



# OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS REVISITED

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

## COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

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



**100** RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

### TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

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| <p><b>1 REGISTERED NURSES</b><br/>Annual Median Wage: <b>\$70,500</b><br/>Opportunity Employment: <b>3,100</b></p>                            | <p><b>2 CARPENTERS</b><br/>Annual Median Wage: <b>\$39,200</b><br/>Opportunity Employment: <b>1,900</b></p>                            |
| <p><b>3 SALES REPRESENTATIVES, SERVICES</b><br/>Annual Median Wage: <b>\$51,600</b><br/>Opportunity Employment: <b>1,800</b></p>              | <p><b>4 SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS</b><br/>Annual Median Wage: <b>\$37,700</b><br/>Opportunity Employment: <b>1,700</b></p>   |
| <p><b>5 HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS</b><br/>Annual Median Wage: <b>\$39,200</b><br/>Opportunity Employment: <b>1,600</b></p>      | <p><b>6 ELECTRICIANS</b><br/>Annual Median Wage: <b>\$55,100</b><br/>Opportunity Employment: <b>1,500</b></p>                          |
| <p><b>7 AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE TECHNICIANS AND MECHANICS</b><br/>Annual Median Wage: <b>\$49,600</b><br/>Opportunity Employment: <b>1,300</b></p> | <p><b>8 GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS</b><br/>Annual Median Wage: <b>\$105,900</b><br/>Opportunity Employment: <b>1,200</b></p>      |
| <p><b>9 COMPUTER USER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS</b><br/>Annual Median Wage: <b>\$53,600</b><br/>Opportunity Employment: <b>1,100</b></p>            | <p><b>10 POLICE AND SHERIFF'S PATROL OFFICERS</b><br/>Annual Median Wage: <b>\$71,600</b><br/>Opportunity Employment: <b>1,100</b></p> |

Sources: Authors' calculations using data from BLS Occupational Employment Statistics (May 2017), Burning Glass Technologies (2015–2017), BEA Regional Price Parities (2016), and American Community Survey Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (2012–2016). Values are rounded to the nearest 100. Occupations are ranked on unrounded opportunity employment values.

For more information, read "Opportunity Occupations Revisited: Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time" by Kyle Fee, Keith Wardrip, and Lisa Nelson and published by the Federal Reserve Banks of Cleveland and Philadelphia, 2019 (available at [www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/publications/special-reports](http://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 Banks of Philadelphia, Cleveland, Atlanta, or the Federal Reserve System.



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