

# Occupational Profile: Dental Hygienist

## GENERAL OCCUPATION DESCRIPTION

Clean teeth and examine oral areas, head, and neck for signs of oral disease. May educate patients on oral hygiene, take and develop X-rays, or apply fluoride or sealants.

*Specific tasks include:*

- Clean calcareous deposits, accretions, and stains from teeth and beneath margins of gums, using dental instruments.
- Feel and visually examine gums for sores and signs of disease.
- Chart conditions of decay and disease for diagnosis and treatment by dentist.
- Feel lymph nodes under patient's chin to detect swelling or tenderness that could indicate presence of oral cancer.
- Apply fluorides and other cavity preventing agents to arrest dental decay.
- Examine gums, using probes, to locate periodontal recessed gums and signs of gum disease.
- Expose and develop x-ray film.
- Provide clinical services and health education to improve and maintain oral health of school children.
- Remove excess cement from coronal surfaces of teeth.
- Make impressions for study casts.

Source: O\*NET online. <http://online.onetcenter.org>

## REQUIRED EDUCATION

As shown in the table (right), 77% of surveyed employers required a 2-year degree or the equivalent for this occupation. The remaining 23% reportedly required a 4-year diploma or more. No employers reported a high school diploma or less to be sufficient.

Required Education	
Percent of Employers Requiring HS Diploma or Less	0%
Percent of Employers Requiring 2-Year Degree or Equiv	77%
Percent of Employers Requiring BS Diploma or More	23%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## WAGES

Dental Hygienist is generally considered a medium to high-wage occupation, with possibility for wage advancement with experience. This occupation is paid substantially higher in the Greater Phoenix MSA and Arizona as compared with the overall United States. This is especially true at the lower percentiles, indicating excellent entry level opportunity for wage earning.

Location	Pay Period	2005				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$18.49	\$23.62	\$29.28	\$34.36	\$41.18
	Yearly	\$38,500	\$49,100	\$60,900	\$71,500	\$85,700
Greater Phoenix MSA	Hourly	\$28.74	\$31.02	\$34.82	\$39.95	\$43.04
	Yearly	\$59,808	\$64,553	\$72,460	\$83,136	\$89,566
Arizona	Hourly	\$28.69	\$30.70	\$34.05	\$38.93	\$42.58
	Yearly	\$59,700	\$63,900	\$70,800	\$81,000	\$88,600

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

As shown in the table to right, a comparison of wages for this occupation by State reveals Arizona ranks 7<sup>h</sup> in terms of wages.

RANK	Location	Median Wage 2005	
		Hourly	Annual
1	Alaska	\$41.06	\$85,400
2	Washington	\$39.45	\$82,100
3	California	\$38.13	\$79,300
4	Nevada	\$35.70	\$74,300
5	Colorado	\$35.59	\$74,000
6	Virginia	\$34.30	\$71,300
7	ARIZONA	\$34.05	\$70,800

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## EMPLOYMENT

As shown in the table below, this occupation has a projected 71% growth over 10 years (between 2003 and 2013) for the Greater Phoenix MSA. There is an average projected 102 job openings each year, comprised of 91 new jobs and 11 positions vacated by individuals leaving the field (due to retirement, death, career changes, or other reasons).

	10-YEAR CHANGE			AVERAGE ANNUAL		
	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings	Growth	Separations
United States	2004	2014				
Dental Hygienist	1,269	2,174	71%	102	n/a	n/a
Arizona	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings	Growth	Separations
	2002	2012				
Dental Hygienist	1,680	2,880	72%	130	n/a	n/a
Greater Phoenix MSA	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings	Growth	Separations
	2003	2013				
Dental Hygienist	1,269	2,174	71%	102	91	11

Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.  
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

An additional source of information regarding this occupation can be provided by analysis of employer survey data collected for the Maricopa County Community Colleges by the ERISS Corporation in 2004. As shown, the ERISS survey data shows a projected 1-year growth rate of 1%, which is markedly lower than the average of 7.1% per year reflected by the BLS data above. However, the ERISS data could be considered more indicative of the true trend, as it asks employers only to project 1 year out, and also interviewed more local employers than the BLS survey.

Additionally, the ERISS data provides an indicator of turnover for this occupation, which is reported to be 5%. This is low for occupations within the Health Services industry.

ERISS Occupational Survey Data (2004)			
Greater Phoenix MSA	Growth	Turnover	Demand
Dental Hygienist	1.0%	5.0%	6.0%

Source: 2004 ERISS occupational survey

**Comparison of employment projections for top five regions for Dental Hygienists**

As shown in the table to right, a between state comparison reveals Arizona ranks first in terms of projected 10-year growth for this occupation between 2002 and 2012 (70%).

RANK	Location	Employment		Percent Change
		2002	2012	
1	ARIZONA	1,680	2,880	72%
2	Georgia	4,070	6,680	64%
3	California	16,600	26,200	58%
4	Idaho	980	1,540	57%
5	Tennessee	2,290	3,570	56%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Geo-Location Overlay of Employers with 10 or More Employees that Potentially Employ Occupation (n = 150)

