

# ST. LOUIS REGION'S AERO CAREERS ROADMAP

## High School Diploma/GED

If you're interested in a career in the aerospace industry, these are the programs and initiatives to focus on in high school to secure one of the high-paying jobs below » Stem Programs — Aviation Organizations — Youth Flying Programs — High School Training Programs — Employer Lead Training Programs

### Sheet Metal Workers

*STL Median: \$83,100*

Fabricate or install products made from thin metal sheets. Sample positions:

- Fabrication Sheet Metal Workers
- Installation Sheet Metal Workers
- Maintenance Sheet Metal Workers

**Requires:** Construction — learn trade through apprenticeship.

Manufacturing — learn on-the-job or at technical school.

**Outlook:** 2% job growth expected in the U.S., about 11,500 openings annually.

### Machinists | Tool and Die Makers

*STL Median: \$56,300 and \$59,000*

Set up and operate equipment to produce precision metal parts, instruments, and tools.

**Requires:** High school diploma plus on-the-job training OR training and apprenticeship programs, vocational school OR community/technical colleges.

**Outlook:** About 35,400 openings expected annually in the U.S.

### Installation Maintenance | Repairers

*STL Median: \$58,200*

Install, maintain, and repair factory equipment and other industrial machinery. Sample positions:

- Industrial Machinery Mechanics
- Machinery Maintenance Workers
- Millwrights

**Requires:** High school diploma plus one-year on-the-job training. Most millwrights do a 4-year apprenticeship program.

**Outlook:** 15% job growth projected in the U.S., about 53,000 openings annually. STL MSA had 2X more postings than national avg. in Q4 2024.

### Welders | Cutters | Solderers | Brazers

*STL Median: \$51,600*

Use hand-held or remotely controlled equipment to join, repair, or cut metal parts and products.

**Requires:** High school diploma/GED plus on-the-job training.

**Outlook:** 2% job growth projected in the U.S., about 45,800 openings annually. STL MSA had 9% more openings than national avg. in Q4 2024.

### Wood Workers

*STL Median: \$51,500*

Manufacture a variety of products, such as cabinets and furniture, using wood, veneers, and laminates. Sample positions:

- Cabinetmakers
- Furniture Finishers
- Woodworking Machine Operators

**Requires:** High school diploma/GED plus ability to use computer-controlled machinery.

**Outlook:** About 22,000 openings projected annually in the U.S. STL MSA had 5.3X more openings than national avg. in Q4 2024.

### Metal | Plastic Machine Workers

*STL Median: \$50,800*

Set up and operate equipment that cuts, shapes, and forms metal and plastic materials or pieces. Sample positions:

- Machine Setters
- Operators
- Tenders

**Requires:** High school diploma plus 1 year on-the-job training. CNC tool programmers often need postsecondary education.

**Outlook:** About 91,800 openings expected annually in the U.S.

### Painting | Coating Workers

*STL Median: \$49,000*

Apply finishes, often using machines, to a range of products. Sample positions:

- Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters
- Operators
- Tenders

**Requires:** High school diploma/GED plus on-the-job training.

**Outlook:** About 16,900 openings expected annually in the U.S. STL MSA had 34% more openings than national avg. in Q4 2024.

### Assemblers | Fabricators

*STL Median: \$44,400*

Build finished products and the parts that go into them. Sample positions:

- Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging and Systems Assemblers
- Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers
- Structural Metal Fabricators & Fitters

**Requires:** High school diploma/GED; experience and training for advanced assembly work.

**Outlook:** About 209,800 openings expected annually in the U.S. STL MSA had 28% more openings than national avg. in Q4 2024.



Woodworking skills used in luxury cabins



Note: Job growth projections are for 2023 – 2033.

See open jobs and more:  
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03.20.2025