

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Region

2024 Q1 QUARTERLY
WORKFORCE REPORT

Introduction

Welcome to the Quarter 1 2024 Workforce Report.

Region 2 comprises the New River Valley and Mount Rogers Planning Districts, including the counties of Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington, Wythe and the independent cities of Bristol, Galax and Radford. These quarterly reports analyze and present regional labor supply and demand data to inform the public of the evolving workforce landscape. The data presented in this report is the most up-to-date data available in April 2024.

Each Quarterly Workforce Report focuses on specific themes or industries. This Q1 report focuses on the industry of Healthcare.

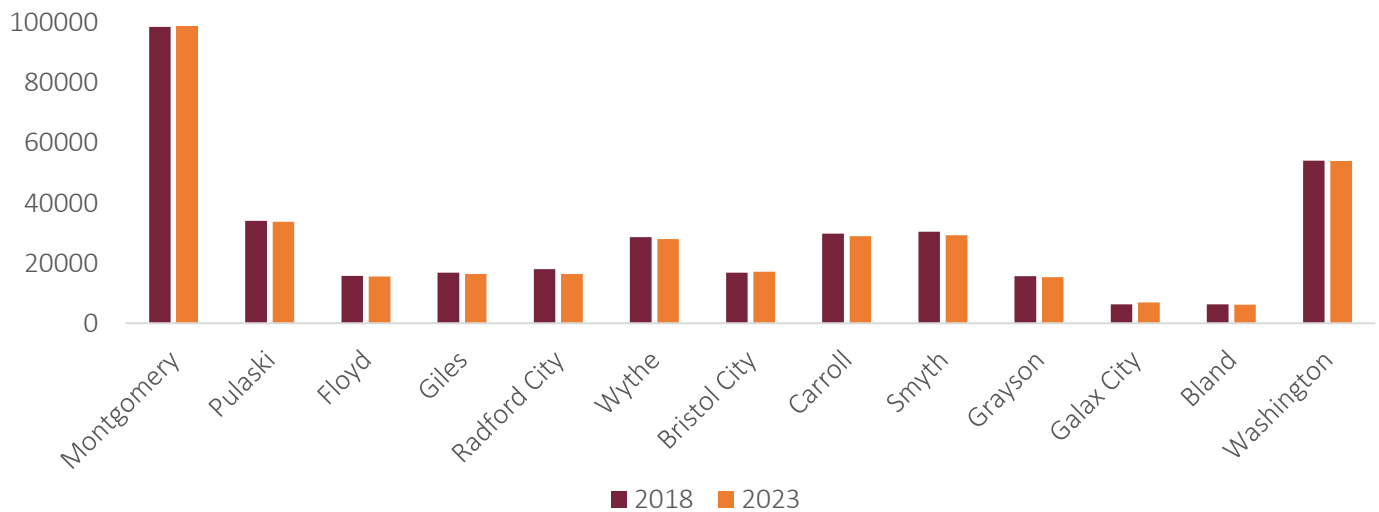
This report provides data relevant to workforce and the healthcare industry and related occupations in the New River Mount Rogers region. The first half of the report includes data relating to population, employment, top industries, and commuting patterns. The second half of the report provides data on healthcare-related occupations and brief case studies of healthcare-related training programs and success stories in the area.



Population and Poverty Overview

The New River Mount Rogers region was home to a population of 367,107 in 2023. The regional population has remained relatively stable over the five-year period, with Galax City experiencing the most significant change, an increase of 10%, and Radford City experiencing a decrease of 9%.

Total Population by County, 2018 - 2023

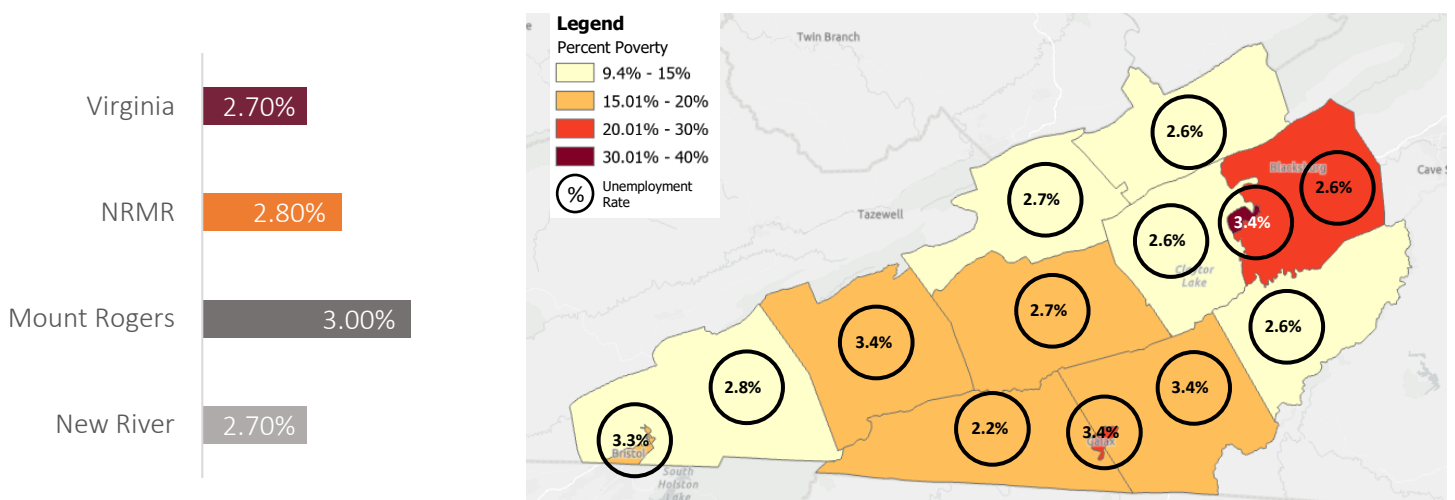


The regional unemployment rate in December 2023 was 2.8% compared to the state unemployment rate of 2.7%. The Mount Rogers unemployment rate was notably higher than that of the New River region at 3% and 2.7% respectively.

Individual county unemployment rates ranged from 2.2% to 3.4%. The percentage of populations living below poverty also varied significantly by county, with percentages ranging from approximately 9% to 34%. The City of Radford faces both high unemployment and poverty rates of 3.4% and 33.8%, respectively.

Unemployment and Poverty by County

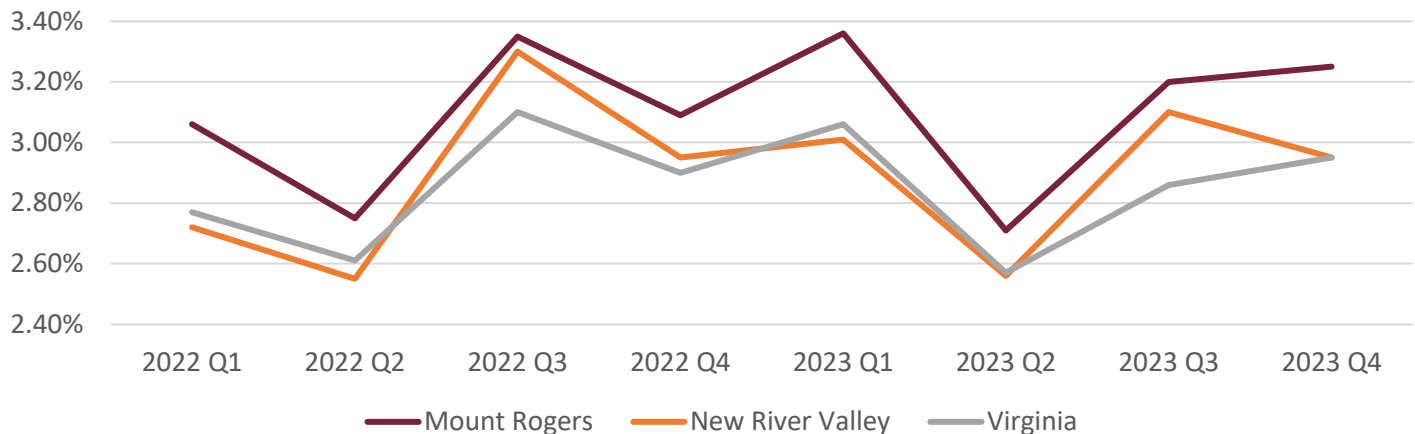
Unemployment Rate (Dec 2023) and Percent of Population Below Poverty Level (2017 – 2022)



Employment and Labor Force

Quarterly Unemployment Rate

Since 2022, the unemployment rate has fluctuated significantly in Region 2 and the state of Virginia alike. Mount Rogers region unemployment hit a high of just under 3.4% in quarter 1 of 2023 before dropping significantly to 2.7% in quarter 2 of the same year.



Underemployment is an important indicator to consider. Underemployment in the context of this report refers to the educational attainment of the working-age population (25+) compared to the typical entry-level education required by jobs in the region. This metric can help indicate whether the population is under or over-skilled. As the table below shows, the New River Mount Rogers region has a highly educated working-age population. There are notable differences between the number of jobs requiring some college, associate's degrees, and graduate degrees or higher and the number of individuals possessing these qualifications - indicating individuals are over-skilled.

Regional Underemployment by Education



8% of the Mount Rogers region population possesses a graduate degree or higher

18% of the New River region population possesses a graduate degree or higher

Education Level	Jobs Requiring Ed. Level	Population at Ed. Level	Difference
No Formal Education Required	17%	10%	7%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	45%	33%	12%
Some College, Non-Degree Award	9%	20%	-12%
Associate's Degree	2%	10%	-8%
Bachelor's Degree	22%	15%	8%
Graduate Degrees and Higher	6%	12%	-6%

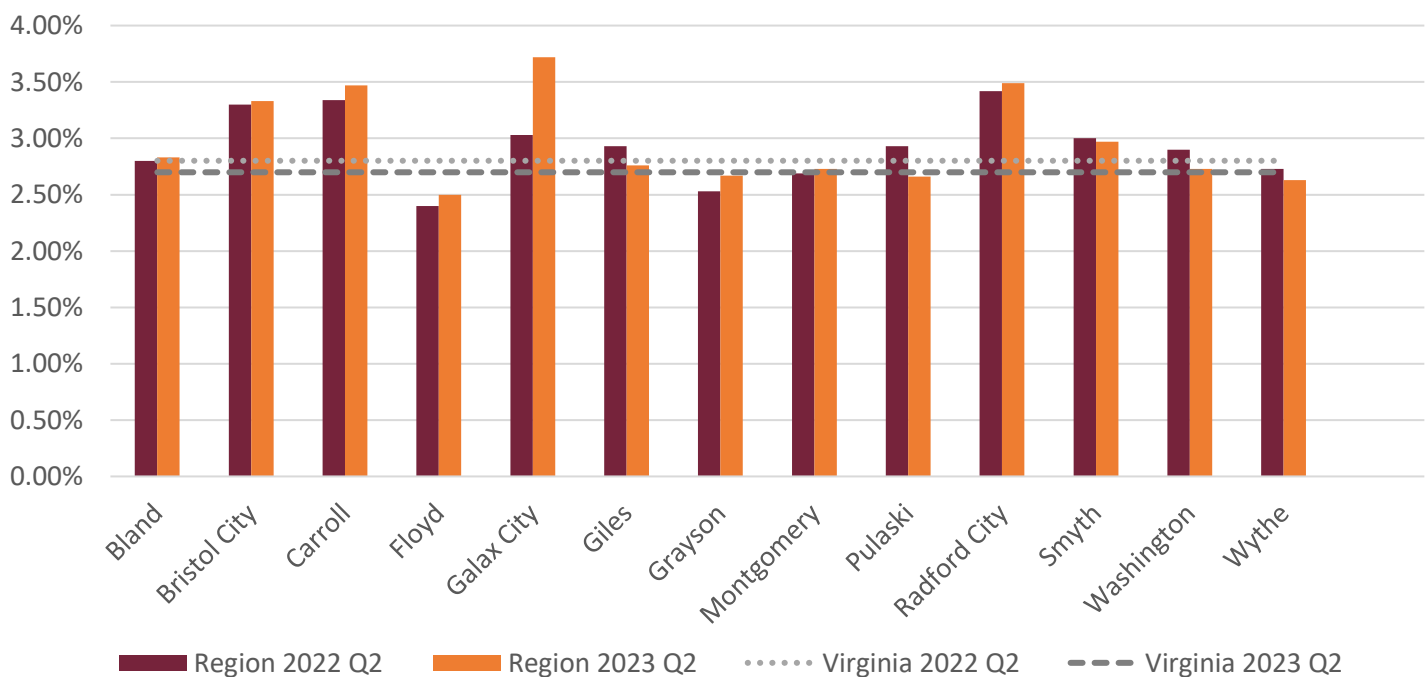
Employment Industry

Top 10 Industries with Employment Loss

Industry (6-digit NAICS)	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change	2023 Earnings
Air-Conditioning & Commercial & Ind. Refrigeration Equip. Manuf.	540	0	-540	-100%	\$0
Photographic Film, Paper, Plate, and Chemical Manuf.	491	0	-491	-100%	\$0
Sporting Goods Retailers	695	212	-483	-70%	\$29,537
State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	3,533	3,071	-462	-13%	\$70,721
Limited-Service Restaurants	5,543	5,103	-441	-8%	\$22,385
Non-upholstered Wood Household Furniture Manuf.	450	24	-426	-95%	\$41,408
Telemarketing Bureaus and Other Contact Centers	1,417	1,015	-402	-28%	\$40,490
Religious Organizations	1,991	1,592	-399	-20%	\$20,744
All Other Rubber Product Manufacturing	362	0	-362	-100%	\$0
Book Retailers and News Dealers	473	150	-323	-68%	\$24,066

The air conditioning, heating, and refrigeration equipment manufacturing sector experienced the most significant decline in job numbers between 2018 and 2023. General medical and surgical hospitals observed a negative 12% change in job numbers, as per the last healthcare quarterly workforce report from 2016. However, healthcare-related industries did not make it to the top 10 industries with employment loss from 2018 to 2023. Unemployment rose in most of the region's counties between the second quarter of 2022 and 2023. State unemployment decreased from 2.8% to 2.7%.

Quarterly Unemployment Rates by County



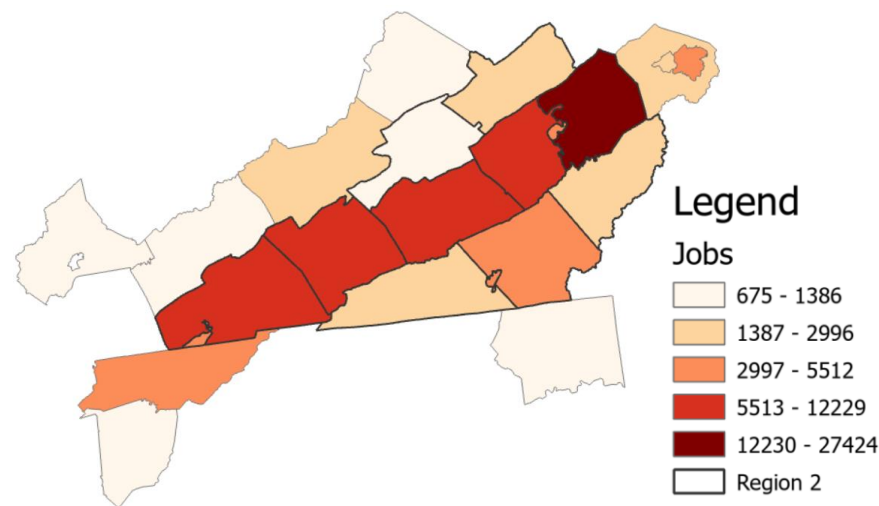
Commute Destinations, Mode, and Cost

Commute Patterns

Top 25 Work Destinations

The map to the left shows the top 25 work destinations for workers living in the 13 counties and cities of Region 2. Montgomery County and the central NRMR region consisting of the counties of Pulaski, Wythe, Smyth, and Washington boast the most employment opportunities. Bland County had especially few job opportunities.

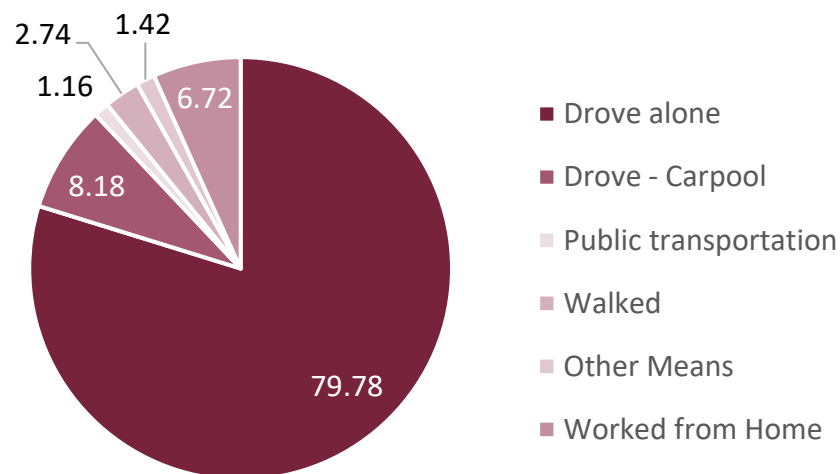
The map does not display Fairfax and Henrico counties, both of which are also included in the list.



Mode Choice

The pie chart to the right illustrates the breakdown of commute mode choices in the region. A staggering 80 percent of New River Mount Rogers area commuters rely on a personal vehicle to get to work.

Public transportation is the least common mode, possibly indicating a need for more accessible transportation infrastructure.



Average Commute Costs and Vehicle Miles Traveled

The table below approximates monthly spending by commuter. For workers making two trips per day for 22 work days (full-time) per month, the work-related monthly costs may vary significantly depending on miles traveled, cost per gallon, and miles per gallon (MPG). Most commutes from the NRMR region are less than 10 miles one way, making monthly miles traveled for employment approximately 440 miles. Average MPG for a car is around 24 according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

	Low End	High End
Days per week	5	5
Distance (one-way)	10 miles	20 miles
Cost per gallon	\$3.50	\$3.50
Miles per gallon	24 MPG	24 MPG
	\$58.33	\$116.67

Healthcare Occupations

Top 10 Healthcare Occupations by Employment



Home Health and Personal Care Aides (2,562 Employees, \$11.68/hr)

Registered Nurses (1,772 Employees, \$35.08/hr)



Nursing Assistants (1,414 Employees, \$15.58/hr)

Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (980 Employees, \$23.47/hr)

Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (518 Employees, \$22.19/hr)



Medical Assistants (390 Employees, \$16.61/hr)

Physical Therapists (242 Employees, \$45.57/hr)

Dental Assistants (224 Employees, \$18.36/hr)

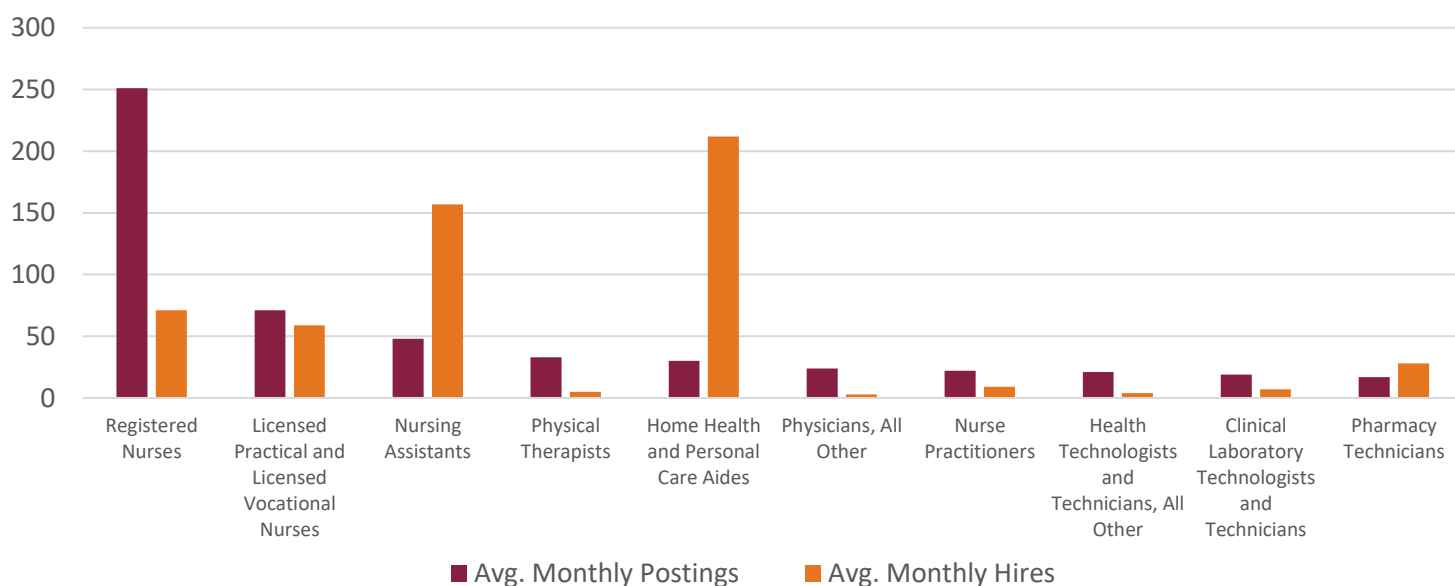


Nurse Practitioners (220 Employees, \$52.05/hr)

Physical Therapist Assistants (200 Employees, \$30.94/hr)

As seen in the list above, home health and personal care aides, along with registered nurses and nursing assistants, are vital to the region's healthcare industry. The demand for these positions is evident in the number of average monthly postings and hires. Approximately 250 advertisements are posted monthly for registered nurse positions, but only an average of 71 nurses are hired. Conversely, both nursing assistant and home health and personal care aide positions are not as frequently advertised but hire more than twice as many employees, largely through word-of-mouth referrals.

Top 10 Healthcare Occupations: Job Postings and Hires



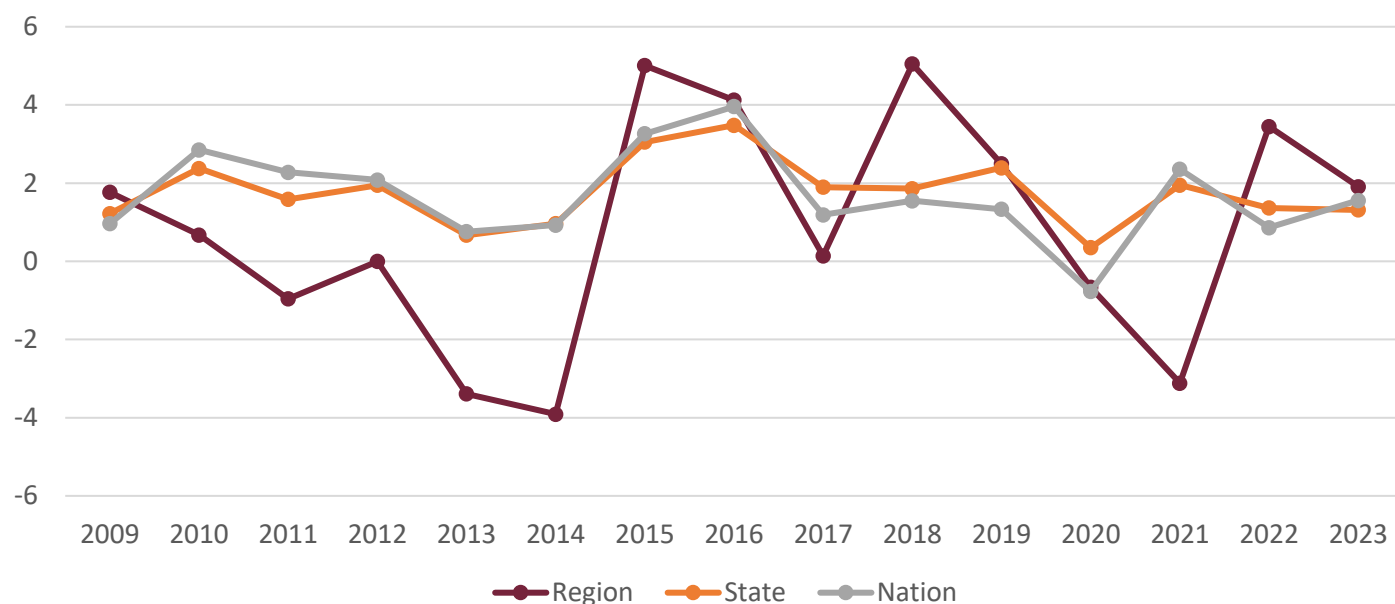
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employers are competing
to hire for healthcare
occupations

\$42.03/hr
Median Advertised Salary

Registered Nurses

Regional Trends and Projections



Nursing candidates from both New River Community College and Wytheville Community College have maintained a pass rate of at least 68.4% in Practical Nursing exams since 2019. However, the number of candidates has decreased significantly since the last Healthcare Quarterly Workforce report in 2016.

Industry	Jobs (Local)	Percent of industry employment (Local)	Regional hourly median wage	National hourly median wage
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	1,127	49.1%	\$35.08	\$39.02
Nursing Care Facilities	176	7.6%		
Offices of Physicians	170	7.4%		
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (State Government)	102	4.4%		
Hospitals (State Government)	91	4.0%		

91.8% of workers in this field are female

3,115 unique job postings over the last year

Bachelor's Degree Preferred

\$72,966 Median Salary

10.4% of workers in this field are minorities

Healthcare

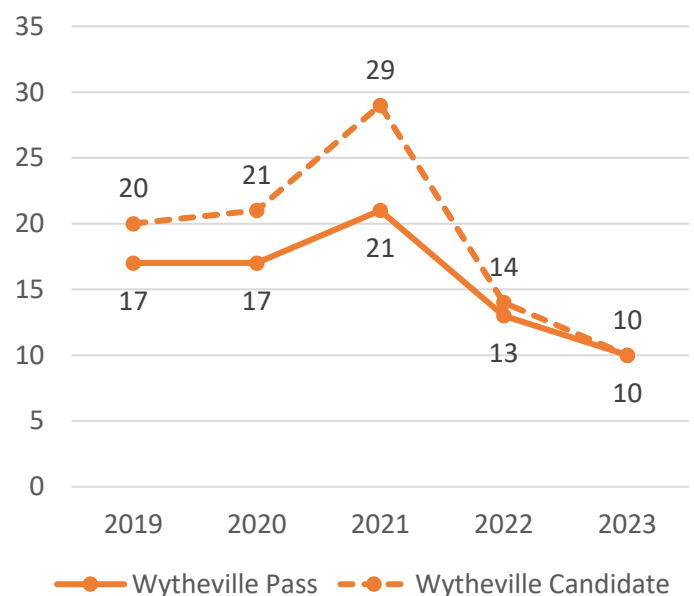
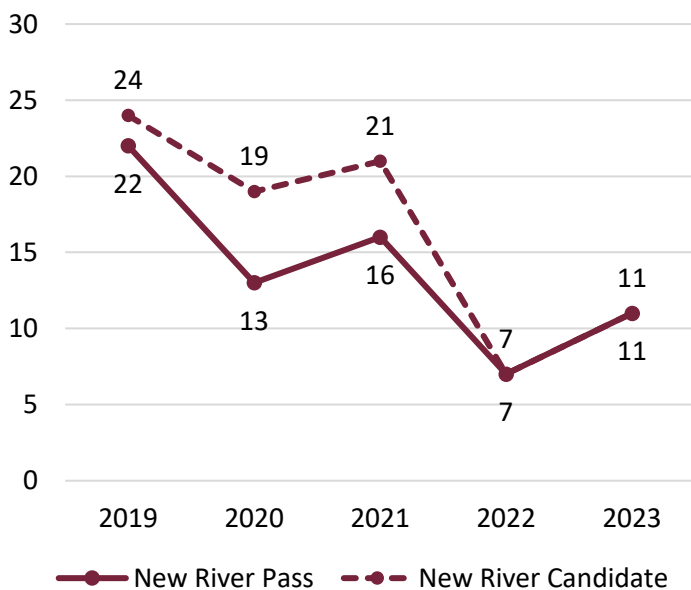
Education and Training

Healthcare Program Completions School Year 2022-2023

Programs	New River Valley Community College	Wytheville Community College
Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, & Treatment Professions	8	8
Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician	21	14
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	7	10
Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician	-	16
Dental Assisting/Assistant/Hygiene/Hygienist	-	23
Health and Medical Administrative Services, Other	11	3
Mental and Social Health Services and Allied Professions	19	8
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	46	41
Physical Therapy Assistant	-	11

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Practical Nursing Exam Candidates and Passes, 2019-2023



Healthcare

Community College Programs

Wytheville Community College

Associate's Degree Programs

- Physical Therapist Assistant
- Medical Laboratory Technician
- Veterinarian
- Nursing
- Health Information Management Specialist
- Dental Hygienist

Career Studies Certificates

- Medical Transcriptionist
- Medical Records Clerk
- Dental Assistant
- Medical Coder
- Electronic Medical Records Specialist
- Phlebotomist
- Pharmacy Technician

Virginia Highlands Community College

Associate's Degree Programs

- Emergency Medical Services Technology
- Level 3 - Emergency Medical Services Technology
- General Studies - Pathway in Exercise Science
- Nursing Track 1 - Day Program
- Nursing Track 2- LPN to RN Transition Day Program
- Nursing Track 3 - Part-time Evening/Weekend
- Nursing Track 4 - LPN to RN Transition Part-time Evening/Weekend
- General Studies - Pre-Pharmacy Science
- Radiography

Career Studies Certificates

- Emergency Medical Technician
- Level 1 - Emergency Medical Technician Plus
- Level 2 - Advanced Emergency Medical Technician
- Medical Assisting
- Medical Coding
- Nurse Aide
- Pre-Pharmacy Science
- Computerized Tomography

New River Community College

Associate's Degree Programs

- Medical Administrative Support Specialization
- Nursing
- Practical Nursing

Career Studies Certificates

- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Health Professions Preparation
- Medical Coding Foundations I
- Medical Coding Foundations II
- Medical Office Assistant
- Nurse Aide

Workforce (Short-term Training)

- EKG/Phlebotomy
- Medical Assistant
- Medication Aide
- Nurse Aide (FastForward)
- Pharmacy Technician

Healthcare

Other Opportunities

CTE Programs

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, offered in grades 6-12, prepare students for careers in many program areas. The Health and Medical Science program provides courses in various health sciences. Please visit your local school website for more information on course availability.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs

The registered apprenticeship program helps to provide resources and certifications for businesses and individuals looking to start or join an apprenticeship program. Visit [apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov) to explore opportunities in healthcare including Pharmacy Technicians, CAN Insurance, Lab Assistants, Sterile Technicians, counselors, and more.

Radford University

13 Bachelors Programs

6 Master's Programs

4 PHD Programs

Please visit [Radford.edu](https://www.radford.edu) for a full course listing

Healthcare Academy of SWVA

The Healthcare Academy of SWVA offers educational programming to prepare students for careers in facility and in-home caregiving. Visit their Facebook here for more information.

Blue Ridge Partnership

The Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers is a collaboration between economic developers, healthcare workers, and educators. This partnership works to provide information and resources to help people navigate careers in health sciences. Visit virginiahealthcareers.org for more information.

Virginia Tech

18 Bachelors Programs

12 Master's Programs

11 PHD Programs

Please visit [vt.edu](https://www.vt.edu) for a full course listing

For information on recruitment opportunities and programs to support Employed Worker Training, On-the-Job Training and other work-based learning opportunities contact the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board [Contact - New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(vcwnewrivermtrogers.com\)](https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com)



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