

Identifying Opportunity Occupations in the Nation's Largest Metropolitan Economies

Opportunity occupations are jobs that pay workers at least the national annual median wage, adjusted for differences in local consumption prices, and are generally accessible for a worker without a bachelor's degree.

This study focused on the 100 largest metropolitan economies in the U.S.

National Educational Attainment Rates

70% of adults 25 and over in the U.S. do not have at least a bachelor's degree.



41% HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR LESS

21% SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE

8% ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE

30% BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER

Source: 2013 American Community Survey

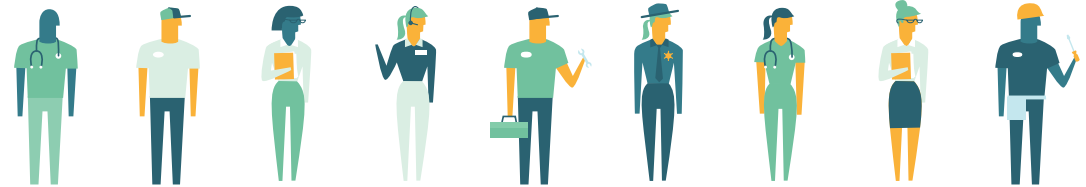
The national annual median wage in May 2014 was roughly

\$35,500

To adjust for variation in local costs, we lower the wage to \$30,800 in the McAllen, TX metro, and raise the wage to \$43,500 in the Bridgeport, CT metro.

Top Opportunity Occupations

These 9 occupations rank in the top 15 opportunity occupations using three different measures of educational attainment.



Registered Nurses

Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers

Bookkeeping and Accounting Clerks

Retail Sales Supervisors

Maintenance and Repair Workers

Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers

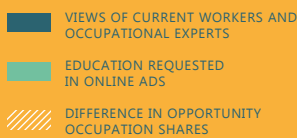
Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses

Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

Electricians

Differences in Level of Education

When compared with the views of current workers and occupational experts on the education needed to perform the job, the education requested in online job ads can significantly lower the opportunity occupation share in some metros.



Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT



San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA



San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA



NY-N. New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA



Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH



Top 10 & Bottom 10 Metros for Opportunity Occupations

Using one measure of educational attainment, roughly 27% of all employment can be classified as an opportunity occupation. The share ranges from over 36% in the Kansas City metro to under 16% in the McAllen metro.

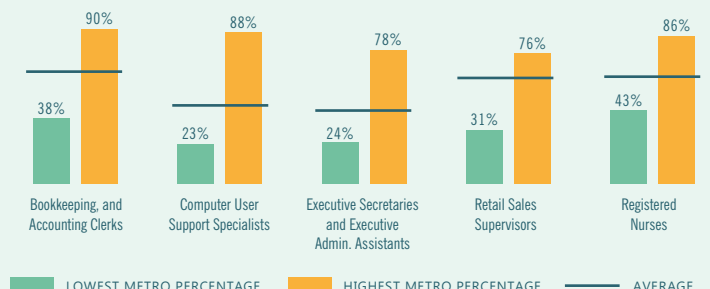


- Top 10**
- 1 Kansas City, MO-KS
 - 2 Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA
 - 3 Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH
 - 4 St. Louis, MO-IL
 - 5 Baton Rouge, LA
 - 6 Louisville-Jefferson County, KY-IN
 - 7 Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT
 - 8 Springfield, MA-CT
 - 9 Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA
 - 10 Birmingham-Hoover, AL

- Bottom 10**
- A Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY
 - B North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, FL
 - C Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA
 - D Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO
 - E Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL
 - F Honolulu, HI
 - G Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL
 - H Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL
 - I El Paso, TX
 - J McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX

Regional Educational Attainment Preferences

For a given occupation, employer preferences for educational attainment vary. This means that an occupation can represent real opportunity for a worker without a bachelor's degree in one metro but not in another.



* These percentages represent the share of online job ads requesting less than a bachelor's degree.



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For more information, read *Identifying Opportunity Occupations in the Nation's Largest Metropolitan Economies*, written by Keith Wardrip, Kyle Fee, Lisa Nelson, and Stuart Andreason and published by the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Atlanta, September 2015. You can find the report at www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/publications/special-reports. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia or the Federal Reserve System.