

NORTH CENTRAL
PLANNING COUNCIL

Labor Study

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Prepared By:



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Introduction

The North Dakota counties of Benson, Cavalier, Eddy, Ramsey, Rolette, and Towner have experienced significant change over the past decades. While the outdoor assets make these counties attractive locations to travel to for recreation in nature, the area has experienced a decline in population, workforce, and quality and quantity of housing. North Central Planning Council (NCPC) is a nonprofit organization that serves these counties. In 2021, NCPC contracted Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) to conduct a Regional Labor Study. The goal of this study is to identify opportunities and challenges in the region's labor market that should be leveraged or mitigated against to increase the quantity and quality of available talent in the region, as well as to increase the regional talent pool's access to quality job opportunities.

To complete this study, TPMA used the following approach to gather data, identify opportunities and challenges within the region, conduct analysis, and suggest recommendations and implementation strategies:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** In summer of 2021, TPMA facilitated in-person focus groups with county officials and community leaders from each of the six counties. Additionally, TPMA conducted one-on-one interviews to better understand labor needs, challenges, and opportunities.
- **Labor Market Analysis:** Using both proprietary and public data sources, TPMA created a workforce landscape matrix for each of the six counties. This matrix included data about workforce demographics, labor force, industry analysis and occupational profiles.
- **Employer Survey:** In concert with the collection and analysis of the labor market information, TPMA designed and fielded an online employer survey to better understand regional labor market trends across industry sectors and to provide employers with an opportunity to provide feedback on their unique experience.

Included in this Regional Labor Study are the key findings from the three qualitative and quantitative approaches outlined above. The data and analysis from these findings are structured by county.

Following the presentation of county-specific data and analysis, the Recommendations and Implementations Strategies section identifies specific recommendations to benefit each county. An implementation plan is included that outlines steps, partners, and resources needed.

A Note on Census Data and Estimates

The following report consists of data from the 2020 U.S. Decennial Census, the 2019 American Community Survey, the State of North Dakota's LMI (NDLMI) website and proprietary models from analytics and modelling companies EMSI and ESRI. Where possible, raw data from the 2020 census is presented. However, due to delays in the reporting of this data related, in part, to the COVID-19 pandemic, reporting of census data was significantly delayed and 2020 estimates were not completed.¹

The Bureau of Labor Statistics does conduct annual surveys known as the American Community Survey (ACS), however, this survey does not produce the same level of accuracy as the decennial census. The results of this survey are used to determine national and regional trends and produce estimates based on those trends. The ACS 1- and 5-year estimates are then publicly reported. The information presented in these yearly reports is then taken by private analytics and modelling companies such as EMSI² and ESRI³, whose data teams produce algorithms based on these and other available data to make further estimates and projections.

Estimates and modeled data are not perfect measures. In many cases, these figures are calculated by adapting information about national trends to arrive at regional estimates. This "regionalizing" of national estimates is an imperfect science and will never result in 100% accurate results. However, as the full census is only performed every ten years, these estimates are the only opportunity to attempt to capture information about a region or county in any non-census year.

The likelihood of discrepancy between "real world" information and regionalized estimates increases in more rural parts of the country where small population counts and unique combinations of circumstances can create situations in which national trends data are ill-equipped for creating accurate estimates. As there are many rural communities throughout the country, it becomes impossible for these analytics and modelling companies to validate their estimates in every small community. Due to these potential discrepancies, TPMA staff have used the most up-to-date Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Census and ACS data and data directly from the NDLMI website wherever possible.

In an effort to further eliminate as many discrepancies between these data sources and the "real world" information, TPMA staff have attempted through surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews with local government officials and area stakeholders to validate these data points with members of the communities throughout North Dakota's North Central Region. By collecting information from the BLS, the State of North Dakota LMI website, EMSI, and ESRI, and presenting these data to local community members, TPMA staff have attempted to match "real world" information to the information collected through secondary research. The information presented in this report is the result of these efforts and presents the best, most accurate information available.

¹ <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

² <https://www.economicmodeling.com/>

³ <https://www.esri.com/en-us/home>

Benson County

Demographics

AGE AND RACE

According to the first release of 2020 Census data, the population of Benson County that is 18 years and over is 5,794. Of that adult population, census data show a slight 53% majority of the county's population as White. The second largest racial group is Native Americans, who make up about 45% of the population, many of whom reside in the Spirit Lake Reservation, located just south of Devil's Lake. According to the Spirit Lake Tribe's website, the current number of individuals living on the reservation is 2,069.⁴

While complete 2020 Census data have not yet been released, according to 2019 estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS), 34.7% of Benson County residents are under 18 years of age with another 8.3% of residents between ages 18 and 24. With an estimated 43% of Benson County's population under the age of 24, the county is much younger than the national average, of which an estimated 32% is younger than 24 years. 13.3% of Benson County's residents are over the age of 65, which is lower than the national average of about 15.6%.

The 2019 ACS also estimates that about 90% of Benson County residents were born in North Dakota.

2020 Population

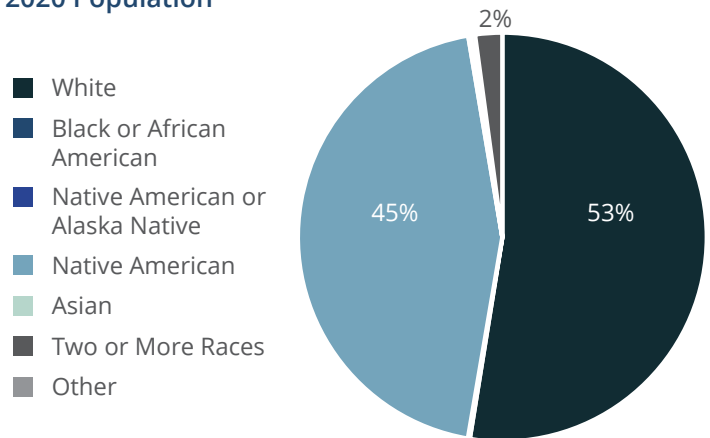


Figure 1: Population by Race in Benson County, 2020

Percent of Population by Age

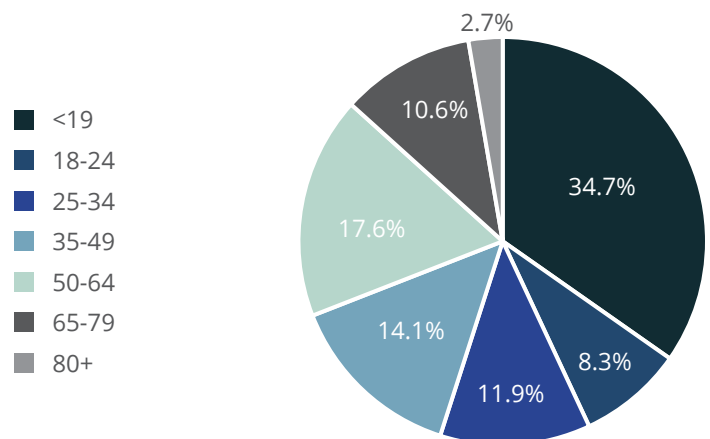


Figure 2: Population by Age in Benson County, 2019

⁴ <http://www.spiritlakenation.com/our-tribe/>

POVERTY

According to the 2019 ACS estimates, 31.9% of Benson County residents live below the poverty line, including 48.9% of all children under the age of 18. An estimated 9.4% of adults over the age of 65 live below the poverty level. Poverty is unevenly distributed across the county's racial populations as an estimated 49.8% of Native Americans in Benson County are estimated to live in poverty.

Category	% below the poverty line
Total population	31.9%
Under 18 years	48.9%
18 to 64 years	26.5%
65 years and older	9.4%
Male	29.8%
Female	34.1%
White	8.9%
Native American	49.8%
Two or more races	20.6%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	36.5%
Less than high school education (ages 25 and over)	44.5%
High school graduate or equivalent (ages 25 and over)	24.4%
Some college or associate's degree (ages 25 and over)	20.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher (ages 25 and over)	2.4%
Employed (16 years and older)	10.7%
Unemployed (16 years and older)	59.5%

Table 1: Poverty by Population Group in Benson County, 2019

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

According to 2019 ACS estimates, nearly 20% of Benson County residents between ages 18 and 24 did not complete high school or the equivalent, including 24.9% of males and 14.3% of females in this age group. Females in Benson County show consistently higher educational attainment rates at every level and in every age group.

Highest Level Attained	% of population ages 18-24	% of population ages 25 and up
Less than high school graduate	19.7% (24.9% M / 14.3% F)	13.7% (16.4% M / 10.9% F)
High school graduate or equivalent	43.3% (42.3% M / 44.3% F)	29.5% (32.6% M / 26.3% F)
Some college or associate's degree	34.2% (31.4% M / 37.1% F)	40.7% (38.6% M / 42.8% F)
Bachelor's degree or higher	2.8% (1.4% M / 4.3% F)	16.1% (12.4% M / 20.0% F)

Table 2: Educational Attainment in Benson County, 2019

Labor Market Analysis

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Since at least 2018, the unemployment rate in Benson County is typically higher than the state average on a month-to-month basis, although the gap has closed in recent years. In April and May of 2020, at the height of the national unemployment surge caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the county's unemployment rate spiked to 11.7% and 12.1% respectively, about three-to-four percentage points higher than the state rate during this time. Although somewhat volatile, unemployment rates in 2021 have largely recovered to pre-pandemic numbers. As of September of 2021, unemployment was reported at 3.5% county-wide.

Unemployment is experienced disproportionately across racial groups, however. 2019 ACS estimates show that of the 5.9% county-wide unemployment rate among residents 16 years and over, the unemployment rate among Benson County's white resident was 2.9% where the rate among Native Americans was 11.3%.

Labor Force Participation

According to 2019 ACS estimates, the labor force participation rate (LFPR)⁵ for Benson County residents 16 years and over was 55.2%. For the typical working-age population for 20-64 years, that number was 66.2%. For those residents with less than a high school diploma, 32.6% were actively working or looking for work. The unemployment rate⁶ for this group was 28%. Residents who completed high school or the equivalent but who did not attend college or receive any postsecondary education show a 62.4% LFPR and a 6.1% unemployment rate. For reference, the national unemployment rate at the end of 2019 was 3.6%, the lowest rate since 1969.⁷

Monthly Unemployment Rate, Jan. 2018 - Sept. 2021

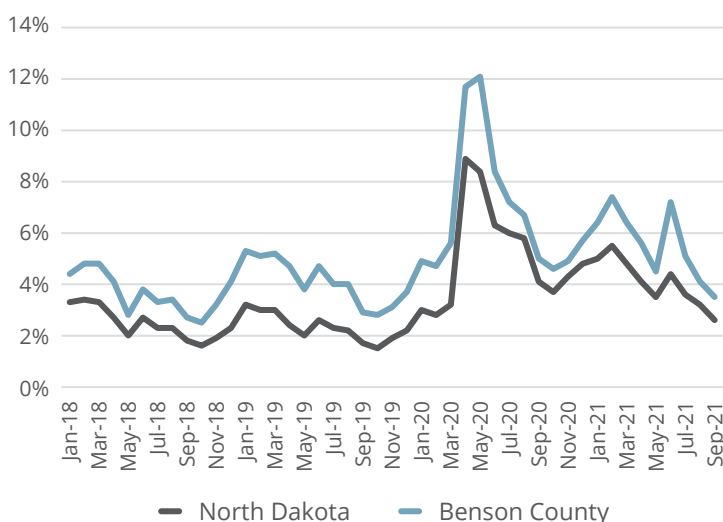


Figure 3: Monthly Unemployment Rate in Benson County, 2018-2021

Labor Force Participation

Population	LFPR	Unemployment Rate
16 years and over	55.2 %	5.9%
20 years to 64 years	66.2%	6.3%
Males (20 to 64 years)	66.8%	7.1%
Females (20 to 64 years)	65.7%	5.4%
Below Poverty Level	37.3%	26.9%
At or Above Poverty Level	77.0%	2.7%
With Any Disability	34.7%	7.7%
Less than High School Graduate (25 to 64 years)	32.6%	28.0%
High School Graduate or Equivalent (25 to 64 years)	62.4%	6.1%
Some College or Associate's Degree (25 to 64 years)	72.5%	5.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher (25 to 64 years)	85.9%	1.3%

Table 3: Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates in Benson County, 2019

⁵ LFPR represents the percentage of the population that is either working or actively looking for work. It is calculated as: (Total Labor Force / Civilian Noninstitutional Population) x 100.

⁶ Unemployment rate is calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as (Number of unemployed individuals / Total Labor Force) x 100.

⁷ <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2020/article/job-market-remains-tight-in-2019-as-the-unemployment-rate-falls-to-its-lowest-level-since-1969.htm>

JOBS TRENDS

Between 2015 and 2019⁸, the number of jobs in Benson County is estimated to have decreased by 10.5%. From 2020-2025, the number of jobs in the county is projected to remain steady.⁹

Benson County Job Trends

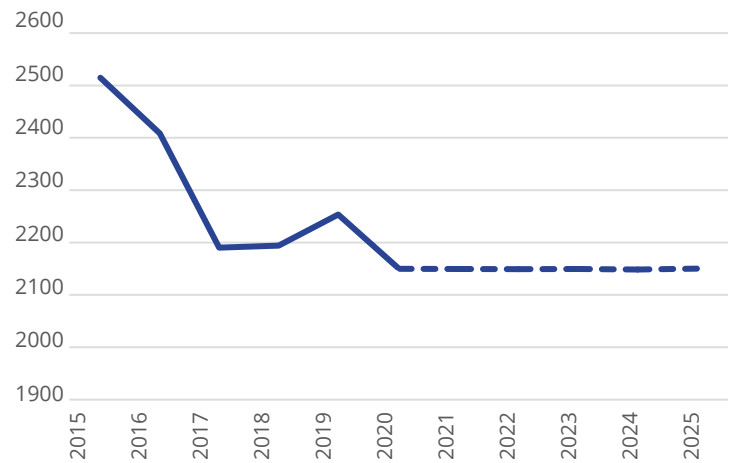


Figure 4: Job Trends in Benson County, 2015-2025

LARGEST INDUSTRIES AND SUBSECTORS

In Table 4, the ten largest industries in Benson County are listed in order of 2020 job count.

The top industry in Benson County is Government. This is largely due to the presence of the Spirit Lake Reservation in the county, as counties with reservations typically house a larger number of government offices. The industry with the largest LQ¹⁰ score is the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting industry, which is concentrated at more than eight times the national average. This was also the highest growth industry from 2015 to 2020.

Industry Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Government	1,611	1,377	(15%)	1,204	\$60,368	4.12
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	126	225	79%	290	\$59,104	8.39
Construction	100	136	36%	190	\$70,025	1.08
Wholesale Trade	96	97	1%	97	\$80,533	1.20
Finance and Insurance	75	79	5%	96	\$69,475	0.86
Accommodation and Food Services	65	66	2%	84	\$15,210	0.40
Health Care and Social Assistance	76	64	(16%)	74	\$22,799	0.23

⁸ Although 2020 numbers were available, 2019 was chosen for this analysis to remove any potential distortion specifically caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

⁹ EMSI, data set Q4 2021.

¹⁰ The Location Quotient (LQ) is a way to quantify the concentration of a particular industry in an area compared to average concentration of that industry nationally. For example, an LQ of 1.00 means that industry matches the national average concentration. An industry with an LQ of 4.0 would be four times more concentrated in the area than it is nationally. An industry with an LQ of .25 would be one-quarter as concentrated in the area as it is nationally. Industries that rank high in this metric are uncommonly concentrated in the area and the combination of industries with high LQs gives an indication of what is uncommon or “unique” in the area.

Industry Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Manufacturing	63	43	(32%)	54	\$42,762	0.25
Retail Trade	64	35	(45%)	30	\$27,770	0.16
Other Services (except Public Administration)	18	24	33%	27	\$57,103	0.21

Table 4: Largest Industries in Benson County, 2020

Table 5 provides information about the top ten subsectors in Benson County, using the 5-digit NAICS codes (as opposed to the 2-digit codes represented in Table 4). The largest growth subsector from 2015 to 2020 was Crop Production, with an 88% increase in jobs over that time. Projections estimate continued growth in this subsector, as well.

Industry Subsector	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	1,053	854	(199%)	711	\$59,632	11.11
Education (Local Government)	360	378	18%	383	\$59,687	3.56
Crop Production	76	164	88%	220	\$67,004	14.49
Federal Government, Civilian, Excluding Postal Service	136	89	(47%)	60	\$88,236	2.69
Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction	46	78	32%	121	\$80,199	15.96
Support Activities for Crop Production	49	60	11%	68	\$38,318	8.80
Grain and Field Bean Merchant Wholesalers	52	53	1%	53	\$86,031	90.22
Federal Government, Military	44	41	(3%)	39	\$24,619	1.55
Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	48	41	(7%)	53	\$17,283	3.10
Frozen Food Manufacturing	33	40	7%	50	\$40,602	31.75

Table 5: Largest Subsectors in Benson County, 2020

TOP EMPLOYERS

Table 6 lists the top employers in Benson County as provided through the North Dakota LMI website. Some organizations have opted to keep their information private, and are therefore presented as “undisclosed.”

Organization	Type	Industry
Spirit Lake Sioux Nation	Local Government	Public Administration
Spirit Lake Casino	Local Government	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
Candeska Cikana Comm. College	Local Government	Educational Services
Undisclosed	-	-
Four Winds Elementary School	Local Government	Educational Services
Sioux Manufacturing Corporation	Local Government	Manufacturing – Textile Mills
Minnewaukan Public School Dist. #5	Local Government	Educational Services
Warwick Public School Dist. #29	Local Government	Educational Services
Fort Totten School Dist. #30	Local Government	Educational Services
Undisclosed	-	-

Table 6: Largest Employers in Benson County, 2020

TOP OCCUPATIONS

Tables 7 and 8 list the top occupations in Benson County, sorted by 2020 job counts. The occupations listed in Table A represent the top 2-digit occupation codes, meaning they are more broadly defined. The occupations presented in Table B are defined more narrowly and are based on the 5-digit occupation codes.

The largest 2-digit occupation group in Benson County is made up of Educational, Instruction, and Library Occupations, which accounted for 268 jobs in 2020. By percentage, the occupation group with the largest growth rate from 2015 to 2020 was Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations with 38% growth over that time. This occupation group is projected to continue to grow in the coming years.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	307	268	(13%)	269	\$21.15	\$43,981.67	37
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	343	263	(23%)	245	\$18.79	\$39,081.41	44
Management Occupations	198	229	16%	252	\$32.28	\$67,145.07	37
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	186	173	(7%)	166	\$20.33	\$42,290.24	28
Construction and Extraction Occupations	146	171	17%	198	\$24.32	\$50,576.52	29
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	139	119	(14%)	122	\$11.75	\$24,434.02	26
Personal Care and Service Occupations	124	109	(12%)	97	\$13.43	\$27,926.99	24
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	105	103	(2%)	97	\$23.87	\$49,651.99	15
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	118	94	(20%)	91	\$15.34	\$31,906.66	18
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	67	93	38%	118	\$17.40	\$36,202.39	20

Table 7: Largest 2-Digit Occupation Groups in Benson County, 2020

Benson County

The largest 5-digit occupation in Benson County in 2020 was Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers with just over 100 jobs that year. This occupation also showed high growth rate from 2015 to 2020, with a 97% increase in the number of jobs over that timeframe. Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators was the only occupation with a higher growth rate over that time period, although the number of added jobs was less overall. Both occupations are expected to show continued growth in the coming years.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	52	101	97%	131	\$22.23	\$46,235.76	20
Office Clerks, General	65	67	4%	60	\$18.35	\$38,177.13	10
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	57	53	(7%)	53	\$22.15	\$46,062.30	4
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	38	51	36%	63	\$17.08	\$35,533.76	9
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	60	51	(14%)	48	\$15.31	\$31,850.00	7
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	50	48	(4%)	47	\$12.99	\$27,012.84	6
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	23	47	99%	57	\$24.79	\$51,556.59	8
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/ Technical Education	39	41	4%	40	\$23.15	\$48,147.41	4
Highway Maintenance Workers	40	38	(5%)	33	\$25.18	\$52,374.33	5
Gambling Dealers	21	38	83%	31	\$12.15	\$25,281.80	7

Table 8: Largest 5-Digit Occupation Groups in Benson County, 2020

Cavalier County

Demographics

AGE AND RACE

According to the first release of 2020 Census data, the population of Cavalier County that is 18 years and over is 3,704. Of that adult population, census data show a vast 95% majority of the county's population as White. The second largest single racial group is Native Americans, who make up about 1% of the population. Residents of two or more races make up about 3% of the county's population. Cavalier County is the least racially diverse county in North Dakota's North Central region.

While complete 2020 Census data have not yet been released, according to 2019 estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS), 21.4% of Cavalier County residents are under 18 years of age with another 7.2% of residents between ages 18 and 24. With an estimated 43.4% of Cavalier County's population under the age of 24, the county is much younger than the national average, of which an estimated 32% is younger than 24 years. 27.1% of Cavalier County's residents are over the age of 65, which is significantly higher than the national average of about 15.6%.

The 2019 ACS also estimates that about 80% of Cavalier County residents were born in North Dakota.

2020 Population

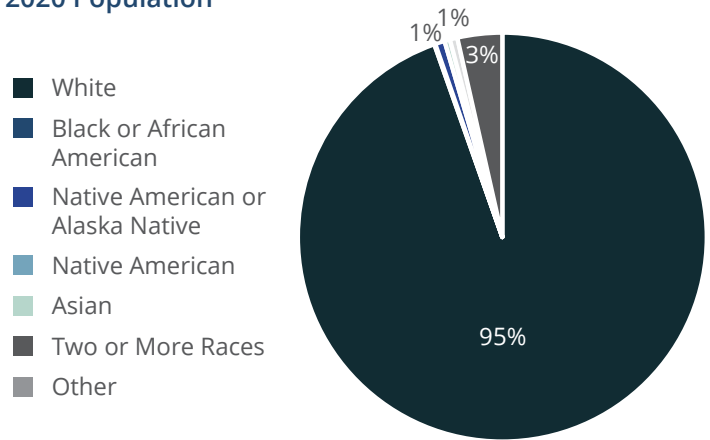


Figure 5: Population by Race in Cavalier County, 2020

Percent of Population by Age

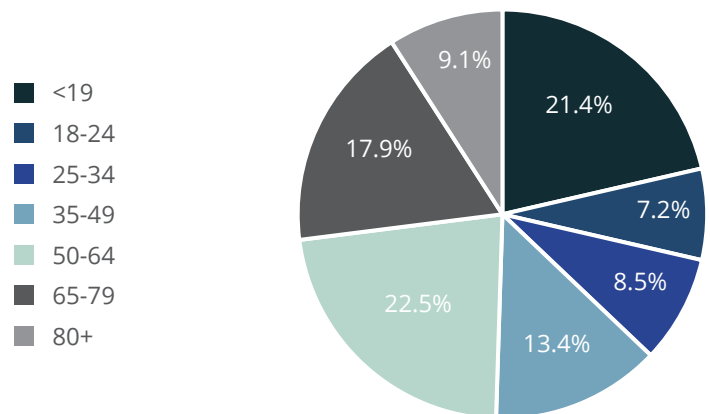


Figure 6: Population by Age in Cavalier County, 2019

POVERTY

According to the 2019 ACS estimates, 11.9% of Cavalier County residents live below the poverty line, including 16.4% of all children under the age of 18. An estimated 6.6% of adults over the age of 65 live below the poverty level. In addition to the 25% of the unemployed population, 8% of employed residents also live below the poverty threshold.

Category	% below the poverty line
Total population	11.0%
Under 18 years	16.4%
18 to 64 years	10.8%
65 years and older	6.6%
Male	10.4%
Female	11.6%
Less than high school education (ages 25 and over)	12.0%
High school graduate or equivalent (ages 25 and over)	7.6%
Some college of associate's degree (ages 25 and over)	5.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher (ages 25 and over)	6.8%
Employed (16 years and older)	8.0%
Unemployed (16 years and older)	25.0%

Table 9: Poverty by Population Group in Cavalier County, 2019

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

According to 2019 ACS estimates, over 98% of Cavalier County residents between ages 18 and 24 completed high school or the equivalent, with just over 54% attending some level of college instruction. Just under 33% of adults 25 years and older have completed some level of college degree, with just under 20% attaining a bachelor's degree or higher. 3.7% of Cavalier County residents have completed a graduate or professional degree.

Highest Level Attained	% of population ages 18-24	% of population ages 25 and up
Less than high school graduate	1.5% (2.0% M / 0.8% F)	8.1% (8.9% M / 7.4% F)
High school graduate or equivalent	44.5% (55.0% M / 31.49% F)	31.5% (34.6% M / 28.4% F)
Some college or associate's degree	28.7% (38.4% M / 16.5% F)	40.9% (40.8% M / 41.0% F)
Bachelor's degree or higher	25.4% (4.6% M / 51.2% F)	19.5% (15.7% M / 23.3% F)

Table 10: Educational Attainment in Cavalier County, 2019

Labor Market Analysis

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Since at least 2018, the unemployment rate in Cavalier County has typically mirrored the average across the state of North Dakota on a month-to-month basis. However, Cavalier County's unemployment rate was less impacted by COVID-19 than the state's. In April and May of 2020, during the peak of pandemic-related unemployment, Cavalier County reported unemployment rates of 5.1% and 5.2% respectively, compared to 8.9% and 8.4% for all of North Dakota. For the remainder of the pandemic up to September of 2021, Cavalier County's unemployment rate has remained below that of the state as a whole.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

According to 2019 ACS estimates, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) for Cavalier County residents 16 years and over was 62.8%. For the typical working-age population for 20-64 years, that number was 83.92%. For those residents with less than a high school diploma, 85.7% were actively working or looking for work. The unemployment rate for this group was not available. Residents who completed high school or the equivalent but who did not attend college or receive any postsecondary education show an 84.1% LFPR and a 2.7% unemployment rate. For reference, the national unemployment rate at the end of 2019 was 3.6%, the lowest rate since 1969.¹¹

Monthly Unemployment Rate, Jan. 2018 - Sept. 2021

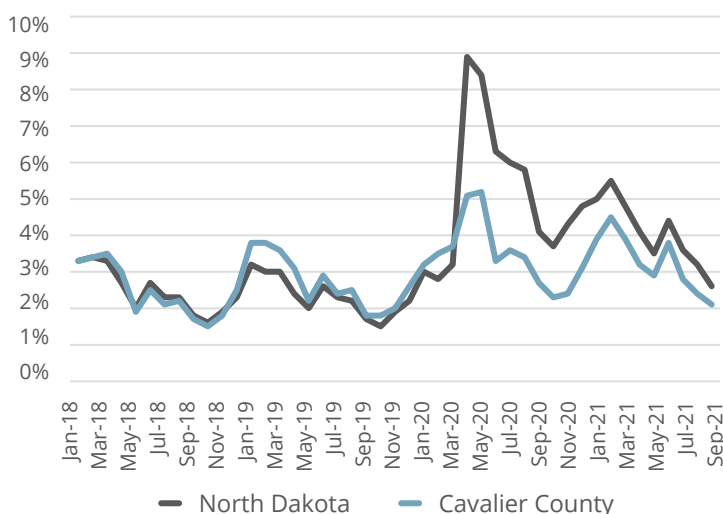


Figure 7: Monthly Unemployment Rate in Cavalier County, 2018-2021

Labor Force Participation

Population	2019 LFPR	2019 Unemployment Rate
16 years and over	62.8%	1.5%
20 years to 64 years	83.9%	1.4%
Males (20 to 64 years)	89.8%	1.4%
Females (20 to 64 years)	77.3%	1.3%
Below Poverty Level	63.4%	6.0%
At or Above Poverty Level	86.6%	1.0%
With Any Disability	60.9%	6.0%
Less than High School Graduate (25 to 64 years)	85.7%	N/A ¹²
High School Graduate or Equivalent (25 to 64 years)	84.1%	2.7%
Some College or Associate's Degree (25 to 64 years)	80.6%	1.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher (25 to 64 years)	83.3%	0.9%

Table 11: Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates in Cavalier County, 2019

¹¹ <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2020/article/job-market-remains-tight-in-2019-as-the-unemployment-rate-falls-to-its-lowest-level-since-1969.htm>

¹² Margin of Error (MoE) too high for accurate estimate.

JOB TRENDS

Between 2015 and 2020, the number of jobs in Cavalier County is estimated to have decreased by 8.6%. From 2020-2025, the number of jobs in the county is projected to rise steadily and return to pre-pandemic numbers.¹³

Cavalier County Job Trends

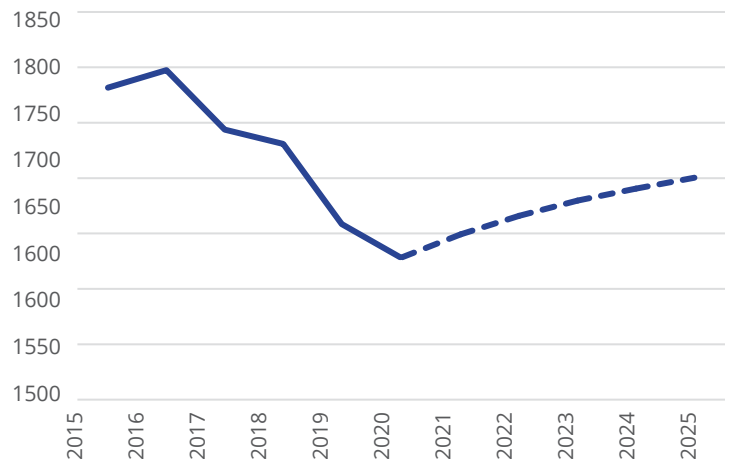


Figure 8: Job Trends in Cavalier County, 2015-2025

LARGEST INDUSTRIES AND SUBSECTORS

In Table 12, the ten largest industries in Cavalier County are listed in order of 2020 job count. The Location Quotient (LQ) is a way to quantify the concentration of a particular industry in an area compared to average concentration of that industry nationally. For example, an LQ of 1.00 means that industry matches the national average concentration. An industry with an LQ of 4.0 would be four times more concentrated in the area than it is nationally. An industry with an LQ of .25 would be one-quarter as concentrated in the area as it is nationally. Industries that rank high in this metric are uncommonly concentrated in the area and the combination of industries with high LQs gives an indication of what is uncommon or “unique” in the area.

The top industry in Cavalier County is Health Care and Social Assistance. The industry with the largest LQ score is the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting industry. This was also the highest growth industry from 2015 to 2020. Conversely, every industry in the county had a drop in jobs except four: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting; Government; Wholesale Trade; and Other Services (except Public Administration). The largest drop in jobs by percentage was in the Finance and Insurance industry with a 32% decrease; although in pure numbers, Retail Trade lost the number of jobs (49).

¹³ EMSI, data set Q4 2021.

Industry Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Government	269	269	0%	267	\$61,049	1.08
Health Care and Social Assistance	250	245	(2%)	261	\$43,902	1.15
Wholesale Trade	194	198	2%	197	\$76,222	3.30
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	110	151	37%	182	\$52,972	7.52
Retail Trade	174	125	(28%)	113	\$39,873	0.78
Other Services (except Public Administration)	121	121	0%	133	\$32,586	1.41
Construction	144	114	(21%)	112	\$57,852	1.20
Transportation and Warehousing	106	105	(1%)	104	\$48,795	1.60
Finance and Insurance	117	80	(32%)	68	\$86,501	1.17
Accommodation and Food Services	87	65	(25%)	72	\$17,535	0.52

Table 12: Largest Industries in Cavalier County, 2020

Cavalier County

Table 13 provides information about the top ten subsectors in Cavalier County, using the 5-digit NAICS codes as opposed to the 2-digit codes represented in Table 12. The largest growth subsector from 2015 to 2020 was Specialized Freight (except Used Goods) Trucking, Local, with an 81% increase in jobs over that time. Projections estimate continued growth in this subsector, as well. Crop Production combined with Support Activities for Crop Production will add more than 30 jobs in the county by 2025. Nursing Care Facilities lost the greatest number of jobs 2015-2020 and will continue to do so into 2025.

Industry Subsector	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	84	129	54%	144	\$50,332	2.63
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	104	117	13%	129	\$48,151	2.04
Education (Local Government)	94	90	(4%)	85	\$72,561	1.13
Grain and Field Bean Merchant Wholesalers	84	88	5%	86	\$100,224	199.40
Crop Production	59	81	37%	96	\$70,442	9.55
Support Activities for Crop Production	51	70	37%	86	\$32,911	13.75
Commercial Banking	81	53	(35%)	40	\$71,005	3.70
Specialized Freight (except Used Goods) Trucking, Local	27	49	81%	55	\$54,093	19.89
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	106	48	(55%)	23	\$29,804	3.04
Religious Organizations	36	45	25%	51	\$18,209	2.55

Table 13: Largest Subsectors in Cavalier County, 2020

TOP EMPLOYERS

Table 14 lists the top employers in Cavalier County as provided through the North Dakota LMI website. Some organizations have opted to keep their information private and are therefore presented as “undisclosed.”

Organization	Type	Industry
Cavalier County Memorial Hospital and Clinics	Hospitals (Private)	Health Care and Social Assistance
Cavalier County	Local Government	Public Administration
Langdon Area School District	Local Government	Educational Services
Maple Manor Care Center	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities (Private)	Healthcare and Social Assistance
Undisclosed	-	-
CHS, INC	Merchant Wholesalers	Wholesale Trade
Farmers Union Oil	Merchant Wholesalers	Wholesale Trade
Undisclosed	-	-
United Communications	Telecommunications (Private)	Information
Munich School District #19	Local Government	Educational Services

Table 14: Largest Employers in Cavalier County, 2020

TOP OCCUPATIONS

Tables 15 and 16 list the top occupations in Cavalier County sorted by 2020 job counts. The occupations listed in Table 15 represent the top 2-digit occupation codes, meaning they are more broadly defined. The occupations presented in Table 16 are defined more narrowly and are based on the 5-digit occupation codes.

The largest 2-digit occupation group in Cavalier is made up of Transportation and Material Moving Occupations, which accounted for 207 jobs in 2020. By percentage, the occupation group with the largest growth rate from 2015 to 2020 was Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations with 19% growth over that time. This occupation group is projected to continue to grow in the coming years. Yet, the greatest number of jobs in the future will be in Management Occupations, which has the highest Median Annual Earnings at \$67,241.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	203	207	2%	211	\$19.21	\$39,953.67	31
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	236	191	(19%)	183	\$17.45	\$36,289.69	29
Sales and Related Occupations	167	145	(13%)	140	\$17.66	\$36,740.23	25
Management Occupations	127	134	5%	148	\$32.33	\$67,241.37	19
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	110	109	(1%)	110	\$23.24	\$48,340.52	20
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	88	100	14%	107	\$27.34	\$56,867.64	13
Construction and Extraction Occupations	118	98	(16%)	98	\$22.10	\$45,964.16	17
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	123	91	(26%)	90	\$11.56	\$24,047.20	20
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	63	75	19%	88	\$17.34	\$36,059.02	14
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	74	74	0%	74	\$22.98	\$47,791.80	10

Table 15: Largest 2-Digit Occupation Groups in Cavalier County, 2020

The largest 5-digit occupation in Cavalier County in 2020 was Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers just over 70 jobs that year. Unfortunately, this was a decrease in the number of jobs in that occupation and the decline is expected to continue in the future. Two occupations tie for largest percentage of change 2015-2020. At 31% are Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers, as well as Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers. The first will add 10 jobs in 2025.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	76	71	(6%)	71	\$20.13	\$41,870.15	8
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	41	53	31%	63	\$21.88	\$45,509.09	9
Office Clerks, General	34	44	27%	44	\$17.82	\$37,068.42	6
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	36	42	16%	48	\$17.19	\$35,752.13	7
Nursing Assistants	57	40	(30%)	32	\$15.00	\$31,201.70	5
Registered Nurses	34	40	17%	43	\$28.51	\$59,291.23	4
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	29	37	31%	38	\$17.77	\$36,959.77	6
Cashiers	45	37	(18%)	31	\$12.94	\$26,918.42	7
Retail Salespersons	40	29	(26%)	29	\$16.54	\$34,403.56	4
General and Operations Managers	30	29	(3%)	30	\$36.16	\$75,209.61	3

Table 16: Largest 5-Digit Occupation Groups in Cavalier County, 2020

Eddy County

Demographics

AGE AND RACE

According to the first release of 2020 Census data, the population of Eddy County that is 18 years and over is 2,347. Of that adult population, census data show a vast 90% majority of the county's population as White. The second largest single racial group is Native Americans, who make up about 3% of the population. Residents of two or more races make up about 6% of the county's population. Eddy County is substantially less racially diverse than the average American county.

While complete 2020 Census data have not yet been released, according to 2019 estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS), 21.5% of Eddy County residents are under 18 years of age with another 6.4% of residents between ages 18 and 24. With an estimated 27.9% of Eddy County's population under the age of 24, the county is younger than the national average, of which an estimated 32% is younger than 24 years. 24.8% of Eddy County's residents are age 65 and over, which is significantly higher than the national average of about 15.6%.

The 2019 ACS also estimates that about 80.6% of Eddy County residents were born in North Dakota.

2020 Population

- White
- Black or African American
- Native American or Alaska Native
- Native American
- Asian
- Two or More Races
- Other

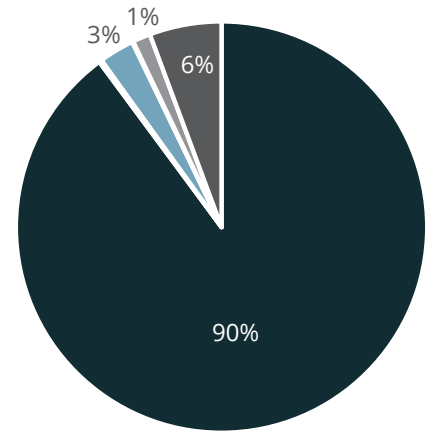


Figure 9: Population by Race in Eddy County, 2020

Percent of Population by Age

- <19
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-49
- 50-64
- 65-79
- 80+

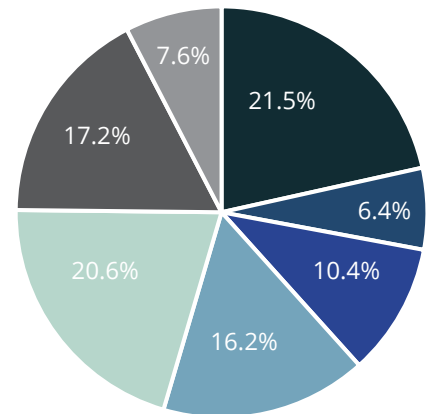


Figure 10: Population by Age in Eddy County, 2019

POVERTY

According to the 2019 ACS estimates, 10.8% of Eddy County residents live below the poverty line, including more than 30% of those ages 25 and over; half with less than high school education and half with a bachelor's degree or higher. An estimated 9.8% of adults over the age of 65 live below the poverty level. Poverty is unevenly distributed across the county's racial populations as an estimated 61% of Native Americans in Eddy County are estimated to live in poverty compared to 8.3% of Whites.

Category	% below the poverty line
Total population	10.8%
Under 18 years	10.3%
18 to 64 years	11.5%
65 years and older	9.8%
Male	7.6%
Female	13.9%
White	8.3%
Native American	61.0%
Two or more races	1.2%
Less than high school education (ages 25 and over)	15.9%
High school graduate or equivalent (ages 25 and over)	12.2%
Some college of associate's degree (ages 25 and over)	6.0%
Bachelor's degree of higher (ages 25 and over)	15.9%
Employed (16 years and older)	7.3%
Unemployed (16 years and older)	7.1%

Table 17: Poverty by Population Group in Eddy County, 2019

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

According to 2019 ACS estimates, 98% of Eddy County residents between ages 18 and 24 completed high school or the equivalent, with just over 24.3% attending some level of college instruction. Just over 38% of adults 25 years and older have completed some type of college degree, with just over 26% attaining a bachelor’s degree or higher. 7.7% of Eddy County residents have completed a graduate or professional degree. Percentages for 18-24 year-old male and female educational attainment have been left off this chart due to high uncertainty/Margin of Error (MoE) in the estimates.

Highest Level Attained	% of population ages 18-24	% of population ages 25 and up
Less than high school graduate	2.0%	10.5% (12.9% M / 8.3% F)
High school graduate or equivalent	73.6%	29.3% (34.7% M / 24.1% F)
Some college or associate’s degree	16.9%	34.0% (31.4% M / 36.4% F)
Bachelor’s degree or higher	7.4%	26.2% (20.9% M / 31.2% F)

Table 18: Education Attainment in Eddy County, 2019

Labor Market Analysis

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Since at least 2018, the unemployment rate in Eddy County is typically higher than the state average on a month-to-month basis, although that trend was reversed during the COVID-19 pandemic. In April and May of 2020, at the height of the national unemployment surge caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the county's unemployment rate spiked to 7.5% and 6.6% respectively, which was lower than the state rate during this time. The numbers for September 2021 returned to pre-pandemic lows and have historically represented the lowest rates of the year.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

According to 2019 ACS estimates, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) for Eddy County residents 16 years and over was 62.9%. For the typical working-age population for 20-64 years, that number was 84.4%. Just over 60% of those working fall below the poverty level. Those residents working who have less than a high school diploma represent 46.8% of the population and the unemployment rate for this group was 2.8%. Residents who completed some college or an associate degree, represent 88.7% of the population and a 2.4% unemployment rate. For reference, the national unemployment rate at the end of 2019 was 3.6%, the lowest rate since 1969.¹⁴

Monthly Unemployment Rate, Jan. 2018 - Sept. 2021

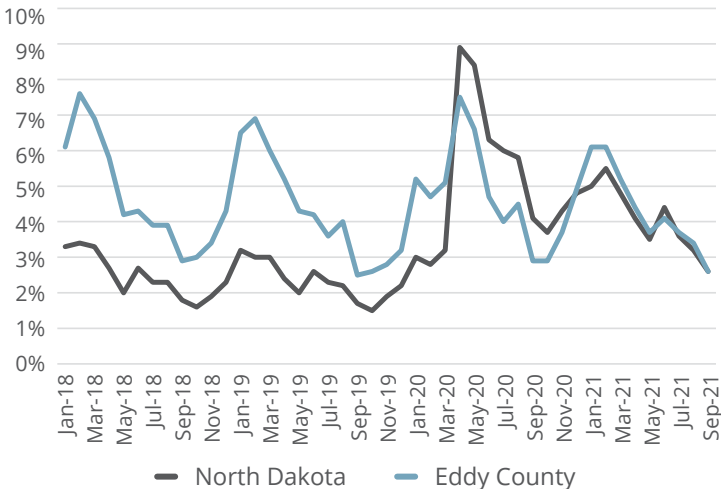


Figure 11: Monthly Unemployment Rate in Eddy County, 2018-2021

Labor Force Participation

Population	2019 LFPR	2019 Unemployment Rate
16 years and over	62.9%	1.2%
20 years to 64 years	84.4%	1.3%
Males (20 to 64 years)	87.1%	1.2%
Females (20 to 64 years)	82.0%	1.3%
Below Poverty Level	61.7%	1.1%
At or Above Poverty Level	87.7%	1.3%
With Any Disability	74.9%	1.3%
Less than High School Graduate (25 to 64 years)	46.8%	2.8%
High School Graduate or Equivalent (25 to 64 years)	87.2%	1.1%
Some College or Associate's Degree (25 to 64 years)	88.7%	2.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher (25 to 64 years)	91.2%	0.3%

Table 19: Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates in Eddy County, 2019

¹⁴ <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2020/article/job-market-remains-tight-in-2019-as-the-unemployment-rate-falls-to-its-lowest-level-since-1969.htm>

JOB TRENDS

Between 2015 and 2020, the number of jobs in Eddy County is estimated to have decreased by 7.9%. From 2020-2025, the number of jobs in the county is projected to grow steadily to pre-pandemic numbers.¹⁵

Eddy County Job Trends

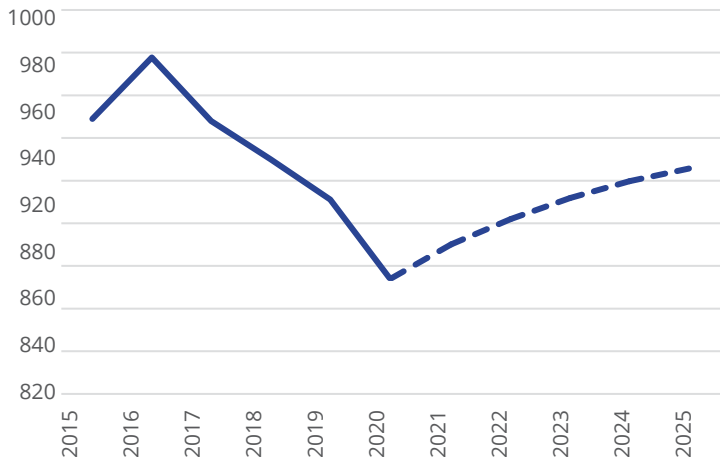


Figure 12: Job Trends in Eddy County, 2015-2025

LARGEST INDUSTRIES AND SUBSECTORS

In Table 20, the ten largest industries in Eddy County are listed in order of 2020 job count. The Location Quotient (LQ) is a way to quantify the concentration of a particular industry in an area compared to average concentration of that industry nationally. For example, an LQ of 1.00 means that industry matches the national average concentration. An industry with an LQ of 4.0 would be four times more concentrated in the area than it is nationally. An industry with an LQ of .25 would be one-quarter as concentrated in the area as it is nationally. Industries that rank high in this metric are uncommonly concentrated in the area and the combination of industries with high LQs gives an indication of what is uncommon or “unique” in the area.

The top industries in Eddy County are Government and Health Care and Social Assistance. The latter is expected to see a slight increase in jobs in the future. The largest gain in the number of jobs will be in Manufacturing at just under 20 jobs; yet Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services represent the largest change from 2015-2202 at 33%. The industry with the largest LQ score is the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting industry, which is concentrated at more than four times the national average.

¹⁵ EMSI, data set Q4 2021.

Industry Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Government	201	197	(2%)	194	\$59,459	1.49
Health Care and Social Assistance	215	197	(8%)	200	\$42,641	1.74
Retail Trade	74	80	8%	85	\$33,309	0.94
Manufacturing	55	67	22%	85	\$50,621	0.98
Construction	50	58	16%	66	\$45,551	1.15
Wholesale Trade	61	56	(8%)	55	\$58,305	1.77
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	88	45	(49%)	49	\$41,286	4.20
Other Services (except Public Administration)	57	44	(23%)	45	\$23,276	0.97
Finance and Insurance	31	34	10%	38	\$68,861	0.93
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	21	28	33%	34	\$73,780	0.47

Table 20: Largest Industries in Eddy County, 2020

Eddy County

Table 21 provides information about the top ten subsectors in Eddy County, using the 5-digit NAICS codes as opposed to the 2-digit codes represented in Table 20. The largest growth subsector from 2015 to 2020 was Bread and Bakery Product Manufacturing with a substantial 178% increase in jobs over that time, likely due to the expansion or addition of an employer. Projections estimate a substantial growth in this subsector, as well.

Industry Subsector	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	130	138	6%	137	\$37,518	16.40
Education (Local Government)	117	118	1%	123	\$69,771	2.81
Bread and Bakery Product Manufacturing	18	50	178%	76	\$44,624	38.65
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	46	44	(4%)	40	\$41,825	1.44
Support Activities for Crop Production	29	34	17%	41	\$39,036	12.40
Petroleum and Petroleum Products Merchant Wholesalers (except Bulk Stations and Terminals)	20	24	20%	25	\$48,158	65.96
Home Centers	16	24	50%	25	\$38,389	5.80
Commercial Banking	12	21	75%	25	\$65,707	2.78
Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability Facilities	16	21	31%	16	\$32,413	9.30
Grain and Field Bean Merchant Wholesalers	18	19	6%	19	\$78,757	83.58

Table 21: Largest Subsectors in Eddy County, 2020

TOP EMPLOYERS

Table 22 lists the top employers in Eddy County as provided through the North Dakota LMI website. Some organizations have opted to keep their information private and are therefore presented as “undisclosed.”

Organization	Type	Industry
Lutheran Home of the Good Shepherd	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities (Private)	Healthcare and Social Assistance
North American Bison, LLC	Food Manufacturing	Manufacturing
New Rockford-Sheyenne School District	Local Government	Educational Services
East Central Center for Exceptional Children	Local Government	Educational Services
4th Corporation	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities (Private)	Healthcare and Social Assistance

Table 22: Largest Employers in Eddy County, 2020

TOP OCCUPATIONS

Tables 23 and 24 list the top occupations in Eddy County, sorted by 2020 job counts. The occupations listed in Table 23 represent the top 2-digit occupation codes, meaning they are more broadly defined. The occupations presented in Table 24 are defined more narrowly and are based on the 5-digit occupation codes.

The largest 2-digit occupation group in Eddy County is Healthcare Support Occupations, which accounted for 95 jobs in 2020. By percentage, two occupation groups tie for the largest growth rate from 2015 to 2020. Transportation and Material Moving Occupations, as well as Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations, both had growth of 12% over that time. These occupation groups are projected to continue to grow in the coming years.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Healthcare Support Occupations	96	95	(1%)	91	\$15.26	\$31,746.12	17
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	96	83	(13%)	85	\$17.08	\$35,524.46	13
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	86	81	(5%)	86	\$23.94	\$49,800.58	10
Sales and Related Occupations	70	75	8%	83	\$15.46	\$32,154.83	15
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	65	66	2%	70	\$12.04	\$25,036.92	15
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	59	66	12%	72	\$18.45	\$38,375.42	12
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	54	60	12%	66	\$25.95	\$53,981.40	10
Production Occupations	52	49	(7%)	55	\$16.55	\$34,430.53	15
Construction and Extraction Occupations	46	46	(1%)	50	\$19.85	\$41,280.19	9
Management Occupations	85	45	(47%)	45	\$34.08	\$70,896.71	17

Table 23: Largest 2-Digit Occupation Groups in Eddy County, 2020

The largest 5-digit occupation in Eddy County in 2020 was Nursing Assistants with just under 60 jobs that year, but the largest percent of change for 2015-2020 was in Retail Salespersons at 30%. The latter will show some growth in the future, as will Cashiers by the same number but at a lower hourly wage.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Nursing Assistants	57	59	5%	58	\$15.00	\$31,206.14	10
Cashiers	28	28	2%	31	\$12.56	\$26,115.41	6
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	25	28	10%	24	\$14.91	\$31,013.98	4
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	20	19	(5%)	20	\$25.35	\$52,722.16	2
Office Clerks, General	15	18	23%	18	\$16.45	\$34,209.50	3
Retail Salespersons	14	18	30%	21	\$15.69	\$32,629.04	3
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	19	16	(16%)	17	\$14.77	\$30,712.18	2
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	16	16	0%	16	\$20.63	\$42,906.15	2
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	18	16	(11%)	18	\$16.73	\$34,791.07	3
Fast Food and Counter Workers	16	15	(5%)	18	\$12.23	\$25,440.80	3

Table 24: Largest 5-Digit Occupation Groups in Eddy County, 2020

Ramsey County

Demographics

AGE AND RACE

According to the first release of 2020 Census data, the population of Ramsey County that is 18 years and over is 11,605. Of that adult population, census data show a vast 81% majority of the county's population as White. The second largest single racial group is Native Americans, who make up about 11% of the population. Residents of two or more races make up about 6% of the county's population. Ramsey County's adult population is about 2.4% Hispanic or Latino, regardless of race.

While complete 2020 Census data have not yet been released, according to 2019 estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS), 23.2% of Ramsey County residents are under 18 years of age with another 8.8% of residents between ages 18 and 24. With an estimated 32% of Ramsey County's population under the age of 24, the county matches the national average. 19.2% of Cavalier County's residents are over the age of 65, which is higher than the national average of about 15.6%.

The 2019 ACS also estimates that about 82% of Cavalier County residents were born in North Dakota.

2020 Population

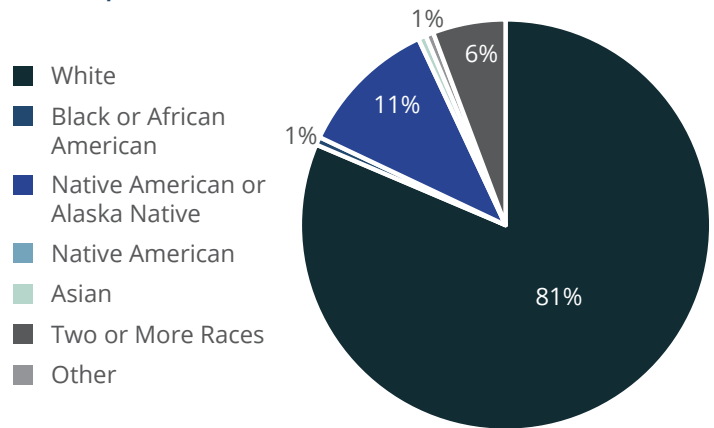


Figure 13: Population by Race in Ramsey County, 2020

Percent of Population by Age

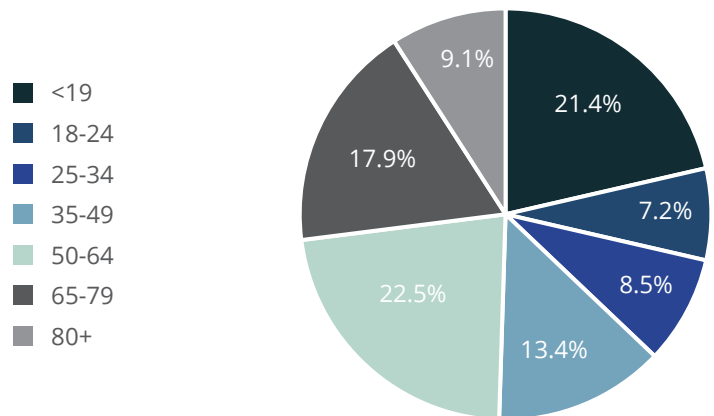


Figure 14: Population by Age in Ramsey County, 2019

POVERTY

According to the 2019 ACS estimates, 12.5% of Ramsey County residents live below the poverty line, including 13.8% of all children under the age of 18. An estimated 11.7% of adults over the age of 65 live below the poverty level. Poverty is unevenly distributed across the county's racial populations as an estimated 29.0% of Hispanic or Latino origin residents in Ramsey County are estimated to live in poverty, as compared to 8.9% of Whites.

Category	% below the poverty line
Total population	12.5%
Under 18 years	13.8%
18 to 64 years	12.2%
65 years and older	11.7%
Male	12.0%
Female	13.0%
White	8.9%
Native American	27.5%
Two or more races	45.0%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	29.0%
Less than high school education (ages 25 and over)	21.4%
High school graduate or equivalent (ages 25 and over)	15.9%
Some college of associate's degree (ages 25 and over)	7.6%
Bachelor's degree of higher (ages 25 and over)	4.2%
Employed (16 years and older)	8.4%
Unemployed (16 years and older)	40.0%

Table 25: Poverty by Population Group in Ramsey County, 2019

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

According to 2019 ACS estimates, 87.5% of Ramsey County residents between ages 18 and 24 completed high school or the equivalent, with around 58.6% attending some level of college instruction. Around 46.5% of adults 25 years and older have completed some type of college degree, with over 26% attaining a bachelor’s degree or higher. 7.2% of Ramsey County residents have completed a graduate or professional degree.

Highest Level Attained	% of population ages 18-24	% of population ages 25 and up
Less than high school graduate	2.0%	10.5% (12.9% M / 8.3% F)
High school graduate or equivalent	73.6%	29.3% (34.7% M / 24.1% F)
Some college or associate’s degree	16.9%	34.0% (31.4% M / 36.4% F)
Bachelor’s degree or higher	7.4%	26.2% (20.9% M / 31.2% F)

Table 26: Educational Attainment in Ramsey County, 2019

Labor Market Analysis

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Since at least 2018, the unemployment rate in Ramsey County is typically very close to the state average on a month-to-month basis. The gap widened a bit during the second half of 2020 with lower unemployment in the county compared to the state, which continued through the most recent completed quarter of this year. In April and May of 2020, at the height of the national unemployment surge caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the county's unemployment rate spiked to 8.3% and 7.8% respectively, about .6 percentage points lower than the state rate during this time. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Ramsey County has reversed the pre-pandemic trend and has reported less unemployment than the state average, although the gap has tightened in recent months.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

According to 2019 ACS estimates, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) for Ramsey County residents 16 years and over was 67.8%. For the typical working-age population for 20-64 years, that number was 85.62%. For those residents with less than a high school diploma, 59.7% were actively working or looking for work. The unemployment rate for this group was 0.0%. Residents who completed Some College or an Associate Degree had a 85.2% LFPR and the highest unemployment rate in the population at 1.0%. For reference, the national unemployment rate at the end of 2019 was 3.6%, the lowest rate since 1969.¹⁶

Monthly Unemployment Rate, Jan. 2018 - Sept. 2021

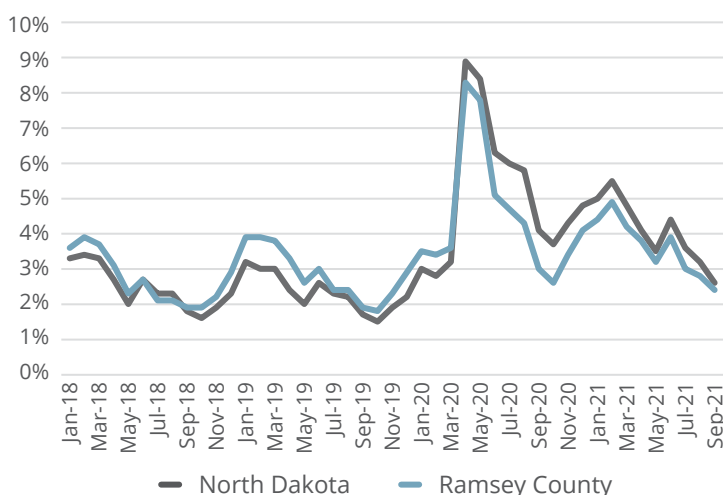


Figure 15: Monthly Unemployment Rate in Ramsey County, 2018-2021

Labor Force Participation

Population	2019 LFPR	2019 Unemployment Rate
16 years and over	67.8%	0.6%
20 years to 64 years	85.6%	0.5%
Males (20 to 64 years)	85.4%	0.2%
Females (20 to 64 years)	85.9%	0.9%
Below Poverty Level	51.8%	3.2%
At or Above Poverty Level	90.6%	0.3%
With Any Disability	48.2%	0.0%
Less than High School Graduate (25 to 64 years)	59.7%	0.0%
High School Graduate or Equivalent (25 to 64 years)	78.4%	0.2%
Some College or Associate's Degree (25 to 64 years)	85.2%	1.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher (25 to 64 years)	93.2%	0.4%

Table 27: Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates in Ramsey County, 2019

¹⁶ <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2020/article/job-market-remains-tight-in-2019-as-the-unemployment-rate-falls-to-its-lowest-level-since-1969.htm>

JOB TRENDS

Between 2015 and 2020, the number of jobs in Ramsey County is estimated to have decreased by 3.8%. From 2020-2025, the number of jobs in the county is projected to grow steadily towards 2017 numbers.¹⁷

Ramsey County Job Trends

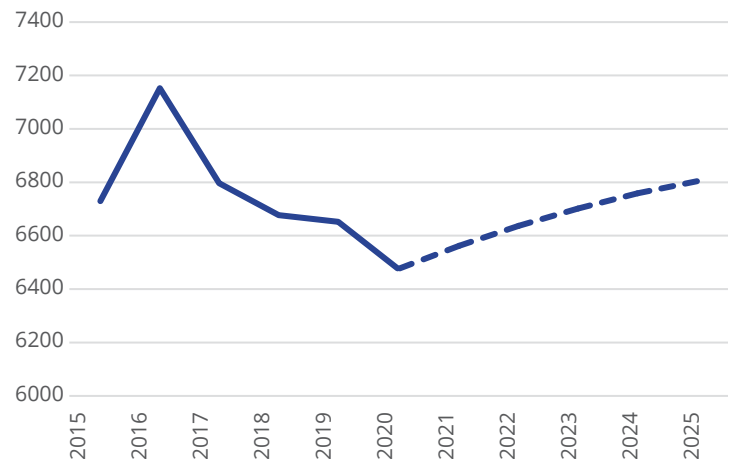


Figure 16: Job Trends in Ramsey County, 2015-2025

LARGEST INDUSTRIES AND SUBSECTORS

In Table 29, the ten largest industries in Ramsey County are listed in order of 2020 job count. The Location Quotient (LQ) is a way to quantify the concentration of a particular industry in an area compared to average concentration of that industry nationally. For example, an LQ of 1.00 means that industry matches the national average concentration. An industry with an LQ of 4.0 would be four times more concentrated in the area than it is nationally. An industry with an LQ of .25 would be one-quarter as concentrated in the area as it is nationally. Industries that rank high in this metric are uncommonly concentrated in the area and the combination of industries with high LQs gives an indication of what is uncommon or “unique” in the area.

The top industry in Ramsey County is Government, much of which appears to be connected to the public schools. The industry with the largest LQ score is the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting industry, which is concentrated at more than five times the national average. Health Care and Social Assistance is expected to add the most jobs (85) in the future.

¹⁷ EMSI, data set Q4 2021.

Industry Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Government	1,542	1,496	(3%)	1,472	\$61,163	1.51
Retail Trade	989	959	(3%)	1,040	\$38,424	1.51
Health Care and Social Assistance	899	943	5%	1,028	\$53,544	1.11
Accommodation and Food Services	683	688	1%	751	\$19,486	1.40
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	405	400	(1%)	417	\$62,460	5.02
Wholesale Trade	296	317	7%	327	\$69,708	1.33
Other Services (except Public Administration)	249	295	18%	288	\$21,858	0.87
Finance and Insurance	278	223	(20%)	207	\$80,597	0.82
Construction	338	207	(39%)	160	\$48,504	0.55
Manufacturing	202	179	(11%)	178	\$65,030	0.35

Table 28: Largest Industries in Ramsey County, 2020

Ramsey County

Table 30 provides information about the top ten subsectors in Ramsey County, using the 5-digit NAICS codes as opposed to the 2-digit codes represented in Table 29. The largest growth subsector from 2015 to 2020 was General Merchandise Stores including Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters at an enormous 2100% change. Nearly 75 jobs will be added to that subsector in the future.

Industry Subsector	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Education (Local Government)	487	459	-6%	445	\$63,720	1.46
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	424	438	3%	459	\$18,275	1.14
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	300	329	10%	351	\$55,604	1.44
State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	325	318	-2%	291	\$70,798	3.45
General Merchandise Stores, including Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	11	242	2100%	316	\$30,761	2.93
Animal Production	262	226	-14%	227	\$66,415	12.09
Education (State Government)	200	194	-3%	217	\$41,334	1.73
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	120	178	48%	179	\$49,587	2.83
New Car Dealers	133	155	17%	173	\$65,269	3.56
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	106	143	35%	168	\$46,073	1.68

Table 29: Largest Subsectors in Ramsey County, 2020

TOP EMPLOYERS

Table 30 lists the top employers in Ramsey County as provided through the North Dakota LMI website. Some organizations have opted to keep their information private and are therefore presented as “undisclosed.”

Organization	Type	Industry
Devils Lake Public School District	Local Government	Educational Services
Walmart	General Merchandise Stores	Retail Trade
Eventide Heartland	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	Healthcare and Social Assistance
Lake Region State College	State Government	Educational Services
Chi St Alexius Health – Devils Lake	Hospitals (Private)	Healthcare and Social Assistance
Ramsey County	Local Government	Public Administration
Lake Region Corporation	Social Assistance (Private)	Healthcare and Social Assistance
City of Devils Lake	Local Government	Public Administration
Leevers Foods	Food and Beverage Stores	Retail Trade
Altru Health System	Ambulatory Health Care Services	Healthcare and Social Assistance

Table 30: Largest Employers in Ramsey County, 2020

TOP OCCUPATIONS

Tables 31 and 32 list the top occupations in Ramsey County, sorted by 2020 job counts. The occupations listed in Table 31 represent the top 2-digit occupation codes, meaning they are more broadly defined. The occupations presented in Table 32 are defined more narrowly and are based on the 5-digit occupation codes.

The largest 2-digit occupation group in Ramsey County is Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations, which accounted for 729 jobs in 2020. By percentage, the occupation group with the largest growth rate from 2015 to 2020 was Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations with 9% growth over that time. Both occupation groups are projected to continue to grow in the coming years.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	711	729	2%	783	\$13.05	\$27,143.00	157
Sales and Related Occupations	732	727	(1%)	778	\$15.21	\$31,631.04	122
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	801	670	(16%)	648	\$17.82	\$37,056.31	108
Management Occupations	555	517	(7%)	527	\$32.72	\$68,047.97	64
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	459	482	5%	504	\$21.78	\$45,308.36	62
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	464	480	3%	517	\$19.01	\$39,546.16	83
Healthcare Support Occupations	458	442	(4%)	481	\$18.40	\$38,271.31	75
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	320	348	9%	360	\$23.31	\$48,494.23	53
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	310	316	2%	325	\$13.36	\$27,788.82	54
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	275	300	9%	302	\$32.61	\$67,835.98	35

Table 31: Largest 2-Digit Occupation Groups in Ramsey County, 2020

The largest 5-digit occupation in Ramsey County in 2020 was Home Health and Personal Care Aides with nearly 270 jobs that year. The job number is expected to grow to just over 300 in the future. The occupation with the highest growth rate from 2015 to 2020 was Cooks, Restaurant, with a 143% increase in the number of jobs over that timeframe. The number of jobs is expected to continue to grow in that occupation.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	293	268	(9%)	304	\$18.02	\$37,489.94	47
Cashiers	241	248	3%	252	\$12.01	\$24,984.81	46
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	261	233	(11%)	235	\$21.16	\$44,011.69	26
Fast Food and Counter Workers	183	223	21%	230	\$11.49	\$23,901.72	45
Retail Salespersons	253	218	(14%)	244	\$15.58	\$32,412.27	33
Office Clerks, General	126	154	22%	148	\$18.04	\$37,518.11	23
Bartenders	138	146	6%	163	\$12.78	\$26,576.71	33
Nursing Assistants	101	120	19%	121	\$18.41	\$38,299.19	18
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	108	118	9%	118	\$11.57	\$24,067.86	22
Cooks, Restaurant	49	118	143%	133	\$14.83	\$30,855.99	23

Table 32: Largest 5-Digit Occupation Groups in Ramsey County, 2020

Rolette County

Demographics

AGE AND RACE

According to the first release of 2020 Census data, the population of Rolette County that is 18 years and over is 12,187. Of that adult population, census data show a large 76% majority of the county's population as Native American, many of whom live on the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indiana Reservation, which is considered to be on the most densely populated reservations in the country.¹⁸ The second largest single racial group is Whites, who make up about 19% of the county's population. Residents of two or more races make up about 5% of the county's population.

While complete 2020 Census data have not yet been released, according to 2019 estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS), 33.8% of Rolette County residents are under 18 years of age with another 9% of residents between ages 18 and 24. With an estimated 42.8% of Rolette County's population under the age of 24, the county is much younger than the national average, of which an estimated 32% is younger than 24 years. 11.3% of Rolette County's residents are over the age of 65, which is somewhat lower than the national average of about 15.6% age 65 and over.

The 2019 ACS also estimates that over 90% of Rolette County residents were born in North Dakota.

2020 Population

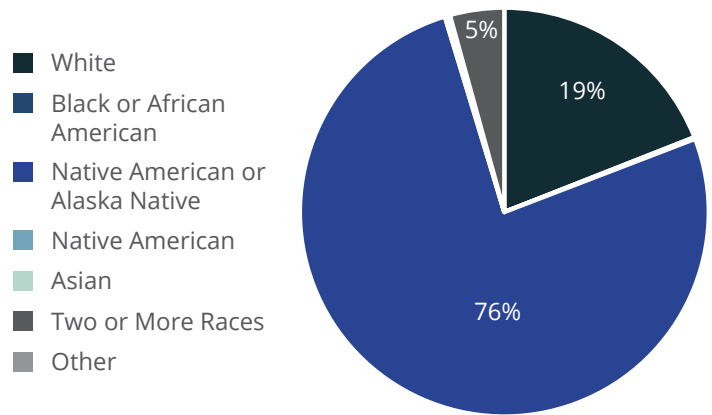


Figure 17: Population by Race in Rolette County, 2020

Percent of Population by Age

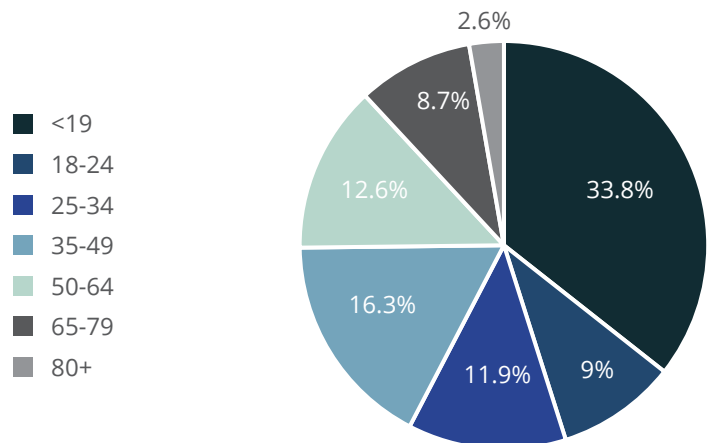


Figure 18: Population by Age, Rolette County, 2019

¹⁸ <https://tmchippewa.com/about-us/>

POVERTY

According to the 2019 ACS estimates, 27.1% of Rolette County residents live below the poverty line, including 35.1% of all children under the age of 18. An estimated 16.3% of adults over the age of 65 live below the poverty level. Poverty is unevenly distributed across the county's racial populations as an estimated 31.5% of Native Americans in Rolette County are estimated to live in poverty.

Category	% below the poverty line
Total population	27.1%
Under 18 years	35.1%
18 to 64 years	24.5%
65 years and older	16.3%
Male	27.4%
Female	26.9%
White	6.2%
Native American	31.5%
Two or more races	25.7%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	48.7%
Less than high school education (ages 25 and over)	48.2%
High school graduate or equivalent (ages 25 and over)	21.3%
Some college of associate's degree (ages 25 and over)	20.3%
Bachelor's degree of higher (ages 25 and over)	7.1%
Employed (16 years and older)	9.9%
Unemployed (16 years and older)	41.4%

Table 33: Poverty by Population Group in Rolette County, 2019

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

According to 2019 ACS estimates, 79.7% of Rolette County residents between ages 18 and 24 completed high school or the equivalent, with around 44.6% attending some level of college instruction. Just under 37% of adults 25 years and older have completed some type of college degree, with around 19.6 % attaining a bachelor’s degree or higher. 5.3% of Rolette County residents have completed a graduate or professional degree.

Highest Level Attained	% of population ages 18-24	% of population ages 25 and up
Less than high school graduate	20.3% (22.5% M / 18% F)	12.4% (15.4% M / 9.7% F)
High school graduate or equivalent	35.2% (32.3% M / 38.2% F)	25.8% (32.6% M / 19.5% F)
Some college or associate’s degree	41.5% (43.1 M / 39.6% F)	42.1% (39.2% M / 45.0% F)
Bachelor’s degree or higher	3.1% (2.1% M / 4.1% F)	19.6% (12.9% M / 25.8% F)

Table 34: Educational Attainment in Rolette County, 2019

Labor Market Analysis

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Since at least 2018, the unemployment rate in Rolette County is typically higher than the state average on a month-to-month basis, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased this gap. In April and May of 2020, at the height of the national unemployment surge, the county's unemployment rate spiked to 14.1% and 15.6% respectively. However, as the national and state unemployment rates began to drop in June of 2020, Rolette's unemployment continued to rise through the summer months, reaching an extremely high rate of 22.1 in August of that year. Although September 2021 showed a significant decrease in the unemployment rate, this year-low was still higher than pre-pandemic September numbers.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

According to 2019 ACS estimates, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) for Rolette County residents 16 years and over was 57.3%. For the typical working-age population for 20-64 years, that number was 69%. For those residents with less than a high school diploma, 49.3% were actively working or looking for work. The unemployment rate for this group was 18.4%. Residents who completed high school or the equivalent but who did not attend college or receive any postsecondary education show a 64.4% LFPR and a 11.5% unemployment rate. For reference, the national unemployment rate at the end of 2019 was 3.6%, the lowest rate since 1969.¹⁹

Monthly Unemployment Rate, Jan. 2018 - Sept. 2021

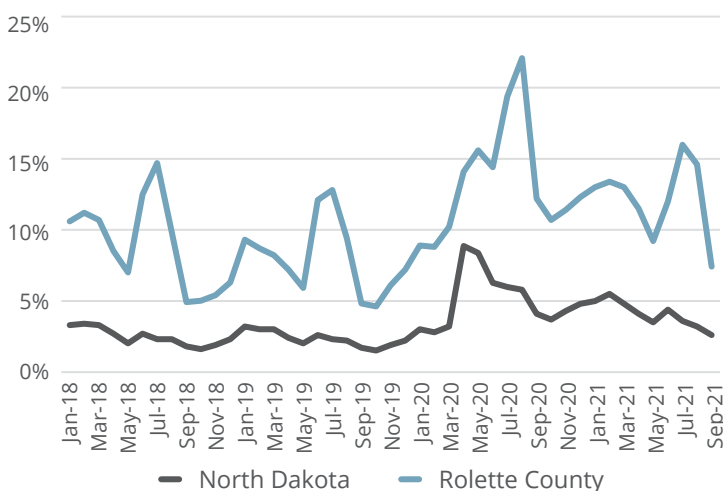


Figure 19: Monthly Unemployment Rate in Rolette County, 2018-2021

Labor Force Participation

Population	2019 LFPR	2019 Unemployment Rate
16 years and over	57.3%	8.3%
20 years to 64 years	69.0%	7.2%
Males (20 to 64 years)	67.7%	9.9%
Females (20 to 64 years)	70.2%	4.6%
Below Poverty Level	37.3%	27.2%
At or Above Poverty Level	79.9%	4.1%
With Any Disability	35.7%	12.7%
Less than High School Graduate (25 to 64 years)	49.3%	18.4%
High School Graduate or Equivalent (25 to 64 years)	64.4%	11.5%
Some College or Associate's Degree (25 to 64 years)	72.6%	5.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher (25 to 64 years)	92.3%	0.2%

Table 35: Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates in Rolette County, 2019

¹⁹ <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2020/article/job-market-remains-tight-in-2019-as-the-unemployment-rate-falls-to-its-lowest-level-since-1969.htm>

JOB TRENDS

Between 2015 and 2020, the number of jobs in Rolette County is estimated to have decreased by 13.1%. From 2020-2025, the number of jobs in the county is projected to continue on a steady decline.²⁰

Rolette County Job Trends

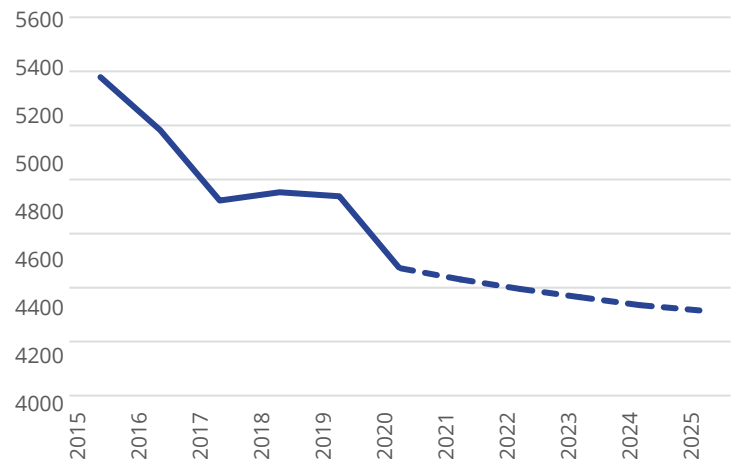


Figure 20: Job Trends in Rolette County, 2015-2025

LARGEST INDUSTRIES AND SUBSECTORS

In Table 36, the ten largest industries in Rolette County are listed in order of 2020 job count. The Location Quotient (LQ) is a way to quantify the concentration of a particular industry in an area compared to average concentration of that industry nationally. For example, an LQ of 1.00 means that industry matches the national average concentration. An industry with an LQ of 4.0 would be four times more concentrated in the area than it is nationally. An industry with an LQ of .25 would be one-quarter as concentrated in the area as it is nationally. Industries that rank high in this metric are uncommonly concentrated in the area and the combination of industries with high LQs gives an indication of what is uncommon or “unique” in the area.

The top industry in Rolette County is Government. This is largely due to the presence of the Turtle Mountain Reservation in the county, as counties with reservations typically house a larger number of government offices. This industry also has the largest LQ score and is concentrated at more than four times the national average. The largest growth industry from 2015 to 2020 was the finance and insurance industry.

²⁰ EMSI, data set Q4 2021.

Industry Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Government	3,134	2,915	(7%)	2,744	\$64,999	4.03
Retail Trade	461	417	(10%)	400	\$26,161	0.90
Health Care and Social Assistance	380	388	2%	379	\$42,161	0.63
Construction	333	264	(21%)	273	\$41,041	0.96
Accommodation and Food Services	139	136	(2%)	146	\$13,090	0.38
Finance and Insurance	101	121	20%	135	\$62,381	0.61
Wholesale Trade	118	108	(8%)	109	\$55,878	0.62
Other Services (except Public Administration)	70	80	14%	93	\$24,757	0.32
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	68	75	10%	75	\$27,685	0.26
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	226	63	(72%)	40	\$54,107	1.09

Table 36: Largest Industries in Rolette County, 2020

Rolette County

Table 37 provides information about the top ten subsectors in Rolette County, using the 5-digit NAICS codes as opposed to the 2-digit codes represented in Table 36. The largest growth subsector from 2015 to 2020 was Sight Preparation Contractors, with a 93% increase in jobs over that time. Projections estimate continued growth in this subsector, as well.

Industry Subsector	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	1,290	1,068	(17%)	942	\$46,557	6.42
Federal Government, Civilian, Excluding Postal Service	903	897	(1%)	840	\$91,338	12.58
Education (Local Government)	785	822	5%	850	\$64,892	3.58
Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	120	129	8%	129	\$20,648	5.13
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	151	126	(17%)	105	\$21,292	1.64
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	84	118	40%	127	\$55,088	0.84
Site Preparation Contractors	46	89	93%	115	\$31,825	5.58
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	98	89	(9%)	87	\$13,356	0.31
Federal Government, Military	94	84	(11%)	78	\$24,797	1.45
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	80	78	(3%)	80	\$31,027	8.62

Table 37: Largest Subsectors in Rolette County, 2020

TOP EMPLOYERS

Table 38 lists the top employers in Rolette County as provided through the North Dakota LMI website. Some organizations have opted to keep their information private, and are therefore presented as “undisclosed.”

Organization	Type	Industry
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians	Local Government	Public Administration
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services	Hospitals, Federal Government	Healthcare and Social Assistance
U.S. Dept. of Interior	Federal Government	Public Administration
Sky Dancer Casino	Local Government	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
Belcourt Schools	Local Government	Educational Services
Turtle Mountain Community College	Local Government	Educational Services
Dunseith School District	Local Government	Educational Services
Presentation Medical Center	Hospitals (Private)	Healthcare and Social Assistance
St. John School District #3	Local Government	Educational Services

Table 38: Largest Employers in Rolette County, 2020

TOP OCCUPATIONS

Tables 39 and 40 list the top occupations in Rolette County, sorted by 2020 job counts. The occupations listed in Table 39 represent the top 2-digit occupation codes, meaning they are more broadly defined. The occupations presented in Table 40 are defined more narrowly and are based on the 5-digit occupation codes.

The largest 2-digit occupation group in Rolette County is made up of Educational, Instruction, and Library Occupations, which accounted for 569 jobs in 2020. By percentage, the occupation group with the largest growth rate from 2015 to 2020 was Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations with 12% growth over that time.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	565	569	1%	581	\$25.07	\$52,142.78	77
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	634	553	(13%)	521	\$16.81	\$34,966.85	83
Sales and Related Occupations	343	329	(4%)	322	\$12.13	\$25,226.01	57
Management Occupations	439	307	(30%)	283	\$36.60	\$76,125.70	39
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	273	306	12%	291	\$28.02	\$58,283.94	33
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	283	286	1%	286	\$27.99	\$58,225.22	37
Construction and Extraction Occupations	326	285	(13%)	283	\$20.43	\$42,498.32	50
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	325	280	(14%)	267	\$17.95	\$37,334.01	48
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	289	280	(3%)	283	\$11.25	\$23,401.04	58
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	226	219	(3%)	213	\$20.84	\$43,350.67	33

Table 39: Largest 2-Digit Occupation Groups in Rolette County, 2020

The largest 5-digit occupation in Rolette County in 2020 was Cashiers with over 175 jobs that year. The occupation groups with the high growth rate from 2015 to 2020 were Office Clerks and Postsecondary Teachers with a 25% increase in the number of jobs over that timeframe. The latter occupation is expected to show continued growth in the coming years.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Cashiers	182	178	(2%)	163	\$10.49	\$21,813.28	33
Office Clerks, General	119	149	25%	138	\$15.98	\$33,235.47	21
Postsecondary Teachers	105	131	25%	150	\$35.29	\$73,404.17	18
Registered Nurses	95	114	19%	111	\$28.96	\$60,231.92	10
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	106	107	1%	104	\$15.00	\$31,202.65	15
Fast Food and Counter Workers	80	100	24%	98	\$10.01	\$20,816.89	19
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	98	89	(10%)	84	\$16.52	\$34,370.08	17
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	89	85	(4%)	84	\$25.42	\$52,879.77	8
Childcare Workers	88	82	(7%)	75	\$11.44	\$23,789.35	15
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	87	81	(7%)	80	\$14.76	\$30,702.49	11

Table 40: Largest 5-Digit Occupation Groups in Rolette County, 2020

Towner County

Demographics

AGE AND RACE

According to the first release of 2020 Census data, the population of Towner County that is 18 years and over is 2,162. Of that adult population, census data show a vast 92% majority of the county's population as White. The second largest single racial group is Native Americans, who make up about 3% of the population. Residents of two or more races make up about 4% of the county's population. Towner County's adult population is about 1.6% Hispanic or Latino, regardless of race. Towner County is the second-most racially homogenous county in North Dakota's North Central region and is much less diverse than the national average.

While complete 2020 Census data have not yet been released, according to 2019 estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS), 22.3% of Towner County residents are under 18 years of age with another 4.9% of residents between ages 18 and 24. With an estimated 27.2% of Ramsey County's population under the age of 24, the county is below the national average of 32% in this age group. 22.6% of Cavalier County's residents are over the age of 65, which is higher than the national average of about 15.6%.

The 2019 ACS also estimates that about 77% of Cavalier County residents were born in North Dakota.

2020 Population

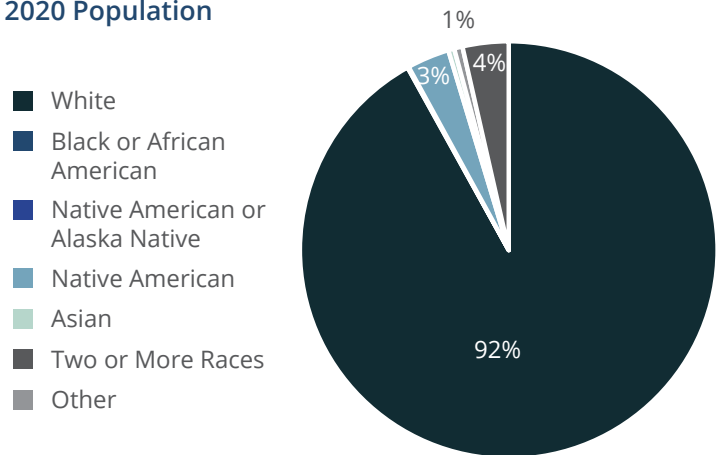


Figure 21: Population by Race in Towner County, 2020

Percent of Population by Age

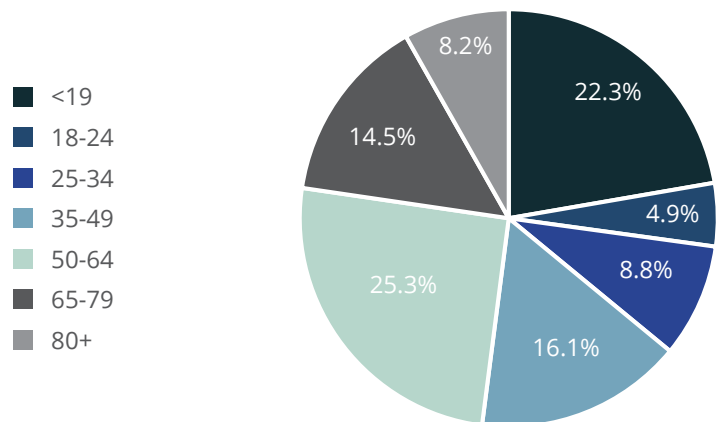


Figure 22: Population by Age in Towner County, 2019

POVERTY

According to the 2019 ACS estimates, 10.4% of Towner County residents live below the poverty line, including 10.3% of all children under the age of 18. An estimated 17.8% of adults over the age of 65 live below the poverty level. Poverty is unevenly distributed across the county's racial populations as an estimated 21.3% of Native Americans in Towner County are estimated to live in poverty.

Category	% below the poverty line
Total population	10.4%
Under 18 years	10.3%
18 to 64 years	7.6%
65 years and older	17.8%
Male	8.0%
Female	13.3%
White	8.8%
Native American	21.3%
Two or more races	47.4%
Less than high school education (ages 25 and over)	23.1%
High school graduate or equivalent (ages 25 and over)	14.5%
Some college of associate's degree (ages 25 and over)	8.9%
Bachelor's degree of higher (ages 25 and over)	4.7%
Employed (16 years and older)	2.1%
Unemployed (16 years and older)	25.7%

Table 41: Poverty by Population Group in Towner County, 2019

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

According to 2019 ACS estimates, 86.1% of Towner County residents between ages 18 and 24 completed high school or the equivalent, with around 35% attending some level of college instruction. Around 31.6% of adults 25 years and older have completed some type of college degree, with around 17% attaining a bachelor’s degree or higher. 3% of Rolette County residents have completed a graduate or professional degree. Percentages for 18-24 year old male and female educational attainment have been left off this chart due to high uncertainty/Margin of Error (MoE) in the estimates.

Highest Level Attained	% of population ages 18-24	% of population ages 25 and up
Less than high school graduate	13.9%	8.6% (10.1% M / 6.8% F)
High school graduate or equivalent	50.9%	33.8% (26.3% M / 42.3% F)
Some college or associate’s degree	29.6%	40.6% (45.5% M / 36.1% F)
Bachelor’s degree or higher	5.6%	17.0% (18.9% M / 14.8% F)

Table 42: Education Attainment in Towner County, 2019

Labor Market Analysis

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Since at least 2018, the unemployment rate in Towner County is typically on par with the state average on a month-to-month basis. However, the unemployment rate in Towner County was not as affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as the rest of the state. In April and May of 2020, at the height of the national unemployment surge caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the county's unemployment rate remained at a low 3.3% and 3.5% respectively, not changing much from pre-pandemic numbers. Towner County's unemployment rate peaked at 5.1% in February of 2021, but has largely returned to pre-pandemic numbers in the months since.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

According to 2019 ACS estimates, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) for Towner County residents 16 years and over was 60.3%. For the typical working-age population for 20-64 years, that number was 78.8%. For those residents with less than a high school diploma, 54.5% were actively working or looking for work. Residents who completed high school or the equivalent but who did not attend college or receive any postsecondary education show a 74.9% LFPR and a 8.9% unemployment rate. For reference, the national unemployment rate at the end of 2019 was 3.6%, the lowest rate since 1969.²¹

Monthly Unemployment Rate, Jan. 2018 - Sept. 2021

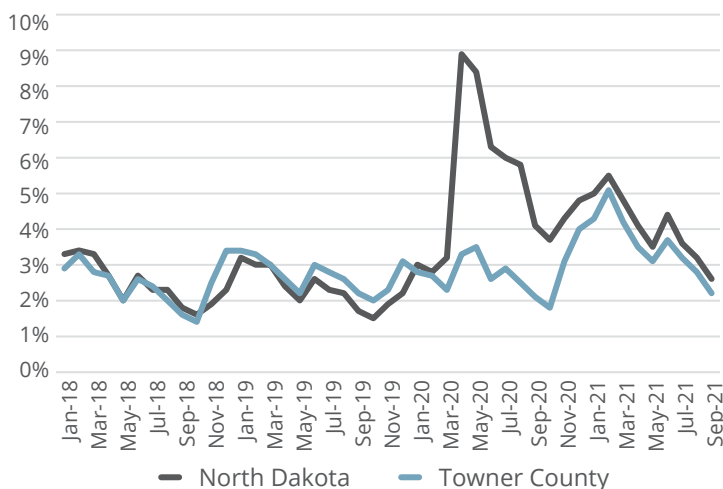


Figure 23: Monthly Unemployment Rate in Towner County, 2018-2021

Labor Force Participation

Population	2019 LFPR	2019 Unemployment Rate
16 years and over	60.3%	3.3%
20 years to 64 years	78.8%	3.2%
Males (20 to 64 years)	88.1%	1.3%
Females (20 to 64 years)	66.5%	6.6%
Below Poverty Level	33.3%	29.0%
At or Above Poverty Level	83.1%	2.4%
With Any Disability	11.4%	41.7%
Less than High School Graduate (25 to 64 years)	54.5%	N/A ²²
High School Graduate or Equivalent (25 to 64 years)	74.9%	8.9%
Some College or Associate's Degree (25 to 64 years)	86.6%	1.9%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher (25 to 64 years)	92.3%	0.2%

Table 43: Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates in Towner County, 2019

²¹ <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2020/article/job-market-remains-tight-in-2019-as-the-unemployment-rate-falls-to-its-lowest-level-since-1969.htm>

²² Margin of Error too high for accurate reporting.

JOB TRENDS

Between 2015 and 2020, the number of jobs in Towner County is estimated to have decreased by 15.5%. From 2020-2025, the number of jobs in the county is projected to continue a steady decline.²³

Towner County Job Trends

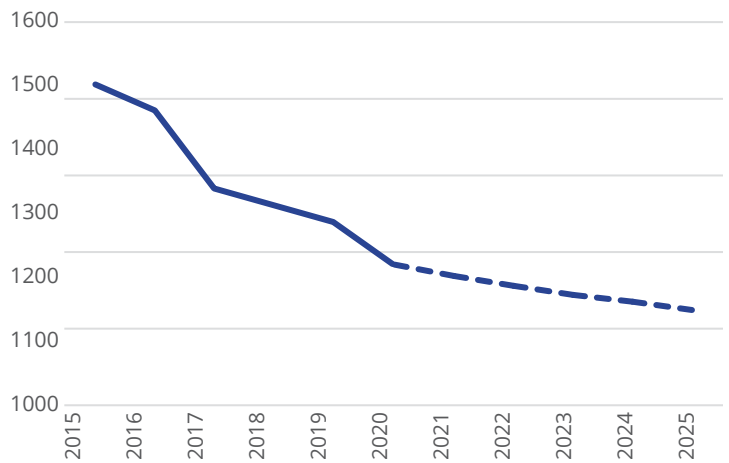


Figure 24: Job Trends in Towner County, 2015-2025

LARGEST INDUSTRIES AND SUBSECTORS

In Table 44, the ten largest industries in Towner County are listed in order of 2020 job count. The Location Quotient (LQ) is a way to quantify the concentration of a particular industry in an area compared to average concentration of that industry nationally. For example, an LQ of 1.00 means that industry matches the national average concentration. An industry with an LQ of 4.0 would be four times more concentrated in the area than it is nationally. An industry with an LQ of .25 would be one-quarter as concentrated in the area as it is nationally. Industries that rank high in this metric are uncommonly concentrated in the area and the combination of industries with high LQs gives an indication of what is uncommon or “unique” in the area.

The top industry in Towner County by a large margin is Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting. This is rarely the top industry in a county in the United States and is only seen in areas with small populations that typically have large farming operations. This industry is 36 times more concentrated in Towner County than the national average. Healthcare and Social Assistance and Government are the next largest industries, with Wholesale and Retail trade showing the largest percentage growth in jobs.

²³ EMSI, data set Q4 2021.

Industry Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	735	569	(23%)	505	\$64,378	36.26
Health Care and Social Assistance	145	150	3%	145	\$54,018	0.90
Government	158	139	(12%)	116	\$61,811	0.71
Wholesale Trade	67	87	30%	95	\$87,967	1.85
Retail Trade	55	69	25%	80	\$22,001	0.55
Finance and Insurance	57	51	(11%)	48	\$61,146	0.96
Accommodation and Food Services	36	43	19%	47	\$10,168	0.44
Other Services (except Public Administration)	31	36	16%	43	\$43,330	0.54
Manufacturing	83	29	(65%)	12	\$35,941	0.29
Educational Services	<10	19	-	25	\$17,974	0.57

Table 44: Largest Industries in Towner County, 2020

Towner County

Table 45 provides information about the top ten subsectors in Rolette County, using the 5-digit NAICS codes as opposed to the 2-digit codes represented in Table 44. The largest growth subsector from 2015 to 2020 was Grain and Field Bean Merchant Wholesalers, with a 60% increase in jobs over that time. Projections estimate continued growth in this subsector, as well.

Industry Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Average Earnings per Job	Location Quotient
Animal Production	488	390	(20%)	384	\$67,083	105.82
Crop Production	219	150	(32%)	90	\$64,398	22.68
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	118	120	2%	130	\$57,216	3.14
Grain and Field Bean Merchant Wholesalers	43	69	60%	80	\$87,221	200.15
Education (Local Government)	52	59	13%	54	\$76,043	0.96
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	66	48	(27%)	37	\$44,572	1.06
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	25	32	28%	39	\$8,315	0.42
Support Activities for Crop Production	28	29	4%	31	\$28,415	7.37
Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	29	27	(7%)	29	\$21,616	3.99
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	15	23	53%	12	\$33,275	1.88

Table 45: Largest Subsectors in Towner County, 2020

TOP EMPLOYERS

Table 46 lists the top employers in Towner County as provided through the North Dakota LMI website.

Organization	Type	Industry
Towner County Medical Center	Hospitals (Private)	Healthcare and Social Assistance
Legacy Cooperative	Merchant Wholesalers	Wholesale Trade
North Star Public School District #10	Local Government	Educational Services
Towner County	Local Government	Public Administration
Heartview Foundation	Ambulatory Healthcare Services	Healthcare and Social Assistance

Table 46: Largest Employers in Towner County, 2020

TOP OCCUPATIONS

Tables 47 and 48 list the top occupations in Towner County, sorted by 2020 job counts. The occupations listed in Table 47 represent the top 2-digit occupation codes, meaning they are more broadly defined. The occupations presented in Table 48 are defined more narrowly and are based on the 5-digit occupation codes.

The largest 2-digit occupation group in Towner County is made up of Management Occupations, which accounted for 424 jobs in 2020. By percentage, the occupation group with the largest growth rate from 2015 to 2020 was Educational Instruction and Library Occupations with 37% growth over that time.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Management Occupations	570	424	(26%)	375	\$22.86	\$47,556.59	47
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	167	142	(15%)	134	\$16.45	\$34,225.03	27
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	107	92	(14%)	85	\$16.60	\$34,528.68	15
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	75	77	3%	79	\$27.54	\$57,275.13	9
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	92	74	(20%)	71	\$19.39	\$40,324.30	14
Sales and Related Occupations	71	72	2%	78	\$13.92	\$28,953.36	14
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	56	66	19%	70	\$11.17	\$23,227.57	18
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	38	52	37%	52	\$23.60	\$49,091.30	9
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	44	42	(3%)	41	\$13.43	\$27,927.34	8
Healthcare Support Occupations	39	40	3%	36	\$15.63	\$32,518.59	8

Table 47: Largest 2-Digit Occupation Groups in Towner County, 2020

The largest 5-digit occupation in Towner County in 2020 was Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers with just over 380 jobs that year. The occupation with the highest growth rate from 2015 to 2020 was Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, with a 38% increase in the number of jobs over that timeframe. Office Clerks was the next fastest growing occupation over that time period, although the number of added jobs was only five.

Description	2015 Jobs	2020 Jobs	% Change 2015-2020	2025 Jobs	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	523	383	(27%)	335	\$21.18	\$44,045.13	41
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	75	59	(21%)	54	\$16.28	\$33,867.47	10
Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	49	46	(5%)	45	\$15.57	\$32,395.87	8
Registered Nurses	37	35	(7%)	36	\$28.52	\$59,315.90	3
Cashiers	25	29	15%	30	\$10.49	\$21,818.56	6
Nursing Assistants	23	27	18%	23	\$15.00	\$31,208.65	4
Office Clerks, General	16	21	27%	21	\$16.67	\$34,677.89	3
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	14	19	38%	20	\$17.69	\$36,800.27	3
Agricultural Workers, All Other	15	18	24%	17	\$15.68	\$32,609.42	4
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	37	17	(54%)	15	\$22.91	\$47,649.99	2

Table 48: Largest 5-Digit Occupation Groups in Towner County, 2020

Recommendations

Labor Recommendations County Matrix

County						
Recommendation	Benson	Cavalier	Eddy	Ramsey	Rolette	Towner
Create and Expand Career Pathways and Exploration	X		X	X		
Vocational Focus & Skills-Based Training	X	X	X		X	X
Assessment of Training Needs of Employers through Employer Engagement					X	X
Talent/Labor Attraction and Retention Incentives			X		X	
Access and Equity and Tapping Underserved Populations	X		X			X
Top 3 Industries - 2020	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals, Education and Hospitals (Local Government) Crop Production	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals Education and Hospitals (Local Government)	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities) Education and Hospitals (Local Government) Bakeries and Tortilla Manufacturing	Education and Hospitals (Local Government) Restaurants and Other Eating Places Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals Federal Government, Civilian Education and Hospitals (Local Government)	Animal Production Crop Production General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Top Growing Industries	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting Construction Other Services (except public administration) Finance and Insurance	Administrative and Support Waste Management and Remediation Services Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services Manufacturing Construction Finance and Insurance	Management of Companies and Enterprises Education Services Other Services (except public administration) Transportation and Warehousing	Arts and Entertainment Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services Finance and Insurance Information	Wholesale Trade Retail Trade Accommodations and Food Service Other Services (except public administration)

Implementation of NCPC Labor Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Create and Expand Career Pathways and Exploration Support (*Benson, Eddy & Ramsey Counties*)

Action	Partners	Resources Needed
Collaborate with community colleges, employers, and Tribal councils to create Pipeline/ Career Pathways Alignment. Align curriculum and training programs to in demand industry (top/growing industries). Explore 2+2/dual credit enrollment and career pathway alignment with secondary school systems	NCPC Small Business Development Center, Lake Regional Community College and Dakota College at Bottineau, local chambers, high schools, higher education institutions, tribal councils, local employers.	State and Federal funding grants - specifically Governor announced \$15 million for technical skills training grants and a workforce innovation grant program. State \$15 million for adding or expanding local workforce development incentive grants. Federal USDOL Workforce Funding grants; EDA Grants
Technology Enhanced Career Exploration	Roadtrip Nation, local employers, Local Chambers, High Schools and Higher Education Institutions.	Foundation funding to cover the cost of Roadtrip Nation video production. State and Federal Education and Workforce Grants

Recommendation 2:

Vocational Focus & Skills-Based Training (*Benson, Cavalier, Eddy Rolette & Towner Counties*)

Action	Partners	Resources Needed
Vocational Focus & Skills-based Training: Industrial Hemp Production Program	Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and Dakota College at Bottineau	State \$15 million for adding or expanding local workforce development incentive grants. Federal USDOL Workforce Funding grants; EDA Grants
Technical Retraining to Achieve Credentials (TRAC-7) via mobile labs or residential short-term training.	Local technical and community colleges	Federal funding grants – Round 2 USDOL TAACCCT grants to mirror the Kansas Technical Retraining to Achieve Credentials (TRAC-7)
Incorporate opportunities for Work-based Learning, including internships and registered apprenticeships	Local businesses partner with two- and four-year state higher education institutions to create and implement work- based learning opportunities for students with each respective field of study.	State Workforce Office - specifically Governor announced \$5 million for technical skills training grants and a workforce innovation grant program.
Develop and/or expand soft skills training	High Schools and Higher Education Institutions.	Incorporation of soft skills training into curriculum.

Recommendation 3:

Assessment of Training Needs of Employers through Employer Engagement (Rolette and Towner Counties)

Action	Partners	Resources Needed
Partner with local education and training providers to assess the training needs of local employers	State Workforce Board, Lake Regional Community College, secondary school districts, community-based organizations; local chambers and the economic development councils and local newspapers (marketing)	State and local education and workforce funding – specifically Governor announced \$5 million for technical skills training grants and a workforce innovation grant program.
Build strong communication and engagement with local business and industry to build awareness of programs/adjust to meet employer needs.		

Recommendation 4:

Talent/Labor Attraction and Retention Incentives (Eddy & Rolette Counties)

Action	Partners	Resources Needed
Explore relocation incentives and education loan repayment and create plans to implement these models.	Relocation Incentives: Local organizations, businesses, and amenities. Loan Repayment: Employers with higher education degree/credential requirements.	Relocation incentives: Funding needed for either cash or discount incentives. Local businesses and organization may provide discounts or memberships. Loan Repayment: Employer funding needed to cover education loan costs.
Explore and educate employers on policies like childcare and benefits & competitive wages.	NCPC Small Business Development Center, Lake Regional Community College; State workforce development office and board; SCORE Chapter in Grand Forks; local newspapers and radio station.	State and local funding; Regional EDA grants; SCORE Chapters do offer free in some areas.
Explore funding and partnership opportunities for rural transportation options	State workforce development board, community-based organizations, local non-profits	Foundation support as well as US Dept of Transportation funding opportunities as well as EDA grants

Recommendation 5:

Access and Equity and Tapping Underrepresented Communities *(Benson, Eddy & Towner Counties)*

Action	Partners	Resources Needed
Opportunity Youth	Community-based organizations; secondary and postsecondary institutions, employers, government and tribal agencies and youth organizations	State and federal funding for youth, US Department of Labor Grants, local funding for support of youth available through the workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
Reentry Population Employment	Local law enforcement agencies, municipal courts, adult parole authorities, probation departments, re-entry centers, and adult basic education/GED programs; state and local mental health agencies and community-based organizations; State Dept of Corrections; State Workforce Office and Board	State and Federal funding opportunities - US Department of Labor Grants; US Dept of Education and US Dept of Criminal Justice
Individuals with Disabilities	EARN, NDCPD, Department of Human Services Disability Services	WIOA funding; local, state, and federal funding/grants
Partner with local community-based organizations to provide wrap around services/supportive services	Philanthropic organizations, workforce development boards, job training centers, governmental agencies, childcare providers	WIOA and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funding,
Native American Owned Businesses—Indian Incentive Program. Identify and create relationships with Department of Defense prime contractors for which a Native American owned business could subcontract. Complete necessary steps to participate in Indiana Incentive Program.	Department of Defense prime contractors; North Dakota Procurement Technical Assistance Center	Indiana Incentive Program provides a 5% rebate for prime contractors that subcontract with a Native American owned business.

Recommendation 1: Create and Expand Career Pathways and Exploration

BENSON, EDDY & RAMSEY COUNTIES

a. Pipeline/Career Pathways Alignment

Research shows early career exploration, beginning in kindergarten, supports building a growing and skilled workforce. Advancing career pathways has been a national educational tool for years that engages youth in developing interests in industry career exploration aligned with academic chosen pathways. Often K-12, higher education institutions, the public workforce systems, and American Job Centers have their own version of an industry career pathway. This is cumbersome to the student and adult job seeker when the different occupational pathways are not aligned and possibly do not provide accurate regional industry career pathway labor market information. This often results in noncompletion or an unskilled workforce. Regions where industry sector partnerships have successfully collaborated with educational partners and the public workforce system in the development of aligned career pathways (from K to Gray), demonstrate to youth and adults how they can engage and progress within their chosen pathway right in their own community. Career pathways that include refreshed labor market data, such as entry wages, listings of regional employers with current job postings, and educational training providers' aligned programs of study, provide valuable information to the user to help them succeed in their chosen career pathway.

b. Technology Enhanced Career Exploration

As with the advancement of technology-based educational offerings, career exploration is advancing with new digital media tools. Youth of all ages and adults can explore careers at home through the local PBS station, on their tablets or smart phones, or in a virtual classroom setting. [Roadtrip Nation](#) offers a series of "a day in the life of..." short videos, incorporated into a self-discovery curriculum that empowers students to explore pathways and opportunities for their futures. Roadtrip Nation could produce stories throughout the region featuring the career journeys of local businessmen and women in key industries. The regional career exploration digital media stories encourage today's students to explore career options right in their communities as well as provide local contacts with whom students can speak. These day in the life, local career stories provide meaningful career exploration in digital media content that attract today's youth. In a series of online lessons accompanied by workbook activities, Roadtrip Nation shows how different interests can correspond to a future life pathway. Kids collaborate, develop online research skills, use multimedia tools, and learn more about the career paths of adults who share their interests in their own backyards. The videos feature people from all walks of life who have found success in their chosen fields.

Recommendation 2: Vocational Focus & Skills-Based Training

BENSON, CAVALIER, EDDY, ROLETTE & TOWNER COUNTIES

a. Vocational Focus & Skills-based Training

The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians is planning hemp production to further sustain the Tribe's strategic economic goals. There are currently two empty manufacturing sites on the tribal lands that can be converted to hemp production plants for oils, creams, and other hemp products. Tribal leadership is partnering with Dakota College at Bottineau to expand its [Industrial Hemp Production Program](#) within the Tribe to build and sustain its own skilled workforce for this new industry. It is estimated 150 to 300 new jobs will be created within the next five years on the reservation for its members. The Tribe is also in the planning stages to attain food sovereignty with their own produce and meats.

b. Technical Training

[Technical Retraining to Achieve Credentials \(TRAC-7\)](#) is a consortium program in Kansas funded by a U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant. The project brought seven institutions together as members of the "TRAC-7" consortium to serve the technical trades training needs of the state of Kansas and beyond. Each institution has a signature program not available at the other member institutions. Each member institution offers some but not all the courses from these signature programs. The project will build on these core common courses to allow participants to complete their chosen program using a variety of technology-enabled learning processes including online learning, real-time online interactions, and personalized instruction. Hands-on learning will be facilitated using mobile labs or residential short-term courses. Students will be assessed into this continuum of competency-based training and will be able to access it at multiple entry points. Through extensive needs analysis and community outreach these programs are based on industry driven competencies, and successful participants will earn industry-recognized credentials. While the strategies employed by each institution may vary according to local needs, skills gaps, or targeted populations, the project was focused on two priorities: building programs that meet industry needs including developing career pathways and strengthening online and technology-enabled learning. The project has been designed in conjunction with several signature employers and many more community members.

c. Work-based Learning Opportunities

Work-based learning programs provide employees with experience employers are seeking and help students and adults alike gain the skills and credentials they need to enter and succeed in careers. Likewise, work-based learning helps employers gain access to job candidates who have the hands-on experience they are seeking.²⁴ Key principles for effective work-based learning, according to Jobs for the Future, include: support entry and advancement in a career track; provide meaningful job tasks that build career skills and knowledge; offer compensation; identify target skills and how gains can be validated; reward skill development; support college entry, persistence and completion; and provide comprehensive student supports. Learn more about implementation and successes of work-based learning [here](#).

²⁴ Why Work-Based Learning? Jobs for the Future. Retrieved 11.22.2021 from <https://www.jff.org/what-we-do/impact-stories/center-for-apprenticeship-and-work-based-learning/benefits-work-based-learning/>

d. Soft Skills Training

During stakeholder engagement sessions hosted throughout the 6-county region, employers and community leaders expressed that the most pressing set of workforce skills that are lacking within the region are soft skills, such as the ability to arrive at work on time with a good work attitude, the willingness to learn and work in a team environment, and the ability to think critically. Many shared stories of employees who no longer show up to work, call in, or respond to their employer’s outreach. This is concerning to all and most definitely has an impact on the economic well-being of the region and the communities they support. This is not a new challenge or specific to only rural regions.

Starting in middle school with career exploration activities, all levels of educational institutions can begin to adopt and implement soft skills activities within current course loads and curriculum. Many personality traits are considered to be soft skills, and students can develop them through interaction and experience. These skills also often overlap—which is why teaching them through interdisciplinary projects is especially effective. The most crucial soft skills necessary to help prepare students for the workforce are leadership, flexibility, critical thinking, problem-solving, conflict management, teamwork, work ethic, and emotional intelligence.

Recommendation 3: Assessment of Training Needs of Employers through Employer Engagement

ROLETTE AND TOWNER COUNTIES

To assess training needs, local community colleges, with assistance from the state's workforce development agency, can work together to help build stronger relationships with businesses on a regional level. This is particularly important in job placement. Many tools exist to help training providers, workforce development organizations, community colleges, other education institutions, and community-based organizations begin to deliberately integrate employer engagement into the core decision making of local training and education programs. Click the links below for resources and tools to help with engaging with industry:

- [Employer Engagement Toolkit: From placement to partners](#)
- [Engaging Employers as Customers: How education and business can join forces to boost success for all](#)
- [Reimagining Employer Engagement: A toolkit for providers](#)

Recommendation 4: Talent/Labor Attraction and Retention Incentives

EDDY & ROLETTE COUNTIES

a. Relocation Incentives

The COVID-19 pandemic has expanded remote work possibilities for many Americans. With various employers allowing employees to work remotely, individuals can live in one city while working for a company based in another city. To attract individuals seeking a new place of residence, cities and towns are offering incentives for individuals who relocate to their areas. While some offer cash incentives, others offer discounts and memberships to local community assets, such as coworking spaces.

The [Tulsa Remote Program](#) in Tulsa, OK offers \$10,000, a free coworking space membership, and other discounts. The program has specific requirements for individuals whose applications are accepted, such as being required to move to Tulsa within 12 months and working a full-time job or being self-employed. Vermont has a similar program known as the [Stay-to-Stay initiative](#). This program offers individuals \$10,000 over the course of two years. The grants can be used to cover various expenses, such as technology purchases and internet.

Given the North Dakota counties' strong broadband network and connections, the area may be a prime location for individuals desiring to live in a place with many outdoor recreation opportunities. Counties that incentivize individuals to move to the area may have more success at attracting a greater number of individuals. Relocation stipends are attractive, but that is not the only option cities can offer. Cities and counties can use already-existing assets to offer discounts or memberships to community resources and amenities that would make moving to the area even more attractive.

b. Education Loan Repayment

Professions that require specific degrees and certifications often create a financial barrier for students that need to cover the cost of educational expenses. Given the very high number of Americans struggling to pay off student loans, employers that provide funding to subsidize education costs can incentivize and attract employees.

One model North Dakota counties can look to is the [Nurse Loan Repayment Program](#) in Missouri. This state-run program provides funding to repay educational loans to individuals who are registered nurses and advanced practice nurses. Registered nurses are eligible to receive up to \$10,000 in funding; advanced practice nurses may receive up to \$20,000. In return, nurses must work within the Missouri hospital system for a minimum of two years. While employees may leave after the two-year mark, the goal is for those individuals to remain in their places of employment, reducing turnover and lowering costs for employers.

This type of program is not limited to the healthcare industry. Rather, it is applicable to any industry that requires specific higher education degrees or certifications. While Missouri has a state-run program, North Dakota counties could create their own programs if they secure funding. Counties seeking to fill roles within these industries should establish funding sources and program requirements. Often, pilot programs can give employers an indication of the effectiveness of the program. A marketing plan may be necessary to publicize this incentive program so that individuals from outside of the county and state know of the benefits for which they may qualify.

c. **Child Care**

It is important to understand the benefits of childcare and the role childcare plays for employers and the local economy. The Urban Institute led a research project to provide a useful glimpse into some diverse strategies that local workforce development boards (LWDBs) can use to meet child care needs.²⁵ Key insights into the role LWDBs can play in meeting the child care needs of their parent clients included: meeting the childcare needs of parent clients is central to LWDBs achieving their mission of helping clients overcome barriers to work, supporting their local workforce, and meeting the needs of employers. LWDBs can take steps to reduce childcare barriers for their clients by working with agencies administering Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds; actively seeking local partners; and using WIOA funds for supportive services to address some childcare needs. Various LWDB administrative structures and approaches can support the childcare needs of parent clients. Some states build coordination and collaboration into their required approach for LWDBs at the state level, while other LWDBs take ownership of this issue at the local level.

d. **Benefits & Competitive Wages**

Businesses can attract and retain talent by offering comprehensive compensation and benefits packages.²⁶ While larger firms can provide more comprehensive compensation packages, small businesses can begin with a few elements and build as their business allows. A few strategies businesses can use to offer more competitive wage and benefit packages include:

- Providing higher compensation for in-demand positions
- Providing employees with up-to-date technology
- Forming partnerships with local colleges and universities

e. **Transportation**

Lack of transportation options is frequently cited as a barrier to employment and training. The Partners for Community Solutions provides a few options for connecting citizens with transportation options including purchasing cab or Uber vouchers, car and van donation centers, creating or partnering with a used bike program, partnering with local non-profits, and/or starting a ride share program.²⁷

The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) and the State Workforce Development Board awarded \$600,000 in grants to six workforce development areas to implement or expand existing public transportation to give people more direct access to work and job training sites. For more information and details visit the DEW's website [here](#).

²⁵ Local Workforce Development Boards and Child Care, Insights from Five Sites. The Urban Institute. August 2018. Retrieved 11/19/2021 from https://www.urban.org/research/publication/local-workforce-development-boards-and-child-care/view/full_report.

²⁶ Offering a competitive compensation and benefits package. The Human Interest Team. January 2020. Retrieved 11/19/21 from <https://humaninterest.com/learn/articles/what-defines-a-competitive-compensation-package/>

²⁷ Transportation Partnerships: Facing the Transportation Barrier. Partners for Community Solutions. Retrieved 11/19/2021 from <https://youth-build.workforcegps.org/resources/2014/08/21/10/07/facing-the-transportation-barrier>

Recommendation 5: Access and Equity and Tapping Underrepresented Communities

BENSON, EDDY & TOWNER COUNTIES

Community-based, collaborative solutions help partners serve underrepresented communities by building the capacity of local systems to better support populations. They do so by identifying and sharing successful strategies, mobilizing stakeholders, advocating for effective policy, and catalyzing public and private investments.

a. Opportunity Youth Forum (OYF)

[Creating Entrepreneurship Pathways for Opportunity Youth](#) aims to address the issue that there are 4.6 million young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not connected to or enrolled in school or participating in the labor market. Additionally, there are significant disparities in disconnection rates between white youth and youth of color (including Latinx, Black, Native American, Hmong youth) and those residing in rural areas as compared to urban areas.

b. Reentry Population

[Supporting Reentry Employment and Success](#) - The justice-involved populations can have significant success in reentry to the workforce with support from organizations that provide wrap-around case management services. These services include approaches that aim to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment through individualized coaching and service planning; employment focused interventions (work release, transitional jobs); and programs focused on preparing for transition to employment including vocational training, work readiness training, and job search assistance. Community partners might include the local law enforcement agencies, municipal courts, adult parole authorities, probation departments, re-entry centers, and adult basic education/GED programs. Additionally, in North Dakota partners might include the North Dakota Behavioral Health Division/Human Services Department, foundations, job readiness non-profits, industry partnerships, and TrainND partners.

c. Individuals with Disabilities

Several local organizations might provide resources and support to recruit, hire, and retain persons with disabilities. This may include:

- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN) – information on recruiting, hiring, retaining, and advancing people with disabilities.
- North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (ndcpd.org)
- North Dakota Department of Human Services - Services to Individuals with Disabilities (<https://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/disabilities/index.html>)

d. Supportive/wrap around services

Philanthropists, workforce development professionals, job training centers, and government entities can strengthen collaboration among providers of supportive services to share best practices and increase economies of scale and specialization.²⁸ Supportive services such as financial education and counseling, childcare, case management, peer support groups, and transportation assistance are some common supportive services. Funding for supportive services can come from a variety of sources including general operating funds, private foundations, and public funds.

e. Native American Owned Businesses

The Department of Defense has established the [Indian Incentive Program](#), a federally funded program that aims to benefit both prime contractors and small businesses owned by Native Americans, Alaskans, or Hawaiians. Given North Dakota's large Native American population, this program could be of great benefit to locally owned businesses. Government contractors are incentivized to hire Native American businesses as sub-contractors because by doing so, the contractors may receive a 5% rebate on sub-contracted work completed by Native American businesses. For businesses to qualify, there must be at least 51% Native American ownership, and the tribe that the owner is a part of must be one that is [federally recognized](#).

Interested Native American owned businesses should first research Department of Defense prime contractors to determine which ones may benefit from the business's services. A link to the directory of prime contractors can be found [here](#). Additionally, the [North Dakota Procurement Technical Assistance Center](#) can assist businesses with obtaining government contracts. Once a business establishes a relationship with a prime contractor, it will need to complete necessary paperwork before it begins work.

²⁸ Supportive Services in Workforce Development Programs – Administrator Perspectives on Availability and Unmet Needs. The Institute for Women's Policy Research. December 2016. Retrieved 11/19/2021 from <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/C449-Supportive-Services-in-Workforce-Development-Programs.pdf>

Conclusion

The above data, recommendations, and implementation strategies aim to address the labor challenges in the six-county region of North Dakota. While the recommendations and strategies may require a significant time, capital, and community investment, implemented carefully and strategically, they are effective tools to alleviate the current challenges. Given the proper resources, the five strategies outlined above can be implemented in the next five years. These five recommendations include:

- Create and Expand Career Pathways and Exploration
- Vocational Focus & Skills-Based Training
- Assessment of Training Needs of Employers through Employer Engagement
- Talent/Labor Attraction and Retention Incentives
- Access and Equity and Tapping Underrepresented Communities

To execute these recommendations and expand their effectiveness, a regional approach may be necessary for counties to take. While each county has its own assets and needs, given the common challenges that the six-county regions face and that similar solutions could help resolve those challenges, counties may receive greater results if they collaborate. Regional collaboration allows for a pooling of resources, participation of additional partners, and expanded impact on a greater scale. Furthermore, acknowledging that county and city staff capacity is limited, collaboration can help ensure that programs are maintained and sustained once established. While strong leadership will be necessary for a regional approach, the benefits of this type of collaboration could be substantial.

Through this Regional Labor Study, it is the hope that the data provide county leaders with additional insight into their communities' needs; the recommendations foster county and regional collaboration; and the implementation strategies give leaders actionable steps to follow that result in significant progress in the coming years. Implementing effective programs today can lead to lasting impacts for current and future North Dakota workers and businesses.

