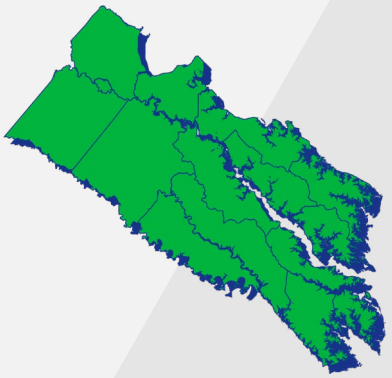
GO VIRGINIA REGION 6

GEORGE WASHINGTON REGIONAL COMMISSION

GO Virginia Region 6

Growth & Diversification Plan 2025 Update



SUBMITTED TO:

GO Virginia Region 6 and the George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC)

TPMA
Bold Solutions.
Empowered Communities.

tpma-inc.com

Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction

The GO Virginia Region 6 Growth & Diversification Plan 2025 Update (the Plan Update) provides a comprehensive roadmap for advancing economic development across the 14 counties and the City of Fredericksburg that comprise Region 6. This biennial update, required by the GO Virginia State Board, identifies priority industry clusters, assesses regional economic conditions, and outlines targeted strategies to create higher-wage jobs through collaborative, locality-driven initiatives.

Approach

The structure of the Plan Update is created thorough an evaluation of both hard quantitative and qualitative date collected from industry specific focus groups and a comprehensive business survey. The data sets are then analyzed through the lens of the following key elements.

Economic and labor market analysis | Target industry cluster evaluation | Skills gap assessment | GO Virginia awarded projects | Growth plan opportunities | Goals and strategies

Key Findings

- Region 6 produces only 7% of the degree types needed for high-demand occupations, with significant gaps in engineering, IT, and cybersecurity-related degrees.
- Five emerging sectors identified for future development: Digital Health & Telemedicine, Blue Economy Innovation, Climate Tech & Environmental Services, Creative Economy & Cultural Tourism, and Remote Work Infrastructure.
- Commuting patterns show a net outflow of 95,000+ workers daily, highlighting the need for local job creation.
- Average annual earnings have increased 116% since 2001, reaching $72,722 in 2024.
- Site readiness efforts are focused on moving Tier 3 sites to Tier 4 sites, with strategic evaluations underway across multiple counties.

Industry Cluster Highlights

The Industry Cluster Analysis analyzed six GO Virginia priority clusters. A review and summary of the newly added seventh cluster, Agriculture/ Controlled Environment Agriculture, can be found at the conclusion of the cluster analysis. Key findings include:

1. AQUACULTURE, SEAFOOD, COMMERCIAL FISHING, AND MARINE

→ 874 jobs, $265M exports, +20.6% wage growth, 59% higher employment concentration

2. DISTRIBUTION AND LOGISTICS

→ 3,335 jobs, $415M GRP, +22.3% wage growth, 264 businesses

3. FORESTRY AND WOOD PRODUCTS

→ 1,928 jobs, $732M exports, +26.7% wage growth, 64% higher employment concentration

4. MANUFACTURING

→ 5,175 jobs, $1.74B exports, +21.6% wage growth, +16.7% projected job growth

5. PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, AND SCIENTIFIC SERVICES

→ 4,396 jobs, $767M GRP, +10.4% wage growth, 58% higher employment concentration

6. INFORMATION AND DATA CENTERS

→ 96 jobs, $12.7M exports, +59.2% wage growth, 27 businesses

7. AGRICULTURE / CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT AGRICULTURE

→ Newly added after 2023 to reflect emerging regional strengths

Skills Gap Analysis Highlights

Region 6 lacks local programs for key roles such as civil, electrical, and mechanical engineers

Surpluses exist in business administration and project management graduates.

Local institutions produce fewer than half of the degrees needed for high-demand occupations.

Strategic Recommendations

1. Expand Regional Talent Pipelines

> Align training with high-growth clusters
> Support internships, apprenticeships, and credentialing
> Address aging workforce in aquaculture and forestry

2. Strengthen Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

> Scale minority-owned business accelerators
> Launch digital marketplaces for seafood, agriculture, and creative industries
> Develop marine innovation hubs and smart tech entrepreneurship initiatives

3. Advance Site Readiness

> Prioritize Tier 3 and Tier 4 site development
> Conduct due diligence on strategic industrial sites
> Align infrastructure investments with cluster needs

4. Close Skills Gaps in High-Demand Occupations

> Expand regional postsecondary offerings in engineering and IT
> Increase credentialing programs for software development, cybersecurity, and data analytics
> Leverage community colleges and workforce boards for targeted training

5. Promote Cluster Scale-Up and Export Readiness

> Support high-growth firms with access to capital and shared-use facilities
> Facilitate supplier matchmaking and peer learning networks
> Invest in logistics hubs and innovation infrastructure

6. Enhance Regional Collaboration

> Establish cluster working groups and regional authorities
> Coordinate marketing, mentorship, and R&D efforts across localities
> Strengthen partnerships with federal innovation assets and anchor employers

Introduction

GO Virginia was established in 2017 as a statewide initiative to promote regional collaboration and economic diversification. Region 6 was formed to address the unique economic challenges and opportunities of the Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck, and Fredericksburg area.

GO Virginia Region 6, also known as the **Mary Ball Washington Regional Council**, encompasses a diverse area of eastern Virginia, including:

- **City of Fredericksburg**
- **Counties:** Caroline, Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Westmoreland

Employment levels have consistently grown over the last ten years, except for a notable dip around 2020. This decline – likely due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic – brought employment down to about 177,000. Since then, the region has experienced a strong recovery, with employment rebounding and surpassing pre-pandemic levels by 2022. From 2024 onward, the forecast projects continuous growth, reaching over 210,000 by 2034.

This demographic expansion has been accompanied by a rise in employment, with job numbers climbing from 177,000(COVID era) in 2021 to over 184,000 by 2025. From 2024 onward, the forecast projects continuous growth, reaching over 210,000 by 2034.

Additionally, since 2001, the average annual income earned per job in Region 6 has increased steadily. Between 2001 and 2024, this average rose from $33,668 to $72,722 – an increase of 116% over the 23-year period. However, the region's workforce presents a complex picture. While unemployment is low, labor force participation has declined slightly, and many residents commute to jobs outside the region—particularly to Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Hampton Roads. This outflow of talent underscores a mismatch between local educational outputs and employer needs, especially in high-growth sectors like IT, engineering, and logistics.

To address these gaps, Region 6 has invested in workforce development initiatives and site readiness efforts. Economic planners have conducted detailed inventories of industrial sites, ranking them by development potential using the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's tiering system. The goal is to elevate more sites to Tier 4 status, making them attractive for business expansion and relocation.

The economic development strategy for Region 6 is centered on seven priority industry clusters that reflect both its natural assets and emerging opportunities. These include aquaculture and marine industries, which leverage the region's coastal geography; forestry and paper manufacturing, rooted in its rural heritage; and more modern sectors like logistics, data centers, professional services, manufacturing, and agriculture/ controlled environmental agriculture. These clusters were chosen not only for their growth potential but also for their ability to foster regional collaboration and attract investment.

The Plan Update outlines targeted investment strategies aimed at accelerating the creation of higher-wage jobs within these priority industry clusters. It incorporates an assessment of current regional initiatives, stakeholder engagement, analysis of economic and workforce trends, and the development of future objectives and investment strategies.

GO Virginia Region 6 is navigating a transition—from a historically rural economy to one that embraces innovation, regional collaboration, and strategic investment. To effectively make this transition, GO Virginia Region 6 is proactively aligning its workforce, infrastructure, and industry clusters to create sustainable, high-quality growth through effective data analysis and the implementation of the G & D Plan goals and strategies.

Purpose

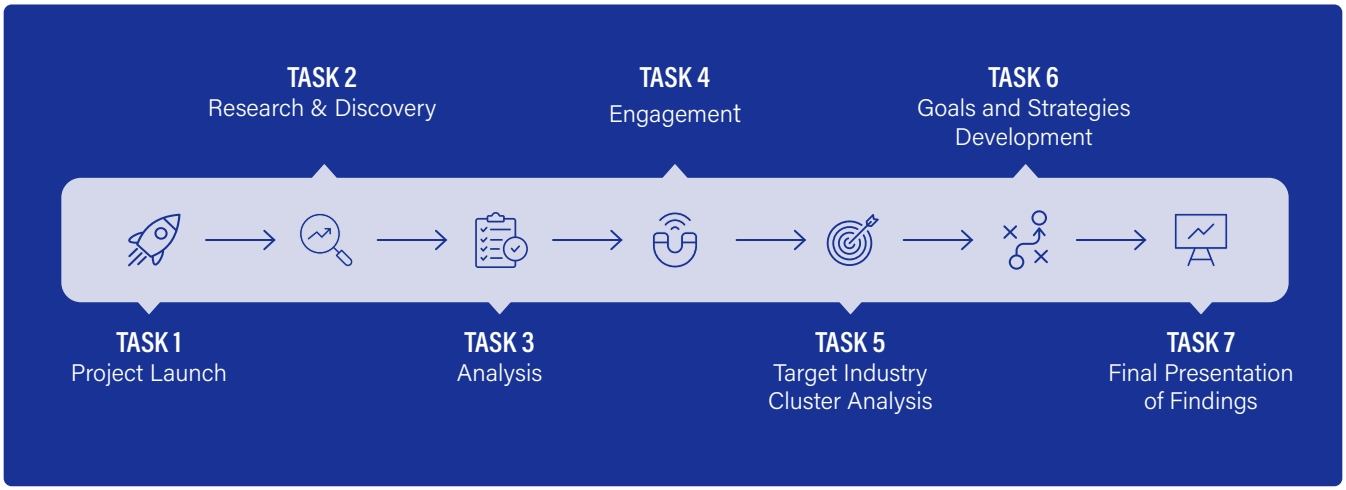
The Plan Update serves as a strategic tool designed to identify and prioritize economic development initiatives aligned with GO Virginia's mission to generate more high-paying jobs through regional collaboration. It employs GO Virginia's four key investment strategies:

1. TALENT DEVELOPMENT
2. ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT
3. SITE DEVELOPMENT
4. CLUSTER S CALE-UP

This framework facilitates the evaluation of growth within targeted traded industry sectors, utilizing specific performance metrics to measure progress and success. A significant focus of the Plan Update is on reaching historically underserved populations and addressing workforce gaps in newly identified sectors through comprehensive skills gap analysis. Additionally, the Plan Update functions as a catalyst for stakeholder engagement, fostering discussions that promote the ideation and coordination of regional projects aligned with overarching economic objectives.

Methodology

The methodology guiding GO Virginia Region 6's strategic planning and project development is a seven-step process designed to ensure data-driven, stakeholder-informed outcomes. Each phase builds upon the previous to create a comprehensive foundation for regional economic development initiatives:



1. Project Launch

The process begins with a formal kickoff, establishing scope, objectives, and stakeholder alignment. This phase sets the tone for collaboration and clarity throughout the project lifecycle.

2. Research & Discovery

A deep dive into existing data sources, regional assets, and economic conditions is conducted. This includes gathering both quantitative and qualitative inputs to inform future analysis.

3. Analysis

Collected data is synthesized to identify trends, gaps, and opportunities. This includes skills gap assessments, industry cluster evaluations, and infrastructure readiness reviews.

4. Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is central to this phase. Through interviews, workshops, and surveys, regional voices are incorporated to validate findings and shape strategic direction.

5. Target Industry Cluster Analysis

Using both state and regional data, priority industry clusters are identified based on growth potential, workforce alignment, and infrastructure compatibility. This step ensures that investments are targeted and impactful.

6. Goals and Strategies Development

Based on the insights from previous phases, actionable goals and strategies are crafted. These are aligned with GO Virginia's Growth & Diversification Plan and tailored to Region 6's unique strengths and challenges.

7. Final Presentation of Findings

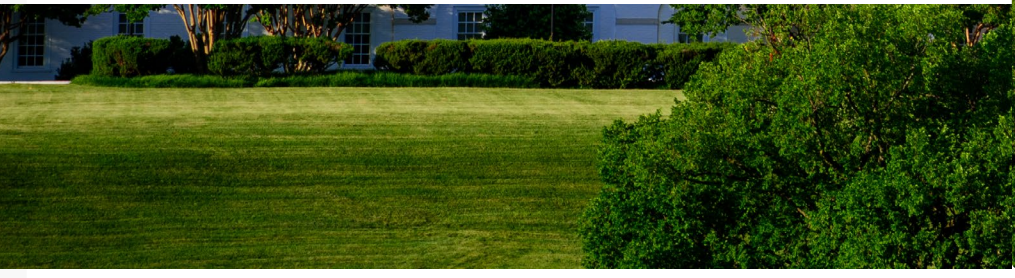
The process culminates in a comprehensive presentation of findings, recommendations, and proposed initiatives. This ensures transparency, accountability, and readiness for implementation.

Regional Economic Overview

Region 6 is experiencing steady population growth, particularly in Stafford and Spotsylvania counties, while rural areas face population decline and workforce challenges. Educational attainment lags behind the state average in post-secondary degrees, impacting workforce readiness. The region also faces significant out-commuting, with over 95,000 workers leaving the region daily for employment elsewhere.

Economic Conditions & Labor Market

- → Employment has rebounded post-pandemic and is projected to grow to over 210,000 jobs by 2034.
- → Key growth sectors include Information (30%), Management of Companies (18%), and Educational Services (17%).
- → Occupational growth is strongest in Computer & Mathematical, Community & Social Services, and Healthcare Support roles.
- → Average annual earnings have increased 116% since 2001, reaching $72,722 in 2024.



Target Industry Clusters

Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine

Distribution and Logistics

Forestry and Wood Products

Manufacturing

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

Information and Data Centers

Agriculture/Controlled Environmental Agriculture

The first six clusters include a SWOT analysis, employment trends, wage data, and strategic opportunities for growth and investment.

The seventh cluster **Agriculture/Controlled Environment Agriculture** was added as a priority cluster to the GO Virginia 6 to cluster list after 2023. A summary of this cluster is included in cluster analysis.

Strategic Frameworks

The four GO Virginia Frameworks guide the Plan Update as outlined below.

- → **Talent Development:** Workforce training, credentialing, and career pathways.
- → **Startup Ecosystem Development:** Support for entrepreneurship and innovation.
- → **Site Development:** Upgrading and preparing sites for business expansion.
- → **Cluster Scale-Up:** Strengthening traded sectors through targeted investment.

Recent Investments & Outcomes

From 2023 to mid-2025, Region 6 secured over $276 million in investment and created 479 new jobs through seven major business announcements. GO Virginia grants supported initiatives in cybersecurity, aquaculture, smart tech, and inclusive entrepreneurship.

Emerging Opportunities

The plan also identifies five emerging sectors for future development:

- → Digital Health & Telemedicine
- → Blue Economy Innovation
- → Climate Tech & Environmental Services
- → Remote Work Infrastructure
- → Micro-Grid

Summary of Regional Economic Conditions

Population

The most recent population data – provided in 2024 by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service – estimates that the total population in Region 6 was 553,219. This is 5.3% greater than the 2020 U.S. Census estimate of 525,595. In Figure 1, population change over the four-year period is provided for each county in the region. Some of the larger counties – Stafford and Spotsylvania Counties, in particular – have realized substantial growth since 2020. Some have grown more modestly, and others have seen slight population decline. Counties that have experienced population decline are generally smaller and more rural than some of the other counties in the region. By 2030, the regional population as a whole is projected to grow to 573,817, up 9.2% from 2020.

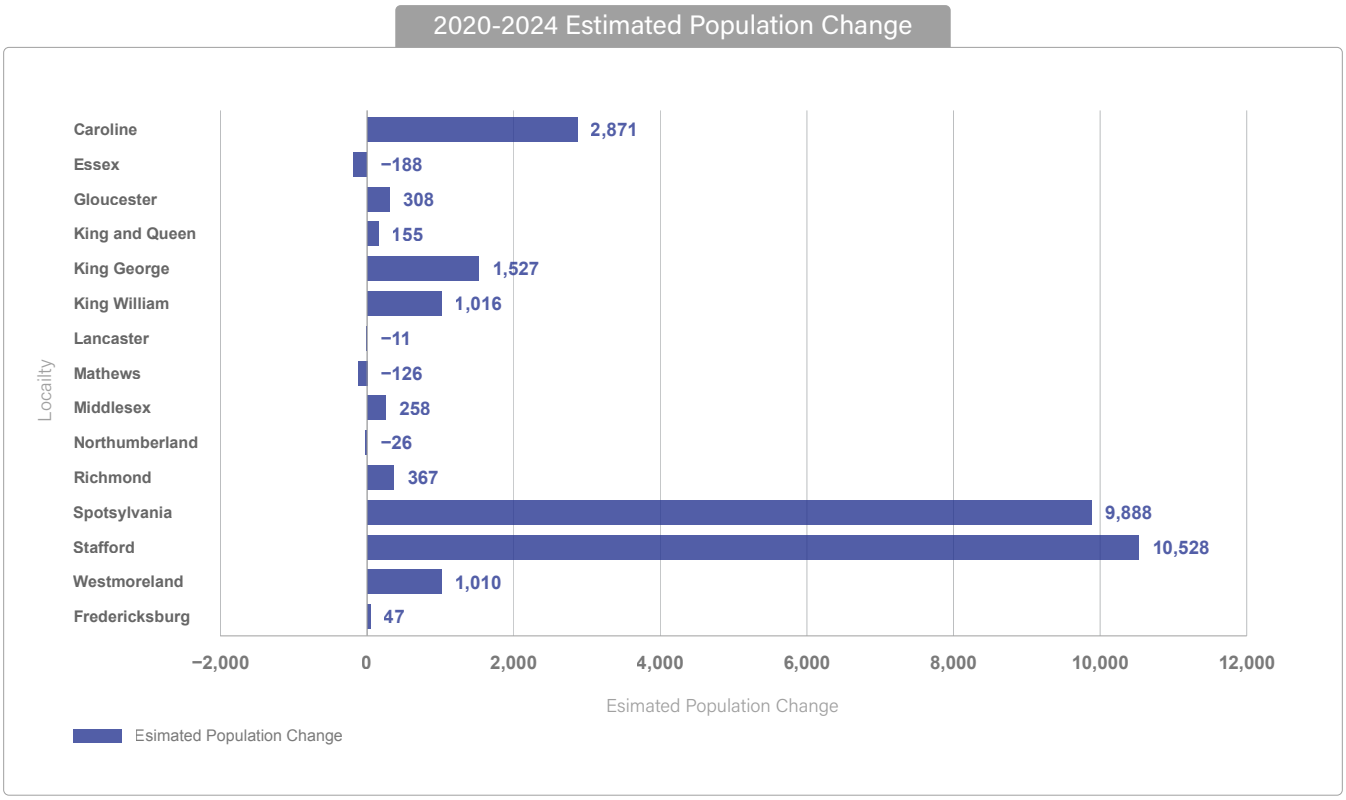


Figure 1: Estimated Population Change by County. Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, 2025

Educational Attainment

In Figure 2, educational attainment in Region 6 and Virginia are compared. While both have high rates of high school completion – 91.8% in Region 6 and 92.4% statewide – Region 6 trails behind the state in higher education levels. Only 35.4% of Region 6 residents have earned a bachelor's degree, compared to 43% statewide. The gap widens at the graduate level, where 13.9% of Region 6 residents hold a graduate or professional degree, versus 18.8% in Virginia overall.

These figures suggest that although basic educational attainment is nearly equal, Region 6 has a lower concentration of individuals with post-secondary and advanced degrees. This difference may impact the region's workforce qualifications, economic development opportunities, and long-term earning potential.

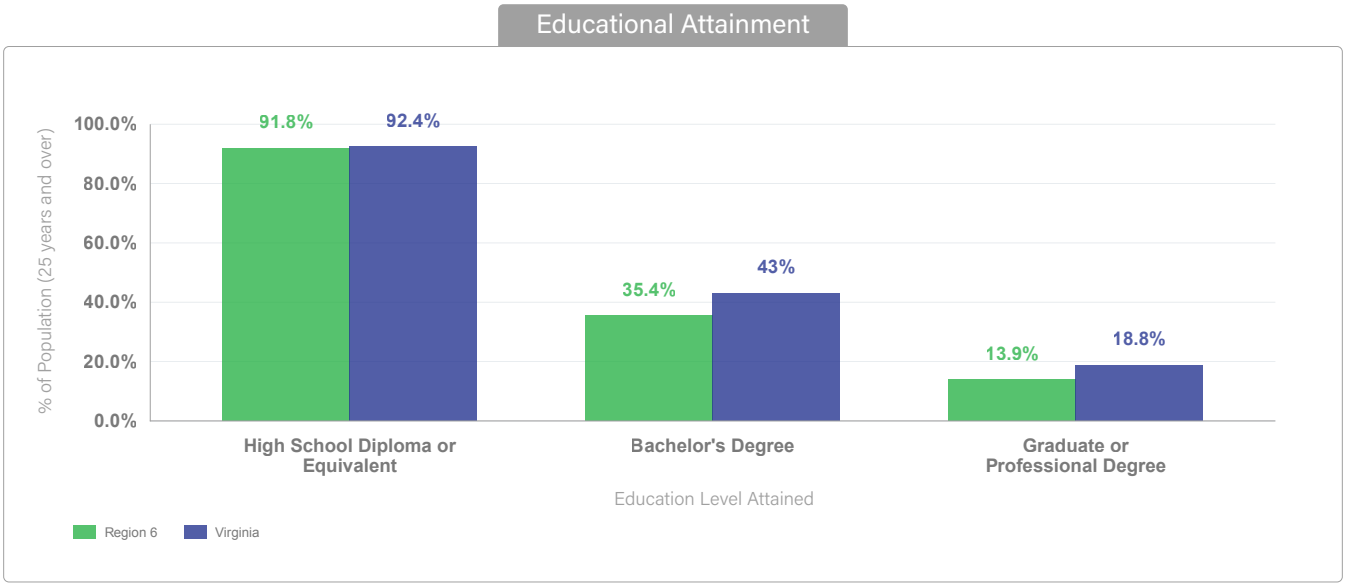


Figure 2: Educational Attainment in Region 6 and Virginia. Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Employment & Labor Force

In Region 6, the largest share of the workforce is between the ages of 25 and 54 years. 177,278 workers fall into this category; of those, 173,323, or 97.76%, are employed. About 51,873 workers are between the ages of 55 and 64 years old, and 38,600 are between 16 and 24 years old. The labor force is smallest among the population over the age of 65 years.

Labor force participation rates generally correspond with the size of the workforce for each age group. About 55.5% of the total population between the ages of 16 and 25 years is in the labor force, as is 83.1% of people between the ages and 25 and 54 years. That figure falls as the population ages, and only 21.6% of people over the age of 65 years are employed or actively seeking employment.

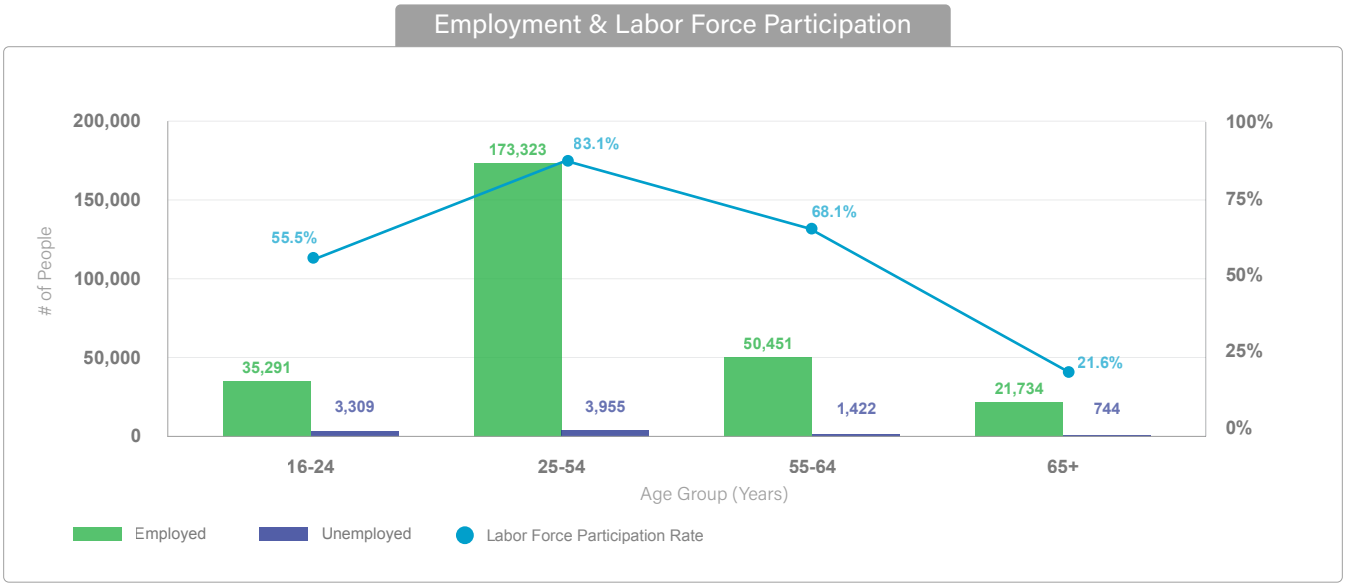


Figure 3: Region 6 Employment and Labor Force Participation. Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Commuting Patterns

An understanding of the commuting patterns of the regional workforce provides important context for economic development. In Region 6, a much greater number of workers leave the region to find work than come into the region. In 2024, an estimated 154,726 workers residing in the region commuted out of it to find employment. In the same year, it was estimated that 59,571 workers traveled into the county from another place of residence to find employment. Therefore, the net number of commuters who leave the region for employment is estimated at 95,154. For a more detailed breakdown of commuters on the county level, see Appendix 2.

A net number of 23,864 workers commute into Fairfax County; 11,776 and 11,489 workers commute into District of Colombia County and Prince William County, respectively. Nearly 5,000 workers (net) travel into Newport News, Henrico County, and Arlington County. In Figure 4, outbound commuting patterns are mapped across the region.

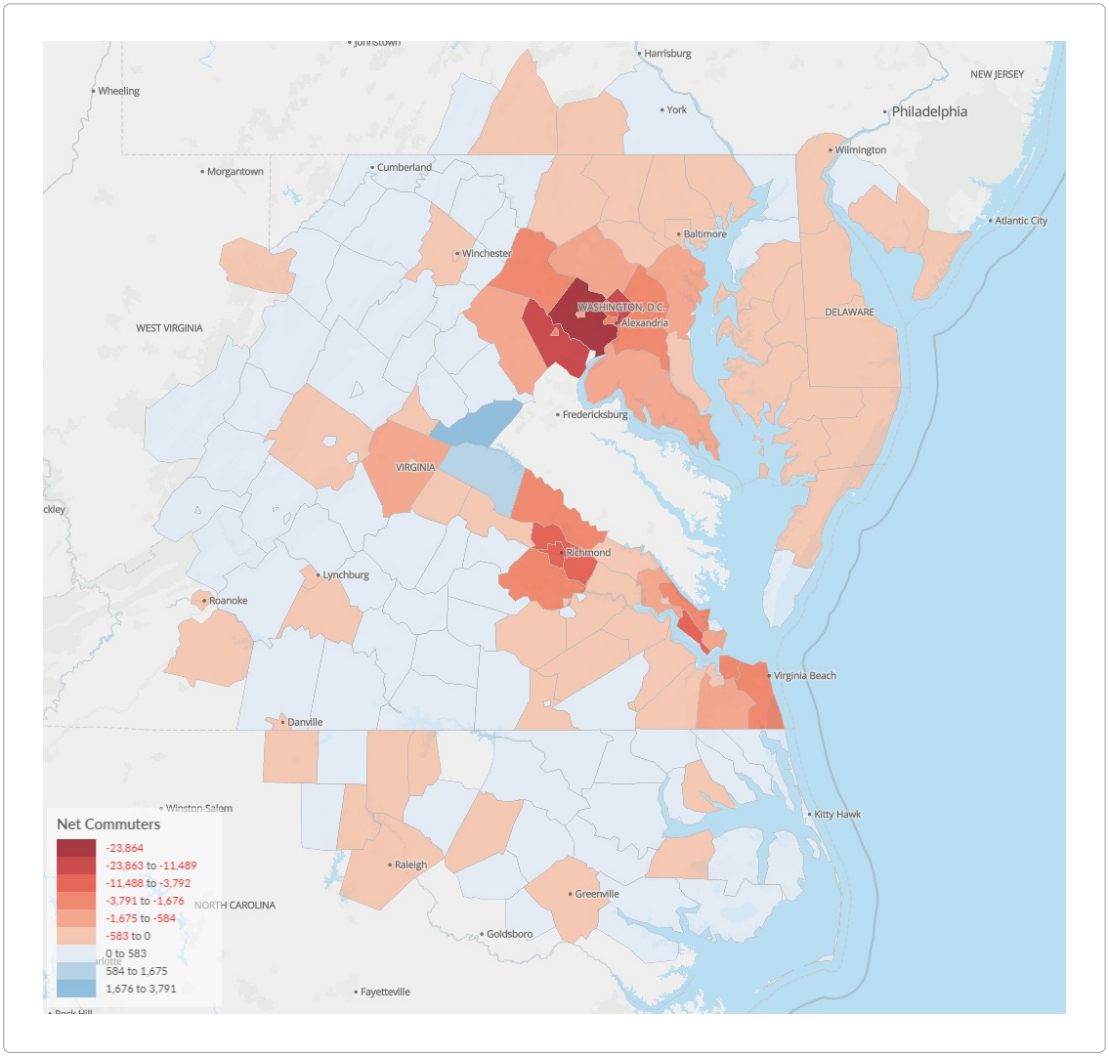


Figure 4: Outbound Commuter Destinations. Source: Lightcast 2025.

Regional Employment

Figure 5 depicts total regional employment from 2015 to 2034 in Region 6. Employment levels have consistently grown over the last ten years, except for a notable dip around 2020. This decline – likely due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic – brought employment down to about 177,000. Since then, the region has experienced a strong recovery, with employment rebounding and surpassing pre-pandemic levels by 2022. From 2024 onward, the forecast projects continuous growth, reaching over 210,000 by 2034. This long-term growth trajectory indicates a resilient regional economy with expanding job opportunities over the next decade.

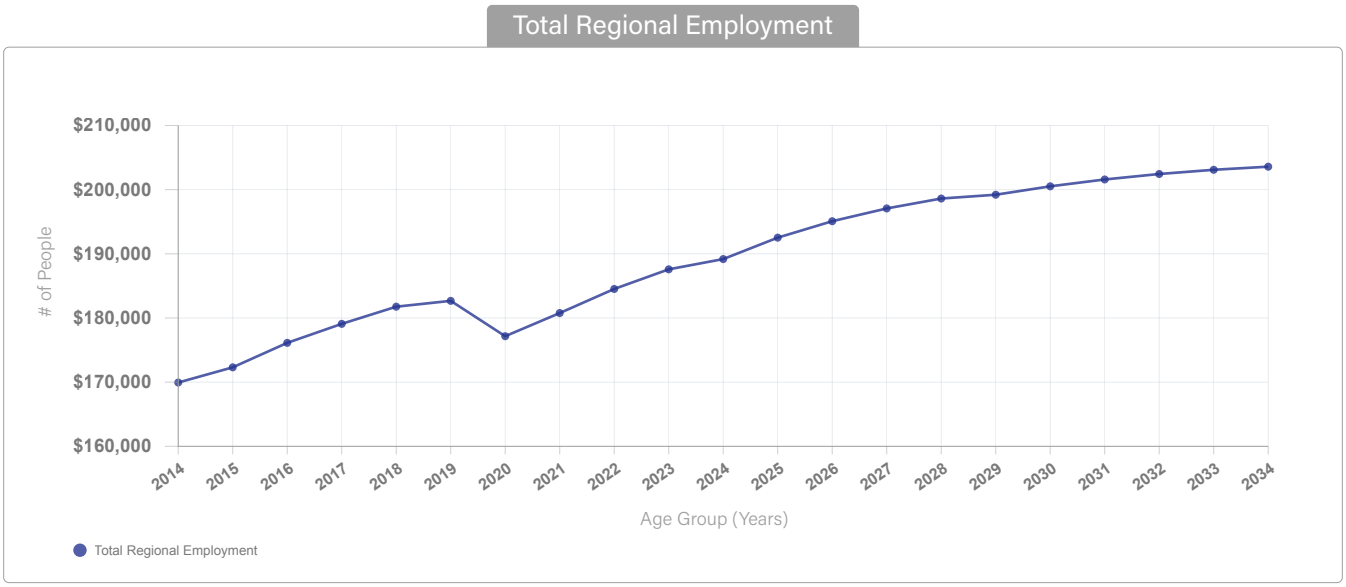


Figure 5: Total Employment in Region 6. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Job Growth by Industry

Table 1 presents projected job growth by industry in the region between 2024 to 2034, with a calculated 10-year growth percentage. The fastest-growing industries include Information (30%), Management of Companies and Enterprises (18%), and Educational Services (17%), signaling strong demand in these sectors over the next decade. Industries like Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, Manufacturing, and Transportation and Warehousing also show solid growth, all above 15%.

On the other end, employment in the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction industry is projected to shrink by 8%; the Utilities and Construction industries show no growth, which indicates that these industries may face structural or technological challenges in the future. The uneven growth patterns suggest a regional economy leaning more heavily into knowledge-based and service-oriented industries, while traditional and resource-extraction sectors may decline or stagnate.

Table 1: Regional Employment and Projected Change by Industry. *Source: Lightcast 2025.2*

NAICS	Industry	2024 Jobs	2026 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2034 Jobs	10-Year % Growth
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,962	1,982	1,995	2,013	3%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	183	182	177	169	-8%
22	Utilities	424	430	430	423	0%
23	Construction	11,519	11,604	11,576	11,475	0%
31	Manufacturing	5,175	5,518	5,766	6,044	17%
42	Wholesale Trade	3,886	4,063	4,172	4,290	10%
44	Retail Trade	24,707	25,047	25,187	25,199	2%

NAICS	Industry	2024 Jobs	2026 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2034 Jobs	10-Year % Growth
48	Transportation and Warehousing	6,588	6,992	7,306	7,655	16%
51	Information	1,353	1,489	1,606	1,764	30%
52	Finance and Insurance	5,668	5,833	5,947	6,290	11%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,663	2,719	2,751	2,774	4%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	13,127	13,693	14,130	14,646	12%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,887	2,013	2,116	2,234	18%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	8,458	8,932	9,301	9,716	15%
61	Educational Services	2,927	3,107	3,256	3,429	17%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	22,602	23,442	24,084	24,783	10%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,255	3,477	3,642	3,813	17%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	17,161	17,412	17,463	17,345	1%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	11,910	12,350	12,756	13,281	12%
90	Government	43,255	44,317	45,053	45,732	6%
99	Unclassified Industry	467	481	493	508	9%

From 2024 to 2034 , the fastest occupational growth is expected in Computer and Mathematical and Community and Social Service occupations, which are both projected to expand by 17%. These are followed closely by Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media and Healthcare Support occupations, which are projected to grow by 15% and 13%, respectively. These trends reflect a rising demand for services that support population health, quality of life, and technology-driven work. Life, Physical, and Social Science roles also show solid growth of around 13%, indicating sustained demand for workers in these fields. In contrast, some occupations are expected to stagnate or decline; for example, Military-only occupations are projected to shrink by 10%. Collectively, these patterns point to a continuing shift in the labor market toward knowledge-based, service-oriented roles.

Table 2: Regional Employment and Projected Change by Occupation. *Source: Lightcast 2025.2*

SOC	Industry	2024 Jobs	2026 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2034 Jobs	10-Year % Growth
11-0000	Management Occupations	12,215	12,733	13,138	13,637	12%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	15,078	15,723	16,209	16,834	12%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	8,038	8,459	8,854	9,379	17%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	3,919	4,092	4,218	4,353	11%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	2,052	2,152	2,231	2,314	13%
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	3,361	3,544	3,708	3,917	17%
23-0000	Legal Occupations	1,559	1,592	1,619	1,664	7%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	14,114	14,358	14,516	14,643	4%

SOC	Industry	2024 Jobs	2026 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2034 Jobs	10-Year % Growth
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	2,954	3,099	3,225	3,393	15%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	9,401	9,718	9,970	10,245	9%
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	8,002	8,356	8,670	9,050	13%
54	Protective Service Occupations	4,504	4,656	4,764	4,871	8%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	16,864	17,158	17,260	17,222	2%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	6,933	7,066	7,150	7,220	4%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	6,262	6,492	6,671	6,874	10%
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	19,427	19,903	20,167	20,383	5%
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	16,533	16,822	16,847	16,778	1%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	1,336	1,354	1,365	1,376	3%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	8,564	8,682	8,723	8,723	2%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	7,237	7,443	7,585	7,719	7%
51-0000	Production Occupations	4,440	4,659	4,799	4,935	11%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	15,227	15,904	16,435	17,002	12%
55-0000	Military-only occupations	1,158	1,116	1,082	1,047	-10%

Economic Development Announcements

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) tracks business announcements and closings throughout the state. Their database provides information on new business developments or expansions that are expected to create new jobs and attract investment, as well as information on planned reductions or closings of regional businesses.

In Table 3, announcements of new or expanding businesses in Region 6 are provided, along with additional data for each business announcement, from the beginning of 2024 until May 2025. Since then, 6 announcements have been made in the region, which are collectively estimated to provide 479 new jobs and receive $276 million in investment. Over the same period, no closings or significant business reductions are reported in the region.

Table 3: Economic Development Announcements. *Source: Virginia Economic Development Partnership, 2025*

Company Name	Locality	NAICS	Business Description	HQ Location	Month Announced	New / Expansion	New Jobs	Investment ($M)
Aspetto, Inc.	Stafford	541690	HQ relocation; Manufacturer of tactical gear and provider of cybersecurity and IT services for defense agencies	VA	February 2025	Expansion	98	0
Marble Systems	Caroline	493110	Distribution and warehouse for stone products	VA	October 2024	Expansion	59	10
Carry On Trailer Company	Westmoreland	332812	Manufactures steel and utility trailers with powder coating capabilities	GA	June 2024	Expansion	60	9
Coldwater Veneer, Inc.	King William	321211	Wood veneer manufacturer for the furniture, construction, and commercial industries	MI	May 2024	New	92	3
SK tes	Spotsylvania	562920	Technology Lifecycle Management Solutions	South Korea	March 2024	Expansion	100	157

Target Industry Cluster Analysis

In this section of the report, each of the six target industry clusters in Region 6 has been evaluated. These industry clusters include:

- Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine
- Distribution and Logistics
- Forestry and Wood Products
- Manufacturing
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Information and Data Centers

For each industry cluster, three sets of information are provided:

1. A one-page overview of the industry cluster, describing its role in the regional economy and some of the most important findings of the data analysis
2. A summary of engagement sessions with regional stakeholders in the industry cluster
3. A SWOT analysis that outlines strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the industry cluster in Region 6

Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine

Industry Cluster Overview

The Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine industry cluster is a cornerstone of Region 6's economy, deeply tied to its geography along the Chesapeake Bay, Rappahannock River, and surrounding waterways. Industries in this cluster draw on a long-standing maritime heritage while producing high-value products for both domestic and international markets. These sectors sustain local livelihoods, preserve working waterfronts, and drive tourism through a strong regional seafood brand. Region 6 represents 13% of the state's jobs in the cluster and made up approximately 8% of exported sales in 2024.

Beyond direct economic output, the cluster creates ripple effects across transportation, equipment manufacturing, hospitality, and retail industries, while also offering opportunities for innovation in aquaculture technology, sustainable harvesting, and value-added processing. Strengthening this industry enhances food security, supports environmental stewardship of local waters, and maintains the cultural identity that makes the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and greater coastal Virginia unique.

Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Cluster Industries

NAICS	Industry Description
311710	Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging
114112	Shellfish Fishing
112512	Shellfish Farming

Key Data Findings

874
total jobs in the cluster in 2024

+20.6%
growth in average annual wages between 2019 and 2024

59%
higher regional employment concentration than the national level

$265 million+
in exported sales in 2024

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders from the aquaculture and fishing industry cluster consistently emphasized both the historical importance of the industry in the region and the constantly expanding opportunities for growth. Aquaculture has connections to environmental initiatives and technological innovation, and the collaborative culture in the region has fostered a strong business community that has differentiated itself in the East Coast market. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of building on that growth through aggressive marketing for the region as a whole, capitalizing on the state's geographic and business environment strengths. Smaller players in the industry are likely facing the most significant barriers, and stronger distribution channels and supply chain resources may help those businesses see dividends as the industry continues to grow.

Business Survey Highlights

- Approximately two-thirds of business owners in the industry felt generally confident about the local economy's growth over the next year. They expected improvement in their business's performance over the same period.
- The most common challenges they reported included consumer demand uncertainty, regulatory and tax burdens, and labor shortages.
- In terms of attracting and retaining employees, businesses reported that housing availability and affordability were the most significant barriers, followed by childcare and healthcare access and quality. Alternatively, safety, crime rates, the local climate, and environment were all seen as advantages.
- Also related to the industry's workforce, participants reported a lack of functional skills specific to job functions like finance and HR as being the most lacking in current employees and applicants.
- Participants largely agreed that regional tourism efforts would benefit their businesses.
- The most common supports they reported as being potentially helpful for their businesses included state and federal financing programs, coordinated marketing efforts, and business incentive programs.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Access to coastal and riverine areas (Gloucester, Middlesex, Mathews)
- Historical and cultural heritage in commercial fishing
- Existing employment base with specialized knowledge
- State regulatory framework supports growth in the aquaculture industry
- Strong collaboration and existing partnerships in the aquaculture industry

WEAKNESSES

- Aging workforce and limited recruitment pipelines
- Vulnerability to environmental and climate-related disruptions
- Limited year-round employment stability
- Smaller farms and businesses struggle to access major distribution channels and resources

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expansion of aquaculture/agricultural technologies and sustainable practices.
- Shift towards containerized, more gear intensive aquaculture operations that leverage new methods and technologies
- Eco-tourism and culinary tourism are tied to local seafood.
- Niche export markets and local food movements.
- Branding initiatives to market Virginia aquaculture as premium products

THREATS

- Regulatory constraints on fishing and aquaculture
- Pollution, water quality, and sea level rise
- Global market pressures from lower-cost producers
- Perceptions surrounding jobs in the aquaculture and agriculture industries may have a discouraging effect on the potential workforce

Distribution and Logistics

Industry Cluster Overview

The Distribution and Logistics industry cluster is an essential driver of Region 6's economy, primarily because of its strategic geographical location. Access to the I-95 corridor, proximity to Washington, D.C., Richmond, and Hampton Roads, and access to central rail, port, and highway networks all support this cluster. Several industries in the cluster ensure the efficient movement of goods within the region and connect local businesses to national and global markets.

This cluster not only underpins the supply chains of other target industry clusters but also generates quality jobs and investment opportunities through warehousing, freight, and wholesale trade. Continued growth in e-commerce, port activity, and advanced logistics technology positions Region 6 to capitalize on its transportation advantages, making distribution and logistics a driver of both short-term competitiveness and long-term economic resilience

Key Data Findings

3,335
total jobs in the cluster in 2024

+22.3%
growth in average annual wages between 2019 and 2024

264
payrolled business locations in Region 6 in 2024

$415 million+
Gross Regional Product in 2024

Distribution and Logistics Cluster Industries

NAICS	Industry Description
493110	General Warehousing and Storage
484110	General Freight Trucking
484220	Specialized Freight (except Used Goods) Trucking, Local
425120	Wholesale Trade Agents and Brokers
423830	Industrial Machinery and Equipment Merchant Wholesalers
484121	General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

While stakeholders did not often focus on distribution and logistics as independent cluster, it is clear that logistical and supply chain gaps exist across industries in the region. As Region 6 lacks the more traditional hub and spoke arrangement typical of many economic development regions, it is not uncommon for industry stakeholders to express challenges in collaboration and organization within distribution lines. There are opportunities that were discussed for a more robust distribution and logistics industry connected to aquaculture and agriculture, manufacturing, construction, among many others. The region functions as a critical logistics and transportation space in the state and continuing to leverage on those strengths was a critical component to many stakeholders' perspective on the overall economic success of the region.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Proximity to I-95 corridor and major urban centers (e.g., Fredericksburg, Stafford)
- Growing workforce in Stafford and Spotsylvania
- Strategic location between Richmond, DC, and Hampton Roads

WEAKNESSES

- Infrastructure limitations in rural counties
- Workforce gaps in logistics-specific skills in some areas
- Uneven broadband and technology coverage

OPPORTUNITIES

- Growth in e-commerce and third-party logistics (3PL)
- Development of logistics hubs in central and northern counties
- Public-private partnerships for transportation upgrades

THREATS

- Congestion and wear on transportation infrastructure
- Automation reducing entry-level job demand
- Competition from larger, better-connected metros

Forestry and Wood Products

Industry Cluster Overview

The Forestry and Wood Products industry cluster leverages the region's abundant timber resources, working forests, and agricultural lands to support the local economy. Industries in this cluster provide a steady supply of raw materials and value-added products that support construction, packaging, and paper industries both regionally and beyond. Moreover, these sectors sustain rural economies by providing well-paying jobs, supporting landowners, and maintaining the viability of forestland as a productive economic resource.

In addition to its contributions to the regional economy, the cluster plays a crucial role in environmental stewardship, carbon sequestration, and long-term land conservation. Innovation in wood products, sustainable forestry practices, and emerging bio-based materials create new opportunities for growth while building the region's identity as a leader in natural resource management. Overall, the Forestry and Wood Products industry cluster is both a pillar of the regional economy and a driver of sustainable development

Forestry and Wood Products Cluster Industries

NAICS	Industry Description
321113	Sawmills
322121	Paper Mills
113310	Logging
111421	Nursery and Tree Production

Key Data Findings

1,928
total jobs in the cluster in 2024

+26.7%
growth in average annual wages between 2019 and 2024

64%
higher regional employment concentration than the national level

$732 million+
exported sales in 2024

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders discussed the importance and legacy the forestry industry holds in the region, especially in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula regions. While much of the workforce in the region is focused on the George Washington region, forestry's legacy in these regions has both current and historically significant impacts on local economies. While stakeholders agreed the industry has more limited opportunities for rapid growth, its steady value and impact on the region is important to cultivate and continue to support.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Extensive forestland and rural geography (e.g., King William, Westmoreland)
- Existing small and mid-sized mills and processors
- Heritage industry with long-standing local expertise

WEAKNESSES

- Fragmented supply chains and outdated facilities
- Aging equipment and limited innovation adoption
- Low awareness among younger workers

OPPORTUNITIES

- Growth in engineered wood, bio-products, and sustainable timber
- Export potential through nearby ports
- Forest conservation and carbon offset markets

THREATS

- Land conversion and development pressure
- Climate-related risks (pests, drought, fires)
- Regulatory and environmental compliance costs

Manufacturing

Industry Cluster Overview

Manufacturing is a cornerstone of Region 6's economy, spanning a wide range of subsectors from food processing and fabricated metals to machinery, plastics, and advanced materials. The cluster supports high-value production, creates stable, well-paying jobs, and drives regional exports, making it critical for both rural and urban parts of the region. Its presence strengthens supply chains for other target industry clusters while also fostering innovation in advanced manufacturing technologies and automation.

In addition, the manufacturing cluster has a strong multiplier effect – it supports local suppliers, logistics providers, and service industries while anchoring workforce development initiatives that prepare residents for in-demand technical careers. By modernizing operations and expanding into new markets, the manufacturing cluster helps Region 6 remain competitive, diversify its economy, and attract further investment.

Key Data Findings

5,175
total jobs in the cluster in 2024

+21.6%
growth in average annual wages between 2019 and 2024

+16.7%
projected regional job growth in the cluster between 2024-2034

Manufacturing Cluster Industries

NAICS	Industry Description
311	Food Manufacturing
312	Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing
313	Textile Mills
314	Textile Product Mills
315	Apparel Manufacturing
316	Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing
321	Wood Product Manufacturing
322	Paper Manufacturing
323	Printing and Related Support Activities
324	Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing
325	Chemical Manufacturing
326	Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing
327	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing
331	Primary Metal Manufacturing
332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
333	Machinery Manufacturing
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing
335	Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing
336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing
337	Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing
339	Miscellaneous Manufacturing

$1.74 billion+
in exported sales in 2024

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders in the manufacturing industry sector emphasized the need for collaboration between employers and educational institutions to better prepare and train a functional workforce that can meet the evolving needs of manufacturing businesses. Talent shortages in the trades and manufacturing have significantly impacted the sector in the region, there is a clear demand for enhanced workforce development. Participants emphasized the opportunities that come with increasing exposure to these types of occupations and career paths for young students, who may not see trades or manufacturing as viable careers. Industry stakeholders also discussed the need for greater collaboration within the manufacturing industry, and the importance of continuing to invest in collaborative cohorts and networking opportunities to strengthen the region as a whole.

Business Survey Highlights

- 75% of business owners in the industry felt generally confident about the local economy's growth over the next year, and 67% expected improvement in their business's performance over the same period.
- The most common challenges they reported included inflation and rising costs, labor shortages, and consumer demand uncertainty.
- In terms of attracting and retaining employees, businesses reported that housing availability and affordability was the largest barrier, followed by childcare and healthcare access and quality. Alternatively, cost of living, safety and crime rates, and the local climate and environment were seen as advantages.
- Also related to the industry's workforce, participants reported a lack of functional skills specific to job functions like finance and HR as being the most lacking in current employees and applicants.
- Participants largely agreed that regional tourism efforts would not significantly benefit their businesses.
- The most common supports they reported as being potentially helpful for their businesses included business incentive programs, financing programs (local, state, and federal), and worker training programs

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Large and diverse labor pool in counties like Stafford and Spotsylvania
- Proximity to major transportation corridors
- Presence of light and advanced manufacturing sub-sectors

WEAKNESSES

- Skill mismatches in rural counties
- Gaps in specialized training programs locally
- Aging industrial park infrastructure in some areas

OPPORTUNITIES

- Reshoring and regional supply chain development
- Automation and precision manufacturing innovations
- Federal and state incentives for advanced manufacturing

THREATS

- Labor shortages in technical roles
- Economic sensitivity to global trade shifts
- Competitive recruitment from other metros

Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services

Industry Cluster Overview

The Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services industry cluster is a growing driver of innovation and competitiveness in Region 6. With businesses in computer systems design, engineering services, and other computer-related services, the cluster supports both private sector and government clients by providing high-skill expertise and solutions critical to modern business operations. Its presence strengthens regional capacity in technology, research, and problem-solving while creating high-wage, knowledge-based jobs that attract and retain talent.

This cluster also plays a catalytic role in supporting other industries, from manufacturing and logistics to aquaculture and energy, by delivering specialized services that improve efficiency, security, and innovation. This industry cluster's contribution to the knowledge economy helps prepare Region 6 for long-term growth, resilience, and competitiveness in an increasingly technology-driven marketplace.

Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Cluster Industries

NAICS	Industry Description
541512	Computer Systems Design Services
541330	Engineering Services
541519	Other Computer Related Services

Key Data Findings

4,396
total jobs in the cluster in 2024

+10.4%
growth in average annual wages between 2019 and 2024

58%
higher regional employment concentration than the national level

$767 million+
Gross Regional Product in 2024

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Business Survey Highlights

- → 75% of business owners in the industry felt generally confident about the local economy's growth over the next year, and 83% expected improvement in their business's performance over the same period.
- → The most common challenges they reported included inflation and rising costs, labor shortages, and consumer demand uncertainty.
- → In terms of attracting and retaining employees, businesses reported that housing availability and affordability were the largest barrier, followed by childcare and overall cost of living. Alternatively, cost of living, safety and crime rates, and the local climate and environment were seen as advantages.
- → Also related to the industry's workforce, participants reported a lack of soft skills as being the most lacking in current employees and applicants.
- → Approximately half of participants in the industry said that regional tourism efforts would not significantly benefit their businesses.
- → The most common supports they reported as being potentially helpful for their businesses included worker training programs, coordinated local business marketing, and local business updates

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
> Proximity to federal government, military, and defense contractors > High educational attainment in counties like Stafford and Fredericksburg > Growth in tech-adjacent sectors	> Limited Class A office and tech-ready space in rural areas > Brain drain to Northern Virginia and Richmond > Broadband limitations for remote/hybrid models in outlying areas
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
> Federal and defense contracting expansion > Growth in cybersecurity, GIS, and IT services > Remote work enabling decentralized talent hubs	> Volatility in federal contracting cycles > High competition for talent > Dependency on external anchor employers

Information and Data Centers

Industry Cluster Overview

The Information and Data Centers industry cluster is an emerging strength of Region 6's economy, and most of the activity in this cluster is currently localized in Stafford and Spotsylvania Counties. Businesses in this cluster support the digital economy by providing the infrastructure and services needed for cloud computing, cybersecurity, and data management, all of which are critical to both private enterprise and government operations. It creates high-skill, high-wage opportunities and supports innovation across nearly every other cluster in the region.

As an emerging cluster, it is well-positioned to grow in Region 6 due to the area's proximity to major data hubs in Northern Virginia, access to reliable energy infrastructure, and the availability of developable land at competitive costs. With growing demand for secure and scalable data solutions, the region has an opportunity to attract investment, diversify its economy, and develop a specialized workforce pipeline through this cluster

Information and Data Centers Cluster Industries

NAICS	Industry Description
518210	Computing Infrastructure Providers, Data Processing, Web Hosting, and Related Services

Key Data Findings

96
total jobs in the cluster in 2024

+59.2%
growth in average annual wages between 2019 and 2024

27
payrolled business locations in Region 6 in 2024

$12.7 million+
in exported sales in 2024

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Discussions with stakeholders in the information and data industry sector often focused on the questions surrounding data centers and technology growth and innovation. Data centers continue to be a divisive topic in economic development, though many agreed that the region has several strengths that community leaders believe make it a prime location for businesses that need space and infrastructural asset support. While job creation numbers and energy strain are still issues that need to be addressed, stakeholders agreed that the region should be open to the opportunities data centers may provide.

Stakeholders also agreed that continued investment in workforce development and training in technology-related careers is important in the region. As automation and artificial intelligence threatens many occupations and industries, jobs in tech fields are continuing to grow in demand and provide quality employment and wages. Historical earnings can be found in Appendix 2.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Access to fiber lines and proximity to NOVA data infrastructure
- Competitive energy costs and available land in rural counties
- Interest from investors in less-congested data locations
- Regional and municipal support for technology business development in the area
- Industries create well-paying in-demand workforce opportunities

WEAKNESSES

- Power capacity constraints in some localities
- Workforce with limited direct data center experience
- Environmental concerns about water and energy usage

OPPORTUNITIES

- Spillover from nearby Ashburn's data center saturation
- Renewable energy and "green" data center demand
- Public-private infrastructure investment opportunities
- Potential to build on existing IT/technology education and training programming in the region

THREATS

- Energy infrastructure delays
- Zoning and local opposition to large-scale facilities.
- National security and cyber risks
- Environmental and social concerns surrounding the growth of data centers

Agriculture/Controlled Environmental Agriculture

Industry Cluster Summary

GO Virginia Region 6, specifically, the Fredericksburg area, Northern Neck, and Middle Peninsula, is experiencing a shift in its agricultural landscape, particularly in rural communities where traditional farming is in decline. To address this, Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) has emerged as a strategic growth opportunity aligned with Region 6's goals of economic diversification, workforce development, and innovation in aquaculture and food systems.

CEA leverages advanced technologies such as hydroponics and aquaponics to produce food in optimized indoor environments, reducing reliance on seasonal cycles and land availability. This approach supports Region 6's priority clusters in aquaculture, seafood production, and agricultural innovation.

A leading example is Healthy Harvest Fresh, an aquaponics-based educational and production facility in Warsaw, VA, which is part of the Healthy Harvest Food Bank. The facility is designed to produce over 140,000 pounds of vegetables and fish annually and serves as a hub for hands-on STEM education, career exploration, and workforce pipeline development. Through partnerships with Virginia State University and local school systems, Healthy Harvest Fresh is cultivating interest in sustainable agriculture and science-based careers among youth and adults.

Investing in CEA infrastructure and programs like Healthy Harvest Fresh enables Region 6 to:

- Strengthen its agricultural and aquaculture clusters
- Create high-wage, future-ready jobs
- Address food insecurity and sustainability
- Build regional resilience through innovation

This sector represents a key opportunity to transform rural economies and position Region 6 as a leader in next-generation agriculture.

Possible Emerging Industries

The following industries should be more thoroughly studied as possible emerging industries in GO Virginia Region 6.

1. Digital Health & Telemedicine

Why it is emerging:

- Region 6 includes rural and coastal areas with limited healthcare access.
- Telemedicine bridges gaps in care delivery and supports aging populations.
- Workforce development in healthcare administration (e.g., UMW's Practice Management Certificate) lays groundwork for digital health expansion.

2. Blue Economy Innovation

Why it is emerging:

- Builds on aquaculture and maritime strengths but expands into ocean tech, marine robotics, and sustainable fisheries.
- Coastal resilience planning (e.g., Virginia Sea Grant) supports infrastructure for innovation in water-based industries.

3. Climate Tech & Environmental Services

Why it is emerging:

- Region 6 is vulnerable to sea-level rise and flooding.
- Increasing demand for technologies in water management, carbon capture, and green infrastructure.
- Coastal resilience initiatives are creating a foundation for climate-focused entrepreneurship.

4. Remote Work Infrastructure & Co-Working Ecosystems

Why it is emerging:

- Post-pandemic shifts have increased demand for flexible workspaces.
- Rural areas in Region 6 can attract remote workers with lifestyle amenities and lower costs.
- Investments in broadband and smart community testbeds (e.g., Stafford) support this trend.

5. Micro-Grid - small-scale, decentralized power grids that can operate independently or in conjunction with the main grid.

Why it is emerging:

- Region 6 includes many rural and coastal communities vulnerable to power outages. Microgrids offer localized backup power, making them ideal for critical infrastructure and emergency preparedness.
- Microgrids often integrate solar, wind, and battery storage, aligning with Virginia's clean energy goals and reducing reliance on fossil fuels
- Microgrids enable energy independence for businesses and institutions, which can attract new industries and reduce operational risks.
- Microgrids reduce transmission losses and can lower long-term energy costs, especially when paired with smart controls and renewable sources

Skills Gap Analysis

This section presents a high-level skills gap analysis focused on key occupations within the region's most in-demand sectors—Aqua Fishing/Marine, Distribution and Logistics, Forestry/Wood Processing, Manufacturing, Professional/Scientific and Technical Services, and Information Services (with an emphasis on IT, Computers, and Software). The occupations highlighted in the table below all require a Bachelor's Degree and are directly connected to local academic programs and majors that align with these roles.

The following is a summary of our methodology and findings. (Our thorough Skills Gap Analysis methodology is provided in the Appendix).

SOC	Description	CIP Codes
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	52.02
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	11.10, 52.02
13-1111	Management Analysts	52.02
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	11.01
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	11.01, 11.10
15-1252	Software Developers	11.01

Our process begins with the Curriculum-to-Occupation crosswalk developed jointly by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which identifies degree programs and fields of study associated with specific occupations. We then obtain the most recent graduate data from NCES, focusing on regionally accredited institutions offering the relevant majors identified in the first step. Finally, we integrate these annual graduate counts with employment demand and job openings data—both current and projected—sourced from LightCast™, to assess alignment between educational output and workforce needs.

Supply Data: Annual Graduates with Appropriate Degrees
Demand Data: Annual CHANGE (growth) in Identified Occupations

Several key majors and fields of study prepare graduates for multiple high-priority occupations on our list. To streamline the analysis, we organize the data below by unique Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes.

Computer and Information Sciences, General (CIP 11.01)

In the 2022/23 Academic year, there were 53 individuals who graduated from institutions within the region with their bachelor's degrees in computer and information sciences. At the same time, within the key occupations of interest, there were 3,423 jobs in the region that require this sort of education. In the figure below, the stacked bars represent the annual demand for new hires in key occupations, namely Computer Systems Analysts, Information Security Analysts, and Software Developers. All 3 of these occupations require a Bachelor's Degree, typically in the field of Computer and Information Systems. These graduates are represented by the LINE in the graph below, with the intersection point between this line and the stacked bars serving as a visual representation of over/under supply. Based on this graph, several important takeaways emerge:

1. If the supply of graduates remains constant, there will be a shortage of qualified, regional new degree holders in the years 2026, 2027, and 2028
2. Based on current projections from LightCast™, this shortage will reverse by 2029 and in both 2029 and 2030, there will be slightly more graduates in the region than new job openings (based on growth)

Annual Demand vs Constant Supply, Computer and Information Systems Graduates vs. Key Jobs

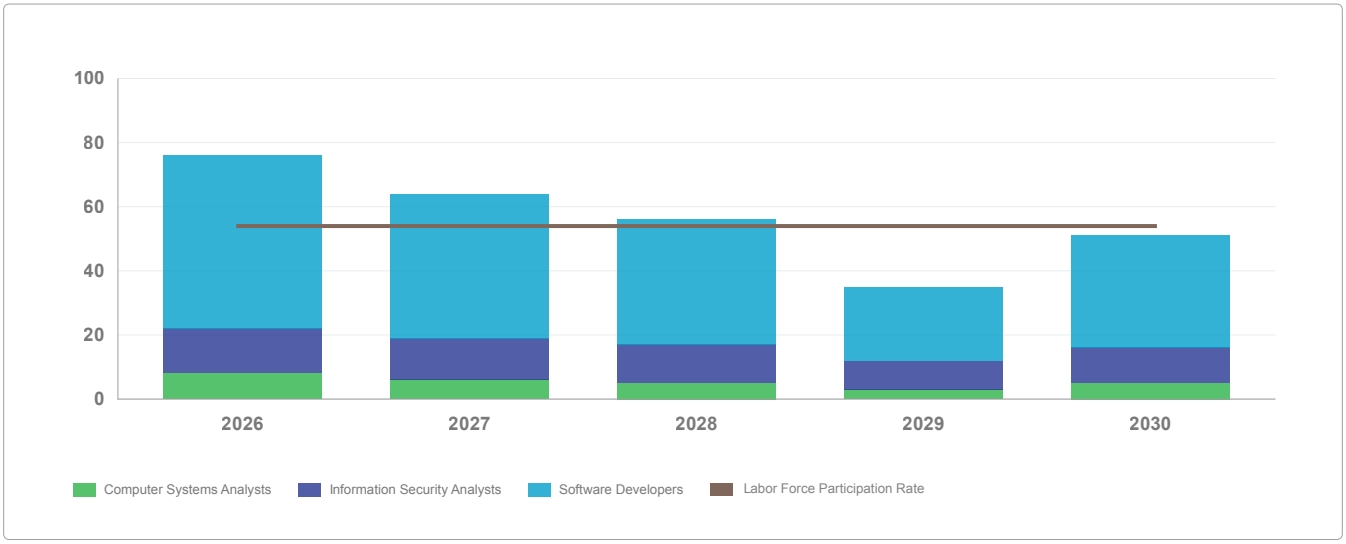


Figure 6: Annual Demand vs Constant Supply, Computer and Information Systems Graduates vs. Key Jobs

Some important caveats are in order, and applicable not just to the current CIP but all of those that follow in subsequent sections.

1. This model assumes that 100% of the regional graduates remain in the region, post-graduation. If these new graduates take jobs outside the region, the gap between demand and supply will widen.
2. This model only tracks NEW jobs, that is, those created in the year in question. If retirees leave current jobs or individuals resign/leave the region, additional vacancies not accounted for here will also need to be filled.

Computer and Information Systems, Administration and Management (CIP 11.10)

Based on the latest available graduation cohort (2022/23), the region produced 51 new graduates with a degree in CIS, Admin and Management (CIP 11.10). Despite the large number of Project Management Specialists in the region, we do see a very moderate change, year-over-year, in the number of new positions that will be created over the next 5 years. All told, for SOCs 15-1211 and 13-1082, there will be a grand total of 91 new jobs between the years 2026 and 2030. As a reminder (from the data reported above) there are 51 graduates annually (circa 2022/23 academic year) produced in the region that are qualified to fill these positions. The graph below shows the annual gap between new graduates and new jobs.

Annual Demand vs. Constant Supply, Computer and Information Systems Administration and Management (CIP 11.10)

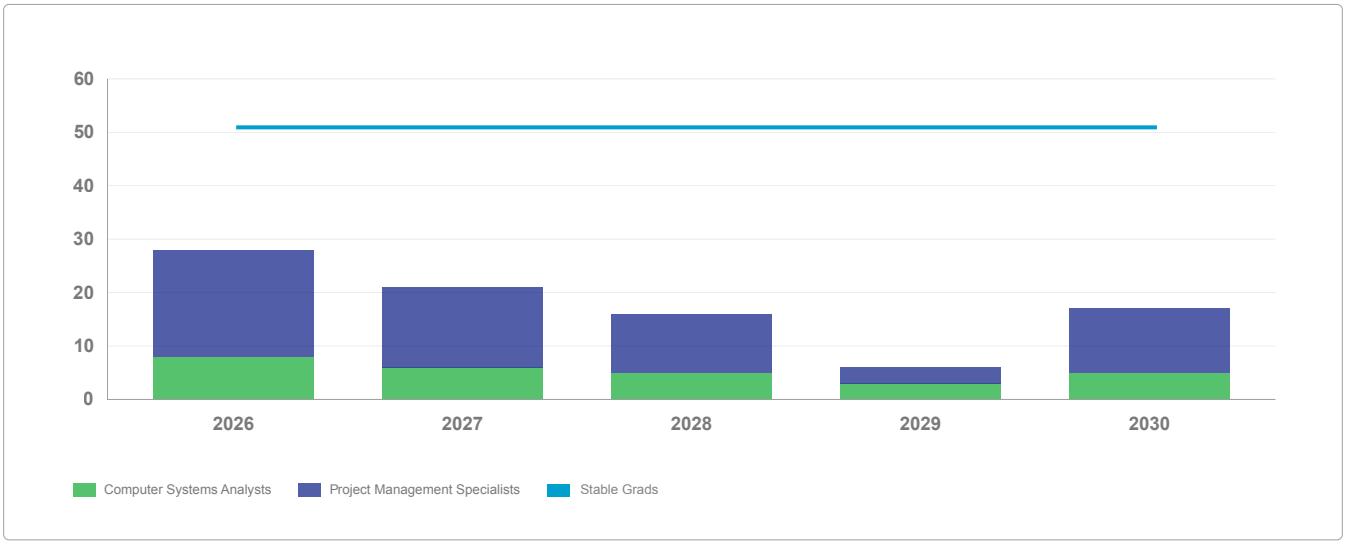


Figure 7: Annual Demand vs. Constant Supply, Computer and Information Systems Administration and Management (CIP 11.10)

Assuming the accuracy of future projected growth from LightCast™, the region appears to be producing a surplus of graduates who can fill the positions of Project Management Specialists and Computer Systems Analysts.

Business Administration, Management and Operations (CIP 52.02)

Perhaps not coincidentally, the most general of CIPs under review, 52.02 Business Admin, produces the largest number of regional graduates. Based on the latest available annual data from IPEDS, in the 2022/2023 academic year, there were 131 bachelor degree earners in the region. The table below highlights the annual growth of the key occupation affiliated with this degree- although it should be noted that this type of degree is general enough that a certain percentage of these graduates will also flow into occupations that are NOT identified as key in the current analysis.

Once again, as with other key occupations, although there are a lot of General and Operations Management jobs, the annual growth is relatively modest, with the region slated to add 214 new positions through 2030. The figure below plots the annual graduation rates (which, as a reminder, number 131 bachelor degree holders annually) against this projected growth. Once again, the figure below does not account for retirements or regular turnover, but rather only NEW jobs created, by year.

Annual Demand vs Constant Supply,General and Operations Managers vs. Business Admin., Management, and Operations Graduates

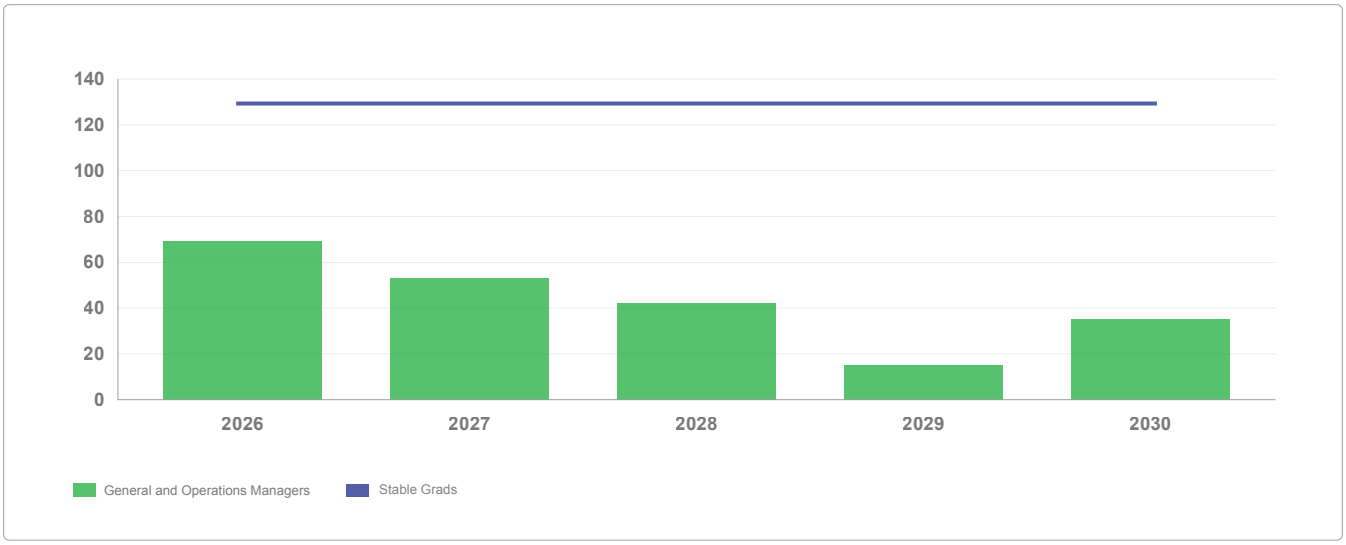


Figure 8: Annual Demand vs Constant Supply, General and Operations Managers vs. Business Admin., Management, and Operations Graduates

To understand which specialized skills are generally requested by employers hiring for any of the six occupations evaluated above, job posting data from August 2023 – August 2025 were analyzed. In the following table, the most commonly posted skills are listed, along with the total number of postings in which they appear over the two-year period. Familiarity with Agile Methodology was the most commonly posted skill; skills related to software development and engineering, project management, and experience with a variety of programming languages are also among the most highly demanded skills for workers of these occupations.

Table 4: Specialized Skill Mentions in Job Postings. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Specialized Skill	# of Job Postings with Mention (8/2023-8/2025)
Agile Methodology	1,025
Software Development	765
Project Management	761
Software Engineering	742
Python (Programming Language)	678
Computer Science	650
Java (Programming Language)	605
C++ (Programming Language)	532
Git (Version Control System)	402
Linux	397
Systems Engineering	377
SQL (Programming Language)	371
JIRA	357
JavaScript (Programming Language)	351
C# (Programming Language)	334
Unit Testing	325
Debugging	316
Amazon Web Services	309
Docker (Software)	308
Configuration Management	302

GO Virginia Region 6 Awarded Projects Since 2023

The following is a list of projects awarded by GO Virginia since 2023

GO Virginia Region 6 Awarded Projects Since FY2023						
Project	**Funds Awarded**	**Match**	**Description**	**Partner**	**Timeline**	**Go Virginia Investment Area**
Stafford County Public Schools Pathways to Success	$100,000	$50,000	JASON Learning modules for career exploratiori for Middle School students in Manufacturing, IT, and Aquaculture.	Stafford County Public Schools	12/9/2022-12/8/2023	Talent Development
KG County Young Entrepreneurs Program	$98,000	$90,272	Entrepreneurship curriculum for high school students.	King George County EDA	1/18/2023-1/17/2024	Entrepreneurship Activities
Stafford County Public Schools Innovation Pathways	$978,449	$563,962	Cyber Security training and Comp TIA Certification for students, teachers, and adult learners	Stafford County Public Schools	4/15/2023-11/30/2025	Workforce Development
MPPDC West Point Airport Industrial Site Evaluation	$100,000	$65,000	Planning grant to conduct the Due Diligence on the West Point Airport Site.	Middle Peninsula Planning	6/1/2023-7/1/2024	Site Development
Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board Talent Pathwavs Initiative	$250,000	$125,000	Development of the TPI for strategic planning.	District Consortium Workforce		Talent Development
Stafford County Economic Development Authority Expanding Smart Community Tech Entrepreneurship	$96,250	$66,350	Study exploring the potential for a Smart Community ecosystem with entrepreneurs in rural areas.	Stafford County EDA	7/15/2023-7/14/2024	Entrepreneurship Activities
Rivers Region Entrepreneurship Ecosystem REI	$300,000	$150,000	Strategic Plan to develop the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem.	Fredericksburg Regional Alliance	1/16/2023-1/15/2024	Entrepreneurship Activities

Project	Funds Awarded	Match	Description	Partner	Timeline	Go Virginia Investment Area
Empowering Black Entrepreneurs Pilot Accelerator	$98,438	$99,738	Planning grant establishing a business accelerator for minority owned businesses.	Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce	10/23/2024-8/31/2024	Entrepreneurship Activities
RCC New Career Technical Center	$290,000	$290,000	Development of a new workforce center for welding and diesel mechanics with dual enrollment and adult night classes at RCC Weems	Rappahannock Community College	12/12/2023-12/11/2025	Workforce Development
VTCECEP romoting Careers in Aquaculture 2.0	$302,536	$177,803	Course modules with hands-on learning and a paid internship for students interested in aquaculture the NN, MP, and Hampton Roads	Virginia Tech Center for Economic Development	12/12/2023-12/11/2025	Talent Development
Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board Career Advancement and Resource Education (CARE)	$307,857	$139,891	Devolopment of industry coalitions to pair with education and government to address workforce needs in the region.	Community Consortium Workforce Development	2/1/2025-1/31/2027	Talent Development
Economic Business Empowerment (EBE) Accelerator	$300,000	$114,500	Implementation of the business accelerator geared towards minority owned businesses.	Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce	12/10/2024-12/9/2026	Entrepreneurship Activities
Cyber Titans Virginia Internship Program (VIP)	$99,826	$50,636	Pilot program pairing high school and post-secondary students with cybersecurity internships and credentialing.	Cyber Bytes Foundation	2/17/2025-2/16/2026	Talent Development
Economic Impact Analysis For RIVERE Ecological Center and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	$72,100	$36,050	Feasibility study around a smart water/tech entrepreneurship hub in Fredericksburg.	RIVERE Ecological Center	3/3/2025-3/2/2026	Entrepreneurship Activities
Virginia Tidewater Aquaculture & Maritime Innovation Incubator Program	$280,800	$140,400	Development of an incubator for watermen paired with a commercial kitchen for cluster expansion.	Greater Reedville Association	7/1/2025-6/30/2027	Entrepreneurship Activities
UMW Practice Management Certificate Program	$78,014	$40,000	Pilot program providing a credential in practice management for primary care physicians.	University of Mary Washington	7/1/2025-6/30/2026	Talent Development

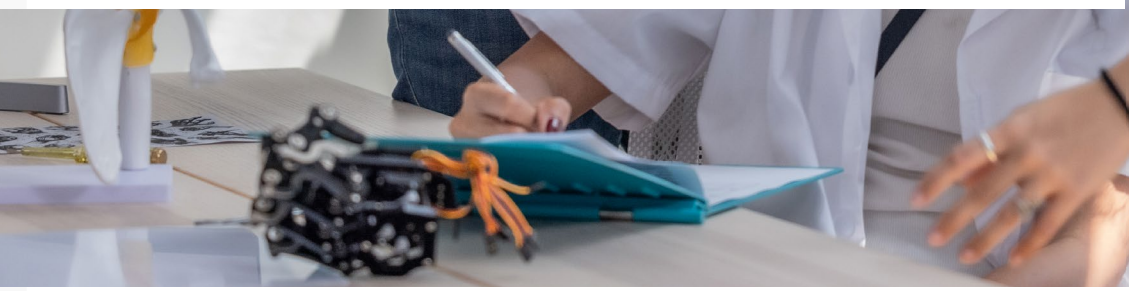
Advancing Growth Plan Opportunities

The following is the list of the opportunities identified above that will drive growth of the target traded sectors through the four project frameworks over the next two years.

1. Talent Development

Region 6 continues to strengthen its talent pipeline through innovative training and experiential learning programs:

- **Stafford County Public Schools Pathways to Success** introduces middle school students to careers in manufacturing, IT, and aquaculture, setting the foundation for long-term regional growth.
- **FXBG Workforce NOW** provides internships and cybersecurity certification, aligning students, teachers, and adult learners with in-demand skills.
- **VTCECE Promoting Careers in Aquaculture 2.0** combines coursework with paid internships in aquaculture across Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and Hampton Roads, directly supporting one of the region's priority industries.
- **UMW Practice Management Certificate Program** addresses the healthcare sector by credentialing professionals in practice management for primary care physicians.
- **Cyber Titans Virginia Internship Program (VIP)** Offers cybersecurity internships to students across Region 6.



- **Career Advancement Resource Education (CARE) Project** Focuses on career readiness and training.
- **Rappahannock Community College New Career Training Center Startup Ecosystem Development**

Together, these initiatives build a skilled workforce across diverse sectors—manufacturing, IT, aquaculture, healthcare, and cybersecurity—ensuring that the region's industries have the talent needed to thrive.

2. Entrepreneurship

Projects in Region 6 highlight a strong emphasis on supporting entrepreneurial ecosystems and expanding access for underrepresented business leaders:

- **Stafford County EDA's Smart Community Tech Entrepreneurship Study** explores how rural areas can leverage smart technology to create opportunities for startups and entrepreneurs.
- **Empowering Black Entrepreneurs Pilot Accelerator and the Economic Business Empowerment (EBE) Accelerator**—both in partnership with the Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce—establish and scale accelerators focused on supporting minority-owned businesses, expanding inclusivity in the regional economy.
- **Economic Impact Analysis for RIVERE Ecological Center and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem** examine the feasibility of developing a hub for water and tech entrepreneurship in Fredericksburg, opening doors for future innovation-based businesses.

These programs create a robust ecosystem where diverse entrepreneurs can thrive, with targeted supports, feasibility studies, and accelerators tailored to community needs.

3. Cluster Scale-Up

Several workforce and entrepreneurship initiatives directly support **industry clusters** that are critical to Region 6's competitiveness:

- **Aquaculture programs** (Stafford Schools' Pathways and VTCECE Aquaculture 2.0) advance the region's water-based economy.
- **Cybersecurity training** under **FXBG Workforce NOW** aligns with Virginia's growing cybersecurity and IT cluster, strengthening regional innovation.
- The **RIVERE Ecological Center feasibility study** positions Fredericksburg as a hub for environmental sciences and water-focused

- **Virginia Sea Grant Resiliency Ecosystem** Development Builds regional capacity for coastal resilience. Economic Impact Analysis for RIVERE Ecological Center Supports planning for a regional ecological and entrepreneurial hub.

- **Stafford County Expanding Smart Community Tech Feasibility Study** Lays groundwork for smart infrastructure expansion.

These initiatives demonstrate a coordinated approach to scaling priority clusters by aligning workforce development, entrepreneurship, and research.

4. Site Development

- The **Middlesex/MPPD West Point Airport Industrial Site Evaluation** provides due diligence planning, a critical first step in preparing a major industrial site for future business expansion. This project ensures that Region 6 remains competitive for attracting businesses seeking ready-to-develop sites.

- **Fredericksburg Regional Industrial Facilities Authority Study** Creates a shared governance model for site development.

- **Northern Neck Sites, Buildings, and Infrastructure Study** Evaluates and prioritizes regional sites for investment.

Site Inventory

Go Virginia Region 6 is concentrating its efforts on these sites to strengthen and expand its target industry clusters

Go Virginia Region 6 Site Development						
Name	**Business Ready Site Program Tier**	**Address**	**City**	**State**	**Zip**	**Locality Name**
Old Page Middle School	1	5630 George Washington MemorialHwy	Gbucester Courthouse	VA	23061	Gloucester
King William Commerce Park	2	112 Commerce Park Drive	Manquin	VA	23106	King William
Tappahannock-Essex County Airport Site	2	1450 Aviation Rd.	Tappahannock	VA	22560	Essex
Ta ppahanno ck Ind us trial Park (0 ld Airport Site	2	620 Airport Rd	Tappahannock	VA	22560	Essex
Midd£ PeninsuJa Regional Airport Site 2	3	1000 Airport Road	Mattaponi	VA	23110	King and Queen
Marshall		13465 James Madison Parkway	King George	VA	22405	King George
Chandler Industrial Park		Ind us trial Park Drive	Montross	VA	22520	Westmoreland

1. Old Page Middle School Site

Scope	**Evaluate redevelopment potential of former school property in Gloucester County**
Goals	Funding
> Advance site readiness under VEDP's tier system > Support light manufacturing and logistics > Align with regional Growth & Diversification Plan	GO Virginia Region 6 site development funds (pending eligibility)
Project Type : Business Park Enhancement and Site Characterization	

2. King William Commerce Park

Scope	Characterize parcels within the existing business park for industrial expansion

Goals	Funding
> Advance site readiness under VEDP's tier system > Support light manufacturing and logistics > Align with regional Growth & Diversification Plan	GO Virginia Region 6 site development funds (pending eligibility)

Project Type: Business Park Enhancement and Site Characterization

3. Tappahannock-Essex County Airport Site

Scope	Prepare 29-acre site for industrial reuse following airport relocation

Goals	Funding
> Support aviation-adjacent industries and logistics > Leverage existing infrastructure and Opportunity Zone status > Advance site to Tier 3 readiness	$796,500 awarded for box hangar site preparation

Project Type: Industrial Redevelopment and Infrastructure Enhancement

4. Tappahannock-Essex County Old Airport Site

Scope	Assess redevelopment potential of the former airport site following relocation of aviation operations.

Goals	Funding
> Identify viable industrial or commercial reuse options. > Evaluate infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints. > Align redevelopment with regional economic development strategies.	Potentially eligible for GO Virginia Region 6 planning or site development grants (pending confirmation).

Project Type: Industrial Site Reuse and Strategic Redevelopment Planning

5. Middle Peninsula Regional Airport Site 2

Scope	Evaluate a secondary site at the Middle Peninsula Regional Airport for future industrial or aviation-related development.

Goals	Funding
> Determine site readiness and compatibility with VEDP tier advancement. > Explore opportunities for aviation cluster growth or logistics support. > Support regional workforce and infrastructure alignment.	Potential eligibility under GO Virginia Region 6 site development or planning funds

Project Type: Site Readiness Evaluation and Aviation Cluster Support

6. Marshall Site

Scope	Evaluate smaller industrial parcels for regional significance
Goals	Funding
> Determine eligibility for GO Virginia waiver (<25 acres) > Align with regional corridor development strategy > Advance site readiness for targeted sectors	Potential under GO Virginia Board Policy #9
Project Type: Small Parcel Strategic Assessment	

7. Chandler Industrial Park

Scope	Assess infrastructure and market potential of existing industrial park
Goals	Funding
> Identify parcels for Tier advancement > Support regional manufacturing and distribution > Enhance marketability through targeted investment	Eligible under GO Virginia site development guidance
Project Type: Industrial Park Characterization and Investment Planning	

GO Virginia Region 6 Partnerships

Regional Councils and Planning Districts

- Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
- Northern Neck Planning District Commission
- George Washington Regional Commission
- Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority

Business and Entrepreneurial Networks

- Fredericksburg Area Chamber of Commerce
- Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce
- Fredericksburg Regional Alliance
- Rivers Region Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Council
- RIoT
- GCubed, Inc.
- Cyber Bytes Foundation
- G3 Community Services
- Greater Reedville Association

Education and Workforce Development

- Old Dominion University
- Virginia Institute of Marine Science
- Rappahannock Community College
- Germanna Community College
- University of Mary Washington
- Virginia Tech Center for Economic Development and Community Engagement
- Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board

Sector Specific Partners

- Virginia Sea Grant
- Rise Resilience Innovations
- KCB Oyster Holdings
- Little Wicomico Oyster Company, LLC
- Matheson Oyster Company
- Rappahannock Oyster Company
- Shores and Ruark Oyster Company
- Ward Oyster Company
- Oyster Seed Holdings
- Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren

Local Economic Development Authorities (EDAs)

- Stafford County EDA
- King George County EDA
- Lancaster County EDA
- Northumberland County EDA
- Middlesex County EDA
- Mathews County EDA
- King and Queen County EDA
- Essex County EDA
- Gloucester County EDA
- City of Fredericksburg EDA

Goals and Strategies

Based on a comprehensive review of both the quantitative data—including Target Industry and Cluster analyses and Skills Gap assessments—and the qualitative insights gathered from regional stakeholders, the following goals and strategies will guide GO Virginia Region 6 through 2026:

1.0 Talent Development / Workforce Development

1.1 Align workforce training programs to targeted sectors

Strategy	Description	Potential Partner	Metrics	Industries
1.1.1	Expand career pathways in high-demand sectors like IT, aquaculture, manufacturing, and cybersecurity	Workforce Development Boards	Number of new career pathways created	IT/Data Centers; Aquaculture; Manufacturing; Cybersecurity
1.1.2	Support internships and apprenticeships (e.g., Cyber Titans Virginia Internship Program)	Educational Institutions & Employers	Number of internships/ apprenticeships supported	All Industry Clusters
1.1.3	Support training through CARE and sector-specific programs	Training Providers	Enrollment in CARE and sector programs	Aquaculture/Marine Services; Manufacturing; IT/Data Centers
1.1.4	Promote awareness of cluster careers in schools and community programs	School Districts & Community Orgs	Number of awareness programs conducted	All Industry Clusters
1.1.5	Address Aging Workforce: Build recruitment and upskilling programs in aquaculture and forestry	Industry Associations	Participation in upskilling programs	Aquaculture/Marine Services; Forestry; Manufacturing; Ag/ CEA

1.2 Align training efforts across the region
(e.g., Rappahannock Community College Career Training Center)

Strategy	Description	Potential Partner	Metrics	Industries
1.2.1	Create roles like Regional Talent Development Coordinator to align regional efforts	Regional Councils	Role established and staffed	Role established and staffed
1.2.2	Develop regional training centers similar to Rappahannock Community College Career Training Center	Community Colleges	Number of training centers developed	Manufacturing; Distribution/ Logistics; IT/Cybersecurity
1.2.3	Conduct feasibility studies for workforce infrastructure (e.g., Northern Neck Workforce Training Feasibility Study)	Planning District Commissions	Completion of feasibility studies	All Industry Clusters

1.3 Address regional disparities in education and labor force participation

Strategy	Description	Potential Partner	Metrics	Industries
1.3.1	Conduct a labor force study to identify labor commuting out from Region 6	Economic Development Organizations	Labor force study completed	Manufacturing; IT/Data Centers; Professional, Scientific, Technical Services; Distribution/Logistics
1.3.2	Build recruitment pipelines especially in aquaculture and forestry to address aging workforce	Industry & Workforce Boards	Recruitment pipeline established	Aquaculture/Marine Services; Manufacturing; Ag/CEA

2.0 Startup Ecosystem Development / Entrepreneurial Support

Strategy	Description	Potential Partner	Metrics	Industries
2.1.1	Expand innovation and tech entrepreneurship, including the Potomac Tech Bridge	Tech Incubators & Universities	Number of startups supported	IT/Data Centers; Professional, Scientific, Technical Services
2.1.2	Build innovation capacity in smart tech, aquaculture, and climate resilience	Regional Innovation Councils	Innovation projects launched	IT/Data Centers; Aquaculture/ Marine Services; Ag/CEA

Strategy	Description	Potential Partner	Metrics	Industries
2.1.3	Support minority-owned and rural startups by increasing access to capital	CDFIs & Economic Development Orgs	Capital deployed to target groups	Aquaculture/Marine Services; Ag/CEA; Manufacturing; Professional, Scientific, Technical Services
2.1.4	Launch digital marketplaces for seafood, agriculture, and creative industries	Chambers of Commerce & Industry Groups	Platforms launched and active users	Aquaculture/Marine Services; Ag/CEA
2.1.5	Build a better mentorship and networking system	Entrepreneur Support Organizations	Number of mentorships matches	All Industry Clusters
2.1.6	Support startups in marine tech, water management, and environmental services	RIVERE & Marine Innovation Hubs	Number of marine startups supported	Aquaculture/Marine Services; Ag/CEA
2.1.7	Develop marine research and innovation hubs for aquaculture	Universities & Research Institutes	Hubs established and operational	Aquaculture/Marine Services

3.0 Site Development

Strategy	Description	Potential Partner	Metrics	Industries
3.1	Conduct site readiness evaluations and identify sites for specific industry targets	Planning District Commissions	Number of sites evaluated	Manufacturing; Distribution/ Logistics; IT/Data Centers; Aquaculture/Marine Industries
3.2	Establish regional authorities (e.g., Fredericksburg RIFA)	Local Governments	Authorities formed	Manufacturing; Distribution/ Logistics; IT/Data Centers; Aquaculture/Marine Industries
3.3	Address energy, broadband, and zoning for data centers and industrial parks	Utility Providers & Zoning Boards	Infrastructure improvements completed	Manufacturing; Distribution/ Logistics; IT/Data Centers,
3..4	Align site development with priority industry clusters	Economic Development Orgs	Number of cluster-aligned sites	Manufacturing; Distribution/ Logistics; IT/Data Centers; Aquaculture/Marine Industries
3..5	Conduct due diligence and increase tiered sites under VBRSP	Site Consultants & VEDP	Number of sites tiered	Aquaculture/Marine Industries; Professional, Scientific, Technical Services; IT/Data Centers; Ag/CEA

4.0 Cluster Scale-Up in Traded Industries

4.1 Support Business Expansion in Priority Traded Sectors

Strategy	Description	Potential Partner	Metrics	Industries
4.1.1	Identify and support high-growth firms with expansion potential	Business Retention Teams	Firms supported	All Industry Clusters
4.1.2	Facilitate access to capital for scaling businesses	Financial Institutions & CDFIs	Capital deployed	All Industry Clusters
4.1.3	Promote export readiness and global market access	Export Assistance Centers	Firms entering new markets	All Industry Clusters
4.1.4	Align infrastructure investments with growth needs	Regional Planning Bodies	Infrastructure projects completed	All Industry Clusters
4.1.5	Develop shared-use facilities to reduce barriers to scale	Industry Associations	Facilities developed	Manufacturing; Professional, Scientific, Technical Services; IT/Data Centers; Ag/CEA

4.2 Encourage Collaboration Among Firms

Strategy	Description	Potential Partner	Metrics	Industries
4.2.1	Establish cluster working groups or councils	Regional Councils	Groups formed	Manufacturing; IT/Data Centers; Aquaculture/Marine Industries; Ag/CEA
4.2.2	Launch regional supplier matchmaking platforms	Chambers of Commerce	Platform usage metrics	Manufacturing; Distribution/ Logistics; Aquaculture/Marine Industries
4.2.3	Support joint R&D and commercialization efforts	Universities & Industry	R&D projects launched	IT/Data Centers; Scientific, Technical Services; Aquaculture/ Marine Services
4.2.4	Promote peer learning through roundtables and forums	Cluster Organizations	Events held	All Industry Clusters
4.2.5	Incentivize co-location and shared logistics	Local Governments	Co-location projects initiated	Manufacturing; Distribution/ Logistics; Aquaculture/Marine Industries

4.3 Invest in Supply Chain and Innovation Capacity

Strategy	Description	Potential Partner	Metrics	Industries
4.3.1	Conduct supply chain mapping for local sourcing	Economic Development Orgs	Mapping completed	Ag/CEA; Aquaculture/Marine Services; Manufacturing; Distribution/Logistics
4.3.2	Support development of logistics hubs and intermodal facilities	Transportation Authorities	Hubs developed	Manufacturing; Distribution/ Logistics; Aquaculture/Marine Industries; Ag/CEA
4.3.3	Expand innovation infrastructure	Tech Bridges & Incubators	Infrastructure projects completed	IT/Data Centers; Scientific, Technical Services; Aquaculture/ Marine Services; Ag/CEA
4.3.4	Strengthen connections to federal innovation assets	Federal Agencies & Regional Partners	Partnerships formed	IT/Data Centers; Scientific, Technical Services
4.3.5	Promote climate-resilient and circular economy practices	Sustainability Councils	Adoption rate of practices	Aquaculture/Marine Services; Ag/CEA

Appendix

Appendix 1: Additional Regional Data

Home Values & Earnings

Figure 7 shows that most homes fall within the mid-to-upper value ranges, with over 65% of homes valued between $300,000 and $749,999. The single-largest category is $750,000–$999,999, which accounts for 25.5% of all homes, followed by $500,000–$749,999 (21.0%) and $400,000–$499,999 (19.2%). The average home value in 2024 in Region 6 was estimated at $469,502. This reveals a housing market with a concentration of high-value properties.

Lower-value homes, especially those under $300,000, make up a small fraction of the total housing stock. Combined, these lower tiers account for less than 25%, with the least represented being homes under $150,000. Very high-end homes – valued at $1 million or more – make up only a small percentage (around 3% combined). This distribution could indicate challenges relating to affordability, particularly for first-time buyers or lower-income residents.

These housing data can be measured against income data for a clearer idea of the costs of living in the region. A cost-of-living index (COLI) measures the costs of various living expenses within a region and compares them to national averages; on this scale, a score of '100' would be equal to the average cost of living throughout the nation. In 2024, Region 6's COLI score was 103.7, which indicates it is more generally more expensive to live in Region 6 than in other parts of the country. This is reflected in high home values, and also in the median household income for the region. In 2024, the median household income (MHI) for Region 6 households was $98,495; this is higher than Virginia's MHI, which was $89,834 in the same year. Between 2024 and 2029, the MHI in Region 6 is projected to increase to $109,272, or by 10.94%.

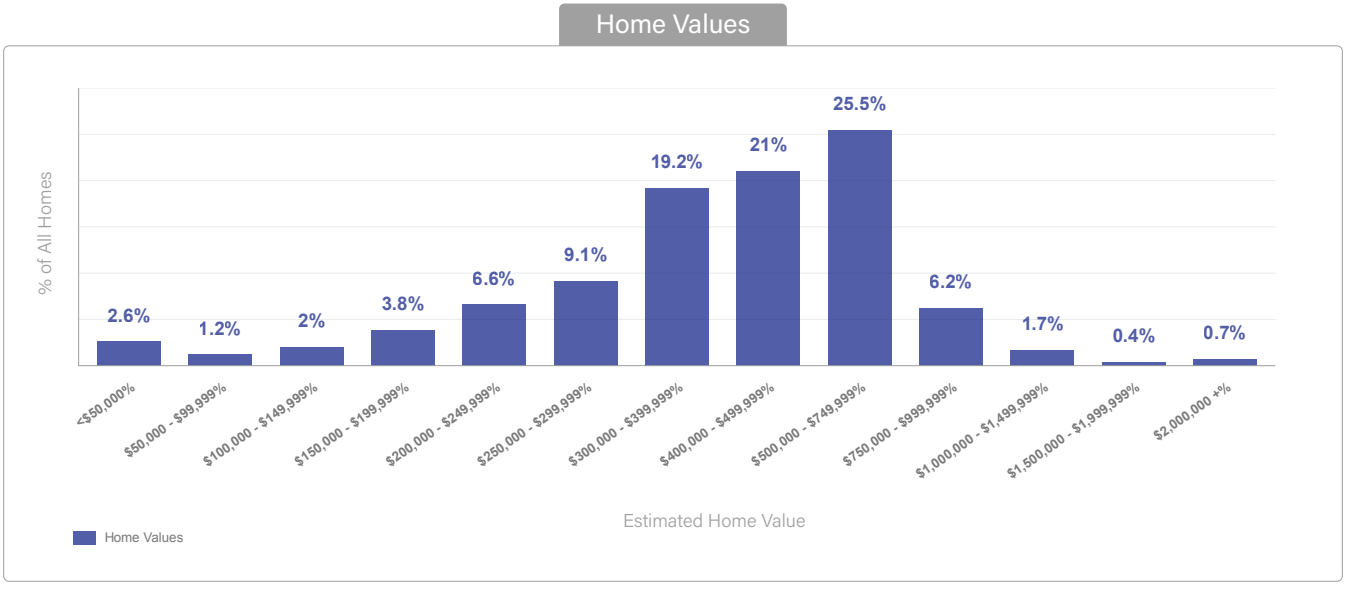


Figure 9: Home Values in Region 6. Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Commuting Patterns

Error! Reference source not found. presents the top ten counties into which outbound commuters are most likely to travel for work. A net number of 23,864 workers commute into Fairfax County; 11,776 and 11,489 workers commute into District of Colombia County and Prince William County, respectively. Nearly 5,000 workers (net) travel into Newport News, Henrico County, and Arlington County.

Table 5: Top Ten Counties by Net Commuter Loss. *Source: Lightcast 2025.2*

County	Inbound Commuters	Outbound Commuters	Net Commuters
Fairfax County, VA	4,218	28,082	(23,864)
District of Columbia County, DC	463	12,239	(11,776)
Prince William County, VA	6,393	17,882	(11,489)
Newport News, VA	1,646	6,538	(4,892)
Henrico County, VA	2,799	7,691	(4,892)
Arlington County, VA	702	5,544	(4,842)
Richmond City County, VA	1,563	5,355	(3,792)
Virginia Beach City County, VA	1,706	4,879	(3,172)
Hanover County, VA	2,954	6,051	(3,097)
Alexandria City County, VA	560	3,063	(2,504)

Historical Earnings

Since 2001, the average annual income earned per job in Region 6 has increased steadily. Between 2001 and 2024, this average rose from $33,668 to $72,722 – an increase of 116% over the 23-year period. The rate of earnings growth increased in 2020; this is likely connected to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when many lower-paying jobs were suspended and essential workers were more likely to receive overtime pay.

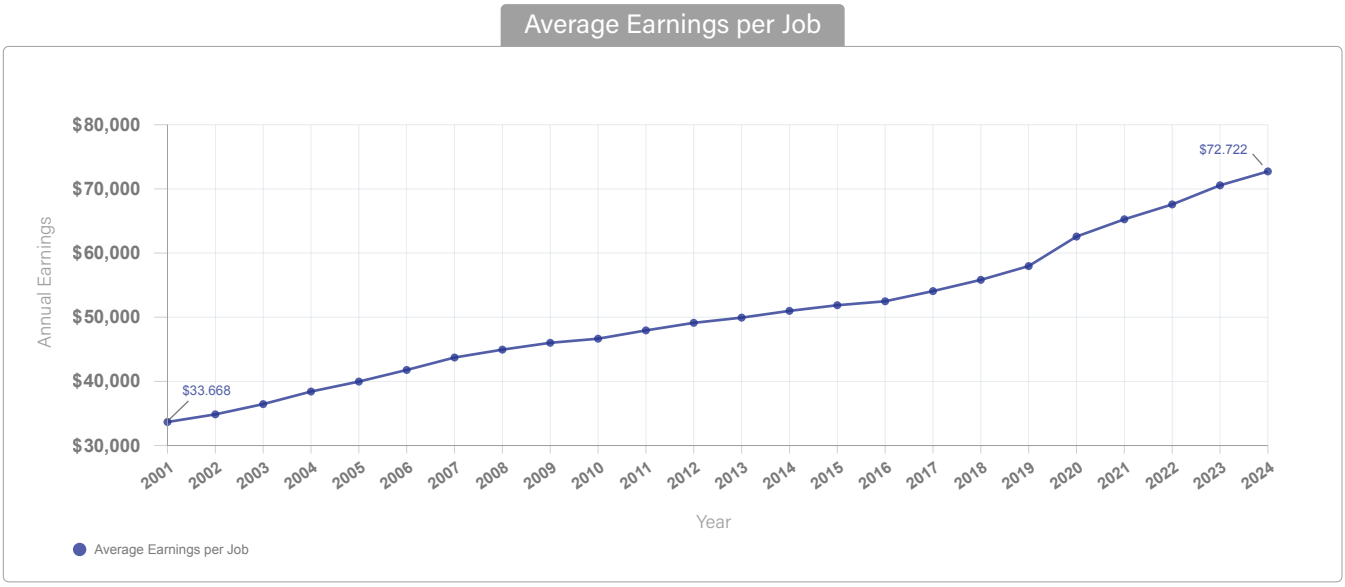


Figure 10: Average Earnings per Job in Region 6. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Payrolled Business Locations & Employment Concentration

In Table 5, industries are ranked (from top to bottom) by the number of payrolled business locations in the region in 2024. The largest industries – measured by payrolled business locations – are: Healthcare and Social Assistance; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Retail Trade. Collectively, there are 6,275 payrolled businesses in these industries in Region 6.

On the right side of the table, the industries' employment concentration is measured by location quotient. Location quotient measures the concentration of industry employment in a region relative to other comparable geographies. If an industry's location quotient is less than 1, then the employment concentration of that industry in Region 6 is lower than average. If the location quotient is greater than 1, then that particular industry's employment is more highly concentrated in other comparable regions. Industries with high location quotients are often valuable for economic development in that they indicate an opportunity to export goods or services out of the region. An unusually high concentration of any industry in one region means that other regions are likely to rely upon exports from that industry to meet their local demand.

In Region 6, the Unclassified, Government, Retail Trade, and Other Services (except Public Administration) industries are the most highly concentrated. A high concentration of businesses in the Unclassified industry indicates that a relatively large share of businesses in the region are young, likely small businesses.

Businesses in the Government industry include local public or administrative offices, public school systems, and public hospitals. Those in the Other Services industry do not fit well into other industry groups and are therefore categorized separately. This industry might capture businesses that provide personal services, laundry services, repair work, religious guidance or instruction, or other services.

Table 6: Payrolled Business Locations & Employment Concentration by Industry in Region 6. *Source: Lightcast 2025.2*

NAICS	Description	2024 Payrolled Business Locations	2024 Employment Concentration
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	3,076	0.90
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,671	0.99
44	Retail Trade	1,529	1.40
23	Construction	1,477	1.05
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,387	1.27
72	Accommodation and Food Services	993	1.09
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	753	0.76
90	Government	655	1.58
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	574	0.81
52	Finance and Insurance	504	0.74
42	Wholesale Trade	421	0.57
48	Transportation and Warehousing	358	0.80
31	Manufacturing	354	0.36
99	Unclassified Industry	249	1.68
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	207	0.96
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	163	0.89
61	Educational Services	157	0.61
51	Information	154	0.40
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	74	0.67
22	Utilities	28	0.65
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	13	0.28

Industry Demand & Sales

Figure 9 illustrates demand data by industry in Region 6. The left axis measures the demand met locally next to the demand met by imports, and the right axis measures the total local demand for goods or services provided by each industry. Industries such as Real Estate and Rental Leasing, Government, and Construction have a relatively high percentage of their demand met in-region, indicating strong local supply chains or service provision. In contrast, industries like Manufacturing, Mining, and Wholesale Trade rely heavily on imports to meet demand, suggesting opportunities for regional growth or investment in these sectors.

Total local demand is highest in Government , followed by Manufacturing, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Finance and Insurance. While these sectors also import a significant portion of their goods and services, the scale of their demand implies that even modest improvements in local supply could yield substantial economic benefits.

A mismatch between local supply and demand in many industries suggests that the region has considerable potential to strengthen its economy by increasing local capacity. Expanding local production, service delivery, and business development – especially in industries with large unmet demand – could reduce import dependence and retain more economic value within the region.

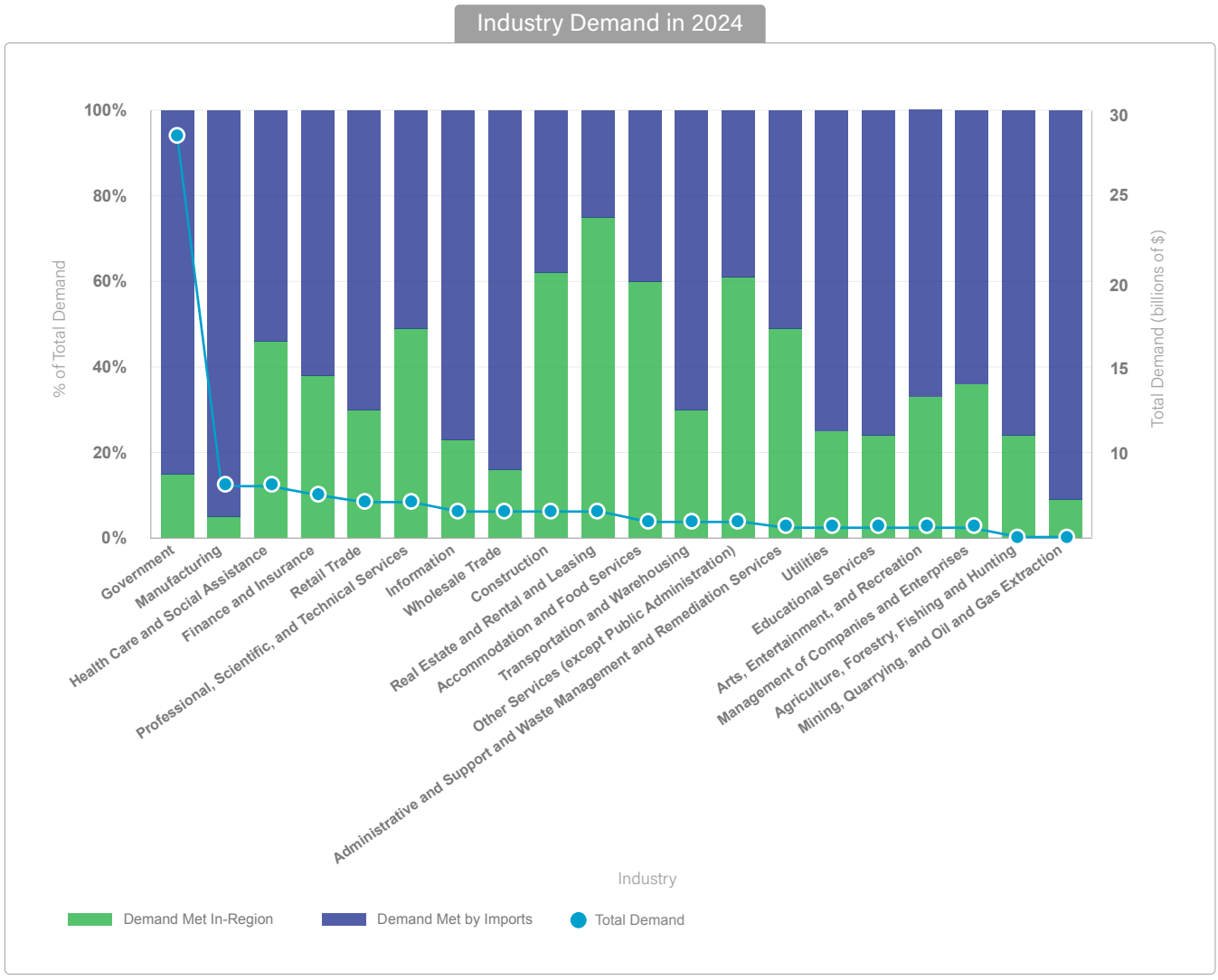


Figure 11: Industry Demand in Region 6. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Figure 10 depicts the proportion of total sales generated within the region (in-region sales) versus sales exported outside the region, along with the total sales value for each industry in billions of dollars. Total sales are highest in Government, Retail Trade, and Health Care and Social Assistance. Industries such as Accommodation and Food Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Information rely heavily on local demand, as much of their sales occur within the region. In contrast, industries like Manufacturing and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting show a high share of exported sales, indicating these sectors are strongly connected to external markets. These industries play a role in bringing external dollars into the local economy; as export-oriented industries, they not only support regional economic output but also indicate competitive advantages that extend beyond local demand.

The balance of in-region versus export sales provides valuable insight into which industries are driven by local consumption, and which are net contributors to regional economic growth through external trade. Expanding export-capable sectors, especially those already demonstrating high external sales, presents a strategic opportunity to boost economic resilience and increase revenue flows into the region.

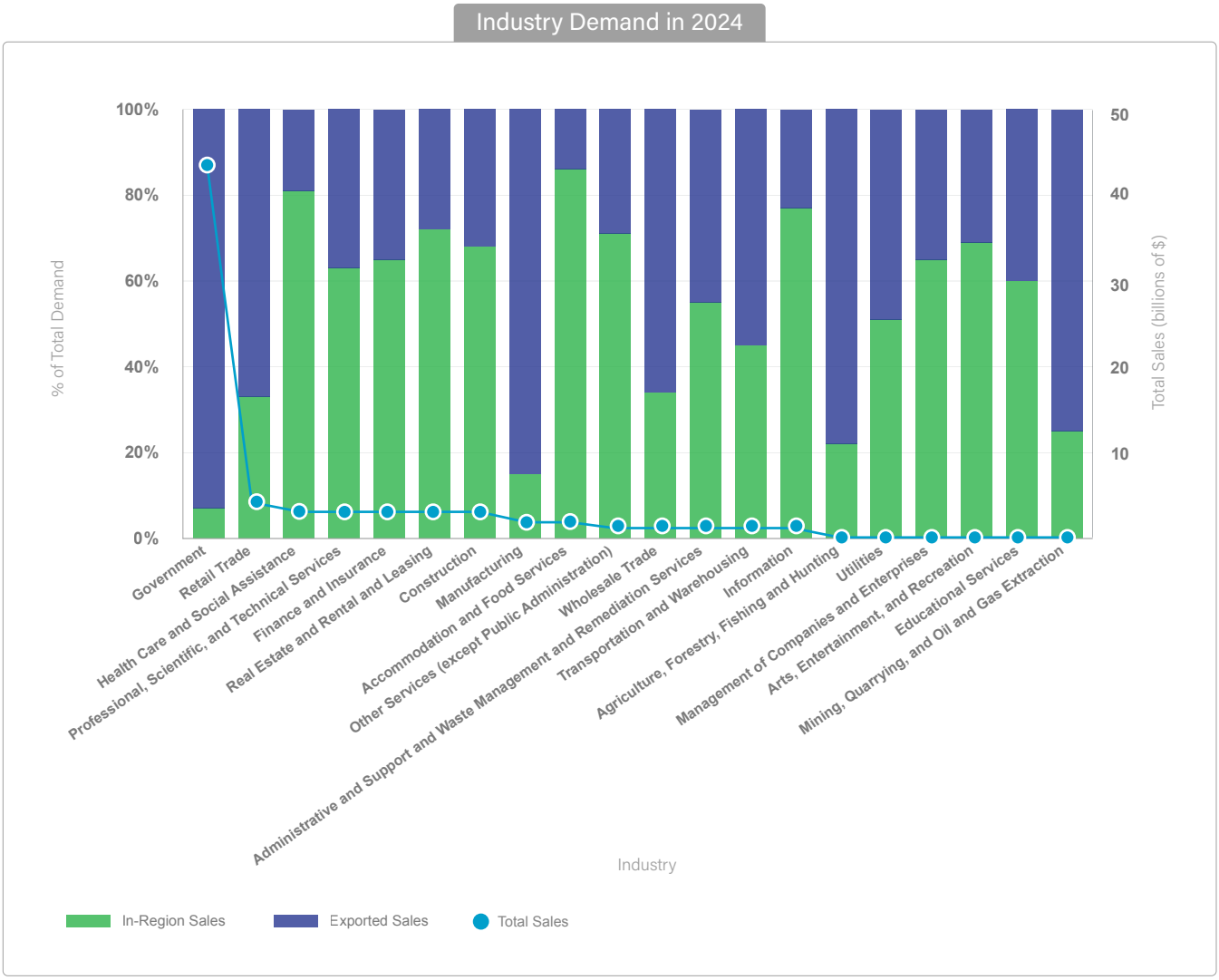


Figure 12: Industry Sales in Region 6. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Hires & Separations

Figure 11 illustrates the hires and separations experienced in each industry and indicates that most industries have closely aligned numbers of hires and separations. High-turnover sectors such as Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade are the most dynamic, with each reporting approximately 18,000 to 21,000 hires and nearly as many separations. This reflects the fast-paced nature and employment volatility in customer-facing roles.

Other large sectors, like Government and Health Care and Social Assistance, also saw notable hiring and separation activity, suggesting both strong demand and internal workforce shifts. Professional and administrative industries, including Professional, Scientific, Technical Services and Administrative and Support Services similarly experienced high volumes of workforce churn, likely due to contract work, project-based employment, or ongoing labor market adjustments.

In contrast, industries such as Utilities, Mining, and Information recorded relatively low activity, pointing to more stable or smaller employment bases. Overall, the data show that service-heavy industries continue to experience the highest workforce fluidity, while specialized sectors remain more consistent in employment patterns.

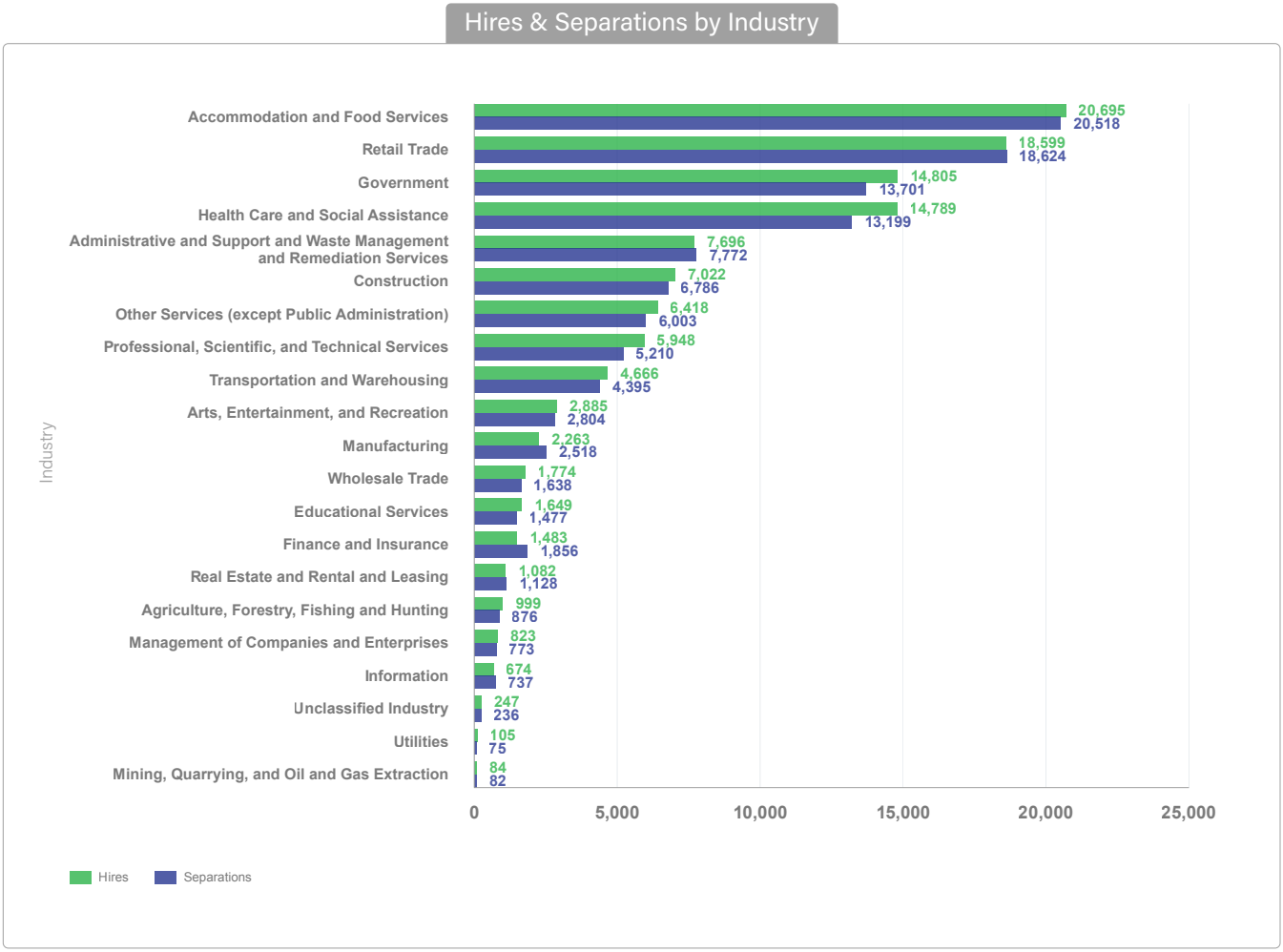


Figure 13: Hires & Separations by Industry in Region 6. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Historical Industry Employment

Table 7: Historical Industry Employment in Region 6. Source: *Lightcast 2025.2*

NAICS	Industry	2014 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2024 Jobs	10-Year % Growth
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,384	1,785	1,910	1,962	-18%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	224	194	180	183	-18%
22	Utilities	471	468	428	424	-10%
23	Construction	10,467	10,925	11,190	11,519	10%
31	Manufacturing	5,715	5,728	5,474	5,175	-9%
42	Wholesale Trade	4,570	3,985	3,776	3,886	-15%
44	Retail Trade	22,896	23,236	24,266	24,707	8%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	3,876	5,594	6,137	6,588	70%
51	Information	1,617	1,259	1,527	1,353	-16%
52	Finance and Insurance	8,433	9,052	8,260	5,668	-33%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,287	2,724	2,770	2,663	16%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10,379	11,847	13,189	13,127	26%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,841	1,815	1,870	1,887	2%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6,008	7,659	7,632	8,458	41%
61	Educational Services	1,991	2,609	2,523	2,927	47%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	20,053	21,431	20,911	22,602	13%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,605	2,709	2,873	3,255	25%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	15,819	17,111	16,457	17,161	8%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	10,188	11,271	11,216	11,910	17%
90	Government	38,113	40,833	41,086	43,255	13%
99	Unclassified Industry	<10	437	847	467	N/A

Historical Occupation Employment

Table 8: Historical Occupational Employment in Region 6. Source: *Lightcast 2025.2*

SOC	Industry	2014 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2024 Jobs	10-Year % Growth
11-0000	Management Occupations	8,747	9,679	11,416	12,215	40%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	10,269	12,405	15,029	15,078	47%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	6,567	7,995	8,698	8,038	22%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	3,406	3,917	3,783	3,919	15%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	1,519	1,650	1,695	2,052	35%

SOC	Industry	2014 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2024 Jobs	10-Year % Growth
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	2,789	3,289	3,199	3,361	20%
23-0000	Legal Occupations	1,667	1,833	1,782	1,559	-6%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	13,311	13,999	13,508	14,114	6%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	2,573	2,602	2,767	2,954	15%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	8,403	9,159	8,994	9,401	12%
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	6,607	7,364	7,309	8,002	21%
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	3,574	3,740	4,067	4,504	26%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	15,506	16,495	15,959	16,864	9%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	6,306	6,890	6,673	6,933	10%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	5,255	5,914	5,562	6,262	19%
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	19,976	20,128	18,947	19,427	-3%
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	19,010	19,456	17,889	16,533	-13%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	1,539	1,129	1,335	1,336	-13%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	8,447	8,660	8,358	8,564	1%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	6,394	6,898	7,147	7,237	13%
51-0000	Production Occupations	5,025	4,950	4,580	4,440	-12%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	11,697	13,238	14,580	15,227	30%
55-0000	Military-only occupations	1,350	1,281	1,244	1,158	-14%

Shift Share Analysis

A shift share analysis can be used to understand the competitiveness of industries in a specific region. There are four components of a shift share analysis: industrial mix effect, national growth effect, expected job change, and competitive effect. The industrial mix effect estimates the regional employment change in an industry based on that industry's performance on a national level; the national growth effect measures the impact of general economic growth (at the national level) on the regional industry. Together, these calculations are used to estimate how an industry might change in a typical region over some specified period of time – in this case, between 2025 and 2029 .

The competitive effect figure is the product of the analysis and is ultimately used to determine whether the region holds some advantage over its competitors for a particular industry. If an industry is projected to realize more growth in the region than it would be expected to, then that surplus growth is reflected in a positive competitive effect. If an industry is projected to realize less growth than would be expected, the competitive effect is negative. Industries with higher competitive effects are concluded to be more competitive in the region

In Region 6, the most competitive industries (after Government) are Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, Manufacturing, and Other Services (except Public Administration). These industries, among others, are projected to realize exceptional growth in the region over the next ten years. As seen in a previous graph, the demand for services provided by the Government industry is remarkably high in Region 6, and that demand likely affects the regional growth of the industry; the Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services industry is closely related. The Manufacturing industry can be a high-value industry, given that many jobs in the industry are high-paying and many manufacturing industries export their products.

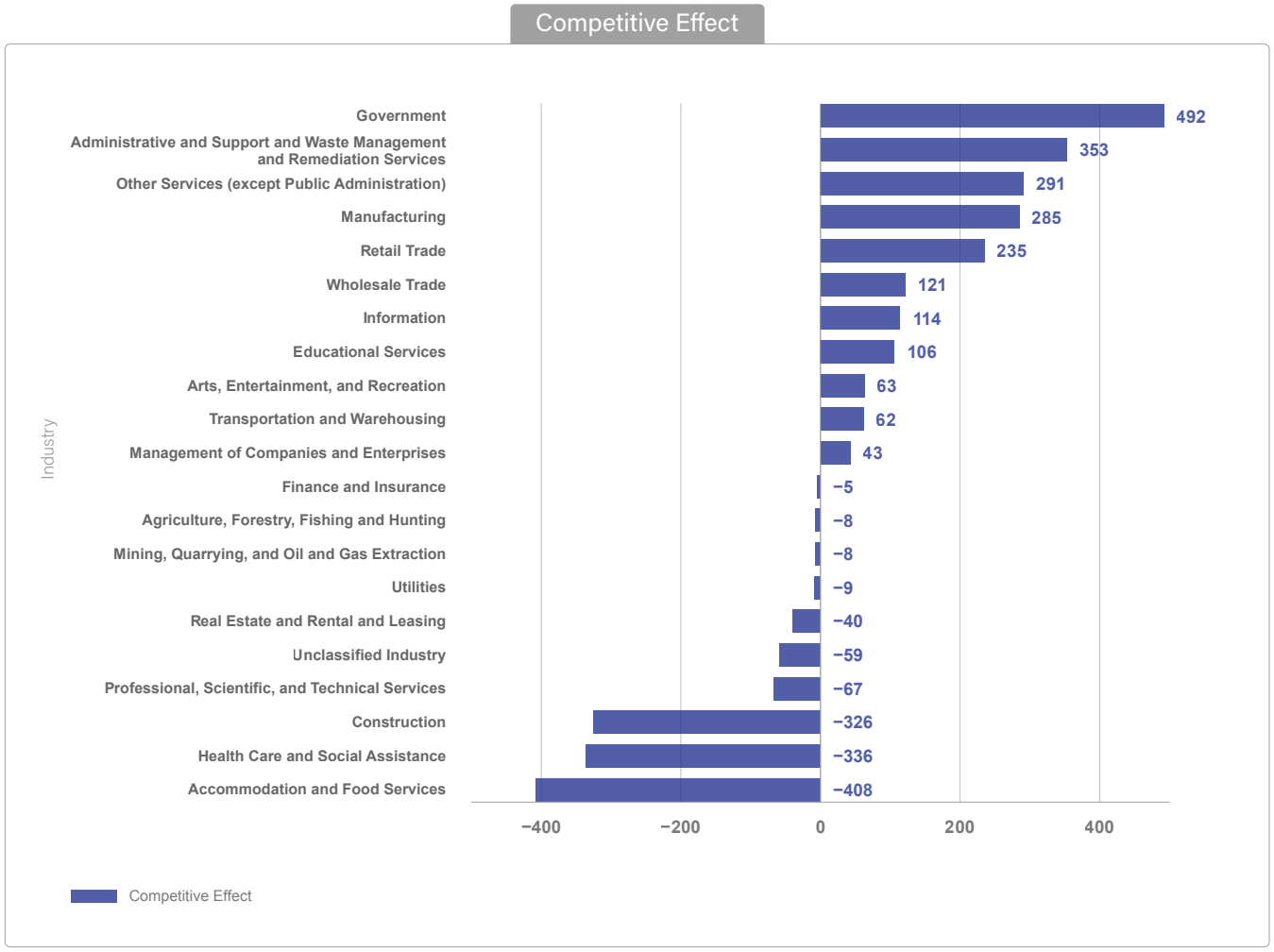


Figure 14: Competitive Effect by Industry in Region 6. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Table 9: Shift Share Calculations by Industry in Region 6 (2025-2029). *Source: Lightcast 2025.*

Description	Industry Mix Effect	National Growth Effect	Expected Change	Competitive Effect
Government	(730)	1,432	703	492
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	(60)	285	225	353
Other Services (except Public Administration)	(83)	397	314	291
Manufacturing	(62)	175	113	285
Retail Trade	(769)	814	45	235
Wholesale Trade	(67)	130	64	121
Information	18	47	64	114
Educational Services	24	99	123	106
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	89	110	199	63
Transportation and Warehousing	207	223	430	62
Management of Companies and Enterprises	52	64	116	43
Finance and Insurance	2	188	190	(5)
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	(35)	64	30	(8)
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	(3)	6	3	(8)
Utilities	(3)	14	11	(9)
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	8	88	96	(40)
Unclassified Industry	62	15	77	(59)
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	314	439	753	(67)
Construction	(50)	378	328	(326)
Health Care and Social Assistance	594	754	1,348	(336)
Accommodation and Food Services	(7)	565	558	(408)

Historical Shift Share Analysis

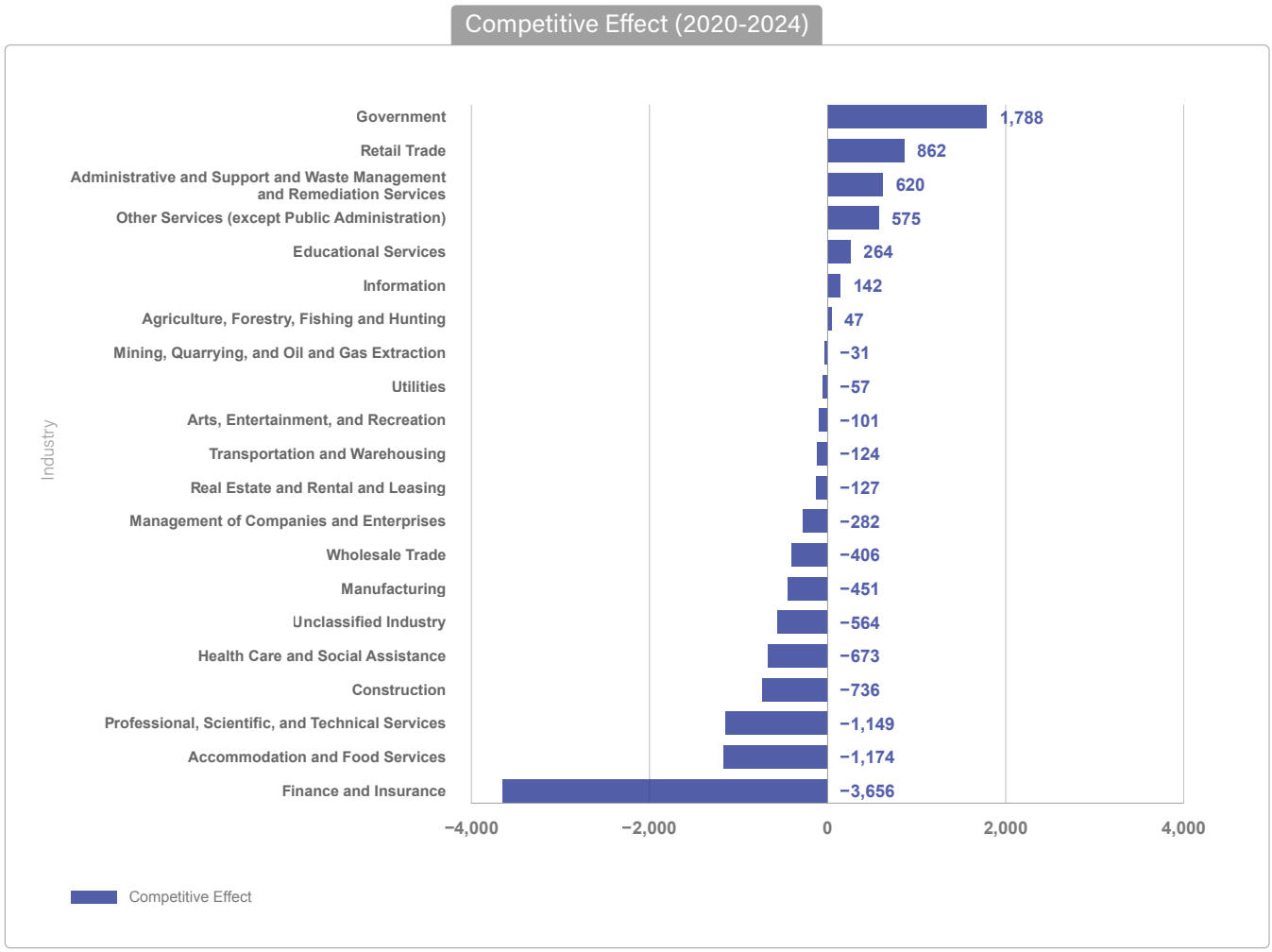


Figure 15: Historical Competitive Effect by Industry in Region 6 (2020-2024). Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Table 10: Historical Shift Share Calculations by Industry in Region 6 (2020-2024). *Source: Lightcast 2025.2*

Description	Industry Mix Effect	National Growth Effect	Expected Change	Competitive Effect
Government	(2,031)	3,868	1,838	1,788
Retail Trade	(1,130)	2,221	1,091	862
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	(192)	714	522	620
Other Services (except Public Administration)	(298)	1,035	737	575
Educational Services	(70)	243	174	264
Information	(18)	109	91	142
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	(191)	187	(4)	47
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	(2)	19	18	(31)
Utilities	(7)	43	36	(57)
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	745	232	977	(101)
Transportation and Warehousing	330	568	898	(124)
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	(4)	248	244	(127)
Management of Companies and Enterprises	45	189	233	(282)
Wholesale Trade	(63)	387	324	(406)
Manufacturing	(200)	518	318	(451)
Unclassified Industry	421	54	475	(564)
Health Care and Social Assistance	426	2,032	2,458	(673)
Construction	26	1,087	1,114	(736)
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	249	1,247	1,497	(1,149)
Accommodation and Food Services	2,448	1,413	3,861	(1,174)
Finance and Insurance	(523)	876	353	(3,656)

Gross Regional Product

GRP measures the final market value of all goods and services produced in the region of study. GRP is similar to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP); the only difference is that the former measures only industries within the county while the latter measures industries at the national level.

In Region 6, the Government industry creates the most dollar value, with a GRP of $6.20 billion in 2024. Other high-value private industries in the county include Retail Trade and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industries, which were evaluated as having GRPs of $2.54 billion and $2.10 billion, respectively, in 2024.

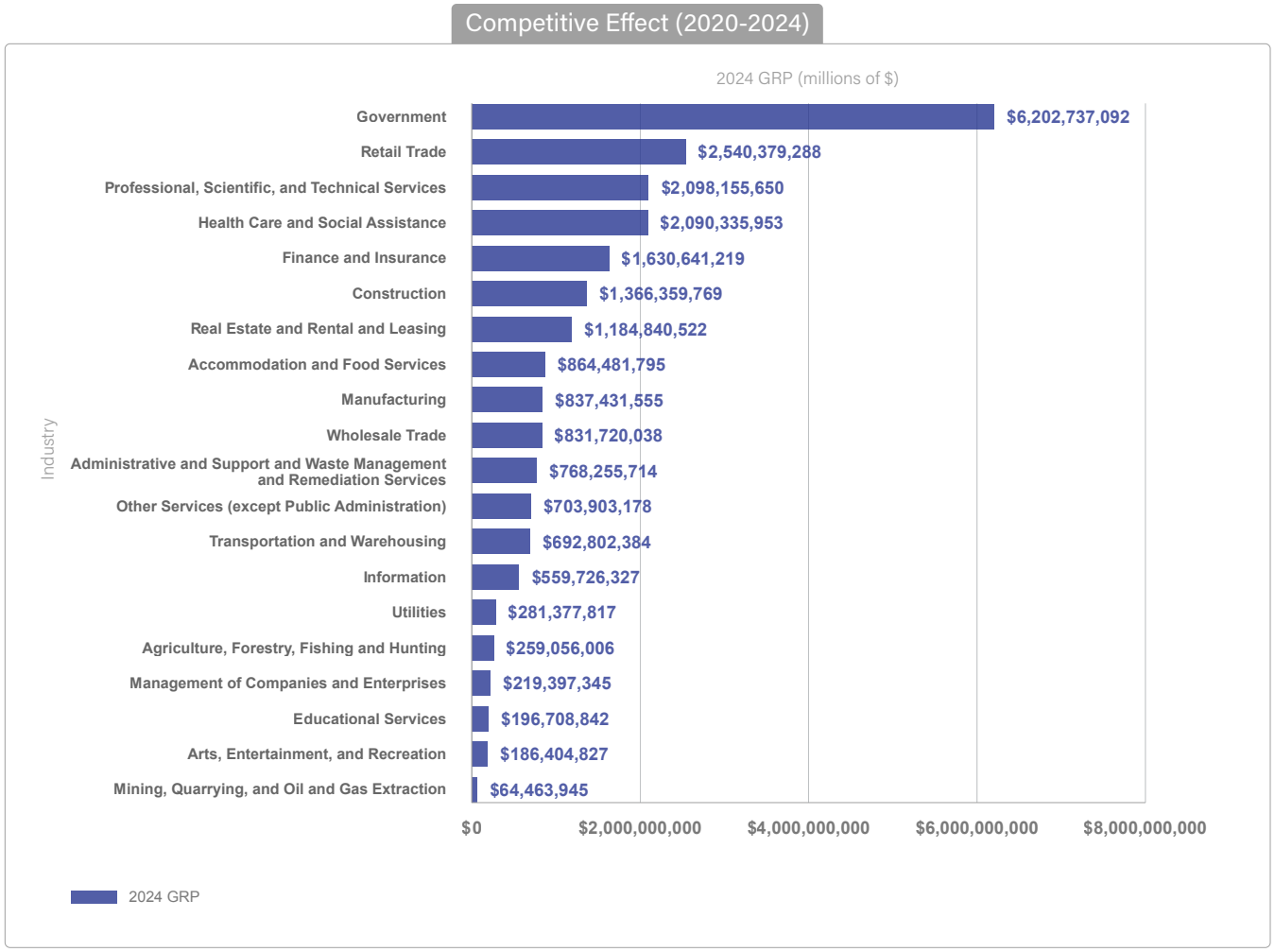
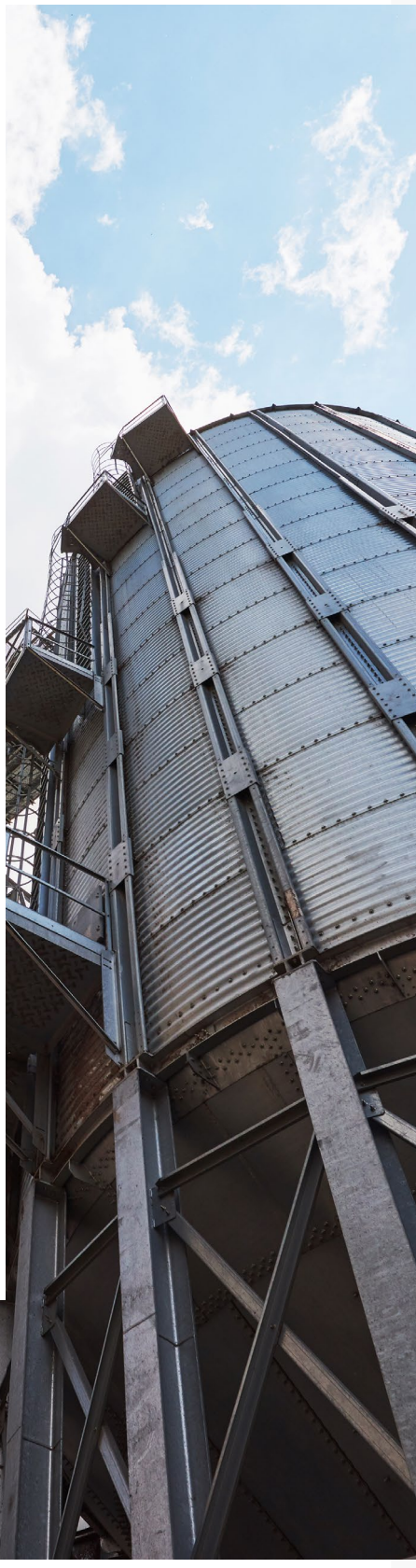


Figure 16: GRP by Industry in Region 6. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Appendix 2: Target Industry Data & Maps



Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster

The Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster includes three industries at the 6-digit NAICS level.

Table 11: Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster

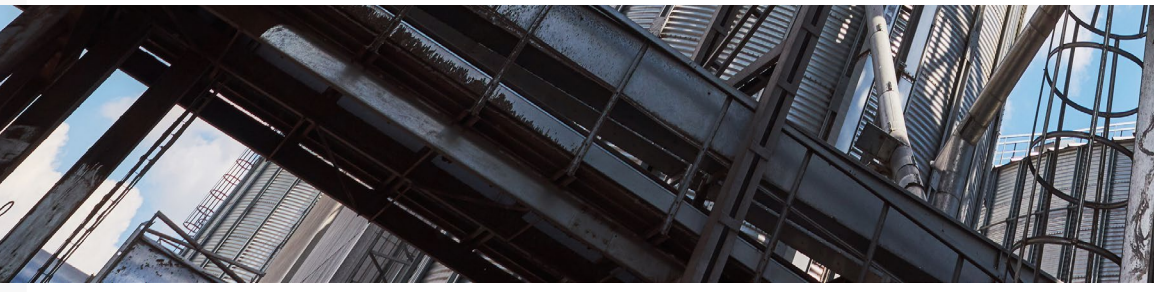
NAICS	Industry Description
311710	Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging
114112	Shellfish Fishing
112512	Shellfish Farming

Due to the suppression of agriculture data at the federal level, data on the "Shellfish Farming" industry, specifically, are not available. The most specific data on this industry are those provided for the "Animal Production" industry (NAICS 112). In cases where the entire cluster has been analyzed collectively, it should be noted that the data include the "Animal Production" industry instead of the "Shellfish Farming" industry, and therefore some of the estimates might be inflated.

Industry Cluster Employment

In 2014, there were 750 workers in the combined "Shellfish Fishing" and "Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging" industries. By 2024, that figure had decreased to 565 workers. By 2034, that figure is projected to fall by 475 workers.

Employment in the "Animal Production" industry, which includes the "Shellfish Farming" industry, increased between 2014 and 2024, and that increase is expected to continue through 2034. It is difficult to know whether that trend is true for the smaller "Shellfish Farming" industry within it.



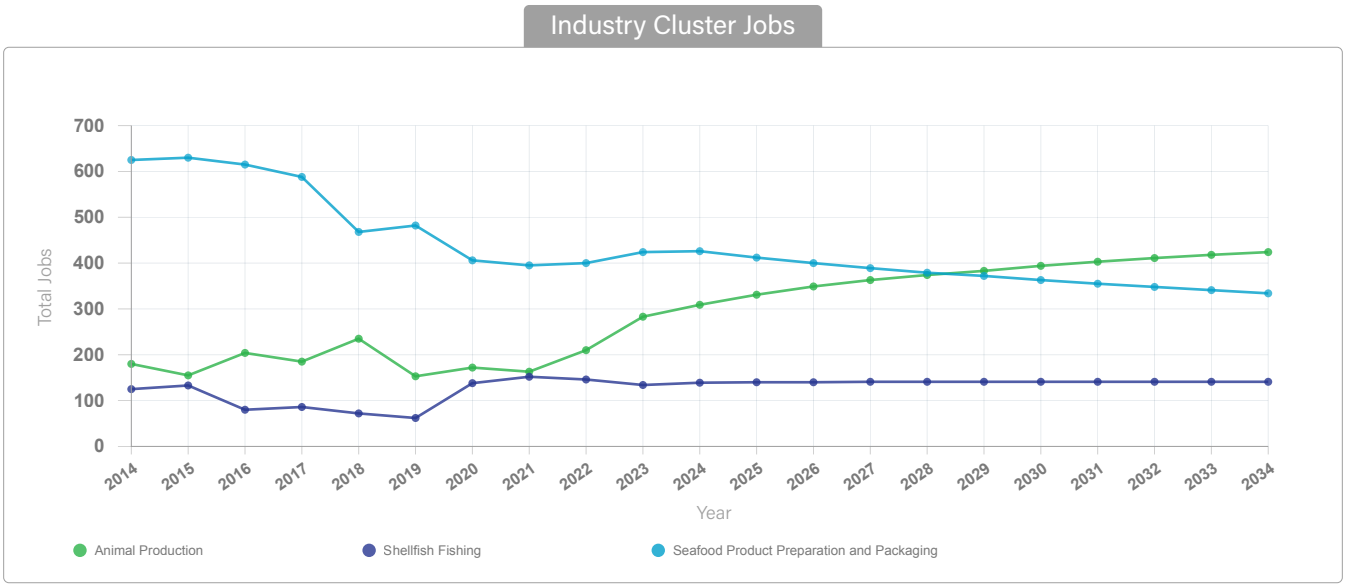


Figure 17: Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster Employment. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Payrolled Business Locations

In 2024, there were 51 payrolled business locations in the Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster in Region 6. The "Animal Production" industry, which includes industries other than "Shellfish Farming," represents the majority of those payrolled business locations; therefore, it is likely that the total estimate is inflated.

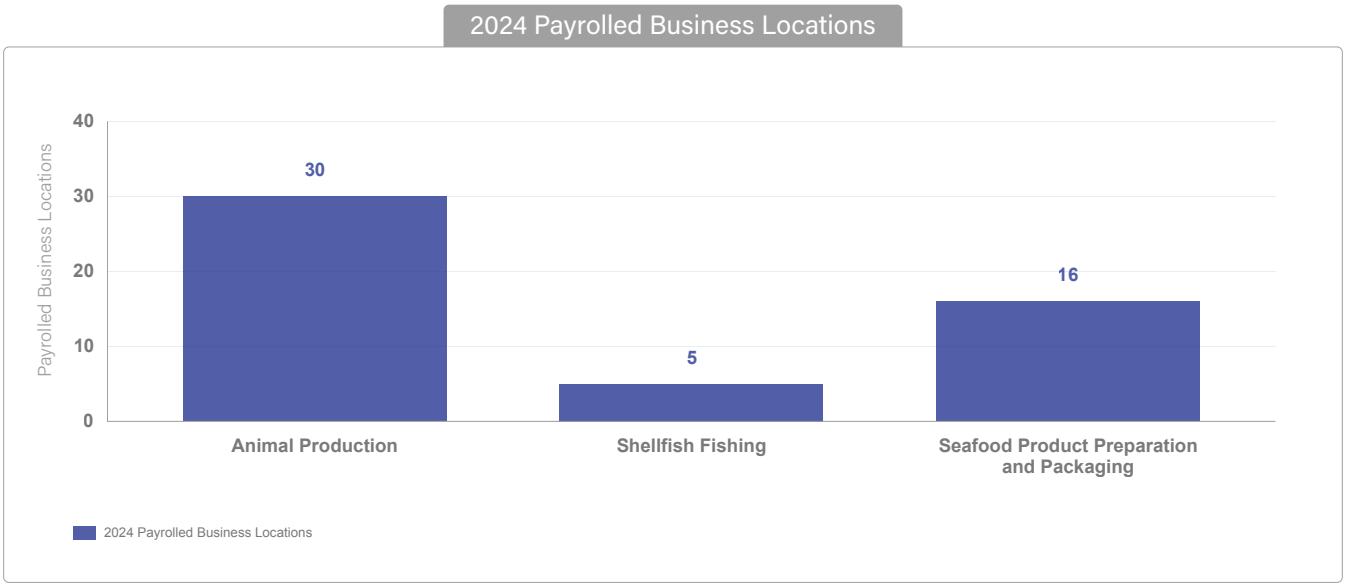


Figure 18: Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster Payrolled Business Locations. Source: Lightcast 2025.

Employment Concentration

Both "Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging" and "Shellfish Fishing" industries are very highly concentrated in Region 6. This indicates high potential to export the products of local businesses to external markets. While the employment concentration of the "Animal Production" industry is low, it is possible that employment in the "Shellfish Farming" industry, in particular, is much higher in Region 6.

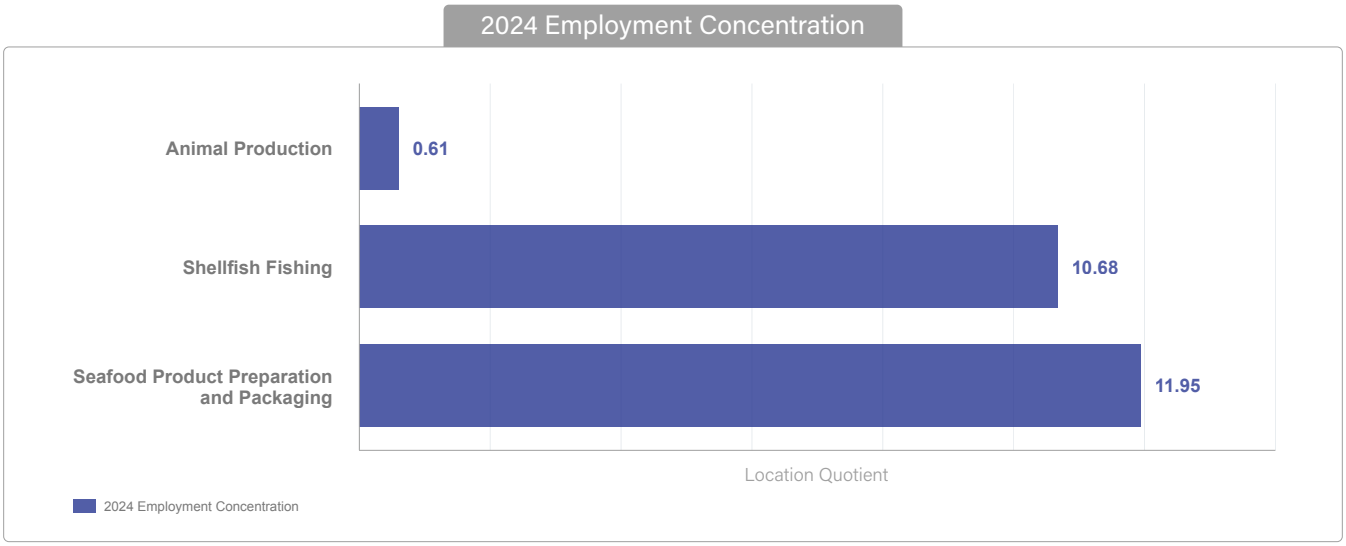


Figure 19: Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster Employment Concentration. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Gross Regional Product

Collectively, the GRP of the three industries included in Figure 17 was estimated at $98.5 million in 2024. That of the "Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging" industry was estimated at $39.7 million, which is much higher than that of the "Shellfish Fishing" industry ($11.4 million).

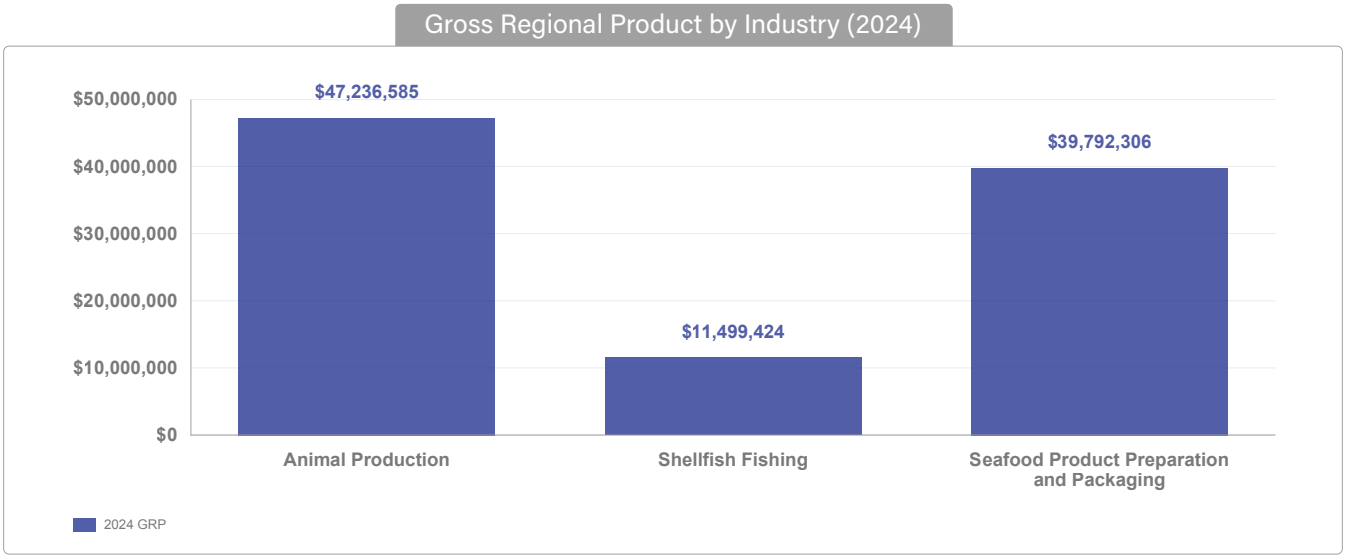


Figure 20: Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster GRP. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Sales & Demand

For the cluster as a whole, the sales figures of businesses in Region 6 are much higher than regional demand. These data help validate the implication of the employment concentration graph: the goods produced by these industries far surpass local demand, which means that a large share of those goods are exported outside of the region.

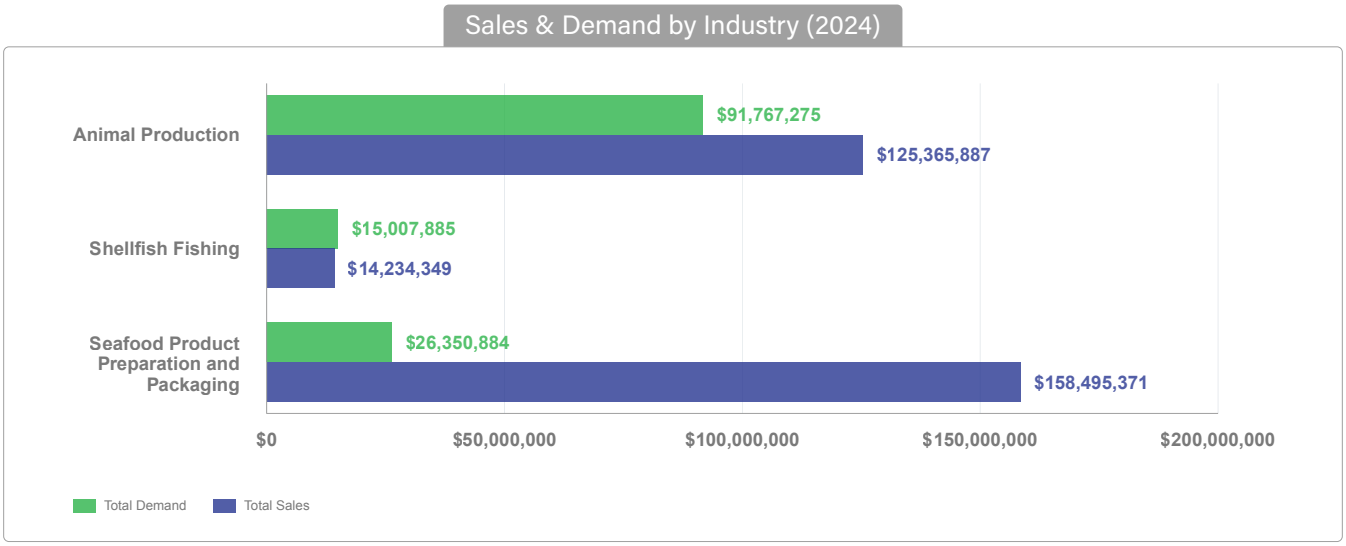


Figure 21: Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster Sales & Demand. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Annual Earnings

The average annual earnings increased between 2019 and 2024 for all industries in the cluster. Workers in the "Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging" industry generally earn the highest wages, while workers in the "Shellfish Fishing" industry earn the lowest wages in the cluster.

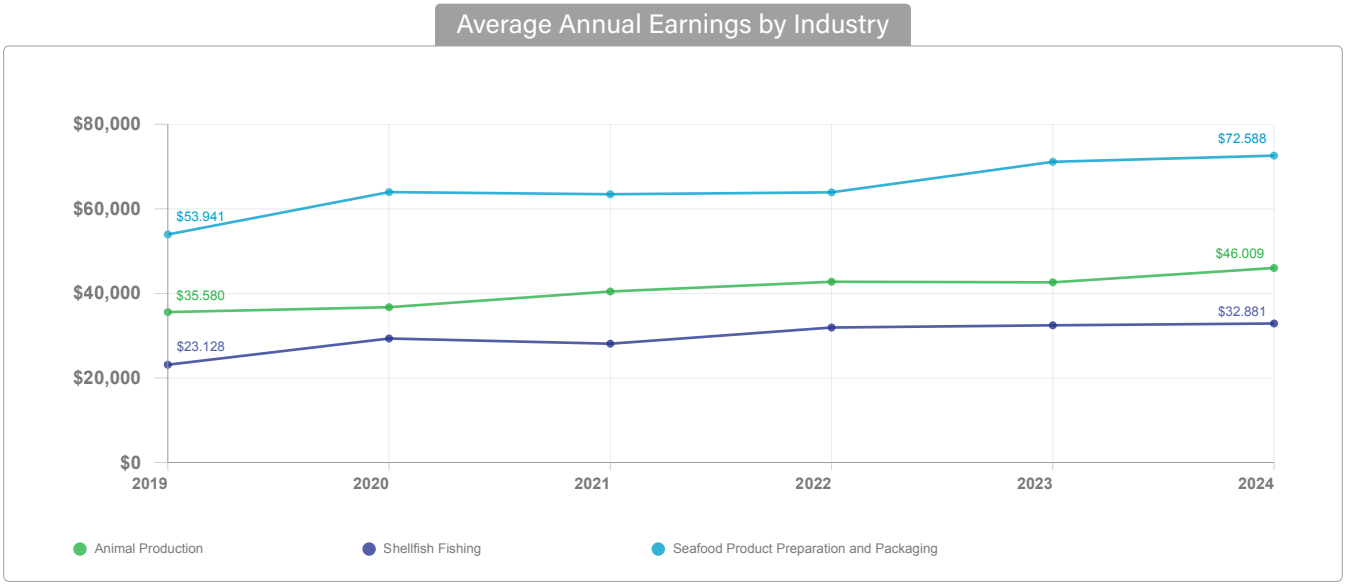


Figure 22: Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster Average Annual Earnings. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Common Occupations

In Table 11, the most common occupations of workers employed in these industries are provided. Overall, the education level required to secure an entry-level job in the cluster is relatively low; all of the occupations listed typically require a high school diploma, an equivalent certification, or no formal educational credential at all. Median hourly earnings range from $13-$20/hour.

Table 12: Common Occupations in Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster.
Source: Lightcast 2025.2

SOC	Description	Employed in Industry Group (2024)	% of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2024)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry-Level Education
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	157	17.9%	$14.19	High school diploma or equivalent
45-3031	Fishing and Hunting Workers	120	13.7%	$16.42	No formal educational credential
51-3022	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	103	11.8%	$17.87	No formal educational credential
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	54	6.2%	$13.46	No formal educational credential
45-2093	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	40	4.6%	$15.09	No formal educational credential
53-7064	Packers and Packagers, Hand	32	3.7%	$16.81	No formal educational credential
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	24	2.7%	$19.03	No formal educational credential
51-9199	Production Workers, All Other	20	2.3%	$17.20	High school diploma or equivalent
51-3099	Food Processing Workers, All Other	20	2.3%	$17.98	No formal educational credential
45-2099	Agricultural Workers, All Other	20	2.2%	$17.33	No formal educational credential

Employment Maps

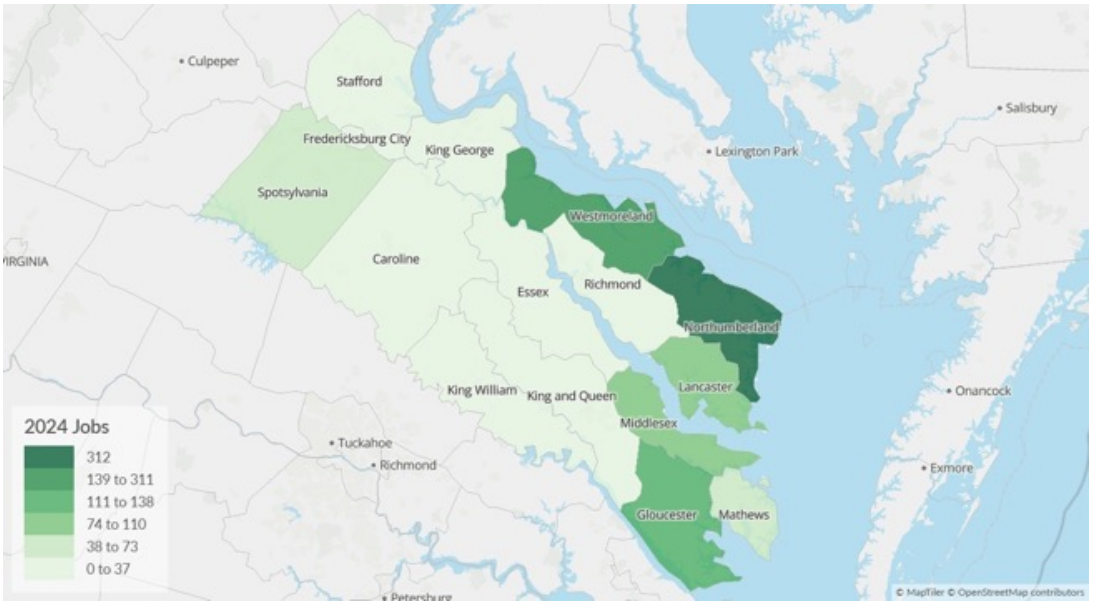


Figure 23 : Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster 2024 Jobs. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

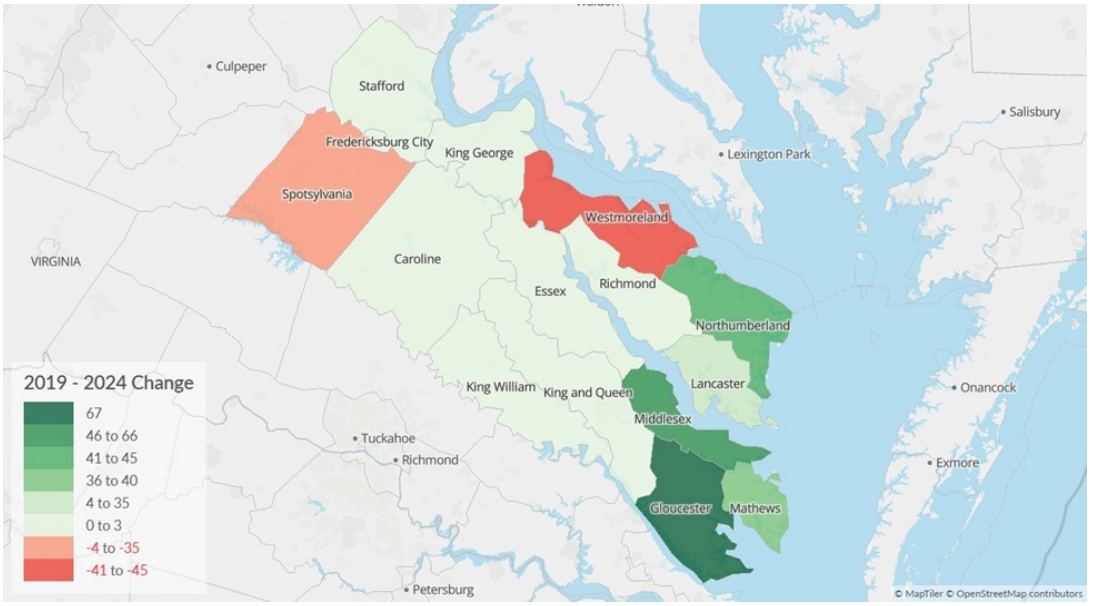


Figure 24: Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster 2019-2024 Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

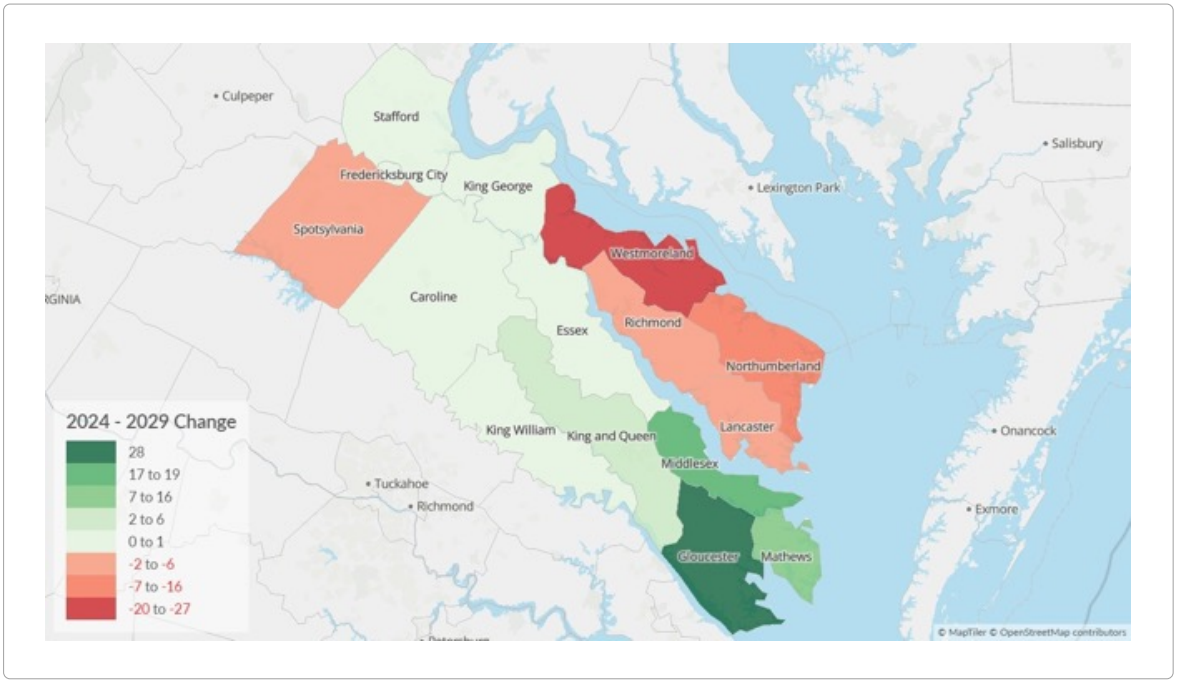


Figure 25 : Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industry Cluster 2024-2029 Projected Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster

The Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster includes six industries at the 6-digit NAICS level

Table 13 : Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster

NAICS	Industry Description
493110	General Warehousing and Storage
484110	General Freight Trucking
484220	Specialized Freight (except Used Goods) Trucking, Local
425120	Wholesale Trade Agents and Brokers
423830	Industrial Machinery and Equipment Merchant Wholesalers
484121	General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload

Industry Cluster Employment

In 2014, there were 2,074 workers employed in the Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster in Region 6. By 2024, that figure had risen to 3,335 workers. Employment levels in the industry cluster are projected to remain relatively constant through 2034.

Figure 26 : Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster Employment. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Payrolled Business Locations

There were 266 payrolled business locations in Region 6's Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster in 2024. The largest of these industries – measured by payrolled business locations – is the "Wholesale Trade Agents and Brokers" industry, with 72 locations in the region. The smallest industry, with 14 locations in the region, is the "General Warehousing and Storage" industry.

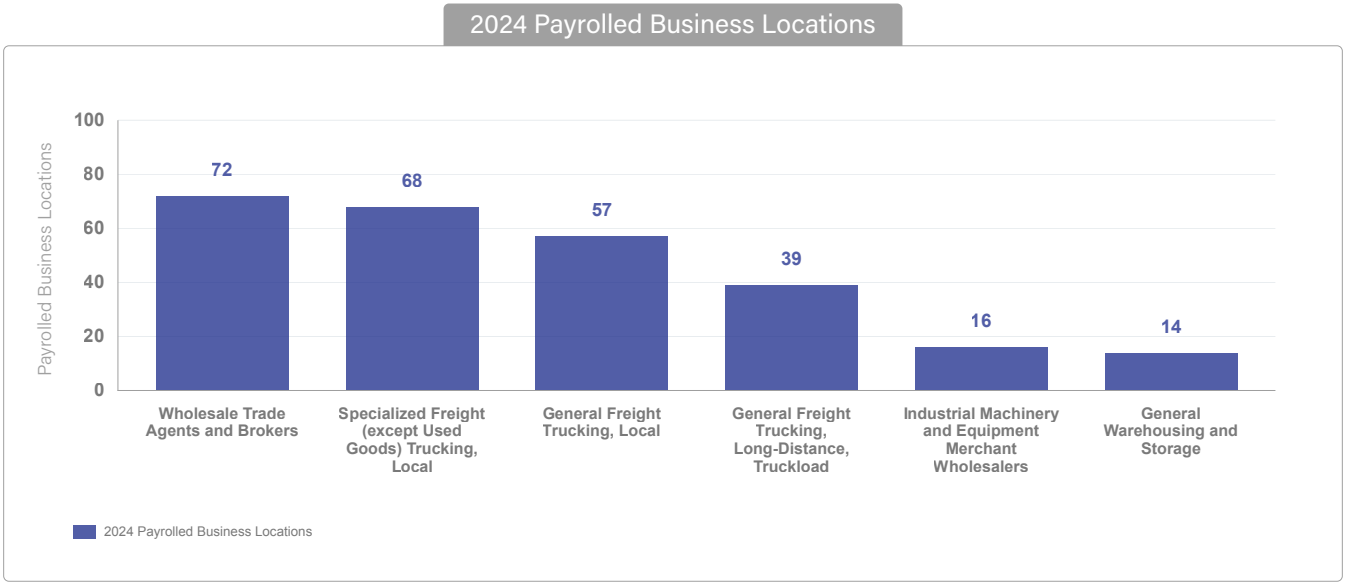


Figure 27: Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster Payrolled Business Locations. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Employment Concentration

Of the six industries in the cluster, two have a relatively high employment concentration. The "Specialized Freight (except Used Goods) Trucking, Local" industry is most highly concentrated, with a location quotient of 1.62. This indicates that there are 1.6 more jobs in the industry in Region 6 than in other comparable regions across the county. There is also a high concentration of regional employment in the "General Freight Trucking, Local" industry. Other industries in the cluster are less highly concentrated in Region 6.

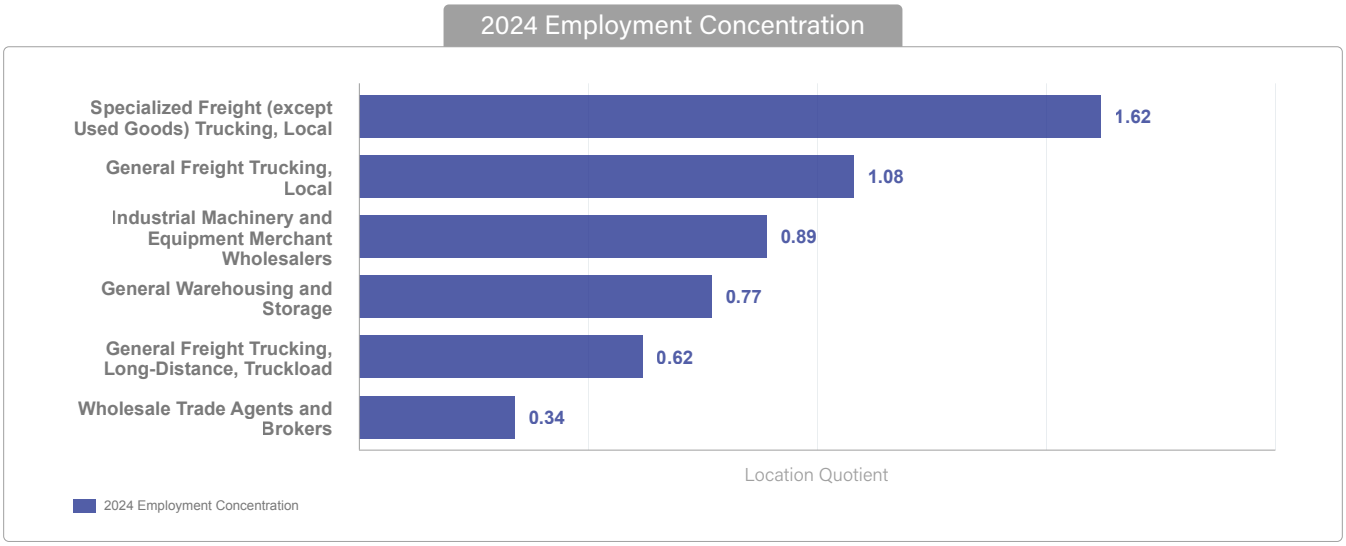


Figure 28 : Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster Employment Concentration. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Gross Regional Product

Collectively, the Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster's estimated GRP in 2024 was $415 million. The "General Warehousing and Storage" industry had the highest GRP of the group, estimated at $132 million. The GRP of other industries in the cluster ranged from $44 million to $72 million.

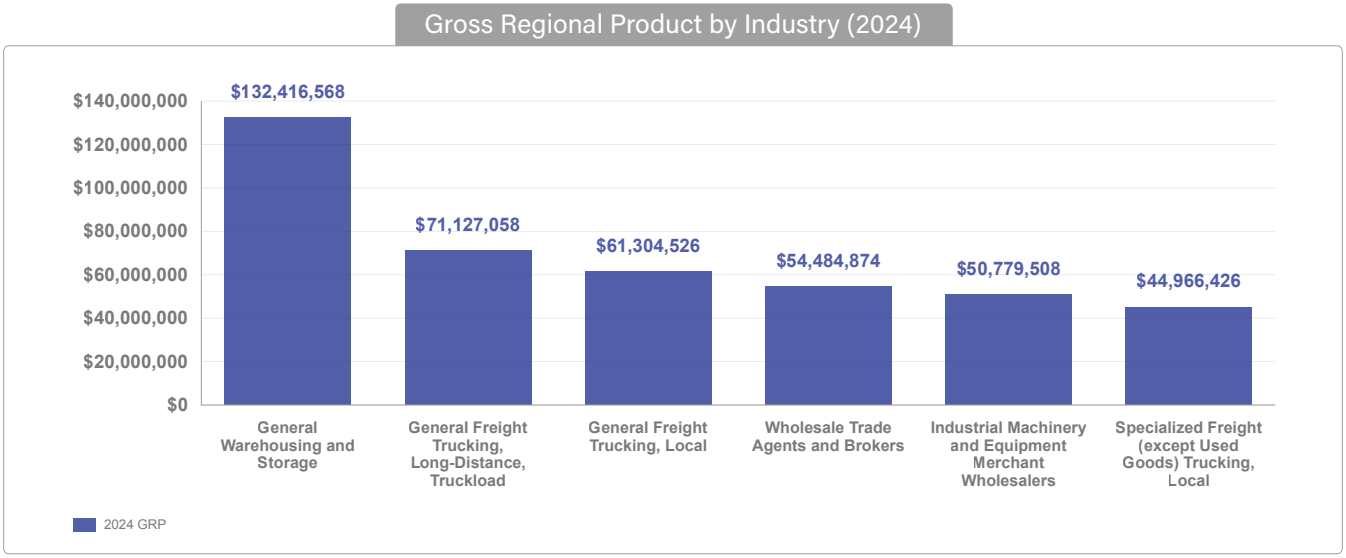


Figure 29 : Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster GRP. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Sales & Demand

For some industries in the Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster, regional demand is higher than the sales made by regional businesses; this is true for the "Wholesale Trade Agents and Brokers," "Industrial Machinery and Equipment Merchant Wholesalers," and "General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload" industries. The remaining industries generate more than enough sales to meet regional demand.

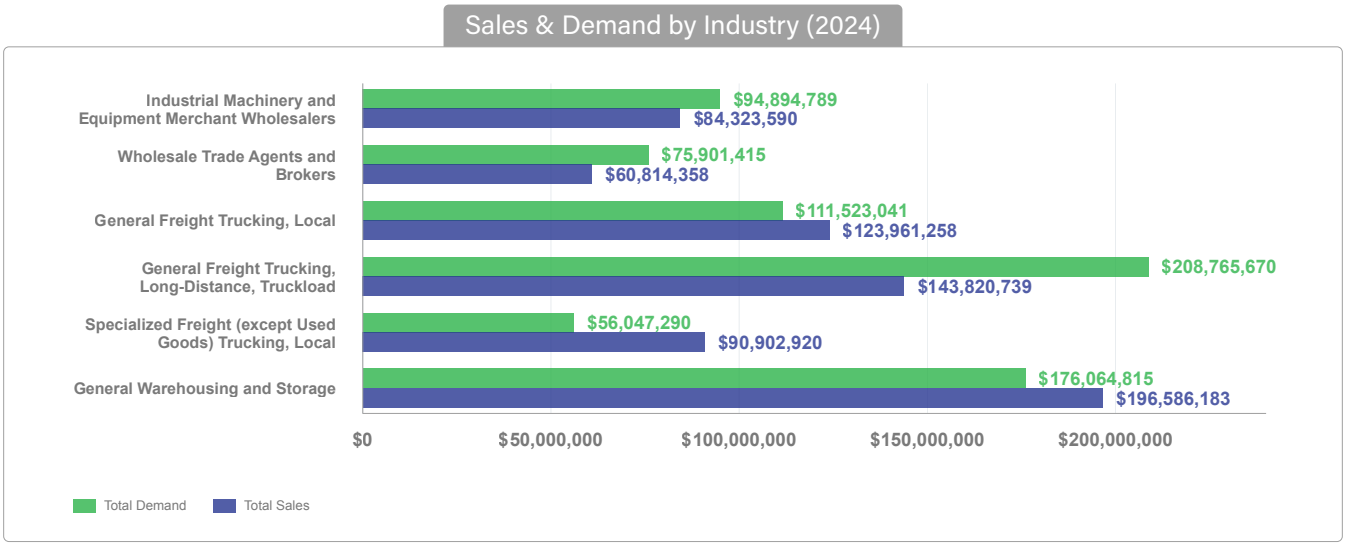


Figure 30: Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster Sales & Demand. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Annual Earnings

In Figure 28, the average annual earnings between 2019 and 2024 are provided for each industry in the cluster. Over the five-year period, earnings increased in all industries. In 2024, earnings were highest in the "Wholesale Trade Agents and Brokers" industry, with the average worker earning $125,000/year.

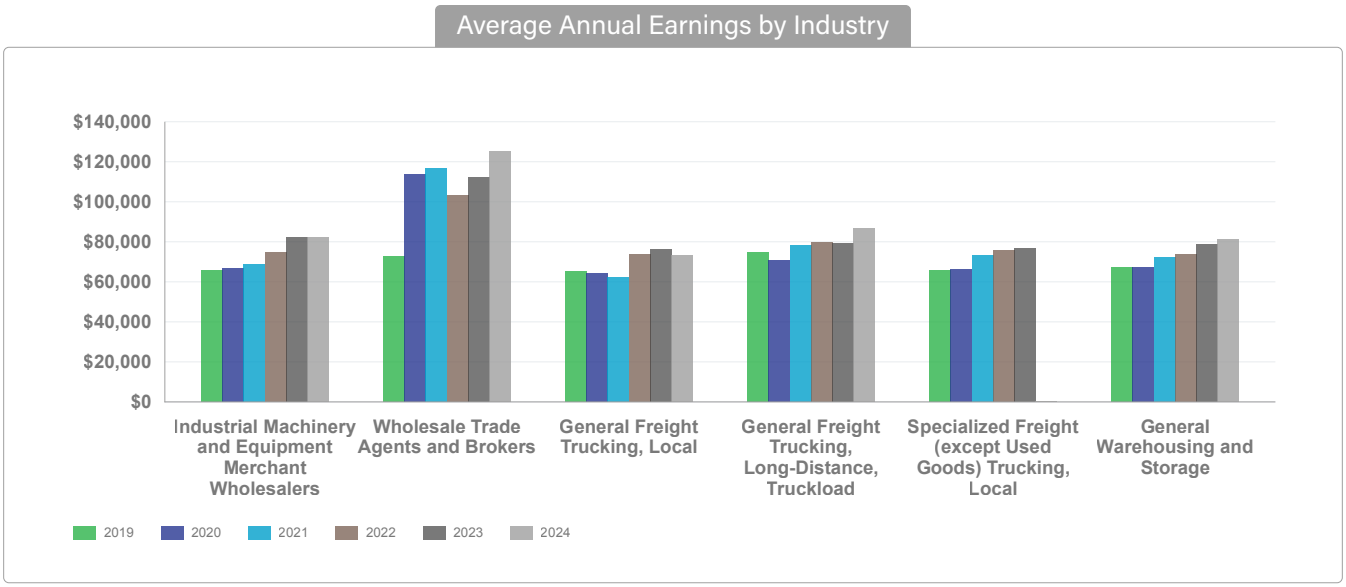


Figure 31: Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster Average Annual Earnings. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Common Occupations

In Table 13, the most common occupations in the Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster are provided. Collectively, these occupations make up more than 70% of the cluster's workforce in Region 6. Workers in these occupations earn between $18-$58/hour, and the education level required for an entry-level position varies widely. Some occupations require no formal educational credential, while others typically require a bachelor's degree.

Table 14 : Common Occupations in the Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster. *Source: Lightcast 2025.2*

SOC	Description	Employed in Industry Group (2024)	% of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2024)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry-Level Education
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,017	30.5%	$24.96	Postsecondary nondegree award
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	359	10.8%	$18.37	High school diploma or equivalent
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	340	10.2%	$19.03	No formal educational credential
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	219	6.6%	$25.36	No formal educational credential
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	104	3.1%	$19.26	High school diploma or equivalent
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	86	2.6%	$31.11	High school diploma or equivalent
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	83	2.5%	$57.23	Bachelor's degree
53-1047	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	80	2.4%	$26.42	High school diploma or equivalent
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	57	1.7%	$19.83	High school diploma or equivalent
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	51	1.5%	$19.78	High school diploma or equivalent

Employment Maps

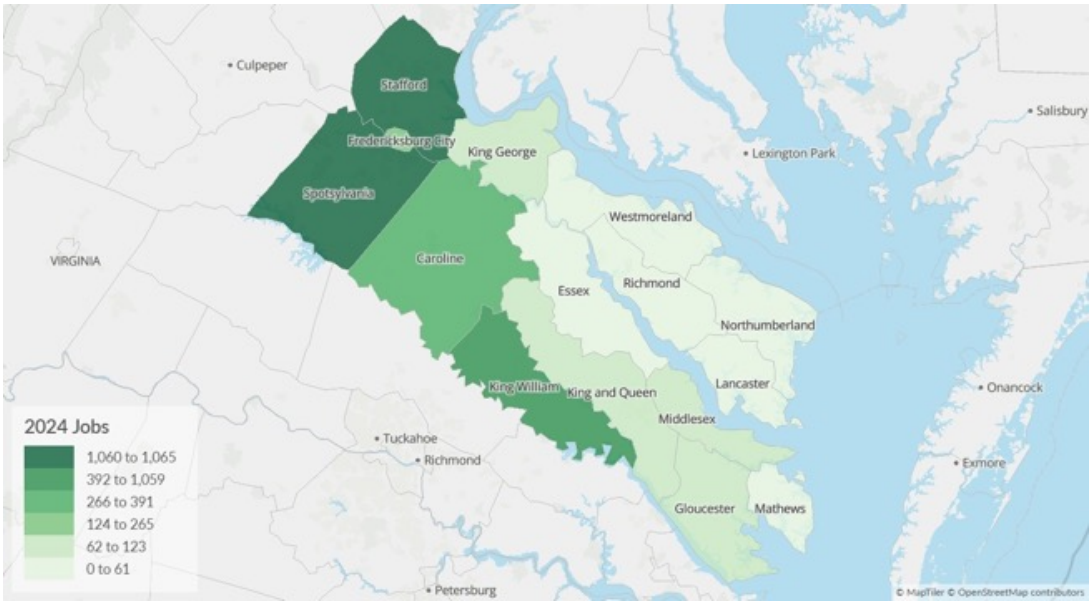


Figure 32 : Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster 2024 Jobs. Source: Lightcast 2025.

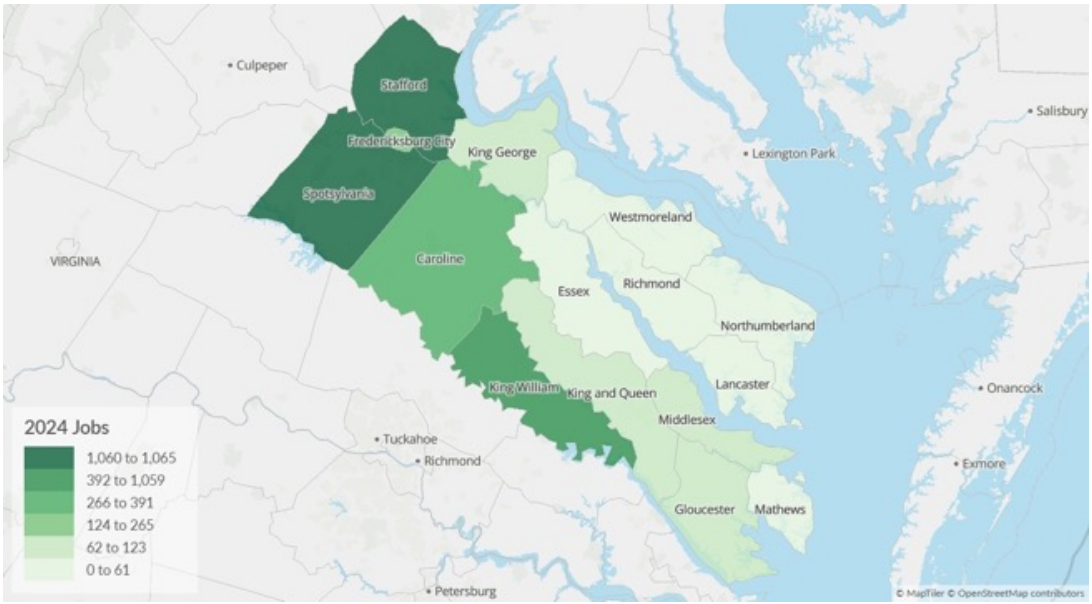


Figure 33: Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster 2019-2024 Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Figure 34 : Distribution and Logistics Industry Cluster 2024-2029 Projected Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster

The Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster includes four industries at the 6-digit NAICS level

Table 15: Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster

NAICS	Industry Description
321113	Sawmills
322121	Paper Mills
113310	Logging
111421	Nursery and Tree Production

Due to the suppression of agriculture data at the federal level, data for the "Nursery and Tree Production" industry, specifically, are not available. The most specific data on this industry are those provided for the "Crop Production" industry (NAICS 111). In cases where the entire cluster has been analyzed collectively, it should be noted that the data include the "Crop Production" industry instead of the "Nursery and Tree Production" industry, and therefore some of the estimates might be inflated

Industry Cluster Employment

In 2014, there were 1,103 workers in the combined "Logging," "Sawmills," and "Paper Mills" industries. In 2024, that figure had increased slightly to 1,206 workers. By 2034, that figure is projected to decrease slightly, to 1,040 workers.

The "Crop Production" industry – of which the "Nursery and Tree Production" industry is only a part – saw a significant decline in Region 6 between 2014 and 2024, but employment levels are projected to remain relatively stable through 2034

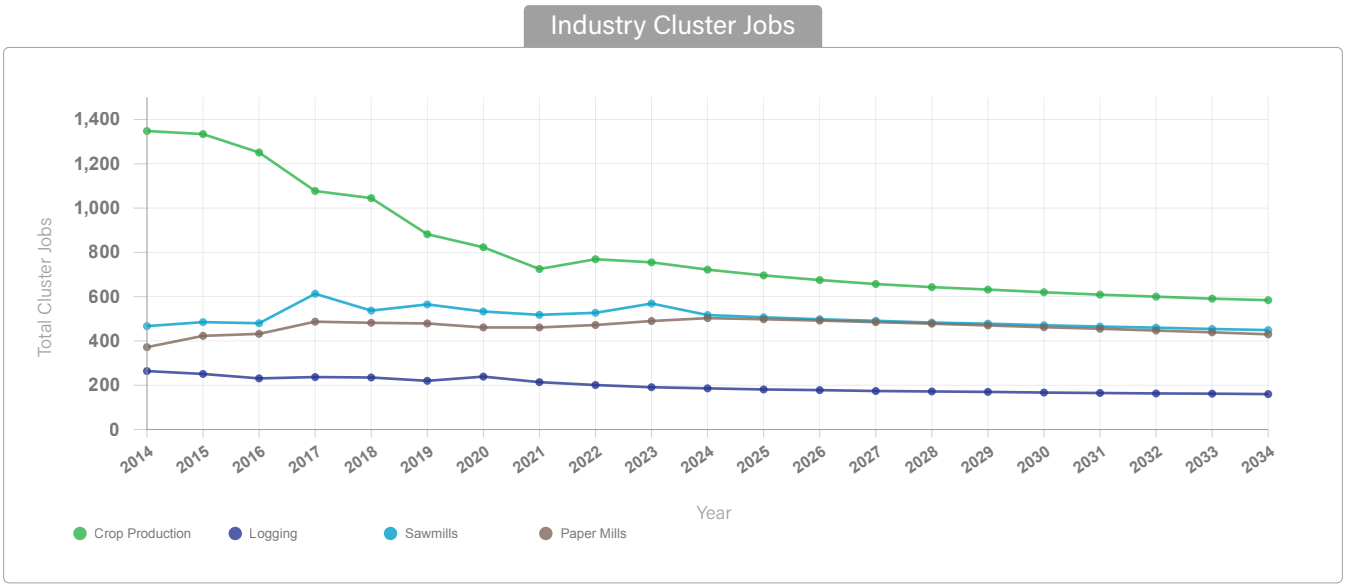


Figure 35: Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster Employment. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Payrolled Business Locations

In 2024, there were 109 payrolled business locations in the Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster in Region 6. The "Crop Production" industry, which includes industries other than "Nursery and Tree Production," represents the majority of those payrolled business locations; therefore, it is likely that the total estimate is inflated. There are 22 businesses in both the "Logging" and "Sawmills" industries, and only 1 in the "Paper Mills" industry.

Figure 36: Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster Payrolled Business Location. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Employment Concentration

All industries in the Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster are highly concentrated in Region 6, except for the "Crop Production" industry. This does not necessarily mean that the "Nursery and Tree Production" industry is not also highly concentrated in the region. The "Paper Mills" industry – which is the most highly concentrated – employs more than 9 times as many workers in Region 6 as it does in other comparable regions across the country. High employment concentration indicates potential to export the goods or services provided by these industries.

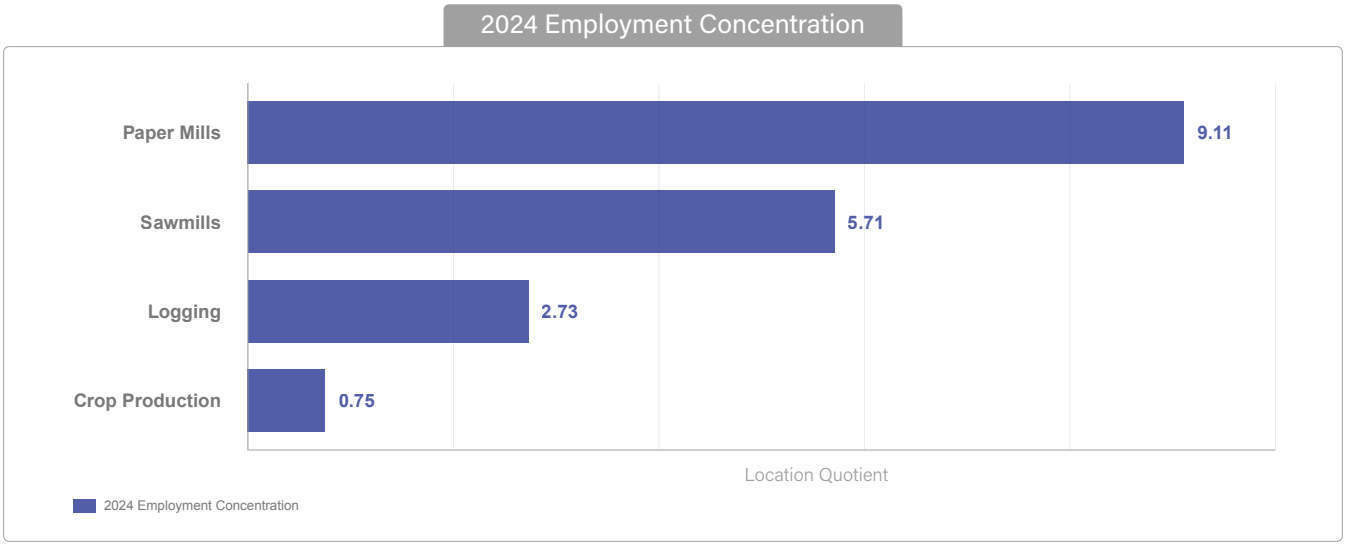


Figure 37: Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster Employment Concentration. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Gross Regional Product

The GRP of the Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster was $358 million in 2024. The "Paper Mills" industry's GRP was the highest of the group, estimated at $157 million. The industry with the lowest GRP was "Logging," which was estimated at $17 million.

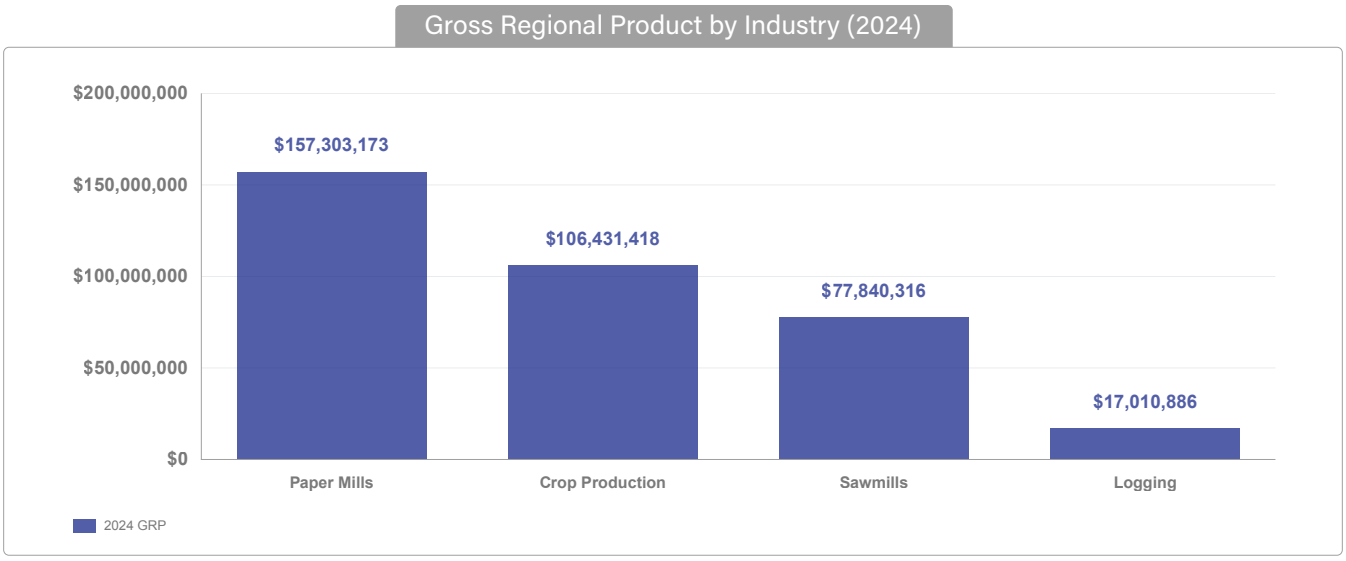


Figure 38: Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster GRP. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Sales & Demand

For every industry except for "Logging," the sales made by Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster businesses in Region 6 are greater than the demand for the goods or services provided by those businesses; this indicates that a large part of these businesses' sales is being made outside of the region, which can benefit the regional economy.

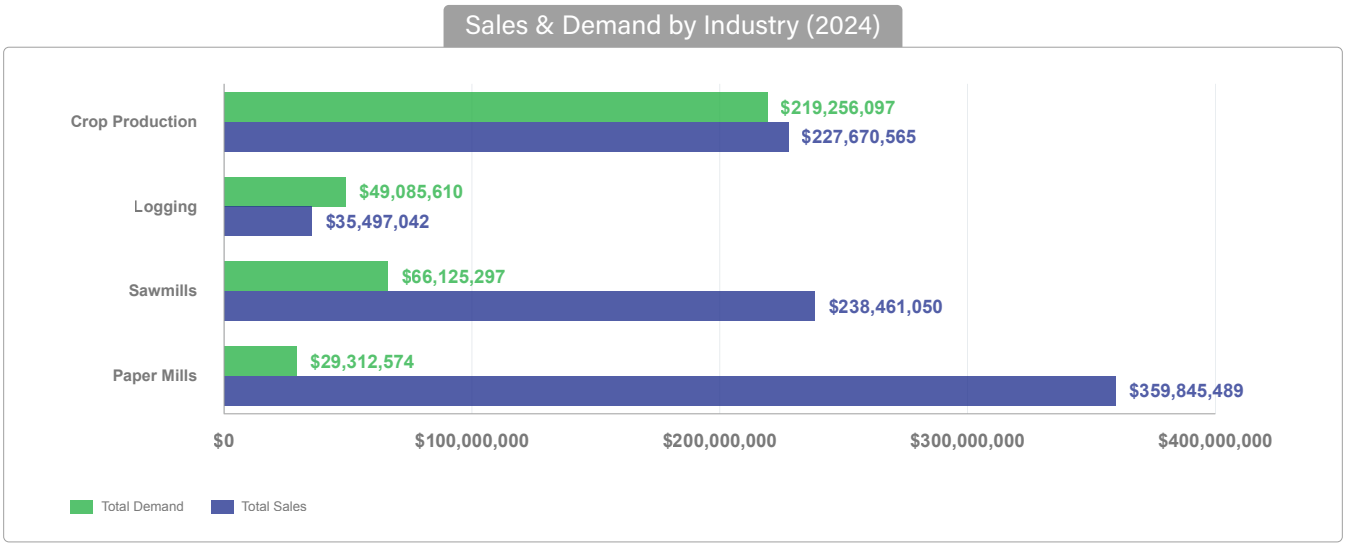


Figure 39: Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster Sales & Demand. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Annual Earnings

In Figure 37, the average annual earnings are provided for each industry in the cluster for 2019-2024. Earnings have increased over the five-year period for each industry. Workers in the "Paper Mills" industry typically earn the highest wages; in 2024, the average worker in this industry earned $130,212.

Figure 40: Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster Average Annual Earnings. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Common Occupations

In Table 15, the most common occupations of workers employed in these industries are provided. Generally, the education level required to acquire an entry-level job in the Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster is relatively low; most of the occupations listed require a high school diploma, an equivalent certification, or no formal educational credential at all. Only one occupation – Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers – requires a postsecondary nondegree award. Median hourly earnings range from $13-$30/hour.

Table 16: Common Occupations in the Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster. *Source: Lightcast 2025.2*

SOC	Description	Employed in Industry Group (2024)	% of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2024)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry-Level Education
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	323	16.7%	$14.19	High school diploma or equivalent
51-9196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	181	9.4%	$23.22	High school diploma or equivalent
51-7041	Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	129	6.7%	$19.03	High school diploma or equivalent

SOC	Description	Employed in Industry Group (2024)	% of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2024)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry-Level Education
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	121	6.3%	$13.46	No formal educational credential
45-4022	Logging Equipment Operators	100	5.2%	$20.24	High school diploma or equivalent
45-2093	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	71	3.7%	$15.09	No formal educational credential
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	70	3.6%	$19.03	No formal educational credential
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	59	3.0%	$24.96	Postsecondary nondegree award
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	54	2.8%	$25.36	No formal educational credential
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	50	2.6%	$29.85	High school diploma or equivalent

Employment Maps

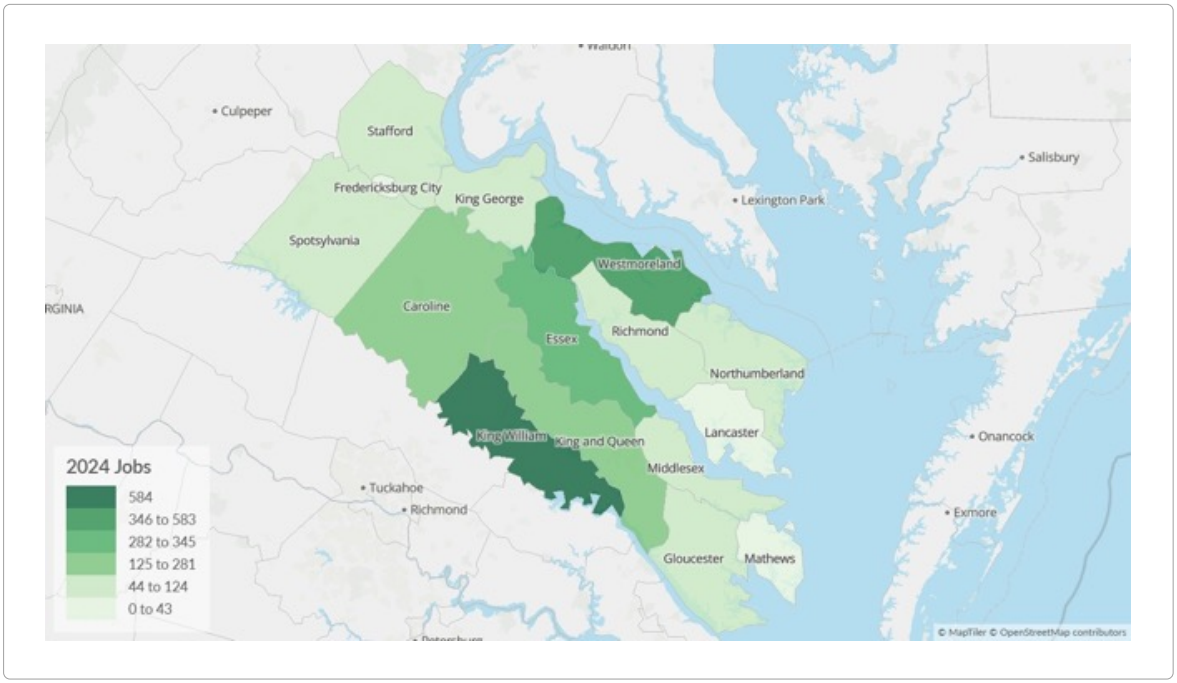


Figure 41: Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster 2024 Jobs. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

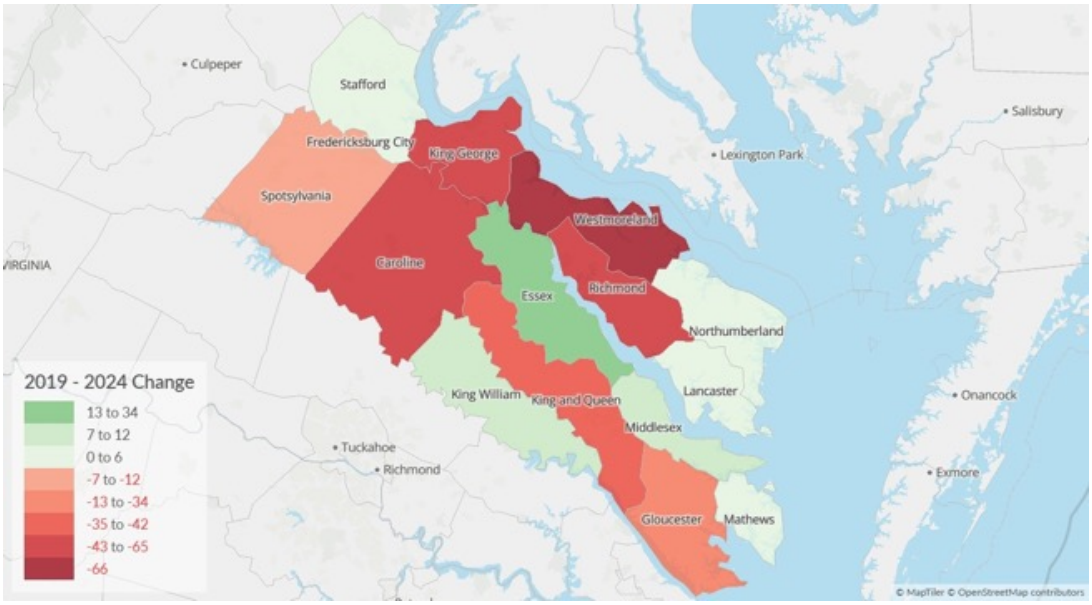


Figure 42: Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster 2019-2024 Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

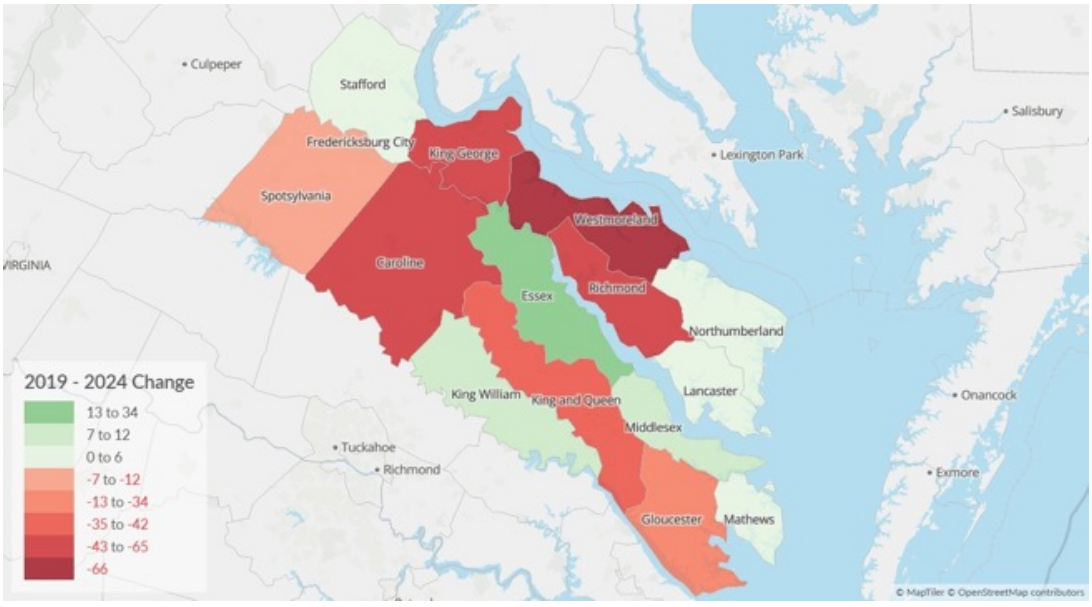


Figure 43: Forestry and Wood Products Industry Cluster 2024-2029 Projected Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Manufacturing Industry Cluster

The Manufacturing Industry Cluster is defined to be a much larger cluster in Region 6 than the other five target industry clusters. This industry cluster includes all industries with NAICS codes that start with 31, 32, and 33. Overall, there are 346 6-digit NAICS codes that fall into the cluster. In order to provide informative data on the industry cluster in this report, all industry data in this section have been pulled at the 3-digit level; at this level, 22 industries are included in the Manufacturing Industry Cluster. Those industries are the following:

Table 17: Manufacturing Industry Cluster

NAICS	Industry Description
311	Food Manufacturing
312	Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing
313	Textile Mills
314	Textile Product Mills
315	Apparel Manufacturing
316	Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing
321	Wood Product Manufacturing
322	Paper Manufacturing
323	Printing and Related Support Activities
324	Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing
325	Chemical Manufacturing
326	Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing
327	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing
331	Primary Metal Manufacturing
332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
333	Machinery Manufacturing
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing
335	Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing
336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing
337	Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing
339	Miscellaneous Manufacturing

Industry Cluster Employment

In 2014, there were 5,715 workers employed in the Manufacturing Industry Cluster in Region 6. After a peak in 2017, that figure fell 5,175 in 2024. Between 2024 and 2034, the industry cluster is projected to recover and increase its total employment to 6,044 in Region 6.

Figure 44: Manufacturing Industry Cluster Employment. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

2024, there were 354 payrolled business locations in Region 6 that are captured by the Manufacturing Industry Cluster. The "Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing" and "Wood Product Manufacturing" industries are the largest, with 45 and 44 payrolled business locations in the region, respectively.

Payrolled Business Locations

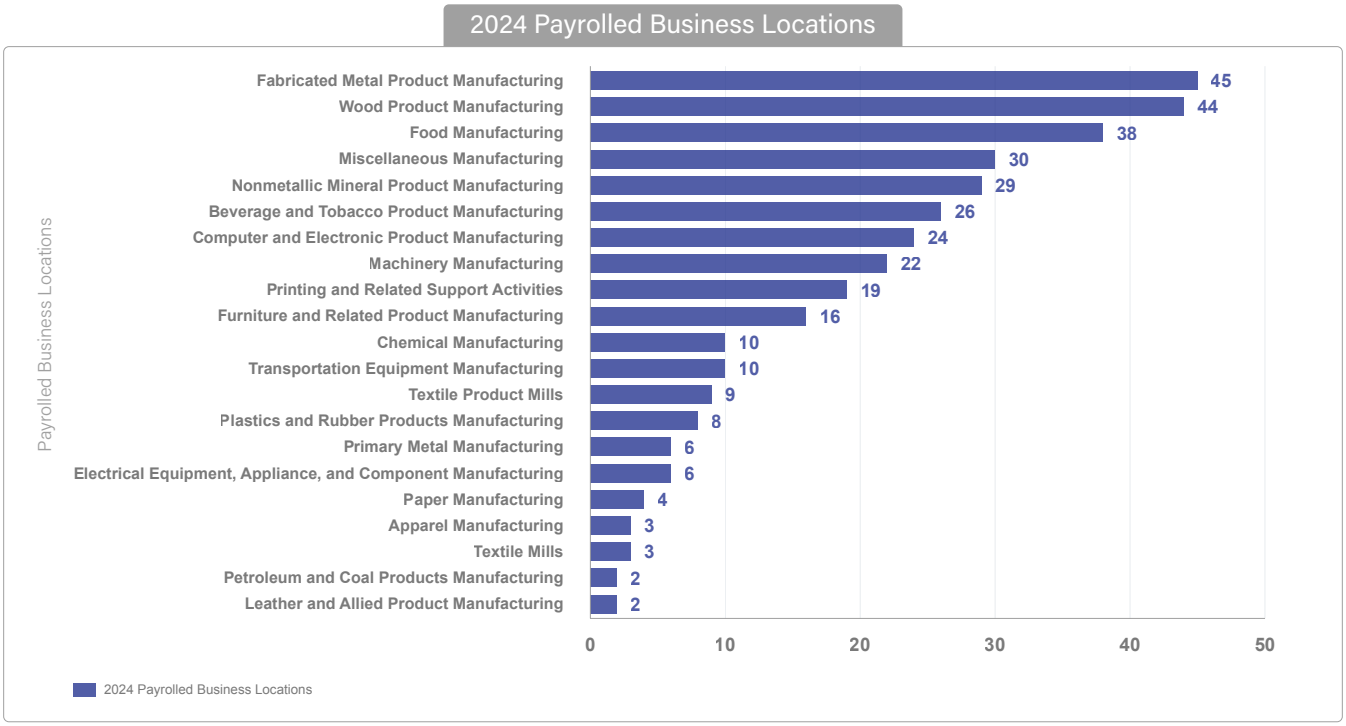


Figure 45: Manufacturing Industry Cluster Payrolled Business Locations. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Of the 22 3-digit NAICS codes that fall into the Manufacturing Industry Cluster, three have high employment concentration in Region 6. The most highly concentrated industry is the "Wood Products Manufacturing" industry, with more than twice as many employees than in comparable regions across the country. Other highly concentrated industries are the "Paper Manufacturing" and "Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing" industries, with location quotients of 1.35 and 1.07, respectively.

Employment Concentration

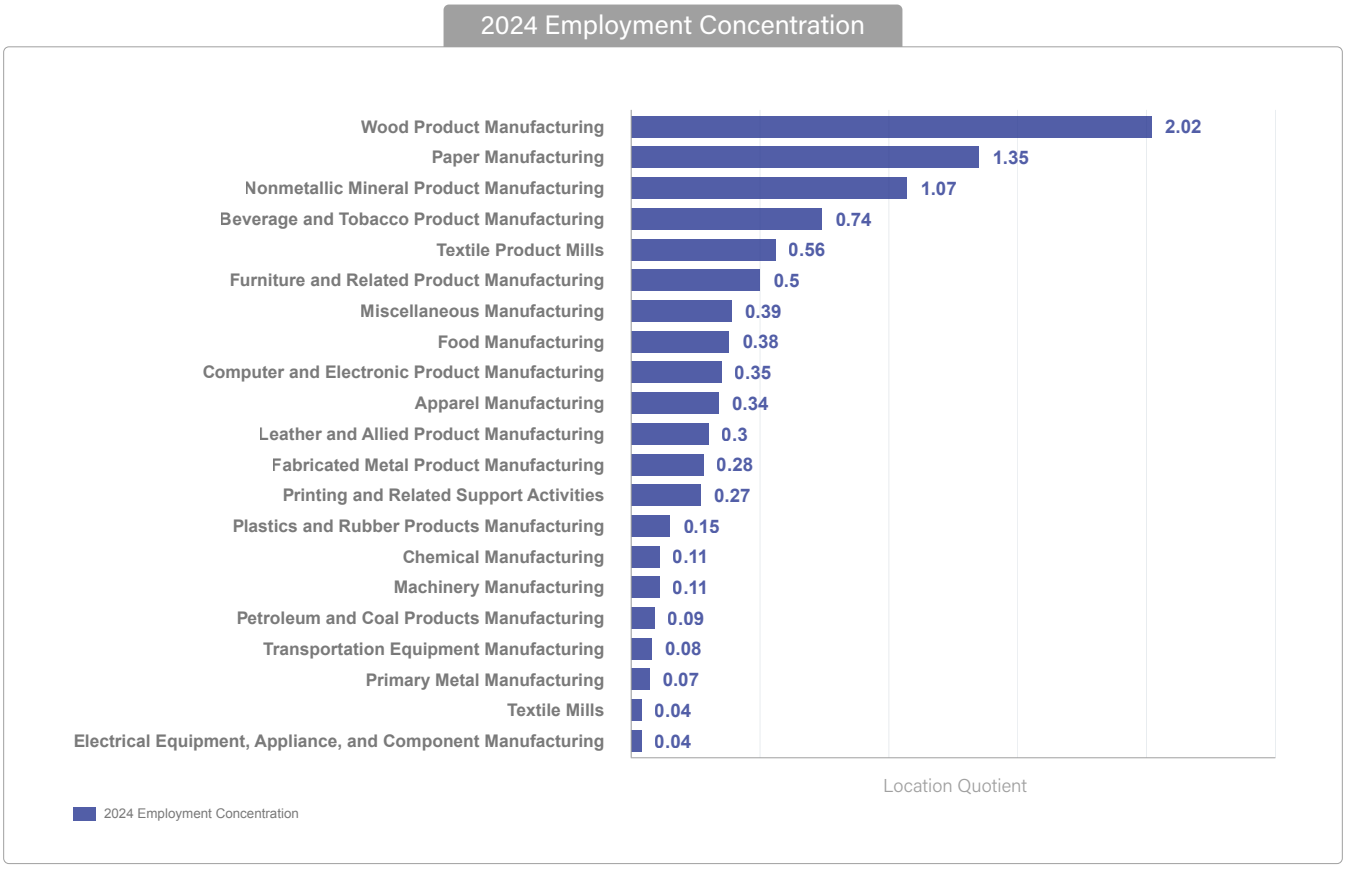


Figure 46: Manufacturing Industry Cluster Employment Concentration. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Gross Regional Product

Collectively, the Manufacturing Industry Cluster's GRP was estimated at $837 million in 2024. The "Paper Manufacturing" and "Wood Product Manufacturing" industries had the highest GRPs of all manufacturing industries, at $161 million and $150 million, respectively.

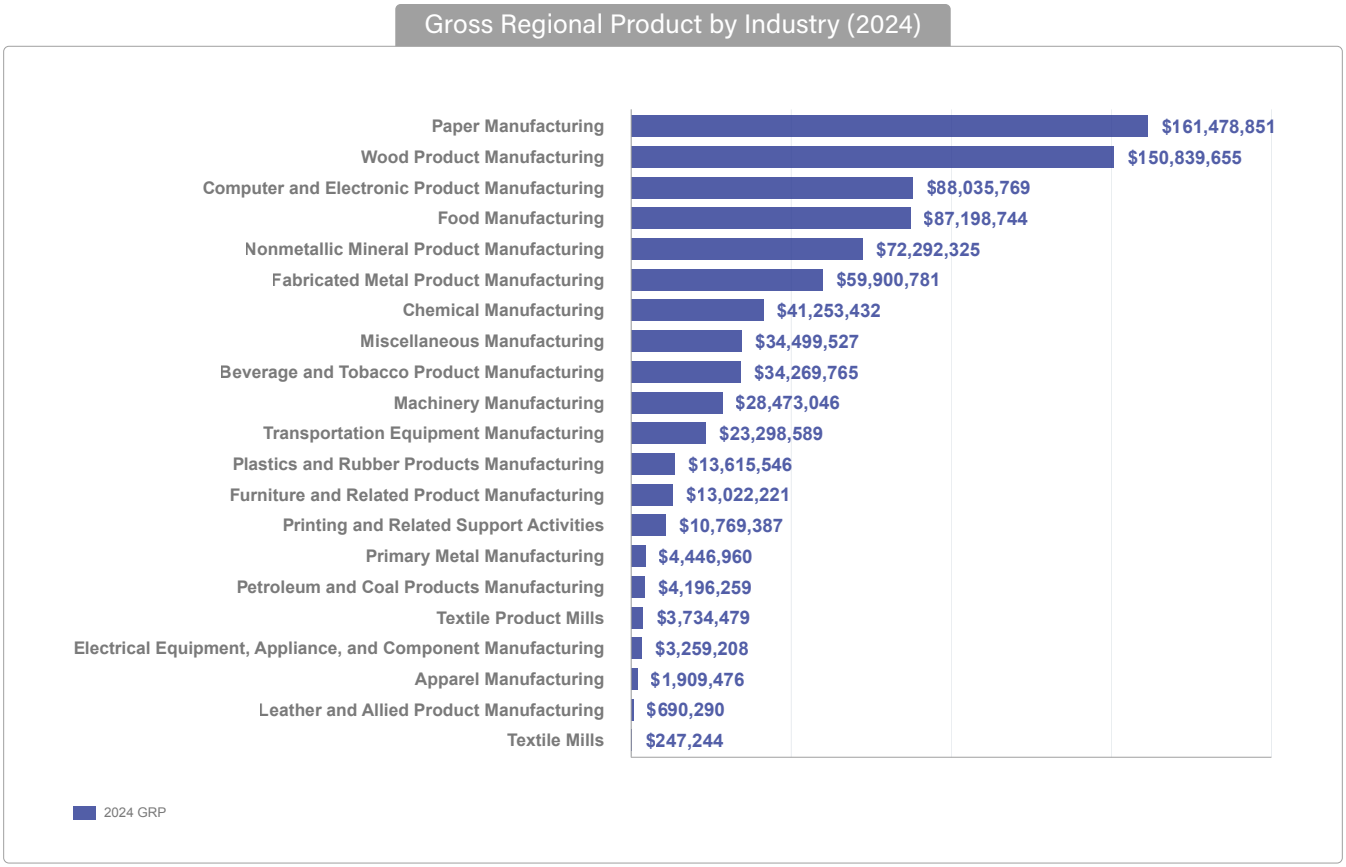


Figure 47: Manufacturing Industry Cluster GRP. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Sales & Demand

Sales and demand estimates in Region 6 vary widely for each industry in the Manufacturing Industry Cluster. Some industries, such as the "Paper Manufacturing" and "Wood Product Manufacturing" industries, generate much more in sales than is demanded by the region; these industries are likely significant exporting industries. Others, such as "Transportation Equipment Manufacturing," "Chemical Manufacturing," and "Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing" do not generate enough in sales to meet regional demand. Products of these industries are likely imported from out-of-region suppliers.

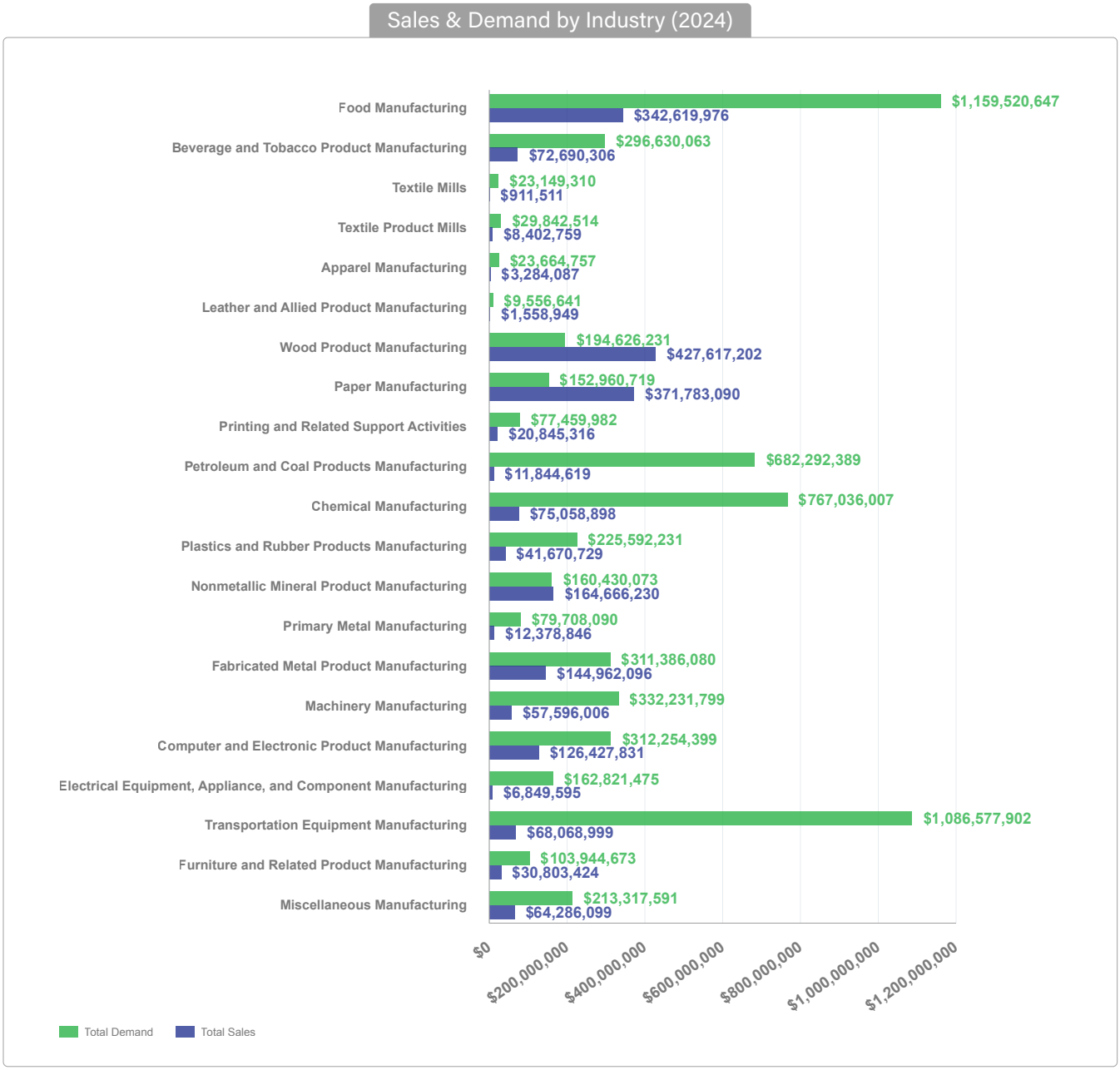


Figure 48: Manufacturing Industry Cluster Sales & Demand. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Annual Earnings

Average annual earnings increased between 2019 and 2024 for every industry in the cluster. The highest-earning industries are the "Paper Manufacturing" and "Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing" industries. The typical worker in these industries earned $127,232 and $120,591 in 2024, respectively.

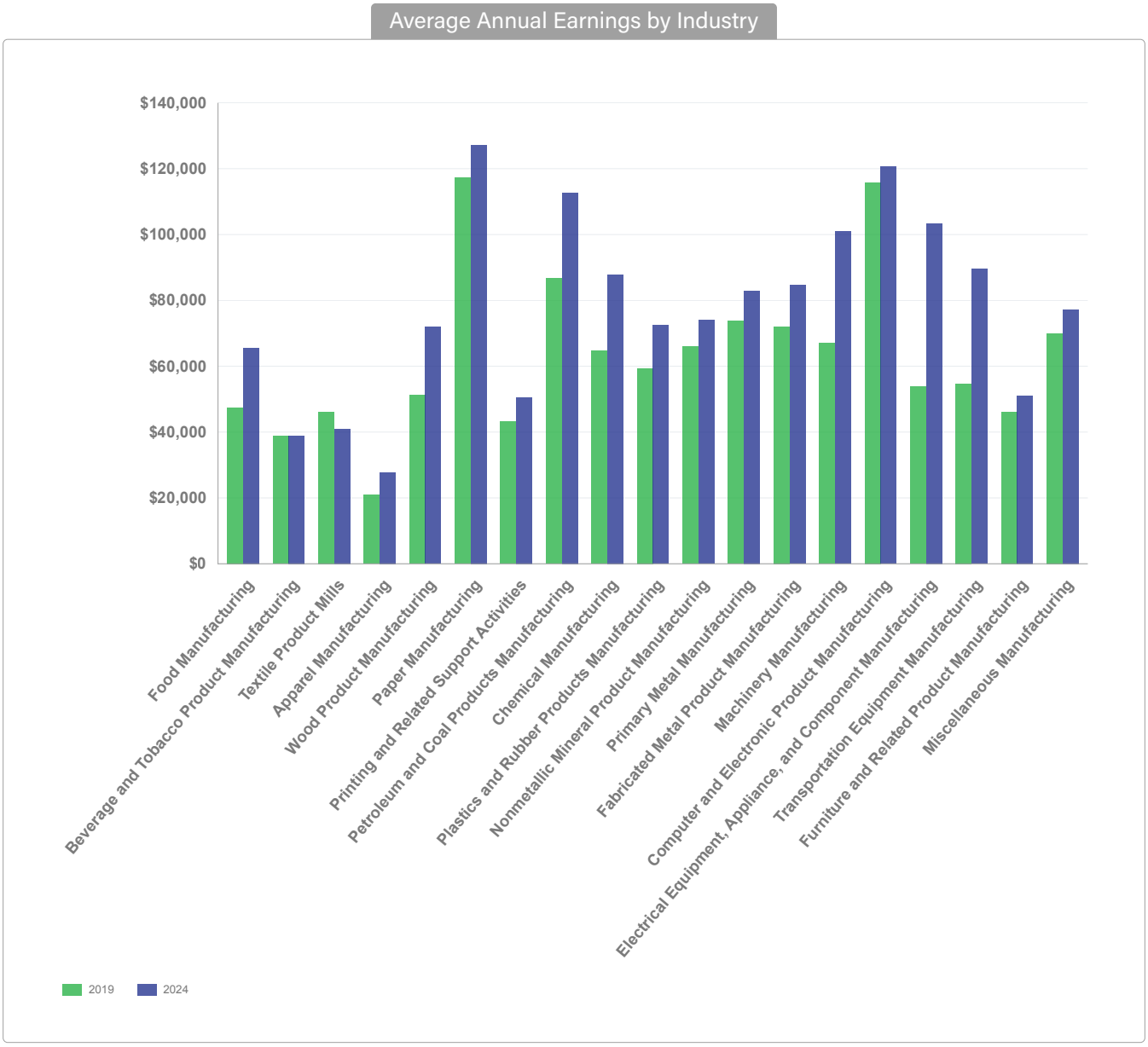


Figure 49: Manufacturing Industry Cluster Average Annual Earnings. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Common Occupations

In Table 17, the most common occupations in the Manufacturing Industry Cluster are provided. Workers in these occupations earn between $17-$58/hour, and the education level required for an entry-level position varies widely. Some occupations require no formal educational credential, while others typically require a bachelor's degree.

Table 18: Common Occupations in the Manufacturing Industry Cluster. Source: *Lightcast 2025.2*

SOC	Description	Employed in Industry Group (2024)	% of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2024)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry-Level Education
51-2098	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	234	4.5%	$18.29	High school diploma or equivalent
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	211	4.1%	$19.03	No formal educational credential
51-9196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	204	3.9%	$23.22	High school diploma or equivalent
51-7041	Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	181	3.5%	$17.85	High school diploma or equivalent
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	178	3.4%	$24.96	Postsecondary nondegree award
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	163	3.1%	$32.18	High school diploma or equivalent
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	121	2.3%	$25.16	High school diploma or equivalent
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	118	2.3%	$57.23	Bachelor's degree
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	115	2.2%	$25.36	No formal educational credential
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	111	2.1%	$29.85	High school diploma or equivalent

Employment Maps

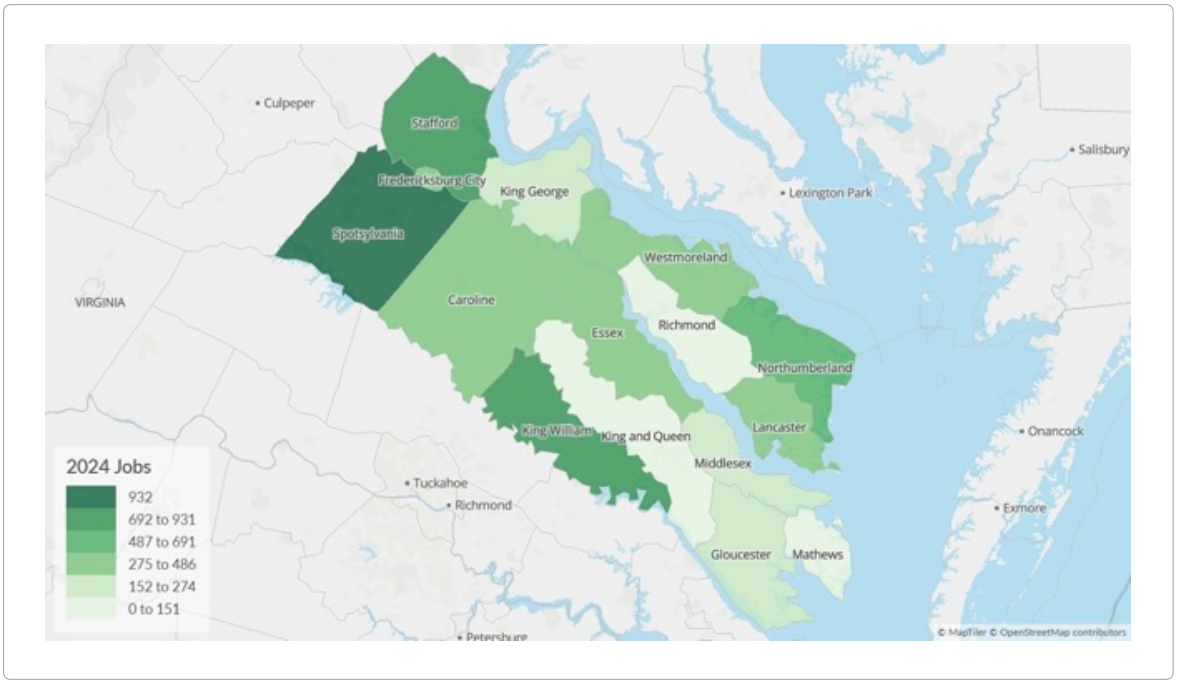


Figure 50: Manufacturing Industry Cluster 2024 Jobs. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

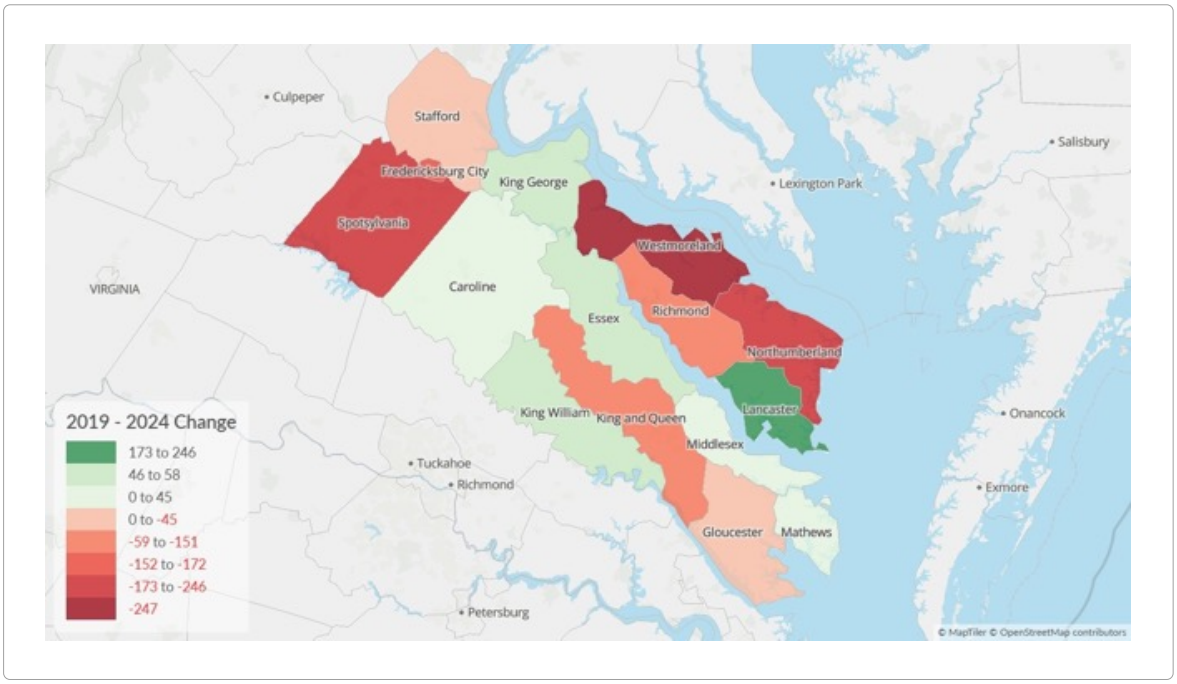


Figure 51: Manufacturing Industry Cluster 2019-2024 Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

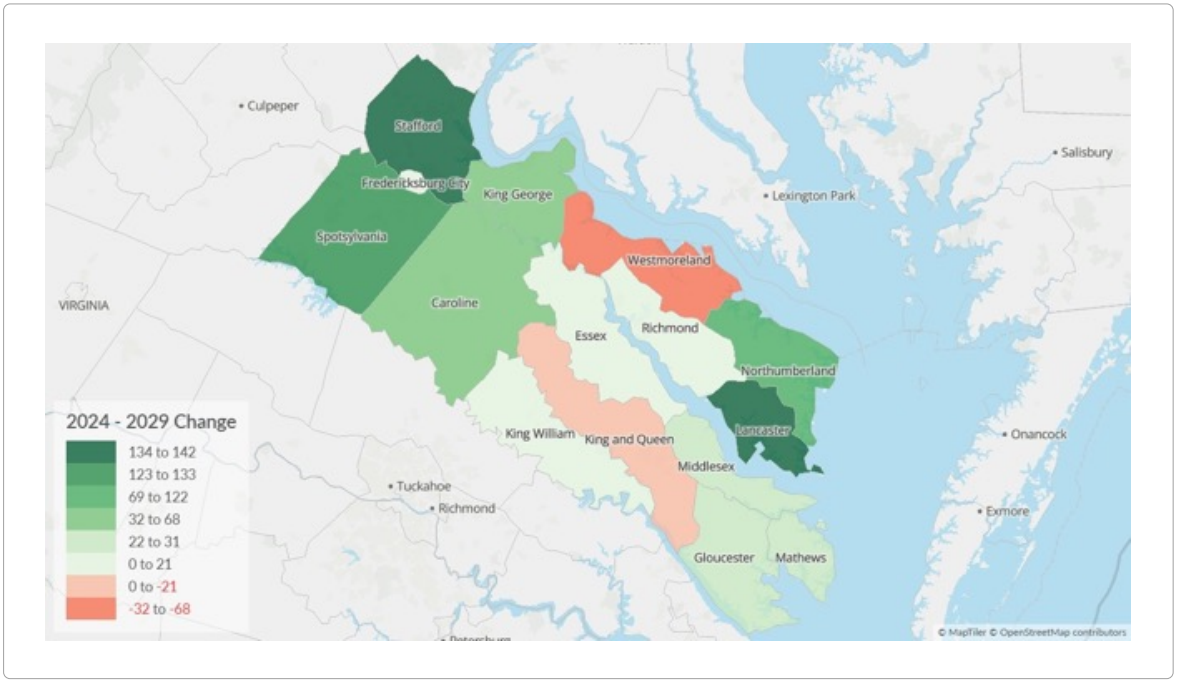


Figure 52: Manufacturing Industry Cluster 2024-2029 Projected Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster

The Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster includes three industries at the 6-digit NAICS level.

Table 19: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster

NAICS	Industry Description
541512	Computer Systems Design Services
541330	Engineering Services
541519	Other Computer Related Services

Industry Cluster Employment

In 2014, there were 3,065 workers in the Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster in Region 6. By 2024, that figure had increased steadily to 4,396 workers. Employment levels in the cluster are projected to continue to increase, albeit at a more modest rate, through 2034. By then, it is estimated that there will be 4,735 workers in the cluster in Region 6.

Figure 53: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster Employment. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Payrolled Business Locations

In 2024, there were 434 payrolled business locations in the Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster in Region 6. The "Computer Systems Design Services" industry was the largest in the region, with 238 payrolled business locations. There were 146 businesses in the "Engineering Services" industry in the region, and 50 businesses in the "Other Computer Related Services" industry.

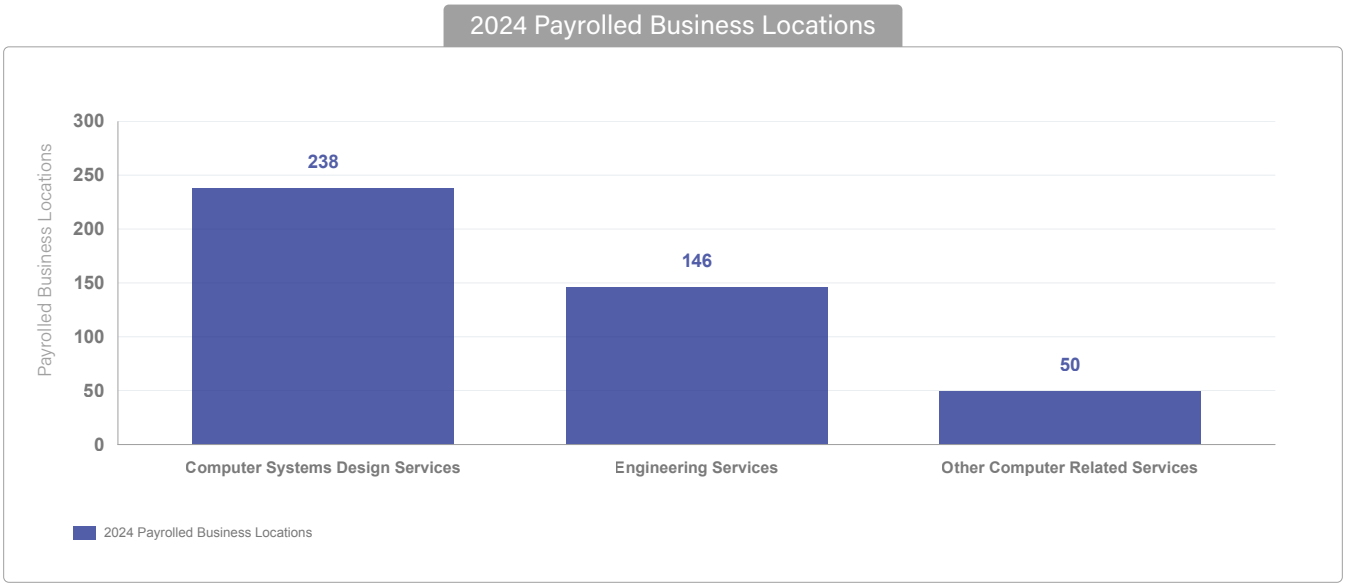


Figure 54: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster Payrolled Business Locations. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Employment Concentration

All three industries in the Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster have high employment concentrations. The "Engineering Services" industry is the most highly concentrated, with a location quotient of 1.66. The "Computer Systems Design Services" and "Other Computer Related Services" industries have location quotients of 1.58 and 1.01, respectively

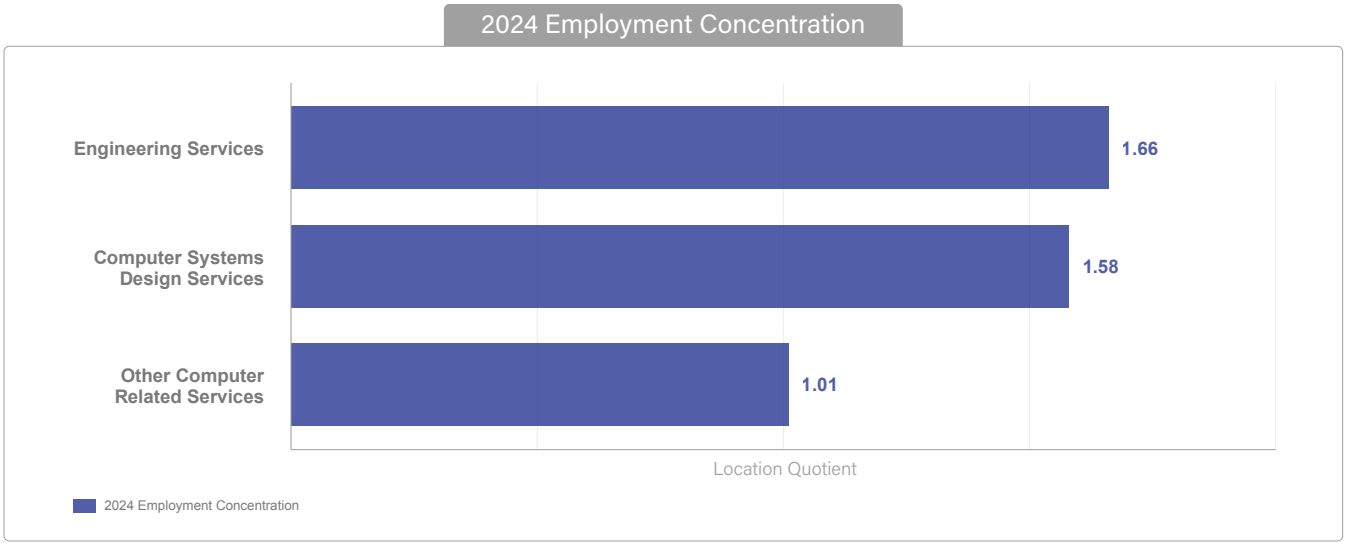


Figure 55: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster Employment Concentration. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Gross Regional Product

Overall, the Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster's GRP was estimated at $767 million in 2024. The GRPs of the "Computer Systems Design Services" and "Engineering Services" industries were both considerably higher than that of the "Other Computer Related Services" industry.

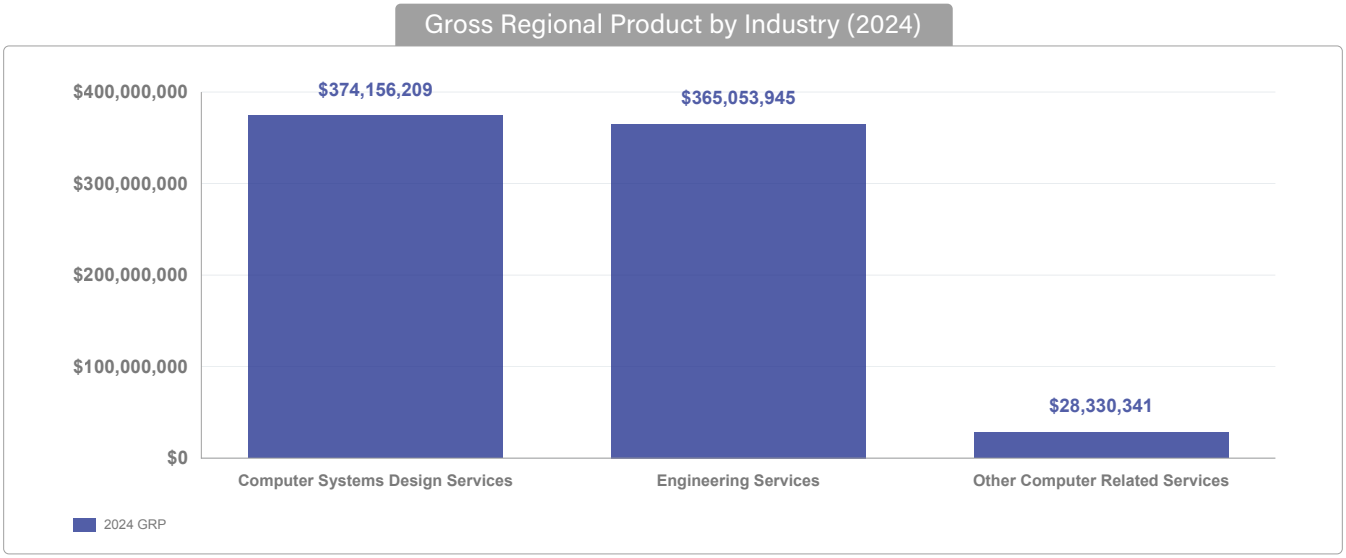


Figure 56: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster GRP. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Sales & Demand

For all three industries in the Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster, the regional sales made by businesses are greater than the regional demand for the goods or services provided by those industries. This indicates that much of each industry's sales being made to out-of-region consumers, which can benefit the regional economy.

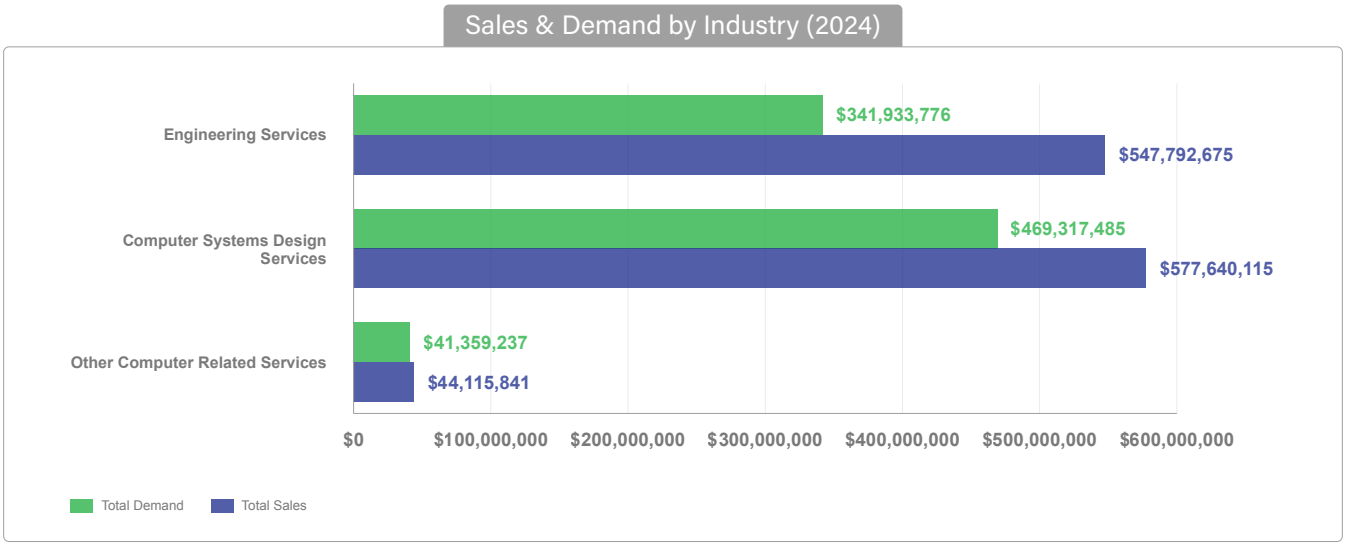


Figure 57: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster Sales & Demand. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Annual Earnings

The average annual earnings of workers in all three industries in the Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster increased between 2019 and 2024. In 2024, workers in the "Engineering Services" industry typically earned the highest wages, with an estimated average annual income of $131,928. The average worker in every industry earned more than $100,000/year.

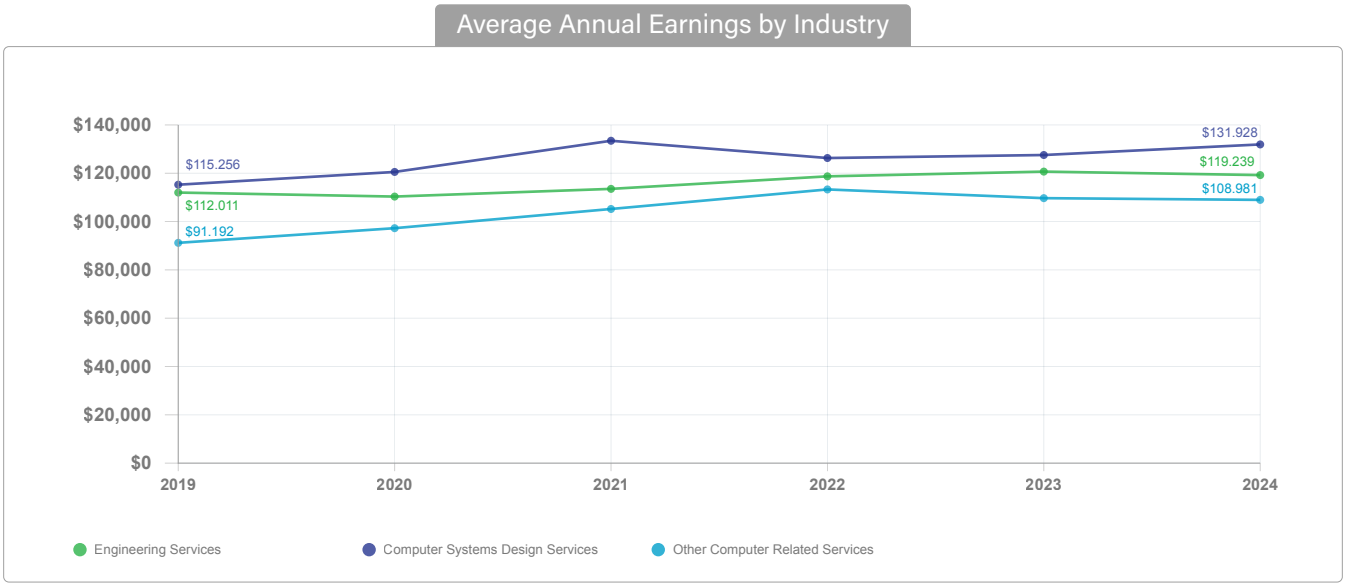


Figure 58: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster Average Annual Earnings. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Common Occupations

In Table 19, the top occupations of workers in the Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster are provided. As is reflected in the previous graph, most of these occupations earn relatively high wages. Correspondingly, the typical education required to acquire each occupation is high; in most cases, a bachelor's degree is required to perform the work associated with each occupation.

Table 20: Common Occupations in the Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster. *Source: Lightcast 2025.2*

SOC	Description	Employed in Industry Group (2024)	% of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2024)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry-Level Education
15-1252	Software Developers	655	14.9%	$59.64	Bachelor's degree
17-2051	Civil Engineers	223	5.1%	$44.35	Bachelor's degree
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	216	4.9%	$54.41	Bachelor's degree
17-2071	Electrical Engineers	178	4.0%	$17.85	Bachelor's degree
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	164	3.7%	$56.76	Bachelor's degree
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	140	3.2%	$53.15	Bachelor's degree
13-1111	Management Analysts	133	3.0%	$54.46	Bachelor's degree
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	110	2.5%	$57.23	Bachelor's degree
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	109	2.5%	$61.54	Bachelor's degree
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	104	2.4%	$31.74	Some college, no degree

Employment Maps

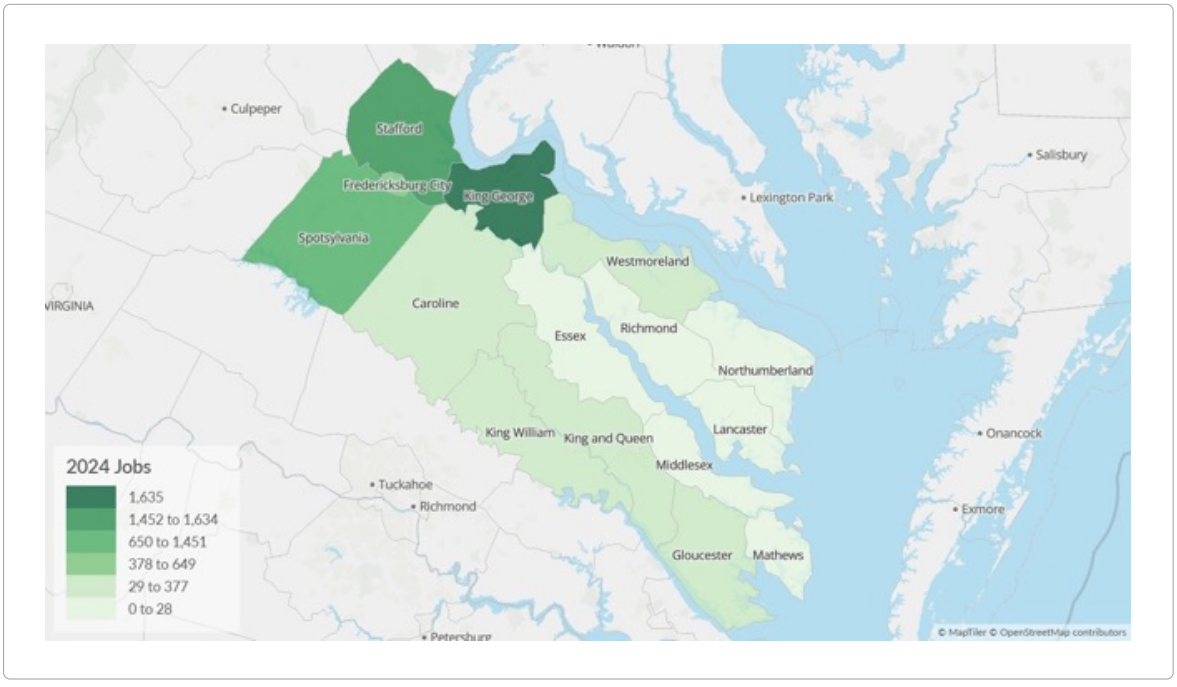


Figure 59: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster 2024 Jobs. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

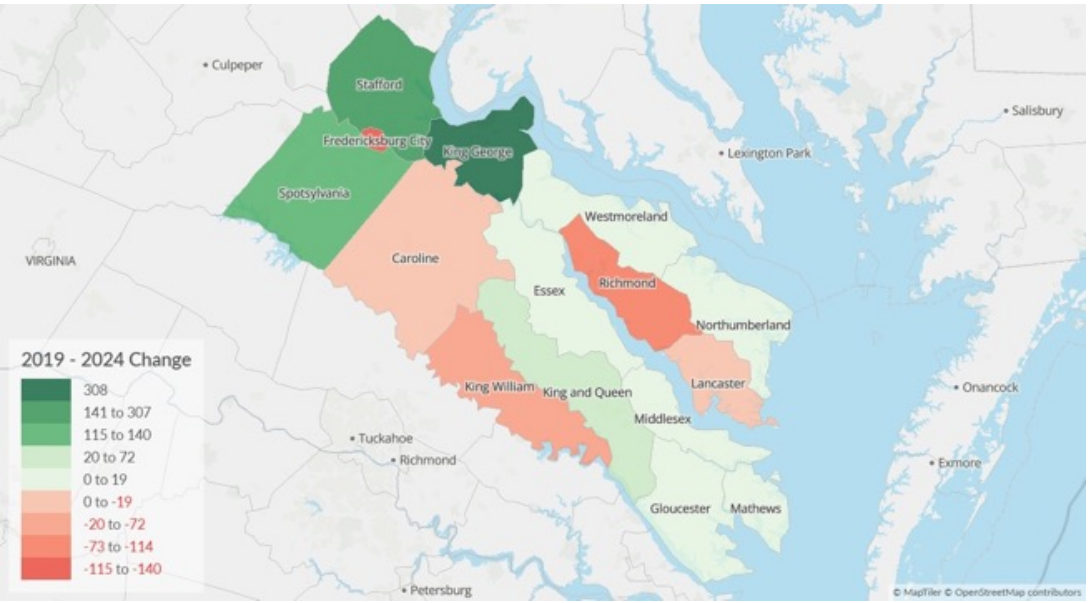


Figure 60: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster 2019-2024 Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Figure 61: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services Industry Cluster 2024-2029 Projected Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster

The Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster includes one 6-digit level industry

Table 21: Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster

NAICS	Industry Description
518210	Computing Infrastructure Providers, Data Processing, Web Hosting, and Related Services

Industry Cluster Employment

In 2014, there were 72 workers employed in the Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster in Region 6. The employment level fluctuated over a ten-year period, and in 2024, there were 96 workers employed in the region. Over the next ten years, employment levels are projected to decline slightly; by 2034, 65 workers are predicted to find employment in the cluster.

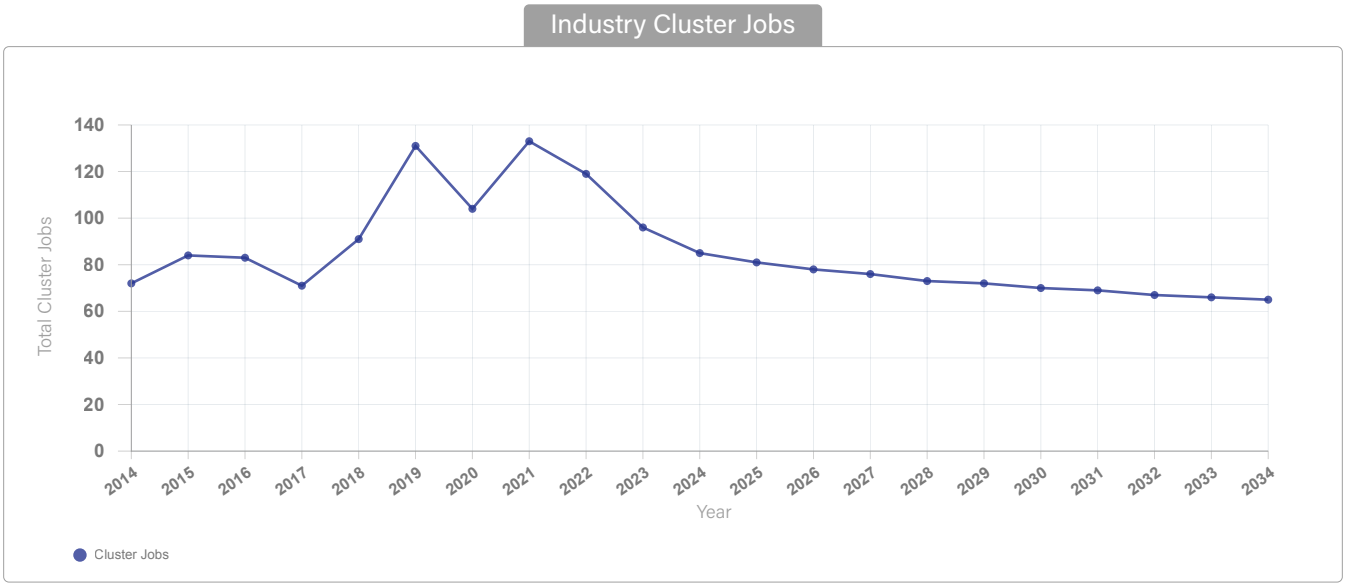


Figure 62: Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster Employment. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Payrolled Business Locations

Compared to other regions across the country, employment concentration in the Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster is low. There are only about 16% as many workers in the cluster in Region 6 as there are in other comparable regions. This could imply that the region depends upon external markets to meet its demand for the services provided by businesses in this industry, and an opportunity to expand the regional business base.

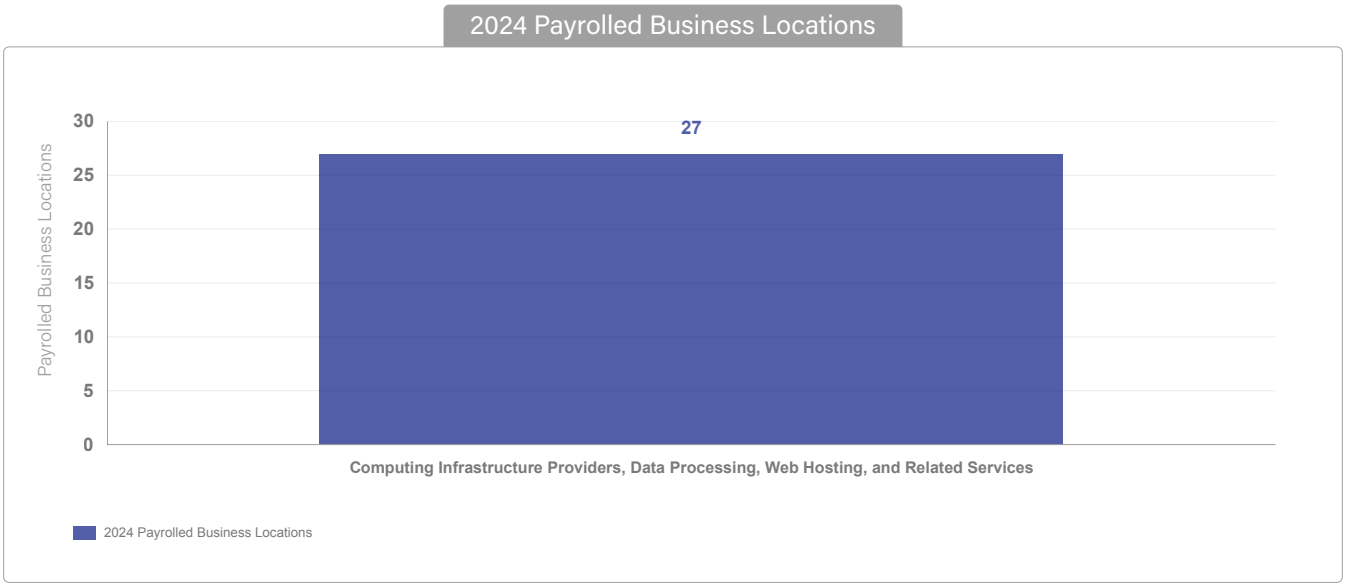


Figure 63: Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster Payrolled Business Locations. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Employment Concentration

Compared to other regions across the country, employment concentration in the Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster is low. There are only about 16% as many workers in the cluster in Region 6 as there are in other comparable regions. This could imply that the region depends upon external markets to meet its demand for the services provided by businesses in this industry, and an opportunity to expand the regional business base.

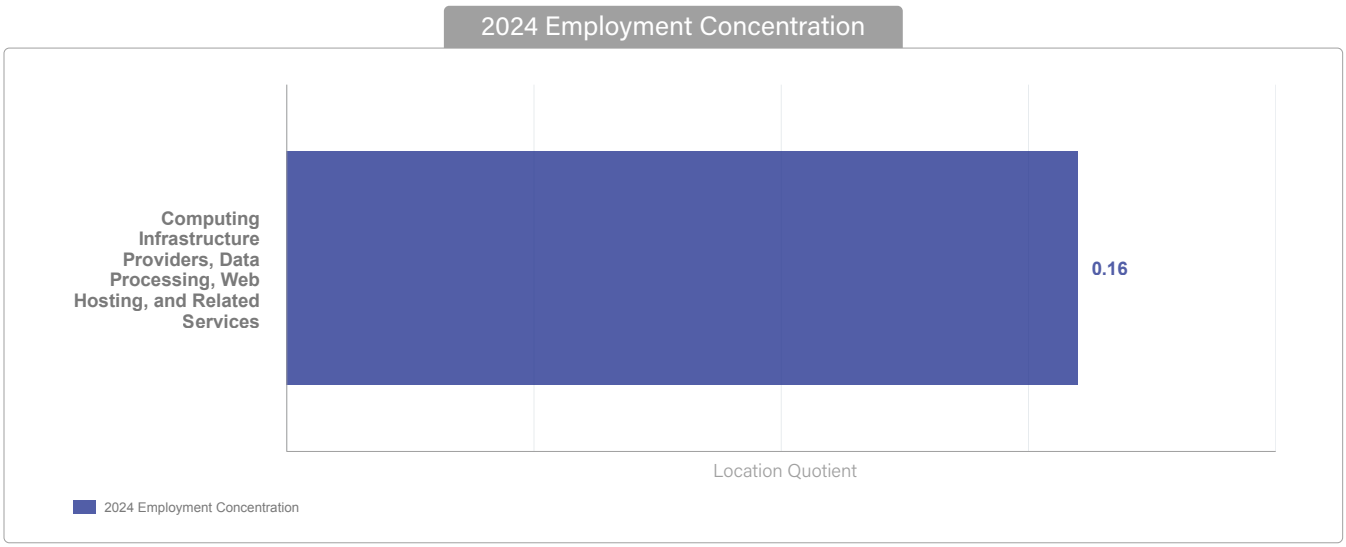


Figure 64: Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Gross Regional Product

In 2024, the Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster's GRP was estimated at $32 million.

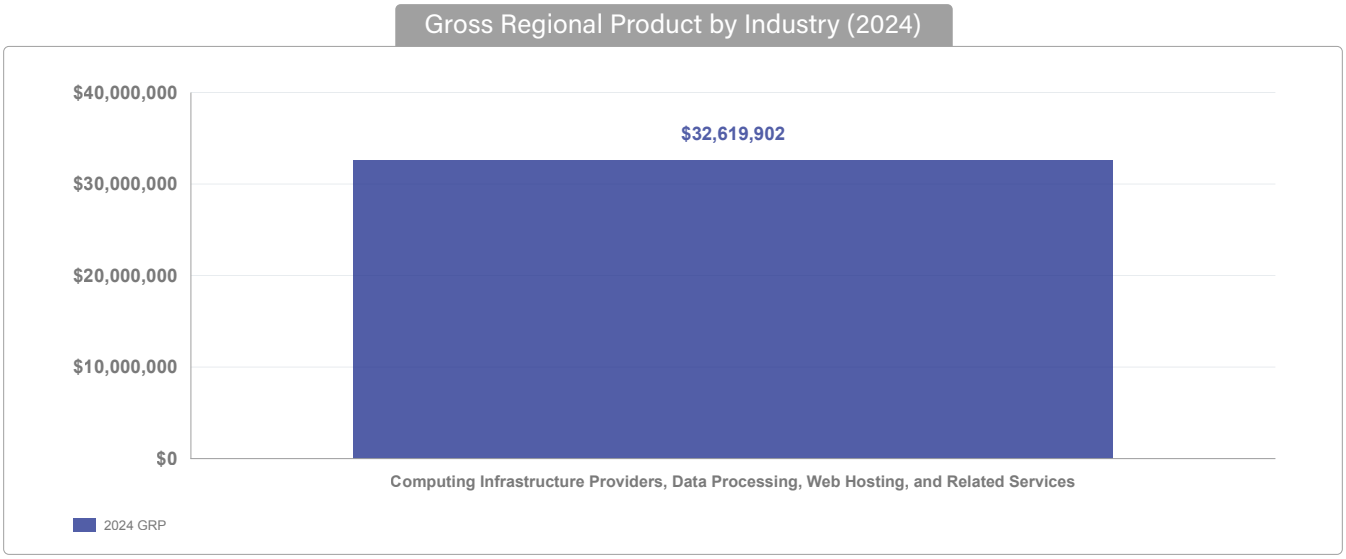


Figure 65: Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster GRP. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Sales & Demand

As indicated in the previous section on employment concentration, the demand for the services provided by businesses in this industry cluster is much greater than the sales made in the region. The expansion of the regional business base could help meet regional demand more locally.

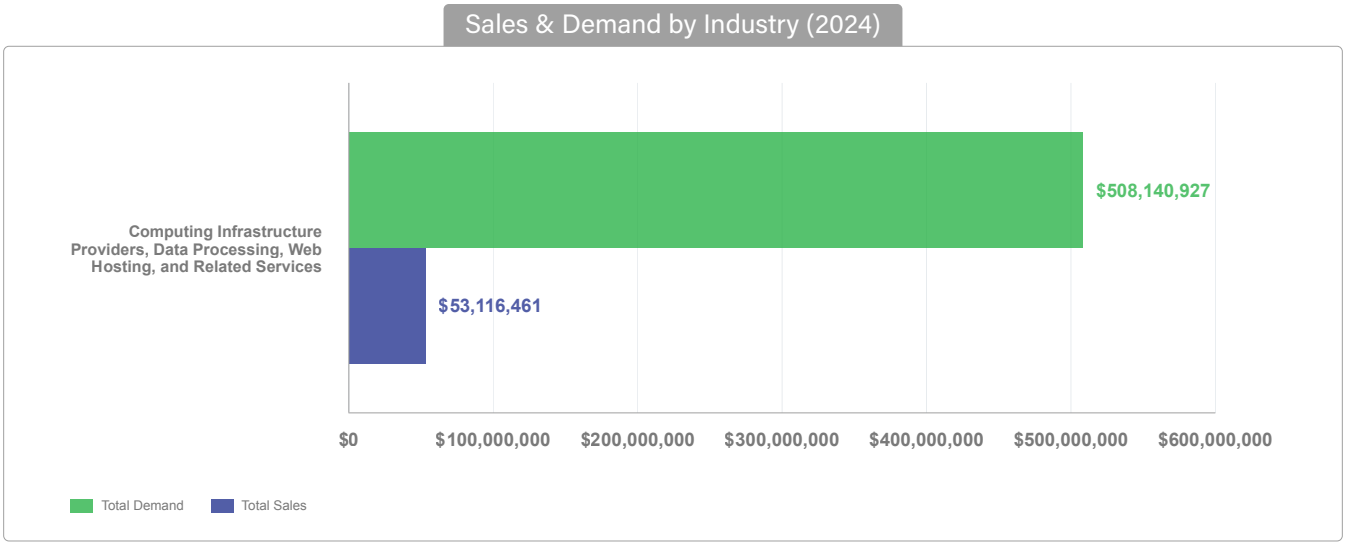


Figure 66: Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster Sales & Demand. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Annual Earnings

The average annual earnings of a worker in this industry cluster have increased since 2019. Between 2019 and 2024, the average annual earnings were at their highest in 2023. In 2024, the typical worker in the industry cluster earned $118,927.

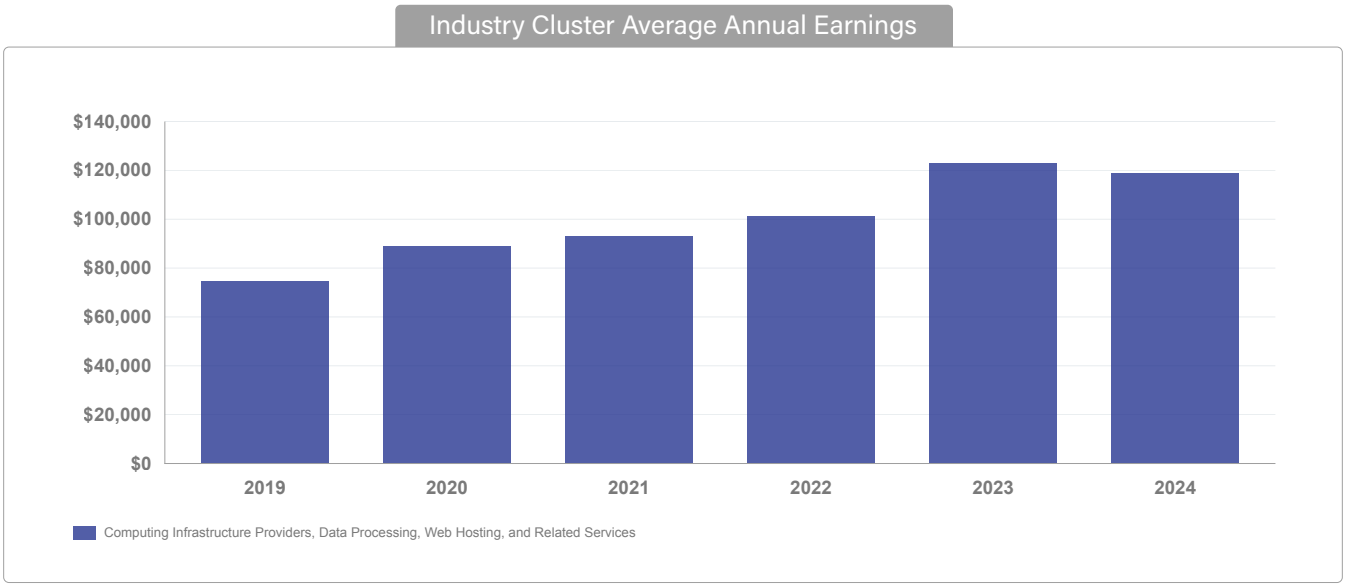


Figure 67: Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster Average Annual Earnings. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Common Occupations

In Table 21, the most common occupations in the Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster are provided. These occupations earn high wages and require specific skillsets; each occupation in the list requires a bachelor's degree, and median hourly earnings are all above $54/hour.

Table 22: Common Occupations in the Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster. *Source: Lightcast 2025.2*

11-3021	Description	Employed in Industry Group (2024)	% of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2024)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry-Level Education
15-1252	Software Developers	655	14.9%	$59.64	Bachelor's degree
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	<10	4.4%	$89.06	Bachelor's degree
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	<10	2.5%	$54.41	Bachelor's degree
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	<10	2.3%	$57.23	Bachelor's degree
11-9199	Managers, All Other	<10	1.6%	$65.56	Bachelor's degree
11-2021	Marketing Managers	<10	1.0%	$86.28	Bachelor's degree
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	<10	0.9%	$39.28	Bachelor's degree
11-3031	Financial Managers	<10	0.6%	$81.37	Bachelor's degree
11-2022	Sales Managers	<10	0.6%	$76.97	Bachelor's degree
11-1011	Chief Executives	<10	0.5%	$90.80	Bachelor's degree

Employment Maps

Figure 68: Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster 2024 Jobs. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

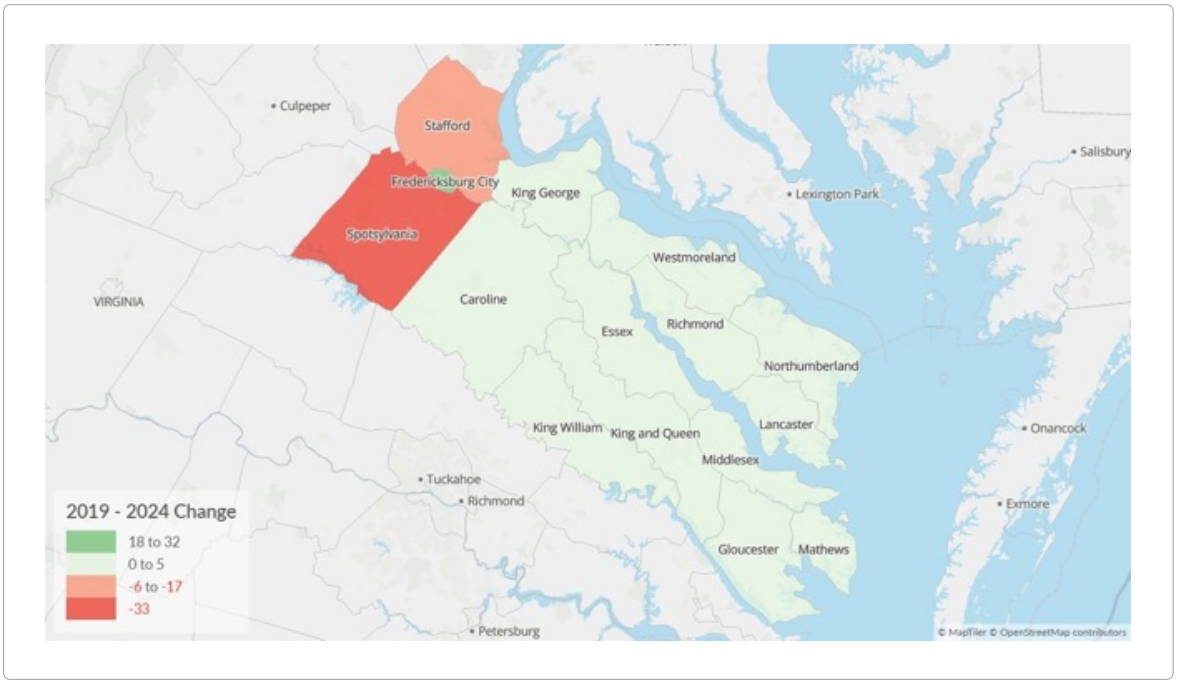


Figure 69: Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster 2019-2024 Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Figure 70: Information and Data Centers Industry Cluster 2024-2029 Projected Job Change. Source: Lightcast 2025.2

Appendix 3: Business Survey

Business Characteristics

1	Please select the county or independent city where your primary business location is based.								
a.	Caroline	b.	Essex	c.	Gloucester	d.	King and Queen	e.	King George
f.	King William	g.	Lancaster	h.	Mathews	i.	Middlesex	j.	Northumberland
k.	Richmond	l.	Spotsylvania	m.	Stafford	n.	Westmoreland	o.	City of Fredericksburg
p.	Outside of Go Virginia Region 6: Please specify the name of the county or independent city where your primary business location is based:								

2	What is your business's primary industry								
a.	Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting			b.	Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction			c.	Utilities
d.	Construction	e.	Manufacturing	f.	Wholesale trade	g.	Retail trade	h.	Transportation and warehousing
i.	Information	j.	Finance and insurance	k.	Real estate and rental and leasing			l.	Professional, scientific, and technical services
m.	Management of companies and enterprises			n.	Administrative & support and waste management & remediation services				
o.	Educational services	p.	Health care and social assistance	q.	Arts, entertainment, and recreation			r.	Other services (except public administration)
s.	Public administration		t. I'm not sure: Please describe your business in one sentence or less.						

3	Does your business fall into any of the following target industries?							
a.	Aquaculture, seafood, commercial fishing & marine industries			b.	Forestry, wood products, and paper			
c.	Manufacturing	d.	Distribution & logistics	e.	Information & data centers			
f.	Professional, scientific & technical services	g.	Agriculture/controlled environment agriculture	h.	None of the above			

4	How many business locations do you have in Virginia?						
a.	1	b.	2 to 5	d.	6 to 9	d.	10 or more

5	What best describes the market or region you serve from your location(s)?								
a.	City/town	b.	County	c.	Virginia	d.	Mid Atlantic	e.	National
f.	Global	g.	Other						

6	How many years has your business been in operation?									
a.	Less than 2 years	b.	2 to 3 years	c.	4 to 5 years	d.	6 to 10 years	e.	11 to 15 years
f.	16 years or more	g.	I don't know						

7	What is the size of your business in terms of number of employees?							
a.	Zero Employees (non-employee establishments)			b.	1 to 4 employees	c.	5 to 9 employees	
d.	10 to 19 employees	e.	20 to 49 employees	f.	50 to 99 employees	g.	100 to 249 employees	
h.	250 to 499 employees	i.	500 to 999 employees	j.	1,000 or more employees	k.	I don't know	

8	What was the annual revenue of your business in 2024?						
a.	Less than $50,000	b.	$50,000 to $99,999	c.	$100,000 to $499,999	d.	$500,000 to $999,999
e.	$1 million to $4.9 million	f.	$5 million to $9.9 million	g.	$10 million to $49.9 million	h.	$50 million to $99.9 million
i	$100 million or more	j.	I don't know				

Economic Outlook

9	How confident are you in the local economy's growth over the next year?		
a.	Very Confident – Strong belief in significant economic growth.	b.	Confident – Generally optimistic about economic prospects.
c.	Neutral – Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	d.	Unconfident – Generally pessimistic about economic growth
e.	Very Unconfident – Strong belief that the economy will decline.		

10	What are your expectations for your business's performance over the next 12 months?		
a.	Significant Improvement – Expecting strong growth in revenue, customer base, or market share.	b.	Moderate Improvement – Anticipating steady growth or recovery.
c.	No Change – Expecting stable performance with no major shifts.	d.	Moderate Decline – Forecasting some challenges or reduced performance.
e.	Significant Decline – Anticipating major setbacks or contraction.		

11	What are the biggest economic challenges your business is currently facing?				
a.	lease select your top three challenges)	b.	Inflation and Rising Costs	c.	Supply chain disruptions
d.	Labor Shortages	e.	Interest Rates and Access to Capital	f.	Consumer Demand Uncertainty
g.	Regulatory and Tax Burdens	h.	Geopolitical and Global Market Risks	i.	Technology and Cybersecurity
j.	Other (please explain				

Regional and Local Conditions

12	**Please indicate your view of each of the following aspects of your county's business factors or support services. (Weakness, Neutral, Strength, I Don't Know)**							
a.	Number of Customers	b.	Suppliers	c.	Workforce Resources for employers			
d.	Quality of life for workforce	e.	Business Advisors	f.	Financial Resources			
g.	Business Support Groups	h.	Business Incubators	i.	Tech/IT Support	j.	Business Regulations	

13	**How would you rate the quality of local infrastructure as it impacts your business?**				
a.	Excellent, Good, Average, Fair, Poor, No Opinion)	b.	Road conditions	c.	Electricity infrastructure
d.	Natural gas infrastructure	e.	Internet (Broadband)	f.	Waste Management
g.	Water Services	h,	Emergency Services		

14	**To what extent do the following quality of life factors affect your ability to attract and retain employees?**						
a.	(Major advantage, minor advantage, no effect, minor barrier, major barrier, I don't know	b	Cost of Living				
d.	Housing Availability and Affordability.	e.	Commute Times	f.	Public transportation options		
g.	Education (K-12)	h.	Childcare (birth to age 5)	i.	Secondary Education (post-high school)		
j.	Safety and Crime Rates	k.	Recreational and Cultural Amenities	l.	Climate and Environment		

15	**Would a regional tourism effort/organization benefit your business?**				
a.	Yes	b.	No	c.	I don't know

16	**How would you describe the sense of regional (economic) identity across GO Virginia Region 6?**										
a.	Very strong	b.	Strong	c.	Neither strong nor weak	d.	Weak	e.	Very weak	f.	I don't know

17	**How would you describe the sense of regional (economic) identity in the [Northern Neck/Middle Peninsula/PD 16 depending on the county they entered; will show a map of the relevant area]**										
a.	Very strong	b.	Strong	c.	Neither strong nor weak	d.	Weak	e.	Very weak	f.	I don't know

18	**How can GO Virginia Region 6 help your business? (Select all that apply)**				
a.	Business Start-Up Resources	b.	Worker Training Programs	c.	Local Business Updates
d.	Coordinated Local Business Marketing	e.	Federal Financing Programs	f.	fState Financing Programs
g.	Local Financing Programs	h.	Business Incentive Programs	i.	Technical Assistance
j.	Other (please specify)				

Workforce and Employment

19 Consider the following labor-skilled classes and check the number that best represents your opinion of their availability for employment locally and the quality of the job applicant.

- An unskilled worker performs basic tasks that require little or no prior experience, training, or formal education. Jobs can be learned in 30 days or less and involve routine, manual work.
- A semi-skilled worker has some experience or training but not extensive specialized education, often gained through an associate degree, vocational certification, or several years of on-the-job experience. Work tasks require attention to detail, coordination, or specialized equipment use, but are not complex.
- A skilled worker is trained and experienced in a trade, technical role, or specialized occupation.ww This typically requires a bachelor's degree or 5+ years of relevant experience. Skilled workers use independent judgment and technical knowledge to complete complex tasks.
- A professional/management worker is someone whose primary duties require advanced knowledge in a specialized field, typically acquired through prolonged education (bachelor's degree or higher). This worker is responsible for decision-making, supervision, planning, or applying specialized knowledge.

19.1 Availability

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	No opinion
Unskilled						
Semi-skilled						
Skilled						
Professional/management						

19.2 Quality of job applicants

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	No opinion
Unskilled						
Semi-skilled						
Skilled						
Professional/management						

20 Which of the following skills are lacking in the local labor market? (Please select all that apply)

a.	Technical Skills (e.g., software development, data analysis)	b.	Soft Skills (e.g., communication, teamwork
c.	Leadership Skills (e.g., strategic thinking, decision-making)	d.	Digital Skills (e.g., digital marketing, cybersecurity)
e.	Functional Skills (specific to job functions like finance, HR, sales)		

GO VIRGINIA REGION 6

GO Virginia Foundation

800 E Canal St, Ste 1100
Richmond, VA 23219

govirginia.org

TPMA
Bold Solutions.
Empowered Communities.

GO VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR GROWTH & OPPORTUNITY IN EACH REGION

GEORGE WASHINGTON
REGIONAL COMMISSION