

# O\*NET Career Exploration Playbook

O\*NET (Occupational Information Network) is a powerful, free online database sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. It provides detailed information on hundreds of occupations, helping you understand the skills, knowledge, abilities, and work activities required for various roles, as well as their outlook in the job market. Think of O\*NET as your personal career GPS, offering a comprehensive map of the professional landscape. Whether you're looking to advance in your current field, explore new career paths, or identify skills for professional development, O\*NET can be an invaluable resource.

## Why Use O\*NET for Career Exploration?

- ✓ **Informed Decisions:** Gain deep insights into different occupations, helping you make data-driven decisions about your career path.
- ✓ **Skill Identification:** Understand the skills and knowledge required for various jobs and identify areas where you might need to upskill or reskill.
- ✓ **Interest Alignment:** Discover occupations that align with your personal interests, values, and abilities, leading to greater job satisfaction.
- ✓ **Market Awareness:** Learn about "Bright Outlook" occupations—those expected to grow rapidly or have many job openings in the coming years.
- ✓ **Personalized Exploration:** Use self-assessment tools to match your unique profile with suitable career options.

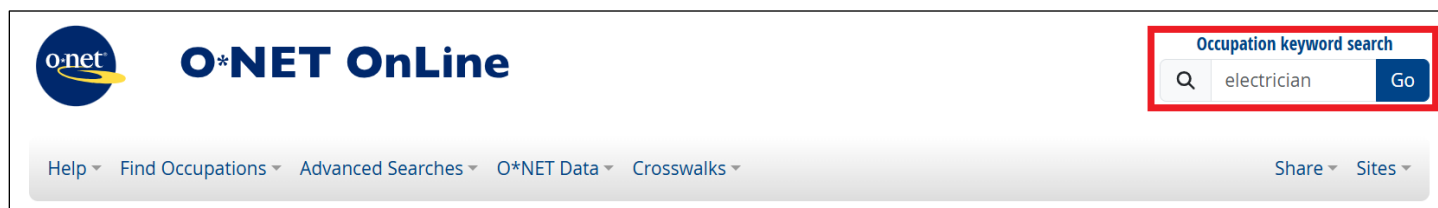
## Key Features of O\*NET & How to Use Them

O\*NET Online ([www.O\\*NETonline.org](http://www.O*NETonline.org)) is the primary portal for accessing the O\*NET database. The following are its key features.

### Occupational Search

**Purpose:** Find specific occupations or explore related roles.

**How to Use:**



The screenshot shows the O\*NET Online homepage. On the left is the O\*NET logo. To its right is the text "O\*NET OnLine". On the right side, there is a search bar labeled "Occupation keyword search" with a magnifying glass icon, the text "electrician" entered, and a blue "Go" button. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with links: "Help", "Find Occupations", "Advanced Searches", "O\*NET Data", and "Crosswalks". On the far right of the menu are "Share" and "Sites" links.

At the top of the web page, enter a **job title** (for example, "Electrician") or an **O\*NET-SOC code** in the "Occupation Keyword Field", then select "Go."

**A detailed report** will appear, showing tasks, technology, knowledge, skills, abilities, work activities, work context, job zone (education/experience level), interests, work styles, work values, and wage/employment trends.

### Training & Credentials

State training	Select a State	Go
Local training	ZIP Code	Go
Certifications	Find certifications nationwide +	
State licenses	Select a State	Go

Within the detailed report, navigate to the **“Training & Credentials”** section. Here, you can find information on relevant training programs, certifications, licenses, and registered apprenticeships. This section often links to resources where you can search for available programs in your local area, helping you identify concrete steps for skill development.

### Wages & Employment Trends


Median wages (2024)	\$29.98 hourly, \$62,350 annual	
State wages	Select a State	Go
Local wages	ZIP Code	Go
Employment (2024)	818,700 employees	
Projected growth (2024-2034)	■ ■ ■ ■ Much faster than average (7% or higher)	
Projected job openings (2024-2034)	81,000	
State trends	Select a State	Go
Top industries (2024)	<a href="#">Construction</a>	

Also within the detailed report, look for the **“Wages & Employment”** section. Enter your state or zip code to view localized data including median wages, projected growth, and employment trends for that occupation. This provides valuable insights into the local labor market and potential opportunities.

## Find Occupations

**Purpose:** Provides a structured way to explore if you don't have a specific job title in mind.

**How to Use:**

**O\*NET OnLine**

Occupation keyword search

[Help](#) [Find Occupations](#) [Advanced Searches](#) [O\\*NET Data](#) [Crosswalks](#) [Share](#) [Sites](#)

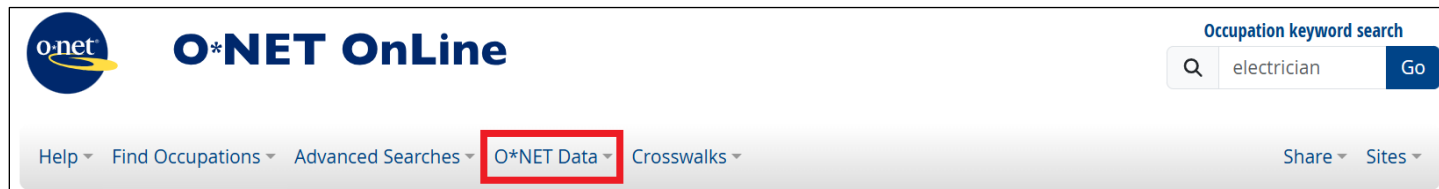
At the top of the webpage, select **“Find Occupations”** to open a drop-down menu. The most common tools in the menu are the following:

- **Bright Outlook:** Discover occupations with strong growth projections.
- **Career Clusters:** Browse occupations grouped by similar skills and industries (for example, “Information Technology,” “Healthcare”).
- **Industries:** Explore jobs within specific industries (for example, “Educational Services”)

## Skills Search

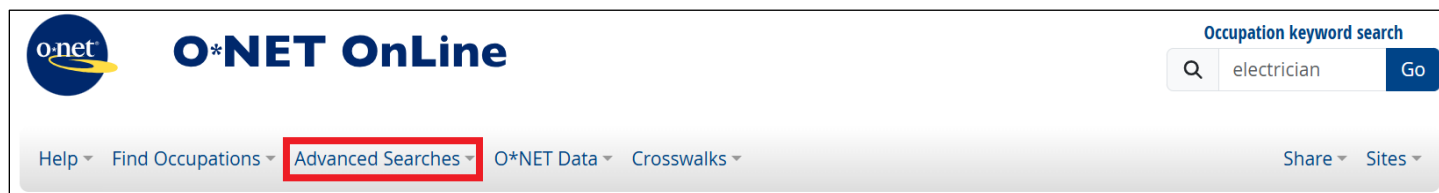
**Purpose:** Identify occupations that require specific skills you possess or want to develop. It helps you see how your existing skills translate to different jobs and what skills are in demand.

**How to Use:**



At the top of the webpage, select “O\*NET Data” to open a drop-down menu. The skill-based tools in the menu are the following:

- **Basic Skills:** for example, Reading Comprehension, Active Listening
- **Cross-Functional Skills:** for example, Critical Thinking, Complex Problem Solving



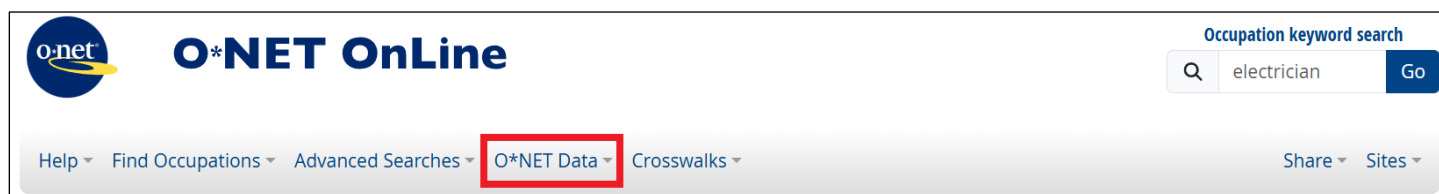
At the top of the webpage, select “Advanced Searches” to open a drop-down menu. The skill-based tools in the menu are the following:

- **Soft Skills:** for example, Coordination, Negotiation
- **Technology Skills:** for example, Microsoft Excel, Oracle Java

## Browse by O\*NET Data

**Purpose:** Understand how your natural abilities and values in a job align with different occupations to help you consider the deeper aspects of a job fit beyond just tasks and skills.

**How to Use:**






At the top of the webpage, select “O\*NET Data” to open a drop-down menu. Navigate to different tools, including abilities, interests, knowledge, work activities, work content, and work styles to see their association with different occupations.

## Step-by-Step Guide for O\*NET Career Exploration

Follow these steps to effectively utilize O\*NET for your career journey.

## Self-Assessment (Start with You!)

O\*NET's self-assessment is a tool designed for anyone at the beginning of their career journey or considering a change. It helps you discover what you like to do and connects those work interests to satisfying career paths.

"I want to be a ..."	"I'll know it when I see it."	"I'm not really sure."
 <b>Search careers with key words.</b> Describe your dream career in a few words: <input type="text" value="electrician"/> → Examples: doctor, build houses	 <b>Browse careers by industry.</b> There are over 900 career options for you to look at. Find yours in one of these industries: <input type="text" value="Administration &amp; Support Services"/> ▼ →	 <b>Discover your interests.</b> Answer questions about the type of work you might enjoy. We'll suggest careers that match a personalized profile of your interests. <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">             Start →           </div>

Go to [www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org) and select **"Start"** under the **"Discover your interests"** section. Take the self-assessment, which includes 60 questions about work activities.

Upon receiving your results, **reflect on your skills** by making a list of your current technical and soft skills. Consider the skills you enjoy using and those you want to develop. Then, **identify your work values**. Ask yourself: What's most important to me in a job?

## Explore Occupations

Once you complete the Interest Profiler, begin exploring occupations:

- **Use Interest Profiler Results:** The Interest Profiler will suggest occupations. Select these to view their detailed O\*NET reports.
- **Keyword Search:** If you have a specific job title in mind (even if it's a dream job), type it into the "Occupation Keyword Search" on [www.O\\*NETonline.org](http://www.O*NETonline.org).
- **Browse by Industry or Career Cluster:** If you're exploring broader areas, use the "Find Occupations" menu to browse by industries or career clusters that pique your interest.

## Analyze Occupation Reports

For each occupation that interests you, dive into its detailed report:

- **Tasks:** What are the typical responsibilities and duties?
- **Technology Skills:** What software and tools are commonly used?
- **Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (KSAs):** What foundational knowledge, developed skills, and enduring abilities are required? Compare these to your own.
- **Work Activities & Context:** What are the general work activities, and what is the typical work environment like?
- **Job Zone:** Understand the typical education, experience, and training needed.
- **Interests, Work Styles, Work Values:** See how the occupation's characteristics align with your self-assessment results.
- **Wages & Employment Trends:** Get an idea of salary ranges and the job outlook (for example, "Bright Outlook," "Little or No Change").

## Compare & Prioritize

Based on your analysis, begin a selection process:

- **Create a Short List:** Narrow down 3-5 occupations that seem like a good fit.
- **Gap Analysis:** For each occupation on the list, identify the gaps between your current skills/knowledge/experience and what the occupation requires.
- **Prioritize:** Which occupations excite you the most? Which ones have a strong outlook and manageable skill gaps?

## Develop an Action Plan

Once you've identified potential career paths:

- **Skill Development:** Based on your gap analysis, identify specific courses, certifications, or training programs that can help you acquire the necessary skills.
- **Networking:** Look for individuals in these roles and connect with them for informational interviews to learn more about their day-to-day work.
- **Mentorship:** Seek out mentors who can guide you in your chosen direction.
- **Internal Opportunities:** Explore if there are opportunities within your current organization that align with your new career goals.
- **Resume/Portfolio Building:** Tailor your resume and build a portfolio that highlights skills relevant to your target occupations.

## Tips for Effective O\*NET Use

- ✓ **Be Patient and Thorough:** O\*NET is rich with information. Take your time to explore and understand the data.
- ✓ **Use "My Next Move" for Quick Starts:** For a more streamlined, user-friendly experience, especially with the Interest Profiler, start at [www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org).
- ✓ **Don't Limit Yourself:** Explore occupations you might not have considered before. You might be surprised by what you find!
- ✓ **Combine with Other Research:** While O\*NET is comprehensive, supplement your research with industry trends, and discussions with professionals in your target fields.
- ✓ **Revisit Regularly:** The job market evolves. Revisit O\*NET periodically to stay updated on occupational trends and refine your career goals.