

Washburn 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.

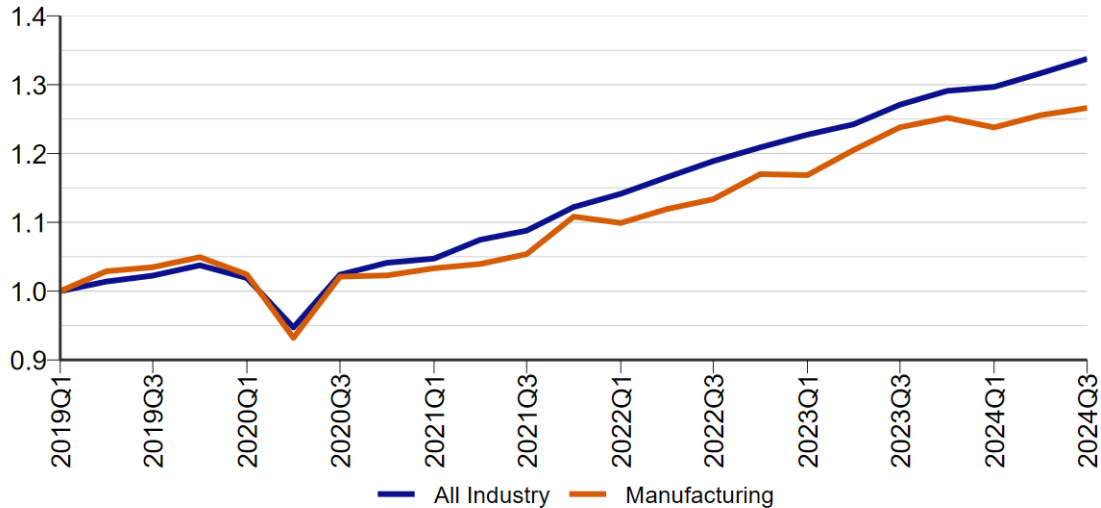


Figure 2: GDP growth index (2019Q1 = 100).

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.

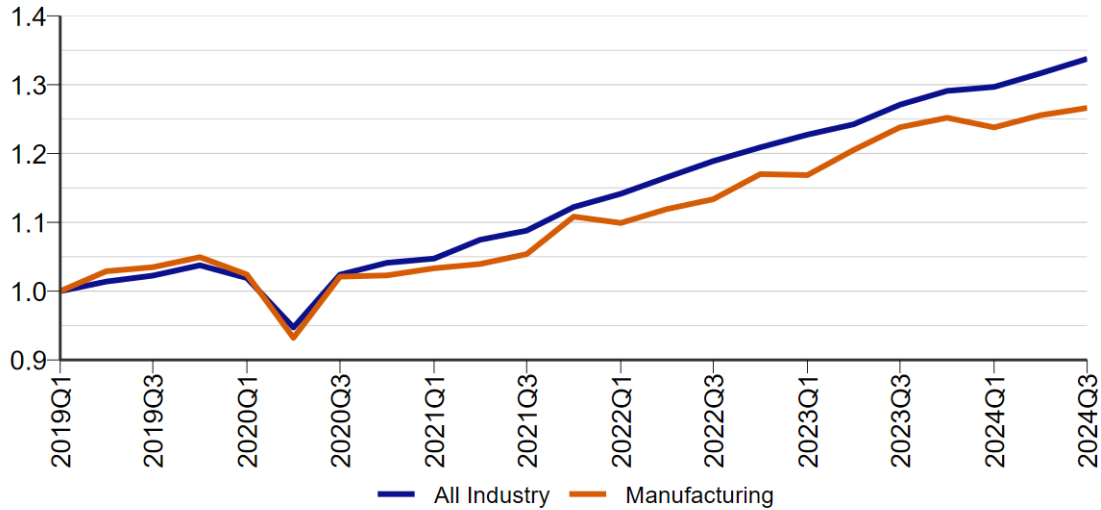


Figure 3: Wisconsin all industry v manufacturing growth (2019Q1 = 100).

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.

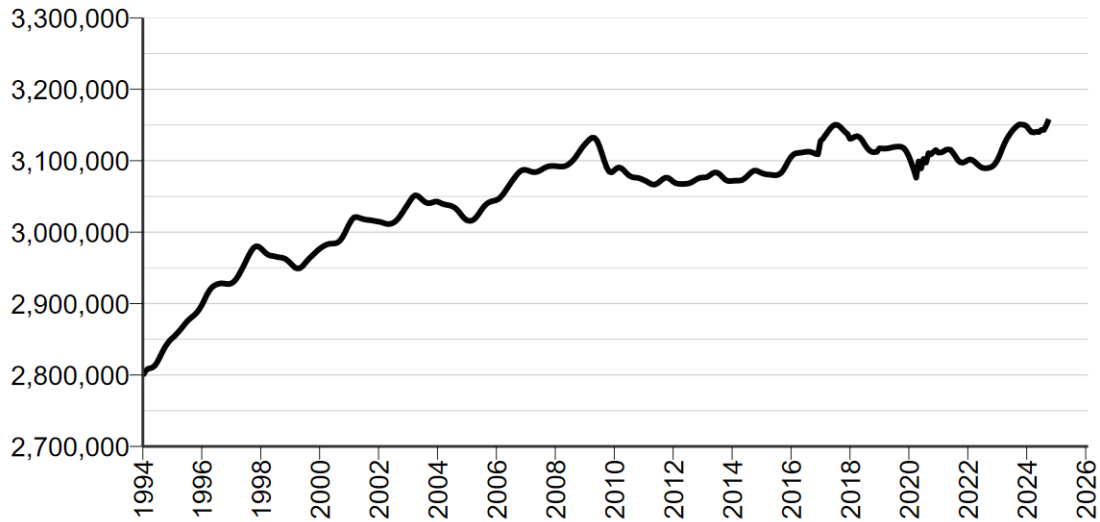


Figure 4: Wisconsin labor force.

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.

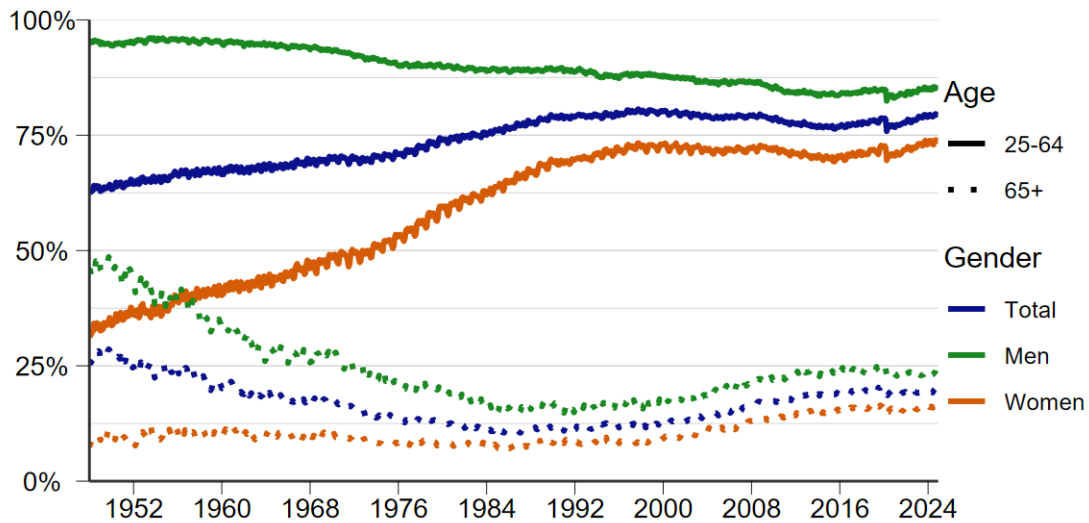


Figure 5: US labor force participation rate.

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.

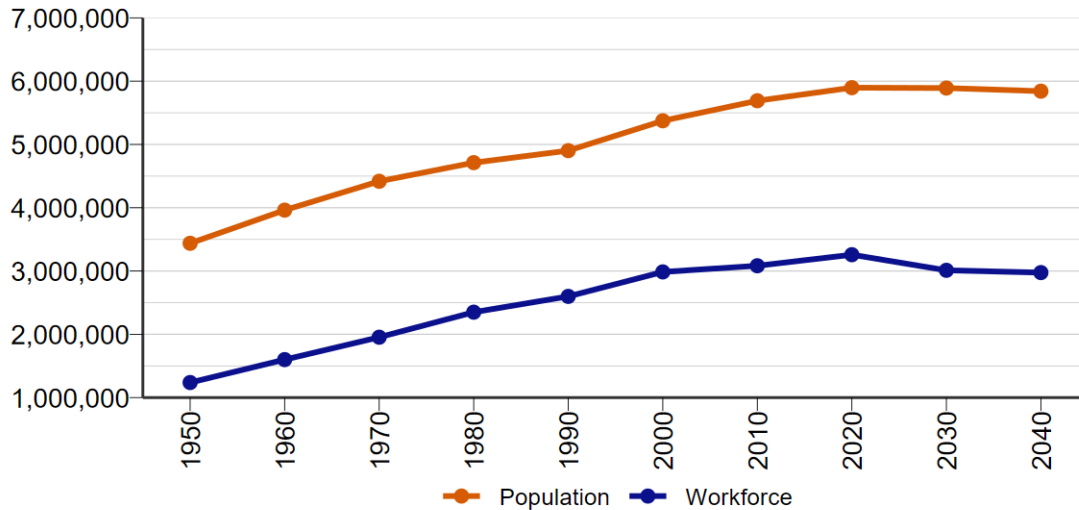


Figure 6: Wisconsin population and workforce projections.

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.

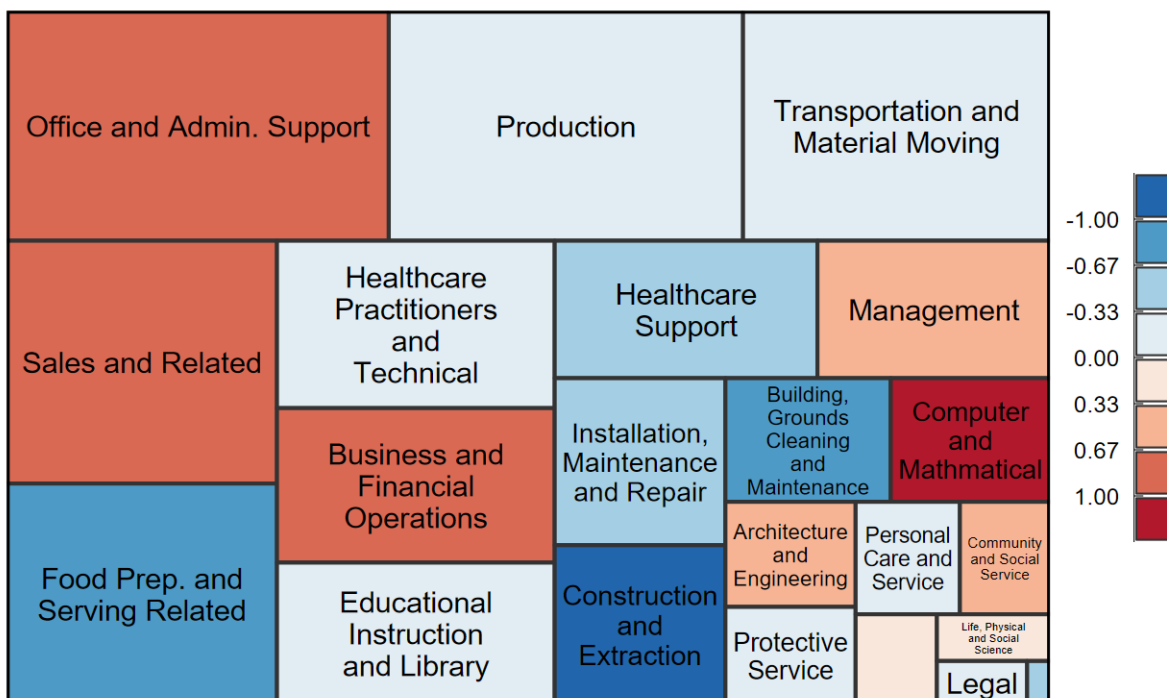


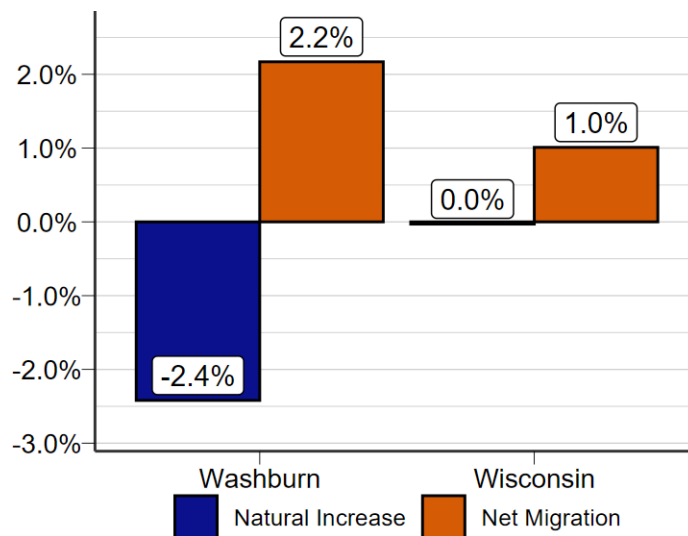
Figure 7: AI exposure per occupation group by number employed.

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
Spooner, City	2,477	2,430	-47	-1.9%
Shell Lake, City	1,371	1,365	-6	-0.4%
Evergreen, Town	1,191	1,200	9	0.8%
Bashaw, Town	1,079	1,075	-4	-0.4%
Minong, Town	984	994	10	1.0%
Trego, Town	908	918	10	1.1%
Spooner, Town	827	830	3	0.4%
Beaver Brook, Town	795	799	4	0.5%
Long Lake, Town	628	629	1	0.2%
Birchwood, Town	605	611	6	1.0%
Washburn, County	16,623	16,580	-43	-0.3%
Wisconsin, State	5,893,718	5,951,400	57,682	1.0%

Washburn County is the 59th most populous county in Wisconsin with 16,580 residents. It is also the state's 50th fastest-growing county. From 2020 to 2023, the population changed by 0.3%, compared to the 1.0% change in Wisconsin. The county saw its population peak in 2020 and the City of Spooner saw its highest population in 2010 at 2,682.



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.

The fastest-growing municipality in Washburn County is the Town of Trego, which added 10 people, for a 1.1% growth rate.

Washburn County's population growth in terms of natural increase was -2.4%, ranking 70th in the state. Net migration was 2.2%, ranking 11th in the state.

According to data gathered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, there were 111 births in Washburn County. It's fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15–44) in 2022 was 47.9, which rated 61st highest out of Wisconsin's 72 counties. In 2022, Wisconsin's fertility rate was 54.2 and

it was 56.0 in the United States. As a comparison, the rate for the county was 66.7, state's was 62.3 and the United States' was 64.7 in 2010. Washburn County's 0-5 age population in 2022 is 4.6% of the county's population, compared to Washburn County's 75 and older population, which is 10.7% of the county's population. In 2010, the 0-5 age population was 6.5%, and the 75 and older population was 9.3%. Washburn County's birth rate has been low for a long time. The county's number of births has decreased over time and it struggles to attract residents from outside the county. Because of this, the population will be lower and have a challenge rebounding as the baby boomers (currently 60 to 78) continue to grow older. .

Population Projections

	2020	2030	2040	2050	2020-2050 Population Change
Washburn	16,623	16,120	15,085	13,720	-17.5%
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	5,559	-191	-3.3%	100.0%
Education and Health Services	1,271	-145	-10.2%	22.9%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,101	-43	-3.8%	19.8%
Manufacturing	999	-35	-3.4%	18.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	649	-21	-3.1%	11.7%
Public Administration	612	16	2.7%	11.0%
Professional and Business Services	290	20	7.4%	5.2%
Construction	213	87	69.0%	3.8%
Financial Activities	191	4	2.1%	3.4%
Other Services	142	-31	-17.9%	2.6%
Natural Resources and Mining	75	-29	-27.9%	1.3%
Information	17	-13	-43.3%	0.3%

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

Washburn County employment lost 191 jobs (-3.3%) from 2018 to 2023. Average employment levels were at 5,559 jobs in 2023. The largest industry was education and health services, accounting for 22.9% of employment in the county in 2023. From 2018 to 2023, the fastest-growing industry was construction, adding 87 jobs for a 69.0% growth rate. Some of the largest employers in Washburn County are Link Snacks Inc, Spooner Health, and Schmitz's Economart. The Quarterly Workforce Indicators dataset includes age groups of workers by industries at the county level. The share of 65 and older workers in the Trade, transportation, and utilities industry was 12.9% in 2018 vs 14.9% in 2023. This increase suggests an increase in retirement in the near future. To maintain current production levels with a shrinking workforce, industries 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

Washburn County's monthly average unemployment rate in 2023 was 3.8%, compared to the state's rate of 3.0%. This ranks the county 56th in terms of the rate of unemployment in 2023. These rates were much lower than the all-time high rates achieved during the COVID-19 pandemic, which interrupted a long steady decline that began at the end of the Great Recession in 2010. Both Washburn County and the Wisconsin state reached their lowest unemployment rates on record in 2022, while the United States reached its lowest in 2023. Washburn County's unemployment rate has a higher degree of variability than does the state and nation. A larger 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.

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.

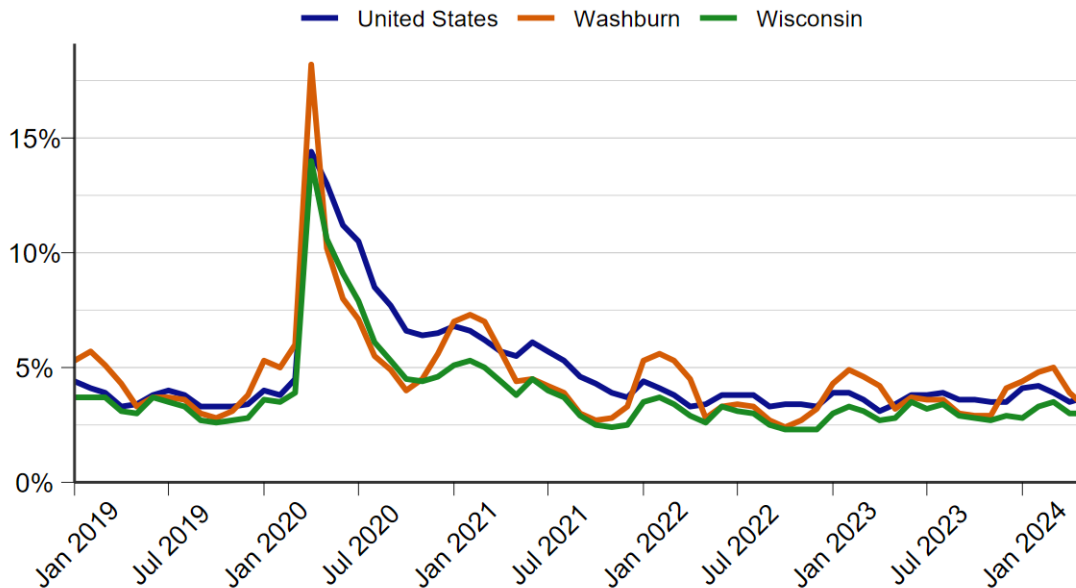


Figure 9: Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Labor Force Participation

Washburn County's labor force participation rate (LFPR) was 55.2%, ranking 61st in the state. In recent history the county's LFPR has been lower than the state's. Since Washburn County's recent high of 70.5% in 1997, the gap between the county and the state has widened to 10.1 percentage points, 65.3% for the state and 55.2% the county. The main reason for this divergence is the aging of the Washburn population. The LFPR includes the number of people 16 and older working or looking for work. Most workers retire in their 60's. In recent years, the baby boomers began to retire causing the LFPR to decrease dramatically. The share of the Washburn County population in 2002 that was 65 and older was 19%, in 2022 it was 28%.

Another way to look at this situation is through the Employment-Population Ratio (EMRATIO). The EMRATIO is the proportion of the civilian non-institutional population 16 years and over that is employed, doesn't count the people looking for a job. The larger the unemployment rate, the larger the difference between the two metrics. Washburn County's EMRATIO was 57.6% in 2002 declining to 53.4% in 2022.

The share of the population 65 and older was 28% in Washburn County, or 4,800 individuals. If the LFPR is to reverse its declining trend, many of these people will have to be recruited back into the labor force because the number of youth 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.

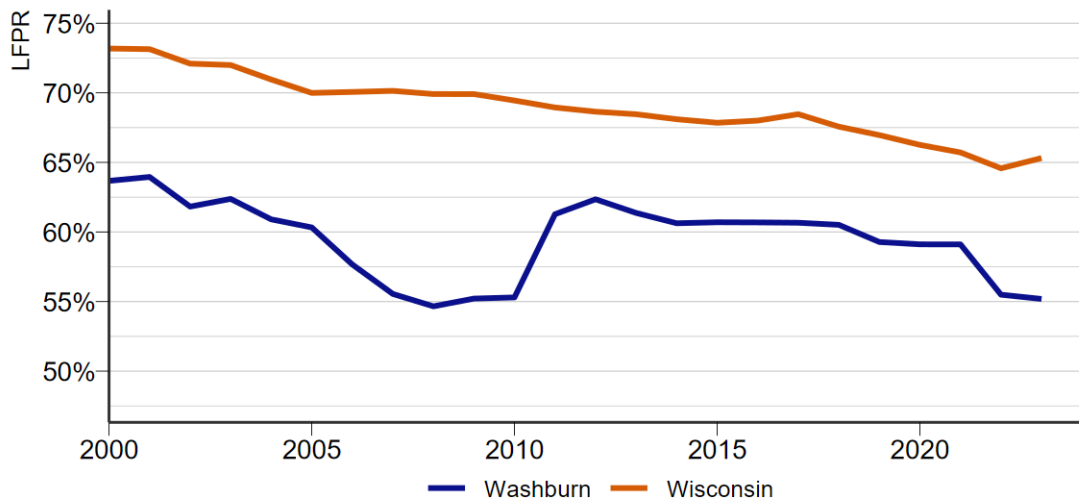


Figure 10: Source: WI Department of Workforce Development Office of Economic Advisors.

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. 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 1.6% of the Washburn 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 2.5% of the county's 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. Washburn county is part of the Northwest WDA, which also includes Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, and Taylor counties. Non-farm employment located within this WDA is expected to increase by 3,806 (5.1%), compared to the state's growth rate of 7.1%. In recent decades, Northwest WDA projected industry growth has been lower than the state because Northwest WDA's population growth has been lower than most of Wisconsin and the Northwest WDA population's 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 when you have an economy where the main limiting factor to 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. This growth rate in the construction industry is slightly higher than the statewide growth rate of 11.1%.

In the Northwest WDA, 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 Wisconsin projected grow rate for the self-employed 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.

In the Northwest WDA, architecture and engineering occupations are projected to be the fastest-growing occupation, 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 the Northwest WDA is transportation and material moving occupation at 11.7%, which is also projected to have the most jobs added.

Two useful things not in the occupation employment projections table 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 with 1,190 total openings. 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 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 Northwest WDA's projected employment growth rate of 5.1%.

When viewing the growth rate of employment based on the typical education required to perform an occupation, 62% of employment growth in the Northwest WDA is in occupations that typically require a high school degree or less. 38% typically require education beyond high school, with 19% typically requiring a bachelor's degree. The projected employment growth at the state level is in occupations that typically require higher levels of education than in the Northwest WDA. 46% of statewide projected employment growth is in occupations with typical education above a high school diploma, 29% requiring a bachelor's degree.

Aging Population

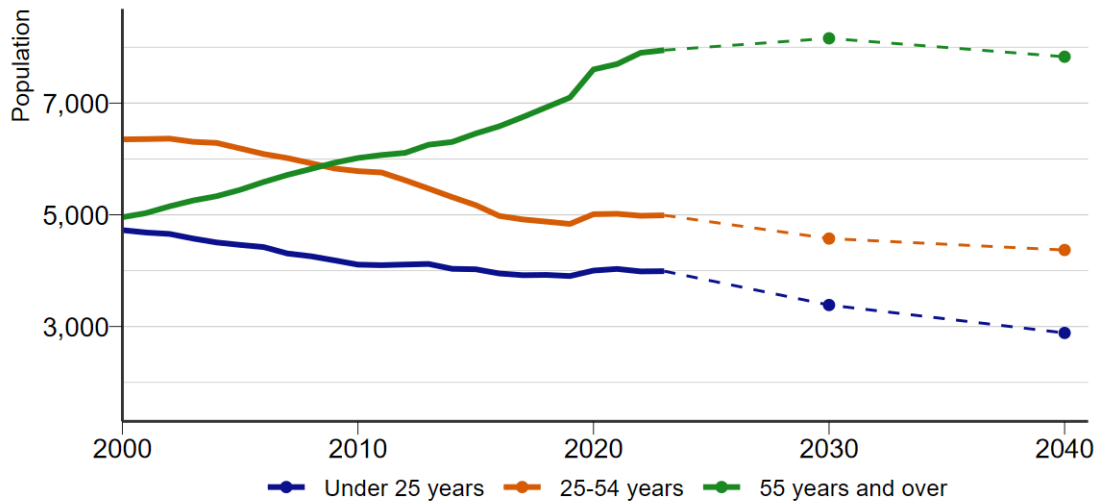


Figure 11: US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program and WI Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center.

The aging population within Washburn County is an issue not only in Washburn County, but most of Wisconsin. The above graph shows the change over time of three age groups, the green representing 55 years and over is growing steadily throughout the 2000's. This illustrates the aging baby boomers. The share of the population age 55 and older was 46.9% in 2023, growing from 39.5% in 2013 and 32.6% in 2003.

What is causing such a rapid acceleration in the 55 and over share of the total population is the negative growth of the other two age groups in Washburn County. The 25 to 54 age group has been declining until 2020 and has stabilized since. The share of the population age 25 to 54 was 29.5% in 2023, shrinking from 34.5% in 2013 and 39.1% in 2003. Ages 25 through 54 are known as the prime working years, the age group with the highest labor force participation rate. When the share of a community's workforce declines in this age group it makes it challenging to grow the economy in industries that require humans. The share of the population ages under 25 was 23.6% in 2023, shrinking from 26.0% in 2013 and 28.3% in 2003. The under 25 age group are those that will soon be replacing 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 stable while at the same time the 55 and over age group is still growing. From 2017 to 2022, the median age in Washburn County was 52.2, compared to Wisconsin's median age of 39.9, according to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Washburn County's median age ranked 8th oldest in Wisconsin's 72 counties.

Even though Washburn 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 in the 25-54 age group has on the growth of the area's workforce. 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. Not only is a lack of childcare bad for the current economy, but it also disincentivizes future parents from having children early and often, which reduces the number of young people in Washburn County.

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

The dashed lines on the aging population graph show the projected populations of the three work-force age groups. Two of the three are projected to decline in Washburn County when comparing the years 2020 and 2040. Under 25 is projected to decrease 970, 25-54 is projected to decrease 575, and 55 and over is projected to increase 7. Overall, the total population is projected to decrease by 1,538. This would be devastating for the county's economy. Companies, that are challenging to automate, would have a hard time finding employees. Demand for local goods and services will greatly decline, some examples would be groceries, haircuts, schools, energy consumption. The list could go on. The housing market would have an oversupply of structures, leading to many structures becoming abandoned and falling into disrepair. Local road maintenance would be more challenging due to less gasoline taxes being collected.

Personal Income

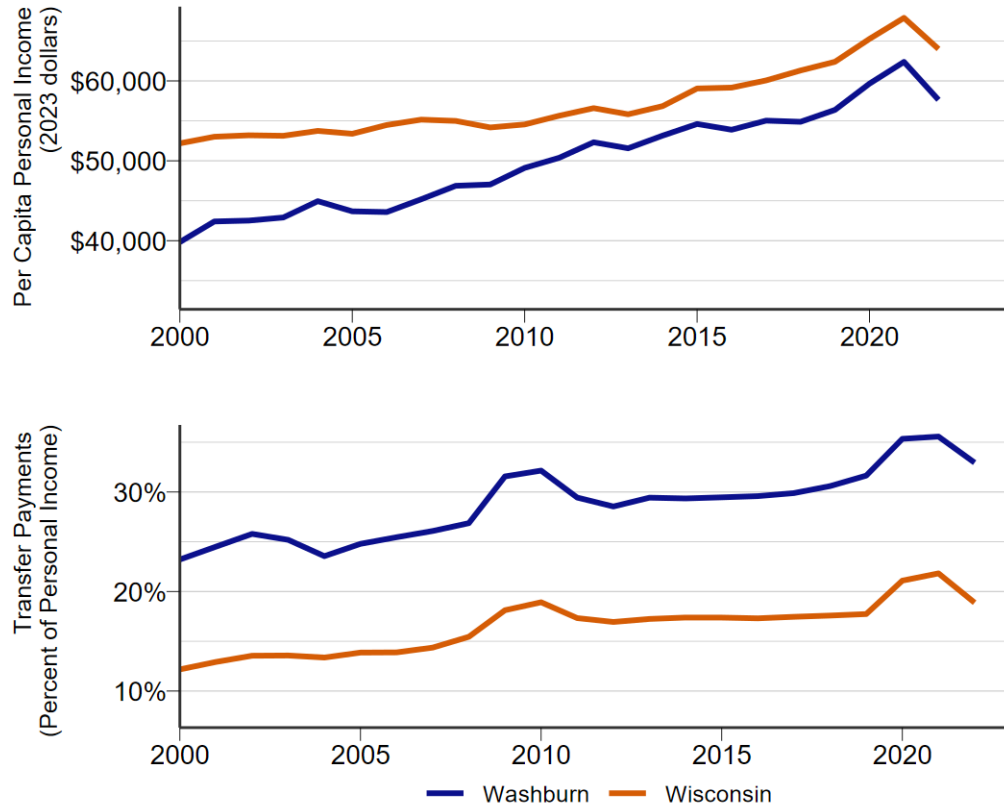


Figure 12: Source: United States Bureau of Economic Analysis.

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.

In the modern world 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 Washburn County was \$57,632 in 2022, compared to the statewide average of \$63,996. The gap between the statewide and Washburn County average per capita personal income has narrowed over the last 22 years. The gap in 2000 was \$12,358, in 2022 the gap was \$6,364.

In total, 32.9% of that income came from transfer payments as opposed to earned income in 2022.

Transfer payments as a share of personal income increase during economic depressions and recessions, 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 Washburn County grew faster than the share in Wisconsin, because the county's population has a larger share of older individuals than the statewide population. That means a larger share of Washburn 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 Washburn County the share increased 9.7 percentage points during the same time period.

Workforce Pipeline

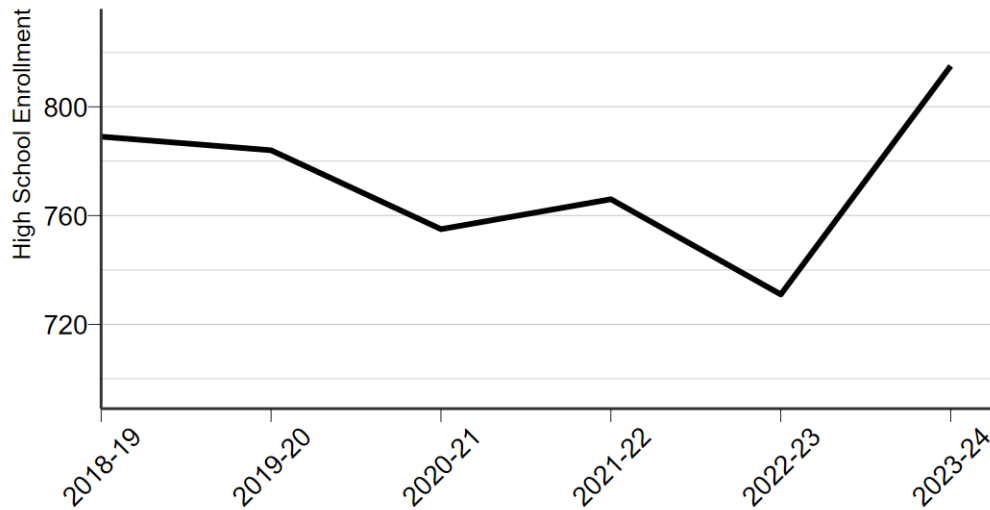


Figure 13: Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Education prepares the next generation of the labor force. As of the 2023-24 school year, 815 students were enrolled in grades 9-12. This includes public, private, and home-based schools. Another term for home-based schools is home schooling, which is classified differently than online schooling. Over the last five years, home based schooling increased 106% in Washburn County. It is now 9% of 9-12 grade students in Washburn 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. Counts are taken from the main office of the school districts located in the county.

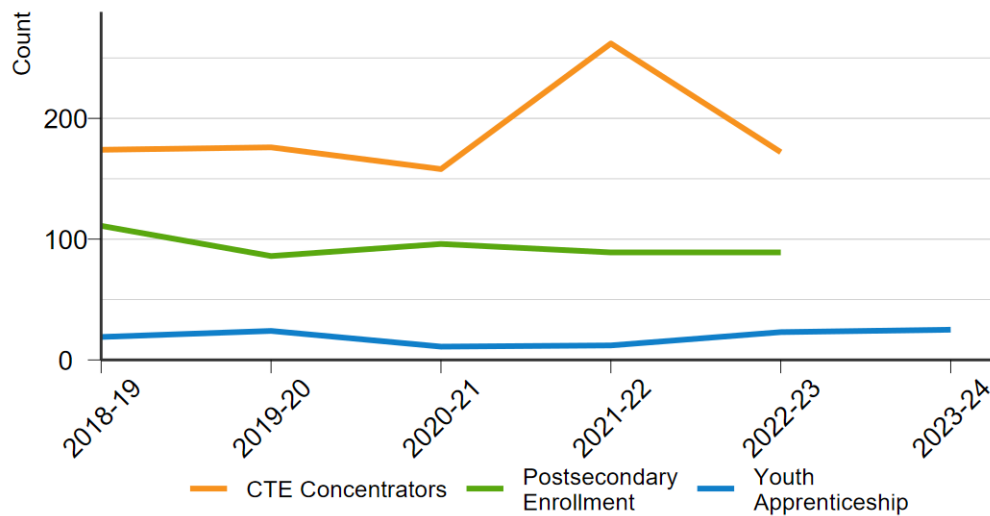


Figure 14: Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Department of Workforce Development.

Career and Technical Education

Of those attendees, 49.4% were concentrators in career and technical education (CTE), compared to 44.3% for the state during the 2022-23 school year. The number of Washburn County students receiving CTE has been trending upward over the last five years on record. During those five years the most popular CTE clusters in Washburn County was agriculture, food, and natural resources, with 347 students. The second most popular cluster was manufacturing with 203 students. The agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry employs 1.4% of jobs and the manufacturing industry employs 19.2% of jobs in Washburn County.

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
Washburn	172	49.4%
Wisconsin	64,124	44.3%

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

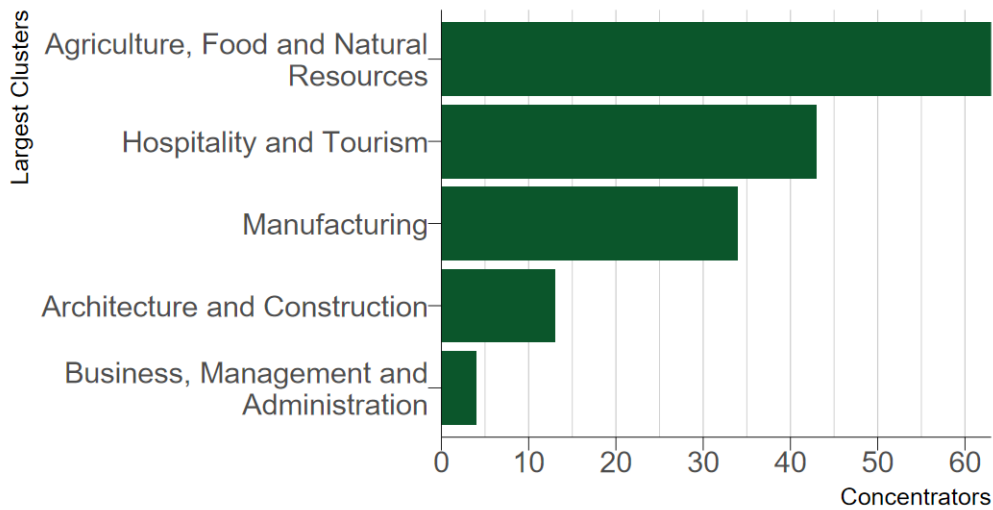


Figure 15: School year 2022-23. Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

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 49.4%. In Wisconsin, it was 43.6%. That 49.4% was an increase in the percentage enrolled five years prior when 47.0% of the 2018-2019 graduating class chose to pursue a postsecondary education. Students in Washburn County can stay close to home if they choose with Northwood Technical College Health Education Center in Shell Lake located in the county.

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
Washburn	89	49.4%
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 23 youth apprentices in Washburn County in the 2022-23 school year. The county has a higher rate of youth apprentices than Wisconsin. While historically, Northwest Wisconsin counties have struggled to find employers to participate in youth apprenticeship programs,

it is an important tool for counties because it connects 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. It can be a challenge for Washburn County businesses to attract employees from outside of Northwest Wisconsin, emphasizing the importance of retaining the young talent that is already in the community.

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
Washburn	23	6.6%
Wisconsin	8,222	5.7%

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