



MASSHIRE
METRO NORTH
WORKFORCE BOARD

METRO NORTH WDA

QUARTERLY JOB SEEKER REPORT

APRIL 2026

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INTRODUCTION

This quarterly report aims to provide insightful analysis of the current labor market trends in the Metro North region. Whether you are a business leader, job seeker, or community member, you'll find valuable information to help you understand and navigate the local employment landscape.

We cover key topics such as unemployment trends, top occupations, job posting data, and the most sought-after skills.

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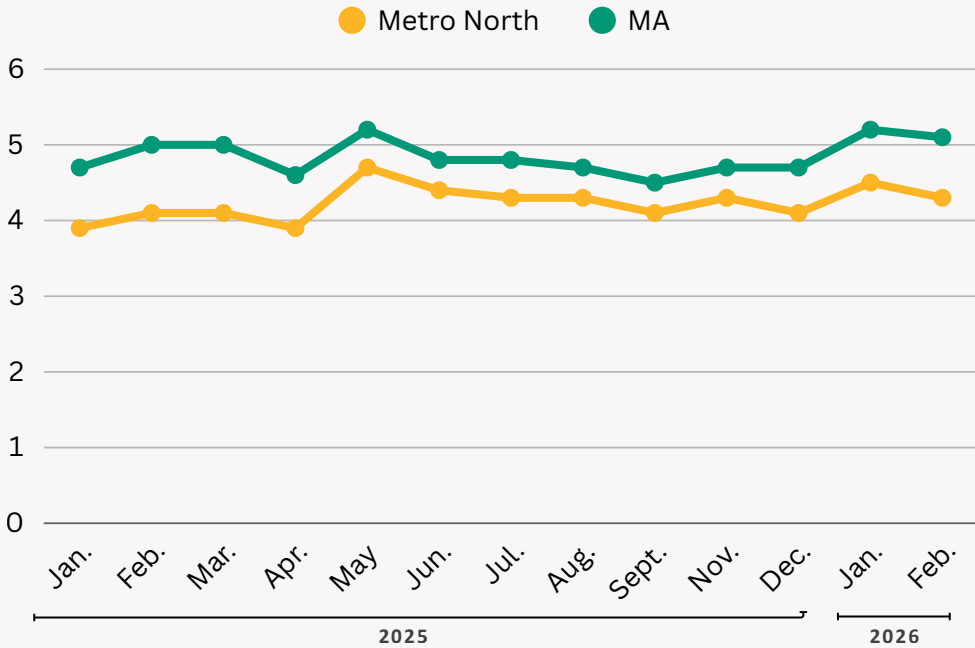


**METRO NORTH
WORKFORCE BOARD**

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

*Unemployment data is not available for March, 2026 at the time of this release.

General Trend: Unemployment rates increased at the start of the year in both Metro North WDA and MA, before showing slight improvement in February. Metro North rose from 4.1% in December to 4.5% in January, then declined slightly to 4.3% in February. Similarly, MA increased from 4.7% in December to 5.2% in January, followed by a small decrease to 5.1% in February. Despite this increase, **Metro North WDA maintained lower unemployment rates than the statewide average.**



SEASONAL TRENDS

Unemployment increased at the start of 2026 in both Metro North WDA and MA, consistent with typical seasonal patterns, before showing slight improvement in February.

CONCLUSION

The unemployment rate in Metro North WDA continues to remain below the statewide average.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

FEBRUARY 2026

ESTIMATED TOTAL
LABOR FORCE

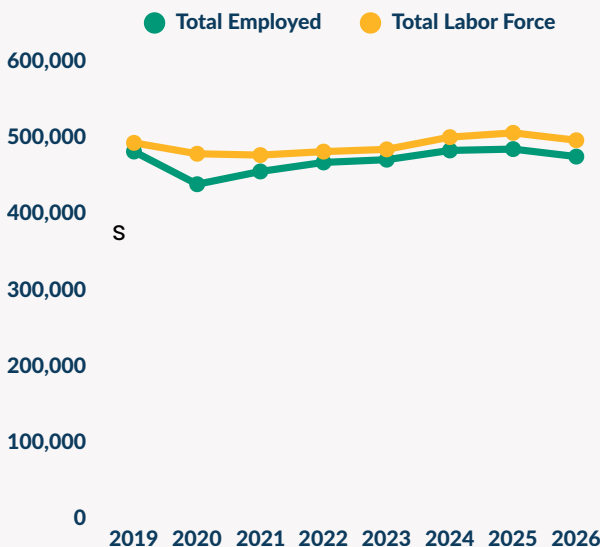
496,568

-7,803 YEAR OVER YEAR

ESTIMATED TOTAL
EMPLOYED

475,143

-8,496 YEAR OVER YEAR



There has been a consistent gap between the total labor force and those employed. The gap widened significantly in 2020, peaking at 39,930 due to economic disruption caused by the pandemic.

The gap has narrowed since then, falling to 21,425 by February 2026, indicating gradual improvement in employment levels. However, the labor market has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Ongoing factors such as **retirements, softer economic conditions, and reduced labor force participation among foreign-born workers** continue to shape a more uneven recovery.

JOB POSTING BREAKDOWN

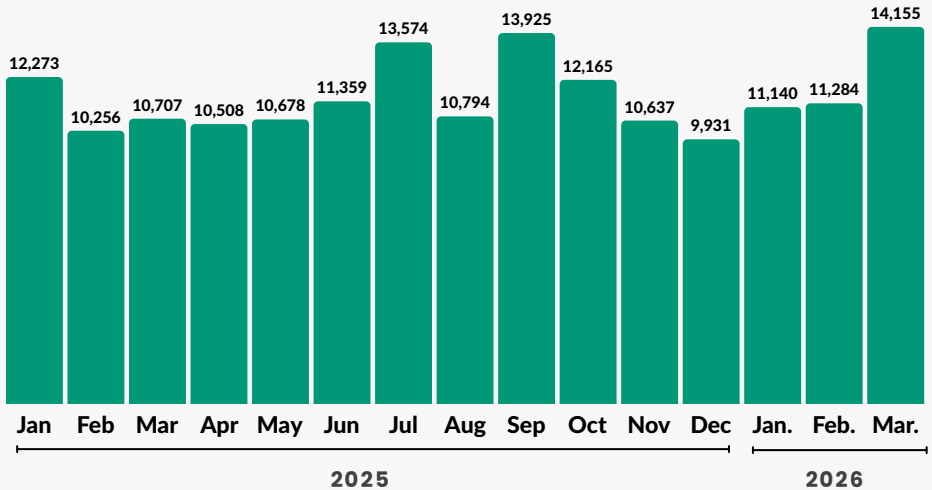
Lightcast provides local job posting data on employer demand based on occupation, industry, and various other details. According to the latest estimates, the total number of job postings in Metro North has increased compared to the previous quarter.

36,579

Unique Job Postings
This Quarter

+3,846

Change in Job Postings Over
Previous Quarter



Job posting trends indicate an increase in postings from January-March 2026, compared to October-December of 2025. When compared to the same time period in 2025, postings also rose by 2,792, with 33,787 unique postings during that period. Job postings from this quarter slightly exceed pre-pandemic levels (35,924 postings January-March 2019). While this suggests a recovery in employer demand, the increase remains modest, indicating that hiring activity is stabilizing rather than accelerating, as **employers continue to navigate economic uncertainty.**

TOP POSTED OCCUPATIONS & PROJECTED DEMAND

Occupation	Number of Postings (Jan-March 2026)	Projected Growth over the next 2 years
Registered Nurses	1,947	0%
Software Developers	870	+2%
Medical and Health Services Managers	685	+5%
Retail Salespersons	670	-2%
Project Management Specialists	574	+2%
General and Operations Managers	521	0%
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	516	-1%
Secretaries and Admin Assistants, Except Legal, Medical & Executive	480	0%
Marketing Managers	449	+1%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	446	0%

From January-March 2026, job postings remain concentrated in Healthcare & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Professional Scientific & Technical Services, & Administrative and Support & Waste Management.

Healthcare leads demand, driven by Registered Nurses (0% projected growth) and Medical & Health Services Managers (+5% projected growth over the next 2 years.)

In the **Professional, Scientific & Technical Services**, Software Developers also continue to see steady demand (2% projected growth.)

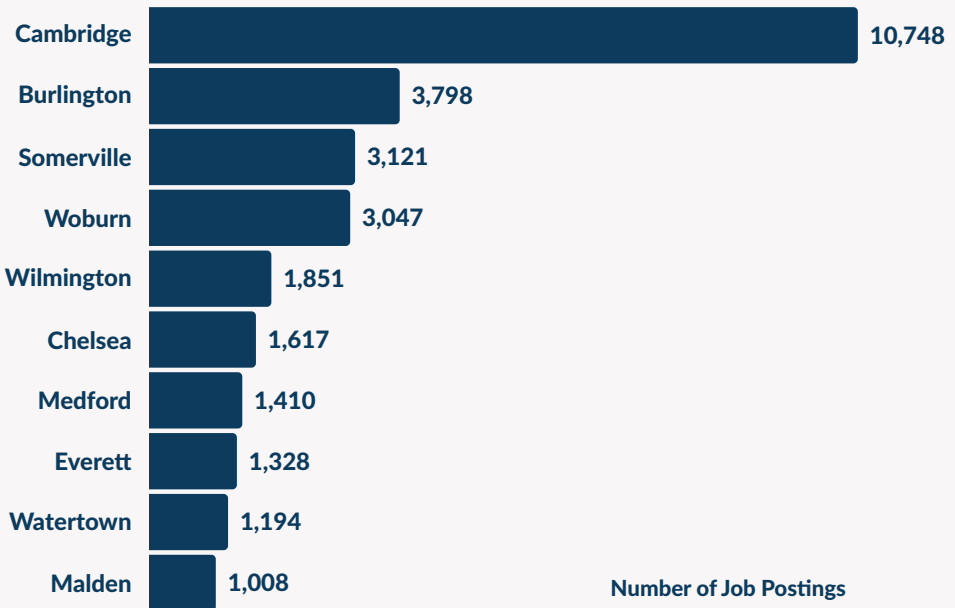
Retail Trade continues to be a top sector, however key occupations such as Retail Salespersons (-2%) and First Line Supervisors (-1%) are projected to slightly decline.

Administrative Support occupations remain stable with Secretaries and Admin Assistants seeing no change over the next 2 years.

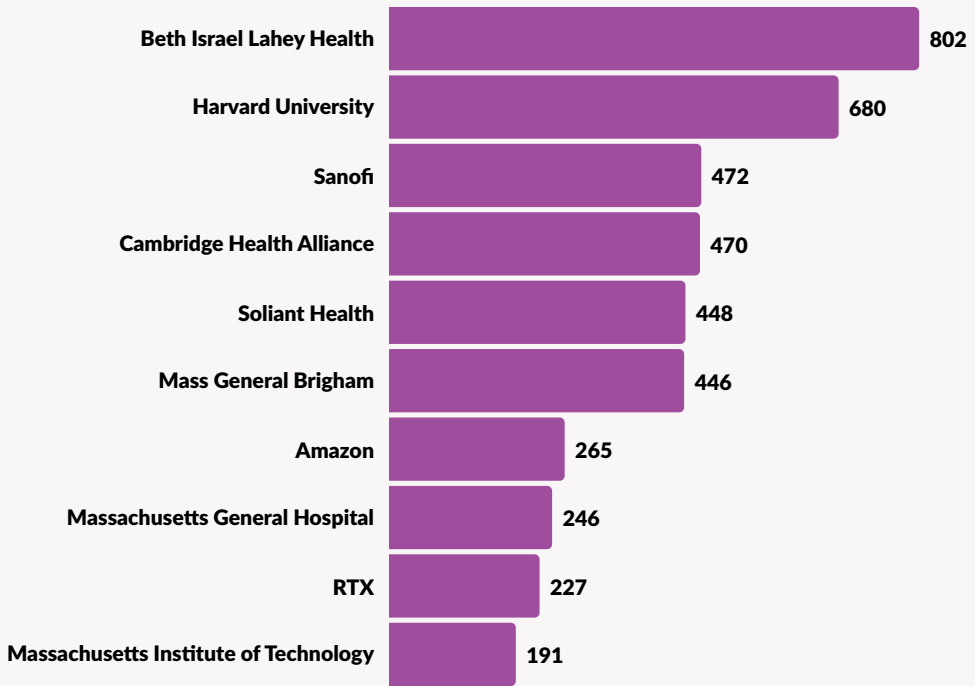
Transportation and Warehousing saw a notable increase in demand for Heavy Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers, rising from 373 unique postings in Oct-Dec 2025 to 446 postings in January-March 2026, reflecting demand in logistics and supply chain activity, though growth is projected to remain unchanged.

TOP CITIES

Job postings remain **highly concentrated in Cambridge**, which continues to serve as Metro North's WDA's primary employment hub, followed by Burlington, Somerville, and Woburn.



TOP EMPLOYERS



From January to March 2026, the top employers remained consistent compared to the previous quarter (Oct-Dec 2025). Slight shifts in the number of job postings suggest evolving hiring needs within major institutions. However, these changes appear to reflect normal fluctuations rather than a significant shift in the labor market.

SKILLS BREAKDOWN

TIME PERIOD: JANUARY–MARCH 2026



SPECIALIZED SKILLS: SKILLS THAT ARE PRIMARILY REQUIRED WITHIN A SUBSET OF OCCUPATIONS TO EQUIP ONE TO PERFORM A SPECIFIC TASK.

<i>Specialized Skill</i>	<i>Number of Postings</i>	<i>% Of Postings</i>	<i>Projected Skill Growth (2 years)</i>
Project Management	3,318	10%	20%
Workflow Management	3,261	9%	18%
Marketing	2,500	7%	23%
Finance	2,328	6%	27%
Lifting Ability	2,193	6%	11%
Continuous Improvement Process	2,156	6%	23%
Auditing	2,112	6%	22%

TOP COMMON SKILLS: SKILLS THAT ARE PREVALENT ACROSS MANY DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS, INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING BOTH ATTRIBUTED AND LEARNED SKILLS.

<i>Common Skill</i>	<i>Number of Postings</i>	<i>% Of Postings</i>	<i>Projected Skill Growth (2 years)</i>
Communication	16,526	35%	4%
Leadership	8,870	24%	9%
Operations	8,211	22%	8%
Management	7,928	22%	5%
Customer Service	7,407	20%	5%
Detail Oriented	6,089	17%	7%
Problem Solving	5,236	14%	11%

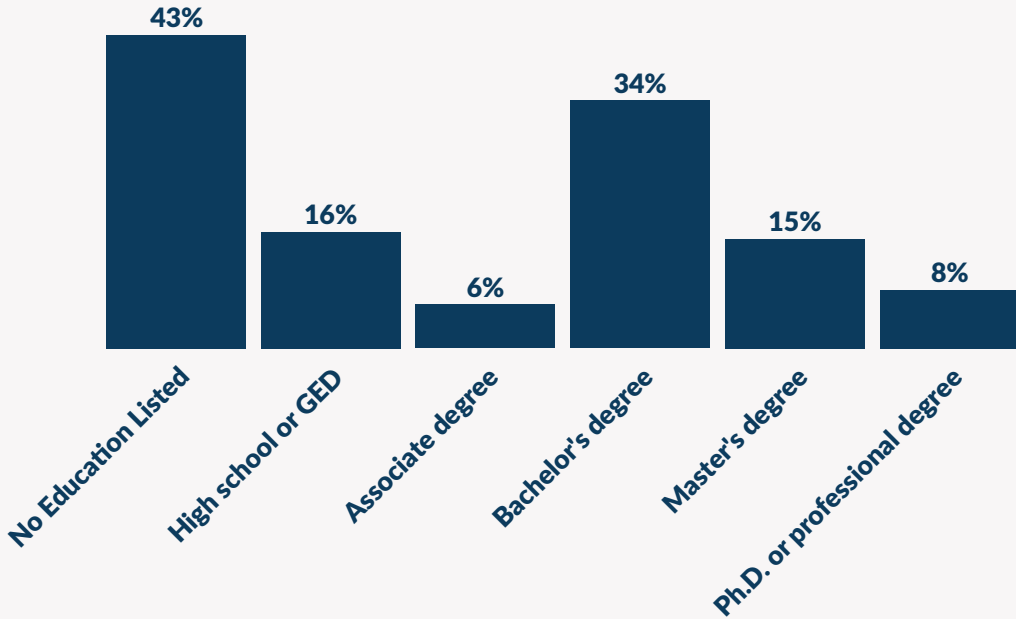
TOP QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification	Number of Postings with Qualification
Valid Driver's License	2,886
Registered Nurse (RN)	1,927
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	1,629
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	1,127
Security Clearance	779
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	762
First Aid Certification	558
Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification	542
Licensed Practical Nurse	352
Board Certified/Board Eligible	387

Healthcare related certifications continue to dominate employer demand, with credentials such as Registered Nurses (RN), Basic Life Support (BLS), and CPR among the most requested. Qualifications such as a valid driver's license, security clearance, and an MBA (Masters of Business Administration) highlight the need for both **foundational** and **specialized** skills across industries.



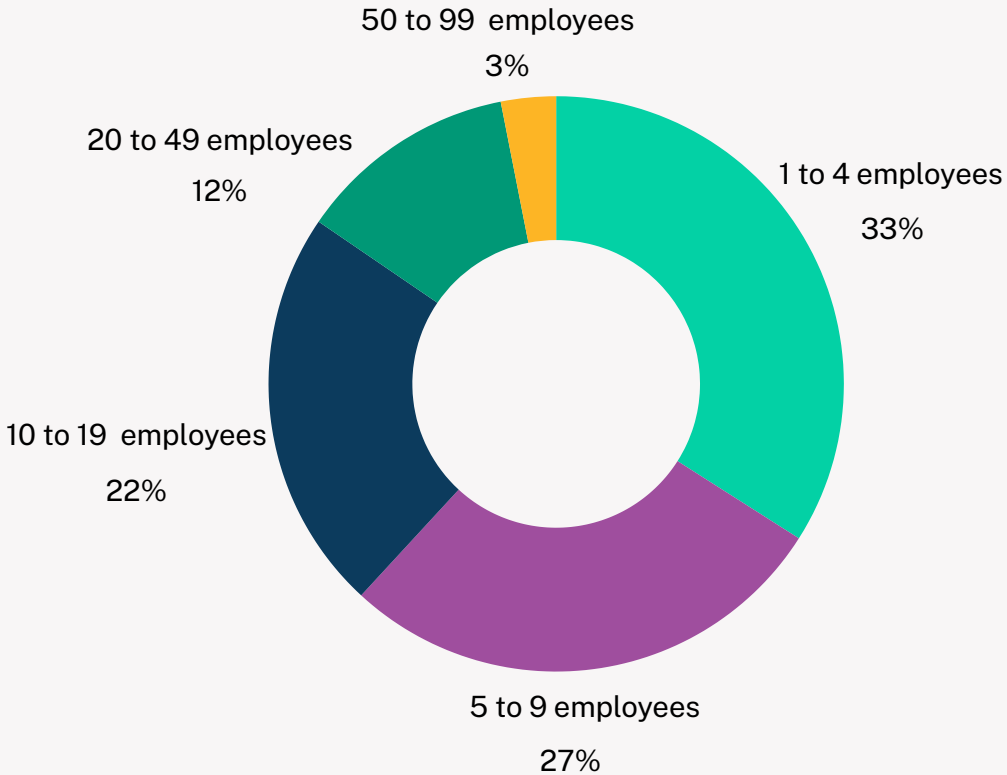
EDUCATION BREAKDOWN



The education breakdown of job postings in Metro North WDA varies widely. Nearly half of postings (43%) do not specify a required level of education. Among postings that list education requirements, (16%) require a high school diploma or GED, (6%) seek candidates with an Associate's degree, and 34% require a Bachelor's degree. Additionally, (15%) of job postings require a Master's degree, while (8%) require a Ph.D. or professional degree. This data indicates a diverse range of educational requirements, with a **significant emphasis on higher education.**

*Percentages may exceed 100% as postings can include multiple education requirements.

BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS



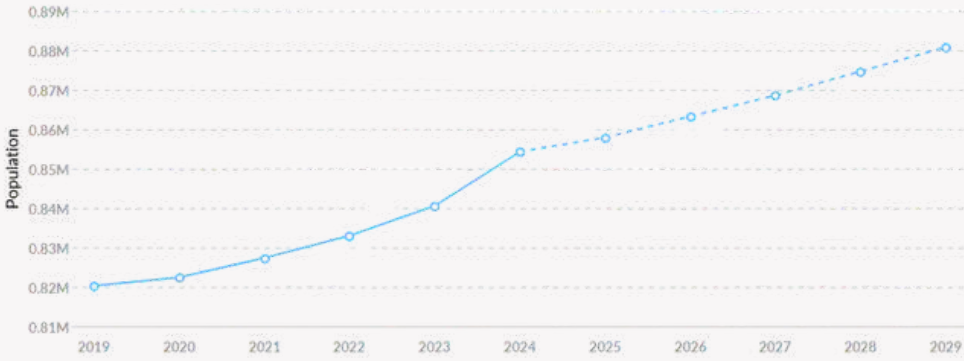
This data reveals that **small businesses**, especially those with fewer than 20 employees, **represent the largest portion of this segment.**

To break it down: 33% of these businesses employ between 1 to 4 people, 27% have 5 to 9 employees, and 22% consist of 10 to 19 employees. Altogether, this shows that 82% of businesses are classified as small enterprises with fewer than 20 employees.

HISTORIC & PROJECTED TRENDS

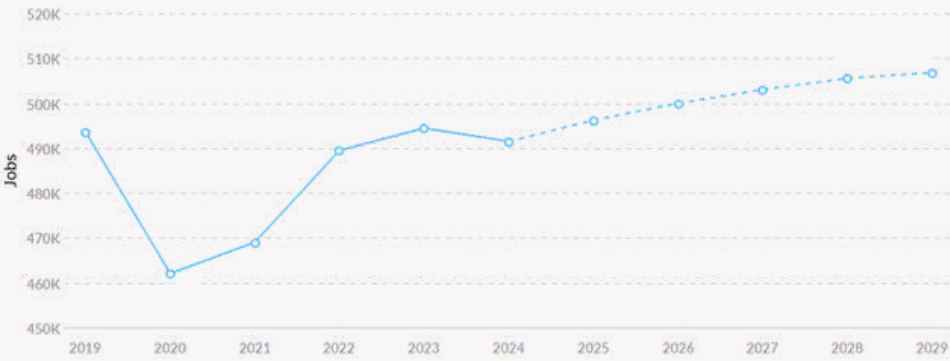
Population Trends

As of 2025, the region's population increased by 4.1% since 2019, growing by 34,015. Population is expected to increase by 3.1%, between 2024 and 2029, adding 25,535



Job Trends

From 2019 to 2024, jobs declined by 0.4% in Metro North WDA from 493,510 to 491,482. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 4.4% by 4.8%.



MEDIAN ADVERTISED HOURLY WAGE



From January to March, the average hourly wage was \$39.24. This reflects an increase of **\$0.66 per hour** compared to the previous quarter (October-December 2025)

LARGEST PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT CHANGE 2026-2028

Occupation	2026	2028 Jobs	Employment Change (2026-2028)	Median Hourly Wage
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	14,863	15,514	650	\$20.03
Postsecondary Teachers	18,023	18,409	386	\$63.19
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	5,296	6,176	250	\$63.60
Software Developers	9,865	10,094	229	\$57.54
Cooks, Restaurant	2,951	3,106	155	\$22.58
Medical and Health Services Managers	2,434	2,562	128	\$78.54
Natural Sciences Managers	3,564	3,691	127	\$112.78
Data Scientists	1,971	2,088	117	\$69.72
Fast Food and Counter Workers	8,294	9,036	112	\$18.29
Biochemists and Biophysicists	5,566	5,672	106	\$61.20
Financial Managers	3,471	3,569	98	\$100.38
Waiters and Waitresses	6,043	6,139	96	\$22.25
Management Analysts	5,050	5,142	92	\$73.17
Biological Technicians	3,184	3,275	91	\$33.64

Region: Metro North WDA

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

No Formal Educational Credential Required

Occupation	2026	2030 Projected Jobs	Projected Job Change 2026-2030 %	Avg. Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	9,358	9,198	-2%	1,551	\$47,307
Fast Food & Counter Workers	8,924	9,090	2%	2,132	\$38,107
Retail Salespersons	8,641	8,386	-3%	1,248	\$41,980
Cashiers	7,097	6,782	-4%	1,340	\$37,030
Waiters and Waitresses	6,043	6,186	2%	1,293	\$46,277
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	4,142	4,172	1%	556	\$48,317
Cooks, Restaurant	3,951	4,220	7%	677	\$46,968
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	4,018	4,029	0%	587	\$44,578
Construction Laborers	2,621	6,674	2%	237	\$70,203
Bartenders	2,138	2,227	4%	386	\$45,124

Region: Metro North WDA

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

High School Diploma Required

Occupation	2026 Jobs	2030 Projected Jobs	Projected Job Change 2026-2030 %	Avg. Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	14,864	15,990	8%	2,552	\$43,373
Office Clerks, General	5,597	6,814	-2%	802	\$54,715
Stockers and Order Fillers	5,904	5,060	3%	990	\$41,264
Customer Service Representatives	5,996	5,784	-4%	782	\$53,815
Secretaries & Admin Assistants, Except Legal, Medical & Executive	5,238	5,284	1%	590	\$59,476
First Line Supervisors of Office & Admin Support Workers	4,696	4,600	-2%	440	\$81,564
Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services & Travel	4,619	3,541	-2%	439	\$99,329
Maintenance & General Repair Workers, General	3,577	3,690	3%	355	\$60,252
Childcare Workers	3,605	3,633	1%	642	\$40,357
Security Guards	3,280	3,397	4%	457	\$45,438

Region: Metro North WDA

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

Associate's Degree Required

Occupation	2026 Jobs	2030 Projected Jobs	Projected Job Change 2026-2030 %	Avg. Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	1,996	2,068	4%	240	\$49,792
Dental Hygienists	1,257	1,330	6%	101	\$102,189
Electrical & Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians	712	713	0%	68	\$84,912
Veterinary Technologists & Technicians	561	607	8%	66	\$54,215
Chemical Technicians	544	562	3%	70	\$75,081
Paralegals & Legal Assistants	537	523	-3%	55	\$71,713
Architectural & Civil Drafters	479	464	-3%	40	\$77,464
Radiologic Technologists & Technicians	420	421	0%	23	\$97,491
Life, Physical, & Social Science Technicians, All Other	376	416	11%	59	\$81,365
Computer Network Specialists	371	371	0%	25	\$98,833

Region: Metro North WDA

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

Bachelor's Degree Required

Occupation	2026 Jobs	2030 Projected Jobs	Projected Job Change 2026-2030 %	Avg. Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
General & Operations Managers	12,205	13,326	1%	1,098	\$158,217
Software Developers	9,865	10,259	4%	616	\$161,280
Registered Nurses	7,597	7,628	0%	411	\$114,844
Auditors & Accountants	5,810	5,890	1%	469	\$105,292
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	5,432	5,485	1%	489	\$102,956
Management Analysts	5,050	5,205	3%	444	\$152,187
Computer & Information Systems Managers	4,257	4,393	3%	320	\$214,493
Natural Sciences Managers	3,563	3,762	6%	316	\$234,590
Human Resources Specialists	3,592	3,678	2%	317	\$97,008
Financial Managers	3,471	3,645	5%	285	\$200,794

Region: Metro North WDA

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

Master's Degree Required

Occupation	2026 Jobs	2030 Projected Jobs	Projected Job Change 2026-2030 %	Avg. Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Education Administrators, Postsecondary	3,037	3,104	2%	219	\$152,279
Educational, Guidance, & Career Counselors, & Advisors	2,049	2,134	4%	179	\$91,716
Nurse Practitioners	1,033	1,136	11%	179	\$149,117
Instructional Coordinators	917	935	2%	86	\$96,159
Education Administrators, Kindergarten through Secondary	818	818	0%	57	\$130,222
Librarians and Media Collection Specialists	774	795	3%	75	\$84,257
Healthcare Social Workers	723	736	2%	65	\$77,414
Mental Health & Substance Abuse Social Workers	704	726	3%	60	\$74,218
Computer & Information Research Scientists	605	674	11%	55	\$180,648
Occupational Therapists	589	602	2%	34	\$100,778

Region: Metro North WDA



ADVANCED MANUFACTURING SPOTLIGHT

***This section highlights emerging trends in
Advanced Manufacturing related to hiring
across Metro North and Boston.***

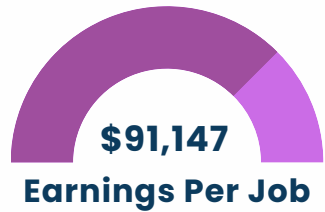
INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Advanced manufacturing is defined by its use of advanced technology, automation, and skilled labor, distinguishing it from traditional manufacturing, which relies more heavily on manual, high-volume production.

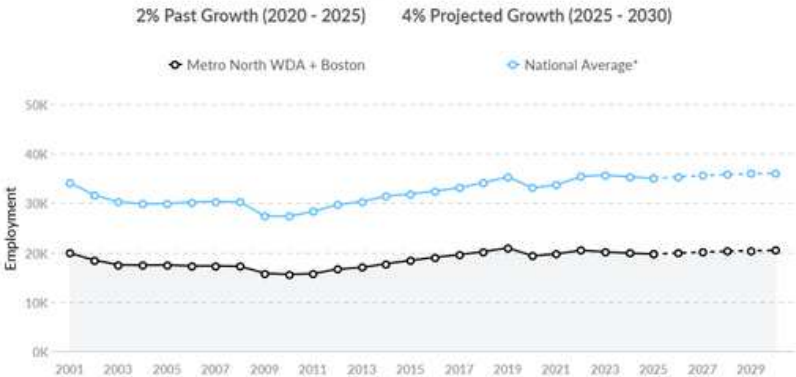
The occupations selected for this analysis focus specifically on roles that support these advanced processes, including engineers, engineering technicians, CNC operators and programmers, machinists, and industrial maintenance workers. Additional roles such as inspectors and production supervisors are included to reflect the broader technical workforce required to operate and maintain advanced manufacturing systems.



The region's advanced manufacturing workforce is lower than the national average for similarly sized regions (19,664 vs. 34,974). This suggests a tighter labor supply, which can create more opportunity for job seekers as employers compete for skilled talent.



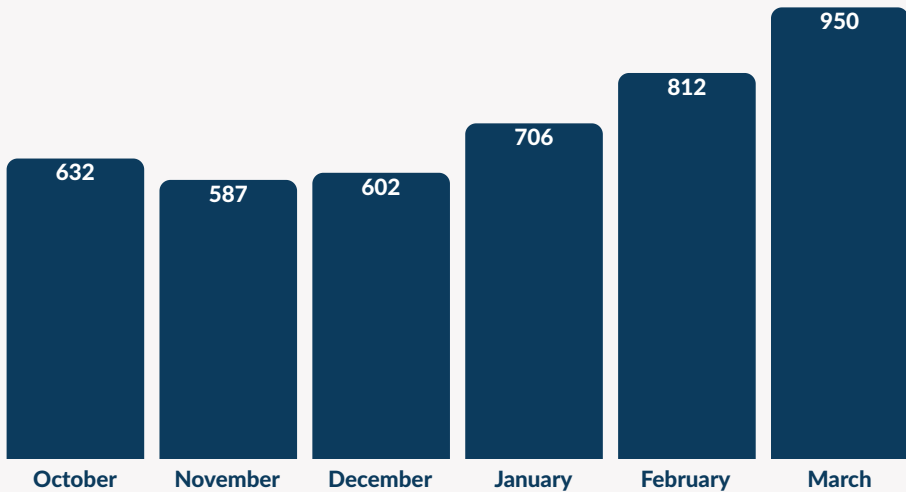
Average annual earnings for advanced manufacturing occupations in the region are significantly higher than the national average, with average compensation of \$91,147 compared to \$59,796 nationally.



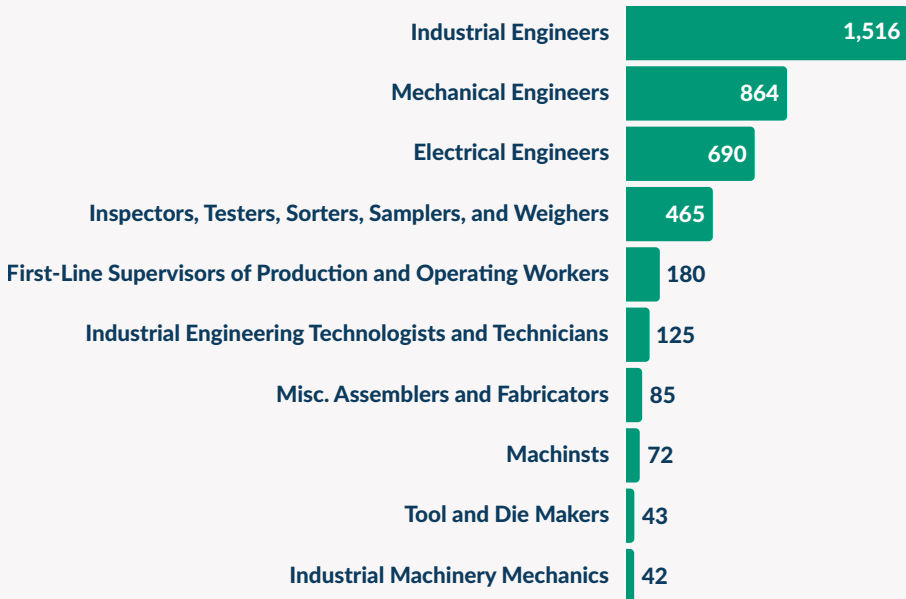
*National average values are derived by taking the national value for your occupations and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

NUMBER OF UNIQUE JOB POSTINGS

OCTOBER 2025–MARCH 2026

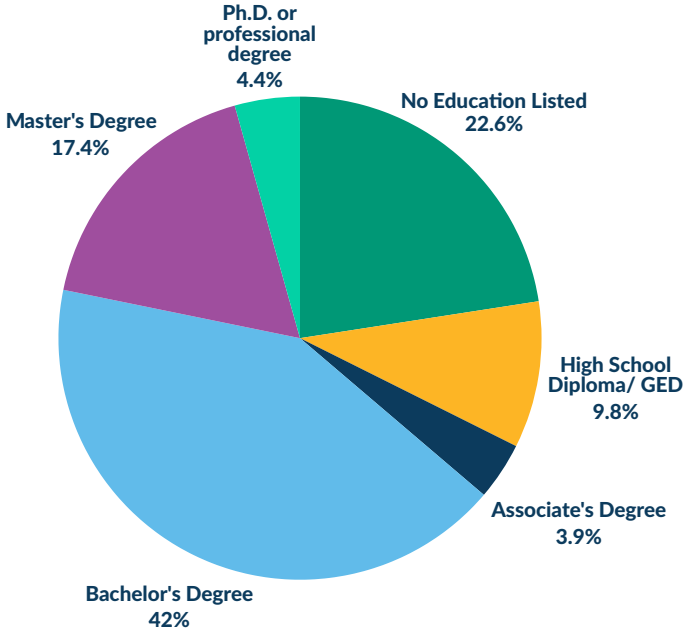


TOP OCCUPATIONS

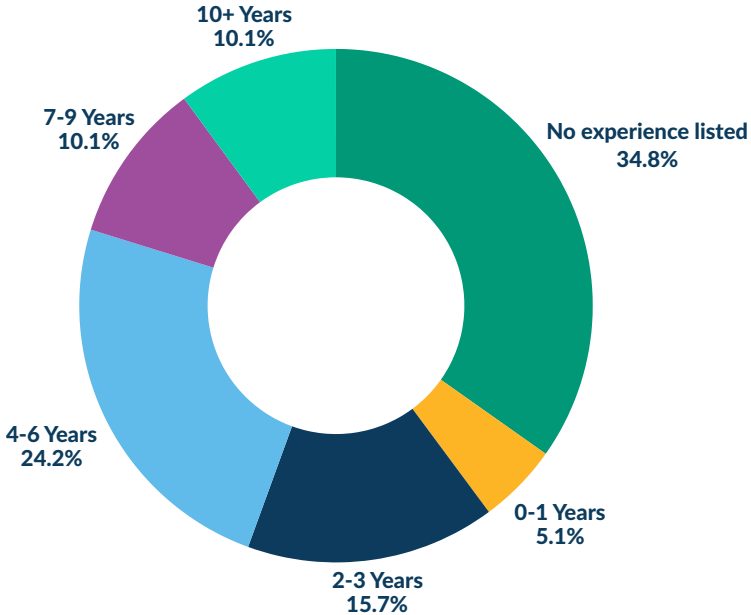


Regions: Metro North WDA and Boston

EDUCATION BREAKDOWN IN JOB POSTINGS

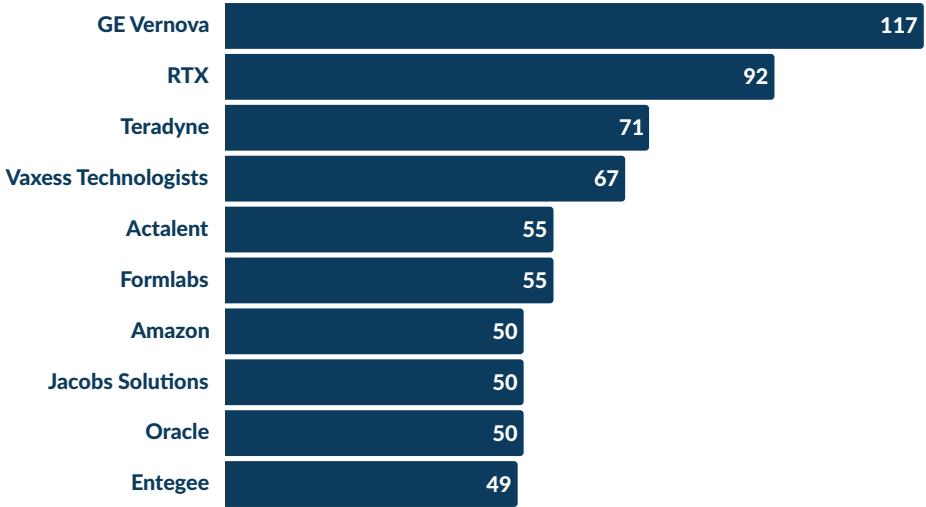


MINIMUM EXPERIENCE LEVEL IN JOB POSTINGS

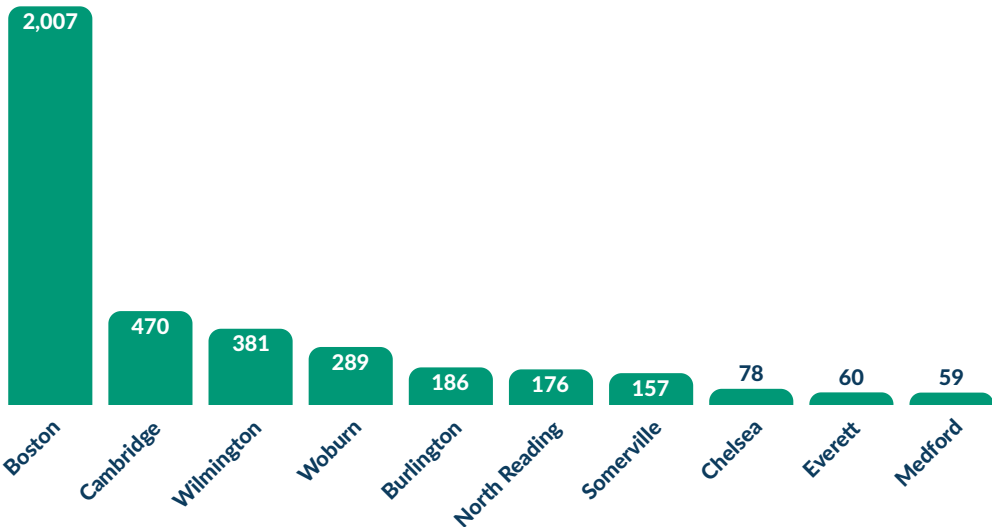


Regions: Metro North WDA and Boston

TOP COMPANIES HIRING



TOP CITIES



Regions: Metro North WDA and Boston

TOP QUALIFICATIONS

<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Postings with Qualification (Last 6 months)</i>
Security Clearance	333
Professional Engineer (PE) License	171
Valid Driver's License	143
Secret Clearance	90
Microsoft Certified Professional	50
Six Sigma Green Belt	45
LEED Accredited Professional (AP)	43
Engineer in Training	43
American Society for Quality (ASQ) Certified	37

TOP SPECIALIZED SKILLS

<i>Specialized Skill</i>	<i>Number of Postings (Last 6 months)</i>	<i>% Of Postings</i>	<i>Projected Skill Growth (2 years)</i>
Automation	821	19%	30%
Mechanical Engineering	787	18%	21%
Continuous Improvement Process	746	17%	23%
Project Management	694	16%	20%
Electrical Engineering	583	16%	21%
Workflow Management	640	15%	18%

Regions: Metro North WDA and Boston