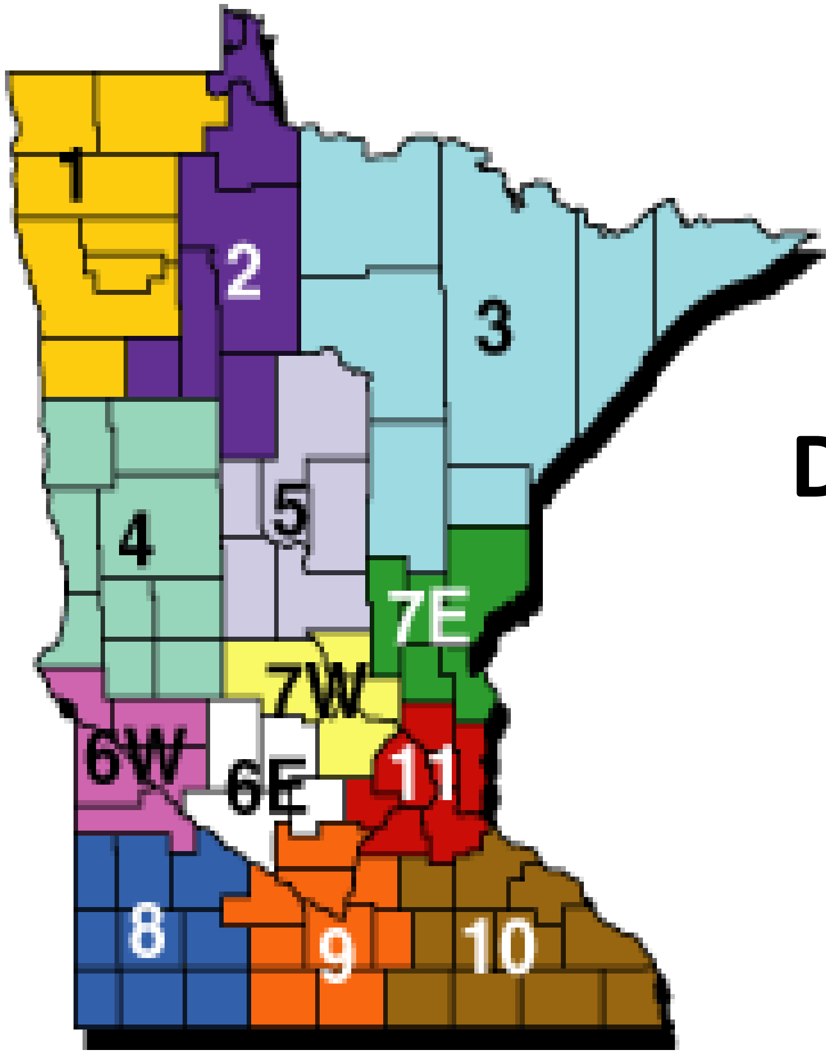

Economic Development Region 3:
Northeast Minnesota

Covering the following counties:
Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis

2024 REGIONAL PROFILE

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DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE

Northeast Minnesota, also known as the Arrowhead region or Economic Development Region 3, includes a total of 7 counties. According to population data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Northeast Minnesota was home to 327,051 people in 2023, accounting for 5.7% of the state's total population. Despite its large geographic size, the Northeast Minnesota planning region is the least populated of the six planning regions in the state. Since 2010, the region has added 826 people, a small increase of 0.3%. Meanwhile, the state of Minnesota grew by 8.2% with an increase of almost 434,000 people (Table 1).

Table 1. Population Change 2010-2023

Area	2010 Population	2023 Population	2010-2023 Change	
			Number	*Percentage*
Northeast Minnesota	**326,225**	**327,051**	***+826***	***+0.3%***
Aitkin Co.	16,202	16,102	*-100*	*-0.6%*
Carlton Co.	35,386	36,825	*+1,439*	*+4.1%*
Cook Co.	5,176	5,639	*+463*	*+8.9%*
Itasca Co.	45,058	45,365	*+307*	*+0.7%*
Koochiching Co.	13,311	11,751	*-1,560*	*-11.7%*
Lake Co.	10,866	10,855	*-11*	*-0.1%*
St. Louis Co.	200,226	200,514	*+288*	*+0.1%*
City of Duluth	86,265	87,680	*+1,415*	*+1.6%*
State of Minnesota	**5,303,925**	**5,737,915**	***+433,990***	***+8.2%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census, 2023 Pop. Estimates

Three of the 7 counties in the region lost population from 2010 to 2023, with Koochiching County losing 1,560 people, an -11.7% decline, making it the second fastest declining county in the state. Aitkin and Lake counties saw slight declines in the past decade while Itasca and St. Louis counties saw small increases of less than 1% each. Carlton County gained the most people, adding 1,439 people since 2010, which equated to a 4.1% increase. Cook County had the fastest growth, expanding by 8.9%, the 16th fastest growing county in the state and the only county in the region to see population growth above the statewide average from 2010-2023 (Table 1).

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

A recent population increase was fueled by increased in-migration. People moved into the region both from elsewhere in the country (4,860) as well as from abroad (306) (Table 2). Positive net migration offset a negative natural increase (more deaths than births) of nearly 4,000. The trend of positive domestic in-migration to Northeast Minnesota also countered the statewide losses to other states in the U.S that accelerated in the pandemic period.

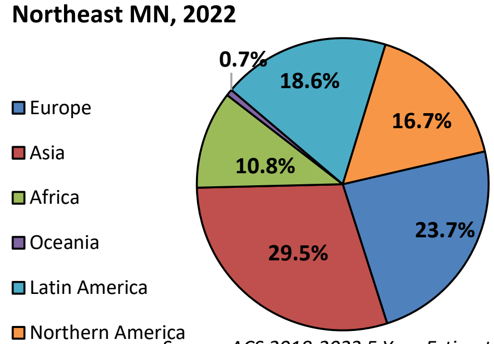
Table 2. Estimates of the Components of Population Change, 2020-2023

	Total Change	*Natural Increase*	Vital Events		Net Migration		
			Births	Deaths	*Total*	*International*	*Domestic*
Northeast	***+1,339***	*-3,989*	9,453	13,442	*+5,166*	*+306*	*+4,860*
Minnesota	***+31,111***	*+40,368*	207,857	167,489	*-11,352*	*+34,624*	*-45,976*

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

International in-migration was slow in the region, and Northeast was home to 5,645 foreign born residents, or 1.7% of the total population, compared to 8.5% statewide. The largest number of immigrants in the region came from Asia, Europe, Canada, or Latin America (Figure 1). However, the fastest increase in immigrants came from Africa, which doubled since 2010. Based on year of entry, Northeast's foreign-born population was "older" than the rest of the state. About 35% of the region's immigrants entered the U.S. before 1990, compared to just 18.4% statewide. The region had a smaller percentage of foreign-born residents who entered 2010 or later or between 1990-2009 than the state. Compared to the total population, the foreign-born population has both a larger share of its population between the ages of 25 and 54 (48% to 33.7%). While a higher percentage of foreign-born residents had an advanced degree than native born, immigrants were also more likely to have attended some college or have an associate degree.

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

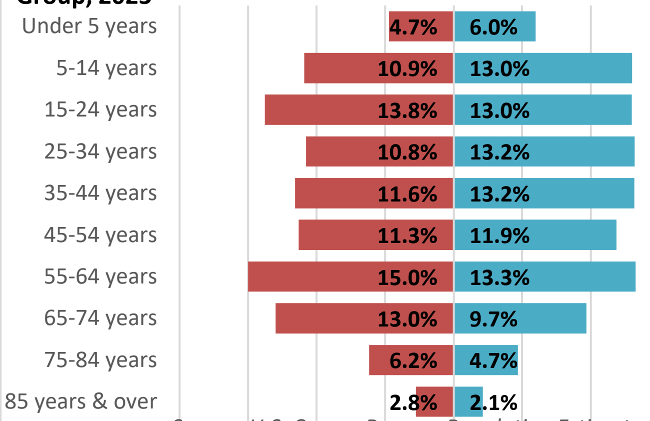


Source: ACS 2018-2022 5 Year Estimates

POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

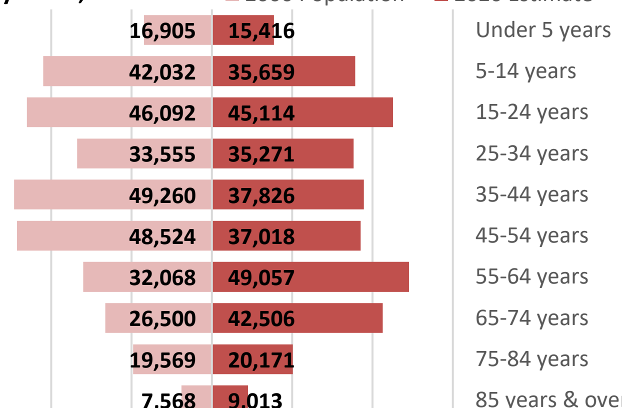
Northeast Minnesota has a much older population than the rest of the state, with 21.9% of residents aged 65 years and over, compared to 16.5% statewide. Consequently, the Arrowhead had a lower percentage of people in the 25- to 54-year-old age group, typically considered the "prime working years," as well as a smaller percent of school-aged children. However, having several postsecondary institutions in the region led to a slightly higher percentage of people aged 15 to 24. Over a quarter of the region's population is a part of the Baby Boom generation (people born between 1946 and 1964) which is creating a significant shift in the population over time. The only age group under 55 years that grew was the 25-34, which expanded by 1,716 people in 23 years. While the number of younger and middle-aged residents held steady or declined, the number of residents aged 55 years and over increased by over 35,000 individuals (Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2. Percentage of Population by Age Group, 2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Figure 3. Northeast Minnesota Population Pyramid, 2000-2023



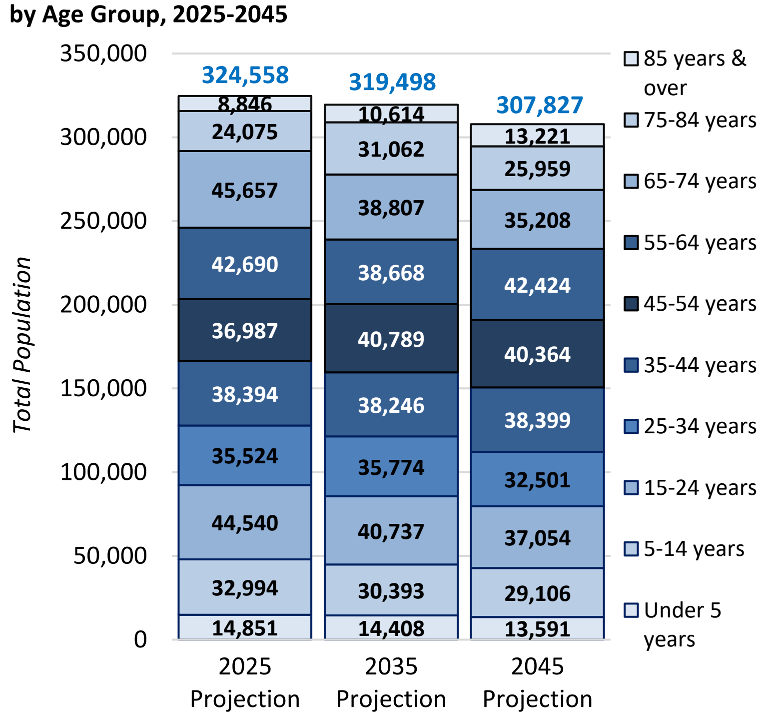
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP

Population projections indicate an accelerating decline in the region over the next two decades. According to population projections from the [State Demographic Center](), Northeast Minnesota is expected to lose more than 16,700 residents from 2025 to 2045, a 5.2% decline (Figure 4). In comparison, the state of Minnesota is projected to grow 5.5% from 2025 to 2045, closing in on 6.2 million residents.

However, the Arrowhead is expected to add nearly 6,300 people aged 75 years and over, a 19% jump. The region is also projected to see a smaller gain in 45-to-54-year-olds (+9.1%). In contrast, the region is expected to lose school-aged children and young adults, as well as people from 55 to 74 years as the current Baby Boom generation ages. The 55-74 age group is expected to shrink by nearly 11,000 people.

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



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

POPULATION BY RACE

Table 3. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2022	Northeast Minnesota			Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	*Change from 2010-2022*	Percent	*Change from 2010-2022*
Total	**325,995**	**100.0%**	***+0.1%***	**100.0%**	***+7.9%***
White	295,732	90.7%	*-2.5%*	79.7%	*-0.4%*
Black or African American	4,382	1.3%	*+21.5%*	6.7%	*+44.3%*
American Indian & Alaska Native	7,273	2.2%	*-19.8%*	0.9%	*-10.2%*
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	2,459	0.8%	*-0.7%*	5.1%	*+37.1%*
Some Other Race	1,761	0.5%	*+66.6%*	2.3%	*+84.7%*
Two or More Races	14,388	4.4%	*+132.8%*	5.3%	*+159.6%*
Hispanic or Latino origin	5,936	1.8%	*+52.0%*	5.7%	*+34.6%*

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

Northeast Minnesota's population is less diverse than the state's but is becoming more diverse over time. In 2022, about 90.7% of the region's residents reported White alone as their race, compared to 79.7% of residents statewide. The region had much smaller percentages of Black or African American residents, Asian or Other Pacific Islanders, and people of Hispanic or Latino origin. However, at 2.4%, Northeast Minnesota had a higher share of people reporting as American Indian or Alaska Native than the state. Two or More Races was the fastest growing group in the region (Table 3).

Cook County had the most diverse populace in the region, with 14.7% of residents reporting as people of color, primarily because 7.4% of Cook County residents identified as American Indian or Alaska Native. In contrast, Aitkin and Lake Counties had 6.5% and 4% of their respective populations reporting their race as people of color.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

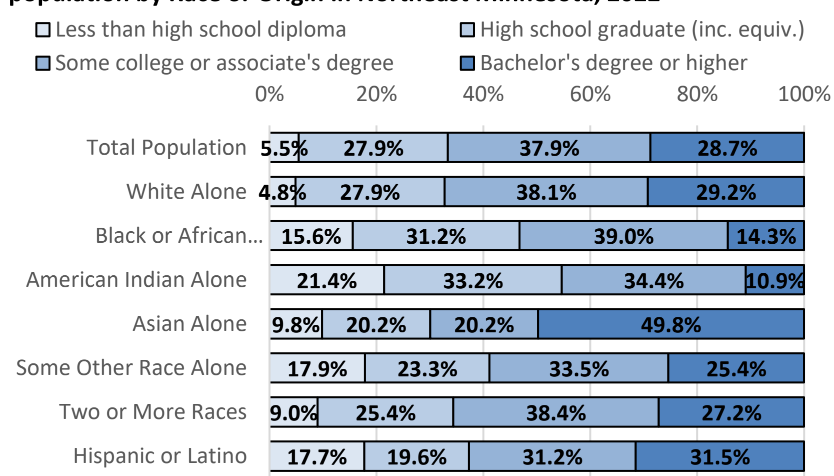
With 39.2% of adults aged 18 years and over holding a college degree, Northeast Minnesota had lower educational attainment than the state in 2022, where 46.6% of adults have an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree. In contrast, the region had a higher share of people with some college but no degree, an associate degree, or a high school diploma. The region's older population and industry mix led to a different educational attainment profile (Table 4).

Table 4. Educational Attainment for the Adult Population, 2022	Northeast MN		Minnesota
	Number	Percent	Percent
Total, 18 years & over	**262,352**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Less than high school	15,832	6.0%	7.0%
High school grad. (incl. equiv.)	74,883	28.4%	24.5%
Some college, no degree	69,501	26.4%	22.0%
Associate degree	33,887	12.8%	11.1%
Bachelor's degree	45,866	17.4%	23.7%
Advanced degree	23,754	9.0%	11.8%

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

Educational attainment varied significantly by race and ethnicity in Northeast. More than 17% of American Indian, Hispanic or Latino, and residents of Some Other Race had less than a high school diploma, compared to just 4.8% of White residents. The shares of Blacks and those identifying as Two or More Races with some college or associate degrees were similar to White residents. Half of Asian and 29.1% of Hispanic or Latino residents had a bachelor's degree or higher. Both shares were greater than the White population's (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Educational Attainment for the 25 & over population by Race or Origin in Northeast Minnesota, 2022



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey

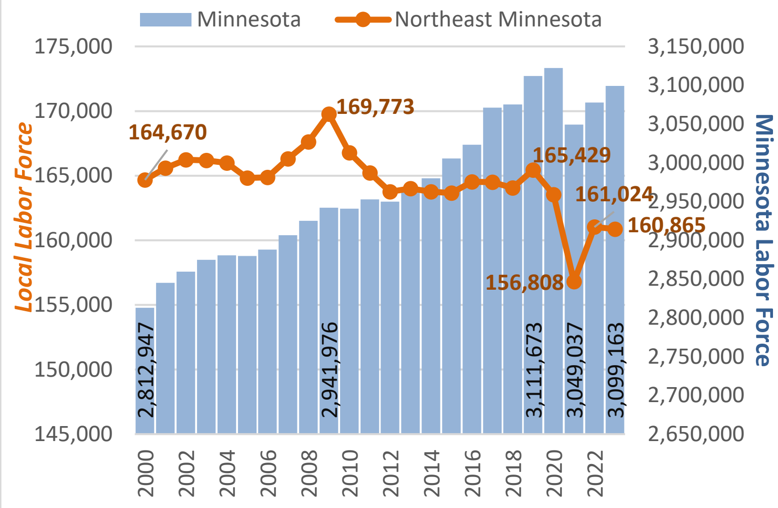
LABOR FORCE

LABOR FORCE CHANGE

According to data from DEED's Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, Northeast Minnesota had an average of 160,865 workers in 2023. In the depths of the Great Recession in 2009, the region's labor force reached its peak with nearly 170,000 workers, but then declined as the economy recovered, before increasing again from 2018-2019. Even though the region's population declined only slightly over the past decade, the labor force lost 4,344 workers from 2009-2019, a trend that accelerated from 2020 into 2021 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2019 through 2021, 8,621 workers left the labor force, a decline of 5.2%. Northeast is one of two regions to see its labor force shrink since 2009, with a relative loss (-5.2%) two percentage points greater than that of Southwest (-3.2%). By contrast, the statewide labor force added 157,000 workers since 2009, despite the loss of more than 69,000 during the pandemic (Figure 6).

After averaging a net gain of about 1,950 additional labor force participants per year between 1990 and 2000, Northeast Minnesota employers were able to tap into a large and growing pool of talented workers. However, from 2001 to 2019, Northeast Minnesota's labor force ceased expanding (see Figure 7). This decrease was then overshadowed by the sizable losses of 2020 and 2021. The region dropped to 156,808 workers in 2021, the lowest number since 1995. The labor force briefly rebounded into 2022, but then fell below 161,000 again.

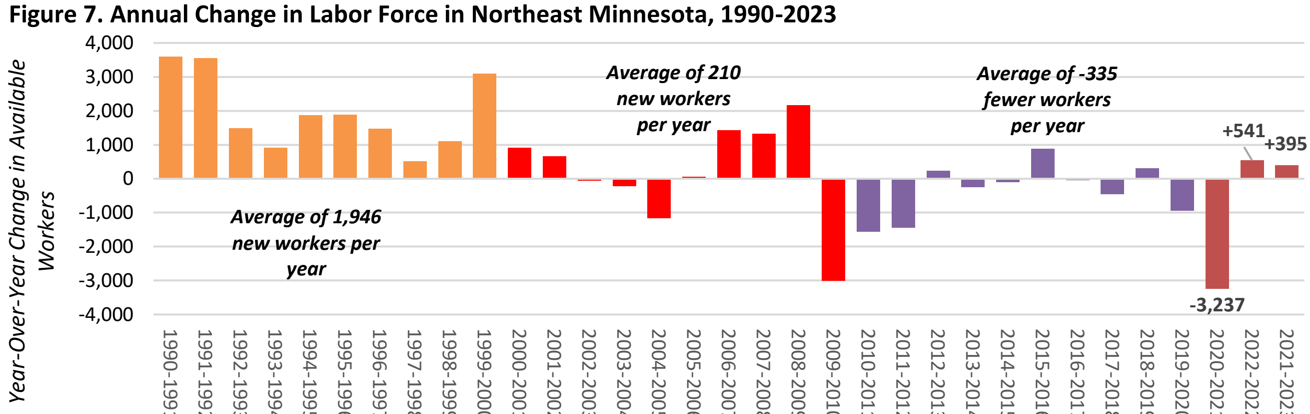
Figure 6. Annual Labor Force Estimates



Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

Prior to the pandemic, an increasingly tight labor market and a growing scarcity of workers was recognized as one of Northeast Minnesota's most significant barriers to future economic growth. After some pandemic-induced uncertainty, tight labor market conditions returned rapidly. In the face of these increasing constraints, it has become increasingly evident 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. As the White, native-born workforce continues to age, younger workers of different races or from different countries will comprise the fastest growing segments of the labor force.

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



Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS

If Northeast Minnesota's population changes at the projected rates shown in Figure 4 above, the region would be expected to also see a decline in the labor force over the next decade. Applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections by age group creates labor force projections for the region, which indicate a 1.4% drop in workforce numbers by 2035. In addition to the overall decline, the labor force will also see the impacts of aging and retirements. The number of workers aged 75 years and over will expand rapidly against large declines in the number of workers aged 55 to 74 years. The region is also expected to lose many of the youngest workers in the next decade. However, the region is expected to see modest gains in the number of 45-to-54-year-olds (Table 5).

Table 5. Northeast Minnesota Labor Force Projections

	2025 Labor Force Projection	2035 Labor Force Projection	*2025-2035 Change*	
			Numeric	*Percent*
16 to 19 years	8,346	7,362	*-984*	*-11.8%*
20 to 24 years	19,506	18,370	*-1,136*	*-5.8%*
25 to 44 years	62,993	63,080	*+87*	*+0.1%*
45 to 54 years	30,622	33,769	*+3,148*	*+10.3%*
55 to 64 years	26,211	23,742	*-2,469*	*-9.4%*
65 to 74 years	8,710	7,403	*-1,307*	*-15.0%*
75 years & over	1,708	2,162	*+454*	*+26.6%*
Total Labor Force	**158,096**	**155,889**	***-2,207***	***-1.4%***

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

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

With just 59.1% of the population over 16 years of age in the labor force, Northeast has much lower labor force participation than the state. Each Northeast age group had lower participation rates than those statewide (Table 6).

The region also had lower labor force participation rates than the state for every racial or ethnic group; and had large unemployment rate disparities for workers of color. Unemployment rates for Black or African Americans and American Indians were more than triple the White rate. The region also had 6,364 veterans and 11,100 workers with disabilities in the labor force. Workers with disabilities had much lower participation rates while veterans exhibited higher labor force participation. Labor force participation was highest for prime age, Asian, and most-educated workers. Unemployment rates were highest for youth, people of color, workers with disabilities, and those with the lowest education levels. Regional unemployment rates were higher than across the state for most groups.

Table 6. Northeast Minnesota Employment Characteristics, 2022

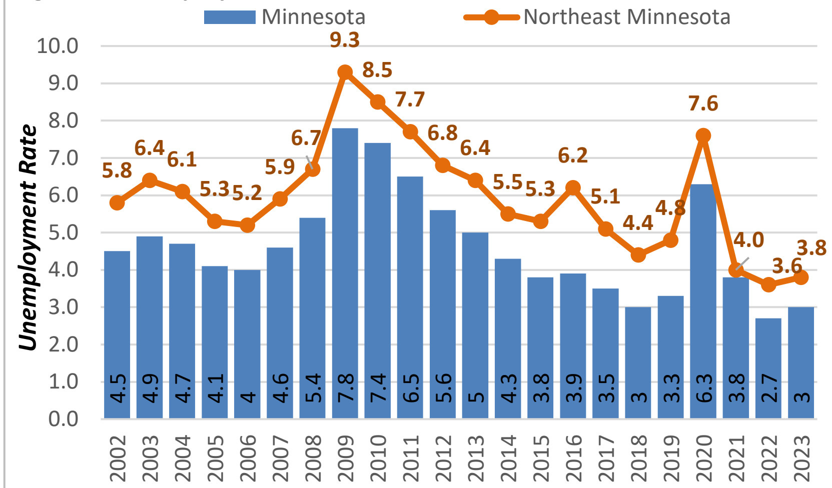
	Northeast Minnesota			Minnesota	
Age Group	Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Labor Force	**160,415**	**59.1%**	**4.8%**	**68.7%**	**4.0%**
16 to 19 years	8,997	51.5%	8.1%	53.0%	9.8%
20 to 24 years	19,199	80.4%	7.1%	83.1%	6.7%
25 to 44 years	62,093	85.2%	5.0%	88.8%	3.5%
45 to 54 years	30,548	82.8%	3.6%	87.8%	2.9%
55 to 64 years	30,024	61.4%	3.3%	72.8%	3.1%
65 to 74 years	8,083	19.1%	4.0%	27.6%	3.3%
75 years & over	1,509	5.2%	5.0%	6.6%	3.2%
Employment Characteristics by Gender					
Male	84,288	61.3%	5.3%	72.4%	4.3%
Female	76,165	56.9%	4.2%	65.0%	3.6%
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin					
White alone	147,667	59.1%	4.4%	67.8%	3.4%
Black or African American	1,485	44.5%	22.9%	71.5%	8.7%
American Indian & Alaska Native	3,023	52.7%	14.1%	57.6%	11.9%
Asian or Other Pacific Islanders	1,484	69.2%	3.5%	73.9%	3.6%
Some Other Race	958	67.4%	1.7%	76.1%	6.1%
Two or More Races	5,854	64.0%	6.4%	74.3%	6.6%
Hispanic or Latino	2,710	66.7%	5.5%	77.0%	6.3%
Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status					
Military Veteran	6,364	73.8%	4.2%	81.1%	4.0%
Employment Characteristics by Disability					
With Any Disability	11,100	46.4%	9.2%	54.4%	10.2%
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment					
Population 25 to 64 years	122,663	77.3%	4.3%	84.4%	3.3%
Less than H.S. Diploma	4,321	54.5%	6.1%	67.2%	4.6%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	26,247	66.5%	2.7%	76.8%	2.5%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	50,643	79.2%	4.1%	85.1%	3.6%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	41,460	87.6%	2.0%	90.3%	2.0%

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

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Northeast has consistently reported higher unemployment rates than Minnesota, typically at least one percentage point above the state rate. [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) show that the unemployment rate reached its peak in 2009 at 9.3%, then declined to an annual rate of 4.4% and landed at 4.8% in 2019. Since then, a steep climb early in the pandemic was erased as rates consistently fell to a record low 3.6% in 2022, before ticking up slightly in 2023 (see Figure 8)

Figure 8. Unemployment Rates, 2002-2023

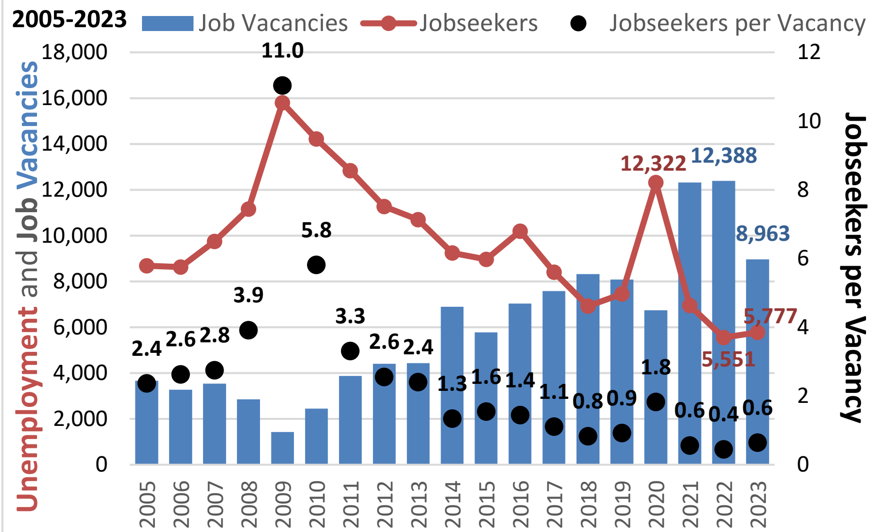


Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY

Prior to the coronavirus crisis, the labor market had already been tightening. One clear example of this is the ratio of unemployed jobseekers per vacancy, which in 2019 stood at 0.9-to-1 in Northeast Minnesota; meaning there were slightly fewer people looking for work than there were open jobs. After briefly rising to 1.8 in 2020, the ratio declined to an all-time low of 0.4 jobseekers per vacancy before ticking up slightly in 2023. According to the most recent job vacancy survey results, there were 8,963 openings reported by employers compared to 5,777 (2nd lowest on record) unemployed jobseekers in the region. By comparison, the ratio climbed as high as 11.0 during the recession in 2009 (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Jobseekers per Vacancy in Northeast Minnesota, 2005-2023



Source: DEED LAUS, DEED JVS

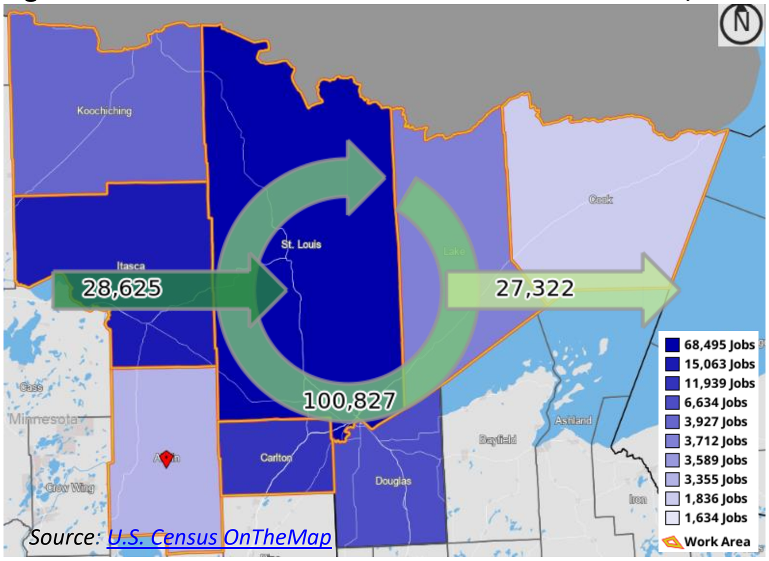
COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED

According to commuting data from the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the majority – just under 79% – of workers who live in the region also work within the region. However, Northeast is a net importer of labor, having slightly more jobs than available workers. Just over 100,800 workers both lived and worked in the 7-county region, while another 28,600 workers commuted into the region for work, compared to 27,300 who live in the region but commuted to other counties for work (Table 7 and Figure 10).

Table 7. Northeast Minnesota Inflow/ Outflow Job Counts (Primary Jobs), 2021	2021	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	129,452	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	28,625	22.1%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	100,827	77.9%
Living in the Selection Area	128,149	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	27,322	21.3%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	100,827	78.7%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap		

Since 2010, the share of people employed in the region but living elsewhere grew the fastest, expanding 17%.

Figure 10. Northeast Minnesota Labor & Commute Shed, 2021



Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap

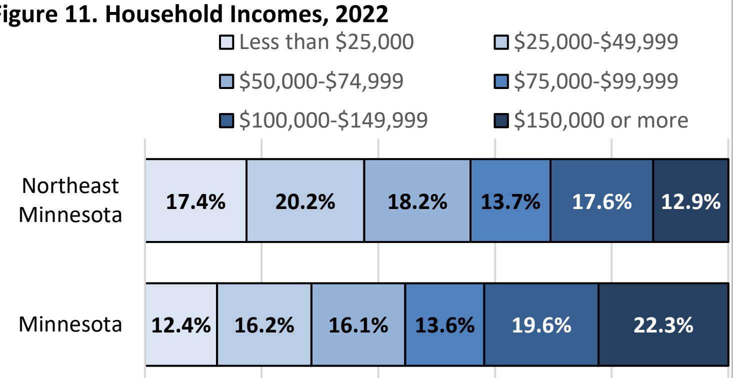
St. Louis County is the largest employment center in the region and the biggest draw for workers living in the region (52.7% of jobs), followed by Itasca (10.2%), Carlton (7%), Hennepin (5.4%) and Douglas (2.9%) (WI) counties (Figure 10). Employers in the region draw workers from Douglas County (6,634) in Wisconsin as well as Hennepin (3,712) and Dakota (1,634) counties. The average commute time for workers the region was 21.6 minutes, compared to 23.3 minutes for workers statewide. More than 58% of workers commuted less than 20 minutes each way, compared to 47.1% statewide. As of 2022, about 8.5% of workers worked at home, an increase from 5.4% before the pandemic. About 3.4% were able to walk to work.

INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Household incomes were significantly lower in Northeast Minnesota than the rest of the state. The median household income in the Arrowhead was $66,576 in 2022, compared to $84,313 in Minnesota, ranking last of the six planning regions. More than one out of every three households (37.6%) in the region had incomes below $50,000 in 2022, compared to 28.6% of households statewide. Just 12.9% of households had incomes greater than $150,000 in the region (Figure 11). On a positive note, median household incomes in the region grew 29% from 2017.

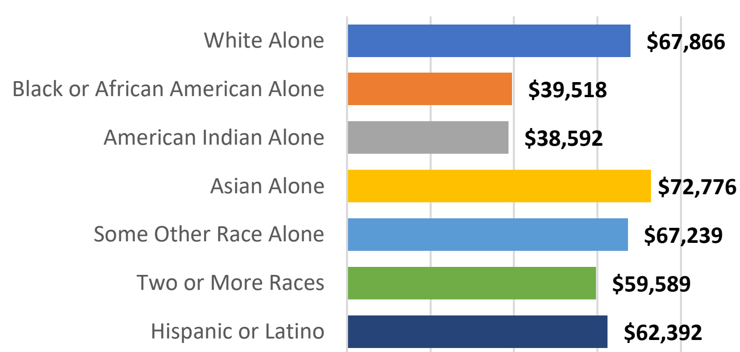
Figure 11. Household Incomes, 2022



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

Median household incomes varied by race or origin in the region. American Indian and Black or African American households reported the lowest incomes in Northeast Minnesota, with median incomes about 60% those of White and Some Other Race households. At over $72,700 a year, Asian households had the highest median incomes (Figure 12).

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



Source: 2018-2022 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 $67,320 in 2023.

The cost of living for a similar family in Northeast Minnesota was $60,228 – which was the third lowest of the 6 planning regions in the state. The highest monthly costs were for housing, transportation, and food; though all but the region's health care costs were lower than the rest of the state. 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 an average of $19.30 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 the Arrowhead would be $30,876 which would require an hourly wage of $14.84 to meet the basic needs standard of living (Table 8).

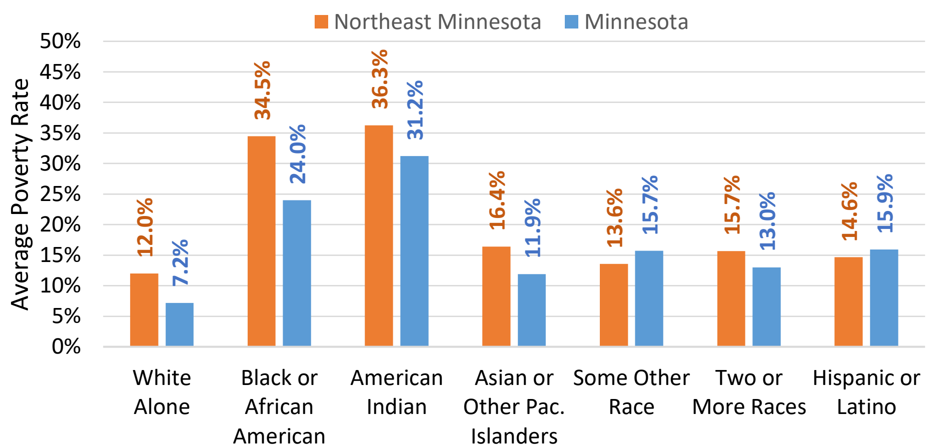
Table 8. Family Yearly Cost, Worker Hourly Wage, and Family Monthly Costs, 2023

Family Composition	Number of Workers	Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
				Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Trans-portation	Other	Taxes
Northeast Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$30,876	$14.84	$0	$408	$161	$821	$565	$294	$324
Single, 1 child	1 FT	$51,120	$24.58	$786	$602	$415	$1,073	$569	$401	$414
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$60,228**	**$19.30**	**$393**	**$932**	**$576**	**$1,073**	**$964**	**$480**	**$601**
2 parents, 2 children	2 FT	$82,272	$19.78	$1,176	$1,213	$585	$1,402	$1,001	$625	$854
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

In 2022, the Northeast Minnesota poverty rate was 12.9%, which was well above the statewide rate of 9.3%, and up slightly from the previous year. Like incomes, poverty levels varied widely by race and origin. It was estimated that more than 34% of the region's Black or African American and American Indian population was below the poverty level in 2022, compared to 12% of the White population. Likewise, rates were higher for Asians, those of Two or More Races, Some Other Race, and Hispanic or Latino origin. Almost 17% of people identifying as Two or More Races also were below the poverty level in 2022. The region's poverty rate was higher than the state's poverty rate for most racial or ethnic groups, excepting Some Other Race and Hispanic or Latinos (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percent Below the Poverty Level by Race or Origin, 2022



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

WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics (OEWS) program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Northeast Minnesota was $23.41 as of the first quarter of 2024, which was the fourth highest wage level of the six planning regions in the state. Northeast's median wage was $1.81 below the state's median hourly wage, equaling 92.8% of the statewide wage rate, and $4.37 below the median hourly wage in the Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to a difference of nearly $9,100 per year for a full-time worker (Table 9).

Table 9. Occupational Employment Statistics by Region, 1st Qtr. 2024	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
Central Minnesota	$23.55	274,190
Northeast Minnesota	**$23.41**	**138,010**
Northwest Minnesota	$22.77	219,910
Southeast Minnesota	$24.26	240,340
Southwest Minnesota	$22.98	169,300
Twin Cities Metro Area	$27.78	1,743,500
State of Minnesota	**$25.22**	**2,881,100**

Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics

Based on location quotient, Northeast Minnesota stands out for having higher concentrations of Community & Social Service, Construction & Extraction, Protective Service, Installation, Maintenance & Repair, Farming, Fishing, & Forestry, Healthcare Practitioners & Technical, Life, Physical & Social Science, and Food Preparation & Serving Related workers than the state. The largest occupations in the region include Office & Administrative Support, Food Preparation & Serving Related, Sales & Related, Healthcare Practitioners, and Healthcare Support positions. Those occupational groups combined to account for over 45.8% of regional employment.

The lowest-paying jobs are concentrated in Food Preparation & Serving, Sales & Related, Personal Care & Service, Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance, and Healthcare Support. Each of these occupational groups paid at least $5.42 below the median for all occupations and tend to have lower educational and training requirements (Table 10).

Table 10. Northeast Minnesota Occupational Employment Statistics, 2024

Occupational Group	Northeast Minnesota				State of Minnesota		
	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	**$23.41**	**138,010**	***100.0%***	***1.0***	**$25.22**	**2,881,100**	***100.0%***
Office & Administrative Support	$22.44	16,760	*12.1%*	*1.0*	$23.86	352,250	*12.2%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	$14.40	13,910	*10.1%*	*1.3*	$15.07	232,190	*8.1%*
Sales & Related	$16.96	11,740	*8.5%*	*1.0*	$18.82	242,440	*8.4%*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	$39.02	11,510	*8.3%*	*1.3*	$43.01	184,410	*6.4%*
Healthcare Support	$17.99	9,260	*6.7%*	*1.1*	$18.07	169,580	*5.9%*
Transportation & Material Moving	$21.66	8,810	*6.4%*	*0.8*	$22.86	225,820	*7.8%*
Education, Training & Library	$25.65	8,350	*6.1%*	*1.1*	$28.22	163,340	*5.7%*
Management	$45.28	7,740	*5.6%*	*0.8*	$57.75	201,710	*7.0%*
Construction & Extraction	$32.73	7,590	*5.5%*	*1.4*	$32.44	110,960	*3.9%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	$29.94	6,760	*4.9%*	*1.4*	$29.54	104,530	*3.6%*
Production	$24.87	6,550	*4.7%*	*0.7*	$23.05	203,810	*7.1%*
Business & Financial Operations	$34.89	5,970	*4.3%*	*0.6*	$39.26	202,700	*7.0%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	$17.48	4,560	*3.3%*	*1.2*	$18.83	79,660	*2.8%*
Community & Social Service	$25.46	4,280	*3.1%*	*1.5*	$27.92	57,930	*2.0%*
Protective Service	$26.04	3,070	*2.2%*	*1.4*	$28.87	45,860	*1.6%*
Personal Care & Service	$17.17	3,050	*2.2%*	*1.1*	$17.60	59,420	*2.1%*
Architecture & Engineering	$40.12	2,180	*1.6%*	*0.8*	$42.97	58,320	*2.0%*
Computer & Mathematical	$42.37	2,090	*1.5%*	*0.4*	$50.83	98,240	*3.4%*
Life, Physical & Social Science	$35.31	1,820	*1.3%*	*1.3*	$39.93	29,220	*1.0%*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	$23.33	1,250	*0.9%*	*0.7*	$29.01	36,160	*1.3%*
Legal	$40.53	540	*0.4%*	*0.6*	$51.15	19,040	*0.7%*
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	$22.88	220	*0.2%*	*1.3*	$22.13	3,520	*0.1%*

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2024

The highest paying jobs in Northeast Minnesota are found in Management, Computer & Mathematical, Legal, Architecture & Engineering, and Healthcare Practitioners & Technical occupations, which all have wages $15 higher than the median wage for all occupations. Many occupations in these groups require higher levels of education and experience, including many that require postsecondary training. The pay gaps at the highest end of the wage scale for the Management and Computer & Mathematical occupational groups compared to the Twin Cities metro area are near and exceed $20 more per hour. The four highest-paying occupational groups are also less concentrated in the region.

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Employers in Northeast Minnesota reported 8,963 job vacancies in 2023, down more than 3,400 from the year before, but higher than all but one survey period before 2021. The sectors with the largest number of openings were Healthcare & Social Assistance (3,288 vacancies), Accommodation & Food Services (1,185), Retail Trade (1,160), and Educational Services (653). More than 70% of regional vacancies were in these industries.

The rising demand of the past several years has translated to rising wage offers, with the 2023 median hourly wage offer jumping to $18.49 per hour, which was the highest offer on record, and the fourth-highest among the six planning regions. Wage offers ranged from under $15/hr for Food Prep & Serving and Personal Care & Service to over $35/hr for Management, Architecture & Engineering, and Computer & Mathematical positions.

The largest number of vacancies by occupation were in Healthcare Practitioners & Technical, Food Preparation & Serving Related, Healthcare Support, Sales & Related, and Installation, Maintenance & Repair occupations. More than 54% of regional vacancies were in these occupational groups. Job vacancy rates, a measure of turnover and demand, were the highest for Installation, Maintenance & Repair, Legal, Personal Care & Service, Healthcare Practitioners & Technical, and Healthcare Support. Overall, 30% of the openings were part-time, 37% required post-secondary education, and 41% required 1 or more years of experience (Table 11).

Table 11. Northeast Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey Results, 2023

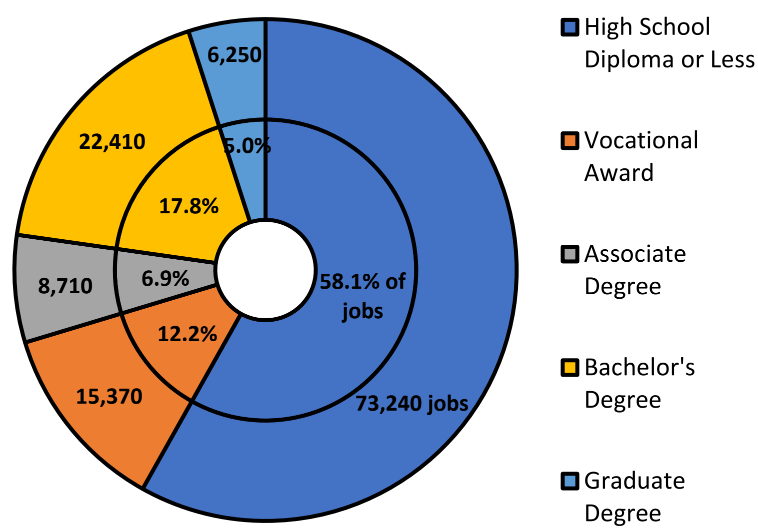
Northeast Minnesota	Number of Total Vacancies	Median Hourly Wage Offer	Percent Part-Time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Work Exp.	Requiring Certificate or License	*Job Vacancy Rate*
Total, All Occupations	**8,963**	**$18.49**	**30%**	**10%**	**37%**	**41%**	**45%**	***6.6%***
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	1,244	$34.84	27%	1%	97%	56%	99%	*10.9%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	1,043	$14.24	50%	18%	6%	32%	3%	*7.7%*
Healthcare Support	982	$15.95	34%	3%	39%	3%	54%	*10.7%*
Sales & Related	826	$16.06	41%	5%	5%	31%	10%	*7.2%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	760	$20.03	4%	4%	37%	47%	40%	*11.9%*
Office & Administrative Support	594	$16.61	36%	3%	11%	45%	13%	*3.7%*
Transportation & Material Moving	499	$17.36	59%	19%	1%	9%	63%	*5.3%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	436	$16.13	34%	45%	2%	22%	23%	*9.6%*
Education, Training & Library	426	$17.76	27%	26%	59%	32%	64%	*5.0%*
Production	420	$21.97	7%	0%	26%	72%	30%	*6.3%*
Personal Care & Service	346	$14.10	24%	23%	39%	56%	24%	*11.1%*
Community & Social Service	333	$21.88	24%	0%	60%	75%	91%	*7.7%*
Business & Financial Operations	246	$23.69	4%	0%	44%	77%	25%	*4.2%*
Architecture & Engineering	195	$36.71	1%	1%	85%	77%	80%	*8.3%*
Management	144	$39.89	3%	0%	82%	88%	54%	*1.9%*
Protective Service	129	$19.03	48%	6%	19%	49%	90%	*4.3%*
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	70	$33.94	13.0%	3.0%	62.0%	54.0%	55%	4.1%
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	70	$16.85	74%	62%	33%	35%	50%	*5.5%*
Legal	62	$30.09	0%	0%	100%	46%	100%	*11.6%*
Construction & Extraction	59	$23.67	0%	14%	23%	74%	57%	*0.8%*

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, 2023

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Reflecting the recent job vacancy data, DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics program shows that about 42% of current jobs held in the region typically require post-secondary education to enter. The other 58% 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. Share of Jobs by Educational Requirements in Northeast Minnesota, 2023



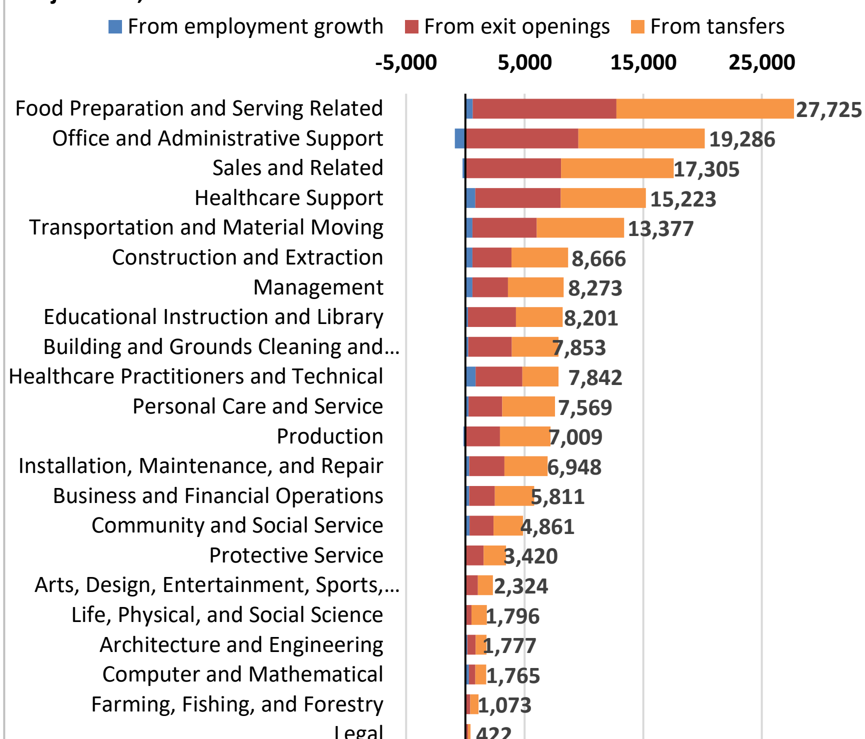
Source: [DEED Occupational Employment Statistics]()

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 marketplace. While education is typically a worthwhile investment, college can be expensive – with average annual expenses ranging between $20,600 and more than $53,600 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 Northeast planning area is projected to grow 3.3% from 2022 to 2032, a gain of 5,157 new jobs. In addition, the region is also expected to need 178,526 replacement openings to fill jobs left vacant by retirements and career changers. Employment growth is expected to slow from the initial pandemic recovery, more in line with pre-2020 employment growth. Accordingly, Food Preparation & Serving is the occupational group expected to add the most jobs, followed by Office & Admin. Support, and Sales & Related occupations (Figure 15). The largest percent growth is expected for Computer & Mathematical (+12.6%), Healthcare Support (+8.9%), Architecture & Engineering (+7.5%), and Healthcare Practitioners & Technical (+7.3%).

Figure 15. Northeast Minnesota Regional Employment Projections, 2022-2032



Source: DEED 2022-2032 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 426 occupations in demand (OID) in Northeast Minnesota, and 253 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 just under 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, Accommodation & Food Service, Education, Retail, Other Services, and other related industries (Table 12).

Table 12. 2023 Occupations in Demand by Education Level, Northeast Minnesota

High School or Less	Vocational Training	Some College or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Home Health and Personal Care Aides $34,948/yr	Nursing Assistants $40,605/yr	Registered Nurses $81,894/yr	General and Operations Managers $76,245/yr
Retail Salespersons $33,663/yr	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses $54,185/yr	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers $76,015/yr	Accountants and Auditors $71,413/yr
Cashiers $29,976/yr	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers $61,962/yr	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians $71,154/yr	Human Resources Specialists $65,973/yr
Cooks, Restaurant $37,144/yr	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks $47,607/yr	Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping $48,119/yr	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education $63,522/yr
Fast Food and Counter Workers $30,037/yr	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics $54,132/yr	Dental Hygienists $84,405/yr	Physician Assistants $120,821/yr
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary $38,927/yr	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers $66,247/yr	Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians $73,049/yr	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education $65,592/yr
Waiters and Waitresses $22,936/yr	Substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors $49,373/yr	Community Health Workers $43,268/yr	Child, Family, and School Social Workers $69,154/yr
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners $36,904/yr	Machinists $62,131/yr	Surgical Technologists $65,008/yr	Medical and Health Services Managers $100,366/yr
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners $33,611/yr	Emergency Medical Technicians $39,523/yr	Forest and Conservation Technicians $53,442/yr	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term $41,313/yr
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General $50,367/yr	Medical Assistants $47,014/yr	Respiratory Therapists $80,721/yr	Nurse Practitioners $132,823/yr

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

ECONOMY

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, Northeast Minnesota was home to 9,308 business establishments providing 138,508 covered jobs through 2023, with a total payroll of almost $7.8 billion (Table 13). That was 4.8% of total employment in the state of Minnesota, and the smallest share of the six planning regions. Average annual wages were $56,133 in the region, which was about $15,400 lower than the average annual wage statewide, Average wages were up 2.7% from 2022 and 7.3% from 2021, exceeding statewide wage growth over those periods.

Table 13. Northeast Minnesota Industry Employment, 2023

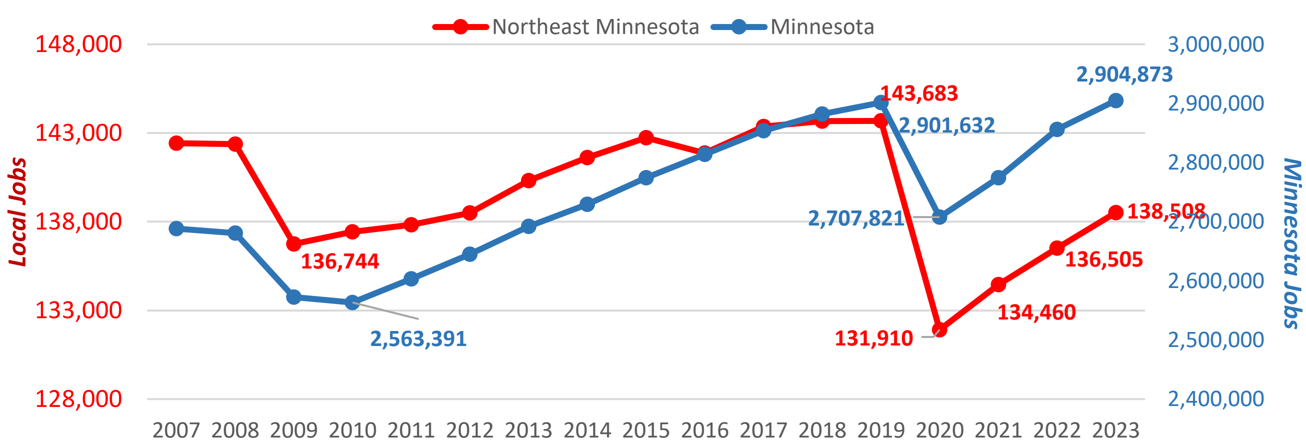
Geography	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll	Average Annual Wage	*2022-2023* Change in Jobs	*2022-2023* Percent Change	*2019-2023* Change in Jobs	*2019-2023* Percent Change
Northeast Minnesota	**9,308**	**138,508**	**$7,774,858,423**	**$56,133**	***+2,003***	***+1.5%***	***-5,175***	***-3.6%***
Aitkin Co.	477	4,289	$198,401,510	$46,228	*+78*	*+1.9%*	*+152*	*+3.7%*
Carlton Co.	802	12,944	$709,273,896	$54,808	*-67*	*-0.5%*	*-233*	*-1.8%*
Cook Co.	340	2,654	$115,293,681	$43,420	*+121*	*+4.8%*	*-227*	*-7.9%*
Itasca Co.	1,311	15,831	$817,335,913	$51,636	*+208*	*+1.3%*	*-460*	*-2.8%*
Koochiching Co.	426	4,326	$240,787,879	$55,640	*-96*	*-2.2%*	*-228*	*-5.0%*
Lake Co.	372	3,812	$198,838,435	$52,156	*+35*	*+0.9%*	*-394*	*-9.4%*
St. Louis Co.	5,579	94,650	$5,494,927,109	$58,032	*+1,723*	*+1.9%*	*-3,785*	*-3.8%*
State of Minnesota	**208,123**	**2,904,873**	**$207,757,410,993**	**$71,552**	***+48,741***	***+1.7%***	***+3,241***	***+0.1%***

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

St. Louis County is the largest employment center in the region with 94,650 jobs at 5,579 firms; followed by Itasca County and Carlton County with 15,831 and 12,944 jobs, respectively. Of the seven counties, only Aitkin added jobs between 2019 and 2023. Of the other six, Lake County's employment was down 9.4% and Cook County's was down 7.9% over four years. Carlton's and Itasca's percent losses were the smallest. The regional decline was driven by employment losses in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the year, employment was up 1.5%, growing by 2,003 (Table 13). Employment grew in all counties except Koochiching and Carlton and growth in Aitkin, Cook, and St. Louis outpaced the state since 2022.

Northeast Minnesota has seen employment ups and downs over the past decade but ended 2019 with 6,939 more jobs than it had in 2009, surpassing pre-Great Recession levels in 2015. However, a decade of employment gains was eliminated in a few months in 2020 as the regional economy finished the year with nearly 11,800 fewer jobs. Early pandemic losses in the region (-8.2%) exceeded the statewide losses which amounted to a decline of -6.7% (Figure 16). 2023 employment remained below pre-pandemic levels, at 96.3% of 2019 levels, despite a recovery of 6,600 jobs and 5% growth over three years.

Figure 16. Industry Employment Statistics, 2007-2023



Source: DEED QCEW program

With 32,639 jobs at 1,068 firms, Health Care & Social Assistance is the largest employing sector in the Northeast region, accounting for 23.6% of total jobs in the region. That is nearly six percentage points higher than the state's concentration of employment in the sector. As in most sectors, employment declined since 2019. That decline was relatively larger than for all industries combined. However, Health Care & Social Assistance was one twelve sectors that saw employment growth over the year into 2023, adding almost 500 jobs. At $63,265 in 2023, average annual wages were about $7,100 higher in Health Care than all industries.

The next largest sectors were Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Service as these two industries made up another 22.6% of all the jobs in the region. While both sectors were down jobs from 2019, Retail employment declined by only 0.3%, relatively better than the 6.5% decline experienced by Accommodation & Food Services. With Accommodation & Food Service averaging $22,590 a year and Retail paying an average of $33,440 per year, both sectors are among the lowest paying. Combined, the two sectors added 450 jobs over the year.

Employment in Educational Services and Public Administration comprise the fourth and fifth largest industries in the region, accounting for 16.2% of total employment. Since 2019, Public Administration lost 213 jobs, despite adding 232 in the last year. Educational Services saw even greater losses with a decline of 391 and also had slight job growth into 2023. Manufacturing was the 6th largest industry in 2023 – accounting for 6.6% of employment – and expanded 2.3% from 2019-2023. Perhaps the most well-known industry in the region is Mining, which offered 3,985 jobs (3% of total) at 35 firms. At over $116,200, the Mining sector paid the highest average wage in the region. Along with Mining, Professional & Technical Services, Construction, and Utilities were the only industries to have more jobs in 2023 than in 2019. The largest percent declines since 2019 occurred in Information (-17.2%), Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation (-12.1%), and Finance and Insurance (-11%). Those three sectors, along with five others, experienced job losses over the past year (Table 14).

Table 14. Northeast 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	**9,308**	**138,508**	**$7,774,858**	**$56,133**	***+2,003***	***+1.5%***	***-5,175***	***-3.6%***
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,068	32,639	$2,064,857	$63,265	*+488*	*+1.5%*	*-1,949*	*-5.6%*
Retail Trade	1,266	17,049	$569,617	$33,440	*+366*	*+2.1%*	*-34*	*-0.3%*
Accommodation & Food Services	979	14,241	$321,252	$22,590	*+84*	*+0.5%*	*-972*	*-6.5%*
Educational Services	269	11,485	$603,140	$52,515	*+30*	*+0.3%*	*-391*	*-3.3%*
Public Administration	381	10,943	$683,796	$62,487	*+232*	*+2.2%*	*-213*	*-1.9%*
Manufacturing	332	9,098	$638,085	$70,181	*+366*	*+4.1%*	*+207*	*+2.3%*
Construction	1,081	7,360	$559,361	$76,083	*+87*	*+1.1%*	*+353*	*+4.9%*
Other Services	975	4,749	$158,446	$33,378	*+176*	*+3.8%*	*-396*	*-7.7%*
Professional & Technical Services	596	4,596	$364,186	$79,274	*-43*	*-1.0%*	*+238*	*+5.4%*
Mining	35	4,097	$476,089	$116,233	*+112*	*+2.8%*	*-121*	*-2.9%*
Transportation & Warehousing	351	3,885	$238,862	$61,626	*+83*	*+1.9%*	*-332*	*-8.1%*
Finance & Insurance	435	3,861	$297,587	$77,095	*-12*	*-0.3%*	*-475*	*-11.0%*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	277	3,335	$101,429	$30,615	*+5*	*-0.5%*	*-436*	*-12.1%*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	354	3,235	$119,481	$36,991	*+26*	*+0.7%*	*-199*	*-5.9%*
Wholesale Trade	259	2,846	$210,093	$73,820	*-39*	*-1.4%*	*-139*	*-4.7%*
Utilities	50	1,490	$163,876	$109,984	*+28*	*+1.9%*	*+24*	*+1.6%*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	282	1,279	$50,409	$42,113	*+64*	*-1.5%*	*-11*	*-7.2%*
Information	143	1,085	$57,656	$53,139	*-7*	*-0.6%*	*-226*	*-17.2%*
Management of Companies	49	701	$67,086	$95,700	*-32*	*-4.4%*	*-53*	*-7.0%*
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	130	529	$25,347	$47,915	*-11*	*-2.0%*	*-50*	*-8.6%*

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

EMPLOYMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

According to DEED's Quarterly Employment Demographics (QED) program, the workforce in the region was aging over the past 10 years. Over one-fifth (22.9%) of workers in the region were 55 years or older, compared to 22.1% statewide and 20.4% in the region one decade earlier. In contrast, the percentage of workers under 25 years old fell from 18.9% in 2012 to 17.2% in 2022 (Table 15). The share of workers 19 years and under grew slightly and was higher in Northeast Minnesota than the rest of the state.

As noted above, wages climbed across the board for all workers due to rising demand and a tight labor market. Wages were lowest for the youngest and oldest workers who tend to fill lower-skilled, less-than-full time jobs in industries like Retail Trade, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, and Accommodation & Food Services. Despite having the lowest wages, workers aged 19 and under of age saw the highest relative wage growth (+84%) over the past decade, followed by workers aged 20-24 (+76%). The age groups with the highest wages were those between 45 and 64 years, with median hourly wages greater than $25.50.

The share of women workers in the regional workforce declined slightly from 2012 to 2022. And while the median hourly wage for women increased relatively faster than it did for men over the last 10 years, women still earn only 80% of the male median wage. In 2012 that ratio was 74.8% so the pay gap is narrowing but still significant.

Lastly, QED tracks the number of hours worked per quarter. A full-time, 35 hours a week worker would equate to 455 hours per quarter. Workers between ages 45 and 64 had median hours worked that exceeded that figure. The fewest median hours worked were by workers 19 and under and those 65 years and older. Women worked a median 358 hours per quarter in 2022, 79% of the male median. From 2012, median hours worked for all workers fell from 408 to 391. Hours increased the most for workers over 64 and 20-24, growing 6.1% and 4.3% respectively. Median hours declined for all other age groups and both genders (Table 15).

Table 15. Workforce Demographics by Age Group and Gender, Total of All Industries, 2012-2022

Northeast Minnesota	Percentage of Workers		*Percent of Workers, Minnesota*		Median Hourly Wage		Median Hours Worked (Per Qtr.)	
	2012	2022	2012	2022	2012	2022	2012	2022
Total, all ages	100.0%	100.0%	*100.0%*	*100.0%*	$15.51	$22.12	408	391
19 and under	6.6%	6.9%	*6.3%*	*6.6%*	$7.92	$14.55	133	129
20 to 24 years	12.3%	10.3%	*11.3%*	*9.2%*	$10.00	$17.63	246	257
25 to 44 years	38.2%	41.6%	*42.3%*	*43.6%*	$16.92	$25.03	449	445
45 to 54 years	22.4%	18.3%	*21.9%*	*18.4%*	$20.11	$28.66	476	470
55 to 64 years	17.1%	17.2%	*14.7%*	*16.7%*	$19.98	$25.58	466	460
65 years and over	3.3%	5.6%	*3.5%*	*5.4%*	$12.47	$18.25	207	220
Male	49.2%	50.1%	*49.1%*	*49.1%*	$18.47	$25.64	460	451
Female	50.8%	49.9%	*50.9%*	*50.9%*	$13.82	$20.52	363	358

Source: DEED Quarterly Employment Demographics

EMPLOYMENT DIVERSITY

While people of color make up 9.3% of the overall population, they held 9.7% of total jobs in Northeast Minnesota, according to data from the Quarterly Workforce Indicators program. In 2023, that equaled 13,989 workers of color, compared to 130,138 White alone workers. However, workers of color held just 5% of total jobs in the region in 2003, meaning their share of employment nearly doubled over 20 years (Figure 17).

Workers of color have filled an additional 7,288 jobs in the region since 2003, accounting for 66% of the 11,066 total jobs added. With 3,281 jobs, Hispanic or Latino workers were the largest racial or ethnic group in the regional economy and gained 2,059 jobs since 2003. The next largest group was workers of more than one race, who held 3,140 jobs in 2023, an increase of 1,743 from 2003. Indigenous workers were the next largest group with 2,927 jobs. After increasing 207% from 2003 to 2023, Black or African Americans held 2,647 jobs. Asians held 1,922 jobs in 2023 (Figure 18).

Figure 17. Employment by Race & Ethnicity, All Industries, Northeast Minnesota, 2003-2023

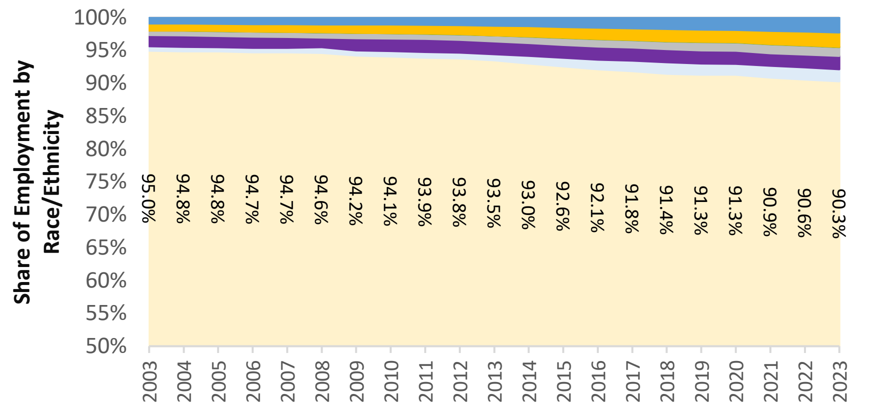


Figure 18. Workers of Color Employment, All Industries, Northeast Minnesota, 2003-2023

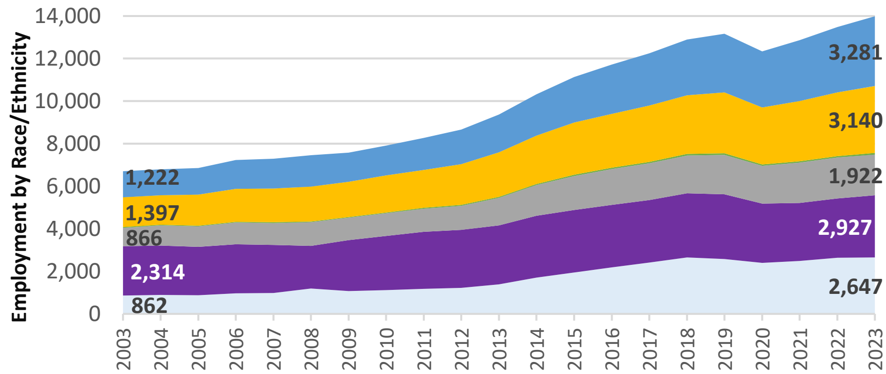
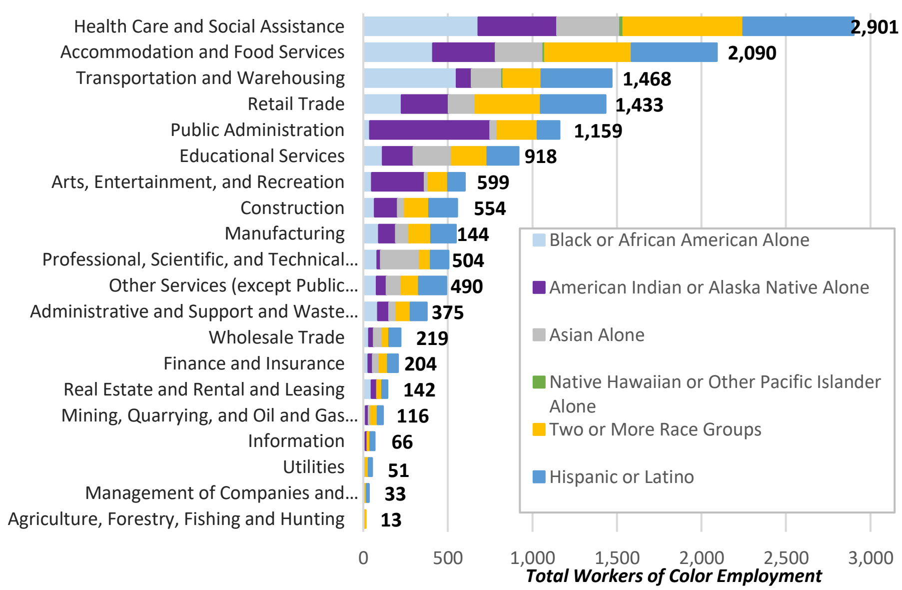


Figure 19. People of Color Employment by Industry, Northeast Minnesota, 2023



Source: DEED, Census LEHD Quarterly Workforce Indicators

Employment for people of color rebounded quicker following the pandemic peak of 2020, growing 13.4% as White employment grew 0.9%. Most sectors in Northeast Minnesota are non-diverse, but there are a couple sectors that rely more heavily on workers of color. For example, 17% of the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and 16.9% of Transportation & Warehousing jobholders are people of color. The largest number of workers of color were employed in Health Care & Social Assistance (2,901), Accommodation & Food Services (2,090), Transportation & Warehousing (1,468), and Retail Trade (1,433) (Figure 19). Accommodation & Food Services and Retail were two of the four lowest-paying sectors in the region.

INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

The Northeast Minnesota planning region is projected to grow 3.3% from 2022 to 2032, a gain of 5,157 new jobs. By comparison, the state is projected to grow 4.6% over the same period. The sectors expected to grow the fastest are diverse, and include high and low-paying industries such as Management and Arts, Entertainment, & Rec. The most new jobs are expected to be added in Health Care & Social Assistance, Accommodation & Food Svcs., and Construction. By contrast, Retail, Utilities, Information, and Finance & Insurance are projected to see employment declines as the way we work continues to evolve under the implementation of new technology and structural changes to the economy (Table 16).

Table 16. Northeast Minnesota Industry Projections, 2022-2032

Industry	Estimated Employment 2022	Projected Employment 2032	*Percent Change 2022-2032*	*Numeric Change 2022-2032*
Total, All Industries	**153,945**	**159,102**	***+3.3%***	***+5,157***
Health Care & Social Assistance	31,799	33,864	*+6.5%*	*+2,065*
Retail Trade	16,565	16,360	*-1.2%*	*-205*
Public Administration	15,176	15,440	*+1.7%*	*+264*
Accommodation & Food Services	14,034	14,860	*+5.9%*	*+826*
Educational Services	12,004	12,056	*+0.4%*	*+52*
Total, Self-Employed	9,619	9,506	*-1.2%*	*-113*
Manufacturing	8,777	9,016	*+2.7%*	*+239*
Construction	7,006	7,544	*+7.7%*	*+538*
Other Services	5,953	6,118	*+2.8%*	*+165*
Professional and Technical Svcs.	5,055	5,444	*+7.7%*	*+389*
Finance & Insurance	4,592	4,578	*-0.3%*	*-14*
Transportation & Warehousing	4,151	4,437	*+6.9%*	*+286*
Mining	4,006	4,134	*+3.2%*	*+128*
Wholesale Trade	3,202	3,359	*+4.9%*	*+157*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3,125	3,383	*+8.3%*	*+258*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt.	3,097	3,231	*+4.3%*	*+134*
Utilities	1,352	1,342	*-0.7%*	*-10*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1,235	1,268	*+2.7%*	*+33*
Information	1,222	1,208	*-1.1%*	*-14*
Agriculture Forestry, Fish & Hunt	1,222	1,134	*-7.2%*	*-88*
Management of Companies	753	820	*+8.9%*	*+67*

Source: DEED 2022-2032 Employment Outlook

NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS

Northeast Minnesota was home to 20,514 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, Northeast Minnesota saw a slight increase in nonemployers over the past decade, responding to economic changes. In sum, the region gained 280 nonemployers from 2012-2021, a 1.4% increase. These non-employers generated sales receipts of nearly $890 million in 2021 (Table 17).

Table 17. Nonemployer Statistics, 2021

	2021		*2012-2021*	
	Number of Firms	Receipts ($1,000s)	*Change in Firms*	*Percent Change*
Northeast MN	**20,514**	**$889,985**	***+280***	***+1.4%***
Aitkin Co.	1,150	$62,883	*0*	*0.0%*
Carlton Co.	1,982	$79,380	*-28*	*-1.4%*
Cook Co.	763	$33,560	*-5*	*-0.7%*
Itasca Co	2,977	$135,654	*-129*	*-4.2%*
Koochiching Co.	823	$32,450	*-43*	*-5.0%*
Lake Co.	868	$44,329	*+56*	*+6.9%*
St. Louis Co.	11,951	$501,729	*+429*	*+3.7%*
Minnesota	**429,672**	**$22,727,564**	***+41,117***	***+10.6%***

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Unlike other parts of Greater Minnesota, agriculture is not a key industry in Northeast Minnesota, but there are 2,406 farms producing just over $90 million in the market value of products sold in 2022 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. All of the counties in the planning region rank near the bottom in Minnesota in regard to the market value of products sold (Table 18).

Table 18. Census of Agriculture, 2022

	Number of Farms	Market Value of Products Sold	*State Rank*
Northeast Minnesota	**2,406**	**$90,006,000**	***6/6***
Aitkin Co.	449	$22,322,000	*81/87*
Cook Co.	25	$506,000	*86/87*
Carlton Co.	463	$13,416,000	*83/87*
Itasca Co.	424	$13,796,000	*82/87*
Koochiching Co.	190	$10,444,000	*84/87*
Lake Co.	34	$468,000	*87/87*
St. Louis Co.	821	$29,054,000	*79/87*
State of 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 requiring additional accommodations by contacting Carson Gorecki at* (218) 302-8413 *or at* carson.gorecki@state.mn.us.**