

Introducing the Revamped Star Ratings System

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Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD)

NC Department of Commerce



Star Jobs Rating System

Identifying the most promising career prospects at the statewide and regional level



Wage Level

Most Weighted

Pay is weighted as the most important factor for long-term career prospects



Projected Growth

Employment growth outlook for the occupation over 10 years



Total Projected Openings

Expected job openings from growth and replacement needs



Star Jobs Rating System

Identifying the most promising career prospects at the statewide and regional level

1 to 2 Stars

Wages below area median, or lower education and training requirements, or both

3 Stars

Wages at or above the area median

4–5 Stars

Strong pay combined with solid projected growth



No, Really: What Does All of This Mean?

Star Rating	What It Means	Occupational Examples
0	Not rated - This occupation cannot be evaluated reliably.	Oral Surgeons, Pile Driver Operators, Gambling Managers
1	Limited career potential - These occupations typically offer low wages with limited advancement opportunity. Most are occupations requiring no formal education or limited training.	Fast-Food Cooks, Animal Caretakers, Parts Salespersons



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3	Solid Career – Occupations typically offering competitive wages, positive employment growth, or both. May include some higher wage occupations with declining prospects.	Auto Service Techs, Paralegals, Skincare Specialists, Medical Records Specialist



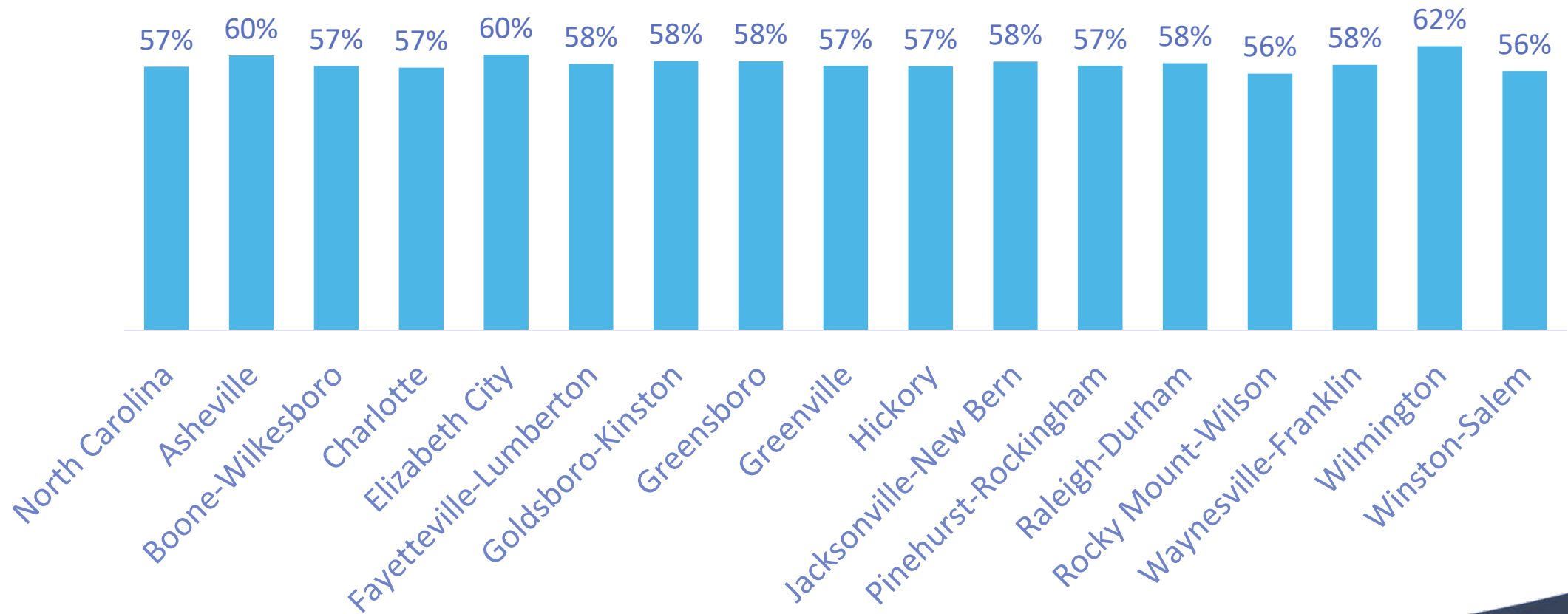
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4	Strong Career – Strong earnings & good prospects. Above avg. wages, stable or positive growth.	Electricians, Public Relations Specialists, Sales Engineers, Interior Designers
5	Excellent Career – Top wages with strong growth & demand.	RNs, Lawyers, Civil Engineers, Transport. Storage & Distribution Managers



Regional Star Rating Composition

Share of Occupations Rated at 3+ Stars



More Education, Higher Rating

Min Education	1★	2★	3+★
No formal educational credential	1,183	49	0
High school diploma or equivalent	602	1,441	1,898
Some college, no degree	0	83	30
Postsecondary nondegree award	0	238	411
Associate's degree	0	106	512
Bachelor's degree	0	164	1,956
Advanced degree	0	21	1,118



Training and Experience Matter Too

Region	Occupational Title	Star Rating	Min Education	Job Training + Work Experience	Median Wage
North Carolina	Dental Laboratory Technicians	2	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$49,460
North Carolina	Semiconductor Processing Technicians	2	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$47,320
North Carolina	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	1	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training	\$39,530



Where to Access this Data

NCcareers.org

Our nationally recognized career development platform. Explore occupations and learn about their star ratings, education and training requirements, expected demand, and more.

Note: Latest star ratings data expected to be uploaded within a week.

<https://nccareers.org/>

The screenshot displays the NCcareers.org website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo and several menu items: Find My Interests, Explore Occupations, Plan My Career, Education & Training, Job Search, Sign In, and Help Search. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is "Occupations". A search bar is present with the placeholder text "Type in Occupation Name or Job Title". Below the search bar, there is a filter sidebar on the left with categories: Map / Location (North Carolina selected), Salary Range, Education Level, Star Rating, and Career Cluster. The main content area shows "823 matching occupations found" and a table of results. The table has columns for Occupation Name, Median Annual Wage, Annual Growth Rate, and Avg. Annual Openings. Three occupations are visible: Nurse Practitioners, Physical Therapist Assistants, and Logisticians.

Occupation	Median Annual Wage	Annual Growth Rate	Avg. Annual Openings
Nurse Practitioners ★★★★★ Master's degree	\$125,020 (\$60.11/hr)	FAST GROWING Very Strong Growth 4.5%	LOTS OF JOBS Very Strong Opportunity 919
Physical Therapist Assistants ★★★★★ Associate's degree	\$63,930 (\$30.74/hr)	FAST GROWING Very Strong Growth 3.1%	Strong Opportunity 539
Logisticians	\$77,030	FAST GROWING	LOTS OF JOBS

Where to Access this Data

Star Jobs Brochures

Use these if you need a printable handout or a quick reference to top jobs by region and education category.

Look forward to a visual refresh this year!

What are Star Jobs?
North Carolina's 5-Star Jobs represent occupations with the greatest projected employment potential through 2032. Occupations were rated from 1-5 stars based on wages, projected growth rates, and projected job openings.

ASHEVILLE REGION



Buncombe | Henderson | Madison
Polk | Rutherford | Transylvania



For a complete list of Star Jobs and explanation of the rating process, scan the QR code or visit: www.commerce.nc.gov/data-tools-reports/labor-market-data-tools/employment-projections#StarJobs-274

	MEDIAN WAGE	
	Hourly	Annual
★ Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	\$2779	\$57,796
★ Lawyers	\$49.17	\$102,274
★ Nurse Practitioners	\$58.37	\$121,404
★ Physical Therapists	\$47.74	\$99,294
★ Physician Assistants	\$63.20	\$131,437
★ Veterinarians	\$61.27	\$127,438
★ Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	SALARY POSITION	\$71,088
★ Instructional Coordinators	\$2763	\$57,462
★ Education Administrators, Postsecondary	\$41.30	\$85,894
★ Healthcare Social Workers	\$30.77	\$63,995

All wages are based on LEAD analysis of data of Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) 2024 Data released in May 2025.
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 guarantee, warranty, or assurance 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.



NCcareers.org @CareersinNC lead@commerce.nc.gov



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

<https://www.commerce.nc.gov/star-jobs-region>

Where to Access this Data

Occupational Projections Web Table

Use this web table to look at the finer points of the data. Includes the ability to customize displayed columns, apply filters to data, and even download for personal use and analysis.

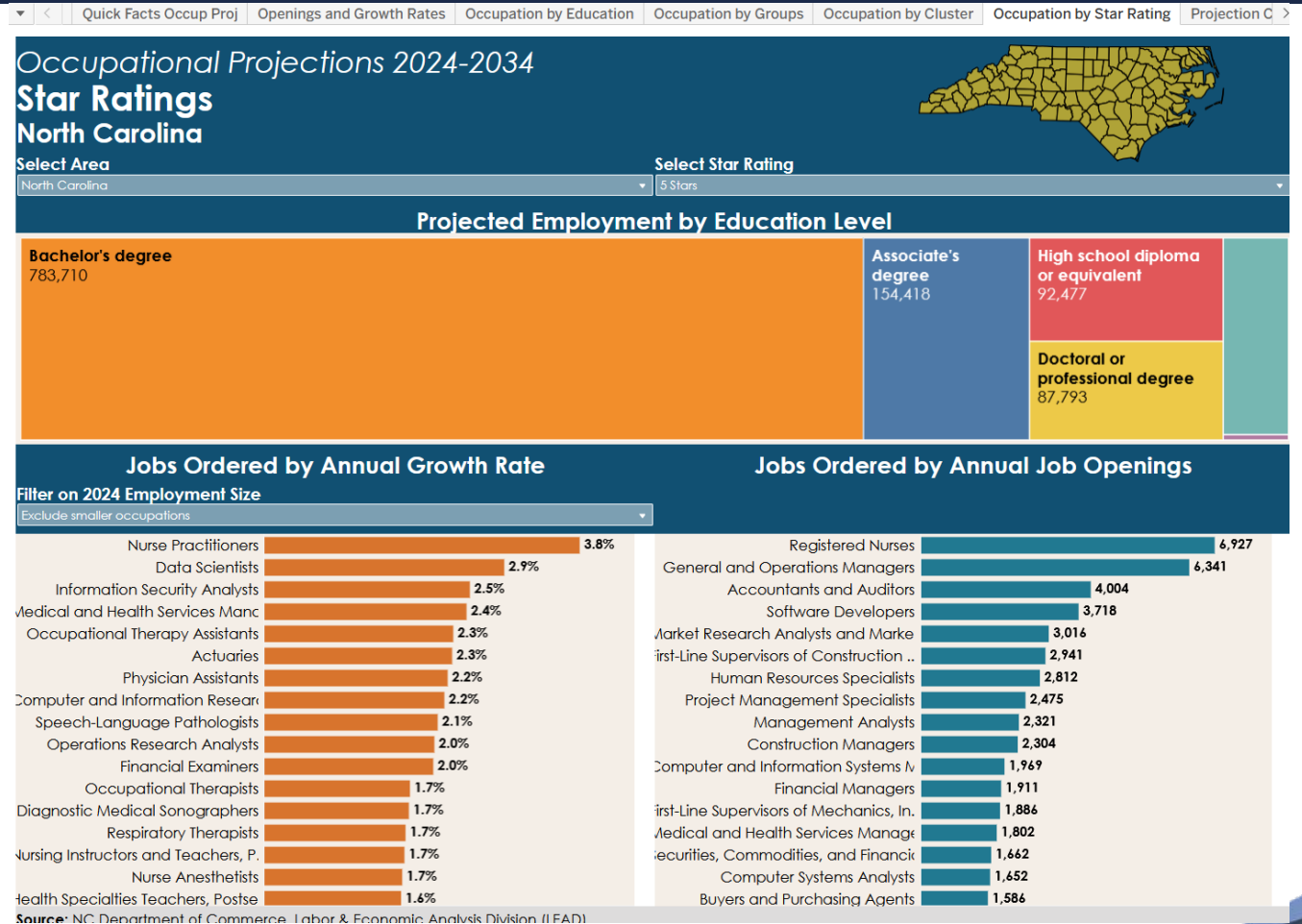
Occ Code	Occ Title	2024 Base Employment	2024 Projected Employment	Net Change Total	Annual Growth Rate	Hourly Median Wage ¹	Annual Median Wage ¹	Education	Career Cluster
11-1011	Chief Executives	3,663	3,822	159	0.43%	*	*	Bachelor's degree	Business Management and Administration
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	74,660	78,920	4,260	0.56%	\$47.69	\$99,190	Bachelor's degree	Business, Management and Administration
11-1031	Legislators	*	*	*	1.34%	*	*	Bachelor's degree	Government and Public Administration
11-2011	Advertising and Promotions	157	157	0	0.00%	\$63.66	\$132,410	Bachelor's degree	Marketing

<https://analytics.nccommerce.com/projections/occ/>

Where to Access this Data

Occupational Projections Dashboard

Use this dashboard for an interactive breakdown of the data. Navigate to the Occupation by Star Rating tab.



<https://analytics.nccommerce.com/Occupation-Projections/>

Thank You!

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Look out for a forthcoming blog post which will summarize what you need to know about star jobs. For any questions, concerns, or comments, e-mail lead@commerce.nc.gov, or chi.wong@commerce.nc.gov.

