

Occupational Profile: Medical Assistants

GENERAL OCCUPATION DESCRIPTION

Perform administrative and certain clinical duties under the direction of physician. Administrative duties may include scheduling appointments, maintaining medical records, billing, and coding for insurance purposes. Clinical duties may include taking and recording vital signs and medical histories, preparing patients for examination, drawing blood, and administering medications as directed by physician.

Specific tasks include:

- Interview patients to obtain medical information and measure their vital signs, weight, and height.
- Show patients to examination rooms and prepare them for the physician.
- Record patients' medical history, vital statistics and information such as test results in medical records.
- Prepare and administer medications as directed by a physician.
- Collect blood, tissue or other laboratory specimens, log the specimens, and prepare them for testing.
- Explain treatment procedures, medications, diets and physicians' instructions to patients.
- Help physicians examine and treat patients, handing them instruments and materials or performing such tasks as giving injections or removing sutures.
- Authorize drug refills and provide prescription information to pharmacies.
- Prepare treatment rooms for patient examinations, keeping the rooms neat and clean.
- Clean and sterilize instruments and dispose of contaminated supplies.

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

REQUIRED EDUCATION

As shown in the table (right), the great majority of employers (92.8%) reportedly required a 2-year degree or the equivalent for this occupation.

Required Education	
Percent of Employers Requiring HS Diploma or Less	6.4%
Percent of Employers Requiring 2-Year Degree or Equiv	92.8%
Percent of Employers Requiring BS Diploma or More	0.8%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

WAGES

Medical Assistant is generally considered a low to medium-wage occupation, with above average possibility for wage advancement with experience. This occupation is paid comparably in the Greater Phoenix MSA as compared with the overall United States.

Location	Pay Period	2005				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$8.81	\$10.17	\$12.19	\$14.49	\$16.96
	Yearly	\$18,300	\$21,200	\$25,400	\$30,100	\$35,300
Greater Phoenix MSA	Hourly	\$8.86	\$10.06	\$12.35	\$14.31	\$16.15
	Yearly	\$18,438	\$20,935	\$25,700	\$29,779	\$33,608
Arizona	Hourly	\$9.29	\$10.55	\$12.30	\$14.63	\$17.36
	Yearly	\$19,300	\$21,900	\$25,600	\$30,400	\$36,100

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

As shown in the table to right, a comparison of wages for this occupation by State reveals Arizona ranks 21st in terms of median wages.

RANK	Location	Median Wage 2005	
		Hourly	Annual
1	Columbia	\$15.64	\$32,500
2	Alaska	\$14.83	\$30,800
2	Massachusetts	\$14.83	\$30,800
3	Washington	\$14.51	\$30,200
4	Connecticut	\$14.50	\$30,200
5	Hawaii	\$13.92	\$29,000
21	ARIZONA	\$12.30	\$25,600

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The table below provides a comparison of wages by industry for the Greater Phoenix MSA (2005). As shown, the main employment sector (Ambulatory Health Care Services) generally pays more than other sectors.

Wages by Industry: Greater Phoenix MSA (2005)	Rounded Employment	Mean Wage	10th Percentile Wage	25th Percentile Wage	Median Wage	75th Percentile Wage	90th Percentile Wage
Ambulatory Health Care Services	4,110	\$13.38	\$9.57	\$11.02	\$12.95	\$15.67	\$18.34
Hospitals	670	\$12.10	\$9.26	\$10.35	\$11.89	\$13.84	\$15.89
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	30	\$11.56	\$7.74	\$8.80	\$12.22	\$13.43	\$14.22

EMPLOYMENT

As shown in the table below, this occupation has a projected 72% growth over 10 years (between 2003 and 2013) for the Greater Phoenix MSA. There is an average projected 648 job openings each year, comprised of 515 new jobs and 133 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				
Medical Assistant	387,100	588,600	52%	27,310	n/a	n/a
Arizona	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings	Growth	Separations
	2002	2012				
Medical Assistant	10,950	19,540	78%	1,060	n/a	n/a
Greater Phoenix MSA	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings	Growth	Separations
	2003	2013				
Medical Assistant	7,178	12,324	72%	648	515	133

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 6%, which is comparable to the average of 7.2% per year reflected by the BLS data above.

Additionally, the ERISS data provides an indicator of turnover for this occupation, which is reported to be 23%. This high turnover rate is somewhat typical for lower paying occupations within the Health Services industry.

ERISS Occupational Survey Data (2004)			
Greater Phoenix MSA	Growth	Turnover	Demand
Medical Assistant	6.0%	23.0%	29.0%

Source: 2004 ERISS occupational survey

Comparison of employment projections for top five regions for Medical Assistants

As shown in the table to right, a statewide comparison reveals the State of Arizona ranks 2nd in terms of projected 10-year growth for this occupation between 2002 and 2012 (78%).

RANK	Location	Employment		Percent Change
		2002	2012	
1	Idaho	950	1,730	81%
2	ARIZONA	10,950	19,540	78%
3	Arkansas	1,200	2,070	72%
4	Georgia	11,130	18,770	69%
4	Utah	3,300	5,590	69%
4	Virginia	7,210	12,150	69%
5	New Hampshire	1,060	1,770	68%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Employment by Industry

The table below shows the industries that most commonly employ Medical Assistants, and the proportion of employment accounted for at the national level. As shown, Offices of Physicians account for the great majority of employment.

Percent of Employment Nationally by Industry	
Percent	Industry
58.9%	Offices of Physicians
10.3%	General Medical & Surgical Hospitals
4.7%	Offices of Chiropractors
4.6%	Outpatient Care Centers, Except Mental Health
3.4%	Office of Optometrists
2.5%	Offices of all Other Health Care Practitioners

Geo-Location Overlay of Employers with 25 or More Employees that Potentially Employ Occupation (n = 124)

