

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. There are many careers available to high school graduates and college students working in Ophthalmology offices as part of the eye care team. Allied Ophthalmic Personnel (AOP) are highly skilled professionals, qualified by didactic and clinical ophthalmic training, who perform ophthalmic procedures under the direction of a licensed ophthalmologist. They 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. People who are compassionate, empathetic, respectful, and professional, with strong communication skills have the important characteristics of eye care team members.

AOP have a variety of responsibilities and work with patients of all ages, from babies and children to adults and the elderly. They often perform a patient's initial exam, including evaluating eye muscle movements, and gather information about a patient's health history. Some AOP administer eye medications and assist ophthalmologists in surgical settings.

4.2 MILLION

Americans ages 40 and older are visually impaired

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

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.

Certification and Professional Organizations

After completing training, allied ophthalmic personnel 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 may help with 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®)



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. Many AOP also choose to join the Association of Technical Personnel in Ophthalmology (ATPO) www.atpo.org and/or the Canadian Society of Ophthalmic Medical Personnel (CSOMP) <http://www.cos-sco.ca/csomp/>.

Factors That Determine Allied Ophthalmic Personnel Salaries

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

According to the Association of Technical Personnel in Ophthalmology (ATPO) National Salary and Benefits Report for Ophthalmic Medical Personnel, **average salaries for an Ophthalmic Medical Technician per level of training:**

Entry
COA Level
\$42,500
annual salary

Intermediate
COT Level
\$52,500
annual salary

Advanced
COMT Level
\$60,200
annual salary

For more information, please visit:
www.jcahpo.org/career_opportunities
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or call 800-284-3937.



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