



# **Insight: Measuring the Bronx's Creative Workforce**

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## Key Takeaways

- **Creative Class.** 32 percent of Bronx residents who work are members of the Creative Class. The Location Quotient for the Bronx’s creative workforce exceeds that of Brooklyn and is 10 percent larger than the U.S. average.
- **Projected Growth.** The Bronx’s creative workforce is projected to grow 18 percent by 2025.
- **Meds and Eds.** Healthcare, social service, and education occupations account for 63 percent of the Bronx’s Creative Class.
- **Resident Educators.** 22 percent of Bronx creatives work in the healthcare or education sectors.

After decades of underinvestment, abandonment, crime, and concentrated poverty, the Bronx (with the exception of Riverdale and a handful of other affluent enclaves) had become a national symbol of urban blight. The early 2000s offered a brief glimmer of hope as art galleries, restaurants, and boutiques began popping up in the borough’s southernmost neighborhoods of Port Morris, Mott Haven, and Melrose. But in 2007, this investment trailed off as the housing market collapsed nationwide.

Today, New York’s strong economic recovery is breathing new life into the borough. As Manhattan and Brooklyn struggle to cope with housing affordability, more and more people are moving to the Bronx, enticed by its strong transportation access and affordable housing stock. In 2015 alone, more than 13,500 people relocated to the Bronx. Since 2010, the borough’s population has increased by 70,300 people, or 5.1 percent.<sup>1</sup> Bronx has led not just the city, but the entire state of New York for its rate of growth.<sup>2</sup>

Bronx’s Creative Class—workers who make their livings by using their minds, whether in science, technology, law, and medical industries, or academia, media, management, and finance—numbers just over 86,000 workers, or about 32 percent of the people in the borough who work (whether in the Bronx or elsewhere).<sup>3</sup> The Bronx’s Creative Class earns an average annual salary of \$77,875 per year. With a location quotient (LQ) of 1.10, the borough’s share of creative workers is slightly higher than the national average, though it is just a quarter of the size of Brooklyn’s and 16 percent as large as Manhattan’s. Over the next decade, the Bronx’s Creative Class share is expected to grow by 18.3 percent.

**Figure 1: Bronx Occupational Payroll Clusters**

Cluster	LQ	Employment	Share of Employment	Annual Salary
Creative Class	1.10	85,759	32.2%	\$77,875
Service Class	1.52	131,931	49.6%	\$30,160
Working Class	0.82	48,351	18.2%	\$39,520

Source: QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees - EMSI 2015.2 Class of Worker

That said, the Bronx’s Creative Class pales in comparison to its Service Class, which consists of low-paying, low-skill routine jobs in food preparation and service, retail trade, personal care, clerical and administrative positions, and more (the average salary for the Bronx Service Class is \$30,160, just 40 percent of the what the Creative Class makes on average). With 132,000 employees, the Service Class accounts for nearly half of the Bronx’s workforce and it is expected to grow another 15.2 percent in the coming decade.

While many still think of the Bronx as a manufacturing center, the number of production jobs in the borough is actually quite low. With less than 50,000 employees and an LQ of 0.82, the Bronx’s Working Class—which consists of blue-collar jobs in construction, transportation, cleaning, and building and grounds maintenance as well as direct production—accounts for just 18.2 percent of its total workforce. Over the next ten years, this share is anticipated to grow by 13.4 percent. Bronx’s Working Class earns an average salary of \$39,000, more than the Service Class but just half of what the Creative Class makes on average.

### **The Bronx’s Creative Class**

After a longstanding creative drought, the Bronx is experiencing steady growth across all of its creative clusters. Figure 2 (below) breaks out each creative cluster by category and salary, and Figure 3 (below) graphs the location quotient, total employment, and employment growth of each cluster to show which have competitive strengths, and which are declining or emerging.

**Figure 2: Bronx Creative Class Occupational Payroll Clusters**

<b>Occupational Cluster</b>	<b>LQ 2015</b>	<b>2015 Employment</b>	<b>2011-2015 5-Year Growth</b>	<b>2025 Employment</b>	<b>10-Year Projection</b>	<b>Annual Salary</b>
Community and Social Service	2.15	8,901	13.4 %	11,532	29.6 %	\$44,834
Healthcare Practitioners	1.94	29,685	9.5 %	35,369	19.1 %	\$83,262
Education	1.01	15,827	6.3 %	18,713	18.2 %	\$58,881
Management	0.96	12,719	8.6 %	14,648	15.2 %	\$119,581
Legal	0.82	1,530	11.8 %	1,882	23.0 %	\$114,763
Science	0.82	1,877	5.4 %	2,104	12.1 %	\$65,515
Business and Financial Operations	0.64	8,798	3.0 %	9,933	12.9 %	\$69,467
Arts, Media, and Design	0.62	2,262	0.0 %	2,551	12.7 %	\$54,387
Computer and Mathematical	0.39	3,110	7.6 %	3,584	15.2 %	\$79,305
Architecture and Engineering	0.22	1,049	8.6 %	1,151	9.8 %	\$76,044

*Source: QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees - EMSI 2015.2 Class of Worker*

The Bronx's creative economy, like Brooklyn's, Queens', and Staten Island's, is driven by healthcare and education occupations, or so-called "meds and eds." Together, these occupational clusters make up nearly half of the borough's creative workforce (around 46,000 residents).

With nearly 30,000 employees, Healthcare Practitioners is by far the largest creative cluster in the Bronx, and the only real competitive advantage that the borough has to offer. With an LQ of 1.94, Healthcare Practitioners has nearly twice the concentration as the national average. Across all five boroughs, this is the third highest LQ for a creative cluster. Healthcare Practitioners grew by 9.5 percent in the Bronx between 2011 and 2015, and is projected to grow another 19.1 percent by 2025. The average salary is \$83,000.

Education has around half as many employees (16,000) as Healthcare Practitioners; its share is almost on a par with the national average (LQ 1.01). Education grew by 6.3 percent between 2011 and 2015 and is anticipated to grow by 18.2 percent in the coming decade. Education professionals earn far less than their creative colleagues in the Bronx, with an annual salary of around \$59,000.

Management, is close behind Education in size with less than 13,000 employees, a share that is just under the U.S. average (LQ 0.96) for the cluster. The sector grew 8.6 percent between 2011 and 2015 and is projected to grow another 15.2 percent by 2025. Management salaries are the highest of all ten creative clusters in the Bronx, averaging nearly \$120,000 per year.

Because they are often linked to the Bronx's strong "meds and eds" cluster, Community and Social Service jobs are highly concentrated in the borough. Though the cluster accounts for less than 9,000 workers, its LQ (2.15) is more than twice the national average. Between 2011 and 2015, Community and Social Service has experienced the most significant growth of any creative cluster in the Bronx (13.4 percent) and it is expected to grow by another 30 percent in the next decade (the fastest growth rate of any cluster). Community and Social Service employees receive the lowest salaries of all the creative occupations in the Bronx, averaging less than \$45,000 annually.

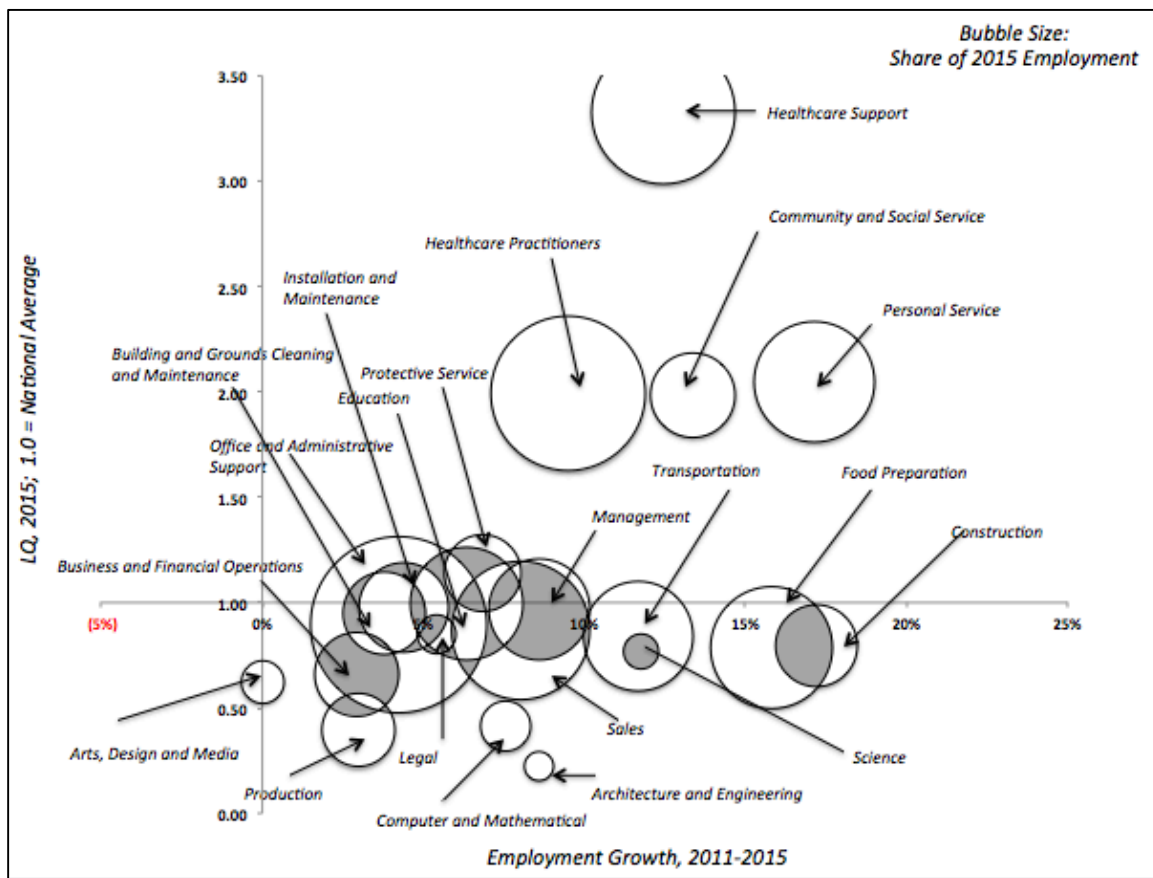
Business and Financial Operations is close behind Community and Social Service in size with nearly 8,800 employees. With an LQ of 0.64, this share is well below the U.S. average, owing in part to the cluster's relatively slow growth. From 2011 to 2015, Business and Financial Operations in the Bronx grew by a mere 3 percent. Over the next decade, the share is expected to increase by about 12.9 percent. Employees in this occupational group earn an average of \$70,000 a year.

The rest of the Bronx's creative skills clusters have less than 3,500 employees and are smaller than the national average. Both the Legal and Science clusters, for instance, are 18 percent smaller than the U.S. average (LQ 0.82). With just over 1,800 employees, Legal is slightly larger than Science, which accounts for some 1,500 employees. From 2011 to 2015, the Bronx's Legal cluster has grown by 11.8 percent and will likely grow another 23 percent in the coming decade. Meanwhile, the borough's Science cluster has grown by 5.4 percent from 2011 and 2015 and is expected to grow by 12.1 percent by 2025. Legal

workers in the Bronx also earn far more—nearly \$115,000 a year—than the borough’s Science employees, who earn around \$65,000 annually.

The Bronx’s Arts, Media, and Design cluster may not be the borough’s smallest cluster, but it has seen some of the slowest growth in recent years. From 2011 to 2015, the cluster did not grow at all. In the coming decade, it is only expected to grow by 12.7 percent. With an annual salary of less than \$55,000, Arts, Media, and Design also has the second lowest salary of all the clusters. The Bronx’s smallest cluster, Architecture and Engineering, has an annual salary of around \$76,000, despite its less than 1,100 employees.

**Figure 3: Bronx Occupational Payroll Clusters**



Source: QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees - EMSI 2015.2 Class of Worker

*Self-Employment*

Although more than 43,000 of the Bronx’s residents are self-employed, fewer than 10,000 of them work in creative occupations. This share is much smaller than the national average for Creative Class self-employment (LQ 0.65), and well below the creative class share of self-employed residents in Brooklyn and Manhattan. With around 2,600 self-employed residents, Management boasts the largest share of all ten creative clusters, followed by Arts, Design, and Media with less than 2,000 self-employed residents.

Only two creative clusters—Education and Community and Social Service—have self-employment shares that exceed the national average.

**Figure 4: Bronx Occupational Self-Employment Clusters**

Cluster	LQ	Employment	Share of Employment	Annual Salary
Creative Class	0.65	8,811	20.5%	\$35,152
Service Class	2.05	20,767	48.3%	\$16,515
Working Class	1.36	13,436	31.2%	\$19,115

*Source: QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees - EMSI 2015.2 Class of Worker*

The majority of the Bronx’s creative clusters have seen a rise in self-employment from 2011 to 2015. Most notably, the self-employed share of Education has grown by 19.3 percent and is expected to grow another 18.3 percent in the coming decade. Meanwhile, the self-employed share of the borough’s Community and Social Service cluster has grown by 17.9 percent and is likely to grow by 17.3 percent in the next ten years. The few clusters that have experienced declines of self-employed workers in recent years are Architecture and Engineering, Computer and Mathematical, and Science (which declined by 4.6 percent between 2011 and 2015 and is projected to shrink by 18.4 percent in the next decade).

### **The Bronx’s Service and Working Classes**

With nearly 132,000 workers, the Service Class makes up the bulk of employment in the Bronx – 49.6% of the workforce. The majority of these service workers are employed in Healthcare Support or Sales jobs, which each consist of around 25,000 employees. With an LQ of 3.33, the Bronx’s Healthcare Support cluster is about 3 times larger than the U.S. average. This should not come as a surprise, given the fact that the Bronx’s largest employers are healthcare institutions. Over the next ten years, the share of Healthcare Support jobs in the Bronx will likely increase by 20.4 percent, while the share of Personal Care jobs will increase by 29 percent.

Although they make up the overwhelming majority of the workforce, service workers in the Bronx earn notoriously low salaries. Four out of five service clusters in the Bronx have median annual salaries below \$34,000. Even so, the vast majority of the Bronx’s healthcare workers do not earn a living wage.

The majority of blue-collar workers in the Bronx (nearly 15,000) are employed in Transportation.

### *Self-Employment*

Most of the Bronx’s self-employed workers work in Service and Working Class occupations, which account for almost 80 percent of self-employment in the borough. Overall, nearly half of the Bronx’s service workers are self-employed, compared to 30 percent of blue-collar workers.

## Who Lives in the Bronx?

More than 50 percent of all working Bronx residents (over 271,000) are employed in service sector occupations, whether they work in the Bronx or not. In particular, the borough is home to a high concentration of residents working in Healthcare Support (LQ 3.08), Personal Care and Services (LQ 1.90), and Protective Services (LQ 1.90). Another 25.7 percent of the borough's working residents are employed in blue-collar occupations such as Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance (LQ 1.91) and Transportation (LQ 1.28).

**Figure 5: Bronx Residents by Occupational Cluster**

Cluster	LQ	Residents	Share of Residents
Creative Class	0.66	129,750	23.9%
Service Class	1.29	271,649	50.1%
Working Class	1.06	139,279	25.7%

*Source: QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees - EMSI 2015.2 Class of Worker*

The remaining 23.9 percent working borough's residents (nearly 130,000 in total) hail from the Creative Class. While the share of working Service and Working Class residents exceeds the national average, the share of Creative Class residents is much smaller (LQ 0.66). A significant plurality of these residents—over 28,000, or 21.8 percent of the Bronx's Creative Class residents—are educators. Another 12.1 percent work in Business and Financial Operations, compared to 11.4 percent of creative residents who work as Health Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners. Close behind is Community and Social Service, which accounts for 11.2 percent of the Bronx's share of Creative Class residents. With more than 14,000 residents, Community and Social Service is the only occupational group that exceeds the national average (LQ 1.61). Creative occupations with the lowest shares of residents include Architecture and Engineering (2500 residents, or two percent of the borough's Creative Class); Life, Physical, and Social Science (just under 2500 residents, or 1.9 percent); and Legal (4,200 Creative Class residents or 3.3 percent).

As more and more creative professionals migrate to the Bronx to live, there is growing concern that its Working Class and Service Class families will be displaced. In fact, a staggering 55.6 percent of Bronx renters are considered "rent burdened," meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.<sup>4</sup>

## About the Authors

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<sup>1</sup> New York City Government, [“Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn Fastest Growing Boroughs; NYC Population at All Time High.”](#) 2016.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census American Community Survey 2014-2015.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Florida, “The Rise of the Creative Class,” New York, Basic Books, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Lightfeldt, [“StreetEasy Predicts 2016 New York City Housing Market Trends.”](#) 2015.