

# Economic Detective

## Ciona Meets the Working World



### Problem

Ciona Gumpers has had a good time in high school, made many friends, and gone to every school game and dance. She has also taken a solid course of study and kept her grades up. Despite her teachers' advice, however, Ciona has given no thought to life after high school. She picks up her diploma at commencement and, with sudden anxiety, whispers goodbye to high school and hello to the world of work.



### Investigation 1

Ciona's first job offer comes from the Way Vee Windsock Manufacturing Company, where she is hired to sort fabrics according to color for an hourly wage of \$7.00. She has to wait three weeks before starting but does not have to join the Windsockers' Union until she has worked at Way Vee for six months. After two months of sorting, Ciona is promoted to sewing machine operator, which pays \$12.00 an hour. Ciona is happy with the higher wage, but finds that her union dues are higher when she has to join the Stitchers of America.

1. At what point does Ciona become employed?

2. (a) What unskilled job does Ciona do at Way Vee?

(b) What semiskilled job? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What qualifies Way Vee as a union shop?

4. What craft union does Ciona join?



### Investigation 2

Ciona has worked at Way Vee for eight months when the South Brees Windsock Makers opens across town. South Brees offers sewing machine operators \$15.00 an hour. Way Vee raises its machine operators' wages to \$15.00, but before long it begins to install computers to do the work of sorters and stitchers. Ciona changes her position at Way Vee to that of a part-time assistant computer operator and takes junior college computer courses at night. With her courses completed, Ciona applies to be a salaried computer operator. The manager of the all-white, all-male computer operator staff, however, tells her Way Vee is not promoting at this time.

1. How does Way Vee respond to the wage increase for sewing machine operators?

2. How does Ciona increase her human capital?

3. Where does Ciona seek contingent employment?

4. What evidence of the glass ceiling does Ciona encounter? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What qualifies Way Vee computer operators as white-collar workers? \_\_\_\_\_



### Investigation 3

Still optimistic, Ciona quits Way Vee and applies for a computer operator position at South Brees. The South Brees managers recognize her computer skills, but tell her they hire only college graduates. Ciona now decides she needs a college degree to get a high-paying job. She takes out a loan and earns a degree in computer networking in three years. To get experience, she "temps" for a year, until one of her assigned firms offers her a full-time job. Ciona welcomes the pension and other

benefits, but the company emphasizes that employee health insurance payments are likely to rise soon.

1. List three ways in which Ciona illustrates the current face of the U.S. labor market.

2. How does the screening effect impact Ciona?

3. What trend in benefits does Ciona anticipate?