

GROWING JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN WYOMING



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Labor Market Analysis and Program Recommendations for Academic Programs in Hospitality, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation



STRONGEST GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT (CIP CODE 52.0901)

- Clearest labor-market undersupply
- Regional employment demand significantly exceeds local graduate completions
- Graduates qualify for diverse management roles in lodging, events, tourism, and food service
- Significant opportunity for enrollment growth and workforce development

2,341 Total WY jobs in 2025

302 Annual WY openings

+7.5% Projected Growth (2025-2030)



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING EXPANSION

TOURISM MANAGEMENT (CIP CODE 52.0903)

- Tourism-related employment shows a significant workforce undersupply
- Graduates often lack on-the-job training, and low-wage, entry-level roles are unappealing
- As a result, employers frequently hire outside the region or train unskilled workers
- Increasing experiential learning opportunities will prepare students for management positions before entering workforce and keep WY graduates in the state

1,324 Total WY jobs in 2025

171 Annual WY openings

+9.1% Projected Growth (2025-2030)



HIGH VOLUME, MIXED WAGES

PARKS, RECREATION & LEISURE MANAGEMENT (CIP CODE 31.0301)

- High job volume supports stable enrollment and career opportunities
- Stackable credentials would offer flexible, customizable pathways toward degree completion or professional development and grow enrollment
- Certificates and supervisory tracks can help workers transition from seasonal roles into higher-wage and management positions
- Increasing partnerships with parks, DMOs, and employers will strengthen internship and job placements

4,636 Total WY jobs in 2025

613 Annual WY openings

+7.0% Projected Growth (2025-2030)

OTHER PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS



NICHE MARKET | HIGH SKILL VALUE

BREWING SCIENCE

- Strong starting salaries, often exceeding \$70K annually
- Stable demand within Wyoming's growing craft beverage industry
- Appeals to students interested in artisanal food and beverage industries
- Best suited as a concentration, certificate, or add-on track within Hospitality and Tourism programs
- Supports targeted workforce development rather than mass enrollment growth



CROSS-INDUSTRY WORKFORCE POTENTIAL

FOOD SCIENCE

- Prepares graduates for careers in nutrition, dietetics, food technology, and agricultural inspection
- Connects tourism with other growing sectors, such as healthcare and agriculture
- Supports broader Wyoming economic development goals
- Best positioned as a complementary specialization within existing academic programs
- Creates interdisciplinary pathways tied to regional workforce needs

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Here are a few of the many and varied career pathways for graduates in Hospitality, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation:

- Guest and hospitality service
- Hotel or Lodge Managers
- Meeting, Convention, and Event Management
- Concierge
- Tourism management
- Outdoor recreation enterprise
- Environmental education
- Outfitting and guiding services
- Outdoor adventure enterprise
- Resort or ranch management
- Recreation planning for governments
- Tour operation, Travel Guides, Travel Agents
- Museum Management
- Interpretation

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH WORKFORCE-ALIGNED EDUCATION

Wyoming's travel industry offers ample opportunities for graduates to seek employment and remain in the state. However, entry-level positions in hospitality, tourism, and outdoor recreation may not require educational credentials, and the low hourly wages are not appealing to graduates.

Wyoming is behind the nation in terms of median salary for careers in hospitality, tourism, and outdoor recreation. Thinking strategically and creatively, higher educational institutions can help to bridge the wage-labor gap by offering more pathways that are customizable to the individual learner, including stackable credentials, certifications, and skill verification that would help workers transition from entry level and seasonal roles into stable, higher-wage leadership positions. Not only would this improve wage outcomes, but it would appeal to both full-time professionals and degree-seeking students.



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