

Restaurant Manager

Run the floor, the schedule, the money and the people. You can get here with no degree, and most managers started as servers.

TYPICAL PAY

\$69,390

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$46k to \$108k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Restaurants, hotel dining rooms,
chain locations, catering compani...**

How you get there

1 High school

Grades 9 to 12

Get a job in a restaurant now: busser, dishwasher, host, counter. The industry hires at 15 or 16 in most states and the experience counts from day one.

2 Learn both sides

1 to 3 years

Serving teaches you guests and money. A stretch in the kitchen teaches you food cost and timing. Managers who have only done one of the two get found out.

3 Get certified in food safety

A few days

A food protection manager certificate is required by most states for whoever is in charge of the building. It is a short course and an exam.

4 Shift lead, then assistant manager

1 to 2 years

You start opening and closing, counting cash, writing schedules and handling complaints. This is the real training.

5 General manager

3 to 6 years in

You own the profit and loss of the whole location: labor cost, food cost, hiring, inspections and the guest experience.

Pros and cons

- + No degree and no debt needed to reach the national median
- + Promotion is fast when you are good, because results are obvious
- + Every town in the country has these jobs
- Nights, weekends and holidays are when the work is
- 50 to 60 hour weeks are normal and the salary does not pay overtime
- Staff turnover is relentless and hiring never stops

Optional boosts

Food protection manager certification. Alcohol server and seller training. Wine and beverage knowledge. Scheduling and inventory software.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Food Service Managers, wages and tasks
ServSafe, run by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation
National Restaurant Association
Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida

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/restaurant-manager>

Good to know

Restaurants are where America starts working

The National Restaurant Association describes the industry as the nation's second largest private sector employer and says half of all adults have worked in it at some point. It is the most common first jo...

The food safety exam is run by the industry itself

ServSafe, the certification most managers hold, is run by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation rather than by a government agency. States then decide whether to require a certific...



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