

I ndustry Snapshots

(Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics)

- The retail trade sector is the nation's largest employer, with 15.3 million jobs in 2006. The sector is expected to add 1.6 million new jobs, reaching 16.7 million by 2014, and will continue to be the dominant source of employment and the largest source of employment growth.
- Real output for retail trade is expected to grow at a rate of 4.6 percent annually, rising from \$1.1 trillion in 2004 to \$1.8 trillion in 2014.
- The retail industry offers substantial employment opportunities. Part-time and temporary work is plentiful ranging from small, independent retailers to national and multinational retail chains. Solid store experience can lead to an array of retail management and store support career ladders. A college degree can afford direct entry into management training programs and regional/corporate level career paths. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and National Retail Federation Foundation)

High Growth INDUSTRY PROFILE

W orkforce Issues

Pipeline: Career Ladders and Lattices

The retail trade industry is a dynamic field with diverse career ladders, a wide range of employee benefits and on-the-job training that is increasingly driven by high-end technology that requires advanced skills. Employers recruit job candidates from community colleges and universities and train incumbent workers to upgrade their skills for career advancement.

Pipeline: Recruitment and Retention

Retail trade employers struggle to attract and retain the best and brightest employees because of the misperception that jobs are low-wage and lack growth potential. In reality, to day's retail trade careers are more than just cashier and sales associate positions; they encompass information technology, marketing, communications, loss prevention, finance and merchandise sourcing.

Pipeline: Diversity

In an increasingly diverse society, multilingual employees are desirable. Retailers are customer service-driven and need workers to speak the languages of their customer base. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a problem as workers may speak the language of customers but lack basic English language and literacy skills to perform all job functions.

Competency Models

Though the retail industry has started work on initial training models and skills certifications, they are not

yet used consistently across the industry to build skills competency requirements for positions at all levels and to encourage career growth. Retailers are struggling to attract qualified individuals, train them and assist in advancing their careers.

S kill Sets

(Sources: National Retail Federation Foundation and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006-07 Career Guide to Industries)

- Education leading to a high school diploma or equivalent is important for employment entry in retail.
- College graduates will fill most new management positions. Employers increasingly seek graduates from junior and community colleges, technical colleges, and universities.
- While structured training at smaller stores is generally brief, on-the-job training is continuous for committed employees who demonstrate initiative and often takes a mentoring form. At larger companies, initial training tends to be very structured, often lasting several days, and may be instructor-led and computer/video-based. Supplemental training in the form of on-the-job, instructor led, computer/video-based, self-paced and coaching is offered at various stages of employee tenure, supporting career advancement.

E TA in Action

In June 2003, ETA announced the High Growth Job Training Initiative to engage businesses with local education providers and the local/regional workforce investment system to find solutions that address changing talent development needs in various industries.

In October 2005, the Community-Based Job Training Grants were announced to improve the role of community colleges in providing affordable, flexible and accessible education for the nation's workforce.

ETA is investing more than \$260 million in 26 different regions across the United States in support of the WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) Initiative. Through WIRED, local

leaders design and implement strategic approaches to regional economic development and job growth. WIRED focuses on catalyzing the creation of high skill, high wage opportunities for American workers through an integrated approach to economic and talent development.

These initiatives reinforce ETA's commitment to transform the workforce system through engaging business, education, state and local governments, and other federal agencies with the goal of creating a skilled workforce to meet the dynamic needs of today's economy.

I nvestments

ETA has invested \$5,164,900 in the retail industry in the form of three High Growth Job Training Initiative grants. There are no Community-Based Job Training Grants in retail. Leveraged resources from all of the grantees total \$9,605,400.

R esources

For additional background information about the industry and details on the grants, information about employment and training opportunities and workforce development tools for employers, educators and workforce professionals, please visit: www.doleta.gov/BRG, www.careervoyages.gov, www.careeronestop.org, and www.workforce3one.org.