

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Business Growth Strategy

FOURTH EDITION | 2025-2027

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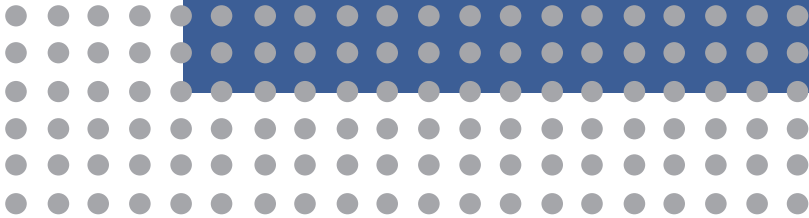
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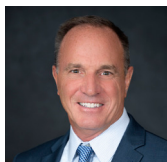
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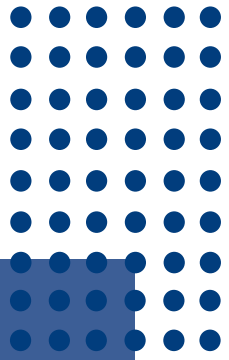
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOURTH EDITION OF THE BUSINESS GROWTH STRATEGY

2025-2027

The fourth edition of the Business Growth Strategy for Waukesha County will serve as a strategic guide for the Waukesha County Center for Growth Board and staff over the next three years. Operational plans and tactical strategies have been developed to align the organization's collective efforts, along with those of its partners, around common goals.

Using demographic, economic, and labor market analysis, as well as input from the Center for Growth's Board of Directors and key municipal investors, three strategic outcomes have been reaffirmed as vital to the success of the Center for Growth and Waukesha County businesses:

1. Business Retention, Expansion, and Attraction
2. Expansion of the GROW Fund
3. Serving as the Economic Development Resource for Partner Communities

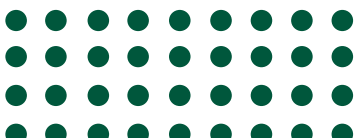
Key performance indicators (KPIs) have been established for each strategic outcome to enable the board and staff to track progress and refine strategies as needed. Annual targets for each KPI will be set by the Center for Growth, with results presented in a quarterly dashboard format. Comprehensive results will be shared publicly in the Center for Growth's annual reports.

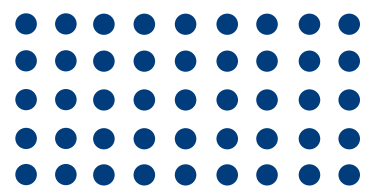
A data-driven analysis has also identified a new target industry: Medical Technology. This sector will now join the existing industry clusters of Energy, Power & Controls, Advanced Manufacturing, and Food & Beverage Production as a focus for business retention and attraction efforts. The U.S. Economic Development Administration's recognition of the Madison-to-Milwaukee corridor as a Biohealth Tech Hub further underscores the importance of Medical Technology, highlighting Waukesha County's role in the medical device and healthcare support supply chain.

PLANNING OVERVIEW AND PROCESS

In September 2024, a three-month planning process began, incorporating extensive data and research from the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and input from key stakeholders. The Center for Growth Board of Directors and municipal investors analyzed the findings, refined strategic outcomes, and contributed to plans for implementing these outcomes over the next three years.

This collaborative effort culminated in the 4th Edition of the Business Growth Strategy for Waukesha County (2025–2027), which was reviewed and approved by the Center for Growth Board of Directors on February 14, 2025.





WHO WE ARE

Advancing business. Growing communities.

The Waukesha County Center for Growth, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has provided economic development services for Waukesha County since its establishment in 2016. Founded through a partnership between Waukesha County, the City of Waukesha, the Waukesha County Business Alliance, the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center, and local municipalities, our mission is to connect businesses and communities with the resources they need to succeed.

We are dedicated to helping businesses and communities thrive in Waukesha County. By connecting organizations with the resources they need, we enable growth, foster innovation, and support long-term success. Our mission is to empower businesses to reach their fullest potential, contributing to the prosperity of the entire region.

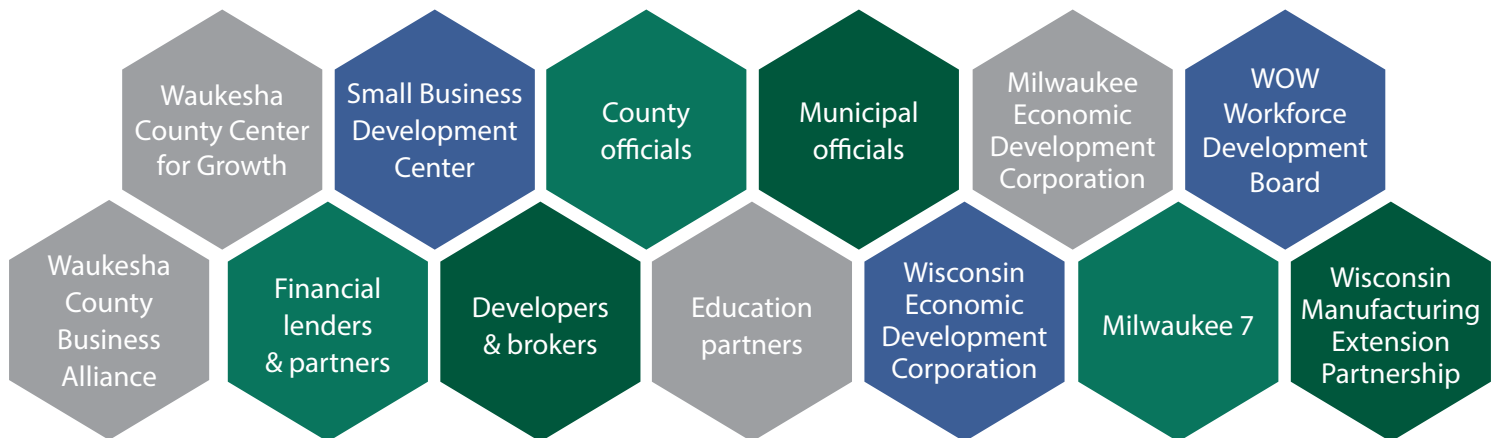
MISSION:
Engage businesses and connect them to the resources they need to succeed in Waukesha County

VISION:
A vibrant economy where businesses, communities and citizens thrive.

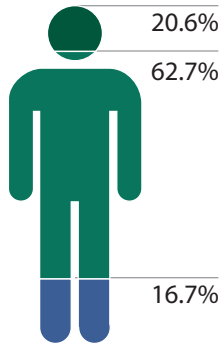
CORE VALUES:
Integrity | Collaboration | Excellence

KEY PARTNERS

As the central hub for businesses, the Waukesha County Center for Growth partners with a network of organizations to maximize impact and leverage collective expertise. These collaborations are essential to achieving strategic goals and providing exceptional support to businesses across Waukesha County.



WAUKESHA COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS



WAUKESHA COUNTY SHARE OF POPULATION BY AGE

- Ages 0-14
- Ages 15-64
- Ages 65+

MEDIAN AGE

Year	Waukesha County	Wisconsin	United States
2022:	43.8	40.4	39.0
2020:	43.3	40.0	38.6

WAUKESHA COUNTY TOTAL POPULATION:
410,434
(AS OF 2022)



White
85.1 %



Hispanic or Latino
5.4 %



Asian
4.0 %



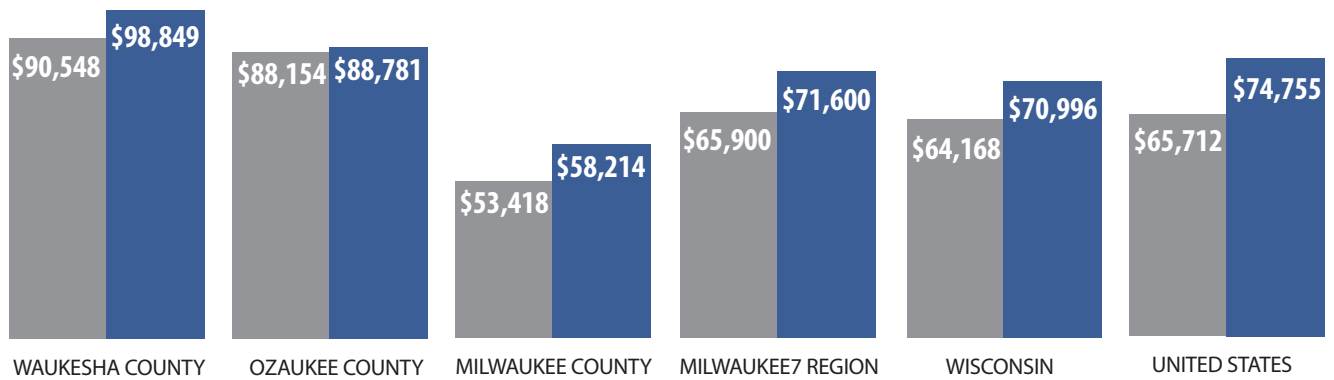
Other
3.6 %



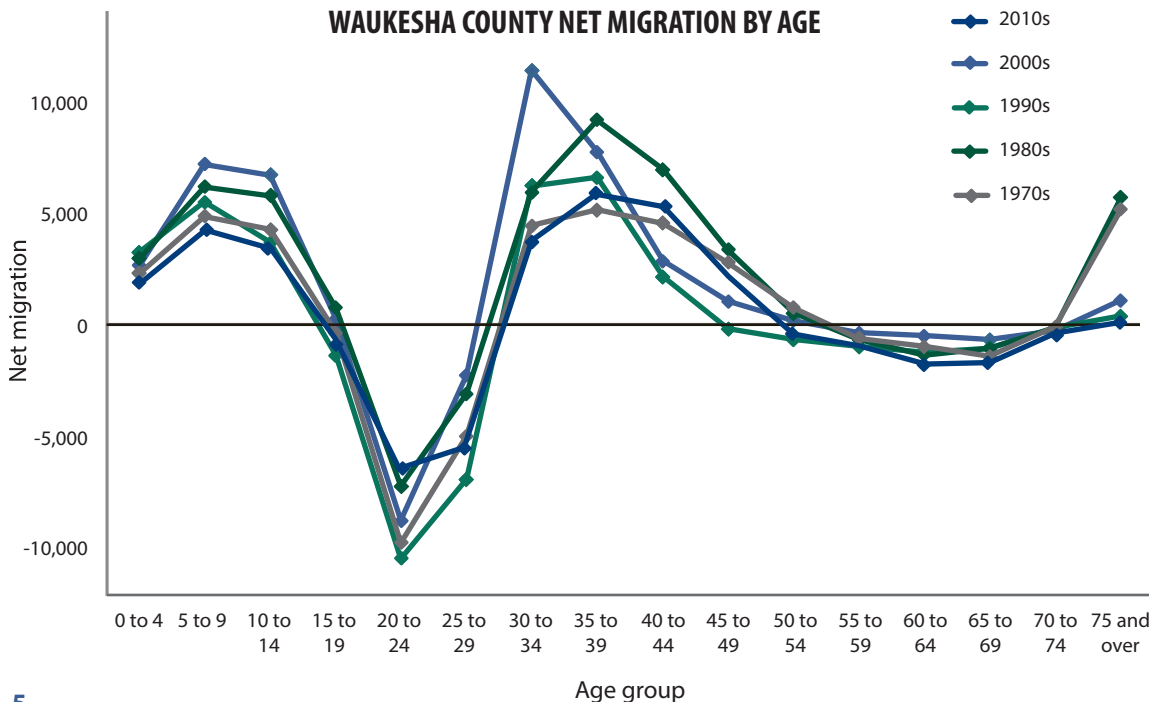
Black or African American
1.9 %

Waukesha County has the highest median household income in Wisconsin.

2020
2022

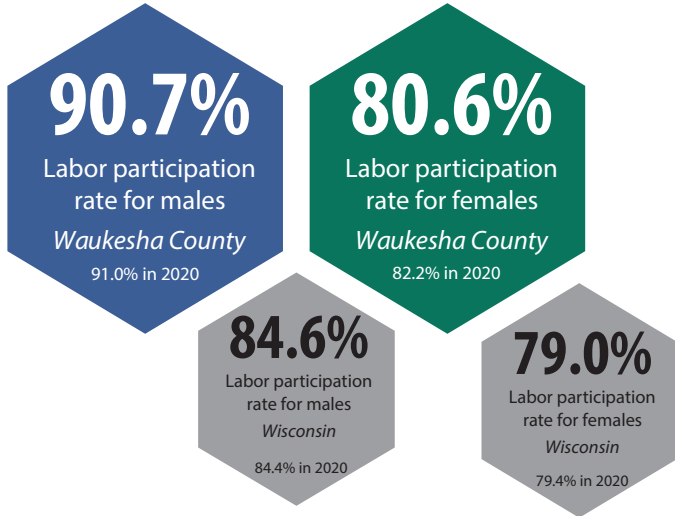
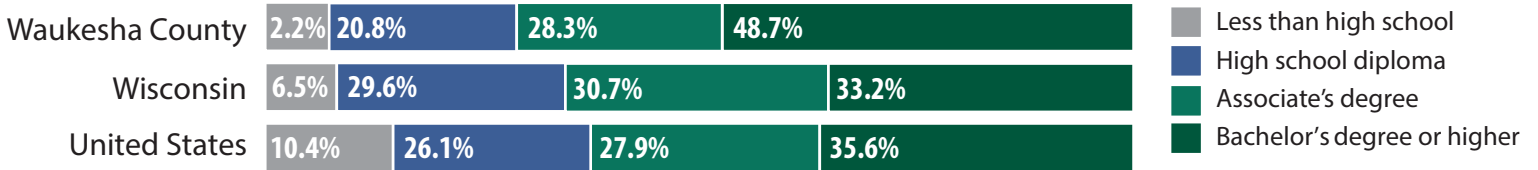


WAUKESHA COUNTY NET MIGRATION BY AGE

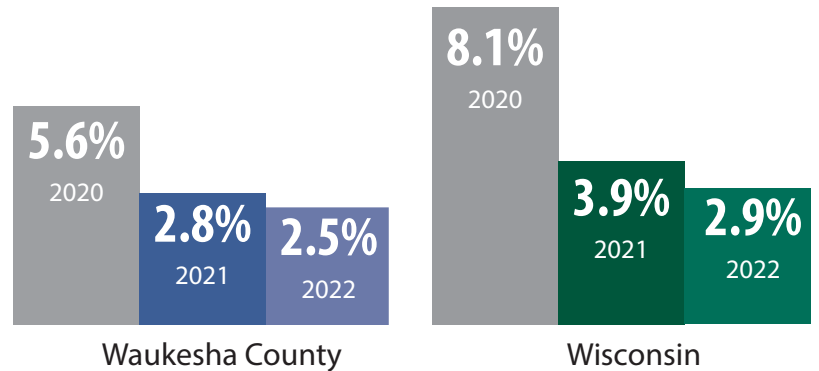


Median home sale price increased from \$405,000 in 2022 to \$431,000 in 2023.

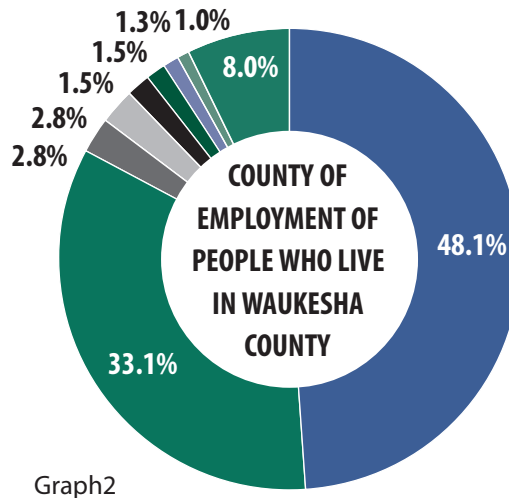
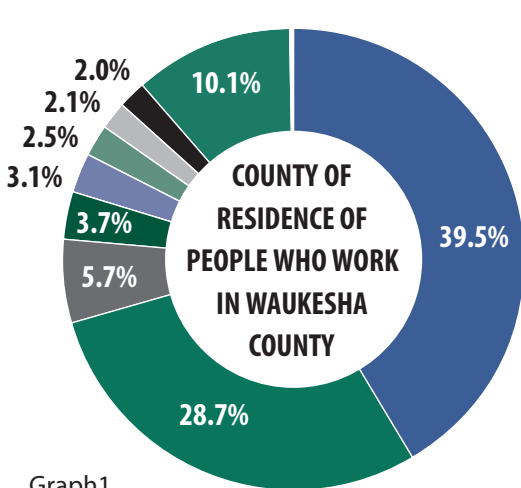
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



WORKER FLOW FOR WAUKESHA COUNTY (Q2 2021)



County	Graph1	Graph2
Waukesha	99,075	99,075
Milwaukee	71,972	68,117
Washington	14,261	5,817
Racine	9,352	3,087
Jefferson	7,735	2,629
Walworth	6,162	2,049
Dane	5,317	5,859
Ozaukee	5,097	3,042
Other	25,250	16,366

250,748 workers employed in Waukesha County.

206,032 workers living in Waukesha County.

15.0% of Waukesha County workers have one vehicle available to them

83.9% have two or more vehicles available to them

Only **1.1%** of workers do not have a vehicle available to them, compared to **5.3%** of Milwaukee county workers.

DRIVER INDUSTRIES

Driver industries are those that play a key role in the economic vitality of a region by supplying quality, often high-paying jobs while also supporting job growth in other industries. These industries function as the primary engines for economic growth and stability because they export products and services and import vital dollars. Those dollars then circulate in the economy and support other local industries and jobs.



ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Advanced Manufacturing is in our DNA, 18% of Wisconsin's workforce is employed in manufacturing. The industry here is robust and diverse, including machinery manufacturing, transportation equipment, fabricated metal products, aerospace and defense. Waukesha County based companies are constantly innovating to be more efficient and effective in their production using advanced analytics, connectivity, automation, and smart manufacturing technologies to embrace the future of production.



ENERGY, POWER & CONTROLS

Known as the Smart Energy Hub, this cluster includes world-class energy efficiency, renewable energy, distributed generation, control technologies, energy storage companies and university research. Waukesha County is home to several companies specializing in power, distribution and specialty transformer manufacturing, capacitor, coil and inductor manufacturing, motor and generator manufacturing, relay and industrial control manufacturing.



FOOD & BEVERAGE

Wisconsin's strong agricultural base is a historic driver of the robust food and beverage manufacturing cluster in Waukesha County. Internationally recognized brands of kefir, cheese, beer, condiments, spices and food additives are produced here. Local companies also make packaging, labels, pumps, refrigeration units and other products serving the Food & Beverage Processing supply chain.



MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Led by our partners BioForward Wisconsin, the Madison and Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA has been designated as the Wisconsin Biohealth Tech Hub and received a \$49 M grant from the US Economic Development Administration. The Biohealth Tech Hub aims to position Wisconsin as a global leader in personalized medicine by strengthening innovation in manufacturing and commercialization in the region in three key areas: imaging/theragnostics, genomics, and big data/analytics.



STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND STRATEGY

Establishing clear goals and strategic objectives allows an organization to operationalize its mission. Each of the following goals provides measurable objectives by which WCCG will focus strategic activities that support our mission and overarching vision.

GOAL ONE: FOSTER ECONOMIC GROWTH

Foster growth and sustainability with existing Waukesha County businesses while attracting strategic businesses to bolster the county's economic prosperity.

- Engage primary employers located in Waukesha County and drive growth and expansion efforts through counseling, and connections to appropriate partner resources and tools.
- Assist companies seeking to locate in Waukesha County and support the business attraction efforts of state and local partners. Promote Waukesha County as the premier place to locate.
- Increase awareness of the Waukesha County Center for Growth with key stakeholders in the business community.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Number of projects completed
- New/retained jobs
- New capital investment
- Business retention visits completed
- Assists logged for business growth, talent development and community development

In economic development, a **PRIMARY EMPLOYER** is a business producing goods and services for statewide, national or international markets. The goods and services are exported to consumers outside of the region, resulting in a stream of new dollars coming into the local economy and ultimately a distribution of wealth through wages paid to employees, a stronger supply chain, and tax revenues.

Quad Graphics, for example, is headquartered in Waukesha County and provides services to customers all over the country.

Secondary employers are those businesses that produce goods and services that meet the needs of the local consumer market. This includes local restaurants and retail establishments. The relationship between primary and non-primary employers is one of dependence as primary employers are known to bring new wealth and jobs into a region while secondary or local establishments circulate that wealth throughout the economy.

WCCG's economic development efforts focus on attracting, retaining, and nurturing primary employers in our region. These businesses are responsible for significant job creation, provide competitive wages, and often have a larger multiplier effect in terms of economic impact.

GOAL TWO: BUILD THE GROW FUND

The Waukesha County Center for Growth will promote the use of and increase investment in the GROW Fund to a level that will allow the GROW Fund to be a sustainable funding source for WCCG.

- Market the GROW Fund to financial partners, strategic partners and potential end users as a tool to retain, expand and attract businesses.
- Identify and secure additional GROW Fund investments from foundations, lenders, organizations, corporations and individuals.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- The number of new loans to Waukesha County employers
- The number of new investors and amount of new investment into the GROW Fund

The **GROW Fund** targets two types of applicants essential to the economic development of the County:

- Manufacturing, service and other businesses located (or which will locate) in Waukesha County looking to expand operations and create jobs.
- Developers with projects to make available housing stock to meet existing and projected workforce growth and talent attraction in Waukesha County.

GOAL THREE: BUILD LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

The Waukesha County Center for Growth will build capacity in investor communities as the county-wide economic development resource, creating strong partnerships between local government, businesses, and non-profit organizations.

- Serve as the county-wide economic development resource for communities in Waukesha County. Perform business retention, expansion and attraction work on behalf of and in conjunction with municipal partners.
- Facilitate communication and dialogue with local municipal leaders to become a trusted resource to support community development goals.
- Act as a forum for sharing best practices and economic development resources for the communities. Leverage partnerships with other agencies to access tools and expertise.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- The number of projects, new jobs and new capital investment created in Waukesha County
- The number of business retention visits completed
- The number of community assists completed

An **ASSIST** is a value-added connection or referral. Think of a hockey assist where a player who passes the puck to the player who scores the goal receives an assist. An example might be a referral to the WMEP for assistance with plant floor layout that enables a company to continue to grow on-site. Assists help us tell the story of the economic development work we do outside of the top-line metrics of new capital investment and new jobs.

SUCCESS MEASURES

The Waukesha County Center for Growth is a metric-driven organization with a track record of generating new jobs and capital investment in the region. The organization is committed to meeting the following targets of success over the next three years.



175
New/Retained
Jobs



400
Assists to Businesses
and Communities

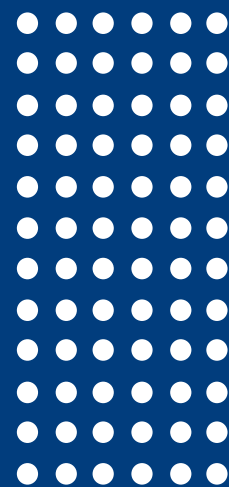


\$50M
New Capital
Investment



\$1.5M
New Investment to
the GROW Fund





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