

Understanding the Local Labor Market

Promising Career Pathways
in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County

Focus: Automotive Service Technicians

January 2005

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.

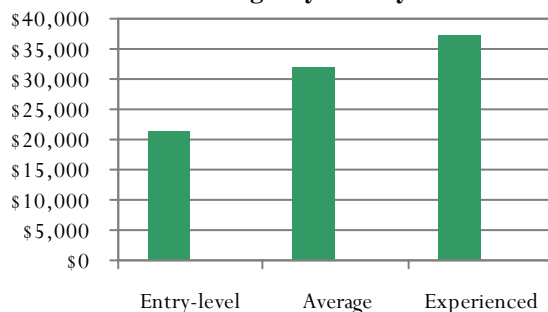
What do automotive service technicians do?

- Automotive service technicians (also known as auto mechanics) inspect, maintain, diagnose and repair automobiles and trucks. Working as an automotive service technician is physically demanding and can require heavy lifting and an ability to stand or work under a vehicle for an extended period of time. These jobs require traditional mechanical skills as well as high technology skills because most newer automobiles have complex electronic and computerized parts and systems.
- Automotive technology is dynamic. Currently advancements are being made related to alternative fuels and computerized functions including computer guidance systems. Automotive service technicians must continually upgrade their knowledge and skills related to these innovations.

What are automotive service technicians' wages, benefits, and work conditions?

- Automotive service technicians generally work for small auto repair shops or large automobile dealerships that operate day shifts on weekdays and Saturdays.
- Automotive service technician wages tend to be hourly and benefits may be offered. Employers may also offer bonuses or rewards for efficiency. Average annual wages for automotive service technicians are \$31,880 in Allegheny County. Earning potential tends to be higher for those who work for dealerships and who service more expensive cars.

**Wages for Automotive Service Technicians
Allegheny County**



Source: PA Dept. of Labor & Industry, Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (www.dli.state.pa.us/workforceinfo)

Note: The figure above shows average wages; automotive service technicians' wages can exceed \$50,000 annually in Allegheny County.

What do automotive service technicians like about their jobs?

- Automotive service technicians' work is both mentally and physically challenging and is especially rewarding for individuals who are interested in automobiles.
- Automotive service technicians enjoy the hands-on nature of their work and gain satisfaction from applying their problem-solving abilities to automobiles.
- Automotive service technicians enjoy the opportunity to continually upgrade their skills related to advancements in automobile technology.

What are related jobs and advancement opportunities?

- The automotive industry offers many related job opportunities including: automotive body repairer; automotive glass installer and repairer; parts specialist; diesel repair technician; alternative fuels vehicle (AFV) technician.
- Through work experience and/or additional formal training, automotive service technicians may pursue positions as: service managers; service engineers; automotive writers; automotive shop or dealership owners; automotive salespersons; automotive insurance estimators/adjustors; and, teachers.
- Due to the physically demanding nature of the work, as automotive technicians get older, they tend to pursue opportunities where they can apply their deep understanding of automobiles in a less physically strenuous way.

How many automotive service technicians openings are there?

- In our region, current demand for automotive service technicians is strong and steady. The PA Department of Labor & Industry's Center for Workforce Information & Analysis estimates that there are approximately 4,000 automotive service technicians working in Allegheny County. These positions are relatively secure from global competition as they cannot be outsourced to other countries.
- The Pittsburgh Automotive Trade Association estimates that there are more than 100 employers in Allegheny County that employ automotive service technicians.
- Currently, there are nearly 550 local automotive service technician (or automobile mechanic) job postings on the **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** website (www.careerlinkpittsburgh.com).

How can I become an automotive service technician?

- Most entry-level automotive service technician jobs require a high school diploma or equivalent along with hands-on automotive training. In addition to automotive training, a good foundation in math, reading, computers, electronics and physics is needed to succeed as an automotive service technician.
- Automotive training is offered at the secondary level through local career technology centers (CTCs) and vocational schools. Post secondary training is available through some local CTCs and vocational schools, local community colleges, and private training providers. (See list, right.)
- Most employers require automotive service technicians to be certified. The National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) provides nationally recognized certifications in 8 key areas (including engine repair; brakes; and electrical systems). The highest certification level for an automotive service technician is master technician. ASE certification can be obtained through passing a written test and demonstrating two years of relevant work experience. Visit www.ase.com for more information.
- Some local employers offer apprenticeships that combine paid on-the-job-training with classroom training. Upon successful completion, trainees obtain Journeyman's papers, an associate degree, and a job with the sponsoring employer.

How do I find out about automotive service technician jobs?

- **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** has many job postings for automotive workers. Call 1-866-317-JOBS or visit www.careerlinkpittsburgh.com to find out more.
- Many automotive employers use **local newspapers** to advertise openings.
- The **Pennsylvania Automotive Association's (PAA)** website (www.paa.org) provides links to websites of more than 25 dealerships in Allegheny County. Some of these websites list job postings or contact information for inquiring about available positions.

Where can I get training locally?

When evaluating an automotive training program consider: Is the program NATEF certified? Visit www.natef.org to learn more.

AW Beattie AVTS — 412-366-2800; www.beattietech.com.
Automotive technology program covering all aspects of automotive trouble shooting and repair available to high school students and adults.

AYES (Automotive Youth Educational Systems) — 412-963-8909; www.ayes.org. For high school students, AYES forges partnerships between local high schools, vehicle manufacturers, and automobile dealers to facilitate automotive training.

Community College of Allegheny County Technology Center — 412-269-4900; www.ccac.edu. Three factory-sponsored programs providing automotive training toward an associate degree. These programs are five semesters in length and include paid co-op work experience. CCAC also offers an evening Automotive Technology Program toward an associate degree or certificate.

Forbes Road CTC — 412-373-8100; www.forbesroad.com.
Automotive Technology Program covering diagnosis, repair, and adjustment.

Rosedale Technical Institute — 412-521-6200; www.rosedaletech.org. Associate degree program in automotive technology in four 16-week semesters.

Steel Center AVTS — 412-469-3200. Training for high school students toward entry-level employment as an automotive service technician. Some minimal automotive training is available for adults.

Can I get help paying for training?

- Some **local automotive employers** reimburse for training.
- Limited training funds may be available through **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink**.
- At the post-secondary level, loans may be available.

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 Tom Murphy (City of Pittsburgh) and Chief Executive Dan Onorato (Allegheny County).

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The TRWIB does not warrant that the information in this publication is accurate or complete.

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