

**Explore Careers and Plan Your Future  
With RUReady.ND.gov**

# **INTEREST PROFILER**

# How do I access [RUReady.ND.gov](https://RUReady.ND.gov)?

## PUBLIC SCHOOL student in grades 6-12:

### Accessing RUReady.ND.gov



- 1 Go to your school's PowerSchool Sign In to access RUReady.ND.gov.  
Sign in to your PowerSchool account. 
  - 2 From the PowerSchool main screen, click on the Applications icon to access your ND Education Portal. 
  - 3 Click on the ND Education Portal Link 
  - 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](https://RUReady.ND.gov).
2. Click **Create an 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**.

<p><a href="#">Full Instructions</a> for Public School students.</p>	<p><a href="#">Full Instructions</a> for Private/Tribal School students.</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

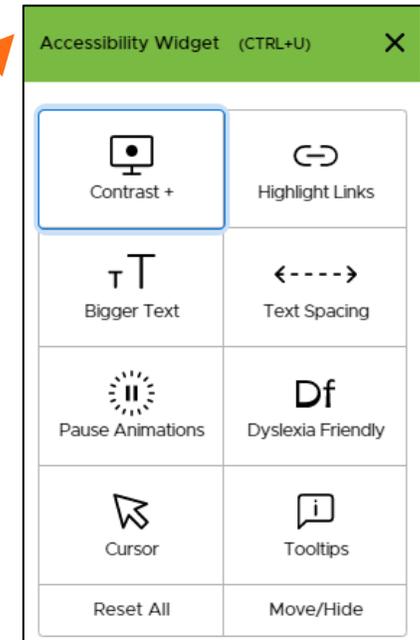
# The UserWay Widget

The UserWay widget offers assistance with the following:

- Contrast
- Highlight Links
- Bigger Text
- Text Spacing
- Pause Animations
- Dyslexia Friendly
- Cursor
- Tooltips



Click on the green UserWay icon in the in upper right-hand corner of the screen to select accessibility tools.



# Find the Interest Profiler

Click on the **CAREER PLANNING** tab.



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.

Click on **Interest Profiler**

## LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF

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



### Interest Profiler

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

⌚ Duration: 10-20 minutes



### Career Cluster Survey

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

⌚ Duration: 15-25 minutes



### Basic Skills Survey

Find out what careers require your basic skills.

⌚ Duration: 30-45 minutes



### Transferable Skills Checklist

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

⌚ Duration: 30 minutes



### Work Values

Find your work values and match them to career options.

⌚ Duration: 5-15 minutes



### The Career Key

Discover your career interest areas in a few quick steps.

⌚ Duration: 10-15 minutes

Click on  
**GET STARTED**

**INTEREST PROFILER**

> Start

Questions

> Results

> Matching Careers

## SEE HOW YOUR INTERESTS MATCH CAREERS

10-20 mins

1 Indicate how much you'd like or dislike each work task.

2 Your results will include a profile of your interests.

3 Explore the careers that match your interests

**Get Started**



**Answer  
the  
Questions**



**INTEREST PROFILER**

- > Start
- > **Questions**
- > Results
- > Matching Careers

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO...  
**Build kitchen cabinets**

Strongly Dislike   Dislike   Unsure   **Like**   Strongly Like

1



# Tracks Your Progress

The screenshot displays the 'INTEREST PROFILER' interface. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with the following items: '> Start', '> Questions' (highlighted in red), '> Results', and '> Matching Careers'. The main content area features a question: 'HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO... Buy and sell stocks and bonds'. Below the question is a horizontal scale with five buttons: 'Strongly Dislike', 'Dislike', 'Unsure', 'Like', and 'Strongly Like'. A 'Previous' button is located below the scale. At the bottom center, there is a circular progress indicator with a blue segment and the number '9' inside.

# Your Interest Profile

## INTEREST PROFILER

> Start

> Questions

> **Results**

> Matching Careers

### Refine Your Search

Combine your interests with earnings, education, and other characteristics in the Career Finder

> Use these interests in the Career Finder

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### Your Interest Profile

You may have interests in each area, and some areas that match you best. Think about your profile as you explore careers on the next page.

Matching Careers



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.



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.



Conventional



- You are an "Organizer".
- You enjoy systematic, step-by-step work tasks.
- You like to keep things neat and in order.
- You prefer working in stable environments with predictable routines.

Artistic



- You are a "Creator".
- More...

Investigative



- You are a "Thinker".
- More...

Enterprising



- You are a "Persuader".
- More...

### Reflecting on your Interest Profiler results:

Check any that apply:

- The top interests sound like me.
- I was surprised by my results.
- I feel that some of the bottom interests might fit me better than the top ones.
- I can see that some careers might suit me better than others.

Write any additional thoughts about your interests:

Maximum 245 characters

Save

Matching Careers

# Refine Your Search

Use your interests to search for careers in the Career Finder.

**INTEREST PROFILER**

- > Start
- > Questions
- > Results
- > Matching Careers

**Refine Your Search**  
Combine your interests with earnings, education, and other characteristics in the Career Finder

- > Use these interests in the Career Finder

**Matching Careers**

- Click a career to see its profile.
- Click in the Your Match column to see how you match.
- You can also see matches by education level.

**Your Interest Profile**

- Realistic
- Investigative
- Artistic
- Social
- Enterprising
- Conventional

**Looking for a specific career?**  
Search for the career, then see how it compares to your interests.

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Best Match | Education Level < Prev 1 2 3 4 5 Next >

Career	Education Level	Annual Salary (?)	Your Match (?)
<a href="#">Physical Therapist Aide</a>	High school (GED), plus on-the-job training	\$29,180	★★★★★
<a href="#">Massage Therapist</a>	Post-secondary training, plus work experience	\$47,180	★★★★★
<a href="#">Home Health Aide</a>	High school preferred, plus short term, on-the-job training	\$26,440	★★★★★
<a href="#">Occupational Therapy Aide</a>	High school (GED), plus on-the-job training	\$34,310	★★★★★
<a href="#">Dental Hygienist</a>	Associate's degree	\$77,230	★★★★★
<a href="#">Physical Therapist Assistant</a>	Associate's degree	\$58,520	★★★★★
<a href="#">Post-secondary Career and Technical Education Teacher</a>	Bachelor's degree	\$60,420	★★★★★
<a href="#">Lifeguard</a>	High school preferred, plus short term, on-the-job training	\$25,380	★★★★★
<a href="#">Ski Patrol</a>	High school preferred, plus short term, on-the-job training	\$25,380	★★★★★
<a href="#">Occupational Therapy Assistant</a>	Associate's degree	\$61,880	★★★★★
<a href="#">Licensed Practical Nurse</a>	One to two years post-secondary training	\$48,500	★★★★★
<a href="#">Ambulance Driver/Attendant</a>	High school preferred, plus moderate length, on-the-job training	\$29,600	★★★★★

## CAREER FINDER

105 matches

(after last selection)

### Education

- > Education Level
- > Post-Secondary Programs
- > School Subjects
- > Apprenticeships

### Money and Outlook

- > Earnings
- > Outlook

### Skills

- > Basic Skills
- > Transferable Skills
- > Workplace Skills

### My Characteristics

- > Interests
- > Work Values
- > Aptitudes

### Career Facts

- > Career Clusters
- > Working Conditions
- > Physical Demands
- > Physical Abilities
- > Work Hours and Travel
- > Military
- > Careers by Gender

### Interests

Search for careers by choosing the interests that best describe you. Remember to only pick one or two interests. Career Finder will return careers that match all your choices.

**Interest Profiler**  
Use Interest Profiler results

#### Clear all

- 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.
- Investigative**
  - You are a "Thinker".
  - You enjoy observing, learning, evaluating.
  - You like the challenge of thinking through problems.
  - You prefer working on your own.
- Artistic**
  - You are a "Creator".
  - You enjoy art of all types, including drama, music, literature, poetry.
  - You like using your imagination and creativity.
  - You prefer working in unstructured environments.
- 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.
- Enterprising**
  - You are a "Persuader".
  - You enjoy leading or managing other people.
  - You often respond well to competition and enjoy leading teams.
  - You are willing to take risks.
- Conventional**
  - You are an "Organizer".
  - You enjoy systematic, step-by-step work tasks.
  - You like to keep things neat and in order.
  - You prefer working in stable environments with predictable routines.

**SEE YOUR MATCHING CAREERS >**

or click on any characteristic on the left to add it to your search

Click **See Your Matching Careers** to add interests to your search.



Click on  
**Education Level**



**CAREER FINDER**

Choose Characteristics

**Education**

- > Education Level
- > Post-Secondary Programs
- > School Subjects
- > Apprenticeships

**Money and Outlook**

- > Earnings
- > Outlook

**Skills**

- > Basic Skills
- > Transferable Skills
- > Workplace Skills

**My Characteristics**

- > Interests
- > Work Values
- > Aptitudes

**Career Facts**

- > Career Clusters
- > Working Conditions
- > Physical Demands
- > Physical Abilities
- > Work Hours and Travel
- > Military
- > Careers by Gender

**Interests**

Search for careers by choosing the interests that best describe you. Remember to only pick one or two interests. Career Finder will return careers that match all your choices.

Clear all



- Realistic
  - You are a "Do-er".
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- Enterprising
  - You are a "Persuader".
  - You enjoy leading or managing other people.
  - You often respond well to competition and enjoy leading teams.
  - You are willing to take risks.

**Interest Profiler**

Use Interest Profiler results



**Education Level**  
Choose the level  
you HOPE to  
achieve.

Click on **See  
Your Matching  
Careers**

## CAREER FINDER

105 matches

(after last selection)

### Education

- > Education Level
- > Post-Secondary Programs
- > School Subjects
- > Apprenticeships

### Money and Outlook

- > Earnings
- > Outlook

### Skills

- > Basic Skills
- > Transferable Skills
- > Workplace Skills

### My Characteristics

- ✓ Interests
- > Work Values
- > Aptitudes

### Career Facts

- > Career Clusters
- > Working Conditions
- > Physical Demands
- > Physical Abilities
- > Work Hours and Travel

### Education Level

Choose the level of education you have or would like to attain. Lower levels will be automatically selected as well unless you uncheck them.

Clear all

### Education Level

- High school not completed (but preferred)
- High school completed (GED)
- One to two years post-secondary training
- Bachelor's degree
- Professional or graduate degree

**SEE YOUR MATCHING CAREERS >**

or click on any characteristic on the left to add it to your search

### What is a Professional Degree?

A professional degree prepares students for the licensing or certification required to practice in fields like dentistry, law and medicine. These degrees often require some undergraduate study before students can start the professional degree program.

**CAREER FINDER**

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Sort by **State**  
**Average Annual Earnings**

67 matches  
(after last selection)

- Education**
  - ✓ Education Level
  - > Post-Secondary Programs
  - > School Subjects
  - > Apprenticeships
- Money and Outlook**
  - > Earnings
  - > Outlook
- Skills**
  - > Basic Skills
  - > Transferable Skills
  - > Workplace Skills
- My Characteristics**
  - ✓ Interests
  - > Work Values
  - > Aptitudes
- Career Facts**
  - > Career Clusters
  - > Working Conditions
  - > Physical Demands
  - > Physical Abilities
  - > Work Hours and Travel
  - > Military
  - > Careers by Gender

You chose the following characteristics:

- **Education Level:** High school not completed (but preferred), High school completed (GED), One to two years post-secondary training, Bachelor's degree
- **Interests:** 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 the characteristics you've chosen.

[GO](#)

67 careers match all of these characteristics

CAREER	EDUCATION LEVEL	STATE AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS	CAREER CLUSTER	
Acute Care Nurse	Associate's degree	\$5,740	Health Science	Compare your selections
Adapted Physical Education Specialist	Bachelor's degree	-	Education and Training	Compare your selections
Ambulance Driver/Attendant	High school preferred, plus moderate length, on-the-job training	\$28,860	Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	Compare your selections
Animal Control Worker	High school preferred, plus moderate length, on-the-job training	-	Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security	Compare your selections
Armored Assault Vehicle Officer ... (Military - Officer)	Bachelor's degree	-	Government and Public Administration	Compare your selections
Athletic Trainer	Bachelor's degree	\$45,470	Health Science	Compare your selections
Audio-Visual Collections Specialist	Bachelor's degree	-	Education and Training	Compare your selections



# Career Exploration

## What They Do

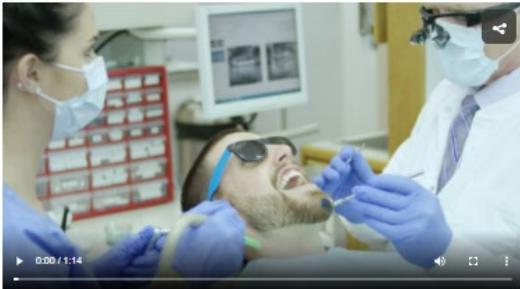


Make sure to watch the career profile video.

**Health Science**  
**Dental Assistant**

AVG. SALARY: \$47,140    EDUCATION: 1-2 years post-secondary training    JOB OUTLOOK: Stable

**What They Do**  
Dental Assistants Career Video



0:00 / 1:14

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.

**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

# Is This For You?

Health Science

## Dental Assistant



AVG. SALARY  
\$47,140



EDUCATION  
1-2 years post-secondary training



JOB OUTLOOK  
Stable

### 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.

#### Your Interests

The last time you took the Interest Profiler your results were:

Social

Realistic

Take the [Interest Profiler](#) again.

#### 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
- Interviews
- Real-Life Activities

[Compare to Another Career >](#)

[Start a Career Plan >](#)

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# Skills Needed

Health Science  
**Dental Assistant**

 **Avg. Salary** \$47,140    
  **Education** 1-2 years post-secondary training    
  **Job Outlook** Stable

**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.

Save to Portfolio

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# What To Learn

Health Science  
**Dental Assistant**

**AVG. SALARY**  
\$47,140

**EDUCATION**  
1-2 years post-secondary training

**JOB OUTLOOK**  
Stable

**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.americanmedteech.org>
- <http://www.danb.org>

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# Money and Outlook and Military Options

Health Science  
**Dental Assistant**

AVG. SALARY \$47,140 | EDUCATION 1-2 years post-secondary training | JOB OUTLOOK Stable

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Compare to Another Career >  
Start a Career Plan >

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## Money & Outlook

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

North Dakota

### North Dakota Earnings

Average Annual Wage	\$47,140
Entry Annual Wage	\$35,250
Experienced Annual Wage	\$60,200
Average Hourly Wage	\$22.68
Entry Hourly Wage	\$16.85
Experienced Hourly Wage	\$28.21
Median Hourly Wage	\$22.23

### 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

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

<b>Outlook</b>	Stable Growth rate is estimated to be 16%
<b>Job Openings</b>	92 estimated annual job openings
<b>Employment</b>	698 were employed in this occupation
<b>Industries</b>	Large concentrations of this occupation are found in these industries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offices of dentists (NAICS621200) (93.83%)</li> <li>Federal Government, excluding Postal Service (5.2%)</li> </ul>

### National Earnings

Average Annual Wage	\$41,170
Average Hourly Wage	\$19.79
Average Annual Range	\$27,980 to \$66,900

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

<b>Outlook</b>	<b>stable</b> The employment change from 2018 to 2028 is estimated to be +11%. (The National average for all occupations is +9%)
<b>Job Openings</b>	<b>very small number</b> 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)
<b>Employment</b>	<b>medium occupation</b> 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)
<b>Growth</b>	<b>Much faster than average growth</b> 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.
<b>Non Traditional Occupation</b>	This is a non-traditional occupation for men in 2019.
<b>Industries</b>	Large concentrations of this occupation are found in these industries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health care and social assistance (NAICS282000) (95.2%)</li> </ul>

Health Science  
**Dental Assistant**

AVG. SALARY \$47,140 | EDUCATION 1-2 years post-secondary training | JOB OUTLOOK Stable

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## Military Options

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 and Interviews

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**Dental Assistant**

**AVG. SALARY**  
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## 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.dentalassistant.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.dentalassistant.org/>  
Myfuture.com  
<http://www.myfuture.com>

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

### Related Career Information Sources

**O\*NET- SOC occupation**  
Dental Assistants – 31-9091.00  
<http://www.onetonline.org>

**SOC occupation**  
Dental Assistants – 31-9091  
<http://www.bls.gov/soo/>

**Occupational Outlook Handbook**  
<http://www.bls.gov/oooh/>

### Military Career Opportunities

#### 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 Reserve](#)

#### Coast Guard

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

#### Navy

- [U.S. Navy](#)

**Job Banks by State**

North Dakota

[Job Service ND >](#) [USA Jobs - North Dakota >](#)

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## Interviews

Would you like to be a tooth fairy?

Shery 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 anesthesia.

"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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# Take-Away



- **Did you learn anything new about yourself?**
- **How will you use this information in the future?**