

Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technician

Professional Activities

Clinical laboratory personnel examine and analyze body fluids, and cells. They look for bacteria, parasites, and other microorganisms; analyze the chemical content of fluids; match blood for transfusions; and test for drug levels in the blood that show how a patient is responding to treatment. Clinical laboratory technicians perform less complex tests and laboratory procedures than technologists perform. Technicians may prepare specimens and operate automated analyzers, for example, or they may perform manual tests in accordance with detailed instructions. Like technologists, they may work in several areas of the clinical laboratory or specialize in just one.

Clinical laboratory technicians use automated equipment and computerized instruments capable of performing a number of tests simultaneously, as well as microscopes, cell counters, and other sophisticated laboratory equipment. Then they analyze the results and relay them to physicians. With increasing automation and the use of computer technology, the work of technologists and technicians has become less hands-on and more analytical.

Hours and other working conditions of clinical laboratory technologists and technicians vary, according to the size and type of employment setting. In large hospitals or in independent laboratories that operate continuously, personnel usually work the day, evening, or night shift and may work weekends and holidays.

Laboratories usually are well lit and clean. However, specimens, solutions, and reagents used in the laboratory sometimes produce fumes. Laboratory workers may spend a great deal of time on their feet.

Educational Requirements

Medical and clinical laboratory technicians generally have either an associate degree from a community or junior college or a certificate from a hospital, a vocational or technical school, or the Armed Forces. A few technicians learn their skills on the job.

Clinical laboratory personnel need good analytical judgment and the ability to work under pressure. Close attention to detail is essential, because small differences or changes in test substances or numerical readouts can be crucial for patient care. Manual dexterity and normal color vision are highly desirable. With the widespread use of automated laboratory equipment, computer skills are important. Technicians can become technologists through additional education and experience.

Academic Programs

[Danville Area Community College](#)

[Elgin Community College](#)

[Illinois Central College](#)

[IL Valley Community College](#)

[John A Logan College](#)

[John Wood Community College](#)

[Kankakee Community College](#)

[Kaskaskia College](#)

[Malcolm X College](#)

[Oakton Community College](#)

[Olney Central College](#)

[Rend Lake College](#)

[Richland Community College](#)

[Shawnee Community College](#)

[Southeastern Illinois College](#)

[Southwestern Illinois College](#)

Employment/Salary Outlook

Employment of clinical laboratory workers is expected to grow by 14 percent between 2008 and 2018, faster than the average for all occupations. The volume of laboratory tests continues to increase with both population growth and the development of new types of tests. Although hospitals are expected to continue to be the major employer of clinical laboratory workers, employment is expected also to grow rapidly in medical and diagnostic laboratories, offices of physicians, and all other ambulatory healthcare services.

State and National Trends

United States	Employment	Percent	Job Openings
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	2008	2018	Change	1
Medical and clinical laboratory technicians	155,600	180,700	+16%	5,460
Illinois	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2008	2018		
Medical and clinical laboratory technicians	7,600	8,240	+9%	210

¹ Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

State and National Wages

Location	Pay Period	2009				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$11.46	\$13.83	\$17.32	\$21.84	\$26.55
	Yearly	\$23,800	\$28,800	\$36,000	\$45,400	\$55,200
Illinois	Hourly	\$12.07	\$14.85	\$18.55	\$23.35	\$29.03
	Yearly	\$25,100	\$30,900	\$38,600	\$48,600	\$60,400

Professional Information

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References

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition, Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos096.htm>

O*NET OnLine, on the Internet at
<http://online.onetcenter.org/link/summary/29-2012.00>

Date Last Modified: May 5, 2011