



OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS REVISITED

Exploring Employment for
Sub-Baccalaureate Workers
Across Metro Areas and Over Time

TOLEDO, OH

New research explores the economic opportunity available in 121 of the largest metro areas in the U.S. The report defines **opportunity employment** as jobs accessible to workers without a bachelor's degree and typically paying above the national annual median wage (\$37,690), adjusted up or down to reflect the local cost of living. Occupations characterized by a high level of opportunity employment are called **opportunity occupations**. Nationally, the research finds that 21.6 percent of total employment can be classified as opportunity employment — a figure that varies greatly across the metro areas analyzed. In this region and nationally, the largest opportunity occupations represent a true cross section of the jobs available in today's economy.

SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



1 RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

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|---|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>ASSEMBLERS AND FABRICATORS</p> <p>Annual Median Wage: \$39,400
Opportunity Employment: 7,900</p> | <p>2</p> <p>REGISTERED NURSES</p> <p>Annual Median Wage: \$62,600
Opportunity Employment: 5,000</p> |
| <p>3</p> <p>HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS</p> <p>Annual Median Wage: \$38,600
Opportunity Employment: 5,000</p> | <p>4</p> <p>SECRETARIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS</p> <p>Annual Median Wage: \$34,800
Opportunity Employment: 3,600</p> |
| <p>5</p> <p>MACHINISTS</p> <p>Annual Median Wage: \$55,900
Opportunity Employment: 2,900</p> | <p>6</p> <p>MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORKERS</p> <p>Annual Median Wage: \$39,600
Opportunity Employment: 2,900</p> |
| <p>7</p> <p>LICENSED PRACTICAL AND LICENSED VOCATIONAL NURSES</p> <p>Annual Median Wage: \$44,800
Opportunity Employment: 2,000</p> | <p>8</p> <p>BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING, AND AUDITING CLERKS</p> <p>Annual Median Wage: \$37,400
Opportunity Employment: 1,900</p> |
| <p>9</p> <p>CONSTRUCTION LABORERS</p> <p>Annual Median Wage: \$35,800
Opportunity Employment: 1,800</p> | <p>10</p> <p>HELPERS--PRODUCTION WORKERS</p> <p>Annual Median Wage: \$34,400
Opportunity Employment: 1,800</p> |



Opportunity Occupations in Ohio:

Identification, Online Postings, and Employer Education Preferences

A January 2016 analysis looked at administrative, survey, and online job ads data to see which occupations in Ohio did not require a 4-year degree and also paid a decent wage. The authors found that while most jobs not requiring a 4-year degree are low paying, there are some occupations that do pay well. This analysis also found that Ohio's 8 largest metros each had higher shares of employment than the national average in occupations accessible to individuals without a 4-year degree and paying a decent wage. Here are more of their findings.

THE TOP 5 LIST OF MOST COMMON OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN OHIO'S 8 LARGEST METROS BY NUMBER OF JOBS BEGINS WITH REGISTERED NURSES



110,140 Registered nurses



55,300 General and operations managers



50,940 Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks



50,860 Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers



40,990 Maintenance and repair workers (general)

Read it all:

<http://tinyurl.com/z4d4g6u>

op·por·tu·ni·ty oc·cu·pa·tion

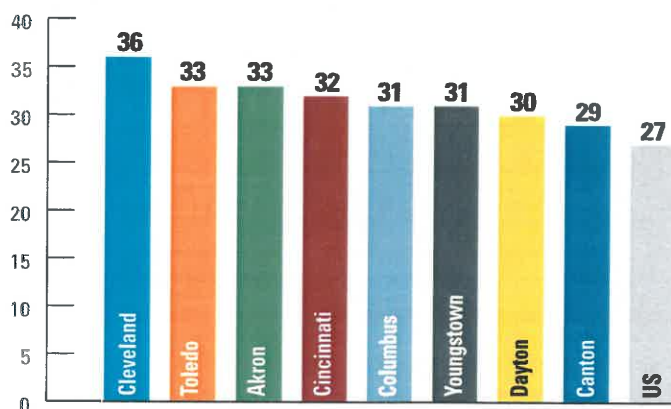
(noun)

Occupation that generally requires less than a 4-year college degree and pays workers at least the national median annual wage: \$35,540 in 2014, adjusted for local consumption prices.

WHERE THE OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS ARE

Based on national administrative and survey data for occupation-specific education requirements, **27%** of national employment in 2014 can be considered an opportunity occupation. But when real-time online job ads were used to capture the educational preferences of employers, this share declines to **20.3%**. Ohio metros have higher shares of opportunity occupation employment than the nation. Cleveland leads with **36%** of employment in opportunity occupations, while Canton, Dayton, and Youngstown rank in the bottom.

Percent of employment in opportunity occupations, 2014



GREATER SHARES OF THESE JOBS, BUT ACCESS VARIES

In each of the 8 metros, there are occupations that survey data show are mostly available to those without a bachelor's degree but for which online job postings indicate otherwise.

The practice of such "up-credentialing" is not found in online job ads for a majority of opportunity occupations in the metros. Those subject to up-credentialing include



General and operations managers

First-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers



Computer systems analysts

Executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants



Why the educational preferences of employers in online job ads vary to the degree that they do for certain occupations is unknown and will be a focus of future research.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland's community development team conducts applied research, analyzes data and trends, provides technical assistance to organizations, and convenes meetings to bring together key players in community and economic development. The aim is to promote economic growth and financial stability, especially in low- and moderate-income areas, and to deepen the understanding of issues affecting communities.

Search a comprehensive collection of Federal Reserve community development resources related to affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization, workforce development, and more at fedcommunities.org.

The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland or the Federal Reserve System.

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