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Nontraditional Careers for Women

Sioux City - As the baby-boomers retire, who's going to take their place in the workforce? Where will these new workers come from, and what will they look like?

The answer may lie in nontraditional careers. A nontraditional career is defined as one where 75% of the workers are of the opposite gender. As more workers are needed, we'll see those gender lines continue to blur, allowing more of the opposite gender into these occupations.

An example would be in the occupation of detectives and criminal investigators. This occupation is primarily and historically held by men, so for a woman it would be considered a nontraditional career. Between the years 2006 and 2016, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects there will be 8,500 such openings in the U.S. This would provide an opportunity for women to work in a nontraditional career, potentially earning higher incomes with greater benefits. During this period of time, the State of Iowa will have approximately 400 openings for detectives and criminal investigators with 20 of those opportunities in the Sioux City area.

Overall, women employed in nontraditional jobs earn higher wages than women employed in occupations considered traditionally female. The average wage for detective and criminal investigation positions is \$58,000 per year.

In the past, access to vocational training such as carpentry, plumbing, police science, or automotive repair has been limited for women. Locally, Western Iowa Tech has seen an increase of women participating in nontraditional career training programs – approximately 61% of the students in vocational/technical training are women.

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) is a resource used by many traditional and nontraditional job seekers. IWD's web site, iowajobs.org, makes it easy to search for job openings in nontraditional careers - simply select a career from the search page. Job seekers can also search by geographic location of the employer, by the date the position was listed, by wage or by various other search criteria. New jobs are posted everyday, and with 7 million hits per month, jobs are applied for and filled quickly.

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