




# Medical Assistant

## About

Medical assistants perform administrative and certain clinical duties under the direction of a physician. Administrative duties may include scheduling appointments, maintaining medical records, billing, and coding information for insurance purposes. Clinical duties may include taking and recording vital signs and medical histories, preparing patients for examination, drawing blood, and administering medications as directed by physician.

## Job Outlook and Salary



- Projected regional employment in 2024 is **10,341**
- The statewide projected average annual growth rate over the next five years is **0.75%** 
- The average annual wage is **\$50,831** (Seattle MSA)
- Hourly wages range from **\$19.36/HR** (25<sup>th</sup> percentile) to **\$25.78/HR** (75<sup>th</sup> percentile)

## Job Tasks



- Record patient history and personal information
- Measure vital signs, such as blood pressure
- Help physicians with patient examinations
- Give patients injections or medications as directed by physicians and as permitted by state law
- Schedule patient appointments
- Prepare blood samples for laboratory tests
- Enter patient information into medical records

## Education and Training



- Medical assistants typically graduate from **postsecondary education programs**. Although there are no formal educational requirements for becoming a medical assistant in most states, employers may prefer to hire assistants who have completed these programs.
- Programs for medical assisting are **available from community colleges, vocational schools, technical schools, and universities and take about 1 year to complete**. These programs usually lead to a certificate or diploma. Some community colleges offer 2-year programs that lead to an Associate's degree. All programs have classroom and laboratory portions that include lessons in anatomy and medical terminology.
- Some medical assistants have a high school diploma or equivalent and learn their duties on the job. High school students interested in a career as a medical assistant should take courses in **biology, chemistry, and anatomy, and possibly business and computers**.

## Licensures



- Medical assistants **are not required to be certified in most states. However, employers may prefer to hire certified assistants.**
- Several organizations offer certification. An applicant **must pass an exam and have taken one of several routes to be eligible for each certification.** These routes include graduation from an accredited program and work experience, among others. In most cases, an applicant **must be at least 18 years old before applying for certification.**

## Work Schedule



- Most medical assistants work full time. Some work evenings, weekends, or holidays to cover shifts in medical facilities that are always open.

## Skills



- **Analytical skills.** Medical assistants must be able to understand and follow medical charts and diagnoses. They may be required to code a patient's medical records for billing purposes.
- **Detail oriented.** Medical assistants need to be precise when taking vital signs or recording patient information. Physicians and insurance companies rely on accurate records.
- **Interpersonal skills.** Medical assistants need to be able to discuss patient information with other medical personnel, such as physicians. They often interact with patients who may be in pain or in distress, so they need to be able to act in a calm and professional manner.
- **Technical skills.** Medical assistants should be able to use basic clinical instruments so they can take a patient's vital signs, such as heart rate and blood pressure.

## Technology



- **Medical software:** EPIC Systems; Healthcare common procedure coding systems; Medical condition coding software; MEDITECH software
- **Accounting software:** Billing software; Intuit QuickBooks
- **Electronic mail software:** Microsoft Outlook; Microsoft Exchange
- **Categorization or classification software:** Diagnostic and procedural coding software

## Opportunities for Advancement



- With experience, medical assistants can specialize and move into leadership roles. With more education they may advance into other healthcare occupations such as **registered nurse, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.**

## 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 Medical Assistant. Some programs may require additional preparation and completion of prerequisites.



County	Programs
King County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bellevue College (<a href="https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/">https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/</a>)</li> <li>• Blossom Nursing Assistant Training School (<a href="http://www.blossomcna.com/">http://www.blossomcna.com/</a>)</li> <li>• Green River College (<a href="https://www.greenriver.edu/">https://www.greenriver.edu/</a>)</li> <li>• Health Care Apprenticeship Consortium* (<a href="https://healthcareapprenticeship.org/programs/">https://healthcareapprenticeship.org/programs/</a>)</li> <li>• Health Professional Institute (<a href="https://healthprofessionalsinstitute.com/">https://healthprofessionalsinstitute.com/</a>)</li> <li>• Highline College (<a href="https://highline.edu">https://highline.edu</a>)</li> <li>• Pima Medical Institute, Renton (<a href="https://pmi.edu/">https://pmi.edu/</a>)</li> <li>• Pima Medical Institute, Seattle (<a href="https://pmi.edu/">https://pmi.edu/</a>)</li> <li>• Renton Technical College (<a href="https://https://www.rtc.edu/">https://https://www.rtc.edu/</a>)</li> <li>• Royal College of Medical Training (<a href="http://www.royalcollegeusa.com/contact.html">http://www.royalcollegeusa.com/contact.html</a>)</li> <li>• Seattle Central College (<a href="https://seattlecentral.edu/">https://seattlecentral.edu/</a>)</li> </ul>
Kitsap County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olympic College (<a href="https://www.olympic.edu/">https://www.olympic.edu/</a>)</li> </ul>
Pierce County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bates Technical College (<a href="https://www.batestech.edu/">https://www.batestech.edu/</a>)</li> <li>• Charter College, Fife (<a href="https://www.chartercollege.edu/locations/fife">https://www.chartercollege.edu/locations/fife</a>)</li> <li>• Clover Park Technical College (<a href="https://www.cptc.edu/">https://www.cptc.edu/</a>)</li> <li>• Pierce College (<a href="https://www.pierce.ctc.edu/">https://www.pierce.ctc.edu/</a>)</li> <li>• Tacoma Community College (<a href="https://www.tacomacc.edu/">https://www.tacomacc.edu/</a>)</li> </ul>
Snohomish County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edmonds College (<a href="https://www.edmonds.edu/">https://www.edmonds.edu/</a>)</li> <li>• Everett Community College (<a href="https://www.everettcc.edu/">https://www.everettcc.edu/</a>)</li> </ul>

\* In addition to locations in King County, the Health Care Apprenticeship Consortium has additional locations throughout the region.

## Resources to Scholarships and Assistance Programs

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

## References

- 2021 Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates. (2021). Retrieved December 16, 2021 from <https://media.esd.wa.gov/esdwa/Default/ESDWAGOV/labor-market-info/Libraries/Occupational-reports/OES/2021-Occupational-employment-and-wage-estimates.pdf>
- Medical Assistants at My Next Move. (n.d.). Retrieved August 18, 2021, from <https://www.mynextmove.org/profile/summary/31-9092.00>
- Medical Assistants: Occupational Outlook Handbook: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). Retrieved December 6, 2021, from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/medical-assistants.htm>
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