

HEATHER BOULGER | INSIDE THE JOB MARKET

Fall into your next opportunity: Why autumn Is the perfect time for fresh start

By Heather Boulger Sep 18, 2026



Visitors pick apples at Jaeschke's Orchard in Adams in 2024. Fall brings a wave of tourism, boosting seasonal hiring in local restaurants, hospitality and farm stands, notes columnist Heather Boulger. GILLIAN HECK — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

There's something about fall that makes us ready for a fresh start. Kids are back in school, routines are settling in, the leaves are changing, and many of us are thinking about what we want the months ahead to look like.

For some, that may mean a new job. For others, it could mean learning a new skill, earning a credential or taking the next step in a career. Fall is the perfect time to make that move.

Across Berkshire County, employers in nearly every industry are looking for talented, motivated people. For every job seeker, there are 2.5 job openings. Healthcare, manufacturing, education, hospitality, construction, transportation, technology, retail, human services and other industries all need workers with the right skills and a willingness to learn.

And you don't have to navigate the next step alone.

For Job Seekers: Your Next Step Starts Here

Whether you're entering the workforce, returning after time away, changing careers or looking for a better opportunity, the MassHire Berkshire Career Center offers free resources to help you move forward.

Career coaches can help you identify your strengths, explore career options, develop a career plan and connect with education and training opportunities. Job seekers, career changers and young people can access job-search assistance, career fairs, networking opportunities and specialized programs for veterans, teens and young adults, workers with disabilities, mature workers, formerly incarcerated individuals, and Department of Transitional Assistance and SNAP recipients.

MassHire Berkshire also offers entry-level training programs designed to help unemployed and underemployed residents build skills for in-demand careers. Recruitment is currently underway for:

- Career technical training for adults at McCann Tech and Taconic High School;
- Nursing and medical assistant training in partnership with Berkshire Health Systems, CHP Berkshire and Integritus Healthcare; and
- Credit and noncredit courses, adult basic education and ESOL through Berkshire Community College and other local partners. Some opportunities are free, while others have a nominal fee.

Many good-paying careers don't require a traditional four-year degree. Short-term training, industry-recognized credentials, apprenticeships and on-the-job training can all lead to rewarding careers.

Visit MassHire Berkshire Career Center to connect with a career coach.

For Employers: Strengthen Your Workforce

Workforce development isn't just about helping individuals find jobs. It's also about helping Berkshire businesses find, train and retain the people they need to grow.

MassHire Berkshire supports businesses throughout the workforce cycle, connecting employers with training resources, job fairs, layoff-aversion services, grants, outreach and other state and regional workforce and economic-development resources.

During fiscal 2026, MassHire helped 1,045 companies access workforce resources, assisted 4,200 adults with employment and training; and connected more than 2,500 youth with career readiness and pathway opportunities.

Our mission is simple: Your success is our success. Let's work together to identify and solve your workforce challenges. Contact Industry@MassHireBerkshire.com to learn how MassHire can support your business.

The Berkshire Workforce Board can also help businesses access funding to strengthen their workforce, including the Workforce Training Fund to upgrade the skills of your current workforce; and Workplace Safety Training Grants to reduce the risk of worksite injuries and prevention.

Investing in your employees isn't simply a competitive advantage — it's a way to build a stronger, safer and more resilient workforce.

A Season for a Fresh Start

September is Workforce Development Month, a time to recognize the professionals, programs and partnerships that help job seekers and employers thrive. Here are some fun fall workforce statistics:

- **Back-to-school fact:** There are 14,564 students across 49 public schools in the Berkshires with 1,450 teachers.

- **Skills fact:** Berkshire Unemployment rate is 4.5 percent with 62,000 active workers. Berkshire County relies heavily on a diverse mix of healthcare, education, local government, advanced manufacturing, and arts/hospitality jobs.
- **Youth fact:** Berkshire's 16- to 24-year-olds have a 63.8 percent labor-force participation rate — higher than the 61.9 percent rate for adults.
- **The apple and foliage boost:** Fall brings a wave of tourism, boosting seasonal hiring in local restaurants, hospitality, and farm stands.

Back-to-school season isn't just about students. It's a reminder that our schools are also preparing Berkshire County's next generation of workers. Whether you're a job seeker, employer, career changer, young person or new to the Berkshires, fall is a great time to reconnect with the opportunities available in our community.

As the leaves change, so can your career — or your workforce. This fall, invest in yourself, explore a new opportunity or help someone else take their next step. Our workforce is built one person, one skill and one opportunity at a time.

Heather Boulger is executive director of the MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board in Pittsfield.