

CAREER GUIDE FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANT

SOC Code: 31-9092

Pay Band(s): 2 and 3 ([Salary Structure](#))

Standard Occupational Description: Perform administrative and certain clinical duties under the direction of physician. Administrative duties may include scheduling appointments, maintaining medical records, billing, and coding for insurance purposes. Clinical duties may include taking and recording vital signs and medical histories, preparing patients for examination, drawing blood, and administering medications as directed by physician.

Medical Assistant positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Laboratory and Research Technicians and Specialists Career Group](#):

[Laboratory and Research Technician](#)

[Laboratory and Research Specialist](#)

While Medical Assistant within the Commonwealth are all located within the Laboratory and Research Technician and Specialist Career Group, individuals may want to pursue other opportunities within the Commonwealth depending upon individual training, education, knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests.

Other Career Group(s) that may be of interest are:

[Direct Service](#)

[Administration and Office Support](#)

[General Administration](#)

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

Skills

Note: *The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Medical Assistant commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

1. Actively looking for ways to help people.
2. Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
3. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
4. Talking to others to convey information effectively.
5. Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
6. Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
7. Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
8. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
9. Using scientific rules and methods to solve problems.

10. Managing one's own time and the time of others.

Knowledge

Note: *The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Medical Assistant commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

The **Knowledge** of:

1. Administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.
2. Plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
3. Structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
4. Principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.
5. Chemical composition, structure, and properties of substances and of the chemical processes and transformations that they undergo. This includes uses of chemicals and their interactions, danger signs, production techniques, and disposal methods.
6. Human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.
7. Principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
8. Relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.
9. Arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications

Abilities

Note: *The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Medical Assistants commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

The **Ability** to:

1. See details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
2. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
3. Arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).
4. Keep your hand and arm steady while moving your arm or while holding your arm and hand in one position.
5. Read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
6. Quickly and repeatedly adjust the controls of a machine or a vehicle to exact positions.
7. Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.

8. Communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
9. Add, subtract, multiply, or divide quickly and correctly.
10. Tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.

Tasks

Note: *The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by Medical Assistants. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.*

1. Collect blood, tissue or other laboratory specimens, log the specimens, and prepare them for testing.
2. Contact medical facilities or departments to schedule patients for tests and/or admission.
3. Greet and log in-patients arriving at office or clinic.
4. Help physicians examine and treat patients, handing them instruments and materials or performing such tasks as giving injections and removing sutures.
5. Interview patients to obtain medical information and measure their vital signs, weight, and height.
6. Inventory and order medical, lab, and office supplies and equipment.
7. Keep financial records and perform other bookkeeping duties, such as handling credit and collections and mailing monthly statements to patients.
8. Perform general office duties such as answering telephones, taking dictation and completing insurance forms.
9. Record patients' medical history, vital statistics and information such as test results in medical records.
10. Schedule appointments for patients.

INTERESTED?

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

The Medical Assistant occupation has **Social**, **Conventional**, and **Realistic** characteristics.

Social — Social occupations frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations often involve helping or providing service to others.

Conventional — Conventional occupations frequently involve following set procedures and routines. These occupations can include working with data and details more than with ideas. Usually there is a clear line of authority to follow.

Realistic — Realistic occupations frequently involve work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. They often deal with plants, animals, and real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery. Many of the occupations require working outside, and do not involve a lot of paperwork or working closely with others.

LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Generally this is not required for Medical Assistant positions in state government.

The Department of Labor provides the following:

Although medical assistants are not licensed, some States require them to take a test or a course before they can perform certain tasks, such as taking x-rays. Employers prefer to hire experienced workers or certified applicants who have passed a national examination, indicating that the medical assistant meets certain standards of competence. The American Association of Medical Assistants awards the Certified Medical Assistant credential; the American Medical Technologists awards the Registered Medical Assistant credential; the American Society of Podiatric Medical Assistants awards the Podiatric Medical Assistant Certified credential; and the Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology awards credentials at three levels: Certified Ophthalmic Assistant, Certified Ophthalmic Technician, and Certified Ophthalmic Medical Technologist.

EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Labor provides the following:

Medical assistants perform routine administrative and clinical tasks to keep the offices of physicians, podiatrists, chiropractors, and other health practitioners running smoothly.

Clinical duties vary according to State law and include taking medical histories and recording vital signs, explaining treatment procedures to patients, preparing patients for examination, and assisting the physician during the examination.

Assistants who specialize have additional duties. *Podiatric medical assistants* make castings of feet, expose and develop x rays, and assist podiatrists in surgery. *Ophthalmic medical assistants* help ophthalmologists provide eye care.

Most employers prefer graduates of formal programs in medical assisting. Such programs are offered in vocational-technical high schools, postsecondary vocational schools, and community and junior colleges. Postsecondary programs usually last either 1-year, resulting in a certificate or diploma, or 2 years, resulting in an associate degree. Courses cover anatomy, physiology, and medical terminology, as well as typing, transcription, recordkeeping, accounting, and insurance processing. Students learn laboratory techniques, clinical and diagnostic procedures, pharmaceutical principles, the administration of medications, and first aid. They study office practices, patient relations, medical law, and ethics. Accredited programs include an internship that provides practical experience in physicians' offices, hospitals, or other healthcare facilities.

Formal training in medical assisting, while generally preferred, is not always required. Some medical assistants are trained on the job, although this practice is less common than in the past. Applicants usually need a high school diploma or the equivalent.

A listing of all Virginia Educational Institutes that offer educational programs for those interested in a career as a Medical Assistant can be found on the Virginia Area Health Education Centers Program's website: <http://www.ahec.vcu.edu/vhc/med.pdf>

COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees

particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

The Commonwealth Competencies are:

1. Technical and Functional Expertise
2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm. For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example: **Medical Assistant**

PAY BAND	PRACTITIONER ROLES
2	Laboratory and Research Technician
3	Laboratory and Research Specialist I

Sample Career Path

Laboratory and Research Technician

The Laboratory and Research Technician role provides career tracks for medical assistants that perform a variety of laboratory and/or research tasks in support of research/teaching, clinical services, field research or a regulatory laboratory. Employees are responsible for a variety of standard procedures that range from routine to specialized in the areas of cleaning and decontamination; media preparation; performing standard/routine laboratory testing; recording data, and operating and maintaining tools and equipment.

Laboratory and Research Specialist I

The Laboratory and Research Specialist I role provides career tracks for medical assistants who support in the performance of various technical, scientific, analytical or administrative activities for clinical, research, regulatory or laboratory programs.

ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

O*NET (Occupational Information Network)

http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network

<http://www.vacrn.net/>

Professional Organization

American Association of Medical Assistants

<http://www.aama-ntl.org/>