

Charleston, West Virginia

Labor Availability



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West Virginia

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Highlights

Unemployment data should be combined with additional information for a more complete picture of available labor. Additional sources in the Charleston MSA include:

- Active Job Service applicants 6,291
- Unemployed (December 2010) 11,000
- New entrants (students/graduates) 32,200
- Low labor force participation rates 23,690
- Involuntary part-time employees 30,975

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Labor draw availability information presented here reflects the labor draw area for the Charleston area – the Charleston, West Virginia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The MSA consists of five counties: Kanawha, Putnam, Boone, Clay and Lincoln.

In 2010, the average annual total civilian labor force in the Charleston MSA totaled 134,900 with total employment at 123,900. Unemployment was reported at 8.2 percent, or 11,000 people. This compares to an unemployment rate of 9.1 percent for West Virginia. The unemployment rate in the area is, generally, a result of the mix of industrial activities and the impact of international competition, technological displacement of employees and the streamlining of corporate structures.

2010 Annual Averages

	Charleston MSA
Labor Force	134,900
Employment	123,900
Unemployment	11,000
Unemployment Rate (%)	8.2

Kanawha County, the central county in the Charleston MSA, is the state's premier business, financial, medical and governmental center. There are nearly 6,000 businesses in Kanawha County – representing more employment opportunities than any other county in West Virginia.

People commute to work from surrounding rural counties to Charleston. Due to the absence of employment opportunities in these rural areas, it is not uncommon for an individual to commute 50 miles or more each way to work. Charleston's labor draw area consists of nine counties and approximates a 30- to 55-mile radius with a commuting time to Charleston of less than one hour.

When compared with all Americans, West Virginians are more likely to travel outside their home counties to work (31.4 percent compared with a national average of 26.7 percent), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Over 11,000 people commute from Putnam County, while over 2,000 commute from each of Boone and Lincoln counties. In other words, when the jobs are available, people come.

Labor Force Statistics

Annual Averages by County, 2010

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Percent Unemployed
Charleston MSA	134,900	123,900	11,000	8.2
Kanawha	88,240	81,320	6,920	7.8
Putnam	26,600	24,590	2,010	7.6
Boone	8,820	8,110	710	8.0
Lincoln	7,790	6,910	880	11.3
Clay	3,480	2,960	520	15.0
West Virginia	782,300	711,100	71,300	9.1

Source: WorkForce West Virginia

Labor Resources in Charleston, West Virginia

To fully evaluate an area's labor force availability, a thorough look beyond the unemployment rate reflects the number of individuals unemployed is needed. The unemployment rate reflects the number of individuals who are actively seeking work. Unemployment data should be used in conjunction with other labor force data to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the availability of qualified, recruitable labor. Additional sources include:

- Active Job Service applicants
- New entrants
- Low labor force participation rates
- Involuntary part-time employees

Job Service Applicants

- 6,291 active job applicants

There were 6,291 active job applicants registered within the Charleston MSA, based on the most recent records from WorkForce West Virginia. The WorkForce WV Career Center in Charleston is a public employment agency established to assist employers in finding qualified workers and to assist workers in finding suitable jobs. For various reasons, every jobseeker does not register with a Career Center office; however, the applicant experience of the agency provides an excellent indicator of labor availability. Listed below is the number of active applicants within the Charleston MSA.

Active Job Applicants

County	Openings	Applicants
Kanawha	2,986	5,262
Putnam	945	657
Boone	197	176
Lincoln	421	133
Clay	23	63
Charleston MSA	4,572	6,291

Source: WorkForce West Virginia

New Entrants

- 29,333 college students
- 2,867 high school graduates

As students complete their education, they're ready to enter the labor market. Students, college and high school, are excellent sources of job candidates. Serving the Charleston area are eight institutions of higher education and career & technical colleges (CTC). These institutions and latest reported enrollments are as follows:

Institution	2009-2010 Enrollment
Marshall University	13,776
West Virginia State University	3,971
Mountwest CTC	3,083
Southern West Virginia CTC	2,619
Kanawha Valley CTC	2,235
University of Charleston	1,481
WVU Institute of Technology	1,255
Bridgemont CTC	<u>913</u>
Total	29,333

In addition to college students, high school students, especially graduates, are a source of potential employees. Within the Charleston MSA, there are 17 high schools. There were 2,867 graduates in the class of 2010. High school graduates for the 2009-2010 school years are as follows:

High School Graduates, 2009-2010

County	Graduates
Kanawha	1,664
Putnam	593
Boone	279
Lincoln	190
Clay	<u>141</u>
Total	2,867

Labor Force Participation Rates

- 23,690 "hidden" labor force

Labor force participation rates are a further indicator of labor force availability, reflecting potential workers that have either dropped out (discouraged workers) or chosen not to enter the labor force (primarily homemakers). As more attractive jobs become available, people not currently a part of the labor force or who have withdrawn from the labor force are drawn into the pool of available labor. These people constitute a large group of potential workers who can be recruited to jobs given sufficient opportunity. In 2009, the participation rates for West Virginia and the Charleston MSA were 56.1 and 51.7 percent, respectively. Labor force participation rates throughout the Charleston MSA range from a high of 63.7 in Putnam County to a low of 44.9 percent in Clay County. (Labor force participation rates are derived by dividing the total civilian labor force by the non-institutionalized population 16 years and older. The rates provided were calculated by WorkForce West Virginia.)

Involuntary Part-Time Employees

- 30,975 involuntary part-time employees

An additional source of potential employees is those individuals now employed in part-time positions. Involuntary part-time positions are those that are occupied by an individual who would prefer full-time hours. Neither the federal or state agencies responsible for collecting labor force statistics generate data related to involuntary part-time employment. It is possible to estimate involuntary part-time employment.

According to WorkForce West Virginia, approximately one-quarter of the state's workers are part-time (calculated by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics from the Current Population Survey). Assuming the proportion is the same in the Charleston MSA, approximately 30,975 workers are part-time, or work less than 35 hours per week (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics definition).

Productive Workforce

West Virginia pledges an educated and work-ready workforce with among the lowest turnover and highest productivity rates in the country. The state's award-winning public education system and nationally acclaimed training programs provide the skill sets needed for competing in a global economy.

West Virginia has the nation's second-lowest overall employee turnover rate, 15% below the national average. In manufacturing, the state has the nation's lowest employee turnover rate, 31% below the national average.

Business leaders in the state appreciate the workforce for its loyalty, strong work ethic and commitment to superior product quality. National benchmark studies show that our workforce is among the most productive in the nation. For instance, Toyota's plant located in Buffalo, West Virginia, led the nation in 4-cylinder engine productivity for six consecutive years, according to the Harbour Report.

WorkForce West Virginia provides an integrated process with one point of contact to all segments of the workforce development system. It coordinates all state and federal training resources to serve employers and job seekers by:

- Providing job search, job training and re-training
- Helping employers upgrade employees' skills to improve retention and productivity with training designed for an employer's specific needs, both on- or off-site
- Working with employers to forecast future job creation needs and plan for the future

Conclusion

The Charleston MSA's major sources of recruitable labor are:

- Active Job Service applicants
- Unemployed
- New entrants
- "Hidden" labor force
- Involuntary part-time employees

A stable and abundant workforce enables companies in the chemical, automotive, healthcare, telecommunications and professional services sectors to flourish. The world's leading companies find Charleston the perfect fit for teamwork, innovation and productivity.