

Summer job market may be mean to local teens

Youths told to prepare for tight employment market

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School will be out, but doing a little homework may help local teenagers increase their odds of finding work this summer in what is expected to be a tight job market, area employment officials suggest.

According to a recently released report from Boston's Northeastern University, only 42 in 100 American youth ages 16-19 will find work this summer.

"The job market is still very competitive. There are more teens than job openings," said Renee Ward, principal of the Huntington Beach, Calif.-based Forward Group, which publishes the Web site <http://www.teens4hire.org/>

Dawn Hathaway Thoman, vice president of Manpower of Southern Nevada, agreed with the grim outlook for teen summer employment. Even though there will be summer jobs out there for young workers, she said teens will once again be competing with older workers returning to the employment rolls.

"The negative part is that many firms are hiring back employees that were laid off during the recession so students will be up against those people," Thoman said.

In 2003, the Las Vegas area dealt with an overall unemployment rate of around 5.3 percent, the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation reported. So far this year, the percentage year over year is down to 4.6 percent.

However, among youth, the rate was running about 13.3 percent nationally in 2003, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports, up from 12.4 percent in mid-2002. There are neither state nor local statistics on unemployment among area youth, said Jim Shabi, economist with Nevada's Department of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation.

Ward said the market for summer of 2003 was the worst it had been in 55 years, coming on the heels of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the economic downturn that followed. In addition, she said older, laid-off workers were taking the jobs that previously would have gone to teenagers.

Although employment officials agree the job market seems to be rebounding locally and nationally, the influx of new residents to the Las Vegas Valley will make it harder this summer for teens seeking jobs, Ward said.

An added problem, she noted, was that Manpower and other temporary staffing firms often prefer to place workers older than 18 because of liability and insurance issues.

Nevertheless, there will be opportunities for summer jobs around town, especially for teens who prepare themselves properly, employment officials said.

Lauren Bennett, a technical training specialist for the Clark County School District's Career and Technical Education unit, for example, encourages high school students to access the school district's job bank for information on what companies are hiring for the summer.

She said the data bank is active already, with at least five employers having contacted the office to post positions.

"I have had several employers who have called me looking for students in preparation for the summer months," Barnett said. "Right now, we have numerous positions listed in the job bank that are open and not filled."

Available positions include: tellers, theme-ride attendants at Strip hotels, warehouse stock personnel, runners and office assistants. Barnett, whose office helps place about 3,000 students in jobs each summer, said the average wage for summer positions is around \$7.40 an hour.

"Employers have said they are finding success in finding students to fill these positions," Barnett added.

Teens4Hire is a Web site local teens can use to find jobs locally and elsewhere. The site receives some 2.5 million visitors monthly. The site peaks during the summer months and Ward is hoping more small businesses will register and post job listings.

"We need more participation among small businesses because there are not enough jobs for teenagers out there," Teens4Hire's Ward added.

Other popular job sites such as Monster.com and even the Sunday classified section of the Review-Journal can also assist in the effort.

Good old-fashioned legwork will help other teens find summer jobs.

Stacey DeMarco, president of JAS Associates, a company that owns six Blockbuster video stores in Henderson, said she expects to have anywhere from two to four positions available per store when the academic year ends, with starting paying exceeding the minimum wage.

"We will have openings available as people do come and go during the summer. The number of positions depend on the volume in the stores so we're always accepting applications," DeMarco said, adding that having some work experience will be a plus for candidates.

Meanwhile, although it may be too late to apply for lifeguarding positions at the local park swimming pool, municipalities such as Henderson regularly look to the city's own youth to fill positions within its recreational centers.

Andrea Edwards, a recreation coordinator with the city of Henderson's Parks and Recreation Department, said recreation officials are preparing to make their final hiring decisions for the summer for various positions.

She also encouraged high school-age youth to submit an application for anything that may come available during the summer. She added they will begin interviewing in June for positions that will begin next fall.

"Your best bet is to still go ahead and submit an application because there are always ongoing recruitments," Edwards said.

The local mall is another possibility, although Meadows mall senior general manager Greg Sims said he's not aware of an "overabundance of stores putting out help wanted signs."

"We keep a list at our customer service center of stores that are hiring year-round and we encourage them to keep their lists current," Sims said.

BETTERING CHANCES

Top 10 tips to land a job:

1. Get the best grades possible in school.
2. Participate in school-sponsored activities like clubs and sports.
3. Participate in community activities.
4. Be aggressive.
5. Learn how to complete an application.
6. Be prepared to be interviewed on the spot.
7. Practice talking about yourself beforehand.
8. Learn something about the company where you want to work.
9. Follow up.
10. If you land the job, be a good employee.

SUMMERTIME IDEAS

Top 10 places for teens to look for a job:

- Vacation spots
- Hotels-resorts
- Park, recreational, swimming pool and campground facilities
- Day and summer camps
- Amusement/theme/entertainment parks
- Childcare providers
- Golf courses
- Movie theaters
- Fast-food and restaurant establishments
- Ice cream parlors, juice bars
- Clothing and accessory stores
- Museums
- Construction companies
- Health care facilities
- Business services

If you can't find a summer job, consider starting a business such as:

- House-sitting
- Pet-sitting
- Mowing lawns
- Working as a personal assistant
- Tutoring students
- Washing cars
- Coordinating garage sales
- Planning parties/events

Other ideas to fill your summer if you can't find a job include:

- Staying in school
- Taking classes in Internet, word processing and office applications
- Volunteering

Source: Teens4Hire.org