

seekers, or to find a career center to assist you with your workforce needs.

As of Feb. 14, 1,996 job openings were listed for Berkshire County with most of the opportunities in the healthcare, sales, transportation and management sectors. A total of 76,605 positions were open around the state.

In the Berkshires, 345 new jobs were posted during the week of Feb. 7-14 with seven going up on Valentine's Day. A total of 1,161 jobs were posted in the Berkshires in the 30 days that ended on Feb. 14.

qualified applicants and pre-screening; small and large-scale recruitment activities; job fairs; targeted mailings; testing and assessment of job candidates and free job postings at [www.BerkshireWorks.org](http://www.BerkshireWorks.org). For veterans, BerkshireWorks has local veteran representatives and access to the Veteran's Workforce Investment Program at [www.berkshireworks.org](http://www.berkshireworks.org).

■ Need some training? There's the Workforce Training Fund, a program for any size firm that trains employees in job-related skills through a program designed by that company. Collaborative training grants are also available at [www.mass.gov/wtf](http://www.mass.gov/wtf).

Also available is the Workforce Training Fund Express. This is for small companies with 100 employees or less. It trains employees by using off-the-shelf training (a list of pre-registered courses that companies can pick from, according to BCREB).

Training funds are limited to \$3,000 per trainee. Each company is eligible for \$30,000 within a 24-month period. For information go to [www.mass.gov/wtfp](http://www.mass.gov/wtfp).

On the Job Training (OJT) is a method of providing individualized occupational skills training for dislocated workers, low income adults and older youth. The goal of the OJT program is to place participants in occupations that will enhance their prospects for long-term employment. For information, go to [www.berkshireworks.org](http://www.berkshireworks.org).

■ Want internships? BCREB and BerkshireWorks can connect hundreds of young people to college/career readiness programs.

With college and career readiness teams, BCREB works with the 12 Berkshire County school districts to connect the region's young people with career awareness, career exploration, and career immersion activities including shadowing activities, high school internships, STEM programs, mentoring, and numerous other activities. Information is available at [Youth@BerkshireREB](mailto:Youth@BerkshireREB).

Through teacher externships, BCREB provides Berkshire County educators with paid work/learning experiences to learn more about the Berkshire industry base by providing externships that connect them with employers.

■ Looking at downsizing or closing? BCREB has the Rapid Response Team. Rapid Response services are customized to each company's needs and expectations, and all services are provided without cost to the employer. The Rapid Response team will work with each company to provide information on the Trade Adjustment Act and the benefits your workers can receive if the layoffs are a result of foreign trade as well as information about any state or federal requirements or laws for notification.

WorkShare allows businesses to reduce the hours of permanent employees, who can then collect partial unemployment benefits to replace a portion of their lost wages. This translates into immediate payroll savings and prevents the loss of skilled employees. Information can be found at [www.mass.gov/workshare](http://www.mass.gov/workshare).

The Rapid Response team can also help if you've already lost your job. Stop by BerkshireWorks Career Center at 160 North St. in Pittsfield or call 413-499-2220. Services are also provided at North Adams City Hall from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Mondays.

What are you waiting for?

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## INSIDE THE JOB MARKET

# The services you need are available

**Heather Boulger**

and BerkshireWorks can help at every step. All of their services are free.

Here are some examples.

■ Got skills or talent? Register with [www.BerkshireWorks.org](http://www.BerkshireWorks.org) to help prepare for and find the perfect employment opportunity for you. BerkshireWorks provides job search assistance, direct referrals, training, counseling, and career development resources to promote career advancement or new employment opportunities.

Also, visit [JobQuest at www.mass.gov/jobquest](http://JobQuest.www.mass.gov/jobquest) to find job

**BOULGER » PAGE 5**

**PITTSFIELD »** If you're looking for work, or are interested in adding employees, the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and the BerkshireWorks Career Center are good places to get started.

Through these two agencies, the state Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development offers a wide range of programs and resources for both employers and job seekers.

No matter what the size of your business is or the size of your career goals, BCREB