

Discover the rewarding opportunities of a **CAREER IN SIGHT.**



Become an Ophthalmic Professional

Ophthalmology is the practice of medicine concerned with the anatomy, diseases, and treatments of the eye. High school graduates and college students can discover a career working in Ophthalmology practices as part of the eye care team. Allied Ophthalmic Personnel (AOP) are highly skilled, specialty medical assisting professionals who are qualified by didactic and clinical ophthalmic training to perform ophthalmic procedures under the direction of a licensed ophthalmologist. They often perform a patient's initial exam, including evaluating eye muscle movements, and gathering information about a patient's health history. Some AOP are responsible for administering eye medications and assisting ophthalmologists in surgical settings.

AOP work in varied workplace settings and for organizations of all sizes, including private practices, medical centers, hospitals, and university clinics alongside ophthalmologists who provide medical and surgical treatment of eye conditions. They have a variety of responsibilities and work with patients of all ages, from babies and children to adults and the elderly. People who are compassionate, empathetic, respectful, and professional, with strong communication skills have the important characteristics of eye care team members.

There are two ways to enter the ophthalmic career field:

- 1 Attend an accredited academic educational program.
- 2 Begin working for an ophthalmologist now and learn the necessary skills through experience achieved under their supervision. Then take an approved independent study course.

Choose your path

Either path can prepare you for a career in ophthalmology. You will learn the skills needed to work with people who need spectacles or contact lenses, and those who have a variety of eye disorders such as cataracts, glaucoma, and diabetic eye disease.

4.2 MILLION

Americans ages 40 and older are visually impaired

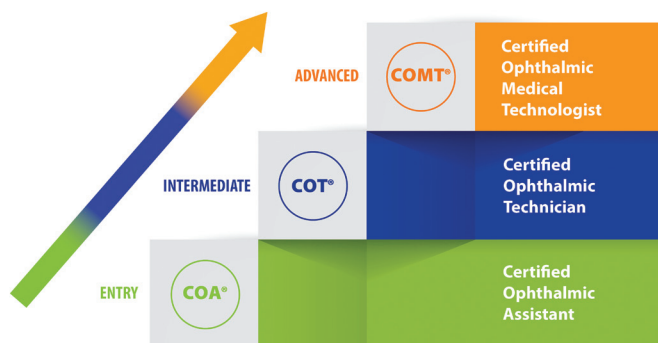
Source: <https://nei.nih.gov/nehep/lvam>, 3/2018

Certification and Professional Development

After completing training, AOP qualify to take the International Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology's (IJCAHPO) Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA) certification examination. Certification increases employment opportunities and earning potential, demonstrates mastery of specific skills, and promotes career advancement.

IJCAHPO offers a variety of certifications recognized worldwide for AOP:

- *Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA®)*
- *Certified Ophthalmic Technician (COT®)*
- *Certified Ophthalmic Medical Technologist (COMT®)*
- *Ophthalmic Surgical Assistant (OSA®)*
- *Registered Ophthalmic Ultrasound Biometrist (ROUB®)*
- *Certified Diagnostic Ophthalmic Sonographer (CDOS®)*
- *Corporate Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (CCOA®)*
- *Ophthalmic Scribe (OSC®)*



AOP lifelong learning is essential and is accomplished through continuing education and professional development. IJCAHPO offers educational opportunities through a wide range of programs and activities, including annual and regional meetings, lectures, workshops, distance and online learning opportunities, and independent programs approved for credit.

Factors That Determine Allied Ophthalmic Personnel Salaries

- Level of Training
- Experience
- Level of IJCAHPO Certification
- Location
- Supervisory Responsibilities

According to IJCAHPO's *International Allied Ophthalmic Personnel (AOP) Salary and Benefits Study*,
average hourly wages for an Ophthalmic Medical Technician per level of training:

Entry
COA Level
\$21.99
hourly wage

Intermediate
COT Level
\$25.54
hourly wage

Advanced
COMT Level
\$31.41
hourly wage



INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION ON ALLIED
HEALTH PERSONNEL IN OPHTHALMOLOGY®

2025 Woodlane Drive, St Paul, MN 55125

For more information: www.DiscoverEyeCareers.org • careers@jcahpo.org • 800-284-3937