Illinois and U.S. Share Similar Need for Skilled Workers

Ratio of state's jobless to job vacancies declining

by Troy McMillan

Research from the Illinois Department of Employment Security suggests that the need for skilled workers in Illinois is consistent with the overall U.S. need for workers with in-demand skill sets.

The Conference Board Help Wanted OnLine® Data Series, or HWOL, shows that Illinois shares 22 of the nation's top 25 in-demand jobs (***see Table 1 on next page***). These are occupations with the most job vacancies in any given time period. In addition to these 22 occupations, Illinois also needs financial managers, management analysts, sales managers, and computer systems engineers and architects. Job vacancy data show that the same skilled workers and the same labor demand exists across most of the Midwest.

Supply/Demand Ratio

The U.S. supply/demand ratio, which is the number of unemployed persons for each advertised job vacancy, was 2.51 in September 2012 *(the latest data available when this article was written)*. That means there were two unemployed

Table 1. Top 25 Occupations Sorted by Job Vacancies*

U.S. Occupational Title	Illinois Occupational Title
1. Registered Nurses	1. Registered Nurses
2. Physical Therapists	2. Occupational Therapists
3. Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	3. Retail Salespersons
4. Retail Salespersons	4. Physical Therapists
5. 1st-Line Servers/Managers, Retail Sales Workers	5. Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer
6. Occupational Therapists	6. 1st-Line Servers/Managers, Retail Sales Workers
7. Computer Systems Analysts	7. Computer Systems Analysts
8. Computer Software Engineers, Applications	8. Web Developers
9. Web Developers	9. Occupational Therapist Assistants
10. Medical and Health Services Managers	10. Computer Software Engineers, Applications
11. Speech-Language Pathologists	11. Sales Agents, Financial Services
12. Customer Service Representatives	12. Physical Therapist Assistants
13. Family and General Practitioners	13. Medical and Health Services Managers
14. Sales Agents, Financial Services	14. Customer Service Representatives
15. Physician Assistants	15. Accountants
16. Occupational Therapist Assistants	16. Network & Computer System Administrators
17. Physical Therapist Assistants	17. Marketing Managers
18. Network & Computer System Administrators	18. Insurance Sales Agents
19. Computer Support Specialists	19. Financial Managers, Branch or Department
20. Internists, General	20. Speech-Language Pathologists
21. Insurance Sales Agents	21. Management Analysts
22. Industrial Engineers	22. Sales Managers
23. Marketing Managers	23. Computer Support Specialists
24. Accountants	24. Stock Clerks, Sales Floor
25. Stock Clerks, Sales Floor	25. Family and General Practitioners

The above list represents jobs that have been vacant for 60 days as of September 2012. The occupational titles are listed in order of occupations with the most vacancies to the least.

people for each of the 4,813,440 job openings in the U.S. In Illinois, there were three unemployed people for each of the 179,507 advertised job openings listed in HWOL. This shows that Illinois has only slightly more unemployed people for every job opening than the nation as a whole.

The good news is that there has been a decline in the over-the-month Illinois ratio for eight of the last 10 consecutive months (***see Graph 1 on next page***). Additionally, Illinois' September 2012 ratio is half what it was three years ago – in September 2009, the ratio was nearly six unemployed people per job opening.

The lower Illinois ratio is a reflection of the increasing number of workers that have completed formal training and found jobs in fields where job vacancies have existed. Even now, Illinois training programs and colleges are outputting a sufficient number of graduates to fill the vacancies in most of the top 25 occupational categories identified in this report, according to Illinois Department of Employment Security analysts. To determine the number of skilled workers in Illinois, the department relies on such data as its occupational projection estimates (the number of newly created jobs and those jobs that will need replacements due to

retirements, deaths or transfers), along with its Occupational Employment Statistics survey results and education, training and certification data.

Job Demand by Area

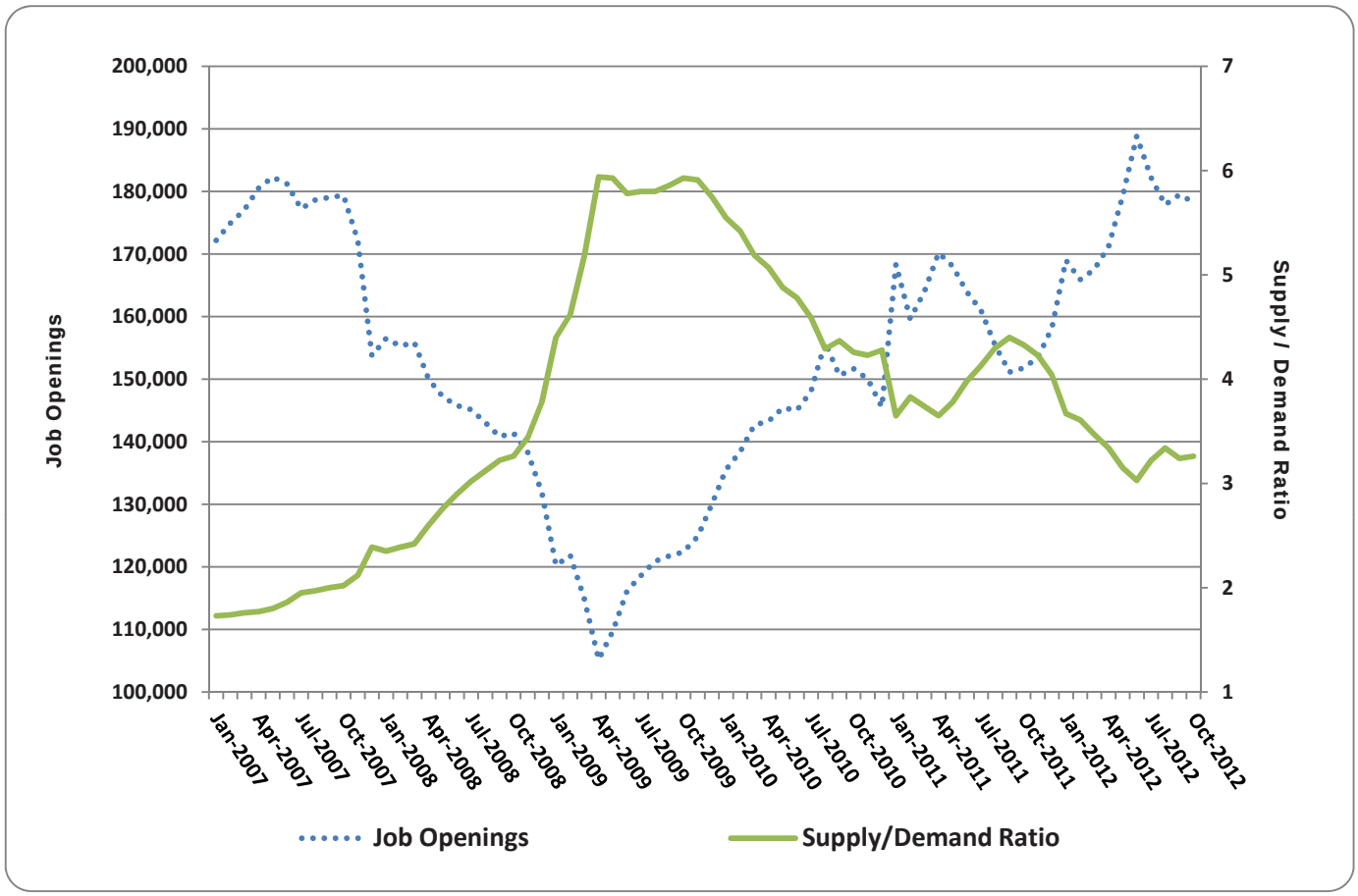
The department also publishes lists of jobs in demand based on real-time online job ads from employers. These lists, which are developed using the HWOL data series, are organized by geographical area and represent real job opportunities, which can be of significant importance to the unemployed and career changers.

The information can also be used as a career planning tool. As students navigate the world of choosing a career, they can use this kind of information as a guide to careers that are in demand and make informed decisions about their future.

Visit the department's website at **http://www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=2518** for geographic-specific lists of top occupations that are currently posting jobs for hire.

Troy McMillan is an Outreach and Training Coordinator with the Economic Information and Analysis Division at the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

Graph 1. Illinois Job Openings and the Supply / Demand Ratio



Source: The Conference Board & U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

To view Top Jobs In Demand by Economic Area, go to www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=2518