

Ophthalmic Laboratory Technician

■ Job Description

Ophthalmic laboratory technicians, also known as manufacturing opticians, optical mechanics, or optical goods workers, cut, grind, edge, and finish lenses and fabricate eyewear. Duties include transcribing prescriptions written by an ophthalmologist or optometrist, selecting appropriate lens forms, and processing the materials to meet the prescription.

■ Job Settings

Wholesale and retail optical laboratories and offices of ophthalmologists, optometrists, and dispensing opticians

■ Projected Need

Nationally, employment of ophthalmic laboratory technicians is expected to grow more slowly than average through 2010. In Illinois, a decline in employment is expected.

The number of jobs at manufacturing companies is expected to increase slowly. Many of these companies are purchasing machines that need little human control. In the retail trade, jobs are expected to decrease.

Middle age is usually the time when most people need to buy corrective lenses. The population of middle-aged and older individuals is expected to increase in the next decade. This should increase the need for lens grinders. Demand for these workers is also related to fashion trends, which influence how many pairs of glasses people buy. Currently, consumers are buying different glasses for different occasions, such as prescriptive sunglasses.

Job openings will occur as current workers retire or leave the occupation. Since this occupation is small, the number of openings will also be small.

In Illinois, there were about 2,650 people employed in this small occupation in 2000.

■ Salaries

Nationally, the median wage for this occupation is \$10.26 per hour. In Illinois, wages range from \$8.54

per hour for beginning technicians to \$11.40 per hour for those with experience. Median wage is \$10.19 per hour.

Some workers belong to unions. These workers tend to earn higher wages than nonunion workers.

Wages also vary by area of the country.

Technicians who work in eastern and western states tend to earn more than those in southern states.

■ Related Careers

Other precision production occupations include biomedical equipment technician, dental laboratory technician, orthotics technician, and prosthetics technician.

■ Differences in Training

Training is available on the job, in vocational-technical institutes and in community colleges. Training programs include instruction in optical theory, surfacing and lens finishing, and reading and applying prescriptions. Programs vary in length from six months to one year.

■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/> You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.

[Ophthalmic Laboratory Technology](#)

■ Resources

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