

Medical Laboratory Technologist

Run the tests behind most diagnoses: blood, tissue, bacteria, DNA. Two to three years of school and a serious shortage of workers.

TYPICAL PAY

\$78,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$62k to \$95k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Hospital labs, private labs, public health labs, blood services

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Grade 12 biology, chemistry and math. English too.
- 2 Accredited medical laboratory science program** 2 to 3 years
 A 2 to 3 year college diploma, or a 4-year degree at a few universities. You learn all five areas: chemistry, hematology, transfusion, microbiology and histology. The final months are a full-time unpaid clinical placement.
- 3 Write the CSMLS (Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science) exam** After graduation
 The national certification exam, written a few times a year.
- 4 Register with your provincial regulator** A few weeks
 In Ontario that is the CMLTO (College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario). Most provinces have a college.

Pros and cons

- + Severe shortage means you will get hired, anywhere in Canada
- + Short, cheap training for the pay
- + Union, pension and shift premiums
- Shift work. Labs never close
- Little public recognition. Patients do not know you exist
- Repetitive at times, and automation keeps changing the job

Good to know

Most diagnoses run through the lab

A commonly quoted estimate is that around 70% of medical decisions rely on a lab result. Every blood test, biopsy and swab passes through a technologist before a doctor sees the answer.

The shortage has been coming for years

The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science has warned for over a decade that a large share of technologists are near retirement while program seats stayed flat. Hospitals now offer bonuses to new...

Optional boosts

Transfusion medicine (blood bank). Histology and cytology. Molecular diagnostics. Charge technologist or lab manager.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Medical laboratory technologists, wages (updated Nov 2025)
 Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science
 College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/medical-laboratory-technologist>



Scan for the full clicker