METAL FABRICATION

Employment is projected to experience slower than average growth through the year 2021, although individual occupations may vary in growth rates. Good job opportunities are expected for skilled welders because some employers are reporting difficulty finding qualified workers. Technology is creating more uses for welding in the workplace and expanding employment opportunities. For example, new ways are being developed to bond dissimilar materials and nonmetallic materials, such as plastics, composites, and new alloys. Also, laser beam and electron beam welding, new fluxes, and other new technologies and techniques are improving the results of welding, making it useful in a wider assortment of applications.

Machinists will become more efficient as a result of the expanded use of and improvements in technologies such as CNC machine tools, autoloaders, and high-speed machining. For machine setters, operators and tenders, many firms are adopting new technologies, such as computer-controlled machine tools and robots in order to improve quality, lower production costs, and remain competitive. Computer-controlled equipment allows operators to tend a greater number of machines simultaneously and often makes setup easier, thereby reducing the amount of time setup workers spend on each machine. Knowledgeable, highly skilled, and those with the ability and willingness to learn new tasks will have the best employment opportunities with more long-term potential.

Employment Information

**Greater Kansas City Area:** Data indicates that those employed in the metal fabrication field held an estimated 4,296 jobs in the fifteen counties that make up the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in 2016, with 4,340 projected by 2021 (+1%). Of those jobs in 2016, 2,400 were welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers; 117 were welding, soldering, brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic, 1,669 were machinists; 111 were lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders of metal and plastic materials.

**State:** In Kansas, those employed in the metal fabrication field held an estimated 11,509 jobs in 2016, with 12,196, jobs projected by 2021 (+6%). Of those jobs in 2016, 6,189 were welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers (6,498 projected, +5%); 564 were welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders (566 projected, +0%); 4,498 were machinists (4,883 projected, +9%); and 258 were lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders of metal and plastic materials (248 projected, -4%). All together 687 openings are anticipated due to the need for replacements.

September 2017
**JCCC PROGRAM OUTLOOK**

**National:** About 938,395 jobs were held by those employed in the metal fabrication field in 2016, with 976,336 jobs projected by 2021 (+4%). Of those jobs in 2016, 427,828 were welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers (442,575 projected, +3%); 55,473 were welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders (52,606 projected, -5%); 416,818 were machinists (444,876 projected, +7%); and 38,275 were lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders of metal and plastic materials (36,279 projected, -5%). Approximately 37,941 openings are expected due to growth and the need for replacement workers.

**Salary Information**

**Greater Kansas City Area:** Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers workers employed in the Greater Kansas City area earned an average hourly wage of $18.42 in 2016, with welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders earning $17.41. Additionally, machinists earned $19.99 per hour; and lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders of metal and plastic materials earned $17.92 per hour.

**State:** Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers working in Kansas earned an average hourly wage of $17.21 in 2016, while welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders earned $17.04. Additionally, lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders of metal and plastic materials earned $18.72 per hour; and machinists earned $18.43 per hour.

**National:** Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers earned an average hourly wage of $18.55 in 2016, with welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders earning $17.57. Additionally, lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders of metal and plastic materials earned $17.78 per hour; and machinists earned $19.71 per hour.

**JCCC Placement and Salary Information**

The JCCC Office of Institutional Research conducts a follow-up study of program completers one year after completion. Fifty-five percent of the graduates who responded to the follow-up study conducted during 2015-16, and were employed, were employed in a related field and reported an average hourly wage of $14.58.

**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.