

# Computer User Support Specialist

## About my job:

I provide help and advice to employees using computer software or equipment. I may be called a computer network support specialist or a support information technology (IT) employee, depending upon the organization.



## What I do every day:

- Maintain the everyday performance of computer systems
- Answer questions regarding computer software or hardware operation; help users solve problems
- Ensure correct equipment set up for employee use, perform proper installation of cables, operating systems and software
- Identify and perform repairs to hardware, software or peripheral equipment
- Consult technical manuals or perform computer diagnostics to resolve problems
- Create training materials and procedures, or train users how to correctly use hardware and software
- Coordinate with colleagues, users and management to develop requirements for new systems or modifications

## What makes my job great?

### Job growth:

The need for computer support specialists is projected to grow 17 percent from 2012 to 2022, and more support services will be needed as organizations upgrade their computer equipment and software.

### Short-term training:

There are many paths into this field. A bachelor's degree is required for some computer support specialist positions, but an associate degree or post secondary classes are appropriate for others.

### Good pay:

The median salary is \$43,000/year. (That means that 50 percent earn less than this number, and the other 50 percent earn more.)

### Benefits:

Most support specialists work full time with benefits that may include:

- **Healthcare**
- **Paid vacation**
- **Tuition assistance**
- **Flexible schedules**

# How can you become a computer user support specialist?



## Academic/training credentials:

- Postsecondary certificate
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree

## Other credentials:

- CompTIA A+ certification
- CompTIA Network+ certification
- Cisco certified network associate certification
- Microsoft technology associate
- Microsoft certified solutions associate
- Microsoft office specialist
- ITIL certification

## Work experience/internships:

Work and internship experience is not required but will advance your job search. Many companies are looking for interns/apprentices. To find out more about local opportunities, contact Lakeland Career Services at 440.525.7222.

## Skills and requirements:

- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Strong problem-solving skills
- Ability to work full time
- Ability to work evenings and weekends

## Where you can find jobs:

- Online job boards
- Temporary employment services
- Career fairs
- Networking with family, friends and teachers
- Social media
- Company websites
- Connections from user groups

## Potential job titles:

- Information technology specialist (IT specialist)
- Support specialist
- Computer technician
- Computer support specialist
- Help desk analyst
- Technical support specialist
- Network support specialist
- Electronic data processing auditor (EDP auditor)
- Network technician
- Computer specialist
- Systems administrator

## Potential local employers:

- the Cleveland Clinic
- Cornerstone IT
- Hewlett Packard
- Hyland Software
- PNC Bank
- Progressive Insurance
- Quicken Loans  
Arena-Cleveland Cavaliers
- Steris



# Local educational opportunities

## Two-year institutions:

- Lakeland Community College: Associate of Applied Business in IT and Computer Science (user support specialist major)
  - IT specialist certificate
  - IT professional certificate

Contact Lakeland Information Technology & Computer Science Department Chair at 440.525.7265.
- Cuyahoga Community College: Associate of Applied Business in Information Technology
  - Computer maintenance and technology certificate
- Kent State Ashtabula and Geauga Campuses: Associate of Applied Business in Computer Technology



## Four-year institutions:

- Holden University of Lakeland Community College/Kent State University: Bachelor of Technical and Applied Studies, Computer Technology General Concentration
- Cleveland State University: Bachelor of Science in Computer and Information Science
- Kent State University: Bachelor of Science in Computer Science
- University of Akron: Bachelor of Science in Computer Science



## High School Tech Prep:

- A-TECH: computer technology and electronic technologies
- Auburn Career Center: information support and services or computer networking
- Lake Shore Compact: computer information systems
- Excel TECC: information technology and programming
- Contact your high school guidance office



## Coursework per educational entity:

### Secondary pathway:

Computer Information Technology

### Postsecondary program:

Computer User support Specialist

An Example of Course with Secondary and Postsecondary Credits

Secondary	7 8	English I	Algebra I	Physical Science	Social Studies	Fine Arts	World Languages		
	9 10	English II	Geometry	Biology	World History	Health (.5) PE (.5)	Programming	World Languages	
	11	English III	Algebra II	Chemistry	U.S. History	Computer and Information Technology	Networking Fundamentals		
	12	English IV	Trigonometry/ Calculus	Physics	U.S. Government	Operating Systems	Programming Logic	Database Applications	
Postsecondary	Year 1 1st Semester	English	First Year Experience	Internet: Services, Tools and Web Page Creation	Health Fitness	Computers and Information Processing	Ethics in Information Technology	Using Microsoft Windows	Network+ and Networking Essentials
	Year 1 2nd Semester	Introduction to Business	Programming Logic	Managing and Optimizing Personal Computers	Microsoft Office Word: Skills and Techniques	Microsoft Office Excel: Skills and Techniques	Survey of College Mathematics		
	Year 2 1st Semester	Organizational Behavior	Business Communication	Information Technology Project Management	Help Desk Concepts and Management	Windows Configuration	Arts and Humanities Elective		
	Year 2 2nd Semester	Introductions to SQL	Information Technology and Computer Science Capstone	Managing and Maintaining Windows 8	Natural Science Elective	Social and Behavioral Science Elective	Technical Elective		
High School Career-Technical Education Program Courses									
High School Courses for Postsecondary Credit (including Apprenticeship Hours) and the Corresponding Postsecondary Courses									
Required Courses									
Recommended Electives									

# How can I grow my career?

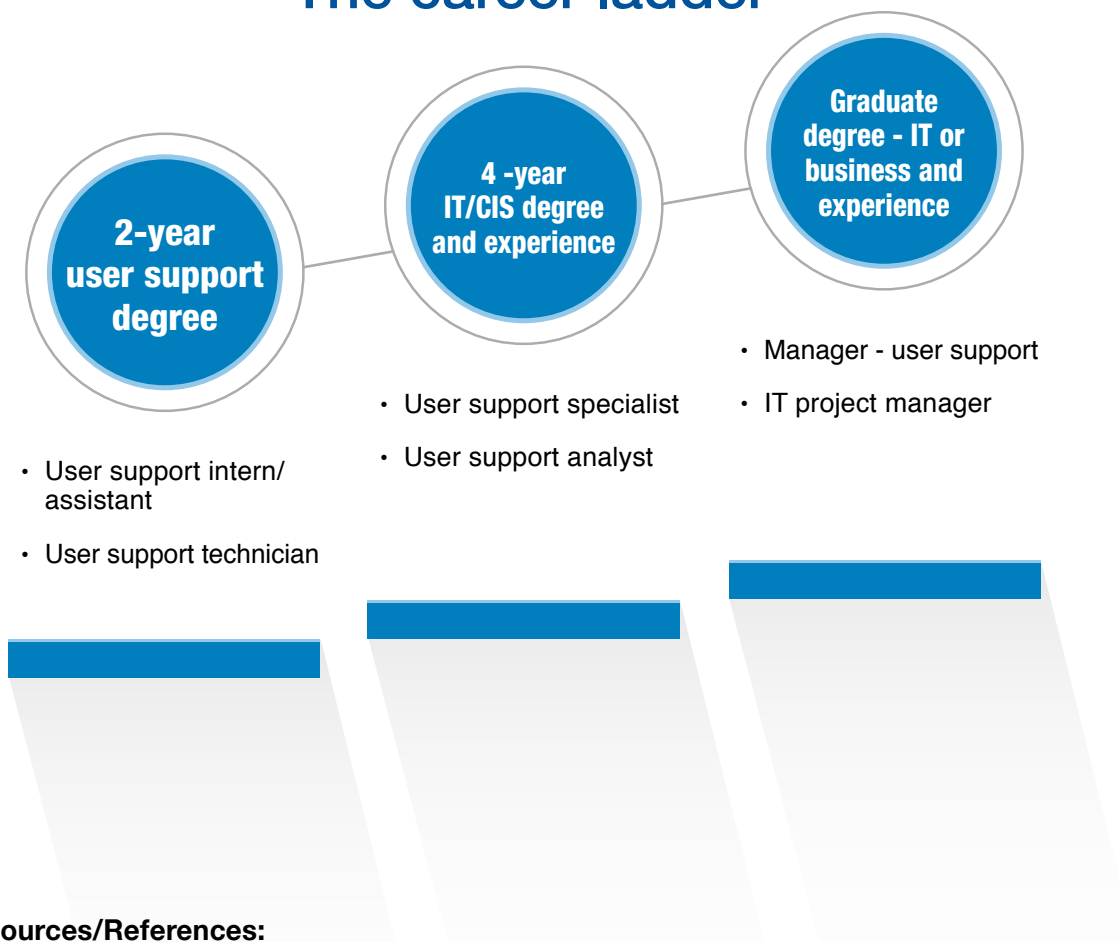


While the minimum requirement is postsecondary certification, an associate and bachelor's degrees will provide more opportunities for jobs and advancement. Over time, support specialists learn more about the software and equipment they support, and are able to advance to positions that handle complex issues. Advancement can take anywhere from several months to a few years.

## Where could I focus or specialize in my career?

- Computer user support specialist
- Computer support manager
- IT project manager
- Information security analyst
- Computer and information systems manager

## The career ladder



### Sources/References:

Ohio Means Jobs, Bureau of Labor Statistics – Occupational Outlook Handbook  
O\*Net Online-Summary Report, Ohio Labor Market Information