

Food and Beverage Sector

Table 9: Lane County Food and Beverage Sector Employment Forecast

2017	2027	# Growth	% Growth	Exits	Transfers	Total Openings
4,019	4,814	795	20%	2,052	2,659	5,506

Source: Oregon Employment Department

The Food and Beverage Sector is a traded sector that includes both manufacturers and wholesalers. An important growth industry in Lane County, Food and Beverage was one of the few industries along with health care to weather the Great Recession without major losses. Between the end of the recession in 2010 and 2017, the number of firms grew from 125 to 167 and employment grew from 2,907 to 4,019.

Going forward, the sector is expected to add 795 additional jobs by 2027 for a 20 percent growth rate, compared to 11 percent for all industries (Table 9). In addition, there are expected to be 4,711 replacement openings. Total job openings will reach 5,506 over the 10-year period.

Wages are higher in the Food and Beverage Sector compared to average wages in Lane County. In 2017, the Lane County average annual wage in the Food and Beverage Sector was \$44,659 compared to \$42,644 for all industries. Higher wages in Food and

Beverage are relatively uncommon in Oregon. Statewide, wages in the Food and Beverage Sector are somewhat less than the average for all industries. In Lane County, many firms in the food and beverage manufacturing portion of the sector produce specialized products such as organic food and craft beer as opposed to large food processors, helping to push wages higher.

Educational requirements for the Food and Beverage Sector are relatively low (Table 10). 13 out of the 15 largest occupations require a high school diploma or less, yet employers in the industry report having difficulty hiring and keeping workers.

In 2017, LWP partnered with the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Eugene, Lane Community College, and Lane County to fund a Food and Beverage Sector Strategist position. The purpose of this role is to be the lead convener for the Lane County Food and Beverage Sector. Micah Elconin was hired in July 2017, and has embraced his role as Food and Beverage Sector Strategist.

When asked about the impact of the Food and Beverage Sector work, Sat Bir Khalsa, Director of Global Community and HR Development for Yogi Tea reflected, “as a long time member of the Lane County Food and Beverage industry, it is wonderful to see us working together as a sector. Our community has been a pioneer and front runner for natural food



Five Fourteen Vineyards in Junction City
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and other food categories for many years. We are now collaborating and engaging our talented businesses to benefit the whole. Our work will bring awareness of the breadth and depth of our businesses, will give a voice to our sector, will promote collaboration for sharing resources, and will promote collective success for our communities.”

Through this collaborative work, several new networking and educational opportunities have

evolved including Food Business Unpacked which attracts approximately 100 people at each event and the Business of Food course offered by the University of Oregon Lundquist College of Business. Additionally, Elevate Lane County has created a career pathway for food and beverage manufacturing which helps students understand the educational path to a career in the industry.

Table 10: Lane County Top Food and Beverage Occupations and Entry Level Education

Occupational Title	2017 Employment	Typical Entry Level Education
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	321	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	319	High school diploma or equivalent
Food Batchmakers	274	High school diploma or equivalent
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	254	High school diploma or equivalent
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	179	Less than high school
Bakers	114	Less than high school
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	111	Less than high school
Packers and Packagers, Hand	105	Less than high school
Driver/Sales Workers	98	High school diploma or equivalent
Retail Salespersons	96	Less than high school

Source: Oregon Employment Department

LOCAL RESPONSES TO FOOD AND BEVERAGE WORKFORCE NEEDS:

Future Workforce: LWP continues to partner with the Eugene City Club and Lane ESD to offer the Lane County Employment and Economy class. This ten week series involves local companies offering in-depth tours to area educators. The 2017 series focused on local food and beverage manufacturers.

Investments: From 2016-2018, LWP has invested \$106,000 in On-The-Job Training contracts with local food and beverage employers.

Together with the City of Eugene, Lane County, Lane Community College, and the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce, LWP has invested \$140,000 over two years to fund a Food and Beverage Coordinator to be the lead convener of the industry.