CENTRAL MINNESOTA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS 6E, 7E, and 7W WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS 5 and 17

Covering the following counties:
Benton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Pine, Renville, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright

2024 REGIONAL PROFILE

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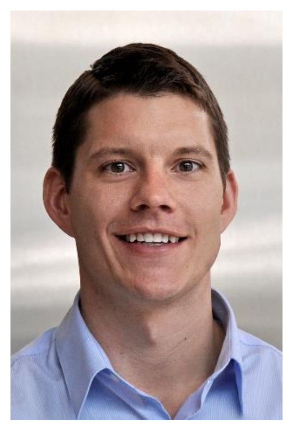
Luke Greiner
Regional Analyst, Central & Southwest Minnesota
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Office: 320-223-6992
E-mail: luke.greiner@state.mn.us
Web: http://mn.gov/deed/data/



DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE

The Central Minnesota planning region includes a total of 13 counties, covering three separate Economic Development Regions (EDRs) and two Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). Central Minnesota was home to just over 750,000 people in 2023, comprising 13% of the state's total population.

The region welcomed a 3.4% increase in population over the past three years, primarily due to rapid gains in EDR 7W and 7E. Central Minnesota was the fastest growing region of the state, accounting for 78% of the state's population growth from 2020 to 2023. In comparison, Minnesota saw a 0.6% gain statewide (Table 1).

Twelve of the 13 counties in the region gained population from 2020 to 2023, only Renville County decreased. Wright and Sherburne were the 1st and 2nd fastest growing counties in the state, respectively. In contrast, Renville was the 6th fastest declining county in the state and is the smallest county in the region.

Table 1. Population Change 2020-2023

	2020 Population	2023 Estimates	*2020-2023 Change*	
			Number	*Percent*
Central Minnesota	**725,940**	**750,312**	***+24,372***	***+3.4%***
Region 6E	**118,626**	**118,436**	***-190***	***-0.2%***
Kandiyohi Co.	43,732	43,813	*+81*	*+0.2%*
McLeod Co.	36,771	36,785	*+14*	*0.0%*
Meeker Co.	23,400	23,490	*+90*	*+0.4%*
Renville Co.	14,723	14,348	*-375*	*-2.5%*
Region 7E	**169,123**	**175,943**	***+6,820***	***+4.0%***
Chisago Co.	56,621	58,535	*+1,914*	*+3.4%*
Isanti Co.	41,135	43,182	*+2,047*	*+5.0%*
Kanabec Co.	16,032	16,602	*+570*	*+3.6%*
Mille Lacs Co.	26,459	27,427	*+968*	*+3.7%*
Pine Co.	28,876	30,197	*+1,321*	*+4.6%*
Region 7W	**438,191**	**455,933**	***+17,742***	***+4.0%***
Benton Co.	41,379	41,600	*+221*	*+0.5%*
Sherburne Co.	97,183	102,206	*+5,023*	*+5.2%*
Stearns Co.	158,292	160,977	*+2,685*	*+1.7%*
Wright Co.	141,337	151,150	*+9,813*	*+6.9%*
Minnesota	**5,706,494**	**5,737,915**	***+31,421***	***+0.6%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

With a young and fast-growing population, Central Minnesota experienced a natural increase – more births than deaths – of 5,933 people in the past three years. In addition, the region gained residents from in-migration, with 18,298 more people moving into the region than moving out. The vast majority of this recent in-migration (82%) was from domestic residents moving into the region from other areas of the state or other states, and not from international migration like in the past. International in-migration was still positive and accounted for 3,341 new residents (Table 2).

Table 2. Estimates of the Components of Population Change, 2020-20223

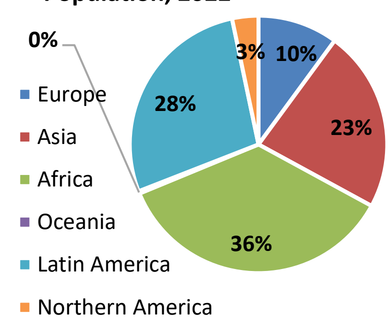
			Vital Events		Net Migration		
	Total Change	***Natural Increase***	**Births**	**Deaths**	***Total***	***Inter-national***	***Domestic***
Central	+24,328	+5,933	27,809	21,876	+18,298	+3,341	+14,957
Minnesota	+31,111	+40,368	207,857	167,489	-11,352	+34,624	-45,976

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Despite the slowdown in the past year, Central Minnesota is now home to 29,886 foreign born residents, or about 4.1% of the total population. The number of immigrants in the region increased by 67% since 2010, more than double the statewide growth rate of 31.3%. Over one-third (10,711 people) of these immigrants were from Africa, while the second largest number of foreign-born residents were from Latin America, accounting for over three in every ten immigrants.

The fastest growing wave of new immigrants to Central Minnesota came from Africa, rising by 8,335 people from 2010 to 2022, a 350% jump. About one-quarter of immigrants were from Asia, after increasing over 34% since 2010, and roughly than 10% were from Europe and 3% were from Canada (Figure 1).

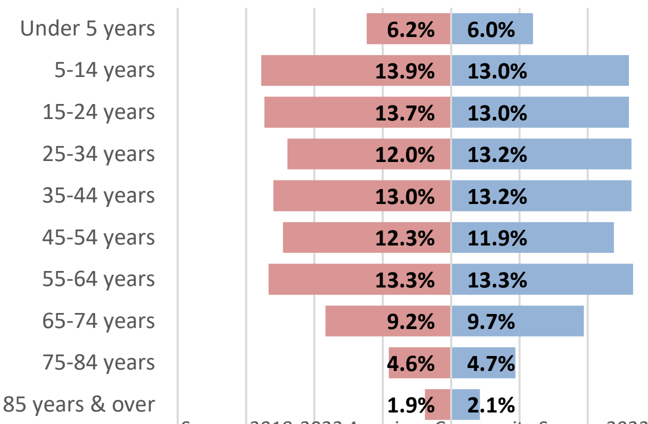
Figure 1. Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population, 2022



POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

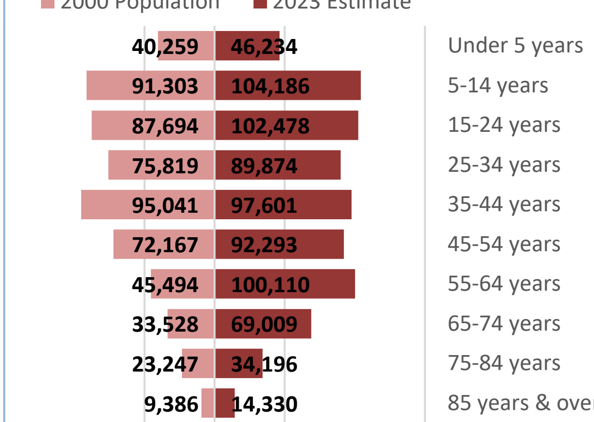
Central Minnesota has a slightly younger population than the rest of the state, with 33.7% of the population under 25 years of age, compared to 32% statewide. Central Minnesota also has a similar percentage of people aged 55 years and older, but a slightly smaller share of people between 25 and 54 years of age, often considered the "prime working years" (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of Population by Age Group, 2023



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 2023 Population Estimates

Figure 3. Central Minnesota Population Pyramid, 2000-2023



Source: 2022 Population Estimates

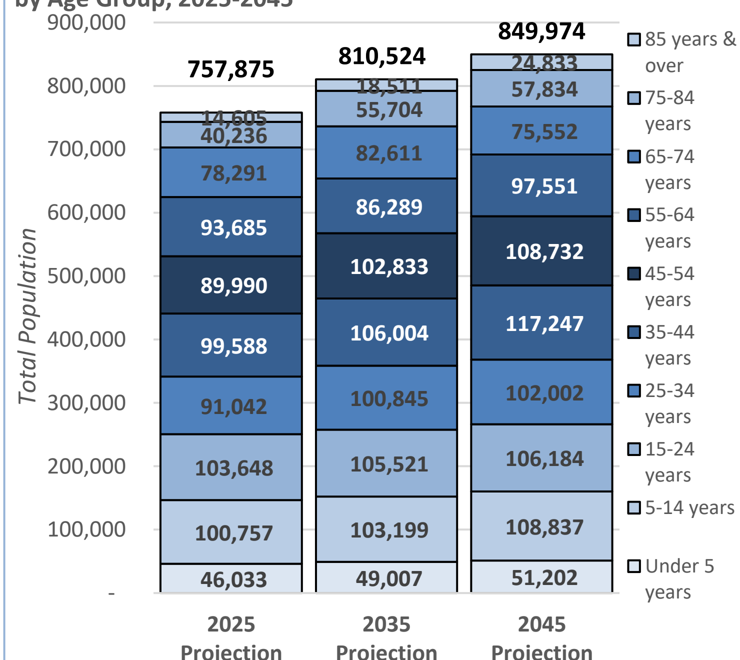
While the number of younger residents was rising rapidly as young, married couple families moved into the region, the number of residents aged 55 years and over was also expanding quickly because of size of the Baby Boom generation – people born between 1946 and 1964. The only age group to experience a nominal growth (+2.7%) in the last 22 years was the 35-to-44-year age group, right in the middle of "prime working" age and a direct result of the void Baby Boomers are leaving behind (Figure 3).

POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP

The entire region is projected to continue growing through 2045. According to population projections from the [Minnesota State Demographic Center](), Central Minnesota is expected to gain 92,099 net new residents from 2025 to 2045, a 12.2% increase (Figure 4). In comparison, the state of Minnesota is projected to grow 5.5%, with the largest growth expected to occur in the Twin Cities metro area.

Central Minnesota is projected to add nearly 28,000 people aged 75 years and over. The region is also expected to gain nearly 28,000 people in the 25- to 44-year-old age group, as well as a corresponding increase in children under 14 years of age. In contrast, Central Minnesota is expected to lose older adults from 65-74 years of age as the Baby Boom generation moves through the population pyramid. But the region should also see a big bump in the 45-54 age group, increasing by some 18,750 additional people as millennials age into older age categories.

Figure 4. Central Minnesota Population Projections by Age Group, 2025-2045



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

POPULATION BY RACE

Central Minnesota's population is less diverse than the state but is becoming more diverse over time. In 2022, 89% of the region's residents reported White alone as their race, compared to 80% of residents statewide. The region had smaller percentages of every other race than the state, and at 4.1%, Central Minnesota also had a lower percentage of people reporting Hispanic or Latino origin than the state (Table 3).

The region's White population increased, contributing to about 16% of overall population growth. People of two or more races provided the largest increase in numbers with more than 19,000 net new residents reporting this somewhat ambiguous racial category. In contrast, American Indians saw a substantial decline in numbers, leading to a 21% loss in population from Central Minnesota.

Table 3. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2022	Central Minnesota				Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Change from 2011-2022 Numeric	Change from 2011-2022 Percent	Percent	Change from 2011-2022
Total	**728,856**	**100.0%**	***+49,119***	***+7.2%***	**100.0%**	***+7.9%***
White	649,294	89.1%	*+7,719*	*+1.2%*	79.7%	*-0.4%*
Black or African American	25,125	3.4%	*+14,434*	*+135.0%*	6.7%	*+44.3%*
American Indian & Alaska Native	3,902	0.5%	*-1,050*	*-21.2%*	0.9%	*-10.2%*
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	9,685	1.3%	*+2,261*	*+30.5%*	5.1%	*+37.1%*
Some Other Race	12,243	1.7%	*+6,553*	*+115.2%*	2.3%	*+84.7%*
Two or More Races	28,607	3.9%	*+19,202*	*+204.2%*	5.3%	*+159.6%*
Hispanic or Latino origin	29,929	4.1%	*+9,340*	*+45.4%*	5.7%	*+34.6%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

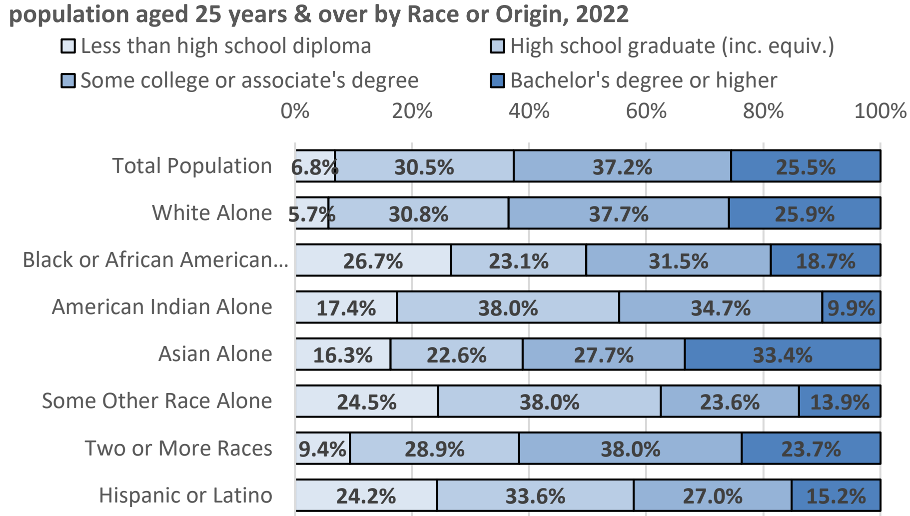
With 37% of adults aged 18 years and over having a college degree, Central Minnesota has lower educational attainment than the state, where 47% of adults have an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree. However, 13.3% of adults in Central Minnesota have an associate degree, which outpaces the state. Another 24.8% have some college experience, but no degree, compared to 22% statewide. The industry mix in Central Minnesota provides ample employment opportunities for workers of every education level.

Table 4. Educational Attainment for the Adult Population, 2022	Central Minnesota		Minnesota
	Number	Percent	Percent
Total, 18 years & over	**551,325**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Less than high school	41,324	7.5%	7.0%
High school graduate (incl. equiv.)	170,802	31.0%	24.5%
Some college, no degree	136,497	24.8%	22.0%
Associate's degree	73,359	13.3%	11.1%
Bachelor's degree	91,180	16.5%	23.7%
Advanced degree	38,163	6.9%	11.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey

Educational attainment varies widely by race and ethnicity in Central Minnesota. Around 25% of Hispanic or Latino, some other race and Black residents had less than a high school diploma, compared to just 7% of the overall population. However, over 31% of Black or African Americans, American Indians, and people of Two or More Races have attended some college or earned an associate's degree, and 33.4% of Asian residents had a bachelor's degree or higher, which was higher than the White population, where about 26% had bachelor's degrees or higher (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Central Minnesota Educational Attainment for the population aged 25 years & over by Race or Origin, 2022



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey

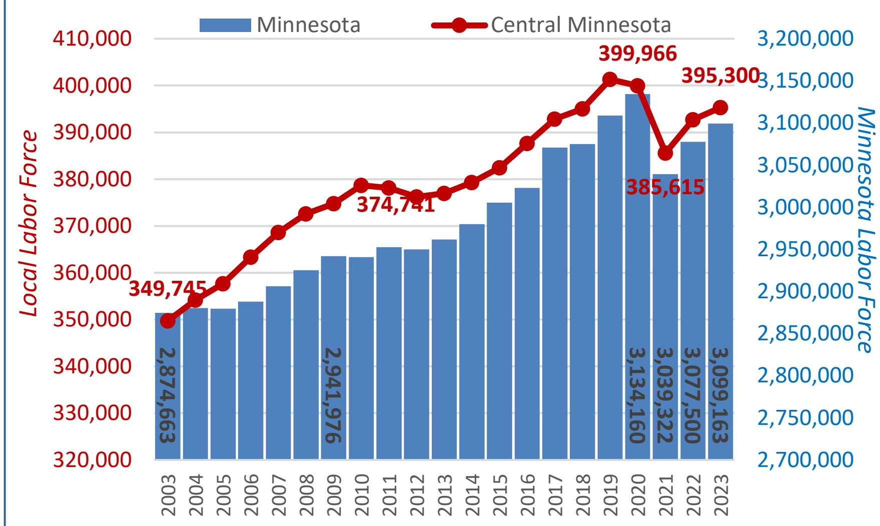
LABOR FORCE

LABOR FORCE CHANGE

According to data from DEED's [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) program, Central Minnesota had an annual average labor force count of just over 395,000 workers in 2023. The regional labor force had been increasing since 2012, adding 24,342 new workers in the 6 years leading up to the pandemic. But since 2019, the labor force still has 6,000 fewer workers (Figure 6).

Central Minnesota added 24,531 workers from 2004 to 2010, then added 19,527 workers from 2010 to 2019. Mass labor force exits were experienced in the aftermath of the pandemic, and Central Minnesota erased its previous six years worth of gains in just two years. Meanwhile, the number of unemployed workers reached record lows. There were just under 13,000 unemployed workers in 2023, down from a high of more than 30,000 unemployed workers in both 2009 and 2010 and roughly 25,000 in 2020. These labor force constraints will have a substantial impact on the regional economy.

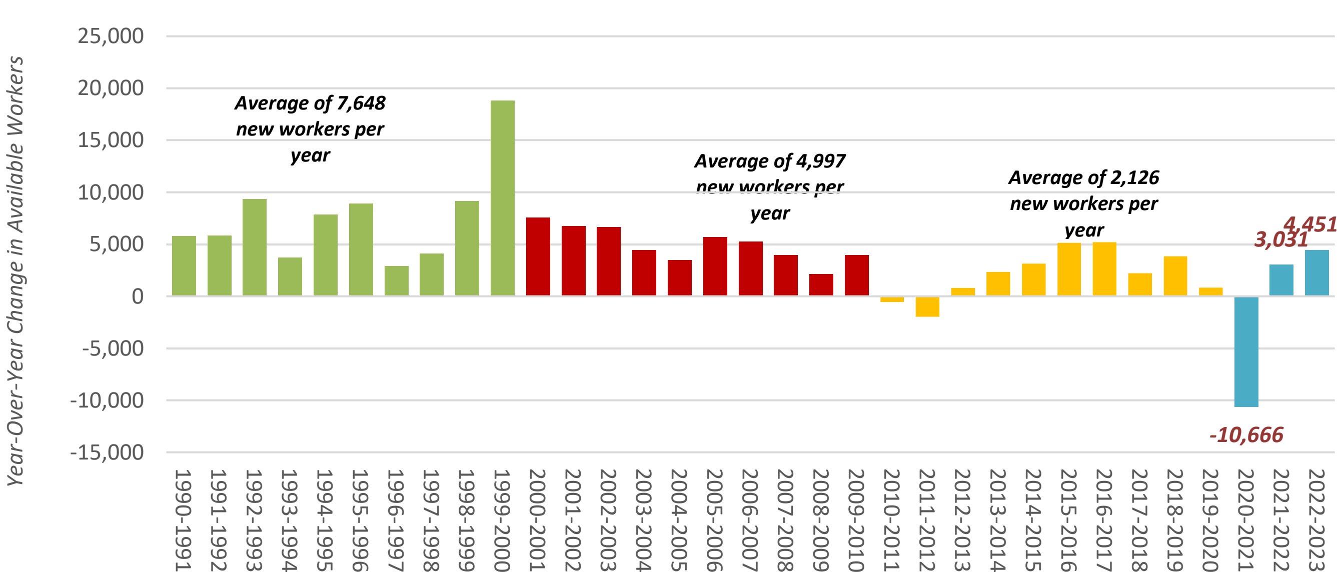
Figure 6. Annual Labor Force Estimates, 2003-2023



Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

Averaging a net gain of 7,648 additional labor force participants per year between 1990 and 2000, employers in Central Minnesota were able to tap into a large and growing pool of talented workers. The regional labor force and economy continued to grow over the next two decades as well, though at a slower pace, until the two-month pandemic recession led to a loss of more than 10,000 workers. Pandemic related labor force losses were thought to have been temporary initially, but as the years go by it appears the lost labor force has not fully come back.

Figure 7. Central Minnesota Annual Change in Labor Force, 1990-2023



Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS

If Central Minnesota's population changes at the projected rates shown in Figure 4 above, the region would be expected to see a slow but steady increase in the labor force over the next decade from applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections by age group. Growth is a welcome expectation, yet it is stubbornly slow. Only the 55 to 64 year age group is projected to lose workers over the decade (see Table 5).

Table 5. Central Minnesota Labor Force Projections, 2025-2035

	2025 Labor Force Projection	2035 Labor Force Projection	*2025-2035 Change*	
			Numeric	*Percent*
16 to 19 years	24,866	25,136	*+270*	*+1.1%*
20 to 24 years	41,323	44,227	*+2,904*	*+7.0%*
25 to 44 years	163,413	170,604	*+7,191*	*+4.4%*
45 to 54 years	78,725	88,939	*+10,214*	*+13.0%*
55 to 64 years	69,771	63,047	*-6,724*	*-9.6%*
65 to 74 years	20,924	22,261	*+1,337*	*+6.4%*
75 years & over	3,377	4,679	*+1,302*	*+38.5%*
Total Labor Force	**402,400**	**418,893**	***+16,493***	***+4.1%***

Source: calculated from Minnesota State Demographic Center population projections and 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

With 69.4% of the population aged 16 years and over in the labor force, Central Minnesota had higher labor force participation rates than the state's 68.7%. The region had slightly higher participation rates than the state in several age groups, with the overall rate trending higher because a higher percentage of Central Minnesota's labor force was in the younger age groups (Table 6).

In contrast, the region had lower participation rates than the state for every race group except White and Black workers. The highest unemployment rates were reported for Black or African Americans and American Indians, which were both over 11% in 2022. Central Minnesota also had over 21,000 workers with disabilities in the workforce, despite lower participation rates and higher unemployment rates than the general population.

Table 6. Employment Characteristics, 2022

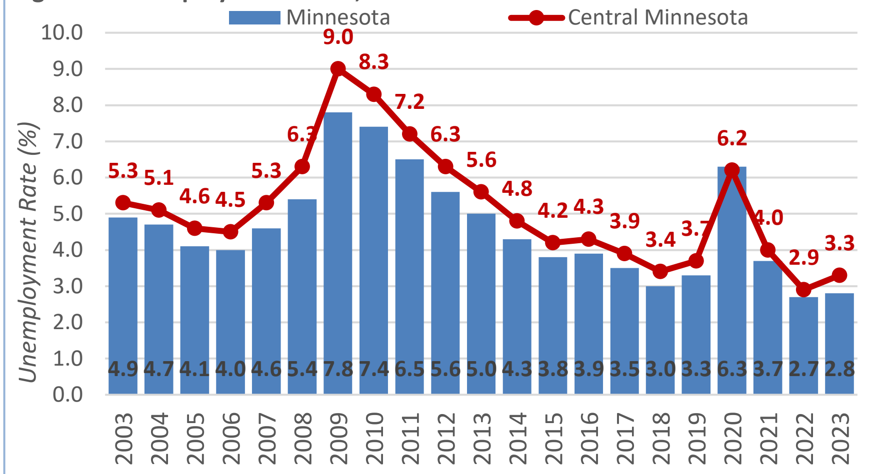
	Central Minnesota			Minnesota		*Percent of Total Labor Force*	
	In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	*Central Minnesota*	*Minnesota*
Total Labor Force	**397,345**	**69.4%**	**3.5%**	**68.7%**	**4.0%**		
16 to 19 years	24,058	58.3%	6.7%	53.0%	9.8%	*6.1%*	*5.1%*
20 to 24 years	41,110	85.1%	5.7%	83.1%	6.7%	*10.3%*	*9.7%*
25 to 44 years	160,333	88.0%	3.5%	88.8%	3.5%	*40.4%*	*42.8%*
45 to 54 years	79,877	89.1%	2.8%	87.8%	2.9%	*20.1%*	*19.0%*
55 to 64 years	71,461	73.5%	2.5%	72.8%	3.1%	*18.0%*	*17.6%*
65 to 74 years	17,463	26.0%	3.0%	27.6%	3.3%	*4.4%*	*4.9%*
75 years & over	2,946	6.3%	1.2%	6.6%	3.2%	*0.7%*	*0.8%*
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin							
White alone	359,492	69.2%	3.2%	67.8%	3.4%	*90.5%*	*81.3%*
Black or African American	12,177	71.7%	11.7%	71.5%	8.7%	*3.1%*	*6.1%*
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,535	53.3%	13.9%	57.6%	11.9%	*0.4%*	*0.7%*
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	5,664	73.0%	3.6%	73.9%	3.6%	*1.4%*	*5.2%*
Some Other Race	6,573	74.4%	4.2%	76.1%	6.1%	*1.7%*	*2.3%*
Two or More Races	11,844	71.1%	5.0%	74.3%	6.6%	*3.0%*	*4.3%*
Hispanic or Latino	14,345	73.4%	5.9%	77.0%	6.3%	*3.6%*	*5.4%*
Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status, 18 to 64 years							
Veterans, 18 to 64 years	14,311	78.2%	3.7%	81.1%	4.0%	*3.9%*	*3.4%*
Employment Characteristics by Disability, 20 to 64 years							
With Any Disability, 20 to 64 years	21,328	55.0%	8.9%	54.4%	10.2%	*6.0%*	*5.9%*
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment, 25 to 64 years							
Population, 25 to 64 years	311,742	84.5%	3.1%	84.4%	3.3%	*78.5%*	*79.5%*
Less than H.S. Diploma	15,412	69.1%	3.9%	67.2%	4.6%	*4.9%*	*4.7%*
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	79,204	78.2%	1.9%	76.8%	2.5%	*25.4%*	*19.0%*
Some College or Assoc. Degree	126,245	86.8%	3.1%	85.1%	3.6%	*40.5%*	*32.8%*
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	90,820	90.8%	1.6%	90.3%	2.0%	*29.1%*	*43.4%*

Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Central Minnesota has consistently reported slightly higher unemployment rates than Minnesota, regardless of the state of the economy. According to [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](), the region's unemployment rate hovered at least a half percent above the state rate from 2005 to 2008, before rising as high as 9.0% in 2009, then dropping back to prerecession levels in 2014. The short pandemic recession pushed rates above 6% for a brief moment, then dropped back to 3.3% in 2023, a historically low level (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Unemployment Rates, 2003-2023



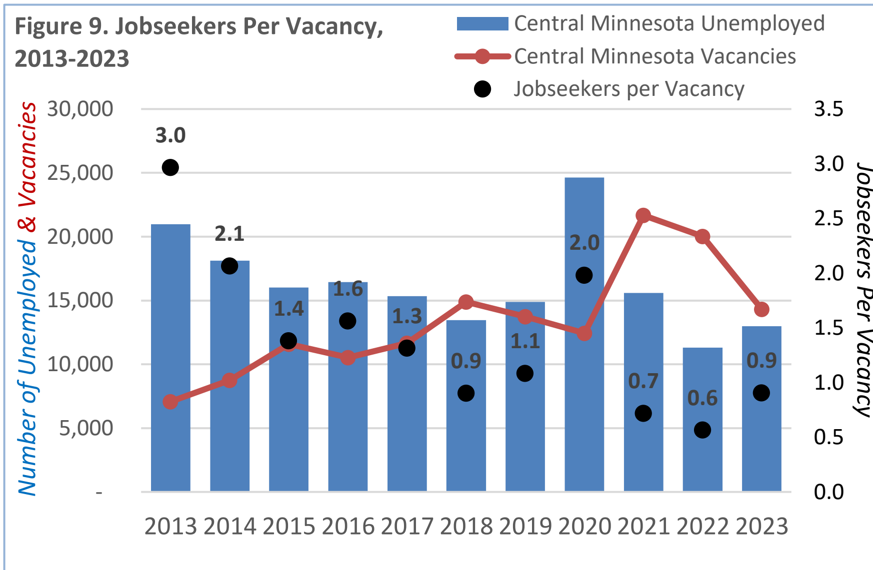
Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY

As the number of available workers has declined, the region's labor market has tightened. One clear demonstration of this is the ratio of unemployed jobseekers per vacancy, which remained below 1-to-1 in 2023.

According to 2023 Job Vacancy Survey results, there were 14,320 openings reported by employers, compared to 12,977 unemployed jobseekers in the region; or more available jobs than available workers. The ratio climbed as high as 11.2-to-1 during the Great Recession in 2009, but has dropped steadily since then, except for the uptick in 2020 (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Jobseekers Per Vacancy, 2013-2023



Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, LAUS program

COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED

According to commuting data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Central Minnesota has the most mobile workers in the state. Just over 43% of the region's working residents drive outside the region for work, primarily to the Twin Cities metro area.

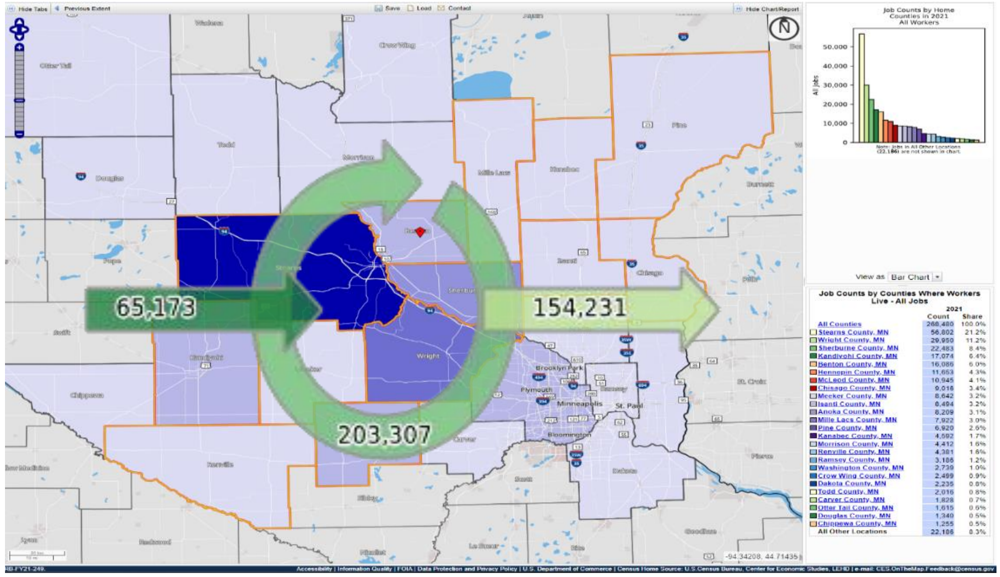
Central Minnesota is a net exporter of labor, having more workers than available jobs. In sum, 203,307 workers both lived and worked in Central Minnesota in 2021, while 154,231 workers who lived in the region drove to surrounding counties for work (Table 7 and Figure 10).

Table 7. Central Minnesota Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)	2021	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	266,480	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	65,173	24.3%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	203,307	75.7%
Living in the Selection Area	357,538	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	154,231	43.1%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	203,307	56.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap

Stearns County is the largest employment center in the region, however, employers in Hennepin County draw in more workers than any other county in the region, and other counties in the Twin Cities metro area are also a major draw for workers. Other counties drawing large amounts of workers include Wright, Sherburne, and Anoka County. Hennepin, Anoka, and Ramsey, Dakota and Scott Counties attract 33% of workers in the Central Minnesota region (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Central Minnesota Labor and Commute Shed, 2021

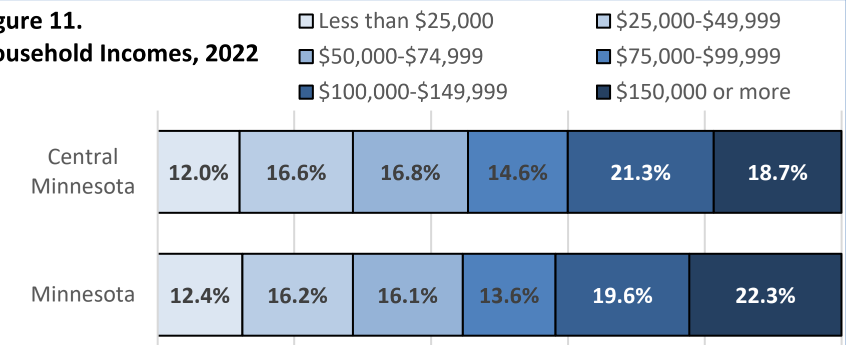


INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Household incomes in Central Minnesota were slightly lower than the rest of the state. The median household income was $83,668 in 2022, compared to $84,313 in Minnesota. About 28.6% of the households in the region had incomes below $50,000 in 2022, similar to the state. Another 31.4% earned between $50,000 and $100,000, 21.3% earned $100,000 to $149,999 and 18.7% earned over $150,000 per year, which was below the state level (Figure 11).

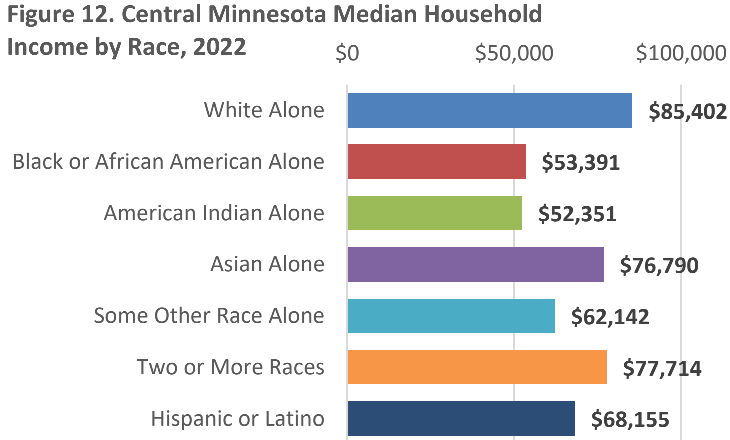
Figure 11. Household Incomes, 2022



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

About 90% of households reporting incomes in 2022 were White alone, and Whites also had the highest median income level. Black or African American and American Indian households reported the lowest incomes in Central Minnesota, with medians just over $52,000, which is roughly 63% of the overall median household income (Figure 12). Median household incomes were also about $20,000 lower for Hispanics and people of some other race than the overall median, while households of Asians, two or more races, and Hispanic or Latinos had incomes that were more similar to Whites and the typical household.

Figure 12. Central Minnesota Median Household Income by Race, 2022



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey

COST OF LIVING

According to DEED's Cost of Living tool, the basic needs budget for an average Minnesota family (which consists of 2 adults and 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) is $67,320 in 2023. The cost of living for a similar family in Central Minnesota was $65,436 – which was the second highest in the state, behind only the Twin Cities metro area. Because of a disproportionate share of workers commute long distances in Central Minnesota the region has the highest transportation costs in the state, and the second highest housing costs.

The highest monthly costs were for transportation, food, and housing, but child care costs are substantially higher than other geographies as well. In order to meet the basic needs cost of living for the region, the two workers in the family scenario described would need to earn $20.97 per hour working a combined 60 hours per week (Table 8).

Table 8. Central Minnesota Cost of Living, 2023

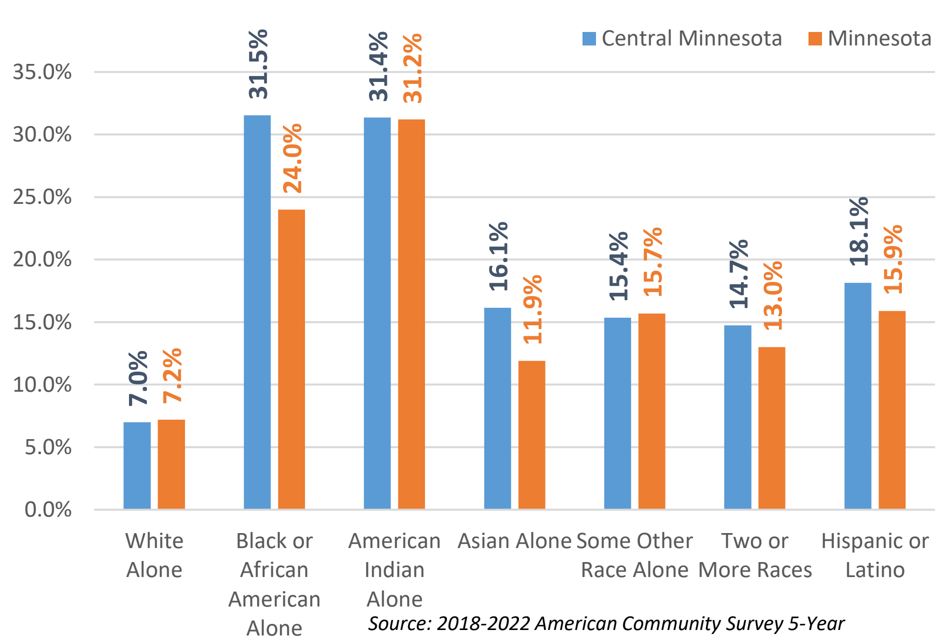
Family Composition	Number of Workers	Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
				Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Trans-portation	Other	Taxes
Central Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$34,176	$16.43	$0	$409	$161	$959	$618	$328	$373
Single, 1 child	1 FT	$55,380	$26.63	$862	$603	$402	$1,205	$623	$433	$487
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$65,436**	**$20.97**	**$431**	**$934**	**$577**	**$1,205**	**$1,094**	**$512**	**$700**
2 parents, 2 children	2 FT	$90,528	$21.76	$1,257	$1,215	$586	$1,640	$1,137	$683	$1,026
State of Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$34,704	$16.68	$0	$419	$160	$1,021	$572	$345	$375
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$67,320**	**$21.58**	**$544**	**$955**	**$574**	**$1,285**	**$977**	**$536**	**$739**

Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

DEED's Cost of Living tool provides different estimates for household compositions including single people, partnered couples, and up to 4 children. For a single person living alone and working full-time, the estimated yearly cost in Central Minnesota would be $34,176, which would require an hourly wage of $16.43 to meet the basic needs standard of living. A single parent in the region requires a substantially higher wage with no other earners in the household, in 2023 that family needed an hourly wage approaching $27/hour in order to meet basic needs (Table 8).

Overall, Central Minnesota's poverty rate was 8.5%, which was below the statewide rate of 9.3%. Like incomes, poverty levels varied widely by race and origin. It was estimated that over 31% of the region's American Indian and Black or African American population was below the poverty level in 2022, compared to 8.5% for the broad population. Likewise, poverty levels hovered around 15% for Asians, people of some other race, Hispanic or Latino origin, and people of some other race had poverty rates near (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Poverty Status by Race, 2022



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year

WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's [Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics] program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Central Minnesota was $23.55 in the first quarter of 2024, which was the 3rd highest wage level of the six planning regions in the state. Central Minnesota's median wage was $1.67 below the state's median hourly wage, equaling roughly 93% of the statewide wage rate, and $4.23 below the median hourly wage in the 7-County Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to $8,798 less per year for a full-time worker. The highest median wage in Central Minnesota for all occupations was found in EDR 7W (Table 9).

Table 9. Occupational Employment Statistics by Region, 1st Qtr. 2024	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
Central Minnesota	**$23.55**	**274,190**
EDR 6E - Southwest Central	$22.72	50,190
EDR 7E - East Central	$23.18	48,440
EDR 7W - Central	$23.85	175,560
Twin Cities Metro Area	$27.78	1,743,500
Northeast Minnesota	$23.41	138,010
Northwest Minnesota	$22.77	219,910
Southeast Minnesota	$24.26	240,340
Southwest Minnesota	$22.98	169,300
State of Minnesota	**$25.22**	**2,881,100**
Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics		

Based on location quotient, Central Minnesota stands out for having higher concentrations of Production, Education, Training & Library, Farming, Construction & Extraction, Installation & Maintenance, and Transportation & Material Moving workers than the state. The largest occupations in the region include Office & Administrative Support, Production, Transportation and Material Moving, and Sales & Related positions (Table 10).

Table 10. Occupational Employment Statistics, 2024							
	Central Minnesota				**State of Minnesota**		
Occupational Group	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment	*Share of Total Employment*	*Location Quotient*	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Statewide Employment	*Share of Total Employment*
Total, All Occupations	**$23.55**	**274,190**	***100.0%***	***1.0***	**$25.22**	**2,881,100**	***100.0%***
Management	$48.62	15,270	*5.6%*	*0.8*	$57.75	201,710	*7.0%*
Business & Financial Operations	$35.84	10,780	*3.9%*	*0.6*	$39.26	202,700	*7.0%*
Computer & Mathematical	$39.07	2,910	*1.1%*	*0.3*	$50.83	98,240	*3.4%*
Architecture & Engineering	$40.35	3,870	*1.4%*	*0.7*	$42.97	58,320	*2.0%*
Life, Physical & Social Science	$37.17	1,580	*0.6%*	*0.6*	$39.93	29,220	*1.0%*
Community & Social Service	$28.93	5,670	*2.1%*	*1.0*	$27.92	57,930	*2.0%*
Legal	$40.20	920	*0.3%*	*0.5*	$51.15	19,040	*0.7%*
Education, Training & Library	$28.45	18,460	*6.7%*	*1.2*	$28.22	163,340	*5.7%*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	$24.12	2,060	*0.8%*	*0.6*	$29.01	36,160	*1.3%*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	$41.02	16,930	*6.2%*	*1.0*	$43.01	184,410	*6.4%*
Healthcare Support	$18.05	16,440	*6.0%*	*1.0*	$18.07	169,580	*5.9%*
Protective Service	$29.59	4,720	*1.7%*	*1.1*	$28.87	45,860	*1.6%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	$14.80	24,610	*9.0%*	*1.1*	$15.07	232,190	*8.1%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	$18.39	8,310	*3.0%*	*1.1*	$18.83	79,660	*2.8%*
Personal Care & Service	$17.35	5,220	*1.9%*	*0.9*	$17.60	59,420	*2.1%*
Sales & Related	$17.92	25,810	*9.4%*	*1.1*	$18.82	242,440	*8.4%*
Office & Administrative Support	$23.00	30,770	*11.2%*	*0.9*	$23.86	352,250	*12.2%*
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	$21.84	620	*0.2%*	*1.9*	$22.13	3,520	*0.1%*
Construction & Extraction	$30.85	15,220	*5.6%*	*1.4*	$32.44	110,960	*3.9%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	$28.52	11,540	*4.2%*	*1.2*	$29.54	104,530	*3.6%*
Production	$23.13	27,790	*10.1%*	*1.4*	$23.05	203,810	*7.1%*
Transportation & Material Moving	$22.02	24,710	*9.0%*	*1.1*	$22.86	225,820	*7.8%*
Source: DEED Occupational Employment &Wage Statistics, Qtr. 1 2024							

Not surprisingly, the lowest-paying jobs are concentrated in Food Prep & Serving, Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance, Sales & Related, Personal Care & Service, and Healthcare Support, which tend to have lower experience and educational requirements.

In contrast, the highest paying jobs are found in Management, Legal, Architecture & Engineering, Computer & Mathematical, Healthcare Practitioners, Business & Financial Operations, and Life, Physical, & Social Science occupations, which all need higher levels of education and experience, including many that require postsecondary training. The pay gaps between the region and state are much bigger in these occupations.

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Employers in Central Minnesota reported 14,320 job vacancies in 2023, which was substantially less than 2022 but continues to be relatively high historically. The median hourly wage offer was $19.13 across all occupations but ranged from a low of $14.55 per hour for Personal Care and Service workers, to roughly $32 per hour for Computer and Mathematical occupations.

Overall, 31% of the openings were part-time, only 33% required any postsecondary education, and 36% required a year or more of experience (Table 11). In sum, educational requirements in the region have been declining over the past 5 years, while previous work experience requirements were rising, largely the result of an expanding economy and tightening labor market. Of all openings in Central Minnesota in 2023, roughly a quarter had a median wage offer below $16.43, which is the wage needed for a single person without children to meet a basic needs cost of living standard in Central Minnesota. The most common openings with wages below the basic needs cost of living wage are often held by high school students, part-time workers, or held as second jobs; such as Fast Food Workers, Personal Care Aides, Food Prep Workers and Waiters/Waitresses.

Table 11. Job Vacancy Survey Results, 2023

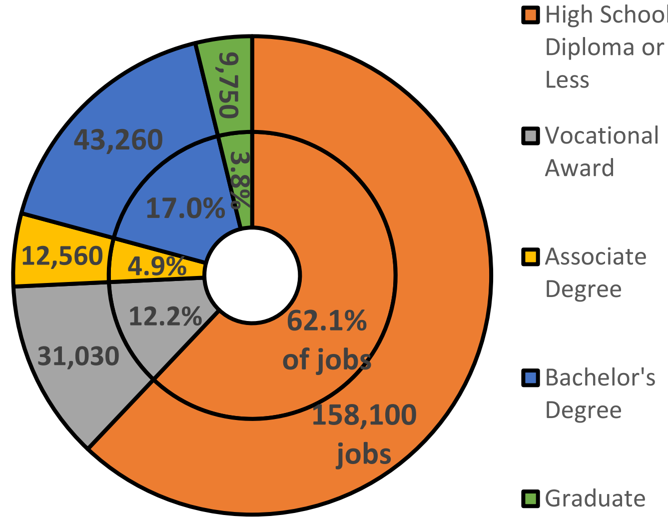
Central Minnesota	Number of Total Vacancies	Median Hourly Wage Offer	Percent Part-Time	Percent Temp or Seasonal	Requiring Postsecondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Work Exp.	Requiring Certificate or License	*Job Vacancy Rate*
Total, All Occupations	**14,320**	**$19.13**	**31%**	**6%**	**33%**	**36%**	**48%**	***5.2%***
Management	281	$28.24	3%	1%	91%	97%	80%	*1.9%*
Business & Financial Operations	220	$26.20	11%	15%	63%	70%	28%	*2.1%*
Computer & Mathematical	132	$32.07	3%	1%	34%	92%	10%	*4.4%*
Architecture & Engineering	230	$30.57	3%	1%	56%	74%	52%	*6.4%*
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	60	$31.02	2%	2%	60%	52%	70%	*3.5%*
Community & Social Service	417	$25.91	24%	3%	83%	89%	91%	*7.9%*
Legal	40	$31.72	0%	2%	100%	100%	100%	*4.2%*
Education, Training & Library	597	$19.04	30%	22%	71%	14%	78%	*3.3%*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	187	$17.70	85%	67%	43%	21%	46%	*7.9%*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	1,967	$28.25	33%	1%	86%	40%	97%	*11.6%*
Healthcare Support	1,097	$17.11	57%	1%	45%	16%	81%	*6.8%*
Protective Service	272	$24.39	36%	9%	42%	53%	85%	*6.3%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	2,319	$14.84	48%	3%	1%	16%	6%	*9.9%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	318	$16.27	39%	7%	0%	15%	17%	*3.9%*
Personal Care & Service	433	$14.55	25%	7%	16%	13%	41%	*8.2%*
Sales & Related	1,632	$17.55	29%	3%	5%	22%	15%	*6.5%*
Office & Administrative Support	747	$17.98	15%	4%	11%	47%	17%	*2.5%*
Construction & Extraction	297	$23.74	0%	1%	27%	69%	70%	*1.9%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	589	$24.92	4%	1%	33%	51%	56%	*5.2%*
Production	993	$20.14	9%	7%	18%	46%	5%	*3.5%*
Transportation & Material Moving	1,275	$19.17	43%	11%	4%	41%	78%	*5.1%*

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, 2023

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Similar to Job Vacancy Survey results, data from DEED's Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics program shows that only about 38% of jobs in the region require postsecondary education for entry. The other 62% can be started with a high school diploma or less and possibly some amount of on-the-job training (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Central Share of Jobs by Educational Requirements, 2023



Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics (OEWS)

Certain careers – such as Dentists, Lawyers, and Teachers – require a college education, while other jobs – including Cost Estimators, Sales Representatives, and Correctional Officers – do not. College is an excellent way to move up career ladders and open windows of opportunity to licensed fields that would otherwise be closed, such as Nursing or Engineering. Many of these occupations offer high wages and are in high demand in the marketplace. While education is typically a worthwhile investment, college can be expensive – with average annual expenses ranging between $13,000 and over $54,000 per year in Minnesota. For those who go to college, choice of major matters – different programs lead to jobs that earn different amounts of money.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Overall, the 13-county Central Minnesota planning area is projected to grow 5.2% from 2022 to 2032, a gain of 16,302 new jobs. The revised faster growth projection makes the region the fastest growing region out of the 6 planning areas.

In addition, the region is also expected to need 160,516 replacement openings to fill jobs left vacant by retirements and other career changers. Healthcare Support, Architecture and Engineering and Computer and Mathematical occupations are expected to see the most new growth, but every occupational group will show some future demand either through new jobs or replacement openings (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Central Minnesota Employment Projections, 2022-2032

Source: DEED 2022-2032 Employment Outlook

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

According to DEED's Occupations in Demand tool, there are roughly 300 occupations showing relatively high demand in the region, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees. These occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries. For example, Nursing Assistants, Personal Care Aides, Home Health Aides, Licensed Practical and Registered Nurses, Electricians, Industrial Engineers, Machinists, Truck Drivers, and Teachers are all in high demand (Table 12).

Table 12. Central Minnesota Occupations in Demand, 2024

High School or Less	Vocational Training	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Retail Salespersons $35,817/yr	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers $60,953/yr	Registered Nurses $97,279/yr	General & Operations Managers $82,833/yr
Home Health & Personal Care Aides $35,952/yr	Nursing Assistants $40,289/yr	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians $79,926/yr	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education $65,116/yr
Fast Food and Counter Workers $30,548/yr	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses $58,035/yr	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers $78,056/yr	Secondary School Teachers, Exc. Special and CTE $66,539/yr
Cashiers $31,985/yr	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics $49,872/yr	Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians $64,316/yr	Medical and Health Services Managers $108,690/yr
Stockers and Order Fillers $38,723/yr	Machinists $61,397/yr	Calibration Technologists and Technicians $51,876/yr	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education $38,309/yr
Janitors and Cleaners $37,511/yr	Emergency Medical Technicians $43,830/yr	Dental Hygienists $95,926/yr	Accountants and Auditors $73,436/yr
Waiters and Waitresses $24,272/yr	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks $49,071/yr	Detectives and Criminal Investigators $77,932/yr	Child, Family, and School Social Workers $65,914/yr
Childcare Workers $32,303/yr	Electricians $79,223/yr	Surgical Technologists $66,288/yr	Industrial Engineers $97,918/yr
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers $47,389/yr	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors $54,808/yr	Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping $49,531/yr	Project Management Specialists $85,453/yr
Customer Service Representatives $44,527/yr	Medical Assistants $48,462/yr	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians $46,438/yr	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School $69,045/yr

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

ECONOMY

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, Central Minnesota was home to 19,945 business establishments providing an average of 279,213 covered jobs through 2023, with a total payroll of over $15.2 billion. That was 9.6% of total employment and 7.4% of total payroll in the state of Minnesota. Average annual wages were $54,709 in the region, which was about $16,820 lower than the state's average annual wage. Central Minnesota had led Greater Minnesota in job growth during the recovery since the recession, but in the past two years, has seen slower than average growth (Table 13).

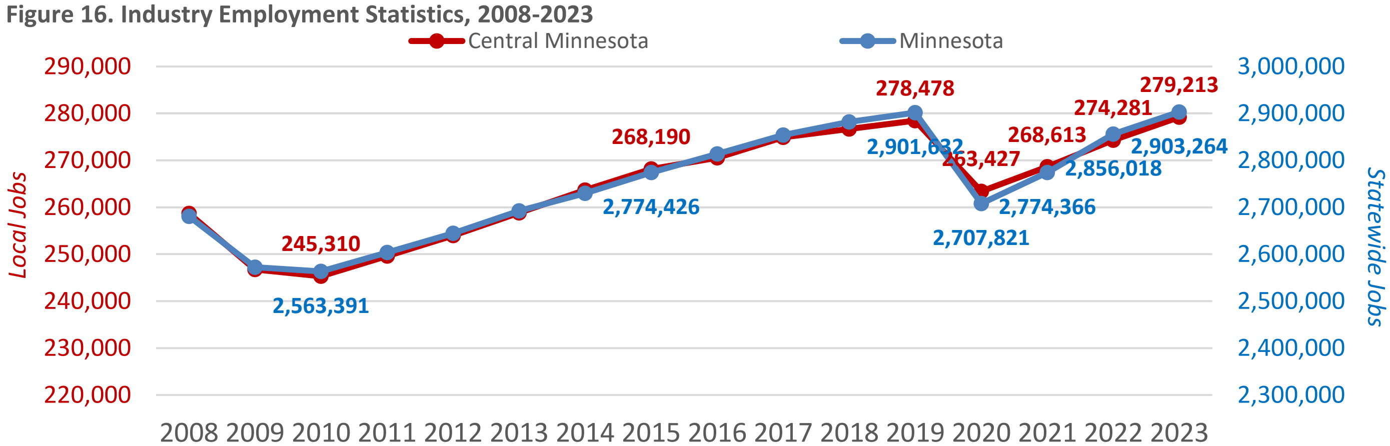
With 178,465 jobs at 12,014 establishments, EDR 7W accounts for about 64% of total employment in the Central planning region. EDR 7W also accounted for 58% of the region's job decline during the pandemic recession in 2020, losing 5,730 jobs, a 3.2% decrease. In contrast, EDR 7E had the fewest jobs and smallest percent increase, with 48,846 jobs at 4,179 establishments, an increase of 83 jobs since 2019. EDR 6E had 3,752 establishments providing 51,902 jobs, after losing 1,444 jobs from 2019 to 2023, a 2.7% decrease, the only remaining job loss in the region.

Table 13. Central Minnesota Industry Employment Statistics, 2023				Average Annual Wage	2022-2023		2019-2023	
Geography	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll		*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*
Central Minnesota	**19,945**	**279,213**	**$15,275,389,048**	**$54,709**	***+4,932***	***+1.8%***	***+735***	***+0.3%***
Region 6E	3,752	51,902	$2,706,470,232	$52,146	*+449*	*+0.9%*	*-1,444*	*-2.7%*
Region 7E	4,179	48,846	$2,423,523,215	$49,616	*+1,067*	*+2.2%*	*+83*	*+0.2%*
Region 7W	12,014	178,465	$10,145,395,601	$56,848	*+3,417*	*+2.0%*	*+2,096*	*+1.2%*
Minnesota	**207,647**	**2,903,264**	**$207,665,582,979**	**$71,528**	***+47,246***	***+1.7%***	***+1,632***	***+0.1%***

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW)

Like other areas of the state, Central Minnesota has just recently recovered jobs lost during the two-month pandemic recession by the end of 2023. With roughly 730 more jobs than it had in 2019, the region's employment is recovered after being cut back to 2016 levels. The short recession proved costly and labor force challenges have prevented employers from regaining enough jobs to recover until 2023. Despite fewer workers in the labor force and low unemployment, employers in Central Minnesota managed to create 4,932 net new jobs in 2023, a 1.8% increase. Central Minnesota reached a prerecession peak of 278,478 jobs in 2019, then hit a low of 263,427 jobs in 2020 (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Industry Employment Statistics, 2008-2023



Source: DEED QCEW program

With 47,870 jobs at 2,579 firms, Health Care & Social Assistance is the largest employing industry in Central Minnesota, accounting for 17.5% of total jobs in the region. However, Central Minnesota still has 0.6% fewer of its Health Care & Social Assistance jobs after losing 1,776 jobs from 2019 to 2022. At $56,350 in 2022, average annual wages were about the same in Health Care as in the total of all industries.

The next largest industry in Central was Manufacturing, with 41,741 jobs at 1,194 firms, after losing 237 jobs from 2019 to 2023. Central Minnesota has large concentrations of Food Manufacturing and Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing, as well as significant amounts of Machinery and Transportation Equipment Manufacturing. Retail Trade is the third largest industry, with 36,167 jobs at 2,184 establishments, and the related Accommodation and Food Services industry also provides 22,976 jobs in the region. The Accommodation & Food Services sector suffered greatly from the pandemic and pandemic related policies, has finally recovered to 2019 levels with 24,061 jobs. The small gain since 2019 hide the substantial losses that occurred in 2020.

Nearly every sector lost jobs during the pandemic recession and only half of the twenty main industry sectors have since recovered and had more jobs in 2023 compared to 2019. Construction had been a bright spot leading into the pandemic recession and remained steadfast in employment gains during the tumultuous past few years, adding more jobs than any sector and growing payroll employment by 10.5%. The Construction industry is the 6th largest industry in the region and provides roughly half as many jobs as Manufacturing (the second largest sector).

The Information and Real Estate, Rental and Leasing industry has suffered the largest rate of decline. The large losses posted at Management of Companies is due to a change in NAICS codes and does not reflect real job loss. Meanwhile the Healthcare and Social Assistance sector added the largest number of jobs in the past year, erasing previously substantial declines.

Table 14. Central Minnesota Industry Employment Statistics, 2023

NAICS Industry Title	2023 Annual Data				2022-2023		2019-2023	
	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll ($1,000s)	Avg. Annual Wage	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*
Total, All Industries	**19,945**	**279,213**	**$15,275,389**	**$54,709**	***4,932***	***1.8%***	***735***	***0.3%***
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunting	518	5,098	$249,528	$48,946	*27*	*0.5%*	*300*	*6.3%*
Mining	27	357	$24,800	$69,468	*15*	*4.4%*	*20*	*5.9%*
Construction	3,004	20,806	$1,597,323	$76,772	*31*	*0.1%*	*1,970*	*10.5%*
Manufacturing	1,194	41,741	$2,753,775	$65,973	*311*	*0.8%*	*-237*	*-0.6%*
Utilities	66	2,254	$277,821	$123,257	*108*	*5.0%*	*24*	*1.1%*
Wholesale Trade	692	10,592	$770,225	$72,718	*319*	*3.1%*	*891*	*9.2%*
Retail Trade	2,184	36,167	$1,261,498	$34,880	*266*	*0.7%*	*-405*	*-1.1%*
Transportation & Warehousing	871	10,010	$581,520	$58,094	*172*	*1.7%*	*29*	*0.3%*
Information	255	2,841	$175,936	$61,928	*-153*	*-5.1%*	*-279*	*-8.9%*
Finance & Insurance	890	7,224	$609,491	$84,370	*-24*	*-0.3%*	*94*	*1.3%*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	581	1,776	$70,457	$39,672	*40*	*2.3%*	*-120*	*-6.3%*
Professional & Technical Services	1,233	6,463	$504,034	$77,988	*40*	*0.6%*	*-56*	*-0.9%*
Management of Companies	87	1,931	$197,486	$102,271	*23*	*1.2%*	*-1,071*	*-35.7%*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	889	9,212	$447,688	$48,598	*-506*	*-5.2%*	*-404*	*-4.2%*
Educational Services	392	24,045	$1,250,472	$52,006	*495*	*2.1%*	*-164*	*-0.7%*
Health Care & Social Assistance	2,579	48,870	$2,753,811	$56,350	*1,720*	*3.6%*	*-295*	*-0.6%*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	366	3,542	$64,430	$18,190	*430*	*13.8%*	*249*	*7.6%*
Accommodation & Food Services	1,352	24,061	$540,759	$22,474	*988*	*4.3%*	*71*	*0.3%*
Other Services	2,292	8,728	$306,051	$35,065	*343*	*4.1%*	*-12*	*-0.1%*
Public Administration	477	13,488	$838,284	$62,150	*285*	*2.2%*	*126*	*0.9%*

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program

EMPLOYMENT DIVERSITY

According to DEED's Quarterly Employment Demographics (QED) program, the workforce in the region was aging over the past 10 years. Nearly one-quarter (22.8%) of workers in the region were 55 years or older, compared to 22.1% statewide and 18.1% in the region one decade earlier (Table 15).

Table 15. Workforce Demographics by Age Group and Gender, Total of All Industries

Central Minnesota	Percentage of Workers		*Percent of Workers, Minnesota*		Median Hourly Wage		Median Hours Worked Per Qtr.	
	2022	2012	2022	2012	2022	2012	2022	2012
Total, all ages	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	$21.99	$14.65	402	400
19 years & under	9.0%	8.6%	6.6%	6.3%	$14.73	$7.97	127	124
20 to 24 years	9.9%	12.3%	9.2%	11.3%	$18.79	$10.42	304	259
25 to 44 years	40.6%	39.5%	43.6%	42.3%	$25.03	$16.66	458	455
45 to 54 years	17.8%	21.4%	18.4%	21.9%	$26.74	$18.13	481	480
55 to 64 years	17.0%	14.2%	16.7%	14.7%	$24.51	$17.56	472	460
65 years & over	5.8%	3.9%	5.4%	3.5%	$18.56	$12.74	230	206
Male	49.1%	47.5%	49.1%	49.1%	$24.76	$16.47	474	470
Female	50.9%	52.5%	50.9%	50.9%	$20.72	$13.46	349	347

Source: DEED Quarterly Employment Demographics

As noted above, wages were climbing across the board for all workers due to rising demand and a tight labor market, despite the short recession in the 2020 dataset. While wages were still lowest for the youngest and oldest workers who tend to fill lower-skilled, less-than-full-time jobs in industries like Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services, these two age groups enjoyed the fastest percentage increase in wages from 2010 to 2020.

Wages were highest for workers between 45 and 64 years of age, and males worked substantially more hours than females. Interestingly, from 2010 to 2020 jobs held by workers 45 to 54 years saw the largest decline in the share of jobs they hold, dropping from 22.2% in 2010 to 18.2% in 2020.

People of color account for 9.5% of the total labor force in Central Minnesota and hold a slightly higher share of jobs, compared to the state overall where they amount to 19.7% of the labor force. According to data from the Quarterly Workforce Indicators program, people of color held 35,162 jobs in Central Minnesota, compared to 255,251 jobs held by White workers. The number of jobs has nearly doubled since 2003 when People of color held 13,420 jobs (Figure 17).

People of color held an additional 21,041 jobs since 2003 compared to 2,831 by White workers. Hispanic/Latino workers hold the largest number of jobs of the racial and ethnic minority groups with 14,609 jobs in 2023, almost half of all minority held jobs. The next largest number of jobs held by a minority group was Black or African American, holding 9,571 jobs in 2023. The number of jobs held by this race has increased by 7,052 since 2003, amounting to a 280% increase (Figure 18).

The Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting sector and Manufacturing sector have the highest share of non-White employment at 28% and 20%, respectively. Accommodation & Food Services and Health Care and Social Assistance also have 15% of jobs held by non-White workers. The largest numbers of non-White workers are employed in Manufacturing (10,066jobs) and Health Care & Social Assistance (7,482 jobs). The least diverse industries include Utilities and Mining (Figure 19).

Figure 17. Employment of People of Color, All Industries, Central Minnesota

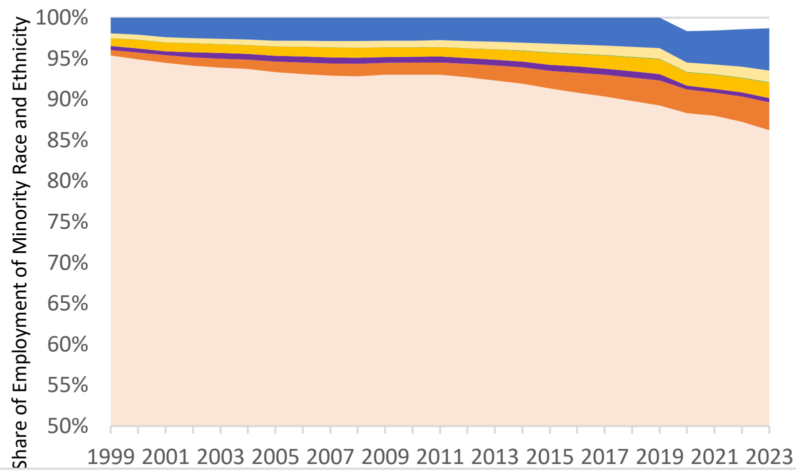


Figure 18. Employment of People of Color, All Industries, Central Minnesota

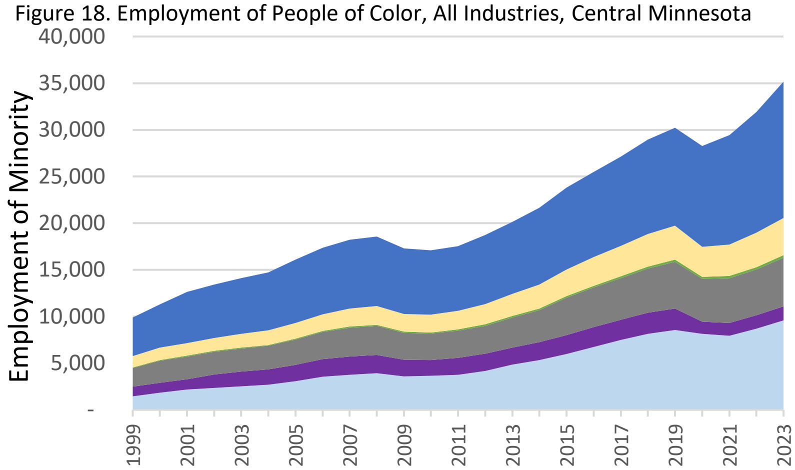
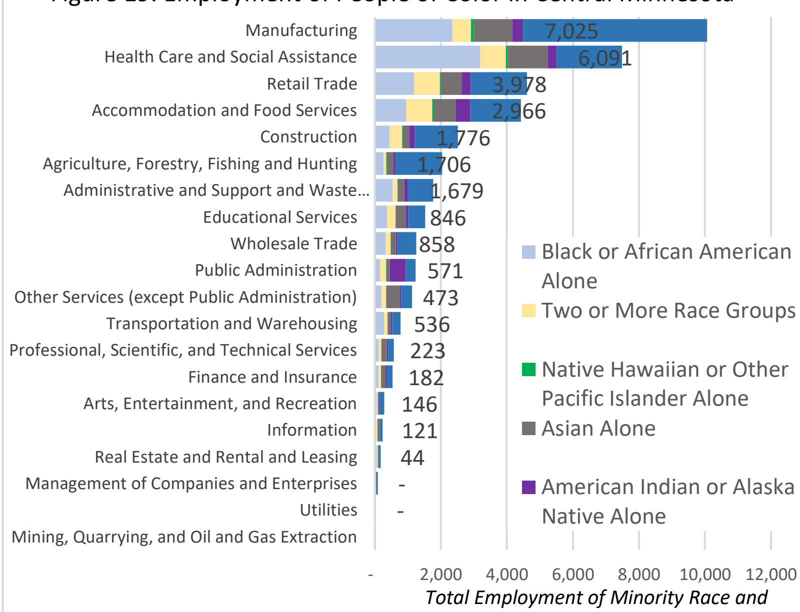


Figure 19. Employment of People of Color in Central Minnesota



Source: DEED, Census LEHD, QWI

INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

As noted above, Central Minnesota is projected to grow 5.2% from 2022 to 2032, a gain of 16,302 new jobs, which would make it the fastest growing region in the state. The largest growing industry is expected to be Health Care and Social Assistance, which may account for one-quarter of total projected growth in the region by 2032, followed by Manufacturing and Construction.

The fastest growth (10.9%) in the region is expected to be in the Construction industry, continuing a decades-long trend of rapid growth, while Professional and Technical Services, Management of Companies, Transportation & Warehousing, and Health Care & Social Assistance are also expected to grow about twice as fast as the region overall (Table 16).

Table 16. Central Minnesota Industry Projections, 2022-2032

Industry	Estimated Employment 2022	Projected Employment 2032	*Percent Change 2022-2032*	*Numeric Change 2022-2032*
Total, All Industries	**315,929**	**332,231**	***+5.2%***	***+16,302***
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish/Hunt	5,295	5,457	*+3.1%*	*+162*
Mining	354	352	*-0.6%*	*-2*
Utilities	1,986	1,998	*+0.6%*	*+12*
Construction	20,532	22,780	*+10.9%*	*+2,248*
Manufacturing	41,539	44,543	*+7.2%*	*+3,004*
Wholesale Trade	11,219	12,105	*+7.9%*	*+886*
Retail Trade	35,711	35,808	*+0.3%*	*+97*
Transportation & Warehousing	9,287	10,143	*+9.2%*	*+856*
Information	3,002	3,214	*+7.1%*	*+212*
Finance & Insurance	8,346	8,644	*+3.6%*	*+298*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1,796	1,884	*+4.9%*	*+88*
Professional & Technical Services	7,080	7,833	*+10.6%*	*+753*
Management of Companies	1,960	2,146	*+9.5%*	*+186*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt.	10,369	11,004	*+6.1%*	*+635*
Educational Services	24,622	24,913	*+1.2%*	*+291*
Health Care & Social Assistance	45,668	49,836	*+9.1%*	*+4,168*
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	4,858	5,168	*+6.4%*	*+310*
Accommodation & Food Services	21,188	22,474	*+6.1%*	*+1,286*
Other Services	10,880	11,311	*+4.0%*	*+431*
Public Administration	20,424	21,077	*+3.2%*	*+653*

Source: DEED 2022-2032 Employment Outlook

NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS

Central Minnesota was also home to 51,530 self-employed businesses or "nonemployers" in 2021, which are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as "businesses without paid employees that are subject to federal income tax, originating from tax return information of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)." Unlike covered employment, Central Minnesota saw a steady decline in nonemployers over the past decade, responding to economic changes. In sum, the region gained 3,584 nonemployers from 2012 to 2021, a 7.5% increase. However, the the vast majority of growth occurred in EDR 7W, while EDR 6E saw declines. In sum, these nonemployers generated sales receipts of nearly $2.7 billion in 2021 (Table 17).

Table 17. Nonemployer Statistics, 2021

	2021		*2012-2021*	
	Number of Firms	Receipts ($1,000s)	*Change in Firms*	*Percent Change*
Central Minnesota	**51,530**	**$2,731,182**	***+3,584***	***+7.5%***
Region 6E	8,150	$460,875	*-147*	*-1.8%*
Region 7E	11,196	$555,596	*+113*	*+1.0%*
Region 7W	32,184	$1,714,711	*+3,618*	*+12.7%*
Minnesota	**429,672**	**$22,727,564**	***+41,117***	***+10.6%***

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Like other parts of Greater Minnesota, agriculture is also a key industry in Central Minnesota, including 12,577 farms producing just under $4.3 billion in the market value of products sold in 2022 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Several of the highest ranked agriculture counties in the state are in Central Minnesota, including Stearns (#1), Renville (#4), and Kandiyohi (#8). Like the state, the number of farms in the region declined over the past 5 years, but Central Minnesota still accounts for 19% of the farms in the state (Table 18).

Table 18. Census of Agriculture, 2022

	Number of Farms	Market Value of Products Sold	*State Rank*
Central Minnesota	**12,577**	**$4,297,678,000**	***4 (of 6)***
Region 6E	3,975	$2,310,052,000	*5 (of 13)*
Region 7E	3,416	$284,274,000	*12 (of 13)*
Region 7W	5,186	$1,703,352,000	*8 (of 13)*
Minnesota	**65,531**	**$28,482,097,000**	

Source: 2022 Census of Agriculture

Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities by contacting Luke Greiner at 320-223-6692 or at luke.greiner@state.mn.us