

## What are Star Jobs?

North Carolina's 5-Star Jobs represent occupations with the greatest projected employment potential through 2034. Occupations were rated from 1-5 stars based on wages, projected growth rates, and projected job openings.

### WAYNESVILLE-FRANKLIN REGION



Cherokee | Clay | Graham | Haywood  
| Jackson | Macon | Swain



For a complete list of Star Jobs and explanation of the rating process, scan the QR code or visit:  
[www.commerce.nc.gov/star-jobs](http://www.commerce.nc.gov/star-jobs)

### Advanced Degree

|    |                                                           | MEDIAN WAGE     |           |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
|    |                                                           | Hourly          | Annual    |
| ★5 | Lawyers                                                   | \$46.34         | \$96,398  |
| ★5 | Postsecondary Education Administrators                    | \$40.33         | \$83,888  |
| ★5 | Pharmacists                                               | \$63.71         | \$132,522 |
| ★5 | Nurse Practitioners                                       | \$60.34         | \$125,508 |
| ★5 | Postsecondary Business Teachers                           | SALARY POSITION | \$138,193 |
| ★5 | Physician Assistants                                      | \$56.58         | \$117,681 |
| ★5 | Speech-Language Pathologists                              | \$39.43         | \$82,022  |
| ★4 | School Psychologists                                      | \$28.32         | \$58,907  |
| ★4 | Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors | \$25.32         | \$52,658  |
| ★4 | Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers          | \$27.10         | \$56,373  |

All wages are based on LEAD analysis of data of Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) 2025 Data released in June 2026.

This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the recipient and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.

**NC** DREAM IT. PLAN IT. BE IT.  
careers.org

DREAM IT. PLAN IT. BE IT.  
**NC**careers.org



Top 10 careers with high wages and employment growth, grouped by education requirements.

**High School & Work Experience****MEDIAN WAGE****Hourly      Annual**

|    |                                                               |         |          |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| ★5 | Chefs and Head Cooks                                          | \$30.54 | \$63,515 |
| ★5 | Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers                | \$38.18 | \$79,406 |
| ★4 | Real Estate Brokers                                           | \$25.40 | \$52,831 |
| ★4 | Electricians                                                  | \$23.28 | \$48,412 |
| ★4 | Sales Representatives of Services                             | \$27.39 | \$56,968 |
| ★4 | Insurance Sales Agents                                        | \$22.47 | \$46,733 |
| ★4 | Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers     | \$26.00 | \$54,090 |
| ★4 | Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants | \$25.09 | \$52,188 |
| ★4 | Detectives and Criminal Investigators                         | \$26.76 | \$55,670 |
| ★4 | Construction and Building Inspectors                          | \$25.75 | \$53,555 |

**Postsecondary Training****MEDIAN WAGE****Hourly      Annual**

|    |                                                                       |         |          |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| ★4 | Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers | \$25.10 | \$52,201 |
| ★4 | Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses                     | \$29.98 | \$62,366 |
| ★3 | Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers                               | \$23.00 | \$47,840 |
| ★3 | Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics                          | \$21.42 | \$44,558 |
| ★3 | Paramedics                                                            | \$23.38 | \$48,628 |
| ★3 | Computer User Support Specialists                                     | \$27.39 | \$56,977 |
| ★3 | Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers                 | \$27.81 | \$57,837 |
| ★3 | Audio and Video Technicians                                           | \$21.72 | \$45,183 |
| ★3 | Ophthalmic Medical Technicians                                        | \$20.03 | \$41,652 |
| ★3 | Library Technicians                                                   | \$20.33 | \$42,284 |

**Associate's Degree****MEDIAN WAGE****Hourly      Annual**

|    |                                                                     |         |          |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| ★5 | Registered Nurses                                                   | \$39.53 | \$82,217 |
| ★5 | Dental Hygienists                                                   | \$40.43 | \$84,085 |
| ★5 | Physical Therapist Assistants                                       | \$30.09 | \$62,577 |
| ★4 | Diagnostic Medical Sonographers                                     | \$34.73 | \$72,239 |
| ★4 | Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars             | \$24.72 | \$51,421 |
| ★3 | Paralegals and Legal Assistants                                     | \$22.08 | \$45,918 |
| ★3 | Radiologic Technologists and Technicians                            | \$30.95 | \$64,385 |
| ★3 | Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians | \$46.92 | \$97,586 |
| ★3 | Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians                     | \$29.99 | \$62,375 |
| ★3 | Computer Network Support Specialists                                | \$39.61 | \$82,395 |

**Bachelor's Degree****MEDIAN WAGE****Hourly      Annual**

|    |                                      |         |           |
|----|--------------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| ★5 | General and Operations Managers      | \$35.09 | \$72,989  |
| ★5 | Accountants and Auditors             | \$33.75 | \$70,201  |
| ★5 | Construction Managers                | \$47.80 | \$99,421  |
| ★5 | Project Management Specialists       | \$41.89 | \$87,139  |
| ★5 | Medical and Health Services Managers | \$49.03 | \$101,986 |
| ★5 | Buyers and Purchasing Agents         | \$29.62 | \$61,613  |
| ★5 | Computer Systems Analysts            | \$42.25 | \$87,879  |
| ★5 | Facilities Managers                  | \$43.90 | \$91,308  |
| ★5 | Industrial Engineers                 | \$45.67 | \$94,993  |
| ★5 | Computer Network Architects          | \$62.39 | \$129,769 |

*Note: Selected occupations for each education/experience category are based on the Star Jobs Methodology. Education categories in this brochure represent the minimum level of education required for entry according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Actual market conditions may require additional education and training.*