Mercer County

Division of Economic and Demographic Research

Office of Research & Information

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

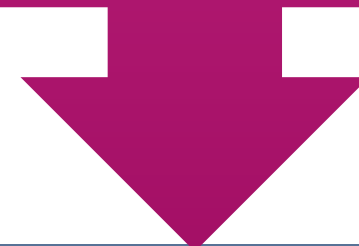**February 2026**

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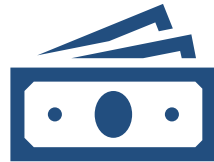
The purpose of this report is to highlight the key demographic and economic trends in the county

Mercer County's population is **younger and more diverse** than the state average, with a slightly higher proportion of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher.

Mercer County's real GDP ranks 7th among all New Jersey counties. **Unemployment** follows state trends but stays slightly below the New Jersey average.
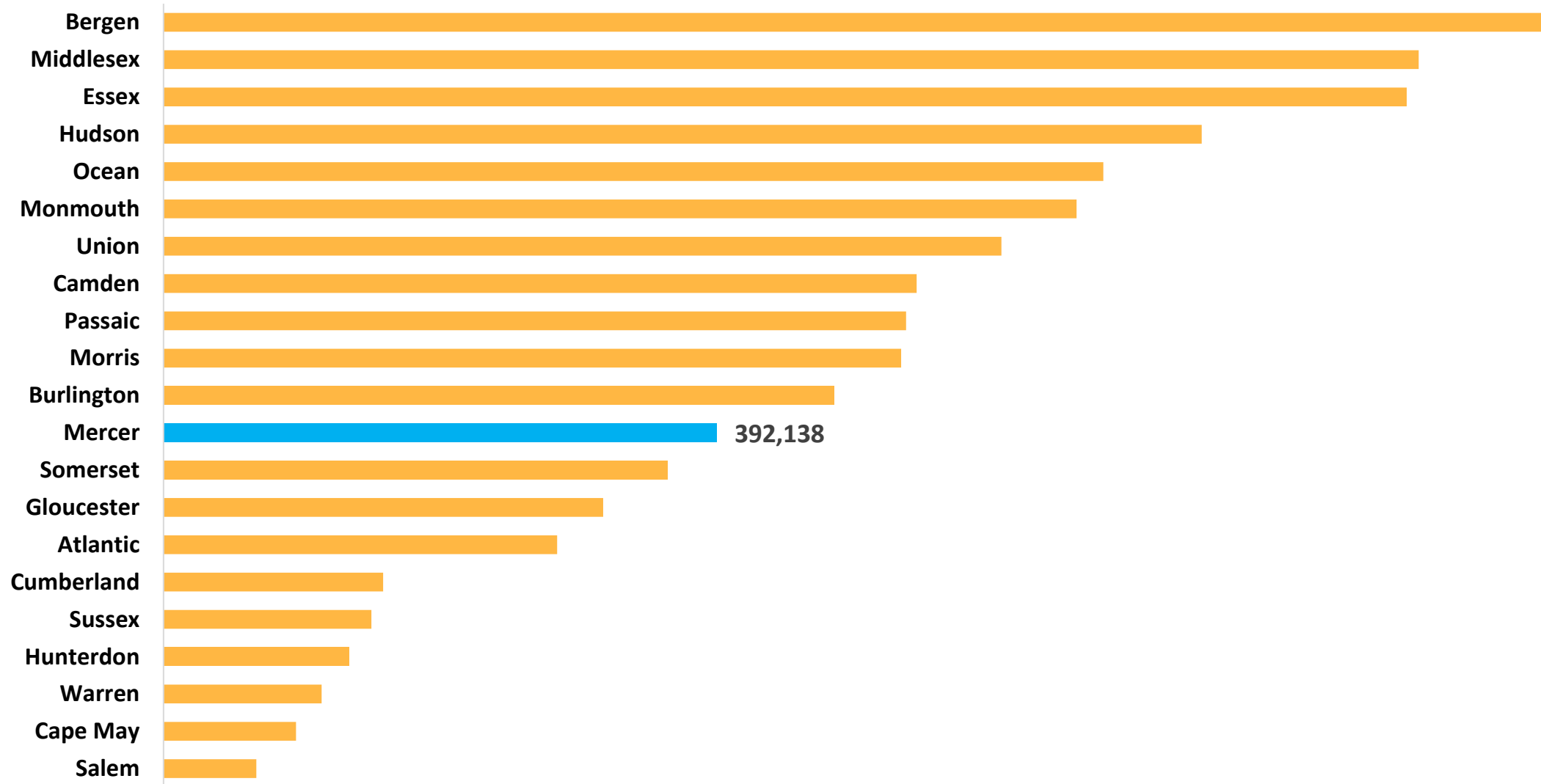
The top occupations in demand include Registered Nurses, Software Developers, Home Health and Personal Aides, Customer Service Representatives, and Retail Salespersons.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Mercer County's population was 392,138 in 2024.

Population Estimates by County in New Jersey, 2024

County	Population
Bergen	
Middlesex	
Essex	
Hudson	
Ocean	
Monmouth	
Union	
Camden	
Passaic	
Morris	
Burlington	
Mercer	392,138
Somerset	
Gloucester	
Atlantic	
Cumberland	
Sussex	
Hunterdon	
Warren	
Cape May	
Salem	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties in New Jersey (Vintage 2024)

Mercer County's population is younger and more diverse than the state overall.

Demographic Characteristics

Indicator	Mercer County	New Jersey
Median Age	39.7	40.4
% of Older Population (65+)	16.6%	18.0%
% of Language Other Than English Spoken at Home	34.8%	34.3%
% of Foreign-Born Population	28.6%	25.0%
% of Hispanic or Latino (of Any Race)	24.6%	23.5%

Source: 2024 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

The share of Mercer County residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is 2.8 percentage points above the state average.

Educational Attainment (Population 25 Years and Older)

Indicator	Mercer County	New Jersey
High School or Equivalent Degree	20.1%	24.7%
Some College, No Degree	14.2%	14.5%
Associate's Degree	5.7%	6.6%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	47.3%	44.5%
High School Degree or Higher	87.3%	90.4%

Source: 2024 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Mercer County has a similar median household income and a slightly higher poverty rate compared to the state overall.

Income & Poverty

Indicator	Mercer County	New Jersey
Median Household Income	$104,148	$104,294
% of Poverty	10.0%	9.2%

Note: Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2023 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)

# Mercer County residents pay lower rent and have a lower homeownership rate compared to the state average.

Housing Characteristics

Indicator	Mercer County	New Jersey
Total Households	148,168	3,543,944
Median Gross Rent	$1,744	$1,800
Homeownership Rate	62.4%	63.9%
% of Housing Value of Owner Occupied (≥$300,000)	72.7%	80.7%

Source: 2024 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Mercer County residents have shorter commute times, and a higher percentage of remote workers compared to the state average.

Commuting Characteristics
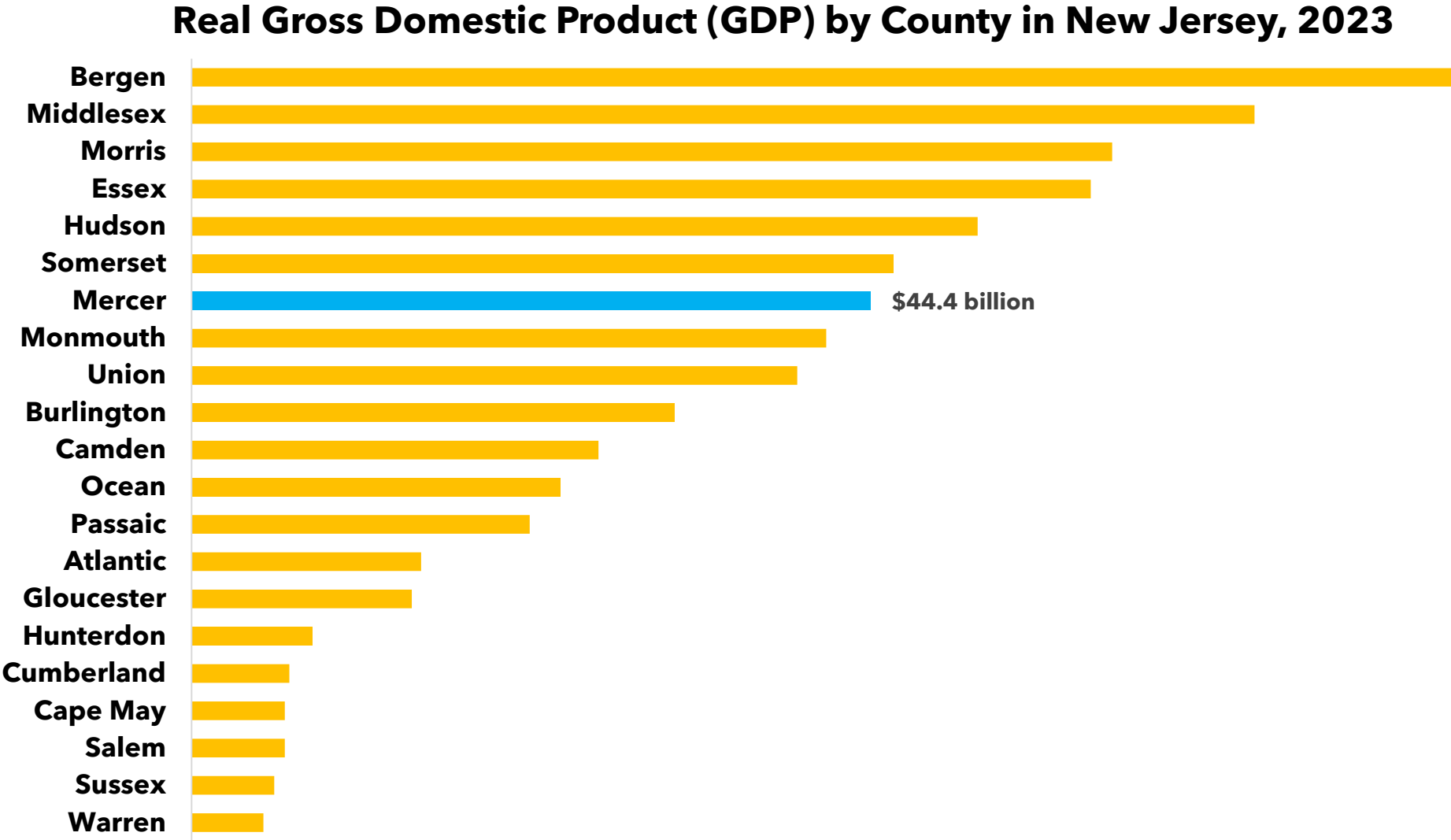
Indicator	Mercer County	New Jersey
Average Travel Time to Work (in Minutes)	27.4	31.9
% of Public Transportation	4.5%	9.7%
% of Working From Home	14.8%	13.5%
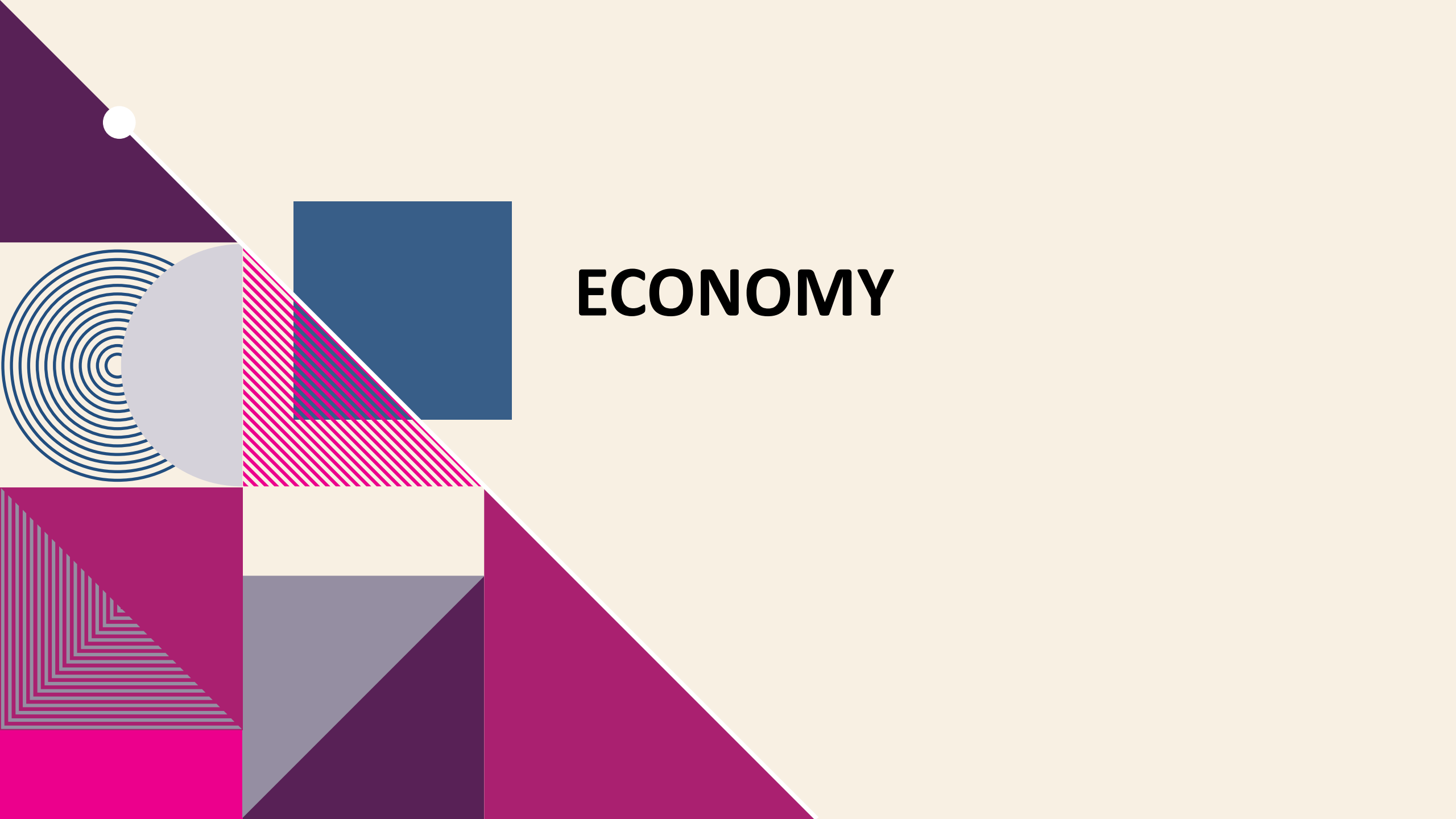
ECONOMY

In 2023, Mercer County's real GDP was $44.4 billion, ranking 7th among all New Jersey counties.

Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by County in New Jersey, 2023

County	
Bergen	
Middlesex	
Morris	
Essex	
Hudson	
Somerset	
Mercer	$44.4 billion
Monmouth	
Union	
Burlington	
Camden	
Ocean	
Passaic	
Atlantic	
Gloucester	
Hunterdon	
Cumberland	
Cape May	
Salem	
Sussex	
Warren	
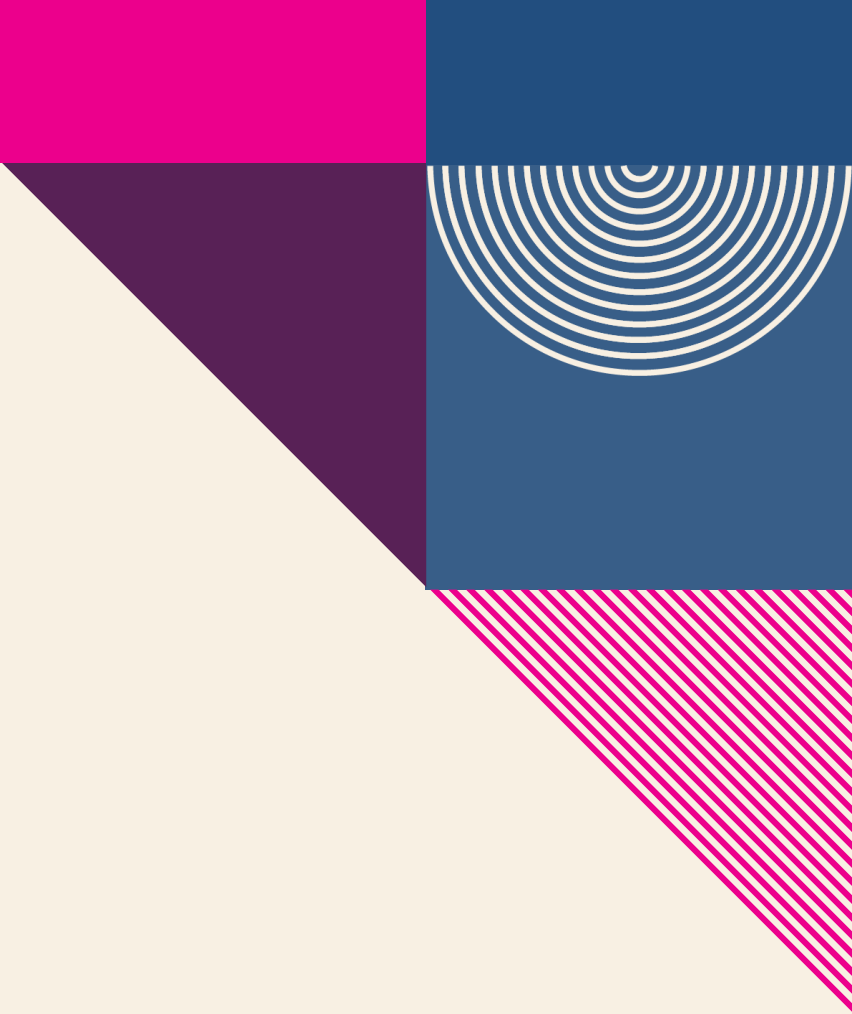
Establishments and Employment

Mercer County

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, 2024 Annual Averages

The QCEW program produces quarterly and annual data on the number of establishments, total employment, and wages for workers covered by New Jersey unemployment insurance (UI) laws, as well as federal employees under the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) program. This data is published at various geographical and industry levels.

14.3% of Mercer County establishments are in the health care and social assistance.

Mercer County Establishments, Ranked by Percent of the Total Establishments
Private Ownerships

Industry	Total Number of Establishments	Total Number of Employees	% of Total Establishments
Health care and social assistance	561	6,377	14.3%
Professional and technical services	550	3,734	14.0%
Construction	440	3,531	11.2%
Retail trade	392	5,954	10.0%
Other services, except public administra	348	2,102	8.8%
Administrative and waste services	296	2,009	7.5%
Accommodation and food services	285	3,497	7.2%
Manufacturing	146	2,931	3.7%
Wholesale trade	144	1,403	3.7%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	84	1,095	2.1%
Real estate and rental and leasing	82	299	2.1%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation"	76	1,126	1.9%
Transportation and warehousing	58	812	1.5%
Educational services	56	852	1.4%
Information	54	302	1.4%

Note: Full list of establishments in Mercer County is available in Appendix.

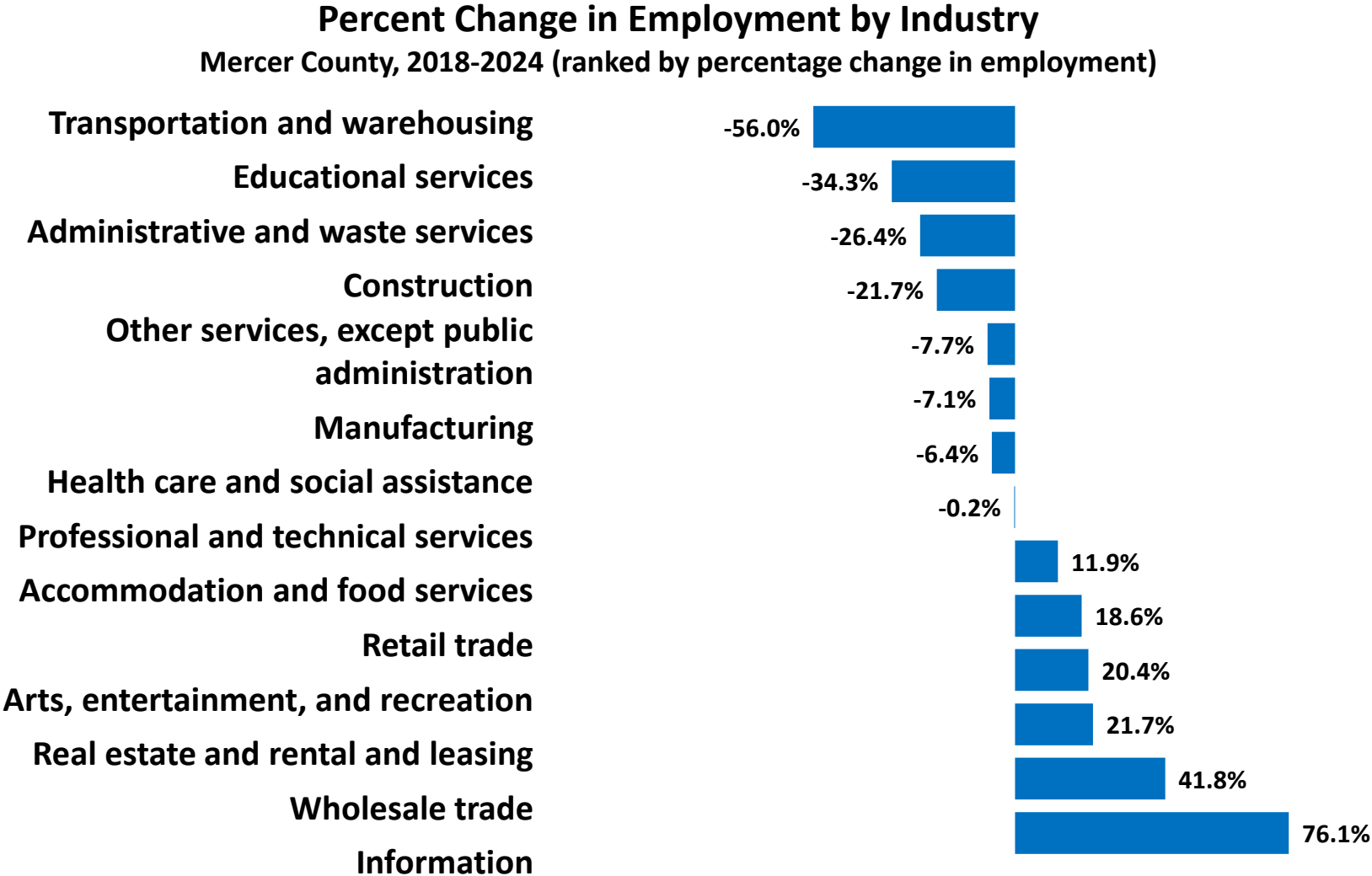Source: ORI-EDR, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, 2024

In Mercer County, professional and technical services and retail trade have higher employment shares compared to state averages.

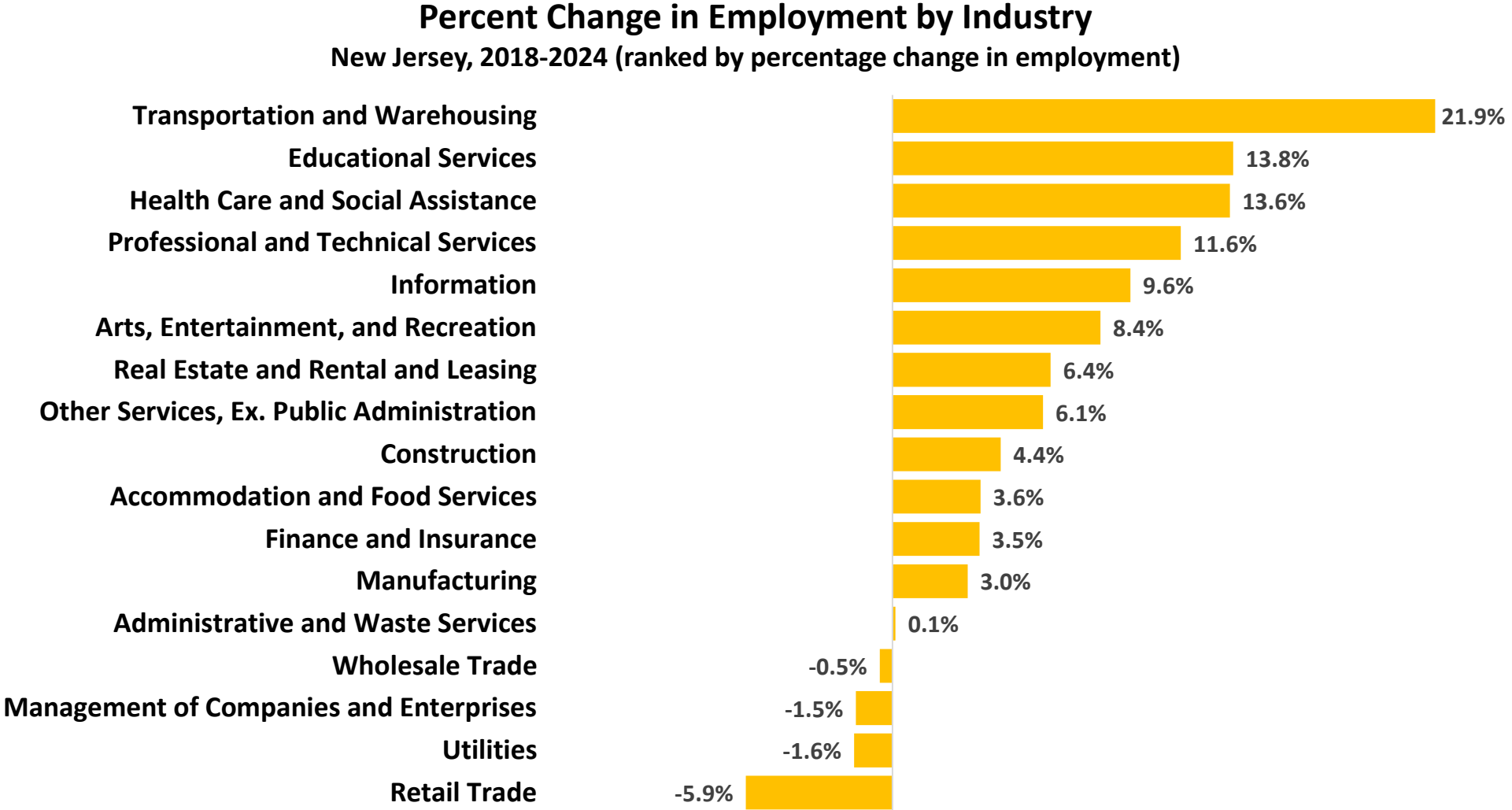## Employment by Private Industry
Mercer County vs. New Jersey, 2024

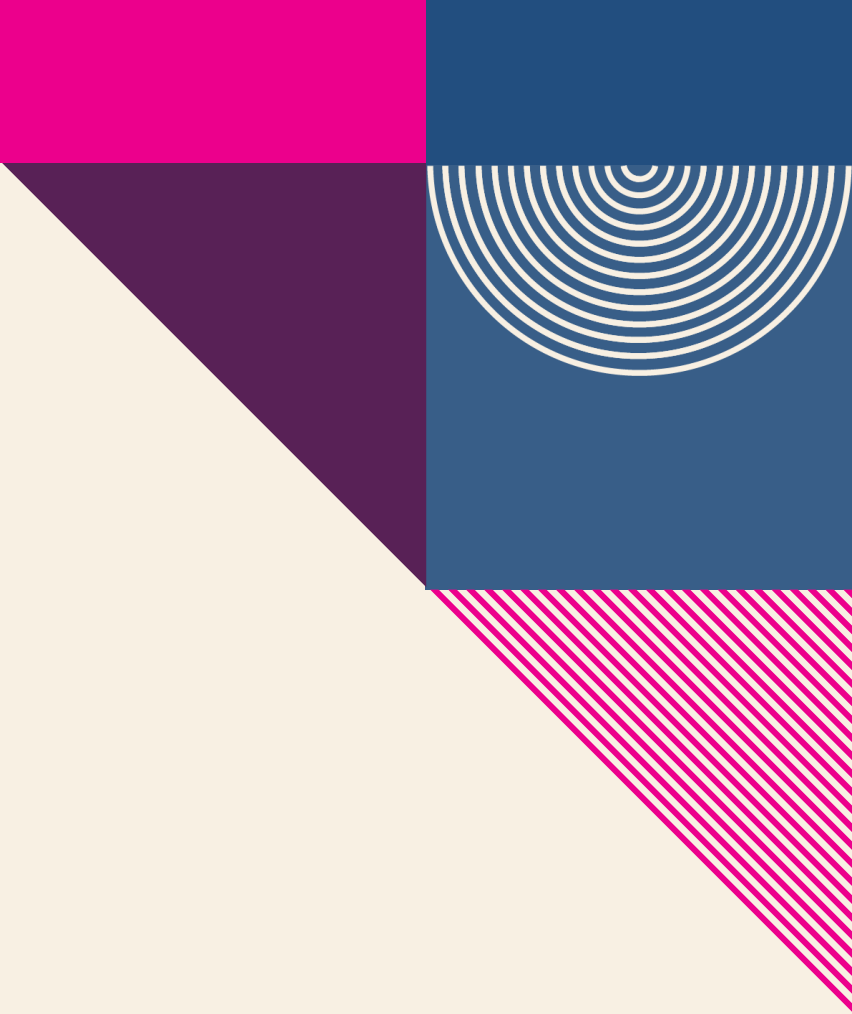| Industry	Hunterdon County		New Jersey		Difference between
	Employment	% of Total	Employment	% of Total	
Construction	3,531	8.7%	164,014	4.5%	4.3%
Manufacturing	2,931	7.3%	253,054	6.9%	0.4%
Wholesale trade	1,403	3.5%	213,549	5.8%	-2.3%
Retail trade	5,954	14.7%	427,521	11.6%	3.1%
Transportation and warehousing	812	2.0%	233,943	6.4%	-4.3%
Information	302	0.7%	76,199	2.1%	-1.3%
Real estate and rental and leasing	299	0.7%	189,987	5.2%	-4.4%
Professional and technical services	3,734	9.2%	63,263	1.7%	7.5%
Management of companies and enterprises	868	2.1%	336,105	9.1%	-7.0%
Administrative and waste services	2,009	5.0%	82,588	2.2%	2.7%
Educational services	852	2.1%	286,750	7.8%	-5.7%
Health care and social assistance	6,377	15.8%	656,356	17.8%	-2.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation"	1,126	2.8%	73,699	2.0%	0.8%
Accommodation and food services	3,497	8.7%	328,905	8.9%	-0.3%
Other services, except public administration	2,102	5.2%	144,086	3.9%	1.3%

Full list of employment by industry is available in Appendix.

Source: ORI-EDR, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, 2024

Between 2018 and 2024, the information sector saw the largest employment growth in Mercer County, increasing by 76.1%.

Percent Change in Employment by Industry
Mercer County, 2018-2024 (ranked by percentage change in employment)

Industry	Percent Change
Transportation and warehousing	-56.0%
Educational services	-34.3%
Administrative and waste services	-26.4%
Construction	-21.7%
Other services, except public administration	-7.7%
Manufacturing	-7.1%
Health care and social assistance	-6.4%
Professional and technical services	-0.2%
Accommodation and food services	11.9%
Retail trade	18.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	20.4%
Real estate and rental and leasing	21.7%
Wholesale trade	41.8%
Information	76.1%

Source: ORI-EDR, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, 2024

Transportation, warehousing, and utilities saw strong growth in New Jersey, expanding by 21.9% from 2018 to 2024.

Percent Change in Employment by Industry
**New Jersey, 2018-2024 (ranked by percentage change in employment)**

Industry	Percent Change
Transportation and Warehousing	21.9%
Educational Services	13.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	13.6%
Professional and Technical Services	11.6%
Information	9.6%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8.4%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	6.4%
Other Services, Ex. Public Administration	6.1%
Construction	4.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	3.6%
Finance and Insurance	3.5%
Manufacturing	3.0%
Administrative and Waste Services	0.1%
Wholesale Trade	-0.5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	-1.5%
Utilities	-1.6%
Retail Trade	-5.9%

Source: ORI-EDR, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, 2024

Unemployment Trend
Mercer County vs. New Jersey

Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), 2024

The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program produces monthly and annual employment, unemployment, and labor force data for Census regions and divisions, States, counties, metropolitan areas, and many cities, by place of residence.

Unemployment in Mercer County follows state trends but was slightly lower than the New Jersey average.

Unemployment Rate
Mercer County vs. New Jersey, 2000-2024

Source: ORI-EDR, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program, 2024
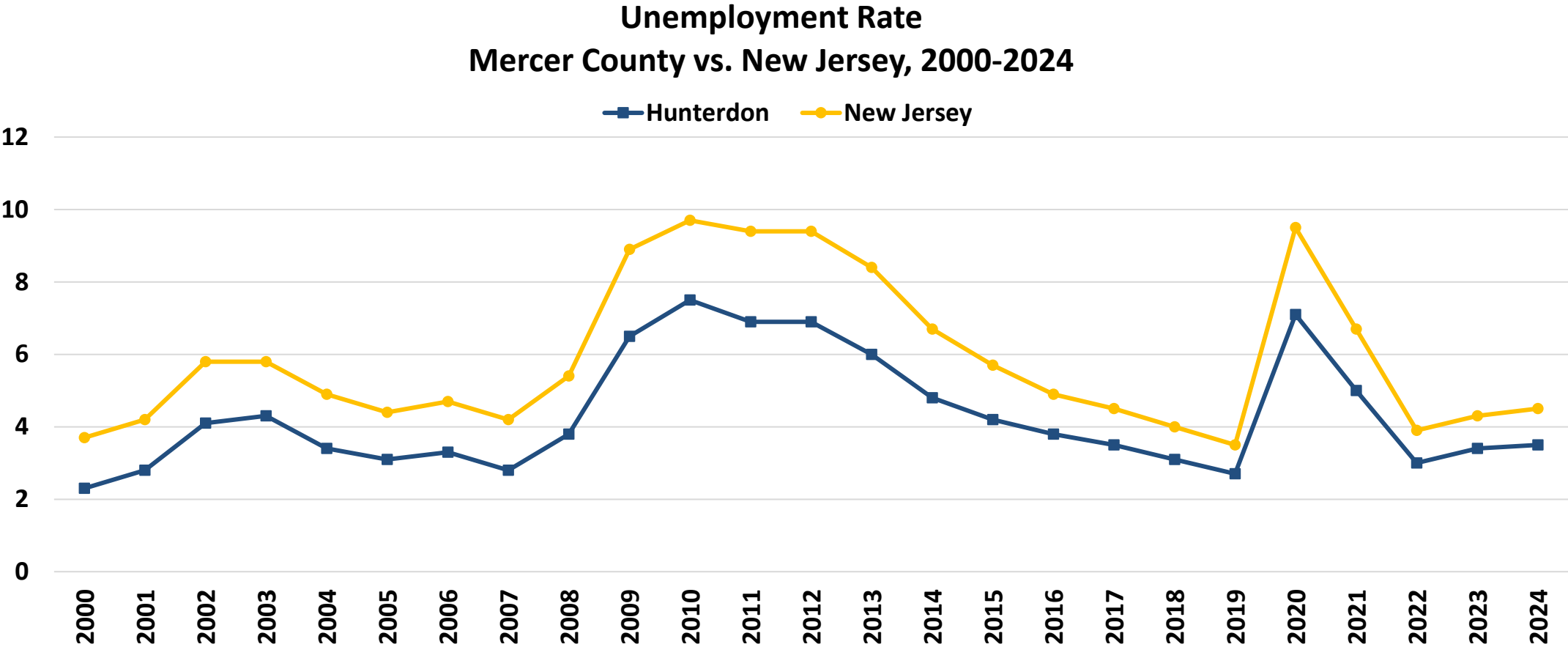
Occupational Employment and Wages

Mercer County vs. New Jersey

Source: 2024 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates (OEWS)

The Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) program produces employment, and wage estimates annually for approximately 830 occupations. These estimates are available for the nation, for individual states, and for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas; national occupational estimates for specific industries are also available.

18.9% of Mercer County's total employment is concentrated in the top 10 occupations.

Top 10 Occupations, Ranked by Employment
Mercer County, 2024

Occupation	Employment	% of Total Employment	Median Hourly Wage
Cashiers	1,090	2.3%	$16.49
Retail Salespersons	1,050	2.2%	$17.76
Fast Food and Counter Workers	1,000	2.1%	$16.26
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	990	2.1%	$19.70
Stockers and Order Fillers	960	2.0%	$18.03
Office Clerks, General	880	1.9%	$23.94
General and Operations Managers	780	1.6%	$65.57
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical	770	1.6%	$24.92
Receptionists and Information Clerks	750	1.6%	$18.57
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	730	1.5%	$19.24
Top 10 Occupations, Total	9,000	18.9%	
All Occupations, Total	47,520	100.0%	$27.69

Note: OES collects the data for 2024.

In New Jersey, the top 10 occupations account for 20.1% of total employment.
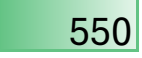
Top 10 Occupations, Ranked by Employment
New Jersey, 2024

Occupation	Employment	% of Total Employment	Median Hourly Wage
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	105,460	2.5%	$17.83
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	101,720	2.4%	$18.78
Registered Nurses	95,150	2.2%	$49.39
Cashiers	93,270	2.2%	$15.96
Retail Salespersons	87,760	2.1%	$17.13
Fast Food and Counter Workers	86,980	2.0%	$16.01
Packers and Packagers, Hand	76,060	1.8%	$20.56
Office Clerks, General	71,140	1.7%	$23.07
Stockers and Order Fillers	70,780	1.7%	$17.69
Janitors and Cleaners	67,590	1.6%	$17.94
Top 10 Occupations, Total	855,910	20.1%	
All Occupations, Total	4,250,430	100.0%	$27.51

Note: OEWS collects the data for 2024.

Between 2022 and 2032 in Mercer County, the food preparation and serving related occupations group is projected to see the largest growth (+550).

Actual and Projected Employment by Occupation Group, Mercer County
Top 10 Occupation groups ranked by 2032 Employment Projections

Occupational Group	2022 Actual	2032 Projected		Net Change	Percent Change
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	6,650	6,100		-550	-8.3%
Sales and Related Occupations	5,150	5,200		50	1.0%
Management Occupations	3,900	4,100		200	5.1%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	3,850	4,100		250	6.5%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	3,300	3,850		550	16.7%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	3,650	3,700		50	1.4%
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	3,500	3,650		150	4.3%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupatior	2,700	2,850		150	5.6%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	2,550	2,700		150	5.9%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	2,100	2,300		200	9.5%

Note: Employment data for Top 15 occupational groups is available in the Appendix.

JOB POSTINGS

Job Postings
Mercer County vs. New Jersey

Source: Lightcast

Lightcast collect raw data on postings from more than 160,000 online sources, then synthesize and interpret those findings to provide meaningful insight in near real time. Job posting analytics can identify supply and demand for workers, skills, and jobs all over the world, as well as important contextual details like compensation trends.

Limitations: One job posting does not necessarily equal one actual job opening. Some companies may post jobs to signal growth to investors or advertise positions in multiple states. Additionally, a decline in job postings doesn't always indicate reduced demand; it could simply mean that companies have already filled their positions and are no longer actively recruiting. We treat this data as directional, offering insights into employer demand rather than exact measurements.

Top 5 Hiring Companies
Mercer County, 2024

- **Princeton University**

- **Bristol-Myers Squibb**

- **Capital Health**

- **Johnson & Johnson**

- **Humana**

Source: Lightcast. Pictures are downloaded from iStockphoto.
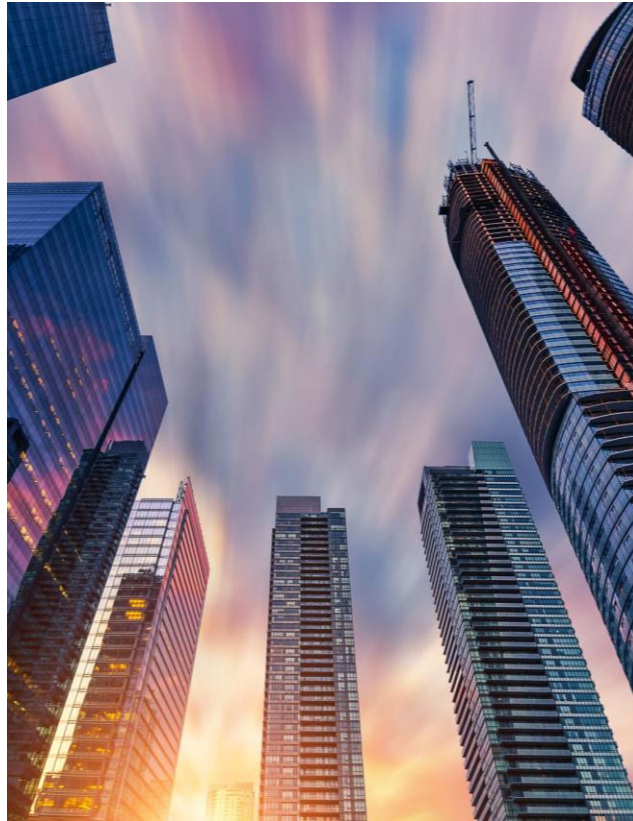
Top 5 Occupations
Mercer County, 2024

- **Registered Nurses**

- **Software Developers**

- **Retail Salespersons**

- **Medical and Health Services Managers**

- **Sales Representatives**
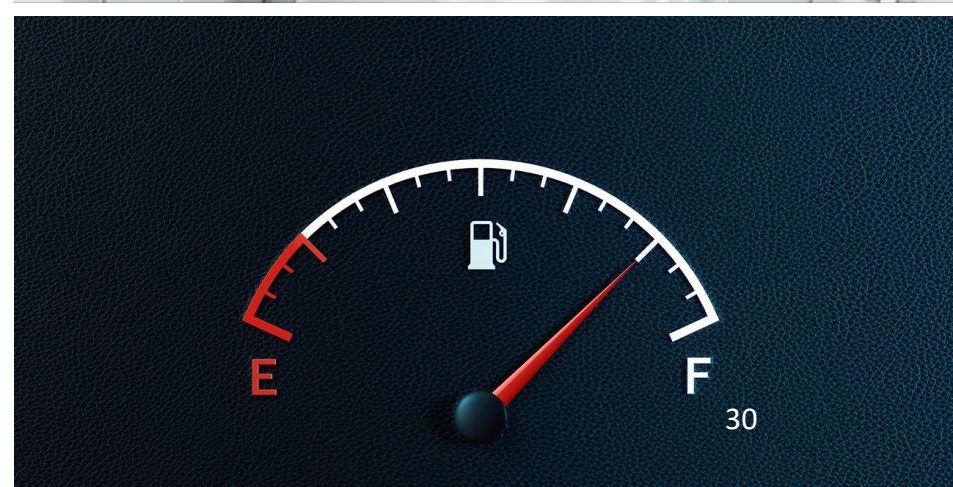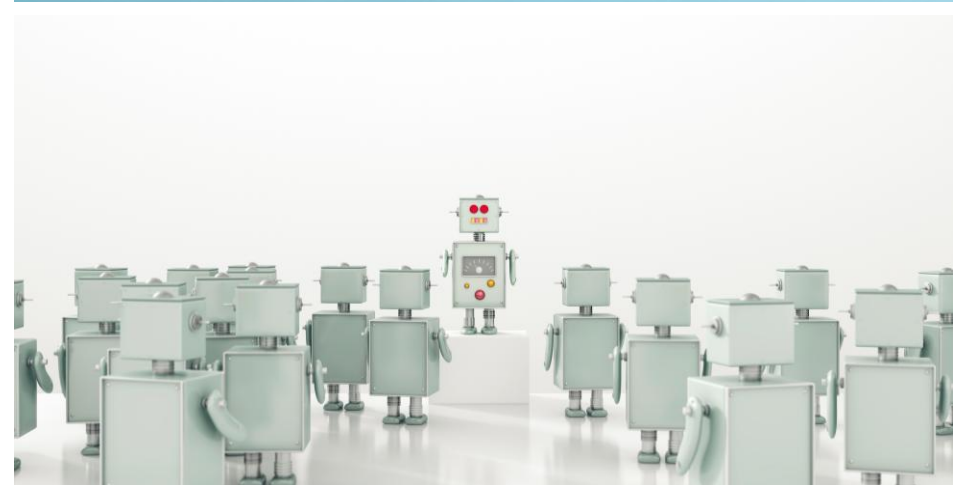
Source: Lightcast

Top 5 Specialized Skills
Mercer County, 2024

- **Project Management**

- **Marketing**

- **Finance**

- **Pharmaceuticals**

- **Auditing**

Top 5 Software Skills

- **Microsoft Office (e.g., Excel, and PowerPoint)**

- **Programming Language (e.g., SQL, Python, and R)**

- **Application Programming Interface (API)**

- **Inventory Management**

- **Amazon Web Services**

Top 5 Soft Skills
Mercer County, 2024

- **Communication**
- **Customer Service**
- **Management**
- **Sales**
- **Operations**

Top 5 Certificates

- **Valid Driver's License**

- **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification**

- **Registered Nurse (RN)**

- **Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)**

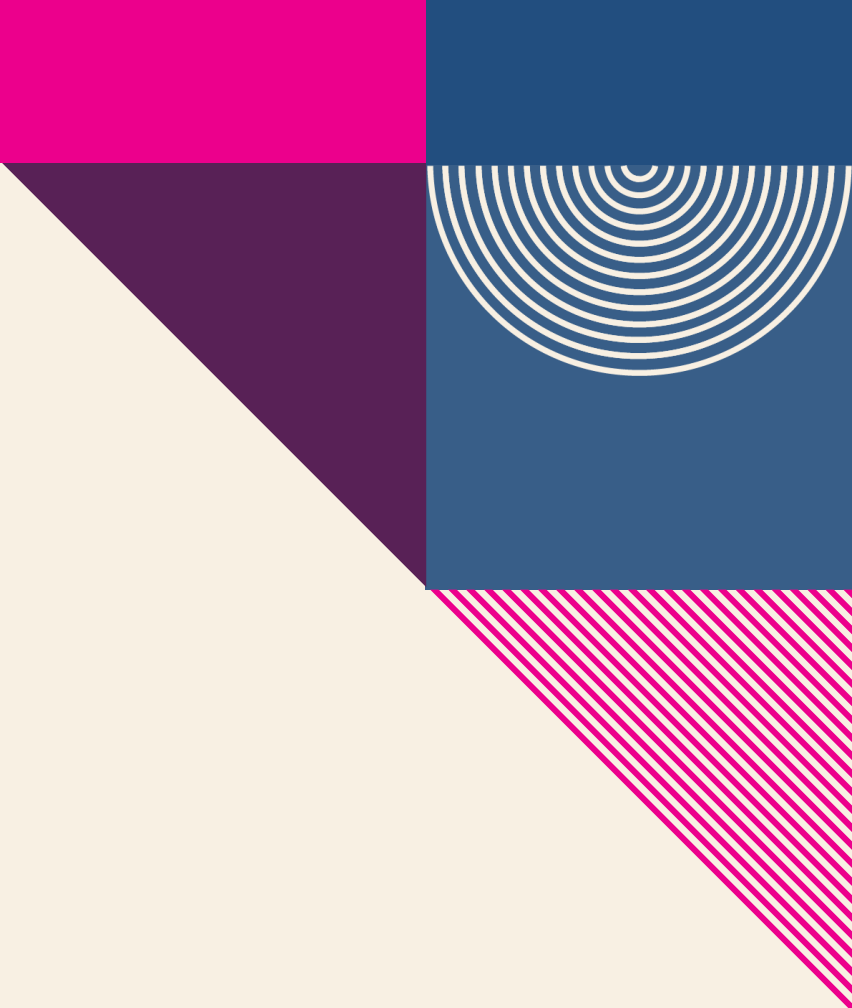- **Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification**

Half of all job postings in Mercer County require a bachelor's degree or higher.

**Job Postings by Educational Attainment
Mercer County, 2024**

■ No education listed ■ High school or GED ■ Associate's degree ■ Bachelor's degree or higher

30%

16%

3%

52%
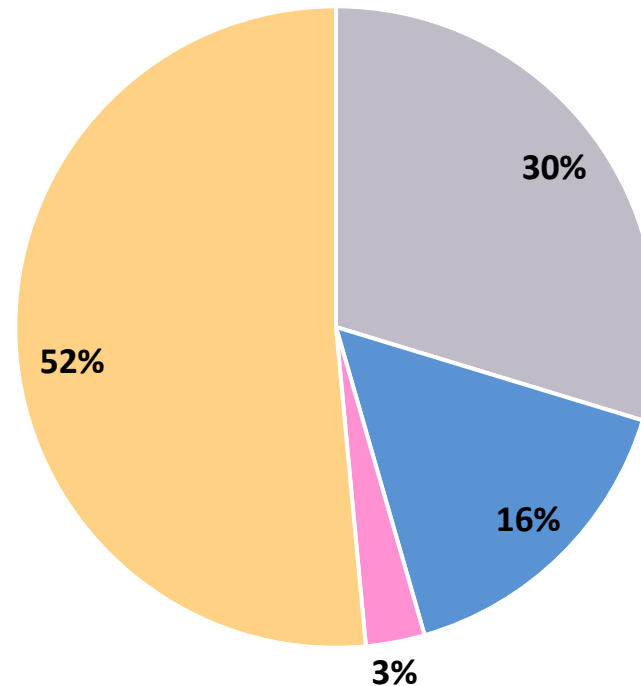
Note: Bachelor's degree or higher includes Bachelor's Degree, Master. Ph.D. or Professional Degree. While 29% of job postings did not specify educational attainment, this does not necessarily mean there are no requirements for it.

Source: Lightcast

AI-related Job Postings
Mercer County vs. New Jersey

Source: Lightcast

To identify AI-related job postings, ORI-EDR compiled a curated list of 130 specific terms. A job listing is deemed AI-related if any of these terms appear in the skills section. A job listing is classified as AI-related if any of these terms are present in the skills section. This includes, but is not limited to, terms such as "AI/ML Inference," "Conversational AI," "Machine Learning Algorithms," "Supervised Learning," and "Deep Learning."

Limitations: One job posting does not necessarily equal one actual job opening. Some companies may post jobs to signal growth to investors or advertise positions in multiple states. Additionally, a decline in job postings doesn't always indicate reduced demand; it could simply mean that companies have already filled their positions and are no longer actively recruiting. We treat this data as directional, offering insights into employer demand rather than exact measurements.
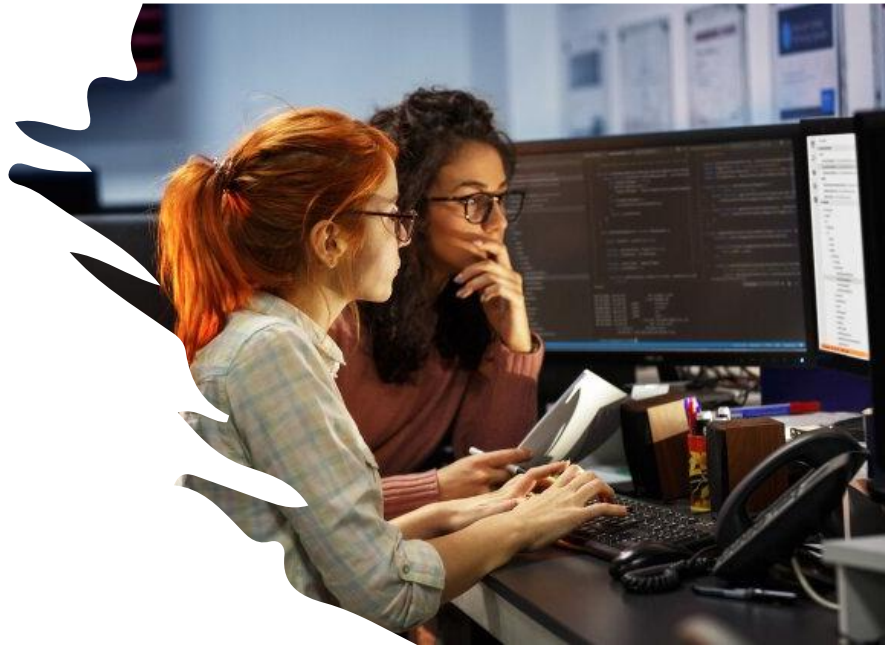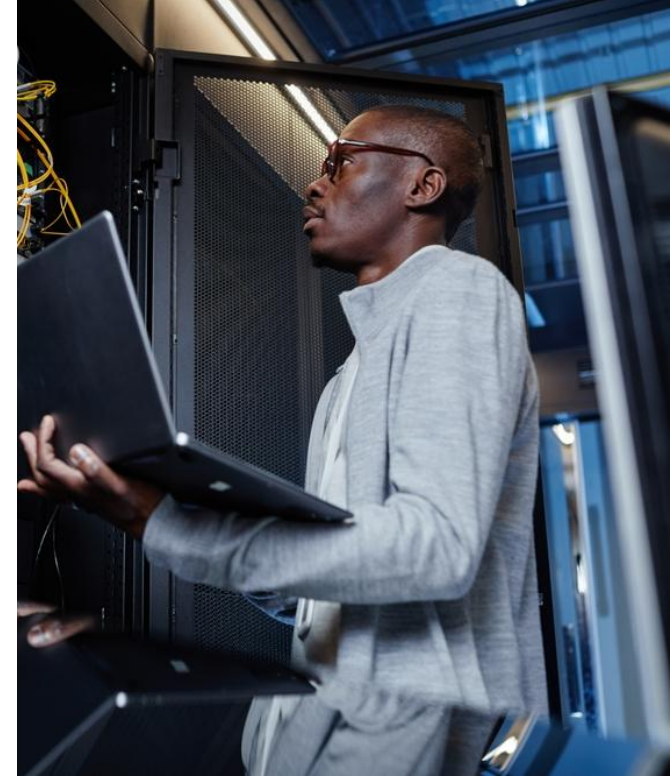
Top 5 AI-related Hiring Companies
Mercer County, 2024

- **Princeton University**
- **Bristol-Myers Squibb**
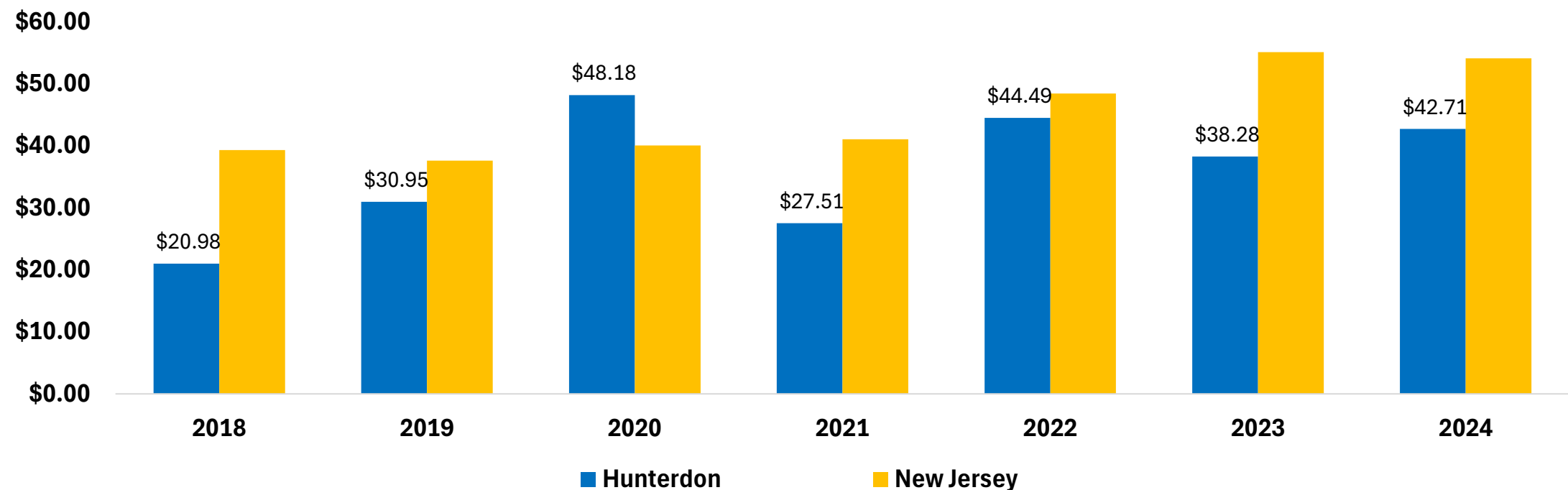- **Johnson & Johnson**
- **Humana**
- **Deloitte**

Top 5 AI-related Occupations
Mercer County, 2024

- **Software Developers**
- **Computer Occupations**
- **Data Scientists**
- **Project Management Specialists**
- **Actuaries**

Source: Lightcast

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In Mercer County, the median hourly wage for AI-related job postings is often lower than the state average.

Median Hourly Wage in AI-related Job Postings, Mercer County vs. New Jersey, 2018-2024

Legend: ■ Hunterdon (blue) ■ New Jersey (yellow)

Hunterdon values labeled: $20.98 (2018), $30.95 (2019), $48.18 (2020), $27.51 (2021), $44.49 (2022), $38.28 (2023), $42.71 (2024)

TAKEAWAYS

- **Key Economic and Workforce Insights: Mercer County**

  - **Demographics**

    - Mercer County's population is younger and more diverse than the New Jersey average.

    - Mercer County's education level is comparable to the state overall, but the proportion of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is 2.8 percentage points higher than the state average.

  - **Regional Variation**

    - There are differences in economic and housing characteristics across Mercer County's municipalities.

*Data Disclaimer*: Data is subject to revision or change

- **Key Economic and Workforce Insights: Mercer County (Continued)**

  - **Industry Composition**

    - Nearly 16% of business establishments are in health care and social assistance.

    - Private educational services and government sectors have higher employment shares in Mercer County compared to state average.

- **Key Economic and Workforce Insights: Mercer County (Continued)**

  - **Occupational Demand in the County**

    - **Top Projected Occupations by 2032 (Net Change)**

      - Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations

      - Transportation and Material Moving Occupations

      - Educational Instruction and Library

      - Computer and Mathematical

      - Healthcare Support

Data Disclaimer: Data is subject to revision or change

- **Key Economic and Workforce Insights: Mercer County (Continued)**

  - **Occupational Demand in the County**

    - **Top Occupations by Job Postings**

      - Retail Salespersons

      - Registered Nurses

      - Home Health and Personal Care Aides

      - Customer Service Representatives

      - Software Developers

Data Disclaimer: Data is subject to revision or change

2025 Report Overview and Subscription Information
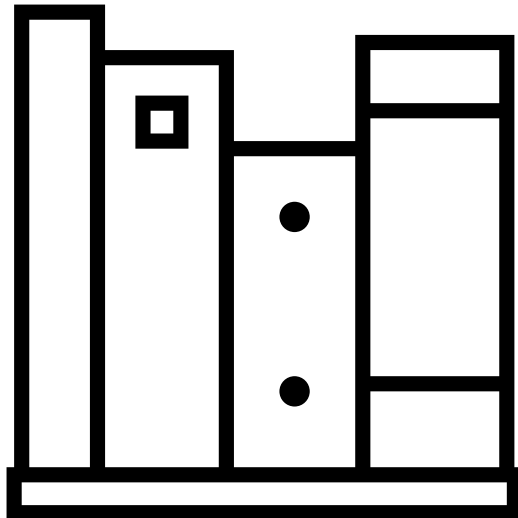
This report was prepared by the Office of Research and Information, Division of Economic & Demographic Research. This division collects and disseminates vital data on employers, employees, and population demographics.

2025-2026 NJDOL PUBLICATIONS

- [Real-Time Insights: Analysis of Job Posting Data in New Jersey for 2025](#) (January 2026)
- [Identifying and Tracking Emerging Occupations in New Jersey's Key Sectors](#) (January 2026)
- [New Jersey's Manufacturing Sector](#) (Winter 2025)
- [County Brief: Labor Market Facts](#) (December 2025)
- [Labor Market Spotlight - Celebrating New Jersey's Veterans](#) (Issue No. 28, Volume 3: November 2025)
- [Labor Market Spotlight - New Jersey's Waterways Help Keep the Economy Flowing](#) (Issue No. 27, Volume 3: October 2025)
- [New Jersey Employment Situation](#) (September 2025)
- [Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)](#) (August 2025)
- [New Jersey Building Permits](#) (August 2025)
- [New Jersey's Life Sciences Sector](#) (Fall 2025)
- [Labor Market Spotlight - The Industries Powering New Jersey's Special Moments](#) (Issue No. 26, Volume 3: August 2025)
- [New Jersey's Health Care Sector](#) (June 2025)
- [New Jersey Business Employment Dynamics](#) (May 2025)
- [Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII)](#) (April 2025)
- [Labor Market Spotlight - Fortune 500 Companies](#) (Issue No. 25, Volume 3: March 2025)
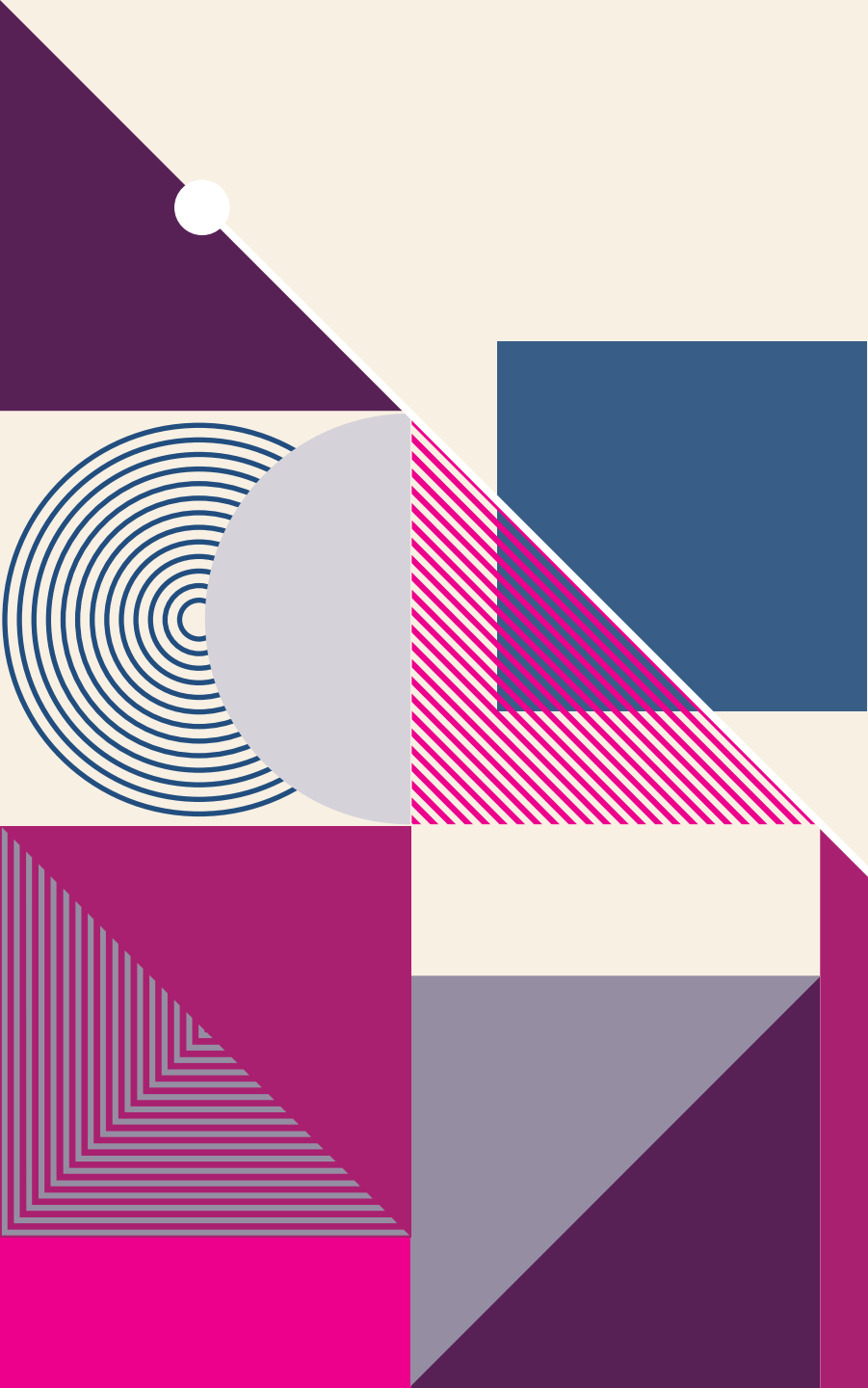- [Labor Market Spotlight - Young Adult Workforce](#) (Issue No. 24, Volume 3: January 2025)

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APPENDIX

Mercer County Establishments, Ranked by Percent of the Total Establishments
All Ownerships

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Transportation and warehousing	58	812	1.5%
Educational services	56	852	1.4%
Information	54	302	1.4%
Management of companies and enterprises	20	868	0.5%
Mining	7	65	0.2%
Total	**3,933**	**40,378**	**100.0%**

Note: An establishment is considered unknown when there is insufficient detail to accurately determine its primary industry at that location. It will be assigned an industry code once the program can verify its main business activity.

Source: ORI-EDR, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, 2024 Annual Averages

Actual and Projected Employment by Occupation Group, Mercer County
Top 15 Occupations ranked by 2032 Employment Projections

Occupational Group	2022 Actual	2032 Projected	Net Change	Percent Change
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	6,650	6,100	-550	-8.3%
Sales and Related Occupations	5,150	5,200	50	1.0%
Management Occupations	3,900	4,100	200	5.1%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	3,850	4,100	250	6.5%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	3,300	3,850	550	16.7%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	3,650	3,700	50	1.4%
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	3,500	3,650	150	4.3%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupation	2,700	2,850	150	5.6%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	2,550	2,700	150	5.9%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	2,100	2,300	200	9.5%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	1,900	2,100	200	10.5%
Healthcare Support Occupations	1,900	2,100	200	10.5%
Production Occupations	2,000	1,850	-150	-7.5%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	1,650	1,750	100	6.1%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance O	1,400	1,450	50	3.6%