

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGION 9: South Central

Covering the following counties:

Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan

2024 REGIONAL PROFILE

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DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE

Economic Development Region 9 is a 9-county region located in the South Central portion of the state, bordering Iowa. With more than 237,000 people, EDR 9 – South Central was the fifth largest of 13 economic development regions (EDRs) in the state, accounting for 4.1% of the state’s total population. The regional population increased by 648 residents from 2020 to 2023, a 0.3% increase, slower than the 0.6% statewide rise (Table 1).

| | 2020 Population | 2023 Estimates | 2020-2023 Change | |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | | Number | Percent |
| Blue Earth Co. | 69,112 | 70,006 | +894 | +1.3% |
| Brown Co. | 25,912 | 25,628 | -284 | -1.1% |
| Faribault Co. | 13,921 | 13,873 | -48 | -0.3% |
| Le Sueur Co. | 28,674 | 29,255 | +581 | +2.0% |
| Martin Co. | 20,025 | 19,657 | -368 | -1.8% |
| Nicollet Co. | 34,454 | 34,242 | -212 | -0.6% |
| Sibley Co. | 14,836 | 15,084 | +248 | +1.7% |
| Waseca Co. | 18,968 | 18,981 | +13 | +0.1% |
| Watonwan Co. | 11,253 | 11,077 | -176 | -1.6% |
| EDR 9–South Central | 237,155 | 237,803 | +648 | +0.3% |
| State of Minnesota | 5,706,494 | 5,737,915 | +31,421 | +0.6% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Only 4 of the 9 counties added population over the past three years: Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Sibley, and Waseca. Blue Earth was the largest county in the region, accounting for 29.4% of the regional population in 2023. It also saw the largest increase since 2020, making it the 13th largest county and 27th fastest growing county (of 87) in the state. Of the remaining five counties that lost population, Martin County saw the largest decrease with a drop of 368, making it the 15th fastest declining county in the state. Likewise, Brown County saw a loss of 284 people, a -1.1% decline. Watonwan County dropped -1.6%, meanwhile, Faribault and Nicollet Counties both declined less than -0.6%.

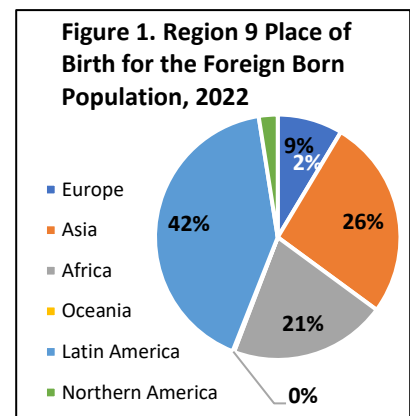
COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

The population growth in Region 9 was fueled by a natural increase – more births than deaths. This included a net gain of 150 people from 2020 to 2023, though that was slower than the annual average in the previous decade due to an uptick in deaths. In addition, 461 more people moved into the region than moved out, primarily due to strong international in-migration (Table 2).

| | Total Change | Natural Increase | Vital Events | | Net Migration | | |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|--------------|---------|---------------|----------------|----------|
| | | | Births | Deaths | Total | Inter-national | Domestic |
| Region 9 | +657 | +150 | 8,108 | 7,958 | +461 | +1,124 | -663 |
| Minnesota | +31,111 | +40,368 | 207,857 | 167,489 | -11,352 | +34,624 | -45,976 |

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

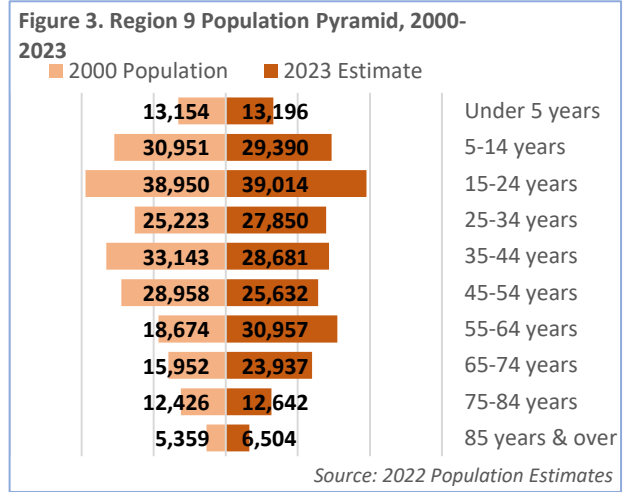
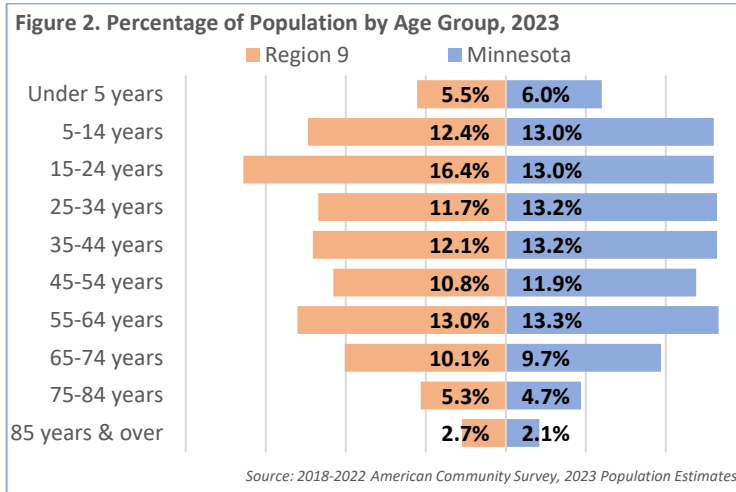
With the in-migration, Region 9 was now home to 10,100 foreign born residents, or 4.3% of the total population, though that was much lower than the 8.5% statewide share. However, the number of immigrants in the region increased by 35.5% from 2010 to 2022, which was above the statewide growth rate of 31.3%. The largest number of immigrants in the region came from Latin America (41.5%) and Asia (26.5%) (Figure 1). The fastest increase in immigrants from 2010 to 2022 was among African immigrants (+157.0%).



Foreign-born residents have a younger age profile than the native-born population, with 59.6% being between 15 and 44 years of age, compared to 40.2% of the total population. A lower percentage of foreign-born residents aged 25 and over had a bachelor’s degree or higher than native born residents. Immigrants were also much more likely to have less than a high school diploma (30.9%).

POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

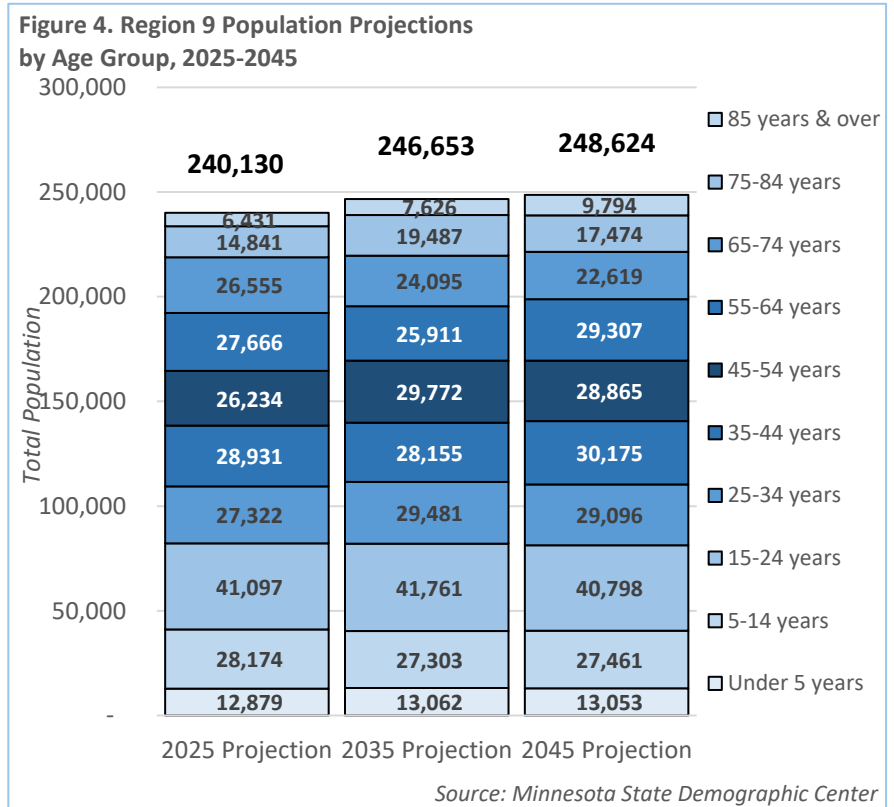
Region 9 has both a younger *and* older population than the state – nearly one-third (31.1%) of the region's population was 55 or older, compared to 29.8% statewide, and another one-third (34.3%) of the population was under 25 years, compared to 32.0% in the state. In contrast, Region 9 had a smaller percentage of people in the 25 to 54 age group - typically considered the "prime working years." A large portion of the population is part of the Baby Boom generation, creating a significant shift in demographics over time. Between 2000 and 2023, over 21,000 more residents were in the 55 years or older groups (Figures 2 and 3).



POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP

Region 9 is projected to increase its population over the next two decades (2025 to 2045). Population projections from the [Minnesota State Demographic Center](#) show that the area is expected to gain 8,512 residents from 2025 to 2045, a 3.5% increase (Figure 4). In comparison, the state of Minnesota is projected to grow 5.5% from 2025 to 2045, closing in on 6.1 million residents.

Projections for growth vary widely by age. The region is expected to add residents between the ages of under 5 and 25 to 64, and 75 years and older in the next 20 years. The Baby Boom generation will move into the oldest age cohorts, leading to more than 27,000 people aged 75 years and over. However, losses are expected in the age groups between 5 to 24 and 65 to 74 years.



POPULATION BY RACE

The population in Region 9 has had some significant changes since the turn of the century, however it remains less racially diverse than the state as a whole. In 2022, 90% of the region’s residents reported white alone as their race, compared to 79.7% of residents statewide. In addition, every other race category increased faster in the region from 2010 to 2022 than the white population. In fact, the number of residents who were Black or African American increased by 71.5%, while those identifying as Two or More Races increased by 187.6%. The Asian and Hispanic or Latino populations also saw notable increases equaling 23.1% and 45%, respectively, since 2010 (Table 3).

| Table 3. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2022 | Region 9 | | | | Minnesota | |
|---|----------------|---------------|--|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| | Number | Percent | Change from 2010-2022 Numeric Percent | | Percent | Change from 2010-2022 |
| Total | 237,076 | 100.0% | 6,481 | +2.8% | 100.0% | +7.9% |
| White | 213,364 | 90.0% | -4,967 | -2.3% | 79.7% | -0.4% |
| Black or African American | 5,269 | 2.2% | +2,197 | +71.5% | 6.7% | +44.3% |
| American Indian & Alaska Native | 754 | 0.3% | +81 | +12.0% | 0.9% | -10.2% |
| Asian & Other Pac. Islander | 3,094 | 1.3% | +580 | +23.1% | 5.1% | +37.1% |
| Some Other Race | 5,337 | 2.3% | +2,551 | +91.6% | 2.3% | +84.7% |
| Two or More Races | 9,258 | 3.9% | +6,039 | +187.6% | 5.3% | +159.6% |
| Hispanic or Latino origin | 15,535 | 6.6% | +4,822 | +45.0% | 5.7% | +34.6% |

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

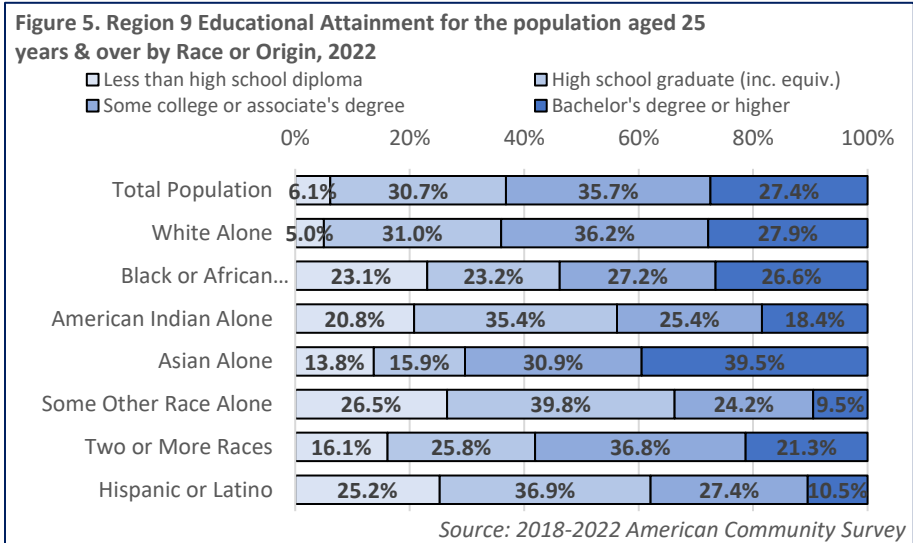
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

With 37.5% of adults aged 18 years and over holding a college degree, Region 9 had lower educational attainment than the state in 2022, where 46.6% of adults have an associate’s, bachelor’s, or advanced degree. However, Region 9 had a much higher percentage of people with a high school diploma or some college but no degree, while also having a slightly smaller percentage of residents with less than high school education (see Table 4).

| Table 4. Educational Attainment for the Population Aged 18 years & Over in Region 9, 2022 | Region 9 | | Minnesota |
|---|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Number | Percent | Percent |
| Total, 18 years & over | 185,783 | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Less than high school | 12,390 | 6.7% | 7.0% |
| High school graduate (incl. equiv.) | 56,949 | 30.7% | 24.5% |
| Some college, no degree | 46,897 | 25.2% | 22.0% |
| Associate's degree | 23,592 | 12.7% | 11.1% |
| Bachelor's degree | 32,653 | 17.6% | 23.7% |
| Advanced degree | 13,302 | 7.2% | 11.8% |

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

Educational attainment varies significantly by race and ethnicity in Region 9. About 46.3% of Black or African American adults have a high school diploma or less, while Hispanic or Latinos and people of Some Other Race see about 62.1% and 66.3% respectively having a high school degree or less, compared to 36.0% of Whites. At just 9.5%, people identifying as Some Other Race had the lowest percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 39.5% of Asian adults and around 27.9% of whites, 26.6% of Blacks, and 21.3% of those of Two or More Races (Figure 5).

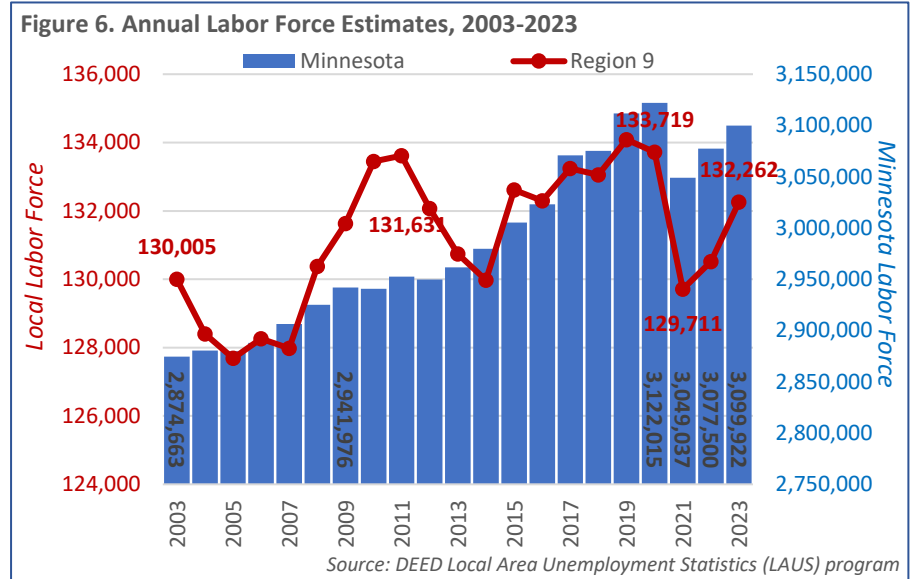


LABOR FORCE

LABOR FORCE CHANGE

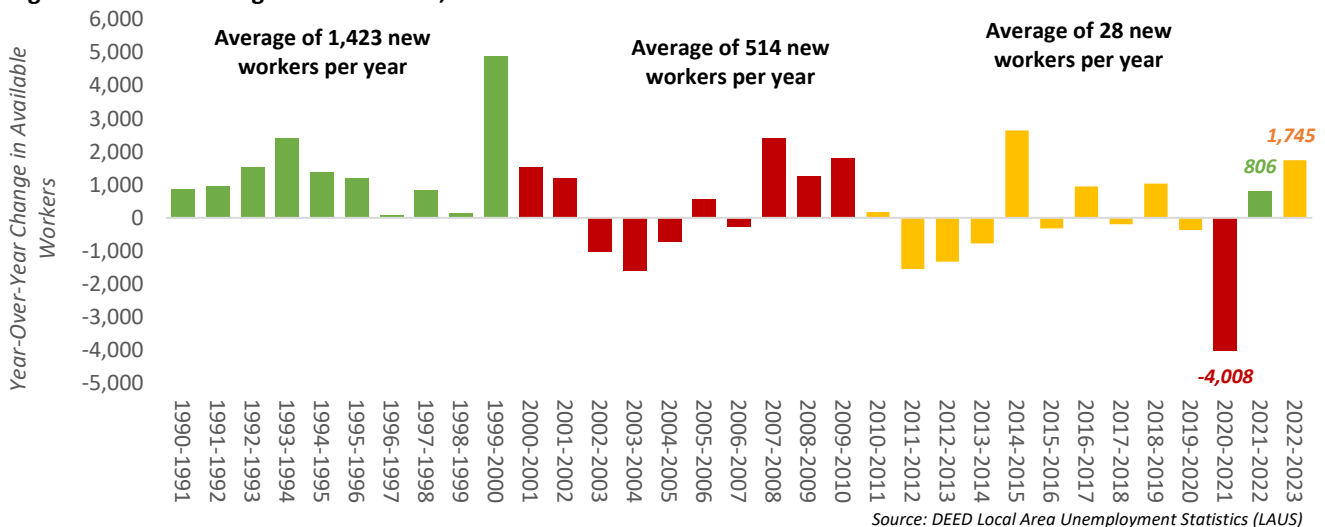
According to data from DEED’s [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) program, Region 9 had an annual average labor force count of over 132,262 workers in 2023, which was up from the recent decline in 2021, which can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic after it caused major changes in the labor force and economy (Figure 6).

Overall, the regional labor force fluctuated between 2003 and 2023. The highest peak was in 2019, with 133,719 workers. After 2019, the labor force decreased by about 4,000 workers from 2019 to 2021. Since 2021, the labor force has seen an increase of about 2,550 workers. The labor market in Region 9 continues to tighten, with fewer unemployed workers available. Out of a labor force of more than 132,000 workers, there were an average of just 3,700 unemployed workers in 2023, down from around 6,400 in 2013 and 4,600 in 2019.



Averaging a net gain of 1,423 additional labor force participants per year between 1990 and 2000, employers in Region 9 were able to tap into a large and growing pool of talented workers. Although the regional economy continues to grow, labor force growth has slowed dramatically, demonstrated by Region 9 gaining an average of only 28 workers per year from 2010 to 2020 (see Figure 7). Increasingly tight labor markets and a growing scarcity of workers are now recognized as one of the most significant barriers to economic growth in Region 9. In the face of these constraints, it has become 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 segment of the labor force.

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



LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS

Similar to the projected population increase from 2025 to 2035 shown in Figure 4, the regional labor force is also expected to increase. Applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections by age group creates labor force projections for the region, which shows a 2.7% increase in workforce numbers, a gain of almost 3,600 additional workers. This increase includes gains in the number of workers aged 20 to 54 and 75 years and older supplemented by notable losses in those between the ages of 16 to 19 and 55 to 74 years (see Table 5).

| Region 9 | 2025 Labor Force Projection | 2035 Labor Force Projection | 2025-2035 Change | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | | Numeric | Percent |
| 16 to 19 years | 8,598 | 8,206 | -392 | -4.6% |
| 20 to 24 years | 19,253 | 20,508 | +1,254 | +6.5% |
| 25 to 44 years | 50,431 | 51,671 | +1,240 | +2.5% |
| 45 to 54 years | 23,013 | 26,117 | +3,104 | +13.5% |
| 55 to 64 years | 20,790 | 19,472 | -1,319 | -6.3% |
| 65 to 74 years | 8,052 | 7,306 | -746 | -9.3% |
| 75 years & over | 1,565 | 1,995 | +430 | +27.5% |
| Total Labor Force | 131,703 | 135,273 | +3,571 | +2.7% |

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

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

With 68.5% of the population ages 16 and over in the labor force, Region 9 had a slightly lower participation rate than the state, despite having higher rates in several age groups, especially in the oldest age groups (see Table 6).

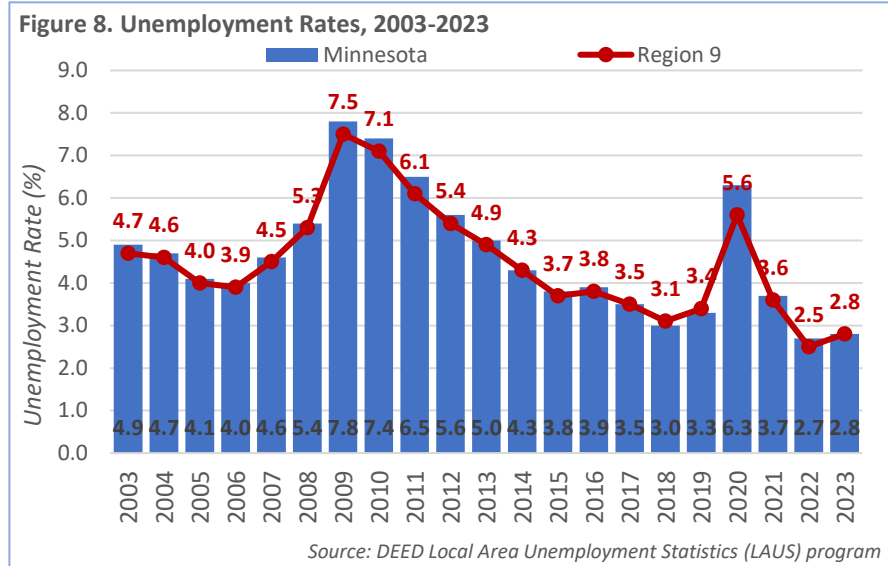
Participation rates varied by race in Region 9, but were ahead of state averages for the most part, with the exception of Black or African Americans and Asian or Other Pacific Islanders individuals. These groups lagged behind by 2.6 and 2.2 percentage points, respectively. Whites, American Indian & Alaska Native, Some Other Race, Two or More Races, and Hispanic or Latino had the same or higher labor force participation rates compared to the state. The largest gap was found in people of Some Other Race which had a higher labor force participation rate by 6.7 percentage point followed by Two or More Races with 5.3 percentage points higher than the state.

| | Region 9 | | | Minnesota | |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| | In Labor Force | Labor Force Partic. Rate | Unemp. Rate | Labor Force Partic. Rate | Unemp. Rate |
| Total Labor Force | 131,069 | 68.5% | 3.5% | 68.7% | 4.0% |
| 16 to 19 years | 8,645 | 59.1% | 8.1% | 53.0% | 9.8% |
| 20 to 24 years | 17,659 | 84.0% | 5.0% | 83.1% | 6.7% |
| 25 to 44 years | 50,525 | 89.6% | 3.2% | 88.8% | 3.5% |
| 45 to 54 years | 22,417 | 87.7% | 2.1% | 87.8% | 2.9% |
| 55 to 64 years | 23,192 | 75.1% | 3.1% | 72.8% | 3.1% |
| 65 to 74 years | 7,236 | 30.3% | 2.4% | 27.6% | 3.3% |
| 75 years & over | 1,405 | 7.4% | 3.0% | 6.6% | 3.2% |
| Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin | | | | | |
| White alone | 118,582 | 67.8% | 3.1% | 67.8% | 3.4% |
| Black or African American | 2,657 | 68.9% | 7.9% | 71.5% | 8.7% |
| American Indian & Alaska Native | 401 | 58.1% | 0.0% | 57.6% | 11.9% |
| Asian or Other Pac. Islanders | 1,983 | 71.7% | 8.2% | 73.9% | 3.6% |
| Some Other Race | 3,122 | 82.8% | 5.4% | 76.1% | 6.1% |
| Two or More Races | 4,324 | 79.6% | 9.3% | 74.3% | 6.6% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 8,197 | 79.7% | 8.9% | 77.0% | 6.3% |
| Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status | | | | | |
| Veterans, 18 to 64 years | 4,046 | 83.2% | 3.5% | 81.1% | 4.0% |
| Employment Characteristics by Disability | | | | | |
| With Any Disability, 20 to 64 years | 6,947 | 54.5% | 11.7% | 54.4% | 10.2% |
| Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment | | | | | |
| Population, 25 to 64 years | 96,139 | 85.2% | 2.9% | 84.4% | 3.3% |
| Less than H.S. Diploma | 4,258 | 67.7% | 3.7% | 67.2% | 4.6% |
| H.S. Diploma or Equivalent | 24,035 | 79.8% | 2.1% | 76.8% | 2.5% |
| Some College or Assoc. Degree | 37,631 | 87.1% | 3.1% | 85.1% | 3.6% |
| Bachelor's Degree or Higher | 30,208 | 91.1% | 1.8% | 90.3% | 2.0% |

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

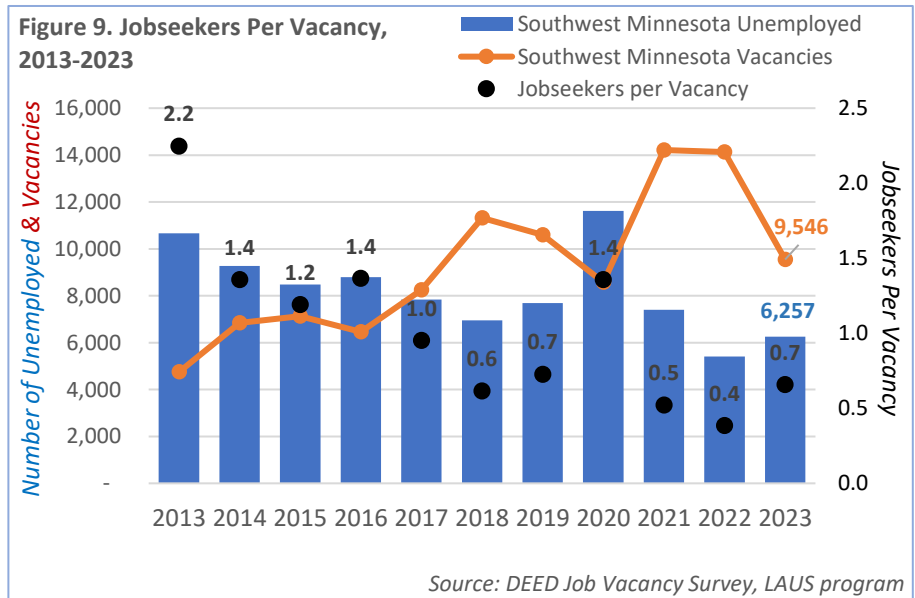
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

According to the [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) program, the unemployment rate in Region 9 has consistently hovered just below the statewide rate, shifting in sync to economic fluctuation. Back during the Great Recession, it rose as high as 7.5% in 2009, but fell back to pre-recession rates by 2014. From there, the regional rate increased slightly in 2016 before dropping to 3.1% in 2018. After spiking during the pandemic recession in 2020, Region 9’s unemployment rate decreased from 5.6% to 3.6% in 2021. In 2023, Region 9 experience the second lowest unemployment rate in 20 years, at 2.8% (Figure 8).



JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY

As the economy continues to recover, the regional labor market has been tightening. A clear demonstration of this is the ratio of unemployed jobseekers per vacancy, which now stands at 0.7-to-1 in the Southwest Planning Region. According to recent Job Vacancy Survey results, there were 9,546 openings reported by employers compared to 6,257 unemployed jobseekers in the region. The ratio climbed as high as 2.2 jobseekers per vacancy in 2013, coming out of the Great Recession (see Figure 9).



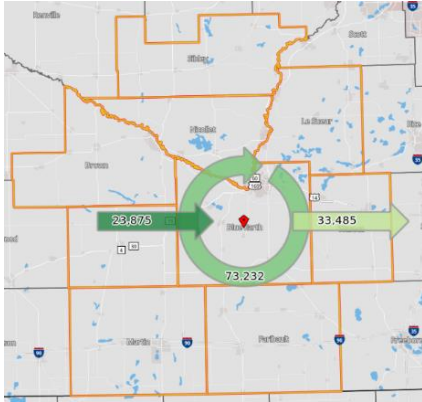
COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED

Over three-quarters of residents in Region 9 also work in the region. In 2021, 73,232 workers both lived and worked in Region 9, while another 23,875 workers drove into the region for work. This is compared to 33,485 workers who lived in the region but drove to outside areas for work (see Table 7 and Figure 10).

| | 2021 | |
|---|---------|--------|
| | Count | Share |
| Employed in the Selection Area | 97,107 | 100.0% |
| Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside | 23,875 | 24.6% |
| Employed and Living in the Selection Area | 73,232 | 75.4% |
| Living in the Selection Area | 106,717 | 100.0% |
| Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside | 33,485 | 31.4% |
| Living and Employed in the Selection Area | 73,232 | 68.6% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap

Figure 10. Region 9- South Central Minnesota Labor and Commute Shed, 2021



Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap](#)

Home to Mankato, Blue Earth County is the largest employment center in the region and the biggest draw for workers, followed by Nicollet and Brown Counties. Employers in the region also draw workers from surrounding counties in the metro, like Hennepin.

The average commute time for workers in Region 9 was 20.3 minutes, compared to 23.3 minutes for workers statewide. Just under 63% of workers commuted less than 20 minutes each way, compared to 47.1% statewide; and less than 5% commuted more than 60 minutes each way. About 8.6% of workers worked at home, and 3.4% were able to walk to work.

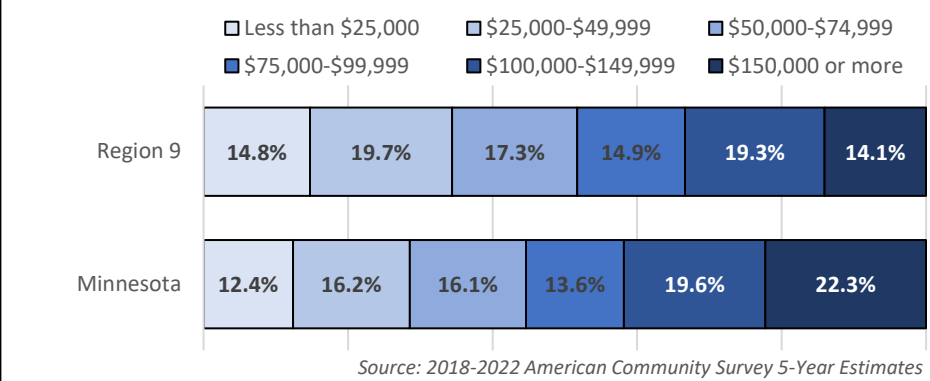
INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Household incomes were lower in Region 9 than in the state overall. At \$72,279, Region 9 had the 6th highest median household income of the 13 economic development regions in the state. About 34.5% of the households in the region had incomes below \$50,000 in 2022, compared to just 28.6% statewide. Another one-third (32.2%) of

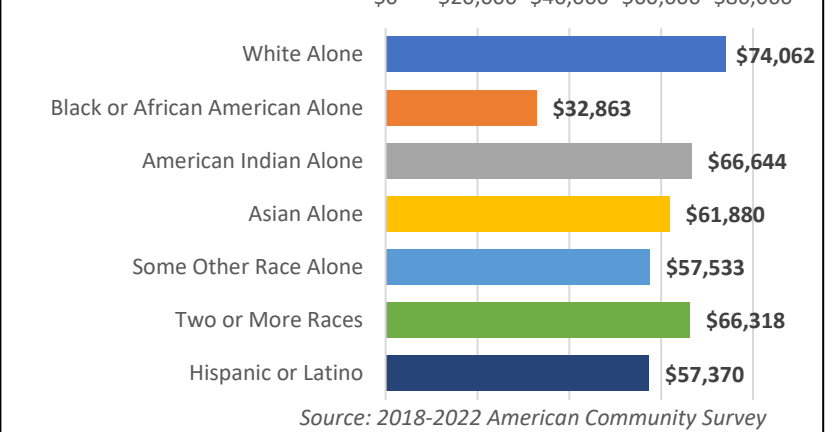
households earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in Region 9, while over 33% of households earned over \$100,000 per year compared to 41.9% of households statewide (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Household Incomes, 2022



Incomes varied widely by race in Region 9, with the highest incomes reported by White households followed by American Indian households and households of Two or More Races, while the lowest incomes reported were among Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino households. The household income for Whites was \$41,200 more than that of Black or African American households, and was also \$16,690 higher than the median household income among Hispanic or Latino households (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Region 9 Median Household Income by Race, 2022



COST OF LIVING

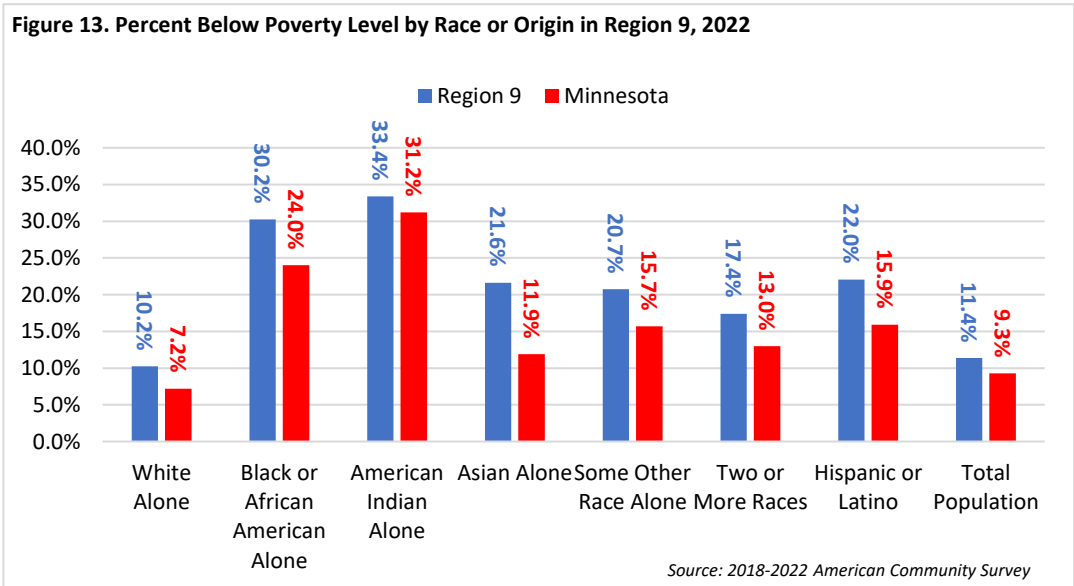
According to DEED’s [Cost of Living tool](#), the basic needs budget for an average Minnesota family (which consists of 2 adults and 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) was \$67,320 in 2023. The cost of living for a similar family in Region 9 was \$57,168 – which was the fourth lowest of the 13 economic development regions in the state. The highest monthly costs were for housing, food, and transportation; though the region’s housing, child care, and taxes were significantly 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 \$18.32 per hour working a combined 60 hours per week (see Table 8).

| Table 8. Basic Needs Cost of Living Estimates, 2023 | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------|----------------|---------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| Typical Family: 2 Adults (1 working full- time, 1 part- time), 1 child | Family Yearly Cost of Living | Hourly Wage Required | Monthly Costs | | | | | | |
| | | | Child Care | Food | Health Care | Housing | Trans- portation | Other | Taxes |
| Region 9 | \$57,168 | \$18.32 | \$358 | \$939 | \$577 | \$984 | \$907 | \$460 | \$539 |
| Minnesota | \$67,320 | \$21.58 | \$544 | \$955 | \$574 | \$1,285 | \$977 | \$536 | \$739 |
| Single Adult, 0 children | Single Yearly Cost of Living | Hourly Wage Required | Monthly Costs | | | | | | |
| | | | Child Care | Food | Health Care | Housing | Trans- portation | Other | Taxes |
| Region 9 | \$29,700 | \$14.28 | \$0 | \$412 | \$161 | \$770 | \$543 | \$283 | \$306 |
| Minnesota | \$34,704 | \$16.68 | \$0 | \$419 | \$160 | \$1,021 | \$572 | \$345 | \$375 |

Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

DEED’s Cost of Living tool provides different estimates for household compositions including single people, partnered couples, and up to 4 children. For a single person living alone and working full-time, the estimated yearly cost in Region 9 would be \$29,700, which would require an hourly wage of \$14.28 to meet the basic needs standard of living. If the same single person had one child, the hourly wage needed jumps to \$23.07 per hour (Table 8).

Overall, Region 9’s poverty rate was 11.4%, which was higher than the statewide rate of 9.3%. Like incomes, poverty levels varied widely by race and origin. It was estimated that 30.2% of the region’s Black or African American population was below the poverty level in 2022, compared to just 10.2% of the white population. Likewise, poverty levels were also higher than whites for American Indians (33.4%), Asians (21.6%), people of Some Other Race (20.7%), people of Two or More Races (17.4%) and people of Hispanic or Latino origin (22%) (Figure 13).



WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

The median hourly wage for all occupations in Region 9 was \$23.24 in the first quarter of 2024. As such, the region has the 6th highest median wage level of the 13 economic development regions in the state (Table 9). Also, the median wage in Region 9 was \$1.98 less than the statewide median wage, and \$4.54 less than the median wage in the Twin Cities metro area. Compared to the other two economic development regions in Southern Minnesota, Region’s median wage was \$1.02 less than the Southeast region but \$0.43 higher than in the Southwest region.

Not surprisingly, the lowest-paying jobs in Region 9 are in Food Preparation & Serving, Personal Care, and Sales occupations, which tend to have lower educational and training requirements. Region 9 has higher median wages than the state in Protective Services; Education, Training & Library; and Healthcare Support occupations. In addition, Region 9 has stronger concentrations of employment in Production; Food Preparation & Serving; Education, Training & Library; Installation, Maintenance & Repair; Community & Social Service; Transportation & Material Moving; Farming, Fishing & Forestry; and Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance occupations (see Table 10).

| | Median Hourly Wage | Estimated Regional Employment |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Region 1 - Northwest | \$23.51 | 35,370 |
| Region 2 - Headwaters | \$22.68 | 32,230 |
| Region 3 - Arrowhead | \$23.41 | 138,010 |
| Region 4 - West Central | \$23.04 | 89,340 |
| Region 5 - North Central | \$21.89 | 62,970 |
| Region 6E - Southwest Central | \$22.72 | 50,190 |
| Region 6W - Upper MN Valley | \$22.61 | 16,230 |
| Region 7E - East Central | \$23.18 | 48,440 |
| Region 7W - Central | \$23.85 | 175,560 |
| Region 8 - Southwest | \$22.81 | 52,080 |
| Region 9 - South Central | \$23.24 | 100,990 |
| Region 10 - Southeast | \$24.26 | 240,340 |
| Region 11 - 7-County Twin Cities | \$27.78 | 1,743,500 |
| State of Minnesota | \$25.22 | 2,881,100 |

Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics, Qtr. 1 2024

| Occupational Group | Region 9 | | | | 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 | \$23.24 | 100,990 | 100.0% | 1.0 | \$25.22 | 2,881,100 | 100.0% |
| Office & Administrative Support | \$22.79 | 11,510 | 11.4% | 0.9 | \$23.86 | 352,250 | 12.2% |
| Production | \$22.68 | 10,680 | 10.6% | 1.5 | \$23.05 | 203,810 | 7.1% |
| Transportation & Material Moving | \$21.90 | 9,640 | 9.5% | 1.2 | \$22.86 | 225,820 | 7.8% |
| Food Preparation & Serving Related | \$14.69 | 9,050 | 9.0% | 1.1 | \$15.07 | 232,190 | 8.1% |
| Sales & Related | \$17.55 | 8,630 | 8.5% | 1 | \$18.82 | 242,440 | 8.4% |
| Education, Training & Library | \$30.13 | 6,690 | 6.6% | 1.2 | \$28.22 | 163,340 | 5.7% |
| Healthcare Support | \$18.45 | 6,120 | 6.1% | 1 | \$18.07 | 169,580 | 5.9% |
| Healthcare Practitioners & Technical | \$40.45 | 5,790 | 5.7% | 0.9 | \$43.01 | 184,410 | 6.4% |
| Management | \$47.87 | 5,590 | 5.5% | 0.8 | \$57.75 | 201,710 | 7.0% |
| Installation, Maintenance & Repair | \$28.11 | 4,660 | 4.6% | 1.3 | \$29.54 | 104,530 | 3.6% |
| Business & Financial Operations | \$34.68 | 4,130 | 4.1% | 0.6 | \$39.26 | 202,700 | 7.0% |
| Construction & Extraction | \$29.78 | 4,050 | 4.0% | 1 | \$32.44 | 110,960 | 3.9% |
| Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint. | \$18.19 | 2,980 | 3.0% | 1.1 | \$18.83 | 79,660 | 2.8% |
| Community & Social Service | \$27.25 | 2,620 | 2.6% | 1.3 | \$27.92 | 57,930 | 2.0% |
| Personal Care & Service | \$16.51 | 2,150 | 2.1% | 1 | \$17.60 | 59,420 | 2.1% |
| Architecture & Engineering | \$37.82 | 1,690 | 1.7% | 0.8 | \$42.97 | 58,320 | 2.0% |
| Protective Service | \$29.43 | 1,430 | 1.4% | 0.9 | \$28.87 | 45,860 | 1.6% |
| Computer & Mathematical | \$38.68 | 1,130 | 1.1% | 0.3 | \$50.83 | 98,240 | 3.4% |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media | \$23.48 | 1,050 | 1.0% | 0.8 | \$29.01 | 36,160 | 1.3% |
| Life, Physical & Social Science | \$33.51 | 810 | 0.8% | 0.8 | \$39.93 | 29,220 | 1.0% |
| Legal | \$38.07 | 380 | 0.4% | 0.6 | \$51.15 | 19,040 | 0.7% |
| Farming, Fishing & Forestry | \$22.13 | 240 | 0.2% | 1.9 | \$22.13 | 3,520 | 0.1% |

Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics, Qtr. 1 2024

The highest paying jobs are found in Management, Healthcare Practitioners and Technical, Computer & Mathematical, and Legal, all of which have median wages over \$38 per hour. These occupations generally require higher levels of education and experience, including many that require bachelor’s degrees or higher. However, the largest median hourly pay gaps between the region and state occurred in Legal and Computer & Mathematical occupations, which were over \$12.00 less than the state.

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Region 9 is part of the larger 23-county Southwest Minnesota planning region. Employers in Southwest reported 9,546 job vacancies in 2023. Demand for workers was high across most occupational groups, with the largest number of openings being in Food Preparation & Serving (1,180), Sales & Related (1,164), Transportation & Material Moving (773), Healthcare Practitioners & Technical (738), and Installation, Maintenance, & Repair (653). These five occupational groups made up nearly half of the total vacancies in the region (see Table 11). The median hourly wage offer from the current survey was \$19.74 per hour, which was up \$3.19 from the second quarter of last year, showing rapidly rising wages amidst a tight labor market. Wage offers ranged from \$14.60 per hour for Personal Care & Service occupations to \$37.50 per hour for Computer & Mathematical occupations.

Table 11. Southwest Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey Results, 2023

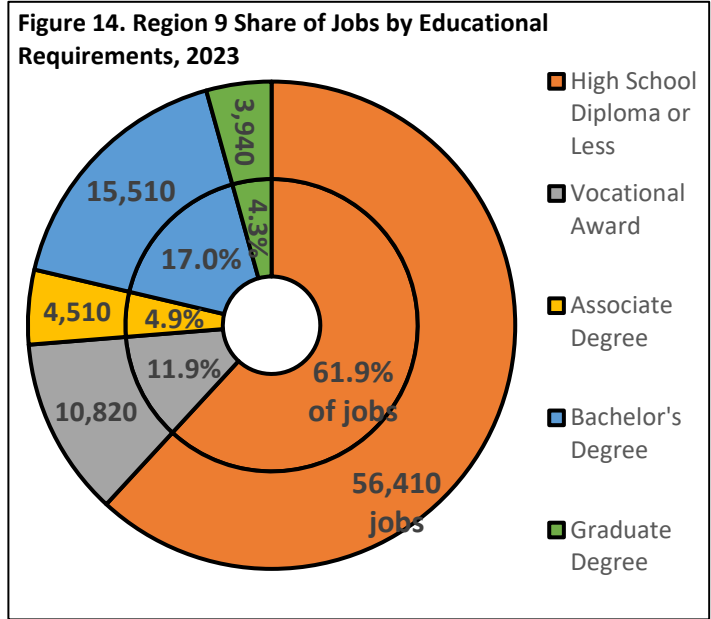
| | Number of Total Vacancies | Median Hourly Wage Offer | Percent Part-Time | Percent Temporary or Seasonal | Requiring Postsecondary Education | Requiring 1 or More Years of Work Exp. | Requiring Certificate or License | Job Vacancy Rate |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Total, All Occupations | 9,546 | \$19.74 | 26% | 11% | 31% | 33% | 46% | 5.5% |
| Food Preparation & Serving Related | 1,180 | \$15.32 | 31% | 5% | 0% | 17% | 7% | 8.6% |
| Sales & Related | 1,164 | \$15.93 | 22% | 5% | 5% | 20% | 10% | 8.0% |
| Transportation & Material Moving | 773 | \$21.15 | 36% | 35% | 3% | 24% | 91% | 4.8% |
| Healthcare Practitioners & Technical | 738 | \$31.97 | 30% | 2% | 95% | 47% | 98% | 7.8% |
| Installation, Maintenance & Repair | 653 | \$22.92 | 6% | 4% | 33% | 60% | 63% | 8.4% |
| Office & Administrative Support | 563 | \$19.27 | 25% | 2% | 9% | 44% | 21% | 3.0% |
| Production | 540 | \$18.93 | 18% | 7% | 12% | 37% | 12% | 2.7% |
| Business & Financial Operations | 520 | \$25.88 | 26% | 9% | 64% | 49% | 47% | 8.1% |
| Healthcare Support | 508 | \$16.76 | 46% | 0% | 45% | 9% | 77% | 5.1% |
| Education, Training & Library | 453 | \$18.35 | 40% | 24% | 58% | 30% | 70% | 3.9% |
| Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint. | 432 | \$16.90 | 26% | 43% | 0% | 13% | 13% | 8.9% |
| Construction & Extraction | 431 | \$25.04 | 0% | 14% | 17% | 46% | 54% | 6.0% |
| Community & Social Service | 258 | \$23.46 | 18% | 0% | 88% | 48% | 75% | 6.9% |
| Management | 202 | \$32.04 | 0% | 0% | 66% | 87% | 43% | 2.2% |
| Personal Care & Service | 188 | \$14.60 | 70% | 45% | 21% | 5% | 37% | 6.0% |
| Protective Service | 177 | \$22.52 | 50% | 14% | 35% | 37% | 77% | 8.1% |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media | 129 | \$16.82 | 81% | 55% | 51% | 24% | 34% | 8.0% |
| Computer & Mathematical | 100 | \$37.50 | 2% | 0% | 91% | 41% | 12% | 5.6% |
| Architecture & Engineering | 96 | \$28.56 | 0% | 0% | 74% | 86% | 61% | 4.1% |
| Life, Physical & Social Sciences | 69 | \$24.18 | 1% | 0% | 26% | 61% | 52% | 4.8% |

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, 2023

Overall, 26% of the openings were part-time. Because of the high concentration of jobs in Food Preparation & Serving, Sales & Related, Transportation & Material Moving, and Installation, Maintenance, & Repair, 31% of postings required postsecondary education. In many cases, one or more years of experience was just as, if not more, relevant. While 33% of the total job openings required one or more years’ experience, typically those occupations that required postsecondary education also required at least one year of experience. This also helped lead to the high wage offers, especially in those fields that required additional training (see Table 11).

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

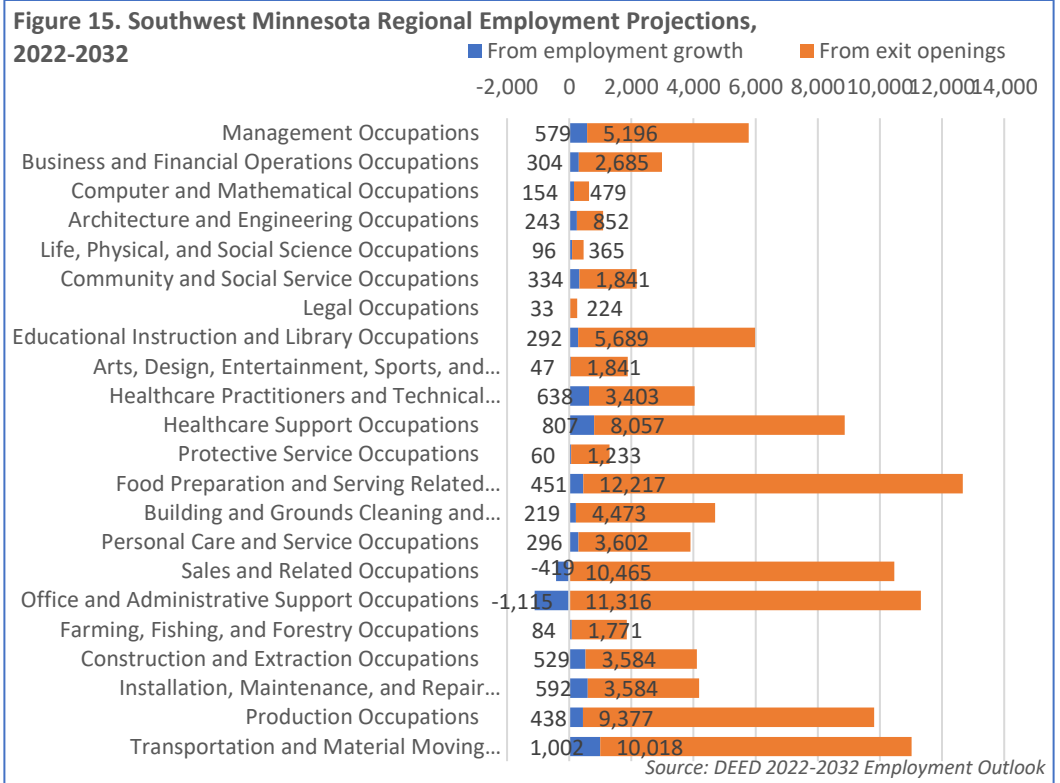
Similar to the recent job vacancy data, DEED’s Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics program shows that just 38% of current jobs held in the region require postsecondary education to enter. The remaining require no more than a high school diploma, and sometimes less (Figure 14). However, some on-the-job training is often needed. 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 opportunities 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 \$14,500 and almost \$50,000 per year in Minnesota. For those who go to college, choice of major matters – different programs lead to different jobs and different earnings.



Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Region 9 is part of the larger 23-county Southwest planning region, which is expected to see job growth to the tune of 3.8% from 2022 to 2032, equaling 5,664 new jobs. The region is also expected to need to fill 102,272 jobs left vacant by retirements and other career changers. Transportation & Material Moving, Healthcare Support, Healthcare Practitioners, and Installation,



Source: DEED 2022-2032 Employment Outlook

Maintenance & Repair occupations are expected to see the most new growth. In contrast, some occupational groups, such as Office & Administrative Support, Sales & Related, and Production, are predicted to lose jobs during this time frame, but every occupational group will show some future demand either through new jobs and/or replacement openings (see Figure 15).

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 retail salespersons are among the top occupations in demand based on the consistent need for workers in these fields (see Table 12).

Table 12. Southwest Minnesota Regional Occupations in Demand, 2023

| High School or Less | Vocational Training | Associate Degree | Bachelor’s Degree or Higher |
|--|--|---|---|
| Retail Salespersons \$34,798/yr | Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers \$54,491/yr | Registered Nurses \$85,138/yr | Accountants and Auditors \$69,245/yr |
| Home Health and Personal Care Aides \$36,495/yr | Nursing Assistants \$39,764/yr | Police and Sheriff’s Patrol Officers \$74,684/yr | General and Operations Managers \$82,482/yr |
| Fast Food and Counter Workers \$30,228/yr | Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses \$58,499/yr | Dental Hygienists \$84,870/yr | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education \$65,364/yr |
| Cashiers \$30,595/yr | Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers \$64,265/yr | Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians \$60,049/yr | Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education \$66,349/yr |
| Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary \$38,031/yr | Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists \$59,444/yr | Radiologic Technologists and Technicians \$78,236/yr | Substitute Teachers, Short-Term \$52,112/yr |
| First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers \$45,427/yr | Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks \$47,963/yr | Agricultural Technicians \$50,274/yr | Financial Managers \$119,560/yr |
| Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners \$37,379/yr | Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters \$61,794/yr | Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping \$49,828/yr | Industrial Engineers \$90,455/yr |
| Construction Laborers \$49,744/yr | Substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors \$49,947/yr | Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians \$71,227/yr | Computer Systems Analysts \$96,291/yr |
| Bus Drivers, School \$49,228/yr | Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics \$50,024/yr | Physical Therapist Assistants \$62,988/yr | Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education \$66,534/yr |
| Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand \$43,003/yr | Industrial Machinery Mechanics \$60,689/yr | Veterinary Technologists and Technicians \$40,453/yr | Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education \$37,747/yr |

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

ECONOMY

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

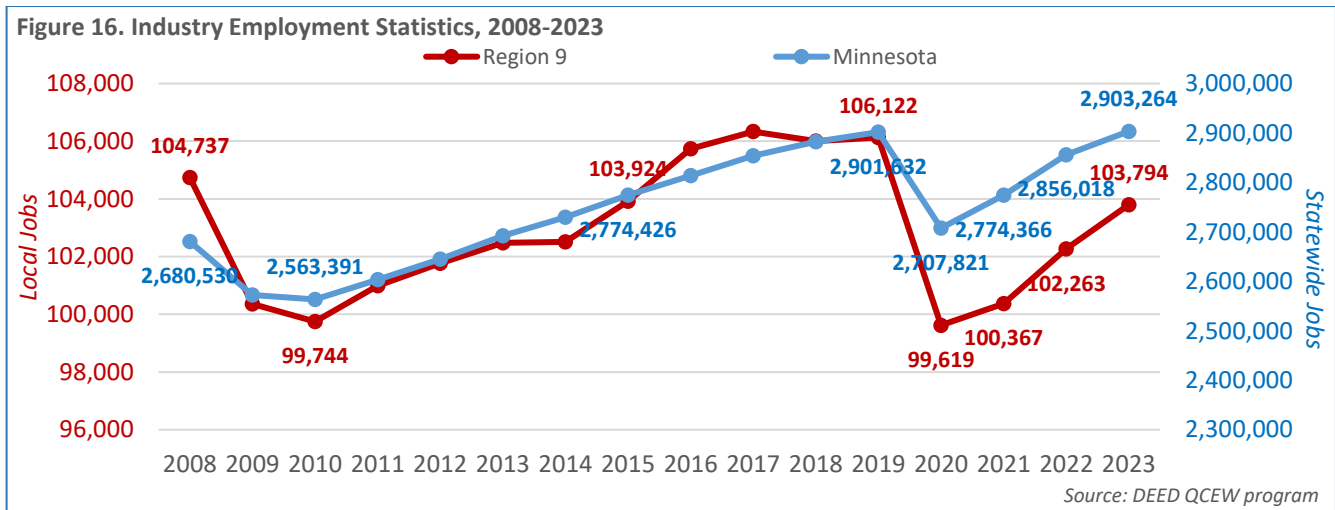
According to DEED’s [Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\) program](#), Region 9 was home to 7,154 business establishments providing 103,794 covered jobs through 2023, with a total payroll that exceeded \$5.5 billion. That was about 3.6% of total employment in the state, making it the 5th largest of the 13 EDRs. Average annual wages were \$53,625 in the region, which was the 6th highest of the EDR’s in the state. Slightly bouncing back from the pandemic, the region experienced job growth of 1,531 jobs, a 1.5% increase in the past year. However, Region 9 is still down 2,328 jobs compared to 2019 (see Table 13).

In terms of employment, Blue Earth County is the largest economic center in Region 9 with 40,264 jobs at 2,133 firms. Sibley County has the smallest economy with 3,824 jobs after losing 134 jobs over the year. Watonwan and Faribault counties are the only counties in Region 9 that have gained jobs from 2019 to 2023. In addition to being the largest employing county, Blue Earth saw the highest annual wages of the nine counties in the South Central region, however, it was still well below the state average.

| Geography | Number of Firms | Number of Jobs | Total Payroll (\$1,000s) | Average Annual Wage | 2022-2023 | | 2019-2023 | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | | | Change in Jobs | Percent Change | Change in Jobs | Percent Change |
| Region 9 - South Central | 7,154 | 103,794 | \$5,565,959 | \$53,625 | +1,531 | +1.5% | -2,328 | -2.2% |
| Blue Earth Co. | 2,133 | 40,264 | \$2,218,508 | \$55,099 | +1,451 | +3.7% | -11 | 0.0% |
| Brown Co. | 896 | 13,242 | \$717,639 | \$54,194 | +173 | +1.3% | -756 | -5.4% |
| Faribault Co. | 488 | 4,605 | \$233,601 | \$50,728 | +23 | +0.5% | +109 | +2.4% |
| Le Sueur Co. | 789 | 8,521 | \$456,262 | \$53,546 | +162 | 1.9% | -234 | -2.7% |
| Martin Co. | 700 | 8,267 | \$429,358 | \$51,936 | +109 | +1.3% | -225 | -2.6% |
| Nicollet Co. | 846 | 15,012 | \$813,121 | \$54,165 | -241 | -1.6% | -405 | -2.6% |
| Sibley Co. | 417 | 3,824 | \$202,176 | \$52,870 | -134 | -3.4% | -460 | -10.7% |
| Waseca Co. | 553 | 5,519 | \$282,789 | \$51,239 | -107 | -1.9% | -506 | -8.4% |
| Watonwan Co. | 333 | 4,537 | \$212,505 | \$46,838 | +101 | +2.3% | +158 | +3.6% |
| State of Minnesota | 207,647 | 2,903,264 | \$207,665,583 | \$71,528 | +47,246 | +1.7% | +1,632 | +0.1% |

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

Due to job losses suffered during the pandemic recession, Region 9 lost jobs over the past 15 years overall, but also experienced other ups and downs in employment during the Great Recession and recovery. Overall, the region’s job trends mirrored that of the state, however the losses during the Great Recession were more severe and the recovery after was slower and less steady than the state. The region fully recovered all of the jobs lost during the Great Recession by 2016, then the pandemic led to a severe drop in jobs in 2020. Over the last year, the region saw a slight increase in jobs, increasing by 1.5% (1,531 jobs), which was less than the 1.7% increase seen statewide (see Figure 16).



The two largest industries in Region 9 are Health Care & Social Assistance and Manufacturing. Health Care & Social Assistance (1,089 firms and 18,384 jobs) was hit hard by the pandemic, resulting in a loss of -423 jobs, or -2.2% from 2019 to 2023. Nursing & Residential Care Facilities is the largest sub-sector, with 6,124 jobs at 169 firms. This is followed by Hospitals (5,083 jobs at 14 firms), Social Assistance (3,824 jobs at 648 establishments), and Ambulatory Health Care Services jobs (3,368 jobs at 259 establishments).

With 18,116 jobs at 351 establishments, Manufacturing is the second largest employing industry in Region 9. Manufacturing saw a decrease of -252 jobs (-1.4%) over the past year, and is still down almost 900 jobs from 2019. Food Manufacturing is the largest subsector, with 5,739 jobs at 57 firms; followed by Electrical Equipment, Appliance & Component Manufacturing (1,924 jobs at 17 firms), Printing & Related Support Activities (1,913 jobs at 42 firms), and Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing (1,394 jobs at 27 firms). Together these four manufacturing sectors account for 60.6% of all manufacturing jobs in the region.

Other important industries in Region 9 include Retail Trade, Educational Services, and Accommodation & Food Services, which all had over 8,000 jobs. Educational Services and Accommodation & Food Services gained jobs within the past year. The next largest industries include Public Administration, Construction, Transportation & Warehousing, which all had over 4,000 jobs. The region has a diverse mix of employment by industry, however 13 of the 20 main industries experienced job losses since 2019, even though 16 of the 20 industries saw recovery since 2022 (see Table 14).

Table 14. Region 9 Industry Employment Statistics, 2023

| NAICS Industry Title | 2023 Annual Data | | | Avg. Annual Wage | 2022-2023 | | 2019-2023 | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Number of Firms | Number of Jobs | Total Payroll (\$1,000s) | | Change in Jobs | Percent Change | Change in Jobs | Percent Change |
| Total, All Industries | 7,154 | 103,794 | \$5,565,959 | \$53,625 | +1,531 | +1.5% | -2,328 | -2.2% |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 1,089 | 18,384 | \$1,011,506 | \$55,021 | +836 | +4.8% | -423 | -2.2% |
| Manufacturing | 351 | 18,116 | \$1,188,065 | \$65,581 | -252 | -1.4% | -889 | -4.7% |
| Retail Trade | 775 | 11,808 | \$382,446 | \$32,389 | -195 | -1.6% | +37 | +0.3% |
| Educational Services | 134 | 9,125 | \$479,302 | \$52,526 | +56 | +0.6% | -472 | -4.9% |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 519 | 8,049 | \$151,196 | \$18,784 | +228 | +2.9% | -11 | -0.1% |
| Public Administration | 279 | 5,820 | \$339,201 | \$58,282 | +178 | +3.2% | +115 | +2.0% |
| Construction | 843 | 4,841 | \$332,867 | \$68,760 | +89 | +1.9% | -241 | -4.7% |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 397 | 4,396 | \$223,319 | \$50,801 | +58 | +1.3% | -179 | -3.9% |
| Wholesale Trade | 312 | 4,112 | \$343,125 | \$83,445 | +184 | +4.7% | +137 | +3.4% |
| Other Services | 607 | 3,209 | \$115,455 | \$35,978 | +34 | +1.1% | -12 | -0.4% |
| Finance & Insurance | 383 | 3,094 | \$240,371 | \$77,689 | +22 | +0.7% | +245 | +8.6% |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunting | 341 | 2,830 | \$152,648 | \$53,939 | -45 | -1.6% | -351 | -11.0% |
| Professional & Technical Services | 373 | 2,614 | \$193,762 | \$74,125 | +136 | +5.5% | +41 | +1.6% |
| Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs. | 253 | 2,343 | \$98,232 | \$41,926 | +94 | +4.2% | +149 | +6.8% |
| Information | 105 | 1,532 | \$105,709 | \$69,000 | +17 | +1.1% | -352 | -18.7% |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation | 138 | 1,147 | \$20,229 | \$17,637 | +41 | +3.7% | +32 | +2.9% |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing | 180 | 1,001 | \$38,365 | \$38,327 | +26 | +2.7% | -15 | -1.5% |
| Management of Companies | 34 | 800 | \$95,084 | \$118,855 | -9 | -1.1% | -17 | -2.1% |
| Utilities | 34 | 447 | \$44,919 | \$100,491 | +23 | +5.4% | -29 | -6.1% |
| Mining | 10 | 122 | \$10,157 | \$83,251 | +9 | +8.0% | -88 | -41.9% |

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, much like the population overall. Nearly one-quarter (23.9%) of workers in the region were 55 years or older, compared to 22.1% statewide and just 20.4% in the region one decade earlier, reflecting the size of the Baby Boom generation in the workforce. In contrast, the percentage of younger workers aged 20 to 24 dropped over the past decade (see Table 15).

Wages have climbed in the past decade for all workers due to rising demand and a tight labor market. While wages were still lowest for the youngest workers, who tend to fill lower-skilled, less-than-full-time jobs in industries like Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services, younger workers enjoyed the fastest percentage increase in wages from 2012 to 2022.

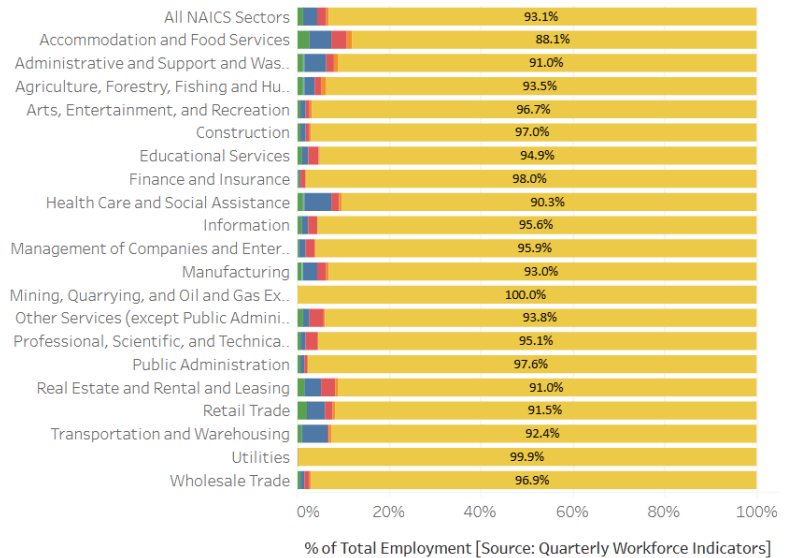
Wages were highest for workers between 45 and 64 years of age, and males worked more hours than females, though the gap increased over the decade. In addition, median hours worked have increased for all age groups excluding 19 years and younger, which has remained the same since 2012.

| | Percentage of Workers | | Minnesota | | Median Hourly Wage | | Median Hours Worked | |
|------------------|-----------------------|--------|-----------|--------|--------------------|---------|---------------------|------|
| | 2022 | 2012 | 2022 | 2012 | 2022 | 2012 | 2022 | 2012 |
| Total, all ages | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | \$20.95 | \$13.80 | 416 | 404 |
| 19 years & under | 8.3% | 8.0% | 6.6% | 6.3% | \$13.58 | \$7.99 | 111 | 111 |
| 20 to 24 years | 11.3% | 13.1% | 9.2% | 11.3% | \$17.35 | \$10.04 | 261 | 245 |
| 25 to 44 years | 40.0% | 37.8% | 43.6% | 42.3% | \$24.14 | \$15.64 | 481 | 466 |
| 45 to 54 years | 16.6% | 20.7% | 18.4% | 21.9% | \$26.53 | \$17.42 | 491 | 480 |
| 55 to 64 years | 16.9% | 15.8% | 16.7% | 14.7% | \$24.33 | \$16.93 | 487 | 476 |
| 65 years & over | 7.0% | 4.6% | 5.4% | 3.5% | \$17.95 | \$12.19 | 235 | 198 |
| Male | 49.8% | 48.6% | 49.1% | 49.1% | \$24.20 | \$15.78 | 480 | 472 |
| Female | 50.2% | 51.4% | 50.9% | 50.9% | \$19.65 | \$12.69 | 369 | 348 |

Source: DEED Quarterly Employment Demographics

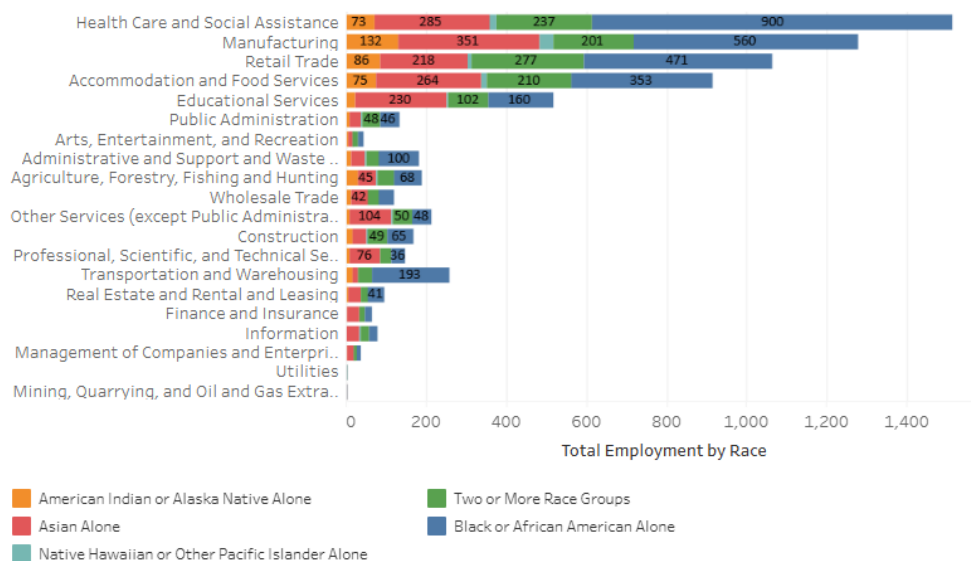
While people of different races make up 10% of the overall population, they held just 6.9% of total jobs in Region 9, according to data from the Quarterly Workforce Indicators program. Based on annual averages for 2023, that equaled 7,073 jobs held by people of other races, compared to 95,412 white workers. While still a small portion, workers of other races held just 3% of the total jobs in 2003, meaning their employment presence more than doubled from 2003 to 2023. In sum, workers of other races have filled an additional 4,081 jobs in the region since 2003, while whites saw a decrease of 1,208 jobs.

Figure 17. South Central Minnesota Employment by Race, 2023



With 3,125 jobs, Black or African Americans were the largest race group in the regional economy, after gaining 2,100 jobs since 2003, a 205% increase. The next largest group was Asians, who held 1,896 jobs in 2023 after rising 67% from 2003 (see Figure 17). Workers of Hispanic or Latino origin filled 7,805 jobs in the region in 2023, up 4,023 (106.4%) jobs since 2003.

Figure 18. South Central Minnesota Employment by Other Races by Industry, 2023



Most industry sectors in Region 9 are not very diverse, but there are a couple that rely more heavily on workers of other races. The largest number of BIPOC workers were employed in Health Care & Social Assistance, though 90.3% of the jobs in the industry were held by white workers. Workers of other races were also employed in larger numbers in Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Accommodation & Food Services. The most diverse industry in the region was Accommodation & Food Services, where 11.9% of workers were non-white (Figure 18).

INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

As noted above, Southwest Minnesota is projected to grow 2.8% from 2022 to 2032, a gain of 5,664 new jobs. The largest growing industry is expected to be Management of Companies with an increase of 9.2%. The region is also expected to see significant employment growth in Art, Entertainment, and Recreation, Transportation and Warehousing, and Professional and Technical Services.

In contrast, Information and Retail Trade are expected to cut the most jobs. In all, 17 of the 20 industries in the region are expected to see an increase in jobs while the other 3 are anticipated to see declines (Table 16).

Table 16. Regional Industry Employment Projections, 2022-2032

| Southwest | Estimated Employment 2022 | Projected Employment 2032 | Percent Change 2022-2032 | Numeric Change 2022-2032 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Total, All Industries | 202,214 | 207,878 | +2.8% | +5,664 |
| Management of Companies | 1,478 | 1,614 | +9.2% | +136 |
| Arts, Entertainment & Recreation | 1,889 | 2,059 | +9.0% | +170 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 6,297 | 6,810 | +8.1% | +513 |
| Professional & Technical Services | 4,066 | 4,371 | +7.5% | +305 |
| Construction | 7,679 | 8,252 | +7.5% | +573 |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 28,786 | 30,498 | +5.9% | +1,712 |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 11,736 | 12,318 | +5.0% | +582 |
| Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. | 4,127 | 4,331 | +4.9% | +204 |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunting | 5,309 | 5,566 | +4.8% | +257 |
| Manufacturing | 32,192 | 33,537 | +4.2% | +1,345 |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing | 1,397 | 1,445 | +3.4% | +48 |
| Other Services | 7,097 | 7,281 | +2.6% | +184 |
| Public Administration | 14,117 | 14,370 | +1.8% | +253 |
| Finance & Insurance | 6,830 | 6,930 | +1.5% | +100 |
| Wholesale Trade | 8,001 | 8,116 | +1.4% | +115 |
| Educational Services | 16,065 | 16,116 | +0.3% | +51 |
| Utilities | 690 | 690 | 0.0% | 0 |
| Mining | 214 | 211 | -1.4% | -3 |
| Retail Trade | 19,409 | 19,084 | -1.7% | -325 |
| Information | 2,093 | 2,046 | -2.2% | -47 |

Source: DEED 2022-2032 Employment Outlook

NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS

Region 9 was home to 15,627 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).” Region 9 saw a slight increase in nonemployers over the past decade, fueled by gains in Blue Earth, Nicollet, and Le Sueur Counties. In sum, the region gained 183 nonemployers from 2012 to 2021, a increase of 1.2%. These nonemployers generated sales receipts over \$807 million in 2021 (see Table 17).

Table 17. Nonemployer Statistics Region 9, 2021

| | 2021 | | 2012-2021 | |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Number of Firms | Receipts (\$1,000s) | Change in Firms | Percent Change |
| Region 9 | 15,627 | \$807,524 | 183 | 1.2% |
| Blue Earth Co. | 4,406 | \$236,717 | 420 | 10.5% |
| Brown Co. | 1,689 | \$77,143 | -46 | -2.7% |
| Faribault Co. | 1,016 | \$56,598 | -154 | -13.2% |
| Le Sueur Co. | 2,044 | \$105,905 | 43 | 2.1% |
| Martin Co. | 1,464 | \$81,245 | -15 | -1.0% |
| Nicollet Co. | 2,204 | \$108,310 | 95 | 4.5% |
| Sibley Co. | 1,065 | \$51,666 | -7 | -0.7% |
| Waseca Co. | 1,137 | \$60,206 | -31 | -2.7% |
| Watonwan Co. | 602 | \$29,734 | -122 | -16.9% |
| Minnesota | 429,672 | \$22,727,564 | 41,117 | 10.6% |

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Finally, agriculture remains an important industry in the region. There are 7,138 farms producing over \$4.9 billion in the market value of products sold in 2022 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The state rank of each of the counties lie mostly in the top half and range from 2nd (Martin County) and 3rd (Blue Earth County) to 53rd (Le Sueur County) in regards to the market value of products sold (see Table 18).

| Table 18. Census of Agriculture, 2022 | | | <i>State Rank (of 87)</i> |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Source: 2022 Census of Agriculture</i> | Number of Farms | Market Value of Products Sold | |
| Region 9 | 7,138 | \$4,972,484,000 | 2 (EDR) |
| Blue Earth Co. | 1,019 | \$838,011,000 | 3 |
| Brown Co. | 973 | \$485,455,000 | 22 |
| Faribault Co. | 773 | \$587,680,000 | 14 |
| Le Sueur Co. | 896 | \$239,195,000 | 53 |
| Martin Co. | 823 | \$943,050,000 | 2 |
| Nicollet Co. | 660 | \$596,399,000 | 12 |
| Sibley Co. | 860 | \$484,129,000 | 23 |
| Waseca Co. | 622 | \$393,883,000 | 37 |
| Watonwan Co. | 512 | \$404,682,000 | 32 |
| Minnesota | 65,531 | \$28,482,097,000 | x |

Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities by contacting Amanda O’Connell at amanda.oconnell@state.mn.us