

Still working for too little in Toledo

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 Toledo 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 alone employ 19,820 people.

Wages up, but not enough: From 2019 to 2021, employers increased median pay for eight of the 10 most common jobs in the Toledo area. Changes ranged from general and operations managers being paid \$6.09-per-hour less (-13.5%) to registered nurses being paid \$2.71-per-hour more (+8.4%). Considering nearly two decades of wage suppression that predated COVID, average annual change in pay ranged from a 26-cent-per-hour pay cut for general managers to a pay boost of 20 cents for registered nurses over the whole span from 2000 to 2021. Assemblers and fabricators also lost 20 cents per hour on average each year.

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

Pay growth recovered lost ground in most common Toledo area jobs

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
Miscellaneous Assemblers & Fabricators	11,400	\$18.13	-\$1.35	-\$2.90	-13.8%	-\$0.20	172%
Registered Nurses	7,630	\$34.97	\$1.53	\$2.71	8.4%	\$0.20	331%
Fast Food & Counter Workers	7,010	\$10.69	-\$0.01	\$0.74	7.4%	\$0.03	101%
Retail Salespersons	6,520	\$13.18	\$0.94	\$0.39	3.0%	\$0.06	125%
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Handlers	6,390	\$14.48	-\$4.21	\$0.51	3.7%	-\$0.18	137%
Cashiers	6,290	\$10.90	-\$0.04	\$0.42	4.0%	\$0.02	103%
Stockers & Order Fillers	5,600	\$14.42	\$0.52	\$1.41	10.8%	\$0.09	137%
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,950	\$23.42	-\$3.47	\$0.99	4.4%	-\$0.12	222%
General & Operations Managers	4,490	\$38.91	\$0.63	-\$6.09	-13.5%	-\$0.26	369%
Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	4,470	\$13.89	-\$0.84	\$0.80	6.1%	\$0.00	132%

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, 2022. Largest detail occupations in Toledo 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.

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.

Seven of greater Toledo's 10 most common pre-COVID occupations lost jobs from 2019 to 2021. As people scaled back dining out, employers laid off 4,650 fast food workers and 2,720 waiters and waitresses. Movement to online shopping meant fewer retail salespeople and cashiers. COVID-19 prompted hiring of registered nurses. Greater Toledo also added miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators.

Many common occupations in Toledo lost jobs between 2019 and 2021

Ten most common Toledo 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
Fast Food & Counter Workers	1	3	11,660	7,010	-4,650	-40%
Miscellaneous Assemblers & Fabricators	2	1	9,940	11,400	1,460	15%
Retail Salespersons	3	4	7,340	6,520	-820	-11%
Cashiers	4	6	7,080	6,290	-790	-11%
Registered Nurses	5	2	6,400	7,630	1,230	19%
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Handlers	6	5	6,230	6,390	160	3%
Waiters & Waitresses	7	15	6,350	3,630	-2,720	-43%
Stockers & Order Fillers	8	7	5,710	5,600	-110	-2%
Office Clerks, General	9	11	5,220	4,370	-850	-16%
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	10	16	5,180	3,350	-1,830	-35%

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 Toledo 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.