

Where are the jobs in my field?



Using Occupational Employment Statistics data in your job search

When searching for jobs, people typically look for information about where the jobs are in their field. Data from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics can also serve as a useful resource for jobseekers. OES data are valuable because they show the areas and industries with the highest employment for distinct occupations and their wages. These data, updated annually, are available online at <http://www.bls.gov/oes>. There are many ways to use these free, publicly available data; here are some tips on how to use OES data to focus your job search:

Focus on your qualifications.

On the OES website, you can search a comprehensive list of 800 occupations to find those related to your interests or experience. For example, under “Protective Service Occupations” you will find occupations such as police officers, security guards, correctional officers, and private investigators. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* has additional information on educational requirements, working conditions, and employment projections for more than 250 occupations.

Alternatively, if you are interested in working in a particular industry, you can find information on the variety of jobs in that industry. For example, jobs in the healthcare industry include orderlies, surgeons, and medical records technicians and jobs in education include teachers, school bus drivers, and education administrators.

Target your search.

Many occupations are found predominantly in specific industries. For example, 73 percent of paralegals worked in the legal services industry and 15 percent worked for the government. With this knowledge, a jobseeker, who may have originally focused on finding openings for this occupation in the legal services industry, can broaden the scope of his or her search to include government employers as well. It is also important to remember that different industries may have different average wages. If a good salary is a priority, apply to jobs in the sectors that pay higher wages.

Look into wages.

Wages vary for numerous reasons, including differing skills, experience, geographic locations, and industry. Although jobseekers may be tempted to move to areas where wages are significantly higher, they should consider cost of living before packing up. For example, the New York metropolitan area may have higher-than-average wages and employment, but the high cost of living can offset higher wages.

Location matters!

Although larger metropolitan areas tend to attract jobseekers because of high employment levels, some occupations have higher employment levels in smaller areas. For example, aspiring zoologists and wildlife biologists could search for jobs in Seattle, Portland, and San Diego, which represent three locations with the highest levels of employment for this occupation. Meanwhile, computer software engineers for systems software could include the Washington, DC, metropolitan area; Boston; and San Jose, CA, in their job search to focus on where employment levels are highest.

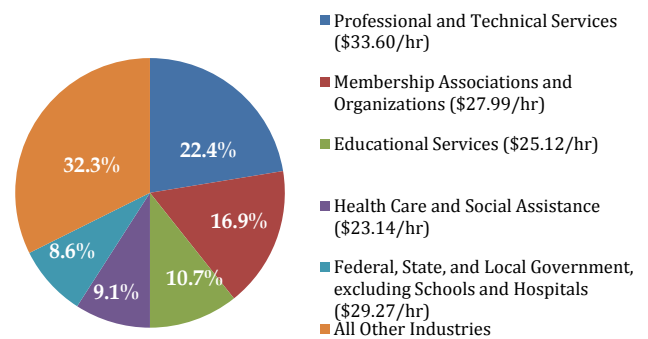
To see these techniques put to use in a real-life situation, we can use the example of Amelia, a psychology major trying to find a career path after graduating from college. She might consider one of the following occupations, which many psychology majors enter:

Occupation	Employment	Mean annual wage
Public relations specialists	242,670	\$59,370
Social and human service assistants	344,050	29,880
Social science research assistants	21,720	40,340
Market research analysts	226,410	67,500

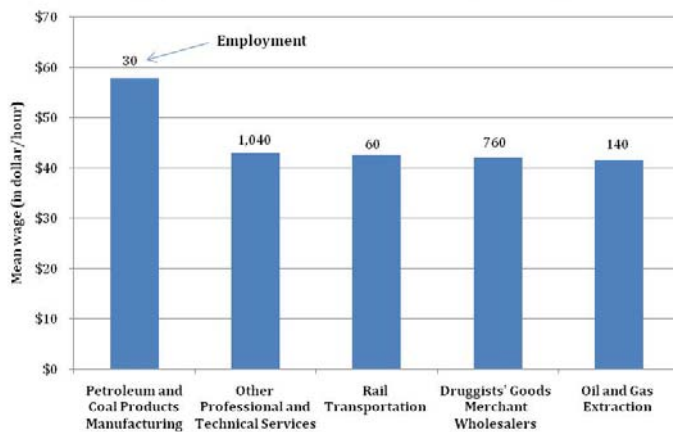
After some thought, Amelia decides that she would like to know more about being a public relations specialist. She consults the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* to understand the qualifications, responsibilities, and job outlook for this occupation.

By visiting the OES website, Amelia can find the industries with the highest employment and the wages as shown for public relations specialists in the chart on the right.

Employment by Industry for Public Relations Specialists, May 2009



Highest Paying Industries for Public Relations Specialists, May 2009



Now Amelia wants to know which industries pay the highest. On the website, she will find the information in the graph on the left which depicts the industries with the highest wage estimates. Industries with higher wages do not necessarily employ large numbers of individuals. In fact, the employment in high paying industries is sometimes much smaller than employment in industries with average wages.

Finally, Amelia wants to know the employment in her state or area, or the areas with the highest employment for her occupation. The areas with the highest employment for public relations specialists are shown in the table to the right.

Metropolitan area	Employment	Mean hourly wage
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	23,290	\$32.99
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	15,340	43.41
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	10,840	31.61
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	7,670	30.27
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	7,020	29.27

To get started, visit: www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_stru.htm. Click on an occupation to see its profile, which includes the industries, states, and areas with the highest pay and employment concentrations.