Douglas County

2025 WORKFORCE PROFILE

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DWD
Department of Workforce Development

WisConomy

DETI-17957-DOU-P (R. 05/2025)

State Narrative for County Profiles

Wisconsin's labor market experienced a strong year in 2024. Employment reached record levels, inflation appeared on the wane, and interest rates are accommodating a largely reconstrued supply chain. In addition, real wages turned positive, and consumer spending was robust.

The primary challenge still facing the future economic construct is the labor quantity challenge and its broader economic impacts.

Wisconsin Jobs

The 2024 employment picture was favorable for Wisconsin, reaching new records in December at 3,076,500. The state's low unemployment rates were also noteworthy registering 3.0% or below the entire year. Although setting new records is always a good sign, new highs in employment would be expected through new expansionary economic periods.

Total non-farm employment also reached new highs, climbing through the year to peak in August at a seasonally adjusted basis of 3,048,000 and consolidating high levels through the remainder of the year, ending in December at 3,042,100. That marks a 1.6% increase over the pre-pandemic highs set in December 2019.

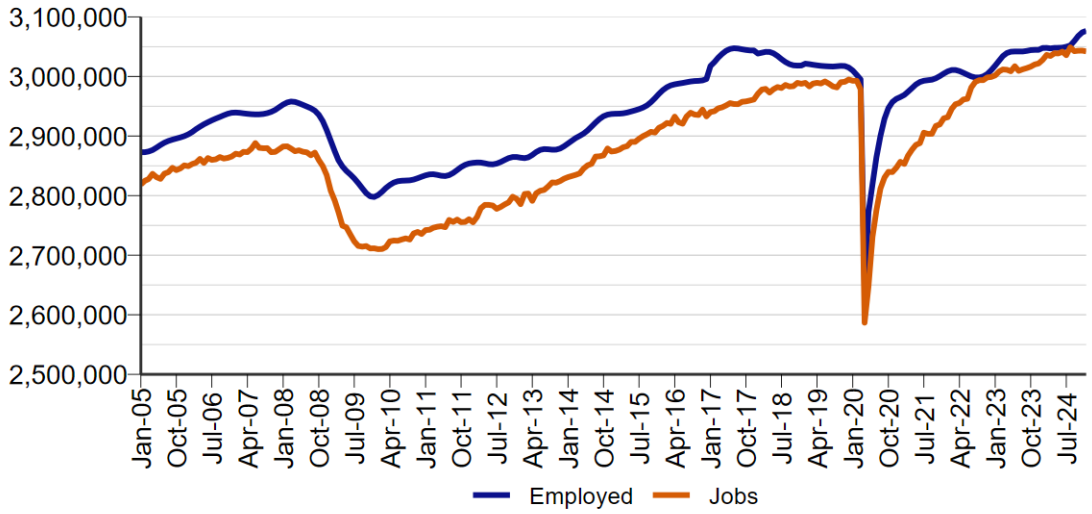


Figure 1: Wisconsin employment and jobs.

Economy

Wisconsin Gross Domestic Product (WGDP) reached new highs in nominal and real dollar terms in 2024[1], at $456 billion or $357 billion in real 2017 dollars. After a slower recovery coming out of the COVID-19 recession, Wisconsin's GDP growth rate has mimicked that of the country.

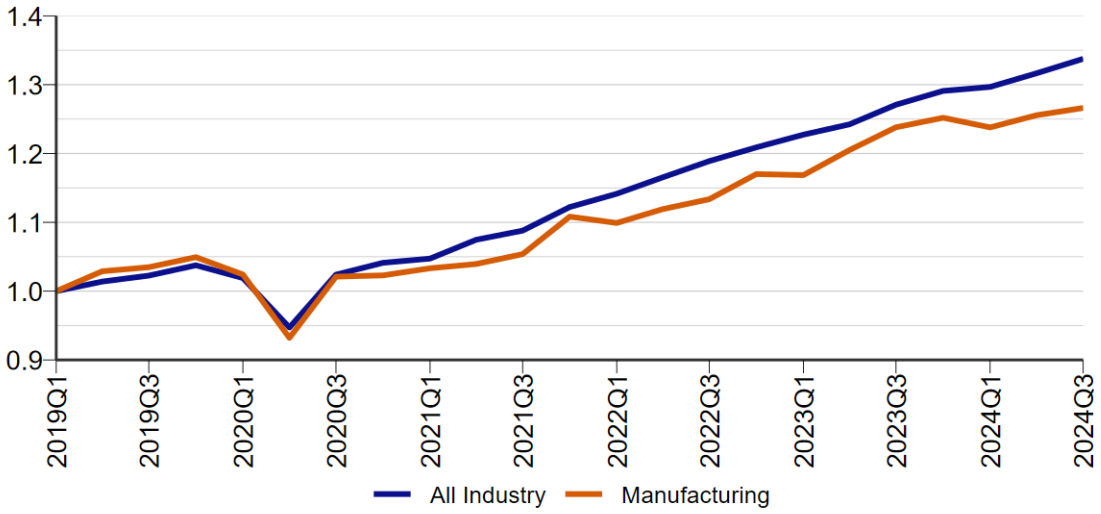


Figure 2: GDP growth index (2019Q1 = 100).

Many industry sectors were vibrant. Construction industry jobs hit new records, surpassing 140,000. Healthcare jobs also set new highs at 324,200. The leisure and hospitality sector recovered almost all the nearly 50% loss of jobs experienced during the COVID-19 recession, finishing with 285,200 jobs. Manufacturing jobs rose above 2023 levels to 481,200, but have not yet returned to pre-Covid19 levels.

Wisconsin ranks first in the number of manufacturing jobs per government job and second in manufacturing jobs share of total jobs. However, state-level manufacturing output was relatively weak against overall economic output. Two of the state's primary manufacturing industries, fabricated metal and machinery manufacturing, lost jobs through 2024. Fabricated metal manufacturing jobs peaked in July 2019, before the COVID-19 recession at 79,400 jobs, and ended 2024 with 74,300. Machinery manufacturing peaked in early 2023 with 68,800 jobs and finished 2024 with 67,200.

[1]Third quarter 2024 is latest data available.

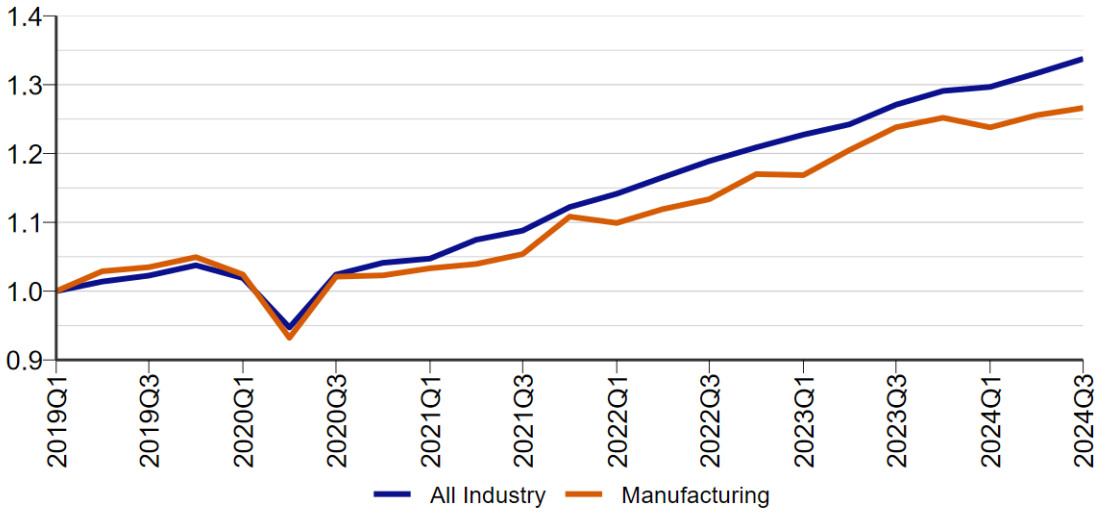


Figure 3: Wisconsin all industry v manufacturing growth (2019Q1 = 100).

While the durable goods manufacturing sector saw declines, non-durable goods manufacturing in Wisconsin has made headway. Jobs in the non-durables industries have increased since the pre-Covid high of 198,600 in July of 2019, to 201,000 in December 2024. Most of that has occurred in the food processing industry.

Labor Quantity Challenges

Employers continue to express challenges finding workers. This situation is being felt in all industries and most occupations – locally, regionally, and globally. Even China is experiencing population and workforce declines. Industries that are showing steady job growth, such as construction and healthcare, are limited by the number of workers available for positions.

As noted in studies dating back to 2000, there are not sufficient numbers of young workers to fill the jobs being vacated by the generation of baby boomers and the increased demand for workers associated with economic growth. The number of workers entering the labor market is essentially the same as the boomers exiting. A growing economy necessitates an increasing labor force or at least a more productive one. Wisconsin's labor force growth has remained close to zero.

The new high in Wisconsin's labor force reached in December 2024 of 3,170,300 is only 0.63% above the previous high in July 2017 and only 0.83% above the peak before that in June of 2009. That amounts to an annual average labor force growth rate of 0.08% per year, or about zero over 15 years.

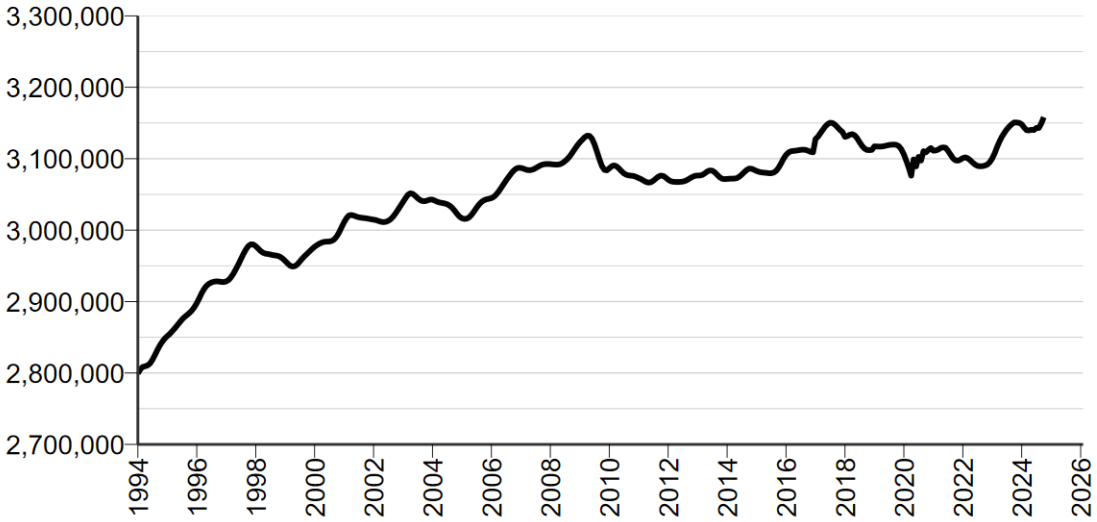


Figure 4: Wisconsin labor force.

This shift has long been anticipated and is well documented. The front edge of the baby boomers turned 63 years old in 2009. By 2024, the back edge of the boomers (those born in 1964) were 60 years old. And while the labor force participation rates of workers 65 and older has increased since the 1990s, the remaining tenure of the boomers is short.

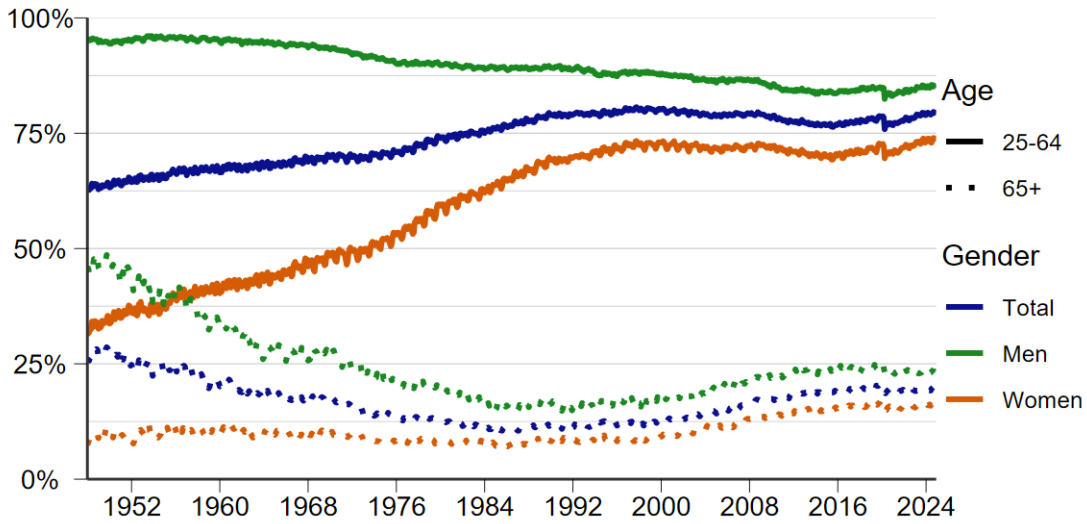


Figure 5: US labor force participation rate.

Below is a graph of Wisconsin's population and labor force projected out to 2040 based on the latest information from the Wisconsin Department of Administration Demographic Services. On a decennial basis, Wisconsin's population has already peaked. This suggests that the workforce will not experience substantial growth moving forward.

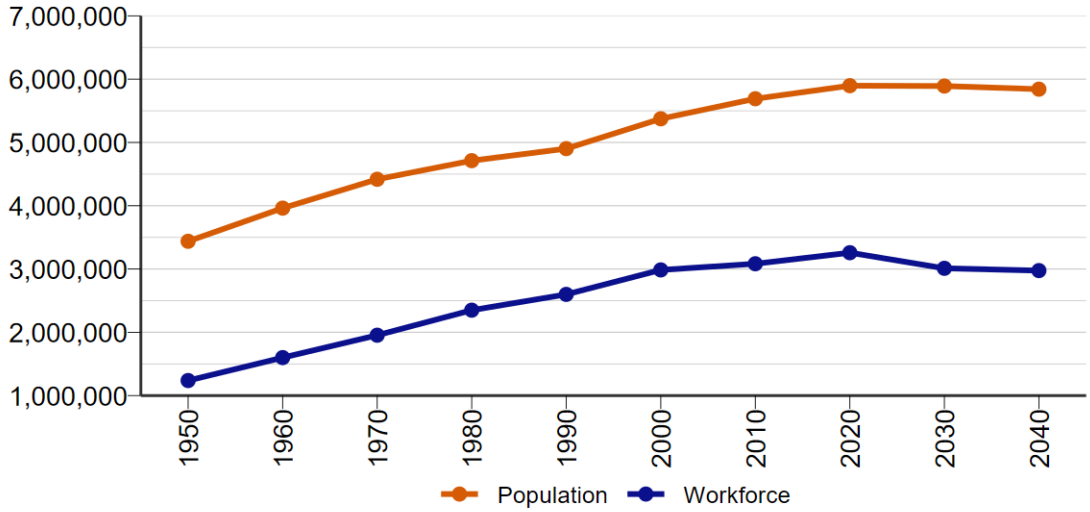


Figure 6: Wisconsin population and workforce projections.

While the overall situation has been realized for some time, the actual quantity of the shortfall has been undetermined until now. Staff at the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Office of Economic Advisors estimate that by 2031, the state could face a labor shortage exceeding 241,000 workers. (See Labor Supply Projections for Wisconsin 2020 – 2040, Winters, Kaur, and Otis, Labor Supply Projections for Wisconsin).

New Construct

Human resource constraints affect the entire economic construct. As one of the three primary components of economic inputs – along with natural resources and capital – a compromise in the abundance of labor permeates the economy. Having never encountered a labor constraint before, it needs to be noted – old models and old policies do not apply.

Moreover, the labor quantity challenge is a macroeconomic phenomenon. It cannot be remedied with microeconomic solutions. Microeconomic attraction and retention incentives of higher wages, better benefits, early exposure, and more are, at best, short-term and limited symptom remedies.

Jobs will go unfilled. Macroeconomic solutions to the challenge include:

1. A workable immigration policy
2. Reducing barriers to employment (see 2023 Wisconsin County Profiles)
3. Expanding trade
4. Technology infusion

Altering a fundamental input of the macroeconomic construct will impact all sectors. The limited and shifting human resource segment will alter income streams, change demand for goods and services, and affect the provision of public goods and services.

Wisconsin's economic health and vigor has been illustrated in the employment and jobs data. However, record low unemployment rates signify two usually unassociated yet coupled performance indicators. On the one hand, low unemployment rates indicate an engaged labor force – a relatively large numerator. On the other hand, in today's environment, low unemployment rates indicate a scarce labor force – a relatively small denominator.

This is an unprecedented situation – and it is not likely to resolve itself quickly.

Yet to be explored are how the limited labor pool and aging population effects other critical economic drivers, such as personal income, as a significant portion of the population (Baby Boomers) shifts to transfer payments that are fixed in real dollar terms, housing stock, dependency ratios, and fiscal balances.

One major unknown on the horizon are the effects that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will have on the future of economic and workforce development. The Governor's Task Force on Workforce and Artificial Intelligence Advisory Action Plan (dwd.wisconsin.gov/ai-taskforce/pdf/ai-advisory-action-plan.pdf) outlines some of the expected effects of AI. For example, the chart below sheds some light on the extent that occupations may be affected by AI.

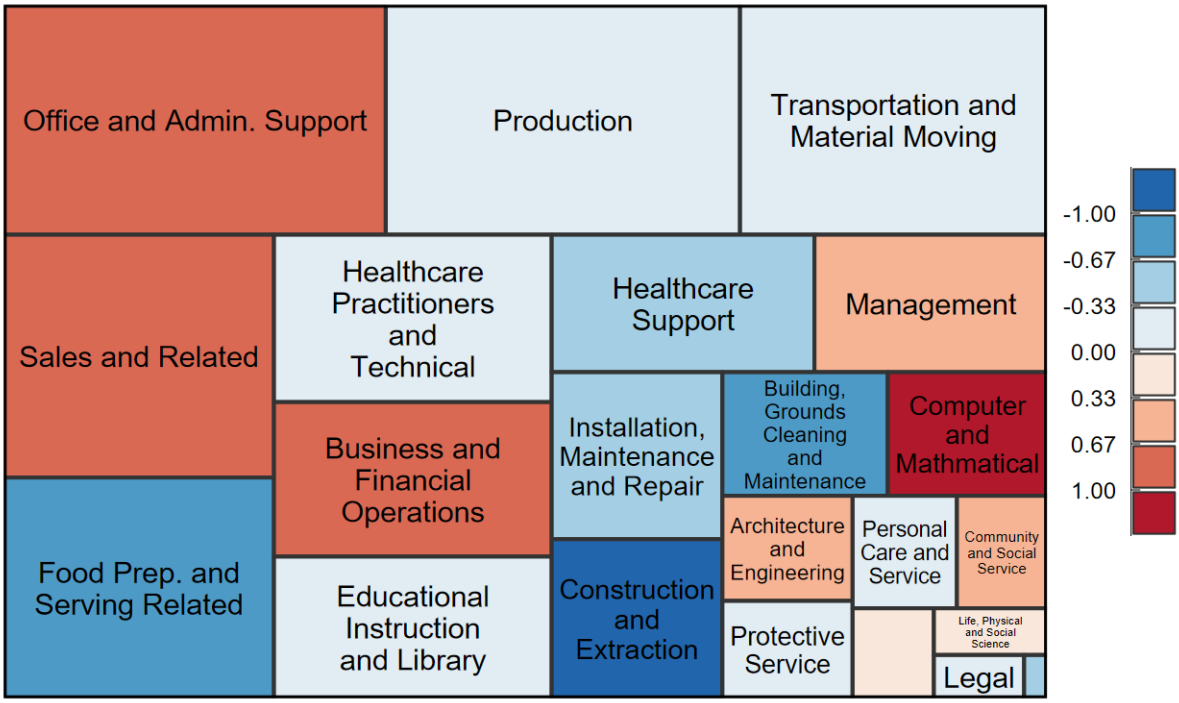


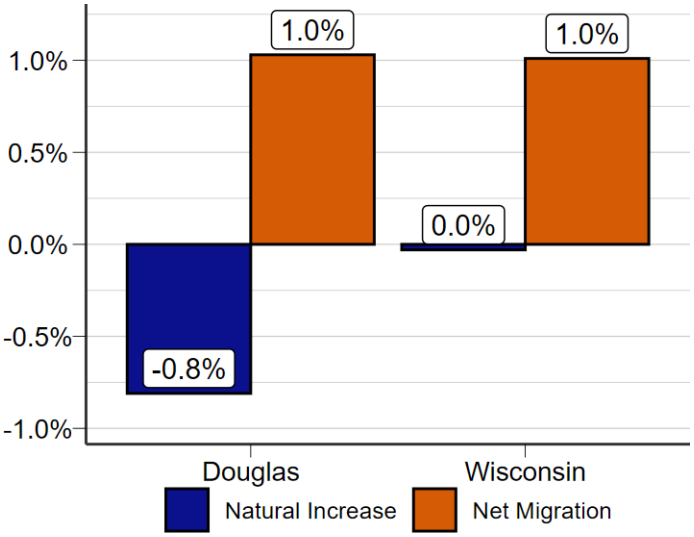
Figure 7: AI exposure per occupation group by number employed.

Fundamental changes are in store for Wisconsin's economy due primarily to two new influencers: workforce constraints and artificial intelligence technology. The degree to how each will affect the other and the whole is yet to be determined.

Population and Demographics

	2020 Census	2023 Final Estimate	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Superior, City	26,751	26,852	101	0.4%
Superior, Town	2,264	2,284	20	0.9%
Parkland, Town	1,231	1,236	5	0.4%
Amnicon, Town	1,224	1,216	-8	-0.6%
Oakland, Town	1,170	1,185	15	1.3%
Lake Nebagamon, Village	1,123	1,124	1	0.1%
Summit, Town	1,030	1,042	12	1.2%
Hawthorne, Town	1,058	1,019	-39	-3.7%
Solon Springs, Town	970	971	1	0.1%
Wascott, Town	912	913	1	0.1%
Douglas, County	44,295	44,392	97	0.2%
Wisconsin, State	5,893,718	5,951,400	57,682	1.0%

Douglas County is the 34th most populous county in Wisconsin with 44,392 residents. It is also the 35th fastest-growing county. From 2020 to 2023, the population changed by 0.2%, compared to the 1.0% change in Wisconsin. Douglas County saw its population peak in 1920 at 49,771 and the City of Superior saw its height in 1910 at 40,384. The fastest-growing municipality in Douglas County is the Town of Oakland, which added 15 people, for a 1.3% growth rate.



Components of Population Change

Population change is driven by natural increase and migration. Natural population increase occurs when there are more births than deaths, while migration increases when more people move into the county than leave. Natural increase is primarily influenced by the population's age structure, while migration has a more immediate and actionable impact on the county labor force.

Figure 8: Source: WI Department of Administration.

Douglas County's population growth in terms of natural increase was -0.8%, ranking 44th in the state. Net migration was 1.0%, ranking 34th in the state.

According to data gathered by Wisconsin's Department of Health Services, there were 409 births in Douglas County. It's fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15□44) in 2022 was 51.2, which rated 55th highest out of Wisconsin's 72 counties. In 2022, Wisconsin's fertility rate was 54.2 and the United States' fertility rate was 56.0. As a comparison, the rate for the county was 58.2, the state's was 62.3 and the United States' was 64.7 in 2010. Douglas County's 0-5 age population in

2022 is 5.5% of the county's population, compared to Douglas County's 75 and older population, which is 7.9% of the county's population. In 2010, the 0-5 age population was 7.0%, and the 75 and older population was 6.7%.

Douglas County's fertility rate has been low for a long time. The baby boomer generation is currently aged 60 to 78, and once the this generation passes on, Douglas County's population will have a hard time rebounding because its number of births has decreased over time. The county's population is projected to decrease 21.8% over the next 25 years. Immigration from outside the county must accelerate to stabilize the population.

Population Projections

	2020	2030	2040	2050	2020-2050 Population Change
Douglas	44,295	42,035	38,760	34,630	-21.8%
Wisconsin	5,893,718	5,890,915	5,841,620	5,710,120	-3.1%

Source: Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Department of Administration.

The recently released Wisconsin population projections shows a decrease of Douglas County's total population of 21.8% from 2020 to 2050. The 0-19 age group is projected to decrease 46.8%, the 20-69 age group is projected to decrease 22.6%, and the 70 and older age group is projected to increase 2.8%. Comparatively, the projected decrease of Wisconsin's overall population from 2020-2050 is 3.1%. State residents aged 0-19 is projected to decrease 13.4%, the population 20-69 to decrease 7.4%, and the population 70 and older to increase 40.6%.

Employment by Industry

	2023 Avg Monthly Employment	5-year Change	5-year % Change	% of Total Employment
Total, All Industries	16,019	214	1.4%	100.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	4,294	92	2.2%	26.8%
Education and Health Services	3,380	-213	-5.9%	21.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,329	115	5.2%	14.5%
Manufacturing	1,777	36	2.1%	11.1%
Construction	1,095	251	29.7%	6.8%
Public Administration	916	12	1.3%	5.7%
Professional and Business Services	903	-79	-8.0%	5.6%
Other Services	615	6	1.0%	3.8%
Financial Activities	517	28	5.7%	3.2%
Information	153	-49	-24.3%	1.0%
Natural Resources and Mining	42	16	61.5%	0.3%

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Douglas County employment added 214 jobs (1.4%) from 2018 to 2023. Average employment levels were at 16,019 jobs in 2023. The largest industry was trade, transportation, and utilities, accounting for 26.8% of employment in the county in 2023. From 2018 to 2023, the fastest-growing industry was natural resources and mining, adding 16 jobs for a 61.5% growth rate. Natural resources and mining is a small industry in Douglas County, and its percentage growth rate can be volatile. The construction industry grew the largest in number of jobs from 2018 to 2023 and has the realistic possibility of high growth soon. One of two bridges in the City of Superior connecting with the City of Duluth, Minnesota, is scheduled to be replaced starting in 2027. The project is projected to cost $1.8 billion and four years to complete.

Some of the largest employers in Douglas County are Lakehead Constructors, the University of Wisconsin-Superior, and Walmart. The Quarterly Workforce Indicators dataset includes age groups of workers by industries at the county level. It shows the share of 65 and older workers in the trade, transportation, and utilities industry was 7.2% in 2018 vs 9.0% in 2023. This increase suggests an increase in retirement soon. To help counteract a rise in retirements, industries in the county could embrace advancements in artificial intelligence and robotics. Examples of these technologies would be autonomous semi-trucks in the transportation industry, automated robots in the warehouse and manufacturing industries, and digital ordering in the food services industry.

Unemployment

Douglas County's monthly average unemployment rate in 2023 was 4.4%, compared to the state's rate of 3.0%. This ranks the county 65th in terms of the rate of unemployment in 2023. These rates were much lower than the all-time high rates achieved during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, which interrupted a long steady decline that began at the end of the Great Recession in 2010. Douglas County achieved its lowest unemployment rates on record in 2018, while Wisconsin reached its lowest in 2022. Douglas County's unemployment rate has a lower degree of variability than most of Northwestern Wisconsin. A smaller share of its businesses temporarily increase employment at certain times of the year, mainly caused by changes in demand for a service or a change in weather. Industries that often have seasonal employment are logging, retail, and tourism. Douglas County has many jobs that are year-round like transportation and manufacturing. Also, a large share of the county's workforce commutes daily across the bridge to Duluth, which is the regional center for healthcare, manufacturing, education, finance, and commerce.

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate is the percentage of people who are not working but actively looking for work compared to the total number of people in the labor force.

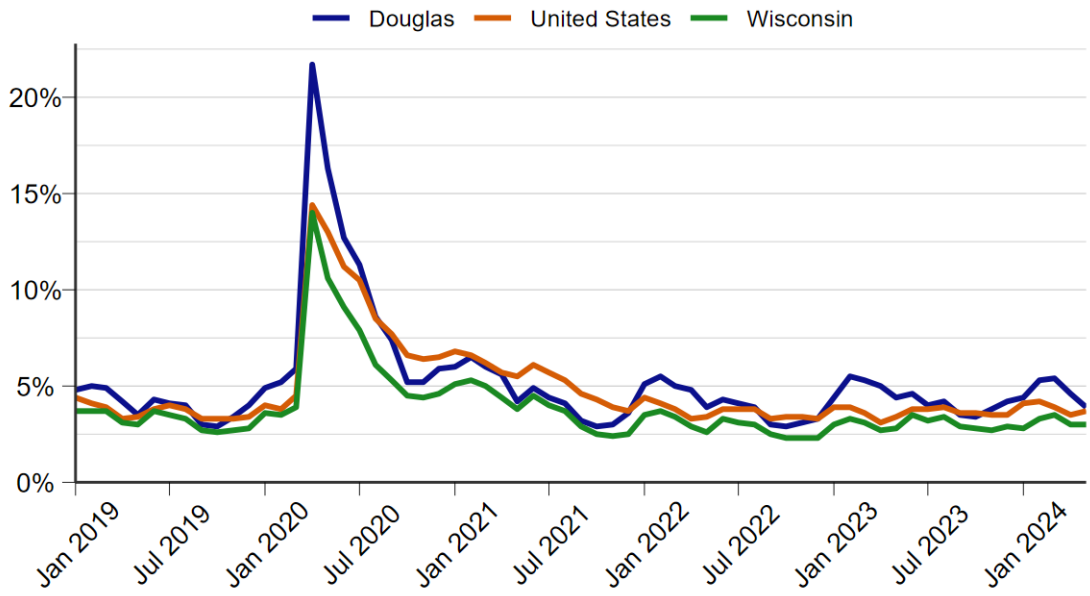


Figure 9: Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Labor Force Participation

Douglas County's labor force participation rate (LFPR) was 62.9%, ranking 43rd in the state. The county's LFPR has been lower that the state dropping from a high of 72.0% in 1998, the LFPR has declined to 62.9%. The main reason for this decline is aging population. In recent years, the large baby boomer generation, the largest generation in American history, began to retire causing the LFPR to decrease dramatically. The share of the Douglas County population in 2002 that was 65 and older was 14%, in 2022 it was 21%, which is low when compared to other counties in Northern Wisconsin.

Another way to view this is through the Employment-Population Ratio (EMRATIO). The EMRATIO is the proportion of the civilian non-institutional population aged 16 years and over that is employed. It is basically the LFPR but doesn't count the people that are looking for a job. The larger the unemployment rate, the larger the difference is between the two metrics. Douglas County's EMRATIO was 62.4% in 2002 declining to 59.5% in 2022.

As stated earlier, the share of the population 65 and older was 21% in Douglas County. That was 9,200 individuals. If the LFPR is to reverse its declining trend, many of these people will have to return into the labor force. The number of youths entering the labor market is not large enough to offset the people retiring.

> **Labor Force Participation Rate**
>
> The labor force participation rate (LFPR) looks at the relative labor resources available and is expressed as the percentage of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and older that is working or actively looking for work.

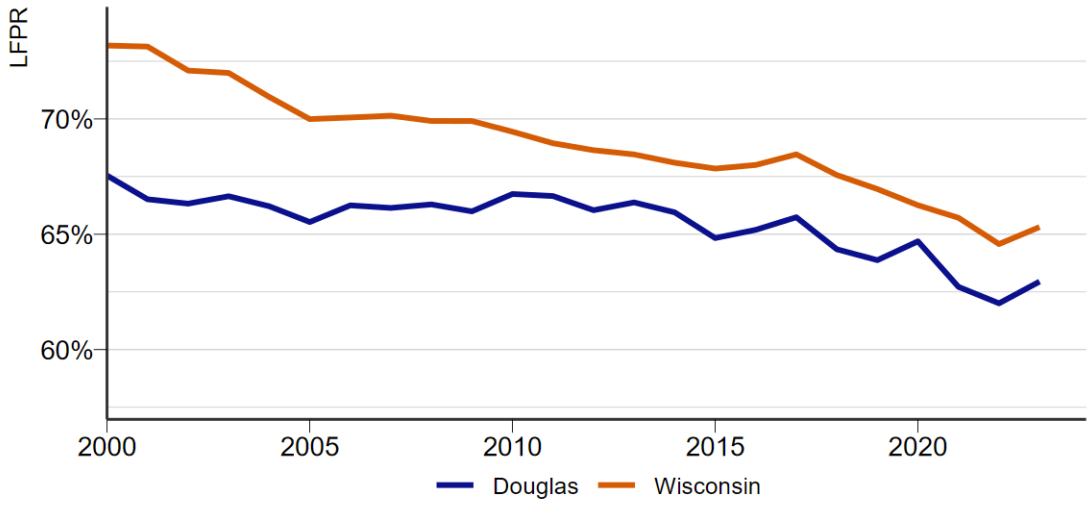


Figure 10: Source: WI Department of Workforce Development Office of Economic Advisors.

AI Impact

Occupation	Employment	% of Total Employment	AI Exposure Index
Cashiers	2,170	3.6%	0.89
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,560	2.6%	-0.09
Retail Salespersons	1,230	2.1%	0.40
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,180	2.0%	-0.78
Office Clerks, General	1,150	1.9%	1.00
Stockers and Order Fillers	1,150	1.9%	-0.05
Fast Food and Counter Workers	1,130	1.9%	-1.00
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	970	1.6%	0.15
Bartenders	970	1.6%	-0.68
Registered Nurses	920	1.5%	0.04

Source: Governor's Task Force on Workforce and Artificial Intelligence.

AI Exposure

AI exposure, as computed by the Governor's Task Force on Workforce and Artificial Intelligence, is the median value across four different research paper's measures of exposure after normalizing each paper's measure to the same mean and variance. A positive value of AI exposure indicates placement in the top 50% of occupations for AI exposure, with higher values indicating greater exposure to AI. Conversely, negative numbers indicate exposure in the bottom 50%. For more information about AI exposure, refer to The Governor's Task Force on Workforce and Artificial Intelligence Advisory Action Plan (dwd.wisconsin.gov/ai-taskforce/pdf/ai-advisory-action-plan.pdf)

The largest occupation in the Northwest Workforce Development Area (WDA) is cashiers, accounting for 3.6% of the area's employment. According to county level estimates, cashiers are 3.5% of Douglas County's employment. This occupation has an artificial intelligence exposure index of 0.89. For context, the occupation with the highest potential AI exposure is bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks, with an AI exposure index of 1.89. It is estimated to be 1.3% of county employment. Another occupation with a high potential AI exposure is general office clerks with an AI exposure index score of 1.00, accounting for 1.5% of employment. Douglas County has a large share of the regions heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, around 700. This occupation has a negative value on the AI Exposure Index and is an estimated 4.3% of the county's total employment.

Industry Employment Projections

	Industry	2022 Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Employment Change 2022-2032	% Change 2022-2032
Highest Percent Growth	Construction	3,322	3,695	373	11.23%
Most Jobs Added	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	12,804	13,912	1,108	8.65%
Highest Number Employed	Education and Health Services	15,227	15,860	633	4.16%
Total	Total All Industries	75,106	78,912	3,806	5.07%

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development Office of Economic Advisors.

DWD conducts employment projections for Wisconsin's 11 WDAs every two years. Douglas is part of the Northwest WDA, which also includes Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, and Washburn counties. Non-farm employment located within Northwest WDA is expected to increase by 3,806 (5.1%), compared to the state's growth rate of 7.1%. In recent decades, this region's projected industry growth has been lower than the state because its population growth has been lower and the median age has been higher than much of Wisconsin. The higher the growth rate in the working age population, the higher the employment growth rate in an economy where the main factor limiting growth is a shortage of human capital.

In the Northwest WDA, the construction industry is projected to be the fastest-growing industry, growing at a rate of 11.2% from 2022 to 2032, which is slightly higher than the statewide growth rate of 11.1%. The trade, transportation, and utilities industry is projected to have the most jobs added of an industry, growing by 1,108 jobs from 2022 to 2032. The industry projected to have the most jobs added statewide is the education and health services industry.

The estimated number of self-employed people in Northwest WDA in 2022 was 6,169 and is projected to grow 8.6% to 6,700 in 2032. The projected grow rate for the self-employed in Wisconsin is higher at 10.4%

For more information and detailed projections results for both occupations and industries, view the WisConomy projections page (jobcenterofwisconsin.com/wisconomy/pub/projections).

Occupation Employment Projections

	Occupation	2022 Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Employment Change 2022-2032	% Change 2022-2032
Highest Percent Growth	Architecture and Engineering	837	939	102	12.19%
Lowest Percent Growth	Legal	276	262	-14	-5.07%
Highest Number Employed	Production	8,302	8,351	49	0.59%
Most Jobs Added	Transportation and Material Moving	7,090	7,917	827	11.66%
Total	Total, All	75,106	78,912	3,806	5.07%

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development Office of Economic Advisors.

Architecture and engineering occupations are projected to be the fastest-growing occupation in the Northwest WDA, growing at a rate of 12.2% from 2022 to 2032. The occupation projected to be the fastest growing in Wisconsin is the computer and mathematical occupation at 17.8%. The second fastest-growing occupation in this WDA is transportation and material moving at 11.7%, which is also projected to have the most jobs added.

Two useful things not in the occupation employment projections below are projected total openings and typical education. The Northwest WDA occupation projected to have the most total openings is food preparation and serving occupations at 1,190. The employment change for food preparation and serving occupations is only projected to increase 289. An occupation can have a high rate of turnover in employees, as shown in the high number of openings, and have a low growth rate in employment.

Total openings include three categories: labor force exits, occupational transfers, and annual growth. For all occupations in the Northwest WDA, labor force exits are projected to be 39.7% of the job openings; occupational transfers are projected to be 56.1% of openings; and annual growth is projected to be 4.2% of job openings. Annual growth is lower than the Wisconsin projected rate of 5.9%, which is consistent with the higher projected growth rate in Wisconsin employment of 7.1% versus the WDA's projected employment growth rate of 5.1%.

In this WDA, 62% of employment growth is in occupations that typically require a high school degree or less. Those that typically require education beyond high school are 38%, with 19% typically requiring a bachelor's degree. At the state level, he projected employment growth is in occupations that typically require higher levels of education than in the Northwest WDA with 46% of statewide projected employment growth in occupations with typical education above a high school diploma and 29% requiring a bachelor's degree.

Aging Population

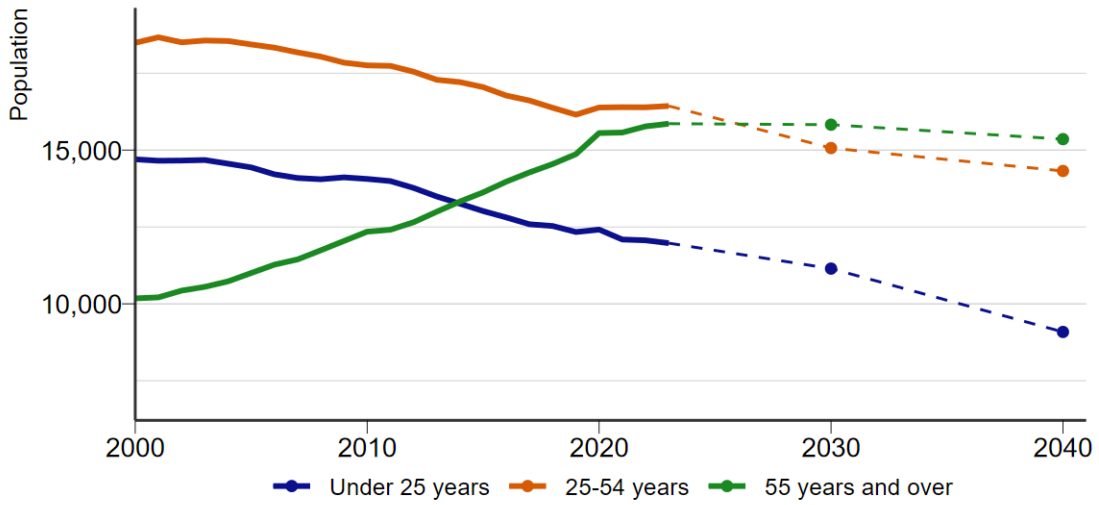


Figure 11: US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program and
WI Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center.

The aging population in Douglas County is aging is an issue across most of Wisconsin. The above graph shows the change over time of three age groups. The green represents those aged 55 years and over, which is flat in the early 2000's and then increases dramatically during the remainder of the period. This illustrates the aging of the baby boomer generation. The share of the population age 55 and older was 35.8% in 2023, growing from 29.7% in 2013 and 24.1% in 2003.

The cause of this rapid acceleration in the 55 and over share of the total population is the negative growth of the other two age groups in Douglas County. The share of the population age 25 to 55 was 37.1% in 2023, shrinking from 39.5% in 2013 and 42.4% in 2003. Ages 25 through 55 are known as the prime working years and is the age group with the highest labor force participation rate. When the share of a community's workforce in this age group declines it makes it challenging to grow the economy in industries that require humans. The share of the population ages under 25 was 27.0% in 2023, shrinking from 30.8% in 2013 and 33.5% in 2003. The under 25 age group are those that will soon replace the 55 and over age group when they retire.

It will continue to be a challenge to recruit workers to replace retirees since the under 25 year age group is shrinking while at the same time the 55 and over age group is growing. From 2017 to 2022, the median age in Douglas County was 42.6, compared to Wisconsin's median age of 39.9, according to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The county's median age ranked 41st oldest in Wisconsin's 72 counties.

Even though Douglas County's younger population is trending downward, it has a shortage of affordable childcare. A lack of affordable childcare compounds the negative effect that the downward trend has on the growth of the area's workforce for people in their prime working years. If both parents want to work outside the home, but can't find affordable childcare, then one or both parents must work fewer hours outside the home to be able to watch their children.

The large increase in the number of elderly in Douglas County creates the challenge of an increased need for personal care workers to help take care of them either in the home or at a nursing home. Both childcare and eldercare are highly physically and emotionally demanding jobs that are important for many people in Douglas County. It will continue to be difficult to find workers for these occupations, when these workers can make as much, if not more, money at a fast-food restaurant or a gas station.

The dashed lines on the aging population graph show the projected populations of the three age groups. All three are projected to decline in Douglas County when comparing the years 2020 and 2040. The under 25 group is projected to decrease 3,681, 25-54 is projected to decrease 1,618, and 55 and over is projected to decrease 236. This population decline would be harmful for the county's economy.

Personal Income

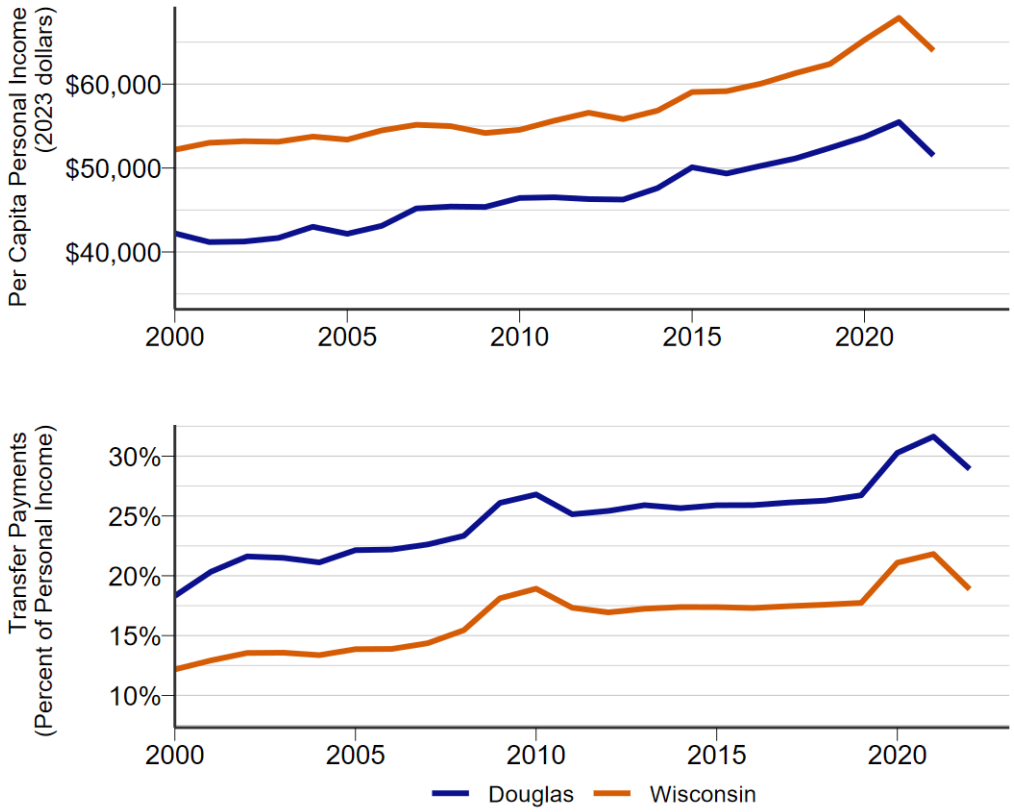


Figure 12: Source: United States Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Personal Income

Personal income includes income from all sources, such as wages, business income, rental income, investments, and government transfer payments. It excludes capital gains or losses, whether realized or unrealized. All dollar amounts are adjusted for inflation using 2023 dollars.

Per capita income usually increases over time, even after accounting for inflation. A couple reasons for this are technological innovation that improves worker efficiency, and a decrease in the number of children as a share of the total population. Children do not work to earn income, and don't collect money from public and private retirement accounts. The per capita personal income in Douglas County was $51,497 in 2022, compared to the statewide average of $63,996. The gap between the statewide and Douglas County average per capita personal income has widened over the last 22 years. The gap in 2000 was $9,969, in 2022 the gap was $12,498.

In total, 28.9% of that income came from transfer payments as opposed to earned income in 2022. Transfer payments as a share of personal income increases during economic depressions and re-

cessions, because the number of people working decreases and the number of people collecting government payments such as food stamps and Unemployment Insurance increases. Transfer payments as a share of personal income in Douglas County grew faster than the share in Wisconsin with the larger share of older individuals. A larger share of the county's personal income is retirement income that includes things like private pensions, Social Security, and Medicare. Transfer payments as a share of personal income in Wisconsin grew 6.7 percentage points from 2000 to 2022. In Douglas County the share increased 10.6 percentage points during the same period.

Workforce Pipeline

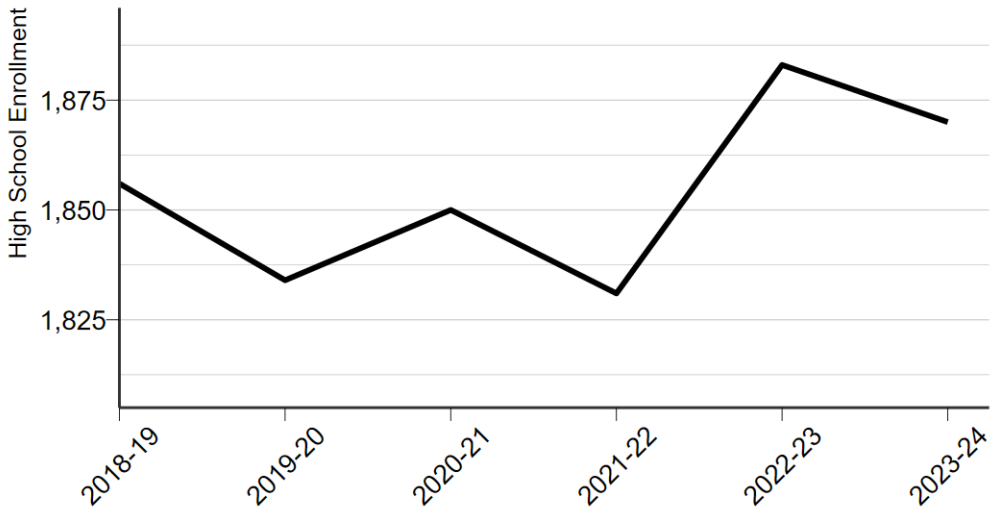


Figure 13: Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Education prepares the next generation of the labor force. As of the 2023-24 school year, 1,870 students were enrolled in grades 9-12. This includes public, private, and home-based schools, or home schooling, which is classified differently than online schooling. Over the last five years, home based schooling increased 59% in Douglas County. It is now 5% of high school students in the county, the statewide average is 3%. Note that school district borders can extend into multiple counties, meaning that county-level counts may not necessarily represent the precise enrollment within county borders. County-level totals are determined by the reported enrollment of school district whose main office is located in that county. As school district borders do not necessarily align with county borders, the numbers below may not match the total number of students residing in the county.

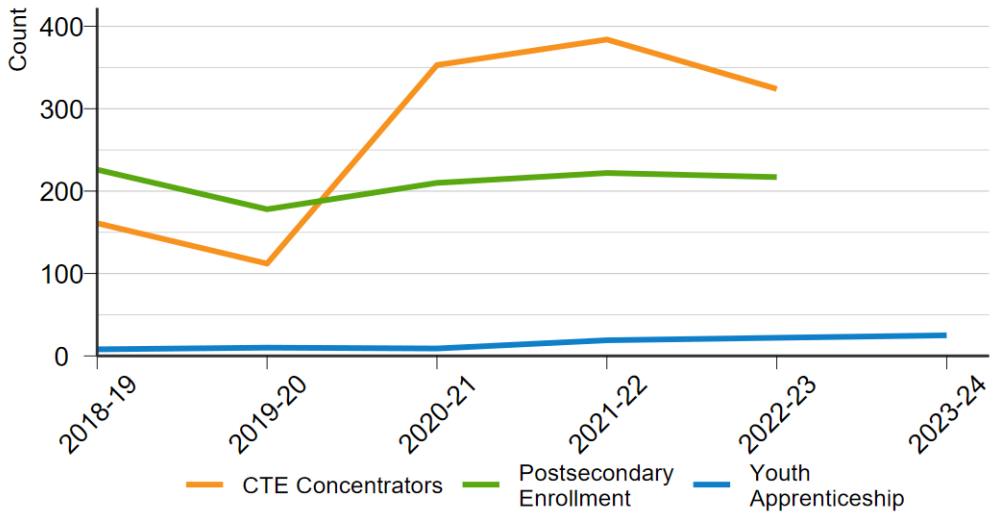


Figure 14: Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Department of Workforce Development.

Career and Technical Education

Of those attendees, 35.4% were concentrators in career and technical education (CTE), compared to 44.3% for the state during the 2022-23 school year. The number of Douglas County students receiving CTE has been trending upward over the last five years. During this period, the most popular CTE pathway in the county was architecture and construction, with 248 students; the second most popular pathway was manufacturing with 194 students. The construction industry employs 7.4% of jobs, and the manufacturing industry employs 11.7% of jobs.

i Career and Technical Education

Career and technical education (CTE) equips students for both the workforce and postsecondary education through work-based learning opportunities. CTE concentrators are 11th and 12th graders who have passed at least two CTE courses within a specific career pathway. Home-based students are not included in this data.

	CTE Concentrator	Percent of Grade 11 and 12
Douglas	324	35.4%
Wisconsin	64,124	44.3%

School year 2022-23. Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

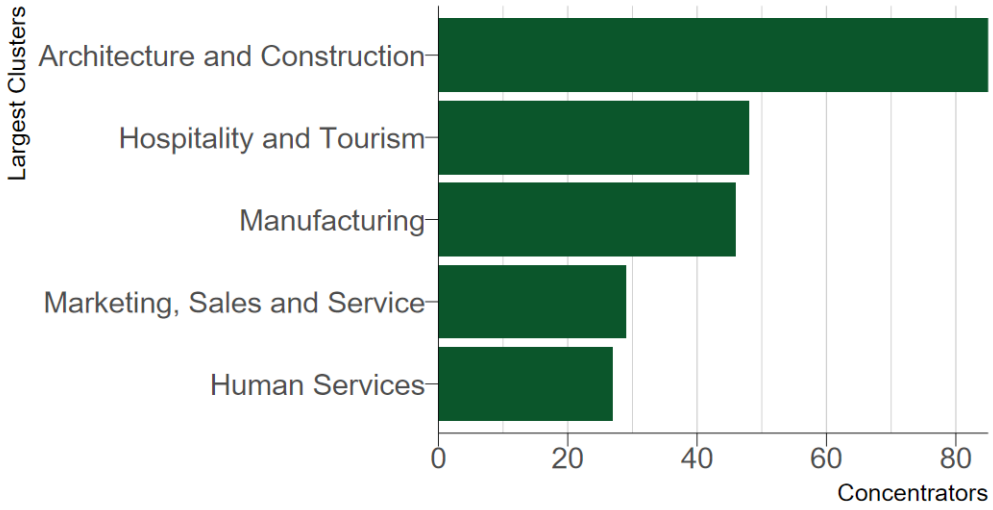


Figure 15: School year 2022-23. Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Postsecondary Enrollment

The percentage of high school completers who went on to enroll in a postsecondary institution as a percentage of all 12th grade students in 2022-23 was 47.2%, which was an increase in the number five years prior. In Wisconsin, it was 43.6%. Those in the 2018-19 graduating class that chose to pursue post-secondary education was 46.7%. Students in Douglas County can stay close to home if they choose by attending the University of Wisconsin-Superior and a Northwood Technical College campus.

Postsecondary Enrollment

Postsecondary enrollment tracks the percentage of high school graduates who attend a postsecondary school (public or private colleges, two- or four-year universities, technical colleges, or training programs) in the fall immediately following graduation. It is important to note that this data may slightly underrepresent actual enrollment due to limitations in how information is matched within the National Student Clearinghouse.

	Postsecondary Enrollment	Percent of Grade 12
Douglas	217	47.2%
Wisconsin	31,893	43.6%

School year 2022-23. Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Youth Apprenticeship

Youth apprenticeship programs prepare participants for the workforce through direct, hands-on work experience. There were 22 youth apprentices in Douglas County in the 2022-23 school year. The county has a lower rate of youth apprentices than Wisconsin.

Historically, Northwest Wisconsin counties have struggled to find employers to participate in youth apprenticeship programs. It also can be a challenge for Douglas County businesses to attract employees from outside of Northwest Wisconsin. Youth apprenticeship could be an important tool to keep young talent already in the community. These programs connect high school students to businesses in their local community. If a high school graduate knows that a local employer is willing to hire them, they are less likely to move away.

i Youth Apprenticeship

Youth Apprenticeship (YA) Program is a school-supervised program that combines work and classroom learning to help high school students prepare for a career. Participants receive on-the-job training directly from the employer. The program helps students explore career paths and helps employers develop a qualified workforce.

	Youth Apprenticeship Participants	Percent of Grade 11 and 12
Douglas	22	2.4%
Wisconsin	8,222	5.7%

School year 2022-23. Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.