MASSHIRE
METRO NORTH
WORKFORCE BOARD

METRO NORTH WDA
QUARTERLY JOB SEEKER REPORT

JANUARY 2026

CONTENTS

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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MASSHIRE

METRO NORTH WORKFORCE BOARD

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

*Due to the federal government shutdown, the unemployment rate for October 2025 is not available.

General Trend: Unemployment rates in both Metro North WDA and MA were relatively stable from Sept. through Dec. 2025. Metro North saw a slight increase from 4.1% in Sept. to 4.2% in Nov. before returning to 4.1% in December. MA rose slightly from 4.5% to 4.7% and remained at that level in December. **Metro North WDA maintained lower unemployment rates than the statewide average.**

Legend: ● Metro North ● MA
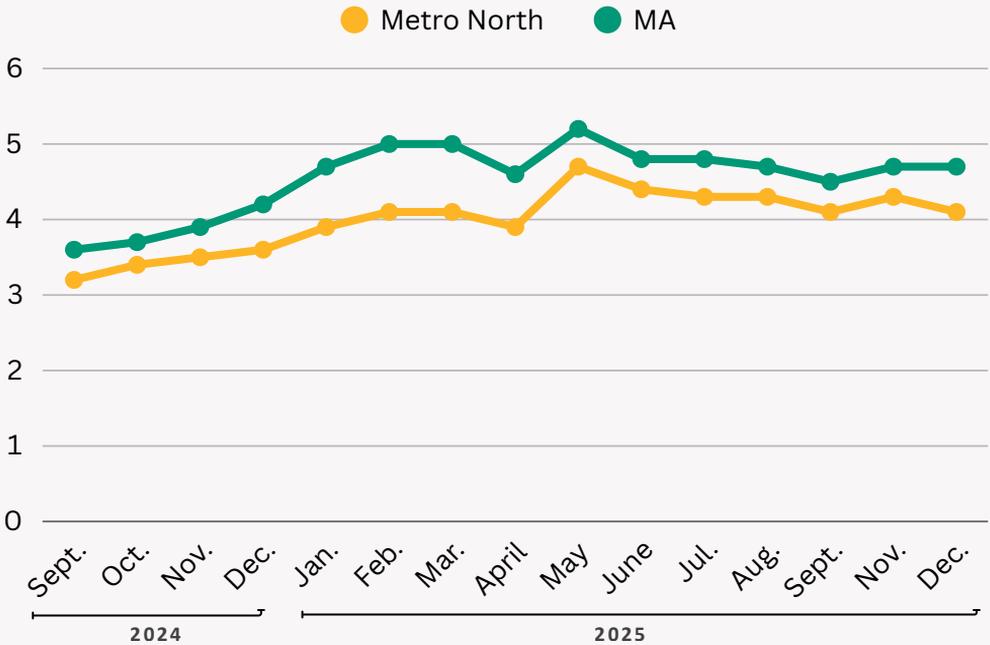
SEASONAL TRENDS

Following the summer months, unemployment rates in both Metro North WDA and MA remained relatively stable through fall and early winter.

CONCLUSION

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

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

DECEMBER 2025

ESTIMATED TOTAL LABOR FORCE

500,473

−3,300 YEAR OVER YEAR

ESTIMATED TOTAL EMPLOYED

479,961

−5,843 YEAR OVER YEAR

● **Total Employed**   ● **Total Labor Force**

600,000

500,000

400,000

300,000

200,000

100,000

0

2019   2020   2021   2022   2023   2024   2025
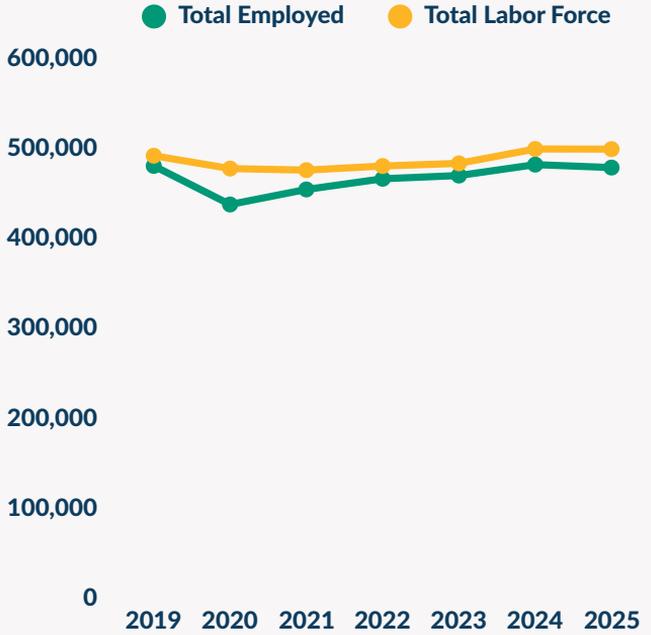
The data shows a consistent gap between the labor force and the total employed from 2019 to 2025. In 2020, the gap peaked, with 39,940 fewer employed individuals compared to the labor force, likely due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since then, the gap has been narrowing, with the difference decreasing to 20,512 in December of 2025, indicating continued improvement in employment levels. While this trend points to recovery, **the labor market has not yet fully returned to pre-pandemic levels**, influenced by factors such as **increased retirements, slack economic conditions, and labor force exits among some foreign-born workers.**

JOB POSTING BREAKDOWN

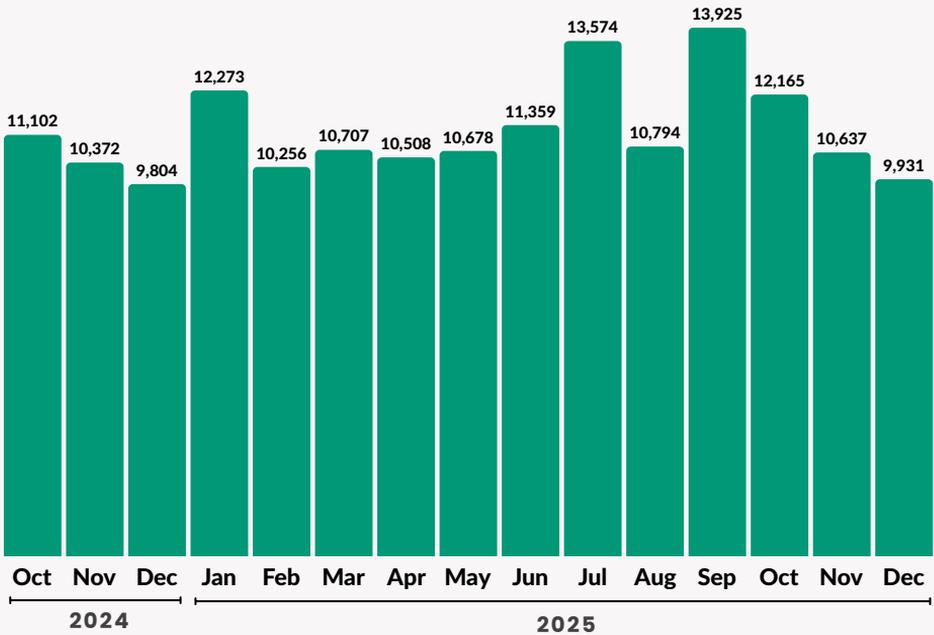Lightcast provides local job posting data on employer demand based on occupation, industry, and various other details. According to the latest estimates, the total number of job postings in Metro North has decreased.

32,733
Unique Job Postings This Quarter

−3,560
Change in Job Postings Over Previous Quarter

Month	Postings
Oct (2024)	11,102
Nov (2024)	10,372
Dec (2024)	9,804
Jan (2025)	12,273
Feb (2025)	10,256
Mar (2025)	10,707
Apr (2025)	10,508
May (2025)	10,678
Jun (2025)	11,359
Jul (2025)	13,574
Aug (2025)	10,794
Sep (2025)	13,925
Oct (2025)	12,165
Nov (2025)	10,637
Dec (2025)	9,931

Job posting trends indicate a decrease in postings from October–December 2025 compared to July–September 2025. However, when compared to the same time period in 2024, postings increased slightly. Between October–December of 2024, there were 31,618 unique job postings, while the same time period in 2025 saw 32,733 job postings, an increase of 1,115. Despite this improvement, hiring activity falls short when compared to pre-pandemic levels. In October–December 2019, there were 39,811 unique job postings, indicating the **job market has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.**

TOP POSTED OCCUPATIONS

Occupation	Postings
Registered Nurses	2,295
Software Developers	673
Medical and Health Services Managers	640
Retail Salespersons	609
Project Management Specialists	542
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	482
General and Operations Managers	476
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	457
Secretaries and Admin Assistants, Except Legal, Medical & Executive	398
Physical Therapists	394

From October to December 2025, job posting data reflects strong demand across Healthcare, Retail Trade, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, and Administrative Support and Waste Management industries.

Healthcare remains the strongest hiring industry, with Registered Nurses, Medical and Health Services Managers, Radiologic Technologists & Technicians, and Physical Therapists.

The Retail Trade sector also shows steady hiring for Retail Sales Associates, and First-Line Supervisors.

In the Professional, Scientific and Technical Service sector, demand for Software Developers remains high, while business and customer service roles such as General and Operations Managers, Project Management Specialists, and Secretaries and Admin Assistants continue to support regional employment needs.

JOB POSTINGS: TOP CITIES

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

City	Number of Job Postings
Cambridge	9,368
Burlington	3,471
Somerville	2,758
Woburn	2,618
Wilmington	1,524
Chelsea	1,495
Everett	1,369
Medford	1,295
Watertown	1,092
Malden	935

Number of Job Postings

TOP EMPLOYERS

Employer	Job Openings
Beth Israel Lahey Health	834
Mass General Brigham	489
Harvard University	471
Sanofi	370
Vetted Health	354
Soliant Health	299
Takeda Pharmaceutical Company	274
Cambridge Health Alliance	268
Massachusetts General Hospital	258
Encompass Health	216

From October to December 2025, Beth Israel Lahey Health, Mass General Brigham, and Harvard University posted the highest number of job openings, reflecting continued **strong demand in healthcare and education**.

SKILLS BREAKDOWN
TIME PERIOD:
OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2025

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

Specialized Skill	Number of Postings	% Of Postings	Projected Skill Growth (2 years)
Project Management	2,871	9%	20%
Workflow Management	2,298	7%	18%
Nursing	2,103	6%	20%
Finance	1,915	6%	27%
Lifting Ability	1,868	6%	11%
Pharmaceuticals	1,842	6%	20%
Auditing	1,817	6%	20%

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

Common Skill	Number of Postings	% Of Postings	Projected Skill Growth (2 years)
Communication	14,117	43%	4%
Leadership	7,206	22%	9%
Management	6,911	21%	5%
Customer Service	6,794	21%	5%
Operations	6,436	20%	8%
Detail Oriented	5,003	15%	7%
Problem Solving	4,672	14%	11%

TOP QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification	Number of Postings with Qualification
Valid Driver's License	2,473
Registered Nurse (RN)	2,098
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	1,817
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	1,004
Master Of Business Administration (MBA)	688
Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification	513
Security Clearance	403
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	352
First Aid Certification	352
Board Certified/Board Eligible	275

Certifications in nursing and emergency care remain highly sought after, reflecting sustained demand for healthcare professionals. Additionally, there is notable interest in candidates with general professional credentials and essential certifications, reflecting the diverse needs of employers across various industries.

This underscores the **importance of both specialized healthcare skills and fundamental professional qualifications** in the job market.

EDUCATION BREAKDOWN

- No Education Listed: 46%
- High school or GED: 16%
- Associate degree: 6%
- Bachelor's degree: 31%
- Master's degree: 15%
- Ph.D. or professional degree: 8%
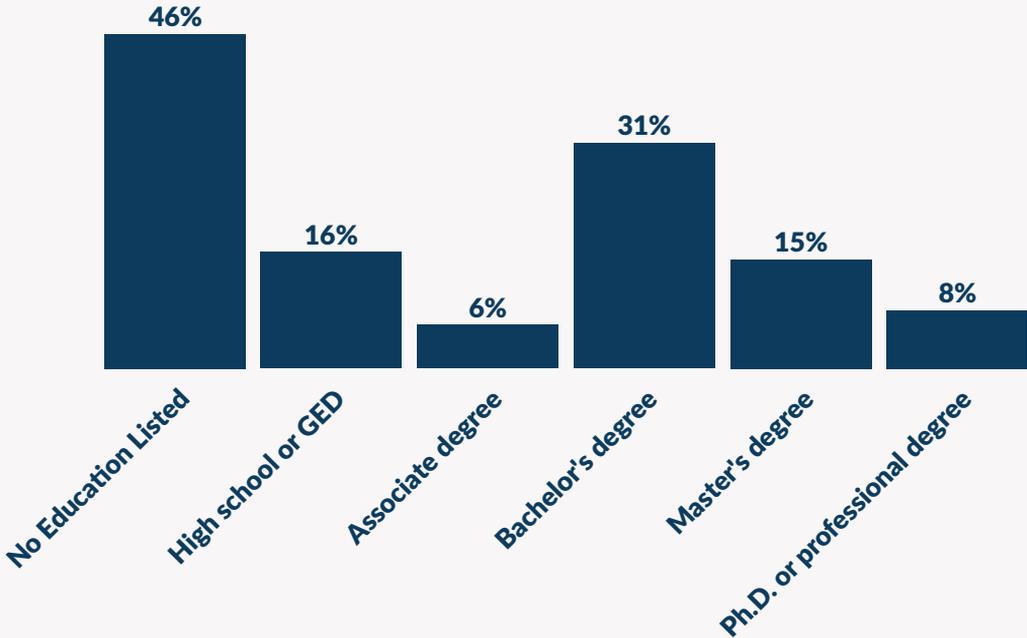
The education breakdown of job postings in Metro North WDA vary widely. Nearly half of postings(46%) do not specify a required level of education. Among postings that list education requirements, 16% require a high school diploma or GED, 6% seek candidates with an Associate's degree, and 31% require 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 educatio**n.

BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS

50 to 99 employees
3%

20 to 49 employees
12.1%

1 to 4 employees
33.3%

10 to 19 employees
22.2%
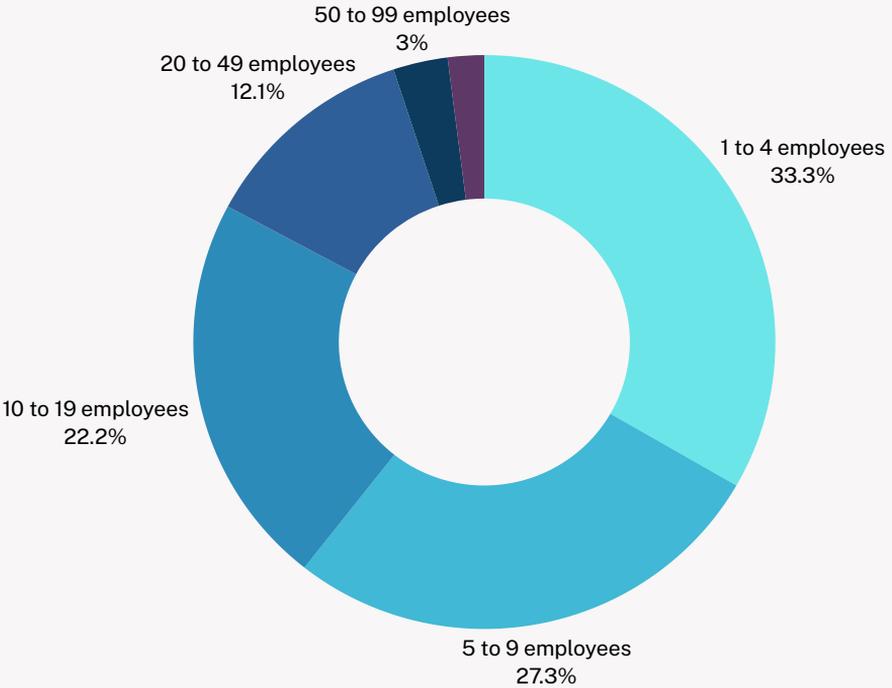
5 to 9 employees
27.3%

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
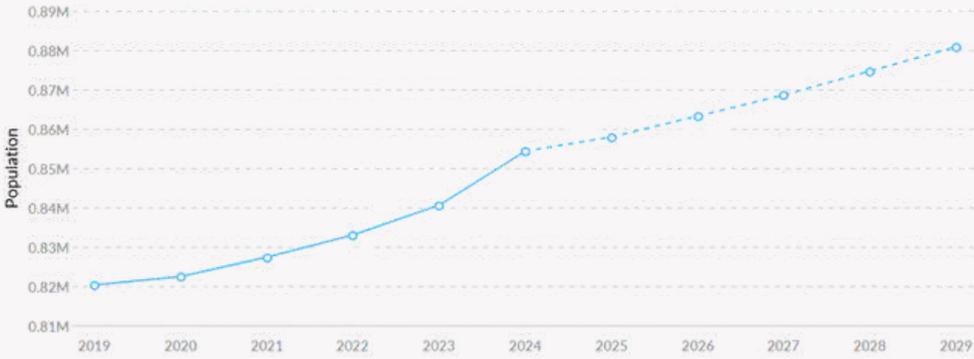
Job Trends

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%.
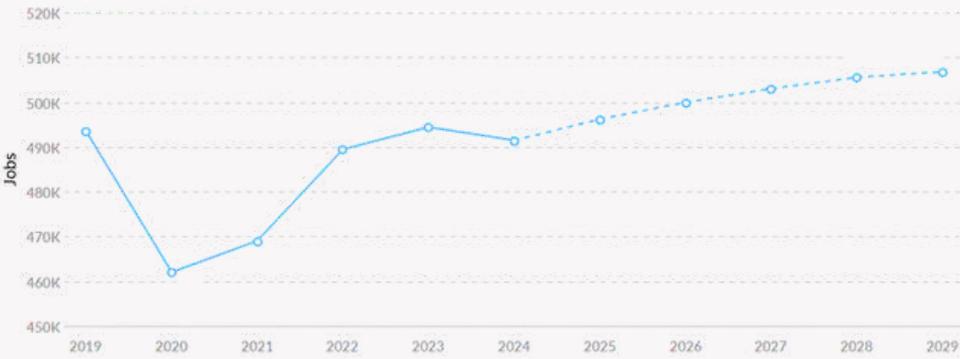
MEDIAN ADVERTISED HOURLY WAGE

$40

$37.35 $39.08 $39.08

$30

$20

$10

$0

October   November   December

From October to December 2025, the average hourly wage was $38.58. This reflects an increase of **increase of $0.71 per hou**r compares to the previous quarter (July-September 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 Maagers	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
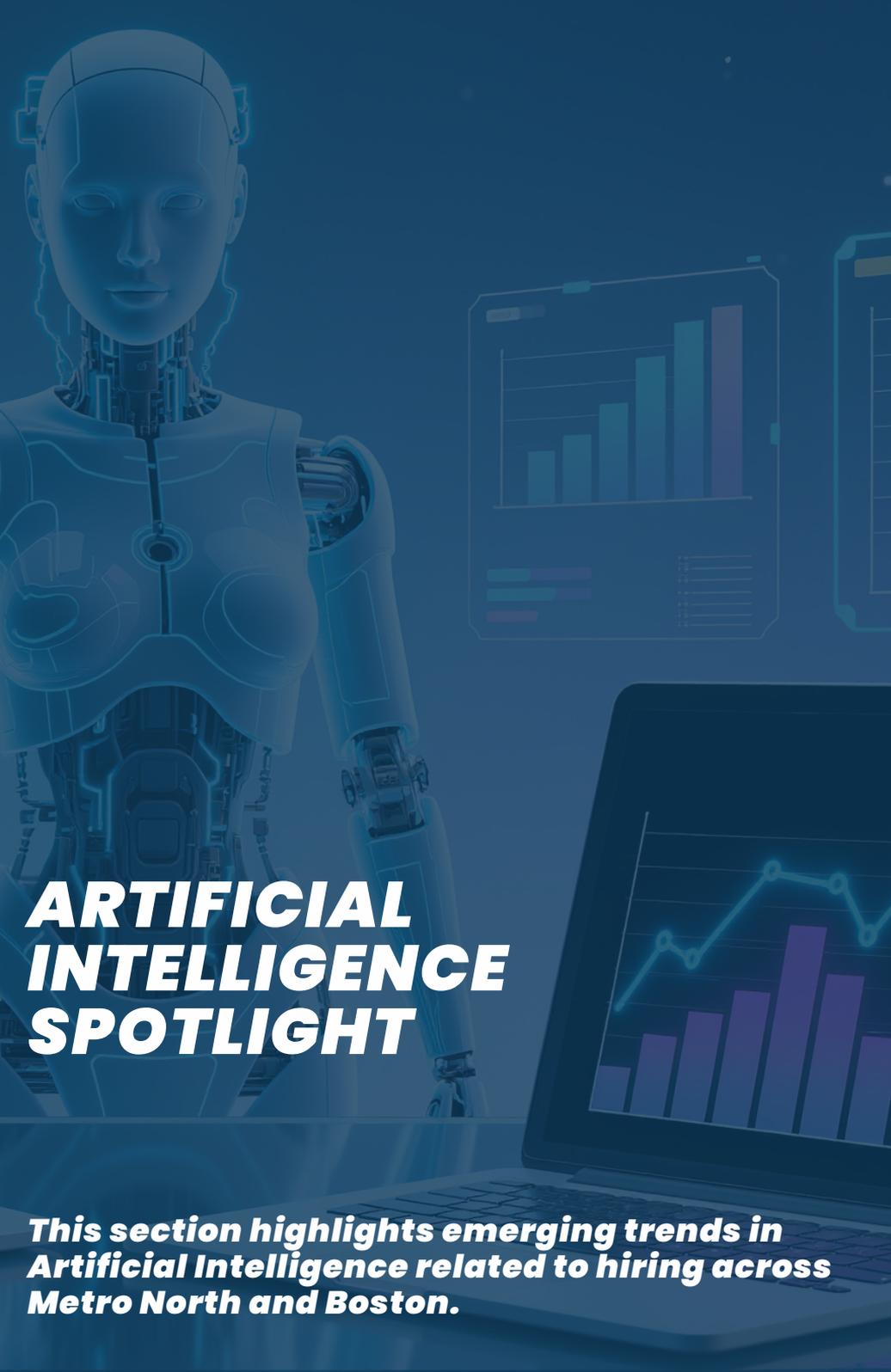
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SPOTLIGHT

This section highlights emerging trends in Artificial Intelligence related to hiring across Metro North and Boston.

NUMBER OF UNIQUE JOB POSTINGS
JUNE–NOVEMBER 2025

June	July	August	September	October	November
1,222	1,286	1,317	1,684	2,028	1,784
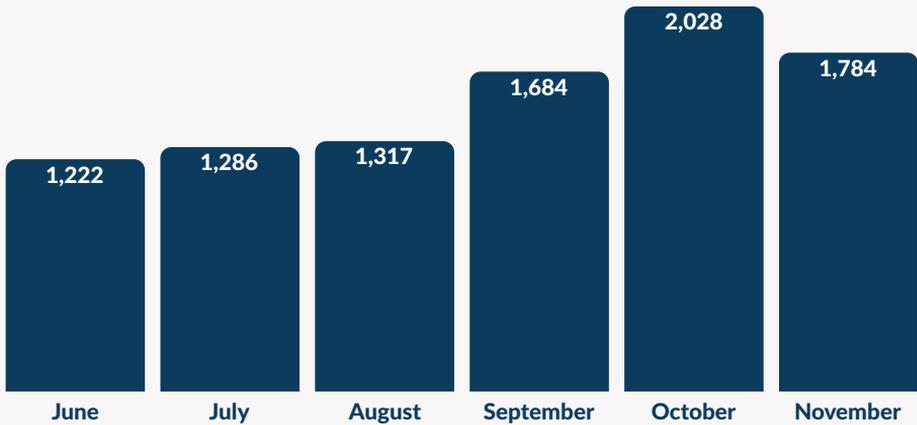
AI related job postings increased, peaking in October. Demand is concentrated in technical roles led by Software Developers, Computer and Information Research Scientists, Data Scientists and Marketing Managers.

TOP OCCUPATIONS

Occupation	Count
Software Developers	1,012
Computer and Information Research Scientists	752
Marketing Managers	695
Data Scientists	600
Computer Occupations, All Other	591
Financial Risk Specialists	238
General and Operations Managers	217
Database Architects	212
Sales Reps, Wholesale and Manufacturing	186
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	182
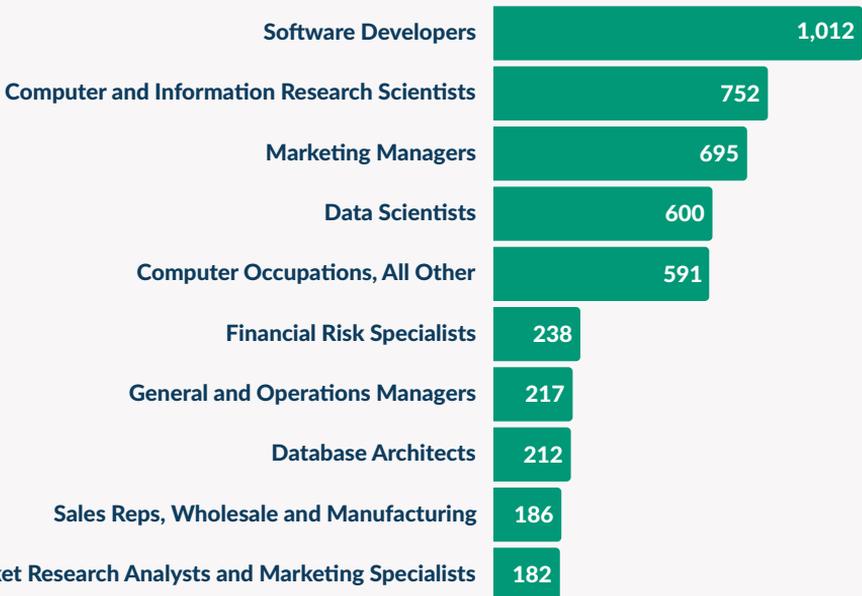
Regions: Metro North WDA and Boston

TOP COMPANIES

Company	Value
Amazon	334
Takeda Pharmaceutical Company	268
Sanofi	209
Deloitte	132
Lumen Technologies	116
Capital One	100
Accenture	97

TOP INDUSTRIES

Industry	Value
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2,256
Manufacturing	1,581
Information	966
Retail Trade	755
Finance and Insurance	686
Admin and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	675
Educational Services	347
Healthcare and Social Assistance	290

Regions: Metro North WDA and Boston

TOP QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification	Postings with Qualification (June-November 2025)
Master Of Business Administration (MBA)	613
Microsoft Certified Professional	125
Security Clearance	122
Certified Information Systems Security Professional	105
Project Management Professional Certification	99
Valid Driver's License	95
Certified Public Accountant	72
Chartered Financial Analyst	65
Secret Clearance	63
Certified Information System Auditor (CISA)	48

TOP SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Specialized Skill	Number of Postings (June-November 2025)	% Of Postings	Projected Skill Growth (2 years)
Machine Learning	3,691	40%	20%
Computer Science	2,753	30%	27%
Scalability	2,580	28%	25%
Workflow Management	2,503	27%	18%
Python (Programming Language)	2,449	26%	25%
Automation	2,195	24%	31%
Generative Artificial Intelligence	1,698	18%	18%