



# STATE OF THE WORKFORCE 2024-2026



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**LANE WORKFORCE**  
PARTNERSHIP



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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WELCOME



Every two years, with the release of the Lane County State of the Workforce Report, our team reflects on our roles, goals, and the values that drive us. This is my second report as Executive Director, and we ask: How can we leverage the intellect, care, and knowledge around us? How do we define dignity, sustainability, and impact in these times of rapid, daily change? We seem to want and need more while also expressing a desire to do less. Are we in alignment with our partners and stakeholders to respond effectively and position our region for success?

Efficiency without true impact can be misleading and limit our potential. Over the past years, the board's work has been a catalyst for significant progress, creating momentum for those ready to seize the opportunity. We have navigated challenges thoughtfully, presented clear ideas, and maintained a strong sense of our role as a regional workforce development board.

Our achievements, like developing the 2024-2028 strategic plan through broad community engagement and launching the Bridge Lane Network with key partners, demonstrate our commitment to addressing current needs and future opportunities. Recognition from national leaders, including Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su, Senator Jeff Merkley, Congresswoman Val Hoyle, and Oregon Governor Tina Kotek, validates our efforts and boosts our confidence in securing vital resources for the region.

Community engagement has been a key focus, inspiring our team and driving our mission forward. The enthusiasm and support from partners and community members are instrumental to advancing our mission.

Our mission—meeting workforce needs through partnerships and innovation—quickly reveals that each organization operates uniquely, with distinct challenges and opportunities. This report highlights the collective interests that shape our work in serving the people and economy of our county and state.

Through strategic investment, engagement, analysis, and input, we are taking a full inventory of the unique resources that make our county special and home to world-class industries.

As we continue this journey, we invite you to join us in our commitment to meeting workforce needs through innovative partnerships. Your support is vital to making a meaningful difference. Thank you for your interest and for taking the time to read our report. Together, we are not just envisioning a brighter future; we are building it.

*Ashley Espinoza*  
Ashley Espinoza



## INTRODUCTION TO THIS YEAR'S STATE OF THE WORKFORCE REPORT

**With a tight labor market and near record low unemployment, where can businesses find the workforce they need? The answer may be using data to uncover the untapped pockets of opportunity to find solutions for businesses and workers.**

The economy is at an inflection point right now. Technological advancements are changing the way we work, the world is becoming ever smaller and more connected, and workers are changing expectations about what work means. The state of business and workforce was already rapidly evolving, and the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated and crystallized these changes. Now that change is here, how can businesses and workers adapt? **The answer lies in the pockets of untapped business practices and workforce opportunities.** By utilizing key research and data, businesses can make the changes necessary to create economic prosperity and workforce development.

Traditional business practices and workforce development systems that once were the cornerstones of our economy are no longer working in many ways. Job seekers now have more informed choices when looking for employment, and they understand that not all careers require traditional four-year diplomas. Businesses are being pushed to move to workplace styles and cultures that would not have existed even ten years ago. Those that are using data and information to their advantage are adapting to the new economic environment and are seeing the returns pay off.

This 2024 State of the Workforce Report uses innovative data and research to find pockets of opportunity for businesses and workers throughout Lane County. Each section offers guidance on the key questions to consider when transitioning into the economy of the future. What is the state of the economy in Lane County? What creative solutions are solving the constraints faced by workers and business? And what will the future hold for all of us?

The economy as we know it today is not the same one that even the most recent generations grew up in. Those that are grasping the data to update their business practices or career development are not just thriving in the current economy, they are establishing themselves for long-term success. This report begins to examine just what this shift means for workforce development and economic prosperity for Lane County.





## ECONOMIC TRENDS

Four decades ago, Lane County's economy was largely dependent upon the University of Oregon and the wood products sector. It now boasts multiple high-tech, forward thinking, and environmentally conscious sectors. These include wood products, specialty food and beverage manufacturing, and the tech sector. In addition, Lane County has become a regional healthcare center. These sectors are growing and forecasted to add jobs in the coming years. The county also expects state and federal government agencies (including the University of Oregon) to continue providing stability.



**Table 1: Lane County Employment 2023**

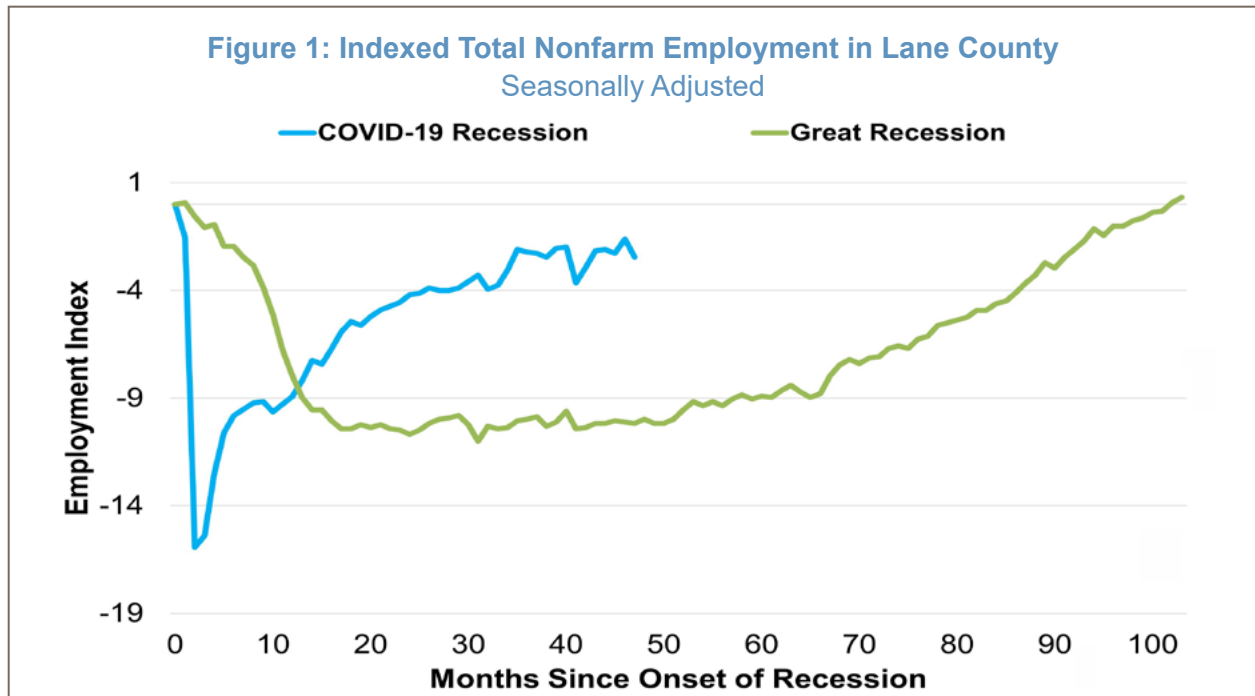
Private Education and Health Services	18%
Government	18%
Retail Trade	12%
Professional and Business Services	11%
Leisure and Hospitality	10%
Manufacturing	9%
Financial Activities	5%
Construction	5%
Wholesale Trade	4%
Other Services	3%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	2%
Information	1%
Mining and Logging	1%
Source: Oregon Employment Department	

In early 2020, Lane County's economy was in the midst of the longest expansion in recent history, adding 26,200 jobs (growth of 19 percent) from September 2010 through February 2020. Several industries contributed

to a rebound from the Great Recession including manufacturing, construction, retail trade, professional and business services, and health services.

The growth came to an abrupt end in March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic reached Oregon. Due to people staying home and restrictions on activities with close contact to avoid spreading the virus, economic activity slowed significantly. In Lane County, small job losses experienced in March became major job losses in April. Between February and April, Lane County lost about 24,000 jobs — a drop of 14.5 percent — while the unemployment rate increased from a record low of 3.5 percent to a record high of 14.7 percent.

All major sectors lost jobs. The first and most restrictive measures were placed on restaurants and bars, severely impacting the leisure and hospitality industry. The sector lost 8,900 jobs, or slightly more than half of all jobs in the industry. The goods producing industries of construction and durable goods manufacturing were least affected by COVID-19 restrictions, losing about 5 percent each.



Source: Oregon Employment Department, Current Employment Statistics

Employment estimates show a rapid rebound followed by a gradual slowing. By December 2023, Lane County had gained back 90 percent of the jobs lost in March and April of 2020 while the unemployment rate decreased to a near record low of 4.0 percent, creating a tight labor market. All major industry sectors added back jobs. The industries that lost the most jobs due to restrictions generally had the largest gains during the recovery. These included leisure and hospitality, retail trade, health care, and social assistance. In addition, manufacturing had strong growth over the period.

As of the writing of this publication, there are lingering issues from the pandemic recession that affect Lane County's labor market. High inflation caused by strong demand and limited supply after the pandemic reached a rate of 9.1% nationally in 2022. Although it has dropped to a more normal level in 2024 at 2.9% in July, it has left higher prices behind and wages that are struggling to catch up. Real hourly earnings adjusted to 2023 dollars

dropped to a low of \$28.19 in 2022 due to the high inflation rate. Although it increased to \$29.77 in 2023, it was still below the pre-pandemic high of \$30.54 set in 2018. Early indications are that wages continued to rise in 2024.

Working from home became more prevalent post pandemic. According to Census Bureau data, people in Lane County who primarily worked from home more than doubled between 2019 and 2021, going from 7% to 17%. Every other means of commuting saw a decline. The work from home rate was down somewhat in 2022 to 15%. As time goes by, we are seeing a shift from exclusively remote work to hybrid work. Survey data from Gallup shows that, at the national level, remote capable jobs had gone from 70 percent exclusively remote in 2020 to a majority 53 percent hybrid in 2023. Exclusively on-site remote-capable jobs remained constant at around 20% from 2021 through 2023.

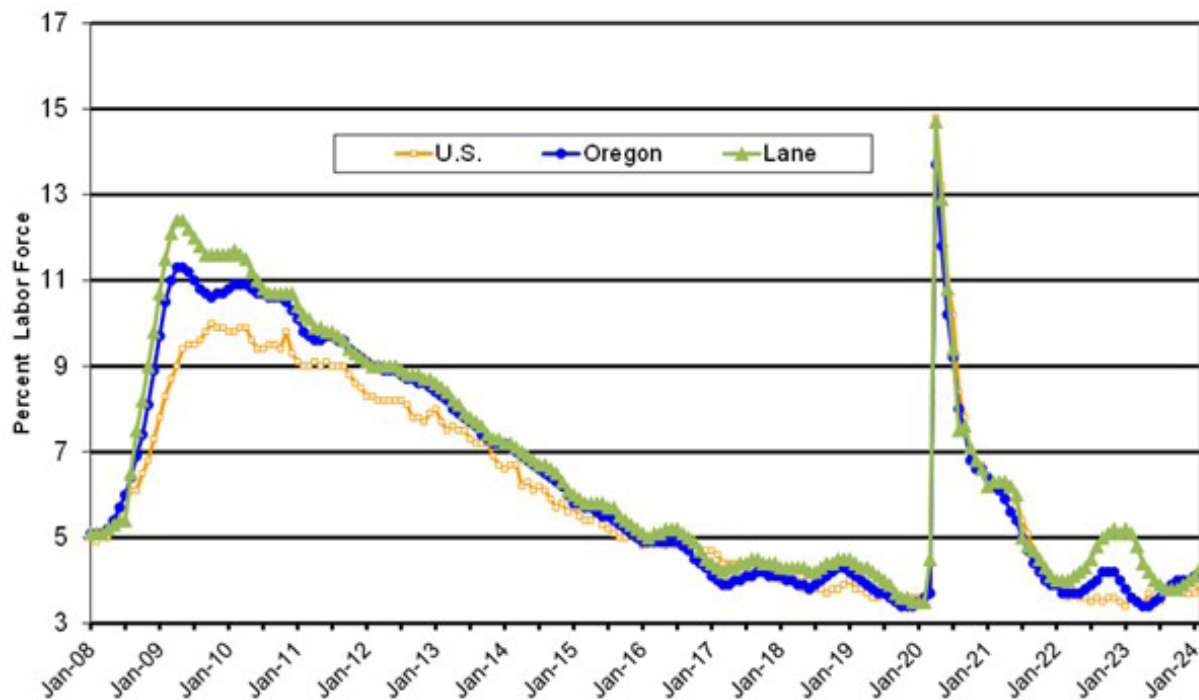


## LABOR MARKET

As employment rebounded from the pandemic recession, the labor market tightened. The graph below shows that, as of the writing of this publication, the unemployment rate has remained low. New initial claims for unemployment insurance remain at or below pre-pandemic levels. The county's unemployment rate has generally followed national and state trends, peaking in April 2020 at 14.7%, a little higher than the Oregon rate (13.7%) and about the same as the U.S. rate (14.8%). Since then, it dropped to a near record low of 3.8 percent in late 2023 before rising to 4.3% in February 2024.



**Figure 2: Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates**  
2008 to Present



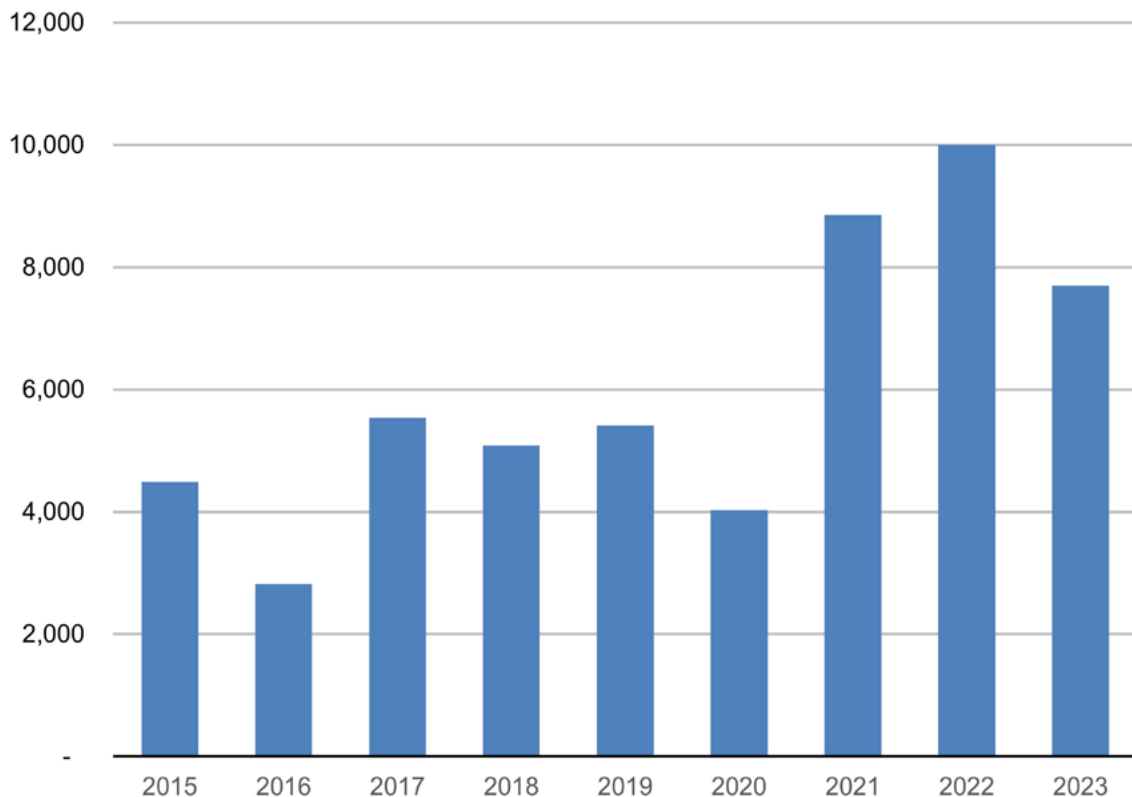
Source: Oregon Employment Department



The low level of initial claims and low unemployment rate are indicative of a tight labor market. However, on the demand side, pent up demand and government stimulus after the pandemic have worked through the economy, providing some relief. On the supply side, though, retirements continue to create openings. As a result, the shortage of workers experienced after the pandemic in 2021 and 2022 has lessened somewhat. Average annual job vacancies in 2022 at Lane County private employers set a record high of 10,003 in 2022. Vacancies, although still elevated compared to pre-pandemic levels, came down in 2023 to an annual average of 7,704.



**Figure 3: Lane County Job Vacancies**  
2015-2023



Source: Oregon Employment Department



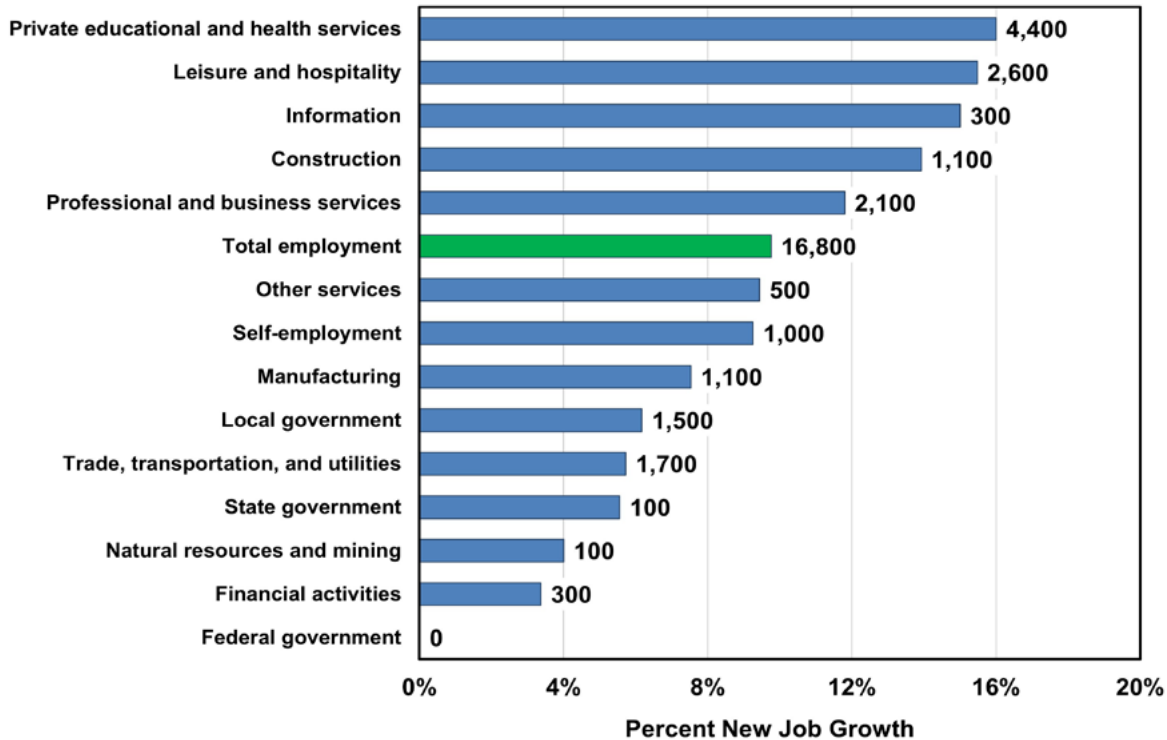


# LANE COUNTY'S EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

The 2022 to 2032 Lane County employment projections are long-term projections intended to capture structural changes in the economy, not cyclical fluctuations. The projections primarily reflect structural growth in the economy, as employment in most sectors had largely recovered from pandemic losses by 2022. In Lane County, some industries are expected to experience especially strong growth between 2022 and 2032 including health services, leisure and hospitality, information, construction, and professional and business services. As shown in the graph below, all Lane County industries except the federal government are expected to add jobs from 2022 to 2032.



**Figure 4: Lane County Industry Sectors Forecast 2022-2032**



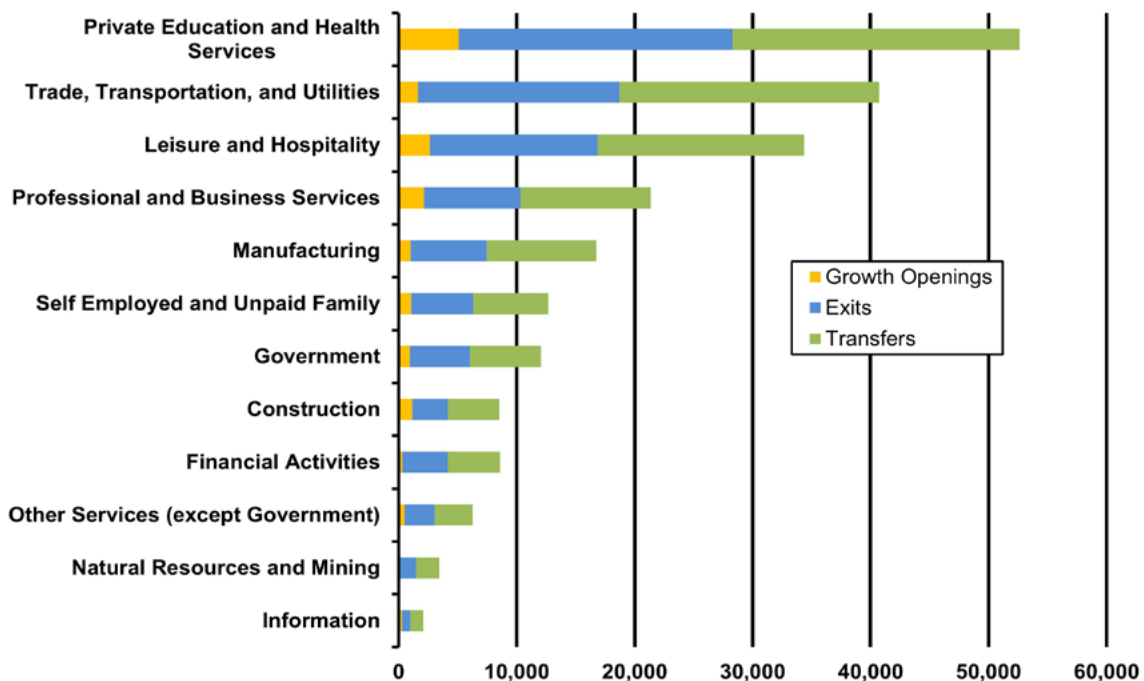
Source: Oregon Employment Department



In 2022, there were 172,100 jobs in Lane County. The 10% increase in employment between 2022 and 2032 includes private-sector gains of 14,200 jobs, 1,600 jobs in government, and an additional 1,000 job gains in self-employed Lane County residents.

Even in industries expected to grow slowly, there will be opportunities created by replacement needs (graph below). Many job openings will be created by 2032 due to the need to replace workers who retire, leave the labor force for other reasons, or make a major occupational change. As the population ages and retirements increase, the level of replacement openings increases.

**Figure 5: Lane County Projected Job Openings by Industry Growth and Replacement 2022-2032**





## LANE COUNTY EMPLOYMENT GROWTH HIGHLIGHTS



The private education and health care sector is projected to add the most jobs, gaining 4,400 jobs (16% growth) over the 10-year period. Most of the growth in this sector is from health care and social assistance (4,100 jobs) and is attributed to the aging of the state's population, longer life expectancies, and a rebound in population growth. Health care alone will account for nearly one out of four new jobs created by 2030.



Leisure and hospitality, which is especially important to Lane County's coastal area, is expected to add the second-largest number of jobs (2,600). Its relatively fast growth (15%) is driven by structural growth and partly by a rebound from the COVID-19 recession as conditions continue to improve for restaurants, hotels, and the arts and recreational establishments. Leisure and hospitality lost 3,900 jobs between 2019 and 2020. By 2023 it was still down 700 jobs.



Information (15%) and construction (14%) are smaller industries that are expected to grow faster than total employment from 2022 to 2032.



Trade, transportation, and utilities is a large industry sector that is projected to grow by 1,700 jobs (6%) due to wholesale trade and demand for transportation services as more people shop online and need products delivered.



Local government adds 1,500 jobs, largely in education including the addition of the Knight Science Campus at the University of Oregon.



Manufacturing will grow by 1,100 jobs. Durable goods manufacturing grows in part from growth at Stratacache, a micro-LED manufacturer. Nondurable goods manufacturing grows, largely from food and beverage manufacturing



Professional and business services is a large sector expected to add 2,100 jobs, or 12% over the 10-year period. Architectural and engineering services, which are tied to expected construction growth, contribute to some of the growth. Additional growth is added by computer and systems design through demand for cybersecurity and telecommuting. These gains will be countered somewhat by losses in business services, especially call centers.



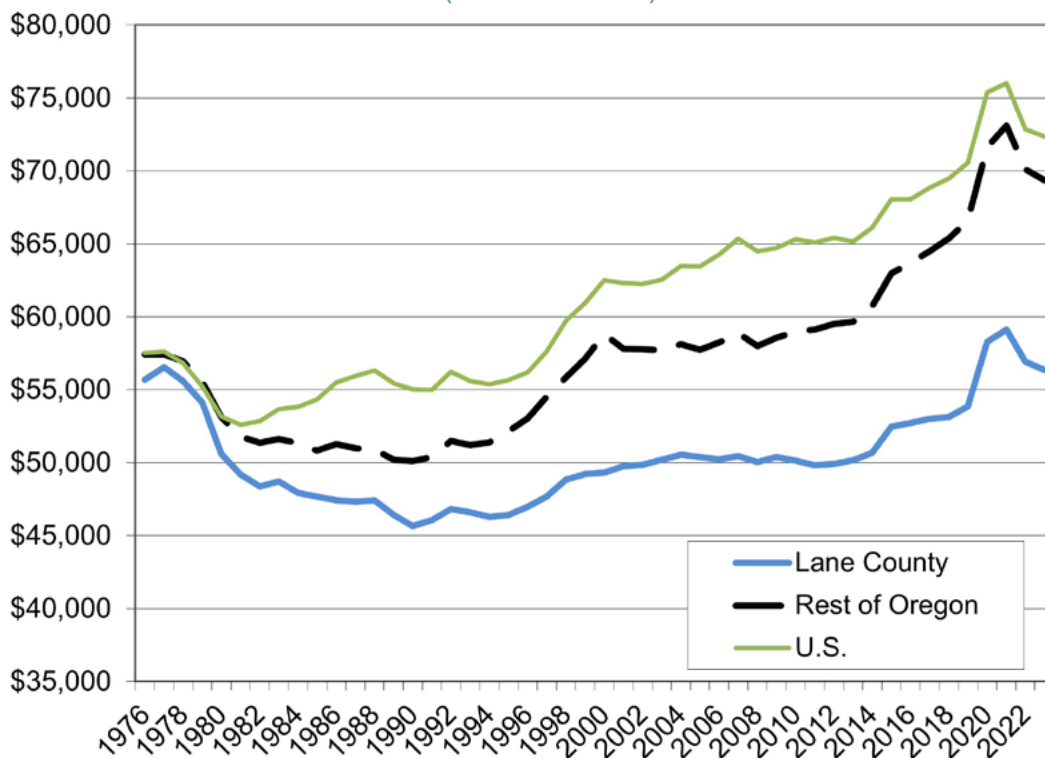
## WAGES

Real average wages in Lane County steadily increased in the 1990s with the addition of technology manufacturing and stabilization in the wood products industry. Wages peaked in 2004 at \$50,549, an increase of \$4,902 (11%) from a low point in 1990. Wages then became stagnant until the end of the Great Recession and rose during the recovery. Wages increased steadily until 2020 when layoffs in lower paying jobs due to pandemic restrictions caused the average to spike and top \$56,000 for the first time since 1977. In 2021, an improved labor market and low overall inflation caused real average annual wages to reach a peak at \$59,144. Recently, in 2022 and 2023 inflation

outpaced wage gains causing the real annual average wage to drop to \$56,346.

The increase in real wages was not enough to keep the wage gap between Lane County and the rest of the state from expanding (chart below). In 1990, Lane County wages were 10 percent less than the rest of the state. By 2000, the gap had expanded to 19 percent, largely due to rapid growth in tech manufacturing in the Portland area. After some small improvement in the early 2000s, the wage gap with the rest of the state began to grow again after 2010, reaching 23 percent in 2023.

**Figure 6: Real Average Annual Wages**  
(in 2023 Dollars)





An industry mix made up of lower-paying industries compared to the Portland area explains some of the wage gap between Lane County and the rest of the state. The University of Oregon provides a ready supply of new graduates to fill entry-level professional positions, which contributes to keeping wages low for those occupations due to high competition. Additionally, quality of life factors can cause workers to accept a lower wage in order to continue living in a desirable area. In Lane County, such factors as less congestion, proximity to outdoor recreation, and lower housing prices may also explain some of the wage differences between Lane County and the rest of Oregon.

Roughly 62 percent of jobs paid less than the average in 2024. In Lane County, most of the largest occupations pay less than the average wages for all occupations (table below). For example, fast food counter workers, home health care workers, retail salespersons and cashiers earn less than \$40,000. General operations managers, registered nurses, and heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers are the exception for large occupations since they pay well, averaging \$100,827, \$97,306 and \$59,763 respectively.

**Figure 7: Largest Occupations and Highest Paying Occupations in Lane County**

Largest Occupations	2023	2024 Average
	Employment	Wages
Fast Food and Counter Workers	6,050	\$32,690
Retail Salespersons	4,400	\$38,535
General and Operations Managers	4,260	\$101,773
Cashiers	3,610	\$34,136
Registered Nurses	3,290	\$109,817
Stockers and Order Fillers	3,130	\$39,705
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,960	\$38,845
Office Clerks, General	2,680	\$44,427
Personal Care and Service Workers, All Other	2,380	\$39,615
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	2,320	\$42,244
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	2,170	\$50,346
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,050	\$37,751
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,050	\$39,954
Customer Service Representatives	1,910	\$44,129
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,860	\$59,763
Highest Paying Occupations	2023	2024 Average
	Employment	Wages
Physicians, All Other	200	\$321,999
Psychiatrists	40	\$269,596
Family Medicine Physicians	130	\$262,464
Judges, Magistrate Judges, and Magistrates	20	\$196,396
Financial Managers	410	\$155,157
Pharmacists	300	\$145,833
Computer and Information Systems Managers	390	\$144,266
Physician Assistants	150	\$141,277
Nurse Practitioners	250	\$141,124
Database Architects	20	\$140,839
Power Distributors and Dispatchers	20	\$138,453
Training and Development Managers	30	\$138,084
Medical and Health Services Managers	510	\$137,448
Computer Science Teachers, Postsecondary	80	\$136,629
Architectural and Engineering Managers	120	\$136,463

Source: Oregon Employment Department



## EDUCATION

Historically, a majority of jobs in Lane County required little in the way of training or education. New trends, illustrated in the table below, show that some of the fastest growing occupations require postsecondary education and training even for entry-level work. About 72% of available openings from 2022 to 2032 typically require a high school diploma or less; many of these jobs are lower-paying service and retail occupations. However, 52% of available openings from 2022 to 2032 will require post-secondary education or training for the applicant to be truly competitive. Jobs that require postsecondary education and training are expected to grow 11%, compared to 10% for all occupations. Those requiring some sort of college degree will grow by 12%.

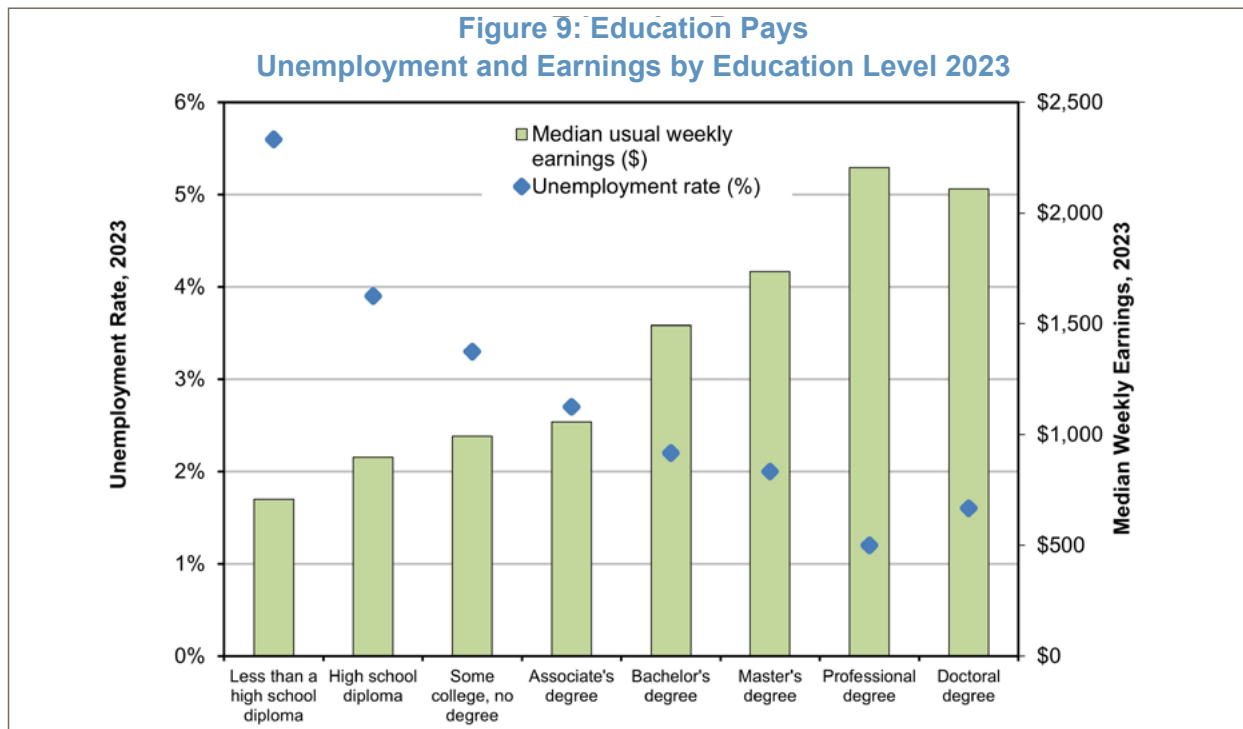


**Figure 8: Lane County Forecasted Typical Educational Attainment**

Typical entry level education						
Education	2022 Employment	2032 Employment	Employment Change	Percent Change	Replacement Openings	Total Openings
Doctoral or professional degree	2,213	2,478	265	12.0%	792	1,057
Master's degree	5,186	5,942	756	14.6%	3,890	4,646
Bachelor's degree	36,628	40,824	4,196	11.5%	28,778	32,974
Associate's degree	3,983	4,558	575	14.4%	3,636	4,211
Postsecondary training (non-degree)	16,622	18,149	1,527	9.2%	17,922	19,449
High school diploma or equivalent	62,047	66,716	4,669	7.5%	72,142	76,811
Less than high school	45,481	50,321	4,800	10.8%	75,975	80,865
Typical competitive-level education						
Education	2022 Employment	2032 Employment	Employment Change	Percent Change	Replacement Openings	Total Openings
Doctoral or professional degree	6,413	7,204	791	12.3%	4,019	4,810
Master's degree	9,601	10,843	1,242	12.9%	7,451	8,693
Bachelor's degree	35,699	39,595	3,896	10.9%	29,486	33,382
Associate's degree	15,274	15,988	714	4.7%	15,901	16,615
Postsecondary training (non-degree)	39,208	43,856	4,648	11.9%	46,625	51,273
High school diploma or equivalent	65,918	71,505	5,587	8.5%	99,655	105,242
	172,110	188,988	16,878		203,135	220,013
	172,113	188,991	16,878		203,137	220,015
		188,988				220,013
Doctoral or professional degree		1%				1,057
Master's degree		3%				4,646
Bachelor's degree		22%				32,974
Associate's degree		2%				4,211
Postsecondary training (non-degree)		10%	55%			19,449
High school diploma or equivalent		35%				76,811
Less than high school		27%				80,865
						220,015
Doctoral or professional degree		4%				4,810
Master's degree		6%				8,693
Bachelor's degree		21%				33,382
Associate's degree		8%				16,615
Postsecondary training (non-degree)		23%				51,273
High school diploma or equivalent		38%				105,242



Data for the U.S. shows a direct correlation between education level, earnings, and unemployment. The higher the education level achieved, the higher the pay and the lower the chances of being unemployed (chart below). People with less than a high school diploma averaged \$708 in weekly earnings and an unemployment rate of 5.6% in 2023, while people with a bachelor's degree earned \$1,493 in weekly earnings and had a 2.2% unemployment rate.



Source: U.S Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Lane County's educational attainment levels have increased over time. The share of the 25 and older population with less than a high school degree declined from 17% in 1990 to 7.2% in 2022, while the share with a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 22.2% to 33.0%. In 2022, the percentage of the population 25 and older with less than a high school diploma was lower in Lane County (7.2%) than Oregon (8.4%) and the U.S. (10.9%). The population with a bachelor's degree or higher was a slightly lower in Lane County at 33.0%, compared to 35.5% for Oregon and 34.3% for the U.S. (table below).

**Table 2: 2022 Educational Attainment in Population 25 Years and Older**

	Lane County	Oregon	United States
% Less than high school	7.2%	8.4%	10.9%
% High school grad or higher	92.8%	91.6%	89.1%
% Associate degree	10.0%	9.1%	8.6%
% Bachelor's degree or higher	33.0%	35.5%	34.3%

Source: Census Bureau 5 - Year American Community Survey, Table B15003



# INDUSTRY PROFILE

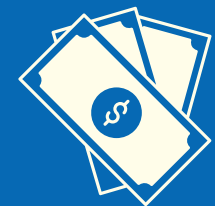


**1,473**  
TOTAL  
EMPLOYEES



**\$131**  
MILLION  
IN LANE COUNTY  
PAYROLL

**190**  
TOTAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS



**\$89,068**  
AVERAGE  
WAGE

## BIOSCIENCE

The Oregon Employment Department has released data on common occupations in the Bioscience sector, highlighting the 2024 numbers, average wages, and the typical entry-level education for each role. Below is a summary:

Occupation	2024 Average Annual Wages	Typical Entry Level Education
Biochemists and Biophysicists	\$107,254	Master's degree
Biological Technicians	\$50,842	Associate's degree
Chemists	\$99,837	Bachelor's degree
General and Operations Managers	\$101,773	Bachelor's degree
Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other	\$47,597	Associate's degree
Logisticians	\$68,355	Bachelor's degree
Mechanical Engineers	\$101,584	Bachelor's degree
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	\$106,410	Doctoral or professional degree
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	\$46,582	High school diploma or equivalent
Office Clerks, General	\$44,427	High school diploma or equivalent





# BIOSCIENCE



World Class Industries Tailgate Sponsored by Oregon Bio, Technology Association of Oregon and CEDO

Lane County is home to 190 bioscience establishments that employed 1,473 workers with a total payroll of \$131 million in 2023. Trends show strong growth in recent years with a slight increase in 2020 during the COVID-19 restrictions. Between 2010 and 2023, the bioscience sector added 132 establishments.

Growth is expected to be helped by the addition of the Phil and Penny Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact at the University of Oregon. The goal of the campus is to accelerate scientific discoveries into commercial uses. Knight Campus Building 2 is a 184,000-square-foot, multi-story bioengineering and applied science research facility now under construction at 1100 Riverfront Parkway in Eugene.

The bioscience sector received support from a number of ecosystem partners, including Business Oregon, Collaborative EDO, and the Oregon Bioscience Association - which have helped increase the visibility of local firms. Local high-growth bioscience companies are gaining international exposure, with Invivo Biosystems participating in the prestigious BIO International Convention in Boston and Swiss Biotech Day in Switzerland. Additionally, KeyBiome LLC, a University of Oregon spinout led by Catherine Robinson, Ph.D., was recognized at Oregon Bio's 2023 Innovation Showcase for excellence in the Early-Stage Startup category, further highlighting the talent and innovation within Oregon's bioscience community.

The Oregon Bioscience Association's Oregon Bio Women Mentorship Program, open to participants in Lane County and entering its third year, fosters the personal and professional growth of women in Oregon's bioscience sector. Through tailored mentor-mentee matches, the program provides valuable guidance and support, helping women advance in their careers.



# OVERVIEW OF THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM



Lane Workforce Partnership's (LWP) workforce system encompasses all of Lane County from the coast to the Cascade Range and borders our neighboring counties to the north and south. Geographically, the region encompasses 4,722 square miles - the same size as the entire state of Connecticut. The region is primarily rural with the Eugene and Springfield metropolitan area located approximately at the center of the county.

Our region boasts great recreational areas including parks, rivers, lakes, hiking trails, and coastal attractions. We are home to the University of Oregon, a public flagship research university with educational offerings that attract students from across the nation and the world. We also have a strong community college, Lane Community College, with advanced and specialized offerings to meet the needs of our diverse regional economy; 94 percent of those enrolled at LCC are Lane County residents.

In addition to the long-established wood products industry still present in Lane County, we have seen the area develop additional major industry hubs in health care, information technology, and food and beverage manufacturing. Through the Knight Campus at the University of Oregon, bioscience has emerged as our newest industry sector.

Lane County's workforce system is part of the larger Oregon Workforce Development System. The statewide workforce development system helps the emerging (youth/young adults ages 14-24), transitional, and current workforce obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs. In addition, the Oregon Workforce Development System assists businesses in finding top candidates for job openings and works to find solutions to workforce challenges.

In Oregon, there are nine local Workforce Development Boards responsible for brokering services for adults, dislocated workers, youth/young adults, and businesses through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as well as local, state, and federal grant funds. In Lane County, Lane Workforce Partnership is the administrative arm of the local Workforce Development Board.

The WIOA emphasizes alignment of a coordinated workforce system. As a result, in Lane County the workforce service delivery system is a collaborative that includes:

- Department of Human Services: Self-Sufficiency Programs and Vocational Rehabilitation
- Department of Education: Lane Community College and K-12 school districts
- Oregon Commission for the Blind
- Oregon Employment Department
- Easter Seals of Oregon

A majority of services to job seekers and business customers are provided out of the WorkSource Lane Centers in Eugene and Florence, and the Oregon Department of Human Services offices in Eugene, Springfield, and Cottage Grove. Most services to Lane County's youth and young adult populations are provided by Connected Lane County.



## QUALITY JOBS PRINCIPLES

One of the newest sets of guiding principles coming out of the federal government is the “Good Jobs Principles<sup>1</sup>.” Released by the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Labor, these principles provide guidance for employers, workers, federal agencies, and governments to advance quality jobs for all. These principles define good jobs, emphasizing recruitment, hiring, pay, benefits, job security, career advancement, collective bargaining, and working conditions, while prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to ensure high-quality, secure jobs for all, through a partnership between the Departments of Commerce and Labor.



The foundation of a thriving and equitable economy is one that puts good jobs at the center to lift workers and families and makes businesses more competitive. Everyone is entitled to share in prosperity and support local communities and our local economy. Workers know when they are in a good job, because it provides stability and security for them and their families. And employers know how important it is to become an employer of choice, which gives them a clear competitive advantage when it comes to recruitment, retention, and execution of a company’s mission.

The Departments of Commerce and Labor partnered to identify what comprises a good job. These eight principles described below create a framework for a shared vision of job quality for all.

### Recruitment and Hiring

Qualified applicants are actively recruited – especially those from underserved communities. Applicants are free from discrimination, including unequal treatment or application of selection criteria that are unrelated to job performance. Applicants are evaluated with relevant skills-based requirements. Unnecessary educational credentials and experience requirements are minimized.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/goodjobs/Good-Jobs-Summit-Principles-Factsheet.pdf>



## Benefits

Full-time and part-time workers are provided family-sustaining benefits that promote economic security and mobility. These include health insurance, retirement plans, workers' compensation benefits, work-family benefits such as paid leave and caregiving supports, and others that may arise from engagement with workers. Workers are empowered and encouraged to use these benefits.

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)

All workers have equal opportunity. Workers are respected, empowered, and treated fairly. DEIA is a core value and practiced norm in the workplace. Individuals from underserved communities do not face systemic barriers in the workplace. Underserved communities are persons adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality, including Black, Indigenous, people of color; LGBTQ+ individuals; women; immigrants; veterans; military spouses; individuals with disabilities; individuals in rural communities; individuals without a college degree; individuals with or recovering from substance use disorder; and justice-involved individuals.

## Empowerment and Representation

Workers can form and join unions. Workers can engage in protected, concerted activity without fear of retaliation. Workers contribute to decisions about their work, how it is performed, and organizational direction.

## Organizational Culture

All workers belong, are valued, contribute meaningfully to the organization, and are engaged and respected especially by leadership.



## Job Security and Working Conditions

Workers have a safe, healthy, and accessible workplace, built on input from workers and their representatives. Workers have job security without arbitrary or discriminatory discipline or dismissal. They have adequate hours and predictable schedules. The use of electronic monitoring, data, and algorithms is transparent, equitable, and carefully deployed with input from workers. Workers are free from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation at work. Workers are properly classified under applicable laws. Temporary or contractor labor solutions are minimized.

## Pay

All workers are paid a stable and predictable living wage before overtime, tips, and commissions. Workers' pay is fair, transparent, and equitable. Workers' wages increase with increased skills and experience.

## Skills and Career Advancement

Workers have equitable opportunities and tools to progress to future good jobs within their organizations or outside them. Workers have transparent promotion or advancement opportunities. Workers have access to quality employer- or labor-management-provided training and education.



## OREGON EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Another resource available to businesses and workers is Essential Employability Skills. These skills have gone by many names over the years, sometimes called soft skills, workplace skills, or employability skills. In Oregon, two primary frameworks are being developed to address Essential Employability Skills. First is the New World of Work<sup>2</sup> (NWoW), an education-based framework developed by California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office<sup>3</sup> and the Division of Workforce and Economic Development. The Willamette Education Services District took this model and used it as the foundation for the creation of the Oregon Employability Skills, reimagined for Oregon's needs along with educational materials.

The NWoW and the Oregon Employability Skills were developed by, and are continually improved upon, with collaboration of educational experts, industry professionals, and community members. The Oregon Employability Skills is a set of definitions and curricula developed to address the growing demand for a well-rounded skill set beyond academic or technical skills. With a rapidly changing world, it is important to continuously improve and update the knowledge of skills required for a successful career.

The Oregon Employability Skills curriculum is designed to equip the workforce of today and tomorrow with the practical skills and mindsets necessary to thrive in the workforce and meet the needs of businesses. The curriculum focuses on a range of crucial employability skills which are:



<sup>2</sup> <https://newworldofwork.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oregonemployabilityskills.org/>



# INDUSTRY PROFILE



**1,030**  
TOTAL  
EMPLOYEES



**1,341**  
NEW &  
REPLACEMENT  
OPENINGS BY  
2032

**18%**  
FORECASTED  
GROWTH BY  
2032



**\$31**  
MILLION  
IN LANE COUNTY  
PAYROLL

**146**  
TOTAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS



**\$30,392**  
AVERAGE  
WAGE

## CHILD CARE

The Oregon Employment Department has released data on common occupations in the Child Care sector, highlighting the 2024 numbers, average wages, and the typical entry-level education for each role. Below is a summary:

Occupation	2024 Average Annual Wages	Typical Entry Level Education
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	\$39,623	Associate's degree
Childcare Workers	\$35,405	High school diploma or equivalent
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	\$42,244	High school diploma or equivalent
Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare	\$55,295	Associate's degree
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	\$65,030	Bachelor's degree
Bus Drivers, School	\$52,005	High school diploma or equivalent
Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	\$40,601	Less than high school
Special Education Teachers, Preschool	\$57,496	Bachelor's degree
Office Clerks, General	\$44,427	High school diploma or equivalent



# CHILD CARE



Lane Education Service District Regional Advisory Committee, April 2024.

The Childcare industry sector is a critical workforce enablement, for all other industries. Childcare services are essential for supporting working families and the broader economy, enabling parents to participate in the workforce. In 2023, the sector included 146 licensed childcare providers in Lane County, employing 1,030 individuals. Average wages are relatively low, averaging \$30,392, while contributing over \$31 million in total wages annually.

10 year employment projections from 2022 to 2032 show 18% growth, compared to 10% for all other industries.

Like most other counties across Oregon, Lane County is considered a child care desert, defined as a community with more than three children for every regulated child care slot. To shed this status, Lane County needs to add approximately 1,500 new child care slots to our current supply, while ensuring new slots: are supported by a diverse, qualified, and well-compensated workforce; have facility space in which to operate; meet the cultural and developmental needs of families; and are affordable for families.

Strategies to address the child care crisis in Lane County include supporting new child care businesses, increasing compensation packages for child care providers, developing paid pathways into the profession, elevating case studies, success stories and opportunities in the field, and fostering employer/child care provider partnerships.



## Adaptability

Open to Change – Finding value in learning from problems, seeking help from others, and managing stress that comes from having to change a course of action when there is a problem.

## Collaboration

Team Player – Identifying how to work with others as a team in order to reach a shared goal, while also seeing conflict as a learning experience in a larger process.

## Digital Literacy

Good with Technology – Having a knowledge and comfort level using digital technology, including a variety of devices, software, and online platforms.

## Entrepreneurial Mindset

Go-Getter – Recognizes the possibilities of starting their own business or working to create solutions to help improve their community.

## Self-Awareness

Self-Understanding – Being able to identify and develop skills that can be used in the jobs/careers they want to pursue and being able to articulate how they would use their skills in the workplace.

## Analysis/Solution Mindset

Problem Solver – Being a problem solver by seeing different points of view, recognize patterns and connections, and test possible solutions.

## Communication

Good Communicator - Understanding when and how to use different methods of communication in the workplace, as well as being an active listener.

## Empathy

Sensitive to Others' Feelings – Recognizing the importance of using empathy to build relationships in and out of the workplace, and to use empathy to advocate for the rights of others.

## Resilience

Plans for Success and Handles Failure – Being able to speak up for themselves, to predict problems they may face in reaching their goals, to learn from setbacks, and to accept advice to grow as a person.

## Social Diversity/Awareness

Sensitivity to Differences – Recognizing that socially diverse environments bring value to the workplace, and each of us plays a part in creating such an environment.







# FINDING POCKETS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESSES AND WORKERS IN LANE COUNTY

Lane County's economy, like much of the United States and the world, is experiencing an unprecedented period of change. Both business practices and workforce participation are at a critical turning point, driven by rapid technological changes, a more connected world, and evolving expectations of work. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated these shifts, leaving businesses and workers to adapt to a transformed landscape, with traditional practices no longer being sufficient.

To shed light on emerging trends and the evolving dynamics of our economy, this report highlights key opportunities for economic and workforce growth. It offers concise, actionable insights, with resources for deeper exploration, aimed at helping everyone in our community navigate these changes. Focusing on the current economic landscape in Lane County, the report identifies opportunities for both businesses and workers. It also presents innovative strategies to address workforce and business challenges, providing guidance on how to thrive in the economy of the future.

## UNDERSTANDING THE LANE COUNTY WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEM

We begin by looking at what are the facts of our local economy as we know them today. This includes analysis of who is in the workforce and what workforce participation is, what our industries look like, and fact checking what workforce movement is or is not happening.

### The Size and Scope of Our Local Industries

The COVID pandemic showed the importance of having diverse businesses and industries, becoming a critical factor in the ability to withstand economic hardships that followed for some areas of the country. One of the primary reasons Lane County did not see long-term impacts after the pandemic is because our local economy does have a lot of diversity.





# INDUSTRY PROFILE



## CONSTRUCTION

The Oregon Employment Department has released data on common occupations in the Construction Aggregate sector, highlighting the 2024 numbers, average wages, and the typical entry-level education for each role. Below is a summary:

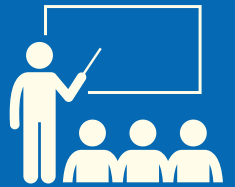
Occupation	2024 Average Annual Wages	Typical Entry Level Education
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	\$50,346	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Carpenters	\$57,737	High school diploma or equivalent
Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	\$62,642	Less than high school
Construction Laborers	\$48,209	Less than high school
Construction Managers	\$111,588	Associate's degree
Electricians	\$78,737	High school diploma or equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades	\$84,516	High school diploma or equivalent
General and Operations Managers	\$101,773	Bachelor's degree
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics	\$62,758	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$59,763	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Office Clerks, General	\$44,427	High school diploma or equivalent

8,188  
TOTAL  
EMPLOYEES



8,803  
NEW &  
REPLACEMENT  
OPENINGS BY  
2032

15%  
FORECASTED  
GROWTH BY  
2032



\$544  
MILLION  
IN LANE COUNTY  
PAYROLL

1,331  
TOTAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS



\$66,485  
AVERAGE  
WAGE



# CONSTRUCTION



Industry partners host youth for Sand & Gravel Tour, April 2024.

Construction and mining are two closely related industries in Lane County that have been combined into a single sector. Almost all mining employment in Lane County is local sand and gravel companies that produce construction aggregate. The construction - aggregate sector has seen strong growth following losses during the Great Recession. After bottoming out in 2011 at 5,256 jobs, employment grew to 8,188 in 2023.

Construction-aggregate is expected to grow slower than the overall economy at 15 percent between 2022 and 2032 resulting in 1,191 new jobs, compared to 10 percent for all industries. In addition, there are 7,612 expected replacement openings for a total of 8,803 openings over the ten-year period.

Annual average wages in construction aggregate are higher than the overall average for all industries at \$66,485 compared to \$56,320 in 2023. Lane County's total payroll in Lane County Top Occupations in the Construction-Aggregate Sector by Entry Level Education construction-aggregate was \$544 million. Even though wages are higher on average than for all industries, most occupations in construction-aggregate require only a high school diploma or less for the typical entry level position, providing good paying jobs at lower educational levels.

The industry faces some challenges due to an aging workforce. With 46 percent of its workers over the age of 45, the majority of skilled workers are being lost, and according to local employers, it is difficult to attract younger workers who are more interested in other industries like technology and entrepreneurship.



This is not to say that there was no impact, but the impact was minimized compared to other parts of the country.

Having diversity is a great economic strength of Lane County. Diverse economies have greater potential for growth, are more resilient, spur innovation and unique collaborations, and present more opportunity for serving a wide range of the workforce. But what does a diverse economy actually look like in Lane County?

In Lane County there are just over 14,000 total business establishments. Around 25% are businesses with no employees due to several factors like temporary or closing businesses. That leaves around 11,000 with some employees.

Lane County's economy is driven by small to mid-sized businesses. Most employ just 1-4 employees, with over 6,200 (54.8%) establishments. The industries with the largest number of these businesses are Health Care and Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, and Construction. For some industries, establishments of this size represent over 75% of all businesses in that industry (Real Estate and Rental and Leasing, Information, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services).

The next largest businesses are 5-9 employees (18.5%), and 10-19 employees (13.5%). This is where there are some industries that have over half of their businesses, such as Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, Finance and Insurance, Transportation and Warehousing, Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Manufacturing.

It is clear that Lane County is driven by small businesses. Over 85% of all local businesses in Lane County employ 20 or less employees. If you include businesses with 20-49 employees (9.2%), 96% of establishments have 50 or less employees.

Large businesses are still an important part of the local economy, both for the strength of the economy and to avoid major economic disruptions. There are 281 businesses with 50-99 employees (2.5%), and 141 with 100-249 (1.2%). Some industries that have several businesses that are larger employers are Manufacturing, Management of Companies and Enterprises, Transportation and Warehousing, Educational Services, Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Retail Trade.

That leaves only 31 businesses with over 250 employees. There are five primary industries with businesses over this threshold. They are Management of Companies and Enterprises (4), Manufacturing (8), Administrative and Support and Waste Management (6), Retail Trade (6), and Health Care and Social Assistance (5).

## Understanding the Diversity Gaps in In-Demand Industries and High-Wage Jobs

Much like the diversity of our business, the diversity of the workforce is an important part of the story of the economy in Lane County. The local racial and ethnic diversity mirrors that of Oregon, with a less racially and ethnically diverse community than the rest of the country. No matter what the size is, it is important to understand what our workforce diversity looks like so we can prepare for the growth and change that is coming to our community.



## Racial and Ethnic Workforce Participation

Looking at the 2023 Lane County workforce participation rates, White workers make up a significant part of the workforce across all industries at 89.2%. Looking at all other races, the highest portion of the workforce is two or more races, coming in at 3.91%, followed by Asian Alone at 3.02% and Black or African American Alone at 2.08%. Rounding out the current workforce participation rate is American Indian or Alaska Native Alone at 1.43% and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone at 0.36%. One other category that is a separate question is Hispanic or Latino, meaning that one could identify as one of the above racial identities and as Hispanic or Latino. That group is the second largest part of the workforce at 10.43%.

When looking at specific workforce participation by industry, there are general trends that can be found. In industries with wages above area median wages, the White workforce is above average across all industries but one (healthcare - 88.7%) at 90.9% on average. Some of the industries with above average wages with the lowest levels of workforce diversity are construction (8.16%), manufacturing (9.60%), professional, scientific, and technical services (9.42%), utilities (6.93%), and finance and insurance (8.43%).



<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators

## Small Now but a Rapidly Growing Portion of the Workforce

Even if the local diversity is small compared to national diversity, the makeup of our local workforce has rapidly grown and is important to follow as the community grows. According to the U.S. Census Bureau<sup>4</sup>, since 2001, all Non-White racial groups in the workforce had an increase, while the White workforce population saw a slight decrease. Easily the largest net change in workforce participation was Hispanic or Latino, with that workforce growing by over 10,000 workers which is an increase of 162% over the 20-year period. Not to be left behind is the increase in the Black or African American workforce, increasing by 138% (1,700 workers). Other large increases are Asian (96% or 2,200) and those who are of two or more race groups (73% or 2,000). Native Indian or Alaskan Native (27% or 300) and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (69% or 200) had smaller but still important increases.

## Women in the Workforce

When looking at the entire workforce, there is an identical split between men and women. Due to a variety of factors, there are industries that have significant over or underrepresentation. When looking at all industries with wages above median wages, women only hold 44% of those jobs. Women have a higher workforce participation rate in education (63%), health care and social assistance (74%), management (62%), and finance and insurance (66%). There is a significant underrepresentation in construction (21%), mining and extraction (15%), manufacturing (25%), wholesale trade (29%), information (36%), and utilities (36%).



# INDUSTRY PROFILE

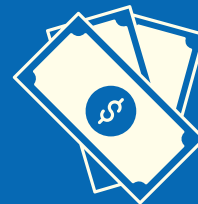


**3,477**  
TOTAL  
EMPLOYEES



**\$171**  
MILLION  
IN LANE COUNTY  
PAYROLL

**565**  
TOTAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS



**\$55,525**  
AVERAGE  
WAGE

## CREATIVES

The Oregon Employment Department has released data on common occupations in the Creative sector, highlighting the 2024 numbers, average wages, and the typical entry-level education for each role. Below is a summary:

Occupation	2024 Average Annual Wages	Typical Entry Level Education
Audio and Video Technicians	\$47,458	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	\$50,346	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Customer Service Representatives	\$44,129	High school diploma or equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Production Workers	\$66,434	High school diploma or equivalent
Graphic Designers	\$54,320	Associate's degree
Helpers--Production Workers	\$41,829	Less than high school
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	\$39,954	Less than high school
Maintenance and Repair Workers	\$50,705	High school diploma or equivalent
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	\$67,996	Bachelor's degree
Music Directors and Composers	\$96,439	Bachelor's degree



# CREATIVES



IATSE Local 675 organized a special "pack in" tour of Chicago, February 2024.

The creative sector is comprised of a variety of industries including those related to the production of apparel, art, publishing, and the performing arts. It also includes museums and historical sites. There were 716 establishments with 3,477 employed and over \$171 million in total payroll in 2023. Trends show a loss of 550 jobs between 2021 and 2023. Going forward, the creative sector should continue to rebound from the losses incurred in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, especially in the performing arts. Galleries are seeing a similar steady recovery as performing art venues.

In February 2024, Lane Arts Council, a key member of our creative sector strategy team, brought forward a significant challenge faced by our local entertainment union, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 675. Our local community was experiencing a critical shortage of stage handlers, particularly within the rigging department. Rigging serves as the vital infrastructure that securely holds lighting, audio equipment, and speakers in place, ensuring the safety of every event. In response, Lane Workforce Partnership convened community partners including the Hult Center for the Performing Arts, City of Eugene, Arts & Business Alliance of Eugene (ABAE), and Lane County Government. Through this gathering, partners collectively committed \$30,000 worth of training materials to fortify the entertainment union's training ability.

The average wage in the creative sector at \$55,525 is slightly below the Lane County all industry average of \$56,320. The sector's diverse industries offer a broad range of occupations with varying wage levels.



## WHAT IS THE TRUE STORY OF THE LANE COUNTY WORKFORCE BEYOND UNEMPLOYMENT NUMBERS?

**The unemployment rate is often used to measure a region's economic success. A rate below 4% is typically seen as a sign of prosperity, while a high rate suggests economic challenges. However, relying on this single metric gives only a partial view of the economic situation. As the saying goes, "The problem with making decisions based on incomplete data is that you may miss the whole picture."**

While common perceptions of poverty and unemployment may have some validity, fostering a deeper understanding and encouraging active engagement can lead to meaningful change. In addition to unemployment rates, we should consider other critical factors, such as the poverty rate, the percentage of individuals eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) benefits, the availability of middle-income housing, the number of unhoused individuals, and the proportion of the population in low-wage jobs. These indicators create a more comprehensive view of a region's economic health. Furthermore, analyzing the balance between income from work and assistance programs can offer additional insights into economic stability and dependency.

While a low unemployment rate suggests a relatively healthy job market, it alone does not fully capture the economic struggles many people face. The 2024 ALICE Report<sup>5</sup> (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) published by the United Way highlights a more complex reality: 47% of Lane County's residents face significant financial challenges. This includes 32% of families classified as ALICE—those who are employed but do not earn enough to cover basic living expenses, and 15% of families living below the poverty line. This combined figure of 47% highlights the critical need to look beyond traditional metrics to address broader issues of economic opportunity, engagement, and inclusion.

Understanding economic challenges also means recognizing the unique difficulties faced by different people, demographics, and communities. Factors such as the availability and diversity of economic opportunities for work readiness, trauma-suppressed will and decision-making abilities, and available resources significantly influence economic outcomes. For instance, individuals from marginalized groups or those with limited access to training and development resources—the underserved—may encounter additional barriers to achieving economic stability. Readiness and support programs tailored to address specific needs and enhance skills are crucial in bridging these gaps. Recognizing the varying levels of support, personal effectiveness, and capacity among individuals helps create more effective solutions that meet their unique needs.

<sup>5</sup> <https://unitedwaylane-dev.squarespace.com/s/2024-ALICE-Report-Lane-County-Snapshot-2pg.pdf>





To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the region's economic health, it is crucial to consider a range of indicators beyond just unemployment:

### Poverty Rate

This reveals the proportion of the population living below the federal poverty line, offering insight into the extent of economic hardship.

### Middle-Income Housing Availability

The availability of affordable, middle-income housing impacts the cost of living and overall quality of life for residents.

### Eligibility for Assistance Programs

The percentage of the population relying on TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and ABAWD (Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents) benefits can highlight financial strain.

### Homelessness/Unhoused

The number of homeless individuals reflects severe economic distress and may indicate broader systemic issues.

### Wage Levels

The percentage of the population working in low-wage jobs affects their ability to cover essential expenses and can influence overall economic stability.

### Demographics

The statistical characteristics of a population, such as age, gender, income, education, and employment, used to analyze and understand trends and patterns within a group.

### Underemployment

Individuals working in jobs that do not fully utilize their skills or education, or who are working fewer hours than desired, reflect a gap in employment quality and job market efficiency.

### Generational Poverty

A cycle of poverty that persists across multiple generations within a family, where individuals are born into poverty and face systemic barriers that make it challenging to break out of that economic disadvantage.

### Benefit Cliff

The benefit cliff occurs when a slight increase in income leads to a sudden loss of financial assistance, reducing overall resources and creating a disincentive to earn more. Effective policy aims to phase out benefits gradually to avoid this abrupt impact and support smoother transitions to self-sufficiency.

In summary, while a low unemployment rate is a positive indicator, it is crucial to recognize and address the broader economic challenges faced by residents. The high ALICE and poverty rates in Lane County reveal that economic growth has not yet translated into widespread financial security for many individuals and families, despite the presence of world-class industries and recognized universities and educational institutions. To bridge this gap, targeted policies and initiatives are essential. Improving wage levels, housing affordability, and access to social services, along with increasing the supply of high-wage and high-demand job opportunities through collaborative efforts, will strengthen the economy and advance progress for everyone.



## TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LANE COUNTY'S WORKFORCE

Across the country, there is a growing understanding of what is needed for effective workforce development, particularly in terms of providing the necessary support for workers to participate in skills training that leads to gainful employment. When making decisions about training and career development, both businesses and job seekers face the challenge of determining whether their investment will pay off. Informed decision-making is crucial for both parties.

Lane County offers diverse training programs through private-for-profit schools, Lane Community College, universities, and online platforms. There are also private training providers with programs primarily aimed at truck driving, entry level healthcare, and welding training. Many parts of Lane County are also served, with LCC campuses in Eugene, Florence, and Cottage Grove. There is also a growing list of online options, such as LinkedIn Learning, which offer a variety of courses for skill development in technology, business, and more.

### Lane County Training Providers

Accessible training programs in Lane County can be found through Private-for-Profit Schools, Lane Community College, and two universities, as well as myriad on-line options for virtual training.

#### *Private-for-Profit*

Private-for-Profit Training providers in Lane County meet very specific business needs for a skilled workforce in healthcare, transportation, and welders.

**160 Driving Academy** with local campuses in Creswell and nearby Albany, offers 4 weeks of instruction in the classroom and behind the wheel to prepare students wishing to obtain a Class A Commercial Driver's License from the State of Oregon.

**Aisling Trucking Academy** located in Goshen offers a 4-week program to students with the goal of becoming a Licensed Class A Commercial Driver (CDL). The training is designed to prepare entry level drivers to prepare for the State of Oregon Commercial Driving Test and an entry level career as an over-the-road truck driver.

**Dare-to-Care Learning Center** located in Eugene and Lebanon is a locally owned training provider offering Certified Nursing Assistant 1 and 2 classes. Depending on the student's enrollment into either day or evening classes, students complete training in 3 – 6 weeks and are supported in taking their State of Oregon Board exam. Certified Nurse Assistant 1 is eligible to enroll in CNA 2, which takes an additional 2 weeks.

**EMT Associates** located in Springfield offers a variety of courses for entering the healthcare industry as well as courses for current workers who need to update their certifications. Offerings include Certified Nursing Assistant 1 and 2 and emergency healthcare training programs such as Basic Life Support and Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support.

**NW Trucking Academy** located in nearby Tangent offers 4 weeks of instruction in the classroom and behind the wheel to prepare students wishing to obtain a Class A Commercial Driver's License from the State of Oregon.



### **WW NDT Services and Welding School**

located in Springfield is a licensed, SENSE accredited, welding school. WW NDT offers a twelve-week competency-based program using American Welding Society Standards for entry-level welders.

### **Community College**

Lane County has one comprehensive community college, Lane Community College (LCC) with campuses located in Eugene, Florence, and Cottage Grove. LCC offers a variety of credit and non-credit courses spanning multiple occupational training opportunities relevant to Lane County's industry sectors.

### **Universities**

**Bushnell University** is a private Christian university located in Eugene offering a variety of graduate and undergrad programs. Bushnell most recently created a workforce solution for the healthcare industry through the development of their Accelerated Bachelor of Nursing Degree, which students are able to complete within one year.

**University of Oregon**, one of Oregon's premier public universities, offers graduate and undergrad programs in multiple disciplines focused on both learning and research. The U of O also offers business solutions with short-term professional certifications.

### **On-line Training**

In today's virtual world, people can find on-line virtual training from hundreds of different training providers. While we cannot possibly name them all, we would like to highlight LinkedIn! Learning. LinkedIn! is a social media platform catering to building professional networks.

LinkedIn! Learning offers a variety of courses in which people can learn the most current and relevant skills needed by today's workforce. Courses span the gamut from Microsoft Office products, interpersonal and team building, through technology specific skills. Businesses can support workers by taking any number of skills training courses in which they can build their knowledge and abilities in a very short amount of time.





# INDUSTRY PROFILE



**4,291**  
TOTAL  
EMPLOYEES



**5,624**  
NEW &  
REPLACEMENT  
OPENINGS BY  
2032

## FOOD & BEVERAGE

The Oregon Employment Department has released data on common occupations in the Food and Beverage sector, highlighting the 2024 numbers, average wages, and the typical entry-level education for each role. Below is a summary:

Occupation	2024 Average Annual Wages	Typical Entry Level Education
Bakers	\$38,519	Less than high school
Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	\$40,075	Less than high school
First-Line Supervisors of Production Workers	\$84,516	High school diploma or equivalent
Food Batchmakers	\$38,777	High school diploma or equivalent
Food Processing Workers, All Other	\$48,449	High school diploma or equivalent
Food Science Technicians	\$51,677	Associate's degree
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$59,763	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Helpers--Production Workers	\$41,829	Less than high school
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	\$68,490	High school diploma or equivalent
Industrial Production Managers	\$116,342	Bachelor's degree

**10%**  
FORECASTED  
GROWTH BY  
2032



**\$238**  
MILLION  
IN LANE COUNTY  
PAYROLL

**188**  
TOTAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS



**\$55,621**  
AVERAGE  
WAGE



## FOOD & BEVERAGE



Positive Community Kitchen Tour, October 2022.

The food and beverage sector, a key traded industry in Lane County, encompasses both manufacturers and wholesalers. In 2023, the sector included 188 firms and employed 4,291 workers. Growth in this industry has been driven in part by craft beer and organic food manufacturers.

Because the food and beverage sector is made up of jobs in manufacturing and wholesale trade, it was less affected by COVID-19 restrictions than some other sectors. When restrictions were enacted in 2020, the sector dropped about 2 percent, compared to 7 percent for all industries.

Going forward, the sector is expected to add 424 additional jobs by 2032 for a 10% growth rate, equal to the all industries average. In addition, there are an expected 2,172 replacement openings over the 10-year period.

Wages are about the same in the food and beverage sector compared to total average wages in Lane County. In 2023, the Lane County average annual wage in the food and beverage sector was \$55,621 compared to \$56,320 for all industries. High wages in the food and beverage sector are relatively uncommon in Oregon. Statewide, wages in the food and beverage sector are somewhat less than the average for all industries. In Lane County, many firms in the food and beverage manufacturing portion of the sector produce specialized products such as organic food and craft beer as opposed to large food processors, helping to push wages higher.

Of the most common occupations, most require a high school diploma or less, yet employers in the industry report having difficulty hiring and keeping workers.



## ARE WORKERS MOVING, OR STAYING, IN INDUSTRIES?

While it seems that industry hopping is a new trend, largely due to its acceleration during COVID, this workforce shift has actually been occurring for decades. In the United States, workers used to stay not only within the same industry and occupation, but with the same employer for their entire career. Both workers and employers were loyal to each other, and employers honored that loyalty with the proverbial gold watch upon the worker's retirement.

In the 1980's, the first generational shift began to take place due to mass layoffs. Millennials began to see their parents being laid off, which created a generation that focused more on the needs of their careers rather than the needs of the company that employed them. This early shift has grown over the decades into an American workforce that is comfortable with not only job hopping, but also industry hopping and, in more recent years, career hopping.

According to a July 2022 global survey of nearly 2,000 workers by McKinsey & Company, 48% of those who quit their job in the past two years have moved to a different sector. In their report, *The Future of Work After COVID-19*,<sup>6</sup> McKinsey reports some 8.6 million occupational shifts took place from 2019 through 2022, with even more change in store. McKinsey expects an additional 12 million occupational shifts by 2030. The total number of transitions through 2030 could be 25 percent higher than projected a little over two years ago.

The question today is what is the current workforce looking for when they make such sweeping career shifts? The answer is not always about better pay.

While many of the shifts from one career to another did take place amongst those who left

in-person service jobs, such as hospitality and food service workers, for jobs with higher pay and more career opportunities, not all were within lower paying industries. The COVID pandemic created an environment in which people had the space to rethink the purpose of their work. What we thought was a mass resignation during COVID was in reality a mass reshuffle. Workers wanted something different, and for many of them, that meant a different purpose in the work they do.

Switching to purpose driven careers, such as a lawyer becoming a teacher, or a nurse who is suffering from burnout looking for a new career in the creative sector, is the current trend. In addition to looking for meaningful work-based perks such as flexibility, improved work-life balance, good benefits, and a company that is a cultural fit, today's worker looks for a purpose-driven fit when they are seeking their next move. The Pandemic and its resulting "labor shortage" opened opportunities for workers to explore what they wanted in a job. People started tapping into their knowledge, skills, and abilities in new and unpredictable ways. People quickly realized that their skills could be transferable across industries and careers, and the workforce is capitalizing on this knowledge.

To keep up with this trend, companies are learning to attract this new workforce by becoming known for their quality jobs, embracing the eight Quality Jobs Principles, and communicating their purpose, vision, and mission through their social media presence. The best employers are embracing the knowledge that while they won't employ the same workers for a lifetime, both the company and the worker will benefit from this transfer of knowledge that industry and career hopping provides.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-after-covid-19>



# CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO SOLVE WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC NEEDS

With a clear understanding of the current state of the workforce established, this section presents innovative strategies for local businesses to address their workforce challenges in the evolving economic landscape. It explores effective methods for developing a skilled workforce tailored to business needs, highlights collaborative efforts among local industries to support their employees, and examines the potential of remote work as a solution to labor market constraints.



## SOLVING NEEDS OF THE WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEM WITH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Although Lane County has experienced historically low unemployment, this can paint a misleading picture. As detailed in an earlier section, low unemployment figures do not reveal the underlying challenges

faced by our workforce, employers, and community. Employers are still searching for skilled workers, and employees need well-paying jobs. One way to address all these needs is through public-private partnerships between businesses and community-based organizations (CBOs). These partnerships create opportunities for sustainable solutions that support workforce development, ensuring businesses can grow and workers can access good jobs, benefiting the community.

Public-private partnerships play a vital role in strengthening businesses by allowing them to oversee the development of their workforce. They can offer training and development programs that enhance employee skills and productivity. The involvement of the public sector ensures these programs align with broader economic and workforce goals.

### Supporting the Workforce Through Life's Challenges

By collaborating with CBOs, businesses can also share the risks of investing in skills training through support service-led programs. These partnerships allow businesses to focus on the training needed to fill the position, while CBOs can facilitate programs and resources that reduce or eliminate barriers to employment that have previously limited employment opportunities.

Partnering with CBOs is a key to success to help upskill many workers that have not had access to training and education programs in their lives, leaving them in low-wage jobs that are not life sustaining. Many job seekers face non-job-related barriers to employment, such as transportation challenges, housing insecurity, lack of basic skills, and financial



# INDUSTRY PROFILE



**21,782**  
TOTAL  
EMPLOYEES



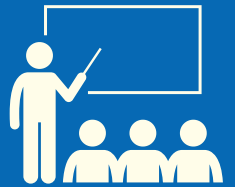
**24,875**  
NEW &  
REPLACEMENT  
OPENINGS BY  
2032

## HEALTH CARE

The Oregon Employment Department has released data on common occupations in the Health Care sector, highlighting the 2024 numbers, average wages, and the typical entry-level education for each role. Below is a summary:

Occupation	2024 Average Annual Wages	Typical Entry Level Education
Billing and Posting Clerks	\$48,370	High school diploma or equivalent
Dental Assistants	\$52,915	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Dental Hygienists	\$100,860	Associate's degree
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	\$38,845	Less than high school
Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan	\$41,832	High school diploma or equivalent
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	\$71,666	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	\$35,595	Less than high school
Medical and Health Services Managers	\$137,448	Bachelor's degree
Medical Assistants	\$49,322	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	\$48,288	High school diploma or equivalent

**15%**  
FORECASTED  
GROWTH BY  
2032



**\$1.6**  
BILLION  
IN LANE COUNTY  
PAYROLL

**1,167**  
TOTAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS



**\$72,389**  
AVERAGE  
WAGE





# HEALTH CARE



Connected Lane County Health Occupations Middle School Tour, April 2023.

In Lane County, healthcare is the largest of all industry sectors, in terms of total employment and payroll. In 2023, there were 21,782 people working in this critical sector, across 1,167 establishments. Average wages in this sector were \$72,389 in 2023, making total payroll nearly \$1.6B.

Some of the largest employers include Peacehealth, McKenzie Willamette, and Northwest Medical Homes. Employment in hospitals, nursing, and residential care facilities returned to pre-pandemic levels in August of 2023. In 2023 there were 19,153 job openings, which is the most openings by far of any industry sector in Lane County. These jobs can be found at individual and family services, home health care services, hospitals, outpatient care centers, offices of physicians, and offices of other health practitioners.

Looking ahead, the local healthcare industry is forecasted to grow by 3,106 positions over the next 10 years. Growth is challenged in this industry and is contingent on expanded capacity in educational and workforce programs.



difficulties. A support service-led training program addresses these barriers by pairing job seekers with CBOs, providing them with the resources needed to navigate the workforce system. This collaboration helps individuals achieve job stability and reduces their reliance on social services, while fostering stronger employer-employee relationships. In practice, this means service providers help address high barriers like housing or transportation, while employers offer entry-level positions that do not require prior experience, allowing job seekers to learn on the job.



## Leading with Training and Employment

There are also partnership models that can give businesses access to additional funding to upskill their workforce to fill higher-wage positions, such as government grants and wage subsidies. For example, subsidies can support work-based training programs, including paid work experience, On-the-Job Training (OJT), or incumbent worker training.

Work-based training benefits various groups: new entrants to the workforce, unskilled job seekers, and incumbent workers. Some job seekers may have steady employment but lack the degrees or credentials needed for higher-paying roles, while others face barriers to even entering the workforce. Work-based training helps both groups by providing jobs that allow them to earn a paycheck while learning new skills. For incumbent workers, it offers the chance to train for promotions. The advantage

for businesses is that they can develop a workforce tailored to their unique needs. Work-based learning can be combined with other forms of training, such as classroom or online learning, to further enhance skills development.

## RETHINKING JOBS REQUIREMENTS TO SUPPORT QUALITY JOBS

For High School seniors right now thinking about the next stage of their lives, many are being asked about what college they are choosing to attend in the Fall to help achieve their career goals. Since the 1980s, there has been a consistent push for students to pursue a four-year degree or higher, with many believing it to be the only pathway to a well-paying career. However, we now know that while there is still a strong relationship between a bachelor's degree or higher and good paying jobs, there are also many degrees that are not seeing the same return on investment. And businesses are learning that a degree does not always equate to the experience and training needed for the job. With college becoming increasingly unaffordable for many, especially historically marginalized communities, and businesses struggling to find the qualified workforce they need, it may be time to rethink what requirements are needed for certain jobs.

The solution lies in educating workers and businesses about the necessity of certain types of education. Business publishers and research institutions are diving into this very problem and are providing information on how to navigate changing expectations. Their research not only details the many degrees that are not leading to high-wage careers, but that many jobs that only require credentials are not seeing enough qualified applicants. This requirement significantly reduces the available talent pool of candidates who would otherwise be highly qualified.



## Should a Degree be Required?

While the tides are changing for college degrees, it is not to say that all four-year degrees or higher are no longer necessary. Occupations like doctors, lawyers, or the sciences still have many valuable skills that are obtained during their studies. And state and federal degree or licensure requirements dictate requirements. However, for many jobs a degree is only a requirement of the business. The prevailing thought is that a college education leads to a better-quality candidate, but that is not always the case.

Businesses that are ahead of the curve are realizing that unless necessary, qualified candidates do not need degrees but require the mindsets, abilities, and skills gained from life experience. These types of experiences can often be equal to or even more valuable than a four-year degree. If a business is struggling to find the workforce they need or are not seeing the quality of work they expect out of a degree holder, then it may be time to have a conversation internally if a change in job requirements is necessary.

## Is the Right Fit a Credential, a Certificate, or Experience?

If a business decides a degree is no longer required for a particular job, it is still important to discuss what should be required for the position. There are many potential options for alternative requirements, including credentials, licenses or certificates, and years of experience.

### Credentials

A report by the American Enterprise Institute<sup>7</sup> recently highlighted that there are nearly one million types of credentials offered across the country. This means that many of the types of experiences wanted can be broken out from their comprehensive degree programs and can be obtained in a short time at the local community college or university.

### Certificates

Certificates can be thought of as a micro degree. They show mastery in a specific skill set that can be obtained in an equally short time as credentials. Certificates can be obtained in many ways, both with educational institutes and private for-profit vendors.

### Experience

A final alternative to requiring a degree is looking at experience. Experience can be found in various forms, such as work history or personal life experience. More businesses are understanding the value that is brought to their teams by having a workforce with a well-rounded experience to offer different perspectives and ideas in the workplace. This can lead to innovation, increased productivity, or different mindsets when working with customers.

## THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR INVESTING IN UPSKILLING AND CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

As the Skills and Career Advancement Quality Jobs Principle indicates, it is crucial for workers to have equitable access to opportunities and resources that enable them to advance into quality jobs, with clear paths for promotion and growth. Career progression often depends on access to employer-provided training and education. While skills training can be a significant cost for employers, the focus should be on the long-term return on investment, rather than the upfront expense.

The return on investment for businesses that invest in upgrading the skills of their workforce pays off in ways that are clearly tangible and quantifiable, but also in ways that are not as easily equated to dollars and cents.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/creating-a-policy-environment-to-unleash-the-workforce-development-potential-of-americas-community-colleges/>



A quick internet search will result in a variety of methods to calculate the return on investment for employer-sponsored training. Some of the calculations are complicated, some less so. In its simplest form ROI can be calculated by dividing the monetary value by the cost of training. However, monetary value considers many varied factors and may be cumbersome to calculate.

Businesses can also just use specific factors to determine their ROI, such as an increase in productivity resulting in an increase in sales. Then there are those factors that are less evident and harder to calculate, such as an increase in employee morale and positive impacts on the culture of the company. In exploring ROI and benefits to the business, here are some factors to consider.

### Tangible Benefits

- 1) Training increases the employee's skills, knowledge, and abilities. This increase in skills has a direct correlation to improved productivity and quality of work. The more skilled an employee is, the less errors they are likely to make. As productivity increases, so do sales, which equates to an increase in revenue. Beyond that, because quality has improved, the cost of goods sold will have a wider profit margin.
- 2) Retaining top talent helps companies to overcome hiring constraints and challenges. People want to feel valued, and investing in professional development is a direct indicator of the value employers place on their workforce. The result is an increase in employee morale, a reduction in expensive employee turnover, and cost savings in workforce recruitment.
- 3) Training from within provides a vehicle by which businesses can grow their top talent and promote from within. Upskilling and retaining top talent is a necessary factor in enabling a company's growth. Companies, such as

Eugene's Delta Sand & Gravel, realize that training can be used to ensure nearly every position has someone trained and able to backfill. "This helps to build a pipeline of talent and provide growth opportunities for employees." – Stan Pickett, President Delta Sand & Gravel

### Intangible Benefits

1) Work-based training creates an environment where the team is engaged in the work. An engaged, skilled, and talented workforce is positioned to take the company to the next level. Skilled employees are sometimes the greatest source of innovative products and services. Through innovation, companies are able to stay ahead of trends in the industry and may also find themselves on the leading edge of those trends if not the trendsetter.

2) With today's "purpose-driven" employees, companies who invest in their workforce attract and retain high achievers. Along with a desire to work in a purpose-driven occupation, companies that invest in training employees create a culture of learning and growth. Cultural fit attracts talented employees. It also helps the company to hand pick their future leaders, and to grow those leaders from within.

3) Investing in training helps to address skill shortages. There are occupations in which trained workers are in such demand that companies end up "poaching" from each other. Stan Pickett at Delta Sand & Gravel explains that investing heavily in training is a "must" for their company to expand the pool of qualified employees and avoid poaching from their competitors.

Overall, employer-supported training not only benefits individual employees but also contributes to the long-term success and competitiveness of the organization. For more information on methods by which employers can provide training, please see the **Training Opportunities** section of this report.



# LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD - PITFALLS OR OPPORTUNITIES?

We now have a baseline for our local workforce ecosystem and have presented some creative solutions that are solving challenges for both businesses and the workforce. This closing section presents information on issues that may be a detriment to our economy if not taken seriously, or they can turn into an asset for local businesses if they are accounted for in future planning. This section analyzes what jobs will be in high demand in 10 years, the impact of changing workforce recruitment and participation, the next generation of workplace skills and training, and how AI will change the way we work.



## HIGH-WAGE OR CRITICAL JOBS THAT WILL HAVE THE LARGEST EMPLOYMENT GAPS IN 10 YEARS

Training needs and job opportunities will be ample in the next ten years but matching those opportunities with new or incumbent workers requires a deeper understanding of the way jobs are projected to grow.

All the major industries in Lane County are projected to add new jobs, although growth rates vary, from 3% growth in financial activities to 16% growth in health care [Figure 4]. All industries will see substantially more openings over that time due to replacement needs, in some cases as much as 10 times more [Figure 5]. High-demand jobs,<sup>8</sup> defined locally as an occupation that has more than 62 openings over ten years, occur throughout these industries, as do high-wage occupations (locally, those that pay over the median for all occupations of around \$46,000).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.qualityinfo.org/documents/20126/110691/Lane+High-Wage%2C+High-Demand%2C+High-Skill+Occupations+2022-2032/b7d5e3e3-4386-bbee-8e54-bb97ddbdcafa?version=1.11>



# INDUSTRY PROFILE



**18,410**  
TOTAL  
EMPLOYEES



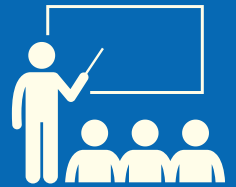
**34,373**  
NEW &  
REPLACEMENT  
OPENINGS BY  
2032

## HOSPITALITY

The Oregon Employment Department has released data on common occupations in the Leisure and Hospitality sector, highlighting the 2024 numbers, average wages, and the typical entry-level education for each role. Below is a summary:

Occupation	2024 Average Annual Wages	Typical Entry Level Education
Fast Food and Counter Workers	\$32,690	Less than high school
Waiters and Waitresses	\$33,190	Less than high school
Cooks, Restaurant	\$36,851	Less than high school
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation Workers	\$44,168	High school diploma or equivalent
Bartenders	\$35,274	Less than high school
Cooks, Fast Food	\$32,266	Less than high school
Dishwashers	\$33,374	Less than high school
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	\$35,595	Less than high school
General and Operations Managers	\$101,773	Bachelor's degree
Driver/Sales Workers	\$45,287	High school diploma or equivalent
Food Service Managers	\$61,598	High school diploma or equivalent
Food Preparation Workers	\$35,963	Less than high school

**16%**  
FORECASTED  
GROWTH BY  
2032



**\$466**  
MILLION  
IN LANE COUNTY  
PAYROLL

**1,293**  
TOTAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS



**\$25,329**  
AVERAGE  
WAGE



# HOSPITALITY



Workforce Boards at the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association Conference, 2024.

In Oregon, the Leisure and Hospitality industry comprises just over 10% of all employment. Statewide, the industry is the second largest business sector behind healthcare in terms of number of jobs. In 2022, the industry provided over 197,000 jobs to working Oregonians and brought in over \$10.9 billion in annual sales for Oregon.

Lane County is home to 1,293 Leisure and Hospitality establishments that employed 18,410 workers, with a total payroll of \$466 million in 2023. Over the ten year period of 2022 - 2032, the industry is expected to add 2,633 jobs.

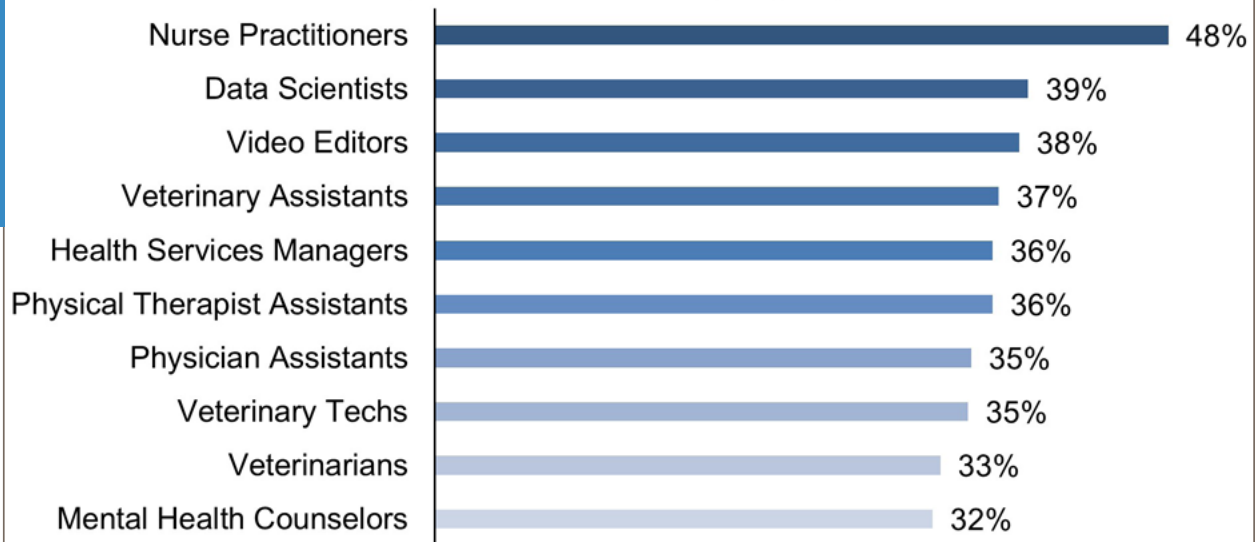
Lane Workforce Partnership (LWP), in collaboration with Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board (SOWIB), Northwest Oregon Works (NOW), Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association (ORLA), and the Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA) led a successful joint application for a Department of Labor Critical Jobs Sector Planning Grant, totaling \$446,786.

This grant represents a significant step towards addressing the unique workforce needs of the Oregon coast's vital hospitality sector, which is projected to generate nearly 40,000 jobs by 2031. The overall average annual wage of \$25,329 in the Leisure and Hospitality sector is lower than the all industry wage in Lane County of \$56,320.

Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association (ORLA) is the leading business association for the foodservice and lodging industry in Oregon. A not-for-profit trade organization, ORLA has increased their work in Lane County over the past year.



**Figure 10: Fastest Growing Jobs 2022-2032**  
Lane County occupations employing 50+ in 2022



Source: Oregon Employment Department 2022-2032 Occupational Employment Projections

As such, the list of jobs that are critical, high-wage, or both is long and can be filtered based on training requirements, industry of interest, or knowledge skills and abilities using tools available on [qualityinfo.org](http://qualityinfo.org) such as the Career Explorer. However, some common threads between high needs career opportunities exist.

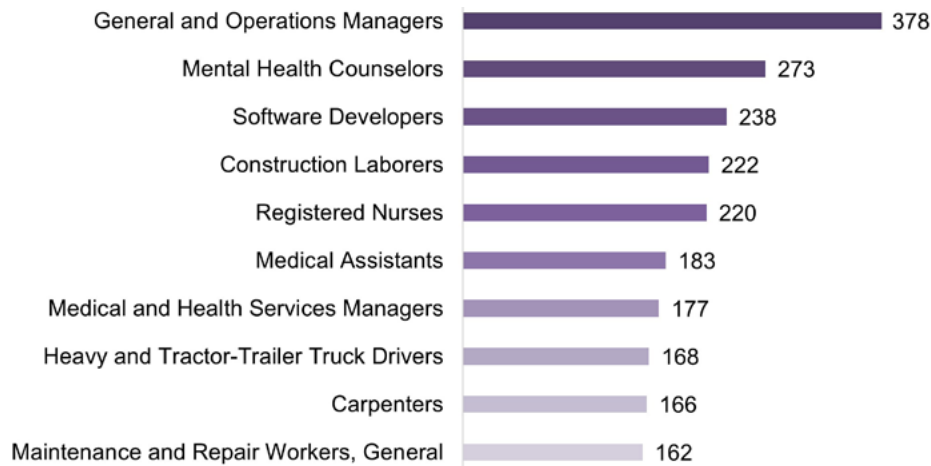
This graph of the top ten fastest growing occupations shows that there will be a high degree of demand (especially relative to training supply) for workers with special skills in data science, video editing, general and mental health care, and veterinary science. The fastest growing jobs tend to require more education and training than the average job – only three of the listed occupations have a competitive entry level education of an associate's degree or less – and all are associated with developing fields such as health care and technology.







**Figure 11: Most Openings due to Growth 2022-2032**  
Lane County High-Wage Occupations



Source: Oregon Employment Department 2022-2032 Occupational Employment Projections

By contrast, looking at high-wage jobs with the most growth openings paints a picture of some broader needs of the labor market. Tech and healthcare are well represented through occupations such as mental health counselors and software developers, although here the increased demand for construction, transportation and maintenance workers, and general managers is more evident. Medical workers such as RNs and MAs represent a growing employment base in an in-demand industry. In general, these jobs are more diverse educationally. Only half

have a competitive entry level education of a bachelor's degree or more.

Looking at high wage jobs with the largest opportunity gaps for both job seekers and employers requires balancing both views, as well as incorporating current demand, difficulty filling vacancies, and training pipelines. The most recent annual report on the Oregon Employment Department's Job Vacancy Survey for Lane<sup>9</sup> shows where employers are currently experiencing the most difficulty finding workers.

**Figure 12: Top Lane County Occupations With the Highest Number of Difficult-to-Fill Job Vacancies, 2023**

Occupation	Vacancies
<b>Difficult-to-Fill Vacancies in All Occupations</b>	<b>4,261</b>
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	282
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	227
Personal Care Aides	176
Security Guards	171
Nursing Assistants	159
Mental Health Counselors	144
Physical Therapists	123
Registered Nurses	98
Construction Laborers	95
Speech-Language Pathologists	91
Cooks, Restaurant	88
Tax Preparers	88

Source: Oregon Employment Department Job Vacancy Survey

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.qualityinfo.org/documents/20126/110695/Job+Vacancies+in+Lane/bcd79dc3-7632-f80c-8b64-c115bf58aca0?version=1.11>



# INDUSTRY PROFILE

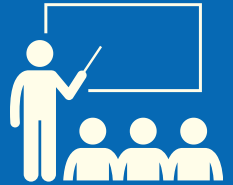


**3,714**  
TOTAL  
EMPLOYEES



**4,008**  
NEW &  
REPLACEMENT  
OPENINGS BY  
2032

**24%**  
FORECASTED  
GROWTH BY  
2032



**\$368**  
MILLION  
IN LANE COUNTY  
PAYROLL

**749**  
TOTAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS



**\$99,273**  
AVERAGE  
WAGE

# TECHNOLOGY

The Oregon Employment Department has released data on common occupations in the Technology sector, highlighting the 2024 numbers, average wages, and the typical entry-level education for each role. Below is a summary:

Occupation	2024 Average Annual Wages	Typical Entry Level Education
Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	\$78,362	Bachelor's degree
Biological Technicians	\$50,842	Associate's degree
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	\$50,346	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Chemists	\$99,837	Bachelor's degree
Civil Engineers	\$99,442	Bachelor's degree
Computer and Information Systems Managers	\$144,266	Bachelor's degree
Computer Programmers	\$95,350	Bachelor's degree
Computer Systems Analysts	\$107,974	Bachelor's degree
Computer User Support Specialists	\$62,716	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	\$45,790	High school diploma or equivalent



# TECHNOLOGY



Local tech firm Emano Flow, winner at the TAO Tech Awards in 2023, in Portland, Oregon.

The tech sector in Lane County includes roughly 749 firms in industries like software publishing, data processing services, and electronic manufacturing. Together, these firms employed 3,714 workers in 2023 and contributed over \$368 million in total payroll. Trends show the sector grew after the Great Recession, gaining roughly 520 jobs between 2012 and 2014 from a variety of manufacturing, software, and computer service firms. Between 2015 and 2021, the sector was down 736 jobs, largely due to published layoffs at Symantec. However, new and expanding tech firms countered these job losses. The number of new firms in the tech sector grew significantly between 2015 and 2021. The tech sector was one of the least affected by COVID-19 restrictions since many of the occupations in the nonmanufacturing tech industries can be done effectively from home.

Tech sector wages are high. In 2023, the average annual wage was \$99,273 compared to \$56,320 for all industries in Lane County.

At the occupational level, common occupations in the industry show a combination of highly paid technical occupations and generally lower paid office personnel. The occupations table shows the most common occupations in the sector with average annual wages.

The Oregon Employment Department forecasts show the tech sector will grow by 24 percent in Lane County between 2022 and 2032, compared to 10% for all industries, for a total of 4,008 openings. Growth is helped by the addition of new establishments in recent years.



While the occupations in the above table are not all considered high wage, they do represent where employers have the largest volume of currently difficult-to-fill jobs. There are several roles that overlap with ten-year projection tables, but this way of looking at the data surfaces many roles that have lots of openings at many education levels but may struggle to pay higher wages or have seasonal demand.

Balancing current needs, projected demand, and training requirements allows us to craft training programs that meet the needs of various types of workers and businesses. Looking at Oregon's Occupations in Demand 2024<sup>10</sup> or Lane's 10-year forecasts by education level<sup>11</sup> allows local decision makers to create training programs that speak to the ongoing needs of the labor market, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.



## IN-MIGRATION'S IMPACT ON WORKFORCE NEEDS

For decades, Oregon's economy benefited from significantly higher net in-migration compared to the national average. Beginning in the late 1980s,<sup>12</sup> businesses across the state thrived as a result of this steady influx of people. Since the early 1990s, Oregon's population has grown by 40%, outpacing the national average of 30%, with much of this growth driven by migration. However, this trend is shifting. Like many other regions, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered migration patterns, and for the first time in decades, Oregon experienced a net decline in in-migration. This downturn shows no signs of reversing in the near future, meaning in-migration is no longer the reliable source of labor for Oregon employers that it was for nearly 40 years.

This shift will affect how businesses recruit and grow. Since the 1980s, strong in-migration enabled Oregon businesses to expand jobs at a rate faster than the national average. With the post-pandemic reversal, the state's job recovery and growth have fallen behind the rest of the country. In a tight labor market, even a modest reduction in the number of new workers entering Oregon can significantly impact the availability of local talent.

For the last few decades, many businesses have experienced the benefits of having a strong and growing labor force to fill their needs as they grow. Businesses could grow with a reasonable assumption that they either had the potential workforce available to fill these growth positions, or they could attract

<sup>10</sup><https://www.qualityinfo.org/documents/20126/110703/Occupations+in+Demand+2024/601de3bd-ebfb-4693-950e-cfe680dc1cfb?version=1.15>

<sup>11</sup><https://www.qualityinfo.org/documents/20126/110703/Lane+Occupations+in+Demand+2022-2032/9c9435c9-57b3-a531-20bf-a990cd914a56?version=1.12>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/oregon-s-natural-population-continued-to-decrease-in-2022?inheritRedirect=true>



the workforce they needed. Equipped with the information of slower than historically average growth, businesses should temper expectations for the available workforce needed. However, all is not lost. There are solutions that are available today for businesses that can overcome challenges and support expansion. So, how can businesses respond to mitigate these potential challenges?

### Train to Your Workforce Needs

One of the major challenges businesses face as a result of the lack of a skilled workforce coming into the region is missing out on an influx of workers trained outside of the area. If this problem is leading to a lack of a trained workforce that requires technical or professional training or credentials, businesses can look to the local workforce and explore investing in the development of the workforce they need. Many credentials offer flexibility, allowing them to be earned in just a few weeks or through on-the-job training. Businesses can also invest in helping current employees obtain these credentials, reducing the pressure on workers who many need additional training to advance but lack the financial resources to pursue it on their own. More can be found about this topic in the return on investment in paying for training section of this report.

### Expand Hiring and Recruitment Practices

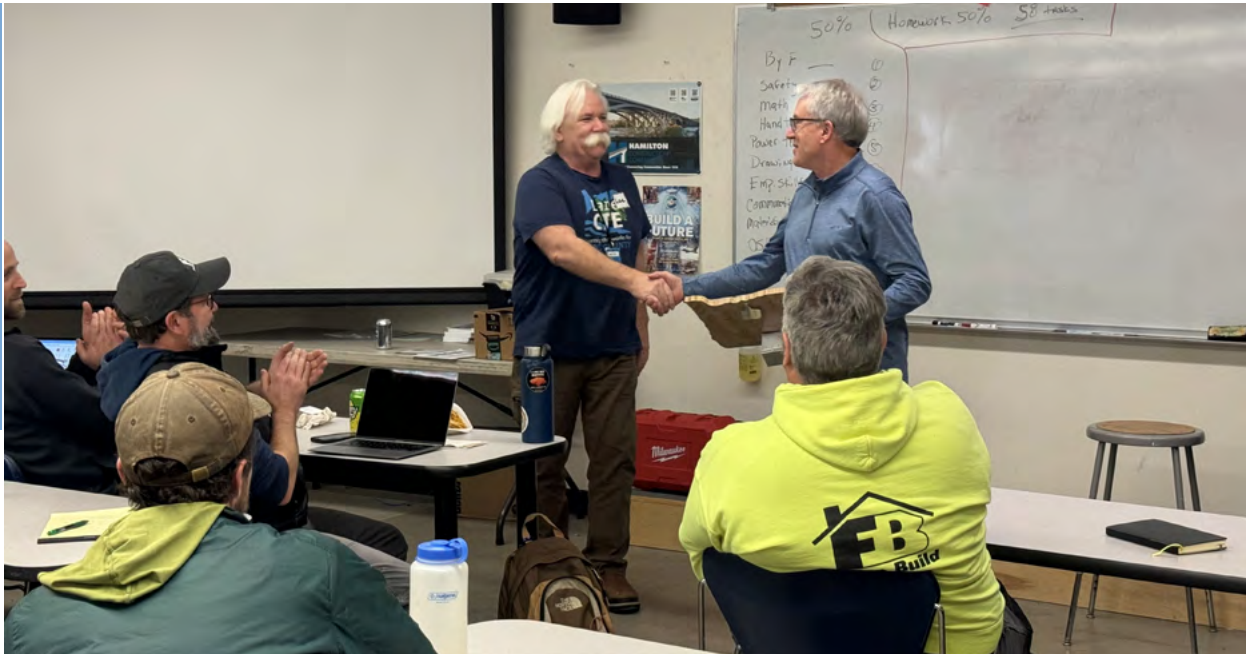
For jobs that do not require certifications or licensure for certain positions, businesses should consider expanding job descriptions that are more experience based. Historically, a college degree has been required for many types of jobs, especially ones based in an office. With the rising costs of college tuition, more young people are opting out of getting a degree and are instead getting into the workforce with the assumption they can learn the skills they need through other

means. There is also greater knowledge about how years of work experience can help develop the same skills that are learned in a classroom. If businesses can rethink education requirements and instead hire based on skills and abilities with equal value for work experience, they can significantly expand their potential hiring pools. Or if some skills are lacking, hire those with potential and train for the skills needed for the job.

### Close Historical Disparities

It is no secret that historically there have been disparities in hiring, educational opportunities, and other opportunities for marginalized communities. By closing the gap on these historical disparities based on sex or gender, race and ethnicity, age, or level of education, we could have thousands more available in the workforce for some of our most critical industries. Oregon State Economists research related to in-migration trends shows that if we close this gap, the state's labor force will grow not just in-line with, but actually higher than the baseline outlook in the decade ahead.





## HOW RETIRING GENERATIONS WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORKFORCE

Many businesses in Lane County, and across the country, are grappling with major challenges related to the retirements of the Baby Boomer generation, the youngest of which reached the age of 60 in 2024. This means that this significant part of the workforce is or is nearing retirement age, but they are bucking expectations. What most industry professionals are tracking is what happens when they do exit the workforce, because this generation will take with them decades of experience and innovation to support our robust local economy.

A recent Oregon Employment Department<sup>13</sup> report highlighted a challenge that many businesses across Oregon are grappling with, which is a workforce that is older than it has ever been. In 1992, 14- to 18-year-olds worked 42,000 jobs; almost double the number held by those ages 65 and older. Looking forward to 2022, that same age group held only 1,000 more jobs, up to just 43,000 jobs. Conversely, the age group that is post-retirement age, ages 65 and up, grew by over 450%, increasing by over 120,000 in the workforce. This problem is happening because of two factors. First, young people are taking longer to get into the workforce, by either taking longer for an education or focusing on other experiences before entering a profession. Second, older generations are delaying their retirement well beyond the historical norms. Currently, one-in-four Oregonians in the workforce are over the age of 55. For comparison, in 1990, only one-in-ten Oregonians in the workforce were over 55.

There are several potential factors as to why older generations are pushing out their retirement. Some at this age are staying in the workforce out of necessity and are unable to retire when they desire. Or they may lack enough savings or quality retirement plans from their employers

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/oregon-s-labor-force-what-slower-population-growth-and-increasing-retirements-mean-for-the-workforce?inheritRedirect=true>



throughout their life, so delaying retirement extends their social security or retirements until they are comfortable. A recent AARP's survey shows that money is the biggest reason older adults are still working. Another factor could be that some older workers are in less physically demanding jobs, remain in good health, and feel no need to retire, as they are still capable of handling their workload. The differences in the decision to retire or not is primarily attributed to the level of educational attainment and access to wealth one has in their lifetime.

An important consideration in this shifting workforce participation to older generations is the lack of career growth opportunities for younger generations that historically were filled by generations aging out of the workforce.

Delaying retirement greatly impacts the number of workers available to fill job vacancies in the economy, creating pressure on a tight labor market. However puzzling the problem may be, there are many creative solutions that business can do to help both the workforce needs and their continued success.

### Mentorship Programs

To avoid the skill and knowledge loss that comes with retirements, businesses should establish mentorship programs that pair the next generation of leaders with those close to retirement age. This allows for a gradual knowledge transfer to the next generation of leaders.

### Clear Succession Planning

Parts of the workforce that are in their prime working age need to know that they have a pathway for career growth, otherwise they may look for opportunities elsewhere. Establishing succession plans helps give younger workers confidence in career opportunities while allowing gradual learning and growth.

### Reimagined Job Descriptions

Some older workers who would like to keep working are not doing so for the paycheck, but to still find fulfillment in their lives. However, they may not need to continue working 40 hours a week. By rethinking jobs to meet the needs of the retirement age workforce, businesses can keep experienced workforce while reducing costs.

While full retirements will eventually happen for the Baby Boomer generation, they and future generations who come to retirement age have indicated they still want to participate in the workforce in some capacity. When businesses are creative and provide space for these later retirements, businesses can still leverage that valuable knowledge and experience, while training the next generations of workers.





# INDUSTRY PROFILE



**2,548**  
TOTAL  
EMPLOYEES



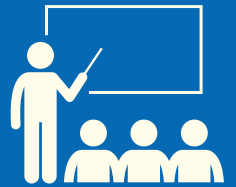
**3,007**  
NEW &  
REPLACEMENT  
OPENINGS BY  
2032

# TRANSPORTATION

The Oregon Employment Department has released data on common occupations in the Technology sector, highlighting the 2024 numbers, average wages, and the typical entry-level education for each role. Below is a summary:

Occupation	2024 Average Annual Wages	Typical Entry Level Education
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	\$80,140	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	\$50,346	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	\$60,646	High school diploma or equivalent
Bus Drivers, School	\$52,005	High school diploma or equivalent
Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	\$66,434	High school diploma or equivalent
Cargo and Freight Agents	\$55,209	High school diploma or equivalent
Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance	\$45,275	High school diploma or equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Transportation & Material Moving Workers	\$62,038	High school diploma or equivalent

**10%**  
FORECASTED  
GROWTH BY  
2032



**\$143**  
MILLION  
IN LANE COUNTY  
PAYROLL

**211**  
TOTAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS

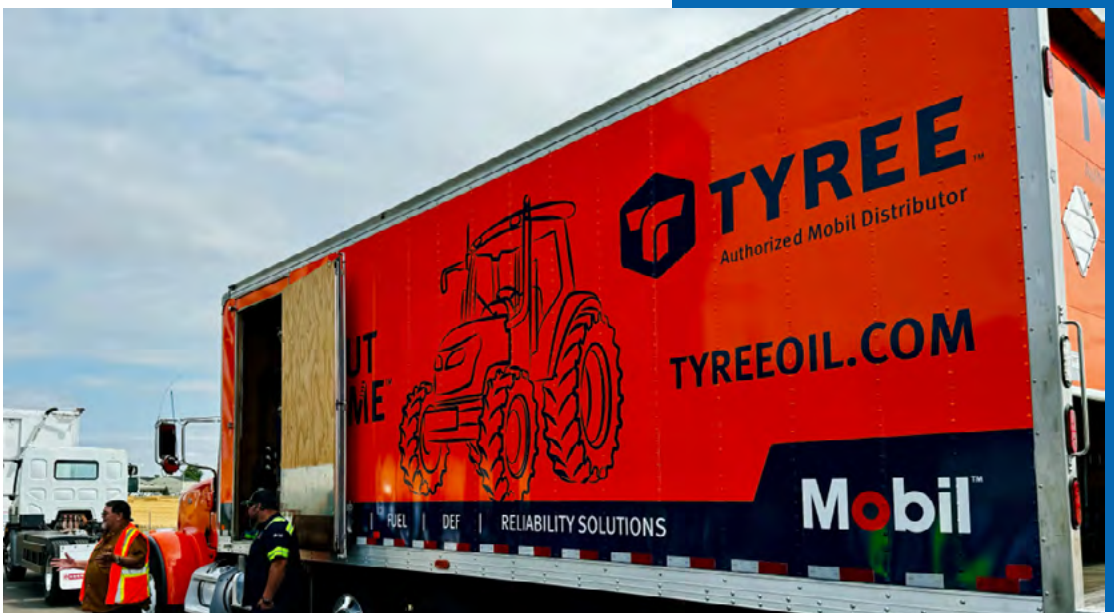


**\$56,505**  
AVERAGE  
WAGE





# TRANSPORTATION



Industry Partners led a “Touch a Truck” event at the Eugene, Oregon Airport in August of 2024.

The transportation sector combines the truck transportation, transit and ground passenger transportation, warehousing and storage, and related activities industries. Combined, these industries include 211 firms that produced annual average employment of 2,548 and \$143 million in total payroll in 2023.

Going forward, Oregon Employment Department forecasts show strong growth with the addition of 253 new jobs for a 10% growth rate between 2022 and 2032 equaling the all industries average. Growth is helped as demand from e-commerce for deliveries through trucking and warehousing increases. In addition, an aging workforce will help add 2,755 replacement openings for a total of 3,007 openings over the 10-year period.

Lane Workforce Partnership is proud to have partnered with the Southern Oregon Workforce Investment Board (SOWIB), and Rogue Workforce Partnership on Driving Prosperity through the Economic Development Administration’s Good Jobs Challenge. This fantastic initiative has enabled over 325 Oregonians the opportunity to obtain their CDLs, opening doors to new opportunities and driving prosperity across our communities. The strategic partnership was honored as one of 32 recipients nationwide to receive funding from the EDA’s Good Jobs challenge, a transformative opportunity aimed at bolstering local economies and placing an additional 50,000 workers in quality jobs through innovative training programs.

The overall average annual wage of \$56,505 in the transportation sector is just slightly more than the all industry wage in Lane County largely due to low wages in the transit and ground transportation portion of the sector. A look at common occupations in the sector shows that most are low to medium wage jobs with attainable education levels.



## EXPANDING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF WORKFORCE NEEDS OF THE NEXT GENERATIONS

Creating a welcoming and inclusive workplace is essential for the growth and success of all employees, particularly young professionals. Businesses with a younger workforce should adopt strategies that recognize their unique strengths to foster innovation and motivation.

The newest generation of workers brings different values and expectations, requiring businesses to address age-related biases, offer hands-on training, promote inclusivity, and assign meaningful tasks. These strategies not only support young employees' development but also enhance workplace culture and drive long-term success.

By adopting these approaches, local employers can create a thriving environment where young workers feel valued and engaged. Providing opportunities like job shadows, internships, and work experiences helps young people build skills and confidence, preparing them for successful careers while benefiting employers seeking to engage the next generation.

### Strategies for Fostering a Welcoming Workplace

#### Acknowledge and Combat Adulthood

Young employees bring valuable perspectives and experiences. Dismissing their input as less valid because of their age can hinder their development and motivation. Instead, focus on their strengths, validate their insights, and support their growth. By respecting their contributions, you create a more inclusive and innovative workplace.



### Effective Training and Engagement

To make training more effective and engaging, sessions should be kept short, ideally no longer than 45 minutes, with breaks incorporated to maintain focus. Gamification and rewards can be used to enhance the learning experience. Hands-on, practical activities should take precedence over lengthy lectures, with visual aids and interactive elements supporting different learning styles and improving retention. Additionally, providing flexible learning spaces that allow movement, rather than confining employees to their desks for long periods, helps sustain energy and focus, particularly for younger workers.

### Inclusive Practices

Inclusive practices are key to creating a supportive workplace environment. It is important to ask for and respect employees' pronouns, as well as provide all-gender individual restrooms to promote inclusivity. Implementing strong diversity and inclusion programs is also essential, along with offering regular feedback and recognition. Younger employees particularly value these efforts, as they prioritize clear communication and opportunities for growth.

**Best practices for supporting young employees include assigning meaningful tasks that provide a genuine understanding of the industry and offer valuable learning opportunities, rather than mundane, uninspiring work. It is equally important to create a supportive environment where young professionals feel encouraged as they grow. Recognizing their efforts and offering constructive feedback are essential for helping them develop professionally and stay motivated.**



## SKILLSETS OF THE FUTURE WORKFORCE TO BEGIN TRAINING NOW

Whether referred to as soft skills, essential skills, or employability skills, these non-technical abilities play a crucial role in an employee's success in the workplace. They are not only key to securing a job, but also to maintaining it and demonstrating potential for career advancement. Detailed earlier in this report, Oregon has identified ten of these skills that need to be taught in schools and to the broader workforce.

A key point about the Essential Employability Skills is that the list is not complete, as workplace skills continually evolve. With technological advancements, shifting expectations of work, and a growing emphasis on health and wellness—both personal and global—the workforce of today and tomorrow requires support to develop additional skills that will benefit both themselves and their future employers.



**As the workforce evolves, several key skills and experiences will become increasingly important for workers to remain competitive.**

Workers who invest in developing these skills and experiences will be better equipped to navigate the future workforce landscape and remain competitive in their careers. Highlighted below are other potential skills for students to learn or for employers to start to build a workplace culture around.

### Digital and Technology Proficiency

With the rapid advancement of software and technology, especially the growth of Artificial Intelligence, it will no longer be important to just have minimal knowledge of digital technologies and tools. Businesses are rapidly adopting these innovative technologies and tools into daily operations, rapidly advancing the pace of automation and mechanization. Future workforces will need to become proficient in AI and machine learning, data science and analysis, cybersecurity, and most would even benefit from a basic knowledge of software development and coding.

### Interpersonal and Emotional Intelligence

Another skill that is becoming increasingly important in the workplace is having strong interpersonal and emotional intelligence. That means learning how to collaborate and work with more diverse teams or in workplaces where everyone is not in the same physical location. The workforce needs to have the ability to lead teams or projects in these settings. It also means having a better sense of self and how to fit into the workplace.

### Creative and Critical Thinking

Changing workplaces, workforce, and economies requires more businesses to become flexible and adaptable in very short order. Employees will need the ability to support their employer to help think outside the box with innovative solutions, to have strong analytical skills to tackle complex problems, or to rethink process and design to develop new products or solutions for customers.

### Green Business Practices

Sustainable practices and environmental awareness is becoming increasingly important for businesses, both in building their brand and meeting more and more regulatory changes every day. Having a workforce that is aware of how to navigate best practices and to meet regulatory requirements helps the overall business. Emerging sustainable technologies and new energy sources also present opportunities to be leveraged. Having a workforce that is knowledgeable about these green skills can help make them more employable, especially to the right employer.





## Remote and Hybrid Work Skills

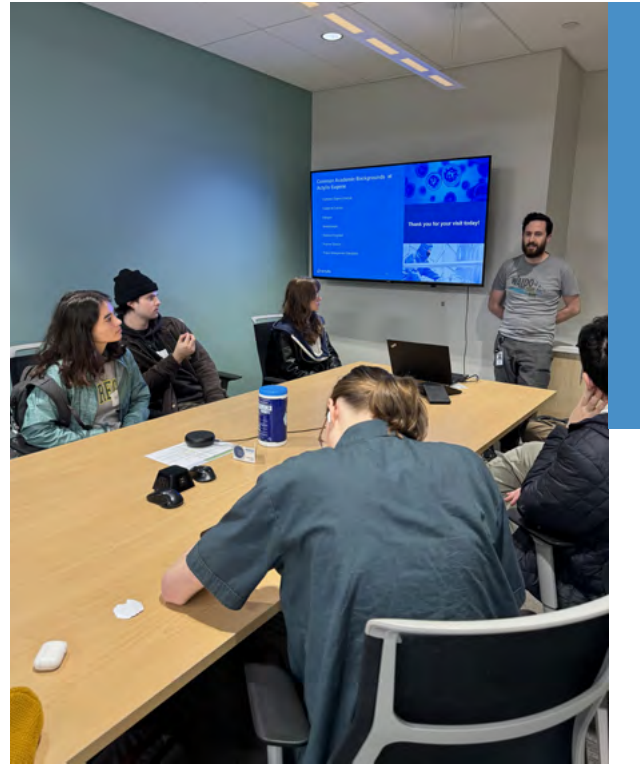
After years of concerns transitioning certain positions to remote or hybrid work would be a failure, the COVID pandemic forced the issue and has created a point of a new concept of work that cannot be undone. For a year or longer, employers and employees navigated how to make it happen to work from home and still be productive. While some jobs have transitioned back to the workplace permanently, more and more employers are realizing that there will never be a full return to normal. To become adept at this change, the workforce will need to develop proficiency in various online communication platforms and management tools. They will also need to develop self-motivation and discipline to manage their time and productivity effectively.

## Health and Well-being

Another outcome of the pandemic was an increased awareness and intentional effort to create a more balanced workplace and workforce. A lack of work-life balance and mindfulness in the workplace is causing burnout, which increases turnover and is a disadvantage for businesses. Employers are looking for a workforce that can manage stress and can maintain good physical and mental health. Maintaining well-being is especially important in high-pressure environments.

## Ethical and Social Responsibility

With increased social awareness around ethics and social responsibility, employers are becoming increasingly keen on hiring individuals with a high level of responsibility. One bad actor could ruin years of positive community reception. With more and more information being digitized, workers need to be aware of ethics using and handling technology and data. There is also a level of awareness of social responsibility, understanding the impact business practices have on society and the environment and how it is perceived publicly.



## TECHNOLOGY AND AI RAPIDLY CHANGING THE WORKFORCE LANDSCAPE

Earlier, we focused on the shift in the workforce created by COVID and the opportunity it provided for workers to reinvent themselves and shift to new careers and industries. In this section, we explore the shifts in the labor market that are being created by the advances of AI.

What exactly is AI? AI is a form of computer science that uses algorithms, data, and computational power to enable computers to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. Does this mean that AI can take over all the work of humans, no – but it does mean that it can advance the work of humans and make us much more efficient. It also means that tasks that can be automated will be – which will create occupational shifts.



# INDUSTRY PROFILE

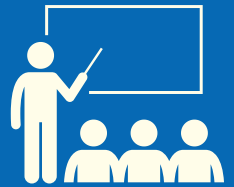


**5,818**  
TOTAL  
EMPLOYEES



**6,384**  
NEW &  
REPLACEMENT  
OPENINGS BY  
2032

**2%**  
FORECASTED  
GROWTH BY  
2032



**\$386**  
MILLION  
IN LANE COUNTY  
PAYROLL

**223**  
TOTAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS



**\$66,466**  
AVERAGE  
WAGE

## WOOD PRODUCTS

The Oregon Employment Department has released data on common occupations in the Wood Products sector, highlighting the 2024 numbers, average wages, and the typical entry-level education for each role. Below is a summary:

Occupation	2024 Average Annual Wages	Typical Entry Level Education
Adhesive Bonding Machine Operators and Tenders	\$49,342	High school diploma or equivalent
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	\$40,963	High school diploma or equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	\$84,516	High school diploma or equivalent
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$59,763	Postsecondary training (non-degree)
Helpers--Production Workers	\$41,829	Less than high school
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	\$68,490	High school diploma or equivalent
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	\$50,128	Less than high school
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	\$47,431	High school diploma or equivalent
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	\$39,954	Less than high school
Logging Equipment Operators	\$61,724	High school diploma or equivalent



# WOOD PRODUCTS



Constructing a Brighter Future students at McKenzie High School, September 2022.

Wood products have played a key role in Lane County's economy for generations, and with innovative technologies, continues to be an important economic sector today. All aspects of wood products production are part of the Lane County economy including planting, harvesting, and manufacturing. When initially tracking this industry sector, LWP focused on the narrow definition of advanced wood products manufacturing, but after extensive conversations with industry leaders, we pivoted to expand our definition to capture a broader list of activities in this industry sector. Numbers from the Oregon Forest Resources Institute show that the sector had 7,585 jobs and over \$419 million in total payroll in Lane County in 2019, the most of any county in Oregon.

Wood products manufacturing is by far the most prominent sector within overall manufacturing in Lane County and is more strongly concentrated in our area than almost any other in the country. In 2021, Lane County wood products manufacturing had approximately eight times more employment concentration than the U.S. and two times more than Oregon statewide.

The Oregon Employment Department forecasts that the sector will increase by 2 percent between 2022 and 2032, gaining 102 jobs over the period. However, replacement needs, largely due to retirements, are expected to create 6,283 replacement openings for 66,384 total openings over 10 years.

Wages are generally high in the wood products sector. The 2023 annual average wage for the sector in Lane County was \$66,466 compared to the overall average of \$56,320 for all industries.



We are already using AI in our daily lives without even thinking about it – such as when we use virtual customer services on the internet. And then of course, there is the advanced use of AI that many of us want to postpone experiencing – such as self-driving cars.

AI is changing the workforce as we have known it, as evidenced by walking into a McDonald's or a Taco Bell restaurant today. Rather than a front-line customer service worker taking our order, customers are directed to an electronic kiosk. Generative AI has automated order taking. According to a study conducted by McKensey and Company, "up to 30 percent of hours worked could be automated by 2030, boosted by gen AI, leading to millions of required occupational transitions." And, as can be seen by placing orders at McDonalds, these transitions are already happening.

For decades now, America's businesses have been challenged by a shortage of skilled workers, especially in industries such as technology and bioscience. The occupational shifts being created by AI will likely exacerbate this problem. AI will create a higher demand for skilled workers. Occupations requiring a skilled workforce will continue to grow and occupations that traditionally hire lower-skilled workers will decline. Both lower-skilled workers and businesses will face even greater labor market challenges as these occupational shifts continue to evolve.

### US OCCUPATIONS THAT ARE RESILIENT AND PROJECTED TO GROW BETWEEN 2022 - 2030<sup>14</sup> INCLUDE:

- Health Professions: 30%
- STEM: 23%
- Transportation: 9%
- Business and Legal: 7%

### US OCCUPATIONS THAT ARE PROJECTED TO DECLINE OVER THE SAME PERIOD INCLUDE:

- Production workers: -1%
- Food Service: -2%
- Customer Service and Sales: -13%
- Office Support: -18%

There are ways in which businesses can prepare for this changing labor market. As discussed earlier, businesses will need to be willing to train their workers. It will be easier and far more cost effective to upgrade the skills of current workers versus competing for new hires in a tight labor market. In their report, "A New Future of Work: The Race to Deploy AI and Raise Skills in Europe and Beyond" McKensey and Company suggests that businesses understand the potential that AI offers and plan for a strategic workforce shift.

<sup>14</sup> generative-ai-and-the-future-of-work-in-america-vf1.pdf (mckinsey.com)





## FINAL THOUGHTS

It is with great enthusiasm that Lane Workforce Partnership provides this 2024-2026 State of the Workforce Report. In this report, we set out to give a high-level overview of how businesses and the workforce are adapting to a new way of working. It is clear that a thriving economy means paying attention and adapting to the new expectations, technologies, and innovations that are driving growth. Businesses can use any of the tools and practices provided in this report to create strategies that allow them and our region to become an even stronger community.

It is also important to note that this growth is not done, and even more changes are coming and need to be explored. There continues to be a growth in the use of and choice to work in a gig-economy, many are exploring the ideas of alternative work weeks such as the four-day work week, and technology solutions are allowing more businesses every day to listen to the needs of their workforce and move to fully remote work. These are just some of the many examples of the way that traditional business practices are being upended, and those that recognize and adapt are finding sustainable success.

Lane Workforce Partnership hopes this report provides the reader with information needed to navigate these unsettling times, changing economic conditions, and the shifts we are experiencing in the makeup of our workforce. We will continue to bring together partners and resources to anticipate and respond to community workforce needs. As we look to the future, we know we will continue to face uncertainties and challenges. We also know that our community is strong – as evidenced by how well we have diversified our industry base over the years. By working together, as the people of Lane County do so well, we will continue to grow and thrive into our collective future.





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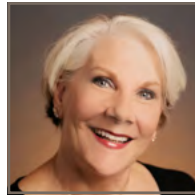
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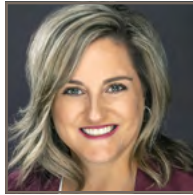
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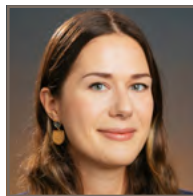
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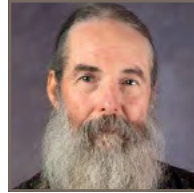
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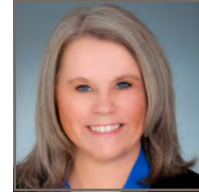
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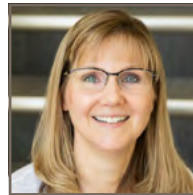
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