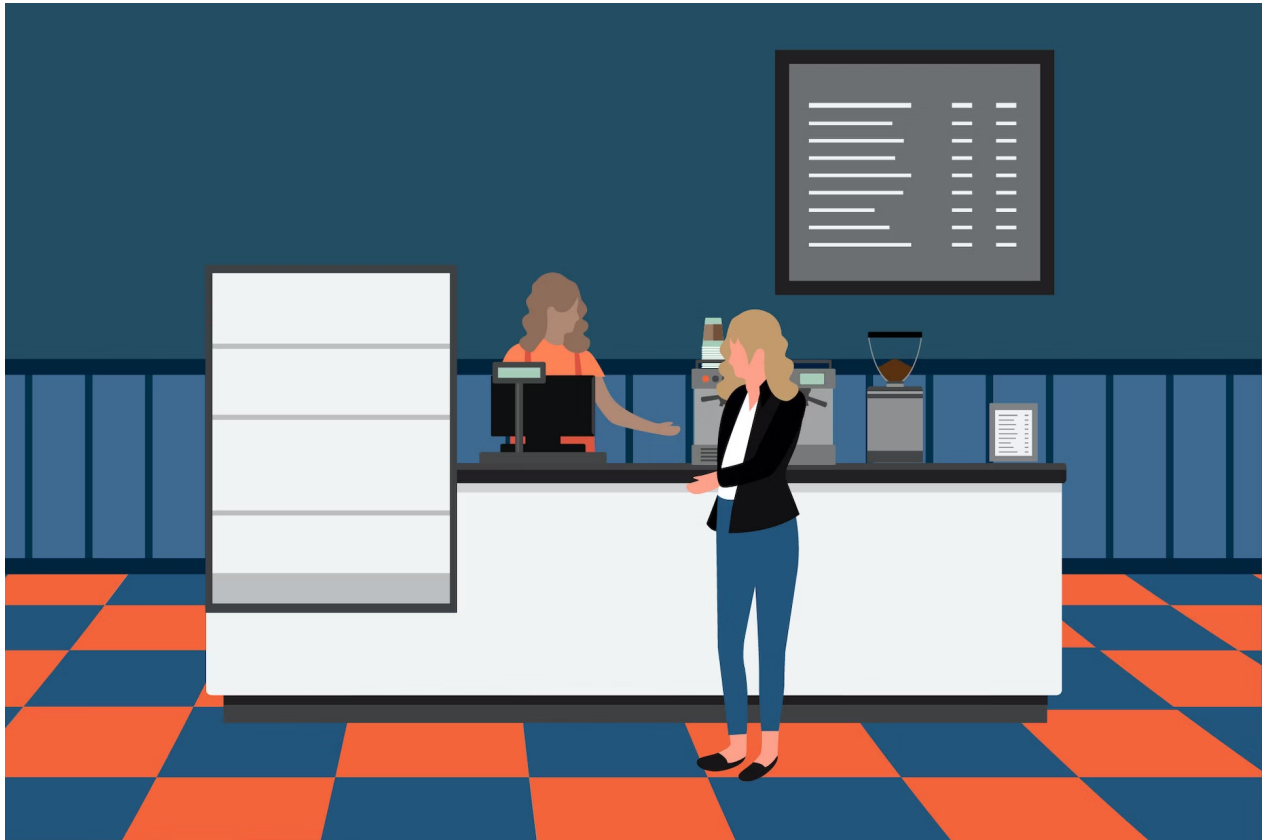




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The Future for Non-College Women Is Bleak



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New projections show a stark warning for women without a college degree: work is changing, and job security is poised to shrink. Over the next decade, non-college women are projected to face high rates of job loss, with estimates showing that two-thirds of jobs lost in the country's top-declining industries will be ones currently held by women.¹ Specifically, non-college women are slated to lose the most middle-wage jobs—jobs that have historically allowed them to provide for themselves and their family. And unless there is a surge in women moving into traditionally male-dominated professions, job growth for non-college women will be concentrated in the lowest-paying sectors.

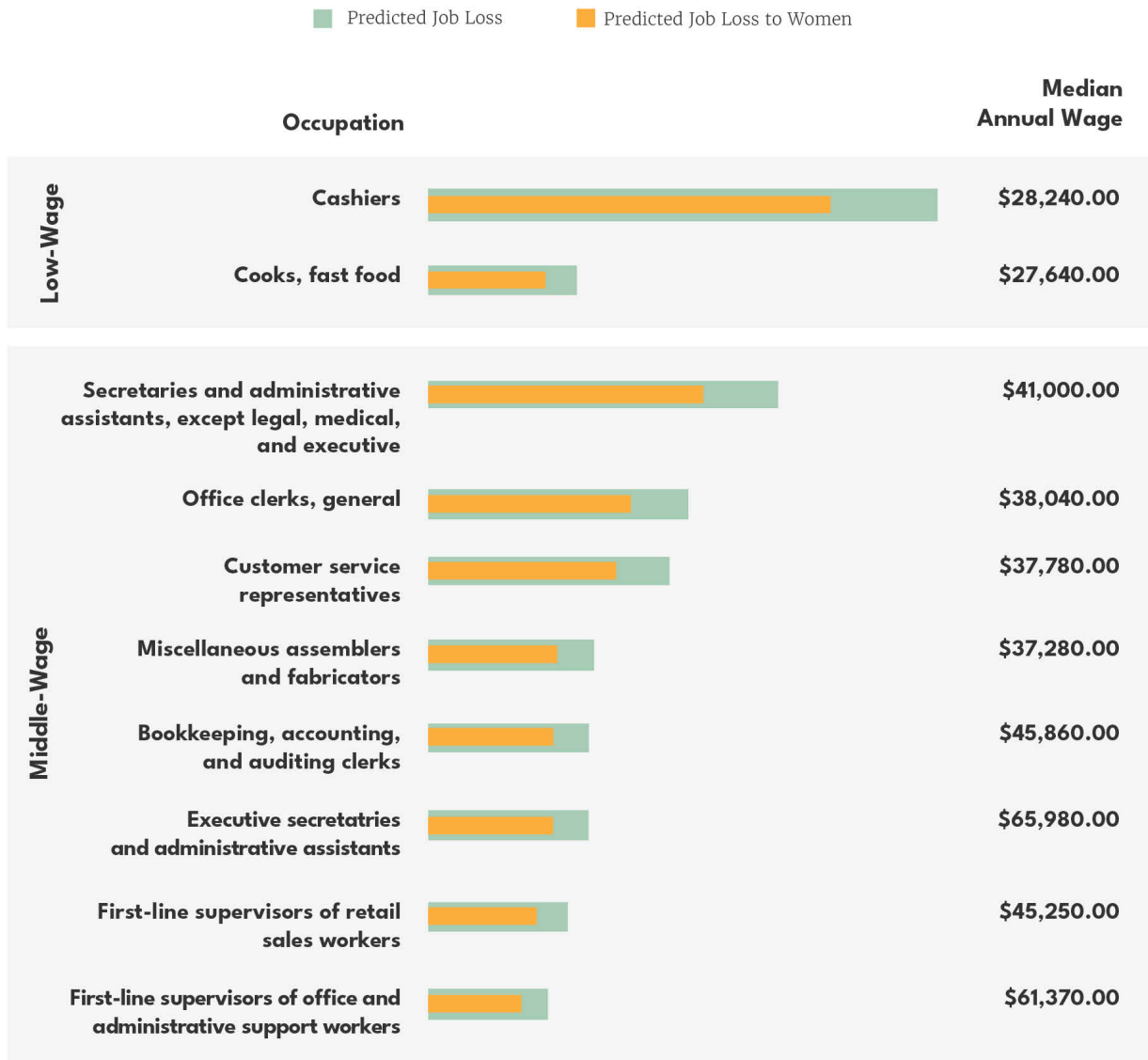
In this analysis, we unpack new projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which predicts which occupations will see the most growth and decline based on current and anticipated employment trends. We focus on the industries that will see the largest number of new jobs as well as the occupations that will see the biggest drops in employment.

Non-college women face the biggest job declines.

The BLS projects which industries are expected to lose the most jobs over the next 10 years—from cashiers (348,000 lost by 2032) to mail carriers (21,000 jobs lost by 2032).² Within those industries, 97% of the jobs lost will be roles that don't require a bachelor's degree, and over 60% are middle-wage jobs.³ This decline will hurt workers without a degree the most. And based on the current gender breakdown of these occupations, two-thirds of jobs predicted to be eliminated will be ones held by women—meaning these losses will disproportionately impact non-college women.⁴



Occupations with Largest Predicted Job Losses in the Next Decade



Source: Author’s analysis of “Employment by major occupational group.” Employment Projections, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 6 Sep. 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/emp-by-major-occupational-group.htm>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023. And; “Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.” Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 25 Jan. 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023. And; Kochnar, Rakesh and Stella Sechopoulos. “How the American middle class has changed in the past five decades.” Pew Research Center, 20 Apr. 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/04/20/how-the-american-middle-class-has-changed-in-the-past-five-decades/>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023.

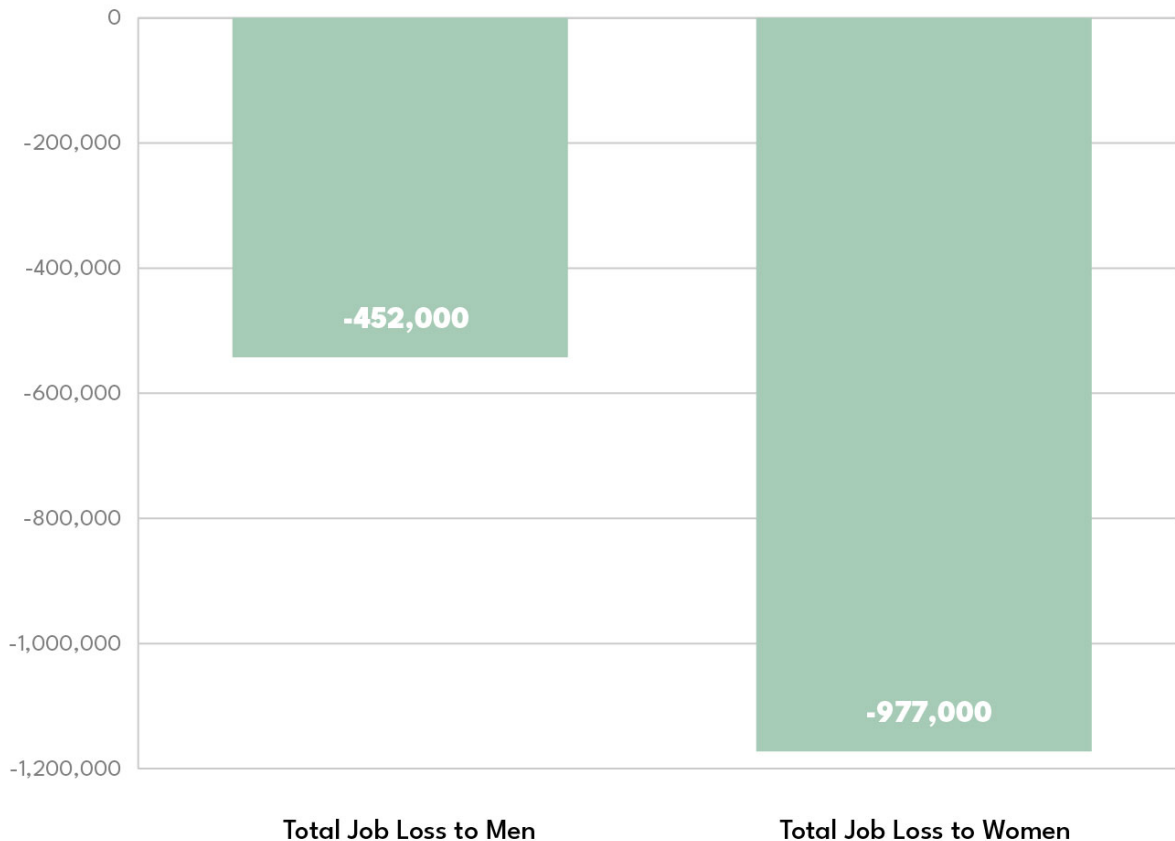
Non-college women are slated to lose the most middle-wage jobs.

Beyond employment declines, the decade ahead is especially bleak for middle-wage jobs—those paying between two-thirds and two times the median wage in the United States (approx. \$36,700 to \$110,100). Within the industries that will be most affected, women will account for 68% of middle-wage jobs lost.⁵ This will largely be driven by job reduction in office and administrative work—a field in which women without a degree have long found economic opportunity. These jobs typically offer good wages, benefits, and job security, all of which provided a dependable path into the middle-class for non-college women.



Predicted Middle-Wage Job Losses by Gender

Based on the top 30 industries with largest predicted job losses



Source: Author's analysis of "Employment by major occupational group." Employment Projections, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 6 Sep. 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/emp-by-major-occupational-group.htm>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023, And; "Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity." Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 25 Jan. 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023, And; Kochnar, Rakesh and Stella Sechopoulos. "How the American middle class has changed in the past five decades." Pew Research Center, 20 Apr. 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/04/20/how-the-american-middle-class-has-changed-in-the-past-five-decades/>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023.

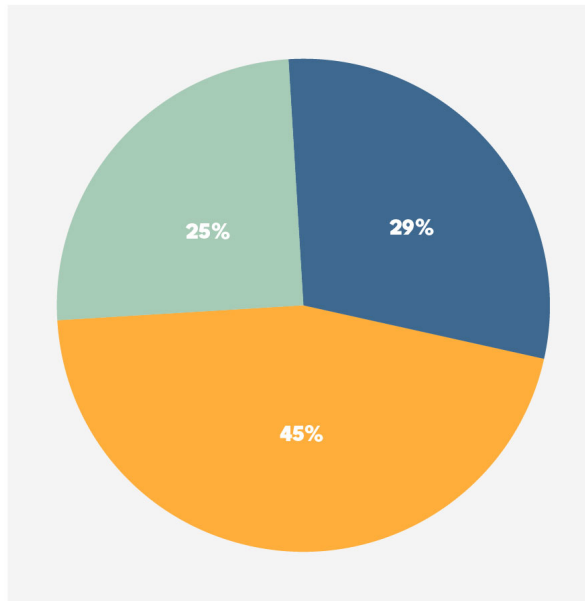
The predicted drops in office jobs come as automation and outsourcing reduce companies' need for these employees to be in house. And many of the administrative roles that remain are now requiring workers to hold a college degree.⁶ As a result, non-college women have fewer available options for jobs that pay a good middle-class wage.

Job growth for non-college women will be concentrated in the lowest-paying sectors.

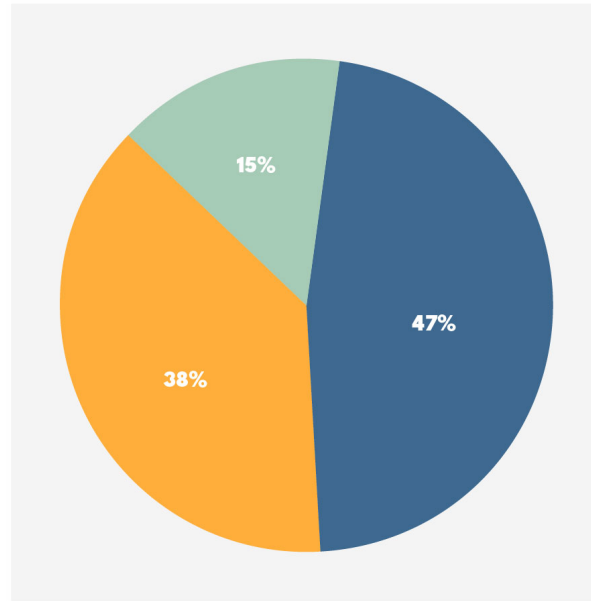
Job loss isn't the whole story, though—BLS predicts a little over half of jobs created in the industries seeing the largest growth will go to women.⁷ But there's a catch: half of those jobs will be in low-wage occupations that pay less than \$36,700 per year, and just 15% will be in high-wage occupations that pay over \$110,100 annually.⁸ Women will also be underrepresented in fast-growing middle-wage jobs that don't require a college degree, only making up a majority of new workers in just two middle-wage non-college occupations— one of which being medical assistants, a job that requires a credential.⁹



New Jobs to Men by Type



New Jobs to Women by Type



■ Low-Wage ■ Middle-Wage ■ High-Wage

Source: Author's analysis of "Employment by major occupational group." Employment Projections, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 6 Sep. 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/emp-by-major-occupational-group.htm>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023. And; "Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity." Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 25 Jan. 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023. And; Kochnar, Rakesh and Stella Sechopoulos. "How the American middle class has changed in the past five decades." Pew Research Center, 20 Apr. 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/04/20/how-the-american-middle-class-has-changed-in-the-past-five-decades/>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023.

With college workers expected to capture much of the growth in high-income jobs and as many middle-wage jobs continue to disappear, non-college workers get stuck with lower-paying work.¹⁰ This concentration of jobs at the high and low-income wage levels is a trend with troubling implications for all non-college workers but especially for women. They will bear the brunt of middle-wage job loss and see far less of the high-income job gains.

Conclusion

For non-college women, the decade ahead could be bleak. The predicted decline of office and administrative work will further erode their pathways to the middle-class as low-paying jobs take their place. Many of these new jobs will involve caring for others—work which continues to be central to the well-being of our society and economy—yet remains low-paying. Without efforts to increase the quality and pay of care-work jobs, as well as an investment in the skills needed for pathways to good middle-class jobs, non-college women will face further hurdles to economic security in the future.

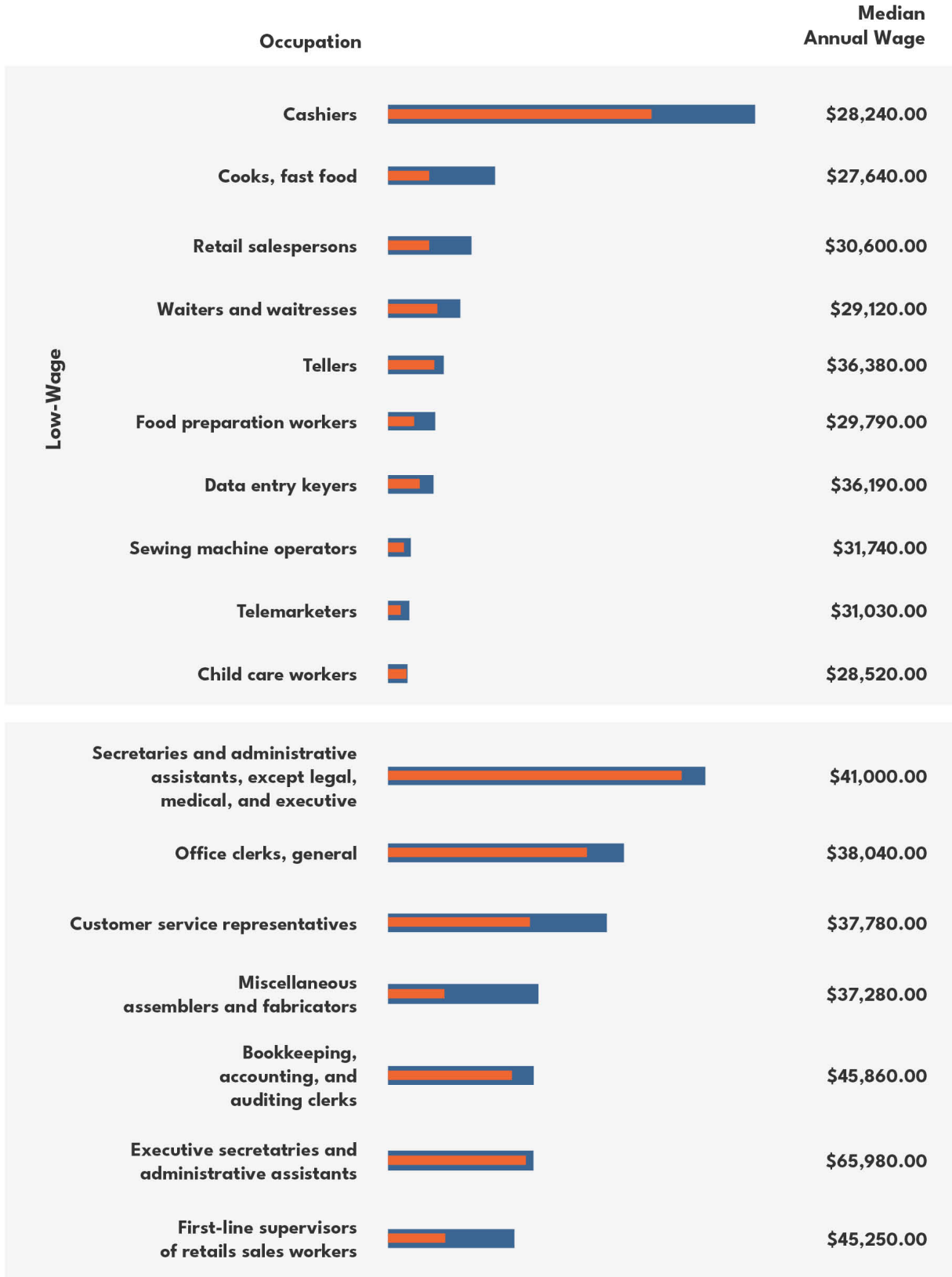
But not all hope is lost—there are ways policymakers can help non-college women move into higher-paying fields while also boosting the quality of critical care jobs. Women represent just 13% of all registered apprentices, but the number of women in apprenticeship programs has more than doubled in the last 10 years.¹¹ Continuing to boost female representation in apprenticeships—and in fields currently dominated by men—is essential to creating more opportunities for non-college women. Meanwhile, pandemic-era funding has helped many places across the country increase the wages of child care workers. And while funding is running out, there are many states committed to keeping these changes in place. These efforts provide an example for federal policymakers to make much-needed investments in our country's care workforce.

Appendix



Jobs with Largest Predicted Employment Declines in Next Decade

■ Predicted Job Loss ■ Predicted Job Loss to Women



Middle-Wage	First-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers		\$61,370.00
	Shipping, receiving, and inventory clerks		\$37,760.00
	Farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers		\$75,760.00
	Buyers and purchasing agents		\$67,620.00
	Legal secretaries and administrative assistants		\$48,780.00
	Correctional officers and jailers		\$49,610.00
	Payroll and timekeeping clerks		\$49,630.00
	Order clerks		\$38,060.00
	Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers		\$43,900.00
	Postal service mail carriers		\$54,250.00
	Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic		\$39,340.00
	Bill and account collectors		\$39,470.00
High-Wage	Chief executives		\$189,520.00

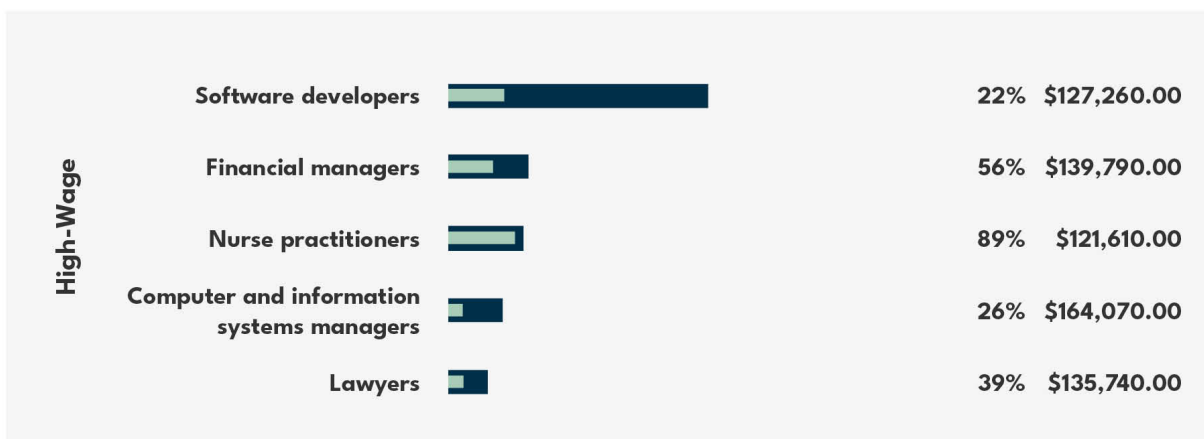
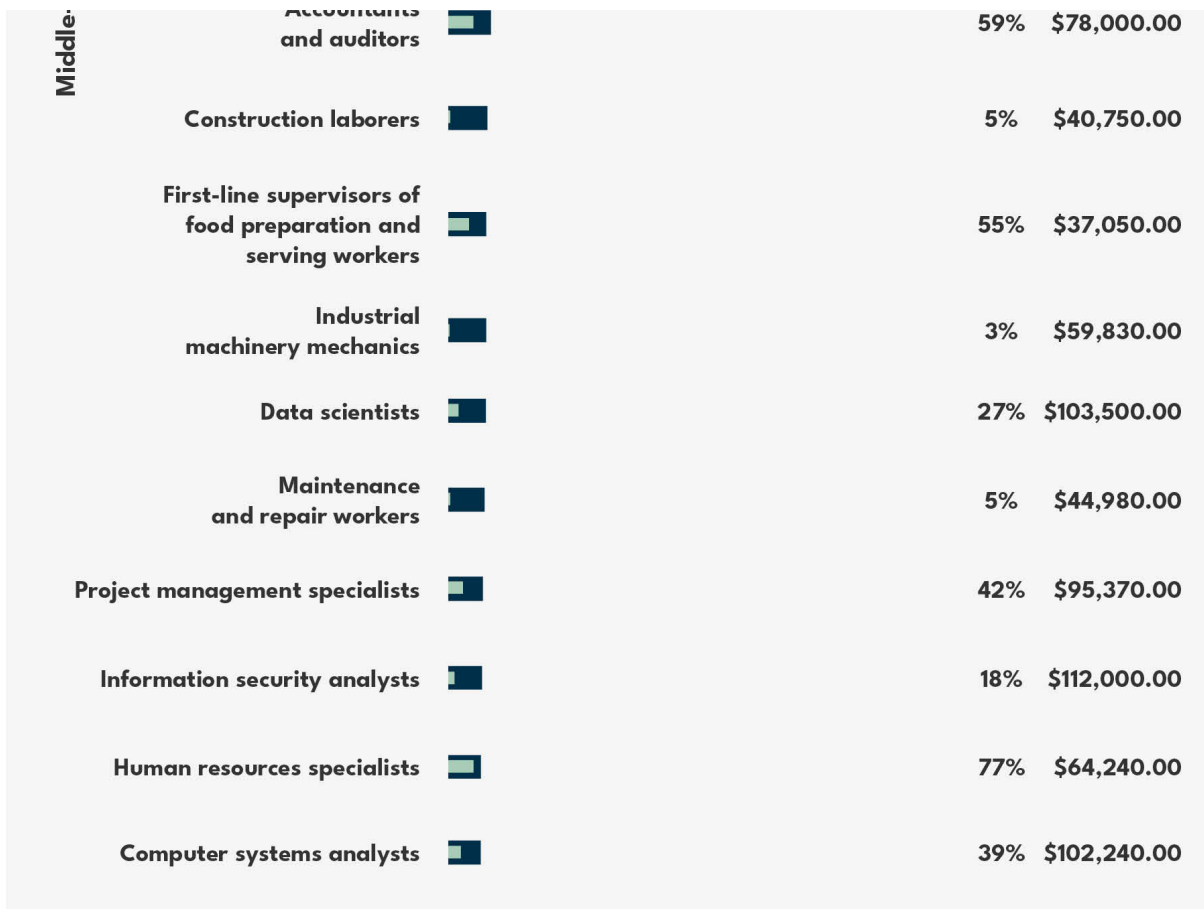
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Jobs with Largest Predicted Employment Growth in Next Decade

■ Predicted Job Growth ■ Predicted Job Growth to Women





Source: Author's analysis of "Employment by major occupational group." Employment Projections, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 6 Sep. 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/emp-by-major-occupational-group.htm>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023. And; "Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity." Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 25 Jan. 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023. And; Kochnar, Rakesh and Stella Sechopoulos. "How the American middle class has changed in the past five decades." Pew Research Center, 20 Apr. 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/04/20/how-the-american-middle-class-has-changed-in-the-past-five-decades/>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023.

ENDNOTES

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- Our definition of low, middle, and high-wage jobs is based on Pew Research’s middle-class income categorization which includes households that fall within two-thirds median household income and two times the median household income. For the purposes of this analysis we use the range of two-thirds median earnings from 2022 (according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics) to two times median earnings to categorize jobs as low-wage, middle-wage, and high-wage.
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 6. Long, Heather. “Administrative assistant jobs helped propel many women into the middle class. Now they’re disappearing.” *Washington Post*, 5 Dec. 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/administrative-assistant-jobs-helped-propel-many-women-into-the-middle-class-now-theyre-disappearing/2019/12/04/75686efe-f6a0-11e9-a285-882a8e386a96_story.html. Accessed 18 Sep. 2023.
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