

Summer Jobs for Adults?

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EMPLOYMENT by Catey Hill (Author Archive)



This summer there's a new type of worker showing up behind ice-cream counters, museum ticket booths and pro shop registers, and they're not exactly heading off to college in the fall.

With summer jobs more plentiful than they've been since the recession, an increasing number of older Americans – both retirees and out-of-work professionals – are competing for the seasonal gigs that were once the domain of students on break. One in ten hiring managers is planning to hire more seasonal staff this summer than last – nearly double the percentage from 2010 and the best hiring forecast since 2007 – according to a recent survey of more than 1,000 hiring managers by IPSOS Public Affairs and SnagAJob.com. But the bigger growth may be in the older hire – those over 50, say hiring experts. "The recession has changed things," says Dan Ryan an executive search consultant and panelist for the Society of Human Resource Management and a principal at staffing firm Ryan Search & Consulting. "In general,

older people and workers in transition are doing things they wouldn't have done before."

In fact, older workers may have an edge up in the competition for these jobs, as experience has become more important to employers: This year, 27% of employers said it was a very important criteria for a job candidate, compared to 20% in 2008. And for some, these summer jobs represent a welcome change of pace – and some extra cash to pad their savings.

For the second summer in a row, Rene LaPierre, 71, plans to leave his home in Key West to work on the resort island of Nantucket, Mass. A retired organist and choirmaster, LaPierre will be working three to four days a week for the Nantucket Historical Association, greeting and answering questions from visitors to the Whaling Museum. And while the money is "alright," LaPierre says he's taking the job mostly for the experience. "I get to show people from all over the world what makes this place unique."

But economists say it's just the latest sign of a troubling trend: The unemployability of older Americans. Some 6.5% of workers 55 and older are currently unemployed, according to the Labor Department, and while the jobless rate is higher for younger

cohorts, it takes older workers longer to rebound -- 35 weeks to find a new job, compared with 30 weeks for 25- to 54-year-olds. By design and by salary, summer jobs aren't a permanent solution -- wages rose 7% this summer to a whopping \$10.90 per hour, and manning a cash register or selling golf clothes and clubs may not be particularly rewarding.

Even so, for those adults looking to keep busy, do something interesting, or earn a little extra cash, a summer job may fit the bill. To begin your search, check out: SeasonalEmployment.com, which specializes in seasonal job listings; both SnagAJob.com and SimplyHired.com, which have sections devoted to seasonal jobs; and CoolWorks.com, which lists seasonal jobs in interesting places in the U.S. You can also call the tourism offices or individual resorts in an area to see if they can point you towards open job opportunities.

Here are three types of jobs older adults and retirees may want to consider.

Arts and culture

On Nantucket Island, Mass., while bars are hiring bartenders and summering families are looking for nannies, there's a better gig to be had. The island's historical preservation organization, called the Nantucket Historical Association, hires five to ten seasonal docents to give tours of historical homes and landmarks -- even the county jail. They also hire people in their visitors' service department to greet guests and workers to demonstrate the milling process in the Old Mill. And while these jobs typically don't pay much more than \$11 an hour, it can be a sweet deal for a history buff. Furthermore, more than two-thirds of the people the Nantucket Historical

Association hires each summer are older adults or retirees, says Kim McCray, the Association's director of interpretation and education.

But as any artist can attest, getting a job in the arts world can be highly competitive. First, the less-glamorous gigs -- washing dishes, waiting tables, selling souvenirs -- are far more plentiful, say experts. And while tourist towns offer plenty of other arts-and-culture-related jobs for seasonal workers, they may require specific skills, like the ability to translate a language or a degree in history or related professional experience. Workers without those skills should seek out businesses, such as tour guide companies (check the local tourism office) as many are looking for workers who are mature, responsible and well-versed in the local culture, says Sarah Cullins, president of Finesse Staffing, a recruiting firm. And these jobs can provide benefits beyond pay: Good hours, the opportunity to meet hundreds of new people and the ability to teach others about the area, says Roberta Matuson, president of Human Resources Solutions, an HR consulting firm, and author of "Suddenly in Charge."

Overseas Adventure

While opportunities to teach abroad are available year around, some programs hire more teachers in the summer. Abbey Road, which leads summer education programs for high-school students, is looking for instructors, program directors and program coordinators to teach classes on subjects including foreign language, architecture, art history and digital photography in Spain, France, Italy and Greece. The company hires about 60 to 100 high-school teachers, grad students and university professors for these positions each summer, and first-year instructors get fully-paid room and board, a

weekly stipend of between 100 and 200 euros, and a salary of between \$1,500 and \$2,000, based on experience, for a four-week class, a spokesperson for Abbey Road says. For more overseas teaching jobs, you can also contact an organization like TeachAbroad.com, Rotary International, the American Institute for Foreign Studies or the National Association of International Educators. Of course, it requires a high tolerance for teenagers (or younger children), and it's not a 9-to-5 job, as issues with your students can come up at anytime – even the middle of the night.

As a result, older adults who want to work overseas may want to check out some other fields. Just like in the U.S., resorts and organizations in other countries, especially those in areas that get a lot of summer travelers like Western Europe and Australia, also need help, says Dr. Kristin Cardinale, a career coach and author of "The 9-to-5 Cure." The jobs vary widely, from tour guides in London to deckhands in Greece – and so does the pay, which may simply be room and board for a few hours of daily tour-guiding, to thousands of dollars a month for more skilled jobs like city planners (yes, really, says Cardinale) or consultants. For more possibilities, start with TransitionsAbroad.com or a tour company. You should also call the cultural ambassador at the embassy or consulate of the country you'd like to visit; they may be able to point you towards temporary cross-cultural initiatives or city-planning projects that could work with your seasonal travel schedule, Cardinale says.

The Great Outdoors

The dude ranch in Montana. The golf club in Maine. The national park on Admiralty

Island in Alaska. Where tourists go, seasonal workers must be ready. The National Parks Service hires about 7,000 people to work during the summer in jobs that range from visitor service assistants who greet guests and take entrance fees to guides who direct visitors through the parks and lead hikes. Golf courses are another good bet, as roughly half of golf-course employees work part-time, with many of these workers, especially in colder climates, getting hired in the summertime, says Phil Berry, an employment consultant with the Professional Golf Association. These jobs include clerks in the pro shop, "starters" who greet guests at the first tee and go over course conditions and rules and rangers who monitor play on the course. Often, they also come with discounted or free rounds of golf. One thing you won't get is rich: These jobs usually only pay about \$10 to \$12 per hour, according to the National Parks Service and the PGA, though caddies can earn up to about \$100 a bag at higher-end courses.

Getting outside may sound like an Emersonian ideal (if Emerson golfed, anyway), but experts do caution realism: it often entails some physical work – something retirees or older people may need to consider, experts say. Leading hikes in a national park, for example, may require long hours outside and the navigation of some difficult terrain. Even working as a ranger on a golf course, which might not sound that strenuous, often demands many hours in the sun. For those who are physically fit, resort towns offer some of the best opportunities for sports-related jobs, such as sailing. The catch: You'll likely need a certification to teach, which can take a year or more to complete. Also, pay is just \$12 to \$15 per hour (more if you're highly skilled), says Charlie Nobles, the executive director of the American Sailing Association.