



# Illinois Workforce Demand 2025-2030

## Introduction

The Illinois job market continues to evolve in response to shifting economic conditions, technological change, and workforce demographics. Understanding the most in-demand occupations offers valuable insight for job seekers, educators, and policymakers aiming to align training and education with labor market needs.

This report highlights the top occupations in demand across education levels, from entry-level positions with minimal requirements to advanced roles requiring specialized degrees. The data reflects continued demand for essential service jobs, growing opportunities in healthcare and technical fields, and the sustained value of higher education in accessing stable, well-paying careers.

These projections incorporate the latest data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, including updated national employment forecasts and revised unemployment rates from the 2024 Current Population Survey.

## Notable Year-Over-Year Changes: 2024–2029 vs. 2025–2030

Between the 2024–2029 and 2025–2030 workforce projections, the overall structure of demand remains stable, with continued emphasis on service, logistics, and healthcare roles. However, several key updates stand out. Notably, **behavioral and mental health counselors (21-1018)** are now classified as requiring a **master's degree** (previously a bachelor's), with a **marked increase in unemployment** due to updated CPS data. **Office clerks (43-9061)** have newly entered the top ten list for workers with a high school diploma or less, reflecting steady demand for administrative support. In the associate degree and certificate category, **licensed practical nurses (29-2061)** were added, replacing computer support specialists. Among bachelor's-level roles, **employment totals dipped slightly** across most occupations, yet annual demand remains high due to workforce churn. Across all categories, **replacement demand continues to outpace net job growth**, highlighting the importance of aligning workforce development strategies with turnover-driven needs rather than expansion alone.

Year-Over-Year Changes: 2024–2029 vs. 2025–2030			
Occ. Code	Occupation Title	Change	Category
21-1018	Behavioral/Mental Health Counselors	Reclassified from Bachelor's to Master's degree; unemployment rate rose from 1.7% to 8.6%	Master's Degree or Higher
43-9061	Office Clerks	New to Top 10 for High School Diploma or Less	High School Diploma or Less
29-2061	Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)	New to Top 10 for Postsecondary Non-Degree	Postsecondary Non-Degree / Associate's
15-1232	Computer Support Specialists	Dropped from Top 10 for Postsecondary Non-Degree	Postsecondary Non-Degree / Associate's
11-1021	General Managers	Slight decline in job total; remains highest annual demand for Bachelor's level	Bachelor's Degree
35-3023	Fast Food Workers	Still top-ranked for annual demand, despite slight job decline	All Education Levels

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

The most in-demand occupations in Illinois continue to be concentrated in service, retail, and logistics roles. **Fast food workers, cashiers, retail salespersons, stockers/order fillers, and laborers and material movers** account for a substantial share of projected job openings, driven primarily by high turnover and replacement needs rather than new job growth. The demand for these roles remains strong despite modest employment declines, reflecting their essential role in the state's economy.

**Personal care aides** again stand out as the only occupation in this group with notable net job growth, supported by ongoing demand for in-home care and long-term services for aging populations. This trend reinforces healthcare support as a growing employment sector across multiple education levels.

**General and operations managers** remain the highest-paid role in the top ten and are the only occupation in this group requiring a bachelor's degree. Their continued inclusion reflects consistent employer demand for leadership and organizational oversight, even amid slight declines in total employment.

**Waiters and waitresses, janitors and cleaners, and customer service representatives** round out the list, underscoring continued labor needs in hospitality, facility maintenance, and administrative support. These roles, while often lower-wage, remain central to day-to-day business operations across industries.

Overall, the data highlights sustained demand for essential frontline and support roles across Illinois. While net job growth is limited, the volume of replacement openings ensures these occupations will remain key entry points and employment opportunities for a wide range of workers.

Top 10 In Demand Statewide: Regardless of Education Level Typically Required																
Occ. Code	Occupation Title	2025 Jobs Estimated	2030 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 Workers	131,101	128,557	8.6%	-2,545	81,775	68,253	147,483	29,497	\$30,300	\$33,700	\$36,500	\$14.59	\$16.19	\$17.57	None
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	132,846	130,552	9.0%	-2,294	65,349	38,556	101,611	20,322	\$33,900	\$40,500	\$45,500	\$16.31	\$19.47	\$21.89	High school diploma or equivalent
53-7062	Laborers and Material Movers, Hand	163,582	160,526	9.6%	-3,056	67,551	36,992	101,487	20,297	\$34,300	\$41,700	\$48,700	\$16.49	\$20.05	\$23.40	None
41-2011	Cashiers	121,285	109,625	10.2%	-11,660	55,684	51,184	95,208	19,042	\$29,600	\$32,100	\$35,500	\$14.24	\$15.46	\$17.06	None
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	136,058	129,842	6.5%	-6,216	53,738	41,286	88,808	17,762	\$30,600	\$35,600	\$44,400	\$14.73	\$17.10	\$21.37	None
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	85,379	81,892	7.3%	-3,487	51,185	33,435	81,134	16,227	\$29,900	\$32,400	\$39,600	\$14.39	\$15.56	\$19.06	None
31-1122	Personal Care Aides	93,870	98,494	4.9%	4,624	31,342	35,681	71,647	14,329	\$32,600	\$37,300	\$39,400	\$15.66	\$17.92	\$18.96	High school diploma or equivalent
11-1021	General Managers	178,150	175,960	1.8%	-2,190	51,028	19,356	68,194	13,639	\$58,900	\$111,600	\$178,000	\$28.34	\$53.65	\$85.59	Bachelor's degree
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners	102,652	99,745	6.5%	-2,907	37,072	32,563	66,728	13,346	\$32,200	\$38,700	\$44,400	\$15.46	\$18.59	\$21.33	None
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	111,677	104,516	5.9%	-7,161	42,989	27,067	62,895	12,579	\$35,300	\$46,000	\$55,100	\$16.98	\$22.12	\$26.48	High school diploma or equivalent

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

For individuals with a high school diploma or less, Illinois continues to offer a wide range of entry-level job opportunities. Many of the most in-demand roles—including **fast food workers, laborers, cashiers, retail salespersons, and waiters and waitresses**—are concentrated in customer service, food service, and logistics. These jobs typically require minimal prior experience or training, making them accessible to a broad segment of the workforce.

**Stockers and order fillers** remain critical to the retail and distribution sectors, reflecting the sustained impact of e-commerce and supply chain operations. Similarly, **janitors and cleaners** continue to play a vital role in facility maintenance across industries, generating consistent annual demand through workforce turnover.

**Personal care aides** again emerge as a key growth occupation, with positive net job growth and increasing annual demand. Their continued presence in this list highlights the long-term need for healthcare and home-based support services as the population ages.

New to the top ten this year are **office clerks**, reflecting modest but steady demand for administrative support roles that require only a high school education. Their inclusion signals a continued need for clerical workers across multiple sectors, even as automation evolves traditional office functions.

**Customer service representatives** also remain a significant source of job openings, supporting business operations in both retail and administrative environments. While some of these roles face pressures from automation and offshoring, they continue to generate substantial replacement demand.

Overall, these occupations represent essential functions within Illinois' economy and provide important employment pathways for individuals without postsecondary credentials. While wages vary, many of these roles offer stable entry points into the workforce and the potential for advancement with experience or additional training.

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

Occ. Code	Occupation Title	2025 Jobs Estimated	2030 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 Workers	131,101	128,557	8.6%	-2,545	81,775	68,253	<b>147,483</b>	<b>29,497</b>	\$30,300	\$33,700	\$36,500	\$14.59	\$16.19	\$17.57	None
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	132,846	130,552	9.0%	-2,294	65,349	38,556	<b>101,611</b>	<b>20,322</b>	\$33,900	\$40,500	\$45,500	\$16.31	\$19.47	\$21.89	High school diploma or equivalent
53-7062	Laborers Material Movers, Hand	163,582	160,526	9.6%	-3,056	67,551	36,992	<b>101,487</b>	<b>20,297</b>	\$34,300	\$41,700	\$48,700	\$16.49	\$20.05	\$23.40	None
41-2011	Cashiers	121,285	109,625	10.2%	-11,660	55,684	51,184	<b>95,208</b>	<b>19,042</b>	\$29,600	\$32,100	\$35,500	\$14.24	\$15.46	\$17.06	None
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	136,058	129,842	6.5%	-6,216	53,738	41,286	<b>88,808</b>	<b>17,762</b>	\$30,600	\$35,600	\$44,400	\$14.73	\$17.10	\$21.37	None
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	85,379	81,892	7.3%	-3,487	51,185	33,435	<b>81,134</b>	<b>16,227</b>	\$29,900	\$32,400	\$39,600	\$14.39	\$15.56	\$19.06	None
31-1122	Personal Care Aides	93,870	98,494	4.9%	4,624	31,342	35,681	<b>71,647</b>	<b>14,329</b>	\$32,600	\$37,300	\$39,400	\$15.66	\$17.92	\$18.96	High school diploma or equivalent
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners	102,652	99,745	6.5%	-2,907	37,072	32,563	<b>66,728</b>	<b>13,346</b>	\$32,200	\$38,700	\$44,400	\$15.46	\$18.59	\$21.33	None
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	111,677	104,516	5.9%	-7,161	42,989	27,067	<b>62,895</b>	<b>12,579</b>	\$35,300	\$46,000	\$55,100	\$16.98	\$22.12	\$26.48	High school diploma or equivalent
43-9061	Office Clerks	105,289	98,200	4.8%	-7,089	31,450	26,957	<b>51,319</b>	<b>10,264</b>	\$33,900	\$45,900	\$54,900	\$16.29	\$22.05	\$26.41	High school diploma or equivalent

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

Illinois' labor market continues to show strong demand for workers with postsecondary certifications, some college education, or associate degrees. These roles are concentrated in **healthcare, logistics, education, and skilled trades**, offering accessible career paths for individuals pursuing alternatives to a four-year degree.

**Heavy truck drivers** remain at the top of the list, underscoring the critical role of freight transportation in the state's economy. While overall employment for this occupation is projected to decline slightly, annual demand remains high due to turnover and retirements. Similarly, **nursing assistants** and **medical assistants** continue to serve as foundational roles in the healthcare system, offering stability and employment growth, with medical assistants showing net job gains.

**Teaching assistants** and **accounting clerks** reflect continued need in education and administrative support functions. Although both occupations show net employment declines, strong replacement demand sustains their ranking among the top ten.

**Cosmetologists, dental assistants, and automotive service technicians** represent personal service and technical trades that offer hands-on career paths with relatively competitive wages and consistent annual openings. These roles remain attractive for individuals seeking credentialed employment outside of traditional academic tracks.

New to the top ten this cycle is the inclusion of **licensed practical nurses (LPNs)**, who bring valuable capacity to the healthcare sector, especially in long-term care settings. Their median wages are among the highest in this education category, highlighting the value of short-term, career-specific training.

Overall, these occupations provide meaningful opportunities for individuals who invest in short-term training or two-year programs. They represent sectors where upskilling leads to economic mobility and where targeted workforce development can help fill persistent labor shortages.

**Top 10 In Demand Statewide: Post-secondary non-degree (certificate), Some College, and Associate's Degree**

Occ. Code	Occupation Title	2025 Jobs Estimated	2030 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 Truck Drivers	96,227	94,291	5.1%	-1,936	28,820	19,371	46,255	9,251	\$43,100	\$62,700	\$76,000	\$20.73	\$30.15	\$36.52	Postsecondary non-degree award
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	63,692	61,874	5.8%	-1,818	24,853	18,329	41,363	8,273	\$37,600	\$43,300	\$47,100	\$18.08	\$20.84	\$22.65	Postsecondary non-degree award
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, PK-12	57,521	54,610	6.1%	-2,911	17,941	14,353	29,384	5,877	\$31,000	\$37,700	\$43,800	\$14.89	\$18.12	\$21.03	Some college, no degree
43-3031	Accounting Clerks	58,497	54,639	2.6%	-3,857	14,991	16,379	27,512	5,502	\$40,000	\$52,800	\$62,200	\$19.25	\$25.40	\$29.93	Some college, no degree
39-5012	Hairdressers	24,602	24,343	3.1%	-260	9,123	6,569	15,432	3,086	\$31,300	\$39,000	\$50,900	\$15.04	\$18.76	\$24.46	Postsecondary non-degree award
31-9092	Medical Assistants	22,443	23,032	2.2%	588	9,572	5,014	15,175	3,035	\$37,800	\$45,300	\$50,200	\$18.16	\$21.80	\$24.13	Postsecondary non-degree award
49-3023	Automotive Service Techs	32,125	31,141	4.0%	-984	7,982	4,852	11,850	2,370	\$36,700	\$53,700	\$69,300	\$17.63	\$25.83	\$33.34	Postsecondary non-degree award
25-2011	Preschool Teachers	22,369	21,818	3.6%	-551	7,333	4,706	11,489	2,298	\$34,100	\$41,100	\$47,700	\$16.42	\$19.74	\$22.95	Associate's degree
31-9091	Dental Assistants	14,305	14,257	2.5%	-49	5,973	3,413	9,337	1,867	\$35,300	\$46,100	\$51,200	\$16.95	\$22.17	\$24.61	Postsecondary non-degree award
29-2061	Licensed Practical Nurses	22,904	22,116	2.4%	-788	4,450	4,339	8,001	1,600	\$53,700	\$67,700	\$77,300	\$25.81	\$32.53	\$37.18	Postsecondary non-degree award

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

For individuals with a bachelor's degree, Illinois continues to offer strong employment opportunities in **management, healthcare, finance, technology, and education**. These occupations provide access to high-wage, high-stability career paths that span both the public and private sectors.

**General and operations managers** remain the most in-demand role requiring a four-year degree. Despite a slight projected decline in overall employment, the volume of annual job openings remains high due to retirements and internal transfers. This underscores continued demand for experienced leadership across industries.

**Registered nurses** continue to be vital to the state's healthcare infrastructure, though projected employment has dipped slightly. Nevertheless, the need to replace exiting professionals ensures that annual demand remains robust.

Occupations such as **software developers, accountants, and financial managers** highlight the importance of finance and technology expertise in today’s job market. Among these, **software developers** stand out as one of the few roles with strong positive net job growth, emphasizing the resilience of the tech sector and the demand for digital innovation across industries.

Roles like **management analysts, marketing specialists, and business operations specialists** reflect employers’ growing reliance on data-driven strategy, organizational planning, and customer analytics to stay competitive. These analytical and communications-based roles remain central to workforce modernization efforts.

**Elementary school teachers and human resources specialists** round out the list, reinforcing the ongoing need for educators and workforce professionals in both traditional and evolving formats of work and learning.

Overall, bachelor’s-level occupations continue to offer some of the highest median and experienced wages in the state, alongside strong long-term prospects. While net job growth may be flat or declining for many of these roles, **high turnover and internal movement** ensure consistent opportunity for qualified candidates across Illinois.

Top 10 In Demand Statewide: Bachelor's Degree																
Occ. Code	Occupation Title	2025 Jobs Estimated	2030 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 Managers	178,150	175,960	1.8%	-2,190	51,028	19,356	<b>68,194</b>	<b>13,639</b>	\$58,900	\$111,600	\$178,000	\$28.34	\$53.65	\$85.59	Bachelor's degree
29-1141	Registered Nurses	142,212	139,597	1.6%	-2,615	15,377	20,270	<b>33,032</b>	<b>6,606</b>	\$73,000	\$90,700	\$103,600	\$35.09	\$43.61	\$49.81	Bachelor's degree
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	57,955	57,169	2.1%	-786	13,438	8,292	<b>20,944</b>	<b>4,189</b>	\$57,000	\$83,000	\$108,000	\$27.41	\$39.90	\$51.95	Bachelor's degree
15-1252	Software Developers	59,631	62,778	3.6%	3,147	10,804	5,248	<b>19,199</b>	<b>3,840</b>	\$87,600	\$133,000	\$155,900	\$42.10	\$63.95	\$74.96	Bachelor's degree
11-3031	Financial Managers	48,416	50,226	3.4%	1,810	10,905	5,948	<b>18,663</b>	<b>3,733</b>	\$100,800	\$162,100	\$220,300	\$48.48	\$77.94	\$105.93	Bachelor's degree
13-1111	Management Analysts	44,777	45,219	4.7%	442	10,786	6,966	<b>18,193</b>	<b>3,639</b>	\$71,500	\$110,000	\$152,400	\$34.39	\$52.89	\$73.26	Bachelor's degree
13-1161	Marketing Specialists	38,528	38,617	4.3%	89	11,540	5,001	<b>16,629</b>	<b>3,326</b>	\$49,600	\$77,900	\$100,600	\$23.85	\$37.46	\$48.37	Bachelor's degree
13-1199	Business Ops Specialists	40,691	40,274	3.9%	-417	10,870	6,039	<b>16,492</b>	<b>3,298</b>	\$49,200	\$81,100	\$105,300	\$23.67	\$39.01	\$50.61	Bachelor's degree
11-9199	Managers, All Other	45,713	45,039	2.2%	-674	10,366	6,310	<b>16,001</b>	<b>3,200</b>	\$84,900	\$137,500	\$180,900	\$40.84	\$66.11	\$86.96	Bachelor's degree
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers	59,350	56,237	2.7%	-3,114	9,953	8,815	<b>15,655</b>	<b>3,131</b>	\$51,300	\$70,100	\$86,000	\$24.67	\$33.72	\$41.35	Bachelor's degree
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	35,512	35,601	3.7%	89	9,753	4,788	<b>14,630</b>	<b>2,926</b>	\$51,100	\$71,700	\$90,700	\$24.56	\$34.49	\$43.61	Bachelor's degree

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

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For advanced degree holders in Illinois, the strongest occupational demand continues to be concentrated in **healthcare, education, and law**. These fields require specialized training, professional licensure, and a high degree of subject-matter expertise. While many of these roles show limited net job growth, demand remains strong due to ongoing replacement needs and the evolving nature of care, instruction, and public service delivery.

A key shift in the 2025–2030 projections is the reclassification of **behavioral and mental health counselors**, which now require a **master's degree** (previously a bachelor's). This update reflects changes in national data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and aligns with professional licensure trends across the country. Counselors also experienced a sharp increase in reported unemployment—from **1.5% to 8.6%**—based on updated Current Population Survey estimates. Despite this, the role continues to show net job growth and generates a high number of annual openings, driven by rising demand for behavioral health services and workforce turnover.

**Nurse practitioners** show the strongest net job growth among all occupations in this category (+1,582), further highlighting the critical need for advanced-practice healthcare providers. Their wages remain among the highest for master's-level professionals, underscoring their value in a strained healthcare system. Other healthcare-related roles, such as **speech-language pathologists** and **physical therapists**, remain key areas of demand, particularly in rehabilitation, early intervention, and long-term care. These occupations continue to offer high wages, strong employment stability, and sustained replacement demand.

In education, roles such as **PK–12 education administrators, postsecondary administrators, and instructional coordinators** reflect the ongoing need for academic leadership and curriculum development. While some of these positions show slight employment declines, they remain essential to the operation and modernization of educational institutions.

**Lawyers** continue to be a high-demand occupation at the doctoral level, with steady demand driven by retirements, career transitions, and evolving legal needs in both the public and private sectors.

**Librarians and media specialists** appear on the list again, providing stable employment opportunities within public education and community institutions, particularly as digital literacy and information access remain critical societal needs.

While overall growth in master's-level occupations is modest, these roles remain central to Illinois' healthcare, education, and legal systems. Updates to educational requirements and unemployment rates—particularly for behavioral health roles—highlight the importance of continuously monitoring labor market data to ensure alignment between training pipelines and real-world workforce demand.

Top 10 In Demand Statewide: Masters's Degree or Higher

Occ. Code	Occupation Title	2025 Jobs Estimated	2030 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
21-1018	Behavioral/Mental Health Counselors	17,768	18,905	8.6%	1,137	4,454	3,155	8,746	1,749	\$43,900	\$61,700	\$78,900	\$21.13	\$29.67	\$37.95	Master's degree
23-1011	Lawyers	34,964	34,216	1.0%	-747	2,743	3,429	5,425	1,085	\$83,700	\$167,300	\$238,900	\$40.25	\$80.42	\$114.84	Doctoral or professional degree
21-1012	Guidance Counselors	13,298	12,931	2.5%	-367	2,921	1,947	4,501	900	\$47,500	\$63,200	\$80,600	\$22.83	\$30.38	\$38.77	Master's degree
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	10,255	11,837	0.8%	1,582	1,308	1,137	4,028	806	\$108,200	\$134,300	\$150,100	\$52.04	\$64.57	\$72.15	Master's degree
11-9032	Education Administrator, PK-12	13,809	13,088	1.5%	-721	2,779	1,588	3,646	729	\$81,900	\$119,300	\$139,000	\$39.35	\$57.35	\$66.84	Master's degree
25-9031	Instructional Coordinators	8,952	8,626	2.7%	-326	1,910	1,867	3,452	690	\$56,800	\$81,100	\$107,500	\$27.32	\$38.98	\$51.67	Master's degree
11-9033	Education Administrators, Postsec	10,746	10,403	1.6%	-343	2,196	1,255	3,108	622	\$64,900	\$92,600	\$125,700	\$31.19	\$44.51	\$60.43	Master's degree
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	8,141	8,479	0.8%	338	1,128	1,045	2,510	502	\$63,100	\$91,200	\$109,100	\$30.36	\$43.85	\$52.43	Master's degree
29-1123	Physical Therapists	11,249	11,533	0.8%	284	913	1,142	2,339	468	\$87,700	\$109,900	\$123,200	\$42.14	\$52.85	\$59.21	Doctoral or professional degree
25-4022	Librarians and Media Collections Specialists	5,377	5,227	1.6%	-150	1,103	1,234	2,187	437	\$46,300	\$65,500	\$82,200	\$22.27	\$31.47	\$39.54	Master's degree

Conclusion

The 2025–2030 workforce projections underscore the wide range of career opportunities available across Illinois, from essential service and logistics roles to advanced positions in healthcare, education, and technology. While most projected openings stem from **replacement demand rather than new growth**, the scale of turnover presents significant opportunity for workers at every education level.

Entry-level jobs remain a critical part of the labor market, offering accessible pathways for those without postsecondary credentials. At the same time, roles requiring specialized training or degrees—particularly in healthcare and technical fields—continue to offer strong wages and long-term career stability.

Notably, updates to educational requirements and unemployment rates for certain occupations, such as behavioral health counselors, highlight the importance of **staying aligned with national data and evolving industry standards**. As the labor market continues to shift, job seekers, educators, and policymakers must consider both short-term needs and long-term trends when investing in workforce development.

By aligning education and training with high-demand occupations, Illinois can build a more adaptable, competitive, and inclusive workforce capable of meeting the state’s current and future economic needs.

### 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

- **2025 Jobs Estimated** – The projected number of jobs in an occupation for the year 2024.
- **2030 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

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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)) and was the most current data available as of May 20, 2025.

**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.