FASHION MERCHANDISING AND DESIGN

Employment of wholesale and retail buyers is projected to grow about as fast as the average through the year 2021. In the retail industry, mergers and acquisitions have caused buying departments to consolidate. In addition, larger retail stores are eliminating local buying departments and centralizing them at their headquarters. Employment opportunities for retail salespersons are expected to be good because of the need to replace the large number of workers who transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force each year. In addition, many new jobs will be created for retail salespersons as businesses seek to expand operations and enhance customer service. Employment in the retail industry is expected to grow about as fast as average for all occupations through the year 2021, reflecting rising retail sales stemming from a growing population. Opportunities for part-time work should be abundant, and demand will be strong for temporary workers during peak selling periods, such as the end-of-year holiday season. Designers will be needed to design clothing and accessories for the mass market and everyday wear. In addition, as new clothing technology is developed, fashion designers will be needed to create garments using new fabrics, such as moisture-wicking fabrics. Those with formal education in fashion design, with excellent portfolios, and with industry experience will have the best job prospects.

Employment Information

**Greater Kansas City Area:** In 2016, those in the fashion merchandising field held an estimated 54,225 jobs in the fifteen counties in Kansas and Missouri that make up the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), with 55,055 jobs projected by 2021 (+1.5%). Of those jobs in 2016, 1,889 are wholesale and retail buyers, 1,248 are merchandise displayers and window trimmers, and 14,770 are supervisors of retail sales; 35,436 are retail salespersons. Additionally, 854 are tailors, dressmakers, and custom sewers, and 27 are fabric pattern makers.

**State:** In Kansas, those in the fashion merchandising field held an estimated 75,306 jobs in 2016, with 77,155 jobs projected by 2021 (+2.5%). Of those jobs in 2016, 1,462 were merchandise displayers and window trimmers (1,407 projected, -4%); 1,939 were wholesale and retail buyers (2,070 projected, +7%); 23,081 are supervisors of retail sales (23,800 projected, +3%); 47,492 are retail salespersons (48,592 projected, +2%); 1,308 are tailors, dressmakers, and custom sewers (1,262 projected, -4%); and 24 are fabric and apparel pattern makers (24 projected, +0%)

**National:** About 7,962,531 jobs were held in the fashion merchandising field in 2016, with 8,318,205 jobs projected by 2021 (+4.5%). Of those jobs in 2016, 136,090 were merchandise displayers and window trimmers (141,341 projected, +4%); and 170,002 were wholesale and retail buyers (182,744 projected, +7%); 2,166,396 are supervisors of retail sales (2,262,386 projected, +4%); 5,364,987 are retail salespersons (5,364,987 projected, +4%); 120,034 are tailors, dressmakers,
and custom sewers (122,372 projected, +2%); and 5,021 are fabric and apparel patternmakers (4,095 projected, -18%)

**Salary Information**

**Greater Kansas City Area:** Merchandise displayers and window trimmers employed in the Greater Kansas City area earned an average hourly wage in 2016 of $13.18, while wholesale and retail buyers earned $27.48 per hour, and supervisors of retail sales workers earned $15.03. Additionally, retail salespersons earned $10.74, patternmakers earned $20.97, and tailors, dressmakers, and sewers earned $10.64.

**State:** Merchandise displayers and window trimmers in Kansas earned an average hourly wage of $12.88 in 2016, while supervisors of retail sales workers earned $14.09 and patternmakers earned $22.21. Additionally, retail salespersons earned $10.82, wholesale and retail buyers earned $24.81 per hour, and tailors, dressmakers, and sewers earned $9.90.

**National:** Merchandise displayers and window trimmers working full-time earned an average hourly wage of $12.35 in 2016, while supervisors of retail sales workers earned $15.76 and patternmakers made $23.48. Additionally, retail salespersons earned $11.08 per hour, wholesale and retail buyers earned $25.21 per hour, and tailors, dressmakers, and sewers earned $11.74.

**JCCC Placement and Salary Information**

The JCCC Office of Institutional Research conducts a follow-up study of program completers one year after completion. Seventy-eight percent of the graduates who responded to the follow-up study conducted during 2015-16, and were employed, were employed in a job related to their field. Fashion merchandising completers reported an average hourly wage of $15.48.

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**Note:** Salary Information for Greater Kansas City, State, and National is based on EMSI 2016 third quarter data. JCCC information for career program completers is based on data supplied by respondents to follow-up studies and is not necessarily representative of all career program completers. Other sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics