

Best Careers of 2010

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It's not a little bit optimistic to be establishing a list of best careers now, at the tail end of a particularly hard-knocks recession that has helped put 15.4 million Americans out of work. That's particularly so because no industry or occupation was spared the misery of layoffs, hiring freezes, benefit cuts, and general anxiety. But some industries were much safer harbors for workers than others. Healthcare, most notably, managed to expand its payrolls, though not at the clip customary for a healthier economy. It's clear that the recession is ending and that employers aren't slashing jobs with the blunt instrument they used over the past two years, but many unemployed workers and college students have a question that can't be answered by upticks in the GDP, namely: Where on earth will the jobs be?

For this year's list, *U.S. News* examined the Labor Department's brand-new job growth projections for 2008 to 2018. We looked for occupations that will add jobs at an above-average rate over the next decade or so and those that provide an above-average median income. We analyzed the data for jobs with enough bulk to make them worth mentioning. Since not everyone wants to be a nurse or an engineer, we looked for occupations in a broad range of categories. And since not everyone can go back to school for a doctorate, we included a broad range of educational requirements. We also considered, where possible, data on job satisfaction, turnover, and impending retirements, which crank up openings in jobs that may have only slightly above-average employment growth.

In the end, we found a list of 50 jobs that present some of the best opportunities for workers.

1. X-Ray Technician
2. Veterinarian
3. Meteorologist
4. Computer Software Engineer
5. Firefighter
6. Special-Education Teacher
7. Financial Adviser

8. Meeting Planner

Employment of meeting and convention planners is expected to grow faster than the average for all professions over the next decade or so. The number of jobs planners hold is forecast to jump 16 percent, thanks to the growing importance of meetings to increasingly global companies.