



Southwest Georgia Agribusiness Consortium Economic and Workforce Profile Executive Summary

Executive Briefing

Highlights of population and labor force trends, labor force quality, target industry and occupation trends are excerpted below, followed by a detailed analysis of the region's workforce supply and demand.

Population Trends

- After growing at 0.5 percent annually between 2000 and 2008, the population of the region was 311,054 in 2008.
- Over the next eight years, the annual population growth of the region is predicted to slow to 0.2 percent annually.
- Lee County is projected to experience the fastest growth at 2.1 percent per year over the next eight years.
- The unemployment rate increased from 5.5 percent in February 2008 to 9.4 percent in February 2009 as 5,463 more workers were unemployed in February 2009 than one year prior.
- The region's labor turnover rate has remained almost unchanged since 2000, increasing by only 0.1 percent to 10.0 percent in 2008, slightly higher than Georgia's 9.6 percent rate.
- In 2007, 22,156 people migrated to the region and 22,175 people emigrated from the region, creating a net out-migration of 19 people.
- The region's population is 50.8 percent non-white, while the state's population is 41.4 percent non-white.

Labor Force Trends

- Between 2000 and 2008, the regional labor force grew at 0.4 percent annually compared to 0.9 percent annually statewide.
- Within each of the target industries, the labor turnover rate was less than that industry at the state level and less than the overall labor turnover rate for the region and state.
- Workers aged 19-24 make up about 11 percent of the labor force in both the region and the state of Georgia, with 17.4 percent of the region's food processing employees being 19-24 years old.
- The region has a higher percentage of workers 55-64 years old than the state as a whole, but among target industries this is only reflected in agriculture.
- Each of the target industries is composed of a higher percentage of males than females, with agriculture having the highest proportion of males at 70.5 percent.



Labor Force Quality

- In 2006, the average income in the Southwest Georgia Agribusiness Consortium was \$29,940 or almost 25 percent lower than the state average of \$39,969.
- Self-employed proprietors account for 17.8 percent of jobs in the region, up from 13.3 percent a decade ago. In 2006, these jobs generated \$19,340 per year for each non-wage or salary job, down significantly from \$31,566 per year in 1996.
- Sixteen percent of residents of the region aged 25 and above have not completed high school compared with 14.9 percent for the U.S. and 16.7 percent for Georgia.

Industry and Occupation Trends

- While the manufacturing supersector in the region lost jobs between 2003 and 2008, employment in the food processing industry remained stable during that time period.
- Chemical manufacturing lost over 400 workers between 2003 and 2008, but is projected to maintain roughly the same level of employment between 2008 and 2018.
- Food processing is predicted to lose 288 jobs and agriculture is predicted to lose 673 jobs between 2008 and 2018.
- The average earnings for all workers in the region are \$35,395.
- Two of the largest occupations within the target industries, each with over 400 workers in 2008, are meat, poultry and fish cutters and trimmers and slaughterers and meat packers.
- Albany Technical College, Bainbridge College, and Southwest Georgia Technical College all offer programs to help the region train workers for key occupations.