



Essex County

Division of Economic and Demographic Research

Office of Research & Information

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

February 2026

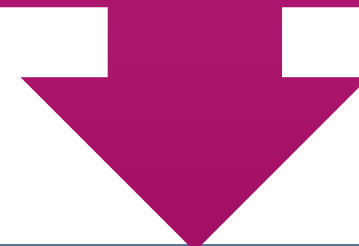


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**WHO ARE
WE?**

New Jersey Department of Labor
Office of Research and Information



Division of Economic and Demographic
Research

SDC

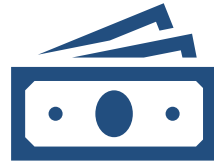
BLS

LMI

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



Essex County has a **lower median age and a greater share of foreign-born residents** than New Jersey.



Essex County's real GDP ranks 3rd among all New Jersey counties.



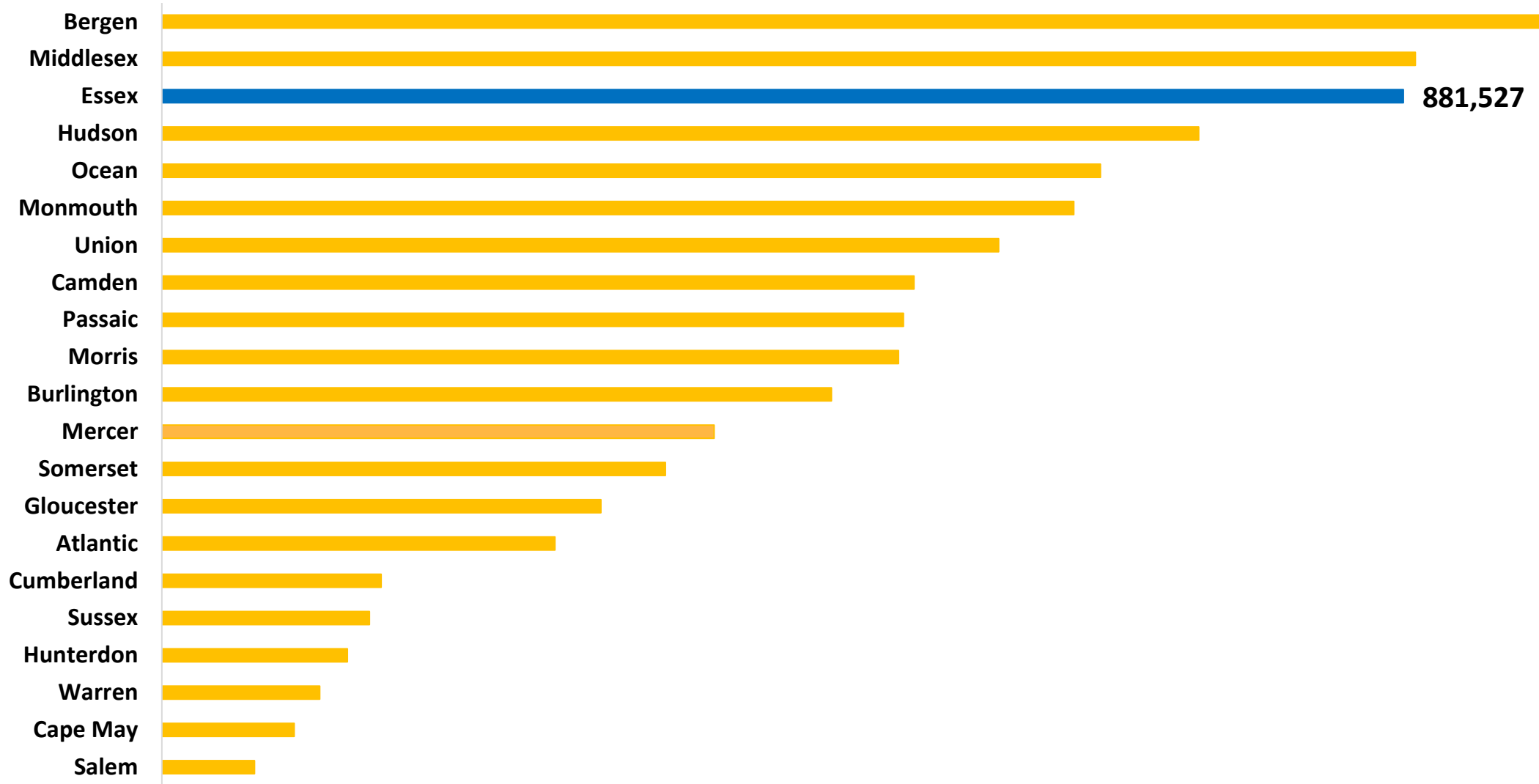
The **top** occupations in demand include Registered Nurses, Retail Salespersons, and Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Drivers.



DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Essex County's population was 881,527 in 2024.

Population Estimates by County in New Jersey, 2024



Essex County has a lower median age and a greater share of foreign-born residents than New Jersey.

Demographic Characteristics

Indicator	Essex County	New Jersey
Median Age	38.0	40.1
% of Older Population (65+)	14.7%	18.0%
% of Language Other Than English Spoken at Home	39.4%	34.3%
% of Foreign-Born Population	31.8%	25.0%
% of Hispanic or Latino (of Any Race)	26.1%	23.5%

The share of Essex County residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is 4.0 percentage points below the state.

Educational Attainment (Population 25 Years and Older)

Indicator	Essex County	New Jersey
High School or Equivalent Degree	27.2%	24.7%
Some College, No Degree	12.5%	14.5%
Associate's Degree	5.7%	6.6%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	40.5%	44.5%
High School Degree or Higher	85.9%	90.3%

Essex County has a lower median household income and a higher poverty rate than the state.

Income & Poverty

Indicator	Essex County	New Jersey
Median Household Income	\$86,780	\$104,294
% of Poverty	13.3%	9.2%

Note: Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2024 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)

Essex County residents pay lower rent and have a lower homeownership rate than the state.

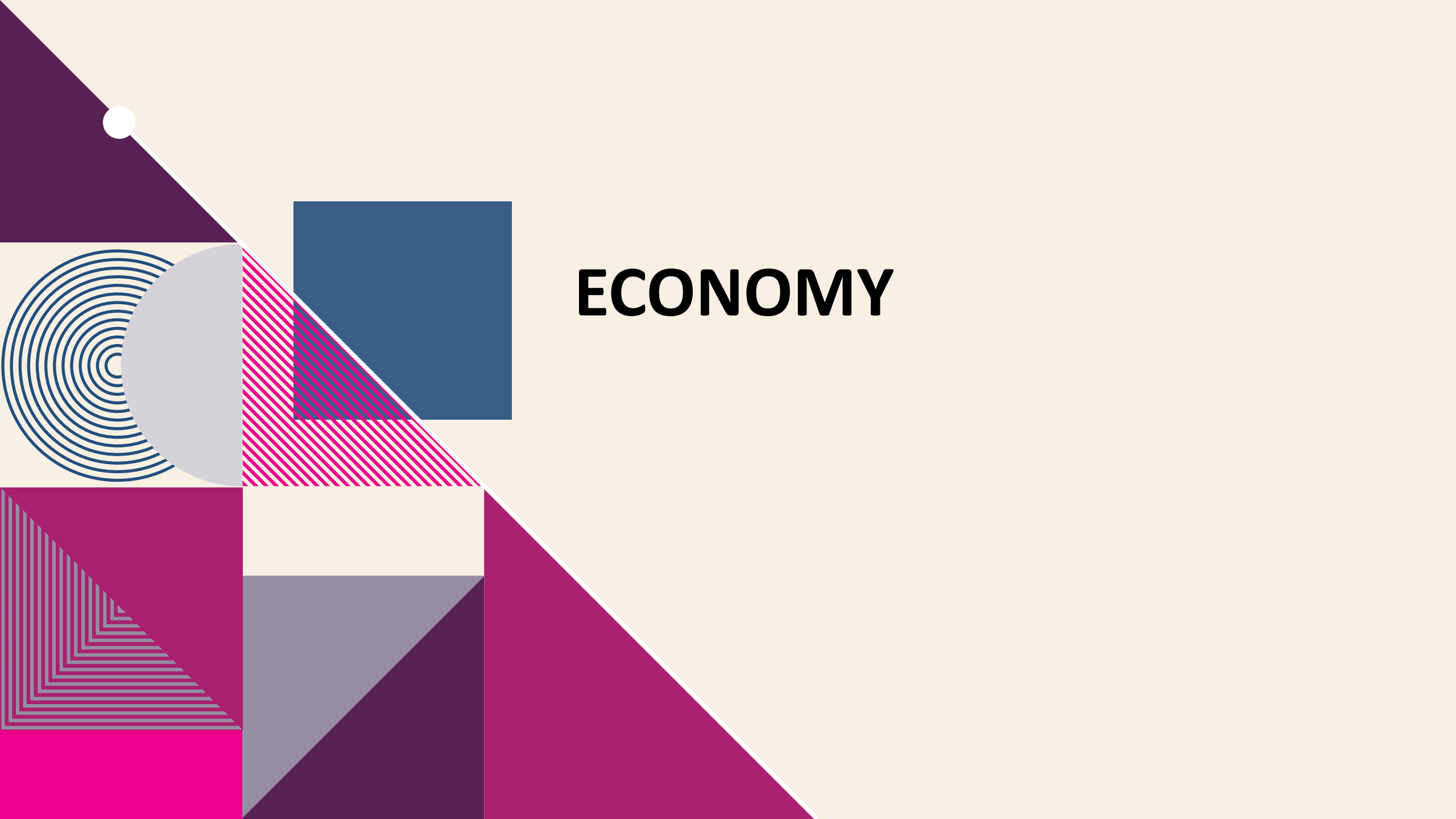
Housing Characteristics

Indicator	Essex County	New Jersey
Total Households	320,791	3,543,944
Median Gross Rent	\$1,616	\$1,800
Homeownership Rate	45.0%	63.9%
% of Housing Value of Owner Occupied (\geq\$300,000)	85.0%	80.7%

Essex County residents have longer commute times and use public transportation at a higher percentage compared to the state average.

Commuting Characteristics

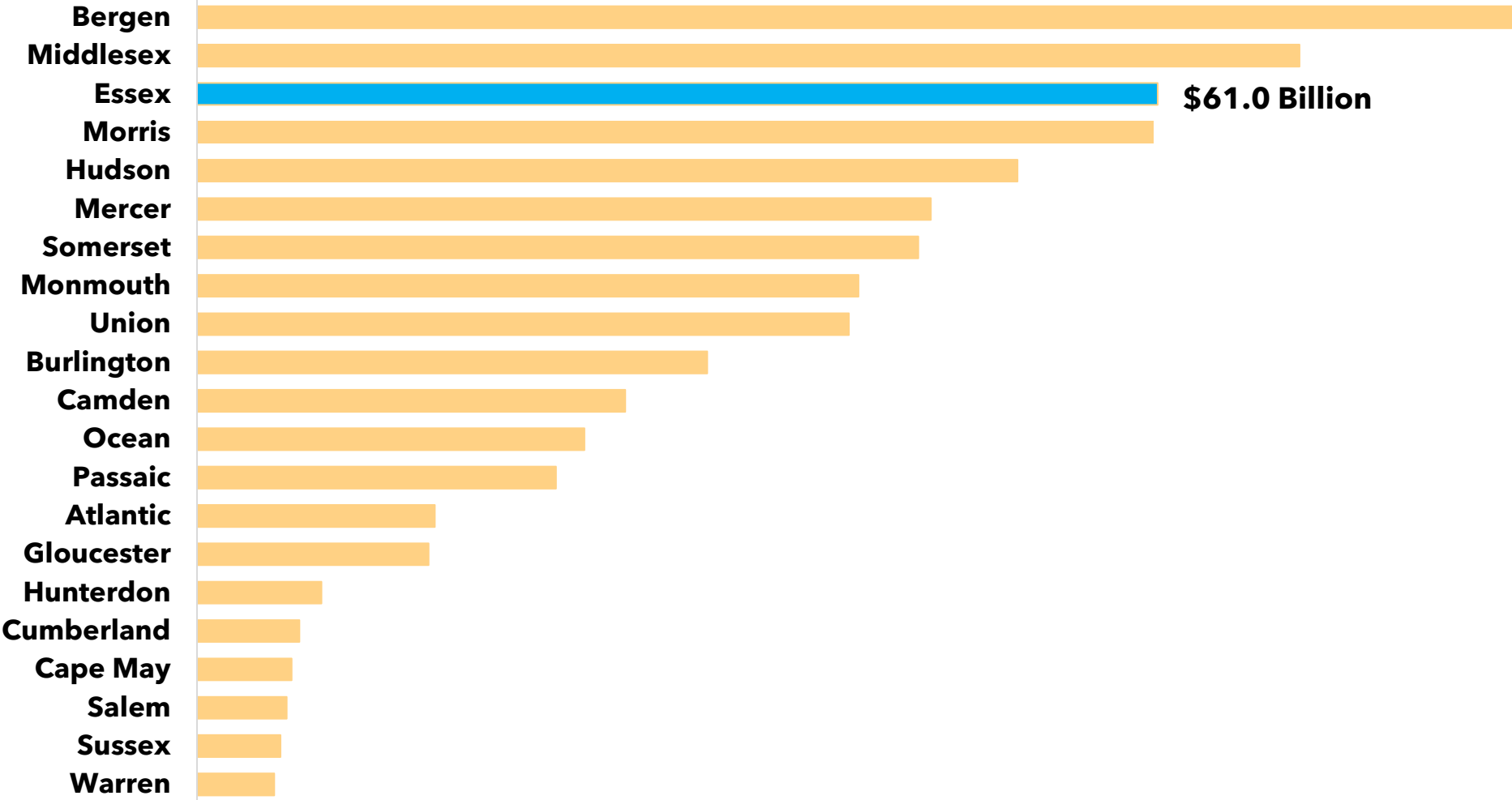
Indicator	Essex County	New Jersey
Average Travel Time to Work (in Minutes)	33.8	31.9
% of Public Transportation	18.5%	9.7%
% of Working From Home	13.1%	13.5%



ECONOMY

In 2024, Essex County's real GDP was \$61.0 billion, ranking 3rd among all New Jersey counties.

Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by County in New Jersey, 2024



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "[CAGDP1 County and MSA gross domestic product \(GDP\) summary](#)" (accessed November 28, 2025).



Establishments and Employment

Essex County

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

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.

23.5% of Essex County establishments are in health care and social assistance.

Essex County Establishments, Ranked by Percent of the Total Establishments Private Sector

Industry	Total Number of Establishments	Total Number of Employees	% of Total Establishments
Health care and social assistance	5,448	54,762	23.5%
Other services, except public administration	2,402	12,430	10.3%
Retail trade	2,390	23,847	10.3%
Professional and technical services	2,327	21,668	10.0%
Accommodation and food services	1,659	25,637	7.1%
Construction	1,510	10,318	6.5%
Administrative and waste services	1,073	16,073	4.6%
Real estate and rental and leasing	910	6,216	3.9%
Wholesale trade	856	11,448	3.7%
Finance and insurance	786	16,560	3.4%
Manufacturing	691	16,495	3.0%
Information	377	8,036	1.6%
Educational services	329	8,411	1.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	314	5,050	1.4%
Management of companies	92	4,976	0.4%

Note: Full list of establishments in Monmouth County is available in [Appendix](#).

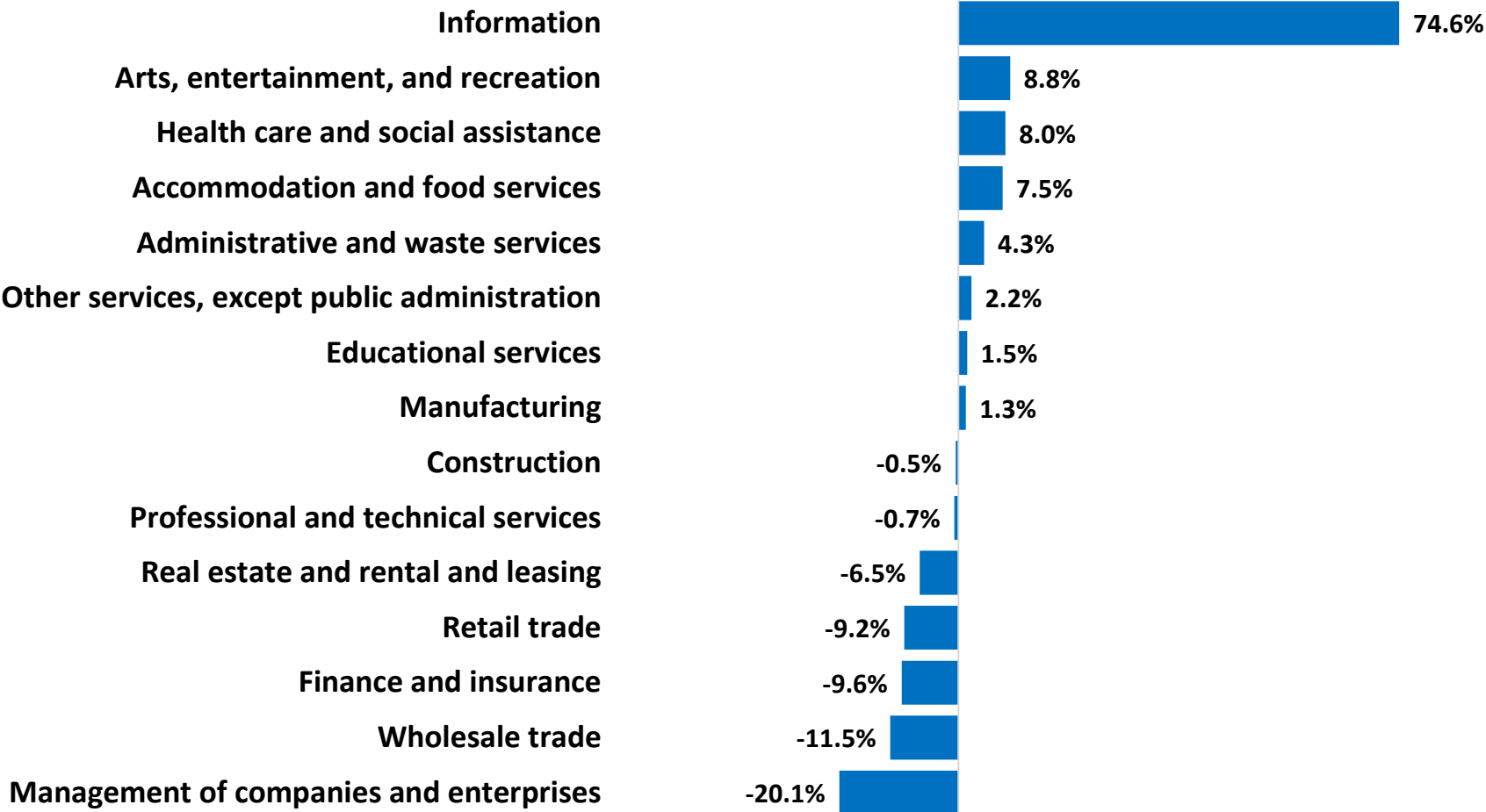
In Essex County, health care and social assistance has a higher employment share compared to state averages.

Private Employment Essex County vs. New Jersey, 2024

Industry	Essex County		New Jersey		Difference between
	Employment	% of Total	Employment	% of Total	
Construction	10,318	3.7%	164,014	4.5%	-0.8%
Manufacturing	16,495	5.9%	253,054	6.9%	-1.0%
Wholesale trade	11,448	4.1%	213,549	5.8%	-1.7%
Retail trade	23,847	8.5%	427,521	11.6%	-3.1%
Information	8,036	2.9%	76,199	2.1%	0.8%
Finance and insurance	16,560	5.9%	189,987	5.2%	0.8%
Real estate and rental and leasing	6,216	2.2%	63,263	1.7%	0.5%
Professional and technical services	21,668	7.7%	336,105	9.1%	-1.4%
Management of companies and enterprises	4,976	1.8%	82,588	2.2%	-0.5%
Administrative and waste services	16,073	5.7%	286,750	7.8%	-2.0%
Educational services	8,411	3.0%	90,018	2.4%	0.6%
Health care and social assistance	54,762	19.6%	656,356	17.8%	1.7%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	5,050	1.8%	73,699	2.0%	-0.2%
Accommodation and food services	25,637	9.2%	328,905	8.9%	0.2%
Other services, except public administration	12,430	4.4%	144,086	3.9%	0.5%

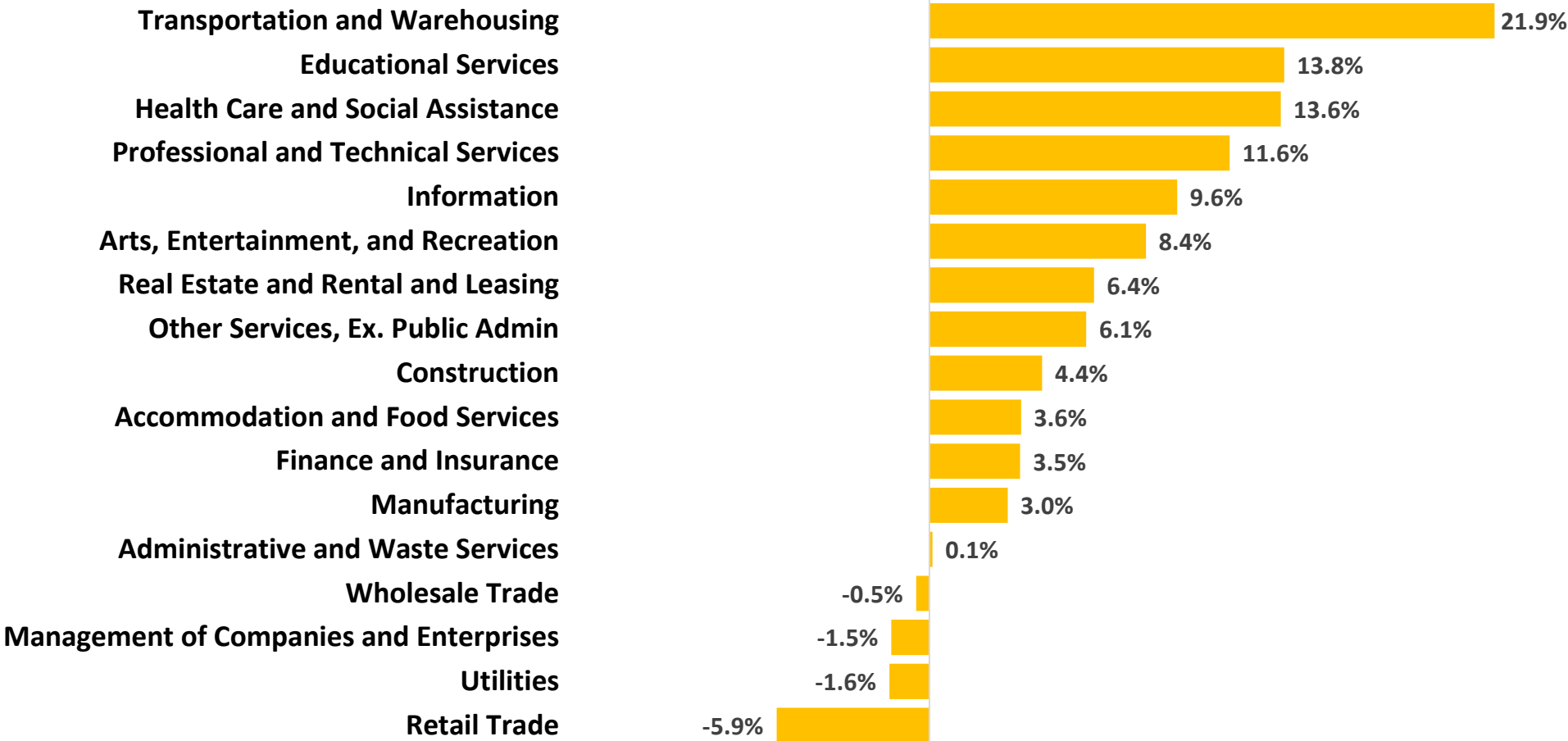
Between 2018 and 2024, the information sector saw the largest employment growth in Essex County, increasing by 74.6%.

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



Transportation and warehousing 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)





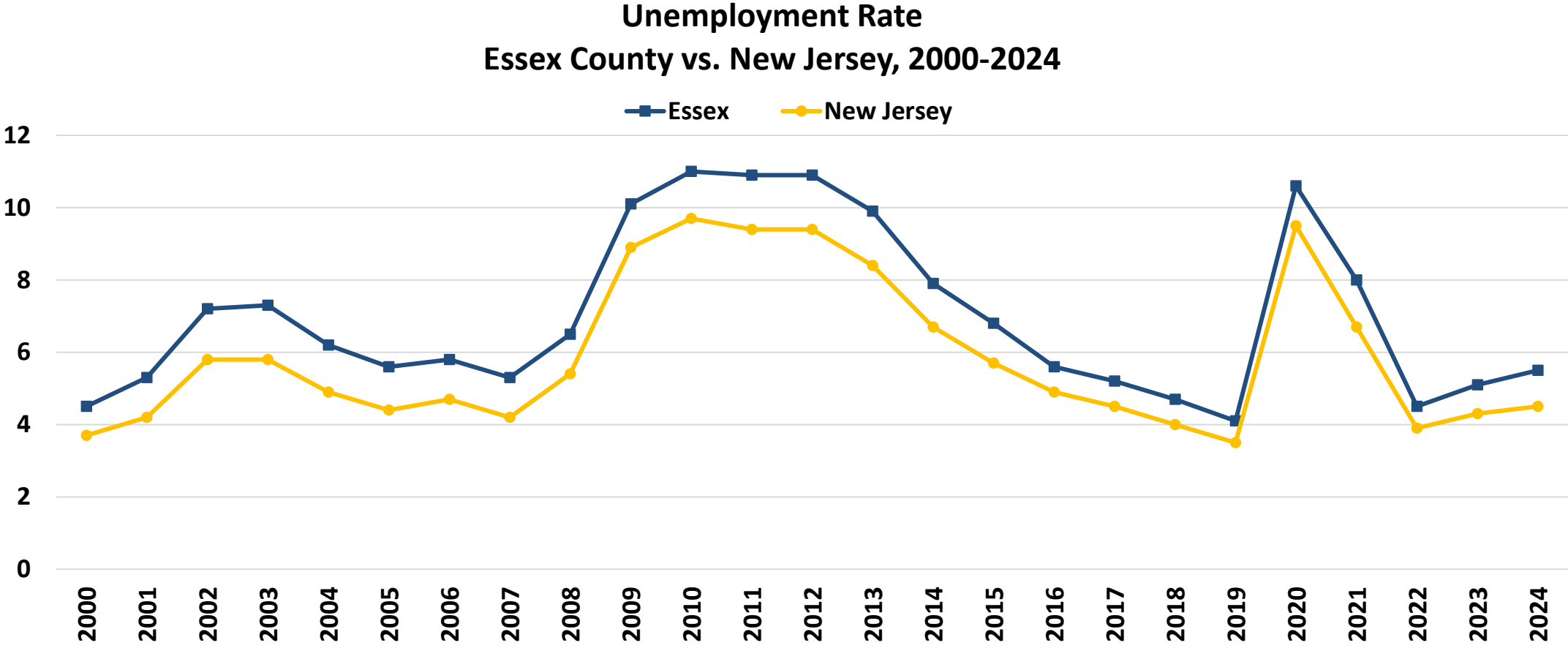
Unemployment Trend

Essex County vs. New Jersey

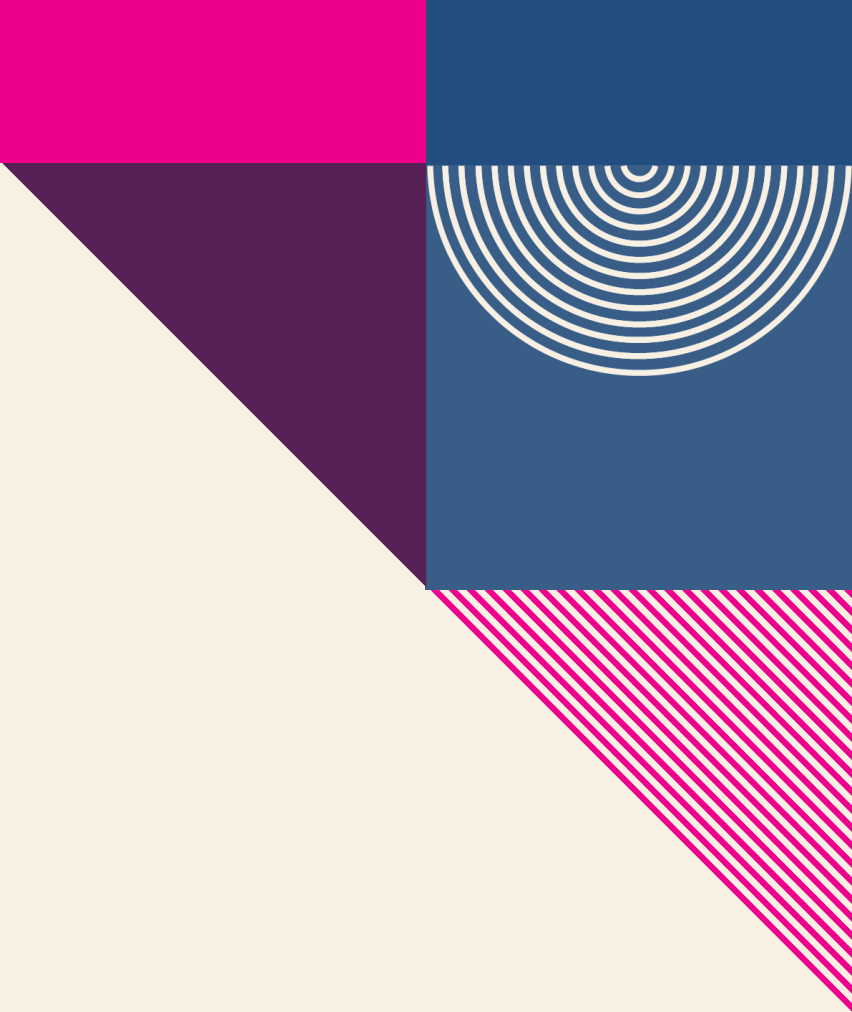
Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), 2024

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.

The unemployment rate in Essex County follows state trends but is above the New Jersey average.



Source: ORI-EDR, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program, 2024



Occupational Employment and Wages

Essex 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.

19.0% of Essex County's total employment is concentrated in the top 10 occupations.

Top 10 Occupations, Ranked by Employment Essex County, 2024

Occupation	Employment	% of Total Employment	Median Hourly Wage
Registered Nurses	9,670	2.7%	\$50.20
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	9,110	2.6%	\$19.16
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	8,270	2.3%	\$17.66
Fast Food and Counter Workers	6,810	1.9%	\$16.29
Cashiers	6,210	1.8%	\$15.97
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	6,140	1.7%	\$18.24
Office Clerks, General	5,660	1.6%	\$23.63
Retail Salespersons	5,260	1.5%	\$16.94
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	5,060	1.4%	ND
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,940	1.4%	\$25.00
Top 10 Occupations, Total	67,130	19.0%	
All Occupations, Total	353,950	100.0%	\$29.25

Note: OEWS 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, Essex County’s transportation and material moving occupational group is projected to see the largest growth (+3,450).

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

Occupational Group	2022 Actual	2032 Projected	Net Change	Percent Change
Transportation and Material Moving	46,400	49,850	3,450	7.4%
Office and Administrative Support	51,250	47,600	-3,650	-7.1%
Educational Instruction and Library	34,150	35,900	1,750	5.2%
Management	27,650	28,800	1,150	4.2%
Business and Financial Operations	25,650	25,800	150	0.6%
Sales and Related	26,500	25,500	-1,000	-3.9%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	21,900	23,450	1,550	7.1%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	21,550	22,450	900	4.2%
Healthcare Support	16,350	18,450	2,100	12.9%
Computer and Mathematical	13,600	14,650	1,050	7.7%

Note: Employment data for Top 15 occupational groups is available in the [Appendix](#).



JOB POSTINGS



Job Postings

Essex 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 Essex County, 2024

- **RWJBarnabas Health**
- **Prudential Financial**
- **Rutgers-The State University**
- **Swing Education**
- **Seton Hall University**

Top 5 Occupations Essex County, 2024

- Registered Nurses
- Retail Salespersons
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Software Developers
- Sales Representatives

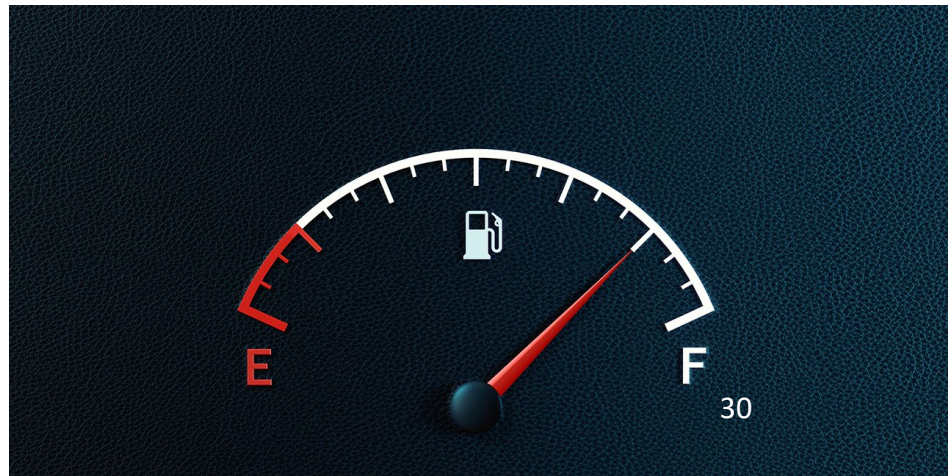
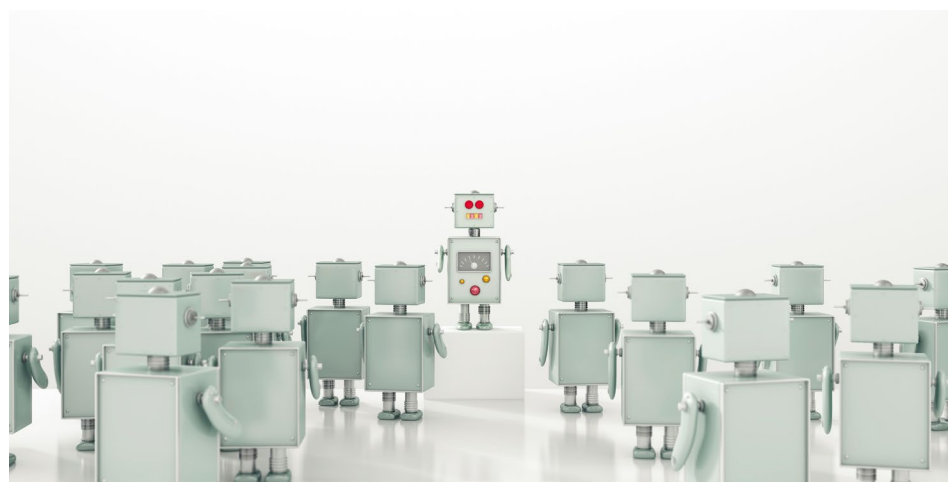
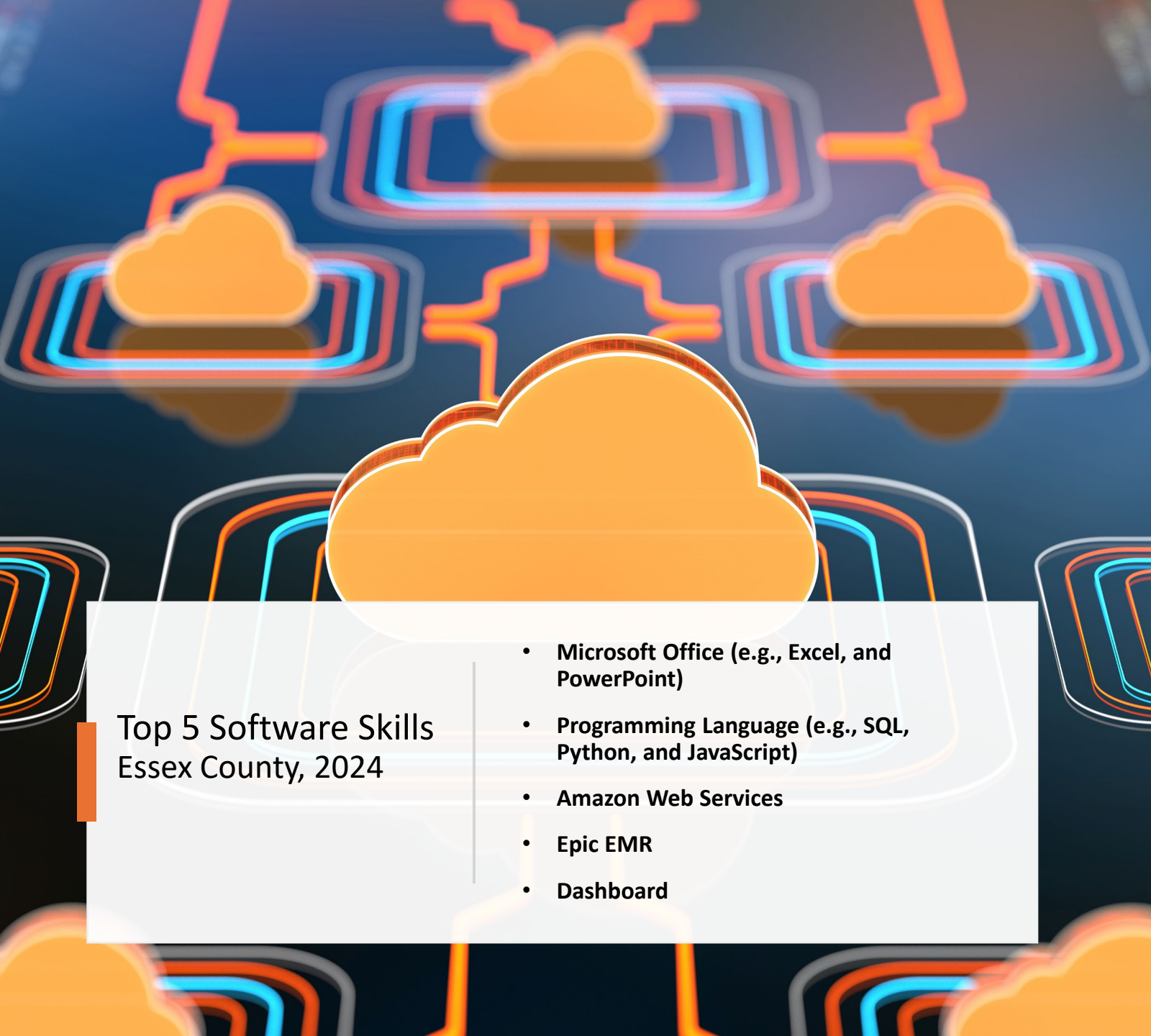




Top 5 Specialized Skills Essex County, 2024

- **Nursing**
- **Marketing**
- **Project Management**
- **Auditing**
- **Finance**





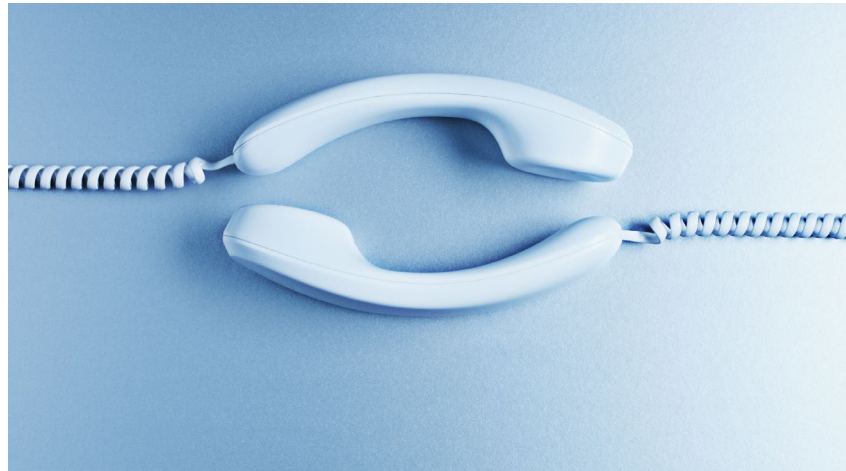
Top 5 Software Skills Essex County, 2024

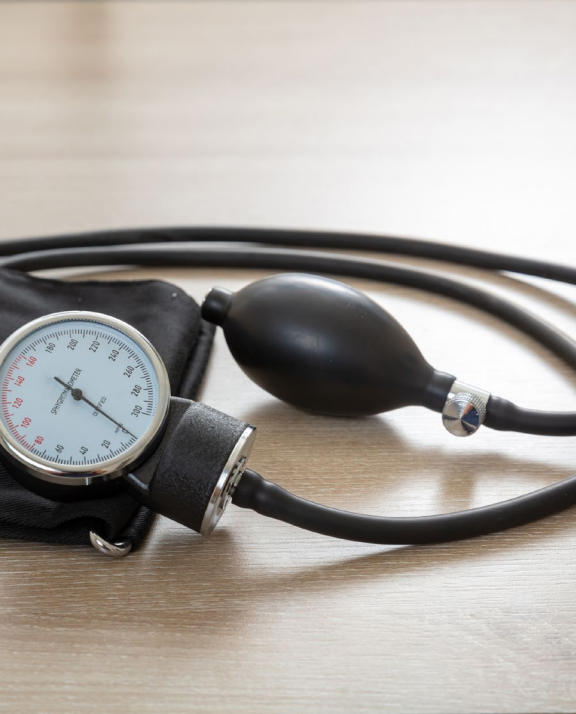
- **Microsoft Office (e.g., Excel, and PowerPoint)**
- **Programming Language (e.g., SQL, Python, and JavaScript)**
- **Amazon Web Services**
- **Epic EMR**
- **Dashboard**



Top 5 Soft Skills Essex County, 2024

- **Communication**
- **Customer Service**
- **Management**
- **Operations**
- **Leadership**





Top 5 Certificates Essex County, 2024

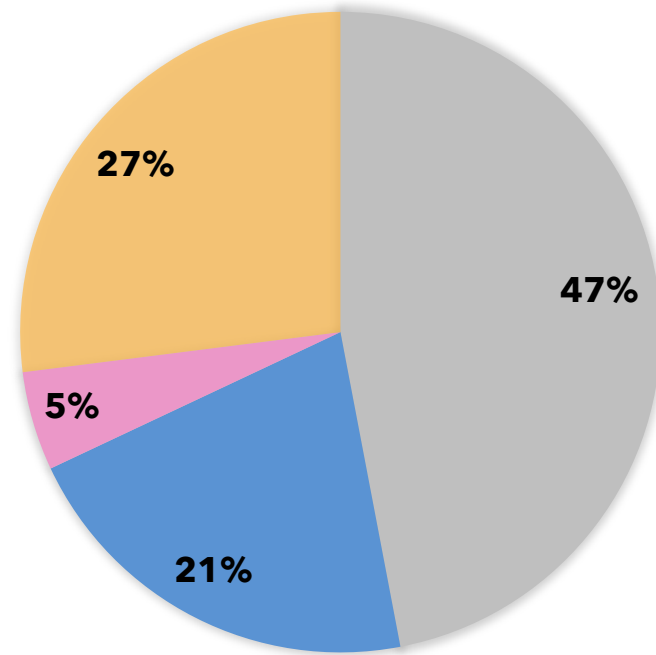
- **Valid Driver's License**
- **Registered Nurse (RN)**
- **Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification**
- **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification**
- **Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification**



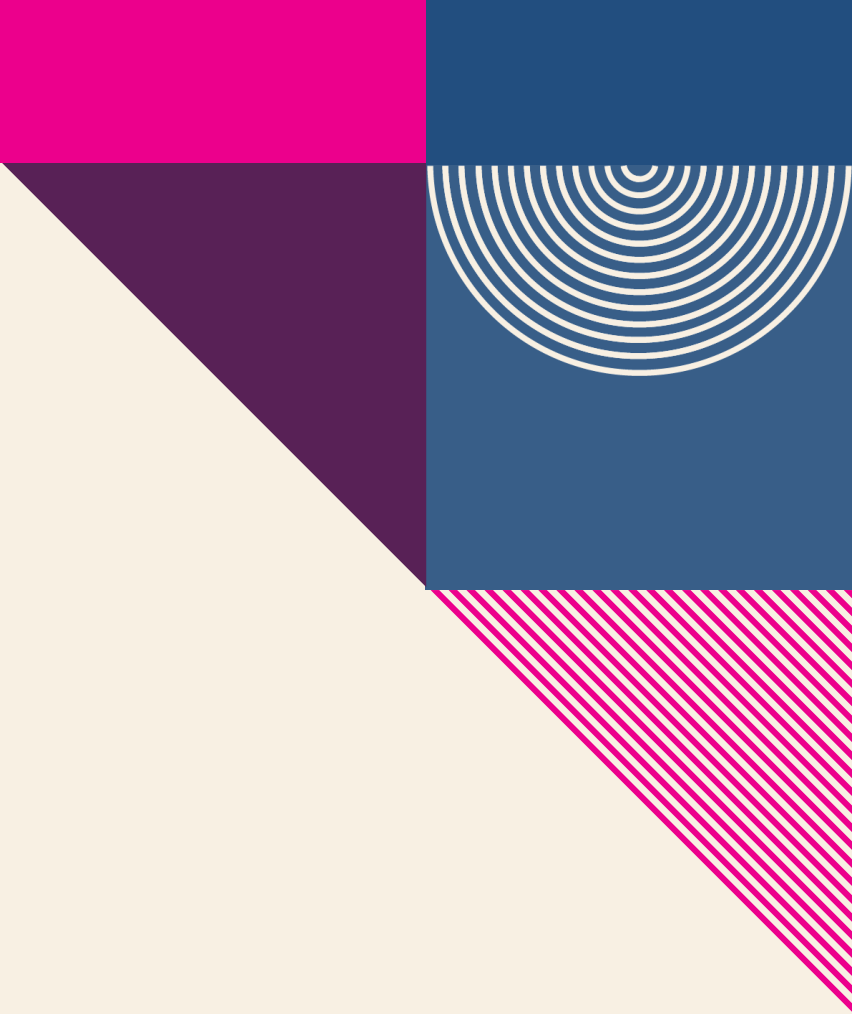
27 percent of job postings in Essex County require a bachelor's degree or higher.

Job Postings by Educational Attainment Essex County, 2024

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



Note: Bachelor's degree or higher includes Bachelor's Degree, Master, Ph.D. or Professional Degree. While 47% of job postings did not specify educational attainment, this does not necessarily mean there are no requirements for it.



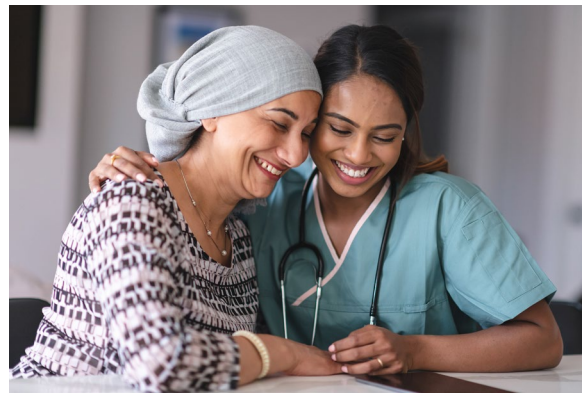
AI-related Job Postings

Essex 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.

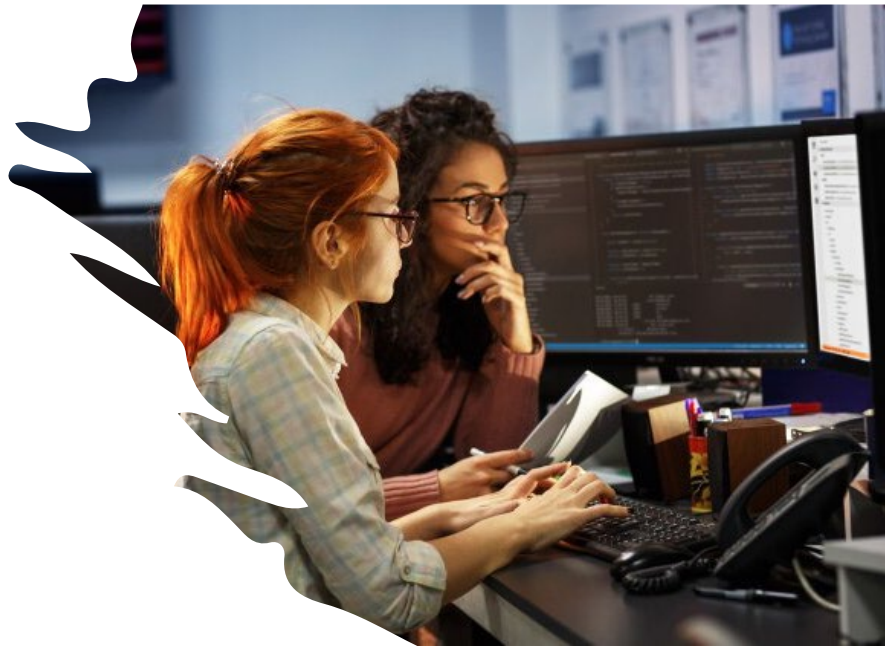
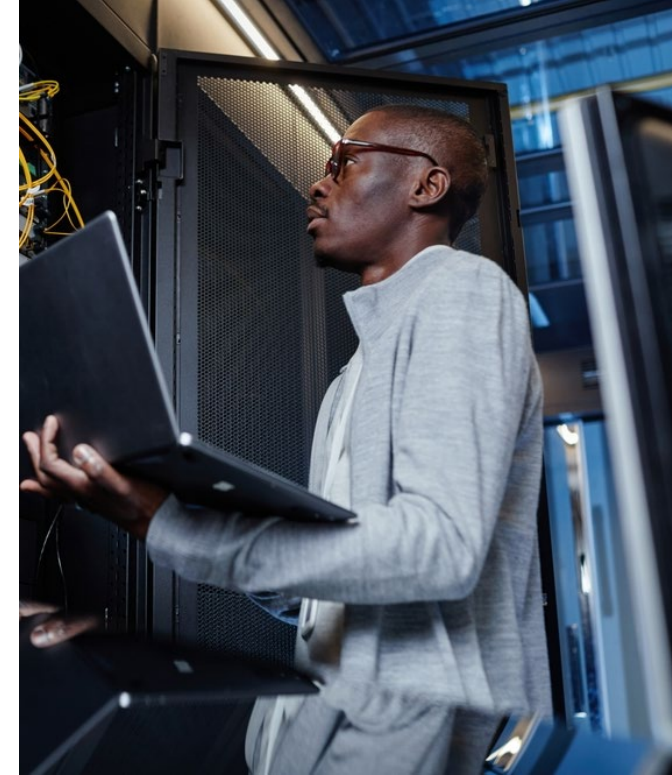


Top 5 AI-related Hiring Companies Essex County, 2024

- Prudential Financial
- Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey
- Public Service Enterprise Group
- ADP
- New Jersey Institute of Technology

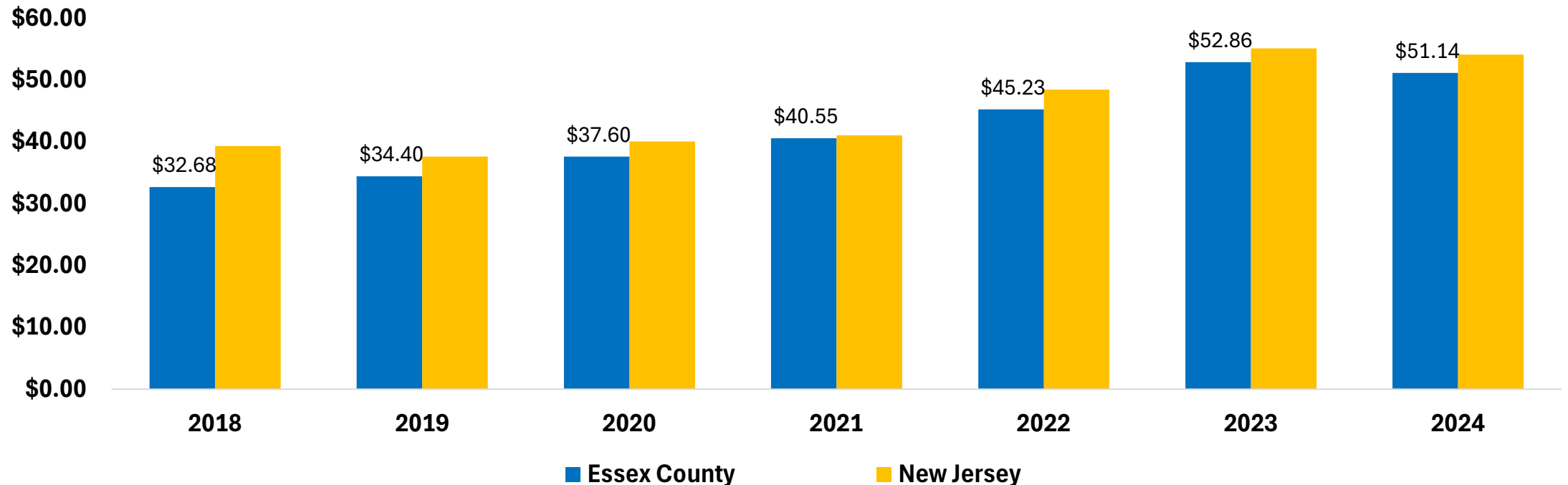
Top 5 AI-related Occupations Essex County, 2024

- Software Developers
- Project Management Specialists
- Computer Occupations, All Other
- Data Scientists
- Marketing Managers



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

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





TAKEAWAYS



- **Key Economic and Workforce Insights: Essex County**
 - **Demographics**
 - Essex County's population is younger and more diverse than New Jersey.
 - The proportion of Essex County residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is 4.0 percentage points below the state.

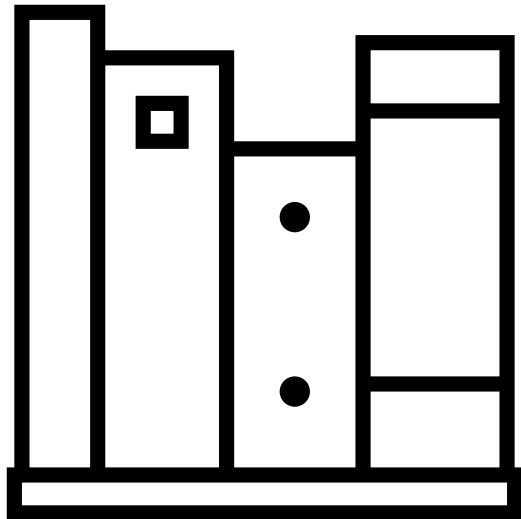


- **Key Economic and Workforce Insights: Essex County (Continued)**

- **Industry Composition**

- Health care and social assistance establishments account for 23.5% of all business establishments.
- Health care and social assistance sector has a higher employment share in Essex County compared to the state.

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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THANK YOU!



APPENDIX

Essex County Establishments, Ranked by Percent of the Total Establishments Private Sector

Industry	Total Number of Establishments	Total Number of Employees	% of Total Establishments
Health care and social assistance	5,448	54,762	23.5%
Other services, except public administration	2,402	12,430	10.3%
Retail trade	2,390	23,847	10.3%
Professional and technical services	2,327	21,668	10.0%
Accommodation and food services	1,659	25,637	7.1%
Construction	1,510	10,318	6.5%
Unclassified	1,282	1,476	5.5%
Administrative and waste services	1,073	16,073	4.6%
Real estate and rental and leasing	910	6,216	3.9%
Wholesale trade	856	11,448	3.7%
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Information	377	8,036	1.6%
Educational services	329	8,411	1.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	314	5,050	1.4%
Management of companies and enterprises	92	4,976	0.4%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	15	57	0.1%
Total	23,209	279,659	100.0%

*Source: ORI-EDR, QCEW, 2024

** Data are suppressed

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.

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

Occupational Group	2022 Actual	2032 Projected	Net Change	Percent Change
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	46,400	49,850	3,450	7.4%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	51,250	47,600	-3,650	-7.1%
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	34,150	35,900	1,750	5.2%
Management Occupations	27,650	28,800	1,150	4.2%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	25,650	25,800	150	0.6%
Sales and Related Occupations	26,500	25,500	-1,000	-3.9%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	21,900	23,450	1,550	7.3%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	21,550	22,450	900	4.4%
Healthcare Support Occupations	16,350	18,450	2,100	12.9%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	13,600	14,650	1,050	7.9%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	13,500	14,600	1,100	8.2%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	12,550	12,900	350	3.1%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	11,700	12,000	300	2.9%
Production Occupations	12,000	11,800	-200	-1.6%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	10,450	10,950	500	5.1%