

# OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

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## Barbers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists

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### Summary

## Summary



### Quick Facts: Barbers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists

<b>2021 Median Pay</b>	\$29,680 per year \$14.27 per hour
<b>Typical Entry-Level Education</b>	Postsecondary nondegree award
<b>Work Experience in a Related Occupation</b>	None
<b>On-the-job Training</b>	None
<b>Number of Jobs, 2020</b>	622,700
<b>Job Outlook, 2020-30</b>	19% (Much faster than average)
<b>Employment Change, 2020-30</b>	119,800

### [What Barbers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists Do](#)

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists provide haircutting, hairstyling, and a range of other beauty services.

### [Work Environment](#)

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists work mostly in a barbershop or salon. Physical stamina is important, because they are on their feet for most of their shift. Many work full time, but part-time positions are also common.

### [How to Become a Barber, Hairstylist, or Cosmetologist](#)

All states require barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists to be licensed. To qualify for a license, candidates are required to graduate from a state-approved barber or cosmetology program and then pass a state exam for licensure.

### [Pay](#)

The median hourly wage for barbers was \$14.41 in May 2021.

The median hourly wage for hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists was \$14.26 in May 2021.

### [Job Outlook](#)

Overall employment of barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists is projected to grow 19 percent from 2020 to 2030, much faster than the average for all occupations.

About 85,300 openings for barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

### [State & Area Data](#)

Explore resources for employment and wages by state and area for barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists.

### [Similar Occupations](#)

Compare the job duties, education, job growth, and pay of barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists with similar occupations.

### [More Information, Including Links to O\\*NET](#)

Learn more about barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists by visiting additional resources, including O\*NET, a source on key characteristics of workers and occupations.

## What Barbers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists Do

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists provide haircutting, hairstyling, and a range of other beauty services.

### Duties

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists typically do the following:

- Inspect and analyze hair, skin, and scalp to recommend treatment
- Discuss hairstyle options
- Wash, color, lighten, and condition hair
- Chemically change hair textures
- Cut, dry, and style hair
- Receive payments from clients
- Clean and disinfect all tools and work areas



Hairstylists provide hair styling and beauty services.

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists provide hair and beauty services to enhance clients' appearance. Those who operate their own barbershop or salon have managerial duties that may include hiring, supervising, and firing workers, as well as keeping business and inventory records, ordering supplies, and arranging for advertising.

**Barbers** cut, trim, shampoo, and style hair, mostly for male clients. They also may fit hairpieces, perform facials, and offer facial shaving. Depending on the state in which they work, some barbers are licensed to color, bleach, and highlight hair and to offer permanent-wave services. Common tools include combs, scissors, straight razors, and clippers.

**Hairstylists** offer a wide range of hair services, such as shampooing, cutting, coloring, and styling. They often advise clients, both male and female, on how to care for their hair at home. Hairstylists also keep records of products and services provided to clients, such as hair color, shampoo, conditioner, and hair treatment used. Tools include hairbrushes, scissors, blow dryers, and curling and flat irons.

**Cosmetologists** provide scalp and facial treatments and makeup analysis. Some also clean and style wigs and hairpieces. In addition, most cosmetologists actively recommend professional hair care products or salon hair care products.

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Work Environment

## Work Environment

Barbers held about 53,000 jobs in 2020. The largest employers of barbers were as follows:

Self-employed workers	69%
Personal care services	30

Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists held about 569,600 jobs in 2020. The largest employers of hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists were as follows:

Personal care services	46%
Self-employed workers	43
Retail trade	10

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists work mostly in a barbershop or salon, although some work in a spa, hotel, or resort. Some lease booth space from a salon owner. Some manage salons or open their own shop after several years of experience.

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists usually work in pleasant surroundings with good lighting. Physical stamina is important, because they are on their feet for most of their shift. Prolonged exposure to some chemicals may cause skin irritation, so they often wear protective clothing, such as disposable gloves or aprons.



Barbers usually work in barbershops and must stand for long periods.

### Work Schedules

Many barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists work full time; however, part-time positions are also common. Those who run their own barbershop or salon may have long workdays. Work schedules often include evenings and weekends—the times when barbershops and beauty salons are busiest. Those who are self-employed usually determine their own schedules.

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How to Become One

## How to Become a Barber, Hairstylist, or Cosmetologist

All states require barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists to be licensed. To qualify for a license, candidates are required to graduate from a state-approved cosmetology program.

### Education

A high school diploma or equivalent is required for some positions. In addition, every state requires that barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists complete a program in a state-licensed barber or cosmetology school. These programs are mainly found in postsecondary vocational schools and typically lead to a postsecondary nondegree award or certificate. Most of these workers take advanced courses in hairstyling or in other personal appearance services to keep up with the latest trends. Those who want to open their own business also may take courses in sales and marketing.

### Licenses, Certifications, and Registrations

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists must obtain a license in order to work. Qualifications for a license vary by state, but generally, a person must fulfill the following criteria:

- Reached a minimum age of 16
- Received a high school diploma or equivalent
- Graduated from a state-licensed barber or cosmetology school

After graduating from a state-approved training program, students take a state licensing exam that includes a written test and, in some cases, a practical test of styling skills or an oral exam.

In many states, cosmetology training may be credited toward a barbering license and vice versa, and a few states combine the two licenses. A fee usually is required to apply for a license, and continuing education units (CEUs) may be required with periodic license renewals.

Some states have reciprocity agreements that allow licensed barbers and cosmetologists to get a license in another state without needing additional formal training or state board testing, but such agreements are not common. Consequently, people who want to work in a particular state should review the laws of that state before entering a training program.

### Important Qualities

**Creativity.** Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists must keep up with the latest trends and be ready to try new hairstyles for their clients.

**Customer-service skills.** Workers must be pleasant, friendly, and able to interact with customers in order to retain clients.

**Listening skills.** Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists should be good listeners. They must listen carefully to what the client wants in order to make sure that the client is happy with the result.

**Physical stamina.** Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists must be able to stand on their feet for long periods.

**Tidiness.** Workers must keep a neat personal appearance and keep their work area clean and sanitary. This requirement is necessary for the health and safety of their clients and for making clients comfortable enough so that they will want to return.

**Time-management skills.** Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists need to manage their time efficiently when scheduling appointments and providing services. For example, routine haircuts do not require the precise timing of some other services, such as applying neutralizer after a permanent wave. Clients who receive timely hair care are more likely to return.



Workers must obtain a license through a state-approved barber, hairstyling, or cosmetology program.

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Pay

## Pay

The median hourly wage for barbers was \$14.41 in May 2021. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$10.79, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$25.60.

The median hourly wage for hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists was \$14.26 in May 2021. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$10.03, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$28.40.

In May 2021, the median hourly wages for barbers in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Personal care services	\$14.37
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In May 2021, the median hourly wages for hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Personal care services	\$14.26
Retail trade	14.16

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists may receive tips from customers. High quality work and customer service usually contribute to greater tip totals.

Many barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists work full time; however, part-time positions are also common. Those who run their own barbershop or salon may have long workdays. Work schedules often include evenings and weekends—the times when beauty salons and barbershops are busiest. Those who are self-employed usually determine their own schedules.

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Job Outlook

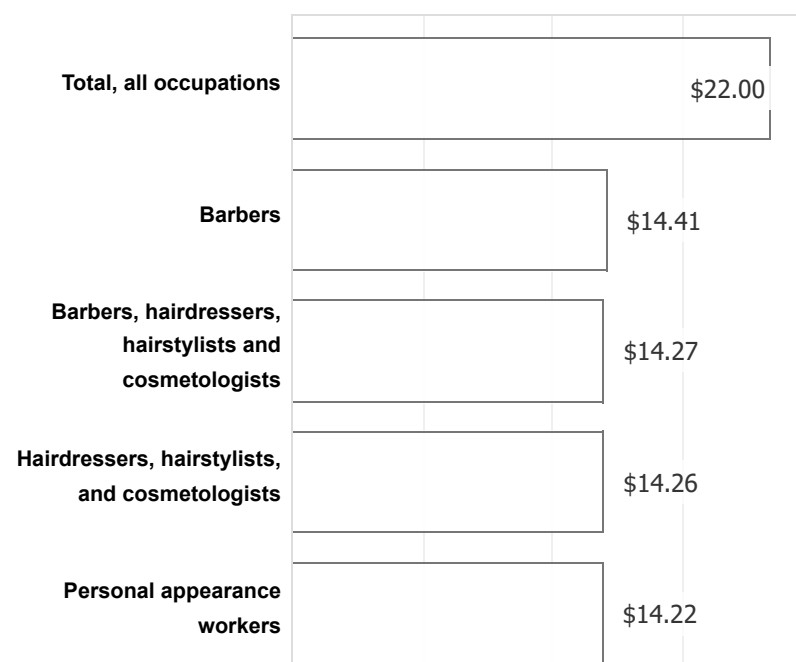
## Job Outlook

Overall employment of barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists is projected to grow 19 percent from 2020 to 2030, much faster than the average for all occupations.

About 85,300 openings for barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit

### Barbers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists

Median hourly wages, May 2021



Note: All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics

### Barbers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists

Percent change in employment, projected 2020-30

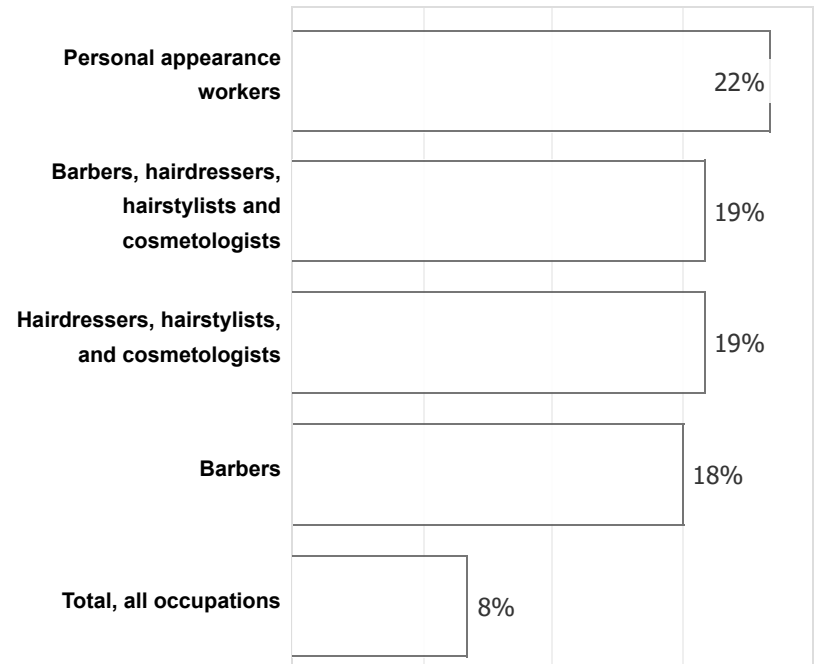
the labor force, such as to retire.

## Employment

Much of the projected employment growth in these occupations is due to recovery from the COVID-19 recession that began in 2020 and is likely to occur early in the decade.

The need for barbers and hairdressers will stem primarily from population growth, leading to greater demand for basic hair care services. In addition, an increased demand for hair coloring, hair straightening, and other advanced hair treatments is expected to continue over the projections decade.

Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists continue to compete with providers of specialized services, such as nail and skin care. Consumers often choose manicurists and pedicurists and skincare specialists for these services, rather than to visit hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists for them. Still, employment is expected to grow to meet increased demand for personal appearance services.



Note: All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

## Employment projections data for barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists, 2020-30

### Barbers, hairdressers, hairstylists and cosmetologists

**SOC Code:**

39-5010

**Employment, 2020:**

622,700

**Projected Employment, 2030:**

742,400

**Change, 2020-30 (Percent):**

19

**Change, 2020-30 (Numeric):**

119,800

**Employment By Industry:**

[Get data](#)

### Barbers

**SOC Code:**

39-5011

**Employment, 2020:**

53,000

**Projected Employment, 2030:**

62,300

**Change, 2020-30 (Percent):**

18

**Change, 2020-30 (Numeric):**

9,300

**Employment By Industry:**

[Get data](#)

### Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists

**SOC Code:**

39-5012

**Employment, 2020:**

569,600

**Projected Employment, 2030:**

680,100

**Change, 2020-30 (Percent):**

19

**Change, 2020-30 (Numeric):**

110,500

**Employment By Industry:**

[Get data](#)

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

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State & Area Data

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# State & Area Data

## Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)

The [Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics](#) (OEWS) program produces employment and wage estimates annually for over 800 occupations. These estimates are available for the nation as a whole, for individual states, and for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. The link(s) below go to OEWS data maps for employment and wages by state and area.

- [Barbers](#)
- [Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists](#)

## Projections Central

Occupational employment projections are developed for all states by Labor Market Information (LMI) or individual state Employment Projections offices. All state projections data are available at [www.projectionscentral.com](http://www.projectionscentral.com). Information on this site allows projected employment growth for an occupation to be compared among states or to be compared within one state. In addition, states may produce projections for areas; there are links to each state's websites where these data may be retrieved.

## CareerOneStop

CareerOneStop includes hundreds of [occupational profiles](#) with data available by state and metro area. There are links in the left-hand side menu to compare occupational employment by state and occupational wages by local area or metro area. There is also a [salary info tool](#) to search for wages by zip code.

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Similar Occupations

## Similar Occupations

This table shows a list of occupations with job duties that are similar to those of barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists.

### [Manicurists and Pedicurists](#)

**Job Duties:**

Manicurists and pedicurists clean, shape, and beautify fingernails and toenails.

**Entry-Level Education:**

Postsecondary nondegree award

**2021 Median Pay:**

\$29,210

### [Skincare Specialists](#)

**Job Duties:**

Skincare specialists cleanse and beautify the face and body to enhance a person's appearance.

**Entry-Level Education:**

Postsecondary nondegree award

**2021 Median Pay:**

\$37,300

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More Info

## Contacts for More Information

For more information about barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists, including education and training, visit

[American Association of Cosmetology Schools](#)

[Beauty Schools Directory](#)

[National Association of Barber Boards of America](#)

For information about state licensing, practice exams, and other professional links, visit

[National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology](#)

[Professional Beauty Association](#)

## O\*NET

[Barbers](#)

[Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists](#)

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**SUGGESTED CITATION:**

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Barbers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care-and-service/barbers-hairstylists-and-cosmetologists.htm> (visited August 09, 2022).

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