

### Still working for too little in Cleveland

All working people — no matter their race, gender, or the kind of job they do — should be paid enough to live a good life and provide for their families. Labor market pressures forced many employers to increase pay during the pandemic. Federal stimulus stabilized people's incomes. But in 2021, four of the Cleveland area's 10 most common occupations paid so little that a worker with a family of three would need food aid to get by. These four occupations alone employed 80,180 people.

**Wages up, but not enough:** From 2019 to 2021, median pay rose in six of the 10 most common jobs in the Cleveland area. Changes ranged from general and operations managers being paid \$4.21-per-hour (-8.1%) less, to registered nurses being paid \$1.91-per-hour (+5.3%) more. Considering nearly two decades of wage suppression that predated COVID, average annual change in pay ranged from losses of 11 cents per hour for general managers to gains of 13 cents for registered nurses over the whole span from 2000 to 2021.

### Wages up since 2019, but working people are still underpaid in Cleveland

Pay growth recovered lost ground in most common Cleveland area jobs

Top 10 occupations 2021	2021 Jobs	2021 hourly pay	Pay growth 2000-2019	Pay growth since 2019	Percent pay growth since 2019	Average annual pay growth 2000-2021	2021 pay as a share of poverty
Registered Nurses	28,510	\$37.53	\$0.92	\$1.91	5.3%	\$0.13	356%
Customer Service Representatives	23,720	\$18.21	-\$0.98	-\$0.27	-1.5%	-\$0.06	172%
Retail Salespersons	21,470	\$13.06	-\$0.51	\$1.21	10.2%	\$0.03	124%
Fast Food & Counter Workers	21,100	\$10.81	\$0.38	\$0.60	5.9%	\$0.05	102%
Cashiers	19,990	\$11.12	\$0.42	-\$0.05	-0.5%	\$0.02	105%
Stockers & Order Fillers	19,410	\$14.53	-\$1.26	\$1.25	9.4%	\$0.00	138%
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	17,620	\$11.49	-\$1.26	\$0.00	0.0%	-\$0.06	109%
Office Clerks, General	16,720	\$18.13	\$1.07	\$0.39	2.2%	\$0.07	172%
General & Operations Managers	16,660	\$47.93	\$1.92	-\$4.21	-8.1%	-\$0.11	454%
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Handlers	16,650	\$16.33	\$0.83	\$1.08	7.1%	\$0.09	155%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) Survey, May 2000, May 2019, and May 2021. Estimates, available at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>, accessed April 12, 2022. Largest detail occupations in Cleveland Elyria MSA by employment. Median annual earnings shown as a share of the poverty threshold for a family of three in 2021 (\$21,960). The gross monthly income threshold for food assistance is 130% of poverty (\$28,548) or less. All wage are adjusted for inflation using May 2021 dollars.

## COVID disproportionately destroyed low-paying jobs

COVID-19 disproportionately destroyed the jobs of low-paid Ohioans: people in economic precarity even before the pandemic. Statewide, these jobs are typically more likely held by Black and brown Ohioans, and women.

Eight of greater Cleveland's 10 most common pre-COVID occupations lost jobs from 2019 to 2021. As people scaled back dining out, employers laid off 8,810 fast food workers and 4,020 waiters and waitresses. Movement to online shopping meant fewer retail salespeople and cashiers. Health care needs led to hiring of 2,910 new registered nurses, but Greater Cleveland lost 1,350 home health aides.

### Many common occupations in Cleveland lost jobs between 2019 and 2021

Ten most common Cleveland-Elyria MSA occupations by employment, 2019

Top 10 occupations 2019 pre-COVID-19	2019 rank	2021 rank	2019 jobs	2021 jobs	Change in jobs	Percent change
Fast Food & Counter Workers	1	1	29,910	21,100	-8,810	-29%
Retail Salespersons	2	2	29,830	21,470	-8,360	-28%
Registered Nurses	3	3	25,600	28,510	2,910	11%
Customer Service Representatives	4	10	23,580	23,720	140	1%
Office Clerks, General	5	4	23,490	16,720	-6,770	-29%
Laborers & Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Handlers	6	6	21,680	16,650	-5,030	-23%
Cashiers	7	9	21,230	19,990	-1,240	-6%
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	8	5	18,970	17,620	-1,350	-7%
Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	9	11	15,880	13,220	-2,660	-17%
Waiters & Waitresses	10	12	15,810	11,790	-4,020	-25%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) Survey, May 2000, May 2019, and May 2021. Estimates, available at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>, accessed April 12, 2020. Largest detail occupations in Cleveland-Elyria MSA by employment. Median annual earnings shown as a share of the poverty threshold for a family of three in 2021 (\$21,960). The gross monthly income threshold for food assistance is 130% of poverty (\$28,548) or less.