



FORWARD TOGETHER:

An update on Wisconsin's workforce

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development | 09/24/2025

TRIBAL ACTION PLAN

Focus areas:

- Assisting Tribal Nations with Addressing Workforce Challenges
- Apprenticeships
- Access to Resources
- Investing in Tribal Youth
- Workforce Data
- Connections to Vocational Rehabilitation
- Improving Cultural Competency
- Resources for Justice-Involved Individuals.

Scan the QR
code or visit

**[dwd.wisconsin.gov/
tribalaffairs](https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/tribalaffairs)**



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Agenda

- Agency update: Sec. Pechacek
- Labor market update: Scott Hodek
- Wisconsin Fast Forward overview: Dennis Powers
- Q&A and Resources





Keep up to date with all DWD news by visiting dwd.wi.gov/news and signing up for press releases.



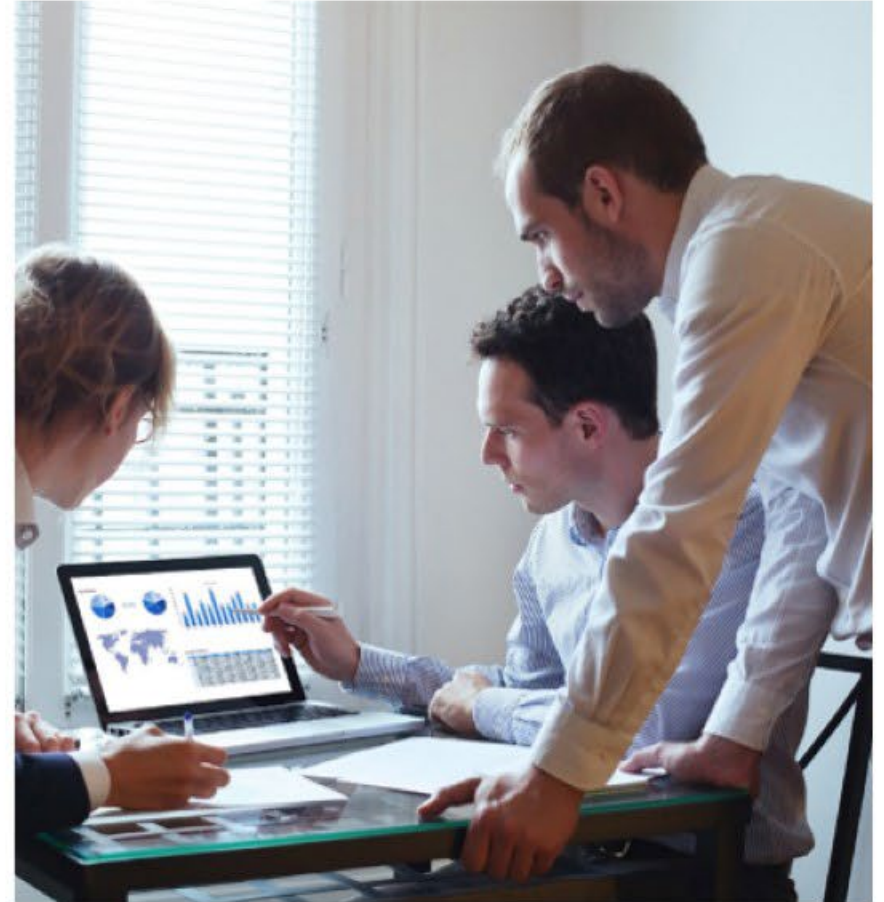
LABOR MARKET INFORMATION AND WISCONOMY

Section Chief for the Office of Economic Advisors, Scott Hodek

Understanding & Using Labor Market Information

Bureau of Workforce Information and Technical Support (BWITS)

- Collects and analyzes data
- Makes employment projections
- Offers consulting services



About BWITS

Labor Market
Information
(LMI)

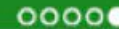
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Economic
Advisors

WisConomy

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CENTER



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130,250 Jobs

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Data Tools

Access advanced query tools to create personalized reports and visualize data. The query tool allows you to create a personalized report with visual interaction. Find data downloads here.

[Access Data >](#)

Programs

Learn about available labor and economic data and how to use it to make informed employment decisions.

[Visit Programs >](#)

Economists

Labor Market Economists analyze and interpret labor force and economic data to help users understand the effects of trends on employment and economic growth for Wisconsin.

[Contact Economists >](#)

CONTACT BWITS

Regional Labor Market Economists analyze and interpret labor force and economic data to help users understand the effects of trends on employment and economic growth.

Scan the QR
code or visit

[jobcenterofwisconsin.
com/wisconomy/
pub/contact](https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/wisconomy/pub/contact)



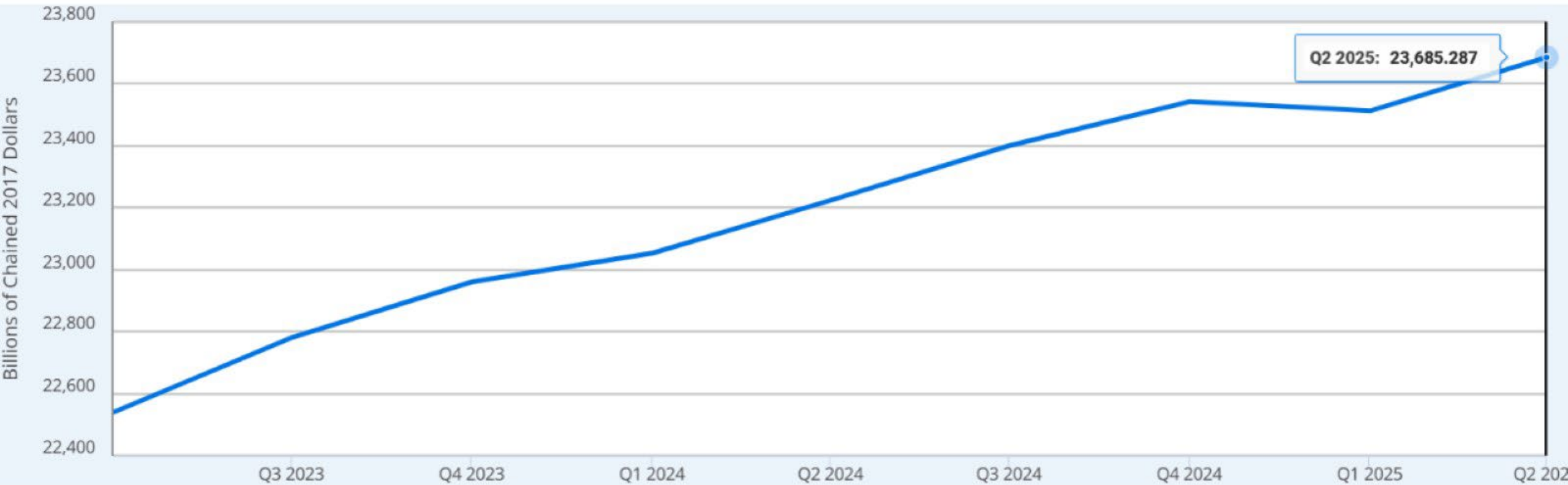
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Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)



Source: US Dept of Commerce – Bureau of Economic Analysis via St. Louis Federal Reserve FRED

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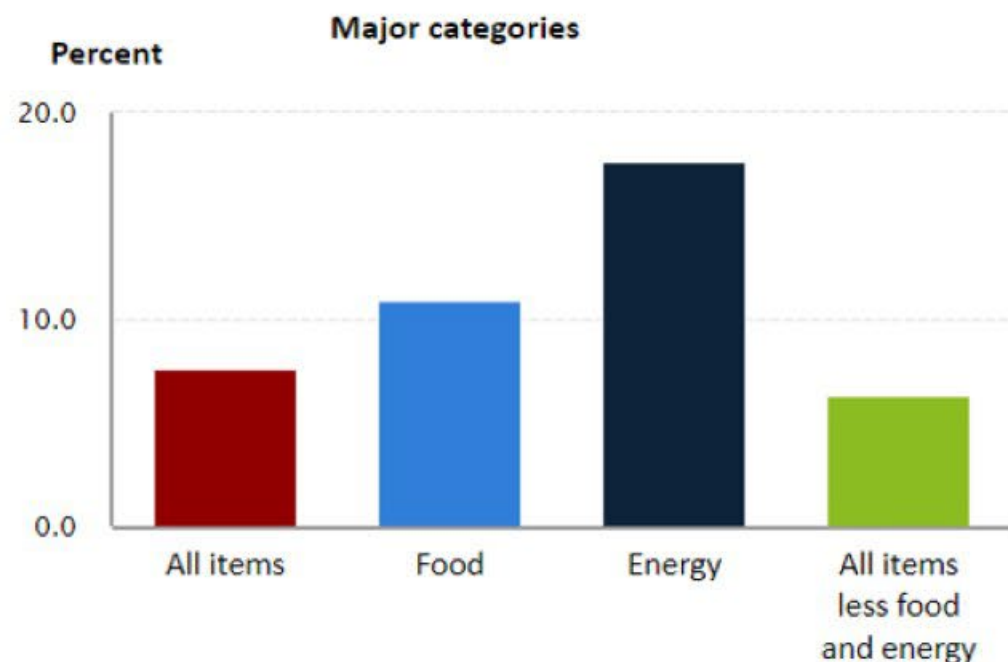
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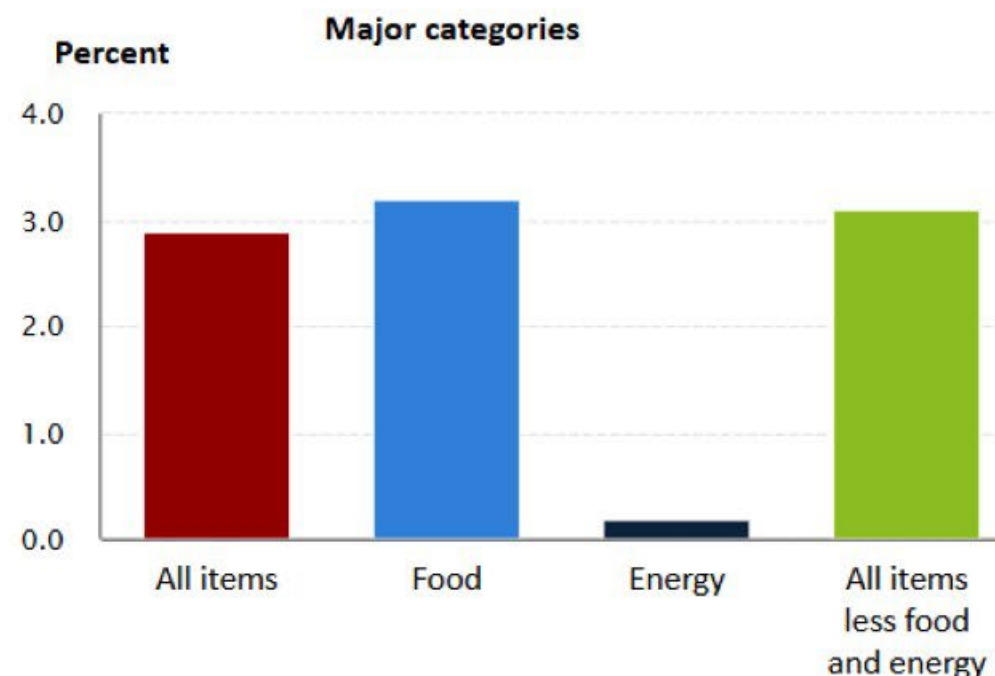
12-Month Consumer Price Index Percent Change

12-month percentage change, Consumer Price Index, selected categories, October 2022, not seasonally adjusted



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

12-month percentage change, Consumer Price Index, selected categories, August 2025, not seasonally adjusted



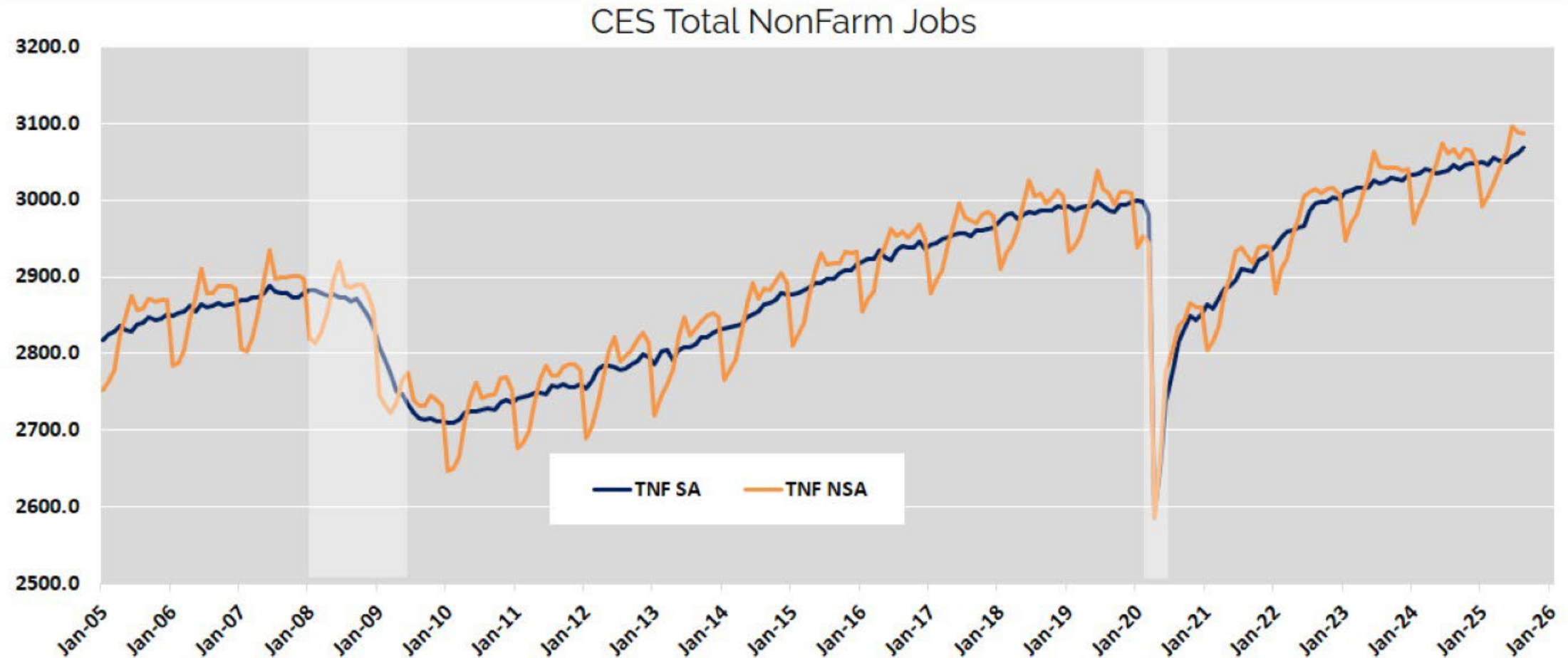
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Current Employment Statistics (CES) Nonfarm Jobs



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Unemployment Statistics

Unemployment Rates (seasonally adjusted)



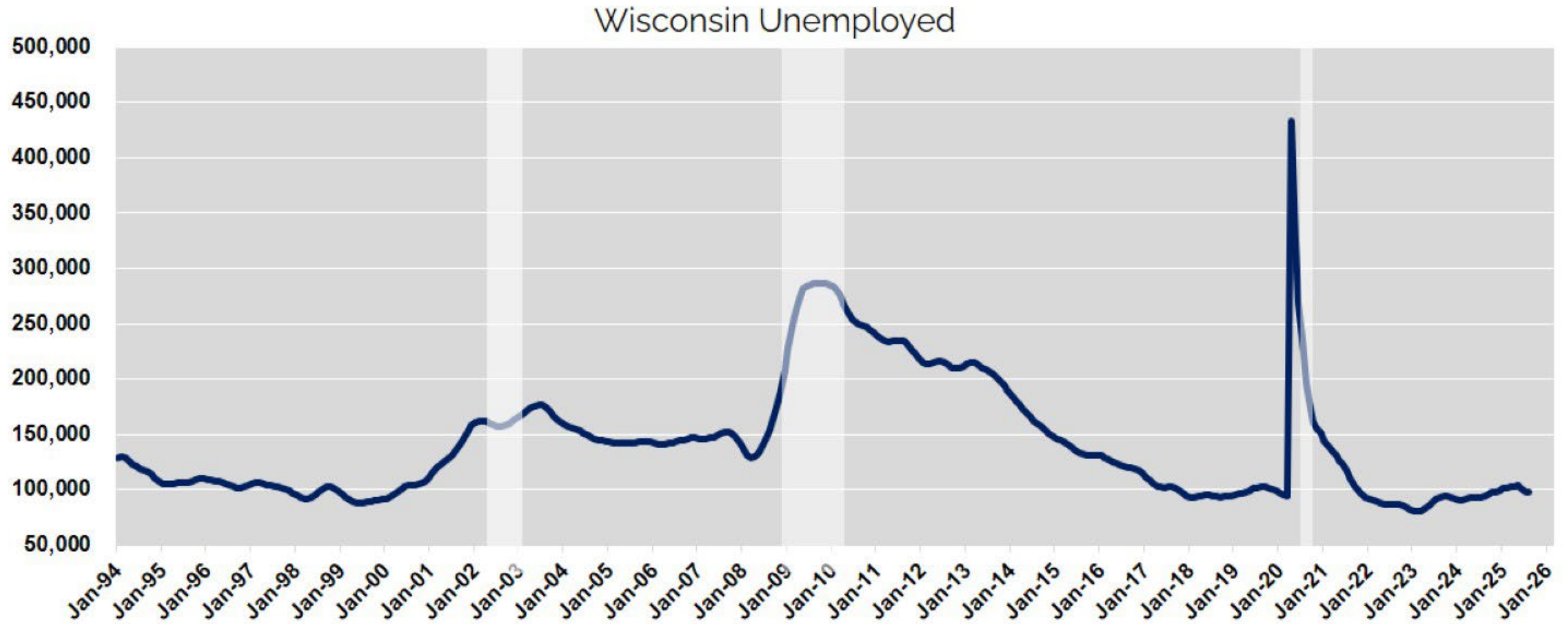
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Wisconsin Unemployment



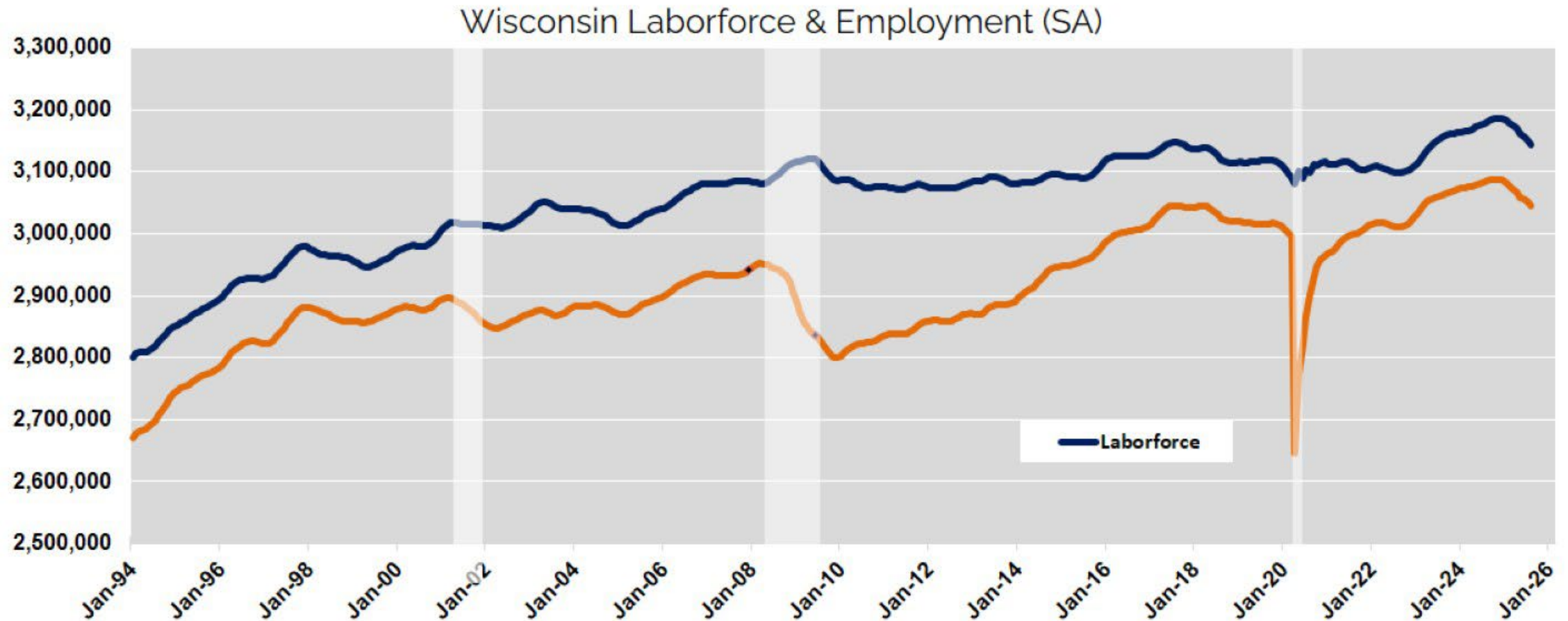
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Wisconsin Employment



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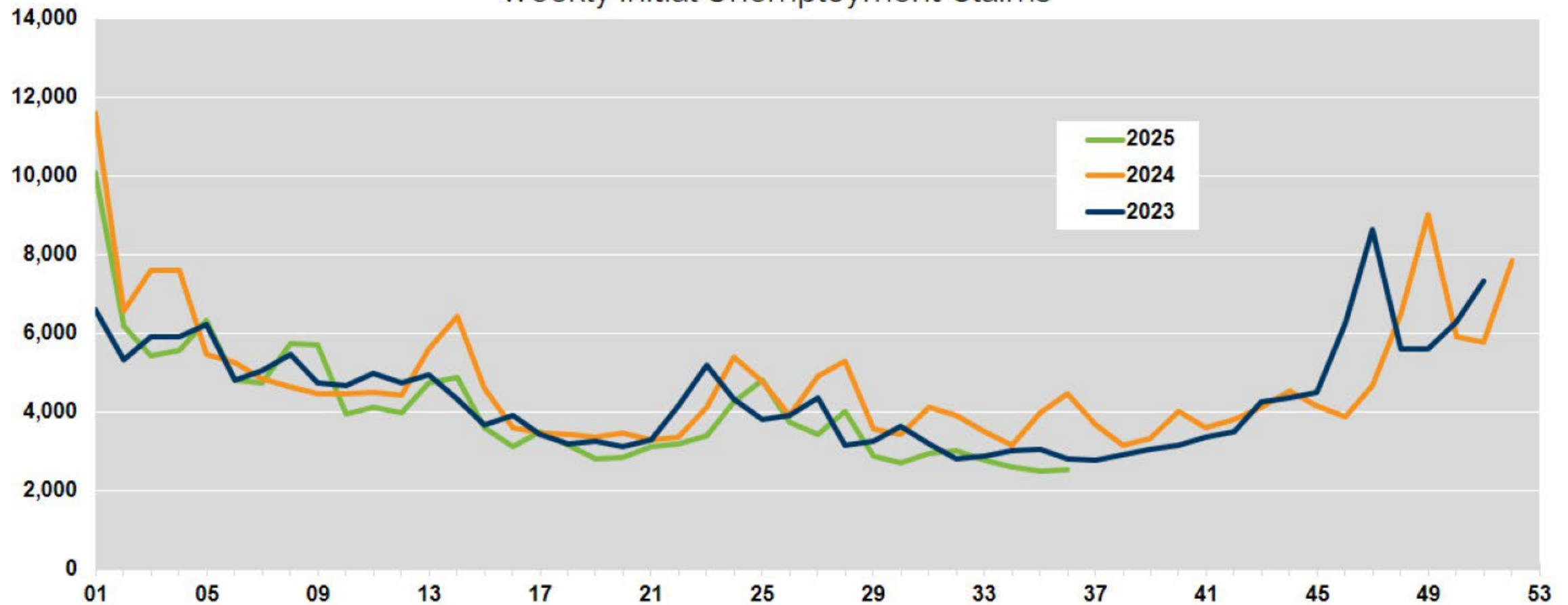
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Unemployment Insurance Claims

Weekly Initial Unemployment Claims



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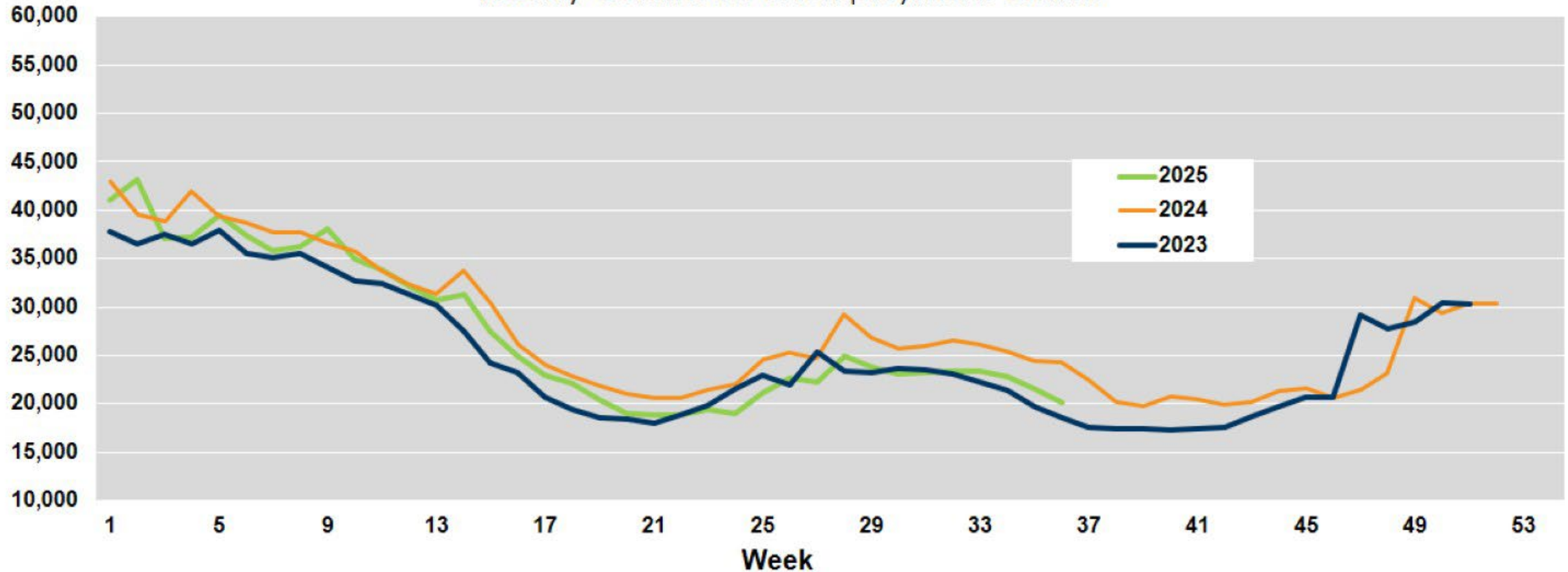
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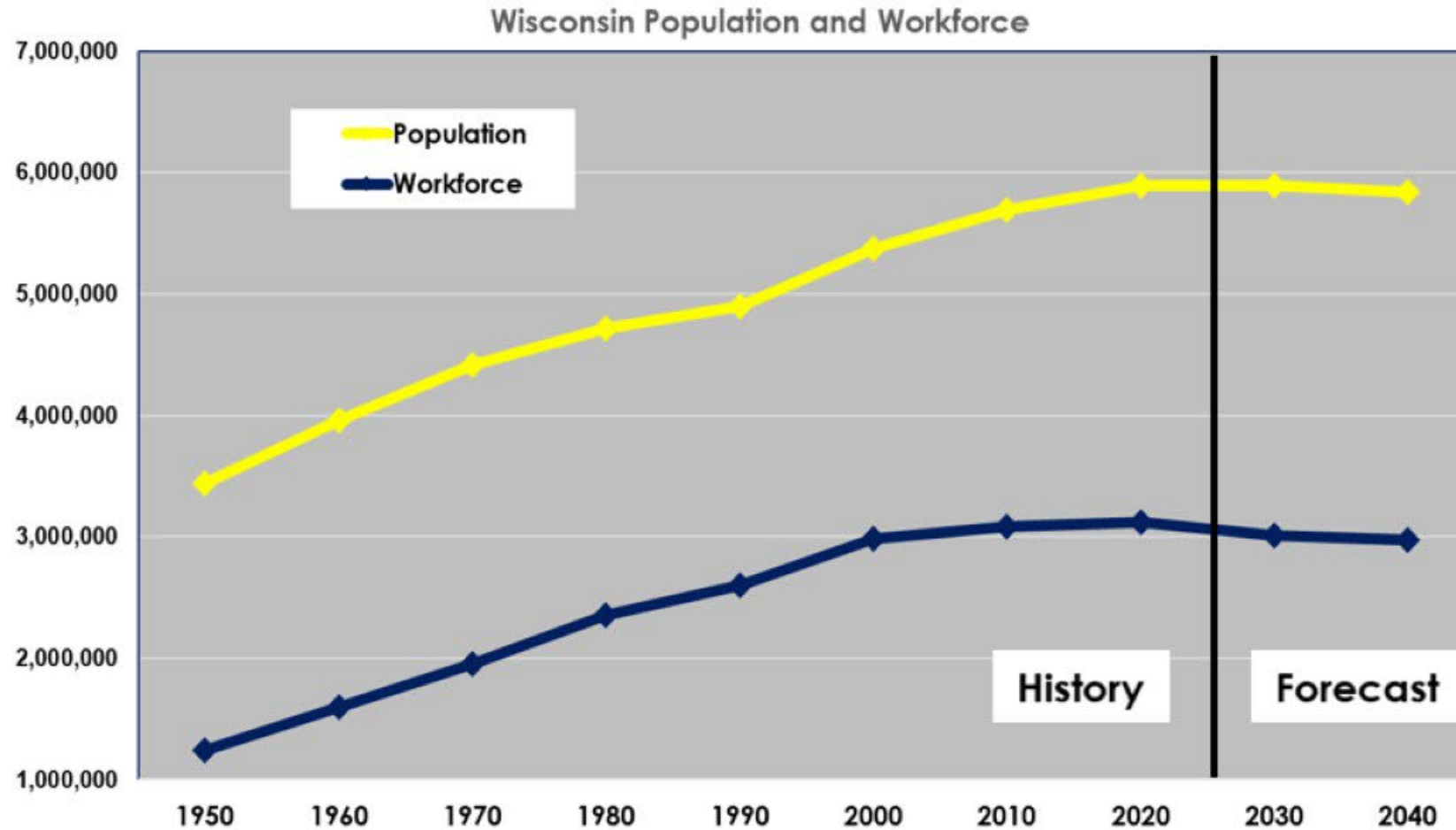
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Unemployment Insurance Claims

Weekly Continued Unemployment Claims



Labor Quantity Challenge: Population & Labor Force

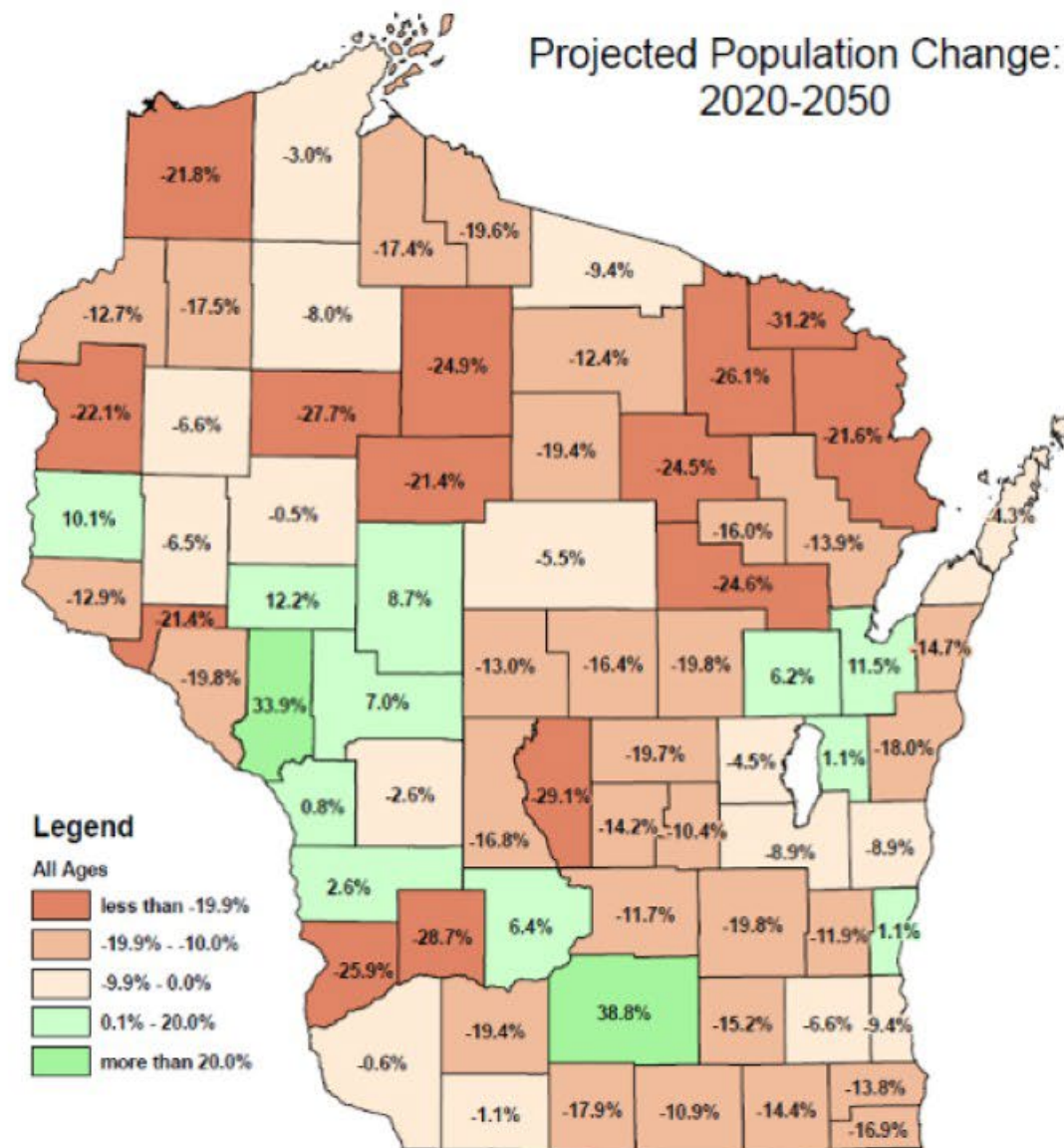


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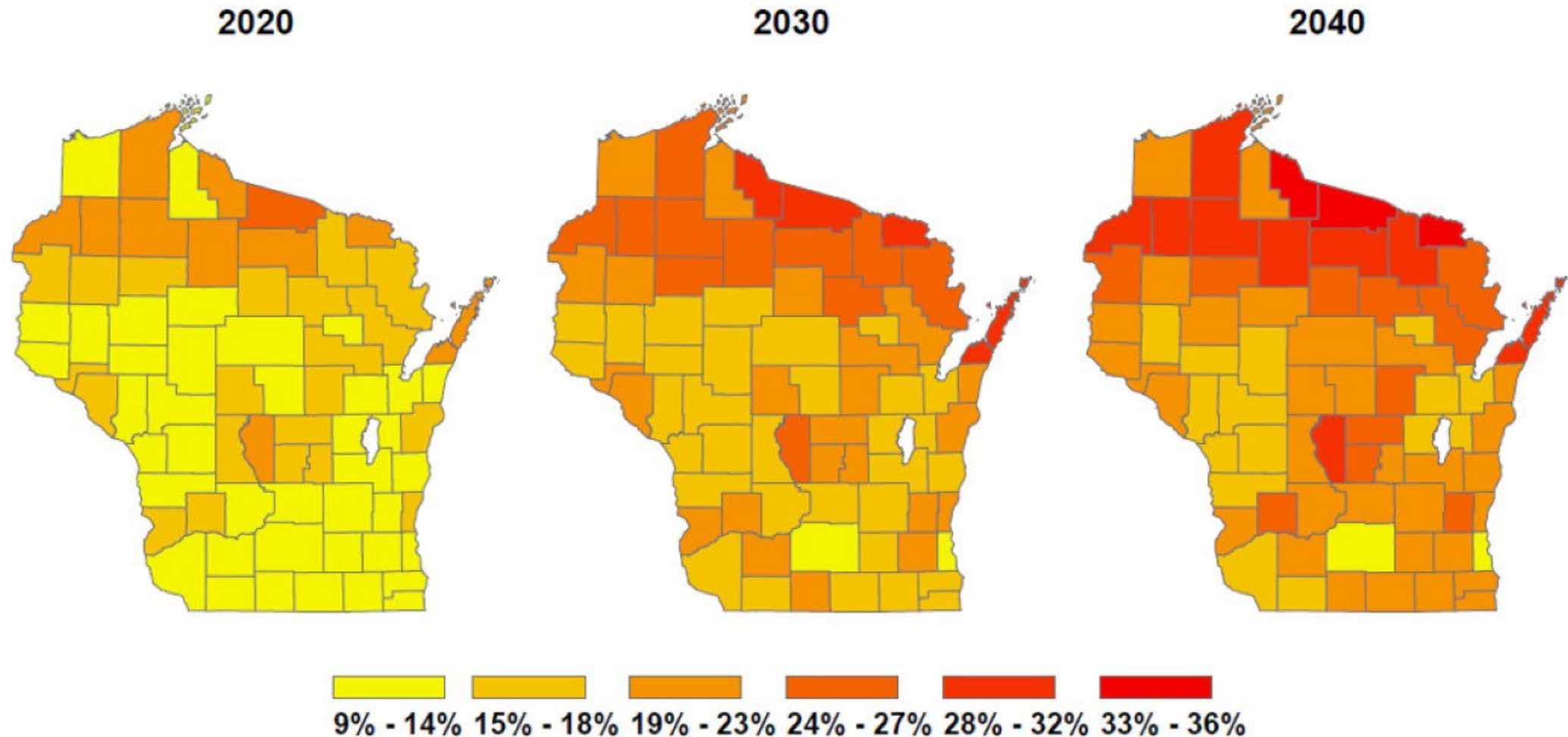


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Source: WI Dept of
Administration
Demographic Services,
Map by DWD Office of
Economic Advisors

Projected Share of Total Population: Age Group 70 and Older



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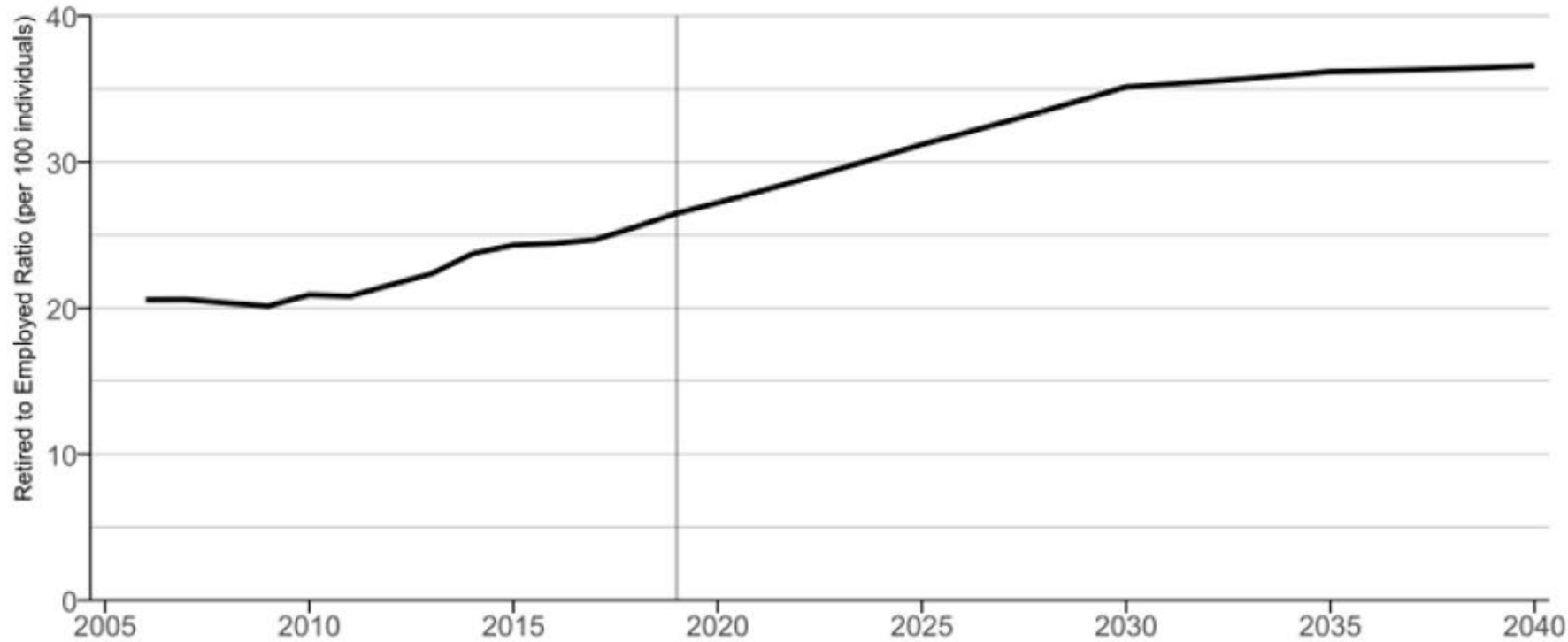


Source: WI Dept of Administration Demographic Services,
map by DWD Office of Economic Advisors

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Labor Quantity Challenge

Retired to Employed Ratio



Scan the QR code to view the full report:



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Gap Analysis 2031

Population Models	Supply	Jobs Filled*	Gap
Department of Administration Model	3,098,314	3,340,884	-242,570

*Jobs Filled numbers are calculated using 2018-2028 percent change from DWD Occupation Projections and then applying to 2021 base employment.



WISCONSIN FAST FORWARD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

DET Office of Skills Development, Dennis Powers

Program Overview

- The Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) program was signed into law in March 2013 with the near-unanimous support of the State Legislature.
- The program addresses Wisconsin's skills gap by investing in grants to employers for customized skills training.
- Grants fill current job openings and ongoing skill requirements.

Program Budget

- Funded with state General Purpose Revenue funds.
- Annual budget:
 - \$5.25 million for Industry Sectors Worker Training Grants.
 - \$1.5 million for Advanced Manufacturing Technical Education Equipment grants and Teacher Training and Recruitment Grants.
- Additional \$250,000 provided in 2025-27
 - Funds to support training in the healthcare industry.
 - More details forthcoming as DWD completes implementation.

By the Numbers

Grants Awarded:
461 grants for
\$51 million

Cost per Trainee:
\$1,495 average

Employees Upskilled:
30,000+

Average Wage Increase:
\$1.28

Funding Available in Nine Industry Sectors

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Customer Service
- Financial Services
- Health Care
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Small Business
- Transportation



Standard Grant Program

- Supports employer-led worker training.
- Prepares workers for current and future jobs.
- Projects must be demand driven:
 - Trains for in-demand occupational skills for new or existing workers.
 - Employers must place trainees in positions related to the training.
- Training must be new or customized.
- Primarily hard skills.
- Existing training previously offered is not eligible.
- Reimbursement grant program.



Eligible Expenses

- WFF funds are used for training-related expenses.
- This may include:
 - Curriculum development.
 - Instructor salaries during the training period.
 - Consultant/contractual expenses.
 - Training materials and supplies.
 - Travel, meals, and lodging for course instructors .
 - Administration (limited to 10% of the requested funds).
- WFF funds cannot be used for trainee wages, stipends or fringe benefits.



Benefits

Trainees:

- Transferrable Skills.
- Employment/Wage Increase.
- Career Development.
- Certifications.

State of Wisconsin:

- Reimbursable Grants.
- Return on Investment (ROI) to taxpayers.
- Transparent and Accountable.

Wisconsin Businesses:

- Skilled Workforce.
- More Competitive.

Standard Wisconsin Fast Forward

\$5,000 to
\$400,000

\$0.50:\$1
match

Any size
company

Grant Application

Eligible applicants include:

- Public agencies.
- Private organizations.
- A consortium of partners with a lead public or private organization as the applicant.
- Tribal governing bodies of a federally recognized tribe or band of Native Americans, or an organization appointed by the tribal governing body.



Type of Trainees



- **Incumbent worker:** Current employees on payroll prior to grant submission.
- **Underemployed trainees:** Part-time or seasonal prior to training, or a worker employed but not in a capacity that reflects their skills and experience in terms of hours, compensation, or responsibility.
- **Unemployed trainees:** Do not have a job at the time of training, but are intended to be employed with a project partner after completing training.

Application Requirements

Basic tips for application success:

- Why do they need this grant?
- Who is impacted by the grant?
- What is going to be accomplished through the grant?
- How does a grant help the applicant achieve goals?
 - Includes a clear and concise project timeline leading to outcomes defined in the application and GPA.
- Firm commitments from Employment Placement Partners?



Evaluation Guidelines

Projects are scored based on:

- Project need
- Capacity building
- Equity and economic opportunity
- Economic impact
- Training objectives and outcomes
- Training program design, cost, and implementation

Grant Outcomes



- **85%** completed training.
- **75%** received industry recognized credentials.
- **65%** placed into employment.
- **75%** increased wages.

Application Technical Assistance

As applications are entered:

- Technical assistance.
- Contact: WisconsinFastForward@dwd.wisconsin.gov

Workforce Development Boards and technical college partnerships.

- Grant writing and administration experience.

CONTACT:

Dennis Powers
Office of Skills Development
dennisj.powers@dwd.wisconsin.gov

LEARN MORE:

WFF is accepting applications for workforce training grants. Apply by 3 p.m. on Thursday Oct. 16, 2025, to be considered. More information, including the grant announcement and rubric are available online.

Scan the QR
code or visit

WisconsinFastForward
[d.com/wff_standard](https://dwd.com/wff_standard)



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LEARN MORE:

Visit DWD's Tribal Affairs website to view DWD's tribal action plan and explore resources and programs.

Scan the QR
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