

2021 CMA (AAMA)® Compensation and Benefits Report

The CMA (AAMA)

Employers are increasingly demanding that their medical assistants have a CMA (AAMA)® credential.¹ Every day the AAMA responds to more than 100 employer requests for CMA (AAMA) certification verification—for both current and potential employees.² Such demand is often due to the pressures of potential malpractice suits and the certification mandates placed on employers by managed care organizations.³

Medical assistants and medical assisting educators across the country enthusiastically participated in the 2021 Compensation and Benefits Survey conducted by the American Association of Medical Assistants® (AAMA). Nearly 14,000 medical assistants completed the survey.

The AAMA emailed an electronic questionnaire to more than 80,000 CMAs (AAMA) and AAMA members and announced the survey via the AAMA Facebook page (over 51,000 followers). The majority of respondents (86%) were medical assistants, while almost 2% identified themselves as medical assisting educators.

Approximately 3% of respondents identified themselves as medical practice managers, while about 2% identified as both medical assistants and medical assisting educators. Most of the participants had earned the CMA (AAMA) credential (97%) and were members of the AAMA (74%).

Statistical significance and terms used

The large number of participants ensures that the results have a high degree of statistical significance. The overall margin of error for the 13,805 responses is $\pm 0.85\%$ at the 95% confidence level. Margin of error describes the statistical significance of the sample as an estimate of the population. The margin of error should be treated only as an approximation, since margin of error calculations are based on pure random selection, which is not achievable in traditional survey settings where response is voluntary. The $\pm 0.85\%$ margin of error applies to overall statistics based on the total respondents to the survey; smaller breakout groups presented throughout the report have higher margins of error. Judgments based on statistics with very low sample sizes should be made with caution. Statistics are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Employee pay rate and status

Both hourly pay rates and annual gross earnings were collected on the survey.

Approximately 98% of full-time medical assistants are paid hourly, while roughly 2% are paid by annual salary. Of the 10,900 respondents who are practicing medical assistants, approximately 91% work full time while 9% work part time. For the purposes of this report, results represent compensation and benefits for the full-time employee population.

Compensation

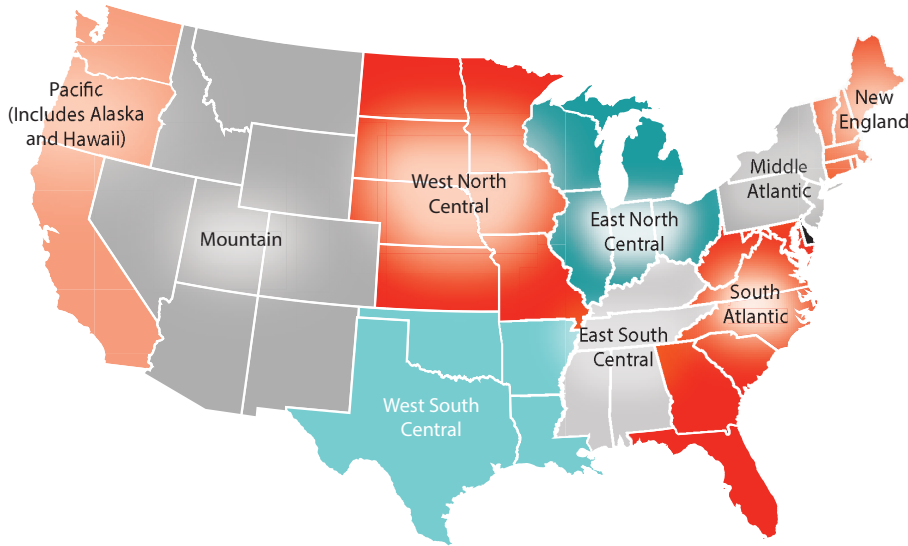
Overall, of those surveyed, full-time medical assistants holding a current CMA (AAMA) certification earn an average of \$19.02 per hour or average annual earnings of \$35,659.36. Average hourly wages and annual earnings varied for CMAs (AAMA) according to years of experience and other factors, which are broken down as follows.

By geographic region

The average annual earnings and hourly wages were computed for geographic regions of the United States (Figure 1). The Pacific region showed the highest earnings for full-time current CMAs (AAMA), with averages of \$43,441.18 annually and \$22.94 hourly. Across the country, the New England region turned in the second-highest annual earnings (\$37,907.80), while West North Central region had the second-highest hourly wages (\$20.20). The full comparison is shown in Table 1.

CMA (AAMA) overall
 average earnings
 Hourly: \$19.02
 Salary: \$35,659.36

Figure 1. Regions based on the United States Census divisions



Note: Data presented in this report represent current-dollar values (i.e., dollar amounts are not adjusted for cost of living by region). To learn more about constant-dollar values in your region, search online to view cost-of-living adjustments for individual locations.

Table 1.

Geographic region	Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience (\$)					
	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Northeast						
New England	17.92	18.90	19.90	21.05	21.96	20.01
	33,776	35,589	38,038	40,025	41,601	37,908
Middle Atlantic	16.94	17.77	18.90	20.17	21.44	18.89
	32,766	33,672	36,305	39,151	41,779	36,122
Midwest						
East North Central	16.59	17.59	18.35	19.12	20.63	18.50
	30,157	32,494	33,630	35,318	38,974	34,150
West North Central	17.06	18.96	20.25	21.00	22.14	20.20
	31,387	34,160	37,363	37,866	42,329	37,253
South						
South Atlantic	15.79	16.61	17.51	18.60	19.98	17.83
	29,379	31,311	33,341	35,494	38,515	33,880
East South Central	14.64	16.14	16.81	18.13	19.74	17.14
	27,230	31,373	32,438	34,167	39,494	32,975
West South Central	14.75	15.90	17.28	19.18	19.60	17.42
	27,667	29,433	32,270	37,658	37,014	33,063
West						
Mountain	16.48	17.49	19.06	20.48	21.45	18.92
	30,049	31,791	35,563	38,155	40,765	35,042
Pacific	20.47	21.99	23.39	24.57	24.73	22.94
	37,305	40,764	44,184	46,890	49,144	43,441

By work setting

The overwhelming majority of CMA (AAMA)–certified medical assistants surveyed work in physicians’ offices. Nearly 94% of medical assistant respondents are employed in that setting, with roughly 1% in ambulatory surgery and another 3% in “other.” Almost 2% of respondents work in inpatient settings. The breakdown of wages and earnings by work setting is shown in Table 2. Figures for home health settings are not listed due to insufficient response numbers.

By practice specialty

About 60% of medical assistant respondents who are CMA (AAMA)–certified work in a primary care practice. Another 33% work in practices with other medical and surgical specialties. The income figures for practice specialty are shown in Table 3.

By number of specialties

Almost 53% of CMA (AAMA) respondents work in a single-specialty practice, while 44% work in a multispecialty setting. The income figures for full-time current CMAs (AAMA) by number of specialties are listed in Table 4.

Table 2.

Work setting	Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience (\$)					
	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Physician practice	16.95 31,246	17.96 33,328	18.88 35,229	19.87 37,232	21.16 40,527	19.01 35,576
Ambulatory surgery	17.29 30,036	18.67 34,708	20.30 39,950	20.54 38,796	22.38 41,912	19.88 37,762
Inpatient setting	18.03 31,952	19.00 35,707	18.57 35,821	20.12 38,966	20.01 40,083	18.97 36,137
Other	17.59 32,121	18.24 34,093	18.64 36,145	20.60 39,696	21.33 43,056	19.29 37,017

Table 3.

Practice specialty	Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience (\$)					
	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Primary care	16.92 31,111	17.92 32,935	18.69 34,484	19.83 36,788	21.02 40,012	18.90 35,074
All other medical and surgical specialties	17.17 31,613	18.24 34,333	19.31 36,630	20.18 38,465	21.49 41,709	19.39 36,797
Other	17.01 31,623	18.10 33,709	18.88 35,502	19.88 37,665	21.12 40,770	18.95 35,791

Table 4.

Number of specialties	Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience (\$)					
	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Single specialty	16.91 31,267	17.83 33,207	18.72 35,186	19.81 37,324	21.01 40,502	18.92 35,613
Multiple specialties	17.14 31,511	18.26 33,800	19.22 35,851	20.22 37,772	21.58 41,269	19.31 36,071
Other	17.40 31,583	18.26 34,143	18.31 33,580	19.55 36,793	20.58 38,628	18.72 34,650

Employment benefits

Roughly 96% of all full-time CMAs (AAMA) receive some form of benefits package from their employer.

Insurance

About 84% of full-time CMAs (AAMA) receive paid vacation. Nearly 84% receive dental coverage, while 72% receive major medical coverage. About 78% receive vision coverage, and 63% receive disability coverage. The full range of benefits for full-time CMAs (AAMA) is shown in Figure 3.

AAMA membership and conference

When asked if employers offer to help pay for various AAMA expenses, about 11% of full-time medical assistants who are AAMA members responded that their employers pay their membership dues in full (Figure 4). In addition, approximately 6% have their AAMA Annual Conference registration fees paid for in full, and just over 3% have travel and lodging paid by their employers. ♦

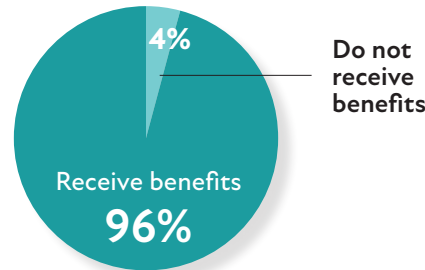
The American Association of Medical Assistants thanks all the participants who made this survey possible.

References

1. Balasa DA, Johnson A. CMA (AAMA) certification: Why it is the premier credential. *CMA Today*. 2015;48(6):6-7. November 2015. Accessed October 19, 2021. <https://www.aama-ntl.org/docs/default-source/other/nd-pa.pdf>
2. What is a CMA (AAMA)*? American Association of Medical Assistants. Accessed October 19, 2021. <http://www.aama-ntl.org/medical-assisting/what-is-a-cma>
3. Balasa DA. Why more employers are hiring CMAs (AAMA). *CMA Today*. 2013;46(5):6-7. January 2007. Updated September 2013. Accessed October 19, 2021. <http://www.aama-ntl.org/cma-today/archives/article?id=b286d24a-4840-6a90-a81c-ff00003b2c18>

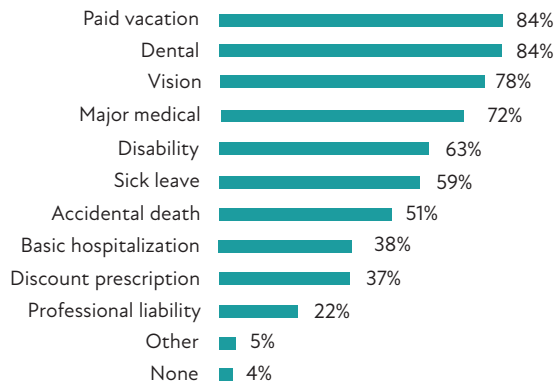
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Figure 2. Benefits received by full-time CMAs (AAMA)



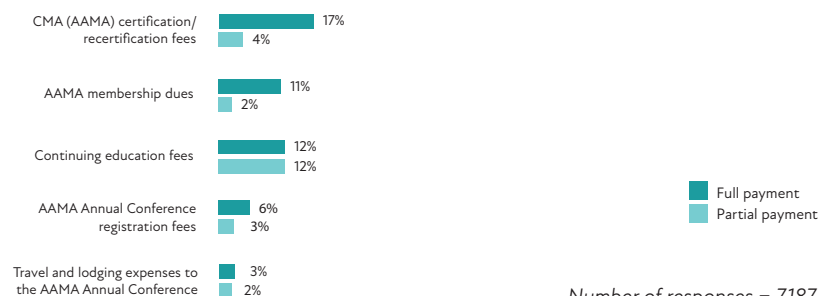
Number of responses = 9,396
Results rounded to the nearest whole number

Figure 3. Insurance benefits received by full-time CMAs (AAMA)



Number of responses = 9,396
Results rounded to the nearest whole number

Figure 4. Dues assistance received by full-time medical assistant AAMA members



Number of responses = 7,187
Results rounded to the nearest whole number