



# Job Opportunities for Electricians in Illinois

*by Dennis Hoffman*

**T**he U. S. Department of Labor’s “Occupational Outlook” states that job opportunities for electricians are excellent. Employer reports also note that electrician is one of the top 10 occupations that are difficult to fill. Data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Economic Information and Analysis Division, supports the future demand for electricians statewide.

Electricians install and maintain the wiring, fuses, and other components through which electricity flows in

residences, commercial buildings, and offices. Many electricians also install and maintain electrical machines in factories. Electricians use blueprints to locate circuits, outlets, panel boards, and other equipment. They use ammeters, ohmmeters, voltmeters, and other equipment to test connections and the safety of components. Many electricians specialize in new construction and install new wiring systems in residential and commercial buildings. Others focus on maintenance, including repairing and upgrading existing electrical systems and equipment. In Illinois, many electricians

<b>ELECTRICIANS</b>	<b>ELECTRICIAN HELPERS</b>
<b>SOC CODE</b>	
<b>47-2111</b>	<b>47-3013</b>
<b>BASE EMPLOYMENT 2012</b>	
<b>25,742</b>	<b>837</b>
<b>PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT 2022</b>	
<b>28,328</b>	<b>1,040</b>
<b>AVERAGE ANNUAL OPENINGS: DUE TO GROWTH</b>	
<b>286</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>DUE TO REPLACEMENTS</b>	
<b>480</b>	<b>13</b>



receive their training through a union hall and are in apprenticeship training for five years before earning a journeyman wireman card. Others earn an Associate's Degree from a community college or university. There is not a state test in Illinois for an electrician but many cities and

communities may require electricians, or the owner/representative of a business, to pass a test before work can be performed. A similar occupation, electrician helpers, assist electricians by performing duties requiring less skill.

### Employment Opportunities

According to Employment Projections produced by the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Economic Information and Analysis Division, by 2022 Illinois will need 2,856 more electricians. This is an 11.21 percent increase from 2012 (Table 1, on page 4). Approximately 766 annual jobs will be available in which 286 are from growth (37.3 percent) and 480 are from replacement (62.7 percent). Although there are not nearly as many electrician helpers or assistants, demand for electrician helpers will also increase by over 200 jobs during the 10 year period with an average of 33 job openings (Table 2, on page 4).

The favorable job outlook is not confined to specific metro areas in Illinois; there

is a demand for electricians in each of the ten Economic Development Regions (Table 1). As expected, over 70 percent of the job openings will be in the Northeast Economic Development Region which is the Chicago area. An annual average of

over 500 job openings is anticipated for the Northeast Economic Development Region. Other Economic Development Regions in which a significant number of annual job openings are expected include the North Central Region (39), the Southwestern Region (37), the Northwest Region (29), and the Northern Stateline Region (28). The trend is the same in all 10 economic development regions for electrician helpers (Table 2) and, by far, the most job openings will be in the Northeast Economic Development Region (Chicago area).

The Help Wanted OnLine report each month lists the number of job opportunities in online ads, sorted by occupation. The data is compiled by the Conference Board which is a global, independent business membership and research association. The construction trades often do not advertise all job openings, thus, there are generally more workers needed than indicated on the Help Wanted OnLine. However, for the month of June 2015, there were 329 electrician jobs advertised in Illinois and for a four month period from March to July 2015, there were over 900 electrician jobs listed. Since a substantial number of job openings for electricians are listed every month on this report, electricians are believed to be a demand occupation today and in the future.

I interviewed four area electricians and one business owner. All are confident that there is an increasing demand for electricians. The owner of a small heating and air conditioning firm states that he has six to seven electricians on staff and usually has at least one position open. A retired electrician, who still works for some

individuals and small companies, stated that an independent electrician with a solid reputation can have as much work as they want. A forty year career electrician working through the union hall stated that very seldom did he not have work and then for only short periods of time. An electrician working for a city housing inspection department noted that more cities and communities are requiring housing inspections. Most of these inspections are geared towards building safety concerns, especially electrical conditions. The increase in the number of city housing inspections and requirements have been a recent notable trend even among smaller towns as communities are worried about the safety, maintenance, and conditions of the older housing stocks.

## Wages

As a recently retired union electrician stated “I worked for 40 years and made

a good living.” According the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Economic Information and Analysis Division’s Occupational Wage Survey, the entry level wage in 2014 in Illinois for an electrician was \$21.03 per hour with the median wage at \$36.51 (Table 3, on page 5). The hourly experienced wage in Illinois was \$39.92 for an electrician in 2014.

Wages for electricians in the Northeast and Northern Stateline Economic Development Regions were slightly higher than the statewide average. Wages for electricians for all other Economic Development Regions in Illinois were somewhat less than the overall statewide average. Central, Southeast, and West Central Economic Development Regions had the lowest wages at the experienced level. Wages for union electricians are generally at the experienced level or above. However, union electricians must serve a five year apprenticeship before they

can command this wage. Even with the variable wage range throughout Illinois, overall the pay for electricians is near the average level or considerably above average when compared to other occupations.

Wages for electrician helpers are significantly

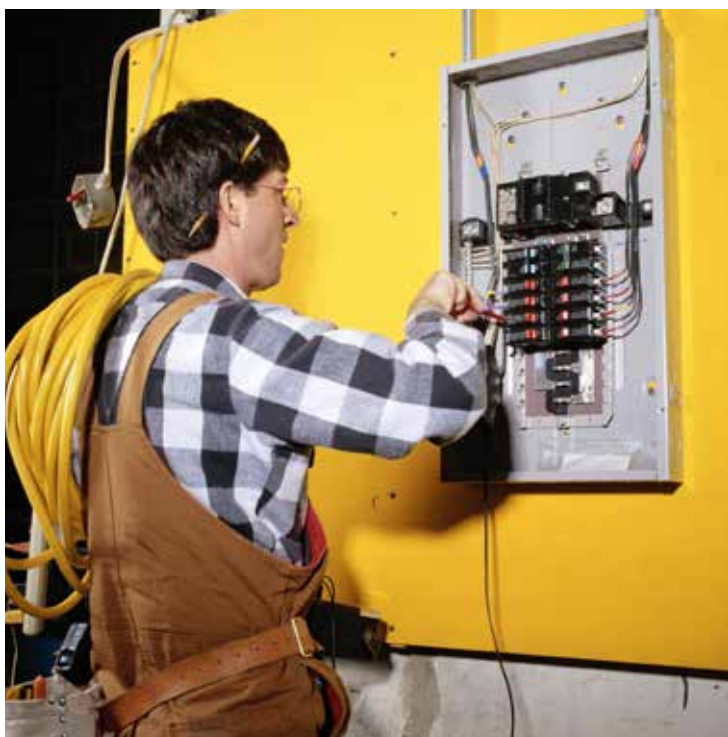
less, with starting wages at only a few dollars more than minimum wage. In Illinois, the starting wage for electrician helper is \$12.11 per hour with a median wage of \$15.39 (Table 3). Experienced wages for an electrician helper is generally less than \$18.38 per hour which is less than the entry wage for degreed or certified electricians.

## Summary

All indications, including employment projections data, help wanted ads, and opinions of workers in the field, point to a significant demand for electricians. Traditional electrical work with new construction, repairs, and machinery maintenance continue to be needed throughout the state. Also, the recent trend of city housing inspections with a focus on the safety of electrical wiring is adding to the need for electricians. In addition, this is an occupation in which wages have historically been above average and will likely continue to be at a higher level.

This is also a good career choice for young adults who do not want to attend a four year college and are seeking an industrial, hands-on type job. This could also be a good profession for workers who have been displaced and need a career change. A career as an electrician is certainly an occupation that should be encouraged for consideration.

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**Table 1: Electricians - Employment Projections**

Illinois	Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Code	Occupational Title	Base Year Employment 2012	Projected		Employment Change 2012-2022	Average Annual Job Openings due to Replacements	Total
				Year 2022	Employment 2022			
				Number	Percent			
<b>Economic Development Regions</b>								
	47-2111	Electricians	25,472	28,328	2,856	11.21	286	480
	47-2111	Electricians	1178	1263	85	20.5	9	22
	47-2111	Electricians	610	678	68	11.1	6	11
	47-2111	Electricians	1,323	1,460	137	10.4	14	25
	47-2111	Electricians	17,632	19,751	2,119	12	212	332
	47-2111	Electricians	825	949	124	15	12	16
	47-2111	Electricians	989	1097	108	10.9	11	18
	47-2111	Electricians	588	634	46	7.8	5	11
	47-2111	Electricians	610	646	36	5.9	4	11
	47-2111	Electricians	1,318	1,435	117	8.9	12	25
	47-2111	Electricians	373	396	23	6.2	2	7

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security; Economic Information and Analysis Division.

**Table 2: Electricians Helpers - Employment Projections**

Illinois	Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Code	Occupational Title	Base Year Employment 2012	Projected		Employment Change 2012-2022	Average Annual Job Openings due to Replacements	Total
				Year 2022	Employment 2022			
				Number	Percent			
<b>Economic Development Regions</b>								
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	837	1,040	203	24.3	20	13
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	39	46	7	5.1	D	D
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	16	20	4	25.0	D	D
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	44	54	10	22.7	D	D
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	581	733	152	26.2	15	10
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	27	34	7	25.9	D	D
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	31	38	7	22.6	D	D
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	18	21	3	16.7	D	D
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	18	21	3	16.7	D	D
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	43	52	9	20.9	D	D
	47-3013	Helpers-Electricians	11	13	2	18.2	D	D

D = Insufficient Data

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security; Economic Information and Analysis Division.

**Table 3: Wages - 2014**

	SOC Occupational Title	Entry Wage		Median Wage		Experienced Wage	
		Hourly	Annual	Hourly	Annual	Hourly	Annual
Illinois	Electricians	\$21.03	\$43,746	\$36.51	\$75,946	\$39.92	\$83,032
	Helpers--Electricians	\$12.11	\$25,192	\$15.39	\$32,015	\$18.38	\$38,235
EDR 1 Central	Electricians	\$11.81	\$24,571	\$20.20	\$42,017	\$28.25	\$58,756
	Helpers--Electricians	Data Not Available					
EDR 2 East Central	Electricians	\$19.14	\$39,804	\$30.76	\$64,394	\$35.42	\$73,684
	Helpers--Electricians	\$10.48	\$21,798	\$11.68	\$24,305	\$13.47	\$28,026
EDR 3 North Central	Electricians	\$19.28	\$40,109	\$31.00	\$64,481	\$34.33	\$71,410
	Helpers--Electricians	\$11.40	\$23,715	\$11.43	\$38,339	\$22.98	\$47,807
EDR 4 Northeast	Electricians	\$24.06	\$50,055	\$38.50	\$80,073	\$41.24	\$85,788
	Helpers--Electricians	\$12.45	\$25,896	\$16.47	\$34,263	\$18.97	\$39,458
EDR 5 Northern Stateline	Electricians	\$26.19	\$54,485	\$37.70	\$78,424	\$40.17	\$83,552
	Helpers--Electricians	Data Not Available					
EDR 6 Northwest	Electricians	\$14.19	\$29,522	\$27.22	\$56,618	\$34.55	\$71,858
	Helpers--Electricians	Data Not Available					
EDR 7 Southeast	Electricians	\$15.16	\$31,532	\$21.60	\$44,935	\$27.85	\$57,921
	Helpers--Electricians	\$11.08	\$23,038	\$13.15	\$27,345	\$14.06	\$29,237
EDR 8 Southern	Electricians	\$18.46	\$38,406	\$32.48	\$67,564	\$36.96	\$76,871
	Helpers--Electricians	\$17.50	\$36,415	\$25.07	\$52,136	\$26.27	\$54,645
EDR 9 Southwest	Electricians	\$22.25	\$46,274	\$31.61	\$65,752	\$36.08	\$75,053
	Helpers--Electricians	Data Not Available					
EDR 10 West Central	Electricians	\$12.98	\$26,990	\$19.66	\$40,888	\$26.13	\$54,356
	Helpers--Electricians	Data Not Available					

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security; Economic Information and Analysis Division.