Turner College of Business & Technology
Columbus State University

The Butler Center for Research and Economic Development

Columbus Regional Job Openings and Hiring Trends

Columbus, GA – September 2026

HIRING TRENDS

OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

EMPLOYER INSIGHTS

WORKFORCE OUTLOOK





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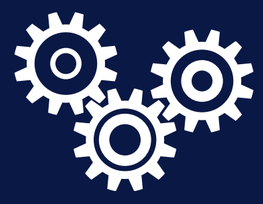
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Executive Summary

Columbus experienced stronger job advertising in summer 2026, followed by easing in September. Active job advertisements reached 8,143 in July, 14.9% above July 2025, before declining to 7,375 in September, 3.9% below September 2025. Active job advertisements also declined between July and September 2026 in Georgia and the United States. However, September counts remained 3.8% higher in Georgia and 8.7% higher nationwide than in September 2025.

From September 30, 2025, through September 30, 2026, registered nurses led occupational demand with 2,029 active job advertisements, nearly twice the count for retail supervisors at 1,083. Truck drivers and retail salespersons followed with 1,067 and 1,031 advertisements, respectively, showing demand across healthcare, transportation, and retail roles.
Columbus Consolidated Government led the employer listings during the same period with 774 advertisements, followed by Kindred with 640 and Piedmont Healthcare Inc. with 631. These results highlight the prominence of local government and healthcare among the leading advertisers.

Communication was the most frequently listed soft skill, appearing in 17,649 advertisements, followed by teamwork in 10,864. Microsoft Office and Excel led the listed hard skills, appearing in 2,823 and 2,378 advertisements, respectively. Healthcare credentials occupied seven of the ten leading certification and license entries, with Basic Life Support appearing in 1,876 advertisements.

Median annual advertised wages ranged from $23,900 at Piggly Wiggly to $147,500 at Pratt & Whitney among the listed employers with available pay information. These figures reflect disclosed pay and the mix of advertised positions, rather than companywide employee salaries. Median posting duration was 32 days or less for 22 of the 25 employer entries. Longer postings may reflect recurring recruitment and do not, by themselves, establish hiring difficulty.

Full-time advertising accounted for 79.7% of the combined full-time and part-time category counts, compared with 20.3% for part-time. These shares exclude advertisements without either label, and the categories may overlap. Separately, 1,827 advertisements indicated remote work, which can apply to either full-time or part-time positions.

Overall, job advertisements point to ongoing hiring activity across a range of occupations in Columbus, particularly in healthcare, retail, and transportation. The summer improvement was encouraging, and September's easing may prove temporary. Job advertising could strengthen again in the coming months, with additional data helping clarify whether the summer momentum resumes.

Sincerely, Fady Mansour

Report Scope and Data

This report examines job openings and employer demand in the Columbus, GA–AL metropolitan area, using online job advertisement data from JobsEQ's Real-Time Intelligence (RTI) platform, developed by Chmura Economics & Analytics. JobsEQ collects advertisements from thousands of sources, including employer websites, job boards, and job aggregators. The database is updated daily, and postings are processed to identify and remove duplicate advertisements.

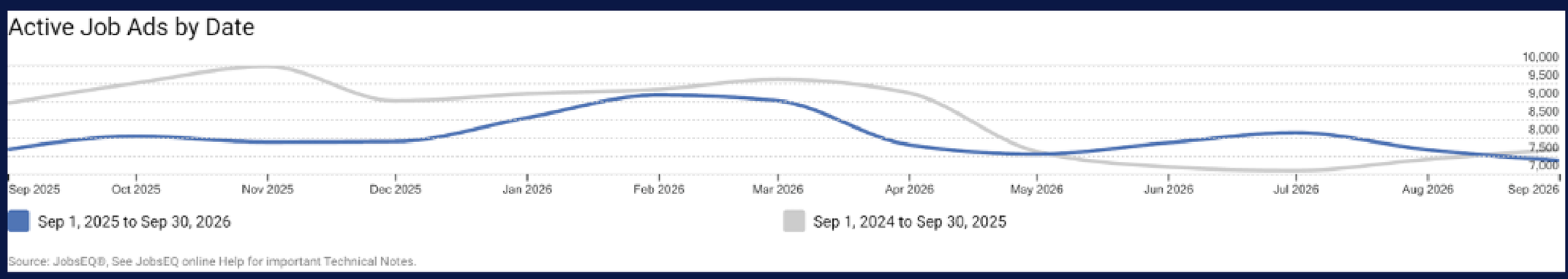
The analysis tracks changes in active job advertisements through September 2026 and compares Columbus with Georgia and the United States. It also identifies frequently advertised occupations, leading employers, and the skills employers request. Active advertisements include postings that were available at any point during the specified period; newly posted advertisements include only those first appearing during that period.

These data provide a timely indicator of hiring activity and employer demand for specific occupations and skills. They do not measure the exact number of vacancies or completed hires: one advertisement may cover multiple positions, and some openings are never advertised online. Changes in posting activity can also reflect shifts in data coverage or employer advertising practices. The findings should therefore be interpreted as signals of employer demand rather than a complete measure of employment growth or labor shortages.

Columbus hiring activity strengthened over the summer before easing in September

Figure 1: Monthly Active Job Advertisements in the Columbus MSA

September 2025–September 2026 compared with the same months one year earlier



Source: JobsEQ. Blue: September 2025–September 2026. Gray: September 2024–September 2025.
Note: The blue line shows active job advertisements from September 2025 to September 2026. The gray line shows the corresponding months one year earlier.

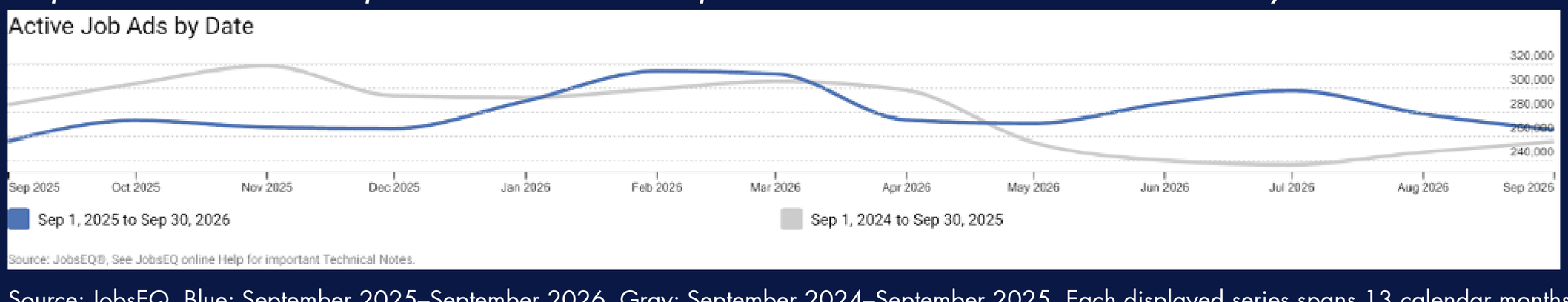
Columbus experienced an encouraging rebound in hiring activity during summer 2026, following weaker year-over-year activity in late 2025 and the first half of 2026. Active job advertisements reached 8,143 in July, up 14.9% from 7,090 in July 2025, indicating stronger employer demand compared with the previous summer.

However, this improvement did not carry through to September. Active advertisements fell to 7,375, down 3.9% from 7,674 in September 2025. While the summer gains were encouraging, the September result suggests that hiring activity lost momentum toward the end of the period.

Columbus Hiring Activity in State and National Context

Figure 2: Monthly Active Job Advertisements in Georgia

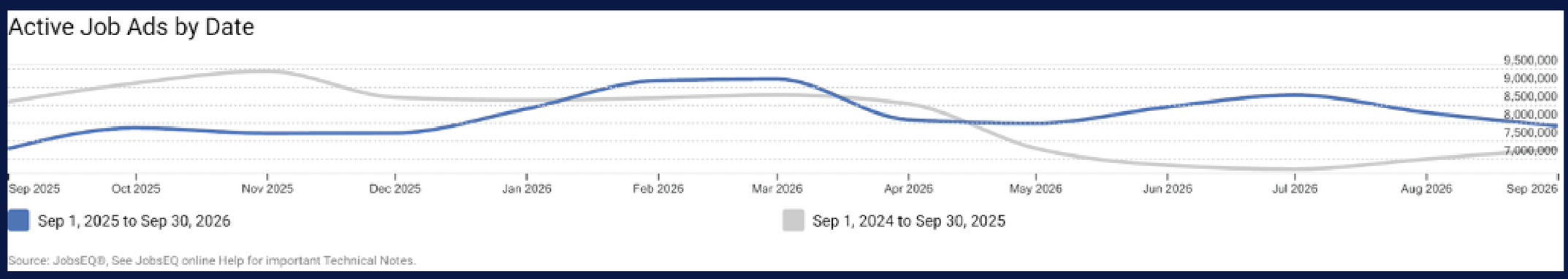
September 2025–September 2026 compared with the same months one year earlier



Source: JobsEQ. Blue: September 2025–September 2026. Gray: September 2024–September 2025. Each displayed series spans 13 calendar months.

Figure 3: Monthly Active Job Advertisements in the United States

September 2025–September 2026 compared with the same months one year earlier



Source: JobsEQ. Blue: September 2025–September 2026. Gray: September 2024–September 2025. Each displayed series spans 13 calendar months.

Columbus shared in the stronger hiring activity seen across Georgia and the United States during summer 2026. However, its July increase was smaller than either benchmark, and by September its active job advertisements had fallen below their prior-year level.

Table 1: Year-over-Year Changes in Active Job Advertisements and September 2026 Counts

Region	July year-over-year change	September year-over-year change	Active ads in September 2026
Columbus MSA	+14.90%	–3.9%	7,375
Georgia	+26.00%	+3.80%	265,412
United States	+30.6%	+8.70%	7,913,980

Source: Butler Center calculations based on JobsEQ data. Percentage changes compare each month in 2026 with the same month in 2025.

Hiring activity eased between July and September in all three regions. Georgia and the United States nevertheless remained above their September 2025 levels, while Columbus ended 3.9% below its prior-year level. The comparison highlights an encouraging summer improvement in Columbus, followed by a weaker September result relative to Georgia and the United States.

Healthcare Leads Hiring Demand

Table 2: Leading Occupations by Active Job Advertisements
September 30, 2025–September 30, 2026

SOC	Occupation	Active job ads
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2,029
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,083
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,067
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	1,031
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	818
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	766
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	663
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	655
21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants	648
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	645
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	602
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	519
41-3031	Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	513
33-9032	Security Guards	485
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	482
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	478
29-1123	Physical Therapists	470
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	437
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	357
29-2031	Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	355
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	326
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	320
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	318
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	313
43-6013	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	307

Source: JobsEQ Real-Time Intelligence. Detailed occupations at the six-digit SOC level.
Note: Counts reflect job advertisements active at any point from September 30, 2025, through September 30, 2026.

Registered nurses led the displayed occupations with 2,029 active job advertisements, nearly twice the count for retail supervisors, the next highest occupation at 1,083. Healthcare demand also extended to medical and health services managers, respiratory therapists, nursing assistants, physical therapists, licensed practical and vocational nurses, cardiovascular technologists and technicians, and speech-language pathologists.

Recruitment also spanned retail, transportation, maintenance, and food service. Retail supervisors and retail salespersons together accounted for 2,114 advertisements. Truck drivers, stockers and order fillers, and hand laborers and material movers together accounted for 2,048. General maintenance workers recorded 818 advertisements, while food preparation and serving supervisors and fast food and counter workers together recorded 1,265. The range of occupations highlights hiring activity across healthcare, retail, transportation, maintenance, and customer service.

Local Government and Healthcare Lead Job Advertising

Table 3: Leading Employers in the Columbus MSA — Job Advertisements, Duration, and Wages

September 30, 2025–September 30, 2026

Employer	Active job ads	Median duration (days)	Median annual wage
Columbus Consolidated Government	774	12	$41,600
Kindred	640	32	$64,300
Piedmont Healthcare Inc.	631	17	N/A
Aflac	424	11	$52,700
RTX	390	44	N/A
Allied Universal	382	8	$33,900
Piedmont Healthcare	354	16	N/A
Tyson Foods	310	6	N/A
Columbus State University	238	30	$31,100
Walmart	214	30	$38,000
Piedmont	213	21	N/A
Department of the Army	209	14	$37,500
Piggly Wiggly	200	208	$23,900
Muscogee County School District	196	100	$39,600
CHSGa	193	27	$30,500
Pratt & Whitney	185	22	$147,500
Department of Defense	184	10	$33,900
Valley Hospitality	175	31	N/A
Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES)	156	6	N/A
Dollar Tree	147	15	N/A
CVS	144	27	$47,400
Circle K	140	31	$29,800
The Reserves Network	140	32	$31,100
AutoZone	131	31	N/A
Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Georgia Department of - DBHDD	122	31	N/A

Source: JobsEQ Real-Time Intelligence.

Note: Counts cover ads active during the period shown. Duration measures posting length, not confirmed time to hire. Annual wages reflect available advertised pay, not companywide salaries; n/a means unavailable. Employer names are shown as listed in JobsEQ. Entries that may represent the same organization have not been combined.

During the period from September 30, 2025, to September 30, 2026, Columbus Consolidated Government led the listed employers with 774 active job advertisements, followed by Kindred with 640 and Piedmont Healthcare Inc. with 631.

Reported median annual advertised wages ranged from $23,900 at Piggly Wiggly to $147,500 at Pratt & Whitney. Kindred reported $64,300 and Aflac $52,700. These figures reflect the available wage information in job advertisements, since some postings do not disclose pay. Differences also reflect the mix of positions advertised and should not be interpreted as differences in companywide employee salaries.

Median posting duration was 32 days or less for 22 of the 25 entries. Piggly Wiggly stood out at 208 days, followed by Muscogee County School District at 100 days. Longer durations may reflect ongoing recruitment associated with higher employee turnover. This practice is common in retail, where employers may keep advertisements open to attract applicants for recurring vacancies, even as they hire workers. Posting duration alone cannot determine whether an employer's longer advertising period reflects turnover, continuous recruitment, or difficulty filling positions.

Office Software Leads Hard Skill Requirements

Table 4: Leading Hard Skills in Active Job Advertisements in the Columbus MSA
September 30, 2025–September 30, 2026

Hard skill or requirement	Active job ads
Microsoft Office	2,823
Microsoft Excel	2,378
Ability to Lift 41–50 lbs.	1,893
Ability to Lift 51–100 lbs.	1,660
Microsoft Outlook	1,073
Manufacturing	1,063
Microsoft PowerPoint	918
Sales	912
Retail Sales	908
Cash Handling (Cashier)	893

Source: JobsEQ Real-Time Intelligence.
Note: Counts cover advertisements active during the period shown. JobsEQ's hard skills category includes physical requirements. An advertisement may mention several skills, so the rows should not be added together.

Microsoft Office and Excel were the most frequently listed hard skills, appearing in 2,823 and 2,378 advertisements, respectively. Outlook and PowerPoint also ranked in the top ten, underscoring the visibility of workplace software in advertised requirements. Lifting requirements were prominent alongside manufacturing, sales, retail sales, and cash handling. This mix reflects demand for computer proficiency as well as practical skills used in physical and customer-facing work.

Communication and Teamwork Lead Soft Skill Requirements

Table 5: Leading Soft Skills in Active Job Advertisements in the Columbus MSA
September 30, 2025–September 30, 2026

Soft skill	Active job ads
Communication (Verbal and written skills)	17,649
Cooperative/Team Player	10,864
Customer Service	6,661
Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty	4,893
Organization	4,823
Problem Solving	4,529
Detail Oriented/Meticulous	4,291
Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership	3,576
Ability to Work in a Fast Paced Environment	3,535
Supervision/Management	3,486

Source: JobsEQ Real-Time Intelligence.
Note: Counts cover advertisements active during the period shown. An advertisement may mention several skills, so the rows should not be added together. Skill mentions describe advertised requirements, not measured skill shortages.

Communication stood out with 17,649 advertisements, followed by teamwork with 10,864 and customer service with 6,661. These leading requirements emphasize the ability to communicate clearly, work with others, and assist customers. Adaptability, organization, problem solving, and attention to detail also appeared frequently, showing that employers sought dependable day-to-day work habits alongside interpersonal skills.

Healthcare Credentials Lead Certification Requirements

Table 6: Leading Certifications and Licenses in Columbus MSA Job Advertisements
September 30, 2025–September 30, 2026

Certification or license	Active job ads	Median duration (days)
Basic Life Support (BLS)	1,876	18
Driver's License	1,742	27
Registered Nurse (RN)	1,248	16
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	1,036	25
Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS)	888	18
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)	445	16
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	351	36
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	350	31
Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL-A)	347	46
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	328	23

Source: JobsEQ Real-Time Intelligence.
Note: An advertisement may mention multiple credentials, so counts should not be added. Duration measures posting length, not confirmed time to hire.

Healthcare credentials occupied seven of the ten positions in the list. Basic Life Support led with 1,876 advertisements, followed by a driver's license with 1,742 and Registered Nurse licensure with 1,248. CPR and advanced life-support credentials were also prominent. Commercial driver's licenses also appeared among the leading requirements, highlighting demand for workers in transportation-related roles across the Columbus area.

Full-Time Advertising Outweighs Part-Time Advertising

Table 7: Full-Time and Part-Time Shares of Recorded Job Type Counts in the Columbus MSA
September 30, 2025–September 30, 2026

Job type	Share of combined full-time and part-time counts
Full-time	79.7%
Part-time	20.3%

Source: Butler Center calculations based on JobsEQ Real-Time Intelligence data.
Note: Percentages use the sum of the full-time and part-time category counts, rather than all advertisements. Ads without either label are excluded. The supplied summary does not show whether some ads appear in both categories.

Full-time represented 79.7% of the combined full-time and part-time counts, compared with 20.3% for part-time. Separately, 1,827 advertisements indicated remote work during the period. Remote work can apply to either full-time or part-time positions.

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Sincerely,

Fady Mansour

2026

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