



INSIGHTS INSIDER

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WORCESTER COUNTY'S GROWING JOB SECTORS

INTRODUCTION

What is there for work? Making a decision to live in a place can sometimes hinge on its economic conditions. Between 2001 and 2022, Worcester County saw its total number of jobs grow by 22%, very similar to the Massachusetts total of 23%. In that same time period, Worcester County's population grew by an estimated 13.5%; Massachusetts grew by 9.8%. Insights Insider #5 will analyze this growth as well as commuting patterns within Worcester County.

JOB SECTOR CHANGE

Economies change over time, and industries that were once dominant might someday find themselves receding, and vice versa. While Worcester County was itself once a major manufacturing center, many of those jobs have since left the area. Indeed, between 2001 and 2022, the number of manufacturing jobs in the County declined by 30%, a loss of just over 16,000 across the entire County, a smaller percentage decrease than statewide. However, in that same time frame, **the number of jobs in the County increased by 22%**, for a gain of 89,121 to bring the total to 496,084. Those gains were driven by jobs in **Health Care and Social Assistance** (an in-sector gain of 50%, or 25,681 jobs), **Financial Activities** (a gain of 66%, or 18,275), **Trade, Transportation, and Utilities** (a gain of 25%, or 18,073), and **Professional and Business Services** (a gain of 27%, or 14,022).

Worcester County had a **greater percentage gain in job growth** than Massachusetts in Health Care and Social Assistance and in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities. Worcester County also saw **greater percentage growth** in Construction, Government, and Leisure and Hospitality.

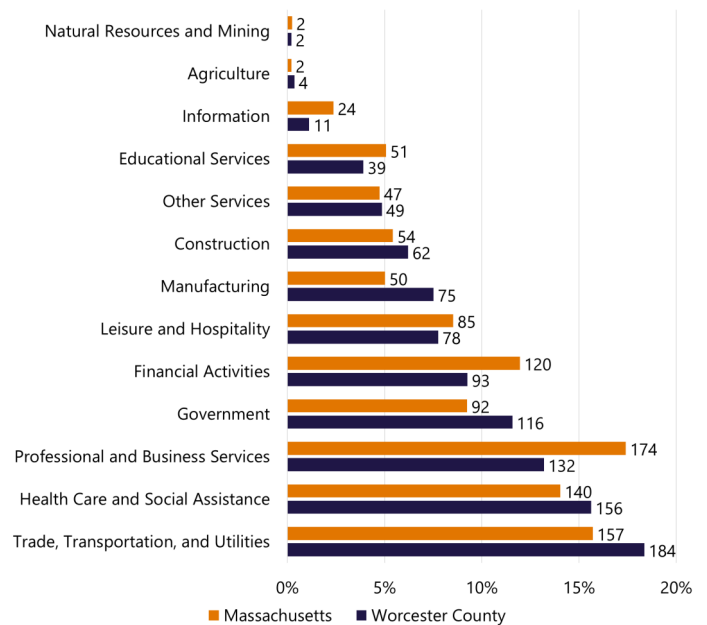
WHO'S WORKING WHERE?

Putting these numbers into perspective is helpful. There are two ways to do this. The first is simply thinking about the percentage of jobs that each sector represents out of the total. In Worcester County, jobs classified as Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (which includes jobs in

wholesale and retail trade, transportation and warehousing, and utilities) made up the largest share of jobs, at 18.4% of all jobs. In Massachusetts, these jobs made up 15.7% of all jobs in 2022 (Professional and Business Services had the greatest share of total jobs in Massachusetts).

The second way of putting these numbers into perspective is by considering how many jobs these represent out of every 1,000 workers. So, for example, of every 1,000 workers in Worcester County, 184 of them worked in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities. 156 worked in Health Care and Social Assistance. **Chart 1** graphs the percentage of all jobs each sector contributes to, as well as the number of workers out of every 1,000.

Chart 1: Percentage of Total Jobs and Jobs Per 1,000 People by Sector, 2022

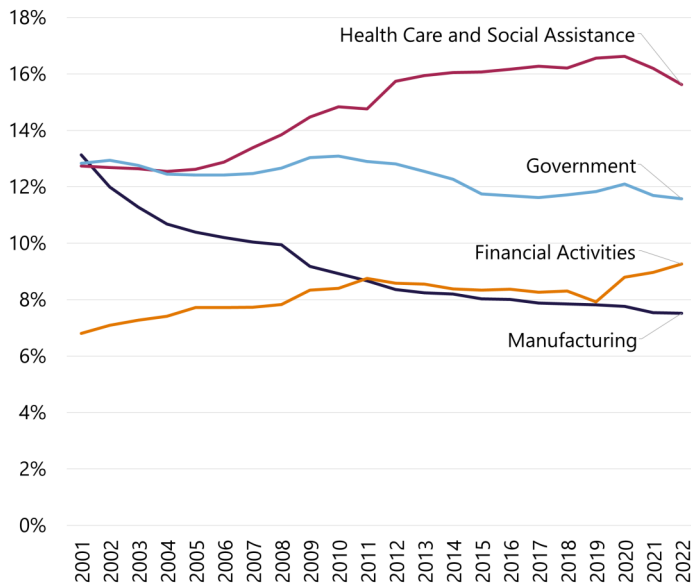


Source: Worcester County Insights Dashboard, 2025; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Note: Labels indicate number of workers out of 1,000

When compared to 2001, Health Care and Social Assistance, as well as Financial Activities, made up a much larger share of total jobs in the County. **Chart 2** compares

the sectors with more than a 1% change in total job share between 2001 and 2022. Interestingly, despite growth across most job sectors, two represented a smaller portion of total jobs in 2022 than they did in 2001—Other Services and Government are the two notable examples.

Chart 2: Job Sector Share of Total Jobs, 2001 to 2022



Source: Worcester County Insights Dashboard, 2025; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

WHERE ARE THEY EMPLOYED?

While a detailed breakdown of job sector locations within Worcester County is not available, there is plenty of information regarding commuting patterns across the sixty communities in the County. [Worcester County Insights includes data from 2021](#) about the number of people entering and leaving these municipalities for work, whether for their primary jobs or for any secondary work. **About 37% of the people working in the County entered it from a different county; while 47% of the County’s working residents left it to work somewhere else.** Numbers can vary quite a bit depending on the community.

The percentage of workers entering a municipality in Worcester County for work varies from 47% in Royalston to 96% in New Braintree. Westborough ranked second in the number of workers entering it for their jobs—95% of its workers in 2021 came from outside the town. Interestingly, **the number of people entering Westborough for work that year, 23,349, was greater than the total number of residents in Westborough in the 2020 Census, which was 21,567.** 69% of workers in Worcester came from outside of it. The map to the right shows the percentage of workers in each community that came from outside of it.

The percentage of workers leaving a community for work ranged from 61% in Worcester to 96% in New Braintree.

Worcester had by far the lowest percentage of workers leaving the community for work. In total, **70,604 people commuted to Worcester to work in 2021, 50,125 people left, and 32,111 stayed** within its boundaries. For more information, see a recent [Federal Reserve Bank of Boston report](#) on commuting patterns in New England.

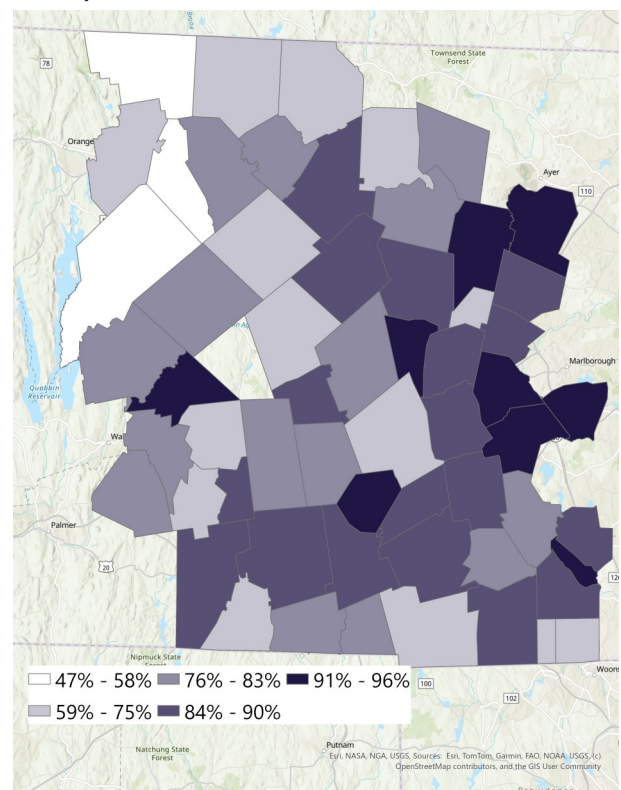
CONCLUSIONS

Since 2001, Worcester County has continued to grow, seeing 22% more jobs in 2022 vs 2021, nearly matching Massachusetts’ own growth. Only two sectors saw a decline in the number of jobs. The sectors with the most growth have been in Financial Activities and Health Care and Social Assistance, **which together made up nearly a quarter of all jobs in the County in 2022.** In addition, nearly two-thirds of people working in the County are from the County itself, and **less than half of the County’s working residents leave to work elsewhere.** Although it is impossible to know the future, the shift from manufacturing in the 20th Century to finance and health care shows that reinvention is possible; and if it can maintain its growth, Worcester County is positioned well for the future.

Worcester County Rank Compared to 13 MA Counties

	2001-2022 % Change	Number of Jobs	
		2001	2022
Financial Activities	9th	4th	5th
Health Care/Social Assistance	5th	3rd	3rd

Percent of Workers in a Municipality Who Entered from Elsewhere, 2021



Source: Worcester County Insights Dashboard, 2025. Note: There was no information available for Oakham on the dashboard.