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A DEPARTMENT OF LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

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# Presentation to City of Asheville Economic Recovery Board

## October 15, 2026






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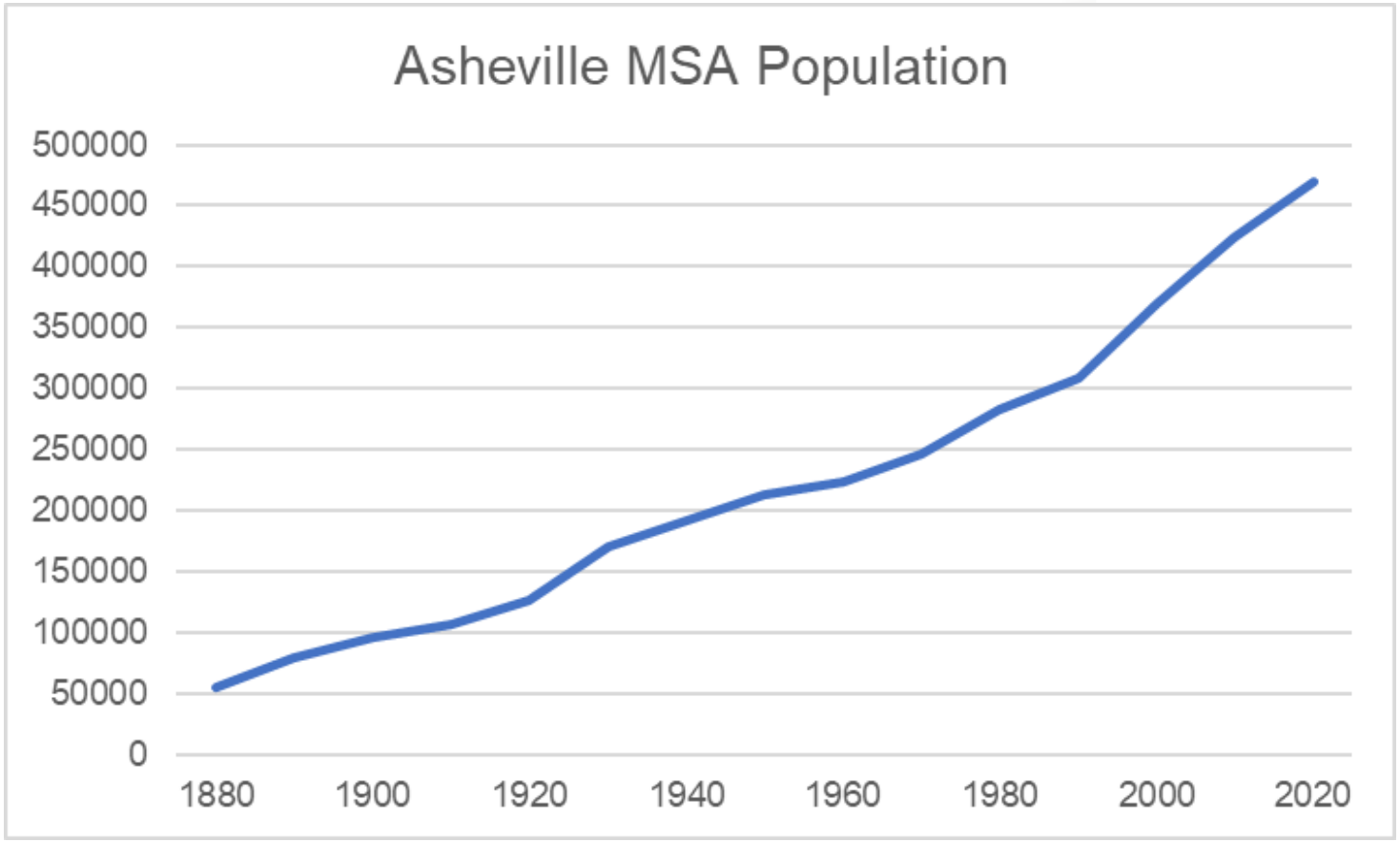
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# *City of Asheville State of the Workforce*



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## Land of Sky region population projection 2050: **547,686**

| County | April 2020 Base Population | July 1, 2024 Population Estimate | July 1, 2030 Population Projection | Avg. Annual Numeric Change | | Avg. Annual Percent Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | April 1, 2020 - July 1, 2024 | July 1, 2024 - July 1, 2030 | April 1, 2020 - July 1, 2024 | July 1, 2024 - July 1, 2030 |
| Buncombe | 269,425 | 279,533 | 293,414 | 2,378 | 2,314 | 0.9 | 0.8 |
| Henderson | 116,304 | 122,513 | 128,809 | 1,461 | 1,049 | 1.2 | 0.9 |
| Madison | 21,198 | 21,944 | 22,439 | 176 | 83 | 0.8 | 0.4 |
| Transylvania | 32,984 | 33,765 | 33,560 | 184 | (34) | 0.6 | -0.1 |
| **Land of Sky** | **439,911** | **457,755** | **478,222** | **4,199** | **3,411** | **1.0** | **0.7** |

Source: NC OSBM, Vintage 2024 Population Estimates & Vintage 2025 Population Projections

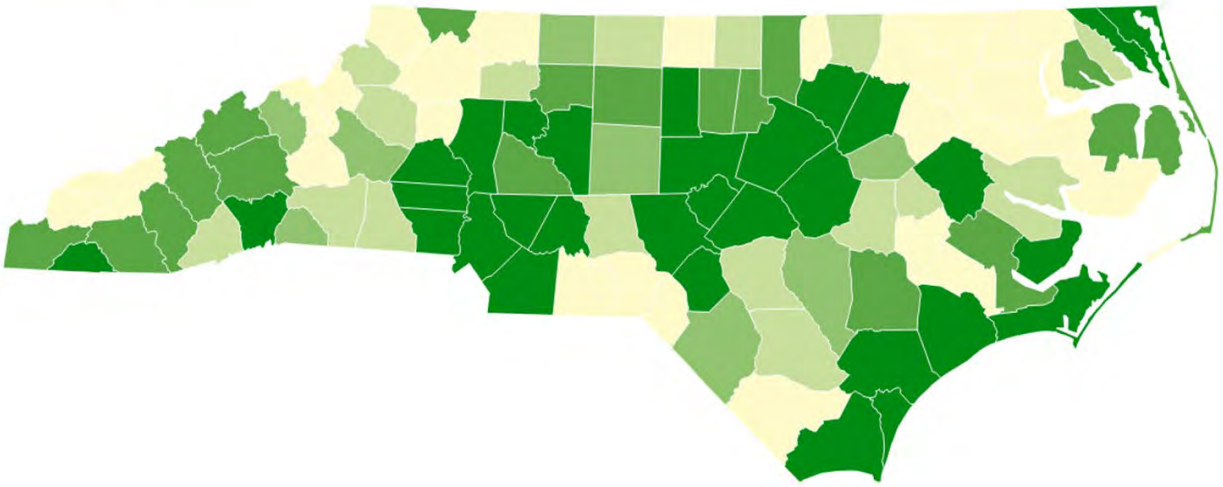
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Projected Population Change

**% Change, 2020 - 2030**

0 3 5 10



Map: NC Office of State Budget & Management • Source: NCOSBM, Vintage 2025 Population Projections • Created with Datawrapper

**Triangle/Charlotte**

- ***41% of Population***
- ***62% of Growth***

**Wilmington/Triad**

- ***20% of Population***
- ***20% of Growth***

**All other Metros**

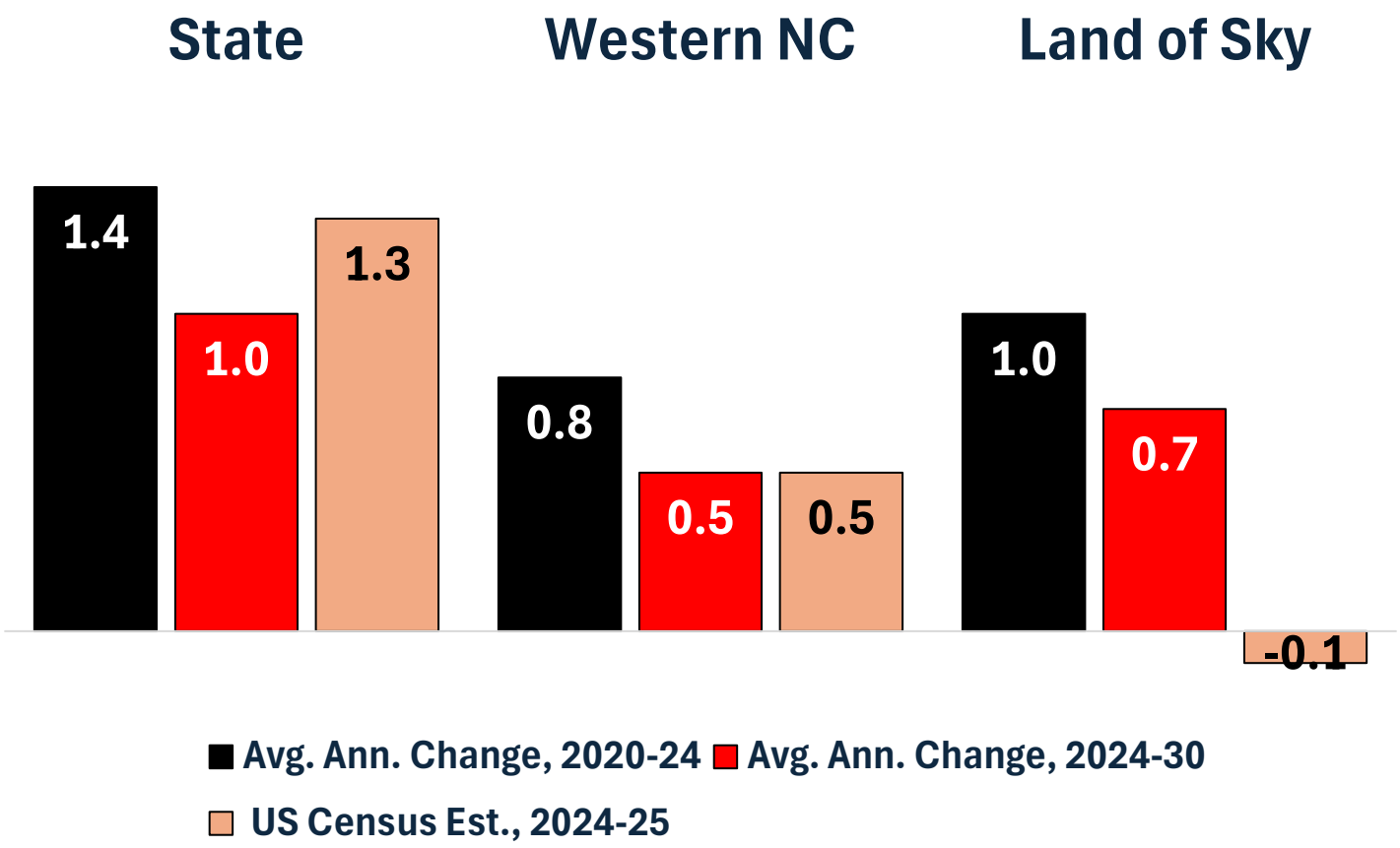
- ***19% of Population***
- ***12% of Growth***

**Rural Areas**

- ***20% of Population***
- ***6% of Growth***

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# City of Asheville

**Population:** 97,700 (July 1, 2025)
98,391 (July 1, 2024)
61,607 (1990)

**Buncombe:** 281,781(July 1, 2025)
341,138 (2050)

**Labor Force**: 49,086
**Employed:** 47,467
**Unemployed:** 1,619
**Unemployment Rate:** 3.3%



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Helene significantly impacted our region's unemployment rate.

**City of Asheville:** 3.3% (4.2% in Oct. 2024)

**Asheville metro:** 3.1% (8.5% in Oct. 2024) now #1 lowest in NC

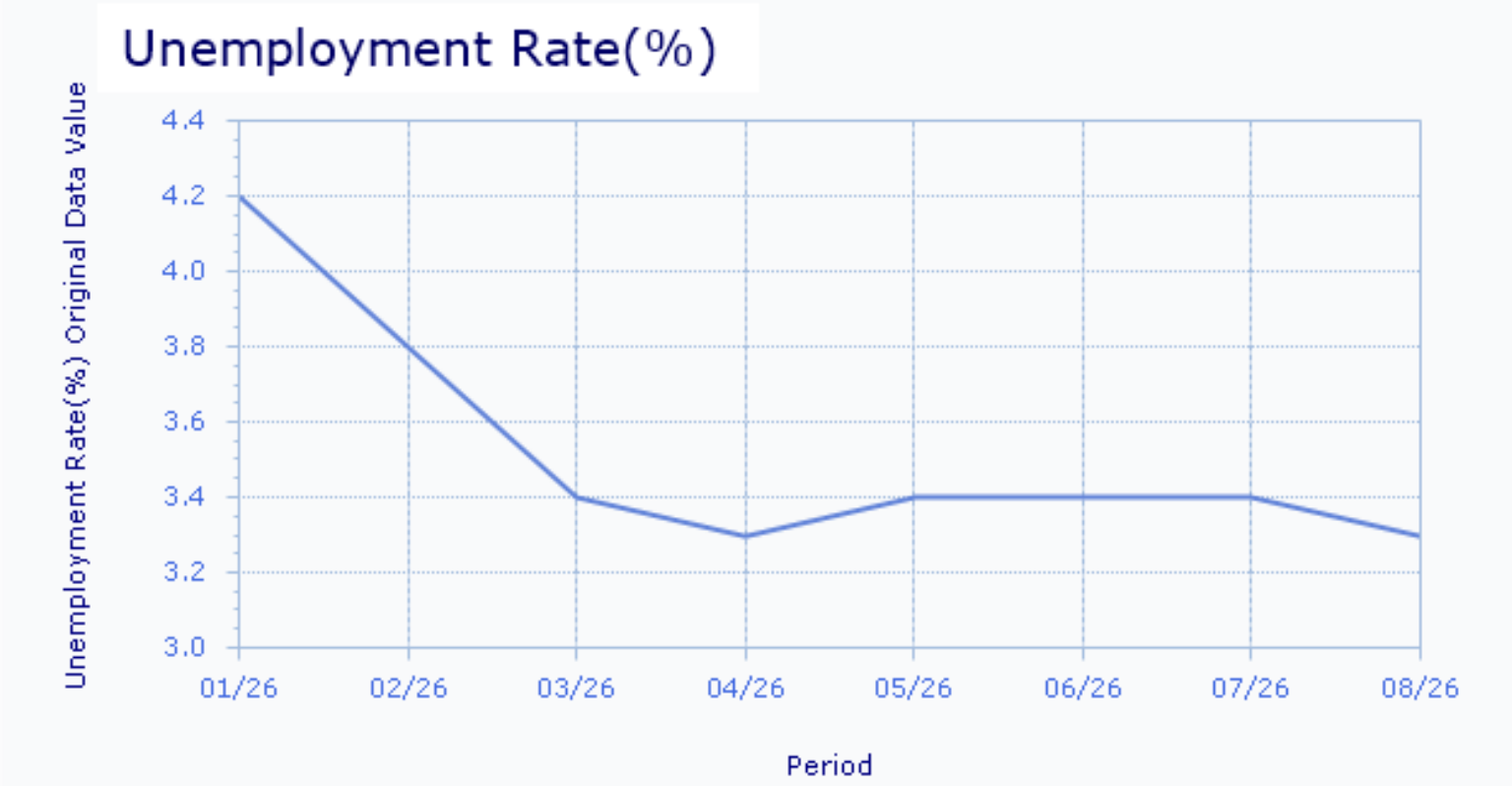
**Buncombe County:** 3.2% (10.4% in Oct. 2024)

August 2026

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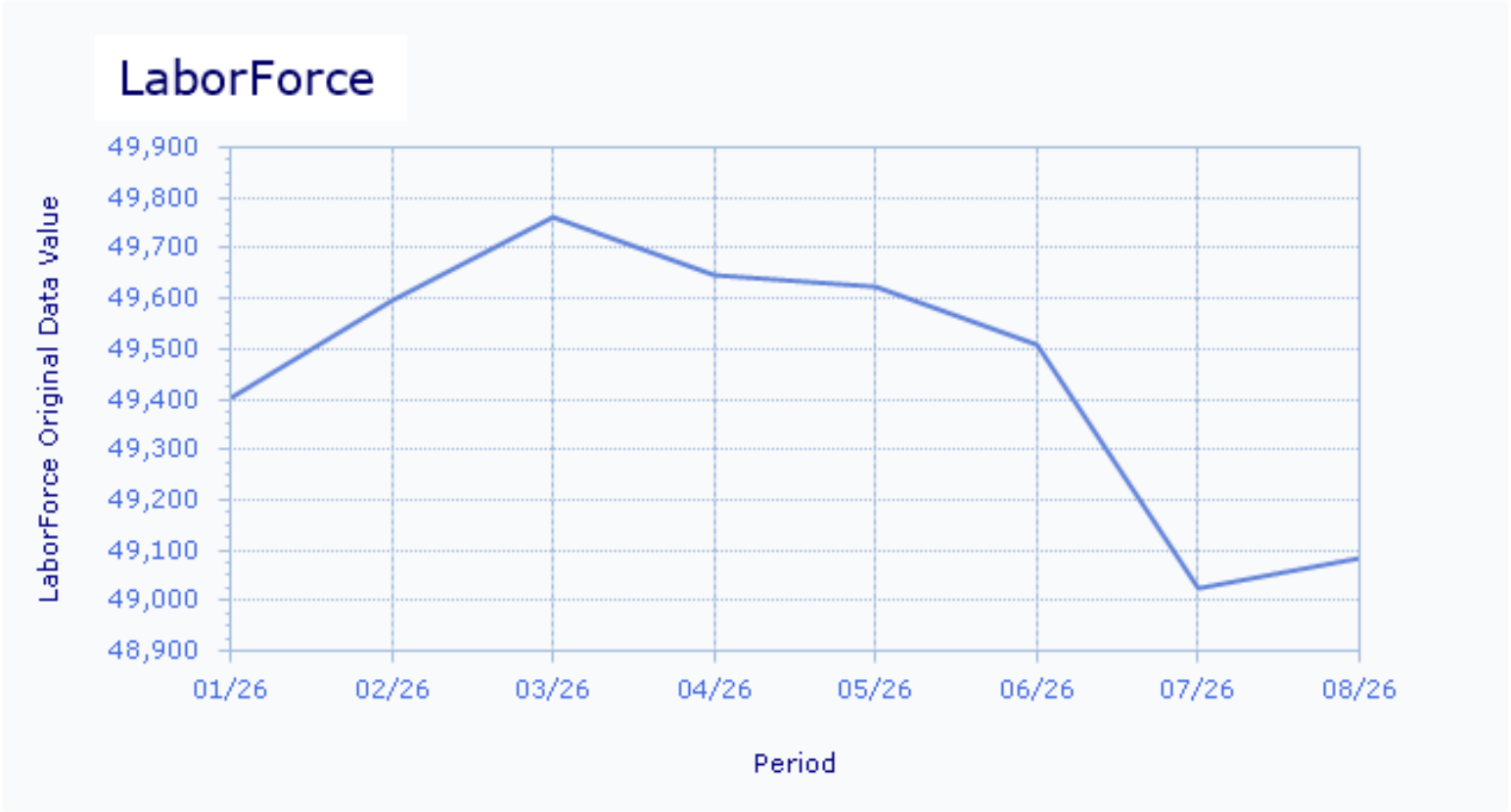
# City of Asheville



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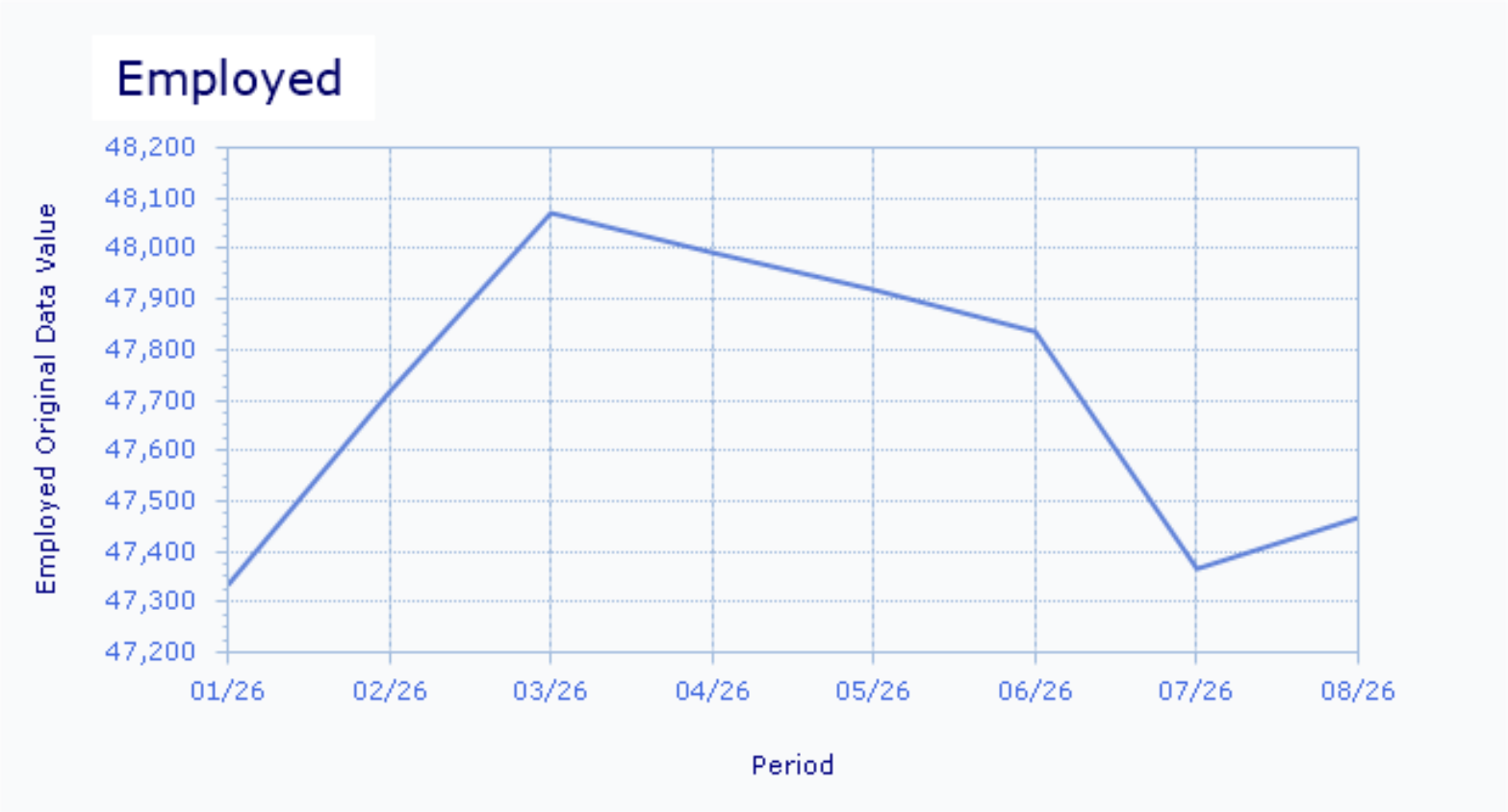
City of Asheville



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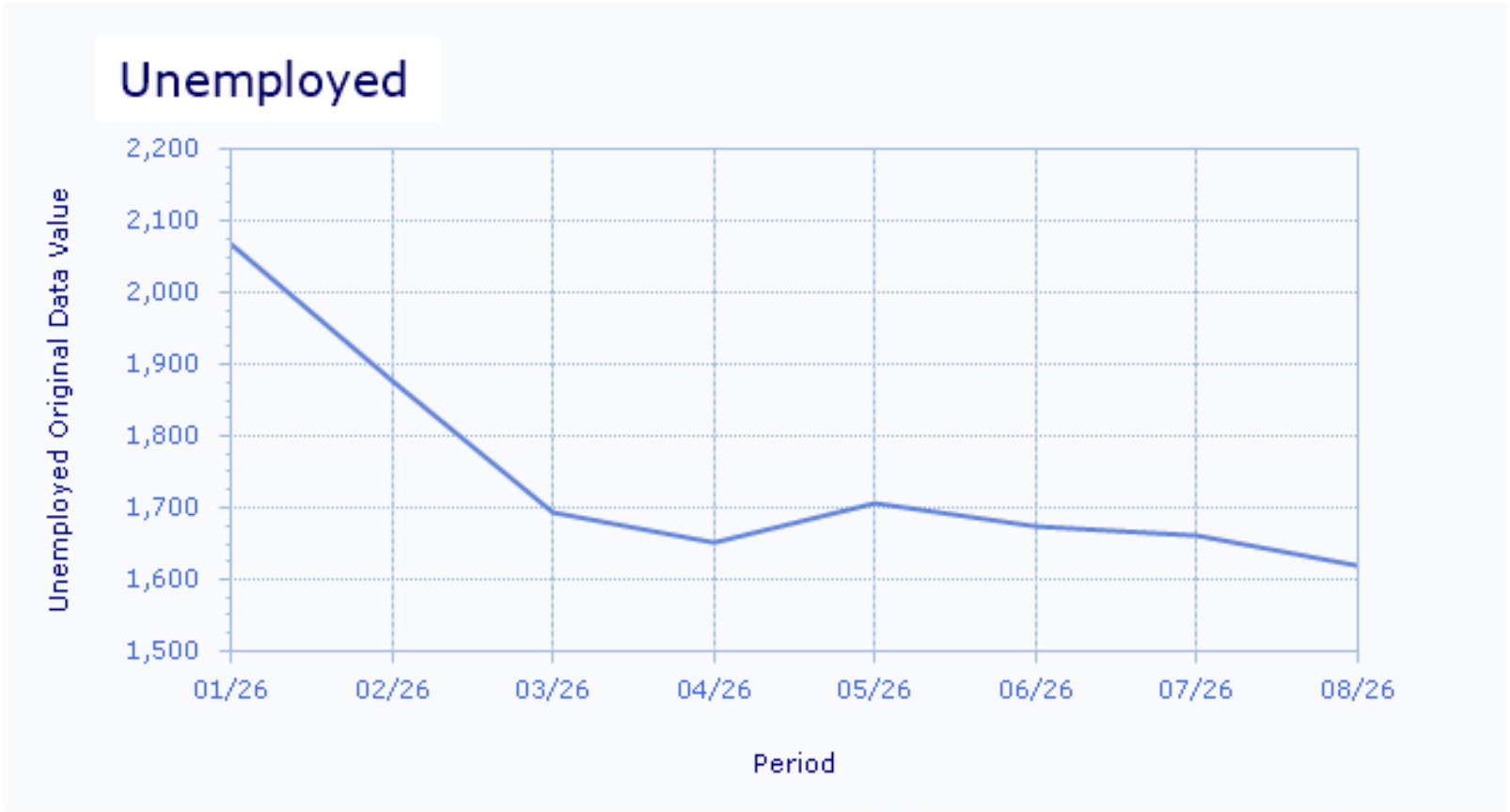
City of Asheville



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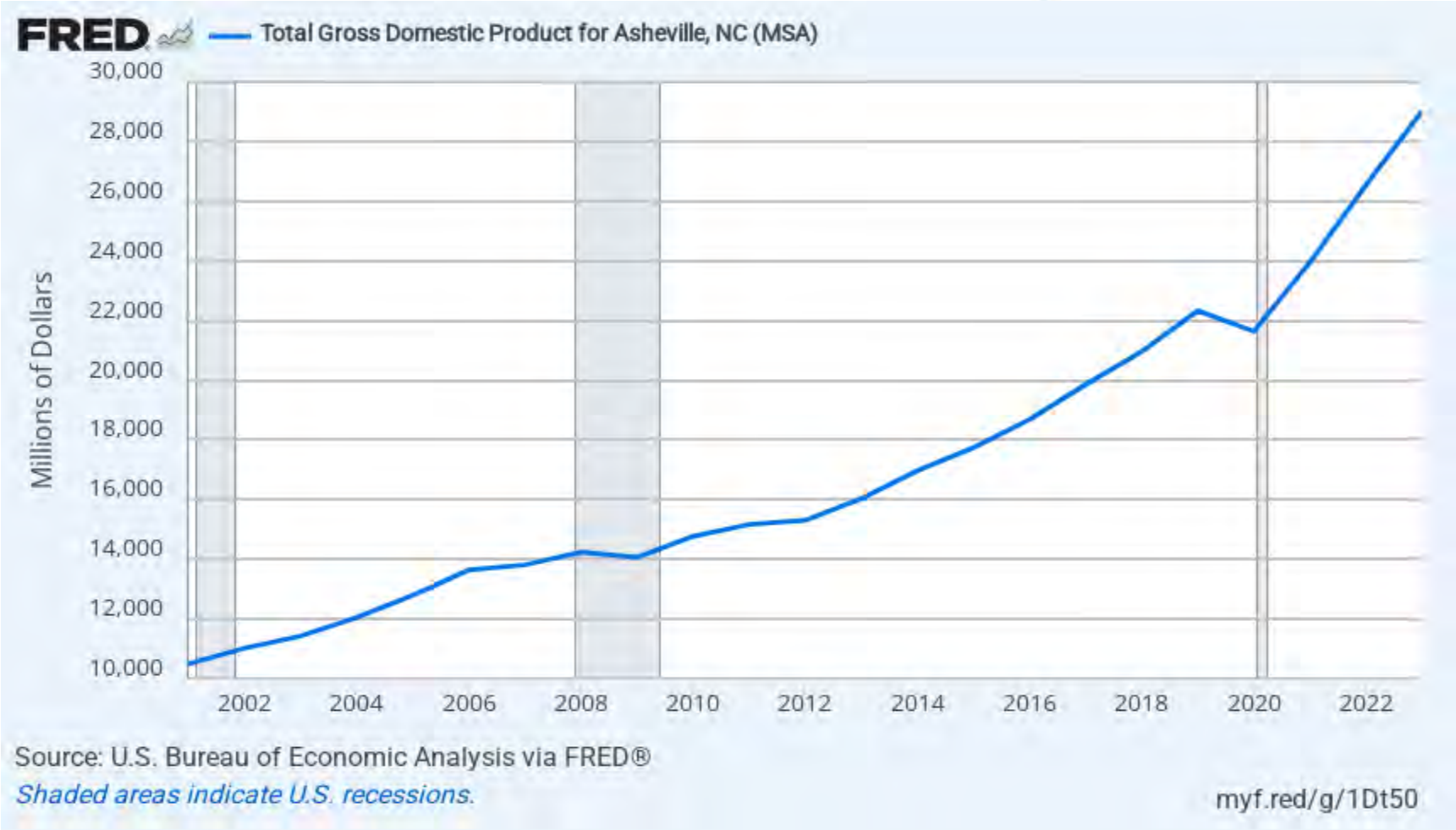
City of Asheville



Region's GDP has increased 200% in 20 years from $10.57 billion to $29.014.297 billion (as of 2023)

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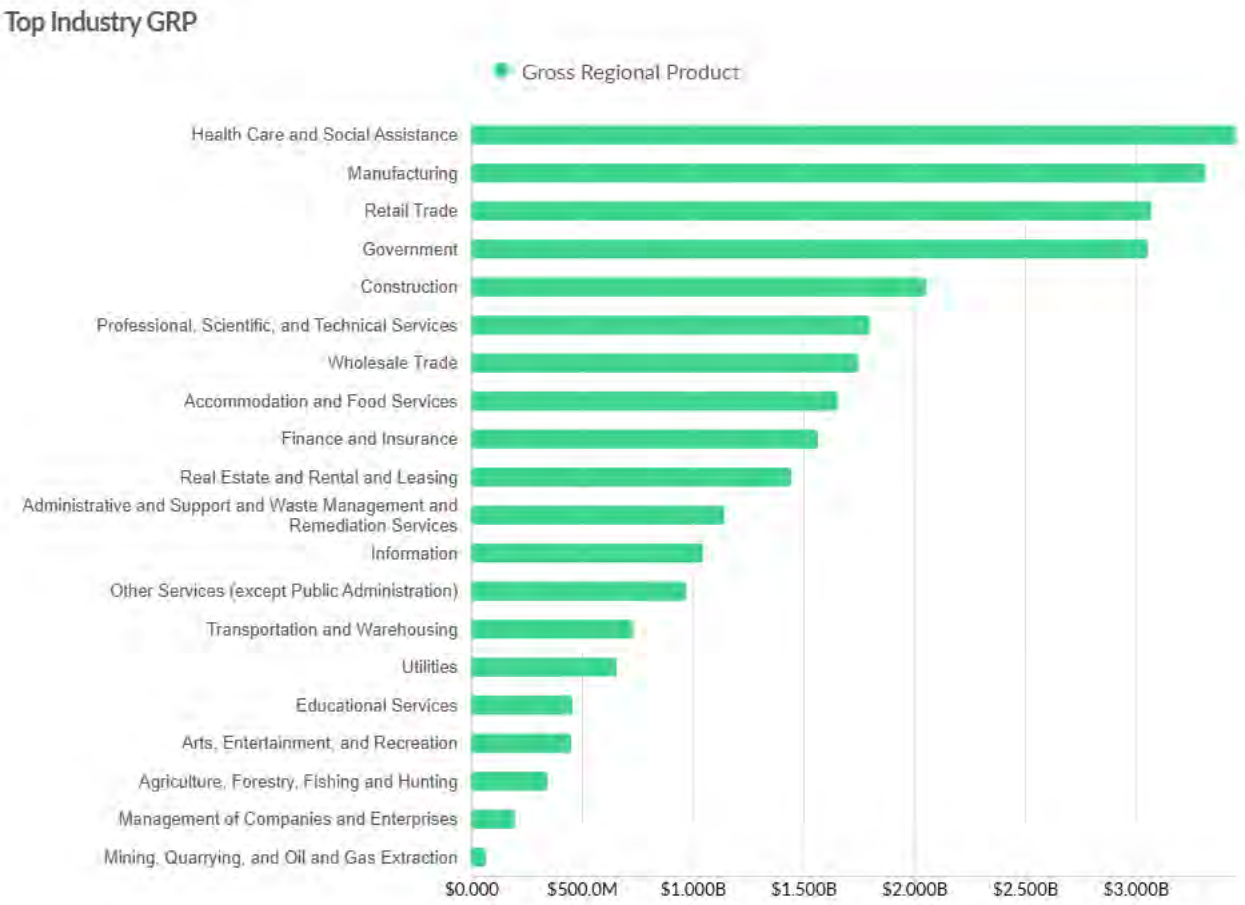


Top 4 sectors of Asheville's metro economy (based on economic impact – Gross Regional Product) each over **$3 billion** annual impact:

#1 Health Care and Social Assistance
#2 Manufacturing
#3 Retail Trade
#4 Government (data source: Lightcast)

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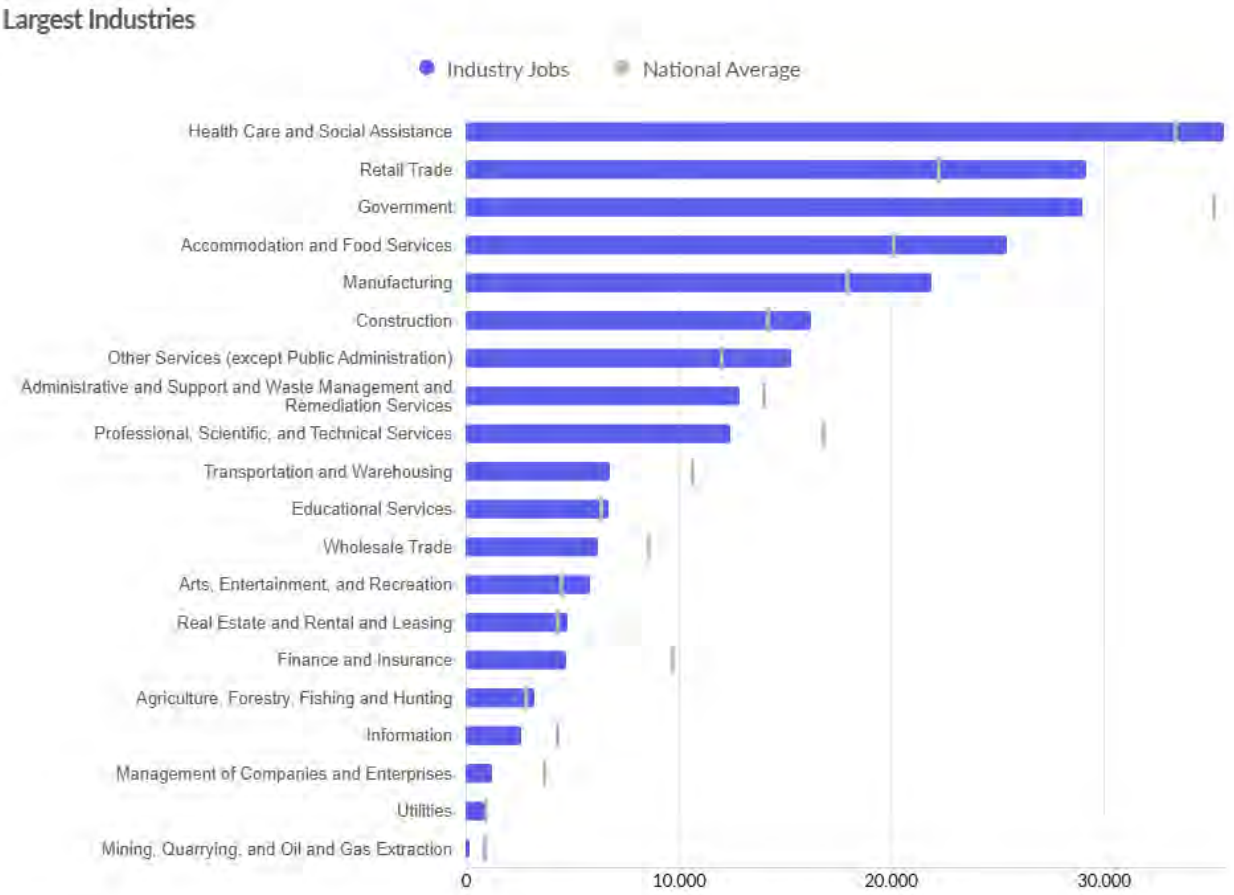
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Top 5 sectors of Asheville's metro economy (based on number of jobs) each over **20,000 jobs**:

#1 Health Care and Social Assistance
#2 Retail Trade
#3 Government
#4 Accomodations and Food Services
#5 Manufacturing

(data source: Lightcast)

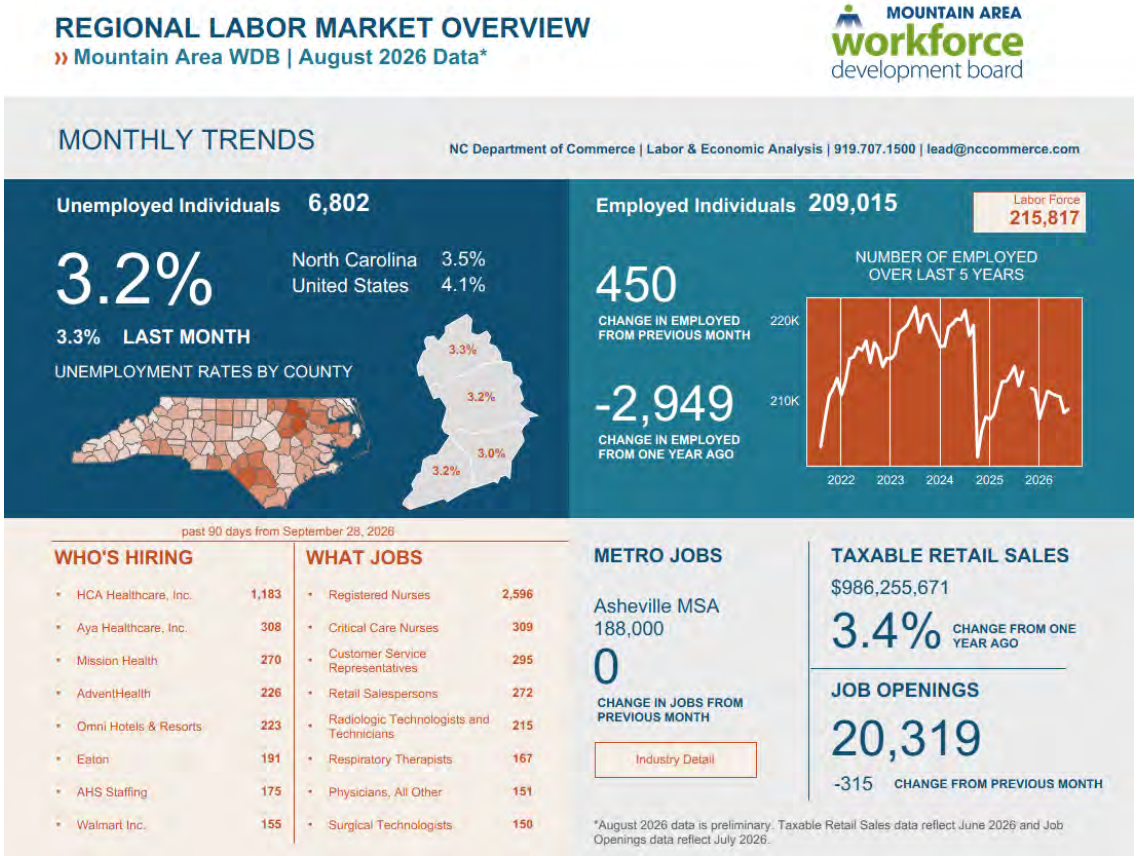


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Buncombe **3.4%**
Henderson **3.0%**
Haywood **3.4%**
Madison **3.5%**
Transylvania **3.3%**
**North Carolina 3.7%**
**United States 4.3%**

Job openings: **20,319**



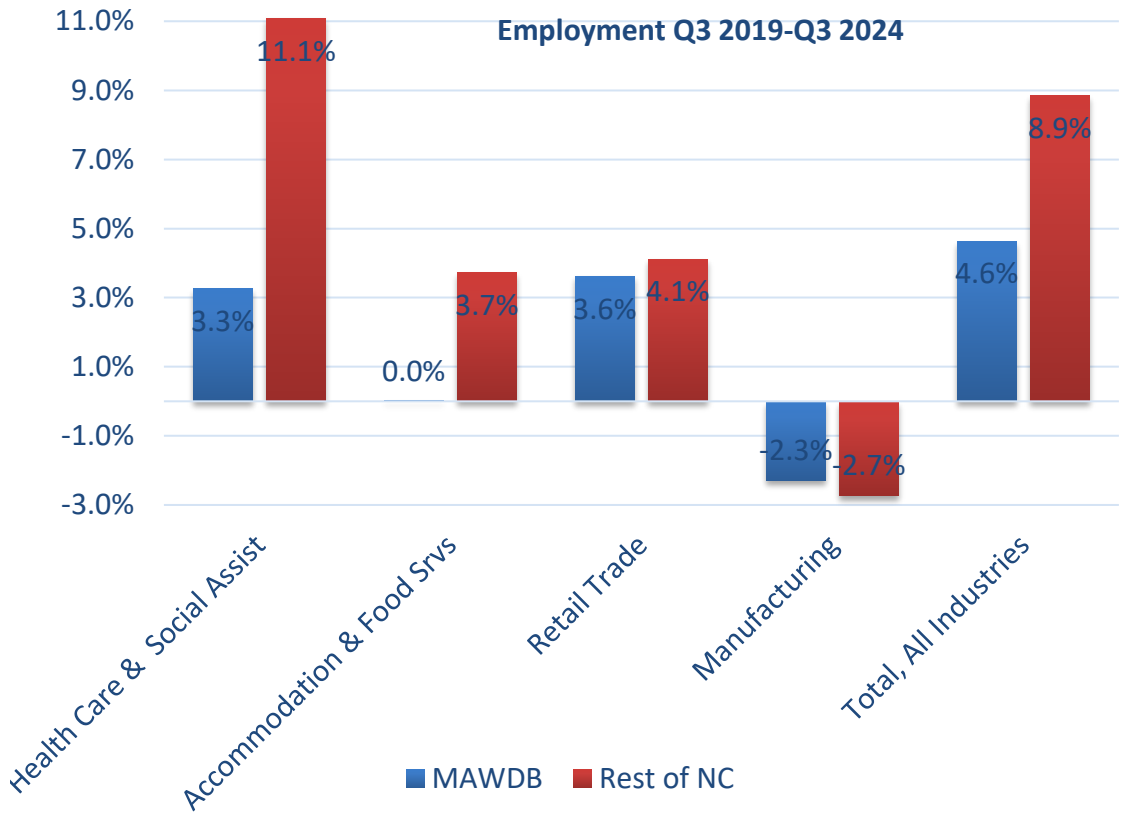
# Where was the region's economy pre-Helene?



Jobs in the region were slower to rebound from Covid (particularly Buncombe & Transylvania)

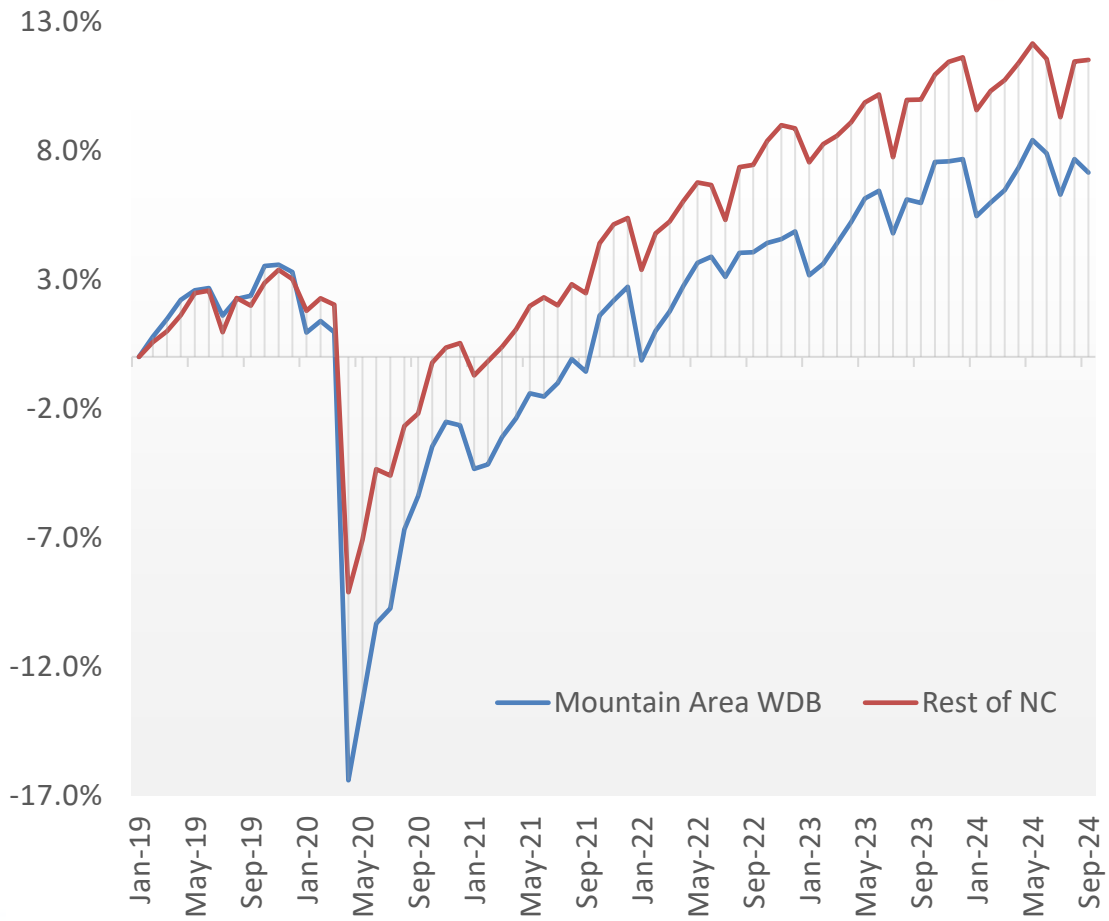
- Particularly among the largest employment industries
- Jobs in Accommodations & Food Service back to Q3 2019

Source: NC Dept. of Commerce



# Pandemic jobs impact overall was greater in this region – bigger hole to dig out of

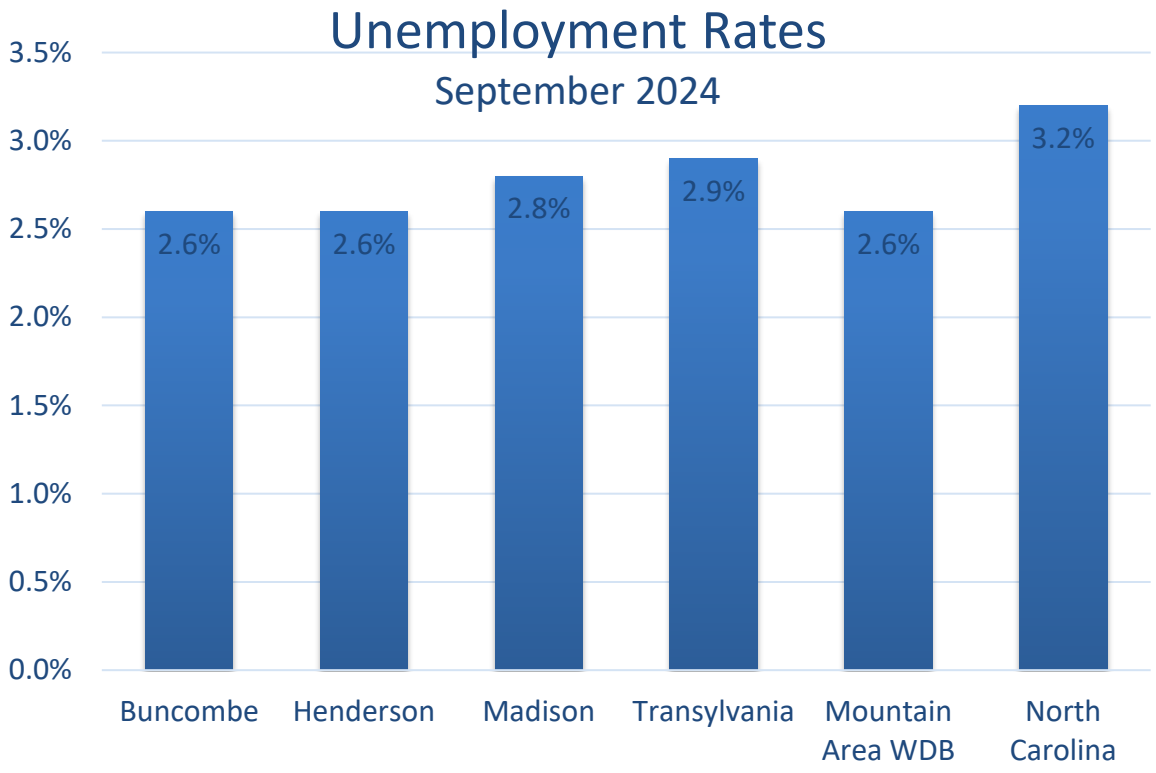
Source: NC Dept. of Commerce



Prior to Helene low unemployment, Sept 2024

- Asheville metro was lowest NC metro
- Buncombe & Henderson tied for 2nd lowest county
- Madison & Transylvania both below 3.0%





Lowest unemployment rate in last 35 years was
**2.0%** September 1999

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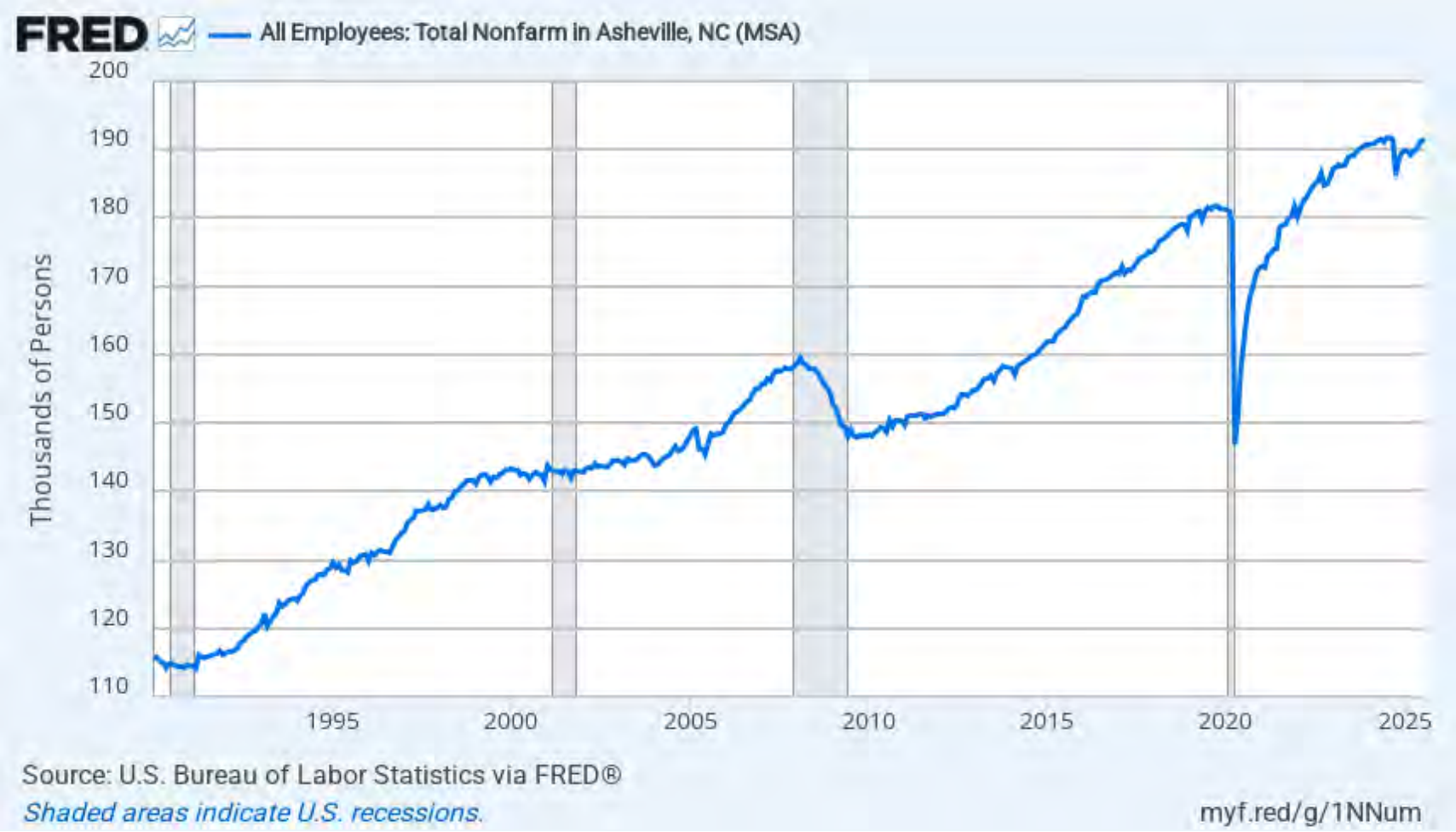
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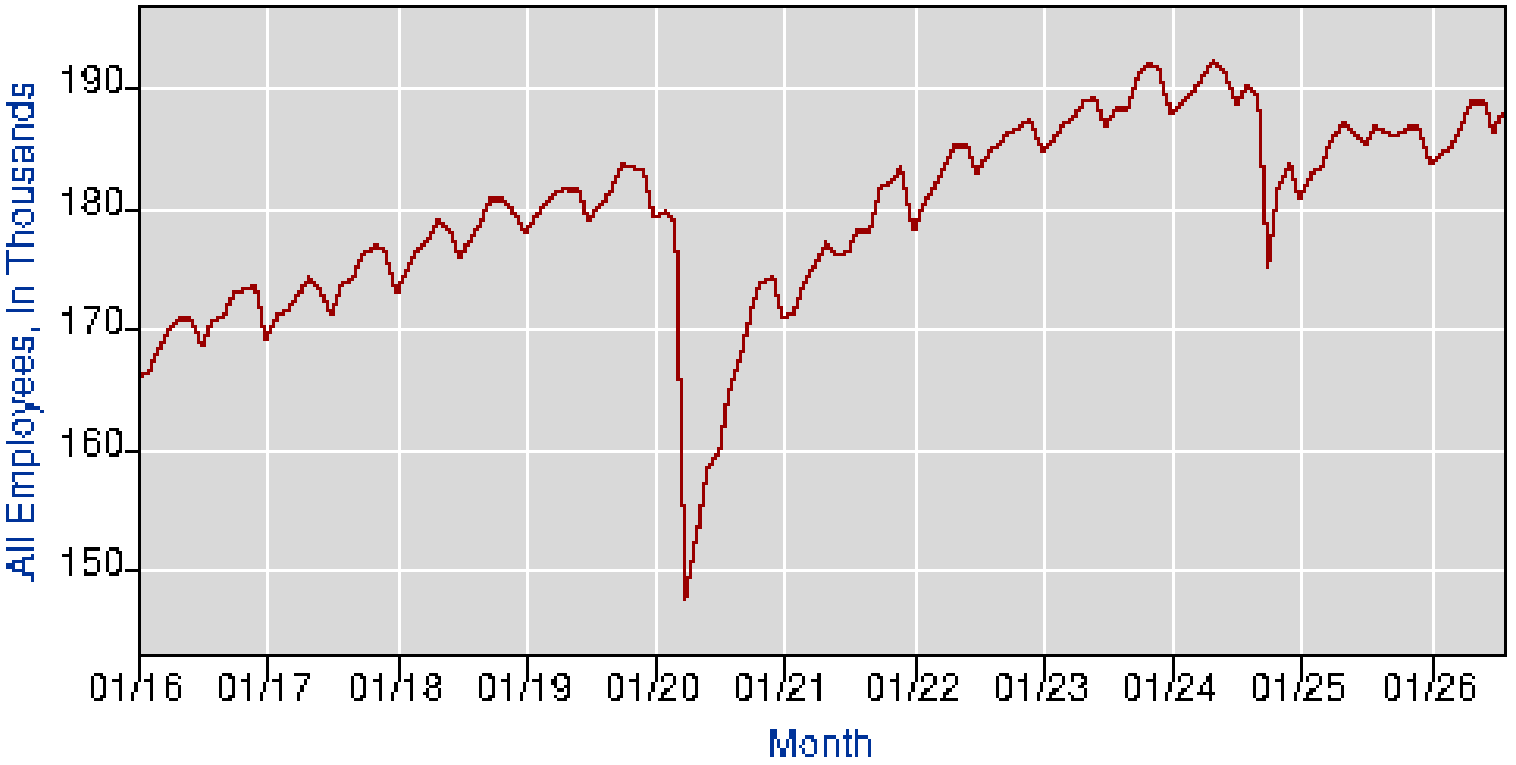
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Jobs have not completely recovered compared to pre-Helene



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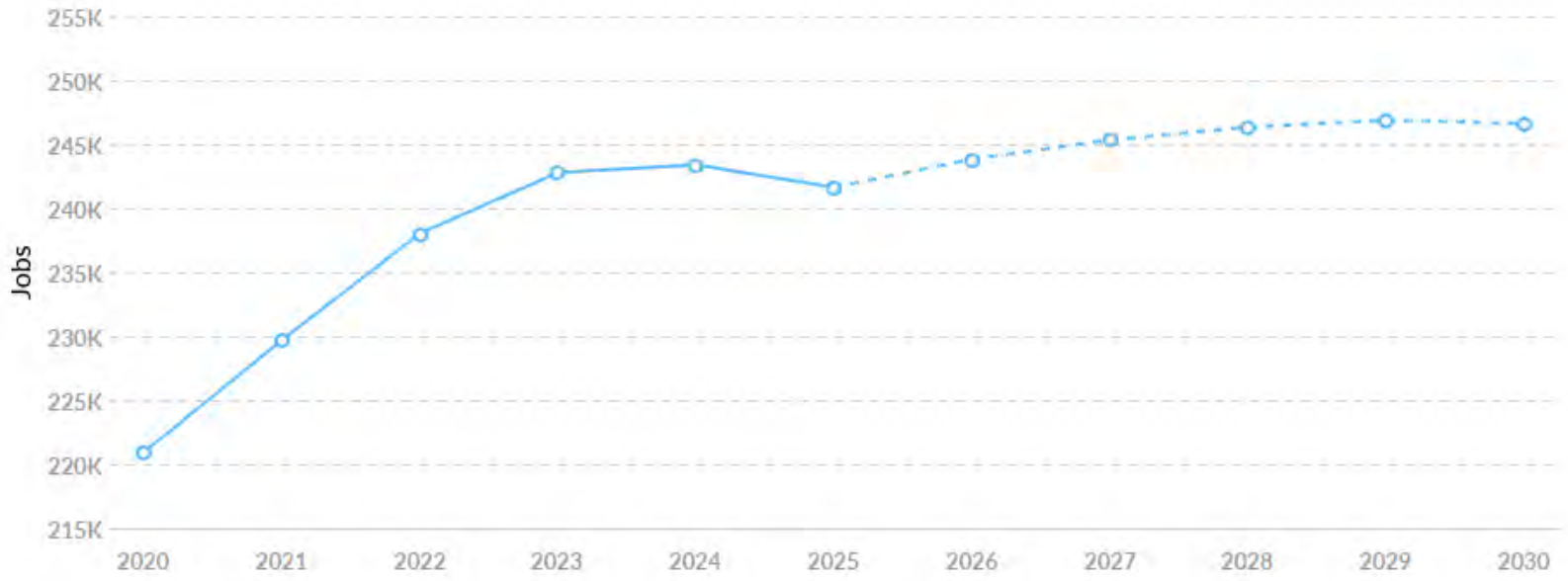


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## Job Trends

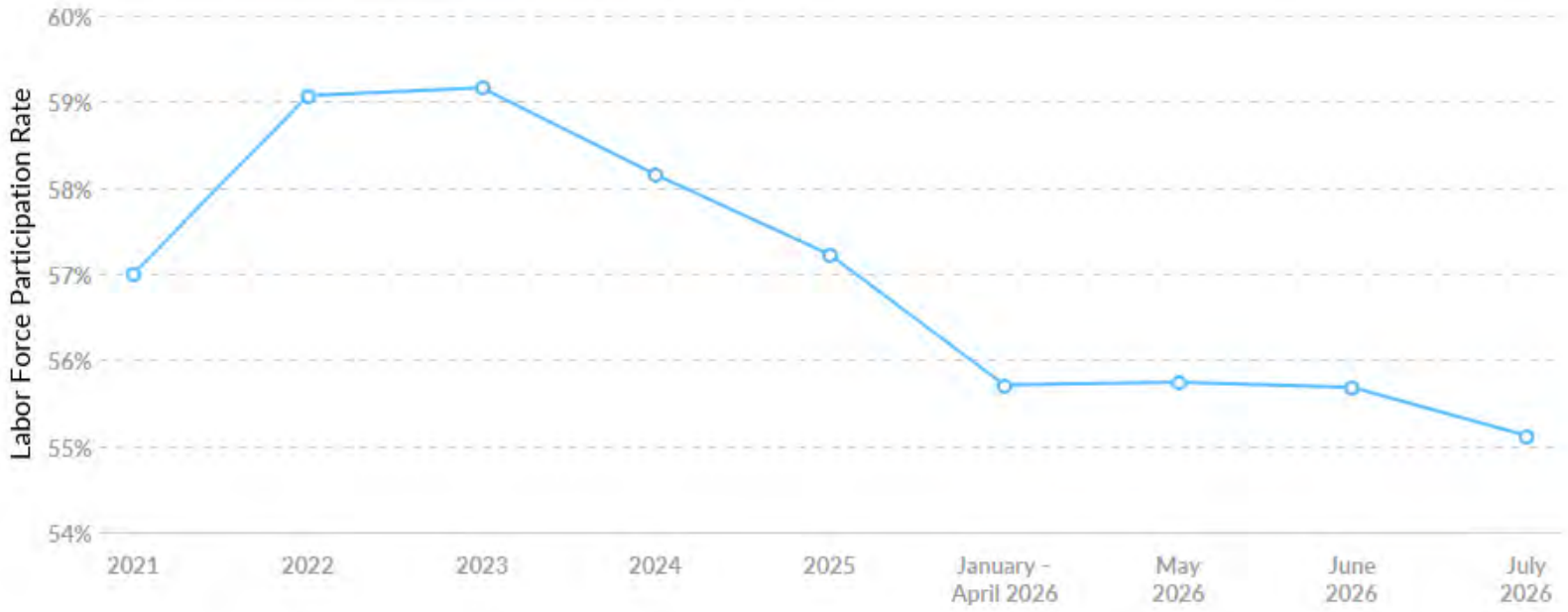
From 2020 to 2025, jobs **increased by 9.4%** in Mtn Area + Haywood from 220,911 to **241,630**. This change **fell short of the national growth rate of 10.7% by 1.3%.**



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## Labor Force Participation Rate Trends

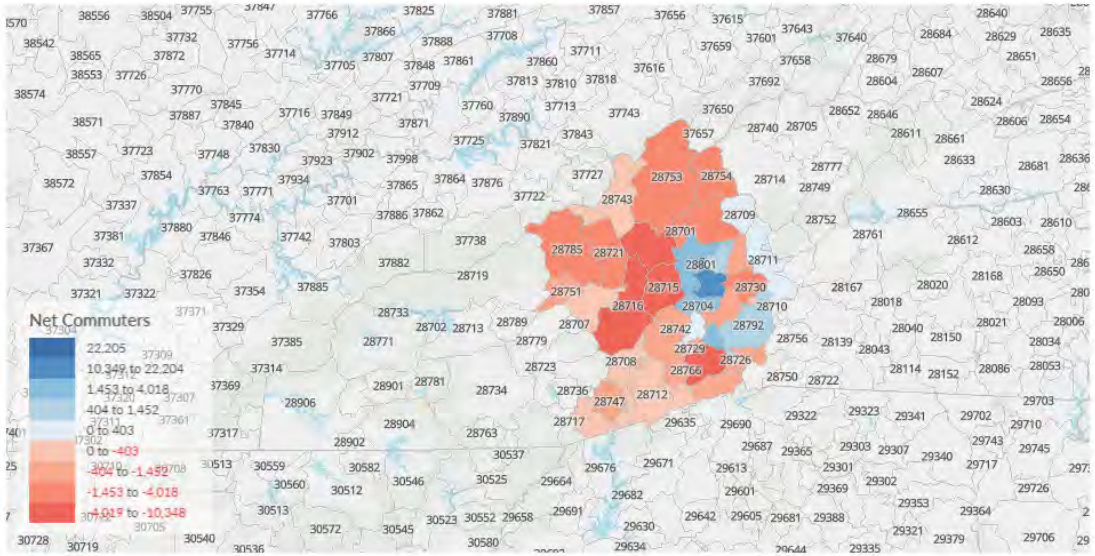


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## Place of Work vs Place of Residence

Understanding where talent in the region currently works compared to where talent lives can help you optimize site decisions. For example, the #1 ranked ZIP for employment ranks #11 for resident workers. The top ZIP for resident workers is 28806.




### Where Talent Works

| ZIP | Name | 2025 Employment |
|---|---|---|
| 28801 | Asheville, NC (in Buncombe count | 30,940 |
| 28803 | Asheville, NC (in Buncombe count | 26,352 |
| 28806 | Asheville, NC (in Buncombe count | 24,858 |
| 28792 | Hendersonville, NC (in Henderson | 17,323 |
| 28704 | Arden, NC (in Buncombe county) | 13,562 |

### Where Talent Lives

| ZIP | Name | 2025 Workers |
|---|---|---|
| 28806 | Asheville, NC (in Buncombe count | 22,910 |
| 28792 | Hendersonville, NC (in Henderson | 16,705 |
| 28803 | Asheville, NC (in Buncombe count | 16,003 |
| 28715 | Candler, NC (in Buncombe county | 13,140 |
| 28704 | Arden, NC (in Buncombe county) | 11,310 |

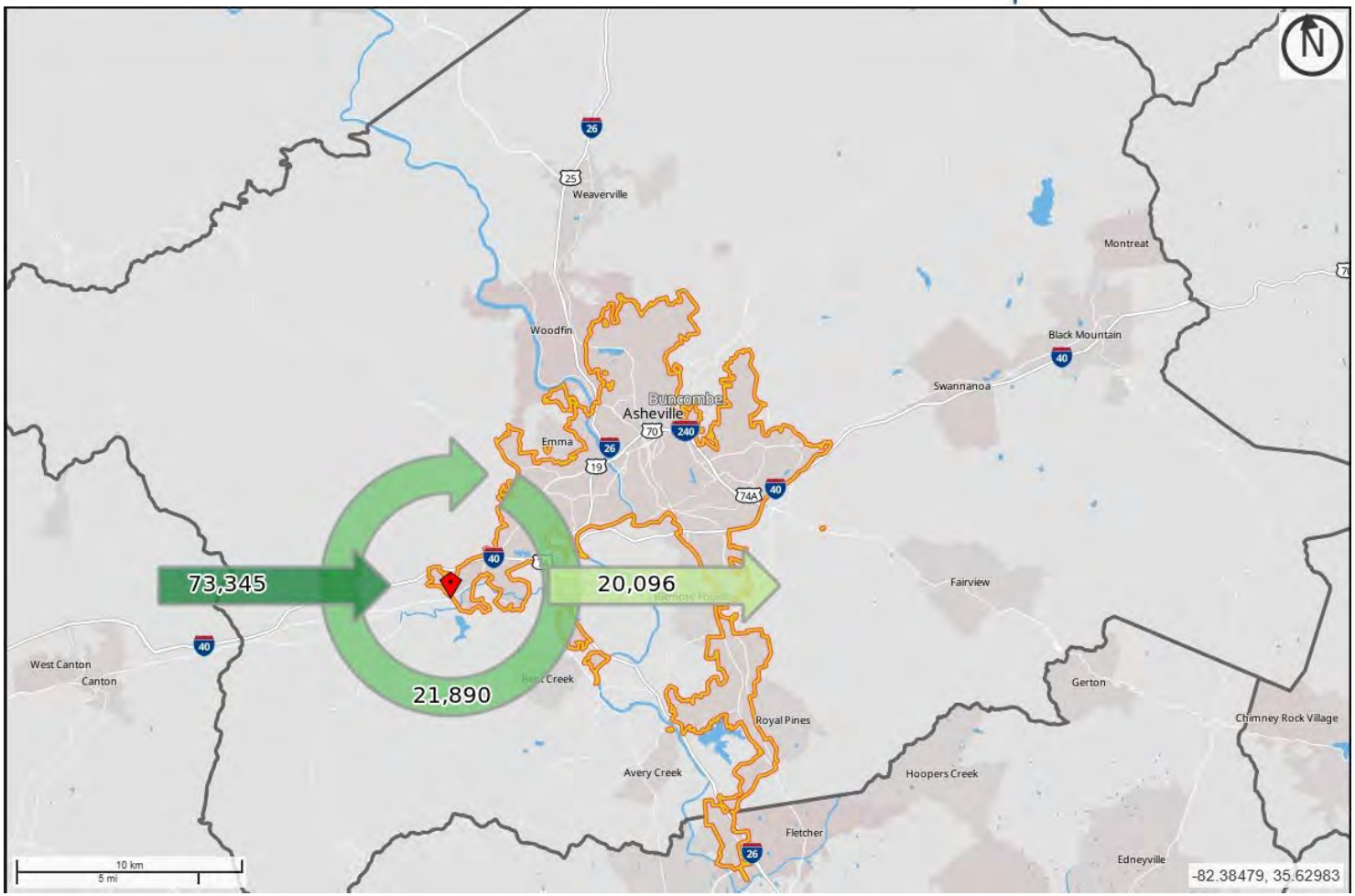
**Interstate 26** Corridor from Asheville to Fletcher to Hendersonville is a job magnet – **Interstate 40** Corridor from Asheville to Black Mountain net inflow

**73,345** workers live outside City of Asheville but work inside corporate limits
**21,890** workers live inside City of Asheville and work inside corporate limits
**20,096** workers live inside City of Asheville but work outside corporate limits

Data source: US Census Bureau 2023

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## Top Growing Occupations



Average hourly earnings
August 2026 $33.98 4.1%
$34.61 NC 1.6%
$37.79 USA 3.8%

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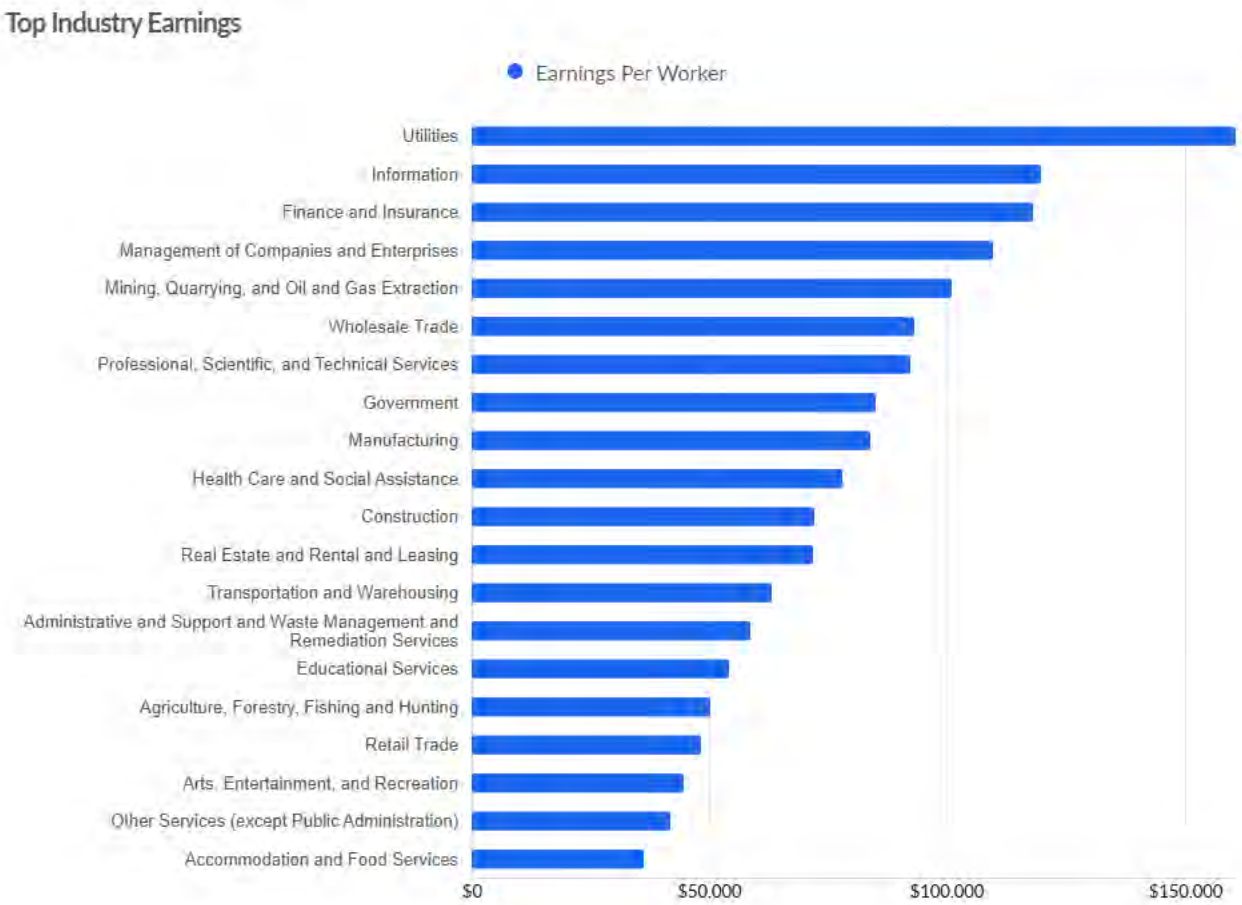
# Earnings per worker in Asheville metro by occupation

Source: Lightcast



# Earnings per worker in Asheville metro by industry

Source: Lightcast



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**Only two sectors in our region pay average wages above the NC average:**

**Healthcare:** Wages $3,000 higher or 7% above the NC average

**Hospitality & Tourism:** Wages $2,000 higher or 12% above the NC average

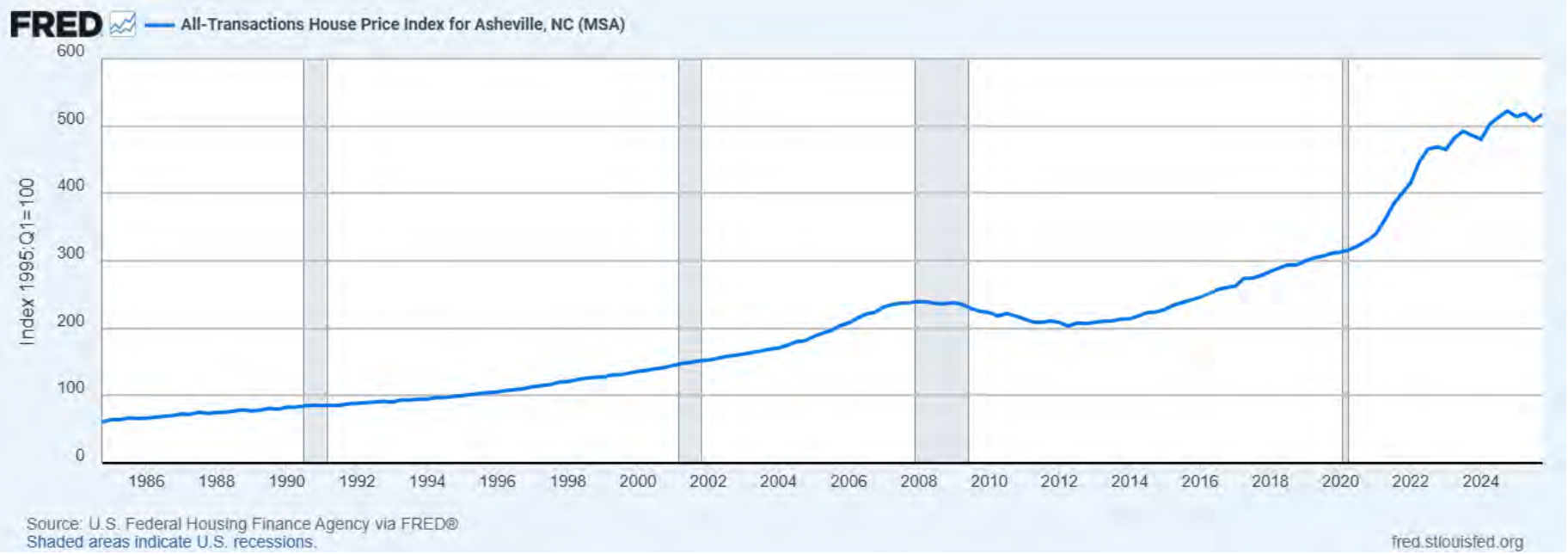
**16 out of 20 industries in our region are at least 10% lower than the NC average wage for that industry**

# All-Transactions House Price Index Asheville MSA

Q4 2025 $517.65, Index 1995 Q1 = 100

Region median price 2024: $453,540 Bowen Report

- USA Q4 2025 $405,300 (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis – Census Bureau, HUD)
- Southeast Q4 2024 $367,300
- Zillow (2026): Asheville $460,994, Buncombe $454,250, NC $336,408, USA $366,019, Transylvania County $474,865



# AVL metro housing price growth versus NC and USA



# Wage growth vs. Housing price growth



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Bowen National Research: Housing Needs Assessment, Asheville Region
Housing Gap Estimates by 2029:

For-Sale: **20,437 units**

Rental: **13,921 units**

Senior Care: **7,705 beds**



Almost 4,000 net new manufacturing jobs since 2010 – sector not projected to grow in employment over next decade but will take 6,000 new workers to replace retirees (workers who are 55+ today)



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# Manufacturing in Asheville metro

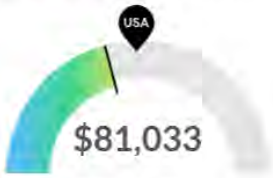
Source: Lightcast

## Aggressive Hiring Competition Over a Deep Supply of Regional Talent




**Supply (Jobs)**

Your area is a hotspot for this kind of talent. The national average for an area this size is 16,652* employees, while there are 20,528 here.




**Earnings Per Job**

Earnings per job are below the national average. Earnings per jobs is the total industry earnings divided by the number of jobs in the industry.




**Demand (Job Postings)**

Competition from online job postings is high in your area. The national average for an area this size is 273* job postings/mo, while there are 343 here.

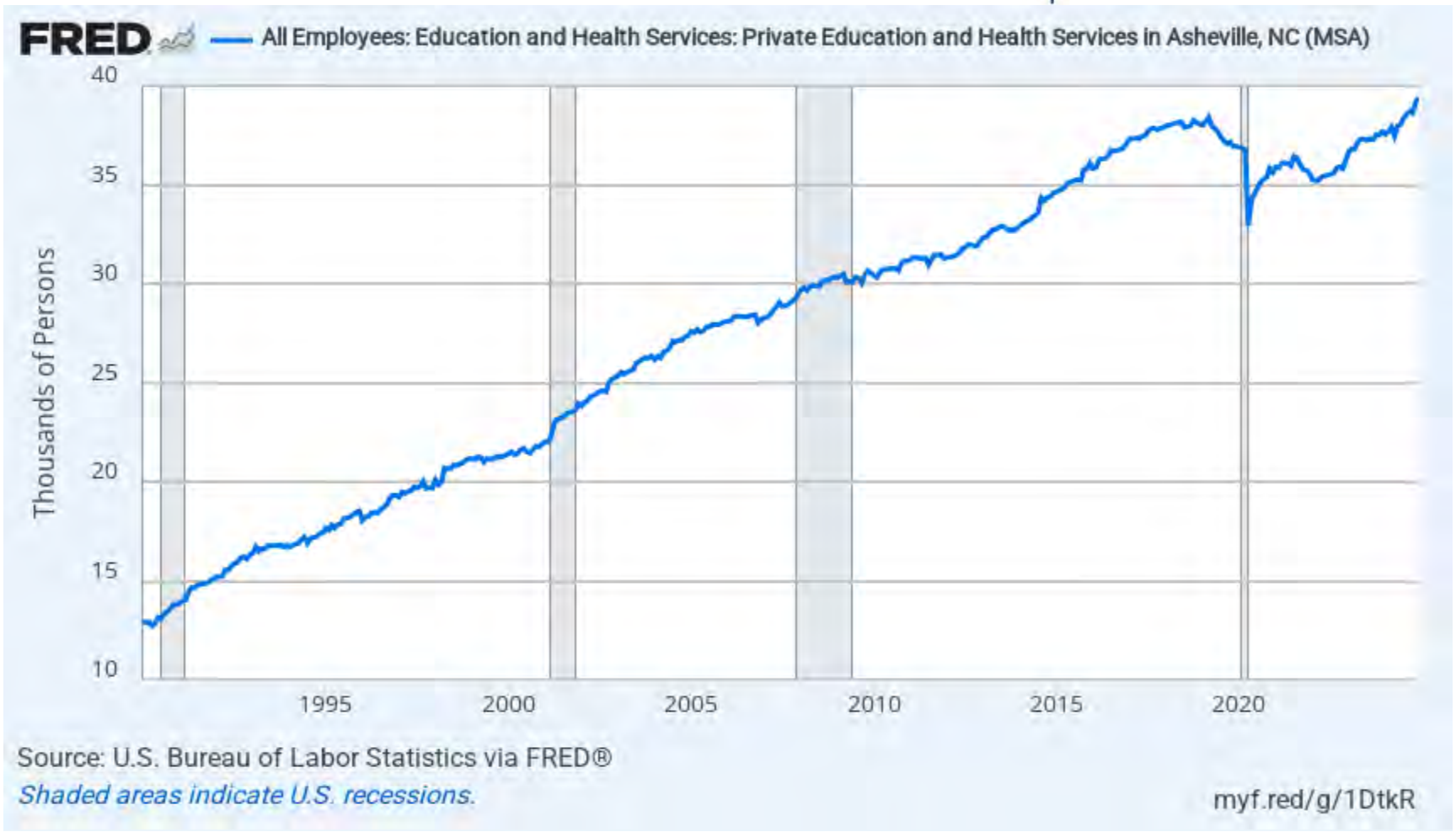
*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Manufacturing and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

## Gross Regional Product (GRP)

| $1.8B | $1.1B | $128.9M | $3.0B |
|---|---|---|---|
| Earnings (2024) | Property Income (2024) | Taxes (2024) | Total GRP (2024) |

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# Healthcare and social assistance in Asheville metro

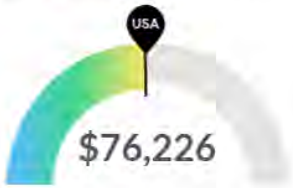
Source: Lightcast

## Aggressive Hiring Competition Over a Deep Supply of Regional Talent




**Supply (Jobs)**

Your area is a hotspot for this kind of talent. The national average for an area this size is 29,685* employees, while there are 33,816 here.




**Earnings Per Job**

Earnings per job are about the same as the national average. Earnings per jobs is the total industry earnings divided by the number of jobs in the industry.




**Demand (Job Postings)**

Competition from online job postings is high in your area. The national average for an area this size is 666* job postings/mo, while there is 1,104 here.

*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Health Care and Social Assistance and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

## Gross Regional Product (GRP)

| $2.8B | $319.1M | $49.4M | $3.1B |
|---|---|---|---|
| Earnings (2024) | Property Income (2024) | Taxes (2024) | Total GRP (2024) |

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# Accomodation and food services in Asheville metro

Source: Lightcast

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## Aggressive Hiring Competition Over a Deep Supply of Regional Talent




### Supply (Jobs)

Your area is a hotspot for this kind of talent. The national average for an area this size is 18,406* employees, while there are 23,791 here.




### Earnings Per Job

Earnings per job are about the same as the national average. Earnings per jobs is the total industry earnings divided by the number of jobs in the industry.




### Demand (Job Postings)

Competition from online job postings is high in your area. The national average for an area this size is 205* job postings/mo, while there are 290 here.

*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Accommodation and Food Services and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

## Gross Regional Product (GRP)

| $868.8M | $391.4M | $203.7M | $1.5B |
|---|---|---|---|
| Earnings (2024) | Property Income (2024) | Taxes (2024) | Total GRP (2024) |

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# Construction in Asheville metro

Source: Lightcast

## Average Hiring Competition Over an Average Supply of Regional Talent




**Supply (Jobs)**

Your area is about average for this kind of talent. The national average for an area this size is 12,850* employees, while there are 13,922 here.




**Earnings Per Job**

Earnings per job are below the national average. Earnings per jobs is the total industry earnings divided by the number of jobs in the industry.




**Demand (Job Postings)**

Competition from online job postings is about average in your area. The national average for an area this size is 95* job postings/mo, while there are 102 here.

*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Construction and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

## Gross Regional Product (GRP)

| $1.3B | $368.5M | $18.1M | $1.7B |
|---|---|---|---|
| Earnings (2024) | Property Income (2024) | Taxes (2024) | Total GRP (2024) |

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# Professional and business services in Asheville metro

Source: Lightcast

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## Light Hiring Competition Over a Thin Supply of Regional Talent




**Supply (Jobs)**

Your area is not a hotspot for this kind of talent. The national average for an area this size is 15,494* employees, while there are 11,523 here.




**Earnings Per Job**

Earnings per job are below the national average. Earnings per jobs is the total industry earnings divided by the number of jobs in the industry.




**Demand (Job Postings)**

Competition from online job postings is low in your area. The national average for an area this size is 339* job postings/mo, while there are 226 here.

*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

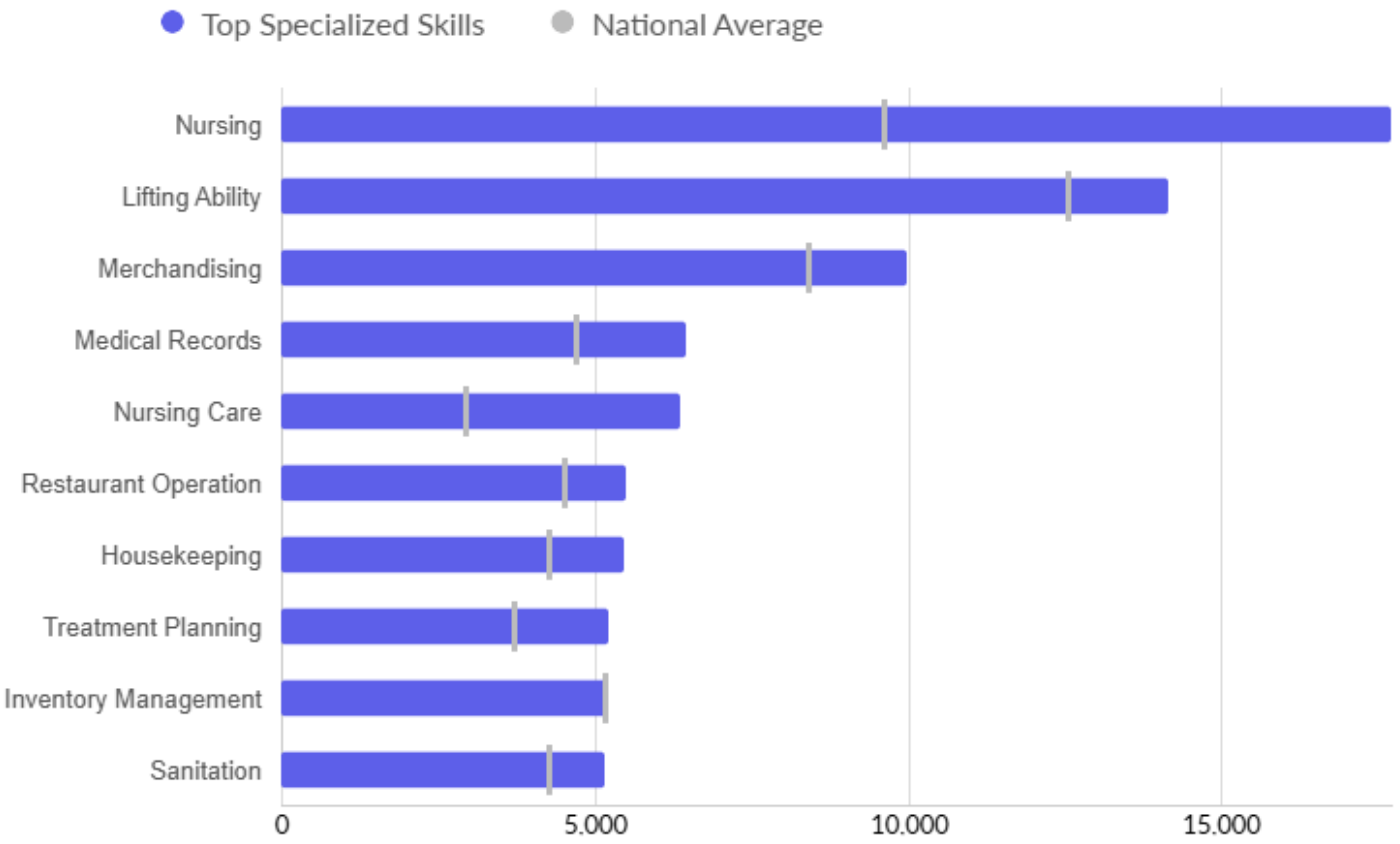
## Gross Regional Product (GRP)

| $1.3B | $288.1M | $38.7M | $1.6B |
|---|---|---|---|
| Earnings (2024) | Property Income (2024) | Taxes (2024) | Total GRP (2024) |

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# In-Demand Skills



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## How you can find the right opportunity for you in Asheville?

Many opportunities for high school students

- Career and Technical Education
- Career and College Promise (Dual Enrollment)
- Registered Apprenticeships
- Earn and Learn

### My Future NC

1. 2 million by 2030
2. Post-secondary credential
3. Many paths to a great career

myFUTURENC
2 million by 2030.

OUR GOAL






NC works

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AB Tech Community College

Goodwill Northwest North Carolina

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COALITION Asheville-Buncombe County




MOUNTAIN AREA workforce development board

A DEPARTMENT OF LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Land of Sky P20 Council facilitates collaboration between stakeholders in education, community, government and business to ensure WNC's students and job seekers are acquiring the knowledge, credentials and support they need to be successful in the region's most high-demand jobs.




P20

Partnerships from
Pre-K to Post-Grad

MOUNTAIN AREA workforce development board

A DEPARTMENT OF LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

# How can we solve these challenges together as a region?

