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Washington aerospace hiring to flatten, except for skilled positions

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While aerospace employment in Washington will only creep up about 1 percent annually in the next five years, the demand for skilled aerospace workers remains hot.

That's a key conclusion a report released Monday in Olympia, by the Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board.

"While outlook for hiring is relatively flat, there is still strong demand for skilled employees in core specialties and employers are struggling to fill those positions," said [Alex Pietsch](#), director of the governor's aerospace office, in an email.

Aerospace companies that participated in a survey conducted by the board said demand for specific occupations are expected to grow robustly: Computer and Numerical Control (CNC) programmers, tool makers, manufacturing planners, composites assemblers and computer technicians.

Students are responding to Washington educational programs to fill these positions, with enrollment in five leading programs up 82 percent between 2008 and 2013, the report said.

The strongest growth has been training to work with carbon composites, a choice that is expected to be fruitful because [Boeing](#) has decided to assemble the 777X wing in Washington.

Currently, Washington employs one fifth of the nation's aerospace workers, or 94,200 people, the report said.

Aerospace workers are nine times more concentrated in Washington than elsewhere around the country.

Steve Wilhelm covers manufacturing, aerospace and trade for the Puget Sound Business Journal