



# Illinois Workforce Demand 2024-2029

## Introduction

The Illinois job market continues to evolve, driven by shifting economic trends, technological advancements, and changing workforce needs. Understanding the most in-demand occupations provides valuable insights for job seekers, educators, and policymakers striving to align workforce development with industry demands. This report highlights the top occupations in demand across different education levels, from entry-level positions requiring minimal formal education to advanced roles necessitating specialized degrees. The findings underscore the persistent need for essential service jobs, the rising demand for skilled technical workers, and the increasing importance of higher education in securing lucrative career opportunities.

## Top 10 Occupations in Demand Statewide: Regardless of Education Level Typically Required

The most in-demand occupations in Illinois across all education levels are dominated by service, retail, and logistics roles. Fast food and counter workers, cashiers, retail salespersons, and stockers/order fillers make up a large portion of job openings, reflecting high turnover rates and sustained consumer demand. Laborers and material movers are also in high demand, a trend likely driven by e-commerce and supply chain logistics.

Notably, personal care aides stand out due to the growing need for elderly care services. General and operations managers are among the higher-paying roles on this list, requiring extensive experience and leadership skills. Customer service representatives and janitors remain key players in the workforce, particularly in business support roles. Overall, these positions highlight strong demand for essential service jobs, many of which require only short-term on-the-job training.

**Top 10 in Demand Statewide: Regardless of Education Level Typically Required**

Occ. Code	Occupation Title	2024 Jobs Estimated	2029 Jobs Projected	Unempl Rate	5 Year Growth	Total Exits	Total Transfers	5 Year Total Demand	Annual Demand	Entry Level Wages, Annual	Median Wages, Annual	Experienced Wages, Annual	Entry Level Wages, Hourly	Median Wages, Hourly	Experienced Wages, Hourly	Entry-Level Education Requirements
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	125,255	119,970	8.2%	-5,285	66,382	71,210	132,307	26,461	\$29,900	\$32,700	\$35,300	\$14.36	\$15.72	\$16.99	None
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	194,359	190,866	9.6%	-3,492	45,828	77,335	119,671	23,934	\$33,500	\$40,600	\$47,400	\$16.11	\$19.54	\$22.78	None
41-2011	Cashiers	124,424	112,121	10.0%	-12,303	54,973	55,546	98,216	19,643	\$29,600	\$32,000	\$35,300	\$14.21	\$15.38	\$16.97	None
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	135,853	127,785	5.8%	-8,068	42,605	50,997	85,535	17,107	\$30,600	\$35,400	\$44,200	\$14.69	\$17.02	\$21.27	None
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	101,555	99,970	10.1%	-1,585	30,986	48,977	78,378	15,676	\$33,200	\$39,600	\$44,400	\$15.96	\$19.03	\$21.36	High school diploma or equivalent
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	82,499	77,207	7.0%	-5,293	33,588	47,258	75,553	15,111	\$29,500	\$31,500	\$38,300	\$14.18	\$15.13	\$18.43	None
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	191,470	187,191	2.5%	-4,279	23,436	50,621	69,778	13,956	\$57,800	\$109,400	\$174,300	\$27.80	\$52.58	\$83.82	Bachelor's degree
31-1122	Personal Care Aides	90,194	95,051	5.2%	4,857	34,496	30,301	69,654	13,931	\$32,100	\$36,500	\$38,600	\$15.41	\$17.55	\$18.55	High school diploma or equivalent
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	116,956	108,742	5.8%	-8,215	30,862	42,986	65,633	13,127	\$34,600	\$45,000	\$53,800	\$16.64	\$21.63	\$25.87	High school diploma or equivalent
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and House-keeping Cleaners	100,679	96,489	5.9%	-4,190	33,972	33,972	63,755	12,751	\$31,500	\$37,600	\$43,000	\$15.16	\$18.08	\$20.67	None

## Top 10 Occupations in Demand Statewide: High School Diploma/GED or Less

For individuals with a high school diploma or less, Illinois' job market offers numerous entry-level opportunities. Many of these roles, such as fast food workers, laborers, cashiers, and retail salespersons, involve frontline customer service and logistics. These jobs typically require minimal prior experience, making them accessible to a broad workforce.

Personal care aides and janitors also remain in high demand, reflecting the need for healthcare support and building maintenance roles. Stockers and order fillers continue to be integral to the retail and supply chain industries. The presence of customer service representatives and office clerks underscores the demand for administrative support in various industries. Although wages in these occupations vary, they provide essential employment opportunities for workers without higher education credentials.

**Top 10 in Demand Statewide: High School Diploma/GED or Less**

Occ. Code	Occupation Title	2024 Jobs Estimated	2029 Jobs Projected	Unempl Rate	5 Year Growth	Total Exits	Total Transfers	5 Year Total Demand	Annual Demand	Entry Level Wages, Annual	Median Wages, Annual	Experienced Wages, Annual	Entry Level Wages, Hourly	Median Wages, Hourly	Experienced Wages, Hourly	Entry-Level Education Requirements
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	125,255	119,970	8.2%	-5,285	66,382	71,210	132,307	26,461	\$29,900	\$32,700	\$35,300	\$14.36	\$15.72	\$16.99	None
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	194,359	190,866	9.6%	-3,492	45,828	77,335	119,671	23,934	\$33,500	\$40,600	\$47,400	\$16.11	\$19.54	\$22.78	None
41-2011	Cashiers	124,424	112,121	10.0%	-12,303	54,973	55,546	98,216	19,643	\$29,600	\$32,000	\$35,300	\$14.21	\$15.38	\$16.97	None
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	135,853	127,785	5.8%	-8,068	42,605	50,997	85,535	17,107	\$30,600	\$35,400	\$44,200	\$14.69	\$17.02	\$21.27	None
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	101,555	99,970	10.1%	-1,585	30,986	48,977	78,378	15,676	\$33,200	\$39,600	\$44,400	\$15.96	\$19.03	\$21.36	High school diploma or equivalent
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	82,499	77,207	7.0%	-5,293	33,588	47,258	75,553	15,111	\$29,500	\$31,500	\$38,300	\$14.18	\$15.13	\$18.43	None
31-1122	Personal Care Aides	90,194	95,051	5.2%	4,857	34,496	30,301	69,654	13,931	\$32,100	\$36,500	\$38,600	\$15.41	\$17.55	\$18.55	High school diploma or equivalent
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	116,956	108,742	5.8%	-8,215	30,862	42,986	65,633	13,127	\$34,600	\$45,000	\$53,800	\$16.64	\$21.63	\$25.87	High school diploma or equivalent
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	100,679	96,489	5.9%	-4,190	33,972	33,972	63,755	12,751	\$31,500	\$37,600	\$43,000	\$15.16	\$18.08	\$20.67	None

## Top 10 Occupations in Demand Statewide: Postsecondary Non-Degree (Certificate), Some College, and Associate's Degree

Occupations requiring postsecondary certifications or associate degrees highlight Illinois' need for skilled professionals in healthcare, transportation, and technical trades. Heavy truck drivers top the list, reflecting the ongoing demand for logistics and freight movement. Similarly, nursing assistants and medical assistants play a crucial role in the growing healthcare sector, emphasizing the state's need for patient care support.

Accounting clerks, teaching assistants, and computer support specialists demonstrate the continued demand for financial management, education, and IT support roles. Meanwhile, cosmetologists and automotive service technicians highlight career paths in personal services and skilled trades. With relatively higher wages compared to high school-level jobs, these occupations offer promising opportunities for individuals seeking specialized training without pursuing a four-year degree.

### Top 10 in Demand Statewide: Post-Secondary Non-Degree (Certificate), Some College, and Associate's Degree

Occ. Code	Occupation Title	2024 Jobs Estimated	2029 Jobs Projected	Unempl Rate	5 Year Growth	Total Exits	Total Transfers	5 Year Total Demand	Annual Demand	Entry Level Wages, Annual	Median Wages, Annual	Experienced Wages, Annual	Entry Level Wages, Hourly	Median Wages, Hourly	Experienced Wages, Hourly	Entry-Level Education Requirements
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	95,912	93,548	5.4%	-2,364	21,091	27,652	46,379	9,276	\$42,100	\$61,200	\$74,100	\$20.25	\$29.43	\$35.60	Postsecondary non-degree award
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	58,996	57,063	5.1%	-1,933	18,038	22,333	38,437	7,687	\$36,700	\$42,400	\$46,000	\$17.66	\$20.37	\$22.14	Postsecondary non-degree award
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	68,863	63,743	2.0%	-5,120	21,022	16,494	32,396	6,479	\$39,200	\$51,600	\$60,800	\$18.84	\$24.83	\$29.23	Some college, no degree
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	54,979	52,228	4.6%	-2,750	15,004	15,530	27,783	5,557	\$30,500	\$36,800	\$42,500	\$14.65	\$17.68	\$20.45	Some college, no degree
31-9092	Medical Assistants	23,676	24,124	2.2%	447	5,625	9,574	15,647	3,129	\$36,900	\$44,300	\$49,000	\$17.76	\$21.31	\$23.56	Postsecondary non-degree award
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	22,317	22,119	1.7%	-197	6,625	8,281	14,709	2,942	\$30,600	\$38,000	\$49,400	\$14.73	\$18.26	\$23.76	Postsecondary non-degree award
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	32,596	31,400	2.5%	-1,196	5,523	7,732	12,058	2,412	\$35,700	\$52,100	\$67,100	\$17.16	\$25.03	\$32.25	Postsecondary non-degree award
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	21,803	21,129	3.2%	-674	4,877	6,255	10,457	2,091	\$33,400	\$40,100	\$46,500	\$16.07	\$19.27	\$22.37	Associate's degree
31-9091	Dental Assistants	13,497	13,342	2.3%	-155	3,732	5,398	8,976	1,795	\$34,600	\$45,100	\$50,000	\$16.64	\$21.69	\$24.05	Postsecondary non-degree award
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	27,729	27,331	2.3%	-399	3,415	5,601	8,617	1,723	\$43,600	\$62,100	\$76,700	\$20.98	\$29.88	\$36.87	Some college, no degree

### Top 10 Occupations in Demand Statewide: Bachelor's Degree

For those holding a bachelor's degree, Illinois presents strong employment opportunities in management, finance, healthcare, and technology. General and operations managers lead the list, reflecting the need for experienced leaders in various industries. Registered nurses remain in high demand, reinforcing the continued need for healthcare professionals.

Software developers, accountants, and financial managers represent key roles in finance and technology, offering high salaries and career stability. Similarly, management analysts and marketing specialists showcase the need for strategic decision-making and data-driven insights in business operations. Business operations specialists, elementary school teachers, and managers across various sectors round out the list, emphasizing the demand for educated professionals in both private and public sectors.

### Top 10 in Demand Statewide: Bachelor's Degree

Occ. Code	Occupation Title	2024 Jobs Estimated	2029 Jobs Projected	Unempl Rate	5 Year Growth	Total Exits	Total Transfers	5 Year Total Demand	Annual Demand	Entry Level Wages, Annual	Median Wages, Annual	Experienced Wages, Annual	Entry Level Wages, Hourly	Median Wages, Hourly	Experienced Wages, Hourly	Entry-Level Education Requirements
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	191,470	187,191	2.5%	-4,279	23,436	50,621	69,778	13,956	\$57,800	\$109,400	\$174,300	\$27.80	\$52.58	\$83.82	Bachelor's degree
29-1141	Registered Nurses	132,363	129,340	1.7%	-3,023	21,370	13,599	31,945	6,389	\$71,200	\$88,500	\$101,000	\$34.21	\$42.55	\$48.58	Bachelor's degree
15-1252	Software Developers	60,252	65,405	2.7%	5,154	5,447	11,535	22,135	4,427	\$85,400	\$129,800	\$152,000	\$41.06	\$62.39	\$73.09	Bachelor's degree
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	58,283	56,903	1.5%	-1,380	8,835	12,825	20,281	4,056	\$55,900	\$81,300	\$105,900	\$26.88	\$39.11	\$50.89	Bachelor's degree
13-1111	Management Analysts	49,876	49,979	3.5%	103	8,461	11,447	20,011	4,002	\$70,000	\$107,500	\$148,900	\$33.66	\$51.70	\$71.61	Bachelor's degree
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	38,137	39,067	6.2%	929	6,003	11,231	18,163	3,633	\$48,600	\$76,300	\$98,500	\$23.37	\$36.69	\$47.36	Bachelor's degree
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	41,815	40,984	2.3%	-831	6,770	10,669	16,608	3,322	\$48,300	\$79,500	\$103,000	\$23.20	\$38.20	\$49.53	Bachelor's degree
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	59,762	56,887	2.8%	-2,875	9,742	9,456	16,323	3,265	\$50,100	\$68,500	\$83,900	\$24.08	\$32.91	\$40.33	Bachelor's degree
11-3031	Financial Managers	42,459	43,733	1.4%	1,274	5,628	8,874	15,776	3,155	\$98,800	\$158,900	\$215,800	\$47.49	\$76.39	\$103.76	Bachelor's degree
11-9199	Managers, All Other	44,661	43,400	2.0%	-1,261	6,747	9,141	14,626	2,925	\$83,300	\$134,900	\$177,300	\$40.06	\$64.83	\$85.23	Bachelor's degree

## Top 10 Occupations in Demand Statewide: Master's Degree or Higher

Advanced degree holders in Illinois find the greatest demand in law, healthcare, and education. Lawyers, nurse practitioners, and speech-language pathologists represent high-paying roles that require specialized education and expertise. Education administrators, instructional coordinators, and postsecondary health teachers highlight the ongoing need for leadership in educational institutions.

Healthcare social workers and physical therapists reflect the demand for specialized healthcare services, particularly in rehabilitation and patient support. With relatively low unemployment rates and competitive salaries, these roles provide stable career paths for individuals with graduate-level education. Overall, this list underscores the importance of advanced degrees in fields that require professional licensure and expertise.

Top 10 in Demand Statewide: Master's Degree or Higher

Occ. Code	Occupation Title	2024 Jobs Estimated	2029 Jobs Projected	Unempl Rate	5 Year Growth	Total Exits	Total Transfers	5 Year Total Demand	Annual Demand	Entry Level Wages, Annual	Median Wages, Annual	Experienced Wages, Annual	Entry Level Wages, Hourly	Median Wages, Hourly	Experienced Wages, Hourly	Entry-Level Education Requirements
23-1011	Lawyers	34,452	34,075	0.6%	-377	3,914	2,552	6,089	1,218	\$81,700	\$163,400	\$233,000	\$39.30	\$78.54	\$112.03	Doctoral or professional degree
21-1012	Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors	13,245	12,899	2.2%	-346	1,939	2,585	4,177	835	\$46,400	\$61,800	\$78,700	\$22.29	\$29.69	\$37.85	Master's degree
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	9,085	10,414	0.5%	1,329	1,110	1,110	3,549	710	\$105,700	\$131,200	\$146,500	\$50.83	\$63.08	\$70.44	Master's degree
11-9032	Education Administrators, Kindergarten through Secondary	12,875	12,273	1.1%	-602	1,668	2,348	3,415	683	\$80,200	\$116,900	\$136,200	\$38.55	\$56.22	\$65.49	Master's degree
25-9031	Instructional Coordinators	8,605	8,298	4.5%	-308	1,917	1,625	3,235	647	\$55,500	\$79,200	\$105,000	\$26.68	\$38.10	\$50.49	Master's degree
11-9033	Education Administrators, Postsecondary	11,170	10,812	1.1%	-358	1,465	2,062	3,168	634	\$63,400	\$90,600	\$123,000	\$30.50	\$43.57	\$59.12	Master's degree
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	9,330	9,760	1.8%	429	1,300	1,252	2,981	596	\$61,500	\$88,800	\$106,100	\$29.58	\$42.70	\$51.00	Master's degree
25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	5,763	5,980	1.8%	216	1,300	1,004	2,520	504	\$51,800	\$80,800	\$115,100	\$24.89	\$38.83	\$55.34	Doctoral or professional degree
21-1022	Healthcare Social Workers	5,483	5,480	2.9%	-3	1,010	1,283	2,291	458	\$48,900	\$67,300	\$76,600	\$23.53	\$32.36	\$36.83	Master's degree
29-1123	Physical Therapists	10,330	10,621	0.7%	291	1,210	789	2,290	458	\$85,500	\$107,300	\$120,200	\$41.12	\$51.57	\$57.77	Doctoral or professional degree

## Conclusion

The data presented in this report reflects the diverse career pathways available in Illinois, catering to individuals with varying levels of education and expertise. While entry-level service and logistics roles remain crucial to the state's economy, fields such as healthcare, technology, and management continue to drive long-term employment growth. As industries adapt to changing labor market conditions, job seekers must consider both immediate workforce needs and future career stability when pursuing education and training. By aligning skills with industry demand, Illinois' workforce can remain competitive, fostering economic resilience and professional advancement.

### Occupation Code and Title

- **Occupation Code (Occ. Code)** – A numerical identifier assigned to each occupation, based on the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system used by government agencies for workforce data analysis.
- **Occupation Title** – The formal name of an occupation as classified in workforce databases.

### Employment Metrics

- **2024 Jobs Estimated** – The projected number of jobs in an occupation for the year 2024.
- **2029 Jobs Projected** – The estimated number of jobs expected in an occupation by the year 2029.
- **Unemployment Rate** – The percentage of individuals within the labor force actively seeking but unable to find employment in a given occupation.
- **5-Year Growth (Net Job Growth)** – The change in employment levels over five years. A positive number indicates job expansion, while a negative number signifies job decline.

### Workforce Demand Components

- **Total Exits** – The number of job openings created when workers leave an occupation permanently due to retirement, career changes, or personal reasons.
- **Total Transfers** – The number of job openings created when workers leave a job within an occupation but remain in the workforce by moving to another occupation.
- **5-Year Total Demand** – The overall number of job openings within an occupation over five years, calculated by summing net job growth, exits, and transfers.
- **Annual Demand** – The average number of job openings per year in an occupation, derived by dividing the **5-Year Total Demand** by five.

### Wage Data

- **Entry-Level Wages (Annual/Hourly)** – The estimated earnings for workers at the beginning of their careers, in the lower 30%, in a given occupation, expressed in both annual and hourly rates.
- **Median Wages (Annual/Hourly)** – The midpoint wage where half of workers earn more and half earn less, expressed in both annual and hourly rates.
- **Experienced Wages (Annual/Hourly)** – The estimated earnings for workers with significant experience in an occupation, in the upper 30%, reflecting higher pay levels over time, expressed in both annual and hourly rates.

### Education, Training, and Experience Requirements

- **Entry-Level Education Requirement** – The minimum education level typically required to enter an occupation, as defined by national standards. This may differ from common hiring practices in Illinois.

## About the Data

---

The workforce data in this report is sourced from JobsEQ, a labor market analytics platform developed by Chmura Economics & Analytics ([www.chmura.com](http://www.chmura.com)).

**Sources:** JobsEQ aggregates data from over 48 public sources, including the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), U.S. Census Bureau, O\*NET, and the National Center for Education Statistics. Job posting data is separately sourced from millions of online job advertisements, scraped and analyzed to capture real-time labor market trends.

**Data Integrity:** To ensure accuracy, JobsEQ employs rigorous validation, cross-referencing, and statistical methods to minimize inconsistencies and enhance data reliability.

**Methodology:** The platform utilizes data scraping, natural language processing, and econometric modeling to analyze job demand, skill requirements, and educational qualifications.

**Credibility:** Developed by Chmura Economics & Analytics, a respected economic research firm, JobsEQ is widely trusted by policymakers, educators, and business leaders for labor market insights.

By leveraging JobsEQ's robust data and analytical capabilities, this report is grounded in highly accurate and current labor market information, ensuring its relevance and reliability across various workforce analyses.