

Employment in Hospitality

This section contains a listing of careers with the most job openings in Virginia and a brief summary of many of the careers in hospitality open to people today. You may be interested in one or many of these careers. This is an opportunity to take a look at the kinds of skills, tasks, requirements, workplaces and job outlooks for a wide range of jobs in hospitality.

Take a look at the career summaries provided. Choose one of the careers described. Read the page and then fill out the student handout “Career Paths in Hospitality” (page 20) showing what you learned and what you still want to know about the career you have selected.

Job Briefs in this Section Provided by Career Prospects at:

http://www3.ccps.virginia.edu/career_prospects/default-search.shtml

- Amusement and Theme Park Workers
- Bakers
- Bartenders
- Chefs
- Cooks
- Heating and AC Technicians
- Hotel Guest Services Representatives
- Hotel Housekeepers
- Hotel Managers
- Meeting and Event Planners
- Restaurant Managers
- Travel Agents
- Waitstaff



Career Prospects in Virginia

www.careerprospects.org

Virginia's careers with the most job growth, 2002-2012

Downloaded from the State Occupational Projections website: www.projectionscentral.com

NOTE: These projections were revised June 2005. Please discard earlier sets.

Title	Estimated Employment 2002	Projected Employment 2012	Employment Growth 2002-12
Total, All Occupations	3,457,430	4,097,670	640,250
Customer Service Representatives	60,140	78,210	18,070
Retail Salespersons	118,670	136,350	17,680
Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers	55,830	70,980	15,160
Registered Nurses	53,750	68,790	15,040
Management Analysts	30,970	45,220	14,240
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	24,290	37,650	13,360
Waiters and Waitresses	57,300	70,320	13,010
Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeepers	59,320	72,020	12,700
General & Operations Managers	55,370	67,540	12,170
Cashiers	100,680	112,780	12,100
Office Clerks, General	98,950	110,250	11,300
Computer Systems Analysts	26,080	37,040	10,960
Security Guards	24,640	35,270	10,620
Postsecondary Teachers	30,320	40,710	10,390
Accountants and Auditors	34,790	44,970	10,180
Receptionists and Information Clerks	29,860	39,620	9,760
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	18,660	28,290	9,630
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	29,300	37,830	8,530
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	37,360	45,330	7,970
Computer Support Specialists	19,550	27,430	7,880
Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services	28,010	34,960	6,960
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	24,500	31,410	6,910
Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing	34,170	41,020	6,850
Teacher Assistants	25,180	31,820	6,640
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	12,270	18,450	6,180

Prepared by the Guide to Career Prospects in Virginia, www.careerprospects.org, from data distributed by the Virginia Employment Commission. Used with permission.

Career Paths in Hospitality

Pick a career summary from the Career Prospects information provided and answer the following questions:

Career Path _____

Please summarize:

1. What do they do? (Choose 3 of the most interesting to you)

2. What skills will you need? (Again, choose three.)

3. Earnings:

4. Education and/or Certification needed:

5. My question about this career:

6. Something new I learned about this career:

Filling Out Your Job Application

A great deal of your possible success in getting a job depends upon the way you fill out the application. While it is only one of the strategies you use for getting to the interview, it is important to know how to fill out an application correctly.

You need to know that an application for employment is a legal document. This is why you should always use pen, a typewriter, or in a new trend, a computer, online. This is also the reason you do not want to make statements that are not true. False information on an application is considered a valid reason to fire, even if you are well qualified or currently doing a good job.

Online applications require special considerations. It is a good idea to read through the entire application and work out your answers before keying them in. If possible, print out the document to read it over and complete your responses in draft form. Be sure to proofread the application very carefully before sending it off. Activate the spelling function and the grammar function to avoid typographical errors. Often, online applications go into the candidate tracking system for that company. That is just another reason to be complete and accurate.

Don't send an online application to a company you know nothing about. Be sure it is a legitimate place of business. Once your application is in cyberspace, there's no telling where it will end up. Check the business website to see where it is located and what they say about themselves, if nothing else. Remember too, that if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Employers use the application to:

- Screen out obviously unqualified job seekers
- Gather consistent information on all applicants
- See if applicants can follow instructions
- See how applicants present themselves on paper

Applicants are less likely to be screened out if their applications:

- Are neat and clean
- Are printed in black ink or typed or keyed correctly
- List related experiences in detail
- Follow directions: *read the entire application carefully and fill it out completely*
- Provide only positive information
- List unpaid work experience in the work experience section
- Use the phrase "will discuss in the interview" to explain difficult situations

Problem Areas

Gaps in Employment: Employers like a complete history. And they don't like mysteries. Give your reasons for long unemployed periods: "raising children," "returned to school," or "cared for aging parents." If you did anything for money, you may write "self-employed."

Reasons for Leaving: Think positively. Instead of saying "fired," use the term "laid off." Say "decided on a career change." Or, state "will discuss."

Not Much Experience: Emphasize your strengths. List volunteer experiences. Do not forget your transferable skills from other areas of your life.

Pay Desires: This is always difficult. You won't get more than you ask for, and you may price yourself out of a job. It is best to say "negotiable" on the application. It is always wisest to let the employer to mention the dollar amount first.

Position Desired: While you want to be considered for all the positions a business might have in your field, you also do not want to be too unfocused. List a broad category: "customer service" or "accounting." Remember also, if you apply for a job for which you are clearly not qualified, you will probably not be considered for any other position the business might have.

Disabilities: You are not required to talk about any disability unless it would affect the performance of your job or raise safety issues. In most cases, it is considered correct to list "none."

Felony Convictions: If arrested but not convicted, say "no." If convicted say, "will discuss in the interview."

When employers are looking for more workers, they use the application as their first step in finding a good future employee. It is their weeding out step. A messy, misspelled, wrinkled, or dirty application may not even be read. Its appearance tells the business person all he or she needs to know. Your job in filling out the application is to get from the big pile of all applicants into the smaller pile of interesting potential employees.

The next page is a sample application from a northern Virginia hotel. Make a copy of the application and practice filling it out. Save your final copy to use as a reference for other applications you will be filling out as you go through your job search.

Be sure to fill out the complete application. In some businesses, if you write "see attached" or "see resume," the company could consider your application as incomplete, and it will go in the large pile of rejected applications. Even when that is not the case, applications and their attachments can get separated, and your application, missing its important information, might not receive the attention it deserves.



DATE: _____

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Welcome to **PM Hospitality Strategies, Inc!** If you need help filling out this form, please ask. Answer all questions completely and accurately. PMHS is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will be considered without regard to age, race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, ancestry, citizenship, veteran status, sexual orientation or preference, physical or mental disability, genetic predisposition or carrier status, or any other category protected under applicable federal or state law.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

YOUR NAME (Last)	(First)	(Middle)	Social Security Number
ADDRESS (Street)	(Unit or Apt. #)		Phone Number ()
(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)	Alternate Phone Number ()
If hired, can you provide proof of eligibility to work in the U.S. within 3 days of Hire? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			How were you referred to PMHS?
Are you at least 18 years of age? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

Position (s) Applied for:	Minimum Salary/Wage Expected:
---------------------------	-------------------------------

Schedule desired: Full-time Part-Time Temp On-Call
 1st Shift 2nd shift 3rd shift Any

Can you work "On Call" or Over time when needed? Yes No

Date you can start to work:

Have you ever worked for PMHS? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If "YES", when and where. Reason for Leaving.
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------

Have you ever been bonded? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If "YES", when?	If "NO" are you aware of anything that may keep you from being bonded? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

PMHS is a Drug Free Workplace and conducts random drug-testing, post work-related accident drug testing, and other such testing for reasonable suspicion as allowed by federal and state law. If employed by PMHS, are you willing to consent to such drug testing at our expense? Yes No

Please read the following before completing the next section:

*** Disclosure of a criminal record where and how allowed by federal and/or state laws will not necessarily disqualify you for employment. Each conviction will be considered with respect to date, circumstances and severity, in relation to the position for which you are applying. An applicant for employment with a sealed record on file may answer "no record" with respect to any inquiry relative to prior arrests, criminal court appearances or convictions. In addition, any applicant may answer "no record" with respect to any inquiry relative to prior arrests, court appearances and adjudications in all cases of delinquency or as a child in need of services, which did not result in a complaint transferred to the superior court for criminal prosecution. If you received a pardon for any offenses for which you were convicted, you may exclude such convictions.*

Have you ever been **convicted** of a felony? Yes No If "Yes" please explain.**

Have you been **convicted** of a misdemeanor crime within the last five years? Yes No If "Yes", please explain. **

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (Applicants may include in this section any verified work performed on a voluntary basis – Please provide COMPLETE employment history for the last 10 years. Use a separate sheet if necessary to include a complete employment history)

May we contact your current employer? Yes No

Current or Last Employer

Employer: _____ Phone # _____
Address: _____ Supervisor: _____
Dates of Employment: From: ___/___/___ to ___/___/___ Salary/Wage: _____
Starting Position: _____ Ending Position : _____
Reason for Leaving: _____

Next Previous Employer

Employer: _____ Phone # _____
Address: _____ Supervisor: _____
Dates of Employment: From: ___/___/___ to ___/___/___ Salary/Wage: _____
Starting Position: _____ Ending Position: _____
Reason for Leaving: _____

Next Previous Employer

Employer: _____ Phone# _____
Address: _____ Supervisor: _____
Dates of Employment: From: ___/___/___ to ___/___/___ Salary/Wage: _____
Starting Position: _____ Ending Position: _____
Reason for Leaving: _____

Please explain any gaps in the dates of employment:

Have you ever been discharged from a job or have you ever resigned under threat of termination or after your employer expressed dissatisfaction with your performance or conduct? Yes No If "YES", please explain.

OTHER SKILLS: Please describe any other skills of experience you feel maybe relevant to the job for which are you applying:

RECORD OF EDUCATION

	Name/Address of School	Graduated Yes No	Diploma or Degree	Major Field of Study
College/ University				
Last HS attended				
Other (Business Skills, etc.)				
Graduate school				

Professional Licenses or Memberships:

Type: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Other Professional Memberships: _____

(You need not disclose membership in any professional organizations which may reveal information regarding race, color, creed, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other protected status.)

OPTIONAL INFORMATION:

Have you ever been a member of the Armed Forces of the United States? Yes No
 If "Yes", when? _____ Which Branch? _____

Employers have a legal duty in regard to each employee's safety. You, your fellow workers, and our customers and their visitors' safety are of the utmost importance. It is neither beneficial for you or us to place you into a job where you have a higher risk of injury because of any physical or mental condition. As an Equal Opportunity Employer we consider applicants for employment regardless of their disabilities. However, in addition to our own requirement, the Americans with Disabilities Act also requires us to make certain that each employee is capable of performing the essential functions of the job. Therefore, you must be honest with us in regard to your personal evaluation as to your abilities to perform the essential functions of the job. Your signature will authorize agreement to any lawful post-offer medical examination that may be required as a condition of employment. We welcome you to discuss any needs for accommodations that would allow you to perform the job in accordance with the job description.

APPLICANT'S CERTIFICATION

- I hereby certify that all the information given on this application and in the pre-employment process is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I also certify that I have accounted for all of my work experience and training on this application, and that I have not knowingly withheld any fact or circumstance which would, if disclosed, effect my application unfavorably.
- I understand and agree that any misrepresentation or omission of facts in my application in the pre-employment process may result in the rejection of my application or in termination of employment if employed.
- I further understand that a report may be made as to my character, employment history and general reputation. I authorize all previous employers, schools, persons and organization having relevant information or knowledge to provide it to PMHS or its duly authorized representative(s) for use in deciding whether or not to offer me employment. I hereby release PMHS and its duly authorized representative(s) and all such employers, schools, persons and organizations from all liability in making or responding to inquiries in connection with my application. I agree to furnish additional information as may be required to complete my employment file.
- A copy of this release shall be as valid as the original.
- I further understand that this is an application for employment and that no employment contract, either expressed or implied, is being offered. I also understand that if employed, such employment is for an indefinite period and can be terminated at will be either party, with or without notice, at any time, for any or no reason, and is subject to change in wages, conditions, benefits, and operating policies. Nothing in this application or in any other oral communication or representation from PMHS or any PMHS representative made at any time constitutes a contract, guarantee, promise or any other binding obligation on PMHS or any of its affiliates. I understand that no supervisor, manager or representative of the company other than the President/COO of PMHS has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to guarantee me any set schedule.
- If employed by PMHS, I agree to abide by its rules and regulations, a copy of which will be provided during or before my first week of employment.

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

NOTICE:

This application is not a contract of employment, and does not guarantee employment with PMHS. If hired, anyone has the right to leave the employ of PMHS at any time for any reason. Likewise, PMHS has the right to terminate any employee at any time for any reason.

This application will only remain active for 60 days. After 60 days, if you are still interested in employment with PMHS, you must complete a new application.



**DISCLOSURE TO EMPLOYMENT APPLICANT REGARDING PROCUREMENT OF AN
INVESTIGATIVE CONSUMER REPORT**

In connection with your application for employment, please be advised that we conduct reference checks. These reference checks, also known as a **consumer report**, may include information as to your character, general reputation, mode of living, driving record, criminal and civil actions brought by or against you, general references regarding your skills, abilities, work habits, and other information related to the employment you are seeking with PM Hospitality Strategies, Inc.(PMHS) This information may be obtained by contacting previous or current employers, references supplied by you or others, providers of public records, or legitimate consumer information agencies or persons.

You have the right to request, in writing, within a reasonable time, a complete and accurate disclosure of the nature and scope of the information requested. Such disclosure will be made to you within 5 working days of the date on which we receive the request from you. *The Fair Credit Reporting Act gives you certain specific rights in dealing with consumer reporting agencies. You will be given a summary of these rights together with a copy of this document.*

By your signature below, you hereby authorize PMHS to obtain such consumer and/or investigative reports about you in order to consider you for employment. You authorize all corporations, former employers, consumer reporting agencies, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, city, county and federal courts, military services and persons to release information about you to PMHS or to the person(s) or company(ies) contracted by PMHS to gather this information. In addition, you hereby release PMHS and all prior employers, references and educational institutions (and all their agents, servants, and employees) from all liability and claims whatsoever that may arise from the securing or disclosure of any of the information requested or disclosed.

To be completed by Applicant:

Applicant Name: _____ (_____)				
LAST	FIRST	MI	(Other)	
Applicant Address: _____				
Street (No PO Box numbers)				

City	State	County	ZIP	
How long at this address? _____				
Previous Address: _____				

Date of Birth: _____		Social Security Number: _____		
Driver's License (State, Number, Exp.) _____				
<i>(if applying for a position that requires driving for the company)</i>				

Applicant Signature and Authorization _____
Date

**** Some states do not allow employers to research some records of potential employees, such as Worker's Compensation files. PMHS will only seek information as allowed by law, and as deemed necessary to hire competent, safe, and honest employees.**



Amusement and Theme Park Workers

What do they do? Operate rides, sell tickets & souvenirs, clean up & do other jobs in theme parks

Specializations: Ride operators, performers, ticket people, admissions attendants & more

Preferred education: Some high school

Certification & licensing: None

Getting ahead: These jobs offer little chance for advancement

Skills & knowledge: Working well with guests, attention to detail, following directions

Where they work: On rides; on the grounds; in restaurants, stores & booths

Job outlook: Good; there's usually lots of work in this high-turnover field

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$12-22,000 range

Links: Find more information about this career



● WHAT DO THEY DO?

People visit amusement and theme parks to have fun, but as most amusement and theme park workers know, creating fun is a lot of work.

Although amusement and theme parks hire administrative and [professional people](#), like engineers, designers, human resource specialists, marketers, and managers, this brief describes only the people who do the tasks directly involved with the park's daily operations. They operate rides, sell tickets and souvenirs, act in shows and parades, usher guests in and out of attractions, supervise games, and act as lifeguards for water rides. They even walk the park dressed as cartoon or other theme characters.

Amusement workers do jobs also found at more mundane work sites, like hotels and restaurants. They clean, garden, cook and serve food, drive guests around, and patrol the park and parking lots for safety.

The people who do all this are usually hourly employees who come to the job with little or no training. [In Virginia](#) and other states where amusement parks shut down for the winter, these hourly positions are usually [seasonal](#). Employees work on the weekends in the spring and full-time in the summer and early fall. Some amusement and theme parks provide dorm-style housing for workers during the summer. Employers usually house college or international student workers in these dorms.

While amusement park workers often receive perks like free tickets to the park or free food, the jobs themselves are low-paid, rarely provide benefits, and most are also tedious and stressful. Amusement and theme parks are like high production factories, pushing people through rides, restaurants, and attractions as quickly as possible. The fast pace not only causes stress; it can also lead to dangerous mistakes. For example, ride operators may only have two tasks--

Real life...

[Working for Disney](#)

[Getting a theme park job](#)

What about Virginia...

[Va's Electronic Labor Market](#)



checking safety bars and turning the ride on and off. However, if they do the tasks too quickly and miss a safety threat, someone could get seriously injured.

Amusement parks pride themselves on fostering a friendly and cheerful environment. However, this positive work environment can also add to workers' stress. Most workers interact constantly with guests and can never let their smiles fade or their voices become even slightly angry. On the other hand, this work can be perfect for people who want only a seasonal job--students looking to earn extra money over the summer, for example.

Specific tasks:

Since there are so many different kinds of first-line jobs in amusement and theme parks, specific tasks vary widely. Some of these are summarized below, in the section on specialization.

The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

Since most amusement or theme park work requires only minimal training, there are no areas of specialization for hourly workers, only specific jobs. Although workers can request the kind of job they want, they don't always get it. Instead, managers put workers in whichever jobs are open and often move workers from one job to another.

- *Ride operators* help guests in and out of rides, explain rules for rides, fasten safety restraints, and start and stop rides.
- *Performers* include the musicians, actors, and street artists who entertain guests. Some parks employ professional performers for special shows, but many of the people who dress up as characters or perform for other attractions need little or no training.
- *Ticket people/ admissions attendants* sell and accept tickets to enter the park. They check tickets for authenticity, hand out maps, explain discounts, and give directions.
- *Parking attendant/ traffic control associates* sell parking tickets and direct traffic in the lot.
- *Ushers* deal with crowd control on rides and attractions. They also set up attractions, open and close rides, and lead guests to and from their seats.
- *Sales clerks* sell products at booths, from vending carts, or in stores inside the park. They help customers, ring up purchases, accept payment, and wrap and bag purchases.
- *Games attendants* manage the games that guests play to win prizes. Attendants may run dart-throwing games, ring tosses, skeet-ball games, or shooting games. They explain the rules, demonstrate the game, take payment, hand out prizes, stock prizes, and clean up.
- *Food and beverage servers* work as waiters and waitresses in full-service restaurants or as counter people in fast food restaurants. They also sell food and beverages from carts and booths.
- *Kitchen workers* work in the parks' restaurants. They include cooks, bussers, and dishwashers.
- *Cleaners/ custodians/ park attendants* sweep, clean inside and outside buildings, empty trash cans, bus outside tables, and re-stock bathrooms.
- *Laundry workers* clean costumes, uniforms, and other fabric items on-site at the park.
- *Maintenance workers* cut grass, trim plants and trees, clean pools, make minor repairs, paint, and move furniture, large objects, or large garbage cans.

- *Delivery persons* drive vehicles to deliver food and other products to places around the park. They stock supplies, work a forklift, count inventory, and load and reload vehicles.



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

In general, amusement and theme park worker jobs are entry-level and require little or no experience or training. Workers train on the job, and to land their first job, they often need nothing more than a positive attitude, a willingness to work hard, and proof that they're 16 or older. However, some jobs have additional requirements. For example, because operating rides requires serious attention to detail, most ride operators must be 18 and have a high school diploma or [GED](#). Servers in restaurants that sell alcohol also need to be 18. Workers who drive vehicles need a driver's license.

Some Virginia high schools have co-op programs with amusement parks. Students who enroll in these programs earn credit towards graduation by working at parks.

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)



● GETTING AHEAD

Amusement park jobs are perfect for students who want to earn extra money in the summer, but these jobs rarely turn into careers, and they offer few opportunities for advancement.

After a few years of successful work experience, amusement park workers may sometimes advance to supervisory positions. However, even these jobs are relatively low-paid and often seasonal. To earn moderate salaries, employees need to work as middle or upper-level managers, jobs that usually require an associate's or bachelor's degree.

Workers who enjoy the amusement park atmosphere may want to earn degrees in art, engineering, marketing, or business. Professionals from all these careers, and many others, find full-time work in amusement or theme parks.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)



● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Communicating clearly
- Dealing with complaints tactfully, calmly, and politely
- Working well with guests
- Attention to detail
- Following directions
- Physical strength
- [See a complete list of skills from the US Dept of Labor at O-Net](#)

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Reading | • Computer literacy | • A strong work ethic |
| • Math | • Problem-solving & decision-making | • A positive attitude |
| • Writing | • Understanding the broader picture | • Independence & initiative |
| • Speaking & listening | • Working with people | |



● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Amusement-park and theme-park workers find jobs in every type of ride, attraction, restaurant, store, and booth in parks of all sizes. They work for local amusement parks with only a few rides and for Disney World. They may sit all day in a lifeguard tower and watch rafts speed down a watery hill, or they may spend the day serving hot dogs and barbecue from a booth or cart. They also work in the streets of a park, driving service vehicles, cleaning up trash, assisting guests, entertaining, or patrolling.



● OUTLOOK

The amusement park industry seems to be growing and the number of new jobs for amusement park workers in Virginia is projected to grow faster than average through 2014. However this field depends on a strong economy and on people having extra income for leisure activities. When the economy slows, or people are reluctant to travel, amusement park attendance decreases and parks hire fewer people.

In general, however, workers shouldn't have trouble finding part-time, seasonal work. Since the pay is so low and the schedule requires weekend and evening work, employers often have trouble filling all the positions. In fact, they often recruit international college students to work during summer breaks.

The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)



● LOOK FOR WORK

- Look for [job ads at ThemedAttraction.com](#).
- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



● EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

Most amusement and recreation attendants earn somewhere in the \$12,000-\$23,000 range. In Virginia in 2004, the median was about \$16,000. Other amusement park workers, like cleaners and ticket sales people, also earn pretty low wages, often about minimum wage. Workers with some experience and those who get moved up into supervisory roles can make slightly more, and some workers get tips. Low wages are sometimes compensated for by benefits, like reduced cost housing, access to low-cost medical clinics, or free admission passes.

- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



● FOR MORE INFORMATION

- National Amusement Park Historical Association
PO Box 83

Mt. Prospect, IL 60056

www.napha.org/

- International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions
1448 Duke St
Alexandria, VA 22314
www.iaapa.org/
- Paramount's Kings Dominion
PO Box 2000
Doswell, VA 23047
www.kingsdominion.com/jobs.jsp
- Anheuser Busch Adventure Parks
Career Opportunities
www.becjobs.com/student.asp
- Amusement Park Jobs
www.coolworks.com/amusement-park-jobs.asp
- Amusement Park Jobs: Job Monkey
www.jobmonkey.com/resorts/html/amusement_theme_parks.html

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Bakers

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What do they do? Bakers produce baked goods for restaurants, institutions, caterers, & retail bakeries

Specializations: Bread-making, pastry work, decorating

Preferred education: Formal training in high school CTE programs through professional cooking school is very valuable but you can get started as a helper with out this.

Certification & licensing: Food safety & other certification is valuable

Getting ahead: With experience, can become supervisors or self-employed

Skills & knowledge: Baking, attention to detail, measuring & calculating, stamina, business sense

Where they work: Retail bakeries, restaurants, catering companies

Job outlook: Good

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: In the \$20-35,000 range but managers and pastry chefs working in hotels and casinos earn more

Links: Find more information about this career



● WHAT DO THEY DO?

Thick crusty bread. Cookies. Cakes. Pies. Muffins. It's all wonderfully delicious, thanks to the legions of bakers across the country who tempt us daily with their sinful treats.

Bakers--or pastry chefs as they are known in some kitchens--are the people we usually imagine with tall white hats and a paunch. They [lovingly produce](#) baked goods for retail and wholesale bakeries, supermarkets, restaurants, cafeterias, caterers and neighborhood cafes.

Unlike bakers who work in large, automated industrial bakeries, these bakers produce relatively small quantities of breads, rolls and pastries, doing most of the work by hand. Think [Carmen Gonzales](#), who now owns her own well-known restaurant, or [Thaddeus DuBois](#), who despite his French name, trained in the United States and is now White House executive pastry chef. Pastry chefs measure and mix ingredients, shape and bake the dough, and apply fillings and decorations. Those who work in small establishments must also run the business side of things, including purchasing baking supplies and overseeing sales and merchandising.

Though bakers make plenty of sugary confections, the life of a baker is not always so sweet. Bakers must usually rise early, and some start work as early as 4 a.m. They work in rooms with large ovens that can be very hot. They lift heavy trays of ingredients and pastries and stand on their feet for long periods of time. Some must work the "red-eye" shift, laboring through the night until early morning.

The job can be stressful as bakers work feverishly to meet strict deadlines. And because bakers work with flour and sugar, some suffer [respiratory and skin problems](#). This is one job that is definitely not "a piece of cake." However, it is an occupation that has its rewards--pastry chefs love their jobs as well as

Real life...

[Chef Jacquy Pfeiffer](#)
[Chef Jarek Wysock](#)

[Young baker turns cookies into cash](#)

[Pastry chefs need precision](#)

What about Virginia...

[Va Chefs Association](#)
[Virginia apprenticeships](#)
[Johnson & Wales University](#)
[See baking students at Chesterfield technical center](#)



their products and are proud of a profession that goes back as long as man--and woman--has cooked anything more than a leg of mammoth over a fire in a cave. And--pastry chefs sometimes get to sneak a cookie, or even a piece of pie.

Specific tasks include:

- Preparing and baking all kinds of sweets
- Making icings and frosting
- Decorating cakes, tarts, and other baked goods
- Maintaining and cleaning kitchen work areas, equipment, and utensils
- Purchasing supplies and overseeing sales and merchandising of baked goods
- Hiring and training assistants



The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

Most bakers are generalists, though some specialize in creating different types of baked goods. Some examples of specialties are bread-making, pastry work, decorating, wedding cakes, sugar centerpieces and chocolate confections. Other bakers can specialize in baked goods from a particular region or country, such as Italian, French or Viennese pastries



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Many bakeries hire helpers with a high school diploma or GED and train them in house, but formal training is an advantage for anyone who wants to advance as a baker. There are several good ways to study for this career:

- Many high schools offer career and technical education programs in culinary arts that provide a good basic preparation.
- Programs are also available in some community colleges and in specialist cooking schools. These colleges teach more advanced and specialized skills and offer associate's degrees as well as certificates in the culinary arts, professional cookery and baking and pastry-making. [Johnson and Wales University](#) is one of the best known specialist cooking schools in Virginia.
- Apprenticeships are also available, and some employers support apprenticeship training for their employees, particularly for those who need more advanced and specialist skills.

Voluntary certification is available for bakers. The Retailer's Bakery Association, for example, offers several levels of certification, including certification as a journey baker, baker, decorator, bread baker and master baker. RBA certification is aimed at students graduating from baking and culinary programs with limited working experience, bakery staff with little or no formal education but with on-the-job training, and bakers interested in specializing in decorating and bread baking. Applicants must pass a written exam and practical test in addition to proving work experience and/or education.

In addition to culinary education, employers now often look for staff with safe food handling certificates. The two major certifying institutions are the National Restaurant Association and the American Food Safety Institute.

Studying to be a baker in Virginia:

- Apply for the The Otto Bernet Memorial Pastry Scholarship from the [Va Chefs Association](#) (go to the home page and click on Scholarships).
- Are you in high school? Learn more about [Career and Technical Education](#). Find out about the [CTE courses in your community](#). Look for courses in Culinary Arts.
- Some high schools have [Tech Prep](#) programs that let you get started on a community college degree while you're still in school. Ask your guidance counselor if there's one at your school.
- Planning to go to college? Find [community college programs](#). Find [programs at 4 year colleges and universities](#) in Virginia
- Learn more about [apprenticeships](#). Contact your [local apprenticeship representative](#).
- Find [links to cooking schools](#) in the Shaw Guides Guide to Career Cooking Schools.
- Get more [information on professional certification](#) from the Retailer's Bakery Association.
- Learn more about [safe food handling certification](#) from the American Food Safety Institute.

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)



● GETTING AHEAD

After learning the ropes and getting some experience, it is possible to become a supervisor in a store or a stand-alone bakery. The workload in small bakeries is demanding, however, and unless the bakery is extremely successful, supervisors have to pitch in with some of the actual baking. Some stores offer far better working conditions and opportunities for advancement than others, so it is best to shop around, particularly for a first job. Bakers working in manufacturing companies can move up by taking on supervisory and managerial roles. As bakers gain more responsibility, they can find themselves in charge of developing new tasty treats for the masses. Some bakers may decide to cater to a more elite clientele by becoming pastry chefs in fancy, high-end restaurants and on cruise ships. Others may opt to move up by opening their own bakeries and bread shops. The extremely successful can become famous for their pastry creations, writing cookbooks, opening franchises (Think of Mrs. Field's Cookies) and even sometimes getting cooking shows on television.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)



● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Ability to get up early; bakers usually start work at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning
- Strength and stamina; bakers are on their feet all day, kneading, rolling out dough and, carrying heavy trays
- Thorough knowledge of baking
- Being comfortable with routine repetitive work
- Attention to detail
- Following detailed instructions
- Calculating weights, measurements and proportions
- Bending, carrying, lifting, and standing for long periods of time

- Working well with customers
- Sense of design for decorating fancy baked goods
- [See a complete list of skills from the US Dept of Labor at O-Net](#)

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- Reading
- Math
- Writing
- Speaking & listening
- Computer literacy
- Problem-solving & decision-making
- Understanding the broader picture
- Working with people
- A strong work ethic
- A positive attitude
- Independence & initiative
- Self-presentation

● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Local bakeries, grocery stores, bakeries, large hotels and restaurants, and institutions.

● OUTLOOK

In Virginia, demand for bakers is projected to grow about as fast as average through 2012. People eat out more than ever before and have been looking for more variety, quality, and freshness in the baked goods they buy, which should help sustain job growth. In addition, artisan breads and European baking techniques have come into vogue in recent years and many neighborhood bakeries specializing in these goods have opened up. However, baked goods are still luxuries and when the economy slows, so does demand for bakers. There is a lot of job turnover in this field, though, so even in a slow economy, there should be opportunities for trained bakers.

The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)

● LOOK FOR WORK

- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)

● EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

In 2005, bakers earned average salaries in the \$20-\$35,000 range. According to Baking Business.com, baker and oven operators earn salaries of about \$25,000 while bakery managers earn about \$40,000. Bakery owners earn salaries of about \$64,000. According to Payscale.com, pastry chefs working in hotels and casinos earned salaries in the \$35,000 to \$58,000 range in 2005. Executive pastry chefs overseeing and directing others in these environments earned salaries in the \$70,000 to \$90,000. Bakers who work full-time often receive benefits, but part-time workers usually don't.

- Check out [salaries in this and other culinary fields](#) at Culinary School Finder: Salaries.
- Read more about bakers salaries at [Baking Business.com](#).
- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)

● FOR MORE INFORMATION

- The Retailer's Bakery Association (RBA)
14239 Park Center Dr
Laurel, MD 20707
www.rbanet.com/
Career Information
www.rbanet.com/
- The Bread Bakers Guild of America
www.bbga.org/
- Bakery-Net
bakery-net.com/
Modern Baking
bakery-net.com/rdocs/modern/modbak.html
- PastryChef Central
www.pastrychef.com/
- ProgressiveBaker.com
www.progressivebaker.com/
- American Culinary Federation
10 San Bartola Dr
St Augustine, Florida 32086
www.acfchefs.org/
- Apprenticeship Division
Department of Labor and Industry
13 South 13th St
Richmond, VA 23219
www.doli.state.va.us/
- Star Chefs
www.starchefs.com/chefs/html/index.shtml

This page was last edited on: May 25, 2006





Bartenders

What do they do? Mix & serve alcoholic and other drinks in bars & restaurants

Specializations: None

Preferred education: High school diploma or GED

Certification & licensing: Certification available

Getting ahead: Can move into bar, restaurant, & food service management

Skills & knowledge: Multi-tasking, knowledge of alcohol laws, getting along with customers, physical stamina

Where they work: Places where alcoholic drinks are served

Job outlook: Good; high turnover creates lots of opportunities

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$12-28,000 range plus tips, though bartenders at high-end places can make a lot more

Links: Find more information about this career



● WHAT DO THEY DO?

“Love”--a concoction of sloe gin, eggs, lemon juice and raspberry syrup--is one of the thousands of drinks bartenders serve each day to customers at bars, restaurants and nightclubs. Though many of the drinks that bartenders serve are alcoholic--wine, beer, straight shots, and mixed drinks--many aren't. Bartenders also serve fruit juice, soda pop, club soda, coffee, and plain old water.

Keeping up with the trends is important in this profession. In fact, many bartenders attend [bartending schools](#) where they learn how to mix a long roster of drinks, many of which are relatively obscure. Witness the Oatmeal Cookie (cinnamon schnapps, coffee liqueur, cream, Frangelico with a shot of Irish cream), the Sicilian Kiss (amaretto, galliano and Irish cream) and the 57 Chevy (Grand Marnier, pineapple juice, Southern Comfort and vodka).

In addition to mixing drinks, bartenders handle the business side of tending bar, including collecting payments from customers, operating the cash register, and ordering and maintaining inventories of liquor, mixes and other bar supplies. Other tasks include cleaning glasses and counters, serving food to customers, checking customers' IDs to make sure they're old enough to drink legally, and turning the spigot off when a customer has obviously exceeded the limit.

Most bartenders work part-time and are paid by the hour. Since the jobs are often poorly paid, bartenders usually rely on tips to supplement their earnings. There are other downs to this job as well, including constant cigarette smoke, occasional bar fights among drunken and unruly patrons, and standing for long periods.

Even so, many bartenders [enjoy their work](#), especially the social aspects of the job, including the generally congenial bar atmosphere and the opportunity to chat with customers. The job is also attractive to college students or people looking for a second job.

Specific tasks include:

Real life...

[Alcohol awareness training](#)

[The life of a bartender](#)

What about Virginia...

[Va Dept of Alcoholic Beverage Control](#)

[Va's Electronic Labor Market](#)



- Mixing and serving drinks
- Preparing fruit for garnishing drinks
- Collecting money for drink orders
- Cleaning coolers, taps, glasses, utensils, and other bar equipment
- Ordering supplies and ingredients
- When licensed, selling unopened bottles for carry-out service
- Replacing beer and soft drink tanks and re-connecting the pressure regulator as the containers are emptied.
- Monitoring customers to make sure they don't drink too much and calling taxis for intoxicated customers
- Supervising other bartenders and bar staff



The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)

● SPECIALIZATION

- *Bar attendants or barkeepers* sell and serve alcoholic drinks to patrons in taverns or combination bar and package-goods stores, but they do not usually serve mixed drinks

● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

No specific training is required for tending bar, but in Virginia bartenders must be at least 21 years old, and employers often prefer to hire people 25 or older. Most employers also prefer people with a [GED](#) or high school diploma. Bartenders must be familiar with state and local laws concerning the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Some bartenders acquire their skills by attending a bartending school. These programs and classes offer instruction on state and local laws and regulations, cocktail recipes, bar equipment, dress and conduct, and stocking a bar. Some of these schools also help their graduates find jobs.

Since restaurants and bars are held liable for injuries caused by intoxicated customers, many prefer bartenders who have had training in recognizing and dealing with over-drinking. There are several courses available. The National Hospitality Institute offers a course entitled "[Techniques of Alcohol Management](#)" that teaches bartenders how to serve alcohol responsibly. This course is offered in many states, including Virginia. In addition, Virginia's [Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control](#) offers a similar program called "[Responsible Sellers and Servers: Virginia Program](#)" (RSVP), which trains bartenders to help prevent illegal alcohol sales, sales to intoxicated patrons, and drunk driving. Finally, a similar course, "[Training Intervention Procedures Strategies](#)" (TIPS), is offered by Health Communications, Inc. Such courses are usually voluntary, but they may be required by individual establishments.

- For more information on licensing, see the [Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control](#).

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)

● GETTING AHEAD

Bartenders generally get ahead by changing jobs and going to work in more-upscale places with more

customers and higher tips. A bartender at a convention hotel in Northern Virginia earns more and has a lot more opportunities for advancement than someone working at a local watering hole in a rural town. Bartenders can also advance into management if they are good at supervising others and at the business side of running a bar. They can become the manager of an individual bar and from there move further up in hospitality and food service management with a hotel or resort chain. A few open their own drinking establishments.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)



● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Working under pressure
- Memorizing how to make a large variety of drinks
- Keeping track of several orders at once
- Totaling tabs and making change quickly and accurately
- Remaining even-tempered and working well with all types of people
- Maintaining a neat and clean personal appearance
- Standing for long periods of time; lifting and moving heavy kegs or cases
- Knowledge of state and local laws for the purchase and sale of alcoholic beverages
- [See a complete list of skills from the US Dept of Labor at O-Net](#)

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- Reading
- Math
- Writing
- Speaking & listening
- Computer literacy
- Problem-solving & decision-making
- Understanding the broader picture
- Working with people
- A strong work ethic
- A positive attitude
- Independence & initiative
- Self-presentation



● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

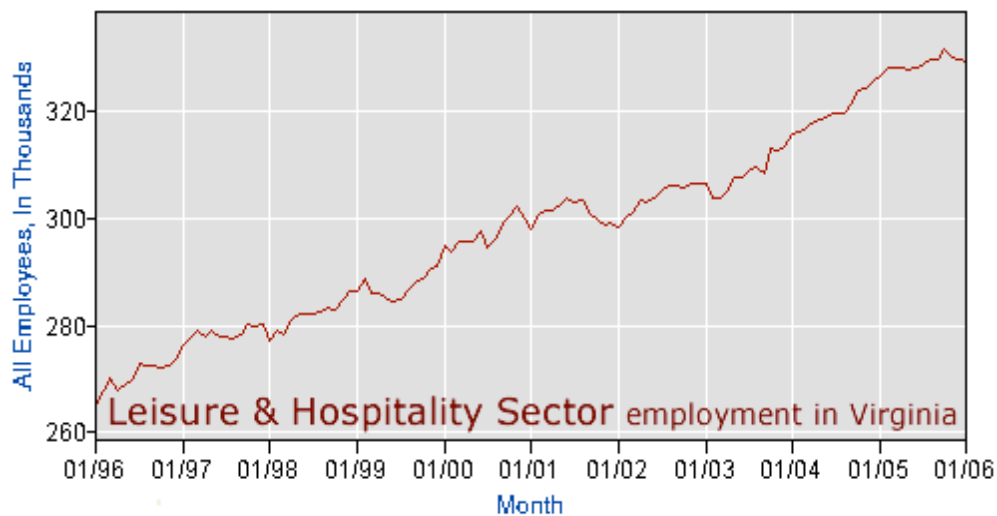
Nationally, two-thirds of all bartenders work in bars and restaurants. The rest are divided roughly evenly among hotels, amusement and recreation services, and civic and social associations. Vacation resorts offer seasonal employment, and some bartenders alternate between summer and winter spots rather than remain in one area year-round.



● OUTLOOK

It is difficult to judge the outlook for jobs in bartending. Many bartenders work part-time and, as in other occupations that require little formal training, turnover rates are high, creating many job openings. However, in large metropolitan areas, jobs may be difficult to get, since in these places, both wages and tips tend to be relatively high, and bartending, particularly at upscale establishments, is considered a well-paying job.

It seems likely that people who really want to work in this area will be able to find a position as long as they are willing to go where the jobs are.



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economies at a Glance: Virginia

The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)



LOOK FOR WORK

- Take a look at [job ads](#) at HospitalityCareers.com.
- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

Bartenders' earnings come from a combination of wages and tips and vary with the type of establishment. Bartenders who work in bars where patrons can sit at the bar receive more than half their earnings from tips, while those working in bars where drinks are served by waiters and waitresses earn most of their income from their wages. Wage surveys show that most bartenders earn somewhere between \$12,000 and \$28,000 per year. However, a bartender who works full-time in a high-end establishment can earn a lot more than this, and many bartenders make a good supplemental income working part-time in this field.

- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



FOR MORE INFORMATION

- *Bartender Magazine*
www.bartender.com/2links/trades2.htm
- Bottles Up: the website of the *Flair Bartending Magazine*
www.bottlesup.com/
- International Hotel & Restaurant Association
 251 rue du Faubourg St Martin 75010
 Paris, France
www.ih-ra.com

- Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control
2901 Hermitage Rd
P.O. Box 27491
Richmond, VA 23261
www.abc.state.va.us/

This page was last edited on: June 8, 2006





Chefs

What do they do? Chefs cook in high-end restaurants & catering services

Specializations: One or several of the world's many different types of cuisine

Preferred education: Graduation from a recognized cooking school

Certification & licensing: Food safety certification often required by employers

Getting ahead: Can advance to executive chef

Skills & knowledge: Cooking, creativity, supervising, working under pressure, multi-tasking, teamwork

Where they work: Restaurant, hotels, catering companies

Job outlook: Good

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$19-60,000 range but head chefs can earn more

Links: Find more information about this career



[Julie Thoman, South Lakes High School/ Chantilly Academy, Culinary arts program](#)

● WHAT DO THEY DO?

If you chill onions before cutting them, they won't make you cry. If you rub potatoes with olive oil and crushed salt, and lightly prick their skins, potatoes emerge from the oven with deliciously crunchy skins. The best way to make a sauce without lumps is to pour boiling liquid into a butter and flour mixture, whisk it continually, and if the sauce still looks lumpy, use a sieve.

You may not know such [kitchen tricks](#). But rest assured that chefs--people working in the kitchens of high-end restaurants--know all these trade secrets and more. In record time they can use their cooking skills to serve up delicacies like a black pepper-seared salmon filet with egg pasta, sauteed green asparagus, and champagne-lemon creme. And for dessert: grand marnier chocolate cake with shiny chocolate icing and vanilla gelato.

Although the terms chef and [cook](#) are still used interchangeably by most people, chefs are actually very different from cooks. In general, chefs have more skills and better training. They concentrate on designing menus, ordering and purchasing food, creating new dishes, and managing the kitchen. They often come up with creative menu items like the ones described [above](#).

Cooks, on the other hand, usually do not have the creative latitude of a chef. Cooks usually produce basic menu items like hamburgers or spaghetti with meat sauce. While a chef may have attended a prestigious cooking school to learn the business, a cook may pick up most of the skills on the job. Cooks also tend to work in more casual eating establishments and in the cafeterias of schools, hospitals, businesses and other institutions, while chefs work in upscale restaurants, hotels, casinos, cruise ships, and resorts.

There is definitely a prestige factor involved with being a chef. Some of the most skilled and imaginative chefs have earned fame for both themselves and the restaurants where they work. So-called celebrity chefs have TV programs of their own, lend their names to lines of cookware and other kitchen equipment, write cookbooks, market their own brands of frozen pizza, and earn enormous amounts of money in the process. Think of [Food Network Channel](#) favorites like [Molto Mario](#), [Emeril Lagasse](#), [Rachael](#)

Real life...

[A day in the life of a chef](#)

[Chef profiles](#)

[See a video](#)

[Profile of a chef](#)

Meet people ...

[Julie Thoman, chef from Va](#)
[Peter George, chef](#)
[Shari Robins, exec. chef](#)

[Ray](#) and [Wolfgang Puck](#).

While all this may sound very glamorous, there are many aspects of being a chef that aren't so glamorous. First, chefs spend long hours on their feet. They work in hot kitchens and very often in tight quarters. Their days are spent lifting heavy pots and kettles, and burns, slips and falls are often part of the job description. Because people dine primarily in the evenings and weekends, chefs often don't have much of a social life. They have to work while everyone else is having fun. Their working hours can include early mornings and late evenings.

What about Virginia...

[Virginia Chefs Association](#)

[See culinary students at Chesterfield technical center](#)

Being a chef is also stressful. Chefs need to be highly organized. The top chef in a kitchen supervises the entire kitchen staff, all of whom are working in close quarters and at top speed in an extremely hot kitchen, producing many dishes at once and getting them to wait staff to be delivered in a reasonable amount of time, often to very demanding customers. Many chefs get up at unbelievably early hours in order to visit produce and other wholesale food markets so that they can personally choose ingredients for the day's menu.

Despite the down side to this line of work, people who become chefs have a passion for food and for the job. More than just a job, this type of work is really a lifestyle perfect for people who see really delicious food as the true spice of life.

Specific tasks include:

- All aspects of preparing and cooking food
- Selecting and developing recipes suitable for the type of restaurant
- Estimating the supply needs for the kitchen, ordering from suppliers, and examining supplies to ensure their quality
- Hiring, firing, and supervising lower-ranked chefs, cooks, and kitchen helpers
- Maintaining time and payroll records
- Many chefs also play a management role including marketing the restaurant and dealing with customers



The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

Chefs usually specialize in one or several of the world's many different types of cuisine, from barbecue to Asian fusion to Nuevo Latino. In the kitchen they hold one of a number of different positions. These include:

- *Chef De Froids* design, prepare, decorate and arrange foods for buffets and informal restaurants.
- *Sous chefs* supervise and coordinate the activities of cooks and other workers in preparing and cooking food, and work under the direction of the executive chef or the chef de cuisine.
- *Pastry chefs* prepare breads, cakes, pies, or cookies for restaurants and bakeries.
- *Chef de Cuisines* head the kitchen, supervise all the cooks, and have the final decision-making authority in the kitchen.
- *Executive chefs* plan menus, order kitchen and food supplies, and supervise the cooks.
- *Master chefs* possess the highest degree of professional knowledge and skill and teach and supervise other chefs.



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Many chefs have an associate's degree in cooking, or culinary arts from a community college or specialist culinary school. Some universities now offer a 4-year bachelor's degree. Employers look for experience in addition to training. Secondary career and technical education programs usually offer a co-op portion useful for gaining experience. Many chefs complete apprenticeship programs. Even with training, however, beginners need to learn a lot of the essential skills on the job in a real, fast-paced kitchen. And many top chefs have served apprenticeships in Europe.

The [American Culinary Federation](#) offers 8 levels of certification, from culinarian (cook) to master chef. The ACF has a specific number of work and educational points that applicants must achieve for each level. Work experience counts only if the person has been at a position for at least one full year. In addition, each level requires applicants to have at least 30 classroom hours (or approximately 2 college credits) in sanitation, nutrition, and supervisory management. Applicants must also pass an ACF test for each level, offered nationwide at Sylvan's testing centers.

In addition to culinary education, restaurant and food service employers now often look for staff with safe food handling certificates. The two major certifying institutions are the [National Restaurant Association](#) and the [American Food Safety Institute](#).

Studying to be a chef in Virginia:

- Are you in high school? Learn more about [Career and Technical Education](#). Find out about [CTE courses](#) in Culinary Arts. Because chefs have so many managerial responsibilities, they also benefit from courses like Business Management, Hospitality Services, and Marketing.
- Find culinary arts programs at [high schools, technical centers, and community colleges](#).
- [See a list of Virginia cooking schools](#)
- Find links to cooking schools in the Shaw Guides [Guide to Career Cooking Schools](#).
- Learn more about [apprenticeships](#). Contact your [local apprenticeship representative](#).
- Learn more about certification from the:

[American Food Safety Institute](#)

[The American Culinary Federation](#)

[National Occupational Competency Testing Institute](#)

[National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation](#)

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)

[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)

● GETTING AHEAD

Advancement opportunities for chefs depend on education, experience, skill, and management ability. Even after earning a degree, many chefs must take positions as cooks before they have gained enough experience to be hired as a chef. Chefs advance and earn more by moving to new jobs and acquiring new skills. Besides culinary skills, advancement also depends on the ability to supervise less-skilled workers, keep costs low and quality high, and run an efficient operation. Some chefs eventually move

out of the kitchen and work exclusively as [restaurant managers](#).


Some chefs [go into business](#) as [caterers](#) or restaurant owners, and others become instructors in a cooking school. Some advance to executive-chef positions or supervisory or management positions, particularly in hotels, clubs, and larger, more elegant restaurants. A few become nationally known as writers or television performers.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)
- 

● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE


- Cooking
- Managing and supervising people
- Teamwork
- Attention to detail
- A good sense of taste and smell
- Physical strength and stamina
- Keeping abreast of current food trends and customer tastes
- Working under extreme pressure
- Creativity
- Multi-tasking
- Working long and irregular hours
- [See a complete list of skills from the US Dept of Labor at O-Net](#)

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Reading | • Computer literacy | • A strong work ethic |
| • Math | • Problem-solving & decision-making | • A positive attitude |
| • Writing | • Understanding the broader picture | • Independence & initiative |
| • Speaking & listening | • Working with people | • Self-presentation |
- 

● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Chefs work in fine restaurants and hotels, for catering companies, and in other places, like cruise ships or casinos, where fine food is served.

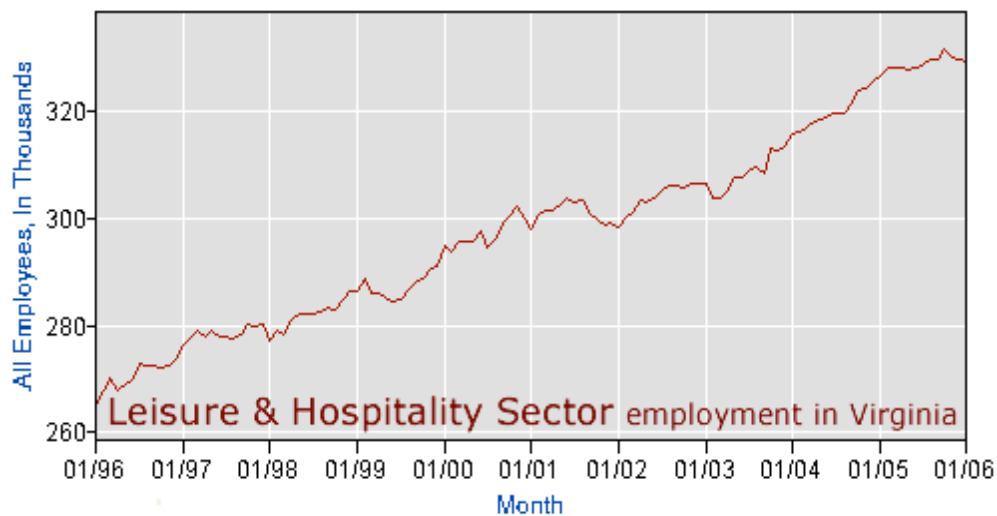


● OUTLOOK

There should be plentiful job opportunities in this field through 2014. The number of restaurants continues to grow, as do the number of meals eaten away from home. Increases in household income and in the number of households in which both partners are employed encourage the eating-out trend.

However, the number of job openings in this field is highly dependent on the economy. When the economy is booming, people spend money on fine dining, but when recession hits, they cut back on the amount they're willing to spend on restaurants. But even in a recession, experienced chefs will be able to find work. They may, however, work in establishments that are not as high-end as those they trained for.

- Read about [the restaurant industry](#).



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economies at a Glance: Virginia

The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)



LOOK FOR WORK

- See the job ads posted with [Restaurant.org](#)
- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

In 2005 most Virginia chefs earned somewhere in the \$19-\$60,000 range. Many chefs own or have a financial stake in their restaurants and benefit from its success, though they also lose if it fails. High-end, successful restaurants and hotels pay the highest wages. Executive chefs in these establishments may earn in the \$55-\$96,000 range. Some five-star executive chefs with a talent for investment and self-promotion even become rich and famous.

- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Virginia Chefs Association of the American Culinary Federation
 10533 Hamilton Rd
 Glen Allen, VA 23060
[www.vachefs.com](#)
- The American Culinary Federation
 10 San Bartola Dr
 St Augustine, FL 32086
[www.acfchefs.org/](#)
- Council on Hotel, Restaurant, & Institutional Education
 3205 Skipwith Rd
 Richmond, VA 23294

- www.chrie.org/
- The Culinary Institute of America
1946 Campus Dr
Hyde Park, NY 12538
www.ciachef.edu/
- Hospitality Executive
www.hospitalityexecutive.com/
- Chefs Employment
www.chefsemployment.com/
- Hotel & Restaurant Employees International Union
1219 28th St NW
Washington DC, 20007
www.hereunion.org/
- Ehotelier.com The one stop website for hoteliers
ehotelier.com/browse/culinary.htm
- Shaw Guides Guide to Career Cooking Schools
<http://cookingcareer.shawguides.com/>
- Virginia Department of Labor and Industry, Apprenticeship Program
13 South Thirteenth St
Richmond, VA 23219
www.doli.state.va.us/
- American Food Safety Institute
One Green Street,
Hulmeville, PA 19047
www.americanfoodsafety.com/
- The American Culinary Federation
10 San Bartola Dr
St Augustine, FL 32086
www.acfchefs.org/
- National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)
500 North Bronson
Big Rapids, MI 49307
www.nocti.org
- National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation
175 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 1500
Chicago, IL 60604
www.nraef.org
- *Star Chefs*
www.starchefs.com/





Cooks

What do they do? Cooks plan menus, prepare food, & supervise kitchen workers in restaurants, hotels & hospitals

Specializations: Short order cooks, institutional cooks

Preferred education: High school CTE or postsecondary program in culinary arts, but many are hired with less education than this

Certification & licensing: Food safety certification often required by employers

Getting ahead: Move to restaurants that pay more, or into management

Skills & knowledge: Cooking, working under pressure, multi-tasking, supervision, teamwork, food-safety regulations, physical stamina

Where they work: Restaurants, hotels, the military, hospitals, & other institutions

Job outlook: Good

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$15-35,000 range

Links: Find more information about this career



● WHAT DO THEY DO?

Chopping onions, mincing garlic, slicing mushrooms, peeling potatoes, then roasting, sauteing or baking them--these are but a few of the many tasks tackled by cooks each day around the country. Their work behind the scenes results in the meals we eat in restaurants, hotels, cafeterias, and even local fast-food restaurants.

Cooks are responsible for planning menus, preparing food, and supervising other kitchen workers in any establishment, organization, or institution that serves food. Some cooks prepare fancy meals in expensive and elegant restaurants and hotels, or on board cruise ships, earning good salaries and enjoying liberal benefits. Others work in low-priced fast-food restaurants, diners and coffee shops, earning only minimum wage. Some cooks even work in private households where they plan, prepare and cook meals for a single family.

Large eating establishments tend to have several cooks on staff. Each cook has a special assignment and often a special job title, such as vegetable, fry, or sauce cook. In smaller full-service restaurants, cooks prepare and cook a limited number of easy-to-prepare meals from start to finish. Typically, a small, casual restaurant might employ one cook, a short-order cook, and one or two kitchen workers. A fast-food restaurant might employ one cook who produces only a few items that are often prepared in advance and kept warm until sold.

Cooks working in cafeterias, schools and businesses prepare large quantities of a limited number of entrees, vegetables, and desserts, while restaurant cooks generally prepare a wider selection of dishes that are individually cooked to order.

Part of a cook's job description includes monitoring and ordering foods and other supplies, planning menus, deciding food portions and estimating how much food will be needed for any given day.

Real life...

[National Restaurant Assoc](#)

[American Culinary Federation](#)

[Profile of a short order cook](#)

What about Virginia...

[Va apprenticeships](#)

[Va School Nutrition Assoc](#)

[See culinary students at Chesterfield technical center](#)

[Va Chef's Association](#)



People who like to cook and think they want to do it professionally sometimes don't realize how hard a cook's job is. Cooks, particularly those in restaurants, work at top speed in hot, crowded kitchens, where they have to keep track of many orders and many people at once. Things go wrong all the time, and cooks have to be experts at fixing them up on the spot, whether it's a stove that's malfunctioning or a Porterhouse steak that got dropped onto the floor on its way to the plate. Burns, cuts, bumps, and bruises are common. But for those who truly love food and enjoy preparing it, all this is not only worth it but actually fun.

Head cooks direct the work of other kitchen workers, supervising less-skilled staff who weigh and measure ingredients, retrieve pots and pans, clean work areas, stir and strain soups and sauces and clean and peel vegetables and fruits.

Although the terms "cook" and "[chef](#)" are often used interchangeably, chefs tend to be the more highly skilled and better-trained members of the profession. Their training and career paths are usually different from those of cooks.

Specific tasks include:

- Cooking meals to order
- Preparing special meals for patients as instructed by a dietitian
- Estimating requirements for food and other supplies based on the expected number of customers
- Supervising and training other cooks
- Baking breads and pastries
- Planning menus, taking advantage of foods in season and local availability
- Ordering food and kitchen supplies and keeping detailed records and accounts



The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

- *Short order cooks* prepare and serve foods that require only a short preparation time. They grill and garnish hamburgers, prepare sandwiches, fry eggs, and cook french fries, often working on several orders at the same time.
- *Institutional and cafeteria cooks* prepare large quantities of a limited number of entrees, vegetables, and desserts in institutions that may include schools, businesses, hospitals, and prisons.
- *Bakers* bake breads, pastries, and desserts.
- *First cooks* prepare hot food items, using sauteing, roasting, and baking skills and carrying out other tasks deemed necessary by the executive chef. They also supervise second and third cooks.
- *Second and Third cooks* prepare and cook foods as directed by the first cook. Second cooks usually prepare cold appetizers, salads and desserts and do preparation and set-ups for buffets. They also oversee bakers, pastry cooks and cleaners.
- *Grill cooks* specialize in preparing grilled meats, fish, vegetables, and other foods.
- *Kitchen helpers and line cooks* clean kitchen areas, wash dishes, and perform various other activities to assist workers preparing foods and beverages. They also prepare foods for cooking and do quality control of various ingredients.



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Most entry-level cooking and food-preparation jobs require cooking experience rather than formal training. Food prep workers often start in fast-food or in other lower-skilled kitchen positions. These positions require little education or training, and skills are learned on the job. After acquiring some basic food handling, preparation, and cooking skills, workers can move up to assistant cook positions.

Though you can start a career in cooking without much training, those who want to move up need culinary training. You can study cooking, or "culinary arts," in high school career technical education programs or in post-secondary culinary schools. In addition, apprenticeship programs offered by culinary institutes, industry associations, or unions provide training and skills helpful in getting jobs. The armed forces are also a good source of experience and training.

The [American Culinary Federation](#) (ACF) offers certification for cooks and pastry culinarians. The designation "certified culinarian" can be earned by candidates who have either an associate's degree or a three-year ACF apprenticeship and who pass the ACF exam.

In addition to culinary education, restaurant and food service employers often look for staff with safe-food handling certificates. Many states require that their employees have these certificates, but this is not yet required in Virginia. People interested in getting a certificate often enroll in a ServSafe course, which normally takes about 8 hours. Certifying institutions include the National Restaurant Association, the American Food Safety Institute and the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (see below for links).

Studying culinary arts in Virginia:

- Are you in high school? You can get started with [Career and Technical Education](#) courses in Culinary Arts. Cooks who want to move up into managerial jobs also benefit from courses like Business management, Hospitality Services, and Marketing.
- Some high schools have [Tech Prep](#) programs that let you get started on a community college degree while you're still in school. Ask your guidance counselor if there's one at your school.
- Find culinary arts programs at [community colleges](#).
- Learn more about [apprenticeships](#). Contact your [local apprenticeship representative](#).
- For more information on certification, see:

[American Food Safety Institute](#)

[American Culinary Federation](#)

[National Occupational Competency Testing Institute](#)

[National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation](#).

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)



● GETTING AHEAD

Skilled cooks who show an ability to manage kitchen activities may be promoted to supervisory positions. Often, cooks have to find new jobs in order to advance. Higher pay is also a form of advancement for cooks. Some cooks go to culinary schools in order to become chefs. Some go into businesses as caterers or restaurant owners while others become instructors in career and technical education programs in high schools, community colleges or other academic institutions.

Since cooks are known for being temperamental and sometimes not very reliable, one who is even-tempered, successful at teamwork in the kitchen, and who spends a reasonable amount of time in a job before moving on has the best chances for advancement.

Some cooks and chefs become [restaurant managers](#) and some open their own establishments.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)



● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Cooking
- Working under pressure
- Multi-tasking
- Physical stamina
- Supervision & teamwork
- Knowledge of kitchen safety and sanitation
- Working in a hot, fast-paced kitchen
- [See a complete list of skills from the US Dept of Labor at O-Net](#)

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ● Reading | ● Computer literacy | ● A strong work ethic |
| ● Math | ● Problem-solving & decision-making | ● A positive attitude |
| ● Writing | ● Understanding the broader picture | ● Independence & initiative |
| ● Speaking & listening | ● Working with people | ● Self-presentation |



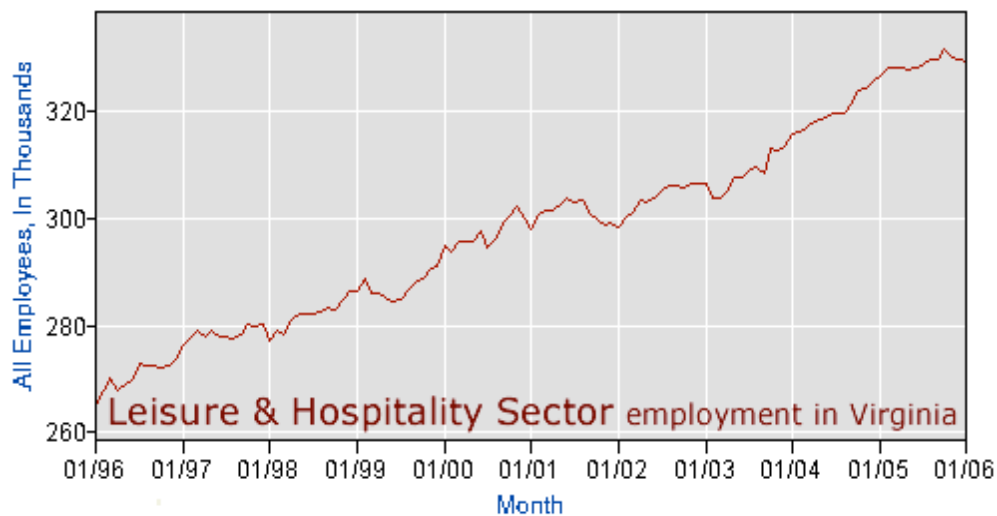
● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Most cooks work in restaurants or fast food joints. The rest are employed in a variety of other organizations, including schools, universities, hospitals, nursing homes, hotels, and grocery stores. A large percentage of cooks work part-time.



● OUTLOOK

This is a very large occupation--about 70,000 Virginians work as "cooks and other food preparation workers." This large size, along with a high turnover rate and about average growth, means that there should be plenty of job opportunities for cooks. Though jobs will be relatively easy to find in upcoming years, high-paying jobs with benefits will continue to be scarce. Trained cooks will have an advantage in finding the best jobs, but chronically low wages in this industry will continue to discourage people from seeking training.



The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)



LOOK FOR WORK

- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

Cooks usually earn somewhere in the \$15-35,000 range. Wages are usually highest in elegant restaurants and hotels and lowest in fast food restaurants. In Virginia in 2005, the [median](#) salary for restaurant and cafeteria cooks was about \$17,000. Fast food cooks in Virginia earned about \$13,000 a year and short order cooks earned about \$15,000. Nationally, the average salary for cooks was about \$27,000 in 2005.

The [Foodservice.com Salary Survey](#) also lists salaries for a wide range of food service jobs, though it generally shows higher salaries than the Bureau of Labor Statistics survey does.

- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



FOR MORE INFORMATION

- The National Restaurant Association
 1200 17th St NW
 Washington DC 20036
www.restaurant.org/
- American Culinary Federation
 PO Box 3466
 St. Augustine, FL 32085
www.acfchefs.org
- Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education

1200 17th St NW
Washington DC 20036
www.chrie.org/

- FoodService.com
www.foodservice.com
- Virginia Department of Labor and Industry
Apprenticeship Program
Powers-Taylor Building
13 South Thirteenth St
Richmond, VA 23219
www.doli.state.va.us/
- American Food Safety Institute
One Green Street,
Hulmeville, PA 19047
www.americanfoodsafety.com/
- American Culinary Federation
PO Box 3466
St. Augustine, FL 32085
www.acfchefs.org
- National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)
500 North Bronson
Big Rapids, MI 49307
www.nocti.org
- National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation
175 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 1500
Chicago, Illinois 60604
www.nraef.org

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Heating & Air-Conditioning Technicians

What do they do? HVAC techs install, maintain, & repair heating, air-conditioning, & refrigeration systems

Specializations: Particular kinds & brands of equipment

Preferred education: GED/HS diploma (especially with CTE program) and postsecondary training or apprenticeship

Certification & licensing: Certification often required by employers

Getting ahead: Can move into supervisory positions or open own business

Skills & knowledge: Electronics, mechanical ability, physical strength & agility, trouble-shooting, charts & diagrams, working well with customers

Where they work: Work for HVAC contractors, industries, schools, hospitals; self-employment

Job outlook: Good

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$24-55,000 range

Links: Find more information about this career



[Daniel Ramos, Va Beach Technical & Career Education Ctr. HVAC program](#)

● WHAT DO THEY DO?

In the chill of winter, most of us depend on central heating to keep our homes and offices warm as toast. In the dog days of summer, we depend on air-conditioning to keep our homes and offices cool and comfortable.

In short, a lot of our daily comfort depends on heating and air-conditioning systems and the people who install, maintain, and repair them--heating and air-conditioning technicians.

Heating and air-conditioning technicians (also known as HVAC technicians) install and repair heating, air-conditioning, and ventilation systems in residential, commercial and industrial buildings. These systems are usually quite complicated, consisting of a variety of mechanical, electrical and electronic components like motors, compressors, pumps, fans, ducts, pipes, thermostats, and switches.

Temperature control is vital not only to our comfort but also to the economic health of most of our businesses.

For example, electronic and computer manufacturers need cool, clean and very dry air for their products. Hospitals, day care centers, and community centers need comfortable temperatures and good air quality for patients. Research labs, medical manufacturers, and food-preparation companies need heating, cooling, and refrigeration equipment to keep their products pure and safe. Printers use high-speed, multi-color printing equipment that requires strict humidity control to ensure product quality. Even farmers need refrigerated trucks, warehouses, and display cases for their agricultural produce. All of these businesses depend heavily on the expertise of HVAC technicians, as do sports arenas, shopping malls, movie theatres, grocery stores, and factories.

Wherever a HVAC technician may work, part of the job inevitably involves dealing with customers. Therefore, it's important that technicians not only know their way around a compressor, but have a good "bedside" manner too, with the ability to be pleasant and courteous while carrying out prompt, successful

Real life...

[How air conditioners work](#)
[Cool Careers](#)
[AC Contractors of America](#)
[Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Assoc](#)
[RHVAC Tools](#)

What they read

installation and repair.

Specific tasks include:

- Installing and repairing furnaces, boilers, air conditioners, and ventilation equipment
- Diagnosing causes of breakdowns and figuring out how to fix them
- Recharging cooling systems with refrigerant gases
- Installing copper tubing systems that circulate water or cooling gases
- Replacing compressor parts like valves, pistons, bearings, and electrical motors on refrigeration units
- Repairing thermostats and electrical circuits

[HPAC Engineering](#)

[Snips](#)

The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

Heating and air-conditioning technicians often specialize in either installation, maintenance, repair, or sales. Some specialize in one type of equipment.

- *Sales and marketing specialists* sell and market heating and air-conditioning systems to businesses and homeowners
- *CAD designers* design heating and air-conditioning systems for "smart" office buildings and homes
- *Quality control engineers* ensure that HVAC products work to specification. As products come off the production line, they test, locate, and correct defects before the equipment reaches the consumer



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Some heating and air-conditioning technicians learn skills informally on the job, but employers increasingly prefer to hire technicians who have completed an apprenticeship program or formal technical training in high school, a postsecondary technical school, community college, or the armed services. Formal apprenticeship programs normally last 3 or 4 years and combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction. Many community colleges also offer two-year associate degrees in heating, air-conditioning and refrigeration. Students study theory, design and equipment construction, electronics, and the basics of installation, maintenance and repair.

In Virginia technicians who buy or work with refrigerants must pass a written exam and be certified in their proper handling by the Department of Professional & Occupational Regulation [Board for Contractors Tradesman Licensure](#).

[North American Technician Excellence](#) and [HVAC Excellence](#) offer certificate programs for heating and air-conditioning technicians. In addition, certification in EPA regulations can be obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency. The National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER) also offers HVAC certification.

Studying to become a HVACR technician in Virginia::

- Check out the education and career resources at [Cool Careers](#).
- Are you in high school? Learn more about [Career and Technical Education](#). Find out about [CTE courses](#) in Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration. This program can

lead to certification from the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER).

- Some high schools have [Tech Prep](#) programs that let you get started on a community college degree while you're still in school. Ask your guidance counselor if there's one at your school.
- See a [national list of HVAC programs](#)
- Planning to go to college? Find HVACR programs at Virginia [community colleges](#).
- Learn more about [apprenticeships](#) from [Virginia's Career Connect](#). Contact your [local apprenticeship representative](#).
- For more information on certification, see:

[North American Technician Excellence](#)

[HVAC Excellence](#)

[Environmental Protection Agency](#)

[National Center for Construction Education & Research](#)

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)

● GETTING AHEAD

For most HVAC technicians, advancement comes in the form of higher wages. However, some technicians advance to positions as supervisor or service manager. Others may move into areas such as sales and marketing. Those with enough capital and managerial skill can [open their own businesses](#), contracting to install HVAC equipment, doing repairs, or both.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)

● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Mechanical aptitude
- Electronics
- Diagnosing malfunctions and figuring out how to fix them
- Working well with customers
- Understanding technical drawings, diagrams, graphs, and charts
- Physical strength and agility
- Reading gauges and other instruments
- [See a complete list of skills from the US Dept of Labor at O-Net](#)

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- Reading
- Math
- Writing
- Computer literacy
- Problem-solving & decision-making
- Understanding the broader picture
- A strong work ethic
- A positive attitude
- Independence &



● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Approximately 15% of all HVAC mechanics workers are [self-employed](#). More than half of all the others work for cooling and heating contractors. The rest work in a wide variety of industries, including refrigeration and air-conditioning service and repair businesses, fuel oil dealers, schools, hospitals, office buildings, and other organizations that operate their own large heating and air-conditioning systems.



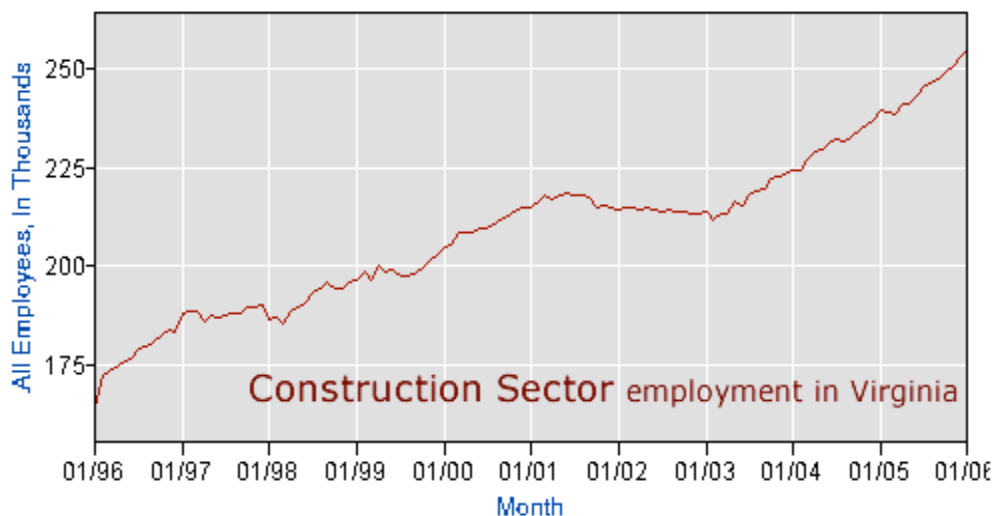
● OUTLOOK

Prospects for skilled HVAC technicians are expected to be very good, particularly for those with technical school or formal apprenticeship training. In addition to job openings created by employment growth, thousands of openings will result from the need to replace workers leaving the field.

In addition, rising energy costs will encourage the development of new, energy-saving heating and air-conditioning systems and also encourage home and business owners to replace old systems with new more efficient ones. Demand for maintenance and service should also increase, as owners try to keep systems operating at peak efficiency. In addition, the continuing focus on improving indoor air quality should contribute to the growth of jobs for HVAC technicians.

Although technicians who specialize in installation may suffer unemployment when the economy slows down and cuts the level of new construction, maintenance and repair work usually remains pretty stable. People and businesses depend on their climate control systems and have to keep them running no matter what the economy is like.

- The number of new houses started each month is a good measure of the health of the construction industry. You can see national [trends in housing starts](#) on this page from Fidelity Investors' Weekly.



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economies at a Glance: Virginia



● LOOK FOR WORK

- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



● EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

In Virginia, most heating and air conditioning technician earned between \$24,000 and \$55,000 a year in 2003. Experienced techs can earn more.

- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



● FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Apprenticeship Division, Department of Labor and Industry
13 South Thirteenth Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.doli.state.va.us/
- Air Conditioning Contractors Association
PO Box 4268
Silver Spring, MD 20914
www.acca-ncc.org
- North American Technician Excellence
8201 Greensboro Drive, Suite 300
McLean, VA 22102
www.natex.org
- National Association of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors
180 S. Washington St
PO Box 6808
Falls Church, VA 22040
www.phccweb.org/
- TradeJobsOnline: Construction Employment
www.tradejobsonline.com/
- 21-CR Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Technology Institute
4301 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 425
Arlington, VA 22203
www.arti-21cr.org/
- Department of Professional & Occupational Regulation
Board for Contractors Tradesman Licensure
3600 West Broad St
Richmond, VA 23230
www.state.va.us/dpor/tra_main.htm
- HVAC Excellence
Office Box 491
Mount Prospect, IL 60056
www.hvacexcellence.org
- Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460
www.epa.gov
- National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER)
www.nccer.org/



Hotel Guest Services Representatives

What do they do? Guest services representatives are the up-front people in hotels, resorts, motels, like front desk people, concierges, & doormen

Specializations: Reservations, front desk, bell service, telephone, concierge, & transportation

Preferred education: GED or HS diploma (especially with CTE program) through bachelor's degree

Certification & licensing: Certification available

Getting ahead: In most hotel chains it is difficult to move into management without a degree.

Skills & knowledge: Handling the unexpected, dealing with complaints, relating well to a wide variety of people, teamwork, record-keeping

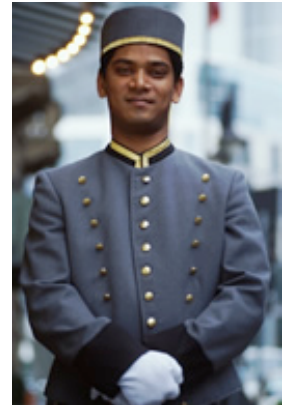
Where they work: Hotel lobbies & front offices of hotels, motels, resorts, & conference centers

Job outlook: Good

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$13-29,000 range

Links: Find more information about this career



● WHAT DO THEY DO?

A typical day might find guest services workers in hotels tracking down tickets to a hot concert in town, making reservations at a hip new restaurant, picking up dry cleaning, carrying luggage, welcoming guests, opening doors, or booking reservations. But whatever their exact duties or job titles, guest services representatives have the basic task of making hotel guests feel welcome, relaxed, and even pampered.

As front desk people, guest services representatives are the "public face" of a hospitality enterprise. Guests often get a good or bad feeling about where they are staying within the first few minutes of their stay, and this opinion is often based on the helpfulness and friendliness--or the *un*helpfulness and *un*friendliness--of the up-front people. When a concierge goes out of the way to get information for a guest, or when a reservation agent is especially courteous and helpful, it can ensure that a first-time guest becomes a regular.

While hotel and resort guests love excellent service, providing it is not always easy. Guest representatives must remain courteous, tactful, calm, and helpful, even when hotel guests are rude and demanding. If a concierge or desk clerk blows his cool, the hotel's reputation--and the concierge's or desk clerk's job--may suffer. Even after a horrendously long day, guest representatives must be as friendly and helpful to the last guest they encounter as they were to the first one.

"How may I assist you?" is a phrase practically stamped on these workers foreheads. And even if a hotel is teeming with guests on the busiest weekend of the year while five staff members are out sick with the flu, guest representatives must remain as unflustered, serene, and peaceful as Zen monks. Needless to say, these jobs require a certain type of personality for success.

Real life...

[You're a what?](#)

[Profile of a hotel porter](#)

What about Virginia...

[Va Hospitality & Travel Assoc](#)

[Va's Electronic Labor Market](#)



Specific tasks vary by specialization, but all guest services representatives do the following:

- Greeting guests, offering assistance, and recommending hotel and area services
- Keeping an eye out for problems, from unsatisfied customers to untidy restrooms, and making sure they're reported to those who can fix them
- Reporting and documenting safety hazards, conditions, or unsafe practices
- Providing service with a *smile*



The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

In very large hotels, the front office is usually subdivided into sections such as reservations, the front desk, bell service, telephone, concierge, and guest transportation. Many people may be employed in each area, with managers and assistant managers to supervise them.

In small hotels one or two guest services representatives may handle all of these responsibilities. In this case they are usually called front-desk agents. In very small hotels, inns, and bed and breakfasts, one person may handle these and many other tasks, from housekeeping to food service to maintenance.

- *Reservations agents* keep up with hotel booking. They handle group room-contracts negotiated by the sales department and correspond with groups and travel agents to answer special requests for rooms and rates. They enter information into the computer and retrieve it when needed. They see that the front desk, housekeeping, and other departments, such as food service, receive daily information on expected arrivals and departures.
- *Front desk agents* work behind the main desk, where guests register when they arrive and check out when they leave. They make sure that guests have the rooms they booked, take payments, ask about any other needs the guests have, and generally try to sell and promote hotel services.
- *Bellmen* assist guests with luggage.
- *Doormen* open the hotel door for guests entering or leaving. They also assist guests with luggage, call taxis, and direct traffic moving in front of the hotel.
- *Concierges* perform many services for guests, including arranging hotel services, recommending local amenities, and booking transportation, restaurants, and tickets. At business and conference hotels, they also have to know a considerable amount about business services, like where to find legal secretaries, translators, or computer repair.
- *Guest transportation agents* drive guests in hotel vehicles. They usually drive to and from the airport or between hotel outbuildings, but some hotels provide more extensive transportation services.
- *Telephone operators* take incoming calls and direct them to the proper room or department. They also take messages for guests and answer simple questions.



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Most large hotels provide extensive training to their employees and do not require degrees for their entry-level staff. Many people begin working in guest services jobs with a GED or high school diploma, especially if they studied hospitality in high school.

However, people who want to become managers, and in some cases even assistant managers, need a college degree, preferably in hotel management. Associate's and bachelor's degrees are available from

many colleges. Both are useful, but a bachelor's degree is usually necessary for upper level management, and an MBA for the executive level. Some hotels, especially the top ones, prefer to hire college graduates even for their front desk positions and see this as an entry-level management position.

Studying for a career in guest services in Virginia

- Are you in high school? Learn more about [Career and Technical Education](#). Find out about [CTE courses](#) in Hospitality Management and Hospitality Services. These programs can lead to hospitality skills certification from the American Hotel & Lodging Association and the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI).
- Planning to go to college? Find programs in hospitality at [community colleges](#).
- For more information on certification, see:
 - [American Hotel & Lodging Association](#)
 - [National Occupational Competency Testing Institute](#) (NOCTI)

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)

● GETTING AHEAD

Guest services representatives advance by moving from entry-level positions within their department to supervisory positions. In most hotel chains it is difficult to move into management without a degree.

Service representatives can also advance by moving from smaller, less prestigious hotels to larger ones. Wages in luxury hotels are significantly higher than those in budget hotels.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)

● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Being consistently pleasant and polite
- Dealing with complaints tactfully, calmly, and politely
- Handling unexpected situations calmly
- Relating to a wide variety of people
- Teamwork
- Record-keeping

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Reading | • Computer literacy | • A strong work ethic |
| • Math | • Problem-solving & decision-making | • A positive attitude |
| • Writing | • Understanding the broader picture | • Independence & initiative |
| • Speaking & listening | • Working with people | • Self-presentation |

● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Guest services representatives work in the lobby and front offices of hotels and resorts, many of which are located in cities or resort communities such as beaches and ski areas.



● OUTLOOK

The recent tough economy hurt the hotel industry, which has always been cyclical. The industry responds quickly to the overall economy, slowing in recession years and rising in expansion. The 2001 terrorism attacks and increased concerns about security dealt a particularly hard blow to the hospitality industry. However, it has now begun to recover and even to expand.

New technology has changed the job of guest services representatives over the last decade. Computerized record-keeping has cut down the amount of paperwork that front desk workers do. Guests can now check out automatically, view their bills on television screens in their room, and get messages on in-room answering machines. However, guests still want, and will probably always want, direct and personal service from hotel staff.

Regardless of changing technology or the state of the economy, there are usually a lot of job opportunities in guest services because there is a high turnover among hotel workers.



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economies at a Glance: Virginia

The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)



● LOOK FOR WORK

- Take a look at job ads in the [Va Hospitality & Travel Association job bank](#).
- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



● EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

Salaries in this career are generally low, as they are throughout the hospitality industry. Most desk clerks

usually earn in the \$13,000-\$23,000 range. Concierges earn somewhat more, mostly in the \$14,000-\$29,000 range. Those who have an opportunity to earn tips from guests--such as doormen and bellhops--can earn more than workers who are generally not tipped, like front desk clerks.

- For more salary information, see the [HospitalityCareerNet Hospitality Compensation Exchange](#).
- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



● FOR MORE INFORMATION

- The Rooms Chronicle: Website for hotel rooms management
www.roomschronicle.com/
- Hotel Job Resource
www.hoteljobresource.com/
- American Hotel and Lodging Association
1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
www.ahma.com
- The International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education
3205 Skipwith Road,
Richmond, VA 23294
www.chrie.org/
- Hospitality Careers Online
www.hcareers.com/seeker/
- HospitalityCareerNet
www.hospitalitycareernet.com/

This page was last edited on: June 19, 2006





Hotel Housekeepers

What do they do? Housekeepers clean guest rooms & the public areas of hotels & other lodging places

Specializations: None

Preferred education: None required to start; but a HS diploma or GED is often needed to move up

Certification & licensing: Certification available

Getting ahead: Can become inspectors or specialists, or move to a better hotel

Skills & knowledge: An eye for neatness, attention to detail, following standard procedures, physical strength and agility

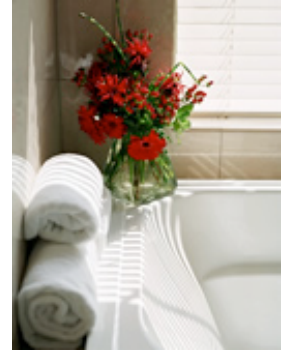
Where they work: Hotels, motels, resorts & conference centers

Job outlook: Large occupation with high turnover means lots of openings

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$12-22,000 range

Links: Find more information about this career



● WHAT DO THEY DO?

Your first flight was late, so you missed your second one and waited in a crowded airport for four hours before you could get another flight out. In the meantime, you had to call two clients to reschedule appointments, but one of them had apparently turned her cell phone off, and it took four calls before you could find her. And when you finally got where you were going, and retrieved your luggage, it was 90 degrees out and you had to wait for an hour before the hotel van came to get you. You're hot, tired, and frustrated.

Then you get to your hotel room and find it immaculately clean, with a sparkling bathroom and a bed outfitted with crisp, fresh sheets. And thanks to the hotel housekeepers who made it that way, you heave a huge sigh, kick your shoes off, and relax.

Hotel housekeepers clean the guestrooms and public areas of hotels, motels, and other kinds of lodgings. They are also called roomkeepers, room attendants, room cleaners, or maids. You see them pushing a trolley from room to room, pushing a cart filled with cleaning supplies as well as fresh sheets and towels, and stocks of plastic shower caps, shoe shine sponges, and little sewing kits.

Housekeeping in a hotel has to meet far more rigorous standards than most people maintain in their own houses. Housekeepers vacuum the entire floor of each guest room and dust every surface. They check lamps, clocks, radios and the TV to make sure they work. They clean all the surfaces in the bathroom and restock it with guest supplies.

Then they make the bed, immaculately and with no creases. Usually they change linens and towels, unless guests request that they not be changed. (More hotels are asking guests to specifically request changes as a way of reducing energy costs.) Housekeepers must do such rigorous cleaning for as many as [18 hotel rooms](#) a day, which can be [exhausting](#).

Real life...

[Read about hotel workers in Las Vegas](#)

What about Virginia...

[Va Hospitality & Travel Assoc](#)

[Va's Electronic Labor Market](#)



In most hotels, housekeepers' work is [inspected](#) each day by a supervisor or specialist room checker, and housekeepers may have their wages docked a certain amount for each failure to meet hotel standards or be paid bonuses for perfect inspections. In addition, particularly fastidious housekeepers may receive tips from grateful guests who have appreciated a job well done, as well as the opportunity to sleep late in the morning.

Specific tasks include:

- Attending pre-shift meetings to learn room assignments and the day's tasks
- Stocking housekeeping carts with cleaning supplies, fresh linens, and guest supplies
- Cleaning, vacuuming, and re-stocking guest rooms and baths
- Making beds
- Removing all trash and dirty linen from guest rooms
- Cleaning, vacuuming, straightening public areas when assigned to those shifts
- Reporting items left behind to housekeeping supervisor

The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

None



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Most employers don't require hotel housekeepers to have a diploma or degree. They are more concerned with finding people who will be conscientious workers, reliable about attendance, and courteous to guests. Employers would like to have housekeepers who speak basic English, but when the economy is booming, they often hire many new immigrants who speak very little English. Some better hotels help staff take English lessons.

Most large hotels and hotel chains formally train new workers in hotel policies, cleaning techniques, and the safety standards that that Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires. In small hotels and bed and breakfasts, housekeepers usually learn on the job.

Studying housekeeping in Virginia:

- Are you in high school? Learn more about [Career and Technical Education](#). Find out about [CTE courses](#) in Hospitality Services. This program can lead to hospitality skills certification from the American Hotel & Lodging Association and the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI).

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)



● GETTING AHEAD

Generally speaking, opportunities for promotion are better in large hotels than in small ones.

Housekeepers can advance to become inspectors or specialists--who do light maintenance and deep cleaning--without further education, provided that they have the skills to do the job and can read and write well enough to keep the necessary records. Some hotels require a high school diploma, GED, or even an associate's degree for supervisors, but because of the labor shortage in this field, many promote workers without these educational qualifications if they have supervisory skills and a good work record.

It used to be that skilled workers could even rise to be housekeeping-department managers without additional formal education, but this is rarely true today. Housekeeping managers usually have at least an associate's degree, and many fine hotels require a bachelor's degree, preferably in hotel management.

Though it may be difficult to move up the job ladder, housekeepers can also advance by seeking jobs in better hotels, where wages and working conditions are often much higher than those found in smaller, cheaper establishments.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)



● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Attention to detail and a eye for neatness and cleanliness
- Physical strength, agility, and stamina
- Following standard procedures and safety rules
- [See a complete list of skills from the US Dept of Labor at O-Net](#)

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Reading | • Computer literacy | • A strong work ethic |
| • Math | • Problem-solving & decision-making | • A positive attitude |
| • Writing | • Understanding the broader picture | • Independence & initiative |
| • Speaking & listening | • Working with people | • Self-presentation |



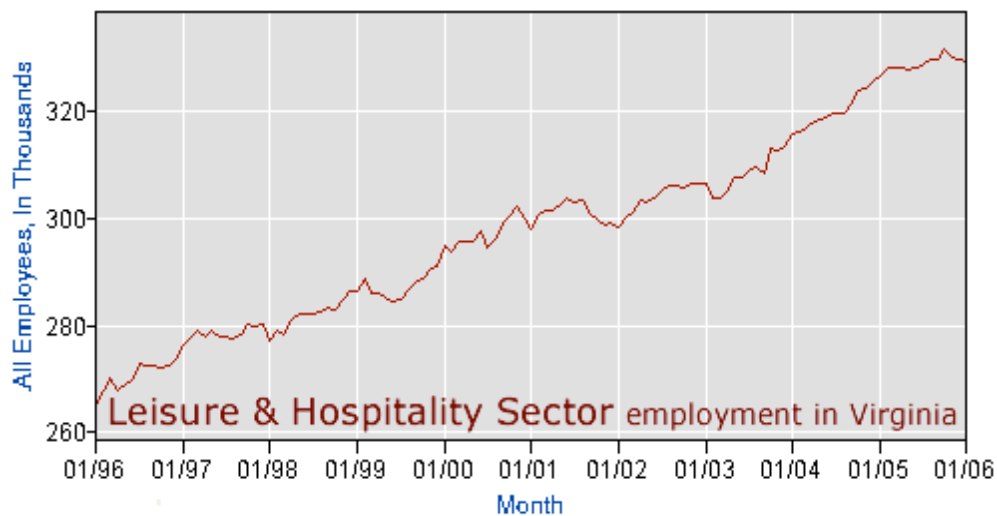
● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Hotel hospitality staff work in hotels, motels, inns and bed and breakfasts throughout Virginia and nationwide.



● OUTLOOK

Because pay is low and the work is physically demanding, turnover is extremely high in this field, so there will be opportunities for employment in most parts of Virginia regardless of the state of the economy. More jobs will certainly develop as new hotels and convention centers come on line in cities like Richmond, Virginia Beach, Hampton and Roanoke.



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economies at a Glance: Virginia

The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)



LOOK FOR WORK

- Take a look at job ads in the [Va Hospitality & Travel Association job bank](#).
- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

Housekeeping workers earn very low wages, usually between \$6.00 and \$10.00 per hour. In 2003, the [median](#) annual earnings for housekeepers was about \$16,000 a year. Some guests leave tips, but rarely enough to make a substantial contribution to the housekeeper's income. Housekeeping supervisors earned substantially more--in the \$18,000-\$46,000 range. In certain areas of the country, like Las Vegas, where hotel workers are well-organized, unionized hotel housekeepers earn more than average and enjoy benefits that are often not the norm.

- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



FOR MORE INFORMATION

- The Rooms Chronicle: Website for hotel rooms management
www.roomschronicle.com/
- Hotel Job Resource
www.hoteljobresource.com/
- American Hotel and Lodging Association
 1201 New York Ave NW, Suite 600
 Washington, DC 20005
www.ahma.com/
- The International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education

3205 Skipwith Rd
Richmond, VA 23294
www.chrie.org/

- Hospitality Careers Online
www.hcareers.com/seeker/
- HospitalityCareerNet
www.hospitalitycareernet.com/

This page was last edited on: June 19, 2006





Hotel Managers

What do they do? Hotel managers oversee the running of hotels, motels, or departments within them

Specializations: Guest services, housekeeping, food & beverage, security, & other areas

Preferred education: Associate's degree through MBA

Certification & licensing: Certification available

Getting ahead: Can advance from trainee to assistant manager to department manager

Skills & knowledge: Attention to detail, multi-tasking, decision-making, handling stress, business sense

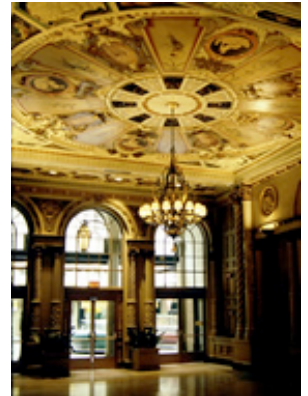
Where they work: Offices & all other parts of hotels, motels, resorts, & conference centers

Job outlook: Slow growth predicted; but turnover keeps lots of entry level positions available

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$17-60,000 range

Links: Find more information about this career



● WHAT DO THEY DO?

On a typical day, a hotel manager might interview a new job candidate, review the hotel's budget for accuracy, talk with [housekeeping](#) about changes in the housekeeping routine, deal with a major leak in room 909, inspect the condition of the lobby and hallways, plan an upcoming renovation, handle guest [complaints](#), plan employees' schedules for the next week, negotiate a contract with a new beverage service company, fire an unreliable doorman and note that the flowers at the reception desk are wilting and are due for a change.

And that's all *before* noon.

In short, [hotel managers](#) wear a million [different hats](#) and juggle a million different tasks. As managers who oversee the running of entire hotels or motels, they must have an incredible eye for detail, great organizational ability, and lots and lots of energy.

In the back-office part of their jobs, hotel managers hire and fire, manage employees, do budgeting, decide wages, negotiate contracts with suppliers, and plan renovations. As managers, they set hotel policies and are responsible for the many and varied administrative aspects of running a hotel. But even so, most managers--even high-level ones--spend time each day in the public parts of their hotel, speaking to guests, observing workers, inspecting facilities and generally making sure that the hotel is running as it should. When staff is short, hotel managers can even help out by serving guests and working to check guests in and out at the front desk.

Needless to say, this job can be a very tough one. In the course of the day, hotel managers face all sorts of crises. They must make many quick decisions with grace and aplomb. They must have a good sense of business and know how to [promote](#) their hotel through advertisements, promotional events and special offers. But it's not enough to be highly organized, efficient, and

Real life...

[A hotel manager](#)

[American Hotel & Lodging Assoc](#)

What about Virginia...

[Va's Electronic Labor Market](#)



familiar with financial practices and budgeting. Managers must also have good people skills, too.

They must know how to manage and communicate with hotel employees, encouraging them to do good work, and know how to keep hotel guests happy, by talking with them and promptly responding to their needs. They must also be willing to work long hours during busy periods.

There is one thing for sure in this line of work: the only people who get a chance to rest in hotels are the guests.

Specific tasks vary by specialization, but all managers do the following:

- Hire, fire, and supervise employees
- Administer budgets
- Walk the hotel to ensure that all is going well



The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

Like other large corporations, modern hotels are organized into separate departments. The number of departments varies with the size of the hotel. In a very small hotel there may be only one manager, the innkeeper, and one department. A very large hotel may have ten or more, each one administered by a manager with the help of assistant managers for sub-departments. Each department manager needs specialized skills and sometimes a specialized degree suitable for that department. A general manager supervises all the others.

The following departments are commonly found in large hotels.

- Guest services or "Rooms"
- Housekeeping
- Food & beverage
- Security
- Recreation
- Banqueting
- Conferences and events
- Accounting/finance
- Purchasing
- Human resources
- Marketing/sales
- Property management
- Management information service



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Twenty years ago, hotel managers, came up through the ranks, usually starting out at the front desk. This is less likely today. An associate's degree can qualify someone to be an assistant manager, or manager of a small hotel, but in a large hotel, it is difficult to rise beyond assistant manager without additional education. Most department managers have a bachelor's degree, preferably from a hotel-school

program and acquire their work experience first through the extensive internships that these programs normally require and then by several years work in trainee or assistant manager positions. Hotel executives often have advanced degrees in a specialty or an MBA.

Chain hotels run extensive training programs for employees, and new managers, even those with hotel school degrees, are usually put through a year-long management trainee program before being assigned an assistant manager position.

Studying for a career in hotel management in Virginia:

- Are you in high school? Learn more about [Career and Technical Education](#). Find out about [CTE courses](#) in Hotel/Motel Marketing, Hospitality Management, Hospitality Services and Travel and Tourism Marketing. These courses can lead to hospitality skills certification from the American Hotel & Lodging Association and the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute.
- Planning to go to college? Find programs in hospitality at [community colleges](#).
- For more information on certification, see:
[American Hotel & Lodging Association](#)
[National Occupational Competency Testing Institute](#)
- Search for an [internship](#).

Find out how much you can afford to borrow for a [bachelor's degree](#), [master's](#) or [PhD](#).

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)

● GETTING AHEAD

Hotel managers advance by rising through the ranks from trainee to assistant manager to department manager. Equally important, however, they advance by moving from smaller, less prestigious, hotels to larger ones. Salaries and bonuses in large hotels are very much higher than those in small ones.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)

● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Attention to detail
- Keeping track of numerous responsibilities at once
- Keeping abreast of trends and consumer tastes
- Organizing, directing, and coordinating large-scale activities
- Making important decisions quickly and under pressure
- Handling stressful and unexpected situations calmly and managing crises
- Business sense and financial skills
- Supervising and motivating large numbers of low-paid, part time, seasonal, and immigrant workers
- Working in a competitive environment

- Teamwork
- Keeping accurate records
- Working with computers
- [See a complete list of skills from the US Dept of Labor at O-Net](#)

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Reading | • Computer literacy | • A strong work ethic |
| • Math | • Problem-solving & decision-making | • A positive attitude |
| • Writing | • Understanding the broader picture | • Independence & initiative |
| • Speaking & listening | • Working with people | • Self-presentation |



● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Hotel managers work in hotels, motels, and resorts. Most of these are found in cities and resort communities such as beaches and ski areas.



● OUTLOOK

In recent years the hotel industry has struggled following the September 11 terrorist attacks and the continuing problems in Iraq and the Middle East. The sniper attacks in the Washington DC area dealt yet another blow to the health of the Virginia tourism and hotel industry.

Even so, there is much continued optimism in this industry. In Virginia, major new convention centers are planned for Richmond, Hampton and Virginia Beach. If these cities succeed in attracting more convention business as more groups decline to meet in larger cities, the state's hotel industry may experience a very bright future indeed.

Though the industry is likely to do well in the long term, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts there won't be very much growth in the number of jobs for hotel managers. A lot of new hotels will be economy class and extended-stay hotels that don't hire so many managers.

Despite slow growth there will be room to enter the hotel profession at the bottom and to move up, since the long hours, low pay, and stress mean that many managers leave the field during their first few years.



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economies at a Glance: Virginia



● LOOK FOR WORK

- Take a look at job ads in the [Va_Hospitality & Travel Association job bank](#).
- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



● EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

In 2003, most hotel managers in Virginia earned salaries in the \$17-60,000 range.

Management trainees earn low or moderate salaries, but if they survive those first few years, chances for advancement and higher salaries increase. Salaries for upper managers vary enormously. Hotel size is the most important factor determining salary. In 2002, general managers in hotels of under 150 rooms earned an average of \$50,000 per year, not including bonuses. In hotels of over 800 rooms they earned \$173,000 per year, not including bonuses. Earnings in this field vary greatly depending on the size and hotel of location. Those working in smaller hotels in lower-cost regions earn salaries in the \$26,000 to \$44,000 range.

Salaries also vary by specialization. General managers earn the most. Other managerial positions in order of salary were sales, food and beverage, controller, human resources, rooms, and management information systems (MIS), or computer technology. General managers often earn twice as much as MIS managers.

- For more salary information, see the [HospitalityCareerNet Hospitality Compensation Exchange](#).
- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



● FOR MORE INFORMATION

- "Hotels & Conventions" *Virginia Business* articles
www.virginiabusiness.com/magazine/yr2003/jan03/index.shtml
- The Rooms Chronicle: Website for hotel rooms management
www.roomschronicle.com/
- Hotel Job Resource
www.hoteljobresource.com/
- American Hotel and Lodging Association
1201 New York Ave, NW, Suite 600
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www.ahma.com
Lodging Magazine
www.lodgingmagazine.com
- The International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education
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www.chrie.org/
- Hospitality Careers Online
www.hcareers.com/seeker/

- HospitalityCareerNet
www.hospitalitycareernet.com/
- National Hotel Executive
www.hotelexecutive.com/
- American Hotel & Lodging Association
1201 New York Avenue, NW, #600
Washington, DC 20005
www.ahma.com
- National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)
www.nocti.org/

This page was last edited on: June 15, 2006





Meeting & Event Planners



What do they do? Meeting planners organize conventions, trade shows, reunions, galas, and other kinds of functions

Specializations: Type of events they put on, or the type of client they serve

Preferred education: Bachelor's degree

Certification & licensing: Certification available

Getting ahead: Meeting planners advance & earn more by working on more complex & prestigious events

Skills & knowledge: Networking, negotiating, competitiveness, attention to detail, working independently

Where they work: Corporations, associations, hotel, destination management companies

Job outlook: Good overall but very sensitive to the health of the economy

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$30-77,000 range

Links: For more information

● WHAT DO THEY DO?

It's time again for Star Trek fans to meet. Or the Neurophysicists of America. Or the American Heart Association. Or Acme Pharmaceutical corporation.

When it's time for thousands of people to meet in one place, there is one group of workers who leap into action to make sure things go smoothly and efficiently: meeting planners.

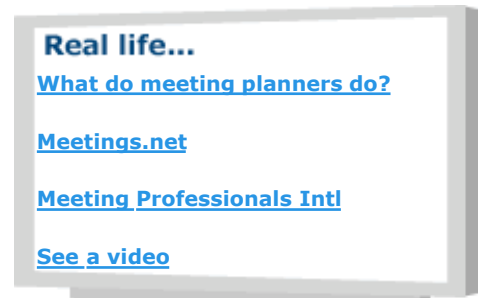
Meeting planners run the meetings of America's associations and corporations. They handle everything from small luncheons of a few hundred people to week-long conventions of more than 10,000. They may arrange motivational meetings for sales workers or academic conferences for scientists. They also organize trade shows for major manufacturers.

Putting these events together is a full-time job for meeting and event planners, who handle all the hundreds of details. They book transportation, research and reserve facilities, round up speakers, and attend meetings themselves to handle the crises that almost always arise.

Meeting planners are rarely tied to a desk. They do some work in their offices, but they also travel a great deal. They visit clients and suppliers to negotiate contracts and investigate facilities. They stay in the hotels their clients book and attend functions to make sure all is going well. They need to be comfortable in all sorts of situations, from executive offices to hotel kitchens.

Specific tasks include:

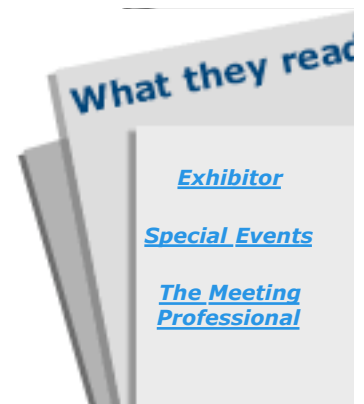
- Consulting with clients and negotiating agreements with them
- Researching suppliers and services
- Negotiating with suppliers and subcontractors
- Planning travel, accommodation, food and other services needed for



What about Virginia...

[Virginia Business Meeting & Conference Planner](#)

[Va's Electronic Labor Market](#)



- meetings
- Attending functions and ensuring that all goes well

The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

All meeting planners need a wide range of skills applicable to many kinds of events. Nonetheless, both planners and the firms they work for tend to specialize in the kind of work they do.

- Meeting planners may specialize in the type of service they offer. *Corporate event consultants* advise clients about program content, locations, and subcontractors. *Destination management companies* serve sponsors of the event once they have chosen a particular town or city. They help clients choose among different hotels or convention facilities, plan transportation, and select entertainers or other services they need.
- Meeting planners can also specialize in the type of meeting they put on: family reunions, trade shows and exhibitions, incentive travel events, corporate events, special events and galas, conventions and conferences, training sessions.
- Some planners specialize in just one piece of the meeting puzzle, like accommodations management, registration, event promotion, on-site management, or program content development.
- Some planners specialize in particular types of clients, such as professional associations, manufacturing industry, or local governments.



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Meeting planners usually need a bachelor's degree. Many have a major in marketing, business, hotel administration, or a related subject, but this is not the only way to enter the field. A number of people become meeting planners because of the experience they gain participating in meeting while holding another job. Academics who serve on their professional association's meeting planning boards, corporate trainers who have long involvement with setting up training sessions, or caterers who routinely serve corporate functions, can all move into this profession. They bring their specialized knowledge and education along with their planning experience to the job.

Only a few colleges and universities offer specialist degrees in convention and meeting planning, usually in their hotel schools. However, the number of hotel schools offering this concentration will probably increase to catch up with the recent growth in meeting and convention work.

Most meeting planners do not have or need advanced degrees. However those who manage large planning or destination management companies and those involved with major convention and trade show business may benefit from an MBA or a master's degree in hospitality management, particularly where this provides additional legal and negotiating skills.

Increasing numbers of meeting planners are seeking certification from their professional organizations. These include the Convention Industry Council's "Certified Meeting Planner" and the International Special Events Society's "Certified Special Events Professional". The Association of Destination Management Executives is also beginning a certification program.

Studying to become a meeting planner:

- Find [community college programs](#). Find [programs at 4 year colleges and universities](#) in Virginia.

- Get advice about meeting education from [Meeting Professionals International](#) (look under "mycareer").
- Learn more about certification from the:

[Convention Industry Council](#)

[International Special Events Society](#)

[Association of Destination Management Executives](#)

www.earthfinstudios.com

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)

● GETTING AHEAD

Meeting planners advance in several ways. Some advance while staying in meeting-planning. They begin with basic tasks, like photocopying, printing up name tags, and identifying and solving problems at small meetings. Once they have learned the basics, they then begin to take responsibility for particular aspects of planning a meeting and gradually go on to more complex jobs. For example, by becoming more skilled at negotiating with service-providers like hotels and caterers, they save money for their employers. In return, they earn larger bonuses and can demand higher salaries. Skilled negotiators can also win larger commissions from the suppliers with whom they do business.

Other meeting planners advance by changing jobs within the company. After a period of success at their jobs, they move into sales or management, both of which have the potential for high earnings.

Finally, planners advance by moving from low-paying firms to higher-paying ones, and from less complex, lower-paying projects to more complex, high-paying ones. Those who work on local government meetings earn less than those who work on meetings attended by Fortune 500 CEOs. Small state conventions are usually much less profitable than the Detroit Auto Show.


- [Welcome to your career toolkit.](#)
- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)

● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Networking
- Selling, negotiating, and bargaining
- Translating clients preferences into actual events
- Keeping up with products, trends, and clients tastes
- Communicating clearly
- Competitiveness
- Handling unexpected and stressful situations calmly
- Working well with clients
- Attention to detail
- Projecting an image of integrity, enthusiasm, and self-confidence
- Working with minimal supervision
- Keeping track of numerous responsibilities at once

- General office skills
- Organizing, directing, and coordinating large-scale activities
- [See a complete list of skills from the US Dept of Labor at O-Net](#)


In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- Reading
 - Math
 - Writing
 - Speaking & listening
 - Computer literacy
 - Problem-solving & decision-making
 - Understanding the broader picture
 - Working with people
 - A strong work ethic
 - A positive attitude
 - Independence & initiative
 - Self-presentation
- 

● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Meeting planners work for many different kinds of employers. Corporate planners work for corporations, usually large ones, and are charged with planning corporate events, usually with the help of many sub-contractors. Trade and professional associations employ large numbers of planners to handle their annual meetings and other functions. Hotels and resorts employ planners to handle events booked there. These planners sometimes run events on their own and sometimes work with other planners employed by clients booking the event. Finally, many planners work for independent meeting-planning firms, or destination-management companies.

Regardless of who they work for, meeting planners never work in one place all the time. They visit clients, suppliers, and subcontractors, stay in hotels, and attend functions. They need to be comfortable working in a wide variety of surroundings and with a wide variety of people.

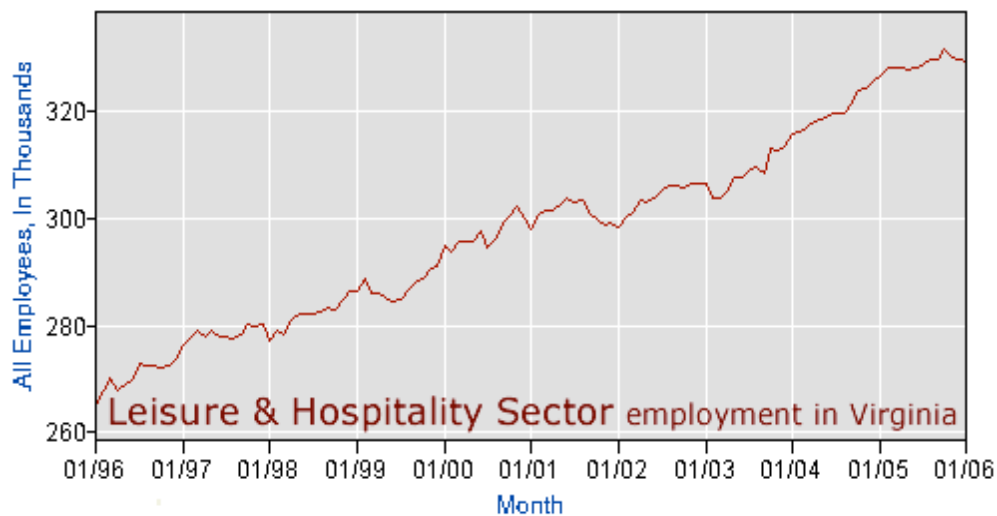


● OUTLOOK

The employment outlook for meeting planners depends on the overall economy. The demand for planners grew throughout the 1990s when the economy expanded and companies spent more and more on meetings. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that employment in Virginia will continue to grow at a faster than average rate through 2014. As the business world grows more and more international, meetings and conventions become even more important. And as technology increases the ability for people to meet, through e-mail, teleconferencing, and the Web, it actually encourages more meetings since people who would formerly never have interacted now have the possibility to collaborate. The end result is even more face-to-face meetings.

Even so, planners are still likely to encounter some ups and downs. When the economy slows down, meeting expenses are one of the first things to be cut. Then when the economy revives, businesses invest in meetings and conventions again. Many planners had a hard time after 9-11. Businesses cut travel and meetings and a slow economy kept spending down. When the economy is doing well, however, there should be plenty of demand for people in this field. This job is not going to go away, be automated, or sent off shore.

- Read [FutureWatch 2005](#), a pdf you download from *The Meeting Professional* magazine.



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economies at a Glance: Virginia

The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)



LOOK FOR WORK

- Take a look at job ads posted with [Meeting Professionals International](#) or [MeetingsNet](#).
- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

Meeting planners in Virginia earned somewhere in the \$30-77,000 range in 2004. The median was \$45,000. According to the 2005 Salary Survey conducted by Meeting Professionals International, meeting planners made an average of about \$46,000 in 2004.

- Read the MPI [salary survey](#) report.
- See more salary information from the [Meetings.net, Career Toolkit](#).
- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Meeting Professionals International
 4455 LBJ Freeway, Suite 1200
 Dallas, Texas 75244
www.mpiweb.org
- Connected International Meeting Professionals Association
 9200 Bayard Place
 Fairfax, Virginia 22032
www.cimpa.org/

- American Society of Association Executives
1575 I St., NW
Washington, DC 20005
www.asaenet.org/main/
Career Headquarters
www.asaenet.org/careers/
- International Special Events Society
401 North Michigan Ave,
Chicago, IL 60611
www.ises.com/
- Association of Destination Management Executives
3333 Quebec St, Suite 4050
Denver, CO 80207
www.adme.org/
- The Professional Convention Management Association
2301 South Lake Shore Dr, Suite 1001
Chicago, IL 60616
www.pcma.org/
- Convention Industry Council
8201 Greensboro Drive, Suite 300
McLean, VA 22102
www.conventionindustry.org/
- Meetings.net
<http://meetingsnet.com/>
- *Exhibitor Magazine*
www.exhibitor.net/exhibitor/magazine/
- *Special Events Magazine*
<http://industryclick.com/magazine.asp?siteid=28&magazineid=38>

This page was last edited on: June 15, 2006





Restaurant Managers

What do they do? Restaurant managers run restaurants

Specializations: Types of restaurants from fine-dining to fast-food

Preferred education: Post-secondary training; but some chains now prefer 2 or 4 year degrees

Certification & licensing: Certification often required by employers

Getting ahead: Begin as assistant manager & move up to manager or higher paying restaurants

Skills & knowledge: Managing people & finances, multi-tasking, attention to detail, business sense

Where they work: Restaurants

Job outlook: Good

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$17-60,000 range

Links: Find more information about this career



● WHAT DO THEY DO?

Restaurant managers orchestrate the chaos of the restaurant business. They must be simultaneously aware of and deal with a vast number of details, from the cleanliness of spoons to the market price of swordfish. In an industry infamous for its high turnover rates, they try to corral a competent staff, and when employees suddenly quit or simply don't show up, they may end up bussing tables, flipping burgers, or tending bar. They must calm angry patrons, accept responsibility for their employees' mistakes, and do their best to make sure that everyone is satisfied and smiling.

Whether running a fast-food restaurant or a five-star establishment at a posh resort, restaurant managers work in a high-pressure environment and work long hours, nights, weekends, and holidays. This is a good job for people who like constant activity, can make quick decisions, and are willing to go out of their way to make customers happy.

Everyone loves a good meal at a well-run eatery, and restaurant managers who do their jobs well can take pride in the fact that customers leave happy and want to come back.

Specific tasks include:

- Hiring staff
- Making staff work schedules
- Overseeing food preparation and cooking
- Resolving customer complaints
- Ordering supplies

Real life...

[National Restaurant Assoc](#)

[Beth Casey, owner/manager](#)

[John Zukle, restaurant owner](#)

What about Virginia...

[Va Hospitality & Travel Assoc](#)

[Va's Electronic Labor Market](#)

What they read

[Food Service & Hospitality](#)

- Selecting and pricing menu items
- Making sure that the restaurant is clean and in compliance with health regulations
- Filling in at any station, including cooking, waiting tables, and cleaning up

[Restaurant Hospitality](#)

[Restaurant News](#)

The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)

● SPECIALIZATION

There are many different kinds of restaurants. Managers develop specialized knowledge of running one or more types through their work experience. These include:

- *Fine-dining restaurants* serve the best quality food, have a unique atmosphere, and are usually independently owned and managed.
- *Full-service chain restaurants* provide complete restaurant service and are owned by a chain that determines the menu, décor, employment policies, and so forth.
- *Fast-food restaurants* have no waitstaff and are almost always part of a large chain.

● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Restaurant managers have traditionally advanced from the ranks of [servers](#), [cooks](#), and [chefs](#). Though this is still a viable career path, large restaurant chains increasingly seek managers who have completed an associate's or bachelor's degree program in hospitality management. Many 2- and 4-year colleges and universities offer these programs, which include courses in nutrition, food planning and preparation, accounting, business management, computers, food safety, and human resources.

Most managers receive extensive on-the-job training. In small and independently owned restaurants, they usually begin working as assistants, handling specific managerial tasks like monitoring inventory and ordering supplies or making employee work schedules under the supervision of a manager.

Restaurant chains often have rigorous training programs. Through a combination of classroom and on-the-job training, trainees receive instruction and gain work experience in managerial practices. Training may last anywhere from a few months to a year. Those who complete it successfully are offered an assignment as an assistant manager.

The Educational Foundation of the National Restaurant Association offers a voluntary certification program for restaurant managers. In order to qualify, candidates must have 2-3 years of experience as a restaurant manager, have special training in food safety, and pass an exam. Those who meet these qualifications become certified Foodservice Management Professionals. Though certification is not generally required for employment or advancement, it does demonstrate a commitment to excellence and professionalism, and some employers prefer it.

Both the [National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation](#) and the [American Food Safety Institute](#) offer training and certification in safe food handling. Growing concern about food safety means that there is pressure to require food service managers to have this certification. This is mandated in Maryland and the District of Columbia, for example. In Virginia regulation is left to local jurisdictions, however this certification is a wise precaution for all managers.

Studying to be a restaurant manager in Virginia:

- Are you in high school? Learn more about [Career and Technical Education](#). Find out about [CTE courses](#) in Restaurant Management and Culinary Arts.

- Planning to go to college? Find food service, hospitality and restaurant management programs at [community colleges](#).

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)



● GETTING AHEAD

Restaurant managers typically begin as assistant managers. After gaining experience, they may be promoted to manager. After that, advancement usually means moving to a larger or more respected establishment or becoming a regional manager for a restaurant chain. This often requires relocation. Some managers eventually open their own restaurants.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)



● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Hiring, firing, and supervising people
- Managing and supervising people
- Giving clear directions
- Keeping track of numerous responsibilities at once
- Dealing with complaints tactfully, calmly, and politely
- Motivating others
- Staying calm under stress
- Thinking on your feet
- Making decisions based on professional standards and personal judgment
- Staying on your feet for long periods of time
- Promoting their establishments
- Attention to detail
- Working with minimal supervision
- Working with computers
- Budgeting & financial management
- Business sense

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Reading | • Computer literacy | • A strong work ethic |
| • Math | • Problem-solving & decision-making | • A positive attitude |
| • Writing | • Understanding the broader picture | • Independence & initiative |
| • Speaking & listening | • Working with people | • Self-presentation |



● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Restaurant managers work in all kinds of eating establishments. They may manage a fast food restaurant in a small town or a fine dining establishment in a big city. They manage restaurants in hotels, at resorts, and on cruise ships. Big cities and tourist locations offer the most opportunities, but restaurant managers are needed just about everywhere.



● OUTLOOK

National employment projections indicate steady growth in the demand for restaurant managers. More people are eating away from home than ever before, and the restaurant industry experienced unprecedented expansion in the last decade. Growth is expected to continue, though perhaps not so rapidly as before. In addition, there are always a lot of job openings for restaurant managers because there is such a lot of turnover in this high stress occupation.

There will probably be more jobs for managers in restaurant chains and [franchises](#) than in independently owned restaurants. Most new restaurants are part of one of the national chains rather than being independently owned and operated. As this trend continues, fewer owners will manage restaurants themselves, and more restaurant managers will be employed by larger companies.



The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)



● LOOK FOR WORK

- Take a look at [job ads](#) at Hospitality Careers.com
- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



● EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

Most restaurant managers earn somewhere in the \$17-60,000 range. Many chains also pay significant bonuses to managers based on restaurant earnings.

- Fine more salary information from the HospitalityCareerNet [Hospitality Compensation Exchange](#).



● FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association
2101 Libbie Avenue
Richmond, VA 23230
www.vhta.org/
- Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education
1200 17th St NW
Washington, DC 20036
www.chrie.org
- National Restaurant Association
1200 17th St NW
Washington, DC 20036
www.restaurant.org
- Hcareers.com: Hospitality Careers Online
www.hcareers.com/
- RestaurantJobs.com
www.restaurantjobs.com/
- National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation
250 South Wacker Dr, Suite 1400
Chicago, IL 60606
www.nraef.org/
- American Food Safety Institute
One Green Street,
Hulmeville, PA 19047
www.americanfoodsafety.com/
- HospitalityCareerNet Hospitality Compensation Exchange
www.hospitalitycareernet.com/careerresources/hce.asp

This page was last edited on: February 10, 2006





Travel Agents

Description: Travel agents plan trips & book tickets & hotels

Specializations: Arranging different types of travel or tours

Preferred education: High school CTE or postsecondary program in travel marketing to start

Certification & licensing: Certification available; required in some states

Getting ahead: May advance to managerial positions or start their own businesses

Skills & knowledge: Finding & organizing information, selling; planning, independence, working well with clients

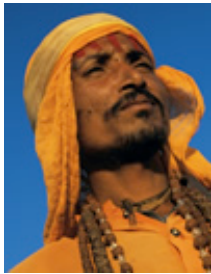
Where they work: Travel agencies, some work out of their homes

Job outlook: Technological change is cutting jobs; very sensitive to recession

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$15-43,000 range

Links: Find more information about this career



● WHAT DO THEY DO?

You're dreaming of a trip to Morocco. Or maybe Kenya, India, the Caribbean or Japan. Where do you go when you need advice about how to get to these places and where to stay once you're there?

You see your travel agent.

Travel agents are the people who help us sort through changing airfares and air schedules, vacation packages, visa requirements and resort options. They arrange itineraries, set up car rentals, book hotel accommodations and tours, and give general advice on traveling. They can provide advice about complicated things, such as customs regulations and vaccinations. Or they can give advice about simpler but very essential matters, such as weather conditions, local customs and currency exchange rates. In many cases, they have visited the destinations they talk about, so they are able to provide a first-hand account of what a traveler might expect.

A travel agent's typical day includes not only booking hotel, car and airplane reservations, but also researching unusual destinations for clients, helping others get passports for international trips, or visiting a hotel or restaurant to see whether it is worth recommending to clients. Each time agents book reservations on airlines, cruise ships, hotels or tour packages, they receive a commission from those companies.

It was once a given that anyone thinking of a big international trip would visit a travel agent first. Today, however, technology has [reduced the role of travel agents](#). Most people can easily

Real life...

[American Society of Travel Agents](#)

[Becoming a travel agent](#)

[Travel Sense](#)

What about Virginia...

[Virginia is for Lovers](#)

book their own flights and hotel accommodations using the [internet](#). They can also find other types of information--on exchange rates, visa requirements and weather, for example--with one click of the mouse.

This means that fewer and fewer people use travel agents. In addition, following a plummet in airline travel after the World Trade Center attack in 2001, many airline companies have cut the commissions they give to agencies for selling airplane tickets, or they compete directly with travel agents by selling their tickets online. That means that travel agents also make less money than they used to.

On the other hand, travel agents do still play a role in some types of travel. Although many companies have begun arranging business trips in-house, travel agents still arrange trips for many organizations, planning meetings and conventions to various cities. They also continue to market cruises and resort packages, and plan group trips. And many are increasingly specializing in niche markets, as the general consumer becomes better informed about travel. For example, some now specialize in organizing trips for seniors, or for gay couples, or for adventure travelers or bicyclists. Some specialize in tours to Zanzibar or in tours dedicated to opera, or yoga or wine, or any other interest you can think of. Many now work at home or visit the homes of their clients. While the future of this career is very uncertain, there will probably always be at least [a small role for agents](#) who become specialists in a special destination or a particular type of travel, or for those marketing to well-heeled customers unwilling to make their own travel arrangements.

Specific tasks include:

- Talking with customers to determine destination, travel dates, financial considerations, and other preferences
- Consulting a variety of published and computer-based sources for information on departure and arrival times, fares, and hotel ratings and accommodations
- Selling travel package tours
- Providing travel information such as weather conditions, restaurants, recreation, and tourist attractions
- Making train, ship, plane, and hotel reservations
- Visiting hotels, resorts, and restaurants to evaluate their comfort, cleanliness, and the quality of food and service
- Using telemarketing, direct mail, and the Internet to promote their services



The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

Travel agents may specialize in foreign or domestic service, leisure or business travel, specific geographical areas, individual or group travel, airplane charters, or package tours.

- *Leisure vacation travel counselors* help customers with leisure travel plans, and advise them on all their travel needs, including hotel accommodations and airline, cruise, tour, package and car reservations.
- *Corporate travel specialists* assist business travelers. Many corporate agents arrange special meeting fares to a city for a discount.
- *Group travel planners* work exclusively with groups. The planner works with the tour leader in planning the itinerary and making all arrangements for the group, including group sightseeing and any other arrangements the group wants.
- *Meeting and incentive planners* work with businesses in planning company meetings and/or

conventions.



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Most employees require travel agents to have a high school diploma or [GED](#). Formal post-secondary training is becoming increasingly important because fewer employers are willing to provide all the necessary training on the job. Some employers look for applicants with college degrees. Colleges and universities offer 2- and 4-year curriculums in travel and tourism. Private career schools, including some in Virginia, also teach basic travel agent skills in programs that last approximately six to eighteen weeks. Some larger travel agencies offer their own training programs.

Experienced travel agents can take advanced self or group study courses from the Institute of Certified Travel Agents (ICTA), leading to the designation of Certified Travel Counselor (CTC).

Studying to become a travel agent:

- Are you in high school? Learn more about [Career and Technical Education](#). Find out about the [CTE courses in your community](#).
- Learn more about certification from the [Institute of Certified Travel Agents](#).

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)



● GETTING AHEAD

Travel agents working in travel agencies may advance to managerial positions or start their own businesses. Experience, sales ability, and education are the most important factors affecting advancement.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)



● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Foreign languages
- Keeping abreast of current products and developments in the field of travel
- Locating, collecting, and organizing information
- Representing the employer favorably to clients
- Selling
- Translating clients' preferences into the proper travel plans
- Working independently
- Working well with clients
- Working with computers
- [See a complete list of skills from the US Dept of Labor at O-Net](#)

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- Reading
- Computer literacy
- A strong work ethic

- Math
- Writing
- Speaking & listening
- Problem-solving & decision-making
- Understanding the broader picture
- Working with people
- A positive attitude
- Independence & initiative
- Self-presentation



● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

About 80% of all travel agents work for travel agencies, and most of the rest work for automobile clubs and hotels. Although they work throughout Virginia, travel agents are concentrated in metropolitan areas.



● OUTLOOK

The number of jobs for travel agents is expected to decline through 2014. The Internet makes it easier for people to book their own tickets and avoid travel agencies altogether. Airlines compete with travel agencies and would rather sell tickets directly to the public. Recently they have begun to cut or eliminate the commission they pay travel agencies and this will eliminate some agencies and some agents.

- Read more about changes in the travel industry:

[Travel Industry Associations Reinvent Themselves](#)

[A way to survive and prosper](#)

The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)



● LOOK FOR WORK

- Look at [job ads posted with the American Society of Travel Agents](#).
- [Read more about travel agents and see job ads at Monster](#).
- [See job ads at Virginia's Job Bank](#) • [More job banks](#) • [Find local employers](#)
- [Learn job search skills—from reading job ads to preparing for the interview](#)
- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



● EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

In 2004 the [median](#) earnings for travel agents in Virginia was \$26,000. Most agents earned somewhere in the \$15-43,000 range. The people who earn most have developed an established clientele, or work primarily with groups or corporations. Most travel agents earn commission as well as a salary, so sales skills are essential in this field.

- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



● FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Institute of Certified Travel Agents
PO Box 812059
Wellesley, MA 02482
www.icta.com
- American Society of Travel Agents
1101 King St, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
www.astanet.com
- Travel Industry Association of America
www.tia.org/
- Interesting travel sites:
www.fodors.com
www.travel.org
- *Jaxfax, Travel Marketing Magazine*
www.jaxfax.com

This page was last edited on: May 17, 2006





Waitstaff

What do they do? Waitstaff serve food & drinks to customers at tables

Specializations: Sommeliers

Preferred education: HS diploma/GED preferred, but many workers have less

Certification & licensing: Certification available

Getting ahead: Can move to better restaurants where prices & tips are higher. Some go into management

Skills & knowledge: Attention to detail, dealing with complaints, stamina, working under pressure, math

Where they work: Restaurants & other eating places

Job outlook: This large occupation with lots of turnover usually has many job openings.

Look for work: Link to job banks and other job search resources

Earnings: Usually in the \$12-23,000 range but full time workers in top restaurants make more

Links: Find more information about this career



● WHAT DO THEY DO?

It's a job that we are all intimately familiar with, even if we haven't done it ourselves. Waiting tables. Who among us hasn't eaten out and been served our food by either a very good (or very bad) waiter or waitress? When a waiter or waitress is good, we eat happily, and we come back for more. When a waiter or waitress is bad, we convince ourselves never to set foot into a particular restaurant again.

But from the other side of the table, it's not easy waiting tables. The life of a waiter involves doing a million different tasks at once. For example, table 23 is waiting for mustard while table 14 wants their bill. A party of five has just been seated at table 17 and wants to order while plates of steaming food await delivery to tables 15 and 20. You get the idea.

While it may at first glance seem simple enough to take customers' orders and make out checks, the reality is that being a waiter is more complicated than that. It's a bit like being a juggler. Waiters must be able to multi-task while being friendly and charming. They must remain pleasant with even gruff or rude customers. They must have a fair amount of strength and dexterity so that they can serve heaping platters of food without dumping them all over the floor. They must have grace and speed so that they can dodge customers and other waitstaff without spilling a drop of boiling hot coffee. They must also have the stamina to stand for 8-hour stretches. Most of all, they must anticipate the needs of their customers and be organized so that they can attend to seven tables in the fastest and most efficient way possible.

Waiting on tables is not the only aspect of the job. Waiters also do simple food preparation, stock supplies, like coffee cups and water glasses, wipe down tables and set them up, do paperwork associated with tabulating bills, and divvy up tips.

Personality can be extremely important for success in this job. Because a key component of this job is interacting with

Real life...

[Waiter's World](#)

[Wisdom for waiters](#)

[So you wanna be a waiter?](#)

What about Virginia...

[Va's Electronic Labor Market](#)



customers, waiters who are friendly, patient and funny do much better (and earn better [tips](#)) than waiters who do not have these "people" skills.

Undoubtedly, this can be a tough job. However, waiting tables is attractive to many people who are looking for freedom. Waiters can often pick their own shifts and go on vacation when they want to. Although they make low wages and are dependent on tips, some actually earn very good incomes.

Specific tasks include:

- Presenting menus to customers and suggesting food or beverage selections
- Taking orders for food or beverages and relaying them to the kitchen
- Preparing simple foods like beverages, salads, and sandwiches
- Serving meals or beverages to customers
- Observing customers and responding to additional requests
- Clearing tables or counters of dirty dishes
- Filling salt, pepper, sugar, cream, condiment, and napkin containers
- Cleaning table tops
- Totaling bills

The right job for you? Learn more with an [informational interview](#) with a [local employer](#).



The wrong job for you? [Take an interest test & find a better one.](#)



● SPECIALIZATION

- *Sommeliers* are wine stewards who work in fine restaurants. Their vinous expertise allows them to help patrons make appropriate wine selections to enhance the dining experience. Many of them also decide which wines to place on their restaurant's wine list.



● EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, & LICENSING

Employers look for waitstaff with skills and experience, and generally aren't worried about whether or not they have a degree. High school hospitality programs give students a chance to get skills and experience and certification from the [American Hotel and Lodging Association](#) to prove it.

Studying for a career in hospitality:

- Are you in high school? Learn more about [Career and Technical Education](#). Find out about the [CTE courses in your community](#).
- Some high schools have [Tech Prep](#) programs that let you get started on a community college degree while you're still in school. Ask your guidance counselor if there's one at your school.

Read about [GED](#), [High School](#), [Community College](#), [Financial Aid](#), & more in [The World of Education](#)
[Va public schools](#) • [Your School Division](#) • [HS Graduation Requirements](#) • [Career Readiness Certificates](#)



● GETTING AHEAD

Experienced waiters and waitresses may move to restaurants where prices, and therefore tips, are higher. Larger and more up-scale restaurants are also more likely to offer opportunities for promotion to positions like headwaiter and maitre'd. Restaurant managers are also often recruited from the ranks of experienced and competent waitstaff. Waiters interested in the food service business might ultimately open up their own eating establishments or go to school to become chefs. Still others might consider moving into related careers tending bar at eating and drinking establishments or working as managers and service staff in hotels, on cruise ships or in recreational establishments.

- [Bright ideas for getting ahead in any job](#)



● SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Attention to detail
- Dealing with complaints tactfully, calmly, and politely
- Thinking on your feet
- Following directions
- Working with minimal supervision
- Carrying and balancing heavy trays and dishes
- Totaling tabs and making change quickly and accurately
- Working under pressure
- Dealing with difficult people
- Carrying out several different tasks simultaneously
- Staying on one's feet for long periods of time

In addition to career-specific skills, *everybody* needs these basic skills:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ● Reading | ● Computer literacy | ● A strong work ethic |
| ● Math | ● Problem-solving & decision-making | ● A positive attitude |
| ● Writing | ● Understanding the broader picture | ● Independence & initiative |
| ● Speaking & listening | ● Working with people | ● Self-presentation |



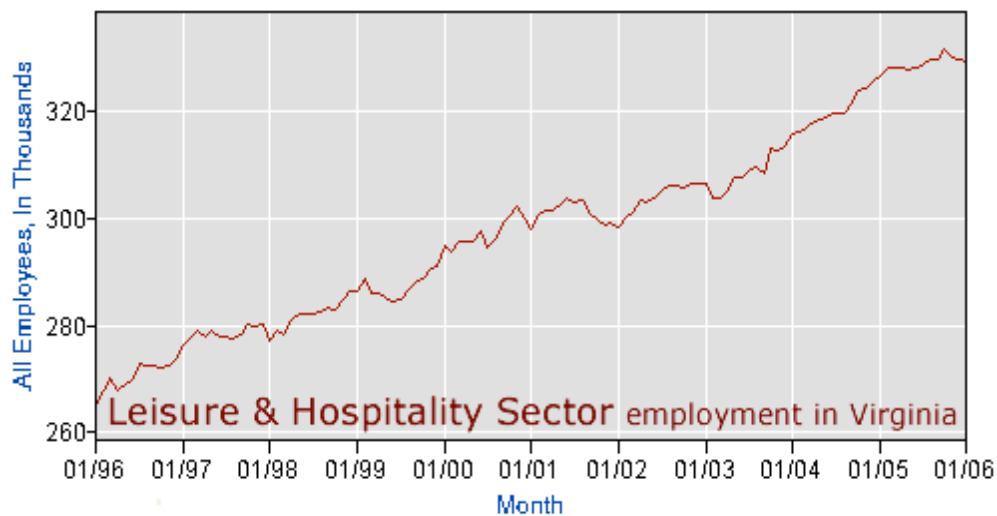
● WHERE THEY WORK ([Employer locator](#))

Most waitstaff are employed in restaurants, coffee shops, and other eating and drinking places. Others work in hotels, resorts, and clubs.



● OUTLOOK

State and national employment projections predict steady growth through 2014 in the different kinds of waitstaff occupations that they survey. The restaurant industry has grown considerably over the last two decades and Americans are eating more meals away from home than they ever have before. Like all luxuries, however, this one is sensitive to recession. In bad times, people eat out less often and there will be fewer opportunities and lower tips for waitstaff. There will always be jobs, but there will be fewer jobs at high-end restaurants where you can earn big tips.



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economies at a Glance: Virginia

The economy in:
[Your area](#) • [Virginia](#) • [The nation](#)



[Employment projections](#)
[Monster Employment Index](#)
[Manpower Employment Outlook](#)



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- [When finding a job at home is tough, maybe it's time to think of relocating.](#)



● EARNINGS

[See what people usually earn](#)

Waiters and waitresses usually get a combination of hourly wages and customer tips. Wages and tips vary greatly depending on the kind of place they work, but generally waitstaff in Virginia get paid about \$6-8.00 an hour. While employers may consider tips as part of wages, by Federal law, they are required to pay at least \$2.13 an hour in direct wages. If tips don't add up to \$5.15 an hour, the restaurant owner is required to make up the difference.

Overall, earnings in this field are usually low, because many waiters and waitresses only work part-time. In Virginia in 2004, waiters and waitresses earned salaries in the \$12-\$23,000 range. Full-time waiters and waitresses, especially those working in busy, high-end restaurants can earn a lot more. Also, many waiters and waitresses receive free meals as part of their benefits. In some restaurants, workers are required to put their tips into a tip pool which is then distributed among the restaurants other food service workers, including kitchen and bar staff.

- Learn more about earnings at [Salary.com](#), [Payscale.com](#), [Career Info Net](#), & [other sites](#)



● FOR MORE INFORMATION

- The International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education
 1200 17th St NW
 Washington, DC 20036
www.CHRIE.org
- American Hotel and Lodging Association
www.ahma.com/

- National Restaurant Association
www.restaurant.org/

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