



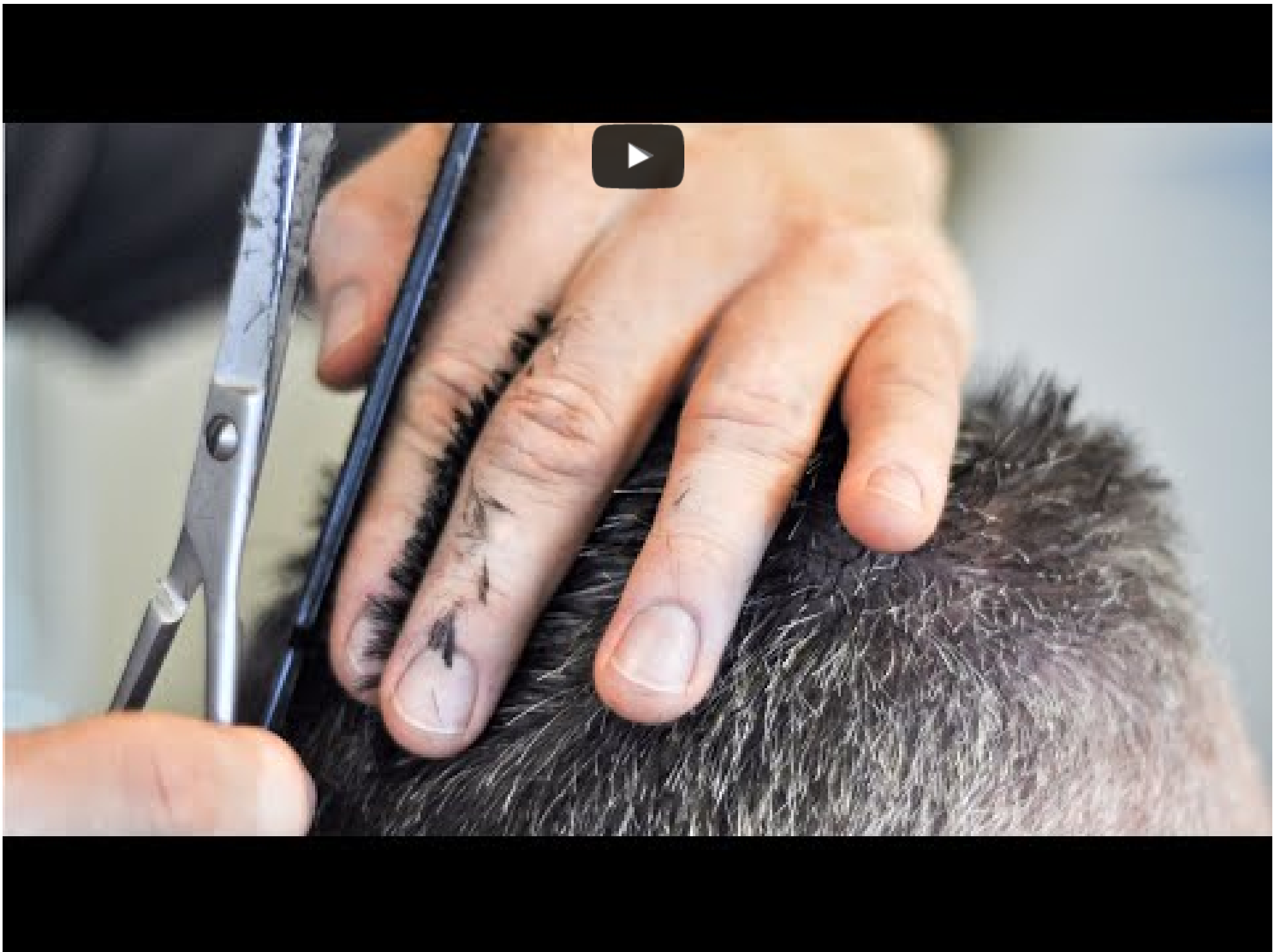
OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

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Barbers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists

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Summary



The median hourly wage for barbers was \$17.38 in May 2023.

The median hourly wage for hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists was \$16.81 in May 2023.

[Job Outlook](#)

Overall employment of barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists is projected to grow 8 percent from 2022 to 2032, faster than the average for all occupations.

About 89,400 openings for barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

[State & Area Data](#)

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

[Similar Occupations](#)

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

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

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

What They Do ->

What Barbers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists Do



Hairstylists provide hair styling and beauty services.

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists provide haircutting, hairstyling, and other services related to personal appearance.

Duties

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists typically do the following:

- Inspect and analyze hair, scalp, and skin to recommend services or treatment
- Discuss hairstyle options
- Shampoo, color, lighten, and condition hair
- Chemically change hair texture
- Cut, dry, and style hair
- Trim facial hair
- Receive payments from client
- Clean and disinfect all tools and work areas

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists provide hair and other services to enhance clients' appearance. Common tools may include combs and hairbrushes, clippers and scissors, straight razors, blow dryers, and curling and flat irons. They also may keep records of products used and services provided to clients, such as hair color, hair treatment, and clipper setting.

Those who operate their own barbershop or salon have managerial duties that may include hiring, supervising, and firing workers. They also may keep business and inventory records, order supplies, and arrange for advertising.

Barbers shampoo, cut, and style hair, mostly for male clients. They also may fit hairpieces, provide facials, trim beards and mustaches, and offer facial and head shaving. Depending on the state in which they work, some barbers are licensed to bleach, color, and highlight hair and to offer permanent-wave services.

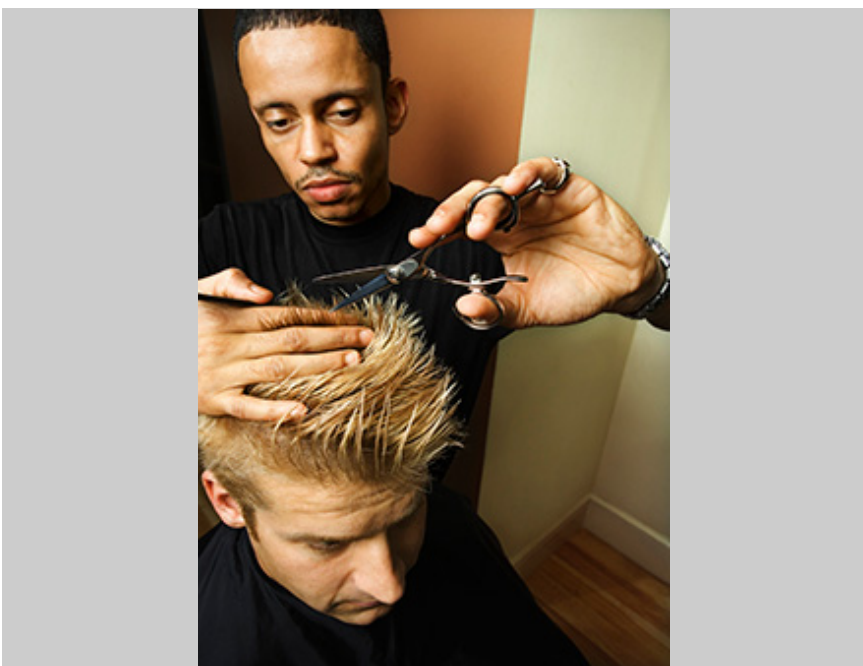
Hairstylists and cosmetologists offer a wide range of hair services, such as shampooing, cutting, coloring, and styling. They often provide consultation and advise clients on how to care for their hair at home. Some also clean and style wigs and hairpieces.

Hairstylists and cosmetologists also provide facial and scalp treatments, makeup analysis, and skincare and nail services. In addition, some recommend hair care or skincare products. For more information about workers who specialize in skincare treatment or in fingernail and toenail services, see the profiles for [skincare specialists](#) or [manicurists and pedicurists](#), respectively.

< Summary

Work Environment ->

Work Environment



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

Barbers held about 63,100 jobs in 2022. The largest employers of barbers were as follows:

Self-employed workers 79%

Personal care services 20

Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists held about 555,800 jobs in 2022. The largest employers of hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists were as follows:

Personal care services 48%

Self-employed workers 46

Retail trade 4

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists work mostly in barbershops or salons, although some work in spas, hotels, or resorts. Some lease booth space from a salon owner. Others manage salons or open their own shop after several years of gaining experience.

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

Work Schedules

Most barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists are full time, although part-time work is common. Work schedules may vary and often include evenings and weekends—times when barbershops and beauty salons may be busiest. Those who are self-employed and operate their own barbershop or salon may have long workdays, but they usually determine their own schedules.

[← What They Do](#)

[How to Become One →](#)

How to Become a Barber, Hairstylist, or Cosmetologist



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

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

Education

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists usually must complete a state-approved barber or cosmetology program. Admission to these programs varies by state, with some requiring a high school diploma or equivalent. Programs typically involve a mix of classroom studies and hands-on training and lead to a certificate or other postsecondary nondegree award. Some states require health and safety training as part of these programs.

Workers may continue to take advanced courses in hairstyling or in other personal appearance services throughout their careers to keep up with the latest trends. Those who want to open their own business also may benefit from taking courses in sales and marketing.

Licenses, Certifications, and Registrations

Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists must obtain a license in order to work. Qualifications for a license vary by state. Generally, a person must meet state-specified minimum age requirements, have a high school diploma or equivalent, and have graduated from a state-licensed barber or cosmetology school.

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

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

State reciprocity agreements may allow licensed barbers and cosmetologists to get a license in another state without needing additional formal training or state board testing. Contact your state licensing agency for details.

Important Qualities

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

Customer-service skills. Workers must be friendly, pleasant, and able to interact with clients to build and retain clientele.

Listening skills. Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists must be attentive when clients describe what they want to ensure satisfaction with the result.

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

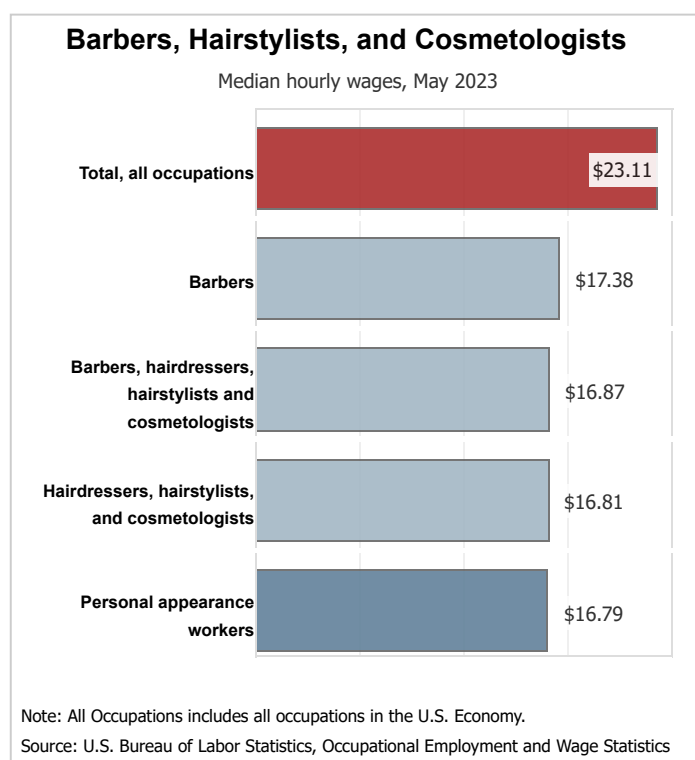
Tidiness. Workers must keep their work area clean and sanitary for the health and safety of their clients. They also must keep a neat personal appearance so that clients feel comfortable and want to return.

Time-management skills. Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists need to manage their time efficiently when scheduling appointments and providing services. Clients who receive timely hair care are more likely to return, and some services, such as hair coloring, require precise timing.

[← Work Environment](#)

[Pay →](#)

Pay



The median hourly wage for barbers was \$17.38 in May 2023. 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 \$12.87, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$29.37.

The median hourly wage for hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists was \$16.81 in May 2023. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$11.31, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$30.44.

In May 2023, the median hourly wages for barbers in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Personal care services \$17.25

In May 2023, the median hourly wages for hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Personal care services \$17.00

Retail trade 13.07

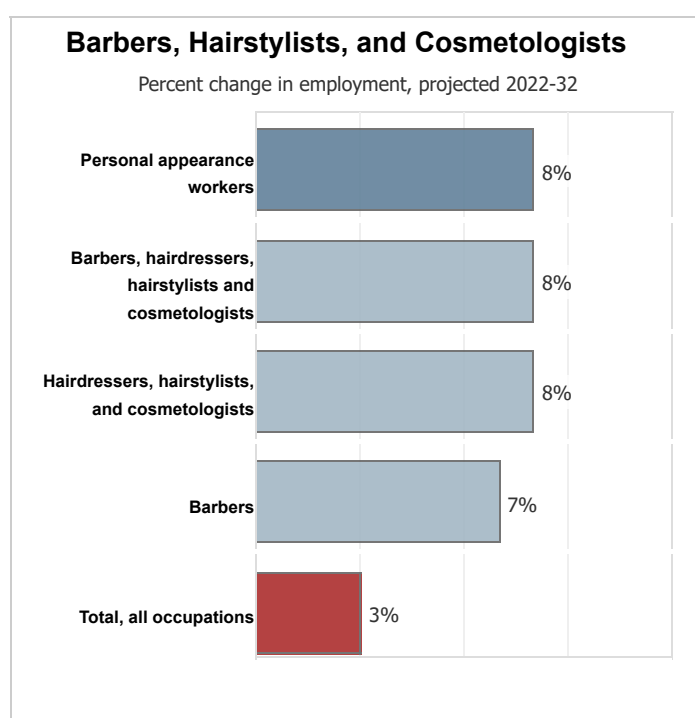
Barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists may receive tips from customers. These tips are included in the wage data shown.

Most barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists work full time, although part-time work is common. Work schedules may vary and often include evenings and weekends—times when beauty salons and barbershops may be busiest. Those who are self-employed and operate their own barbershop or salon may have long workdays, but they usually determine their own schedules.

[← How to Become One](#)

[Job Outlook →](#)

Job Outlook



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

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Employment

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

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

Employment projections data for barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists, 2022-32

Barbers, hairdressers, hairstylists and cosmetologists

SOC Code:

39-5010

Employment, 2022:

618,900

Projected Employment, 2032:

666,100

Change, 2022-32 (Percent):

8

Change, 2022-32 (Numeric):

47,200

Employment By Industry:

[Get data](#)

Barbers

SOC Code:

39-5011

Employment, 2022:

63,100

Projected Employment, 2032:

67,600

Change, 2022-32 (Percent):

7

Change, 2022-32 (Numeric):

4,400

Employment By Industry:

[Get data](#)

Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists

SOC Code:

39-5012

Employment, 2022:

555,800

Projected Employment, 2032:

598,600

Change, 2022-32 (Percent):

8

Change, 2022-32 (Numeric):

42,800

Employment By Industry:

[Get data](#)

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

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[State & Area Data ->](#)

State & Area Data

Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)

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

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

Projections Central

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

CareerOneStop

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

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[Similar Occupations ->](#)

Similar Occupations

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

[Manicurists and Pedicurists](#)

Job Duties:

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

Entry-Level Education:

Postsecondary nondegree award

2023 Median Pay:

\$34,250

[Skincare Specialists](#)

Job Duties:

Skincare specialists provide cleansing and other face and body treatments to enhance a person's appearance.

Entry-Level Education:

Postsecondary nondegree award

2023 Median Pay:

\$43,200

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[More Info ->](#)

Contacts for More Information

For more information about barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists, including education programs and state licensing, visit

[American Association of Cosmetology Schools](#) (AACCS)

[Beauty Schools Directory](#)

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

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

For information about other professional links, visit

[Professional Beauty Association](#) (PBA)

O*NET

[Barbers](#)

[Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists](#)

[-< Similar Occupations](#)

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Barbers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care-and-service/barbers-hairstylists-and-cosmetologists.htm> (visited April 17, 2024).

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U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections PSB Suite 2135 2 Massachusetts Avenue NE Washington, DC 20212-0001

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