

Occupations of Opportunity

NICHE MANUFACTURING

KEY OCCUPATIONS IN NICHE MANUFACTURING

Niche Manufacturing includes more than 500 small, specialized producers spread across more than 20 industry classifications. No individual sector employs more than a few hundred people. Firms in this sector are involved in metal components, coatings, glass products, machinery, medical devices, and other products. These firms are growing operations and, according to a focus group of CEOs, already experiencing labor shortages that could affect their ability to continue growing in the region.

Strong Career Potential *Figures calculated between 1990 - 2004; firms through 2003.*

- **JOB GROWTH:** 33% (from 1517 to 2022 jobs)
- **FIRM GROWTH:** 19% (from 460 to 548 firms)
- **WAGE GROWTH:** 25% (from \$27,023 to \$33,824)

Employment Opportunities by Wage Level

Half of the Niche Manufacturing jobs are in the mid-wage level, with the remaining occupations distributed in the lower-wage level (30%) and 20% in the higher-wage level.

30% of Jobs are in the Low Wage Level, including stock clerks, order fillers, office clerks, laborer, material movers

50% of Jobs are in the Mid Wage Level, including computer support specialists, maintenance & repair workers, auditing clerks, light, delivery, and heavy truck drivers

20% of Jobs are in the Higher Wage Level, including accountants, auditors, general & operations managers, first line supervisors of sales workers



Past & Future Drivers of Growth

Entrepreneurs stay for quality of life, and build a niche business

Small firms focus on small, high-value areas, and make a commitment to quality and innovation at reasonable cost

Internet has helped expand market reach

Large institutional markets or government policies have stimulated growth in some cases

Growing demand for customized, specialty products in wide variety of industry and consumer markets

Growing need for agile, specialized machining, engineering, and manufacturing or rapid prototyping

Growing government-driven markets (e.g., pollution control equipment)

Innovative designs (e.g., decorative glass)

