

Indiana State-Regulated Licensing Requirements by Profession

Min. OJT hours · Cost to qualify · Degree requirements · Avg. salary · Continuing education · Community impact · Compiled June 2026

Sources: Indiana PLA (in.gov/pla), IDOH, Indiana Supreme Court, NCARB, NCEES, BLS, ZipRecruiter, Salary.com, PayScale, Indeed (2025–2026)

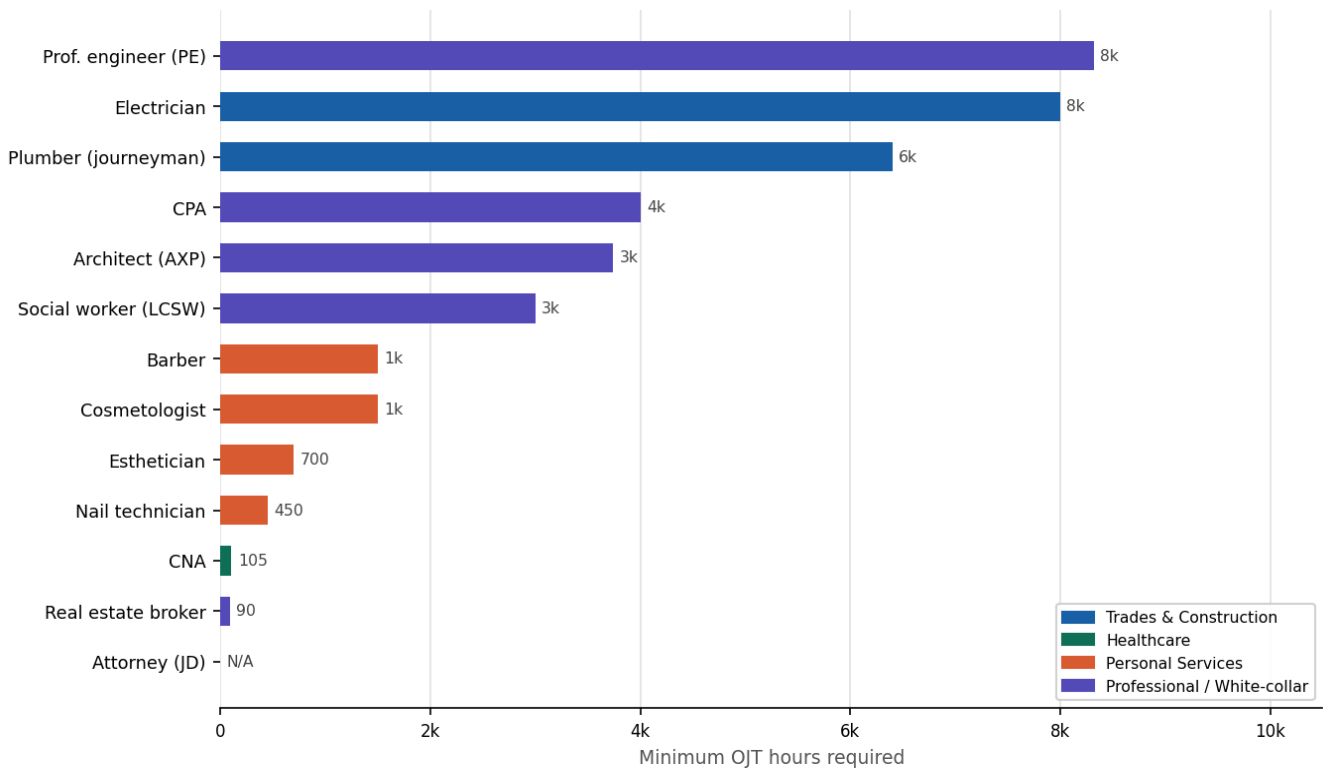


Figure 1. Minimum OJT hours required before licensure, sorted lowest to highest.

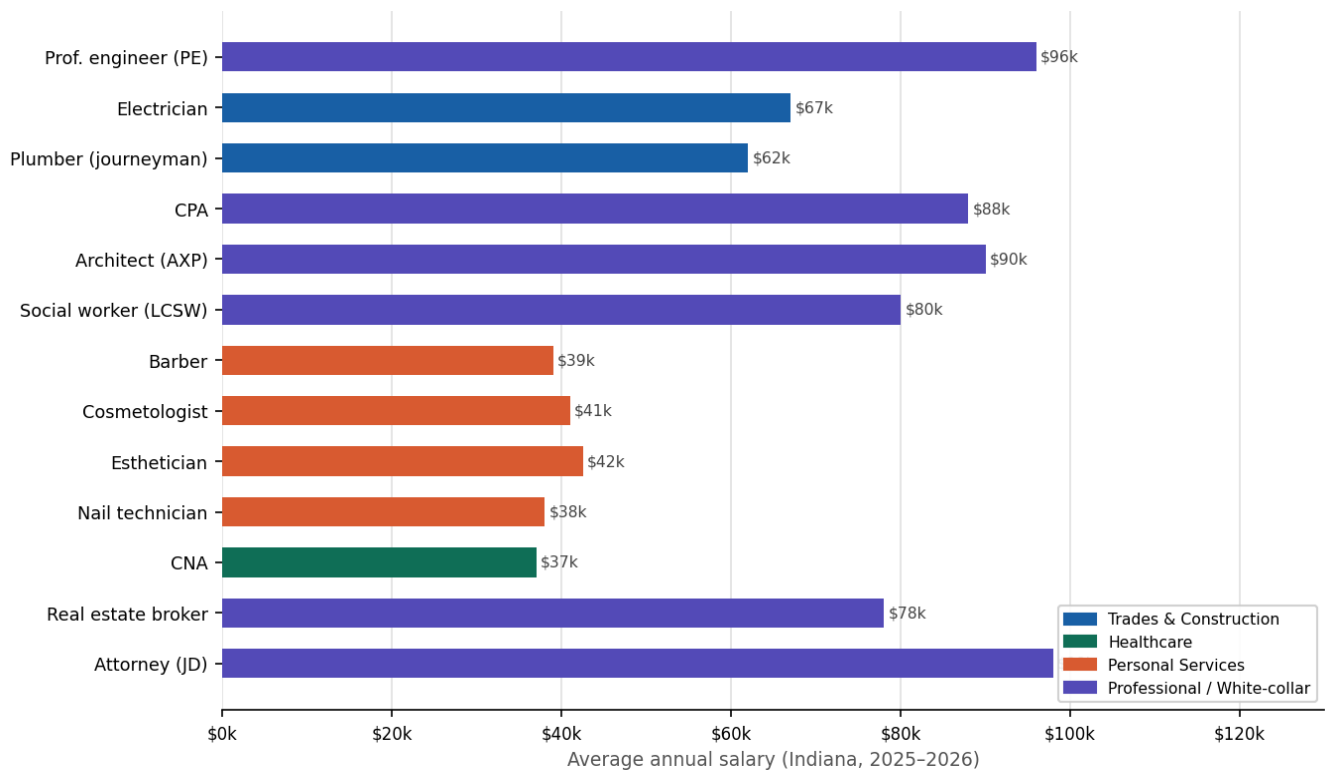


Figure 2. Average annual salary in Indiana by profession (2025-2026). Sources: BLS, ZipRecruiter, Salary.com, Indeed, PayScale.

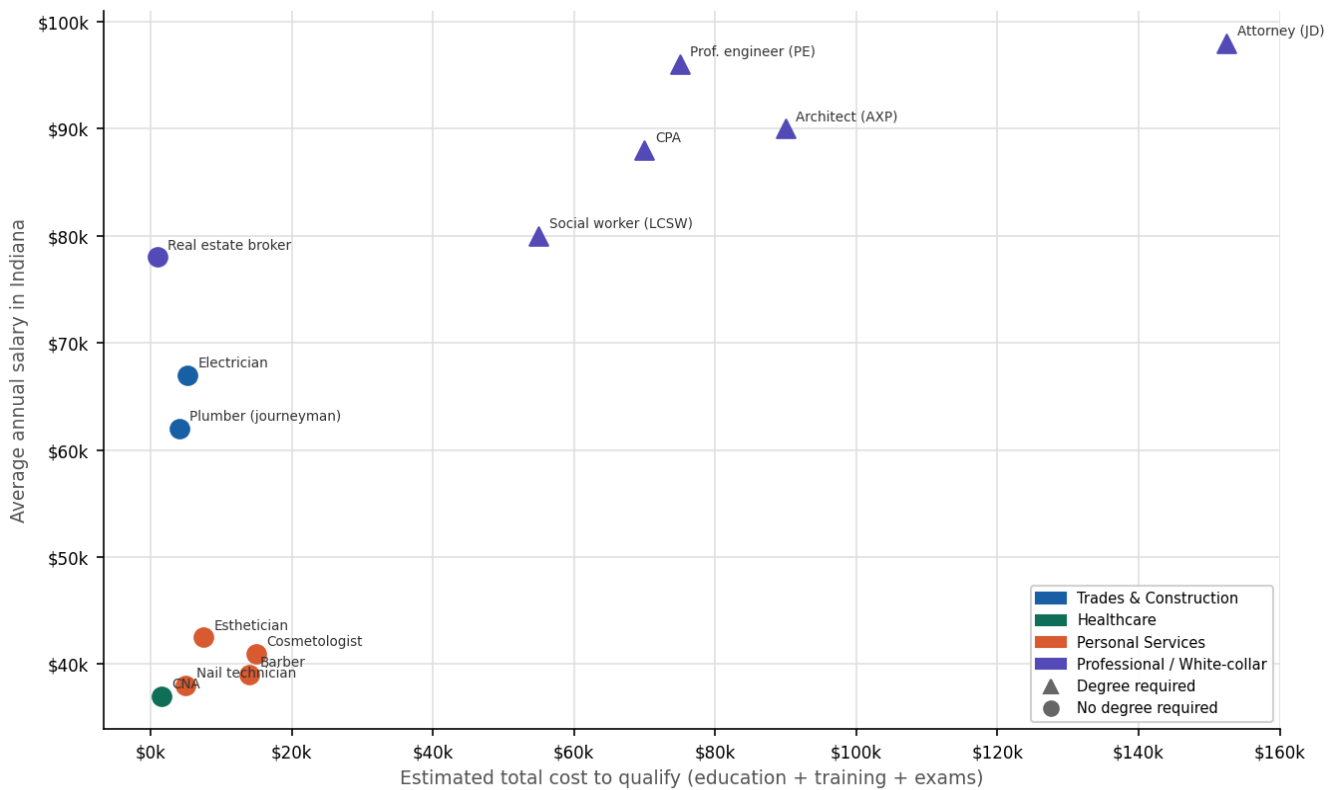


Figure 3. Cost to qualify vs. average annual salary. Positions upper-left = faster ROI. Triangle = degree required; circle = no degree.

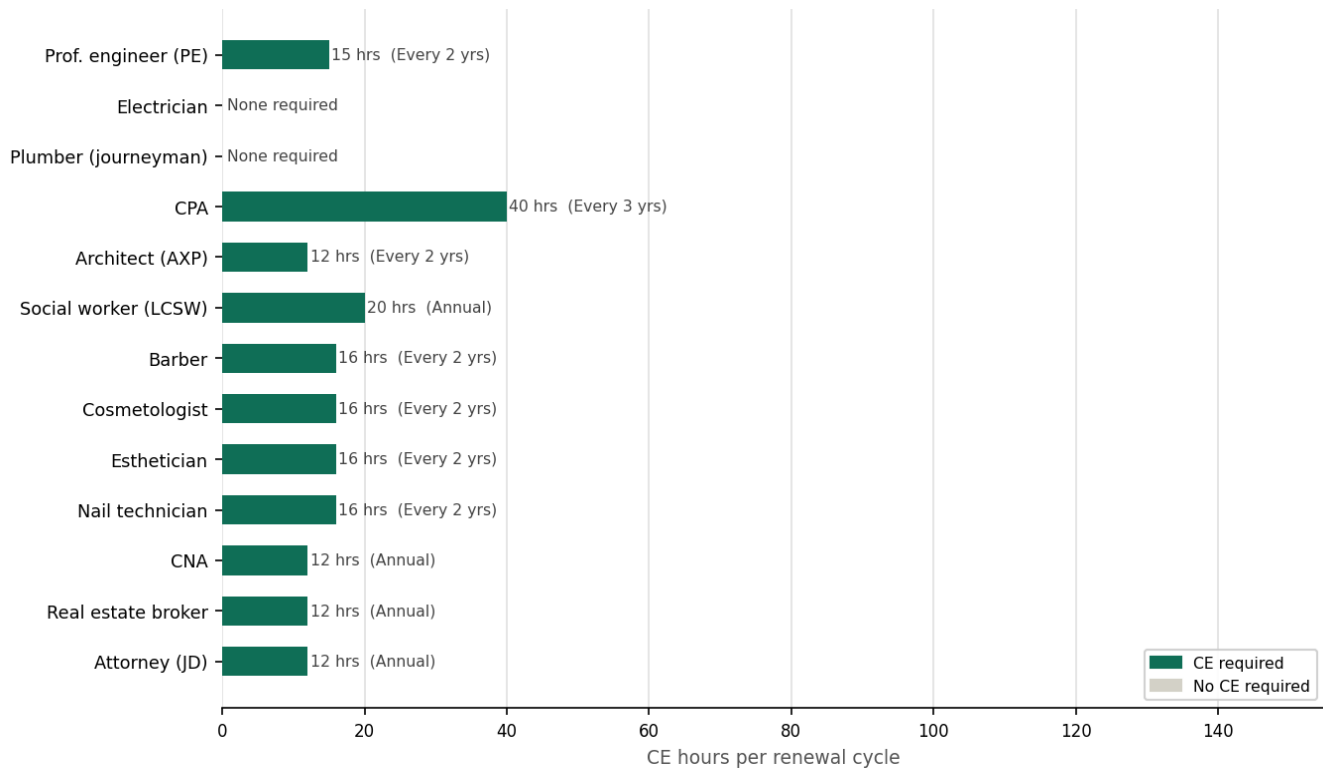


Figure 4. Continuing education hours required per renewal cycle. Green = CE required; gray = none required.

Skilled Trades						
Profession	Min. hours	Duration	Degree	Avg. salary	CE hrs/cycle	Notes & Authority
Electrician (Journeyman)	8,000 OJT +576 class	4–5 yrs	No degree	~\$67k/yr	None (local varies)	No statewide CE. Licensed at city/county level only.
Plumber (Journeyman)	6,400 OJT +576 class	4 yrs	No degree	~\$62k/yr	None	No CE required. Renews every 2 yrs. Indiana Plumbing Commission / PLA.
Construction Laborer	4,000 OJT +392 class	~2.5 yrs	No degree	~\$48k/yr	N/A	Indiana Laborers' Apprenticeship Program.

Healthcare						
Profession	Min. hours	Duration	Degree	Avg. salary	CE hrs/cycle	Notes & Authority
CNA	105 hrs total (30 class+75 clin.)	4–10 wks	No degree	~\$37k/yr	12 hrs/yr (annual)	Min. 12 hrs inservice/yr. IDOH / Ivy Tech exam.

Cosmetology & Personal Services

Profession	Min. hours	Duration	Degree	Avg. salary	CE hrs/cycle	Notes & Authority
Cosmetologist	1,500 hrs	10–24 mo	No degree	~\$41k/yr	16 hrs (biennial)	8 mandatory hrs incl. OSHA, sanitation. Indiana PLA.
Barber	1,500 hrs	10–24 mo	No degree	~\$39k/yr	16 hrs (biennial)	Indiana State Board of Cosmetology & Barber Examiners.
Esthetician	700 hrs	~6–12 mo	No degree	~\$43k/yr	16 hrs (biennial)	8 mandatory hrs incl. OSHA, communicable disease.
Nail Technician	450 hrs	~3–6 mo	No degree	~\$38k/yr	16 hrs (biennial)	8 mandatory hrs incl. license law, sanitation.

Professional Certifications

Profession	Min. hours	Duration	Degree	Avg. salary	CE hrs/cycle	Notes & Authority
CPA (current pathway)	~4,000 hrs (2 yrs)	2 yrs	Bachelor's (150 cr-hrs)	~\$88k/yr	120 hrs (triennial)	120 hrs CPE per 3-yr cycle. Indiana Board of Accountancy.
CPA (2027 path — 150 hr)	~2,000 hrs (1 yr)	1 yr	Bachelor's (150 cr-hrs)	~\$88k/yr	120 hrs (triennial)	Effective Jan. 2027 (HEA 1143): 150-hr path, 1 yr experience.
CPA (2027 path — BS only)	~4,000 hrs (2 yrs)	2 yrs	Bachelor's in accounting	~\$88k/yr	120 hrs (triennial)	Effective Jan. 2027 (HEA 1143): BS-only path, 2 yrs experience.
Prof. Engineer (PE)	~8,320 hrs (4 yrs post-BS)	4 yrs	BS Engineering	~\$96k/yr	30 PDH (biennial)	30 PDH/2-yr cycle. 1 PDH ethics + 1 PDH IN rules. State Board.
Architect (AXP)	3,740 hrs (6 areas)	Varies	B.Arch or M.Arch	~\$90k/yr	24 hrs (biennial)	24 hrs/2-yr cycle; 16 hrs must cover health, safety & welfare.
LCSW	~3,000 hrs (2 yrs)	2 yrs	MSW (Master's)	~\$80k/yr	40 hrs (biennial)	40 hrs/2-yr renewal. Incl. 2 hrs ethics. Indiana BHHS Board.
Real Estate Broker	90 classroom hrs (pre-license)	~3–6 mo	No degree	~\$78k/yr	12 hrs/yr (annual)	Commission-based; wide range. 12 hrs/yr; 30-hr post-lic. for new brokers.
Attorney (JD)	No OJT min.	3 yrs JD	JD req.	~\$98k/yr	12 hrs/yr (annual)	36 CLE hrs/3-yr period. New attorneys: 6-hr professionalism course.

Community Impact Analysis

Which licensed professions carry the greatest potential for negative — and positive — impact on Indiana communities?

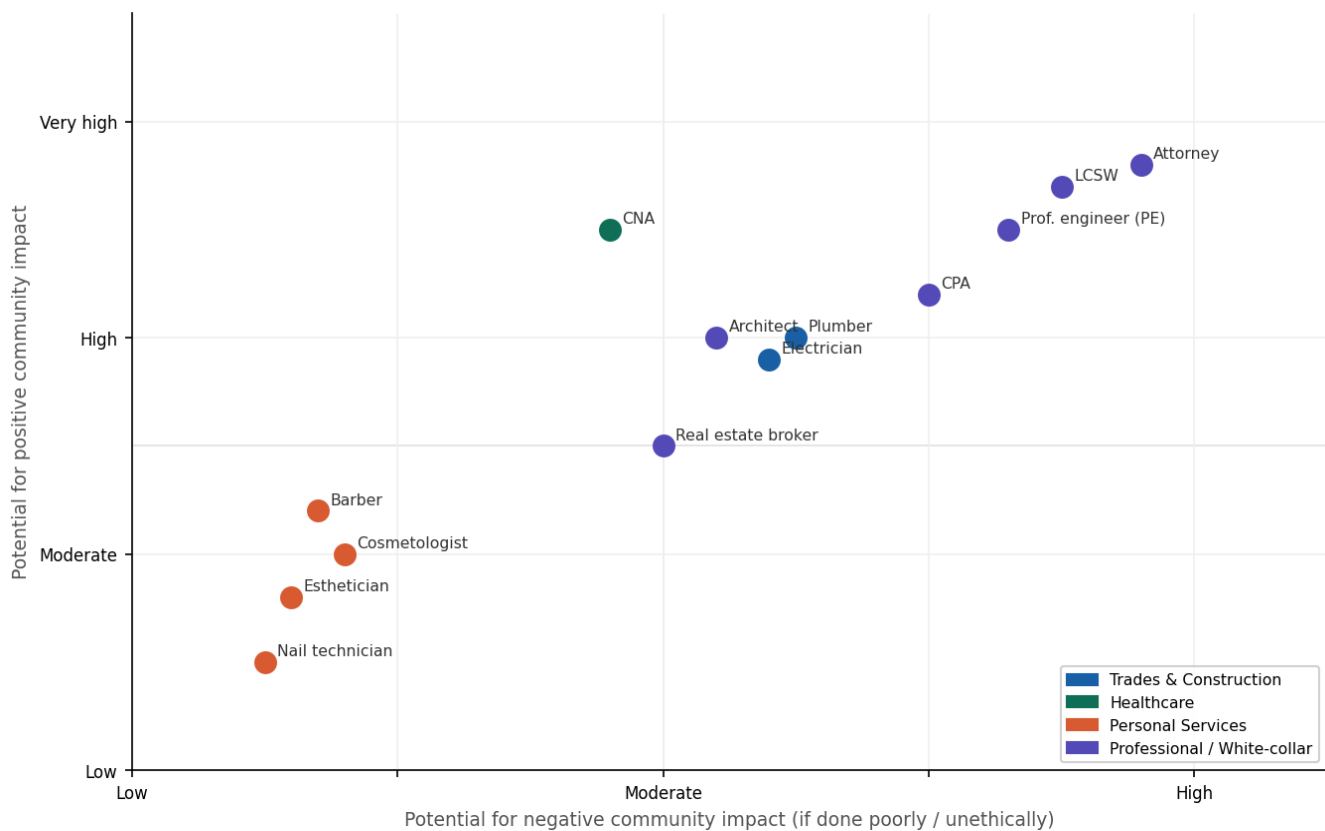


Figure 5. Relative potential for negative vs. positive community impact by profession. Positions upper-right = high stakes in both directions. Scores are qualitative assessments based on scope of practice, supervision levels, vulnerability of populations served, and scale of consequences if practice standards fail.

Overview

The licensed professions with the most potential for negative community impact are generally those that (1) serve vulnerable populations, (2) make decisions with long-lasting consequences, and (3) operate in areas where errors are difficult to detect or reverse. Notably, these are also the same professions with the highest degree requirements, longest training periods, and most rigorous continuing education — reinforcing why those requirements exist.

The analysis below is organized from highest to lowest potential for harm if professional standards fail.

HIGHEST RISK — Attorney

Lawyers control outcomes in criminal prosecutions, family courts, housing disputes, civil rights cases, and estate matters. An incompetent or unethical attorney can cost a client their freedom, their children, their home, or their life savings. Overworked public defenders contribute to wrongful convictions. Attorneys working for predatory lenders, slumlords, or employers in bad faith can weaponize the legal system against vulnerable people. Because legal decisions are often irreversible — a conviction, a lost custody case, a foreclosure — the downstream harm can span decades and affect entire families.

HIGHEST RISK — Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

LCSWs work with the most vulnerable populations in society: children in abuse situations, people in mental health crises, individuals struggling with addiction, elderly adults, and families in poverty. Poor clinical judgment, missed warning signs, or ethical violations (boundary violations, misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatment decisions) can result in suicide, unreported child abuse, unjust removal of children from homes, or denial of necessary services. Their decisions ripple through entire family systems for generations. Indiana's requirement for 3,000 supervised hours and a master's degree reflects the gravity of this role.

HIGH RISK — Professional Engineer (PE)

Engineers stamp drawings and approve structural designs for buildings, bridges, water treatment facilities, and critical infrastructure. A negligent or corrupt PE can cause structural failures with mass casualty potential. Historical examples include bridge collapses, dam failures, and building implosions. In Indiana, where manufacturing and infrastructure investment is significant, PE errors could affect thousands of workers and residents. The 4-year post-degree experience requirement and PE exam exist specifically to prevent these outcomes.

HIGH RISK — CPA

Accountants who commit fraud, enable tax evasion, or misrepresent financials can devastate businesses, wipe out employee retirement funds, defraud nonprofit organizations, and erode public trust in institutions. At the local level, a CPA manipulating books for a small business, school, or municipal entity can cause harm that takes years to uncover and correct. Indiana's 120-hour triennial CPE requirement helps ensure practitioners stay current with ethical standards and regulatory changes.

MODERATE-HIGH RISK — Plumber & Electrician

These trades are frequently underestimated in terms of community harm potential. Faulty plumbing can cause sewage contamination, Legionella outbreaks in water systems, flooding, and mold infestations that render homes uninhabitable. Substandard electrical work is one of the leading causes of residential fires in the United States — fires that kill people and displace entire neighborhoods. The absence of a statewide electrician license in Indiana means quality control varies significantly by jurisdiction, creating uneven protection for residents.

MODERATE RISK — Real Estate Broker

Real estate professionals have the power to perpetuate or disrupt housing discrimination. Steering buyers toward or away from neighborhoods based on race, inflating or misrepresenting property values, and enabling predatory flipping practices all contribute to systemic harm. Communities that experience blockbusting or speculative flipping often see long-term declines in homeownership rates, neighborhood stability, and generational wealth. These harms are typically systemic and slow-moving rather than acute, but their cumulative effect on communities can be profound.

LOWER RISK — CNA, Cosmetologist, Barber, Esthetician, Nail Technician

Personal service and entry-level healthcare workers have more limited scope of practice and operate under direct supervision, which constrains their potential for large-scale harm. Sanitation failures in salons can spread fungal infections or bloodborne pathogens, and CNAs can contribute to neglect or abuse in long-term care settings — but both scenarios are more easily detected and corrected than harms in high-stakes professional roles. Notably, barbers have historically served as trusted community connectors and informal mental health resources, representing an underappreciated positive impact on community wellbeing.

Key Takeaway

The professions with the highest licensing barriers — most training hours, degree requirements, and continuing education mandates — are precisely those with the greatest capacity for both benefit and harm. This is not coincidental. Indiana's licensing framework reflects the principle that the higher the stakes, the more rigorous the gatekeeping should be.

Conversely, professions where errors are more visible, more correctable, or more limited in scope tend to have lighter regulatory touch.

Workforce development programs should consider this risk spectrum when prioritizing training investments, scholarship funding, and apprenticeship incentives across Indiana communities.

Salary notes: Averages are approximate statewide figures for 2025–2026 from BLS, ZipRecruiter, Salary.com, PayScale, and Indeed. Real estate broker income is commission-based and highly variable. Cost estimates include education, training, and exam fees only. For degree-required professions, work-experience phases are paid employment. Electricians: no statewide license; requirements vary by city/county. CPA requirements change Jan. 1, 2027 under HEA 1143. Contact Indiana PLA: in.gov/pla