

Bureau of Labor Statistics Projections - 2019

**Audiology, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy,
Respiratory Therapy, Speech Language Pathology**



Overview

According to the job growth projections from the 2019 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) annual Occupational Outlook Handbook, every profession included in the Allied Health Workforce Diversity (AHWD) Act proposal is anticipated grow at a rate far exceeding the overall employment growth as well as the average for all healthcare professions.

- Overall growth for all professions ----- **4%**
- Average growth for all healthcare professions: - **10%**
- Range of growth for AHWD professions: ----- **13% - 35%**

- The 2019 BLS data is the most current data available
- Data does not account for the anticipated increase workforce required for COVID treatment and recovery

Total BLS 10 year projected growth: 199,200

Breakdown by Profession

Audiology

Job Outlook

Employment of audiologists is projected to grow 13 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. However, because it is a small occupation, the fast growth will result in only about 1,800 new jobs over the 10-year period.

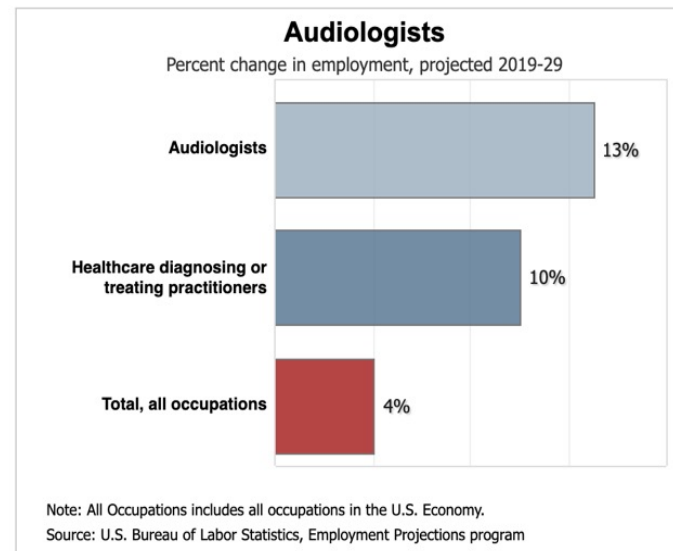
An aging baby-boom population and growing life expectancies will continue to increase the demand for most healthcare services. Hearing loss and balance disorders become more prevalent as people age, so the aging population is likely to increase demand for audiologists.

The early identification and diagnosis of hearing disorders in infants also may spur employment growth. Advances in hearing aid design, such as smaller size and the reduction of feedback, may make such devices more appealing as a means to minimize the effects of hearing loss. This may lead to more demand for audiologists.

Job Prospects

Demand may be greater in areas with large numbers of retirees, so audiologists who are willing to relocate may have the best job prospects.

About this section ?



10 year projected growth: **1,800**

Occupational Therapy

Job Outlook

Employment of occupational therapists is projected to grow 16 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. Occupational therapy will continue to be an important part of treatment for people with various illnesses and disabilities, such as Alzheimer's disease, cerebral palsy, autism, or the loss of a limb. However, demand for occupational therapy services is related to the ability of patients to pay, either directly or through health insurance.

The need for occupational therapists is expected to increase as the large baby-boom generation ages and people remain active later in life. Occupational therapists can help senior citizens maintain their independence by recommending home modifications and strategies that make daily activities easier. Therapists also play a role in the treatment of many conditions and ailments commonly associated with aging, such as arthritis and stroke.

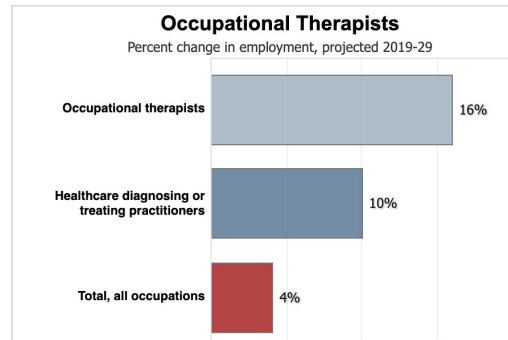
Occupational therapists also will be needed in a variety of healthcare settings to treat patients with chronic conditions, such as diabetes. Patients will continue to seek noninvasive outpatient treatment for long-term disabilities and illnesses, either in their homes or in residential care environments. These patients may need occupational therapy to become more independent and to perform a variety of daily tasks.

Demand for occupational therapy services also will stem from patients with autism spectrum disorder. Therapists will continue to be needed in schools to assist children with autism in improving their social skills and accomplishing a variety of daily tasks.

Job Prospects

Job opportunities should be good for licensed occupational therapists in all settings, particularly acute hospital, rehabilitation, and orthopedic settings where the elderly receive treatment. Occupational therapists with specialized knowledge in a treatment area also will have better job prospects.

About this section



Note: All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

Job Outlook

Employment of occupational therapy assistants is projected to grow 35 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations.

Employment of occupational therapy aides is projected to grow 20 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. However, because it is a small occupation, the fast growth will result in only about 1,600 new jobs over the 10-year period.

Occupational therapy assistants and aides will be needed to help therapists treat additional patients and to ensure that treatment facility operations run smoothly. However, demand for occupational therapy services is related to the ability of patients to pay, either directly or through health insurance.

Demand for occupational therapy is likely to grow over the coming decade in response to the health needs of the aging baby-boom generation and a growing elderly population. Older adults are more prone than younger people to conditions and ailments such as arthritis and stroke. These conditions can affect one's ability to perform a variety of everyday activities. Occupational therapy assistants and aides will be needed to help occupational therapists in caring for these patients. Occupational therapy will also continue to be used to treat children and young adults with developmental disabilities, such as autism.

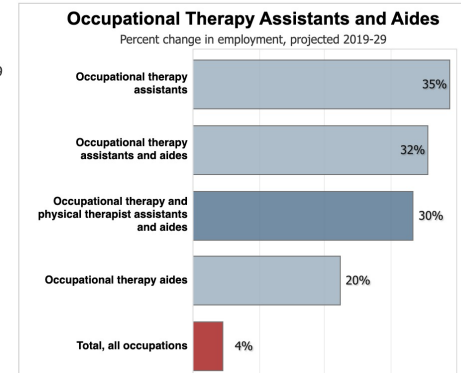
Occupational therapy will also continue to be used to treat children and young adults with developmental disabilities, such as autism.

Healthcare providers, especially those specializing in long-term care such as nursing homes and home healthcare services, will continue to employ assistants to reduce the cost of occupational therapy services. After the therapist has evaluated a patient and designed a treatment plan, the occupational therapy assistant can provide many aspects of the treatment that the therapist prescribed.

Job Prospects

Occupational therapy assistants and aides with experience working in an occupational therapy office or other healthcare setting should have the best job opportunities. However, occupational therapy aides may face strong competition from the large pool of qualified people, because there are relatively few requirements to enter the occupation.

About this section



Note: All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

10 year projected growth: 40,600

Physical Therapy

Job Outlook

Employment of physical therapists is projected to grow 18 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations.

Demand for physical therapy will come in part from the large number of aging baby boomers, who are staying more active later in life than their counterparts of previous generations. Older people are more likely to experience heart attacks, strokes, and mobility-related injuries that require physical therapy for rehabilitation.

In addition, a number of chronic conditions, such as diabetes and obesity, have become more prevalent in recent years. More physical therapists will be needed to help these patients maintain their mobility and manage the effects of chronic conditions.

Advances in medical technology have increased the use of outpatient surgery to treat a variety of injuries and illnesses. Medical and technological developments also are expected to permit survival of a greater number of trauma victims and newborns with birth defects, creating additional demand for rehabilitative care. Physical therapists will continue to help these patients recover from surgery.

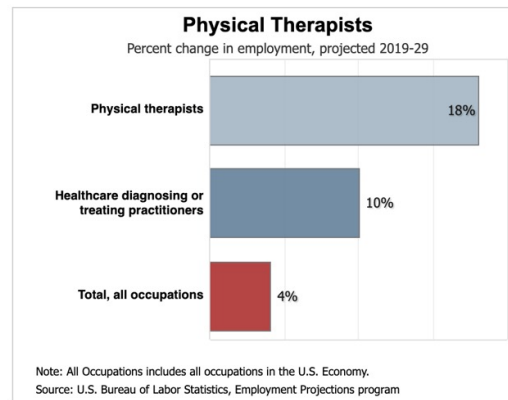
Job Prospects

About 15,200 openings for physical therapists are projected each year, on average, over the decade.

Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

Job prospects should be especially favorable in rural areas, where physical therapy services are less prevalent than in urban and suburban areas.

About this section ?



Job Outlook

Employment of physical therapist assistants is projected to grow 33 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. Employment of physical therapist aides is projected to grow 21 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations.

Demand for physical therapy is expected to increase in response to the health needs of an aging population, particularly the large baby-boom generation. This group is staying more active later in life than previous generations did. However, many baby boomers also are entering the prime age for heart attacks, strokes, and mobility-related injuries, increasing the demand for physical therapy needed for rehabilitation.

In addition, more physical therapist assistants and aides will be needed to help patients maintain their mobility and manage the effects of chronic conditions, such as diabetes and obesity. Moreover, medical and technological developments should permit an increased number of trauma victims and newborns with birth defects to survive, creating added demand for therapy and rehabilitative services.

Physical therapists are expected to rely on physical therapist assistants, particularly in long-term care environments, in order to reduce the cost of physical therapy services. After the physical therapist has evaluated a patient and designed a plan of care, the assistant provides many parts of the treatment, as directed by the therapist.

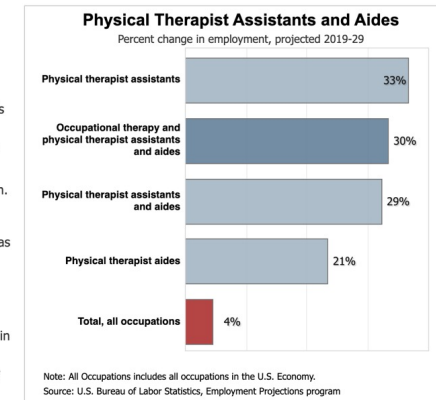
Job Prospects

About 15,100 openings for physical therapist assistants and 6,900 openings for physical therapist aides are projected each year, on average, over the decade.

Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

Job opportunities should be good in settings where the aging population is most often treated, such as skilled-nursing homes, home health, and outpatient orthopedic facilities. Physical therapist aides with an associate's or bachelor's degree may have better prospects than will those without one, as some employers prefer to hire candidates who have a degree.

About this section ?



10 year projected growth: **90,000**

Respiratory Therapy

Job Outlook

Employment of respiratory therapists is projected to grow 19 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. Growth in the middle-aged and older population will lead to an increased incidence of respiratory conditions such as pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and other disorders that can permanently damage the lungs or restrict lung function. The aging population will in turn lead to an increased demand for respiratory therapy services and treatments, mostly in hospitals.

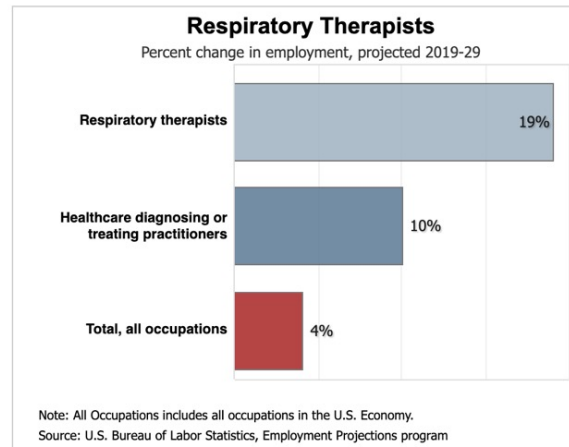
In addition, a growing emphasis on reducing readmissions in hospitals may result in more demand for respiratory therapists in nursing homes and in doctors' offices.

Advances in preventing and detecting disease, improved medications, and more sophisticated treatments will also increase the demand for respiratory therapists. Other conditions affecting the general population, such as respiratory problems due to smoking and air pollution, along with respiratory emergencies, will continue to create demand for respiratory therapists.

Job Prospects

Job prospects will be best for therapists willing to travel to look for job opportunities. Some areas will be saturated with workers, and other areas (more often, rural areas) will be in need of respiratory therapists' services. Certification is generally recommended, as it may increase an applicant's competitiveness in the job market.

About this section ?



10 year projected growth: **26,300**

Speech Language Pathology

Job Outlook

Employment of speech-language pathologists is projected to grow 25 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations.

As the large baby-boom population grows older, there will be more instances of health conditions such as strokes or dementia, which can cause speech or language impairments. Speech-language pathologists will be needed to treat the increased number of speech and language disorders in the older population.

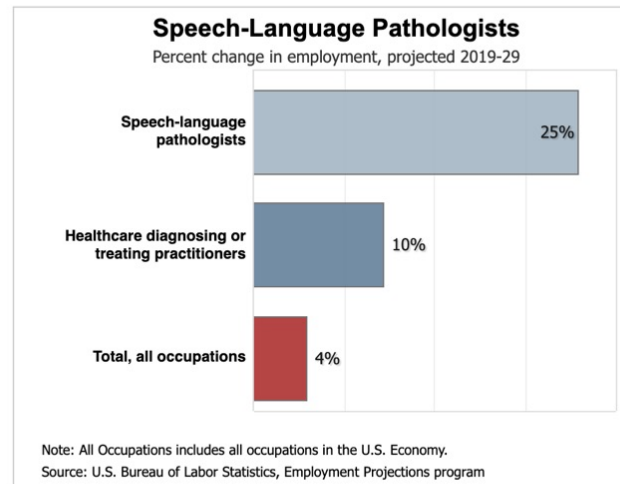
Increased awareness of speech and language disorders, such as stuttering, in younger children should lead to a need for more speech-language pathologists who specialize in treating that age group. Also, an increasing number of speech-language pathologists will be needed to work with children with autism to improve their ability to communicate and socialize effectively.

In addition, medical advances are improving the survival rate of premature infants and victims of trauma and strokes, many of whom need help from speech-language pathologists.

Job Prospects

Overall job opportunities for speech-language pathologists are expected to be good. Generally, speech-language pathologists who are willing to relocate will have the best job opportunities.

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10 year projected growth: **40,500**