

Opportunities for  
Jobs with Low  
Barriers to Entry  
in Greenville  
County



South Carolina  
Department of  
Commerce



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## INTRODUCTION

This analysis looks at jobs with low barriers to entry in Greenville County in five sectors: construction, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, manufacturing, and professional and technical services. The purpose is to identify potential opportunities for those in the Greenville area with low skills, particularly for jobs paying a living wage. These jobs also can provide the experience and skills that serve as a gateway to better jobs.

## METHODOLOGY

### Low-Barrier Jobs

Jobs with low barriers are defined as those not requiring higher levels of skills, training, or education. Specifically, for this analysis, low-barrier jobs are those rated as requiring “low” or “moderate” levels of reading comprehension, writing, speaking, and math, and rated as requiring short- or moderate-term on-the-job training. These skill and training ratings come from U.S. Department of Labor data for typical skill and education requirements for jobs at the national level.

### Living Wage

To measure adequacy of wages, living wage models were explored. Several models were available utilizing reliable national data from sources such as the U.S. Census, U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Children’s Defense Fund.

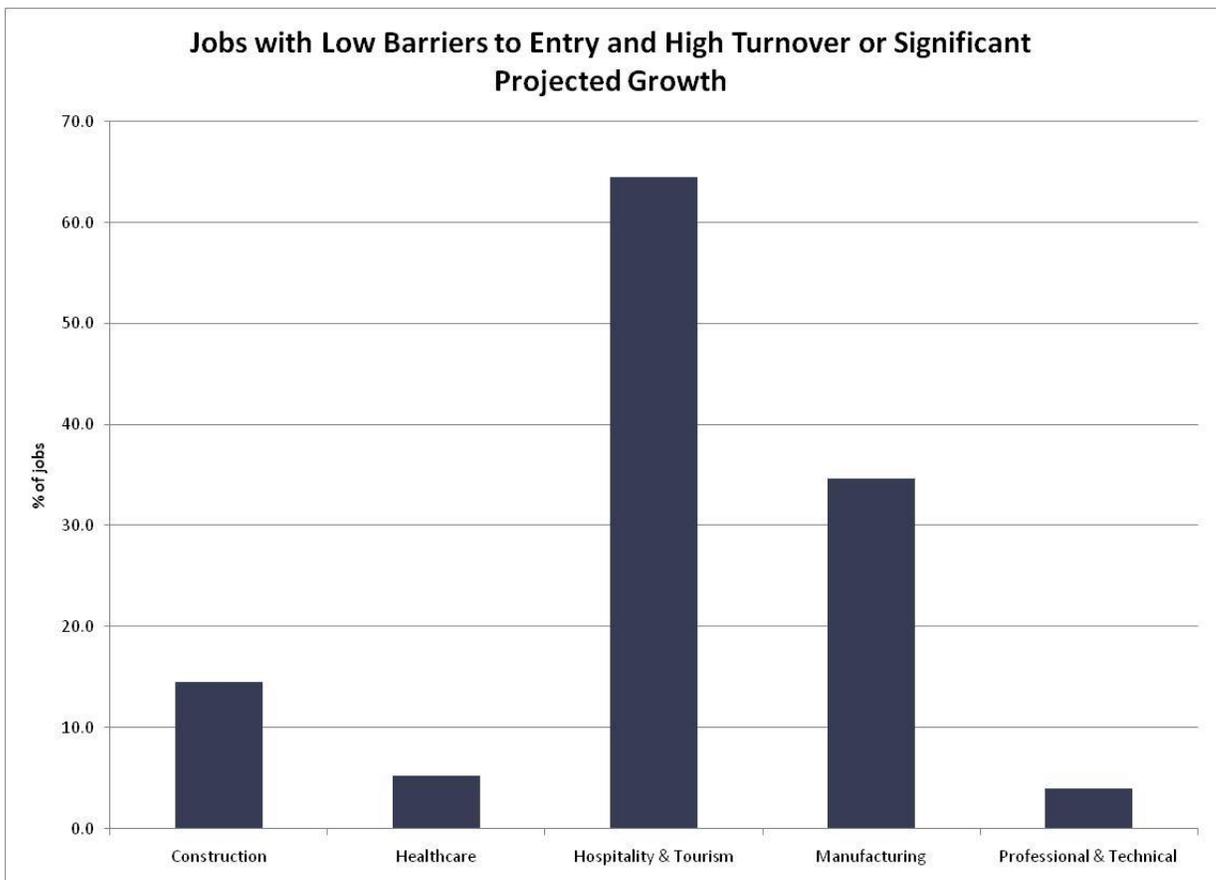
The model utilized for this analysis was developed by Pennsylvania State University using the sources listed above. The model provided data up to 2004 by area. That data was adjusted for inflation using the 2008 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers. Based on this data, a family consisting of one adult and one child would need an annual salary of \$31,477, or an hourly wage of \$15.13, as a living wage in Greenville County. The hourly wage was determined by dividing the annual salary by 2,080 hours.

## QUESTIONS RESEARCHED

### Available Opportunities

What opportunities are there in the five sectors in Greenville County for jobs with low entry barriers in terms of skills? The focus is on those jobs with opportunities through either significant growth or high turnover.

The chart below shows the percentage of 2007 jobs in each of the five focus sectors that have low entry barriers and either high turnover or high projected growth. High-turnover jobs are those with 70 percent or more of their openings due to replacement needs (based on state occupational data). High-growth jobs are those projected to grow by 100 or more over the 2006-2016 period in Greenville County (across all industry sectors). Almost two thirds of the jobs in Greenville's hospitality and tourism sector have low entry barriers and significant levels of opportunities. Over one third of the jobs in manufacturing meet these requirements. About 15 percent of construction jobs, five percent of healthcare jobs, and four percent of professional and technical jobs meet these requirements.



## Sector-specific Occupations

Which jobs in the focus sectors provide good opportunities for those with lower levels of skills, experience and education while also providing a living wage? Listed below are the occupations within each of the five sectors that have significant employment in the sector in Greenville County, low skill barriers, good growth prospects or high turnover, and average wages above the living wage level in Greenville County (\$15.13/hour).

### **Construction**

Pipelayers  
Roofers  
Laborers

### **Healthcare**

None

### **Hospitality & Tourism**

None

### **Manufacturing**

Tire builders  
Chemical equipment operators  
Machinery maintenance workers  
Lathe and turning machine tool operators  
Coating, painting & spraying machine operators  
Mixing and blending machine operators  
Drilling and boring machine tool operators

### **Professional & Technical**

None

Also, within the construction and manufacturing sectors, there are significant opportunities for welders. Average wages for welders are above the living wage and skill requirements are not high. However, welding jobs require higher levels of experience or training, but levels that may be within reach for many with low skills.

Following is a listing of all occupations in Greenville County in the five focus sectors that have substantial employment, low barriers, and significant opportunities. Included is an explanation of the various factors considered in identifying these occupations.

Greenville County occupations with significant employment, low skill  
barriers and opportunities\*

Code	Title	2007 Average Wage	2007 Sector Emp.
<b>Construction</b>			
<u>Above living wage</u>			
47-2151	Pipelayers	19.29	126
47-2181	Roofers	16.85	160
47-2061	Construction Laborers	15.19	1,165
<u>Below living wage</u>			
47-3011	Helpers--Brickmasons, Blockmasons, Stonemasons, and Tile and Marble Setters	14.65	160
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	10.90	109
<b>Healthcare</b>			
<u>Below living wage</u>			
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	9.77	130
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	8.87	110
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	8.41	200

<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>2007 Average Wage</b>	<b>2007 Sector Emp.</b>
<i>Hospitality &amp; Tourism</i>			
<u>Below living wage</u>			
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	10.16	560
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	9.77	269
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	9.20	817
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	8.87	1,353
41-2021	Counter and Rental Clerks	8.85	158
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	8.41	1,724
35-3041	Food Servers, Nonrestaurant	8.20	417
41-2011	Cashiers	7.69	1,325
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	7.64	2,248
35-9031	Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	7.39	857
35-9021	Dishwashers	7.32	1,107
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	7.26	4,325
35-9011	Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee	7.10	725
35-3022	Shop	7.03	951
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	6.85	6,320

Code	Title	2007 Average Wage	2007 Sector Emp.
<b>Manufacturing</b>			
<u>Above living wage</u>			
51-9197	Tire Builders	18.61	205
51-9011	Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	18.59	183
49-9043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	17.95	151
51-4034	Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	17.38	117
51-9121	Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	16.46	163
51-9023	Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	15.62	314
51-4032	Drilling and Boring Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	15.27	147
<u>Below living wage</u>			
51-9032	Cutting and Slicing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	14.97	185
51-6061	Textile Bleaching and Dyeing Machine Operators and Tenders	13.66	292
51-2092	Team Assemblers	13.55	2,611
51-9041	Extruding, Forming, Pressing, and Compacting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	13.46	202
51-4031	Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	12.82	346
53-7063	Machine Feeders and Offbearers	12.19	230
51-6064	Textile Winding, Twisting, and Drawing Out Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	11.05	633
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	10.90	663
51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	10.55	469
51-9198	Helpers--Production Workers	9.34	510
53-7064	Packers and Packagers, Hand	8.92	344

Code	Title	2007 Average Wage	2007 Sector Emp.
<i>Professional &amp; Technical</i>			
<u>Below living wage</u>			
43-5021	Couriers and Messengers	14.63	116
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	10.90	173

\*Factors used in identifying these occupations:

- 2007 employment of 100 or more in the sector.
- Required skill levels of low or moderate for reading comprehension, writing, speaking, and math.
- Experience/education requirement of short- or moderate-term on-the-job training.
- Projected growth of 100 or more for the 2006-2016 period or 70% or more of job openings due to replacement needs.

NOTE: Skill levels and experience/education requirements are based on U.S. Department of Labor data for typical requirements for occupations nationally; projected growth is for the occupation across all industries in Greenville County; replacement needs are based on state data (59% of all state job openings are due to replacement needs); and living wage is based on costs for family of one adult and one child in Greenville County, adjusted to current levels by the national Consumer Price Index.

Sources: EMSI, U.S. Department of Labor, S.C. Department of Commerce, Pennsylvania State University (Living Wage Calculator).

## FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

The lists of occupations presented in this analysis should not be considered exhaustive in regard to opportunities for those with low skills in Greenville County. Nor should the five sectors covered here be considered the only sectors providing low-barrier opportunities in the Greenville area.

However, the jobs noted in the five sectors can provide a good starting point for targeting efforts to help those with low skills in the Greenville area. Provided along with this analysis are lists of larger businesses in Greenville County in each of the five sectors. Those employers can provide information on opportunities, obstacles and resources for assisting those with low skills. They may also be willing to help with assistance such as apprenticeships and career ladders.

These occupations can also provide a basis for an assessment of assistance available for the low-skilled in the Greenville area through workforce development, education and business organizations. Are there programs targeted to these occupations in the area? Who offers them? Where? How many people do those programs serve? If there are no efforts targeted to these occupations, should they be started?

One thing to keep in mind regarding the jobs listed here is that many of them can be a point of entry to higher-level jobs. Employers commonly are critical of the lack of “soft” skills such as dependability and teamwork among many of their entry-level workers. The jobs listed here, while perhaps not providing high wages, do give low-skilled workers the opportunity to learn and demonstrate those “soft” skills. Area leaders may want to consider how to develop career ladders using these low-barrier jobs as a starting point.





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