

# Understanding the Local Labor Market

## Promising Career Pathways in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County

### Focus: Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics

*Understanding the Local Labor Market: Promising Career Pathways in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County* is intended as a useful resource for career counselors and other professionals responsible for helping jobseekers make informed decisions about employment and training. Featured occupations are selected on the basis of vacancies, wages and benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

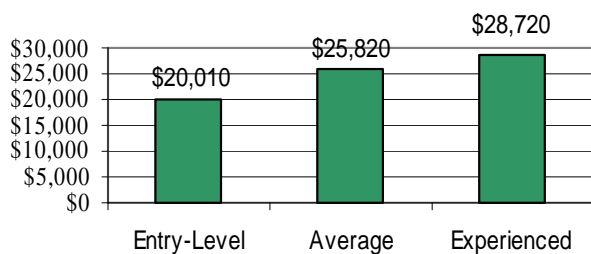
#### What do Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics do?

- Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and paramedics are emergency responders trained to provide emergency medical services to the critically ill and injured. They also transport those persons to medical facilities. A paramedic is an EMT with more advanced training.
- EMTs and paramedics respond to many types of emergency calls including medical emergencies, hazardous materials exposure, childbirth, child abuse, fires, injuries, trauma, and psychiatric crises.

#### What are wages, benefits, and work conditions for Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics?

- EMTs and paramedics work in stressful, life-or-death situations that may include exposure to dangerous diseases and violence. EMTs and paramedics also do considerable kneeling, bending, and heavy lifting.
- EMTs and paramedics work both indoors and outdoors, in all types of weather conditions. EMTs work irregular hours, but usually between 45-60 hours per week. EMTs and paramedics' earnings depend on employment setting, geographic region, and the individual's training. The average annual wages for these positions in Allegheny County is \$25,820.

Annual Wages for Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics in Allegheny County



Source: PA Dept. of Labor & Industry, Center for Workforce Information & Analysis ([www.paworkstats.state.pa.us](http://www.paworkstats.state.pa.us))

#### What do Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics like about their jobs?

- EMTs and paramedics find the work to be both exciting and challenging.
- They enjoy the opportunity to help others and save lives.
- EMTs and paramedics like supporting people through stressful, life-or-death situations.
- They enjoy working with other people and overcoming difficult situations.

#### What are advancement opportunities and related occupations?

- Advancement occurs through additional training. There are four levels of EMTs: EMT-Basic, also known as EMT-1; EMT-Intermediate, or EMT-2 or EMT-3 (currently not recognized in PA); and EMT-Paramedic. Advancement beyond EMT-Paramedic usually requires further education and leaving fieldwork.
- An EMT-Paramedic can become a supervisor, operations manager, administrative director, or executive director of emergency services. Some become instructors, dispatchers, or physicians' assistants, while others move into sales or marketing of emergency medical equipment.
- Related occupations that require level-headed reactions to life-or-death situations include: air-traffic controllers, fire-fighting occupations, physicians' assistants, police and detectives, and registered nurses.

#### How many openings are there for Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics?

- The PA Department of Labor and Industry estimates that there are approximately 1,950 EMTs and paramedics working in Allegheny County.
- As population and urbanization increase, and segments of the population begin to have more medical emergencies, the demand for EMTs and paramedics is expected to rise.
- As full-time paid EMTs and paramedics replace unpaid volunteers, employment is projected to increase by 350 jobs to 2300 EMTs and paramedics in 2012 within Allegheny County.
- The PA Department of Labor and Industry projects that the annual amount of job openings in Allegheny County for EMTs and paramedics will be approximately 57 jobs.

## FOCUS: Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics

### How can I become an Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic?

- Formal training and certification is needed to become an EMT or paramedic.
- A high school diploma or equivalent is usually required to enter a training program. Some programs offer an associate degree or bachelor degree along with formal training.
- All fifty states and the District of Columbia have a certification program. To maintain certification, EMTs and paramedics must re-register every two years.
- EMT-Basic coursework typically involves emergency skills, such as managing respiratory, trauma, cardiac emergencies, and patient assessment. The program also provides instruction and practice in dealing with bleeding, fractures, airway obstruction, cardiac arrest, and emergency childbirth.
- EMT-Intermediate requires passage of EMT-Basic training. Although requirements vary from state to state, training commonly includes an additional 35-55 hours beyond EMT-Basic coursework, and covers patient assessment as well as the use of advanced airway devices and intravenous fluids. Currently, EMT-Intermediate is not recognized in PA.
- EMT-Paramedic receives training in body function and learns more advanced skills. The technology program typically lasts up to 2 years and results in an associate degree in applied science. Extensive related coursework, as well as clinical and field experience is required to become a paramedic.
- EMTs and paramedics should be emotionally stable, have good dexterity, agility, and physical coordination, and be able to lift and carry heavy loads.

### How do I find out about Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic jobs?

- **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** has job postings for these positions (contact 1-866-317-JOBS or visit [www.careerlinkpittsburgh.com](http://www.careerlinkpittsburgh.com) to learn more).
- **National Association of EMTs** has a job board with postings for EMT and paramedic positions on their website, [www.naemt.org](http://www.naemt.org).
- **National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians** has information on certification procedures, [www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org).

### Where can I get training locally?

**A.W. Beattie Center** — [www.beattietech.com](http://www.beattietech.com), 412-366-2800. Offers EMT-Basic certification courses.

**Center for Emergency Medicine** — [www.centerem.org](http://www.centerem.org), 412-647-5300.

Offers training and certification for EMTs and paramedics. It also offers refresher courses.

**Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC)** — [www.ccac.edu](http://www.ccac.edu), 412-237-2500.

Provides training and certification for EMTs and paramedics at a variety of locations including: Alle-Kiski Medical Center, McKeesport Hospital, Medical Rescue Team South Authority (MRTSA), Ross West View, Valley Ambulance Authority, Monroeville Public Training Center, and UPMC St. Margaret.

**Duquesne University** — [www.duq.edu](http://www.duq.edu), 412-396-6000.

Students have the opportunity to obtain certification as an EMT while they pursue their bachelor's degree in athletic training.

**Forbes Road Career and Technology Center** — [www.forbesroad.org](http://www.forbesroad.org), 412-373-8100.

Offers EMT-Basic certification courses.

**University of Pittsburgh, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences** — [www.shrs.pitt.edu](http://www.shrs.pitt.edu), 412-383-6558.

Offers an undergraduate program in Emergency Medicine. The school admits people at various skill levels. Paramedics can earn advanced standing.

### Can I get help paying for training?

- Financial aid may be available for training associated with degree programs.
- Some public safety departments may also provide funds for continuing education.
- Limited training funds may be available through Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink.

### Remember...

Labor markets are affected by economic, social, and institutional factors that are difficult to predict. No one can forecast perfectly how many jobs will be available, or whether there will be too many or too few workers to fill those jobs. The reality is that employment is never a guarantee, even for individuals who pursue training in demand occupations.

The Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (TRWIB) is charged with promoting a coordinated and accountable employment and training system for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Responsibilities include setting and monitoring local performance standards, chartering CareerLink comprehensive and community centers that provide a range of services to jobseekers and employers, and certifying qualified training providers. Board members are appointed by Mayor Luke Ravenstahl (City of Pittsburgh) and Chief Executive Dan Onorato (Allegheny County).

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