

Maintenance Technician

The entry point

Read across: program → role → pay → where it leads.

DFW median	\$63,380 · Texas median \$61,930 · top 10% in DFW \$93,210
Jobs	12,730 in DFW today · about 6,380 openings a year across Texas · +22% statewide by 2034
DFW college programs	Tarrant County College: Industrial Technician (AAS and certificates). TSTC North Texas (Red Oak): Industrial Maintenance, becoming Advanced Manufacturing in fall 2026. Names vary by college.
Credential	Technical college certificate or diploma
Leads to	Robotics, controls, instrumentation, hydraulics, electrical; then lead technician, maintenance planner, trainer, technical manager
Who hires it	Morton Industries (Dallas), Danone (Dallas), PepsiCo (Arlington, Grand Prairie), Mary Kay (Lewisville), Martin Sprocket & Gear (Arlington, Fort Worth), Amazon RME (Wilmer, Garland). <i>10 openings on the Technicians of DFW marketplace, October 7, 2026 (O*NET 49-9041, 49-9071).</i>
Online courses on the marketplace	Multi-Craft Technician: Level 1; Accelerator: Multi-Skilled Technician. Self-paced online courses are priced per course.
National role profile	Industrial Maintenance Technician · Mechanical Maintenance · Predictive Maintenance

Advising tip: Maintenance is the door most technicians come through. A student who starts in industrial maintenance hasn't locked out robotics or controls. Those are where it leads.

Wages: BLS OEWS, Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington metro and Texas, May 2025. Projections: Texas Workforce Commission via Projections Central, 2024 to 2034 (statewide). Employers and online courses: Technicians of DFW marketplace, October 7, 2026. Programs: college websites, October 2026; check each college's current catalog. Last reviewed October 2026.

Machinist Technician

Precision, by the thousandth

Read across: program → role → pay → where it leads.

DFW median	\$59,830 · Texas median \$59,180 · top 10% in DFW \$81,930
The ladder	CNC tool operator \$47,990 → machinist \$59,830 → CNC tool programmer \$71,060 (DFW medians)
Jobs	About 2,140 openings a year across Texas · +5% statewide by 2034
DFW college programs	Dallas College : Precision Machining Technology (AAS); CNC Mill and Lathe Operator certificate. Tarrant County College : CNC Machinist Technology certificate (Manufacturing Technology AAS). TSTC North Texas (Red Oak): Precision Machining. Names vary by college.
Found in	Aerospace, automotive, defense, heavy equipment
Who hires it	Martin Sprocket & Gear (CNC Operator, Arlington and Fort Worth; Tool & Die Machinist, Arlington). <i>4 openings on the Technicians of DFW marketplace, October 7, 2026 (O*NET 51-9161, 51-4111).</i>
Online courses on the marketplace	Smart CNC Machinist; Introduction to CNC Machinist. Self-paced online courses are priced per course.
National role profile	Not yet in the National Technician Role Library . Use the DFW figures above.

Advising tip: Programming pays more than running. Same shop, same machines: in DFW, CNC tool programmers earn a median \$71,060, against \$47,990 for operators.

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Robotics Technician

The automation side

Read across: program → role → pay → where it leads.

DFW median	\$52,160 · Texas median \$54,460 · top 10% in DFW \$93,340 (electro-mechanical and mechatronics technicians)
Jobs	About 110 openings a year across Texas · +8% statewide by 2034. The smallest of the four: worth aiming at, not waiting for.
Entry	Mechatronics or automation certificate, or maintenance experience plus controls training
DFW college programs	Dallas College: Robotics and Industrial Automation (AAS); Industrial Automation certificate; Mechatronics Technology certificate. Tarrant County College: Electronics Technology: Robotics & Automation (AAS), with a Mechatronics Technology certificate. Names vary by college.
Found in	Automotive, food and beverage, logistics, semiconductors
Who hires it	Jabil (Engineering Technician, Richardson). Amazon RME and Jabil are also hiring automation engineers, the next step up. <i>1 opening coded to this role on the Technicians of DFW marketplace, October 7, 2026 (O*NET 17-3024).</i>
Online courses on the marketplace	Introduction to Mechatronics (free trial); Foundations of Automated Equipment Maintenance. Self-paced online courses are priced per course.
National role profile	Industrial Robotics Technician · Mechatronics Maintenance · Electro-Mechanical / Mechatronics

Advising tip: Robotics is often a second step. Plenty of DFW technicians start in maintenance and add controls and automation training while they work. The top 10% in DFW earn \$93,340.

Wages: BLS OEWS, Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington metro and Texas, May 2025. Projections: Texas Workforce Commission via Projections Central, 2024 to 2034 (statewide). Employers and online courses: Technicians of DFW marketplace, October 7, 2026. Programs: college websites, October 2026; check each college's current catalog. Last reviewed October 2026.

Instrumentation & Control Technician

Highest paid of the four

Read across: program → role → pay → where it leads.

DFW median	\$75,580 · Texas median \$74,050 · top 10% in DFW \$103,880 (electrical and electronic engineering technologists and technicians)
Jobs	About 780 openings a year across Texas · +6% statewide by 2034
Entry	Instrumentation, electrical, or automation certificate; strong overlap with maintenance
DFW college programs	Dallas College: Electronics Technology certificate. Tarrant County College: Electronics Technology (AAS) tracks. TSTC North Texas (Red Oak): Electrical Power and Controls. Look for electronics, electrical, and controls programs; names vary by college.
Found in	Semiconductors, energy, chemicals, food and beverage, telecommunications equipment
Who hires it	Texas Instruments (Engineering Technician, Dallas), Ericsson (Equipment Engineering Technician I and Electronic Troubleshoot Technician, Lewisville), Jabil (Test Engineering Technician, Richardson), Vistra (RTU/SCADA Technician, Irving). 5 openings on the Technicians of DFW marketplace, October 7, 2026 (O*NET 17-3023, 49-2095).
Online courses on the marketplace	Instrumentation and Control Technician series: Fundamentals of Instrumentation, Fundamentals of Control Systems, and a Virtual Lab. Self-paced online courses are priced per course.
National role profile	Instrumentation & Controls Technician · Process Control · PLC Technician

Advising tip: About \$12,000 a year more than maintenance in DFW (\$75,580 against \$63,380). The most analytical of the four, and the skills carry into process control, automation, and reliability work.

Wages: BLS OEWS, Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington metro and Texas, May 2025. Projections: Texas Workforce Commission via Projections Central, 2024 to 2034 (statewide). Employers and online courses: Technicians of DFW marketplace, October 7, 2026. Programs: college websites, October 2026; check each college's current catalog. Last reviewed October 2026.