

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

Too many jobs in Springfield 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 five of the Springfield 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 four pay a typical worker less than \$35,000, for full-time year round work, and three pay less than \$25,000. This is a better mix of jobs than many regions in Ohio, it is in part because teachers, nurses, and manufacturing adjacent industries, which pay better but require skill training account for a higher share of the regional labor market.

Many jobs do not offer the same pathway to stability that those fields can provide. 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 Springfield 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
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,480	\$12.75	\$26,510	128%
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	1,400	\$9.24	\$19,230	93%
Cashiers	1,340	\$9.45	\$19,650	95%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,340	\$22.85	\$47,530	229%
Retail Salespersons	1,320	\$11.06	\$23,010	111%
Registered Nurses	1,040	\$26.53	\$55,190	266%
Office Clerks, General	1,010	\$14.54	\$30,250	146%
Nursing Assistants	940	\$12.87	\$26,770	129%
Assemblers and Fabricators, including Team Assemblers	930	\$17.93	\$37,280	179%
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	910	NA	\$59,350	286%

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 Springfield 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.

Policymakers should not restrict access to food and health insurance when so many jobs offer neither. The region saw some improvement in 2018, with teachers making up a larger share of the regional labor market than lower paid waiters and waitresses. Some occupations paid less as a share of poverty in 2018 than they did a decade and a half ago when Springfield was part of the Dayton MSA. The new rules of Ohio’s labor market are so tilted in favor of corporate employers that many in Springfield will not be able to work their way to self-sufficiency.

Workers still struggle			
Toledo occupations, employment and median annual wage: 2017 and 2018			
Top 10 occupations 2017	Earnings as share of poverty	Top 10 occupations 2018	Earnings as share of poverty
Cashiers	94%	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	128%
Food Prep & Serving Workers, including Fast Food	95%	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	93%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, Material Movers	126%	Cashiers	95%
Retail Salesperson	110%	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	229%
Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers	224%	Retail Salespersons	111%
Registered Nurses	249%	Registered Nurses	266%
Assemblers and Fabricators, including Team Assemblers	176%	Office Clerks, General	146%
Office Clerks	135%	Nursing Assistants	129%
Nursing Assistants	125%	Assemblers and Fabricators, including Team Assemblers	179%
Waiters and Waitresses	95%	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	286%

Source: BLS, OES Survey, 2017 Springfield MSA estimates and May 2018 estimates, accessed 4/13/19 at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>. Largest detail occupations by employment. Median annual earnings shown as share of poverty threshold for a family of three in 2017 (\$20,420), and 2018 (20,780). The gross monthly income threshold for food assistance is generally 130 percent of poverty.

Springfield on average had 49,000 jobs last year. That’s 3,300 fewer jobs than in 2007, when the last recession began. Springfield is still struggling for a solid recovery despite a larger share of regional jobs being in occupations that offer better wages but may require additional education and specialized skills for entry level work.

Even with additional skill requirements, job quality has been eroded. Tax policy has sent big cuts to the wealthiest, shrinking funding to support 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. These new data show that such policies are essential in Springfield where jobs still make it hard to get by.