

5 Great Seasonal Jobs for Retirees

Working after retirement in the spring, summer, fall or winter can pay bills and keep you busy

by: Kerry Hannon, from: AARP, Updated January 2011

Working after retirement doesn't require a commitment to year-round employment. Some retirees, whether they need the income or simply enjoy staying busy, prefer to take on seasonal jobs that last just part of the year.

One of those retirees is Jim Brush, 67, who drives a stretch limo filled with tuxedo-clad prom goers in the spring and decked-out wedding parties in the summer. Pay is typically \$18 an hour, and the extra cash is welcomed. Although he and his wife have two grown children, and he receives a pension, they still have a sizable mortgage to pay.

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Scott Goldsmith/Aurora

Jim Brush, 67, drives a stretch limo during prom and wedding seasons.

Brush, who lives in Pittsburgh, retired five years ago from his position as a Pennsylvania state dog warden, where he had worked for 25 years. In his pre-retirement days, Brush spent plenty of time in the car cruising county roads to inspect kennels and patrolling for stray pets. Knowing his way around comes in handy today. Brush also chauffeurs passengers for nonseasonal events, such as airport runs.

Besides driving, Brush fills his year with other seasonal employment. Snow removal is in hot demand in Pittsburgh's blustery winters, and he does landscaping during the spring and fall months. He even tends bar from time to time. "I want to keep busy earning money while I still have the energy and the desire," he says.

While you might not have the experience or stamina to sign on as a ski instructor in Squaw Valley or a white-water rafting guide in Colorado, great seasonal jobs are out there that are right for you. Here are five to consider. Pay ranges, which will vary based on factors such as experience and where you live, are derived from U.S. Department of Labor data.

1. Limo Driver

The nitty-gritty: Routine duties include keeping the car shipshape each day. You'll help passengers into the car, hold open doors, provide umbrellas if it's raining. Loading and unloading heavy luggage can call for some strong muscles. Other drawbacks: driving for long periods can take a mental toll, especially in crowded city streets. Then, too, remaining seated for several hours at a time isn't as easy as it sounds.

The hours: For weddings and proms, drivers are busy from April to June and usually book in

three- to five-hour increments. Proms are evening and night shifts. Weddings vary from morning to night bookings. Other trips are often booked by the hour.

Median pay range: Pay can range from \$7.67 to more than \$16.84 per hour. Those figures vary widely depending on experience, where you live, the number of hours worked and customer tips.

Qualifications: Most limo companies provide on-the-job training. A good driving record is vital — no more than two moving violations in the past five years, and no reckless or drunk driving violations. If you're 70 or older, insurance restrictions might be a stumbling block. Patience, punctuality and level-headedness are de rigueur. A basic understanding of auto mechanics can also be useful. Street smarts count.

2. Tax Preparer

The nitty-gritty: To prepare annual income tax returns for individuals or small businesses, you must be up to speed on what expenses can be deducted and what tax forms must be filed. Your job is to help filers avoid penalties, interest or additional taxes that could result from an examination by the Internal Revenue Service.

The hours: Expect to book plenty of hours between January and the April 15 tax deadline, particularly if you sign up with a tax prep firm.

Median pay range: \$8.50 to \$30.90 per hour

Qualifications: A degree in accounting is helpful, but not required. Computer use is mandatory. By 2012, you will be required to use IRS e-file if you prepare 11 or more returns. Under new IRS rules, you must have a Preparer Tax Identification Number. It costs \$64.25 per year. A competency exam is expected to be ready in mid-2011. Once you pass the exam — mandatory for most, but some certified public accountants and others are exempted — you'll become an IRS registered tax return preparer. Additionally, you must take continuing education courses. Bean counters should apply.

3. Tutor

The nitty-gritty: If teaching experience is in your bag of tricks, then you'll find plenty of opportunities in working as a private tutor. Some prep firms hire tutors to help teens and adults with standardized tests and professional certification exams. They provide tools and training materials. Fall and spring are the top seasons for college-bound kids to take the SAT and ACT aptitude tests. A demand also exists for ongoing private tutoring in a range of subjects to boost student grades.

The hours: Tutoring sessions can last anywhere from an hour after school to three hours on weekends. Sessions can take place at your place, theirs, the library or online. Plan to work at least four hours a week.

Median pay range: \$10.27 to \$24.21, but landing rates as high as \$65 an hour isn't unusual.

Qualifications: A background in education and working with students in a classroom is generally a prerequisite. A certified teacher is preferred. That said, professional experience can open doors. Experts in a range of fields from nursing to finance, law and business may find opportunities, as can those with foreign language skills. No chalkboard needed.

4. National Park Service Employee

The nitty-gritty: The National Park Service hires about 10,000 temporary and seasonal employees annually. Some possibilities: collecting fees, answering visitor questions, doling out maps and brochures, giving directions through the park and reporting potential safety hazards. Park guides or rangers give short interpretative educational programs. More rigorous work might involve maintaining hiking trails or collecting biological field samples.

The hours: Summer is typically high season.

Median Pay range: \$14 to \$18 an hour

Qualifications: You must be a U.S. citizen and will be subject to a security background check. A teaching résumé or public speaking skills are selling tools. Expertise in a particular field — say, botany, history or geology — can get you in the gate. Military veterans enjoy special consideration.

5. Nursery Worker

The nitty-gritty: It's all about getting dirt under your nails, tending plants and answering customers' gardening queries. More physically demanding tasks may require cutting and stacking sod, staking trees and packing plants to fill orders, and digging up or moving shrubs and trees.

The hours: Spring and summer are the busiest times. Expect weekend hours.

Median pay range: \$7.94 to \$12.12 an hour

Qualifications: Training is on the job. It helps to know the difference between an annual and a perennial, or course, and what plants do best in the shade versus the sun. You might consider taking a master gardener class to boost your résumé. Green thumb, anyone?