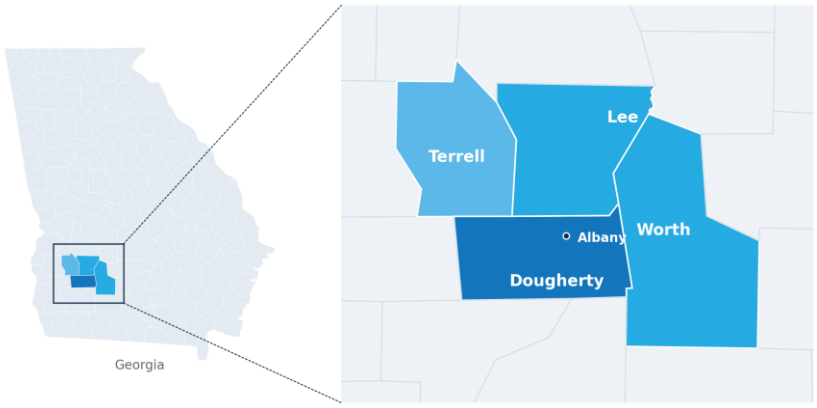
ARTESIAN SOLUTIONS GROUP

Albany MSA Regional Workforce Assessment

Dougherty, Lee, Terrell and Worth Counties, Georgia



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1. Executive summary

This section presents the bottom line of the assessment, with the key findings and top recommendations in brief.

Early findings point to three challenges that are distinctive to the Albany MSA: it is the only peer metro losing population, its disconnected youth rate is two to three times that of peer metros, and the region trains workers in key fields who do not stay. Low labor force participation is real but regional; Albany matches peer South Georgia and Alabama metros, all of which trail Georgia and the nation.

Indicator	Albany MSA	Peer MSAs (range)	Georgia
Population change per year	-0.3%	+0.1% to +0.7%	+1.0%
Disconnected youth, ages 16-19	7.6%	2.6% to 4.0%	3.0%
Children in single-parent families	55.7%	42.8% to 50.2%	38.0%
Labor force participation, 16+	57.1%	56.9% to 57.6%	63.5%
Prime-age (25-54) participation	77.5%	74.8% to 77.9%	82.0%
Poverty rate	20.9%	17.9% to 20.7%	13.4%
Average annual wage	$53,234	$50,360 to $55,741	$72,234

Sources: JobsEQ Economic Overviews, 2026Q2, for the Albany MSA and peer metros Valdosta, Macon-Bibb, Columbus (GA-AL) and Dothan (AL); ACS 2020-2024, Census 2025 population estimates and QCEW wages.

Definition: *Disconnected youth are 16- to 19-year-olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force. Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview, 2026Q2 (Chmura Economics & Analytics), based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020-2024 five-year estimates.*

- **Population loss is concentrated in Dougherty County,** which loses about 894 residents a year while Lee County gains about 499 (see Section 3).
- **Youth disconnection is the Albany MSA's most distinctive gap,** with 634 young people ages 16-19 out of school and work; about 78% live in Dougherty (see Section 3).
- **Retention, not just training, limits key occupations.** Region-wide, schools produce more RN graduates than JobsEQ projects in openings, yet RNs have 530 active job ads, 1.1% unemployment, and Phoebe alone reported about 180 nursing openings. Albany Tech's own ASN program graduated 51 nurses in 2026, and CNAs show the same retention pattern at entry wages of $28,000 (see Sections 7 and 8).

2. Scope, geography and methodology

This section defines the region studied, the time period, the comparison areas, and the data sources and methods used.

Purpose. This assessment was prepared for Albany Technical College to show how well the college's programs match regional labor market demand, and to give the college and its partners a shared set of facts for planning recruitment, retention and workforce strategy.

Geography. The study area is the Albany, Georgia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Dougherty, Lee, Terrell and Worth counties. Each county is also profiled separately in Section 3, because Dougherty and Lee function as very different labor markets. Baker County, which borders the MSA but is not part of it, is treated as part of the wider area the region draws workers from.

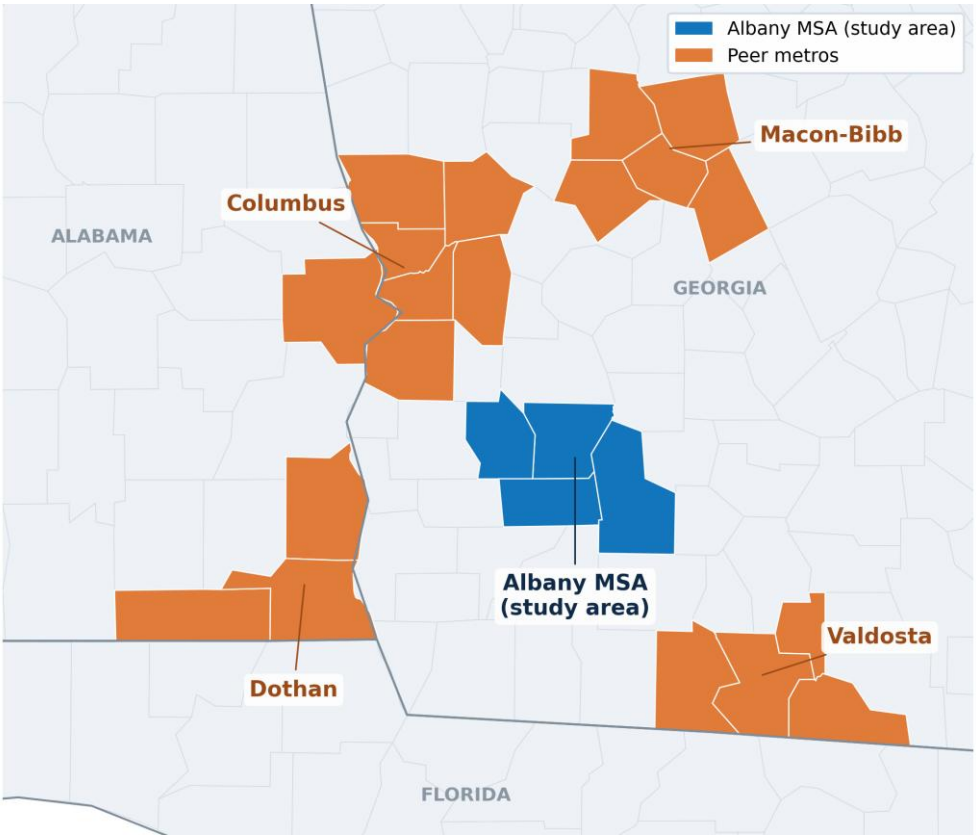
Terms used. In this report, "Albany MSA" refers to the four-county metropolitan area of Dougherty, Lee, Terrell and Worth counties. "Albany" on its own refers to the city, where Albany Technical College is located. Peer regions are likewise referred to by their full metropolitan area names, such as the Valdosta MSA.

Comparison areas. The Albany MSA is compared with Georgia, the United States and four peer metropolitan areas in South Georgia and Alabama: the Valdosta MSA, the Macon-Bibb County MSA, the Columbus (GA-AL) MSA and the Dothan (AL) MSA.

Why these peers. The four peers are the nearest regional centers in South Georgia and southeast Alabama, and they share key traits with the Albany MSA: economies anchored by health care, a nearby military installation, logistics and a technical college, along with similar poverty rates (17.9% to 20.7%) and labor force participation (about 57%). The Valdosta MSA (150,188 residents) and Dothan MSA (152,674) are the closest matches in size to the Albany MSA (146,018). The Macon-Bibb MSA (234,943) and Columbus MSA (325,615) are larger regional hubs, included because they face the same regional labor market patterns; differences in size should be kept in mind when comparing them.

Counties in each metro

Metro area	Counties included
Albany, GA MSA (study area)	Dougherty, Lee, Terrell and Worth counties, Georgia
Valdosta, GA MSA	Brooks, Echols, Lanier and Lowndes counties, Georgia
Macon-Bibb County, GA MSA	Bibb, Crawford, Jones, Monroe and Twiggs counties, Georgia
Columbus, GA-AL MSA	Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, Muscogee, Stewart and Talbot counties, Georgia; Russell County, Alabama
Dothan, AL MSA	Geneva, Henry and Houston counties, Alabama



Albany MSA and its four peer metros. Sources: metro county definitions from JobsEQ Economic Overview region definitions, 2026Q2 (U.S. Office of Management and Budget); map from U.S. Census Bureau county boundary files.

Time period. Labor market data are current as of the second quarter of 2026, with employment projections over the next 10 years (2026-2036). Demographic figures come from the 2020-2024 American Community Survey, commuting data from 2023, and Albany Tech enrollment and graduation data from academic years 2024-2026.

Data sources

Source	What it provides	Period
JobsEQ (Chmura Economics & Analytics)	Demographics, employment, wages, industry and occupation projections, award gaps, skill gaps, peer and county profiles	2026Q2
U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey	Population, labor force participation, education, income, poverty, housing (through JobsEQ)	2020-2024
U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap	Where workers live and work; commuting flows and earnings	2023
Albany Technical College, KMS reports TEC0180 and TEC3111	Enrollment by major and graduates by major	AY 2024-2026
MIT Living Wage Calculator	Living wage benchmarks for the Albany metro	February 2026

Source	What it provides	Period
Georgia Budget and Policy Institute; U.S. DOL National Database of Childcare Prices	Childcare cost by county	2022 dollars
Public reports and organization websites	Transit, housing, broadband, training providers and workforce assets	2022-2026

Sources: brief source notes appear with each table and chart; full citations are on the Sources page at the end of this report.

Methods. Priority occupations were selected from the six occupation groups with the strongest demand, using two tests: at least 100 projected openings over 10 years, and an average wage of at least $40,000 or a direct path into such a job (see Section 5). Supply was measured by comparing annual graduates with annual openings (see Section 7), wages were compared with living wage benchmarks (see Section 8), and findings were checked against public sources. This is a desk study using published data and online research rather than interviews or surveys.

Limitations. Most figures are estimates. Small-county results, especially for Terrell County, have wide margins of error. Federal completion counts exclude some private and employer-based training, and Albany Tech graduate counts can include the same student more than once when certificates are stacked. These limits are noted where they affect a finding.

3. Demographic and labor force profile

This section describes who lives in the region and who is working, including population trends, labor force participation, education and income.

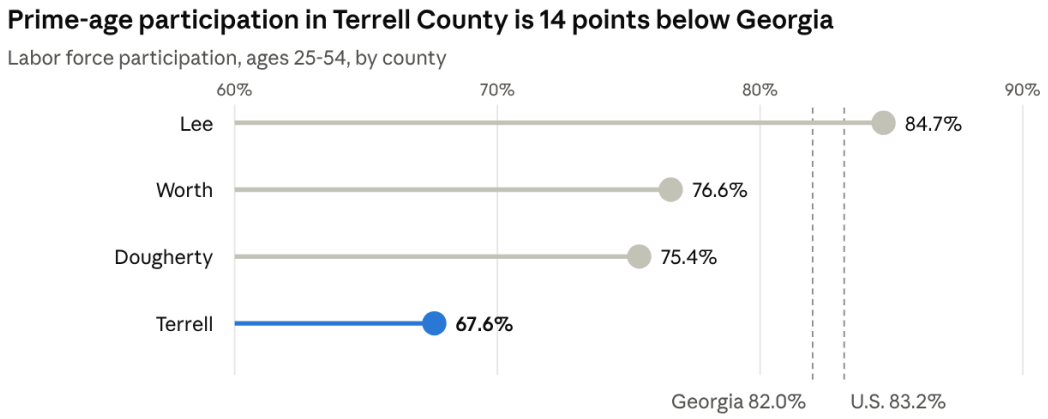
The region's population is shrinking, and compared with Georgia, fewer adults are working or looking for work, fewer hold a bachelor's degree, and more live in poverty.

Indicator	Albany MSA	Georgia
Population	146,018	10,940,407
Population change per year, since 2015	-0.3%	+1.0%
Median age	38.0	37.6
Labor force participation, ages 16+	57.1%	63.5%
Prime-age (25-54) participation	77.5%	82.0%
Unemployment rate, August 2026	4.1%	3.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher, ages 25-64	23.8%	36.6%
Median household income	$58,716	$77,353
Poverty rate	20.9%	13.4%
Households receiving SNAP	23.5%	12.3%

Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview, Albany MSA, 2026Q2 (U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020-2024; Census 2025 population estimates; BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics, August 2026).

County comparison

The MSA's challenges are concentrated in Dougherty and Terrell counties, while Lee County outperforms both Georgia and the nation on labor force participation.



JobsEQ Economic Overview by county, 2026Q2 (ACS 2020-2024)

Indicator	Dougherty	Lee	Terrell	Worth	MSA
Population	83,091	33,626	8,850	20,451	146,018
Population change per year	-894	+499	-36	-63	-495
Labor force participation	54.8%	65.6%	50.1%	55.2%	57.1%
Prime-age (25-54) participation	75.4%	84.7%	67.6%	76.6%	77.5%
Unemployment, Aug 2026	4.8%	2.9%	4.8%	3.8%	4.1%
Median household income	$49,044	$89,168	$46,171	$58,694	$58,716
Poverty rate	25.0%	5.7%	33.3%	24.0%	20.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher, 25-64	22.7%	35.4%	12.4%	12.9%	23.8%
No high school diploma, 25-64	11.4%	7.3%	17.4%	11.9%	10.8%
Disconnected youth, 16-19	9.7% (493)	2.9% (65)	2.1% (8)	10.1% (68)	7.6% (634)
Households with no vehicle	10.9%	2.8%	11.8%	6.5%	8.6%
Average wage of jobs located in county	$55,447	$47,273	$47,030	$43,124	$53,234
Mean commute (minutes)	20.0	23.1	22.6	28.4	22.2

Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview by county, 2026Q2 (ACS 2020-2024; Census 2025 population estimates; BLS LAUS for unemployment).

Note: *County rates differ from the 7.6% MSA rate used elsewhere in this report, which combines all four counties. For example, Dougherty County's disconnected youth rate is 9.7%, while the MSA rate is 7.6%.*

Definition: *Disconnected youth are 16- to 19-year-olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force. Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview, 2026Q2 (Chmura Economics & Analytics), based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020-2024 five-year estimates.*

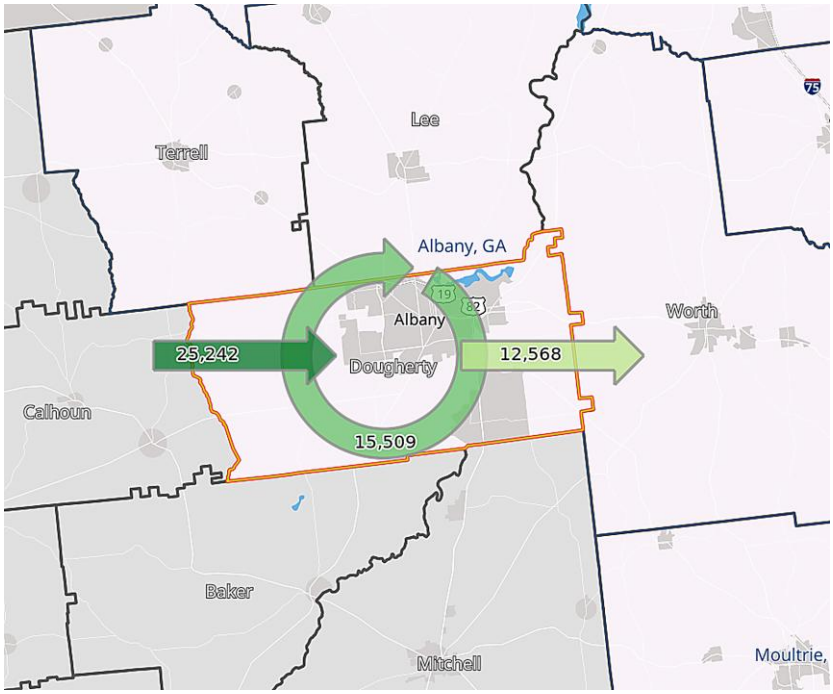
- **Population loss is a Dougherty story.** Dougherty loses about 894 residents a year; Lee gains about 499, offsetting more than half.
- **The participation gap is concentrated.** Dougherty and Terrell drive the MSA's low participation; Lee's prime-age rate (84.7%) exceeds the national rate (83.2%).
- **Jobs are in Dougherty; higher earners live in Lee.** Dougherty has the highest-paying jobs but lower resident incomes, while Lee residents earn far more than jobs in Lee pay. Worth has the lowest local wages and the longest commutes, suggesting many residents work elsewhere. LEHD OnTheMap can confirm these flows.
- **Rural counties face education and transportation barriers.** Terrell and Worth have bachelor's attainment near 12-13%; Terrell also has the highest rates of no diploma and no vehicle.
- **Worth has the highest disconnected youth rate** (10.1%), though the count is small (68).
- **Small-county estimates have wide margins of error,** especially for Terrell; treat their rates as directional.

Baker County, which borders the MSA, is not part of its current definition. It is small (2,790 residents) with very low participation (44.5%) and can be treated as part of the wider labor shed rather than included in MSA totals.

Commuting patterns

Dougherty County is the region's job center: it has 40,751 jobs but only 28,077 working residents, and 62% of its jobs are held by people who live elsewhere. Those in-commuters hold a larger share of the higher-paying jobs than Dougherty residents do.

Dougherty County inflow and outflow of workers, 2023



Only

38%

of Dougherty County jobs are held by people who live in the county

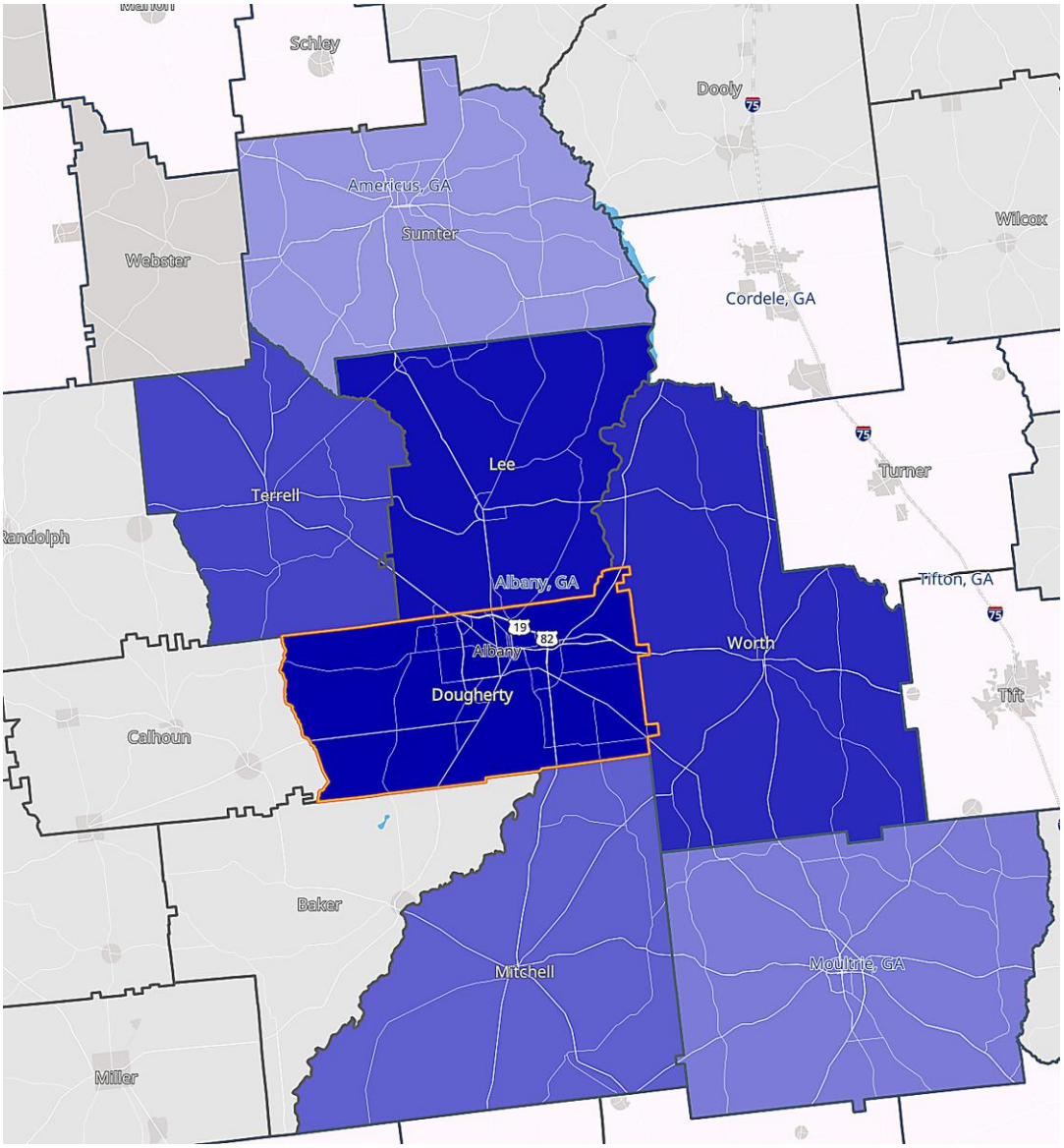
15,509 of 40,751 jobs

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap, Inflow/Outflow analysis, Dougherty County, 2023 primary jobs. Map generated in OnTheMap. Dark green arrow: workers commuting in; light green arrow: residents commuting out; circle: residents who live and work in the county.

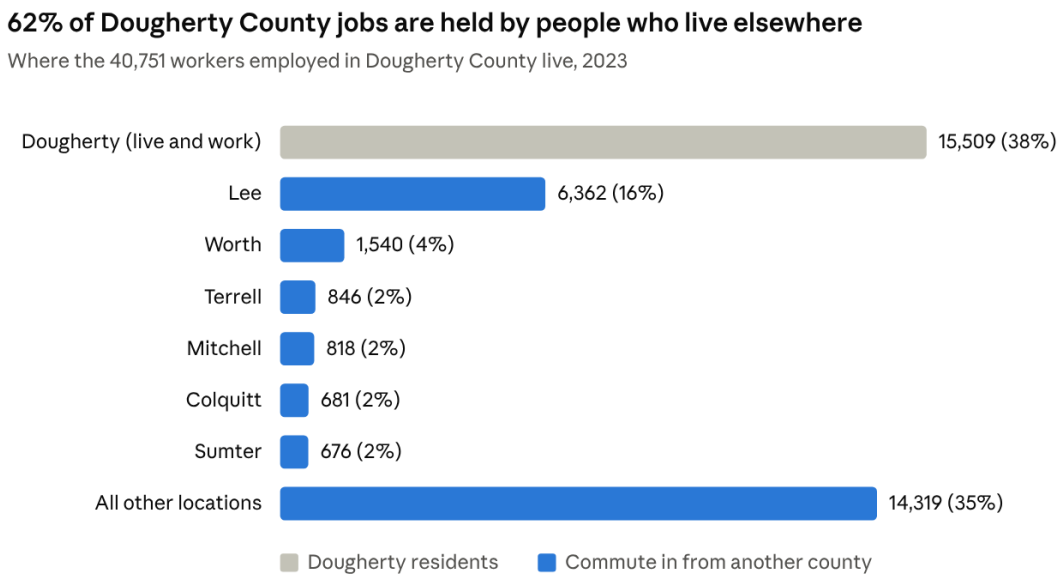
Dougherty County jobs (primary jobs, 2023)	Count	Share
Employed in Dougherty County	40,751	100.0%
Employed in Dougherty County but living outside	25,242	61.9%
Employed and living in Dougherty County	**15,509**	**38.1%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap, Inflow/Outflow Job Counts, Dougherty County, 2023.

Where people who work in Dougherty County live



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap, Destination analysis (home counties of Dougherty County workers), 2023 primary jobs. Map generated in OnTheMap. Darker shading indicates more workers; Dougherty County is outlined in orange.



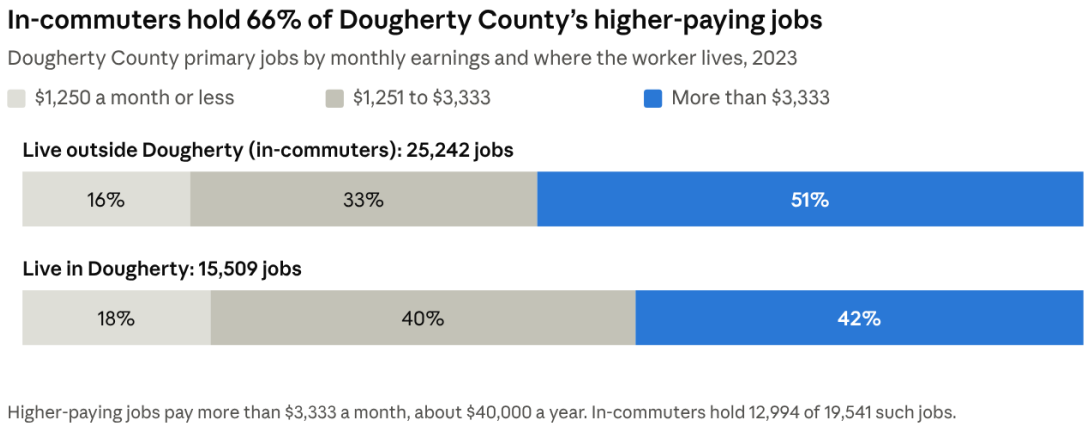
U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap, Destination analysis, 2023 primary jobs

66%

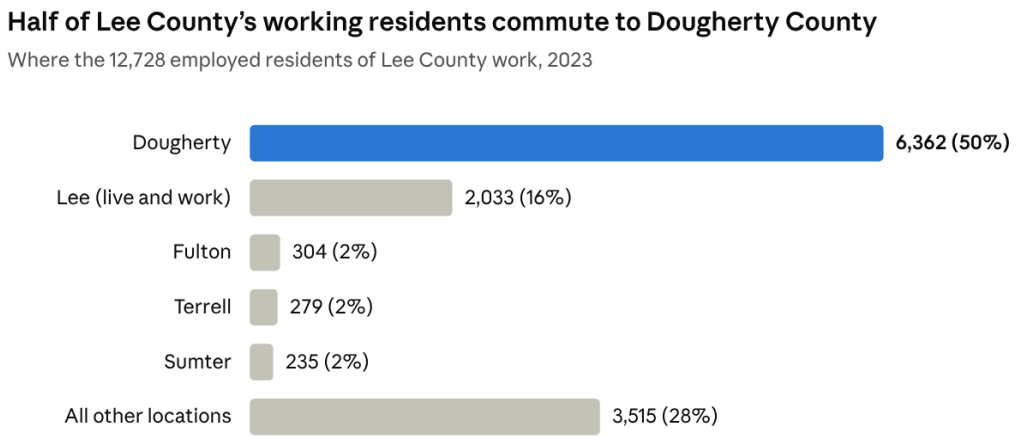
of Dougherty County's higher-paying jobs are held by in-commuters

In-commuters hold a larger share of higher-paying jobs than Dougherty residents do: 12,994 of the 19,541 Dougherty County jobs paying more than $3,333 a month (about $40,000 a year) go to workers who live outside the county.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap, Inflow/Outflow analysis, Dougherty County, 2023 primary jobs.



U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap, Inflow/Outflow analysis, Dougherty County, 2023 primary jobs



U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap, Destination analysis, Lee County, 2023 primary jobs

50%

of Lee County's working residents commute to Dougherty County

6,362 of Lee County's 12,728 employed residents work in Dougherty County, while only 16% work in Lee County itself. Lee residents also hold 16% of all Dougherty County jobs, more than any county other than Dougherty.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap, Destination analysis, Lee County, 2023 primary jobs.

Commuting flow (primary jobs, 2023)	Dougherty County	Albany MSA
Jobs located in the area	40,751	53,196
Working residents	28,077	51,432
Net daily inflow of workers	+12,674	+1,764
Jobs held by people living outside the area	25,242 (62%)	21,391 (40%)
Residents working outside the area	12,568 (45%)	19,627 (38%)
In-commuters earning over $3,333/month	51%	47%
Residents working locally earning over $3,333/month	42%	47%

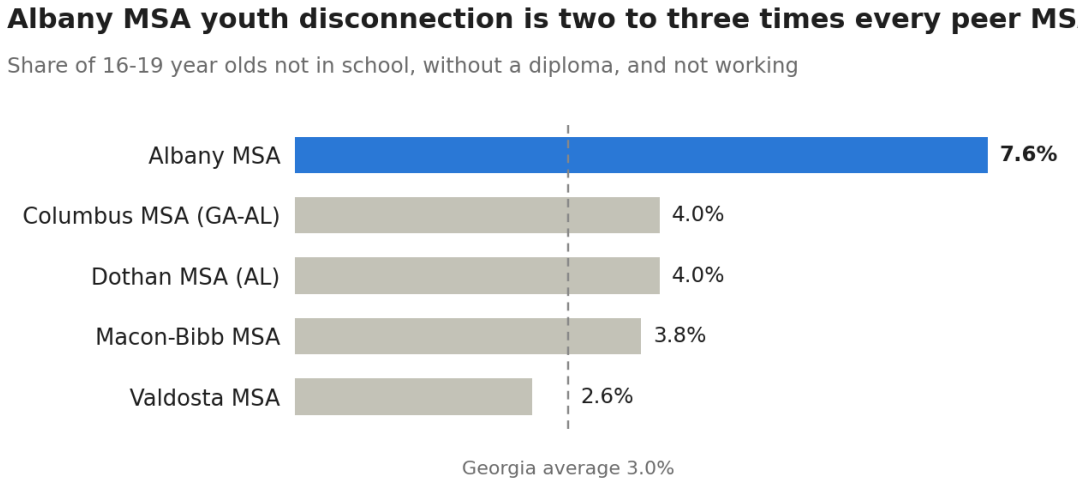
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap, 2023 primary jobs.

- **Dougherty County is the economic engine of the region.** Dougherty County, home to the city of Albany, holds about 77% of all jobs in the Albany MSA (40,751 of 53,196), making it the center of the regional economic system. Jobs located there support workers and households across all four counties and beyond.

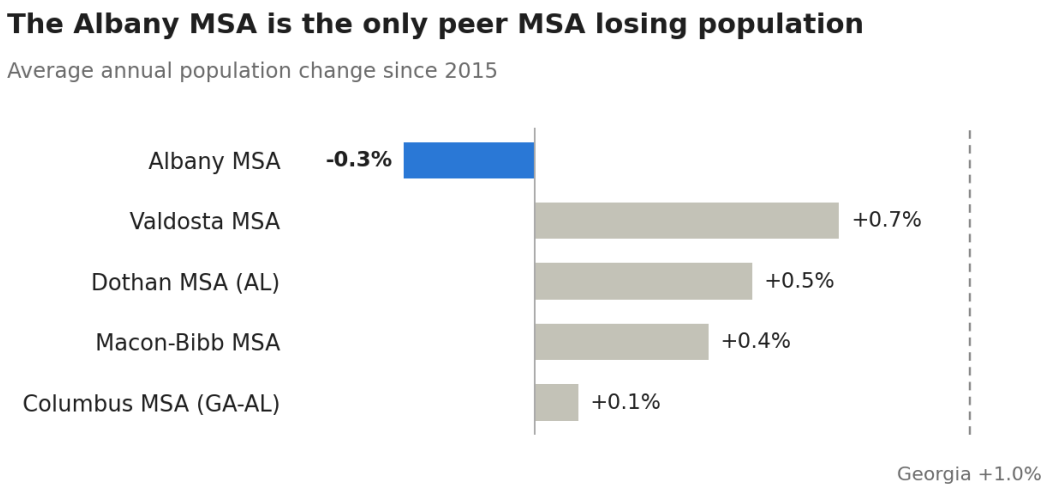
- **The labor market extends well beyond the MSA.** 40% of MSA jobs are filled by workers living outside the four counties, so the regional talent pool includes surrounding counties such as Mitchell, Sumter, Tift and Colquitt.
- **Dougherty's better-paying jobs tilt toward commuters.** Half of in-commuters earn more than $3,333 a month, compared with 42% of residents working in the county.
- **Where MSA residents work:** 47% in Dougherty, 8% in Lee, then Worth, Terrell, Tift, Mitchell and Fulton (Fulton likely reflects jobs reported at Atlanta headquarters).
- **Lee County is a commuter suburb of Dougherty.** Half of Lee's working residents (6,362 of 12,728) work in Dougherty, and only 16% work in Lee itself. Lee residents hold 16% of all Dougherty jobs, the largest share after Dougherty residents (38%). Worth (1,540), Terrell (846) and Mitchell (818) are the next-largest sources of Dougherty's workforce.

Peer comparison

The Albany MSA's low labor force participation is typical of South Georgia and Alabama metros, not unique to the region. What sets the Albany MSA apart is that it is the only peer losing population, and its disconnected youth rate is two to three times that of every peer.



JobsEQ Economic Overviews, 2026Q2 (ACS 2020-2024) · Albany MSA and four peer metros



JobsEQ Economic Overviews, 2026Q2 (Census 2025 population estimates, average annual growth since 2015)

Indicator	Albany MSA	Valdosta MSA	Macon-Bibb MSA	Columbus MSA (GA-AL)	Dothan MSA (AL)
Population	146,018	150,188	234,943	325,615	152,674
Population change per year	-0.3%	+0.7%	+0.4%	+0.1%	+0.5%
Labor force participation	57.1%	57.6%	57.0%	57.4%	56.9%
Prime-age (25-54) participation	77.5%	74.8%	77.9%	75.7%	76.8%
Median household income	$58,716	$56,613	$58,957	$60,013	$57,755
Poverty rate	20.9%	20.2%	20.7%	18.7%	17.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher, 25-64	23.8%	26.3%	25.6%	28.7%	22.0%
Disconnected youth, 16-19	7.6%	2.6%	3.8%	4.0%	4.0%
Children in single-parent families	55.7%	42.8%	50.2%	47.5%	43.3%
Households with no vehicle	8.6%	6.7%	9.1%	9.2%	6.7%
Average annual wage	$53,234	$50,360	$55,741	$55,220	$55,349

Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview for each MSA, 2026Q2 (ACS 2020-2024; Census 2025 population estimates; QCEW wages).

Peer metro counties: *Valdosta (Brooks, Echols, Lanier, Lowndes); Macon-Bibb (Bibb, Crawford, Jones, Monroe, Twiggs); Columbus, GA-AL (Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, Muscogee, Stewart, Talbot, and Russell County, AL); Dothan, AL (Geneva, Henry, Houston). See Section 2.*

- **Participation is a regional pattern.** All five metros sit near 57%, well below Georgia (63.5%) and the nation (63.3%). The Albany MSA's prime-age rate is in the middle of the peer group.
- **The Albany MSA is the only peer losing population.** Every other peer MSA is growing between 0.1% and 0.7% a year.
- **Youth disconnection is the Albany MSA's most distinctive gap.** At 7.6%, it is roughly double the Macon-Bibb, Columbus and Dothan MSAs and nearly three times the Valdosta MSA.
- **Family structure stands out.** The Albany MSA has the highest share of children in single-parent families, which reinforces the importance of childcare and wage adequacy (see Sections 8 and 9).

4. Economic and industry base

This section shows which industries employ the most people, which are more concentrated here than nationally, and which are growing or shrinking.

Health care is the region’s largest employer, and government, wholesale trade and agriculture are more concentrated here than in the nation. Total employment has been nearly flat over five years and is projected to decline slightly over the next decade.

Largest industry sectors

Industry sector	Jobs, 2026	Avg annual wage	Concentration (LQ)	5-year change
Health Care and Social Assistance	10,373	$63,537	1.05	+610
Retail Trade	7,537	$35,570	1.26	+186
Accommodation and Food Services	5,698	$20,840	1.04	+266
Educational Services	5,468	$51,027	1.07	+72
Public Administration	4,909	$65,753	1.67	-533
Administrative and Support Services	4,879	$37,142	1.30	-1,267
Manufacturing	4,117	$74,552	0.85	-16
Wholesale Trade	3,622	$68,299	1.58	+854
All industries	62,892	$53,234	1.00	+353

Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview, Albany MSA, 2026Q2 (BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages). Concentration (location quotient, or LQ) compares the industry’s share of local jobs with its share nationally; 1.00 equals the national share, and higher means more concentrated.

Key findings

- **Health care leads.** Health Care and Social Assistance employs 10,373 people, 16.5% of all jobs, and contributed the largest share of regional GDP in 2025 ($981 million).

- **Most concentrated sectors.** Public Administration (LQ 1.67), Wholesale Trade (1.58) and Agriculture (1.46) employ a larger share of workers here than nationally.
- **Highest-paying sectors.** Information ($105,829), Management of Companies ($105,721) and Utilities ($104,360) pay the most but employ few people; Manufacturing pays $74,552 on average.
- **Five-year shifts.** Wholesale Trade (+854) and Health Care (+610) grew most, while Administrative and Support Services (-1,267) and Public Administration (-533) declined most. The 4-digit detail below explains these swings.
- **Strongest cluster.** Wood and paper products, including Procter & Gamble's Albany plant, are 5.06 times more concentrated than nationally, employing 1,465 workers at an average wage of $67,894, though the cluster is projected to shrink about 1% a year.
- **Economic output.** Regional GDP was $7.68 billion in 2025, up 3.8%, led by health care, manufacturing ($895 million) and wholesale trade ($703 million).
- **Outlook.** Total employment is projected to decline about 0.4% a year over the next 10 years, based on national projections adjusted for regional patterns.

Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview, Albany MSA, 2026Q2 (industry employment and wages from the BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; GDP from the Bureau of Economic Analysis).

What drove the big sector changes (4-digit industries)

The sector-level swings trace to a handful of specific industries: call-center and staffing losses explain the Administrative and Support decline, military employment explains the Public Administration decline, and one wholesale industry accounts for most of Wholesale Trade's growth.

Industry (NAICS)	Jobs, 2026	Avg wage	LQ	5-yr change	10-yr forecast
Professional and Commercial Equipment Wholesalers (4234)	1,248	$50,760	4.47	+673	-49
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals (6221)	3,166	$82,754	1.28	+501	-124
Warehousing and Storage (4931)	538	$51,347	0.75	+293	-30
Converted Paper Product Manufacturing (3222)	1,084	$87,082	10.76	+235	-104
Business Support Services (5614)	969	$34,321	3.60	-712	-108
Employment Services (5613)	1,498	$39,761	1.23	-645	-138
National Security and International Affairs (9281)	1,563	$88,352	7.26	-557	-197

Source: JobsEQ Industry Snapshot, Albany MSA, 4-digit NAICS, 2026Q2, 10-year forecast.

- **Administrative and Support (-1,267 over 5 years)** is mostly Business Support Services, which includes call centers (-712), and Employment Services, or staffing agencies (-645).

- **Public Administration (-533)** is driven by National Security and International Affairs (-557), the category that includes military installation employment.
- **Wholesale Trade (+854)** is mostly Professional and Commercial Equipment Wholesalers (+673), a highly concentrated industry (LQ 4.47).
- **Converted paper products**, anchored by Procter & Gamble's Albany plant, are the Albany MSA's most concentrated major industry (LQ 10.76) and among its best-paying ($87,082), adding 235 jobs over five years.
- **Projected growth is in outpatient healthcare.** The industries forecast to add the most jobs over 10 years are outpatient care centers (+94), home health care (+90) and individual and family services (+81), which supports the healthcare focus in Section 5.

5. Occupational demand

This section identifies the jobs employers will need to fill over the next 10 years and selects the priority occupations analyzed in the rest of the report.

The region will have about 58,400 job openings over the next 10 years, even as total employment falls by about 2,700. Nearly all demand comes from replacing workers who retire or change occupations, so the story is a replacement pipeline, not job growth.

Priority occupations. 18 occupations were selected from six groups (healthcare practitioners, healthcare support, installation and maintenance, transportation, production, construction). Criteria: at least 100 openings over 10 years and an average wage of $40,000 or more, or a direct feeder into such a job. Radiologic technologists were added despite lower volume because of 35 active job ads and 1.2% unemployment.

Occupation	Sector	10-yr openings	Avg wage
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Transportation	1,049	$55,400
Nursing Assistants	Healthcare	713	$35,000
Registered Nurses	Healthcare	680	$88,100
Medical Assistants	Healthcare	568	$39,400
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	Trades	437	$46,200
Automotive Service Technicians	Trades	372	$54,100
Electricians	Trades	249	$59,900
Paper Goods Machine Operators	Production	224	$52,100
Pharmacy Technicians	Healthcare	207	$43,300
Licensed Practical Nurses	Healthcare	202	$59,400
Dental Assistants	Healthcare	176	$44,700

Occupation	Sector	10-yr openings	Avg wage
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	Trades	166	$70,400
HVAC Mechanics and Installers	Trades	148	$54,300
Nurse Practitioners	Healthcare	130	$122,300
Diesel Engine Specialists	Trades	121	$68,400
Plumbers and Pipefitters	Trades	118	$55,900
Welders	Trades	101	$52,600
Radiologic Technologists	Healthcare	53	$73,000

Source: JobsEQ Occupation Snapshot, Albany MSA, 2026Q2, 10-year forecast.

Demand signals

- Registered nurses are the tightest market in the region: 530 active job ads and 1.1% unemployment.
- Food preparation has the most openings of any group (8,764 over 10 years) but averages $29,100; this is turnover, not a training priority.
- High-volume, low-wage roles (stockers, hand laborers, personal care aides, packers) were excluded for the same reason.

6. Talent supply and education pipeline

This section examines how many workers local education and training programs produce, and which skills and credentials job seekers bring.

Regional institutions produce about 2,450 awards a year against about 5,850 annual openings across all occupations. The largest supply gaps are foundational skills, not technical ones.

About the completions data: award counts in this section and Section 7 come from JobsEQ Award Gaps and include every award level at colleges that participate in federal student aid. They exclude online schools, private CDL schools, apprenticeships and employer training. Albany Tech's own graduate counts appear in Section 7.

Albany Technical College enrollment

Albany Tech enrollment held steady at about 4,000 students a year: 4,062 in 2024, 4,021 in 2025 and 4,101 in 2026. Early College Essentials, the dual-enrollment pathway for high school students, is the college's largest major and grew to 541 students in 2026, a strong K-12 pipeline asset. Enrollment shifted sharply within programs: Business Healthcare Technology fell from 540 to 143 students, while radiologic technology (76 to 192), surgical technology (45 to 84) and medical assisting (53 to 130) grew. Program-level alignment with the priority occupations is in Section 7.

Source: Albany Technical College, KMS Enrollment by Major report (TEC0180), academic years (AY) 2024-2026.



Why Albany Technical College matters to the regional economy

Albany Tech offers programs for 17 of the 18 priority occupations in this assessment, which makes it the region's main pipeline into the jobs employers need most. That pipeline matters beyond the college because two-year college graduates tend to build their careers close to where they studied. A national study tracking the graduates of about 2,600 U.S. colleges found that about half of recent graduates live and work in the metro area nearest their college, and that graduates of the most selective four-year universities move about 5.5 times as far as the average community college graduate (Conzelmann et al., 2025). Community college students also enroll closer to home than students in any other sector; across all undergraduates, the median distance from home to college is about 17 miles (Hillman, 2023).

For the Albany region, this means each Albany Tech graduate is likely to stay and work locally, strengthening employer pipelines, household incomes, the tax base and the population stability the region needs (see Sections 3 and 12).

Sources: Conzelmann, J. G., Hemelt, S. W., Hershbein, B. J., Martin, S., Simon, A., & Stange, K. M. (2025). Grads on the go: Measuring college-specific labor markets for graduates. Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 44(3), 741-763. Hillman, N. (2023). Geography of Opportunity Series, Brief 2. The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS).

How to read the skill gap tables

- **Annual demand** is the estimated number of workers entering local jobs each year whose job ads call for the skill.
- **Annual supply** is the estimated number of new entrants each year who list the skill on their resumes.
- **Gap** is supply minus demand. A negative number is a shortage; a positive number is a surplus. For example, a math gap of -133 means about 133 more workers a year need math skills than the local candidate pool appears to have.
- **Gaps are relative to the nation.** The analysis assumes the U.S. as a whole is balanced, so each gap shows how the Albany MSA differs from the national pattern.
- **Supply comes from resumes posted online.** Workers who do not post resumes online, often in lower-wage or less digital jobs, are underrepresented.

Foundational skill gaps. Math and digital literacy are short across every sector.

Skill	Annual supply	Annual demand	Gap
Mathematics	91	224	-133
Microsoft Outlook	80	152	-72
Microsoft Excel	326	397	-71
Microsoft Office	285	356	-71

Skill	Annual supply	Annual demand	Gap
Personal computers	50	110	-60
Data analysis	31	61	-30
Keyboarding	31	55	-24

Credential gaps

Credential	Annual supply	Annual demand	Gap
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	39	89	-50
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	22	54	-32
CDL Class A	4	24	-20
CPR certification	93	113	-19
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	13	27	-13
Medication administration	5	14	-10
Medical Assistant certification	50	24	+27

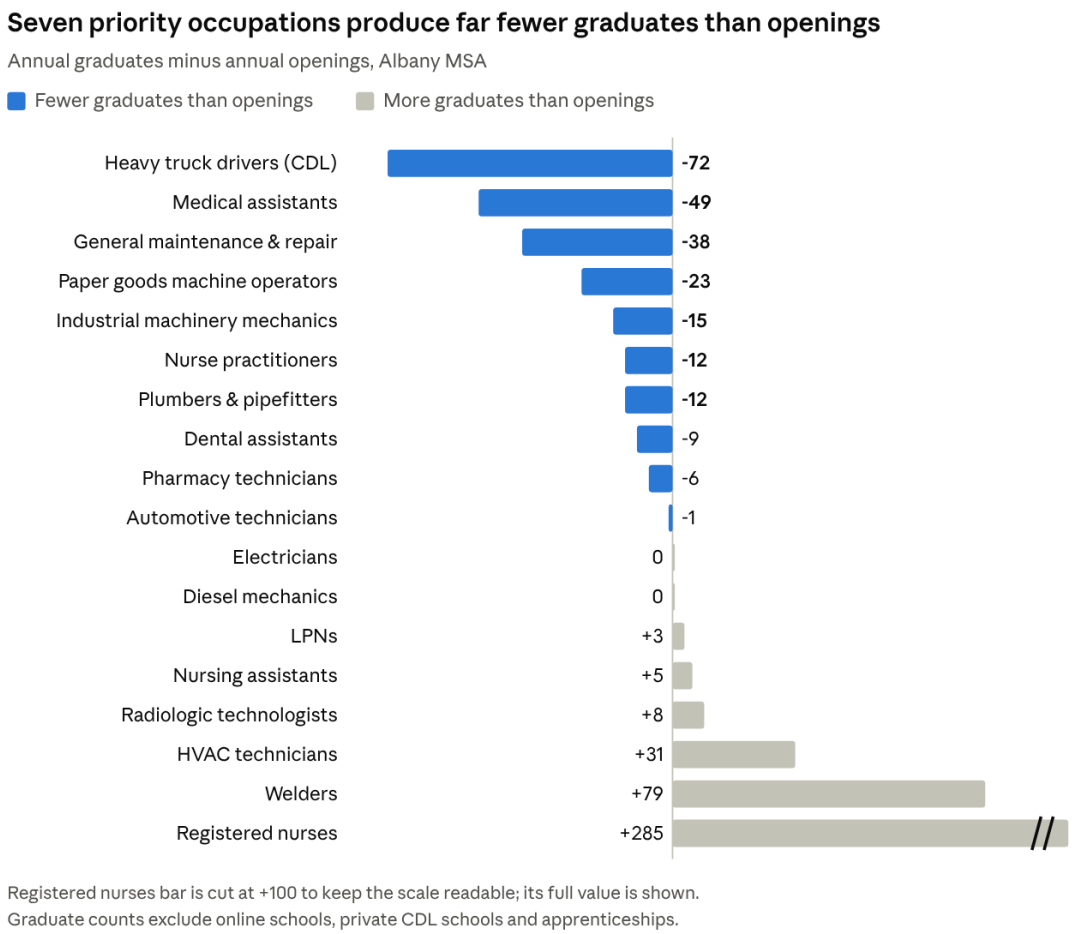
Source: JobsEQ Skill Gaps, Albany MSA; postings and candidate sample compiled March 2025. Maintenance and mechanic skills show small gaps because their annual demand is small; treat them as low-confidence.

7. Supply and demand gap analysis

This section compares graduates with job openings for each priority occupation to show where the region produces too few or too many trained workers.

Seven of the 18 priority occupations show clear training shortages, led by truck drivers (-72 a year) and medical assistants (-49). Three show large surpluses despite tight labor markets, which points to a retention problem rather than a training problem.

Method. Annual graduates (JobsEQ Award Gaps, all award levels) compared directly with annual openings (10-year forecast). JobsEQ's own gap figure reports 0 whenever awards fall within a target range whose floor is a national benchmark, which hides local shortfalls; for example, truck drivers show 0 despite 33 graduates against 105 openings.



JobsEQ Award Gaps and Occupation Snapshot (10-year forecast), Albany MSA, 2026Q2

> **Note on registered nurses:** the surplus shown for registered nurses reflects how JobsEQ counts openings, not a true oversupply. JobsEQ's projected openings exclude nurses who change employers within the occupation, so turnover between hospitals, agencies and travel contracts does not appear as demand. Phoebe Putney Health System alone reported about 180 nursing openings in 2024, far more than the 68 annual RN openings JobsEQ projects. See "Validation findings" later in this section.

Occupation	Graduates per year	Openings per year	Gap
Heavy Truck Drivers (CDL)	33	105	-72
Medical Assistants	7	56	-49
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	6	44	-38
Paper Goods Machine Operators	0	23	-23
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1	16	-15
Nurse Practitioners	0	12	-12

Occupation	Graduates per year	Openings per year	Gap
Plumbers and Pipefitters	0	12	-12
Dental Assistants	9	18	-9
Pharmacy Technicians	15	21	-6
Automotive Service Technicians	36	37	-1
Electricians	25	25	0
Diesel Engine Specialists	12	12	0
Licensed Practical Nurses	23	20	+3
Nursing Assistants	77	72	+5
Radiologic Technologists	13	5	+8
HVAC Mechanics and Installers	46	15	+31
Welders	89	10	+79
Registered Nurses	353	68	+285

Findings

- **Training shortages:** truck drivers, medical assistants, general maintenance workers, industrial machinery mechanics and nurse practitioners.
- **Retention, not training:** registered nurses graduate at five times local openings yet have 530 job ads and 1.1% unemployment. CNAs show the same pattern: a small graduate surplus, but an estimated annual shortage of about 50 CNA-credentialed new entrants in the skill data. Graduates are leaving the region or the field, or employers want experience new graduates lack.
- **Likely oversupply:** welders and HVAC graduates far exceed local openings; check whether graduates find work in the field or commute out.
- **Data limitations:** the CDL and paper operator graduate counts exclude private CDL schools and employer training. The medical assistant gap conflicts with an estimated annual surplus of 27 MA-certified new entrants in the skill data, likely because online and private programs are not counted.

Validation findings

Online research confirms the medical assistant shortage, identifies additional CDL training providers whose graduates are not counted, and indicates the RN surplus is an artifact of how openings are counted rather than a true oversupply.

- **CDL drivers: additional training providers.** Beyond Albany Technical College, whose completions are included in the award data, FMCSA-registered entry-level driver training providers in Albany include DBG Transport LLC and the Dougherty County School System (FMCSA Training Provider Registry listings via OTrucking). South Georgia Technical College also provides employer-

sponsored CDL training for City of Albany employees (SGTC). Completions from these providers are not reported in federal data; their annual graduate counts are needed to measure total regional CDL supply. Albany Tech's own records show 180 commercial driving graduates in 2026 (KMS Graduation Rate report TEC3111), well above the 33 a year in federal completions data.

- **Medical assistants: shortage confirmed.** Albany Tech's CAAHEP-accredited program is the region's main pipeline (Albany Tech catalog), and federal IPEDS data show about 10 completers in 2023 across its two credential levels (SkillPlum, IPEDS 2023), close to the 7 in the award data and far below 56 annual openings. The program reported a 75% job placement rate for 2020 graduates, so expansion should be paired with employer hiring commitments.
- **Registered nurses: openings are undercounted, and turnover is the issue.** Phoebe Putney Health System alone reported about 180 nursing openings in 2024 (CBS 44, 2024), far more than the 68 annual RN openings in the JobsEQ projection. JobsEQ's openings exclude workers who change employers within the same occupation, so nurse turnover between hospitals, agencies and travel contracts does not appear as demand. Albany Tech's nursing program reports 100% job placement (WALB, 2020), and Phoebe now funds faculty, sign-on bonuses and loan forgiveness to keep local graduates (JEMS, 2022). The issue is keeping nurses in local bedside roles, not producing more graduates.
- **Existing partnerships to build on:** Phoebe and Albany Tech opened a Living and Learning Community for nursing students in 2024, with a goal of 200 associate-degree nursing students (WALB, 2024), and Phoebe partners with Albany State University on nursing and EMT expansion.

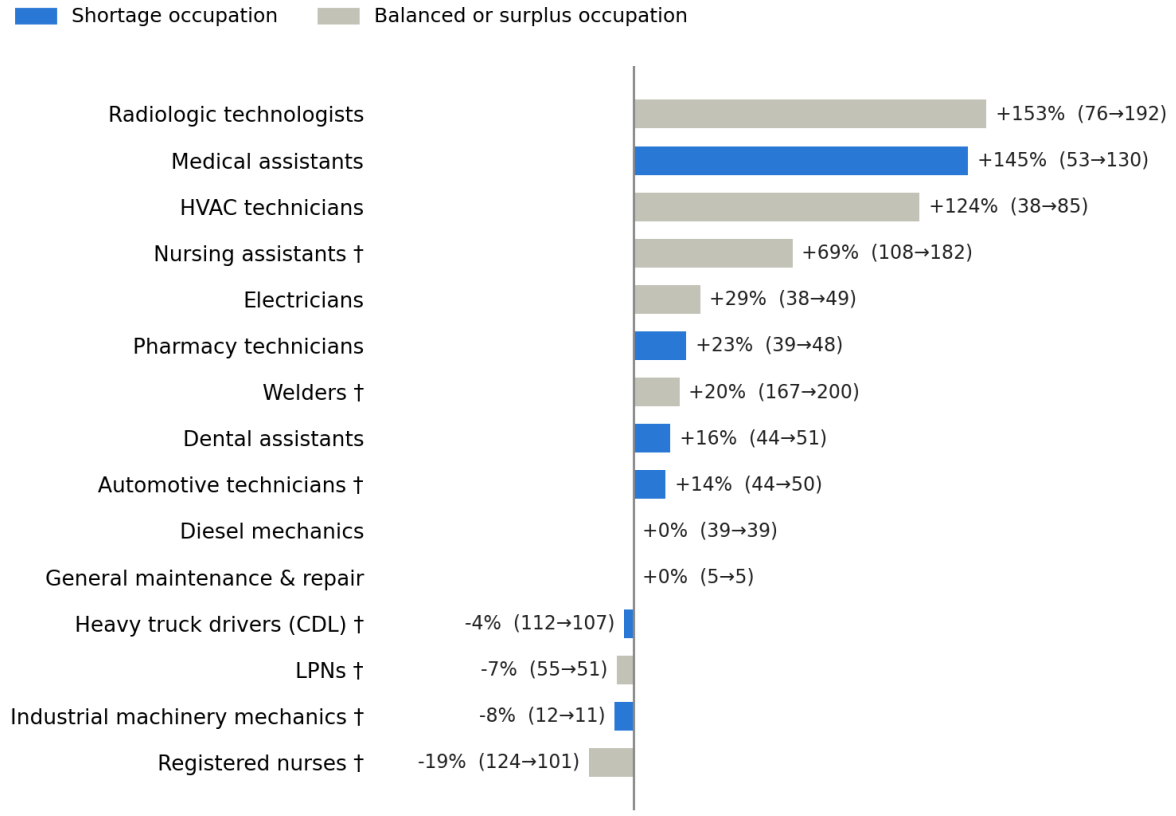
Albany Technical College program alignment

Albany Technical College offers programs for 17 of the 18 priority occupations. Adding graduation data shows that enrollment alone does not close the gaps: in six priority occupations Albany Tech graduates fewer people each year than the region needs, led by medical assisting (10 graduates in 2026 for 56 annual openings) and general maintenance (9 for 44). Commercial driving, automotive, electrical, diesel, practical nursing and nurse aide programs graduate enough students to sustain local demand. Only one priority occupation, nurse practitioners, has no Albany Tech program. Two others have approved programs with no recent enrollment: plumbing, and the Industrial Operations Technician certificate, which Albany Tech developed with Procter & Gamble and the Albany-Dougherty Industry Roundtable to prepare workers for entry-level manufacturing roles such as paper goods machine operators.

How to read this: enrollment is the academic-year headcount by major, and graduates are the credentials awarded in each reporting year, both combining every award level (associate degree, diploma and technical certificate of credit) that trains for the occupation. Because students can earn several stacked certificates, graduate counts in welding, HVAC, automotive, diesel and electrical may count one student more than once. The graduation rate is graduates divided by graduates plus students who left without graduating. † marks occupations whose programs are on the Governor's high-demand list.

Albany Tech enrollment is surging in radiologic technology, medical assisting and HVAC; nursing (ASN) enrollment is declining

Change in enrollment, academic year 2024 to 2026, programs that train for each priority occupation



† On the Governor's high-demand list.

Source: Albany Technical College, KMS Enrollment by Major report (TEC0180), academic years (AY) 2024-2026.

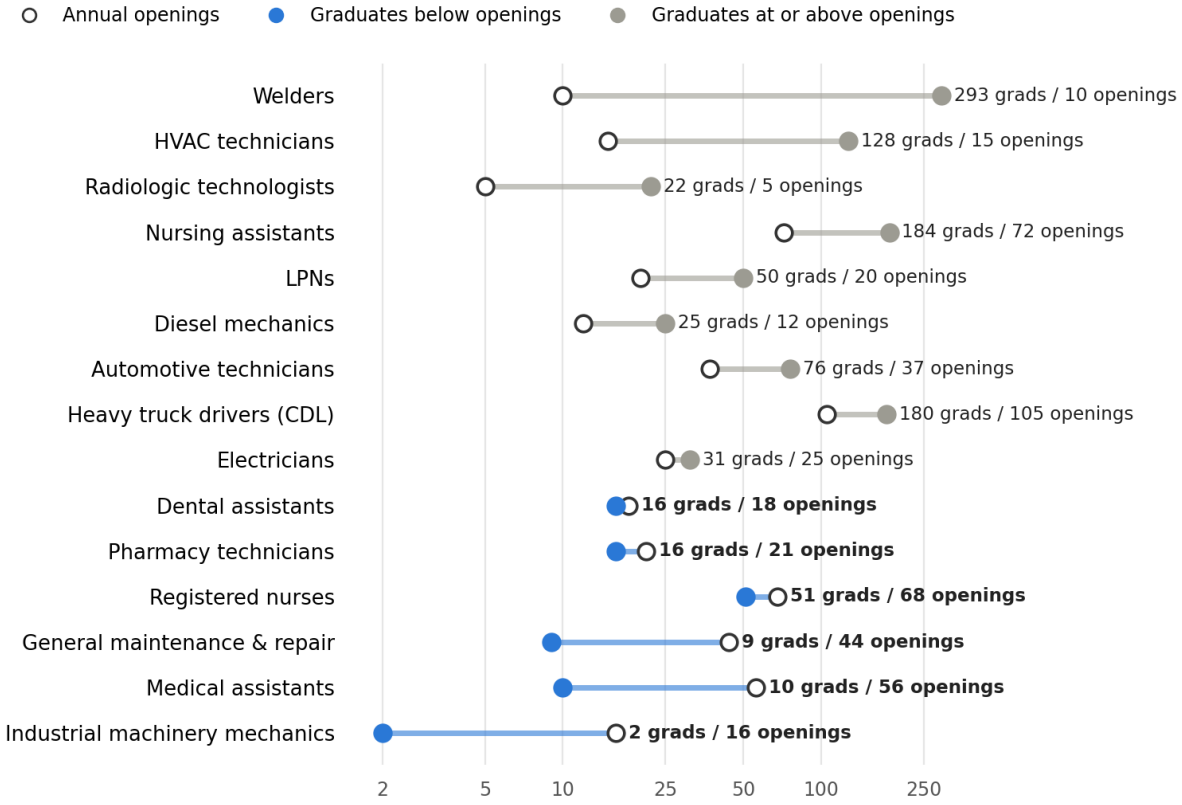
Priority occupation	Albany Tech program(s)	Enrolled 2024	Enrolled 2025	Enrolled 2026	Grads 2024	Grads 2025	Grads 2026
Heavy truck drivers (CDL) †	Commercial Driving Class A; Truck Driving & Owner/Operator (TCCs)	112	95	107	196	129	180
Medical assistants	Medical Assisting (AAS, diploma); Clinical Medical Assistant (TCC)	53	83	130	17	12	10
General maintenance & repair	Building Maintenance (diploma); General Maintenance Mechanic (TCC)	5	9	5	2	9	9
Paper goods machine operators	Industrial Operations Technician (TCC; no recent enrollment)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Industrial machinery mechanics †	Mechatronics (AAS, diploma); Industrial Systems Mechanic; Precision Manufacturing	12	15	11	10	6	2
Nurse practitioners	No program (graduate degree)	—	—	—	—	—	—

Priority occupation	Albany Tech program(s)	Enrolled 2024	Enrolled 2025	Enrolled 2026	Grads 2024	Grads 2025	Grads 2026
Plumbers & pipefitters	Plumbing (approved; no recent enrollment)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dental assistants	Dental Assisting (diploma)	44	39	51	21	15	16
Pharmacy technicians	Pharmacy Technology (AAS, diploma, TCC)	39	42	48	36	32	16
Automotive technicians †	Automotive Technology (diploma) and automotive TCCs	44	41	50	112	93	76
Electricians	Electrical Systems Technology; NCCER Electrical; electrical TCCs	38	44	49	37	47	31
Diesel mechanics	Diesel Equipment Technology (diploma) and diesel TCCs	39	35	39	61	53	25
LPNs †	Practical Nursing (diploma, then certificate)	55	65	51	57	53	50
Nursing assistants †	Nurse Aide Accelerated; Geriatric Care Assistant (TCCs)	108	140	182	127	163	184
Radiologic technologists	Radiologic Technology (AAS)	76	123	192	16	20	22
HVAC technicians	Air Conditioning Technology (diploma) and HVAC TCCs	38	63	85	58	101	128
Welders †	Welding & Joining (diploma) and welding TCCs	167	216	200	207	280	293
Registered nurses †	Nursing (ASN)	124	111	101	36	54	51

Sources: Albany Technical College, KMS Enrollment by Major report (TEC0180) and KMS Graduation Rate report (TEC3111), academic and reporting years 2024-2026; Albany Technical College SACSCOC approved program list (August 2026).

Albany Tech graduates fall short of annual openings in six priority occupations, led by medical assisting and general maintenance

Albany Tech graduates (credentials awarded) in 2026 compared with annual regional openings (log scale)



Graduates in programs with stacked certificates (welding, HVAC, automotive, diesel, electrical) may count one student more than once.

Sources: Albany Technical College, KMS Graduation Rate report (TEC3111), reporting year 2026; annual openings from the JobsEQ Occupation Snapshot, Albany MSA, 2026Q2, 10-year forecast.

Do enrollment and graduates sustain the gap?

Priority occupation	Annual openings	Grads 2026	Graduation rate 2026	Enough graduates?	Alignment
Heavy truck drivers (CDL)	105	180	100%	Yes	Sustain*
Medical assistants	56	10	26%	No	Improve completion*
General maintenance & repair	44	9	100%	No	Grow enrollment
Paper goods machine operators	23	0	—	No (no enrollment)	Reactivate program with P&G*
Industrial machinery mechanics	16	2	33%	No	Grow and improve completion*
Nurse practitioners	12	—	—	No program	University partner

Priority occupation	Annual openings	Grads 2026	Graduation rate 2026	Enough graduates?	Alignment
Plumbers & pipefitters	12	0	—	No (no enrollment)	Reactivate program*
Dental assistants	18	16	52%	Nearly	Improve completion*
Pharmacy technicians	21	16	53%	No	Improve completion*
Automotive technicians	37	76	96%	Yes	Aligned
Electricians	25	31	84%	Yes	Aligned
Diesel mechanics	12	25	74%	Yes	Aligned
LPNs	20	50	78%	Yes	Sustain; ladder to RN*
Nursing assistants	72	184	96%	Yes	Retain and ladder
Radiologic technologists	5	22	34%	Yes	Monitor placement; improve completion*
HVAC technicians	15	128	90%	Yes	Monitor placement
Welders	10	293	84%	Yes	Monitor placement
Registered nurses	68	51	69%	No	Grow completions and retain*

** Alignment changed after adding graduation data or updated program information from Albany Tech. Sources: Albany Technical College, KMS Graduation Rate report (TEC3111) and KMS Enrollment by Major report (TEC0180), 2024-2026; annual openings from JobsEQ, Albany MSA, 2026Q2.*

What the enrollment and graduation data show

- **Enough graduates to sustain demand.** Commercial driving (180 graduates in 2026 for 105 openings), automotive, electrical, diesel, practical nursing and nurse aide programs graduate at least as many students as the region needs. The CDL figure also resolves the earlier question in this section: federal data counted only 33 CDL awards a year, while Albany Tech's own records show about 130 to 195 graduates a year.
- **Enrolled but not graduating: medical assisting.** Enrollment rose from 53 to 130, but graduates fell from 17 to 10, a 26% graduation rate in 2026. Recruitment is working; retention through graduation is now the constraint.
- **Graduates slipping below openings.** Pharmacy technology graduates fell from 36 to 16 against 21 annual openings (53% graduation rate), and dental assisting graduates 16 against 18 openings (52%).
- **Too few enrolled and graduating.** General maintenance (9 graduates for 44 openings) and industrial machinery mechanics (2 graduates in 2026, down from 10, with a 33% graduation rate) need both more students and better completion. Automation and Robotics programs are approved and on the Governor's high-demand list but show no enrollment or graduates.
- **Nursing: Albany Tech alone does not meet demand.** The ASN program graduated 51 students in 2026 against 68 projected annual openings and about 180 openings reported by Phoebe, while

enrollment fell from 124 to 101 and the graduation rate was 69%. The regional RN surplus in Section 7 reflects graduates from all institutions; retaining them locally remains the larger issue.

- **Fast growth with low completion: radiologic technology.** Enrollment nearly tripled to 192, but only 22 students graduated in 2026 (34% graduation rate) for 5 annual openings, a combination that risks both non-completion and oversupply.
- **Surplus programs.** Welding and HVAC graduates far exceed local openings even allowing for stacked certificates; tracking where graduates work would show whether they commute out or leave the field.
- **Two programs to reactivate, and one shortage without a local program.** Albany Tech's plumbing program remains approved but has had no students in recent years, so plumbing demand could be met by reactivating it, possibly alongside a registered apprenticeship. The Industrial Operations Technician certificate, built with Procter & Gamble and the Industry Roundtable for entry-level manufacturing jobs, shows no enrollment in 2024-2026 and could be relaunched to train paper goods machine operators. Nurse practitioners require a graduate degree and would be addressed through university partners.

Governor's high-demand programs at Albany Tech

Most of the Governor's high-demand program areas line up with a local priority occupation. The exception is cyber and IT, which enrolls about 225 to 250 students a year even though the region's computer occupations total about 1,217 jobs with about 55 openings a year (JobsEQ Economic Overview, Albany MSA, 2026Q2).

High-demand program area	2024	2025	2026	Matching priority occupation
Mechatronics	10	13	11	Industrial machinery mechanics
Automation & Robotics	—	—	—	Industrial machinery mechanics
Welding & Joining	167	216	200	Welders
Automotive	44	41	50	Automotive technicians
CDL	112	95	107	Heavy truck drivers (CDL)
Cyber and IT	231	247	224	Not a priority occupation (small local demand)
Nursing (ASN)	124	111	101	Registered nurses
LPN	55	65	51	LPNs
Nurse Aide	108	112	159	Nursing assistants
Paramedicine	23	19	24	Not in priority list (EMT and paramedic)

Sources: Governor's high-demand program list as provided by Albany Technical College; Albany Technical College, KMS Enrollment by Major report (TEC0180), academic years (AY) 2024-2026. Cyber and IT includes cybersecurity, cyber crime and forensics, computer programming, computer support, IT professional, networking and related certificates.

8. Wage adequacy and cost of living

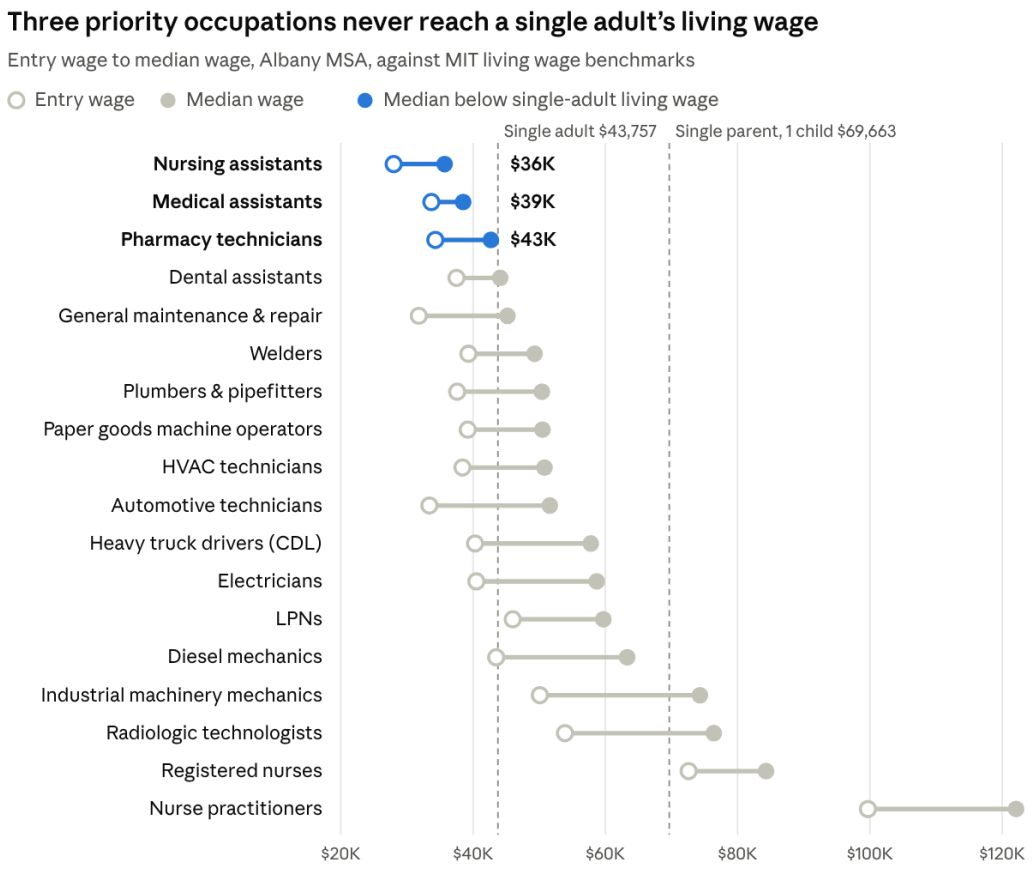
This section tests whether the priority occupations pay enough for a worker to cover basic living costs in the region.

Only 5 of the 18 priority occupations pay a living wage for a single adult at entry level, and 3 never reach it even at the median: nursing assistants, medical assistants and pharmacy technicians. Two of those three are the occupations with the clearest shortage or retention problems, which suggests low pay is part of the cause.

Living wage benchmarks, Albany MSA (MIT Living Wage Calculator, updated February 2026; annual pre-tax income for one full-time worker)

Household	Living wage
Single adult, no children	$43,757
Two working adults, two children (per worker)	$47,528
Single adult, one child	$69,663

The single-parent benchmark matters here: 55.7% of children in the MSA live in single-parent families (JobsEQ Economic Overview, Albany MSA, 2026Q2, using ACS 2020-2024).



JobsEQ Occupation Wages, Albany MSA, 2026Q2 · MIT Living Wage Calculator, Albany GA metro, February 2026

Priority occupations against the single-adult living wage

Occupation	Entry wage	Median wage	Reaches $43,757
Nurse Practitioners	$99,700	$122,100	At entry
Registered Nurses	$72,600	$84,300	At entry
Radiologic Technologists	$53,900	$76,400	At entry
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	$50,100	$74,300	At entry
Licensed Practical Nurses	$46,000	$59,700	At entry
Diesel Engine Specialists	$43,500	$63,300	At median
Electricians	$40,500	$58,700	At median
Heavy Truck Drivers (CDL)	$40,300	$57,800	At median

Occupation	Entry wage	Median wage	Reaches $43,757
Welders	$39,300	$49,300	At median
Paper Goods Machine Operators	$39,200	$50,500	At median
HVAC Mechanics and Installers	$38,400	$50,800	At median
Plumbers and Pipefitters	$37,600	$50,400	At median
Dental Assistants	$37,500	$44,100	At median
Automotive Service Technicians	$33,400	$51,600	At median
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	$31,800	$45,200	At median
Pharmacy Technicians	$34,300	$42,700	No
Medical Assistants	$33,700	$38,500	No
Nursing Assistants	$28,000	$35,700	No

Source: JobsEQ Occupation Wages, Albany MSA, 2026Q2. Entry wage is JobsEQ's entry-level estimate.

What it means

- **Skilled trades pay off with experience.** Entry wages fall short, but medians clear the benchmark, which favors earn-while-you-learn models such as apprenticeships.
- **Low pay likely drives CNA turnover.** The region graduates enough CNAs, but at $28,000 entry they are unlikely to stay; CNA works best as a step toward LPN or RN.
- **Medical assistant demand may reflect turnover, not just a training gap.** A median of $38,500 sits below the benchmark.
- **Only RNs, NPs and, at the median, radiologic technologists and industrial machinery mechanics support a single parent with one child.**

9. Barriers to participation

This section looks at obstacles that keep residents from working, such as transportation, childcare, broadband and housing.

Barriers help explain the participation gap, especially in Dougherty and Terrell counties.

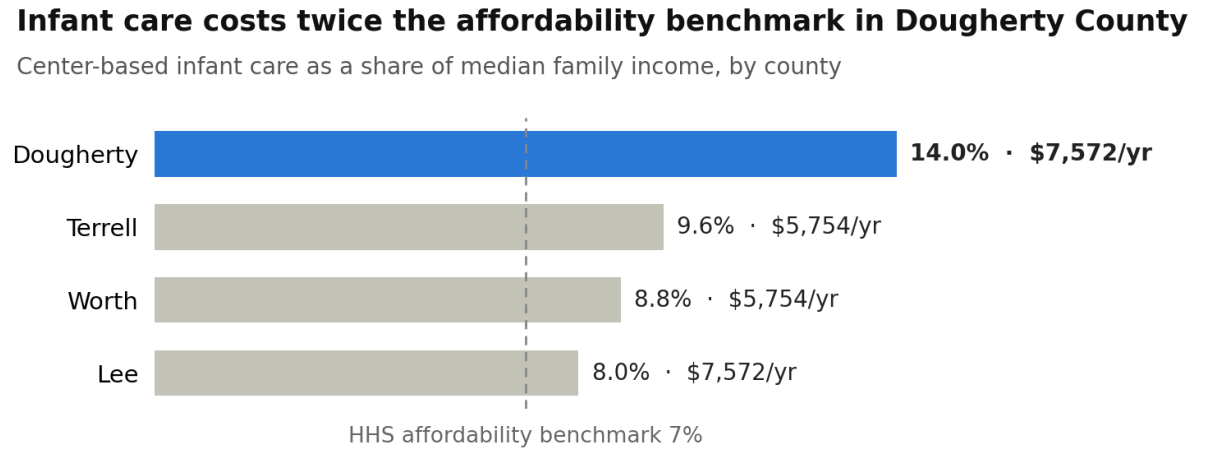
- **Transportation:** 8.6% of MSA households have no vehicle (10.9% in Dougherty and 11.8% in Terrell), and only 0.5% of workers commute by transit, which serves Dougherty County only and stops running in the early evening. Details follow below.
- **Childcare:** center-based infant care costs up to 14% of median family income, twice the federal affordability benchmark. Details follow below.
- **Broadband and digital access:** rural parts of Lee and Terrell counties had large service gaps as recently as 2022. Details follow below.

- **Housing:** nearly half of Dougherty County renters spend 30% or more of their income on rent. Details follow below.
- **Health and disability:** 14.6% of working-age adults have a disability, and only 37.7% of them are in the labor force, compared with 47.1% statewide; 12.0% of residents are uninsured.

Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview, Albany MSA and counties, 2026Q2 (U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020-2024).

Childcare cost

Center-based infant care costs about $7,572 a year in Dougherty and Lee, equal to 14% of median family income in Dougherty (GBPI, 2024). That is twice the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services affordability benchmark of 7% of family income, and every county in the MSA exceeds it.



GBPI county fact sheets (2024), DOL National Database of Childcare Prices, 2022 dollars

County	Infant, center-based	Preschool, center-based	Infant care as share of median family income
Dougherty	$7,572	$6,966	14.0%
Terrell	$5,754	$5,452	9.6%
Worth	$5,754	$5,452	8.8%
Lee	$7,572	$6,966	8.0%

Source: Georgia Budget and Policy Institute county fact sheets (February 2024), using the U.S. Department of Labor National Database of Childcare Prices. Prices are median yearly prices for one child, in 2022 dollars, based on Georgia's 2016-2017 Market Rate Survey, so current prices are likely higher.

- **Childcare consumes a large share of entry-level pay in priority occupations.** Infant care equals about 27% of a nursing assistant's entry wage ($28,000) and about 22% of a medical assistant's ($33,700), which helps explain turnover in those roles. Wages: JobsEQ Occupation Wages, Albany MSA, 2026Q2; prices: GBPI, 2024.

- **Single parents are hit hardest.** 66.9% of children in Dougherty live in single-parent families, where one income must cover this cost (JobsEQ Economic Overview, Dougherty County, 2026Q2, using ACS 2020-2024).

Transportation

Public transit serves only Dougherty County and stops running in the early evening, so it cannot support second-shift, weekend or cross-county commutes.

- **Service area:** the Albany Transit System serves Dougherty County only, with fixed routes Monday through Saturday and no Sunday service (Albany Transit System). Lee, Terrell and Worth have no fixed-route transit.
- **Hours:** since February 9, 2026, weekday buses start at 5:15 a.m. and the last routes depart at 7:15 p.m.; Saturday service runs 6:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. (WALB, January 2026).
- **Implication:** healthcare, manufacturing and logistics shifts that end after 7:15 p.m. or fall on Sundays are not reachable by bus. This matters most in Dougherty (10.9% of households without a vehicle) and Terrell (11.8%) (JobsEQ Economic Overview by county, 2026Q2, using ACS 2020-2024).

Housing cost burden

Nearly half of Dougherty renters are cost-burdened, and 29% are severely burdened, the highest rates in the MSA and above the state average.

County	Median renter income	Median annual rent	Rent-burdened (30%+ of income)	Severely burdened (50%+)
Dougherty	$27,600	$9,300	49%	29%
Worth	$32,600	$8,000	43%	20%
Terrell	$26,300	$7,700	38%	20%
Lee	$47,200	$12,400	37%	18%
Georgia	$39,600	$12,700	45%	22%

Source: U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee calculations, published by the Office of Sen. Raphael Warnock (August 2022), based on ACS 2016-2020 five-year data. Figures predate recent rent increases; an update from the latest ACS table B25070 is recommended.

- **Rent burden compounds low pay.** Dougherty's median renter earns $27,600, about the entry wage of a nursing assistant, and 54.7% of Dougherty households rent (JobsEQ Economic Overview, Dougherty County, 2026Q2).

Broadband

Rural parts of the MSA had large broadband gaps as recently as 2022, though state awards were made to close them.

- In February 2022 the state awarded Lee County about $12.5 million to serve 4,234 locations and Terrell County about $9.6 million to serve 2,270 locations (Office of the Governor, February 2022). In Terrell, that is roughly half the county's 4,252 housing units (JobsEQ Economic Overview, Terrell County).
- Statewide, 94.6% of locations were served at 25/3 Mbps or better in 2023, and about 90% of unserved locations were outside urban areas (Georgia Technology Authority).
- Current county figures should be checked on the Georgia Broadband Map, since these projects may now be complete.

10. Special populations

This section profiles groups with distinct employment challenges, including veterans, opportunity youth, adults with disabilities and older workers.

Four groups face distinct barriers to work or represent untapped talent for the priority occupations.

- **Veterans and transitioning service members:** 6,155 veterans ages 18-64 live in the MSA, 7.2% of that age group compared with 5.3% statewide, but only 68.5% are in the labor force, compared with 75.6% statewide. Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany adds a steady flow of transitioning service members and military spouses.
- **Opportunity youth:** disconnected youth (ages 16-19 who are not in school, have no high school diploma, and are unemployed or not in the labor force) make up 7.6% of that age group, or 634 young people, two to three times the rate in peer metros (see Section 3).
- **Adults with disabilities:** 12,141 working-age adults (14.6%) have a disability, and 37.7% of them are in the labor force, compared with 47.1% statewide.
- **Older workers:** 18,190 residents are ages 55-64 (12.5% of the population) and will reach retirement age over the next decade, driving much of the replacement demand described in Section 5.

Source: JobsEQ Economic Overview, Albany MSA, 2026Q2 (U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020-2024); Georgia comparisons from the same report.

11. Workforce ecosystem asset map

This section inventories the organizations, programs and funding streams that serve job seekers and employers in the region.

The Albany region already has a broad set of workforce assets: a technical college that trains for 17 of the 18 priority occupations, a university, a regional college and career academy, a WIOA-funded workforce board, an active economic development partnership and a community-wide talent strategy.

The gaps are in reach and coordination: youth programs that do not cover every county, support services concentrated in Dougherty County, and a talent strategy whose current plan period has ended.



Source: desk research of organization websites and public reports, October 2026; full sources listed on the Sources page at the end of this report.

Key assets and how they connect to the findings

Asset	What it offers	Connection to findings
Albany Technical College	Associate degrees, diplomas and certificates for 17 of the 18 priority occupations; Early College dual enrollment; Adult Education and Career Plus HSD; customized training; DOD SkillBridge	Primary training partner (see Section 7; Recommendations 1-4)
Albany State University	Bachelor's and graduate programs, including nursing; nursing and EMT partnership with Phoebe	RN pipeline and a route toward nurse practitioner training
Commodore Conyers College & Career (4C) Academy	Regional charter college and career academy with dual enrollment at Albany Tech and Albany State; pathways include mechatronics, therapeutic services, construction and logistics	K-12 recruitment (Recommendation 4); serves Dougherty, Terrell, Baker and Calhoun, but not Lee or Worth

Asset	What it offers	Connection to findings
WorkSource Southwest Georgia (LWDA 17)	WIOA training funds and supportive services for adults, youth ages 16-24 and dislocated workers across 14 counties, delivered through the Albany Career Center	Funding for priority training and completion supports (Recommendation 3)
Georgia Department of Labor Albany Career Center	Job search help, employer recruitment services and WIOA access at 1608 S. Slappey Blvd.	Job placement for graduates and job seekers
Goodwill Southern Rivers Albany Career Center	Free job coaching, skills classes, GED preparation and reentry employment services	Opportunity youth and returning citizens (see Section 10)
Georgia Quick Start	State customized training for new and expanding employers, delivered with Albany Tech	Customized manufacturing training, alongside the Industrial Operations Technician certificate (Recommendation 1)
Albany-Dougherty Economic Development Commission	Public-private partnership for industry recruitment and expansion; co-facilitates the Industry Roundtable, which worked with Albany Tech on the Industrial Operations Technician certificate	Employer demand signals; partner for Recommendation 5
Albany Area Chamber and Chamber Foundation	Leads the Albany-Dougherty County Works! talent strategy (2020; Strategy 2.0 for 2023-2025)	Natural venue for presenting this assessment (Recommendation 5)
Phoebe Putney Health System	Largest healthcare employer; nursing partnerships with Albany Tech and Albany State, sign-on bonuses and loan forgiveness	Nurse retention (see Sections 7 and 12)
Procter & Gamble (Albany plant)	Major manufacturer in the paper products industry, Albany's most concentrated industry	Co-designed the Industrial Operations Technician certificate; partner for relaunching it to train paper goods machine operators (Recommendation 1)
Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany	Transitioning service members and military spouses	Veteran recruitment for technical programs (Recommendation 1)
Support services	Albany Transit System; DECAL childcare subsidies (CAPS); Albany Housing Authority; Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency; reentry providers such as Albany Second Chance	Barriers to participation and completion (see Section 9)

Sources: organization websites and public reports listed on the Sources page at the end of this report.

Gaps and opportunities in the ecosystem

- **Youth access is uneven.** The 4C Academy serves students from Dougherty, Terrell, Baker and Calhoun counties, so high school students in Lee and Worth, two MSA counties, cannot attend.
- **Support services are concentrated in Dougherty County.** Fixed-route transit serves only Dougherty and ends at 7:15 p.m. on weekdays, and the main WIOA and Department of Labor access point is in Albany, with other WIOA locations in Thomasville and Moultrie.
- **Two programs are dormant.** Albany Tech's plumbing program and its Industrial Operations Technician certificate, developed with Procter & Gamble and the Industry Roundtable, remain approved but have had no recent enrollment. Desk research also found no registered plumbing apprenticeship in the MSA (see Section 7).

- **The community talent strategy is due for renewal.** Albany-Dougherty County Works! Strategy 2.0 covered 2023-2025. This assessment can provide the data for the next update, including the four-county labor market and the 40% of MSA jobs filled by workers from outside the region (see Section 3).
- **Coordination should be confirmed with partners.** Desk research did not identify a shared referral system or common outcome measures across providers; partners can confirm whether one exists.
- **Childcare capacity data is not public by county.** Licensed slots and evening or weekend availability should be requested from DECAL to complete the picture in Section 9.

12. Recommendations and performance metrics

This section presents prioritized strategies tied to the findings, and the measures to track progress.

Six recommendations follow from the findings. The first four are actions Albany Technical College can lead directly; the fifth asks the college to convene regional partners around the data, because the region's biggest challenges, population loss, commuting and youth disconnection, extend beyond any one institution. The sixth sets out how to measure progress.

Recommendation	Lead	Key partners	How progress is measured
1. Grow recruitment for priority programs with unmet demand	Albany Tech	Employers, Albany Tech Foundation, workforce board	Enrollment in priority programs
2. Sustain recruitment and retention in aligned programs	Albany Tech	Program advisory committees	Enrollment matched to openings; regional placement
3. Increase retention through graduation	Albany Tech	Student affairs, employers, community partners	Completions relative to enrollment and openings
4. Strengthen K-12 recruitment into priority pathways	Albany Tech	School districts in the four counties	Dual enrollment in priority pathways; youth disconnection rate
5. Present findings to regional partners and build a resident recruitment and retention strategy	Albany Tech (convener)	Economic development, workforce boards, chamber, City of Albany, and Dougherty, Lee, Terrell and Worth county governments	Share of Dougherty jobs held by residents
6. Track progress with an annual dashboard	Albany Tech	All partners above	Annual update of baseline indicators

1. Grow recruitment for priority programs with unmet demand

Why: Several priority occupations have fewer graduates than openings, and the Albany Tech programs that train for them are small or flat: general maintenance (5 students; annual gap of 38), mechatronics for industrial machinery mechanics (about 11 students; gap of 15), and medical assisting (gap of 49,

though enrollment is now rising). Automation and Robotics programs are approved and on the Governor's high-demand list but have no enrollment, and nursing (ASN) enrollment fell from 124 to 101 while Phoebe reports about 180 openings (see Sections 7 and 8).

- **Target recruitment campaigns** to Building Maintenance, Mechatronics, Automation and Robotics, Medical Assisting, Pharmacy Technology, Dental Assisting and Nursing (ASN), with messaging built around local openings and wages.
- **Launch employer-sponsored cohorts** with manufacturers, paper products employers such as Procter & Gamble, and Phoebe, so students see a job at the end of the program.
- **Recruit adults who started but did not finish college.** The MSA has 15,830 adults ages 25-64 with some college and no degree (see Section 6), a ready market for short diploma and certificate programs.
- **Recruit transitioning service members and veterans** for mechatronics, maintenance and diesel programs; the MSA has 6,155 working-age veterans (see Section 10), and Albany Tech already participates in DOD SkillBridge.
- **Close program gaps:** reactivate Albany Tech's plumbing program (possibly paired with a registered apprenticeship), relaunch the Industrial Operations Technician certificate with Procter & Gamble and the Industry Roundtable to train paper goods machine operators, and build an RN-to-NP pathway with university partners.

2. Sustain recruitment and retention in aligned programs

Why: Commercial driving, automotive technology, electrical systems, diesel and practical nursing graduate at least as many students as the region needs each year (see Section 7). Three programs, welding, HVAC and radiologic technology, are growing much faster than local openings.

- **Hold aligned programs steady:** keep recruitment and retention at levels that match local openings rather than expanding.
- **Track placement for fast-growing programs.** For welding (about 200 students; 10 openings a year), HVAC (85; 15) and radiologic technology (192; 5), measure where graduates work and whether they stay in the field before adding seats.
- **Use program advisory committees** to confirm employer demand each year and adjust recruitment targets.

3. Increase retention through graduation for programs that serve priority industries

Why: Graduation data show where students are being lost. Medical assisting enrolled 130 students in 2026 but graduated 10 (a 26% graduation rate); mechatronics and related programs graduated 2 (33%); radiologic technology 22 (34%); dental assisting 16 (52%); pharmacy technology 16 (53%); and nursing (ASN) 51 (69%) (see Section 7; KMS Graduation Rate report TEC3111). Barriers in Section 9, including infant care at 14% of family income in Dougherty and buses that stop at 7:15 p.m., make finishing harder.

- **Set graduation rate targets** for each priority program, starting with medical assisting, mechatronics and radiologic technology, and review progress each term with Albany Tech's institutional research office.
- **Expand completion supports:** early-alert advising, completion coaching, emergency aid, and transportation and childcare assistance for students in priority programs.

- **Schedule for working adults:** offer evening, weekend and hybrid sections where possible, given limited transit and shift work.
- **Build foundational skills into programs.** Math and digital literacy are the region's largest skill gaps (see Section 6); embedding them reduces stop-outs.
- **Stack credentials** so certificate completers, such as nurse aides, can move directly into LPN and ASN programs.

4. Strengthen K-12 recruitment into priority pathways

Why: The MSA's disconnected youth rate is 7.6%, two to three times that of every peer metro, and about 78% of those 634 young people live in Dougherty County (see Section 3). At the same time, Early College Essentials, the dual-enrollment pathway, is Albany Tech's largest major at 541 students (see Section 6), but it is not tied to specific priority occupations.

- **Steer dual enrollment toward priority pathways** such as healthcare, mechatronics and maintenance, using the career fields in Section 5.
- **Partner with school districts in all four counties,** with added focus on Dougherty and Terrell, on career exploration, CTAE alignment and summer bridge programs.
- **Re-engage young people who have left school** through Adult Education and the Career Plus high school diploma, connected directly to short-term priority credentials.
- **Bring parents and counselors in** with local wage and job information for each pathway.

5. Present the findings to regional partners and build a strategy to recruit and retain residents

Why: Dougherty County is the region's job center, but only 38% of its jobs are held by county residents, and in-commuters hold about two of every three higher-paying jobs (see Section 3). Dougherty loses about 894 residents a year, nearly half of its renters are cost-burdened, and buses stop running in the early evening (see Sections 3 and 9). These issues require partners beyond the college.

- **Present this assessment** to the economic development authority, the local workforce development board, the chamber of commerce, the City of Albany, and the Dougherty, Lee, Terrell and Worth county governments.
- **Set shared goals for resident hiring,** including pipelines from Albany Tech programs into higher-paying jobs located in Dougherty County.
- **Address the barriers that keep residents from working,** such as extended transit hours for shift workers, childcare capacity, and housing near job centers.
- **Create retention incentives for local graduates,** building on Phoebe's sign-on bonuses and loan forgiveness for nurses.
- **Hold an annual regional data briefing** so partners review progress together.

6. Track progress with an annual dashboard

Why: Baseline values for 2026 are drawn from this assessment so progress can be measured each year.

- **Enrollment in priority programs** (see Section 7 baseline).
- **Completions in priority programs relative to annual openings** (see Section 7 gap table).
- **Graduation rates for priority programs** (2026 baseline from the KMS Graduation Rate report, TEC3111).
- **Placement of graduates in the region,** by program.
- **Dual enrollment in priority pathways and the disconnected youth rate** (7.6% baseline).

- **Share of Dougherty County jobs held by residents** (38% baseline) and share of higher-paying jobs held by residents (34% baseline).

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