

Still working for too little in Dayton

All working people — no matter their race, gender, or the kind of job they do — should be paid enough to care for their families. Labor market pressures forced many employers to increase pay. Federal stimulus stabilized people’s incomes. In 2021, four of the Dayton 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 employed 31,730 people.

Wages up, but not enough. From 2019 to 2021, employers increased median pay for eight of the 10 most common jobs in the Dayton area. Changes ranged from general managers being paid \$4.44-per-hour less (-8.9%) to registered nurses being paid \$1.75-per-hour more (+5.1%). Between 2000 and 2019, employers pushed down median pay for people working in seven of Dayton’s 10 most common jobs as of 2021. Considering nearly two decades of wage suppression that predated COVID, average annual change in pay ranged from a 7-cent-per-hour pay cut for both home health aides and laborers and freight handlers, to a pay boost of 21 cents for registered nurses over the whole span from 2000 to 2021. In 2000, the Dayton MSA included Springfield, which is now reported separately.

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

Pay growth recovered lost ground in most common Dayton area jobs

Top 10 occupations 2021	2021 jobs	2021 hourly pay	Pay growth 2000-2019	Pay growth since 2019	Percent pay growth since 2019	Annualized pay growth 2000-2021	2021 pay as a share of poverty
Registered Nurses	10,540	\$36.06	\$2.68	\$1.75	5.1%	\$0.21	342%
Retail Salespersons	8,750	\$13.38	-\$0.64	\$1.81	15.6%	\$0.06	127%
Fast Food & Counter Workers	8,300	\$10.70	-\$0.47	\$0.46	4.5%	\$0.00	101%
Cashiers	8,060	\$10.92	-\$0.27	\$0.64	6.2%	\$0.02	103%
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	6,620	\$11.65	-\$1.47	-\$0.09	-0.8%	-\$0.07	110%
Stockers & Order Fillers	6,550	\$14.08	-\$0.51	\$1.88	15.4%	\$0.07	133%
General & Operations Managers	5,920	\$45.44	\$6.85	-\$4.44	-8.9%	\$0.12	430%
Customer Service Representatives	5,830	\$17.77	-\$0.99	\$0.43	2.5%	-\$0.03	168%
Office Clerks, General	5,660	\$17.88	\$1.96	\$0.27	1.5%	\$0.11	169%
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Handlers	5,580	\$14.61	-\$1.64	\$0.25	1.7%	-\$0.07	138%

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 Dayton MSA by employment. 2000 Dayton MSA included Springfield. 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 wages are adjusted for inflation using May 2021 dollars.

COVID disproportionately destroyed low-paying jobs

COVID-19 disproportionately destroyed the jobs of low-paid Ohioans, who, statewide are more likely to be Black and brown, or women.

Eight of the 10 most common pre-COVID occupations lost jobs. As people scaled back dining out, employers laid off 2,450 fast food workers and 1,540 waiters and waitresses. More online shopping meant fewer retail salespeople and cashiers, and more stockers and order fillers. Unlike the state, Dayton lost registered nurses, though added home health aides.

Many common occupations in Dayton lost jobs between 2019 and 2021

Ten most common Dayton 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
Registered Nurses	1	1	12,100	10,540	-1,560	-13%
Retail Salespersons	2	2	11,130	8,750	-2,380	-21%
Fast Food & Counter Workers	3	3	10,750	8,300	-2,450	-23%
Cashiers	4	4	8,880	8,060	-820	-9%
Office Clerks, General	5	9	8,640	5,660	-2,980	-34%
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Handlers	6	10	7,690	5,580	-2,110	-27%
Customer Service Representatives	7	8	6,440	5,830	-610	-9%
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	8	5	6,020	6,620	600	10%
Waiters & Waitresses	9	13	5,980	4,440	-1,540	-26%
Stockers & Order Fillers	10	6	5,950	6,550	600	10%

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 Dayton 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.