

MICHIGAN

FOOD MANUFACTURING & PROCESSING

The food manufacturing and processing pathway looks at roles involved in the processing of raw food and the manufacturing of food and beverage products. Most jobs in Michigan within this subsector are in food manufacturing.

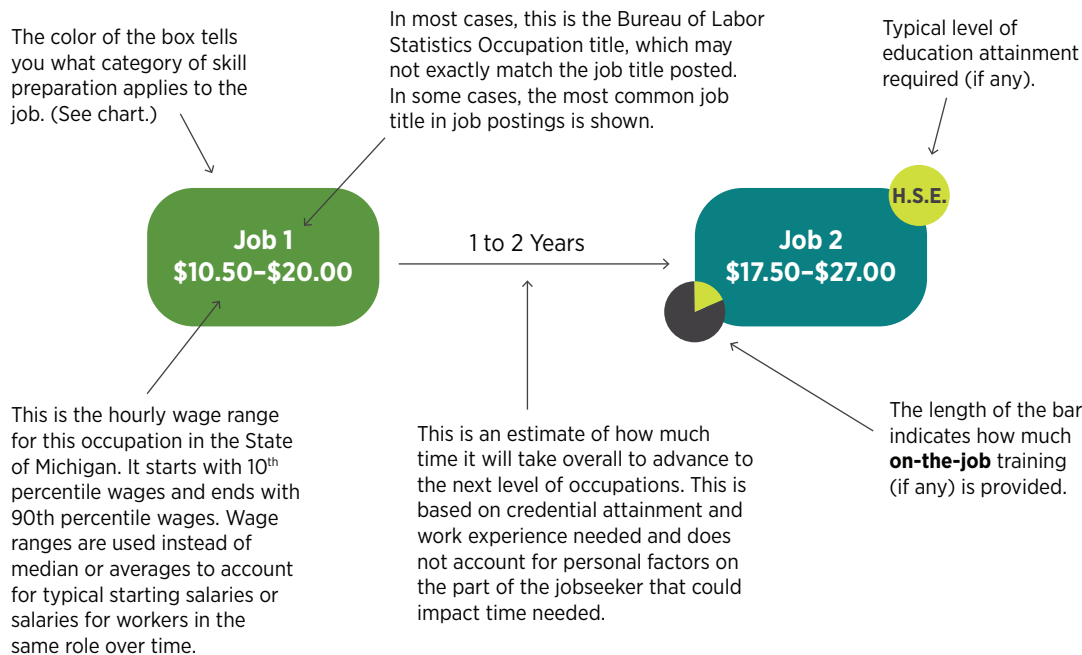
The jobs and titles, pathways, pay, and work will be different across employers in the Food Manufacturing and Processing subsector. However, many workers in this field find themselves working for one of these types of organizations or with these products:

- Bakery
- Brewery, winery
- Cheese, other dairy processing, fluid milk, ice cream, yogurt
- Cider mill, cidery / hard cider
- Chocolatier
- Coffee roasters, tea
- Co-packer / contract manufacturer
- Distillery / spirits
- Food incubator
- Food processing facility
- Maple candy / sugar
- Meat processing
- Non-alcoholic beverages
- Grain mill, maltery
- Shared-use commercial kitchen
- Slaughterhouse
- Specialty foods / snacks




What are the career pathways for Food Manufacturing & Processing?

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

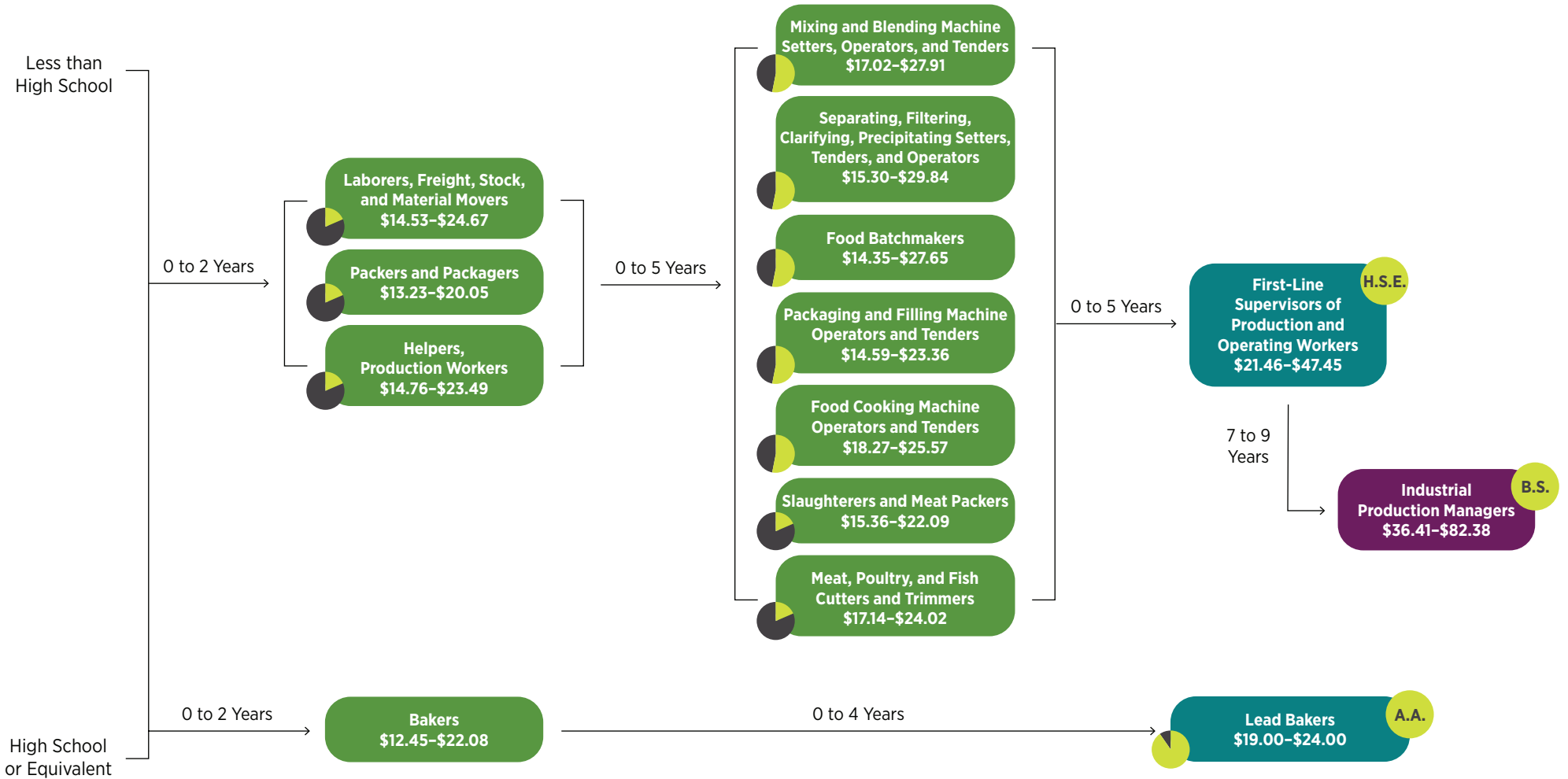


Notes:

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.

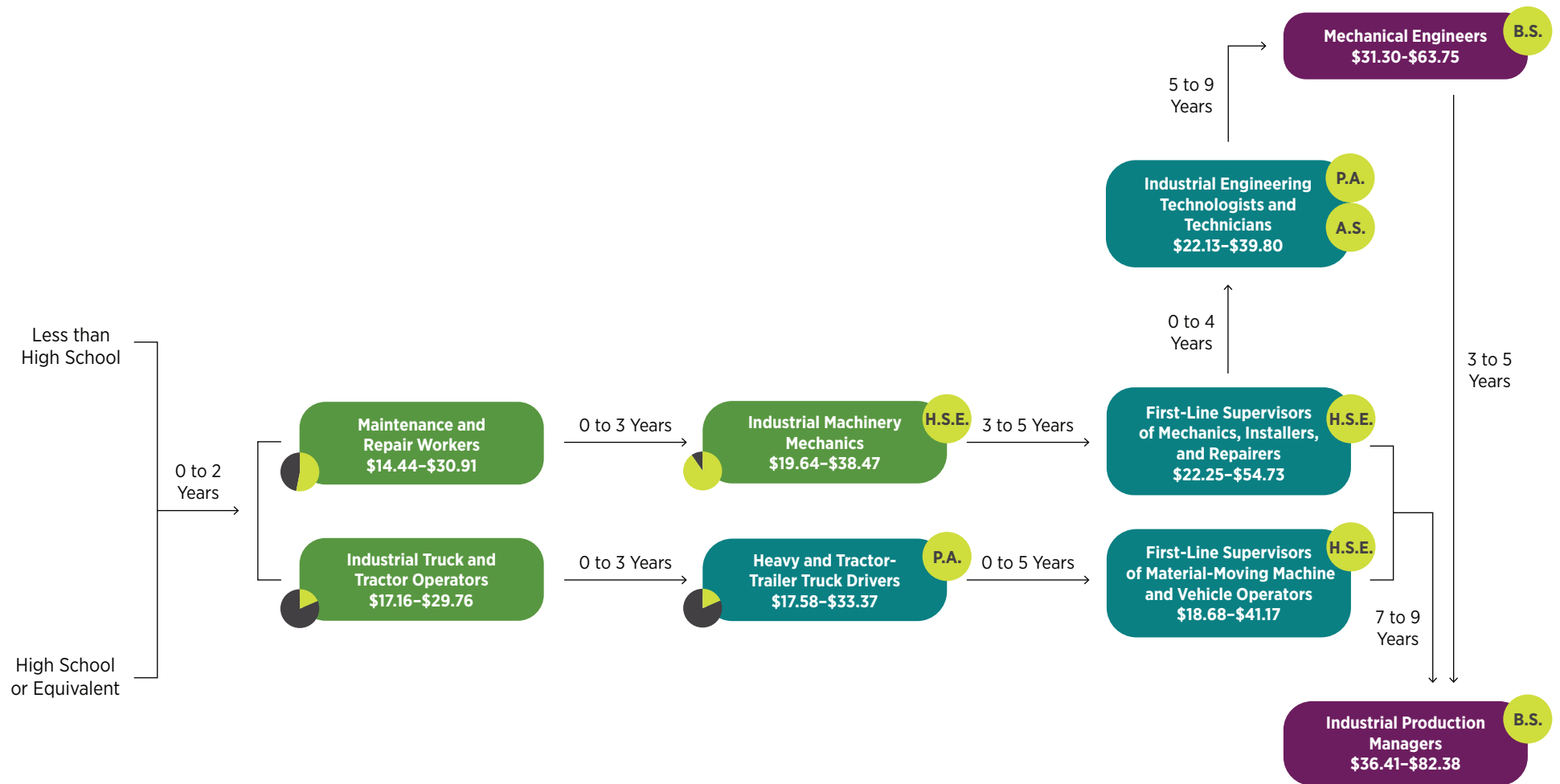
This map was derived using Lightcast™, a labor market information data source, in October 2024. This information includes the *typical* wages and requirements for jobs and might not exactly match the positions identified by jobseekers. The data included in these maps are constantly updated.

Food Manufacturing and Processing Production Pathway



Food Manufacturing and Processing

Production for Maintenance and Engineering Pathway



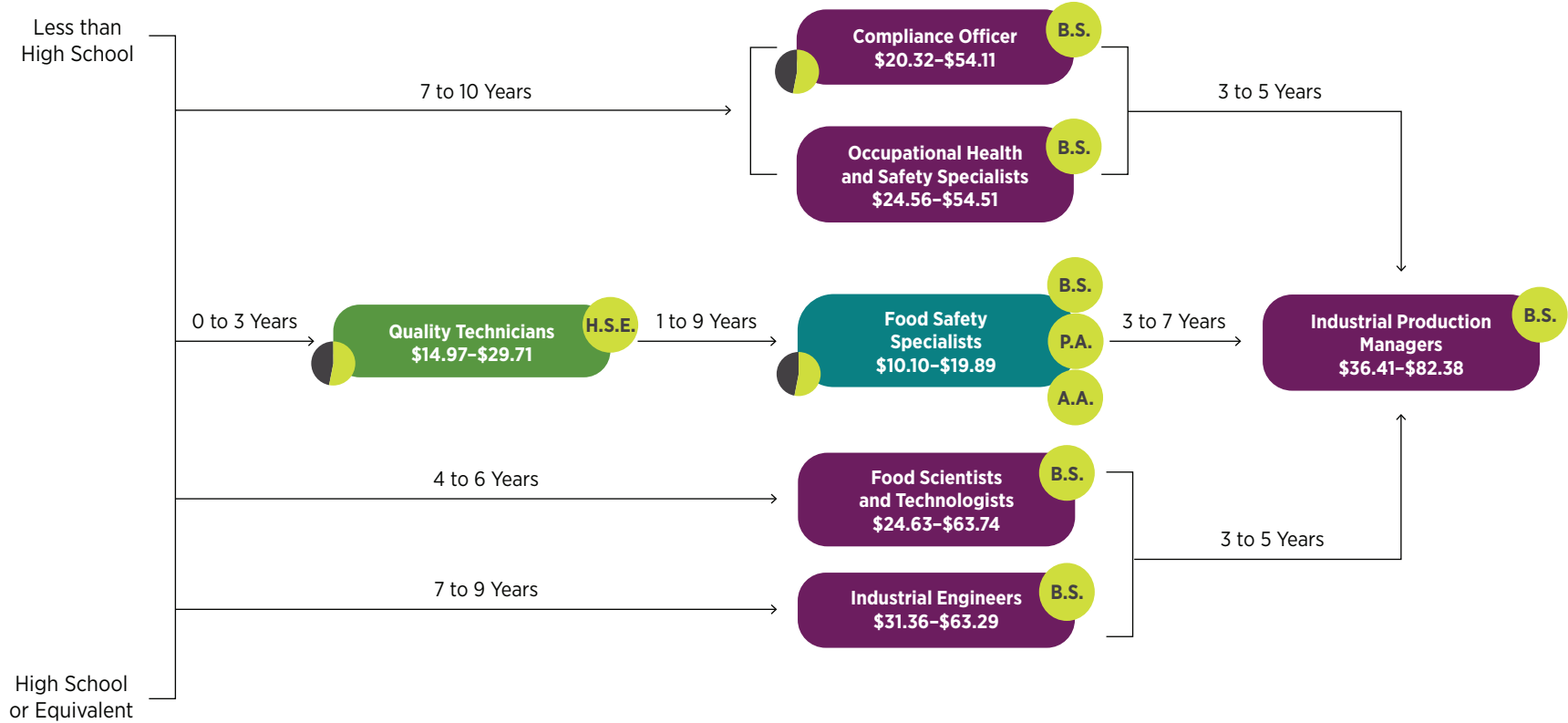
Food Manufacturing and Processing

Regulation, Quality Assurance, and Research and Development Pathway

 Entry-Level

 Middle-Skill

 High-Skill



OCCUPATIONS AND DEMAND IN THE FOOD MANUFACTURING AND PROCESSING 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.

Production 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	
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders: Packaging Line Operator Brewery Packaging Operator Filler Operator	Operate or tend machines to prepare industrial or consumer products for storage or shipment. Includes cannery workers who pack food products.	Packaging, Machinery, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Food Safety, Forklift Operation	6,657	6,871	7%
Food Batchmakers: Head Brewer Production Brewer Cheesemaker	Set up and operate equipment that mixes or blends ingredients used in the manufacturing of food products. Includes candy makers and cheese makers.	Packaging, Cleaning, Quality Assurance and Control, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Machinery	4,203	4,361	8%

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	
Bakers: Production Baker Bagel Baker Baker/Confectioner	Mix and bake ingredients to produce breads, rolls, cookies, cakes, pies, pastries, or other baked goods.	Food Service Experience, Food Preparation, Customer Service, Food Safety, Machinery	2,632	2,703	6%
Packers and Packagers, Hand: Picker/Packer Line Attendant Packer Warehouse	Pack or package by hand a wide variety of products and materials.	Packaging, Food Safety, Preventative Maintenance, Machinery, Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)	1,223	1,277	9%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand: General Labor Loader Material Handler Driver	Manually move freight, stock, or other materials or perform other general labor. Includes all manual laborers not elsewhere classified.	Forklift Operation, Cleaning, Product Sales, Packaging, Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)	1,941	2,029	10%
Helpers-Production Workers: Production Operator General Production Operator Line Operator	Help production workers by performing duties requiring less skill. Duties include supplying or holding materials or tools, and cleaning work area and equipment.	Food Safety, Machinery, Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Packaging, Hand Tools	642	660	5%

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	
Slaughterers and Meat Packers: Debone Supervisor Meat Processor Kill Floor Trainer	<p>Work in slaughtering, meat packing, or wholesale establishments performing precision functions involving the preparation of meat. Work may include specialized slaughtering tasks, cutting standard or premium cuts of meat for marketing, making sausage, or wrapping meats.</p>	Machinery, Food Safety, Operations Management, Packaging, Cleaning	1,235	1,269	6%
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers: General Production Poultry Care Person	<p>Use hand or hand tools to perform routine cutting and trimming of meat, poultry, and seafood.</p>	Cleaning, Machinery, Personal Protective Equipment, Hand Tools, Food Safety	680	723	16%
Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders: Pub Brewer Processing Technician Distiller	<p>Set up, operate, or tend continuous flow or vat-type equipment; filter presses; shaker screens; centrifuges; condenser tubes; precipitating, fermenting, or evaporating tanks; scrubbing towers; or batch stills. These machines extract, sort, or separate liquids, gases, or solids from other materials to recover a refined product. Includes dairy processing equipment operators.</p>	Packaging, Food Safety, Forklift Operation, Repair, Industrial Equipment Industry Knowledge	993	1,034	8%

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	
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders: Blender Operator Processing Line Attendant Dry Mixer	Set up, operate, or tend machines to mix or blend materials, such as chemicals, tobacco, liquids, color pigments, or explosive ingredients.	Machinery, Basic Math, Product Knowledge, Machine Operation, Cleaning	419	436	8%
Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders: Cooker Operator Food Manufacturing Sauce Operator	Operate or tend cooking equipment, such as steam cooking vats, deep fry cookers, pressure cookers, kettles, and boilers, to prepare food products.	Packaging, Cleaning, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Cooking, Machinery	750	773	6%
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers: Production Supervisor Line Lead Plant Manager	Directly supervise and coordinate the activities of production and operating workers, such as inspectors, precision workers, machine setters and operators, assemblers, fabricators, and plant and system operators.	Scheduling, Food Safety, Supervisory Skills, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Budgeting	2,082	2,154	7%
Lead Bakers (Bakers): Pastry Chef Artisan Baker	Mix and bake ingredients to produce breads, rolls, cookies, cakes, pies, pastries, or other baked goods.	Food Safety, Customer Service, Supply Ordering, Recipe Development, Quality Assurance	NA	NA	NA

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	
Industrial Production Managers: Manufacturing Reliability Manager Production Manager Production Superintendent	Plan, direct, or coordinate the work activities and resources necessary for manufacturing products in accordance with cost, quality, and quantity specifications.	Food Safety, Quality Management, Quality Assurance and Control, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), Food Science	846	868	5%

Maintenance and Engineering 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	
Industrial Machinery Mechanics: Maintenance Mechanic Fleet Maintenance Mechanic	Repair, install, adjust, or maintain industrial production and processing machinery or refinery and pipeline distribution systems.	Repair, Preventative Maintenance, Welding, Machinery, Facility Maintenance	1,708	1,791	12%
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators: Forklift Driver Forklift Operator	Operate industrial trucks or tractors equipped to move materials around a warehouse, storage yard, factory, construction site, or similar location.	Forklift Operation, Plant Safety, Occupational Health and Safety, Basic Math, Lift Trucks	1,515	1,573	8%
Maintenance and Repair Workers: Maintenance Technician Fleet Maintenance	Perform work involving the skills of two or more maintenance or craft occupations to keep machines, mechanical equipment, or the structure of an establishment in repair. Duties may involve pipe fitting; boiler making; insulating; welding; machining; carpentry; repairing electrical or mechanical equipment; installing, aligning, and balancing new equipment; and repairing buildings, floors, or stairs.	Repair, Plumbing, HVAC, Machinery, Preventative Maintenance	1,089	1,133	9%

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	
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers: Driver CDL Truck Driver	Drive a tractor-trailer combination or a truck with a capacity of at least 26,000 pounds Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW). May be required to unload truck. Requires commercial drivers' license.	Hand Trucks, Beverage Industry Knowledge, Product Delivery, Post Trip Inspections, Food Safety	586	612	9%
First-Line Supervisors of Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators: Fleet Manager Distribution Supervisor Road Supervisor	Directly supervise and coordinate activities of material-moving machine and vehicle operators and helpers.	Scheduling, Inventory Management, Inventory Control, Warehouse Operations, Employee Training	296	308	9%
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers: Maintenance Supervisor Maintenance Foreman Maintenance Manager	Directly supervise and coordinate the activities of mechanics, installers, and repairers.	Repair, Budgeting, Preventative Maintenance, Machinery, SAP	262	273	10%

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	
Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians: Maintenance Technician Plant Maintenance Mechanic	<p>Apply engineering theory and principles to problems of industrial layout or manufacturing production, usually under the direction of engineering staff. May perform time and motion studies on worker operations in a variety of industries for purposes such as establishing standard production rates or improving efficiency. Assist industrial engineers in such activities as quality control, inventory control, or material flow methods. May conduct statistical studies or analyze production costs.</p>	Repair, Preventative Maintenance, Power Tools, Electrical Diagrams, Packaging	91	92	4%
Industrial Production Managers: Manufacturing Reliability Manager Production Manager Production Superintendent	<p>Plan, direct, or coordinate the work activities and resources necessary for manufacturing products in accordance with cost, quality, and quantity specifications.</p>	Food Safety, Quality Management, Quality Assurance and Control, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), Food Science	846	868	5%
Mechanical Engineers: Reliability Engineer Project Engineer Design Engineer Capital Project Engineer	<p>Perform engineering duties in planning and designing tools, engines, machines, and other mechanically functioning equipment. Oversee installation, operation, maintenance, and repair of equipment such as centralized heat, gas, water, and steam systems.</p>	Mechanical Engineering, Packaging, Project Management, Preventative Maintenance, Repair	96	99	11%

Regulation, Quality Assurance, and Research and Development 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	
Quality Technicians (Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers)	Inspect, test, sort, sample, or weigh nonagricultural raw materials or processed, machined, fabricated, or assembled parts or products for defects, wear, and deviations from specifications. May use precision measuring instruments and complex test equipment.	Quality Assurance and Control, Quality Management, Food Safety, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), SAP	1,528	1,573	6%
Food Safety Specialists (Food Science Technicians)	Work with food scientists or technologists to perform standardized qualitative and quantitative tests to determine physical or chemical properties of food or beverage products. Includes technicians who assist in research and development of production technology, quality control, packaging, processing, and use of foods.	Quality Assurance and Control, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), Food Safety, Food Safety and Quality, Legal Compliance	180	190	11%
Food Scientists and Technologists: Senior Food Technologist Assistant Food Technologist Product Development Scientist	Use chemistry, microbiology, engineering, and other sciences to study the principles underlying the processing and deterioration of foods; analyze food content to determine levels of vitamins, fat, sugar, and protein; discover new food sources; research ways to make processed foods safe, palatable, and healthful; and apply food science knowledge to determine best ways to process, package, preserve, store, and distribute food.	Food Science, Product Development, Food Safety, Chemistry, Quality Assurance and Control	159	167	11%

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	
Industrial Production Managers: Manufacturing Reliability Manager Production Manager Production Superintendent	Plan, direct, or coordinate the work activities and resources necessary for manufacturing products in accordance with cost, quality, and quantity specifications.	Food Safety, Quality Management, Quality Assurance and Control, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), Food Science	846	868	5%
Industrial Engineers: Packaging Engineer R and D Engineer Process Engineer	Design, develop, test, and evaluate integrated systems for managing industrial production processes, including human work factors, quality control, inventory control, logistics and material flow, cost analysis, and production coordination.	Packaging, Project Management, Industrial Engineering Industry Expertise, Scheduling, Food Safety	357	367	6%
Occupational Health and Safety Specialists: Safety Manager Occupational Health Manager Safety, Health, and Environmental Manager	Review, evaluate, and analyze work environments and design programs and procedures to control, eliminate, and prevent disease or injury caused by chemical, physical, and biological agents or ergonomic factors. May conduct inspections and enforce adherence to laws and regulations governing the health and safety of individuals. May be employed in the public or private sector. Includes environmental protection officers.	Occupational Health and Safety, Safety Training, Workers' Compensation, Plant Safety, Environmental Health and Safety	63	65	24%

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	
Compliance Officers: Compliance and Reporting Administrative Assistant Payroll Compliance Specialist Senior Regulatory Specialist	Examine, evaluate, and investigate eligibility for or conformity with laws and regulations governing contract compliance of licenses and permits, and perform other compliance and enforcement inspection and analysis activities not classified elsewhere.	Legal Compliance, Food Science, Regulatory Affairs, SAP, Food Safety	28	29	10%

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.