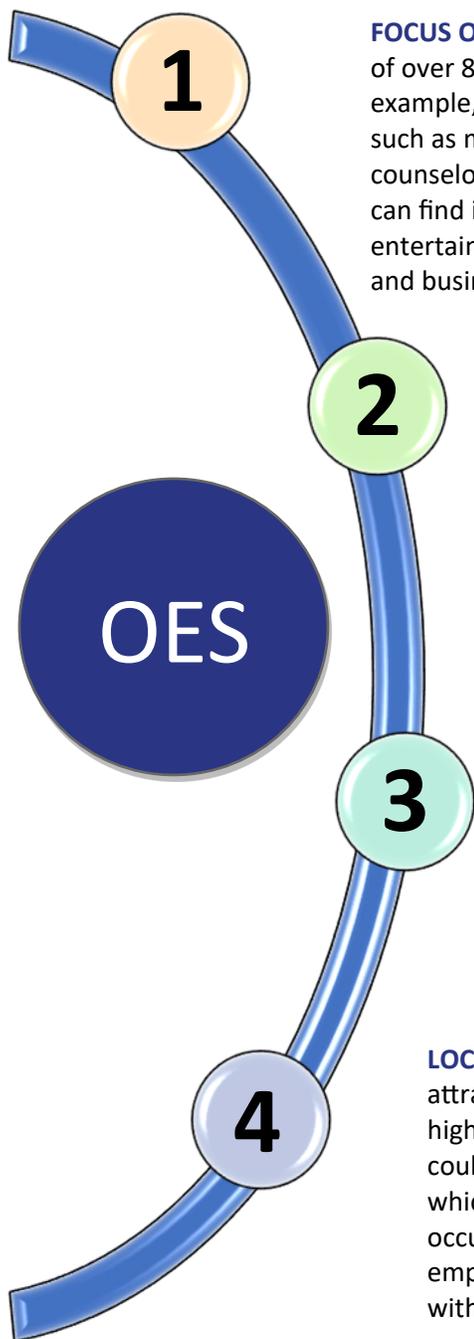


# How OES can take the mystery out of your job search

Looking for a job and don't know where to start? Consider preparing yourself with information from the **Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)** program at the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data from the OES program can serve as a useful resource for jobseekers. OES data are valuable because they show employment and wages for individual occupations in specific geographical areas or industries. These data, updated annually, are available online at [www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm). There are many ways to use these free, publicly available data. Here are some tips on how to use OES data to focus your job search:



**FOCUS ON YOUR INTERESTS** On the OES website, you can search a comprehensive list of over 800 occupations to find those related to your interests or experience. For example, under “Community and Social Service Occupations,” you will find occupations such as marriage and family therapists, healthcare social workers, and rehabilitation counselors. Alternatively, if you are interested in working in a particular industry, you can find information on the variety of jobs in that industry. For example, jobs in the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry include fundraisers, fitness trainers, and agents and business managers.

**TARGET YOUR SEARCH** Many occupations are found predominantly in specific industries. For example, 52 percent of civil engineers worked in the engineering services industry, and 24 percent worked for federal, state, and local government. With this knowledge, a jobseeker who originally may have focused on finding openings for this occupation in the private sector can broaden the scope of his or her search to include government employers as well.

**LOOK INTO WAGES:** Wages vary for numerous reasons, including different skills, experience, geographic locations, and industry. Although jobseekers may be tempted to move to areas where wages are significantly higher, they should consider cost of living before packing up. The New York metropolitan area may have higher-than-average wages and employment, but the high cost of living can offset these higher wages.

**LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!** Although larger metropolitan areas tend to attract jobseekers because of high employment levels, some occupations have higher employment levels in smaller areas. For example, aspiring nursing assistants could search for jobs in the New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago metropolitan areas, which are three of the locations with the highest employment levels for this occupation. However, Midland, Texas, was among the areas with the highest employment of wellhead pumpers, and Fort Collins, Colorado, was among the areas with the highest employment of conservation scientists.

To see these techniques put to use in a real-life situation, we can use the example of Kelly, a computer science major trying to find a career path after graduating from college. She might consider one of the following occupations that many computer science majors enter:

After some thought, Kelly decides that she would like to know more about being an information security analyst.

Occupation	National employment	National annual average wage
Software developers, applications	903,160	\$108,080
Information security analysts	108,060	102,470
Computer systems analysts	587,970	93,610

By visiting the OES website, Kelly can find the industries with the highest wages for information security analysts, as shown in the graph below:

### Top paying industries for information security analysts, May 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics program.

Kelly also wants to know how concentrated employment for her chosen occupation is in different states. On the OES occupational profile page for applications software developers, she finds a location quotient map that graphically shows the employment concentration of information security analysts in each state. By holding her mouse pointer over Virginia in the map, Kelly easily finds that the employment concentration for information security analysts is 4.96 times as high in Virginia as in the United States as a whole. The same “hover over” option on the map also shows that there were 14,180 information security analysts in Virginia, representing approximately 3.7 out of every 1,000 jobs and earning an average of \$111,780 per year.

