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Californians With Low Incomes Will be Hit Hardest by the COVID-19 Economic Shutdown

A Look at Occupations Most Immediately Affected by Statewide Business Reductions and Closures

The COVID-19 public health crisis has upended the lives of Californians. Millions of people have experienced serious disruptions to their jobs following social distancing public health recommendations and state and local shelter-in-place orders aimed at slowing the spread of the virus. While necessary to prevent overwhelming the state’s health care system, the business reductions and closures forced by these orders will have a severe economic impact on Californians and will hit those with low incomes especially hard.

This *Fact Sheet* shows that the types of occupations most immediately impacted by the COVID-19-related economic shutdown typically pay low wages, providing annual incomes near or below the poverty line based on the Supplemental Poverty Measure for Los Angeles, even for full-time work.¹ This means that the Californians who will bear the brunt of the economic slowdown live paycheck to paycheck even when work is plentiful and are unlikely to have savings to fall back on when their jobs disappear.

Occupations Most Immediately Impacted by COVID-19-Related Business Reductions and Closures

Occupation	Median Hourly Wage	Annual Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	\$15.22	\$26,635
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	\$14.94	\$26,145
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	\$13.80	\$24,150
Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations	\$12.60	\$22,050
Bartenders	\$12.74	\$22,295
Cooks, Fast Food	\$12.15	\$21,263
Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	\$16.73	\$29,278
Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	\$12.59	\$22,033
Dishwashers	\$12.10	\$21,175
Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	\$12.25	\$21,438
Waiters and Waitresses	\$12.45	\$21,788
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	\$19.38	\$33,915
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	\$13.96	\$24,430

Occupation	Median Hourly Wage	Annual Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers
Personal Care and Service Occupations	\$12.49	\$21,858
Amusement and Recreation Attendants	\$12.34	\$21,595
Childcare Workers	\$13.08	\$22,890
Manicurists and Pedicurists	\$12.40	\$21,700
Ushers, Lobby Attendants, and Ticket Takers	\$12.12	\$21,210
Sales and Related Occupations	\$15.48	\$27,090
Cashiers	\$12.28	\$21,490
Retail Salespersons	\$13.22	\$23,135
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$16.32	\$28,560
Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	\$19.19	\$33,583
Driver/Sales Workers	\$16.43	\$28,753
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$22.82	\$39,935
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	\$17.85	\$31,238
Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs	\$15.27	\$26,723
Poverty Line, Parent With Two Children		
Official Poverty Measure, 2019		\$20,598
Supplemental Poverty Measure, Los Angeles Metro Area, Renter Households, 2018		\$29,789

Note: Median hourly wage is for the first quarter of 2019. Full-time, year-round work is defined as working 35 hours per week, 50 weeks per year. The Supplemental Poverty Measure poverty line varies by metropolitan area and is not yet available for 2019. The Los Angeles metro area includes Los Angeles and Orange counties.

Source: Budget Center analysis of Employment Development Department data

¹ Although many people employed in these occupations have likely lost work in recent weeks, there are notable exceptions. For example, within transportation and warehousing, there has been *increased* demand for jobs supported by online shopping.