



B **INDUSTRY PROFILES 2025:** **PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND TECHNICAL** **SERVICES IN BOSTON**

City of Boston Planning Department Research Division

PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

Boston's Professional, Scientific, and Technical services sector plays a critical role in the region's economy, offering specialized services such as legal services, consulting, and engineering. The city's concentration of highly educated young professionals, combined with its biotech hub and the presence of leading firms of the sector, made this industry a significant employer in Boston.

In Boston, Professional, Scientific, and Technical services include approximately 100,644 employees and 5,619 establishments, making up 14.7% of all employment and 17.8% of businesses.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GROSS CITY PRODUCT (GCP)

The Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry is the largest contributor to Boston's Gross City Product (GCP). In 2023, the sector accounted for 20.3% of Boston's GCP. After 13 consecutive years of growth and rising to the top GCP contributor in 2021, Boston's Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services experienced its first setback in 2023 with a 0.5% decline in GCP contribution.

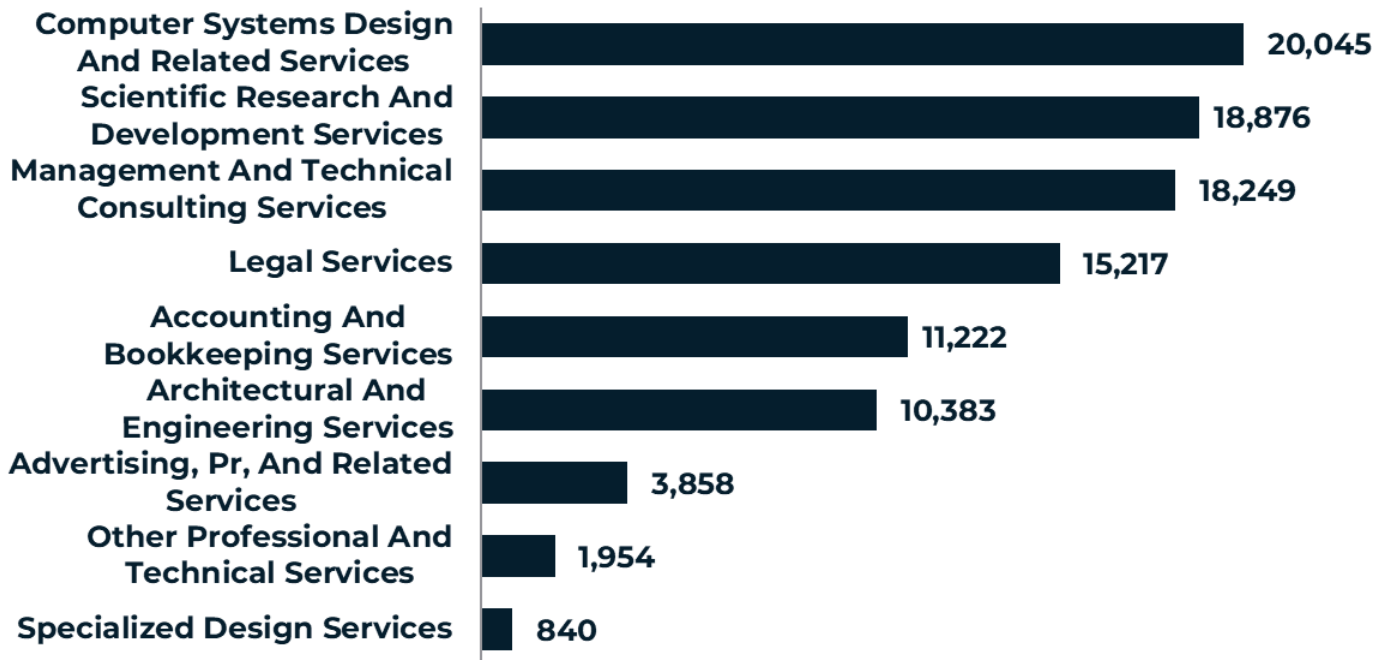


EMPLOYMENT

Computer Systems Design and Related Services employment is the largest subset of the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry, employing around 20,045 workers and accounting for around 19.9% of the sector’s employment in Boston. Boston has a strong technology and biotechnology hub that relies heavily on Computer System Design and Related Services. Following closely are Scientific Research and Development Services, with 18,876 employees (18.7% of the sector), and Management and Technical Consulting Services, which employ 18,249 workers, accounting for 18.1% of the sector.

NUMBER OF JOBS BY INDUSTRY

Average monthly employment in 2024 (Third Quarter)



Source: MA Department of Economic Research, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY INDUSTRY

Overall, Professional, Scientific, and Technical service sector employment declined from 2022 to 2023, losing around 1,027 payroll workers.¹ However, employment growth within the Boston’s Professional, Scientific, and Technical Service sector varied widely across different subsectors.

Scientific research and development services experienced the strongest employment growth at 8.2%, followed by Accounting and Bookkeeping services at 3.5%, and Legal Services at 1.1%. The

¹ Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD)

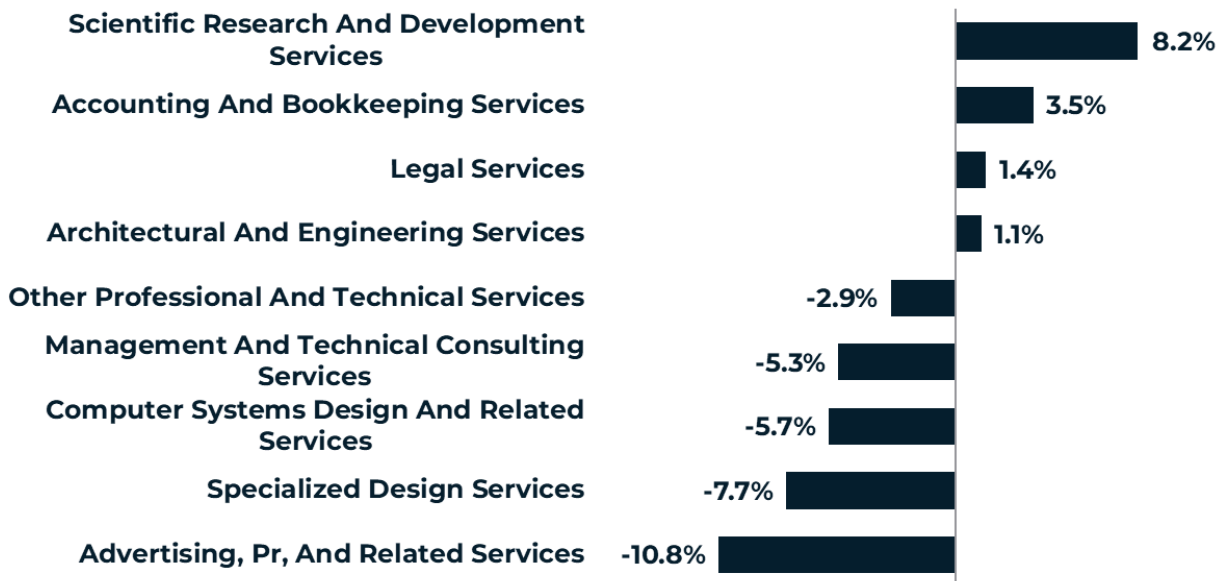


city has one of the top Scientific Research and Development Service markets in the U.S. with major universities like Harvard, MIT, and Boston University, driving innovation and attracting a highly skilled workforce. This has contributed to the expansion of Scientific Research roles, bolstered by the presence of biotech and pharmaceutical companies in the region, making Boston a hub for cutting-edge research and technological advancements.

In contrast, several subsectors within the industry saw employment declines, including Computer Systems Design and Related Service (-5.7%), Specialized Design Services (-7.7%), Advertising, PR, and Related Services (-10.8%).

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF JOBS BY INDUSTRY

2022-2023



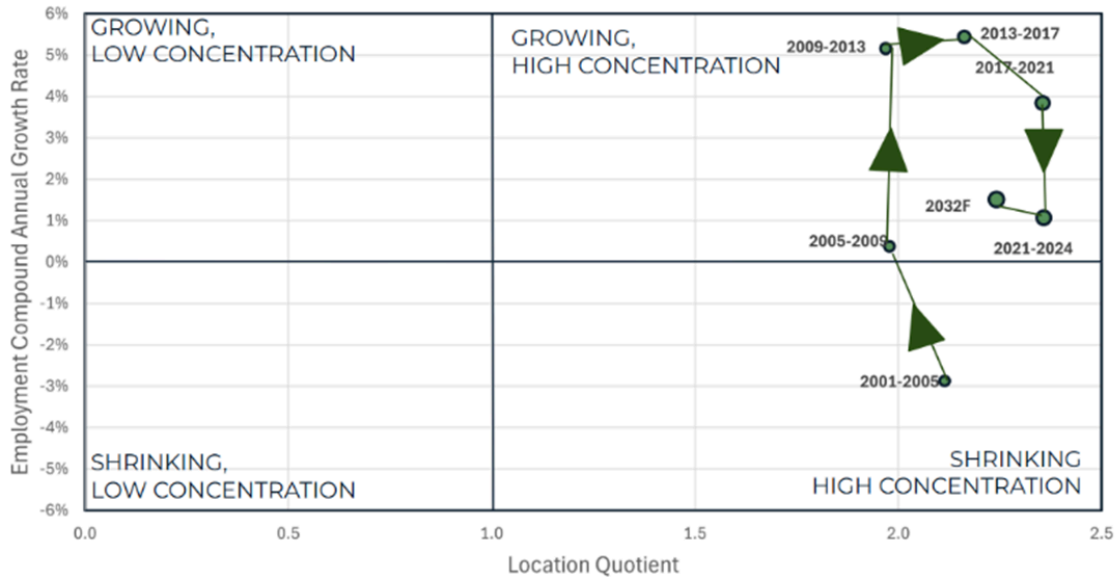
Source: MA Department of Economic Research, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

Boston’s Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector has had both strong employment growth since 2005 and high employment concentration compared to the nation. However, job growth has been slowing in recent years even as concentration has increased. From 2021 to 2024, the compound annual job growth rate was 1.07%, down from 5.16% from 2013–2017. Boston’s Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services employment nevertheless grew faster than that of the nation, increasing its location quotient to 2.36 in 2024, indicating that Boston’s share of employment in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services is 2.36 times that of the nation.



PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND TECHNICAL SERVICES INDUSTRY

2001 - 2032F



Note: Bubble size represents the relative number of Boston employees in the industry. Future forecasts adjusted to subtract the 2024 Q3 ratio of government workers. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), private sector jobs, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division

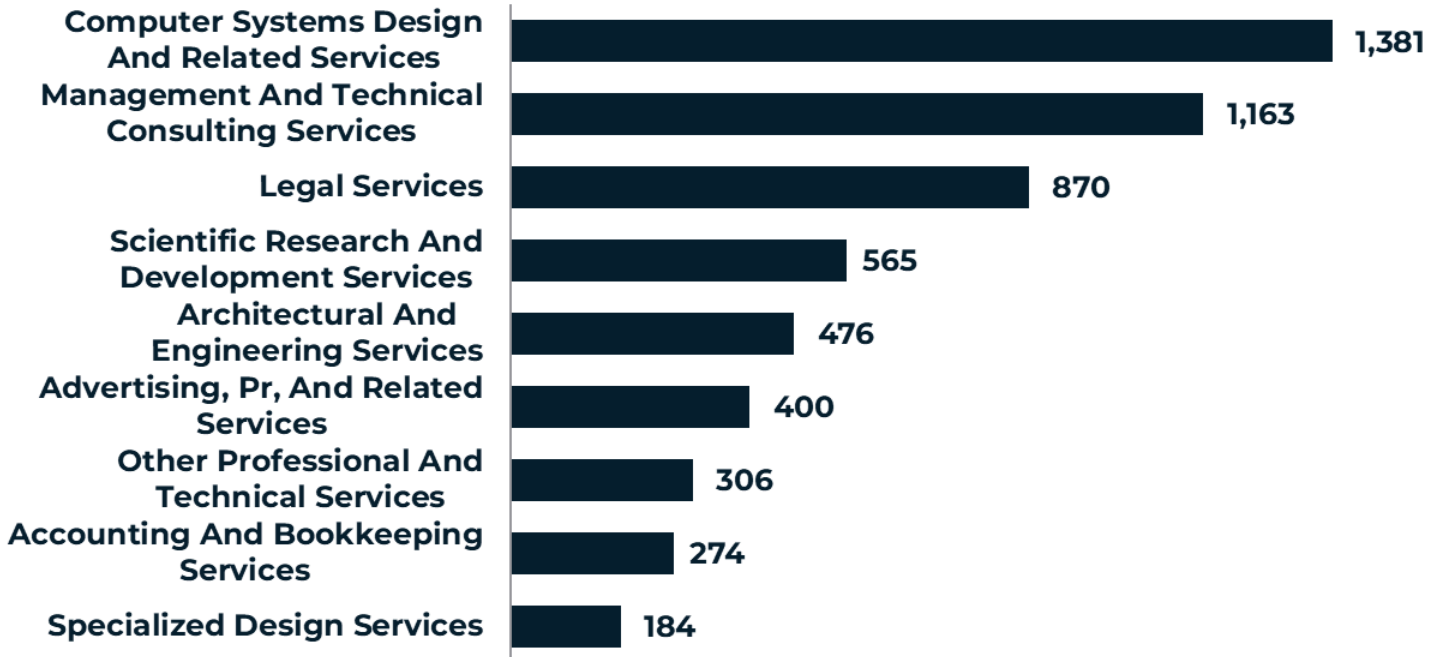
ESTABLISHMENTS

Professional services cover various company types, including Consulting and Architecture, but they all focus on providing specialized services rather than selling products. Across the sector, Computer Systems Design and Related Services has the largest number of establishments in Boston, with 1,381 firms as of September 2024. Management and Technical Consulting Services follows with 1,163 establishments, and Legal Services with 870 firms. Firms like Accenture and Boston Consulting Group (BCG) are examples of firms in Boston under these industries.



NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS BY INDUSTRY

September 2024



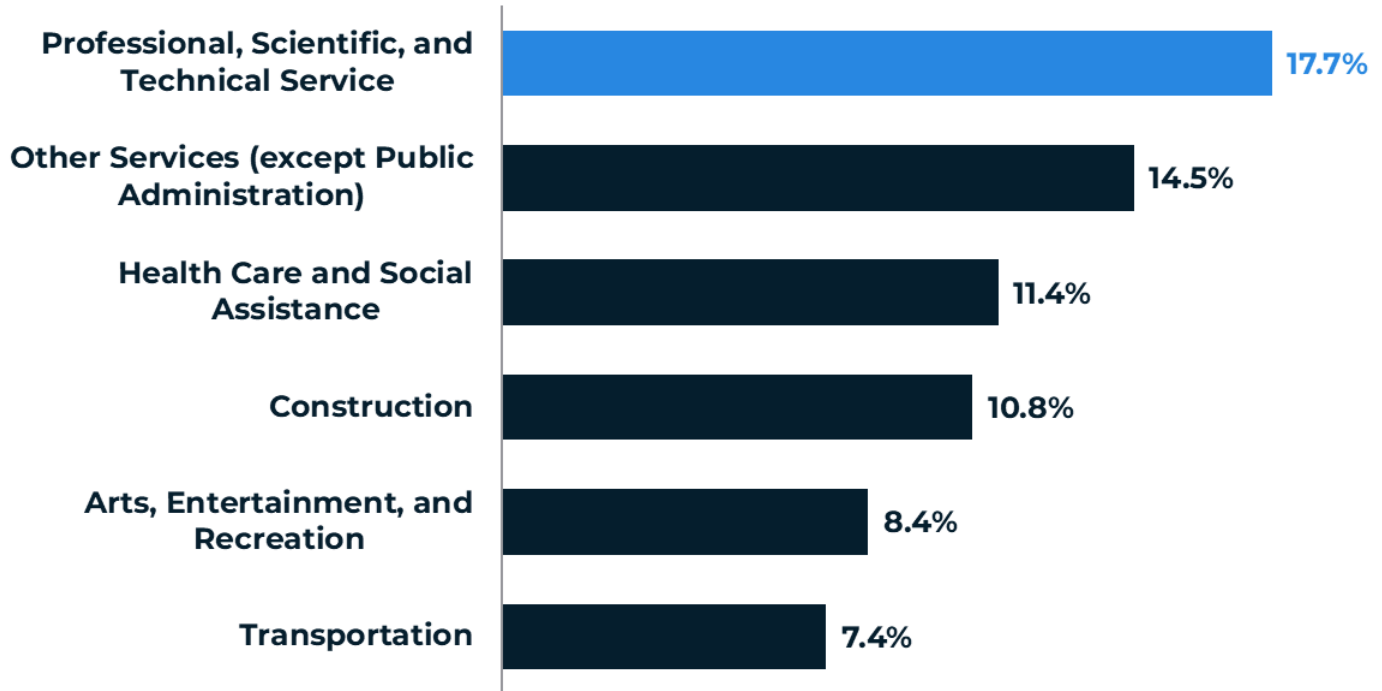
Source: MA Department of Economic Research 2025, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

As of 2025, around 4% of the Professional, Scientific, and Technical service industry workers are self-employed and the sector represents around 17.7% of all self-employed businesses in Boston. In this industry, offices of Lawyers and Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Service represent around 36% of all self-employment.



SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Share of self-employment in Boston, 2025



Source: Lightcast 2025, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

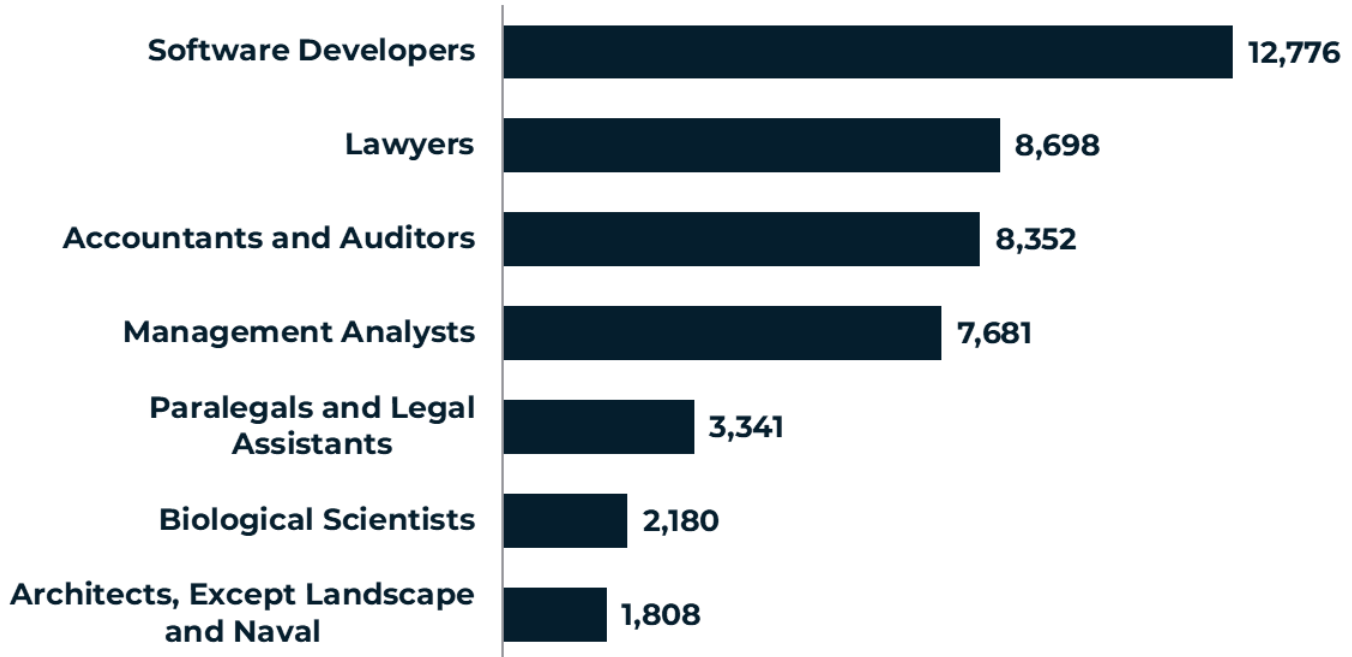
OCCUPATIONS

Boston's Professional, Scientific, and Technical service sector is driven by software developers, Lawyers, and Accountants and Auditors. Software developers have the highest employment at 12,776. Their high employment may be driven by advances in technology, such as AI, and growing integration of technology into almost every aspect of business operations. On the other hand, there were only 1,808 architects working in Boston in 2023.



NUMBER OF JOBS BY OCCUPATION

2023



Source: Lightcast Q1, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

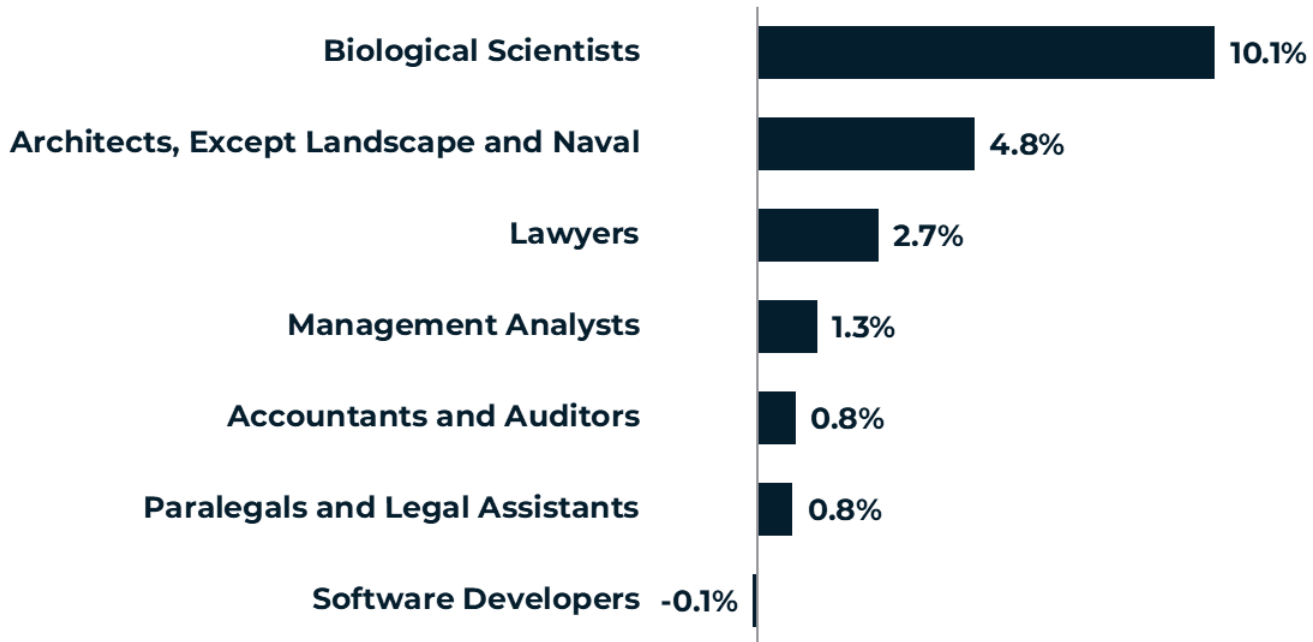
Occupations in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical sector experienced various changes in employment numbers. Biological scientists experienced the largest positive change in employment, with a 10.1% growth in 2023 from 2022. Architects experienced the second largest change in employment from 2022 to 2023 - with an increase of 4.8% - followed by the lawyers, with 2.7%. Software developers experienced a decline of 0.1%, possibly reflecting the massive tech layoffs occurring during this time period.²

² <https://www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2023/12/29/total-boston-tech-layoffs-2023-annual.html>



CHANGE IN NUMBER OF JOBS BY OCCUPATION

2022-2023



Source: Lightcast Q1, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

Many occupations in the Professional Service sector require higher degrees and longer years of training, and their high average annual earnings reflect these skills, knowledge, and demand. Lawyers earn the highest average annual earnings of \$206,977 followed by Software Developers with earnings of \$154,984.

Employment in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical service sector typically demands a high level of education and specialized training. For example, Lawyers are required to have at least a doctoral or professional degree and most occupations in this sector require at least a bachelor's degree.³ Additionally, many of these occupations require additional work aside from education. As an instance, Lawyers need to pass the Massachusetts Bar Exam and Accountants and Auditors benefit by pursuing additional certifications like the CPA. Boston's Professional, Scientific, and Technical service industry benefits from its neighboring institutions, as new graduates join the sector after graduation. For example, Harvard Law School had the highest bar pass rate in 2024 of 97.86% and many colleges in Boston are known for technical and science degrees that serve as a pipeline into the industry.⁴

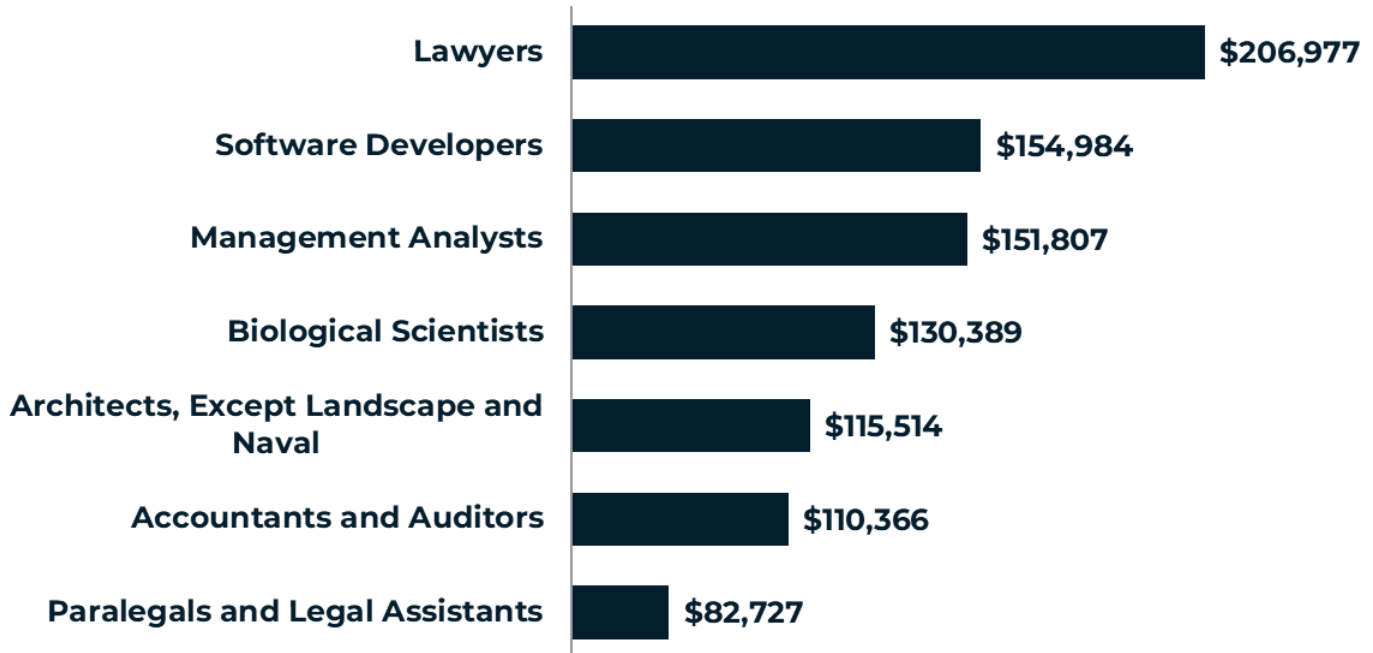
³ [Lightcast](#), 2025

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/these-us-law-schools-crushed-bar-exam-2024-2025-03-13/>



AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS BY OCCUPATION

2023



Source: Lightcast, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

Following COVID-19, there was a rise of remote working, and the Professional, Scientific, and Technical service industry had the largest share of work from home shares in the nation from 17% in 2019 to over 39% in 2021.⁵ Boston's Professional, Scientific, and Technical service sector also had the highest share of residents working primarily from home of all industries in 2023. Around 29% of Boston residents working in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services worked primarily from home in 2023, an increase of 21.1 percentage points from 2013. In comparison, only 14.7% of Boston resident workers worked primarily from home in 2023. Of those that work in this industry, Software Developers, Management Analysts, and Lawyers have the highest share of remote workers.

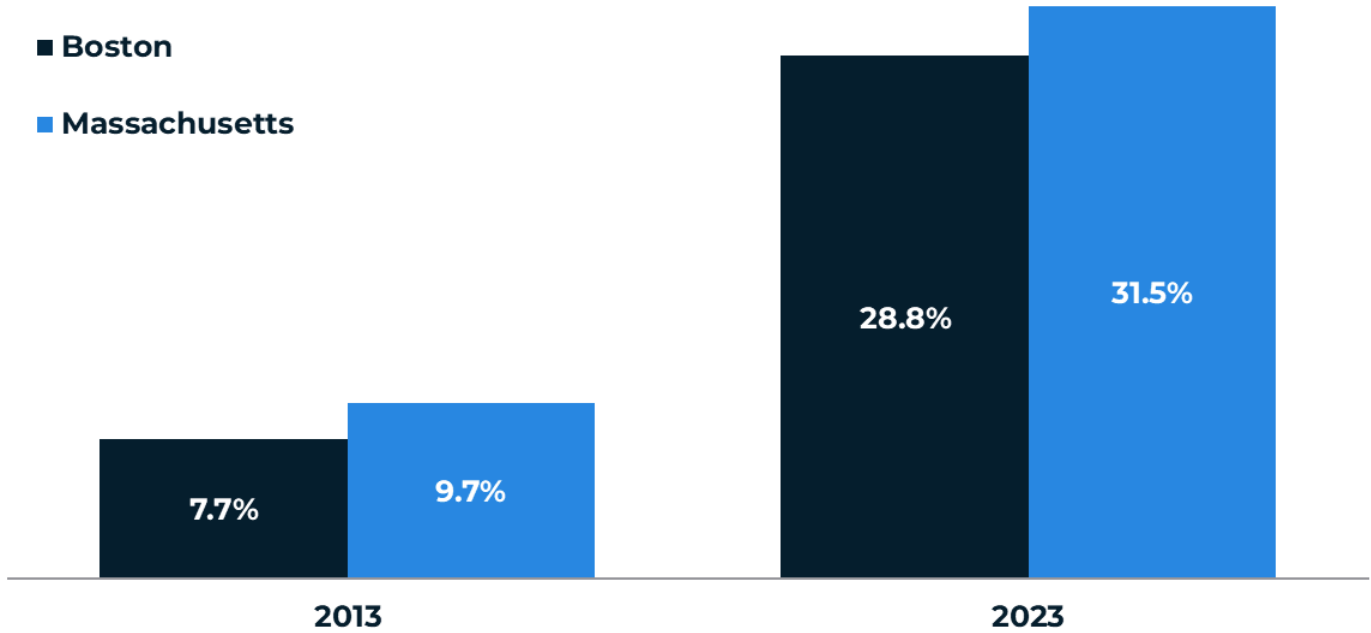
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<https://www.bls.gov/opub/btn/volume-13/remote-work-productivity.htm#:~:text=Professional%2C%20scientific%2C%20and%20technical%20services,than%2017%20percent%20in%202019>



WORKING FROM HOME

Share of residents in the Professional Service industry working from home



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year & 2023 1-Year American Community Survey, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

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