Opportunity Occupations: Alabama
Exploring Economic Opportunity for Workers in the Southeast

What Are Opportunity Occupations?
Opportunity occupations are occupations that are generally accessible to workers without a bachelor’s degree and that pay more than the national median wage ($41,950 in 2020), adjusted for local cost-of-living differences. They offer economic opportunity for middle-skill workers—those who have finished a high school degree but have not completed college—and for workers in certain occupations who do not have a high school degree.

What Are the Jobs?
Top 10 Opportunity Occupations
Median Annual Wage and Number of Employed in 2020

* Registered Nurses - $59K, 48,850 employed
* Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers - $42K, 32,310 employed
* Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers - $62K, 14,500 employed
* Industrial Machinery Mechanics - $51K, 13,020 employed
* Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers - $60K, 12,040 employed
* Police and Sheriff’s Patrol Officers - $46K/11,820 employed
* Electricians - $47K/9,990 employed
* Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers - $64K/9,970 employed
* HVAC Mechanics and Installers - $43K/6,740 employed
* Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters - $46K/6,220 employed
### Where Are the Jobs?

**Selected Metropolitan Areas**
**Top Opportunity Occupations, Median Wage, and Number of Employed in 2020**

#### Mobile
- **35%** of workers are employed in opportunity occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Median Wage</th>
<th>Number of Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>$57K</td>
<td>5,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>$50K</td>
<td>1,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers</td>
<td>$53K</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</td>
<td>$59K</td>
<td>1,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers</td>
<td>$73K</td>
<td>1,080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Birmingham-Hoover
- **33%** of workers are employed in opportunity occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Median Wage</th>
<th>Number of Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>$61K</td>
<td>16,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</td>
<td>$48K</td>
<td>8,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police and Sheriff’s Patrol Officers</td>
<td>$54K</td>
<td>3,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers</td>
<td>$67K</td>
<td>2,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses</td>
<td>$44K</td>
<td>2,750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Opportunity Occupations in Alabama

**Distribution of Employment by Wages in 2020**

- **42.3%** Lower Wage Employment
- **33.3%** Opportunity Employment
- **24.4%** Higher Wage, BA Degree Required
Educational Attainment in Alabama

How Many Pursue Higher Education?

Educational Attainment for People over 25 (2019)

- Less than high school: 13.8%
- High school: 30.8%
- Some college, no degree: 21.4%
- Associate’s degree: 8.5%
- Bachelor’s degree: 15.9%
- Graduate or professional degree: 9.5%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR PEOPLE between 25 and 65 (2019)

- Less than high school: 11.1%
- High school: 6.1%
- Some college or associate’s degree: 4.6%
- Bachelor’s degree or higher: 2.1%

MEDIAN EARNINGS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR PEOPLE OVER 25 (2019)

- Less than high school: $22.1K
- High school: $29.9K
- Some college or associate’s degree: $33.6K
- Bachelor’s degree: $50.5K
- Graduate or professional degree: $60.8K

Sources:
- US Bureau of Economic Analysis: Regional Price Parities (2020)
- US Census Bureau: American Community Survey: 2019 one-year estimates

For more information visit us at atlantafed.org/opportunityoccupationsmonitor

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