Opportunity Occupations: Mississippi
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

- **$60K**
  - Registered Nurses
  - 28,800 employed

- **$44K**
  - Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
  - 21,900 employed

- **$44K**
  - Supervisors of Office and Admin. Workers
  - 11,950 employed

- **$50K**
  - Sales Reps, Wholesale and Manufacturing
  - 8,080 employed

- **$58K**
  - Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
  - 6,510 employed

- **$51K/5,120 employed**
  - Electricians

- **$50K/4,420 employed**
  - Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers

- **$48K/5,060 employed**
  - Industrial Machinery Mechanics

- **$43K/3,360 employed**
  - Lab Technologists and Technicians

- **$43K/2,800 employed**
  - Machinists
Where Are the Jobs?

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

Jackson
30.3%
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>$65K</td>
<td>8,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</td>
<td>$49K</td>
<td>6,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses</td>
<td>$43K</td>
<td>2,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers</td>
<td>$71K</td>
<td>1,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctional Officers and Jailers</td>
<td>$43K</td>
<td>1,130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gulfport-Biloxi-Pascagoula
26.9%
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>$63K</td>
<td>3,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors of Office and Admin. Workers</td>
<td>$47K</td>
<td>1,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses</td>
<td>$44K</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers</td>
<td>$76K</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Reps, Wholesale and Manufacturing</td>
<td>$55K</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Opportunity Occupations in Mississippi
Distribution of Employment by Wages in 2020

- **44.4%** Lower Wage Employment
- **32.8%** Opportunity Employment
- **22.8%** Higher Wage, BA Degree Required
Educational Attainment in Mississippi

How Many Pursue Higher Education?

Educational Attainment for People over 25 (2019)

- Less than high school: 15.5%
- High school: 30.4%
- Some college or associate’s degree: 22.3%
- Associate’s degree: 9.8%
- Bachelor’s degree: 13.7%
- Graduate or professional degree: 8.4%

Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment for People between 25 and 65 (2019)

- Less than high school: 13.6%
- High school: 7.6%
- Some college or associate’s degree: 5.4%
- Bachelor’s degree or higher: 2.8%

Median Earnings by Educational Attainment for People over 25 (2019)

- Less than high school: $21.9K
- High school: $27.4K
- Some college or associate’s degree: $31.7K
- Bachelor’s degree: $43.5K
- Graduate or professional degree: $55.5K

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