

# A COMPLETE GUIDE TO TRANSCRIPTION JOBS

Descriptions, Requirements, and Stats



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## INTRODUCTION

When we talk about transcription, it implies typing up spoken audio that could either be live or recorded, into a printed format. There are varied types of transcription, each requiring different skill levels and even different equipment.

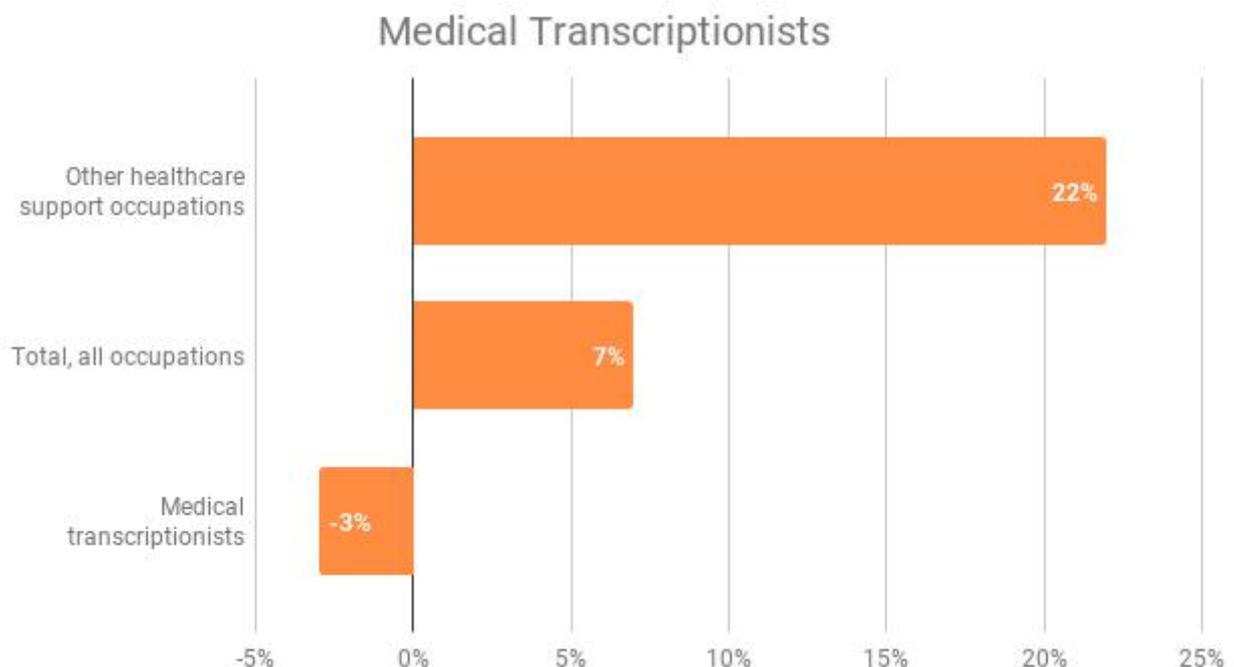
*"There are basically five broad categories or types in the field of transcription: **medical, legal, general, media, and business transcription.**"*



# WHAT IS MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION?

It is a specialized type of transcription, needing training and certification. It involves transcribing a medical practitioner's or physician's dictation, to be added later into a patient's medical record. Medical transcription needs training after the post-secondary stage, which could either be a certificate program of one-year duration, or an associate's degree of two years' duration.

Upon a request made in 2009 by the U.S. Health and Human Services Department, there has been a major transition to computerized medical records. It's much easier for the medical professionals to create electronic records of their dictations using speech recognition software.



## Percent change in employment, projected 2016-26

**Note:** All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy.

**Source:** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

Consequently, The Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected that between years 2016 to 2026, there will be a 3% decline in jobs, which though not alarming, is a decline nevertheless.



## LEGAL TRANSCRIPTION: A FACT CHECK

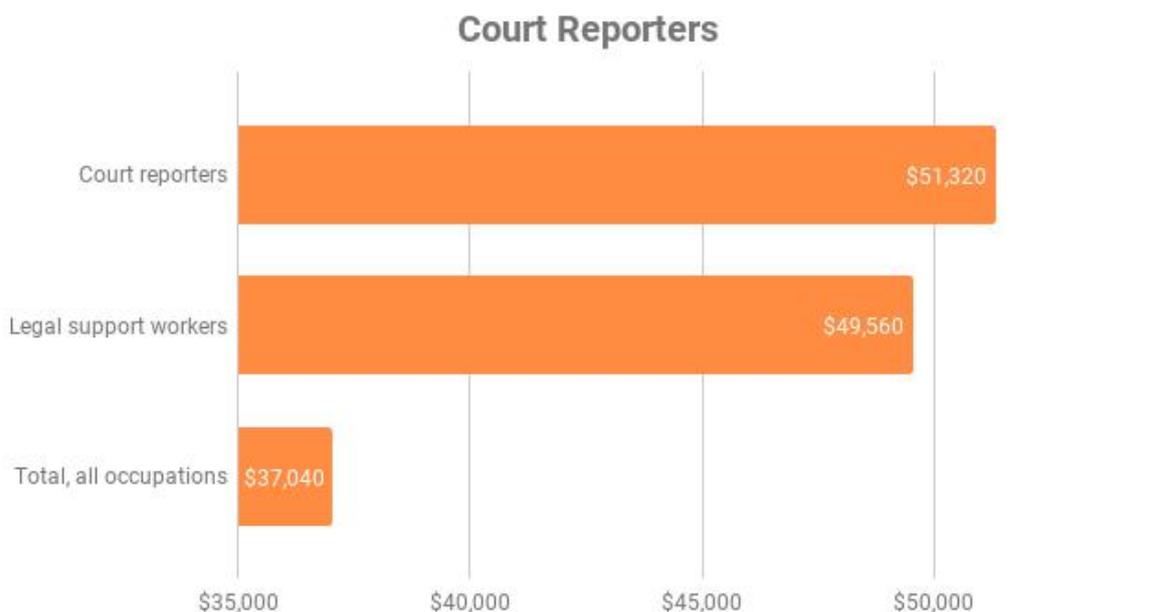
Legal transcription, like medical transcription, is more complex than it seems initially. Legal transcriptionists are trained to accurately transcribe spoken words from an audio file to verbatim written documents and they also have a thorough grounding in legal terminology and legal practices, that speeds up their work and its accuracy.

If you are looking to hire a legal transcription service for your needs, ensure that the transcriptionist is specialized in legal transcriptions and has relevant experience to handle your audio files.

**With the advancement in technology**, the accuracy of professional legal transcription has shown considerable improvement. Digital audio and quick file transfer via the internet have been a great help in this regard. This was not the case in the past, as the attorneys and the paralegals were responsible for recording the proceedings and often weren't skilled enough in transcription. They also lacked attention to detail and the time to ensure accurate information transfer.

**In stark contrast**, the professionally managed transcription services of today are able to receive the audio files through internet and are able to return unabridged, complete, proofed, and accurate transcriptionists within a 24-hour turnaround time, thereby ensuring that those legal professionals who need those transcriptions are able to focus on their daily tasks with a complete peace of mind.

Litigation involves court cases, negotiation, interrogation, or arbitration where accurate documentation is critical, since being able to refer back to exact spoken words in any given situation can influence an unfavorable or a favorable verdict. Unlike keeping the assistants or secretaries in the past to record meeting minutes, lawmakers and attorneys are now able to maintain more accurate records with the help of legal transcription. This ultimately helps everyone working in the legal field to prioritize tasks and serve the public more effectively.



### Median annual wages, May 2016

**Note:** All Occupations includes all occupations in the U.S. Economy.

**Source:** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

Depending on the productivity and speed of the transcriber, **the salary ranges from \$15-\$25 per hour**. Thus it can be said that if one has interest in legal matters, this could prove to be an absorbing job and a lucrative one too.

# GENERAL TRANSCRIPTION: AN OVERVIEW

**General transcriptionists** do the task of transcribing academic, entertainment, media and other English dictations. The clients for general transcription companies could be from the government, colleges and universities, and the entertainment industry.

Individuals, like authors, professors and teachers also seek transcriptionists to transcribe their dictations.

**General transcription as a field** has witnessed a fast growth with a high demand for professional transcriptionists who can help bring real value for businesses, podcasts, and blogs.



## MEDIA TRANSCRIPTION: THE TRENDING OPTION



Media transcription deals with the conversion of various video/audio products into text files. These could range from documentaries and TV shows, to presentations, lectures, or lessons.

Media is all about communication, with the aim of information dissemination to the largest possible audience. Media creators place a premium on the visibility and accessibility of their products and the transcription of audio/video products can be highly beneficial to that end.

## BUSINESS TRANSCRIPTION: AN INTRODUCTION

**The business world** generates large volumes of audio/video content from investor meetings, presentations and conference calls on a daily basis. These calls and meetings are extremely important, as they cover new business and competitive strategies, apart from the presentation of crucial financial data.

**Business transcription** ensures the possession of each and every conversation that pertains to key financial, marketing and legal decisions in your business in a written format.

# BASIC SKILL SETS NEEDED BY A TRANSCRIPTIONIST

**Below are basic skills that are needed for doing any form of transcription:**

- ✓ Sharp listening skills.
  - ✓ Ability to simultaneously listen, understand and type.
  - ✓ Fast, accurate typing skills.
  - ✓ Ability to research.
  - ✓ High proficiency in the language in terms of grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary.
  - ✓ Formatting knowledge of the text specific to the client requests.
- Good working knowledge of computers.



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## INDUSTRY SPECIFIC SKILLS

When transcribers work in a specific industry, they will need to know terminology related to the industry, especially when they work in medical or legal transcription. The knowledge of industry-specific jargon needed is huge. Before becoming a transcriber in such industries, training will have to be undergone to learn.

## PRE-REQUISITES FOR MEDICAL TRANSCRIBERS

In medical transcription, anatomy, diseases and their treatments, drugs names, surgical procedures, etc. will have to be learned and knowledge of these continually updated along with the industry's growth and change.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR LEGAL TRANSCRIBERS

The subject area of legal transcription is very vast, with meeting with lawyers, depositions, police interviews, court hearings etc. being just a few of them. You need to be well-versed in legal terminology and the procedures to do legal transcription; hence, formal training is required.

## DOING YOUR HOMEWORK FOR BUSINESS TRANSCRIPTION

Business transcriptionists should be familiar with business practices, although the training required is not as intense as for medical or legal transcription.

## SKILLSETS NECESSARY TO BE A GENERAL TRANSCRIPTIONIST

General transcription covers within its ambit everything that is not covered within legal, medical or business transcription. Due to the requirement to work on widely varied subjects, it helps if you have a knack of gathering general knowledge.

As a general transcriptionist, you will become well-informed on a variety of subjects. Since formal training is not required for general transcription, all you need is just practice transcribing for one month.

## HOW MUCH MONEY CAN YOU MAKE AS A TRANSCRIPTIONIST?

As per the stats provided by PayScale, **the hourly average wage for the transcribers is \$15.15**. The gender profile in this work segment is a bit skewed, with *females making up 87 percent of the workforce*. Quite a few of the workers report not receiving health benefits, but a majority do receive medical coverage and about a third of them receive dental coverage as well.

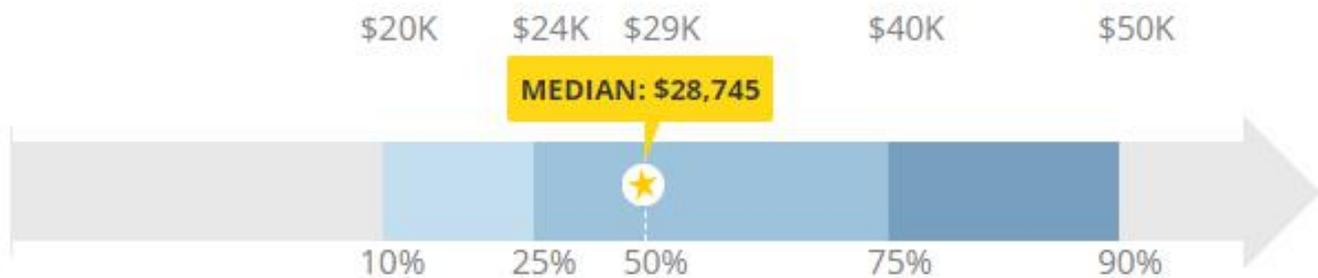


**Source: PayScale**

**Country:** United States | **Currency:** USD

**Updated:** 26 Mar 2018 | **Individuals Reporting:** 122

The satisfaction rate with the job, overall, ranks at par with the national average. The payment rate going by experience for a transcriber shows a positive trend: a transcriber at the entry level having less than 5 years of experience can expect earning \$31,000 per annum; these stats are based on 60 salaries provided by users anonymously.



**Source: PayScale**

**Country:** United States | **Currency:** USD

**Updated:** 26 Mar 2018 | **Individuals Reporting:** 122

An experienced transcriptionist, having between 10 to 20 years of experience makes around \$ 35,000: these figures are based on 17 salaries given out anonymously. If one is having late-career experience which means employees having more than 20 years of experience earns \$ 35,000 on an average, as has been calculated from 13 salaries.

## WHERE TO LOOK FOR ONLINE TRANSCRIPTION JOBS?

### For Freelance Transcription Jobs

#### 1. Upwork

Upwork has a 1.5 million plus clients' list and offers an array of options for every type of freelancer, regardless of where you stand in your career.

## 2. Toptal

Toptal, having an approach quite distinct from other similar freelancing services, caters mainly to talented and seasoned freelancers. It has a rigorous screening process that opens the doors to meaningful projects with many top clients, along with a good compensation. As a part of the Toptal community, you will have access to tech events and frequent meetups.

## 3. Freelancer

Apart from offering millions of projects, this platform, unlike others, allows you to test yourself against other freelancers through contests to showcase your skills. As a confident, expert freelancer, here you will get a better chance to attract more clients.

## 4. Craigslist

Craigslist, unlike what many believe to be as a mere platform to buy and sell things, is also a great source for finding freelance jobs. If working in-office is your preference, you may search for local offerings, or search by big cities in case working remotely is your preference.

# MORE RESOURCES FOR TRANSCRIPTIONISTS

## 1. Transcription Essentials Forum

This forum is great for anyone pursuing a career in transcription services or is already established in the industry. They give detailed information on companies hiring for independent contractors, either experienced or new, for medical, legal, and general transcription.

They also have a review section for you to check if any particular company that you are interested in pays on time, how much money you are likely to make, and the hours of free time that you have at your disposal per week. They do rigorous screening during the registration process to avoid any spam.

## **2. WAHM - No. 1 Resource for Work at Home Moms**

It has a primary focus on helping stay-at-home moms run a successful business online. They also have a section where one can ask questions dealing with any topic. You may also promote your business, in case you have one, in one of their sections. Apart from that, they also provide you tips on setting up a business.

## **3. Transcription Certification Institute**

Transcription Certification Institute, or TCI, is an online general transcription certification and training institute that helps you kick-start your career in general transcription.

TCI also offers an internship program post training with qualifying grades that will help you hone your transcription skills.

And this is not all... you can apply for either home-based, freelance, or full-time transcription jobs through the TCI Job Board that enlists transcription companies hiring globally.

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## RESOURCES

- **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:** <https://www.bls.gov/>
- **PayScale:** <https://www.payscale.com/>
- **Upwork:** <https://www.upwork.com/>
- **Toptal:** <https://www.toptal.com/>
- **Freelancer:** <https://www.freelancer.com/>
- **Craigslist:** <https://www.craigslist.org/about/sites>
- **Transcription Essentials Forum:** <https://www.transcriptionessentials.com/>
- **WAHM - No. 1 Resource for Work at Home Moms:** <https://www.wahm.com/>
- **Transcription Certification Institute:** <https://www.transcriptioncertificationinstitute.org/>