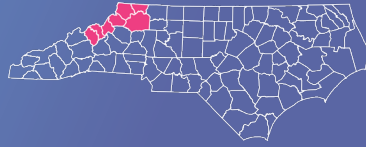


What are Star Jobs?

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.

HIGH COUNTRY BOONE-WILKESBORO REGION



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



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

Advanced Degree

		MEDIAN WAGE	
		Hourly	Annual
★5	Postsecondary Education Administrators	\$40.74	\$84,742
★5	Lawyers	\$46.61	\$96,943
★5	Pharmacists	\$63.07	\$131,193
★5	Postsecondary Business Teachers	SALARY POSITION	\$108,467
★5	Nurse Practitioners	\$57.16	\$118,893
★5	Physical Therapists	\$48.25	\$100,368
★5	Physician Assistants	\$53.89	\$112,087
★4	Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors	\$26.54	\$55,212
★4	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	\$25.12	\$52,239
★4	Healthcare Social Workers	\$26.88	\$55,902

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

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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	Food Service Managers	\$35.38	\$73,586
★5	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	\$38.18	\$79,407
★5	Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	\$39.27	\$81,684
★4	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	\$34.94	\$72,670
★4	Wholesale and Manufacturing Sales Representatives	\$30.35	\$63,128
★4	Electricians	\$23.20	\$48,250
★4	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	\$27.78	\$57,778
★4	Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	\$28.05	\$58,341
★4	Chefs and Head Cooks	\$28.91	\$60,128
★4	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics	\$29.38	\$61,110

Postsecondary Training

MEDIAN WAGE

Hourly Annual

★4	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	\$25.10	\$52,217
★3	Paramedics	\$22.10	\$45,965
★3	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$23.90	\$49,718
★3	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	\$21.71	\$45,159
★3	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	\$21.42	\$44,558
★3	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	\$29.98	\$62,359
★3	Computer User Support Specialists	\$28.69	\$59,676
★3	Psychiatric Technicians	\$22.55	\$46,905
★3	First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers	\$26.17	\$54,444
★3	Surgical Technologists	\$24.28	\$50,510

Associate's Degree

MEDIAN WAGE

Hourly Annual

★5	Registered Nurses	\$37.78	\$78,587
★5	Dental Hygienists	\$44.10	\$91,726
★5	Respiratory Therapists	\$31.56	\$65,639
★5	Architectural and Civil Drafters	\$28.34	\$58,947
★5	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	\$40.92	\$85,113
★4	Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians	\$30.97	\$64,424
★4	Computer Network Support Specialists	\$28.47	\$59,226
★4	Occupational Therapy Assistants	\$32.08	\$66,726
★3	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	\$22.06	\$45,878
★3	Forest and Conservation Technicians	\$22.57	\$46,950

Bachelor's Degree

MEDIAN WAGE

Hourly Annual

★5	Accountants and Auditors	\$36.55	\$76,026
★5	Construction Managers	\$47.42	\$98,629
★5	Project Management Specialists	\$45.54	\$94,714
★5	Buyers and Purchasing Agents	\$32.09	\$66,752
★5	Civil Engineers	\$45.89	\$95,455
★5	Computer Systems Analysts	\$46.02	\$95,723
★5	Facilities Managers	\$51.75	\$107,640
★5	Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	\$36.05	\$74,990
★5	Logisticians	\$34.75	\$72,284
★5	Human Resources Managers	\$56.95	\$118,450

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.