



Dental Assisting National Board, Inc.

# DENTAL ASSISTANTS **SALARY SURVEY**

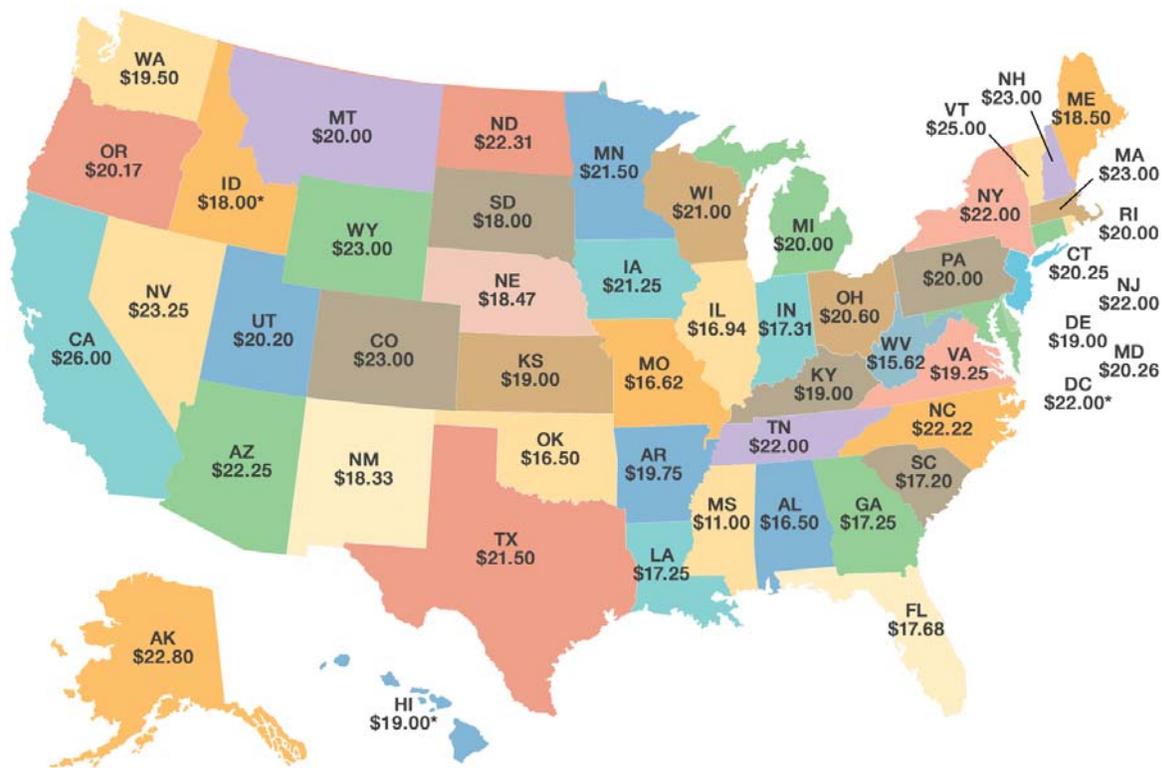
DANB certification improves dental assistants' careers and benefits the dental practices in which they work. Read on to see the results of DANB's salary and employment survey.



# CERTIFICANT SALARIES

## DANB CERTIFICANT EARNINGS

Dental assistants who hold DANB's Certified Dental Assistant™ (CDA®) certification earn more per hour than dental assistants who don't. The map below shows the median hourly wages of DANB CDA certificants by state.



## DANB CERTIFICANTS EARN MORE

Dental assistants who hold DANB CDA certification earn more than \$2 per hour than non-certified assistants.\*\*



DANB  
Certified  
**\$20.46**



Non-DANB  
Certified  
**\$17.76**

I have maintained DANB certification for 26 years and it has always been a benefit to me.

\* Data from DC, HI, and ID is from 2014 due to insufficient data collected from the 2016 survey in these three locations.

\*\* Compared to figures from the 2016 Occupational Outlook Handbook, published by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Figures are based on dental assistants working full-time (35+ hours per week).



# CERTIFICANT SALARIES

## CERTIFICANT SALARY BREAKDOWN

### GETTING INTO THE EARNINGS DETAILS

If you're a Certified Dental Assistant certificant, your salary may be the result of many factors, including years of experience, practice setting or location, and employment status. The chart below breaks down how much DANB CDA certificants earn based on these various employment details.



#### TOP PAYING STATES

\$26.00	California
\$25.00	Vermont
\$23.25	Nevada
\$23.00	Colorado, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Wyoming
\$22.80	Alaska
\$22.31	North Dakota
\$22.25	Arizona
\$22.22	North Carolina
\$22.00	D.C., New Jersey, New York, Tennessee



#### Education

High school or equivalent	\$20.90
Some college but no degree	\$20.20
Associate degree	\$19.21
Bachelor degree	\$22.83
Graduate degree	\$26.50



#### Years in Profession

0-5	\$16.75
6-10	\$20.68
11-15	\$21.75
16-20	\$22.00
21-25	\$21.25
26-30	\$23.22
31-35	\$24.00
36+	\$23.63



#### Employment Status

Full-time	\$20.46
Part-time	\$19.79
Temporary	\$18.67



#### Practice Location

Rural area	\$19.99
Small city or suburb	\$20.00
Large city	\$20.07
Metropolitan area	\$22.50



#### Practice Setting

Solo or small practice	\$20.52
Large practice	\$18.03
Specialty practice	\$20.25
Public health dentistry	\$18.00
Hospital dental clinic	\$20.55
Military	\$21.75
School or university	\$24.38
Insurance company	\$29.44
Dental product company	\$30.00

### STRONG CAREER OUTLOOK

Dental assisting is a fast-growing profession and DANB CDA certificants are positioned for success.

**36K** CDA certificants nationwide — and growing every year!

**18%** expected increase in dental assisting jobs by 2024



# BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION

## INCREASED EARNINGS

### CDA CERTIFICANTS EARN MORE

Certified Dental Assistant certificants not only earn over \$2 more per hour than dental assistants who are not certified, they also more frequently ask for and receive raises.



### ASKING FOR MORE

CDA certificants frequently reported asking for raises and receiving raises.

- 70%** received a raise in their current position
- 39%** received a raise without asking
- 31%** asked for and received a raise



I have asked for a raise and it was granted at a higher amount than I had asked.

## CAREER SATISFACTION

### DANB CERTIFICANTS ENJOY THEIR CAREERS

There are many rewards that holding DANB certification brings, including personal pride, increased knowledge, and greater earning power. These are just some of the reasons that might be why DANB Certified Dental Assistant certificants report high levels of career satisfaction.

- COMMITTED TO CERTIFICATION **99%** plan to renew
- ENCOURAGING OF OTHERS **96%** would encourage others to earn certification
- DEDICATED TO THEIR CAREER **95%** view dental assisting as a career
- SATISFIED IN THEIR WORK **89%** reported high job satisfaction



My career satisfaction is due to the fact that I worked for dentists who valued and appreciated my work as a dental assistant.



# BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION

## PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS

### HOLDING DANB CERTIFICATION BRINGS MANY BENEFITS

Dental assistants who hold DANB certification report numerous personal and professional benefits. As a result of this and many other factors, DANB certificants report high levels of career satisfaction and a passion for the profession.



#### Top 5 work benefits

1. Paid vacation **85%**
2. Paid holidays **84%**
3. Retirement plan **67%**
4. Paid sick leave **55%**
5. Free dental care **54%**



#### Top 5 personal benefits

1. Increased knowledge **77%**
2. Pride **75%**
3. Stand out when applying for jobs **66%**
4. Greater confidence **61%**
5. Elevation of the profession **60%**

## PASSION FOR THE PROFESSION



There are so many ways DANB certification can improve your career as a dental assistant. It's no wonder DANB certificants love their jobs!

“ I've been a dental assistant for 24 years, and DANB certified since 1993. Certification helps me to assist in more productive ways. The thing I'm most proud of is that I get to help people — to encourage them to take good care of themselves; and to remove fear from dentistry, one patient at a time. There is joy in seeing kids excited about coming to the dentist. I love that about my job! — Tracy G., CDA

I have been a dental assistant for almost 40 years now and I am proud of all aspects of my career. Dentistry is my passion. The best advice that I could give is get DANB certified and take all the continuing education classes you can. Having that CDA certification on the wall tells patients that I care enough about them to be the absolute best that I can be. — Deborah H., CDA





# CERTIFICANTS DELIVER VALUE

## EDUCATED AND EXPERIENCED

DANB certificants are educated and experienced professionals who have a commitment to the profession and passion for lifelong learning.

### WHAT QUALITIES DO DANB CERTIFICANTS HAVE?

DANB CERTIFICANTS ARE ...

LOYAL	<b>8.4</b>	years on average with their current employer
DEDICATED	<b>18.4</b>	years on average in the profession
EDUCATED	<b>90%</b>	have some college or higher
QUALIFIED	<b>44%</b>	have a state credential
PROFESSIONAL	<b>95%</b>	view dental assisting as a career
INTEGRAL	<b>87%</b>	perform critical duties around the office

## DELIVERING VALUE TO THE DENTAL PRACTICE



DANB certificants are integral to the dental office. They perform many important functions that keep the office running smoothly. DANB certificants contribute to office productivity and efficiency — contributing to the bottom line.

### Top 5 duties CDA certificants perform

- **Infection control** 81%
- **Lab functions** 70%
- **Order dental supplies and equipment** 63%
- **Expanded functions** 58%
- **In-office training** 41%



Being a Certified Dental Assistant certificant builds our knowledge and skills so that we can bring value to the dental practice.



# WHY EARN DANB CERTIFICATION?

## THE DANB DIFFERENCE

The value of holding DANB certification is clear. Year after year, DANB Certified Dental Assistant certificants share the value they see in holding credentials that set them apart from the rest. This year, DANB's Salary Survey reached out to both DANB CDA certificants and non-certified assistants.

In addition to earning a higher salary, DANB CDA certificants reported differences in some key areas.



### JOB SATISFACTION

DANB CDA certificants reported higher job satisfaction than their non-certified colleagues.

- CDA certified — **89%** report high job satisfaction
- Non-certified — **78%** report high job satisfaction



### EDUCATION

Although many dental assistants have pursued higher education, more DANB CDA certificants reported having completed some college or higher than non-certified individuals.

- CDA certified — **90%** have some college or more
- Non-certified — **80%** have some college or more



### RAISES RECEIVED

According to survey results, dental assistants who hold DANB's CDA certification more frequently reported receiving a raise in their current position.

- CDA certified — **70%** have received a raise in their current position
- Non-certified — **59%** have received a raise in their current position



### STATE CREDENTIALS

DANB exams and certifications are often one way to earn a state credential. So, it may not be a surprise to learn that DANB CDA certificants are more likely to hold a state credential.

- CDA certified — **44%** hold state credential
- Non-certified — **30%** hold state credential



# WHY EARN DANB CERTIFICATION?



## EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

DANB CDA certificants are more likely to get paid holidays, vacations, sick time, retirement plans and reimbursement for CE than non-certified assistants.

Benefit	Certified	Non-Certified
Paid vacation	85%	73%
Paid holidays	84%	74%
Retirement plan	67%	54%
Sick leave	55%	40%
Reimbursement for CE	41%	27%



## OFFICE CONTRIBUTIONS

DANB CDA certificants are more likely to perform key duties around the dental office than non-certified certificants. Therefore, it seems likely that dental assistants who hold CDA certification contribute more to office productivity, efficiency and profitability.

Duty	Certified	Non-Certified
Infection control	81%	74%
Lab functions	70%	62%
Expanded functions	58%	44%



## PURCHASING POWER

Additionally, CDA certificants have purchasing power! They reported being in charge of ordering dental materials, products and equipment at a higher rate than those who are not certified.

- CDA certified — **63%** place orders
- Non-certified — **52%** place orders



## PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT

Most dental assistants who were surveyed responded that they view dental assisting as a career and not “just a job.” However, DANB CDA certificants reported this sentiment at a higher rate than those who are not certified. That could be why DANB CDA certificants, on average, have been in the profession for almost 20 years!

- CDA certified — **95%** view dental assisting as a career
- Non-certified — **88%** view dental assisting as a career



## THE EFDA REPORT

This year, for the first time ever, DANB’s Salary Survey included responses from dental assistants who reported holding a state expanded function credential.\*

Many dental assistants are eager to climb the career ladder in their state and be eligible to perform expanded functions. In many states, earning DANB’s CDA certification is one of the ways to be eligible to earn an expanded functions credential, such as EFDA, RDAEF, EDDA, or DA II.

DANB surveyed CDA certificants and non-certificants who also hold a state-specific EFDA credential and identified some key findings.

### DANB CERTIFICATION + EFDA = MORE REWARDS

CDA certificants who hold an EFDA credential share many similarities with certificants who do not hold an EFDA credential. For example, both groups have similar levels of education, years of experience, years with the same employer, and similar salaries.

But CDA certificants who also hold an EFDA credential reported higher levels of career satisfaction and were more likely to receive a raise. So, if your state offers an expanded functions credential, you may want to consider going for it!

### HIGHER SATISFACTION + MORE RAISES

	CDA + EFDA	CDA only	EFDA only	No credentials
View dental assisting as a career	97%	94%	93%	88%
High job satisfaction	90%	88%	79%	78%
Received a raise in current position	72%	68%	66%	59%

#### If you’re already an EFDA, should you earn DANB certification?

Survey says ... YES! Although holding a state EFDA credential offers many benefits, the survey results show that holding a state expanded functions credential and DANB certification result in even greater career satisfaction and professional rewards, including a higher salary.

	CDA + EFDA	CDA only	EFDA only	No credentials
Median Hourly Salary	\$20.25	\$20.05	\$18.07	\$16.41

\* These findings are based on the responses from 233 CDA certificants and 142 non-certified assistants who reported holding one of the following state-specific credentials: EFDA, RDAEF, EDDA, DA II.



# THE RAISE REPORT

## HOW TO ASK FOR A RAISE

Many dental assistants are interested to learn how to ask for a raise. This can be a difficult conversation to have with your employer, but our survey results point to some strategies for success.

### 1. EARN CREDENTIALS.



Those who hold DANB certification and a state EFDA credential reported asking for raises and receiving raises more often than those without credentials. And dental assistants with credentials were more likely to receive a raise without asking than dental assistants without any credentials. So, to maximize your potential salary, earn DANB certification and any state credentials you can — the numbers show that it pays off!

### 2. DEMONSTRATE YOUR VALUE.



If you want to ask for a raise, you'll want to show your employer why you deserve one. A good place to start is by taking notes on all the ways you help the practice run smoothly and how the duties you perform impact patient care and practice profitability. Keep this list updated and add to it as your responsibilities grow. Offer to perform additional duties allowed in your state (see [www.danb.org](http://www.danb.org)). When you're ready, you can share this with your employer.

### 3. DO YOUR SALARY RESEARCH.



DANB's salary survey report includes great information about how much dental assistants earn based on their credentials, experience, and location. You can use this information to prepare a raise request that you think is fair based on these national salary survey results.

### 4. DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK.



Of all dental assistants surveyed, less than 10% reported having a raise request denied. That's why you should go ahead and prepare your case for why you believe you deserve a salary increase and bring this information to your employer. Chances are good that your request will be considered!

## HAVE YOU EVER ASKED FOR A RAISE?

In our survey, we asked DANB certificants and non-certificants if they have ever asked for a raise in their current position. The results are encouraging!

- DANB CDA certificants who also hold a state EFDA credential are most likely to ask for and receive a raise at the requested level
- DANB CDA certificants are most likely to receive a raise without asking
- Dental assistants without credentials are least likely to receive a raise

### IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION, HAVE YOU EVER ASKED FOR A RAISE?

	CDA + EFDA	CDA only	EFDA only	No credentials
Yes and received at requested level	29%	14%	15%	14%
No but received a raise anyway	32%	44%	36%	29%
No never asked for or received raise	16%	14%	20%	28%



# ABOUT THE SALARY SURVEY

## ABOUT THE DANB SALARY SURVEY

The Dental Assisting National Board, Inc. (DANB) has conducted the DANB Salary Survey every two years since 2004. This year, for the first time, DANB's Salary Survey includes salary and benefit information as reported by:

- Dental assistants who hold DANB's Certified Dental Assistant™ (CDA®) certification
- Dental assistants who do not hold DANB certification
- Certified and non-certified dental assistants who hold state-specific expanded functions credentials

The 2016 DANB Salary Survey was conducted in November 2016. The findings in this report are based on an 11% response rate from a stratified random sample of 6,000 CDA certificants, and an 11% response rate from a stratified random sample of 4,500 non-certified assistants who have taken at least one DANB exam. Survey researchers consider an 11% response rate sufficient to generalize the results to the population surveyed.

DANB has conducted the Salary Survey every two years since 2004. The consistency of data over these years supports the conclusion that these results are representative of the population.

Salary figures are reported as the median response (the median is the point in a data set at which ~50% of responses fall above and ~50% fall below). Salary figures are reported as hourly wages, without including the dollar value of any employee benefits.

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