



SOUTHERN GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION



# 2022-2026 Southern Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Atkinson - Bacon - Ben Hill - Berrien

Brantley - Brooks - Charlton - Clinch - Coffee - Cook - Echols - Irwin - Lanier - Lowndes

Pierce - Tift - Turner - Ware Counties

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# What is a CEDS?

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's (SGRC) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy. The SGRC CEDS will analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, a regional plan of action, and the investment priorities and funding sources.

As a performance-based plan, this CEDS will play a critical role in adapting to global economic conditions by fully utilizing the region's unique advantages to maximize economic opportunity for its residents by attracting private investment that creates jobs. The SGRC CEDS is a regionally-owned strategy that is the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with regional public and private sector participation. This plan sets forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the Southern Georgia region and clearly defines the measures of success.

The organization responsible for the development of this CEDS is the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC). As recipient of EDA Partnership Planning Investment funds (#ED22ATL3020014), the SGRC serves as a designated Economic Development District (EDD). The SGRC's planning district includes the eighteen county governments of Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Cook, Clinch, Coffee, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware, and the 45 municipal governments within those counties.

This CEDS plan follows the guidelines released by the US Economic Development Administration in September 2020. The CEDS is a strategy-driven plan developed by city and county elected officials, as well as economic, community, and workforce development professionals. The utilization of input and ideas from the diverse group of public officials and private sector representatives on the SGRC Council, Workforce Development Board, and the Strategy Committee ensures the inclusiveness of all demographic segments of the region in the CEDS planning process.

The following forms the basis for the SGRC CEDS:

- Summary Background of economic conditions in the region
- SWOT Analysis to identify regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
- Strategic Direction/Action Plan based on the SWOT Analysis
- Evaluation Framework to evaluate the implementation of the CEDS and its impact on the regional economy



# Summary Background

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) is an economic development planning district located in Southern Georgia. The vast 18-county region covers South Central to Southeast Georgia, and spans nearly 8,000 square miles. SGRC is the largest Regional Commission and Economic Development District in Georgia, both in the number of member counties served and in land area.

The SGRC is a multi-jurisdictional planning agency whose membership includes public officials, private individuals, post-secondary education representatives, workforce development representatives, economic development professionals, and other stakeholders throughout the region. The SGRC provides technical, planning, community and economic development assistance, and aging and workforce development services to the Southern Georgia region. The governing authority, or "Council," of the Regional Commission functions as the District Council in administering the District's EDA programs.

Agriculture, commercial timber production, and other rural development initiatives are all cornerstones of the Southern Georgia economy. However, the evidence of manufacturing is seen throughout the region and has helped to raise the per capita income, jobs creation and retention, and capital investments in some areas of the region.

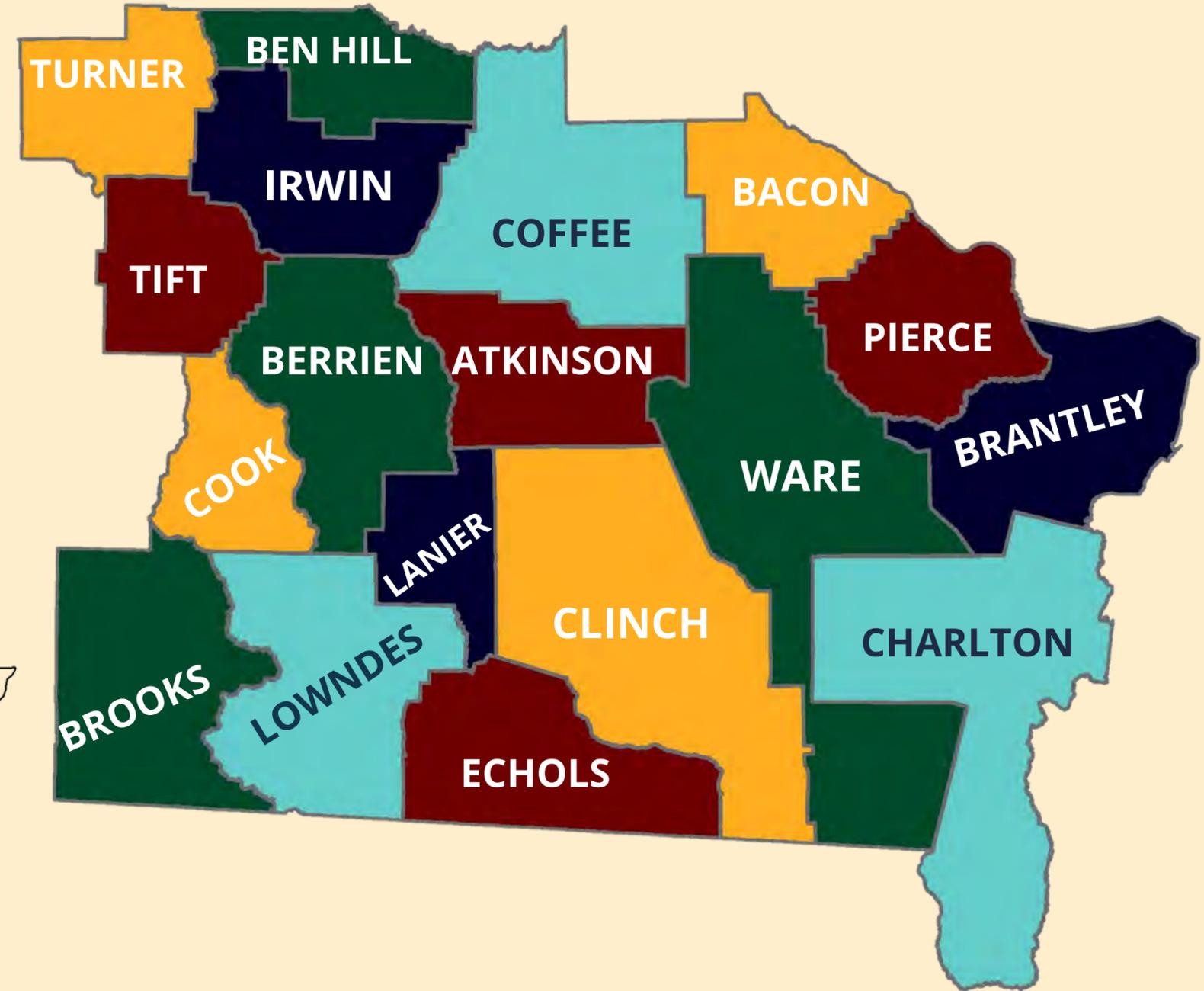
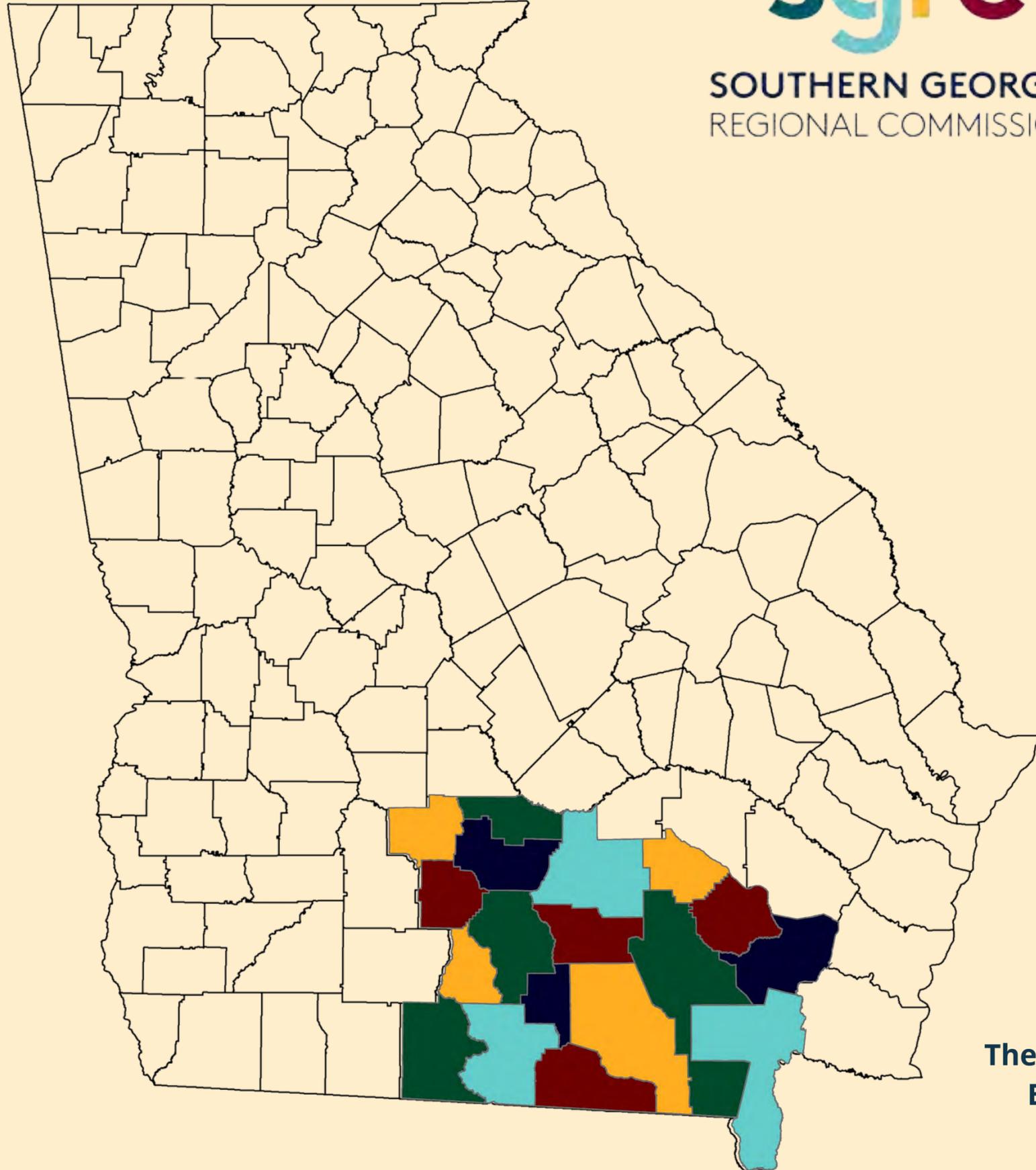
Valdosta, the major city and county seat of Lowndes County, is the only designated Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) located in the District. The counties of Lowndes, Brooks, Echols, and Lanier are associated with the MSA. Valdosta has a growing manufacturing, warehouse, and distribution base. It is also home to Moody Air Force Base and Valdosta State University. One county, Brantley, is associated with the Brunswick MSA, located outside the SGRC District.

The SGRC EDD has four Micropolitan Statistical Areas. They are: Douglas-Coffee County, Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County, Tifton-Tift County, and Waycross-Ware County. The Douglas and Waycross Micropolitan Statistical Areas each include an adjoining county, Atkinson (Douglas) and Pierce (Waycross).

The Southern Georgia region has a network of four-lane transportation arteries that directly connect to Interstate 75 and Interstate 95, which provides ease of access to the Georgia Ports. Sufficient highway transportation is essential to commercial and industrial growth. Significant improvements have been made to the highway and road systems in the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in recent years. These improvements have helped to open up areas of the region for various types of development and growth and provide safer more efficient transportation arteries.



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The Southern Georgia region includes Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware Counties.

## ***Demographics***

The total population for the Southern Georgia Region increased from 406,586 in 2010 to 413,869 in 2020, a 1.79% increase. As the regional population increases, so does the diversity, as nearly half of the municipalities are Minority-Majority. Growth within the region has not been consistent. Charlton County had a 7.07% increase in population (2010-2020), the most substantial increase in the region. Other counties with population increases were Bacon, Brantley, Coffee, Cook, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, and Tift.

Nine of the eighteen counties in the region experienced a loss in population between 2010 and 2020. Turner County experienced the greatest loss of 11.31%. The lack of job opportunities in these particular counties, especially for the population that is between 18 and 24 years of age, has forced this age group to move outside of these counties to work and live. Other counties with population loss from 2010 to 2020 were Atkinson, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brooks, Clinch, Echols, Irwin, and Ware.

The region's overall population is 62% White, 28% Black/African American, 7% Hispanic/Latino, 1.7% two or more races, 0.96% Asian, 0.23% American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.02% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 0.09% some other race.

## ***Socioeconomic Data***

The poverty rate in the State of Georgia is 14.3%. One hundred percent (100%) of the Southern Georgia EDD's counties have a poverty rate higher than the state. Clinch (29.8%), Turner (29.5%), and Ben Hill (29.1%) Counties experience the highest rates of poverty in their communities, with Pierce (18.5%) and Brantley (18.8%) Counties being the lowest. An increasing number of rural communities are experiencing persistently high poverty rates. In fact, eight of the eighteen counties in the SGRC region are listed as Persistent Poverty Counties. They are: Atkinson County, Bacon County, Ben Hill County, Brooks County, Cook County, Tift County, Turner County, and Ware County.

The average per capita income (PCI) in the Southern Georgia EDD is \$21,050, which is much lower than the State of Georgia's PCI of \$32,427. There are six counties with PCI above the region's average of \$21,050; however, all eighteen counties in the Southern Georgia EDD are below Georgia's PCI of \$32,427.

Georgia's unemployment rate is 2.9%. Thirteen (72.2%) of the Southern Georgia EDD counties have unemployment rates higher than that of the state. Ben Hill (4.6%), Irwin (4.2%), and Turner (4.1%) Counties have the highest unemployment rates in the region and Pierce (2.5%) and Echols (2.2%) Counties have the lowest.

All eighteen counties (100%) in the Southern Georgia EDD have median household income limits below the state average of \$61,224. Pierce (\$48,969) and Lowndes (\$46,113) Counties have the highest median income limit, and Ben Hill (\$32,077) and Lanier (\$32,158) Counties have the lowest.

In Georgia, 12.6% of the population is without health care coverage. All eighteen counties (100%) in the Southern Georgia EDD have a population above this rate. Echols (25.3%) and Berrien (21.7%) Counties have the highest percentage of residents without health care coverage, and Lanier (12.7%) and Turner (13%) Counties have the lowest percentage of residents without health coverage.

## **Housing**

Access to safe and affordable housing plays a major role in the SGRC EDD's economic competitiveness and resilience. The consensus of each SWOT analysis performed in the development of this CEDS identified the scarce availability of affordable workforce housing as a threat to the economic well-being of the region. In addition, declining housing conditions and the growing inventory of substandard rental housing, particularly in the region's cities, is having an adverse effect on quality of life. Smart housing planning is increasingly essential for healthy growth, regardless of a metro, suburban, or rural environment. The housing stock must include safe, affordable, and accessible for-sale and rental units, not only to meet social equity goals, but to ensure community health as well as economic vitality and economic health.

There are 176,073 housing units in the SGRC Region, with 151,566 (86.1%) being occupied. Bacon County has the lowest percentage of occupied housing units at 77.9%, with the median home value being \$82,300. Echols County has the highest percentage of occupied housing units at 97.8%, with the median home value being \$76,000.

## **Environment**

The Southern Georgia Region is a vast, rural region spanning the Upper and Lower Coastal Plains of south-central Georgia. The mostly forested and agricultural region is comprised of approximately 7,810 square miles. The Region contains some unique natural features, including the Okefenokee Swamp, which, at 438,000 acres, is the largest "blackwater" swamp in North America. The 18-county Southern Georgia region is predominantly rural in terms of its land area and approximately half rural and half urban in terms of its population. The region's largest urban area is Valdosta, and other major urban clusters include Douglas, Fitzgerald, Tifton, and Waycross. Historically, the region's major industries were agriculture (both crops and livestock) and forestry, including the extraction of turpentine from pine trees. However, in recent decades, in keeping with national trends, the region has shifted from a production economy to a service economy. Although the majority of the region's land area is still used for agriculture and forestry, more jobs are now in service-providing industries than in goods-producing industries.

## **Infrastructure**

A sound infrastructure plays a vital role in encouraging a more productive and competitive regional economy. When problems exist with the performance of infrastructure, the effects can be widespread. The quality of a region's infrastructure has a profound effect on its ability to attract development, and the success of companies that choose to locate there.

Many communities in the SGRC Region have aging infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, bridges), but lack of funding to address those problems. Most incorporated municipalities in the region have municipal water and sewer systems, except for a few smaller cities that do not. Some counties in the region provide water and sewer service to select areas. Storm water management is handled at the local level.

Broadband service in the region is provided through DSL, cable, fiber, fixed wireless, and satellite. Some areas of the region (such as Echols County) have only one broadband provider, while others have multiple providers. Not all broadband technologies are available in all areas of the region. However, due to the increasing importance of broadband access in daily life, business, and recreation, broadband availability is increasingly likely to influence development patterns throughout the region. Recent federal broadband funding directed to the Southern Georgia EDD will result in the deployment of additional broadband infrastructure and increased accessibility in the region.

## ***Economy***

The economies of the SGRC region have become more diversified over the past twenty years; however, this diversity did not make the region immune to the Coronavirus pandemic. With the arrival of COVID-19 came many challenges and changes in the economy and everyday life throughout the SGRCEDD region, Georgia, and the United States. Georgia's statewide shelter-in-place order issued in April 2020 brought with it closures of schools, colleges, businesses, and many local governments. There were mass layoffs throughout the region, school students were suddenly faced with the challenge of online learning, the unemployed were desperately searching for resources, and many hospitals were at a maximum capacity treating those struck ill by the coronavirus.

As offices and retail spaces were shutting down around the country, it became clear that some industries do not stop. This realization coined the term, "essential worker". While workers and staff throughout the United States sheltered-in-place, essential workers did not face any employment interruption. These critical sectors remained operational in order to preserve health, safety, and to keep America going.

Southern Georgia is beginning to recover with more and more businesses reopening and attempting to restaff. However, many businesses are finding it difficult to fill all of the available positions. Some attribute this worker shortage to increased unemployed benefits, while others cite childcare issues or concerns about contracting COVID as a deterrent to employment - perhaps it is a combination. Additionally, many sectors are facing supply chain interruptions and even shortages. The adverse effects of the pandemic are still present in the SGRC region, while the long-term economic impacts of the pandemic remain unknown.

Many of the eighteen counties in the SGRC region have areas that experience persistent economic distress and unemployment. In fact, because nine of the EDD's 18 counties have maintained poverty rates of 20% or more for the past 30 years, they are designated as persistent poverty counties. Although unemployment in the EDD is comparable to Georgia and the United States, there are notable disparities in unemployment rate by race and ethnicity. In the SGRC region, the Hispanic population faces an unemployment rate two percentage points higher than that of the white population while the Black population faces an unemployment rate nearly double that of the white population.

Barriers to economic prosperity in Southern Georgia are numerous. Efforts must be made to reverse negative trends and to move the region forward. The Southern Georgia CEDS emphasizes strategic approaches based on regional visioning and goal setting. Stakeholders will be able to use this CEDS as a guide to understanding the regional economy, thus empowering them to take action to improve it through regional initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable economic development.

## **Education and Workforce**

The Southern Georgia Region's workforce is a geographically large workforce area with diverse industry sectors. The top five (5) industry sectors with the highest employment and total demand are Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Accommodations and Food Services, and Transportation and Warehousing. The region has a civilian labor force of 175,959 with a participation rate of 54.8%. The majority of employment opportunities can be found in five of the eighteen counties, including Lowndes, Ware, Coffee, Tift, and Charlton.

For many of the occupations projected to show the greatest growth in the coming years, advanced degrees and specialized training are not required. For example, retail salespersons, first line supervisors of retail sales workers, stockers, and order fillers typically require only a brief training period and do not require higher-level qualifications. However, some of the occupations that are expected to experience growth in the region in the near future do require advanced degrees and/or special training, for example: heavy and tractor trailer truck drives, registered nurses, and licensed practical nurses.

The Southern Georgia Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) envisions the local one-stop workforce development system as the mechanism to promote, encourage, and coordinate the development of a well-trained labor force with skills to not only meet the needs of the area's current employers, but also to attract new business and industry to the area. It is crucial to continued economic resilience and prosperity that the region continues to develop a diverse set of industry sectors that provide living wage jobs.

Workforce Development through education and training is a critical need for economic development in Southern Georgia. Statistics show that a high poverty, low diversity region can turn away both potential employers and a potential workforce. Low literacy and educational attainment can cripple attempts at industry diversification towards high skill/high wage job growth. If higher paying industries are to be recruited to the region, then higher skilled employees must be trained and made available. Education and training are recognized as critical needs. Fortunately, there are a number of regionally significant institutions that are making a difference in the lives of many uneducated and/or untrained worker in the region. They are listed on the following page.

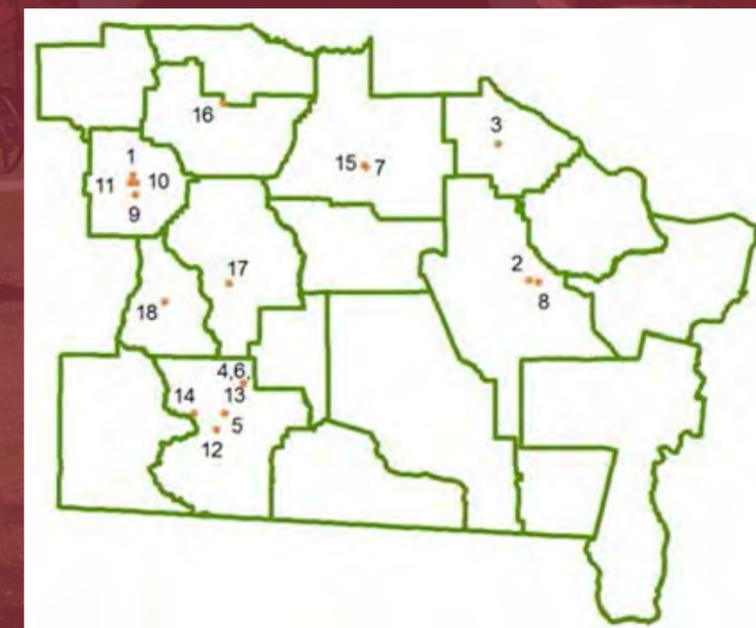
The Southern Georgia Area WDB will continue working with these educational institutions to ensure individuals have access to a variety of in-demand training programs to meet the specific needs of the region and create well-paying, quality jobs. The strong partnerships have set the stage for future progress.



# Colleges and Universities

**The Southern Georgia region is home to the following colleges and universities:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College              | 10. Troy University Tifton Campus       |
| 2. Coastal Pines Technical College (TC)              | 11. University of Georgia Tifton Campus |
| 3. Coastal Pines TC Alma Campus                      | 12. Valdosta State University           |
| 4. Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Moody Campus | 13. Webster University Moody Campus     |
| 5. Georgia Military College                          | 14. Wiregrass Technical College         |
| 6. Park University Moody Campus                      | 15. Wiregrass TC Douglas Campus         |
| 7. South Georgia State College                       | 16. Wiregrass TC Fitzgerald Campus      |
| 8. South Georgia State College Waycross Campus       | 17. Wiregrass TC Nashville Campus       |
| 9. Southern Regional Technical College Tifton Campus | 18. Wiregrass TC Sparks Campus          |

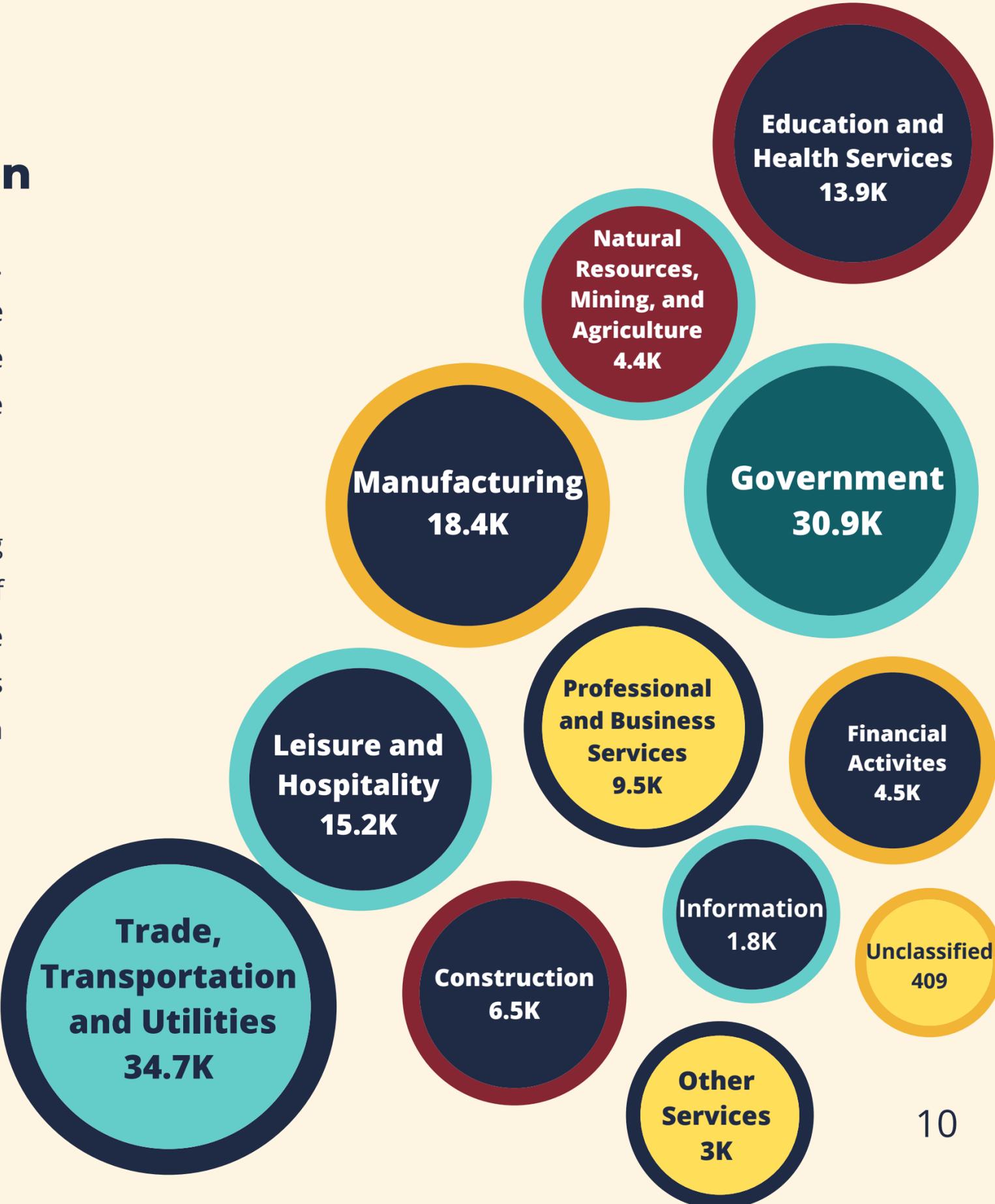


# Top Industry Concentrations

## Based on Average Employment in the Region

A cluster is a regional concentration of related industries in a particular location. Clusters are a striking feature of economies, making regions uniquely competitive for jobs and private investment. They consist of companies, suppliers, and service providers, as well as government agencies and other institutions that provide specialized training and education, information, research, and technical support.

Locating and analyzing the region's economic clusters was crucial to developing the strategic focus areas, and, therefore, the region's CEDS. The wide array of economic clusters in the 18-county Southern Georgia EDD region illustrates the diversity of the district's economy, and a critical component of the region's economic resilience. Currently, there are 15 strongly traded clusters in Southern Georgia.



# Economic Resiliency



# Economic Resiliency

The weight of the global pandemic has brought serious challenges to the Southern Georgia EDD and its economy. Rural small businesses were still rebounding from the Great Recession, and entered the COVID-19 crises with compounding, preexisting vulnerabilities.

The negative effects of the pandemic included:

- business closures,
- rural hospitals struggling to meet demand for healthcare,
- students with limited broadband experiencing educational gaps because of inability to participate in online education,
- hospitality industry decimated,
- supply chain disruptions, and
- mass layoffs throughout the region.

As COVID-19 tests the resilience of rural economies, their ability to remain places where people want to live and work is at a higher risk. Barriers to economic prosperity in Southern Georgia include poverty, infrastructure, economic exclusion, and limited resources.

The SGRC region will focus on understanding, sustaining, and investing in strategies that foster economic growth.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) defines economic resilience with the following Regional economic prosperity is linked to the area's ability to prevent, withstand, and quickly recover from disruptions to its economic base.

According to the Economic Development Administration, in order to build economic resilience, regions should focus on both steady - state and responsive initiatives with the following two-pronged approach <sup>1</sup>:

*1) Planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region **(steady-state)**, and*

*2) Establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges **(responsive)**.*

The Southern Georgia region has narrowed its focus to the following initiatives, developed from the two-pronged approach:

1. <http://www.eda.gov/ceds/content/economic-resilience.htm>

## Steady-State Initiatives:

- Engaging in comprehensive planning efforts that involve extensive participation from the community to define and implement a collective vision for resilience that includes the integration and/or alignment of other planning efforts
- Undertaking initiatives to broaden the industrial base by identifying emerging clusters that build on the region's SWOT
- Constructing and developing a resilient workforce that adapts to a shifting economy
- Maintaining geographic information systems (GIS) that link with business establishment data bases to track regional and local "churns."

## Responsive Initiatives:

- Conducting pre-disaster recovery planning to define key responsibilities and actions
- Establishing regular communication of business community needs and issues through the SGRC Economic Development Professionals Advisory Committee
- Establishing strong leadership succession plans
- Further developing broadband through the use of small cells for reliable communication

In August 2020, the SGRC received Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for the purpose of assisting the region with pandemic recovery and increasing resilience. With this funding, the SGRC worked directly with communities to assess the region's needs and to devise a strategy to meet those needs through coordination, partnerships, and leveraged resources.

The result of those efforts is the development of the Southern Georgia Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan which identifies methods to strengthen economic resilience. The Plan can be viewed in its entirety here:

<https://www.sgrc.us/community-and-economic-development.html>



Atkinson - Bacon - Ben Hill - Berrien  
Brantley - Brooks - Charlton - Clinch - Coffee  
Cook - Echols - Irwin - Lanier - Lowndes  
Pierce - Tift - Turner - Ware Counties





# CEDS Process Overview

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed to be an inclusive, strategy driven planning process that defines a regional vision for economic growth and resilience and identifies local priorities for future investment.

A goal of this CEDS is to identify where investment can be made to further diversify the region's economic base. Creating local businesses and industries will result in stronger local economies and therefore, economically resilient regions.

The 2022-2026 Southern Georgia CEDS report is a strategic five-year plan that assesses current status, and identifies resources and services that support regional economic stability and prosperity.

The issues of economic resilience and equitable access to jobs and other opportunities are integral to the Region's economy.

# CEDS Planning & Implementation



In April 2022, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission kicked off the CEDS planning and implementation process by emailing a survey to members of the CEDS Strategy Committee and local government officials. In addition, the survey was promoted via the SGRC's Facebook page.

The SGRC held CEDS Strategy Committee workshops in May and June, and consulted with members of the Workforce Development Board during its June meeting.



Data collected from the surveys, input from the CEDS Strategy Committee, and the SWOT Analysis, identified four Strategic Focus Areas to support regional economic resilience:

- State of the Regional Economy
- Transportation, Community Facilities, Infrastructure, and Broadband
- Education and Workforce Development
- Population and Housing

The Strategic Focus Areas served as the basis for the SWOT Analysis, Action Plan, and creation of the CEDS Vision Statement.



# Strategic Focus Areas

1. State of the Regional Economy

2. Transportation, Community Facilities,  
Infrastructure and Broadband

3. Education and Workforce  
Development

4. Population and Housing





# SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis of the regional economy should answer the question, “Where are we now?” by using the relevant data and background information to help identify the critical internal and external factors that speak to the region’s unique assets and competitive positioning. The SWOT is a strategic planning tool used by organizations to ensure that there is a clear objective informed by a comprehensive understanding of a region’s capabilities and capacity. A SWOT analysis identifies the region’s competitive advantages—those indigenous assets that make the region special or competitive in the national and global economies—juxtaposed against those internal or external factors that can keep a region from realizing its potential.

Determining and analyzing what the region already possesses that could be leveraged better to build the capacity for growth, including competitive cultural, economic, technological, intellectual and physical assets, is critical to developing the strategic direction and implementation plan to promote regional economic vitality. Leveraging assets refers to using the activities and engagement of business, government leaders and other stakeholders to maximize the economic potential of a region. In addition, the SWOT analysis should consider economic resiliency. Specifically, what factors and/or elements are in place (or need to be put in place) to ensure the long-term success, viability, and durability of the regional economy?

# State of the Regional Economy

## Strengths

- Land Availability for New Growth
- Existing Manufacturing
- Transportation Corridors
- Agriculture/Agribusiness
- Timber Industry
- Cost of Living
- Natural Resources
- Climate
- Proximity to Florida
- Trained and Qualified Workforce
- Regionalism
- PP Collaboration
- Tourism
- Low State Income Tax

## Weaknesses

- Aging & Undersized Infrastructure
- Lack of Funding for Economic Development
- Underdeveloped Industrial Parks
- Lack of Regional Collaboration
- Lack of Leadership & Lack of Understanding in Leadership
- Lack of Funding for Industrial Parks
- Revitalization of Downtowns
- Lack of Value-Added Agriculture
- Dysfunctional City/County Boundaries
- No Money for Industrial Recruiting
- Lack of Available Product
- Lack of Workforce Population
- Low Labor Force Participation
- Unskilled Workforce

## Opportunities

- Growth Toward Rail
- Highschool Industrial Education
- Leadership Development Designed to Incite New Leadership
- Tax Credits/Business Incentives for Entrepreneurs
- Projects Focused on Responsible Sustainability
- Value Added Agriculture
- Tourism Development
- Tax Credits/State Rural Incentives
- Downtown Revitalization
- Film Industry
- Natural Resources
- Low Cost of Living
- Job Tax Credit

## Threats

- Population Loss
- Commercial Blight
- Low Labor Force Participation Rates
- Poor City & County Relationships
- Internet Sales Depleting Local Retail
- Low Minimum Wage
- Lack of Leadership
- National Economy
- Threats to Rural Healthcare
- Homelessness
- Trickle Down Entitlements
- Lack of Jobs for College Graduates
- Lack of Focus from State
- Rising Cost of Healthcare
- Ignoring Community Weaknesses
- Unfunded State & Federal Mandates
- Lack of Workforce Housing

# Transportation, Community Facilities, Infrastructure, & Broadband

## Strengths

- Transportation Corridors
- Proximity to I-95, I-75, I-10, Ports, Major Markets & Regional Airports
- Georgia Ports
- Rails
- Private Partnerships for Transportation
- Condition of Roadways
- Electric
- T-SPLOST/TIA
- Water
- Improvements to Broadband
- Tech Schools CDL Programs
- CDBG Accessibility for Infrastructure

## Weaknesses

- Aging & Deteriorating Water & Sewer Infrastructure
- Resistance of Rail Lines to Allow for Growth
- Overpasses for Vehicles Over Railroad Tracks
- Inadequate Transportation Corridors Between I-75 & I-95
- Lack of Reliable Broadband & Cell Service
- Lack of Natural Gas Capacity
- Workforce Attitude
- Passing Lanes on 2 Lane Highways
- Leadership
- EV Charging Stations
- Affordable Housing
- Involvement of School System

## Opportunities

- EMC Incentives for Broadband
- Affordable, Working Class Housing
- Water & Sewer Upgrades
- Extension of Natural Gas Service
- Upgrades to Local Meeting Venues in Need of Repair
- Cost of Utilities
- Broadband-Starlink
- Workforce
- Public Transportation
- Career Academies
- Healthcare
- Industrial Parks Infrastructure Upgrades
- Leadership
- Cheerleading Chamber of Commerce as Promoter
- Expansion of Rail
- Quality Affordable Childcare
- Need for Transportation Workforce

## Threats

- Low Labor Force Participation Rates
- Affordable Housing
- Lack of Market Rate Housing
- Lack of Reliable Broadband & Cell Service
- Lack of Natural Gas Capacity
- High School Students not Trained for Employment in Existing Industries
- Struggling Rural Hospitals
- 4-Laning Highways, Bypassing Small Towns
- Lack of Public Transportation
- Leadership
- Low Population Numbers
- Hospitals
- Regional Collaboration

# Education & Workforce Development

## Strengths

- Strong Network of Technical Colleges
- Southern GA Regional Commission Knowledge
- Targeted Training for Demand Occupations
- Cohesiveness Between Technical Colleges & Service Providers
- Clusters and Pathways
- Quickstart for New Industries
- Relationship between K-12 & Technical Colleges
- Financial Assistance Opportunities
- Workforce Savvy Chamber of Commerce
- Apprenticeships

## Weaknesses

- Politics
- Large Section of Population not Entering the Workforce
- High School Dropout Rate
- Lack of Quality Workforce to Attract New Businesses
- 2 Georgias-Atlanta vs Rest of the State
- Mismatch of Skills Needed & Skills Available in Existing Workforce
- Skillset of New Generation of Workers Entering the Workforce
- Transportation
- Low Wages
- Childcare
- Failure to Pass Drug Test
- Turf Guarding
- Turnover Rates
- Workforce Emigration
- Lack of Focus on Manufacturing

## Opportunities

- High School Industrial Education
- Market Local Jobs in Schools- Incentivize Educated to Stay Local
- Apprenticeships, Internships, & Mentor Relations with Industries
- Increase Collaboration on Trade-Based Curriculum in Schools
- New Strategies for Economic Development
- Attract More Tech Jobs
- HOPE Career Grant
- Regional Collaboration for Costly Programs like STEM
- Marketing of Technical Colleges
- Early Childhood Education & Learning Centers
- Prepare Workforce to Assume High Skill Jobs
- Diversify Job Opportunities
- Leadership
- Dual Enrollment

## Threats

- Lack of Quality Workforce to Attract New Businesses
- Failure to Understand what Workforce Skills the Economy of the Future will Require
- Low Wages
- Workforce Emigration
- Lack of Turnover in Elected Positions
- Qualified Leadership
- Drugs, Mental Health & Incarceration
- Losing Graduates to Larger Areas
- Difficulty Attracting Students into Manufacturing
- Lack of Access to Technical College Programs
- Personal Financial Skills
- Lack of Tourism and Recreational Opportunities
- Lack of Effective Academic Remediation Plans
- Perception of Lack of Opportunities
- Lack of Qualified Workforce
- Resistance to Change in Education
- Transportation

# Population & Housing

## Strengths

- Retiree Attraction
- Wide Open Spaces, Small Communities with Caring People
- Short Commute Times
- Utilities
- Cost of Land
- Roads
- Availability of Service Infrastructure
- Growth
- New Construction
- Low Cost of Development
- Lower than Average Housing Costs

## Weaknesses

- Losing Population
- Losing Educated, but Retaining HS Dropouts
- Decline in Housing Stock
- Need Higher Quality, Affordable Rental Housing to Deter Dilapidated Rental Housing
- Aging Population
- Need More Affordable Housing/Starter Homes
- Lack of Codes and Code Enforcement
- Lack of Rural Healthcare, Affordability
- Low Average Wage, High Housing Cost
- Low Census Count
- Blight

## Opportunities

- Creating Functional/Unique Neighborhoods
- Educating Students at an Early Age about Local Workforce Opportunities
- Ease of Life, Low Traffic, Safe Communities
- Cost of Living
- Rehabilitation of Dilapidated Housing Close to Downtown Areas
- Expand Code Enforcement, Especially in Downtown Areas
- Implement Consistent Zoning
- More Housing
- Attractions for Young People
- Relationship with Housing Authority
- Funding Opportunities for Dealing with Blight
- Mixed Use Downtown
- Develop Partnership Opportunities

## Threats

- Uneducated Workforce
- Lack of Soft Job Skill Training
- Conversion of Usable Agriculture Property into Solar Farms
- Lack of Low Cost, Quality Housing
- Conversion of Usable Agriculture Property into Subdivisions
- Lack of Collaboration Between Local & Regional Govts
- Emigration of Educated Young Adults
- Lack of Code Enforcement
- Drugs
- Rental Rates
- Homelessness
- Lack of Recreation
- Poorly Constructed Housing

# Strategic Focus Area # 1

## State of the Regional Economy

GOALS
Create regional groups (authorities) to take ownership of existing, underdeveloped industrial parks to build out infrastructure for industry
Implement programs to foster entrepreneurship growth
Recruit/encourage value-added food processing (agribusiness)
Infrastructure Assessment
Fully filled positions
Land availability for new growth

ACTION PLAN
Identify existing industrial parks that could be considered regional, then identify a funding source for infrastructure and ongoing maintenance. Community collaboration or MOU for revenue sharing.
Teach value of entrepreneurship at primary and elementary levels. Have communities develop entrepreneurial strategies of identifying assets. Connect with community network.
Identify commodities for value added products. Develop product infrastructure for food processing. Partner with agriculture community.
Analyze infrastructure age, capacity, and availability.
Look for resources and funding. Improve infrastructure. Education of leaders.
Identify 3 to 5 regional megasites.

# Strategic Focus Area # 2

## Transportation, Community Facilities, Infrastructure, and Broadband

### GOALS

Expand Natural Gas Service

Develop more family event venues

Pass T-SPLOST (TIA-2)

EV Station

Create better connectivity between I-75 and I-95

Provide broadband to all unserved and underserved people throughout the region

### ACTION PLAN

Pursue funding to improve existing infrastructure.

Work with GDECD tourism to develop regional strategy for local community venues to attract tourism dollars.

Submit regionally significant transportation projects.

Expand the network of charging stations in our region.

Widen corridors that have a positive regional impact.

Pursue funding to increase broadband availability.

# Strategic Focus Area # 3

## Education and Workforce Development

### GOALS

Start Career Education earlier in school system

Strong, official partnership between school system, technical college, & industries for discussion of skills in demand and for future

Increase labor force participation rate

Improve the quality of the workforce

Increase accessibility to high-demand technical curriculum and programs

### ACTION PLAN

Recruit high school graduates for jobs with local industries. Educate middle school students about the importance of careers in home community.

Identify responsible agency for facilitating and holding accountable the partnership. Incentivize industry participation.

Better skills training.

Target skills training to meet business and industry needs.

Expand high-demand career education on high school and technical college campuses.

## Population and Housing

<b>GOALS</b>
Regional Housing Studies and Cooperation
Regional Recruitment
Increase Housing Stock
Negative mindset concerning multi-family affordable housing
Limited access to affordable, workforce housing

<b>ACTION PLAN</b>
Determine where the commuters are traveling from and whether or not there is a demand.
Better marketing of regional assets and amenities. Pool resources between the communities.
Pursue funding for housing rehabilitation, reconstruction, and demolition in declining neighborhoods and enforce code enforcement.
Educate the public about the benefits of multi-family affordable housing.
Identify barriers to the development of affordable housing.

# Evaluation Framework

Performance measures will be used to evaluate the implementation of the CED's four Strategic Focus Areas. The evaluation frameworks on the following pages will be used to assess how the region is performing and what needs to be improved.

## 1. State of the Regional Economy

Promote economic development strategies that encourage entrepreneurship, support existing industries, attract new employers, and stimulate tourism.

## 2. Transportation, Community Facilities, Infrastructure and Broadband

Protect, expand, and enhance critical infrastructure and connectivity for existing and future community growth.

## 3. Education and Workforce Development

Facilitate growth and development of an educated, skilled, prepared workforce by utilizing available programs and resources.

## 4. Population and Housing

Create an inviting sense of place through rural renewal and other strategies in order to retain population, and to attract new members to our community.



# Strategic Focus Area 1: Performance Measures

## Metrics:

- Revenue growth for key industries
- Number of businesses and entrepreneurs receiving services from community colleges and workforce development programs
- Number of new entrepreneurs/businesses
- Volume of small business lending and private investment



# Strategic Focus Area 2: Performance Measures

## Metrics:

- Volume of water and sewer capacity
- Number of grants funded for local infrastructure improvements
- Number of new businesses and industries recruited to the region
- Number of communities with broadband access



# Strategic Focus Area 3: Performance Measures

## Metrics:

- Number of jobs created/retained after implementation of the CEDS
- Number of industry recognized certificates issued for specific training programs
- Number of students in career and technical education programs that are linked to in-demand jobs
- Number of workers trained, placed, or otherwise impacted by workforce sector initiatives



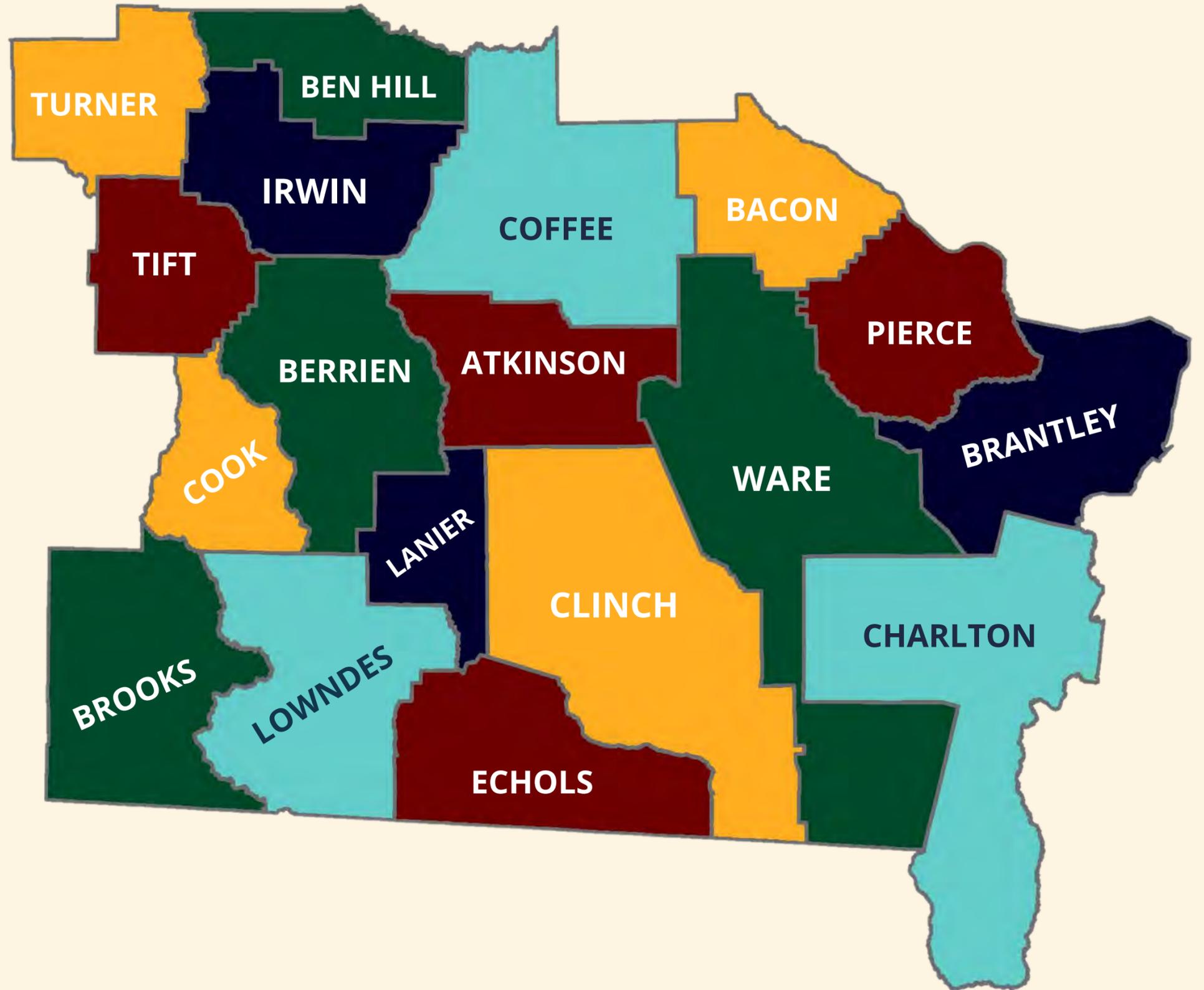
# Strategic Focus Area 4: Performance Measures

## Metrics:

- Number of Main Street Communities
- Number of Code Enforcement violations issued
- Resources available to aging population
- Population demographics
- Number of grants awarded for housing rehabilitation

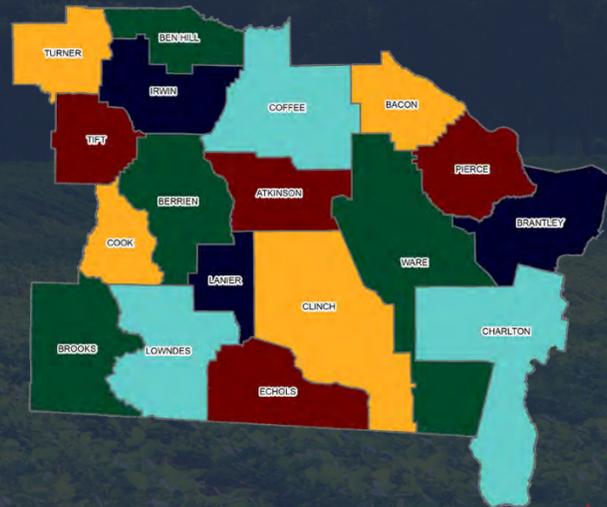


Regional  
Data Pages



# Regional

Atkinson - Bacon - Ben Hill - Berrien  
Brantley - Brooks - Charlton - Clinch  
Coffee - Cook - Echols - Irwin  
Lanier - Lowndes - Pierce - Tift  
Turner - Ware Counties



2010 Census: 406,586  
2020 Census: 413,869

Population Percentage  
Increase 1.79%



Male - 49.6%  
Female - 50.4%  
Age 65+ - 62,023  
Under 18 - 99,585  
Median Age - 38.4  
Minority - 28.3%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$93,300  
Occupied Housing Units 151,566  
Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.2%  
Rental Vacancy Rate 5.1%  
  
% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 7.5%

## Economic



Median Household Income \$39,632  
Per Capita Income \$21,050  
Per Capita Living Wage  
\$31,927  
% of People Below Poverty Level 24.0%



## Top 5 Industries

Health Care & Social Assistance  
Manufacturing  
Retail Trade  
Educational Services  
Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Food Insecurity Rate



Region - 15.0%  
Georgia - 10.9%  
National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Chaparral Boats, Inc.  
Coffee Regional Medical Center, Inc.  
Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.  
OASIS OutSourcing V, Inc.  
Pilgrim's Pride Corporation

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022



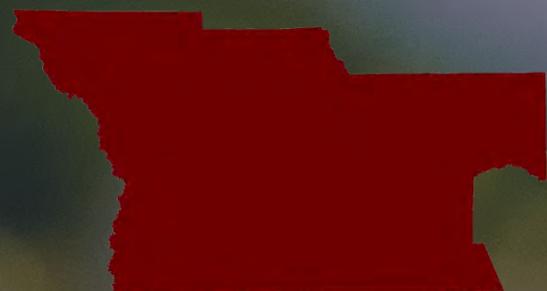
Georgia 2.9%  
173,890 Unemployed  
U.S. 3.8%

1. US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3. [www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Atkinson County

Founded 1917

County Seat: Pearson



2010 Census: 8,375

2020 Census: 8,311



Population Percentage  
Decrease -.076%



Male - 49.8%

Female - 50.2%

Age 65+ - 1,075

Under 18 - 2,223

Median Age - 35.9

Minority - 24.9%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$63,400

Occupied Housing Units 2,953

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.2%

Rental Vacancy Rate 3.8%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 5.0%



## Economic

Median Household Income \$35,703

Per Capita Income \$20,887

Per Capita Living Wage

\$31,025

% of People Below Poverty Level 28.2%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Atkinson - 14.9%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Cady Bag Company, LLC

Core & Main

Elite Cargo Trailers, LLC

First String Space, Inc.

Freedom Trailers, LLC

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Manufacturing

Retail Trade

Transportation & Warehousing

Public Administration

Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022

Current 2.7%

123 Unemployed

Georgia 2.9%

U. S. 3.8%

1. US Census Bureau, 2020 Census
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data
3. www.livingwage.mit.edu
4. www.feedingamerica.org
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Bacon County

Founded 1917

County Seat: Alma



2010 Census: 11,096

2020 Census: 11,140



Population Percentage Increase .40%



Male - 49.1%

Female - 50.9%

Age 65+ - 1,738

Under 18 - 2,847

Median Age - 36.5

Minority - 18.8%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$82,300  
Occupied Housing Units 3,743  
Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.2%  
Rental Vacancy Rate 6.3%

% of Housing Units that are Transportation Disadvantaged 7.7%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Bacon - 16.2%  
Georgia - 10.9%  
National - 11.8%



## Economic

Median Household Income \$36,692  
Per Capita Income \$19,882  
Per Capita Living Wage \$31,979

% of People Below Poverty Level 26.1%



## Top 5 Employers

Alma Telephone Co, Inc.  
Bacon County Hospital  
Beach Timber Company, Inc.  
Boatright Trucking, Inc.  
D L Lee & Sons, Inc.

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

Manufacturing  
Health Care & Social Assistance  
Retail Trade  
Agriculture, Forestry,  
Fishing, & Hunting  
Public Administration



## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022

Current 2.9%  
136 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Ben Hill County

Founded 1906

County Seat: Fitzgerald

2010 Census: 17,634

2020 Census: 16,889

Population Percentage  
Decrease -4.22%

Male - 48.7%

Female - 51.3%

Age 65+ - 2,893

Under 18 - 4,196

Median Age - 39.5

Minority - 40.6%



## Housing

Median Home Value 85,500  
Occupied Housing Units 6,612  
Homeowner Vacancy Rate 4.6%  
Rental Vacancy Rate 4.0%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 9.5%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Ben Hill - 17.2%  
Georgia - 10.9%  
National - 11.8%



## Economic

Median Household Income \$32,077  
Per Capita Income \$18,241  
Per Capita Living Wage \$31,979

% of People Below Poverty Level 29.1%



## Top 5 Employers

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

American Blanching Company, Inc.  
Covered Wagon Trailers, LLC  
Dorminy Medical Center  
Gilman Building Products  
Labor Finders

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Manufacturing  
Retail Trade  
Administrative & Support and  
Waste Mgmt.  
Health Care & Social Services  
Public Administration

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022

Current 4.6%  
253 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Berrien County

Founded 1856

County Seat: Nashville



2010 Census: 19,286

2020 Census: 19,206

Population Percentage  
Decrease -0.41%



Male - 48.9%

Female - 51.1%

Age 65+ - 3,447

Under 18 - 4,633

Median Age - 39.8

Minority - 13.8%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$95,200

Occupied Housing Units 7,391

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 0.7%

Rental Vacancy Rate 7.4%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 6.0%

## Economic

Median Household Income \$42,089

Per Capita Income \$20,545

Per Capita Living Wage

\$31,122

% of People Below Poverty Level 22.6%



## Top 5 Industries

Manufacturing

Retail Trade

Public Administration

Health Care & Social Assistance

Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Food Insecurity Rate



Berrien- 16.3%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Atlas Manufacturing, Inc.

Berrien Nursing Center

Chaparral Boats, Inc.

Coyote MFG, Co.

Dollar General

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022



Current 3.1%  
234 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Brantley County

Founded 1920

County Seat: Nahunta



2010 Census: 18,411

2020 Census: 18,924

Population Percentage Increase 2.79%



Male - 49.9%

Female - 50.1%

Age 65+ - 3,101

Under 18 - 4,556

Median Age - 40.8

Minority - 6.1%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$92,800

Occupied Housing Units 6,763

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 0.7%

Rental Vacancy Rate 0.5%

% of Housing Units that are Transportation Disadvantaged 3.6%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Brantley - 14.6%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%

## Economic

Median Household Income \$34,679

Per Capita Income \$18,883

Per Capita Living Wage

\$34,129

% of People Below Poverty Level 18.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Bayview Nursing Home, LLC Brantley

Telephone Co Inc.

Cal Maine Foods, Inc.

Friendly Express

Okefenokee Rural Elec Membership, Co.

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Retail Trade

Construction

Wholesale Trade

Public Administration

Manufacturing

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022

Current 3.2%  
236 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1. US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3. www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4. www.feedingamerica.org  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Brooks County

Founded 1858

County Seat: Quitman



2010 Census: 16,243

2020 Census: 15,548



Population Percentage  
Decrease -4.28%



Male - 48.3%

Female - 51.7%

Age 65+ - 2,972

Under 18 - 3,428

Median Age - 43.6

Minority - 40.2%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$94,200  
Occupied Housing Units 6,392  
Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.9%  
Rental Vacancy Rate 4.5%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 5.2%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Brooks - 14.0%  
Georgia - 10.9%  
National - 11.8%

## Economic



Median Household Income \$37,516  
Per Capita Income \$26,115  
Per Capita Living Wage  
\$32,642

% of People Below Poverty Level 22.9%



## Top 5 Employers

AG-Pro, LLC  
Brooksco Dairy LLC  
Crown Health Care Laundry Services  
Eyesouth Partners  
Fellowship Home At Brookside

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Agriculture, Forestry,  
Fishing, & Hunting  
Health Care & Social Assistance  
Retail Trade  
Public Administration  
Manufacturing

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022

Current 2.9%  
194 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Charlton County

Founded 1854

County Seat: Folkston



2010 Census: 12,171

2020 Census: 13,032

Population Percentage  
Increase 7.07%



Male - 58.4%

Female - 41.6%

Age 65+ - 2,064

Under 18 - 2,441

Median Age - 40.5

Minority - 31.0%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$87,200

Occupied Housing Units 3,826

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 0.9%

Rental Vacancy Rate 8.3%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 6.7%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Charlton - 14.9%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%

## Economic

Median Household Income \$42,743

Per Capita Income \$19,228

Per Capita Living Wage

\$31,979

% of People Below Poverty Level 23.2%



## Top 5 Employers

AJM Packaging Corporation

Big John Trailers, Inc.

Geo Corrections & Detention, Inc.

Grand Prairie Healthcare Services, P.C.

H & R Block

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Manufacturing

Administrative & Support and

Waste Mgmt.

Retail Trade

Accommodation & Food Service

Public Administration

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022

Current 2.8%  
137 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Clinch County

Founded 1850

County Seat: Homerville



2010 Census: 6,798

2020 Census: 6,648

Population Percentage  
Decrease - 2.21%



Male - 50.2%

Female - 49.8%

Age 65+ - 1,002

Under 18 - 1,696

Median Age - 38.8

Minority - 31.2%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$71,800

Occupied Housing Units 2,387

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.4%

Rental Vacancy Rate 10.9%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 8.1%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Clinch - 16.1%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Economic

Median Household Income \$38,844

Per Capita Income \$17,539

Per Capita Living Wage  
\$31,332

% of People Below Poverty Level 29.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Bway Corporation, Inc.

Conner Holdings, LLC

Dupont Pine Products, LLC

Great American Cobbler Company

Homerville Grocery, LLC

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Manufacturing

Health Care & Social Assistance

Retail Trade

Administrative & Support  
& Waste Mgmt.

Agriculture, Forestry,  
Fishing, & Hunting

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022

Current 3.0%  
91 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Coffee County

Founded 1854

County Seat: Douglas



2010 Census: 42,356

2020 Census: 43,070

Population Percentage Increase 1.69%



Male - 51.1%

Female - 48.9%

Age 65+ - 6,040

Under 18 - 10,548

Median Age - 36.9

Minority - 32.2%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$106,400

Occupied Housing Units 14,832

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.0%

Rental Vacancy Rate 2.9%

% of Housing Units that are Transportation Disadvantaged 7.3%

## Economic

Median Household Income \$42,526

Per Capita Income \$20,659

Per Capita Living Wage

\$31,979

% of People Below Poverty Level 20.4%



## Top 5 Industries

Manufacturing

Retail Trade

Health Care & Social Assistance

Transportation & Warehousing

Educational Services

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Food Insecurity Rate



Coffee - 14.2%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Coffee Regional Medical Center, Inc.

Elixir Door & Metals Company

Elixir Extrusions, LLC

Fleetwood Homes, Inc.

OASIS OutSourcing V, Inc.

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022



Current 3.9%  
708 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Cook County

Founded 1918

County Seat: Adel



2010 Census: 17,212

2020 Census: 17,217

Population Percentage Increase 0.03%



Male - 48.3%

Female - 51.7%

Age 65+ - 2,771

Under 18 - 4,383

Median Age - 37.5

Minority - 29.3%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$93,400

Occupied Housing Units 6,202

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 0.8%

Rental Vacancy Rate 6.5%

% of Housing Units that are Transportation Disadvantaged 7.2%



## Economic

Median Household Income \$40,943

Per Capita Income \$20,769

Per Capita Living Wage \$31,591

% of People Below Poverty Level 21.0%



## Top 5 Employers

Basf Corporation

Cardinal Glass Industries, Inc.

Hornet Steel Buildings, Inc.

J-M Manufacturing Co, Inc.

Metal Concepts, LLC

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Retail Trade

Manufacturing

Health Care & Social Assistance

Accommodation & Food Services

Public Administration

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022

Current 2.9%  
269 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Echols County

Founded 1858

County Seat: Statenville



2010 Census: 4,034

2020 Census: 3,944

Population Percentage  
Decrease - 2.23%



Male - 45.0%

Female - 55.0%

Age 65+ - 536

Under 18 - 946

Median Age - 40.3

Minority - 22.4%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$76,000  
Occupied Housing Units 1,497  
Homeowner Vacancy Rate 0.0%  
Rental Vacancy Rate 8.3%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 2.7%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Echols - 13.9%  
Georgia - 10.9%  
National - 11.8%



## Economic

Median Household Income \$44,454  
Per Capita Income \$23,768  
Per Capita Living Wage \$32,642

% of People Below Poverty Level 23.5%



## Top 5 Employers

Coggins Farm Supply Georgia, LLC  
Corbett Brothers Farms, LLC  
Corbett Electrical Construction, Inc.  
Grimmway Enterprises, Inc.  
KMA Employee Leasing, Inc.

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Agriculture, Forestry,  
Fishing, & Hunting  
Construction  
Wholesale Trade  
Transportation & Warehousing  
Retail Trade

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Unemployment Rate As of July, 2022

Current 2.2%  
42 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1. US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3. www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4. www.feedingamerica.org  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Irwin County

Founded 1818

County Seat: Ocilla



2010 Census: 9,538

2020 Census: 9,379

Population Percentage  
Decrease -1.67%



Male - 53.9%

Female - 46.1%

Age 65+ - 1,801

Under 18 - 1,995

Median Age - 39.7

Minority - 29.8%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$83,200  
Occupied Housing Units 3,477  
Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.7%  
Rental Vacancy Rate 3.0%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 7.3%

## Economic



Median Household Income \$41,484  
Per Capita Income \$21,123  
Per Capita Living Wage  
\$31,332

% of People Below Poverty Level 22.1%



## Top 5 Industries

Health Care & Social Assistance  
Retail Trade  
Public Administration  
Agriculture, Forestry,  
Fishing, & Hunting  
Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Food Insecurity Rate



Irwin - 14.3%  
Georgia - 10.9%  
National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Forest River, Inc.  
Fuller's Place, Inc.  
Harvey's

Irwin Electric Membership Corp  
Lasalle Corrections

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022



Current 4.2%  
148 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Department of Labor Market Explorer

# Lanier County

Founded 1920

County Seat: Lakeland



2010 Census: 10,078

2020 Census: 10,534

Population Percentage  
Increase 4.52%



Male - 46.6%

Female - 53.4%

Age 65+ - 1,373

Under 18 - 2,357

Median Age - 37.0

Minority - 24.9%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$117,800

Occupied Housing Units 3,825

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.0%

Rental Vacancy Rate 6.7%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 10.4%

## Economic

Median Household Income \$32,158

Per Capita Income \$18,788

Per Capita Living Wage

\$32,642

% of People Below Poverty Level 28.6%



## Top 5 Employers

Affinity Building Systems, LLC

Biscuits And Burgers

Browns Bread & Butter I, LLC

Connell Cabinets & Millworks, Inc.

Farmers & Merchants Bank

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Health Care & Social Assistance

Public Administration

Accommodation & Food Services

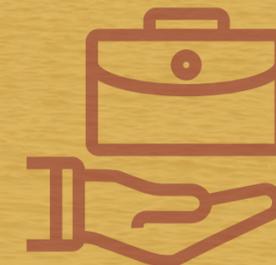
Retail Trade

Manufacturing

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022



Current 3.0%  
114 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1. US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3. www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4. www.feedingamerica.org  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Lowndes County

Founded 1825

County Seat: Valdosta



2010 Census: 109,233

2020 Census: 116,436

Population Percentage  
Increase 6.59%



Male - 48.5%

Female - 51.5%

Age 65+ - 14,342

Under 18 - 27,948

Median Age - 30.6

Minority - 41.7%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$145,900

Occupied Housing Units 42,755

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 2.4%

Rental Vacancy Rate 9.7%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 9.2%

## Economic

Median Household Income \$46,113

Per Capita Income \$24,580

Per Capita Living Wage

\$32,642

% of People Below Poverty Level 22.7%



## Top 5 Industries

Health Care & Social Assistance

Retail Trade

Accommodation & Food Services

Educational Services

Manufacturing

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Food Insecurity Rate



Lowndes - 14.1%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.

Packaging Corp Of America

Parkwood Development Center

Publix Super Market, Inc.

Teamtemps Personnel Staffing, Inc.

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022



Current 3.1%  
1,551 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.[www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4.[www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Pierce County

Founded 1857

County Seat: Blackshear



2010 Census: 18,758

2020 Census: 19,336

Population Percentage Increase 3.08%



Male - 50.0%

Female - 50.0%

Age 65+ - 3,313

Under 18 - 4,807

Median Age - 39.0

Minority - 13.5%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$101,700

Occupied Housing Units 7,178

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 0.6%

Rental Vacancy Rate 2.5%

**% of Housing Units that are Transportation Disadvantaged 3.8%**



## Food Insecurity Rate

Pierce - 12.4%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Economic

Median Household Income \$48,969

Per Capita Income \$23,832

Per Capita Living Wage

\$31,914

**% of People Below Poverty Level 18.5%**



## Top 5 Employers

**Cal Maine Foods, Inc.**

**Farmers & Builders Supply**

**Gilman Building Products**

**Harborview Pierce, LLC**

**Scott Davis Chip Co, Inc.**

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Retail Trade

Manufacturing

Wholesale Trade

Construction

Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022

**Current 2.5%**  
**214 Unemployed**  
**Georgia 2.9%**  
**U. S. 3.8%**

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.[www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4.[www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Tift County

Founded 1905

County Seat: Tifton



2010 Census: 40,118

2020 Census: 40,590

Population Percentage Increase 1.18%



Male - 48.6%

Female - 51.4%

Age 65+ - 5,989

Under 18 - 10,036

Median Age - 36.1

Minority - 34.0%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$123,000

Occupied Housing Units 14,868

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 0.8%

Rental Vacancy Rate 1.7%

% of Housing Units that are Transportation Disadvantaged 9.0%

## Economic

Median Household Income \$44,827

Per Capita Income \$24,191

Per Capita Living Wage

\$31,332

% of People Below Poverty Level 22.5%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Tift - 13.8%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

American Textile Company

Coca-Cola Bottling Company

Heatcraft, Inc.

Orgill, Inc.

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Top 5 Industries

Health Care & Social Assistance

Retail Trade

Transportation & Warehousing

Accommodation & Food Services

Educational Services

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022



## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022

Current 2.7%  
569 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Turner County

Founded 1905

County Seat: Ashburn



2010 Census: 8,930

2020 Census: 7,920

Population Percentage  
Decrease -11.31%



Male - 46.8%

Female - 53.2%

Age 65+ - 1,501

Under 18 - 1,931

Median Age - 39.7

Minority - 41.1%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$73,600

Occupied Housing Units 3,208

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 0.0%

Rental Vacancy Rate 0.6%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 17.2%

## Economic

Median Household Income \$34,514

Per Capita Income \$19,653

Per Capita Living Wage

\$31,332

% of People Below Poverty Level 29.5%



## Top 5 Industries

Manufacturing

Retail Trade

Public Administration

Wholesale Trade

Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Food Insecurity Rate



Turner- 17.9%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

Ashburn

Carroll's Sausage & Meats, Inc.

Georgia Department of Corrections

Golden Peanut Company

Heritage Healthcare of Ashburn, LLC

## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022



Current 4.1%  
134 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3.www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4.www.feedingamerica.org  
5.Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# Ware County

Founded 1824

County Seat: Waycross



2010 Census: 36,312

2020 Census: 35,745

Population Percentage  
Decrease -1.56%



Male - 50.6%

Female - 49.4%

Age 65+ - 6,065

Under 18 - 8,614

Median Age - 39.3

Minority - 34.2%



## Housing

Median Home Value \$86,800

Occupied Housing Units 13,657

Homeowner Vacancy Rate 0.8%

Rental Vacancy Rate 5.4%

% of Housing Units that are  
Transportation Disadvantaged 8.7%

## Economic

Median Household Income \$37,041

Per Capita Income \$20,221

Per Capita Living Wage

\$31,089

% of People Below Poverty Level 23.3%



## Top 5 Industries

Health Care & Social Assistance

Retail Trade

Manufacturing

Accommodation & Food Services

Educational Services

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Food Insecurity Rate



Ware - 14.9%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Baptist Village, Inc.

Champion Home Builders, Inc.

CMH Manufacturing, Inc.

Concerted Services, Inc.

Memorial Satilla Health

GA DOL  
1st Qtr. 2022

## Unemployment Rate

As of July, 2022



Current 3.0%  
466 Unemployed  
Georgia 2.9%  
U. S. 3.8%

1. US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Data  
3. www.livingwage.mit.edu  
4. www.feedingamerica.org  
5. Georgia Labor Market Explorer

# CEDS Approval Resolution

Adopted by the SGRC Council on  
September 22, 2022

## RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

### TO APPROVE THE 2022-2026 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

*WHEREAS*, the eighteen counties of Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware make up the Southern Georgia Economic Development District as identified by the Economic Development Administration, and;

*WHEREAS*, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission has prepared an economic development plan known as the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)* which is a strategic plan for regional economic development that was developed through a locally-based, strategy-driven economic development planning process. Designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of a region, the CEDS provides a vehicle for individuals, organizations, local governments, institutes of learning, and private industry to engage in a meaningful conversation and debate about what capacity building efforts would best serve economic development in the region, and;

*WHEREAS*, the 2022-2026 CEDS provides a summary background of the economic development conditions in the region; analyzes the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; provides a strategic direction through the implementation of goals/objectives and action plan; establishes performance measures; and outlines a plan to ensure the economic resiliency of the "District," and;

*WHEREAS*, implementation of the CEDS is vital to the economic development future of the "District", and;

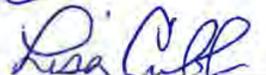
*WHEREAS*, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission utilized public and private sector participation in the development of the CEDS, and recognizes the importance of public and private sector partnerships in the implementation of the CEDS.

***NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED***, that the Southern Georgia Regional Commission Council approve the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for 2022-2026, and;

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED***, that the Southern Georgia Regional Commission continue to strive to meet the needs and attain the goals of the CEDS in order to ensure economic prosperity for the region.

Adopted by the governing Council of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of September, 2022.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joyce Evans, Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Cribb, Executive Director

# Appendix

# Southern Georgia Regional Commission Council

## **Atkinson**

Buddy Willis  
Robert Johnson  
Robbie Stone

## **Brantley**

Skipper Harris  
Barbara Maefield  
Vacant

## **Coffee**

AJ Dovers  
Tony Paulk  
Adam Smith

## **Lanier**

Dennis Fender  
Bill Darsey  
John Fitton

## **Turner**

Dana Whiddon  
Sandra Lumpkin  
Brandi Giddens

## **Bacon**

Richard Foskey  
Larry Taylor  
Lisa Coley

## **Brooks**

Patrick Folsom  
Don Morgan  
Zurich Deshazior

## **Cook**

Dwight Purvis  
Buddy Duke  
Derry Bennett

## **Lowndes**

Joyce Evans  
Vivian Miller-Cody  
Anthony Payton

## **Ware**

Elmer Thrift  
Michael-Angelo James  
Barbara King

## **Ben Hill**

Steve Taylor  
Jason Holt  
Jason Dunn

## **Charlton**

James Everett  
Lee Gowan  
Vacant

## **Echols**

Bobby Walker  
Cheryl Garner

## **Pierce**

Neal Bennett  
Keith Brooks  
Steven Paul

## **Governor's Office**

Norman "Bo" Lovein III  
Guy Daughtry  
Jonathan Jones

## **Berrien**

Ronnie Gaskins  
John Clayton  
Lisa Smart

## **Clinch**

Roger Metts  
Brooks Blich, IV  
Willie Hardee, Jr.

## **Irwin**

Scott Carver  
Horace Hudgins  
Mona Paulk

## **Tift**

Tony McBrayer  
Julie Smith

## **Lt. Governor's Office**

Keith Stone

# Local Workforce Development Board Member List

Frank Bannamon

Keith Bryant

Sandra Cole

Melissa Dark

Elton Dixon

Myrtice Edwards

Kevin Ellis

Katrena Felder

Jennifer Gainey

Jennifer Gillard

Sarah Gove

Johnathan Gray

Curtis Griffin

Melvin Johnson

Merrill Kemp-Wilcox

Shannon McConico

William Palmer

Sean Panizzi

Darlene Tait

Courtney Taylor

Paige Taylor

Leigh Wallace

Jamon Williams

## Youth Committee

Frank Bannamon

Gerald Copeland

Adrienne Dixon

Katrena Fedler

Jennifer Gainey

Kelly Peacock

## Executive Committee

Frank Bannamon

Keith Bryant

Jennifer Gainey

Melvin Johnson

April McDuffie

Sean Panizzi

Darlene Tait

Jamon Williams



# Identification of Community and Private Sector Partners

## Local Governments:

Atkinson County  
City of Pearson  
City of Willacoochee  
Bacon County  
City of Alma  
Ben Hill County  
City of Fitzgerald  
Berrien County  
City of Alapaha  
City of Enigma  
City of Nashville  
City of Ray City  
Brantley County  
City of Hoboken  
City of Nahunta  
Brooks County  
City of Barwick  
City of Morven  
City of Pavo  
City of Quitman  
Charlton County  
City of Folkston  
City of Homeland  
Clinch County  
City of Argyle  
City of Dupont  
City of Fargo  
City of Homerville  
Coffee County  
City of Ambrose  
City of Broxton  
City of Douglas  
City of Nicholls  
Cook County  
City of Adel  
City of Cecil  
City of Lenox  
City of Sparks  
Echols County  
Irwin County  
City of Ocilla  
Lanier County  
City of Lakeland  
Lowndes County  
City of Dasher  
City of Hahira  
City of LakePark  
City of Remerton  
City of Valdosta  
Pierce County  
City of Blackshear  
City of Patterson  
City of Offerman  
Tift County  
City of Omega  
City of Tifton  
City of Ty Ty  
Turner County  
City of Ashburn  
City of Rebecca  
City of Sycamore  
Ware County  
City of Waycross

## Other Stakeholders:

Workforce Investment Boards  
Airport Authorities  
Boards of Education Business Owners  
Chambers of Commerce  
Private Citizens  
Councils on Aging Development Authorities  
EMA/EMS  
Fire Departments  
Historic Preservation Boards  
Hospitals/Medical Centers Housing Authorities  
Main Street Organizations Moody Air Force Base  
Police Departments  
Southern Georgia Regional Commission  
State and Federal Agencies  
Universities/Colleges  
Valdosta/Lowndes MPO

# Identification of Participation Techniques– Part I

We will and/or have employed the following participation techniques to involve the communities and private sector partners in the CEDS in order to create awareness of the plan and to gather a broad range of input into the development of the plan, and then continue participation for the implementation and evaluation of the plan. Some of the participation techniques are more intended to disseminate information, others to solicit input and participation.

## **Informational Techniques:**

### ***CEDS Update & Implementation Webpage***

This webpage will be part of the Regional Commission website where all the information regarding the CEDS update and subsequent implementation activities will be displayed. The webpage will provide information on all meetings, PDF draft documents and will also include contact information for staff to provide more information, clarifications or details upon request.

### ***Facebook Information Sharing Page***

The Facebook page "Southern Georgia Regional Commission Information Center" will serve as an information clearing house to distribute information on meetings, progress, and provide opportunity for comments, especially for those stakeholders that are not able to attend meetings.

### ***Email***

Emails will be utilized to notify and invite stakeholders to workshops, meetings and other events.



# Identification of Participation Techniques– Part II

## ***Work Sessions***

Work sessions with stakeholders provide input and feedback on the identification and assessment of the economic development problems and opportunities, and the implementation program including the goals and objectives, plans of action, and the performance standards proposed by staff.

## ***Surveys***

A short survey solicited input from Stakeholders on issues and opportunities and performance standards. The survey was distributed by email and made available during various stakeholder meetings.

## ***Quarterly CEDS Implementation Meeting***

A regularly scheduled quarterly meeting will be held to discuss the implementation of the CEDS with the stakeholders and partners and to evaluate the status of activities, initiatives and investment priorities.

## ***Webpage and Facebook Page***

Both the webpage and Facebook page will not only provide information, but are also geared towards providing comments, engaging in discussion, and contacting staff.



# Evaluation Framework

The following are the additional performance measures that will be used to evaluate the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's successful development and implementation of the CEDS.

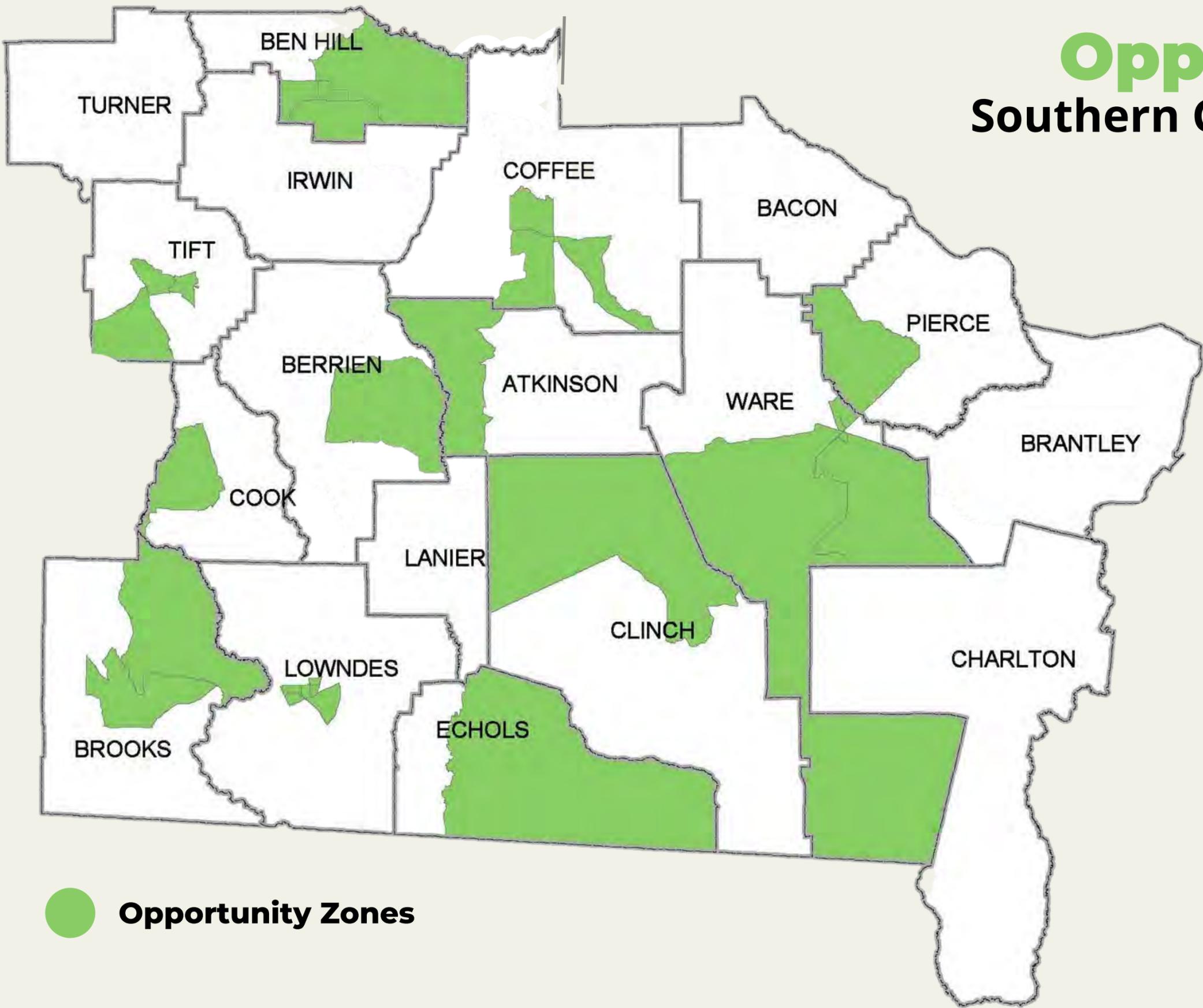
1. Number of jobs created/retained and private investment made after implementation of the CEDS.
  - a. Quarterly reporting from regional ED Pros (Chambers of Commerce, Better Hometown and MainStreet programs, and Development Authorities) on jobs creation/retention and private investment in their local communities.
  - b. Quarterly updates from the Southern Georgia Regional Commission Loan Program division on new private investment in the region.
  - c. Local businesses/industries in region advertise successful growth and job retention through PSA's, newspapers, local television and radio.
  - d. Compare Census statistics
  - e. Evaluate tax digest increase/decrease
  - f. Evaluate sales tax increase/decrease
  - g. Increase/decrease in business licenses
  - h. Governors listing of imminent business/industry closures.
2. Number and types of public investment undertaken in the region.
  - a. Semi-annual reporting from the Regional Commission, Local Governments, and the Workforce Development Board on new investments in the region.
3. Changes in the economic environment of the region.
  - a. Local governments, ED Pros, and the Workforce Development Board report major changes to the region's economic environment to the Regional Commission.

# Opportunity Zones

## Southern Georgia Regional Commission

Opportunity Zones are a federal economic development tool focused on improving the outcomes of communities across the country, especially in areas that have suffered from disinvestment over many years. Opportunity Zones are designated low-income census tracts where tax incentives are available to groups or individuals who invest in an Opportunity Fund and hold their capital gains in Opportunity Zone-related assets or property.

There are 38 Opportunity Zones in the SGRC EDD. By establishing a clear vision for the future and identifying both assets and challenges, the CEDS can help the attract investments in the region 's Opportunity Zones.

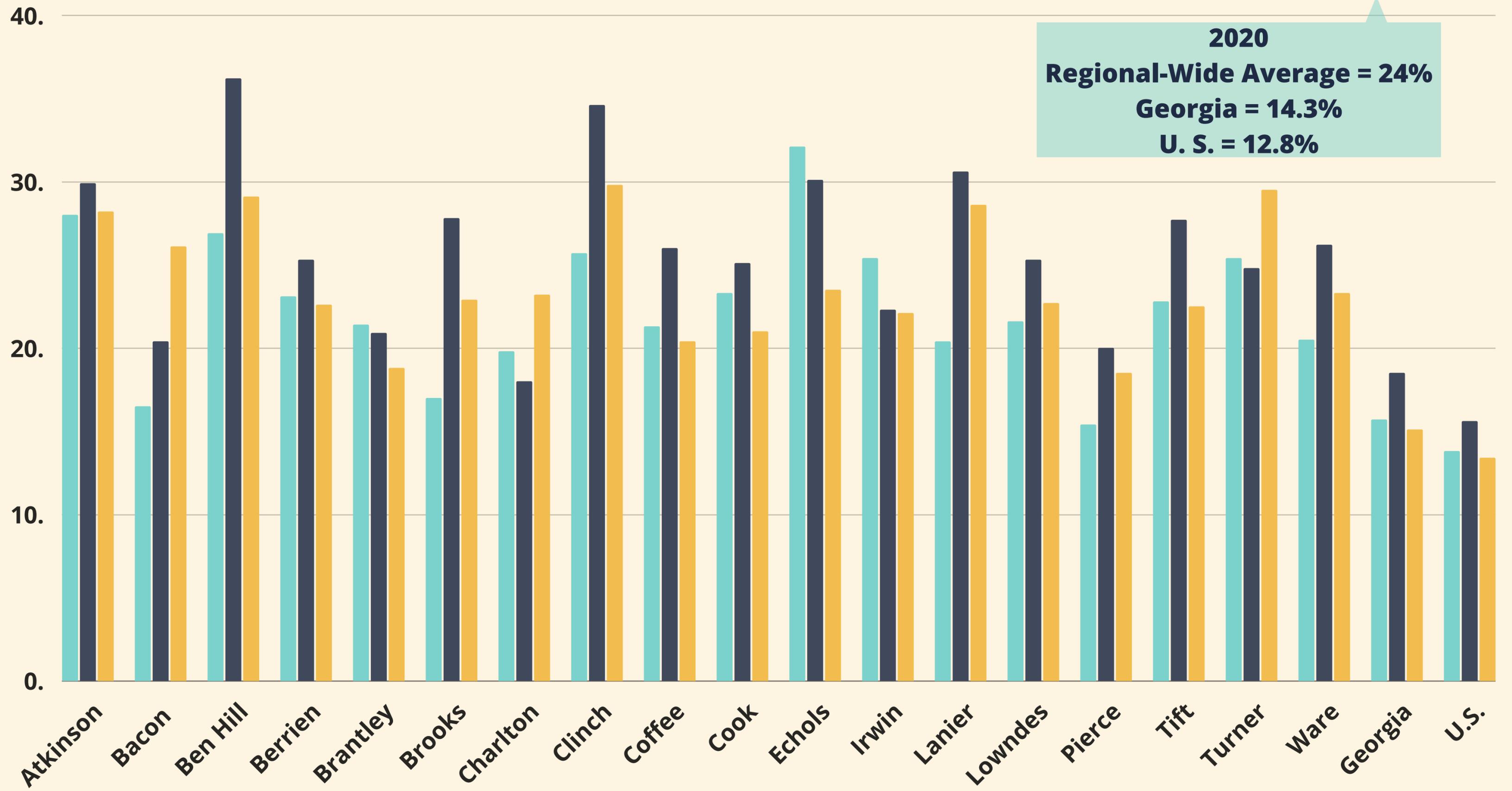


 Opportunity Zones

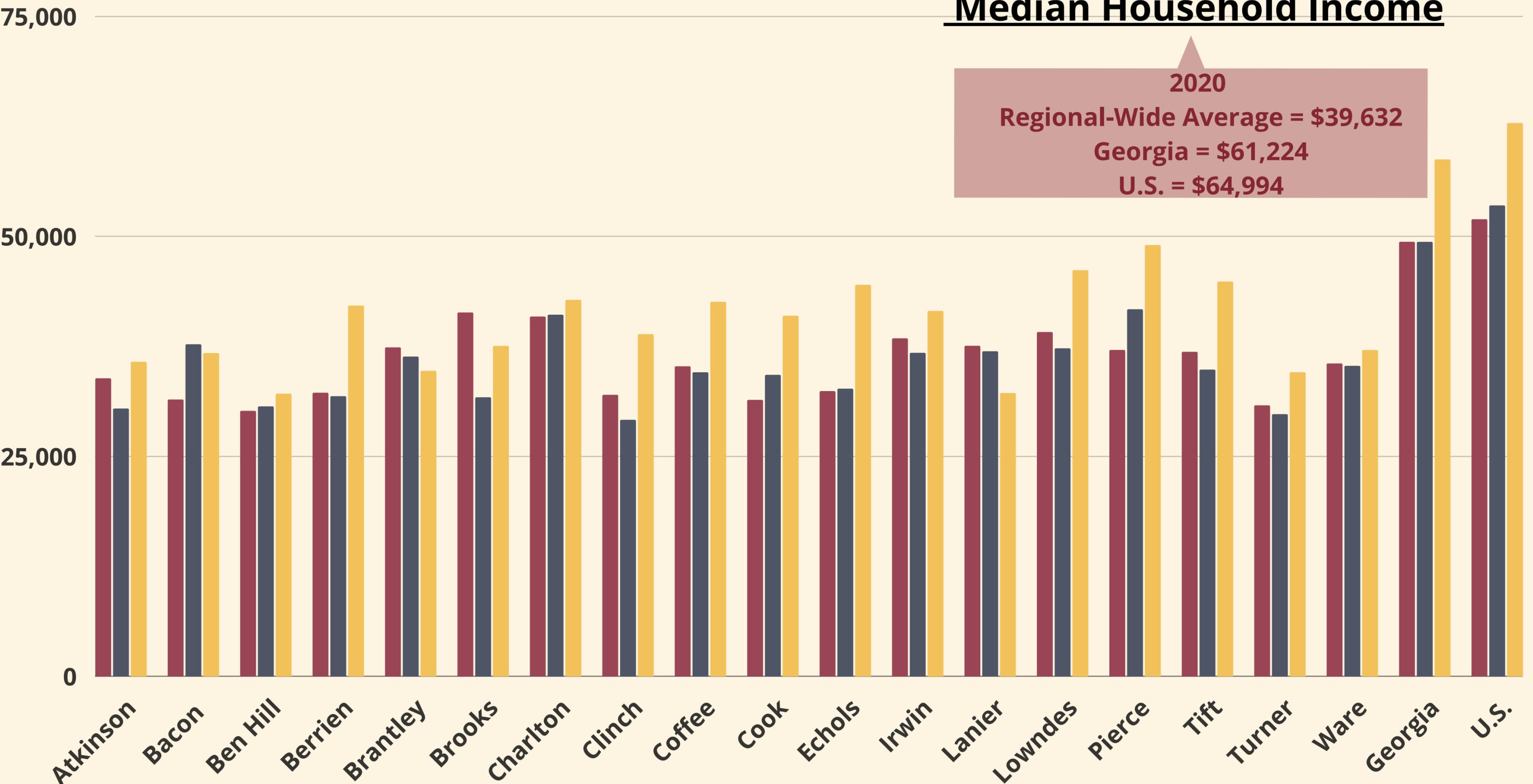


2010 2015 2020

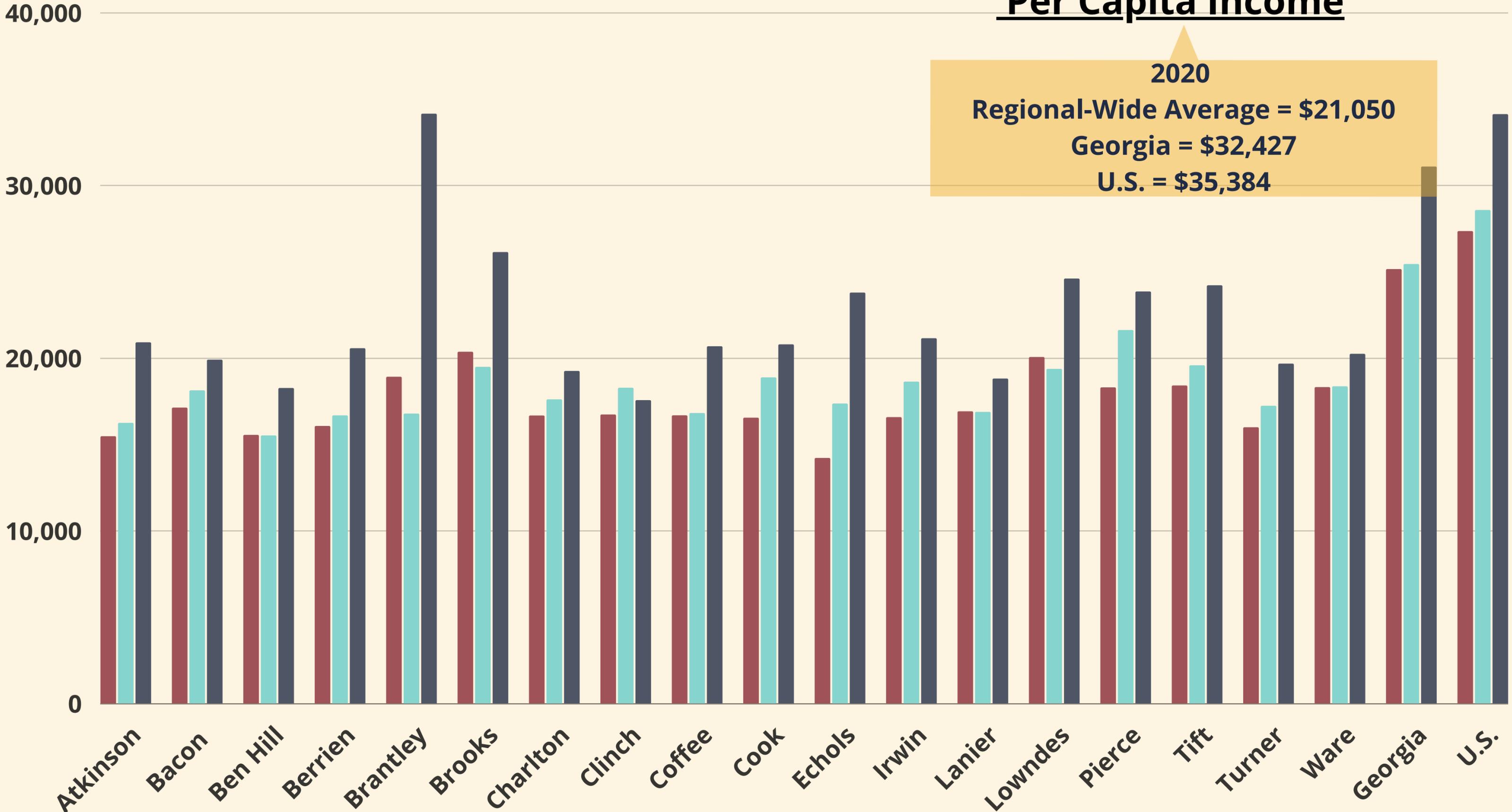
# POVERTY RATE %



# Median Household Income

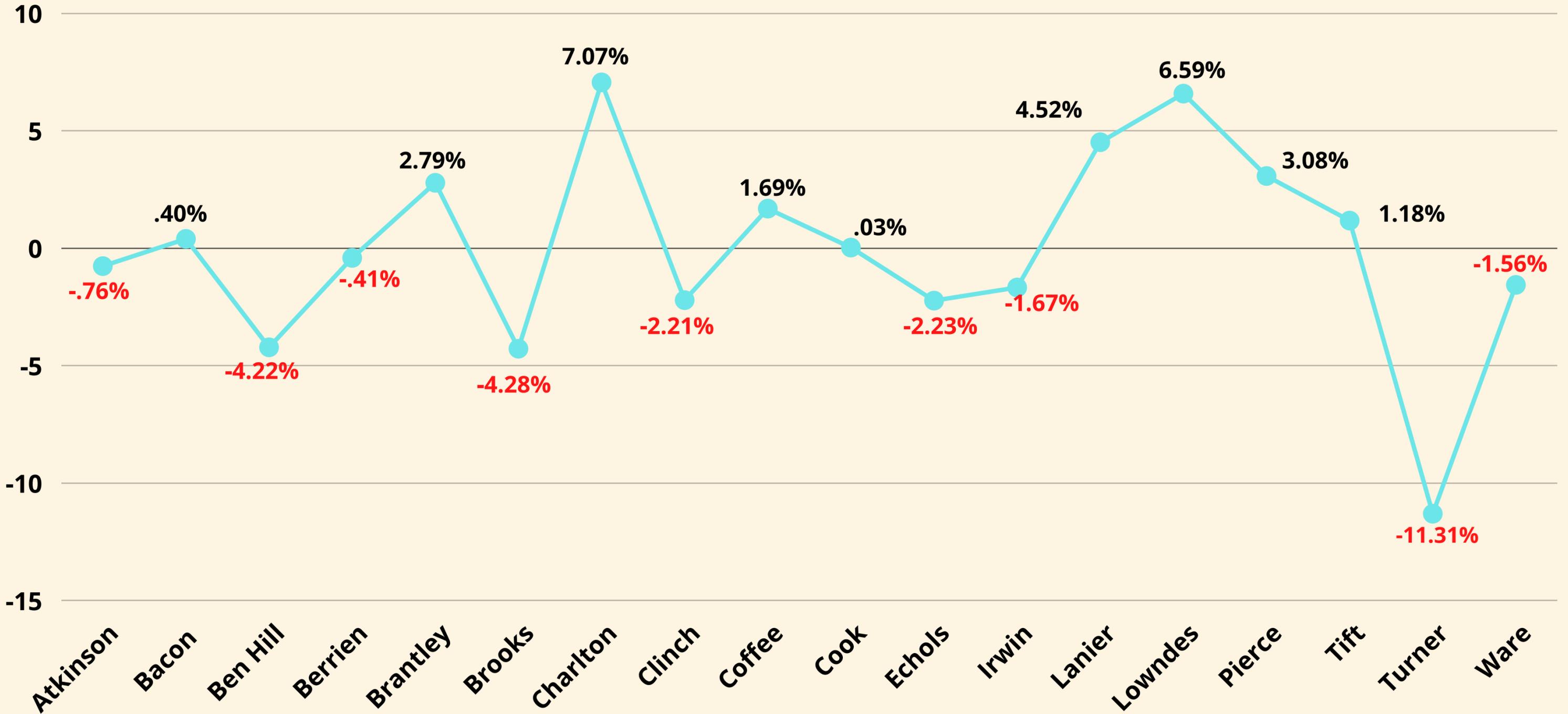


# Per Capita Income



# Population Growth by County 2010-2020

■ Percent Change





# Educational Attainment of Workforce 25 years & older

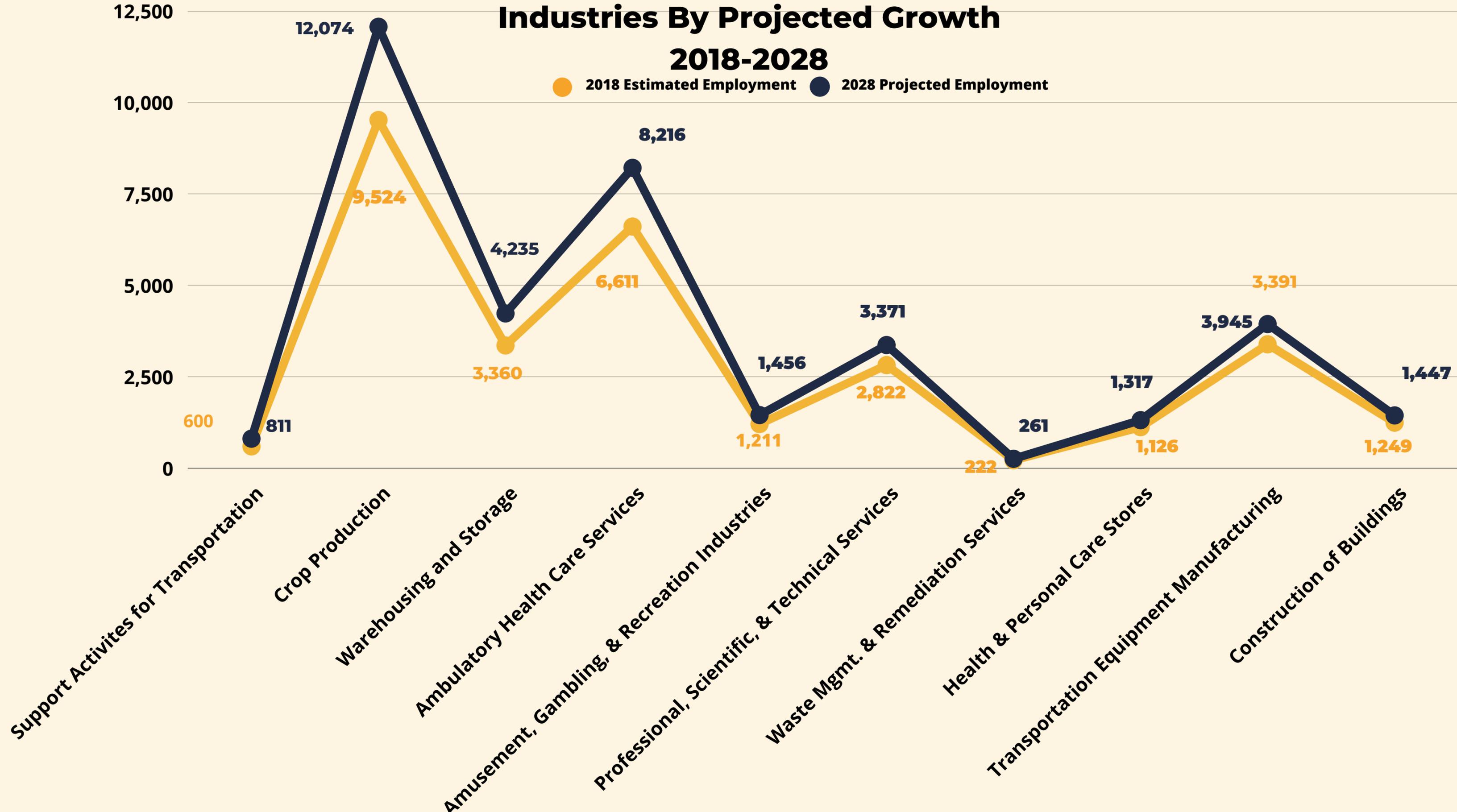
<u>County</u>	<u>Less than 9th Grade</u>	<u>9th to 12 Grade, No Diploma</u>	<u>High School Graduate, GED or equivalent</u>	<u>Some College, No Degree</u>	<u>Associate's Degree</u>	<u>Bachelor's Degree</u>	<u>Graduate Professional Degree</u>	<u>Total</u>
Atkinson	913	791	1,805	773	350	300	346	5,278
Bacon	400	890	3,280	1,659	421	322	359	7,331
Ben Hill	622	1,242	5,235	1,945	1,058	864	381	11,347
Berrien	797	1,908	5,387	2,428	990	1,261	487	13,258
Brantley	722	1,803	5,916	2,445	1,190	435	454	12,965
Brooks	653	1,126	3,731	2,493	1,218	1,318	503	11,042
Charlton	862	981	3,911	1,739	632	654	540	9,319
Clinch	507	741	1,622	953	177	321	165	4,486
Coffee	2,462	4,681	10,681	5,347	1,770	2,159	1,296	28,396
Cook	616	1,557	3,706	2,539	1,097	1,070	702	11,287
Echols	184	437	1,262	413	177	150	60	2,683
Irwin	240	975	2,364	1,258	517	567	542	6,463
Lanier	272	794	2,661	1,292	665	960	435	7,079
Lowndes	2,376	5,677	22,496	14,223	6,027	10,927	7,123	68,849
Pierce	709	1,374	5,621	2,164	1,414	938	801	13,021
Tift	1,394	2,966	8,823	4,770	3,511	2,064	2,415	25,943
Turner	483	676	1,930	1,072	820	345	259	5,585
Ware	1,206	3,319	9,930	4,389	1,885	2,479	1,224	24,405

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# Industries By Projected Growth

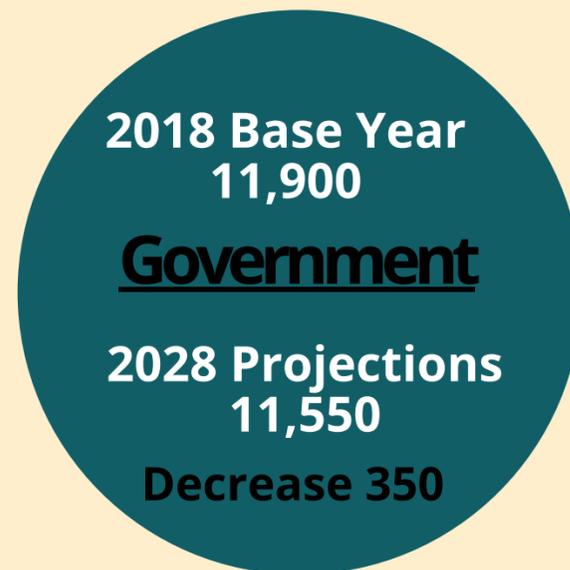
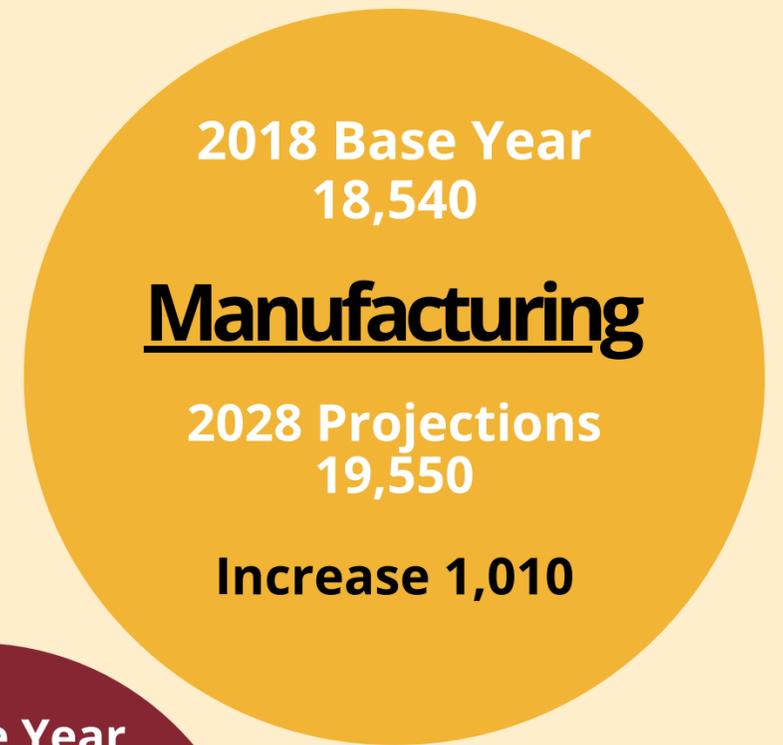
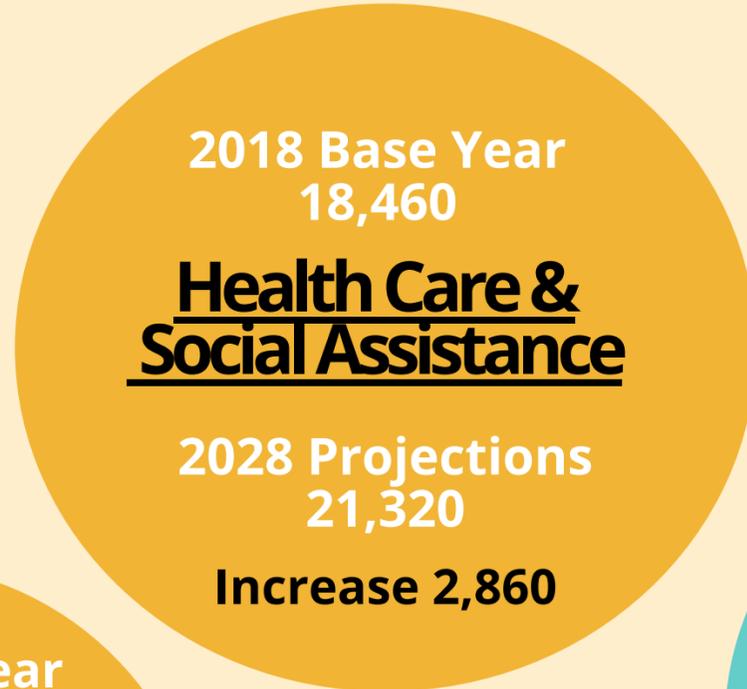
## 2018-2028

● 2018 Estimated Employment ● 2028 Projected Employment



Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Projections Unit

# Long-Term Industry Projections 2018-2028



# Occupations By Projected Growth

2018 Base Employment

2028 Projected Employment

## 2018-2028

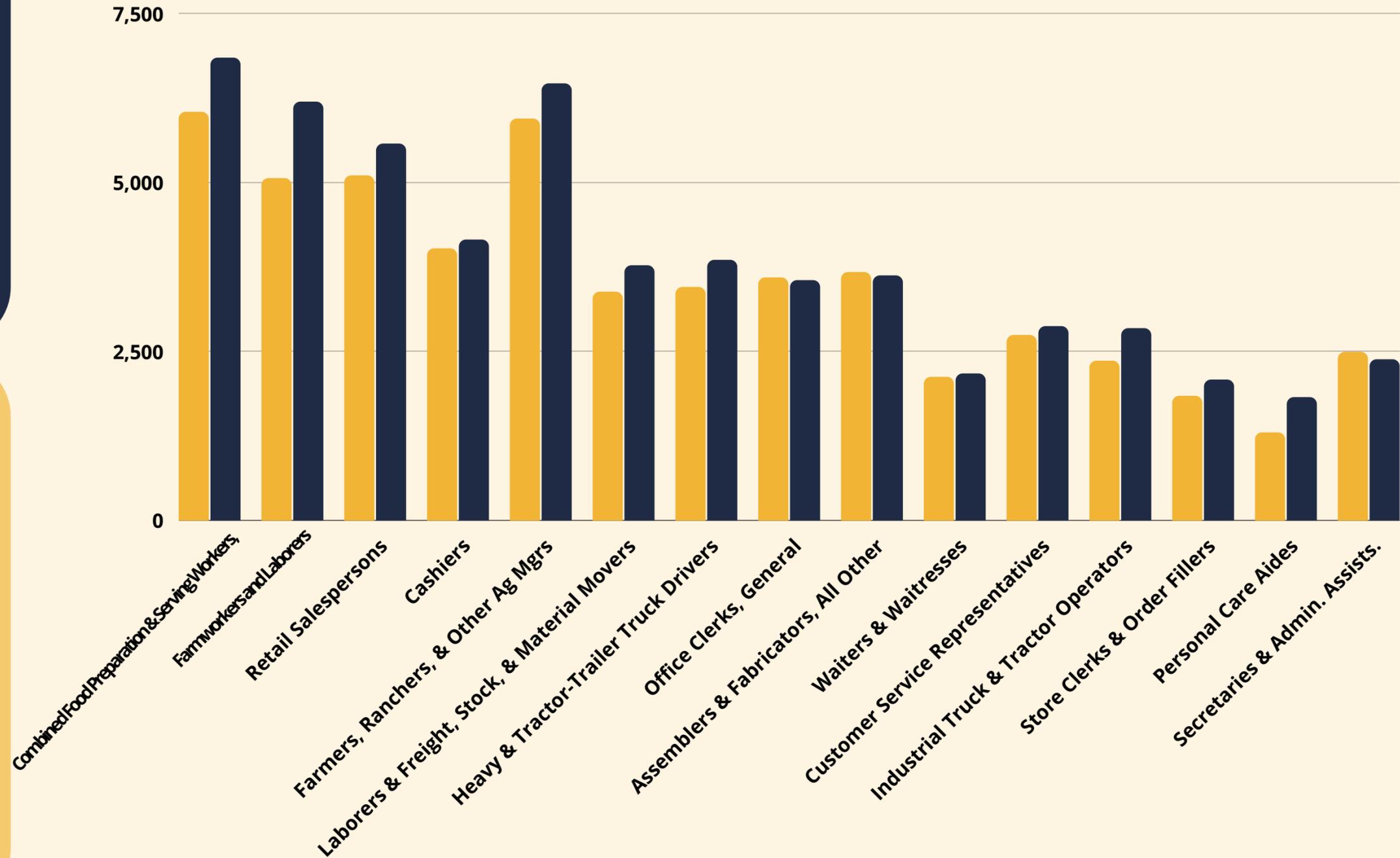
### Percent Change in Employment 2018-2028

Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food - 13.29%  
 Farmworkers & Laborers, Crop, Nursery, & Greenhouse - 22.20%  
 Retail Salespersons - 9.22%  
 Cashiers - 3.13%  
 Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs. - 8.70%  
 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers - 11.50%  
 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers - 11.57%  
 Office Clerks, General - -1.25%  
 Assemblers & Fabricators, All Other, Including Team Assemblers - -1.47%  
 Waiters & Waitresses - 2.31%  
 Customer Service Representatives - 4.75%  
 Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators - 20.52%  
 Store Clerks & Order Fillers - 12.64%  
 Personal Care Aides - 40.28%  
 Secretaries & Administrative Assistants - -4.30%

### Change in Employment 2018-2028

Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food - 800  
 Farmworkers & Laborers, Crop, Nursery, & Greenhouse - 1,130  
 Retail Salespersons - 470  
 Cashiers - 130  
 Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs. - 520  
 Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers - 390  
 Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers - 400  
 Office Clerks, General - -40  
 Assemblers & Fabricators, All Other, Including Team Assemblers - -50  
 Waiters & Waitresses - 50  
 Customer Service Representatives - 130  
 Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators - 480  
 Store Clerks & Order Fillers - 240  
 Personal Care Aides - 520  
 Secretaries & Administrative Assistants - -110

### Occupations 2018-2028

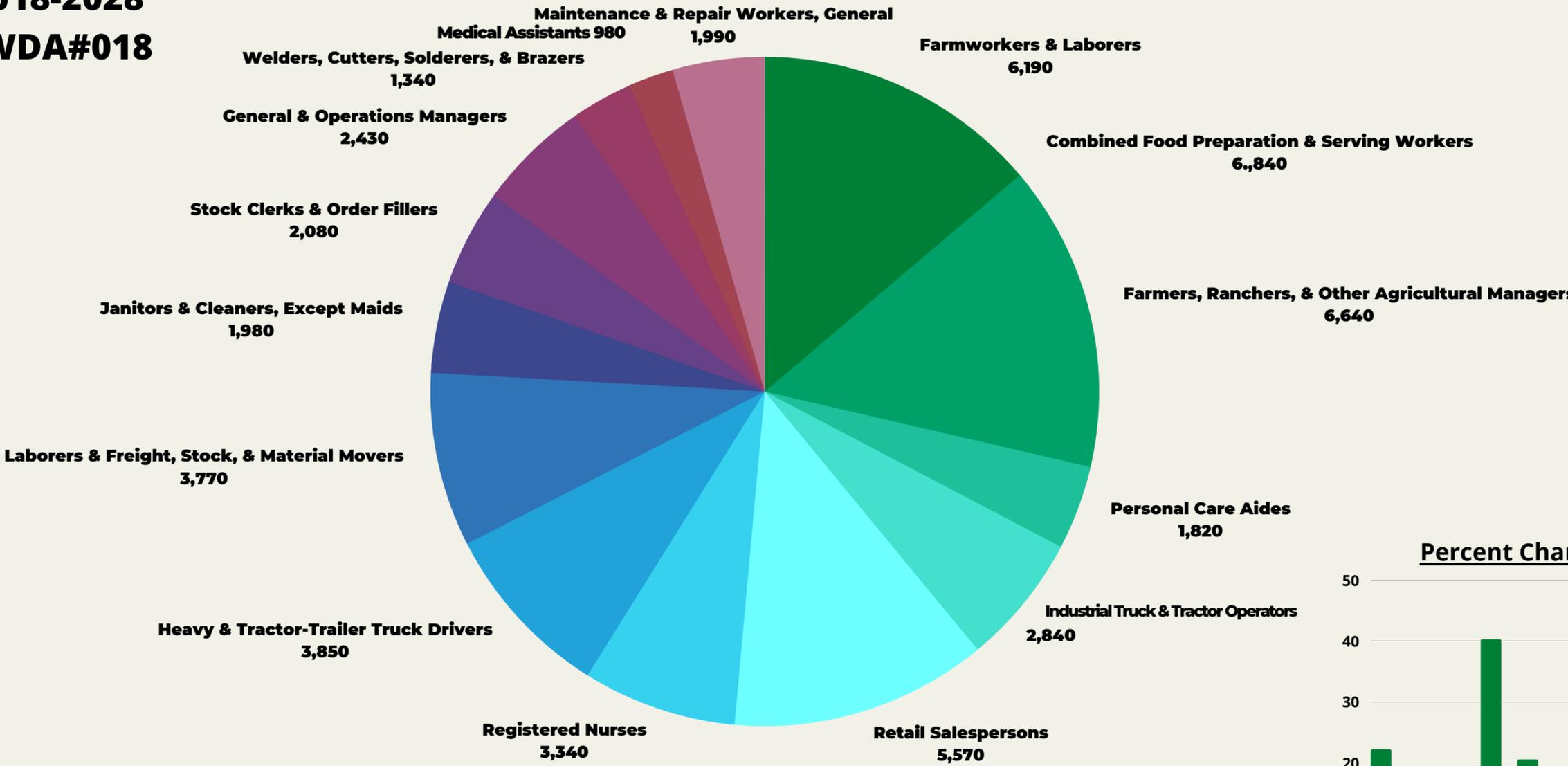


# Long-Term Regional Occupational Projections

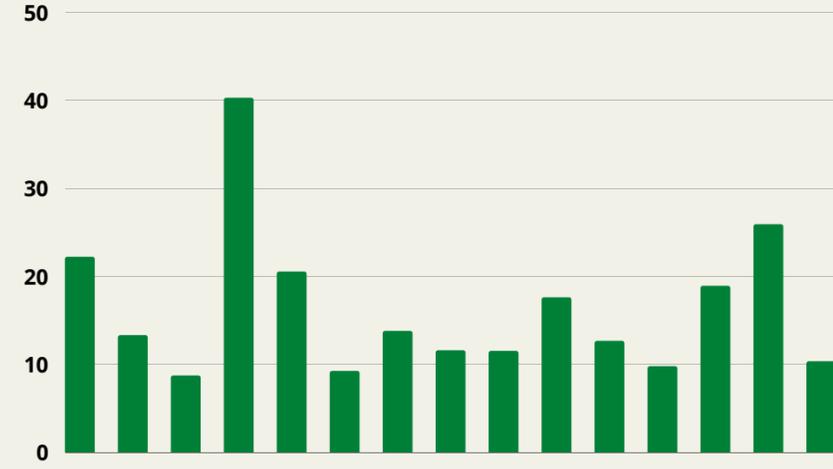
2018-2028

LWDA#018

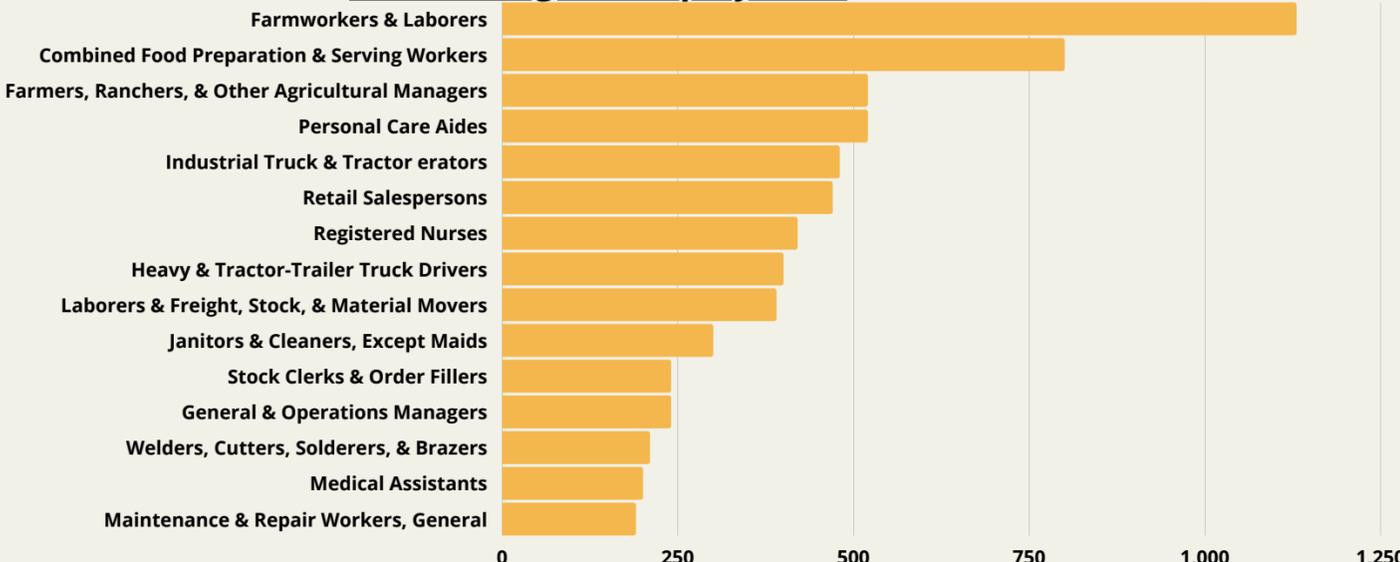
## 2028 Projected Employment



## Percent Change in Employment



## Total Change in Employment



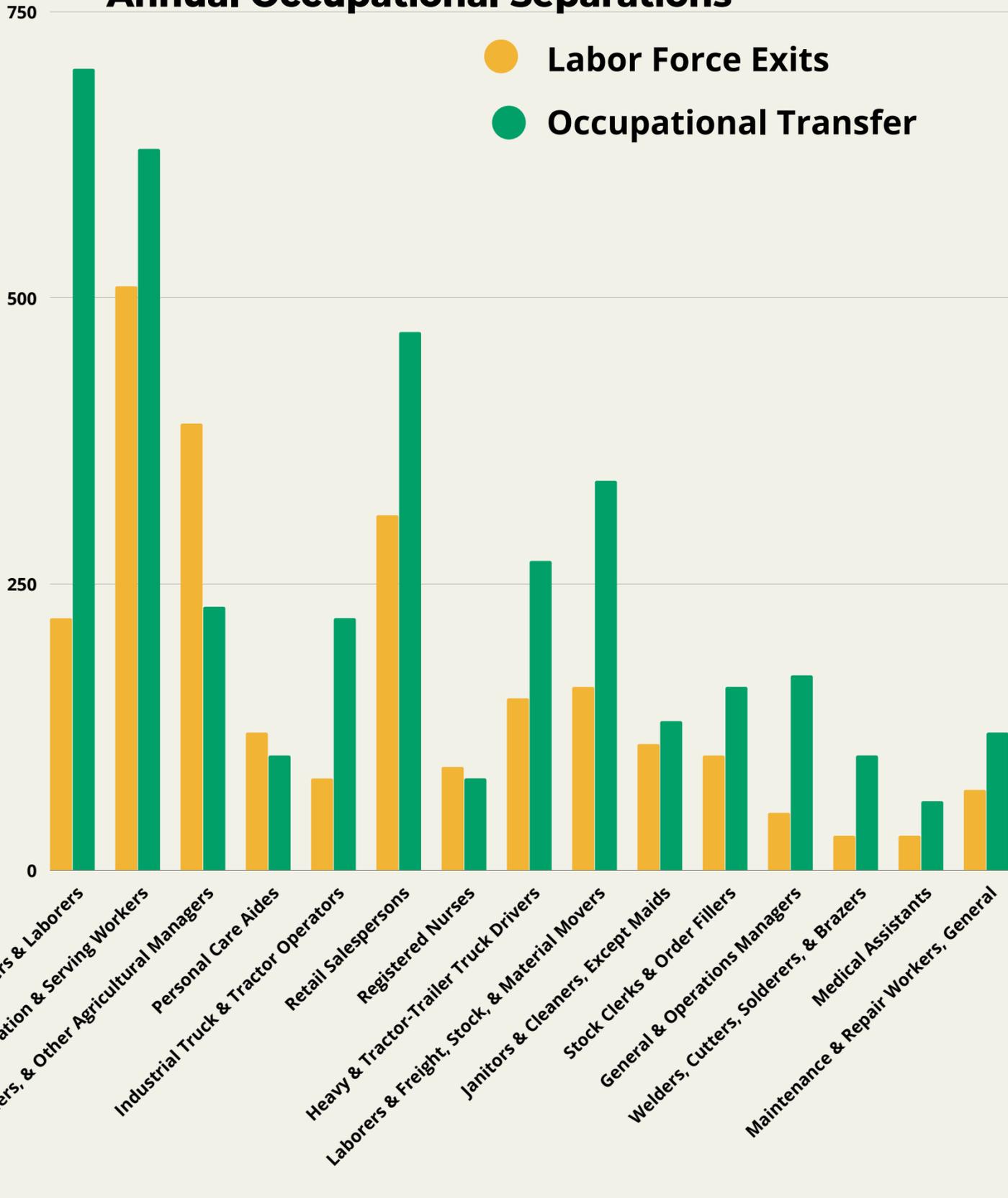
Source: GA DOL Office of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, July, 2021

# Long-Term Regional Occupational Projections

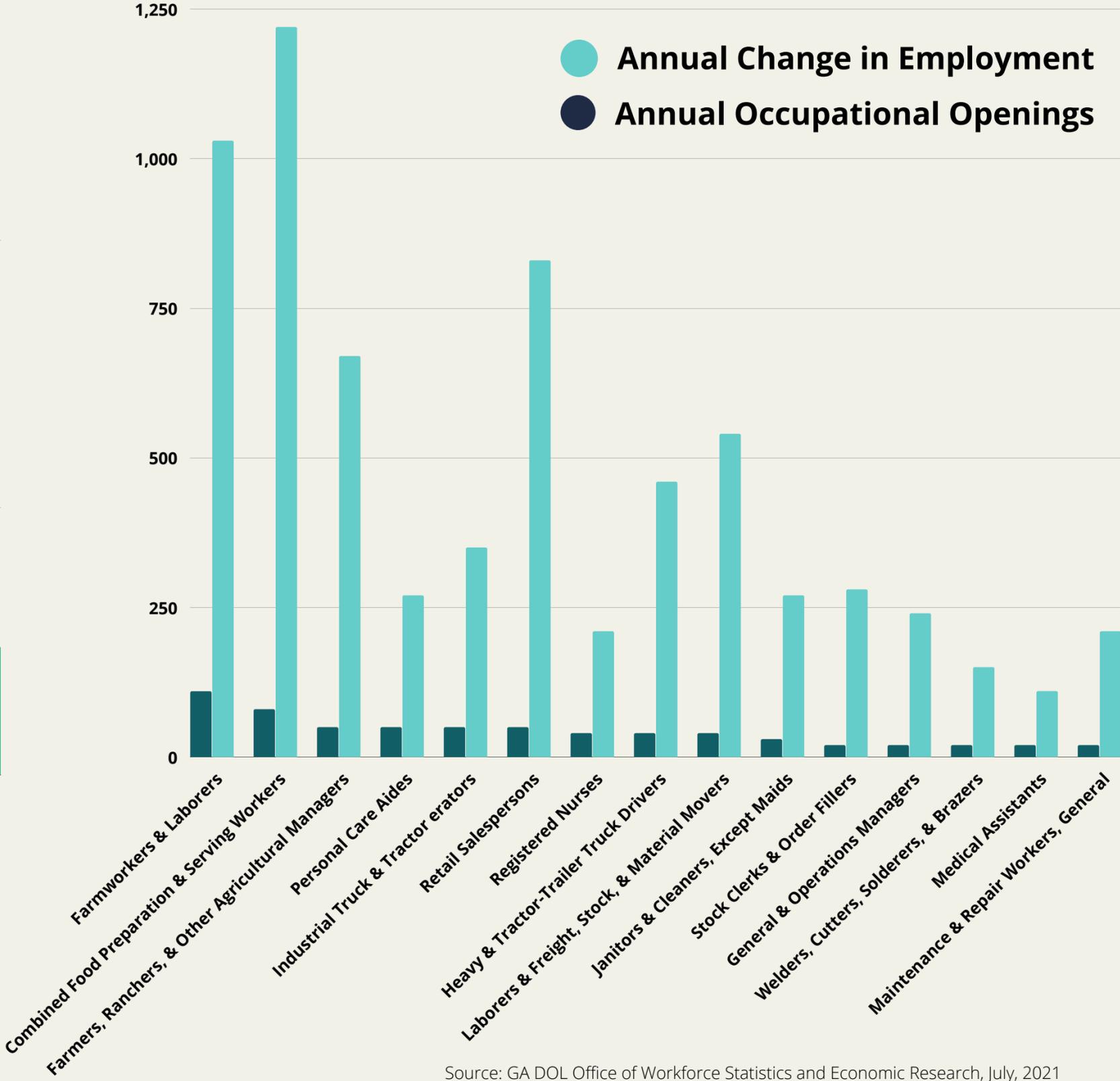
2018-2028

LWDA#018

## Annual Occupational Separations



## Annual Change in Employment



■ 2017 Employment ■ 2018 Employment ■ 2019 Employment ■ 2020 Employment  
■ 2021 Average Employment

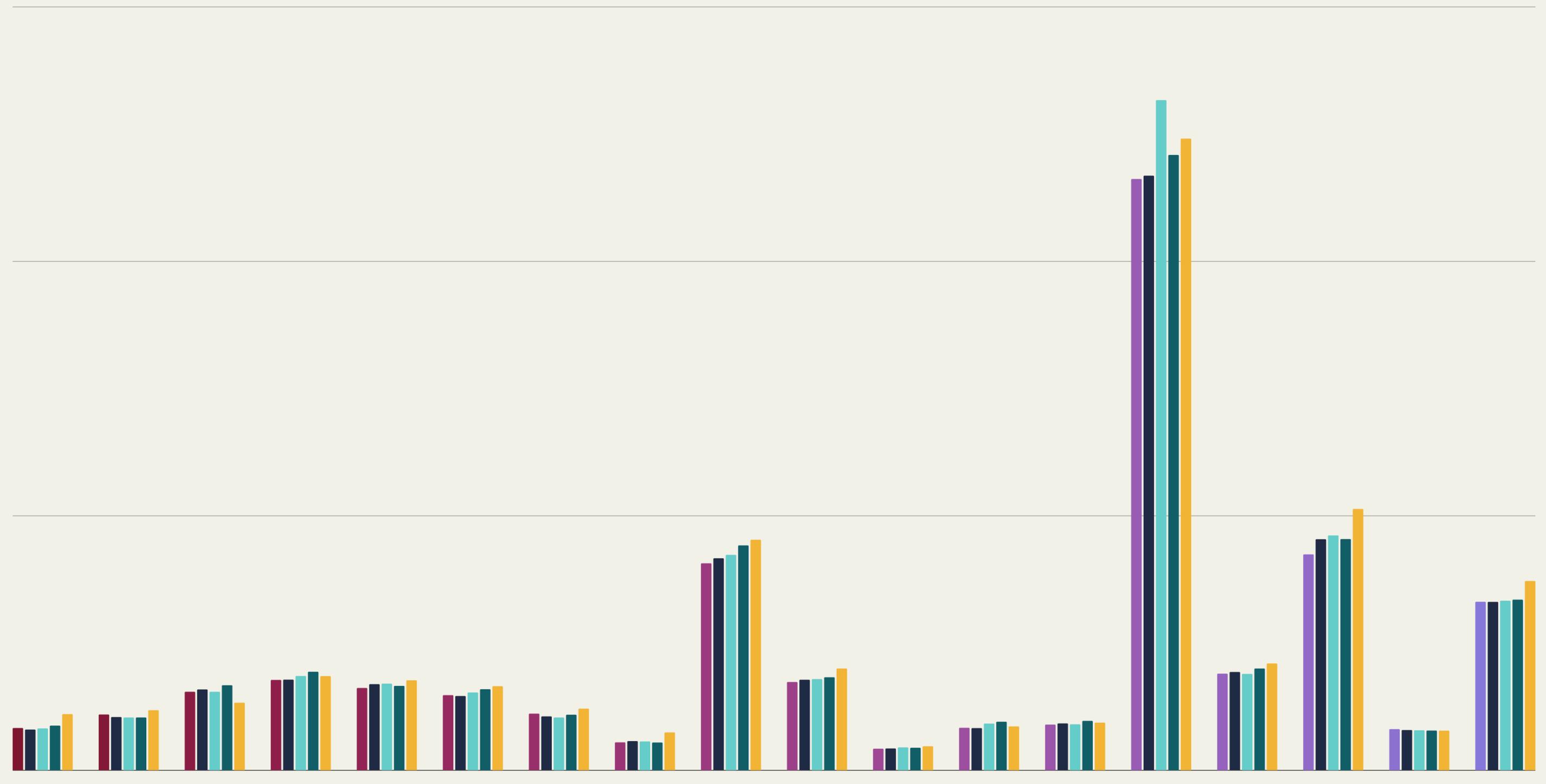
60,000

40,000

20,000

0

Atkinson Bacon Ben Hill Berrien Brantley Brooks Charlton Clinch Coffee Cook Echols Irwin Lanier Lowndes Pierce Tift Turner Ware





SOUTHERN GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION



# 2022-2026 Southern Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Special thanks to SGRC Staff Member Michael Rivera for providing many of the beautiful regional images featured within this document.