EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Workforce Trends & Benchmarking Your Wages

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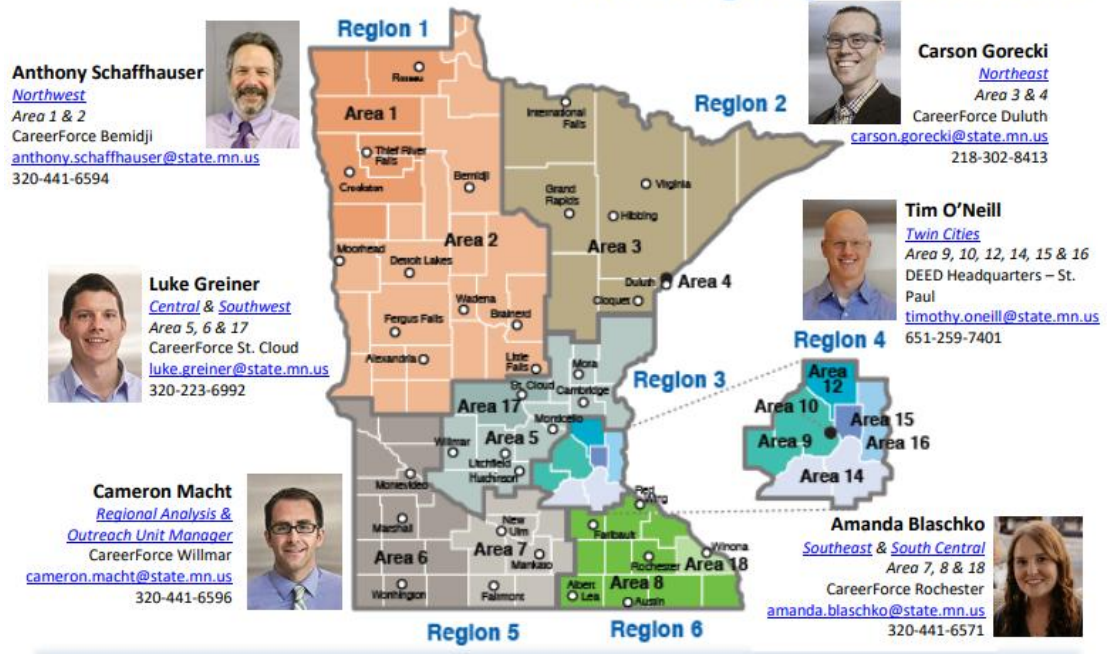
Labor Market Information Office

- Each state produces employment and economic statistics in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics
- LMI includes employment statistics, unemployment rates, wages and salaries, job projections and more
- LMI is the foundation for informed, market-responsive planning
- https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/



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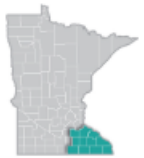
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Southeast Region

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is excited to be offering a series of workshops on utilizing our Labor Market Information tools.

Labor Market

Explore the Southeast Minnesota labor market, including employment, unemployment, wages, occupations, and industries.



Counties

Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Winona

Want the freshest data delivered by email? Subscribe to our regional newsletters.

Profiles | Snapshots | Articles | Blog | Contact

Regional Profiles

Planning Regions

Southeast Minnesota

Counties: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Winona

Economic Development Regions

Region 10

Counties: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Winona

County Profiles

Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Winona

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COUNTY PROFILE

Dodge Co.

Dodge Co. is a part of Economic Development Region 10, which is located in the Southeast Planning Region.



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

2024 population:	**21,242 people**	Median Age:	**38.5 years**
Population change, 2020-2024	*375 people* / *1.8% increase*	*state:*	*38.6 years*

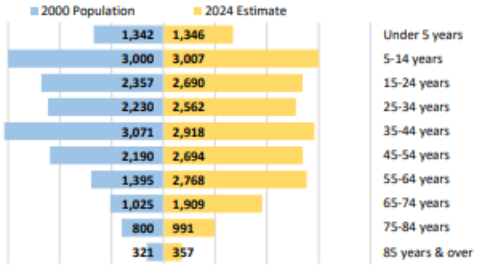
Dodge Co. is the 48th largest of the 87 counties in the state. Its population increased so far this decade, ranking as the 29th fastest growing in the state from 2020 to 2024. Dodge Co.'s population has a younger median age than the state and a smaller percentage of people aged 65 years and older. The population is aging, especially as the Baby Boom generation moves through the population pyramid (see Figure 1).

Table 1. Population by Age Group, 2024

	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	1,346	6.3%
5-14 years	3,007	14.2%
15-24 years	2,690	12.7%
25-34 years	2,562	12.1%
35-44 years	2,918	13.7%
45-54 years	2,694	12.7%
55-64 years	2,768	13.0%
65-74 years	1,909	9.0%
75-84 years	991	4.7%
85 years & over	357	1.7%
Total Population	**21,242**	**100.0%**

Source: Census 2024 Population Estimates, 2019-2023 ACS

Figure 1. Population Pyramid, 2000-2024



Dodge Co. enjoyed a natural increase - more births than deaths from 2020 to 2024, but also experienced net out-migration - meaning more people moved out than moved in. Despite suffering domestic out-migration, Dodge Co. welcomed net international in-migration - gaining new Minnesotans from foreign countries (see Table 2).

Table 2. Cumulative Estimates of the Components of Population Change, 2020-2024

	Total Population Change	April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2024					
		Natural Increase	Vital Events		Net Migration		
			Births	Deaths	Total	International	Domestic
Dodge Co.	378	428	1,074	646	-63	110	-173
State of Minnesota	86,459	51,570	268,689	217,119	33,161	81,091	-47,930

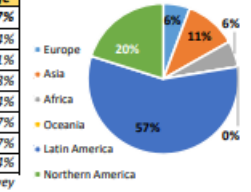
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Compared to the state, Dodge Co. has a smaller percentage of foreign-born residents. From 2013 to 2023, Dodge Co. saw an increase in the number of foreign-born residents, which was faster than the statewide increase.

Table 3. Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population, 2023	Dodge Co.		*Change 2013-2023*		Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	*Number*	*Percent*	Percent	*Change*
Foreign-born Population	**785**	**3.7%**	***456***	***138.6%***	**8.6%**	***24.7%***
Europe	45	5.7%	*20*	*80.0%*	8.8%	*-3.4%*
Asia	87	11.1%	*20*	*29.9%*	35.7%	*18.1%*
Africa	44	5.6%	*34*	*340.0%*	28.3%	*78.8%*
Oceania	0	0.0%	*0*	*#DIV/0!*	0.4%	*5.4%*
Americas:	609	77.6%	*382*	*168.3%*	26.7%	*8.7%*
Latin America	*451*	*57.5%*	*247*	*121.1%*	*24.2%*	*9.7%*
Northern America	*158*	*20.1%*	*135*	*587.0%*	*2.5%*	*0.4%*

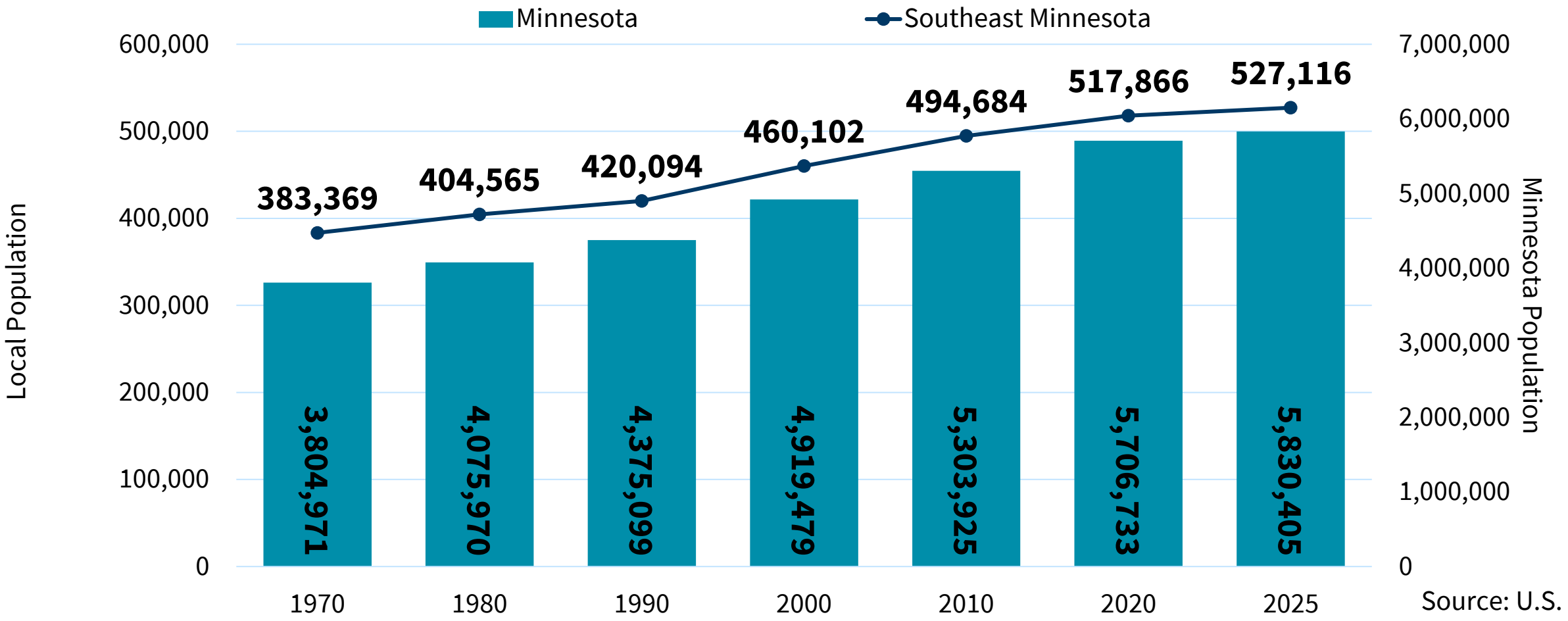
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey

Figure 2. Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population, 2023



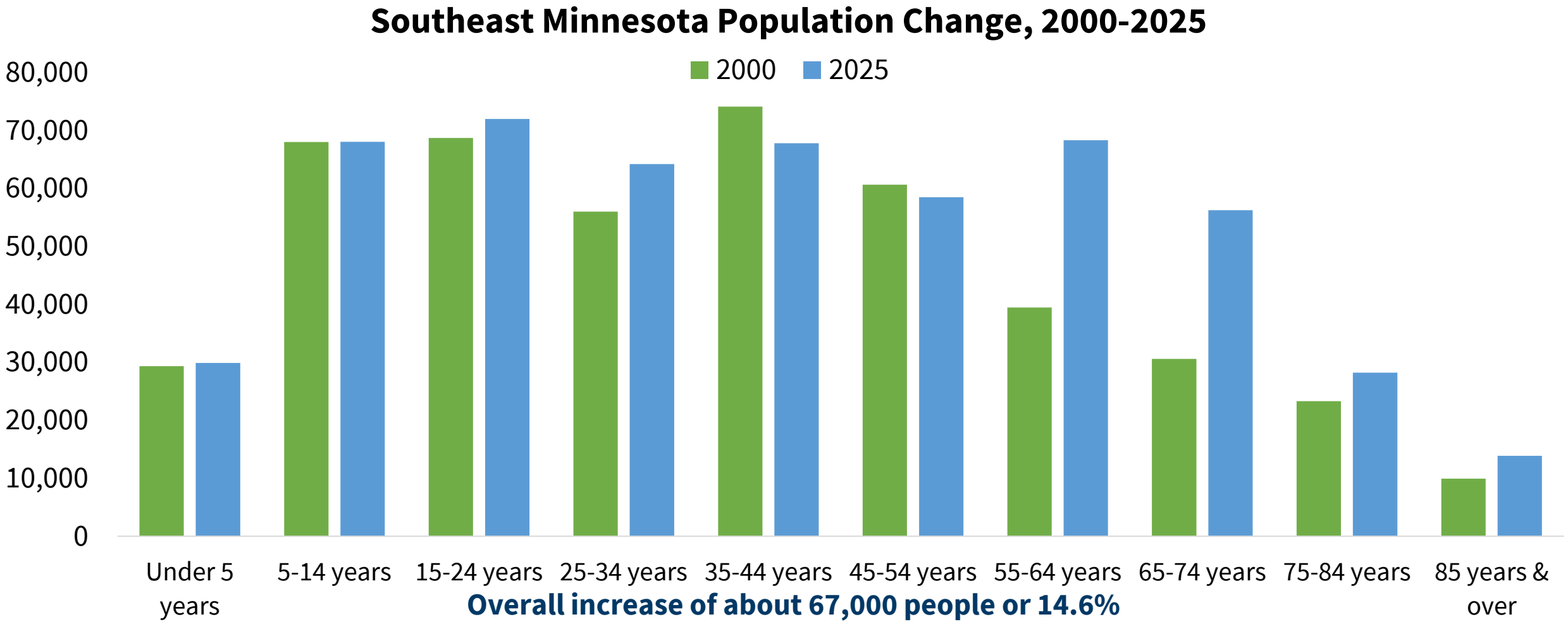
Population

Population Change, 1970-2025



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

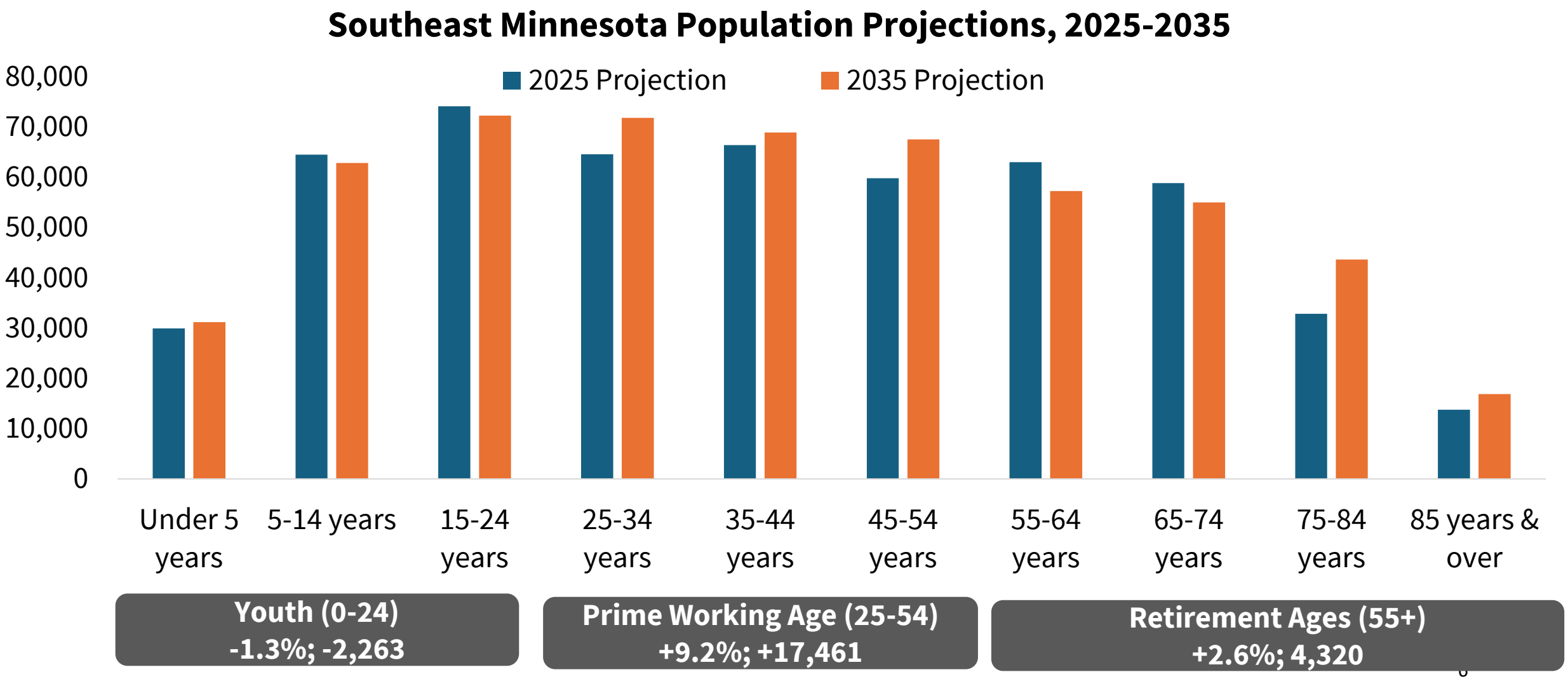
Population Change, 2000-2025



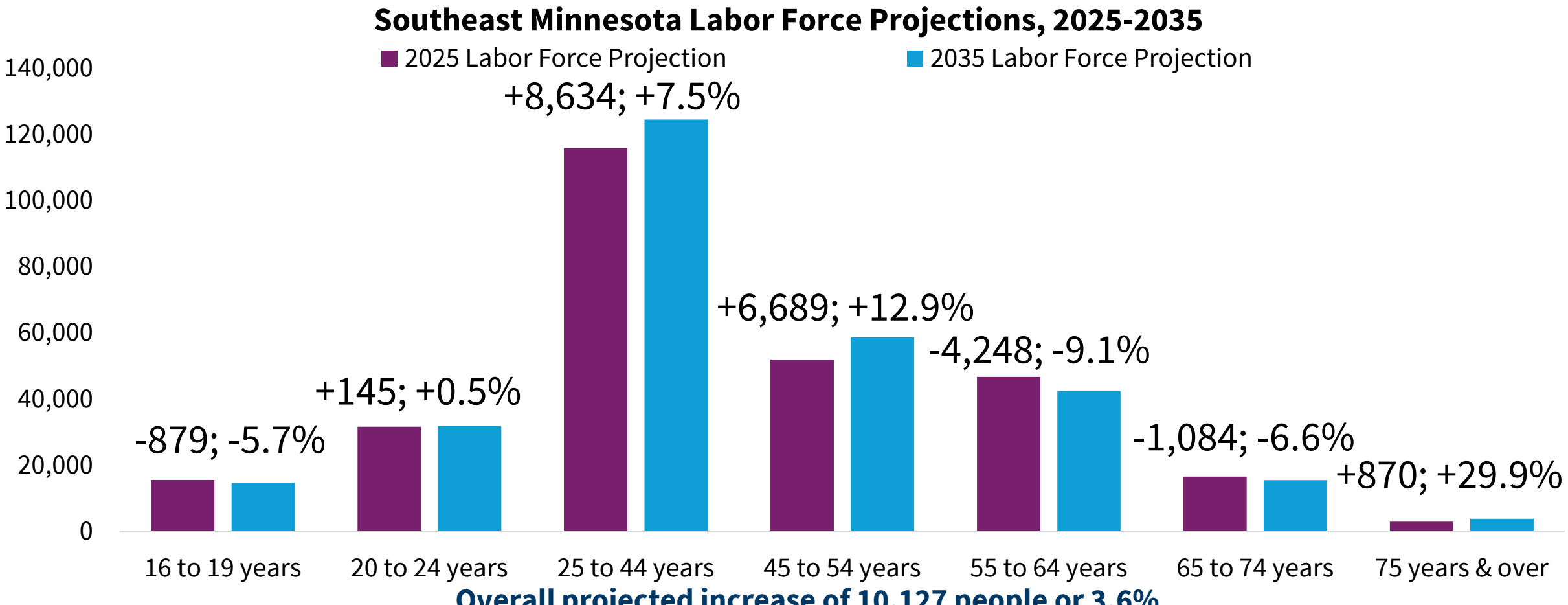
Overall increase of about 67,000 people or 14.6%

Youth (0-24)	Prime Working Age (25-54)	Retirement Ages (55+)
+2.3%; +3,897	-0.1%; -274	+61.4%; +63,391

Population Projections



Labor Force Projections, 2025-2035



Overall projected increase of 10,127 people or 3.6%

Youth (16-24)	Prime Working Age (25-54)	Retirement Ages (55+)
-1.6%; -734	+9.1%; +15,323	-6.7%; -4,462

Youth (16-24)
-734 people or -1.6%

Competition for younger workers may increase as the available labor pool shrinks

Build early connections

Establish relationships with high schools, colleges, and workforce development organizations.

Create work-based learning opportunities

Explore internships, job shadowing, apprenticeships, and summer employment.

Reevaluate entry-level requirements

Consider whether experience or education requirements are unnecessarily limiting your applicant pool.

Low-Hanging Fruit to Connect with Youth
Future*Forward*

FutureForward™

Tonna Mechanical

Send Us A Message

"Built on a strong foundation of honesty, trust, and professionalism, making it an ideal workplace"

Working at Tonna Mechanical in Rochester, MN, offers a unique opportunity to join a team that has been a trusted leader in heating, cooling, plumbing, and water treatment services for nearly 50 years. Our company is built on a strong foundation of honesty, trust, and professionalism, making it an ideal workplace for those who value integrity and customer satisfaction.

At Tonna Mechanical, we serve both residential and commercial clients, providing a wide range of services that enhance comfort and efficiency in homes and businesses across Southeastern Minnesota. Our commitment to delivering high-quality service means that employees can take pride in being part of a company that consistently meets the diverse needs of our community.



Low-Hanging Fruit to Connect with Youth
Future*Forward*

FutureForward™

Career Clusters
Architecture and Construction, Business, Management, and Administration, Education and Training, Manufacturing, Marketing

Learning Opportunities
Apprenticeships, Career Fairs / Reverse Career Fairs, Employability / Soft Skills, Internships, Job Shadows, Mentorships, Paid / Unpaid Work Experience, Project Based Learning, Tours, Work-Based Experience

Primary Contact
Dan Kuphal

Social

Website
https://www.calltonna.com/

Phone
507-288-1908

Address
1440 industrial Dr NW
Rochester, MN 55901

Careers
https://www.calltonna.com/resources/about-us/careers/

Low-Hanging Fruit to Connect with Youth

Future*Forward*

FutureForward™

Featured Video(s)



Prime Working Age (25-54)

+9.1%; +15,323

Employers will have a larger pool of prime-age workers to recruit from, but competition for these workers will remain.

Develop career pathways

Give employees opportunities to advance into higher-skilled and leadership positions.

Build leadership capacity

Identify employees who could take on greater responsibilities and begin developing those skills.

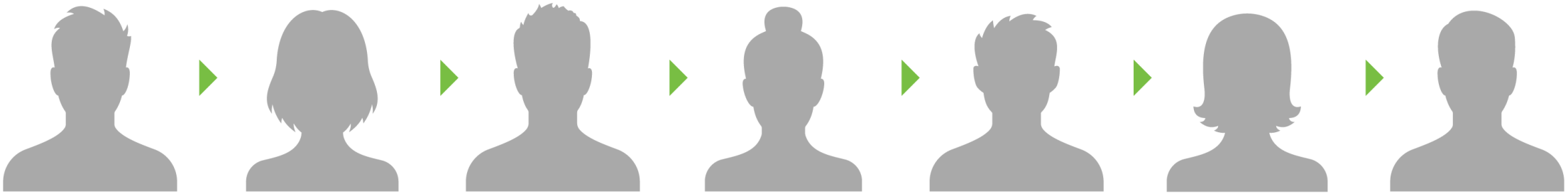
Benchmark pay, benefits, & workplace practices

Evaluate compensation, benefits, workplace culture, and advancement opportunities.

Develop Career Pathways/Build Leadership Capacity

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

CORRECTIONS OFFICER
EXAMPLE CAREER PATH



CORRECTIONS OFFICER TRAINEE	CORRECTIONS OFFICER 1	CORRECTIONS OFFICER 2	SERGEANT	LIEUTENANT	CAPTAIN	WARDEN
$29.61/hr	$61,826/year	$63,371 to $84,251/year	$72,182 to $95,839/year	$78,676 to $111,123/year	$87,278 to $123,004/year	$124,988 to $178,795/year

6 weeks | Year 1 | Year 2

This diagram illustrates one possible path

Benchmark Pay, Benefits, & Workplace Practices

Best Places to Work Survey (WDI)

The 2026 Best Places to Work Survey

- Free 40-question survey for Southeast Minnesota employers
- Confidential report with regional comparisons for every participant
- Top Small, Mid-Size, and Large employers honored at the Workforce Development Forum

Workforce DEVELOPMENT, INC.
The Workforce Development Board of Southeast Minnesota

BEST places to work®
SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA

Contact Kortney Wobbe for more information: kwobbe@wdimn.org

Retirement Age (55+)

-6.7%; -4,462

Losing experienced employees can erase institutional knowledge, technical expertise, and key relationships, leaving organizations that depend on such staff vulnerable to disruption

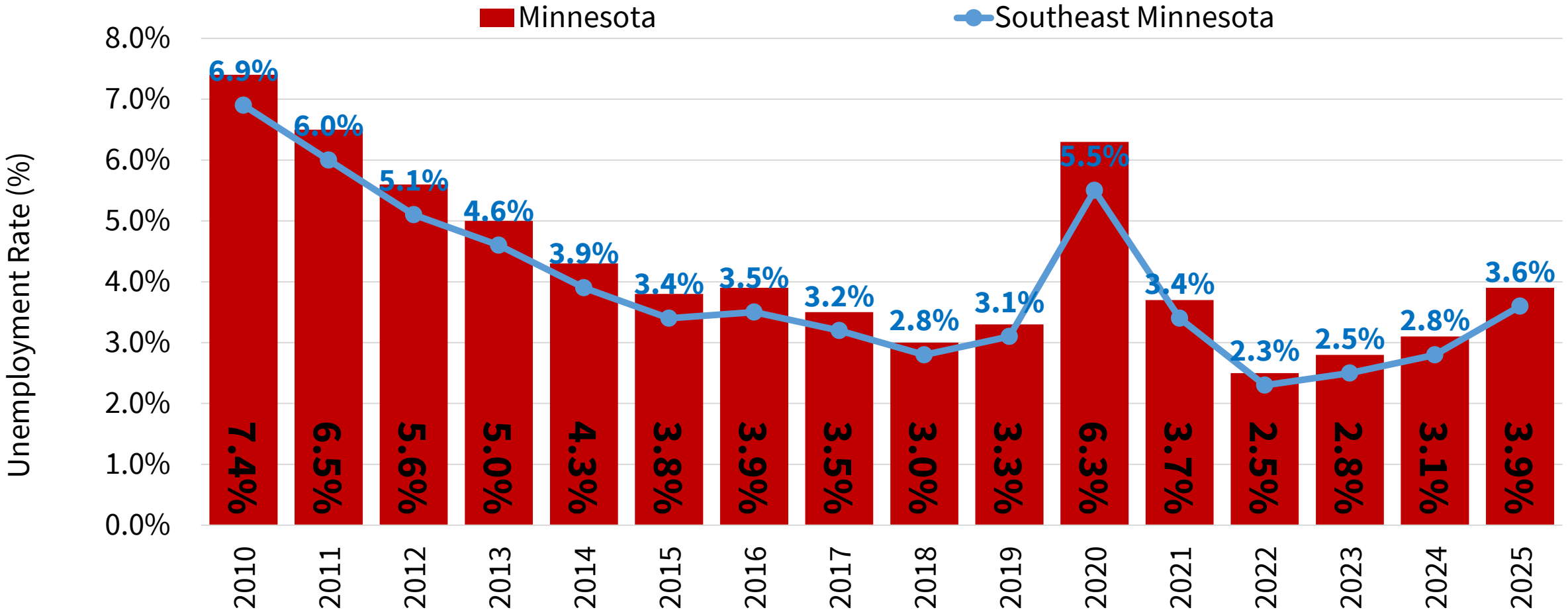
Identify retirement exposure	Transfer institutional knowledge	Document critical processes	Explore flexibility
Evaluate where older and long-tenured employees are concentrated, particularly in critical positions.	Establish mentoring, cross-training, and job-shadowing opportunities before employees retire.	Make sure important job responsibilities, procedures, and organizational knowledge aren't held by just one person.	Consider flexible schedules, reduced hours, phased retirement, or part-time arrangements.

Labor Market Update

SE MN Labor Force Statistics

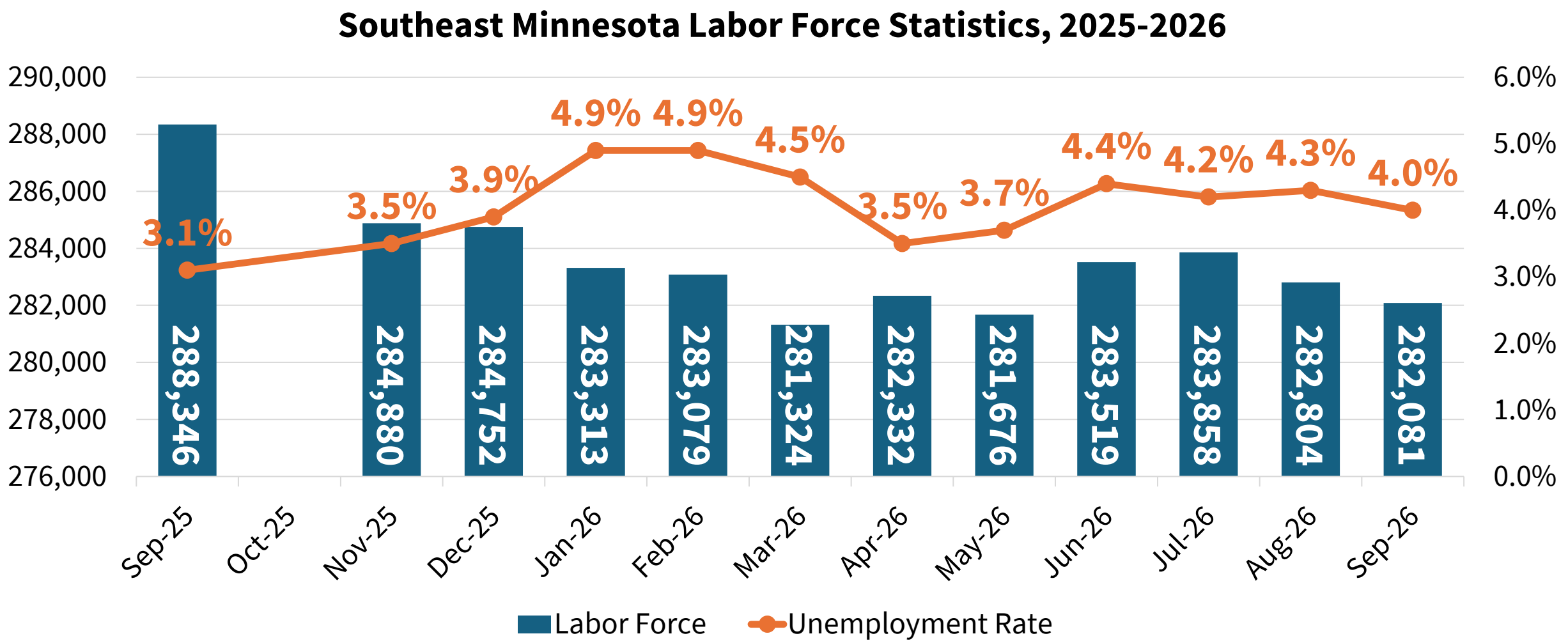
Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

Unemployment Rates, 2010-2025



SE MN Labor Force Statistics

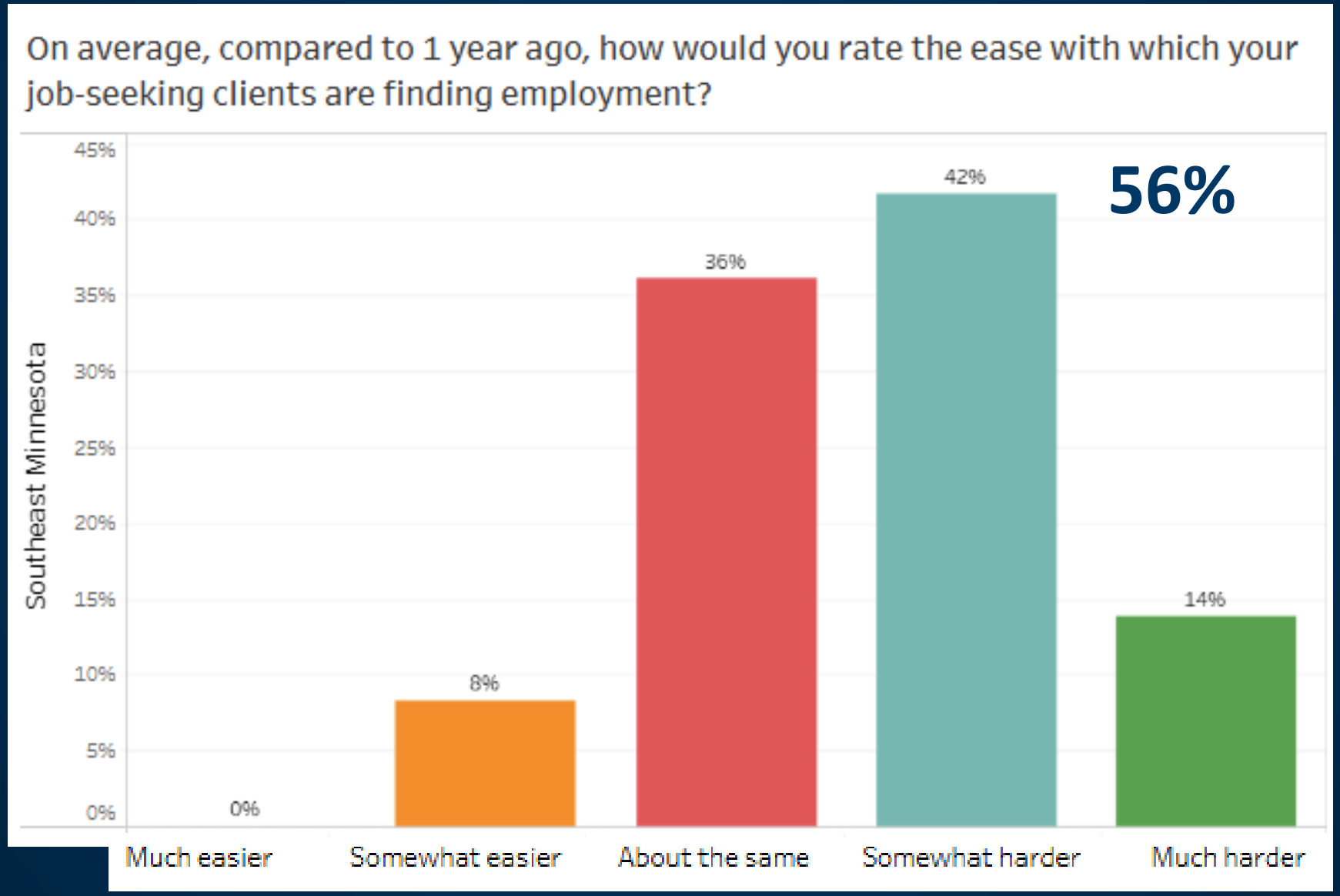
Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)



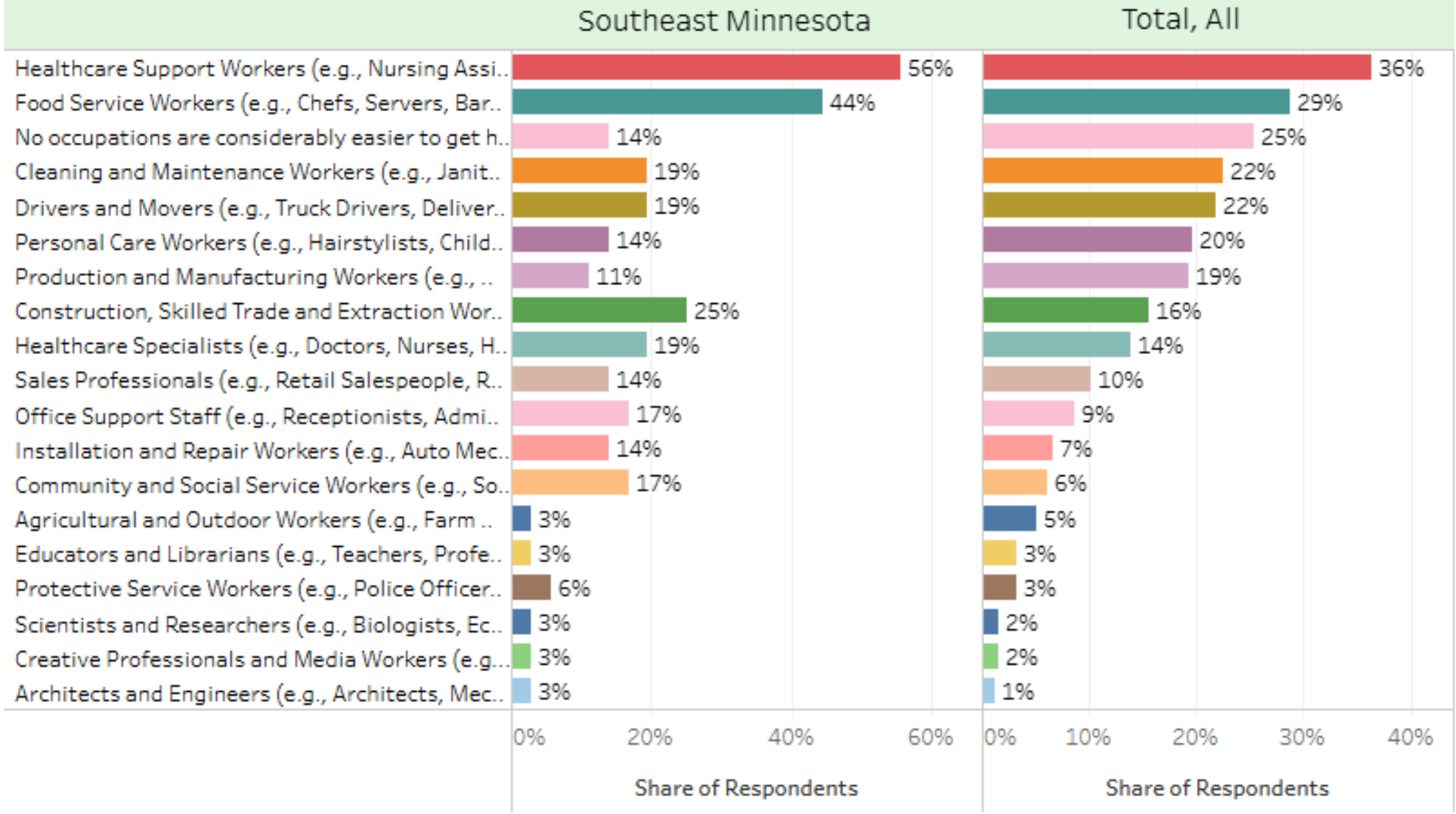
Job Search Survey (July 2026)

- DEED surveys hundreds of frontline CareerForce workforce professionals (DEED staff, Local Workforce Development Board staff, community partners) statewide, twice yearly
- These staff serve thousands of job seekers weekly, giving an objective, year-over-year read on the job search environment that job seeker surveys alone couldn't provide
- Results feed an interactive data visualization showing the labor market through the eyes of those working directly with job seekers
- Builds a growing time series tracking labor market health and surfacing emerging trends in real time

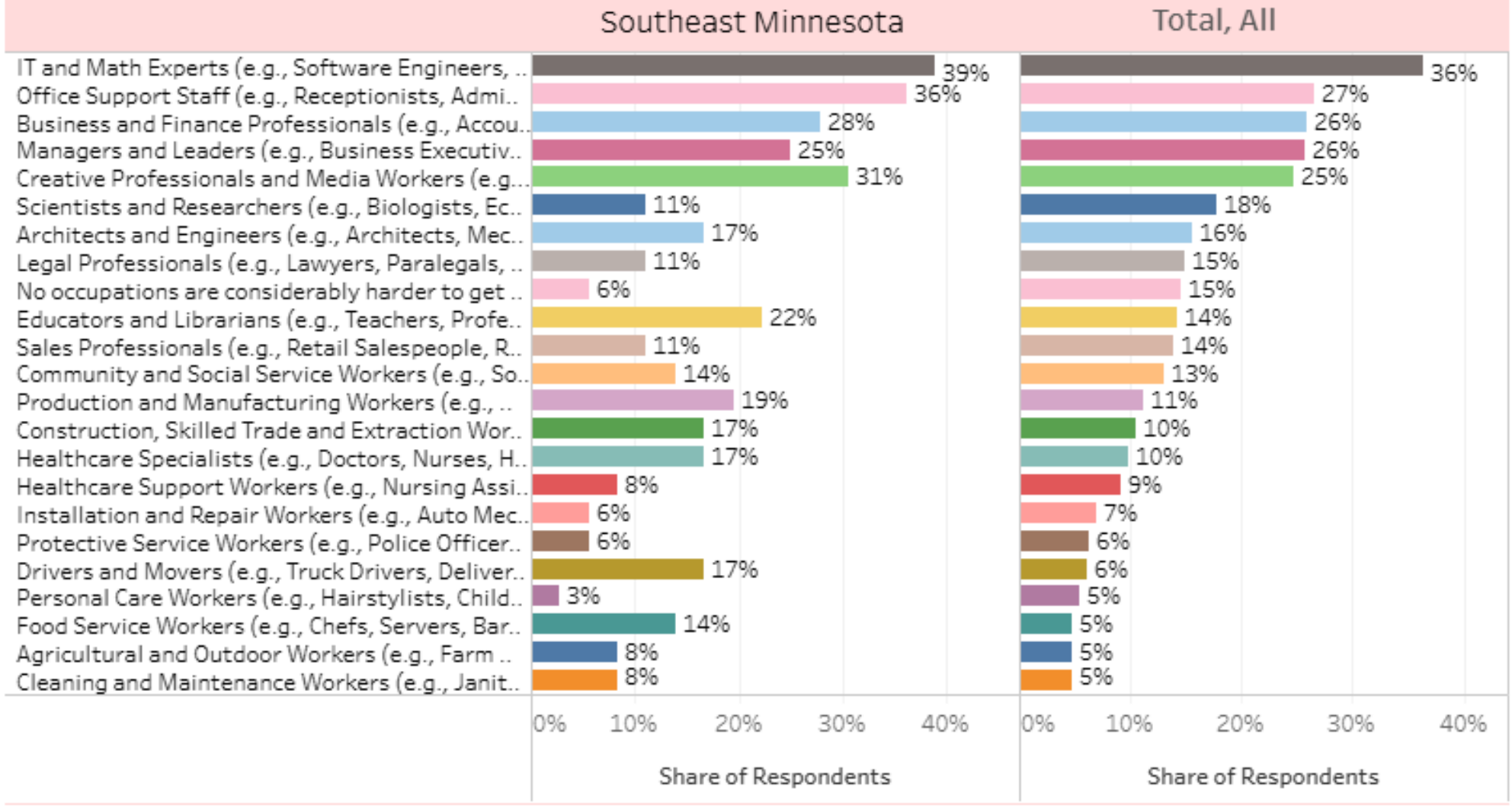
On average, compared to 1 year ago, how would you rate the ease with which your job-seeking clients are finding employment?



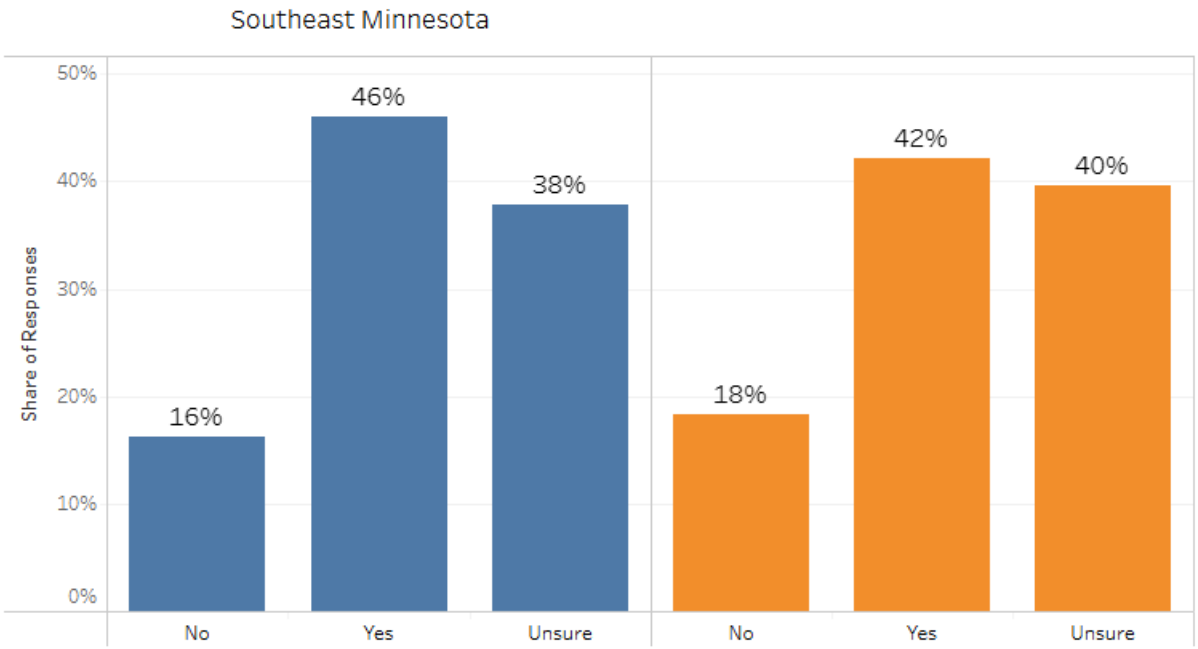
What positions is it **CONSIDERABLY EASIER** for your job-seeking clients to get hired for now compared to 1 year ago?



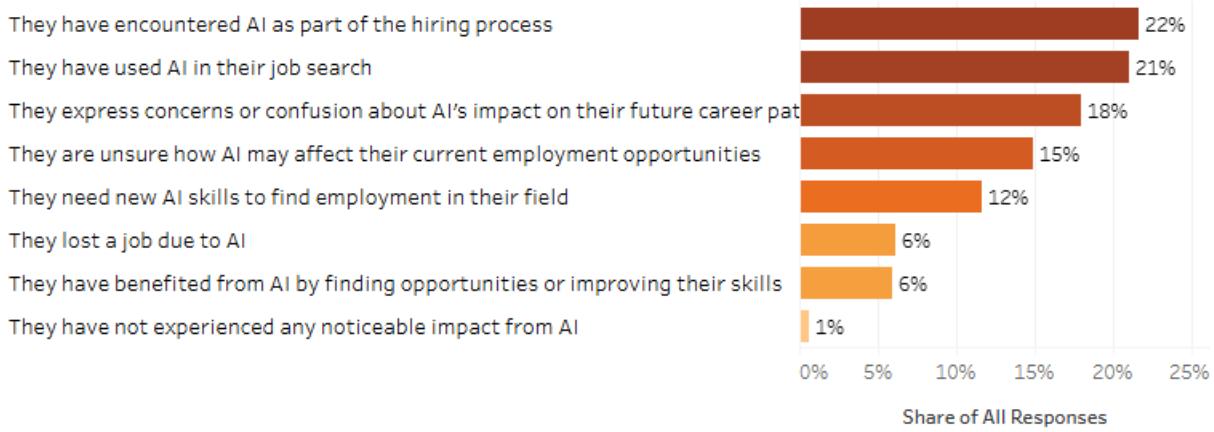
What positions is it **CONSIDERABLY HARDER** for your job-seeking clients to get hired for now compared to 1 year ago?



Have your job-seeking clients' employment or job search been affected by Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the past three months?

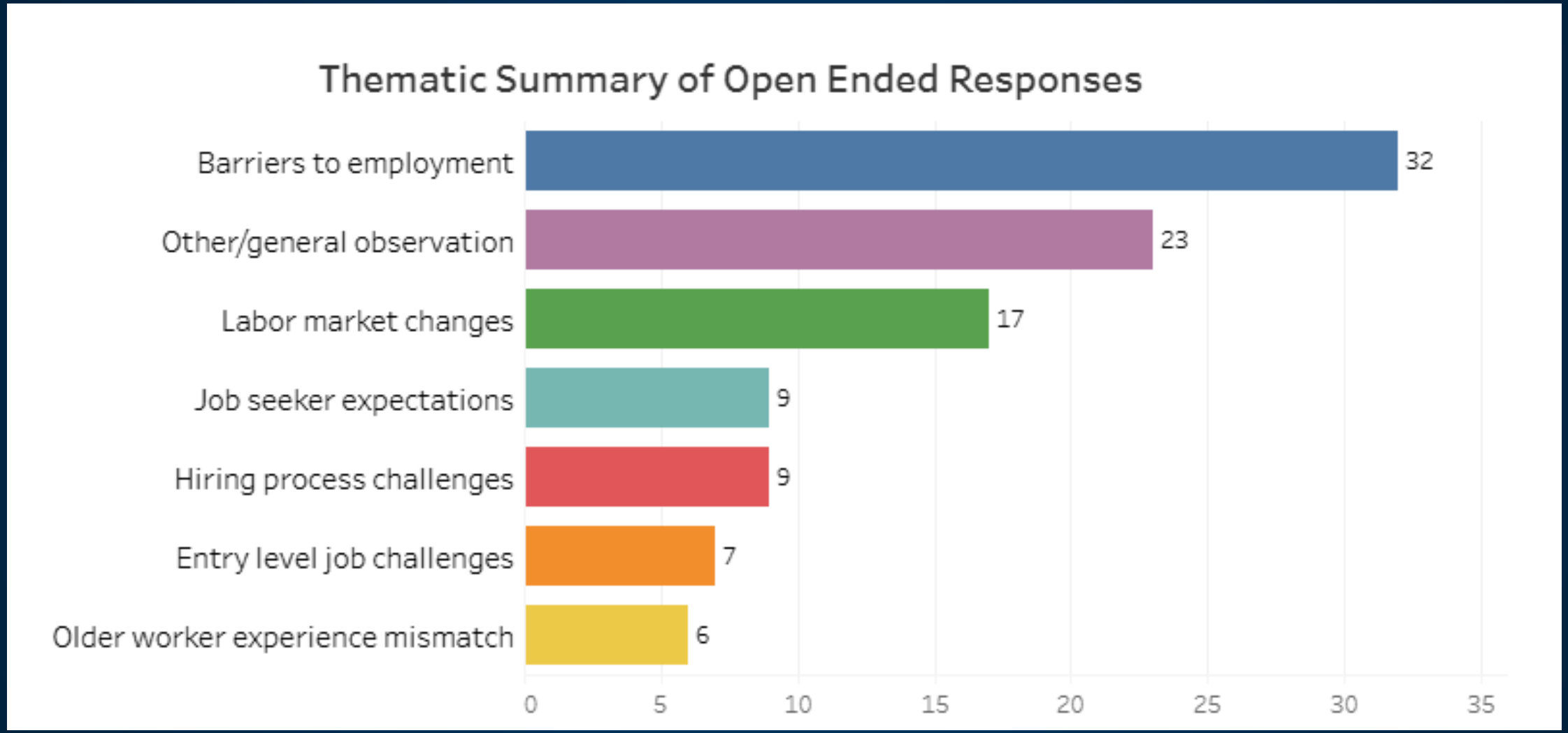


If your job-seeking clients were affected by AI, how has their employment or job search been affected?

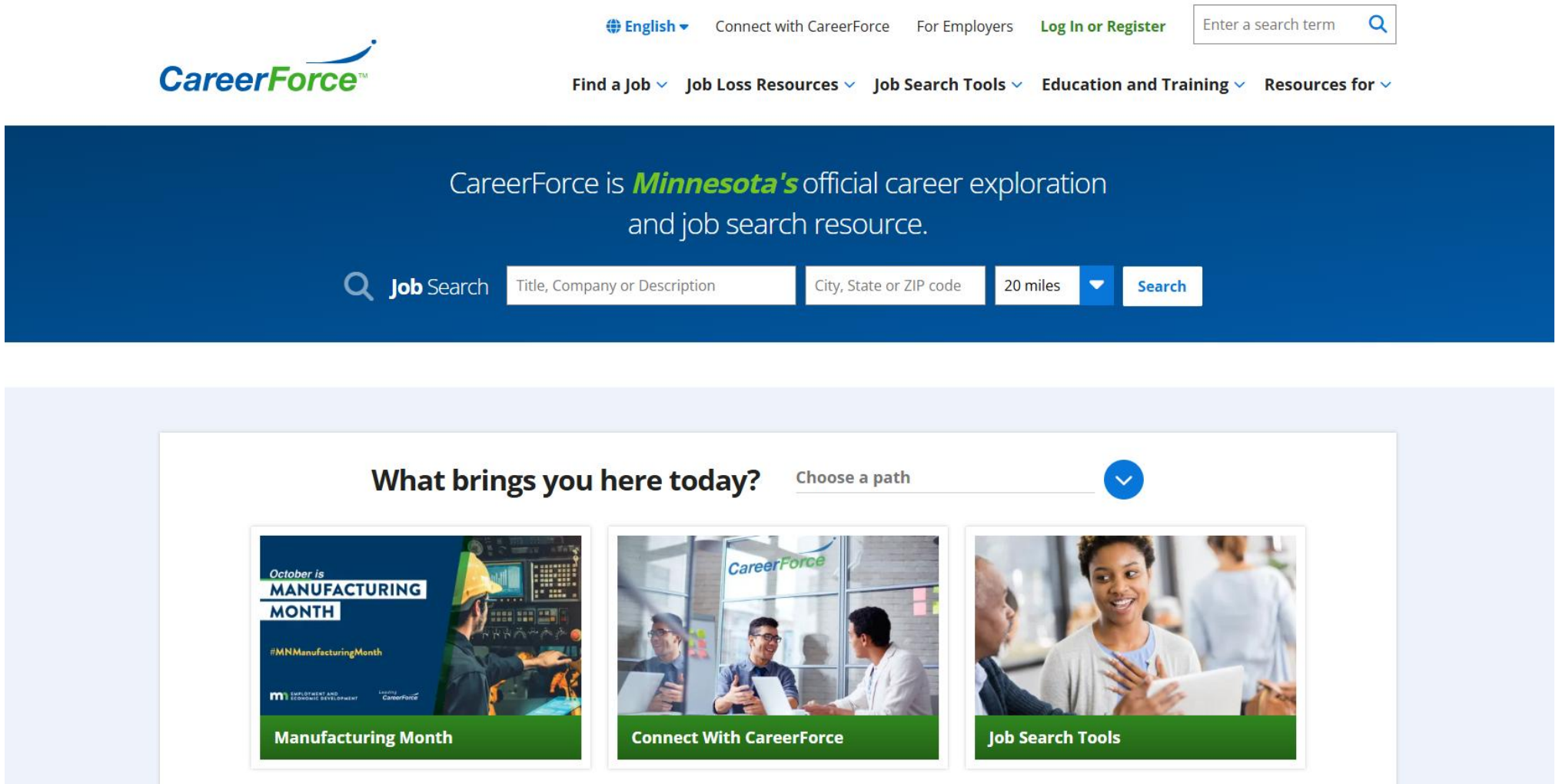


What is the MOST common benefit that job seekers you work with are looking for in their new job search, after increased wages?




Thematic Summary of Open Ended Responses
Barriers to employment
32
Other/general observation
23
Labor market changes
17
Job seeker expectations
9
Hiring process challenges
9
Entry level job challenges
7
Older worker experience mismatch
6
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35

Post Your Job Openings on CareerForce



Laying Off Employees?
Contact DEED Rapid Response Team

Layoff Aversion

- **Shared Work Program**
  - Selected employees will work reduced hours during a temporary slowdown. They receive unemployment benefits to offset their reduced wages. (Keep experienced/trained staff, avoid future hiring costs, & avoid full layoff)
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT)/Incumbent Worker Program**
  - Training designed to meet the needs of an employers to retain staff and avert layoffs by helping workers gain new skills

Layoff Support

- Helps connect employees to programs and services to get the reemployed

Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics

https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/oes/

Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics



Explore wages by location
Compare occupational wages across metro areas and regions



Understand Wage Ranges
View average, 10th, 25th, median, 75th, and 90th percentiles



Inform employer decisions
Use wage estimates as benchmarks when evaluating pay & setting competitive wages

Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics

Employment Coverage

- Paid employees are counted (PT & FT). Self-employed & independent contractors are excluded

Wage definition

- Straight-time gross pay, including base pay, incentive pay, on call pay & tips.
- OT, shift differentials, non-production bonuses, holiday pay, severance, jury duty pay & reimbursements are not included

Understanding SOC Codes

Major groups

- 00-0000 All Occupations
- 11-0000 Management Occupations
- 13-0000 Business and Financial Operations Occupations
- 15-0000 Computer and Mathematical Occupations
- 17-0000 Architecture and Engineering Occupations
- 19-0000 Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations
- 21-0000 Community and Social Service Occupations
- 23-0000 Legal Occupations
- 25-0000 Educational Instruction and Library Occupations
- 27-0000 Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations
- 29-0000 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
- 31-0000 Healthcare Support Occupations
- 33-0000 Protective Service Occupations
- 35-0000 Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations
- 37-0000 Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations
- 39-0000 Personal Care and Service Occupations
- 41-0000 Sales and Related Occupations
- 43-0000 Office and Administrative Support Occupations
- 45-0000 Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations
- 47-0000 Construction and Extraction Occupations
- 49-0000 Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations
- 51-0000 Production Occupations
- 53-0000 Transportation and Material Moving Occupations

Standard Occupational Classifications

Nursing Assistant

31-1131

Identifies the major group the occupation is in

Last four digits tell you the specific occupation

Understanding SOC Codes

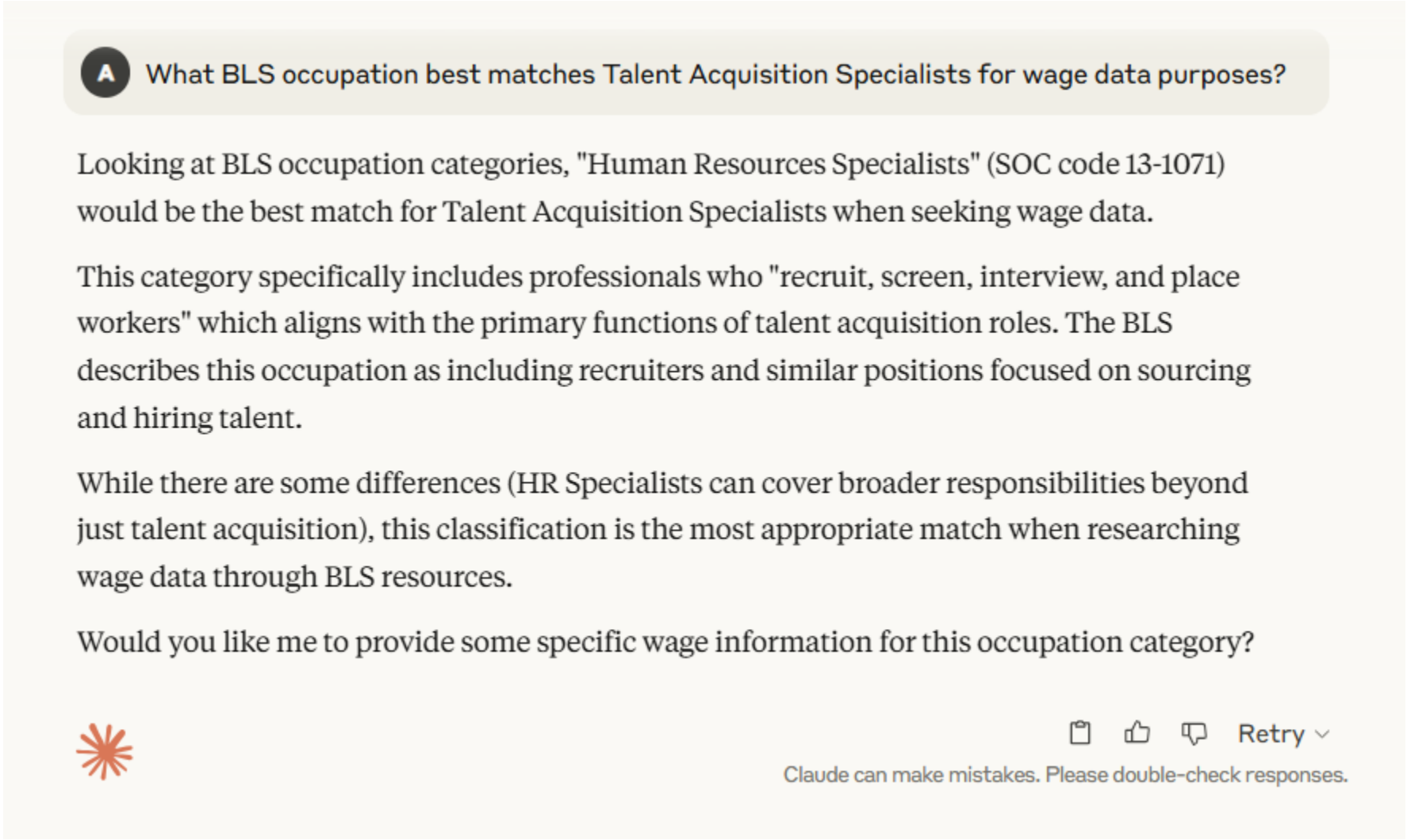
Example:
Your company has a job title of "Talent Acquisition Specialist." However, this occupational title is not recognized by the BLS.



Understanding SOC Codes

- **You can find a list of occupations at:** https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/major_groups.htm
- **O*NET -** It catalogs over 900 detailed occupation profiles and show information such as the knowledge, skills, abilities, tasks, work activities, and work context for each occupation

Tip: Use AI to find the BLS Occupation



Interpreting Wages Data

Human Resources Specialists

Occupational Employment Statistics(OES) Wage Data
First Quarter 2026

Geography	Employment	Emp SE*	Percentiles					
			Mean	10th	25th	Median	75th	90th
Southeast Minnesota	1,000	44	$40.69/hr	$26.76/hr	$30.72/hr	$38.91/hr	$50.33/hr	$57.60/hr

90% of people make more

Half of workers earn less, and half earn more

10% of people earn more

Using Wage Data to Attract/Retain

A healthcare organization in Southeast Minnesota has multiple openings for Nursing Assistants and is struggling to fill these positions. Despite offering starting wages of $18/hour, the company is receiving very few applications and facing significant recruitment challenges.

Occupational Employment Statistics(OES) Wage Data
First Quarter 2026

Geography	Employment	Emp SE*	Mean	Percentiles 10th	25th	Median	75th	90th
Southeast Minnesota	3,200	249	$21.92/hr	$18.90/hr	$19.30/hr	$22.92/hr	$23.31/hr	$25.03/hr

Using Wage Data to Retain

A Restaurant Supervisor in Southeast Minnesota currently earning $30/hour reaches out to her manager requesting a wage increase. She has extensive experience in her role and politely indicates that without a raise, she may need to explore other employment opportunities.

Occupational Employment Statistics(OES) Wage Data
First Quarter 2026

			Percentiles					
Geography	Employment	Emp SE*	Mean	10th	25th	Median	75th	90th
Southeast Minnesota	2,030	65	$22.15/hr	$15.80/hr	$18.25/hr	$21.39/hr	$24.10/hr	$30.47/hr

Any questions or comments?