



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK of ATLANTA

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Opportunity Occupations Infographic Poster Activity (Answer Key)

Ever wonder what jobs are available that pay higher than the national median wage but don't require a bachelor's degree? Explore the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's Community and Economic Development team's Opportunity Occupations infographics. These print (or digital) [posters](#) highlight the six southeastern states that are located, either wholly or partially, within the Atlanta Fed's District. Answer the following questions to evaluate the data found on the infographics.

1. Review our [human capital poster](#) to answer the following questions. What is human capital? Based on your review of the poster, why do you think it is important to develop your human capital? *Human capital is the skills, knowledge, and training people possess, measured by their economic value. Workers with higher levels of educational attainment have higher median weekly earnings. An example from data featured on the poster is as follows: in 2018 workers with an associate's degree received \$862 in median weekly earnings, while those with less than a high school diploma made only \$553.*

2. Choose a [state poster](#) and write the name here: _____. Using the Opportunity Occupations poster you chose, answer the following questions based on the data: *Answers for a–g will vary, depending on the state chosen by the student.*

- What percentage of people over the age of 25 had a bachelor's degree? _____
- What percentage of people over the age of 25 had only a high school diploma? _____
- What was the unemployment rate for people with a bachelor's degree or higher? _____
- What was the unemployment rate for people with only a high school diploma? _____
- What level of educational attainment resulted in the highest median annual earnings? _____
- Add together the percentages of people over the age of 25 with less than high school, high school diploma, and some college, no degree. Record the answer here: _____
- What percentage of the state's residents over 25 lack associate's or bachelor's degrees? _____
- How does a worker's educational attainment relate to his or her rate of unemployment and median earnings? *Workers with higher levels of educational attainment have higher median weekly earnings and lower rates of unemployment.*
- How might these relationships affect a worker's decision making and/or choices? *Choices/decisions made regarding housing, modes of transportation, rates of savings, health care plans, and many other personal expenditures are driven by workers' median weekly earnings and potential periods of unemployment that are often driven by the business cycle and the relationship between educational attainment and rates of unemployment.*

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3. Look at the top of the poster. What are opportunity occupations, and how do they affect middle-skill workers in your chosen state? *Opportunity occupations are jobs that are generally accessible to workers without a bachelor's degree and that pay more than the national median wage (\$37,690 in 2017), adjusted for local cost of living differences. These are jobs for which employers request that workers have a four-year college degree in less than 50 percent of job advertisements placed within a certain area. They offer economic opportunity for middle-skill workers—those who have a high school diploma but have not completed college. These jobs allow middle-skill workers throughout the Southeast to earn a good wage and join the middle class.*

4. According to your poster, what percentage of jobs in the state are classified as opportunity occupations? _____

5. What was the range, low to high, of the median annual salaries for the state's opportunity occupations? _____

6. Generally speaking, do opportunity occupations require some postsecondary (after high school) training or education? Explain. *Often, opportunity occupations require an associate's degree or a professional certification, usually obtained at a community or technical college. They generally require fewer credit hours, less tuition, and lower student loans than degrees from four-year colleges. It is important to note that the pay, number of openings, and extent to which employers demand a bachelor's degree can vary significantly between industries and metro areas, even within a state.*

7. According to the state you selected, what were the top three opportunity occupations based on the median annual wage? What were the job openings that corresponded to each of the top three? *Answers will vary, depending on the state chosen by the student.*

8. Look at the "Where are the jobs?" section of the poster. If you were considering an opportunity occupation in one of these cities in your selected state, which city and occupation would you choose? Explain. *Often, opportunity occupations require an associate's degree or a professional certification, usually obtained at a community or technical college. They generally require fewer credit hours, less tuition, and lower student loans than degrees from four-year colleges. It is important to note that the pay, number of openings, and extent to which employers demand a bachelor's degree can vary significantly between industries and metro areas, even within a state.*

9. What other factors are you likely to consider when deciding where to live and work? *Answers will vary, but may include proximity to family and friends, cost of living expenses such as housing and food, commute times, and accessibility to quality health care, education, public transportation, and cultural attractions.*

10. If you decided to pursue one of the opportunity occupations listed on the poster, which one would it be, and why? *Answers will vary, depending on the opportunity occupation chosen by the student.*

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11. Visit the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh>). *Answers will vary, depending on the opportunity occupation chosen by the student.*

- a. Use the search field to find the occupation that you selected for question #9, determine the educational attainment required for this job under the summary tab.
- b. Next, select the How to Become One tab. Identify the educational and potential licenses, certifications, or registrations required to be qualified for the job.
- c. Next, select the Job Outlook tab to identify the projected employment growth from 2016 to 2026. How does this job's growth prospects compare to the total of all occupations? Explain.

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