

Working for less: Most common Dayton jobs pay too little

Too many jobs in Dayton pay too little and many pay less as a share of poverty than they did nearly two decades ago. New data released by the U.S. Department of Labor show that seven of the Dayton area’s 10 most common jobs pay the typical worker too little to feed a family of three without food assistance (earnings under 130 percent of poverty, about \$27,000 typically qualify). Of the 10 most common jobs, all but one pays a typical worker less than \$35,000, for full-time year round work, and half pay less than \$25,000.

This data confirms that job quality matters to family stability. During this budget cycle, policymakers should not restrict access to food and health insurance when so many jobs offer neither. The challenge is not requiring people to work, as most already do. Rather, the true challenge is getting employers—many of which are major international corporations with vast profits—to pay a fair wage with benefits and set a schedule that provides stability.

Working for Less

Most common occupations in the Dayton metropolitan area, by employment, 2018

Top 10 occupations 2018	Total Employment	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Salary	Median annual earnings as a share of poverty
Retail Salespersons	12,480	10.42	21,680	104%
Registered Nurses	11,960	32.27	67,130	323%
Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	10,240	9.49	19,740	95%
Cashiers	9,170	9.42	19,580	94%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	7,970	12.70	26,410	127%
Office Clerks, General	7,900	16.12	33,520	161%
Waiters and Waitresses	6,340	9.50	19,750	95%
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	6,080	12.26	25,500	123%
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	5,450	11.68	24,280	117%
Customer Service Representatives	5,080	16.69	34,720	167%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey, May 2018 estimates, available at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>, accessed April 13, 2019. 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 2018 (\$20,780). The gross monthly income threshold for food assistance is generally 130 percent of poverty.

Many of Ohio’s most common jobs now simply pay too little to eliminate need. That is also true in Dayton. Low wages were not always so ubiquitous in Dayton. In 2000, five of the 10 most common occupations paid so little that a family of three was left dependent on food assistance to get by- now it’s seven. Some occupations paid less as a share of poverty in 2017 than they did a decade and a half ago. The new rules of Ohio’s labor market are so tilted in favor of corporate employers that many Daytonians will not be able to work their way to self-sufficiency.

Wrong Direction

Dayton occupations, employment and median annual wage: 2000, 2017, and 2018

Top 10 occupations 2000	Earnings as share of poverty	Top 10 occupations 2017	Earnings as share of poverty	Top 10 occupations 2018	Earnings as share of poverty
Retail Salespersons	114%	Retail Salespersons	103%	Retail Salespersons	104%
Cashiers	99%	Registered Nurses	320%	Registered Nurses	323%
Team Assemblers	181%	Food Prep & Serving Workers, including Fast Food	96%	Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	95%
Registered Nurses	296%	Cashiers	94%	Cashiers	94%
Waiters and Waitresses	94%	Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	124%	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	127%
General & Operations Managers	403%	Waiters & Waitresses	95%	Office Clerks, General	161%
Food Prep & Serving Workers, including Fast Food	100%	Office Clerks	159%	Waiters and Waitresses	95%
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	150%	Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping	122%	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	123%
Secretaries, Except Legal Medical	153%	Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	118%	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	117%
Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping	124%	Customer Service Reps	160%	Customer Service Representatives	167%

Source: BLS, OES Survey, 2000, 2017 Dayton MSA estimates and May 2018 estimates, accessed 4/13/18 at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>. Largest detail occupations in Dayton MSA by employment. Median annual earnings shown as share of poverty threshold for a family of three in 2000 (\$14,150), 2017 (\$20,420), 2018 (20,780). The gross monthly income threshold for food assistance is generally 130 percent of poverty.

Dayton on average had 390,000 jobs last year. That’s 2,800 fewer jobs than in 2007, when the last recession began. Dayton is still struggling for a solid recovery. While one of the top jobs, registered nurse, pays well above twice the poverty line, the others do not. Most of the top jobs do not offer the same income or stability as top jobs from 2000.

Job quality has been eroded. Ohio tax policy has sent big cuts to the wealthiest, shrinking funding for education, infrastructure, and healthcare—investments that help working people and their kids get ahead. Policy Matters Ohio has set out 10 policy priorities that help working people by raising wages, extending overtime protections, providing paid leave, preserving public jobs and more new data show that such policies are essential in Dayton where jobs still make it hard to get by.