

Georgia Economic Overview: Employment, Wages, and Sector Forecast (2025Q4)

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Georgia's economic engine is currently defined by a profound paradox: while the state added a staggering 128,897 jobs in Health Care and Social Assistance over the past five years—leading all other sectors—this growth is as much a challenge as it is an achievement (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). This surge serves as a critical barometer for Georgia's workforce development infrastructure, signaling a pressing need to align training capacity with the high-volume labor demands projected through the end of 2026.

To understand the mechanics behind these shifts, this report synthesizes JobsEQ® 2025Q4 regional economic data with U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey five-year estimates. By examining the demographic foundations, industry concentrations, and wage distributions that underpin the state's profile, we can more clearly delineate the policy levers required to sustain Georgia's competitive edge.

Demographic and Labor Force Foundation

Georgia's total population stood at 10,940,407 in the 2019 to 2023 ACS reference period, with a median age of 37.6 years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). The civilian labor force reached 5,496,061, yielding a participation rate of 63.5%. Among the prime working-age cohort of adults aged 25 to 54, labor force participation was 82.0%, a figure that carries direct implications for talent supply in a state where employers across sectors are competing for the same core working-age population (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026).

Educational attainment among adults aged 25 to 64 is a persistent policy variable: 36.5% hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to a national figure of 37.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). That gap of less than one percentage point understates the structural challenge, because it is concentrated unevenly across the state's geography and demography. Median household income is \$77,353, with per-capita income of \$40,924. Black or African American residents make up 31.1% of the population and Hispanic or Latino residents 11.0%, two population groups whose workforce participation rates and access to credential pathways have direct implications for Georgia's overall human capital formation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

Work-from-home penetration stands at 15.9%, roughly matching the national average, reflecting a labor market that has absorbed the post-pandemic redistribution of office work without a dramatic structural departure from the broader national pattern (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026).

The Structural Engine: Industry Growth and Wage Dynamics

The stability of the labor force described above provides the platform for an expansive non-farm employment base, which reached 5,320,987 in 2025Q4 (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). However, the state's average annual wage of \$70,163 masks significant variance between high-volume service sectors and high-value technical industries.

Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest employer in the state at 700,911 workers and has driven the most absolute job creation over the past five years at 128,897 net additions, though its average annual wage of \$68,833 sits below the statewide average (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). This combination of high volume, rapid growth, and near-average wages characterizes a sector that is essential to Georgia's economic base but does not independently resolve the state's income distribution challenges.

Retail Trade employs 533,071 workers, representing the second-largest sector by employment, but its average annual wage of \$41,300 places it well below the state average (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). Accommodation and Food Services, the third-largest sector at 464,946 workers, added 84,930 jobs over five years at an average annual wage of \$27,294, the lowest among the major sectors tracked, reflecting a significant share of Georgia's workforce in roles that do not generate middle-class household incomes without supplement from other sources.

Manufacturing employs 436,627 workers at an average annual wage of \$74,107, above the state average, and added 44,850 jobs over five years (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). Educational Services, at 425,388 workers and an average wage of \$62,622, represents another large employment base that operates below the statewide wage average.

The highest-wage sectors in Georgia's economy are Management of Companies and Enterprises at \$155,556, Information at \$136,822, Finance and Insurance at \$122,091, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services at \$111,492 (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services added 58,066 jobs over the past five years while Transportation and Warehousing, which carries a location quotient of 1.21 indicating above-national concentration, added 60,364 jobs at an average wage of \$67,083.

Competitive Advantages: Analyzing Location Quotients

While the volume of employment dictates the scale of the economy, location quotients (LQ) reveal where Georgia possesses a true comparative advantage over the national average (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). An LQ above 1.0 identifies sectors where Georgia is specialized, most notably in Transportation and Warehousing (1.21) and Information (1.21).

The Transportation and Warehousing concentration is particularly significant for workforce policy. A location quotient of 1.21, combined with 60,364 net jobs added over five years and a one-year forecast of an additional 2,717 jobs, identifies this sector as a durable competitive advantage for Georgia that merits sustained workforce investment rather than episodic attention (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). The Information sector's equivalent location quotient, paired with a wage premium of \$136,822 annually, makes it a high-return target for skills pipeline development even though its employment volume is smaller.

Forward Outlook: The One-Year Employment Forecast

Understanding these historical concentrations allows for more precise forecasting. JobsEQ projects a net gain of 42,359 jobs across Georgia's economy through 2026Q4, a 0.8% expansion that underscores a continuing, albeit moderate, upward trajectory (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026).

Health Care and Social Assistance leads with 7,818 projected net additions at a growth rate of 1.1%. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services follows with 4,735 net additions at 1.3%, representing the strongest growth rate among major sectors. Construction is projected to add 3,349 jobs (1.1%), Accommodation and Food Services 3,832 jobs (0.8%), Transportation and Warehousing 2,717 jobs (0.8%), Manufacturing 2,607 jobs (0.6%), and Retail Trade 2,147 jobs (0.4%).

At the occupational level, Computer and Mathematical Occupations carry the highest projected growth rate at 1.5%, followed by occupations within Professional and Technical Services (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). These figures are particularly relevant for aligning the Technical College System of Georgia and the University System of Georgia program offerings to where the state's labor demand is moving fastest.

Occupation Snapshot: Volume, Separation Demand, and Unemployment

Georgia's largest occupation groups by current employment are Office and Administrative Support at 607,559 workers, Transportation and Material Moving at 533,608, and Sales and Related at 492,407 (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). These three groups collectively account for more than 1.6 million jobs, representing a substantial share of the state's employment base in roles that carry significant automation and displacement exposure.

Separation demand, which encompasses retirements and workers voluntarily changing occupations, is a critical planning variable for workforce development that is often underweighted relative to net new job creation. Georgia's highest separation demand is in Food Preparation and Serving at 83,733 jobs and Office and Administrative Support at 67,027 jobs (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). These figures mean that even in the absence of sector-level employment growth, the training infrastructure for these occupation groups must continuously produce credentialed workers to maintain current employment levels.

Occupational unemployment rates in Georgia range from 1.2% in Legal Occupations to 6.7% in Farming, Fishing, and Forestry, reflecting significant variation in labor market tightness across the occupational spectrum (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). The sectors with the lowest unemployment rates are also, in several cases, those with the longest training pipelines and highest credential barriers, a relationship that underscores the importance of both accelerating credential production and reducing artificial barriers to entry where credential requirements exceed job performance demands.

Policy Implications

Accelerate STEM and Technology Talent Pipelines. With Computer and Mathematical occupations projected to lead growth at 1.5%, the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and University System must pivot capacity toward these high-wage technical sectors (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). Institutional funding and program enrollment should be aggressively aligned with this real-time labor demand to prevent talent shortages in Georgia's most productive industries.

Mitigate High-Volume Separation Churn. The annual requirement for over 150,000 workers in lower-wage service roles is a systemic risk to economic continuity (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). Policy focus must shift toward short-cycle credentials and stackable career ladders that professionalize these roles and facilitate upward mobility, reducing the volatility associated with high turnover.

Institutionalize Logistics Leadership. Georgia's Logistics and Transportation sector remains a cornerstone of its competitive identity (LQ 1.21). Sustaining this advantage requires integrated workforce investments that are explicitly linked to the state's broader economic development and infrastructure strategies (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026).

Bridge the Attainment Gap via Articulated Pathways. To eliminate the 0.8% bachelor's degree deficit relative to national averages, Georgia must streamline the transition between technical and university systems (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023; Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2026). Expanding 2+2 transfer agreements and stackable pathways allows the working-age population to upskill without exiting the labor force, maximizing human capital formation across the state.

This analysis is part of the PPV Workforce Intelligence series. Related coverage: [National Real-Time Labor Market Intelligence: 12-Month Job Posting Analysis](#).

Have data, institutional experience, or research that extends or challenges what's here? [Reach out](#).

References

Chmura Economics & Analytics. (2026). *JobsEQ® quarterly economic data: Georgia, Q4 2025* [Regional labor market database]. Chmura Economics & Analytics. <https://www.chmura.com/jobseq>

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About PPV's Methodology

PPV connects policy decisions with real-world workforce and economic impacts. Our analysis is evidence-based, nonpartisan, and transparently sourced, grounded in how policy actually affects people's livelihoods. Claims are grounded in primary sources, public data, and verifiable program documentation. Speculation is labeled as such. [Read the full methodology](#).