**Production Occupations** is projected to add 4,037 new jobs to the state economy, an increase of 3.45 percent. Of the 15,507 annual job openings, 4,859 are for those created from employees leaving the workforce, while 8,630 are from people changing jobs. Growth and expansion accounts for 2,018 annual openings.

**2-Year Projected (2018-2020) Growth Rate: 3.45%  
Biggest Gain: Helpers--Production Workers (51-9198) – 624 jobs  
Fastest Gain: Cutters and Trimmers, Hand (51-9031) – 61.90%   
Biggest Loser: Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers (51-2021) – 40 jobs  
Fastest Loser: Gas Plant Operators (51-8092) – 14.81%**

**Short-Term Outlook 2018-2020**

**Production Occupations (51-0000)**

The ***Supervisors of Production Workers*** occupational family is anticipating 324 new jobs, an increase of 3.92 percent. The occupational family is expecting around 969 annual job openings.

***Assemblers and Fabricators*** is forecast to gain 224 jobs between 2018 and 2020. Team Assemblers is expected to gain 206 jobs, while Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers is expected to go in reverse losing 40 jobs, or 11.73 percent of its workforce. Around 2,010 annual job openings are anticipated in the occupational family.

***Food Processing Workers*** is anticipated to raise employment 987, a 5.38 percent gain. Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers is predicted to add 451 to its workforce, while Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tendersis predicted to be the fastest growing occupation in the family gaining 6.39 percent. An estimated 2,790 annual job openings is expected in the occupational family.

The ***Metal Workers and Plastic Workers*** occupational family is expected to experience a net gain of 833 jobs. Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers is slated to add 202 new jobs, while Machinists is projected to increase employment by 196. Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic is set to increase by 7.32 percent. Around 3,124 job openings are projected to be available annually in the occupational family.

The ***Printing Workers*** occupational family is predicted to lose 41 jobs, or 1.54 percent of its workforce. The family is anticipating 264 annual job openings during the 2018 and 2020 time period.

The ***Textile, Apparel, and Furnishings Workers*** occupational family is predicted to gain 141 jobs during the projection period, a 2.60 percent increase. Sewing Machine Operators is estimated to match the gain of the entire occupational family, with a gain of 141, increasing by 8.05 percent, while Extruding and Forming Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Synthetic and Glass Fibers is forecast to increase employment by 11.31 percent, placing third in the state in percent growth. The occupational family is estimated to have 728 job openings annually.

The ***Woodworkers*** occupational family is predicted to gain 101 new jobs, an increase of 3.79 percent. Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood is estimated to gain the most, with 55 new jobs on the horizon. The occupational family is anticipating 351 annual job openings.

A mixed outlook is expected out of the ***Plant and System Operators*** occupational family, which is expected to increase by 0.05 percent. Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators is predicted to gain 41 new jobs, but Gas Plant Operators is projected to lose 36 jobs, or 14.81 percent of its workforce, making it the fastest declining industry in the **Production Occupations** major group, as well as the state. The occupational family is estimated to have 375 annual job openings.

One of the brighter outlooks in **Production Occupations** is in the ***Other Production Occupations*** occupational family. The occupational family anticipates 1,466 new jobs, a 4.38 percent rise in employment. Helpers--Production Workers is predicted to be the top growing occupation with 624 new jobs. This occupational family boasts six occupations estimated to increase by more than 5 percent, including Cutters and Trimmers, Hand, with a 61.90 percent gain. The family is forecast to have 4,895 annual job openings.

**Workforce Development Area Outlook  
Production Occupations**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Workforce Development Area** | **2018 Estimated Employment** | **2020 Projected Employment** | **Numeric Change** | **Percent Change** | **Annual Openings- Exits** | **Annual Openings- Transfers** | **Annual Openings- Change** | **Annual Openings- Total** |
| Northwest Arkansas | 27,718 | 29,090 | 1,372 | 4.95% | 1,204 | 2,075 | 686 | 3,965 |
| North Central Arkansas | 6,615 | 6,949 | 334 | 5.05% | 266 | 488 | 167 | 921 |
| Northeast Arkansas | 15,276 | 15,895 | 619 | 4.05% | 602 | 1,132 | 310 | 2,044 |
| Western Arkansas | 15,084 | 15,507 | 423 | 2.80% | 655 | 1,126 | 212 | 1,993 |
| West Central Arkansas | 11,623 | 11,989 | 366 | 3.15% | 497 | 852 | 183 | 1,532 |
| Central Arkansas | 9,179 | 9,159 | -20 | -0.22% | 358 | 640 | -10 | 988 |
| City of Little Rock | 6,436 | 6,717 | 281 | 4.37% | 272 | 470 | 140 | 882 |
| Eastern Arkansas | 2,672 | 2,666 | -6 | -0.22% | 114 | 195 | -3 | 306 |
| Southwest Arkansas | 11,307 | 11,387 | 80 | 0.71% | 436 | 812 | 40 | 1,288 |
| Southeast Arkansas | 10,193 | 10,475 | 282 | 2.77% | 410 | 737 | 141 | 1,288 |