

Medical Laboratory Technician

Run the routine hospital tests that keep a diagnosis moving. Two years of school, then straight into the lab.

TYPICAL PAY

\$62,930

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$39k to \$101k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Hospital labs, clinics, reference labs, blood donation centers

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Biology, chemistry and math. A diploma is the entry requirement for almost every program.
- 2 Apply to an accredited program** Months
 Associate degree programs are accredited by the national clinical laboratory accrediting agency. Places are limited, so apply early and to more than one.
- 3 Classroom and student lab** About 3 semesters
 Hematology, chemistry, urinalysis, microbiology, immunology and the rules that govern specimen handling.
- 4 Clinical rotations** 1 to 2 semesters
 Unpaid placements on real hospital benches, supervised, running real patient samples.
- 5 Certification exam and first job** Year 1
 Pass the national technician exam, then start on one bench and rotate as you prove out.

Pros and cons

- + Two years and a community college price tag
- + Hospital benefits and a stable employer
- + Real laboratory science without a four year degree
- Starting pay sits well below the published combined median
- Nights, weekends and holidays come with the job
- Repetitive work, and the ceiling is low without more school

Good to know

One published wage covers two jobs

The federal wage survey reports medical laboratory technologists and technicians under one set of numbers. That is why a two year technician and a four year scientist appear to share a median, and w...

Federal law decides which tests you may run

Roughly 320,000 laboratory entities are regulated under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments, a 1988 law that ranks tests by complexity. Your qualification level determines which of those levels...

Optional boosts

Finish the bachelor's degree. Blood bank work. Phlebotomy certification. Instrument troubleshooting.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians (29-2012.00)
 National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences
 New York State Office of the Professions: clinical laboratory technology
 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/medical-laboratory-technician>



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