

Ozaukee County

2025 WORKFORCE PROFILE



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 reconstructed 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 2024¹, 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.

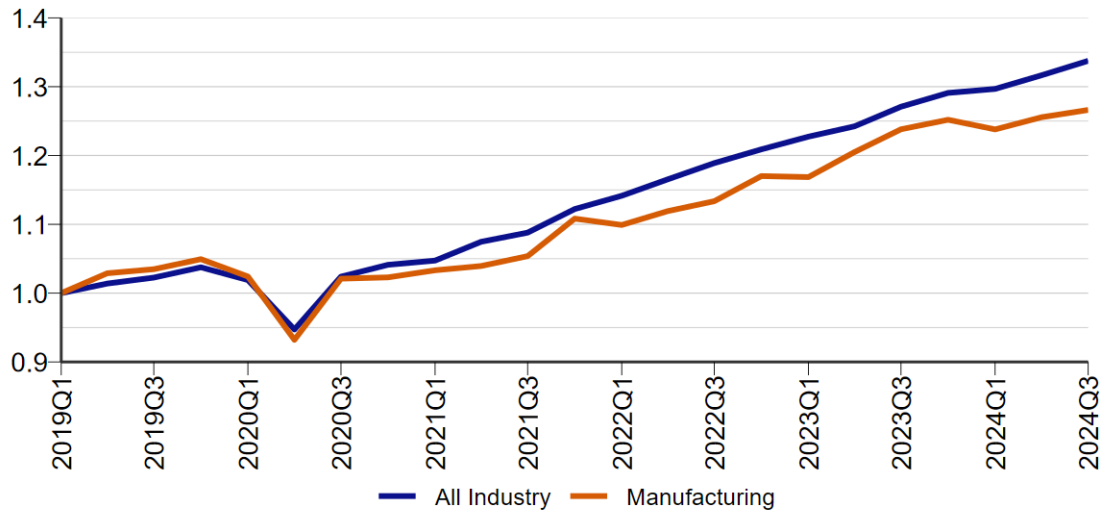


Figure 2: GDP growth index (2019Q1 = 100).

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.

¹Third quarter 2024 is latest data available.

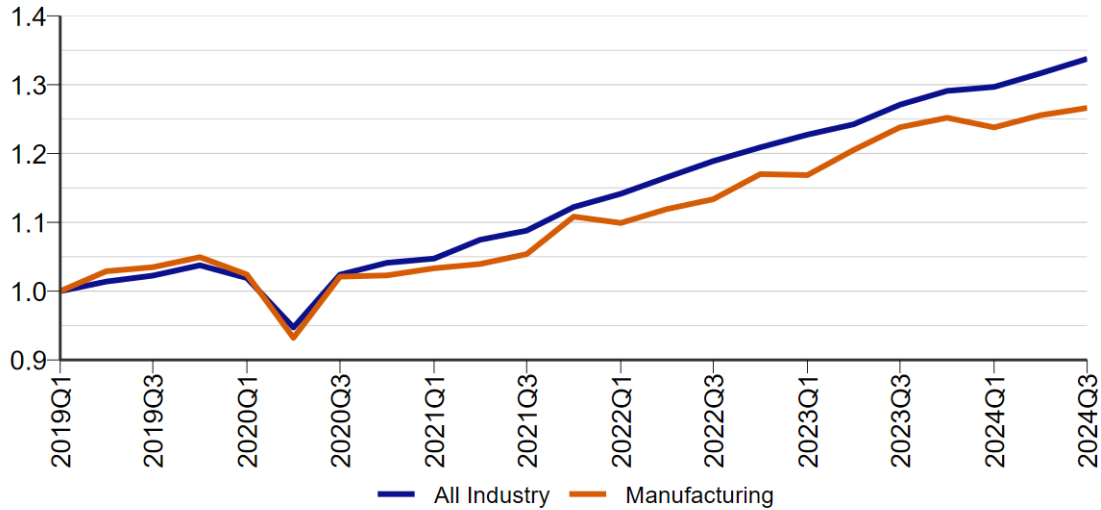


Figure 3: Wisconsin all industry v manufacturing growth (2019Q1 = 100).

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.

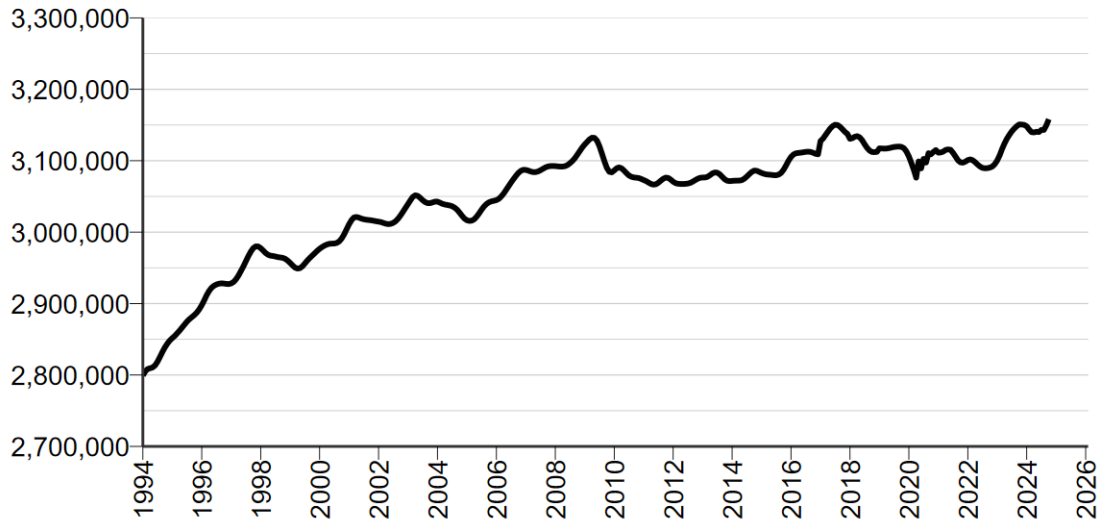


Figure 4: Wisconsin labor force.

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.

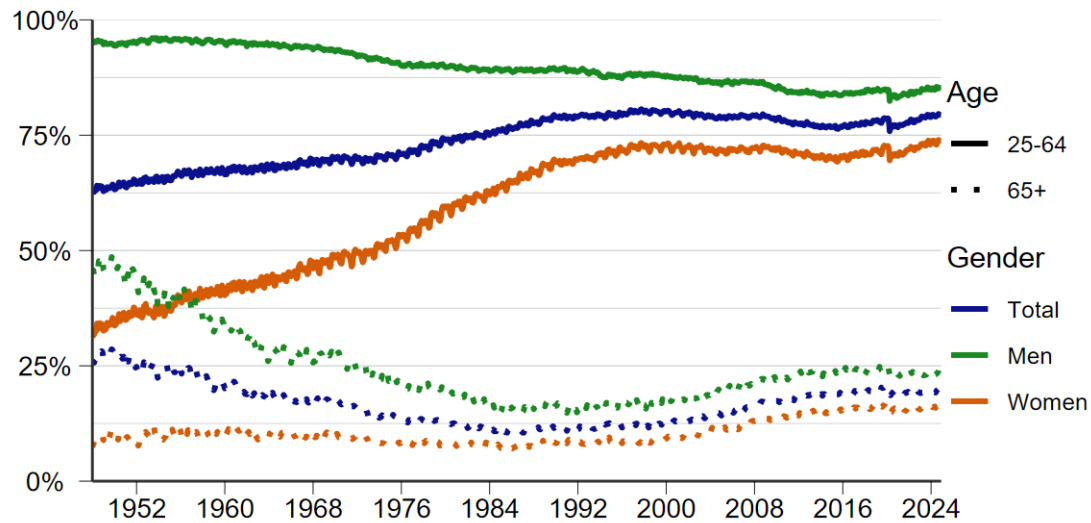


Figure 5: US labor force participation rate.

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.

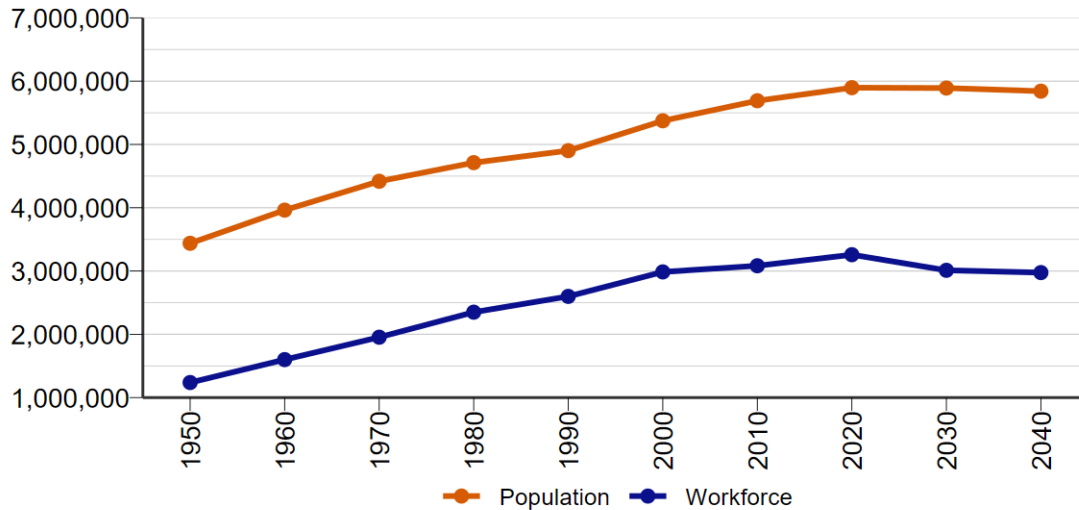


Figure 6: Wisconsin population and workforce projections.

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.

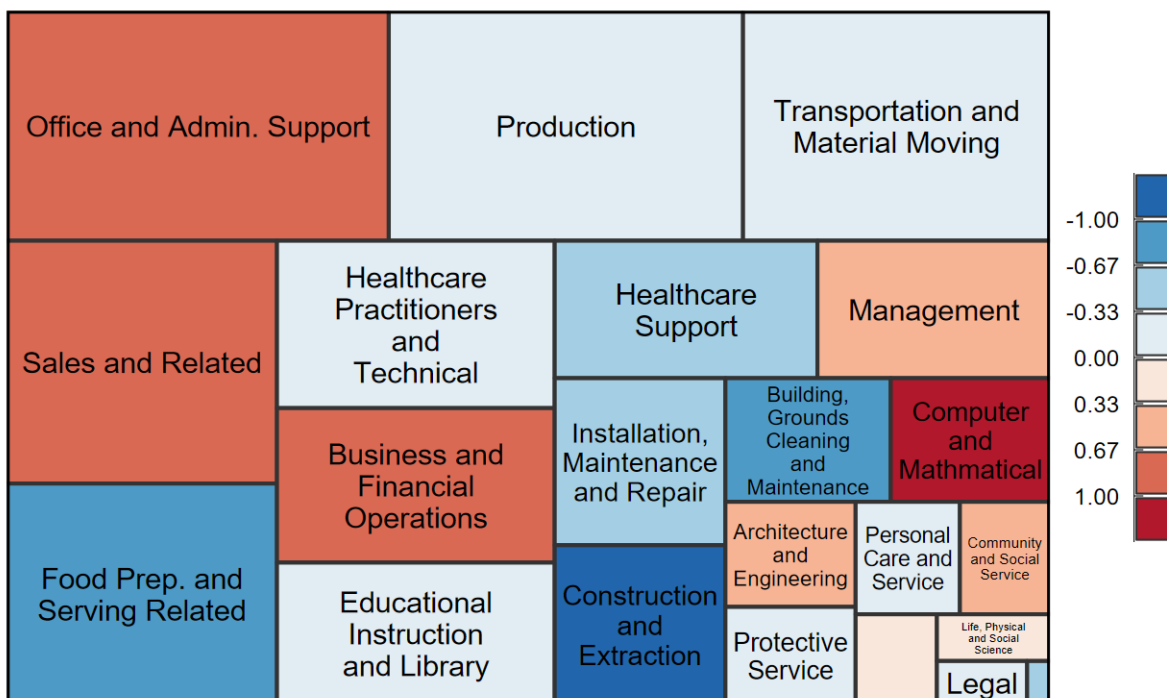


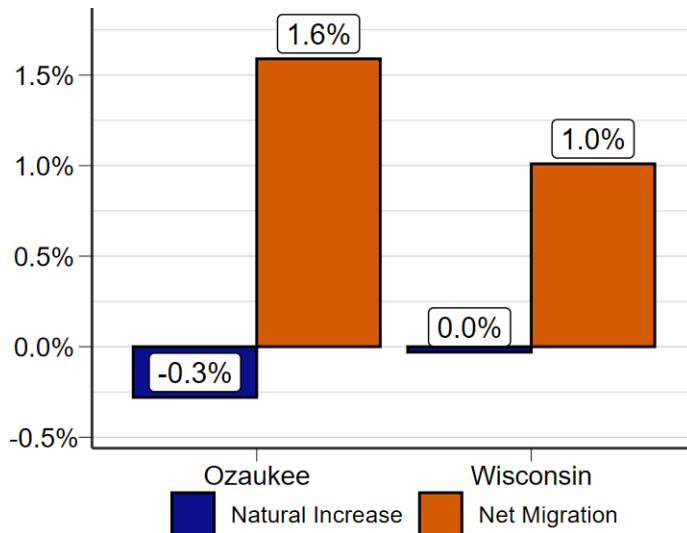
Figure 7: AI exposure per occupation group by number employed.

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
Mequon, City	25,142	25,073	-69	-0.3%
Port Washington, City	12,353	12,831	478	3.9%
Cedarburg, City	12,121	12,702	581	4.8%
Grafton, Village	12,094	12,351	257	2.1%
Cedarburg, Town	6,162	6,139	-23	-0.4%
Grafton, Town	4,355	4,341	-14	-0.3%
Saukville, Village	4,258	4,211	-47	-1.1%
Thiensville, Village	3,290	3,262	-28	-0.8%
Belgium, Village	2,421	2,480	59	2.4%
Fredonia, Village	2,279	2,264	-15	-0.7%
Ozaukee, County	91,503	92,699	1,196	1.3%
Wisconsin, State	5,893,718	5,951,400	57,682	1.0%

Ozaukee County is the 18th most populous county in Wisconsin with 92,699 residents. The county is part of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Statistical Area sharing its southern border with Milwaukee County, the most populated county in the state. The region has a strong workforce and commuting connection among the counties.



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.

Ozaukee County is the 11th fastest-growing county in Wisconsin. From 2020 to 2023, the population increased by 1.3%, compared to the 1.0% change in Wisconsin. Both the state and the county measured slightly more deaths than births over the past three years. Above average population growth was due to net migration. Growth of 1.6% for the county exceeded statewide growth of 1.0%.

The county is dissimilar from most population-dense counties in having no definitive urban center. Its residents are spread across the county. The largest municipality, Mequon, is about twice the

size of the Port Washington, the county seat. The fastest-growing municipality in Ozaukee County is the City of Cedarburg, which added 581 people, for a 4.8% growth rate.

Unlike the state, the county's population is expected to grow over the next two decades. The outlook is subject to change if the actual components of change differ from the projections. Residents in the county are older than the state with a median age of 43.8 compared to 39.9. The county's fertility rate, measured as births per 1,000 women between 15 and 50 years old, is also lower than the statewide rate at 31 versus 48. Therefore, there will likely continue to be more deaths than births without a combination of rising fertility rates and net in-migration of younger residents. There need to be continued efforts to retain current residents and attract new people to the county to maintain population growth through net migration.

Population Projections

	2020	2030	2040	2050	2020-2050 Population Change
Ozaukee	91,503	92,205	92,690	92,510	1.1%
Wisconsin	5,893,718	5,890,915	5,841,620	5,710,120	-3.1%

Source: Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Employment by Industry

	2023 Avg Monthly Employment	5-year Change	5-year % Change	% of Total Employment
Total, All Industries	40,776	-2,023	-4.7%	100.0%
Education and Health Services	9,688	-64	-0.7%	23.8%
Manufacturing	8,336	-963	-10.4%	20.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	6,920	-194	-2.7%	17.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,931	81	1.7%	12.1%
Professional and Business Services	4,432	-639	-12.6%	10.9%
Financial Activities	1,767	-69	-3.8%	4.3%
Public Administration	1,586	-76	-4.6%	3.9%
Construction	1,382	38	2.8%	3.4%
Other Services	1,138	-113	-9.0%	2.8%
Information	348	-30	-7.9%	0.9%
Natural Resources and Mining	248	5	2.1%	0.6%

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

Ozaukee County employment lost -2,023 jobs (-4.7%) from 2018 to 2023. Average employment levels were at 40,776 jobs in 2023. This represents place of work employment. Approximately 40% of workers at county businesses live outside of the county. Important context to the five-year change is that employment experienced a rapid dip in 2020 as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent public health response. Job counts bottomed out at 39,882, which was a 6.8% decline from 2018. The has been comparatively slow. Statewide employment declined by 5.1% between 2018 and 2020 but netted 1.6% growth over the five year period.

Manufacturing makes up one-fifth of employment in the county. There were 199 manufacturing establishments in the area with an average of 41.9 employees per firm. The average employees per manufacturing establishment for the state is 53.0, which indicates employment is distributed among multiple small to medium firms instead of consolidated in a few major employers. This key industry lost 963 jobs (-10.4%). The two largest subsectors, Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing and Machinery Manufacturing, lost 166 and 420 jobs, respectively.

The fastest-growing industry was construction, adding 38 jobs for a 2.8% growth rate. However, this industry makes up only 3.4% of the counties total employment.

Unemployment

Ozaukee County's monthly average unemployment rate in 2023 was 2.6%, compared to the state's rate of 3.0%. This is measured based on the place of residence. Approximately 40% of employed Ozaukee County residents commute outside of the county for work, which mean trends seen in the place of work data discussed in the previous section do not necessarily align. Rates for both the county and the state are historically low and indicative of a tight labor market. Simply put, employers are having difficulty finding workers. There are some signs that that the difficulty has eased more recently. However, the demographic challenges of an aging population that are driving the tight labor markets are not going away.

i 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.

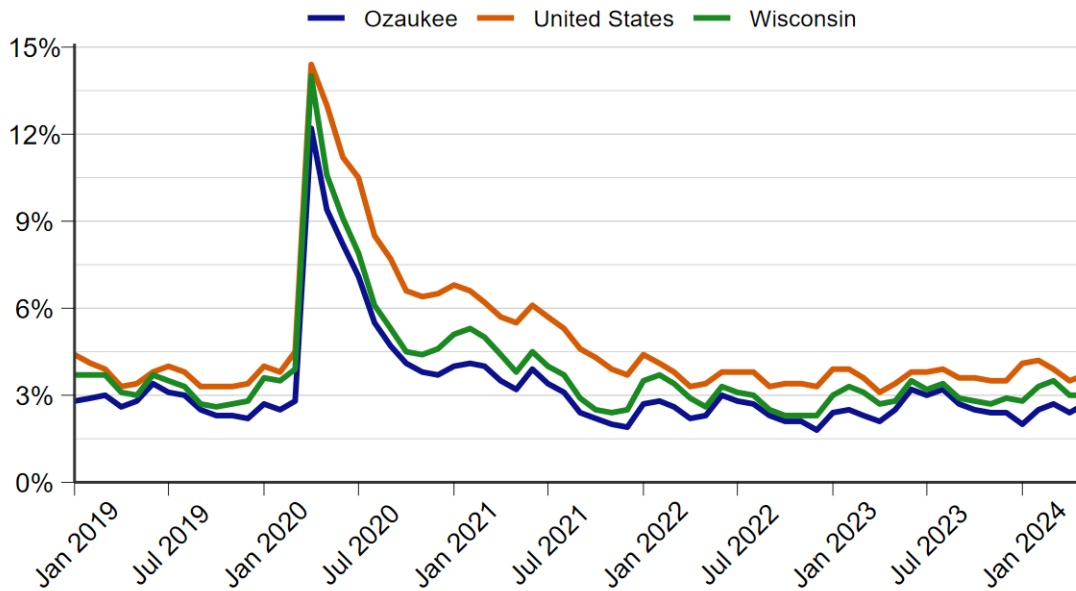


Figure 9: Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Labor Force Participation

The long-term impact of the aging population is also seen in the declining labor force participation rate (LFPR). LFPR by age group has remained relatively steady over time. However, the population is getting progressively older. Therefore, the overall LFPR is declining as more and more residents enjoy their well-deserved retirements. Ozaukee County's labor force participation LFPR stood at 65.6% in 2023. As a comparison, it was nearly 80% in the mid-1990s when baby boomers were in their prime working years. There are two general strategies that can help alleviate the challenges of declining labor force: 1) increase migration and, 2) more fully using the existing population, which largely boils down to addressing workforce barriers.

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.

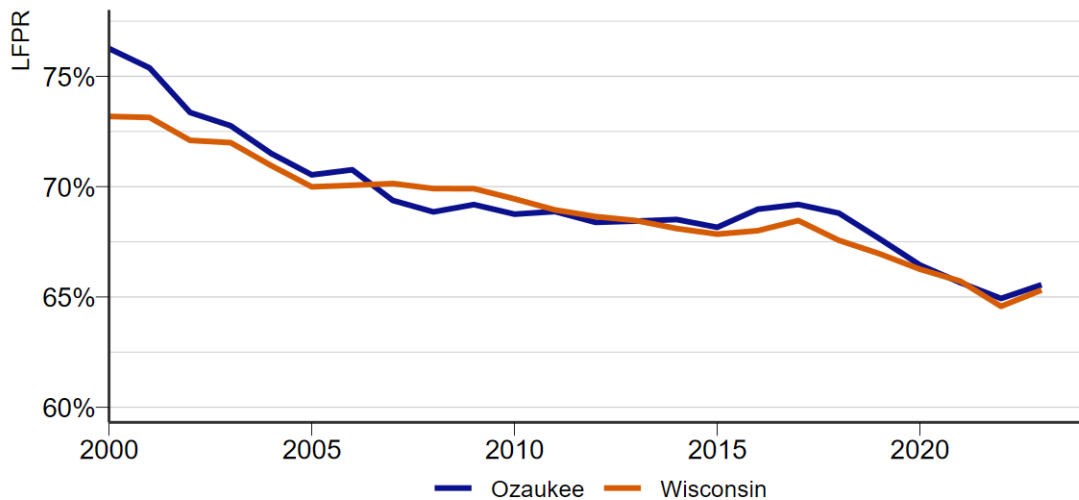


Figure 10: Source: WI Department of Workforce Development Office of Economic Advisors.

AI Impact

Occupation	Employment	% of Total Employment	AI Exposure Index
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	9,070	2.6%	-0.78
Cashiers	8,580	2.5%	0.89
Retail Salespersons	7,950	2.3%	0.40
Fast Food and Counter Workers	7,620	2.2%	-1.00
Customer Service Representatives	7,000	2.0%	0.75
Stockers and Order Fillers	6,360	1.8%	-0.05
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	6,050	1.7%	1.01
Office Clerks, General	5,910	1.7%	1.00
Registered Nurses	5,580	1.6%	0.04
General and Operations Managers	4,900	1.4%	0.20

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)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are profoundly shaping the nature of work. If implemented correctly, it can be a part of alleviating demographically driven workforce quantity shortages by freeing up workers to focus more on tasks that cannot be replaced by technology. The challenge is to make sure that the workforce is prepared to adapt as technologies adapt rapidly.

Ozaukee County is part of the WOW Workforce Development Area (WDA), which also includes Waukesha and Washington counties. The largest occupation in the WOW workforce development area is laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand, accounting for 2.6% of the area's employment. This occupation has an artificial intelligence exposure index of -0.78. For context, the occupation with the highest potential AI exposure is bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks, with an AI exposure index of 1.89.

Industry Employment Projections

	Industry	2022 Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Employment Change 2022-2032	% Change 2022-2032
Highest Percent Growth	Professional and Business Services	45,113	53,619	8,506	18.85%
Most Jobs Added	Professional and Business Services	45,113	53,619	8,506	18.85%
Highest Number Employed	Education and Health Services	75,231	83,211	7,980	10.61%
Lowest Percent Growth	Government	10,468	10,497	29	0.28%
Total	Total All Industries	381,505	418,494	36,989	9.70%

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

DWD conducts employment projections for Wisconsin's 11 WDAs every two years. Employment in WOW WDA is expected to increase by 36,989 (9.7%), compared to the state's growth rate of 7.1%. Goods producing industries are projected to grow by 7.0% while service providing industries are projected to grow by 11.0%.

In the WOW WDA, the professional and business services industry is projected to be the fastest-growing industry, growing at a rate of 18.9% from 2022 to 2032. It is also projected to add the most jobs.

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
Most Jobs Added	Business and Financial Operations	24,710	28,060	3,350	13.6%
Highest Percent Growth	Computer and Mathematical	11,423	13,717	2,294	20.1%
Highest Number Employed	Office and Administrative Support	45,140	45,728	588	1.3%
Lowest Percent Growth	Office and Administrative Support	45,140	45,728	588	1.3%
Total	Total, All	381,505	418,494	36,989	9.7%

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

In the Southeast WDA, computer and mathematical occupations is projected to be the fastest-growing occupational group, growing at a rate of 20.1% from 2022 to 2032. Occupations within this group will be important for the incorporation of artificial intelligence. Office and administrative support workers support occupations is projected to grow as the slowest rate. However, this occupational group does have a high need for replacements. Given the aging population, there will be occupations that have limited growth or even declining employment totals but still have a need for employees. This is largely driven by increasing retirements.

Aging Population

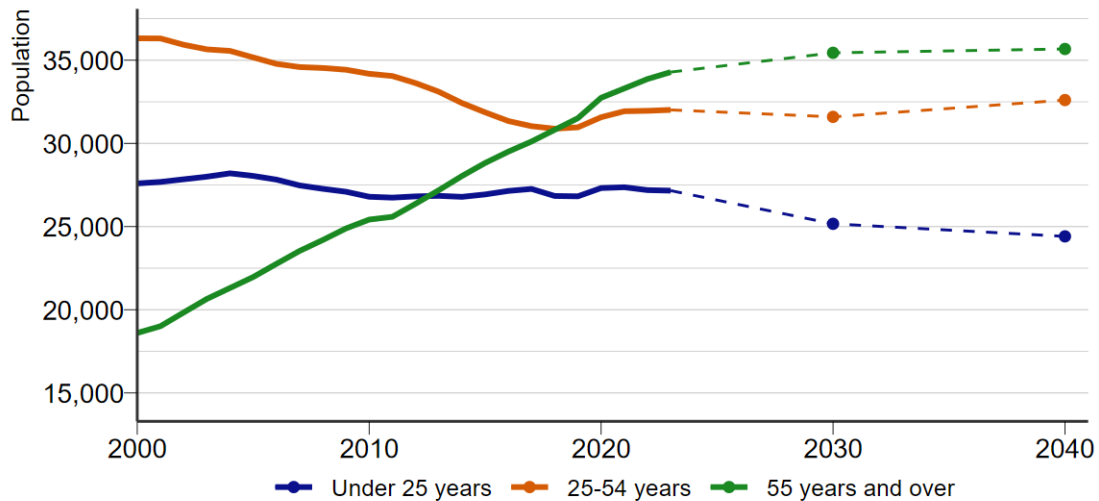


Figure 11: US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program and WI Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center.

Age demographics have been mentioned throughout this profile. The chart above displays movement in population by age group. The share of the population age 55 and older was 36.9% in 2023, growing from 22.5% in 2000. The population under 55 has declined over the same timeframe. This aging trend is expected to continue with the share of population 55 and older projected to reach 38.4% by 2040.

The selected age groups represent different stages of typical labor force participation. Participation increases rapidly starting from 16 to 24 years old. Residents in these age groups are less likely to be full-time since they're more likely to be enrolled in secondary or post-secondary schools. Those in the 25- to 54-year age group are considered to be in their prime working years. Participation starts to drop precipitously at 55 years old. This age group represents the tail end of the workforce participation as these residents can be expected to be nearing retirement if they haven't already exited the workforce.

Personal Income

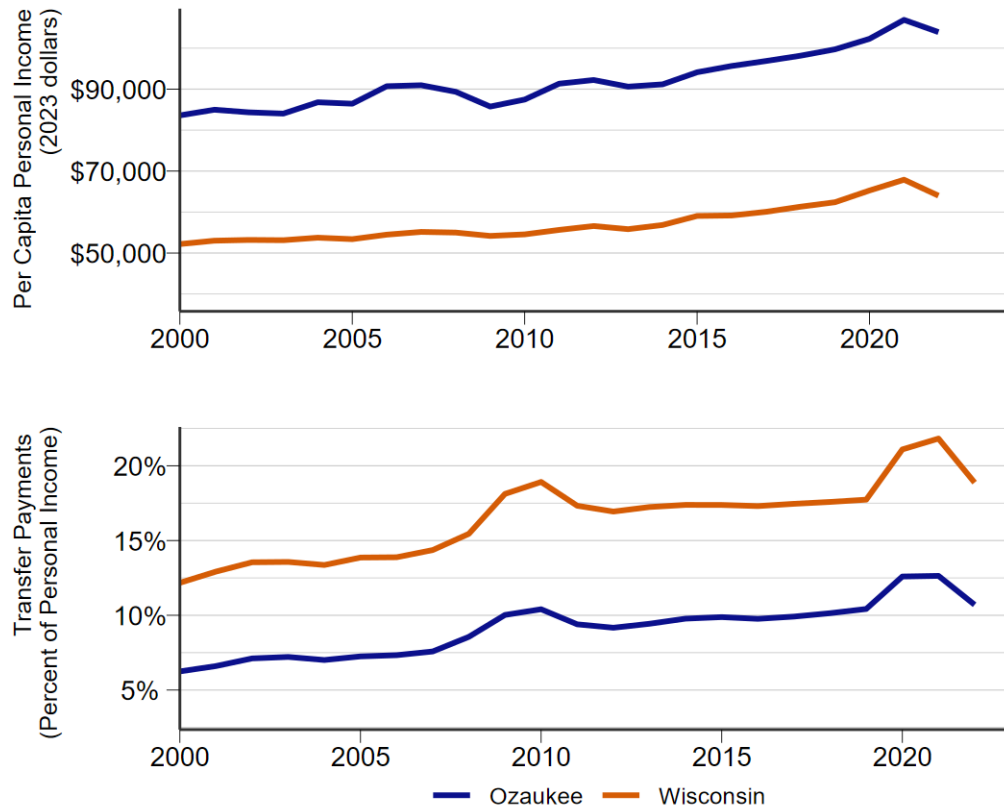


Figure 12: Source: United States Bureau of Economic Analysis.

i 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.

The per capita personal income in Ozaukee County was \$103,909 in 2022, compared to the statewide average of \$63,996. It ranks as the second highest among the Wisconsin's 72 counties. In total, 10.7% of that income came from transfer payments as opposed to earned income in 2022. This share is an increase from 6.2% in 2000. The two noticeable temporary rises in the share of transfer payments align with the Great Recession of the late 2000's and Covid era recession in 2020. Economic downturns usually put downward pressure on earned income sources such as wages and business income. At the same time, they trigger automatic stabilizers such as the Unemployment Insurance program. The long-term upward trend in the share of transfer payments is yet another reflection of the aging population since this component includes Social Security and other retirement income sources.

Workforce Pipeline

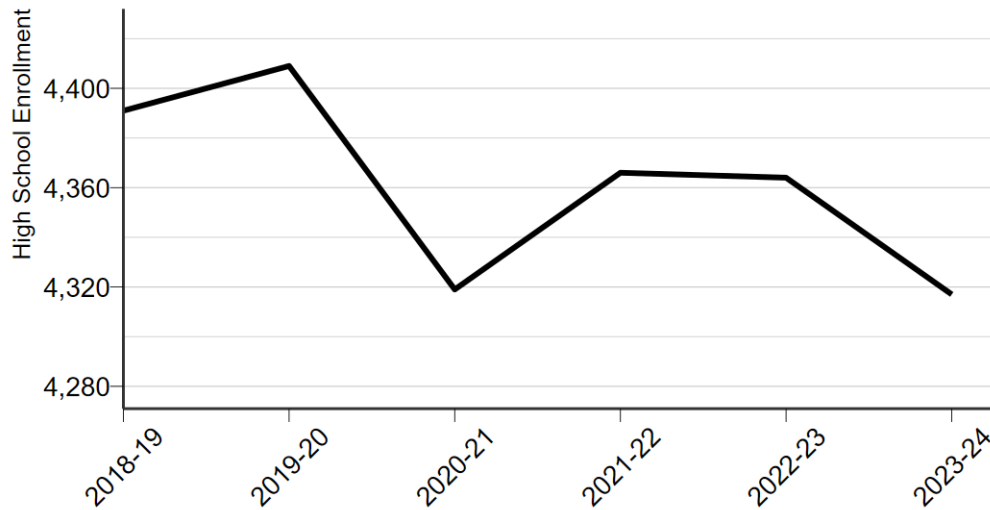


Figure 13: Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Education prepares the next generation of the labor force. As of the 2023-24 school year, 4,317 students were enrolled in grades 9-12. This includes public, private, and home-based schools. 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. Counts are determined by the reported enrollment of school district whose main office is located in that county.

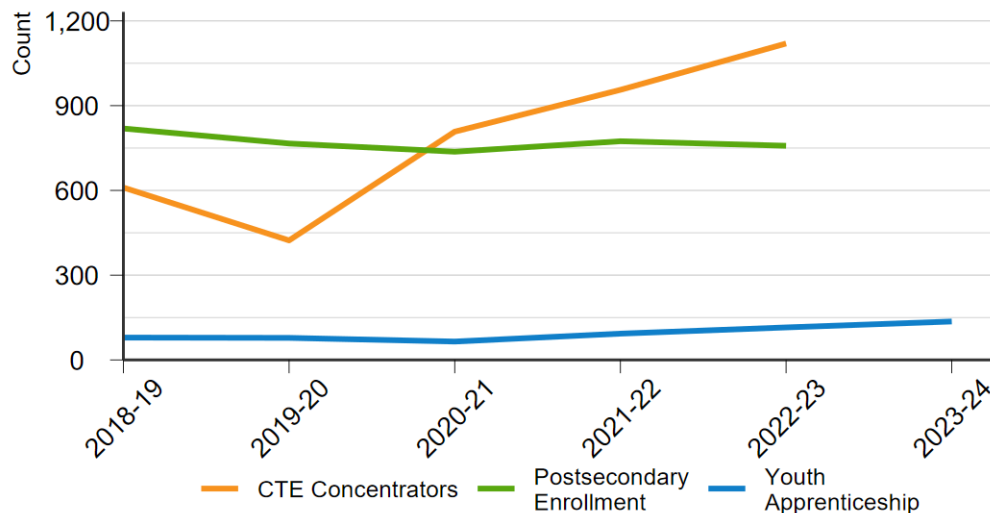


Figure 14: Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Department of Workforce Development.

Career and Technical Education

Of those attendees, 50.9% were concentrators in career and technical education (CTE), compared to 44.3% for the state during the 2022-23 school year. CTE participation shows efforts to improve career readiness among high school students. Business administration as the largest career clusters among CTE participants in the county.

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
Ozaukee	1,120	50.9%
Wisconsin	64,124	44.3%

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

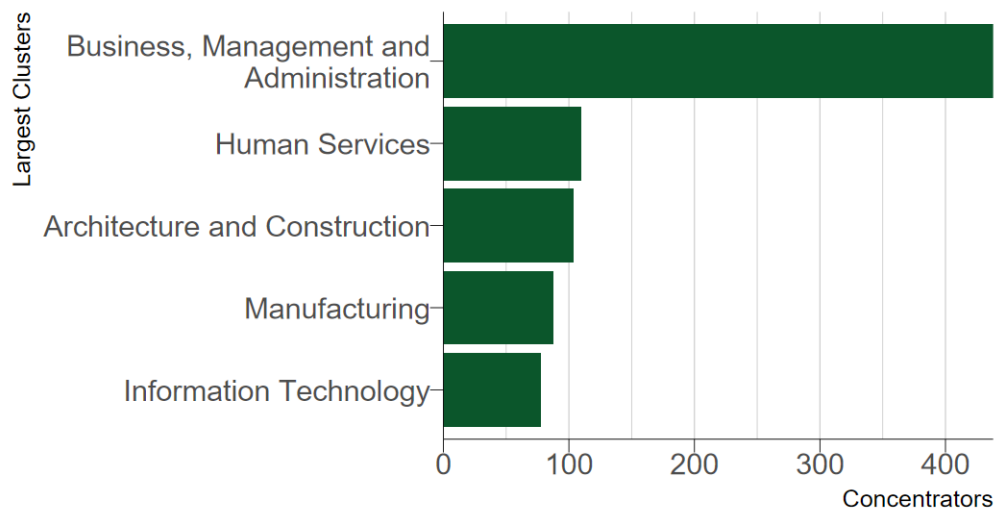


Figure 15: School year 2022-23. Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

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 66.0%, which is the highest rate among the state's 72 counties. This metric counts students from Waukesha County secondary schools that went on to postsecondary education, regardless of the location of the institution. While there is no guarantee that these students will return to the county, their ties to the area make them a potential source of skilled workers after they complete education and training programs.

i 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
Ozaukee	758	66.0%
Wisconsin	31,893	43.6%

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

Youth Apprenticeship

Youth apprenticeship prepares participants for the workforce through direct, hands-on work experience. There were 115 youth apprentices in Ozaukee County in the 2022-23 school year. This program can be expanded upon to further workforce readiness among students.

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
Ozaukee	115	5.2%
Wisconsin	8,222	5.7%

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