

2011

American Association of Medical Assistants

Medical Assisting Salary Survey

Medical assistants across the country enthusiastically participated in the 2011 salary survey, conducted by the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA). More than 3,800 medical assistants completed the survey.

The AAMA e-mailed a questionnaire to a random sampling of more than 20,000 medical assistants and medical assisting educators. Most of the participants were CMAs (AAMA) and members of the AAMA.

The large number of participants ensures that the results have a high degree of statistical reliability.

Statistical reliability and terms used

The overall margin of error for the 3,898 responses is ± 1.6 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Margin of error describes the statistical reliability of the sample as an estimate of the population. The margin of error should be treated only as an approximation, since margin of error calculations are based on pure random selection, which is not achievable in traditional survey settings where response is voluntary. The ± 1.6 percent margin of error applies to overall statistics based on the total respondents to the survey. Smaller breakout groups presented throughout the report have higher margins of error. Judgments based on statistics with very low sample sizes should be made with caution. Statistics are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Compensation

Both hourly pay rates and annual gross salaries were collected on the survey. Over 95 percent of full-time medical assistants are paid hourly, while roughly 5 percent are paid by annual salary. By contrast, 84 percent of full-time medical assisting educators receive an annual salary, while approximately 16 percent are paid hourly.

Average hourly wages (Table 1) and salary (Table 2) vary according to years of experience for all medical assistants surveyed. In addition, full-time medical assistants holding a CMA (AAMA) certification earn more on average than medical assistants who do not hold a CMA (AAMA) certification and may or may not hold another type of medical assisting certification (\$14.94 vs. \$13.43 per hour) as shown in Table 3.

Employers are not only paying higher wages for the CMA (AAMA), they are also increasingly demanding that their medical assistants have a CMA (AAMA). Every day the AAMA responds to more than 100 employer requests for CMA (AAMA) certification verification—for both current and potential employees. Such demand is often due to the pressures of potential malpractice suits and the certification mandates placed on employers by managed care organizations.¹

On average, full-time medical assisting educators reported earning an annual

gross salary of \$49,771, with over 16 percent reporting that they earn at least \$65,000 annually.

Table 1. Average hourly pay for all medical assistants

Years of experience	Hourly pay	Number of responses
0–2 years	\$12.88	1,060
3–5 years	14.31	590
6–9 years	15.21	420
10–15 years	16.23	349
16 years +	17.58	473
Overall	\$14.67	2,921

Table 2. Average gross salary for full-time medical assistants

Years of experience	Salary	Number of responses
0–2 years	\$24,882	804
3–5 years	27,913	517
6–9 years	30,123	378
10–15 years	32,539	311
16 years +	35,882	421
Overall	\$29,201	2,449

Table 3. Average pay for full-time CMAs (AAMA) and Non-CMAs (AAMA)

	Hourly pay	Number of responses	Salary	Number of responses
CMAs (AAMA)	\$14.94	2,106	\$29,460	2,114
Non-CMAs (AAMA)	13.43	289	26,568	285

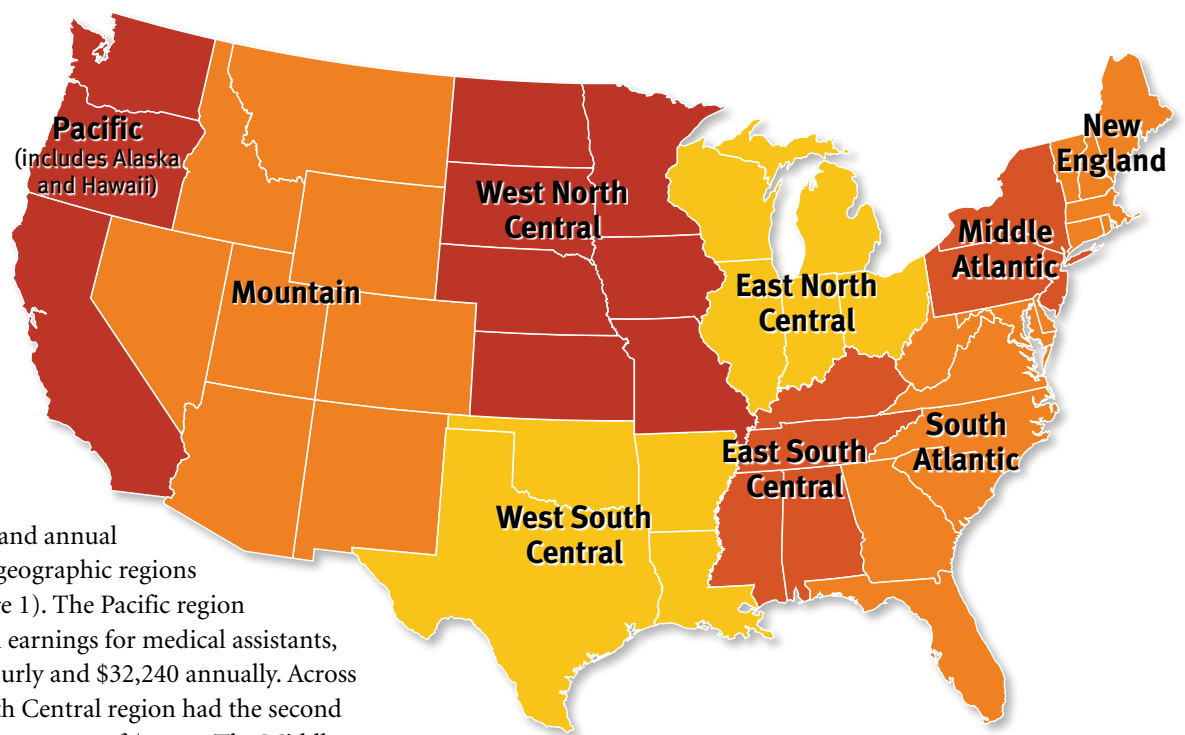


Figure 1. Regions based on the United States Census divisions

The average hourly wages and annual salary were computed for geographic regions of the United States (Figure 1). The Pacific region showed the highest annual earnings for medical assistants, with averages of \$16.85 hourly and \$32,240 annually. Across the country, the West North Central region had the second highest hourly rate, with an average of \$15.53. The Middle Atlantic region turned in the second highest annual salary, with an average of \$30,256. The full comparison is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Geographic region

Average full-time medical assistant hourly pay and gross salary by years of experience

Region	Overall	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years +
<i>Northeast</i>						
New England	\$15.49 \$30,106	\$13.86 \$26,373	\$14.99 \$29,090	\$16.43 \$32,542	\$16.96 \$33,741	\$19.22 \$38,000
Middle Atlantic	14.86 30,256	13.35 25,867	13.83 27,852	15.82 31,556	17.69 37,300	17.89 39,250
<i>Midwest</i>						
East North Central	14.25 28,189	12.42 24,085	13.85 27,208	14.41 28,222	16.13 31,773	17.04 34,464
West North Central	15.53 30,211	13.57 25,607	14.78 28,351	15.52 31,019	16.82 32,730	17.94 35,534
<i>South</i>						
South Atlantic	14.03 28,265	12.17 23,661	13.75 27,127	14.51 29,294	15.57 30,837	17.04 35,909
East South Central	13.29 27,065	11.39 22,480	13.06 25,786	13.43 25,833	15.50 31,571	15.71 33,700
West South Central	14.29 28,886	12.20 22,909	14.45 28,875	* *	14.80 *	16.48 37,071
<i>West</i>						
Mountain	14.33 28,386	12.33 23,392	13.68 26,262	14.32 28,450	15.83 34,300	18.13 35,250
Pacific	16.85 32,240	14.98 28,265	16.43 30,946	18.03 34,375	18.61 36,431	19.51 38,488

* Insufficient response

Over 62 percent of medical assistants hold a certificate or diploma in medical assisting, while 43 percent hold an associate degree in medical assisting. Data regarding occupational training is presented in Figure 2.

Over 52 percent of medical assistants work in a single specialty practice with an average of 19 total employees, while approximately 44 percent work in a multispecialty office averaging 47 employees (Table 5).

The overwhelming majority of medical assistants surveyed work in physicians' offices. Over 87 percent of respondents are employed in that setting, with roughly 4 percent listed in emergency and outpatient hospital departments, and another 6 percent in "Other." The breakdown of wages and earnings is shown in Table 6. Figures for ambulatory surgery, inpatient hospital care, nursing homes, home and hospice care, and residential care are not listed due to insufficient response numbers.

Approximately 59 percent of medical assistants work in a primary care office or practice. Another 25 percent work in practices with medical or surgical specialties, with an additional 16 percent in the "Other" category. The income figures for practice specialty are shown in Table 7.

Figure 2. Occupational training background

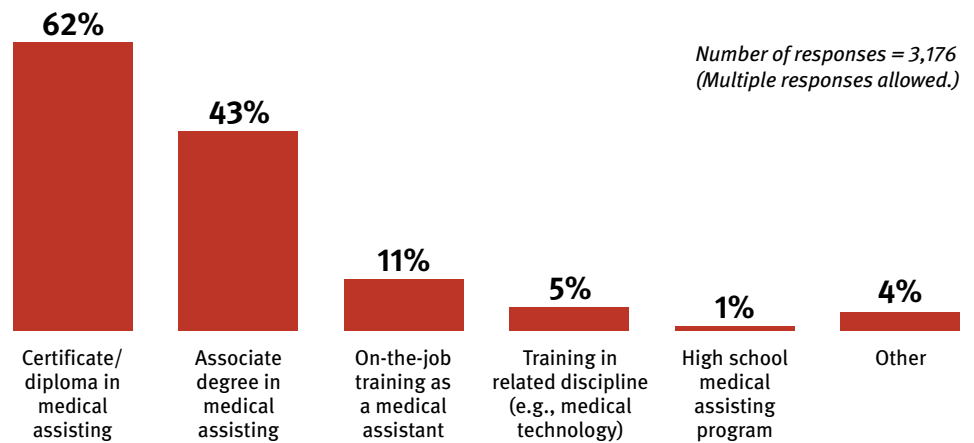


Table 5. Average number of employees

Employee role	Overall	Single specialty	Multispecialty
Physicians	9	5	14
CMA's (AAMA)	5	3	8
Other medical assistants	6	3	9
Other nonphysicians	13	8	16
Medical assistants subtotal	11	6	17
Total number of staff persons	33	19	47
Number of responses	3,046	1,619	1,304

Table 6. Work setting

Average full-time medical assistant hourly pay and gross salary by years of experience

Specialty	Overall	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years +
Physician's office	\$14.74 \$29,036	\$12.93 \$24,739	\$14.22 \$27,733	\$15.12 \$29,639	\$16.20 \$31,952	\$17.55 \$35,555
Emergency and outpatient hospital department	15.18 30,718	13.12 26,024	15.14 29,575	15.65 36,136	* *	18.55 37,900
Other	14.92 29,872	12.97 24,509	14.48 27,944	15.63 31,658	17.85 38,409	19.39 43,192

* Insufficient response

Table 7. Practice specialty

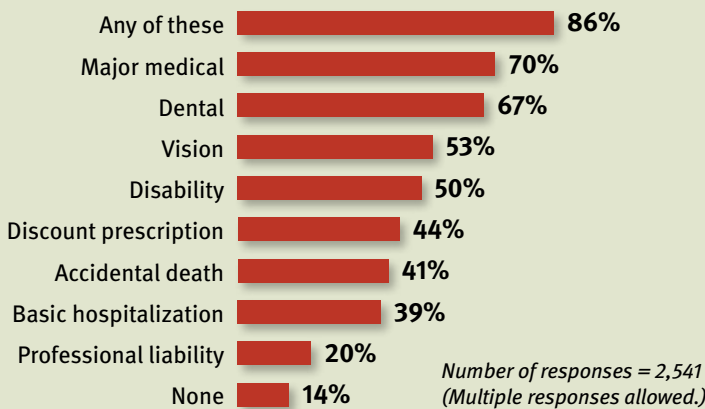
Average full-time medical assistant hourly pay and gross salary by years of experience

Specialty	Overall	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years +
Primary care	\$14.53 \$28,382	\$12.79 \$24,465	\$14.13 \$27,424	\$14.82 \$29,362	\$16.20 \$31,380	\$17.31 \$34,392
Medical and surgical specialties	15.41 31,020	13.36 26,021	14.67 28,732	15.61 31,182	16.61 33,972	18.18 37,569
Other	14.79 29,380	12.93 24,885	14.50 28,569	16.45 31,683	16.57 33,915	17.89 38,291

Employment benefits

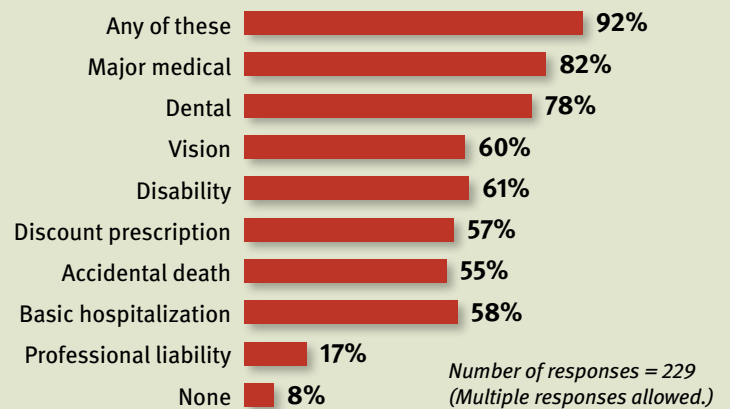
Roughly 86 percent of all full-time medical assistants receive some form of benefits package from their employer. Just over 67 percent of full-time medical assistants receive dental coverage, over 53 percent receive vision coverage, just under 50 percent receive disability coverage, and over 20 percent receive professional liability coverage. The full range of benefits for full-time medical assistants is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Insurance benefits received by full-time medical assistants



Roughly 92 percent of full-time educators receive some form of benefits package. Over 78 percent receive dental insurance. Vision, disability, discount prescription coverage, accidental death, and basic hospitalization all were over 50 percent rates. Rates of coverage for full-time educators are listed in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Insurance benefits received by full-time educators



When asked if employers offer to help pay for various AAMA expenses, over 20 percent of member medical assistants responded that their employers pay their membership dues in full. In addition, 13 percent have their annual conference registration fees paid for in full, and another 7 percent have travel and lodging paid by their employers (Table 8).

Full-time educators saw a much greater percentage of employers paying for these services, with over 50 percent reporting full payment of membership dues and conference registration fees, and over 42 percent reporting full payment of travel and lodging for conference (Table 9).

Table 8. AAMA expenses paid by employers for full-time medical assistants

Expense	Full	Partial	None	Number of responses
AAMA membership dues	20%	2%	78%	2,392
AAMA Annual Conference registration fees	13%	5%	82%	2,344
Travel and lodging expenses for the AAMA Annual Conference	7%	4%	89%	2,336

Table 9. AAMA expenses paid by employers for full-time educators

Expense	Full	Partial	None	Number of responses
AAMA membership dues	51%	3%	46%	227
AAMA Annual Conference registration fees	50%	13%	37%	225
Travel and lodging expenses for the AAMA Annual Conference	42%	13%	45%	226

Rank and order of duties

Medical assistants (both full- and part-time) detailed what responsibilities took up the most, and the least, amount of their daily routine (Figure 5). Respondents said that 72 percent of their time is spent on clinical tasks, whereas less than 25 percent is spent on administrative tasks. Managerial responsibilities, clinical and administrative combined, took up approximately 9 percent on average.

The majority of medical assistants involved in clinical areas obtain patient history and vital signs (89 percent). Seventy-three percent perform injections, and 50 percent are involved in laboratory duties. Only a select few perform such tasks as starting IVs (5 percent) or infusing medication into IV lines (2 percent). About 5 percent of respondents are not involved in clinical areas (Figure 6).

For medical assistants involved in administrative activities, the most common task is scheduling patient appointments (72 percent). About 57 percent handle medical records. The task least performed is bookkeeping, with only 14 percent of respondents involved in that area (Figure 7).

Although managerial responsibilities occupy a small percentage of medical assistants' time on average, purchasing equipment/supplies (33 percent) occurs most frequently. Other managerial responsibilities that arise are supervising staff (12 percent) and hiring, evaluating, or terminating employees (6 percent). Nearly 61 percent of respondents stated they are not involved in management areas. The full range of managerial tasks is listed in Figure 8.

Reference

1. Balasa DA. Why more employers are hiring CMAs (AAMA). American Association of Medical Assistants. <http://www.aama-ntl.org/resources/library/WhyMoreEmpsHireCMA.pdf>. Published January 2007. Updated February 2009. Accessed October 7, 2010.

Figure 5. Average time spent on duties

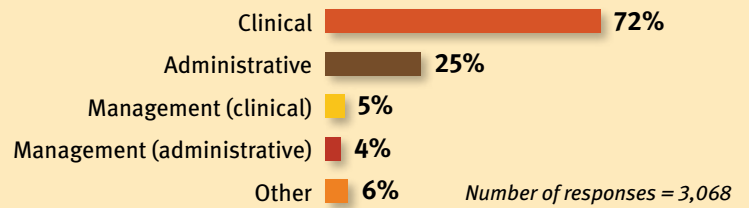


Figure 6. Clinical responsibilities

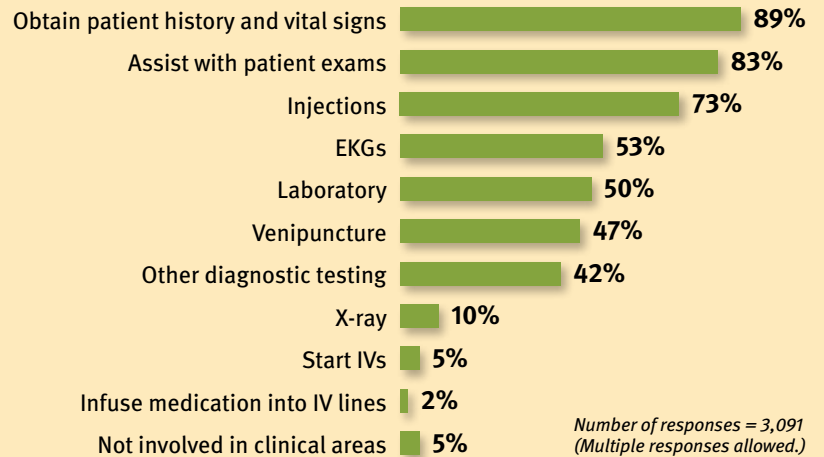


Figure 7. Administrative responsibilities

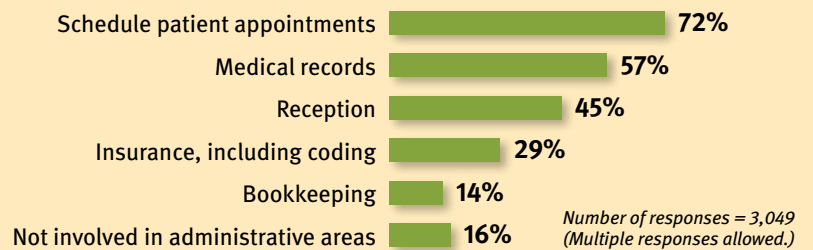
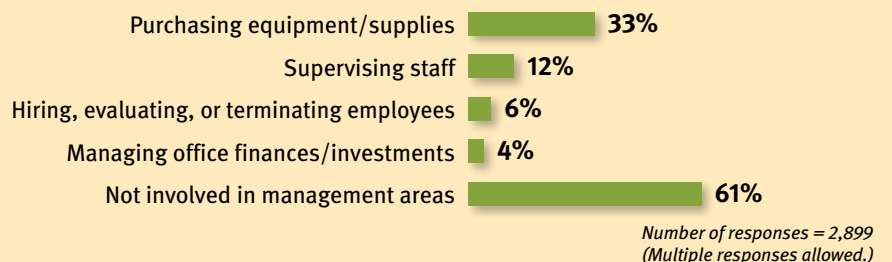


Figure 8. Management responsibilities



For more information on medical assisting responsibilities, see the *AAMA 2007–2008 Occupational Analysis of the CMA (AAMA)* on the website.

The American Association of Medical Assistants thanks all the participants who made the 2011 survey possible.