



LABOR MARKET INSIGHTS FOR DISPARITIES REDUCTION

Hennepin County Department of Workforce Development

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Executive Summary

This report serves as an addendum to the Workforce Development Disparities Reduction Framework elaborated by the Hennepin County Department of Workforce Development. The purpose of this report is to provide labor market guidance to Hennepin County's workforce development initiatives. This may include informing grant applications the County may submit, or possible priorities for use of available workforce funds. Although not comprehensive, this report aims to offer a snapshot of the current workforce landscape county-wide and the targeted local opportunities within a 14-zip code corridor extending west and north of downtown Minneapolis.

Findings County-Wide:

- **Health Care and Finance industries**, and their related core occupations, remain highly prominent in the county and poised for growth.
- **More than 80% of the companies based in Hennepin County employ less than 20 people.** Services for and collaboration with small businesses and entrepreneurs may be a priority group to engage in workforce development efforts countywide.
- **Workers aged 25-44** comprise the almost half of unemployed individuals in Hennepin County and a disproportionate number of those unemployed are white males.

Findings Along the Corridor:

- **With a high local concentration of people under 34** and a younger employed workforce than the county overall, engaging youth and younger workers in career pathways early and often is a key to a sustainable local workforce along the corridor.
- **Overrepresentation of Black, Indigenous and People of Color** in the local workforce—along with the misalignment between local talent educational attainment levels and the requirements of local jobs—presents a clear opportunity to design career pathways to increase upward career growth for underrepresented groups in a targeted way by sector.
- **A higher concentration of companies with 20 or more employees** locally than observed county-wide means that medium and large organizations may be a priority group to engage in workforce development efforts.
- **Significant volumes of outbound commuters** living in the central zip codes along the corridor represent both possible future riders of planned public transit opportunities to be expanded, and a local workforce to leverage.

Findings Among Gateway Careers:

- **Common middle-skill gateway careers are thinning out**, although more than 25,000 new workers in these occupations will be needed to replace outgoing talent in the corridor region alone by 2029.
- **Business, Office, Administrative, and Legal careers** are in high volume, concentration, and demand in the county and corridor specifically, despite flattening forecasts of total employment volumes. These continue to be the backbone of local Gateway Careers.
- **Manufacturing careers are greening and growing** in the county and corridor more locally. Variation in the geography of opportunity for specific jobs means that careful and targeted approaches in partnership with employers will make a difference.
- **Healthcare careers in nursing and support functions remain in high demand** county-wide, with the highest signals of demand among long-term care providers—despite a high local concentration of hospitals and specialty clinics. Health care and insurance program servicers also have high local needs for Support Specialists, Customer Service Representatives, and other public health support service roles.
- **Construction and Energy careers are less concentrated** in Hennepin County than other MSP Metro counties, but high volumes of both inbound and outbound commuters make these positions available with employers outside of the county still within reach for talent with reliable transportation.

Observations for Further Exploration:

- **Workforce development and career education alike may be facing an inflection point.** As the volume of Gateway Careers continues to erode and skills-based hiring practices become more prominent, traditional career navigation supports may no longer meet the needs of job-seekers seeking long-term career growth and stability. New research on career advising in postsecondary education points to holistic mentoring individuals toward personalized “fields of purpose” may help students tap into a “hidden job market;” similar strategies may serve individuals forging a new career path and seeking high-demand, living wage opportunities.
- **Occupation-specific workforce strategies are still important.** Despite a changing workforce landscape, developing strategies that are particular to individual occupations—and even job titles—in demand in a particular community ensures that the right training is offered and the right skills developed for local needs. Many Gateway Careers are in demand across a variety of sectors, or are becoming part of career

pathways that span multiple sectors. This suggests that perhaps not all workforce solutions will be sector-based. From this report, Hennepin County Workforce Development will have the tools to identify occupational needs by zip code with consideration to talent demographics, needs, and commute patterns. This information coupled with outcome data from recent programs, strong employer advisory groups, and program participant feedback may be used to guide future investments.

- **Employer-centric strategies remain vital to workforce program success.** Ensuring local employers have access to talent with the right skillsets is an essential strategy in business retention. Identifying the most significant employer “pain points” in recruitment and retention efforts can open the door to more strategic leadership from employers in program design, delivery, and successful employment outcomes.
- **Job quality can be measured and should be central to workforce program development.** This report only considers indicators of job quality found in job posting data as a measure of the “employee value proposition” that employers market to attract job applicants. Due to the imperfect nature of measuring job quality accurately in postings, this is not an appropriate measure for identifying quality jobs at large. However, measurement and evaluation of job quality is possible and dependent on employer buy-in. Workforce development entities may have a key role to play in promoting and improving job quality among local employers. Employer collaboratives and sector strategies would do well to track job quality measures well beyond livable wages and incentivize best practices among employer partners.
- **Expanding opportunities for underrepresented populations to access Gateway Careers in priority sectors, Green Jobs, and Essential Trades remains an important strategy for addressing talent shortages.** Occupational sorting persists across all sectors, with roles that pay higher average wages typically being predominantly held by male talent. Other disparities in employment may be signs of barriers to success for other demographics of talent and should be considered and addressed by both employers and local government agencies alike.

Introduction

Hennepin County has a vision for its residents to have equitable opportunities for long-term prosperity, well-being, and meaningful careers. To move toward this vision, the Hennepin County Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has a mission to develop equitable employment and training services that reduce residents' barriers to employment, meet employers' skill needs, and support community prosperity. Holding the values of 1) people first, 2) stewardship, 3) integrity, 4) equity, and 5) innovation, the County established a series of goals, objectives, and strategies to bring this mission to life. The five high-level goals and their corresponding objectives and strategies are outlined in the Hennepin County Department of Workforce Development Strategic Plan.¹

This report serves as an addendum to the Workforce Development Disparities Reduction Framework elaborated by the Hennepin County DWD in their Strategic Plan. The purpose of this report is to provide labor market guidance for Hennepin County's workforce development initiatives. This may include informing grant applications the County may submit or informing how best to use available funds (such as designing RFPs, identifying partners, or establishing strategic areas of focus in the labor market for a variety of internal efforts).

The contents of this report support the following goals:

- **Goal 3: Employer Needs:** Ensure employers' needs for a talented, diverse workforce are met.
 - The DWD Strategic Plan currently focuses on the share of employed program exits that are working in priority sectors (3.1.1), defined as the top ten NAICS industries with the highest projected job growth in the metropolitan region. This report provides a more refined definition of roles to a detailed 5- and 6-digit SOC level, as well as job titles where possible.
 - The DWD Strategic Plan recognizes the need to collect labor market insights for employment counselors to better understand the high-demand skills, experiences, and qualifications in the region, as well as the specific occupations in demand, wage rates, and employers hiring.

¹ 2023-2028, last updated May 22, 2024.

- **Goal 4: Green-Ready Careers:** Increase the size and diversity of the green-ready career workforce.
 - The DWD Strategic Plan specifically identifies Green-Ready Careers programs among their partner organizations as well as Green-Ready Occupations (O*NET Green Occupations). Metrics 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 require detailed occupation-level data on demand for green occupations from traditional LMI and job posting sources.
 - The DWD Strategic Plan acknowledges the needs for resources and materials to be developed highlighting green industry opportunities for multiple audiences, including quantitative data on the green industry's outlook, opportunities, economic conditions, wages, career advancement opportunities, training needs, and top regional employers. This report aims to support these efforts with focused and actionable insights on green occupational demand.

Approach

In order to elevate the workforce development priorities by sector and address the needs identified in the DWD Strategic Plan Goals 3 and 4, RealTime Talent consulted with Hennepin County to establish definitions for promising occupations for program development and client referrals. Through a series of working sessions and interviews, RealTime Talent identified the following specific needs:

- An overview of the high-level industry and occupational demand for talent county-wide, including five-year growth and total demand forecasts (2024Q4-2029Q4) and historical trends.
- Identification of Gateway Careers in Hennepin County, which are **(1)** low-barrier (requiring no more than a two-year postsecondary degree for entry-level talent), **(2)** in-demand, and **(3)** pay a livable-wage.
- Prioritization of Gateway Careers that are **(1)** aligned to priority sectors including **(a)** green jobs, **(b)** essential line construction jobs, and **(c)** high-demand clusters county-wide, and **(2)** show evidence of being “good jobs.”
- Deeper place-based context of the unique labor market opportunities for talent residing or working along the corridor region located to the eastern edge of Hennepin County.

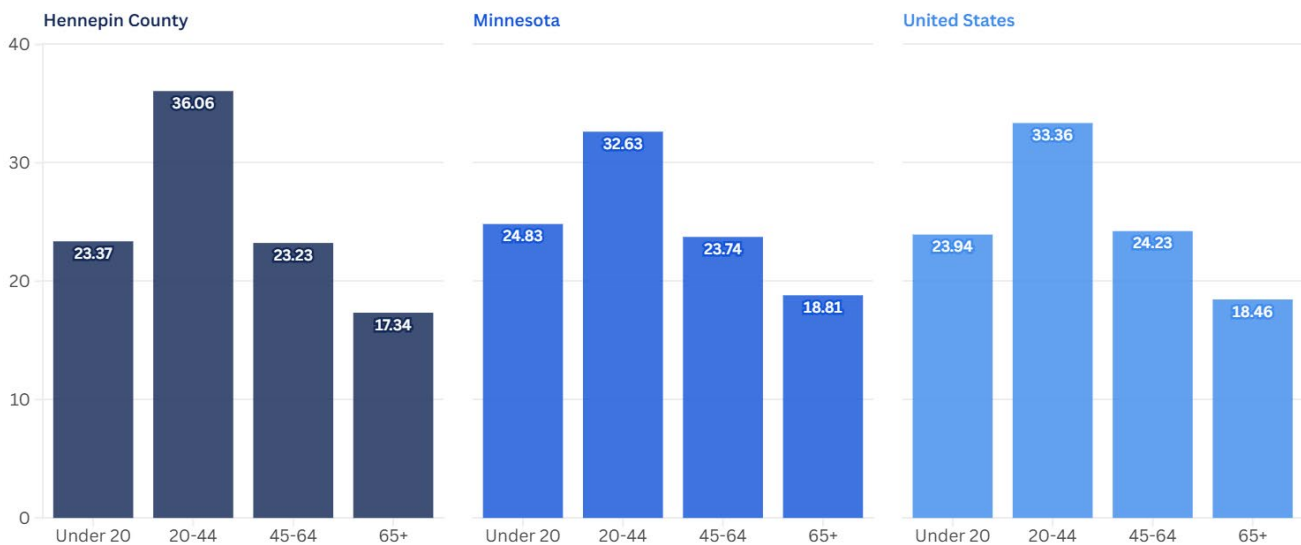
More detailed definitions and methodology for the criteria above can be found in the Appendix of this report.

Hennepin County Labor Market Overview

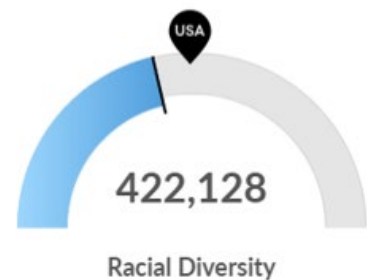
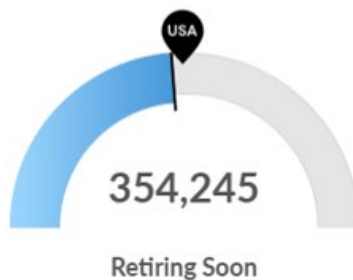
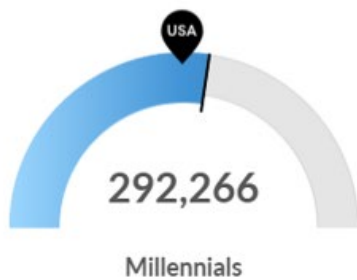
Population Characteristics

Hennepin County has a population of close to 1.25 million people. The population has been declining over the past five years (-0.9%) and is also projected to decline by almost 25,000 (-2.0%) in the next five years. Hennepin County is home to a slightly younger population than both the state and the nation overall. There are more people in Hennepin County who are between 25-44 (+3%) than there are in either Minnesota or the nation. While there are slightly fewer people who are under 20 in Hennepin County as compared to the state (-1%) and nation (-0.5%), there are also fewer people who are over 45 (-2.5%). As seen by dials below, Hennepin County also has fewer people on the verge of retiring and less overall diversity as compared to the nation.²

Share of Hennepin County Population by Age Group



Source: Lightcast 2025Q2 Dataset Population Demographic Table

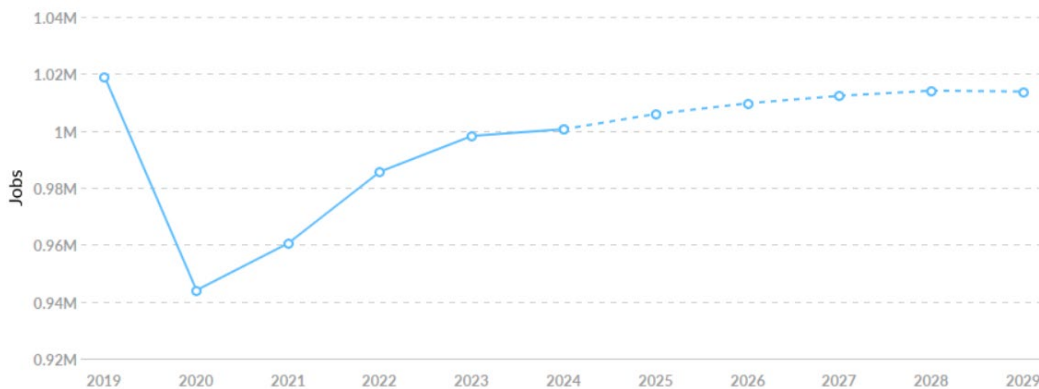


² Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset. Population data based on the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2019-2023 from the US Census Bureau.

Employment Characteristics

Employment in Hennepin County was measured at just over one million people in 2024, down by about 20,000 workers (-1.8%) since 2019. In contrast, nationally, employment grew 4.1% during the same timeframe.³ Estimates for 2025 show moderate growth in total employment county-wide by about 6,000 workers, and employment in Hennepin County is projected to grow by about 13,000 jobs by 2029.

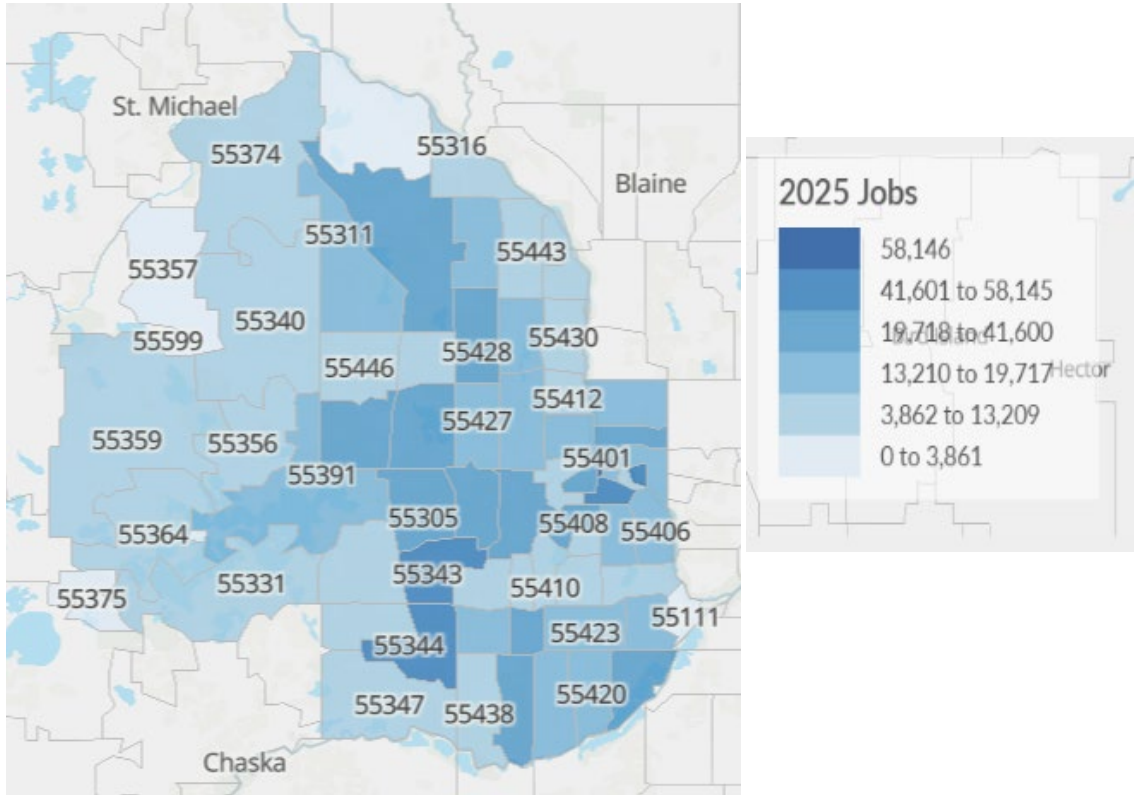
Forecasted Baseline Employment Change in Hennepin County through 2029



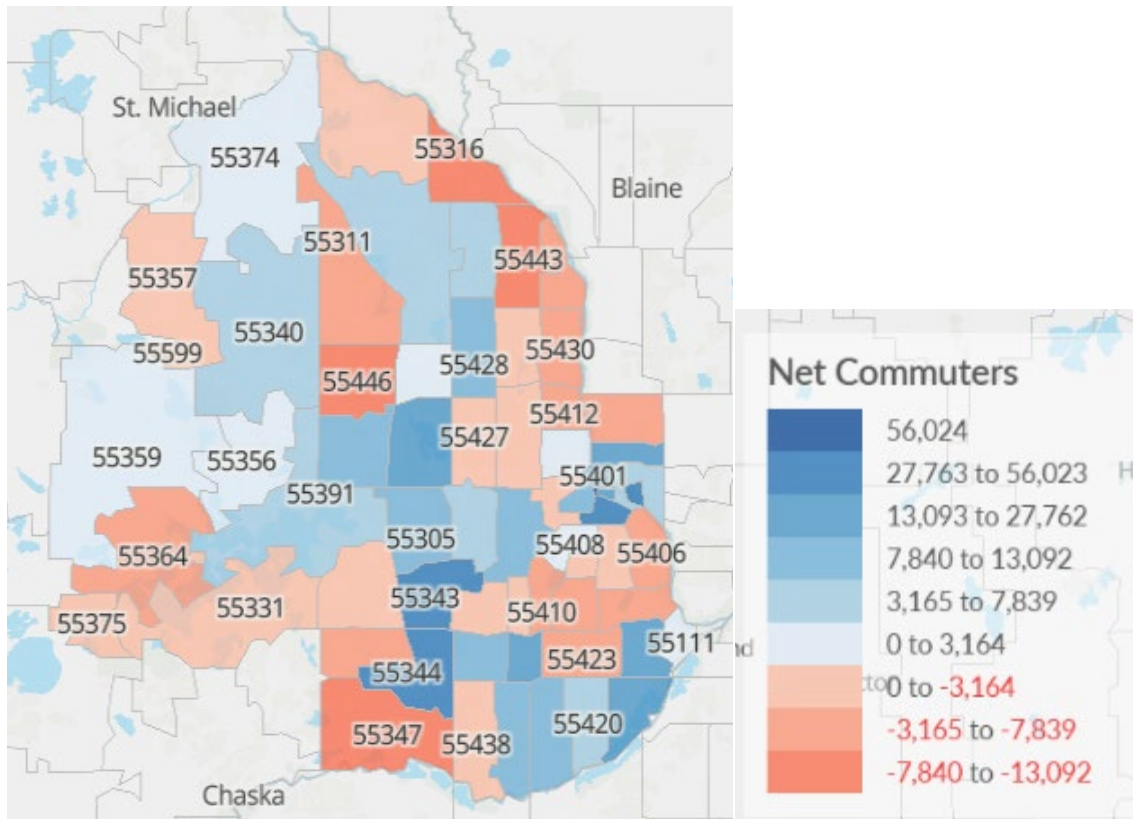
The maps below show the employment concentration on the top and the net commuting patterns on the bottom by zip code. Areas of high concentration are darker blue and roughly correspond with zip codes that have a high volume of in-bound commuters, shown in blue on the lower map. Similarly, areas with a less intense concentration of employment also roughly correspond to a negative net commuting pattern, shown with red shading in the lower map. A total of 360,212 people commute into Hennepin County for work from outside the county, and 83.5% of the resident workforce are also employed in Hennepin County. Overall, the county has more inbound commuters than outbound (237,940 net positive inbound commuters).

³ Unless otherwise noted, all population and labor market statistics in this section were cultivated from the 2025Q2 dataset in Lightcast accessed June and July 2025. Employment and occupation data are inclusive of both covered and self-employment data, based in Bureau of Labor Statistics and US Census Bureau sources, modeled forward to the second quarter of 2025.

Hennepin County Employment by Zip Code, 2024-2025



Hennepin County Net Commuting by Zip Code, 2024-2025



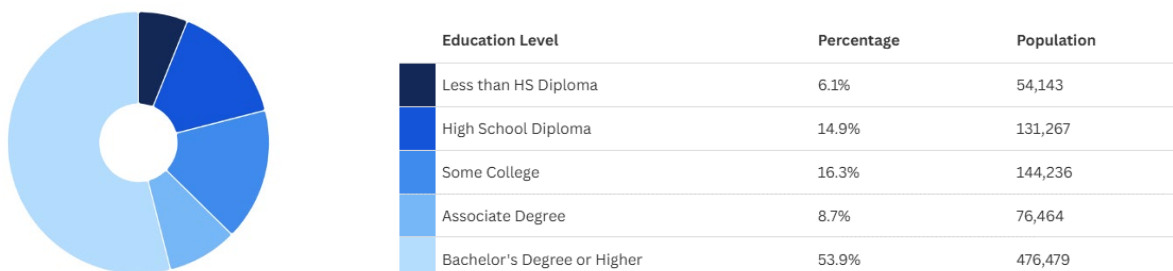
Labor Force Characteristics

Although Hennepin County saw a contraction of employment through the years impacted by the pandemic from 2019 through 2024, labor force participation decreased only slightly in line with decreasing volume of total jobs, from 71.1% to 70.8% between 2019 and 2024. Meanwhile, unemployment in Hennepin County varies by age, gender, and race. As of May 2025, 3.2% of the labor force was unemployed in Hennepin County (up from 2.8% in April), which matched the state (3.2%) but was lower than the national rate (4.0%). People between 25 and 44 years of age comprised approximately half of the unemployed population (49.7%), while those under 25 made up only 7.0% of unemployed persons. Males made up the majority of the unemployed, comprising 70.9% of the total. Similarly, white residents made up 78.5% of the unemployed. Hennepin County residents have a significantly higher rate of educational attainment at the bachelor’s degree level as compared to the national rate (+12.9%) but have a slightly lower rate at the associate degree level (-0.02%). Overall, more residents have attained at least a bachelor’s degree (53.9%) than all other levels combined (46.1%).⁴

Hennepin County Labor Force Participation



Hennepin County Educational Attainment, Total Population

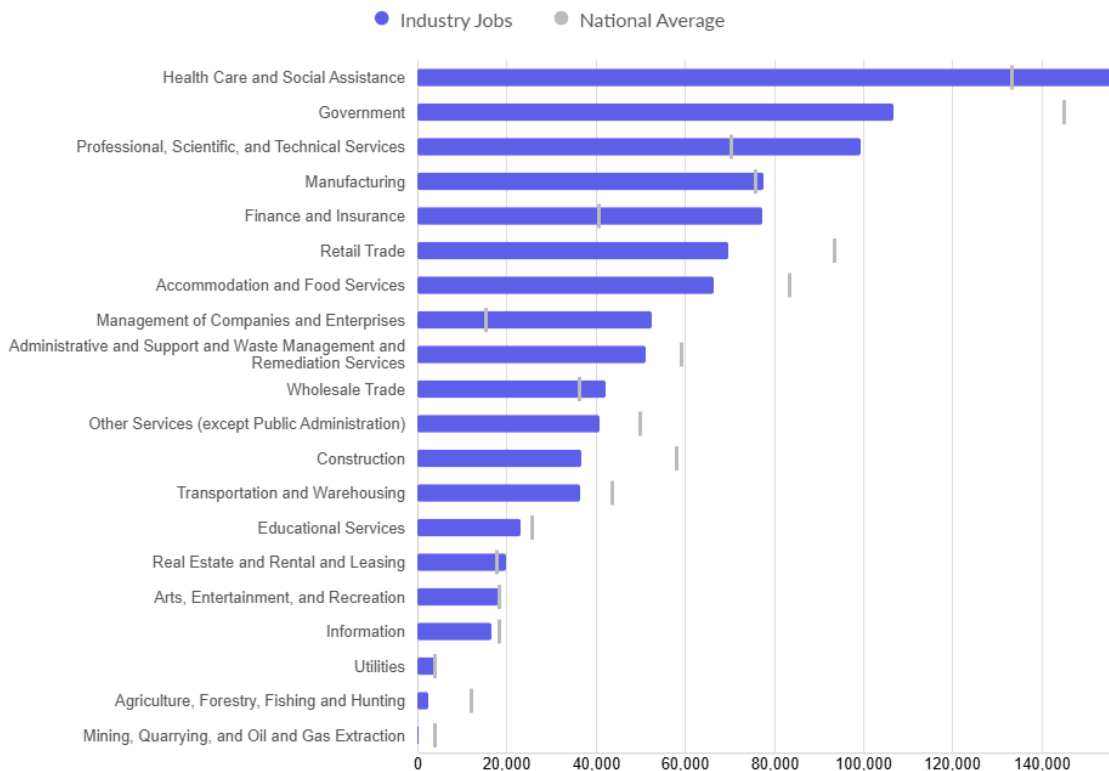


⁴ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset. Population data based on the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2019-2023 from the US Census Bureau.

Industries

Health Care and Social Assistance is not only the industry with the largest number of people employed in Hennepin County, but also the top growing industry, adding more than 10,000 jobs from 2019-2024. Two other industries employ close to 100,000 or more workers: 1) Government and 2) Professional, Scientific and Technical Assistance. As seen below, six of the top ten industries in the region also employ more talent than the national average.⁵

Industry Employment and Concentration in Hennepin County

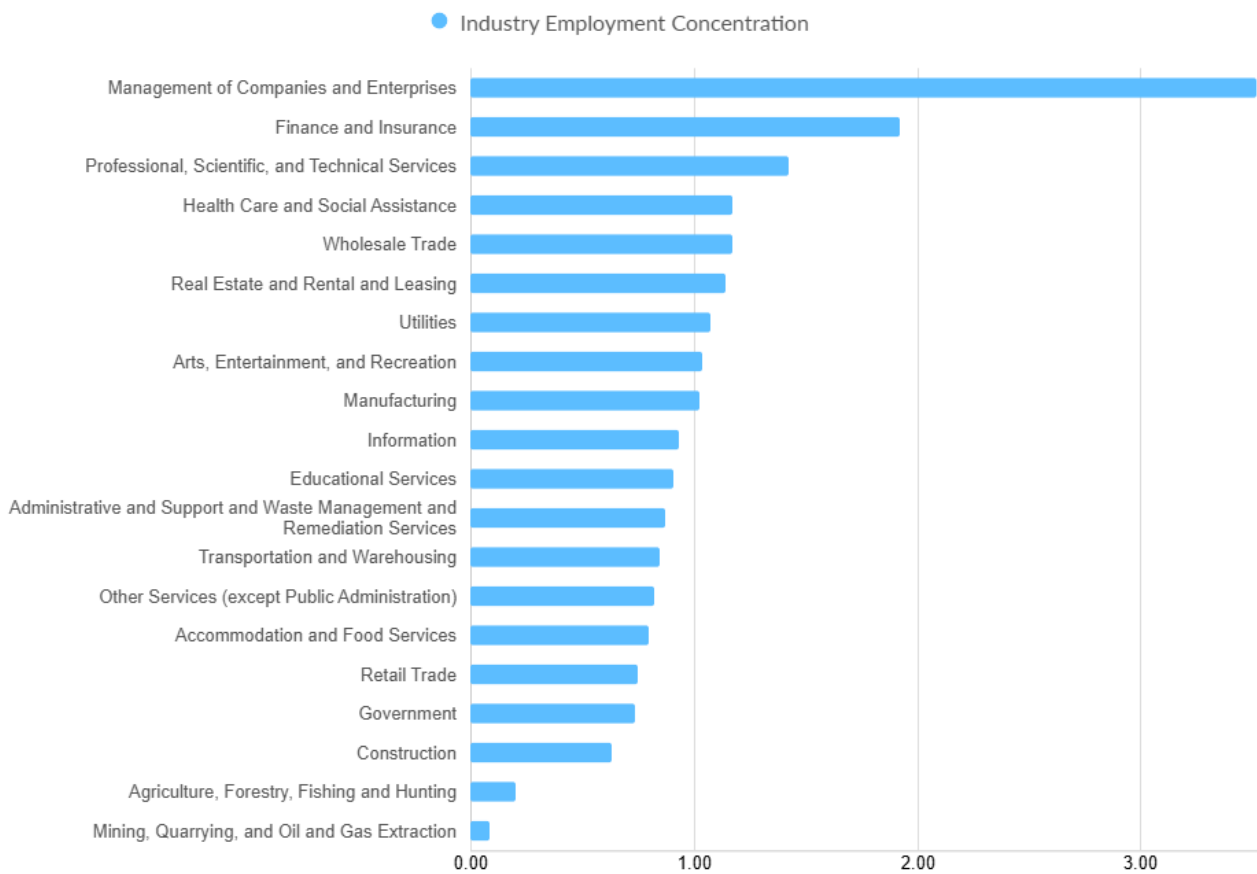


⁵ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

Industry Concentration

The concentration of an industry in a community is one indicator of its importance for the local economy and job market. Hennepin County has nine industries with a higher concentration of employment locally than in areas of similar size and population.⁶ The three most highly concentrated industries in Hennepin County have local concentrations above 1.25: Management of Companies and Enterprises (LQ, 3.52), Finance and Insurance (LQ, 1.92), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (LQ, 1.42). Health Care and Social Assistance is also highly concentrated with a local concentration of 1.17 and Wholesale Trade rounds out the top five (LQ, 1.17).⁷

Top Industry Employment Concentration in Hennepin County



⁶A local concentration (formally known as a location quotient, or LQ) above 1.0 indicates industries that are more highly concentrated locally than the national average.

⁷ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

Gross Regional Product (GRP) and Earnings Per Worker

The top five industries in Hennepin County in terms of GRP brought in more than \$100 billion (56% of total GRP) in 2024. Finance and Insurance (\$32.71B) and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (\$22.2B) were the highest grossing industries followed by Manufacturing (\$16.86B) Healthcare and Social Assistance (\$14.6B) and Wholesale Trade (\$14.6B). Although the Utilities and Mining industries contributed less to total GRP in the county, they top the charts in terms of earnings per worker (\$200,000+). Finance and Insurance (\$183,870), Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$165,508), and Information (\$149,534) round out the top five industries with the highest earnings per worker.⁸

Industry Employment Concentration and Earnings Per Worker in Hennepin County

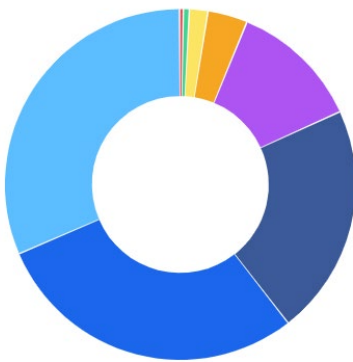
Industry	Employment Concentration (LQ)	Earnings Per Worker (Thousands)	GRP Volume (Billions)
Finance and Insurance	1.92	\$183,870	\$32.7
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1.42	\$146,540	\$22.2
Manufacturing	1.03	\$115,646	\$16.9
Health Care and Social Assistance	1.17	\$81,100	\$14.6
Wholesale Trade	1.17	\$134,883	\$14.6
Government	0.74	\$96,717	\$11.9
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3.52	\$165,508	\$9.9
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.14	\$90,596	\$9.6
Information	0.93	\$149,534	\$8.1
Retail Trade	0.75	\$55,380	\$7.8

⁸ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

Business Characteristics

Hennepin County has more than 141,000 companies, 14,685 of which posted jobs locally in the past 12 months.⁹ Businesses located in Hennepin County vary in size, with the bulk of companies (82%, or 54,270 companies) employing fewer than 20 people. An additional 17.4% of companies employ between 20 and 249 employees. Large companies of more than 250 employees make up less than 1.0% of the total volume in the county.¹⁰

Hennepin County Business Characteristics



	Percentage	Business Count
1 to 4 employees	31.4%	20,846
5 to 9 employees	29.1%	19,304
10 to 19 employees	21.3%	14,120
20 to 49 employees	12.0%	7,969
50 to 99 employees	3.7%	2,431
100 to 249 employees	1.7%	1,133
250 to 499 employees	0.5%	361
500+ employees	0.4%	233

⁹ Employer Counts and business size are from Databaseusa.com via Lightcast. RealTime Talent does not endorse or warrant its accuracy or consistency with job posting or other employer database sources.

¹⁰ Lightcast 2025Q2. Database USA, 2024 Firms.

Occupations

Office and Administrative Support Occupations comprise nearly 12% of all jobs in Hennepin County as of 2024. This occupation group also has a high projected 2029 employment concentration of 1.07. Although this occupation group is projected to decline by 3% or 4,000 jobs over the next four years, it is still projected to make up 11.5% of the total jobs in 2029. Business and Financial Operations Occupations have the second highest volume of current and future job demand, with nearly 100,000 local jobs held and more highly concentrated in the county than observed nationwide (LQ 1.47). In 2024, nearly one in ten jobs in Hennepin County was in Business and Financial Operations roles. This occupation group has been growing, adding roughly 4,000 local jobs since 2021 and projected to add another 1,000 by 2029. The chart below outlines the top twelve occupation groupings in Hennepin County by projected 2029 employment concentration.¹¹

Employment by Occupation Grouping in Hennepin County

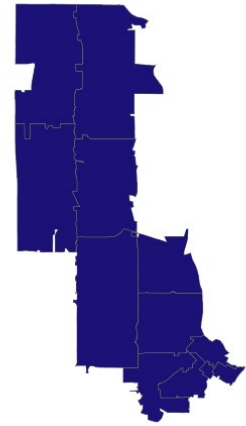
SOC	Occupation	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 - 2029 Change	Forecasted Growth	2029 Employment Concentration	Median Annual Earnings
13	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	98,165	99,298	1,133	1%	1.47	\$91,213.30
15	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	47,901	48,667	766	2%	1.46	\$112,278.89
17	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	22,258	22,943	686	3%	1.42	\$93,399.99
23	Legal Occupations	11,746	11,535	-211	-2%	1.35	\$110,231.02
31	Healthcare Support Occupations	60,457	66,654	6,197	10%	1.3	\$39,967.59
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	11,275	11,746	470	4%	1.19	\$88,536.69
21	Community and Social Service Occupations	20,529	21,824	1,295	6%	1.14	\$63,914.85
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	20,591	20,616	25	0%	1.1	\$61,972.47
11	Management Occupations	82,984	85,084	2,100	3%	1.09	\$133,117.71
43	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	121,337	117,206	-4131	-3%	1.07	\$54,269.94
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	58,745	61,371	2,627	4%	1.02	\$103,573.90
51	Production Occupations	52,541	51,880	-661	-1%	1	\$51,007.84
25	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	50,615	52,351	1,736	3%	0.92	\$61,043.19
41	Sales and Related Occupations	78,899	75,470	-3430	-4%	0.9	\$50,127.40

¹¹ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

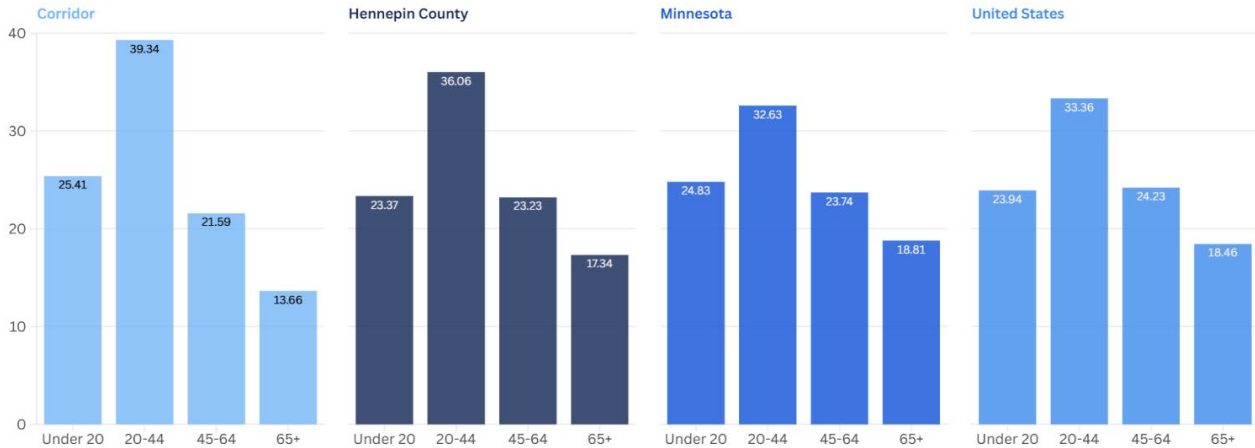
Along the Corridor

Population Characteristics

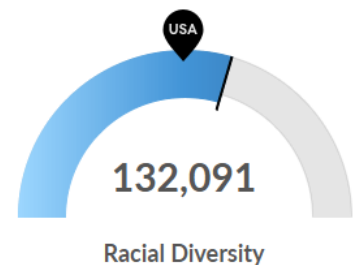
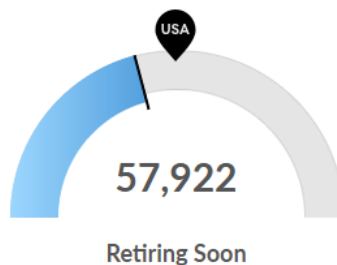
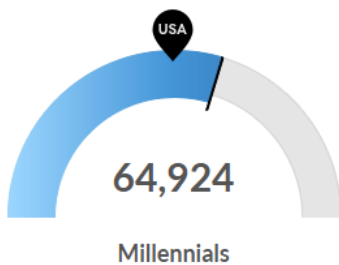
The Hennepin County corridor, comprised of fourteen zip codes located along the eastern side of the county, has a total population of 245,618 people of all ages as of 2025, which is just under 20% of the total population for the county (1.25 million). Population in this part of the county has been increasing slightly (+0.7%) since 2019 but is projected to decline (-0.3%) over the next five years. There are more people in this section of Hennepin County who are between 20-44 (+7%) than there are in either Minnesota or the nation. There are slightly more people who are under the age of 20 in this part of Hennepin County as compared to the state (+0.5%) and nation (1.5%). Overall, this part of the county skews younger, with 5% fewer people over 45 as compared to the county and 7% less than the state and nation. There are slightly more millennials and higher racial diversity in this region than both the county as a whole and the nation.¹²



Share of Corridor Population by Age Group



Source: Lightcast 2025Q2 Dataset Population Demographic Table

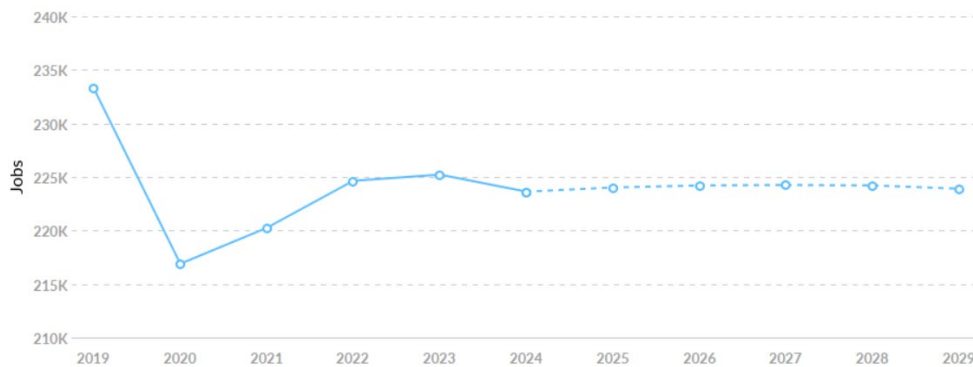


¹² Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset. Population data based on the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2019-2023 from the US Census Bureau.

Employment Characteristics

Employers based in the fourteen zip codes that comprise this section of Hennepin County employ an estimated 223,283 people as of May 2024, and just over 224,000 as of July 2025 estimates. Total employment in the corridor region has decreased by about 4.2% (-10K) since 2019. There was a larger decline in employment along the corridor than in Hennepin County as a whole (-2.2%). Employment in this region is expected to remain relatively flat over the next five years (+284 workers).¹³

Forecasted Baseline Employment Change in the Corridor through 2029

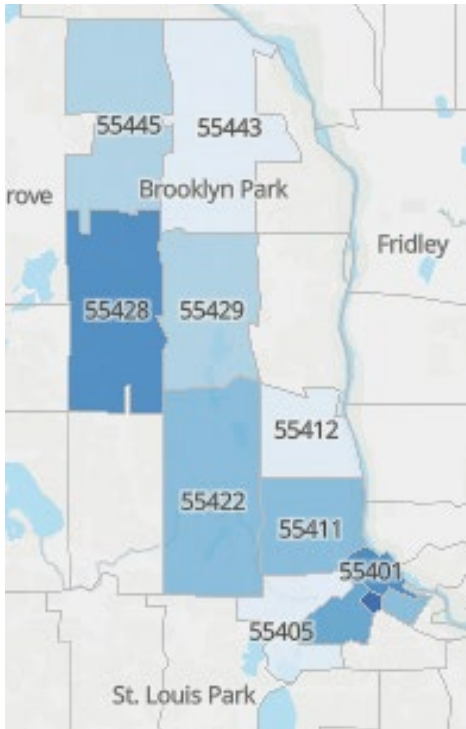


	Population (2025)	Labor Force (May 2025)	Jobs (2024)	Cost of Living	GRP	Imports	Exports
Region*	245,618	N/A	223,283	114.4	\$47.4B	\$35.4B	\$54.0B
Hennepin County, MN	1,249,537	726,644	1,000,570	114.4	\$194.2B	\$111.1B	\$172.5B
State	5,778,071	3,160,161	3,256,666	101.8	\$502.8B	\$360.1B	\$422.5B

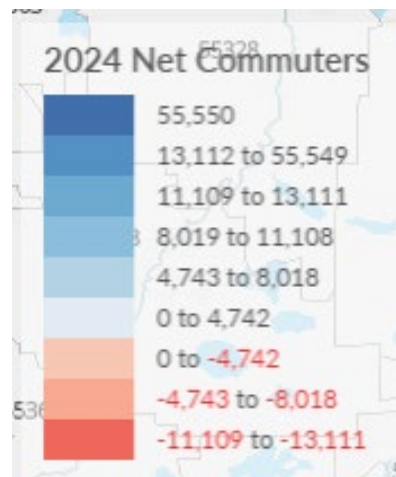
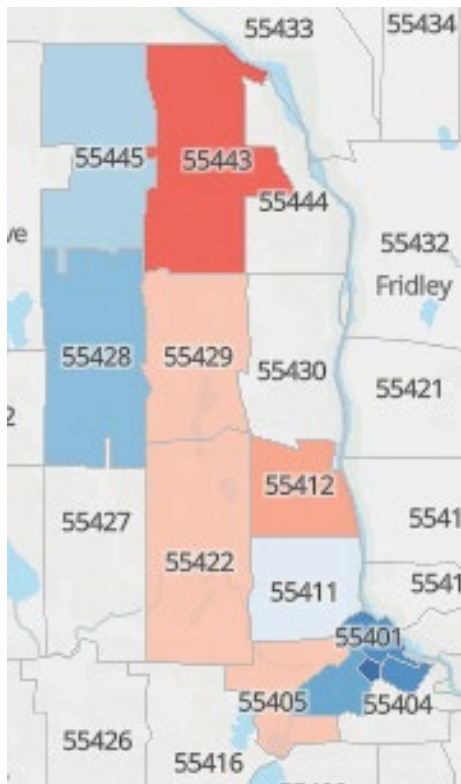
The maps below show the employment concentration (top) and the net commuting patterns (bottom) by zip code. Areas of high concentration of inbound commuters or employment are shown in shades of darker blue. Overall, the corridor has more inbound commuters than outbound, yet most zip codes have net-negative outbound commute patterns—shown by red shading. There are approximately 131,000 resident workers in the corridor and just over 223,000 jobs. If all resident workers were employed in the corridor, the area would still need around 92,000 inbound commuters. The number one zip for employment (55402) ranks last for resident workers (2,517), while the number one zip for resident workers (55443) ranks 10th for total employment (7,613).

¹³ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

Corridor Employment by Select Zip Codes, 2024-2025



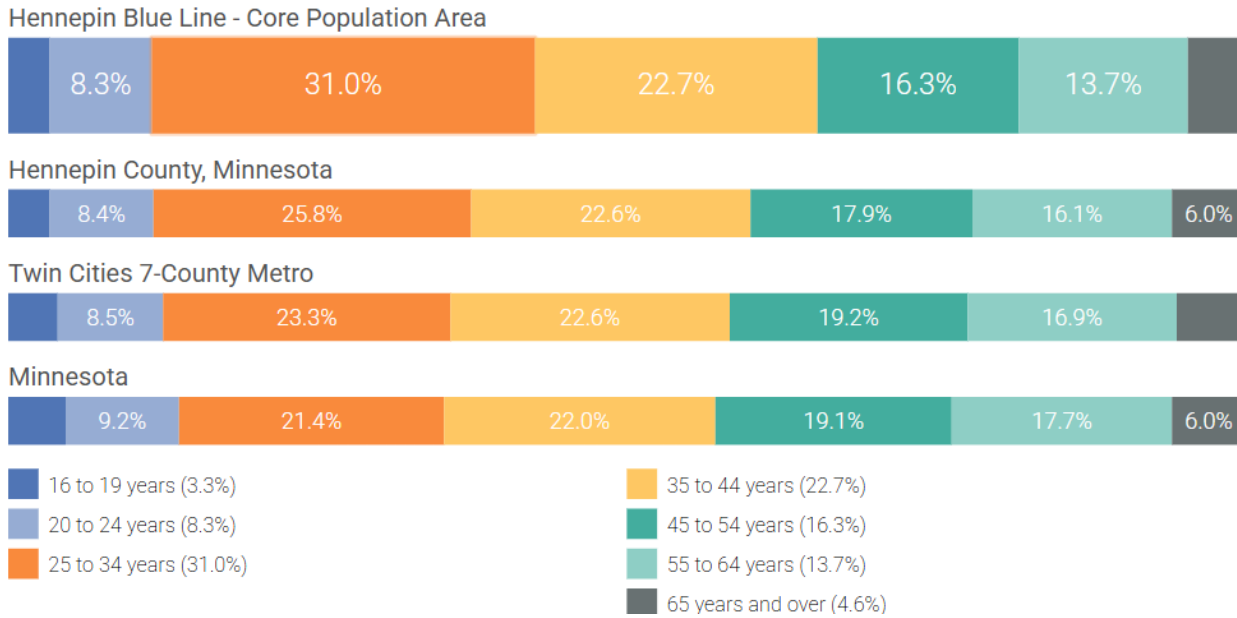
Corridor Net Commuting by Select Zip Codes, 2024-2025



Workforce Demographics

This section details the essential demographics of the Hennepin County resident workforce, with a focus on the corridor. Resident workers in the corridor area are younger, on average, than the resident workers of Hennepin County overall, with 31% of talent between the ages of 25 and 34 years compared to 25.8% county-wide.¹⁴

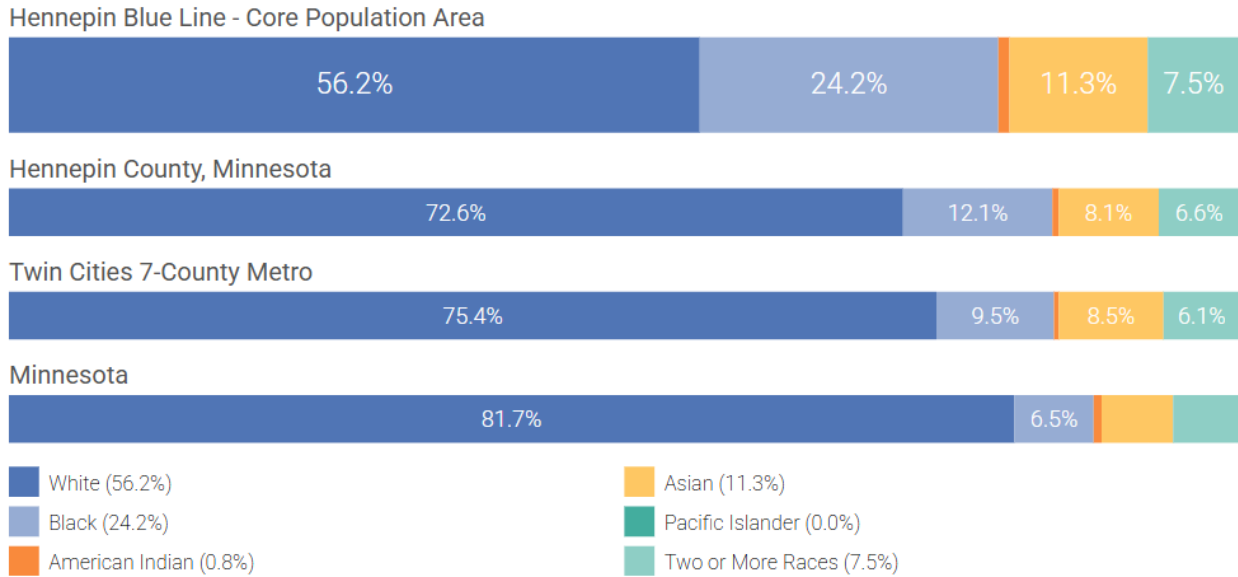
Age of the Employed Workforce by Region, All Occupations



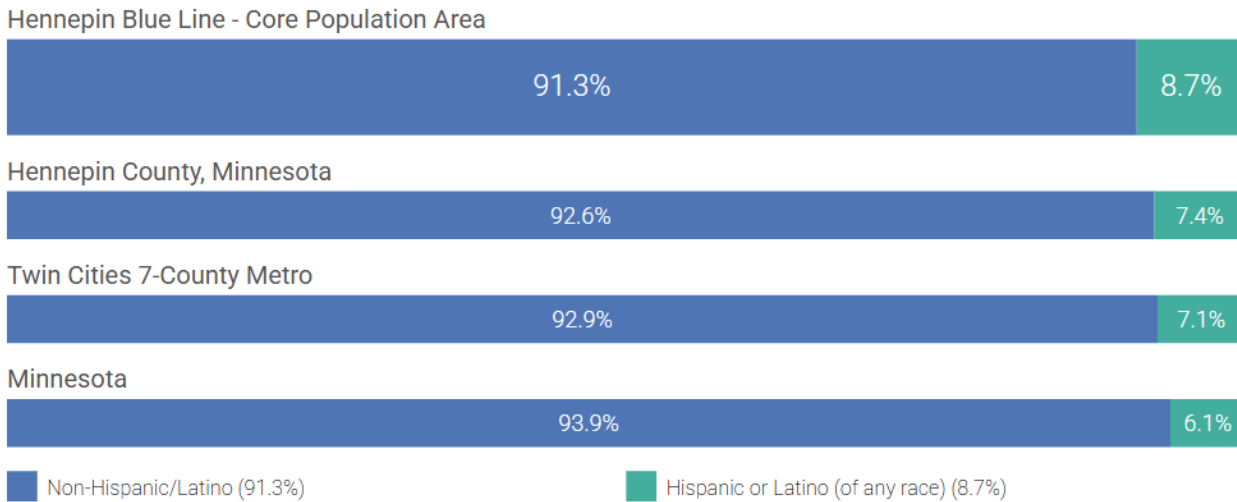
The corridor region has a significantly higher population of Black and African American workers than the county overall, with about one in four employed workers (24.2%) identifying as Black or African American. Talent who identify as Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, or multi-racial are all overrepresented in the corridor’s resident workforce to lesser degrees.

¹⁴ Chmura JobsEQ 2025Q1 dataset, modeled to zip code areas based on ACS and LODES data. All employment statistics in this section are by place of residence.

Race Demographics of the Employed Workforce by Region, All Occupations

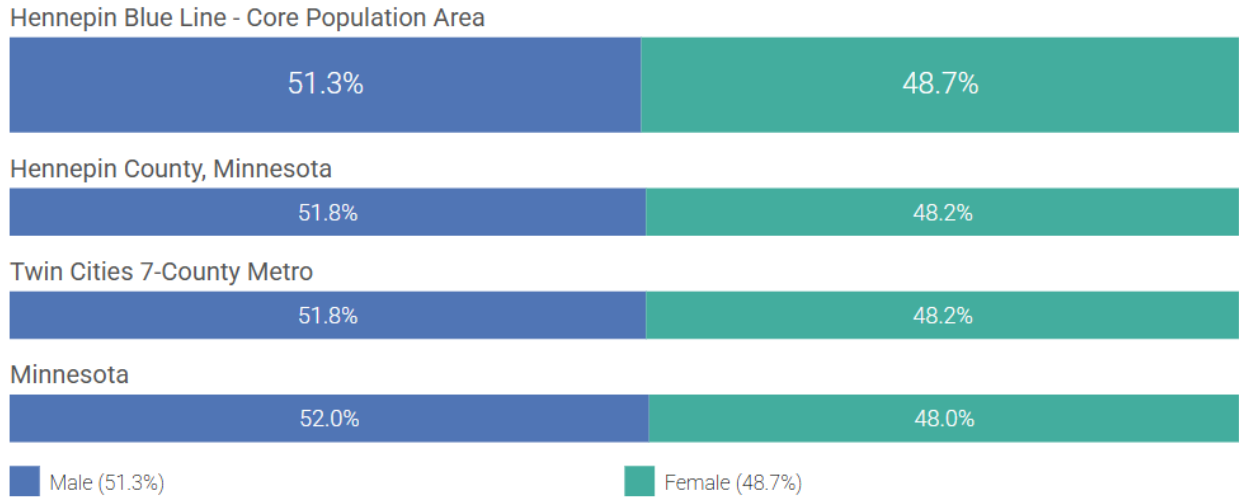


Ethnicity Demographics of the Employed Workforce by Region, All Occupations



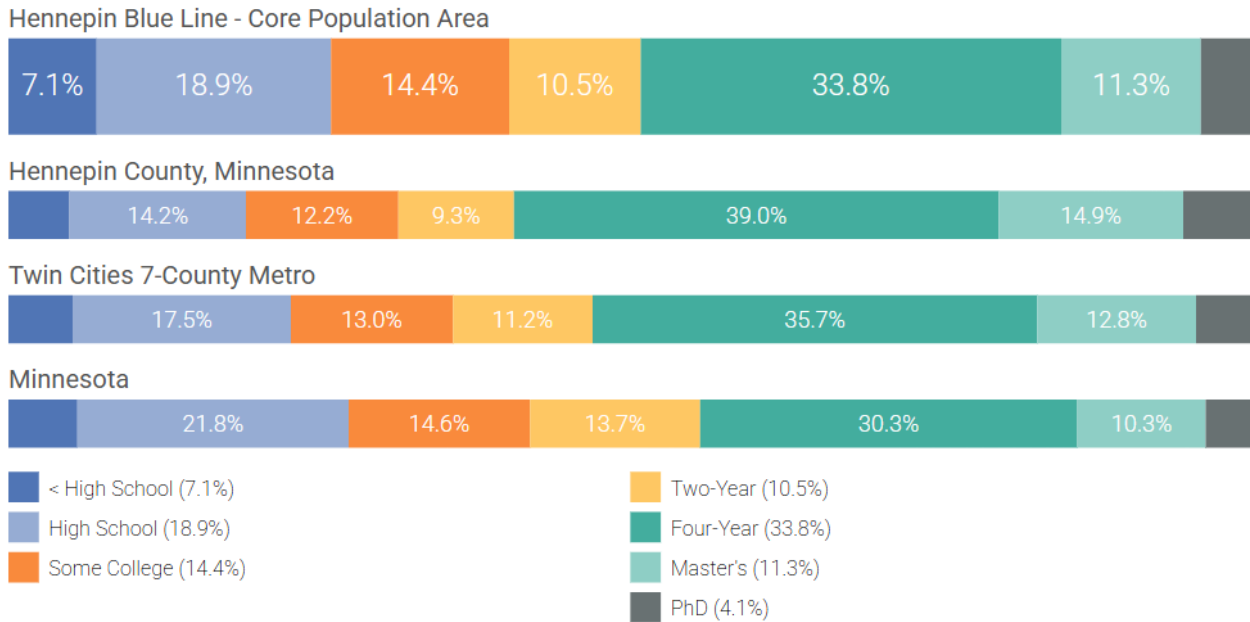
Workforce demographics by gender are consistent at the state, metro, county, and corridor levels, varying by less than one percentage point between regions. In all, there are more male than female workers.

Gender of the Employed Workforce by Region, All Occupations



Resident workers of the corridor region have lower overall educational attainment levels than Hennepin County as a whole, closer in line with the educational attainment of the workforce metro-wide. However, in contrast, jobs located along the corridor are more likely to require a Bachelor’s degree (34.7% of roles) than jobs across Hennepin County (30.3%).

Educational Attainment of the Workforce by Region, All Occupations



Education and Training Requirements of Local Jobs, All Occupations

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



Minnesota

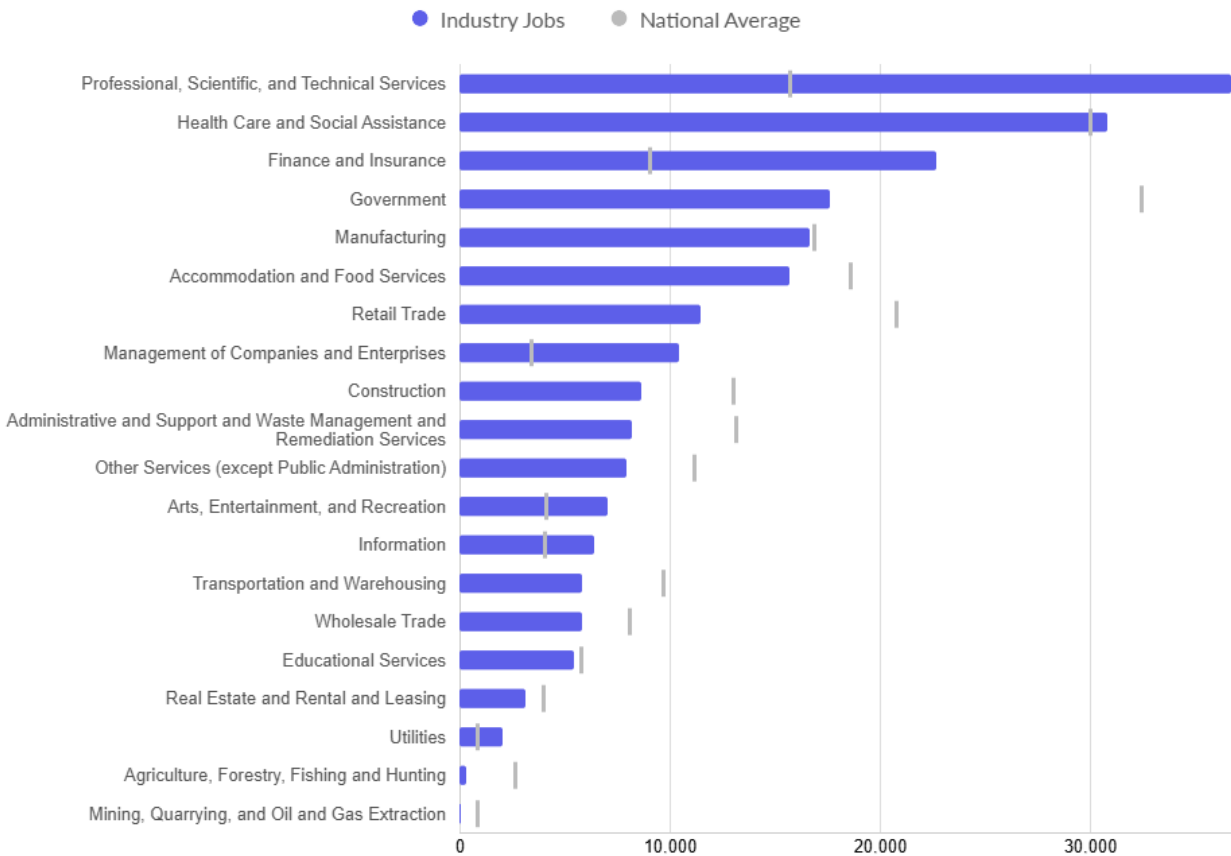


- Short-term OJT, no exp, no award (29.6%)
- Moderate-term OJT, no exp, no award (13.6%)
- Long-term training, no exp, no award (3.4%)
- Previous work experience, no award (6.3%)
- 2-year degree or certificate (7.5%)
- Bachelor's degree (34.7%)
- Postgraduate degree (5.0%)

Industries

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services is the industry employing the most people in this corridor of Hennepin County with almost 37,000 local workers, more than double the national average. The Health Care and Social Assistance industry has the second highest total employment locally, with almost 31,000 workers. Health Care and Social Assistance is also the corridor’s top growing industry, adding almost 4,000 jobs from 2019-2024. Other growing industries include Construction and Wholesale Trade, each adding more than 1,000 workers in the past five years. As seen below, three of the top ten industries in the region also employ more talent than the national average. The Construction industry (10th largest) and the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry (12th largest) employ more people in the corridor as compared to the county as a whole (12th and 16th respectively) whereas the Wholesale Trade industry is underrepresented considerably in the corridor (15th largest in the corridor) compared to countywide (10th in Hennepin County).¹⁵

Industry Employment and Concentration in the Corridor

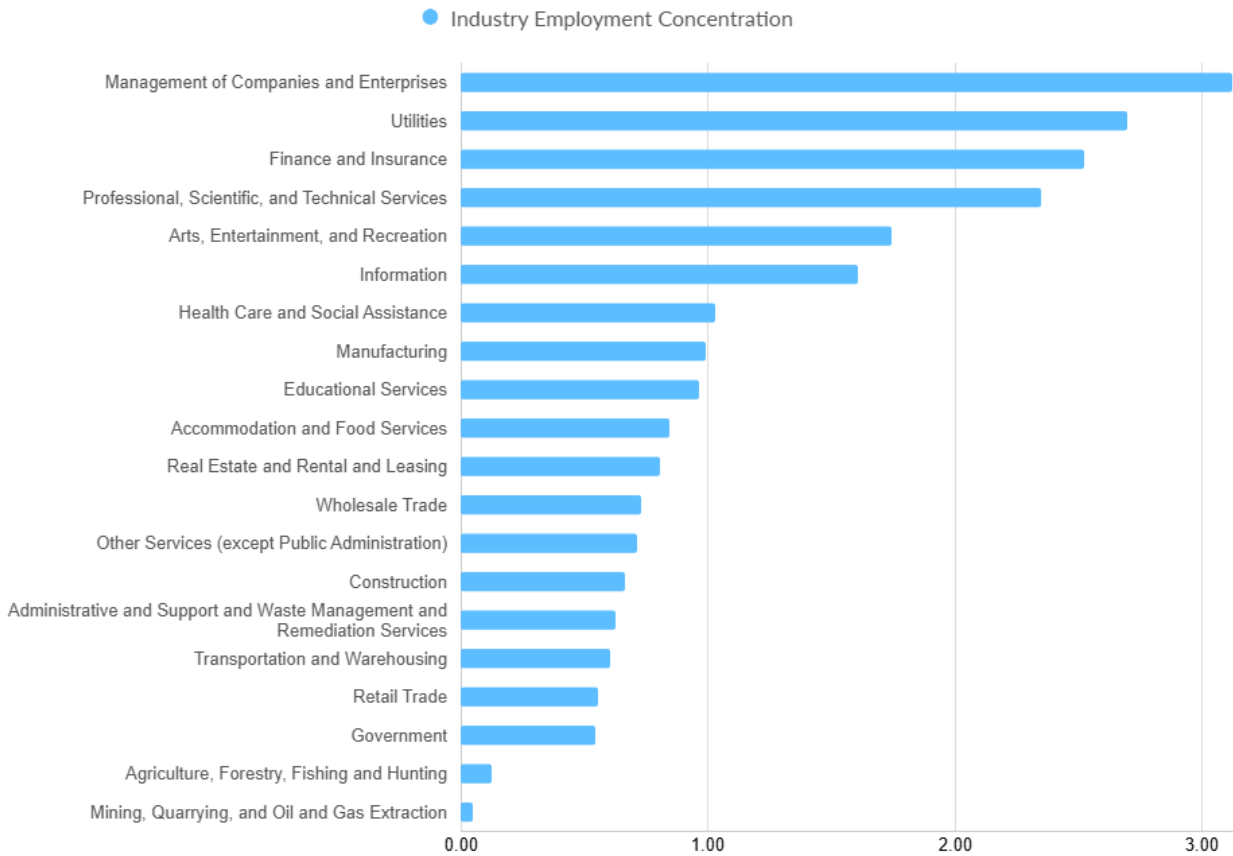


¹⁵Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

Industry Concentration

As observed across Hennepin County as a whole, the corridor has nine industries with a local concentration (LQ) above 1.0, which means those industries are more highly concentrated locally than in areas of similar size and population. The mix of industries that are most highly concentrated in the corridor is similar to the county overall with a few exceptions. Management of Companies and Enterprises is the most highly concentrated industry with a location quotient of 3.12. Utilities (LQ 2.70), Finance and Insurance (LQ 2.53), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (LQ 2.35) are also very highly concentrated in the corridor region. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation rounds out the top five most highly concentrated industries along the corridor (LQ 1.74).¹⁶

Top Industry Employment Concentration in the Corridor



¹⁶ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

Gross Regional Product (GRP) and Earnings Per Worker

The top five industries in the corridor in terms of GRP brought in \$18.6 billion in 2024, roughly 10% of the county's total GRP. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (\$6.5B) and Finance and Insurance (\$5.7B) were the highest-grossing industries locally, mirroring their importance county-wide. Also similar to Hennepin County as a whole, the Utilities and Mining industries' contributions to GRP were lower, but they top the charts in terms of earnings per worker (\$200,000+). Finance and Insurance (\$186,421), Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$172,565), and Information (\$152,557) round out the top five in terms of earnings per worker.¹⁷

Industry Employment Concentration and Earnings Per Worker in Hennepin County

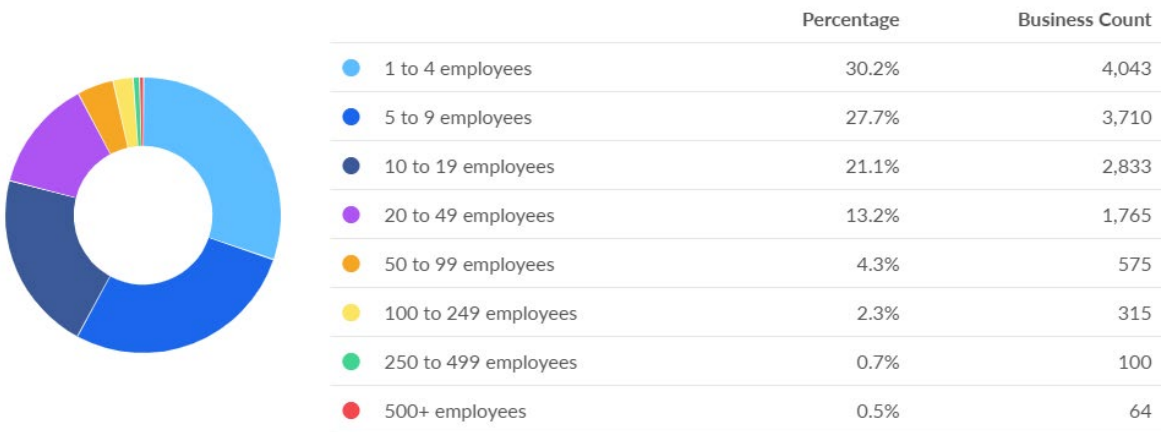
Industry	Employment Concentration (LQ)	Earnings Per Worker (Thousands)	GRP Volume (Billions)
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2.27	\$149,743	\$6.5
Finance and Insurance	2.42	\$186,421	\$5.7
Health Care and Social Assistance	1.06	\$85,491	\$2.7
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3.08	\$172,565	\$1.9
Manufacturing	1.01	\$112,315	\$1.9
Government	0.55	\$100,914	\$1.8
Information	1.40	\$152,557	\$1.4
Construction	0.69	\$122,881	
Wholesale Trade	0.71	\$128,515	\$1
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.80	\$87,585	

¹⁷ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

Business Characteristics

This corridor of Hennepin County has 13,405 local companies. Businesses in the corridor are of varying size, with the bulk of companies (79% or 10,586 companies) employing less than 20 people, slightly less than the county as a whole (82%). An additional 19.8% of companies employ between 20 and 249 employees; this is 2.4% higher than the county as a whole, where 17.4% of companies fall in this size range. Large companies of 250+ employees make up slightly more than 1.0% of the total volume in the corridor, again slightly higher than the county as a whole.¹⁸

Corridor Business Characteristics



¹⁸ Lightcast 2025Q2. Database USA, 2024 Firms.

Occupations

Legal Occupations are the most highly concentrated occupation group in the corridor region, being more than two times as prevalent in this region than the national average (LQ 3.22). Office and Administrative Support Occupations comprise nearly 12% of all jobs in the corridor as of 2024 and has a high projected 2029 employment concentration of 1.13 slightly more concentrated than the county as a whole (1.07). Although this occupation group is projected to decline by 4% or about 1,000 jobs over the next four years, it is still projected to comprise 12% of the total jobs in 2029. Business and Financial Operations Occupations is a close second in terms of volume of local jobs (26,591 or 12% of current local employment). This occupation group is projected to stay flat through 2029. It also has the second highest projected employment concentration at 1.79 by 2029. The chart below outlines the top twelve occupation groupings in Hennepin County by projected 2029 employment concentration.¹⁹

Employment by Occupation Grouping in the Corridor

SOC	Occupation	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 - 2029 Change	Forecasted Growth	Median Annual Earnings	2029 Employment Concentration
23	Legal Occupations	6,379	6,066	-313	-5%	\$106,500.21	3.22
13	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	26,591	26,676	85	0%	\$91,322.37	1.79
15	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	12,199	12,167	-31	0%	\$113,033.25	1.68
17	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	5,487	5,630	142	3%	\$92,042.49	1.58
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	6,425	6,262	-163	-3%	\$61,978.69	1.51
11	Management Occupations	19,409	19,662	253	1%	\$136,692.06	1.14
43	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	28,780	27,364	-1416	-5%	\$54,460.85	1.13
21	Community and Social Service Occupations	4,127	4,303	177	4%	\$63,683.46	1.02
31	Healthcare Support Occupations	10,281	11,267	985	10%	\$40,640.92	1
39	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	12,312	12,878	566	5%	\$104,155.67	0.97
51	Production Occupations	11,337	11,149	-187	-2%	\$51,222.05	0.97
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	1,904	1,961	57	3%	\$89,283.51	0.9
35	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	15,330	15,714	384	3%	\$37,197.65	0.88
39	Personal Care and Service Occupations	5,236	5,233	-3	0	\$38,945.93	0.83

¹⁹ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

Prioritizing Corridor Opportunities

Engaging Youth and Younger Workers

With 44% of residents in prime working age and 31% under the age of 25, corridor strategies face an opportunity to engage younger workers in local careers. However, with high concentrations of local jobs in legal, business, finance, and professional, scientific, and technical services, and among large firms in particular, there may not be ready-made pathways from origin and gateway careers into the highest-paying occupations available locally. Mindful career pathway planning must be at the forefront of county strategies in the corridor.

**Young population,
larger companies,
commuter culture**

With 31% of residents under the age of 25, the corridor faces a unique opportunity to engage more young residents in local career opportunities.

Tailor Programs to Populations of Focus

The corridor has an overrepresentation of Black and African American resident talent in the workforce, as well as overrepresentations of Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, and multi-racial talent. Resident workers in the corridor also have lower overall educational attainment levels than Hennepin County as a whole, while jobs located along the corridor are more likely to require a Bachelor's degree (34.7% of roles) than in the workforce across Hennepin County (30.3%). This disconnect between local talent's educational background and locally-available positions may lead to underrepresentation of diverse talent in advanced careers. The misalignment of local educational attainment and occupational requirements may also contribute to the commute patterns of talent in and out of the corridor region.

Grow Connections to Local Jobs at Large Firms

With 19.8% of companies based in the corridor having between 20-249 employees, and another 1.2% having 250 employees or more, the corridor has a higher local concentration of large companies than Hennepin County and Minnesota as a whole. This poses an opportunity for targeted career pathway mapping into these large firms, which may offer more internal career growth opportunities, benefits options, and other perks.





Leverage Commuter Culture


The corridor workforce is heavily impacted by commuting patterns. While many central zip codes have more outbound than inbound resident workers, many of those residents still work in Hennepin County. An estimated 83.5% of resident workers in Hennepin County work within the county. With more transit options made available within the corridor, residents may find more employment options both within and beyond the immediate area, and more inbound commuters may find their way to new careers in the corridor.

Focus on Industries and Occupations that Matter Most Locally

A high-level overview of county and corridor-specific industry and occupational concentration elevate a few clear trends worth highlighting in workforce strategy development. Compared to the national average, the corridor has an overrepresentation of six industries: Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Finance and Insurance; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; Information; and Utilities. In addition, Health Care and Social Assistance and Manufacturing employ large volumes of workers locally. Businesses representing these eight industries should be prioritized in outreach and hiring strategies of workforce development efforts in balance with their local presence. The table below shows the total employment volume and local concentration of industry employment in the corridor, ranked out of the total 20 industries at the 2-digit NAICS classification level.

Top Industries of Importance, Ranked for the Corridor

Industry and Growth Outlook	Hennepin County	Corridor
1 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	99,588 Employed (#3) LQ 1.4	36,755 Employed (#1) LQ 2.4
2 Health Care and Social Assistance 	158,019 Employed (#1) LQ 1.2	30,909 Employed (#2) LQ 1.0
3 Finance and Insurance	76,497 Employed (#5) LQ 1.9	22,692 Employed (#3) LQ 2.5
4 Management of Companies and Enterprises 	52,225 Employed (#8) LQ 3.5	10,458 Employed (#8) LQ 3.1
5 Manufacturing 	77,399 Employed (#4) LQ 1.0	16,667 Employed (#5) LQ 1.0
6 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	18,855 Employed (#16) LQ 1.0	7,053 Employed (#12) LQ 1.7
7 Information	16,509 Employed (#17) LQ 0.9	6,398 Employed (#13) LQ 1.4
8 Utilities 	3,758 Employed (#18) LQ 1.1	2,076 Employed (#18) LQ 2.7

 Indicates that the industry's forecasted employment outlook through 2029 is more favorable than the overall employment outlook. Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

The table below highlights the top three highest-ranking occupation clusters by indicators of their local importance in the corridor's workforce landscape. The table includes three high-level indicators of current demand to consider (left) alongside three forecast considerations (right). The specific occupational needs in the corridor vary in demand and outlook. However, Business and Financial Operations occupations are found in the corridor in high volume and concentration today and also have high replacement demand and growth outlooks. Other occupation clusters showing up in the top three in more than one field of consideration include Management occupations, Office and Administrative Support occupations, Legal, and Computer occupations, and Mathematical occupations, which all share Origin and Gateway career opportunities. The

Healthcare Support occupational cluster is one of the top three clusters by forecasted growth and Food preparation and Serving occupations have high replacement demand needs in the corridor.²⁰

Top Career Clusters of Importance in the Corridor

Current Demand

Top Career Clusters by Employment Volume

1. Office and Administrative Support
2. Business and Financial Operations
3. Management

Forecasted Demand

Top Career Clusters by 5-Year Repl. Demand

1. Office and Administrative Support
2. Food Preparation and Serving
3. Business and Financial Operations

Top Career Clusters by Local Concentration (LQ)

1. Legal (LQ 3.33)
2. Business and Financial Operations (LQ 1.82)
3. Computer and Mathematical (LQ 1.73)

Top Career Clusters by Forecasted 5-Year Growth

1. Business and Financial Operations
2. Management
3. Healthcare Support

Top Career Clusters by Median Hourly Wage

1. Management (\$65.72)
2. Computer and Mathematical (\$54.34)
3. Legal (\$51.20)

Top Career Clusters with Gateway Opportunities

1. Office and Administrative Support
2. Manufacturing
3. Healthcare Support

²⁰ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

Gateway Careers

Gateway Careers are in-demand roles that have low barriers to entry and, on average, pay livable wages. These careers are the right place to focus workforce development efforts as they have high needs among employers in the community and offer stable jobs for residents. In addition, Hennepin County has identified the importance of flagging Gateway Careers that are high quality by other measures, are core to the Green Economy, or essential to light rail construction needs. This section details the Gateway Careers that are important county-wide and within the corridor focus area.

Definitions

Gateway Careers are occupations at the five or six-digit SOC level that meet each of the following criteria, based on

- 1) **Low-barrier** jobs are those that typically require no more than a two-year degree for entry-level talent.²¹
- 2) **In-demand** jobs are detailed occupations (six-digit SOC) that meet at least two of the following four criteria: 1) forecast higher than average county-wide growth over the next five years; 2) Forecast needed replacement of over half of the workforce employed over the next five years; 3) Have an unemployment rate below 3%; 4) Have an average 30-day job posting volume above 100 postings in the corridor, or 200 postings in the county.²²
- 3) **Livable-wage** jobs are defined as positions that pay \$21.50 or more per hour on average as of 2024 estimates, or \$44,720 annually, matching the internal Hennepin County minimum wage threshold set in 2024.²³

Occupation-Level Flags are used in this report to feature other important criteria about how occupations align to critical sectors.

²¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics Education and Training Assignments by Detailed Occupation, 2024.

²² Demand thresholds determined with Lightcast 2025Q2 data. Employment by occupation data are estimates derived from the Lightcast Industry/Occupation Matrix and industry employment data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics--imputed by Chmura where necessary--and updated through 2024Q4 with preliminary estimates by Lightcast updated to 2025Q2. Occupation unemployment figures are imputed utilizing Chmura JobsEQ 2025Q1 dataset. Job ads data are online job posts from the Real-Time Intelligence (RTI) data set, produced by Chmura and gleaned from over 40,000 direct corporate websites.

²³ Occupation wages are sourced from Lightcast 2025Q2 data based upon OEWS wage data from the BLS which represents occupation wages within Covered Employment.

1) **Good jobs** are roles that provide both basic needs fulfillment and opportunities for personal and professional growth, while also offering a sense of purpose and value. Job Quality encompasses fair pay and benefits, safe working conditions, and opportunities for advancement. Furthermore, a good job fosters a positive work environment where employees feel respected, supported, and have a voice in their work. In this report, we define Good Jobs as occupations in which a certain threshold of job postings in the county contain signals of quality. While wage is already considered as an occupation-level filter, eight additional interconnected principles of job quality are combined together in this report to define a good job.²⁴

Most measures of job quality are challenging to identify definitively within job postings alone. As such, this measure should be utilized as a qualitative, subjective measure of the likelihood of finding high-quality jobs in the local market rather than a guarantee. A table found in the appendix illustrates in detail how job quality principles are identified within job postings and flagged.²⁵ This report leverages the Results for America Job Quality Framework, which is made up of eight interconnected principles that together define a good job: earnings, schedules, safety and security, purpose and meaning, environment and culture, benefits, learning and development, and voice and representation.²⁶ These eight principles fall in to three categories: Job Necessities, Job Opportunities, and Job Features.

²⁴ Results for America Job Quality Framework. "What is Job Quality?" <https://jobquality.results4america.org/what-is-job-quality>

²⁵ Katz, Batia. 2022. The Urban Institute. Measuring Job Quality: Current Measures, Gaps, and New Approaches. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/Measuring%20Job%20Quality.pdf>

²⁶ Results for America Job Quality Framework. "What is Job Quality?" <https://jobquality.results4america.org/what-is-job-quality>

The Results for America Job Quality Framework



- 2) **Green jobs** are identified with a visual flag in this report, using the O*NET occupational categories that describe different consequences of green economy activities and technologies on how occupations are performed.²⁷ O*NET refers to this process as the “greening” of occupations and defines this as follows:

“The “greening” of occupations refers to the extent to which green economy activities and technologies increase the demand for existing occupations, shape the work and worker requirements needed for occupational performance, or generate unique work and worker requirements.”

Out of this definition, O*NET developed three general occupational categories to describe the differing consequences of green economy activities and technologies on how occupations are performed. The Green occupational categories assigned to the occupations are:



Green New and Emerging— The impact of green economy activities and technologies is sufficient to create the need for unique work and worker requirements, which results in the generation of new occupations.



Green Increased Demand — These occupations encompass "indirect jobs" to the green economy, including energy consulting or research and other related business services.













Green Enhanced Skills — The impact of green economy activities and technologies results in a significant change to the work and worker requirements of an existing O*NET-SOC occupation.

Gateway Careers and essential line construction jobs are flagged throughout this report in alignment with the O*NET occupational categories for reference and coordination with Green Economy initiatives locally.

²⁷ Learn more about green jobs here: https://www.onetcenter.org/dictionary/22.0/excel/green_occupations.html

3) Essential line construction jobs are roles that had significant increased demand and high work hours required for the METRO Green Line Expansion project started in 2019. According to internal Hennepin County reports, these occupations include Laborers, Power Equipment Operators, Carpenters, Electricians, Piledrivers, Ironworkers, Cement Masons, Truck Drivers, Painters, Sheet Metal Workers, Plumbers, Roofers, and other miscellaneous trades. Each of these occupations has been aligned to related Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) Code, as follows.

Hennepin County Occupation Designation	Standard Occupation Classifications (SOC) Used in this Report
Laborers 	Construction Laborers (47-2061)
Power Equipment Operators 	Rail-Track Laying and Maintenance Equipment Operators (47-4061)
Carpenters 	Carpenters (47-2031) Helpers—Carpenters (47-3012)
Electricians 	Electricians (47-2111) Electrical and Electronics Installers and Repairers, Transportation Equipment (49-2093) Helpers—Electricians (47-3013)
Piledrivers	Pile Driver Operators (47-2072)
Ironworkers 	Structural Iron and Steel Workers (47-2221) Reinforcing Iron and Rebar Workers (47-2171)
Cement Masons 	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers (47-2051)
Truck Drivers 	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators (53-7051)
Painters 	Painters, Construction and Maintenance (47-2141) Helpers—Painters, Paperhangers, Plasterers, and Succo Masons (47-3014)
Sheet Metal Workers	Sheet Metal Workers (47-2211)
Plumbers 	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters (47-2152) Helpers—Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters (47-3015)
Roofers 	Roofers (47-2181) Helpers—Roofers (47-3016)
Other Misc. Trades	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers (47-1011) Paving, Surfacing, and Tamping Equipment Operators (47-2071) Helpers—Construction Trades, All Other (47-3019)

The staffing pattern for these occupations in the Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction industry (NAICS 2379) was used to estimate with greater specificity the needs related to rail construction and similar projects locally.

Job Quality in Hennepin County

An Overview of Job Quality Indicators

Across the eight principles of job quality, five have observable insights that can be identified in job postings. Mention of job quality principles by employers advertising jobs suggests likelihood of those employers offering high-quality jobs, but it does not guarantee that hired talent ultimately receives those benefits. Mentions of job quality principles such as earning structure, consistent and stable scheduling, benefits and leave, learning and development, and opportunities for expression of worker voice can be considered to be the “employee value proposition” that employers make to talent to encourage an application to a job.

In Hennepin County, learning and development opportunities appear in higher frequency across postings (29% of postings) than in Greater Minnesota or nationally (20% of postings). In contrast, job postings advertised in Hennepin County mention bonuses and other pay variables less frequently (18% of postings) than Greater Minnesota or nationally (22% of postings). Although the volume of local job postings that explicitly mention benefits and leave has increased by 71% over the past year, these remain a small share of postings advertised overall in Hennepin County in a similar way to observed statewide and nationally (7% of postings).²⁸

Job Quality Indicators Featured by Employers through Job Postings

	Principles	Total Postings June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025 Hennepin County	Percent of All Postings				
			Hennepin County	MSP Metro	Greater MN	MN	USA
Job Necessities	Earnings / Pay Variables	37,328 (+17%)	18%	18%	22%	19%	22%
	Schedules*	695 (-17%)*	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%	1%
	Safety and Security	N/A					
Job Features	Purpose and Meaning	N/A	-	-	-	-	-
	Environment and Culture	N/A	-	-	-	-	-
	Benefits and Leave	14,681 (+71%)	7%	8%	6%	7%	6%
Job Oppor- tunities	Learning and Development	59,029 (+21%)	29%	29%	20%	26%	20%
	Voice and Representation*	6,809 (-3%)*	3%	5%	4%	6%	4%

* Likely low volume of employers flagging scheduling or indicating opportunities for worker voice in job postings, undercount of job quality in these two categories is probable.

²⁸ Data source: TalentNeuron job posting data aggregated from all live, deduplicated postings excluding anonymous employers, newly advertised between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025.

Job Quality Indicators in Postings by Occupation

Indicators of job quality found in postings vary by occupation type. For instance, there were four occupations with 100 or more local job postings of which 50% or more indicated bonuses or favorable pay variables for the applicant; two of these occupations were in Healthcare, and two were in Transportation.

Regarding scheduling, production laborers and sales drivers are most likely to clearly describe employee-favorable scheduling considerations in their postings—likely mentioned more frequently due to the prevalence of varied approaches to scheduling found in these roles. The top five occupations with 100 or more local job postings that reference scheduling considerations typically do not require more than a two-year degree, certificate, or high school diploma for hire.

Benefits are mentioned across a wide range of roles, often appearing with reference to bonuses and other pay variables; two of the positions with the highest share of postings referencing bonuses and favorable pay variables also had the highest share of postings referencing specific benefits and leave policies.

Learning and development is most frequently mentioned among roles that require no more than a postsecondary certificate or industry credential to begin working; three of the top five roles by total share of postings that mention learning and development opportunities are in Healthcare occupations (Emergency Medical Technicians, Medical Equipment Preparers, and Phlebotomists). In contrast, the top five roles with the highest share of postings mentioning worker voice and formal representation typically require a four-year degree or higher and include engineering, communication, psychology, and the arts.









Top Occupations Featuring High Frequency of Job Quality Principles in Postings

Job Quality Principles	Top Occupations Featuring Principles by Share of Total Postings (100 or more postings, advertised June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025)
Earnings / Pay Variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opticians, Dispensing (72%) • Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (59%) • Psychiatrists (58%) • Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists (53%) • Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers (49%)
Schedules*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpers—Production Workers (22%) • Sales Worker Drivers (5%) • Security Guards (4%) • Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers (4%) • Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing (4%)
Benefits and Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opticians, Dispensing (66%) • Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers (44%) • Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors (38%) • Career and Technical Education Teachers, Postsecondary (34%) • Veterinarians (31%)
Learning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Appliance Repairers (95%) • Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists (91%) • Emergency Medical Technicians (83%) • Medical Equipment Preparers (65%) • Phlebotomists (61%)
Voice and Representation*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Engineers (31%) • News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists (25%) • Producers and Directors (17%) • Environmental Engineers (16%) • School Psychologists (16%)

In all, there are 29 occupations that have been identified through frequency of job quality indicators across job postings advertised in Hennepin County since June 2024. Nine of these 29 occupations are Gateway Careers both county-wide and in the corridor region, plus two additional occupations are Gateway Careers at the county-level alone due to forecasted growth and current unemployment rate (Opticians and Medical Records Specialists). Seven of the nine Healthcare occupations that were identified as showing a high frequency of job quality indicators locally are Gateway Careers. Eight of the 29 occupations featuring postings with job quality indicators are classified as green jobs.²⁹

²⁹ RealTime Talent analysis of TalentNeuron job posting data aggregated from all live, deduplicated postings from the selected employers, newly advertised between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025.

Share of Job Postings in Hennepin County Featuring Job Quality Indicators, June 1, 2024-May 31, 2025

Row Labels	Gateway Career in County or Corridor, Green Job Flag	Total Postings	Earnings/Pay Variables	Schedules	Benefits and Leave	L&D	Voice and Representation	Total	Career Cluster
Opticians, Dispensing	HC	134	72%		66%	49%		187%	Healthcare
School Psychologists		132	29%		19%	47%	16%	111%	Human Services
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers		546	49%	2%	44%	12%	2%	109%	Manufacturing
Civil Engineers		1,691	21%		12%	43%	31%	108%	Construction
Career/Technical Education Teachers, Postsecondary		163			34%	53%	13%	100%	Education
Special Education Teachers, Middle School		155	20%		15%	60%	3%	99%	Education
Home Appliance Repairers		107			1%	95%	1%	97%	Construction
Emergency Medical Technicians	HC + Corridor	184	14%			83%		96%	Healthcare
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	HC + Corridor	879	2%	<1%	2%	91%		96%	Human Services
Phlebotomists	HC + Corridor	347	33%		1%	61%		95%	Healthcare
Medical Assistants	HC + Corridor	1,229	36%	<1%	5%	51%	1%	94%	Healthcare
Personal Financial Advisors		355	26%		24%	41%	<1%	92%	Business and Finance
Mental Health Counselors		571	44%	2%	4%	41%	1%	92%	Human Services
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	HC + Corridor	1,303	37%	<1%	4%	46%	3%	90%	Healthcare
Medical Equipment Preparers	HC + Corridor	267	20%		3%	65%	1%	90%	Healthcare
Veterinarians		131	22%	2%	31%	34%	2%	89%	Healthcare
Environmental Engineers		308	21%		14%	38%	16%	89%	Energy and Resources
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists		425	53%	1%	13%	16%	3%	86%	Transportation
Facilities Managers		125	22%		14%	39%	10%	86%	Construction
Production Workers, All Other		407	32%	2%	19%	27%	5%	85%	Manufacturing
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers		1,594	59%	2%	5%	13%	6%	84%	Transportation
Engineering Technologists and Technicians, All Other	HC + Corridor 	138	39%		4%	34%	6%	83%	Manufacturing
Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	HC + Corridor	357	1%	1%	38%	44%	<1%	83%	Education
Dental Assistants	HC + Corridor	132	25%		2%	55%	2%	83%	Healthcare
Home Health Aides		284	29%		5%	46%	2%	81%	Healthcare
Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists		481	26%		15%	34%	6%	81%	Business and Finance
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers		963	28%	3%	7%	42%	1%	81%	Human Services
Medical Records Specialists	HC	722	19%		3%	58%	1%	80%	Healthcare
Helpers--Production Workers		111	13%	22%	4%	41%	2%	80%	Manufacturing

Gateway Career Talent Demand

In-demand, living-wage roles with low barriers to entry are found in most critical industries across Hennepin County. The Business, Management, and Administration career field has the highest volume of local Gateway Career opportunities, with a high concentration in the corridor region in Office and Administration, Business and Finance, and Retail clusters. The Construction, Maintenance, and Operations field also has a high volume of local Gateway Careers—many of which are green jobs—yet more of these occupations are more likely to be impacted by advances in automation (higher automation index). About 59,790 people are employed in the corridor across all 136 occupations that are flagged as high-demand, living-wage roles with low barriers to entry. Despite overall local employment being forecast to remain relatively flat in these roles over the next five years, an estimated 32,800 new workers will be needed to replace outgoing Gateway talent in the region through 2029.

Nearly 60,000 people work in Gateway Careers in the Corridor

Another 32,800 people will be needed to fill jobs vacated between 2024 and 2029.

Forecasted employment outlook is mixed among Gateway Careers in the region, despite demand playing a core role in the definition of Gateway Careers themselves. Eight of the top twenty Gateway Careers forecast declining overall employment over the next five years. Business, Management, and Administration occupations have some of the poorest overall growth outlooks yet have some of the lowest turnover rates and unemployment rates among top Gateway Careers. High turnover and high unemployment rates among Stockers and Order Fillers, Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers, Restaurant Cooks, and Nursing Assistants imply that there are factors at play locally keeping talent churning through positions, whether the reason be lower competitive wages, working conditions, or other reasons. None of the Gateway Careers with the highest turnover rates and unemployment rates saw a prevalence of job quality indicators in local job postings, nor are considered to be green jobs by O*NET definitions.

Most of the top Gateway Careers in the corridor represent between 17 to 27% of the county's total employment in any given occupation, with one notable exception; Legal careers are uniquely concentrated in the corridor region, with 60% of all Paralegals and Legal Assistants employed in Hennepin County working at businesses located within the corridor. An estimated 49% of all talent holding roles as Paralegals and Legal Assistants will need to be replaced by 2029, and unemployment remains significantly low (1.7%).

All corridor Gateway Careers also meet demand and wage criteria county-wide; an additional ten Gateway Careers are identified county-wide for pathway consideration as well. These additional occupations met demand and wage thresholds county-wide, but did not meet one—or both—criteria in the corridor sub-region. Human Services occupations make up half of the additional county-wide Gateway Careers, ranging from Social and Human Services Assistants to Security Guards and Flight Attendants.

Only two occupations (Landscapers and Restaurant Cooks) among the thirty identified Gateway Careers in Hennepin County have dramatically high Automation Indexes—a measure developed by O*Net and updated in 2023 that estimates an occupation’s likelihood of being impacted by automation. Given recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, it is likely that this measure underestimates the possible occupational impacts of automation.

The principal challenge with Gateway Careers is that an increasing number of jobs require advanced training and substantial critical-thinking skills, particularly with the expansion of automation and artificial intelligence across a multitude of job domains. Entry-level cognitive jobs and middle-skill career paths are increasingly being replaced or modified by technologies that support or guide common tasks of these positions. Thus, entry-level jobs that remain are largely repetitive and manual labor-based roles, which no longer always lead to career advancement within a company.³⁰ According to Ned Scott Laff and Scott Carlson, co-authors of *Hacking College*, this is leading to a workforce landscape “hourglass” which is cutting out Gateway Careers which were once strong on-ramps into stable careers. As a result, talent with low levels of education and experience have a very challenging time navigating a long-range career path without social and cultural capital to facilitate job changes.³¹

Career Clusters of Focus

Business, Legal, and Education:

High Concentration, Low Forecast

Construction, Maintenance, and

Operations: Higher Forecast,
Green Jobs, Low Concentration

Healthcare: Higher Forecast, Low

Concentration, More Specialized

³⁰ Carlson, Scott. “What Gets Forgotten in the Debates about Liberal Arts,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 5, 2018, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/what-gets-forgotten-in-debates-about-the-liberal-arts/>.

³¹ Laff, Ned Scott and Scott Carlson. *Hacking College: Why the Major Doesn’t Matter—and What Really Does*. 2025, Johns Hopkins University Press.

The findings of Gateway Careers in Hennepin County and the corridor area point to this local reality, and make a case for a shift in how we conceptualize workforce development and career navigation away from transactional relationships between a career navigator and a job-seeker, toward holistic mentoring of individuals that leverages tapping into life experiences, interests, passions, and sense of vocational purpose to explore the breadth of opportunities in the “hidden job market.”






Target Occupations








Gateway Careers

Origin Occupations



Top 20 Gateway Careers in the Corridor by Total 2025 Employment, Grouped by Cluster

Career Clusters	Occupation	Quality & Green Jobs	2025 Jobs	2024 - 2029 Forecasted % Change	2024 - 2029 Replacement Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
Business, Management, and Administration	Customer Service Representatives		5,239	(8%)	3,403	\$26.34	HS or equivalent
	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks		2,643	(4%)	1,481	\$28.43	Some college
	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive		2,492	(1%)	1,356	\$26.57	HS or equivalent
	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers		923	(5%)	447	\$28.26	HS or equivalent
	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants		819	(1%)	416	\$39.71	HS or equivalent
Legal	Paralegals and Legal Assistants		2,228	(6%)	1,099	\$37.40	Associate's degree
Education	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary		1,902	0%	1,114	\$21.81	Some college
	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education		806	6%	445	\$22.23	Associate degree
Construction, Maintenance, and Operations	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General		1,899	2%	858	\$30.77	HS or equivalent
	Stockers and Order Fillers		1,743	(1%)	1,382	\$21.77	HS or equivalent
	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Q 	1,613	4%	830	\$33.63	Postsecondary nondegree award
	Light Truck Drivers		1,113	1%	569	\$25.72	HS or equivalent
	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers		972	5%	629	\$23.49	No formal credential
	Electricians		933	7%	411	\$44.42	HS or equivalent
	Machinists		928	3%	462	\$29.93	HS or equivalent
Healthcare	Nursing Assistants		1,429	4%	1,008	\$24.45	Postsecondary nondegree award
	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants		887	3%	441	\$26.27	HS or equivalent
Information Technology	Computer User Support Specialists		1,575	(3%)	493	\$35.31	Some college
Food Service	Cooks, Restaurant		1,730	9%	1,319	\$22.63	None
	Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers		770	3%	315	\$22.25	HS or equivalent



Top 20 Gateway Careers in the Corridor by Total 2025 Employment, with Posting Intensity, Unemployment, and Concentration

Career Clusters	Occupation	Quality & Green Jobs	Corridor	Hennepin County				Corridor			Automation Index
			2025 Jobs	2025 Jobs	Share of Empl in Corridor	Share Replaced 2024 - 2029	2024 Turnover Rate	Unempl Rate (April 2025)	30-Day Job Postings	LQ	
Business, Management, and Administration	Customer Service Representatives		5,239	23,486	22%	64%	59%	4.1%	131	1.48	96.4
	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks		2,643	9,650	27%	56%	34%	1.8%	84	1.05	103.6
	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive		2,492	10,825	23%	55%	39%	2.4%	163	0.94	91.4
	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers		923	5,384	17%	48%	35%	2.0%	200	0.70	87.8
	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants		819	3,487	23%	51%	35%	2.1%	40	1.21	92.4
Legal	Paralegals and Legal Assistants		2,228	3,726	60%	49%	31%	1.6%	107	1.70	89.4
Education	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary		1,902	7,876	24%	59%	65%	4.1%	124	0.98	89.7
	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education		806	3,775	21%	56%	71%	2.6%	59	1.19	81.5
Construction, Maintenance, and Operations	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General		1,899	9,452	20%	46%	45%	2.8%	288	0.97	109.6
	Stockers and Order Fillers		1,743	9,821	18%	79%	77%	6.1%	164	0.62	112.3
	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Q 	1,613	7,677	21%	52%	57%	3.4%	162	0.56	110.1
	Light Truck Drivers		1,113	5,937	19%	51%	74%	3.3%	44	0.97	112.9
	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers		972	5,179	19%	66%	71%	6.0%	29	0.70	129.1
	Electricians		933	4,036	23%	45%	44%	2.8%	27	0.82	110.3
	Machinists		928	4,380	21%	49%	28%	2.5%	33	2.47	115.2
Healthcare	Nursing Assistants		1,429	6,991	20%	71%	70%	3.8%	51	0.82	97.0
	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants		887	4,203	21%	50%	36%	1.0%	86	0.85	93.1
Information Technology	Computer User Support Specialists		1,575	6,515	24%	31%	38%	2.1%	239	1.54	82.9
Food Service	Cooks, Restaurant		1,730	8,276	21%	78%	71%	5.4%	66	0.95	125.0
	Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers		770	5,177	23%	73%	46%	3.6%	255	0.74	107.7

Additional Top Gateway Careers in Hennepin County by Total 2025 Employment, Grouped by Cluster

Career Clusters	Occupation	Quality & Green Jobs	2025 Jobs	2024 - 2029 Forecasted % Change	2024 - 2029 Replacement Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
Business, Management, and Administration	Office Clerks, General		18,861	(3%)	10,871	\$25.84	HS or equivalent
	Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other		2,785	(4%)	1,450	\$22.37	HS or equivalent
	Billing and Posting Clerks		2,514	0%	1,256	\$27.98	HS or equivalent
Construction, Maintenance, and Operations	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand		17,481	(3%)	11,212	\$23.79	None
	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers		3,111	4%	1,192	\$49.60	HS or equivalent
Human Services	Security Guards		4,199	(3%)	2,649	\$26.43	HS or equivalent
	Self-Enrichment Teachers		4,152	2%	2,479	\$25.84	HS or equivalent
	Social and Human Service Assistants		3,624	6%	1,834	\$25.26	HS or equivalent
	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	Q	2,840	(1%)	1,813	\$25.24	Postsecondary nondegree award
	Flight Attendants		2,702	6%	1,854	\$27.35	HS or equivalent

Additional Top Gateway Careers in Hennepin County, with Posting Intensity, Unemployment, and Concentration

Career Clusters	Occupation	Quality & Green Jobs	2025 Jobs	Share Replaced 2024 - 2029	2024 Turnover Rate	Unempl Rate (April 2025)	30-Day Job Postings	LQ	Automation Index
Business, Management, and Administration	Office Clerks, General		18,861	57%	52%	2.9%	81	1.2	102
	Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other		2,785	52%	49%	1.5%	40	2.0	87.6
	Billing and Posting Clerks		2,514	50%	40%	20%	39	1.0	98.5
Construction, Maintenance, and Operations	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand		17,481	64%	94%	6.0%	221	1.0	117.2
	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers		3,111	39%	35%	2.4%	69	0.6	106.2
Human Services	Security Guards		4,199	63%	76%	5.2%	204	0.6	109.8
	Self-Enrichment Teachers		4,152	60%	52%	1.8%	77	1.5	89
	Social and Human Service Assistants		3,624	52%	64%	2.3%	765	1.4	89.4
	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	Q	2,840	64%	30%	1.8%	158	0.8	98
	Flight Attendants		2,702	69%	31%	1.8%	1	3.5	97.0

These occupations met demand and wage thresholds county-wide, but did not meet one—or both—criteria in the corridor sub-region. All corridor Gateway Careers also meet demand and wage criteria county-wide and may be prioritized by workforce initiatives.

Gateway Career Talent Supply

This section details the essential demographics of the Hennepin County resident workforce employed in Gateway Careers, with a focus on the corridor.

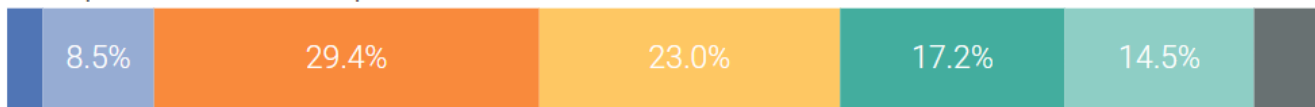
Age

As is true across the whole workforce, resident Gateway Career talent in the corridor area are younger, on average, than in the county overall; however talent holding Gateway Careers are slightly more likely to fall between the ages of 35 and 64 than among non-Gateway Careers—a reality observed at the county, metro, and state levels as well.³²

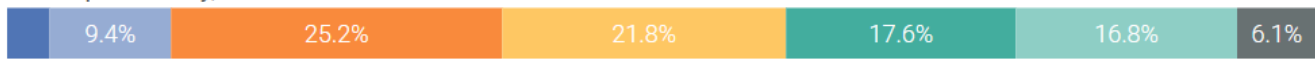
Some Gateway Careers have a particularly high concentration of prime working age talent, such as Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists, for whom nearly 30% of corridor resident workers fall between the ages of 35 and 44 years. This age bracket is also overrepresented among Construction Supervisors, Retail Supervisors, and Computer User Support Specialists. The corridor’s youngest resident workers between the ages of 16 and 24 are most highly concentrated in Restaurant Cook (23.0%) and Stocker and Order Filler roles (25.9%); while Bookkeeping and Accounting Clerks has the highest share of resident workers 65 and older (9.5%).

Age of the Employed Workforce by Region, Gateway Occupations

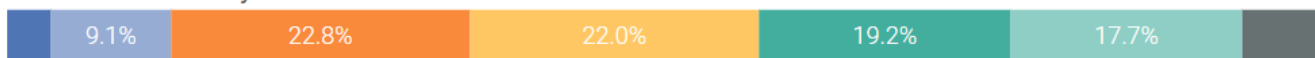
Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



Minnesota



³² Chmura JobsEQ 2025Q1 dataset, modeled to zip code areas based on ACS and LODES data. All employment statistics in this section are by place of residence.

Age of the Employed Workforce in the Corridor, Gateway Occupations³³

Occupation**	2025 Total Employment (place of work)		Corridor Demographics							
	Hennepin County Jobs	Corridor Jobs*	16 to 19 years	20 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over	
Cooks, Restaurant	8,276	1,730	10.4%	12.6%	27.3%	21.5%	15.5%	9.6%	3.2%	
Stockers and Order Fillers	9,821	1,743	8.2%	17.7%	29.2%	17.0%	11.8%	11.5%	4.5%	
Customer Service Representatives	23,486	5,239	5.9%	12.9%	32.6%	20.6%	12.4%	11.1%	4.5%	
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	17,481	3,093*	5.4%	13.2%	34.1%	18.6%	13.9%	11.6%	3.1%	
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	5,179	972	4.7%	8.5%	26.3%	24.8%	16.7%	13.4%	5.5%	
Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	5,177	770	3.7%	14.4%	32.0%	22.6%	14.2%	10.8%	2.3%	
Nursing Assistants	6,991	1,429	3.7%	13.0%	26.5%	23.1%	16.4%	13.2%	4.1%	
Office Clerks, General	18,861	4,016*	3.4%	10.9%	28.1%	19.6%	17.0%	15.3%	5.7%	
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	7,876	1,902	2.7%	13.5%	34.6%	19.7%	14.0%	11.8%	3.7%	
Self-Enrichment Teachers	4,152	731*	1.9%	8.0%	34.2%	21.0%	16.1%	11.9%	7.1%	
Electricians	4,036	933	1.6%	9.8%	32.0%	25.2%	16.6%	11.8%	3.1%	
Security Guards	4,199	591*	1.4%	10.1%	35.9%	19.6%	12.5%	14.0%	6.5%	
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	3,775	806	1.4%	11.2%	32.4%	25.3%	16.0%	10.7%	3.1%	
Machinists	4,380	928	1.1%	3.7%	24.5%	24.1%	19.0%	23.2%	4.4%	
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	2,840	626*	1.0%	6.6%	26.1%	29.2%	20.0%	12.7%	4.3%	
Light Truck Drivers	5,937	1,113	1.0%	4.6%	25.7%	24.9%	20.2%	18.5%	5.1%	
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	7,677	1,613	1.0%	4.7%	26.0%	24.7%	20.1%	18.4%	5.2%	
Social and Human Service Assistants	3,624	734*	0.9%	8.0%	34.5%	22.7%	15.9%	13.2%	4.8%	
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	9,452	1,899	0.9%	6.4%	25.7%	21.5%	19.0%	20.3%	6.2%	
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	5,384	923	0.8%	5.5%	28.3%	26.8%	19.7%	13.7%	5.2%	
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	9,650	2,643	0.6%	5.6%	21.0%	21.6%	19.3%	22.3%	9.5%	
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	10,825	2,492	0.6%	4.7%	26.7%	20.5%	18.0%	22.6%	6.9%	
Billing and Posting Clerks	2,514	642*	0.6%	5.0%	29.1%	24.9%	20.0%	16.5%	4.0%	
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	2,785	542*	0.5%	6.4%	35.3%	23.8%	16.1%	12.5%	5.3%	
Supervisors of Construction Trades Workers	3,111	770*	0.3%	2.4%	23.9%	27.6%	25.1%	17.3%	3.3%	
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	3,726	2,228	0.1%	8.2%	33.9%	20.2%	17.9%	15.3%	4.3%	
Computer User Support Specialists	6,515	1,575	0.1%	6.8%	36.7%	26.4%	14.8%	11.9%	3.3%	
Flight Attendants	2,702	72*	0.0%	8.5%	40.6%	17.1%	16.6%	13.3%	3.9%	
Executive Secretaries / Administrative Assistants	3,487	819	0.0%	2.1%	33.0%	17.4%	18.1%	23.6%	5.7%	
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,203	887	0.0%	7.6%	27.0%	24.1%	16.7%	21.4%	3.1%	

Race and Ethnicity

Compared to the overall corridor’s resident workforce, Gateway Careers have an overrepresentation of Black and Hispanic workers and an underrepresentation of white and Asian talent. By occupation, Nursing Assistants, Security Guards, Light Truck Drivers, and Restaurant Cooks are the most diverse Gateway Careers in the corridor and county overall. Nursing Assistants has the highest concentration of Black and African American talent (52.7% of the local workforce) of any Gateway

³³ Chmura JobsEQ 2025Q1 dataset, modeled to zip code areas based on ACS and LODES data. All employment statistics in this section are by place of residence. Total employment estimates from Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

*Fields shown with an asterisk do not meet Gateway Career requirements within the corridor region. While they may serve as strong county-wide career pathways, they lack demand or living wages within the corridor area.

** Occupations are colored corresponding to the career cluster grouping that they pertain to.

Career in the region. American Indian talent is overrepresented in Social and Human Services Assistant and Restaurant Cook roles (1.9% and 1.6% respectively), while multiracial talent is overrepresented among local Electricians (11.2%) and Medical Secretaries (10.0%). One in five Computer User Support Specialists in the corridor identify as Asian (20.8%), and this is also the occupation with the highest share of non-Hispanic talent (96.7%). Hispanic talent is most highly concentrated in Landscaping and Groundskeeping roles (23.4%) and Restaurant Cook roles (19.0%). Within the corridor, Manufacturing and Construction Gateway Careers have an overrepresentation of white talent; 67.3% of Construction Supervisors are white (and 92.9% non-Hispanic).

Race Demographics of the Employed Workforce by Region, Gateway Occupations

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



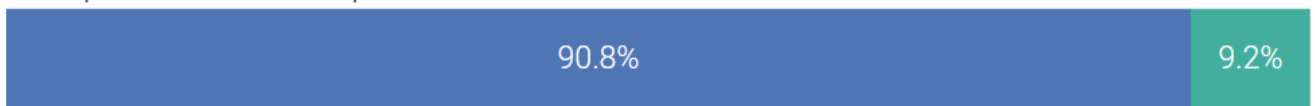
Minnesota



- White (53.0%)
- Black (28.3%)
- American Indian (0.8%)
- Asian (10.3%)
- Pacific Islander (0.0%)
- Two or More Races (7.6%)

Ethnicity Demographics of the Employed Workforce by Region, Gateway Occupations

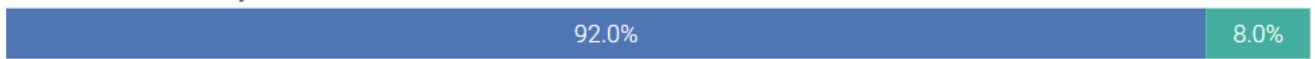
Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



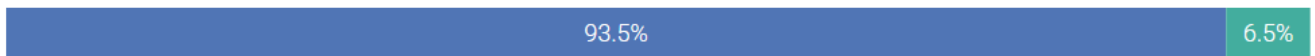
Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



Minnesota



- Non-Hispanic/Latino (90.8%)
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race) (9.2%)

Race and Ethnicity of the Employed Workforce in the Corridor, Gateway Occupations³⁴

Occupations**	Total 2025 Employment (place of work)		Corridor Demographics (place of residence)							
	Hennepin County Jobs	Corridor Jobs*	White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Two or More Races	Non- Hispanic/ Latino (of any race)	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	
Nursing Assistants	6,991	1,429	32.1%	52.7%	0.8%	7.9%	6.4%	93.9%	6.1%	
Security Guards	4,199	591*	32.4%	50.3%	0.8%	7.1%	9.4%	91.8%	8.2%	
Light Truck Drivers	5,937	1,113	46.1%	39.9%	0.9%	8.7%	4.5%	90.2%	9.8%	
Cooks, Restaurant	8,276	1,730	46.9%	31.1%	1.6%	11.5%	8.9%	81.0%	19.0%	
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	7,677	1,613	46.9%	39.2%	0.9%	8.5%	4.5%	90.1%	9.9%	
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	17,481	3,093*	50.4%	34.0%	1.1%	6.7%	7.8%	87.8%	12.2%	
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	2,840	626*	50.5%	28.8%	0.7%	10.9%	9.0%	91.7%	8.3%	
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	7,876	1,902	51.2%	21.0%	1.2%	17.2%	9.4%	92.7%	7.3%	
Social and Human Service Assistants	3,624	734*	52.0%	33.9%	1.9%	6.8%	5.3%	90.9%	9.1%	
Flight Attendants	2,702	72*	52.5%	34.1%	0.9%	7.7%	4.8%	93.4%	6.6%	
Customer Service Representatives	23,486	5,239	52.9%	28.3%	0.2%	9.2%	9.4%	91.0%	9.0%	
Billing and Posting Clerks	2,514	642*	52.9%	31.7%	0.7%	8.1%	6.6%	93.2%	6.8%	
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	3,775	806	53.3%	26.9%	1.4%	11.0%	7.4%	92.7%	7.3%	
Executive Secretaries / Administrative Assistants	3,487	819	53.4%	28.3%	0.8%	8.5%	8.9%	92.2%	7.8%	
Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	5,177	770	53.5%	31.3%	0.7%	6.9%	7.6%	91.5%	8.5%	
Computer User Support Specialists	6,515	1,575	53.6%	19.0%	1.1%	20.8%	5.5%	96.7%	3.3%	
Stockers and Order Fillers	9,821	1,743	54.3%	29.3%	0.8%	7.1%	8.4%	89.5%	10.5%	
Office Clerks, General	18,861	4,016*	54.4%	23.9%	0.4%	11.7%	9.5%	91.5%	8.5%	
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	5,384	923	59.0%	18.1%	1.0%	15.1%	6.8%	94.1%	5.9%	
Machinists	4,380	928	60.1%	16.1%	0.5%	17.5%	5.7%	95.5%	4.5%	
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	9,452	1,899	60.3%	22.1%	1.4%	6.9%	9.3%	90.5%	9.5%	
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,203	887	60.8%	16.4%	0.7%	12.1%	10.0%	90.7%	9.3%	
Electricians	4,036	933	60.9%	22.1%	1.4%	4.4%	11.2%	89.5%	10.5%	
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	2,785	542*	61.1%	21.7%	0.9%	8.3%	8.0%	93.7%	6.3%	
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	5,179	972	63.8%	24.1%	0.9%	2.2%	8.9%	76.6%	23.4%	
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	9,650	2,643	64.1%	16.9%	0.7%	12.1%	6.2%	94.6%	5.4%	
Self-Enrichment Teachers	4,152	731*	64.4%	18.2%	1.8%	10.0%	5.7%	94.7%	5.3%	
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	3,726	2,228	66.0%	19.5%	0.5%	6.1%	8.0%	91.8%	8.2%	
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	10,825	2,492	66.7%	18.2%	1.0%	8.1%	5.9%	94.2%	5.8%	
Supervisors of Construction Trades Workers	3,111	770*	67.3%	21.3%	0.9%	4.2%	6.4%	89.0%	11.0%	

³⁴ Chmura JobsEQ 2025Q1 dataset, modeled to zip code areas based on ACS and LODS data. All employment statistics in this section are by place of residence. Total employment estimates from Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

*Fields shown with an asterisk do not meet Gateway Career requirements within the corridor region. While they may serve as strong county-wide career pathways, they lack demand or living wages within the corridor area.

** Occupations are colored corresponding to the career cluster grouping that they pertain to.

Gender

Female talent is slightly underrepresented among Gateway Careers in the corridor (by just under one percentage point), yet is slightly overrepresented county-wide by a similar margin. There is slightly more significant underrepresentation of female talent in Gateway Careers at the metro (1 percentage point) and statewide (2 percentage points). Gateway Careers in Construction, Maintenance, and Operations have an overrepresentation of male talent, while Education, Business Administration, and Healthcare Gateway Careers have an overrepresentation of female talent in the corridor.

Gender of the Employed Workforce by Region, Gateway Occupations

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



Minnesota



Male (52.0%) Female (48.0%)

Gender of the Employed Workforce in the Corridor, Gateway Occupations³⁵

Occupation**	Total 2025 Employment (place of work)		Corridor Demographics (place of residence)	
	Hennepin County Jobs	Corridor Jobs*	Male	Female
Electricians	4,036	933	96.6%	3.4%
Machinists	4,380	928	94.3%	5.7%
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	9,452	1,899	94.3%	5.7%
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	3,111	770*	92.9%	7.1%
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	5,179	972	92.7%	7.3%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	7,677	1,613	91.0%	9.0%
Light Truck Drivers	5,937	1,113	90.9%	9.1%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	17,481	3,093*	75.3%	24.7%
Computer User Support Specialists	6,515	1,575	74.5%	25.5%
Security Guards	4,199	591*	70.9%	29.1%
Stockers and Order Fillers	9,821	1,743	60.3%	39.7%
Cooks, Restaurant	8,276	1,730	54.4%	45.6%
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	5,384	923	54.2%	45.8%
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	5,177	770	41.0%	59.0%
Self-Enrichment Teachers	4,152	731*	40.0%	60.0%
Customer Service Representatives	23,486	5,239	35.1%	64.9%
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	2,785	542*	27.1%	72.9%
Social and Human Service Assistants	3,624	734*	26.7%	73.3%
Flight Attendants	2,702	72*	24.8%	75.2%
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	3,726	2,228	22.0%	78.0%
Office Clerks, General	18,861	4,016*	20.4%	79.6%
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	7,876	1,902	18.9%	81.1%
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	9,650	2,643	15.1%	84.9%
Billing and Posting Clerks	2,514	642*	12.2%	87.8%
Nursing Assistants	6,991	1,429	10.7%	89.3%
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	10,825	2,492	8.9%	91.1%
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	2,840	626*	7.6%	92.4%
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,203	887	6.9%	93.1%
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	3,487	819	4.9%	95.1%
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	3,775	806	3.6%	96.4%
Gateway Careers			52.0%	48.0%
Total - All Occupations			51.3%	48.7%

Educational Attainment

Although no Gateway Careers typically require more than a two-year degree, about one in three resident workers of the corridor region employed in Gateway Careers (36.4%) hold a four-year degree or higher. Self-Enrichment Teachers, Preschool Teachers, and Paralegals are the three occupations most likely to have local talent that holds a much higher level of professional

³⁵ Chmura JobsEQ 2025Q1 dataset, modeled to zip code areas based on ACS and LODS data. All employment statistics in this section are by place of residence. Total employment estimates from Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

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** Occupations are colored corresponding to the career cluster grouping that they pertain to.

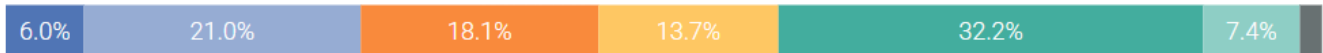
education than typically required for their position. Hennepin County communities outside of the corridor have even more Gateway Career talent with advanced levels of education.

Educational Attainment of the Workforce by Region, Gateway Occupations

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



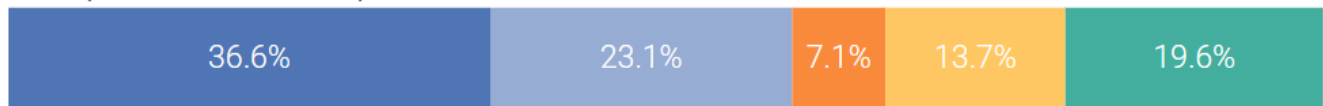
Minnesota



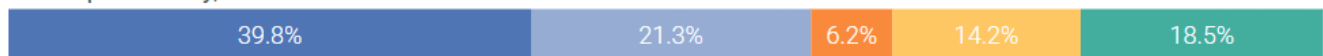
- < High School (7.2%)
- Two-Year (14.0%)
- High School (23.4%)
- Four-Year (28.7%)
- Some College (18.9%)
- Master's (6.2%)
- PhD (1.5%)

Education and Training Requirements of Local Jobs, Gateway Occupations

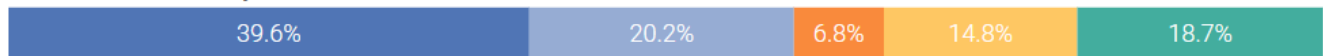
Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



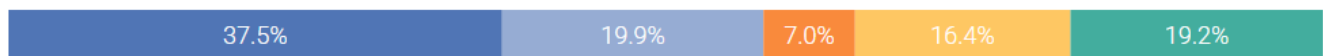
Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



Minnesota



- Short-term OJT, no exp, no award (36.6%)
- Previous work experience, no award (13.7%)
- Moderate-term OJT, no exp, no award (23.1%)
- 2-year degree or certificate (19.6%)
- Long-term training, no exp, no award (7.1%)
- Bachelor's degree (0.0%)
- Postgraduate degree (0.0%)

Educational Attainment of the Employed Workforce in the Corridor, Gateway Occupations³⁶

Occupation**	2025 Total Employment		Corridor Demographics (place of residence)								Typical Education Requirement
	Hennepin County Jobs	Corridor Jobs*	< High School	High School	Some College	Two-Year	Four-Year	Master's	PhD		
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	5,179	972	29.1%	29.5%	13.0%	7.5%	17.6%	2.5%	0.8%	None	
Cooks, Restaurant	8,276	1,730	22.6%	35.7%	15.5%	8.8%	14.0%	2.6%	0.8%	None	
Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	3,111	770*	13.1%	34.3%	17.7%	10.4%	20.2%	3.3%	1.0%	HS or equivalent	
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	17,481	3,093*	13.0%	37.5%	18.5%	10.1%	17.2%	2.7%	1.0%	None	
Light Truck Drivers	5,937	1,113	12.4%	38.9%	19.9%	9.9%	15.2%	2.8%	0.8%	HS or equivalent	
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	7,677	1,613	12.4%	38.9%	19.9%	9.9%	15.2%	2.8%	0.8%	Postsecondary non-degree award	
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	9,452	1,899	9.4%	33.5%	20.6%	16.9%	16.5%	2.2%	1.0%	HS or equivalent	
Stockers and Order Fillers	9,821	1,743	9.2%	32.7%	19.0%	11.1%	23.0%	4.1%	1.0%	HS or equivalent	
Nursing Assistants	6,991	1,429	7.8%	28.8%	25.9%	15.7%	17.8%	3.1%	1.0%	Postsecondary non-degree award	
Machinists	4,380	928	7.4%	37.8%	23.9%	18.5%	10.4%	1.4%	0.5%	HS or equivalent	
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	5,177	770	6.9%	26.4%	20.8%	13.8%	27.1%	3.9%	1.1%	HS or equivalent	
Electricians	4,036	933	6.0%	29.1%	24.3%	21.1%	16.5%	2.4%	0.7%	HS or equivalent, Apprenticeship	
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	2,840	626*	4.5%	35.0%	26.7%	16.9%	14.1%	2.0%	0.8%	Postsecondary non-degree award	
Security Guards	4,199	591*	4.2%	23.9%	21.1%	14.3%	28.6%	6.4%	1.5%	HS or equivalent	
Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	5,384	923	3.5%	17.2%	17.3%	10.9%	40.8%	8.3%	1.9%	HS or equivalent	
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	7,876	1,902	2.8%	14.8%	13.1%	13.7%	39.8%	12.9%	2.9%	Some college, no degree	
Customer Service Representatives	23,486	5,239	2.5%	15.8%	18.9%	12.8%	41.1%	7.5%	1.4%	HS or equivalent	
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	9,650	2,643	2.3%	17.0%	24.2%	16.4%	32.9%	6.1%	1.0%	Some college, no degree	
Office Clerks, General	18,861	4,016*	2.3%	19.2%	20.0%	15.1%	34.4%	7.4%	1.6%	HS or equivalent	
Billing and Posting Clerks	2,514	642*	1.8%	17.5%	21.3%	17.9%	33.6%	6.5%	1.4%	HS or equivalent	
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	10,825	2,492	1.6%	15.5%	18.8%	15.6%	38.8%	8.2%	1.5%	HS or equivalent	
Social and Human Service Assistants	3,624	734*	1.3%	6.5%	10.7%	9.0%	49.7%	19.7%	3.1%	HS or equivalent	
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	2,785	542*	1.1%	9.1%	13.6%	11.2%	46.3%	16.1%	2.5%	HS or equivalent	
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,203	887	1.1%	15.8%	23.4%	17.9%	32.8%	8.2%	0.8%	HS or equivalent	
Self-Enrichment Teachers	4,152	731*	0.8%	4.6%	7.6%	6.5%	46.6%	26.9%	6.9%	HS or equivalent	
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	3,775	806	0.8%	5.8%	8.8%	9.2%	49.6%	23.5%	2.4%	Associate degree	
Flight Attendants	2,702	72*	0.7%	6.2%	16.2%	11.8%	53.7%	10.0%	1.3%	HS or equivalent	
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	3,487	819	0.7%	7.6%	15.1%	13.1%	52.2%	9.7%	1.7%	HS or equivalent	
Computer User Support Specialists	6,515	1,575	0.6%	4.8%	11.9%	12.8%	53.6%	14.6%	1.8%	Some college, no degree	
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	3,726	2,228	0.5%	5.5%	10.9%	15.8%	53.0%	9.1%	5.3%	Associate degree	

³⁶ Chmura JobsEQ 2025Q1 dataset, modeled to zip code areas based on ACS and LODES data. All employment statistics in this section are by place of residence. Total employment estimates from Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

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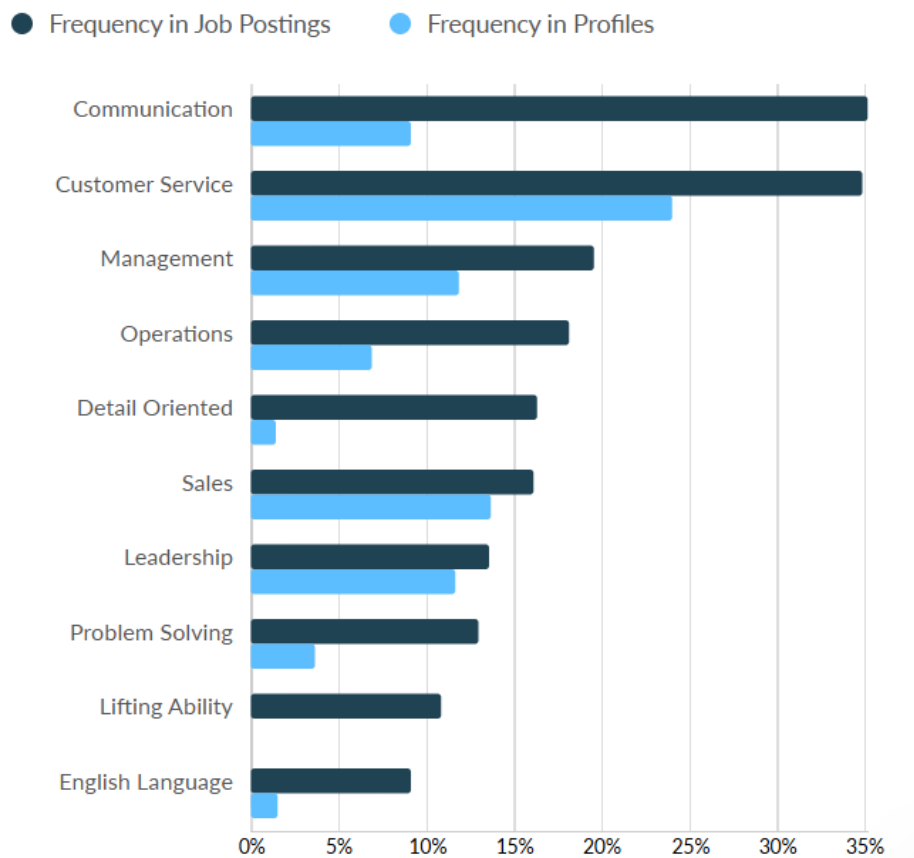
** Occupations are colored corresponding to the career cluster grouping that they pertain to.

Promising Pathways

Core Gateway Career Skills for Success

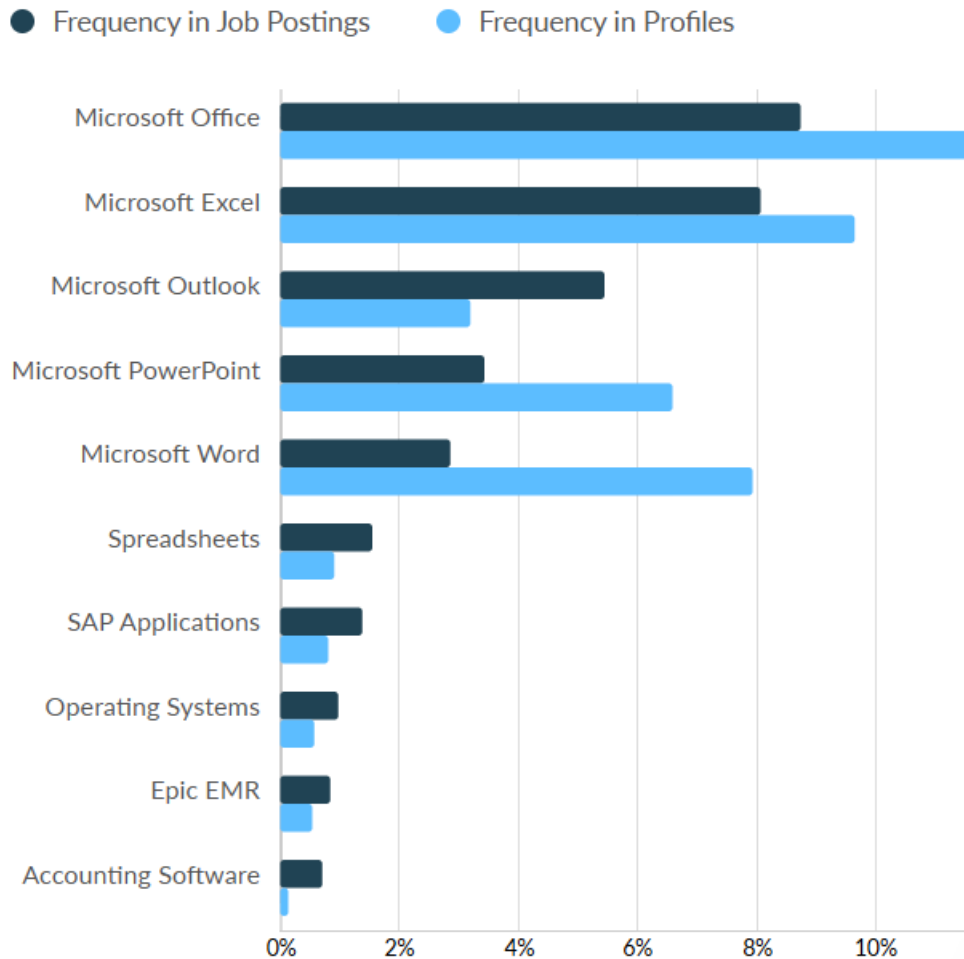
There were nearly 66,000 Gateway Careers advertised in Hennepin County from June 2024 through May 2025. Around 7,000 unique employers were competing for talent across the 209 occupations identified as Gateway Careers locally, with median posted wages sitting at about \$51,600 over this timeframe (up 22% from 2022). What sets these roles apart from lower wage entry-level positions is their focus on essential skillsets. The following skills are mentioned in high frequency across all types of Gateway Careers in the county and are likely foundational to career success across many different career pathways. These should be considered in any training or educational program developed for career advancement.³⁷

Frequency of Common Skills in Job Postings and Talent Profiles, June 2024 – May 2025



³⁷ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset. Aggregate live deduplicated job postings advertised between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025.

Frequency of Software Skills in Job Postings and Talent Profiles, June 2024 – May 2025



Priority Sector Gateway Careers

Combining the labor market analysis completed above, several priority Gateway Careers emerge for nuanced career pathway development in Hennepin County in alignment to the Drive for Five sectors and top industries of concentration in the county.

Information Technology Sector

Demand for Information Technology (IT) talent across a wide range of industries has seen a dramatic shift in the past two years. Gateway Career opportunities have dropped precipitously in job postings metro-wide, with 62% fewer job postings in the past 12 months compared to the prior period. The market is dominated by larger employers and staffing agencies, with no single industry dominating the hiring landscape for Gateway Career job postings. Fewer job postings and a highly-skilled incumbent workforce make the current job market challenging for new professionals in the

field. While nearly 84% of all IT positions in the MSP Metro typically require a Bachelor's degree, an even higher share of IT talent hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. Collaboration between training providers, employers, and workforce agencies to deliver programs that lead directly to employment, offer mentorship supports, and professional development opportunities can create more robust pathways to well-paying jobs.³⁸

Computer User Support Specialists and Customer Service Representatives

Despite challenges in the job market today for many IT careers, entry-level Computer User Support Specialists roles—including customer support and help desk positions—remain the last standing traditional access point to tech careers for individuals without a four-year degree. As a “foot-in-the-door” entry to business careers and user-focused IT, these positions are smaller in number locally than in prior years, with 1,439 people employed in these roles within the corridor, they are still 40% more highly concentrated locally than the national average. About 25% of Hennepin County's total Computer User Support Specialist positions are found within the corridor area.

In order to create a holistic pathway in alignment with the evolving role of user support, pathways focused on this occupation should include Customer Service Representatives in their scope. As the top Gateway Career in the county (and corridor) by total volume of employment by 2025 estimates and about 50% more highly concentrated in the county than the national average, this role is evolving in response to automation and still serving as the lowest-barrier career in the region. Local wages are about 21% higher than the national benchmark (taking into account cost of living). Customer Service roles of the future will increasingly emphasize human skills such as de-escalation, problem solving, and communication, as indicated in these rising skillsets advertised in local job postings.

Computer User Support Specialists and Customer Service Representatives are needed across a wide range of industries, but with relative consistency in foundational skill needs. Top industries employing this talent include Corporate Managing Offices (10.4%), Direct Health and Medical Insurance Carriers (7.5%), Commercial Banking (4.9%), and Insurance Agencies (4.5%). Staffing and Temp Agencies have a high recruiting presence in Hennepin County and the MSP Metro as a whole. These agencies may be important first points of contact for workforce training and career navigation staff.

³⁸ In alignment with MN DEED, the broad IT sector is defined as the cluster of occupations including all Computer and Mathematical Occupations (SOC 15-0000), Computer and Information Systems Managers (SOC 11-3021) and Computer Hardware Engineers (SOC 17-2061).

Healthcare Sector

Healthcare talent demand remains high across all occupation types, with a limited number of Gateway Careers serving as a crucial entry point for talent into a variety of long-term career paths. This sector requires attention to the unique workforce needs and workplace environments of different employer types, as well as the geographic nuances of where employers are located. Hospitals are more highly concentrated in downtown Minneapolis, in comparison to Older Adult Services providers (Nursing and Residential Care Facilities) which are more prominently found in first-and second ring suburbs, including Columbia Heights, Hopkins, Maple Grove among others.

Nursing Pathways

Nursing Assistants and Licensed Practical Nurses both appear on the corridor and county-wide lists of Gateway Careers, but Nursing Assistant roles barely meet the wage threshold requirements. Low wages are likely a strong contributing factor to high turnover rates (70%) and unemployment (3.8%) in this occupation. Needs of employers vary between hospitals, clinics, and long-term care providers; in Hennepin County, hospitals are more highly concentrated than the typical community nationally and are often able to pay higher wage rates for nursing talent. Long-term care providers have higher talent needs for Nursing Assistants and Licensed Practical Nurses but have lower posted salaries and as an industry are experiencing higher turnover rates for talent. Partnerships between local community-based organizations and postsecondary institutions to establish earn-and-learn programs that incorporate employer leadership into program design and offer stackable credentials to further career advancement will ensure retention of talent in nursing pathways as they advance their careers.

Pharmacy Technicians

There are nearly 2,300 people working in Hennepin County as Pharmacy Technicians, with about 18% of them employed in the corridor region. Unemployment in these roles is low at just 2.1% county-wide, and turnover sits at about 54%. The growth outlook is moderate, but nearly 50% of all currently-employed talent will need to be replaced with new Pharmacy Technicians by 2029—nearly 1,100 people. Most job postings advertised locally do not require any experience (55%), and another 35% look for talent with less than a year of relevant pharmacy experience prior to hire.

A career as a Pharmacy Technician can start with about nine months of training and preparation. An individual with 18 years or older with a GED or high school diploma, a clean criminal record (with no felonies) who has either 1) completed a Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) course or 2) worked at least 500 hours in a pharmacy (as an aide or assistant) may take a qualifying PTCB exam. Passing this exam earns the title of Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT).

Design of a Pharmacy Technician career pathway program should always be done with the leadership of employers seeking talent, as demand fluctuates with the market landscape. Nearly two-thirds (61%) of employers of Pharmacy Technicians are Pharmacies and Drug Retailers, but Hospitals (14%), Supermarkets (5.2%), and Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters (3.0%) also have notable demand for this talent, and often slightly different talent needs. Employers with the highest volumes of Pharmacy Technician job postings in Hennepin County over the past year include Walgreens, CVS Health, Actalent, Walmart, Optum, and M Health Fairview.

Other Careers of Focus

Due to the high local demand and essential role of the Health Care industry in community well-being, additional specialized roles in this sector may be ripe for employer partnerships. Other highly-specialized Healthcare Gateway Careers that have low barriers to entry and high forecasted talent shortages that would be strong opportunities for career pathway consideration include:

- 1) **Medical Records Specialists** – High local concentration in Minneapolis; aligned to Customer Service Representative talent demand
- 2) **Radiologic Technologists and Technicians** – High local concentration in Minneapolis
- 3) **Medical Equipment Repairers** – High local concentration; low unemployment
- 4) **Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors** – High local concentration
- 5) **Phlebotomists** – High score for job quality; high local replacement demand
- 6) **Medical Assistants** – High MSP Metro regional demand
- 7) **Dental Assistants** – High local replacement demand; High MSP Metro regional demand
- 8) **Dental Hygienists** – Low turnover; very low unemployment rate

Manufacturing Sector

A large share of Manufacturing Gateway Careers are considered green jobs, and some signal favorable job quality indicators among local job postings. Less concentrated in Minneapolis than in suburban Hennepin County, and with high representation among specific industries such as Medical Device Manufacturing, Semiconductor Manufacturing, and Industrial Machinery Manufacturing, this is a sector that requires employer partnerships to ensure successful implementation of career pathways across the numerous Gateway Careers of opportunity.

General Maintenance and Repair Workers

Nearly 9,500 people work as General Maintenance and Repair Workers in Hennepin County, with only 2.6% of available workers being unemployed as of April 2025. About 46% of general maintenance talent employed in 2024 will need to be replaced by 2029—a total of nearly 4,300

General Maintenance Workers county-wide, backed up by one of the highest job posting intensities and growth forecasts among similar occupations. An average 30-day period saw nearly 700 General Maintenance Worker roles advertised in Hennepin County this past year. About 20% of the occupation's total employment is based in the corridor region.

Among the top Manufacturing sector Gateway Careers in Hennepin County, this role has the highest wage at an average of \$30.77 per hour county-wide. Roles typically require a high school diploma or equivalent, and moderate on-the-job training for desired skillsets. Skills in this occupation are transferrable to many Manufacturing and Construction careers, and demand for this talent is spread across a wide range of industries. Employers with the highest volumes of job postings over the past year include staffing and temp agencies, management companies, long-term care facilities, hotels, and hospitals.

Other Careers of Focus

Other highly specialized Manufacturing Gateway Careers that have low barriers to entry and high forecasted talent shortages that would be strong opportunities for career pathway consideration include:

- 1) **Machinists** – High local concentration outside of Minneapolis; High MSP Metro regional demand
- 2) **Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians** – High local concentration outside of Minneapolis
- 3) **Medical Equipment Repairers** – High local concentration outside of Minneapolis; low unemployment
- 4) **Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers** – High local concentration outside of Minneapolis; High MSP Metro regional demand
- 5) **Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians** – High local concentration outside of Minneapolis; High MSP Metro regional demand
- 6) **Chemical Technicians** – High local concentration outside of Minneapolis; High MSP Metro regional demand

Educational Services Sector

Few Educational Services Gateway Careers are accessible in Hennepin County and across the MSP Metro without attaining a Bachelor's degree or higher. However, careers in community education, health and wellness instruction, coaching, and arts education are in demand and strong opportunities for freelance and part-time work. Teaching Assistants are one of the only full-time

Gateway Careers in this sector which are in-demand, pay a living wage, do not require advanced education.

Teaching Assistants

Despite low-barrier entry points to the Educational Services sector being sparse, there is notable demand for Teaching Assistants both county-wide and in the corridor. Nearly 7,900 people currently work as Teaching Assistants in the county as of 2025 estimates, with 24% of these working within the corridor. Nearly 300 jobs were advertised in a 30-day time frame across the county, signaling demand for this talent. Job titles used by employers include Paraprofessionals, Education Assistants, Assistant Teachers, and Classroom Aides.

Despite only being forecast to grow by only 1% between 2024 and 2029 official estimates, about 59% of all Teaching Assistants employed in 2024 will need to be replaced with new talent by 2029. While some workers may seek to enter a Teaching Assistant role for the long-term, these positions also serve as low barriers to entry into teaching and school administration professions, allowing talent to gain experience and exposure to school environments prior to continuing with long-term and potentially costly postsecondary education programming.

Construction Sector

Despite being underrepresented in the county and corridor, Construction careers remain important to support the local built environment of Hennepin County's communities. Significant project sites across Hennepin County may be promising opportunities for job seekers.

Electricians

Just over 4,000 people work as Electricians in Hennepin County, with 23% of these working for companies based in the corridor. About 25% of all Electricians employed as of 2024 will need to be replaced by 2029 due to job changes, retirements, and other exits from the profession. These roles are highly concentrated in Hennepin County's suburban communities outside of Minneapolis and more broadly across the MSP Metro.

To become an Electrician in Minnesota, the typical career pathway involves earning a high school diploma or GED and then gaining formal training through a four-to-five-year apprenticeship program which combines on-the-job training with classroom instruction. There are two primary paths for earning a Class A Journeyman Electrician License: 1) Enroll in a two-year electrical course approved by the board of electricity and complete 36 months (7,000 hours) of work experience, or 2) complete 48 months (8,000 hours) of work under the supervision of a licensed electrician.

Electrical apprentices in Minnesota are required to be at least 17 years old with a high school

diploma or GED, have reliable transportation, be physically fit, and pass an aptitude test. A supervising company must submit written agreements to the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Apprenticeship Department, and upon completion of the state-approved internship, the apprentice receives a certificate of completion. After gaining the required experience and passing the Journeyman Electrician Exam, a Journeyperson can then pursue a Master Electrician License.

Other Careers of Focus

Other highly-specialized Construction Gateway Careers that have low barriers to entry and high concentrations of employment in suburban Hennepin County that would be strong opportunities for career pathway consideration include:

- 1) **Heavy Truck Drivers** – High local concentration outside of Minneapolis; Green job; Job quality indicators present in local job postings
- 2) **Architectural and Civil Drafters** – High local concentration outside of Minneapolis

Other High-Concentration Local Gateway Careers

Paralegals and Legal Assistants in the Corridor

With a high concentration of legal firms within the corridor region, workforce opportunities to enter into legal pathways are uniquely featured in the corridor's geography. Specifically, Paralegals and Legal Assistants ranks as the occupation with the fourth highest total employment volume as of 2025 job estimates. This translates to 2,228 total local workers, or 60% of Hennepin County's total Paralegal workforce. These roles are 70% more highly concentrated in the corridor than in an average community nationwide (LQ 1.7) and have a low local unemployment rate (1.6%) compared to national rates. About 49% of workers holding these roles in 2024 will need to be replaced by 2029—equivalent to about 1,100 total workers. There are about 107 unique postings advertised in the corridor area in a typical 30-day period, signaling significant employer demand for these specialized roles.

With an hourly salary of \$37.40, Paralegals and Legal Assistants have high earnings among Gateway Careers. In Minnesota, there are no state-mandated requirements for paralegals to be licensed or certified. However, most employers prefer candidates with formal education, such as an Associate or Bachelor's degree in paralegal studies, or a certificate from an ABA-approved program. The Minnesota Paralegal Association (MPA) offers a voluntary certification program (MnCP) for those seeking to demonstrate their qualifications. Nationally, these roles typically require an Associate degree, and among local postings, about 15% require an Associate degree, while 60% indicate a

high school diploma, certificate, or no education requirement. This suggests that a Paralegal position might be a strong gateway into a living wage career.

Social and Human Services Assistants Across Hennepin County

Just over 3,600 people work as Social and Human Services Assistants in Hennepin County as of 2025 estimates, forecast to grow by 6% through 2029. Over half (52%) of talent holding a Social and Human Services Assistant role as of 2024 will need to be replaced with new talent by 2029 due to job changes, retirements, and turnover. These positions are highly concentrated in Hennepin County, with about 36% more jobs locally than found on average nationally (LQ 1.36). In a 30-day period, there were 765 total job postings for Social and Human Services Assistants in Hennepin County, signaling dramatic employer needs amidst a landscape of low unemployment (2.3%).

Typically requiring no more than a high school diploma and short-term on-the-job training, this occupation has broad demand across government and nonprofit institutions, paying \$25.26 per hour on average across all roles county-wide. Both of these facts are backed up by local job posting data; only 10% of Social and Human Services Assistant roles advertised over the past year require a Bachelor's degree, 3% an Associate degree, and all others a high school diploma (53%) or no minimum educational requirements (34%). Older-Adult Services Providers represent nine of the ten top-posting employers advertising jobs for Social and Human Services Assistants (Ebenezer, M Health Fairview, Presbyterian Homes, Cassia, Ecumen, Great Lakes Management, Chandler Place, Sunrise Senior Living, and the Goodman Group). Specific job titles used by employers include Life Enrichment Assistants/Managers/Coordinators, Social Service Designees, Culinary Assistants, Social Services Assistants, and Community Connectors.

Essential Green Jobs

Demand and forecasted growth among green jobs varies by occupation type and sector. Green jobs that are requiring more green enhanced skills (marked by a green leaf) frequently see job postings in Hennepin County with indicators of good job quality. In contrast, among roles necessary for light rail construction, more positions are classified as green jobs due to increased demand (marked by a green arrow) through the requirements of an expanding green economy.

About 16,600 people currently work in Green Gateway Careers located in the corridor region, and nearly 85,000 county-wide.

55% of Hennepin County's Green Gateway Workforce will need to be replaced by 2029.

Broadly analyzed, the top ten green

jobs ranked by total employment volume in the corridor region by 2029 will remain flat, yet will simultaneously require just over 8,600 replacement workers. Across Hennepin County, just under 47,000 new workers will be needed to fill Green Gateway Careers by 2029—replacement of about 55% of 2024's total employment in Green Gateway Careers in Hennepin County.













Two related production occupations in the top ten list of Green Gateway Careers county-wide do not have sufficient demand within the corridor to qualify as Gateway Careers in the corridor area: Laborers and General Production Workers. Conversely, two automotive maintenance occupations that do not meet Gateway Career criteria county-wide are in high demand with living wage careers in the corridor and may make for strong local pathways of focus: Automotive Service Mechanics and Bus/Truck Mechanics. These examples illustrate opportunities to right-size and locate training opportunities within communities that need the workers most.³⁹

Nearly 30% of Corridor Gateway Career Employment is in Green Occupations

About 16,600 people work in Green Gateway Careers in the corridor region. Of these, around 8,600 will need to be replaced with new talent by 2029.

³⁹ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

Green Gateway Careers of Focus in Hennepin County and the Corridor, 2025

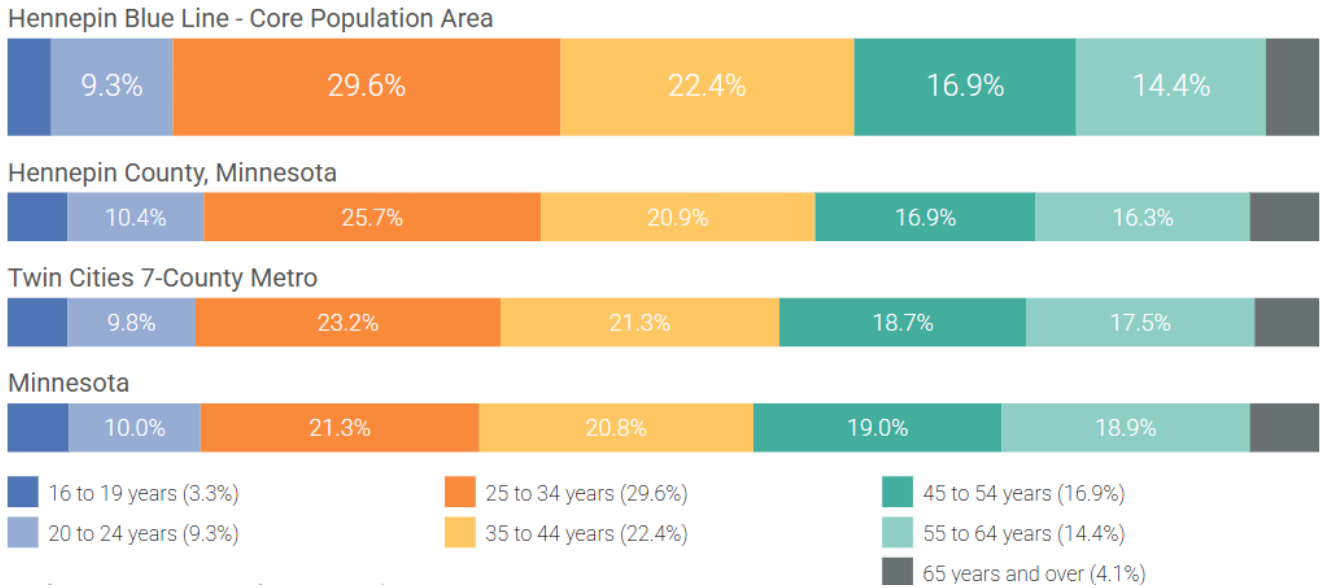
Occupation	Green Job Type	Quality	Hennepin County		Corridor	
			Gateway	2025 Employment	Gateway	2025 Employment
Customer Service Representatives	Increased Demand 		Y	23,486	Y	5,239
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	Increased Demand 		Y	17,481	N	3,093
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	Enhanced Skills 		Y	9,452	Y	1,899
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Enhanced Skills 	Q	Y	7,677	Y	1,613
Electricians	Increased Demand 		Y	4,036	Y	933
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	New and Emerging 		Y	3,111	Y	770
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	Increased Demand 		Y	2,575	Y	538
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	Enhanced Skills 		Y	2,275	Y	478
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	Increased Demand 		Y	1,639	Y	345
Production Workers, All Other	New and Emerging 	Q	Y	1,599	N	333
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	Enhanced Skills 		N	3,104	Y	551
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	Enhanced Skills 	Q	N	1,455	Y	315

Green Gateway Career Workforce Demographics

Young workers starting their career and older workers approaching retirement are both more heavily represented in the local Green Gateway Career workforce than typical across all occupation types. Resident workers in Hennepin County's Green Gateway Careers are more likely to fall in the 20-24 and 55 to 64 age brackets than the overall population, both county-wide and in the corridor.⁴⁰

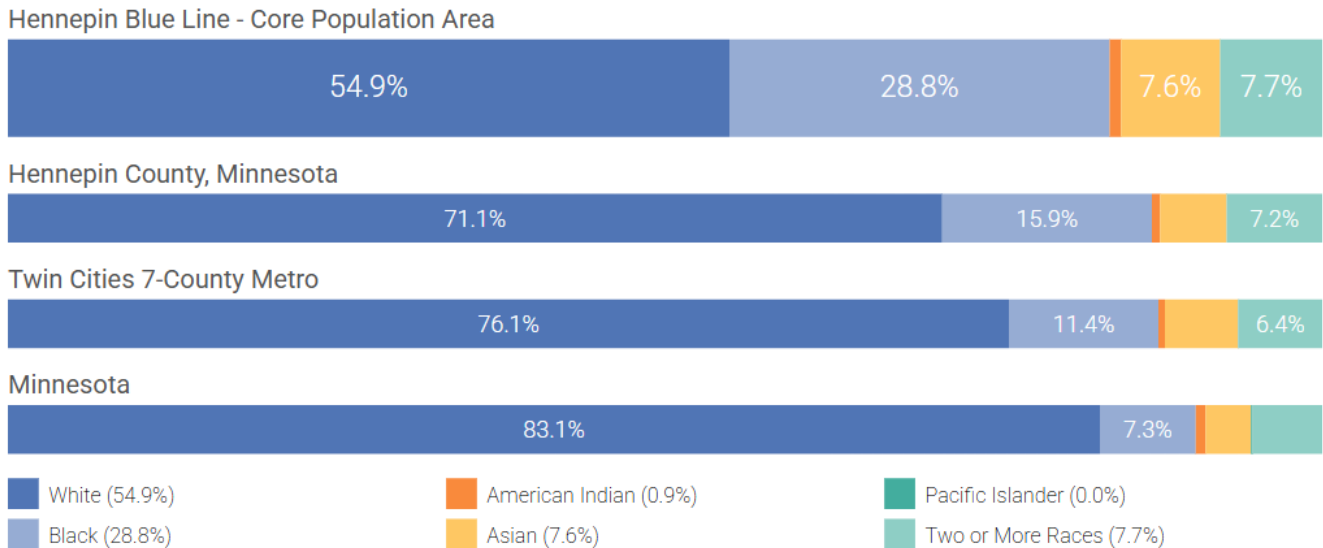
⁴⁰ Chmura JobsEQ 2025Q1 dataset, modeled to zip code areas based on ACS and LODES data. All employment statistics in this section are by place of residence.

Age of the Employed Workforce by Region, Green Gateway Careers



Both Hennepin County and the corridor region have an even higher population of Black and African American workers than observed in the local workforce overall, with about 15.9% of Hennepin County Green Gateway Career talent identifying as Black or African American compared to 12.1% across all occupations. Hispanic talent is also more highly concentrated in these roles than in the overall workforce. White and Asian talent are underrepresented in Green Gateway Careers locally compared to their distribution across all occupations as a whole.

Race Demographics of the Employed Workforce by Region, Green Gateway Careers



Ethnicity Demographics of the Employed Workforce by Region, Green Gateway Careers

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



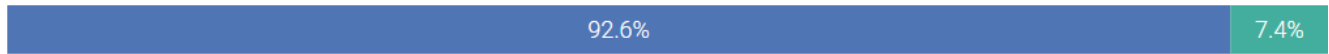
Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



Minnesota



■ Non-Hispanic/Latino (89.8%) ■ Hispanic or Latino (of any race) (10.2%)

Only 27% of Green Gateway Career talent identify as female in Hennepin County, and just under one in four resident Green Gateway workers in the corridor.

Gender of the Employed Workforce by Region, Green Gateway Careers

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



Minnesota



■ Male (75.2%) ■ Female (24.8%)

A majority (85%) of Green Gateway Careers require no postsecondary education at all, yet many workers hold these advanced degrees; 59.6% of corridor and 56.5% county-wide talent holding these positions do not have a postsecondary credential.

Educational Attainment of the Workforce by Region, Green Gateway Careers

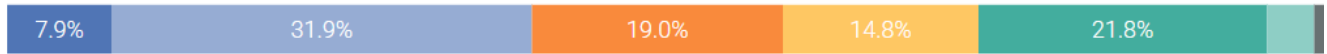
Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



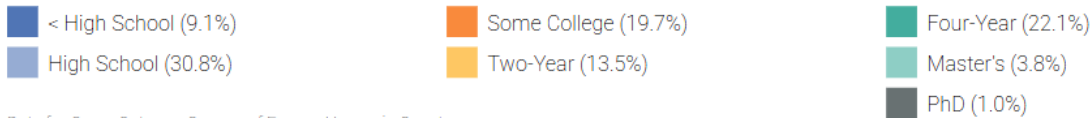
Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro

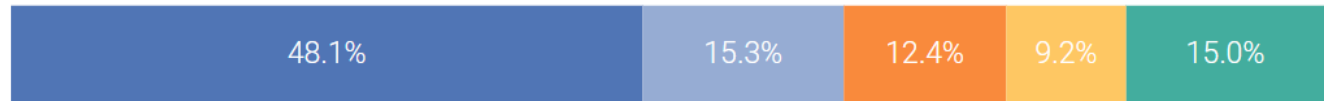


Minnesota



Education and Training Requirements of Local Jobs, Green Gateway Careers

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



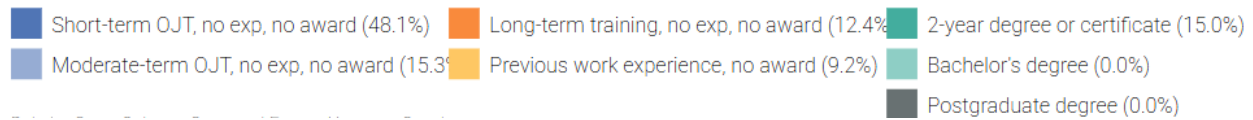
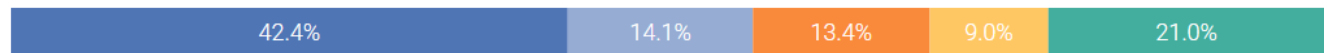
Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



Minnesota



Essential Line Construction Jobs

A wide range of new talent are needed to fill construction roles essential for light rail construction.⁴¹ In this report, we have specified these roles as Essential Trades, then further detailing those aligned to the Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction industry (NAICS 237) for the Essential Line Construction jobs.

As previously noted in this report, Construction industry employment is underrepresented in Hennepin County by place of employment. This is also true of all 22 occupations identified by Hennepin County Workforce Solutions as Essential Trades for line construction efforts; none of the specified occupations are found in a similar or higher concentration of local jobs than observed nationwide.

Nearly 7,500 people work in the Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction industry across the seven-county MSP Metro, with 1,838 of those employed within Hennepin County. Four Essential Trades occupations have more than 10% of total employment being attributed to the Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction industry specifically metro-wide: Construction Laborers, Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers, Paving, Surfacing, and Tamping Equipment Operators, and Pile Driver Operators.

About one third (33%) of the MSP Metro's Essential Trades workforce reside in Hennepin County.














And, about 31% of Hennepin County's Essential Trades workforce reside in the corridor region (5,702 workers out of 18,404 county-wide).

⁴¹ Lightcast 2025Q2 dataset.

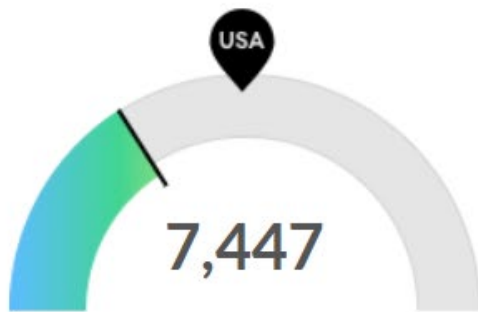
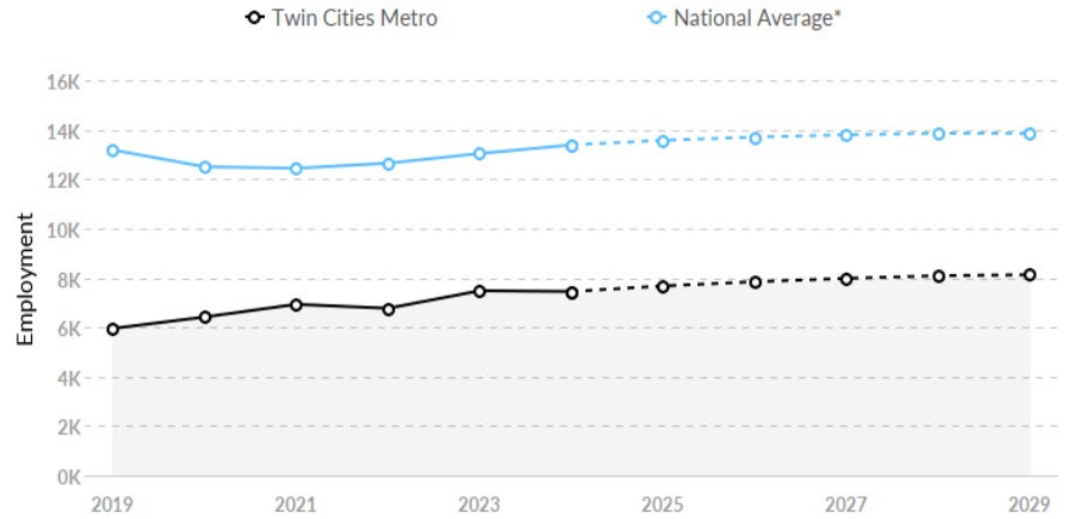
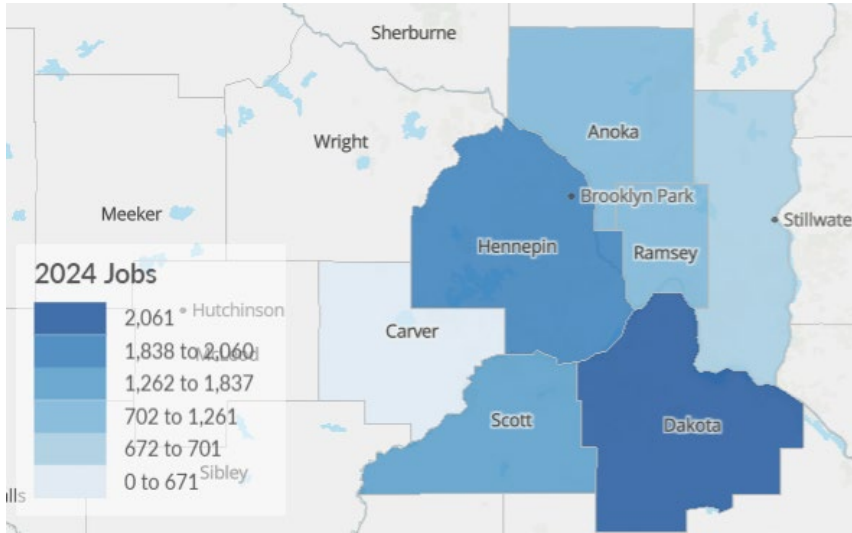
Hennepin County Essential Trades Workforce Employment with Concentration in Heavy and Civil Engineering Industry

Occupation	MSP Metro 2025 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	2024 Turnover Rate	2024 - 2029 Replacement Jobs	% Heavy and Civil Engineering Industry	Avg. Hourly Earnings
Construction Laborers	16,228	4%	72%	6,790	13.9%	\$31.14
Carpenters	10,657	1%	50%	4,115	2.2%	\$36.37
Electricians	8,234	7%	43%	3,631	1.1%	\$42.91
Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	7,191	4%	38%	2,755	8.1%	\$48.21
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	5,128	4%	49%	2,171	1.9%	\$44.09
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	5,003	6%	54%	2,453	0.2%	\$27.49
Painters, Construction and Maintenance	3,445	(3%)	45%	1,319	1.1%	\$31.31
Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	2,195	(1%)	71%	800	11.5%	\$34.98
Sheet Metal Workers	1,587	2%	49%	709	0.3%	\$36.30
Roofers	1,471	8%	65%	545	0.3%	\$36.30
Structural Iron and Steel Workers	649	(0%)	57%	266	4.3%	\$44.18
Paving, Surfacing, and Tamping Equipment Operators	457	5%	61%	191	32.9%	\$35.16
Helpers--Carpenters	222	1%	188%	119	2.3%	\$21.17
Rail-Track Laying and Maintenance Equipment Operators	136	(2%)	83%	49	3.7%	\$29.06
Helpers, Construction Trades, All Other	120	7%	195%	65	4.3%	\$23.79
Helpers--Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	80	17%	187%	44	6.6%	\$28.36
Helpers--Electricians	65	37%	170%	37	0.0%	\$30.40
Electrical and Electronics Installers and Repairers, Transportation Equipment	55	(1%)	79%	22	0.0%	\$37.89
Reinforcing Iron and Rebar Workers	52	(2%)	141%	19	9.5%	\$38.85
Helpers--Roofers	19	17%	191%	11	0.0%	\$30.44
Helpers--Painters, Paperhangers, Plasterers, and Stucco Masons	18	16%	564%	<10	0.0%	\$28.43
Pile Driver Operators	15	9%	107%	<10	33.4%	\$42.36

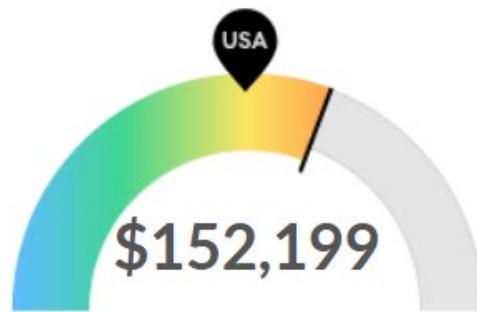
Essential Trades Careers of Focus in Hennepin County and the Corridor, 2025

Occupation	Green Job Type	Hennepin County			Corridor		MSP Metro	
		Gateway	2025 Employment	LQ	Gateway	2025 Employment	Gateway	2025 Employment
Construction Laborers	Enhanced Skills 	N	6,507	0.77	N	1526	Y	16,228
Carpenters	Increased Demand 	N	4,581	0.77	N	1153	N	10,657
Electricians	Increased Demand 	Y	4,036	0.82	Y	933	Y	8,234
Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	New and Emerging 	Y	3,111	0.59	Y	770	Y	7,191
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	Enhanced Skills 	Y	2,275	0.74	Y	478	Y	5,128
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	Increased Demand 	N	2,265	0.48	N	368	N	5,003
Painters, Construction and Maintenance		N	1,716	0.75	N	334	N	3,445
Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	Increased Demand 	N	782	0.64	N	184	N	2,195
Sheet Metal Workers	Enhanced Skills 	Y	705	0.96	Y	121	N	1,587
Roofers	Enhanced Skills 	N	646	0.64	N	91	N	1,471
Structural Iron and Steel Workers	Increased Demand 	Y	243	0.62	N	56	N	649
Paving, Surfacing, and Tamping Equipment Operators		N	157	0.54	N	29	N	457
Helpers--Carpenters	Increased Demand 	Y	103	0.68	N	27	N	222
Rail-Track Laying and Maintenance Equipment Operators	Increased Demand 	N	62	0.54	N	12	N	136
Helpers, Construction Trades, All Other		N	47	0.29	N	<10	Y	120
Helpers--Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters		N	36	0.13	N	<10	Y	80
Helpers--Electricians		N	32	0.07	N	<10	N	65
Electrical and Electronics Installers and Repairers, Transportation	Increased Demand 	N	21	0.39	N	<10	N	55
Reinforcing Iron and Rebar Workers		N	20	0.18	N	<10	N	52
Pile Driver Operators		N	<10	0.25	N	<10	N	15
Helpers--Painters, Paperhangers, Plasterers, and Stucco Masons		N	<10	0.17	N	<10	N	18
Helpers--Roofers		N	<10	0.27	N	<10	N	19

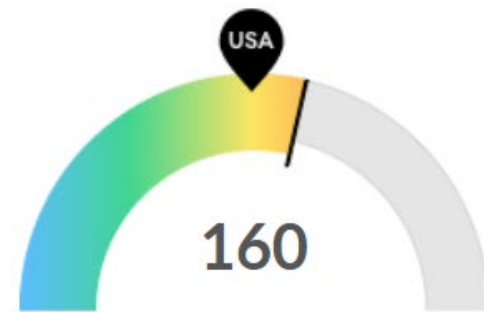
Heavy and Civil Engineering Industry Employment, All Occupations



Supply (Jobs)



Earnings Per Job

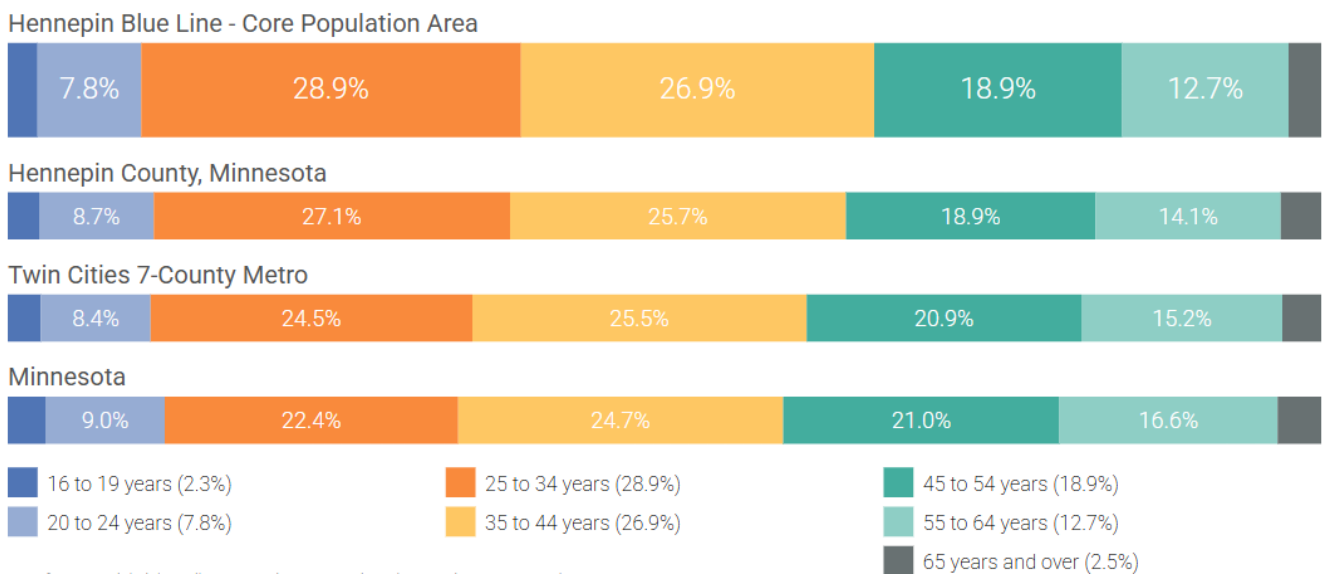


Demand (Job Postings)

Essential Trades Workforce Demographics

There is a slightly higher share of Essential Trades workers between the ages of 35 and 44 than typical across all occupation types in the corridor region, county-wide, and metro-wide. These roles face lower “retirement risk” than the average occupation with just 2.5% of resident workers in Essential Trades roles being 65 years or older as of current employment metrics, compared to 4.6% across all occupations.⁴²

Age of the Employed Workforce by Region, Essential Trades Careers



Both Hennepin County and the corridor region have a higher share of white workers in the Essential Trades than observed in the local workforce overall, with the most dramatic underrepresentation of talent among Asian workers (3.7% in the corridor’s Essential Trades compared to 11.3% in the overall workforce of the corridor). Hispanic talent is much more highly concentrated in these roles than in the overall workforce, with at least one in five workers in Essential Trades roles identifying as Hispanic or Latine.

⁴² Chmura JobsEQ 2025Q1 dataset, modeled to zip code areas based on ACS and LODES data. All employment statistics in this section are by place of residence.

Race Demographics of the Employed Workforce by Region, Essential Trades Careers

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



Minnesota



Ethnicity Demographics of the Employed Workforce by Region, Essential Trades Careers

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



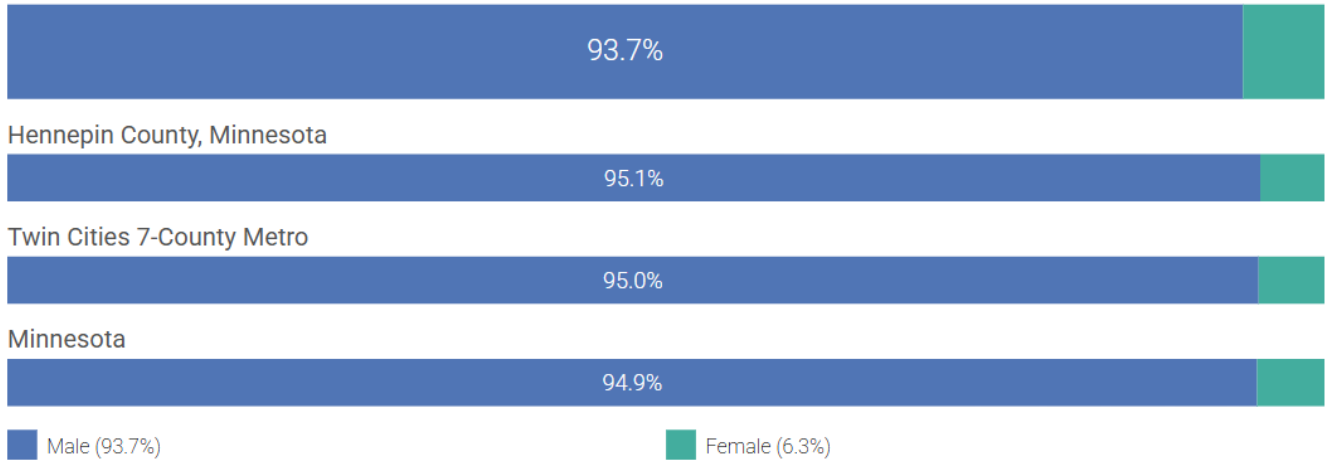
Minnesota



Only 6.3% of Essential Trade talent identify as female in the corridor, significantly lower than the overall workforce yet slightly more than the rate county-wide (4.9%). This discrepancy is consistent across the metro and statewide.

Gender of the Employed Workforce by Region, Essential Trades Careers

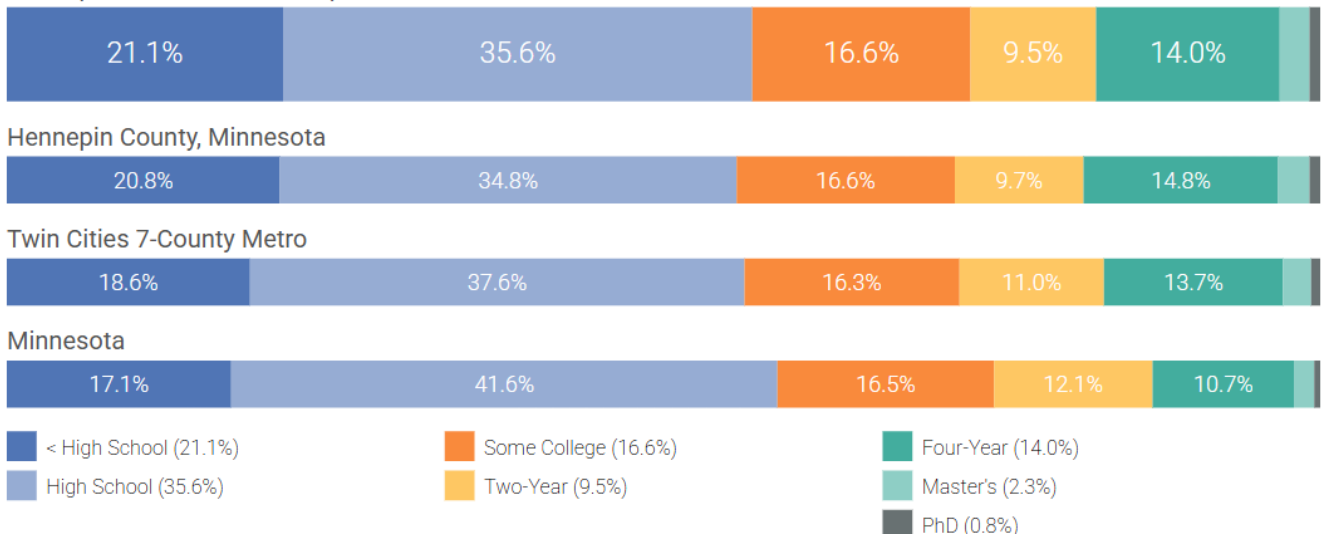
Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



The Essential Trades are unique in that one in five of the corridor’s Essential Trades workers do not hold a high school diploma (21.1%) and about one in three (35.6%) hold a high school diploma as their highest level of formal education. Nearly 100% of occupations in the Essential Trades do not require any postsecondary credential at all, though many require on-the-job training or formal Apprenticeship training.

Educational Attainment of the Workforce by Region, Essential Trades Careers

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



Education and Training Requirements of Local Jobs, Essential Trades Careers

Hennepin Blue Line - Core Population Area



Hennepin County, Minnesota



Twin Cities 7-County Metro



Minnesota



- Short-term OJT, no exp, no award (34.8%)
 Long-term training, no exp, no award (38.8%)
 2-year degree or certificate (0.1%)
- Moderate-term OJT, no exp, no award (12.8%)
 Previous work experience, no award (13.6%)
 Bachelor's degree (0.0%)
- Postgraduate degree (0.0%)

Conclusion: Strategies for Action

Hennepin County stands at a critical juncture in workforce development, with emerging trends highlighting both pressing challenges and unique opportunities. As the region experiences shifts in employer needs, workforce demographics, and industry demand, strategic and targeted workforce solutions are essential. The following strategies are designed to align training and employment initiatives with the county's evolving labor market—focusing on high-growth sectors, underrepresented populations, and localized employer engagement—to build a more inclusive, resilient, and future-ready workforce.

1. Target Specific Demographics with Tailored Programs

- **Engage Unemployed and Underemployed Adults Aged 25–44**
 - Design re-skilling and up-skilling programs that match current Gateway Career job openings, such as office, health support, and customer service.
 - Include mental health support, career navigation, and wraparound services that address underemployment and discouragement.
 - Design programs that meet the needs of specific populations in high volume locally, including the overrepresentation of unemployed white males county-wide, and the high volumes of Black, Indigenous and People of Color in the corridor region who are underemployed or facing barriers to career advancement.
 - Explore opportunities to expand representation of underrepresented groups in key pathways, such as female talent in the Essential Trades, with an eye to supporting welcoming workplace cultures.
- **Invest in Early Career Pathways for Youth and Young Adults 34 and Younger**
 - Launch and scale career exploration, internships, and apprenticeships in high schools, colleges, and community programs.
 - Connect young workers directly with gateway industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and business services.

2. Customize Training by Industry and Occupation

- **Design Occupation-Specific Training**
 - Focus on **Healthcare (especially long-term care and support roles), Business/Office/Admin, Greening Manufacturing, and Legal/Finance Services.**

- Map talent gaps and design short-term credentialing or certification programs aligned with specific job titles in demand (by zip code).

- **Promote Gateway Careers with Succession Planning**

- Prepare replacement talent for middle-skill jobs likely to see significant job exits.
- Build and scale up transition programs for retiring workers to mentor new hires or career switchers.

3. Support Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs)

- **Small Business Engagement**

- Offer workforce planning tools, human resources training, and hiring incentives to businesses with fewer than 20 employees (80% of all employers in Hennepin County).
- Partner with chambers, neighborhood associations, and ethnic business coalitions to co-design recruitment and training strategies.

- **Mid-Sized and Large Business Partnerships Along Corridor**

- Target corridor employers with 20 or more employees for customized incumbent worker training and retention solutions.

4. Align Training with Commute Patterns and Transit Expansion

- **Use Transportation as a Workforce Connector**

- Promote workforce hubs near public transit and prioritize training programs with commute-friendly job placements.
- Engage outbound commuters from central zip codes in upskilling and connecting to local job opportunities.

5. Modernize Career Navigation and Mentorship

- **Field-of-Purpose Coaching**

- Replace generic career counseling with **personalized, purpose-aligned mentorship** that taps into hidden job markets.
- Train workforce staff and mentors to help individuals explore values-driven career paths within growing industries and career paths.

6. Center Employer Engagement in Program Design

- **Support Employer-Led Workforce Solutions**

- Bring employers together to identify shared occupations that are challenging to recruit or retain and establish shared metrics (turnover, retention, skill gaps, cost-to-hire) to co-create and evaluate training programs.
- Involve businesses and unions in curriculum design, mentorship models, and placement pipelines.

- **Build Sector-Based Employer Collaboratives**

- Launch or expand groups in high-need Career Clusters like **Healthcare, Legal Services, Administrative Support, and Green Manufacturing**.
- Perform a detailed **Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction** industry engagement to deeply analyze future local workforce needs, drawing upon union talent pipeline knowledge and infrastructure to create sustainable pathways into the sector's Gateway Careers.

- **Support Cross-Sector Employer Collaboratives**

- Establish occupation-focused collaboratives that build out workforce program design for the many Gateway Careers see high demand across multiple sectors.

7. Elevate Job Quality Standards

- **Define and Track Job Quality Metrics**

- Re-evaluate wage thresholds to more accurately reflect true cost of living expenses in the MSP Metro; consider increasing the minimum wage threshold for Gateway Careers from \$44,720 to \$50,000.
- Move beyond wages to track benefits, advancement pathways, flexibility, workplace culture as success outcomes from workforce programs.
- Use this data to influence employer practices, especially for entry- and mid-level jobs in Gateway Careers.

- **Use Quality as a Program Metric**

- Prioritize employer partnerships that offer high-quality roles and support career mobility.

- Incentivize employers to meet “good job” benchmarks in exchange for support in streamlining and optimizing talent pipelines.

8. Integrate Place-Based Strategies

- **Neighborhood-Based Workforce Planning**

- Use zip code level labor market estimates to localize program offerings in proximity to market demand and partner strategically with CBOs, schools, and libraries.
- Recognize that opportunities vary even within the corridor, and plan for iterative and community-centered solutioning.

Appendix

Methodology and Definitions

Gateway Careers

Gateway Careers are defined as:

Livable Wages	<p>Detailed occupations (six-digit SOC) that pay average annual wages of \$21.50 or more per hour as of 2024 estimates, or \$44,720 annually, matching the internal Hennepin County minimum wage threshold set in 2024.</p> <p>It is important to note that this threshold is somewhat below the MN DEED 7-county metro cost of living threshold, which is \$48,300 as of 2023 annually and is considered the estimated full-time worker's salary needed to meet local basic needs (cost of living) based on a household of 1 full-time, 1 part-time, and one dependent. The MN DEED published overall household living wage income for this household size in the 7-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metropolitan Planning Region (PR) was \$72,444 (or \$23.22 per hour). Read more at https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/col/.</p>
Demand	<p>Detailed occupations (six-digit SOC) that meet at least two of the following four criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Forecast higher than average county-wide growth over the next five years; 2) Forecast needed replacement of over half of the workforce employed over the next five years; 3) Have an unemployment rate below 3%; 4) Have an average 30-day job posting volume above 100 postings in the county.⁴³
Requirements	<p>Detailed occupations (six-digit SOC) requiring no more than a two-year degree, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate or other two-year degree • Certificate • Credential • High school diploma • No requirement for formal education experience or industry training

⁴³ Demand thresholds determined with Chmura JobsEQ data. Employment by occupation data are estimates derived from the Chmura Industry/Occupation Matrix and industry employment data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics--imputed by Chmura where necessary--and updated through 2024Q4 with preliminary estimates by Chmura updated to 2025Q1. Occupation unemployment figures are imputed utilizing Chmura JobsEQ. Job ads data are online job posts from the Real-Time Intelligence (RTI) data set, produced by Chmura and gleaned from over 40,000 direct corporate websites.

Common Terms

Core terms used in this report are defined as:

<p>Demand Indicator 1: 5-Yr Growth</p> <p>An occupation is considered to have high growth in that occupation has forecasted 5-year growth that is greater than the overall regional forecasted 5-year pessimistic growth model.</p>
<p>Demand Indicator 2: Total Demand</p> <p>An occupation is considered to have high total demand if the total 5-year forecast employment growth, transfers, and exits combined is greater than 50% of total employment in that occupation as of 2025Q2 (i.e. high long-term demand)</p>
<p>Demand Indicator 3: Unemployment <3%</p> <p>An occupation is considered to have low unemployment if the estimated unemployment rate for the occupation is below 3% in the region as of 2025Q2 (i.e. high employer retention demand)</p>
<p>Demand Indicator 4: Posting Volume</p> <p>An occupation is considered to have high posting volumes if the volume of online job postings in June 2025 was greater than 100 in the corridor or 200 in the county, the occupation is considered to have high job posting volumes in the specified region (i.e. high immediate employer demand).</p>
<p>Location Quotient (referred to in this report as Local Concentration)</p> <p>Location quotient (LQ) is a measurement of concentration in comparison to the nation. An LQ of 1.00 indicates a region has the same concentration of an industry (or occupation) as the nation. An LQ of 2.00 would mean the region has twice the expected employment compared to the nation and an LQ of 0.50 would mean the region has half the expected employment in comparison to the nation. Click here to see the formula for LQ. Occupations with an LQ greater than or equal to 1.2 have been flagged in this analysis of having a unique specialization in the region.</p>
<p>Occupation Gaps</p> <p>Occupation gaps are developed by JobsEQ and use a multitude of data sources. Employment supply and demand projections are based on a starting date of 2025Q1 using baseline low-growth forecasts modeled from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (more pessimistic forecast outlook than utilized in D1 and D2). The potential supply shortfall is an underlying force that the market needs to resolve one way or another, such as by employers recruiting from further distances for these occupations, wages going up to attract more candidates, and/or increased demand and wages enticing more local residents to get training for these occupations. While this is an important analysis for determining local occupation needs, the occupation gap should be considered along with other regional data including growth and separation forecasts, unemployment rates, wage trends, and award and skill gap analyses.</p>
<p>Award Gaps</p> <p>This metric illustrates the difference between the number of awards conferred (which are post-secondary certificates or degrees) and the occupation demand in your region. Negative values represent the gap, or shortage, of degrees being awarded in the region to meet the demand for the occupations selected. The positive values represent the surplus of awards meaning that the number of awards awarded are greater than the target range of demand for the region. Awards data are based upon degrees conferred for the academic year 2023-2024 and are provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Occupation employment data are derived from the most recent four quarters of industry employment (from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, updated quarterly) and the industry/occupation matrix available for the region. Occupation training concentrations and shortfalls are calculated by JobsEQ. The percent college educated are provided by the BLS per the Employment Projections Program.</p>

Job Quality

This report leverages the Results for America Job Quality Framework, which is made up of eight interconnected principles that together define a good job: earnings, schedules, safety and security, purpose and meaning, environment and culture, benefits, learning and development, and voice and representation.⁴⁴ These eight principles fall in to three categories: Job Necessities, Job Opportunities, and Job Features.

The table below illustrates the full descriptions of each job quality principle and the search criteria used to filter through job postings analyzed in TalentNeuron, looking at job postings newly-advertised between June 1, 2024-May 31, 2025.

Job Quality Search Criteria in Postings

Categories	Principles	Description	Job Posting Signals
Job Necessities	Earnings / Pay Variables	Living wage provided through base pay, bonuses, and profit sharing; earnings are level, have fair terms, and are provided regularly	<p>*Average occupational wages must meet the established threshold to be in consideration</p> <p>*Mention of bonus or profit-sharing in postings, or imminent pay increase opportunity</p> <p><i>KEYWORDS: "bonus" OR "profit share" OR "eligibility for pay increase" OR "eligible for pay increase" OR "eligible for wage increase"</i></p>
	Schedules	Stable, predictable, and fair	<p>*Mention of consistent or reliable scheduling without variable or on-call circumstances</p> <p><i>KEYWORDS: ("regular schedule" OR "fixed schedule" OR "standard work schedule" OR "set schedule" OR "consistent schedule" OR "fixed shift") AND NOT ("On-call" OR "On call" OR "Outside of their regular schedule")</i></p>
	Safety and Security	Proper classification and physically, mentally, and emotionally safe environment	N/A; Not feasible to measure this quality measure through job postings.
Job Features	Purpose and Meaning	Meaningfulness, mattering, and personal alignment	N/A; Not feasible to measure this quality measure through job postings.
	Environment and Culture	Use of skills, sense of connection, and autonomy	N/A; Not feasible to measure this quality measure through job postings.
	Benefits and Leave	Health and well-being, education, wealth building and safety net support available	<p>*Evidence of health, dental, and/or vision insurance offerings, and</p> <p>*Evidence of retirement and savings options available, and</p> <p>*Evidence of paid time off options, and</p>

⁴⁴ <https://jobquality.results4america.org/what-is-job-quality>

			<p>*Evidence of additional safety net and employee well-being services provided</p> <p><i>KEYWORDS: ("benefits" OR "insurance") AND ("401k" OR "retirement" OR "company match") AND ("PTO" OR "paid time off" OR "FTO" OR "flexible time off" OR "paid holidays") AND ("free parking" OR "bus pass" OR "transportation assistance" OR "childcare expenses" OR "dependent care" OR "parental leave" OR "maternity leave" OR "paternity leave" OR "wellness program")</i></p>
Job Opportunities	Learning and Development	Career paths, training, and skill development, recognition and advancement	<p>*Mention of learning and development programs, educational reimbursement options, or career advancement opportunities</p> <p><i>KEYWORDS: "employee learning" OR "employee development" OR "career development" OR "professional development" OR "career advancement" OR "on the job training" OR "skill development" OR "education reimbursement" OR "tuition reimbursement" OR "educational assistance" OR "educational reimbursement" OR "Investment in employee growth" OR "tuition benefits"</i></p>
	Voice and Representation	Formal representation, participatory management, and employee engagement	<p>*Mention of employee resource groups, formal unions/organizing, engagement opportunities, and avenues to make opinion and perspective known to the company</p> <p><i>KEYWORDS: "employee representation" OR "employee resource group" OR "employee owned" OR "employee managed" OR "union membership" OR "union position" OR "collective bargaining" OR "bargaining unit"</i></p>

Frequently Asked Questions

How is employment forecast determined?

Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, forecasts for 2024-2034, adapted for regional growth patterns by Lightcast. Employment data are based on [occupation forecasts](#) and event-based forecasts if applicable. Forecasts are developed at the county level; therefore, for detailed (6-digit NAICS) ownership-specific industries, the forecast employment growth for a zip code or place (city, town, etc.) is taken from the forecast of the county to which it belongs.

What is a local concentration, or location quotient?

A location quotient (LQ) is a measurement of concentration in comparison to the nation. An LQ of 1.00 indicates a region has the same concentration of an industry (or occupation) as the nation. An LQ of 2.00 would mean the region has twice the expected employment compared to the nation and an LQ of 0.50 would mean the region has half the expected employment in comparison to the nation.

What is a cluster?

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. If a regional cluster has a location quotient of 1.25 or greater, the region is considered to possess a competitive advantage in that cluster.

What is separation demand?

Separation demand is the number of jobs required due to separations—labor force exits (including retirements) and turnover resulting from workers moving from one occupation into another. Note that separation demand does not include all turnover—it does not include when workers stay in the same occupation but switch employers. The total projected demand for an occupation is the sum of the separation demand and the growth demand (which is the increase or decrease of jobs in an occupation expected due to expansion or contraction of the overall number of jobs in that occupation).

What is the difference between industry wages and occupation wages?

Industry wages and occupation wages are estimated via separate data sets, often the time periods being reported do not align, and wages are defined slightly differently in the two systems (for example, certain bonuses are included in the industry wages but not the occupation wages). It is therefore common that estimates of the average industry wages and average occupation wages in a region do not match exactly.

What is NAICS?

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is used to classify business establishments according to the type of economic activity. The NAICS Code comprises six levels, from the “all industry” level to the 6-digit level. The first two digits define the top-level category, known as the “sector,” which is the level examined in this report.

What is SOC?

The Standard Occupational Classification system (SOC) is used to classify workers into occupational categories. All workers are classified into one of over 804 occupations according to their occupational definition. To facilitate classification, occupations are combined to form 22 major groups, 95 minor groups, and 452 occupation groups. Each occupation group includes detailed occupations requiring similar job duties, skills, education, or experience.

Who created this report?

This report was developed by RealTime Talent for Hennepin County Workforce Development. If you have questions about the data found in this report, or are interested in learning more, please contact Erin Olson, Senior Director of Strategic Research for RealTime Talent at Erin@realtimetalentmn.org or visit the RealTime Talent website at www.realtimetalent.org

Sources

Lightcast

Lightcast is a company that specializes in labor market analytics, providing data and insights to help organizations understand and navigate the complexities of the job market. They collect and analyze data from various sources, including online job postings, career profiles, and government data, to offer a comprehensive view of the labor market.

- Occupation employment by default indicates employment by place of work. Occupation employment is as of 2025Q2 and based on industry employment and local staffing patterns calculated by Lightcast and utilizing BLS OES data. Employment forecasts are by RealTime Talent using models provided by Lightcast and are consistent with BLS national-level 10-year forecasts. Occupation wages (mean, median, and percentiles) are derived from BLS OES data as of 2024 and represent the average for all Covered Employment. Entry-level and experienced wages are derived from these source data, computed by Lightcast.
- Industry employment is as of 2025Q2 and based upon BLS QCEW data that are imputed by Lightcast where necessary and supplemented by additional sources including Census ZBP data.

- Education and training requirements are from the BLS. Educational attainment mix and other occupation demographics data are modeled by Lightcast for 2025Q2 using regional occupation employment, ZCTA-level demographics data from the Census Bureau, and national occupation-demographics patterns from the BLS.
- Postsecondary awards are per the NCES and for the 2023-2024 academic year. Any programs shown are linked with the occupation(s) being analyzed via the program-occupation crosswalk, which may not be comprehensive. Any programs shown reflect only data reported to the NCES; reporting is required of all Title IV schools. Training providers that do not report data to the NCES are not reflected.
- Occupation employment by place of residence is as of 2025Q2 and modeled by Lightcast based upon occupation employment by place of work and commuting patterns. Commuting patterns are derived from source data from the Census Bureau, occupation-specific commuting tendencies, and updated to reflect more recent population and employment estimates.
- Annual demand is the sum of the annual projected growth demand and separation demand. Separation demand is the number of jobs required due to separations—labor force exits (including retirements) and turnover resulting from workers moving from one occupation into another. Note that separation demand does not include all turnover—it does not include when workers stay in the same occupation but switch employers. Growth demand is the increase or decrease of jobs expected due to expansion or contraction of the overall number of jobs.
- Figures may not sum due to rounding.

The following data sources are included behind the analysis of the data presented in this report from Lightcast as a data source.

Bureau of Economic Analysis

- State Personal Income and Employment (SPI)
- Local Area Personal Income and Employment (LPI)
- National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA)
- Annual Input-Output (I-O) Accounts
- Benchmark Input-Output (I-O) Accounts
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by State, and Gross Regional Product (GRP), the GDP measure applied to a smaller region. More on the methodology of calculation of GRP by county and ZIP codes can be found here: <https://kb.lightcast.io/en/articles/6957464-lightcast-s-gross-regional-product-grp-methodology>

U.S. Census Bureau

- American Community Survey (ACS)
- County Business Patterns (CBP)
- ZIP Code Business Patterns (ZBP)
- Nonemployer Statistics (NES)
- Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI)
- OnTheMap (OTM)
- TIGER/Line File (with additions by DM Solutions Group)
- Population Estimates
- U.S. National and State Population Projections
- Census 2000 & 2010 Summary Files
- Census of Government — State and Local Government Finances by State
- Journey-to-Work (JtW)
- Consumer Expenditures Survey (CEX)
- Current Population Survey (CPS)
- Commodity Flow Survey (CFS)
- Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES)
 - Origin-Destination (OD)
 - Resident Area Characteristics (RAC)
 - Work Area Characteristics (WAC)

U.S. Department of Labor

Bureau of Labor Statistics

- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)
- Current Employment Statistics (CES)
- Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)
- National Industry-Occupation Employment Matrix (10-year, current/projected)

- Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)
- Occupational Education and Training Projections

Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

- Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed (CIU)

Occupational Information Network

- National Center for O*NET Development
- [Automation Index](#): The automation index captures an occupation's risk of being affected by automation, presented as a scale with a base of 100. An automation index greater than 100 indicates a higher-than-average risk of automation; an automation index less than 100 indicates a lower-than-average risk of automation. The scale uses four measures:
 - % of time spent on high-risk work
 - % of time spent on low-risk work
 - Number of high-risk jobs in compatible occupations
 - Overall industry automation risk
- [O*NET Database](#) (see Dataset Chart for specific database per Lightcast datarun)
 - Original Source: [U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration](#)
 - Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International See: [Usage License](#)

Wage and Hour Division

- Minimum Wage Laws in the United States

U.S. Department of Education

National Center for Education Statistics

- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
- Office of Educational Research and Improvement for the CIP – SOC crosswalk, Classification of Instructional Programs Crosswalk to Standard Occupational Classification
- Common Core of Data

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

National Center for Health Statistics

- Health, United States

U.S. Postal Service

- Address Information Systems (AIS) Products, Delivery Statistics
- AIS Products, 5-Digit ZIP Product
- AIS Products, City State Product

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board

- Annual Railroad Retirement Act and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act Statistical Tables

Oak Ridge National Laboratory

- County-to-County Distance Matrix (Skim Tree)

Private sources

- DatabaseUSA business-level data

State Sources

- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Employment Outlook

Chmura JobsEQ

- Occupation demographics by age, gender, race, and ethnicity are modeled by **Chmura** based upon employment by occupation at place of residence and zip-code level data from the [American Community Survey, 2019-2023](#).
- Occupation by educational attainment are regional data modeled by **Chmura** using **U.S. Census Bureau Educational Attainment** data projected to **2025Q1** along with source data from the [BLS](#).
- Underemployment is calculated by **Chmura** using county-level JobsEQ data according to a method developed by the [NY Federal Reserve](#).
- Education requirement category assignments are per the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**.
- Occupation unemployment figures are imputed by **Chmura**.
- Occupation gaps, also referred to as estimated annual talent shortage, are modeled by JobsEQ as of 2025Q1 estimates, indicating long-term potential supply and demand mismatches in a region due, in part, to job demand and labor pool dynamics, including educational attainment and projected growth.

- General job ads data noting average 30-day posting volumes in this report are based on online job posts from the Real-Time Intelligence (RTI) data set, produced by JobsEQ and gleaned from over 45,000 websites. Data reflect ads active during July 2025 and advertised for any Zip Code Tabulation Area in or intersecting with the region for which this report was produced. Historical ad volume is revised as additional data are made available and processed.

TalentNeuron

Detailed job posting data insights provided in the Job Postings section of the report are aggregated using TalentNeuron (<https://www.talentneuron.com/>), a job posting aggregation tool which allows for greater specificity on education, experience level, and employer names. This report summarizes information from postings newly advertised between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025. Since many extraneous factors can affect short-term volume of online job postings, time-series data can be volatile and should be used with caution. All ad counts represent deduplicated figures.

- **Demand:** TalentNeuron scrapes approximately 1.3 million job postings daily, which are cleaned, deduplicated, and aggregated on the platform daily.
- **Skills:** TalentNeuron categorizes and tags skill and experience data from individual job postings for analysis at the aggregate level. The platform recognizes over 30,000 unique individual skills.
- **Salary:** TalentNeuron AI algorithms scrape job postings for salaries which are added to a historical database. As not all job postings include salaries, statistical analysis is used to predict or model the likely salary offer, which is vetted against U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics employment wage data.