

# Talent in Puerto Rico



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## Talent in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico boasts a highly talented workforce, with especially strong concentrations in technical, engineering, and BioScience professions. While recent natural disasters have caused an outmigration to the mainland, the growth of key sectors of the economy, an enthusiastic & engaged diaspora community

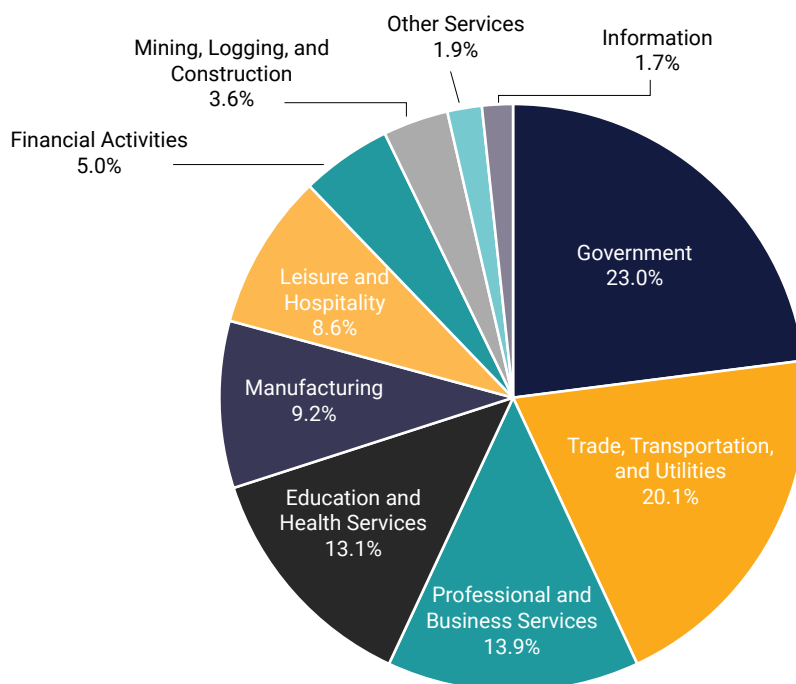
of Puerto Ricans, available workforce development resources, and strong academic centers have all contributed to the growing pool of skilled workers that are eager to participate in the local economy in the years since.

Puerto Rico's Economy	
Job Growth (FY20-21)	1.2%
Unemployment Rate (June 2021)	8.1%
Jobs (June 2021)	980,300
Annual Mean Wages (May 2020)	\$30,750 (\$56,310 in U.S.)

Companies in Puerto Rico not only benefit from the technical prowess of the local labor force, but also from the bicultural and bilingual reality of the Island. With over 50% of the Island capable of operating in either English or Spanish, businesses are able to easily reach customers around the world and even use Puerto Rico as

the jumping off point to expand operations into the mainland U.S. or the rest of Latin America. The Puerto Rico labor force is highly skilled, bilingual, and wages are on average 40% lower than the U.S. national average. This makes the local workforce among the most competitive in the world.

## Puerto Rico Labor Force



According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), there are about 22,000 direct jobs in tech-related fields. Puerto Rico specializes in industrial (LQ=4.9) & electrical engineering (1.8), computer operators (3.74) and programmers (1.15). As an added benefit to the high skilled and concentrated talent in Puerto Rico, the local average wages for these roles are about 40% lower than the national average.

Puerto Rico's diaspora over the past decade has created an enthusiastic and supportive community of nearly 5 million Puerto Ricans living on the mainland U.S. Local talent retention, and attraction group [ConPRmetidos](#) has identified around 30,000 individuals across the U.S. that are interested in coming back to the Island. To harness the potential of these individuals and link them with local companies, ConPRmetidos has launched [El Comeback](#), an initiative to collect the resumes of skilled workers on the mainland and connected them with companies in Puerto Rico that are eager to grow. Invest Puerto Rico is confident that businesses can find the talent needed in Puerto Rico, as well as have access to more talent if needed.

Puerto Rico's Incentive Code (Act 60) also confers credits to employers who have a hard time filling roles, enabling companies to attract difficult-to-recruit talent to the Island. Check out Act 60 [here](#).

The [Workforce Development Program at the Department of Economic Development and Commerce \(DDEC\)](#) administers training and employment funds. Through the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program, the Workforce Development

Program provides a wide variety of workforce development activities to support job applicants, displaced workers, and young people gain access to meaningful employment, education, training, and support services.

Mostly administered by local municipalities, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) operations take place in 16 career centers around Puerto Rico. For 2020, Puerto Rico received:

- \$29.7 million to support adult activities
- \$28.6 million for youth activities
- \$76.2 million for displaced worker activities
- \$6.4 million for the Employment Service ([Wagner-Peyser Act](#))

You can access the WIOA State Unified Plan for 2020-2023 through the DDEC's website or by clicking [here](#).

Eligible entities can also access up to \$40,000,000 in congressionally administered Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support existing job training programs. For more information about these funds and who can access them, check out the Puerto Rico Department of Housing's [page](#).

Thanks to decades of growth and development in highly technical fields, like medical device and pharmaceutical manufacturing, as well as supportive service industries like architecture, design, and construction, local human resources and recruiting agencies can help companies find specialized talent. Check out some of the talent-related service providers in Puerto Rico.

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University names, companies, and research centers mentioned in this document in different colors include a hyperlink to a website.

# Talent Highlights

In 2019



Local universities graduated  
**26,500 STEM  
Degrees**

including health sciences  
professionals

**60%** of university  
graduates hold a  
STEM degree



**6X** more than  
the highest states

Puerto Rico



**6<sup>th</sup> Highest**

availability of scientists  
and engineers in the world,  
according to the World  
Economic Forum's Global  
Competitiveness Report

In Latin America & the Caribbean, the Island is



**1<sup>st</sup>** in rates of higher  
education

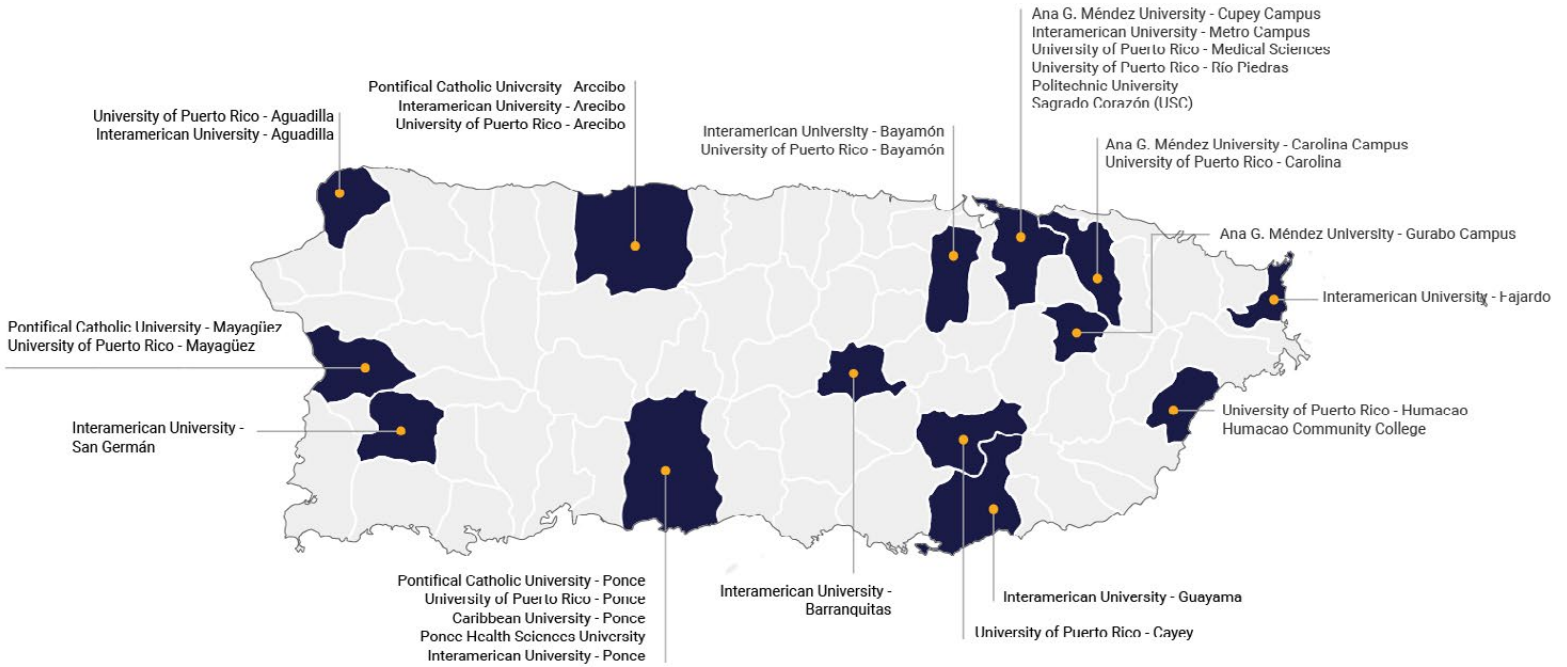
**2<sup>nd</sup>** in rates of digital  
skills amongst  
the population



## Academic Assets

Puerto Rico is home to over 100 accredited universities and colleges around the Island, with courses and study programs available in a wide range of different fields.

Many of these institutions are nationally renowned for their high concentrations of technical degree programs and for awarding STEM majors.



## Public University

The public University of Puerto Rico (UPR) is the oldest and largest university system on the Island. It spans 11 campuses and nearly 60,000 students. University of Puerto Rico's 11 campuses include a Medical Science Campus in San Juan and the nationally recognized research institutes at Río Piedras

and Mayagüez. The University of Puerto Rico system is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, though branch campuses tend to have additional areas of specialty for which they are accredited.

## University of Puerto Rico (UPR) - Campuses

University	Students	Graduates in 2019	Focus Areas
<a href="#">UPR - Río Piedras</a>	14,932	2,467 (1,817 bachelors, 384 masters, 253 doctorates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Biomedical and Biological Sciences</li> <li>· Communications, Journalism, and Public Relations</li> <li>· Psychology</li> <li>· Accounting</li> <li>· Physical Sciences (Chemistry, Biology)</li> <li>· Architecture and Urban Planning</li> <li>· Liberal Arts (Law and Social Work)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">UPR - Mayagüez</a>	12,954 (12,099 undergraduates)	1,895 (1,701 bachelors, 181 masters, 13 doctorates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Engineering (Mechanical, Chemical, Electrical, Computer, Civil, and Industrial)</li> <li>· Biological and Biomedical Sciences (Industrial Biotechnology and Microbiology)</li> <li>· Nursing and Pre-Veterinary Sciences</li> </ul>
<a href="#">University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus</a>	2,207 (329 undergraduates, 1,878 graduates students)	712 (257 masters, 238 doctorates, and 72 postgraduate certificates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Biomedical Sciences, Medicine, Pharmacy, Physical and Occupational Therapy, Dentistry, and Nursing</li> </ul>

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University	Students	Graduates in 2019	Focus Areas
UPR - Aguadilla	2,762	495 (66 associates and 429 bachelors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Biology (Bioinformatics, Biomedicine, Genetics, Quality Systems Evaluation)</li> <li>. Marketing, Accounting, and Human Resources</li> <li>. Education</li> <li>. Electrical, Environmental, and Communications Technology</li> </ul>
UPR - Arecibo	3,545	672 (84 associates and 588 bachelors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Business, Management, and Marketing</li> <li>. Microbiology</li> <li>. Radio and Television Broadcasting Technology</li> <li>. Health Professions</li> </ul>
UPR - Bayamón	3,937	496 (13 associates and 483 bachelors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Accounting</li> <li>. Biological and Biomedical Sciences</li> </ul>
UPR - Carolina	3,014	621 (44 associates and 577 bachelors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Forensic Psychology</li> <li>. Criminal Justice</li> <li>. Advertising</li> <li>. Hotel Management (and other business degrees)</li> </ul>
UPR - Cayey	2,885	493 (all bachelors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Biology and Biological Sciences</li> <li>. Psychology</li> <li>. Accounting</li> <li>. Education</li> </ul>
UPR - Humacao	3,218	605 (64 associates and 541 bachelors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Social Work</li> <li>. Nursing</li> <li>. Biology, Microbiology, Marine Biology</li> <li>. Digital Communications</li> <li>. Business Degrees</li> </ul>
UPR - Ponce	2,540	429 (25 associates and 404 bachelors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Biological and Biomedical Sciences</li> <li>. Elementary Education and Teaching</li> <li>. Psychology (including Forensic)</li> <li>. Business Degrees</li> </ul>
UPR - Utuado	675	127 (92 associates and 35 bachelors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Agricultural Operations and Sciences</li> <li>. Accounting</li> <li>. Natural and Social Sciences</li> </ul>



# University of Puerto Rico Highlights

## UPR - Río Piedras

Only Puerto Rican institution certified as a Doctoral Research-Intensive University and is the largest public research university in Puerto Rico. Recognized as a “very high research activity” by Carnegie Educational Foundation

## UPR - Medical Sciences Campus

The Pharmacy School at the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus is ranked 9th out of 130 U.S. schools based on how many graduates passed NAPLEX on their first attempt. UPR had a 2019 passing rate of 97.5%

## UPR - Mayagüez

Rated best university in Puerto Rico and #1 in the Caribbean

Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, National League for Nursing, and American Chemical Society accreditations, amongst others

#1 in graduating Hispanic engineers

#1 in graduating chemical engineers

#2 in graduating women engineer

11th in granting chemical engineering master's degrees

14th in awarding computer engineering degrees

15th of top 20 chemical engineering schools in the U.S.

## UPR - Cayey

Research centers include the Environmental Education Center, Institute for Interdisciplinary Research, and the Howard Hughes Project

## UPR - Humacao

Space observatory and microbial observatory funded by National Science Foundation

## Private Universities

While the University of Puerto Rico is the most prominent university system on Island, there are also several accredited private university systems in Puerto Rico that offer a wide range of specialties, from business administration to technical and engineering fields.

University	Students	Graduates in 2019
<a href="#">Universidad del Sagrado Corazón</a>	4,751 (4,448 undergraduates and 303 graduates)	1,037 (866 bachelors and 128 masters)
<a href="#">Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico</a>	9,212 (6,893 undergraduates, 2,319 graduates)	1,394 (921 bachelors, 220 masters, and 253 doctorates)
<a href="#">Ponce Health Sciences University</a>	1,248	301 (168 masters and 108 doctorates)
<a href="#">Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico</a>	4,360 (3,690 undergraduates, 670 graduates)	517 (5 associates, 348 bachelors, and 163 masters)
<a href="#">Inter American University of Puerto Rico</a>	Over 40,000	Approx. 6,000
<a href="#">Universidad Ana G. Méndez (Cupey, Gurabo, Carolina)</a>	Approx. 30,000	Approx. 7,700

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# Private Universities Highlights

## [Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico](#)

The institute offers Mechanical Engineering, Software Development, Engineering in Supply Chain and Logistics, Biomedical Engineering, Chemical, Civil, Computer, Electrical, Environmental, and Industrial Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management

[Plasma Engineering Laboratory](#)

## [Inter American University of Puerto Rico](#)

The institute offers dozens of academic programs in Natural, Environmental, and Health Sciences, Engineering, Math, Information Technology, and Business Administration

## [Universidad de Ana G. Méndez](#)

Includes School of Health Sciences; School of Science and Technology; School of Technical Studies

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## Next Generation of Puerto Rican Tech Professionals

As an emerging tech hub, Puerto Rico is home to various alternative education programs to encourage the development of STEM skills, including coding and software development, machine learning, IoT, robotics, and more. As an example, [New Horizons](#) is a computer learning center in San Juan that offers trainings and certifications on a diverse set of software and technical skills.

Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico houses the [Center for Information Assurance for Research and Education \(CIARE\)](#) in San Juan, which specializes in advancing and promoting information assurance and cyber defense. Atlantic University College has courses in UX/UI and specialized programs in digital technology, including animation, graphic design, and interactive programming.

The [Holberton School](#) is another option for students looking to learn world class computer science and software development, while offering career placement support for its

graduates.

The Escuela Elemental at the UPR-Río Piedras is the first school in Puerto Rico to be admitted into Microsoft's Innovative Schools program as an Associate Showcase School. This title recognizes the successful implementation of technology in the classroom and promotion of STEM education.

[Engine-4](#) is a regional hub for tech skills training and development. Based in the northern city of Bayamón, Engine-4's coworking space houses robotics labs, AI and code training for high schoolers, and the IOTeen Eco Technology and Business Education Project; a collaborative effort to bring tech workshops to teenagers. Engine-4 also works with IBM, Intel, Microsoft, AT&T, and Hewlett-Packard to fund additional data projects, trainings, and hackathons. The facility in Bayamón also houses Puerto Rico's Internet of Things Lab.

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## Research Centers

In addition to Puerto Rico's extensive list of university assets, there are several applied research centers that provide academic space to address real world challenges. In 2019, research institutes in Puerto Rico received a total of \$83 million in federal funding through the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). While this is considerably smaller than most U.S. jurisdictions, the funding supported dozens of research partnerships and about 120 specific research projects.

### NSF Funding

- In 2019, 14 Puerto Rican institutions received \$19.4 million for 30 projects
- 12 awards went to UPR-Mayagüez (\$3.74 million); 9 awards went to UPR-Río Piedras (\$5.18 million)
- This is slightly down from \$19.5 million in 2018
- Projects included \$2 million for UPR-Río Piedras' study on genomic logic; \$3.7 million for UPR's Center for the Advancement of Wearable Technologies; Over \$12 million from 2019 on STEM engagement in higher education

### NIH Funding

- In 2019, 13 Puerto Rico's institutions received \$63.6 million for 102 projects. This is up from 89 awards worth \$52 million in 2018
- 48 awards went to Medical Sciences (\$28

million); 13 to UPR-Río Piedras (\$10.7 million); 10 to Ponce School of Medicine (\$12.3 million); 8 to Comprehensive Cancer Center (\$2.2 million)

- Projects included \$4 million for Center for Collaborative Research in Minority Health and Health Disparities; \$2.9 million for UPR's Institute of Neurobiology; \$2 million for Phase 2 at UPR's Center for Neuroplasticity

With support from federal funds, research centers across Puerto Rico contribute to groundbreaking work in technology, science, and medicine:

### Puerto Rico Science, Technology, and Research Trust (PRSTRT)

- Advanced Research Grants Program
- Catalyzer Research Grant Program
- Science City and the Science District (in development)
  - » Research and facilities, labs, business initiatives, academic resources
- Puerto Rico Consortium for Clinical Investigation formed by PRSTRT in 2016 to improve clinical research speed
  - » 19 research sites around Puerto Rico

### Bioprocess Development and Training Complex (BDTC) in Mayagüez

- Part of the Technoeconomic Corridor (PRTEC) and the Guanajibo Research and

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## Research Centers

### [Translational Molecular Research Center \(MSRC\) at the UPR](#)

- [Materials Characterization Center](#) offers R&D solutions for on-Island manufacturing; 300 researchers
- [Confocal and multiphoton microscopy, mass spectrometry and chromatography, nuclear magnetic resonance, sequencing and genotyping, surface microscopy and spectroscopy, x-ray diffraction](#)

### [Center for Collaborative Research in Health Disparities at UPR Medical Sciences Campus](#)

- [NIH-funded center that promotes research in minority populations and provides initial funding for basic behavioral and clinical research to close health disparities](#)

### [Caribbean Genomic Center at UPR - Mayagüez](#)

- [This is a next-generation sequencing research center that works with the biology department at the UPR-Mayagüez campus to study evolution in various species](#)

### [Pharmaceutical Engineering Research and Training Center](#)

- [Supports the research and development behind optimizing pharmaceutical manufacturing processes, including through the training of students and professionals](#)

### [UPR Comprehensive Cancer Center in San Juan](#)

- [Designed to be part of UPR's Science District with inpatient and outpatient facilities](#)
- [Dedicated to cancer treatment and prevention](#)

### [FDA's San Juan Laboratory](#)

- [One of eight in the country, with specialization in pharmaceutical analysis and chromatography](#)

### [Ponce Research Institute \(PRI\) and Ponce Health Science University](#)

- [Studies cancer, neuroscience, infectious diseases, women's health, community-based research, and e-health initiatives](#)
- [Leaders in clinical research in southwestern Puerto Rico, having participated in over 275 Phase 1-4 clinical trials](#)

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## Caribbean Primate Research Center at the UPR

- Across four facilities in Puerto Rico, this NIH-funded research center improves scientific knowledge of primate biology and behavior, critical to human health and welfare. It has been in operation for over 75 years

## Science and Technology Research Development Center (CDICTP) in Ponce

- Programs support STEM education, university-level research, and global research collaboration

## Sustainable Energy Research Center and Microgrid Laboratory at UPR - Mayagüez

- One of eight in the country, with specialization in pharmaceutical analysis and chromatography

## Center of the Advancement of Wearable Technology (CWAT) at UPR

- Studies cancer, neuroscience, infectious diseases, women's health, community-based research, and e-health initiatives
- Leaders in clinical research in southwestern Puerto Rico, having participated in over 275 Phase 1-4 clinical trials

Due to Puerto Rico's favorable geography and weather, the Island is home to nationally unique research centers including the only truly tropical agricultural research station in the U.S.

## Center for Teaching and Research in Agricultural Biotechnology (CEIBA)

- In coordination with the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico in Ponce, the Center conducts research to control plant diseases and protect crop quality

UPR - Mayagüez has several [agricultural research centers](#) around Puerto Rico:

- Center of Excellence for Quarantine and Invasive Species
- Pesticide Research Center
- Entomology and Tropical Biodiversity Museum
- Tropical Agricultural Research Station
- One of three USDA tropical/subtropical research centers
  - » Conducts research to develop solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority
- Plague and Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic
- Experimental Dairy Farm Station
- Central Analytic Laboratory
- Animal Molecular Biotechnology Laboratory
- Food Innovation Hub
- Water Quality Laboratory
- Environmental Chemistry Laboratory
- Phytopathology and Tissue Culture Laboratory
- Experimental Agricultural Station Library
- Botanical Gardens in San Juan

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May 2020 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates

Occupation Title	Employment	Location Quotient	Mean Hourly Wage	Annual Mean Wage
Chief Executives	2,940	2.46	\$59.14	\$123,010
Pharmacists	1,760	0.95	\$44.55	\$92,660
Financial Managers	4,060	1.05	\$40.17	\$83,550
Computer and Information Systems Managers	1,490	0.55	\$38.86	\$80,820
General and Operations Managers	6,100	0.44	\$38.07	\$79,190
Purchasing Managers	480	1.15	\$36.14	\$75,160
Human Resources Managers	1,330	1.45	\$32.09	\$66,750
Computer Systems Analysts	1,220	0.36	\$26.10	\$54,290
Compliance Officers	3,800	1.97	\$23.79	\$49,480
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	1,000	0.5	\$22.96	\$47,750
Computer Programmers	1,250	1.19	\$22.81	\$47,440
Computer Occupations, All Other	710	0.33	\$22.51	\$46,810
Agricultural and Food Science Technicians	260	2.02	\$17.96	\$37,360
Registered Nurses	19,250	1.09	\$17.05	\$35,450
Computer User Support Specialists	3,740	1	\$15.76	\$32,780
Insurance Claims Processor	1,180	0.83	\$12.67	\$26,350
Call Center Representatives	16,680	1.00	\$11.33	\$23,560

To read or download all May 2020 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates Puerto Rico from all industry sectors, visit the Bureau of Labor Statistics [here](#)

In addition to the BioScience research institutes across the Island, there is a burgeoning tech scene that will position Puerto Rico at the forefront of industrial technological advancements. In the efforts to restore telecommunications infrastructure, at least three companies have rolled out 5G and two companies have provided Puerto Rico with new LORAWAN networks to connect IoT devices. There are now two 5G test beds in Puerto Rico that focus on cost-effective, industry-facing tech applications:

#### T-Mobile 5G and NB-IoT Lab at Engine-4

Engine-4 and T-Mobile's lab is bringing together a diverse group of public, private, and nonprofit partners to focus on emerging applications of 5G and the Internet of Things. Together in

Bayamón, these leaders and students of all ages are developing new tools and services in agriculture, manufacturing, health, and entertainment.

#### Puerto Rico 5G Zone

This initiative with the National Spectrum Consortium will connect the University of Puerto Rico with three other Labs Across America. Puerto Rico's 5G Zone will focus on resiliency, manufacturing & logistics, and other business-facing industrial applications for 5G as well as the broader wave spectrum. This test bed will enable companies to explore cost-effectively new technologies that promise to enhance everyday operations.

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Reach out to our Business Development experts to learn more about the talent and academic assets in Puerto Rico.

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