

### Working for less in Canton: Most common jobs pay too little

The economy comes down to people: people who work, buy and sell. An economy that relies on working people who can't afford to get by is shaky even in the best of times. Now more than ever, Ohioans need leaders who put people first. Reporting to work in the midst of a pandemic is a frightening new reality for many of Ohio's working people. Others are out of work to comply with Gov. DeWine's stay-at-home order. Many still wait for unemployment compensation to arrive. Some worry how they will cope if they or a family member falls ill. Many have lost health insurance when they were sent home from work.

As Ohioans scramble to take care of one another and meet basic needs, low wages compound the hardship. New data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show a jobs landscape already drastically outmoded. Nearly 30,000 Stark and Carroll County residents who were working this March are out of work today. But looking at the jobs that dominated the region's labor market through May of 2019 sheds light on the challenges workers still at or recently laid off from work face today. These data show that even before the pandemic and after a decade of economic growth, many people in Canton and surrounding communities lived on the brink.

Working for Less				
Most common occupations in the Canton metropolitan area by employment, 2019				
Top 10 occupations 2019	Total Employment	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Salary	Median annual earnings as a share of poverty
Fast Food and Counter Workers*	6,340	\$9.34	\$19,430	91%
Retail Salespeople	5,000	\$11.65	\$24,230	114%
Cashiers*	4,860	\$10.84	\$22,550	106%
Office Clerks	4,130	\$15.18	\$31,570	148%
Home Health & Personal Care Aides*	3,860	\$10.66	\$22,160	104%
Registered nurses*	3,710	\$30.00	\$62,400	293%
Laborers and Freight, Stock & Material Handlers*	3,400	\$14.15	\$29,430	138%
Customer Service Reps	3,080	\$14.64	\$30,450	143%
Waiters and Waitresses	2,880	\$9.61	\$19,990	94%
Nursing Assistants*	2,610	\$12.69	\$26,400	124%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey, May 2019 estimates, available at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>, accessed April 8, 2020. Largest detail occupations in the Canton MSA by employment. Median annual earnings shown as a share of the poverty threshold for a family of three in 2019 (\$21,330). The gross monthly income threshold for food assistance is 130 percent of poverty (\$27,729) or less. Red text highlights the occupations paying a typical wage below this threshold. Asterisk (\*) indicates that a job would likely be considered "essential" under Gov. DeWine's stay-at-home directive.

Too many greater Canton jobs pay too little. By 2019 six of the top 10 jobs left a worker with a family of three in need of food aid, up from five in 2000. Wages so low would not even have been possible half a century ago. At its peak in 1968, the federal minimum wage was worth over \$12 per hour in today's dollars: more than the median wage in half of Canton's 10 most common jobs.

Wrong Direction					
Most common Canton MSA occupations, employment and median annual wage: 2000, 2018, and 2019					
Top 10 occupations 2000	Earnings as share of poverty	Top 10 occupations 2018	Earnings as share of poverty	Top 10 occupations 2019	Earnings as share of poverty
Retail Sales	101%	Food Prep & Serving Workers, incl. Fast Food	93%	Fast Food and Counter Workers*	91%
Food Prep & Serving Workers, incl. Fast Food	89%	Retail Salespeople	111%	Retail Salespeople	114%
Cashiers	93%	Office Clerks	131%	Cashiers*	106%
Registered Nurses	298%	Registered Nurses	291%	Office Clerks	148%
General & Operations Managers	362%	Cashiers	110%	Home Health and Personal Care Aides*	104%
Office Clerks	149%	Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	138%	Registered nurses*	293%
Packers and Packers	115%	Waiters & Waitresses	94%	Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Handlers*	138%
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, Attendants	141%	Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	122%	Customer Service Reps	143%
Janitors & Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping	123%	Nursing Assistants	118%	Waiters and Waitresses	94%
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	136%	Customer Service Reps	141%	Nursing Assistants*	124%

Source: BLS, OES Survey, 2000 state estimates and May 2019 estimates, accessed April 8, 2020 at <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>. Largest detail occupations in the Canton MSA by employment. Median annual earnings shown as share of poverty threshold for a family of three in 2000 (\$14,150), 2018 (\$20,780), and 2019 (\$21,330). Red font indicates occupations that have median annual earnings under 130% of poverty, the typical threshold for food aid, for a family of three. Asterisk (\*) indicates likely "essential" occupation.

These paltry wages left many with no savings to withstand a coronavirus layoff. Policy Matters Ohio has set out four policy priorities to help working people through the crisis and beyond. Ohio lawmakers can protect people today and build a stronger state for tomorrow by protecting essential workers, shoring up unemployment comp, providing paid sick leave, and making sure all working people, no matter what job they do, get a fair return for their work.