



# Sales and Service Opportunities in Transportation, Logistics and Distribution

**What is TLD?** As an economic sector, Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution (TLD) encompasses businesses that manage the flow of goods between production and final sale to customers and other businesses. TLD includes all types of transportation (air, sea, rail, and truck) and warehousing services, as well as professional services industries like freight forwarding, customs brokerages, and consulting firms that provide third-party logistics planning services to other businesses, known as 3PLs.

## Why did we choose TLD?

TLD represents an important segment of Hudson County's economy because of its strategic location within a densely populated metropolitan area and proximity to major ports, airports, highways, and rail lines. From the warehousing and distribution firms in Jersey City, Secaucus, Bayonne, and Kearny to 3PLs that are concentrated in Jersey City and Secaucus, TLD supports a wide range of local jobs. TLD was selected as a subject for this report because:

- ▶ *Employment growth in the industry has outpaced the county's overall private sector growth six-fold.*
- ▶ *Average annual wages in these industries are higher and have increased at more than three times the rate of the private sector overall.*
- ▶ *TLD is one of seven "Talent Networks" identified by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development as an economic priority. Local education and workforce development providers have begun to form more robust partnerships with industry designed to improve pipeline development and employer-informed training.*<sup>6</sup>

## The TLD Sector

Some manufacturers and wholesale trade companies provide their own transportation, warehousing, distribution, and logistics services, while other companies use specialized services. This report focuses on companies that provide specialized services to other industries, which includes firms that transport and warehouse goods, as well as those that provide professional logistics consulting services, otherwise known as third-party providers of logistics consulting services or 3PLs.

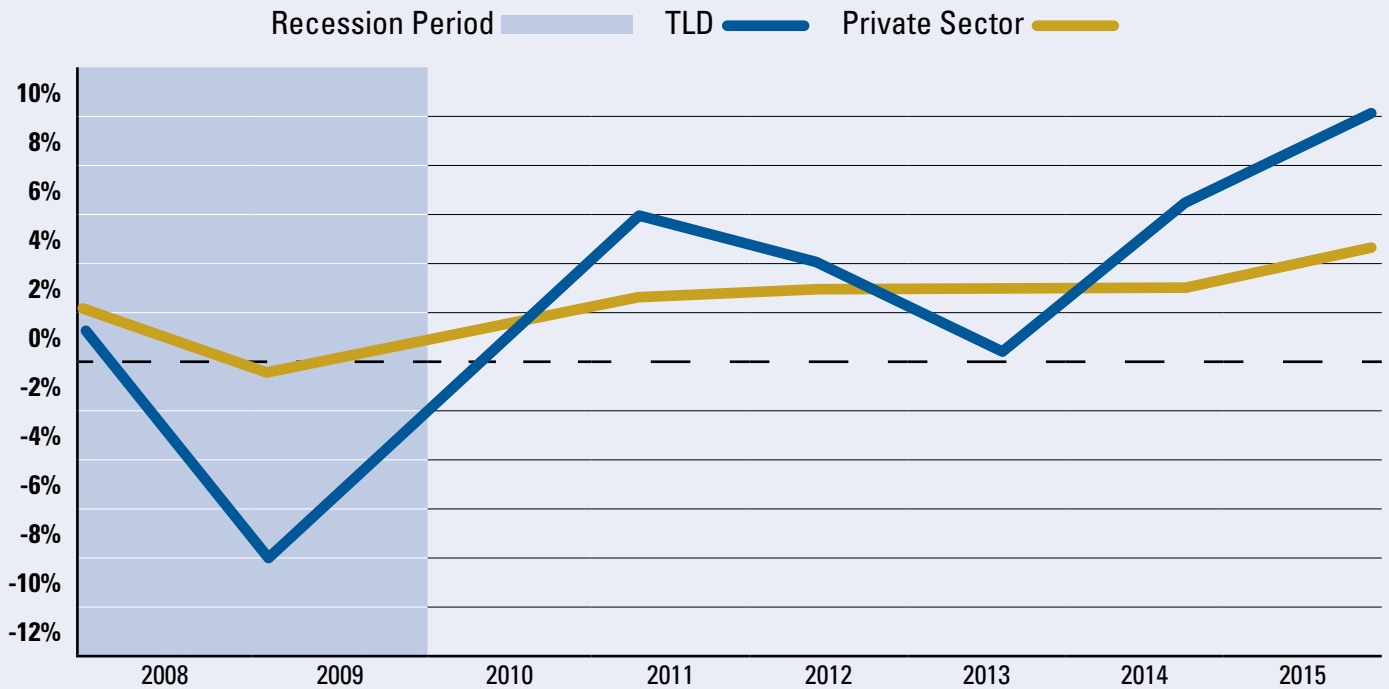
- ▶ *Recent investments in degree and non-degree education and training programs can be expanded upon to broaden opportunities for Jersey City residents to start and advance in TLD careers.*
- ▶ *Across the board, interviewed employers expressed a desire to raise greater public awareness of the opportunities available in this field.*

## What are the employment and wage trends in TLD?

Overall, the pace of employment growth in TLD in Hudson County exceeded that of the private sector:

<sup>6</sup> New Jersey's Talent Networks are partnerships of industry experts, businesses, and workforce and educational institutions. One of their primary goals is to develop industry intelligence that better informs stakeholders about employers' skill needs and to engage industry in the development of industry-valued education and training. They also form targeted industry partnerships across the state, focused wherever there is a concentration of employment in the given industry. The TLD Talent Network is led by the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) and Essex County College (ECC).

**FIGURE 14: YEAR-OVER-YEAR EMPLOYMENT CHANGE IN HUDSON COUNTY: SELECTED TLD INDUSTRIES AND TOTAL PRIVATE SECTOR.**



Source | BLS QCEW, 2005–2015.

From 2005 to 2015 employment in TLD industries grew by 19 percent—from 1,802 in 2005 to 2,147 in 2015—more than six times faster than the private sector overall, which grew by three percent. Annual employment losses were between five and 10 percent during the recession of 2007 to 2009. Since then, the picture has been more positive with annual job growth between five and eight percent, with the exception of 2013.

Real annual average wages in TLD industries are higher and have grown at more than three times the rate of Hudson County’s private sector overall (19 percent compared to 5 percent). In 2005, real annual average wages were approximately \$70,000 in Hudson County compared to about \$79,000 for TLD industries. This wage differential grew and widened over 10 years; the 2015 average annual wage in

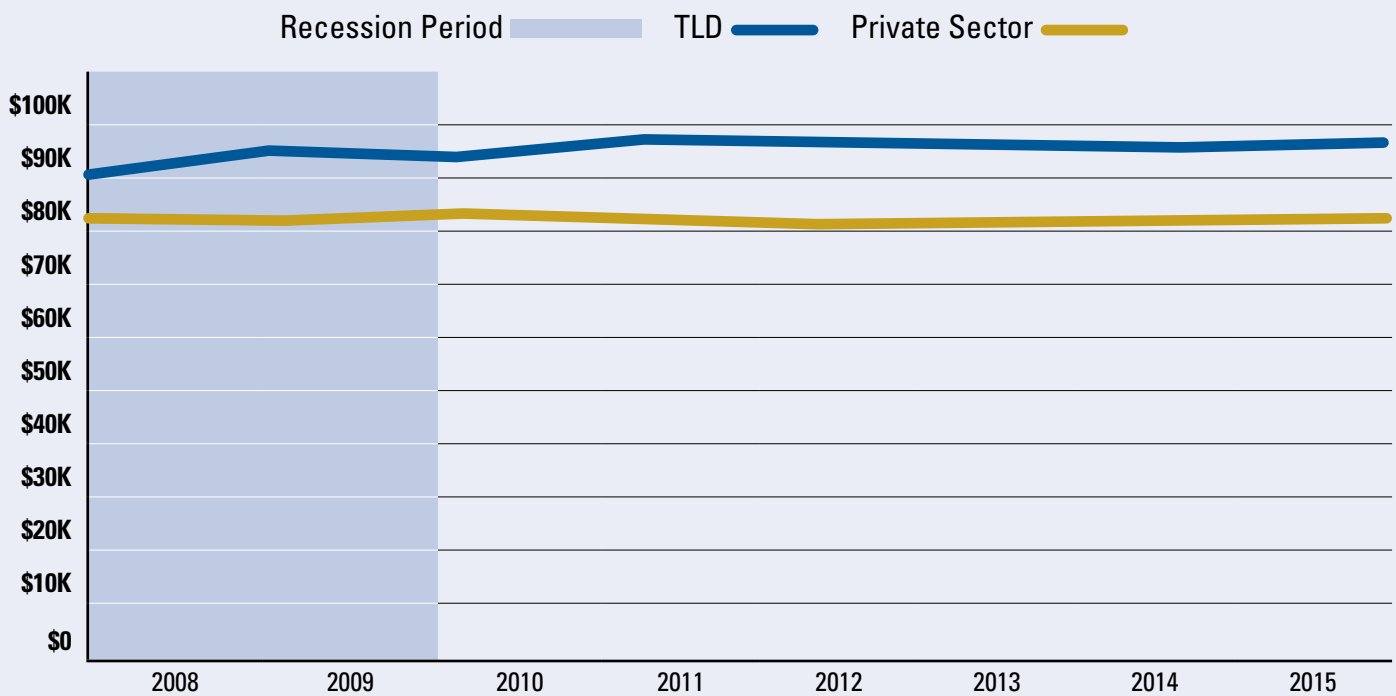
Hudson County was about \$72,000, as compared to \$87,000 in TLD (Figure 15).

### What are the sales and service opportunities in TLD?

While there are many job opportunities within the transportation and warehousing segment of TLD, the most promising opportunities for advancement are in the professional services firms within the industry. People in TLD sales positions market and sell transportation services to customers and manage client relationships. Service jobs that are unique to TLD include cargo freight agents, also known as import or export agents or freight forwarders, and customs brokers. The sales positions, customer service representatives, and sales representatives may be ubiquitous throughout the economy, but in

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**FIGURE 15: REAL AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES IN SELECTED TLD INDUSTRIES AND TOTAL PRIVATE SECTOR.**



Source | BLS QCEW, 2005–2015. \*Wages are adjusted for inflation using CPI-U for the New York City Metropolitan Area, base year 2015.

this field they require specialized knowledge in TLD firms.

- ▶ **Import and export agents/freight forwarders** coordinate the transportation of cargo—by rail, truck, ocean, air, or “intermodally”—from the manufacturer or producer to a market, customer, or distribution center. They arrange routes and schedules, confirm them with carriers, book cargo space in warehouses and on carriers, negotiate rates, and arrange for insurance. They calculate the volume, weight, and cost of goods; prepare quotes and invoices for customers; and keep customers informed on the progress of their shipments.
- ▶ **Customs brokers** track the status of their clients’ international shipments and ensure that they are cleared through the various regulatory requirements of international trade. Typical activities include tracking shipments, filing customs entries, and paying duties and fees. Recordkeeping is an essential function of this job; customs brokers must create, maintain, and securely store accurate and up-to-date documentation, such as detailed invoices, power of attorney forms to act on the clients’ behalf,

and other special forms required by federal regulatory agencies, like inspection certificates.

- ▶ **Customer service representatives (CSRs)** are the primary contacts for customers within an organization. This job requires a high degree of interpersonal skills, problem-solving, patience, and professionalism. CSRs field customer inquiries and follow-up with customers when new information becomes available. They handle customer complaints and work with them to resolve issues as they arise. CSRs are typically expected to handle some clerical tasks, like intercepting orders, entering them into the company’s system, and checking data for accuracy. They may also be expected to perform analytic activities, like generating reports on customer service satisfaction.
- ▶ **Sales representatives** are responsible for growing a company’s sales by establishing new accounts, maintaining customer satisfaction, and selling additional services to existing customers. In order to sell customers freight forwarding or customs brokerage services, sales representatives must have a sound understanding of operations and regulations as well as some experience in the field.

## Where are the jobs for TLD sales and service professionals?

3PLs are major employers of TLD sales and service professionals. Freight forwarders and customs brokers commonly work for 3PLs, and they may also find work in specialty freight forwarding firms and customs brokerage firms. In addition to 3PL firms, sales representatives and customer service representatives may also work for freight forwarding firms that own their own fleets like UPS and FedEx, or for companies that distribute their own goods, like Tropicana and Goya, all of which are in Hudson County.

Online job postings give an indication of employer demand. An analysis of online job ads for TLD sales and service jobs in Hudson County over the past five years is shown below in Table 2. Of these, Yusen Logistics, Kuehne + Nagel, and Panalpina advertise the most jobs.

**TABLE 2: HIGHEST VOLUME TLD JOB ADVERTISERS IN HUDSON COUNTY, NOVEMBER 2012 THROUGH OCTOBER 2016.**

| EMPLOYER  | CITY        |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Freight Forwarders and Customs Brokers</b>                     |             |
| Yusen Logistics   | Secaucus    |
| Kuehne + Nagel  | Jersey City |
| Panalpina   | Secaucus    |
| Avanti  | Jersey City |
| Cintas  | Union City  |
| <b>Customer Service Representatives and Sales Representatives</b> |             |
| Panalpina   | Secaucus    |
| Kuehne Nagel  | Jersey City |
| Yusen Logistics   | Secaucus    |
| UPS   | Jersey City |
| FedEx   | Hoboken     |

## What do employers want?

While there is variation among the specific companies and types of roles, there are certain general skills that are preferred for all of these jobs. These include:

- ▶ *Customer-focused orientation*
- ▶ *Organizational skills*

- ▶ *Problem-solving*
- ▶ *Personal integrity*
- ▶ *Work ethic*
- ▶ *Computer applications skills, especially proficiency in Microsoft Excel*
- ▶ *Knowledge of shipping procedures, including legal and regulatory compliance*

In addition, the requirements to work in this field continue to evolve as the nature of the business and the technology to support it change. Employers highly value relevant experience—including experience working in other similar firms, or experience with ocean or air cargo shipping—sometimes more so than educational credentials. Local training and educational capacity for this field is limited, and expertise in these areas can also be difficult for employers to find. Given the nature of the work and limited specific training courses, employers may seek out candidates with a combination of the right set of skills and traits that can lead to success in this field, even if their content knowledge is limited.

Some technical skills are essential in this field, like proficiency with spreadsheets and a strong foundation in math and geography. Because coordination is central to most TLD activities, interpersonal skill, such as good communication, customer service, professionalism, and an ability to problem-solve, are nearly as important as any of the technical skills that these jobs typically require. Similarly, passion, motivation, ambition, and professionalism will help less-experienced candidates gain entry into the field and facilitate advancement within it.

- ▶ **Entry-level.** *For candidates with little to no relevant experience, jobs in sales and customer service are a typical place to start. To land these jobs, candidates need at least a high school education, solid speaking and writing skills, and good customer service skills. Specifically, CSRs must know how to assess a client's needs, meet quality standards for services, and evaluate customer satisfaction. Problem-solving skills are central to this role.*

Entry-level sales jobs, like **sales representatives**, require a similar set of skills. It also helps to have familiarity with best practices to generate business, such as product demonstrations and other sales techniques. Many large employers in this industry cluster have their own sales guidelines.

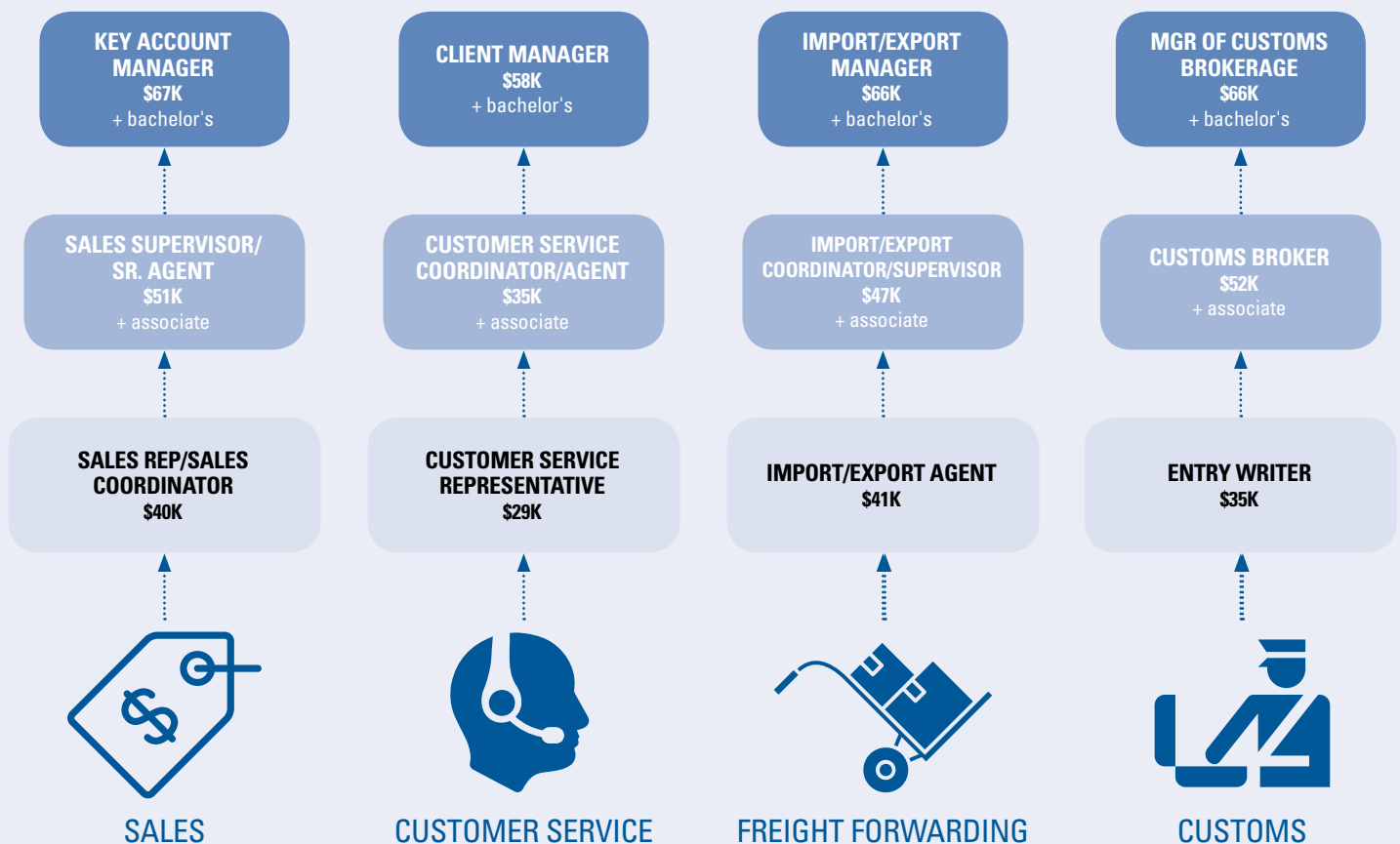
Most people need no more than a high school diploma to become an **import or export agent**. Like other entry-level examples described in this section, these jobs also have a customer service component. To do their jobs well, import and export agents must also have specialized knowledge of multimodal transportation systems, including the costs and benefits of moving people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road. Because they are responsible for calculating rates and price versions as well as converting and verifying shipment weight and volume, strong foundational

skills in math are a must. With some motivation, entry-level workers in this field can develop this expertise after a few years on the job.

People interested in pursuing a career as a customs broker can get their start as **entry writers**. Entry writers are responsible for ensuring that all of the proper documentation required to process international shipments on behalf of clients is complete and in order. Entry writers act as customer advocates and must have solid customer service skills. Precision and an attention to detail are crucial, as is basic knowledge of U.S. Customs regulations. These jobs also require a high school education.

► **Mid-level.** After gaining experience and demonstrating strong performance, TLD sales and service professionals may qualify for

## TLD SALES AND SERVICE CAREER PATHS



Source | PayScale.com & Salary.com; salaries reflect Hudson County, NJ

**TABLE 1: TLD SALES AND SERVICE JOBS.**

|          | Job                                      | Education                             | Yrs Exp. | Median Pay |
|----------|--|---------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| ENTRY    | Entry Writer                             | High school diploma or its equivalent | 0–2      | \$35K      |
|          | Customer Service Representative or Agent | High school diploma or its equivalent | 0–2      | \$29K      |
|          | Sales Representative or Coordinator      | High school diploma or its equivalent | 0–2      | \$40K      |
|          | Import/Export Agent                      | High school diploma or its equivalent | 0–2      | \$41K      |
| MID      | Sales Supervisor or Senior Agent         | High school diploma or its equivalent | 3–5      | \$51K      |
|          | Customer Service Coordinator             | Associate degree                      | 3–5      | \$35K      |
|          | Import/Export Supervisor or Senior Agent | Some postsecondary training           | 3–5      | \$47K      |
|          | Customs Brokers                          | Some postsecondary training           | 4+       | \$52K      |
| MID-HIGH | Sales/ Account Managers                  | Bachelor’s degree                     | 5–7      | \$67K      |
|          | Client Manager                           | Bachelor’s degree                     | 5–7      | \$58K      |
|          | Customs Brokerage Manager                | Bachelor’s degree                     | 6+       | \$66K      |

*supervisory positions and/or more senior roles with greater responsibility and autonomy.*

*Supervisors may continue to perform some of the same functions or delegate these functions to a team of employees they oversee. These positions require leadership skills and business savvy. A **sales supervisor** could manage and develop sales representatives to promote customer retention, growth, and sales support. **Customer service coordinators** oversee CSRs, supporting staff with their daily activities and providing them with feedback and guidance. **Import or export supervisors** or team leads oversee import or export agents and ensure operations are cost-effective and meet customer needs.*

***Senior agents in sales and customer service** handle strategic, high-priority customer accounts while **senior import or export agents** oversee complex, high-profile shipments. In these roles, senior agents must be highly knowledgeable within their areas, self-assured, and able to instill confidence in others—all qualities that can be developed on-the-job through direct experience and with some mentoring.*

*Although educational requirements for becoming a **customs broker** vary by employer, the skill and knowledge demands of the job often require additional education or training beyond*

*high school. Because they help clients comply with import/export laws, customs brokers must be well-versed in them. They must also be able to think critically and creatively within these parameters in order to troubleshoot shipping issues as they arise. Strong communication skills are important because they interact with clients, customs officials, and other parties to international shipments. Meticulous record keeping is an important component to this job, which is why skills such as word processing and file management are recommended.*

- ▶ **Middle-to-high level.** These mostly include jobs in management. People who start out as customer service professionals may become **client managers**. They provide oversight, leadership, and direction over assigned account portfolios. Sales representatives follow a similar trajectory where they can become **key account managers**, overseeing higher-priority or larger accounts. Experienced **customs brokers** may eventually apply for a license from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Licensing requirements are detailed under the certifications heading in this section.

### TLD sales and service certifications

The major industry-recognized credentials for entry-level, middle-skill, and middle-to-high TLD

professions are described below. With the exception of U.S. Customs Brokerage License, none of the employers interviewed for this study mentioned these credentials nor were familiar with them.

All companies who engage in the customs business, whether 3PLs or customs brokerage houses, must have at least one licensed officer in order to operate. According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Licensed Customs Brokers “must have expertise in the entry procedures, admissibility requirements, classification, valuation, and the rates of duty and applicable taxes and fees for imported merchandise.”<sup>7</sup> To become licensed, customs brokers must first pass an open book, four-and-a-half hour examination. To sit for the exam, candidates must be U.S. citizens, at least 18 years of age, and pass a background investigation. Exam preparation courses are offered online and in the classroom by private firms and trade associations.

- ▶ *The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP) offers certifications in eight specializations as part of its SCPro™ Fundamentals program. The two most related to the career pathways highlighted in this report are customer service operations and transportation operations. SCPro™ Fundamentals certifications are designed to be acquired quickly.*

<sup>7</sup> Source: <https://www.cbp.gov/trade/programs-administration/customs-brokers/becoming-customs-broker>





- ▶ *The National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association (NCBFA) offers certified customs specialist and certified export specialist credentials to individuals with at least one year of professional experience in TLD. NCBFA also offers exam preparation classes for the customs broker licensing exam.*
- ▶ *The Institute for Supply Chain management offers the Certified Professional in Supply Management (CPSM) credential for TLD professionals with three years of experience and a bachelor's degree or five years experience without a bachelor's degree.*
- ▶ *The American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS) offers certificates for professionals in inventory management (CPIM); supply chain operations (SCOR-P); logistics,*

*transportation, and distribution (CLTD); and supply chain management (CSCP). The latter requires a bachelor's degree or three years of experience.*

## **TLD Sales and Service career paths**

For Hudson County, there are four main functional areas for career development in TLD Sales and Service. In all of these, people can enter with a high school diploma. Advancement is based on developing freight forwarding knowledge and experience, customer service skills, and leadership. With the right set of skills and experience, workers can either be promoted within these same functional areas or move from one to another. Higher-level positions, including managers and directors, usually require a college degree in addition to several years of relevant experience.



### **Panalpina Seeks Jersey City Talent**

Panalpina is a full-service, third party logistics (3PL) company based in Secaucus, New Jersey. During the interview, Panalpina expressed a strong interest in developing a robust network of recruiting entry or “desk” level middle-skill occupations in freight forwarding and customs brokerage. The greatest challenge the company faces in recruiting is a perceived lack of awareness about the industry and a relatively low degree of attractiveness to younger workforce. The company is looking for candidates who show some experience or indication of knowledge of the industry. They are eager to work with local institutions of higher education to find Jersey City candidates, including those who haven’t yet finished a four-year degree. Panalpina also covers up-front customs brokerage license costs. They provide books and training and pay exam and license fees. In addition, Panalpina has an Early Career Leadership Development Program and a Successor Program for internal management training.

### **LINCS Training Model in Supply Chain and Logistics**

The Leveraging, Integrating, Networking, Coordinating Supplies (LINCS) in supply chain

management is a program administered by Broward College in Fort Lauderdale through a TAACCCT consortium grant. It is a national consortium of nine colleges and three universities led by a national team from Broward College dedicated to the education and training of students for the supply chain and logistics professions. In partnership with the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP), LINCS offers eight stackable certification tracks that are most relevant in supply chain functions, which include Supply Chain Management Principles, Customer Service Operations, Transportation Operations, Warehouse Operations, Demand Planning, Inventory Management, Manufacturing & Service Operations, and Supply Management & Procurement. LINCS also works closely with potential employers and supports and assists students who have completed the certifications to gain new jobs. Hudson County Community College Center for Business and Industry’s supply chain management program comes from this model and allows students to take the CSCMP certification exam for free and for multiple times until they can pass it.