

Washington Retail Workforce Report

INCREASING EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR
CAREERS IN RETAIL

FALL, 2023

WORKFORCE TRAINING & EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY – CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS RESEARCH



CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS RESEARCH



Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

Retail Workforce Analysis



Fall 2023

<https://cbe.wvu.edu/cebr>

About the Authors

The Center for Economic and Business Research is an outreach center at Western Washington University located within the College of Business and Economics. In addition to publishing the Puget Sound Economic Forecaster, the Center connects the resources found throughout the University to assist for-profit, non-profit, government agencies, quasi-government entities, and tribal communities in gathering and analyzing useful data to respond to specific questions. We use several collaborative approaches to help inform our clients so that they are better able to hold policy discussions and craft decisions.

The Center employs students, staff and faculty from across the University as well as outside resources to meet the individual needs of those we work with. Our work is based on academic approaches and rigor that not only provides a neutral analytical perspective but also provides applied learning opportunities. We focus on developing collaborative relationships with our clients and not simply delivering an end product.

The approaches we utilize are insightful, useful, and are all a part of the debate surrounding the topics we explore; however, none are absolutely fail-safe. Data, by nature, is challenged by how it is collected and how it is leveraged with other data sources. Following only one approach without deviation is ill-advised. We provide a variety of insights within our work—not only on the topic at hand but also the resources (data) that inform that topic.

We are always seeking opportunities to bring the strengths of Western Washington University to fruition within our region. If you have a need for analysis work or comments on this report, we encourage you to contact us at 360-650-3909 or by email at cebr@wwu.edu.

To learn more about CEBR visit us online at <https://cebr.wwu.edu> or follow us online through your favorite social media stream.



[facebook.com/westerncebr](https://www.facebook.com/westerncebr)



twitter.com/PugetSoundEF



[linkedin.com/company/wwu-center-for-economic-and-business-research](https://www.linkedin.com/company/wwu-center-for-economic-and-business-research)



[instagram.com/wwucebr](https://www.instagram.com/wwucebr)

The Center for Economic and Business Research is directed by Hart Hodges, Ph.D. and James McCafferty.

Contents

About the Authors	4
Retail Workforce Analysis	6
Executive Summary	6
Introduction	8
Deliverables	8
Retail Hierarchy	10
Core Retail Skills and Competencies	13
Most Desired Hard Skills	14
Most Desired Soft Skills	15
Most Desired Certifications	16
Geographic Job Listing Breakdown	17
NAICS and SOC Codes	18
Retail Jobs by Career Stage Interactive Tree Map	18
Industry Subsectors (NAICS) and 3 Year Forecast	19
Top 10 Retail Occupations in Washington by Employment	24
Value of Credentials	26
Retail Turnover and Promotion	28
Credential Finder	29
Washington Retail Awards	35
Washington Labor Market Award Gaps	36
Action Points	36
Pathways to Action Points	36
Additional Research	37
Policy Recommendations.....	37
Appendix 1: Industries Top 10 Occupational Data	42

Retail Workforce Analysis

Executive Summary

This report explores available national data specific to retail occupations, education and certificate data to identify retail career pathways, and to inform policy. The retail industry has undergone significant change since the COVID-19 pandemic. Identifying core skills, job position categories, and education opportunities helps to inform what will be necessary for the transformed industry to adapt.

In general, the retail industry workforce is shrinking. Large-scale layoffs that occurred during the COVID19 pandemic have yet to be recouped. This indicates a necessary transformation of retail career pathways if the industry is to evolve with changing technology and societal behavior. Key factors identified in these career pathways include workplace upskilling and incentives, certification and credentialing standardization, and sequencing in skill attainment clearly tied to promotion milestones.

The retail industry has a high turnover rate (in excess of 60%¹) due to the service/support nature of most retail labor, seasonality, and lack of clear advancement incentives. It may be most efficient for workers to laterally shift into new jobs or industries to obtain increases in pay. For employers, employee attrition results in continual retraining, scheduling difficulties, and talent loss. Focusing on ways to reduce turnover and increase internal promotion may offer benefits to both employers and workers simultaneously. One potential solution to this challenge is improving career advancement opportunities in the retail space. This is connected to wages, benefits, and incentives, but must be balanced with labor costs and value creation. Retail employees generally develop their skills and knowledge by specific on-the-job training and work itself, but opportunities to build on skills leading to positions with more responsibility are often lacking. Retail skills may not also be as readily or obviously transferable to other industries for workers to advance in a different career path.

Improving access to networks of employers and/or networking assistance provided by employers, government services, and certificate-granting institutions may also offer integrated benefits to workers and employers. A “Learner-Employer Record” portal/program as an online network resource could improve communication options between those seeking work and those seeking workers.

Another potential solution is creating more communication and standardization (or consistencies) between award granting entities and significant businesses within retail. Currently, credentials, degrees, and awards can have significantly different lengths, courses, and areas of specialty. While the retail curriculum generally uses similar job titles, business hierarchies, marketing, and communication focused tasks, each training entity creates its own requirements for an award.

For example, a Washington “Retail Management Certificate” can range from three to eighteen months and consist of a variety of concentrations. By contrast, bachelor’s degrees are standardized and generally reflect the equivalent of 180 quarter credit hours with course content that is consistent across all higher education institutions. Standardizing certificate length and course content, and “stacking” credentials to build toward academic degrees would support career pathing. Education opportunities

¹ David Fuller, Brian Logan, Pollo Suarez and Aneliya Valkova, McKinsey Global, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/how-retailers-can-attract-and-retain-frontline-talent-amid-the-great-attrition>

are available with the growth of online education and certification, but the long-term value and network building of short-term awards has yet to be fully realized because of inconsistent recognition in the value of certificated training, and the lack of stackable certification leading to traditional degrees.

Data also indicates that retail employers prefer hiring workers with bachelor's degrees by employers in the retail industry, as indicated in the data, calls for a careful examination of whether these degrees truly benefit retail workers or simply a preferred proxy used by employers. It is essential to avoid promoting bachelor's degrees as a default requirement without strong evidence of wage premium or merit for entry-level retail positions. Workers with high school diplomas or some college experience may already possess the skills for success in the retail field. Degrees often serve as a proxy for qualification, but this practice doesn't necessarily reflect merit, highlighting the need for a shift towards emphasizing credential transparency, skills, and competencies versus reliance on degrees as a measure of readiness for employment.

Introduction

The Center for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) at Western Washington University has been tasked with researching and identifying components concerning the future of the retail workforce in Washington state. Stakeholders invested in the competencies and vitality of the retail workforce include retail workers, retail employers, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Corrections, the Employment Security Department, and the Career Connected Learning Cross-Agency Work Group.

Over the course of 2023, CEBR conducted research at both primary and secondary levels. CEBR held stakeholder meetings and performed data collection and literature reviews. This report will be presented to the Washington state legislature by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) to provide the legislature with information on education and training programs for retail workers in Washington.

Deliverables

This report examines the following subject matter areas:

1. Identify core skills and competencies needed for employment in the retail industry.
 - a. Map retail occupations and career pathways, showing geographic and industry subsector breakdowns, numbers employed, and current and projected job openings.
 - b. Describe each occupational level by skills and competencies required. Work with employers to establish a single or near-single taxonomy of retail occupational titles, skills and competencies where possible.
 - c. Identify in-demand, non-industry specific professions both within and outside the retail industry that experience in the retail industry may lead to and map the possible routes to those opportunities.
2. Identify existing credit and non-credit courses, educational pathways, and apprenticeships for students and entry-level job seekers to gain the core skills identified:
 - a. Map educational pathways and apprenticeships that retail workers may use to pursue promotions and job advancement opportunities.
 - b. Breakdown education and training opportunities by the skills and competencies that can be learned.
 - c. Map credentials of all types and how credentials relate to each other. Describe each credential by the skills or competencies represented and how such skills and competencies are assessed and/or validated.
 - d. Identify where there are gaps in educational courses, training, and apprenticeships for the career opportunities available in the retail industry.

Discussion points for recommendations include:

- Strategies to develop additional courses, pathways, and apprenticeships to make retail certifications and credentials available and easily navigable for job seekers and current retail employees.
- Strategies to build a network for students and job seekers who complete retail certification courses to connect with potential employers.

- Options for engaging and partnering with retail employers to provide courses to incumbent front-line workers for the purpose of up-skilling and promotions, including in-demand, higher paid, non-industry specific positions within the retail industry.
- Options for increasing training and job opportunities in the retail industry for underserved communities and previously incarcerated individuals.

Retail Hierarchy

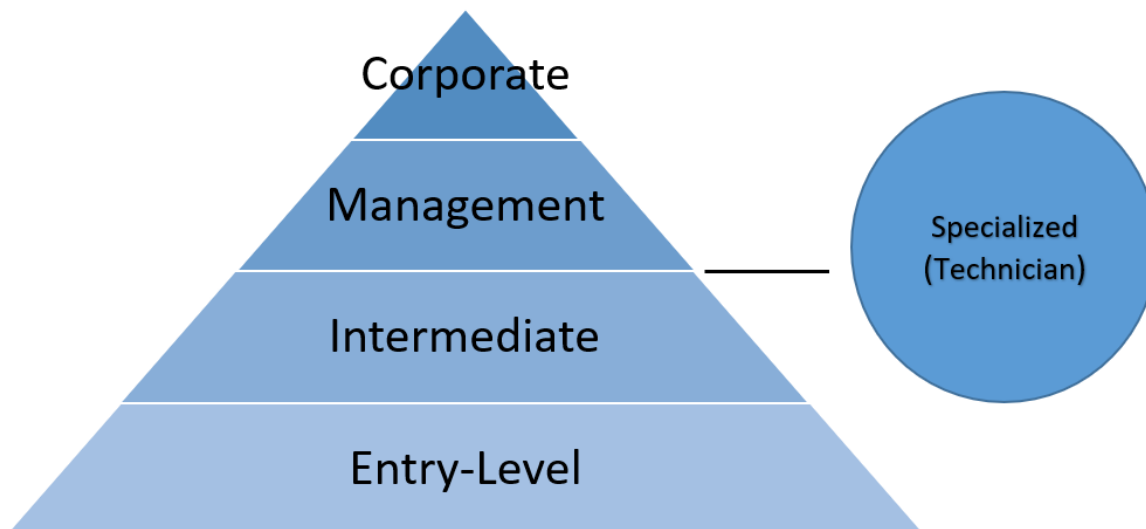
The hierarchy in a typical retail setting can vary significantly depending on the size of the organization, its retail industry sector, and its specific structure. It is important to understand the differences between large corporate retail chains and specialty small businesses which are categorized under the same industry umbrella. Listed below is a common hierarchy of roles and responsibilities found in a sample retail establishment.

1. **Store Manager/General Manager:** The store manager is responsible for overseeing the overall operations of the retail store. They manage the staff, ensure the store meets sales targets, implement company policies, handle customer complaints, and make strategic decisions to drive business growth.
2. **Assistant Store Manager/Deputy Manager:** The assistant store manager supports the store manager in various tasks and assumes responsibility in their absence. They assist with managing staff, scheduling, inventory management, and ensuring the store is operating efficiently.
3. **Department Supervisor/Team Leader:** Department supervisors or team leaders are responsible for specific departments or sections within the store, such as apparel, electronics, or customer service. They oversee the daily operations of their department, manage a team of employees, ensure merchandise is displayed effectively, and assist with customer inquiries or issues.
4. **Sales Associates/Customer Service Representatives:** Sales associates or customer service representatives are front-line employees who interact directly with customers. They assist customers in finding products, provide product information, process transactions, handle customer complaints, and maintain a clean and organized sales floor.
5. **Cashiers:** Cashiers primarily handle the processing of customer transactions, including receiving payments, providing change, and issuing receipts. They may also assist with bagging items, organizing the checkout area, and addressing basic customer inquiries.
6. **Stock Associates/Visual Merchandisers:** Stock associates are responsible for receiving, unpacking, and organizing merchandise in the stockroom. They replenish shelves, maintain inventory accuracy, and ensure the sales floor is well-stocked. Visual merchandisers focus on creating visually appealing displays to showcase products and attract customers.

The hierarchy and job titles may differ from one retail organization to another. Smaller stores may have a flatter structure with fewer management levels, while larger retail chains may have additional management positions and specialized roles. Many of the responsibilities and work actions that employees complete can be very similar across levels of the hierarchy or different job titles.

To simplify categorization, a pyramid structure serves to represent a basic model of retail hierarchy. It was designed after a thorough literature review of existing retail organizational structures, job posting definitions, and classifications of positions. This research combines data from Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) and North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes to identify key divisions of job duties and responsibilities in the retail hierarchy. The federal standards for occupation data are primarily from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and regional employment offices. Workforce projections are courtesy of the BLS. In determining where jobs lay within a retail hierarchy, CEBR utilized data on job responsibilities, education, certifications, job descriptions, and length of on-the-job training. The listings begin with the top ten jobs by volume of people employed by category. Much of the

employment in retail consists of retail salespersons followed by cashiers, stockers, and first-line supervisors. In all, the top 25 jobs in Washington comprised 306,491 active employees and 160,497 active job ads.



The largest base of workers in retail will be in the Entry-Level tier. These positions generally require no training or very short (less than 6 months) training to enter as an employee. Common examples include cashiers, stock associates/visual merchandisers, and basic customer service roles.

Many of the entry level workers can complete moderate (6 months to one year) on-the-job training or complete certifications that improve skills or provide knowledge which can move them into Intermediate roles with more responsibilities. For example, the cashier or stocker will begin taking on other tasks or finding a focus such as becoming a customer service representative, choosing a department niche, or taking on more leadership roles.

Above intermediate is Management. Managers generally have long-term job experience (1 year or more) or formal education/certification. In this same tier is the Specialized bubble. Specialized or technician workers in the retail space often have long-term training/experience or are educated for a specific role. Some examples in this space include pharmacy workers and mechanics, which do not fit into an intermediate or management classification.

Finally, the highest tier of retail workers are the corporate positions, at a minimum. This includes office workers and executive positions which are related to the retail industry but often have very different roles and duties than the day-to-day operation jobs of other tiers.

Jobs were classified into 4 different levels within the hierarchy. Entry-level positions were classified as positions requiring little to no previous experience or education. Job titles include cashier, customer service assistant, product demonstrator, and sales associate. The next level is the intermediate level. These positions usually require some experience and are often promoted from entry-level positions. The next level is management which requires substantial experience and usually a degree or certification.

Included in the management level are specialized positions, which require very specific education or certifications. The final level on the hierarchy is the corporate level. This level requires specialized education and employees will work out of a corporate office.

Core Retail Skills and Competencies

Core competencies in retail work typically include a combination of customer service skills, sales and marketing abilities, operational efficiency, and product knowledge. General skills in the retail industry are often soft skills which are harder to measure, such as communication and the ability to work in a team. Hard skills tend to lend themselves towards specialization or targeted career roles but usually accompany a certification or competencies associated with specific technology and tasks. Some example key competencies sought after in the retail industry include:

Hard Skills:

- **Customer Service:** Providing exceptional service to customers is crucial in retail. This includes effective communication, active listening, problem-solving, and resolving customer complaints or issues promptly and satisfactorily.
- **Sales and Upselling:** The ability to understand customer needs, recommend products or services, and to close sales is essential. Upselling and cross-selling skills help increase sales and maximize revenue.
- **Product Knowledge:** A strong understanding of the products or services being offered allows retail workers to provide accurate information, make appropriate recommendations, and address customer inquiries or concerns.
- **Merchandising and Visual Presentation:** Knowledge of visual merchandising techniques, including product placement, attractive displays, and store layout, help to create an appealing shopping environment that enhances sales.
- **Cash Handling and Point-of-Sale (POS) Systems:** Proficiency in handling cash transactions, processing payments, and operating POS systems ensures accuracy, efficiency, and a positive customer experience.
- **Inventory Management:** Understanding inventory control methods, stock replenishment, and maintaining accurate records to optimize stock levels, reduce out-of-stock conditions, and minimize losses.
- **Productivity and Sales Targets:** Meeting sales goals, achieving targets, and maintaining productivity levels are key performance indicators in many retail positions.

Soft Skills:

- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Collaborating effectively with colleagues, supervisors, and other departments fosters a positive work environment and ensures smooth store operations.
- **Time Management and Organization:** Prioritizing tasks, managing multiple responsibilities, and meeting deadlines are essential to maintain operational efficiency in a fast-paced retail environment.
- **Adaptability and Flexibility:** Being able to adapt to changing situations, handle unexpected challenges, and adjust to varying customer demands is important in retail work.
- **Knowledge of Policies and Procedures:** Understanding and following company policies, procedures, and compliance requirements, such as safety regulations and cash handling protocols, is crucial for maintaining a secure and compliant retail environment.
- **Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** Effective verbal and written communication skills, along with the ability to build rapport and connect with customers and colleagues, contribute to a positive and engaging retail experience.

Specific competencies may vary depending on the type of retail establishment and the importance of tailoring skills to align with the requirements of the specific retail sector of interest.

According to 126,121 Washington job postings with the keyword “retail” from March 2022 to March 2023, the below tables include the most repeated skills sought by employers. The terms below are from paid job postings by employers which often reflect the most essential skills sought and are typically not an exhaustive list due to the financial cost of advertisements.

Most Desired Hard Skills

Skill Name	Active Job Ads
Retail Sales	22,071
Microsoft Excel	11,674
Merchandising	11,663
Cash Handling (Cashier)	11,170
Microsoft Office	11,028
Sales	10,859
Ability to Lift 41-50 lbs.	10,497
Ability to Lift 21-30 lbs.	7,204
Hospitality	5,856
Ability to Lift 51-100 lbs.	5,750
Cash Registers	5,656
Microsoft Outlook	5,317
Microsoft Word	4,690
Point of Sale Systems (POS Systems)	3,817
Microsoft PowerPoint	3,634
Mathematics	3,595
Finance	3,477
Retail Management	3,394
Personal Computers (PC)	3,007
Ability to Lift 1-10 lbs.	2,995
Presentation	2,887
Using Ladders	2,865
Inventory Control	2,669
Structured Query Language (SQL)	2,663
Bilingual	2,571

Source: JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

Most Desired Soft Skills

Skill Name	Active Job Ads
Communication (Verbal and written skills)	69,799
Customer Service	57,664
Cooperative/Team Player	40,345
Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty	24,226
Organization	21,518
Ability to Work in a Fast-Paced Environment	19,950
Interpersonal Relationships/Maintain Relationships	18,538
Supervision/Management	18,011
Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership	17,621
Detail Oriented/Meticulous	17,258
Problem Solving	16,717
Prioritize	11,260
Leadership	11,179
Enthusiastic/Energetic	10,343
Analytical	9,041
Punctual	8,937
Work Ethic/Hard Working	8,538
Multi-Task	8,515
Coachable/Willingness to Learn	8,012
Listening	8,006
Time Management/Time Utilization	7,760
Initiative	6,832
Good Judgment	6,776
Optimism/Positive Attitude	6,158
Coaching/Mentoring	6,009

Source: JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

Most Desired Certifications

Certificate Name	Active Job Ads
Driver's License	3,024
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	514
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	510
First Aid Certification	396
ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification	341
Certified Public Accountant (CPA)	273
National Phlebotomy Association Certified Phlebotomist	267
HAZMAT	243
Associate in Commercial Underwriting (AU)	233
Forklift Certified	229
Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPT)	211
Series 63	169
Project Management Professional (PMP)	167
AED Essentials	128
Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL-A)	115
Basic Life Support (BLS)	111
Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	94
Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System (NMLS)	82
EPA Section 608 Certification (EPA 608)	79
Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT)	61
Registered Pharmacy Technician (RPT)	61
Certified Management Accountant (CMA)	56
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC)	54
Loss Prevention Qualified (LPQ)	53
Registered Medical Assistant	53

Source: JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

Geographic Job Listing Breakdown

Location	Active Job Ads
Seattle	23,456
Bellevue	6,733
Spokane	6,451
Tacoma	5,655
Vancouver	5,004
Everett	3,304
Lynnwood	2,956
Puyallup	2,570
Kent	2,558
Redmond	2,491
Olympia	2,488
Bellingham	2,483
Renton	2,284
Tukwila	2,158
Kennewick	2,007
Auburn	1,779
Federal Way	1,522
Issaquah	1,505
Silverdale	1,500
Yakima	1,420
Kirkland	1,375
Wenatchee	1,331
Valley	1,324
Lacey	1,228
Marysville	1,212

Source: JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

NAICS and SOC Codes

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) are two federal tools that categorize and distinguish between job positions and industries. Below is a brief explanation of each type of code used and the limitations of these organizational systems.

The NAICS is the standard used by federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. It was developed to allow for a high level of comparability in business statistics among the three North American countries. NAICS is based on a production-oriented concept, meaning that it groups establishments into industries according to similarity in the processes used to produce goods or services.

The codes are in a hierarchical structure with the first two digits distinguishing the industry sector. NAICS includes 20 sectors. From there, a 3-digit code is for subsectors, 4-digit for industry groups, 5-digit for NAICS industry, and a 6-digit code for the national industry.

The SOC system more commonly known as “SOC codes” is a federal statistical standard used to classify workers into occupational categories. SOCs have different levels of specificity with 867 detailed occupations, 459 broad occupations, 98 minor groups, and 23 major groups that connect occupations with similar duties, skills, or education. Using SOCs allows connection to other national statistics and assists with potential data updates.

Unfortunately, there is some degree of difficulty in moving between NAICS and SOC codes with consistency. This presents a limitation in our research given that NAICS codes were used for some aspects of the project while SOC codes were used for others. Future updates to the way job data is reported and synthesized would enable further expansion and updating of this research.

Retail Jobs by Career Stage Interactive Tree Map

One aspect of this research intended to make data exploration easier is the interactive career stage tree map. The interactive map allows users to visualize the connections between retail positions at all career stages and explore the average path taken to reach a particular position.

Follow the link below to the interactive map containing retail industry and occupation data up to Quarter 3 2022. This data is explored further in the Top 10 tables and charts in the report, but the interactive map contains significantly more data overall from Q4 2022 employment data.

<https://tinyurl.com/retailworkforcemap>

Retail Trade in Washington, 2022 Q4

NAICS	Industry	Current				5-Year History		3-Year Forecast				
		# of Employees	Avg. Annual Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Location Quotient	Employee Change	Annual %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl. Growth	Annual %
455	General Merchandise	77,458	\$41,958	\$19.84	1.04	-4,767	-1.2%	37,015	15,093	20,128	1,794	0.8%
445	Food and Beverage	72,498	\$38,340	\$18.99	0.97	1,856	0.5%	34,484	15,282	19,152	49	0.0%
459	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, Book, and Misc.	49,348	\$47,199	\$21.05	1.22	-13,272	-4.7%	19,747	8,369	11,411	-34	0.0%
441	Motor Vehicle and Parts	42,898	\$76,577	\$22.14	0.90	-2,829	-1.3%	16,588	6,203	9,334	1,050	0.8%
444	Building and Garden	34,274	\$48,173	\$20.38	1.02	1,708	1.0%	15,339	6,084	8,383	872	0.8%
449	Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Appliance	23,144	\$65,915	\$21.40	1.05	-4,463	-3.5%	8,714	3,501	5,225	-11	0.0%
456	Health and Personal Care	21,275	\$56,148	\$29.21	0.76	-5,853	-4.7%	7,588	3,318	4,265	5	0.0%
458	Clothing, Clothing Accessories, Shoe, and Jewelry	21,222	\$48,252	\$20.41	0.74	-11,198	-8.1%	9,205	3,831	5,000	374	0.6%
457	Gasoline Stations and Fuel	14,779	\$35,181	\$19.42	0.62	496	0.7%	7,262	3,536	3,856	-130	-0.3%
44	Retail Trade (Total Retail)	356,897	\$49,402	\$20.45	0.96	-38,323	-2.0%	156,207	65,566	86,612	4,029	0.4%
	Total - All Industries Across All Sectors	3,724,757	\$82,962	N/A	1.00	224,307	1.2%	1,445,182	547,050	762,026	136,107	1.2%

Industry Subsectors (NAICS) and 3 Year Forecast

Washington state data from BLS Q4 2022 – Exported through JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics May 23, 2023

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

The table above provides an overview of the retail industry in Washington State as of Q4 2022. Almost all of the industry subsectors are projected to see some annual growth in the next three years according to JobsEQ. The only industry projected to see a decrease is gasoline stations and fuel dealers, potentially due to the increase in adoption of electric vehicles. The largest projected growth is 0.8 percent for general merchandise retailers, motor vehicle and parts dealers, and building material and garden equipment supplies dealers. National projected annual growth is 1.2 percent, which is higher than the overall projected growth in the retail sector at 0.4percent. The five-year history for Washington retail positions shows significant decreases due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the industry. The retail industry is still recovering from the effects of the pandemic as shown in the 3-year employment forecast.

Additionally, the average annual wages reported in the table might not reflect full-time employment for every position. Part-time employment is common in the retail industry, so when workers' wages are summarized in an average format the resulting number does not necessarily reflect 40 hours per week of work. Chmura economics and analytics, the provider of the data shown above, states that "wage data represent the average for all Covered Employment," not necessarily full-time employment.

Skills and Competencies by Occupational Level

Occupational Level	Soft Skills	Hard Skills
Entry-Level	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication 2. Customer Service 3. Cooperative/Team Player 4. Adaptability/Flexibility 5. Organization 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to lift 41-50 pounds 2. Ability to lift 51-100 pounds 3. Retail Sales 4. Sales 5. Microsoft Office
Intermediate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication 2. Customer Service 3. Cooperative/Team Player 4. Problem Solving 5. Organization 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Microsoft Office 2. Microsoft Excel 3. Microsoft Outlook 4. Retail Sales 5. Microsoft Word
Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication 2. Cooperative/Team Player 3. Supervision/Management 4. Analytical 5. Problem Solving 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Microsoft Excel 2. Amazon Web Services 3. Agile 4. Structured Query Language 5. Microsoft Office
Corporate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication 2. Cooperative/Team Player 3. Detail Oriented/Meticulous 4. Customer Service 5. Organization 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Microsoft Excel 2. Microsoft Office 3. Microsoft Outlook 4. Accounting 5. Finance
Specialized	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication 2. Cooperative/Team Player 3. Problem Solving 4. Customer Service 5. Self-Motivated/Ability to Work independently 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Computer Programming/Coding 2. Java 3. Amazon Web Services 4. Python 5. Java Script

The five levels for occupations distinguished in this report are: entry-level, intermediate, management, corporate, and specialized. The lowest level is considered to be entry-level and the highest is considered to either be corporate or specialized, with intermediate and management being steppingstones connecting the levels from top to bottom. As workers ascend in the business hierarchy, each level requires more than the previous with regards to skills, education and on-the-job (OTJ) training.

To analyze the differences in these criteria at each level, Real Time Intelligence (RTI) job postings data was examined. The national data set with 45,000 source websites shows the number of job postings for each level and their corresponding hard skills, soft skills, education levels, and OTJ training, among other criteria. Hard skills are considered to be measurable skills that are specific to the job, while soft skills are less obviously quantifiable. Soft skills are transferable and tend to refer to dynamic response to

workplace conditions. The top five hard and soft skills for each level are listed, along with the most common education and OTJ training metric listed.

Starting with entry-level, the most common hard skills listed in the job postings are physical. The ability to lift anywhere from 41-100 pounds is the most common, listed on 21 percent of postings. Sales are the next most common, whether it be retail or general, listed on 13 percent of postings. The final hard skill listed is Microsoft office appearing on 6 percent of job postings. The top soft skills listed are communication at 44 percent, customer service at 33 percent, ability to work in a team at 24 percent, and organization/flexibility both at 14 percent. The most common education required is a high school degree, with only 16 percent of the job postings mentioning a bachelor's degree. Finally, 74 percent of OTJ is commonly defined as short, meaning less than six months of duration.

Intermediate hard skills most commonly mentioned for positions include those that are computer based. Microsoft Office is the most common at 16 percent, followed by Microsoft Excel at 15 percent, Microsoft Outlook at 8 percent, and Microsoft Word at 7 percent. Retail sales are also mentioned on 7 percent of job postings. However, the soft skills listed are almost identical to entry-level with communication, customer service, and ability to work in a team being the top three most commonly listed in job postings. Organization is also listed in 14 percent of postings, with problem solving being the only soft skill listed for intermediate that is not in the top five for entry-level. The most common education listed is high school diploma or equivalent, with a bachelor's degree being the second most common. Thirty-five percent of OTJ training is classified as either short or none provided.

The management tier hard skills are almost exclusively computer based. Microsoft Excel is the top hard skill listed at 16 percent, followed by Amazon Web Services and Agile at 12 percent, and Structured Query Language and Microsoft Office at 11 percent. The top soft skills listed are similar to those listed at for Entry-Level and Intermediate tiers, where communication is at 72 percent and being a cooperative team player is at 56 percent. Supervision/Management is listed at 41 percent, and analytical and problem solving are both at 26 percent. Unlike the first two tiers, a bachelor's degree is the most common education level listed at 56 percent. All the postings listed in the management section mentioned no OTJ training.

The corporate tier's top three hard skills are also computer based, with Microsoft Excel at 31 percent, Microsoft Office at 23 percent, and Microsoft Outlook at 12 percent. Hard skills in accounting and finance are both at 12 percent. Four of the five top soft skills are similar to other tiers, with communication at 63 percent, being a cooperative/team player at 37 percent, customer service at 27 percent, and organization at 23 percent. Detail oriented/meticulous is a new skill introduced at this level showing up on 27 percent of listings. Once again, a bachelor's degree is the most commonly listed education level and the OTJ training is most frequently classified as moderate.

The specialized segment has the most specific hard skills listed. The most frequent is computer programming/coding at 26 percent, Java at 21 percent, Amazon Web Services at 16 percent, Python at 14 percent, and Java Script at 13 percent. The top two soft skills were similar, with communication and being a cooperative team player being listed most frequently, followed by problem solving and customer service. The final soft skill in the top five was the ability to be self-motivated and work independently, which was not frequently listed in any of the other levels. A bachelor's degree was the most common education level listed with no OTJ training being the most common.

As an employee attempts to work their way up the occupational ladder, more is required of them. After getting past the intermediate level a bachelor's degree is more frequently listed as an educational requirement. In addition, the hard skills become increasingly more computer based after surpassing the entry level and becomes more focused on coding skills towards the top. The soft skills remain relatively the same regardless with communication, customer service, organization, and being a cooperative/team player being the most commonly listed. Being detail oriented and self-motivated emerges at the top tiers. The amount of OTJ training is most commonly classified as short or none, with the corporate level being most often moderate.

Top 10 Retail Occupations in Washington by Employment

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	88,957	\$37,400	\$17.99	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
41-2011	Cashiers	56,493	\$34,100	\$17.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	35,314	\$38,000	\$19.44	Entry-Level	HS	Short
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	30,158	\$52,800	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	11,345	\$41,300	\$22.27	Intermediate	HS	Short
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	8,479	\$32,500	\$16.93	Entry-Level	HS	Short
11-1021	General and Operations Manager	7,136	\$108,900	\$59.87	Management	Bachelors	None
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	6,420	\$37,100	\$20.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	5,688	\$55,600	\$27.24	Specialized	Non-degree Award	Short
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	5,463	\$36,400	\$18.66	Entry-Level	HS	Short

Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

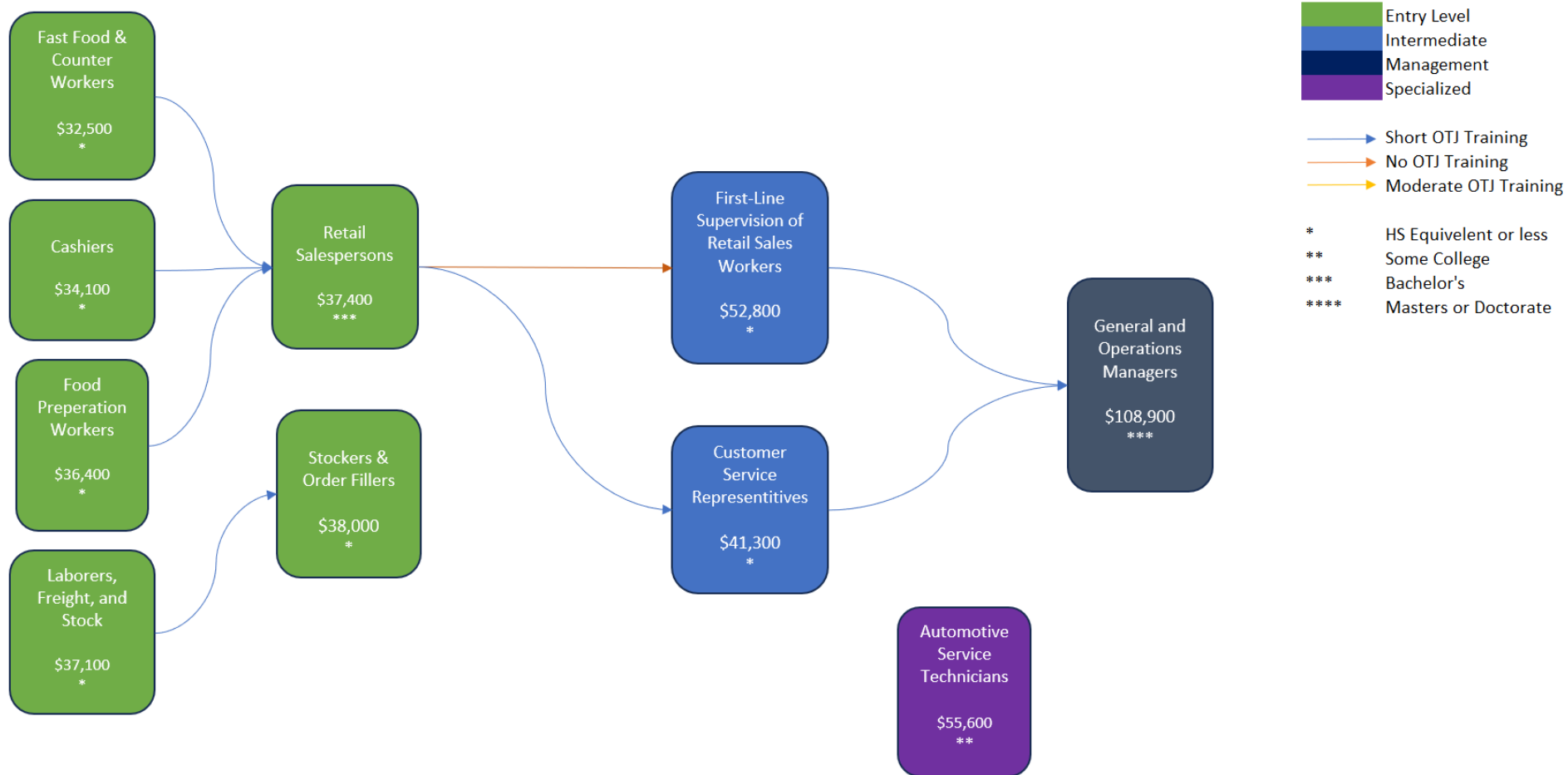
*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

***Education level is the most frequently represented level of education employers are asking for in the examined job postings

This table shows the overall top ten occupations in the retail industry, ranked by number of employees. Retail Salespersons is the top occupation with 88,957 employees and an annual average wage of \$37,400. Out of the top 10 occupations, 6 are entry level positions, 2 are intermediate, 1 is management and 1 is specialized. The majority of on-the-job training is short with 8 of them fitting that category and the other 2 containing no on-the-job training.

Figure 1: Top 10 Retail Positions in Washington



Value of Credentials

Credentials and certifications can play a role in enhancing the effectiveness of individuals in retail jobs. While formal qualifications can certainly provide certain advantages as a proven way to display skills, it's important to recognize that the effectiveness of credentials in the retail sector is influenced by a range of factors. Below are some benefits of credentialing:

Improve Basic Skills and Knowledge: Certain retail positions, particularly those in management or specialized areas like merchandising, may require a degree or relevant certification. These credentials can ensure that individuals possess a foundational understanding of business principles, customer service, inventory management, and other critical aspects of the retail environment. This knowledge can contribute to better decision-making and overall job effectiveness.

Attain Specialized Roles: In some cases, retail jobs necessitate specialized knowledge, such as in the case of pharmacy technicians, mechanics, electronics specialists, or beauty consultants. Credentials in relevant fields can equip employees with the specialty expertise needed to excel in these roles, leading to higher improved job performance.

Career Advancement: Credentials can also be advantageous for career progression within the retail sector. Many large retail companies have established management training programs that require candidates to possess certain educational qualifications. These credentials can provide employees with opportunities for promotion and leadership roles.

Confidence and Credibility: Retail employees with credentials might feel more confident and credible in their roles, which can positively impact their interactions with customers and colleagues. This increased confidence can lead to improved communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and overall effectiveness in handling various situations.

Adaptability and Soft Skills: While credentials offer valuable theoretical knowledge, the retail industry is known for its rapidly changing dynamics and customer interactions. Soft skills such as communication, empathy, adaptability, and problem-solving are crucial in retail jobs. While credentials may not directly address these skills, a combination of formal education and the development of soft skills can lead to a well-rounded and effective retail employee.

On the other hand, significant research supports the fact that employers prefer college degrees to certifications. Short-term credentials have become much more popular over the last decade, especially with major employers creating their own credential packages, but according to Harvard Business Review and Northeastern University, more than half of job openings still prefer a bachelor's degree.² This is shown by the significant rate of bachelor's achievement among retail related positions. While those positions generally do not *require* a degree, many of the workers in intermediate and above retail positions do have some level of collegiate attainment, whether associates or bachelors. In particular, business, marketing, and communications degrees lend themselves to the retail market.

² Harvard Business Review, 2019

Certification is a steadily growing market in itself, moving from 3.2 million certificates awarded in 2002-2003 to 5.2 million in 2020-2021 according to the National Center for Education Statistics.³ As much as one-quarter of the U.S. workforce has a noncredit certificate, license, or award.⁴

In terms of market outcomes, the level of benefits provided by certification vary significantly depending on the awarding institution and chosen industry. While bachelor's and associate degrees show positive lifetime earnings increases, short-term certifications (across all industry sectors) have mixed results, sometimes improving earnings, sometimes not being worth the certification expense. The Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment has found conflicting information in a meta-analysis of short-term certification, although in general, the longer the program, the greater the expected return, and certificates with accreditation had greater value. A 2012 Washington Study by the Community College Research Center found no long-term impact from short-term certification, and actually had negative returns for women regarding employment status.⁵ This raises a significant question: is short-term certification worth it? Short-term certification in the retail space generally connects to low earning jobs, but specialized and management level roles did see major income increases.

The recognition and articulation of retail industry credentials into academic degrees and certificates play a crucial role in enhancing the value of short-term certifications. Per a 2018 Brookings Institution report, the long-term value of short-term certifications often diminishes over time due to the absence of clear pathways for ongoing education. Currently, only a fraction of the workforce possesses "stackable" credentials, and obstacles between private and public academic institutions in terms of credit transfer serve as significant impediments to advancing education. This highlights the importance of establishing seamless mechanisms for the integration of industry-recognized credentials into academic programs, ensuring that individuals can continuously build on their qualifications and skills for sustained career growth.

Another significant issue with short-term certification is the level of recognizance of specific certifications. One of the things that gives awards value is the awarding entity, and their level of influence. Rutgers University recently completed a significant study on credential market quality and found that the fragmentation of the credential market and the lack of generalized norms among certifications reduces the quality of awards.⁶ There are 5,832 recorded award granting institutions nationally, many of them with significant differences in approach, standards, and length. This is generally why employers prefer degrees, as universities have a relatively standardized education process demonstrated by being accredited by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or another accrediting agency. Additionally, the longer term of 2–4-year degree attainment shows a certain level of commitment.

Educational institutions which create statewide norms, or market-influencing businesses adopting specific standards tend to make the most impact regarding improving short-term credential quality.

³ National Center for Education Statistics, 2022

⁴ New America, 2021

⁵ Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment, 2017

⁶ Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations, 2023

Microsoft and Google specifically made changes to the short-term credential market when they began accepting Microsoft and Google training programs and certifications for hiring.

This preference for two- and four-year degrees over shorter term credentials is in turn partially responsible for the inflation of baccalaureate degree preference for entry-level retail positions. Many employers in the retail industry now favor bachelor's degrees for roles that traditionally didn't demand such qualifications, which can lead to an oversupply of overqualified candidates and a mismatch between job requirements and the educational background needed. This trend calls for a more balanced and skills-focused approach to hiring in the retail sector to ensure that academic qualifications align with the actual job demands. Degrees are being used as a proxy for skill level, when the industry should move toward recognizing credentials and work experience as more accurate representations of a potential employee's abilities.

Available research consistently reaches a common conclusion: the value of certification is highly dependent on the occupation, awarding entity, length of education, employer, and industry. In the retail space, retail management and business degrees are the most sought-after award, with longer degree attainment providing on average the highest returns in income increases, career advancement, and likelihood of employment. For example, the average annual wage of General and Operations Managers in Washington is \$108,900 compared to the average annual wage of retail salespersons in the state of \$37,400.⁷ The level of education preferred for general and operations managers is generally a bachelor's or master's degree, while the level of education desired by employers to be a retail salesperson is a high school diploma or bachelor's degree. Of course, there is also a range of credential and certification levels between high school and a baccalaureate degree. While the data from the job advertisements we analyzed show that the most popular level of education listed by employers for "retail salesperson" is a college degree, not all employers prefer this requirement. As stated earlier in this report, using college degrees as proxies for skill level is an inefficient practice that excludes otherwise qualified candidates.

Retail Turnover and Promotion

Some pieces that also require specific mention when regarding the retail industry are turnover rate and promotion rates. The retail industry is unique with an extremely high turnover ratio. A 2022 survey from 100 major retailers with average revenue between \$100 million to \$20 billion by Korn Ferry shows a 75.8 percent turnover ratio for hourly in-store retail workers.⁸ Part-time employees had even higher turnover at 85 percent. For managers and assistant managers, turnover also remains higher than national standards, with 17.7 percent and 29.2 percent turnover respectively. This annual change is a standard piece of the retail industry, bringing its own benefits and detriments.

The benefit of this high turnover rate is connected significantly to career advancement in the retail space. As many retail positions have very similar needs in terms of soft skills and basic knowledge, the ability to transfer into another position or another industry is very high. This is exemplified in the NAICS industry chart, with a very high number of employment transfers. Retail-related positions often have very similar wage levels and responsibilities, encouraging employees to change jobs to attain a higher offered wage. Many employees will learn valuable skills similar to certification through on-the-job

⁷ JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics, 2023

⁸ Korn Ferry, 2022

training or just by working for a period of time and can transfer those skills to another job or industry. Retail workers are often suited to hospitality, warehousing, delivery, and service professions.

One of the major detriments of such turnover is the related promotion rate within the retail industry. The retail industry generally has lower levels of benefits and incentives for employees to take on additional labor, with a lower than national average internal promotion rate of 8.9 percent according to research by ADP. This indicates that the vast majority of intermediate to management positions transfer into those jobs, they are not promoted from entry level positions. This is one area to focus on regarding retail career advancement, as internal opportunities and incentives are lacking in this space.

The span of control or hierarchal distance is also generally higher in the retail space, which can generate animosity between levels of the hierarchy. Managers usually have significant power over employees and incentives, which leads to significant variation depending on individual management style and policy. This is one contributing factor to high turnover rates which should be considered.

Credential Finder

Credential finder is an accessible tool used to explore all information published in the Credential Registry. We chose to use credential finder as our data source due to recommendation from the Retail Association, the credential work on Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL), and their wide accessibility among training seekers. Credential Finder displays over 25 different credential types ranging from different forms of collegiate degrees to apprenticeships to various forms of certifications. When examining Washington and focusing on the retail industry, there are 84 credentials that are specifically identified, mapped below. The table below lists these 84 credentials by the title, type, and location.

As far as “pathways,” employees generally choose a discipline on their own to participate in one of the occupation/industry groups described previously. As most certificates are non-stackable, study towards higher degree attainment like an associate degree is usually separate from certification. Certifications are most useful for entry level positions or for those lacking formal education or previous job experience.

The discussion of retail industry pathways should extend beyond a sole focus on stackable credentials, recognizing that there are alternative approaches to incremental educational attainment that can be highly valuable. An example of this is Highline College's 39-credit Retail Management Certificate which is available entirely online. The program's endorsement by the Western Association of Food Chains (WAFC) underlines its industry relevance and alignment with the needs of prominent retailers like Safeway and Fred Meyer, where many students come from. The successful implementation of cohort-based learning for employees of larger retail companies underscores the importance of group engagement in enhancing retention and success rates, emphasizing the significance of educational pathways that cater to the specific needs and preferences of retail professionals.

Occupation	Type of Award	Location
Meatcutter, Retail	Apprenticeship Certificate	Seattle Meatcutters Apprenticeship Committee
Café Manager/Store Manager	Apprenticeship Certificate	FareStart
Retail Management	Associate degree	Shoreline Community College

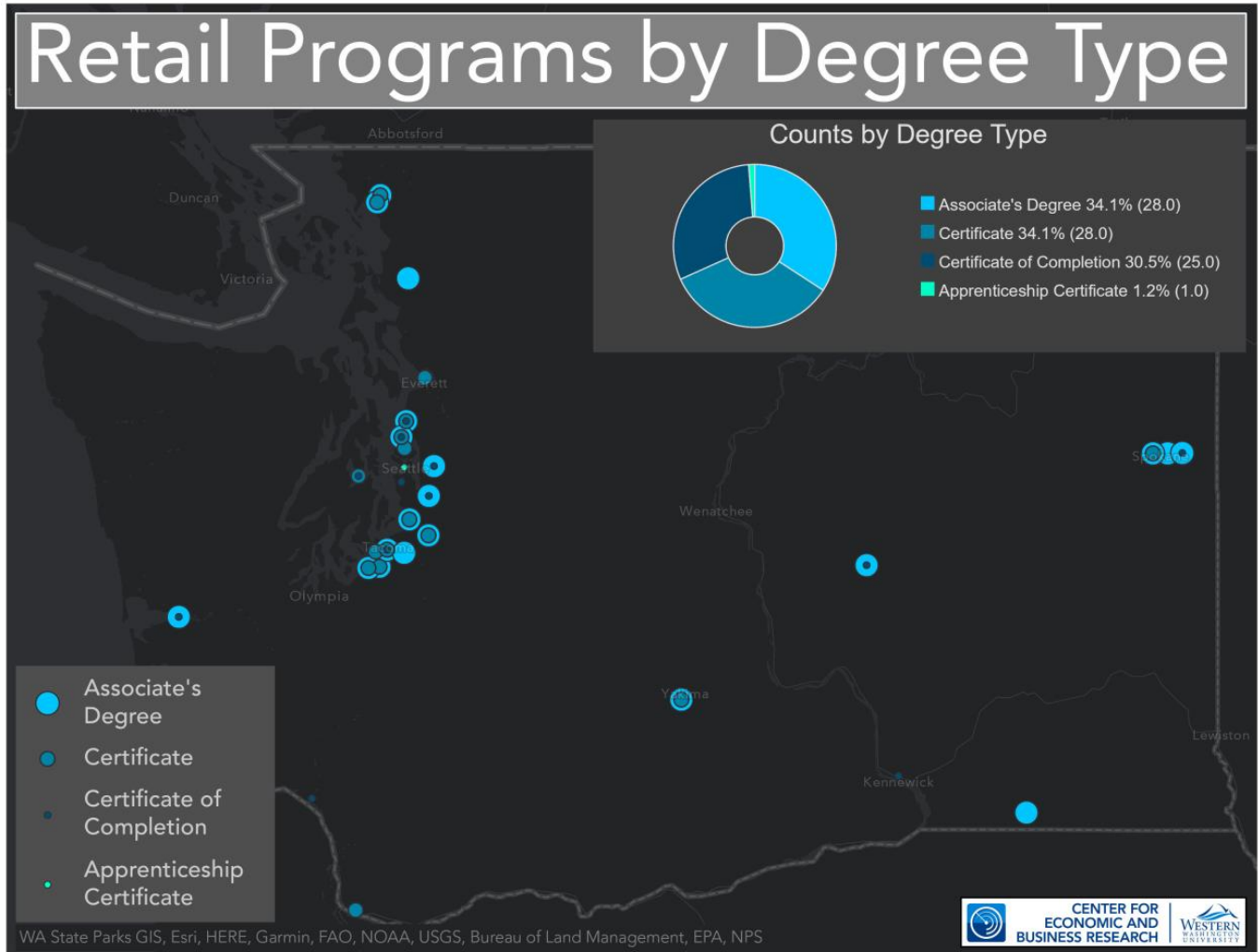
Retail Business Management	Associate degree	Clover Park Technical College
Professional Sales	Associate degree	Highline College
Business Management	Associate degree	Skagit Valley College
Business	Associate degree	Highline College
Professional Baking	Associate degree	Renton Technical College
Accounting Technician	Associate degree	Big Bend Community College
Enology and Viticulture	Associate degree	Walla Walla Community College
Business Management	Associate degree	Grays Harbor College
Nursery/Greenhouse	Associate degree	Edmonds College
Business Administration	Associate degree	Whatcom Community College
Winery Technology	Associate degree	Yakima Valley College
Interior Design	Associate degree	Spokane Falls Community College
Marketing	Associate degree	Spokane Community College
Baking	Associate degree	Edmonds College
Culinary Arts-Baking	Associate degree	Edmonds College
Database Management and Development	Associate degree	Bates Technical College
Business Management	Associate degree	Bellevue College
Database Technology	Associate degree	Bates Technical College
Occupational Safety & Health Technician (collab w/Dec)	Associate degree	Pierce College
Pharmacy Technician	Associate degree	Renton Technical College
Accounting	Associate degree	Bellingham Technical College
Carpentry Technology-Residential and Light Commercial Carpentry	Associate degree	Green River College
Marketing	Associate degree	Shoreline Community College
Cosmetology	Associate degree	Bellingham Technical College
Pharmacy Technology	Associate degree	Carrington College
Business Management	Associate degree	Olympic Management
Interior Design	Associate degree	Spokane Falls Community College
Retail Management	Certificate	Pierce College
Retail Management	Certificate	Everett Community College
Retail Management	Certificate	Yakima Valley College
Retail Management	Certificate	Whatcom Community College
Retail Management (WAFC)	Certificate	Highline College
Retail Management	Certificate	Spokane Falls Community College
Retail Management	Certificate	Clover Park Technical College
Retail Management (WAFC)	Certificate	Tacoma Community College
Business Management-Retail Management	Certificate	Edmonds College
Business Management-Retail Management	Certificate	Green River College
Business Management- Business Foundations	Certificate	Green River College
Introduction to Customer Service	Certificate	Highline College

Pharmacy Technician	Certificate	Clover Park Technical College
Business Marketing	Certificate	Yakima Valley College
Business Management	Certificate	Yakima Valley College
Office Assistant	Certificate	Bellingham Technical College
Receptionist	Certificate	Bellingham Technical College
Management	Certificate	Tacoma Community College
Marketing	Certificate	Clark College
Marketing	Certificate	Shoreline Community College
Accounting Fraud	Certificate	North Seattle College
Database Technician	Certificate	Bates Technical College
Accounting Assistant	Certificate	Bellingham Technical College
Construction Safety Technician	Certificate	Pierce College
General Office Support	Certificate	Olympic College
Pharmacy Technician	Certificate	Yakima Valley College
Marketing	Certificate	Pierce College
Retail Management	Certificate	Shoreline Community College
Retail Marketing	Certificate of Completion	Bellevue College
Retail Management	Certificate of Completion	Lower Columbia College
Retail Management	Certificate of Completion	Shoreline Community College
Retail Management	Certificate of Completion	Grays Harbor College
Retail Management (WAFC)	Certificate of Completion	Olympic College
Retail/Wholesale Baking	Certificate of Completion	Olympic College
Retail Management Fundamentals	Certificate of Completion	Edmonds College
GES236 Retail Customer Service Skills Training	Certificate of Completion	South Seattle College
Retail Management Western Assoc. of Food Chains (WAFC)	Certificate of Completion	Shoreline Community College
Promotional Marketing	Certificate of Completion	Bellevue College
Sales	Certificate of Completion	Bellevue College
Sales	Certificate of Completion	Columbia Basin College
Customer Service	Certificate of Completion	Edmonds College
Professional Baking	Certificate of Completion	Renton Technical College
Business Management	Certificate of Completion	Grays Harbor College

Small Business/Entrepreneurship	Certificate of Completion	Grays Harbor College
Accounting Principles Proficiency	Certificate of Completion	Big Bend Community College
Marketing	Certificate of Completion	Shoreline Community College
Entrepreneurship	Certificate of Completion	Shoreline Community College
Inventory/Stock Specialist	Certificate of Completion	Bates Technical College
Vehicle Parts Counter Person	Certificate of Completion	Bates Technical College
Warehouse/Distribution Specialist	Certificate of Completion	Bates Technical College
Pharmacy Technician	Certificate of Completion	Renton Technical College
Optician Certifications Training	Certificate of Completion	South Seattle College
Massage Therapy	Certificate of Completion	Carrington College
Master Makeup Arts	Diploma	TINT School of Makeup & Cosmetics

Included below is a map of the 84 credential programs and their locations in Washington state. Notably, a large number of credential programs are clustered in the Western part of the state.

Figure 12: Location of Retail Programs in Washington by Type of Degree



In Washington, the most popular kind of credential is certificates at 28 followed by associate degrees at 27, then certificates of completion at 26. There were two apprenticeship certificates and one diploma listed as well. There are 32 different locations at which these credentials can be obtained, with the majority from community colleges in Western Washington.

Below is a table listing the definitions of the 5 different credentials that are listed in Washington for the retail industry.

Apprenticeship Certificate	Associate degree	Certificate	Certificate of Completion	Bachelor's Degree
A credential earned through work-based learning and postsecondary earn-and-learn models that meet national standards and are applicable to industry trades and professions	An award level that normally requires at least 2 but less than 4 years of full time-equivalent college-level work	A credential that designates requisite mastery of the knowledge and skills of an occupation, profession, or academic program	Credential that acknowledges completion of an assignment, training or other activity	An award by an educational institution for successful completion of the requirements of a course of study or equivalent

As mentioned before, awards are significantly fractured depending on their awarding institution. A “Retail Management Certificate” can range from 3-18+ months, with vastly different levels of completion and required coursework. Diplomas and Certificates of Completion fall into the same category. Apprenticeships generally have an industry agreed-upon training and testing, while associate degrees require a standardized 60 credit hours.

Important to note is the distinction between a certificate and a certificate of completion. While they sound similar, a certificate of completion acknowledges that an individual completed a training or course, but no mastery of the subject material is required. A certificate designates mastery of the subject material and is therefore more valuable.

Business Management, Retail Management, and Marketing were the three most popular titles with most of them being certificates, and the rest being either certificates of completion or associate degrees. These three credentials account for 37 percent of the titles listed. Accounting, Database Management, Interior Design, Pharmacy Technicians, Baking, and Sales all had multiple credentials available.

Washington Retail Awards

The following tables display the number of awards available for various retail skills as well as the expected gaps in the labor market for retail employees with those awards. There are a total of 331 awards available in Washington with many awards covering the same skillset.

CIP Code	Title	Certificate < 1 Year	Certificate 1+ but < 2 Year	Associate's	Certificate 2+ but < 4 Year	Bachelor's	Total Awards
52.1803	Retailing and Retail Operations	62	21	0	0	4	87
09.0903	Advertising	1	0	0	0	75	76
52.0212	Retail Management	48	2	10	0	0	60
52.1804	Selling Skills and Sales Operations	26	9	4	0	0	39
52.1501	Real Estate	13	0	3	0	7	23
52.0903	Tourism and Travel Services Management	2	0	0	0	12	14
52.1902	Fashion Merchandising	0	0	0	0	11	11
52.1905	Tourism and Travel Services Marketing Operations	1	0	9	0	0	10
52.0804	Financial Planning and Services	0	0	0	0	4	4
52.0411	Customer Service Support/Call Center/Teleservice Operation	2	0	1	0	0	3
52.1909	Special Products Marketing Operations	0	0	0	0	2	2
52.0208	E-Commerce/Electronic Commerce	0	0	1	0	0	1
52.1701	Insurance	0	0	0	0	1	1
19.0203	Consumer Merchandising/Retailing Management	0	0	0	0	0	0
52.0207	Customer Service Management	0	0	0	0	0	0
04.1001	Real Estate Development	0	0	0	0	0	0
52.1907	Vehicle and Vehicle Parts and Accessories Marketing Operations	0	0	0	0	0	0
00.0000	Total	155	32	28	0	116	331

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2020-2021

Washington Labor Market Award Gaps

CIP Code	Title	Total Award Gap	<2yrs Gap	Associate's Gap	Bachelor's Gap	Master's Gap	PhD Gap
52.0212	Retail Management	-1077	-327	-121	-425	-161	-43

SOC	Occupation	<2yr	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	PhD
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	-327	-121	-425	-143	-19
25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary	0	0	0	-18	-24

According to RTI data, and data from the NCES on awards, award gaps show the local difference in requested talent. Searching in the retail space only retrieved data for the Retail Management CIP code and its local relation to General and Operations Managers in the retail space. There is also some small demand for Business Teachers, but these are generally for MBA or other programs related to retail, not standard worker pathways. This aspect of the report may not be as strong as ideal due to data limitations on the awards gaps for non-management retail positions. If additional data is released in the future, expansion of this section of the research would prove useful in determining which kind of awards are most in need in the state's retail workforce.

Action Points

Two main action points arose as a result of this research. The first is the need to standardize credentials within the retail industry as accreditation for various retail skills and awards varies significantly by institutions. For example, while there are multiple programs offered for retail management in Washington, they might all have different coursework requirements or credit hours required. This makes it difficult for employers to discern between potential employees and also makes it difficult for employees to identify which award program will provide them with the highest value both in that coursework itself but also for future coursework that could expand on it.

The second action point is the ability to transfer credits and continue education. Often this is referred to as making credits "stackable" in which an individual can earn a series of credentials that culminate in a degree or certificate that is more valuable as a whole. Within this report references to stacking could include multiple course sequences from a single institution or combining coursework from among multiple institutions using a non-linear education pathway. Other opportunities to build up credits include micro-credentials and smaller increments of training and education. Currently, only a small percentage of the retail workforce possesses stackable credits, limiting their ability to pursue further education that benefits their career. If there were a greater number of stackable credits to be earned, employees would have an easier time working towards a retail skill award. The ability to work towards connecting to broader education and training pathways, linear or non-linear, creates motivation to pursue further training and will benefit the retail industry as the nature of retail work evolves.

Pathways to Action Points

The pathways toward achieving the two action points noted above involve some aspects of education and/or industry standardization. Because of the lack of generalized norms among credits with either

similar or the same titles, it would be useful to standardize and condense credential programs by either using common definitions or common definitional criteria within the various programs. Both employers and employees would benefit from this action as the value of credentials would be clearer, and the skills employees gain in credential-issuing programs would be more uniform regardless of the institution in which the program is located. Another piece of educational and industry standardization of awards is making credits stackable in some way that would allow an employee to leverage multiple educational sequences throughout their career. This action enables employees to work towards a clear educational path forward and attain the college degrees that some employers have demonstrated a clear preference for.

An additional action point involves the industry actively participating in the identification of its distinct skill requirements and offering transparent employment outcomes for those skillsets. Education and training providers should prioritize aligning credentials, certificates, and degrees with these industry-specific skill needs. Both the industry and educational institutions should collaborate to ensure that learning and career pathways are clearly visible to workers, enabling them to make informed choices regarding when and how to invest in their education. This approach should also encompass alternative opportunities for workers to attain credentials while employed, such as gaining workplace experience or obtaining industry-recognized certifications, with the option of converting this work-based expertise into academic credit to support their educational progress.

Additional Research

Throughout the research process, opportunities arose for further research that is not covered in the scope of this report. Aside from the data limitations noted in earlier sections, it would be useful to unpack the data within the credential finder tool in greater depth to learn what credentials might be eligible for stackability or non-linear sequencing. This information would enable the researcher to learn what credentials serve the same function and could therefore be combined into one credential, reducing fragmentation of awards.

Additionally, a majority of credential programs are earned at institutions in Western Washington. While this is somewhat expected due to the geographic population distribution in Washington, further research on the availability of programs in the Central and Eastern portions of the state would be useful in determining if the current award program offerings are sufficient for the business communities located there.

Policy Recommendations

Enabling legislation for this report, HB2019, directed the Workforce Board and stakeholder partners to formulate recommendations around four specific topics in the following section. These stakeholders worked with the Workforce Board and contractor to come to a consensus on the following recommendations.

- 1. Strategies to develop additional courses, pathways, and apprenticeships to make retail certifications and credentials available and easily navigable for job seekers and current retail employees.**

Recommendation 1: Establish a collaborative industry work group to design retail sector training programs, spanning entry-level to management roles, addressing gaps outlined in the report.

Stakeholders would include representatives from businesses, labor, education, and workforce development.

This work group will play a pivotal role in designing a comprehensive spectrum of training programs, catering to a wide range of roles, from entry-level positions to management. Its primary focus will be to bridge the identified gaps in the current retail workforce landscape, and work to ensure employers' demands for specific skills and competencies are met. The work group will work to establish a system that emphasizes the importance of industry-recognized credentials, enabling employers to readily identify qualified candidates and workers who have attained skills necessary for employment. Where possible, these credentialing and training programs should align with broader educational systems and career pathways.

A collaboration of business, labor, community-based organizations and education partnerships, these regionally-based work groups can draw inspiration from Industry Skill Panels previously established in Washington. Business participants should include representatives of multiple sizes from small and medium-owned businesses up to major national and international retailers. The work group would also focus on removing barriers for workers from underserved communities.

The initial focus should be on entry and intermediate levels, with potential expansion to associate degree certificates and the integration of the pre-existing training and certification programs. Pilot programs can be used to gauge the effectiveness and relevance of existing curriculum and trainings and offer participants the opportunity to demonstrate their credentials and evaluate if they can be articulated into college credit or recognized as an in-demand industry credential.

***Recommendation 2:** Conduct pilot programs for short-term credentialing and micro credentialing programs relevant to the retail sector.*

The retail workforce study stakeholder group identified several existing programs relevant to the retail industry that could be piloted. If proven successful and provide value for workers and employers, these could then be articulated into programs for college credit. These include:

- Rise Up: a training and credentialing program established by the National Retail Foundation that provides foundational employability skills to help people land jobs and get promoted in retail and beyond.
- Education design labs: a series of nine 21st Century skills micro-credentials, culminating in a digital badge.

2. Strategies to build a network for students and job seekers who complete retail certification courses to connect with potential employers.

***Recommendation 3:** Conduct a feasibility study exploring requirements and capacity necessary to develop a Learning and Employment Record (LER) platform. This platform would provide a comprehensive digital record of an individual's skills, competencies, credentials, and employment history that may be able to show a complete picture of an individual's education and work experiences.*

The proposed Learning and Employment Record System (LERS) is designed to bridge this gap by offering a comprehensive and user-friendly platform that benefits both job seekers and employers in the retail industry. LER systems are already operating successfully in other states such as Virginia, where its

Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation issued over 300,000 verified digital credentials across 114 license types for 40 professions. Using a verified digital platform, employers, industry associations, and educational institutions can now surface relevant opportunities to DPOR licensees, such as jobs, trainings and Continuing Education Credits, association memberships, discounts, and more. Digital credentialing has saved time and cost for agency staff, licensees, and the broader industries DPOR regulates.

Localized efforts are also underway in Washington with a partnership between Greater Spokane Inc, Washington State Student Achievement Council, the Workforce Board, Eastern Washington University, Providence Health Care, technology partner Merit, and others to create an LER network supporting jobseekers, education partners and the business community. Another LER pilot is occurring in conjunction with Washington's development of an apprenticeship pathway to nursing for long-term care workers. Led by the Workforce Board in coordination with LNI and the Board of Nursing, each enrolled CAN or Home Health Aid is provided a digital credential wallet that helps them track their prerequisites, required nursing-related courses, and time on the job to meet apprenticeship requirements. The LER platform also allows for employers to provide information about other accomplishments of the employee and even letters of recommendation.

Comprehensive Record-Keeping: LERS would allow job seekers to maintain a detailed digital record of their employment history, including previous retail positions, skills acquired, relevant training and certifications, and other important achievements. This comprehensive record can be continually updated, providing a clear and verifiable snapshot of an individual's qualifications. These would include credentials commonly sought by retail employers, including first aid, forklift and CDL certification, and others.

Skill Matching: Employers can utilize LERS to search for candidates based on specific skills and qualifications, streamlining the hiring process. Job seekers' profiles would be tagged with relevant keywords and skills, increasing their visibility to potential employers. Employers can also develop templates, or skills and certification menus, which can aid in targeting specific relevant knowledge and skillsets. This data will also be useful to employers in understanding the value of specific certification and training programs to employers.

Certification Verification: The system would enable quick and easy verification of certifications, ensuring the authenticity of an individual's qualifications. This feature would enhance trust and accuracy in the hiring process for both employers and job seekers.

Industry Networking: LERS would also include a networking component, allowing job seekers and employers to connect, exchange information, and build relationships within the retail industry. This feature can help job seekers access mentorship and guidance from experienced professionals.

Training and Promotion/Upskilling: The system could suggest additional training and education opportunities to job seekers based on their career goals, helping them develop the skills necessary to advance in the industry.

Recommendation 4: *Work with education and accreditation bodies to recognize more retail-industry recognized credentials, competency-based credit, and other credit for prior learning avenues.*

There are some instances of awarding college credit for prior learning, work-based credit, competency-based credit, and other programs for experience-based learning, yet many more opportunities exist to expand these offerings. These models are needed in the retail sector to shorten the time and money needed to acquire credentials and credits by including programs that already exist, including dual credit programs in both secondary and postsecondary pathways.

Collaboration between educational and accreditation bodies to recognize a wider array of retail-industry recognized credentials would facilitate more pathway options both within the retail sector, as well as linking to jobs in other industries. This in turn would create additional pathways for workers to earn recognized certifications and competencies that directly align with the demands of the retail sector. This recognition should extend to competency-based credits and other avenues for acknowledging prior learning, ensuring that the skills and knowledge acquired through experience are valued in the academic and professional spheres. South Seattle College’s Multi-Occupational Engineering & Technology (MOET) AAS-T degree is one example of a successful program utilizing this model, enabling students to acquire a degree in as little as six months.

3. Options for engaging and partnering with retail employers to provide courses to incumbent front-line workers for the purpose of up-skilling and promotions, including in-demand, higher paid, non-industry-specific positions within the retail industry.

Recommendation 5: Support funding for existing incumbent worker training programs include the Job Skills Program (JSP) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program.

These well-regarded and highly subscribed programs offer a means to up-skill the existing workforce, allowing employees to gain new skills and competencies necessary for the evolving demands of the retail industry. By investing in these training programs, employers can ensure their workforce remains adaptable and capable of meeting new demands, ultimately benefiting their businesses.

With enhanced training, these programs enable retail workers to acquire new skills and qualifications and pursue promotions and higher-paid positions within the industry. This provides employees the opportunity to move from front-line positions to more specialized and management roles that not only enhances personal and professional growth but also reduces the employee turnover in an industry with historically high turnover rates. This investment in the continuous training and growth of incumbent workers can contribute to a more skilled and adaptable workforce, ultimately boosting the competitiveness and resilience of the retail industry in Washington state.

Recommendation 6: Conduct a feasibility to develop a statewide institutional mapping tool that charts employers offering retail jobs, including required skills and competencies, and potential earnings based on varying levels of credentials and experience.

A statewide institutional and career pathway mapping tool is crucial for the Washington retail industry to address several pressing needs. This would provide a comprehensive and standardized framework for individuals to navigate their career prospects within the retail sector, aiding both job seekers and existing employees in understanding the diverse pathways available to them.

This tool should provide program-specific outcome data, such as numbers of enrollees and completers, employment rates, and wage at placement using a single taxonomy to describe skills, competencies, and experiences that will allow true “apples-to-apples” comparisons across programs for both credential

seekers and employers. The mapping tool would also promote collaboration between educational institutions, employers, and workforce development agencies, fostering a coordinated approach to meet the demands of the industry.

The mapping tool can leverage existing state workforce development systems or, if necessary, integrate new technology to collect and disseminate data. The Career Bridge website⁹ operated by the Workforce Board, for instance, offers some of these capabilities already such as education programs relevant to specific occupations such as retail, as well as wage data for these occupations. This cost-effective approach ensures efficient resource utilization.

4. Options for increasing training and job opportunities in the retail industry for underserved communities and previously incarcerated individuals.

Recommendation 7: Create a statewide database of retail businesses willing and able to hire justice-involved workers and other underserved that have completed relevant retail training.

This database would connect retail employers seeking to hire formerly-justice involved prospective employees with relevant retail training and business-related certificates or degrees from accredited postsecondary institutions. While the Department of Corrections (DOC) maintains a list of "second chance" employers, it is not always up-to-date or comprehensive, and there is a gap in connecting trained individuals directly with prospective employers. Establishing a database akin to the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) list would help bridge the gap by providing a verified and exhaustive resource that connects trained individuals from underserved communities with employers in the retail sector, opening doors to meaningful career opportunities.

Access to prospective employers, complete with contact information, would assist individuals pre- and post-release to identify where to apply for employment. The Department of Corrections also has Reentry and Workforce Navigation services who can help coordinate between database employers and prospective employees during transition, including the ability to connect prior to release or at Reentry Centers in the community.

If successful, this model could be expanded to include other underserved communities including immigrants, refugees, English as a second language communities, citizens with disabilities, and others.

Recommendation 8: Establish guidance on how employers can attract and retain employees, particularly those employees experiencing barriers to employment.

This guidance is intended to aid employers attract and retain employees in a retail sector grappling with high turnover rates and a shortage of qualified staff. It will help employers develop strategies for identifying important aspects of the hiring, promotion and career development pathways of employees and offer jobs that respond to local labor market needs.

Some considerations for these strategies could include guidance on job quality indicators, and their impact on attracting and retaining workers—especially workers from disadvantaged populations. Job quality components can include recruitment and hiring practices, benefits, empowerment and representation, job security and working conditions, organizational culture, pay, skills and career

⁹ <https://wtb.wa.gov/career-resources/career-bridge/>

advancement, and diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Taking these factors into consideration can help employers not only attract a wider talent pool but also increase their commitment to the organization.

Appendix 1: Industries Top 10 Occupational Data

The following section of the report presents employment statistics for the top 10 retail positions in each of the major retail subsectors in Washington. Each table shows the data in a traditional format, and then a figure is presented to better visualize the data. The boxes are color-coded according to the hierarchical level of the position within the industry, while the arrows between boxes indicate pathways that retail employees can take to reach that position. The requested on-the-job training and education levels are noted as well.

The mapping component of this research that is presented below is critical. Often, retail employees desire to move up in their career but don't have the knowledge about what pathways are available. One of the stated purposes of this research project is to provide information to both retail employers and employees about what training and certification options are obtainable in order to provide a well-trained retail workforce in Washington.

General Merchandise

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	19,059	\$37,300	\$17.99	Intermediate	Bachelors	Short
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	15,778	\$38,700	\$19.44	Entry-Level	HS	Short
41-2011	Cashiers	14,012	\$34,000	\$17.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	6,577	\$52,900	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	3,990	\$43,800	\$22.27	Intermediate	HS	Short
41-9099	Sales and Related Workers, All Other	1,872	\$40,400	\$30.32	Entry-Level	Bachelors	None
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	1,706	\$33,000	\$16.93	Entry-Level	HS	Short
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,681	\$39,000	\$20.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1,296	\$74,000	\$34.83	Intermediate	Some College	None
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,245	\$38,200	\$19.70	Entry-Level	HS	Short

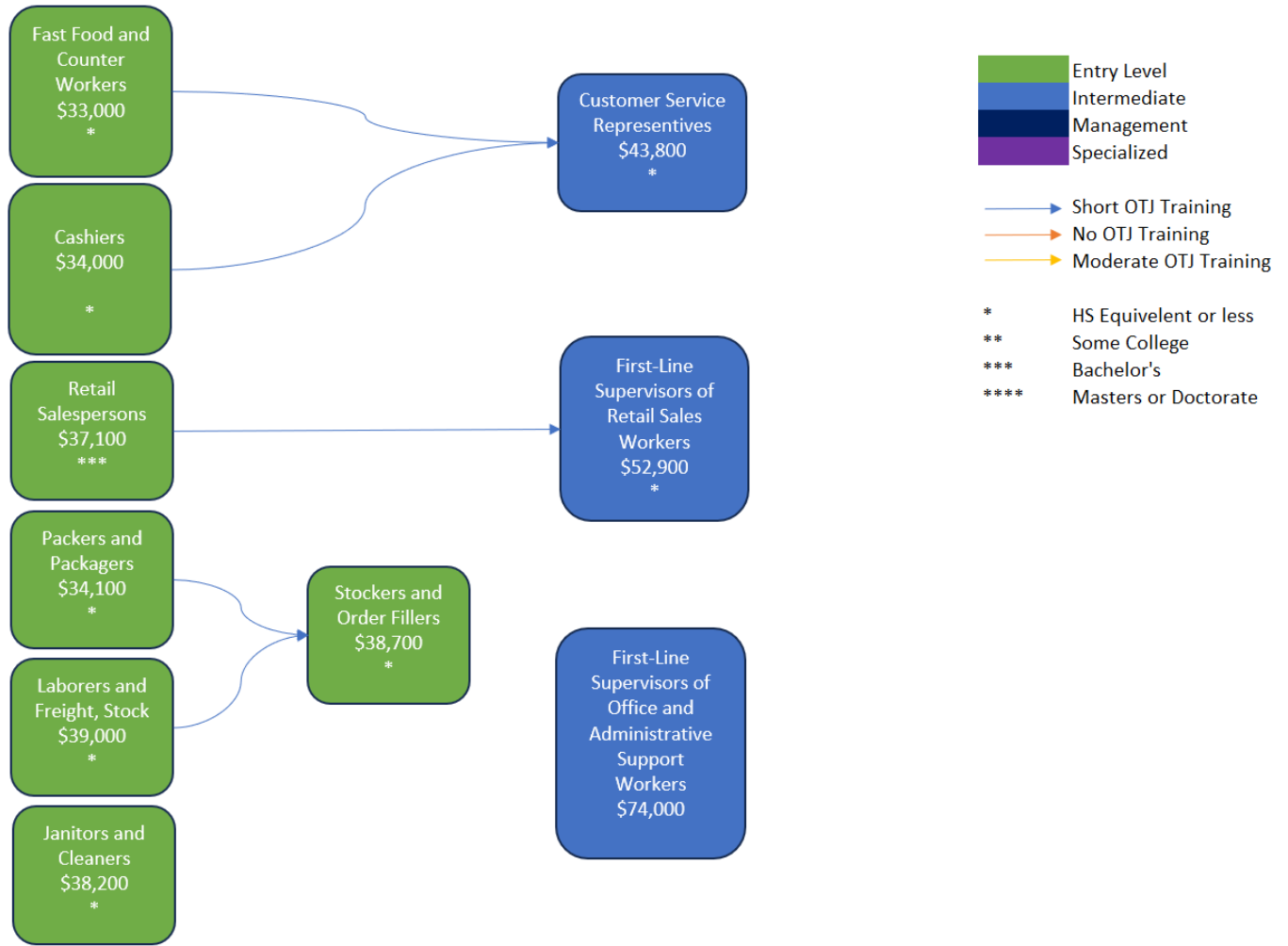
Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

These tables look at each individual industry under the umbrella of retail starting with general merchandise. Once again retail salesperson is the most common occupation with over 19,000 employees. The highest annual wage listed is first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers at \$74,000 and the lowest is cashiers at \$34,000. Six of the occupations are entry-level positions and the remaining four are intermediate. Seven of the occupations require just a HS degree, one requires some college, and the other requires a bachelor's degree. Seven of the OTJ training courses are classified as short, and three are considered to have none.

Figure 2: Top 10 General Merchandise Positions in Washington



Food & Beverage

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2011	Cashiers	19,072	\$33,900	\$17.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	13,101	\$38,600	\$19.44	Entry-Level	HS	Short
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	5,272	\$32,900	\$16.93	Entry-Level	HS	Short
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	4,485	\$36,700	\$18.66	Entry-Level	HS	Short
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	4,375	\$52,500	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	3,102	\$36,900	\$17.99	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
51-3021	Butchers and Meat Cutters	2,862	\$42,800	\$23.07	Entry-Level	HS	Long
43-4051	Customer Representatives	2,449	\$43,900	\$22.27	Intermediate	HS	Short
53-7064	Packers and Packagers, Hand	2,377	\$34,000	\$18.37	Entry-Level	HS	Short
51-3011	Bakers	1,638	\$36,900	\$18.93	Entry-Level	HS	Moderate

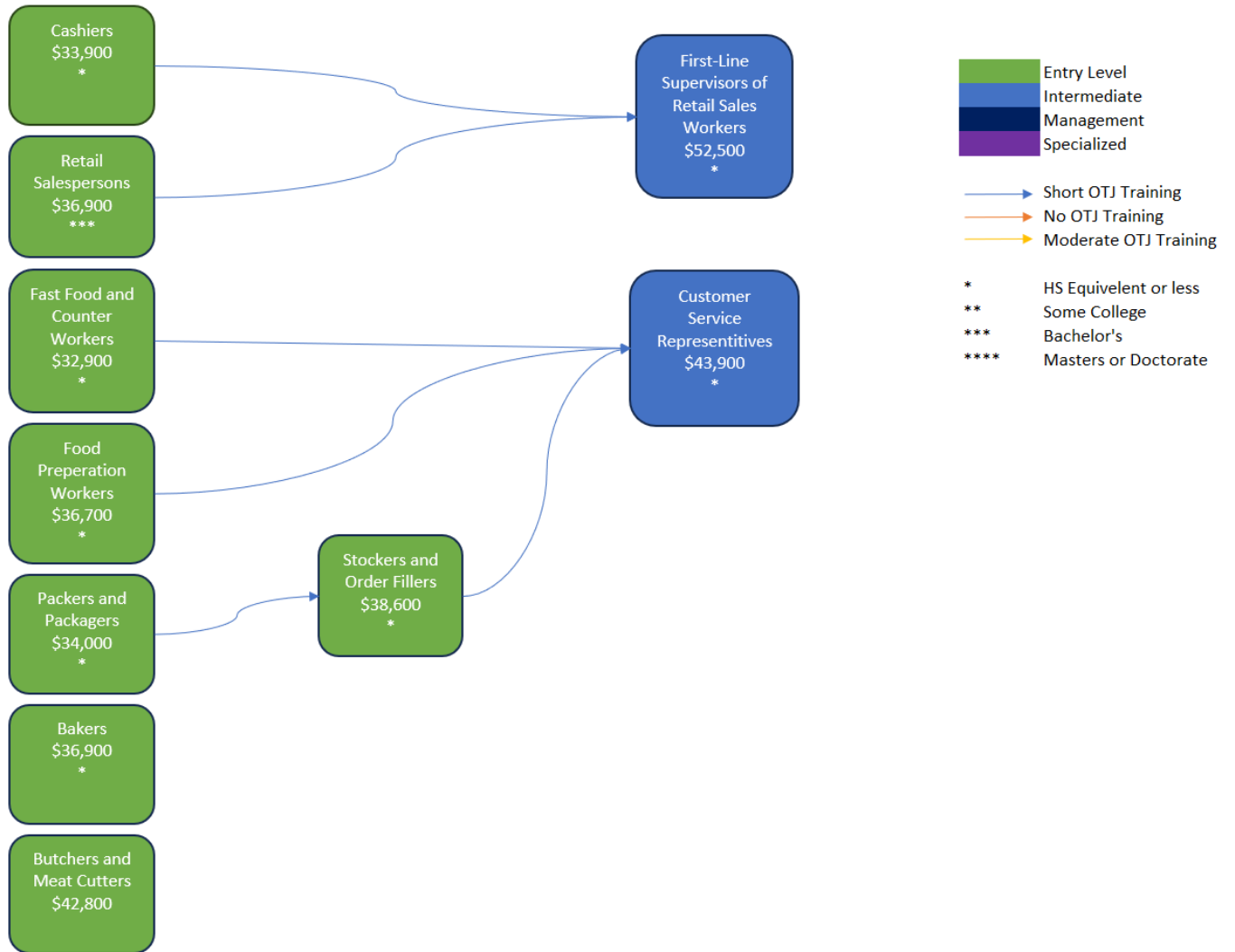
Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

For food and beverage positions, cashiers are the most common occupation with 19,072 employees. The highest annual wage is first-line supervisors of retail sales workers at \$52,500 and fast food and counter workers are the lowest at \$32,900. Eight of the occupations are considered entry-level and the remaining two are intermediate. Nine of the ten occupations require just a high school degree with the remaining one requiring a bachelor’s degree (retail salespersons). Seven of the occupations have OTJ training that is considered to be short, one has none, one has moderate, and the final one has long OTJ training.

Figure 3: Top 10 Food and Beverage Positions in Washington



Sports, Hobbies, Music, Books, and Miscellaneous Retail

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	20,821	\$35,500	\$17.99	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	5,773	\$51,900	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
41-2011	Cashiers	4,159	\$34,500	\$17.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	1,585	\$106,100	\$59.87	Management	Bachelors	None
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	1,482	\$36,400	\$19.44	Entry-Level	HS	Short
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	1,437	\$36,600	\$22.27	Intermediate	HS	Short
39-2021	Animal Caretakers	1,246	\$34,600	\$18.64	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,139	\$37,100	\$20.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	1,059	\$40,900	\$22.15	Entry-Level	HS	Short
27-1023	Floral Designers	814	\$35,300	\$18.32	Entry-Level	HS	Moderate

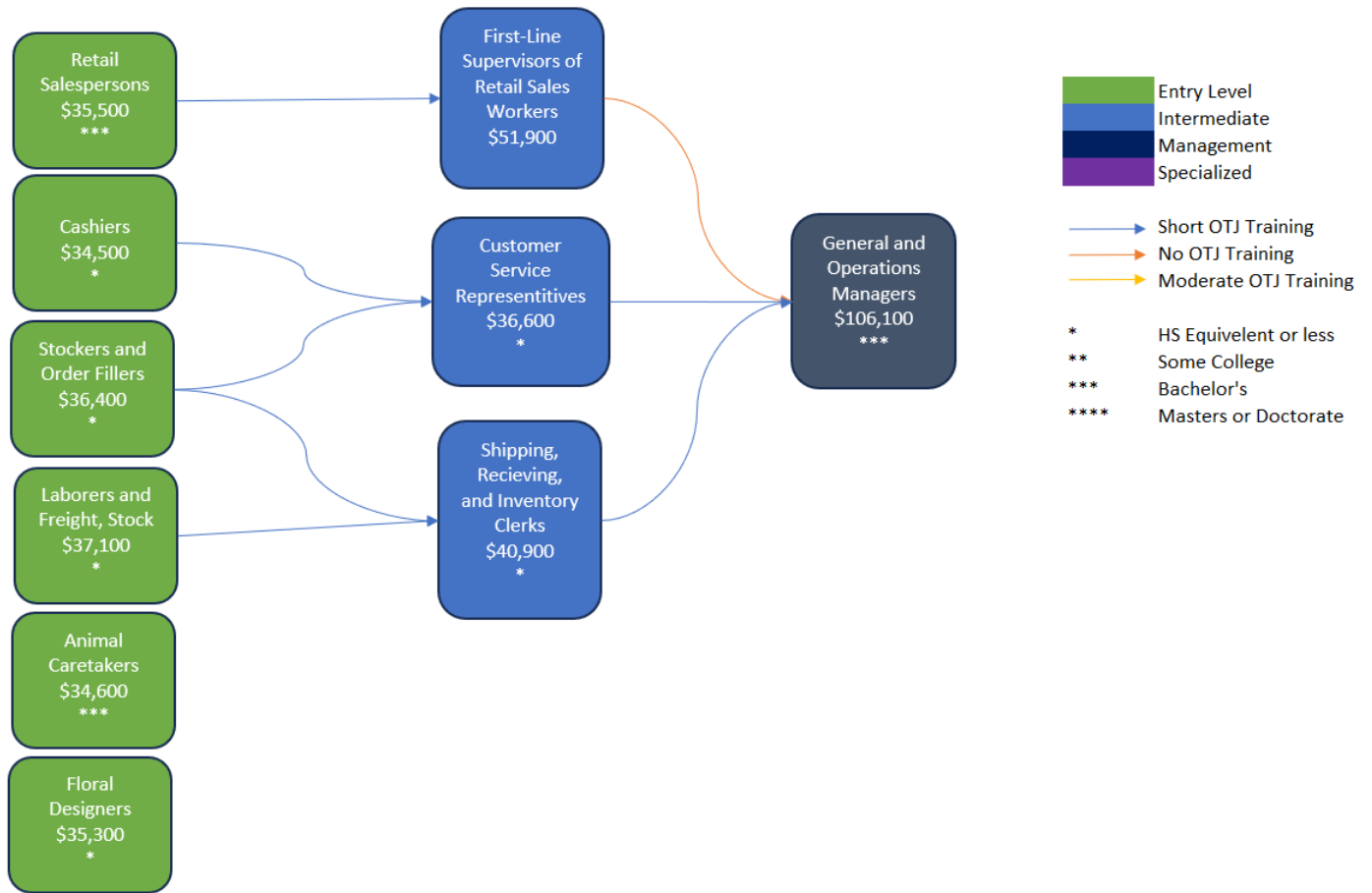
Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

For the category including sports, hobbies, music, books, and miscellaneous retail positions, retail salespersons once again is the most common occupation with 20,821 employees. The highest-paid occupation is general and operations manager at \$106,100 and the lowest is cashier at \$34,500. Seven of the occupations are entry-level, two are intermediate, and one is management. Seven of them require just a high school degree, and the final three require bachelor's degrees. Seven of the on the job trainings are classified as short, two have none, and one has moderate training.

Figure 4: Top 10 Sports, Hobbies, Music, Books, and Miscellaneous Retail Positions in Washington



Motor Vehicle

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	6,908	\$53,300	\$17.99	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	5,347	\$55,800	\$27.24	Specialized	Non-Degree Award	Short
41-2022	Parts Salesperson	4,175	\$40,200	\$20.20	Entry-Level	HS	Moderate
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2,525	\$72,600	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
41-2021	Counter and Rental Clerks	2,114	\$51,200	\$20.02	Entry-Level	HS	Short
49-3093	Tire Repairers and Changers	2,025	\$35,600	\$18.51	Entry-Level	HS	Short
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	2,021	\$29,500	\$22.72	Entry-Level	HS	Short
53-7061	Cleaners of Vehicle and Equipment	1,804	\$35,600	\$18.25	Entry-Level	None	Short
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	1,060	\$41,400	\$22.61	Corporate	Bachelors	Short
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	998	\$78,200	\$40.96	Entry-Level	HS	None

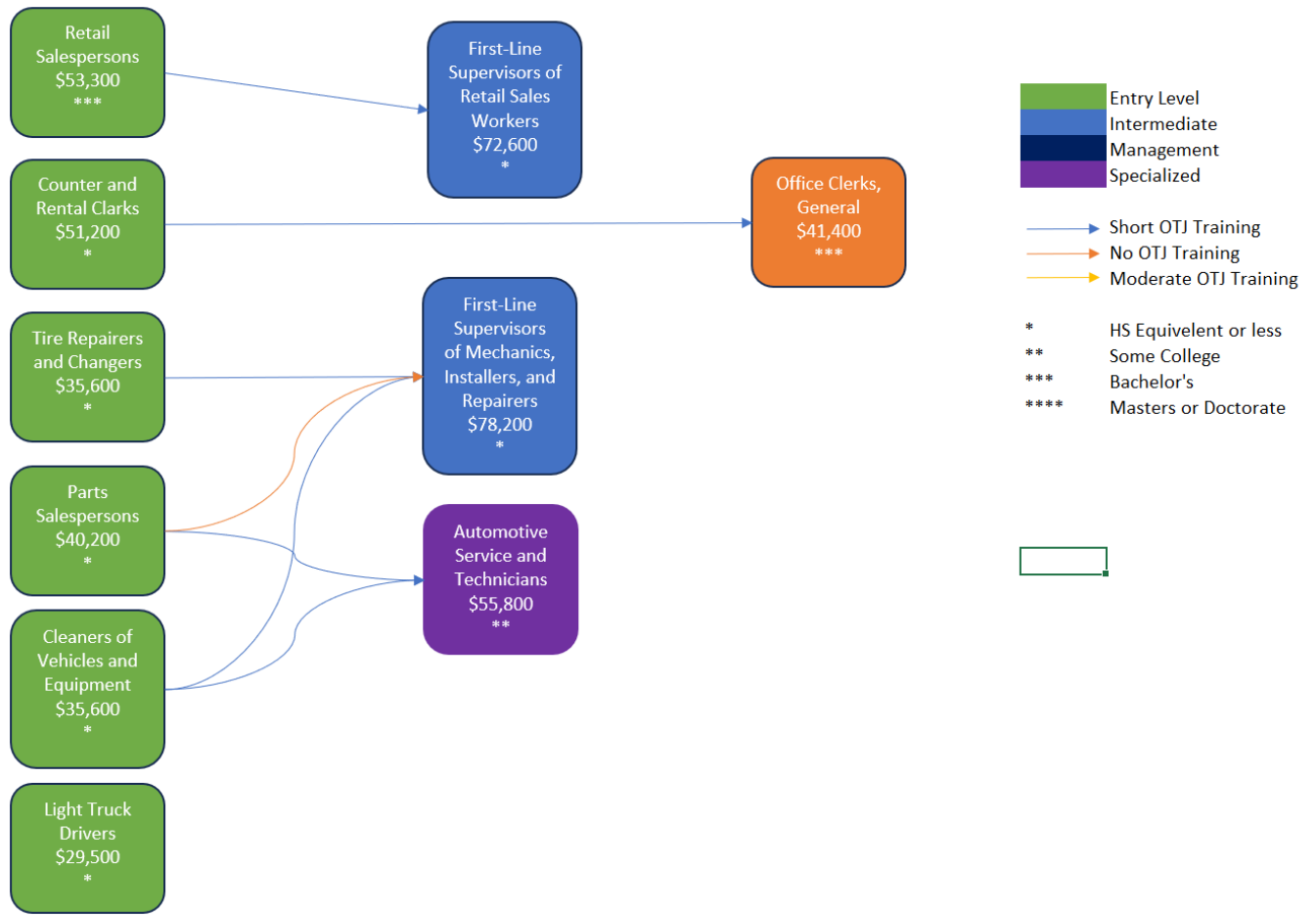
Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

For motor vehicle retail, salespersons are again the most common occupation with 6,908 employees. The highest average annual wage is first-line supervisors of mechanics, installers, and repairers at \$78,200 and the lowest is tire repairers and changers is \$35,600. Seven of the occupations are entry-level, one is intermediate, one is specialized, and one is corporate. Six of the occupations require a HS degree, 2 require a bachelor's, and two require either non or a non-degree award.

Figure 5: Top 10 Motor Vehicle Positions in Washington



Building and Garden

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	12,972	\$36,400	\$17.99	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
41-2011	Cashiers	3,566	\$36,300	\$17.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	2,759	\$34,600	\$19.44	Entry-Level	HS	Short
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2,475	\$52,500	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,593	\$35,200	\$20.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	1,066	\$34,900	\$22.27	Intermediate	HS	Short
27-1026	Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	988	\$40,400	\$20.29	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	733	\$98,600	\$59.87	Management	Bachelors	None
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	658	\$42,100	\$22.72	Entry-Level	HS	Short
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	617	\$41,300	\$22.15	Entry-Level	HS	Short

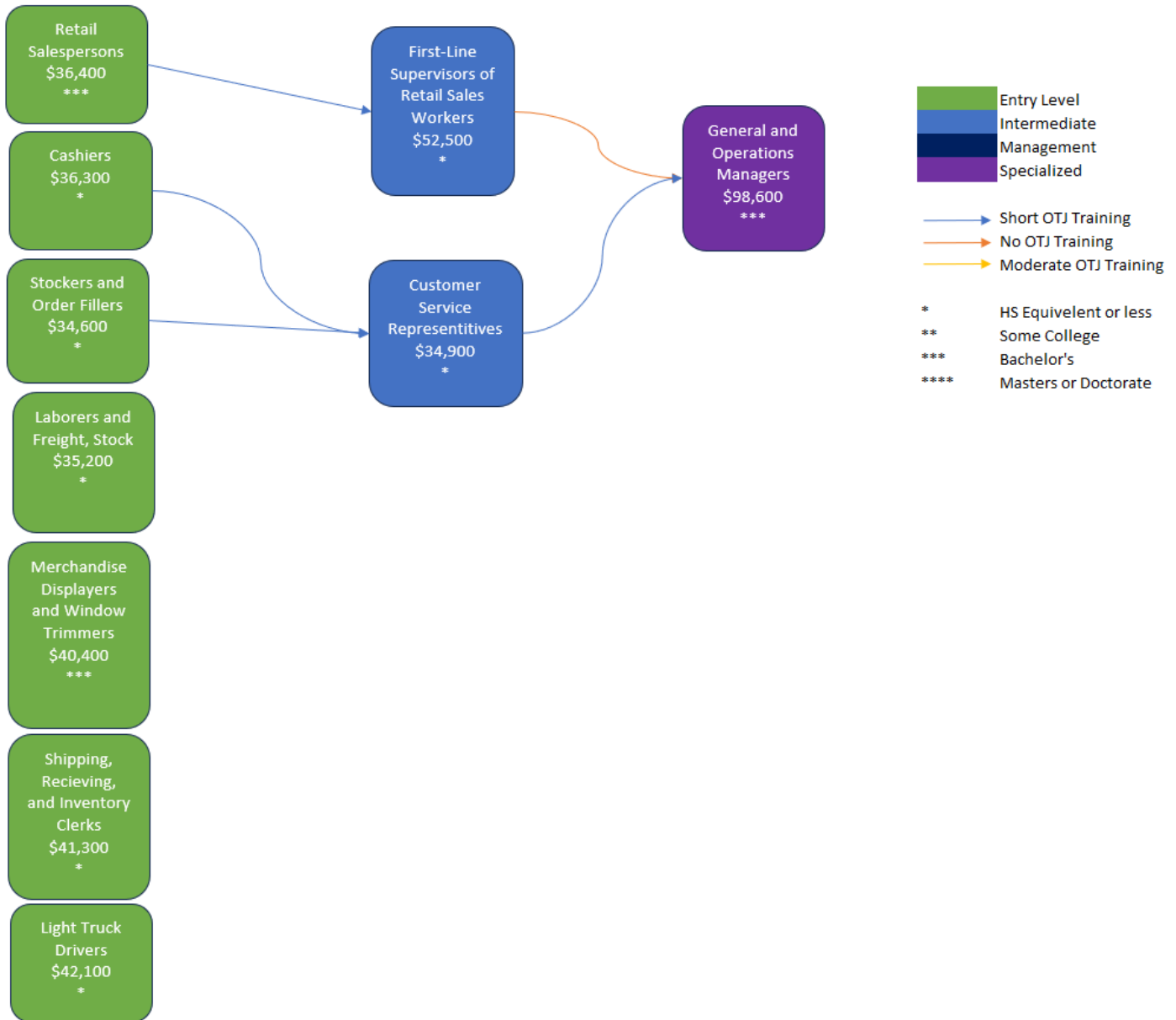
Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

Again, retail salespersons is the most common occupation for building and garden retail with nearly 13,000 employees. The highest annual average wage is general and operations managers at \$98,600 and the lowest is stocker and order fillers at \$34,600. Seven of the occupations are entry-level, two are intermediate, and one is management. Seven of the degrees required are just high school and the remaining three are bachelors. Eight of the on-the-job training courses are considered short and the remaining two are none.

Figure 6: Top 10 Building and Garden Positions in Washington



Furniture

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	4,222	\$41,200	\$17.99	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	856	\$60,700	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
41-2011	Cashiers	812	\$36,000	\$17.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	539	\$37,200	\$20.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	435	\$36,200	\$19.44	Entry-Level	HS	Short
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	407	\$37,300	\$22.72	Entry-Level	HS	Short
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	367	\$101,900	\$59.87	Management	Bachelors	None
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	289	\$40,900	\$22.61	Corporate	Bachelors	Short
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	266	\$38,900	\$22.27	Intermediate	HS	Short
47-2041	Carpet Installers	212	\$51,600	\$25.72	Entry-Level	HS	Short

Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

Retail salesperson is once again the most common occupation for furniture with 4,222 employees. The highest annual wage is general and operations manager at \$101,900 and the lowest annual wage is cashiers at \$36,000. Six of the occupations are entry-level, two are intermediate, one is management, and one is corporate. Seven of the occupations require a high school degree and three are bachelors. Eight of the on-the-job training courses are classified as short and two are none.

Figure 7: Top 10 Furniture Positions in Washington



Electronics and Appliances

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	4,393	\$38,300	\$17.99	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	1,984	\$45,600	\$33.88	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Moderate
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	893	\$56,900	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
41-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers	892	\$71,700	\$44.09	Intermediate	Bachelors	None
49-2011	Computer, Automated Teller, and Office Machine Repairers	687	\$42,100	\$23.03	N/A	N/A	N/A
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	650	\$40,100	\$22.15	Entry-Level	HS	Short
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	415	\$38,100	\$22.27	Intermediate	HS	Short
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	361	\$36,200	\$19.44	Entry-Level	HS	Short
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	268	\$103,500	\$59.87	Management	Bachelors	None
49-9031	Home Appliance Repairers	204	\$43,900	\$25.69	Specialized	HS	Moderate

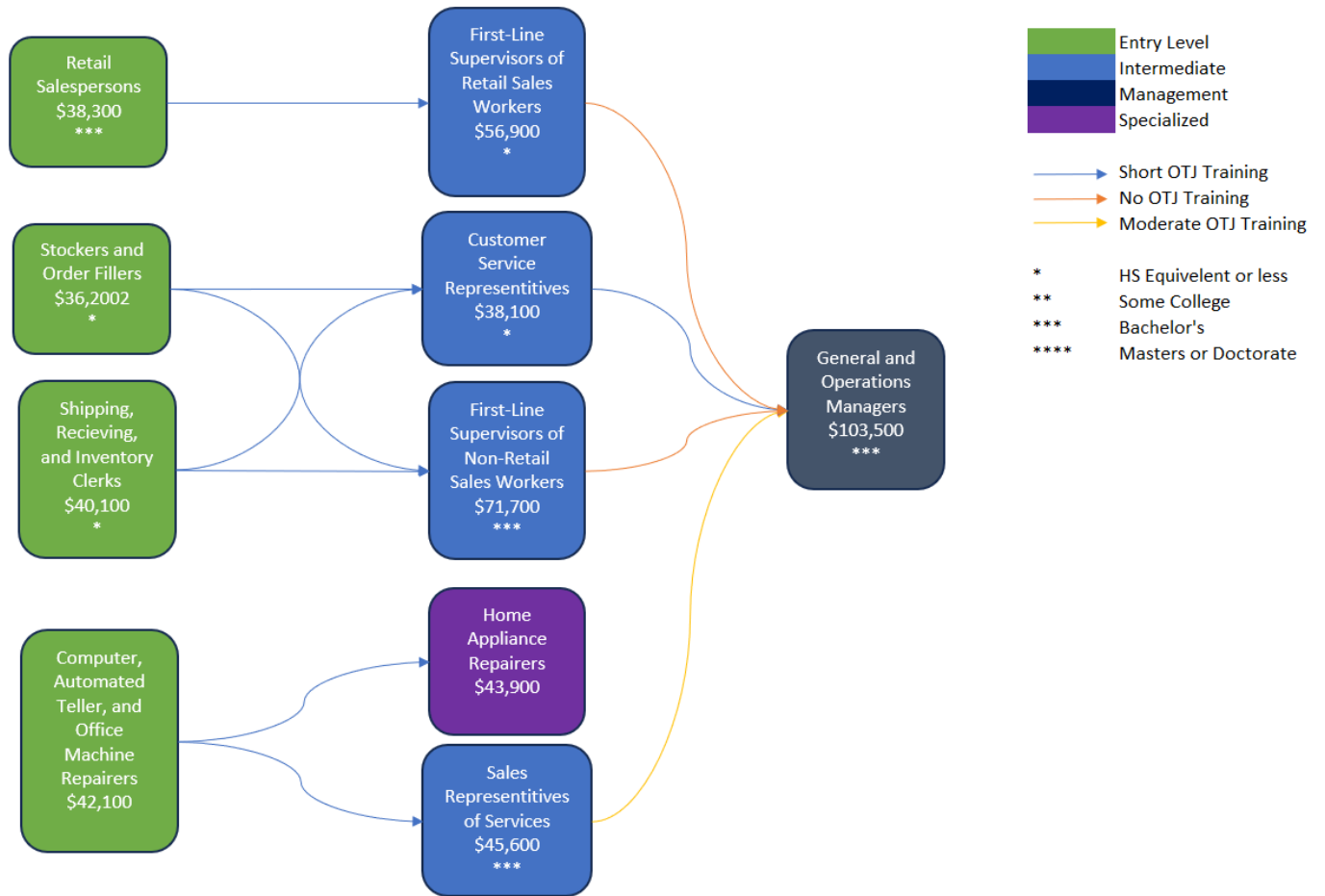
Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

Retail salespersons are the most common occupation for electronics and appliances with 4,393 employees. The highest annual wage is \$103,500 with general and operations managers and stockers and order fillers having the lowest annual wages at \$36,200. Four of the occupations are entry-level, three are intermediate, one is management, one is specialized, and one is not available. Five of the degrees required are high school, and four are bachelors. Four on the job training courses are classified as short, four are none, and one is moderate.

Figure 8: Top 10 Electronics and Appliance Positions in Washington



Health and Personal

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2011	Cashiers	3,894	\$36,600	\$17.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	3,796	\$36,000	\$17.99	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	3,564	\$45,000	\$24.40	Specialized	HS	Moderate
29-1051	Pharmacists	2,701	\$129,800	\$70.04	Specialized	Doctoral	None
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,982	\$44,300	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
31-9095	Pharmacy Aides	782	\$31,000	\$18.09	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	722	\$93,100	\$59.87	Management	Bachelors	None
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	546	\$42,600	\$22.27	Intermediate	HS	Short
29-2081	Opticians, Dispensing	451	\$47,900	\$23.91	Specialized	Some College	Long
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	434	\$33,900	\$22.72	Entry-Level	HS	Short

Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

The most common occupation for health and personal retail is cashier with 3,894 employees. The highest average annual wage is pharmacists at \$129,800 and the lowest average annual wage is pharmacy aids at \$31,000. Four are entry-level, three are specialized, two are intermediate, and one is management. Five of the degrees required are HS, three are bachelors, one requires some college, and one requires a doctoral degree. Five on the job training courses are classified as short, three have none, one is moderate, and one is long.

Figure 9: Top 10 Health and Personal Retail Positions in Washington



Gasoline

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2011	Cashiers	8,558	\$32,000	\$17.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,514	\$40,500	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	981	\$30,300	\$16.93	Entry-Level	HS	Short
53-6031	Automotive and Watercraft Service Attendants	388	\$34,100	\$17.59	Entry-Level	HS	Short
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	370	\$62,900	\$59.87	Management	Bachelors	None
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	296	\$31,900	\$18.66	Entry-Level	HS	Short
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	196	\$30,800	\$17.99	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	159	\$29,600	\$19.44	Entry-Level	HS	Short
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	151	\$31,700	\$17.45	Entry-Level	HS	Short
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	123	\$32,000	\$18.97	Entry-Level	HS	Short

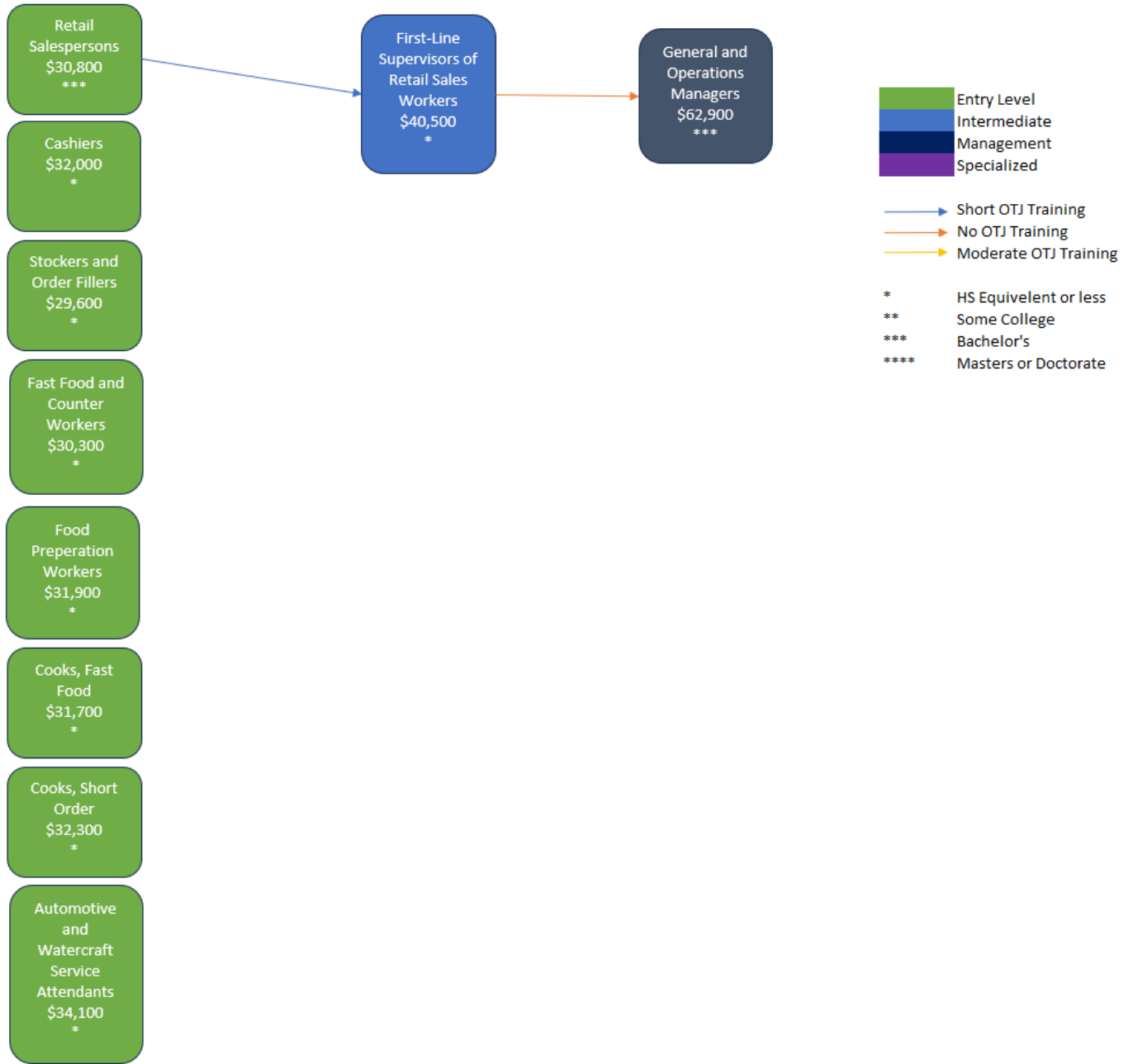
Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

The most common occupation for gasoline retail is cashiers with 8,558 employees. The highest annual wage is \$62,900 for general and operations managers and the lowest is stockers and order fillers is \$29,600. Eight of the occupations are entry-level, one is intermediate, and one is management. Eight of them require just a high school degree, and the remaining two require a bachelor's degree. Eight of the on-the-job trainings are classified as short, and two have none.

Figure 10: Top 10 Gasoline Positions in Washington



Clothes and Accessories

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Median Hourly Wages	Hierarchy	Education	OTJ Training
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	10,379	\$31,700	\$17.99	Entry-Level	Bachelors	Short
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2,469	\$46,500	\$25.27	Intermediate	HS	None
41-2011	Cashiers	1,693	\$36,200	\$17.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	463	\$93,600	\$59.87	Management	Bachelors	None
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	428	\$32,600	\$19.44	Entry-Level	HS	Short
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	205	\$35,700	\$22.15	Entry-Level	HS	Short
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	197	\$33,900	\$22.27	Intermediate	HS	Short
33-9032	Security Guards	128	\$40,300	\$19.90	Entry-Level	HS	Short
43-4151	Order Clerks	117	\$32,900	\$22.78	Intermediate	Bachelors	Short
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	110	\$31,800	\$20.10	Entry-Level	HS	Short

Source: 2022 Q4 Washington State data from JobsEQ by Chmura Economics and Analytics

*Average annual wages might not represent full-time employment.

**Median hourly wages are 2023 Q1 Washington State data

The most common occupation for clothes and accessories retail is retail salespersons with 10,379 employees. The highest annual wage is for general and operations managers at \$93,600 with the lowest being \$31,700 for retail salespersons. Six positions are entry-level, three are intermediate, and one is management. Seven require high school degrees, and three require bachelors. Eight have on-the-job training courses that are classified as short and two have no on-the-job training.

Figure 11: Top 10 Clothes and Accessories Positions in Washington

