



Dental Workforce Wages and Job Counts Dashboard: Data & Methods

Overview

The Wages and Job Count Dashboard provides a comprehensive view of employment statistics and wage data for key dental occupations, including dental hygienists, dental assistants, and general practitioner dentists. The data sources used for these figures are from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Health Policy Institute (HPI).

Data Sources and Methodology

1. BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) Survey

The OEWS survey is a comprehensive tool used to measure employment and wage rates across multiple sectors in the U.S. The BLS collects data from approximately 1.1 million business establishments, utilizing two semiannual survey panels each year. The results of these surveys are aggregated over a three-year period to produce the employment and wage estimates used in the dashboard.¹

To account for sampling error, the job counts for dental hygienists and dental assistants in the dashboard include a margin of error, represented as a 95% confidence interval. This interval indicates that we are 95% confident that the true job count falls within the displayed lower and upper bounds. The margin of error is inherent in survey-based data due to the potential for sampling variation.

Wage data for this dashboard is derived from BLS survey responses and reflects wages for employees in nonfarm establishments. These figures do not account for the self-employed. However, wage data for general practitioner dentists, as reported by the BLS, does not include figures for the 75th and 90th percentiles. As a result, we have presented the average annual inflation-adjusted wages for general practitioner dentists without confidence intervals.

Key aspects of the OEWS methodology include:

- **Employment Definition:** Employment is defined as the total number of workers who are full or part-time employees, including those on paid leave or short-term unpaid absences. The survey excludes self-employed individuals, owners of unincorporated firms, household workers, and unpaid family workers.

- **Sample Size and Coverage:** The survey covers wage and employment information for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments. The May 2023 estimates are based on survey responses from six semiannual panels, representing 55% of total national employment.

For a detailed overview of the OEWS methodology, visit the [BLS website](#).¹

2. Health Policy Institute Analysis of ADA Masterfile

The American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute provides job counts for general practitioner dentists using data from the ADA masterfile. This file contains comprehensive records of all licensed and practicing dentists, allowing for a more accurate representation of dentist employment figures without sampling techniques. As a result, these counts reflect the total population of dentists in each area rather than an estimate based on a sample.

Data Timeliness and Reference Period

The data in the dashboard is based on the most recent estimates available from the BLS as of May 2024, which covers employment levels as of May 2023. The income figures for general practitioner dentists also correspond to this time period. The general practitioner dentist job count corresponds to December 2023.

Adjusting Wages for Inflation

The findings in the Health Policy Institute's Dental Workforce Wages and Job Counts Dashboard are adjusted for inflation. We used the Consumer Price Index (CPI)³ to calculate the current value of a past dollar amount. We multiplied the past, or original, dollar amount by the current CPI and divided it by the past CPI (when the original dollar amount was recorded).

$$\text{Current value} = \text{Original value} \times \left(\frac{\text{Current CPI}}{\text{CPI in the past}} \right).$$

According to BLS, the national median hourly wage for dental hygienists in 2022 was \$39.14. For our dashboard, we wanted to calculate its inflation-adjusted value in terms of 2023 dollars, the most recent data year available for this dashboard. The values of the CPI (not seasonally adjusted) for the years 2022 and 2023 were 288.347 and 304.702, respectively. Plugging our spending and index values into the formula above, we calculated \$41.36 as the 2022 national median hourly wage for dental hygienists in terms of inflation-adjusted 2023 dollars.



Health Policy Institute

ADA American Dental Association®

Suggested Citation

American Dental Association. Dental workforce wages and job counts dashboard. Health Policy Institute. 2024.
Available from: <https://www.ada.org/resources/research/health-policy-institute/wage-and-job-count-dashboard>

References

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2023: 29-2099 Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other. Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics. May 2023. Available from: www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_tec.htm. Accessed October 2, 2024.

² Mendez-Carbajo D. Adjusting for Inflation. Page One Economics®. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. January 3, 2023. Available from <https://research.stlouisfed.org/publications/page1-econ/2023/01/03/adjusting-for-inflation>. Accessed March 19, 2024.

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Consumer Price Index. All Urban Consumers. Available from <https://www.bls.gov/cpi/data.htm>. Accessed March 27, 2024.