

# MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANT



American Society for  
Clinical Pathology

## What do I do?

As a vital member of the healthcare team the I work with other medical professionals to ensure each patient sample is appropriate for testing. Quality specimen management leads to results that are accurate for the diagnosis, treatment, management, and prognosis of disease states impacting health.

### My typical day includes:

- Proper identification of each patient in order to collect the correct specimen
- Accurate labeling of each specimen and ensure proper handling
- Timely receipt and processing of samples within the laboratory for testing
- Perform instrument maintenance to monitor analytic equipment status
- Analyze quality control material as directed by the Laboratory Manager
- Prepare samples to ship for referral lab testing

## Necessary Skill Sets



**COMMUNICATION**  
Includes both written and verbal communication skills. Medical Laboratory Assistants need to communicate clearly and efficiently with patients and others in the laboratory and healthcare team.



**TECHNICAL SKILLS**  
Develop an in-depth knowledge of the proper process and handling of patient specimens and oversight of sensitive medical equipment used in diagnostic testing.



**INTERPERSONAL**  
Also known as “people skills”, these include cooperation and teamwork. Active listening is an example of a skill integral to the respect and care of patients and others in the laboratory and healthcare team.



**TIME MANAGEMENT**  
Prioritize tasks and responsibilities so work is performed in an efficient and timely manner for optimal patient care.



**ATTENTION TO DETAIL**  
This refers to being thorough and accurate when performing tasks because a patient's care is dependent upon error free work.



**ANALYTICAL SKILLS**  
Assessing each activity from collection of a specimen, labeling, process and handling, storage, evaluation of instrument performance, and quality control to ensure a quality result.

## Salary

Mean Annual Salary\*: \$41,200  
(Median: \$38,200)

## Certification

[Earn certification as a Medical Laboratory Assistant \(MLA\) from the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification \(ASCP BOC\).](#)

## Education Requirements

Must have a minimum of a high school diploma.

\* Salaries are based on a national average and will vary by location and years of service and other factors.