

Working for less: Many common Youngstown jobs pay too little*

Too many jobs in Youngstown 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 Youngstown 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 Youngstown 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
Retail Salespersons-	8,990	\$10.10	\$21,000	103%
Food Prep & Serving Workers, including Fast Food-	7,660	\$9.09	\$18,920	93%
Cashiers-	6,460	\$9.25	\$19,240	94%
Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers+	4,830	\$13.68	\$28,440	139%
Office Clerks-	4,720	\$13.63	\$28,360	139%
Waiters & Waitresses	4,420	\$9.21	\$19,160	94%
Registered Nurses-	4,410	\$27.60	\$57,420	281%
Secretaries and Admin Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, Exec.-	3,790	\$14.79	\$30,770	151%
Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers+	3,500	\$21.22	\$44,140	216%
Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping+	3,410	\$12.39	\$25,770	126%

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 Youngstown 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 common jobs pay too little to eliminate need. That is also true in Youngstown. Policymakers should not restrict access to food and health insurance when so many jobs offer neither. Youngstown is the one reported Ohio MSA that saw an improvement since 2000, when seven of the 10 most common occupations paid so little that a family of three was left dependent on food assistance to get by. Today five top Youngstown jobs pay that low. Even so, some occupations paid less as a share of poverty in 2017 than they did a decade and a half ago. The rules of Ohio's labor market are so tilted in favor of corporate employers that many in Youngstown will not be able to work their way to self-sufficiency.

* By Hannah Halbert, with research assistance from Isaac Miller

Some improvement, but too many stuck in low wage work			
Youngstown 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	104%	Retail Salespersons-	103%
Cashiers	93%	Food Prep & Serving Workers, including Fast Food+	93%
Food Prep & Serving Workers, including Fast Food	89%	Cashiers+	94%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	209%	Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers+	139%
Registered Nurses	285%	Office Clerks+	139%
General and Operations Managers	371%	Waiters & Waitresses+	94%
Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping	116%	Registered Nurses-	281%
Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers	118%	Secretaries and Admin Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, Exec.+	151%
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, Attendants	122%	Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers+	216%
Waiters and Waitresses	93%	Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping+	126%

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

Youngstown on average had 220,000 jobs last year, 19,100 fewer than when the last recession began, the largest decline of all the reported Ohio areas. Not only that: many of the 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.

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 Youngstown where jobs still make it hard to get by.

