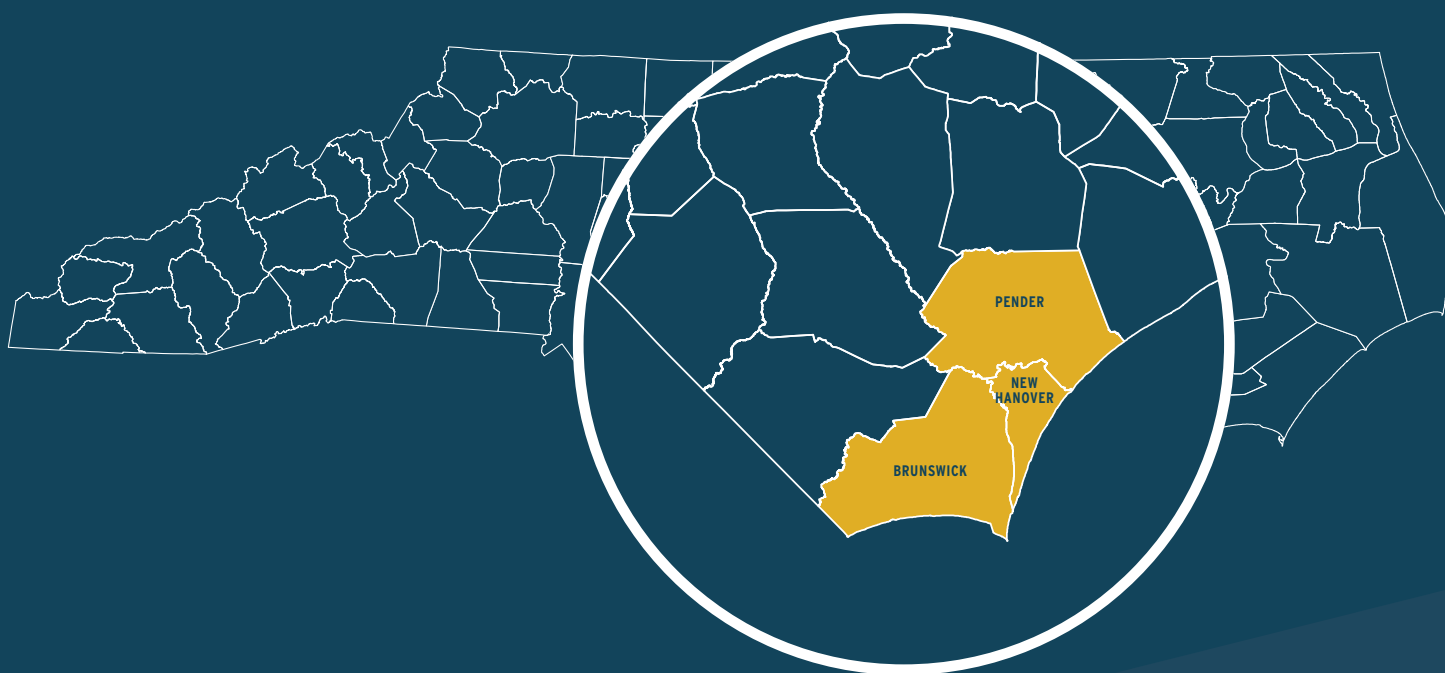# North Carolina Community College System

2025 Wilmington Region Labor Market Analysis Report

APRIL 2025

Wilmington Region Counties
Brunswick • New Hanover • Pender

NC Community Colleges serving the Wilmington Region
Brunswick CC • Cape Fear CC

NC DEPARTMENT of COMMERCE
LABOR & ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP of NORTH CAROLINA

NC COMMUNITY COLLEGES
CREATING SUCCESS

Introduction

This report is designed to help stakeholders understand the current and future labor market within their region. It is also a tool for North Carolina community colleges as they consider programmatic changes that align with the labor market and identify potential opportunities for programmatic collaboration with other colleges in the region. This report specifically provides regional insights into:

- Recent trends associated with overall employment at the region and county levels

- Current regional diversity of industry sectors and occupational groups

- Projected regional changes across industry sectors and occupational groups

- Regional projections for annual openings in occupations requiring or preferring a community college education and their associated earnings

- Annual count of regional community college completers by program and their associated earnings

- Comparison of occupational openings and community college completers by PropelNC Workforce Sector

- Recent economic development activity

Region

North Carolina's 100 counties are organized into eight multi-county economic regions called Prosperity Zones, which are further divided into sixteen Sub Prosperity Zones. The Wilmington Region is one of three subzones of the Southeast region, encompassing the following counties: Brunswick, New Hanover, and Pender.

Highlights

Employment (Pages 4-5)

- The region grew employment by 15.1% between 2018 and 2023, resulting in 182,793 workers in 2023.

- All three counties in the region saw growth in employment across the 6-year period.

- The regional unemployment rate was 3.4% in 2023, below the statewide rate (3.5%).

- All counties showed a net decrease in unemployment rates across the 6-year period. In 2023, unemployment rates ranged from 3.1%-4.2%.

Existing Industry Sectors and Occupational Groups (Pages 6-7)

- In 2022, the four largest industry sectors in the region were Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, Retail Trade, and Construction.

- In 2022, the four largest occupational groups in the region were Food Preparation and Serving Related, Sales and Related, Office and Administrative Support, and Transportation and Material Moving.

Labor Supply and Demand (Page 8)

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an oversupply of job seekers relative to job openings. In every year since (through 2023), job openings have outpaced labor.

- In 2023, Architecture and Engineering Occupations and Healthcare Support Occupations had significantly more jobs than job seekers (ratio: 0.2), whereas Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations had about twice as many job seekers as available jobs (ratio: 2.3).

Employment Projections (Pages 9-10)

- The region is projected to add 22,224 jobs between 2022 and 2032. The Health Care and Social Assistance sector will experience the largest growth (+4,949 jobs) and the largest percent growth (18.7%).

- Across the 10-year period, the Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations group will experience the largest growth (+3,126 jobs), and the Healthcare Support Occupations group will have the largest percent growth (22.2%).

Focused Occupational Projections (Pages 11-12)

- Between 2022 and 2032, it is projected that Home Health and Personal Care and First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving will be the two occupations with the highest number of annual openings in the region.

- Within the region, median annual earnings among the top twenty-five occupations range from $28,734 (Childcare Workers) to $80,169 (Registered Nurses).

Community College Completers and Earnings (Page 13)

- In the 2023-2024 academic year, the Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Nursing and Patient Care Assistant/Aides pathways produced the most completers (247 and 246, respectively).

- The Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse completers had the highest average median salary ($75,506).

PropelNC Workforce Sector Occupation Projections and Community College Completers (Page 14)

- Using projections for 2032, the PropelNC-aligned workforce sectors with the largest number of openings in the Wilmington region were Trades and Transportation (29.9%) and Business and Management (21.7%).

- In comparison, based on completions in the 2023-2024 academic year, the PropelNC-aligned workforce sectors with the largest number of completers included Trades and Transportation (21.0%) and Public Safety and First Responders (19.3%).

Economic Development Projects (Page 15-16)

- Between 2019 and 2024, 20 economic development projects were reported across the region, adding a total of 2,508 jobs and $925.5 million in capital investment.

- Across the six-year period, the Automotive sector saw the largest growth in jobs (533 new positions) and the greatest investment ($657 million).

- The announced projects included 4 foreign direct investments from 3 different countries, namely, Canada, India, and Italy.
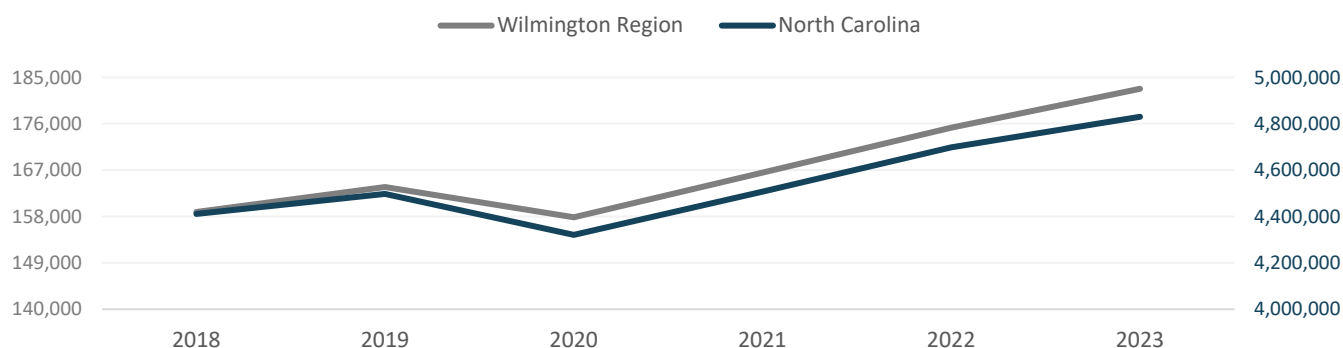
Appendix (Page 17-22)

- Technical Documentation

- Detailed Data Tables

- Acknowledgements

Employment

Employment Trends

Data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages shows that the Wilmington region experienced a 15.1% increase in employment between 2018 and 2023, resulting in 182,793 workers in 2023. After reducing the workforce by around 6,000 individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic, the region quickly recovered and experienced a net gain of around 24,000 workers since 2018. Compared to state trends, Wilmington lost a lower percentage of its workforce during the pandemic (-3.9% statewide compared to -3.6% regionally) and recovered at a faster rate (2.8% growth statewide in 2022-2023 compared to 4.3% regionally). Figure 1 compares statewide and regional employment from 2018 to 2023.

Figure 1. Statewide and regional employment statistics from 2018-2023.

Employment by County

Across 2018-2023, all three counties in the Wilmington region showed large net increases in employment. Pender County, with the smallest workforce of 14,179 workers in 2023, grew employment by 18.2% across the six-year period. Similarly, Brunswick, with about twice as many workers (39,548 in 2023), grew its workforce by 22.1%. The county with the largest workforce, New Hanover, grew employment from 114,464 in 2018 to 129,066 workers in 2023 (a 12.8% increase). Though all counties lost workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the growth in 2021-2023 outpaced statewide trends and most other regions, resulting in large employment gains across the region. Table 1 provides a breakdown of statewide, regional, and county-level employment across the period.
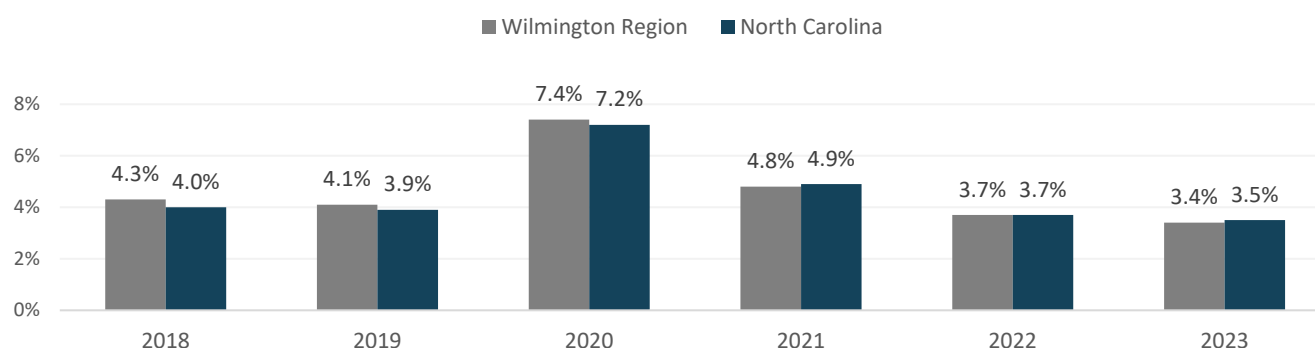
Table 1. Statewide, regional, and county-level employment statistics from 2018-2023.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Net Change
North Carolina	4,411,261	4,497,459	4,321,018	4,506,954	4,698,369	4,830,066	9.5%
Wilmington	158,853	163,706	157,845	166,513	175,223	182,793	15.1%
Brunswick	32,393	33,082	32,691	35,107	37,032	39,548	22.1%
New Hanover	114,464	117,840	112,725	117,844	124,271	129,066	12.8%
Pender	11,996	12,784	12,429	13,562	13,920	14,179	18.2%

Unemployment Rate Trends

Unemployment data, obtained from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, suggests that the rate of unemployment in the Wilmington region hovered around 4.2% in 2018 and 2019, just above statewide averages. Unsurprisingly, unemployment rates hit a record high across the 6-year period in 2020, reaching 7.4%. Since then, unemployment rates have declined rapidly, dipping below pre-pandemic levels by 2022 (3.7%) and resulting in a net change in unemployment rate of -0.9% between 2018 and 2023. Compared to statewide trends, the Wilmington region saw slightly higher unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as of 2023 has very similar unemployment rates (3.4% regionally and 3.5% statewide). Figure 2 compares statewide and regional unemployment rates from 2018 to 2023.

Figure 2. Statewide and regional unemployment statistics from 2018-2023.

Unemployment Rate by County

In 2023, unemployment rates in the Wilmington region ranged from 3.1% (New Hanover) to 4.2% (Brunswick). Based on six years of data from 2018-2023, New Hanover tends to have the lowest unemployment rates in the region whereas Brunswick consistently has the highest. All counties saw peak unemployment during 2020 but show net decreases of 0.8% to 1.1% across the period, indicating that the region has fully recovered from unemployment caused by the pandemic. Table 2 displays statewide, regional, and county-level unemployment rates from 2018-2023.

Table 2. Statewide, regional, and county-level unemployment statistics from 2018-2023.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
North Carolina	4.0%	3.9%	7.2%	4.9%	3.7%	3.5%
Wilmington	4.3%	4.1%	7.4%	4.8%	3.7%	3.4%
Brunswick	5.3%	5.2%	8.7%	6.1%	4.7%	4.2%
New Hanover	3.9%	3.6%	7.1%	4.3%	3.3%	3.1%
Pender	4.2%	4.0%	6.4%	4.3%	3.5%	3.2%

Existing Industry Sectors and Occupational Groups

Industry Sectors

In 2022, three industries –Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade – each accounted for over 12% of jobs in the Wilmington region (a combined 74,147 out of 188,506 jobs in the area). An additional six industry sectors each boasted between 5-7% of the total job count, including Government (10,041 jobs), Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (10,295 jobs), Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers (11,288 jobs), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (11,877 jobs), Educational Services (12,823 jobs), and Construction (13,062 jobs). Collectively, these nine industries account for over 76% of positions in the Wilmington region in 2022. In contrast, three sectors – Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction; Management of Companies and Enterprises; and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting – had less than 900 jobs and accounted for less than 0.5% of the total job market. Other sectors – for example, Information, Wholesale Trade, and Manufacturing – accounted for between 0.7% (roughly 800 jobs) and 4.1% (around 7,700 jobs) of the market. Figure 3 shows the statewide and regional distribution of the workforce in each industry sector.
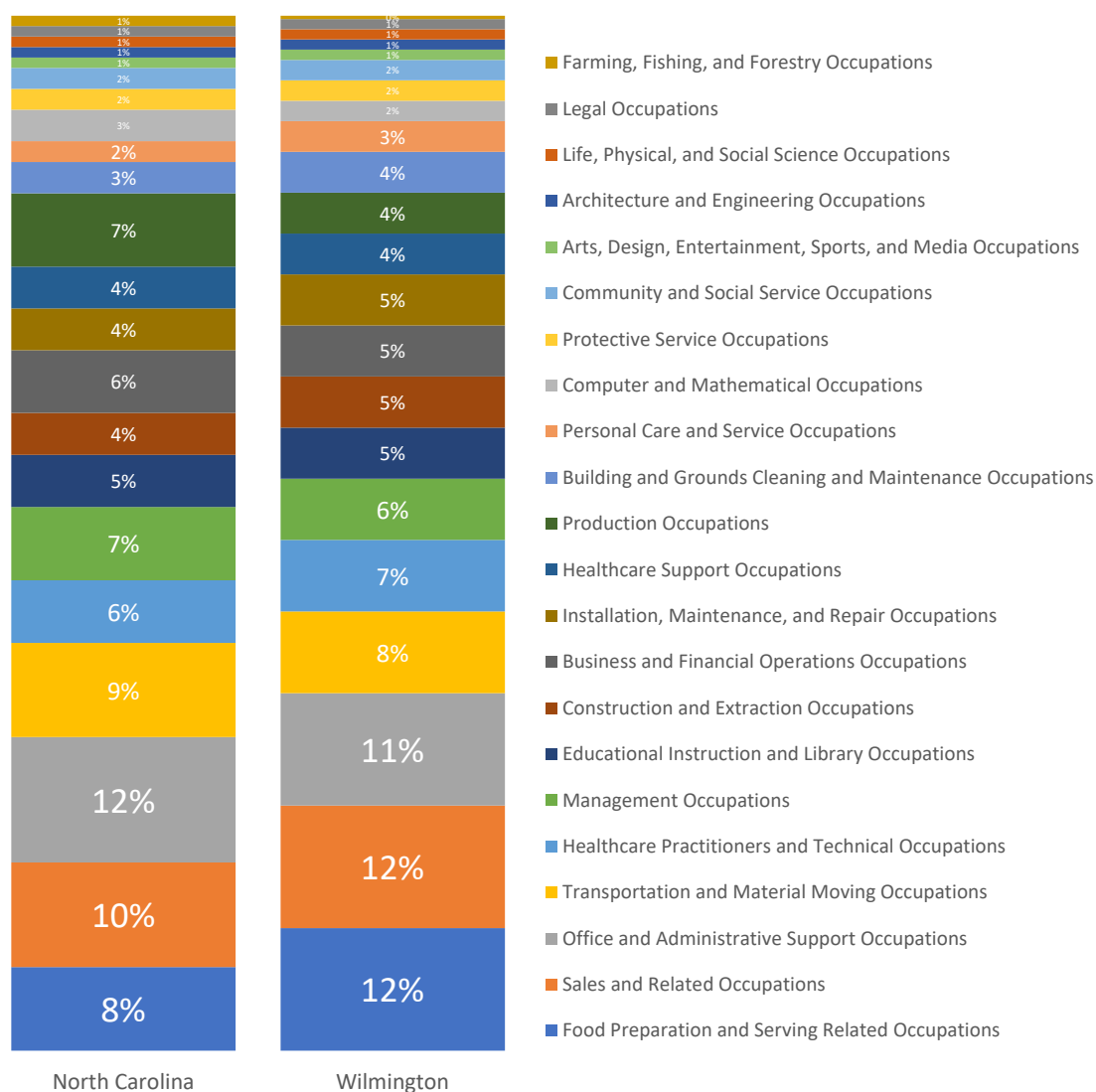
Figure 3. Statewide and regional distribution of industry sectors in 2022.

Occupational Groups

The occupational landscape consists of twenty-two occupational groups, the smallest of which (Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations) was estimated to contain 621 positions, and the largest of which (Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations) was estimated to have 23,137 positions in 2022 in the Wilmington region, representing between 0.3% and 12.3% of the total workforce in this area. Other smaller occupational groups include Legal Occupations (1,154 jobs), Architecture and Engineering Occupations (2,087 jobs), and Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations (1,975 jobs). In total, eight occupational groups have less than 5,000 jobs, each representing 2.0% or less of the total workforce. In contrast, in addition to Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations, two occupational groups had more than 20,000 positions in Wilmington in 2022 – Office and Administrative Support Occupations (20,696 jobs) and Sales and Related Occupations (21,901 jobs). Each of these groups comprised 11.0% or more of the total workforce. Figure 4 shows the statewide and regional distribution of the workforce in each occupational group.

Figure 4. Statewide and regional distribution of occupational groups in 2022.
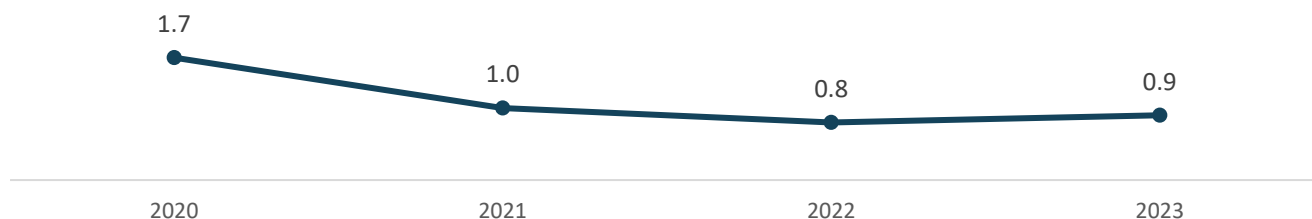
Labor Supply and Demand

Occupational Trends – State Level

Data from the NC Department of Commerce compares the amount of labor supply (the number of persons looking for a job) to labor demand (the number of job openings) at a statewide level. In 2020, this ratio was positive, indicating an oversupply of job seekers relative to job openings. In 2021, the ratio was 1.0, indicating equal supply and demand, whereas in the years since, job openings have outpaced labor. Figure 5 shows statewide average rates of jobseekers to job openings from 2020 to 2023.

Figure 5. Statewide average rate of jobseekers per job opening from 2020-2023.

The trend of decreasing ratios generally holds true across all occupational groups (Table 3). As of 2023, Architecture and Engineering Occupations and Healthcare Support Occupations have the lowest ratios (0.2), indicating that there are approximately five jobs for every job seeker in these fields. In contrast, Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations (2.3), Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations (1.9), and Construction and Extraction Occupations (1.9) have the highest ratios, indicating that there are about twice as many jobseekers as there are available jobs.

Table 3. Statewide average rate of jobseekers per job opening by occupational group from 2020-2023.
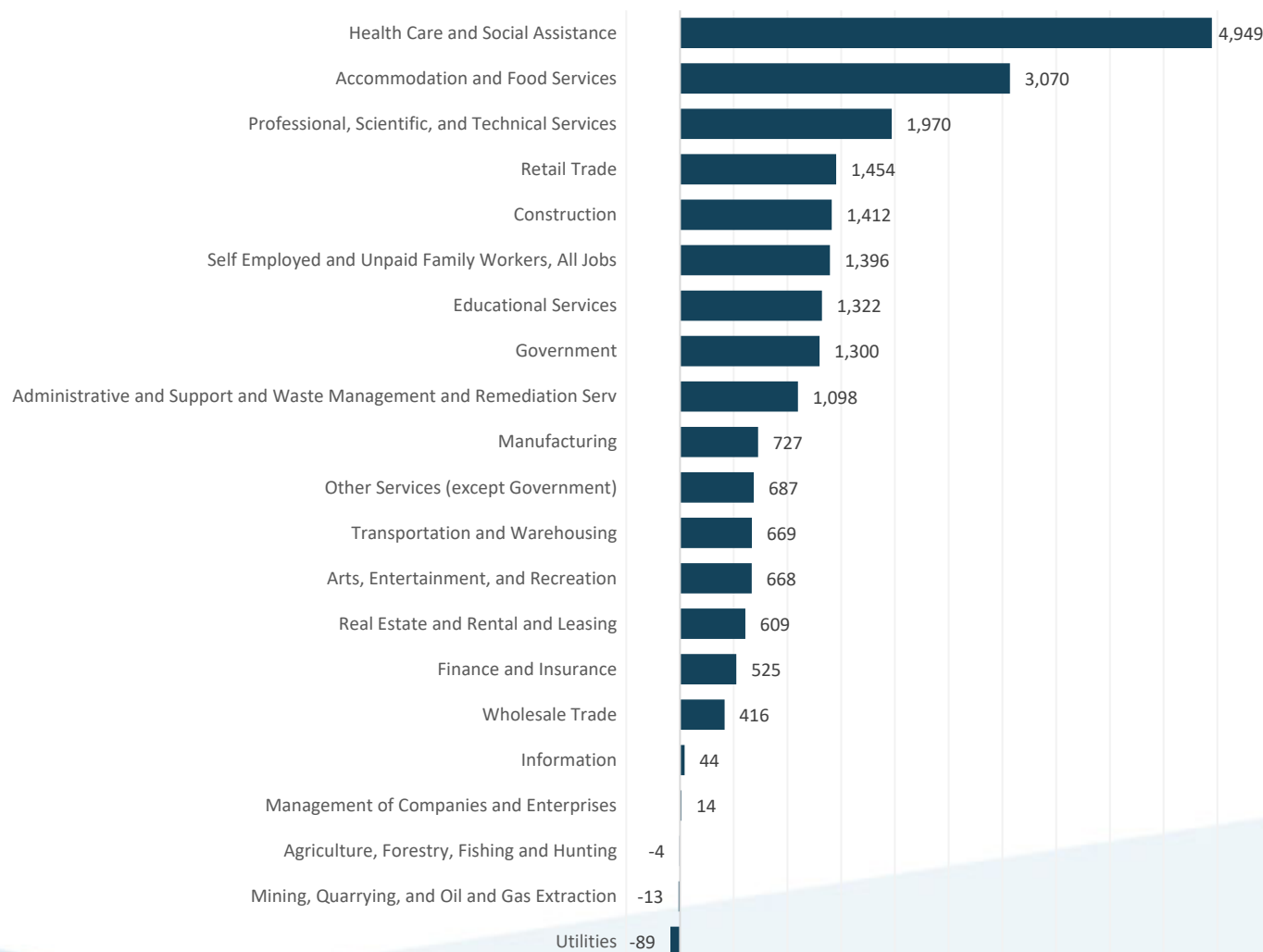
Occupational Group	2020	2021	2022	2023
Architecture and Engineering	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.2
Healthcare Support	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.2
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	0.9	0.3	0.4	0.3
Business and Financial Operations	1.2	0.9	0.5	0.5
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.5
Community and Social Service	1.9	1.9	0.8	0.7
Food Preparation and Serving Related	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.7
Transportation and Material Moving	2.2	0.8	0.8	0.9
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.0
Legal	1.2	0.3	0.8	1.0
Office and Administrative Support	1.2	1.0	0.8	1.0
Protective Service	1.3	0.8	0.5	1.0
Educational Instruction and Library	2.8	2.6	1.6	1.1
Production	2.3	1.1	0.8	1.1
Computer and Mathematical	1.7	1.2	1.3	1.2
Management	2.7	1.3	0.9	1.2
Personal Care and Service	3.6	1.8	1.2	1.2
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	3.1	3.2	2.0	1.9
Construction and Extraction	3.5	2.5	2.2	1.9
Sales and Related	2.5	1.3	1.5	1.9
Life, Physical, and Social Science	2.1	2.6	1.2	2.3
Total (average across all occupational groups)	**1.7**	**1.0**	**0.8**	**0.9**

Employment Projections

Industry Projections

Based on the latest projections, the Wilmington region is expected to add 22,224 jobs between 2022 and 2032. By percentage and raw numbers, Health Care and Social Assistance is projected to be the fastest-growing industry in the region, adding over 4,900 positions across the ten-year period (an 18.7% increase). Similar in magnitude, the Accommodation and Food Services sector is projected to add 3,070 positions (a 12.8% increase), growing to over 27,000 positions in the Wilmington region by 2032. Several other large sectors are also projected to grow by 10.0% or more, including Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+1,970 jobs), Construction (+1,412 jobs), and Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers (+1,396 jobs). Similarly, while they represent a small number of total added jobs, the Transportation and Warehousing (+669 jobs), Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (+668 jobs), Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (+609 jobs), and Finance and Insurance (+525 jobs) sectors are expected to grow by 11.0% or more. In contrast, while most industry sectors are expected to grow in the Wilmington region between 2022 and 2032, three are expected to lose jobs. Namely, Utilities; Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction; and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting are expected to decrease positions by 0.5% to 28.9%. Figure 6 shows the projected net growth across the ten-year period for each industry sector.
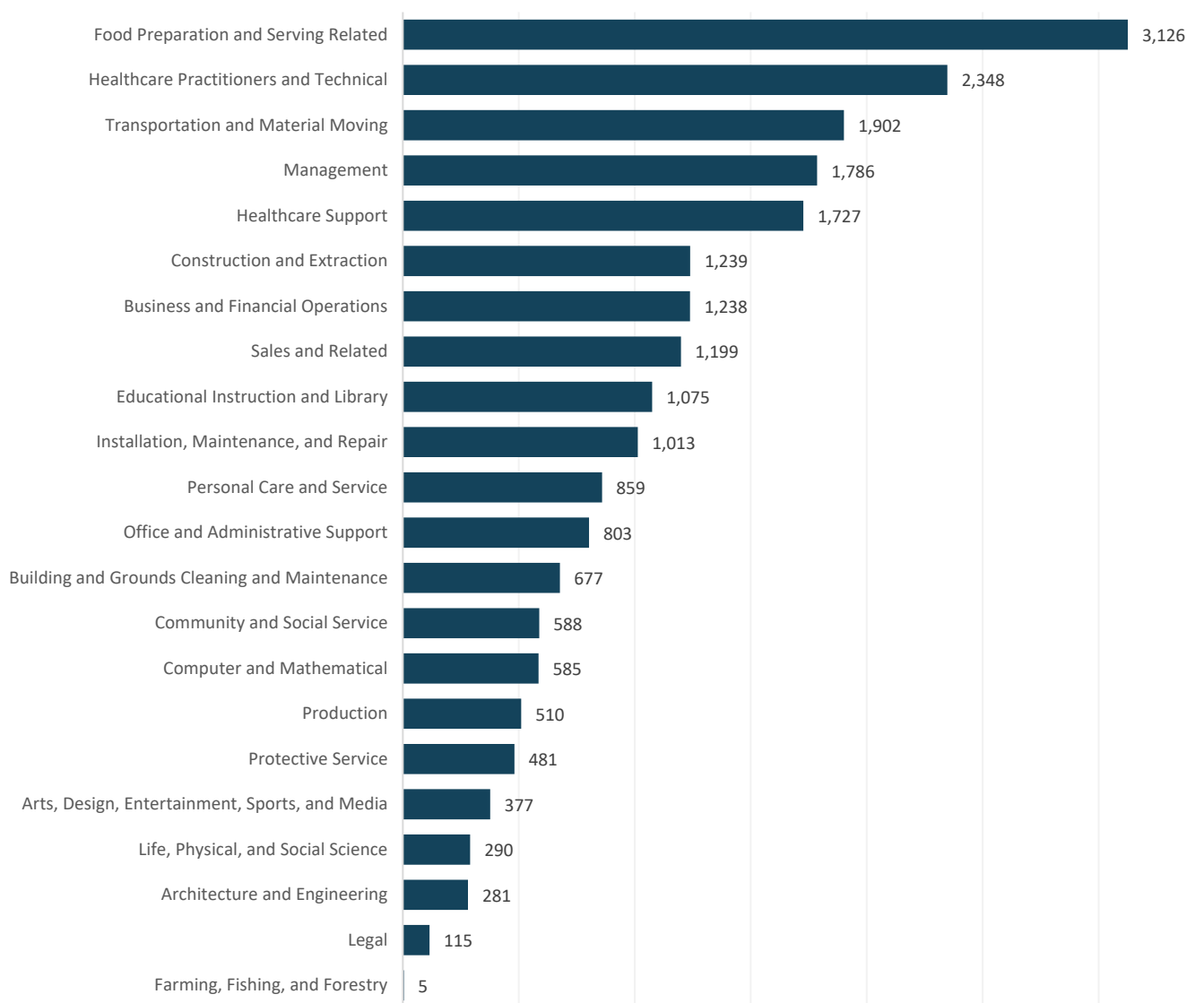
Figure 6. Regional projections for net growth of industry sectors from 2022 to 2032.

Industry	Net Growth
Health Care and Social Assistance	4,949
Accommodation and Food Services	3,070
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,970
Retail Trade	1,454
Construction	1,412
Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs	1,396
Educational Services	1,322
Government	1,300
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Serv	1,098
Manufacturing	727
Other Services (except Government)	687
Transportation and Warehousing	669
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	668
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	609
Finance and Insurance	525
Wholesale Trade	416
Information	44
Management of Companies and Enterprises	14
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-4
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	-13
Utilities	-89

Occupational Group Projections

Occupational employment is divided among twenty-two occupational groups, twelve of which are expected to change by less than 1,000 positions in the Wilmington region between 2022 and 2032. Given the small share of the occupational groups, this still represents a 15.0% or greater net increase for Computer and Mathematical Occupations (+585 jobs), Community and Social Service Occupations (+588 jobs), and Personal Care and Service Occupations (+859 jobs). The smallest occupational group, Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations is only projected to gain 5 positions. Meanwhile, three groups are expected to gain upwards of 1,900 positions (namely, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations, Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations, and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations). These three occupational groups represent one-third of the net growth in expected jobs (7,376 out of 22,224 positions). Figure 7 shows the projected net growth across the ten-year period for each occupational group.

Figure 7. Regional projections for net growth of occupational groups from 2022 to 2032.

Occupational Group	Net Growth
Food Preparation and Serving Related	3,126
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	2,348
Transportation and Material Moving	1,902
Management	1,786
Healthcare Support	1,727
Construction and Extraction	1,239
Business and Financial Operations	1,238
Sales and Related	1,199
Educational Instruction and Library	1,075
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	1,013
Personal Care and Service	859
Office and Administrative Support	803
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	677
Community and Social Service	588
Computer and Mathematical	585
Production	510
Protective Service	481
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	377
Life, Physical, and Social Science	290
Architecture and Engineering	281
Legal	115
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	5

Focused Occupational Projections

Occupational Projections

Specific occupational projections are considered to provide a more granular look at which jobs are expected to have the most openings between 2022 and 2032 based on an annual average of the NC Department of Commerce employment projections. Based on an internal analysis of program alignment, occupations either minimally requiring or preferring a community college credential were included in the analysis.

In the Wilmington region, the twenty-five occupations with the highest average annual openings range from Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers (87) to Home Health and Personal Care Aides (553). In total, these occupations account for a projected 4,600 annual openings. Other occupations with a high number of annual openings include First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers (353), Nursing Assistants (333), Registered Nurses (274), Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive (248), and Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks (235). Meanwhile, occupations toward the lower end of the top twenty-five include Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants; Carpenters; Business Operation Specialists; Police and Sherriff's Patrol Officers; and First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers.

Current Earnings

In Wilmington, median annual earnings among the top twenty-five occupations range from $28,734 (Childcare Workers) to $80,169 (Registered Nurses). Nine of the top twenty-five have annual median earnings under $40,000, while eight have annual median earnings between $40,000 and $50,000. Other occupations with lower annual median earnings include Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary; Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators. Meanwhile, occupations with the highest annual earnings include First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers ($71,632); Business Operations Specialists ($68,352); and Accountants and Auditors ($77,173).

Table 4 includes occupation titles, median earnings, and average annual openings for 25 Standard Occupation Code (SOC) titles with the largest number of annual openings. Two additional tables are available in the Appendices – one that details the 50 SOC occupation titles with the largest number of annual openings that require or prefer either a minimum of a high school credential or a community college credential (Table 8), and one that details the 50 SOC occupation titles with the largest number of annual openings that require a minimum of a Bachelor's degree (Table 9).

Table 4. Regional summary of the top 25 SOC occupation titles with the highest number of average annual openings.

Occupation Title	Median Earnings	Annual Openings
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	$30,445	553
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	$40,378	353
Nursing Assistants	$37,591	333
Registered Nurses	$80,169	274
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	$42,122	248
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	$47,237	235
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	$50,529	227
Light Truck Drivers	$38,698	204
Medical Assistants	$40,023	185
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	$41,929	172
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	$29,806	168
Childcare Workers	$28,734	163
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	$65,469	145
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	$38,327	143
Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	$47,775	129
Real Estate Sales Agents	$61,595	127
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	$37,258	121
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	$48,266	120
Accountants and Auditors	$77,173	118
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	$39,212	117
Carpenters	$48,575	100
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	$68,352	99
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	$53,288	90
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	$71,632	89
Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	$38,513	87

Community College Completers and Earnings

This section summarizes the top 25 Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes with the highest number of completers in the region. "Completers" is defined as the unduplicated student count of Curriculum students successfully completing (i.e., graduating with) an AAS, Diploma, Certificate, or workforce continuing education students with 144+ hours of coursework aligned with workplace entry. It should be noted that the completion count is based on student county of residence, regardless of which college they are enrolled in. One important exclusion that results from this methodology is that those in the military with county residencies outside the state are not included in the completion counts.

Estimated median earnings are based on the earnings in the third year after exit of community college graduates who earned either an AAS, Diploma, or Certificate. For this report, exiters from 2016-17 through 2019-20 are included. Those with any post-secondary enrollment after exit are not included. Earnings are based on the highest quarterly wage record within a year projected out to an annual estimate.

In the Wilmington region, the top 25 CIPs ranged from 12 completers to 247 completers. Five pathways produced more than 100 completers; these include Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor; Cosmetology/ Cosmetologist; Emergency Medical Technology/Technician; Nursing and Patient Care Assistant and Aides; and Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse. Table 5 (below) includes instructional program description, estimated median earnings, and completers for the 25 CIPs with the largest number of completers.

Table 5. Regional summary of the top 25 Classification of Instructional Programs (CIPs) with the highest number of completers (2023-24).
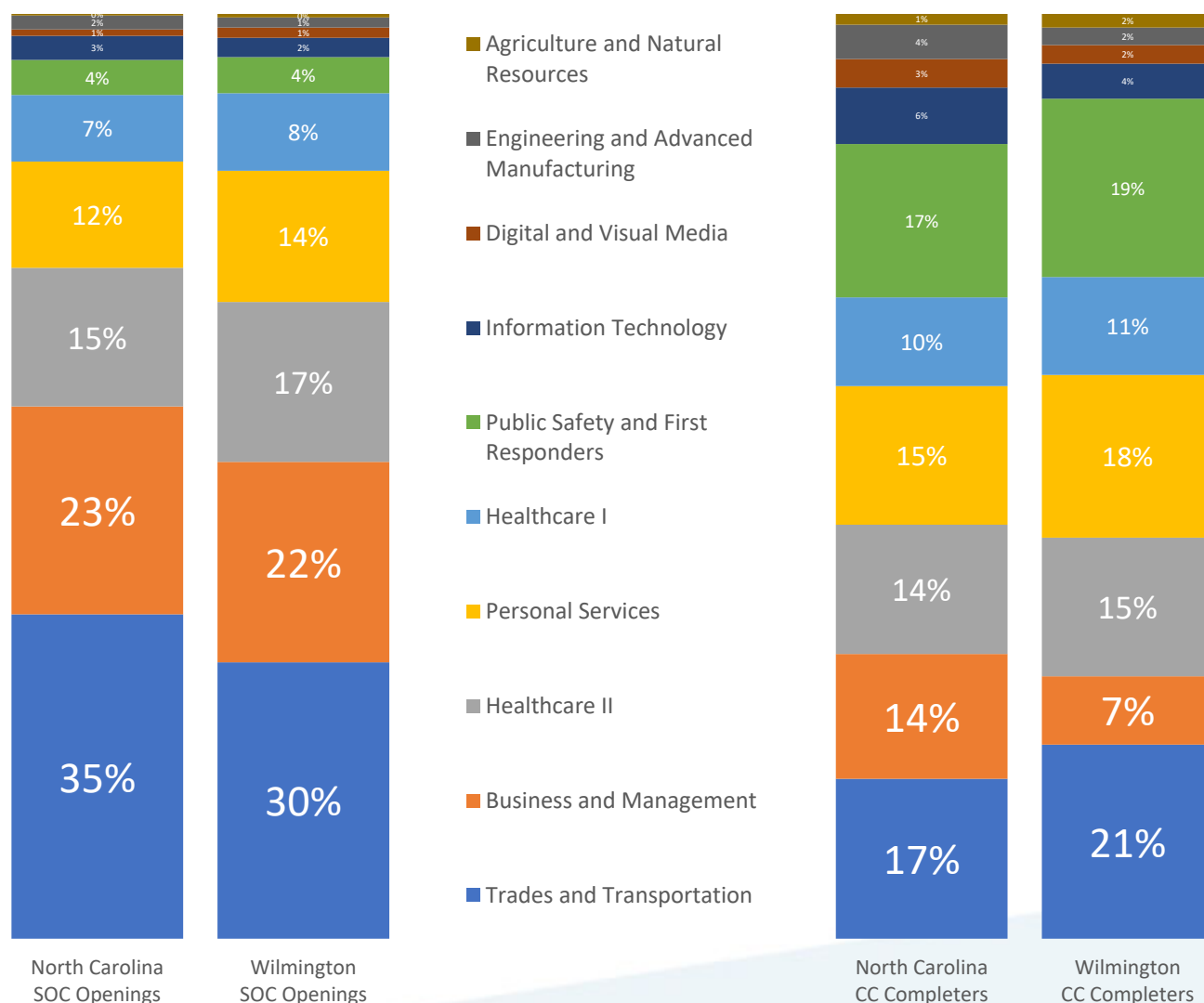
Instructional Program Description	Estimated Median Earnings	Completers
Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor	$55,680	247
Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aide	$34,690	246
Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)	$63,694	224
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General	$32,648	190
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	$75,506	117
Criminal Justice/Police Science	$57,492	103
Business Administration and Management, General	$43,312	70
Information Technology	$48,912	65
Welding Technology/Welder	$54,644	59
Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist	$28,474	47
Barbering/Barber	$35,000	40
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	$56,836	30
Medical Office Management/Administration	$38,788	27
Early Childhood Education and Teaching	$35,548	26
Accounting and Finance	*	26
Fire Prevention and Safety Technology/Technician	*	23
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies	$52,824	22
Sports, Kinesiology, and Physical Education/Fitness, Other	*	20
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Tech	$54,120	18
Building/Property Maintenance	$54,850	18
Legal Assistant/Paralegal	$46,800	15
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician	$49,126	14
Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology/Technician	$32,168	13
Commercial and Advertising Art	*	13
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	$38,856	12

*Represents a cell with insufficient data to calculate median.

PropelNC Workforce Sector Occupation Projections and Community College Completers

Occupations where a community college credential is either required or identified as employer preferred were categorized into PropelNC-related workforce sectors. Similarly, this categorization was applied to programs and coursework associated with community college completers. Please note that some PropelNC workforce sectors were either combined or split for reporting purposes. Like the state, the largest share of PropelNC occupations in the Wilmington region were in Trades and Transportation (29.9%). This was followed by Business and Management (21.7%), Healthcare II (17.3%), and Personal Services (14.2%). As for community college completers, the largest share of PropelNC completers in the Wilmington region was also Trades and Transportation (21.0%). This was followed by Public Safety and First Responder (19.3%), Personal Services (17.6%), and Healthcare II (15%). Figure 8 shows the statewide and regional distribution projected annual openings and 2023-24 community college completers by PropelNC workforce sector.

Figure 8. Statewide and regional distribution projected annual openings and 2023-24 community college completers by PropelNC workforce sector.

Economic Development Projects

Between 2019 and 2024, the Wilmington region reported 20 economic development projects, adding a total of 2,508 jobs and $925.5 million in capital investment. Across the six-year period, the Wilmington region saw the greatest job creation and the greatest investment in 2022 (1,137 jobs and $144.9 million, respectively). The region had no discernable trend in job creation year-over-year. In comparison, statewide job creation was highest in 2022, with nearly 30,000 jobs created from project announcements that year. This corresponds with over $20 billion in investments, which was the highest annual investment during the time period. The following figures show a comparison between annual statewide and regional job creation (Figure 9) and investment (Figure 10) from project announcements during the six-year period.

Figure 9. Statewide and regional job creation from project announcements by year from 2019 through 2024.
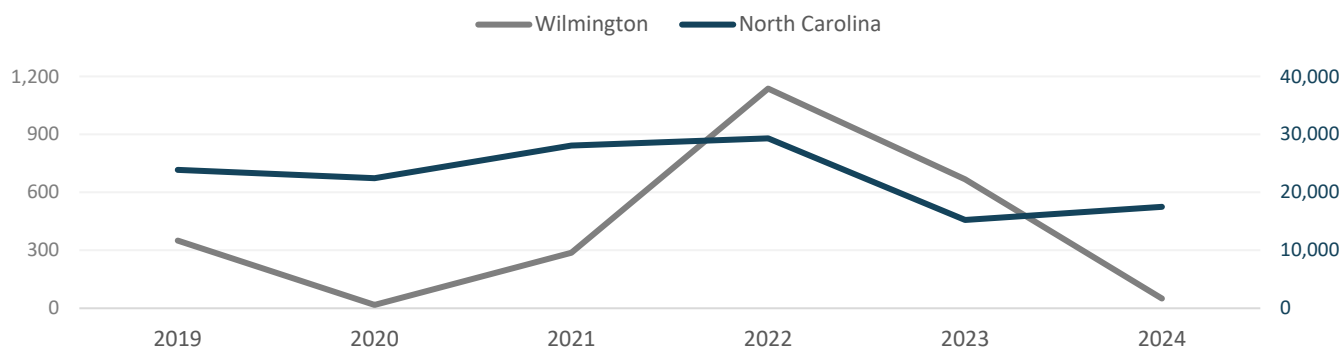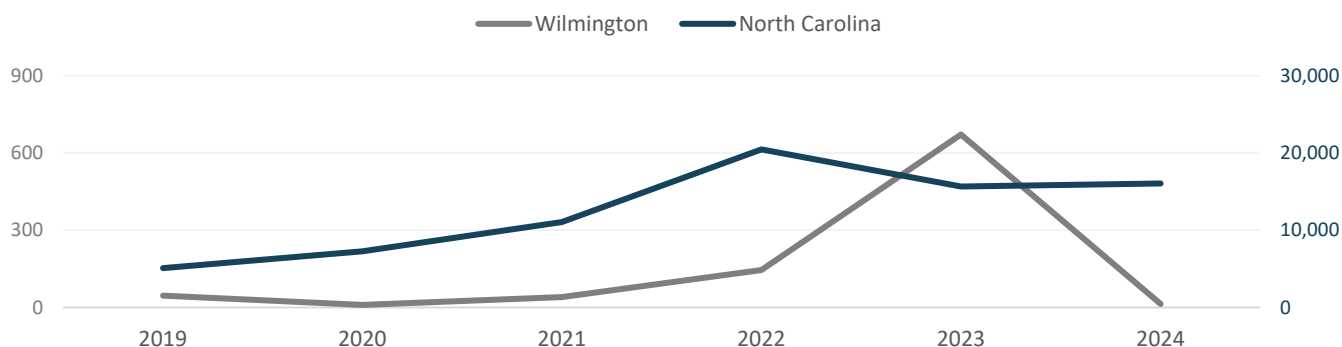

Figure 10. Statewide and regional investment from project announcements by year from 2019 through 2024 (in millions).

In the Wilmington region, the industry sectors with the highest number of jobs included Automotive (533 jobs), Energy (485 jobs), and Transportation and Logistics (375 jobs). Meanwhile, the industry sectors with the highest investment (in thousands) included Automotive ($657,630), Energy ($85,200), and Textiles ($37,600). Table 6 shows the number of projects, announced jobs, and investment by industry sector from 2019 through 2024.

Table 6. Regional Number of Projects, Announced Jobs, and Investment by Industry Sector from 2019-2024.

Industry Sector	Number of Projects	Announced Jobs	Investment (in thousands)
Aerospace/Aviation	2	27	1,900
Automotive	2	533	657,630
Business and Financial Services	2	244	25,462
Chemicals, Plastics and Rubber	1	51	7,900
Computers and Electronics	1	50	3,000
Energy	1	485	85,200
Food, Beverage and Agriculture	3	48	36,318
Information Technology	1	104	4,900
Other	3	292	31,125
Textiles	1	299	37,600
Transportation and Logistics	2	375	26,500

The announced projects included 4 total foreign direct investment projects from 3 different countries, including Canada (1 project), India (2 projects), and Italy (1 project). Foreign-based companies often seek partnerships with local community colleges to establish a talent pipeline, through apprenticeship programs or other custom training opportunities. Figure 11 shows the cumulative investment of all countries who announced projects in the region from 2019 through 2024.

Figure 11. Investment (in thousands) per Foreign Direct Investment Parent Country. Project Count in Parentheses.

Canada (1)	3,000
India (2)	657,800
Italy (1)	0

Appendix

Technical Documentation

Table 7. Summary of data sources.

Section	Sub-section(s)	Description	Source
Employment			
	Employment Trends; Employment by County	*The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program publishes a quarterly count of employment reported by employers covering more than 95 percent of U.S. jobs, available at the county, metropolitan statistical area, state, and national levels by industry.* **URL**: https://d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWSelection.aspx **Dates**: 2018-2023	**Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages:** N.C. Department of Commerce & U.S. Department of Labor
	Unemployment Rate Trends; Unemployment Rate by County	*The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program is a federal-state cooperative effort in which monthly estimates of total employment and unemployment are prepared.* **URL**: https://d4.nccommerce.com/LausSelection.aspx **Dates**: 2018-2023	**Local Area Unemployment Statistics:** N.C. Department of Commerce & U.S. Department of Labor
Existing Industry Sectors and Occupational Groups			
	Industry Sectors; Occupational Groups	*Two measures of employment produced by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) are used to determine base year employment: (1) the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey, an establishment survey that provides data on wage and salary employment and weekly hours for most nonagricultural industries and the logging industry, and (2) the Current Population Survey (CPS), a household survey that includes information regarding agricultural employment, self-employed workers and hours, and private household workers.* **URL**: https://tools.nccareers.org/employmentprojections/about.html **Dates**: 2022	**Employment Projections Program:** N.C. Department of Commerce & U.S. Department of Labor
Labor Supply and Demand			
	Labor Supply and Demand	*The amount of labor supply—the number of persons looking for a job, by occupation and place of residence—is estimated using labor force data from federal household surveys. Occupational trends are derived from labor force data on experienced workers from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Current Population Survey (CPS). The amount of labor demand—the number of job openings, by occupation and place of work—is estimated using online job postings data and federal surveys of employers. Data on job openings at the state level come from the BLS's Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS).* **URL**: https://analytics.nccommerce.com/NC-Labor-Supply-Demand/ **Dates**: 2020-2023	**NC Labor Supply and Demand:** N.C. Department of Commerce & U.S. Department of Labor
Employment Projections			
	Industry Projections; Occupational Group Projections	*Every two years, in conjunction with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the North Carolina Department of Commerce publishes long-term industry and occupational employment projections for statewide and sub-state areas. The employment projections are an estimate of the future demand for workers based on historical employment data and various economic factors.* **URL**: https://tools.nccareers.org/employmentprojections/about.html **Dates**: 2022, 2032 projections	**Employment Projections Program:** N.C. Department of Commerce & U.S. Department of Labor

Focused Occupational Projections and Current Earnings

Occupational Projections	Occupational projections were calculated using the methodology described above for "Occupational Group Projections." Based on an internal analysis of program alignment, occupations either minimally requiring or preferring a community college credential were included in the analysis. **URL**: https://tools.nccareers.org/employmentprojections/about.html **Dates**: 2022, 2032 projections	**Employment Projections Program:** N.C. Department of Commerce & U.S. Department of Labor
Current Earnings	*LEAD utilizes industry employment data derived from the Enhanced Quarterly Unemployment Insurance (EQUI) dataset. The data contains a quarterly count of employment and wages report that is sent from employers based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code. Employment data on uncovered industries within the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program is collected from other sources such as Current Employment Statistics (CES), Census Bureau, and Railroad Retirement Board.* **Dates**: 2022	**Enhanced Quarterly Unemployment Insurance (EQUI) dataset:** N.C. Department of Commerce & U.S. Department of Labor

Community College Completers and Earnings

Community College Completers	"Completers" is defined as the unduplicated student count of Curriculum students successfully completing (i.e., graduating with) an AAS, Diploma, Certificate, or workforce continuing education students with 144+ hours of coursework aligned with workplace entry. **Dates**: 2023-2024 academic year	North Carolina Community Colleges
Estimated Median Salary	Estimated median earnings are based on the earnings in the third year after exit of community college graduates who earned either an AAS, Diploma, or Certificate. For this report, exiters from 2016-17 through 2019-20 are included. Those with any postsecondary enrollment after exit are not included. Earnings are based on the highest quarterly wage record within a year projected out to an annual estimate. **Dates**: graduates from 2016-17 through 2019-20; wages from 2019-20 through 2022-23	North Carolina Community Colleges; National Student Clearinghouse (NSC); Common Follow-up System (CFS)

PropelNC Workforce Sector Occupation Projections and Community College Completers

PropelNC Workforce Sector Occupation Projections and Community College Completers	See methodology for occupational projections and community college completers above. Occupations were categorized into PropelNC-related workforce sectors. Similarly, this categorization was applied to curriculum programs and workforce continuing education coursework associated with community college completers. Please note that some PropelNC workforce sectors were either combined or split for reporting purposes.	North Carolina Community Colleges

Economic Development Projects

Economic Development Projects	The North Carolina Economic Development Activity Report is a comprehensive picture of job and investment growth, tracking job and capital investment of economic development projects, by county, across the state of North Carolina. **URL**: https://cir.edpnc.com/ **Dates**: 2019-2024	North Carolina Economic Development Activity Report (EDAR): The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC)

*Italics indicate that the text is copied directly from documentation provided by the data producers.

Detailed Data Tables

Table 8. Summary of the top 50 SOC occupation titles (including ties), where a community college education is either required or preferred, with the highest number of annual openings in the Wilmington region.

Occupation Title	Median Earnings	Annual Openings
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	$30,445	553
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	$40,378	353
Nursing Assistants	$37,591	333
Registered Nurses	$80,169	274
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	$42,122	248
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	$47,237	235
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	$50,529	227
Light Truck Drivers	$38,698	204
Medical Assistants	$40,023	185
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	$41,929	172
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	$29,806	168
Childcare Workers	$28,734	163
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	$65,469	145
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	$38,327	143
Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	$47,775	129
Real Estate Sales Agents	$61,595	127
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	$37,258	121
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	$48,266	120
Accountants and Auditors	$77,173	118
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	$39,212	117
Carpenters	$48,575	100
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	$68,352	99
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	$53,288	90
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	$71,632	89
Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	$38,513	87
Electricians	$53,456	84
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	$57,855	83
Human Resources Specialists	$63,089	78
Dental Assistants	$48,960	78
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	$31,860	77
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	$51,420	75
Management Analysts	$93,570	71
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	$52,041	70
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	$50,537	68
Pharmacy Technicians	$38,980	67
Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	$58,672	65
Project Management Specialists	$83,410	65
Food Service Managers	$65,667	62
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	$48,843	60
Computer User Support Specialists	$60,764	58
Firefighters	$34,651	55
Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	$80,773	55
Ophthalmic Medical Technicians	$37,966	52
First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers	$43,368	52
First-Line Supervisors of Landscaping, Lawn Service, and Groundskeeping Workers	$53,632	51
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	$69,445	50
Real Estate Brokers	$56,741	49
Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators	$82,735	49
Buyers and Purchasing Agents	$67,924	47
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	*	43
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	$46,780	43

*Represents a cell with insufficient data to calculate median.

Table 9. Summary of the top 50 SOC occupation titles (including ties), where a Bachelor's degree is required, with the highest number of annual openings in the Wilmington region.

Occupation Title	Median Earnings	Annual Openings
General and Operations Managers	$101,978	363
Construction Managers	$102,880	191
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	$66,710	101
Managers, All Other	$120,285	83
Software Developers	$130,175	82
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	$62,079	68
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	$54,214	66
Medical and Health Services Managers	$105,534	59
Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	$52,736	55
Loan Officers	$78,114	49
Financial Managers	$134,404	48
Chemists	$82,177	45
Religious Workers, All Other	*	43
Coaches and Scouts	$42,254	43
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	$52,159	40
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	$99,959	40
Cost Estimators	$63,608	39
Training and Development Specialists	$61,618	38
Sales Managers	$101,137	36
Computer and Information Systems Managers	$159,187	36
Clergy	$60,301	35
Graphic Designers	$50,177	35
Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	$34,058	34
Career/Technical Education Teachers, Postsecondary	$30,876	33
Civil Engineers	$93,219	28
Natural Sciences Managers	$166,253	27
Compliance Officers	$71,081	26
Personal Financial Advisors	$114,305	25
Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health	$64,008	25
Educational Instruction and Library Workers, All Other	$57,566	24
Writers and Authors	$67,015	22
Marketing Managers	$133,286	21
Industrial Engineers	$104,572	19
Public Relations Specialists	$60,626	19
Interior Designers	$40,019	18
Social and Community Service Managers	$76,790	17
Administrative Services Managers	$84,779	16
Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other	$49,493	16
Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School	$49,542	16
Industrial Production Managers	$131,808	14
Facilities Managers	$96,063	13
Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	$79,071	13
Mechanical Engineers	$96,460	13
Data Scientists	$116,528	12
Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors	$49,908	12
Human Resources Managers	$119,625	11
Financial Specialists, All Other	$53,659	11
Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	$86,871	11
Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists	$54,997	11
Architectural and Engineering Managers	$169,963	10
Electrical Engineers	$108,645	10
Soil and Plant Scientists	$34,564	10

*Represents a cell with insufficient data to calculate median.

Table 10. Summary of the top 50 Classification of Instructional Programs (CIPs, including ties) with the highest number of completers.

Instructional Program Description	Estimated Median Salary	Completers
Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor	$55,680	247
Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aide	$34,690	246
Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)	$63,694	224
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General	$32,648	190
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	$75,506	117
Criminal Justice/Police Science	$57,492	103
Business Administration and Management, General	$43,312	70
Information Technology	$48,912	65
Welding Technology/Welder	$54,644	59
Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist	$28,474	47
Barbering/Barber	$35,000	40
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	$56,836	30
Medical Office Management/Administration	$38,788	27
Early Childhood Education and Teaching	$35,548	26
Accounting and Finance	*	26
Fire Prevention and Safety Technology/Technician	*	23
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies	$52,824	22
Sports, Kinesiology, and Physical Education/Fitness, Other	*	20
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Tech	$54,120	18
Building/Property Maintenance	$54,850	18
Legal Assistant/Paralegal	$46,800	15
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician	$49,126	14
Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology/Technician	$32,168	13
Commercial and Advertising Art	*	13
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	$38,856	12
Interior Design	*	12
Occupational Therapist Assistant	$40,820	12
Veterinary/Animal Health Technology/Technician and Veterinary Assistant	$42,412	11
Electrician	$57,588	11
Cinematography and Film/Video Production	$33,912	11
Applied Horticulture/Horticulture Operations, General	*	11
Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer	$60,206	11
Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) Machinist Technology/CNC Machinist	*	10
Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling	*	10
Mechatronics, Robotics, and Automation Engineering Technology/Technician	*	10
Cyber/Computer Forensics and Counterterrorism	*	9
Dental Assisting/Assistant	$44,448	9
Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting and Related Protective Services	*	9
Architectural Engineering Technologies/Technicians	$56,644	8
Plumbing Technology/Plumber	*	8
Medium/Heavy Vehicle and Truck Technology/Technician	$51,596	8
Dental Hygiene/Hygienist	$61,498	8
Medical/Clinical Assistant	$37,648	8
Oceanography, Chemical and Physical	$45,174	7
Chemical Technology/Technician	*	7
Diagnostic Medical Sonography/Sonographer and Ultrasound Technician	$63,440	7
Turf and Turfgrass Management	$51,604	7
Baking and Pastry Arts/Baker/Pastry Chef	*	6
Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, and Treatment Professions, Other	$71,272	6
Landscaping and Groundskeeping	*	5
Surgical Technology/Technologist	$52,670	5
Hotel, Motel, and Restaurant Management	$36,412	5
Child Development	$35,338	5
Electrical, Electronic, and Communications Engineering Technology/Technician	$48,122	5

*Represents a cell with insufficient data to calculate median.

Acknowledgements