

# Accountant/Auditor

## Snapshot

**Career Cluster(s):** Business Management & Administration; Finance; Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security

**Interests:** Accounting; Finance; Data; Statistics; Recordkeeping; Investigating

**Earnings (Yearly Average):** \$77,250

**Employment & Outlook:** As Fast As Average Growth Expected

## OVERVIEW

### Sphere of Work

Accountants and auditors prepare and examine financial records, identify potential areas of opportunity and risk, and provide solutions for businesses and individuals. They ensure that financial records are accurate, that financial and data risks are evaluated, and that taxes are paid properly. They also assess financial operations and work to help ensure that organizations run efficiently. In accounting, cybersecurity is of ever-increasing importance, as more firms manage and store valuable financial data and sensitive information digitally, thus heightening the risk of attacks by cybercriminals.

### Work Environment

Accountants work in offices or at home. Some work on teams, whereas others work alone. Most accountants and auditors work full time. Longer periods of work are typical at certain times of the year, such as for quarterly audits or during tax season.



Photo via iStock.com/KangeStudio. [Used under license.]

## Fast Fact

In 2016, only three industries—government, retail, and technology—accounted for the 95% of compromised customer records. These industries remain highly sought-after targets because of the abundance of personally identifying information in their databases. Source: TechRepublic.com



Photo via iStock.com/weerapatkiatdumrong.  
[Used under license.]

## Additional Requirements

Many systems analysts continue to take classes throughout their careers so that they can learn about new and innovative technologies. Technological advances come so rapidly in the computer field that continual study is necessary to remain competitive.

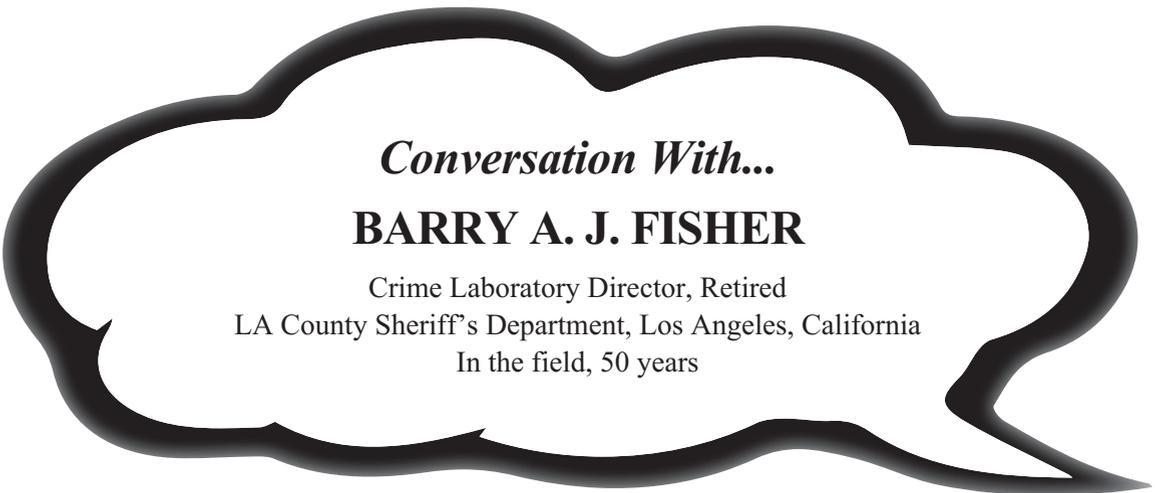
Systems analysts must understand the business field in which they are working. For example, a hospital may want an analyst with a thorough understanding of health plans and programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, and an analyst working for a bank may need to understand finance. If a computer systems analyst works in forensics, they should have a general understanding of law and criminal justice. Having knowledge of their industry helps systems analysts communicate with managers to determine the role of the information technology (IT) systems in an organization.

## EARNINGS AND ADVANCEMENT

Earnings depend upon the computer systems analyst's geographic location, educational attainment, and years of experience. Median annual earnings of computer systems analysts were \$99,270 in 2021. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$60,680, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$158,010.

Computer systems analysts may receive benefits such as paid vacations, holidays, and sick days; life and health insurance; and retirement benefits, usually paid by the employer.

An understanding of the specific field an analyst is working in is helpful in getting a position. For example, a hospital may desire an analyst with a background or coursework in health management. Overall, candidates with a background in



*Conversation With...*

**BARRY A. J. FISHER**

Crime Laboratory Director, Retired  
LA County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles, California  
In the field, 50 years

**What was your individual career path in terms of education/training, entry-level job, or other significant opportunity?**

I received an MS degree in chemistry and accidentally discovered forensic science while searching for my first job following graduate school. After starting work at the crime lab, I also pursued a masters degree in business administration in an evening program while at the laboratory. I suspect the MBA helped me to promote into the supervisory and later management ranks of the crime lab.

**What are the most important skills and/or qualities for someone in your profession?**

The most important skills are a strong background in science—chemistry or biological sciences—and good communication skills. The most important qualities are a strong sense of professional ethics and the ability to work within bureaucratic systems, especially if you are working in government organizations.

**What do you wish you had known going into this profession?**

Working in a law enforcement environment will cause you to see the world very differently. You see the worst of humanity and must be careful not to project that notion to all people you encounter.

**Are there many job opportunities in your profession? In what specific areas?**

There are many job opportunities in forensic sciences but there is lots of competition. Be prepared to market yourself for any position. Often graduate degrees are important. The current major areas in forensic science are in: DNA, drug and toxicology, digital evidence (computer forensics), and forensic chemistry.

**How do you see your profession changing in the next five years, how will technology shift, and what skills will be required?**

Automation and artificial intelligence (AI) are likely to become more prevalent in crime labs. As a result, computer-related skills may become more valuable.

## Fast Fact

The work-from-home lifestyle brought on by COVID-19 had serious ramifications for the financial world, as it inspired more hacking than ever before, with a 238% rate of increase in cyberattacks against banks between February and April 2020. Banking professionals including loan officers should be aware of the ongoing potential dangers, as experts claim U.S. banks are particularly vulnerable to state-sponsored cyberattacks from nations like North Korea, China, and Russia. Source: investopedia.com



Photo via iStock.com/andresr. [Used under license.]

### Related Occupations

---

- Financial Analyst
- Financial Examiner
- Financial Manager
- Insurance Sales Agent
- Personal Financial Advisor
- Real Estate Broker/Sales Agent
- Securities/Commodities/Financial Services Sales Agent
- Tax Examiners/Collectors/Revenue Agent
- Teller

### MORE INFORMATION

#### **American Bankers Association (ABA)**

1120 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
800.226.5377  
www.aba.com

#### **Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA)**

1919 M Street NW, 5th floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
202.557.2700  
membership@mba.org  
www.mba.org

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### High School/Secondary

Education requirements vary greatly with the job, but most jobs require a high school diploma. Students with an interest in this line of work should prepare as though for a career in law enforcement, with courses such as English, civics, history, psychology, and sociology.

#### Suggested High School Subjects

- Algebra
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Civics
- Earth or Life or Physical Science
- Economics
- English
- Forensic Science
- Geometry
- History
- Physics
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Statistics

#### Related Career Pathways/Majors

*Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security Career Cluster*

- Law Enforcement Services Pathway
- Security & Protective Services Pathway

### Postsecondary

Private detectives and investigators typically need several years of work experience and a high school diploma. In addition, the vast majority of states require private detectives and investigators to have a license.

Education requirements vary greatly with the job, but most jobs require a high school diploma. Some jobs may require a 2- or 4-year degree in a field such as criminal justice.

### Transferable Skills and Abilities

#### Communication Skills

- Listening carefully and asking appropriate questions when interviewing a person of interest

#### Decision-making Skills

- Thinking on one's feet and making quick decisions, based on the limited information that they have at a given time

#### Inquisitiveness

- Wanting to ask questions and search for the truth

#### Patience

- Spending long periods conducting surveillance while waiting for an event to occur
- Investigating cases may take a long time, and they may not provide a resolution quickly—or at all

#### Resourcefulness

- Working persistently with whatever leads are available, no matter how limited, to determine the next step toward their goal
- Anticipating what a person of interest will do next