



Career Outlook

<https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2022/article/occupations-that-dont-require-a-degree.htm>

Fast-growing occupations that pay well and don't require a college degree

Ryan Farrell and William Lawhorn | June 2022

Occupations that require a college degree get lots of attention for offering strong job outlook and wages. But there are also fast-growing, well-paying careers that you can enter with a high school diploma or other nondegree options. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) can help you identify and explore careers that interest you.

Between 2020 and 2030, BLS projects that about 60 percent of new jobs in the economy will be in occupations that don't typically require an associate's, bachelor's, or graduate degree. This article highlights some of those occupations in which employment is projected to grow faster than the 7.7 percent average over the decade and that had median annual wages higher than the \$45,760 median wage for all occupations in 2021. (A median wage is the wage at which half of workers in the occupation earned more than that amount, and half earned less.)

Keep reading to learn about some of these fast-growing, well-paying occupations from a range of career fields. Tables present information on employment, outlook and wages, education and experience typically required to enter, and training typically required to attain competency. The occupations are grouped as follows:

- [Construction and installation](#)
- [Maintenance and repair](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Other](#)

No degree? No problem

- According to [BLS data](#), more than two-thirds of jobs are in occupations that don't typically require a college degree. Most of the occupations in the tables that follow typically require at least a high school diploma to enter; specific outlook and wages vary.
- Opportunities created by employment growth are only part of the outlook picture. In addition to expected openings from new jobs (those resulting from growth), occupational openings arise from the need to replace workers who retire or leave permanently for other reasons.
- Note, however, that occupations with small employment may have relatively few openings each year despite projected fast growth over the decade. Fewer openings may limit opportunity, so you may want to consider an occupation's size when exploring careers.

Construction and installation

Workers in occupations related to [construction](#) and [installation](#) make structures safe and attractive, or they set up a variety of equipment.

Table 1. Fast-growing, well-paying occupations related to construction and installation that do not typically require a college degree



Occupation	Median annual wage, 2021	Employment, 2020	Employment growth, projected 2020–30 (percent)	Occupational openings, projected 2020–30 annual average	Typical education needed for entry	Typical experience needed for entry	Typical on-the-job training needed for competency
Wind turbine service technicians	\$56,260	6,900	68	1,400	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Long term
Solar photovoltaic installers	47,670	11,800	52	2,300	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate term
Security and fire alarm systems installers	48,320	73,400	16	9,200	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate term
Floor layers, except carpet, wood, and hard tiles	48,060	23,700	12	2,400	No formal educational credential	None	Moderate term
Tile and stone setters	47,810	54,100	12	5,400	No formal educational credential	None	Long term

Note: Wage data exclude self-employed workers.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections.

Among the occupations shown in table 1, [wind turbine service technicians](#) had the highest wage in 2021. Wind turbine service technicians and [solar photovoltaic installers](#), both of which involve renewable energy, are 2 of the 5 occupations expected to have the fastest employment growth from 2020 to 2030. [Security and fire alarm installers](#) is projected to have the largest number of openings each year, on average, for the occupations shown in table 1. Most of these occupations typically require on-the-job training to attain competency.

Maintenance and repair

Workers in [maintenance and repair](#) occupations keep equipment and vehicles running. They maintain and fix many types of machines.

Table 2. Fast-growing, well-paying occupations related to maintenance and repair that do not typically require a college degree



Occupation	Median annual wage, 2021	Employment, 2020	Employment growth, projected 2020–30 (percent)	Occupational openings, projected 2020–30 annual average	Typical education needed for entry	Typical experience needed for entry	Typical on-the-job training needed for competency
Industrial machinery mechanics	\$59,840	391,800	21	45,100	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long term
Commercial divers	60,360	4,000	17	500	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Moderate term
Aircraft mechanics and service technicians	65,380	130,100	12	12,700	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None
Mobile heavy equipment mechanics, except engines	58,030	152,100	12	17,500	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long term
Farm equipment mechanics and service technicians	46,910	47,600	11	5,400	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long term
Millwrights	60,330	44,200	10	4,400	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship

Note: Wage data exclude self-employed workers.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections.

Among the occupations in table 2, [aircraft mechanics and service technicians](#) had the highest wage. [Industrial machinery mechanics](#) is expected to have the fastest projected employment growth and the largest number of openings each year, on average, of occupations shown in table 2. Nearly all of these occupations require on-the-job training.

Transportation

[Transportation](#) workers ensure that travelers and products get to their destinations. They operate ships, planes, and trains or assist in moving people or cargo.

Table 3. Fast-growing, well-paying occupations related to transportation that do not typically require a college degree



Occupation	Median annual wage, 2021	Employment, 2020	Employment growth, projected 2020–30 (percent)	Occupational openings, projected 2020–30 annual average	Typical education needed for entry	Typical experience needed for entry	Typical on-the-job training needed for competency
Airfield operations specialists	\$47,880	10,400	13	1,200	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long term
Pump operators, except wellhead pumpers	49,580	11,100	13	1,400	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate term
Aircraft cargo handling supervisors	53,540	11,000	12	1,400	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years	None
Commercial pilots	99,640	39,200	11	4,900	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate term
Subway and streetcar operators	81,180	11,000	10	1,100	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate term

Note: Wage data exclude self-employed workers.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections.

Of the occupations shown in table 3, [commercial pilots](#) had the highest wage and the largest number of openings each year, on average, for the group. [Airfield operations specialists](#) is the occupation projected to have the fastest employment growth. Occupations in this group typically require either related work

Other

Other nondegree occupations with fast projected growth and high wages come from a range of career fields, including [entertainment and sports](#), [healthcare](#), and [protective services](#). Duties vary, but most involve working with people.

Table 4. Other selected fast-growing, well-paying occupations that do not require a college degree



Occupation	Median annual wage, 2021	Employment, 2020	Employment growth, projected 2020–30 (percent)	Occupational openings, projected 2020–30 annual average	Typical education needed for entry	Typical experience needed for entry	Typical on-the-job training needed for competency
Athletes and sports competitors	\$77,300	16,700	38	3,400	No formal educational credential	None	Long term
Massage therapists	46,910	144,600	32	23,300	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None
Community health workers	46,590	64,100	21	8,600	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Short term
Private detectives and investigators	59,380	33,700	13	3,500	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years	Moderate term
Hearing aid specialists	59,500	8,000	11	700	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate term
Miscellaneous first-line supervisors, protective service workers	52,480	81,400	10	9,000	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years	None

Note: Wage data exclude self-employed workers.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections.

[Athletes and sports competitors](#) had both the highest wage of occupations in table 4 and the fastest projected employment growth. [Massage therapists](#) is projected to have the most openings each year, on average, for occupations shown in the table. Occupations in this group typically require either related work experience for entry or on-the-job training once hired.

For more information

Learn more about what's required to enter the occupations highlighted in this article, as well as hundreds of others, in the [Occupational Outlook Handbook \(OOH\)](#). Use the [OOH occupation finder](#) to search by entry-level education, training, projected new jobs or growth rate, and pay. BLS [education assignments](#) are based on analyses of the academic preparation that workers typically need to enter an occupation. However, the education that workers in an occupation have attained may vary. See [American Community Survey data](#) for breakdowns of educational attainment by detailed occupation.

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