

Still working for too little in Springfield

All working people — no matter their race, gender, or the kind of job they do — should be paid enough to live a good life and provide for their families. Labor market pressures forced many employers to increase pay during the pandemic. Federal stimulus stabilized people's incomes. But in 2021, three of the Springfield area's 10 most common occupations paid so little that a worker with a family of three would need food aid to get by. These three occupations employ 3,760 people.

Wages up, but not enough: From 2019 to 2021, median pay rose for eight of the 10 most common jobs. Changes ranged from a \$5.93-per-hour (-16.1%) cut for registered nurses to a \$4.66-per-hour (+38.7%) bump for laborers and freight handlers. Considering nearly two decades of wage suppression that predated COVID, average annual change in pay ranged from a 23-cent-per-hour pay cut for miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators (team assemblers in 2000) to a pay boost of just 3 cents for laborers and freight handlers over the whole span from 2000 to 2021.

Wages up since 2019, but working people are still underpaid in Springfield

Pay growth recovered lost ground in most common Springfield area jobs in 2021

| Top 10 occupations 2021 | 2021 jobs | 2021 hourly pay | Pay growth 2000-2019 | Pay growth since 2019 | Percent pay growth since 2019 | Annualized pay growth 2000-2021 | 2021 pay as a share of poverty |
|--|-----------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Fast Food & Counter Workers | 1,460 | \$10.58 | -\$0.86 | \$0.73 | 7.4% | -\$0.01 | 100% |
| Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Handlers | 1,410 | \$16.67 | -\$3.98 | \$4.66 | 38.7% | \$0.03 | 158% |
| Cashiers | 1,350 | \$10.72 | -\$0.25 | \$0.42 | 4.1% | \$0.01 | 102% |
| Miscellaneous Assemblers & Fabricators | 1,220 | \$14.62 | -\$6.50 | \$1.75 | 13.6% | -\$0.23 | 138% |
| Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 1,090 | \$23.22 | -\$2.27 | \$0.17 | 0.7% | -\$0.10 | 220% |
| Customer Service Representatives | 1,060 | \$17.32 | -\$3.38 | \$2.36 | 15.8% | -\$0.05 | 164% |
| Retail Salespersons | 950 | \$11.60 | -\$0.49 | -\$0.12 | -1.0% | -\$0.03 | 110% |
| Registered Nurses | 940 | \$30.86 | \$5.16 | -\$5.93 | -16.1% | -\$0.04 | 292% |
| Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Technical Education | 840 | \$75,570* | \$4,754* | \$7,622* | 11.2% | \$589* | 344% |
| Stockers & Order Fillers | 800 | \$13.85 | -\$0.48 | \$1.61 | 13.2% | \$0.05 | 131% |

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) Survey, May 2000, May 2019, and May 2021. 2000 figures are from then-combined Springfield-Dayton MSA. Estimates, available at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>, accessed April 12, 2022. 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 2021 (\$21,960). The gross monthly income threshold for food assistance is 130% of poverty (\$28,548) or less. All wages are adjusted for inflation using May 2021 dollars. *Teacher pay is annual, not hourly.

COVID disproportionately destroyed low-paying jobs

COVID-19 disproportionately destroyed the jobs of low-paid Ohioans: people in economic precarity even before the pandemic. Statewide, these jobs are more likely to be held by Black and brown Ohioans, and women of all races.

Nine of greater Springfield's most common pre-COVID occupations lost jobs from 2019 to 2021. As people scaled back dining out, employers laid off 160 fast food workers and 280 waiters and waitresses. Movement to online shopping meant fewer cashiers. Springfield also lost 70 registered nurses during the pandemic.

Many common occupations in Springfield lost jobs between 2019 and 2021

Ten most common Springfield MSA occupations by employment, 2019

| Top 10 occupations 2019 pre-COVID-19 | 2019 rank | 2021 rank | 2019 jobs | 2021 jobs | Change in jobs | Percent change |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| Cashiers | 1 | 3 | 1,770 | 1,350 | -420 | -24% |
| Fast Food & Counter Workers | 2 | 1 | 1,620 | 1,460 | -160 | -10% |
| Miscellaneous Assemblers & Fabricators | 3 | 4 | 1,360 | 1,220 | -140 | -10% |
| Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 4 | 5 | 1,330 | 1,090 | -240 | -18% |
| Retail Salespersons | 5 | 7 | 1,280 | 950 | -330 | -26% |
| Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Handlers | 6 | 2 | 1,100 | 1,410 | 310 | 28% |
| Registered Nurses | 7 | 8 | 1,010 | 940 | -70 | -7% |
| Office Clerks, General | 8 | 11 | 920 | 740 | -180 | -20% |
| Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners | 9 | 14 | 860 | 640 | -220 | -26% |
| Waiters & Waitresses | 10 | 21 | 770 | 490 | -280 | -36% |

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) Survey, May 2000, May 2019, and May 2021. Estimates, available at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>, accessed April 12, 2020. 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 2021 (\$21,960). The gross monthly income threshold for food assistance is 130% of poverty (\$28,548) or less.