



Visualize it: Wages and projected openings by occupation

Domingo Angeles and Elka Torpey | November 2019

When making career decisions, you may find visual presentations of data useful for comparing occupations. The following charts from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) can help you to assess, at a glance, the pay and projected openings for hundreds of occupations.

With the scatter charts that follow, you can compare occupations by median annual wages in 2018 and openings projected each year, on average, from 2018 to 2028. The farther to the right a data point is in a chart, the more openings an occupation is projected to have. The higher a data point is, the greater an occupation's wage. A line in each chart shows the 2018 median annual wage for all workers (\$38,640).

Nearly all occupations in the BLS [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) (OOH) are represented in six charts. The charts combine multiple OOH occupation groups with titles adapted as follows:

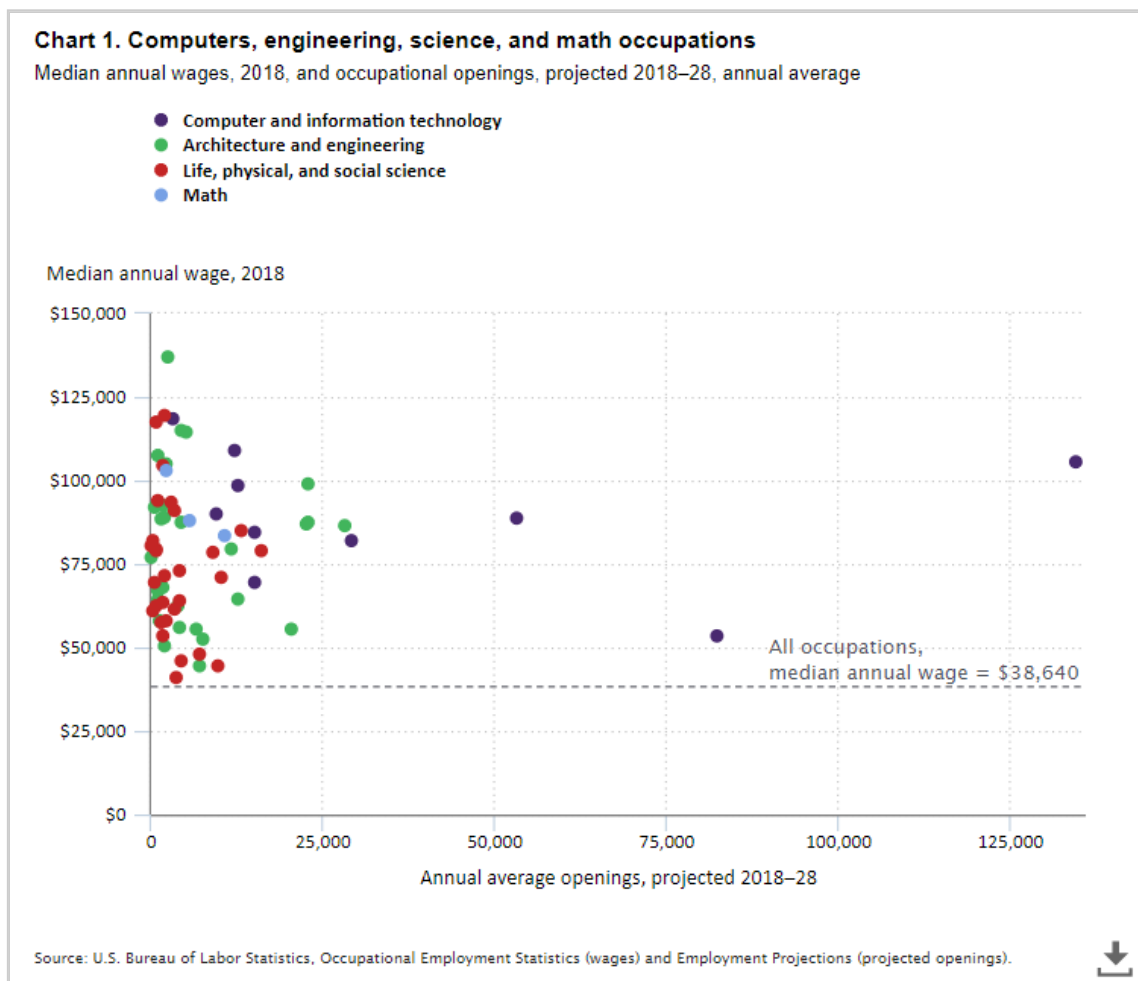
- [Computers, engineering, science, and math](#)

- [Construction, production, repair, and farming](#)
- [Education, protective service, social service, and legal](#)
- [Food, media, entertainment, and arts](#)
- [Healthcare, personal care, and cleaning](#)
- [Office, sales, transportation, management, and business](#)

Most openings arise when workers leave an occupation permanently and need to be replaced (openings from separations). Other openings are from new jobs created in an occupation that need to be filled (openings from growth). Every occupation is projected to have at least some openings due to separations, even if employment in the occupation is projected to decline.

Computers, engineering, science, and math

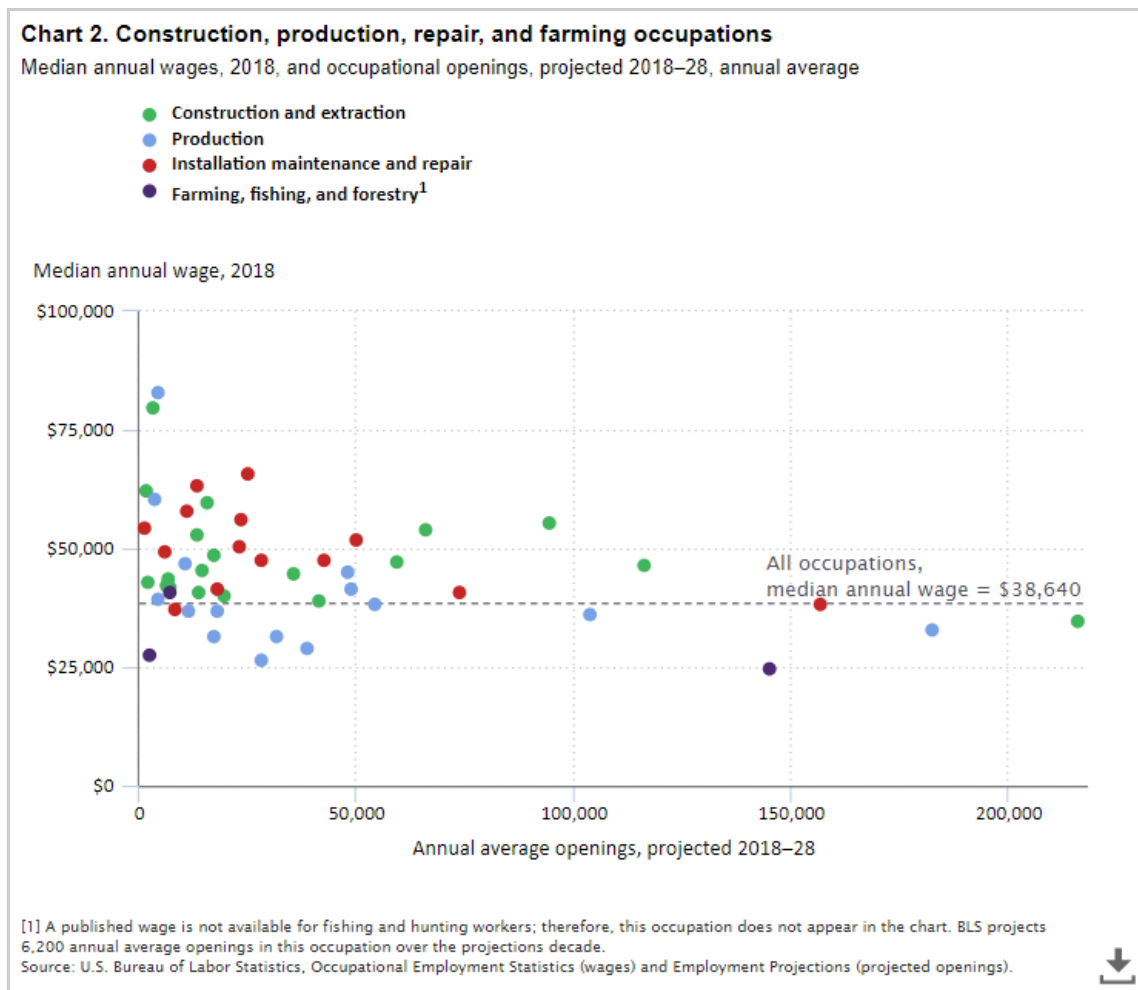
The occupations in chart 1 are projected to have about 705,200 annual average openings over the projections decade. More than half of these projected openings are in the [computer and information technology](#) group, with [software developers](#) projected to have the most openings (134,600) of the occupations in the chart.



Each of the 71 occupations in chart 1 had an annual wage above the median for all workers. And many had a wage that was more than double or triple that amount. The highest earning occupation in chart 1 is [petroleum engineers](#) (\$137,170).

Construction, production, repair, and farming

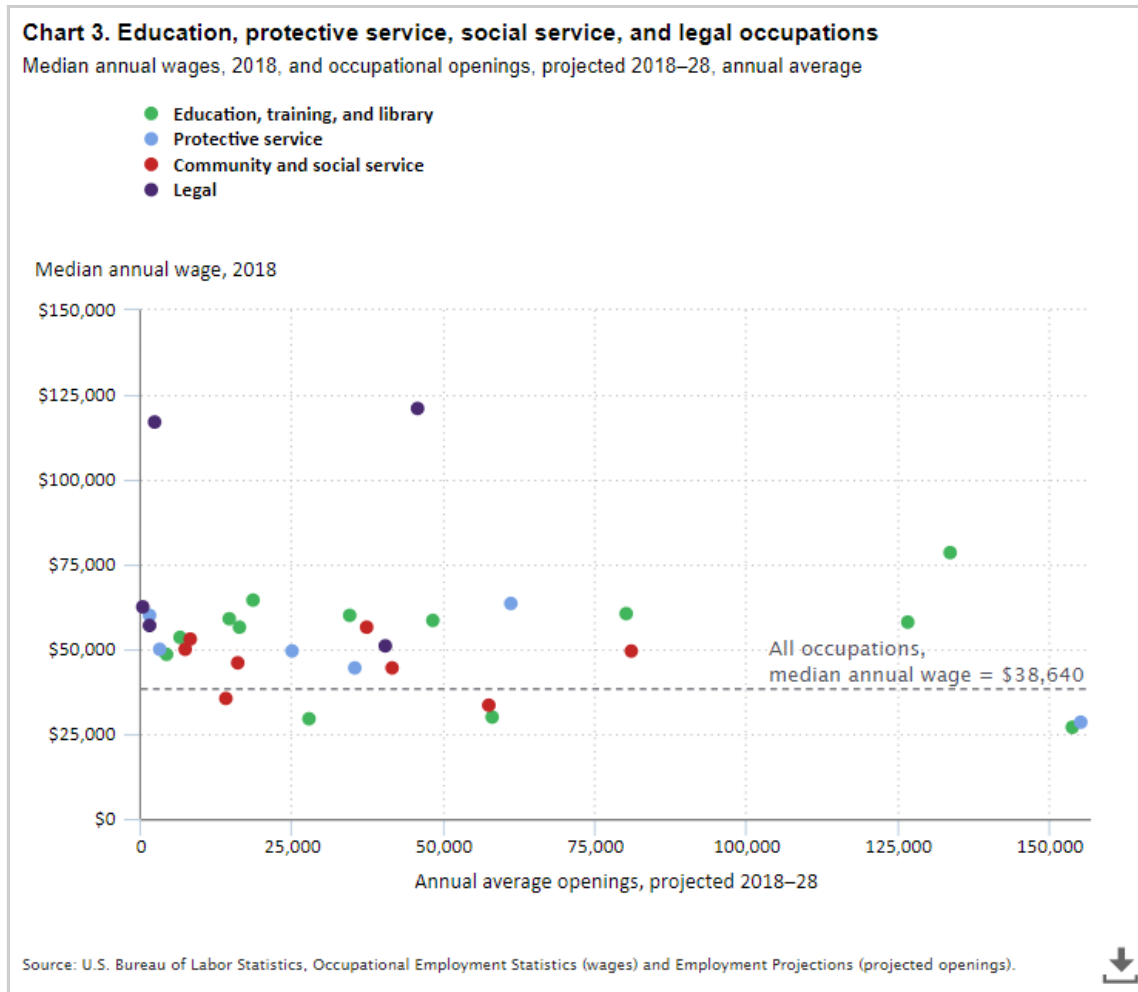
Openings for the occupations shown in chart 2 are projected to total about 2 million annually, on average. Of the occupations shown, [construction laborers and helpers](#) is expected to have the most openings (216,000), followed by [assemblers and fabricators](#) (182,600).



Thirty-seven of the 51 occupations in chart 2 had an annual wage above the median for all workers. [Power plant operators, distributors, and dispatchers](#) (\$83,020), in the [production](#) group, had the highest wage of the occupations in this chart.

Education, protective service, social service, and legal

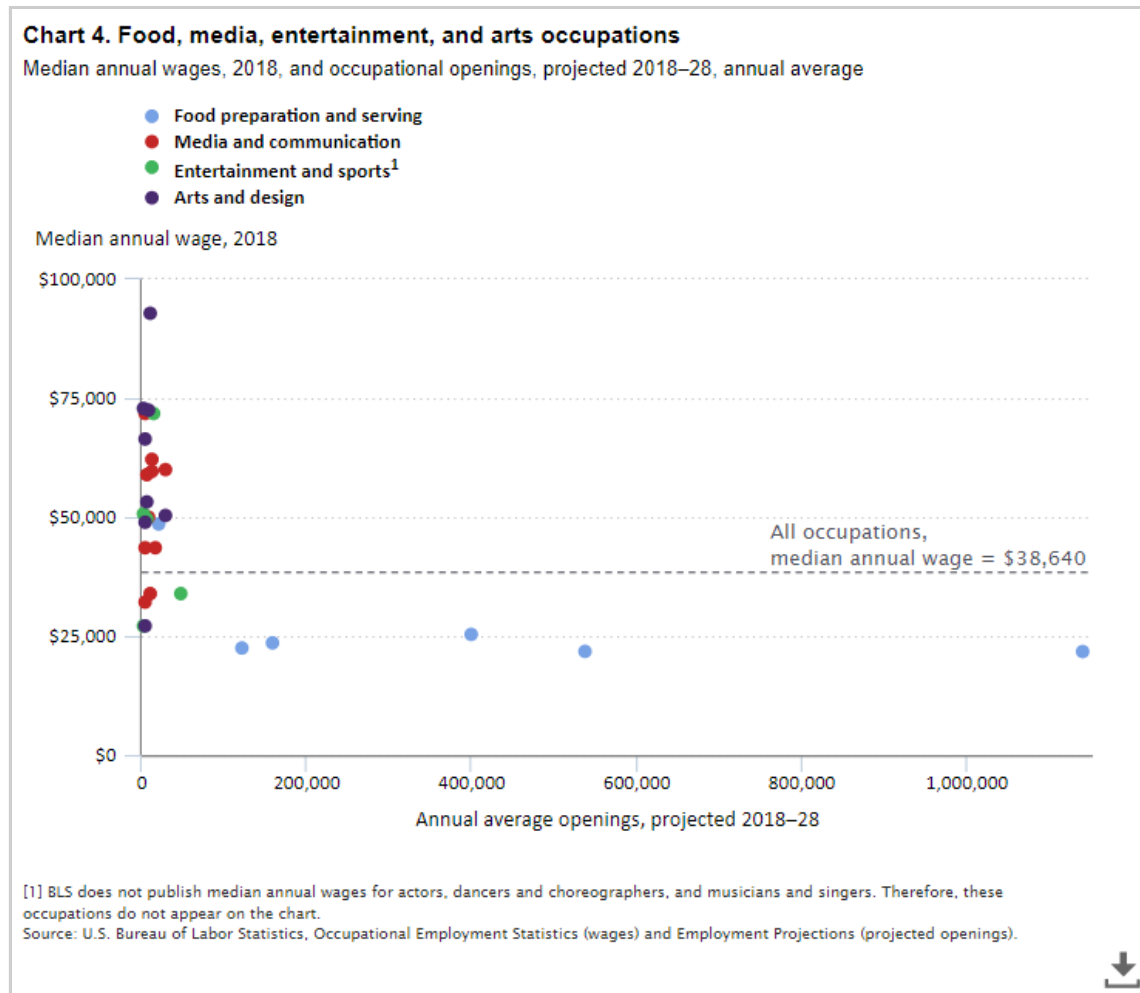
About half of the 1.4 million annual average openings in chart 3 are projected to be in the [education, training, and library](#) group. [Security guards and gaming surveillance officers](#) is the occupation projected to have the most openings of those shown in chart 3: about 155,200 each year, on average, from 2018 to 2028.



Twenty-six of the 32 occupations in chart 3 had an annual wage that was above the median for all workers. Those in the [legal](#) group had some of the highest wages in the chart, notably [lawyers](#) (\$120,910) and [judges and hearing officers](#) (\$117,190).

Food, media, entertainment, and arts

The occupations in chart 4 are projected to have about 2.7 million openings each year, on average, from 2018 to 2028. [Food and beverage serving and related workers](#) is the occupation projected to have more openings than any other in this article: more than 1.1 million annually, on average.



Nineteen of the 29 occupations in chart 4 had an annual wage above the median for all occupations. Nearly all of the occupations in the [arts and design](#) group and the [media and communication](#) group had a wage above the median, compared with one ([chefs and head cooks](#)) in the [food preparation and serving](#) group.

BLS does not publish annual wages for [actors](#) (7,700 openings), [dancers and choreographers](#) (3,600 openings), and [musicians and singers](#) (22,400 openings) because workers in these occupations do not usually work full-time, year round. As a result, these occupations are not included in the chart.

Healthcare, personal care, and cleaning

Openings for the occupations in chart 5 are projected to total about 2.8 million annually, on average, over the 2018–28 decade. [Home health aides and personal care aides](#) combined are expected to have more openings from growth than any other occupation (118,600).

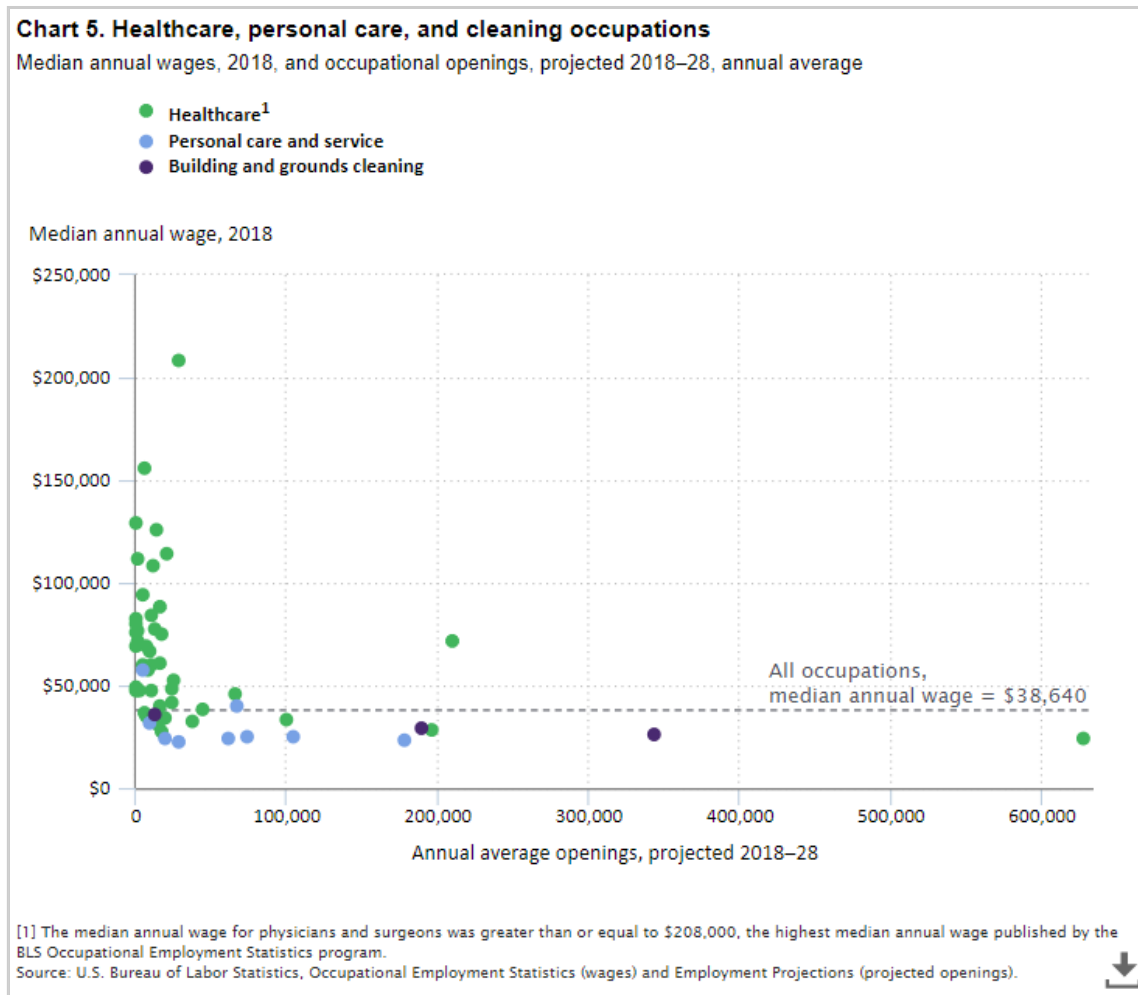
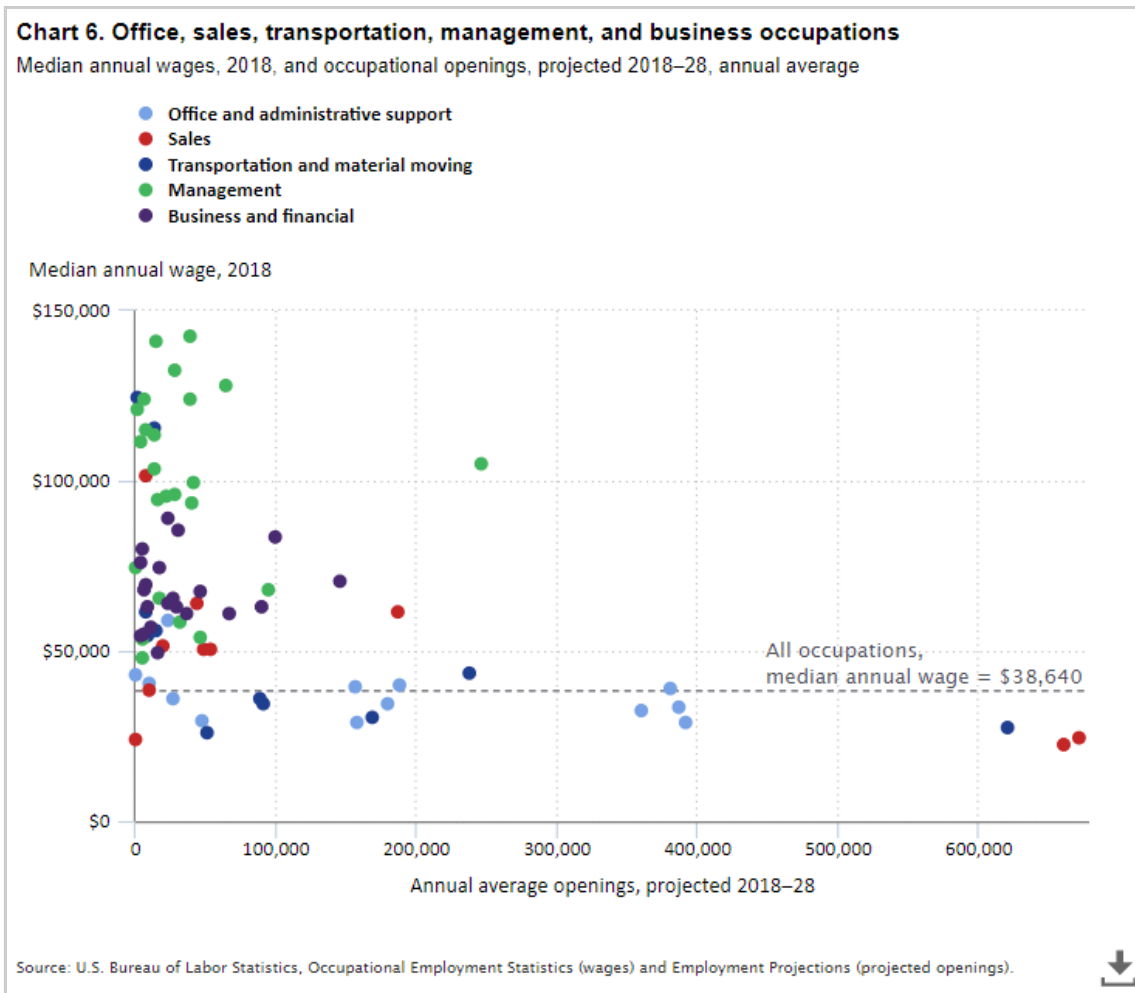


Chart 5 shows 58 occupations, 37 of which had an annual wage above the median for all workers. Most of the high-wage occupations in chart 5 are in [healthcare](#). The wage for [physicians and surgeons](#) is the highest of any occupation, shown here as greater than or equal to \$208,000—the top median annual wage published by BLS.

Office, sales, transportation, management, and business

The occupations in chart 6 are projected to have about 6.9 million openings each year, on average, from 2018 to 2028. [Retail sales workers](#) and [cashiers](#), both in the [sales](#) group, are projected to have the most openings of the occupations in the chart, with combined annual average openings of more than 1.3 million. Although BLS projects overall employment in these two occupations to decline, many openings are still expected as workers leave permanently and need to be replaced.



Sixty-four of the 79 occupations shown in chart 6 had an annual wage that was higher than the median for all workers—including each of the occupations in the [management](#) group and the [business and financial](#) group.

For more information

Wage data in the charts are from the BLS [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) (OES) program, which produces employment and wage estimates annually for more than 800 detailed occupations. Projections data are from the BLS [Employment Projections](#) program.

Get more information about all of the occupations in these charts from the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#). To learn more about occupational separations and openings, watch this [video: “Understanding BLS projections of occupational separations.”](#)

Domingo Angeles and Elka Torpey are economists in the Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, BLS. They can be reached at angeles.domingo@bls.gov or torpey.elka@bls.gov.

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