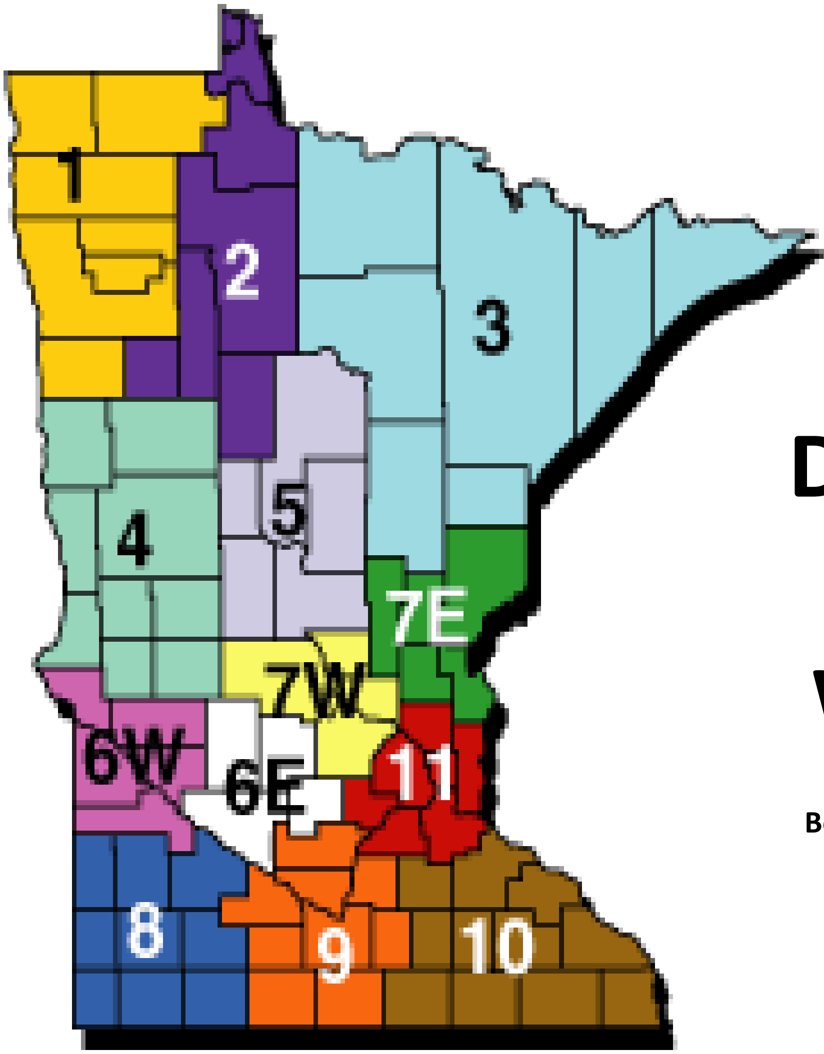

Economic Development Region 4: West Central

Covering the following counties:

Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, and Wilkin

2022 REGIONAL PROFILE

Updated December 2022

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DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE

Economic Development Region 4 – West Central (EDR4) is a mostly rural, nine-county region located in the west central area of the state, bordering North Dakota. Clay County is part of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Statistical Area, and Douglas County and Otter Tail County are both micropolitan statistical areas. Region 4 was the sixth largest of 13 economic development regions (EDRs) in the state, accounting for 4.2% of the state's total population. It was also the largest of the four EDR's in the 26-county Northwest Minnesota Planning Area. The regional population increased by nearly 7%, over 15,000 residents, from 2010 to 2021, compared to a 7.6% rise statewide (Table 1).

Table 1. Population Change 2010-2021

	2010 Population	2021 Estimates	*2010-2021 Change*	
			Number	*Percent*
Region 4-West Central	**221,688**	**237,014**	***+15,326***	***+6.9%***
Becker Co.	32,504	35,219	*+2,715*	*+8.4%*
Clay Co.	58,999	65,574	*+6,575*	*+11.1%*
Douglas Co.	36,009	39,238	*+3,229*	*+9.0%*
Grant Co.	6,018	6,153	*+135*	*+2.2%*
Otter Tail Co.	57,303	60,046	*+2,743*	*+4.8%*
Pope Co.	10,995	11,403	*+408*	*+3.7%*
Stevens Co.	9,726	9,700	*-26*	*-0.3%*
Traverse Co.	3,558	3,286	*-272*	*-7.6%*
Wilkin Co.	6,576	6,395	*-181*	*-2.8%*
Northwest Minnesota	**553,805**	**577,515**	**+23,710**	**+4.3%**
State of Minnesota	**5,303,925**	**5,707,390**	***+403,465***	***+7.6%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

The four largest counties in the region – Becker, Clay, Douglas, and Otter Tail – saw the fastest population growth since 2010, while the five smaller counties either witnessed lesser population gains or lost population. Clay, the largest and fastest growing county in the region, increased over 11%, making it the 7th fastest growing county (of 87) in the state.

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

The recent population increase in Region 4 was fueled primarily by a net migration of 806 people from 2020 to 2021, with domestic migration of 734 and international migration of 72. These increases were partially offset by natural decrease – more deaths than births – of 312 people (Table 2).

With in-migration, Region 4 was home to 6,287 foreign born residents, or 2.7% of the total population. The largest number of immigrants in the region came from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe (Figure 1). However, the largest increase in immigrants from 2010 to 2020 came from Africa, which grew by 640 or 88.6%. Net immigration from Asia was second, growing by 482 or 33%.

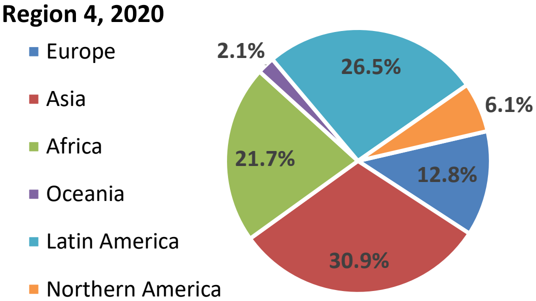
Table 2. Estimates of the Components of Population Change, 2020-2021

			Vital Events		Net Migration		
	Total Change	*Natural Increase*	Births	Deaths	*Total*	*Inter-national*	*Domestic*
Region 4	+507	-312	3,221	3,533	+806	*+72*	*+734*
Minnesota	+896	+12,512	79,493	66,981	-11,734	*+4,213*	*-15,947*

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

Based on year of entry, Region 4's foreign born population was "newer" than the rest of the state. The region gained 37% of immigrants from 2010 or later, compared to just 27.6% statewide. However, the region had nearly the same percentage of Foreign-born residents who had entered the U.S. before 1990 as statewide. Foreign-born residents have a younger age profile than the native-born population, with 58.6% between age 15 and 44, compared to just over 36% of the total population. While a similar percentage of foreign-born residents had a bachelor's degree or higher as native-born residents, immigrants were also much more likely to have less than a high school diploma.

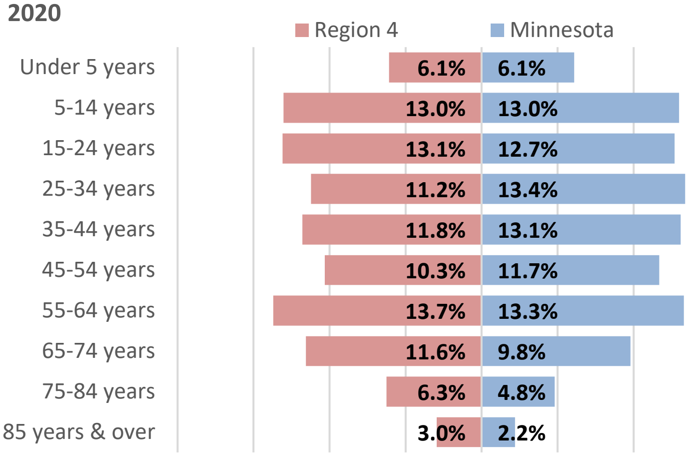
Figure 1. Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population in Region 4, 2020



POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

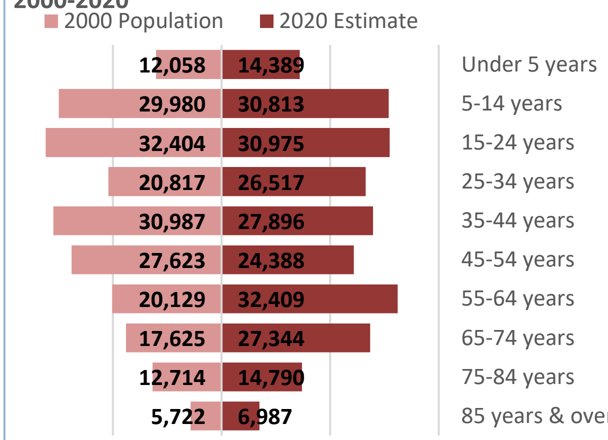
Region 4 had an older population than the state with over one-third (34.5%) of the region's population 55 or older, compared to 30.1% statewide. In contrast, the region had a smaller percentage of people in the 25 to 54 age group – typically considered the "prime working years." A large portion of the region's population is a part of the Baby Boom generation, which is creating a significant shift in regional demographics over time. Between 2000 and 2020, the region gained nearly 25,400 residents 55 years of age or older. Still, 13.1% of the population is 15-24 years of age, a larger share than statewide (Figure 2 and 3).

Figure 2. Percentage of Population by Age Group, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Figure 3. Region 4 Population Pyramid, 2000-2020



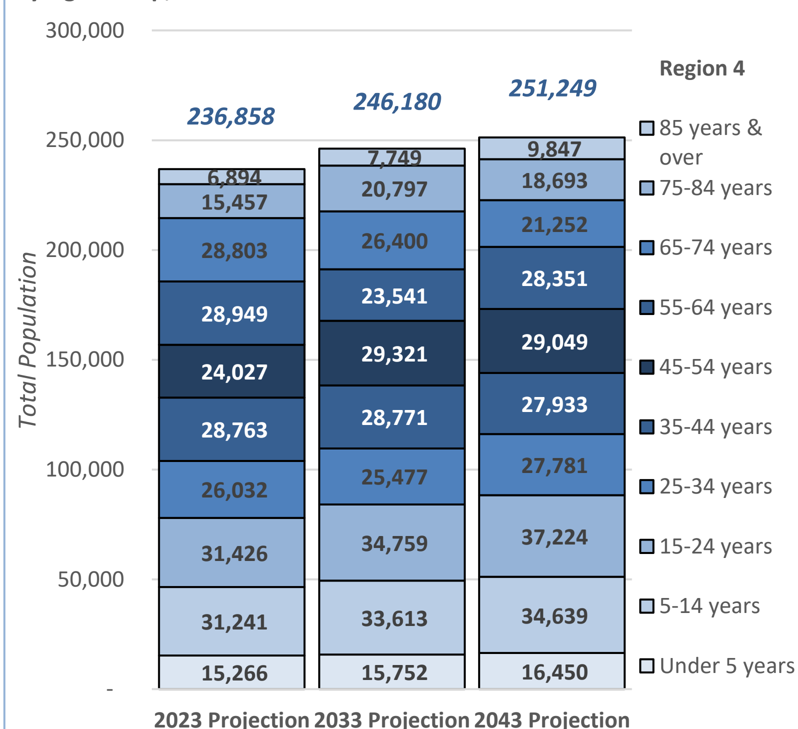
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP

The population of Region 4 is projected to continue its increase in the future. Population projections from the [Minnesota State Demographic Center] show that the area is expected to gain over 9,300 residents from 2023 to 2033, a nearly 4% increase (see Figure 4). In comparison, the projected growth statewide from 2023 to 2033 is approximately 5.6%.

The region's fastest growth is expected in the oldest age groups, reflecting the aging of the large Boomer cohort. The next-largest Millennial cohort swells the age 45 to 54 group by 2033. Net outmigration of young adults is projected to continue. Note that there are 31,426 aged 15 to 24 in 2023, but 25,477 age 25-34 projected in 2033. The under-25 groups are expected to grow throughout the two decades.

Figure 4. Population Projections by Age Group, 2023-2043



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

POPULATION BY RACE

The population in Region 4 increased in diversity since the turn of the century but remains less diverse than statewide. In 2020, just over 89% of the region's residents reported white alone as their race, compared to 77.5% of residents statewide. Also, the white population statewide contracted 2.6%, while experiencing slight growth in Region 4. However, every other race group increased faster than white from 2000 to 2020. Two or More Races grew fastest, increasing nearly 255% and adding 8,242 people, which was the most of any group. Hispanic or Latino added the second most people, increasing 3,332 (Table 3).

Table 3. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2020	EDR 4 – West Central			Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	*Change from 2000-2020*	Percent	*Change from 2000-2020*
Total	**236,507**	**100.0%**	***+7.5%***	**100.0%**	***+8.9%***
White	210,706	89.1%	*+1.1%*	77.5%	*-2.6%*
Black or African American	4,689	2.0%	*+160.2%*	7.0%	*+54.9%*
American Indian & Alaska Native	4,617	2.0%	*+17.3%*	1.2%	*+24.0%*
Asian & Other Pacific Islander	1,737	0.7%	*+21.9%*	5.3%	*+46.4%*
Some Other Race	3,281	1.4%	*+198.5%*	3.0%	*+122.8%*
Two or More Races	11,477	4.9%	*+254.8%*	6.1%	*+221.3%*
Hispanic or Latino	8,337	3.5%	*+66.6%*	6.1%	*+47.9%*

Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

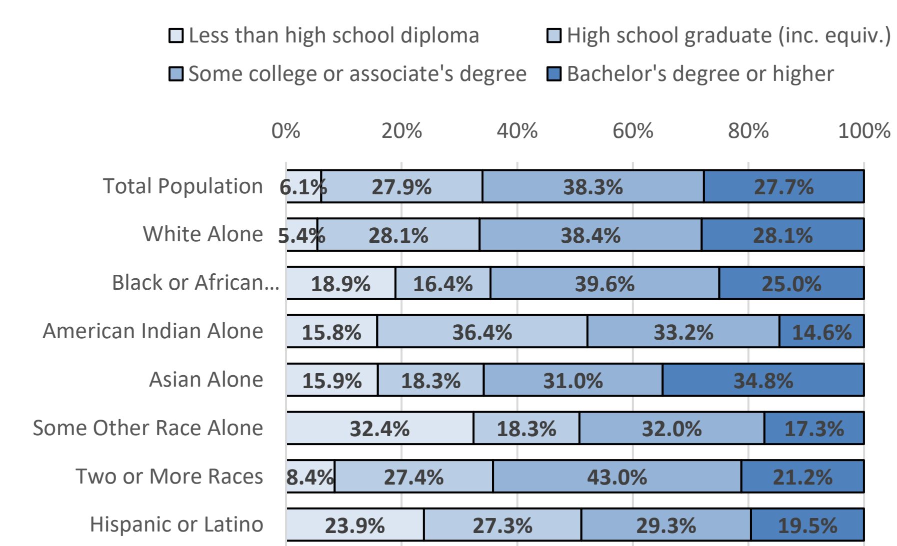
With 25.3% of adults aged 18 years and over holding a bachelor's or advanced degree, Region 4 had lower educational attainment than the state in 2020, where 34.2% of adults have a bachelor's or advanced degree. However, with the region's higher percentage of people with some college but no degree or an associate's degree, 65.4% had higher education, closer to the 68% with at least some higher education statewide. Also, Region 4 had a higher share with high school and a lower share with less than high school compared to statewide (Table 4).

Table 4. Educational Attainment for the Adult Population, 2020	EDR 4-West Central		Minnesota
	Number	Percent	Percent
Total, 18 years & over	**178,309**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Less than high school	11,919	6.7%	7.2%
High school grad. (incl. equiv.)	49,693	27.9%	24.7%
Some college, no degree	44,291	24.8%	22.8%
Associate's degree	27,370	15.3%	11.0%
Bachelor's degree	32,053	18.0%	23.0%
Advanced degree	12,983	7.3%	11.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Educational attainment varies significantly by race and ethnicity. White alone had 5.4% with less than high school, while Two or More Races had 8.4%, and every other racial or ethnic group had starkly higher percentages without a high school education. American Indian alone had the highest share with high school, but the lowest with higher education. Two or More Races had the highest share with some college or an associate's degree, while Asian alone had the highest percentage with a bachelor's degree or higher (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Region 4 Educational Attainment for the population aged 25 years & over by Race or Origin, 2020



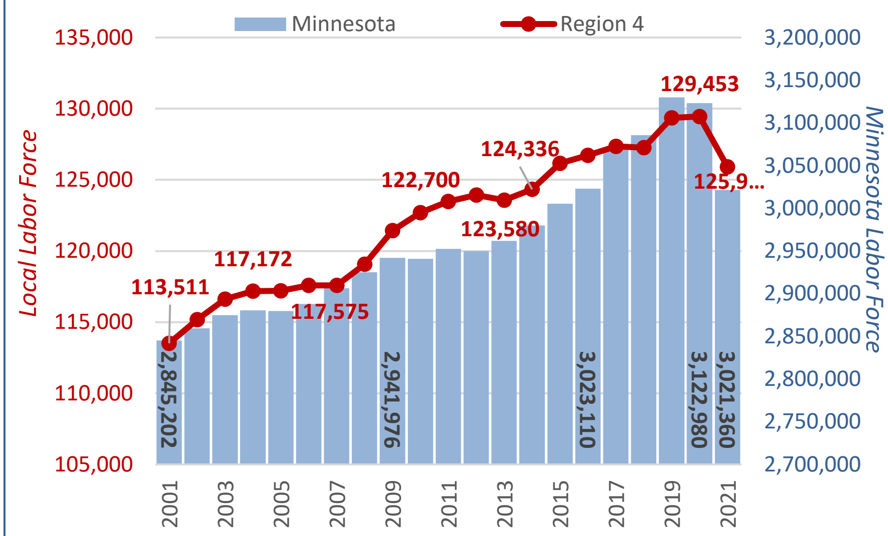
Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

LABOR FORCE

LABOR FORCE CHANGE

According to data from DEED's Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, Region 4 had an annual average labor force of nearly 126,000 workers in 2021. The regional labor force had steadily increased in a stair-step pattern from 2001 through 2020, following a similar trajectory as Minnesota statewide, and adding nearly 16,000 workers (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Annual Labor Force Estimates, 2001-2021

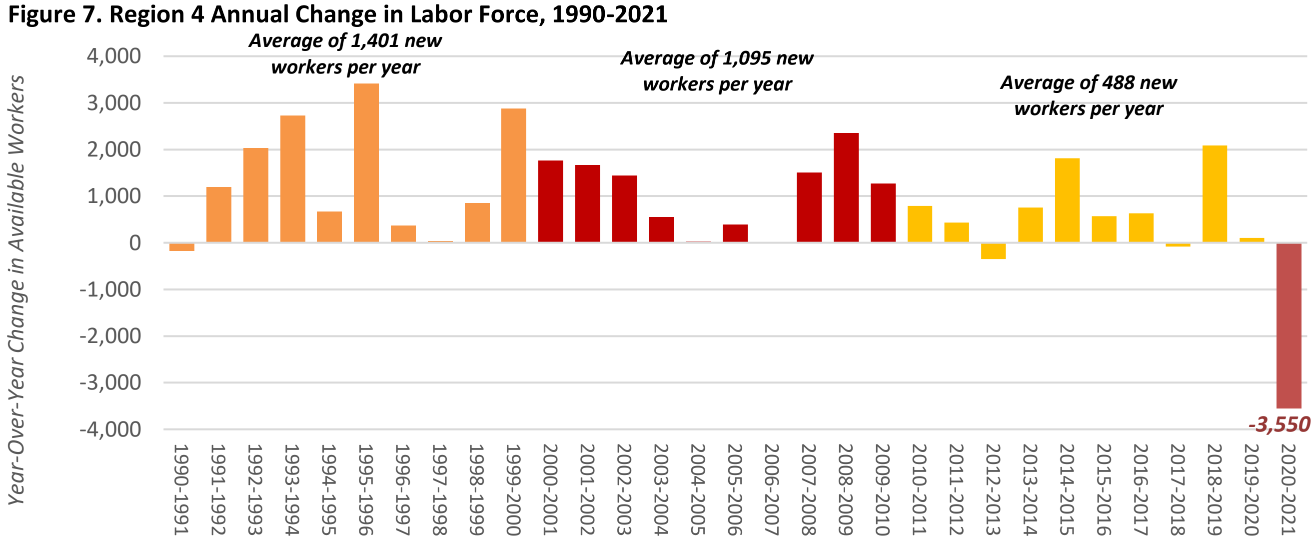


Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

The latest step up was in 2019, then the pattern was halted by the pandemic. The labor force trend had been largely unaffected by the recession in 2001 and the Great Recession from 2007 to 2009. In contrast, the pandemic recession was extremely brief, but left a large mark on the labor force. The labor force dropped by 3,550 workers or 2.7% from 2020 to 2021. By comparison, the labor force statewide dropped 3.2%. However, Region 4's labor force had not been this small since 2014. With faster growth since 2014, the statewide labor force nearly maintained its 2016 level. This sharp labor force drop provoked extremely tight labor markets in 2022. However, underlying long-term demographic trends are also at play, and they are more visible in Region 4.

Averaging a net gain of about 1,400 additional workers per year between 1990 and 2000, Region 4 employers were able to tap into a large and growing pool of talented workers. Over the next decade growth slowed to 1,095 workers per year. Then, from 2010 to 2020, growth was much slower, adding only 488 workers per year (Figure 7). Increasingly tight labor markets and a growing scarcity of workers is now recognized as one of the region's most significant barriers to economic growth. In the face of these constraints, it becomes clear that a more diverse workforce in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, and immigration has been and will continue to be a vital source of the workers that employers need to succeed.

Figure 7. Region 4 Annual Change in Labor Force, 1990-2021



Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS

Applying current labor force participation rates to population projections by age group creates labor force projections for the region, which show a 1.7% increase in the workforce. However, this is much slower than the 4% population increase from Figure 4 due to Boomers leaving the labor force. Note the 18.7% decrease in workers aged 55 to 64 and the 8.3% decrease in 65 to 74 year olds. The 25 to 44 year age group also declines slightly due to many Millennials entering the 45 to 54 age group. This gives the 45 to 54 age group the largest increase, nearly enough to replace the retiring Boomers. The age 75 years and over group is expected to see the fastest growth, but with the lower labor force participation rate of the population 75 years and over, just 391 more workers are predicted, 100 shy of the loss in the 25 to 44 group. Thus, the Gen Z workers in the youngest age groups tip the region to growth (Table 5).

Table 5. EDR 4-West Central Labor Force Projections

	2023 Labor Force Projection	2033 Labor Force Projection	*2023-2033 Change*	
			Numeric	*Percent*
16 to 19 years	7,510	8,269	*+759*	*+10.1%*
20 to 24 years	12,497	13,889	*+1,392*	*+11.1%*
25 to 44 years	49,174	48,683	*-491*	*-1.0%*
45 to 54 years	21,027	25,659	*+4,633*	*+22.0%*
55 to 64 years	21,270	17,296	*-3,973*	*-18.7%*
65 to 74 years	8,327	7,632	*-695*	*-8.3%*
75 years & over	1,411	1,802	*+391*	*+27.7%*
Total Labor Force	**121,214**	**123,230**	***+2,016***	***+1.7%***

Source: calculated from Minnesota State Demographic Center population projections and 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

With 66.1% of the population 16 years and older in the labor force, Region 4 had a lower labor force participation rate than the state overall. However, every age group had either higher or very similar labor force participation rates to statewide. This reveals that the overall difference is due to Region 4's older population, with those age 65 and older having much lower labor force participation (Table 6).

Labor force participation rates in Region 4 vary by race, and are below statewide rates for many groups. Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino had the highest participation rates, higher than white alone in the region, and higher than their respective groups statewide. Summarizing unemployment rates, they were higher among young workers, Black or African American, American Indian, and workers with disabilities, although lower in Region 4 for these groups than statewide. Unemployment was highest for Two or More Races and elevated for Hispanic or Latino. Also, unemployment was higher than statewide for these two groups.

Table 6. EDR 4-West Central Employment Characteristics, 2020

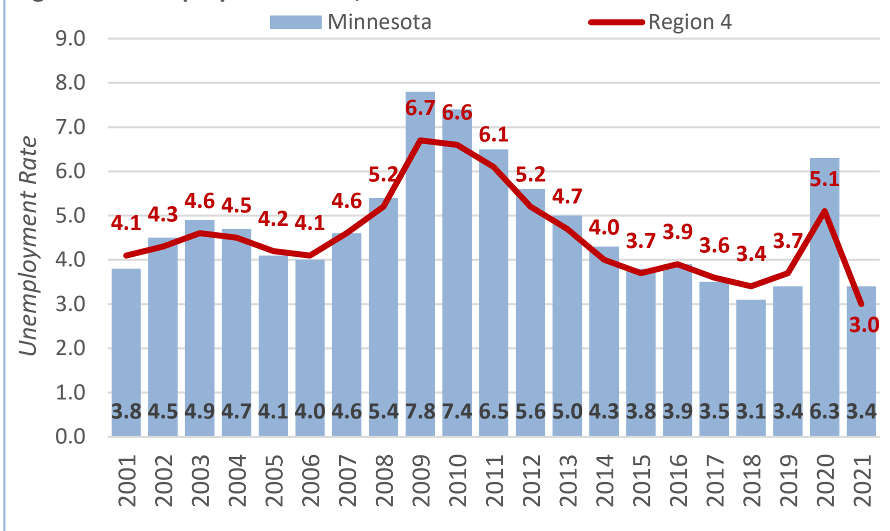
	EDR 4 – West Central			Minnesota	
Age Group	Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Labor Force	**121,421**	**66.1%**	**3.3%**	**69.3%**	**3.8%**
16 to 19 years	7,022	57.7%	8.8%	52.0%	11.0%
20 to 24 years	12,590	82.4%	5.2%	83.8%	6.2%
25 to 44 years	47,274	89.7%	3.0%	88.7%	3.4%
45 to 54 years	22,034	87.5%	2.6%	87.6%	2.8%
55 to 64 years	23,969	73.5%	2.0%	73.0%	3.1%
65 to 74 years	7,221	28.9%	2.6%	28.4%	2.5%
75 years & over	1,317	6.3%	2.4%	6.8%	2.4%
Employment Characteristics by Gender					
Male	63,932	70.0%	4.1%	73.0%	4.2%
Female	57,496	62.2%	2.4%	65.6%	3.4%
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin					
White Alone	113,489	66.2%	2.9%	68.9%	3.2%
Black or African American	1,836	73.9%	7.7%	71.3%	8.7%
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,544	54.7%	10.3%	57.9%	12.7%
Asian or Other Pacific Islanders	947	54.7%	1.2%	72.0%	4.0%
Some Other Race	1,126	68.9%	6.0%	72.7%	6.2%
Two or More Races	2,522	70.3%	11.3%	73.3%	7.1%
Hispanic or Latino	3,791	78.4%	8.2%	76.5%	6.3%
Employment Characteristics by Disability					
With Any Disability	6,618	54.5%	7.0%	52.9%	8.9%
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment					
Population 25 to 64 years	93,285	84.4%	2.7%	84.4%	3.2%
Less than H.S. Diploma	3,654	65.9%	4.2%	66.3%	4.5%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	20,795	79.5%	2.1%	77.9%	2.5%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	39,839	85.7%	2.8%	85.2%	3.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	28,982	89.8%	1.1%	90.0%	1.9%

Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

According to the [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) program, the unemployment rate in Region 4 has trended closely with the state overall. It has tracked within a half percentage point of the statewide rate except around the Great Recession in 2009 to 2010 and the pandemic recession in 2020, when Region 4's unemployment rate did not reach as high as statewide. During the recovery from the pandemic recession in 2021, Region 4's unemployment rate dropped below the prior low in 2018, signaling the onset of an extremely tight labor market (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Unemployment Rates, 2001-2021

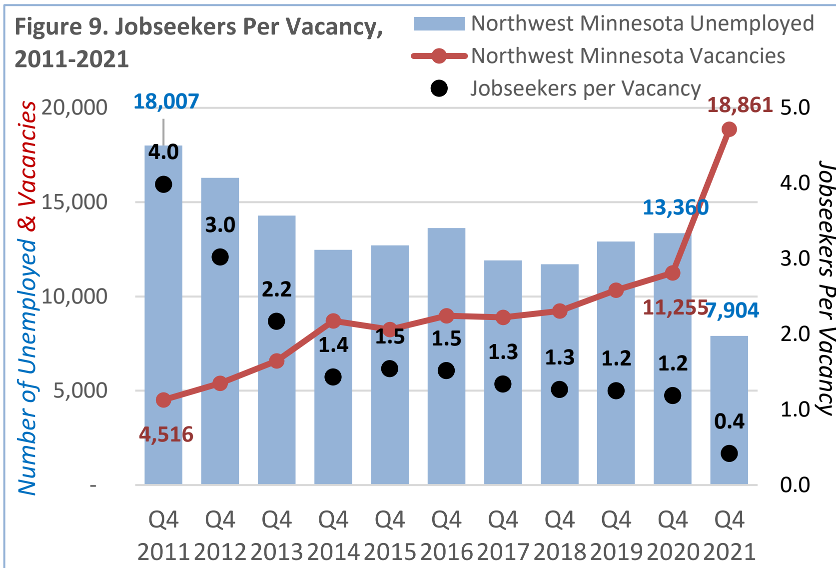


Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY

The unprecedented tight labor market is demonstrated by the ratio of unemployed jobseekers per job vacancy in the fourth quarter of 2021, which reached an all-time low of 0.4-to-1 in the 26-county Northwest Minnesota Planning Area that includes Region 4 (Figure 9). There were an estimated 18,861 openings – a record high – compared to 7,904 unemployed jobseekers. The rapid pandemic spike in unemployment and drop in job vacancies does not show up on this fourth quarter over-the-year series of Figure 9 because these impacts played out in the first through third quarters of 2020, but the labor market has returned to tight conditions, and even tighter.

Figure 9. Jobseekers Per Vacancy, 2011-2021



Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, LAUS program

COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED

According to commuting data from the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), 62% or 68,658 workers both live and work within the region. However, Region 4 is a net exporter of labor, having fewer jobs than available workers. In 2019, 41,857 workers commuted to locations outside the region for work, while another 23,936 workers commuted into the region for work (Table 7). While Otter Tail County is the largest employment center within Region 4, Cass County, North Dakota is the biggest draw for workers.

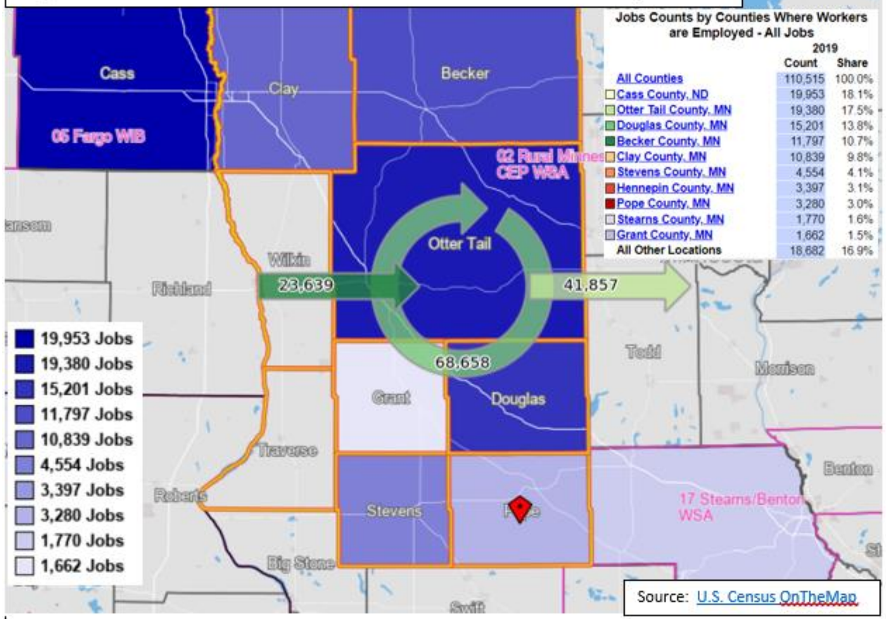
Table 7. EDR 4-West Central Inflow/ Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs), 2019	2019	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	92,297	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	23,639	25.6%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	68,658	74.4%
Living in the Selection Area	110,515	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	41,857	37.9%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	68,658	62.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap

Cass County, ND and Clay County, MN comprise the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Statistical Area, with nearly 28% of the region's workers employed there. Douglas and Becker Counties are the other large employment centers with 13.8% and 10.7% of jobs, respectively. Employers in the region draw a significant number of workers from Cass (ND) and Todd counties (Figure 10).

The average commute time for workers in the region was 19.7 minutes, compared to 23.8 minutes for workers statewide. About 8.4% of workers worked at home and 2.9% walked to work.

Figure 10. EDR 4-West Central Labor and Commute Shed, 2019



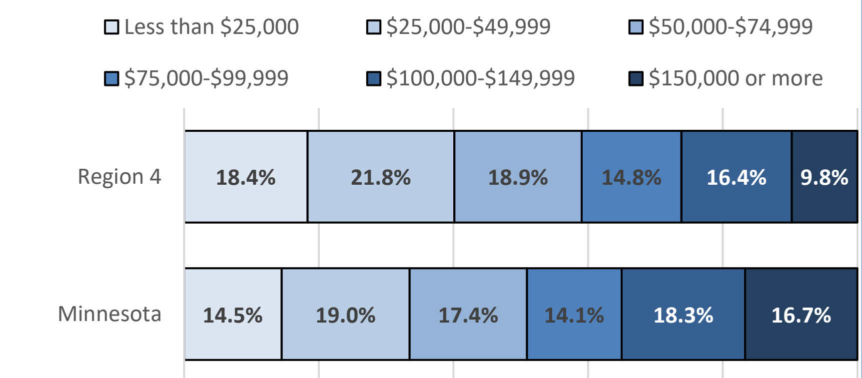
Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap

INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Household incomes were significantly lower in Region 4 than statewide. The median household income was $62,544 in 2020, compared to $73,382 in Minnesota. About a third (33.7%) of Region 4 households had income between $50,000 and $100,000, compared to 31.5% statewide. The largest difference between the region and the state was the percentage of households with income of $150,000 or more (Figure 11).

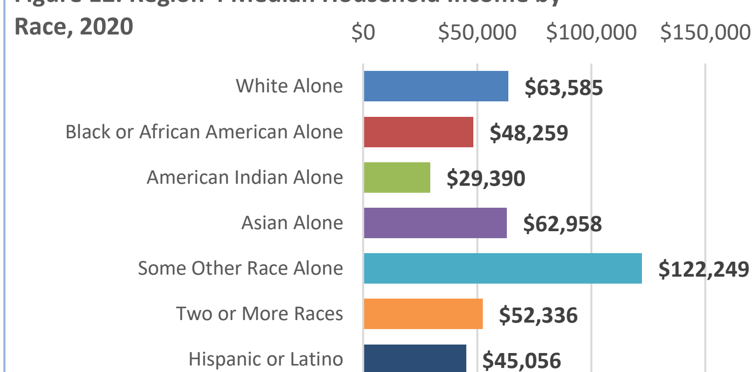
Figure 11. Household Incomes, 2020



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Median household incomes varied by race or ethnicity in the region. American Indian households had the lowest incomes, and every other racial or ethnic group had lower income than white alone, except Some Other Race alone. However, sample sizes were small for several of the race groups, leading to large margins of error and big swings compared to previous years. Nonetheless, the same pattern of income disparity for households or other races has been consistent over the years (Figure 12).

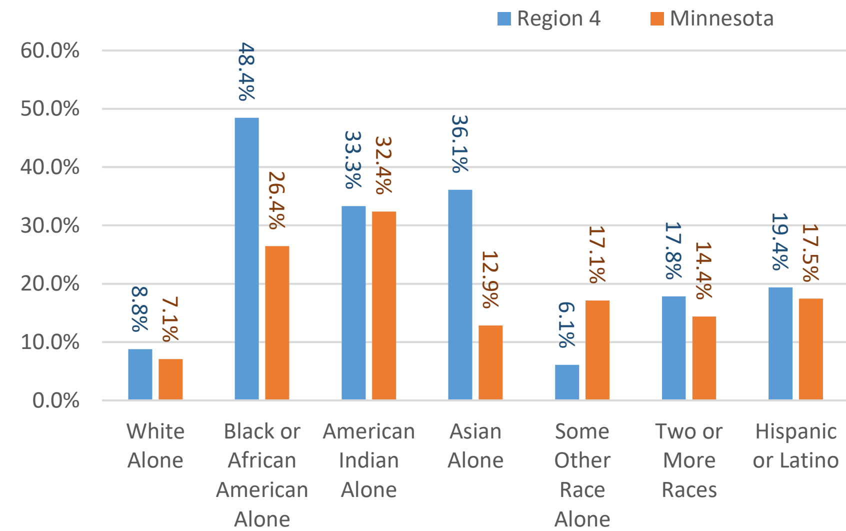
Figure 12. Region 4 Median Household Income by Race, 2020



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

The region's poverty rate for the total population was 10.2% in 2020, which is higher than the statewide rate of 9.3%. Like incomes, poverty levels varied widely by race and ethnicity both in Region 4 and statewide. Except for Some Other Race, the white alone population had a much lower poverty rate than every other group in Region 4, whereas the Some Other Race poverty rate was much higher statewide. The region's Black or African American population had the highest poverty rate at 48.4%, much higher than statewide. The Asian poverty rate in Region 4 was 36.1%, also much higher than statewide. Similar to statewide, a third of the region's American Indian population is below the poverty level. Also like statewide, Two or More Races and Hispanic or Latino poverty rates were more than double the rate for white (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percent Below Poverty Level by Race or Origin, 2020



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

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) was $60,540 in 2021. The cost of living for a similar family in Region 4 was $47,820 – which was the fourth lowest of the 13 economic development regions in the state. The highest monthly costs were for transportation, food, and housing; though the region's housing, child care, and taxes were significantly lower than statewide. In order to meet the basic needs cost of living for the region, the two workers in this family scenario would need to earn $15.33 per hour working a combined 60 hours per week.

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 Region 4 would be $28,524, which would require an hourly wage of $13.71 to meet the basic needs standard of living (Table 8).

Table 8. Family Yearly Cost, Worker Hourly Wage, and Family Monthly Costs, 2021

Family Composition	Number of Workers	Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
				Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Trans-portation	Other	Taxes
EDR 4-West Central										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$28,524	$13.71	$0	$354	$152	$621	$677	$267	$306
Single, 1 child	1 FT	$43,656	$20.99	$526	$524	$482	$799	$681	$362	$264
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$47,820**	**$15.33**	**$263**	**$810**	**$538**	**$799**	**$789**	**$440**	**$346**
2 parents, 2 children	2 FT	$66,288	$15.93	$856	$1,058	$549	$1,094	$833	$589	$545
Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$33,708	$16.21	$0	$359	$157	$903	$663	$345	$382
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$60,540**	**$19.40**	**$579**	**$822**	**$561**	**$1,151**	**$772**	**$540**	**$620**

Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Region 4 was $19.40 in the first quarter of 2022, $4.41 below the state's median wage. Compared to surrounding regions, Region 4's median wage was higher than Region 2, 5, 6E and 6W, but lower than Region 1 and 7W (Table 9).

Table 9. Occupational Employment Statistics by Region, 1st Qtr. 2022	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
Region 1 – Northwest	$22.41	34,150
Region 2 – Headwaters	$19.15	30,150
Region 3 – Arrowhead	$22.54	131,110
Region 4 – West Central	**$19.40**	**83,490**
Region 5 – North Central	$18.83	59,090
Region 6E – SW Central	$18.94	47,920
Region 6W – Upper MN Valley	$18.94	15,790
Region 7E – East Central	$21.95	45,770
Region 7W – Central	$22.94	165,010
Region 8 – Southwest	$19.10	50,230
Region 9 – South Central	$21.92	96,160
Region 10 – Southeast	$23.32	231,930
Region 11 – Twin Cities	$24.47	1,642,620
State of Minnesota	**$23.81**	**2,695,450**

Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics Qtr 1. 2022

Region 4's two largest occupational groups are Office & Administrative Support and Sales & Related, which are also the two largest statewide. Production occupations are third largest in the region, which has a larger share than statewide.

Location quotients measure the regional concentration of each occupational group compared to statewide. For example, production occupations are 30% more concentrated in the region. Also, the region's median wage for Production occupations is higher than statewide. Region 4 has the highest concentration of Farming, Fishing & Forestry occupations. These occupations have lower wages than all occupations in Region 4, but are close to statewide wages. The region also has high concentrations of Education, Training & Library and Community & Social Service occupations, which also have wages close to statewide (Table 10).

Table 10. EDR 4-West Central Occupational Employment Statistics, 1st Qtr. 2022

	Region 4-West Central				State of Minnesota		
	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment	*Share of Total Employment*	*Location Quotient*	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment	*Share of Total Employment*
Total, All Occupations	**$19.40**	**83,490**	***100.0%***	***1.0***	**$23.81**	**2,695,450**	***100.0%***
Office & Administrative Support	$18.81	9,660	*11.6%*	*0.9*	$23.12	334,550	*12.4%*
Sales & Related	$14.73	8,000	*9.6%*	*1.1*	$17.25	245,390	*9.1%*
Production	$21.40	7,930	*9.5%*	*1.3*	$19.59	198,940	*7.4%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	$13.71	7,230	*8.7%*	*1.2*	$14.65	198,800	*7.4%*
Transportation & Material Moving	$18.93	6,780	*8.1%*	*1.0*	$19.30	209,780	*7.8%*
Education, Training & Library	$24.01	6,490	*7.8%*	*1.4*	$24.48	149,990	*5.6%*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	$30.25	5,510	*6.6%*	*0.9*	$38.73	190,180	*7.1%*
Healthcare Support	$15.35	5,380	*6.4%*	*1.1*	$15.37	162,530	*6.0%*
Management	$38.58	4,390	*5.3%*	*0.8*	$50.51	181,090	*6.7%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	$23.49	3,660	*4.4%*	*1.2*	$25.34	96,660	*3.6%*
Construction & Extraction	$23.86	3,580	*4.3%*	*1.1*	$30.09	107,180	*4.0%*
Business & Financial Operations	$30.37	2,930	*3.5%*	*0.5*	$38.08	192,700	*7.1%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	$17.24	2,560	*3.1%*	*1.1*	$17.98	75,850	*2.8%*
Community & Social Service	$23.89	2,360	*2.8%*	*1.4*	$24.68	53,670	*2.0%*
Personal Care & Service	$14.75	1,640	*2.0%*	*0.9*	$15.24	56,580	*2.1%*
Architecture & Engineering	$33.62	1,330	*1.6%*	*0.8*	$39.39	51,970	*1.9%*
Protective Service	$26.14	1,120	*1.3%*	*0.9*	$25.07	40,580	*1.5%*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	$19.12	930	*1.1%*	*0.8*	$26.08	36,710	*1.4%*
Computer & Mathematical	$35.50	890	*1.1%*	*0.3*	$48.34	101,560	*3.8%*
Life, Physical & Social Science	$30.71	570	*0.7%*	*0.7*	$37.30	26,140	*1.0%*
Legal	$29.94	300	*0.4%*	*0.5*	$40.08	19,860	*0.7%*
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	$18.42	270	*0.3%*	*2.0*	$18.55	4,350	*0.2%*

Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics, Qtr. 1 2022

The lowest-paying occupations are Food Preparation & Serving which also have lower education and training requirements. In contrast, the highest paying occupations have the highest required levels of education, training, and experience, including Management, Computer & Mathematical, Architecture & Engineering, Life, Physical & Social Science, Business & Financial Operations, Healthcare Practitioners & Technical, and Legal. The pay gaps between the region and state tend to be large in these occupations, most exceeding 15%.

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Employers in the 26-county Northwest Planning region, which includes Region 4, reported 18,861 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2021, the highest in the history of the survey going back to 2001. Demand for workers surged during the COVID19 pandemic recovery and was high across most industry sectors. The sectors with the most openings, each with over 1,000, were Retail Trade (5,236 vacancies), Health Care & Social Assistance (4,684), Accommodation & Food Services (2,941), and Manufacturing (1,594). Over 76% of the region's vacancies were in these sectors.

This increase in demand for workers fueled substantially increased wage offers. The median wage offer for all vacancies increased to $16.85, or 18%, from $14.26 a year prior in fourth quarter 2020. Most occupation groups saw wage offers increase more than inflation. In contrast, Management Occupations and Personal Care & Service Occupations had a slight decrease in median wage offer. Life, Physical & Social Science Occupations had a slight increase, but well below inflation.

The largest number of vacancies and highest vacancy rates were in Sales & Related, Food Preparation & Serving Related, and Healthcare Support occupations. These occupation groups have many jobs and have high turnover. Personal Care & Service occupations also have high vacancy rates and have a similar share of part-time vacancies as the three occupational groups with the highest number of vacancies. Community & Social Service and Management have the highest share requiring more than one year of work experience. (Table 11).

Table 11. Northwest Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey Results, Qtr. 4 2021

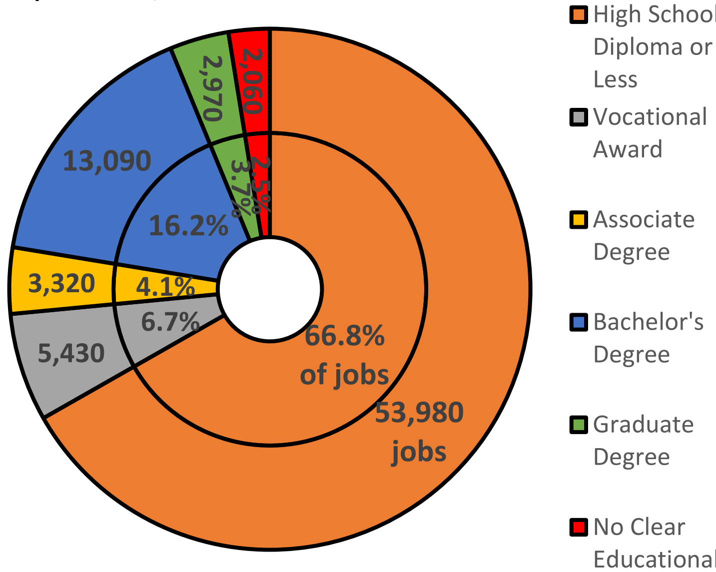
	Number of Total Vacancies	Percent Part-time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Work Exp.	Requiring Certificate or License	Median Hourly Wage Offer	*Job Vacancy Rate*
Total, All Occupations	**18,861**	**34%**	**3%**	**25%**	**41%**	**52%**	**$16.85**	**9.0**
Sales & Related	4,162	46%	0%	3%	23%	74%	$14.28	21.0
Food Preparation & Serving Related	3,442	49%	3%	1%	19%	14%	$13.29	19.1
Healthcare Support	2,232	52%	2%	28%	39%	46%	$16.53	18.8
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	1,510	25%	4%	91%	62%	90%	$25.93	11.2
Production	1,160	12%	2%	10%	31%	8%	$18.18	6.1
Transportation & Material Moving	1,053	34%	4%	0%	23%	70%	$18.00	6.4
Office & Administrative Support	1,009	11%	3%	15%	79%	38%	$19.05	4.0
Personal Care & Service	697	51%	15%	75%	9%	82%	$13.53	17.1
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	660	6%	3%	24%	77%	67%	$22.47	7.3
Management	636	3%	0%	49%	94%	48%	$28.08	5.8
Business & Financial Operations	481	18%	0%	58%	72%	61%	$29.28	6.4
Community & Social Service	442	4%	0%	85%	96%	87%	$23.13	8.3
Education, Training & Library	332	19%	12%	63%	73%	73%	$18.91	2.1
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	300	34%	13%	3%	23%	8%	$15.80	4.6
Construction & Extraction	183	1%	1%	18%	75%	60%	$26.58	2.0
Architecture & Engineering	148	0%	1%	78%	80%	35%	$32.01	5.0
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	127	14%	6%	6%	86%	49%	$20.84	6.5
Protective Service	121	45%	0%	38%	57%	86%	$20.41	3.7
Computer & Mathematical	68	2%	2%	87%	94%	15%	$31.07	3.2
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	51	0%	0%	79%	76%	67%	$21.33	3.3

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, Qtr. 4 2021

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Data from DEED's Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics program show that just under one-third of current jobs in the region require post-secondary education. The other two-thirds require no more than a high school diploma, and sometimes less. However, some amount of on-the-job training is often needed (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Region 4 Share of Jobs by Educational Requirements, 2022



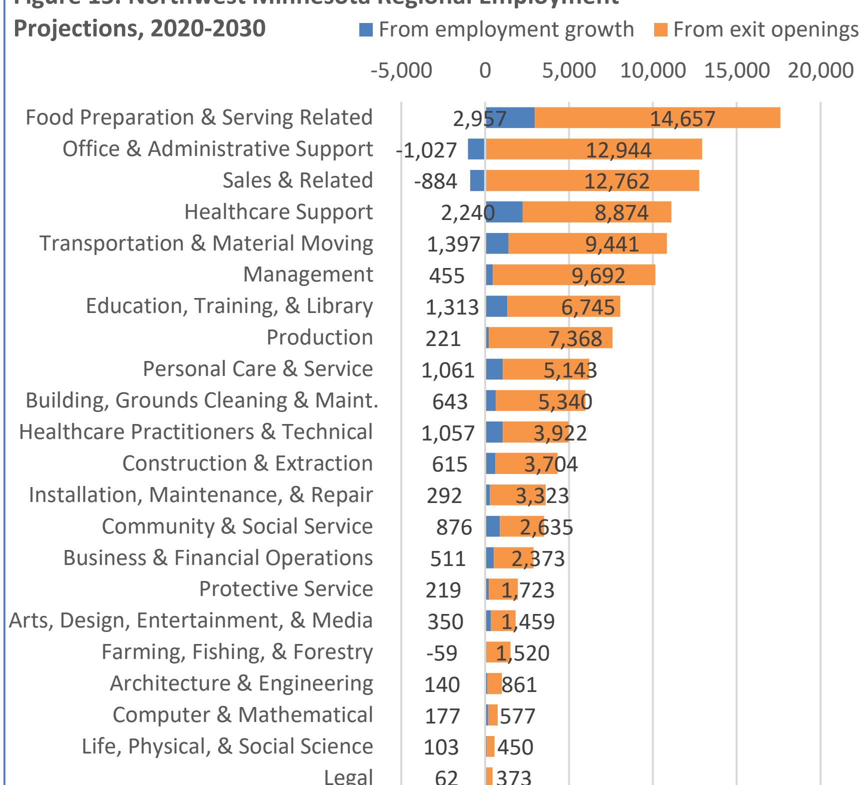
Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics

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 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 job market. While education is typically a worthwhile investment, college can be expensive – with average annual expenses between $19,500 and more than $52,000 per year in Minnesota.[1] For those who go to college, choice of major matters – different programs lead to different jobs that earn different amounts of money.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Overall, the 26-county Northwest Planning Region is projected to grow 5.1% from 2020 to 2030, a gain of 12,719 new jobs. In addition, the region is also expected to need 115,886 replacement openings to fill jobs left vacant by retirements and other career changers. Food Preparation & Serving and Healthcare Support occupations are expected to see the most growth. Note that this timeframe includes recovery from pandemic losses. Office & Administrative Support and Sales & Related are expected to decline but rank second and third in openings due to the large number of replacements needed for those leaving these occupations. Every occupational group will show some future demand through replacement openings (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Northwest Minnesota Regional Employment Projections, 2020-2030



Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook

[1] http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=94

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

According to DEED's Occupations in Demand tool, there are over 500 occupations in demand (OID) in the 26-county Northwest Minnesota Planning Region, and about 300 occupations are showing relatively high demand. Training and education requirements of these occupations range from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education and advanced degrees. Most OID require a high school diploma or less, and less than one-third require a bachelor's degree or higher. While OID exist in every sector, the region's major industries are well represented as many of the jobs are concentrated in health care and social assistance, education, and manufacturing. There are also OID employed in many industries, including managers, accountants, and computer support (Table 12).

Table 12. Northwest Minnesota Occupations in Demand by Education Level, 2021

High School or Less	Vocational Training	Some College or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Retail Salespersons $28,575/yr	Nursing Assistants $33,844/yr	Registered Nurses $72,324/yr	Elementary School Teachers $56,870/yr
Home Health and Personal Care Aides $28,195/yr	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses $46,911/yr	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians $63,225/yr	Secondary School Teachers $59,020/yr
Fast Food and Counter Workers $24,863/yr	Medical Assistants $43,116/yr	Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians $47,468/yr	General and Operations Managers $83,202/yr
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers $45,337/yr	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics $44,859/yr	Respiratory Therapists $66,748/yr	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers $51,793/yr
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers $46,529/yr	Computer User Support Specialists $49,748/yr	Police and Sheriff Patrol Officers $62,502/yr	Child, Family, and School Social Workers $53,854/yr
Stockers and Order Fillers $29,252/yr	Machinists $47,328/yr	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technicians $52,953/yr	Accountants and Auditors $62,678/yr
Customer Service Representatives $38,926/yr	Electricians $60,567/yr	Surgical Technologists $52,040/yr	Social and Community Service Managers $73,316/yr
First-Line Supervisors of Production Workers $60,581/yr	Industrial Machinery Mechanics $54,148/yr	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians $57,045/yr	Medical and Health Services Managers $91,879/yr
Social and Human Service Assistants $37,793/yr	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Programmers $64,600/yr	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers $30,140/yr	Financial Managers $98,220/yr
First-Line Supervisors of Food Prep. & Serving Workers $37,413/yr	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics $37,098/yr	Electro-Mechanical and Mechatronics Technicians $43,611/yr	Industrial Engineers $78,819/yr

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

ECONOMY

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, Region 4 was home to 7,083 business establishments providing 88,630 covered jobs through 2021, with a total payroll that exceeded $4.2 billion. That was 3.2% of total employment in the state of Minnesota. Average annual wages were $47,426 in the region, which was about $19,600 lower than the statewide average. Stevens County had the highest average wages (Table 13).

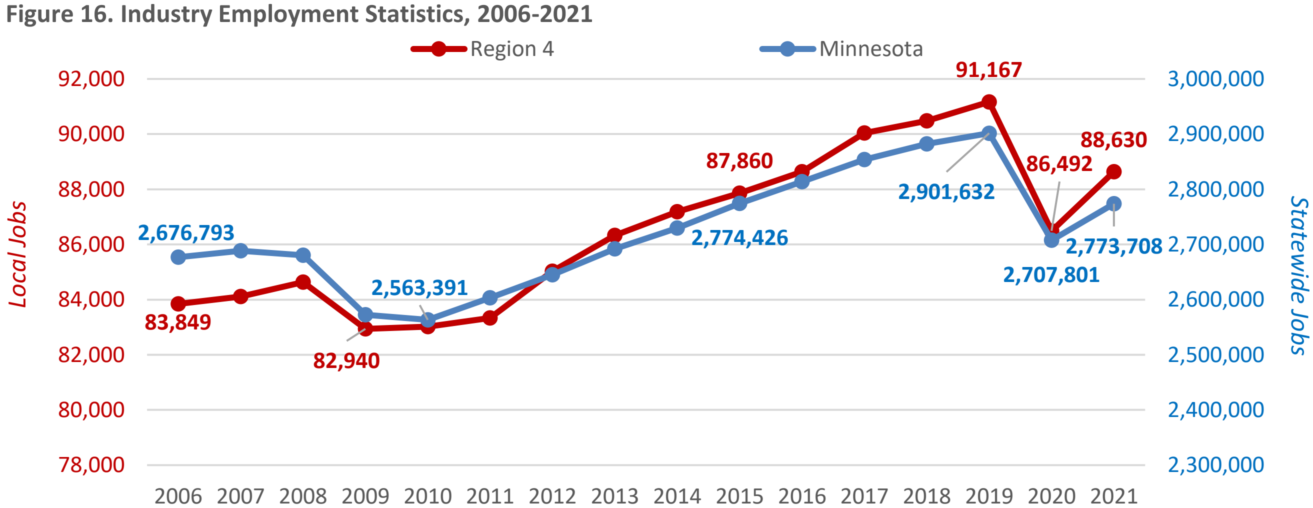
Table 13. EDR 4-West Central Industry Employment, 2021				Average Annual Wage	2020-2021		2019-2021	
Geography	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll		*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*
EDR 4-West Central	**7,083**	**88,630**	**$4,203,391,694**	**$47,426**	***+2,138***	***+2.5%***	***-2,537***	***-2.8%***
Becker Co.	1,072	14,480	$652,120,458	$45,036	*+711*	*+5.2%*	*-181*	*-1.2%*
Clay Co.	1,418	18,767	$888,234,965	$47,330	*+340*	*+1.8%*	*-622*	*-3.2%*
Douglas Co.	1,422	18,984	$953,010,220	$50,201	*+539*	*+2.9%*	*-382*	*-2.0%*
Grant Co.	253	1,818	$79,927,197	$43,964	*+3*	*+0.2%*	*-92*	*-4.8%*
Otter Tail Co.	1,846	22,114	$1,007,222,979	$45,547	*+451*	*+2.1%*	*-729*	*-3.2%*
Pope Co.	363	4,310	$209,520,768	$48,613	*+58*	*+1.4%*	*-179*	*-4.0%*
Stevens Co.	357	5,352	$284,936,121	$53,239	*+18*	*+0.3%*	*-168*	*-3.0%*
Traverse Co.	151	1,096	$43,989,866	$40,137	*-14*	*-1.3%*	*-80*	*-6.8%*
Wilkin Co.	202	1,706	$84,429,120	$49,490	*+31*	*+1.9%*	*-105*	*-5.8%*
State of Minnesota	**185,788**	**2,773,708**	**$185,969,067,414**	**$67,047**	***+65,907***	***+2.4%***	***-127,924***	***-4.4%***

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

In terms of employment, Otter Tail County is the largest county in Region 4 with 22,114 jobs at 1,846 firms. Douglas County was the second largest, with Clay a very close third in number of jobs. Traverse County has the smallest number of jobs and was the only county to lose employment from 2020 to 2021. All counties in Region 4 lost jobs since 2019, however most of the counties and the region had smaller losses compared to the 4.4% decrease statewide. Becker County is closest to its pre-pandemic employment level.

Region 4 had seen employment growth over the past decade prior to the pandemic and peaked in 2019 with 8,227 more jobs than in 2009. The low point in jobs from the Great Recession was 2009 in Region 4, one year prior to Minnesota, and Region 4 regained all the jobs lost by 2012. With the pandemic in 2020, the region lost 4,675 jobs, a 5.1% decrease while the state declined by 6.7%. (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Industry Employment Statistics, 2006-2021



Source: DEED QCEW program

With 16,445 jobs at 712 establishments, Health Care & Social Assistance is the industry sector with the most jobs in the region, accounting for 18.6% of total employment (Table 14). With the region's older population, Nursing & Residential Care is the largest subsector with about a third of the sector's jobs, followed by Hospitals with about 27%. Ambulatory Health Care Services, which includes clinics and offices of doctors, dentists, and other healthcare professionals, has about 22% of the sector's jobs. Social Assistance is the smallest of the four industry subsectors with about 17% of the jobs.

Manufacturing is the second-largest industry sector with 14.6% of the region's jobs. However, the total payroll in Manufacturing was very close to the same as Health Care & Social Assistance due to higher average wages. With 4% job growth from 2020 to 2021, Manufacturing grew faster than all industries during the pandemic recession recovery, but remained 150 jobs shy of its 2019 employment. Retail Trade is the third largest industry in terms of jobs and second in terms of the number of establishments due to this sector's many smaller establishments. With the slight 0.7% job growth from 2020 to 2021, it remained 2.8% below 2019 employment, which is the same as all industries.

Education Services is the fourth largest employing industry and third in terms of total payroll. Although this sector regained 148 jobs from 2020 to 2021, it remained 6.5% below its 2019 level. Only Accommodation & Food Services and Public Administration remained further below pre-pandemic levels. However, Accommodation & Food Services grew a rapid 11.7% from 2020 to 2021, the third fastest growth. The rapid 13.8% job loss in Public Administration from 2020 to 2021 left this sector the furthest from its pre-pandemic job level, both in number and percentage. Nearly all the job losses (93.5%) were in local government.

Construction was the top job gainer, adding over 300 jobs and growing 6.4% from 2019 to 2021. Administrative Support & Waste Management ended the two-year period with the biggest percentage gain in jobs, while Other Services had the fastest growth from 2020 to 2021 (see Table 14).

Table 14. Industry Employment Statistics, 2021

Region 4	2021 Annual Data				*2020-2021*		*2019-2021*	
NAICS Industry Title	**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	**7,083**	**88,630**	**$4,203,392**	**$47,426**	***+2,138***	***+2.5%***	***-2,537***	***-2.8%***
Health Care & Social Assistance	712	16,445	$764,704	$46,501	*+560*	*+3.5%*	*+196*	*+1.2%*
Manufacturing	337	12,966	$764,533	$58,964	*+493*	*+4.0%*	*-150*	*-1.1%*
Retail Trade	878	10,840	$354,821	$32,733	*+80*	*+0.7%*	*-318*	*-2.8%*
Educational Services	144	9,052	$433,553	$47,896	*+148*	*+1.7%*	*-629*	*-6.5%*
Accommodation & Food Services	545	7,201	$131,664	$18,284	*+757*	*+11.7%*	*-773*	*-9.7%*
Construction	994	5,099	$299,860	$58,808	*+166*	*+3.4%*	*+305*	*+6.4%*
Public Administration	251	4,884	$271,285	$55,546	*-782*	*-13.8%*	*-1,046*	*-17.6%*
Wholesale Trade	271	4,006	$271,166	$67,690	*+28*	*+0.7%*	*-99*	*-2.4%*
Other Services	661	2,938	$88,648	$30,173	*+338*	*+13.0%*	*+38*	*+1.3%*
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunting	375	2,698	$137,306	$50,892	*-31*	*-1.1%*	*-16*	*-0.6%*
Transportation & Warehousing	353	2,460	$113,062	$45,960	*-3*	*-0.1%*	*-80*	*-3.1%*
Finance & Insurance	395	2,215	$157,845	$71,262	*+33*	*+1.5%*	*+45*	*+2.1%*
Professional & Technical Services	377	2,066	$131,077	$63,445	*+73*	*+3.7%*	*+37*	*+1.8%*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	280	1,901	$69,642	$36,634	*+113*	*+6.3%*	*+141*	*+8.0%*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	157	1,145	$20,251	$17,687	*+185*	*+19.3%*	*-48*	*-4.0%*
Information	102	1,074	$61,989	$57,718	*+78*	*+7.8%*	*+36*	*+3.5%*
Utilities	24	648	$63,166	$97,479	*-20*	*-3.0%*	*-40*	*-5.8%*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	190	631	$30,230	$47,909	*+39*	*+6.6%*	*+39*	*+6.6%*
Management of Companies	18	232	$30,538	$131,628	*-112*	*-32.6%*	*-182*	*-44.0%*
Mining	20	125	$8,050	$64,397	*-5*	*-3.8%*	*+4*	*+3.3%*

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

EMPLOYMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

According to DEED's Quarterly Employment Demographics (QED) program, over one-quarter (25.6%) of workers in the region were 55 years or older, compared to 22% statewide and just 20.5% in the region one decade earlier. In contrast, the percentage of workers under age 25 was falling (Table 15).

Table 15. Workforce Demographics by Age Group and Gender, Total of All Industries, 2010-2020

EDR 4-West Central	Percentage of Workers		*Percent of Workers, Minnesota*		Median Hourly Wage		Median Hours Worked (Per Qtr.)	
	2020	2010	*2020*	*2010*	2020	2010	2020	2010
Total, all ages	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	$19.06	$13.35	402	385
19 years & under	7.1%	8.8%	6.0%	6.5%	$11.74	$7.79	120	115
20 to 24 years	10.1%	11.8%	10.1%	11.1%	$15.38	$10.00	271	247
25 to 44 years	40.0%	36.7%	43.2%	42.7%	$21.41	$14.98	462	448
45 to 54 years	17.2%	22.1%	18.7%	23.0%	$23.41	$16.16	480	480
55 to 64 years	18.6%	15.6%	16.9%	13.5%	$21.70	$15.89	475	449
65 years & over	7.0%	4.9%	5.1%	3.3%	$17.00	$11.37	215	191
Male	48.2%	45.4%	49.1%	49.0%	$21.58	$15.19	480	477
Female	51.8%	54.6%	50.9%	51.0%	$17.95	$12.17	351	328

Source: DEED Quarterly Employment Demographics

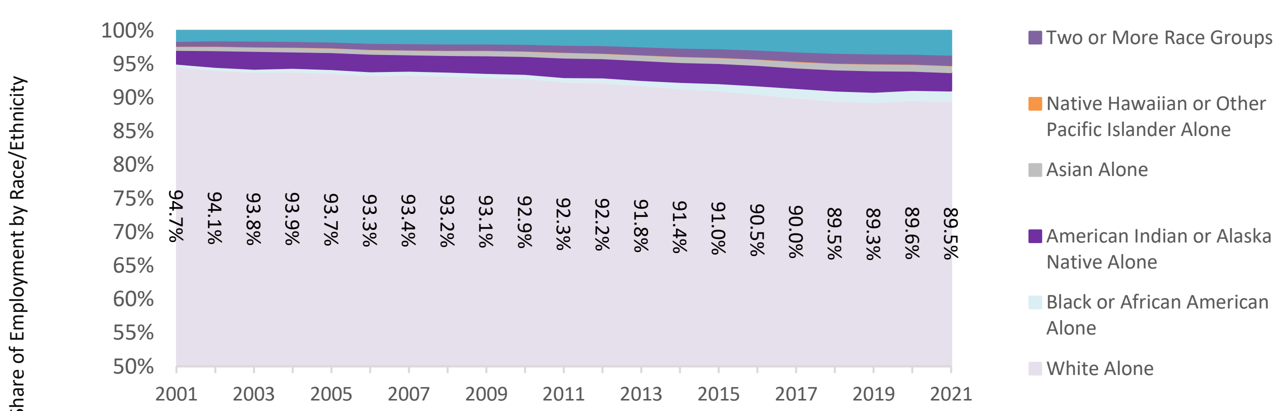
Wages were climbing across the board due to a tightening labor market. While wages were still lowest for teen workers and those age 20 to 24, who tend to fill lower-skilled, less-than-fulltime jobs in industries like Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services, these two age groups enjoyed the fastest percentage increase in wages from 2010 to 2020. Wages were highest for workers aged 45 to 54. While wages were second highest for workers aged 55 to 64, their increase in median wage over the decade was the smallest.

Also reflecting the tightening labor market, hours worked trended higher for all age groups except the age 45 to 64 group which continues to work the most hours. The age 55 to 64 group had the largest increase in hours worked, followed closely by age 20 to 24 and 65 years & over. Although males continued to work more hours than females, females increased hours more than males over the decade, narrowing the gap in hours worked.

EMPLOYMENT DIVERSITY

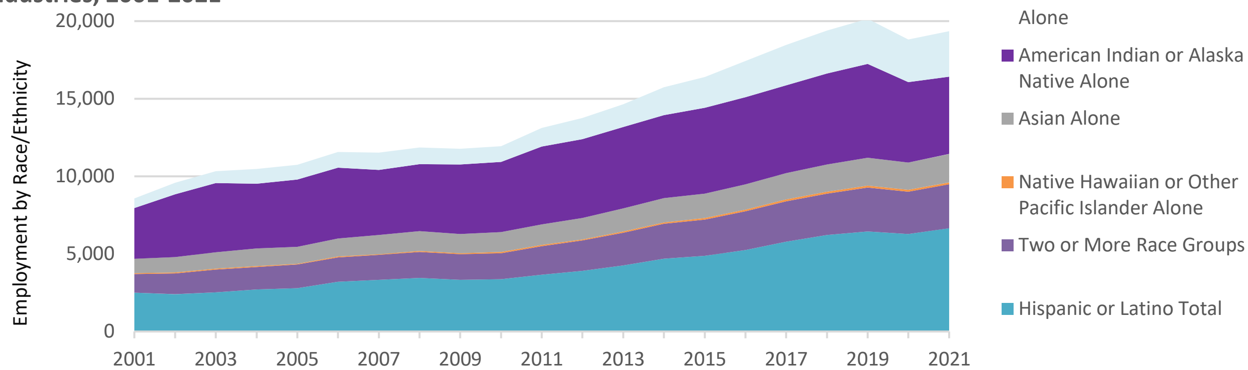
The Quarterly Workforce Indicators program provides workforce demographics for counties and workforce service areas (WSAs). Region 2 is part of the 19-county WSA2 that encompasses EDRs 2, 4, and 5. People of color held 19,350 of the 176,997 jobs in WSA2 in 2021, which was 10.5% of employment. This was nearly double the 5.3% share two decades ago (Figure 17).

Figure 17. WSA2 Employment by Race and Ethnicity, All Industries, 2001-2021



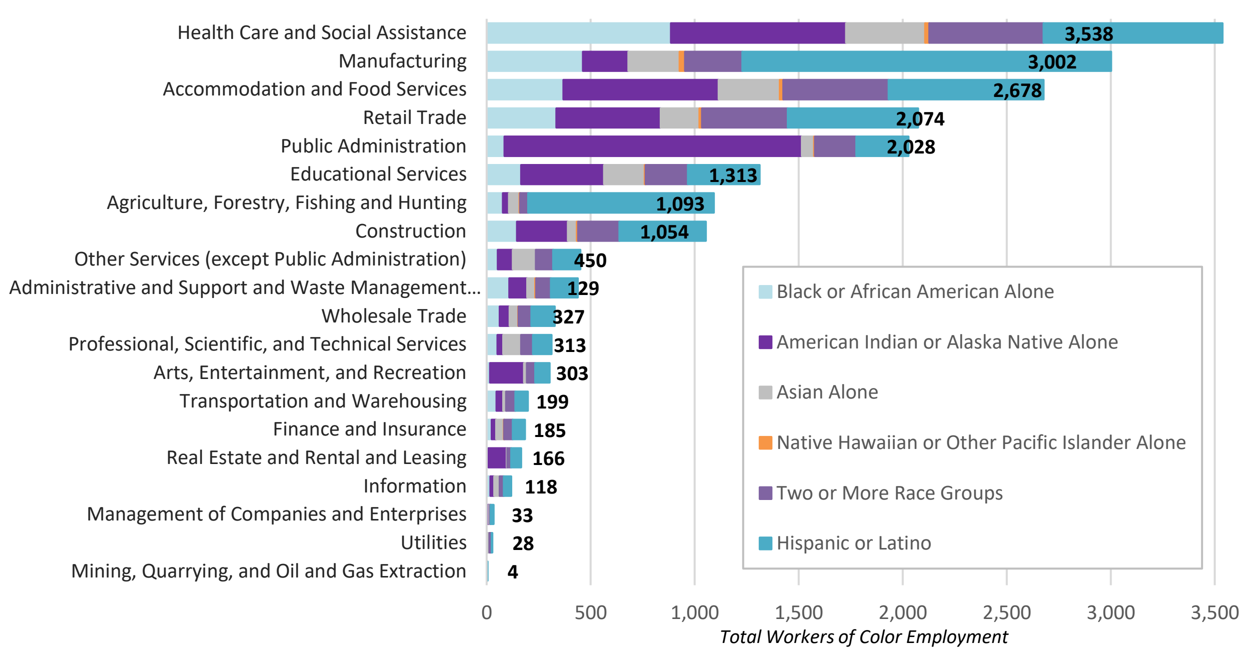
Workers of color filled an additional 10,769 jobs in WSA2 since 2001, accounting for over 47% of the total new jobs added. With 6,660 jobs, Hispanic or Latino was the largest group of color in WSA2's economy, increasing 166% since 2021. American Indian was the next largest group of color with 4,990 jobs in 2021 and growing 50.6%. However, American Indians had the largest pandemic declines, losing 21.2% of their jobs since 2019. Black or African Americans held 2,925 jobs and had the fastest growth. Two or More Races held 2,832 jobs, growing 135.9%. Asians had 1,831 jobs in 2021, growing 97.6%. Besides Whites and American Indians, all other racial and ethnic groups increased employment from 2019 to 2021, filling much neded positions in an extremely tight labor market (Figure 18).

Figure 18. WSA2 Workers of Color Employment, All Industries, 2001-2021



Most sectors in the region are non-diverse, but there are industries that rely more heavily on workers of color. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting relies on 26% people of color including 21% Hispanic or Latino. Public Administration is staffed by 17.5% workers of color, and with 1,430 American Indian workers it has the largest number of any sector. Accommodation & Food Services has 15.2% workers of color, with the largest number of Two or More Races at 506. Manufacturing has 13.4% workers of color, with the largest number of Hispanic or Latino workers of any sector at 1,773. Health Care & Social Assistance has the largest number of workers of color, but at 10.5% of jobs it matches all industries in WSA 2 (Figure 19).

Figure 19. WSA 2 People of Color Employment by Industry, 2021



INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

As noted above, Region 4 is included in the 26-county Northwest Planning Area which is projected to grow 5.1% from 2020 to 2030, a gain of 12,719 new jobs. Health Care & Social Assistance is expected to add the most jobs. Not only is it the region's largest industry, it is also the third fastest growing and accounts for over 35% of the total increase in jobs by 2030. Arts Entertainment & Recreation and Accommodation & Food Services are the fastest-growing industries, with a large portion of this growth reflecting the rebound in employment after large losses in the pandemic recession. Likewise, Other Services is another fast-growing sector that experienced large employment losses in 2020 and a subsequent rebound (Table 16).

Table 16. Northwest Industry Projections, 2020-2030

Industry	Estimated Employment 2020	Projected Employment 2030	*Percent Change 2020-2030*	*Numeric Change 2020-2030*
Total, All Industries	**250,722**	**263,441**	***+5.1%***	***+12,719***
Health Care & Social Assistance	36,901	41,390	*+12.2%*	*+4,489*
Manufacturing	27,999	28,618	*+2.2%*	*+619*
Retail Trade	26,846	25,467	*-5.1%*	*-1,379*
Public Administration	22,824	23,240	*+1.8%*	*+416*
Educational Services	22,015	23,101	*+4.9%*	*+1,086*
Accommodation & Food Services	17,040	20,515	*+20.4%*	*+3,475*
Wholesale Trade	11,829	12,347	*+4.4%*	*+518*
Construction	10,693	11,157	*+4.3%*	*+464*
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	9,052	10,144	*+12.1%*	*+1,092*
Transportation & Warehousing	6,436	6,741	*+4.7%*	*+305*
Finance & Insurance	6,053	6,227	*+2.9%*	*+174*
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	5,574	5,505	*-1.2%*	*-69*
Professional & Technical Services	4,927	5,360	*+8.8%*	*+433*
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	3,406	4,303	*+26.3%*	*+897*
Administrative & Waste Services	3,889	4,139	*+6.4%*	*+250*
Information	2,276	2,229	*-2.1%*	*-47*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1,425	1,414	*-0.8%*	*-11*
Utilities	1,135	970	*-14.5%*	*-165*
Management of Companies	660	665	*+0.8%*	*+5*
Mining	216	235	*+8.8%*	*+19*

Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook

NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS

Region 4 was home to 18,502 self-employed businesses or "nonemployers" in 2019, 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)." Like covered employment, Region 4 saw a steady increase in nonemployers from 2009 to 2019. Of the four economic development regions in the 26-county Northwest Planning Area, Region 4 added the most nonemployers and had the fastest growth. Still, Region 4 did not match the 10.6% statewide nonemployer growth. The region gained 1,060 nonemployers from 2009 to 2019, a 6.1% increase. The region's nonemployers generated 2019 sales of over $897 (Table 17).

Table 17. Nonemployer Statistics, 2019

	2019		*2009-2019*	
	Number of Firms	Receipts ($1,000s)	*Change in Firms*	*Percent Change*
Region 4	**18,502**	**$897,148**	***+1,060***	***+6.1%***
Becker Co.	2,904	$152,436	*-60*	*-2.0%*
Clay Co.	4,268	$173,987	*+574*	*+15.5%*
Douglas Co.	3,455	$184,930	*+216*	*+6.7%*
Grant Co	528	$22,739	*-6*	*-1.1%*
Otter Tail Co.	4,915	$231,774	*+163*	*+3.4%*
Pope Co.	1,027	$44,074	*+80*	*+8.4%*
Stevens Co.	627	$30,277	*+32*	*+5.4%*
Traverse Co.	278	$11,638	*-7*	*-2.5%*
Wilkin Co.	391	$45,293	*+68*	*+15.7%*
Minnesota	**418,080**	**$20,377,253**	***+39,926***	***+10.6%***

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

Otter Tail County had the most nonemployers in 2019, but Clay County was a close second and added the most over the decade. While Douglas County had over 800 fewer nonemployer business than Clay County, their receipts were greater. Wilkin County grew the fastest. Traverse County had the largest percentage decline in nonemployers, but lost only 7, just one more than Grant County. Becker County lost the most.

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Like other parts of Greater Minnesota, agriculture is one of the most important industries in Region 4. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture the region had 7,857 farms producing nearly $2.1 billion in the market value of products sold in 2017. Region 4 had 11% of the state's farms, and 11% of the state's total market value of goods sold, placing it fourth of Minnesota's 13 economic development regions. However, Region 4 has had a 26.6% decline in market value over the past 5 years.

Table 18. Census of Agriculture, 2017			
	Number of Farms	Market Value of Products Sold	*State Rank*
Region 4	**7,857**	**$2,015,632,000**	***4***
Becker Co.	943	$174,531,000	*53*
Clay Co.	694	$277,750,000	*27*
Douglas Co.	960	$100,345,000	*59*
Grant Co.	524	$190,286,000	*46*
Otter Tail Co.	2,544	$349,919,000	*16*
Pope Co.	837	$199,295,000	*44*
Stevens Co.	553	$327,441,000	*21*
Traverse Co.	411	$210,468,000	*41*
Wilkin Co.	391	$185,597,000	*50*
Minnesota	**68,822**	**$18,395,390,000**	

Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture

Otter Tail County had by far the most farms, and at 16th statewide was the highest ranked of the region's counties in terms of sales. With larger farms, Stevens County had the next highest sales in the region, but was five counties down in the statewide ranking. Clay County ranked within the top third of Minnesota's 87 counties and Traverse was just barely in the top half in market value of products sold (Table 18).

Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats by contacting Anthony Schaffhauser at anthony.schaffhauser@state.mn.us.