

18 Reasons to be a CNA
Maura Deering
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Opportunity to Make a Difference:

CNAs provide patients and their families with [essential services](#), performing the daily tasks patients cannot do or struggle to complete on their own, including dressing, bathing, cooking, eating, linen-changing, and getting in and out of bed. During this time of COVID-19, healthcare workers like CNAs may be the only companions for patients in isolation or without families.

Opportunity to Specialize:

Becoming a CNA provides opportunities to try nursing after a shorter training period and explore potential specialty areas. A CNA credential can open doors to educational programs and careers as registered nurses or advanced practice nurses, both of which offer specializations in areas such as acute care, gerontology, oncology, family practice, and pediatrics.

Affordability:

Because CNAs earn a certification rather than a degree, the financial commitment can be far lower. Online CNA training typically costs less than in-person programs, and some schools, organizations, and healthcare facilities offer [free CNA classes](#). CNAs may be able to take these classes for their initial certifications and for maintaining current nursing skills.

Job Stability:

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects approximately [174,000 job openings](#) for CNAs each year between 2019 and 2029. An aging population, along with a [nationwide nursing shortage](#) across all levels of nursing, translates to a high level of job stability throughout the end of the decade.

Variety:

CNA work provides day-to-day variety, including caring for different patients, assisting various healthcare professionals, and performing multiple tasks. CNAs work with nurses, health care providers, and other medical staff and perform duties that include advising patients about their nutritional needs, taking their vital signs, and communicating their concerns to their health care team.

Ability to Work in Various Sectors:

CNAs work in a [variety of environments](#). Nursing care facilities, including skilled nursing facilities, employ 37% of CNAs, followed by hospitals at 27%. The remaining large employers of CNAs include continuing care retirement communities and assisted living facilities for the elderly at 11%, home healthcare services at 5%, and government at 4%.

Wide Experience:

Considered an entry-level nursing position, CNAs help candidates develop basic nursing skills and explore patient care in different healthcare settings. CNAs also interact with, assist, and network with physicians, RNs, nurse practitioners, and other health care professionals. The tasks they perform build a solid base for advancement in the nursing field.

Flexibility:

CNA training programs often provide the flexibility to work full or part time, engage in volunteer work, or take care of other responsibilities. Most CNA classes can be accessed according to students' schedules. Once trained, CNAs may be able to negotiate schedules to fit their needs at many workplaces, including day, evening, and weekend shifts.

Job Security:

The BLS projects an [employment growth rate of 8%](#) from 2019-2029 — a much faster rate than that for all other occupations combined. Home health and personal care CNAs should see an even higher projected job growth rate of 25% through the end of the decade.

Opportunity for Network Connections:

CNAs work under the supervision of RNs and LPNs. They also assist physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other healthcare professionals. Working on a medical staff presents opportunities for creating networking connections and forging camaraderie with co-workers. The connections made can help with recommendations for future employment or education and career advice.

Easier to Get Accepted in Nursing Programs:

Entry-level nursing programs like CNA training and classes typically require a high school diploma or GED. [High school students can prepare](#) for CNA training by gaining relevant volunteer experience and becoming certified in CPR and first aid.

Affordable Courses

Students interested in pursuing a CNA certificate through organizations like the Red Cross, and long-term care facilities and nursing homes may have the training provided free of cost.. Course offerings cover such topics as care relationships, basic nursing theory, nutrition, understanding dementia, and vital signs. Training also includes laboratory and on site clinical experiences.

Easy to Change Easy Careers:

An [entry-level nursing credential](#) like a CNA certificate can function as a step on the path to more advanced nursing positions such as licensed practical nursing or registered nursing. Earning a certificate provides the opportunity to log experience in the nursing field without committing to a degree. CNAs can more easily transition to an associate- or bachelor's-level nursing program.

Personal and Professional Pride:

CNA training offers high school graduates entry into a professional career that fosters personal pride. As the current global pandemic continues to highlight, nurses at all levels perform essential, life-saving work on the front lines of patient care, and CNAs provide foundational support.

Ability to Take Care of Loved Ones:

CNAs acquire basic nursing skills that can transfer over to caring for family members if necessary. In the current climate of economic uncertainty and COVID-19 resurgence, nursing skills serve family members in quarantine. CNAs can also provide expert care for non-urgent illnesses, freeing up healthcare resources for the seriously ill.

Salary:

CNAs can earn their certifications via free or low-cost training, and enter the workforce at an [average hourly rate](#) of almost \$12. The nationwide [mean hourly wage](#) for CNAs totals nearly \$15, with the top 90% making close to \$20 per hour. California and New York rank among the top five states for both job opportunities and salaries, offering hourly mean wages of \$17.61 and \$18.66 respectively.

Bonuses and Benefits:

CNAs who work full time for healthcare facilities may qualify for employee benefits that could include group healthcare insurance plans, life insurance, paid vacation time, and retirement plans such as 401ks.

Enriching Work Experience:

A career as a CNA should provide an enriching experience for those who want to help people, make a difference in patients' daily lives, and enter a profession without committing to earning a degree. It is also ideal for those seeking variety in the workday, job stability, and opportunities for advancement.