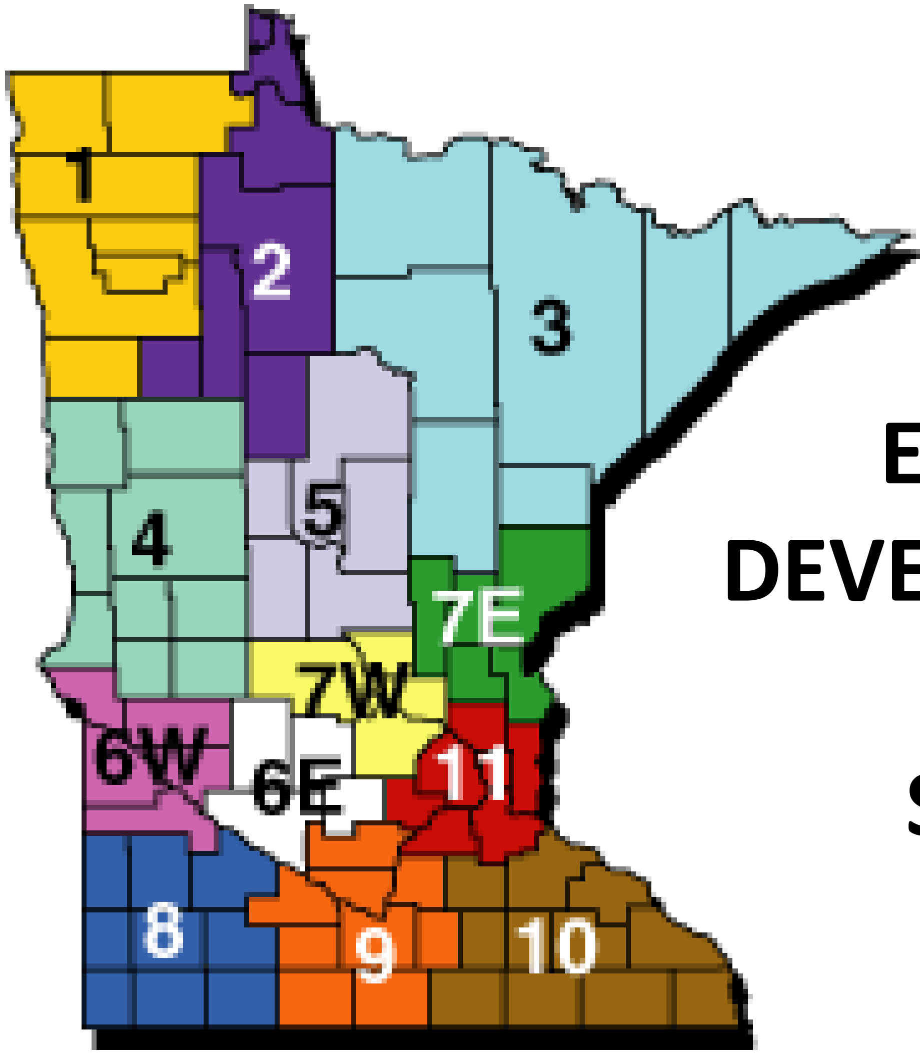

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGION 8: Southwest

Covers counties:
Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, and Rock

2023 REGIONAL PROFILE

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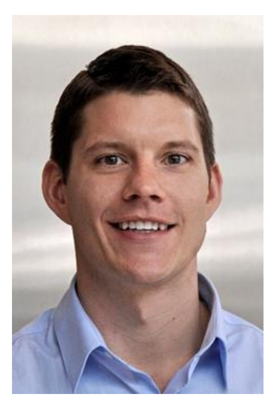


DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE

Economic Development Region 8 includes a total of 9 counties located in the Southwest Minnesota planning area, which also encompasses Region 6W and Region 9. Region 8 was home to 116,351 people in 2022, comprising 2% of the state's total population, making it the 10th largest of the 13 EDRs in the state. Region 8 lost 2,800 residents since 2010, a -2.3% decline, making it the 3rd fastest declining of the 13 EDRs. In comparison, the state of Minnesota saw a 7.8% gain from 2010 to 2022 (Table 1).

Table 1. Population Change 2010-2022

	2010 Population	2022 Estimates	2010-2022 Change Number	2010-2022 Change Percent
Region 8	**119,151**	**116,351**	***-2,800***	***-2.3%***
Cottonwood Co.	11,687	11,356	*-331*	*-2.8%*
Jackson Co.	10,266	9,893	*-373*	*-3.6%*
Lincoln Co.	5,896	5,580	*-316*	*-5.4%*
Lyon Co.	25,857	25,262	*-595*	*-2.3%*
Murray Co.	8,725	8,060	*-665*	*-7.6%*
Nobles Co.	21,378	21,947	*+569*	*+2.7%*
Pipestone Co.	9,596	9,355	*-241*	*-2.5%*
Redwood Co.	16,059	15,361	*-698*	*-4.3%*
Rock Co.	9,687	9,537	*-150*	*-1.5%*
State of Minnesota	**5,303,925**	**5,717,184**	***+413,259***	***+7.8%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Just one county in the region enjoyed population gains so far this decade. Anchored by Worthington, Nobles County gained 569 net new residents from 2010 to 2022, a 2.7% growth that ranked 36th fastest in the state. Home to Marshall, Lyon County is the largest county in the region, with just over 25,000 people. After declining over 5 percent since 2010, Murray and Lincoln County saw the fastest population declines in the region and are among the fastest declining counties in the state. These recent declines are part of a long-term trend in the region, which has been losing population since at least 1950, although the decline has tapered in recent decades.

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

Despite the aging population, Region 8 still experienced a slight natural increase – more births than deaths – of 209 people so far this decade. However, the region lost population because of out-migration, with 1,300 more people moving out of the region than moving in. Though there was domestic out-migration of more than 1,800 people, the region did experience positive in-migration of more than 500 additional residents from international sources (see Table 2).

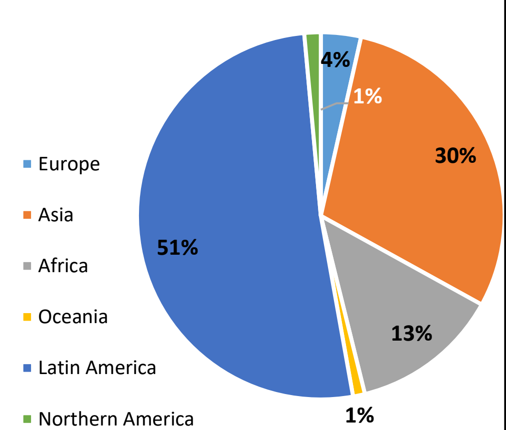
Table 2. Components of Population Change, 2020-2022

	Total Change	*Natural Increase*	Vital Events: Births	Vital Events: Deaths	Net Migration: *Total*	Net Migration: *Inter-national*	Net Migration: *Domestic*
Region 8	*-1,064*	*+209*	3,348	3,139	*-1,308*	*+510*	*-1,818*
Minnesota	*+10,680*	*+26,917*	144,350	117,433	*-17,365*	*+20,012*	*-37,377*

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

Region 8 is now home to roughly 9,000 foreign born residents, or about 7.5% of the total population. The number of immigrants in the region jumped by 43.2% since 2010, outpacing the statewide growth rate of 30.6%. Over half (4,648 people) of these immigrants were from Latin America, and the second largest number were from Asia, accounting for 29.5% of the region's immigrants, while the fastest growth came from Africa, which increased by 124% from 2010 to 2021 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Region 8 Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population, 2021

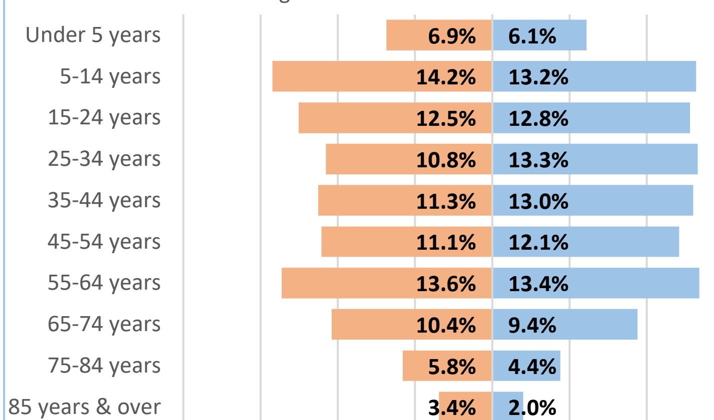


About 40% of the foreign born population is now a naturalized citizen, compared to 60% that are not a U.S. citizen. The foreign born population is much younger than the native born population, with 57.5% between 25 and 54 years of age, compared to 33.1% overall.

POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

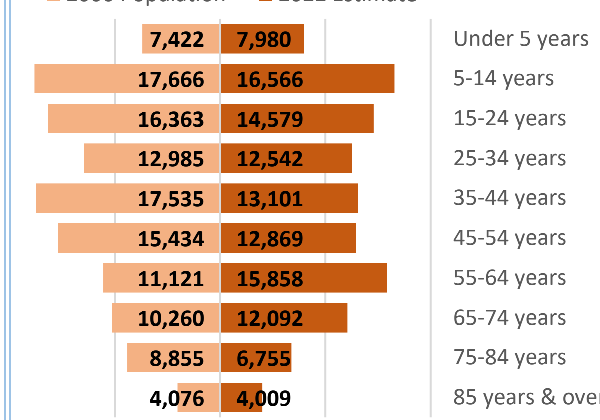
Region 8 has an older population than the rest of the state, with 33% of residents aged 55 years and over, compared to 30.1% statewide. Consequently, Region 8 had a lower percentage of people in the 25- to 54-year-old age group, typically considered the "prime working years," but a slightly higher percent of school-aged children (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of Population by Age Group, 2022



Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 2022 Population Estimates

Figure 3. Region 8 Population Pyramid, 2000-2022



Source: 2022 Population Estimates

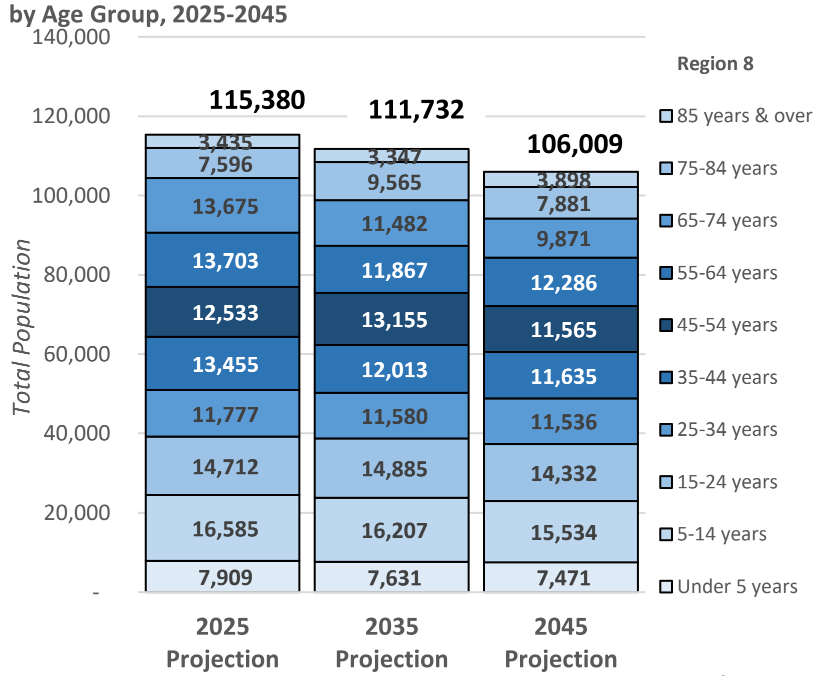
A large portion of the region's population is a part of the Baby Boom generation, people born between 1946 and 1964, which is creating a significant shift in the population over time. While the number of younger and middle-aged residents was declining, the number of residents aged 55 years and over was mostly increasing. This included a huge jump in the number of people from 65 to 74 years of age, but there was also a decline in people aged 75-84 years (Figure 3).

POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP

Region 8 is projected to continue losing residents in the next 20 years. According to population projections from the [Minnesota State Demographic Center](), Region 8 is expected to lose 9,371 residents from 2025 to 2045, an -8.1% decrease (Figure 4). In comparison, the state of Minnesota is projected to grow 7.4%.

Most notably, Region 8 is only projected to gain residents aged 75 years and older, by nearly 750 people, a 6.8% increase. The region is expected to see a large decrease in the 55-74 year-old age group, accounting for nearly half of all population loss projected over the next two decades. Similarly, Region 8 is expected to lose roughly 1,900 people under 25 years of age.

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



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

POPULATION BY RACE

Region 8's population is less diverse than the state's, but is becoming more diverse over time. In 2021, about 86% of the region's residents reported white alone as their race, compared to 80.7% of residents statewide. The region had a smaller percentage of Black or African American, Asian or Other Pacific Islanders, and people of Two or More Races than the state. However, at 10.1%, Region 8 had a much higher percentage of people reporting Hispanic or Latino origin than the state, and a higher percentage of American Indians and people of Some Other Race (Table 3).

The number of people reporting Some Other Race or Two or More Races increased rapidly since 2011, while the number of people reporting White alone declined. People of Hispanic or Latino origin amounted to nearly 12,000 in 2021.

Table 3. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2021	Region 8				Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	*Change from 2011-2021 Numeric*	*Change from 2011-2021 Percent*	Percent	*Change from 2011-2021*
Total	**117,602**	**100.0%**	***-1,186***	***-1.0%***	**100.0%**	***+7.4%***
White	101,006	85.9%	*-8,285*	*-7.6%*	80.7%	*+0.4%*
Black or African American	2,520	2.1%	*+947*	*+60.2%*	6.6%	*+42.2%*
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,284	1.1%	*+27*	*+2.1%*	0.9%	*-8.0%*
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	3,770	3.2%	*+920*	*+32.3%*	5.0%	*+35.8%*
Some Other Race	4,407	3.7%	*+2,186*	*+98.4%*	2.1%	*+66.5%*
Two or More Races	4,615	3.9%	*+3,019*	*+189.2%*	4.6%	*+121.8%*
Hispanic or Latino origin	11,896	10.1%	*+3,794*	*+46.8%*	5.6%	*+31.6%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

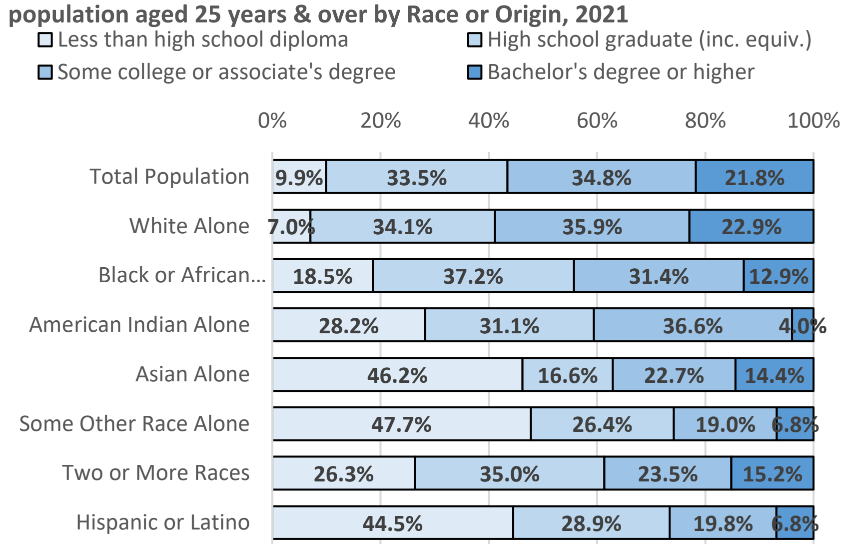
With 32.5% of adults aged 18 years and over having a college degree, Region 8 has lower educational attainment than the state, where 46% of adults have an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree. In contrast, Region 8 has a much higher percentage of people with a high school diploma or less. Reflecting the region's industry mix and older population, Region 8 also has a higher percentage of people with an associate's degree or some college than the state (Table 4).

Table 4. Educational Attainment for the Adult Population, 2021	Region 8 Number	Region 8 Percent	Minnesota Percent
Total Population, 18 years & over	**87,682**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Less than high school	9,269	10.6%	7.1%
High school graduate (incl. equiv.)	29,349	33.5%	24.5%
Some college, no degree	20,503	23.4%	22.4%
Associate's degree	10,561	12.0%	11.1%
Bachelor's degree	13,542	15.4%	23.3%
Advanced degree	4,458	5.1%	11.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey

Educational attainment varies significantly by race and ethnicity in Region 8. Around 45% of Hispanic or Latino residents, Asians, and people of Some Other Race had less than a high school diploma, compared to just 7% of white residents. Nearly 60% of whites have attended some college or earned a degree, compared to less than 45% for all other race groups. About 23% of white adults had earned bachelor's degrees or higher, compared to less than 10% of American Indians, Hispanic or Latinos, and people of Some Other Race (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Region 8 Educational Attainment for the population aged 25 years & over by Race or Origin, 2021



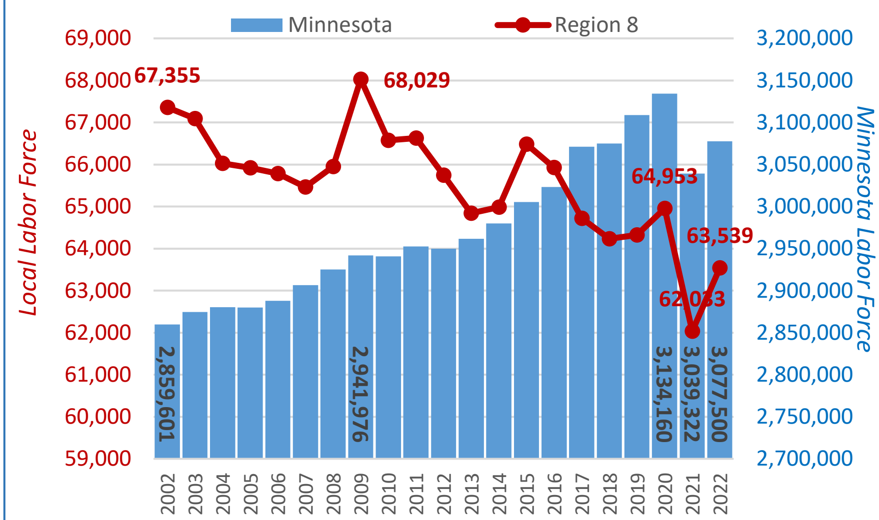
Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey

LABOR FORCE

LABOR FORCE CHANGE

According to data from DEED's [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) program, Region 8 had an annual average labor force count of just over 63,500 workers through 2022. In line with the region's population decline and labor force changes across the country, Region 8 has lost about 4,000 workers since 2002; and is down from a peak of 68,029 workers in 2009. (Figure 6). The labor force declined by nearly 3,000 workers during the 2020 Pandemic Recession, then regained about 1,500 workers in the following year.

Figure 6. Annual Labor Force Estimates, 2002-2022

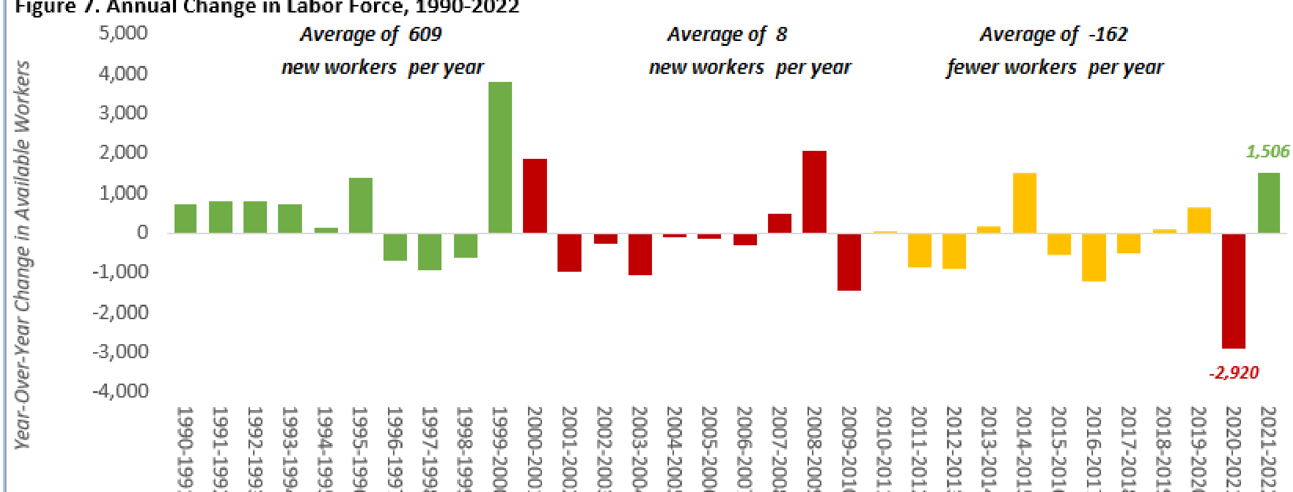


Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

Averaging a net gain of 609 additional labor force participants per year between 1990 and 2000, employers in Region 8 were able to tap into a large and growing pool of talented workers. With recent declines, the region averaged a loss of 162 workers per year between 2010 to 2020 (Figure 7). Increasingly tight labor markets and a growing scarcity of workers is now recognized as one of the most significant barriers to future economic growth in Region 8.

As noted above, the labor market shifted in 2020 from the economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, and for a brief time there were record numbers of unemployed workers despite the loss of 2,920 workers. That quickly changed to a record low number of unemployed workers as 1,506 workers came back into the labor force. Still, the small number of unemployed workers combined with labor force losses are contributing to a very tight labor market moving forward.

Figure 7. Annual Change in Labor Force, 1990-2022



Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS, 2025-2035

Applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections by age group, as shown in Figure 4 above, would lead to a steeper decrease in workforce numbers in Region 8 through 2035 (Table 5).

Table 5. Region 8 Labor Force Projections				
	2025 Labor Force Projection	2035 Labor Force Projection	*2025-2035 Change*	
			Numeric	*Percent*
16 to 19 years	3,386	3,293	*-94*	*-2.8%*
20 to 24 years	5,264	5,609	*+346*	*+6.6%*
25 to 44 years	21,910	20,487	*-1,423*	*-6.5%*
45 to 54 years	10,789	11,325	*+535*	*+5.0%*
55 to 64 years	10,533	9,122	*-1,411*	*-13.4%*
65 to 74 years	4,392	3,687	*-704*	*-16.0%*
75 years & over	860	1,007	*+147*	*+17.1%*
Total Labor Force	**57,135**	**54,530**	***-2,604***	***-4.6%***
Source: calculated from MN State Demographic Center projections, and 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

In addition to the changing size, the labor force will also see a significant shift in composition over time, with small gains in the number of workers aged 75 years and older, 45-54, and 20-24 against huge declines in the number of workers aged 25 to 44 years and 55 to 74 years. This will likely lead to a tight labor market in the future as well, with employers needing to respond to the changing labor force availability in the region.

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

With just 65.4% of the population aged 16 years and over in the labor force, Region 8 had lower labor force participation rates than the state's 69.2%. Interestingly, the region actually had higher labor force participation rates than the state in 4 of the 7 age groups, yet the overall rate was lower because a higher percentage of Region 8's labor force was in the oldest age groups (Table 6).

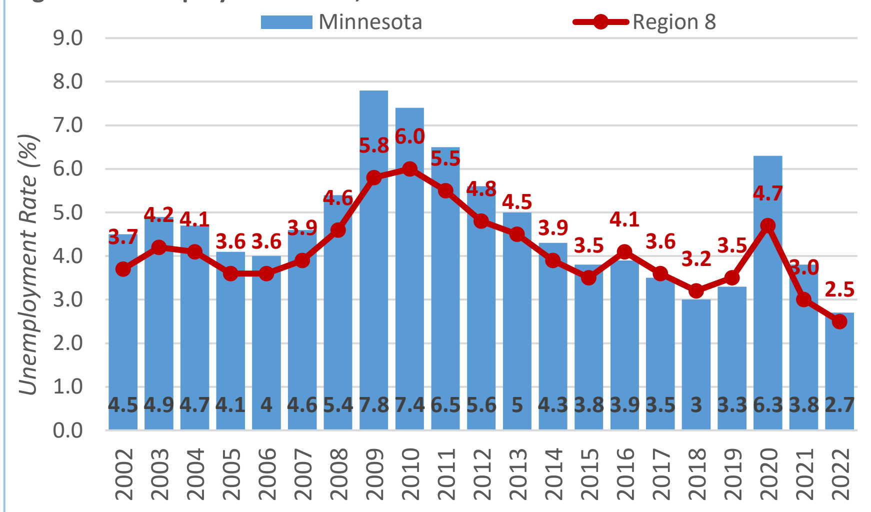
Table 6. Employment Characteristics, 2021						*Percent of Total Labor Force*	
	Region 8			Minnesota			
	In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	*Region 8*	*Minnesota*
Total Labor Force	**59,614**	**65.4%**	**2.9%**	**69.2%**	**4.0%**		
16 to 19 years	3,236	49.8%	7.7%	52.3%	10.7%	*5.4%*	*4.9%*
20 to 24 years	5,569	84.8%	5.2%	83.3%	6.7%	*9.3%*	*9.5%*
25 to 44 years	22,507	86.8%	2.3%	88.8%	3.6%	*37.8%*	*42.6%*
45 to 54 years	11,197	86.1%	2.0%	87.6%	3.0%	*18.8%*	*19.4%*
55 to 64 years	12,321	76.9%	2.8%	73.1%	3.2%	*20.7%*	*17.9%*
65 to 74 years	3,925	32.1%	3.3%	28.0%	3.2%	*6.6%*	*4.8%*
75 years & over	849	7.8%	0.3%	6.6%	2.9%	*1.4%*	*0.8%*
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin							
White alone	52,562	65.2%	2.6%	68.5%	3.4%	*88.2%*	*82.6%*
Black or African American	1,064	66.7%	8.8%	71.9%	8.6%	*1.8%*	*6.0%*
American Indian & Alaska Native	522	64.7%	7.1%	57.4%	12.9%	*0.9%*	*0.7%*
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	1,649	61.1%	6.1%	72.7%	4.1%	*2.8%*	*5.0%*
Some Other Race	2,098	69.9%	3.2%	75.8%	6.2%	*3.5%*	*2.1%*
Two or More Races	1,694	70.3%	5.5%	74.1%	7.3%	*2.8%*	*3.5%*
Hispanic or Latino	5,389	74.5%	4.8%	77.0%	6.6%	*9.0%*	*5.2%*
Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status							
Veterans, 18 to 64 years	1,537	77.9%	3.1%	80.6%	3.9%	*2.9%*	*3.6%*
Employment Characteristics by Disability							
With Any Disability, 20 to 64 years	3,088	52.6%	5.9%	53.6%	9.9%	*6.0%*	*5.7%*
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment							
Population, 25 to 64 years	46,027	83.8%	2.4%	84.4%	3.4%	*77.2%*	*79.9%*
Less than H.S. Diploma	3,734	72.7%	2.5%	66.6%	4.6%	*8.1%*	*4.7%*
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	12,112	78.0%	1.3%	77.3%	2.5%	*26.3%*	*19.4%*
Some College or Assoc. Degree	18,178	86.9%	2.2%	85.1%	3.6%	*39.5%*	*33.3%*
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	11,999	89.6%	1.6%	90.3%	2.1%	*26.1%*	*42.6%*
Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates							

Southwest had a lower unemployment rate than the state, but like the rest of the state, the region had unemployment rate disparities for workers of color. Unemployment rates were highest for youth, workers of other races, workers with disabilities, and workers with lower educational attainment. In addition to the higher unemployment rates, workers of other races also had higher labor force participation rates, especially those of some other race, two or more races, or workers of Hispanic or Latino origin.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Over time, Region 8 consistently reported lower unemployment rates than the state, until the four years leading up to 2020. According to [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](), the region's unemployment rate hovered below the state rate from 2001 to 2015, dropping well below the state during the Great Recession in 2009 and 2010. The pandemic recession in 2020 caused a massive increase in unemployed workers for a very short amount of time, pushing rates high in 2020 before falling to the lowest annual rate in more than 20 years in 2022 (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Unemployment Rates, 2002-2022

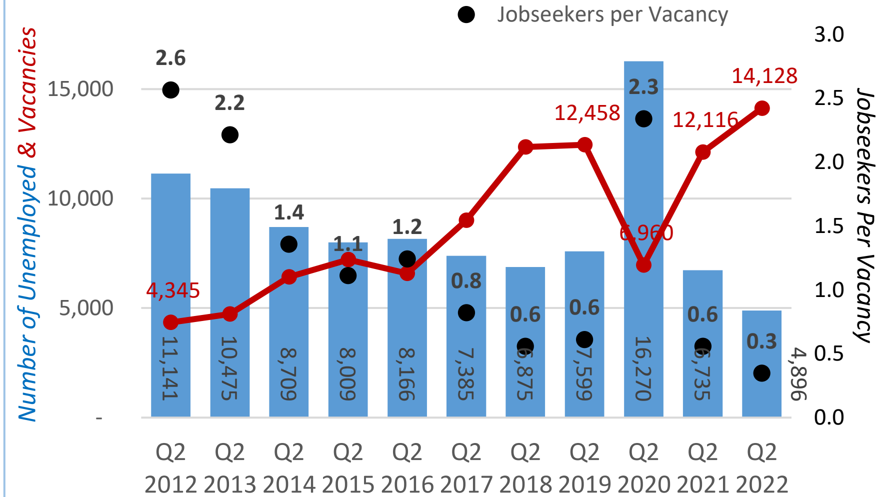


Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY

As the number of available workers has declined, the region's labor market has tightened. One clear demonstration of this is the ratio of unemployed jobseekers per vacancy, which stood at 0.3-to-1 in Southwest Minnesota in 2022, a historical low for the region. The region switched to a tight labor market in 2017 when there were more available jobs that available people looking for those jobs. Since then, that ratio has nosedived to a level that makes filling job openings even more difficult, with more than 2 job openings for every unemployed worker. According to recent Job Vacancy Survey results, there were 14,128 openings reported by employers compared to just 4,896 unemployed jobseekers in the region (Figure 9). For context, the ratio climbed as high as 4.6 jobseekers per vacancy in the depths of the recession in 2009. The current scenario is a jobseeker's market, compared to an employer's market during the past recession.

Figure 9. Jobseekers Per Vacancy, 2012-2022



Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, LAUS program

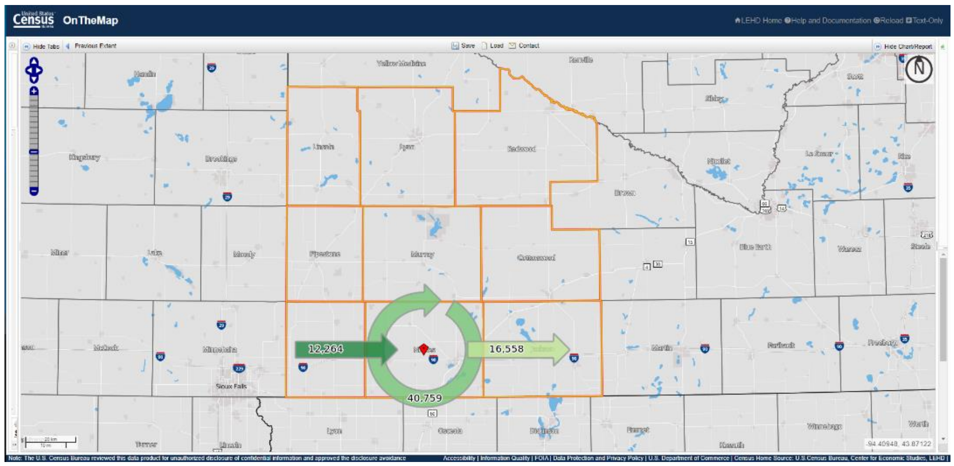
COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED

According to commuting data from the Census Bureau, Region 8 is a net labor exporter, having more workers than available jobs. In sum, 40,759 workers both lived and worked in Region 8 in 2020, while another 12,264 workers drove into the region from surrounding counties for work, compared to 16,558 workers who lived in the region but drove elsewhere for work (see Table 7 and Figure 10).

Table 7. Region 8 Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs), 2020	2020	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	53,023	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	12,264	23.1%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	40,759	76.9%
Living in the Selection Area	57,317	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	16,558	28.9%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	40,759	71.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap

Figure 10. Region 8 Labor and Commute Shed, 2020



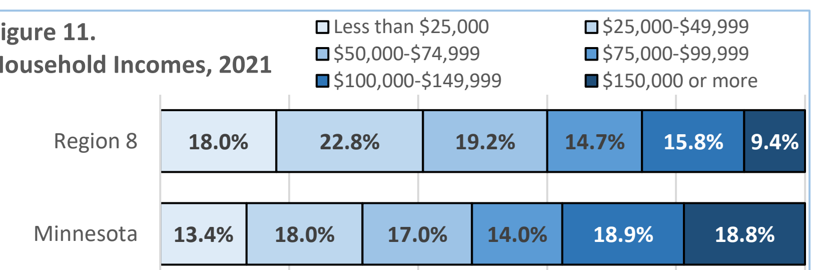
Home to Marshall, Lyon County is the largest job center in the region and was the biggest draw for workers, followed by Worthington in Nobles County. Employers in the region both lose and draw workers from nearby regional centers like Willmar in Kandiyohi County, Sioux Falls in Minnehaha County, South Dakota, and Mankato in Blue Earth County (Figure 10).

INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Household incomes were significantly lower in Region 8 than the rest of the state. The median household income in Region 8 was $61,199 in 2021, compared to $77,706 in Minnesota. Just over 40% of the households in the region had incomes below $50,000 in 2021, compared to just 33.5% statewide. Another 34% of households earned between $50,000 and $100,000 in the region. In contrast, only 22% of households in Region 8 earned over $100,000 per year, compared to 35% of households statewide (see Figure 11).

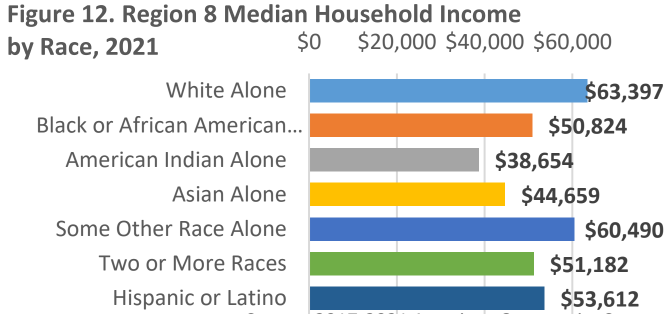
Figure 11. Household Incomes, 2021



Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Like educational attainment and employment, median household incomes varied by race or origin in the region. American Indian households reported the lowest incomes in Region 8, with a median income that was about $29,000 lower than for white households. However, Black or African American households reported incomes roughly the same as white households in the region, with several other races just slightly lower (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Region 8 Median Household Income by Race, 2021



Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey

COST OF LIVING

According to DEED's Cost of Living tool, the basic needs budget for an average Minnesota family (which consists of 2 adults and 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) was $60,720 in 2022. The cost of living for a similar family in Region 8 was $46,284 – which was the 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, taxes, and transportation costs were significantly lower than the rest of the state. In order to meet the basic cost of living for the region, the workers in the family scenario described would need to earn $14.83 per hour over the course of 60 hours per work 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 8 would be $28,182, which would require an hourly wage of $13.52 to meet the basic needs standard of living (Table 8). That was the lowest cost of living in the state for a single person.

Table 8. Region 8 Cost of Living, 2022

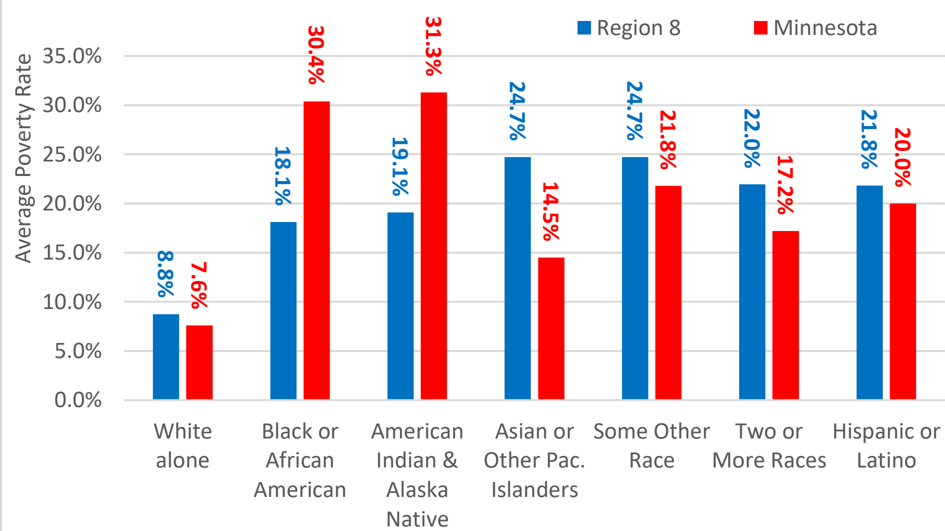
Family Composition	Number of Workers	Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
				Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Trans-portation	Other	Taxes
Region 8										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$28,128	$13.52	$0	$398	$162	$626	$719	$248	$191
Single, 1 child	1 FT	$42,600	$20.48	$541	$588	$447	$806	$724	$337	$107
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$46,284**	**$14.83**	**$271**	**$909**	**$526**	**$806**	**$837**	**$415**	**$93**
2 parents, 2 children	2 FT	$61,944	$14.89	$787	$1,187	$537	$1,081	$882	$549	$139
State of Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$34,992	$16.82	$0	$403	$159	$961	$760	$330	$303
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$60,720**	**$19.46**	**$574**	**$921**	**$555**	**$1,216**	**$886**	**$517**	**$391**

Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

Overall, Region 8's poverty rate was 10.7%, which was above the statewide rate of 9.2%. Like incomes, poverty levels varied widely by race and origin. It was estimated that roughly 18% to 25% of every race other than white alone was below the poverty level in 2020, compared to 8.8% of the white population. However, because of the region's relative lack of racial diversity, nearly three-quarters of people living in poverty in the region are white, amounting to almost 8,650 people.

Although the rate of poverty is highest for people of some other race, there are far fewer people in this racial category in poverty, 1,078 people, or about 9% of people in poverty compared to more than seven-in-ten that are white. The region had a lower poverty rate for Black or African Americans and American Indians compared to the state overall, but higher rates for all other race groups and Hipsanic or Latino origin (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percent Below the Poverty Level by Race or Origin, 2021



Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey

WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Region 8 was $21.23 in the first quarter of 2023, which was the fourth lowest wage level of the 13 EDRs in the state. Region 8's median wage was $3 below the state's median hourly wage, and almost $4.50 below the median hourly wage in the 7-County Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to $9,235 per year for a full-time worker. Region 8 had slightly higher wages than Region 6W at $20.82 and Region 6E at $21.20, but significantly lower wages than Region 9 to the east, which were at $22.61 (Table 9).

Table 9. Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics by Region, 2023	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
EDR 1 - Northwest	$22.83	35,000
EDR 2 - Headwaters	$21.90	31,370
EDR 3 - Arrowhead	$22.57	136,490
EDR 4 - West Central	$21.88	87,550
EDR 5 - North Central	$19.98	62,060
EDR 6E - Southwest Central	$21.20	49,510
EDR 6W - Upper MN Valley	$20.82	16,160
EDR 7E - East Central	$22.48	48,210
EDR 7W - Central	$23.10	172,540
EDR 8 - Southwest	**$21.23**	**51,900**
EDR 9 - South Central	$22.61	99,520
EDR 10 - Southeast	$23.44	236,590
EDR 11 - 7-County Twin Cities	$25.67	1,718,290
State of Minnesota	**$24.25**	**2,827,310**

Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics

Based on location quotient, Region 8 stands out for having higher concentrations of Farming, Production, Education, Training, & Library, Transportation & Material Moving, and Installation, Maintenance & Repair occupations than the state. The largest occupations in the region include Office & Administrative Support, Production, Transportation & Material Moving, and Sales & Related positions. For the most part, the gap in pay between Region 8 and the state is also much lower in these jobs (Table 10).

Table 10. Region 8 Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics, 1st Qtr. 2023

	Region 8				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	**$21.23**	**51,900**	***100.0%***	***1.0***	**$24.25**	**2,827,310**	***100.0%***
Management	$42.66	2,760	*5.3%*	*0.8*	$51.58	193,760	*6.9%*
Business & Financial Operations	$31.03	1,980	*3.8%*	*0.5*	$38.19	201,940	*7.1%*
Computer & Mathematical	$39.33	530	*1.0%*	*0.3*	$49.73	99,250	*3.5%*
Architecture & Engineering	$34.54	670	*1.3%*	*0.7*	$40.60	53,100	*1.9%*
Life, Physical & Social Science	$30.81	500	*1.0%*	*0.9*	$39.37	29,070	*1.0%*
Community & Social Service	$25.00	870	*1.7%*	*0.9*	$25.82	54,820	*1.9%*
Legal	$34.75	120	*0.2%*	*0.3*	$47.87	18,730	*0.7%*
Education, Training & Library	$23.94	3,850	*7.4%*	*1.3*	$24.82	158,830	*5.6%*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	$22.40	370	*0.7%*	*0.5*	$28.80	37,630	*1.3%*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	$35.05	2,880	*5.5%*	*0.8*	$41.07	186,700	*6.6%*
Healthcare Support	$16.77	2,960	*5.7%*	*1.0*	$17.40	162,400	*5.7%*
Protective Service	$24.61	650	*1.3%*	*0.9*	$25.83	40,620	*1.4%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	$14.11	3,720	*7.2%*	*0.9*	$14.89	216,970	*7.7%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	$17.60	1,540	*3.0%*	*1.1*	$18.26	76,210	*2.7%*
Personal Care & Service	$15.68	720	*1.4%*	*0.7*	$16.96	58,120	*2.1%*
Sales & Related	$15.72	4,420	*8.5%*	*1.0*	$18.14	239,500	*8.5%*
Office & Administrative Support	$20.57	5,780	*11.1%*	*0.9*	$23.06	345,830	*12.2%*
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	$19.20	270	*0.5%*	*3.6*	$19.84	4,060	*0.1%*
Construction & Extraction	$24.18	2,220	*4.3%*	*1.1*	$31.00	113,930	*4.0%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	$24.67	2,360	*4.5%*	*1.3*	$27.95	98,670	*3.5%*
Production	$20.18	7,440	*14.3%*	*1.9*	$22.07	209,380	*7.4%*
Transportation & Material Moving	$20.72	5,280	*10.2%*	*1.3*	$21.05	227,780	*8.1%*

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2023

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

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

After reaching what at the time were record highs in 2018 and 2019, the number of job vacancies dropped in the second quarter of 2020 amid COVID concerns, temporary shutdowns, and new economic conditions. Employers in Southwest Minnesota reported just under 7,000 job vacancies in the second quarter of 2020, which was down nearly 5,500 openings compared to the past year, the biggest decline across the 6 regions in the state. However, by the fourth quarter of 2020, openings were back to pre-pandemic levels and 2021 brought new record numbers of openings. The 14,128 vacancies recorded in second quarter 2022 are again near historic highs and show tremendous demand for workers. The median hourly wage offer was $16.55 across all occupations but ranged from a low of around $13.00 per hour for Personal Care & Service occupations, to about $32 per hour or more for Computer & Mathematical occupations.

The largest number of vacancies were in Food Prep & Serving occupations, driven by returning demand in Leisure & Hospitality. There were also a lot of openings in Production due to Manufacturing growth, as well as Sales & Related, and Healthcare Support and Healthcare Practitioner occupations. Overall, about two out of five openings were part-time, one-third (31%) required postsecondary education, and one-third (32%) required a year or more of experience (Table 11). In sum, educational requirements in the region had been stable or declining over the past 5 years, while work experience requirements were rising.

Table 11. Job Vacancy Survey Results, Qtr. 2 2022

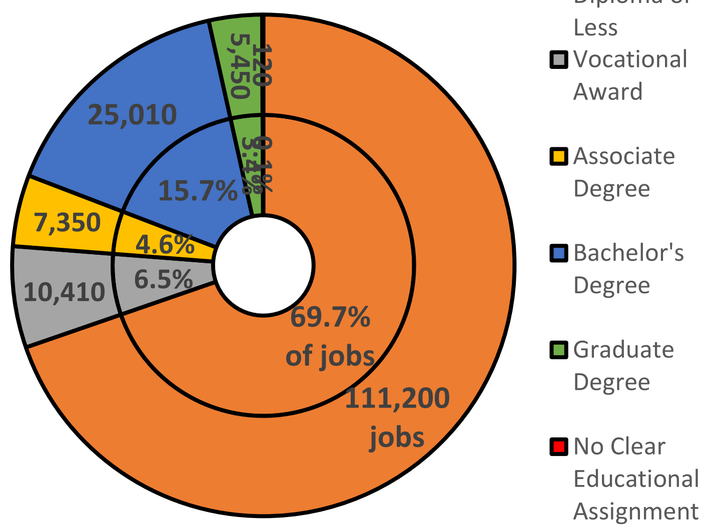
Southwest Minnesota	Number of Total Vacancies	Median Hourly Wage Offer	Percent Part-Time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Postsecondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Work Exp.	Requiring Certificate or License	*Job Vacancy Rate*
Total, All Occupations	**14,128**	**$16.55**	**42%**	**16%**	**31%**	**32%**	**37%**	***8.4%***
Management	430	$27.04	28%	0%	68%	77%	55%	*4.9%*
Business & Financial Operations	151	$24.64	1%	6%	72%	80%	35%	*2.4%*
Computer & Mathematical	99	$31.77	0%	1%	70%	90%	40%	*5.9%*
Architecture & Engineering	130	$27.09	1%	0%	94%	78%	47%	*5.7%*
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	69	$20.91	1%	1%	42%	84%	50%	*4.6%*
Community & Social Service	159	$25.21	3%	1%	95%	77%	77%	*4.5%*
Legal	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	*#N/A*
Education, Training & Library	731	$17.88	34%	24%	86%	92%	80%	*6.7%*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	183	$13.88	36%	65%	19%	59%	12%	*12.0%*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	1,252	$25.17	32%	1%	88%	47%	88%	*13.1%*
Healthcare Support	1,290	$14.92	52%	1%	51%	18%	62%	*12.9%*
Protective Service	142	$19.76	43%	6%	68%	78%	93%	*6.0%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	2,626	$13.56	77%	28%	5%	11%	6%	*20.2%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	379	$15.50	40%	20%	1%	14%	31%	*7.7%*
Personal Care & Service	135	$12.78	80%	21%	5%	9%	14%	*4.4%*
Sales & Related	1,467	$14.33	59%	11%	5%	18%	30%	*9.6%*
Office & Administrative Support	766	$14.07	71%	10%	11%	38%	8%	*4.0%*
Construction & Extraction	165	$17.90	0%	16%	12%	38%	27%	*2.3%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	554	$22.90	11%	3%	39%	45%	55%	*7.2%*
Production	1,782	$18.26	9%	24%	12%	19%	4%	*9.3%*
Transportation & Material Moving	786	$17.46	44%	35%	1%	24%	55%	*5.2%*

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, Qtr. 2 2022

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Similar to Job Vacancy Survey results, data from DEED's Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics program shows that only 30% of jobs in the region require postsecondary education for entry. The other 70% can be started with a high school diploma or less and some amount of on-the-job training (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Southwest Minnesota Share of Jobs by Educational Requirements, 2022



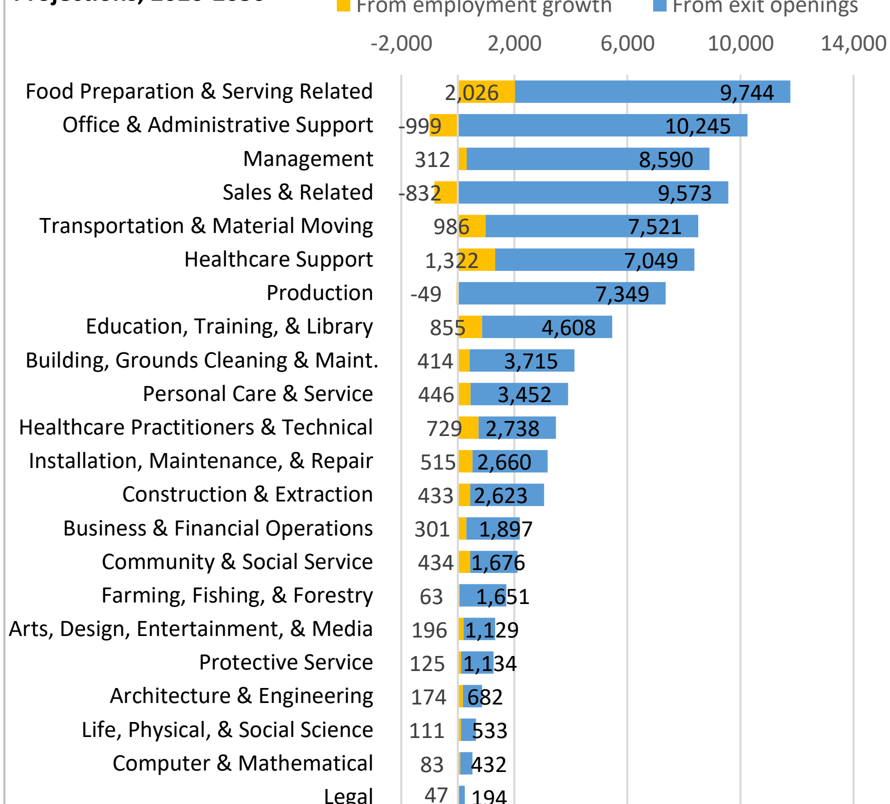
Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics

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 marketplace. While education is typically a worthwhile investment, college can be expensive – with average annual expenses ranging between $19,00 and almost $50,000 per year in Minnesota. 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 23-county Southwest Minnesota planning area is projected to grow 3.9% from 2020 to 2030, a gain of 7,692 new jobs. That is the slowest of the 6 planning regions in the state. In addition, the region is also expected to need 89,195 replacement openings to fill jobs left vacant by retirements. Food Prep, Healthcare Support, Transportation & Material Moving, and Education, Training, & Library occupations are expected to see the most new growth – some attributable to the continuing pandemic recovery – but every occupational group will show some future demand either through new jobs or replacement openings (Figure 15).

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



Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

According to DEED's Occupations in Demand tool, there are well over 200 occupations showing relatively high demand in the region, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees. These occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries. For example, Nursing Assistants, Personal Care Aides, Teachers, Mechanics and Repair workers, and Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers are among the top occupations in demand based on the consistent need for workers in these fields. Many of the jobs are concentrated in Manufacturing, Healthcare, Transportation, and other related industries (Table 12).

Table 12. Southwest Minnesota Occupations in Demand (with Median Annual Wage), 2022

High School or Less	Vocational Training	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	Nursing Assistants	Registered Nurses	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term
$32,800/yr	$38,146/yr	$80,694/yr	$46,668/yr
Retail Salespersons	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	General & Operations Managers
$30,660/yr	$52,242/yr	$66,050/yr	$78,383/yr
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	Dental Hygienists	Elementary School Teachers
$51,299/yr	$49,362/yr	$82,983/yr	$63,391/yr
Cashiers	Dental Assistants	Clinical Laboratory Technologists & Technicians	Secondary School Teachers
$29,092/yr	$54,422/yr	$61,801/yr	$64,067/yr
Fast Food & Counter Workers	Machinists	Industrial Engineering Technologists & Technicians	Accountants & Auditors
$29,393/yr	$49,288/yr	$49,646/yr	$66,142/yr
Waiters & Waitresses	Electricians	Radiologic Technologists & Technicians	Preschool Teachers
$24,271/yr	$63,396/yr	$66,703/yr	$35,451/yr
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	Computer User Support Specialists	Computer Network Support Specialists	Medical & Health Services Managers
$39,654/yr	$57,870/yr	$72,682/yr	$95,320/yr
Office Clerks, General	Medical Assistants	Electrical & Electronic Engineering Technicians	Industrial Production Managers
$41,160/yr	$46,233/yr	$66,192/yr	$99,559/yr
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	Civil Engineering Technologists & Technicians	Lawyers
$49,219/yr	$59,803/yr	$71,840/yr	$103,321/yr
Teaching Assistants, exc. Postsecondary	Farm Equipment Mechanics & Service Technicians	Environmental Science & Protection Technicians	Personal Financial Advisors
$36,756/yr	$51,684/yr	$39,218/yr	$78,180/yr

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

ECONOMY

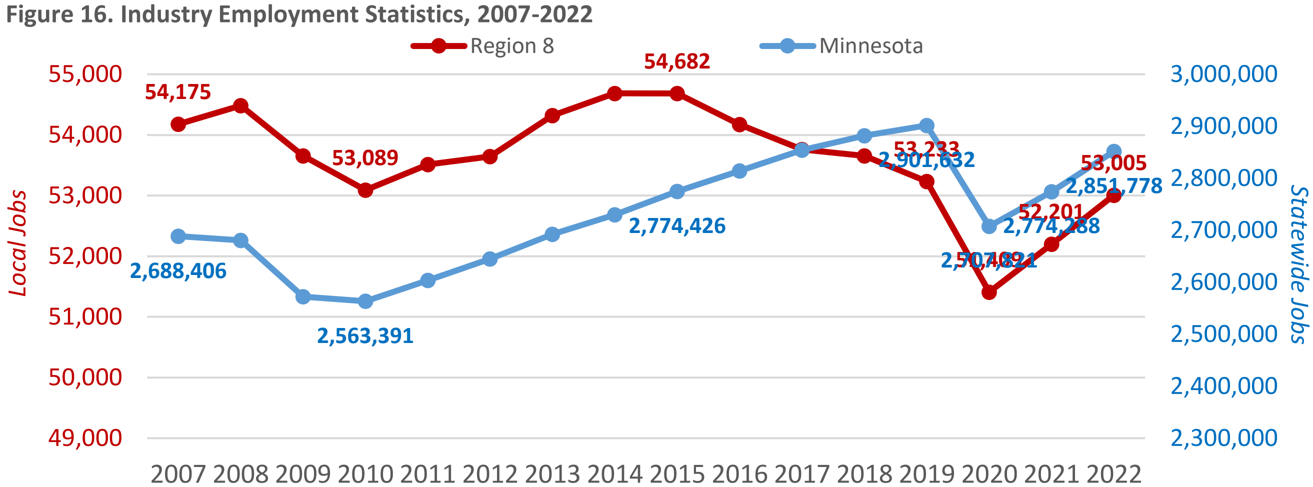
INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, Region 8 was home to 4,103 firms providing 53,005 jobs on an annual average basis in 2022, with a total payroll of over $2.6 billion. Average annual wages were $49,345 in the region, which was 71% of the average wage statewide. Home to Marshall, Lyon County is the largest employment center in the region, with 13,713 jobs at 847 firms; followed by Worthington and Nobles County with 10,251 jobs at 634 firms. After gaining more than 800 jobs in the past year, employers in the region have nearly recovered to pre-pandemic employment levels, with Cottonwood and Rock well above their 2019 job counts. Although growth from 2021-2022 was slower in the region than the state, overall pandemic recession losses are much less than the state (Table 13).

Table 13. Region 8 Industry Employment Statistics, 2022				Average Annual Wage	*2021-2022*		*2019-2022*	
Geography	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll		*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*
Region 8	**4,103**	**53,005**	**$2,615,539,695**	**$49,345**	***+804***	***+1.5%***	***-228***	***-0.4%***
Cottonwood Co.	439	5,871	$262,581,513	$44,725	*+198*	*+3.5%*	*+730*	*14.2%*
Jackson Co.	354	4,826	$233,243,858	$48,331	*+11*	*+0.2%*	*-304*	*-5.9%*
Lincoln Co.	223	1,566	$63,542,568	$40,576	*+47*	*+3.1%*	*-102*	*-6.1%*
Lyon Co.	847	13,713	$703,348,520	$51,291	*+205*	*+1.5%*	*-327*	*-2.3%*
Murray Co.	328	2,817	$127,724,726	$45,341	*-3*	*-0.1%*	*-133*	*-4.5%*
Nobles Co.	634	10,251	$545,040,042	$53,169	*-19*	*-0.2%*	*-221*	*-2.1%*
Pipestone Co.	378	4,333	$205,021,217	$47,316	*+163*	*+3.9%*	*-140*	*-3.1%*
Redwood Co.	578	6,027	$298,171,084	$49,473	*+127*	*+2.2%*	*-8*	*-0.1%*
Rock Co.	325	3,599	$176,866,167	$49,143	*+75*	*+2.1%*	*+277*	*+8.3%*
State of Minnesota	**199,603**	**2,851,778**	**$198,839,398,672**	**$69,725**	***+77,490***	***+2.8%***	***-49,854***	***-1.7%***
Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW)								

Region 8 has seen several employment ups and downs over the past 15 years, ending 2022 with 1,170 fewer jobs than it had in 2007, and about 1,680 fewer jobs than the peak hit in 2015. The region entered the Great Recession later than the state, still experiencing job growth through 2008, before suffering severe declines in 2009 and 2010. Region 8 then saw a rapid recovery, adding almost 1,600 jobs from 2010 to 2015. However, since peaking in 2014 and 2015, Region 8 has lost jobs while the state continued growing (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Industry Employment Statistics, 2007-2022



Source: DEED QCEW program

With 11,599 jobs at 200 firms, Manufacturing is the largest employing industry in Region 8, accounting for a growing percentage of total jobs in the region that stood at 21.9% in 202s. That is double the rate of the state's concentration of employment in Manufacturing, thanks in part to a more than 1,400 job increase since 2019. Food Manufacturing is the largest sector, providing 5,689 jobs at 52 firms; followed by Machinery Manufacturing and Wood Product Manufacturing. At $57,939 in 2022, average annual wages were almost $8,600 higher in Manufacturing than the total of all industries.

The next largest industry in Region 8 was Health Care & Social Assistance, with 8,348 jobs at 470 firms, after losing 787 jobs since the pandemic. Due to the region's older population, the largest sectors were Ambulatory Health Care Services with 3,013 jobs and Nursing & Residential Care Facilities with 2,612 jobs. Retail Trade is the third largest industry, with 5,745 jobs at 476 stores, and the related Accommodation & Food Services industry had 2,978 jobs at 239 firms. Combined, these two industries provide over 16% of total jobs, and combined to add nearly 225 jobs in the past year (Table 14).

Table 14. Region 8 Industry Employment Statistics, 2022								
	2022 Annual Data			Avg.	*2021-2022*		*2019-2022*	
NAICS Industry Title	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll ($1,000s)	Annual Wage	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*
Total, All Industries	**4,103**	**53,005**	**$2,615,540**	**$49,345**	***+804***	***+1.5%***	***-228***	***-0.4%***
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	249	1,820	$84,863	$46,628	*+89*	*+5.1%*	*+64*	*+3.6%*
Mining	8	78	$4,695	$60,194	*+5*	*+6.8%*	*+2*	*+2.6%*
Construction	527	2,267	$128,956	$56,884	*+71*	*+3.2%*	*-15*	*-0.7%*
Manufacturing	200	11,599	$672,031	$57,939	*+430*	*+3.8%*	*+1,411*	*+13.8%*
Utilities	32	348	$34,145	$98,116	*+18*	*+5.5%*	*+34*	*+10.8%*
Wholesale Trade	246	2,413	$173,667	$71,971	*+33*	*+1.4%*	*-197*	*-7.5%*
Retail Trade	476	5,745	$172,595	$30,043	*+105*	*+1.9%*	*-16*	*-0.3%*
Transportation & Warehousing	268	1,969	$95,557	$48,531	*-72*	*-3.5%*	*-139*	*-6.6%*
Information	71	358	$14,410	$40,251	*+4*	*+1.1%*	*-73*	*-16.9%*
Finance & Insurance	227	2,307	$173,329	$75,132	*-119*	*-4.9%*	*-187*	*-7.5%*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	67	188	$5,904	$31,403	*+8*	*+4.4%*	*-21*	*-10.0%*
Professional & Technical Services	177	1,019	$71,383	$70,052	*+7*	*+0.7%*	*+31*	*+3.1%*
Management of Companies	12	561	$55,274	$98,528	*-51*	*-8.3%*	*+21*	*+3.9%*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	116	1,439	$76,363	$53,067	*+80*	*+5.9%*	*-191*	*-11.7%*
Educational Services	75	4,751	$220,322	$46,374	*+130*	*+2.8%*	*+10*	*+0.2%*
Health Care & Social Assistance	470	8,348	$394,487	$47,255	*-180*	*-2.1%*	*-787*	*-8.6%*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	76	449	$7,864	$17,515	*+17*	*+3.9%*	*+33*	*+7.9%*
Accommodation & Food Services	239	2,978	$49,242	$16,535	*+117*	*+4.1%*	*-219*	*-6.9%*
Other Services	354	1,288	$41,189	$31,979	*+46*	*+3.7%*	*+34*	*+2.7%*
Public Administration	215	3,080	$139,263	$45,215	*+71*	*+2.4%*	*-20*	*-0.6%*

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

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's Quarterly Employment Demographics (QED) program, the workforce in the region was aging over the past 10 years. One-quarter (24.2%) of jobs in the region were held by workers 55 years or older, compared to 22.1% statewide and just over 21% in the region one decade earlier. Likewise, the percentage of teenaged workers also jumped following 2020, and both wages and hours were rapidly rising for younger workers, showing their importance to the regional economy (Table 15).

Wages were climbing across the board for all workers due to rising demand and a tight labor market. While wages were still lowest for the youngest and oldest workers who tend to fill lower-skilled, less-than-fulltime jobs in industries like Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services, these two age groups had the fastest percentage increase in wages from 2012 to 2022. Wages were highest for workers between 45 and 64 years of age. Females typically worked just 80% of the quarterly amount worked by men, contributing to a gap in wages, though the gap was narrowing for both hours worked and wages over time (Table 15).

Table 15. Workforce Demographics by Age Group and Gender, Total of All Industries, 2010-2020								
Region 8	**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%	$19.47	$12.79	397	399
19 years & under	8.8%	8.3%	6.6%	6.3%	$13.29	$7.98	124	118
20 to 24 years	10.1%	12.2%	9.2%	11.3%	$16.99	$10.22	297	276
25 to 44 years	40.3%	37.9%	43.6%	42.3%	$21.63	$14.09	456	450
45 to 54 years	16.4%	20.6%	18.4%	21.9%	$23.87	$15.38	478	472
55 to 64 years	16.9%	16.0%	16.7%	14.7%	$22.41	$15.34	472	466
65 years & over	7.3%	5.1%	5.4%	3.5%	$17.80	$11.75	225	196
Male	46.3%	45.9%	49.1%	49.1%	$21.41	$14.73	462	465
Female	53.7%	54.1%	50.9%	50.9%	$18.93	$11.72	369	349

Source: DEED Quarterly Employment Demographics

EMPLOYMENT DIVERSITY

People of color account for 13.9% of the total population in Southwest Minnesota and hold roughly the same share of jobs, compared to the state overall where they amount to 22.5% of the population but only hold 15.2% of jobs. According to data from the Quarterly Workforce Indicator program people of color held 23,323 jobs compared to 146,486 jobs held by White Workers.

The number of jobs held by minorities has more than doubled since 2000 when People of color held 6% of jobs (See Figure 17). People of color have filled an additional 13,150 jobs since 2000 compared to a decline of 14,281 jobs held by White workers. Hispanic/Latino workers hold the largest number of jobs after white workers with 13,342 jobs in 2021, over half of all Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) jobs. The next largest number of jobs held by a BIPOC group was Black or African Americans, holding 4,124 jobs in 2021. The number of jobs held by this group increased by 2,820 since 2000, amounting to a 216% increase. Only Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander employment grew faster (See Figure 18).

The Manufacturing, Administrative Support, Agriculture, and Accommodation & Food Services sectors have the highest share of non-White employment at 29%, 22%, 21%, and 19% respectively. The largest numbers of non-White workers are employed by Manufacturing (9,135 jobs), Healthcare & Social Assistance (3,572 jobs), Retail Trade, and Accommodation & Food Services (both 2,274 jobs) (see Figure 19).

Figure 17. Employment Share by Race & Ethnicity in Southwest, 2000-2021

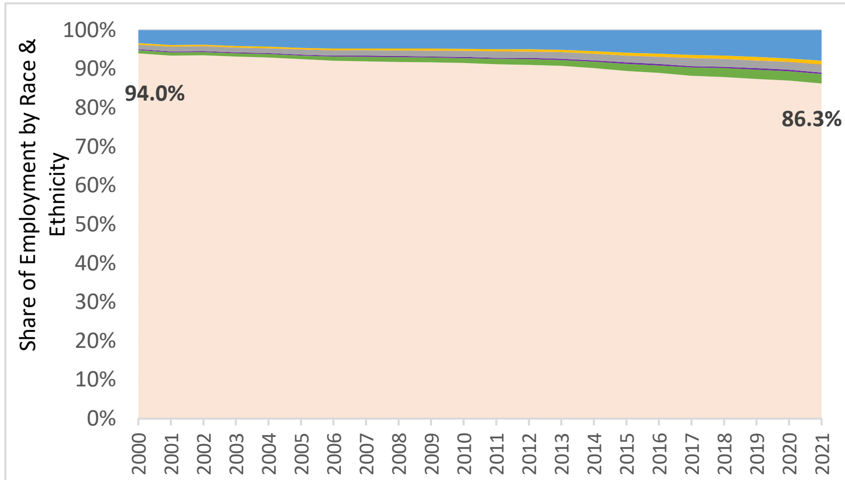


Figure 18. People of Color Employment in Southwest Minnesota, 2000-2021

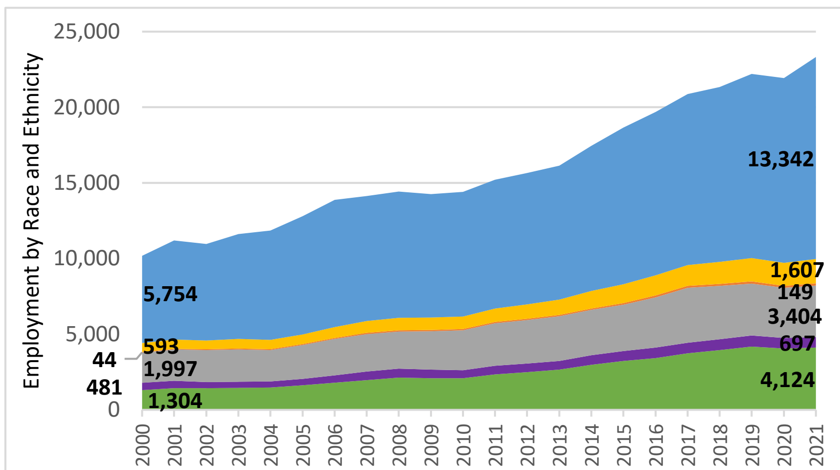
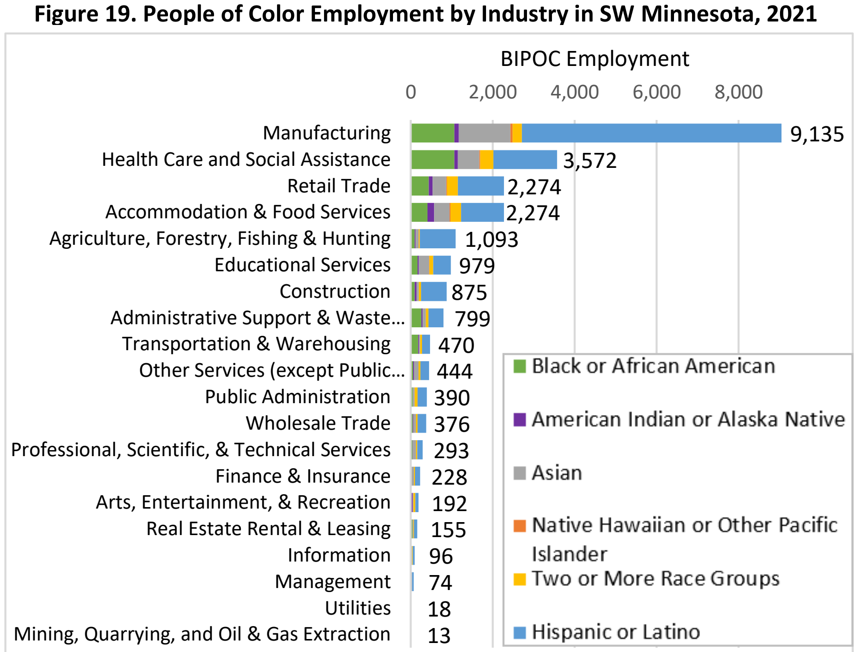


Figure 19. People of Color Employment by Industry in SW Minnesota, 2021



INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

As noted above, the 23-county Southwest planning region is projected to grow 3.9% from 2020 to 2030, a gain of 7,692 new jobs. Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services, and Other Services are expected to grow the fastest as the pandemic employment recovery continues. Health Care & Social Assistance is projected to add the most new jobs over the next decade and in doing so would surpass Manufacturing as the region's largest industry. Educational Services, Construction, and Transportation & Warehousing are all expected to see strong growth. Real Estate & Rental & Leasing, Information, and Retail Trade are the only industries projected to lose jobs (Table 16).

Table 16. Southwest Minnesota Industry Projections, 2020-2030

Industry	Estimated Employment 2020	Projected Employment 2030	*Percent Change 2020-2030*	*Numeric Change 2020-2030*
Total, All Industries	**195,812**	**203,504**	***+3.9%***	***+7,692***
Health Care & Social Assistance	29,352	32,081	*+9.3%*	*+2,729*
Accommodation & Food Services	10,089	12,268	*+21.6%*	*+2,179*
Educational Services	15,564	16,274	*+4.6%*	*+710*
Other Services	6,756	7,462	*+10.4%*	*+706*
Manufacturing	30,107	30,719	*+2.0%*	*+612*
Construction	7,573	8,082	*+6.7%*	*+509*
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1,655	2,114	*+27.7%*	*+459*
Transportation & Warehousing	7,385	7,817	*+5.8%*	*+432*
Public Administration	13,193	13,517	*+2.5%*	*+324*
Professional & Technical Services	3,788	4,006	*+5.8%*	*+218*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt.	3,421	3,636	*+6.3%*	*+215*
Finance & Insurance	6,780	6,921	*+2.1%*	*+141*
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & hunt	5,674	5,753	*+1.4%*	*+79*
Wholesale Trade	8,045	8,118	*+0.9%*	*+73*
Utilities	713	735	*+3.1%*	*+22*
Mining	257	273	*+6.2%*	*+16*
Management of Companies	1,495	1,506	*+0.7%*	*+11*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1,318	1,311	*-0.5%*	*-7*
Information	2,152	2,001	*-7.0%*	*-151*
Retail Trade	18,569	17,653	*-4.9%*	*-916*

Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook

NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS

Region 8 was home to 8,306 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)." In sum, these nonemployers generated sales receipts of over $405.8 million in 2019 (Table 17).

Table 17. Nonemployer Statistics, 2019

	2019		*2009-2019*	
	Number of Firms	Receipts ($1,000s)	*Change in Firms*	*Percent Change*
Region 8	8,306	$405,837	*-110*	*-1.3%*
Minnesota	418,080	$20,377,253	*+39,926*	*+10.6%*

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Like other parts of Greater Minnesota, agriculture is also a key industry in Region 8, including 7,287 farms producing just over $3.35 billion in the market value of products sold in 2017 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Region 8 ranks first of the 13 EDRs in the state for farms, and several of the highest ranked agriculture counties in the state are in Region 8, including Nobles (#4), Redwood (#6), Rock (#9), Lyon (#11), Cottonwood (#13), Murray (#19), Pipestone (#22), and Jackson (#24). Like the state, the number of farms in the region declined over the past 5 years, but Region 8 still accounts for 10.6% of the farms in the state (Table 18).

Table 18. Census of Agriculture, 2017

	Number of Farms	Market Value of Products Sold	*State Rank*
Region 8	**7,287**	**$3,350,135,000**	***1***
Cottonwood Co.	744	$382,170,000	*13*
Jackson Co.	799	$314,510,000	*24*
Lincoln Co.	672	$186,041,000	*48*
Lyon Co.	893	$412,331,000	*11*
Murray Co.	864	$337,829,000	*19*
Nobles Co.	885	$518,965,000	*4*
Pipestone Co.	595	$326,053,000	*22*
Redwood Co.	1,134	$453,161,000	*6*
Rock Co.	701	$419,075,000	*9*
Minnesota	**68,822**	**$18,395,390,000**	

Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture

Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats by contacting Luke Greiner at 320-223-6992 or at luke.greiner@state.mn.us.