

MICHIGAN

FOOD PREPARATION & SERVICE

The food preparation and service pathway encompass occupations involved in the preparation, cooking, and serving of food. Most jobs in this subsector are in restaurants and other eating places.

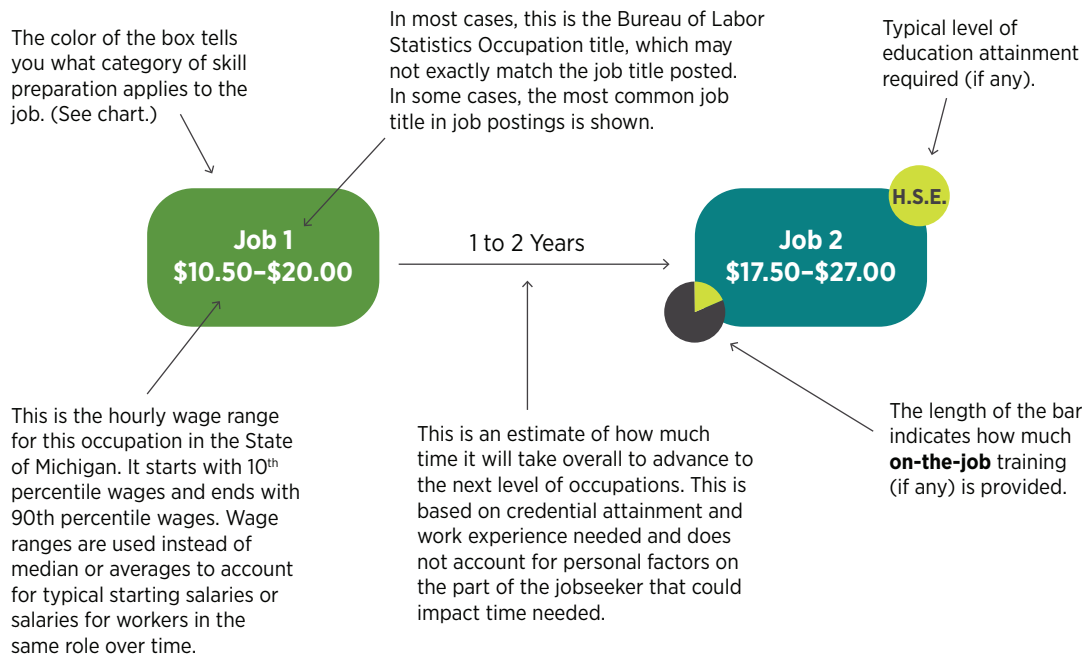
The jobs and titles, pathways, pay, and work will be different across employers in the Food Preparation and Service subsector. However, many workers in this field find themselves working for one of these types of organizations or with these products:

- Restaurant / café, including fine dining, farm-to-table, and organically certified restaurants
- Dining service / cafeteria
- Fast food, deli
- Grocery store to-go meals and other prepared foods
- Food trucks

What are the career pathways for Food Preparation & Service?

The maps below indicate the most common occupations in this field as well as wages, opportunities for advancement, typical time to advance, education required and on-the-job training.

Figure 6
Michigan's Food System Career Pathway Map Key



Skill Levels

| Color | Preparation Level | Definition |
|-------|-------------------|--|
| | Entry-Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High School Diploma or No High School Diploma |
| | Middle-Skill | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Postsecondary Certificate Advanced Postsecondary Certificate Associate Degree High School Diploma with Experience |
| | High-Skill | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor's Degree Associate Degree with 5 Years Experience Advanced Postsecondary Degree with 5 Years or More Experience |

Education Levels

| Initials | Credential |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| H.S.E. | High School Diploma or Equivalency |
| P.A. | Postsecondary Nondegree Award |
| A.S. or A.A. | Associate Degree |
| B.S. | Bachelor's Degree |
| B.A. | Bachelor of Arts |
| B.B.A | Bachelor of Business Administration |

On-the-Job Training



Notes:

This map is grounded in data collected on the State of Michigan. Other cities or regions may pay different wages or require different skills, credentials, or work experience depending on their local employers.

This map was derived using Lightcast™, a labor market information data source, in October 2024. This information includes the *typical* wages and requirements for jobs and might not exactly match the positions identified by jobseekers. The data included in these maps are constantly updated.

OCCUPATIONS AND DEMAND IN THE FOOD PREPARATION AND SERVICE SUBSECTOR

Below are the top occupations in this subsector, their common job titles, the work involved, skills required, how much demand there is currently, and how much demand is expected in the future.

Food Preparation and Service Pathway Employment Data

| Occupation and common titles in Michigan job postings | O*NET Description | Top skills requested in Michigan job postings | Michigan employment in food production | | Michigan projected 5-year growth in food production |
|---|--|---|--|---------|---|
| | | | 2023 | 2024 | |
| Fast Food and Counter Workers | Perform duties such as taking orders and serving food and beverages. Serve customers at counter or from a steam table. May take payment. May prepare food and beverages. | Customer service, food preparation, food safety, food service experience, retail industry knowledge | 101,025 | 102,105 | 2% |
| Waiters and Waitresses | Take orders and serve food and beverages to patrons at tables in dining establishment. | Customer service, food delivery, food preparation, customer checkout, cleaning | 55,736 | 56,270 | 1% |

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|---|--|---|--|---------------|---|
| | | | 2023 | 2024 | |
| Cooks, Restaurant: Line Cook Prep Cook | Prepare, season, and cook dishes such as soups, meats, vegetables, or desserts in restaurants. May order supplies, keep records and accounts, price items on menu, or plan menu. | Cooking, food preparation, customer service, food safety, cleaning | 31,458 | 32,583 | 10% |
| Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop | Welcome patrons, seat them at tables or in lounge, and help ensure quality of facilities and service. | Guest services, cash handling, cleaning, restaurant experience, store operations | 9,340 | 9,490 | 3% |
| Dishwashers | Clean dishes, kitchen, food preparation equipment, or utensils. | Food preparation, cleaning, cooking, guest services, restaurant experience | 9,255 | 9,357 | 1% |
| Cooks, Fast Food | Prepare and cook food in a fast food restaurant with a limited menu. Duties of these cooks are limited to preparation of a few basic items and normally involve operating large-volume single-purpose cooking equipment. | Customer service, food preparation, product sales, teaching, restaurant experience | 10,791 | 10,811 | -2% |

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|--|---|--|--|--------------|---|
| | | | 2023 | 2024 | |
| Food Preparation Workers: Kitchen Prep Kitchen Staff | Perform a variety of food preparation duties other than cooking, such as preparing cold foods and shellfish, slicing meat, and brewing coffee or tea. | Food preparation, cooking, cleaning, food safety, food service experience | 7,119 | 7,223 | 2% |
| Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers: Busser Server Assistant Barback | Facilitate food service. Clean tables; remove dirty dishes; replace soiled table linens; set tables; replenish supply of clean linens, silverware, glassware, and dishes; supply service bar with food; and serve items such as water, condiments, and coffee to patrons. | Cleaning, food preparation, bartending, restaurant experience, customer service | 8,072 | 8,232 | 5% |
| Cashiers | Receive and disburse money in establishments other than financial institutions. May use electronic scanners, cash registers, or related equipment. May process credit or debit card transactions and validate checks. | Customer service, cash handling, basic math, customer checkout, guest services | 8,086 | 8,096 | -2% |
| Bartenders | Mix and serve drinks to patrons, directly or through waitstaff. | Bartending, guest services, sales, cash handling, upselling products and services | 6,936 | 7,090 | 5% |

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|---|--|---|--|--------------|---|
| | | | 2023 | 2024 | |
| Drivers/Sales Workers: Delivery Driver Catering Driver | Drive truck or other vehicle over established routes or within an established territory and sell or deliver goods, such as food products, including restaurant take-out items, or pick up or deliver items such as commercial laundry. May also take orders, collect payment, or stock merchandise at point of delivery. | Order correction, cash handling, pizza delivery, customer service, repair | 6,051 | 6,195 | 6% |
| Cooks, Short Order | Prepare and cook to order a variety of foods that require only a short preparation time. May take orders from customers and serve patrons at counters or tables. | Food preparation, food service experience, scheduling, customer service, cleaning | 1,224 | 1,235 | 0% |
| Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria | Prepare and cook large quantities of food for institutions, such as schools, hospitals, or cafeterias. | Customer service, food service experience, cooking, training programs, safety training | 1,858 | 1,860 | -2% |
| Bakers | Mix and bake ingredients to produce breads, rolls, cookies, cakes, pies, pastries, or other baked goods. | Customer service, retail industry knowledge, cash handling, sales, food preparation | 1,724 | 1,752 | 3% |

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|--|---|--|--|--------|---|
| | | | 2023 | 2024 | |
| Light Truck Drivers | Drive a light vehicle, such as a truck or van, with a capacity of less than 26,001 pounds Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW), primarily to pick up merchandise or packages from a distribution center and deliver. May load and unload vehicle. | Customer service, vehicle inspection, hand trucks, repair, basic math | 290 | 292 | 1% |
| Pastry Chefs (Bakers) | Mix and bake ingredients to produce breads, rolls, cookies, cakes, pies, pastries, or other baked goods. | Cooking, food preparation, scheduling, food safety, event catering | NA | NA | NA% |
| First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers: Shift Leader Shift Supervisor Team Leader | Directly supervise and coordinate activities of workers engaged in preparing and serving food. | Retail industry knowledge, customer service, cash handling, restaurant management, food safety | 25,242 | 25,693 | 4% |
| Food Service Managers: Shift Manager Assistant Manager Restaurant Manager | Plan, direct, or coordinate activities of an organization or department that serves food and beverages. | Restaurant management, food safety, scheduling, cost control, guest services | 6,352 | 6,455 | 4% |

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|--|--|--|--|-------|---|
| | | | 2023 | 2024 | |
| Sous Chefs (Chefs and Head Cooks) | Direct and may participate in the preparation, seasoning, and cooking of salads, soups, fish, meats, vegetables, desserts, or other foods. May plan and price menu items, order supplies, and keep records and accounts. | Cooking, cost control, staff management, food preparation, budgeting | 2,961 | 3,013 | 4% |
| Executive Chefs (Chefs and Head Cooks) | Direct and may participate in the preparation, seasoning, and cooking of salads, soups, fish, meats, vegetables, desserts, or other foods. May plan and price menu items, order supplies, and keep records and accounts. | Cooking, cost control, food preparation, scheduling, staff management | 2,961 | 3,013 | 4% |
| General and Operations Managers: District Manager Area Manager Food & Beverage Operations Manager | Plan, direct, or coordinate the operations of public or private sector organizations, overseeing multiple departments or locations. Duties and responsibilities include formulating policies, managing daily operations, and planning the use of materials and human resources, but are too diverse and general in nature to be classified in any one functional area of management or administration, such as personnel, purchasing, or administrative services. Usually manage through subordinate supervisors. Excludes First-Line Supervisors. | Budgeting, operations management, scheduling, cost control, staff management | 3,654 | 3,725 | 4% |

ABOUT THIS WORK

In 2021, as a continuation of the 2019 Michigan Local and Regional Food System Workforce Assessment, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) partnered with Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems to develop career pathway maps that provide jobseekers and workers with necessary information about career options and the potential for advancement within and across different subsectors of the Michigan food system. These were also developed in response to interest from Michigan workforce development agencies that will be able to use this information to help support relevant program development. Funding for this work was provided in part by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and MSU Extension.

In 2024, through the Michigan Agriculture and Food Systems Workforce Advancement Initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, CSW updated these career pathway maps with current labor market information data (as of October 2024) and Spanish translations to ensure the maps remain useful and are accessible to more workers and learners.

Pathway maps were developed for the following food system subsectors that exist within local and regional food systems:

- **Food inputs and services**
- **Food processing and manufacturing**
- **Food production**
- **Food retail**
- **Food preparation and service**
- **Wholesale food distribution or storage**

Please access [the original Food System Career Pathways in Michigan report](#) for information about the development of the career pathway maps, including a detailed methodology, as well as a list of education programs in each of the subsectors.

These pathway maps were authored by Chris Webb and Megan Elyse Williams from Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW). Charli Holloway of Charli ReNae Design and Taylor McDonald from CSW provided formatting support.