



Dental Workforce Trends

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Dental Workforce Landscape

Profession	BLS Annual Job Openings (2021-2031)	Number of Graduates from Accredited Programs (2019)	Percentage of Annual Graduates from Accredited Programs to Annual Openings
General Dentistry	5,100	6,350	125.0%
Dental Hygiene	16,300	7,311	44.9%
Dental Assisting	56,400	4,688	8.3%

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statists- Dentists. Retrieved 4.17.2023. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm>

The percentage of annual graduates from accredited programs to annual openings was calculated by dividing the number of graduates from accredited programs by BLS annual job openings.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statists- Dentists. Retrieved 4.17.2023. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm>

American Dental Education Association – Trends in Dental Education 2020-2021. Retrieved 4.17.23.

<https://www.adea.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=43750>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics- Dental Hygienists. Retrieved 4.17.2023. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm>

American Dental Education Association – Trends in Dental Education 2020-2021. Retrieved 4.17.23.

<https://www.adea.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=43750>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics- Dental Assistants. Retrieved 4.17.2023. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm>

American Dental Education Association – Trends in Dental Education 2020-2021. Retrieved 4.17.23.

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Legislative Action on Dental Workforce

- **Dentist and Dental Hygienist Interstate Compact:** House Bill 1576 (2023) enacted the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact. The Compact enables licensed dentists and dental hygienists, in good standing, to practice in all states participating in the Compact, rather than having to obtain an individual license in every state in which they want to practice. Washington state was one of the first states to join the Compact. In order for the Compact to become operational, seven states will need to pass Compact legislation. Currently, 5 states have joined.
- **Extending the Initial Limited License for Dental Hygienists:** House Bill 1466 (2023) made it easier for out-of-state dental hygienists, in good standing, to obtain a Washington license and start providing preventive care sooner. The bill extended the initial limited license for hygienists from 18 months to 5 years.
- **Removing a Barrier to Initial Limited Hygiene Licensure:** House Bill 1287 (2023) further reduced barriers to licensure for out-of-state hygienists. This legislation removed the requirement for hygienists seeking initial licensure in our state to have worked 560 hours over the past 24 consecutive months.
- **Preventive Dental Assistant:** House Bill 2176 (2024) would create a “Preventive Dental Assistant” license to permit licensees to provide basic preventive care. All applicants would need to complete training and demonstrate competency as determined by the Dental Quality Assurance Commission in order to become licensed. The Military, Indian Health Service, and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium use a similar model to provide routine, preventive dental care to their communities

Additional Advocacy on Dental Workforce

- **Adding new and expanding Dental Hygiene Programs:**
 - Peninsula College, in Port Angeles, is establishing an associate degree hygiene program, which plans to welcome their first cohort of 10 students in the Fall of 2025.
 - Olympic College, in Bremerton, has recently expressed interested in starting both a dental hygiene and dental assisting program.
 - We continue to work with current programs to increase enrollment and are looking to create new programs in Snohomish County and across the state.
- **Advocating for CODA to reevaluate current accreditation standards.**

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