



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



# Contents

---

Vision

Introduction

Our Region

Summary Background

SWOT Analysis

Regional Service Priorities

Data Fact Sheets

Economic Resilience

Regional Cluster Analysis

Strategic Focus Areas

Action Plan

Goal 1:

Goal 2:

Goal 3:

Goal 4:

Evaluation Framework

Appendix







# CEDS Strategy Committee

**Kevin McGovern**  
Atkinson County  
Development Authority

**Kevin Ellis**  
Alma/Bacon County  
Development Authority

**Jason Dunn**  
Fitzgerald-Ben Hill  
Development Authority

**Melissa Dark**  
Fitzgerald-Ben Hill  
Development Authority

**Lisa Smart**  
Berrien County  
Development Authority

**Winshell Preston**  
Nashville Main Street Program  
& Economic Development

**Mel Baxter**  
Brantley County  
Development Authority

**Stephanie Mata**  
Brooks County  
Development Authority

**Dana O'Quinn**  
Okefenokee Chamber of  
Commerce  
& Economic Development

**Pete Snell**  
Coastal Pines  
Technical College

**Jeff Brown**  
Clinch County  
Development Authority

**Phil Martin**  
Clinch County  
Chamber of Commerce

**John Henry**  
Douglas-Coffee County  
Economic Development Authority

**Lisa Collins**  
Cook County Economic  
Development Commission

**Heather Green**  
Adel-Cook County  
Chamber of Commerce

**Hazel McCranie**  
Ocilla-Irwin County  
Chamber of Commerce  
& Industrial Authority

**Andrea Schruijer**  
Valdosta-Lowndes  
Development Authority

**Christie Moore**  
Valdosta-Lowndes  
Chamber of Commerce

**Brandie Dame**  
Valdosta Main Street

**Amy Carter**  
Southern Regional  
Technical College

**Darrell Moore**  
Valdosta State  
University

**Matt Carter**  
Pierce County  
Development Authority

**Sarah Gove**  
Pierce County  
Chamber of Commerce

**Bethany Strickland**  
Blackshear Main Street  
& Economic Development

**Melody Cowart**  
Tifton-Tift County  
Chamber of Commerce

**Abbey McLaren**  
Tifton Maine Street  
& Economic Development

**Ashley Miller**  
Ashburn-Turner County  
Chamber of Commerce  
& Economic Development

**Daniel Morris**  
Waycross-Ware County  
Development Authority

**Paige Taylor**  
Waycross-Ware County  
Chamber of Commerce

**Elizabeth McLean**  
Georgia Department of  
Economic Development

**Dennis Lee**  
Southern Regional  
Technical College

**Lori Hennesy**  
Georgia Department of  
Economic Development

**Kelly Lane**  
Georgia Department of  
Community Affairs

**Scott Purvis**  
Georgia Power

**Jenny Robbins**  
Georgia EMC

**Saralyn Stafford**  
Carl Vinson Institute  
of Government

**Michael Williams**  
Wiregrass Georgia  
Technical College





# Introduction

## 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 Planning Investment funds (Investment #048306740), 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.

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.

This CEDS plan follows the guidelines released by the US Economic Development Administration. The CEDS is a strategy-driven plan developed by city and county elected officials, as well as a diverse group of economic, community and workforce development professionals. The following forms the basis for the SGRC CEDS:

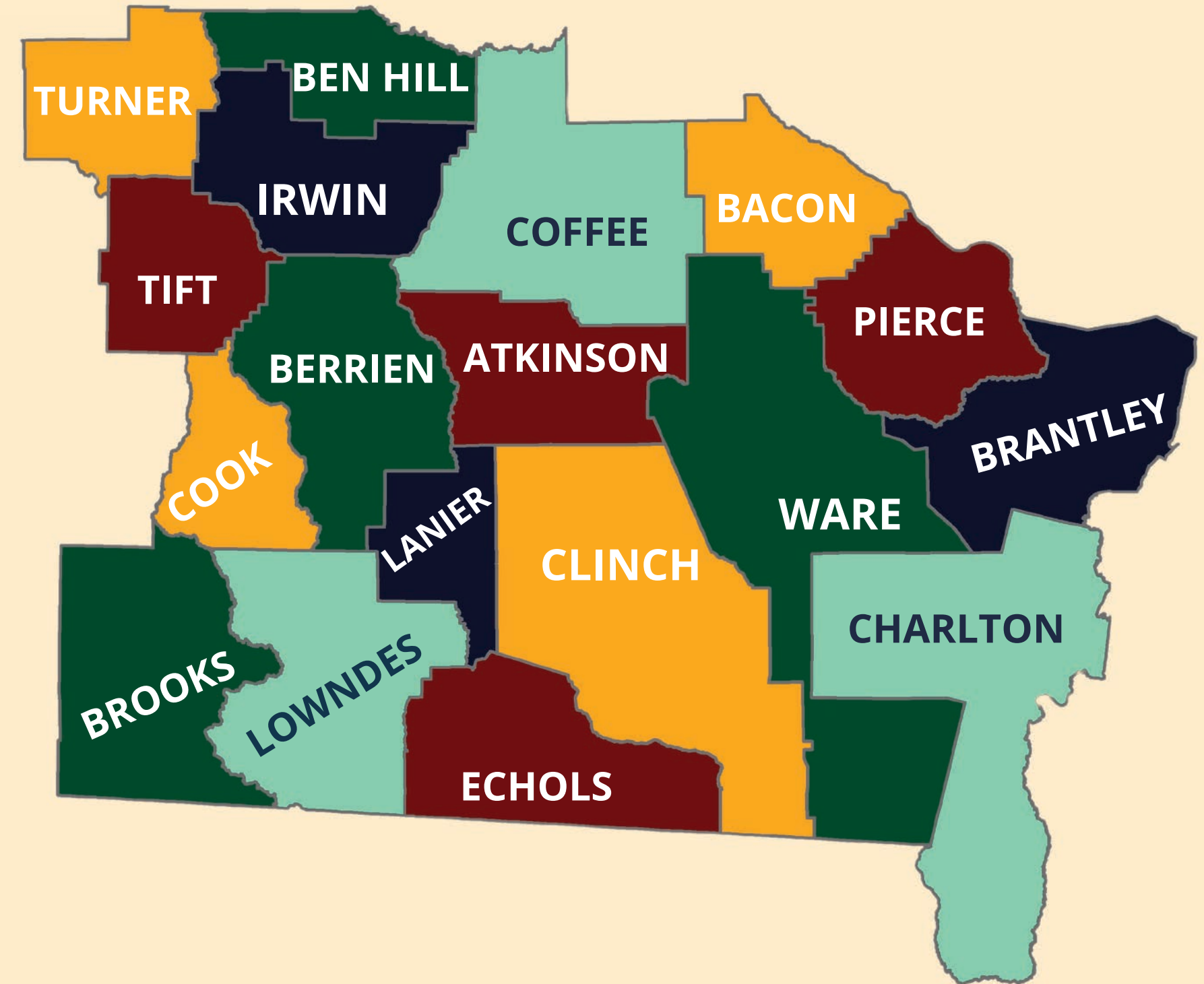


- Summary Background of economic conditions in the region
- SWOT Analysis to identify regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats;
- Action Plan based on the feedback from local economic, community, and workforce development professionals;
- Evaluation Framework to identify and monitor successful development and implementation of the CEDS.





SOUTHERN GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION



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.





## Summary Background

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) is an Economic Development District (EDD) located in Service Delivery Region 11. The vast, rural region covers South Central to Southeast Georgia, encompassing 18 counties and 45 municipalities. Counties included are Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware.

The Southern Georgia Region contains one entire metropolitan statistical area (Valdosta), one partial metropolitan statistical area (Brantley County is part of the Brunswick MSA), and four micropolitan statistical areas (Douglas, Fitzgerald, Tifton, and Waycross). The Region contains some unique natural features, including the Okefenokee Swamp, which, at 438,000 acres, is the largest “blackwater” swamp in North America. There are also four state parks. Agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, and retail trade are all essential pillars of the Region’s economy. The Region is home to 18 colleges and university campuses, including a major state university in Valdosta. Southern Georgia has several four-lane transportation arteries and is connected directly to one interstate highway system (I-75) on the western side of the region.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, radical shifts occurred in the economy and everyday life throughout the SGRC EDD 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.

The economic injury in the SGRC region as a result of the coronavirus pandemic is substantial; however, with the weight of the COVID-19 crisis at bay, the Southern Georgia EDD is committed to assisting local governments, businesses, and stakeholders with their economic recovery through the implementation of the resiliency, mitigation, and economic recovery action items identified in this plan.



## ***Population***

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 increase 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 suffered the highest loss (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 65.6% white, 28% Black/African American, 7.4% Hispanic/Latino, 1.7% two or more races, 1% Asian, 0.27% American Indian/Alaska Native,

## ***Education***

## ***Racial and Ethnic Disparities***



## ***Housing***

The majority of housing units in the region are owner-occupied (63%).

## ***Environment***

## ***Infrastructure***



*Economy*

*Areas of Economic Distress*

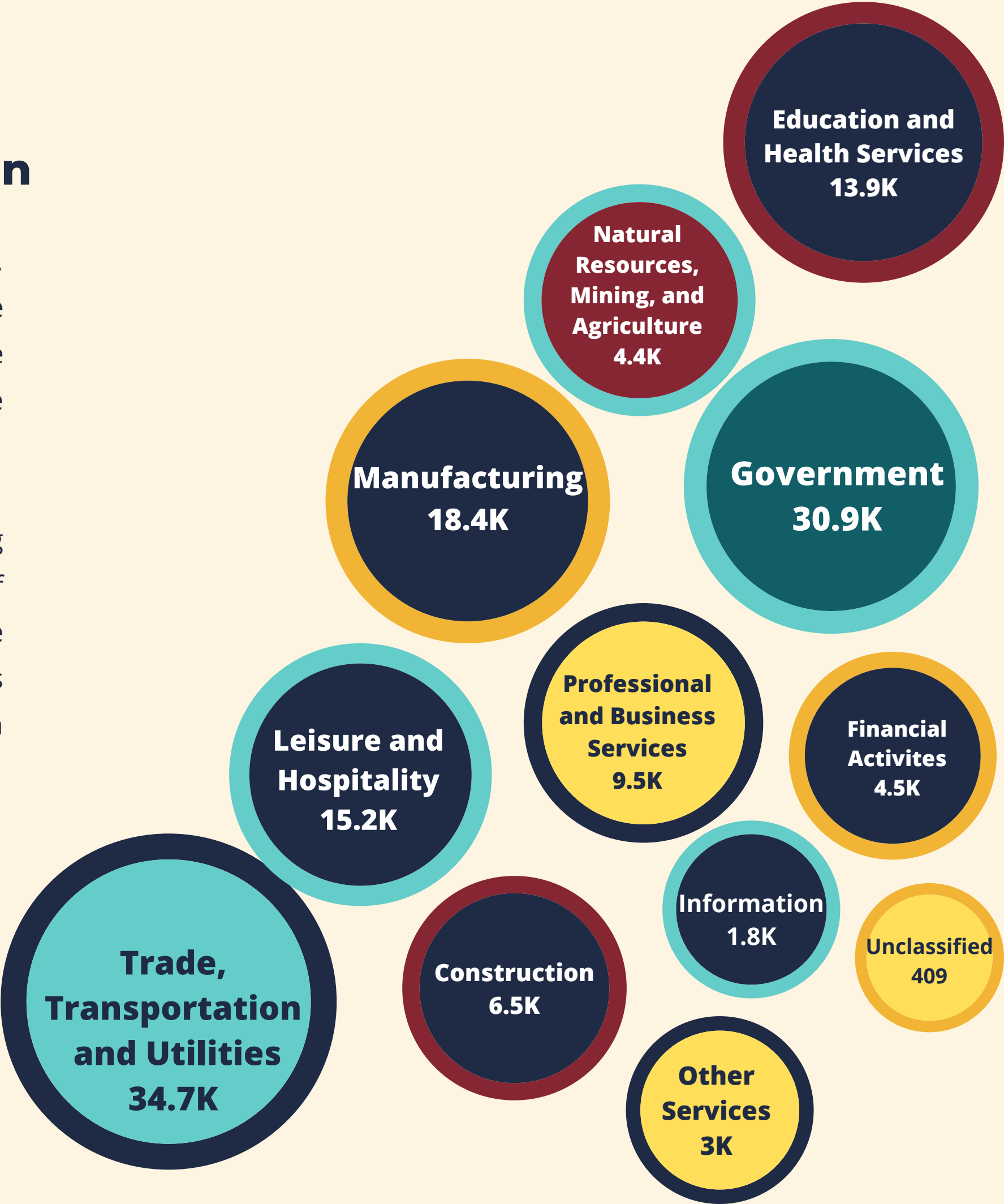


# Top Industry Concentrations

## 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.





# Agri-Tourism

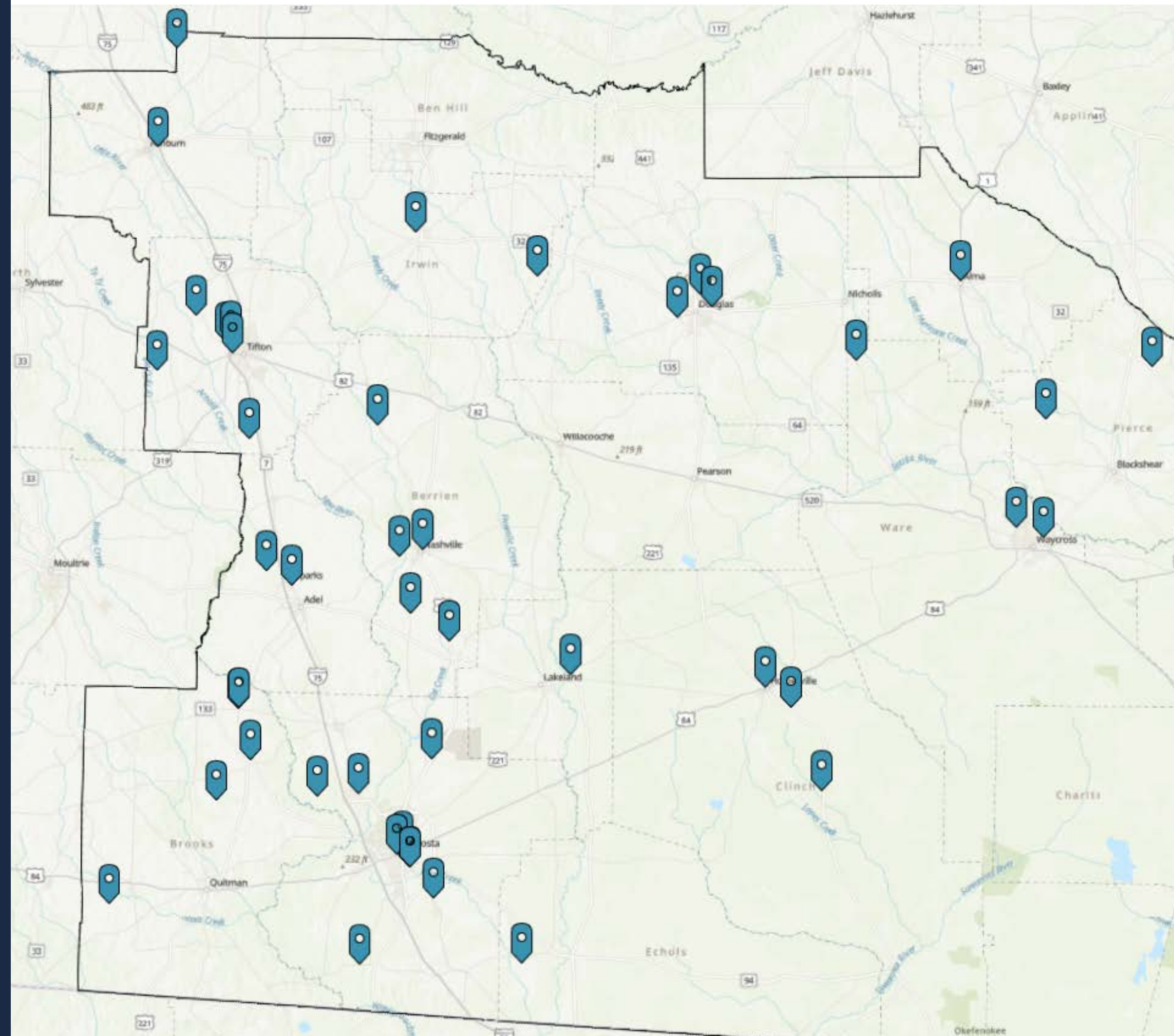
Agritourism can be defined as a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining and/or educating the visitors while generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner.

Agritourism presents a unique opportunity to combine aspects of the tourism and agriculture industries to provide a number of financial, educational, and social benefits to tourists, producers, and communities.

The Southern Georgia region is known for its beautiful rural areas, southern charm, and Georgia Grown commodities. Southern Georgia boasts agricultural entrepreneurs who not only grow and sell products, but create unique commodities using produce, such as wine, soap, syrups, and so much more.

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission has compiled a map where residents and visitors can explore the agritourism offerings within the area. SGRC's Guide to Agritourism can be viewed here:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/95e0cc5b17d0475790a691989e3fc6c7>





**Economic Resiliency, Equity ,  
Environmental Justice**



# Equity and Inclusion

In April 2021, equity was included for the first time as one of EDA's investment priorities, a list of key focus areas that provide the framework to guide the agency's approach to funding projects.

Economic development planning or implementation projects that advance equity across America through investments that directly benefit

1) one or more traditionally underserved populations (PDF), including but not limited to women, Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders or

2) underserved communities within geographies that have been systemically and/or systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic prosperity such as Tribal Lands, Persistent Poverty Counties, and rural areas with demonstrated, historical underservice.

*Eight of the eighteen counties in the region served by SGRC 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.*





# Economic Equity

The term “equity” refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

In order for the Southern Georgia region to thrive economically, it must strive to be a community that excels economically while offering good quality of life to **all** of its residents. This high quality of life is supported through critical infrastructure that businesses need to succeed.

Supporting the economy is a system of infrastructure that provides the critical services necessary for the well being of residents, the success of businesses and the safety of communities.





# Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys:

- The same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and
- Equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work







# 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:

## 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

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





# Education and Workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic brought many challenges and changes in the economy and everyday life throughout the SGRC EDD 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.

As the pandemic seemingly wanes, 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.

In order to supply the region with the next generation of essential workers, the Southern Georgia Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) continues to partner with the local educational institutions to ensure individuals have access to a variety of in- demand training programs to meet the specific needs of industries in the region. The strong partnerships have set the stage for future progress. These pathways are one way in which partners are working with all ages to further develop a strong workforce for the emerging students through curriculum in advanced technologies, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), and soft skills.

The Southern Georgia Area 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. The Southern Georgia region will continue to expand coordination and service integration with local employers, core partners, and other entities that provide needed services in an on-going effort to increase the capacity of our services to meet the needs of both employers and customers.





# Colleges and Universities

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

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Coastal Pines Tech

Coastal Pines Tech Alma Campus

Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Moody Campus

Georgia Military College

Park University Moody Campus

South Georgia State College

South Georgia State College Waycross Campus

Southern Regional Tech Tifton Campus

Troy University Tifton Campus

University of Georgia Tifton Campus

Valdosta State University

Webster University Moody Campus

Wiregrass Tech

Wiregrass Tech Douglas Campus

Wiregrass Tech Fitzgerald Campus

Wiregrass Tech Nashville Campus

Wiregrass Tech Sparks Campus







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. Through the CEDS Strategy Committee and the SWOT Analysis, four strategic focus areas were identified to support regional economic resilience:

- 1.State of the Regional Economy**
- 2.Transportation, Community Facilities, Infrastructure, and Broadband**
- 3.Education and Workforce Development**
- 4.Population and Housing**

These four strategic focus areas formed the foundation for many development decisions made during the CEDS planning process.

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 Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan which assesses the region's community and economic needs, devises strategies to address these needs, and identifies methods to strengthen economic resilience. Southern Georgia's Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan can be viewed in its entirety here:

[LINK.](#)



# CEDS Update Process and Results





**Making Southern Georgia a vibrant region to live, work, grow, and thrive.**



# 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





# 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

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



### GOAL

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 maintenace. 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

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

### GOAL

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

### ACTION PLAN

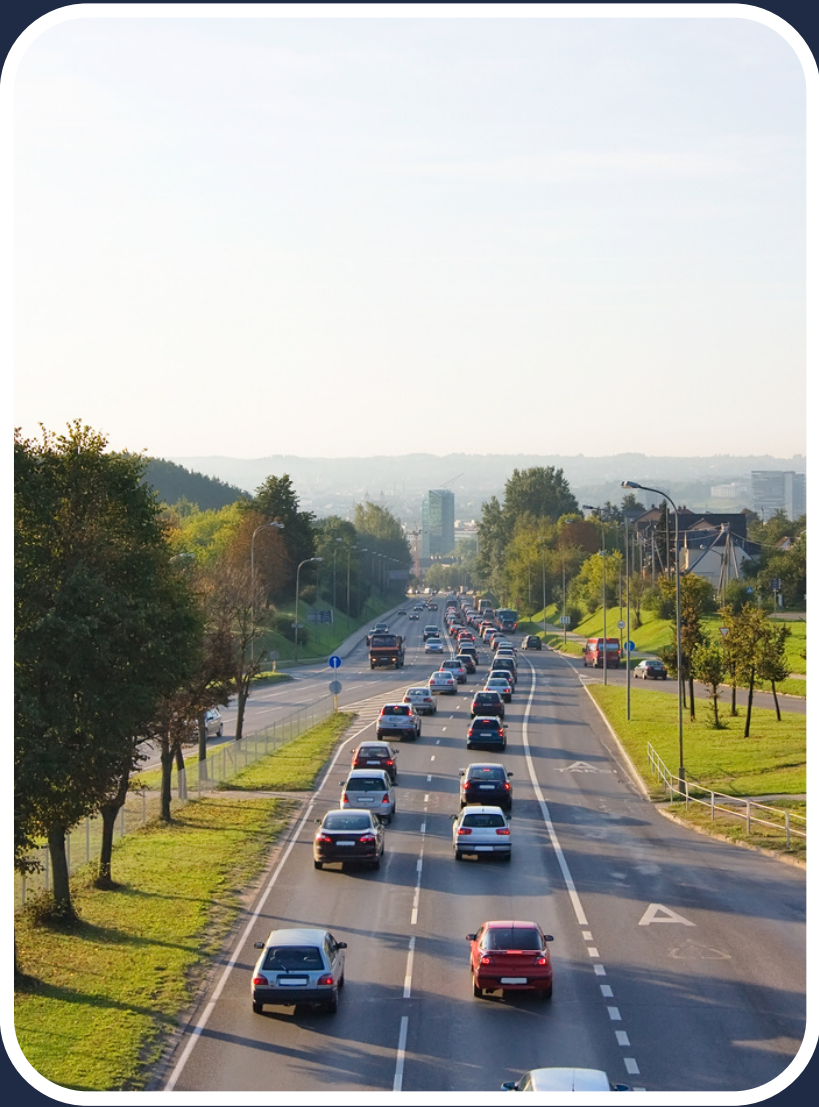
Pursue funding to improve existing infrastructure.

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

Submit regionally significant transportation projects.

Pursue funding to increase broadband availability.

Widen corridors that have a positive regional impact.





# Education and Workforce Development

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

**GOAL**

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

*Objective: 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.*

**GOAL**

Regional Housing Studies and Cooperation

Regional Recruitment

Increase Housing Stock

**ACTION PLAN**

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.





# Evaluation Framework

Performance measures will be used to evaluate the implementation of the CED's four Strategic Focus Areas. The following evaluation frameworks 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



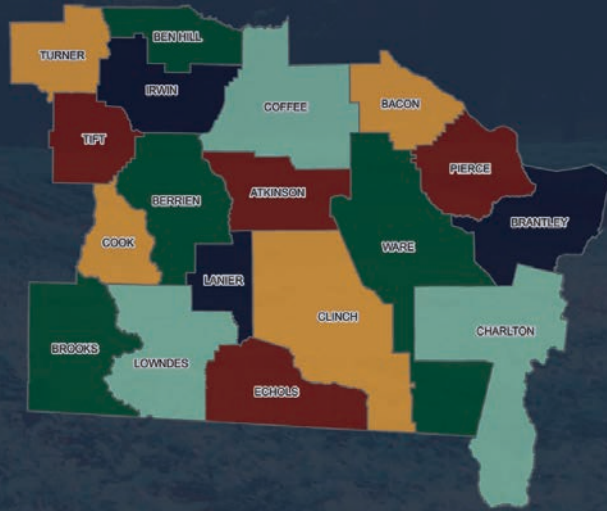


# Regional Data Pages



# 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

Retail Trade

Accommodation & Food Services

Educational Services

Manufacturing

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021

## Food Insecurity Rate



Region - 15.0%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Moody Air Force Base

Valdosta State University

Memorial Satilla Health

Pilgrim's Pride Corporation

Coffee Regional Medical Center

## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022



Georgia 3.3%

172,908 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%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Atkinson - 14.9%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Economic

Median Household Income \$35,703

Per Capita Income \$20,887

Per Capita Living Wage  
\$31,025

% of People Below Poverty Level 28.2%



## Top 5 Employers

Langboard

Cady Bag Co

Live Oak Homes

Atkinson County Pre-K

Freedom Trailers, LLC



## Top 5 Industries

Manufacturing

Transportation & Warehousing

Public Administration

Retail Trade

Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL

4th Qtr. 2021



## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 2.7%

125 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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



# 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

Bacon County Hospital &  
Health System

Beach Timber Co. Inc.

Twin Oaks Convalescent Center

D & L Sons

Satilla REMC



## Top 5 Industries

Manufacturing

Health Care & Social Assistance

Agriculture, Forestry,

Fishing, & Hunting

Retail Trade

Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021



## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 3.1%

150 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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)



# 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%



## 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 Industries

Manufacturing

Retail Trade

Administrative & Support and  
Waste Mgmt.

Health Care & Social Services

Public Administration

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021

## Food Insecurity Rate



Ben Hill - 17.2%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Walmart Supercenter

Southern Veneer Products

Covered Wagon Trailers, LLC

Hospital Authority-Ben Hill

Wiregrass Georgia Technical College

## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 4.5%

249 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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)



# 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%**



## Food Insecurity Rate

**Berrien- 16.3%**  
**Georgia - 10.9%**  
**National - 11.8%**



## 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 Employers

**D & D Farms**  
**Food Lion**  
**Berrien Primary School**  
**B H Electronics, Inc.**  
**South Georgia Medical Center**  
**Berrien Campus**



## Top 5 Industries

**Manufacturing**  
**Retail Trade**  
**Public Administration**  
**Health Care & Social Assistance**  
**Accomodation & Food Services**

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021



## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

**Current 4.5%**  
**253 Unemployed**  
**Georgia 3.3%**  
**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)



# 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

**Cal-Maine Foods, Inc.**

**H & S Car Carriers**

**Okefenokee Rural EMC**

**Hoboken Elementary School**

**Bay View Nursing Home**



## Top 5 Industries

**Wholesale Trade**

**Retail Trade**

**Construction**

**Health Care & Social Assistance**

**Manufacturing**

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021

## Unemployment Rate

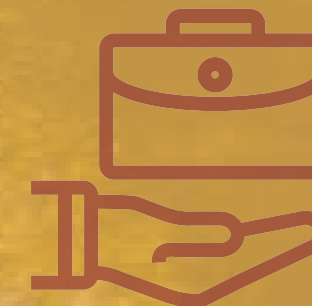
As of June, 2022

**Current 3.6%**

**270 Unemployed**

**Georgia 3.3%**

**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)



# 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

Presbyterian Home

Crown Health Laundry Service

BCT Gin Co.

Langboard OSB

Fellowship Home at Brookside



## Top 5 Industries

Agriculture, Forestry,

Fishing, & Hunting

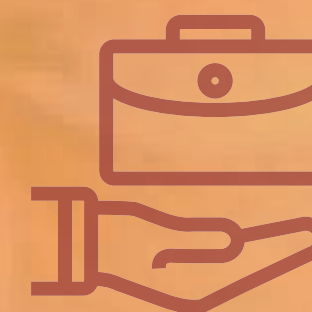
Health Care & Social Assistance

Retail Trade

Public Administration

Manufacturing

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021



## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 3.3%

220 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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)



# 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 Industries

Manufacturing

Administrative & Support and

Waste Mgmt.

Retail Trade

Public Administration

Accommodation & Food Service

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021

## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 3.1%

153 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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)



# 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

**Mauser Small Packaging**

**Lee Container Corp.**

**Clinch County Primary School**

**Clinch Memorial Hospital**

**Dupont Yard, Inc.**



## Top 5 Industries

**Manufacturing**

**Agriculture, Forestry,**

**Fishing, & Hunting**

**Health Care & Social Assistance**

**Retail Trade**

GA DOL

4th Qtr. 2021

**Administrative & Support  
& Waste Mgmt.**



## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

**Current 2.9%**

**90 Unemployed**

**Georgia 3.3%**

**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)



# 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

Health Care & Social Assistance

Retail Trade

Transportation & Warehousing

Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021

## Food Insecurity Rate



Coffee - 14.2%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Pilgrim Pride Corp.

Coffee Regional Medical Center

PCC Airfoils, Inc.

Walmart Supercenter

Coffee Correctional Facility

## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 3.6%

669 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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)



# 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%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Cook - 13.8%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%

## 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

Walmart Supercenter

Williams Investment Co.

Adel Public Works Dept.

Southwell Medical Center

Vulcan Steel



## Top 5 Industries

Retail Trade

Manufacturing

Accommodation & Food Services

Health Care & Social Assistance

Public Administration

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021

## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 3.3%

269 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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)



# 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

Grim Way Farms

Echols County Schools

Coggins Farm and Produce

Big C Freight, Inc.

Corbett Electrical



## Top 5 Industries

Agriculture, Forestry,

Fishing, & Hunting

Construction

Wholesale Trade

Retail Trade

Educational Services

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021



## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 2.6%

49 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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)



# 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

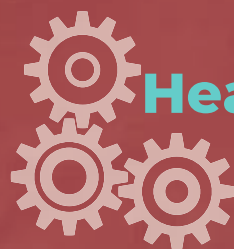
**Median Household Income \$41,484**

**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**

**Professional, Scientific, & Technical  
Services**

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021

## Food Insecurity Rate



**Irwin - 14.3%**

**Georgia - 10.9%**

**National - 11.8%**



## Top 5 Employers

**Irwin County Hospital**

**Irwin County Elementary School**

**Cargomate Trailers**

**Irwin County Commission Office**

**Hertiage Healthcare at Oceloa**

## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

**Current 4.0%**

**141 Unemployed**

**Georgia 3.3%**

**U. S. 3.8%**



1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year  
Data  
3.[www.irwincountyga.com](http://www.irwincountyga.com)  
4.[www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)



# 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%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Lanier - 17.1%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

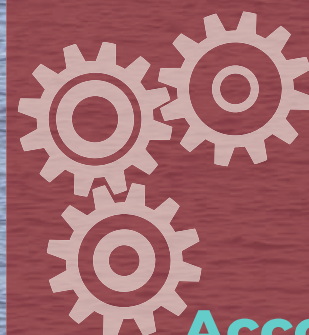
Affinity Building Systems

Lakeland Villa Convalescent Center

FMB Bancshares, Inc.

Lanier County School System

Farmers & Merchant Bank



## Top 5 Industries

Public Administration

Construction

Accommodation & Food Services

Manufacturing

Retail Trade

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021

## Unemployment Rate

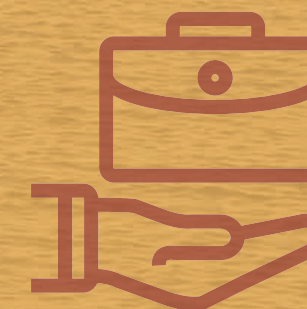
As of June, 2022

Current 3.5%

132 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

U. S. 3.8%



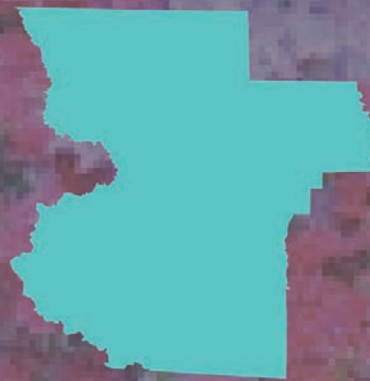
1.US Census Bureau, 2020 Census  
2.US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year  
Data  
3.[www.livingwage.mit.edu](http://www.livingwage.mit.edu)  
4.[www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)



# 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%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Lowndes - 14.1%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%

## 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 Employers

Moody Air Force Base

Valdosta State University

Valdosta Administrative

Home Depot Rapid Employment

Wild Adventures Theme Park



## Top 5 Industries

Health Care & Social Assistance

Retail Trade

Accommodation & Food Services

Educational Services

Manufacturing

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021

## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 3.5%

1,781 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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)



# 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%



## 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 Industries

Retail Trade

Wholesale Trade

Manufacturing

Construction

Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL

4th Qtr. 2021



## Food Insecurity Rate

Pierce - 12.4%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Stewart Distribution Wholesale

Blackshear Elementary School

Thom's Transport Co.

Pierce County Nursing Home

Mac 44 Forestry, LLC

## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 3.1%

266 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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



# 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%



## Food Insecurity Rate

Tift - 13.8%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%

## Economic



Median Household Income \$44,827

Per Capita Income \$24,191

Per Capita Living Wage  
\$31,332

% of People Below Poverty Level 22.5%



## Top 5 Employers

Target Distribution Center

Lewis Taylor Farms, Inc.

Walmart Supercenter

Heatcraft Refrigeration Products

Coastal Plain Experiment Station



## Top 5 Industries

Health Care & Social Assistance

Retail Trade

Accommodation & Food Services

Educational Services

Transportation & Warehousing

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021

## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 3.0%

631 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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)



# 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

Retail Trade

Manufacturing

Wholesale Trade

Public Administration

Accommodation & Food Services

GA DOL

4th Qtr. 2021

## Food Insecurity Rate



Turner- 17.9%

Georgia - 10.9%

National - 11.8%



## Top 5 Employers

Concordia, LLC

Piggly Wiggly

Golden Peanut and Tree Nuts

Turner County Elementary School

UFP Ashburn

## Unemployment Rate

As of June, 2022

Current 4.6%

148 Unemployed

Georgia 3.3%

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



# 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%**



## Food Insecurity Rate

**Ware - 14.9%**  
**Georgia - 10.9%**  
**National - 11.8%**



## 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 Employers

**Memorial Satilla Health**  
**Walmart Supercenter**  
**Ware State Prison**  
**Mall at Waycross**  
**Baptist Village Retirement Community**



## Top 5 Industries

**Health Care & Social Assistance**  
**Retail Trade**  
**Manufacturing**  
**Accommodation & Food Services**  
**Public Administration**

GA DOL  
4th Qtr. 2021



## Unemployment Rate As of June, 2022

**Current 3.2%**  
**489 Unemployed**  
**Georgia 3.3%**  
**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)



# 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 Blitch, 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

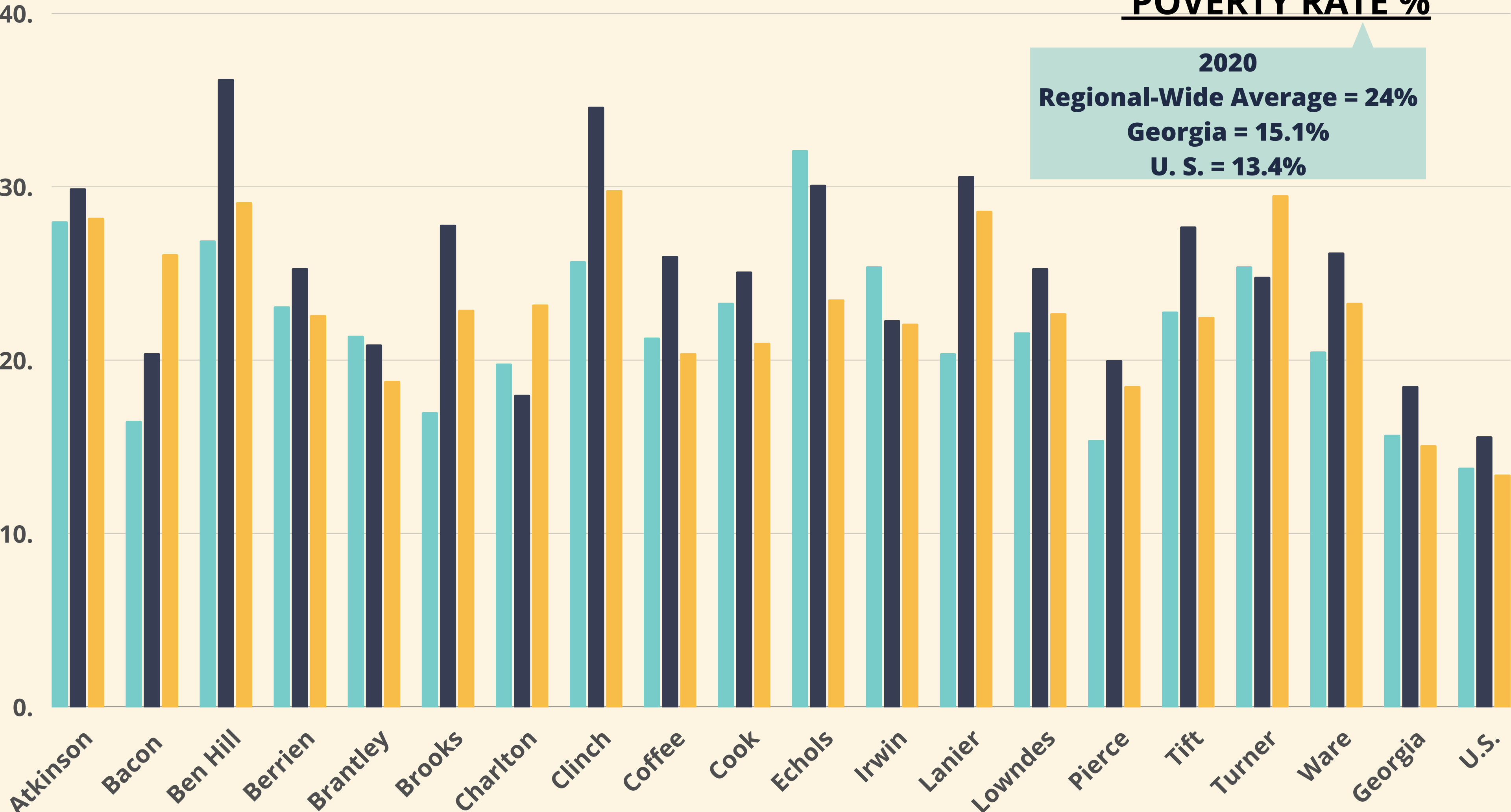
The following are the additional performance measures that will be used to evaluate the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's successful development and implementation of the CEDS.

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.



POVERTY RATE %

2020  
Regional-Wide Average = 24%  
Georgia = 15.1%  
U. S. = 13.4%





# Median Household Income

75,000

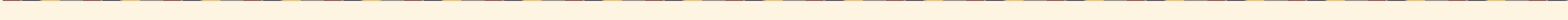
50,000

25,000

0

2020  
Regional-Wide Average = \$39,632  
Georgia = \$58,700  
U.S. = \$62,843

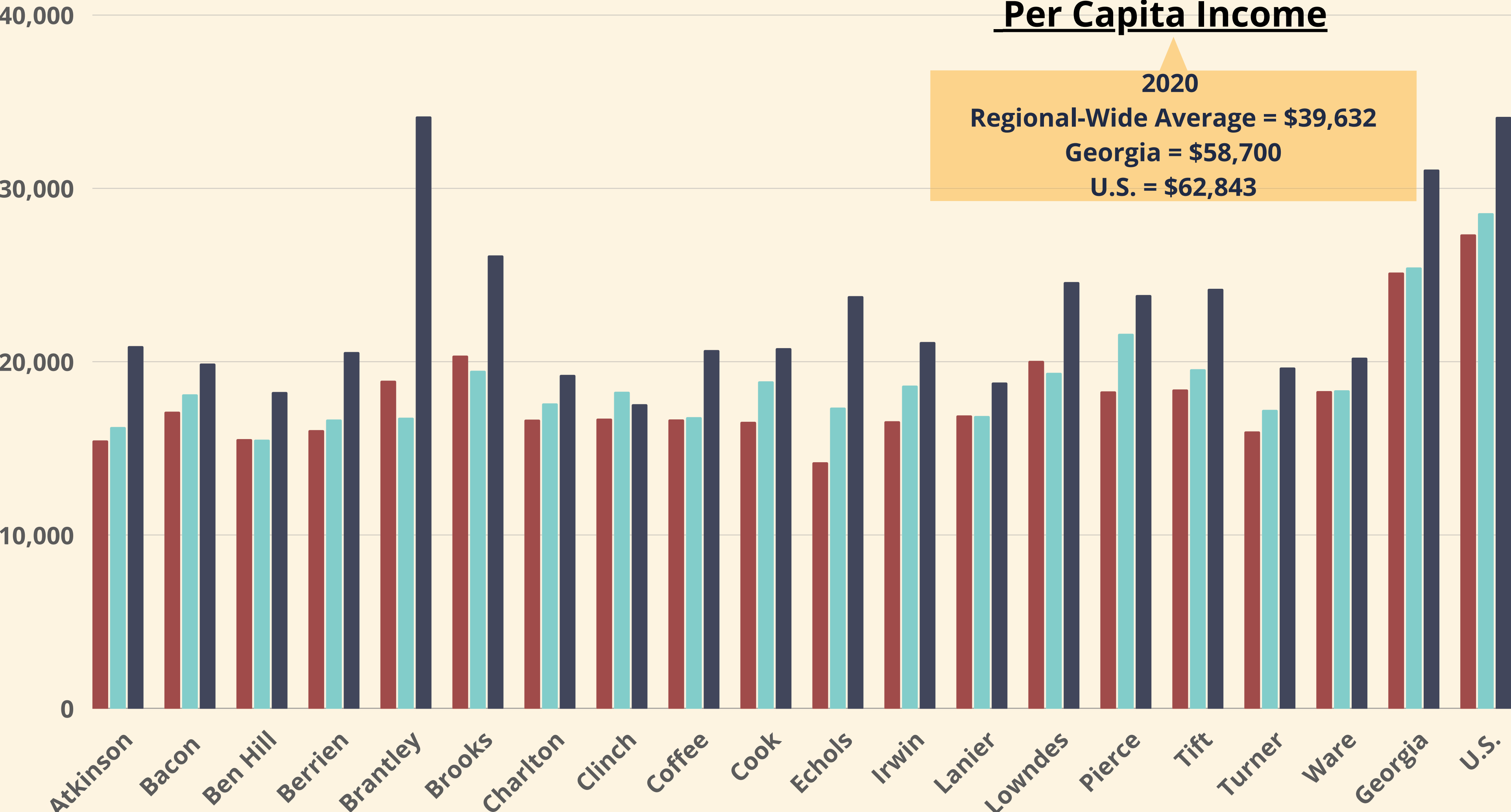
Atkinson Bacon Ben Hill Berrien Brantley Brooks Charlton Clinch Coffee Cook Echols Irwin Lanier Lowndes Pierce Tift Turner Ware Georgia U.S.





# Per Capita Income

2020  
Regional-Wide Average = \$39,632  
Georgia = \$58,700  
U.S. = \$62,843

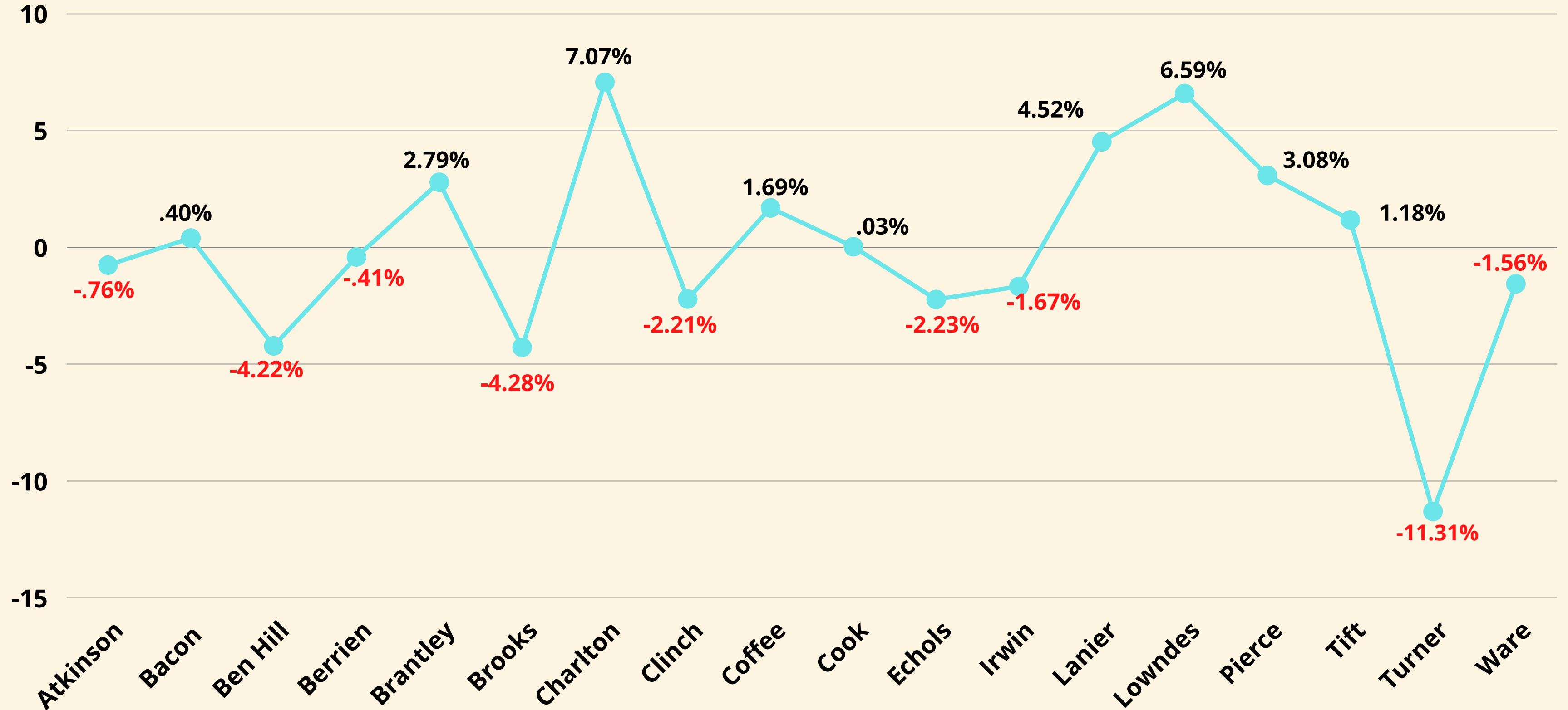




# Population Growth by County

## 2010-2020

■ Percent Change





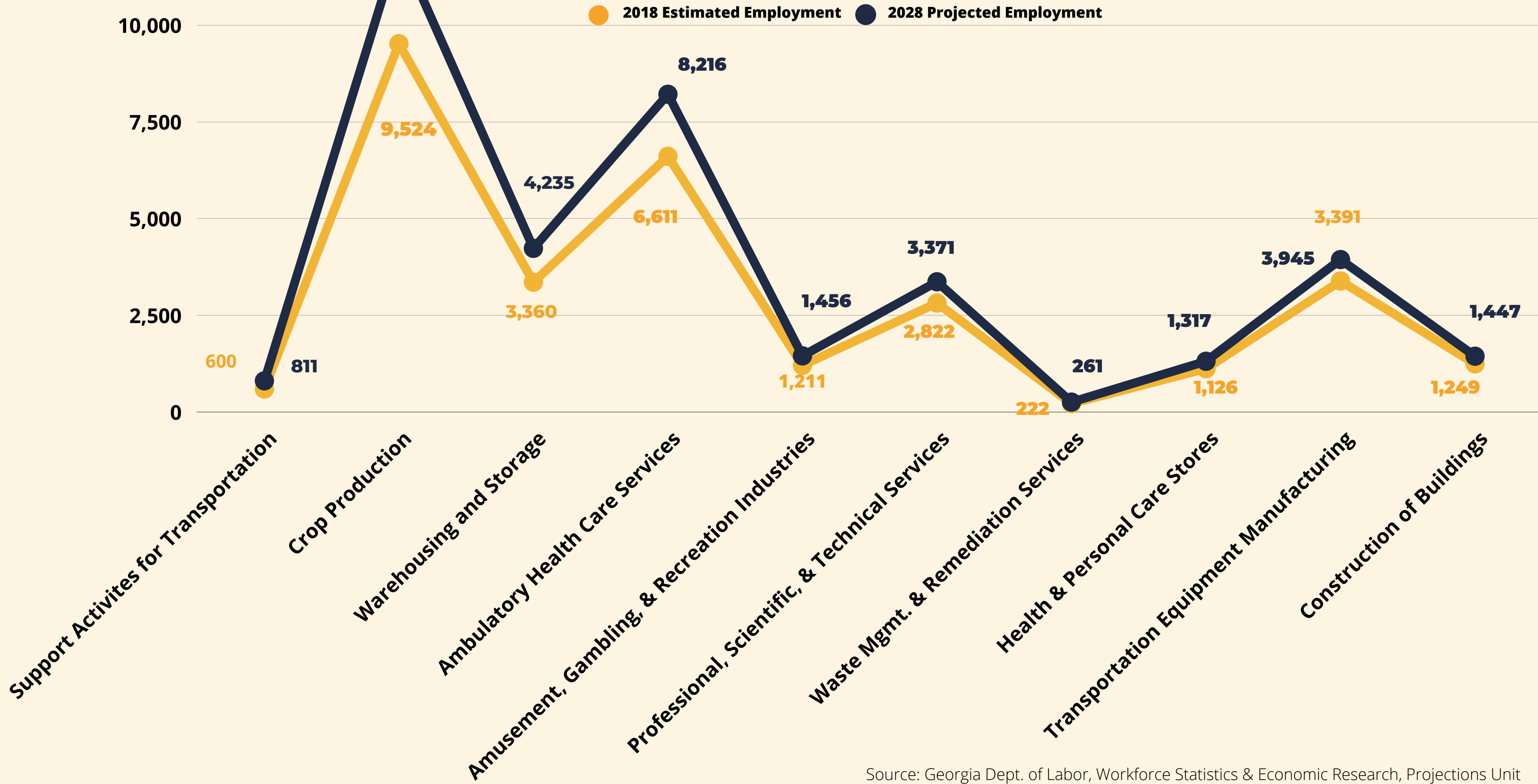
## Occupations By Projected Growth 2018-2028

Occupations	2018 Base Employment	2028 Projected Employment	Total Change in Employment	Precent Change in Employment	Annual Growth Rate Percentage	Annual Change in Employment	Annual Occupational Openings
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	6,040	6,840	800	13.29%	1.26%	80	1,220
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	5,060	6,190	1,130	22.20%	2.03%	110	1,030
Retail Salespersons	5,100	5,570	470	9.22%	0.89%	50	830
Cashiers	4,020	4,150	130	3.13%	0.31%	10	790
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	5,940	6,460	520	8.70%	0.84%	50	670
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	3,380	3,770	390	11.50%	1.09%	40	540
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,450	3,850	400	11.57%	1.10%	40	460
Office Clerks, General	3,590	3,550	-40	-1.25%	-0.13%	0	430
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other, Including Team Assemblers	3,670	3,620	-50	-1.47%	-0.15%	-10	420
Waiters and Waitresses	2,120	2,170	50	2.31%	0.23%	10	420
Customer Service Representatives	2,740	2,870	130	4.75%	0.46%	10	390
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	2,360	2,840	480	20.52%	1.88%	50	350
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	1,840	2,080	240	12.64%	1.20%	20	280
Personal Care Aides	1,300	1,820	520	40.28%	3.44%	50	270
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	2,490	2,380	-110	-4.30%	-0.44%	-10	270



# Industries By Projected Growth

## 2018-2028





# LONG-TERM OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS

## 2018 to 2028

### LWDA#018 Southern Georgia

#	SOC Code	Occupations	Typical Education	2018 Base Employment	2028 Projected Employment	Total Change in Employment	Percent Change in Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Annual Occupational		Annual Change in Employment	Annual Occupation Openings
									Labor Force Exits	Occupational Transfers		
1	45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Green	No formal educational cred	5,060	6,190	1,130	22.20%	2.03%	220	700	110	1,030
2	35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Inc	No formal educational cred	6,040	6,840	800	13.29%	1.26%	510	630	80	1,220
3	11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	High school diploma or equ	5,940	6,460	520	8.70%	0.84%	390	230	50	670
4	39-9021	Personal Care Aides	High school diploma or equ	1,300	1,820	520	40.28%	3.44%	120	100	50	270
5	53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	No formal educational cred	2,360	2,840	480	20.52%	1.88%	80	220	50	350
6	41-2031	Retail Salespersons	No formal educational cred	5,100	5,570	470	9.22%	0.89%	310	470	50	830
7	29-1141	Registered Nurses	Bachelor's degree	3,010	3,430	420	13.77%	1.30%	90	80	40	210
8	53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Postsecondary non-degree	3,450	3,850	400	11.57%	1.10%	150	270	40	460
9	53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Har	No formal educational cred	3,380	3,770	390	11.50%	1.09%	160	340	40	540
10	37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeepin	No formal educational cred	1,680	1,980	300	17.59%	1.63%	110	130	30	270
11	43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	High school diploma or equ	1,840	2,080	240	12.64%	1.20%	100	160	20	280
12	11-1021	General and Operations Managers	Bachelor's degree	2,430	2,670	240	9.76%	0.94%	50	170	20	240
13	51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	High school diploma or equ	1,130	1,340	210	18.90%	1.75%	30	100	20	150
14	31-9092	Medical Assistants	Postsecondary non-degree	780	980	200	25.90%	2.33%	30	60	20	110
15	49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	High school diploma or equ	1,800	1,990	190	10.32%	0.99%	70	120	20	210

#### Data may not add due to rounding

This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the Georgia Department of Labor and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for noncommercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.





# Educational Attainment of Workforce

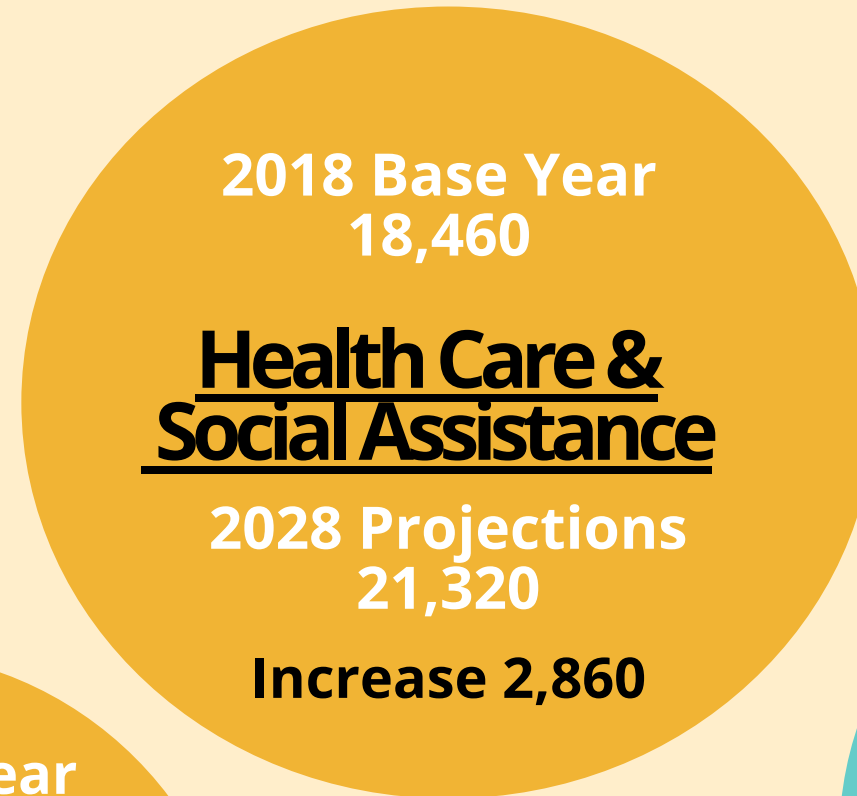
25 years & older

<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



## Long-Term Industry Projections 2018-2028

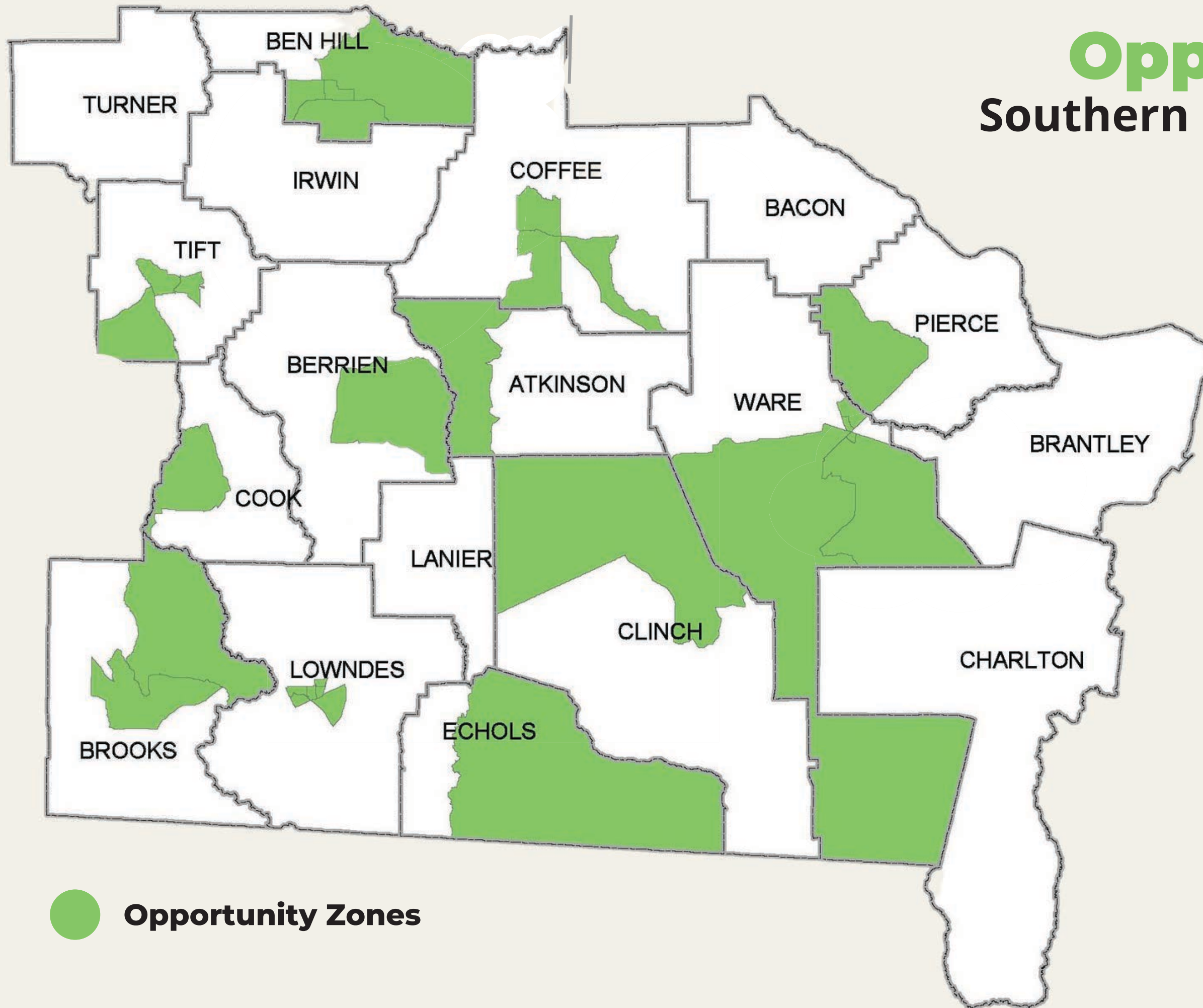




# Opportunity Zones

## Southern Georgia Regional Commission

Opportunity Zones are an economic development tool that allows people to invest in distressed areas in the United States. Their purpose is to spur economic growth and job creation in low-income communities while providing tax benefits to investors.



 **Opportunity Zones**

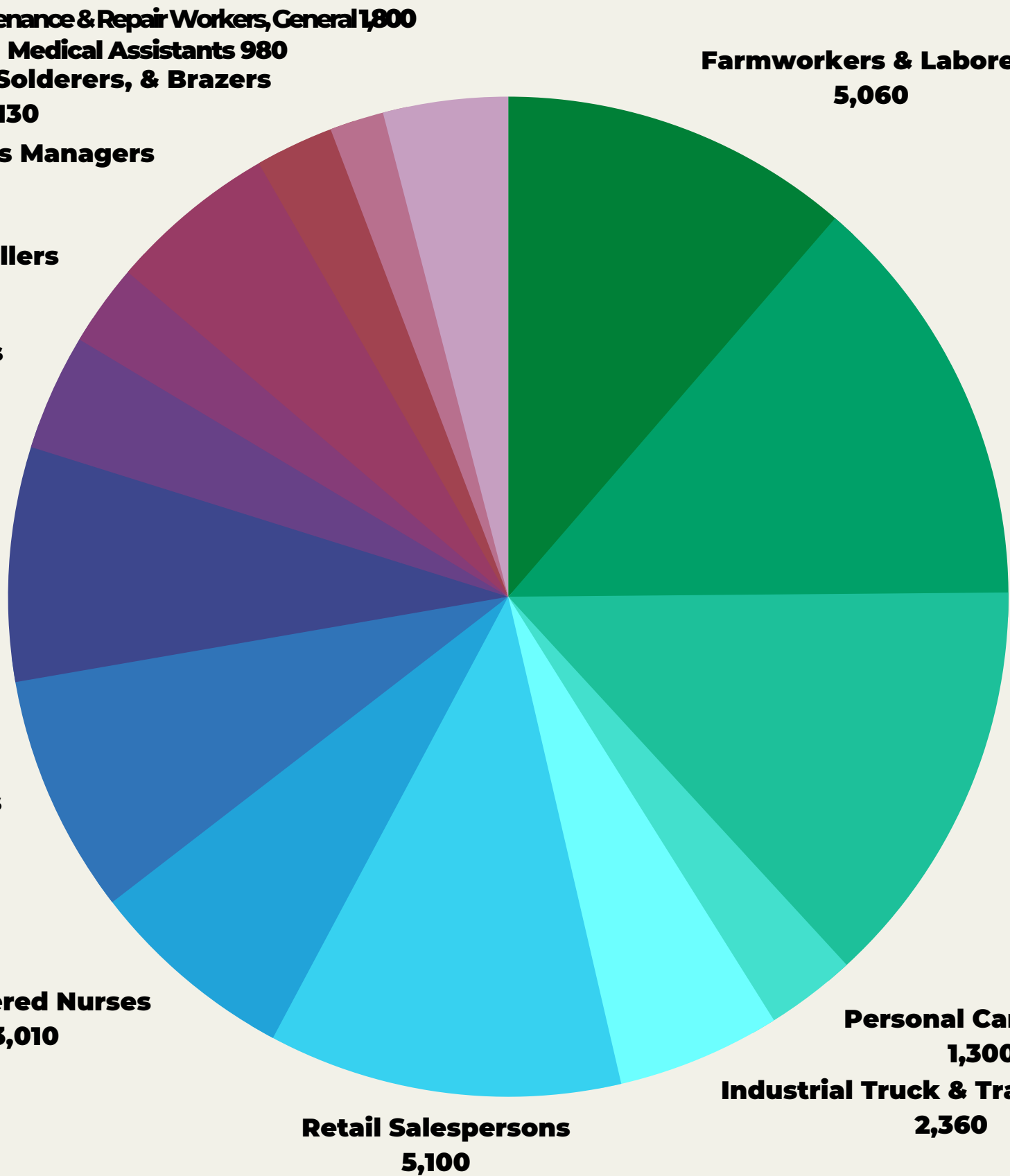




# Long-Term Regional Occupational Projections

## 2018-2028

2018 Base Employment



### Annual Growth Rate

Farmworkers & Laborers - 2.03%  
Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers - 1.26%  
Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs. - 0.94%  
Personal Care Aides - 3.44%  
Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators - 1.88%  
Retail Salespersons - 0.89%  
Registered Nurses - 1.30%  
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers - 1.30%  
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Materials - 1.09%  
Janitors & Cleaners - 1.63%  
Store Clerks & Order Fillers - 1.20%  
General & Operations Managers - 0.94%  
Welders, Cutters, Solderes, & Brazers - 1.75%  
Medical Assistants - 2.33%  
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General - 0.99%

Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers  
6,040

Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Managers  
5,940

Personal Care Aides  
1,300

Industrial Truck & Tractor erators  
2,360

Retail Salespersons  
5,100

Registered Nurses  
3,010

Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers  
3,450

Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers  
3,380

Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids  
1,680

Stock Clerks & Order Fillers  
1,180

General & Operations Managers  
2,430

Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers  
1,130

Medical Assistants  
980

Maintenance & Repair Workers, General  
980

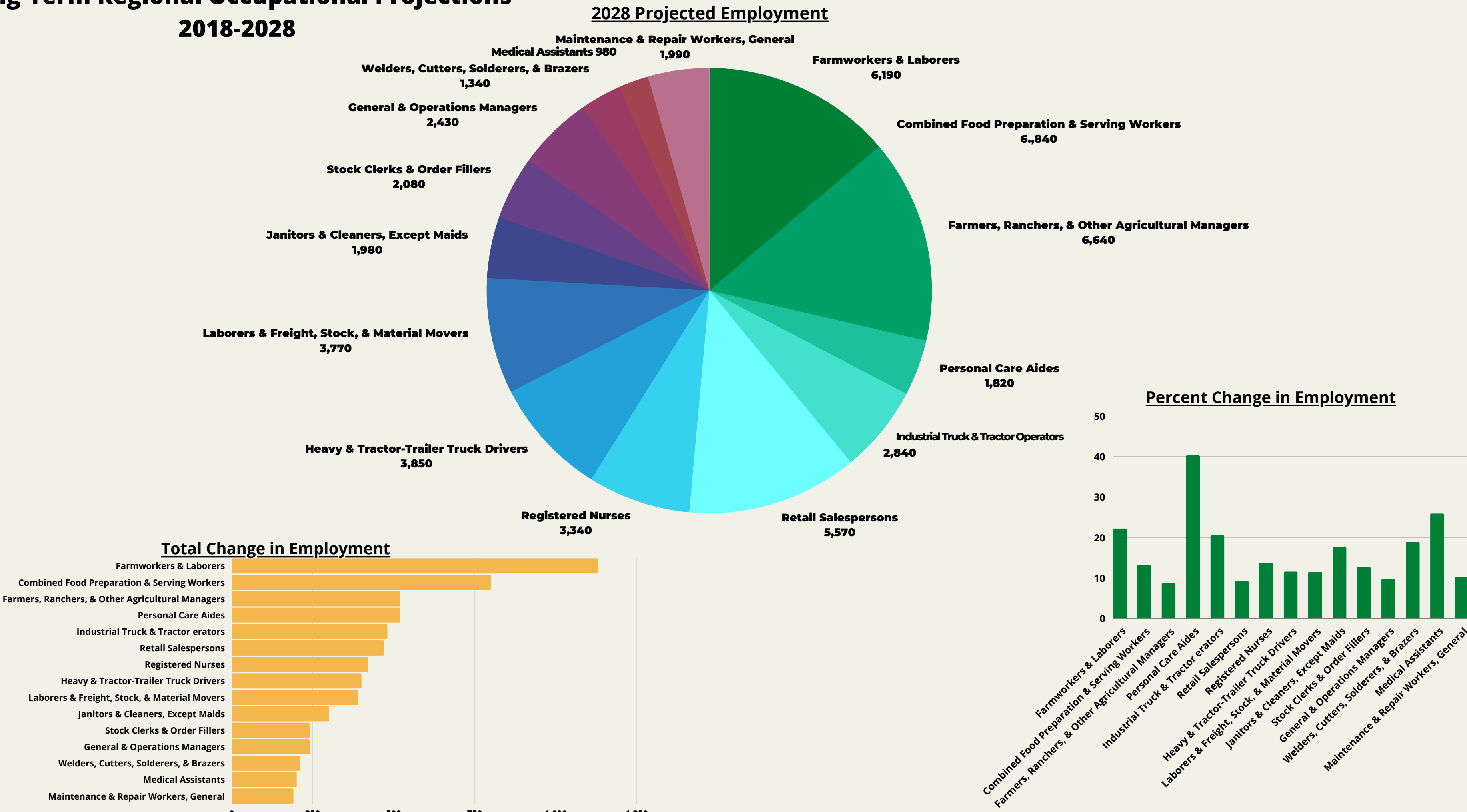
### Typical Education

Farmworkers & Laborers - No Formal Educational Credential  
Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers - No Formal Educational Credential  
Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Mgrs. - High School Diploma or Equivalent  
Personal Care Aides - High School Diploma or Equivalent  
Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators - No Formal Educational Credential  
Retail Salespersons - No Formal Educational Credential  
Registered Nurses - Bachelor's Degree  
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers - Postsecondary Non-Degree Award  
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Materials - No Formal Educational Credential  
Janitors & Cleaners - No Formal Educational Credential  
Store Clerks & Order Fillers - High School Diploma or Equivalent  
General & Operations Managers - Bachelor's Degree  
Welders, Cutters, Solderes, & Brazers - High School Diploma or Equivalent  
Medical Assistants - Postsecondary Non-Degree Award  
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General - High School Diploma or Equivalent



# Long-Term Regional Occupational Projections

## 2018-2028



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



