

Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses

Summary



Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses discuss the care they are providing with patients.

Quick Facts: Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	
2018 Median Pay	\$46,240 per year \$22.23 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Postsecondary nondegree award
Work Experience in a Related Occupation	None
On-the-job Training	None
Number of Jobs, 2018	728,900
Job Outlook, 2018-28	11% (Much faster than average)
Employment Change, 2018-28	78,100

[What Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses Do](#)

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) provide basic nursing care.

[Work Environment](#)

Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses work in many settings, including nursing homes and extended care facilities, hospitals, physicians' offices, and private homes. Most work full time.

[How to Become a Licensed Practical or Licensed Vocational Nurse](#)

Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses must complete a state-approved educational program, which typically takes about 1 year to complete. They must be licensed.

[Pay](#)

The median annual wage for licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses was \$46,240 in May 2018.

[Job Outlook](#)

Employment of licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses is projected to grow 11 percent from 2018 to 2028, much faster than the average for all occupations. As the baby-boom population ages, the overall need for healthcare services is expected to increase. LPNs and LVNs will be needed in residential care facilities and in home health environments to care for older patients.

[State & Area Data](#)

Explore resources for employment and wages by state and area for licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses.

[Similar Occupations](#)

Compare the job duties, education, job growth, and pay of licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses with similar occupations.

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

Learn more about licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses by visiting additional resources, including O*NET, a source on key characteristics of workers and occupations.

What Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses Do



Licensed practical and vocational nurses must be empathetic and caring toward the people they serve.

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) provide basic medical care. They work under the direction of registered nurses and doctors.

Duties

Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses typically do the following:

- Monitor patients' health—for example, by checking their blood pressure
- Administer basic patient care, including changing bandages and inserting catheters
- Provide for the basic comfort of patients, such as helping them bathe or dress
- Discuss the care they are providing with patients and listen to their concerns
- Report patients' status and concerns to registered nurses and doctors
- Keep records on patients' health

Duties of LPNs and LVNs vary, depending on their work setting and the state in which they work. For example, they may reinforce teaching done by [registered nurses](#) regarding how family members should care for a relative; help to deliver, care for, and feed infants; collect samples for testing and do routine laboratory tests; or feed patients who need help eating.

LPNs and LVNs may be limited to doing certain tasks, depending on the state where they work. For example, in some states, LPNs with proper training can give medication or start intravenous (IV) drips, but in other states LPNs cannot perform these tasks. State regulations also govern the extent to which LPNs and LVNs must be directly supervised. For example, an LPN may provide certain forms of care only with instructions from a registered nurse.

In some states, experienced licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses supervise and direct other LPNs or LVNs and unlicensed medical staff.

Work Environment



In some states, licensed practical and vocational nurses can give medication or start intravenous (IV) drips.

Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses held about 728,900 jobs in 2018. The largest employers of licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses were as follows:

Nursing and residential care facilities	38%
Hospitals; state, local, and private	15
Offices of physicians	13
Home healthcare services	12
Government	6

Nurses must often be on their feet for much of the day. They are vulnerable to back injuries, because they may have to lift patients who have trouble moving in bed, standing, or walking. These duties can be stressful, as can dealing with ill and injured people.

Work Schedules

Most licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses (LPNs and LVNs) work full time. Many work nights, weekends, and holidays, because medical care takes place at all hours. They may be required to work shifts of longer than 8 hours.

How to Become a Licensed Practical or Licensed Vocational Nurse



Licensed practical and vocational nurses provide basic medical care, such as checking a patient's blood pressure.

Becoming a licensed practical or licensed vocational nurse (LPN or LVN) requires completing an approved educational program. LPNs and LVNs must have a license.

Education

LPNs and LVNs must complete an approved educational program. These programs award a certificate or diploma and typically take about 1 year to complete, but may take longer. They are commonly found in technical schools and community colleges, although some programs may be available in high schools or hospitals.

Practical nursing programs combine classroom learning in subjects such as nursing, biology, and pharmacology. All programs also include supervised clinical experience.

Contact state boards of nursing for lists of approved programs.

Licenses, Certifications, and Registrations

After completing a state-approved educational program, prospective LPNs and LVNs can take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-PN). In all states, they must pass the exam to get a license and work as an LPN or LVN. For more information on the NCLEX-PN examination and a list of state boards of nursing, visit the [National Council of State Boards of Nursing](#).

LPNs and LVNs may choose to become certified through professional associations in areas such as gerontology and intravenous (IV) therapy. Certifications show that an LPN or LVN has an advanced level of knowledge about a specific subject.

In addition, employers may prefer to hire candidates who are trained to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Advancement

With experience, licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses may advance to supervisory positions. Some LPNs and LVNs advance to other healthcare occupations. For example, an LPN may complete a LPN to RN education program to become a [registered nurse](#).

Important Qualities

Compassion. Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses must be empathetic and caring toward the people they serve.

Detail oriented. LPNs and LVNs need to be responsible and detail oriented, because they must make sure that patients get the correct care at the right time.

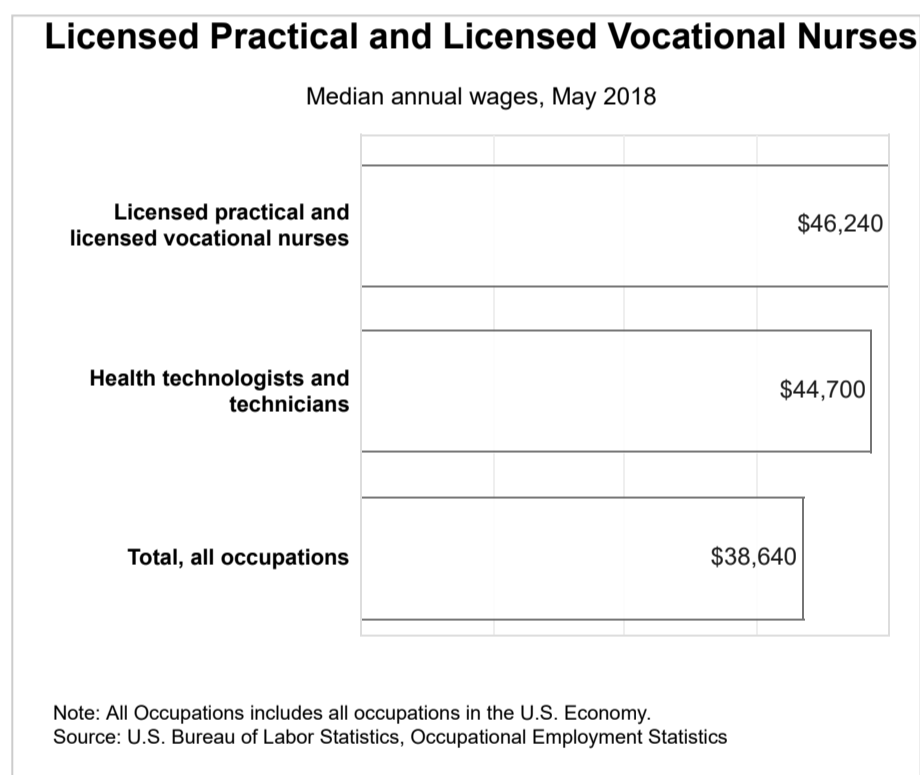
Interpersonal skills. Interacting with patients and other healthcare providers is a big part of their jobs, so LPNs and LVNs need good interpersonal skills.

Patience. Dealing with sick and injured people may be stressful. LPNs and LVNs should be patient, so they can cope with any stress that stems from providing care to these patients.

Physical stamina. LPNs and LVNs should be comfortable performing physical tasks, such as bending over patients for a long time.

Speaking skills. It is important that LPNs and LVNs communicate effectively. For example, they may need to relay information about a patient's current condition to a registered nurse.

Pay



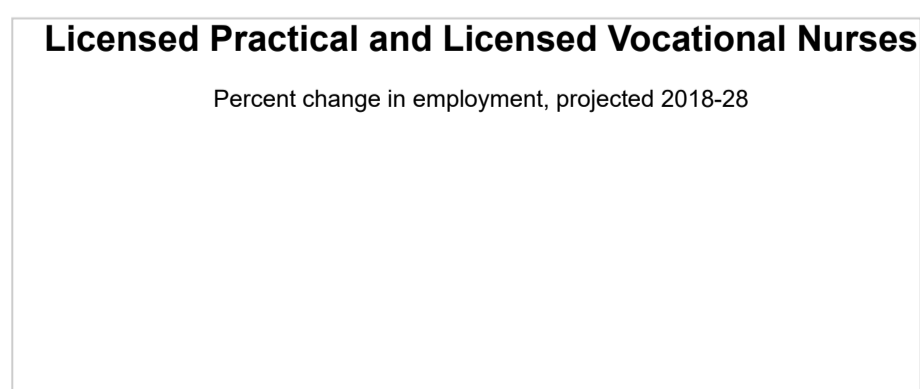
The median annual wage for licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses was \$46,240 in May 2018. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$33,680, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$62,160.

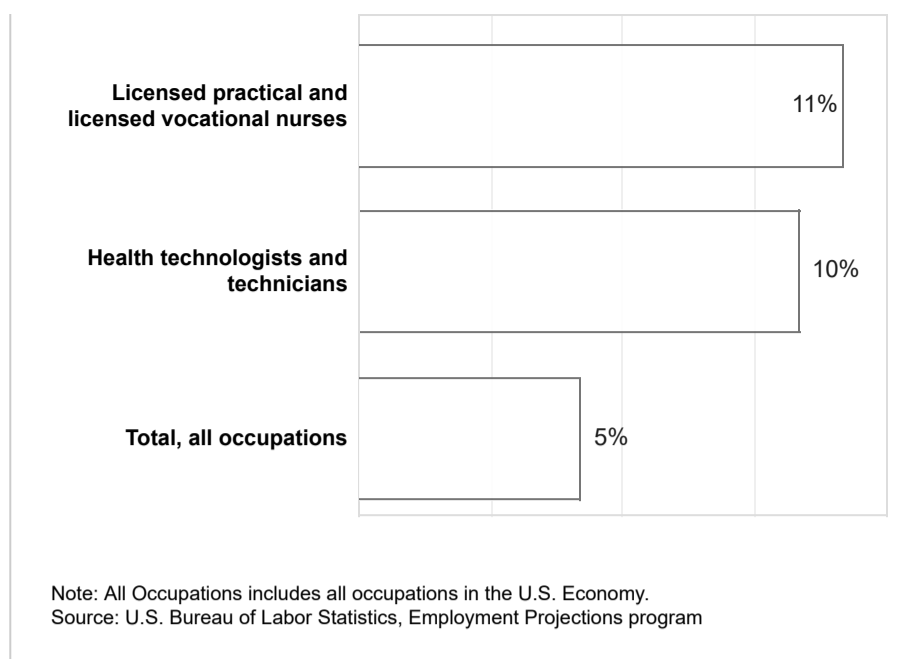
In May 2018, the median annual wages for licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Government	\$48,050
Nursing and residential care facilities	47,470
Home healthcare services	46,510
Hospitals; state, local, and private	44,630
Offices of physicians	42,520

Most licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses (LPNs and LVNs) work full time. Many work nights, weekends, and holidays, because medical care takes place at all hours. They may be required to work shifts of longer than 8 hours.

Job Outlook





Employment of licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses (LPNs and LVNs) is projected to grow 11 percent from 2018 to 2028, much faster than the average for all occupations.

As the baby-boom population ages, the overall need for healthcare services is expected to increase. LPNs and LVNs will be needed in residential care facilities and in home health environments to care for older patients.

A number of chronic conditions, such as diabetes and obesity, have become more prevalent in recent years. LPNs and LVNs will be needed to assist and care for patients with these and other conditions. In addition, many procedures that once could be done only in hospitals are now being done outside of hospitals, creating demand in other settings, such as outpatient care centers.

Job Prospects

Job prospects should be favorable for LPNs and LVNs who are willing to work in rural and medically underserved areas. Employers also may prefer candidates who have certification in a specialty area such as gerontology or intravenous (IV) therapy.

Employment projections data for licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses, 2018-28

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2018	Projected Employment, 2028	Change, 2018-28		Employment by Industry
				Percent	Numeric	
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	29-2061	728,900	807,000	11	78,100	Get data

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

State & Area Data

Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)

The [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) (OES) 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 OES data maps for employment and wages by state and area.

- [Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses](#)

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. 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.

Similar Occupations

This table shows a list of occupations with job duties that are similar to those of licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses.

	OCCUPATION	JOB DUTIES	ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION	2018 MEDIAN PAY
	Nursing Assistants and Orderlies	Nursing assistants help provide basic care for patients in hospitals and residents of long-term care facilities.	See How to Become One	\$28,530
	Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides	Occupational therapy assistants and aides help patients develop, recover, improve, as well as maintain the skills needed for daily living and working.	See How to Become One	\$57,620
	Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides	Physical therapist assistants and aides work under the direction and supervision of physical therapists.	See How to Become One	\$48,090
	Psychiatric Technicians and Aides	Psychiatric technicians and aides care for people who have mental illness and developmental disabilities.	See How to Become One	\$30,860
	Registered Nurses	Registered nurses (RNs) provide and coordinate patient care, educate patients and the public about various health conditions.	Bachelor's degree	\$71,730
	Surgical Technologists	Surgical technologists assist in surgical operations.	Postsecondary nondegree award	\$47,300

	OCCUPATION	JOB DUTIES	ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION	2018 MEDIAN PAY
	Medical Assistants	Medical assistants complete administrative and clinical tasks in hospitals, offices of physicians, and other healthcare facilities.	Postsecondary nondegree award	\$33,610

Contacts for More Information

For more information about licensed practical or licensed vocational nurses, visit

[National Association of Licensed Practical Nurses](#)

For more information about the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-PN) and a list of individual state boards of nursing, visit

[National Council of State Boards of Nursing](#)

O*NET

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