When people consider personal care and service occupations, they often think first of care workers such as personal care aides, (who help the disabled, chronically ill, cognitively impaired, or elderly) or child care workers. However, this group, as defined by the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system, also includes personal service occupations such as barbers, hairdressers and cosmetologists, fitness trainers, recreation workers, amusement and gaming workers, motion picture projectionists, and nonfarm animal caretakers. In this sense, personal care and service occupations contain a very diverse array of roles and activities. In addition, there are several closely-related care occupations, such as home health aides, occupational therapist aides, and physical therapist aides, which instead are grouped under health care support occupations. Nevertheless, all personal care and service occupations are unified in providing some form of care or service directly to individuals of the public.

In 2012, personal care and service occupations made up 2.9 percent of total U.S. employment. In New Mexico, 34,300 workers, or 4.4 percent of all jobs, were classified under personal care and service. New Mexico has the third highest concentration of personal care and service jobs across all U.S. states, with only Nevada (6.1 percent) and Vermont (4.5 percent) having higher concentrations. Specifically among neighboring states, New Mexico has the highest concentration of personal care and service workers by some margin; Texas and Arizona follow at 3.4 percent and 3.0 percent, respectively, and are the only other neighboring states to exceed the U.S. concentration. Colorado's concentration of 2.9 percent equals the national average.

As Exhibit 2 shows, the annual average wage for all personal care and service occupations in New Mexico is lower than the national average of $26,340 and the averages of almost all neighboring states. At $21,280, New Mexico's annual average wage is slightly above 80 percent of the national average and 64 percent of the annual average wage of the District of Columbia (D.C.); at $33,230, D.C. has the highest average annual wage for personal care and service occupations across all states.

Among New Mexico's neighboring states, Colorado has the highest annual average wage for personal care and service occupations, at $25,880, although the wage is slightly below the national average. The average wages of Utah, Arizona, and Oklahoma closely follow that of Colorado. New Mexico's wage falls behind those of all neighboring states apart from Texas, which has an annual average wage of $20,820. Some of this disparity can be accounted for by differences in cost of living estimates. It should also be noted that the annual average wage for this occupational group is about 50 percent of the same measure across all occupations within New Mexico, which is $41,440. Nevertheless,
some of the occupations within this group serve as important entry points into growing industries for job seekers without post-secondary education. Education requirements will be covered in more detail in later sections of this bulletin.

**Employment in Specific Personal Care and Service Occupations**

As can be seen in Exhibit 3, the dominant occupation within personal care and service is personal care aide; personal care aides accounted for over 50 percent (19,050) of all New Mexico workers within personal care and service in 2012. The second most common personal care and service occupation was childcare worker; child care workers made up less than 10 percent (3,340) of total personal care and service employment. Aside from recreation workers, who made up just less than 7 percent (2,350) of total personal care and service employment, the remaining specific occupations each made up less than 5 percent of total employment.

One way to understand how important certain occupations are at the state level is to measure the location quotient. The location quotient represents the ratio of an occupation’s share of employment in a given state to that occupation’s share of employment in the U.S. as a whole. In 2012, New Mexico had the highest location quotient (3.25) across all U.S. states for personal care aides, which can be seen in Exhibit 4. The location quotient for one other occupation within personal care and services, slot key persons, was even higher (8.19). Slot key persons work within gaming and, among other tasks, handle complaints, verify jackpots, and reset slot machines after payoffs. Given New Mexico’s numerous tribal casinos, it makes sense that slot key persons would have a high location quotient. It is revealing that the only other states with higher location quotients (Nevada and Mississippi) also have relaxed legislation regarding gaming. Nevada’s legislation is statewide, while Mississippi legislation relates to one small geographic area (Tunica). States that strictly prohibit gaming would be expected to have a lower location quotient in such occupations relative to states where casinos are legal.

**Personal Care and Service Jobs in New Mexico’s Industries**

We mentioned earlier that personal care and services occupations can be inroads to jobs in growing industries for those with little post-secondary education. We can look at this in a little more detail in Exhibit 5. For example, we can see that the spread of personal care and services jobs across industries is strongly weighted towards health and social assistance, with over 50 percent of jobs falling within social assistance (31.3 percent), ambulatory health care services (15.5 percent), or nursing and residential care facilities (3.6 percent).

As we see from Exhibit 6, many of the health care and social assistance sub-industries that personal care and service occupations fall within are expected to experience high growth between 2011 and 2021, according to employment projections. For example, the three health care and social assistance sub-industries that were mentioned above are in the top four industries projected
to see the most personal care and service job growth over the 10-year period (ambulatory health care services, 66 percent; social assistance, 43 percent; and nursing and residential care facilities, 36 percent). It is also worth noting that social assistance and ambulatory health care are both projected to grow quickly and from large base employment. Another industry with both quick projected growth (28.9 percent) and a relatively large 2011 base employment (7.1 percent of total employment) is amusement, gambling, and recreation. This sub-industry encompasses such occupations as recreation workers, gaming dealers, slot key workers, and amusement and recreation attendants. Industries indicated by red bars in Exhibit 6 have large projected growth but represent less than 1 percent of total personal care and service employment.

Future Personal Care and Service Jobs

According to employment projections, personal care and service occupations are expected to grow by just over 5 percent between 2011 and 2021. About 3.3 percent of these openings (1,477) will be due to new job growth, while the remaining 1.8 percent (813 openings) will be due to replacement needs (turnover and retirements). The two occupations with the most projected growth are worthy of comparison. While personal care aides annual openings are projected to be predominantly due to growth (1,097 jobs, or 88 percent of total employment), openings due to replacement needs will only account for the remaining 12 percent (156 openings). On the other hand, childcare workers are projected to see 290 new jobs annually (13 percent of total personal care and service new openings), 70 percent of which (204 jobs) are due to replacement needs, and only 30 percent (86 jobs) which are due to growth. This may be related to the fact that childcare establishments can economize, even during periods of increasing demand, by increasing the ratio of children to employee, while employers of personal care aides would generally need to employ new personal care staff for each new client due to the one-on-one nature of the role. Other factors, such as an aging population, may also contribute to this disparity.

Education and Advancement within Personal Care and Services

As previously mentioned, personal care and service jobs typically require no post-secondary education and thus offer entry-level opportunities into a competitive labor force. This is not to say that there are no options for those who wish to advance through training. Focusing specifically on personal care aides, the fastest growing occupation within personal care and services, Exhibit 8 shows several certificate-level courses available in various locations around New Mexico. Many of the courses provide basic
patient care skills, preparing individuals to provide routine care and support services for homebound disabled, recovering, or elderly people. The CNM Nurse Assistant/Unit Coordinator course also aims to provide individuals with the skills to work in hospitals and other acute care settings.

Exhibit 9 provides a breakdown of educational program completers in 2011 by personal care and service occupation and certification level. The distribution is dominated by students of general cosmetology completing post-secondary awards, certificates, and diplomas lasting 1 to 2 years. In fact, there are more cosmetology program completers at each certification level, than program completers of any other occupation at each certification level (apart from the facial treatment specialist course, which has more completers (44) at the post-secondary level for courses lasting less than one year). While cosmetology is expected to have a bright outlook in the future, given that there are projected to be 51 openings due to growth and 40 openings due to replacements between 2011 and 2021, it should be noted that New Mexico is producing more cosmetology graduates each year than annual job openings for hairdressers and cosmetologists.

Regarding personal care-related work, there are several occupations that fall outside the personal care and services occupational category but are, nevertheless, very closely-related in skills, especially to personal care aides. Some of these occupations are relatively well paid and, consequently, might be seen as a future career goal by some individuals working in personal care. As can be seen in Exhibit 10, none of these occupations have entry-level educational requirements above an associate's degree.

### Program Cost Provider
- Geriatric Personal Care Attendant: $799, San Juan College, Farmington
- Home Health Aide/Personal Care Attendant: $725, UNM, Los Lunas
- Home Health Aide/Personal Care Support: $96, NM Direct Caregiver Coalition, Placitas
- Nurse Assistant/Aide: $314, Clovis Community College, Clovis
- Nurse Assistant/Unit Coordinator: $1,850, CNM Community College, ABQ

**Note:** All study periods for courses are two years or less. Information current as of 2011. Visit institution website for most current information.

Source: NMDWS, Economic Research and Analysis Bureau

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**Personal Care and Service Program Completers**

**New Mexico, 2011**

**OCCUPATION ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION 2010 MEDIAN PAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION</th>
<th>2010 MEDIAN PAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Therapists</td>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>$74,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>$64,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides</td>
<td>High school diploma/associate’s degree</td>
<td>$47,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
<td>$40,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>$37,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Assistants</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>$28,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Human Service Assistants</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>$28,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
<td>$24,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare Workers</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>$19,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

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The *Occupational Bulletin* is a monthly publication from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, Economic Research & Analysis Bureau. This month’s contributor is Mark Flaherty, Economist.

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