

Employment Trends in State and Local Government

MissionSquare Research Institute explores employment trend history and projections, both as a whole and in specific segments of the public sector, to better inform the management of the government workforce and the ongoing challenges of recruiting and retaining talented employees.

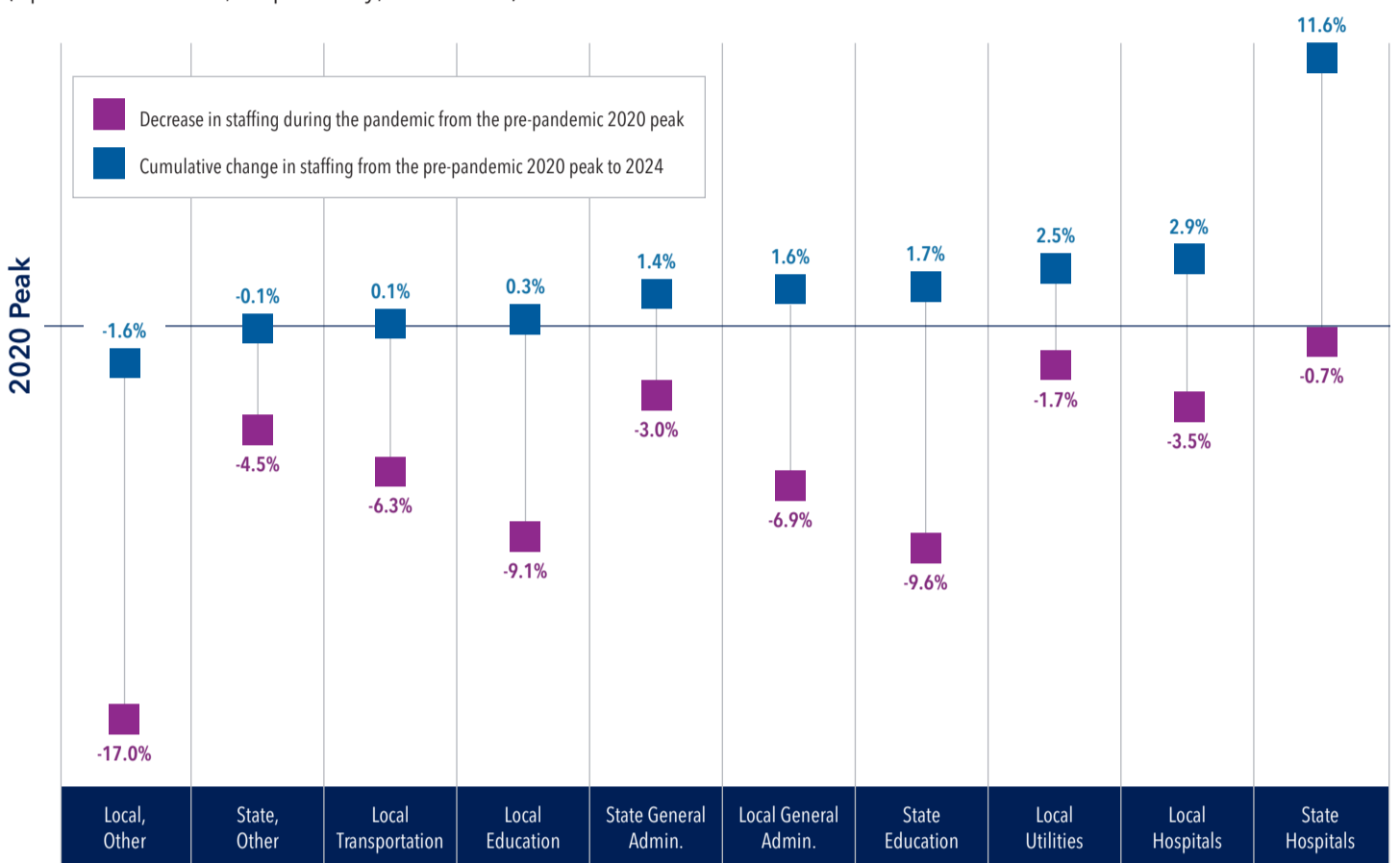
Employment Totals

While state and local governments saw significant downturns in total employment since 2020, **both have now returned to pre-pandemic levels.**

	Lowest level	As of March 2024
Local government	-8.4% (May 2020)	+0.9%
State government	-2.6% (May 2021)	+3.4%

Workforce Changes Since Pre-Pandemic

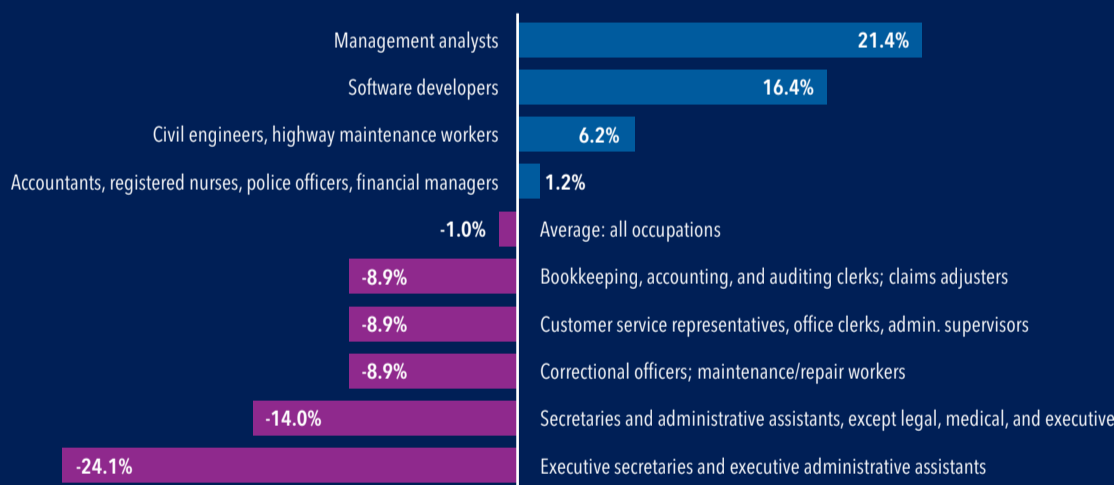
Changes in staffing within specific fields of employment, during both periods (pre-pandemic to pandemic low points, and pre-pandemic to 2024), have varied significantly. From pre-pandemic levels to 2024, state hospitals saw the greatest growth (up 11.6%), while local transportation and education are barely above where they were pre-pandemic (up 0.1% and 0.3%, respectively; see below).



State Government, Projected Employment Change 2022 - 2032

To complement the Institute's annual polling on hard to fill positions, the following figures show occupations for which projected change in demand through 2032 is of **more than 5 percent**. These changes reflect a range of considerations, including artificial intelligence (AI) and other technological developments.

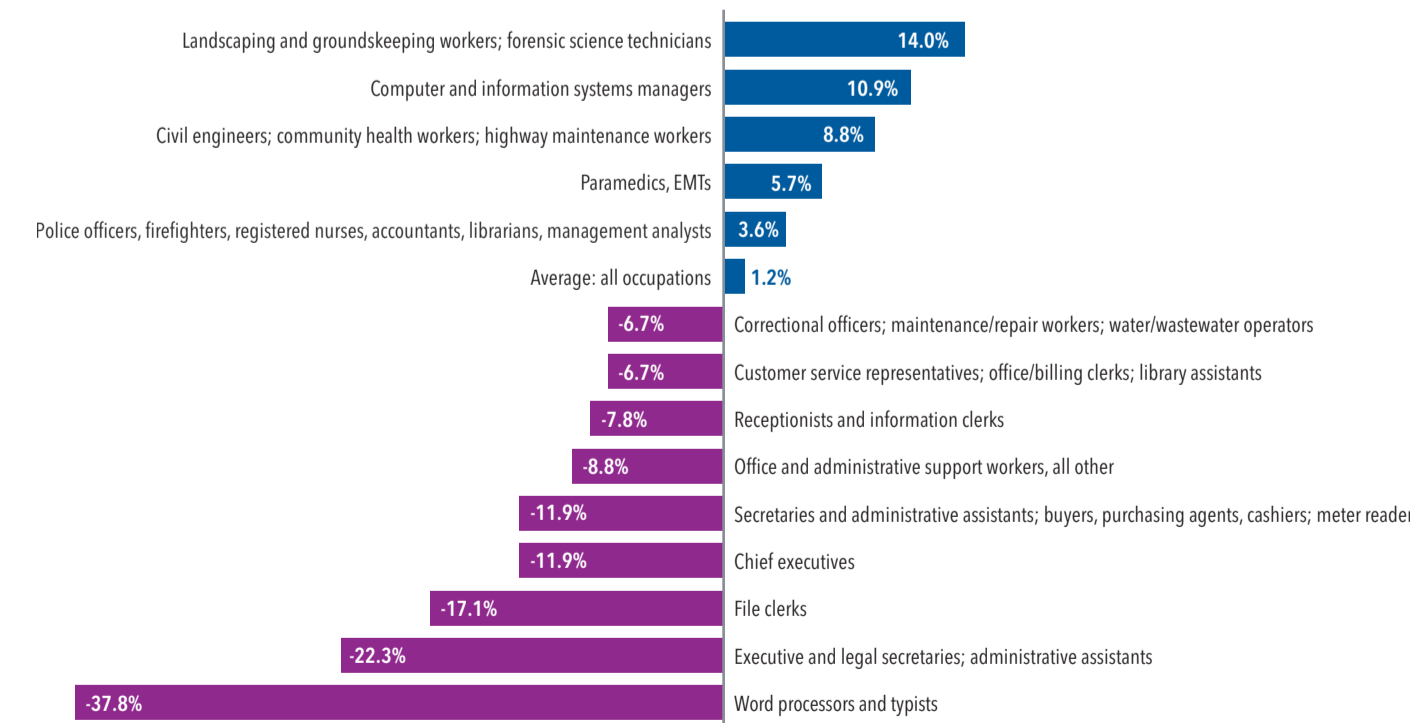
In some cases (e.g., state government management analysts, +21.4%; software developers, +16.4 percent; local government computer and information systems managers, +10.9 percent), demand is projected to increase, while for others such as in **customer service** or **clerical work**, demand is projected to decrease. With the pace of developments in AI, some of the impacts on staffing or on the need for staff retraining may grow.



The graphs display occupations where a greater than 5% change is projected, for occupations with at least 10,000 employees as of 2022. An additional line summarizes various key occupations where the projected change is less than 5%.

Local Government, Projected Employment Change 2022 - 2032

As employers engage in succession planning, recruitment, development of new customer service apps, and policies on the deployment and oversight of AI systems and algorithms, this data can help employers understand where the greatest pressures might be in maintaining the public workforce over the next 8 years.



Click here for the latest **State and Local Government Workforce Survey results.**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

MissionSquare Research Institute (formerly the Center for State and Local Government Excellence at ICMA-RC) promotes excellence in state and local government and other public service organizations so they can attract and retain talented employees. The organization identifies organizing practices and conducts research on development plans, the organization benefits, workforce demographics and skill set needs, labor force development, and topics facing the nonprofit industry and the education sector. MissionSquare Research Institute brings leaders together with respected researchers. For more information and to access research and publications, visit research.missionsq.org and follow on **X (formerly Twitter)** and **LinkedIn**.

