

Careers with options:

Occupations with jobs in many industries



Looking for a career with options? Consider an occupation with jobs in many industries.

Workers in some occupations spend most of their careers in just one industry. Teachers, for example, often work only in schools.

But in other occupations, workers have more flexibility to change industries. This career mobility is common for workers whose skills are needed in many settings. For example, network and computer systems administrators have technical skills that are sought after in more than 200 industries.

This article uses data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to show selected occupations with considerable career mobility. It describes widely distributed occupations in four groups: business and financial operations, computer and mathematics, management, and office and administrative support. Each section includes details about the occupations and their industries of employment. Sources for more information are at the end.

that have jobs for a particular occupation. But what's the difference between an occupation and an industry—and how might they fit together to affect career mobility?

An occupation groups jobs based on the tasks that workers do. For example, jobs for workers who make structures out of wood are classified under the occupation of carpenter.

An industry groups businesses based on the type of product the business makes or on the service it provides. For example, the residential building construction industry consists of businesses that make homes.

Occupational employment may be concentrated in just a few industries or dispersed among many, but workers in almost every occupation have at least some ability to change industries. For example, although nearly half of all jobs for carpenters are in residential or nonresidential building construction, smaller numbers of these jobs are in other industries, including ship and boat building; home furnishings stores; and highway, bridge, and street construction.

The more widely an occupation has jobs in a variety of industries, the more mobile it may be. So, in contrast to carpenters, whose jobs are in relatively few industries, jobs in the occupations highlighted in this article are spread out across hundreds of diverse industries. Workers in these occupations may have

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Occupations, industries, and mobility

As discussed in this article, career mobility may depend on the number of industries

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more mobility and more choices about the type of employer they work for.

The ability to change industries gives workers an opportunity for varied employment. An occupation's specifics may differ from one industry to another. (See box.)

Occupations with options

Many types of employers require workers with knowledge of business and financial operations, computers and mathematics, management, and office and administrative support. Workers in these four groups may have job options in a wide range of industries.

The tables accompanying each of the sections highlight occupations that may offer mobility and their May 2013 employment and median annual wages, according to BLS. The data in the tables do not include self-employed workers. Annual wages show the median for all workers in the occupation—meaning that half of all workers in the occupation earned more than that amount, and half earned less. Compare wages with the median annual wage for all workers: \$35,080 in May 2013.

The accompanying text discusses the occupational groups generally and has additional detail about the three occupations in each table that had the largest numbers of jobs. These details include job descriptions,

Why might industry matter?

Which industry you choose to work in can affect details such as work schedules, wages, benefits, job availability, and job outlook.

Work schedules. The days and times you work might vary from one industry to another. Jobs in schools, for example, usually involve daytime work 10 months of the year. Jobs in hospitals offer both daytime and nighttime shifts, year round.

Wages. As noted in this article, some industries pay better than others for the same occupation. An example is meeting, convention, and event planners. BLS data show that in May 2013, these workers in management, scientific, technical, and consulting services had a median annual wage of \$56,500, while those who worked in restaurants and other eating places had a median annual wage of \$38,060.

Benefits. The availability of health insurance, retirement plans, and other employer-provided benefits vary by industry. In manufacturing, employers paid an average of \$12.19 per hour worked toward employee benefits in December 2013, according to BLS. In leisure and hospitality, where fewer workers receive employer-provided benefits, employer contributions averaged \$2.76.

Job availability. When looking for jobs, you're more likely to find openings in larger industries than in smaller ones. Retail trade, for example, had about 15 million jobs in May 2013, according to BLS data. Utilities—a much smaller industry—had about 540,000 jobs.

Similarly, jobs in some industries are concentrated in certain geographic areas, while others are more widespread. For example, Washington, DC, has a high concentration of federal government jobs. By comparison, jobs in local government are available throughout the United States.

Job outlook. Employment projections vary by industry. Over the 2012–22 decade, for example, BLS projects healthcare and social assistance and professional and business services to add the most new jobs of any industry sectors, for a total of nearly 9 million jobs. In contrast, manufacturing is among the industry sectors with projected declines in employment.

For a graphic illustration of employment projections by industry, see www.bls.gov/ooq/2013/winter/industry.htm, in the winter 2013–14 *Quarterly*.

industry examples, and selected industry wages. Industries that BLS identified as having fewer than 1,000 jobs in an occupation in May 2013 are not included.

Business and financial operations

The success of almost any business depends, at least in part, on its finances and operational efficiency. For this reason, many industries need workers in occupations related to business and financial operations.

As a group, these occupations usually pay well but require formal training. All of the occupations in table 1 had wages that were higher than the median annual wage for all occupations in May 2013. And all of the occupations except for purchasing agents typically require at least a bachelor's degree at the entry level, according to BLS.

Accountants and auditors. Accountants and auditors analyze and prepare financial records. They also offer tax and financial advice and help businesses keep track of expenses to run more efficiently.

Accountants and auditors were employed in more than 280 industries in May 2013,

according to BLS. Accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping, and payroll services had the most jobs for accountants and auditors, about 28 percent of them in May 2013. Other employers include local government, automobile dealers, and general medical and surgical hospitals.

Median annual wages by industry for accountants and auditors in May 2013 ranged from \$50,230 in traveler accommodation to \$89,440 in the federal executive branch. Other industries that pay well for accountants and auditors are securities and commodity contracts intermediation and brokerage, software publishers, and motion picture and video industries.

Management analysts. Also known as program analysts and management consultants, management analysts study business operations and suggest improvements. They also design systems or procedures to help businesses better achieve goals.

In May 2013, there were about 200 industries that employed management analysts. Management, scientific, and technical consulting services had the largest number of these

Table 1: Selected business and financial operations occupations found in many industries, May 2013

Occupation	Employment	Median annual wage
Accountants and auditors	1,168,330	\$65,080
Management analysts	567,840	79,870
Market research analysts and marketing specialists	430,350	60,800
Human resources specialists	426,570	56,630
Purchasing agents, except wholesale, retail, and farm products	284,480	59,780
Training and development specialists	224,110	56,850
Logisticians	120,340	73,400
Compensation, benefits, and job analysis specialists	81,520	59,820
Meeting, convention, and event planners	73,290	46,260
Budget analysts	58,740	70,110

Note: The occupations were selected in part based on the results of an analysis which used the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) to measure how concentrated an occupation is within industries. (Typically, this tool is used to measure market concentration among firms in an industry.) The occupations in the table all had low values under this analysis, meaning that their employment is spread out across industries.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics survey.

jobs, about 27 percent of the total. The federal executive branch; computer systems design and related services; and colleges, universities, and professional schools are among the other employers.

Median annual wages for management analysts in May 2013 ranged from \$54,470 in state government to \$105,110 with software publishers. Computer and peripheral equipment manufacturing; scientific research and development services; and architectural, engineering, and related services also pay well.

Human resources specialists. Businesses hire human resources specialists to handle a variety of duties relating to employees, such as recruitment, training, and benefits administration. Job tasks may include interviewing job applicants, conducting new employee orientation, and processing paperwork for health insurance and retirement benefits.

In May 2013, there were about 260 industries that employed human resources specialists. Employment services accounted for roughly 17 percent of the total jobs in this occupation. Nursing care facilities, depart-

ment stores, and general freight trucking are among the many other employers.

Median annual wages for human resources specialists in May 2013 ranged from \$40,160 in vocational rehabilitation services to \$80,440 in securities and commodity contracts intermediation and brokerage. The federal executive branch, software publishers, and aerospace product and parts manufacturing also pay well.

Computer and mathematics

Because computers are used in most industries, workers in computer-related occupations have many employment options.

Computer and mathematics occupations often pay well: every occupation listed in table 2 had a median annual wage that was higher than the median wage for all occupations. And 7 of the 10 occupations in the table had a median wage that was more than double the median for all occupations.

To enter these occupations, workers typically need at least a bachelor's degree. Computer user support specialists and computer network support specialists are exceptions;

Table 2: Selected computer and mathematics occupations found in many industries, May 2013

Occupation	Employment	Median annual wage
Software developers, applications	643,830	\$92,660
Computer user support specialists	541,250	46,620
Computer systems analysts	507,100	81,190
Network and computer systems administrators	362,310	74,000
Computer network support specialists	165,100	60,180
Computer network architects	141,270	95,380
Database administrators	114,910	78,520
Web developers	112,820	63,160
Information security analysts	78,020	88,590
Operations research analysts	72,680	74,630

Note: The occupations were selected in part based on the results of an analysis which used the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) to measure how concentrated an occupation is within industries. (Typically, this tool is used to measure market concentration among firms in an industry.) The occupations in the table all had low values under this analysis, meaning that their employment is spread out across industries.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics survey.



BLS classifies these two occupations as typically requiring some college education but no degree, plus on-the-job training.

Applications software developers. These workers design and customize computer programs. Job tasks include analyzing user needs, developing and testing software, and creating models and diagrams showing computer programmers how to write software code.

In May 2013, BLS data show, more than 150 industries employed applications software developers. About 34 percent of these jobs were in computer systems design and related services. Applications software developers also work for software publishers, insurance carriers, and wired telecommunications carriers, among other employers.

Median annual wages for applications software developers ranged from \$70,650 in state government to \$117,550 in the other information services industry, which includes Internet publishing, Internet broadcasting, and Web search portals. Other industries that pay well include motion picture and video industries, aerospace product and parts manufactur-

ing, and electronic shopping and mail-order houses.

Computer user support specialists.

These workers offer technical help to computer users. Their job tasks include answering questions about hardware and software and resolving problems related to the use of these technologies.

Computer user support specialists were employed in about 250 industries in May 2013. Computer systems design and related services had about 21 percent of these jobs. Elementary and secondary schools, legal services, and electronics and appliance stores are among the many other employers of these workers.

Median annual wages for computer user support specialists in May 2013 ranged from \$22,530 in office supplies, stationery, and gift stores to \$60,580 in electric power generation, transmission, and distribution. Other industries that pay well for these workers are pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing, securities and commodity contracts intermediation and brokerage, and scientific research and development services.

Computer systems analysts. To help businesses run effectively, these workers recommend updates to computer hardware, software, and procedures. Job tasks include reviewing IT practices with business managers, researching new technologies, and training systems' users.

In May 2013, computer systems analysts were employed in about 180 industry groups. The computer systems design and related services industry accounted for about 30 percent of total jobs in this occupation in May 2013. Insurance carriers, state government, and general medical and surgical hospitals are some of the other employers of computer systems analysts.

Median annual wages for computer systems analysts in May 2013 ranged from \$66,150 in colleges, universities, and professional schools to \$93,790 in securities and commodity contracts intermediation and brokerage. Other industries that pay well are agriculture, construction, and mining machinery manufacturing; natural gas distribution; and aerospace product and parts manufacturing.

Management

Leadership is essential for any type of business. Workers in management occupations provide this leadership in a variety of industries.

Median annual wages for many of the occupations in table 3 were at least three times higher than the median for all occupations in May 2013, according to BLS. But those high wages are due, in part, to the education and experience workers need to become managers. All of the occupations in the table typically require a bachelor's degree and work experience in a related occupation.

The experience required of managers might affect their mobility. A sales manager in pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing, for example, often has experience in the industry as a sales worker before becoming a manager. Therefore, a sales manager in another industry may not have the knowledge needed to work in pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing.

General and operations managers.

These workers have a broad range of duties related to overseeing business activities. Job

Table 3: Selected management occupations found in many industries, May 2013

Occupation	Employment	Median annual wage
General and operations managers	1,973,700	\$96,430
Financial managers	499,320	112,700
Sales managers	352,220	108,540
Administrative services managers	269,500	82,310
Chief executives	248,760	171,610
Marketing managers	174,010	123,220
Human resources managers	110,650	100,800
Public relations and fundraising managers	53,730	98,700
Training and development managers	28,340	98,810
Compensation and benefits managers	17,570	101,490

Note: The occupations were selected in part based on the results of an analysis which used the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) to measure how concentrated an occupation is within industries. (Typically, this tool is used to measure market concentration among firms in an industry.) The occupations in the table all had low values under this analysis, meaning that their employment is spread out across industries.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics survey.

tasks include creating policies, managing budgets, and planning for the future.

General and operations managers is one of the most widely dispersed occupations across industries, with jobs in 290 industries in May 2013. Management of companies and enterprises (an industry that includes corporate offices, regional managing offices, and district headquarters) had about 4 percent of these jobs, the most of any industry. Restaurants and other eating places, building equipment contractors, and grocery stores are among the other employers.

Median annual wages for general and operations managers in May 2013 ranged from \$56,950 in drinking places that serve alcoholic beverages to \$175,440 in securities and commodity contracts intermediation and brokerage. Other industries that pay well include scientific research and development services, software publishers, and oil and gas extraction.

Financial managers. Helping to ensure the fiscal health of a business, these managers oversee money-related matters such as budgets, cash flow, investments, or insurance needs.

In May 2013, financial managers were employed in more than 260 industries. Depository credit intermediation (such as banks and credit unions) had the largest number of these jobs, about 15 percent of the total. Nondepository credit intermediation (such as credit card issuing and sales financing), office administrative services, and offices of physicians are some of the other industries that also employ financial managers.

Median annual wages for financial managers in May 2013 ranged from \$82,480 in individual and family services to \$165,990 in the other financial investment activities industry, which includes investment advice, portfolio management, and venture capital companies. Scientific research and development services; accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping, and payroll services; and software publishers also pay well.

Sales managers. These workers help get products or services to wholesalers and consumers. Sales managers direct teams of sales workers by setting sales quotas and goals, assigning territories, and analyzing performance.

In May 2013, there were about 250 industry groups that employed sales managers.



Management of companies and enterprises accounted for about 9 percent of the total jobs, the most of any industry. Automobile dealers, grocery and related product merchant wholesalers, and agencies, brokerages, and other insurance related activities are among the other employers of sales managers.

Median annual wages for sales managers in May 2013 ranged from \$56,520 in automotive parts, accessories, and tire stores to more than \$187,200 in securities and commodity contracts intermediation and brokerage. Other industries that pay well for these workers are computer and peripheral equipment manufacturing; apparel, piece goods, and notions merchant wholesalers; and scientific research and development services.

Office and administrative support

Businesses of all kinds need clerical or administrative help. Some of the occupations in table 4 had high employment—including three with more than 2 million jobs each in May 2013. Wages in these occupations varied, but 6 of the 10 occupations in the table had a

higher median annual wage than that of all occupations. (All occupations discussed in this section, however, had below-average wages.)

Occupations in the table typically require at least a high school diploma or its equivalent, according to BLS. On-the-job training is an important part of how workers become competent in these occupations.

General office clerks. These workers do a variety of tasks, including photocopying and filing documents, ordering supplies, and answering phones. Responsibilities differ by job and can change daily, depending on the employer's needs.

With more than 2.8 million jobs in May 2013, general office clerks has the largest employment numbers of the occupations discussed in this article. Jobs were dispersed among 290 industries in May 2013. The industries that had the most jobs for office clerks were local government and employment services, with about 6 percent each. Junior colleges, offices of real estate agents and brokers, and automotive repair and maintenance are among the many other employment options.

Table 4: Selected office and administrative support occupations found in many industries, May 2013

Occupation	Employment	Median annual wage
Office clerks, general	2,832,010	\$28,050
Customer service representatives	2,389,580	30,870
Secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive	2,159,000	32,840
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	1,586,380	35,730
Executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants	755,210	49,290
Data entry keyers	207,660	28,470
Payroll and timekeeping clerks	170,400	38,670
Human resources assistants, except payroll and timekeeping	136,960	37,680
Procurement clerks	68,690	38,780
Computer operators	67,450	38,870

Note: The occupations were selected in part based on the results of an analysis which used the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) to measure how concentrated an occupation is within industries. (Typically, this tool is used to measure market concentration among firms in an industry.) The occupations in the table all had low values under this analysis, meaning that their employment is spread out across industries.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics survey.

Median annual wages for these workers ranged from \$21,640 in florists to \$53,840 in postal service. Other industries that pay well include natural gas distribution; wired telecommunications carriers; and electric power generation, transmission, and distribution.

Customer service representatives. Businesses have many types of customers, and these workers help respond to those customers' questions and concerns. Job tasks for these workers include answering phone calls or emails or assisting customers in person.

In May 2013, there were more than 270 industries that employed customer service representatives. Business support services, which includes telemarketing bureaus and other contact centers, had about 10 percent of the jobs. Other employers of customer service representatives include agencies, brokerages, and other insurance related activities; travel arrangement and reservation services; and building material and supplies dealers.

Customer service representatives' median annual wages in May 2013 ranged from \$20,030 in grocery stores to \$47,770 in natural gas distribution. Aerospace product and parts manufacturing, computer and peripheral equipment manufacturing, and semiconductor and other electronic component manufacturing are other industries that pay well.

Secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive. These workers do routine clerical and organizational tasks, such as drafting emails and letters, scheduling appointments, and maintaining files.

In May 2013, there were more than 280 industries that employed secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive. Elementary and secondary schools, the largest employer, accounted for about 10 percent of the jobs. Local government, offices of dentists, and social advocacy organizations are among the many other employers.

Median annual wages for these workers ranged from \$23,380 in personal care services to \$45,970 in the federal executive branch in May 2013. Other industries that pay well

include wired telecommunications carriers; electric power generation, transmission, and distribution; and scientific research and development services.

For more information

To learn more about the occupations in this article, as well as hundreds of others, visit the *Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)* at www.bls.gov/ooq. *OOH* profiles provide occupational descriptions, typical entry requirements, wages, employment outlook, and more.

For detailed information about wages and employment by industry, state, and area, see the occupation profiles available from the Occupational Employment Statistics program at www.bls.gov/oes.

Other recent *Quarterly* articles that describe employment by industries include the following:

- “Working with big data” in the fall 2013 issue at www.bls.gov/ooq/2013/fall/art01.pdf.
- “Powering the nation: Smart grid careers,” also in the fall 2013 issue, at www.bls.gov/ooq/2013/fall/art03.pdf.
- “From script to screen: Careers in film production” in the summer 2013 issue at www.bls.gov/ooq/2013/summer/art02.pdf.
- “Resources work: Careers in mining, oil, and gas” in the spring 2013 issue at www.bls.gov/ooq/2013/spring/art02.pdf.
- “Careers in geothermal energy: Power from below” in the winter 2012-13 issue at www.bls.gov/ooq/2012/winter/art02.pdf.

And for an analysis of occupational concentration by industry, see Audrey Watson's “Measuring occupational concentration by industry” in *Beyond the Numbers: Employment and Unemployment* at www.bls.gov/opub/btn/volume-3/measuring-occupational-concentration-by-industry.htm.

