



YouthBuild USA

# Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

## Industry Spotlight

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## Overview

This industry spotlight provides an introductory overview of the **Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics (TDL)** industry. It intends to support programs with understanding the **industry**, **career pathways**, and **occupations** and help YouthBuild participants determine whether the industry aligns with their interests and career goals.

## About the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Industry

The TDL industry is all about moving people and things from one location to another quickly, safely, and at a low cost. Workers in this industry design transportation systems, operate or repair equipment, plan how to move materials, and take care of storing products. The TDL industry is integral to everyday life and the U.S. economy.

## Quick Facts



Over 5 million  
workers employed



Nearly 70% of all freight  
delivered by trucks



Over \$1.64 trillion spent  
on transportation logistics

Source: 2019 data on the TDL industry in the United States, [CareerOneStop](#), U.S. Department of Labor

### Key Definitions



**Industry:** broad groups of businesses or organizations with similar activities, products, or services



**Career Pathways:** combine high-quality education and training to prepare individuals for work



**Occupation:** a set of activities or tasks that pays employees to perform

### Key Definitions



**Sector:** a broad term to describe the large segments of the economy



**Subsectors:** part of a larger sector



**Career Clusters:** occupations in the same field of work that require similar skills

### TDL Classification and Subsectors

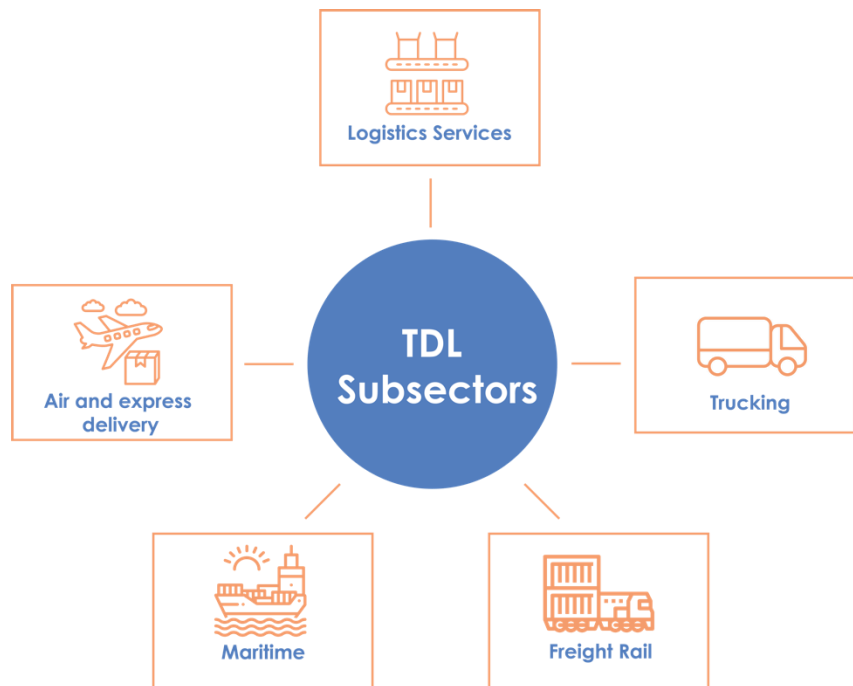
The Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics industry is very broad and classified in different ways. The Department of Labor often refers to Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics as an industry or **career cluster**. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) classifies [Transportation and](#)

[Warehousing](#) as a **sector** and [Process, Physical Distribution, and Logistics Consulting](#)

[Services](#) as a national industry. According to [SelectUSA](#), there are five industry **subsectors** commonly associated with TDL.

### The Logistics Services Subsector

[Oxford Dictionary](#) defines logistics as “the detailed coordination of a complex operation involving many people, facilities, or supplies.” [SelectUSA](#) lists logistics services activities, including inbound and outbound transportation management, fleet management, warehousing, materials handling, order fulfillment, logistics network design, inventory management, and supply and demand planning.



### The Transportation Subsectors

America's highly integrated **supply chain** network links producers and consumers through multiple transportation modes, including air and express delivery services, freight rail, maritime transport, and truck transport. Tailored logistics and transportation solutions ensure coordinated goods move from origin to end-user.

#### Key Definition

**Supply Chain:** a network of people and activities that help move a product from start to consumption by the end-user.

### Overview of Careers in TDL

The TDL industry offers vast and diverse career path options. Whether interest lies in manual warehouse work, supply chain management, or operating transportation machinery, pathways exist for every education and skill level. There is also an opportunity for growth and advancement. Various types of industries and businesses, large and small-scale, benefit from a high-skilled workforce to oversee the coordinated flow of goods from conception to consumption and manage the safe movement of people.

## TDL Industry Career Facts

The TDL industry offers a diversity of employment opportunities and career pathways for participants to explore, providing the incentive for YouthBuild programs to create a Construction Plus (C+) pathway with high growth potential. **Learn more in the following sections about whether a career pathway in the TDL industry is the right pathway for your program and participants.**

### Competitive and Wide Salary Range

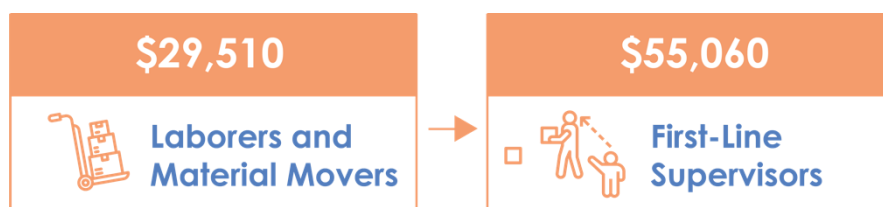
Most careers in TDL pay wages that are higher than the national median. [According to the BLS](#), the median wage for workers in the United States in 2020 was \$984 per week or \$51,168. There are also ample entry-level jobs that may start with wages near or below the national median salary but can lead to career and wage progression. Wages and salary correspond with skill, competency, credential attainment, and experience.

#### YouthBuild Program Tip *Find Your Local Living Wage*

What is considered a good salary in one region may not be in another. To determine a viable living wage in a specific region, use the [MIT living wage](#) calculator.

Within Transportation and Material Moving Occupations, the TDL industry's [major employment group](#), many accessible entry-level jobs can lead to advancement. For example, one of the largest occupations in the United States is Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, with nearly 3 million employed. While the 2019 median salary for this occupation was below the median average, there are opportunities to progress to supervisor roles.

### Example of career and wage progression 2019 Median Wages



Source: [O\\*NET](#) and [O\\*NET](#)

Within logistics services, companies are constantly searching for skilled professionals that can help optimize their supply chains. Due to the level of demand and its significant impact on the economy, a competitive salary is one benefit of a career in logistics services.

## Salary Range for Logisticians



Source: [BLS](#), *Occupational Outlook Handbook*

## Accessibility to Entry-Level Jobs

The typical education requirements for entering occupations in this industry range from less than a high school diploma to a bachelor's degree. Many positions in the logistics services subsector require a four-year college degree or higher. However, there are some entry-level logistics positions where an associate's degree or industry certification may be sufficient. Many occupations within the transportation subsectors require either a high school diploma, certificate, or an associate's degree.

### YouthBuild Program Tip *Identify Entry-Level Points*

Programs can work with local employers to identify entry-level points. Refer to the section below on how to evaluate and assess viable occupations for young people.

## Work Experience Opportunities

On-the-job work experience and registered apprenticeships enable individuals to learn about the foundation and core elements of TDL. High-demand apprenticeships in the TDL industry include diesel mechanic, airframe and powerplant mechanic, ship fitter, avionics technician, and truck driver.

Learn about Registered Apprenticeship at [www.apprenticeship.gov](http://www.apprenticeship.gov).

Sample Jobs by Work Experience		
On-the-Job Training, Entry-Level Jobs	Some Training, Licenses, Apprenticeship	Advanced Training, Management
material movers, delivery drivers, highway maintenance workers, office clerks and administrative assistants, customer service representatives, and rail transportation workers	truck drivers, dispatchers, and mechanics for buses, trucks, and aircrafts	engineers, designers, logistics analysts, and supply chain managers

Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) and [CareerOneStop](#)

## Diverse Work Settings and Employer Options

Manufacturing	Logistics work environments vary from warehouse to office settings to truck driving. Places of employment also range from non-profit organizations and government to large corporations and boutique operations. Under the broad logistics umbrella, there are careers in customer service, operations, warehousing, transportation, materials handling, inventory management, dispatching and fleet operations, freight forwarding, and more.
Federal and State Government	
Warehousing and Storage	
Wholesale Trade	
Food and Beverage Stores	

## Geographically Flexible

Unlike some careers that require relocation to a specific area or state, careers in logistics can begin anywhere. The global demand for logistics professionals enables many employees to be based virtually anywhere. While there are geographies where logistics operations are more prevalent, the need to relocate for a logistics opportunity is unlikely.

## National Career and Occupation Outlook

### Transportation and Material Moving

According to BLS, employment in this major occupation group is projected to grow 3 percent from 2019 to 2029, about as fast as the average for all occupations, and add about 448,900 jobs. The occupation projected to have the largest number of job openings is hand laborers and freight, stock, and material movers. Material moving workers are expected to be needed to move materials in nearly all sectors of the economy.

### YouthBuild Program Tip *Using Labor Market Information*

National career and occupation projections can help YouthBuild programs understand labor demands and trends. On a local level, labor market information may vary. Programs are encouraged to converse with employers regarding local job openings and the skills needed to fill those jobs.

## Transportation Operations

Occupations projected to grow much faster than average from 2019-2029 in transportation operations include school and public transit bus drivers, delivery truck drivers, and forklift operators ([O\\*NET](#)). A wave of retirements in railroad, trucking, and maritime workers will create further openings. The economy depends on transportation operation workers to transport freight and keep supply chains moving.

## Logistics Services & Warehouse Management

[According to Burning Glass Technologies](#), changes in technology and consumer behavior will continue to increase demand for jobs in supply chain management, warehouse distribution, and delivery. The TDL industry is impacted whenever there is a surge or decline in the demand for goods in services. During economic slowdowns, employment trends may decline.

According to [CareerOneStop](#), employment growth in logistics is especially robust in these metropolitan areas:

- New York City
- Dallas
- Los Angeles
- Houston
- Chicago

### Transportation and Material Moving Occupation Snapshot

In 2020, there were 12,163,360 people employed in the Transportation and Material Moving Occupation group.

Industries with the highest levels of employment in this major group include:

- Truck Transportation
- Warehousing and Storage
- Employment Services
- Food and Beverage Stores
- General Merchandise Stores

Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

## TDL Career Pathways

Within the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics industry, five common career pathways offer various occupations.



**Table 1** includes occupations organized by each of the five common career pathways with the TDL industry. While national labor market information can provide insight into general industry trends and occupations in demand, DOL YouthBuild grantees are encouraged to consult with local employers and workforce development stakeholders to identify how to meet local economies and regional business needs. For local labor market data and information, visit the Department of Labor's state labor market projection website at [projectionscentral.org](https://projectionscentral.org) or contact your local Workforce Development Boards.

### YouthBuild Program Tip

#### *Evaluate Viable Occupations Based on Regional Needs*

To determine the occupations that are most viable in the TDL industry, YouthBuild programs can utilize and consider the following criteria:

- **Competitive and Family-Sustaining Wages:** Does the occupation offer competitive, family-sustaining wages?
- **Occupation Growth:** Is there local demand for these roles? Is there enough supply to meet demand?
- **Accessibility:** Are there accessible entry-level points? Is the employer willing to create more accessible entry-level points?

**Table 1: Sample Occupations in TDL Industry by Career Pathways**

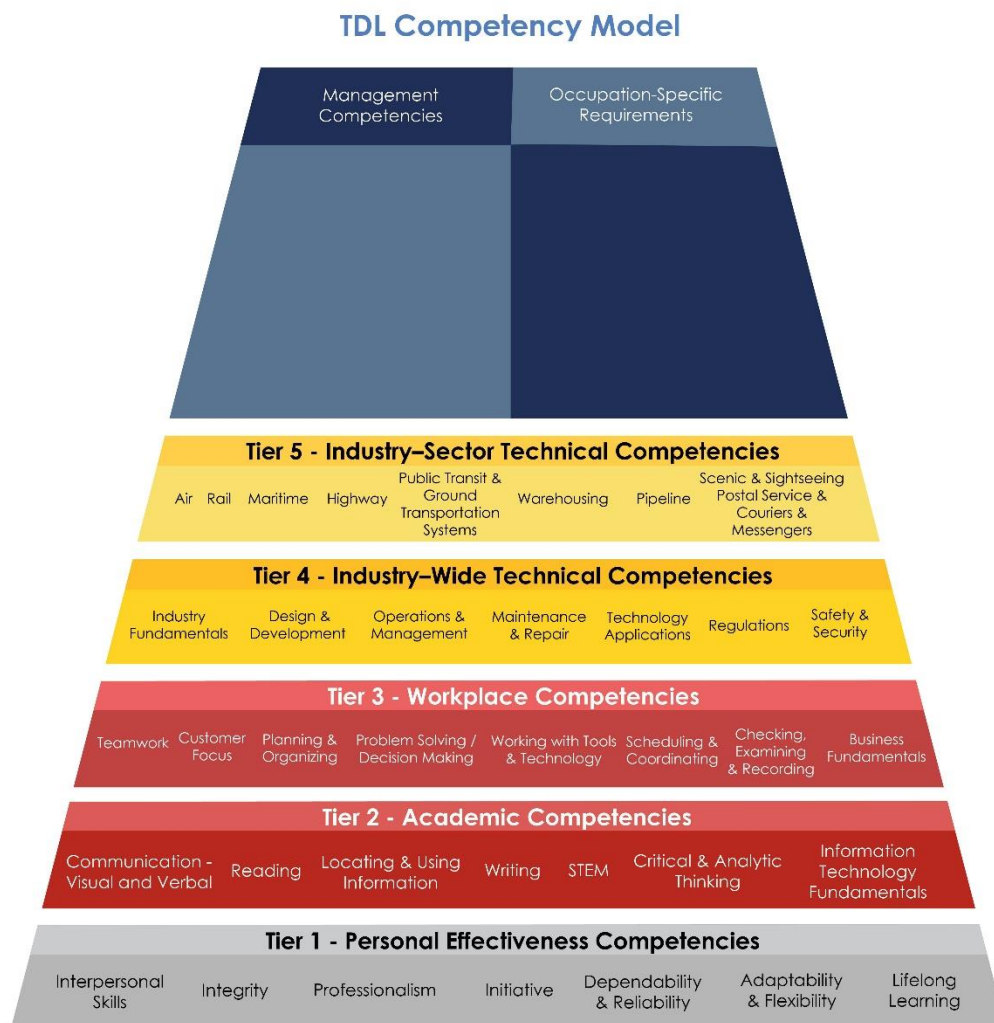
#### **Warehousing & Distribution Center Operations**

Occupation	2020 Median Salary	Typical Entry-Level Education
*Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	\$31,120	High School Diploma
*Stockers and Order Fillers	\$29,190	High School Diploma
*Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping	\$36,650	High School Diploma
*First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	\$54,870	High School Diploma
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	\$37,560	High School Diploma
*First-Line Supervisors of Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators	\$54,870	High School Diploma

Transportation Operations		
Occupation	2020 Median Salary	Typical Entry-Level Education
*Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	\$53,610	High School Diploma
*Bus Drivers, School	\$32,320	High School Diploma
*Flight Attendants	\$59,050	Vocational school training or Associate's degree
*Recycling Coordinators	\$54,870	High School Diploma
Logistics Planning and Management Services		
Occupation	2020 Median Salary	Typical Entry-Level Education
Logisticians	\$76,270	Bachelor's degree
Logistics Analysts	\$76,270	Bachelor's degree
Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	\$96,390	Bachelor's degree
Facility and Mobile Equipment Maintenance		
Occupation	2020 Median Salary	Typical Entry-Level Education
*Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	\$66,440	Vocational school training or Associate's degree
*Recreational Vehicle Service Technicians	\$40,520	High School Diploma
*Bicycle Repairers	\$32,630	High School Diploma
Transportation Systems, Infrastructure Planning, Management, Regulation		
Occupation	2020 Median Salary	Typical Entry-Level Education
Air Traffic Controllers	\$130,420	Associate's degree
*Airfield Operations Specialists	\$51,330	Vocational school training or Associate's degree
*Traffic Technicians	\$47,800	Vocational school training or Associate's degree
<p><i><a href="#">O*NET</a> the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Information Network, categorizes the following TDL occupations with an asterisk as Bright Outlook Occupations, meaning that they are anticipated to grow more quickly than others on a national level. Wages listed are as of May 2020. For the most current wage information, visit <a href="#">O*NET</a>.</i></p>		

## Industry Skill Needs and Competencies

CareerOneStop, in partnership with the Department of Labor, offers the [Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Competency Model](#) that employers in the TDL industry developed. This model identifies a multi-tier set of building blocks defining the competencies needed for success in TDL, starting with Personal Effectiveness Competencies and building up to Management Competencies and Occupation-Specific Requirements. A detailed description of all the specific skills that comprise each tier of competencies can be accessed in the Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Competency Model.



Source: [Competency Model Clearinghouse, CareerOneStop](#)

### YouthBuild Program Tip

#### *Use the Competency Model to Design C+ Pathways*

DOL YouthBuild grantees' program model is designed to address the first three tiers of the competency model. In the upper tiers of the competency model, it is essential to work with industry partners to customize a C+ pathway that meets the local needs of employers.

## Conclusion

The TDL industry will continue to evolve with changes to consumer behavior, technology, and automation. YouthBuild programs can use Industry Spotlights to gain a basic understanding of the TDL industry and continue to monitor local labor market information and work alongside employers to design C+ pathways. YouthBuild participants interested in further developing their IT skills, STEM knowledge, critical thinking, and design skills should consider exploring a TDL industry career.