

Working for less: Most common Canton jobs pay too little*

Too many jobs in Canton 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 Canton 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 typically qualify). At a time when state and federal policymakers are determined to erect new barriers to food assistance and health care, these new data show that 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 their workers a fair wage with benefits and set a schedule that provides some measure of job security.

Working for Less				
Most common occupations in the Canton-Massillon metropolitan area, by employment, 2017				
Top 10 occupations 2017	Total Employment	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Salary	Median annual earnings as a share of poverty
Food Prep & Serving Workers, including Fast Food-	6,760	\$9.13	\$18,980	93%
Retail Salesperson-	6,200	\$10.38	\$21,590	106%
Registered Nurses-	4,480	\$28.39	\$59,050	289%
Office Clerks-	4,090	\$12.79	\$26,600	130%
Cashiers+	3,860	\$9.49	\$19,740	97%
Waiters & Waitresses-	3,260	\$9.18	\$19,090	93%
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers+	2,730	\$13.84	\$28,800	141%
Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping	2,720	\$11.53	\$23,970	117%
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers+	2,640	\$11.86	\$24,670	121%
Nursing Assistants-	2,490	\$12.49	\$25,980	127%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey, May 2017 estimates, available at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>, accessed April 13, 2018. Largest detail occupations in Canton MSA by employment. Median annual earnings shown as a share of the poverty threshold for a family of three in 2017 (\$20,420). The gross monthly income threshold for food assistance is generally 130 percent of poverty. Red text highlights the occupations paying a typical wage below this threshold. (-) indicates a median wage lower than the state median for that occupation. (+) indicates a median wage higher than the state’s for that occupation.

Many of Ohio’s most common jobs now simply pay too little to eliminate need. That is also true in Canton. Policymakers should not restrict access to food and health insurance when so many jobs offer neither. Low wages were not always so ubiquitous in Canton. 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 in Canton will not be able to work their way to self-sufficiency.

* By Hannah Halbert, with research assistance from Isaac Miller

Wrong Direction			
Canton-Massillon occupations, employment and median annual wage: 2000 and 2017			
Top 10 occupations 2000	Earnings as share of poverty	Top 10 occupations 2017	Earnings as share of poverty
Retail Salespersons	101%	Food Prep & Serving Workers, including Fast Food+	93%
Food Prep & Serving Workers, including Fast Food	89%	Retail Salesperson+	106%
Cashiers	93%	Registered Nurses-	289%
Registered Nurses	298%	Office Clerks-	130%
General & Operations Managers	362%	Cashiers+	97%
Office Clerks	149%	Waiters & Waitresses+	93%
Packers and Packagers	115%	Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers+	141%
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, Attendants	141%	Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping-	117%
Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping+	123%	Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	121%
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers+	136%	Nursing Assistants-	127%

Source: BLS, OES Survey, 2000 Canton MSA estimates and May 2017 estimates, accessed 4/13/18 at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>. Largest detail occupations in Canton MSA by employment. Median annual earnings shown as share of poverty threshold for a family of three in 2000 (\$14,150) and 2017 (\$20,420). The gross monthly income threshold for food assistance is generally 130 percent of poverty. Red font notes occupations that have median annual earnings under 130% of poverty for a family of three. (+) indicates earnings increased since 2000, (-) indicates the earnings decreased since 2000, as a share of poverty.

Canton on average had 173,600 jobs last year, just 300 more jobs than in 2007, when the last recession began. Canton is still struggling for a solid recovery. The highest paying among the top jobs, registered nurse, relies in part on maintaining health coverage. Many of the other jobs that have grown over recent years do not offer the same income or stability as those lost. Manufacturing took the biggest hit. Growing sectors, like leisure and hospitality, often pay poorly and lack benefits.

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 Canton where jobs still make it hard to get by.

