

Radiation Therapist

You run the machine that treats cancer, and you see the same patients every weekday for weeks. A two year degree for six figure pay.

TYPICAL PAY

\$105,310

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$81k to \$157k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Hospital cancer centers,
outpatient radiation oncology clin...**

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Physics, biology and math. Some programs also want a health care course or documented volunteer hours.
- 2 Get into an accredited program** Apply a year ahead
Look for accreditation by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology. Class sizes are small and admission is competitive.
- 3 Associate degree or bachelor's degree** 2 to 4 years
Anatomy, radiation physics, oncology and treatment planning, combined with clinical rotations in a real cancer center from early on.
- 4 Pass the national certification exam** After graduation
The radiation therapy exam from the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists, which also checks an ethics requirement before it lets you sit.
- 5 Get your state license** Weeks
Most states license radiation therapists separately from the national credential. Then you can treat patients unsupervised.

Pros and cons

- + Six figure pay from a two year degree
- + Daytime hours with almost no night work
- + You build real relationships with patients over weeks
- The field is growing slowly, so jobs can be scarce in a given city
- Programs are small and getting in takes patience
- Emotionally heavy. Some of your patients will not survive

Good to know

You are the staff member who knows them best

Patients see their oncologist every week or two. They see the radiation therapists every single weekday for the whole course. People tell you things they do not tell the doctor.

You leave the room

The beam is delivered from a control area outside a door in a wall of thick concrete. You watch on camera and talk over an intercom, and the whole treatment often takes less than two minutes.

Optional boosts

Medical dosimetry. Lead or chief therapist. Equipment applications specialist. Teaching.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Radiation Therapists (29-1124.00)
American Registry of Radiologic Technologists: radiation therapy credential
Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology
American Society of Radiologic Technologists: careers

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/radiation-therapist>



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