



Scientific Research, Educational Support Expected to Grow in Lane County

by [Michael Meyers](#)

Published Jan-23-2006

The Eugene-Springfield metro area has become a hub for scientific research and educational support industries in Oregon. These emerging industries owe much of their growth to connections with the University of Oregon. Many owners, employees, and researchers of these businesses have ties with the university. Some have worked there; others have attended. The symbiotic relationship between the university and research and support industries has helped these industries grow and produce or contribute to the success of many new and innovative businesses.

This analysis comprises businesses in scientific research and development services (NAICS 5417) and educational support services (NAICS 6117). NAICS is the North American Industry Classification System. Scientific research and development services include businesses conducting research and analyses in social sciences and humanities. The educational support industry includes businesses providing noninstructional services that support educational processes or systems. These can include activities related to educational research such as educational consulting and testing.

Together, these two industries had 61 businesses in Lane County in 2004 with average total employment of 674. The average wage was \$36,000, compared with the 2004 average annual wage for all industries in Lane County of \$31,338. The 674 employed represent only 0.5 percent of employment in Lane County. That's smaller than the software industry, but larger than biomedical. Within this sector, businesses in research of the physical, engineering, and life sciences pay the most, with an average wage of \$46,459.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded \$54.35 million to 11 research businesses in Lane County in fiscal 2004. This represented 21 percent of the \$258 million in NIH funding awarded statewide, while Lane County comprised 9 percent of the state's population and employment. The University of Oregon received more than one-third of the \$54.35 million, with the rest going to businesses such as the Oregon Research Institute, the Oregon Social Learning Center, and the Oregon Center for Applied Science.

Between 1998 and 2003, Oregon schools saw the largest percentage increase – 150 percent – in research and development funding in the nation, according to the National Science Foundation, which tracks industry-financed research and development expenditures at college and universities. This increase in research funding at Oregon schools, of which the University of Oregon is the main recipient in Lane County, fosters growth and development of private-sector businesses related to and created from university research.

Despite gains in funding, one of the threats to the growth and development of scientific research and educational support businesses in Lane County is, in fact, grant funding. Some of these businesses rely on grants. By their very nature, grants are unpredictable and susceptible to changes in the business cycle. Foundations and industry organizations can also rapidly change the focus of funding, which can leave some research and support businesses without grants if they cannot adapt. While grants are vital to the

sustainability of some of these businesses, many sell their products and services on the open market. This not only provides an element of sustainability, it also provides more opportunities for economic and employment growth.

Educational requirements for jobs in research and support businesses range from short-term, on-the-job training to advanced postsecondary degrees. Their average wage is \$36,000 – higher than the all-industry average for Lane County. Average annual wages range from around \$20,000 for interviewers to more than \$77,000 for economists.

These two industries combined are projected to grow 25 percent – well above the countywide average of 14.8 percent – between 2004 and 2014. Social science research assistants and psychologists are projected to account for nearly one-third of all new jobs in the two industries. These occupations require bachelor's and master's degrees. Occupations that do not require postsecondary degrees, such as interviewers, executive secretaries, and administrative assistants, are also expected to expand. While the two industries represent a small percentage of employment in Lane County, they will likely continue adding well-paying jobs.

Table 1

Staffing Pattern, Employment Projections, Average Wage, and Educational Requirements for Largest Occupations in Scientific Research and Educational Support in Lane County

Occupation	Scientific Research and Educational Support, 2004-2014 Projections						All Industries	
	2004 Employment	Projected 2014 Employment	Percent Growth	Growth Openings	Replacement Openings	Total Openings	2005 Average Annual Wage	Minimum Education Requirement
Social Science Research Assistants	117	148	26%	31	32	63	\$32,835	Bachelor's
Psychologists, All Other	90	114	27%	24	23	47	\$73,915	Master's
Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan	56	70	25%	14	16	30	\$20,109	Short OJT
Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	55	68	19%	13	12	25	\$35,291	Moderate OJT
Recreation Workers	41	51	24%	10	11	21	\$22,177	Short OJT
Statistical Assistants	23	23	0%	0	4	4	\$35,889 ¹	Moderate OJT
Office Clerks, General	22	28	27%	6	6	12	\$25,813	Short OJT
Economists	21	27	29%	6	7	13	\$77,238 ¹	Bachelor's
Statisticians	20	26	30%	6	6	12	\$43,793	Bachelor's

¹Statewide wage. Lane County wage not available.

Note: OJT = On-the-job training; short = less than one month; moderate = less than one year

