

# The Municipality

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February | 2022  
HIRING

## Engineering Technician-City of St. Francis, WI

Posted December 28, 2021 | Closes January 31, 2022 11:59 PM

Engineering Technician City of St. Francis, WI The City of St. Francis is seeking an Engineering Technician to assist the...

## Planner-City of Prescott, WI

Posted January 3, 2022 | Closes January 21, 2022 4:30 PM

Planner City of Prescott, WI Salary: \$54,995 (\$26.44/Hour) plus benefits The City of Prescott located 20 minutes from St. Paul, MN and the eastern Twin Cities...

## Clerk/Treasurer-Village of North Prairie, WI

Posted December 10, 2021 | Closes January 21, 2022 5:00 PM

Job Posting - Village of North Prairie Clerk/Treasurer Waukesha County, WI Application Deadline January 21, 2022, by 5:00 p.m. central time...

## Clerk-Treasurer-Village of Johnson Creek, WI

Posted December 29, 2021 | Closes January 17, 2022

Clerk-Treasurer Village of Johnson Creek, WI The Village of Johnson Creek, the fastest growing community in Jefferson County which embraces small town charm with big...

## Clerk/Treasurer-Village of Belmont, WI

Posted January 6, 2022 | Closes January 28, 2022 4:00 PM

Village of Belmont, Lafayette County, Wisconsin Clerk/Treasurer An Equal Opportunity Employer The Village of Belmont, WI is seeking a professional to fulfill...

## Senior Center Janitor-City of West Allis, WI

Posted December 14, 2021 | Closes January 15, 2022 11:59 PM

Senior Center Janitor City of West Allis, WI Salary: \$17.56 - \$20.07 Hourly Job Type: Permanent part time Department: ...

## Electrician/Electrical Inspector-City of Two Rivers, WI

Posted December 29, 2021 | Closes January 28, 2022 4:00 PM

ELECTRICIAN/ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR City of Two Rivers - Two Rivers Water & Light The Electrician/Electrical Inspector performs skilled work in the installation,...

## City Clerk-City of Ripon, WI

Posted December 22, 2021 | Closes January 24, 2022 11:59 PM

City Clerk City of Ripon, Wisconsin City Clerk, Ripon, WI (pop. 7,833). Ripon is a delightful city in Fond du Lac County, best known as the home of renowned...

## Fire Chief-Village and Township of Egg Harbor, WI

Posted November 8, 2021 | Closes January 30, 2022 11:59 PM

Fire Chief Village and Township of Egg Harbor, WI The combined Township & Village of Egg Harbor are currently seeking to fill the position of Fire Chief...

## Parks Maintenance/Zookeeper-City of Chippewa Falls, WI

Posted December 28, 2021 | Closes January 21, 2022 11:59 PM

City of Chippewa Falls - Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Job Opportunity Parks Maintenance/Zookeeper The City of Chippewa Falls is accepting...

## Financial Analyst-City of New Richmond, WI

Posted December 21, 2021 | Closes January 19, 2022 11:00 AM

Financial Analyst City of New Richmond, WI The City of New Richmond is accepting applications for a Financial Analyst to join our team.

Where are  
Wisconsin's  
Workers?

4

Your Talent Retention  
Strategy in an Employee-  
Driven Market

7

The Strategic  
Case for  
Remote Work

10

Check Your  
Culture Before  
Recruiting

13

Watertown  
Puts It All  
Together

16

Introducing *Enabling  
Better Places: A User's  
Guide to Neighborhood  
Affordability*

23

Suspicionless Drug  
Testing Subject  
to Constitutional  
Constraints

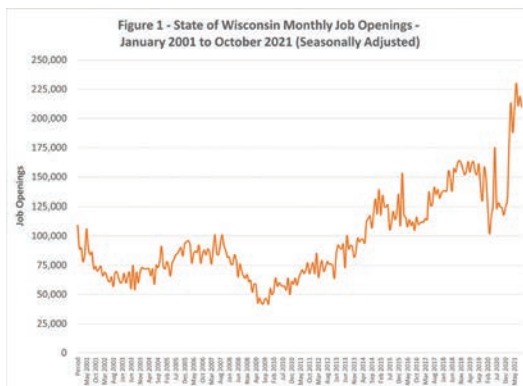
29



# Where are Wisconsin's Workers?

Matt Kures, Community Economic Development Specialist, Community Development Institute,  
University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension

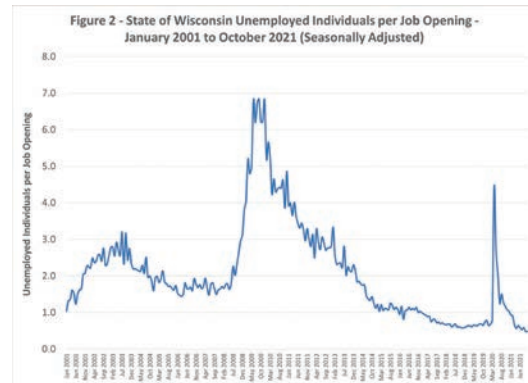
Wisconsin had an estimated 230,000 job openings in July 2021, which was by far the highest number in the last two decades (Figure 1). More recent figures suggest somewhat of a decrease from this peak, but the preliminary estimate of 210,000 openings in October 2021 remains well over the monthly average of 154,000 openings found in 2019. While it may be tempting to attribute the large number of job openings to factors stemming from the emergence of COVID-19, such as the availability of enhanced unemployment benefits, many employers expressed challenges with finding employees prior to the start of the pandemic. In fact, the number of Wisconsin job openings has been steadily increasing since the end of the Great Recession in 2009. Consequently, we must consider a breadth of factors, both related and unrelated to the pandemic, to better understand labor availability.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

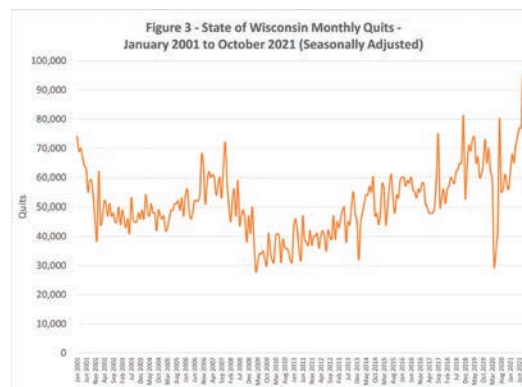
While some workers undoubtedly remained unemployed longer due to pandemic-related unemployment benefits, the number of unemployed workers per job opening has dropped below 1.0 since January 2021, suggesting there are more job openings than unemployed individuals (Figure 2). Current levels are more reflective of the ratios found throughout 2018 and 2019 prior to the start of the pandemic. Furthermore, the ratio of unemployed individuals per job opening was approximately 0.5 (i.e., two jobs for every unemployed individual) in both September and October of 2021, which were among the lowest values in decades. These figures for Wisconsin are also below the national value of 0.7.

In October 2021, Wisconsin had a preliminary estimate of 82,000 quits, or workers who leave their job voluntarily, which



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

is near the recent record high of 95,000 in August 2021 (Figure 3). Quits tend to increase as the economy grows and workers become more confident in their ability to find a new job. As with job openings, the number of quits has steadily increased since the end of the Great Recession. However, the large number of recent quits is also influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic as some workers left their jobs due to childcare demands that arose due to school and childcare disruptions. Other workers employed in high-contact occupations may have quit due to health and safety concerns. The pandemic also may have encouraged workers to quit in pursuit of a higher paying job, a new career path, or to start their own business.

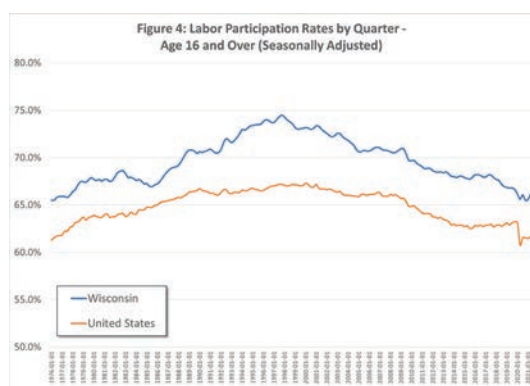


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

With the onset of the pandemic, Wisconsin's unemployment rate jumped to 14.8% in April 2020. Despite this rapid increase, the state's unemployment rate dropped to 4.0% by January 2021 and has since declined to a preliminary figure of

3.0% in November 2021, which matches Wisconsin's lowest rate in the last three decades. However, unemployment rates do not include individuals who have dropped out of the labor force for one reason or another. Shifts in the labor participation rate, or the share of individuals who are either employed, or unemployed and actively looking for a job, provide another perspective on how labor availability has changed.

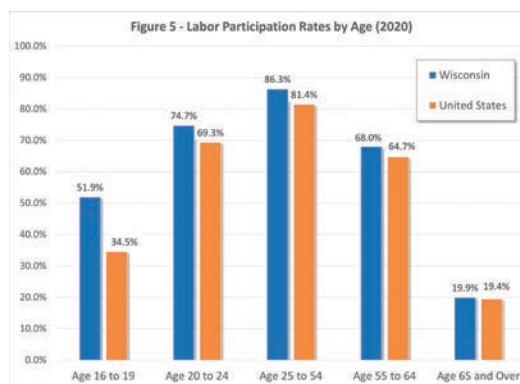
The pandemic induced many people to leave the labor force, both on a voluntary and involuntary basis. Even at the end of 2021, the nation's total labor force is almost 2.3 million participants below its pre-pandemic level. In terms of labor participation rates, the national rate dropped from 63.2% at the start of the pandemic to 61.7% in the third quarter of 2021. Participation rates among women and employees of color experienced particularly notable declines. While Wisconsin's labor participation rate also declined temporarily over the course of the pandemic, it currently sits at 66.5% which is above the 66.2% rate reported in the first quarter of 2020.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Despite the small recent gain in labor participation, Wisconsin's overall labor participation rate has been declining since late 1990s (Figure 4). This decline is attributed to a variety of factors, but an aging population is an important driver of this trend. Consider the variations in labor participation by age group (Figure 5). The highest rate is found among individuals between the ages of 25 and 54, also known as the prime working age population. In contrast, participation rates begin to decline among individuals ages 55 to 64 and drop significantly for individuals ages 65 and over. Importantly, Wisconsin exceeds the national average participation rate in all age groups.

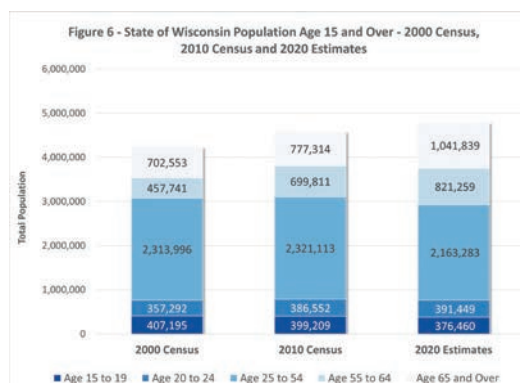
With these labor participation rates in mind, consider how Wisconsin's population has changed over the past several decades (Figure 6). Between 2010 and 2020, the number of working age individuals between the ages of 15 and 64 declined by over 50,000. Furthermore, prime working age



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

residents (age 25 to 54) declined by almost 160,000 as many individuals aged out of this labor force category. In contrast, the number of residents ages 55 to 64 jumped by more than 120,000 individuals while residents ages 65 and over increased by more than 260,000. These trends differ from the changes between 2000 and 2010 when total working age individuals increased by 270,000 and the number of prime working age residents grew by 7,000.

The shift of workers from prime working ages to older age groups with lower participation rates has pushed the state's overall labor participation rate downward. Unfortunately, the imbalance between younger and older workers likely will continue given the changes in ratios of people at the beginning of their careers compared to those nearing retirement. Specifically, there were 1.67 people ages 15 to 24 for every individual between the ages of 55 to 64 in the year 2000. By 2020 this ratio had declined to 0.94.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The declines in total working age population and prime working age population have not been uniform across all Wisconsin counties, but have been widespread geographically (Figure 7 on page 6). Notable declines in total and prime working age individuals occurred throughout northern Wisconsin and in portions of central and southwestern



Wisconsin. Indeed, only eight Wisconsin counties had an increase in total working age population, with all the increases occurring in metro areas except for Menominee County. Furthermore, Eau Claire and Dane were the only two counties to have an increase in prime working age population.

