

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGION 6W: Upper Minnesota Valley

Covers counties:

Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle,
Swift, and Yellow Medicine

2018 REGIONAL PROFILE

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DEMOGRAPHICS

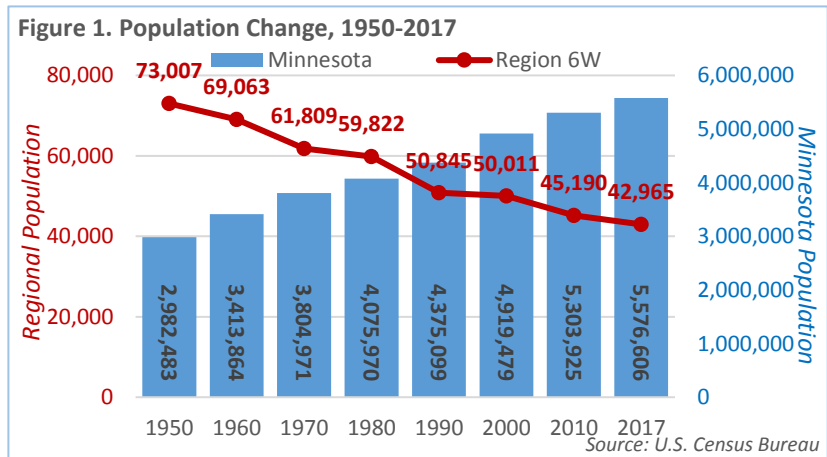
POPULATION CHANGE, 2000-2017

Economic Development Region 6W – Upper Minnesota Valley includes a total of 5 counties, located in the larger 23-county Southwest Minnesota planning area. Region 6W was home to 42,965 people in 2017, comprising less than 1 percent of the state’s total population, making it the smallest region in the state. It is about half the size of the next two smallest regions, which both had about 85,500 people in 2017, and it is considerably smaller than the three regions surrounding it: Region 4 had 229,775 people, while Region 6E and Region 8 both had just over 116,000 residents. In sum, the region saw a -14.1 percent population decline since 2000, which was the largest and fastest decline of the 13 economic development regions (EDRs) in the state. In comparison, the state of Minnesota saw a 13.4 percent gain from 2000 to 2017 (see Table 1).

	2000 Population	2017 Estimates	2000-2017 Change	
			Number	Percent
Region 6W	50,011	42,965	-7,046	-14.1%
Big Stone Co.	5,820	5,026	-794	-13.6%
Chippewa Co.	13,088	11,980	-1,108	-8.5%
Lac qui Parle Co.	8,067	6,685	-1,382	-17.1%
Swift Co.	11,956	9,407	-2,549	-21.3%
Yellow Medicine Co.	11,080	9,867	-1,213	-10.9%
Southwest Minnesota	394,518	392,228	-2,290	-0.6%
Region 8	121,717	116,889	-4,828	-4.0%
Region 9	222,790	232,374	+9,584	+4.3%
State of Minnesota	4,919,479	5,576,606	+657,127	+13.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Every county in the region lost population, but Swift County saw the fastest population decline of the 87 counties in the state, followed by Lac qui Parle County with the fifth fastest decline, Big Stone County with the eighth fastest decline, and Yellow Medicine and Chippewa with the 14th and 19th fastest declines, respectively. Big Stone County is now the fifth smallest county in the state, while Lac qui Parle is the 12th, Swift is the 17th, Yellow Medicine is the 20th, and Chippewa County is the 26th smallest. These recent declines are part of a long-term trend in the region, which has been losing population since 1950 (see Figure 1).



COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE, 2010-2017

With an aging and declining population, Region 6W experienced a negative natural rate of increase – having more deaths than births – of -187 people so far this decade. In addition, the region lost population because of out-migration, with 2,052 more people moving out of the region than moving in. Though there was domestic out-migration of 2,335 people, the region did enjoy positive in-migration of 283 additional residents from international sources (see Table 2).

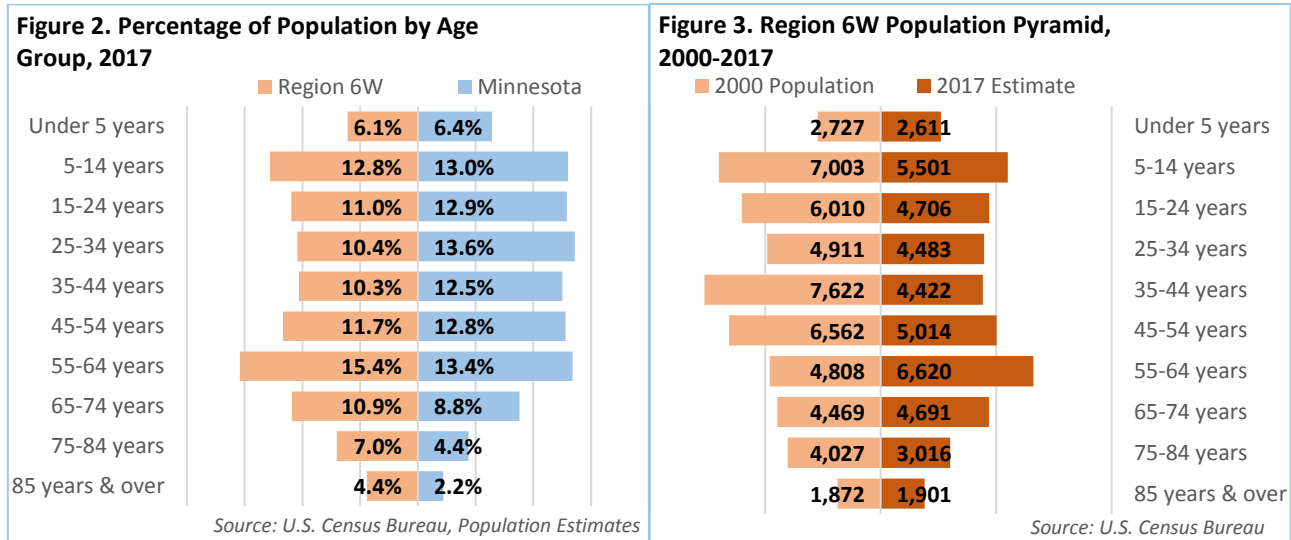
Region 6W is now home to 977 foreign born residents, or about 2.2 percent of the total population. The number of immigrants in the region jumped by 16.3 percent since 2010. Over half (542 people) of these immigrants were from Latin America, while the second largest number were from Asia, accounting for 15 percent of the region’s immigrants.

Total Change	Natural Increase	Vital Events		Net Migration		
		Births	Deaths	Total	Inter-national	Domestic
-2,225	-187	3,692	3,879	-2,052	+283	-2,335

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

POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2000-2017

Region 6W has a much older population than the rest of the state, with 22.3 percent of residents aged 65 years and over, compared to 15.4 percent statewide. Consequently, Region 6W had a lower percentage of people in the 25- to 54-year-old age group, typically considered the “prime working years,” as well as a smaller percent of school-aged children and young adults (see Figure 2).

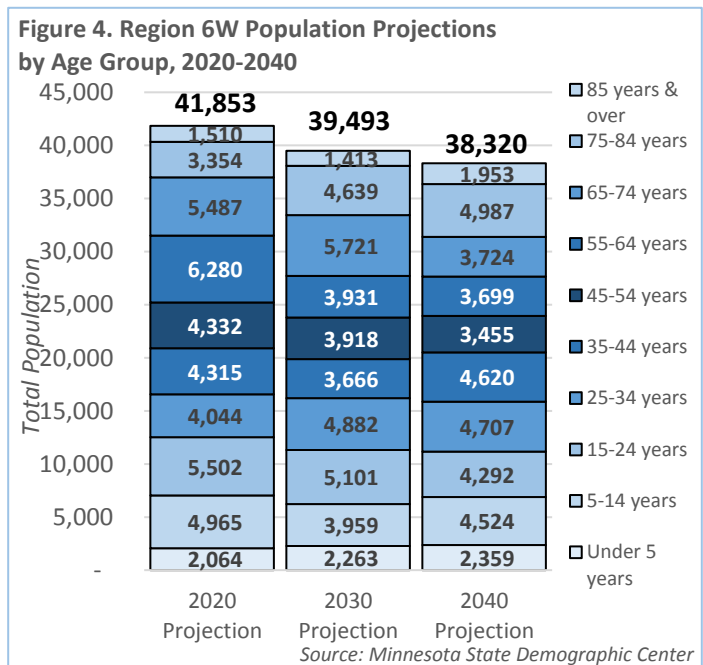


A large portion of the region’s population is a part of the Baby Boom generation, people born between 1946 and 1964, which is creating a significant shift in the population over time. While the number of younger and middle-aged residents was declining, the number of residents aged 55 years and over was rapidly increasing. This included a huge jump in the number of people from 55 to 64 years of age, but a more measured increase in people aged 65 years and over, as some people are choosing to leave the region for various reasons (see Figure 2).

POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP, 2020-2040

Region 6W is projected to experience continued declines in the next 20 years. According to population projections from the [Minnesota State Demographic Center](#), Region 6W is expected to lose 3,500 residents from 2020 to 2040, an 8.4 percent decrease (see Figure 4). In comparison, the state of Minnesota is projected to grow 8.8 percent.

Most notably, Region 6W is projected to gain nearly 2,100 people aged 75 years and over, a 43 percent increase. The region is also expected to see a small increase in the 25- to 44-year-old age group, as well as a corresponding bump in children under 5 years of age. In contrast, Region 6W is expected to lose school-aged children and young adults from 5 to 24 years of age, as well as people from 45 to 74 years of age.



POPULATION BY RACE, 2016

Region 6W’s population is less diverse than the state’s, but is becoming more diverse over time. In 2016, about 95 percent of the region’s residents reported White alone as their race, compared to 84.3 percent of residents statewide. The region had much smaller percentages of Black or African American residents, Asian or Other Pacific Islanders, and people of Two or More Races. However at 1.2 percent, Region 6W had a higher percentage of American Indian and Alaska Natives, and only a slightly lower percentage of people of Some Other Race and reporting Hispanic or Latino origin as the state (see Table 3).

Yellow Medicine and Chippewa had the most diverse populations in the region, with both having about 92.5 percent of people reporting White alone as their race, and over 4 percent reporting Hispanic or Latino origin. In contrast, at least 97 percent of residents in Big Stone and Lac qui Parle were White alone, making them among the least diverse counties in the state.

Table 3. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2016	Region 6W			Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Change from 2000-2016	Percent	Change from 2000-2016
Total	43,661	100.0%	-12.7%	100.0%	+10.8%
White	41,387	94.8%	-13.5%	84.3%	+4.5%
Black or African American	340	0.8%	-10.5%	5.7%	+81.0%
American Indian & Alaska Native	543	1.2%	+16.8%	1.0%	+3.5%
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	317	0.7%	-31.8%	4.6%	+72.8%
Some Other Race	516	1.2%	+27.7%	1.6%	+34.2%
Two or More Races	558	1.3%	+26.5%	2.7%	+79.5%
Hispanic or Latino	1,762	4.0%	+118.3%	5.1%	+92.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

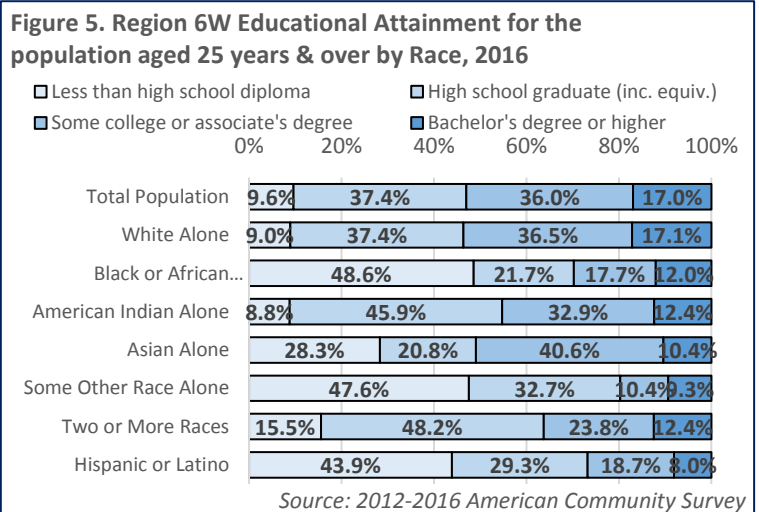
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2016

With 29.8 percent of adults aged 25 years and over having a college degree, Region 6W has lower educational attainment than the state, where 45.3 percent of adults have an associate, bachelor’s, or advanced degree. In contrast, Region 6W has a slightly higher percentage of people with some college but no degree or associate’s degrees, and a much higher percentage of people with a high school diploma or less (see Table 4).

Table 4. Educational Attainment for the Adult Population, 2016	Region 6W		Minnesota
	Number	Percent	Percent
Total Population, 25 years & over	30,903	100.0%	100.0%
Less than high school	3,005	9.7%	7.4%
High school graduate (incl. equiv.)	11,548	37.4%	25.7%
Some college, no degree	7,146	23.1%	21.7%
Associate's degree	3,975	12.9%	11.0%
Bachelor's degree	3,971	12.8%	22.8%
Advanced degree	1,258	4.1%	11.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Educational attainment varies significantly by race and ethnicity in Region 6W. Over 40 percent of Hispanic or Latino residents and almost half of Black or African Americans and people of Some Other Race had less than a high school diploma, compared to just 9 percent of White residents. Encouragingly, over 50 percent of Whites, Black or African Americans, and Asian residents have attended some college or earned a degree. Just over 17 percent of White residents had earned bachelor’s degrees or higher, compared to 12 percent or less of other race groups (see Figure 5).

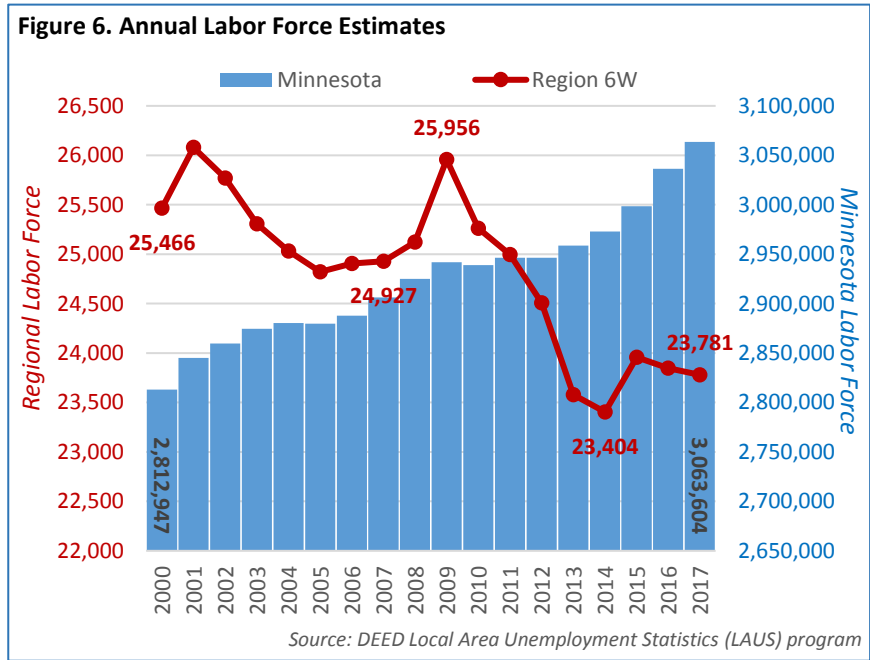


Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey

LABOR FORCE

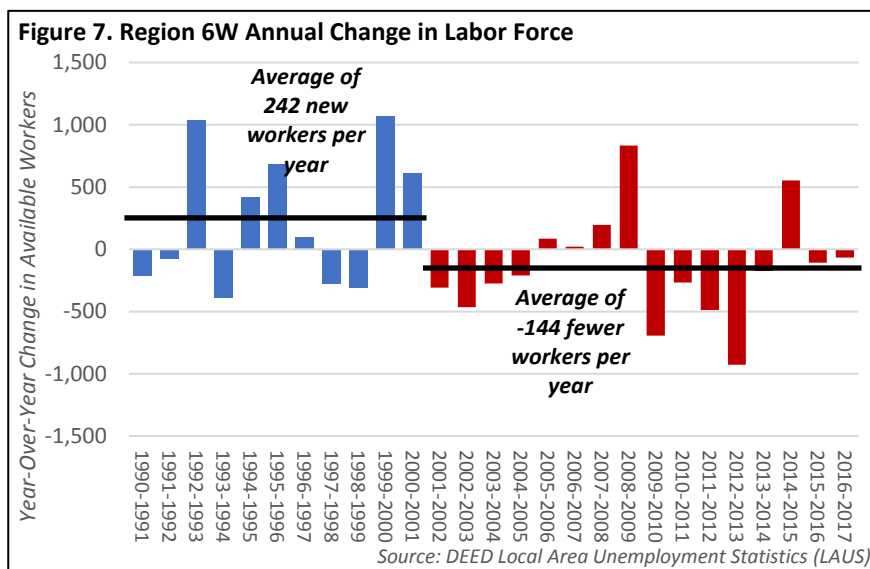
LABOR FORCE CHANGE, 2000-2017

According to data from DEED’s [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) program, Region 6W has experienced some substantial fluctuations in the size of the available labor force over the last 17 years in response to changing economic conditions. During the recessions in both 2001 and 2007, workers flooded into the labor market to earn extra income; then quickly dropped back out when the region’s economy improved. Like the region’s population decline overall, Region 6W lost 1,685 workers over the last 17 years, from 25,466 available workers in 2000 to 23,781 workers in 2017. In contrast, the state was steadily gaining workers over the past decade and a half (see Figure 6). As the economy has recovered, the labor market in the region has been getting tighter, with only about 945 unemployed workers in 2017, down from a peak of 1,780 unemployed workers in 2010.



After averaging a net gain of nearly 250 additional labor force participants per year between 1990 and 2001, Region 6W employers were able to tap into a slowly growing pool of talented workers. However, from 2001 to 2017, Region 6W’s labor force started to shrink, losing almost 2,300 workers so far this century (see Figure 7).

Increasingly tight labor markets and a scarcity of workers is now recognized as one of Region 6W’s most significant barriers to future economic growth. 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.



LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS, 2020-2030

If Region 6W's population changes at the projected rates shown in Figure 4 above, the region would be expected to see a further decline in the labor force over the next decade. Applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections by age group creates labor force projections for the region, which show a further 10 percent drop in workforce numbers (see Table 5).

In addition to the overall decline, the labor force will also see a significant shift over time, with small gains in the number of workers aged 65 years and over against huge declines in the number of workers aged 45 to 64 years. The region is also expected to lose teenaged workers and entry-level workers in the next decade. However, the region is expected to see gains in the number of 25 to 44 year olds. Due to the growth, the 25 to 54 year old age group will make up about 58 percent of the total workforce in 2030, up from 54.5 percent in 2010. Either way, these long-term declines will likely lead to a tight labor market in the future, with employers needing to respond to the changing labor force availability in the region.

	2020 Labor Force Projection	2030 Labor Force Projection	2020-2030 Change	
			Numeric	Percent
16 to 19 years	1,203	1,058	-145	-12.0%
20 to 24 years	2,412	2,347	-65	-2.7%
25 to 44 years	7,286	7,451	+165	+2.3%
45 to 54 years	3,833	3,467	-366	-9.6%
55 to 64 years	4,937	3,090	-1,847	-37.4%
65 to 74 years	1,610	1,678	+69	+4.3%
75 years & over	311	386	+76	+24.4%
Total Labor Force	21,592	19,478	-2,114	-9.8%

Source: calculated from [MN State Demographic Center projections](#), and [2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#).

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS, 2016

With just 65 percent of the population aged 16 years and over in the labor force, Region 6W had lower labor force participation rates than the state's 69.9 percent. However, the region actually had higher labor force participation rates than the state in all but one age group, but the overall rate was lower because a higher percentage of Region 6W's labor force was older (see Table 6).

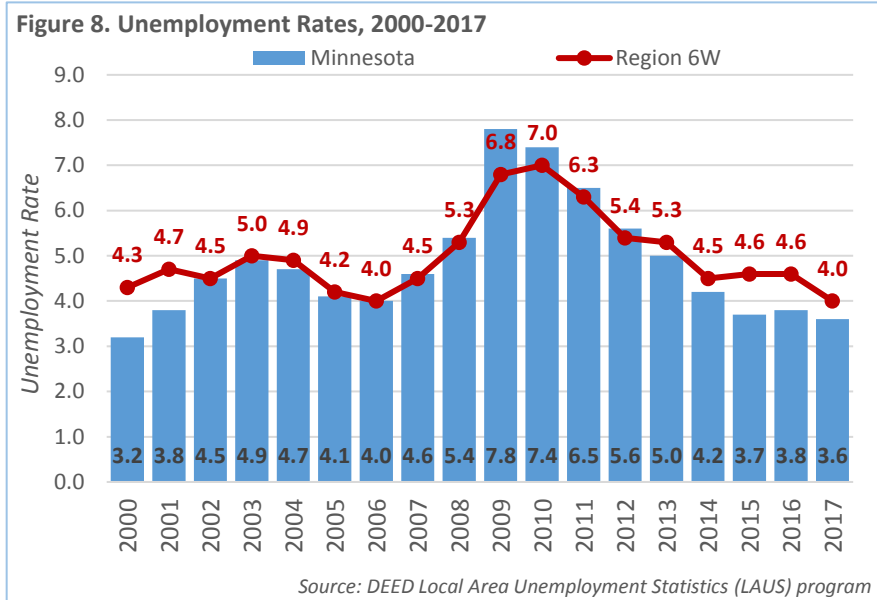
Only about 8 percent of the region's labor force were from minority groups, with Hispanics comprising the largest portion. With the tight labor market, unemployment rates were relatively low in the region, but were highest for young people, minorities – particularly Hispanic or Latino residents, veterans, and people with lower educational attainment.

	Region 6W			Minnesota	
	In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Labor Force	22,869	65.0%	2.9%	69.9%	4.8%
16 to 19 years	1,127	55.7%	6.9%	52.3%	14.2%
20 to 24 years	1,922	86.1%	3.9%	83.5%	8.1%
25 to 44 years	7,821	87.2%	2.9%	88.2%	4.4%
45 to 54 years	5,212	88.5%	2.2%	87.2%	3.4%
55 to 64 years	5,167	78.6%	2.0%	72.3%	3.6%
65 to 74 years	1,312	29.3%	5.2%	27.1%	3.0%
75 years & over	319	6.4%	0.7%	6.0%	2.7%
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin					
White alone	21,944	65.0%	2.8%	69.9%	4.1%
Black or African American	131	59.6%	3.8%	68.5%	12.9%
American Indian & Alaska Native	238	65.8%	3.0%	58.8%	14.8%
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	144	62.1%	4.2%	70.7%	5.6%
Some Other Race	288	84.7%	2.1%	77.3%	8.4%
Two or More Races	130	53.7%	5.4%	71.3%	10.1%
Hispanic or Latino	880	79.2%	7.5%	75.5%	8.2%
Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status					
Veterans, 18 to 64 years	1,109	84.0%	5.6%	78.6%	4.8%
Employment Characteristics by Disability					
With Any Disability	1,292	56.2%	4.3%	51.4%	10.9%
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment					
Population, 25 to 64 years	18,202	84.9%	2.4%	84.0%	4.0%
Less than H.S. Diploma	1,039	72.1%	3.4%	65.0%	5.6%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	5,617	81.7%	2.4%	78.7%	3.4%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	8,039	87.4%	1.6%	85.1%	4.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	3,506	89.4%	1.0%	89.5%	2.3%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 2000-2017

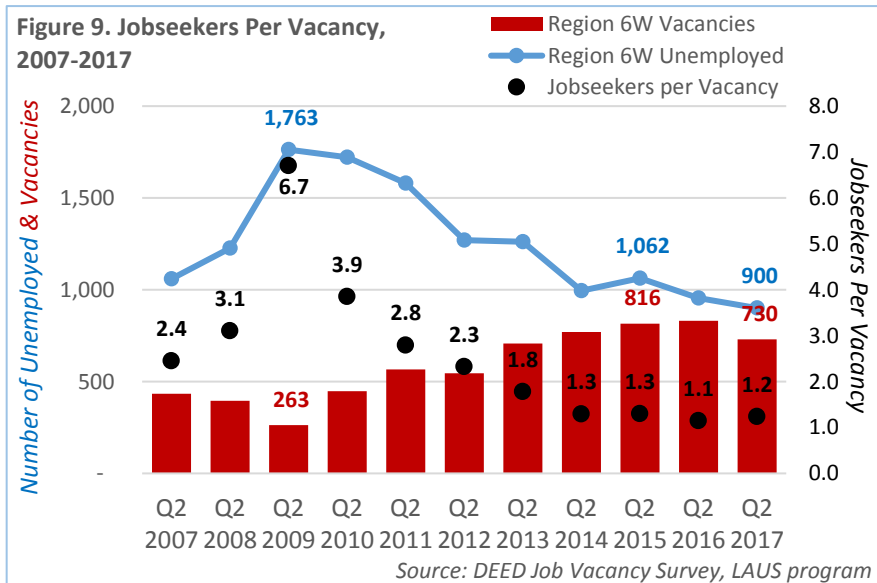
Region 6W had consistently reported unemployment rates that closely matched the state rate. According to [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#), the region’s unemployment rate hovered right in line with the state rate from 2002 to 2012, even dropping below the state rate during the recession in 2009 and 2010. However, while the state’s economy has recovered and unemployment rates are back to prerecession levels statewide, Region 6W’s rate stayed higher in 2015 and 2016 (see Figure 8).



JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY, 2017

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 now stands at 1.2-to-1 in Region 6W.

According to recent Job Vacancy Survey results, there were 730 openings reported by employers compared to 900 unemployed jobseekers in the region. The ratio climbed as high as 6.7 in the depths of the recession in 2009 (see Figure 9).



COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED, 2015

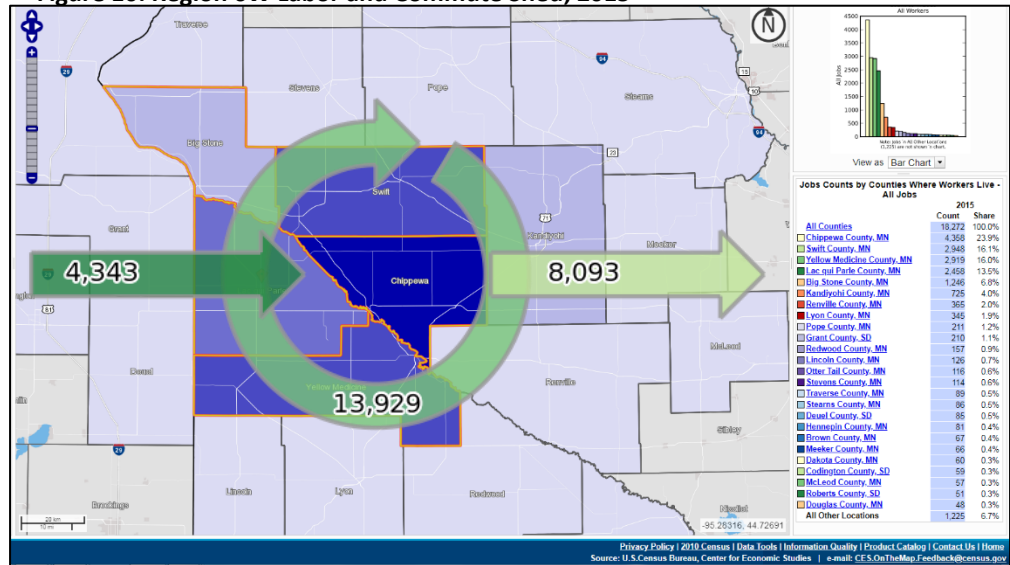
According to commuting data from the [Census Bureau](#), Region 6W is a net labor exporter, having more workers than available jobs. In sum, 13,929 workers both lived and worked in Region 6W in 2015, while another 4,343 workers drove into the region from surrounding counties for work, compared to 8,093 workers who lived in the region but drove elsewhere for work (see Table 7 and Figure 10).

Table 7. Region 6W Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs), 2015	2015	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	18,272	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	4,343	23.8%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	13,929	76.2%
Living in the Selection Area	22,022	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	8,093	36.7%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	13,929	63.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap

Home to Montevidéo, Chippewa County is the largest job source in the region and was the biggest draw for workers, followed by Yellow Medicine, Swift, and Lac qui Parle County. Employers in the region both lose and draw workers from nearby regional centers like Willmar in Kandiyohi County, Marshall in Lyon County, and Redwood Falls in Redwood County, as well as Olivia in Renville County and Morris in Stevens County.

Figure 10. Region 6W Labor and Commute Shed, 2015

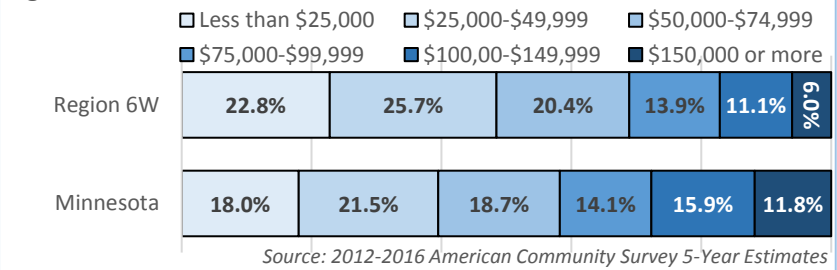


INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

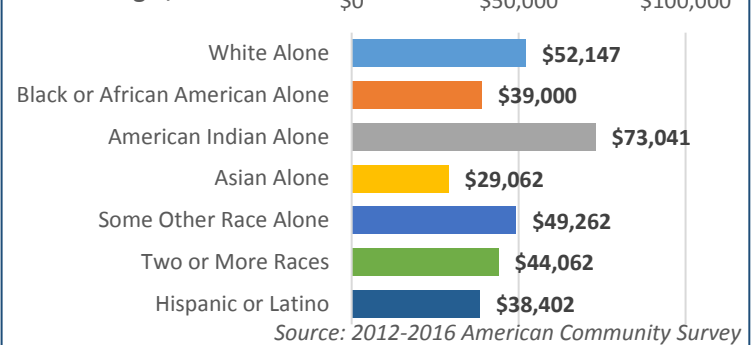
Household incomes were significantly lower in Region 6W than the rest of the state. The median household income in Region 6W was \$51,651 in 2016, compared to \$63,217 in Minnesota. Almost half (48.5%) of the households in the region had incomes below \$50,000 in 2016, compared to 39.5 percent statewide. Another 34.3 percent of households earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in the region. In contrast, only 17.1 percent of households in Region 6W earned over \$100,000 per year, compared to 27.7 percent of households statewide (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Household Incomes, 2016



Median household incomes varied by race or origin in the region. Asian households reported the lowest incomes in Region 6W, with a median income that was about \$23,000 lower than for White households. Hispanic or Latino and Black or African American households also reported much lower household incomes (see Figure 12). Poverty rates also vary widely by race, from a low of 9.9 percent for Whites to more than 25 percent for Black or African Americans, American Indians, and Asian residents.

Figure 12. Region 6W Median Household Income by Race or Origin, 2016



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 \$57,624 in 2018. The cost of living for a similar family in Region 6W was \$44,544 – which was the second 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 \$14.28 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 6W would be \$26,352, which would require an hourly wage of \$12.67 to meet the basic needs standard of living (see Table 8). That was again the second lowest in the state.

Family Composition	Number of Workers	Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
				Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Transportation	Other	Taxes
Region 6W										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	\$26,352	\$12.67	\$0	\$337	\$134	\$535	\$625	\$255	\$310
Single, 1 child	1 FT	\$38,604	\$18.56	\$406	\$497	\$269	\$698	\$663	\$349	\$335
2 parents, 1 child	1 FT, 1 PT	\$44,544	\$14.28	\$203	\$769	\$417	\$698	\$772	\$429	\$424
2 parents, 2 children	2 FT	\$62,448	\$15.01	\$702	\$1,003	\$426	\$968	\$821	\$576	\$708
State of Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	\$31,656	\$15.22	\$0	\$334	\$136	\$754	\$696	\$318	\$400
2 parents, 1 child	1 FT, 1 PT	\$57,624	\$18.47	\$504	\$763	\$459	\$980	\$869	\$510	\$717

Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Region 6W was \$16.86 in the first quarter of 2018, which was the third lowest wage level of the 13 EDRs in the state. Region 6W's median wage was nearly \$3.25 below the state's median hourly wage, equaling 84 percent of the statewide wage rate, and over \$5.00 below the median hourly wage in the 7-County Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to over \$10,500 per year for a full-time worker. Region 6W had lower wages than surrounding regions like Region 6E at \$17.56 and Region 4 at \$17.46, but higher wages than Region 8 at \$16.53 (see Table 9).

The largest occupation group in the region was food preparation and serving related workers, with 2,130 jobs and a location quotient of 1.5. Region 6W also had a higher share of workers in construction and extraction; installation, maintenance, and repair; production, and transportation and material moving occupations (see Table 10).

Region	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
EDR 1 - Northwest	\$18.39	36,250
EDR 2 - Headwaters	\$17.06	30,460
EDR 3 - Arrowhead	\$17.72	143,490
EDR 4 - West Central	\$17.46	86,020
EDR 5 - North Central	\$16.75	59,210
EDR 6E - Southwest Central	\$17.56	50,120
EDR 6W - Upper MN Valley	\$16.86	16,640
EDR 7E - East Central	\$18.47	51,730
EDR 7W - Central	\$17.91	184,060
EDR 8 - Southwest	\$16.53	55,150
EDR 9 - South Central	\$17.56	107,700
EDR 10 - Southeast	\$18.91	238,090
EDR 11 - 7-County Twin Cities	\$21.92	1,769,290
State of Minnesota	\$20.07	2,838,270

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics

Not surprisingly, the lowest-paying jobs are in food preparation and serving, personal care and service, sales and related, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance jobs, which tend to have lower educational and training requirements. For the most part, the gap in pay between Region 6W and the state is also lower in these jobs. In contrast, the highest paying jobs are found in management, computer, business and financial operations, healthcare practitioners, and architecture and engineering 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.

Table 10. Region 6W Occupational Employment Statistics, 1 st Qtr. 2018					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	\$16.86	16,640	100.0%	1.0	\$20.07	2,838,270	100.0%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$10.24	2,130	12.8%	1.5	\$11.12	239,950	8.5%
Office & Administrative Support	\$16.82	2,050	12.3%	0.9	\$18.45	409,820	14.4%
Production	\$15.54	1,910	11.5%	1.5	\$17.89	217,610	7.7%
Sales & Related	\$13.75	1,530	9.2%	0.9	\$14.10	277,720	9.8%
Transportation & Material Moving	\$17.74	1,230	7.4%	1.2	\$17.59	178,720	6.3%
Construction & Extraction	\$23.01	1,030	6.2%	1.8	\$27.10	99,900	3.5%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	\$25.04	1,000	6.0%	0.9	\$34.44	182,500	6.4%
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	\$22.36	940	5.6%	1.7	\$23.22	95,660	3.4%
Education, Training & Library	\$17.86	890	5.3%	0.9	\$23.65	163,850	5.8%
Management	\$36.65	850	5.1%	0.9	\$49.99	168,930	6.0%
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	\$12.64	540	3.2%	1.1	\$14.07	84,300	3.0%
Business & Financial Operations	\$24.87	500	3.0%	0.5	\$31.97	161,080	5.7%
Healthcare Support	\$14.23	480	2.9%	1.0	\$15.81	85,940	3.0%
Personal Care & Service	\$12.07	470	2.8%	0.6	\$12.12	139,210	4.9%
Community & Social Service	\$20.44	240	1.4%	0.7	\$21.88	55,430	2.0%
Protective Service	\$19.47	230	1.4%	0.9	\$20.27	43,150	1.5%
Architecture & Engineering	\$26.27	190	1.1%	0.6	\$36.61	53,780	1.9%
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	\$18.32	150	0.9%	0.7	\$23.44	36,910	1.3%
Life, Physical & Social Science	\$28.42	90	0.5%	0.6	\$31.27	26,220	0.9%
Computer & Mathematical	\$25.19	70	0.4%	0.1	\$40.00	94,290	3.3%
Legal	N/A	-	0.0%	0.0	\$37.34	19,750	0.7%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	N/A	-	0.0%	0.0	\$15.45	3,540	0.1%

Source: [DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2018](#)

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Employers in Region 6W reported 816 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2017, the third highest number ever reported and up almost 50 percent compared to the previous year, and up 334 percent from the low point during the fourth quarter of 2012, when there were just 188 vacancies. The region has averaged 700 vacancies or more over the past 4 years of surveys, an unprecedented level of consistent demand.

Overall, 42 percent of the openings were part-time, and only one-quarter required postsecondary education. The percent of job openings requiring a college degree has seemingly been going down over time, while the percentage needing prior work experience has been higher and going up. In 2017, 41 percent of vacancies required 1 or more years of experience. The median hourly wage offer for all occupations was \$13.97, but ranged from about \$10 for food prep and serving related and sales jobs; to as high as \$42.96 for health care practitioners. The largest number of vacancies were for transportation, food prep and serving, and production workers – those three occupation groups offered just over half of all vacancies in the region (see Table 11).

Table 11. Region 6W Job Vacancy Survey Results, 4th Qtr. 2017

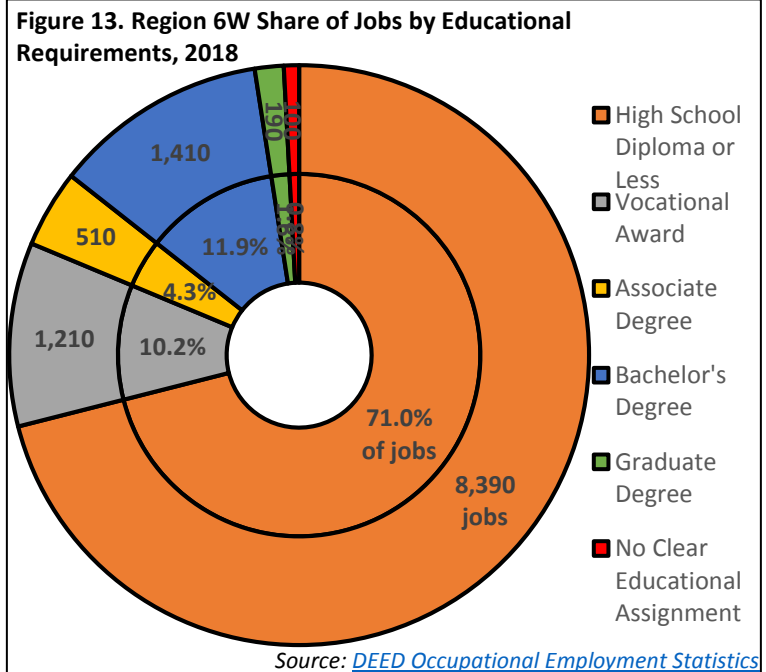
	Number of Total Vacancies	Percent Part-time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Experience	Requiring Certificate or License	Median Hourly Wage Offer
Total, All Occupations	816	42%	24%	27%	41%	44%	\$13.97
Transportation & Material Moving	166	25%	86%	0%	72%	90%	\$13.82
Food Preparation & Serving Related	149	56%	1%	0%	8%	0%	\$9.81
Production	105	1%	15%	36%	66%	40%	\$15.55
Personal Care & Service	69	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	\$11.73
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	62	35%	0%	100%	73%	100%	\$42.96
Sales & Related	50	65%	0%	2%	3%	0%	\$9.97
Healthcare Support	38	97%	1%	66%	0%	66%	\$13.45
Protective Service	26	86%	40%	15%	17%	29%	\$14.86
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$16.50
Education, Training & Library	19	60%	73%	71%	25%	75%	\$16.05
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	19	83%	11%	1%	2%	0%	\$11.26
Business & Financial Operations	18	0%	3%	18%	94%	12%	\$21.37
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	17	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$14.53
Architecture & Engineering	14	0%	0%	91%	85%	59%	\$17.41
Community & Social Service	11	0%	20%	100%	100%	100%	\$21.33
Office & Administrative Support	10	21%	0%	38%	51%	31%	\$15.00
Management	8	0%	0%	100%	100%	78%	\$25.47
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	7	48%	48%	52%	41%	26%	\$13.90
Computer & Mathematical	4	0%	0%	100%	73%	0%	\$19.48

Source: [DEED Job Vacancy Survey, Qtr. 4 2017](#)

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Similar to Job Vacancy Survey results, data from DEED’s Occupational Employment Statistics program shows that less than 30 percent of jobs in the region require postsecondary education for entry. The other 70 percent can be started with a high school diploma or less and some amount of on-the-job training (see Figure 13).

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 \$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 that earn different amounts of money.



OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

According to DEED’s [Occupations in Demand](#) tool, there were 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. Many of the occupations in demand require a high school diploma or less, while a much smaller percentage require some postsecondary training, a vocational award, or an associate’s degree. In general, the highest paying occupations in demand require a bachelor’s degree or higher. These occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region’s major industries. For example, nurses and doctors, salespersons, welders, mechanics, farmworkers, and heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers are among the top occupations in demand based on the consistent need for workers in the health care, manufacturing, retail trade, transportation, agriculture, and other related industries (see Table 12).

Table 12. Region 6W Occupations in Demand by Education Level, 2017

Less than High School	High School or Equivalent	Some College or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor’s Degree or Higher
Personal Care Aides (\$24,063)	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (\$34,738)	Nursing Assistants (\$27,436)	Elementary School Teachers (\$59,363)
Combined Food Prep & Serving Workers (\$20,592)	Teacher Assistants (\$24,609)	Registered Nurses (\$61,199)	Secondary School Teachers (\$51,129)
Janitors & Cleaners (\$29,255)	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers (\$40,934)	Heating, Air Conditioning, & Refrig. Mechanics (\$51,924)	Financial Managers (\$67,330)
Retail Salespersons (\$22,204)	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Mfg. (\$59,555)	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses (\$43,441)	Family & General Practitioners (\$190,791)
Cashiers (\$19,753)	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants (\$32,556)	Industrial Machinery Mechanics (\$46,384)	Network & Computer Syst. Administrators (\$55,022)
Helpers--Production Workers (\$28,109)	Childcare Workers (\$23,625)	Emergency Medical Techs. & Paramedics (\$19,977)	Human Resources Specialists (\$55,087)
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers (\$31,927)	Team Assemblers (\$31,109)	Police & Sheriff’s Patrol Officers (\$48,685)	Occupational Therapists (\$73,335)
Farmworkers & Laborers, Crop, (\$31,763)	Carpenters (\$47,991)	Farm Equipment Mechanics & Service Technicians (\$39,954)	Physical Therapists (\$79,836)
Butchers & Meat Cutters (\$20,253)	Office Clerks, General (\$32,071)	Machinists (\$38,111)	Nurse Practitioners (\$108,22)
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers (\$26,990)	Packaging & Filling Machine Operators & Tenders (\$31,252)	Electricians (\$62,025)	Medical & Health Services Managers (\$92,364)

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

OCCUPATIONS BY GENDER

Although the gap is narrowing, there are still slightly more males than females in the labor force in Region 6W. In 2016 males held about 54 percent of jobs, meaning the other 46 percent of workers were females. While the overall distribution is relatively equal, there are significant differences in what men and women do for work. Not surprisingly, men are much more likely to work in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations and production, transportation, and material moving occupations; while women are much more likely to be employed in service, sales and office occupations (see Table 13).

Table 13. Region 6W Occupational Groups by Gender, 2016

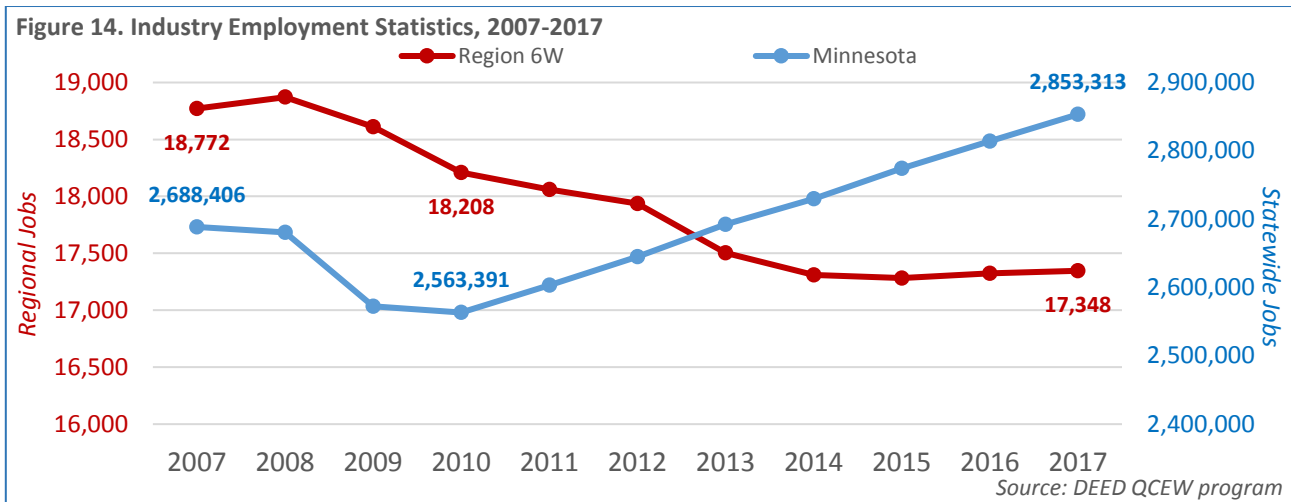
	Male		Female		Total Number
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Management, business, science, & arts	3,496	48.6%	3,699	51.4%	7,195
Service occupations	1,125	29.3%	2,716	70.7%	3,841
Sales & office occupations	1,486	33.1%	3,009	66.9%	4,495
Natural resources, construction, & maintenance	2,809	98.1%	54	1.9%	2,863
Production, transportation, & material moving	3,063	81.0%	718	19.0%	3,781
Total, All Occupations	11,979	54.0%	10,196	46.0%	22,175

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Region 6W has seen employment declines over the past decade, ending 2017 with 1,424 fewer jobs than it had in 2007. The region entered the recession later than the state, still experiencing job growth through 2008, before suffering significant declines in 2009 and 2010. Since then, Region 6W has not seen the same recovery experienced in the state, which gained jobs at a 7.9 percent clip from 2012 to 2017, compared to a -3.3 percent decline in the region. Region 6W reached a peak of 18,871 jobs in 2008, then hit a low of 17,283 jobs in 2015, before gaining back 65 jobs in 2016 and 2017 (see Figure 14).



According to DEED’s [Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\) program](#), Region 6W was home to 1,542 business establishments providing 17,348 covered jobs through 2017, with a total payroll of just under \$654 million. That was about 0.6 percent of total employment in the state of Minnesota, making it the smallest of the 13 EDRs in the state. Average annual wages were \$37,694 in the region, which was about \$18,500 lower than the state’s average annual wage, and the second lowest of the 13 EDRs.

Chippewa County is the largest employment center in the region, with 5,736 jobs at 428 firms; followed by Yellow Medicine County with 3,985 jobs at 349 firms and Swift County with 333 firms and 3,680 jobs. Lac qui Parle and Big Stone County had 2,205 and 1,741 jobs, respectively, making them among the smallest county economies in the state. As shown above, the region suffered job losses in the past five years; and three of the 5 counties in the region also lost jobs since 2012, with Swift and Chippewa County seeing small job gains. The other three counties saw significant job declines, ranging from 7 to 9 percent losses. Swift and Chippewa County would have lost jobs if not for strong gains in the past year, while the other three counties again lost jobs from 2016 to 2017 (see Table 13).

Geography	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll	Average Annual Wage	2012-2017		2016-2017	
					Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Region 6W	1,542	17,348	\$653,913,006	\$37,694	-589	-3.3%	+24	+0.1%
Big Stone Co.	205	1,741	\$66,850,342	\$38,398	-163	-8.6%	-83	-4.6%
Chippewa Co.	428	5,736	\$221,954,131	\$38,695	+10	+0.2%	+66	+1.2%
Lac qui Parle Co.	227	2,205	\$74,423,409	\$33,752	-195	-8.1%	-2	-0.1%
Swift Co.	333	3,680	\$144,491,502	\$39,264	+53	+1.5%	+119	+3.3%
Yellow Medicine	349	3,985	\$146,193,622	\$36,686	-295	-6.9%	-75	-1.8%
State of Minnesota	167,485	2,853,730	\$160,254,656,806	\$56,156	+208,795	+7.9%	+39,728	+1.4%

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

With 3,656 jobs at 114 firms, health care and social assistance is the largest employing industry in Region 6W, accounting for more than one in every five jobs in the region. However, the region saw a decline in health care jobs in the past five years. Due to the region's older population, the two largest sectors were nursing and residential care facilities and hospitals, which had 1,294 and 1,280 jobs in 2017, respectively. After dealing with job cuts in the past five years, nursing and residential care facilities saw a huge increase in the past year, accompanied by smaller gains at hospitals and ambulatory health care services.

Manufacturing is the next largest employing industry in Region 6W, with 2,131 jobs at 81 firms, accounting for 12.3 percent of total jobs in the region. The largest sectors include food manufacturing and machinery manufacturing, which both suffered huge job losses since 2012; as well as computer and electronic product manufacturing and fabricated metal product manufacturing, which both saw smaller declines. Overall, Region 6W suffered a loss of 313 manufacturing jobs since 2012. At \$47,849 in 2017, average annual wages were over \$10,000 higher in manufacturing than the total of all industries.

Retail trade is the third largest industry, with 1,766 jobs at 191 establishments, after seeing small job declines in recent years. The region has a higher concentration of employment in educational services, the fourth largest industry with 1,722 jobs at 35 institutions, primarily at elementary and secondary schools as well as junior colleges. Region 6W also has a higher share of total employment in wholesale trade, with 1,229 jobs at 90 firms, and average annual wages of \$67,413. Other important industries in Region 6W include public administration, accommodation and food services, construction, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, other services, arts, entertainment, and recreation, and agriculture. Just eight of the 20 main industries in the region added jobs since 2012, with huge losses in manufacturing, construction, and other services (see Table 15).

NAICS Industry Title	2017 Annual Data				Avg. Annual Wage	2012-2017		2016-2017	
	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Percent of Jobs	Total Payroll (\$1,000s)		Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Total, All Industries	1,542	17,348	100.0%	\$653,913	\$37,694	-589	-3.3%	+28	+0.2%
Health Care & Social Assistance	114	3,656	21.1%	\$132,998	\$36,378	-10	-0.3%	+144	+4.1%
Manufacturing	81	2,131	12.3%	\$101,966	\$47,849	-313	-12.8%	+14	+0.7%
Retail Trade	191	1,766	10.2%	\$39,651	\$22,452	-40	-2.2%	-29	-1.6%
Educational Services	35	1,722	9.9%	\$62,396	\$36,234	+48	+2.9%	-6	-0.3%
Public Administration	85	1,255	7.2%	\$47,952	\$38,209	+40	+3.3%	+34	+2.8%
Wholesale Trade	90	1,229	7.1%	\$67,413	\$54,852	+41	+3.5%	+5	+0.4%
Accommodation & Food Services	97	976	5.6%	\$11,514	\$11,797	+35	+3.7%	+20	+2.1%
Construction	194	971	5.6%	\$53,592	\$55,192	-126	-11.5%	-31	-3.1%
Transportation & Warehousing	101	568	3.3%	\$20,089	\$35,368	-33	-5.5%	-24	-4.1%
Finance & Insurance	105	558	3.2%	\$28,200	\$50,538	-39	-6.5%	-4	-0.7%
Other Services	129	501	2.9%	\$10,926	\$21,809	-122	-19.6%	-110	-18.0%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	31	458	2.6%	\$11,894	\$25,969	-33	-6.7%	+3	+0.7%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	103	456	2.6%	\$17,827	\$39,093	+23	+5.3%	+33	+7.8%
Professional & Technical Services	65	261	1.5%	\$9,819	\$37,622	-97	-27.1%	0	0.0%
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	42	200	1.2%	\$6,272	\$31,362	-13	-6.1%	+1	+0.5%
Information	28	181	1.0%	\$6,342	\$35,037	+20	+12.4%	-1	-0.5%
Utilities	13	178	1.0%	\$15,633	\$87,827	+43	+31.9%	-6	-3.3%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	28	169	1.0%	\$3,184	\$18,843	-11	-6.1%	-2	-1.2%
Management of Companies	6	59	0.3%	\$3,657	\$61,978	-7	-10.6%	-8	-11.9%
Mining	7	51	0.3%	\$2,588	\$50,737	+11	+27.5%	0	0.0%

Source: [DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\)](#)

Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities by contacting Luke Greiner at 320-308-5378 or at luke.greiner@state.mn.us.