

# Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers

SOC: 31-9096 • Career Profile Report

## ■ Key Facts

**\$37,320**

Median Salary

**117,800**

Employment

**+9.0%**

Growth Rate

## ■ Requirements & Salary Range

**Education:** High school diploma

## ■ Automation Risk Assessment

**Medium Risk** - 48.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job has some routine elements but still requires human judgment and interaction.

## ■■ Work-Life Balance

**6.0/10** - Good work-life balance

## ■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	5.8/10	Investigative	6.0/10
Artistic	4.4/10	Social	8.4/10
Enterprising	4.6/10	Conventional	7.4/10

## ■ Top Skills Required

Communication skills, Compassion, Detail oriented, Manual dexterity, Physical strength

### ✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

### ■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

## ■ What They Do

Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers are animal care professionals who support **veterinary teams and research environments by providing daily care, handling, and basic medical assistance for animals**. They play an essential role in maintaining animal health, safety, and welfare in clinics, hospitals, shelters, and research laboratories. Their work combines hands-on animal care with strict attention to hygiene, safety, and ethical standards.

This career is well suited for individuals who love working with animals, are comfortable with hands-on care, and can follow detailed protocols in medical or research settings.

## What Do Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers Do?

These professionals assist veterinarians, technicians, and researchers with animal care and facility operations.

Common responsibilities include:

- Feeding, watering, and exercising animals
- Cleaning and sanitizing cages, kennels, and work areas
- Handling and restraining animals safely
- Assisting with examinations, treatments, or procedures
- Monitoring animals for signs of illness or distress
- Maintaining accurate care and health records
- Following animal welfare, safety, and biosecurity protocols

## Difference Between Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers

While closely related, their roles differ by work environment:

- Veterinary Assistants: Work in animal clinics and hospitals supporting patient care.
- Laboratory Animal Caretakers: Care for animals used in research under strict ethical and regulatory standards.

## Skills and Abilities Needed

These roles combine animal handling skills with attention to detail and safety.

### **Core Professional Skills**

### **Personal Qualities That Matter**

## Education and Training Pathway

Most individuals enter this field through on-the-job training:

- High School Diploma or Equivalent: Typical minimum requirement
- On-the-Job Training: Learning animal care routines and procedures
- Animal Science or Veterinary Coursework (optional): Helpful for advancement
- Safety and Ethics Training: Required in research settings
- Continued Skill Development: Learning advanced care techniques

## Where Do Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers Work?

They are employed in animal care and research environments:

- Veterinary Clinics and Animal Hospitals
- Animal Shelters and Rescue Organizations
- Universities and Research Laboratories
- Pharmaceutical and Biotechnology Facilities

- Zoos and Wildlife Research Centers

Work may include weekends, evenings, or shift schedules.

## How Much Do Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers Earn?

Earnings vary by setting, experience, and specialization:

- Entry-Level Workers: Typically earn hourly wages
- Experienced Assistants or Caretakers: Often earn higher pay
- Research or Specialized Facilities: May offer additional compensation

Compensation may include benefits in institutional settings.

## Is This Career Difficult?

This work can be physically and emotionally demanding. Professionals may lift animals, stand for long periods, and care for sick or injured animals. The challenge lies in balancing compassion with safety, following strict protocols, and maintaining emotional resilience.

## Who Should Consider This Career?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy caring for animals daily
- Are comfortable with hands-on, physical work
- Can follow detailed procedures and safety rules
- Are emotionally resilient
- Want an entry or support role in animal care or research

## How to Prepare Early

- Volunteer at animal shelters or veterinary clinics
- Learn basic animal behavior and handling techniques
- Develop comfort with cleaning and sanitation tasks
- Take animal science or biology courses
- Explore veterinary or laboratory animal care programs

**Veterinary assistants and laboratory animal caretakers safeguard animal health and welfare—providing essential daily care and support that enables veterinary treatment, ethical research, and compassionate animal stewardship across diverse settings.**

---

Generated by StartRight • Data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & O\*NET

Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/veterinary-assistants-and-laboratory-animal-caretakers.htm>