

Employment and Labor

Companies in the Greater Mankato area have had success in acquiring a workforce due to the regional draw of the area. Minnesota is known as the hardest working state in the nation, and Greater Mankato exemplifies this strong work ethic. With five higher education institutions in the area, the labor force is highly educated. These institutions also benefit employers by providing part-time workers and placing graduating students. According to a labor force assessment study, the labor pool is also increased by the 40% of workers throughout the region who consider themselves “underemployed.”

Occupational Breakdown 2001 (10-mile radius)

Total Employed	34,105	100.0%
White Collar	18,286	53.6%
Executive & Managerial	2,954	8.7%
Professional Specialty	4,830	14.2%
Technical Support	1,084	3.2%
Sales	3,752	11.0%
Administrative Support	5,666	16.6%
Blue Collar		
Precision Production Craft/Repair	3,273	9.6%
Machine Operators	2,561	7.5%
Transportation/Material Moving	1,135	3.3%
Laborers	1,254	3.7%
Farm, Forestry, and Fishing	1,224	3.6%
Services	5,728	16.8%
Protective Services	501	1.5%
Private Household Occupation	94	0.4%

Source: Applied Geographic Solutions

Unemployment Rates

Blue Earth County	Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Rate	Minnesota Rate	U.S. Rate
<u>April, 2003</u>	37,432	1,147	3.1%	4.6%	5.8%
2002 Average	36,799	1,186	3.2%	4.4%	5.8%
2001 Average	34,826	924	2.7%	3.7%	4.7%
2000 Average	35,151	841	2.4%	3.3%	4.0%

Source: Minnesota Department of Economic Security

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Unemployment Rates

Nicollet County	Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Rate	Minnesota Rate	U.S. Rate
April, 2003	20,498	652	3.2%	4.6%	5.8%
2002 Average	20,107	628	3.1%	4.4%	5.8%
2001 Average	19,200	492	2.6%	3.7%	4.7%
2000 Average	19,048	424	2.2%	3.3%	4.0%

Source: Minnesota Department of Economic Security

Minnesota Fastest Growing Occupations 1996-2006

Occupation	Openings per Year	Growth Rate %	Median Wage
Computer Engineers	590	141.0%	\$28.03
Computer System Analysts	1,090	98.0%	\$24.50
Desktop Publication Specialists	160	93.0%	\$16.98
Computer Support Specialists	260	81.0%	\$16.09
Database Administrators	60	76.0%	\$22.76
Personal and Home Care Aides	420	75.0%	\$7.37
Occupational Therapy Assistants	50	73.0%	\$13.43
Physical Therapy Assistants	140	73.0%	\$11.75
Home Health Aides	1,030	69.0%	\$7.71
Human Service Workers	610	66.0%	\$10.56
Data Processing Equipment Repair	260	65.0%	\$16.35
Paralegals	110	60.0%	\$15.61
Surgical Technicians	80	57.0%	\$13.66
Medical Assistants	170	56.0%	\$10.44
Adjustment Clerks	520	53.0%	\$11.09
Numerical Control Machine Tool Operators	190	53.0%	\$14.33
Medical Records Technicians	150	52.0%	\$10.56
Electrical/Electronic Engineers	540	51.0%	\$24.59

Source: Minnesota Department of Economic Security, Research and Statistics Office

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Major Employers (non-retail)

		Employees
Taylor Corporation	Printing and marketing	4,000
Immanuel St. Joseph's - Mayo Health System www.isj-mhs.org	Medical care	1,540
Minnesota State University, Mankato www.mankato.msus.edu	Higher education	1,400
Mankato Rehabilitation Center (MRCI) www.mrcifoundation.org	Adult rehabilitation	1,325
Mankato Clinic www.mankato-clinic.com	Medical care	740
Young America Corporation www.youngamerica.com	Fulfillment service provider	675
Thro Company www.throcompany.com	Nursing care facilities	644
Blue Earth County www.co.blue-earth.mn.us	Government	370
HickoryTech www.hickorytech.com	Telecommunications	363
Kato Engineering, Inc. www.katoengineering.com	Commercial & industrial generators	325
Midwest Wireless www.midwestwireless.com	Telecommunications	293
Southern Minnesota Construction Company www.smc-co.com	Road construction, paving, excavating	275
City of Mankato www.ci.mankato.mn.us	Government	263
Harry Meyering Center www.harrymeyeringcenter.org	Disabled adult facility	255
MICO, Inc. www.mico.com	Hydraulic components & brake systems	224
CHS Cooperative www.cenexharveststates.com	Soybean oil processing	202
Minnesota Elevator, Inc. www.minnesotaelevator.com	Commercial elevator manufacturing	200
Schwickert Company	Mechanical and roofing services	200

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Major Employers (non-retail)

		Employees
Johnson Outdoors, Inc. - MinnKota Operations www.johnsonoutdoors.com	Fishing and sports equipment	185
Atlantis Plastics www.atlantisplastics.com	Plastic extrusion & polyethylene films	178
South Central Technical College www.sctc.mnscu.edu	Higher education	172
Coughlan Companies www.capstone-press.com	Building materials, publishing	160
Crysteel Manufacturing, Inc. www.crysteel.com	Truck body, hoist & platform mfg.	160
E-Travel Experts www.etravelexperts.com	Airline ticket fulfillment/customer support	160
EI Microcircuits www.eimicro.com	Circuit board assembly & design	158
Ridley, Inc. www.hubbardfeeds.com/mankato.html	Animal food	150
Katolight Corporation www.katolight.com	Electric generator sets	134
Free Press Company www.mankato-freepress.com	Newspaper publisher	132
AgStar Farm Credit Services www.farmcredit.com	Agricultural financing	130
TruServ Corporation www.truserv.com	Hardware distributor	120
Perfecseal Mankato www.perfecseal.com	Medical packaging & thermoforming	125
Crown Cork & Seal Company www.crowncork.com	Cans and packaging products	122
Vetter Stone Company www.vetterstone.com	Building stone	114
Dotson Company, Inc. www.dotson.com	Iron component casting	112
Midwest Electric Products www.midwestelectric.com	Outdoor electrical equipment	110

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Organization Activity

Minnesota is not a right-to-work state. Union ranks have fallen steadily since their peak in the 1950s when a union covered more than 35 percent of all U.S. workers. In 2000, just under 15 percent of workers nationally were covered. But in Minnesota, which has historically had strong employment in the heavily-unionized manufacturing industry, almost 20 percent of workers are covered by a union. Although the coverage rate for each of the six occupational groups fell between 1985 and 2000, the decline was smallest for service workers. Since the economy is becoming more service-based, this may reflect a new strategy by unions of organizing health care and other service workers.

Source: Minnesota Department of Economic Security, Research & Statistics Office

Job Training and Placement

The Center for Continuous Learning (CCL)

www.mn-ccl.org

The Center for Continuous Learning is a unique cooperative partnership between Minnesota State University, Mankato and South Central Technical College. Its goal is to be a one-stop-shop where companies can take advantages of the resources of both institutions to address company-specific needs. The CCL delivers continuing education, extended campus, and customized training to business, industry, and the community.

Mankato WorkForce Center (Minnesota Department of Economic Security)

www.mnworkforcecenter.org/Mankato

The WorkForce Center provides no cost services to employers and job seekers. Services offered to employers include:

- Job analysis, employee assessment, employee training
- Labor market information
- Minnesota's Job Bank
- Tax and employment seminars
- America's Learning Exchange
- Tax credit programs

Other Local Training and Placement Services

Doherty Staffing Solutions

Express Personnel Services

Institute for Wireless Education (IWE)

Jeane Thorne Inc.

Labor Ready

Manpower

Olsten Staffing Services

Pro Staff Personnel Services

Rasmussen College

Spherion

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Job Training and Placement, continued

Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Program

The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership is a program of the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development. Its purpose is to develop cooperative training projects between business and education that provide training for new jobs or to retrain existing employees. Grants up to \$400,000 are awarded to educational institutions with businesses as partners. A cash or in-kind contribution from the contributing business must match Partnership funds on at least a one-to-one ratio. Funding from other sources is also available. Projects average 12 months to three years in duration.

Contact: Minnesota Job Skills Partnership, Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development, (651) 296-0388 or 1-800-657-3858.

Unemployment Insurance

The United States Department of Labor's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program provides for payment of unemployment benefits to workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own and meet certain state eligibility requirements. Although Unemployment Insurance is a U.S. Department of Labor program, it is administered by state agencies like the Minnesota Department of Economic Security.

Minnesota employers pay a quarterly UI tax on the first \$22,000 in wages paid to each employee in 2003. New employers are assigned the average cost rate, which is essentially an average rate of all Minnesota employers. New employers in certain industries that routinely result in high unemployment rates are assigned a higher rate. After an employer has reported wages for approximately two years, an experience rating will be assigned.

Source: Minnesota Department of Economic Security

Workers' Compensation

Generally all employers are required to have workers' compensation insurance. If, however, all the employees/workers of a small business are owners or spouses, or parents and children of the owner, the business may be exempt. There are several thousand licensed insurance agents who sell worker's compensation insurance in Minnesota. All workers' compensation policies provide coverage mandated by law; the price and quality of service may vary. Some large employers or groups of employers may self-insure.

Source: Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development