



CAREER

22 Highest-Paying Trade Jobs In Demand in 2022

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Written by [Mint](#)

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11 min read

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You don't need a degree to have a rewarding career that [pays well](#). As a matter of fact, pursuing a trade job is a common option for those who choose not to go to college or university.

Whether you set your sights on following a trade job or you're still unsure about your future, we've compiled a list of the highest-paying trade jobs to guide you toward what relatively degree-free career is right for you.

See Average U.S. Salaries

What Is a Trade Job

In a nutshell, trade jobs are positions that don't usually require a Bachelor's degree. Instead, they require specific training—whether it's from a vocational school, on-the-job training, or apprenticeships.

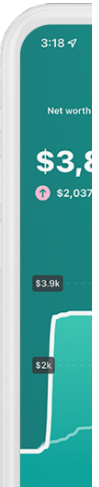
Unlike a typical four-year college, trade school usually takes less time to complete—from eight weeks to two years—and you participate in a more hands-on training program to qualify you for the job. In some cases, aspiring trade workers will do a couple of years of apprenticeships for experience-based education.

Commonly, trade jobs will have a physical component that comes with the work, such as lifting objects and using manual tools. Additionally, some trade jobs can be hazardous and sometimes repetitive.



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TRADE JOB

- Specific technical education
- 8 weeks to 2 years
- Earn a certificate or associate's degree

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE

- Broad education
- Typically 4 years
- Earn a bachelor's degree

Highest-Paying Trade Jobs

Whether you're set on going to trade school or are still [exploring your options](#), knowing how much you could be getting paid for a trade job can be beneficial for planning your future. Here are the highest-paid trade jobs in 2022:

Trade Job	Average Yearly Salary	Job Growth Rate (2020-2030)
Power plant operator	\$103,000	-13.6%
Elevator mechanic	\$99,500	6.1%
Electric lineman	\$85,000	1.3%
Construction manager	\$73,500	11.5%
Nuclear medicine technician	\$69,000	7.8%
Aircraft technician	\$68,500	11.8%
Radiation therapist	\$68,500	9.1%
Millwright	\$65,500	10.3%
Ultrasound technologist	\$62,500	19%
Boilermaker	\$61,000	-1%
Pipefitter	\$60,000	5%
Real estate appraiser	\$59,500	4.4%
Construction inspector	\$57,500	-2.9%
Electronics technician	\$57,000	2%
Electrician	\$56,000	9.1%

Respiratory therapist	\$56,000	23%
Dental hygienist	\$54,500	11.2%
Landscape designer	\$50,500	-0.3%
HVAC technician	\$45,000	5%
IT support specialist	\$42,500	7.5%
Cable technician	\$39,500	-0.7%
Solar energy system installer	\$37,000	52.1%

1. Power Plant Operator

As part of a growing field, [power plant operators](#) are responsible for maintaining electricity generating equipment. Working in rotating shifts—sometimes during nights, weekends, and holidays—power plant operators are essential to the nation’s energy chain. Their primary duties consist of reading meters, calibrating equipment, and manipulating switches, breakers, and valves to ensure that the equipment is operating smoothly.

- **Average salary:** \$103,000
- **Requirements:**
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - College or vocational school (recommended)
 - Extensive on-the-job training
 - U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission license

2. Elevator Mechanic

[Elevator mechanics](#) are responsible for repairing, maintaining, and installing elevators. These specialized professionals need stamina,

strength, and the ability to work at heights. They are tasked with replacing faulty parts and testing and inspecting equipment to ensure that elevators are functioning properly and safely.

- **Average salary:** \$99,500
- **Requirements:**
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Four-year apprenticeship program
 - State license

3. Electric Lineman

If you don't mind working at heights for most of your day, you might consider becoming an [electric lineman](#). Also known as power line technicians, they maintain, repair, and install electric power lines and electrical distribution equipment. This job is also considered dangerous due to the height and high-voltage equipment, along with working outside in all weather conditions.

- **Average salary:** \$85,000
- **Requirements:**
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Three-year apprenticeship
 - On-the-job training
 - Certifications (recommended)

4. Construction Manager

If you have great leadership and communication skills, you might consider a career as a [construction manager](#). Tasked with supervising construction projects, construction managers oversee projects from start to finish by scheduling contractors, addressing problems, and preparing budgets.

- **Average salary:** \$73,500
- **Requirements:**
 - Bachelor's degree (recommended)
 - One-year on-the-job training
 - State license

5. Nuclear Medicine Technician



Are you interested in the medical field? [Nuclear medicine technicians](#) work in hospitals, medical labs, and care centers to prepare radiopharmaceutical drugs and administer them to patients for imaging or treatment. They also support patients by explaining procedures and operating imaging equipment.

- **Average salary:** \$69,000
- **Requirements:**
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Associate's or bachelor's degree (recommended)
 - State license

6. Aircraft Technician

If you like planes—but not necessarily flying them—you should consider becoming an [aircraft technician](#). As an aircraft technician, your job is to perform maintenance and repairs on aircraft with the help of diagnostic equipment. Some other tasks include inspecting aircraft, repairing components, installing instrument panels, and keeping records of maintenance.

- **Average salary:** \$68,500
- **Requirements:**
 - Part 147 FAA-approved aviation maintenance technician school
 - Associate's degree (recommended)
 - On-the-job training
 - Airframe mechanics and/or powerplant mechanics certification

7. Radiation Therapist

Combining their technical and interpersonal skills, [radiation therapists](#) treat cancer and other diseases in patients by administering radiation therapy. They also explain procedures, operating treatment machines, keeping records, and monitoring patients. Radiation therapists usually work in hospitals, outpatient care centers, and physician offices.

- **Average salary:** \$68,500
- **Requirements:**
 - College or vocational school (recommended)
 - Radiation therapy certificate program
 - American Registry of Radiologic Technologists certification
 - State license

8. Millwright

[Millwrights](#), also known as industrial mechanics, are responsible for repairing, maintaining, assembling, and moving machinery in construction sites, factories, and power plants. Their other tasks include replacing defective parts, disassembling machines, and cleaning and lubricating equipment.

- **Average salary:** \$65,500
- **Requirements:**
 - High School diploma or equivalent
 - Four-year apprenticeship program
 - On-the-job training

9. Ultrasound Technologist



Also known as diagnostic medical sonographers, [ultrasound technologists](#) operate imaging equipment to conduct tests and help diagnose medical conditions. They can specialize in imaging the cardiovascular system, reproductive health, and pediatric care. Ultrasound technologists prepare and maintain diagnostic equipment, prepare patients for procedures, and analyze diagnostic information.

- **Average salary:** \$62,500
- **Requirements:**
 - Associate's degree or postsecondary certificate
 - Professional certification
 - Basic life support certification (recommended)

10. Boilermaker

[Boilermakers](#) maintain, repair, and assemble boilers and large containers for buildings, factories, and ships. This labor-intensive job requires physical stamina and attention to safety precautions, and often outside in all weather conditions. Boilermakers are also tasked with testing boilers for leaks, replacing damaged parts, reading blueprints, and cleaning vats.

- **Average salary:** \$61,000
- **Requirements:**
 - High School diploma or equivalent
 - Four-year apprenticeship program
 - State license

11. Pipefitter

[Pipefitters](#) are responsible for piping systems in constructions, commercial and residential areas—from the blueprints to installation. On a normal day, pipefitters install and maintain low- and high-pressure piping systems. They also thread, cut, and troubleshoot malfunctioning pipes.

- **Average salary:** \$60,000
- **Requirements:**
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Vocational school

- Four or five-year apprenticeship program
- State license

12. Real Estate Appraiser

[Real estate appraisers](#) are responsible for providing the estimated value of real estate, such as a building, land, and personal property. This is a job for people with great attention to detail and interpersonal skills since they assist people who own or manage properties. Some of their tasks include preparing financial estimates of properties, evaluating issues that affect their value, inspecting properties, and preparing reports.

- **Average salary:** \$58,500
- **Requirements:**
 - Bachelor's degree (recommended)
 - On-the-job training
 - State license

13. Construction Inspector

[Construction inspectors](#) spend most of their time on construction sites inspecting building structures, plumbing, and electrical. They review building plans, monitor construction sites, verify alignment, leveling, and elevation, as well as issue violation notices and stop-work orders.

- **Average salary:** \$57,500
- **Requirements:**
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - On-the-job training
 - State license

14. Electronics Technician

If math is your forte and you like working with electronics, this might be the job for you. [Electronics technicians](#) modify, test, and repair electronic components, products, and equipment. They work together with electrical engineers to troubleshoot and replace equipment components, upgrade software systems, and diagnose defects.

- **Average salary:** \$57,000
- **Requirements:**
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Technical school
 - Apprenticeship program
 - Certifications (recommended)

15. Electrician



As an [electrician](#), you will install, maintain and fix electrical power, lighting, and communication and control systems in buildings. Some common tasks include reading blueprints and technical

diagrams, inspecting transformers and circuit breakers, replacing wiring and equipment, and using testing devices to identify problems.

- **Average salary:** \$56,000
- **Requirements:**
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Technical school
 - Four or five-year apprenticeship program
 - State license

16. Respiratory Therapist

[Respiratory therapists](#) care for patients who have difficulty breathing, such as chronic respiratory disease, asthma, or emphysema. Treating patients ranging from premature infants to elderly patients, they connect patients, assess respiratory needs, administer diagnostics tests, and provide appropriate treatments. Respiratory therapists can also provide emergency care to patients who have suffered from a heart attack, shock, or drowning.

- **Average salary:** \$56,000
- **Requirements:**
 - Associate's degree
 - Vocational school
 - State license

17. Dental Hygienist

Even if you were scared of the dentist as a kid, this is still a high-paying trade job to consider. [Dental hygienists](#), who work under the supervision of a dentist, examine patients for signs of oral diseases and provide preventive care. Some of their tasks include educating

patients about oral health, removing plaque, applying fluoride, and taking x-rays.

- **Average salary:** \$54,500
- **Requirements:**
 - Associate's degree or technical school
 - State license
 - CPR certification

18. Landscape Designer

Working as a [landscape designer](#) is for those who love the outdoors and being creative. Landscape designers develop landscaping plans for parks and outdoor spaces with features such as water fountains, walkways, ponds, and gardens. Some of their tasks include consulting with clients to assess budgets and needs, presenting different design ideas, and evaluating drainage, vegetation, and soil.

- **Average salary:** \$50,500
- **Requirements:**
 - Bachelor's degree
 - On-the-job training
 - State license

19. HVAC Technician



As an [HVAC technician](#), your job is to install, maintain, and repair ventilation, refrigeration, heating, air-conditioning systems. They also repair larger industrial units, smaller residential units, and are tasked with changing filters, installing heat pumps, performing maintenance, and upgrading equipment. They not only help with making the home environment more pleasant but also help save energy and improve air quality.

- **Average salary:** \$45,000
- **Requirements:**
 - Technical school
 - On-the-job training
 - Apprenticeship program
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) certification

20. IT Support Specialist

If you have a passion for technology and problem solving, you may consider becoming an [IT support specialist](#). They can work at stores, online, or through the phone, and help people by offering technical support. This support can range from troubleshooting

problems and performing routine maintenance to answering questions and providing network support.

- **Average salary:** \$42,500
- **Requirements:**
 - Vocational school (recommended)
 - Certifications

21. Cable Technician

[Cable technicians](#) are responsible for maintaining, installing, and repairing telecommunication networks. They also help improve the speed and reach of broadband communications and may go to homes and businesses when services are down.

- **Average salary:** \$39,500
- **Requirements:**
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Technical school
 - On-the-job training
 - Certifications

22. Solar Energy System Installer

Also known as a solar photovoltaic installer, [solar energy system installers](#) install, assemble, set up, and maintain solar power systems. This is a job for those with no fear of heights since most solar panels are installed on roofs, which can either be flat or slanted.

- **Average salary:** \$37,000
- **Requirements:**
 - High school diploma or equivalent

- Technical school
- On-the-job training
- State license

How To Get a Skilled Trade Job

Choosing to pursue a trade job can bring you personal fulfillment and a potentially high salary. If you set your sights on pursuing one of the highest-paying trade jobs, there are a few ways to get into one.

1. Earn a High School Diploma

The first step is to get a high school diploma or equivalent since that's the minimum requirement for most trade schools.

2. Pick Your Trade

Once you have your diploma, you need to pick which trade you would want to pursue. Going through our list of the best-paid trade jobs can help you understand the requirements and job description.

3. Opt For Technical or Certificate Classes

After picking a trade and understanding the requirements, it's time to evaluate whether you want to pursue technical school or take certification classes at your community college.

4. Look For Apprenticeship Opportunities

Upon completing a technical school or certification classes, you should start looking for apprenticeship opportunities that you can find through local trade unions, employment agencies, or training

institutions. Apprenticeships can last from one to six years.

5. Get a Trade Job

When completing your apprenticeship, you will be ready to practice your trade. Keep in mind that some trades require a license, which should be acquired before pursuing your trade job.

Trade Secrets To Get a Skilled Trade Job

1



Take classes relating to your trade job during high school.

2



Research opportunities and salary to understand the requirements.

3



Focus on your apprenticeship to learn all the skills you need.

4



Keep your licenses and certifications up to date.

The Bottom Line

Pursuing one of the highest-paying trade jobs can be a good option for those who don't see themselves attending a four-year college or university. Understanding the different trade jobs' requirements and salaries can also help you decide the best trades to learn and what you need to be qualified for one.

Highest-Paying Trade Jobs FAQ

If you're considering pursuing one of the highest-paying trade jobs, here are answers to some common questions you might have.

What Trade Jobs Pay The Most?

Some of the highest-paying trade jobs according to [Mint](#) include:

- Power plant operator: \$103,000
- Elevator mechanic: \$99,500
- Electric lineman: \$85,000
- Construction manger: \$73,500
- Nuclear medicine technician: \$69,000

What Trades Are Always in Demand?

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), solar energy systems installers, respiratory therapists, ultrasound technologists, aircraft technicians, and construction managers are seeing the highest growth rate percentage from 2020 to 2030.

What's the Difference Between Trade School and Four-Year College?

Trade school teaches specific technical skills, takes from eight weeks to two years, and you will earn a certification or associate's degree. On the other hand, a four-year college covers broad education rooted in liberal arts and humanities, typically takes four years and you earn a bachelor's degree.

What's The Easiest Trade To Learn?

Although learning a trade depends on the person's skills, some of the easiest trades to learn are elevator mechanic, electric lineman, millwright, boilermaker, and construction inspector, since you can learn your skills throughout apprenticeships and on-the-job training, and don't need a degree.

What Trades Make 100k?

According to [Mint](#), only power plant operators make an average salary of over \$100,000 per year. However, depending on experience, location, and salary raises, the following trades can also make over \$100,000 a year:

- Elevator mechanics
- Electric lineman
- Construction managers
- Nuclear medicine technicians
- Aircraft technicians
- Radiation therapists
- Millwrights



The State of Trade Jobs

Want to trade your skills for a trade job? Here's everything you need to know about the highest-paying skilled trade jobs.



83% of trade job workers are either **very satisfied** or **somewhat satisfied** with their careers.



Only **3%** of trade job workers say they learned **all their technical expertise** in trade school.



59% of trade workers agree that a clear pathway for women would make **trades more welcoming**.

Source: Angi

TRADE JOB

- Specific technical education
- 8 weeks to 2 years
- Earn a certificate or associate's degree

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE

- Broad education
- Typically 4 years
- Earn a bachelor's degree

Some High-Earning

Skilled Trade Jobs

Picking a trade job can be a good career choice, especially considering their high earning potential.

Power Plant Operator

Maintain and calibrate electricity-generating equipment



Construction Manager

Supervise construction projects and oversee them from start to finish

Nuclear Medicine Technician

Prepare radiopharmaceutical drugs and administer them to patients

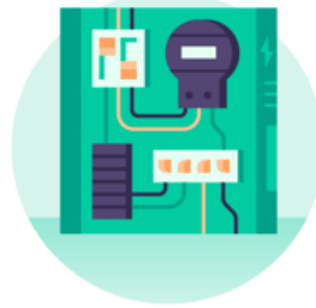


Pipefitter

Install and maintain low and

Electrician

Install, maintain, and fix electrical power and communication systems



The Highest-Earning Skilled Trade Jobs

Power Plant Operator	\$103,000
Elevator Mechanic	\$99,500
Electric Lineman	\$85,000
Construction Manager	\$73,500
Nuclear Medicine Technician	\$69,000
Aircraft Technician	\$68,500
Radiation Therapist	\$68,500
Millwright	\$65,500
Ultrasound Technologist	\$62,500
Boilermaker	\$61,000

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Focus on your apprenticeship to learn all the skills you need.

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Keep your licenses and certifications up to date.





Written by **Mint**

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