

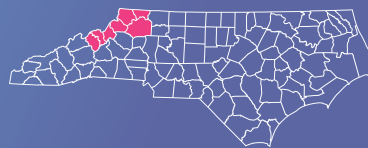
What are Star Jobs?

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.



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

HIGH COUNTRY BOONE-WILKESBORO REGION



Alleghany | Ashe | Avery | Mitchell
Watauga | Wilkes | Yancey

Advanced Degree

		MEDIAN WAGE	
		Hourly	Annual
★5	Education Administrators, Postsecondary	\$39.61	\$82,401
★5	Nurse Practitioners	\$57.36	\$119,310
★5	Physician Assistants	\$58.33	\$121,324
★5	Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary	SALARY POSITION	\$74,226
★5	Speech-Language Pathologists	\$46.01	\$95,706
★5	Education Teachers, Postsecondary	SALARY POSITION	\$82,235
★4	Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors	\$26.70	\$55,535
★4	Pharmacists	\$63.57	\$132,229
★4	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	\$24.47	\$50,897
★4	Physical Therapists	\$44.40	\$92,362

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

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

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

★5	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	\$32.30	\$67,190
★5	Electricians	\$23.62	\$49,129
★5	Chefs and Head Cooks	\$28.27	\$58,809
★4	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	\$19.51	\$40,580
★4	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	\$27.61	\$57,435
★4	Carpenters	\$22.34	\$46,451
★4	Pharmacy Technicians	\$18.50	\$38,487
★4	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	\$23.04	\$47,918
★4	Food Service Managers	\$33.58	\$69,853
★4	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	\$23.76	\$49,418

Postsecondary Training**MEDIAN WAGE**
Hourly Annual

★5	Massage Therapists	\$62.00	\$128,968
★4	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	\$24.51	\$50,993
★4	Psychiatric Technicians	\$21.68	\$45,107
★3	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$23.78	\$49,475
★3	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	\$21.70	\$45,146
★3	Computer User Support Specialists	\$28.60	\$59,489
★3	Medical Assistants	\$18.26	\$37,987
★3	Emergency Medical Technicians	\$17.80	\$37,014
★3	Paramedics	\$21.44	\$44,604
★3	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	\$27.76	\$57,742

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

★5	Physical Therapist Assistants	\$30.72	\$63,906
★4	Registered Nurses	\$38.13	\$79,321
★4	Respiratory Therapists	\$30.88	\$64,238
★4	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	\$39.46	\$82,079
★4	Occupational Therapy Assistants	\$31.70	\$65,929
★4	Computer Network Support Specialists	\$28.80	\$59,921
★3	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	\$30.75	\$63,964
★3	Dental Hygienists	\$39.00	\$81,109
★3	Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians	\$29.77	\$61,921
★3	Architectural and Civil Drafters	\$33.68	\$70,058

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

★5	Construction Managers	\$52.96	\$110,167
★5	Software Developers	\$55.41	\$115,255
★5	Medical and Health Services Managers	\$46.48	\$96,680
★5	Personal Financial Advisors	\$46.45	\$96,618
★4	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	\$27.02	\$56,211
★4	Child, Family, and School Social Workers	\$25.73	\$53,521
★4	Training and Development Specialists	\$19.41	\$40,375
★4	Buyers and Purchasing Agents	\$29.92	\$62,237
★4	Project Management Specialists	\$38.70	\$80,507
★4	Financial Managers	\$49.11	\$102,144

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.