

# Get a STEM Job With Less Than a 4-Year Degree

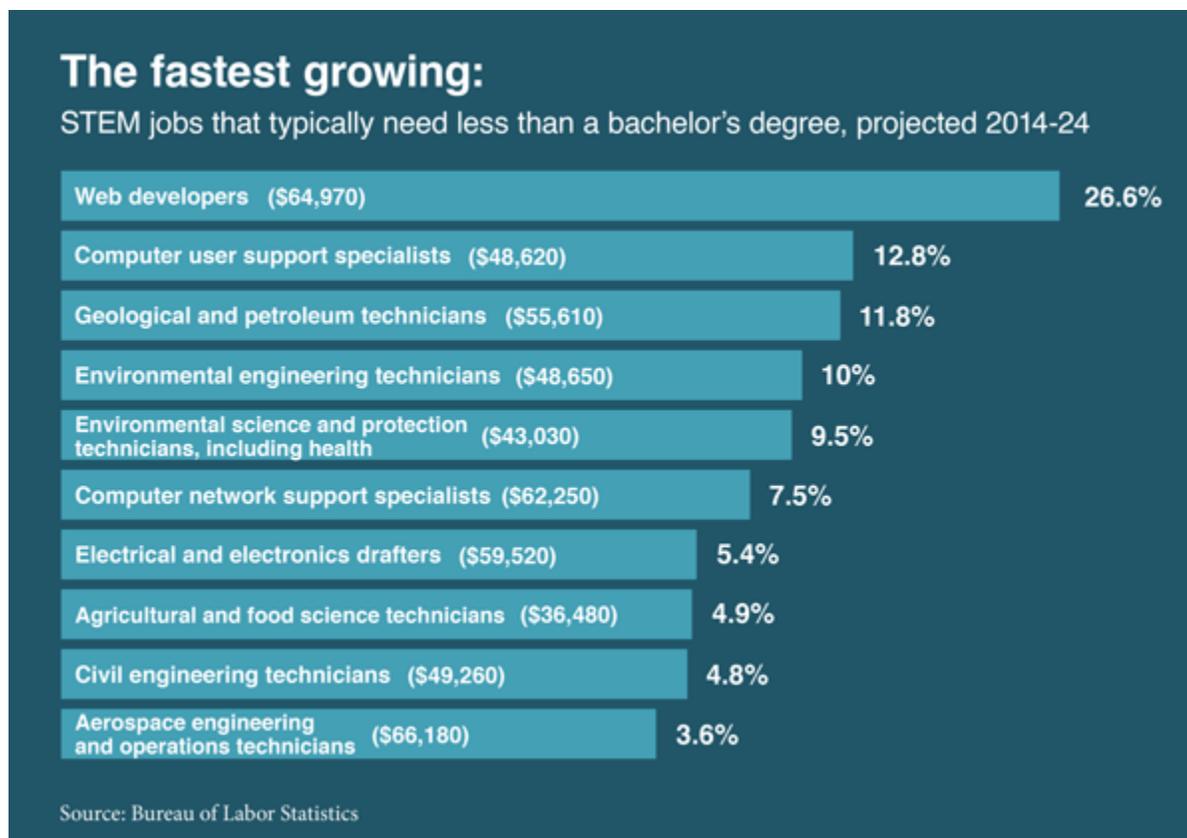
By **U.S. Department of Labor** on July 28, 2016

With rising cost of a 4-year degree, more people are asking: is a bachelor's degree really worth it? The short answer is yes. Bureau of Labor Statistics data show that *most* high-paying jobs require at least a bachelor's degree for entry.

But there is a growing recognition that what workers really need are the right skills and credentials to fill specific jobs. To that end, more employers are creating [apprenticeship](#) programs to train employees on the job, and more workers are turning to community colleges for certificate programs or associate degrees required for certain in-demand fields.

So what are these jobs?

A number of them are in growing STEM fields – science, technology, engineering and math. We've identified a number of STEM jobs that need less than a bachelor's degree to get started, and also pay close to or above the median for *all* occupations in May 2015: \$36,200.



Two different ways to look at which STEM jobs have brightest future over the next decade are to ask what jobs are **growing the fastest** (above) and will have the **most openings (below)**. These numbers are projections calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics every few years. In both charts, we've included median pay as of May 2015.

Jobs that fall into both categories are [web developers](#); [computer user support specialists](#) and [computer network support specialists](#); [civil engineering technicians](#); and [environmental science and protection technicians, including health](#).

## The most openings:

STEM jobs that typically need less than a bachelor's degree, projected 2014-24



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Among all STEM jobs that don't require a bachelor's degree, most are likely to need an associate degree for entry, but [surveying and mapping technicians](#) may need only a high school diploma and on-the-job training, while [computer user support specialists](#) often enter the occupation with only some college.

This [table](#) has a complete list of the STEM occupations that typically need less than a bachelor's degree for entry. Explore these and hundreds of other occupations in the online [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#).

For help connecting with employment and training opportunities near you, visit your local [American Job Center](#) or call 877-USA-JOBS.

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