

Working for less: Most common Lima jobs pay too little, 2019

Too many jobs in Lima 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 six of the Lima 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 two pay 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 Lima 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
Food Preparation & Serving Workers, Incl. Fast Food	1,980	\$9.10	\$18,920	91%
Registered Nurses	1,840	\$32.60	\$67,810	326%
Retail Salespersons	1,670	\$10.22	\$21,260	102%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	1,440	\$12.53	\$26,060	125%
Waiters and Waitresses	1,070	\$9.28	\$19,290	93%
Cashiers	1,070	\$9.66	\$20,090	97%
Office Clerks, General	940	\$15.25	\$31,710	153%
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	870	\$11.92	\$24,790	119%
Nursing Assistants	840	\$13.49	\$28,050	135%
Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	820	\$18.00	\$37,440	180%

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 Lima MSA by employment. Median annual earnings shown as a share of the poverty threshold for a family of three in 2018 (\$20,780).

Many of Ohio’s most common jobs now simply pay too little to eliminate need. That is also true in Lima. In 2000, six of the 10 most common occupations paid so little that a family of three was left dependent on food assistance to get by, that expanded to seven by 2017, but in 2018 the share fell to six with machine operators which pay typical earnings, just under 200% of poverty made up a larger share of the regional labor market. 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 in Lima will not be able to work their way to self-sufficiency.

Wrong Direction

Lima 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
Food Preparation & Serving Workers, Incl. Fast Food	90%	Food Preparation & Serving Workers, Incl. Fast Food	93%	Food Preparation & Serving Workers, Incl. Fast Food	91%
Retail Salespersons	102%	Registered Nurses	324%	Registered Nurses	326%
Cashiers	94%	Retail Salesperson	98%	Retail Salespersons	102%
Registered Nurses	273%	Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	107%	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	125%
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	119%	Cashiers	94%	Waiters and Waitresses	93%
Office Clerks	114%	Waiters & Waitresses	93%	Cashiers	97%
Team Assemblers	189%	Nursing Assistants	131%	Office Clerks, General	153%
General & Operations Managers	372%	Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	103%	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	119%
Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping	145%	Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping	124%	Nursing Assistants	135%
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	118%	Office Clerks	148%	Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	180%

Source: BLS, OES Survey, 2000, 2017 Lima MSA estimates and May 2018 estimates, accessed 4/13/19 at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>. Largest detail occupations in Lima 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.

Lima on average had 53,100 jobs last year. That’s 2,700 fewer jobs than in 2007, when the last recession began. Lima is still struggling for a solid recovery.

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 Lima where jobs still make it hard to get by.