

Explore Careers
and
Plan Your Future
With RUReady.ND.gov
The Career Key

1. How do I access RUReady.ND.gov?

I'm a PUBLIC SCHOOL student in grades 6-12:

Accessing RUReady.ND.gov

RUReady.ND.gov
EDUCATION & CAREER PLANNING

1

Go to your school's PowerSchool Sign In to access RUReady.ND.gov.



2

Sign in to your PowerSchool account. From the PowerSchool main screen. Click on the Applications icon  to access your ND Education Portal.



3

Click on the ND Education Portal Link  Applications ND Education Portal ND Education Portal

4

Click on the RUReady 'badge' on the ND Education Portal to access your account.



!

If you are unable to sign in or are experiencing sign in issues, please contact your school for assistance. For security reasons, PowerSchool is unable to assist with sign in, password, or other accessibility-related issues.

I'm a PRIVATE or TRIBAL SCHOOL student in grades 6-12:

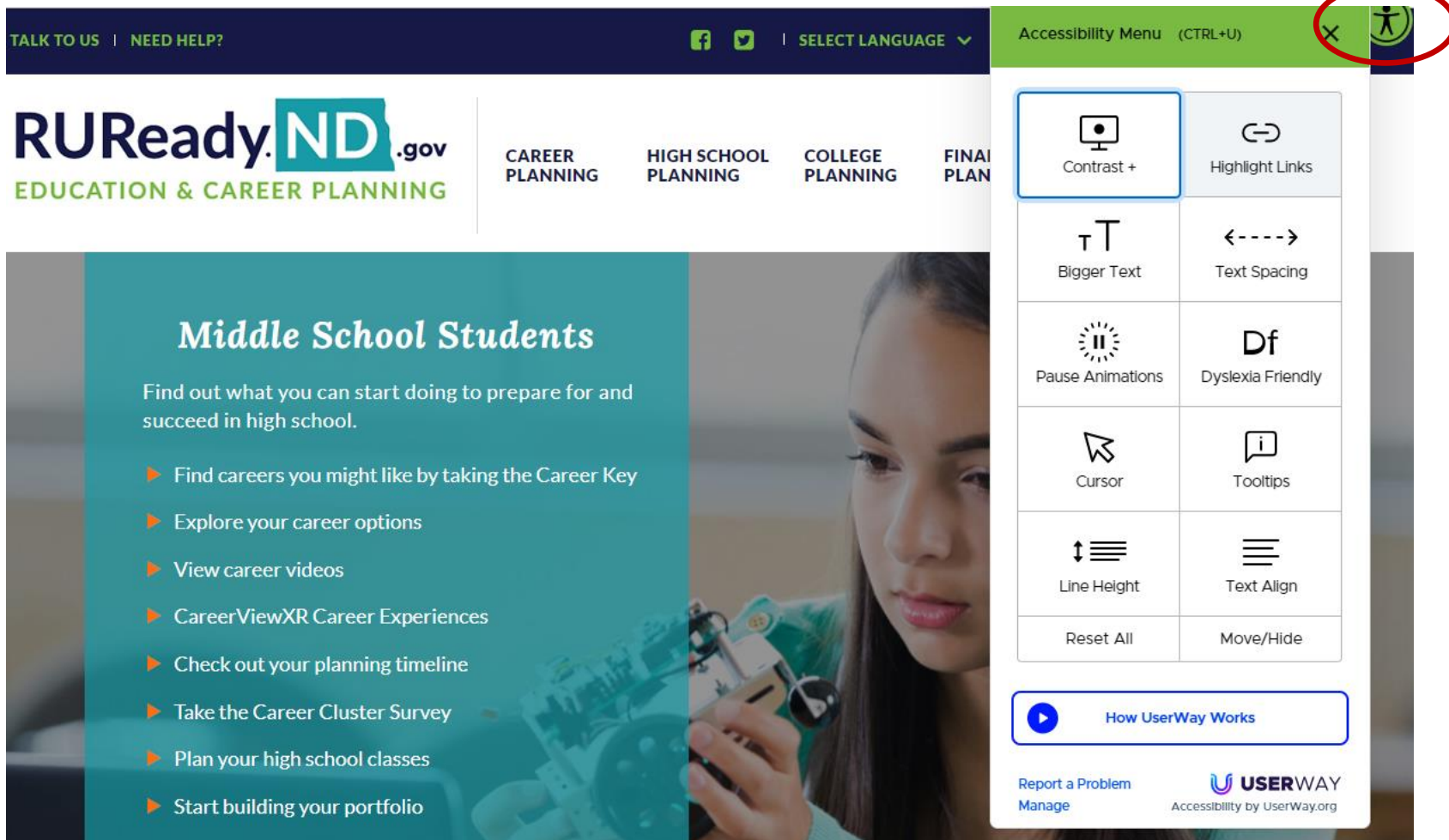
1. Go to RUReady.ND.gov.
2. Click **Create an Account** or **sign in to your account**.
3. Click on the role that best describes you (Middle School or High School Student.)
4. Enter your name and date of birth and select your school and graduation year.
5. Select your Account Name and Password with care. You will use this to access the site.
6. Complete the Account Security questions.
7. Check the box if you agree to the privacy policy and terms of the site.
8. Click **Submit**.

[Full Instructions](#)
for Public School students.

[Full Instructions](#)
for Private/Tribal School students.

The UserWay Widget

Provides Keyboard navigation, Contrast, Highlight links, Bigger text, Text spacing, Pause animations, Legible fonts and Cursor. (Enable by clicking on the green icon in the upper right-hand corner.)



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Accessibility Menu (CTRL+U)  

RUReady.ND.gov
EDUCATION & CAREER PLANNING

CAREER PLANNING HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING COLLEGE PLANNING FINAL PLAN

Middle School Students

Find out what you can start doing to prepare for and succeed in high school.

- ▶ Find careers you might like by taking the Career Key
- ▶ Explore your career options
- ▶ View career videos
- ▶ CareerViewXR Career Experiences
- ▶ Check out your planning timeline
- ▶ Take the Career Cluster Survey
- ▶ Plan your high school classes
- ▶ Start building your portfolio

 Contrast +	 Highlight Links
 Bigger Text	 Text Spacing
 Pause Animations	 Dyslexia Friendly
 Cursor	 Tooltips
 Line Height	 Text Align
Reset All	Move/Hide

 [How UserWay Works](#)

Report a Problem
Manage

 **USERWAY**
Accessibility by UserWay.org

2. Click on CAREER PLANNING



CAREER
PLANNING

HIGH SCHOOL
PLANNING

COLLEGE
PLANNING

FINANCIAL AID
PLANNING

YOUR
PORTFOLIO

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3. Click on Learn About Yourself



CAREER PLANNING



Learn About Yourself

Discover your interests, skills, and work values! Then match them to careers.



Explore Careers

Search for careers that match who you are, your goals, and plans.



Get a Job

Create resumes, practice your interview skills, and more!



Explore Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Find matching opportunities using your career interest areas.

QUICK LINKS

[Interest Profiler >](#)
[Career Plan Builder >](#)
[Career Finder >](#)
[Resume Builder >](#)

YOUR PORTFOLIO

[Career Planning Index page >](#)
[Career Cluster Survey >](#)
• [Hospitality and Tourism](#)
[Work Values >](#)
• [Independence](#)
• [Support](#)
[Full Portfolio >](#)

4. Click on The Career Key

LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF

You can learn about yourself in many different ways. Explore how you are matches with careers by using one or all of the career assessments listed below.



Career Cluster Survey

Find out which career cluster is right for you with this quick survey.

⌚ Duration: 15-25 minutes



The Career Key

Discover your career interest areas in a few quick steps.

⌚ Duration: 10-15 minutes



Basic Skills Survey

Find out what careers require your basic skills.

⌚ Duration: 30-45 minutes



Interest Profiler

Figure out what interests you have and match them to careers.

⌚ Duration: 10-20 minutes



Work Values

Find your work values and match them to career options.

⌚ Duration: 5-15 minutes



Transferable Skills Checklist

See how the skills you've learned can lead to new opportunities.

⌚ Duration: 30 minutes

5. Click on Get Started

THE CAREER KEY™

> Get Started

Careers of Interest

Your Interests

Your Abilities

How You See Yourself

Your Values

Results

Careers

Get Started

The Career Key will help you learn about yourself and careers that might fit you.

You will answer a few questions about yourself in 5 categories then see your personality types (or interest related careers).

Duration: 10 to 15 minutes to answer
questions in 5 categories

GET STARTED



6. Complete the checklists.

Choose careers that interest you:

THE CAREER KEY™

> Get Started

> **Careers of Interest**

Your Interests

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Careers of Interest

Check every career below that interests you, or attracts you in some way. Do not click a career that you are undecided about, that does not sound interesting to you, or that you would dislike.

Clear all

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Salesperson | ☐ Bus Driver | ☐ Artist |
| ☐ Chemist | ☐ Biologist | ☐ Counselor |
| ☐ Airplane Pilot | ☐ Lawyer | ☐ Business Teacher |
| ☐ Laboratory Technician | ☐ Librarian | ☐ Insurance Sales Agent |
| ☐ Bookkeeper | ☐ Apartment Manager | ☐ Speech Therapist |
| ☐ Research Scientist | ☐ Teacher | ☐ Radio/TV Announcer |
| ☐ Mechanical Engineer | ☐ Insurance Clerk | ☐ Court Stenographer |
| ☐ Chemical Technician | ☐ Nurse | ☐ Restaurant Manager |
| ☐ Singer | ☐ Novelist | ☐ Actor/Actress |
| ☐ Physical Therapist | ☐ Musician | ☐ Carpenter |
| ☐ Sales Manager | ☐ Tax Expert | ☐ Dancer |
| ☐ Bank Examiner | ☐ Social Worker | ☐ Farmer |
| ☐ Truck Mechanic | ☐ Fish & Game Warden | ☐ Electrical Engineer |
| ☐ Astronomer | ☐ Bank Teller | ☐ Clothes Designer |

Clear all

What are your interests?

THE CAREER KEY™

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> Your Interests

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Your Interests

Read each statement below and decide how much it describes you. If the statement is a very accurate description of you, click "True". If it is "Mostly True" of you, click that button. If it does not describe you, click "Not True".

Clear all

1. I like to work with animals, tools, or machines.

☒ True ☐ Mostly True ☐ Not True

2. I like to study and solve math, or science problems.

☐ True ☐ Mostly True ☒ Not True

3. I like to do creative activities such as art, drama, crafts, dance, music, or creative writing.

☐ True ☒ Mostly True ☐ Not True

4. I like to do things where I can help people, such as teaching, first aid, or giving information.

☒ True ☐ Mostly True ☐ Not True

5. I like to lead and persuade people, and to sell things and ideas.

☐ True ☒ Mostly True ☐ Not True

6. I like to work with numbers, records, or machines in a set, orderly way.

☐ True ☐ Mostly True ☒ Not True

Clear all

How do your abilities compare to others your age?

THE CAREER KEY™

> Get Started

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> Your Interests

> Your Abilities

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Your Abilities

For the abilities below, compare yourself to other persons your age. Decide the extent to which each statement is true of you.

Clear all

1. I have good skills in working with tools, mechanical drawings, machines, or animals.
☒ True ☐ Mostly True ☐ Not True
2. I am good at understanding and solving science and math problems.
☐ True ☐ Mostly True ☒ Not True
3. I have good artistic abilities in creative writing, drama, crafts, music or art.
☐ True ☒ Mostly True ☐ Not True
4. I am good at teaching, counseling, nursing, or giving information.
☒ True ☐ Mostly True ☐ Not True
5. I am good at leading people and selling things or ideas.
☐ True ☒ Mostly True ☐ Not True
6. I am good at working with written records and numbers in a systematic, orderly way.
☐ True ☐ Mostly True ☒ Not True

Clear all

How do you see yourself?

THE CAREER KEY™

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> Your Abilities

> How You See Yourself

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Careers

How You See Yourself

How do you see yourself? Decide the extent to which each of the statements below is true of you.

Clear all

1. I am practical, mechanical, and realistic.

☒ True ☐ Mostly True ☐ Not True

2. I am precise, scientific, and intellectual.

☐ True ☐ Mostly True ☒ Not True

3. I am artistic, imaginative, original, and independent.

☐ True ☒ Mostly True ☐ Not True

4. I am helpful, friendly, and trustworthy.

☒ True ☐ Mostly True ☐ Not True

5. I am energetic, ambitious, and sociable.

☒ True ☐ Mostly True ☐ Not True

6. I am orderly and good at following a set plan.

☐ True ☒ Mostly True ☐ Not True

Clear all

What are your values?

THE CAREER KEY™

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> How You See Yourself

> Your Values

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Careers

Your Values

To what extent are the statements below true of you?

Clear all

1. I value practical things you can see and touch, such as plants and animals you can grow, or things you can build and make better.

☒ True ☐ Mostly True ☐ Not True

2. I value science.

☐ True ☒ Mostly True ☐ Not True

3. I value creative arts such as drama, music, art or the works of creative writers.

☐ True ☒ Mostly True ☐ Not True

4. I value helping people and solving social problems.

☒ True ☐ Mostly True ☐ Not True

5. I value success in politics, leadership, or business.

☐ True ☒ Mostly True ☐ Not True

6. I value success in business.

☐ True ☒ Mostly True ☐ Not True

Clear all

7. Read through your results. What are your top two Interest Areas?

THE CAREER KEY PRINT THIS | E-MAIL THIS | PDF THIS

> Get Started
> Careers of Interest
> Your Interests
> Your Abilities
> How You See Yourself
> Your Values
> Results
Careers

Results

The Career Key measures how similar you are to six basic types of people. The higher you score, the more you are like that type. For example, if your highest score is on the 'Artistic' scale, that means you are most like the Artistic personality type or Artistic Interest area.

Your top interest areas and your scores for each of the six types are shown below.

Your Top Interest Areas

Realistic

- You are a "Do-er".
- You enjoy "hands-on" activities -- building, tinkering, fixing.
- You prefer concrete (vs. abstract) problems.
- You find that using tools and machinery seems to come naturally to you.

Social

- You are a "Helper".
- You enjoy assisting people in various ways.
- You like working in groups.
- You find that verbal and communication skills come naturally to you.

Your Ranking of the Interest Areas

Click a title to see a description of that interest area and all of the careers associated with it.

Realistic	8
Investigative	1
Artistic	4
Social	8
Enterprising	5
Conventional	2

(Keep in mind that the higher the ranking, the better the interest area matches you.)

VIEW CAREERS

Your reflections on your results from the Career Key:

Do these interest areas sound like you? Why or why not? How do these interests match your current career plans?

> SAVE Maximum 1000 characters

8. Click View Careers to see careers that match your results.

Write a reflection at the bottom of the page.

9. Research matching careers using the search tools:

THE CAREER KEY™

[PRINT THIS](#) | [E-MAIL THIS](#) | [PDF THIS](#)

- > Get Started
- > Careers of Interest
- > Your Interests
- > Your Abilities
- > How You See Yourself
- > Your Values
- > Results
- > **Careers**

105 Careers matching Your Interests

Your Top Interest Areas:

Realistic, Social

Didn't find the career you're looking for?
Search for the career you're looking for, then see how it
compares to your interests.

Search for **GO**

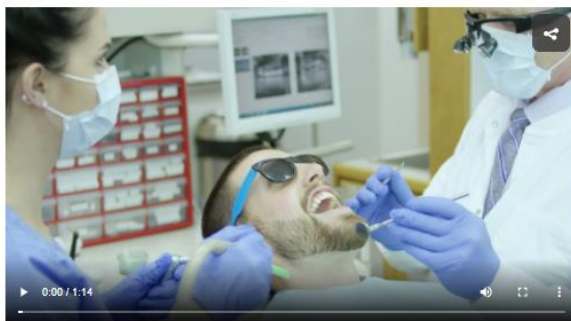
1 2 3 next > last >>

CAREER	EDUCATION LEVEL	STATE AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS	CAREER CLUSTER	INTERESTS
Acupuncturist	Master's degree	\$49,330	Health Science	Social, Realistic, Investigative
Acute Care Nurse	Master's degree	\$66,290	Health Science	Social, Investigative, Realistic
Adapted Physical Education Specialist	Bachelor's degree	-	Education and Training	Social, Realistic
Allergist/Immunologist	First professional degree	\$229,550	Health Science	Investigative, Social, Realistic
Ambulance Driver/Attendant	High school preferred, plus moderate length, on-the-job training	\$29,210	Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	Realistic, Social
Anesthesiologist	First professional degree	-	Health Science	Investigative, Realistic, Social
Anesthesiologist Assistant	Master's degree	\$112,240	Health Science	Realistic, Social, Investigative

Career Exploration: Dental Assistant

What They Do

Dental Assistants Career Video



Assists dentist, sets up equipment, prepares patient for treatment, and keeps records.

This career is part of the [Health Science](#) cluster [Therapeutic Services](#) pathway.

A person in this career:

- Prepares patient, sterilizes or disinfects instruments, sets up instrument trays, prepares materials, or assists dentist during dental procedures.
- Records treatment information in patient records.
- Exposes dental diagnostic x-rays.
- Takes and records medical and dental histories and vital signs of patients.
- Assists dentist in management of medical or dental emergencies.
- Provides postoperative instructions prescribed by dentist.
- Instructs patients in oral hygiene and plaque control programs.
- Orders and monitors dental supplies and equipment inventory.
- Fabricates temporary restorations or custom impressions from preliminary impressions.
- Makes preliminary impressions for study casts and occlusal registrations for mounting study casts.

Save to Portfolio

What They Do

Is This For You?

Skills Needed

What To Learn

Money & Outlook

Military Options

Connections

Interviews

Real-Life Activities

Compare to Another Career >

Start a Career Plan >

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Working Conditions and Physical Demands

People who do this job report that:

- You would often handle loads up to 10 lbs., sometimes up to 20 lbs. You might do a lot of walking or standing, or you might sit but use your arms and legs to control machines, equipment or tools.
- Work in this occupation involves bending or twisting your body more than one-third of the time
- Work in this occupation involves use of protective items such as safety shoes, glasses, gloves, hearing protection, a hard hat, or personal flotation devices
- Exposure to pollutants, gases, dust, fumes, odors, poor ventilation, etc.
- Requires getting into awkward positions
- Exposed to disease and infections more than once a month through work such as patient care, laboratory work, and sanitation control
- Work in this occupation involves using your hands to hold, control, and feel objects more than one-third of the time
- Exposed to conditions such as high voltage electricity, combustibles, explosives, and chemicals more than once a month
- Work in this occupation requires being inside most of the time
- Sound and noise levels are loud and distracting
- Exposed to radiation more than once a month
- Work in this occupation involves making repetitive motions more than one-third of the time
- Work in this occupation involves sitting more than one-third of the time
- Work in this occupation involves standing more than one-third of the time

Working in this career involves (physical activities):

- Seeing clearly up close
- Speaking clearly enough to be able to be understood by others
- Identifying and understanding the speech of another person

Work Hours and Travel

- Regular working hours and limited travel

Specialty and Similar Careers

Careers that are more detailed or close to this career:

- Certified Dental Assistant (CDA)
- Certified Registered Dental Assistant
- Expanded Duty Dental Assistant (EDDA)
- Expanded Function Dental Assistant
- Oral Surgery Assistant
- Orthodontic Assistant (Ortho Assistant)
- Orthodontic Technician
- Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)
- Surgical Dental Assistant

Is This For You?

Interests

The following categories describe the work interests (compatible with Holland's Model) of people who tend to succeed in this career:



Conventional – You are an "organizer". Keeping things neat and organized is important to you. You like working with charts and reports, and work well with power and authority.



Realistic – You are a "doer". You like physical activities and projects. You like to find the answers to problems by doing hands-on work instead of talking about solutions.



Social – You are a "helper". You like being around people and helping them with problems. Socializing is fun for you.

What are your interests?

Take the Interest Profiler to find out.

[Start the Interest Profiler](#)



Work Values

Work values are aspects of work that are satisfying to you. The following work values are generally associated with this career:



Relationships – It's very important to you that you have friendly co-workers. You would like to be of service to others without compromising your sense of right and wrong.



Support – It's very important to you to know the company stands behind its workers and has competent, considerate and fair management.

Tell me more about [Work Values](#) ...

What are your work values?

Take the Work Values Sorter to find out.

[Start the Work Values Sorter](#)



Aptitudes

Aptitudes reflect a person's ability to acquire skills and knowledge. The following aptitudes are important for success in this career:

All Aptitudes

- **General learning ability** – Bottom third
- **Numerical aptitude** – Bottom third
- **Form perception** – Bottom third
- **Finger dexterity** – Top one-third
- **Verbal aptitude** – Middle third
- **Spatial perception** – Bottom third
- **Clerical perception** – Bottom third
- **Manual dexterity** – Top one-third

Tell me more about [Aptitudes](#) ...

[Save to Portfolio](#)

-  [What They Do](#)
-  [Is This For You?](#)
-  [Skills Needed](#)
-  [What To Learn](#)
-  [Money & Outlook](#)
-  [Military Options](#)
-  [Connections](#)
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-  [Real-Life Activities](#)

[Compare to Another Career](#) >

[Start a Career Plan](#) >

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🎯 Skills Needed

Basic Skills

The following skills are **important** for this career:

- **Reading comprehension**
medium (Level 3)
- **Speaking**
medium (Level 3)
- **Active learning**
medium (Level 3)
- **Active listening**
medium (Level 4)
- **Critical thinking**
medium (Level 3)
- **Monitoring**
medium (Level 3)

These skills are **necessary but not as important**:

- **Writing**
low (Level 2)
- **Science**
low (Level 2)
- **Mathematics**
low (Level 1)
- **Learning strategies**
low (Level 2)

Tell me more about [Basic Skills](#) ...

What are your basic skills?

Take the basic skills to find out.

[Start the Basic Skills Survey](#)



Transferable Skills

Here's a list of skills used in this career that are also used in other careers.

Medium level of skill required

- Collecting and recording medical information
- Helping people understand health care instructions
- Treating physical or mental problems
- Using medical or dental instruments to treat patients
- Working as a member of a health services team

Tell me more about [Transferable Skills](#) ...

What are your transferable skills?

Take the transferable skills to find out.

[Start the Transferable Skills Checklist](#)



🎯 Improve Your Skills

Skills are wonderful because you can always improve them! All it takes is a little hard work and motivation. So if you see that a career requires more skill than you currently have, don't worry - it's always possible to learn more skills.

What To Learn

High School

What high school courses should you take if you're interested in this career? Get your answers from the **Health Science** cluster **Therapeutic Services** pathway.

Beyond High School

Here's a list of programs that you should consider if you're interested in this career:

- **Dental Assisting/Assistant**

Education Level

Education training and experience are required at different levels for success in different occupations.

One to two years post-secondary training

There are several possible paths to becoming a dental assistant. Some states require assistants to graduate from an accredited program and pass an exam. In other states, there are no formal educational requirements and dental assistants learn how to do their jobs through on-the-job training.

Additional Information

Dental assistants complete their training through one of two routes. Some are trained on the job. Others attend training programs.

Dental-assisting programs are available through community and junior colleges, trade schools, technical institutes or through the Armed Forces.

Licensed certified dental assistants must meet a continuing education requirement to maintain their licenses.

"It's also important to have CPR skills," says Lois Parento. She's the president of the California Dental Association. Parento advises those interested in a dental assistant career to study science, office practice and computerized bookkeeping.

Dental assistants must be caring and compassionate. They must have good communication skills and a good work ethic. They must be good with their hands.

Computer skills are important. "We work with digital things like digital radiography and digital impressions," said Parento. "Computer skills are a necessity for today's student."

* In some locations, speaking a second language is helpful. Parento says Spanish-speaking dental assistants are needed in California.

Marlene Robinson is the executive director of a dental association. She would like to see all dental assistants become credentialed. "It's a public safety issue," she points out. Certified dental assistants practice infection control. They perform tasks that could put both themselves and the public at risk if not done correctly.

Many dental assistant associations are actively lobbying government to make credentialing a requirement.

Extra Requirements

Some states require dental assistants to be certified; requirements vary by state. States that allow assistants to perform expanded duties, such as coronal polishing, require that they be licensed, registered, or hold certifications from the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB).

For additional information, visit these websites:

- <http://www.americanmedtech.org>
- <http://www.danb.org>

Money & Outlook

To view earnings and outlook for another state, select it from the following list:

North Dakota

Go

North Dakota Earnings

Average Annual Wage	\$47,140
Entry Annual Wage	\$35,250
Experienced Annual Wage	\$60,800
Average Hourly Wage	\$22.66
Entry Hourly Wage	\$16.95
Experienced Hourly Wage	\$29.23
Median Hourly Wage	\$22.28

North Dakota Regional Earnings

North Dakota Metropolitan Areas Wages

Region	Average	Entry Level	Experienced
Bismarck MSA	\$51,360 or \$24.69/hr	\$35,950 or \$17.28/hr	\$65,650 or \$31.56/hr
Fargo ND-MN MSA	\$48,180 or \$23.16/hr	\$36,910 or \$17.75/hr	\$60,030 or \$28.86/hr
Grand Forks ND-MN MSA	\$46,440 or \$22.33/hr	\$35,490 or \$17.06/hr	\$58,160 or \$27.96/hr

North Dakota Geographical Areas Wages

Region	Average	Entry Level	Experienced
East North Dakota nonmetropolitan area	\$44,920 or \$21.60/hr	\$32,300 or \$15.53/hr	\$56,210 or \$27.03/hr
West North Dakota nonmetropolitan area	\$44,430 or \$21.36/hr	\$34,570 or \$16.62/hr	\$58,420 or \$28.09/hr

 View Map

North Dakota's Employment and Outlook (State-wide)

Outlook	Stable Growth rate is estimated to be 16%
Job Openings	92 estimated annual job openings
Employment	696 were employed in this occupation
Industries	Large concentrations of this occupation are found in these industries - Offices of dentists (NAICS621200) (93.83%) - Federal Government, excluding Postal Service (5.2%)

National Earnings

Average Annual Wage	\$41,170
Average Hourly Wage	\$19.79
Average Annual Range	\$27,980 to \$56,930

Note: variations in salaries reflect differences in size of firm, location, level of education and professional credentials.

[Where do these numbers come from?](#)

National Employment and Outlook

Outlook	stable The employment change from 2018 to 2028 is estimated to be +11%. (The National average for all occupations is +5%)
Job Openings	very small number A total of 4480 average annual openings are expected for this occupation between 2018 and 2028. (The National Average for all occupations is 1,832 openings)
Employment	medium occupation This was a medium sized occupation in the United States, employing 346,000 workers in 2018. (The National average for all occupations is 149,803 workers)
Growth	Much faster than average growth Ongoing research linking oral health and general health will continue to increase the demand for preventive dental services. Dentists will continue to hire dental assistants to complete routine tasks, allowing the dentist to work more efficiently. As dental practices grow, more dental assistants will be needed.
Non Traditional Occupation	This is a non-traditional occupation for men in 2019.
Industries	Large concentrations of this occupation are found in these industries Health care and social assistance (NAICS620000) (95.2%)

Get paid to get a career. That's what the military can offer you. Take a moment to review related potential military careers.

Dental Hygienists and Assistants (Enlisted)

Opportunities

Dental hygienists and assistants have many responsibilities, including teeth cleaning, examining patients for signs of oral diseases such as gingivitis, and providing other preventive dental care. They also educate patients on ways to improve and maintain good oral health and perform other miscellaneous tasks, such as equipment maintenance and supplies inventory.

Training Provided

Job training for dental hygienists and assistants consists of classroom and on-the-job instruction, including practice in providing dental care.

- Preventive dentistry
- Radiology (X-ray) techniques
- Dental office procedures
- Dental hygiene procedures
- Basic principles and techniques of patient care
- Anatomy and physiology

All enlisted service members complete basic military training, which includes time spent in a classroom and in the field, and covers tactical and survival skills, physical training, military life and customs, and weapons training.

Earnings

Military pay and benefits are set by Congress, which normally grants a cost-of-living pay increase once each year. All members of the military receive basic pay, which is the largest component of a member's pay. A member's grade (usually the same as rank) and years of service determines the amount of basic pay received. Enlisted members can progress through nine enlisted pay grades during their careers. In 2020, most enlisted personnel started as recruits at Grade E-1 (\$20,796/year basic pay); however, those with special skills or above average education started as high as Grade E-4 (\$27,150/year basic pay). In addition to pay, the military provides many of life's necessities, such as food, clothing, and housing, or pays allowances for them. Other benefits include health care, 30 days paid vacation, legal assistance, recreational programs, education assistance, and military store privileges.

Services offering this occupation

Air Force

- [Air National Guard](#)
- [U.S. Air Force](#)
- [U.S. Air Force Reserve](#)

Army

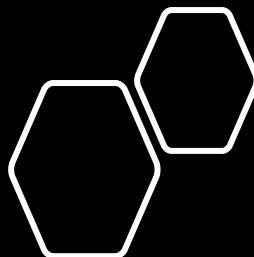
- [U.S. Army](#)
- [U.S. Army National Guard](#)
- [U.S. Army Reserves](#)

Coast Guard

- [U.S. Coast Guard](#)

Navy

- [U.S. Navy](#)



Connections

Associations

American Dental Association
211 E Chicago Ave.
Chicago, IL 60611-2678
<http://www.ada.org>

American Dental Assistants Association
35 East Wacker Drive Suite 1730
Chicago, IL 60601-2211
<http://www.dentalassitant.org/>

Dental Assisting National Board
444 N Michigan Ave Ste 900
Chicago, IL 60611
<http://www.danb.org>

Internet Sites

American Dental Assistants Association
<http://www.dentalassitant.org/>
Myfuture.com
<http://www.myfuture.com>

Dental Assisting National Board
<http://www.danb.org>

Related Career Information Sources

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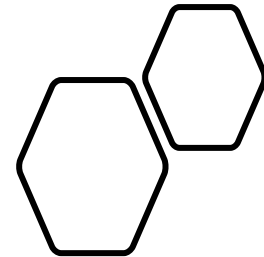
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Interviews

Would you like to be a tooth fairy?

Sherry Messenger knows how that feels. This certified dental assistant helped organize the Tooth Trolley Project with some colleagues. These good people rented a "Tooth Trolley" from a bus company. They brought a group of needy children to a downtown dental school for screening.

"Two dentists went through all these little mouths and we saw some horrific things," she said. It was sad to see, but it also felt good to know she was helping.

Many changes have occurred in the profession since Messenger graduated in 1975. She says her professional association has made a big difference.

Today the law allows dental assistants to do many things that they could not do in the past. "It makes it more fun and more challenging," she says. "It is more pleasant working in an office when you are not just a fixture."

Messenger has had a variety of jobs in the field. She has worked in a small one-dentist office for many years. She loves her job and the people. Sometimes she has worked with a patient's parents or even grandparents.

There is a lot of laughter at work. Her co-workers like to play practical jokes and kid around.

Messenger thinks it is helpful if dental assistants have a sense of humor and are outgoing. It calms the patients and makes them happier. "You don't want a dental assistant who is all strung out," she remarks.

The work can be sad at times. Sometimes people are terrified. They had bad experiences with dentistry years ago. They don't understand that most dentistry today is painless.

"We say, 'Listen, this is where you are now, but it is going to get better,'" Messenger says. "We don't always see them at their best."

Timelines also create stress. It's hard to fit everything in on busy days.

The biggest stress doesn't come from the office, though. The biggest stress comes from lobbying efforts to bring legislative changes to their profession. She would like to see a legal requirement that all dental assistants be credentialed before they can practice. Not everyone agrees with this, Messenger says. "I have some good friends in the other arena. Everyone has a different point of view," she points out. "If you let that get to you, there is a problem."

Messenger advises newcomers to be their own advocate. She says it's a wonderful profession, so don't settle for an office that doesn't meet your needs. Messenger also says that dental assistants have to take care of themselves. Some dentists don't follow employment standards. "Get your education. Join your professional association and be active," she advises.

Like Messenger, Nicolai Cowan loves his job. Cowan works for a dental practice in a small town. This is his first job since he graduated from his training program 18 months ago. Someday he would like to be a dentist himself. Not many men work as dental assistants. Cowan says his former dentist inspired him to go into the field.

Unfortunately, after he finished his training, he could not find work in his home town. He had to take a job in another location.

"No one gave me a chance until I met the dentist I work for," he explains. "He was the best dentist I could find! Every day is a pleasure going to work!" Although Cowan misses his friends and family, he says he never wants to leave his employer. He enjoys working inside. He also likes being part of a team and having an opportunity to interact with the public. "I like the responsibility that goes with the job," Cowan comments.

Cowan works as many hours as he can -- sometimes 40 or 45 hours a week. Sometimes the dentist takes him to the hospital where they work with elderly patients under general anesthetic.

"We're working in a hospital scene and we're taking out around 25 teeth or more," he says.

Miriam Swartz is a dental assistant who graduated from an accredited program. She is the president of the Massachusetts Dental Assistants Association and has been a member of the American Dental Assistants Association for 30 years. Swartz also has certification allowing her to assist with dental surgery. At one point in her career, she worked as implant coordinator for the oral surgery instructor at Tufts University. Today she works in a small dental office.

Swartz chose the profession because she likes working with her hands. When she was in high school, she loved watching her dentist at work. "It's like an art form," she comments. "Dentistry is a very creative field!"

There is always something new to learn. She has traveled for training events. If dentists see you are interested, they will often help you get special training.

At one training event, Swartz volunteered to have 10 veneers put on her teeth as part of a classroom learning experience. "Not only did I have this work done, but I participated in the classroom learning," said Swartz.

Swartz points out that you can make as much of this profession as you want. You can say, "It's just a job," or you can make it into a fabulous career.

Those in the field emphasize that the work is important. People have died from massive infections in an untreated tooth. Also, certain diseases first show up in the mouth. Staph infections can start out as a tooth infection. Swallowing a lot of tartar can cause heart disease and heart problems.

"It's about more than having a fancy smile," Swartz remarks. "That's why it's so important that people get trained in this profession."

She adds that the profession needs people who have a good work ethic, who want to help people and who are compassionate. If this is you, she definitely recommends the field. You also have to be good with your hands. "You don't have to be an artist, but you can't be all thumbs!"

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Dental Assistant



AVG. SALARY
\$47,140



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JOB OUTLOOK
Stable

Real-Life Activities



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do you still have?**