

# The 10 hottest jobs in Michigan in 2015

By Nathan Bomey, Detroit Free Press 9:18 a.m. EST January 4, 2015

*Specialized IT security companies are also booming, particularly in the Ann Arbor area, where tech companies Duo Security, Barracuda Networks and Arbor Networks are flourishing.*



(Photo: Brian Kaufman Detroit Free Press)

A manufacturing comeback helped us dig out of the Great Recession, but the hottest Michigan jobs are now concentrated in other sectors, including some openings for ethical computer hackers improving corporate cybersecurity.

In 2015, Michigan is expected to add 59,400 jobs, but only 10% of those new positions will come from factories, according to the University of Michigan's annual economic forecast.

Instead, most of the new jobs in Michigan are in rapidly growing areas, including nursing, software development and network security.

"Those are just red-hot," said Mike Finney, the chief economic adviser to Gov. Rick Snyder.

What's problematic, however, is that many of the hottest jobs are going unfilled because there are few candidates with the necessary skills to handle them. Even in positions that don't require an advanced degree, employers sometimes have a difficult time finding qualified candidates.



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For example, a nationwide shortage of truck drivers recently forced Ann Arbor Township-based shipping company Con-way Freight to launch its own driver school. The firm provides 12 weeks of training at no cost for prospective drivers, who spend half of that time earning compensation for dock work until they receive their certification.

Con-way expects to train and hire 50 Michigan-based truck drivers in 2015 — all of whom return to their homes at night, unlike long-haul drivers — and about 1,600 nationwide. The company gave a "significant" raise to its current drivers in June and plans to deliver another one in January, said Con-way Freight President Greg Lehmkuhl.

"More than anything else in the next few years, it's a war for qualified and safe drivers," Lehmkuhl said. "The whole industry is raising wages to attract people into the driving profession."

After interviews with business executives, analysts and recruiters and a review of employment data and economic projections, the Free Press assembled this list of the 10 hottest jobs in Michigan in 2015.

What qualifies as a hot job? If you've got the skills to match the job, you can land a position almost immediately. That doesn't mean these are the highest-paying positions or the most enjoyable. But it does mean they're in high demand.



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## Commercial drivers

Trucking may not be a glamorous job, but it offers a quick route to employment for workers with little education.

The aging workforce is prompting many older truckers to retire, and federal regulations effectively disqualify new drivers with spotty personal driving records, Lehmkuhl said. New Con-way drivers earn salaries ranging from \$50,000 to \$55,000, receive three weeks of vacation and get health care insurance.

Con-way is spending about \$5,000 per new trainee. They must have a high school diploma, be at least 21 years old and have a clean criminal record and driving record.

The shortage of truckers is affecting other companies, too. Domino's Pizza CEO J. Patrick Doyle said it's a significant problem.

"The easiest way for someone to become employed right now who isn't employed is get your commercial driver's license," Doyle said.



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### **Ethical hackers**

The recent Sony studio hacking episode, which prompted the company to dramatically scale back its distribution plans for the North Korea spoof movie "The Interview," was simply the latest example of how cybersecurity is becoming a major crisis for businesses.

In Michigan, major corporations are scrambling to find network security specialists who can plug the holes in their technology systems and help prevent future attacks.

Steve Lowisz, CEO of Livonia-based recruiting firm Qualigence International, calls them "ethical hackers" — technology specialists with a deep grasp of network security issues.

"We've seen more requests for ethical hackers than we've ever seen before," Lowisz said. "Companies are hiring hackers to look at their own systems to get ahead of the hackers that are outside their system."

Specialized IT security companies are also booming, particularly in the Ann Arbor area, where tech companies Duo Security, Barracuda Networks and Arbor Networks are flourishing.

"We cannot possibly continue our rapid growth without hiring more talented team members with outstanding security, privacy, technology and people skills," said Yan Ness, CEO of data center firm Online Technologies, which hopes to hire 10 workers in 2015.

### **Specialized nurses and nurse practitioners**

Nursing has probably earned a permanent spot on the list of the hot jobs in Michigan. Although some types of nursing are not in demand, most are. The aging population has compounded the demand for more nurses, and the desire to reduce health care costs has led to a demand for more nurse practitioners, in particular.

"They have a master's degree and have additional responsibilities, like the ability to prescribe medication," said Amy Cell, the talent chief for the Michigan Economic Development Corp., in an e-mail. "They are a cost-effective way to deliver primary care. With the continued changes in health care delivery, they will play a key role."

### **Welders**

The surging demand for welders reflects a general lack of skilled-trades workers in Michigan. Snyder repeatedly says that addressing the deficiency in skilled trades areas is a priority in his second term.

One key driver of the demand for welders is the aging workforce.

"Basically there's a need to find replacement workers for people who are getting older and retiring," said Lou Glazer, president of nonpartisan think tank Michigan Future. "It's clear there's not enough people going in."

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### **High-tech sales and marketing associates**

Michigan's workforce knows how to sell manufacturing equipment, such as complex machinery used to build cars. It does not yet know how to sell high-tech goods like software services. That's the consensus of business executives and recruiters who say that companies are desperately seeking sales and marketing people who can adapt to the so-called knowledge economy.

Larry Freed, managing partner of metro Detroit business consultancy 2nd Stage Partners, said that selling technology services requires a fresh and diverse skill set. For example, salespeople in high-tech areas need to be cognizant of the impact of social media on their business, he said.

"If you make a cold call, they're on the Internet checking you out while you make that call," Freed said. "The sales process has shifted from the vendor being in control to the customer being in control because of the wealth of information that's out there."

### **User-interface software developers**

Creating an app for a smartphone is not particularly difficult. But making that app easy to use is much harder.

People who can develop intuitive software applications, ranging from expensive business enterprise systems to free smartphone apps, are in high demand. These positions are often referred to as user-interface developers, usability experts and quality assurance specialists. For example, rapidly growing Ann Arbor-based LLamasoft is currently hiring a user-interface developer (<http://annarborusa.org/work-here/job-seeker-resources/job-portal/ux-designer-2>) to improve its supply chain software.

Even companies not typically associated with technology, such as Domino's Pizza, are hiring software developers. Nearly half of the company's orders come from its smartphone apps and online ordering.

"We're looking for people who understand consumer experience and can help us with the consumer interface," Domino's CEO Doyle said.

### **Electronic medical record data specialists**

The Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as Obamacare, accelerated the transition of medical records to a digital format, giving doctors and hospitals incentives to translate old print forms into computerized systems.

Health care providers and insurers are actively seeking specialists capable of implementing the systems, a position Lowisz described as "a cross between a technologist and a nurse."

"That's like looking for a needle in a haystack," he said.

### **Systems engineers**

This highly specialized form of engineering generally requires the worker to possess a multidisciplinary grasp of the field. Systems engineers are responsible for tracking the development and performance needs of an entire product.

For example, Farmington Hills-based Batton Inc. is currently trying to hire (<https://jobs.mitalent.org/job-seeker/job-details/2173711>) a systems engineer with at least two years of experience developing automotive infotainment systems, interprocessor communications skills and experience operating devices such as oscilloscopes.

### **Data scientists**

The proliferation of so-called Big Data is simultaneously a huge opportunity and an intimidating area for corporations. Companies may collect reams of data about consumer tastes, sales trends, product performance and distribution costs, but translating that data into actionable steps is difficult.

"These are the people that can figure it all out and the current demand for them greatly outweighs the supply," MEDC's Cell said.

### **Computer numeric control programmers**

Michigan's advanced manufacturing sector relies heavily on automated machines to construct equipment. But programming those machines requires a specialized skill set that's hard to find.

"These are the people that program the machines to do different tasks, and make sure that they operate effectively," Cell said. "Given the dominance of manufacturing in Michigan, these folks will be critical to help employers keep up with the latest manufacturing technology."

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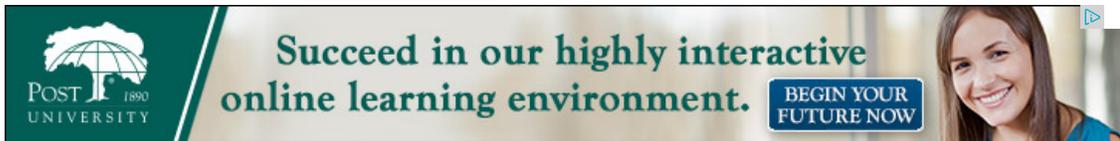


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