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# Best Jobs in Biotechnology

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The majority of the detailed job descriptions on the following pages are for the occupations that offer entry-level opportunities in biotechnology. We have selected jobs that are open to people with a high school diploma, some college, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree. We have also included occupations that show the career ladder from the entry level jobs to positions such as scientist or technical service representative.

The largest number of entry-level jobs are likely to be in positions for laboratory support workers, laboratory assistants and manufacturing assistants. For those with associate degrees in biotechnology or bachelor's degrees, there are also a large number of positions for laboratory technicians, manufacturing technicians and bioinformatics specialists.

Each job description includes detailed information about the job duties and work conditions; wages, hours and benefits; qualifications, skills and training; basic, personal and technical skills sets required for this occupation; career advancement opportunities and related jobs; job titles; hints on finding the job; and a list of community colleges offering programs in this field. Contact information on community colleges is in Chapter 2: Qualification, Training and Interests.

The information on wages in the job descriptions generally gives a range of wages at several levels of experience. In general, the numbers given are a range of the median wages across the state. Some employers will pay less or more than the amounts we indicate, but the majority of jobs are likely to fall within this salary range. We have obtained wage information from many sources including salary surveys, job listings, employers, people working in the occupation, the California Employment Development Department, the California Cooperative Occupational System, civil service job listings and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Wages vary by region of the state, training level and size or type of business. Wages are highest in the large metropolitan areas, especially the San Francisco Bay area. Many jobs in biotechnology are filled by people who have a bachelor's degree in another field before completing an associate degree in biotechnology. They will generally be paid more than people with only an associate degree. Private biotechnology companies tend to pay better than government or university positions. Large businesses pay better than smaller businesses, but usually require a higher level of education and experience. These factors should be taken into account when using the wage information we have provided.

We have made every attempt to make sure that the information presented is accurate as of May 2002. However, wages, labor market trends and even basic requirements for jobs change over time. Therefore, it is helpful for instructors, counselors and job seekers to keep up to date on general economic trends and local employment situations. Web sites that include information about current jobs, employers and the biotechnology industry are included in Chapter 4: Finding a Job.

