In April 2016, the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) added an exciting new tool to its occupational listings, a "Hot Technologies" designation, which will assist job seekers and career explorers in identifying the technology skills most in demand by employers. O*NET, a project of the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, is a primary source of occupational information for job seekers and employers. A "Hot Technology" is one frequently required in employer job postings. The new tool will assist Opportunity Inc. in helping its clients to better identify which IT training opportunities to pursue.

Opportunity Inc provides financial assistance for training in 13 information technology occupations covering computer and information analysis (including cyber security), software development and programming, database and systems administration, network architecture, and computer support. The following technologies are required by 85% of these occupations.

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<th>Technology</th>
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<tr>
<td>Apache Tomcat</td>
<td>Microsoft Project</td>
<td>PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor</td>
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<tr>
<td>C++</td>
<td>Microsoft SharePoint</td>
<td>Python</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hewlett Packard HP-UX</td>
<td>Microsoft SQL Server</td>
<td>Red Hat Enterprise Linux</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBM WebSphere</td>
<td>Microsoft VBScript</td>
<td>Splunk Enterprise</td>
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<td>JavaScript</td>
<td>Microsoft Visio</td>
<td>SQL</td>
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<td>Linux</td>
<td>Microsoft Visual Basic</td>
<td>UNIX</td>
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<td>McAfee software</td>
<td>MySQL software</td>
<td>Wireshark</td>
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<td>Microsoft Access</td>
<td>Oracle Java</td>
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<td>Microsoft Excel</td>
<td>Oracle Solaris</td>
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<td>Microsoft PowerPoint</td>
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Overall, March 2016 was a positive month — with strong year-over-year gains in total employment and hourly earnings and a decline in the unemployment rate over the same period. Weekly hours worked also jumped in March to about their level a year prior. Lastly, while the labor force was down in March from the previous year, it posted its largest month-over-month gain since November 2015.

1.5% INCREASE

EMPLOYMENT TOTAL NONFARM

Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment in the metropolitan area for March was up 11,405 (1.5%) to 771,800 — the best year-over-year growth since August 2013. The gain comes after several months of lackluster performance with regional employment still nearly 2.0% below its pre-recession high of 781,600 set in July 2007. Still, the data shows a hopeful sign worth monitoring.
EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRY SECTOR

Year-over-year employment change varied considerably by sector (chart) with better than average gains posted in Education / Health; Leisure / Hospitality; and Trade / Transportation. Construction; Finance, Insurance & Real Estate (FIRE); and Other Services also increased but at a below average rate. The Information, Professional & Business Services; Government; and Manufacturing sectors all posted declines.

INDUSTRY CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT
March 2015 - March 2016 (000)

- EDUCATION/HEALTH: 4,900
- LEISURE/HOSPITALITY: 4,400
- TRADE/TRANSPORTATION: 2,400
- CONSTRUCTION/NAT. RESOURCES: 1,400
- FIRE: 0,900
- OTHER SERVICES: 0,100
- PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES: 0,100
- INFORMATION: 0,800
- GOVERNMENT: 2,400
- MANUFACTURING: 2,400


HIGHLIGHTS

Job gains in Leisure / Hospitality were driven by increases in Food Services and Arts & Recreation employment. Local Government shed 1,700 jobs in the 12 months ending in March, which more than offset a 1,300 federal job increase. Since the recession began in December 2007, Federal Government civilian employment has increased 9,500 but Local Government employment declined by 8,600. Local Government employment has posted 11 straight month-over-month declines. Lastly, declines in manufacturing were driven largely by a 2,500 job decline in Ship Building and Repair.

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE CHANGE
Percentage and Total Change Mar 2015 - Mar 2016

- MSA: 14,450 (0.34%)
- VIRGINIA: 2,396,000 (1.53%)
- USA: (6504) (-0.77%)
LABOR FORCE
The metropolitan area civilian labor force declined 6,500 (0.8%), from March 2015 to March 2016 (see graph). Over the same period, the labor force in Virginia and the United States both increased. In the case of the United States, March continued a trend of increasing labor force participation that began in September 2015. This is suggestive of an improving national labor market. As job prospects improve, people who had become discouraged and dropped out of the labor force re-enter and begin searching for employment. On the upside, the labor force grew 2,758 in March from February — reversing several months of declines and posting the strongest growth since November 2015. Labor force growth is an important contributor to overall economic health. Over time, employment cannot grow faster than the labor force.

HOURS WORKED
Weekly hours worked increased by a healthy 0.7 hours to 34.3 hours from February to March 2016 — the best month-over-month gain since February 2008. Due to this increase, hours rose back to the level from the previous year.

After reaching a high of 36.5 hours in September 2009, weekly hours worked steadily declined before stabilizing in 2013 to a range between 33.5 and 34.5 hours. Changes in weekly hours worked may result from a variety of factors including changes in part time / full time employment; temporary employment; and occupations and industries that typically offer overtime.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
The seasonally adjusted metropolitan unemployment rate increased to 4.7% in March from 4.6% in February. Year over year, the unemployment rate fell 0.5 p.p. from 5.2% in March 2015. Note, however, the labor force decline, below, was sufficient to account for the entire unemployment rate decrease.

REAL AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS
Inflation adjusted average hourly earnings increased by 4.0% to $21.17 between March 2015 and March 2016. While up 15.4% from the post recession low, hourly earnings are 6.2% below the June 2009 high (see graph).