



CareerOneStop Occupation Profile

Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers

Description: what do they do?

Feed, water, and examine pets and other nonfarm animals for signs of illness, disease, or injury in laboratories and animal hospitals and clinics. Clean and disinfect cages and work areas, and sterilize laboratory and surgical equipment. May provide routine post-operative care, administer medication orally or topically, or prepare samples for laboratory examination under the supervision of veterinary or laboratory animal technologists or technicians, veterinarians, or scientists.

Also known as:

Technician Assistant, Avian Keeper, Veterinarian Assistant, Veterinary Technician Assistant (Vet Tech Assistant), Emergency Veterinary Assistant, Small Animal Caretaker, Animal Caregiver, Veterinary Assistant (Vet Assistant), Research Animal Attendant, Animal Care Provider

Career video

<https://cdn.careeronestop.org/OccVids/OccupationVideos/31-9096.00.mp4>

Transcript: Whether an orangutan needs surgery or a rat performs in a drug trial, veterinary assistants and laboratory animal caretakers help make sure animals' needs and well-being are looked after. Veterinary assistants and laboratory animal caretakers perform routine care tasks such as bathing and exercising animals, cleaning and disinfecting facilities, and providing first aid or care after surgery. They work under the supervision of scientists, veterinarians, and veterinary technologists and technicians. They also administer medication, and help restrain animals for examinations and lab procedures. While empathy for animals makes for a good start, there's often a somber side to animal care. These caregivers treat animals who are sick or have been mistreated and sometimes need to be euthanized. Handling and restraining animals takes physical strength and stamina, but dexterity is also important—especially when handling medical equipment. Good communication skills and an eye for detail are also essential. Work settings for these two fields differ: Veterinary assistants typically work in clinics and animal hospitals, helping treat animals with injuries and illnesses, while laboratory animal caretakers generally work in laboratories where they feed and monitor the animals involved in research. Work hours may be full- or part-time, and often include nights, weekends and holidays. Most workers in these fields have a high school diploma or equivalent, and learn the work on the job.

Outlook: will there be jobs?



New job opportunities are **likely** in the future.

[Find job openings](#)

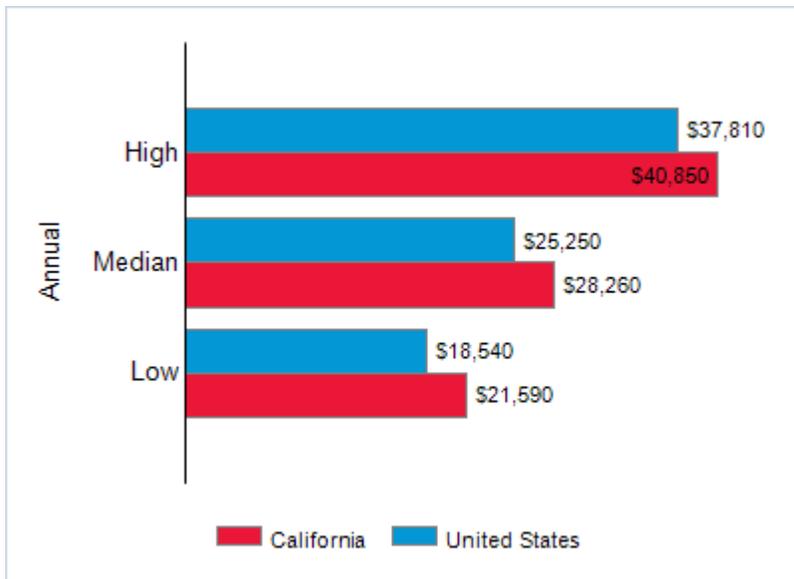
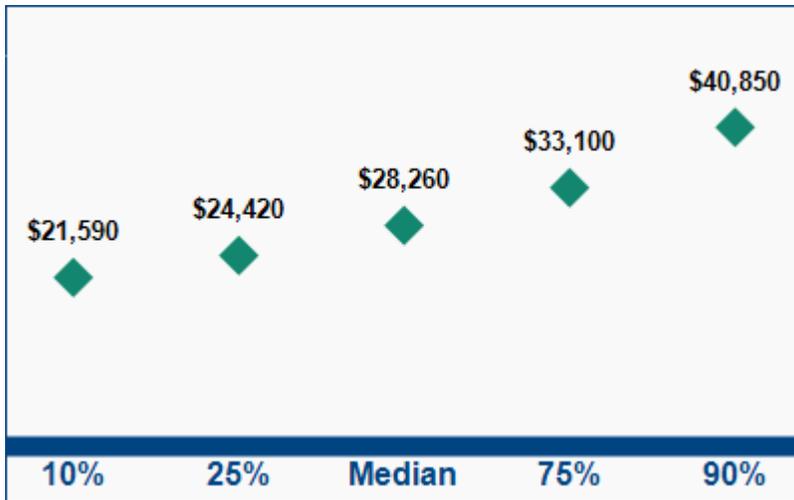
Projected employment

California	United States
10,600 2014 Employment	73,400 2014 Employment
12,600 2024 Employment	80,000 2024 Employment
19% Percent change	9% Percent change
420 Annual projected job openings	2,190 Annual projected job openings

[Compare projected employment](#)

Typical wages

Annual wages for Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers in California



Location	California	United States
10%	\$21,590	\$18,540
25%	\$24,420	\$21,170
Median	\$28,260	\$25,250
75%	\$33,100	\$30,460
90%	\$40,850	\$37,810

[See more wages](#)

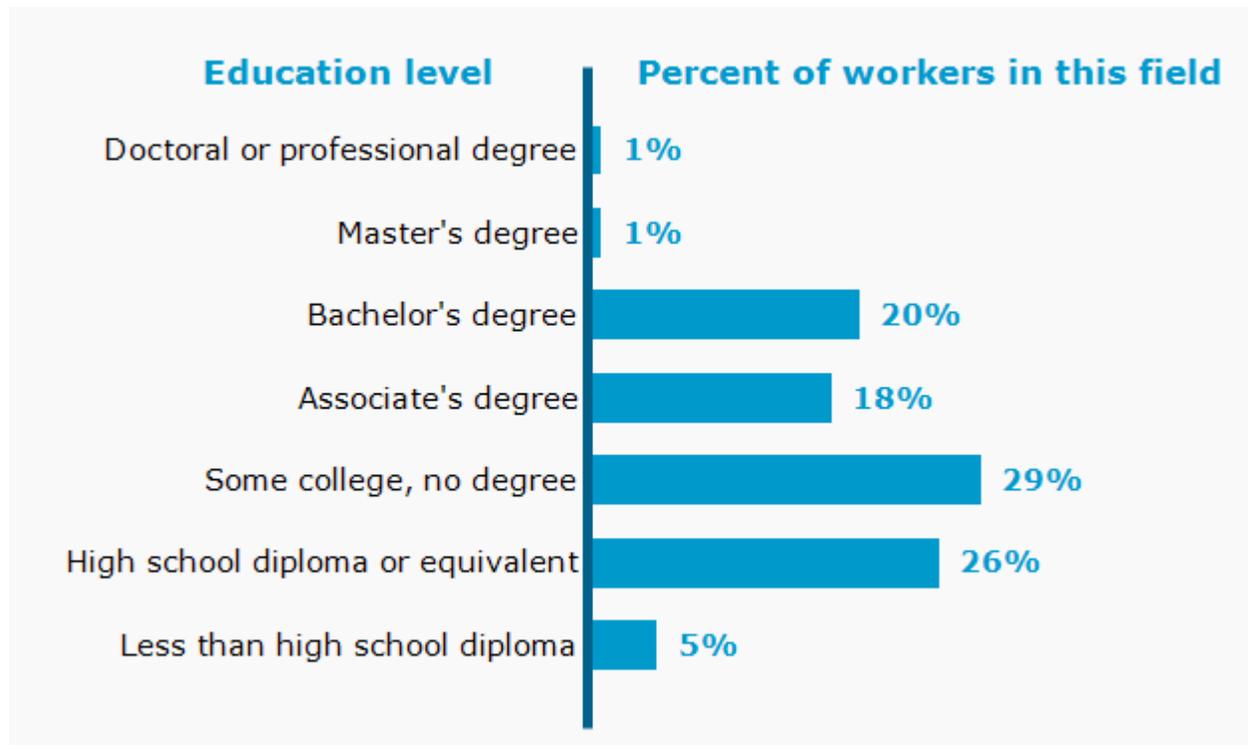
Education and experience: to get started

People starting in this career usually have:

- High school diploma or equivalent
- No work experience
- Less than 1 month on-the-job training

Typical education

How much education do most people in this career have?



[Find local training](#)

Certifications: show your skills

Let employers know you have the skills to do well at this job.

Earning a **certification** can help you:

- Get a job
- Get a promotion

[Find certifications](#)

Licenses: do you need one?

Some states require an **occupational license** to work in this career.

[Find license details for your state](#)

Apprenticeships: learn on the job

Apprenticeships combine paid on-the-job-training with classroom lessons.

[Find apprenticeship sponsors](#)

Activities: what you might do in a day

- Hold patients to ensure proper positioning or safety.
- Clean patient rooms or patient treatment rooms.
- Control prescription refills or authorizations.
- Monitor patient progress or responses to treatments.
- Give medications or immunizations.
- Assist practitioners to perform medical procedures.
- Monitor patients to detect health problems.
- Maintain medical equipment or instruments.
- Clean medical equipment.
- Assess physical conditions of patients to aid in diagnosis or treatment.
- Teach medical procedures or medical equipment use to patients.
- Collect biological specimens from patients.
- Prepare medical instruments or equipment for use.
- Feed patients.
- Administer basic health care or medical treatments.
- Conduct diagnostic tests to determine patient health.
- Assist patients with daily activities.
- Prepare patient treatment areas for use.
- Stock medical or patient care supplies.
- Dispose of biomedical waste in accordance with standards.

- Record vital statistics or other health information.
 - Perform clerical work in medical settings.
 - Schedule patient procedures or appointments.
 - Process medical billing information.
 - Inventory medical supplies or equipment.
 - Prepare medical reports or documents.
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Knowledge

People in this career often know a lot about:

- **Customer and Personal Service** - Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
 - **Biology** - Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
 - **English Language** - Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
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Abilities

People in this career often have talent in:

- **Problem Sensitivity** - Noticing when problems happen.
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Related occupations

- [Physical Therapist Aides](#)
 - [Occupational Therapy Aides](#)
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Education information comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections. (<https://www.bls.gov/emp/>)

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