

Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association

Career Center Tips: Hiring Trends in 2009 How Will It Affect Parks & Recreation



2008 proved to be a difficult year for the job market, including the park and recreation profession. Though employers were cautious in the beginning of the year, they still anticipated a slow, yet steady hiring environment with continued job creation through 2008. The market continued to suffer, however, as the U.S. economy weakened and entered into a recession while employers maintained prudence.

While recruitment levels in 2009 are expected to be lower, employers are not out of the mix completely. Instead, they are taking a "wait and see" approach to hiring, according to CareerBuilder.com's "2009 Job Forecast," which tracks projected hiring trends for the new year. The survey, conducted by Harris Interactive, surveyed 3,259 hiring managers and human resource professionals in private sector companies.

Fourteen percent of employers plan to increase their number of **full-time**, permanent employees in 2009, compared to 32 percent who expected to expand their staff in 2008. Sixteen percent plan to have staff reductions, 56 percent foresee no change and 13 percent of employers are unsure of their hiring plans.

Here are some other key findings from the survey:

- Fifty-six percent of employers plan to raise compensation levels in the next three months. Forty-three percent estimate the average raise to be 3 percent or more, while 12 percent expect a raise of 5 percent or more.
- Staff expansions should be strongest in the Southern and Western regions of the U.S. in 2009, with 18 percent of employers in the South and 14 percent in the West planning to add full-time, permanent employees.
- Nineteen percent of employers in the Northeast expect to reduce staff in 2009, followed by 17 percent in the Midwest.
- Job creation is projected to be the highest in **information technology** and professional and **business** services, with 28 percent and 23 percent of employers planning to hire full-time employees in those sectors, respectively.

As employers approach the job market with a cautious attitude, they also plan to utilize the resources already at their disposal. Here are seven major hiring trends to expect from employers in 2009:

Trend No. 1: Bigger paychecks

Despite the fact that many employers are looking for ways to cut costs, they don't anticipate trimming salaries as a way to do so. Sixty-six percent of employers plan to increase pay for existing employees and one third of hiring [managers](#) estimate increasing salaries on initial offers to new employees in 2009.

Trend No. 2: Flexible work arrangements

Companies are catching on to the [flexible](#) work arrangements that allow employees more freedom in the office. Thirty-one percent of employers say they plan to provide the following options for workers in 2009: alternate schedules (70 percent); [telecommuting](#) (48 percent); compressed workweeks (40 percent); summer hours (19 percent); job sharing (13 percent); and sabbaticals (7 percent).

Trend No. 3: Green jobs

Employers have tried to gain traction using environmentally friendly policies for a while and the New Year shows more of the same. Last year, one-in-ten hiring managers added "[green jobs](#)," which are environmentally conscious positions, compared to 13 percent of employers who plan to add them in 2009. This trend will certainly become a practice in the parks and recreation industry, and green related positions and procedures will become standard in our industry.

Trend No. 4: Recruitment tools

As employers slow down on hiring, recruitment budgets shrink as well. As a result, more employers are using the Internet as an employment medium. Twenty-three percent of employers say that although their hiring budgets will decrease in 2009, they will spend money on the following staffing vehicles: [online recruitment sites](#) (19 percent); newspaper classifieds (15 percent); career fairs (12 percent); staffing firms and recruiters (12 percent); and social networking sites (7 percent).

Trend No. 5: Retaining retirees

Though baby boomers are approaching retirement age, many are continuing to work -- both out of desire and necessity. Employers are looking at ways to retain these workers; 17 percent say they will likely rehire retirees from other companies in 2009 and 12 percent plan to offer incentives for baby boomers to stay on with the company longer.

Trend No. 6: Diversity recruitment

Hiring managers will also focus recruitment efforts on employing diverse workers. Employers said they plan to hire Hispanic, African American and mature workers aggressively in 2009. Eighty-eight percent of companies say they will continue to recruit bilingual candidates, as well.

Trend No. 7: Freelance or contract hiring

To continue their cost-cutting efforts, employers are using freelance or contract workers to help support their businesses. Twenty-eight percent of hiring managers expect to utilize these workers in 2009. This long-standing practice in parks and recreation appears to be catching on with other industries.