




Computer User Support Specialist

About

Computer user support specialists provide help and advice to computer users and organizations. These specialists either support computer networks or they provide technical assistance directly to computer users.

Job Outlook and Salary



- Projected regional employment in 2024 is **14,647**
- The statewide projected average annual growth rate over the next five years is **1.31%** 
- The average annual wage is **\$65,533** (Seattle MSA)
- Hourly wages range from **\$23.78/HR** (25th percentile) to **\$35.57/HR** (75th percentile)

Job Tasks



- Pay attention to customers' descriptions of their computer problems
- Ask customers questions to properly diagnose the problem
- Walk customers through the recommended problem-solving steps
- Set up or repair computer equipment and related devices
- Train users to work with new computer hardware or software, such as printers, word-processing software, and email
- Provide other team members and managers in the organization with information about what gives customers the most trouble and about other concerns customers have

Education and Training



- **Because of the wide range of skills used in different computer support jobs, there are many paths into the occupation.** A Bachelor's degree is required for some applicants applying to computer support specialist positions, but an Associate's degree or postsecondary classes may be enough for others.
- **Education requirements for computer support specialists vary.** Computer user support specialist jobs require some computer knowledge, but not necessarily a postsecondary degree. Applicants who have taken some computer-related classes may be qualified for these jobs. For computer network support specialists, many employers accept applicants with an associate's degree, although some prefer applicants to have a bachelor's degree.

Licensures



- **Certification programs are generally offered by vendors or from vendor-neutral certification providers.** Certification validates the knowledge of and best practices required by computer support specialists. Companies may require their computer support specialists to hold certifications in the products the companies use.

Work Schedule



- Most computer support specialists have full-time work schedules; however, many do not work typical 9-to-5 jobs. Because computer support is important for businesses, support services may need to be available 24 hours a day. As a result, many support specialists must work nights or weekends.

Skills



- **Customer-service skills.** Computer support specialists must be patient and sympathetic. They often help people who are frustrated with the software or hardware they are trying to use.
- **Listening skills.** Support workers must be able to understand the problems that their customers are describing and know when to ask questions to clarify the situation.
- **Problem-solving skills.** Support workers must identify both simple and complex computer problems, analyze them, and solve them.
- **Speaking skills.** Support workers must describe the solutions to computer problems in a way that a nontechnical person can understand.
- **Writing skills.** Strong writing skills are useful for preparing instructions and email responses for employees and customers, as well as for real-time web chat interactions.

Technology



- **Web platform development software:** Microsoft ASP.NET Core MVC; Spring Framework
- **Database user interface and query software:** Blackboard software; Transact-SQL
- **Operating system software:** Microsoft Windows Server; Red Hat Enterprise Linux

Opportunities for Advancement



- Many computer support specialists advance to other information technology positions, such as network and computer systems administrators and software developers. Some become managers in the computer support services department. Some organizations provide paths for support specialists to move into other parts of the organization, such as sales. For more information, see the profiles on network and computer systems administrators and software developers.

Education and Training Resources

The following regional education and training programs are examples of programs in the region that can help you obtain education and credentials to become a Computer User Support Specialist. Some programs may require additional preparation and completion of prerequisites.



County	Programs
King County	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highline College (https://highline.edu)• Seattle Central College (https://seattlecentral.edu/)• South Seattle College (https://southseattle.edu/)
Kitsap County	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Olympic College (https://www.olympic.edu/)
Pierce County	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tacoma Community College (https://www.tacomacc.edu/)
Snohomish County	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Edmonds College (https://www.edmonds.edu/)• Everett Community College (https://www.everettcc.edu/)

Resources to Scholarships and Assistance Programs

- Washington State Opportunity Scholarship: <https://www.waopportunityscholarship.org/about/>
- Washington College Grant: <https://wsac.wa.gov/wcg>

References

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- Computer Support Specialists Outlook Handbook: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). Retrieved December 6, 2021, from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/computer-support-specialists.htm#tab-1>
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- Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. Retrieved January 25, 2022. *Washington Career Bridge*.
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