

Appendix B

Occupational Therapy Assistant



What Does an Occupational Therapy Assistant Do?

- Occupational therapy assistants (OTAs) work with people who are limited by development deficits, learning disabilities, aging, physical injury, illness, or psychological disability.
- OTAs use activities with specific goals to help the individual overcome, lessen, or prevent a disability.
- They apply activities that are personally fulfilling to help people learn the skills they need in order to live as independently as possible.
- They may work with a variety of individuals of various ages and disabilities or specialize in a particular area, such as pediatrics, hand function, geriatrics, and assistive technology.



Current Needs—Statewide and Nationally

- OTAs are listed as one of the top 20 growth fields of the future.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the employment of OTAs will increase by 36 percent or more by 2010.
- The need tends to be in non-traditional settings, nursing homes, public school settings, and in birth to three settings.

Occupational Therapy Assistant Wages

- According to the American Occupational Therapy association, the average starting salary for OTAs in 2000 was \$30,132 for full-time employees and \$19,599 for part-time employees.
- Locally, our 2002 graduates reported a median yearly salary of \$28,056 with generous benefit packages. Wage increases may occur at six months and one year intervals.



What Happens After Graduation?

- OTAs are required to take a national certification exam given by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). Most states requires state licensure or certification to practice.
- OTAs may work in hospitals, nursing facilities, schools, mental health facilities, home health agencies, community agencies, and rehabilitation agencies.
- OTAs may work as activity directors in long-term care facilities, adult day care centers, and senior centers.



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