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Holiday Jobs: 4 Seasonal Gigs to Help Pay for Christmas

(MoneyWatch) During my sophomore year in college, I worked three part-time jobs -- including hostessing, ad sales at the college newspaper, and [selling my class notes](#). Collectively, the paychecks helped me build a nice little Christmas nest egg and be quite a generous gift giver that holiday. (Of course, I probably could have benefited more by saving that money and applying it towards grad school instead of that rare and pricey Beanie Baby purchased off eBay for my then 8-year-old brother -- but his shriek/fist pump upon opening the gift made it all worth it.)



Flash forward more than a decade and we find many Americans seeking additional work this time of year to afford holiday gifts. In fact, one in five plan to take on a [second job](#) this winter to help pay for presents, according to a new [survey by Harris Interactive done for CouponCabin.com](#). Researchers polled more than 2,200 adults and found that nearly half (45%) will have difficulty paying for gifts this year.

For those eager to find an extra revenue stream quickly, consider these jobs, all of which tend to have more openings this time of year.

Part-Time Retail Jobs

One way to approach your second-job search this time of year is to apply at all the [stores looking for seasonal hires](#), including Toys R Us, Macy's and Best Buy. Choose a store where you may receive an employee discount (and where you want to do your gift buying): An employee discount could help you save an extra 30 or 40% in some cases.

Note: This second job won't work if you have strict hours at your primary job. Retailers tend to look for seasonal employees with flexible schedules. But if you're available any evening and all weekends through December, mention that! It could set you apart in the long line of applicants.

Personal Concierge

This summer I met a self-employed woman who successfully ran her own concierge business in Albany. She drives around town picking up clients' dry cleaning, buying their groceries and doing their shopping. She mentioned that her business picks up tremendously around the holidays, when she actually gets paid to help set up (and, later, tear down) people's holiday decorations, Christmas trees and lights. If you're organized and don't mind running other people's errands, Fabjob.com [estimates](#) running a personal concierge business could earn you between \$25 and \$50 per hour.

Baby-, Pet- and House-Sitting

With all the travel and social events surrounding the holidays, demand for babysitters, pet-sitters and house-sitters naturally increases. If you have some free evenings and weekends in November and December, start calling your neighbors, friends and friends

of friends to let them know you can be at their service. You can also check out sites like Sitters.com and SitterCity.com.

Check out this [nifty calculator](#) to see how much you can earn babysitting based on your age, number of children and location. (I learned that my rate would be a sweet \$14.25 per hour.)

Resort Jobs

If you live near a mountain -- big or small -- and don't mind the cold, you may be able to find part-time employment at your local ski resort. Jobs range from ski and snowboard instructor to ski lift operator or rental shop staff member. Coolworks.com has a list of available gigs this season at various ski resorts across the country.

In warmer-weather areas like Florida and southern California, you might also try spas, resorts and other destinations that get a boost from holiday travel.