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Virginia's Economy at a Glance

Data Series	July 2023	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023
Labor Force Data						
Civilian Labor Force(1)	4,597.5	4,601.6	4,610.9	4,615.5	4,624.8	(P)4,623.1
Employment(1)	4,481.2	4,488.5	4,494.5	4,492.7	4,492.7	(P)4,484.3
Unemployment(1)	116.3	113.1	116.5	122.8	132.1	(P)138.8
Unemployment Rate(2)	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.9	(P)3.0
Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment						
Total Nonfarm(3)	4,150.1	4,157.8	4,164.5	4,166.2	4,168.8	(P)4,157.0
12-month % change	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.5	(P)1.1
Mining and Logging(3)	7.1	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.0	(P)7.0
12-month % change	0.0	-2.8	-1.4	-1.4	-2.8	(P)-2.8
Construction(3)	213.5	214.0	210.8	213.1	214.3	(P)214.4
12-month % change	1.9	1.8	-0.3	0.2	1.0	(P)-0.1
Manufacturing(3)	245.9	245.3	244.9	246.7	247.0	(P)247.6
12-month % change	0.1	0.0	-0.5	0.0	0.6	(P)0.9
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities(3)	666.0	667.7	668.4	670.7	670.8	(P)668.2
12-month % change	-0.3	-0.2	-0.2	0.7	0.7	(P)0.1
Information(3)	72.2	72.4	71.4	70.5	71.1	(P)70.9
12-month % change	2.8	2.3	1.1	0.1	0.0	(P)-0.7
Financial Activities(3)	216.3	217.3	217.7	217.1	217.0	(P)217.0
12-month % change	-0.4	-0.1	-0.4	-0.4	1.5	(P)1.3
Professional & Business Services(3)	813.7	814.8	816.8	812.3	811.1	(P)805.1
12-month % change	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.1	0.2	(P)-0.3
Education & Health Services(3)	577.4	579.7	582.5	583.8	585.1	(P)588.3
12-month % change	3.7	4.1	3.8	3.5	3.1	(P)3.6
Leisure & Hospitality(3)	406.3	406.5	406.3	408.4	408.6	(P)409.1
12-month % change	3.4	3.3	2.2	3.0	1.9	(P)1.9
Other Services(3)	194.5	193.9	193.4	195.5	194.4	(P)193.2
12-month % change	1.9	1.4	0.9	1.7	0.8	(P)-0.6
Government(3)	737.2	739.2	745.2	741.0	742.4	(P)736.2
12-month % change	3.0	2.9	3.4	2.8	2.8	(P)2.2

Footnotes

(1) Number of persons, in thousands, seasonally adjusted.

(2) In percent, seasonally adjusted.

(3) Number of jobs, in thousands, seasonally adjusted.

(P) Preliminary

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

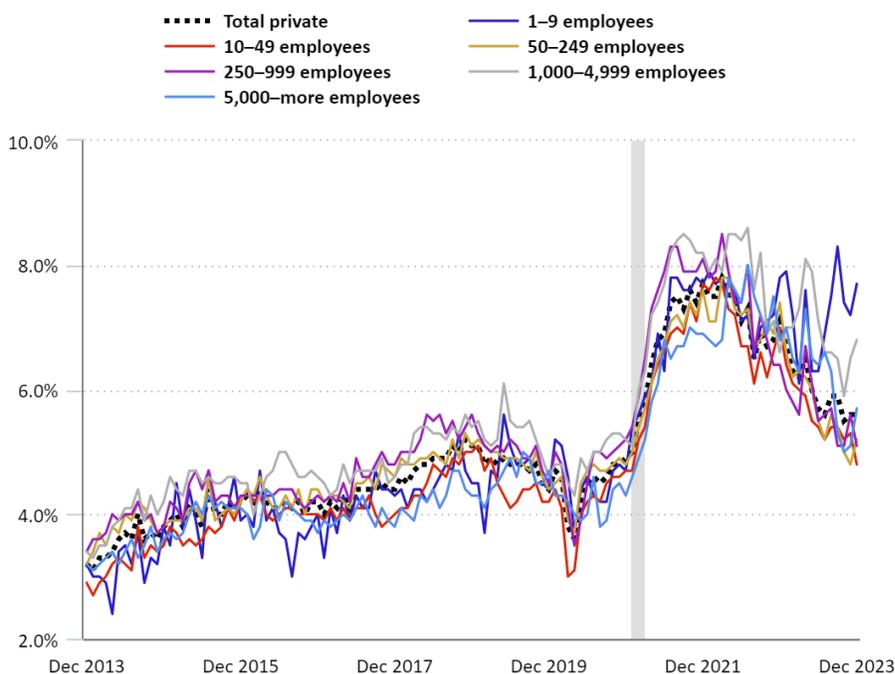
Note: More data series, including additional geographic areas, are available through the ["Databases & Tables"](#) tab at the top of this page.

Labor Market Research

Job Openings Rate Increased for Establishments with 5,000 or More Employees in December 2023

On the last business day of December, there were 8.0 million job openings in private industry, little changed from 7.9 million in November. Over the month, the job openings rate—that is, job openings as a percentage of total employment plus job openings—was unchanged at 5.6 percent. The rate increased for the largest establishments (5,000 or more employees) in December and was little changed for the smallest (1 to 9 employees). Among the size classes, job openings rates ranged from 4.8 percent for establishments with 10 to 49 employees to 7.7 percent for those with 1 to 9 employees.

Job openings rates in private nonfarm establishments by size of establishment, December 2013 to December 2023



Over the year, establishments with 10 to 49 employees and 50 to 249 employees experienced job openings rate declines of 2.2 percentage points each, followed by establishments with 250 to 999 employees and 5,000 or more employees (1.3 percentage points and 1.1 percentage points, respectively). The job openings rates for establishments with 1 to 9 employees and 1,000 to 4,999 employees were little changed from December 2022 to December 2023.

Job openings rates were higher than a decade earlier across all size classes. Establishments with 1 to 9 employees experienced a rate increase of 4.5 percentage points from December 2013 to December 2023, followed by those with 1,000 to 4,999 employees (+3.4 percentage points), 5,000 or more employees (+2.5 percentage points), and 50 to 249 employees (+2.0 percentage points). Job openings rates for establishments with 10 to 49 employees and 250 to 999 employees increased 1.9 percentage points and 1.7 percentage points, respectively.

These data are from the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey and are seasonally adjusted. Data for the most recent month are preliminary. To learn more, see “Job Openings and Labor Turnover — December 2023.” We also have more charts of job openings, hires, and separations data.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, The Economics Daily, Job openings rate increased for establishments with 5,000 or more employees in December 2023 at <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2024/job-openings-rate-increased-for-private-establishments-with-5000-or-more-employees-in-december-2023.htm> (visited February 07, 2024).



Education Level and Projected Openings, 2022–32

Whatever your education level or goal, there are lots of occupations to consider. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) can show you which ones are expected to have the most openings for new entrants.

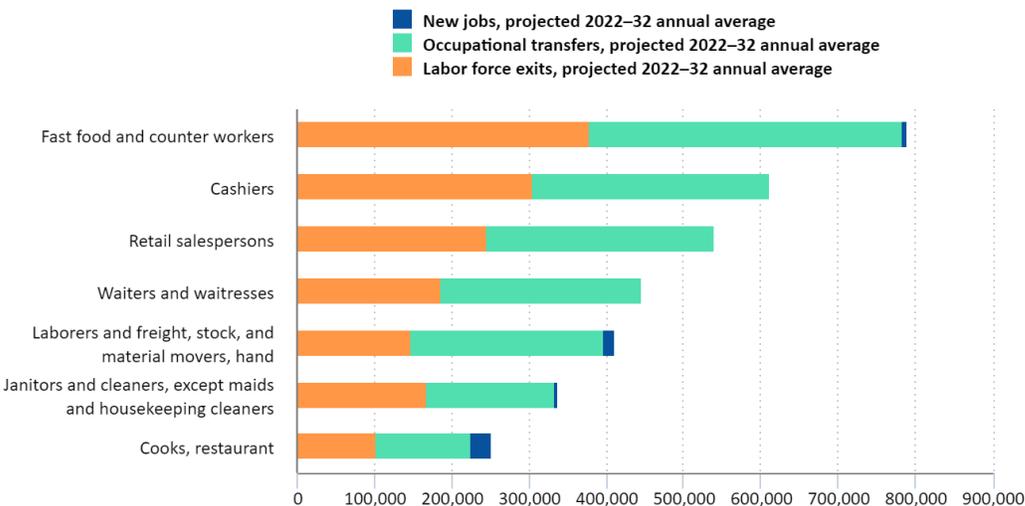
The charts that follow highlight selected occupations that BLS projects will have many annual average openings from 2022 to 2032, along with the source of those openings. Most openings come from the need to replace workers who leave permanently, either to exit the labor force or to transfer to a different occupation. But others are from employment growth: that is, newly created jobs.

Each chart focuses on occupations that typically require a specific education level to enter, from no formal credential to a graduate degree. The table shows an occupation’s wage, which you can compare with the \$46,310 median annual wage for all occupations, as well as the work experience typically needed for entry and the training typically required to become competent.

No Formal Educational Credential

Nearly 5.7 million openings are projected each year, on average, in occupations that you typically can enter without having a high school diploma. Minimal employment growth is expected in these occupations overall, which explains the limited number of openings from new jobs shown in **chart 1**.

Chart 1. Annual average openings, by source of opening, in selected occupations that don't require a formal educational credential, projected 2022–32



Median annual wage, 2022	Work experience required for entry	On-the-job training
\$27,930	None	Short-term
28,240	None	Short-term
30,600	None	Short-term
29,120	None	Short-term
36,110	None	Short-term
31,990	None	Short-term
34,110	Less than 5 years	Moderate-term

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections

Cashiers, retail salespersons, and waiters and waitresses all are projected to have employment declines that are due, in part, to the continued use of self-service technologies in stores and restaurants. But as chart 1 shows, there are still likely to be hundreds of thousands of openings each year for new entrants to replace workers who leave these large occupations.

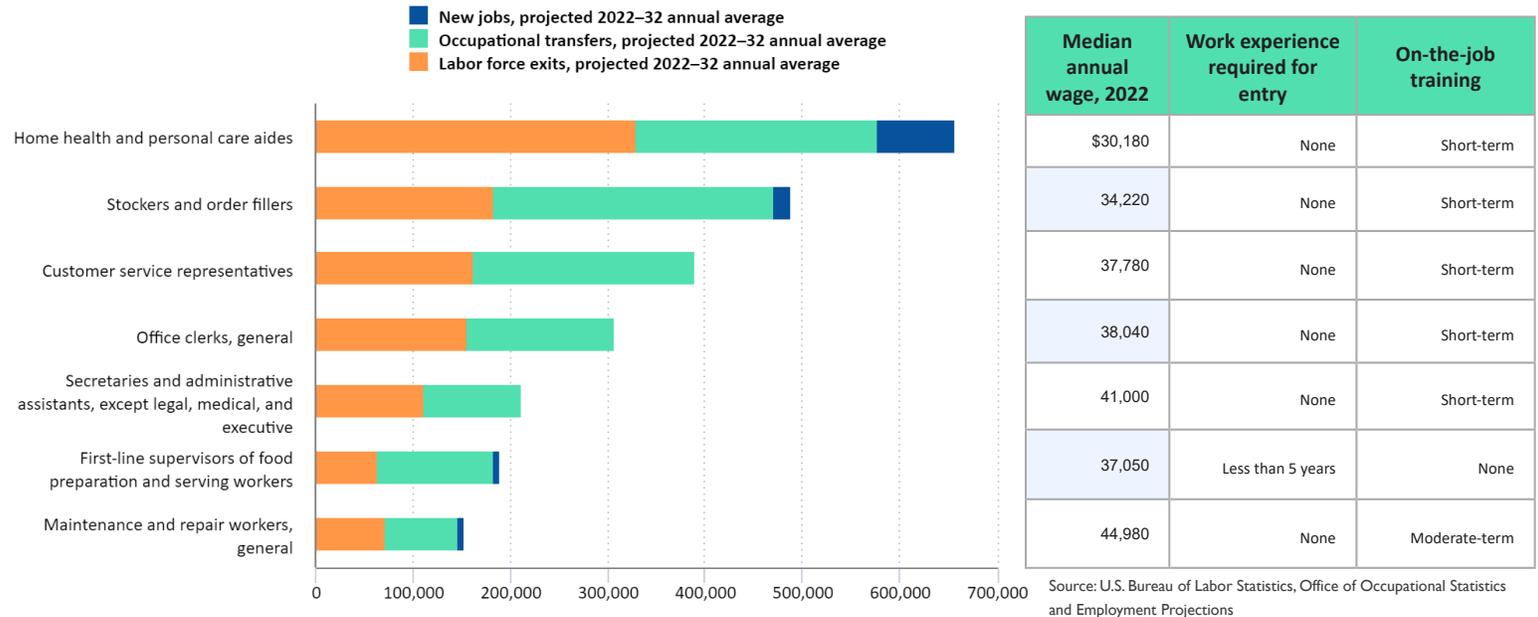
Wages for the occupations in chart 1 ranged from \$36,110 for hand laborers and freight, stock, and material movers to \$27,930 for fast food and counter workers.

Restaurant cooks—the occupation in chart 1 projected to have the most openings from newly created jobs—typically need work experience in a related occupation, such as food preparation workers. All the occupations in chart 1 usually require on-the-job training, which helps workers to learn the skills that they need to attain competency.

High School Diploma or the Equivalent

Occupations that typically require a high school diploma or the equivalent for entry have the most projected openings of any education level: 7.1 million per year, on average, over the decade. And the occupations shown in **chart 2** accounted for about one-third of those total openings.

Chart 2. Annual average openings, by source of opening, in selected occupations that require a high school diploma or equivalent, projected 2022–32



Home health and personal care aides stands out among the occupations in chart 2 for having the largest number of projected openings, averaging well over half a million each year. This occupation is projected to have more openings due to new jobs than any other occupation in the economy, as these workers are increasingly needed to help care for an aging population.

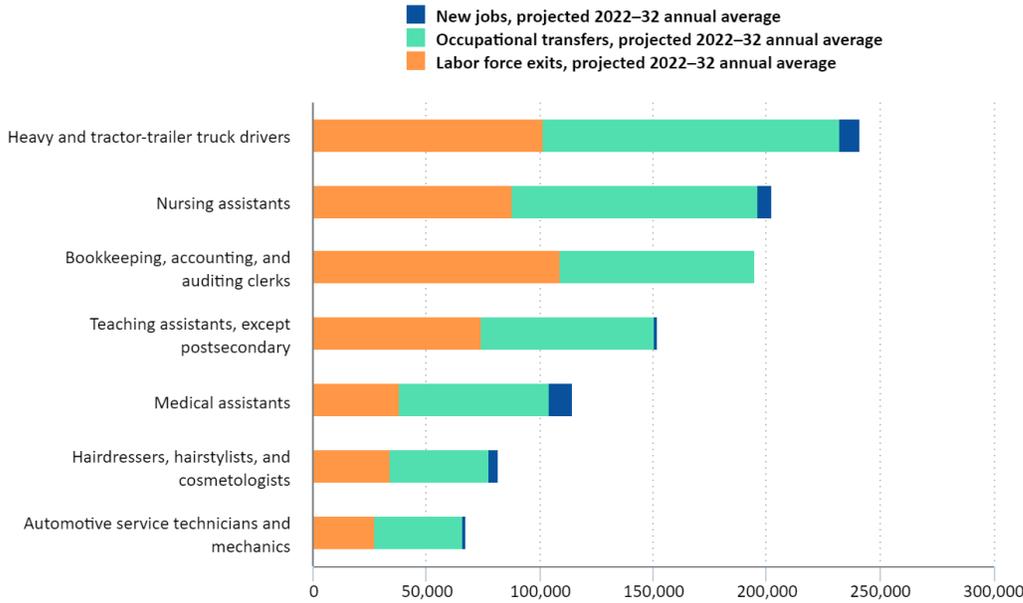
The highest paying occupation in chart 2 was general maintenance and repair workers, with a median annual wage of \$44,980. The lowest paying was home health and personal care aides, with a median annual wage of \$30,180.

Workers in the occupations in chart 2 generally don't need experience to get entry-level jobs; however, they do receive on-the-job training after they are hired. An exception is first-line supervisors of food preparation and serving workers, who typically work their way up from a related food service occupation and therefore may not need formal on-the-job training.

More Than High School, Less Than a Bachelor’s Degree

BLS projects nearly 2 million annual average openings in occupations that typically require a postsecondary nondegree award; some college, no degree; or an associate’s degree. To enter most of the occupations in **chart 3**, you typically need a certificate or other postsecondary nondegree award. (None of the occupations in chart 3 typically requires an associate’s degree.)

Chart 3. Annual average openings, by source of opening, in selected occupations that require a more than high school, less than a bachelor’s degree, projected 2022–32



Median annual wage, 2022	Typical education needed for entry	On-the-job training
\$49,920	Postsecondary nondegree award	Short-term
35,760	Postsecondary nondegree award	None
45,860	Some college, no degree	Moderate-term
30,920	Some college, no degree	None
38,270	Postsecondary nondegree award	None
33,290	Postsecondary nondegree award	None
46,970	Postsecondary nondegree award	Short-term

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections

Medical assistants is the occupation in chart 3 that’s projected to have the most openings due to employment growth, with new jobs expected to stem from greater demand for healthcare services. Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers is projected to have the largest number of total openings (about 241,200 each year, on average) of the occupations in chart 3.

Heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers also had the highest median annual wage of occupations in chart 3: \$49,920. Teaching assistants, except postsecondary, had the lowest median annual wage of those in the chart at \$30,920.

None of the occupations in chart 3 requires experience to enter. Several of them—automotive service technicians and mechanics, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, and bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks—typically need on-the-job training to attain competency.

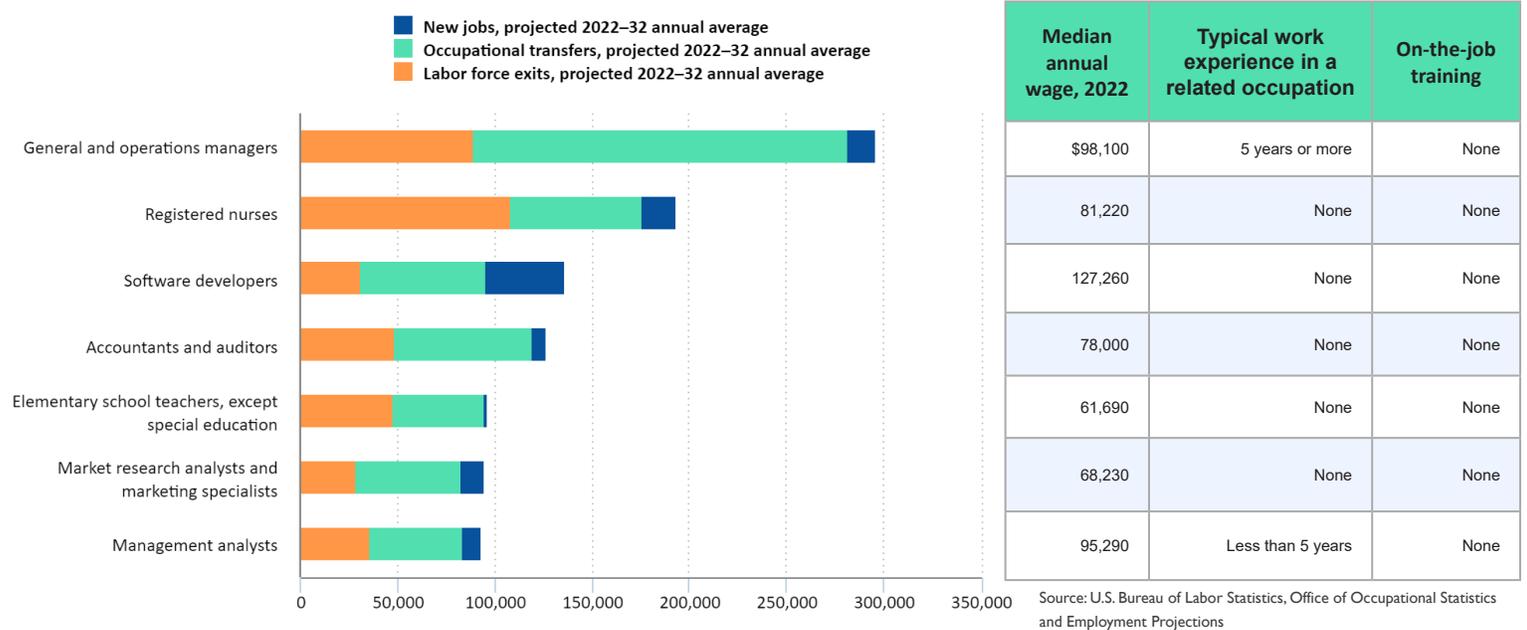


Bachelor’s Degree

Occupations that typically require a bachelor’s degree are expected to have 3.3 million openings each year, on average, over

the projections decade. Overall, employment in bachelor’s-level occupations is projected to grow faster than the average for all occupations. This growth is reflected in **chart 4**, which shows relatively high numbers of openings due to new jobs.

Chart 4. Annual average openings, by source of opening, in selected occupations that require a bachelor’s degree, projected 2022–32



Of the occupations in chart 4, software developers is expected to have the largest number of openings from growth (41,000 each year, on average), and it had the highest median annual wage (\$127,260). General and operations managers is expected to have the most openings of any bachelor’s-level occupation, with an average of about 296,300 per year. Elementary school teachers, except special education, had the lowest wage (\$61,180) of the occupations in chart 4.

Two of the occupations in chart 4 typically need work experience in a related occupation to qualify for entry-level jobs: management analysts and general and operations managers. None requires formal on-the-job training to attain competency.

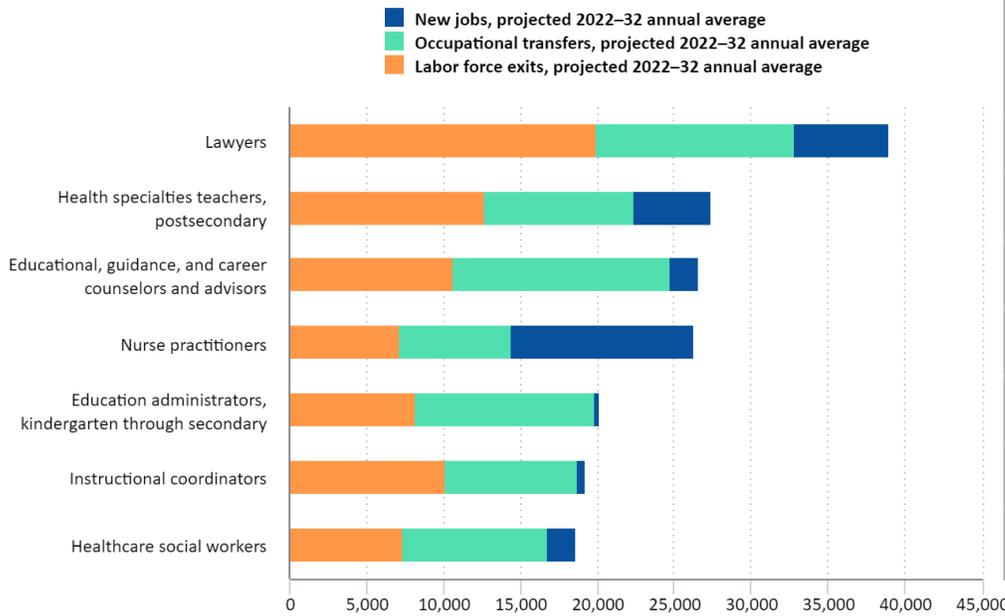
Graduate Degree

Graduate-level occupations include those that typically require a master’s, doctoral, or professional degree, such as a J.D. or M.D. Together, these occupations are projected to have slightly more than 500,000 annual average openings from 2022 to 2032. Many of the occupations in **chart 5** typically require a master’s degree for entry.

Of the occupations in chart 5, nurse practitioners is projected to have the most openings due to employment growth. Heightened demand for these workers is expected as healthcare needs rise and as people increasingly rely on nurse practitioners for preventive and primary care. Lawyers is the occupation in chart 5 that’s projected to have the most annual average openings (39,100) from any source.



Chart 5. Annual average openings, by source of opening, in selected occupations that require a graduate degree, projected 2022–32



Median annual wage, 2022	Typical education needed for entry	Typical work experience in a related occupation
\$135,740	Doctoral or professional degree	None
100,300	Doctoral or professional degree	Less than 5 years
60,140	Master's degree	None
121,610	Master's degree	None
101,320	Master's degree	5 years or more
66,490	Master's degree	5 years or more
60,280	Master's degree	None

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections

Median annual wages for the occupations in chart 5 ranged from \$135,740 for lawyers to \$60,140 for educational, guidance, and career counselors and advisors.

Three of the occupations in chart 5 require experience to enter. Instructional coordinators and education administrators typically need work experience in a related occupation, such as teaching. Postsecondary health specialties teachers typically must have worked in a healthcare occupation related to their instructional field. Healthcare social workers usually complete an internship to attain competency.

For more information

The charts in this article highlight a fraction of the more than 800 occupations for which BLS makes employment projections. Search for occupations by education level, wages, and other variables using the “Select occupations by” feature of the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH). The OOH has information about workers in more than 300 occupational profiles, including what they do, pay, job outlook, how to become one, and more.

Additional information about education and training and occupational openings is available from the BLS Employment Projections program.

Source: Elka Torpey, “Education level and projected openings, 2022–32,” Career Outlook, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2024.

Job Searching



5 Essential Skills Every Job Seeker Should Develop

As the job market becomes more competitive, job seekers must have various essential skills to stand out from the crowd.

While technical skills are vital for specific industries, there are five core skills that every job seeker should develop to increase their chances of success.

Effective Communication

Effective communication is crucial in the workplace, and job seekers need to demonstrate this skill during the hiring process.

Communication skills involve not only the ability to articulate ideas and thoughts effectively but also active listening and understanding.

Job seekers must be clear and concise in their written and verbal communication and demonstrate that they can adapt to different communication styles.

Problem-Solving

Problem-solving is a valuable skill in any role, and job seekers should be able to demonstrate their ability to analyze and solve problems.

Employers want to hire individuals who can think critically and develop innovative solutions to complex problems.

Job seekers should provide examples of how they have tackled challenges in the past and the results of their efforts.

Time Management

Time management is important in the workplace, and job seekers should demonstrate their ability to manage their time effectively.

Employers want to hire individuals who can prioritize tasks, meet deadlines, and work efficiently.

Job seekers should provide examples of how they have managed their time effectively in previous roles and how they have juggled multiple tasks simultaneously.

Adaptability

In today's rapidly changing job market, employers are looking for candidates who can adapt to change and be flexible in their approach.

Job seekers should demonstrate their ability to adapt to new environments, technologies, and workflows. They should be open to learning and willing to take on new challenges.



Teamwork

Employers value teamwork and collaboration in the workplace, and job seekers should showcase their ability to work effectively in a team.

Job seekers should provide examples of how they have contributed to a team in previous roles and resolved conflicts or challenges in a collaborative setting.

Conclusion

Developing these essential skills can set job seekers apart from the competition and increase their chances of success in the job market.

Employers are looking for candidates who can communicate effectively, solve problems, manage their time, adapt to change, and work well in a team.

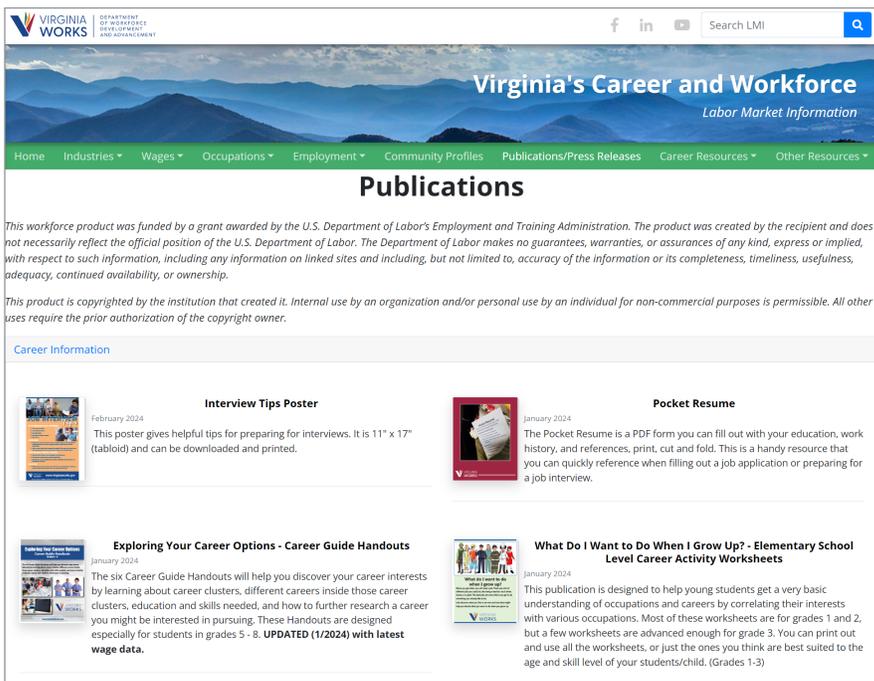
By demonstrating these skills during the hiring process, job seekers can show they are the right fit for the job.

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/5-essential-skills-every-job-seeker-should-develop-workassist-in>

Career and Labor Market Information Publications

Explore Career Possibilities on our Career and Labor Market Information Website at:

<https://virginiaworks.com/publications>



The Virginia Works Labor Market Information division is proud to offer a number of quality publications available to view and download at on our website.

These products provide labor market information, job tips, career planning, and more.

	<p>Virginia Employment Indicators - Quarterly December 2023 A Quarterly publication illustrating and analyzing key economic indicators including employment, unemployment, and production workers' hours and earnings.</p>		<p>Career Quarterly Newsletter November 2023 The <i>Career Quarterly Newsletter</i> provides articles about occupational activity in Virginia, career planning, job seeker advice, and more.</p>
	<p>Statewide Economic Analysis Report - Program Year 2022 - 2023 October 2023 The Statewide Economic Analysis (SEA) Report is an annual product from the Virginia Employment Commission. It explores trends in several economic indicators including labor force demographics, GDP and populations. The report provides information and analysis at both the state and local workforce development areas.</p>		<p>Virginia Occupational Career Resource Guide - 3rd Edition August 2023 UPDATED 3rd EDITION The Virginia Occupational Career Resource Guide is produced by the Virginia Employment Commission to assist students and any other persons who are looking for information to aid them in researching and finding a new career. Information is provided on a variety of career choices, how to plan for a career, education needed to qualify for various jobs, how to apply and interview for jobs, and much more. (The 3rd edition has been updated to include the 2021-2031 occupational projections and the latest wage data from May 2021.)</p>

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