

AITKIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027

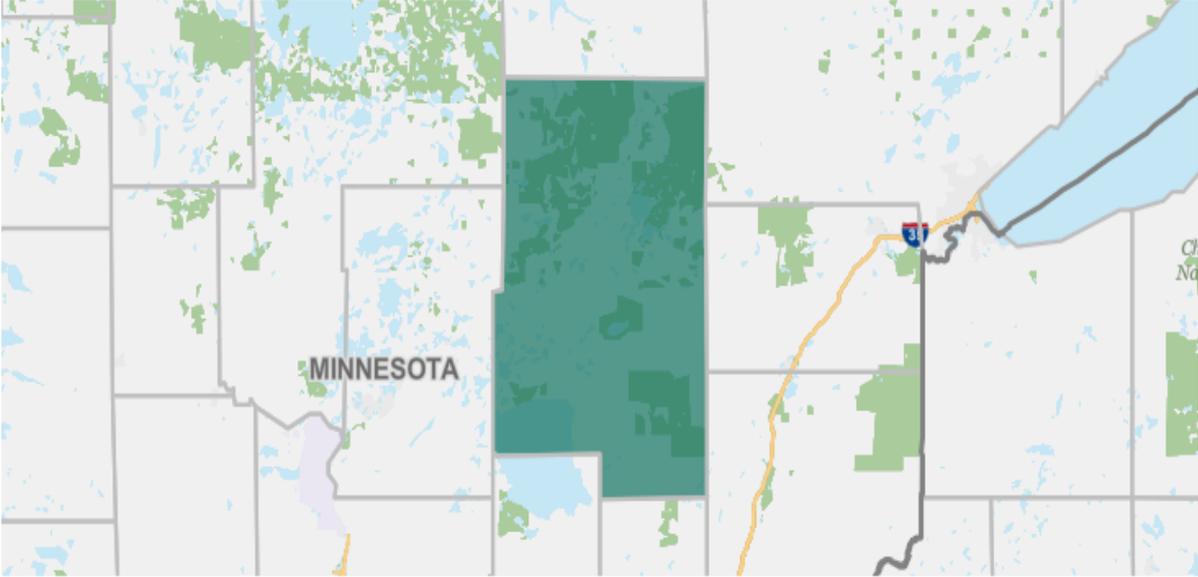


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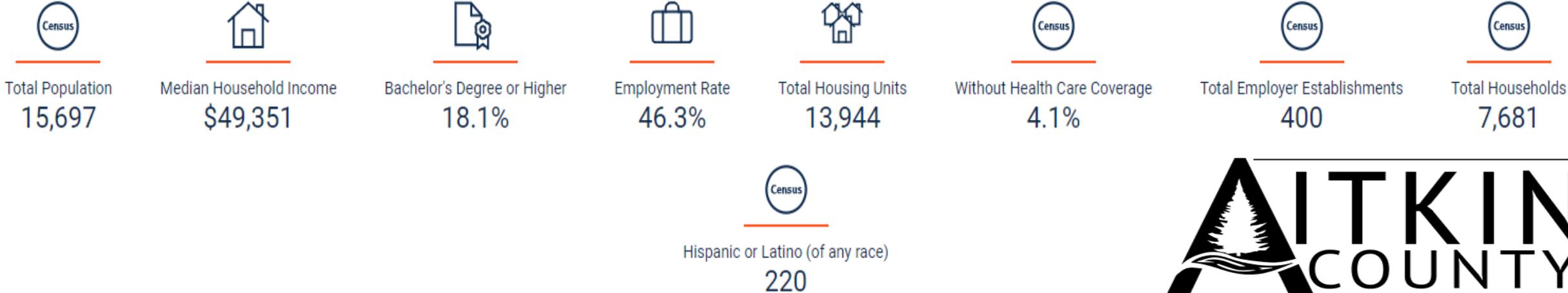
Aitkin County, Minnesota

County, or equivalent in Minnesota

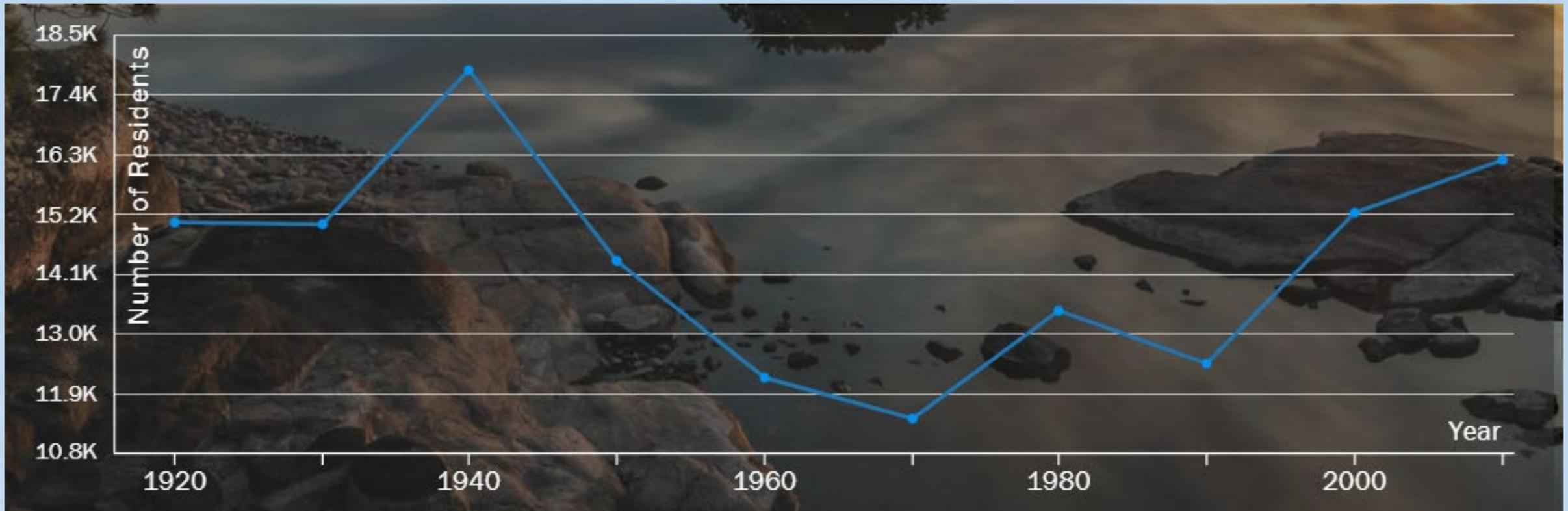


Aitkin County, Minnesota has 1,821.3 square miles of land area and is the 9th largest county in Minnesota by total area. Aitkin County, Minnesota is bordered by Pine County, Minnesota, Itasca County, Minnesota, St. Louis County, Minnesota, Carlton County, Minnesota, Crow Wing County, Minnesota, Cass County, Minnesota, Kanabec County, Minnesota, and Mille Lacs County, Minnesota.

- **Minnesota's statewide median age was 38.4 years**
- **Aitkin County has the highest median age in Minnesota, 55.5.**
- **Neighboring Counties median age: Kanabec 45.0, Pine 45.0, Itasca 46.3 and Crow Wing 46.3**

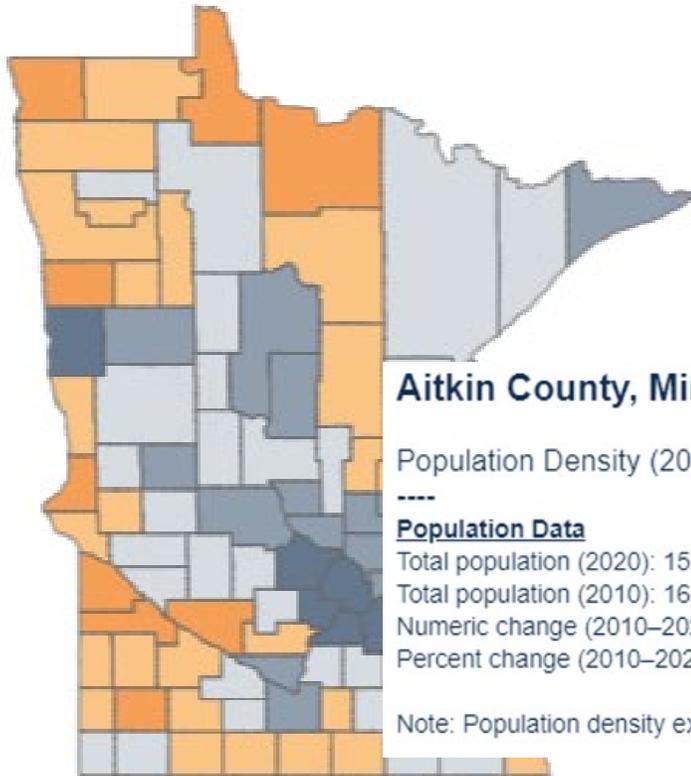


AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL POPULATION



MN COUNTIES 2020 POPULATION +/-

Percent Change in Population for Minnesota Counties: 2010–2020



Aitkin County, Minnesota

Population Density (2020): 8.6 people per square mile

Population Data

Total population (2020): 15,697

Total population (2010): 16,202

Numeric change (2010–2020): -505

Percent change (2010–2020): -3.1

Note: Population density expressed as average number of people per square mile of land area.

Percent change

10.0 to 19.9

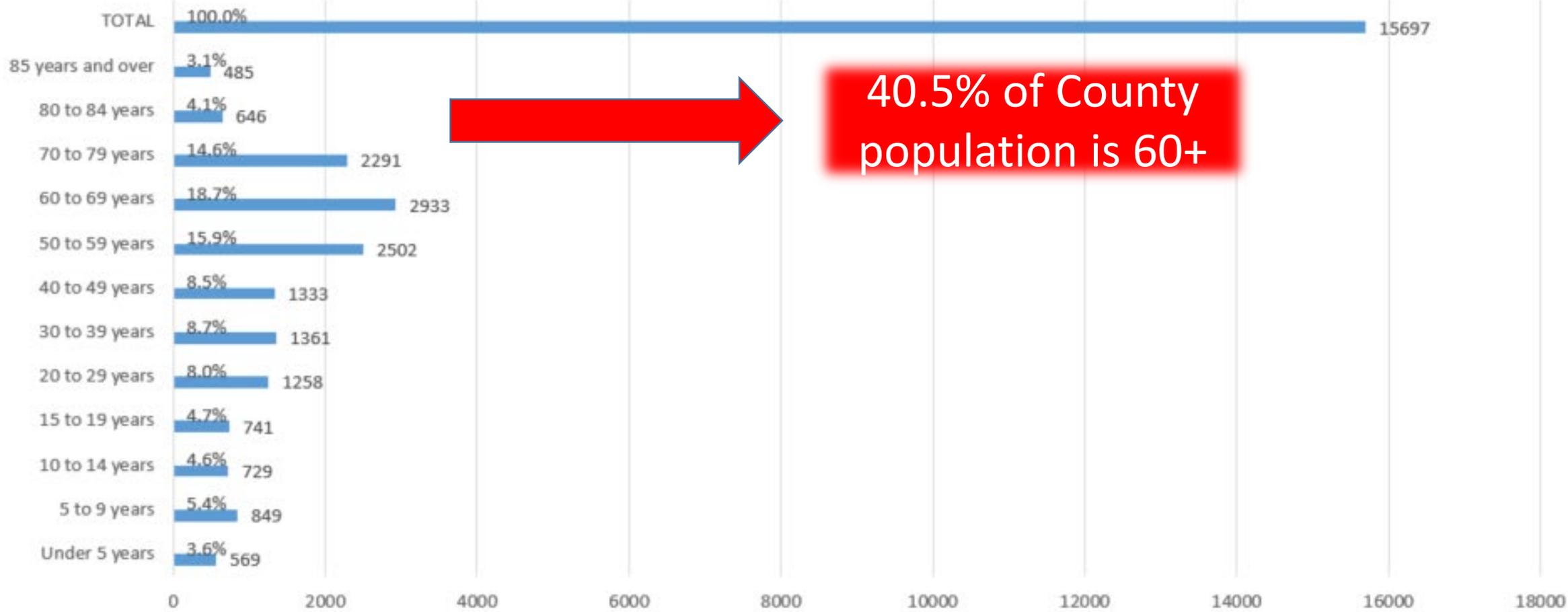
5.0 to 9.9

0.0 to 4.9

-4.9 to -0.1

-5.0 or less

AITKIN COUNTY POP BY AGE RANGE



40.5% of County population is 60+

	Under 5 years	5 to 9 years	10 to 14 years	15 to 19 years	20 to 29 years	30 to 39 years	40 to 49 years	50 to 59 years	60 to 69 years	70 to 79 years	80 to 84 years	85 years and over	TOTAL
■ %	3.6%	5.4%	4.6%	4.7%	8.0%	8.7%	8.5%	15.9%	18.7%	14.6%	4.1%	3.1%	100.0%
■ POP	569	849	729	741	1258	1361	1333	2502	2933	2291	646	485	15697

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Income and Earnings

\$49,351 +/- \$1,960

Median Household Income in Aitkin County, Minnesota

\$74,593 +/- \$826

Median Household Income in Minnesota

Table:
S1901

Table Survey/Program:
2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Median Income by Types of Families in Aitkin County, Minnesota

Families - \$60,765



Married-couple families - \$67,265



Nonfamily households - \$27,559



\$0 \$10,000 \$20,000 \$30,000 \$40,000 \$50,000 \$60,000 \$70,000

Chart Survey/Program: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Class of Worker

16.4% +/- 1.8%

Local, State, & Federal Government Workers in Aitkin County, Minnesota

12.6% +/- 0.3%

Local, State, & Federal Government Workers in Minnesota

Table:
S2406

Table Survey/Program:
2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Class of Worker in Aitkin County, Minnesota

Employee of private company workers - 59.0%



Self-employed in own incorporated business workers - 4.6%



Private not-for-profit wage and salary workers - 10.6%



Local, state, and federal government workers - 16.4%



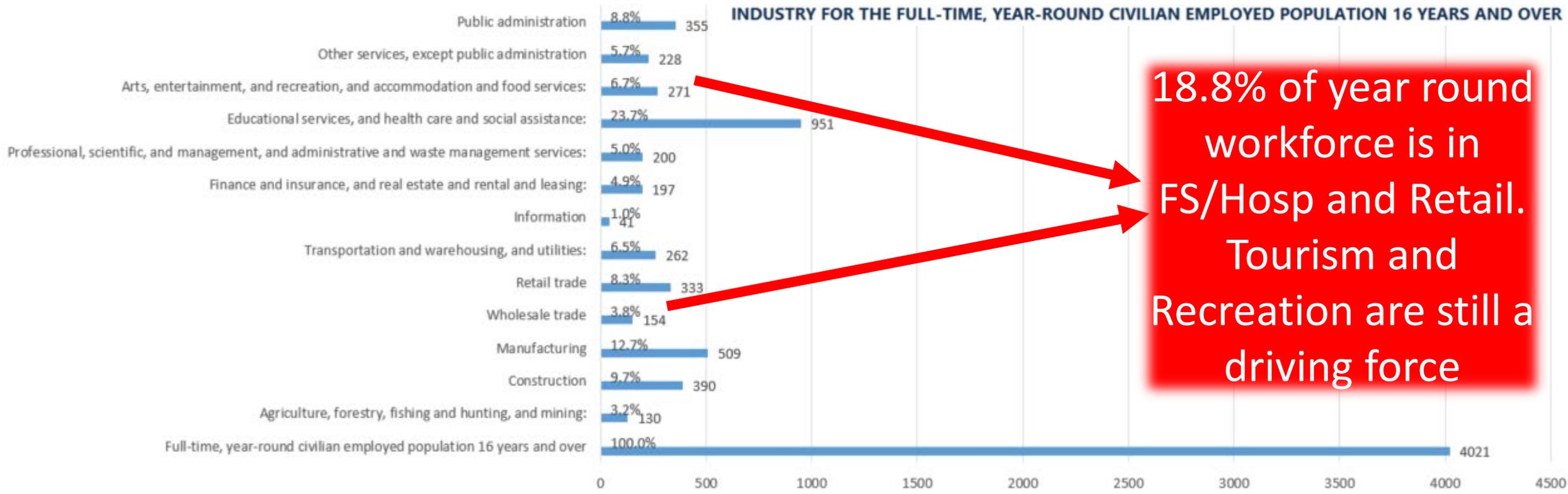
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers and unpaid family workers - 9.3%



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%

Chart Survey/Program: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables

BUSINESS & ECONOMY



18.8% of year round workforce is in FS/Hosp and Retail. Tourism and Recreation are still a driving force

	Full-time, year-round civilian employed population 16 years and over	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	Construction	Manufacturing	Wholesale trade	Retail trade	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	Information	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing:	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services:	Educational services, and health care and social assistance:	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services:	Other services, except public administration	Public administration
%	100.0%	3.2%	9.7%	12.7%	3.8%	8.3%	6.5%	1.0%	4.9%	5.0%	23.7%	6.7%	5.7%	8.8%
#	4021	130	390	509	154	333	262	41	197	200	951	271	228	355

HOUSING

Housing Units

13,944

Total Housing Units in Aitkin County, Minnesota

2,485,558

Total Housing Units in Minnesota

Table:
[H1](#)

Table Survey/Program:
2020 Decennial Census

Homeownership

82.2% +/- 1.3%

Homeownership rate in Aitkin County,
Minnesota

64.0% +/- 0.2%

Homeownership rate in United States

Table:
DP04

Table Survey/Program:
2019 American Community Survey 5-Year
Estimates

Renter Costs

\$768 +/- \$66

Median gross rent in Aitkin County,
Minnesota

\$1,062 +/- \$1

Median gross rent in United States

Table:
DP04

Table Survey/Program:
2019 American Community Survey 5-Year
Estimates

Housing Value

\$183,200 +/- \$6,353

Median housing value in Aitkin County,
Minnesota

\$217,500 +/- \$180

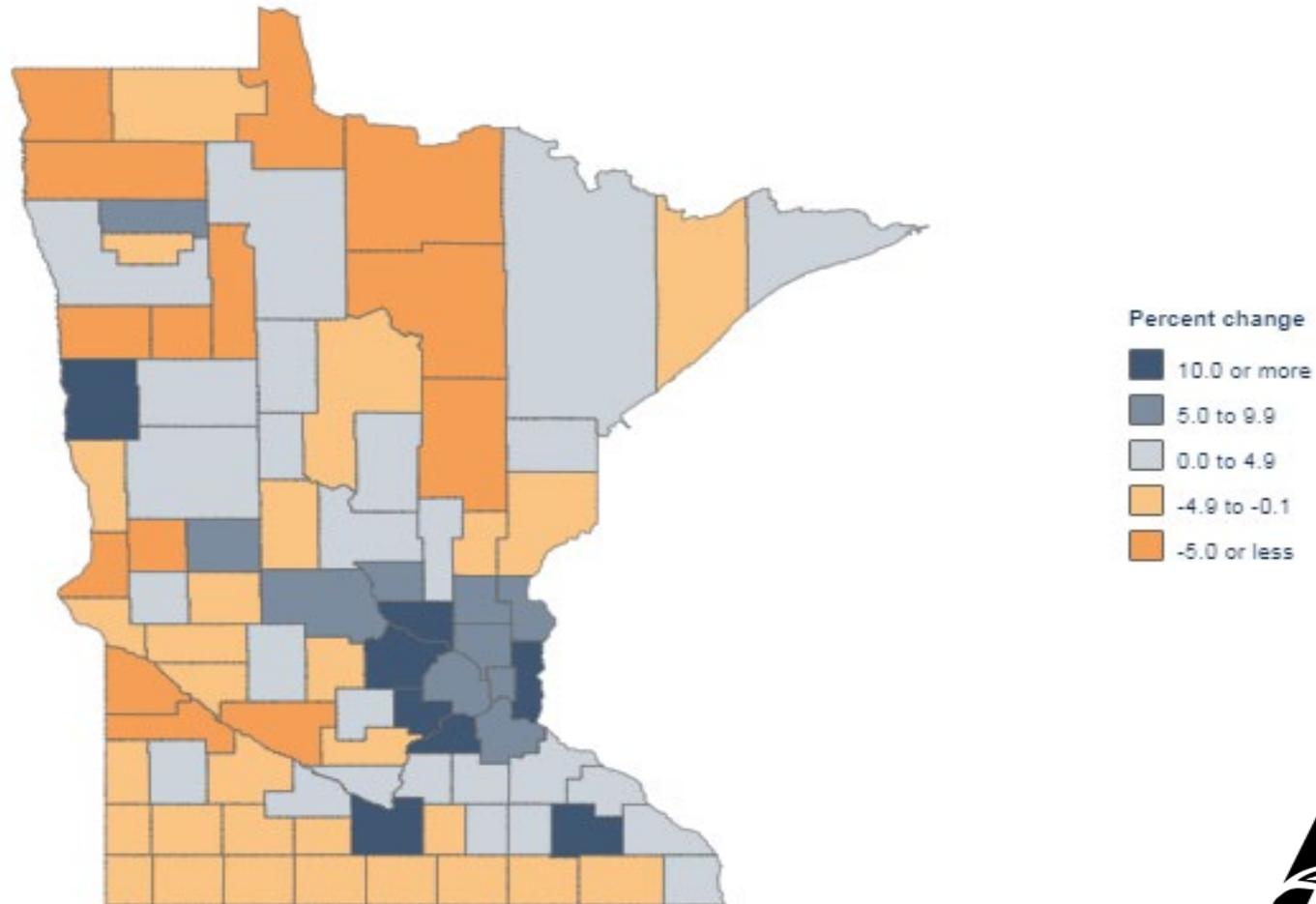
Median housing value in United States

Table:
DP04

Table Survey/Program:
2019 American Community Survey 5-Year
Estimates

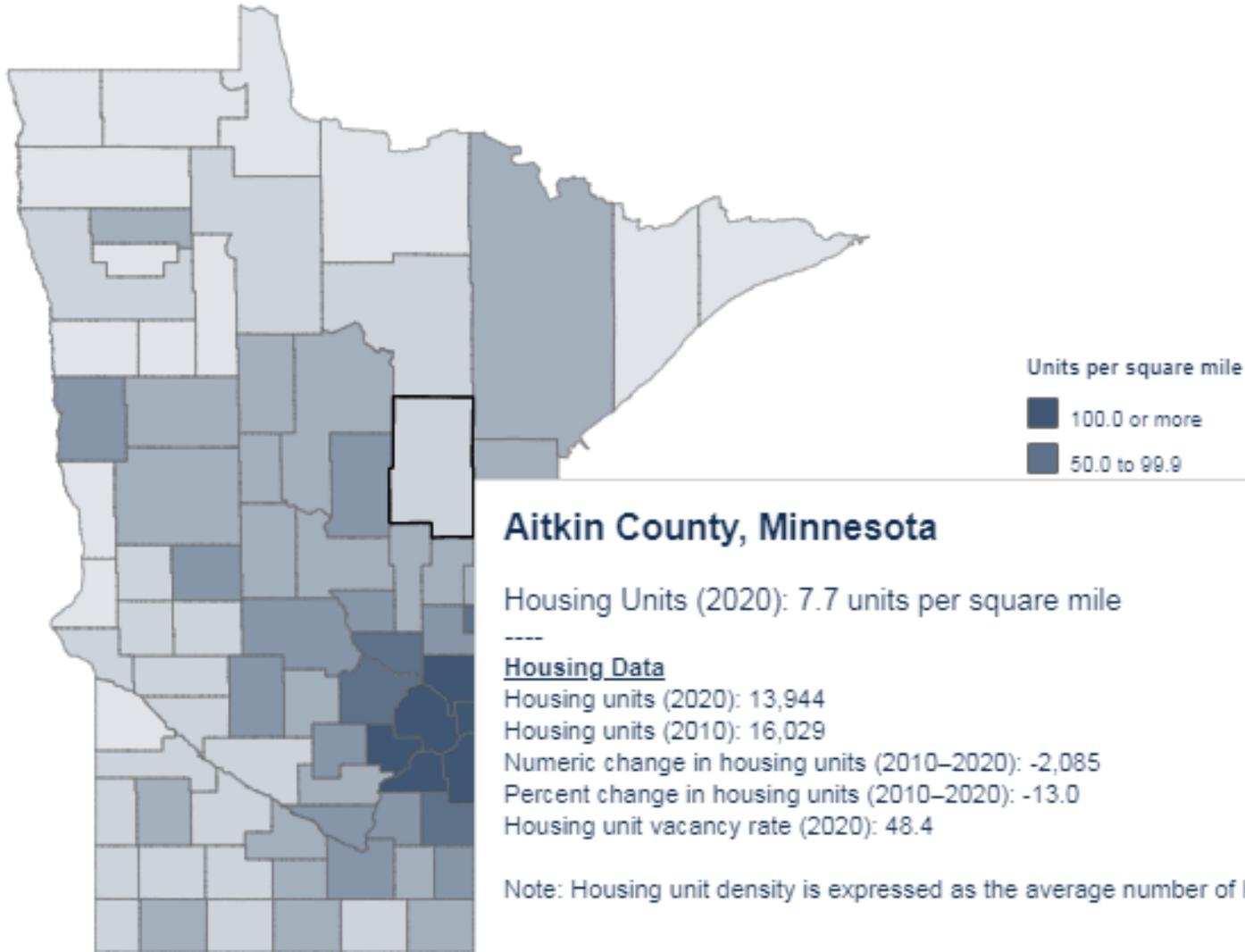
MN COUNTIES 2020 HOUSING UNITS % CHANGE +/-

Percent Change in Housing Units for Minnesota
Counties: 2010–2020



AITKIN COUNTY 2020 HOUSING UNIT DENSITY CHANGE +/-

Housing Unit Density in Minnesota Counties: 2020



Aitkin County, Minnesota

Housing Units (2020): 7.7 units per square mile

Housing Data

Housing units (2020): 13,944

Housing units (2010): 16,029

Numeric change in housing units (2010–2020): -2,085

Percent change in housing units (2010–2020): -13.0

Housing unit vacancy rate (2020): 48.4

Note: Housing unit density is expressed as the average number of housing units per square mile of land area.

Minnesota Counties

(Ranked by number of housing units in 2020)

38.	Aitkin County	13,944
39.	Nicollet County	13,371
40.	Le Sueur County	12,811
41.	Mille Lacs County	12,786
42.	Todd County	12,770
43.	Brown County	11,780
44.	Lyon County	11,180
		10,576
		10,158
		9,748
		9,583
		8,731
		8,354
		8,191
		7,577



SWOT



STRENGTH

- Recreational Resources
- Tourism
- Quality of rural life
- World Class Healthcare
- School Districts
- Regional ED Organizations
- Funding access
- Internal & external collaboration
- Attitude



WEAKNESS

- Broadband Services
- Workforce Housing
- Resistance to rapid change
- Population Demographics
- Youth retention
- Technical and Trade Education



OPPORTUNITY

- Broadband-RDOF
- E Commerce
- Housing Advancement
- Gen Z & Millennial attraction
- Culture Change to remote worker
- Technical and Trade Education
- Innovative marketing
- Wood Industry
- Population demographics
- Counterurbanization



THREAT

- Aggressive neighboring communities
- Brick and Mortar decline
- Population decline
- No "local" higher education
- Rapidly changing world

MISSION

To provide outstanding service in a fiscally responsible manner through innovation and collaboration with respect for all.

VISION

We strive to be a county of safe, vibrant communities that place value on good stewardship of local resources.

CORE VALUES

We achieve outstanding customer service through these core values:

- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Integrity
- People-Focused
- Professionalism



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION

To develop and promote resources for Economic Growth in our community. Establish, implement and administer programs to stimulate economic and retail development in Aitkin County.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

- Provide a single point of contact for existing business owners, new business owners and Entrepreneurs, that identifies all resources available for their business success.
- Spotlight quality of life in Aitkin County by highlighting our extensive outdoor recreational resources.
- Improve Broadband access to all Aitkin County residents and visitors to support vibrant communities.
- Attract businesses located outside of Aitkin County.
- Listen to the needs of the community to drive the economic engine.



FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH



WORKFORCE
ATTRACTION



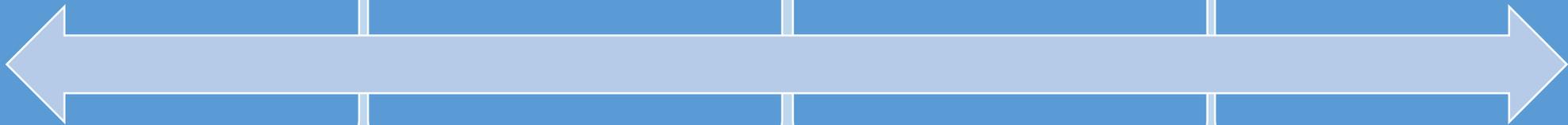
AGGRESSIVE
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



COMMUNITY
RESOURCES



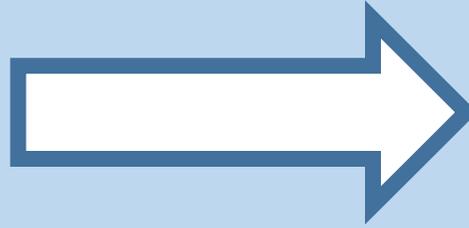
FOUNDATIONAL
ASSETS



WORKFORCE ATTRACTION

PRIORITIES FOR WORK FORCE GROWTH:

1. Support Career Development
2. Market Community Resources
3. Support Housing Initiatives
4. Support Health and Wellness Initiatives (Child Care)
5. Foundational Asset Improvement



We Must Highlight
the Benefits of Aitkin
County

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

- Recreation
- Arts & Entertainment
- Leisure
- Faith

QUALITY OF LIFE:

- Education
 - High Schools
 - Vocational Training
- Healthcare
- Natural Resources

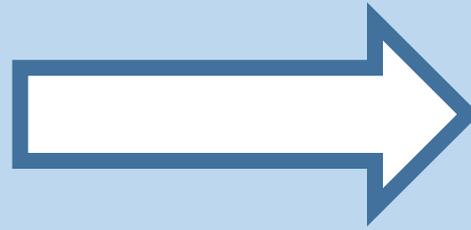
FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS:

- Housing
- Broadband

AGGRESSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESS GROWTH:

1. Business Retention and Expansion
2. Attract Non-Resident Business Prospects
3. Engage Unique and Innovative Businesses
4. Market Community Resources
5. Foundational Asset Improvement



We Must Highlight the Benefits of Aitkin County

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

- Recreation
- Arts & Entertainment
- Leisure
- Faith

QUALITY OF LIFE:

- Education
 - High Schools
 - Vocational Training
- Healthcare
- Natural Resources

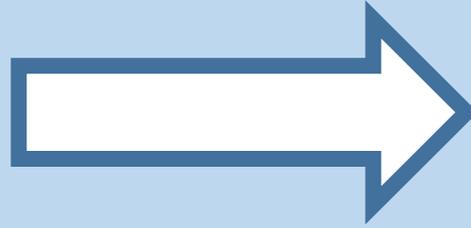
FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS:

- Housing
- Broadband

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

PRIORITIES FOR COMMUNITY RESOURCE GROWTH:

1. Promote Recreation, Leisure and Tourism
2. Support Health and Wellness Initiatives
3. Promote Educational Institutions
4. Invoke Change



We Must Highlight
the Benefits of Aitkin
County

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

- Recreation
- Arts & Entertainment
- Leisure
- Faith

QUALITY OF LIFE:

- Education
 - High Schools
 - Vocational Training
- Healthcare
- Natural Resources

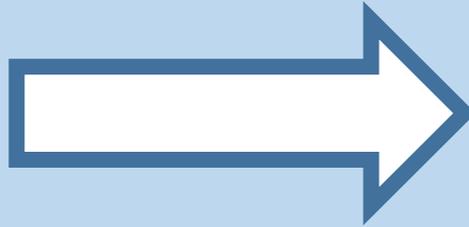
FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS:

- Housing
- Broadband

FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

PRIORITIES FOR FOUNDATIONAL GROWTH:

1. Improve Broadband Access
2. Support Housing Initiatives
3. Transportation
4. Water and Wastewater



**BUILD AND
IMPROVE OUR
INFRASTRUCTURE**

PRIORITY-PLAN-GOAL: WORKFORCE ATTRACTION

WORKFORCE ATTRACTION

PRIORITY	PLAN	GOAL
Support Career Development	Develop Vocational Work and Training Programs	Identify a Vocational Training program for each School District by 2024
	Develop business/workforce roundtable	2023
Market Community Resources	Create marketing plan for Aitkin County Identity	2022
	Aitkin County Website Development	2022
	Develop a focused marketing program for recreation and tourism	2022
	Develop Community Welcome Packet/website link	2022-2023
	Promote all trail systems	2022-2027
Support Housing Initiatives	Collaborate with HRA and highlight their housing progress initiatives	2022-2027
	Develop housing search program for new work force	Complete and functioning program by 2024
Support Health and Wellness Initiatives	Support Riverwood Healthcare initiatives and focus for Telemedicine	2022-2027
	Support local initiatives and focus on mental health	2022-2027
	Increase Child Care availability	Establish the Child Care Start- Up Grant in 2022
Foundational Asset Improvement	Improve broadband access to all County residents	Broadband available to +80% residents by 2027

PRIORITY-PLAN-GOAL: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AGGRESSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PRIORITY	PLAN	GOAL
Focus on Business Retention & Expansion	Establish a consistent BRE routine for current businesses	Implemented Immediately
	Modify the Business Development and Recreation Grant	Implement in 2022
Attract Non-Resident Business Prospects	Develop and Implement Small Business Aid Grant	Implement in 2022
	Develop and implement start up incentive program	Implement in 2022
	Develop relocation incentives program	Implement in 2022
	Develop land availability program and incentive for relocation	coincide with workforce housing search program in 2024
Engage Unique and Innovative Businesses	Aggressive hunt for Entrepreneurs and Producers	2022-2027
	Identify and develop E Commerce opportunity	2022-2027
	Develop state wide entrepreneurial talent search contest	2022
	Engage in all organizations supporting entrepreneurs- Innovate 218	Implemented Immediately
Market Community Resources	Create marketing plan for Aitkin County Identity	2022
	Aitkin County Website Development	2022
	Develop a focused marketing program for recreation and tourism	2022
	Promote all trail systems	2022-2027
Foundational Asset Improvement	Improve broadband access to all County residents	Broadband available to +80% residents by 2027

PRIORITY-PLAN-GOAL: COMMUNITY RESOURCES

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

PRIORITY	PLAN	GOAL
Promote Recreation, Leisure & Tourism	Create marketing plan for Aitkin County Identity	2022
	Aitkin County Website Development	2022
	Develop a focused marketing program for recreation and tourism	2022
	Promote all trail systems	2022-2027
	Modify the Business Development and Recreation Grant	Implement in 2022
Support Health and Wellness Initiatives	Support Riverwood Healthcare initiatives and focus for Telemedicine	2022-2027
	Support local initiatives and focus on mental health	2022-2027
	Increase Child Care availability	2022
Promote Educational Institutions	Support County high schools and higher learning institutions with their initiatives	2022
Foundational Asset Improvement	Improve broadband access to all County residents	Broadband available to +80% residents by 2027

PRIORITY-PLAN-GOAL: FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

PRIORITY	PLAN	GOAL
Improve Broadband Access	Establish full collaboration with all local providers	2022
	Establish routine for holding providers accountable	2022
	Pressure State and Federal Legislatures to clear path for RDOF	2022-2026
	Improve broadband access to all County residents	Broadband available to +80% residents by 2027
Support Housing Initiatives	Collaborate with HRA and highlight their housing progress initiatives	2022
	Develop housing search program for new work force	Complete and functioning program in 2022
	Collaborate with local developers to build workforce housing in all Aitkin County	2022-2027

APPENDIX

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=0500000US27001>



Kanabec County, Minnesota

County, or equivalent in Minnesota



Covering 521.5 square miles, Kanabec County, Minnesota is the 66th-largest county in Minnesota by area. Kanabec County, Minnesota is bordered by Pine County, Minnesota, Chisago County, Minnesota, Aitkin County, Minnesota, Mille Lacs County, Minnesota, and Isanti County, Minnesota.



POPULATION
16,089



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$57,163



POVERTY RATE
10.0%



BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER
14.7%



EMPLOYMENT RATE
59.9%



TOTAL HOUSING UNITS
7,931

People and Population

Age and Sex

45.0 +/- 0.3

Median age in Kanabec County, Minnesota

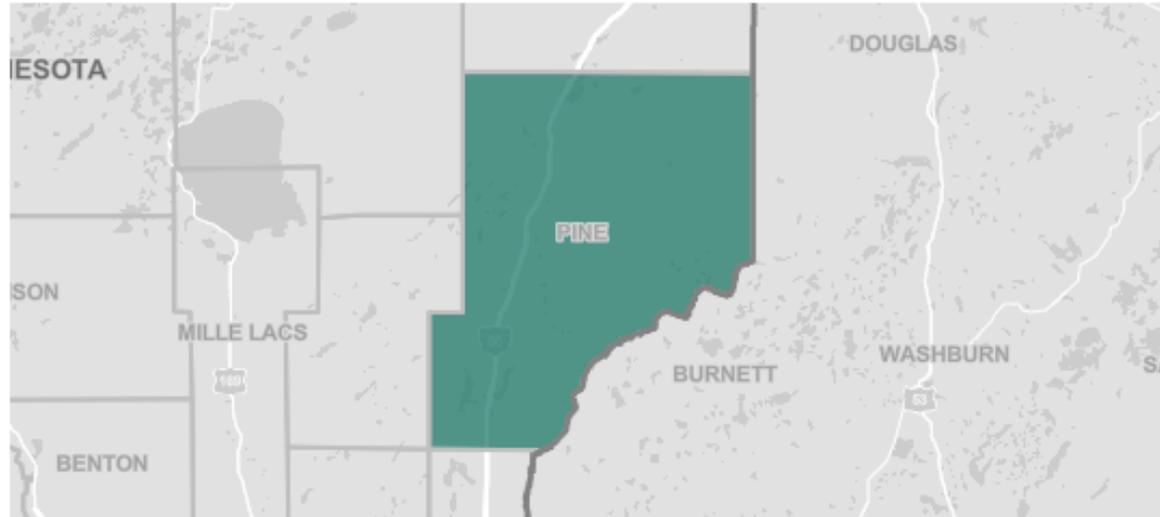
Population by Age Range in Kanabec County, Minnesota

Under 5 years - 5.1%



Pine County, Minnesota

County, or equivalent in Minnesota



Covering 1,410.9 square miles, Pine County, Minnesota is the 13th-largest county in Minnesota by area. Pine County, Minnesota is bordered by Kanabec County, Minnesota, Douglas County, Wisconsin, Burnett County, Wisconsin, Chisago County, Minnesota, Aitkin County, Minnesota, Isanti County, Minnesota, and Carlton County, Minnesota.



POPULATION
29,223



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$53,422



POVERTY RATE
11.0%



BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER
14.9%



EMPLOYMENT RATE
53.1%



TOTAL HOUSING UNITS
17,596

People and Population

Age and Sex

45.0 +/- 0.3

Median age in Pine County, Minnesota

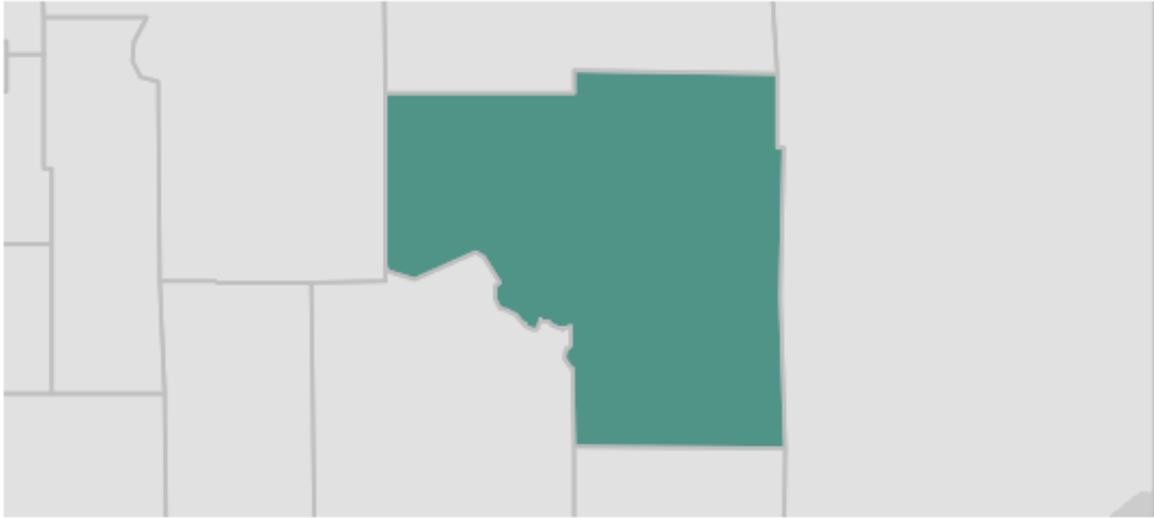
Population by Age Range in Pine County, Minnesota

Under 5 years - 4.7%



Itasca County, Minnesota

County, or equivalent in Minnesota



Covering 2,666.5 square miles, Itasca County, Minnesota is the 3rd-largest county in Minnesota by area. Itasca County, Minnesota is bordered by St. Louis County, Minnesota, Cass County, Minnesota, Aitkin County, Minnesota, Beltrami County, Minnesota, and Koochiching County, Minnesota.



POPULATION
45,141



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$55,139



POVERTY RATE
12.2%



BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER
23.1%



EMPLOYMENT RATE
54.0%



TOTAL HOUSING UNITS
27,667

People and Population

Age and Sex

46.3 +/- 0.2

Median age in Itasca County, Minnesota

Population by Age Range in Itasca County, Minnesota

Under 5 years - 5.3%



Crow Wing County, Minnesota

County, or equivalent in Minnesota



Covering 998.1 square miles, Crow Wing County, Minnesota is the 21st-largest county in Minnesota by area. Crow Wing County, Minnesota is bordered by Cass County, Minnesota, Aitkin County, Minnesota, Morrison County, Minnesota, and Mille Lacs County, Minnesota.



POPULATION
64,217



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$56,549



POVERTY RATE
10.8%



BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER
24.7%



EMPLOYMENT RATE
59.5%



TOTAL HOUSING UNITS
41,916

People and Population

Age and Sex

44.5 +/- 0.3

Median age in Crow Wing County, Minnesota

Population by Age Range in Crow Wing County, Minnesota

Under 5 years - 5.5%

