

HEALTHCARE HIGHLIGHTS

The Rural AHEC Student Newsletter



October's Healthcare Career Focus:

Optician

Opticians work with clients to fit them with eyeglasses and/or contact lenses. To determine what lenses to recommend to clients, they evaluate client prescriptions, facial features, and occupation and hobbies. They also determine what lenses and lens coatings may be best. Opticians measure the distance between the pupil centers and between the eye surface and lens to ensure a good fit. They may use a lensometer to verify the current prescription, or work with the prescription given by the examining optometrist.

What might I do as an Optician?

Practice in a variety of settings, such as medical offices, small stores or large chain stores

Interview clients to determine their likes and dislikes regarding appearance and fit of eyewear, habits and recreational activities, and their occupational requirements (Do they sit at a computer for hours at a time?)

Take client measurements to ensure that eyewear fits properly

Prepare work orders for grinding and mounting lenses in frames

Shape and reshape eyewear to fit client

Conduct eye tests to see if fit allows for good vision

Track prescriptions, appointments, and eyewear inventory

Provide training for clients regarding proper eyewear care and maintenance



How do I become an Optician?

- Graduate with a high school diploma
- Obtain an optician certificate through a post-secondary school program (typically one to two years)
- Or
- Acquire an Associate's Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing (two years)
- Or
- Attain an apprenticeship for on-the-job training under an ophthalmologist or optometrist

Average Salary:
\$38,840

What is it really like to be an Optician?

Opticians are in high demand and will continue to be as our population ages. The field is growing, and there will be no shortage of jobs in the future. This is a great career for someone who is not interested in attending a four-year college and would like to get going in a career soon after high school.

If you are interested in becoming an optician, these are some skills that would benefit you as you get involved in this rewarding career:

- **People skills**—opticians deal with many people on a daily basis
- **Communication skills**—this career requires that you know how to relate to clients, train clients to properly care for their eyewear, and develop long-lasting relationships
- **Collaboration and teamwork abilities**—opticians work with other professionals daily
- **Small motor skills**—much of the work opticians do requires strong, steady hands



Meet Silvia, a mobile optician who connects with clients in their residences to offer her services—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60D7vmVGdmo>

Watch this short video about what opticians do on a daily basis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP3pmq9p814>

“I’m the person that makes sure we get a frame that fits you, that is going to work for your prescription, and is going to last you...”

Maayan Shuval
Optician at Eyedentity, Kirkland, WA

“... people think that upgrades in lenses are kind of a scam, and they’re really not. The coatings make a significant difference in the physics of light and how light actually interacts with your glasses...”

Steve Alexander
The Growth Cooperative consultant for eye care providers

“...my whole world shifted... (eye disease) is super reversible if you have the right information. That’s amazing!”

Maayan Shuval
Optician at Eyedentity, Kirkland, WA

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Western New York Rural Area Health Education Center (R-AHEC) is one of nine centers in the New York State Area Health Education Center (NYS AHEC) organization. Our mission is to improve health and healthcare through education.

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