

What is the Job Outlook for a Career in this Field?

Because of its ever-growing popularity in the recent years, pursuit of a career in forensics is considered a good investment. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that forensic science technicians will grow by 20 percent over the 2006-2016 decade (As of December 2008, there were 12,800 persons employed under this occupation. This number is projected to increase to 15,300 persons by the year 2018). This average increase is much higher than the average for all other occupations reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Job opportunities are expected to increase because of the judicial system's constant need for convicting evidence in criminal procedures. Though this increase may be a good thing, interested persons should expect competition for jobs specifically in the Departments of Justice, Treasury and other Federal law enforcement agencies.

Due to the diversity in the field, all earnings and wages data reported from the BLS pertains to "forensic science technicians" (a general term encompassing forensic scientists that analyze evidence or act as expert witnesses in criminal proceedings):

As of May 2009, the median annual wage of a forensic science technician was \$51,480 (\$23.97 per hour) with the lowest tenth percentile making \$32,420 per year and the highest ninetieth percentile making \$84,260 per year. Local government has the highest employment of forensic scientists with the state government following right behind. Persons working under the federal executive branch have the highest annual mean wage at \$92,100. The next top paying industry for this occupation is within

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management, scientific and technical consulting services at an annual average mean of \$78,200. The third top paying industry is related to forensic architectural and engineering services at \$59,320 per year. Next is under the insurance carriers industry, averaging \$58,000 per year. And finally, persons under the medical and diagnostic laboratories come in at an average of \$57,060 per year.

States with the highest concentration of workers in this occupation include Florida, with the highest (1,340), Arizona, Maryland, District of Columbia, New Mexico and Nevada. The top paying states are Massachusetts (with an annual mean wage of \$81,950), Wisconsin, Kansas, District of Columbia and Illinois. Metropolitan areas with the highest concentration of workers include Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Arizona; Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Florida; Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, Arizona; Topeka, Kansas; and Santa Rosa-Petaluma, California. The top paying metropolitan areas include Washington-Arlington-Alexandria division, Oakland-Fremont-Hayward California division, San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara California division, Santa Ana-Anaheim-Irvine California division, and Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale California division.