



MASSHIRE
METRO NORTH
WORKFORCE BOARD

METRO NORTH WDA

QUARTERLY JOB SEEKER REPORT

JULY 2026

CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[Unemployment Rate](#)

[Labor Force Participation Rate](#)

[Job Postings](#)

[Top Occupations](#)

[Top Cities](#)

[Top Employers](#)

[Specialized & Common Skills](#)

[Top Qualifications](#)

[Education Breakdown](#)

[Business Characteristics](#)

[Historic and Projected Trends](#)

[Median Advertised Hourly Wage](#)

[Projected Employment Changes](#)

[Occupations in Demand-No Formal
Education Requirement](#)

[Occupations in Demand-HS Diploma](#)

[Occupations in Demand-Associate's Degree](#)

[Occupations in Demand-Bachelor's Degree](#)

[Occupations in Demand-Master's Degree](#)

[Small Business Spotlight](#)

[Career Resources](#)

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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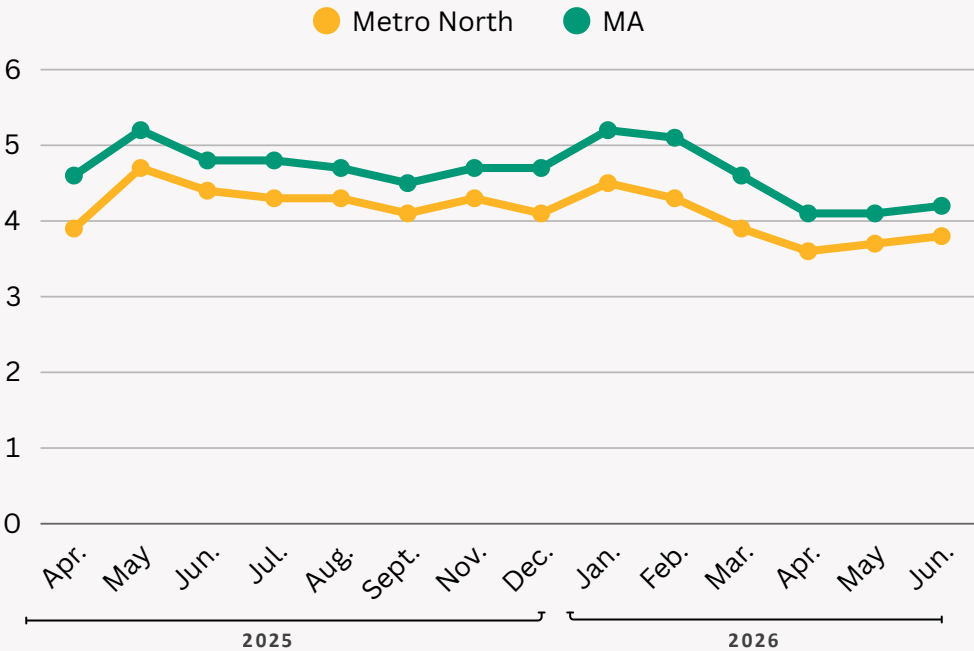


**METRO NORTH
WORKFORCE BOARD**

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

General Trend: Unemployment rates decreased from March to April in both Metro North WDA and MA, before remaining relatively stable through June. Metro North’s unemployment rate decreased from 3.9% to 3.6% in April, then increased slightly to 3.8% by June. Similarly, MA’s unemployment rate decreased from 4.6% in March to 4.1% in April and remained at 4.2% in June.

Metro North WDA maintained lower unemployment rates than the statewide average. Compared to the same period of last year (April-June 2025), unemployment rates this quarter were lower in both Metro North and MA, indicating slight improvements in labor market conditions.



SEASONAL TRENDS

Unemployment rates remained relatively stable from April through June, with only slight fluctuations.

CONCLUSION

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

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

JUNE 2026

ESTIMATED TOTAL
LABOR FORCE

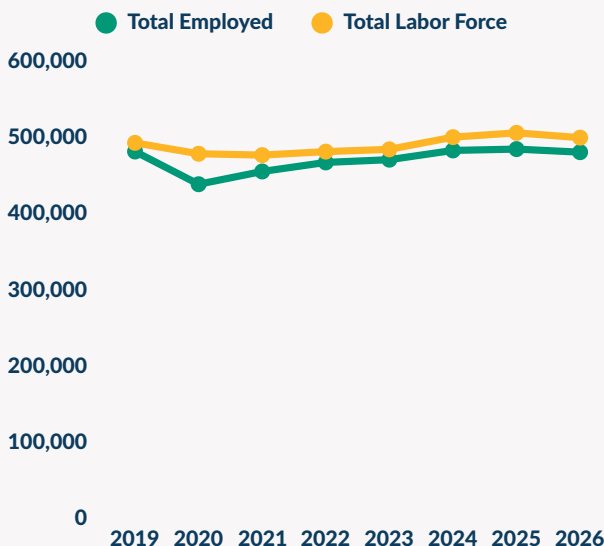
499,958

-10,149 YEAR OVER YEAR

ESTIMATED TOTAL
EMPLOYED

480,925

-8,163 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 19,033 by June 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 contribute to an uneven labor market recovery.

JOB POSTING BREAKDOWN

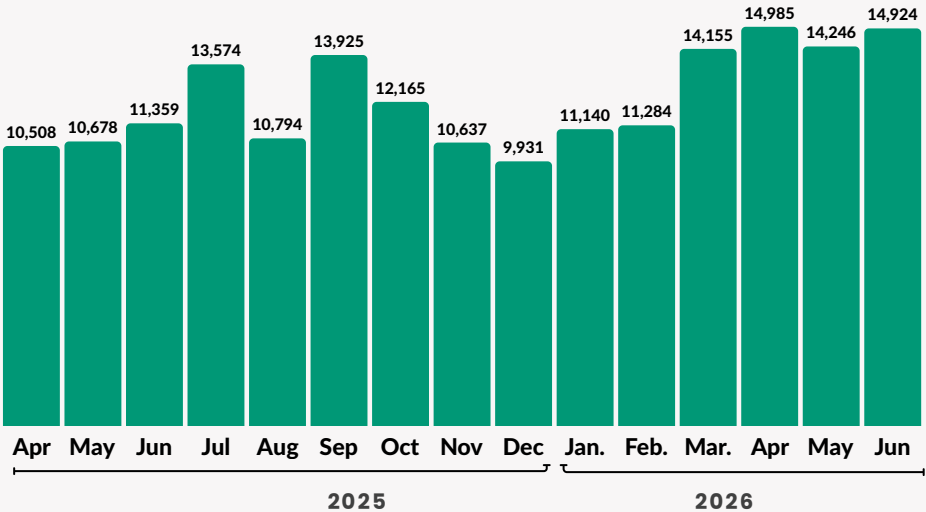
Lightcast provides local job posting data on employer demand based on occupation, industry, and various other details. According to the latest estimates, the total number of job postings in Metro North has increased compared to the previous quarter.

44,155

Unique Job Postings
This Quarter

+7,576

Change in Job Postings Over
Previous Quarter



Job posting trends indicate an increase in postings from April-June 2026, compared to January-March 2026. When compared to the same time period in 2025, postings also rose by 10,157, with 33,998 unique postings during that period. Unlike the more variable job posting levels observed throughout 2025, **postings remained consistently above 14,000 per month during Q2 of 2026**. Job postings from this quarter exceed pre-pandemic levels (35,924 postings January-March 2019). This suggests a recovery in employer demand and that hiring is accelerating.

TOP POSTED OCCUPATIONS & PROJECTED DEMAND

Occupation	Number of Postings (April-June 2026)	Projected Growth over the next 2 years
Registered Nurses	1,719	0%
Software Developers	1,482	+2%
Computer Occupations, All Other	843	+1%
Medical and Health Services Managers	816	+5%
General and Operations Managers	809	0%
Project Management Specialists	785	0%
Financial Managers	744	+2%
Marketing Managers	713	0%
Secretaries and Admin Assistants, Except Legal, Medical & Executive	663	+1%
Industrial Engineers	659	+2%

From April-June 2026, job postings remain concentrated in Healthcare & Social Assistance, 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).

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

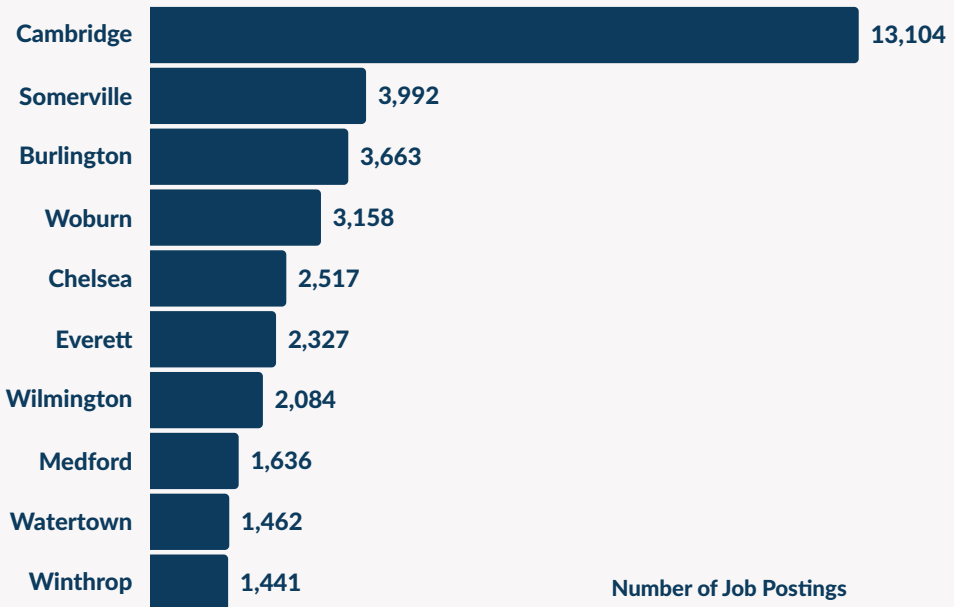
Administrative Support occupations remain stable with Secretaries and Admin Assistants seeing a 1% projected growth over the next 2 years.

A notable change this quarter was the appearance of Industrial Engineers among the top 10 occupations, replacing Retail Salespersons. While Retail Salespersons has historically been one of the top occupations by job posting, **demand, this quarter was more concentrated in technical and engineering related occupations**, reflecting continued employer demand for specialized skills.

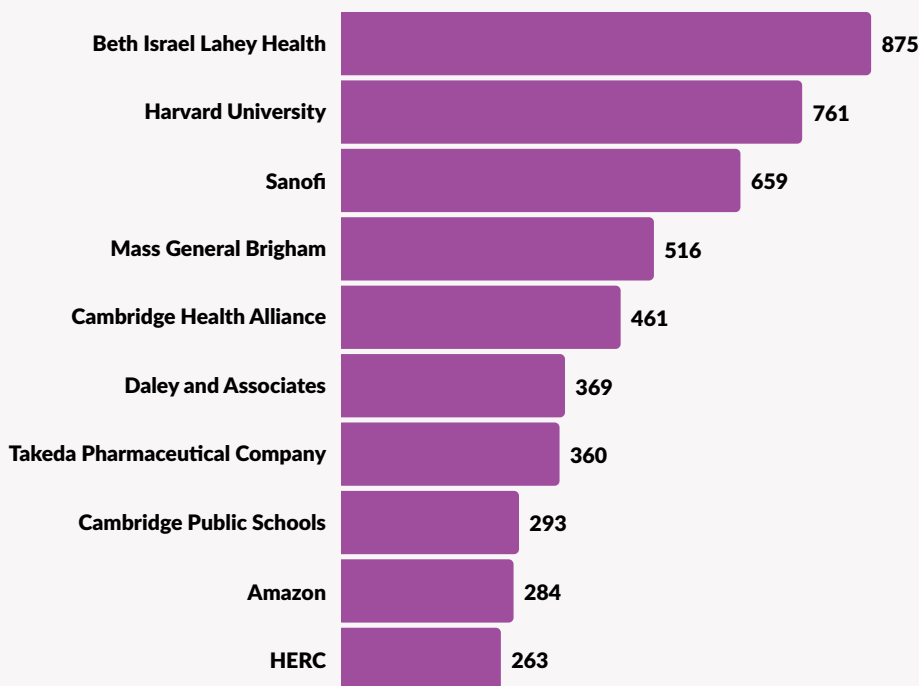
TOP CITIES

Cambridge

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



TOP EMPLOYERS

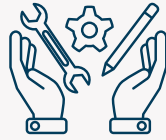


From April to June 2026, the top employers posting jobs remained relatively consistent compared to the previous quarter (January–March 2026). Two organizations that newly appeared in the top 10 were the **Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC)** and **Daley & Associates**. Both are recruiting organizations that connect employers with qualified candidates rather than hiring solely for their own workforce. Their presence among the top employers suggests that organizations continue to rely on third-party recruiters to fill positions. HERC supports recruitment across colleges and universities, while Daley & Associates specializes in accounting, finance, information technology, legal, and life sciences, indicating sustained demand for skilled professionals in these fields.

SKILLS BREAKDOWN

TIME PERIOD:

APRIL-JUNE 2026



Top 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)
Workflow Management	5,451	12%	16%
Project Management	4,303	10%	10%
Artificial Intelligence	3,898	9%	20%
Finance	3,404	8%	22%
Auditing	3,255	7%	21%
Continuous Improvement Process	3,119	7%	20%
Scalability	3,080	7%	23%

Top Common Skills: skills that are prevalent across many different occupations, industries, including interpersonal, transferable, and learned skills.

Common Skill	Number of Postings	% Of Postings	Projected Skill Growth (2 years)
Communication	21,683	49%	9%
Leadership	11,954	27%	10%
Operations	11,229	25%	9%
Management	9,521	22%	6%
Detail Oriented	8,272	19%	8%
Customer Service	8,139	18%	5%
Problem Solving	7,395	17%	11%



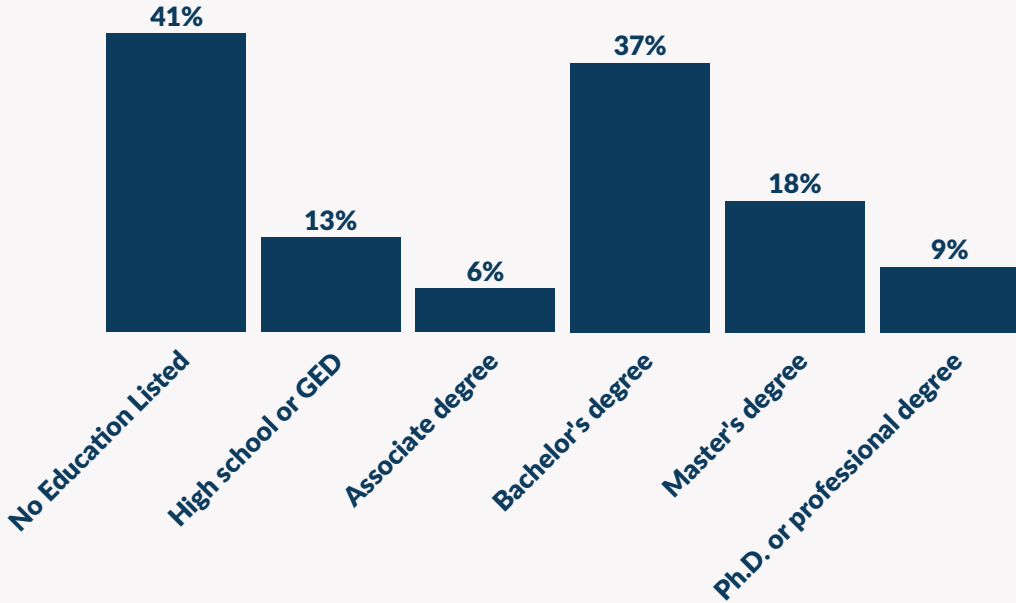
TOP QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification	Number of Postings with Qualification
Valid Driver's License	3,248
Registered Nurse (RN)	1,610
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	1,480
Masters of Business Administration (MBA)	1,061
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	1,010
Security Clearance	942
Teaching Certificate	507
First Aid Certification	465
Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification	447
Project Management Professional Certification	394

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.



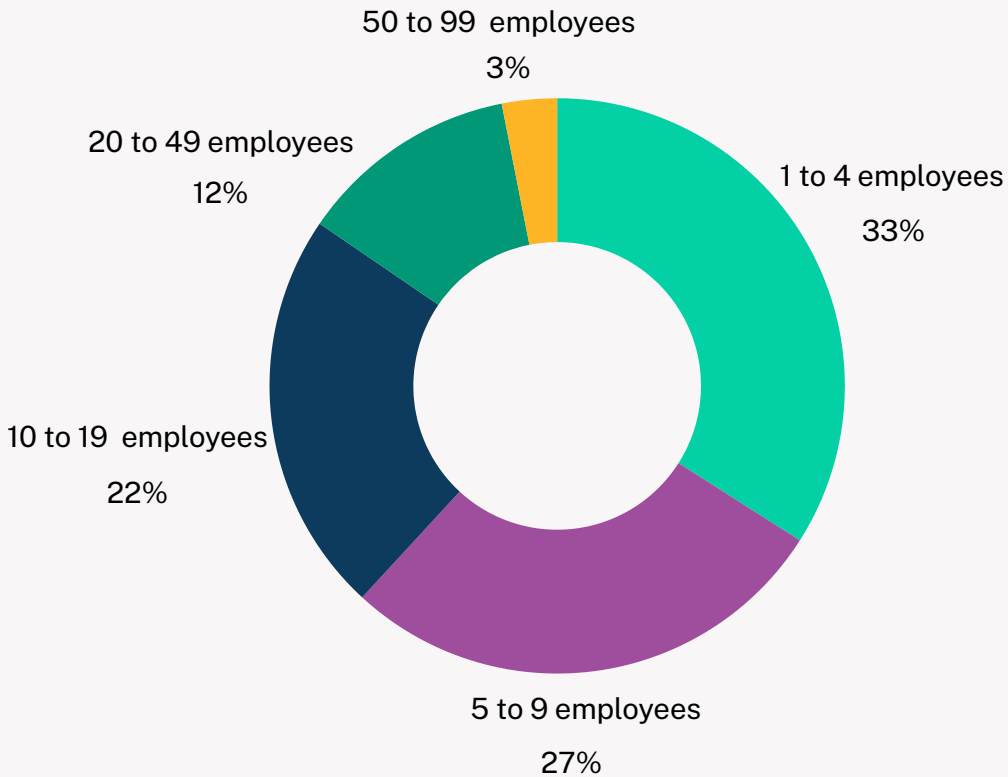
EDUCATION BREAKDOWN



The education breakdown of job postings in Metro North WDA varies widely. Nearly half of postings (41%) do not specify a required level of education. Among postings that list education requirements, 13% require a high school diploma or GED, 6% seek candidates with an Associate's degree, and 37% require a Bachelor's degree. Additionally, 18% of job postings require a Master's degree, while 9% 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

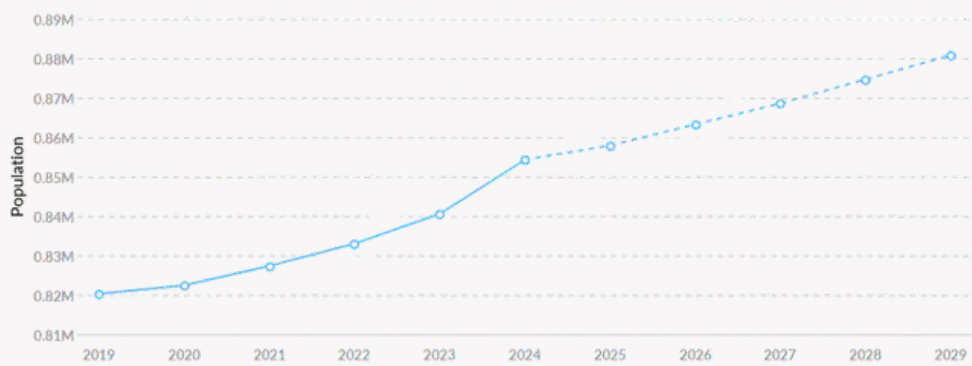


This data reveals that **small businesses**, especially those with fewer than 20 employees, **represent the largest portion of this segment**. To break it down: 33% of these businesses employ between 1 and 4 people, 27% have 5 to 9 employees, and 22% consist of 10 to 19 employees. Altogether, this shows that 82% of businesses are classified as small enterprises with fewer than 20 employees.

HISTORIC & PROJECTED TRENDS

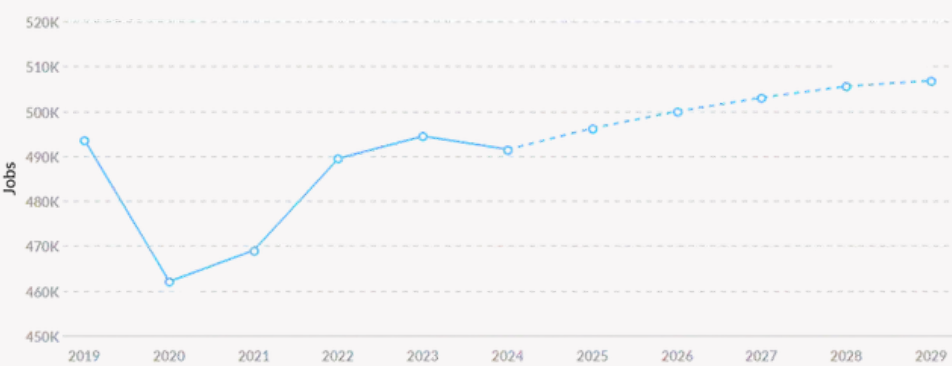
Population Trends

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 April to June, the median hourly wage was \$42.11. This reflects an increase of **\$2.87 per hour** compared to the previous quarter (January-March 2026).

LARGEST PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT CHANGE 2026-2028

Occupation	2026 Jobs	2028 Projected Jobs	Employment Change (2026-2028)	Median Hourly Wage
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	5,296	6,176	880	\$63.60
Fast Food and Counter Workers	8,294	9,036	742	\$18.29
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	14,863	15,514	651	\$20.03
Postsecondary Teachers	18,023	18,409	386	\$63.19
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
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 Jobs	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	2,674	2%	237	\$70,203
Bartenders	2,138	2,227	4%	386	\$45,124

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	6,558	6,352	-3%	802	\$54,715
Stockers and Order Fillers	5,772	5,889	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

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	11,471	11,394	-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

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

SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

The following pages provide statewide context on the role and characteristics of Massachusetts small businesses.



SMALL BUSINESS BREAKDOWN IN MASSACHUSETTS

Note: The Census Bureau and SBA office of Advocacy define small businesses as defined as businesses with fewer than 500 employees.

756,096

Small Businesses
in Massachusetts

99.5%

of Massachusetts
Businesses

1.5 MILLION

Small Business
Employees

44.7%

of Massachusetts
Employees

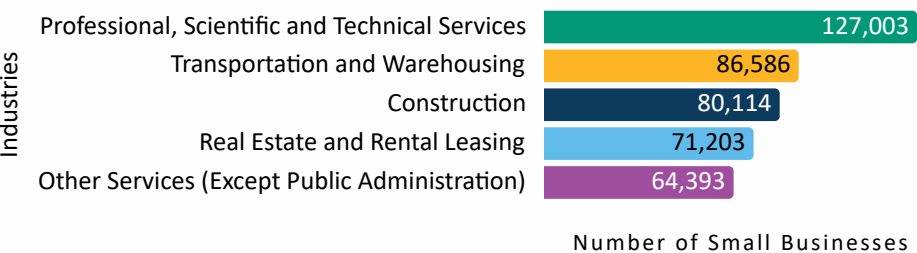
Small businesses are the backbone of Massachusetts' economy. 99.5% of businesses in Massachusetts are considered a small business, employing almost half of all workers. Beyond creating jobs, small businesses drive innovation, strengthen local communities, and account for over 90% of the state's net job growth.

Share of Massachusetts Net Job Growth (March 2023–March 2024)



Small businesses play a critical role in employment growth, creating opportunities for workers across Massachusetts. While large employers remain important contributors to the economy, small businesses account for 91% of job creation, highlighting their role as a key source of employment opportunities.

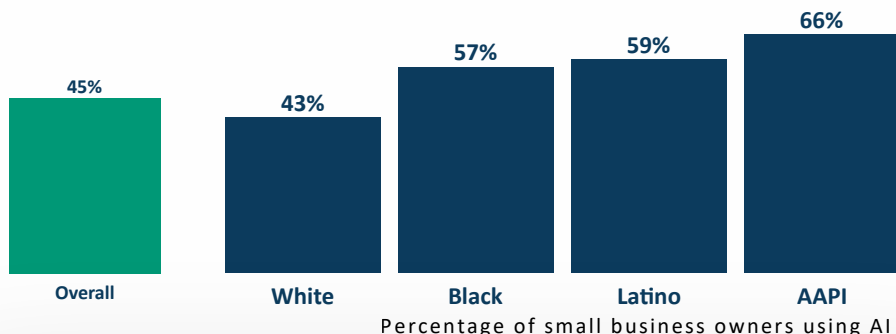
Top 5 Small Business Industries



Small businesses are found across nearly every industry in Massachusetts with strong concentrations in Professional Scientific and Technical Services, Transportation and Warehousing, Construction, Real Estate, and Other Services. These businesses support local economies while creating employment opportunities.

THE IMPACT OF AI ON SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly relevant for small businesses as entrepreneurs explore ways to improve efficiency, streamline operations, and remain competitive. A statewide **survey of 1,049 small business leaders** in Massachusetts found that AI adoption varies across business owners, with entrepreneurs of color reporting higher usage of AI.



Small business leaders are substantially more likely to view AI as an opportunity than as a threat. When asked how they perceive AI's impact on their business:

6 IN 10

Massachusetts Small business owners view AI as an opportunity

Only **6%** view AI as a threat, while **18%** say it is unrelated to their business and **17%** are unsure.

What this means for Small Businesses and Workers

As small businesses continue to adopt emerging technologies, digital skills will become increasingly important. In the Metro North region, AI-related skills are projected to grow by **20% over the next 2 years**, signaling growing demand for workers who can effectively use and adapt to new technologies.

WHO OWNS MASSACHUSETTS SMALL BUSINESSES?

WOMEN

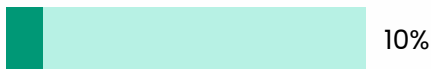
41% OF BUSINESS OWNERS

Share of Massachusetts Small Business Owners



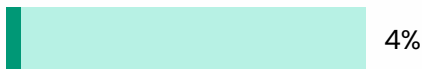
HISPANIC

10% OF BUSINESS OWNERS



VETERANS

4% OF BUSINESS OWNERS



Women, Veterans, and Hispanic small business owners make important contributions to Massachusetts' small business community.

Women represent 41% of small business owners, compared with 49% of workers. **Hispanic** individuals account for 10% of business owners and 12% of workers. Lastly, **Veterans** represent 4% of business owners and 3% of workers.

CAREER RESOURCES

Looking to strengthen your job search and skills? The MassHire Metro North Career Centers offer free workshops and resources to help job seekers with resume development, interviewing skills, career exploration and more. View upcoming workshops and register using the link or scan the QR code below:

masshiremncareers.com/events-calendar/category/workshops/

