



# OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS REVISITED

Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time

## FORT COLLINS, CO

New research explores the economic opportunity available in 121 of the largest metro areas in the U.S. The report defines **opportunity employment** as jobs accessible to workers without a bachelor's degree and typically paying above the national annual median wage (\$37,690), adjusted up or down to reflect the local cost of living. Occupations characterized by a high level of opportunity employment are called **opportunity occupations**. Nationally, the research finds that 21.6 percent of total employment can be classified as opportunity employment — a figure that varies greatly across the metro areas analyzed. In this region and nationally, the largest opportunity occupations represent a true cross section of the jobs available in today's economy.

### SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION AND WAGES



**88** RANK OUT OF 121 METRO AREAS

### TOP 10 OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS IN 2017

1

#### REGISTERED NURSES

Annual Median Wage: **\$68,600**  
Opportunity Employment: **1,800**

2

#### HEAVY AND TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$41,100**  
Opportunity Employment: **1,200**

3

#### PLUMBERS, PIPEFITTERS, AND STEAMFITTERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$48,400**  
Opportunity Employment: **1,100**

4

#### BOOKKEEPING, ACCOUNTING, AND AUDITING CLERKS

Annual Median Wage: **\$39,100**  
Opportunity Employment: **1,100**

5

#### SUPERVISORS OF RETAIL SALES WORKERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$43,500**  
Opportunity Employment: **900**

6

#### AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE TECHNICIANS AND MECHANICS

Annual Median Wage: **\$49,100**  
Opportunity Employment: **800**

7

#### CARPENTERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$44,800**  
Opportunity Employment: **800**

8

#### SALES REPRESENTATIVES, WHOLESALE AND MANUFACTURING

Annual Median Wage: **\$58,000**  
Opportunity Employment: **800**

9

#### ELECTRICIANS

Annual Median Wage: **\$56,500**  
Opportunity Employment: **700**

10

#### GENERAL AND OPERATIONS MANAGERS

Annual Median Wage: **\$95,700**  
Opportunity Employment: **700**



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF PHILADELPHIA

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF CLEVELAND



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF ATLANTA

Sources: Authors' calculations using data from BLS Occupational Employment Statistics (May 2017), Burning Glass Technologies (2015–2017), BEA Regional Price Parities (2016), and American Community Survey Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (2012–2016). Values are rounded to the nearest 100. Occupations are ranked on unrounded opportunity employment values.

For more information, read "Opportunity Occupations Revisited: Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time" by Kyle Fee, Keith Wardrip, and Lisa Nelson and published by the Federal Reserve Banks of Cleveland and Philadelphia, 2019 (available at [www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/publications/special-reports](http://www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/publications/special-reports)). The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia, Cleveland, Atlanta, or the Federal Reserve System.