

The Most Recession-Proof Jobs Right Now

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October was another dark month for the American worker, as the unemployment rate rose from 9.8% to 10.2%, the highest level since April 1983. More than 15 million Americans are now out of work, and they remain unemployed for an average of 28 weeks.

Not surprisingly, the construction sector has suffered the most, and developers are continuing to wait on the sidelines as the real estate market crawls toward recovery. Manufacturing has also been hit hard; manufacturing companies eliminated 61,000 jobs in October alone.

Forbes has tracked 625,806 layoffs since Nov. 1, 2008, at America's 500 largest companies, including recent cuts at Sprint Nextel, the videogame developer Electronic Arts, and Applied Materials, a semiconductor equipment company. On Nov. 19 AOL announced that it would cut 2,500 jobs, or one-third of its workforce, as it prepares to separate from Time Warner.

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But amid the gloom, job hunters can find reasons to be optimistic. Pockets of the job market continue to show growth, especially in the fields of education and health services. Last month those perpetually resilient sectors saw some of the country's highest monthly gains in employment. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the job market's second-biggest gains, after health care, were in temporary help services, as employers who couldn't invest in full-time staffers turned to part-time labor instead. In October, 34,000 employees entered the workforce in new temporary jobs.

Forbes looked to the online job site Vault.com for a clear snapshot of the current job market. Vault.com developed a list of recession-proof jobs by examining all the 1.2 million jobs it aggregates through its partner site simplyhired.com and then determining the ones that were available in the greatest number.

Just as [health care](#) is the industry leading in job gains according to the BLS, the specific job at the top of Vault.com's list is **registered nurse**. They're in high demand thanks to a nursing shortage that will intensify as baby boomers age. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, health care employment increased by 29,000 jobs in October. Since the start of the recession, the field has added 597,000 jobs. **Occupational therapists**, who help patients perform daily activities like eating and dressing, rank fifth on the Vault.com list.

Seasonal jobs occupy the second and third spots. [Retail](#) work, including store manager and associate, ranks No. 2, and UPS driver helper is No. 3. If you have the courage to face down

shoppers on Black Friday, or want to channel your inner Santa while unloading UPS trucks, interview right away.

"These jobs wouldn't have been available in March," says Yazad Dalal, Vault.com's vice president for North American sales. "Companies are both ramping up for the holiday season and seeing their sales gradually increase." The UPS job doesn't include benefits, so if you strain your back unloading a flat-screen TV, be prepared to foot the medical bill yourself. The hourly pay starts at around \$9.50.

Despite last year's meltdown on Wall Street, financial specialists are back in demand. **Financial advisors** rank fourth on the Vault.com list, and **financial analysts** make the No. 9 spot. "The last year and a half has been devastating to this industry," says Yazad Dalal. "We're seeing job numbers increase just so that these companies can get back to where they were pre-recession."

Companies are still betting on the strength of sheer revenue, so many are ramping up their sales efforts. **Sales** and **marketing reps** rank No. 6 on the list, ahead of controllers, No. 8, who direct an organization's accounting functions, typically reporting to the chief financial officer.

Today more than ever, job hunters in every field need to be creative and persistent. "Do as much networking as you can, both offline and online," says Dalal. "Some of the best jobs aren't advertised."

Top 5 Recession-Proof Jobs Today

1. Registered nurse

Job description: Most registered nurses work at hospitals, where they treat patients and provide emotional support and advice to patients' family members. Nurses also help perform diagnostic tests and analyze results, record patients' medical histories and symptoms, administer medications and treatment and help with patient follow-up and rehabilitation.

Salary: \$55,000 to \$90,000.

2. Retail (including store manager, assistant store manager and retail sales associate)

Job description: Run stores and help shoppers through every aspect of the retail purchase process.

Salary: Sales associates earn \$15,000 to \$30,000, while store managers can bring home as much as \$80,000.

3. UPS driver helper (seasonal)

Job description: UPS driver helpers pack and unload UPS trucks during the holiday rush.

Salary: Part-time driver helpers receive hourly rates of \$9.50 or more, depending on their locations.

4. Financial advisor

Job description: Financial advisors help businesses and individuals make investment decisions.

Salary: Compensation varies according to the client base. Private bankers, who work with wealthy clients, can earn seven figures.

5. Occupational therapist

Job description: Occupational therapists help patients improve their ability to perform tasks related to all parts of their life, from dressing and eating to typing on a computer. Therapists also help patients use adaptive equipment, such as wheelchairs. Some therapists work with infants who show signs of developmental delay.

Salary: \$50,000 to \$75,000.