

Southeastern Technical College

Economic Overview

Labor Market Intelligence for Workforce Development Planning

Source: JobsEQ® | Data as of 2026Q1 | Eight-County Service Area

118,296
Population (ACS)

48,981
Civilian Labor Force

37,953
Jobs in Region

51.6%
LF Participation

\$46,993
Avg Annual Wage

\$51,373
Median HH Income

Demographic Profile

The Southeastern Technical College service area was home to **118,296** residents per American Community Survey data for 2020–2024, across the eight counties of Candler, Emanuel, Jenkins, Johnson, Montgomery, Tattnall, Toombs, and Treutlen. The region has a civilian labor force of 48,981 with a participation rate of **51.6%** — below Georgia (63.5%) and the national rate (63.3%). Only 14.3% of individuals 25 to 64 hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, against 37.3% nationally. Median household income is \$51,373 and the median house value is \$120,546.

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

The STC service area is a rural, eight-county region of about 118,296 people. Roughly 51.6% of working-age adults are in the labor force, well below state and national rates. The typical household earns \$51,373, about two-thirds of the national median, and 22.2% of residents live below the poverty line. More than half of working-age adults hold a high school credential or less, and only 14.3% hold a bachelor’s degree. This is precisely the population a technical college is built to serve: the region’s clearest path to higher wages runs through the certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees STC provides.

Key Demographic Indicators (2026Q1)

Indicator	Value	Indicator	Value
Population (ACS)	118,296	Median HH Income	\$51,373
Population Estimate (2025)	119,597	Per Capita Income	\$25,221
Median Age	39.1	Poverty Level	22.2%
Under 18 Years	22.6%	Households on SNAP	23.1%
65 and Over	17.5%	Uninsured	14.9%
Pop. Annual Growth	-0.1%/yr	Median House Value	\$120,546
Population Density	41.8/sq mi	Mean Commute (min)	26.0

Source: JobsEQ®, American Community Survey 2020–2024; population estimate is Census 2025.

Educational Attainment (Age 25–64)

Education Level	STC Service Area	Georgia	USA
No High School Diploma	16.8% (10,008)	10.0%	9.8%
High School Graduate	39.4% (23,508)	25.5%	24.8%
Some College, No Degree	20.4% (12,178)	19.1%	18.9%
Associate's Degree	9.1% (5,455)	8.8%	9.2%
Bachelor's Degree	8.7% (5,208)	22.4%	23.1%
Postgraduate Degree	5.6% (3,343)	14.2%	14.2%

Source: JobsEQ®, ACS 2020–2024. More than half of working-age adults hold a high school credential or less — the core of the College’s addressable population.

Labor Force & Employment — Reading Two Different Counts

This region's labor market is measured by two distinct figures that must not be blended. **The civilian labor force of 48,981** counts residents who live in the eight counties and are working or seeking work, wherever their job is located (an ACS resident measure). **The 37,953 jobs located in the region** counts positions at employers physically inside the eight counties, regardless of where the worker lives (a QCEW place-of-work measure).

Each drives different analysis. Resident labor force governs participation, commuting, and the untapped-workforce picture; jobs located in the region govern industry mix, occupational concentration, wages, and every program-alignment judgment in the companion report. The gap between the two reflects out-commuting, and is itself a finding: a 51.6% participation rate against Georgia's 63.5% signals a sizable pool of working-age residents the College can reach.

Indicator	Value	Indicator	Value
Civilian Labor Force	48,981	Jobs in Region	37,953
LF Participation	51.6%	Unemployment (May 2026)	3.5%
Prime-Age (25-54) Part.	67.7%	1-Yr Employment Change	+0.1%
Avg Annual Wage	\$46,993	Cost of Living (US=100)	83.4
US Purchasing Power	\$56,318	1-Yr Job Forecast	+139

Source: JobsEQ®, Resident measures (ACS) and place-of-work measures (QCEW/LAUS) are drawn from different data sets and are not interchangeable. Cost of living per COLI, 2026Q1.

Industry Snapshot (2026Q1)

UNDERSTANDING LOCATION QUOTIENT (LQ)

Several figures below use a location quotient. An LQ measures how concentrated an industry or occupation is in the region compared with the nation: 1.00 matches the national average, 2.00 means twice the national concentration, and 0.50 means half. A high LQ signals a regional specialization — and often a cluster of employers the College can partner with.

The largest sector is **Health Care and Social Assistance (5,718 workers)**, followed by Retail Trade (4,390) and Manufacturing (4,271). The region's standout concentration is **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (LQ 5.61)**, with Utilities (1.74) and Public Administration (1.47) also well above the national average. For five-year growth, Accommodation and Food Services led (+571), then Construction (+356) and Health Care (+337). The strongest one-year job-count forecast is Health Care (+44).

Industry	Empl.	Avg Wage	LQ	5-Yr	1-Yr Fcst
Health Care & Social Assistance	5,718	\$53,905	0.96	+337	+44
Retail Trade	4,390	\$34,384	1.21	+106	0
Manufacturing	4,271	\$54,844	1.46	+105	+9
Educational Services	3,867	\$42,280	1.25	-495	+1
Accommodation & Food Services	2,953	\$19,966	0.90	+571	+16
Public Administration	2,614	\$46,343	1.47	-207	+7
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunt.	2,554	\$58,445	5.61	-39	+1
Construction	2,342	\$58,188	1.03	+356	+17
Wholesale Trade	1,555	\$55,395	1.12	-4	+6
Transportation & Warehousing	1,333	\$60,975	0.69	+73	+4
Utilities	348	\$91,834	1.74	+5	+3
Total — All Industries	37,953	\$46,993	1.00	+1,224	+139

Source: JobsEQ®, QCEW via BLS, 2026Q1 four-quarter moving average. LQ = location quotient (1.00 = national concentration).

Occupation Snapshot (2026Q1)

The largest occupation group is Office and Administrative Support (3,571), followed by **Transportation and Material Moving (3,368)** and Sales and Related (3,356). Highest concentrations are Farming, Fishing and Forestry (LQ 4.85), Protective Service (1.44), and Production

(1.39). Transportation carries the strongest one-year job-count forecast (+18), tied with Healthcare Practitioners and Technical; Healthcare Support grows fastest by rate (+1.0%).

Occupation Group	Empl.	Mean Wage	LQ	1-Yr Fcst
Office & Administrative Support	3,571	\$43,000	0.86	-10
Transportation & Material Moving	3,368	\$42,700	1.04	+18
Sales & Related	3,356	\$40,800	1.02	-7
Management	3,138	\$108,100	1.05	+16
Food Preparation & Serving	3,024	\$28,800	0.96	+14
Production	2,765	\$42,500	1.39	+5
Educational Instruction & Library	2,712	\$57,300	1.30	+4
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	2,359	\$93,800	1.02	+18
Healthcare Support	1,709	\$33,800	0.90	+17
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	1,683	\$57,000	1.15	+12
Construction & Extraction	1,637	\$51,500	0.96	+12
Protective Service	1,214	\$48,400	1.44	+1
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	1,051	\$39,600	4.85	-1
Total — All Occupations	37,953	\$54,900	1.00	+138

Source: JobsEQ®, 2026Q1. Occupation employment is estimated from the industry/occupation mix.

Industry Clusters & Regional Output

The region’s dominant cluster is **Agricultural (LQ 5.44)**, employing about 2,303 workers at an average wage of \$56,536, with Wood/Paper, Textile/Leather, and Metal & Product Manufacturing all above the competitive-advantage threshold. Regional GDP reached \$3.88 billion in 2024, up 4.8%. Manufacturing produced the largest share (\$591M), ahead of Health Care (\$444M), Retail Trade (\$345M), and Agriculture/Forestry (\$337M) — a pattern showing capital-intensive, higher-wage output the College can prepare students to enter.

Sector (by 2024 GDP)	GDP (\$M)	Sector (by 2024 GDP)	GDP (\$M)
Manufacturing	\$591	Construction	\$281
Health Care & Social Assist.	\$444	Wholesale Trade	\$235
Retail Trade	\$345	Finance & Insurance	\$208
Agriculture / Forestry	\$337	Public Administration	\$204
Educational Services	\$299	Utilities	\$169

Source: JobsEQ®, Bureau of Economic Analysis, through 2024. Total regional GDP \$3,880,071,000.

What the Data Means for the College

KEY FINDING

Four themes define the College’s workforce role. (1) Health care is the anchor — the largest sector and strongest job-count forecast, matching STC’s nursing, allied-health, and paramedicine programs. (2) A skilled-trades and manufacturing core — Manufacturing is the third-largest sector and leads regional GDP, while Construction is among the best growth stories, aligning with welding, electrical, HVAC, diesel, and construction trades. (3) A strong agriculture and forestry signal the current catalog does not serve — the region’s single strongest cluster (LQ 5.61) once matched a vibrant STC forestry program, since discontinued, making reinstatement a lower-risk opportunity than new development. (4) A workforce-participation opportunity — a 51.6% participation rate and 22.2% poverty against a low-attainment base means a large pool of residents the College can move into higher-wage work through flexible, stackable credentials.