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Career & Workplace

These high-paying jobs have the biggest growth potential over the next decade



Image: Phil Leo / Michael Denora/ Getty Images

Only some of the six-figure jobs with the highest growth potential over the next decade are directly related to AI.

PM IMAGES



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Story Highlights

- Job growth will slow to 3.1% over next decade.
- Health care and AI-related industries will see above-average job growth.
- Elder services is expected to add 528,500 new jobs.

Job growth is going to slow dramatically over the next decade, but some professions are poised to see intense demand.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is projecting 5.2 million new jobs from 2024 to 2034, a 3.1% growth rate over the next decade that's much less than the 12% growth posted over the past decade. The slide is due in large part to the ascendance of Gen Z workers, a much smaller generation entering the workforce at a time when the large baby boomer generation continues to retire.

Some industries will see above-average job gains, according to the BLS. Health care and social assurance has the highest projected growth rate of any sector, at 8.4%. Demand for artificial-intelligence systems and technology is expected to drive 7.5% growth in the professional, scientific and technical-services sector, and 6.5% growth in the information sector.

Energy-related jobs also are expected to grow. “Increased demand for electricity, primarily related to AI integration, electric vehicles (EVs) and new data centers, is expected over the next decade,” the BLS noted in its report with the data.

The BLS is projecting a big increase in elder-services jobs, as well, with 528,500 new jobs forecast. The nation's aging population is driving much of the growth across health care, according to the BLS, with demand for in-home and personal health services increasing.

“The growing elderly population, which typically has greater health-care needs compared to younger groups, will increase demand for long-term care and therapy services," the BLS said.

The BLS also spotlighted some jobs that both pay more than $100,000 a year and are projected to see outsized growth.

Other industries, meanwhile, are expected to see a decline in jobs, with mining, oil and related jobs shrinking by 1.6% over the next 10 years due in part to automation and robotics, and retail jobs shrinking 1.2% as automation, e-commerce and consolidation impact that industry.

AI changes workforce needs and expectations

The BLS data shows that AI is not going to take everyone's job away, said Jason Leverant, president of national staffing franchise AtWork Group. It also, however, shows that job seekers will need to think strategically about a future in which AI plays a large part of how business gets done but humans are still vital.

"As AI continues to drive significant productivity gains in the white-collar/administrative support world, demand for highly skilled and technical employees who can play a part in building these tools obviously increases," Leverant said via email. "Additionally, it makes sense that many of the 'services'-based roles will increase in demand, especially health care, which will benefit in some ways from AI and automation but ultimately require humans to take care of health-related issues facing an aging population."

Joe Galvin, chief research officer for executive-coaching firm Vistage Worldwide Inc., said workers are going to see a job market that continues to grow but in different directions than it has in the past.

The demand for essential workers who work with tools, machines and devices will grow, but there also will be a higher bar for expertise and experience. The gap between unskilled and skilled workers will widen, and knowledge workers will see a radical re-engineering of their job functions, Galvin said.

"The demand for AI skills and experience will force many into alternative careers as they fail to keep up," he said. "Those who can both create and operate next-generation AI bots and agents will be in high demand and will be appropriately rewarded."

Sheldon Arora, CEO at health-care job platform StaffDNA, said health-care and health-care-support occupations, which already have been trending upward, are going to continue to grow. At the same time, fewer students are picking professions in health-care and health-care-tech areas, so the need for trained professionals will become even more pronounced.

"For job seekers, choosing careers as clinicians or health-care-tech professionals is a very safe bet. Having an affiliation with AI programs or even just basic knowledge of AI is going to be a big help, as well," Arora said.

Top jobs for older workers

The findings come at a time when many people are delaying retirement. A recent study by Resume Genius analyzed the jobs best suited for workers ages 55 and up, taking into consideration strong wages, low physical demands and accessible entry requirements – along with positive job growth.

The findings identified sales manager, computer-systems analyst, management analyst, accountant and auditor, and real estate broker, among other positions, as some of the top jobs for older workers.

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