

### Working for less: Most common Ohio jobs pay too little\*

Too many jobs in Ohio 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 Ohio'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 Ohio occupations 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	158,070	\$9.21	\$19,150	94%
Retail Salesperson	152,410	\$10.67	\$22,190	109%
Registered Nurses	124,620	\$30.43	\$63,300	310%
Cashiers	119,860	\$9.31	\$19,360	95%
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	111,410	\$12.92	\$26,880	132%
Office Clerks	100,760	\$14.88	\$30,940	152%
Waiters & Waitresses	96,160	\$9.25	\$19,240	94%
Customer Service Reps	90,090	\$15.50	\$32,240	158%
Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping	83,560	\$11.50	\$23,920	117%
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	83,430	\$11.56	\$23,040	118%

*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 Ohio 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.

Ohio's most common jobs now simply pay too little to eliminate need. Policymakers should not restrict access to food and health insurance when so many jobs offer neither. Low wages were not always so ubiquitous in Ohio. In 2000, only four 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 is six. 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 Ohioans will not be able to work their way to self-sufficiency.

\* By Hannah Halbert, with research assistance from Isaac Miller

Wrong Direction			
Most common Ohio 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	114%	Food Prep & Serving Workers, incl. Fast Food +	94%
Cashiers	100%	Retail Salespersons-	109%
Food Prep & Serving Workers, including Fast Food	93%	Registered Nurses+	310%
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	142%	Cashiers-	95%
Registered Nurses	299%	Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers-	132%
General & Operations Managers	407%	Office Clerks+	152%
Office Clerks	146%	Waiters & Waitresses+	94%
Team Assemblers	167%	Customer Service Reps-	158%
Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping	124%	Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping-	117%
Customer Service Reps	175%	Stock Clerks & Order Fillers-	118%

*Source:* BLS, OES Survey, 2000 state estimates and May 2017 estimates, accessed 4/13/18 at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>. Largest detail occupations in Ohio 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.

Ohio has regained the number of jobs lost during the last recession but it never recovered from the 2001 recession. We've lost 78,700 total jobs since then. Among the top jobs, only registered nurse pays more than twice the poverty line. Other jobs that have grown offer less income and stability than those lost. Manufacturing took the biggest hit. General operations managers and assembly line are no longer top jobs, replaced by waiters, waitresses, stock clerks and order fillers. Growing sectors, like leisure and hospitality, often pay poorly and lack benefits. These trends of job growth in lower paid, less secure sectors have only continued since the 2007 recession.

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 an economy where jobs still make it hard to get by.

