Millennials account for 36 percent of the labor force in Minnesota, eclipsing both baby boomers and Generation X.

Minnesota’s labor force is undergoing a major shift. As baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) continue to leave the workforce, millennials (born between 1981 and 1999) seek to fill the void they are leaving behind.

For millennials in college or for those looking for a new career path, the question becomes what occupations offer the best opportunity for good pay, stability, growth and opportunity. What are the best jobs for millennials? In this article we compile a list of the best jobs for millennials in Minnesota based on wages, projected growth, millennial share of employment and total number of jobs statewide. Further, we break down the best jobs for millennials by educational requirement and area of study or interest.

It’s a Millennial’s World

The millennial generation is large. As of 2015, millennials accounted for about 25 percent of Minnesota’s population and nearly 36 percent of the state’s labor force. In fact, millennials now comprise the largest segment of Minnesota’s labor force, while Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) and baby boomer workers comprise approximately 33 and 30 percent of the labor force, respectively.

Fortunately, working-age millennials (ages 25 to 36) are increasingly finding work opportunities statewide, with unemployment rates on par with the average unemployment rate across all working-age groups.

Despite popularly held stereotypes, millennials are proving themselves to be dedicated employees. Across every industry, the working-age millennial turnover rate is never more than three percentage points higher than the turnover rates for all employees.
Moreover, turnover rates for younger workers have actually decreased over the past two decades.

Millennials work throughout Minnesota’s industry sectors. Sectors employing the most millennials include accommodation and food services; retail trade; arts, entertainment and recreation; administrative and support services; and health care and social assistance. Many occupations within these sectors are projected to experience significant growth in the coming years, with some occupations, such as statisticians, home health aides, physician’s assistants and biomedical engineers, anticipated to grow by more than 20 percent through 2024. These are promising trends for millennials, especially those who are just entering the workforce and are interested in pursuing STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) or health care occupations. With baby boomers retiring at an increasing pace, career pathways also open up for older millennials looking to advance their skill sets, take on more leadership and earn higher wages.

At one end of the spectrum, industries like retail trade and accommodation and food services attract millennials looking for immediate work with little to no education required. This is perfect for employers desperate for workers in a tight labor market and can be a springboard for millennials to gain job experience.

At the other end of the spectrum, industries like professional, scientific and technical services; finance and insurance; and management push millennials to seek bachelor’s and advanced degrees.

Manufacturing and construction are often overlooked by millennials, despite their significant presence in the state economy. For example, manufacturing accounts for 13.6 percent of total state jobs compared with 10.5 percent nationally. Wages within manufacturing and construction are more than 16 percent higher than wages for the total of all industries. These occupations do not typically require postsecondary education, with apprenticeships and on-the-job training commonplace. Whether it’s an electrician, carpenter, welder or CNC operator, construction and manufacturing occupations are in-demand and offer excellent opportunities for millennials.

Moreover, turnover rates for younger workers have actually decreased over the past two decades.

Methodology
Along with tools provided by DEED, we used data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau to compile the list of top jobs for millennials in Minnesota. To make the list, each occupation had to have at least 5,000 employees statewide and show projected growth between 2014 and 2024. The average annual wage of the occupation had to be higher than the average annual wage across all occupations in Minnesota ($50,243). Finally, the occupation had to have a millennial share that was higher than the average millennial share across all occupations in Minnesota (23 percent). The occupations were then scored based on their rank for each category.

While other factors like job satisfaction and flexibility are important, no standard measures of these job qualities exist.

Using the new Career and Education Explorer tool developed by DEED, each occupation was matched to the most common area of study. In some cases, two areas of study were assigned to an occupation. The most common educational requirement was also assigned to each occupation.
Top Jobs for Millennials

Table 1 lists the top 25 jobs for millennials based on the data sets outlined above. STEM-related occupations dominate the top 25 list, including the top four occupations on the list, with application software developers at the top. All of the STEM-related occupations that appear on the list most commonly require a bachelor’s degree and almost always have average annual wages over $70,000.

While health care was only represented twice on the list, it is important to mention. As outlined earlier, health care is a great opportunity for millennials with the time and money to attend college and professional schools. Registered nurses, which appears as the sixth-best job for millennials, accounts for about 13 percent of the total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Average Annual Wage</th>
<th>Millennial Share</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Software Developers, Applications</td>
<td>12,950</td>
<td>$93,033</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists</td>
<td>12,090</td>
<td>$68,496</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Systems Analysts</td>
<td>15,130</td>
<td>$89,908</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Developers, Systems Software</td>
<td>9,780</td>
<td>$107,005</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountants and Auditors</td>
<td>26,550</td>
<td>$70,965</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>59,640</td>
<td>$72,892</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Managers</td>
<td>7,590</td>
<td>$136,727</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Analysts</td>
<td>6,020</td>
<td>$87,720</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network and Computer Systems Administrators</td>
<td>8,330</td>
<td>$83,628</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and Operations Managers</td>
<td>38,820</td>
<td>$105,329</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan Officers</td>
<td>7,370</td>
<td>$76,695</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Trades Workers</td>
<td>77,760</td>
<td>$54,254</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers, Pipefitters and Steamfitters</td>
<td>8,630</td>
<td>$66,646</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineers</td>
<td>6,330</td>
<td>$82,328</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>11,240</td>
<td>$59,340</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>5,450</td>
<td>$123,123</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police and Sheriff’s Patrol Officers</td>
<td>8,790</td>
<td>$59,885</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Engineers</td>
<td>8,250</td>
<td>$87,902</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary, Secondary and Special Education School Teachers</td>
<td>78,530</td>
<td>$59,297</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators</td>
<td>9,810</td>
<td>$57,928</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims Adjusters, Examiners and Investigators</td>
<td>5,480</td>
<td>$63,344</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child, Family and School Social Workers</td>
<td>6,550</td>
<td>$57,892</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development Specialists</td>
<td>5,660</td>
<td>$62,236</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and System Operators</td>
<td>6,190</td>
<td>$57,307</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralegals and Legal Assistants</td>
<td>5,070</td>
<td>$54,394</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

jobs on the top 25 list. Many health care–related jobs were left off this list because of their relatively small size. Expanding the list to include jobs with over 1,000 employees statewide pushes the number of health care occupations on this list up to 10 of the top 25.

**How much education do you need?**

Table 2 provides the top jobs for millennials based on five educational requirements, which represent those most frequently required for the job. While average wages generally increase with educational requirement, there are great opportunities for people at all different levels of educational attainment. Most of the top jobs requiring high school or vocational training were construction or trades–related. All of the top jobs for those with an associate degree or above were in health care or STEM–related occupations.

**What do you want to study?**

The College Board identifies eight major areas of study: arts and humanities, business, health and medicine, multi–interdisciplinary studies, public and social services, STEM, social sciences, and trades and personal services. There were no jobs that met the top jobs requirements in the arts and humanities area of study, and the multi–interdisciplinary area of study was not included in the list.

Of the other categories, the list includes the top three jobs for each area of study. In most instances the jobs on this list are not limited to the area of study outlined; however, the area of study outlined is the most logical or most common route of study for the occupation (see Table 3).

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**Table 2: Top 3 Jobs for Millennials by Minimum Educational Requirement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Most Common Educational Requirement</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Average Annual Wage</th>
<th>Millennial Share</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brickmasons and Blockmasons</td>
<td>High School or Less</td>
<td>1,340</td>
<td>$66,292</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roofers</td>
<td>High School or Less</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>$56,313</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>Vocational Training</td>
<td>11,240</td>
<td>$59,340</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers, Pipefitters and Steamfitters</td>
<td>Vocational Training</td>
<td>8,630</td>
<td>$66,646</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers</td>
<td>Vocational Training</td>
<td>2,790</td>
<td>$54,246</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Medical Sonographers</td>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>$76,219</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>59,640</td>
<td>$72,892</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Hygienists</td>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>4,620</td>
<td>$71,582</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Developers, Applications</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>12,950</td>
<td>$93,033</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Systems Analysts</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>15,130</td>
<td>$89,908</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Engineers</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>$99,485</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician Assistants</td>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>2,010</td>
<td>$107,599</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Practitioners</td>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>3,290</td>
<td>$105,231</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Anesthetists</td>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>1,540</td>
<td>$177,074</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Good opportunities exist across Minnesota for millennials at all educational levels and in most areas of interest. This article presents a set of occupations based on large size, employment growth and above-average wages and share of millennials within the occupation. These lists are meant to provide a starting place for millennials who are thinking about their careers and educational opportunities.

The Career and Education Explorer tool can be used by millennials and anyone else to further explore these and other career opportunities in Minnesota. This article is meant to highlight occupations that provide great opportunities for millennials, especially as this generation becomes more prominent in the Minnesota labor market.

Table 3: Top 3 Jobs for Millennials by Area of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Area of Study</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Average Annual Wage</th>
<th>Millennial Share</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>12,090</td>
<td>$68,496</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Managers</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>7,590</td>
<td>$136,727</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>General and Operations Managers</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>38,820</td>
<td>$105,329</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>Health and Medicine</td>
<td>5,450</td>
<td>$123,123</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>Health and Medicine</td>
<td>59,640</td>
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<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Hygienists</td>
<td>Health and Medicine</td>
<td>4,620*</td>
<td>$71,582</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police and Sheriff’s Patrol Officers</td>
<td>Public and Social Services</td>
<td>8,790</td>
<td>$59,895</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child, Family and School Social Workers</td>
<td>Public and Social Services</td>
<td>6,550</td>
<td>$57,892</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralegals and Legal Assistants</td>
<td>Public and Social Services</td>
<td>5,070</td>
<td>$54,394</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Analysts</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>6,020</td>
<td>$87,720</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan Officers</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>7,370</td>
<td>$76,695</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary and Middle School Teachers</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>27,370</td>
<td>$60,322</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Developers, Applications</td>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>12,950</td>
<td>$93,033</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Software Developers, Systems Software</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11,240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plumbers, Pipefitters and Steamfitters</td>
<td>Trades and Personal Services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Trades Workers</td>
<td>Trades and Personal Services</td>
<td>77,760</td>
<td>$54,254</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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