



More call-center jobs on the way

Company adding 100 positions here as job sector continues to grow

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About 100 new call-center jobs are coming to Columbus, adding to the region's solid base in that market sector.

"We're adding the jobs in the next two months," said iQor Inc. spokesman Robert Burke. Starting salaries will top out at \$13 an hour, plus bonuses.

The New York-based company has a call-center facility on the Northeast Side with about 800 employees.

The company has almost 11,000 employees worldwide, including 6,000 in several U.S. locations, and provides customer-service and -retention operations, as well as collection services, to a wide range of businesses.

Burke said confidentiality agreements prevent him from naming clients.

"For us, it's all about people," he said of the decision to expand the local center. "We go where the people are, and we've always found the labor force (in central Ohio) to be highly skilled and have a great work ethic."

The company opened its Columbus center about five years ago. It has grown from 400 to 800 employees in the past two years.

Burke said he wasn't sure about future expansion. "We haven't planned that far ahead."

There are 71 back-office operations in the central Ohio area with a little more than 26,000 employees, according to CB Richard Ellis, a real-estate services and consulting firm. The company helps other companies select locations for such operations.

"(The iQor jobs) are further testament to the growth of this sector in our market," said Matt McCollister, the Columbus Chamber's vice president of economic development.

"More and more of these decisions are based on cost and efficiencies, and we do well in these areas and offer a strong work force and a real value proposition for this type of industry."

Alliance Data Systems has several call centers and 1,900 employees in the area; State Farm has a similar number at two centers; and the Discover Financial Services' operation in New Albany has about 1,700 employees.

JPMorgan Chase is in the midst of adding 1,150 jobs - many of them for call-center operations - to its Easton and Polaris operations.

To apply for a job at iQor, visit www.iqor.com.

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