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# Haas Center

UNIVERSITY *of* WEST FLORIDA

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## About Us

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The UWF Haas Center supports the region and the state with workforce and survey research, economic impact modeling, and industrial innovation. We partner with UWF students, faculty, and external experts to deliver optimal results to our customers.

We are known for the breadth and depth of our data resources and have been for 30 years. We provide textured, meaningful analysis to an array of customers from the public and non-profit sectors to private industry, including manufacturing.

An immersive public manufacturing laboratory, Sea3D in Pensacola's Historic District, showcases what is possible when creative minds intersect with industry leaders in additive and advanced manufacturing.

To learn more about our services, please visit our website: [haas.uwf.edu](https://haas.uwf.edu)

## High Demand Occupations in Florida’s Great Northwest

Researchers at the University of West Florida (UWF) Haas Center examined 22 occupational areas, comparing regional, state, and national trends. Occupations were ranked by median earnings and 10-year job projections. We identified the top 10 occupational categories across Northwest Florida's combined 13-county region, as well as the top occupation per county. Lastly, we summarized the region’s current market for these fields, as well as employer demand pertaining to the skills most requested in job postings. This report provides insights into the projected growth in high demand occupations across Northwest Florida between 2024 and 2034. For this report, mentions of Northwest Florida (NWFL) or Florida's Great Northwest (FGNW) refer to the 13-county region comprised of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes, Washington, Bay, Jackson, Calhoun, Gulf, Liberty, Franklin, and Wakulla counties, as shown in **Figure 1**.

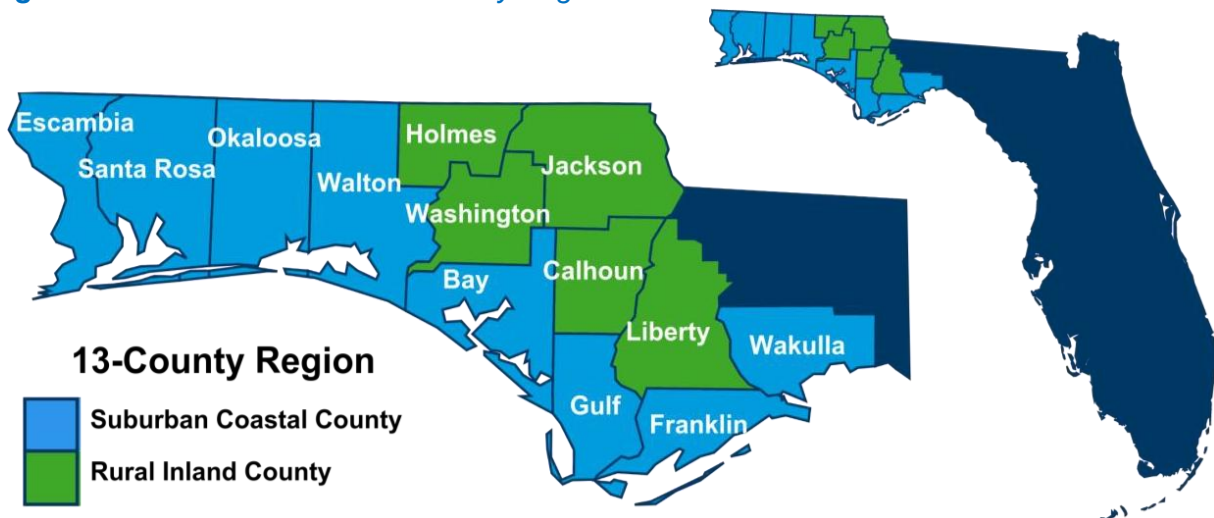
### Highlights

**Population Growth:** The population across the 13 counties of Florida’s Great Northwest is projected to increase by 13 percent between 2024 and 2034. Of these, five counties are both inland and rural. Collectively, the population in these rural counties grew by 4 percent from 2021 to 2024.

**Occupational Growth:** Computer & Mathematical occupations are projected to experience the highest job growth—18 percent nationally, 19 percent statewide, and 16 percent across the 13-county region.

**Earnings by Occupation:** While Management occupations have the highest median earnings at both the national and state levels, Computer & Mathematical occupations lead in earnings within Florida’s Great Northwest.

*Figure 1: Northwest Florida's 13-County Region*



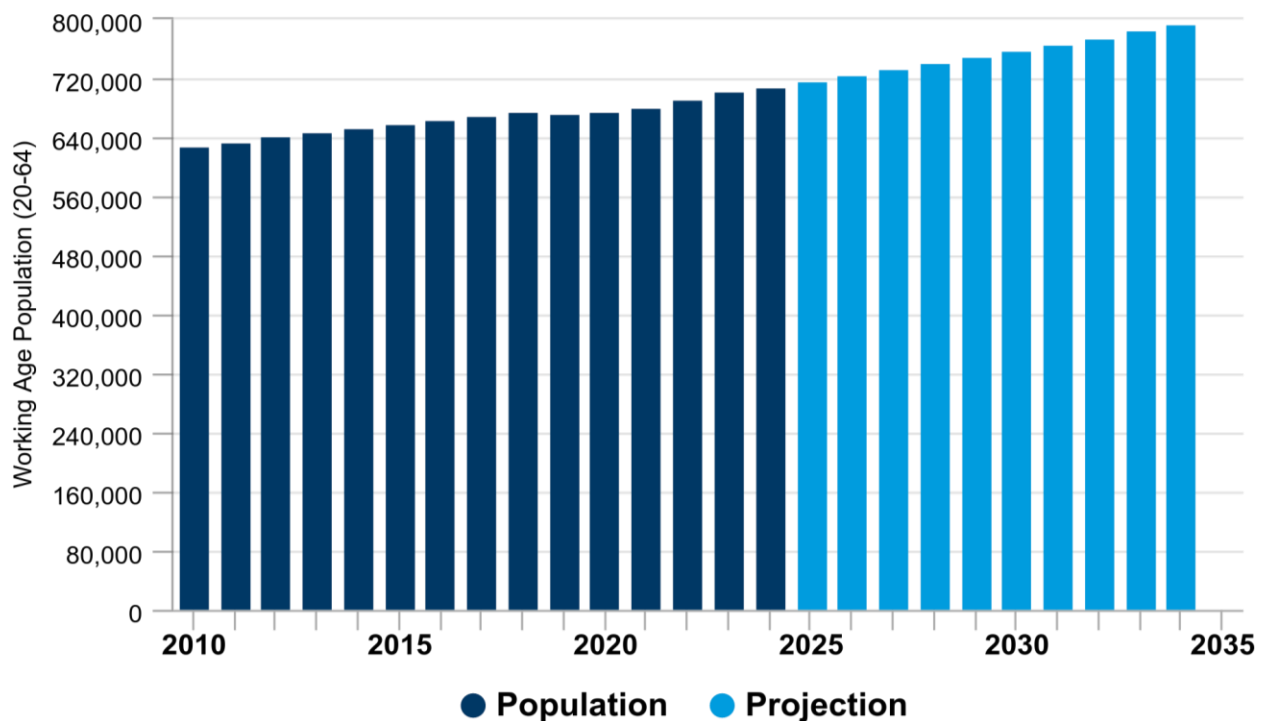
*Source: Florida's Great Northwest official 13 counties. "Rural" defined by the state of Florida.*

## Regional Overview

More than 1.2 million people live in the 13-county region of Northwest Florida. Since 2019, the region's population has grown by nearly 8 percent, adding 87,839 residents. Lightcast, a data analytics tool used by the Haas Center, predicts that the population is expected to grow by 13 percent between 2024 and 2034, adding 159,349 people. An increase in population is essential for business expansion and job creation, as it strengthens the workforce, encourages innovation, bolsters demand, and thus drives economic sustainability. The state attracts new residents for a variety of reasons: Florida's colleges and universities are among the best in the nation, the state does not collect a personal income tax, and the mild climate provides residents and visitors with many outdoor recreation opportunities.

**Figure 2** illustrates growth in the overall working-age population across the 13-county region. Working age is defined as 20-64 years old for this sample. A growing working-age population shows a promising trend for future workforce potential. By 2023 the working-age population was at 702,222, and the area was home to 130,157 veterans. This is a crucial segment of the workforce, as veterans often return to employment after their service, applying their technical skills to civilian professions. Eighteen percent of Northwest Florida residents possess a bachelor's degree, a value that is 3 percentage points below the national average. Approximately 11 percent of our population holds an associate's degree, which is 2 percentage points **above** the national average.<sup>i</sup>

**Figure 2:** Working-Age (20-64 Years) Population Projections for FG NW – ACS 5-year Data



**Source:** US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year - Population Count

Average annual earnings per worker are measured for all 2-digit occupational codes in the region, include part-time and full-time employees, and do not factor in the cost of living. For the Northwest Florida region, average annual earnings in 2024 were \$66,201. The state of Florida had a slightly higher average of \$77,422, and the United States had an even higher average, with \$85,003.

The cost of living index (COLI) provides a standard of how regional costs compare to the nation and to each other. The index is comprised of six major categories: grocery items, housing, utilities, transportation, healthcare, and miscellaneous goods and services. An index below 100 indicates the region has a lower cost of living, whereas above 100 means it is more expensive.<sup>ii</sup> The COLI across the 13-county region, 100.6, is on par with the nation's average of 100. The region also offers a lower COLI than the rest of the state (101.4). The two counties with the highest cost of living are Okaloosa (104.7) and Walton (107.7). By comparison, the cost of living in Indian River County, FL is 110.9, and in New York County, NY, it is 283.1.

## Rural, Inland Communities in Northwest Florida

Notably, five of the 13 counties in this region are both **inland** and **rural**: Holmes, Washington, Jackson, Calhoun, and Liberty. For this report, we use the State of Florida's definition, which classifies counties with fewer than 75,000 residents—or fewer than 125,000 if adjacent to another rural county—as rural. These areas generally have low population density, open spaces (such as agricultural land, industrial spaces, or solar farms), and fewer buildings or housing structures compared to urban or suburban areas.

Rural zones tend to lag behind their urban and suburban counterparts due to scarce resources, fewer educational opportunities, and stagnant economic mobility; however, rural regions often attract residents for a variety of different reasons. Some opt for a rural location to take advantage of the lower cost of living. For these five rural counties, the index was 97.3, which is below the national average of 100. Others return to rural communities after finishing school or working elsewhere, bringing social benefits that strengthen the socioeconomic foundation of the region and enhance the standard of living.<sup>iii</sup>

Rural areas also face healthcare challenges: fewer providers, longer emergency response times, and limited access to health education, to name a few. These effects were amplified for individuals in rural, inland communities during the pandemic, who yielded higher deathrates from COVID-19, relative to their population, compared to metropolitan and urban zones<sup>iv</sup>. From 2019 to 2021, the population exhibited a steady decline for the region, eventually normalizing in 2022 when it returned to pre-pandemic levels. In 2022, there were 1,166 net migrants that came to the five-county region.



The five inland, rural counties that lost population from 2019 to 2021 experienced a 4 percent population growth from 2021 to 2024, strengthening the resilience of the local workforce, and in 2024, the five counties held a combined population of 116,193 individuals.

From 2024 to 2034, the strongest projected job growth is in:

- Educational Instruction & Library
- Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media
- Architecture & Engineering occupations.

## Workforce Projections

Florida businesses benefit from an influx of new residents, including military retirees and graduates of top-rated universities. The Haas Center used data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Census Bureau, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, and Lightcast to rank the top 10 occupational categories based on 22 Standard Occupational Classifications (SOC) across national, state, and regional levels.

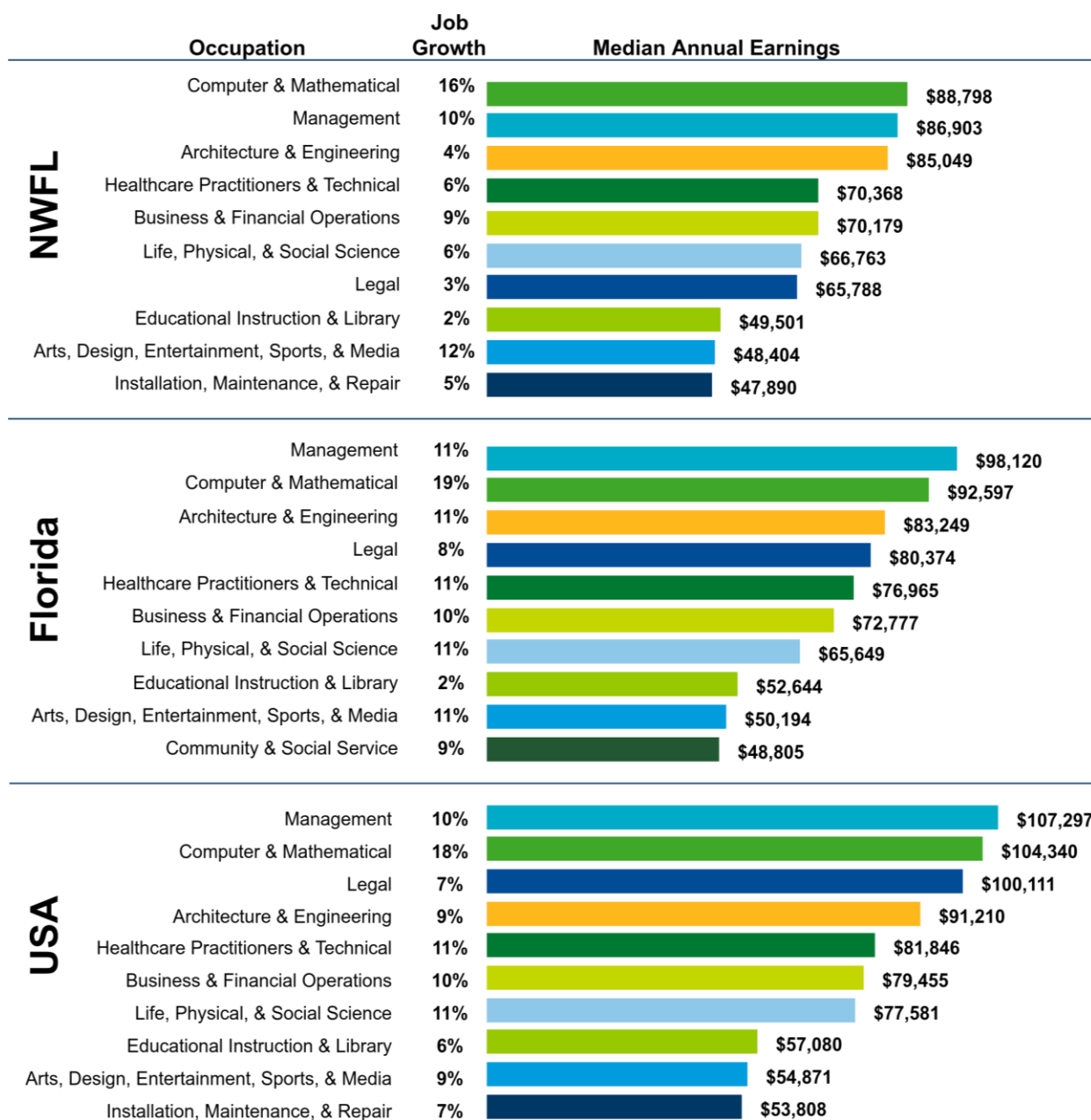
Occupations were ranked first by median earnings and then by the projected job growth between 2024 and 2034. All top 10 occupations in Northwest Florida are projected to experience growth during the forecast period. While the exact rankings, earnings, and growth rates may vary between geographies, the top 10 occupations remain consistent at both the regional and national levels. However, at the state level, Community & Social Service occupations ranked higher than Installation, Maintenance, & Repair, distinguishing it from the regional and national top 10 lists. A list of 22 occupational areas can be found in the appendix.

Projected job growth highlights in Northwest Florida (2024 to 2034):

- Computer & Mathematical occupations are expected to grow by 16 percent, the highest among all top occupations.
- Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media occupations are projected to increase by 12 percent, reflecting growth in creative fields.
- Business & Financial Operations occupations are also expected to expand by 9 percent, reinforcing demand for finance and management professionals.
- Installation, Maintenance, & Repair occupations anticipate a 5 percent increase in new job openings.
- Life, Physical, & Social Science occupations expect 6 percent job growth, signaling ongoing but moderate expansion in STEM professions.

**Figure 3** provides rankings of occupational areas at each geographic level. Note that rankings do not compare occupations between regions, only against those within the same geographic location. Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics (QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees classes of worker) and the American Community Survey (Self-Employed and Extended Proprietors). Occupational wage estimates are also affected by county-level earnings by industry.

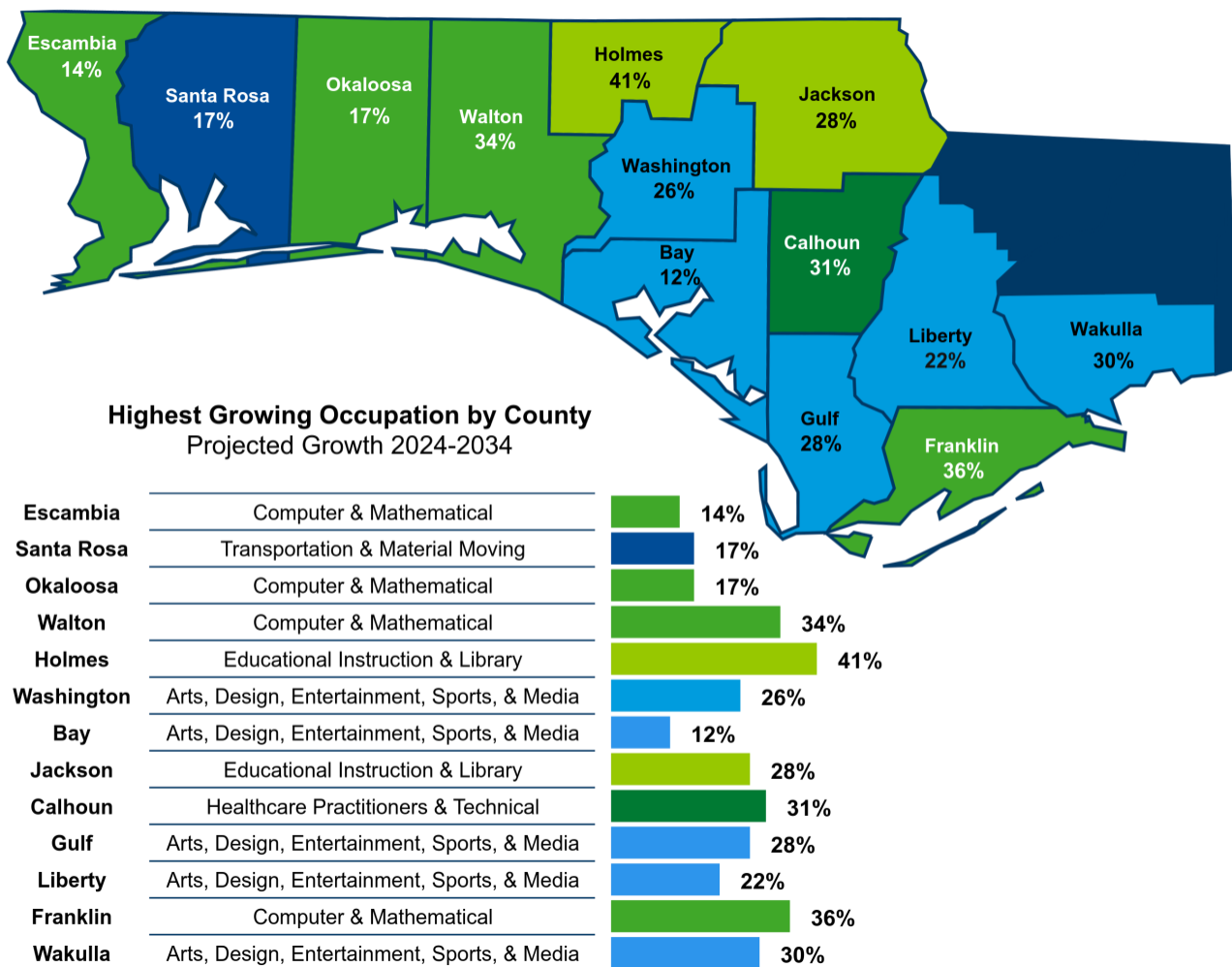
**Figure 3: Top Occupations by Region - Job Growth 2024-2034 and Median Earnings 2024**



Source: Lightcast, Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

**Figure 4** highlights the fastest-growing occupation within each county. Notably, Computer & Mathematical occupations dominate in several counties, including Escambia, Okaloosa, Walton, and Franklin, indicating strong growth in technology-related fields. Educational Instruction & Library occupations are the fastest growing in Holmes and Jackson counties, suggesting a demand for educators in these regions. Meanwhile, Healthcare Practitioners & Technical occupations lead in Calhoun County, reflecting the importance of the healthcare sector. The Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media field shows significant growth in Washington, Bay, Gulf, Liberty, and Wakulla counties. Growth rates vary widely, with the highest increases seen in Holmes (41 percent) and Franklin (36 percent), while Bay County has the lowest at 12 percent. This data suggests a diverse regional job market with varying industry strengths, emphasizing the importance of localized workforce development strategies. The following sections will expound upon the top 10 occupations in these counties.

**Figure 4: Top Occupational Job Growth by County (2024-2034)**



**Source:** Lightcast, Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



## Computer & Mathematical Occupations

Computer & Mathematical occupations have the highest job growth rate among the top 10 occupations at the local, state, and national levels, as shown in **Figure 3** on page 5. In the region, these occupations are anticipated to grow by 16 percent from 2024 to 2034. The salary for Computer & Mathematical occupations in Northwest Florida is anticipated to be \$88,798, which is lower than the national median salary of \$104,340. Common job titles in this sector include Systems Administrators, Software Engineers, Systems Engineers, Network Engineers, and Information Systems Security Specialists. The total number of jobs in this field is 13,332 and continues expanding technology and cybersecurity-related roles. Software Developers represent one of the largest and fastest-growing occupations, making it a highly competitive and rewarding career path.

Major employers hiring for these positions include General Dynamics, Navy Federal Credit Union, Oasis Systems, HX5, and Jacobs Engineering Group. These companies frequently seek highly skilled professionals for roles in network security, software development, and data management. Sample Job Postings as of March 2025: Developer/Architect — **Global Business Solutions** in Pensacola, FL and Network Engineer — **Canvas Agency** in Niceville, FL. The highest-paying jobs include Computer Network Architects, Research Scientists, and Actuaries, all of which offer salaries well above the regional median. At the lower end of the pay scale, Web Developers and Support Specialists tend to earn less compared to roles like Computer Network Architects or Research Scientists.

**Figure 5: Top 15 Skills for Computer & Mathematical Occupations (Lightcast Web Scraper)**



## Management Occupations

The supply of Management jobs in Northwest Florida is 30,378. Wages fall well below national earnings for these sectors. The national median salary for Management occupations is anticipated to be \$107,297, whereas Northwest Florida’s median salary is \$86,903. While Management ranks as the second highest-paid occupation in the region, it remains the top-ranked occupation at both the state and national levels. Job titles include General Managers, Assistant Managers, Program Managers, Operations Managers, and Assistant Operations Managers. Organizations that provide unique job postings in this category are HCA Healthcare, State of Florida, Baptist Health, Arby’s, and Healthcare Services Group. These employers offer a variety of opportunities across industries such as healthcare, government, and business operations.

Sample Job Postings as of March 2025: Construction Manager — **AECOM** in Panama City, FL and Site Quality Manager — **Cytiva** in Pensacola, FL. The three highest-paying occupations in this field are Chief Executives, Architectural and Engineering Managers, and Computer and Information Systems Managers. These roles offer salaries well above the median income level and are typically responsible for overseeing multiple business functions and making high-level strategic decisions. In contrast, other management positions—such as Personal Service Managers and Social and Community Service Managers—tend to earn less, though they still offer opportunities for career growth and advancement.

**Figure 6: Top 15 Skills for Management Occupations (Lightcast Web Scraper)**

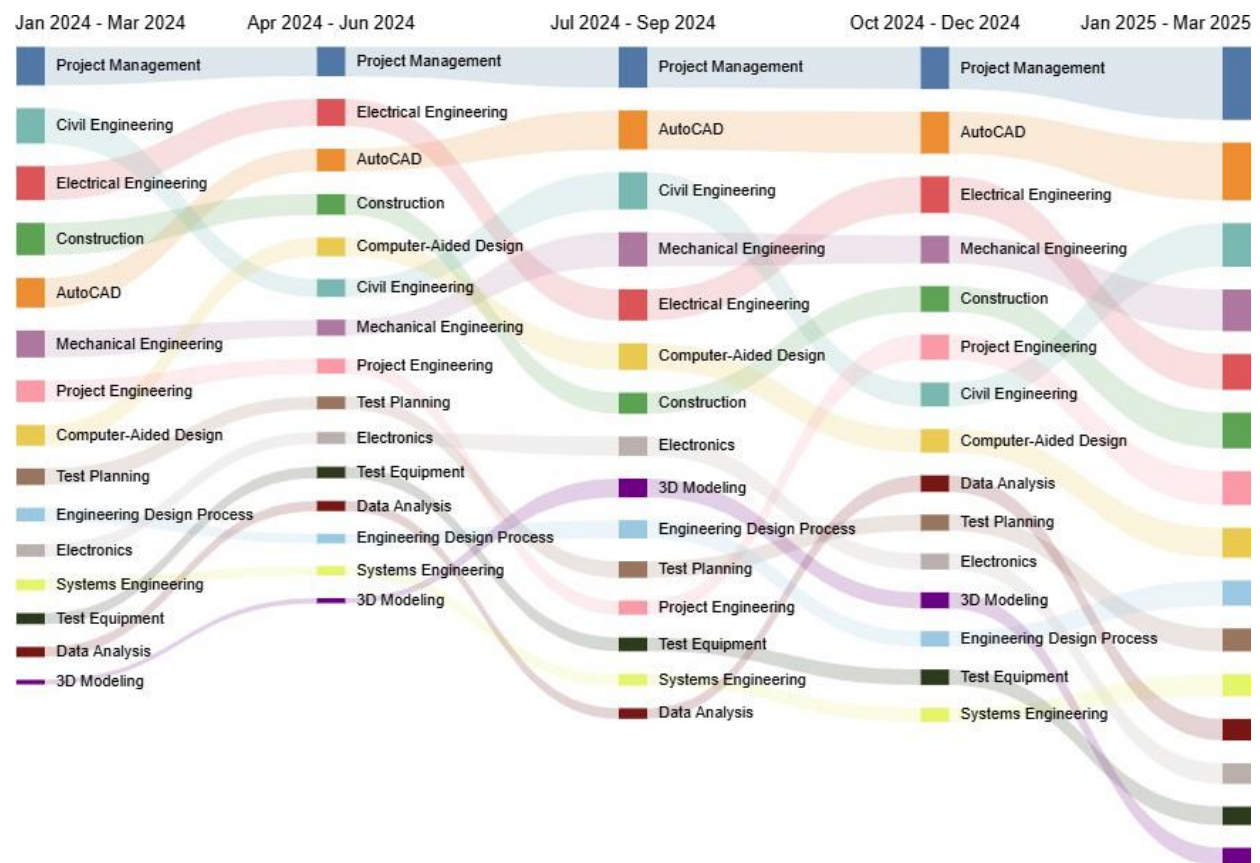


## Architecture & Engineering Occupations

Our region has a greater supply of Architecture & Engineering roles compared to the national average. The median salary for Architecture & Engineering occupations in the 13-county region is anticipated to be \$85,049, which is below the national median salary of \$91,210. This sector ranks among the highest paying occupations but has a moderate growth rate of 4 percent over the next decade, making it a slower-growing high-wage field. The University of West Florida (UWF) plays a key role in producing graduates for this sector, leading the region in higher education program completions.

While most engineering careers offer salaries above the regional median, certain positions—such as Architectural Drafters, Engineering Technicians, and Calibration Technicians—tend to fall below the median salary level. Individuals pursuing careers in this sector may hold titles such as Maintenance Technicians, Electrical Engineers, Engineering Technicians, Manufacturing Engineers, and Electronics Technicians. Notable companies in this industry include HX5, Leonardo DRS, Oasis Systems, Lockheed Martin, and Leidos. Sample Job Postings as of March 2025: Transportation Engineer Manager — **GE Vernova** in Pensacola, FL and Industrial Engineer — **Booz Allen Hamilton** in Panama City, FL.

**Figure 7: Top 15 Skills for Architecture & Engineering Occupations (Lightcast Web Scraper)**



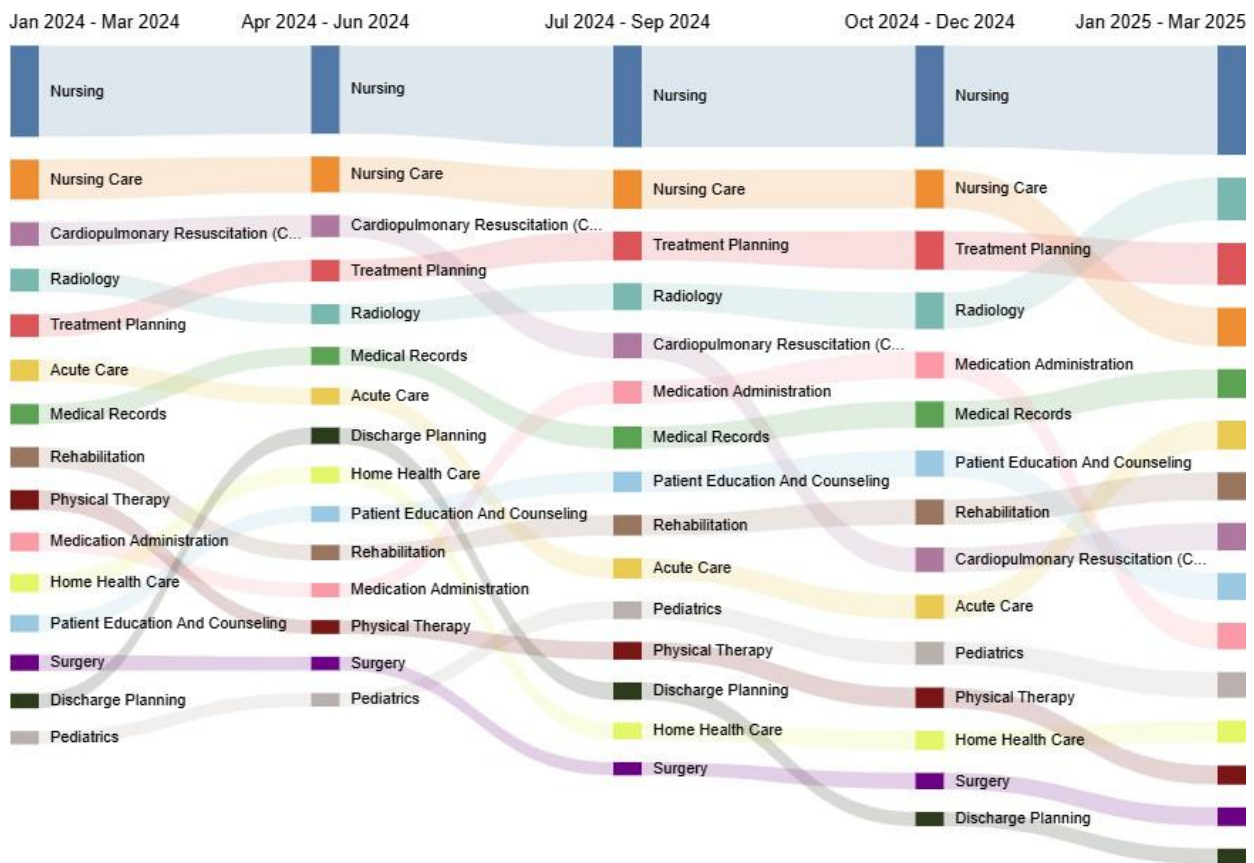


## Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations

The median salary for this field in Northwest Florida is anticipated to be \$70,368, which remains significantly lower than the national median salary of \$81,846. Common job titles in this field include Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Pharmacy Technicians, all of which are critical to the region’s healthcare system and workforce needs. Sample Job Postings as of March 2025: Physical Therapist — **Supplemental Health Care** in Niceville, FL and Locum Tenes Gastroenterologist — **CompHealth** in Panama City, FL.

Key employers in this industry include Ascension, HCA Healthcare, and Baptist Health, which consistently offer job opportunities for healthcare practitioners at various experience levels. As NWFL continues to expand its medical infrastructure, the demand for both specialized and non-specialized healthcare professionals is expected to remain strong.

**Figure 8: Top 15 Skills for Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations (Lightcast Web Scraper)**

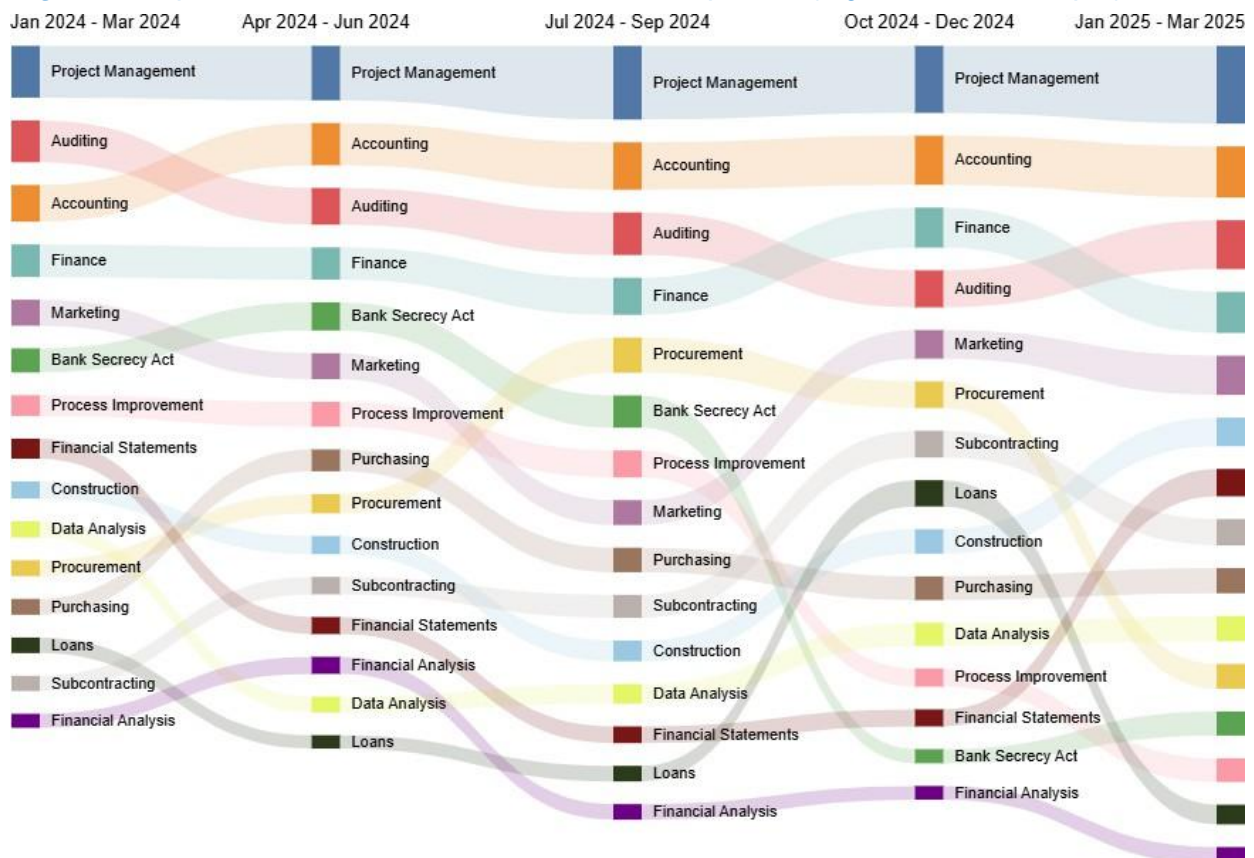


## Business & Financial Operations Occupations

The median salary for Business & Financial Operations occupations in Northwest Florida is anticipated to be \$70,179, which remains lower than the national median of \$79,455. The region has 32,274 jobs in these occupations. Common job titles within this sector include Project Management Specialists, Compliance Officers, Human Resources Specialists, Labor Relations Specialists, and Logisticians. These roles play a vital part in corporate operations, regulatory compliance, and workforce management. Sample Job Postings as of March 2025: Business Analyst — **HCA Healthcare** in Pensacola, FL and Workforce Development Specialist — **Three Saints Bay** in Panama City, FL.

Major employers in this industry include the State of Florida, Navy Federal Credit Union, Walmart, GPAC, and Cox Communications, all of which actively seek candidates for a variety of business and financial roles. With an expected increase in jobs from 32,648 in 2024 to 35,605 by 2034, the business and financial sector in NWFL is poised for steady growth, offering ample career opportunities.

**Figure 9: Top 15 Skills for Business & Financial Occupations (Lightcast Web Scraper)**



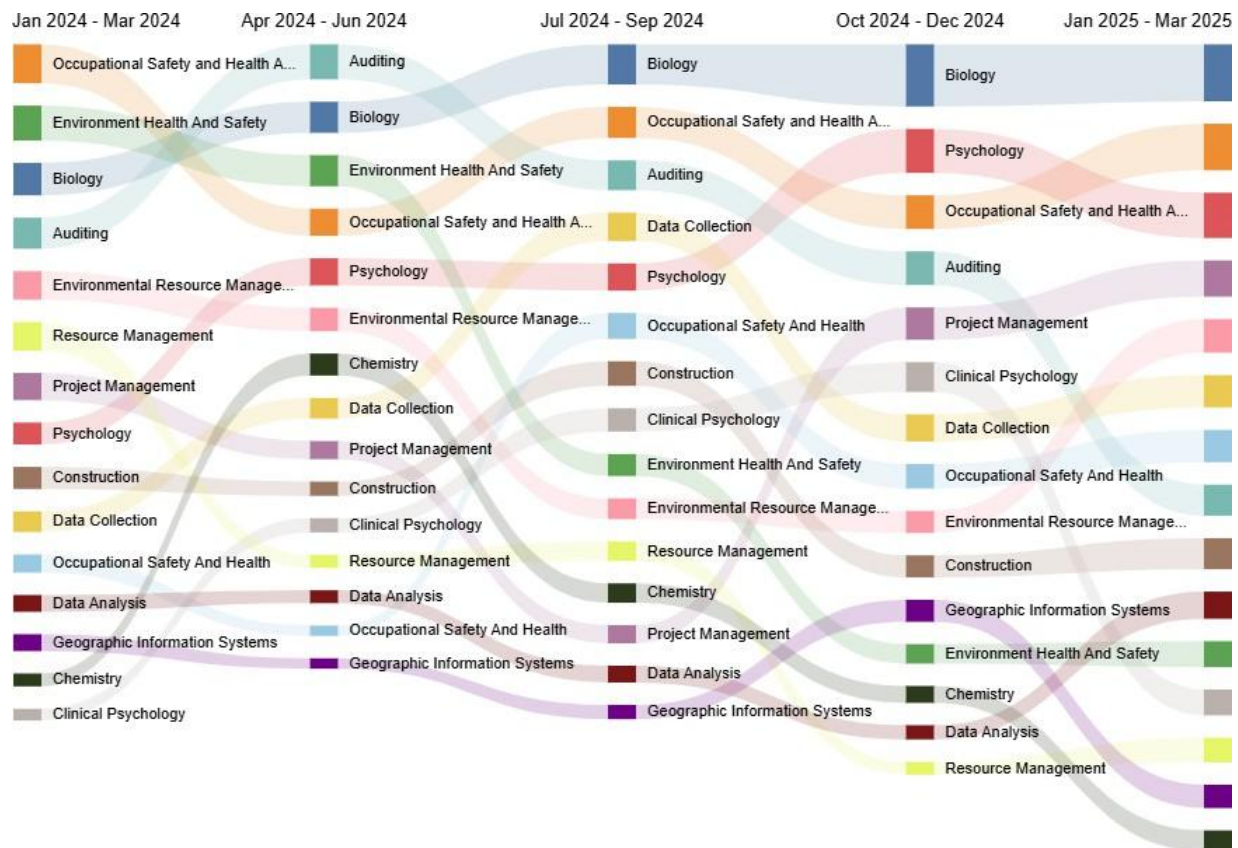


## Life, Physical, & Social Science Occupations

The median salary for Life, Physical, & Social Science occupations in Northwest Florida is anticipated to be \$66,763, which remains lower than the national median salary of \$77,581. Common job titles in this sector include Medical Laboratory Scientists, Clinical Psychologists, Environmental Specialists, and Park Rangers. These professionals play a crucial role in research, healthcare, and environmental management. The total number of jobs in this field is expected to increase from 4,133 in 2024 to 4,386 by 2034, highlighting positive employment trends in the region.

Sample Job Postings as of March 2025: Environmental Program Supervisor — **Three Saints Bay** in Panama City, FL and Interdisciplinary Scientist — **Eglin Air Force Base**, near Valparaiso, FL. Notable employers in the region include Ascension, the State of Florida, K.A. Recruiting, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and Armstrong World Industries. These organizations consistently seek professionals in scientific and research-based roles, ensuring diverse career opportunities for job seekers in the field.

**Figure 10: Top 15 Skills for Life, Physical, & Social Science Occupations (Lightcast Web Scraper)**

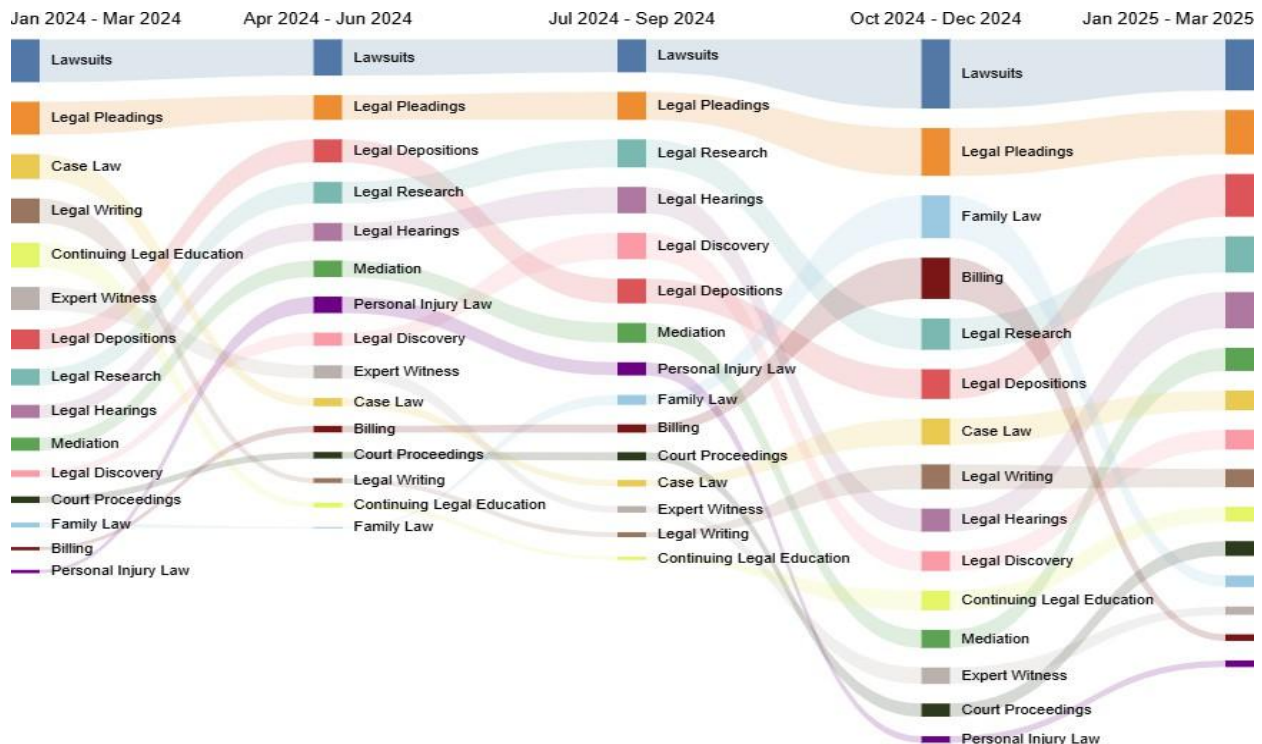


## Legal Occupations

The median salary for Legal occupations in Northwest Florida is anticipated to be \$65,788, which is significantly lower than the national median salary of \$100,111. This represents a wage gap of \$34,323, indicating that wages in this sector may need to increase substantially to attract legal professionals. The job growth in NWFL is 3 percent, which is slightly below the national growth rate of 7 percent, and Florida’s growth rate of 8 percent. The total number of jobs in this field is expected to increase from 4,223 in 2024 to 4,362 by 2034, demonstrating continued demand for legal professionals. Sample Job Postings as of March 2025: Attorney Manager — **State of Florida** in Pensacola, FL and City Litigation Attorney — **Kubicki Draper** in Pensacola, FL.

Notable companies that hire in this field include Morgan & Morgan, the State of Florida, Kelly Services, and the Justice Administrative Commission. These organizations offer opportunities in both public and private sectors, ranging from civil and criminal law to government legal services. Common job titles within this field include Attorney Managers, Legal Assistants, Guardians Ad Litem, and Associate Attorneys. These roles serve various functions in the legal system, from litigation and client representation to legal research and case preparation. Higher-paying roles in this field include Judges, Lawyers, and Administrative Law Attorneys, as they require years of specialized education, licensing, and courtroom experience. In contrast, Paralegals, Judicial Clerks, and Legal Support Workers typically earn below the median salary, as these roles require fewer years of education and certification. While job growth remains steady, salary disparities may continue to affect talent attraction and retention in NWFL’s legal sector.

**Figure 11: Top 15 Skills for Legal Occupations (Lightcast Web Scraper)**

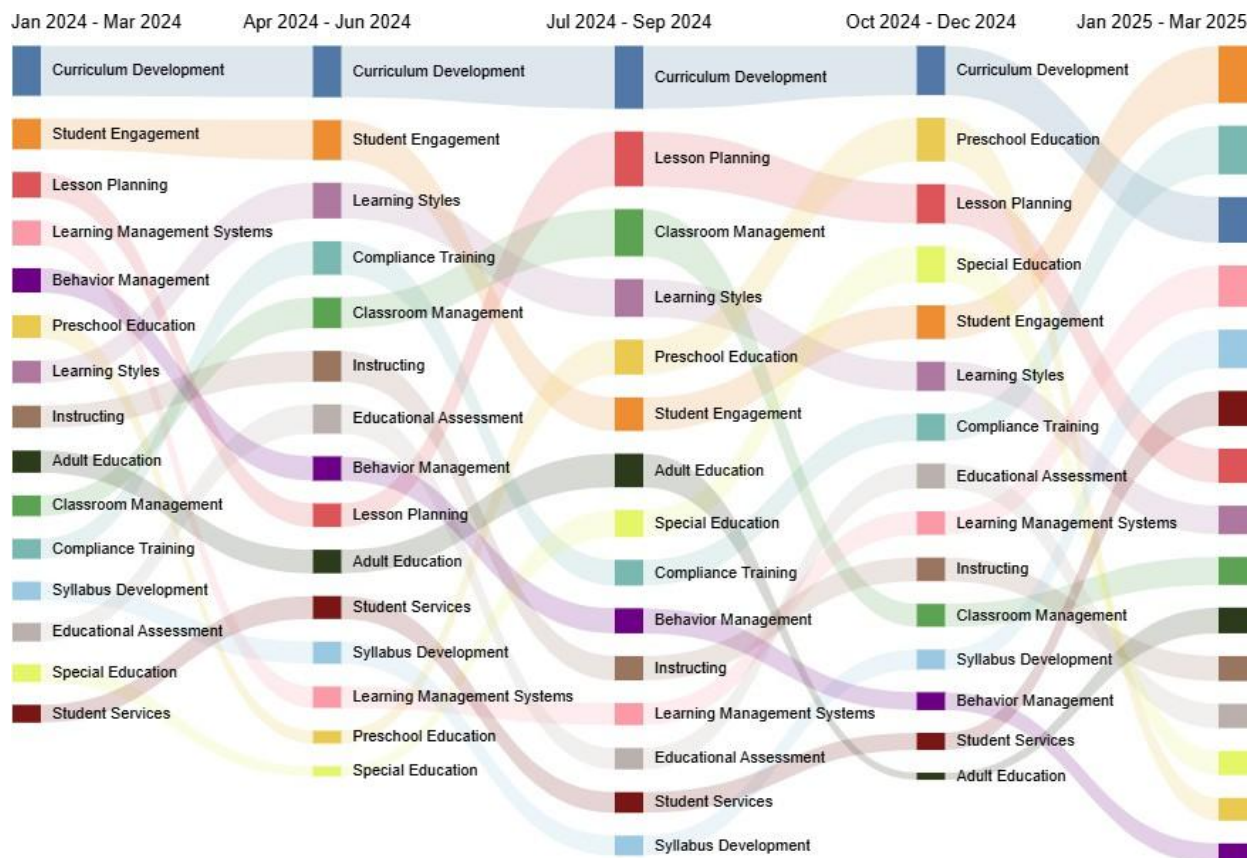


## Educational Instruction & Library Occupations

The median salary for Educational Instruction & Library occupations in Northwest Florida is anticipated to be \$49,501, which remains lower than the national median salary of \$57,080. The anticipated job growth in the region is 2 percent, which is about the same as the state. Common job titles in this sector include Classroom Teachers, Adjunct Faculty, Instructors, Classroom Assistants, and Instructor Pilots. These roles span various levels of education, from early childhood instruction to post-secondary education and other specialized training. The total number of jobs in this field is expected to increase slightly from 25,125 in 2024 to 25,609 by 2034, reflecting slow but steady growth. Sample Job Postings as of March 2025: Educational Consultant — **Pensacola Christian College** in Pensacola, FL and Discovery Manager — **Early Learning Academies** in Gulf Breeze, FL.

Organizations actively hiring in this field include Childcare Network, Pensacola State College, and OBXtek. The demand for educational professionals is largely influenced by regional population trends and funding for public and private institutions. While higher education faculty and specialized instructors often earn above the median salary, classroom assistants and early childhood educators typically fall on the lower end of the pay scale. Given the slow growth rate and lower-than-average salaries, the education sector may face challenges attracting and retaining qualified professionals to Northwest Florida.

**Figure 12: Top 15 Skills for Educational Instruction & Library Occupations (Lightcast Web Scraper)**



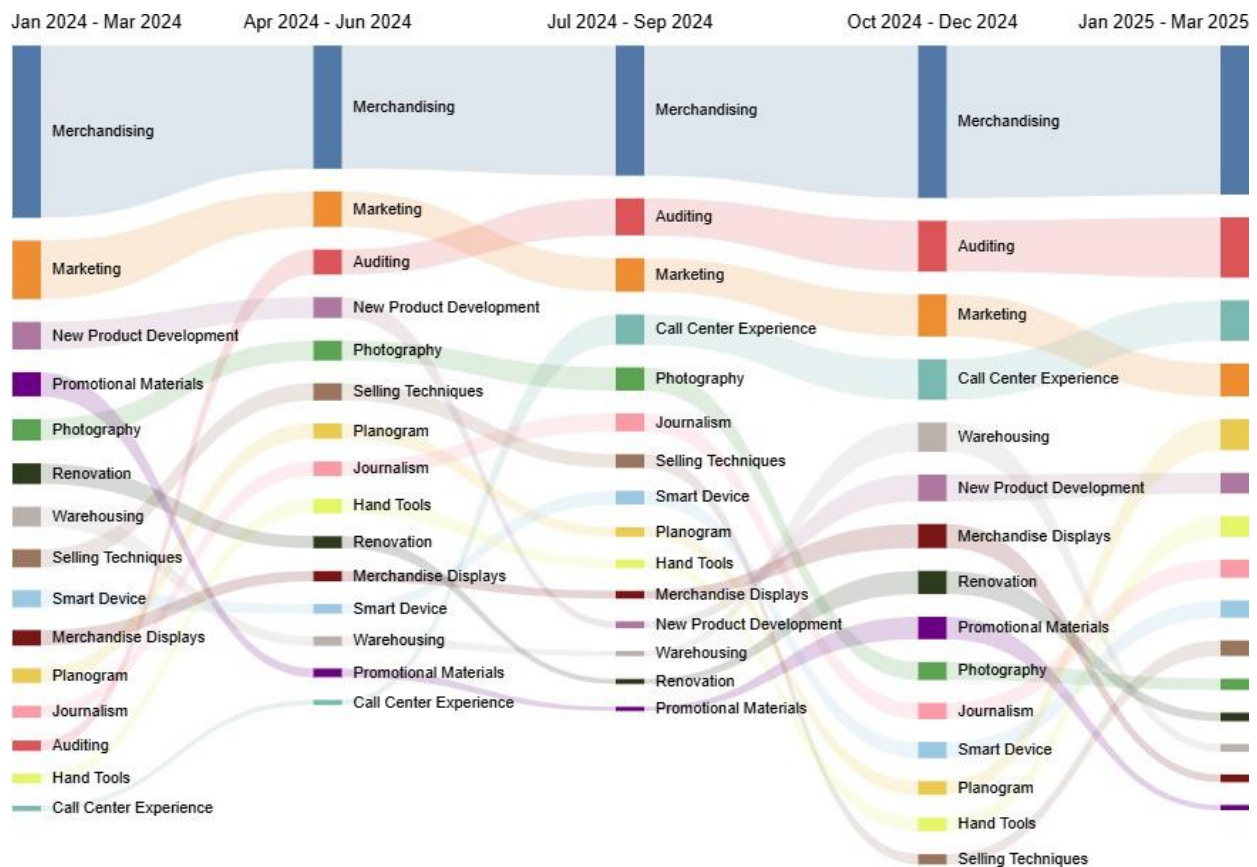


## Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media Occupations

The Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media occupations are ranked 9<sup>th</sup> for the three regions of our study. The median salary in Northwest Florida is \$48,404, which remains lower than the national median salary of \$54,871. Despite this wage gap, the field is projected to experience strong job growth of 11 percent over the next decade, indicating increasing demand for professionals in digital media and marketing roles. Job titles within this sector include Retail Merchandisers and Technical Writers. These roles span across industries such as advertising, journalism, visual arts, and digital media.

The total number of jobs in this field is expected to increase from 7,564 in 2024 to 8,440 by 2034, reflecting steady employment expansion. Sample Job Postings as of March 2025: Multimedia Journalist — **Gray Television** in Panama City, FL and Visual Merchandising Lead — **Sam’s Club** in Panama City, FL. Organizations actively hiring in this field include Anderson Merchandisers, Driveline, Acosta and Co., Crossmark, and SFS, offering opportunities in retail marketing, content creation, and brand merchandising. While technical writers and digital media specialists tend to earn salaries above the median, retail merchandisers and entry-level creative roles often fall on the lower end of the pay scale.

**Figure 13: Top 15 Skills for Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media Occupations (Lightcast Web Scraper)**

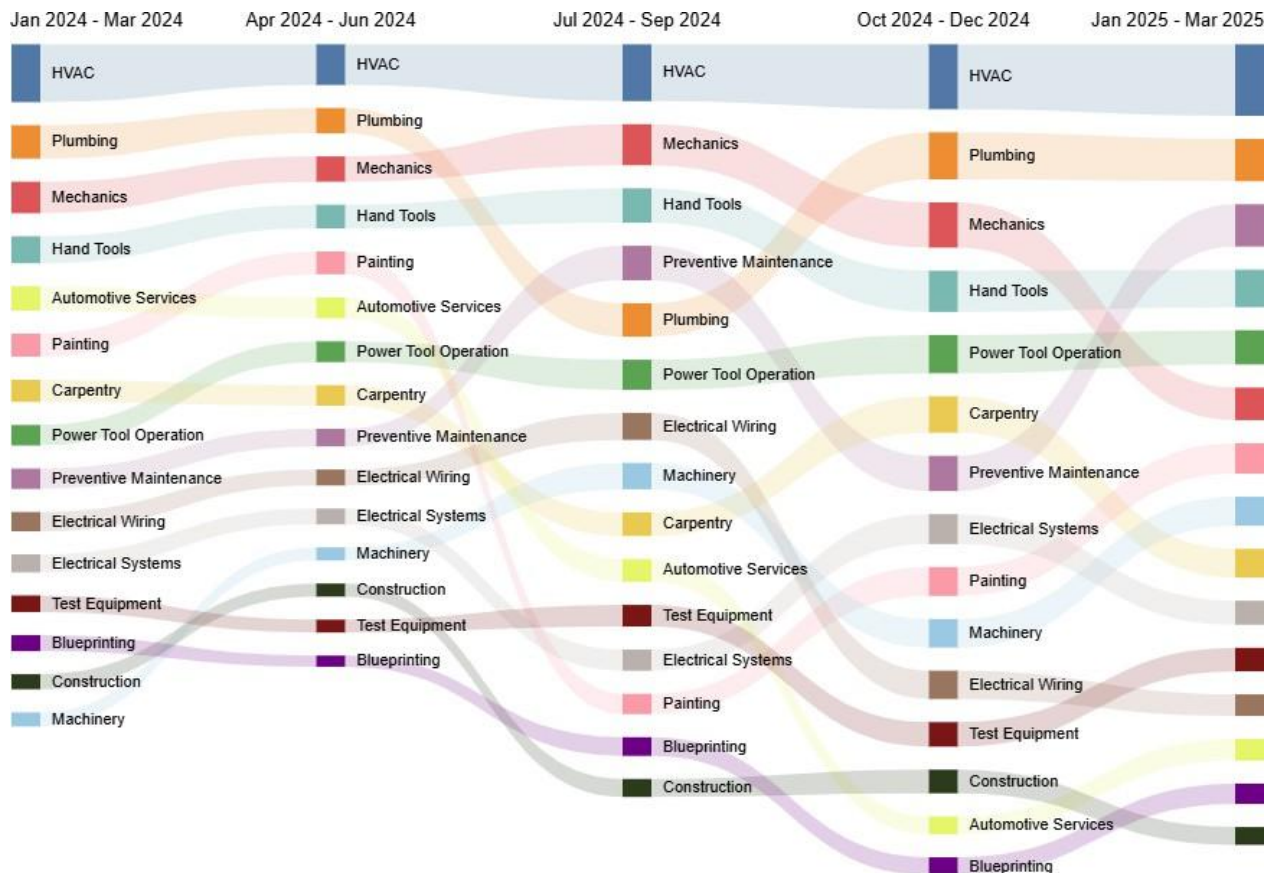


## Installation, Maintenance, & Repair Occupations

The median salary for Installation, Maintenance, & Repair occupations in Northwest Florida is \$47,890, which remains lower than the national median salary of \$53,808. However, the region has a robust job supply in this sector, totaling 27,158 in 2024. Common job titles include Maintenance Technicians, Service Technicians, Automotive Technicians, and Field Service Technicians. These roles are critical for infrastructure maintenance, mechanical repair, and field service operations. Sample Job Postings as of March 2025: Lift Mechanics — **Emerald Coast Utilities Authority** in Pensacola, FL and Maintenance Technician — **Okealoosa County** in Fort Walton Beach, FL. Organizations actively hiring for these roles include Pep Boys, Goodyear, Mediacom, and the State of Florida.

This occupation ranked 10<sup>th</sup> for the 13-county area and the nation, but not for the state. Community & Social Service occupations paid more than Installation, Maintenance, & Repair occupations in Florida, making it the only “outlier” among the top occupations trending for the region, state, and nation within the study. Though the field still projects 5 percent job growth over the next decade, Installation, Maintenance, & Repair Occupations are the only occupations out of the top 10 fields that risk automation.

**Figure 14: Top 15 Skills for Installation, Maintenance, & Repair Occupations (Lightcast Web Scraper)**

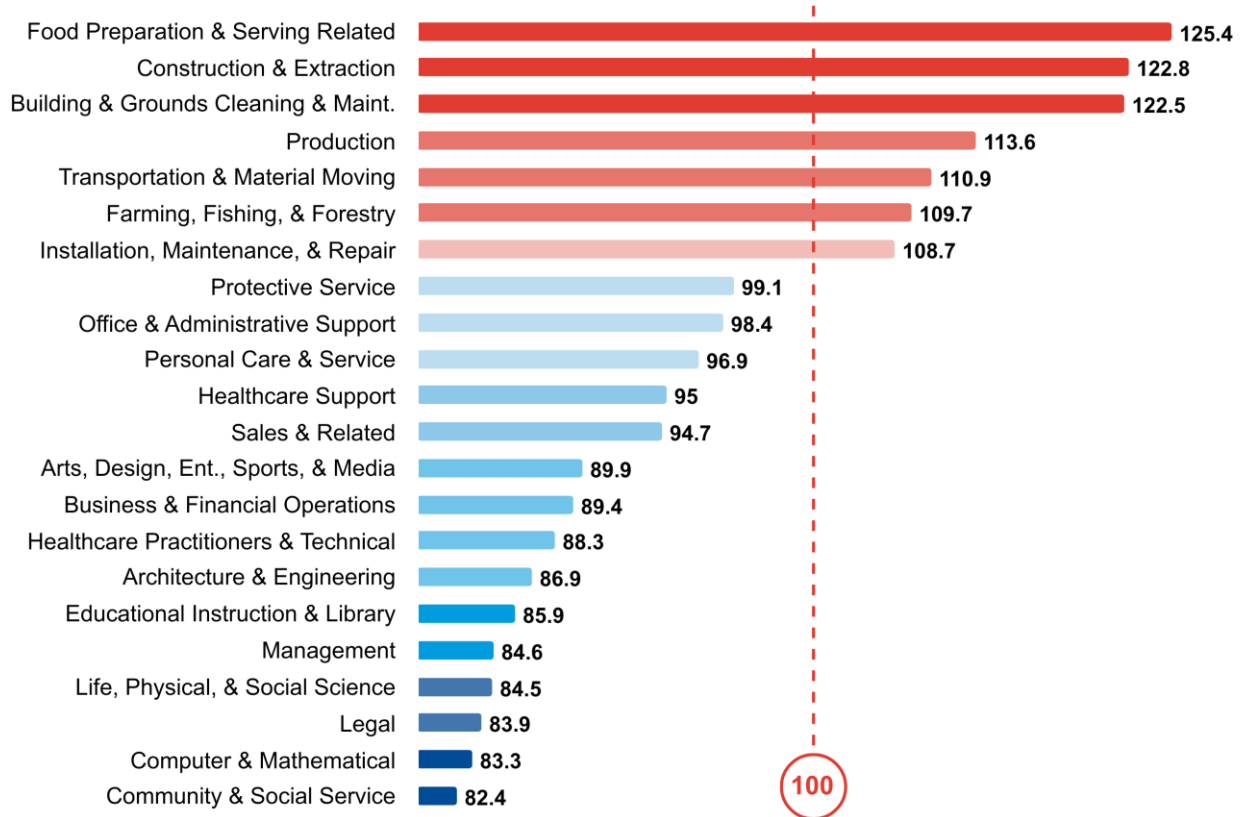




## Automation Index

Lightcast's National Automation Index analyzes the potential automation risk of occupations based on job tasks and their ability to become automated. This metric identifies which job tasks are 'at risk' and which are resilient. Occupations with an automation index above 100 have an above average risk of automation, while occupations with an automation index below 100 have a lower risk. The automation index for the 22 Standard Occupation Codes can be seen in **Figure 15**. We find that 9 out of Northwest Florida's 10 top occupations ranked among the least likely to be automated. The only one deemed "high" risk for automation would be Installation, Maintenance, & Repair occupations, 108.7, which reflects major technological shifts for this field. Healthcare workers are experiencing a great deal of innovation and automation as well, but this is reflected more for the Healthcare Support fields, as opposed to the Healthcare Practitioners & Technical workers.

**Figure 15: National Automation Index by Occupation**



**Source:** Lightcast, Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

## Summary

In conclusion, the Haas Center's team analyzed workforce trends across 13 counties in Northwest Florida. The report projects a 13 percent population increase between 2024 and 2034, which is expected to support economic growth and job creation in the region. The working-age population (ages 20–64) was over 700,000 in 2023, and veterans make up a key portion of the workforce. Educational attainment shows that 18 percent hold a bachelor's degree (below the national average), while 11 percent have an associate's degree (slightly above national levels). Average annual earnings in the region stand at \$66,201, trailing both state and national averages.

The top occupational sectors were ranked by projected 10-year job growth and median earnings. Computer & Mathematical occupations lead in growth, both regionally (16 percent) and statewide (19 percent), and offer the highest salaries in Northwest Florida. Other high-growth areas include Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media (12 percent); Business & Financial Operations (9 percent); and Installation, Maintenance, & Repair (5 percent). Management roles remain top earners nationally and statewide. Educational Instruction & Library occupations are expected to grow by 2 percent from 2024 to 2034. Though job growth is modest, consistent demand for educators remains, driven by population increases and institutional funding. Still, the sector may face recruitment challenges due to low salaries, especially in early childhood and assistant roles. Rural counties, including Holmes and Jackson, are projected to see notable increases in educational job opportunities.

Northwest Florida's inland and rural counties—Holmes, Washington, Jackson, Calhoun, and Liberty offer lower costs of living (COLI index of 97.3), and experienced a 4 percent population rebound from 2021 to 2024. Despite historical economic challenges, these regions are experiencing renewed interest, potentially due to affordability and lifestyle changes. The strongest job growth in rural counties is expected in education, creative industries, and engineering fields. Localized strategies will be crucial to match workforce development with the region's evolving demographic and economic landscape.

## Appendix A: 22 Occupations Ranked by Median Earnings & Job Growth

Rank	Region	Occupation	Median Annual Earnings	2024 - 2034 % Change	Auto Index
1	NWFL	Computer & Mathematical	\$88,798	16%	83.3
	FL	Management	\$98,120	11%	84.6
	USA	Management	\$107,297	10%	84.6
2	NWFL	Management	\$86,903	10%	84.6
	FL	Computer & Mathematical	\$92,597	19%	83.3
	USA	Computer & Mathematical	\$104,340	18%	83.3
3	NWFL	Architecture & Engineering	\$85,049	4%	86.9
	FL	Architecture & Engineering	\$83,249	11%	86.9
	USA	Legal	\$100,111	7%	83.9
4	NWFL	Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	\$70,368	6%	88.3
	FL	Legal	\$80,374	8%	83.9
	USA	Architecture & Engineering	\$91,210	9%	86.9
5	NWFL	Business & Financial Operations	\$70,179	9%	89.4
	FL	Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	\$76,965	11%	88.3
	USA	Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	\$81,846	11%	88.3
6	NWFL	Life, Physical, & Social Science	\$66,763	6%	84.5
	FL	Business & Financial Operations	\$72,777	10%	89.4
	USA	Business & Financial Operations	\$79,455	10%	89.4
7	NWFL	Legal	\$65,788	3%	83.9
	FL	Life, Physical, & Social Science	\$65,649	11%	84.5
	USA	Life, Physical, & Social Science	\$77,581	11%	84.5
8	NWFL	Educational Instruction & Library	\$49,501	2%	85.9
	FL	Educational Instruction & Library	\$52,644	2%	85.9
	USA	Educational Instruction & Library	\$57,080	6%	85.9
9	NWFL	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	\$48,404	12%	89.9
	FL	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	\$50,194	11%	89.9
	USA	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	\$54,871	9%	89.9
10	NWFL	Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	\$47,890	5%	108.7
	FL	Community & Social Service	\$48,805	9%	82.4
	USA	Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	\$53,808	7%	108.7
11	NWFL	Community & Social Service	\$45,373	7%	82.4
	FL	Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	\$47,612	6%	108.7
	USA	Construction & Extraction	\$53,437	6%	122.8

*Military and Unclassified Occupations were removed*

Rank	Region	Occupation	Median Annual Earnings	2024 - 2023 % Change	Auto Index
12	NWFL	Construction & Extraction	\$44,021	3%	122.8
	FL	Construction & Extraction	\$46,130	7%	122.8
	USA	Community & Social Service	\$52,855	12%	82.4
13	NWFL	Protective Service	\$42,416	-4%	99.1
	FL	Protective Service	\$42,829	-1%	99.1
	USA	Protective Service	\$48,258	4%	99.1
14	NWFL	Production	\$39,746	3%	113.6
	FL	Office & Administrative Support	\$40,682	0%	98.4
	USA	Office & Administrative Support	\$43,500	0%	98.4
15	NWFL	Office & Administrative Support	\$38,988	-1%	98.4
	FL	Production	\$38,500	4%	113.6
	USA	Production	\$42,579	2%	113.6
16	NWFL	Transportation & Material Moving	\$36,397	9%	110.9
	FL	Transportation & Material Moving	\$36,932	9%	110.9
	USA	Transportation & Material Moving	\$40,715	9%	110.9
17	NWFL	Healthcare Support	\$34,424	6%	95
	FL	Sales & Related	\$36,904	3%	94.7
	USA	Sales & Related	\$37,325	2%	94.7
18	NWFL	Sales & Related	\$33,268	2%	94.7
	FL	Healthcare Support	\$35,945	12%	95
	USA	Healthcare Support	\$35,874	18%	95
19	NWFL	Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	\$32,011	1%	109.7
	FL	Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	\$32,033	3%	122.5
	USA	Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	\$35,527	4%	122.5
20	NWFL	Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	\$31,033	5%	122.5
	FL	Personal Care & Service	\$30,118	6%	96.9
	USA	Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	\$33,654	4%	109.7
21	NWFL	Personal Care & Service	\$29,226	5%	96.9
	FL	Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$30,029	4%	125.4
	USA	Personal Care & Service	\$33,080	8%	96.9
22	NWFL	Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$28,511	2%	125.4
	FL	Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	\$29,878	-4%	109.7
	USA	Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$32,251	7%	125.4

*Military and Unclassified Occupations were removed*

## Appendix B: Median Household Income and Average Annual Earnings

Region	Median Household Income (2022)	Average Earnings (2024)
Bay	\$65,999	\$62,630
Calhoun	\$41,526	\$48,764
Escambia	\$61,642	\$69,377
Franklin	\$58,107	\$50,540
Gulf	\$56,250	\$59,852
Holmes	\$46,063	\$50,583
Jackson	\$46,144	\$55,619
Liberty	\$51,723	\$59,172
Okaloosa	\$73,988	\$72,340
Santa Rosa	\$84,715	\$60,618
Wakulla	\$72,035	\$56,502
Walton	\$74,832	\$63,746
Washington	\$47,536	\$54,081
<b>NWFL</b>	<b>\$59,020</b>	<b>\$66,201</b>
<b>FL</b>	<b>\$67,917</b>	<b>\$77,422</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>\$75,149</b>	<b>\$85,003</b>

**Appendix B** depicts median household income and average earnings per job by region. Median household income refers to the income level at which half of all households earn more and half earn less. It is the income of all working individuals within the household, no matter what their relation to each other may be. Average earnings are calculated as the average earnings per worker.

**Northwest Florida:** The median household income in the 13 counties was \$59,020 in 2022. Of the top 10 occupations, only three had earnings below the region’s median: Educational Instruction & Library; Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media; and Installation, Maintenance, & Repair fields.

**Florida:** For the state of Florida, the median household income in 2022 was \$67,917. Four of the top 10 occupations fell short of the regional median. The four fields below the median income are: Life, Physical, & Social Science; Educational Instruction & Library; Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media; and Community & Social Service. The average Life, Physical, & Social Science occupation pays less in the state than they would in the 13-county region or at the national level. Despite anticipating a 9 percent growth in jobs between 2024 and 2034, the Community & Social Service occupations earned only \$48,805.

**United States:** Nationally, the median household income in 2022 was \$75,149. Of the top 10 occupations, only three had earnings below the regional median: Educational Instruction & Library; Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media; and Installation, Maintenance, & Repair fields. These are the same occupations that were ranked below the median in Northwest Florida. When comparing these occupations to Northwest Florida’s average annual earnings of \$66,201, four occupations fell short.



Workers in the 13-county region may receive lower earnings when compared to the rest of the state, or the nation, but more occupations pay at, or above, the region's median. Florida's Great Northwest counties offer a desirable residential location that boasts a relatively low cost of living, allowing the value of their dollar to stretch further than it would in the rest of the state or at the national level.

### Appendix C: Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Lightcast Labor Market Analytics, [Data Run 2025.1](#); American Community Survey.

<sup>ii</sup> The Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER): <https://www.c2er.org>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2015/july/why-some-return-home-to-rural-america-and-why-it-matters>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.flhealthcharts.gov/ChartsDashboards/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=COVID19Death.Dataviewer&cid=9937>