

INTRODUCTION

Competition for jobs is increasingly strong, and it is important to know which careers offer the best employment opportunities. The editors of *Hot Jobs* have chosen 26 careers that will grow most quickly [with employment growth of at least 13 percent (carpenters) and as high as 53 percent (network systems and data communication analysts and network architects and engineers), employ the largest number of people, and offer higher-than-average median salaries (the average salary for all workers in May 2009 was \$43,460).

Twenty-seven percent of the careers listed in *Hot Jobs* are found in the health care industry, 15 percent in the computer and information technology industry, and 12 percent in educational services. These industries are some of the strongest in the United States and offer a wealth of career options. In addition to these fields, hot jobs are found in the business, construction, financial planning, marketing, law, public relations, and renewable-energy industries. Opportunities are available for people from all educational backgrounds—from apprenticeship training to a medical degree.

The following paragraphs provide more information on the sections in each career article and other features in the book.

The **Fast Facts** sidebar appears at the beginning of each article. It provides a summary of recommended high school classes and personal skills; the minimum educational requirements to enter the field; the typical salary range; employment outlook; and acronyms and identification numbers for the following government classification indexes: the Occupational Information Network (O*NET)-Standard Occupational Classification System (SOC) index; the Guide for Occupational Exploration (GOE); the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT); and the National Occupational Classification (NOC) Index. The O*NET-SOC, GOE, and DOT indexes have been created by the U.S. government; the NOC index is Canada's career classification system. Readers can use the identification numbers listed in this section to obtain further information about a career. Print editions of the GOE (*Guide for Occupational Exploration*. Indianapolis, Ind.: JIST Works, 2001) and DOT (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*. Indianapolis, Ind.: JIST Works, 1991) are available at libraries. Electronic versions of the DOT (www.oalj.dol.gov/libdot.htm), NOC (www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC), and O*NET-SOC (<http://online.onetcenter.org>) are available on the Internet. When no O*NET-SOC, GOE, DOT, or NOC numbers are listed, this means that the U.S. Department of Labor or Human Resources and Skills Development Canada have not created a numerical designation for this career. In this instance, you will see the acronym "N/A," or not available.

The **Overview** section provides a capsule summary of work duties, educational requirements, the number of people employed in the field, and employment outlook. **The Job** provides a detailed overview of primary and secondary job duties and typical work settings. The **Requirements** section features four subsections: **High School** (which lists recommended high school classes), **Postsecondary Training** (which lists required post-high

school training requirements to prepare for the field), **Certification and Licensing** (which details voluntary certification and mandatory licensing requirements, when applicable), and **Other Requirements** (which lists key personal and professional skills for success in the field). **Exploring** provides suggestions to young people about how they can explore the field while in school. Examples include books and magazines, websites, information interviews, membership in clubs and other organizations, hands-on activities, competitions, and summer and after-school programs. **Employers** lists the number of people employed in the occupation in the United States and details typical work settings. **Getting a Job** provides advice on how to land a job through employment and association websites, career service offices, networking, career fairs, and other methods. The **Advancement** section provides an overview of typical ways to move up at one's employer or via other means (such as opening a consulting firm or entering academia). **Earnings** provides information on starting, median, and top salaries for workers. Information on salaries in particular industries is also provided for many careers. The **Employment Outlook** section provides an overview of the outlook for the career through 2018. It lists the factors that are causing employment to grow and details career areas in which there will be especially strong growth. Outlook information is obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor and is augmented by information gathered from professional trade associations. Job growth terms follow those used in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (<http://stats.bls.gov/search/ooh.htm>). Growth described as "much faster than the average" means that employment will increase by 20 percent or more from 2008 to 2018. Growth described as "faster than the average" means an increase of 14 to 19 percent. Growth described as "about as fast as the average" means an increase of 7 to 13 percent. Each article ends with **For More Information**. This section provides contact information for professional associations that provide details on educational programs, career paths, scholarships, publications, youth programs, and other resources.

Additionally, most articles in *Hot Jobs* features one or more interviews with professionals and educators in that particular field, who provide useful advice on what it takes to land a job and be successful in the field. Other features include informative sidebars, photographs, and a career title and association index.

We hope that *Hot Jobs* provides you with some great ideas for possible career paths. But this book is just the beginning. Contact the professional associations listed at the end of each article to obtain more information; perhaps they can even help arrange an information interview with a worker in a field that interests you. Follow the suggestions in the Exploring section of each article to get hands-on experience. That way, you will be able to try out each field before making the big decision of choosing a career. Learning about careers can be fun, and we hope this book is useful to you as you begin your search. All the best to you during your career exploration!