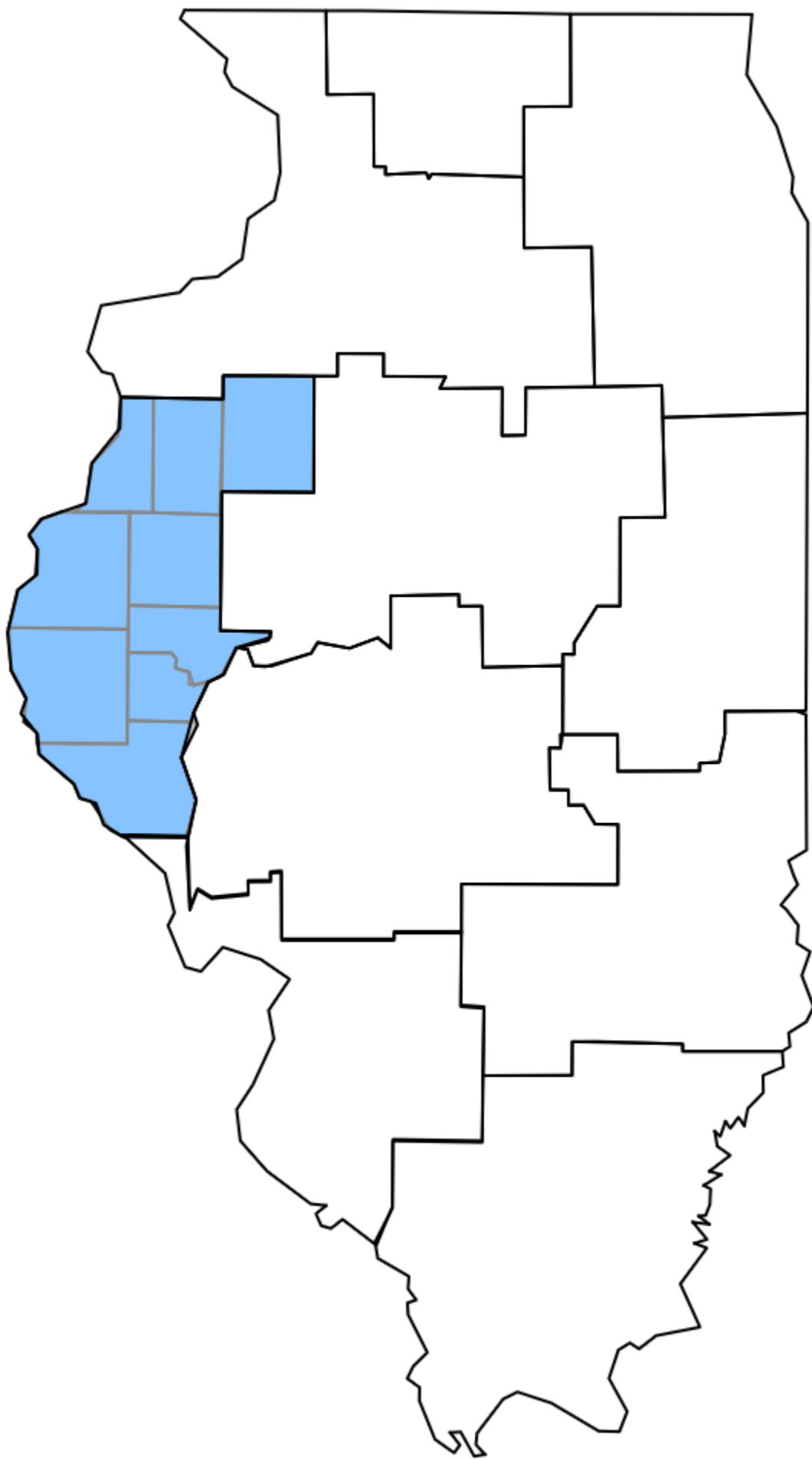




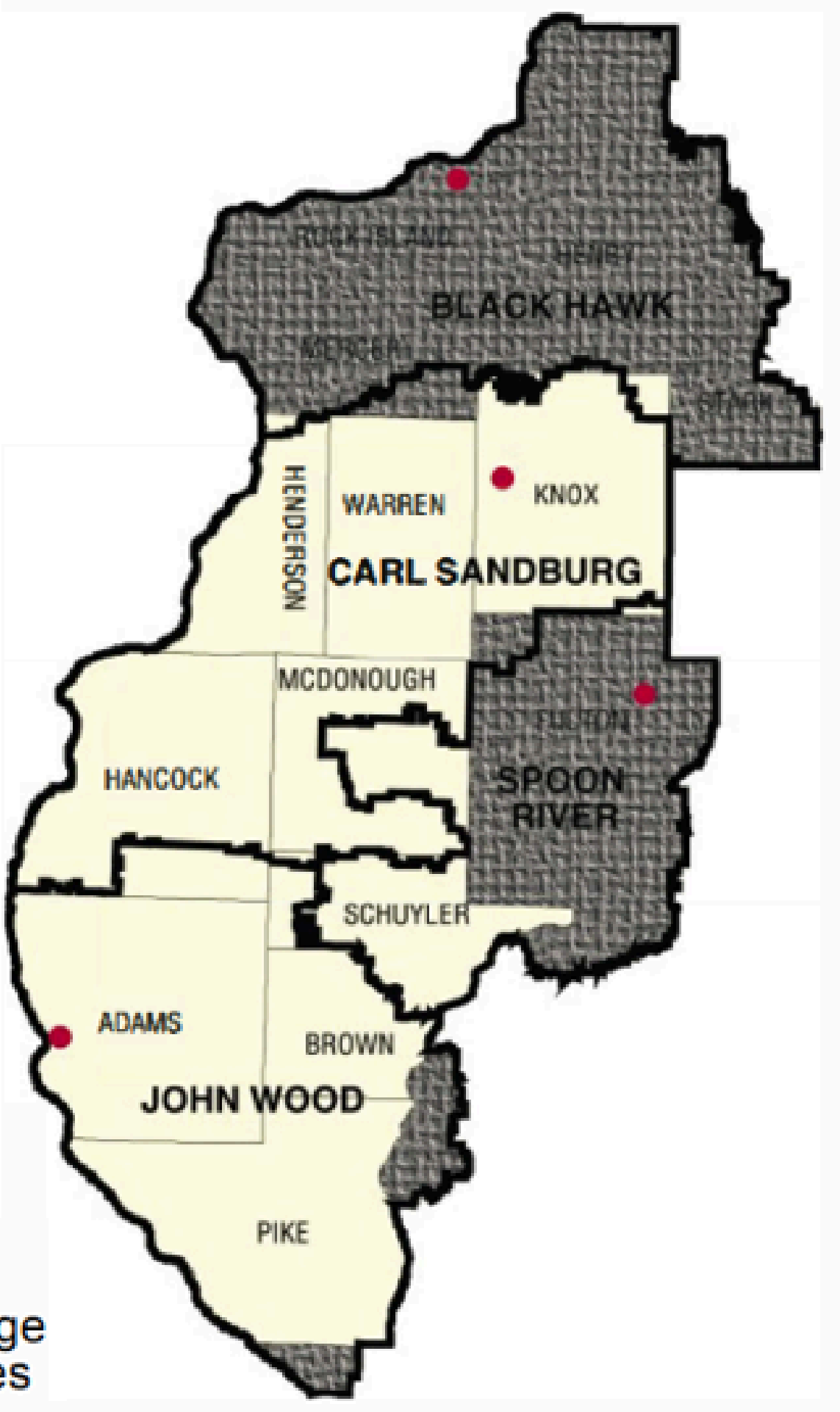
2026 West Central Regional Plan Data Packet

For general questions about the regional data packets, contact Andy Blanke, ablanke1@niu.edu. For more detailed questions, contact your region's Labor Market Economist: Logan Taira, Logan.Taira@illinois.gov.



 LWIA 14

 Community College District Boundaries & Locations



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Demographic Overview



Population Over Time

Age

Race & Ethnicity

Educational Attainment

Bachelor's Degree Fields

Largest Cities in Region

Language

Disabilities

Veterans

Income for Families

Income by Race/Ethnicity

Poverty Status

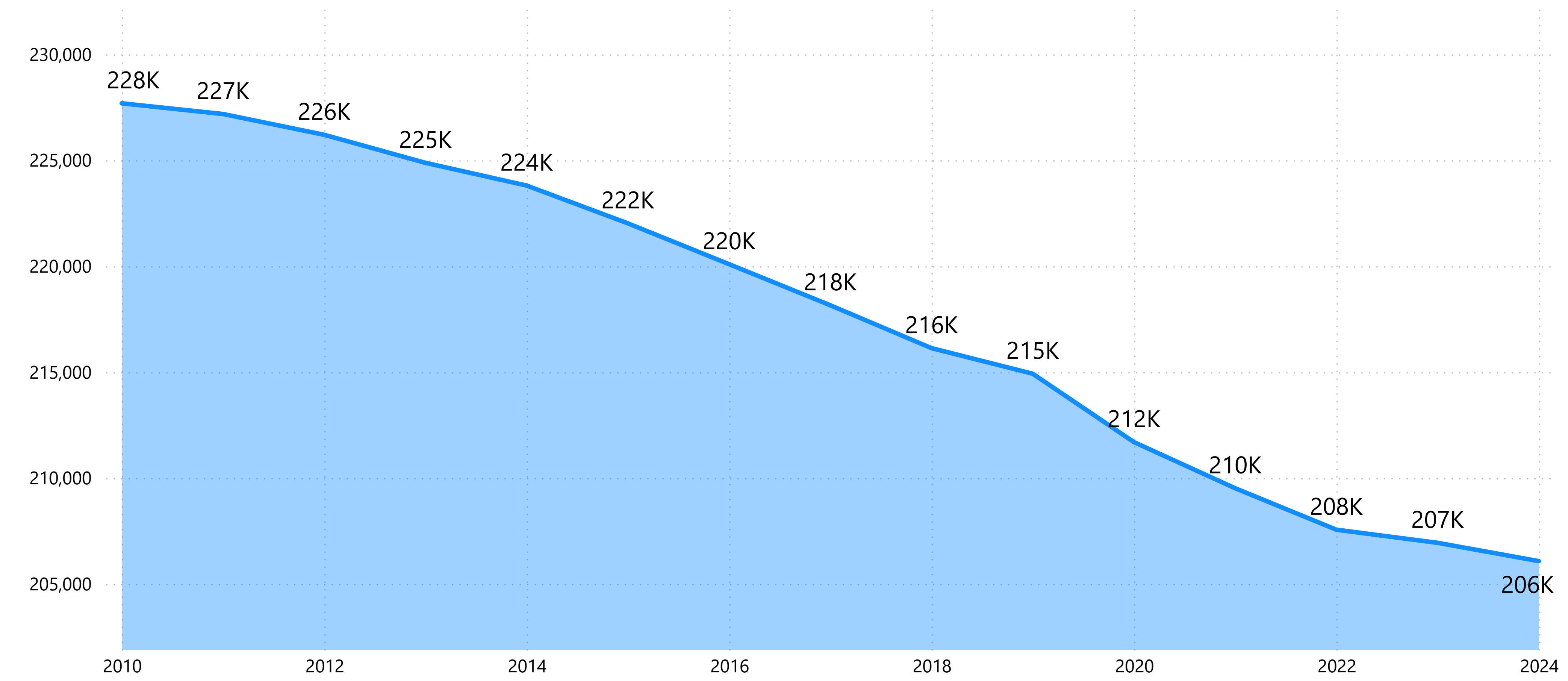
Target Populations

West Central Region Population Over Time

Illinois has a population of 12,710,158 and is the 6th largest state in the nation. Below are the estimated total population and share of total population over time, along with the 2024 population for each county in the region.

Care must be taken when comparing population for 2019 and 2020, as the 2019 estimate was based on migration and aging adjustments from the 2010 census, and 2020 was a full count of the population. The Census Bureau did not revise previous population estimates to reconcile with the 2020 full counts. Statewide, the Census Bureau estimated population decreases for 2020-2022, which were somewhat reversed for 2023-2024.

County	2024 Population
Adams	64,109
Knox	48,716
McDonough	26,662
Hancock	17,008
Warren	16,217
Pike	14,258
Schuyler	6,750
Brown	6,307
Henderson	6,048
Total	206,075



1.8%
Share of State in 2010

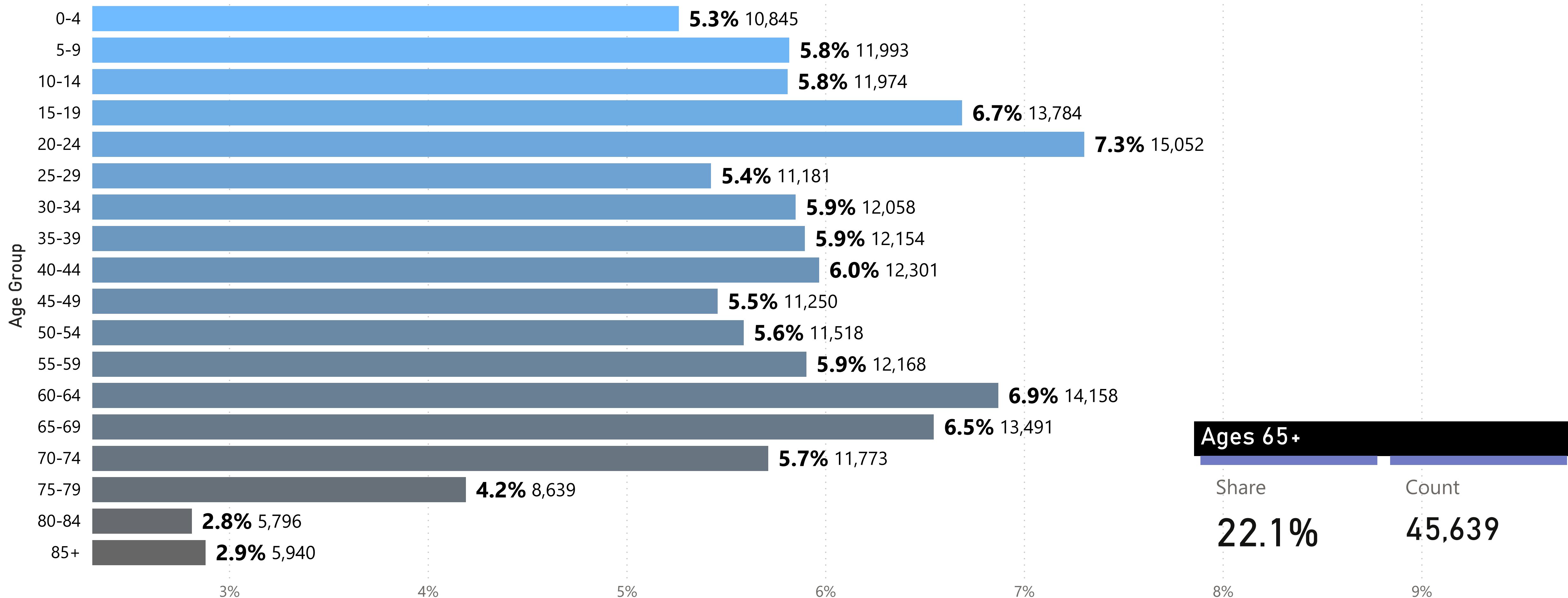
1.6%
Share of State in 2024

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program, 2010-2019 & 2020-2024. 2010 & 2020 populations are for April 1st. All other estimates are for July 1st.

West Central Region Age Composition in 2024

The median age in Illinois has been steadily increasing over the past decade. In 2024, the median age was 39.4 compared to 36.6 in 2010. Statewide, just under 18% of Illinois residents are age 65 and over. Below is the composition of population by age in the region.

Population by Age in 2024, Shares and Counts



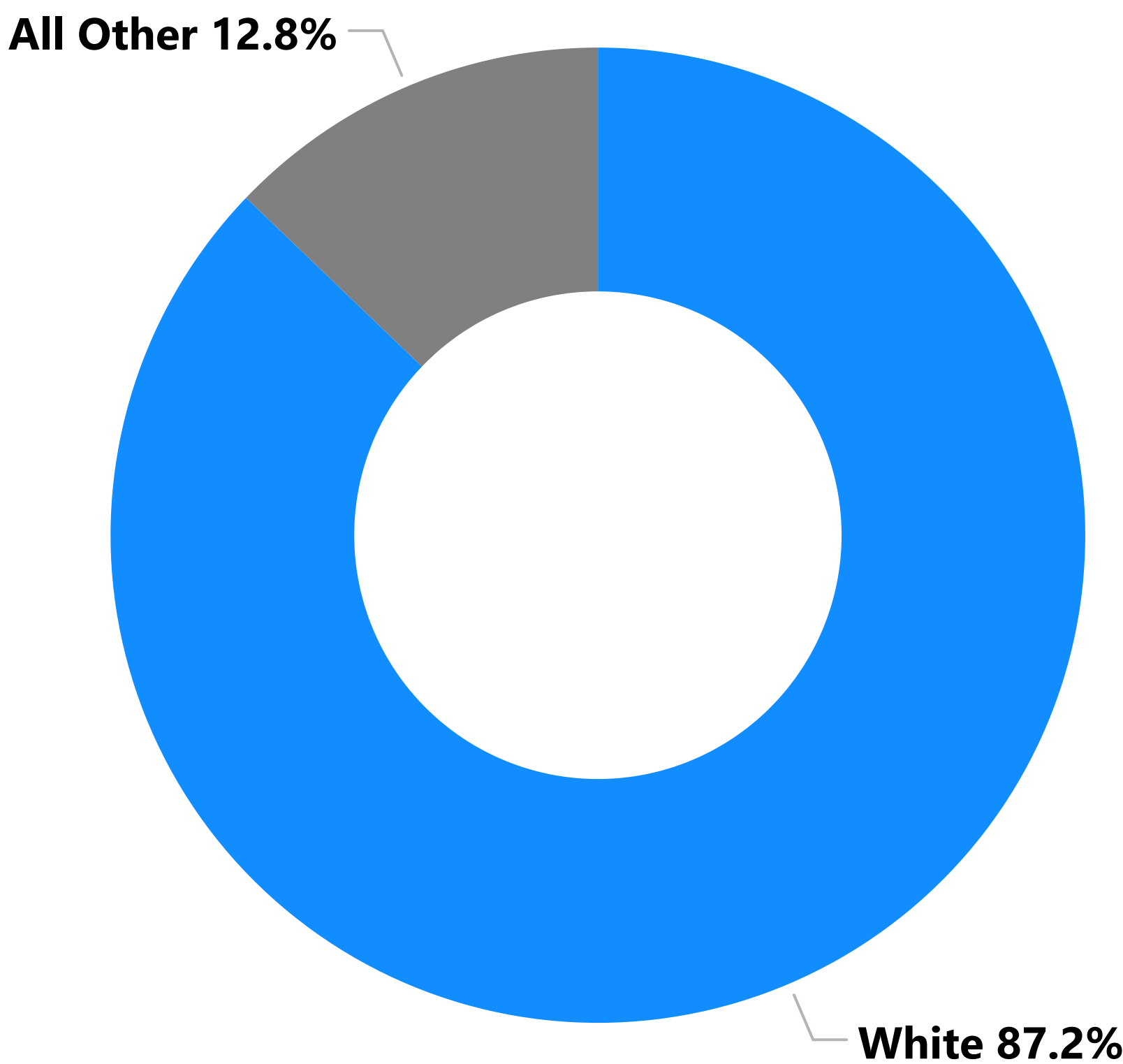
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual County Resident Population Estimates, 2024

West Central Region Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2019-2023

Statewide, about 59% of the population is white, 19% is Hispanic, and 14% is African American. Below is the composition of the population in the region by race and ethnicity, along with estimated population levels for 2019-2023. On this page, Hispanic ethnicity includes all races, and all other categories are non-Hispanic.

Share of Population by Race/Ethnicity

All Races are Non-Hispanic, Hispanic includes all races. "All Other" includes all groups with <5% of total. See table for all categories.



Population Details

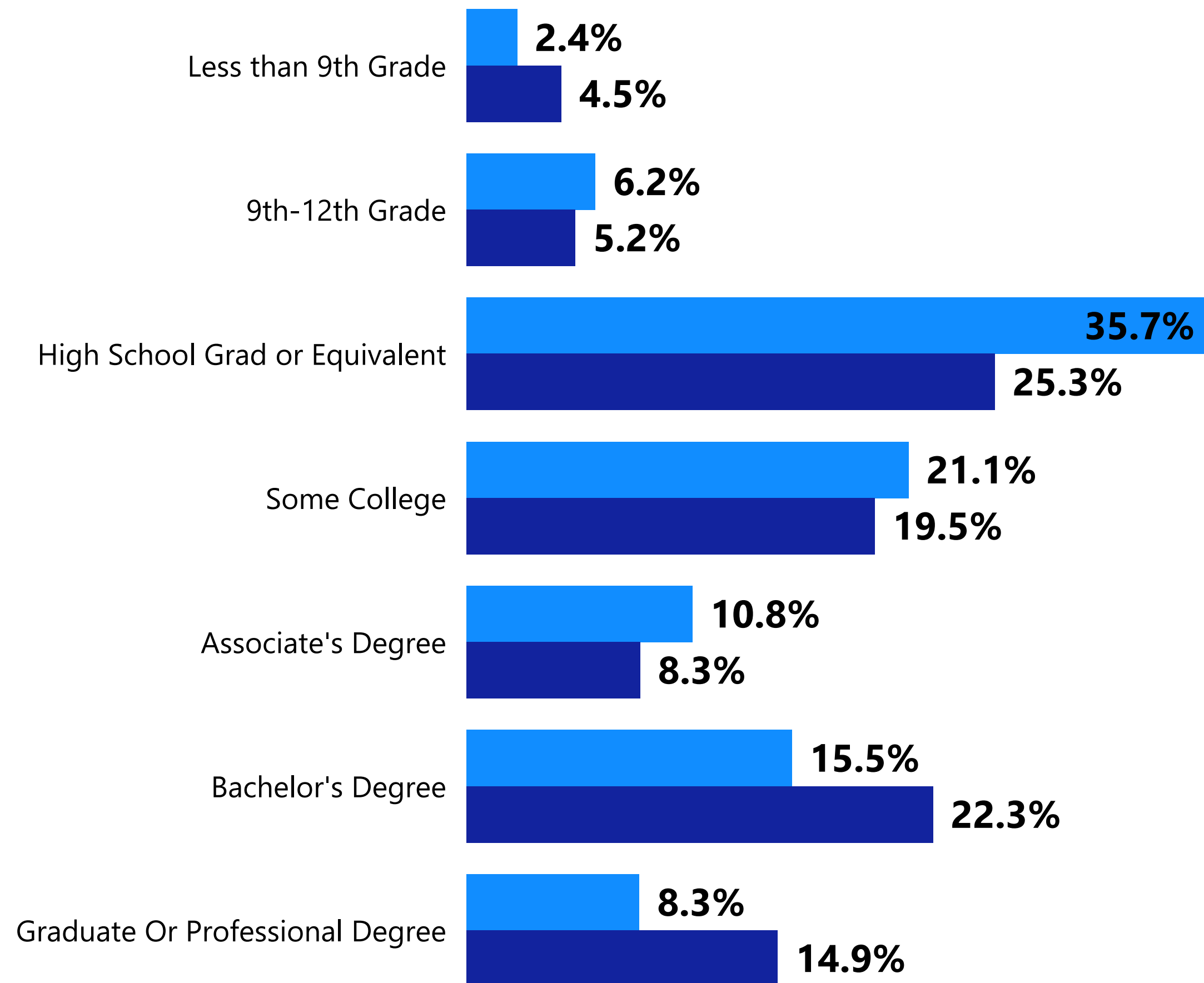
Race	Count	Share
White	182,712	87.2%
African American	9,741	4.6%
Hispanic, any race	8,375	4.0%
Multiracial	6,076	2.9%
Asian	2,022	1.0%
Other	408	0.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	156	0.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	137	0.1%
Total	209,627	100.0%

West Central Region Educational Attainment Characteristics

About 65% of Illinois residents 25 & over continued education past high school. Below are the educational attainment characteristics of the region compared to the state.

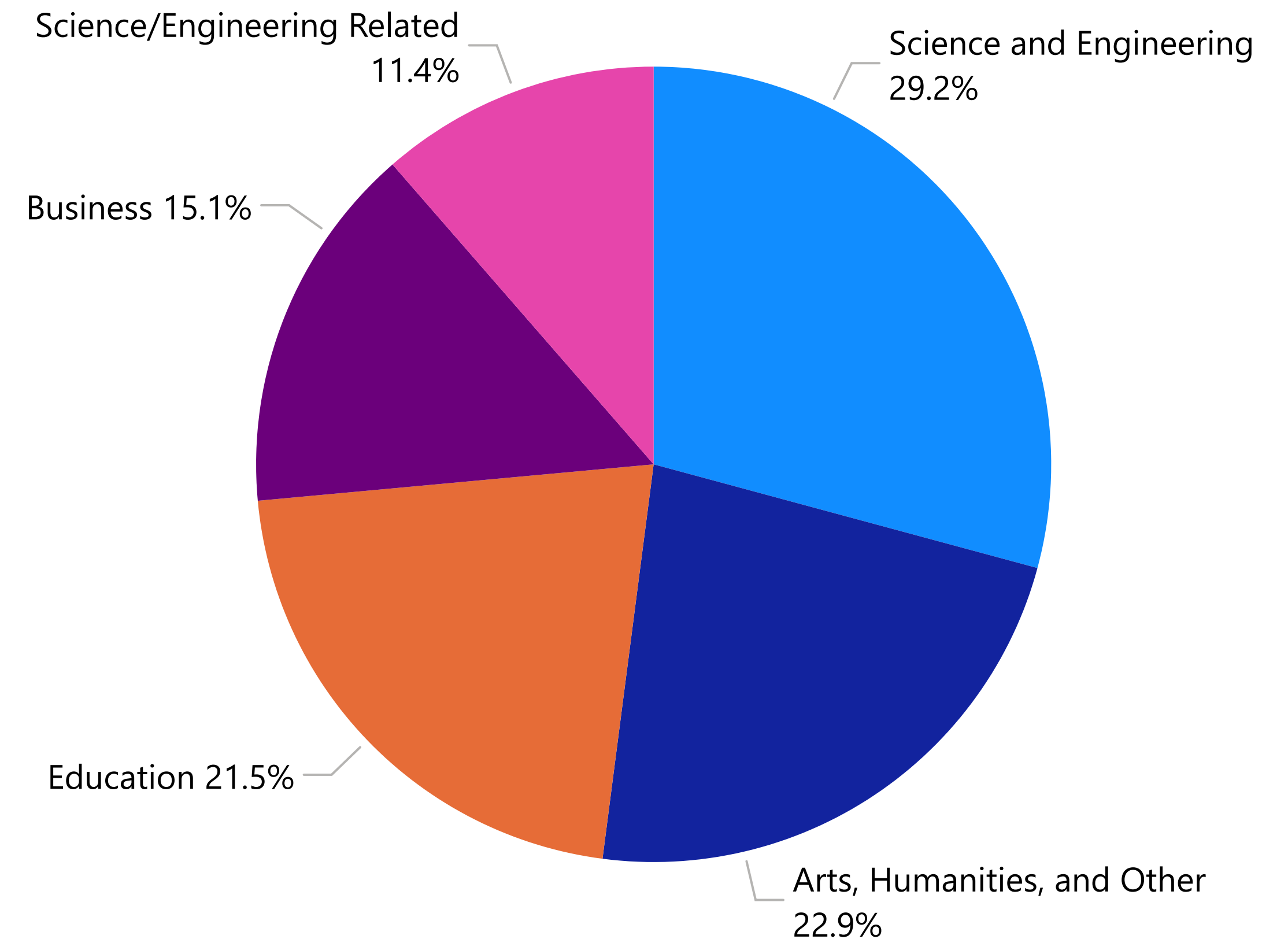
Share of Population Age 25+ by Education Level

● Region ● State



Bachelor's Degrees by Field of Study

American Community Survey does not ask about Associate's Degree fields of study.



Science/Engineering Related includes pre-medical, engineering technology, etc.

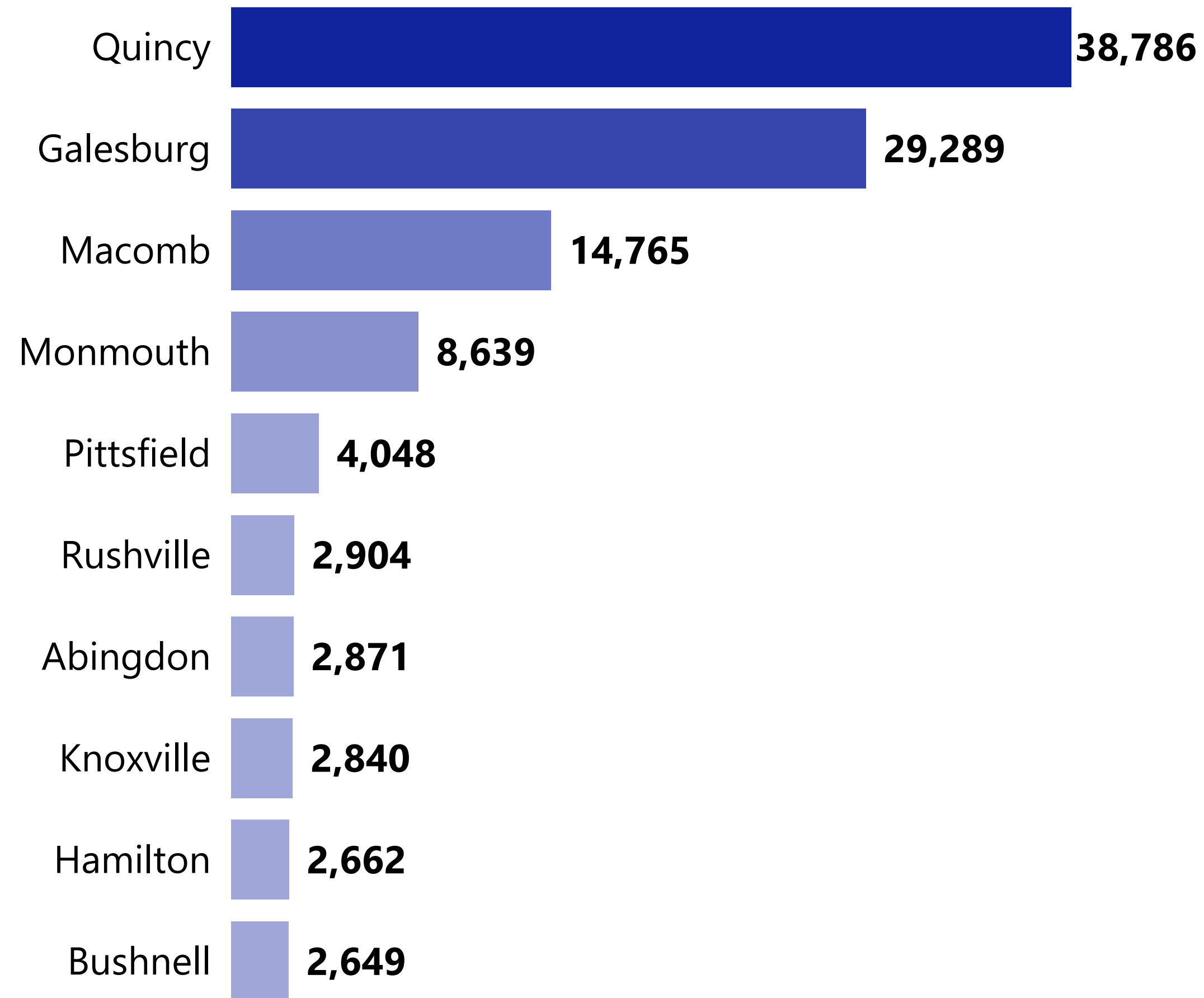
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey, Tables S1501 & S1502.

Largest Cities in West Central Region

Below are the July 1st, 2024 population estimates for the 10 largest cities in the region. *These population counts differ from American Community Survey data, which shows average population over a multi-year period.* Population estimates are based on births, deaths, and relocations that occurred after April 1st, 2020.

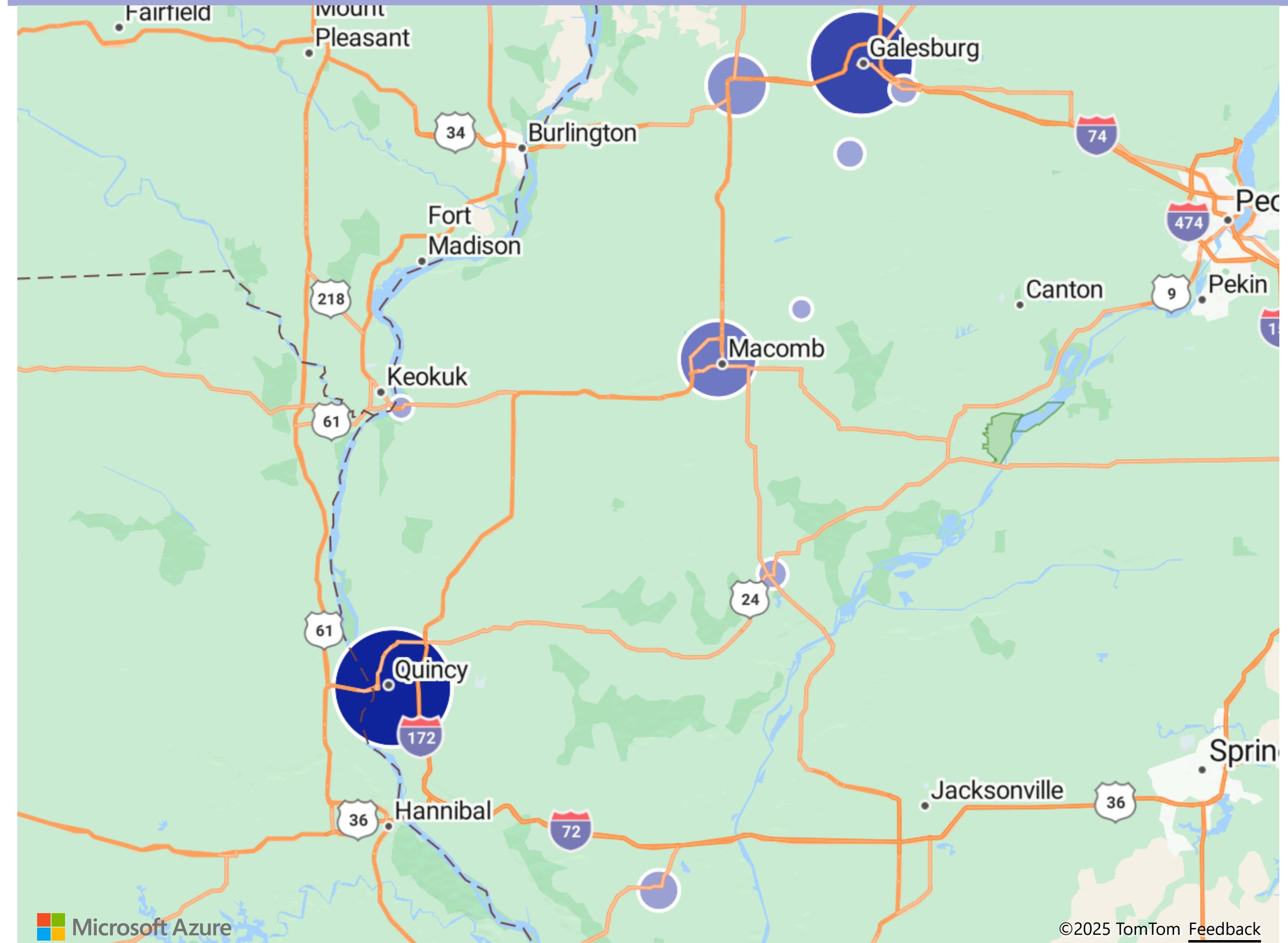
Ten Largest Cities in 2024

Shading proportional to population sizes within region.



Reference Map for Largest Cities

Dots correspond to size in region, not municipal boundaries. Some labels might not show due to density.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 Population Estimates.

Population Ages 5+ by Language Spoken at Home in West Central Region

Statewide, 23.8% of Illinois residents speak a language other than English at home. On the national level, 22.5% of the population speaks a language other than English at home. Below is the composition of population in the region by language spoken at home.

Speaks English Only

Count

189,493

Share

95.6%

Does not Speak English at Home

Count

8,742

Share

4.4%

"Other Indo-European" includes French, Polish, Russian, Hindi, etc.

"Other Languages" includes Arabic, Hebrew, indigenous North American languages, and African languages.

Languages Other than English, by Geographic Origin

Does not total 100% - English is majority in every region.

Spanish

2.3%

Other Indo-European

1.2%

Asian

0.6%

Other La...

0.3%

Population with Disabilities in West Central Region

33,591

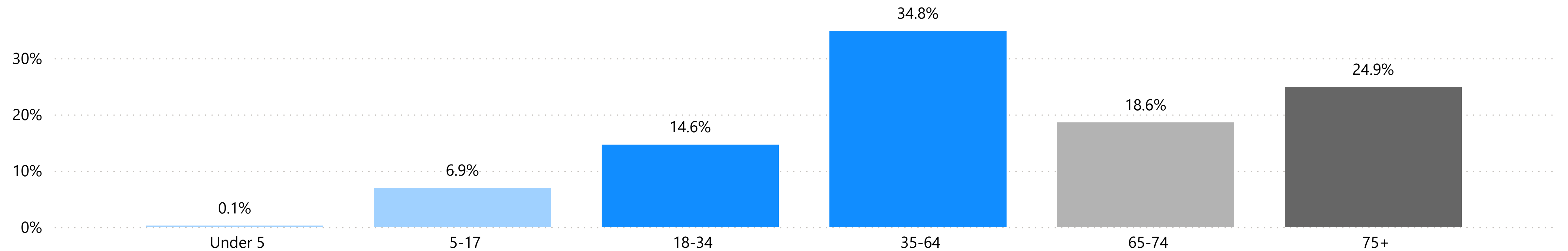
Persons with Disabilities in Region

16.5%

Share

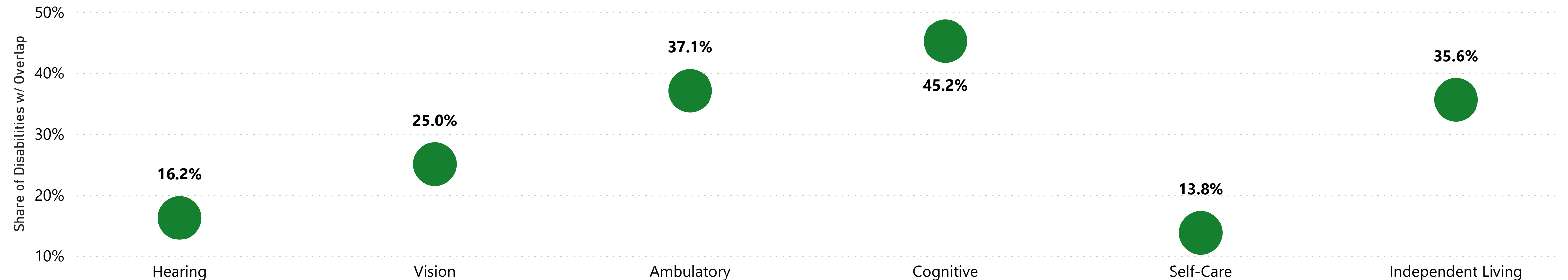
Approximately 12% of the population (or 1.48 million people) in Illinois have some type of disability. Among the population of working age (18-64) with disabilities, the most common disabilities are cognitive and ambulatory. Below is the composition of persons with disabilities in the region by age and by type of disability. **These data are not comparable to the 2023 data packets, which showed disability types for the total population instead of ages 18-64. E.g., the previous data included retirees.**

Share of Persons with Disabilities by Age



Types of Disabilities, Ages 18-64

Percent to total with disabilities AND ages 18-64. Does not total 100 - disabilities can intersect.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey, Table S1810.

Population with Disabilities in West Central Region

12,239

Veterans in Region

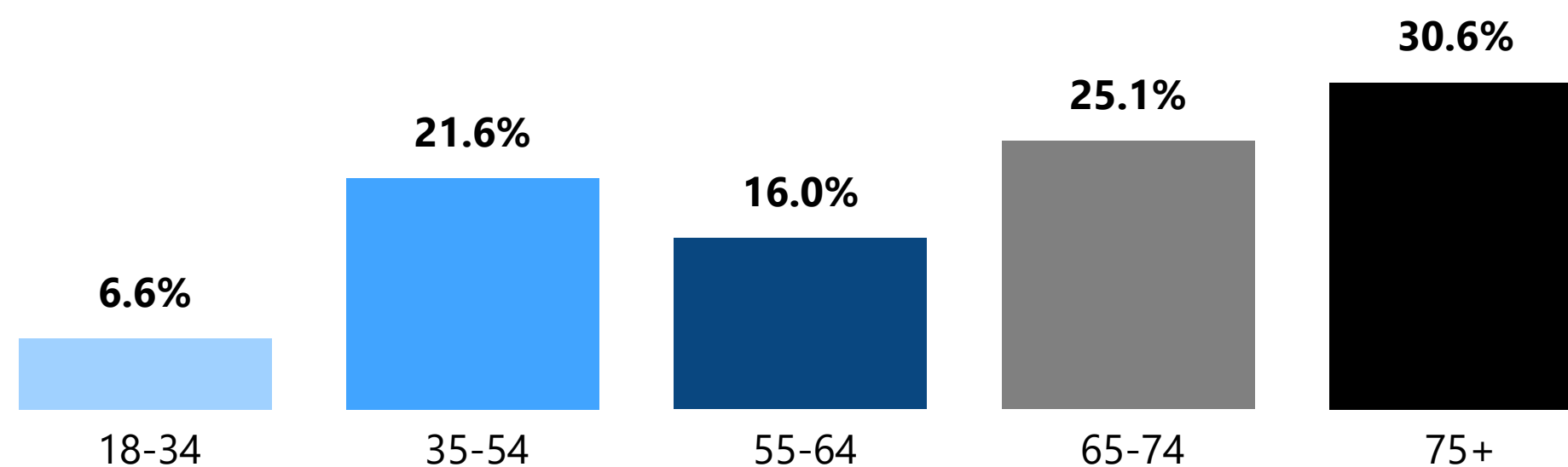
7.4%

% of Population Ages 18+

Statewide, there are 493,667 veterans in Illinois, which is about 5% of the total population. Nationally, veterans represent about 6% of the total population. Below is some information on the share of the veteran population in the region by age, race, period of service, and educational attainment.

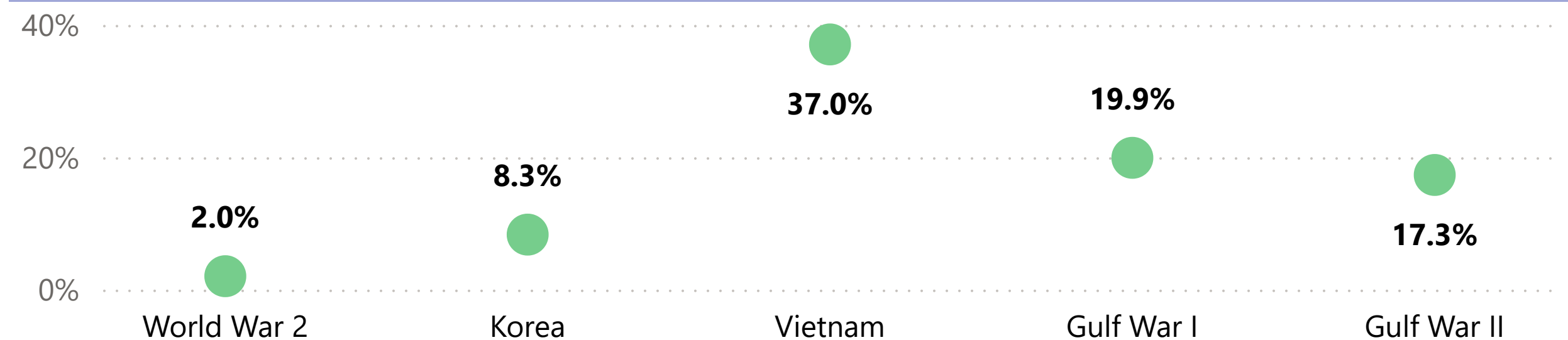
The American Community Survey data on veterans do not consistently dissect by labor force status. Totals by race and educational attainment could also include retirees or those of working age, but not in the labor force.

Share of Veterans by Age



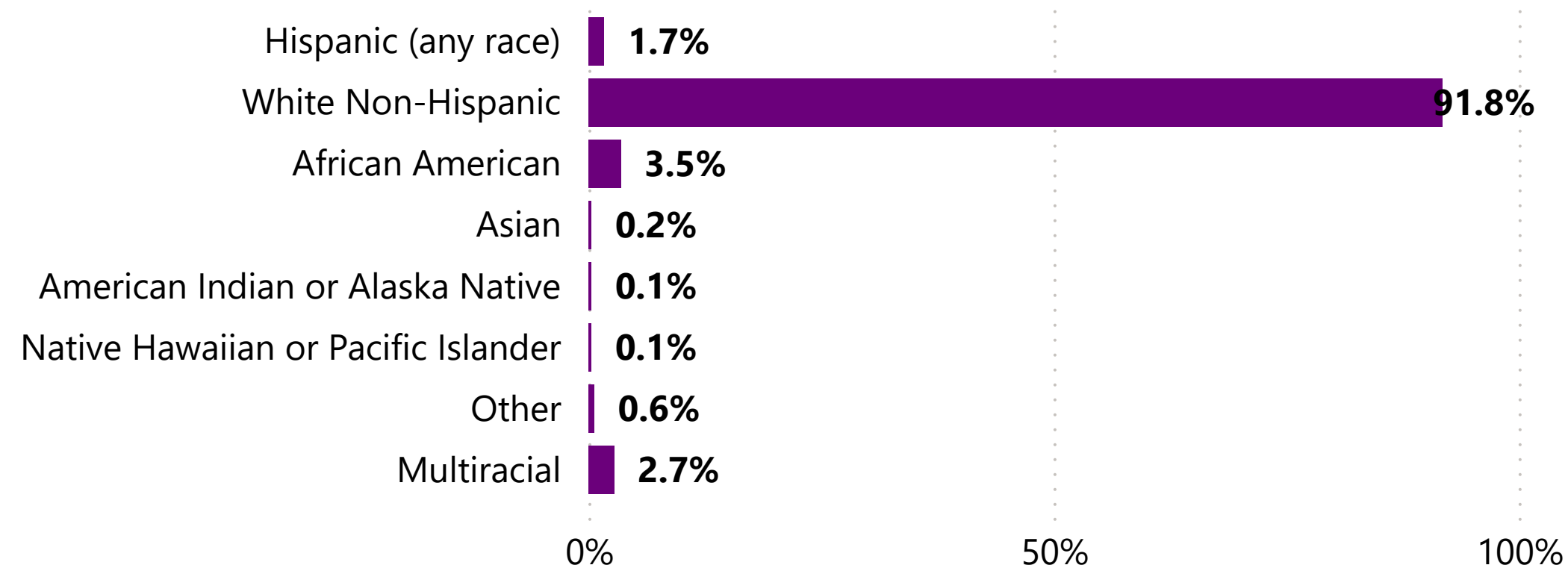
Period of Service

Does not total 100%- excludes peacetimes

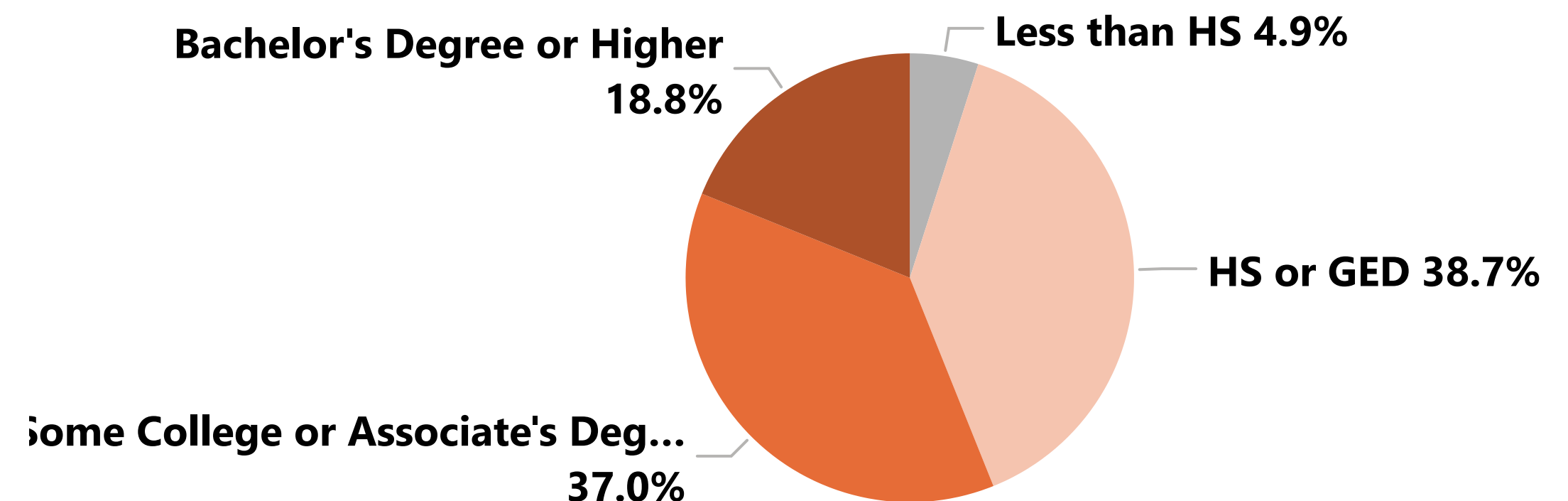


Race/Ethnicity

Does not total 100- survey did not specify non-hispanic except for white.

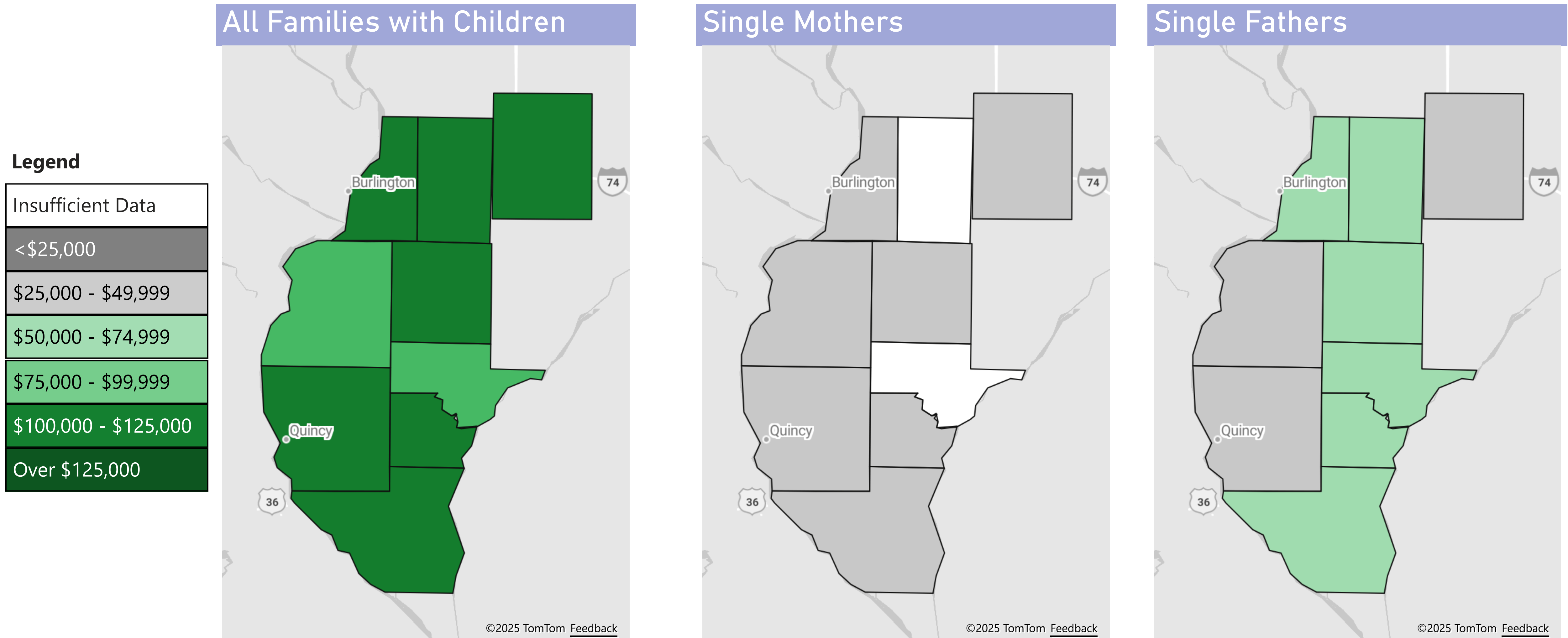


Educational Attainment, ages 25+



Income by Household Type for Counties in West Central Region

The statewide median income for all households was \$81,702, which is 4% higher than the national level of \$78,538. In Illinois, the median income was \$102,968 for all families with children, \$39,148 for single mother households, and \$60,331 for single father households. Single parents typically earn less, which can overlap with earnings gaps by sex.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey, Table S1903.

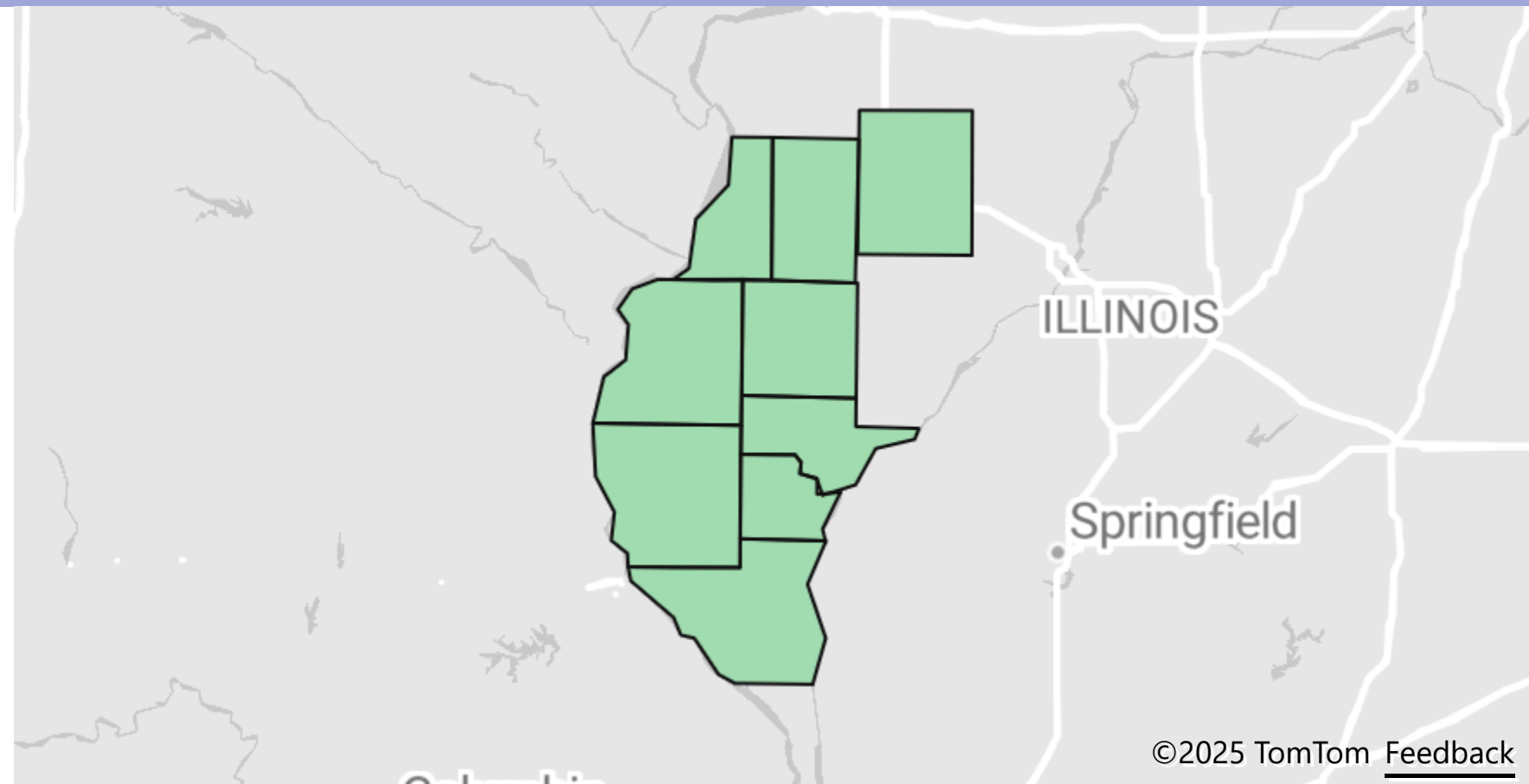
Median Income by Race within Counties, West Central Region

Statewide, the median income for African American households is \$49,100, Asian households is \$111,938, Hispanic households is \$74,795, and White households is \$89,563. Below are the American Community Survey responses for household income by race in each county of the region.

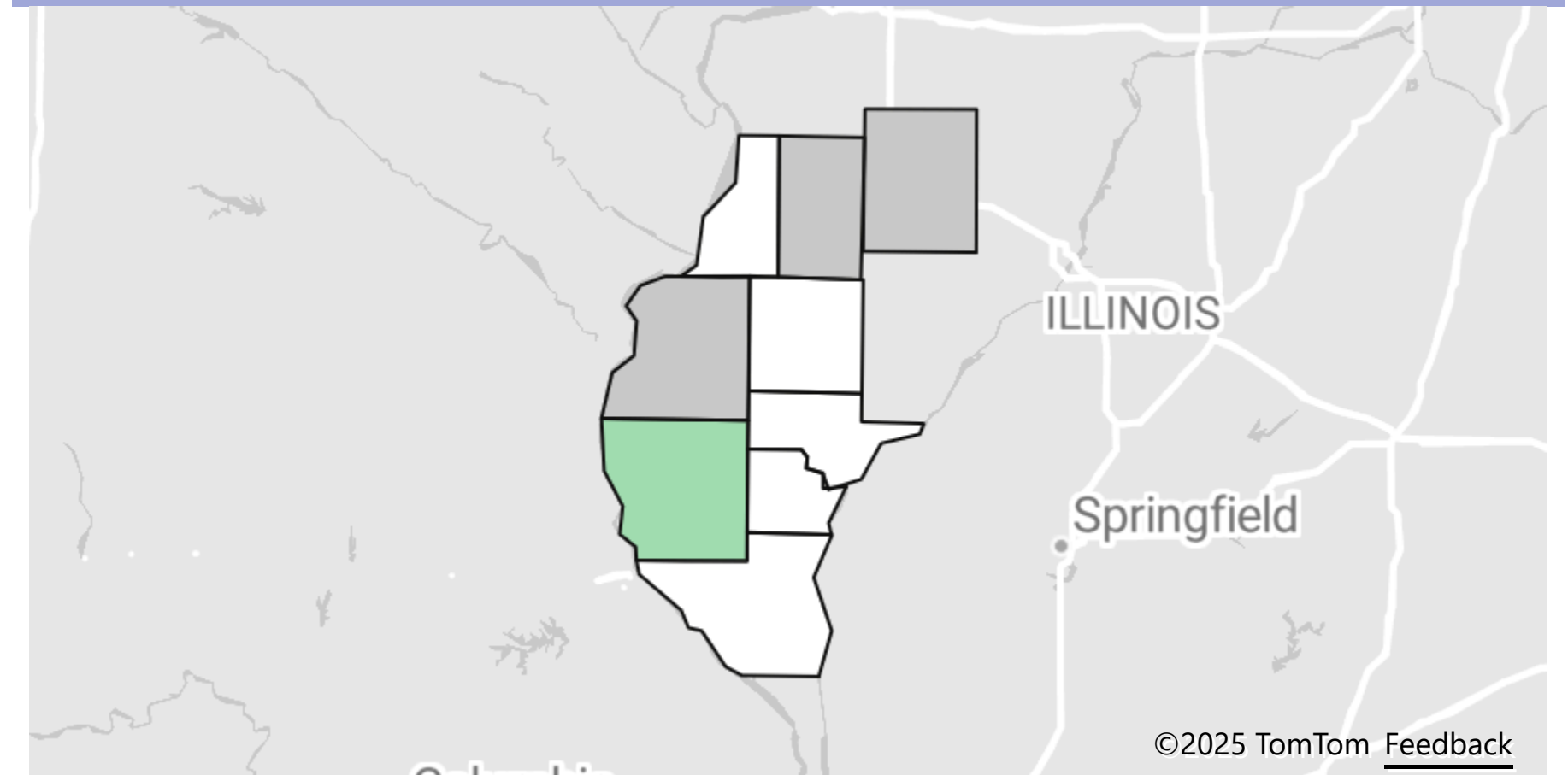
Legend

Insufficient Data
<\$25,000
\$25,000 - \$49,999
\$50,000 - \$74,999
\$75,000 - \$99,999
\$100,000 - \$125,000
Over \$125,000

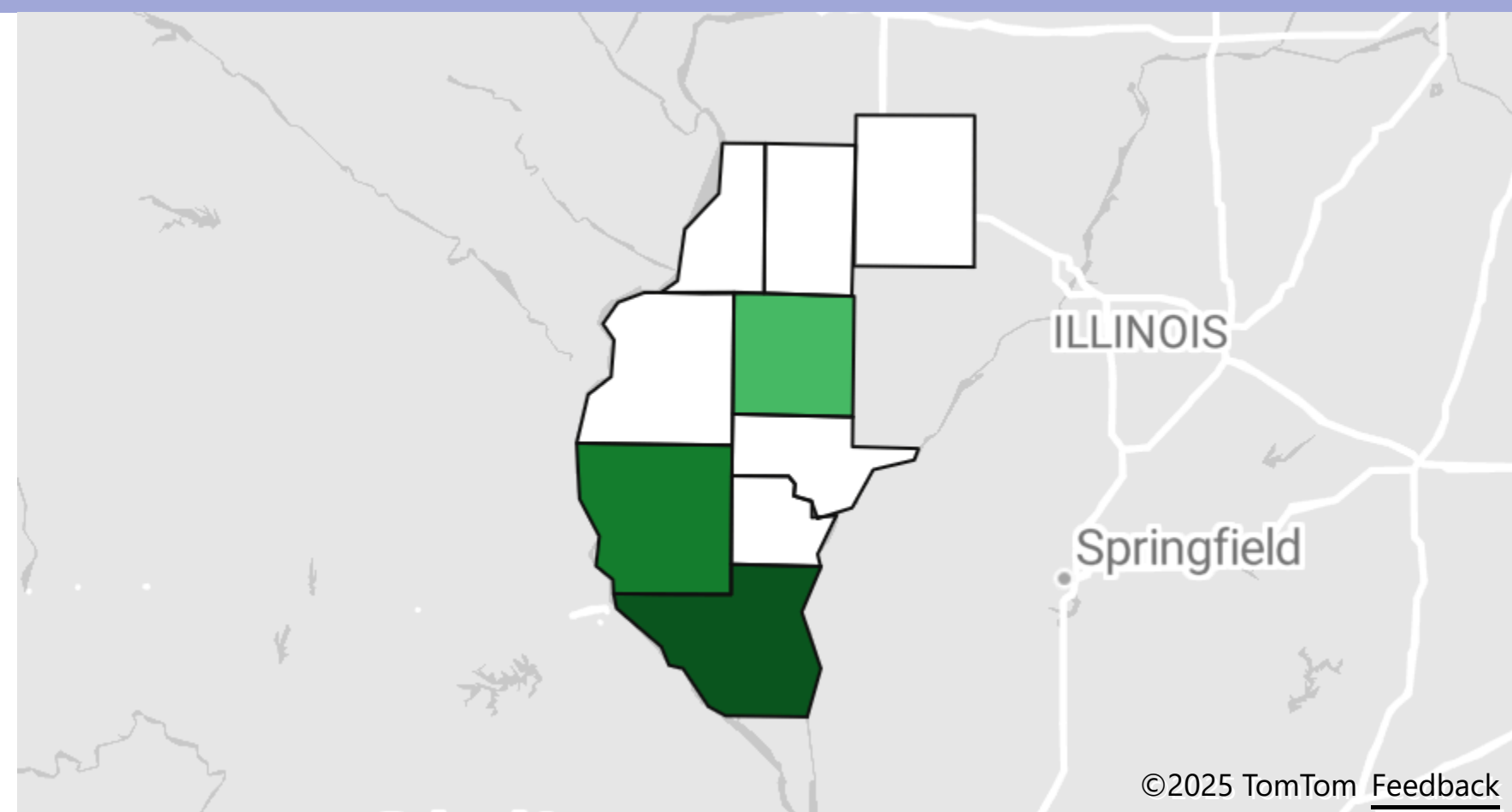
White Non-Hispanic



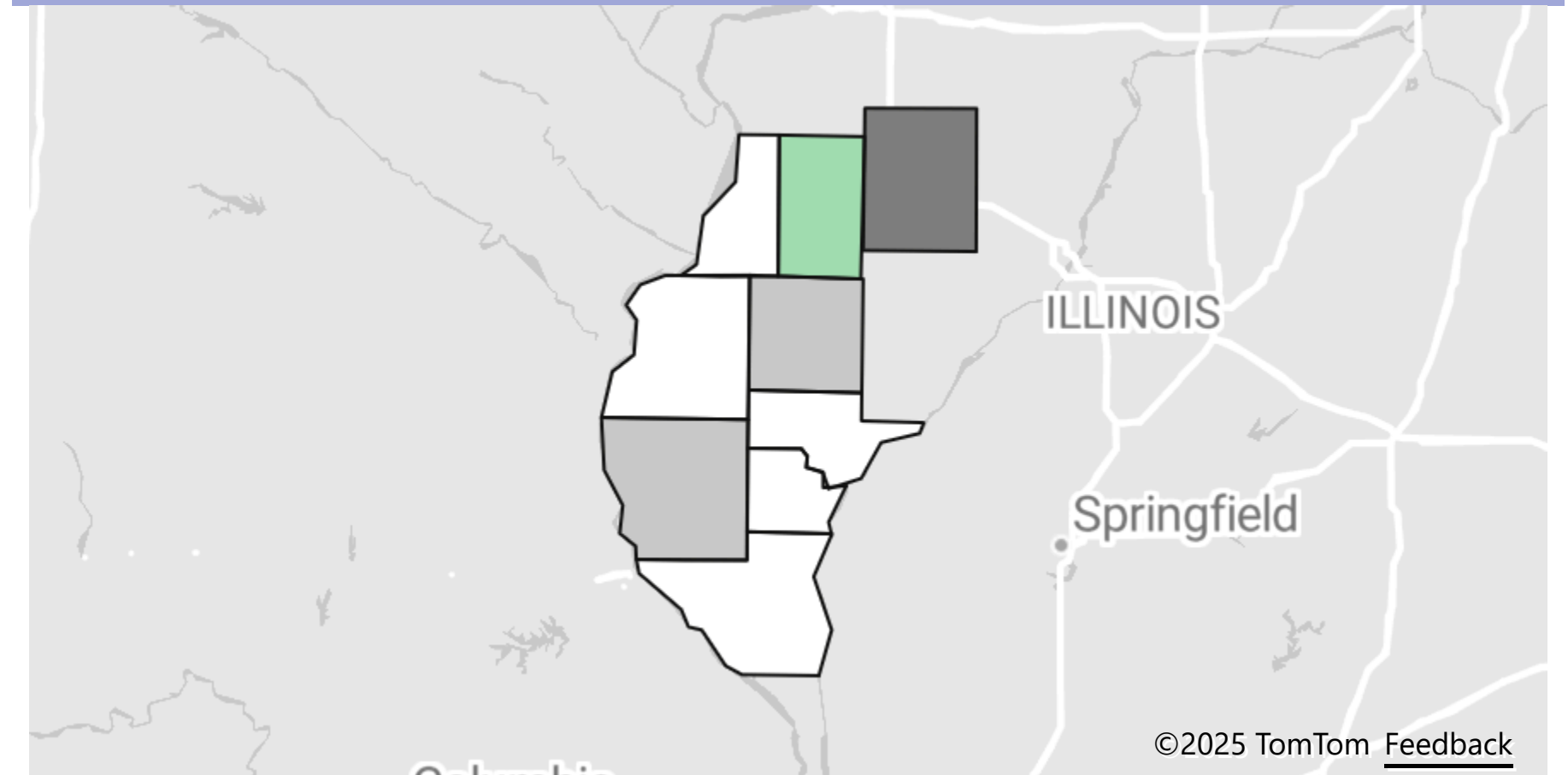
Hispanic (Any Race)



Asian



African American



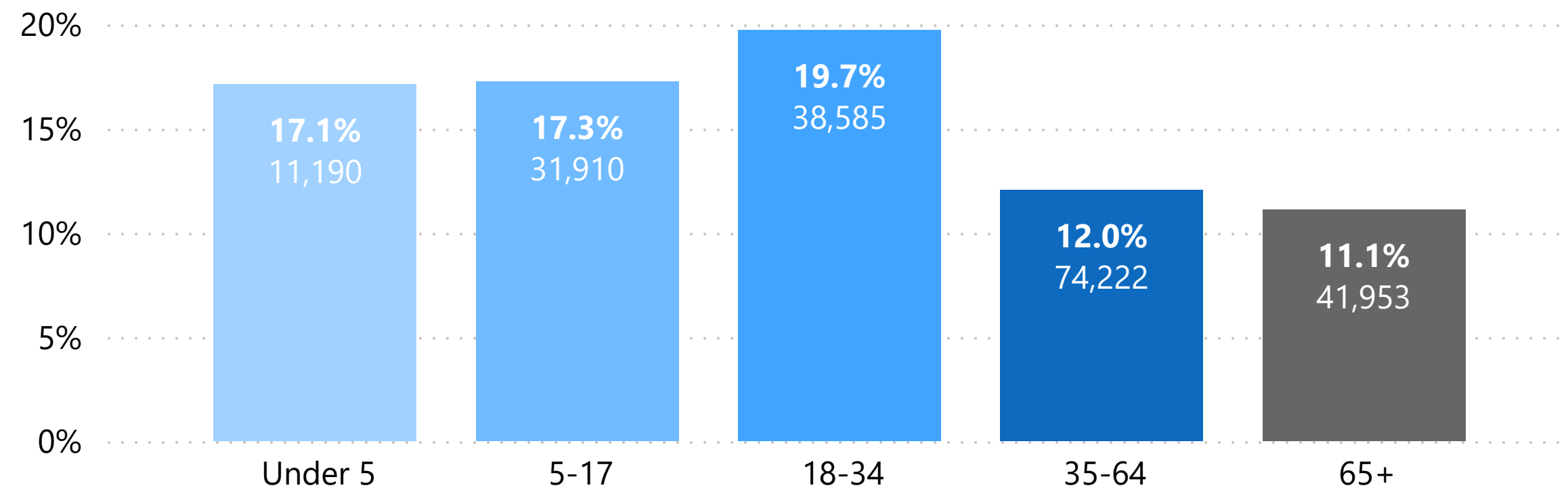
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey, Table S1903.

Poverty Status by Age, Race, Sex, and Education in West Central Region

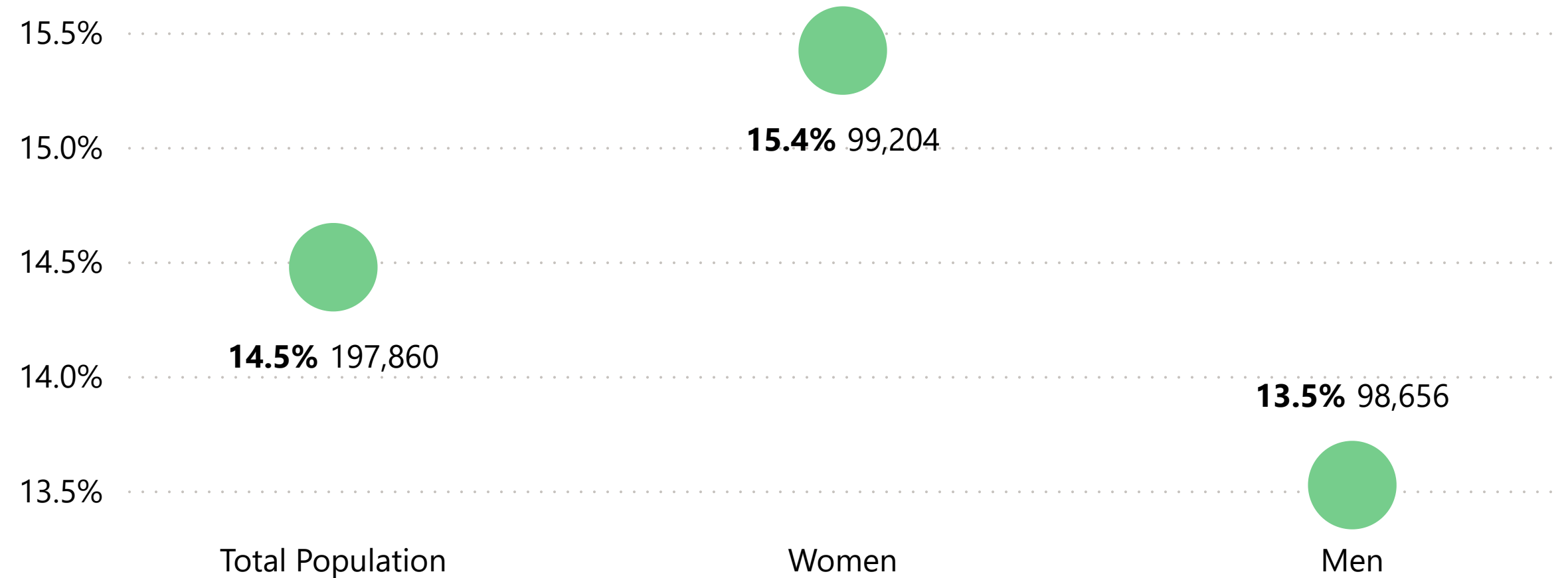
Roughly 1.5 million Illinois residents live below poverty. Children under the age of 5 (17%), females (13%), African Americans (25%), and individuals lacking a high school diploma or equivalent (21%) are more likely to live below poverty. Below are the counts and percentages of residents in the region experiencing poverty by several characteristics. *Percentages are to their total populations in the region- e.g., the percentage of all males, the percentage of all females, etc. For this reason, percentages do not total 100.*

By Age

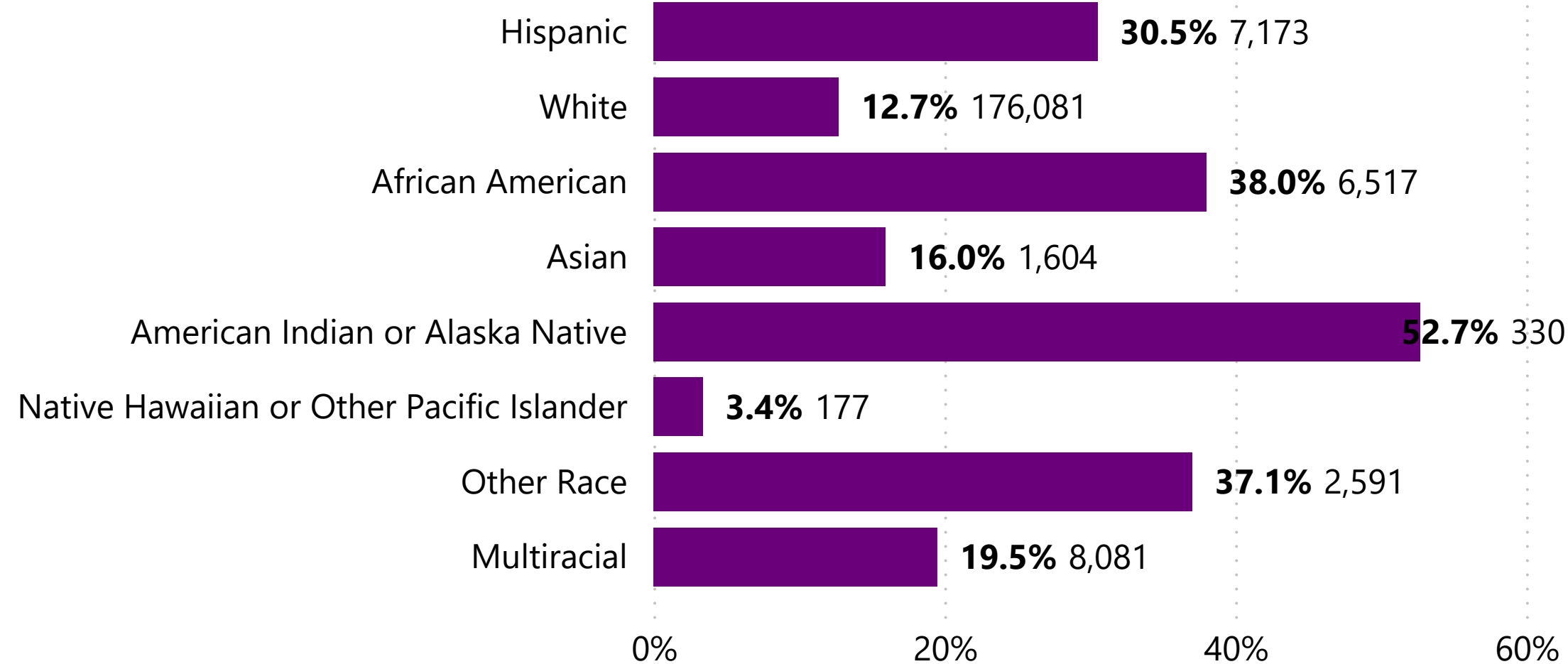
Percentages do not total 100- they are the percent to each group overall.



By Sex

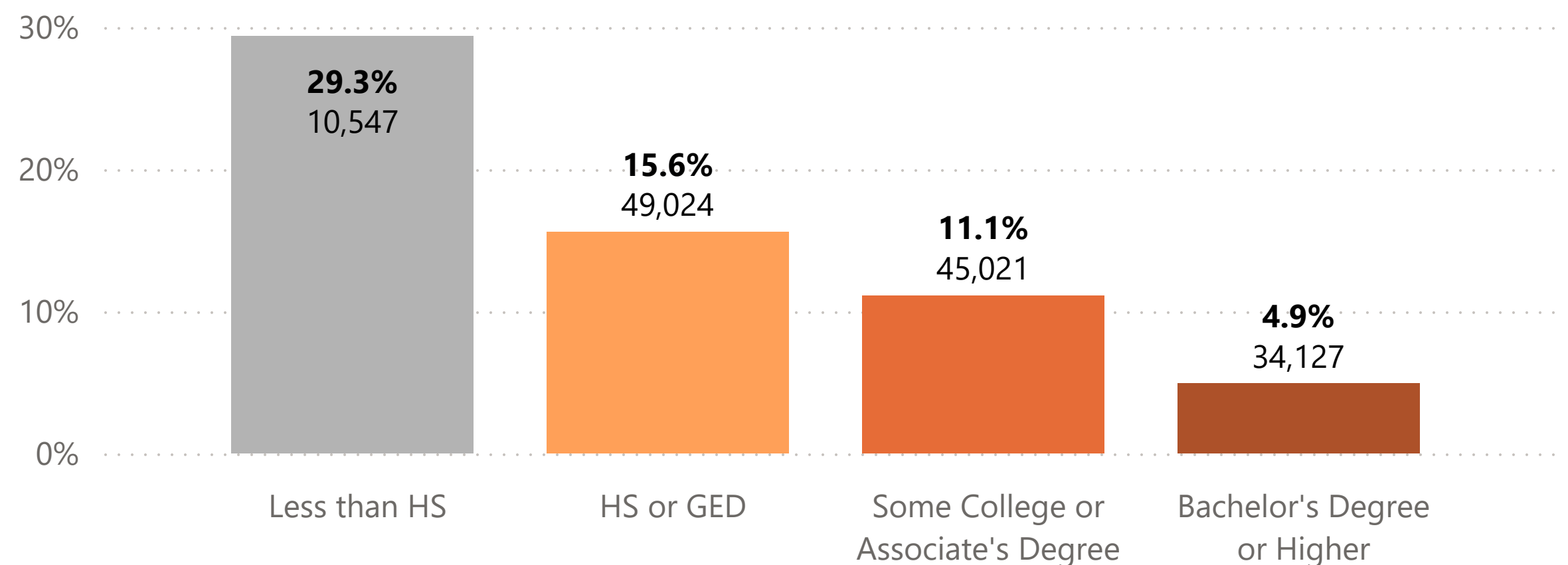


By Race/Ethnicity



By Educational Attainment

Percent to total population ages 25+ at each education level.



Target Populations in West Central Region

Below are some counts of various target populations in the EDR. Please note that timing of the counts varies by indicator, due to the data being reported at different times by several agencies. All data were most recent available at time of writing in August 2025.

Justice-Involvement Indicators

Source: Illinois Department of Corrections, Prison & Parolee Population Datasets, Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, JMIS Monthly Data Reports.



Adult Prison Population

June 30th, 2025.

783

Parolee Population

June 30th, 2025.

384

Juvenile Detention
Population

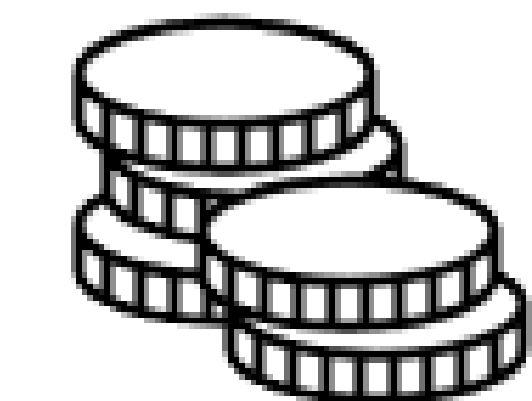
Average for May 2025

0

Several regions do not have
juvenile detention centers.

Low-Income Indicators

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services, June & July, 2025.



SNAP Cases

July 2025

34,820

TANF Persons

June 2025

1,934

SNAP Households

July 2025

18,539

TANF Cases

June 2025

697

Other Target Populations



Foster Youth Population

July 31st, 2025.

650

Source for foster youth: Illinois
Department of Children &
Family Services- Youth in Care
by County, July 31, 2025.



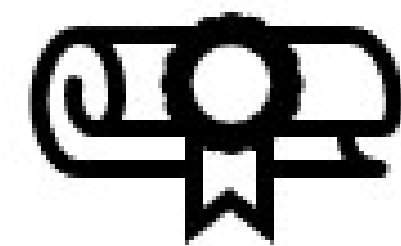
Foreign-Born Population, 2019-2023

American Community Survey (ACS) Table DP02

4,955

Ages 18+ without HS Diploma, 2019-2023

ACS Table S1501



14,635

Single Mothers, 2019-2023

ACSTable S1903



5,040

Single Fathers, 2019-2023

ACSTable S1903

2,275

Employment Trends

Labor Force Participation & Unemployment

Total Employment Relative to 2019

Leading, Emerging, and Maturing Sectors

Sectors Relative to 2019

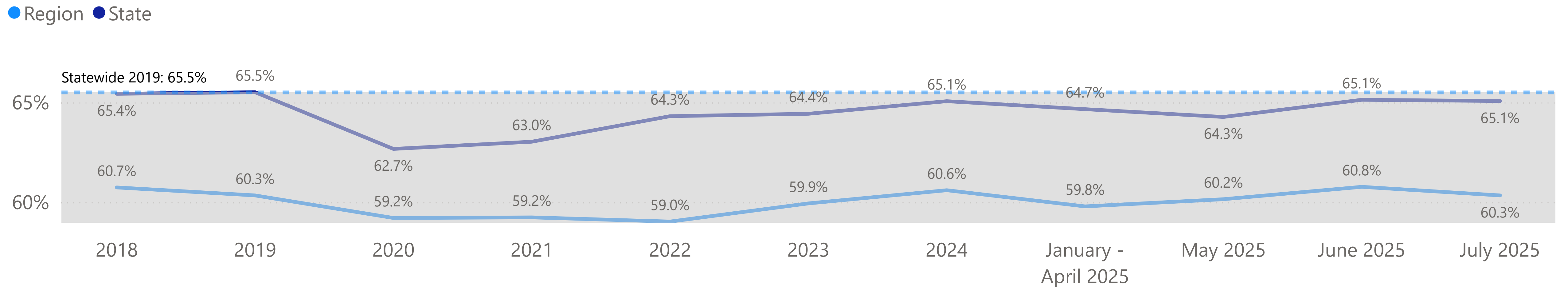
Year-Over-Year Employment Changes



West Central Region Labor Force Participation & Unemployment Over Time

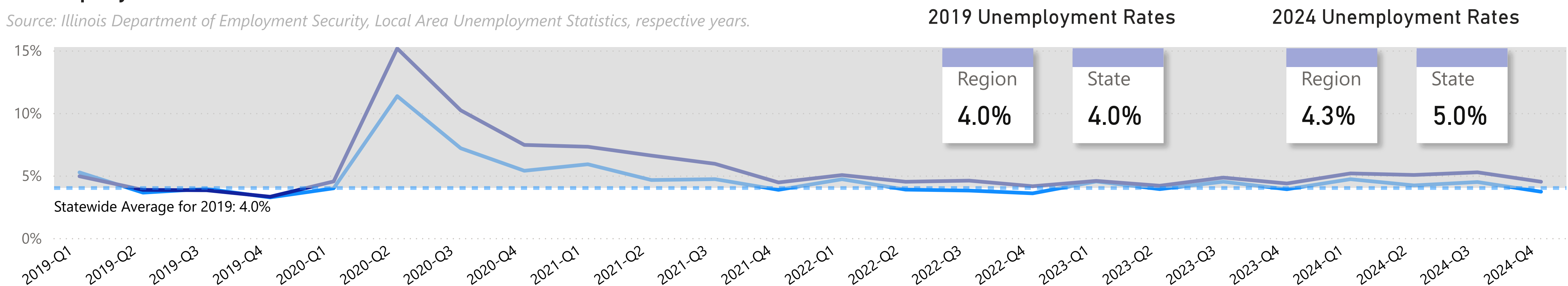
Labor Force Participation Rates

Source: Estimates from Lightcast, 2025. Shaded area shows participation rate below statewide rate in 2019.



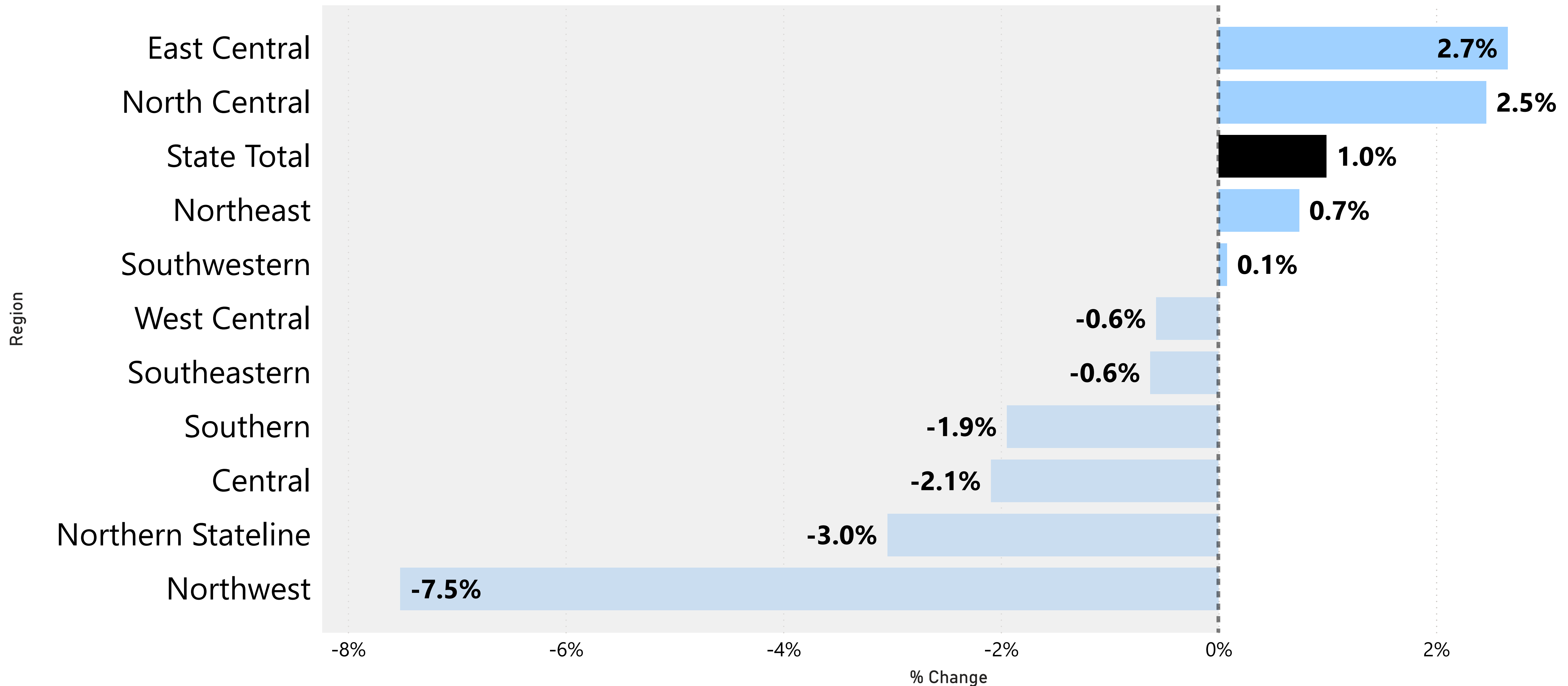
Unemployment Rates

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, respective years.



% Change in Total Nonfarm Employment, Q2 2019 - Q2 2025 (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Below is a high-level comparison of total employment by region for Q2 2019 (pre-pandemic) vs Q2 2023 (latest available at time of writing). Regions are sorted by size of employment growth/declines. Statewide, total employment in Q2 2025 was 1.0% higher than in Q2 2019. In six of ten regions, employment was lower in Q2 2025 than in Q2 2019.



Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Current Employment Statistics, respective years.

Sectors, Industries, and Clusters

Demystifying business employment groupings

All businesses and employers are categorized in Federal data collections by the **North American Industry Classification System - NAICS**. The NAICS is a nested structure that **groups businesses by primary goods produced or services provided**.

Sectors are large segments of the economy, represented as **2-digit NAICS codes**. For example, the manufacturing sector consists of NAICS codes beginning with 31, 32, or 33.

Industries are components of Sectors, represented as **3-6-digit NAICS codes**. More digits in a NAICS code indicate more specific subsets of sectors. For example, Machinery Manufacturing (NAICS 333) is a subset of Manufacturing, and Industrial Machinery Manufacturing (NAICS 3332) is a subset of Machinery Manufacturing. *In other reports, the terms sector and industry are often used interchangeably.* For regional planning purposes, 2-3 digit NAICS codes provide sufficient detail. There are literally thousands of 6-digit NAICS codes, which may be viewed at naics.com/search.

Clusters are **groups of related industries** with a strong **concentration** of employment **in** a particular **region**. Higher concentrations of employment **might indicate competitive advantages** within regions, such as availability of skilled workers, proximity to services and suppliers, and suitable infrastructure. *Industry clusters are typically considered in economic development strategic plans.*

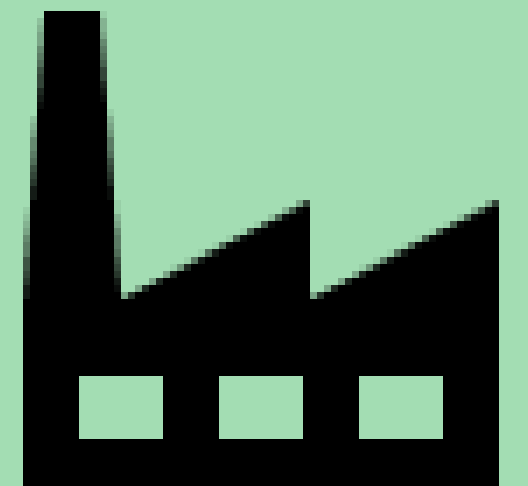
Industry clusters are distinct from Career Clusters. Career Clusters are groups of educational programs organized around knowledge and skill requirements for groups of occupations.

Like all data, NAICS codes have some limitations and caveats. **The Bureau of Labor Statistics updates NAICS every 8 years**, and so emerging industries might not be reflected consistently. For example, **electric vehicle manufacturing does not have a dedicated NAICS code** - it is included in the same industry as fossil-fuel automobile manufacturing. Also, businesses are classified by the primary activity at each physical location, not necessarily by activities of the parent company. For example, warehouses for e-commerce companies are classed as Warehousing and Storage (NAICS 493).

Sector and industry employment are **distinct from occupational employment**, or jobs classified by work responsibilities. For example, all industries employ people with information technology occupations, while the Information sector specifically refers to publishing and telecommunications. **Put simply, sectors and industries describe businesses, while occupations describe workers.**

NAICS example

More digits = more detailed subset



Manufacturing Sector: NAICS 31-33

Example Component Industry

Machinery Manufacturing: 333

Industrial Machinery: 3332

Semiconductor Machinery: 333242

Regional Sector Analysis

Employment Changes and Location Quotients

The **maps** on the following pages **show the "where" for selected economic data** at the regional and county levels. This view allows readers to more easily **see how each county contributes** to the overall economic engine in a region **and** how regions as a whole **compare to other areas** of the state.

All maps in the next section show employment **by place of work, i.e., businesses located in each county**. They might not correspond to where workers live.

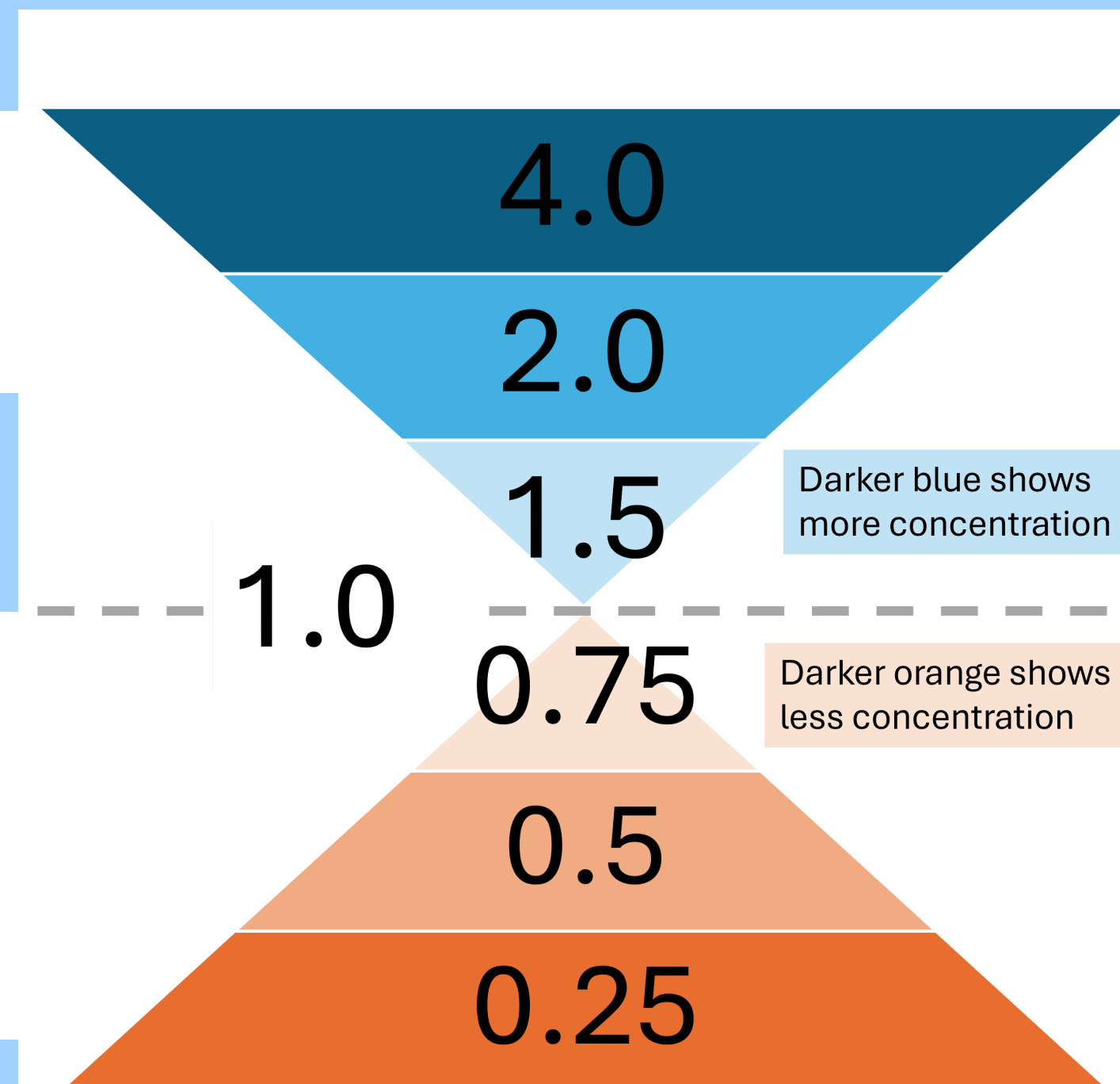
The **Employment Change** maps indicate the level of **gain or loss of employment** between Q4 2021 and Q4 2022 (latest available at time of writing). These maps can be used to understand where gains and losses occurred, and identify targets of opportunity where skilled workers may be in greater demand, or identify areas which may be in need of attention from regional workforce and economic development agencies.

The **The Location Quotient (LQ)** maps indicate counties **where sector employment is** most and least **concentrated** as of Q4 2022. The LQ value indicates how concentrated employment in a given sector compares to the nation.

An LQ of **1.0 means employment is in line with** the overall **national** employment for that **sector**. A value **greater than 1.0 means** that sector's employment is **more heavily concentrated** here than in the nation, while values less than 1.0 indicate employment is less concentrated than the nation. The farther away from 1.0, the greater the difference between what is happening in the county than the nation. For example, if a sector represents 40% of employment in a county and that sector nationally represents 10% of employment, it would have an LQ of 4.0, or a concentration of employment that is 4 times higher than the nation.

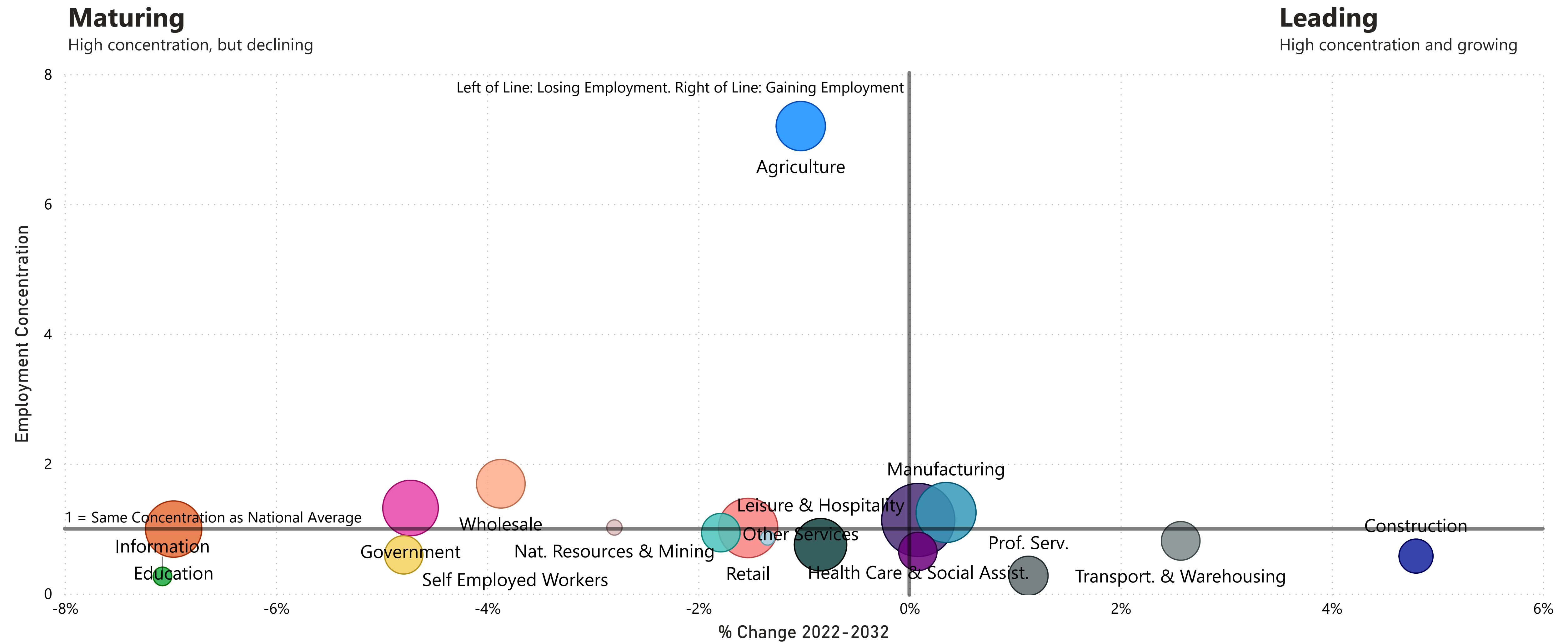
Some maps on the following pages have **counties shaded black**, indicating an insufficient number of workers to reach federal employment reporting thresholds. This data is **suppressed to protect** the **privacy** of businesses, employers, and workers in those counties. **We use 2-digit NAICS** level data **to minimize** the instances of data **suppression**.

The maps on the following pages show where employment is concentrated and the degree to which it is above or below the national level. Areas with **high LQs might have an** inherent **advantage**, while areas with low LQs might have an inherent disadvantage for supporting a particular sector's businesses with skilled workers.



West Central Region Employment Location Quotients by Sector

Bubble size corresponds to total employment in 2022. Some sectors excluded in lower left quadrant due to disproportionately low location quotients and employment declines. Education includes public and private, and government excludes education.

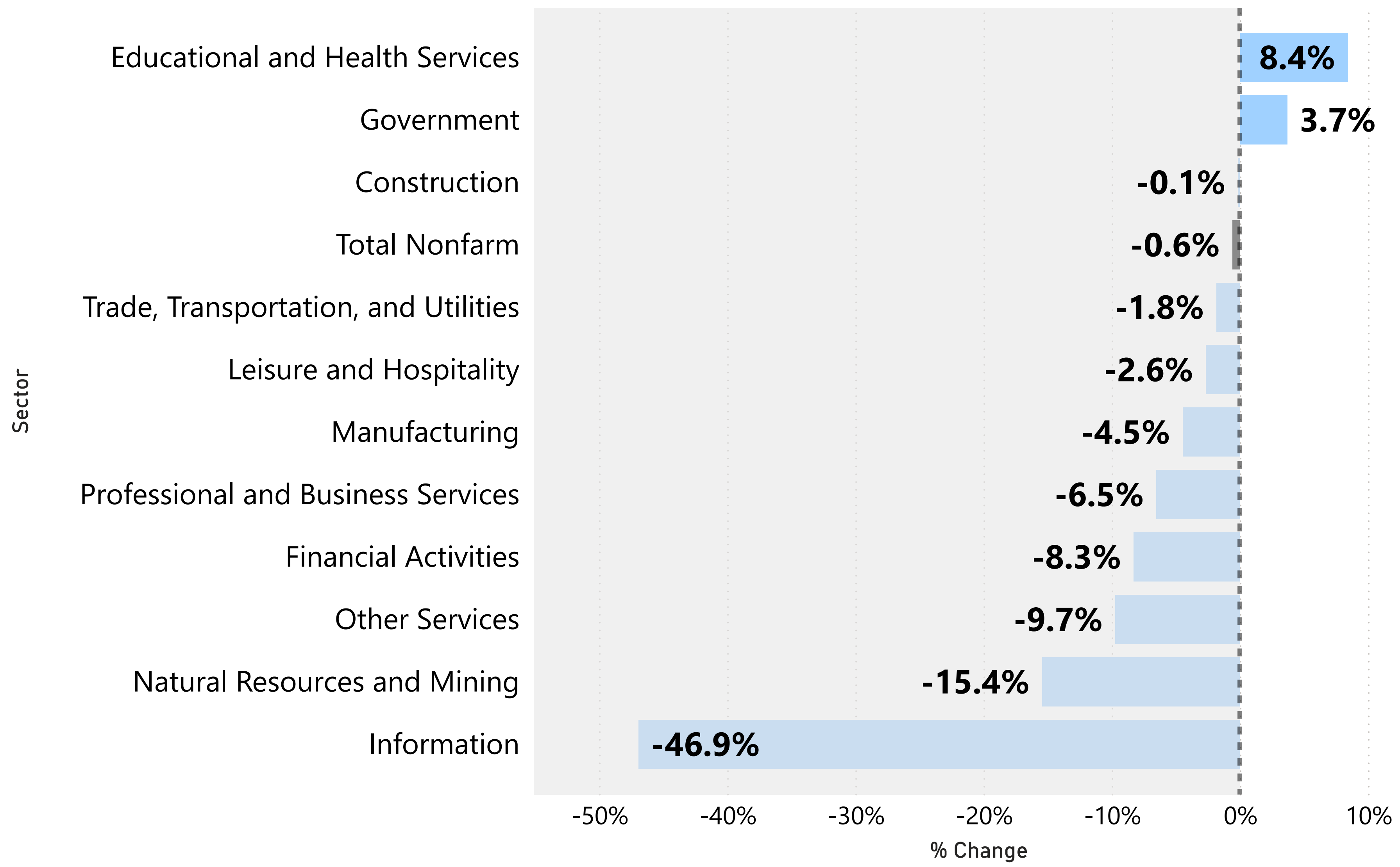


Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, 2022-2032 Industry Employment Projections.

Emerging
Low concentration, but growing

% Change in Employment by Sector in West Central Region, Q2 2019 - Q2 2025

Below is a high-level comparison of total employment by sector in the region for Q2 2019 (pre-pandemic) vs Q2 2025 (latest available at time of writing). Sectors are sorted by size of % employment change. On the right are total jobs in Q2 2025 by sector, sorted by employment size.



Total Employment in Q2 2025

Blank cells indicate suppressed data.

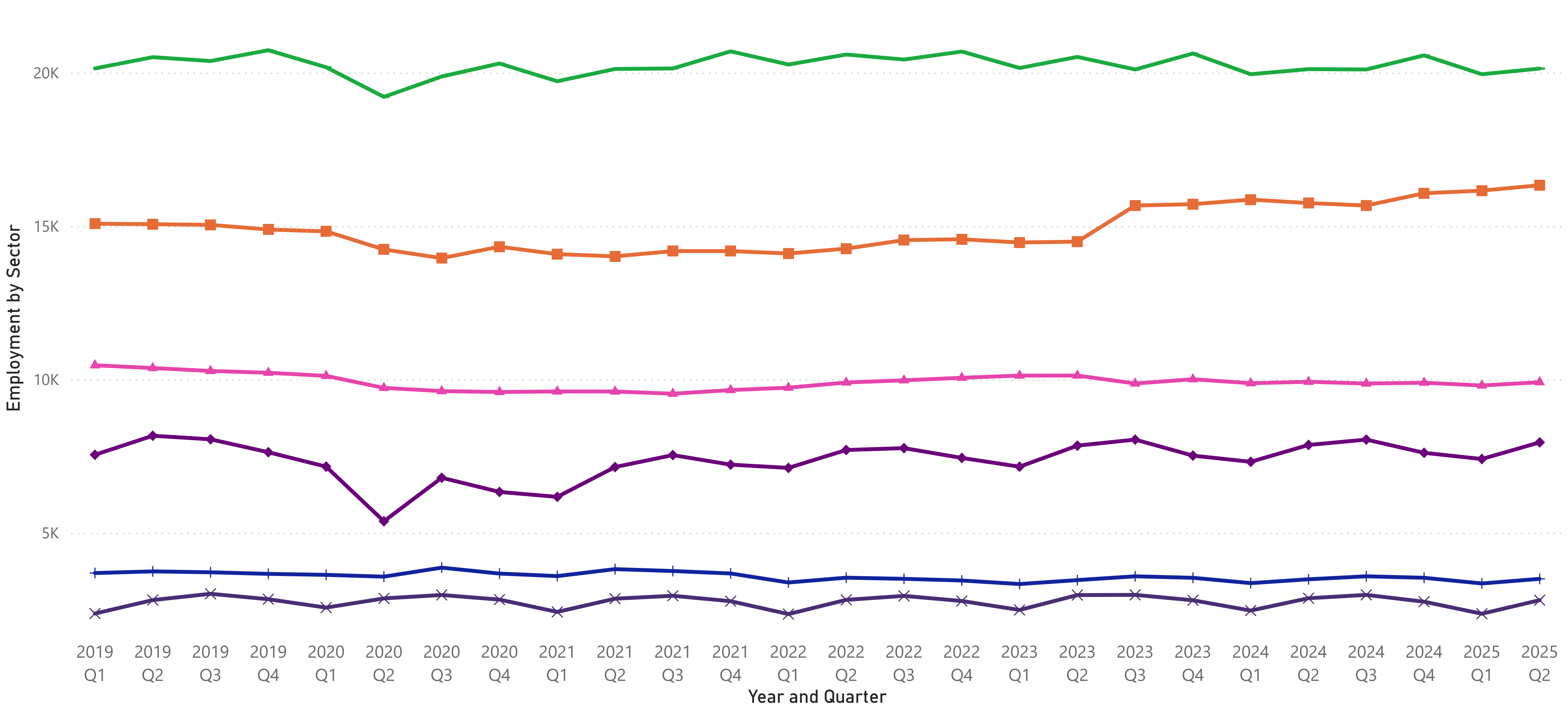
Sector	Count of Jobs
Total Nonfarm	85,968
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	20,134
Government	17,738
Educational and Health Services	16,330
Manufacturing	9,909
Leisure and Hospitality	7,948
Professional and Business Services	3,499
Financial Activities	3,434
Other Services	3,433
Construction	2,804
Information	407
Natural Resources and Mining	333

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Current Employment Statistics, respective years.

West Central Region Employment by Sector and Quarter, 2019-2025Q2 (not seasonally adjusted)

Below are quarterly employment levels by sector in the region, including quarterly employment fluctuations. E.g., transportation employment gets temporary increases in 4th quarter due to holiday e-commerce spending. Some sectors with lower statewide employment are excluded for simplicity.

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities + Professional and Business Services Private Educational and Health Services Leisure and Hospitality Manufacturing X Construction

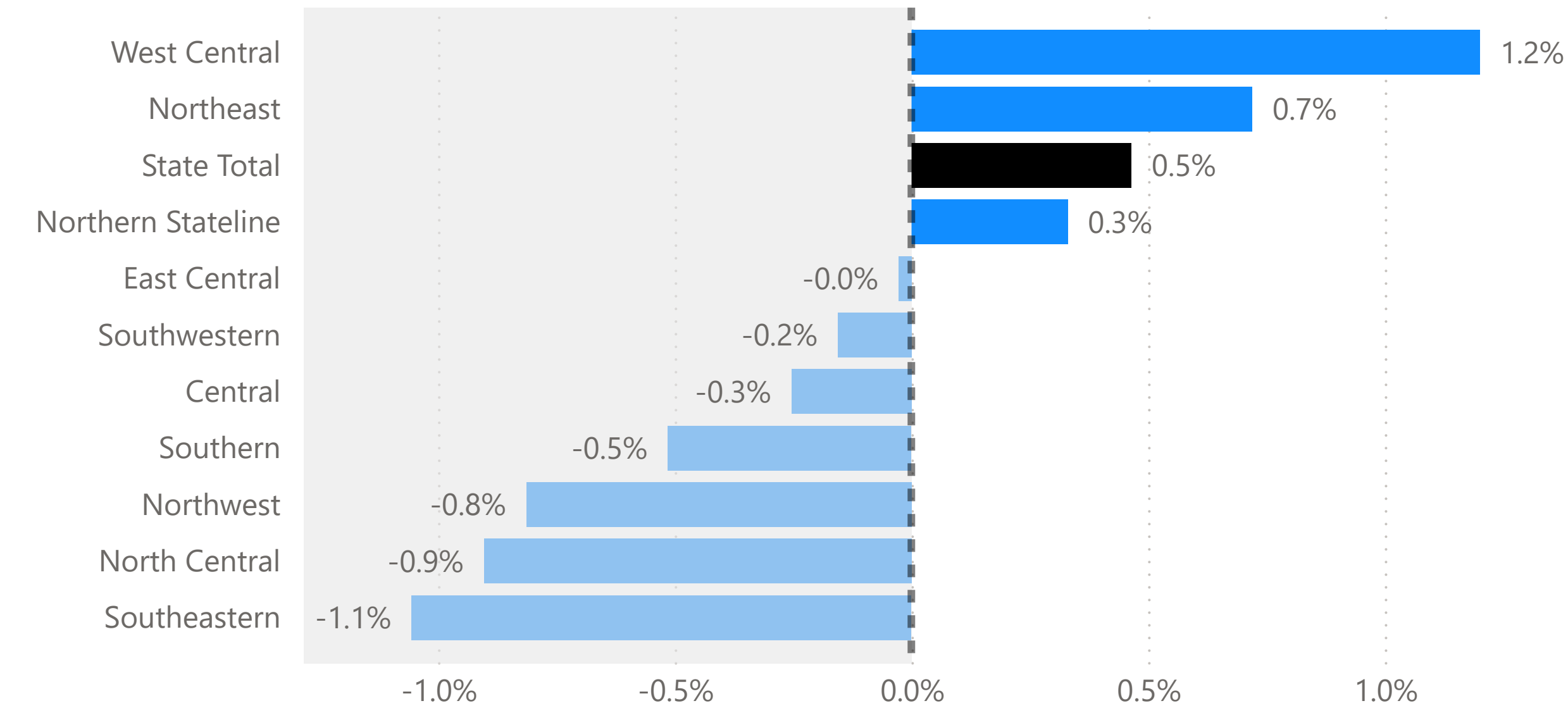


Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Current Employment Statistics, respective years.

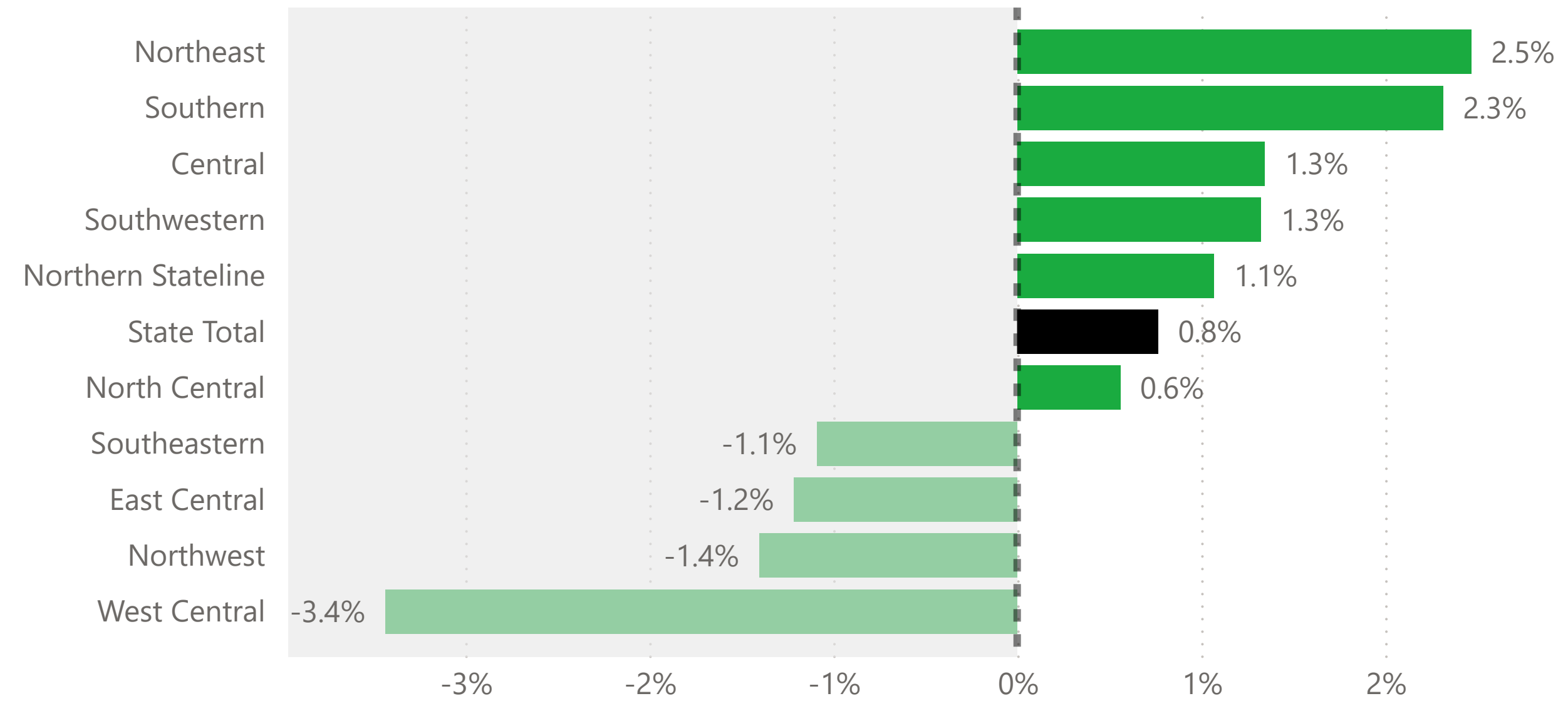
Employment Change by Sector, June 2024 vs June 2025 (Not Seasonally Adjusted, 1 of 3)

Below are comparisons of *year-over-year* employment changes by sector and region. *Regions and the state are sorted by % change in employment.*

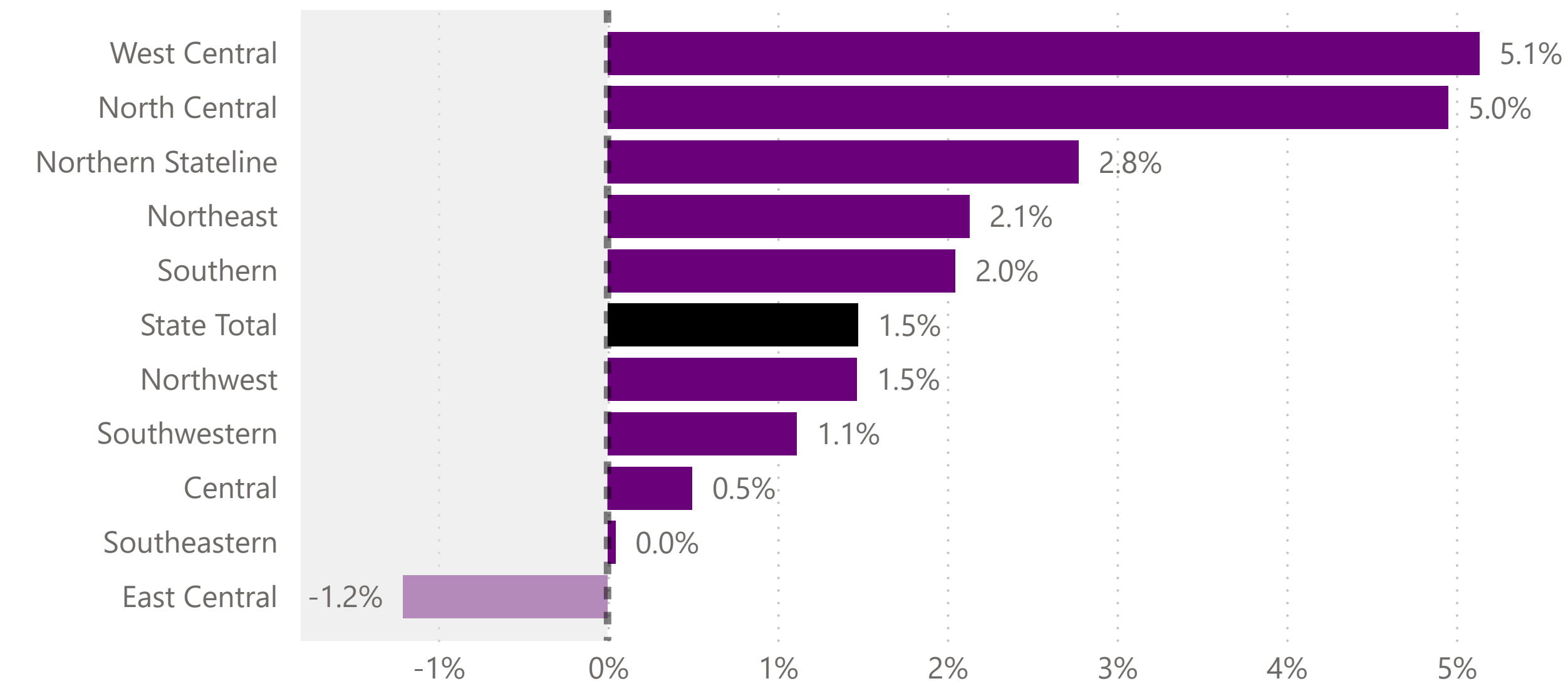
Total Nonfarm



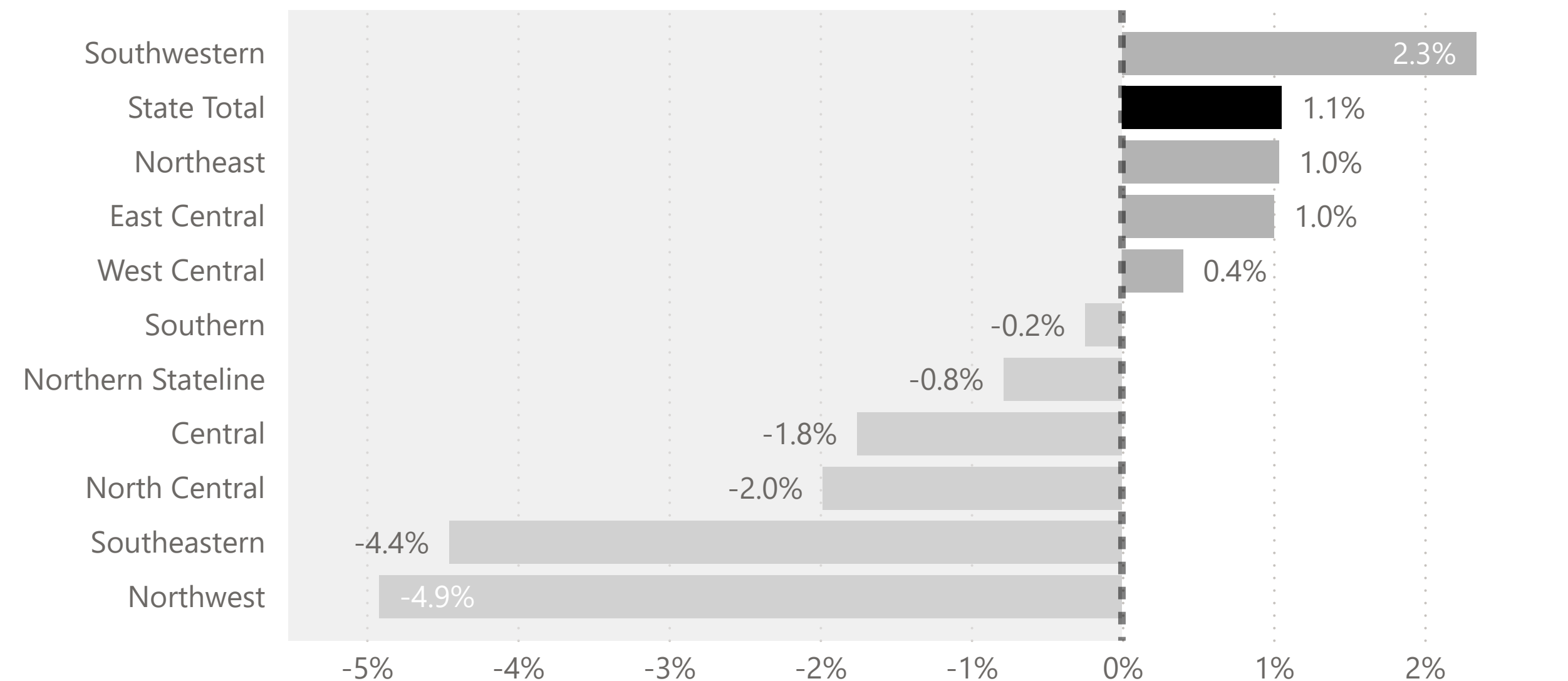
Construction



Private Education & Health Services



Financial Activities

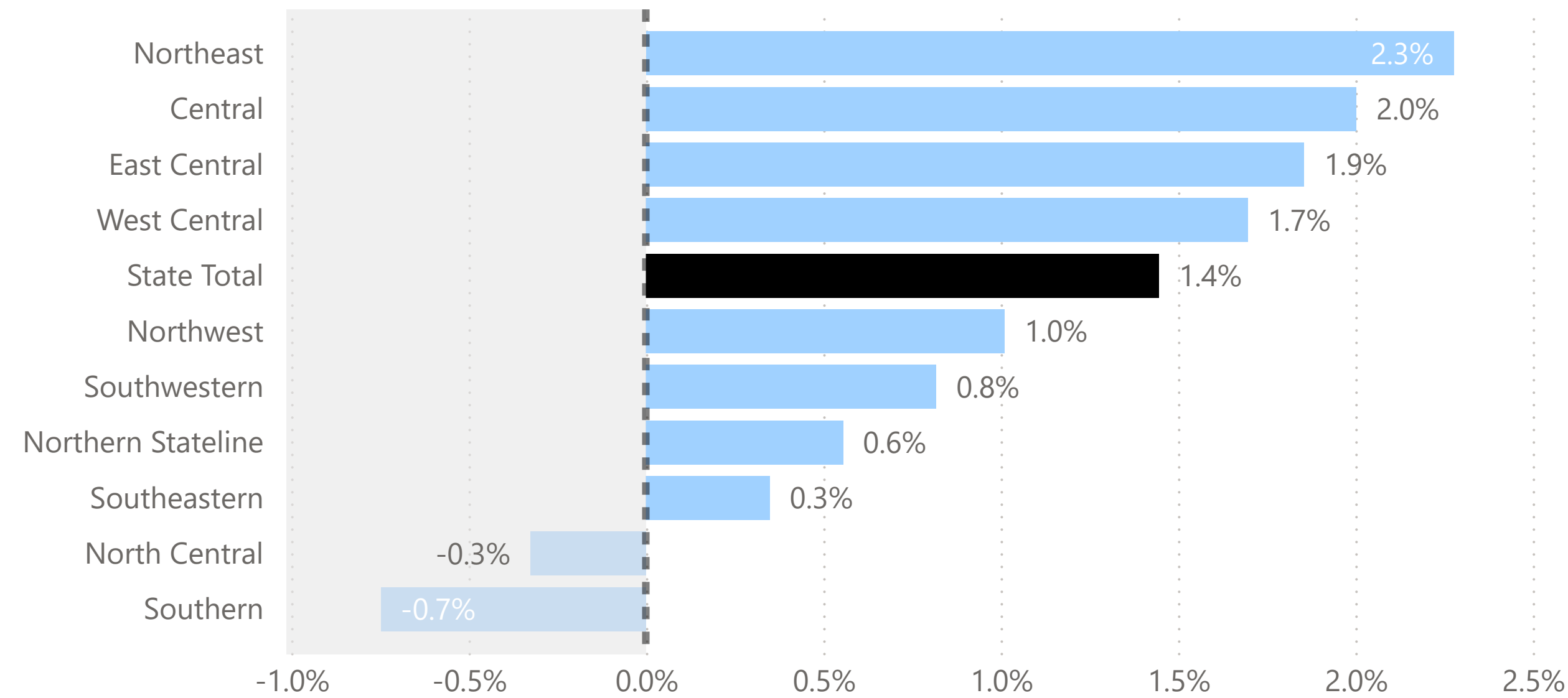


Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Current Employment Statistics, respective years.

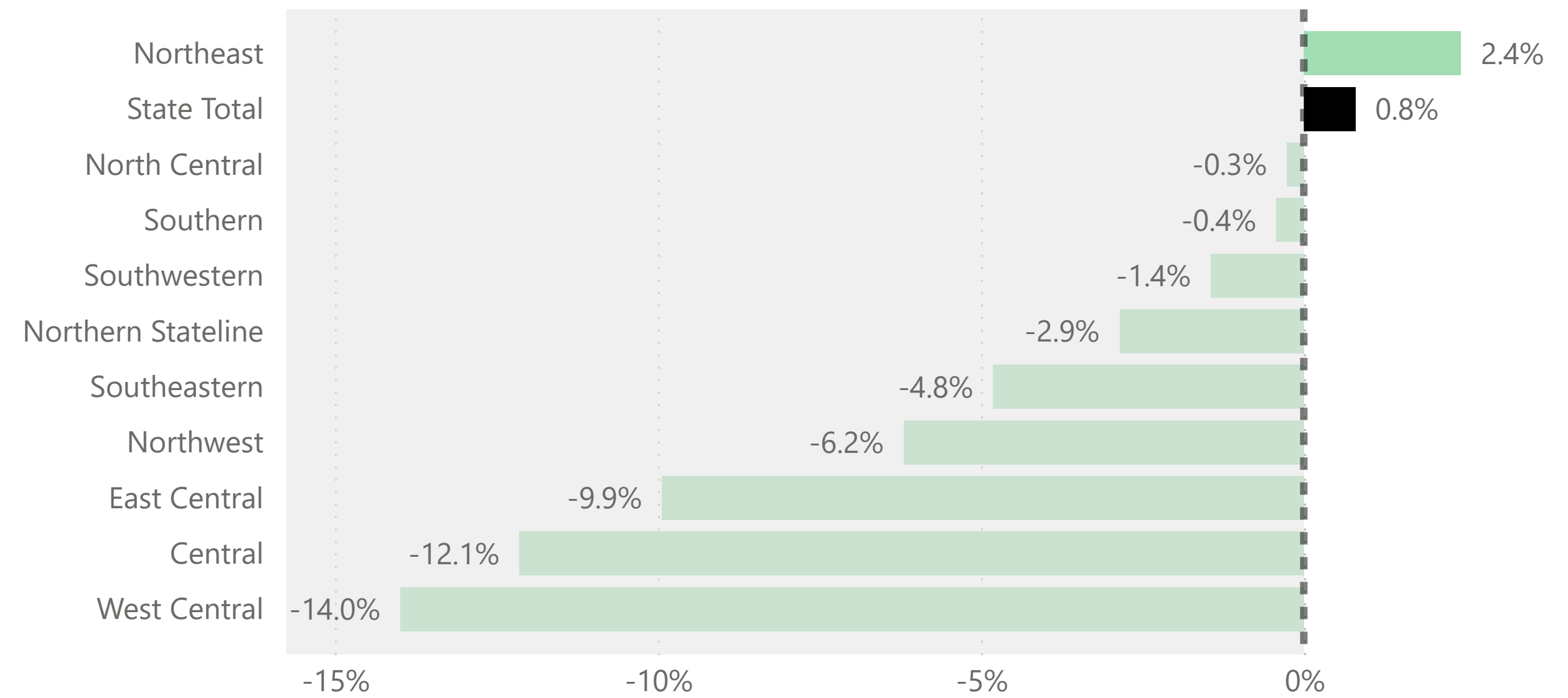
Employment Change by Sector, June 2024 vs June 2025 (Not Seasonally Adjusted, 2 of 3)

Below are comparisons of year-over-year employment changes by sector and region. *Regions and the state are sorted by % change in employment.*

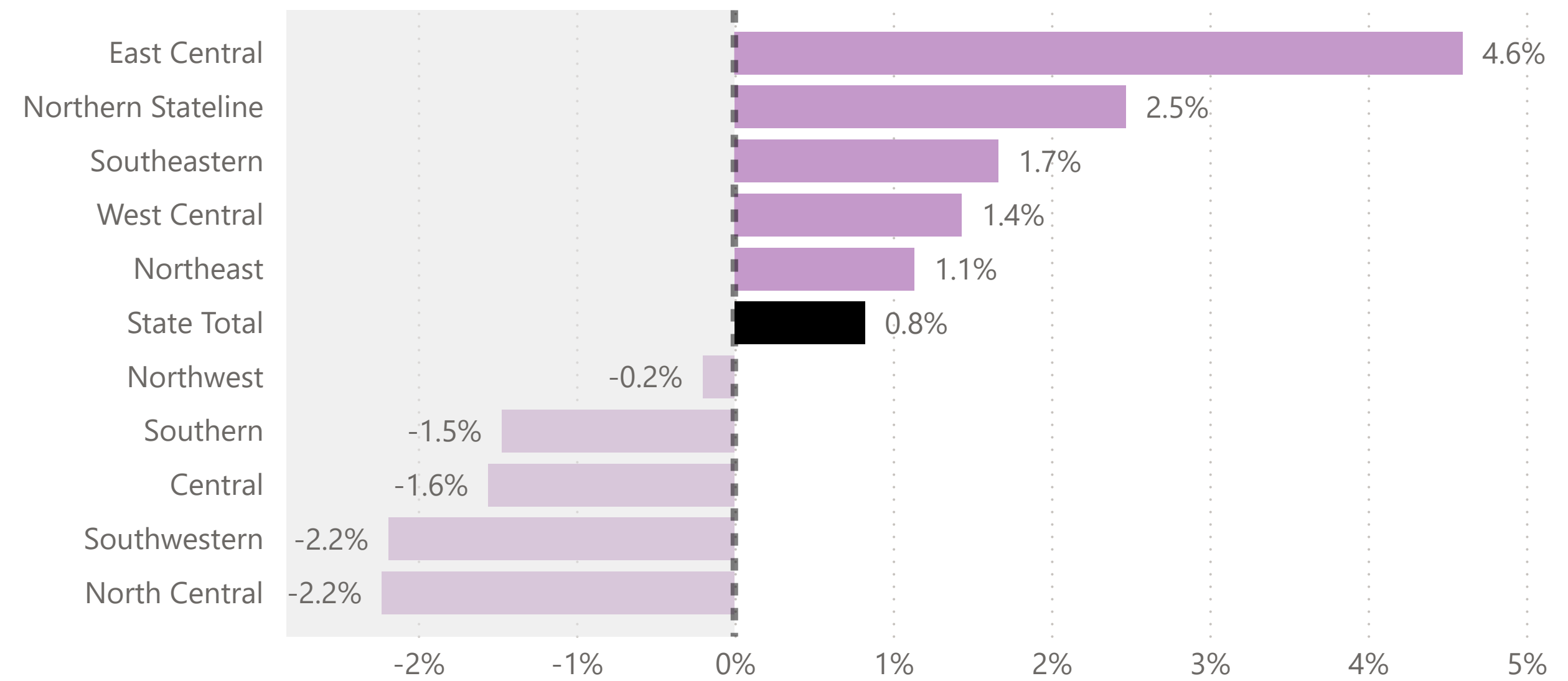
Government



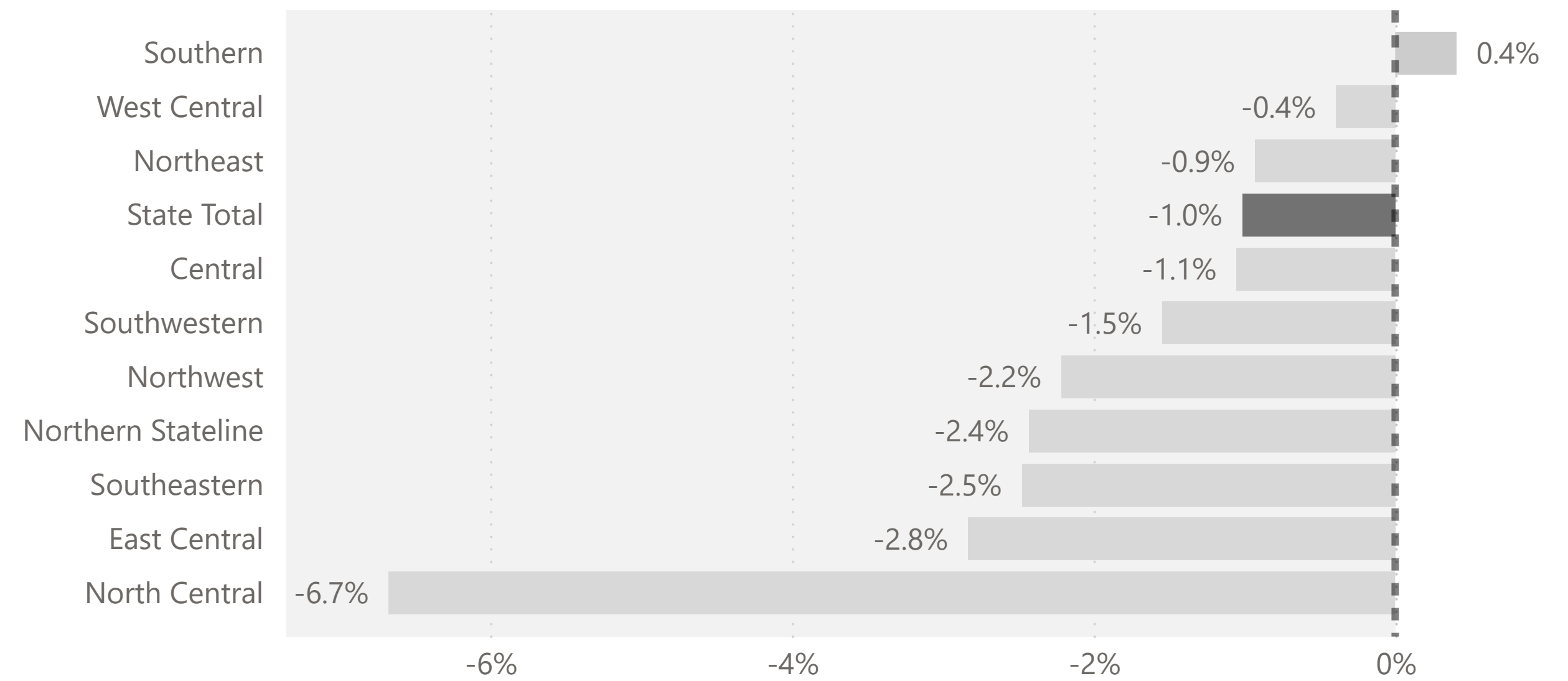
Information



Leisure & Hospitality



Manufacturing

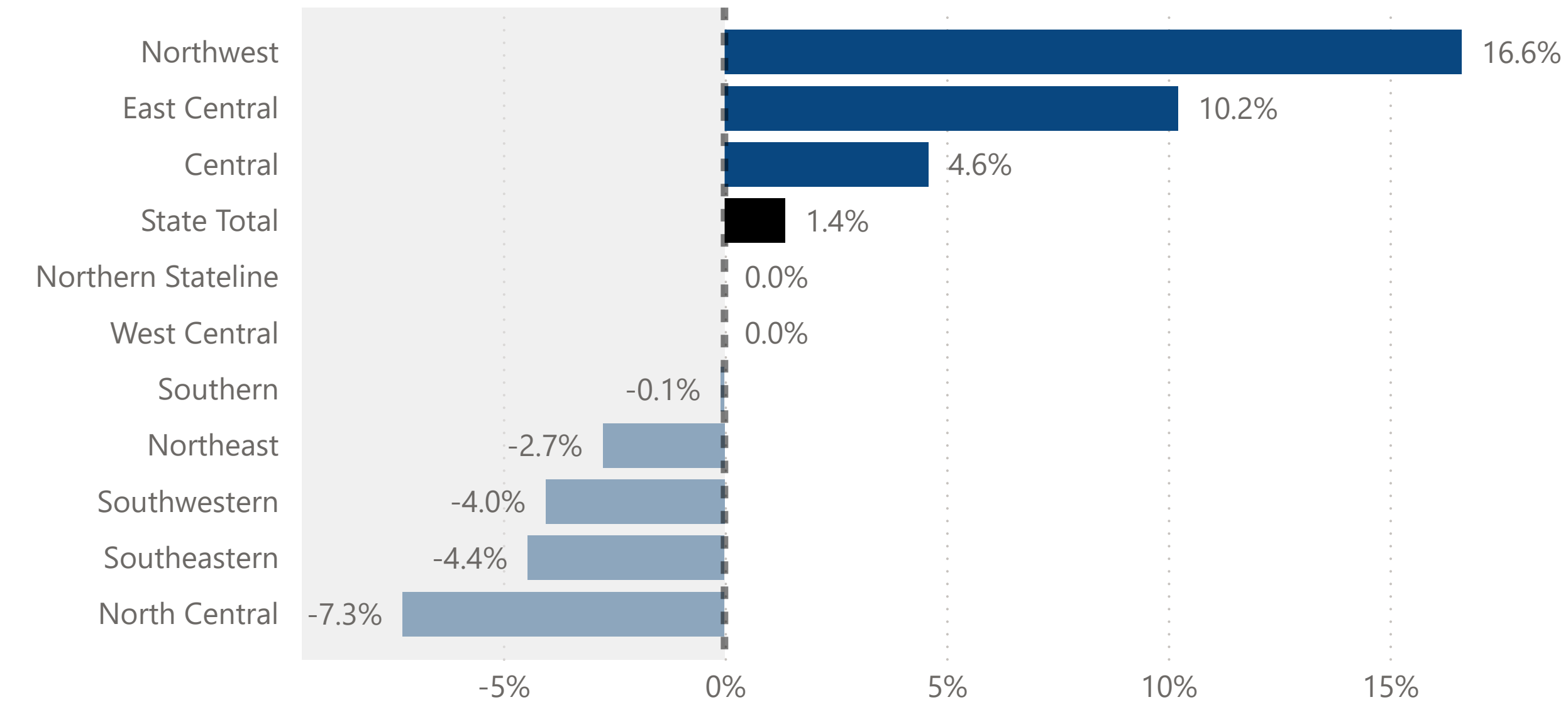


Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Current Employment Statistics, respective years.

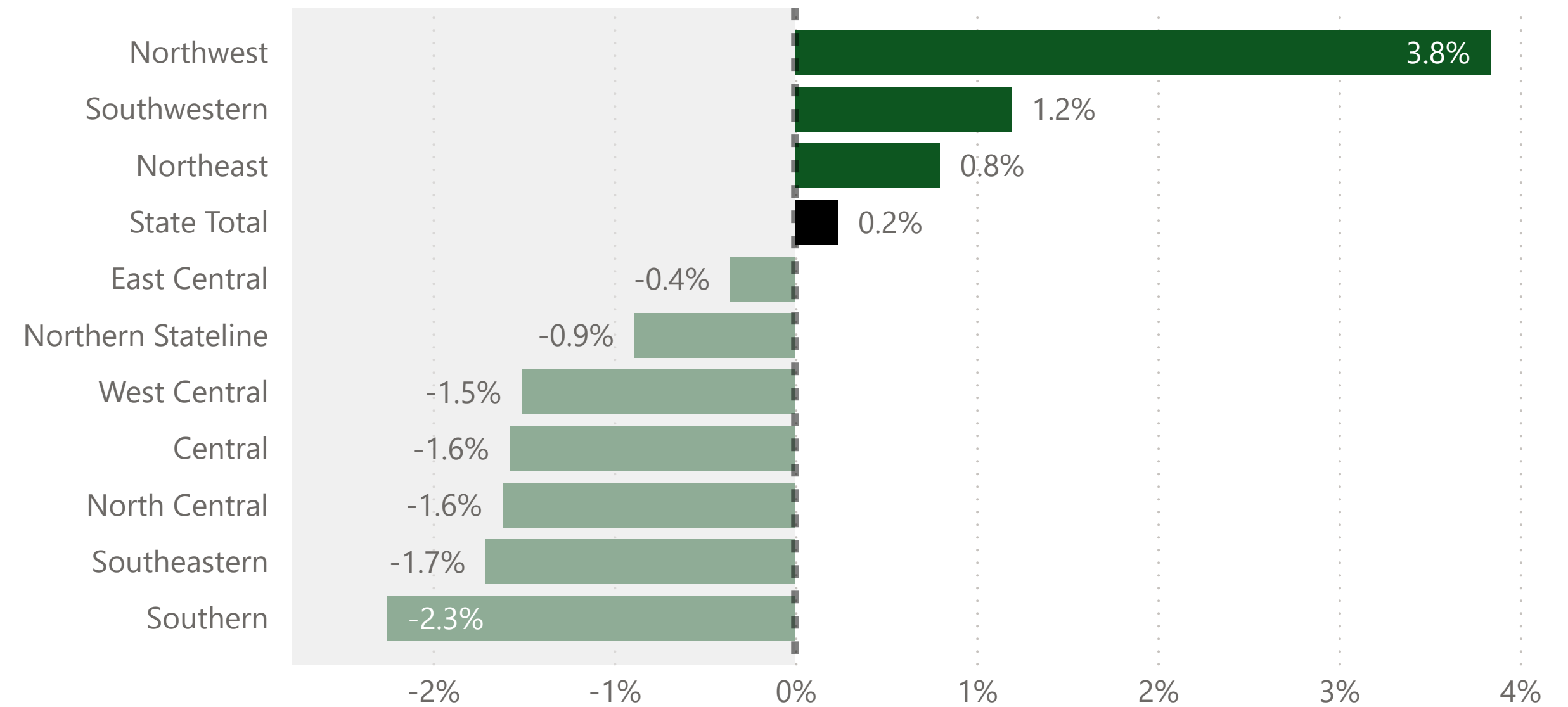
Employment Change by Sector, July 2022 vs July 2023 (Not Seasonally Adjusted, 3 of 3)

Below are comparisons of year-over-year employment changes by sector and region. *Regions and the state are sorted by % change in employment.*

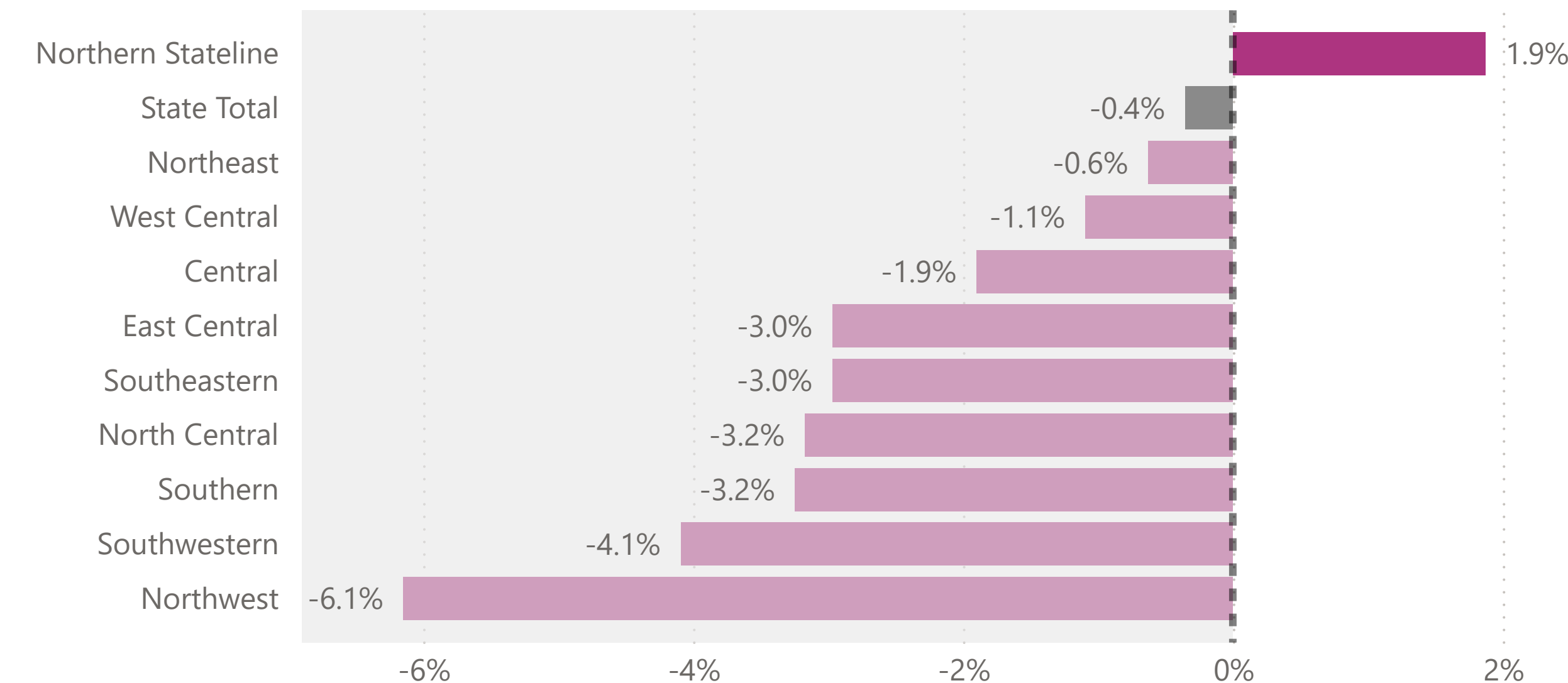
Natural Resources and Mining



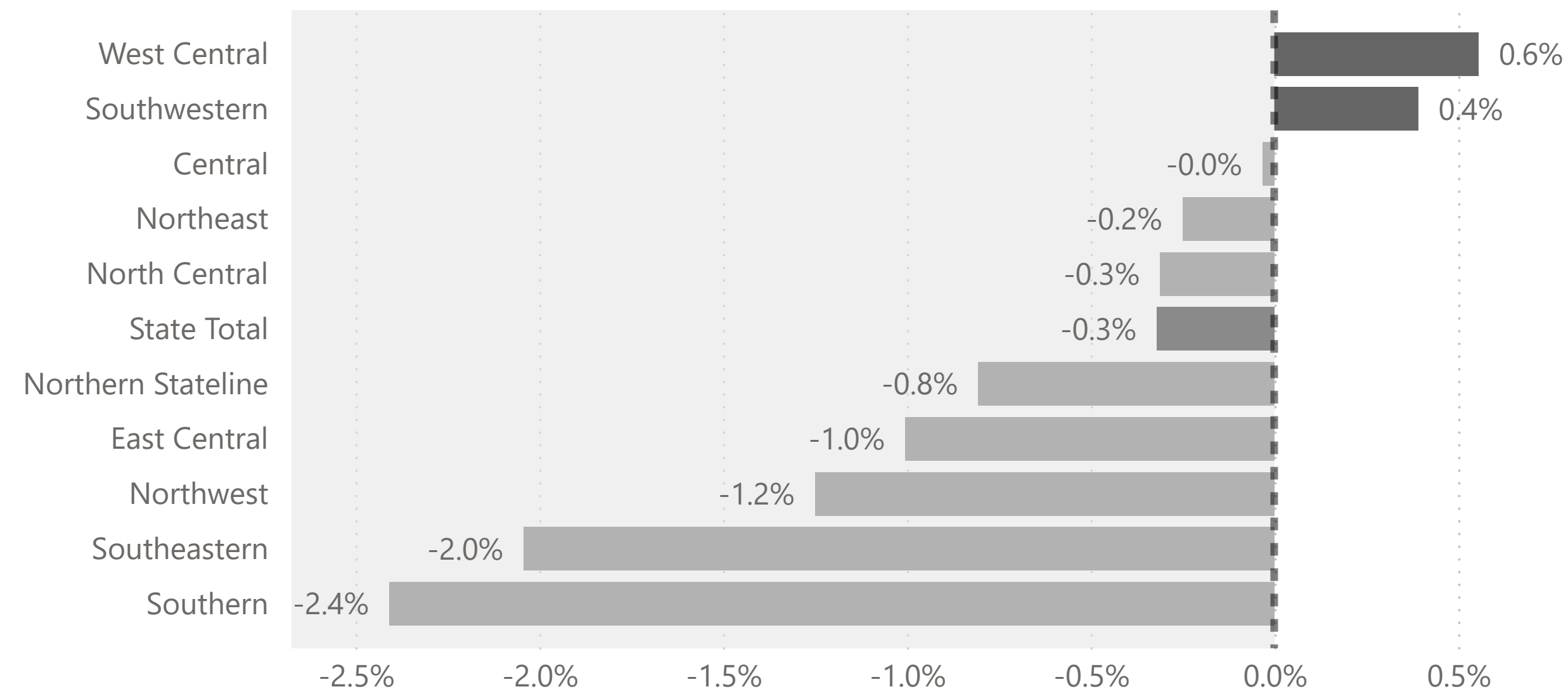
Other Services, excl. Government



Professional and Business Services



Trade, Transportation, and Utilities



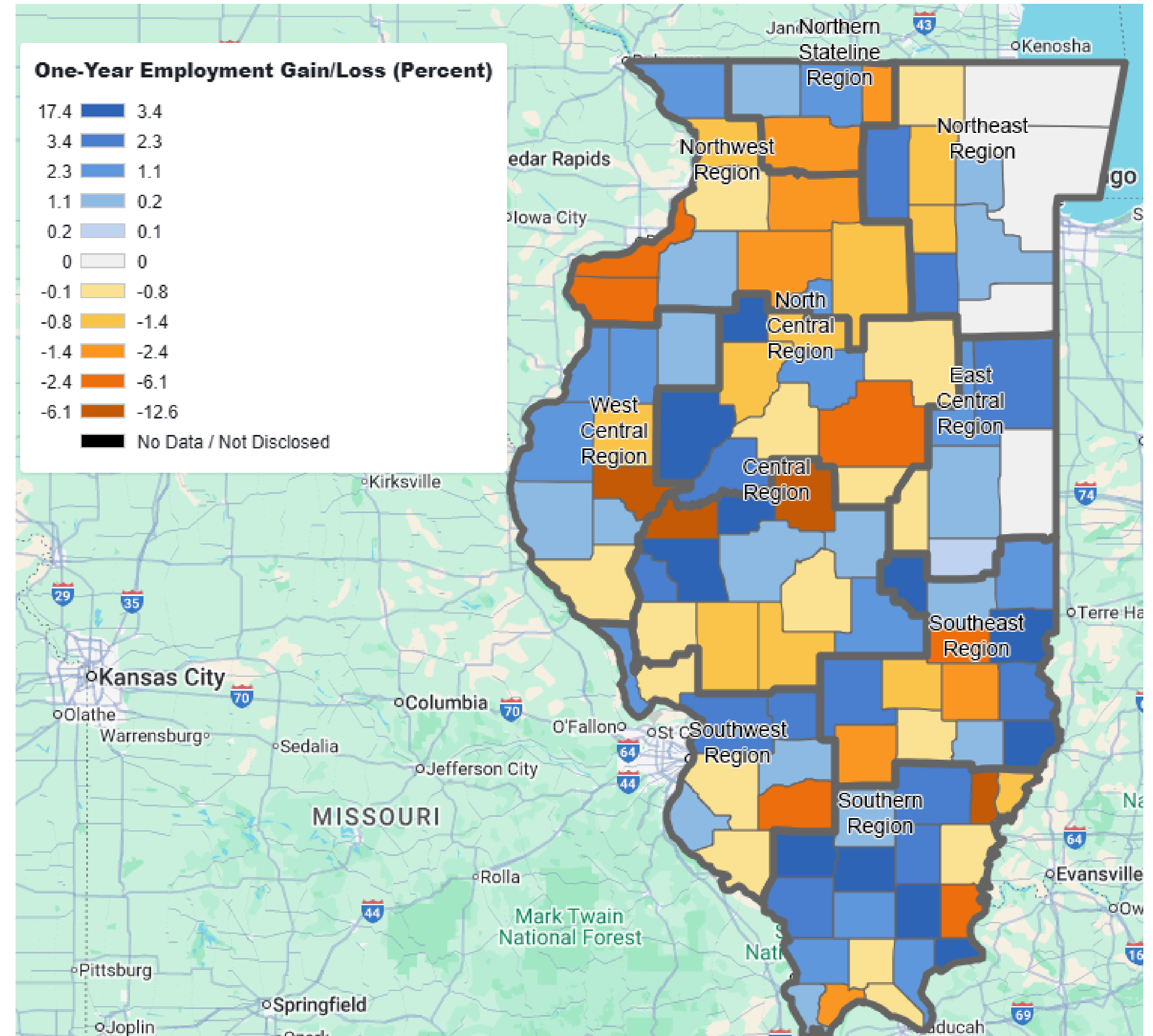
Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Current Employment Statistics, respective years.

Total Employment Change by County, Q4 2023 - Q4 2024

In this map and the maps on the following pages, darker **orange** indicates more employment **declines** over the past year, while darker **blue** indicates more employment **growth**. Region-level employment changes do not reflect the employment **churn** that **occurs within** some **regions**.

Care must be taken when comparing **percentage changes**, as they **are relative to** the employment **size** of each county. For example, some of the largest percentage employment changes were in counties along the Southern border with smaller total employment sizes.

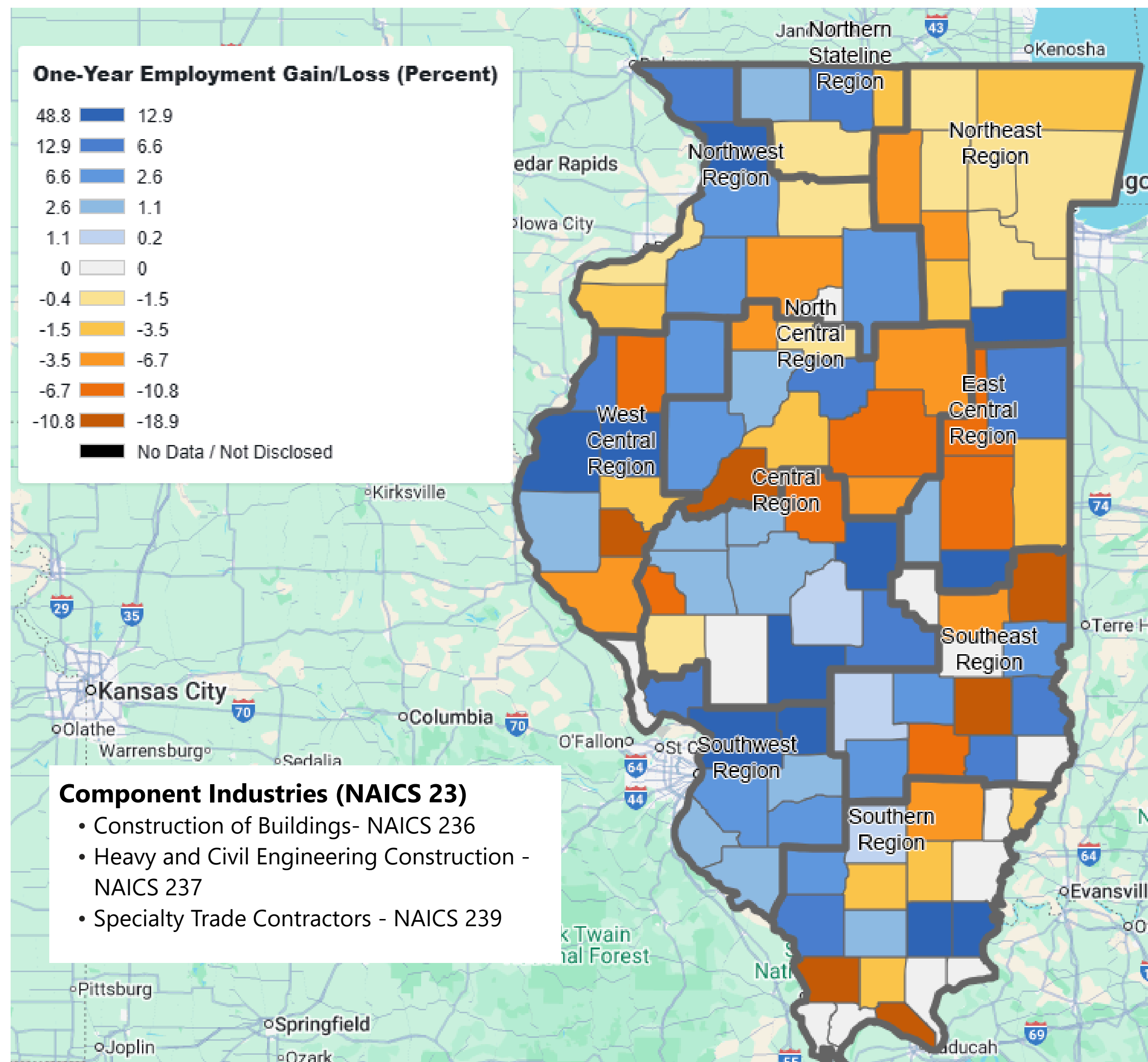
The following pages offer more detail by sector and by county within each region.



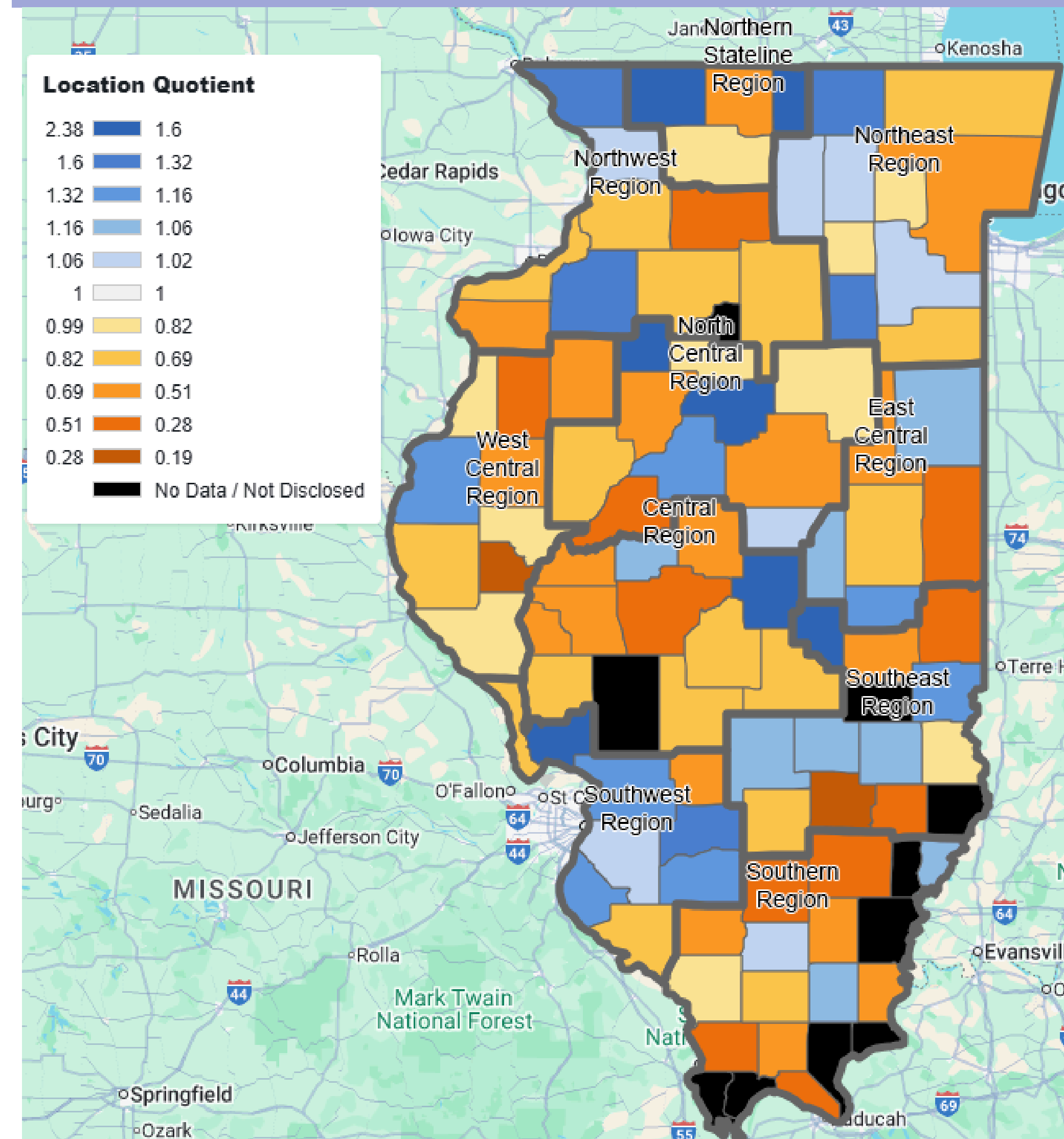
Construction Sector

Q4 2023- Q4 2024% Employment Change & Q4 2024 Employment Location Quotient

Employment Change



Employment Concentration



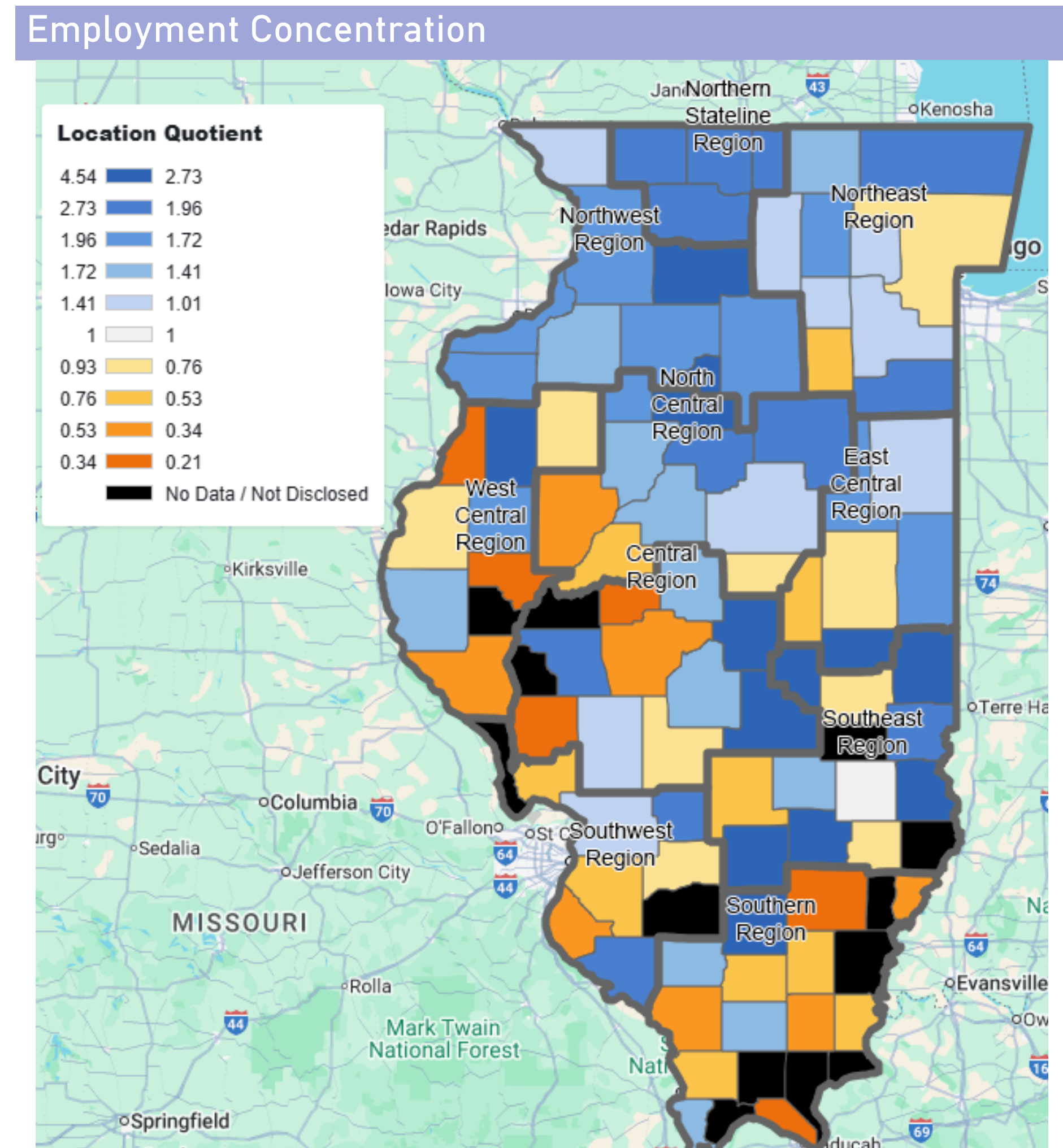
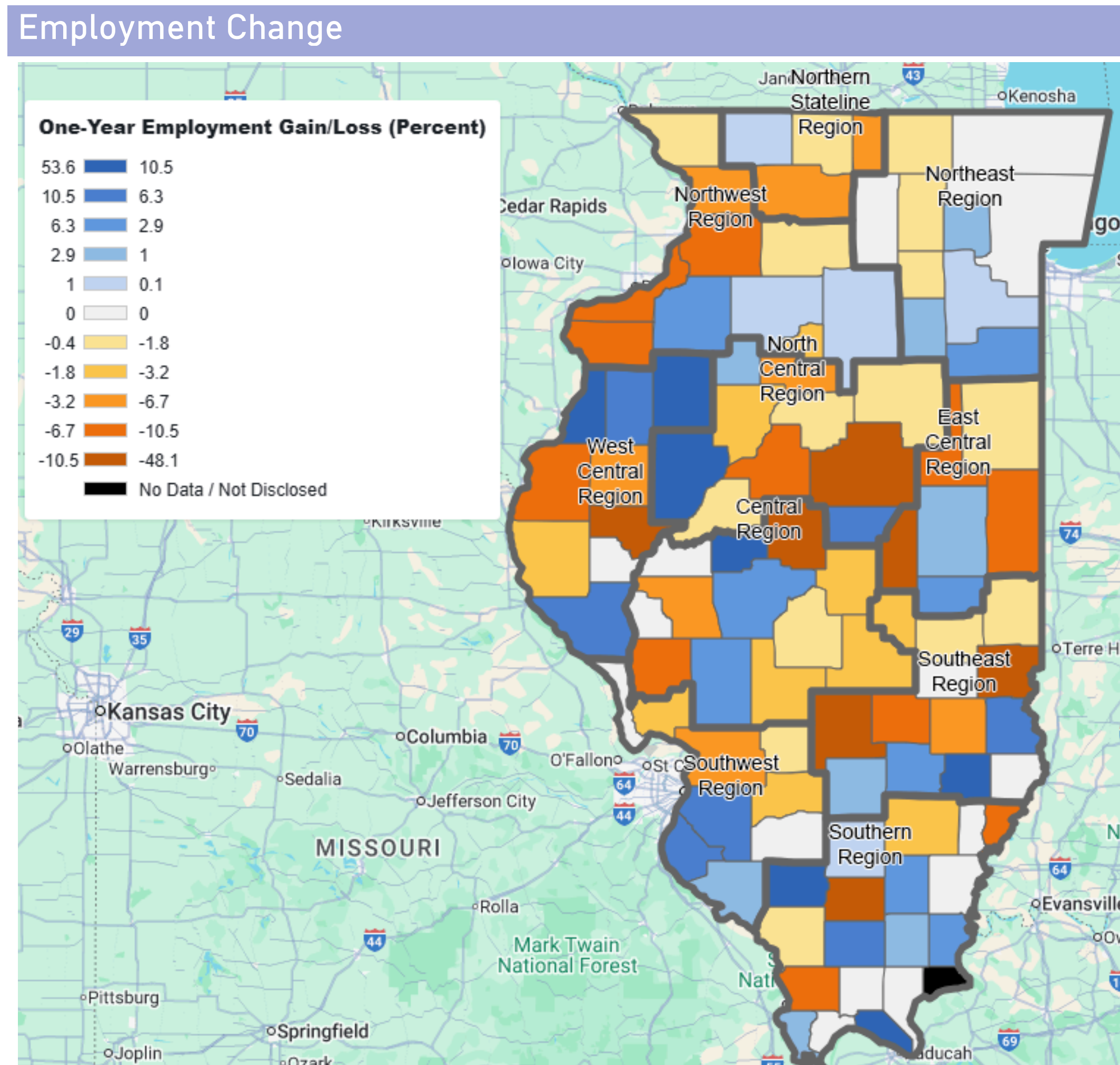
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

Manufacturing Sector

Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change

Component Industries (NAICS 31-33)

- Food(NAICS 311)
- Beverage and Tobacco Products (NAICS 312)
- Textile Mills (NAICS 313)
- Textile Product Mills (NAICS 314)
- Apparel (NAICS 315)
- Leather and Allied Products (NAICS 316)
- Wood Products (NAICS 321)
- Paper (NAICS 322)
- Printing (NAICS 323)
- Petroleum and Coal Products (NAICS 324)
- Chemicals (NAICS 325)
- Plastics and Rubber Products (NAICS 326)
- Nonmetallic Mineral Products (NAICS 327)
- Primary Metals (NAICS 331)
- Fabricated Metal Products (NAICS 332)
- Machinery (NAICS 333)
- Computer and Electronic Products (NAICS 334)
- Electrical Equipment and Components (NAICS 335)
- Transportation Equipment (NAICS 336)
- Furniture (NAICS 337)
- Miscellaneous (NAICS 339)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities Sector

Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change

Component Industries

Utilities (NAICS 22)

Wholesale Trade (NAICS 42)

- Durable Goods (NAICS 423)
- Nondurable Goods (NAICS 424)
- Electronic Markets (NAICS 425)

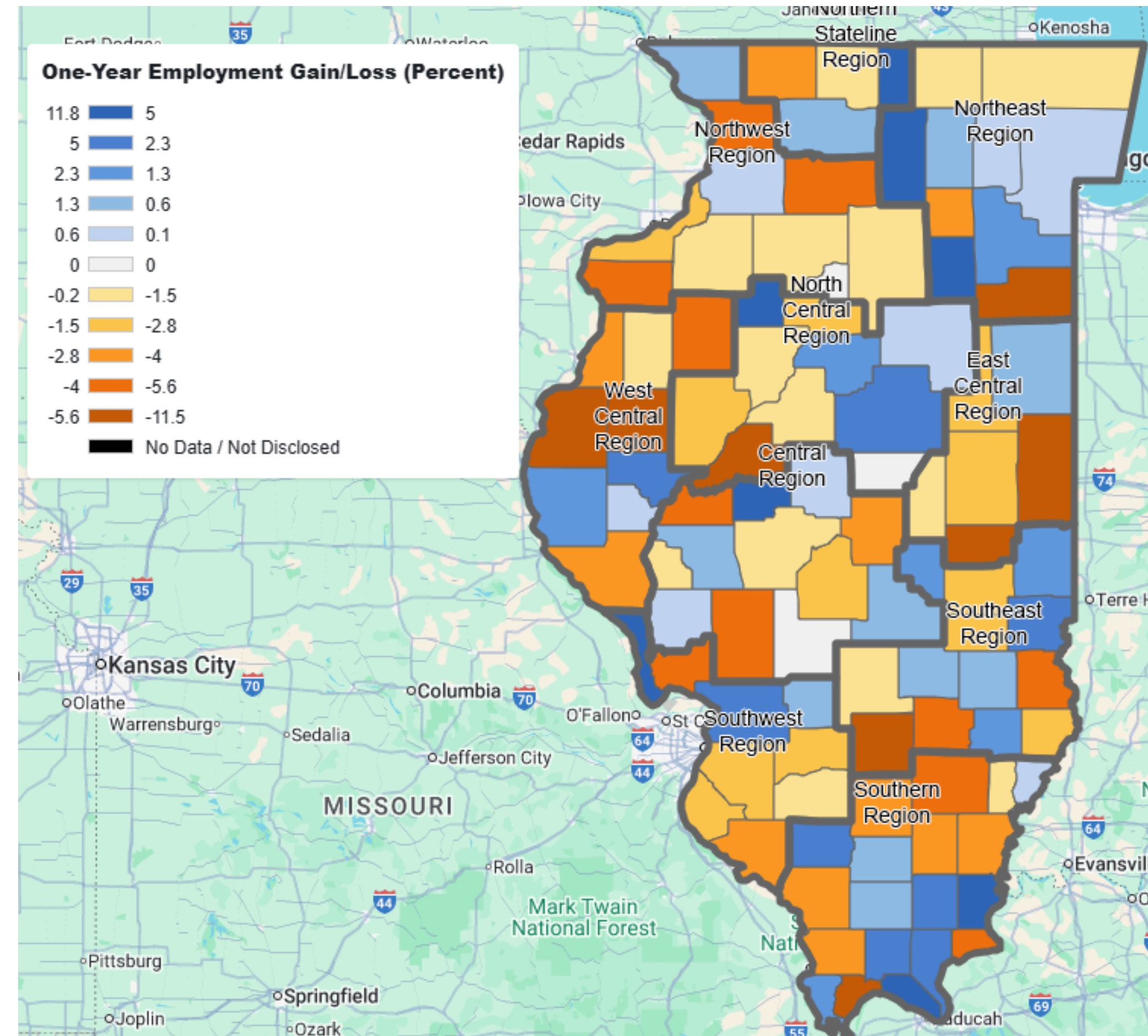
Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45)

- Motor Vehicle and Parts (NAICS 441)
- Furniture and Home Furnishings (NAICS 442)
- Electronics and Appliances (NAICS 443)
- Building and Garden Equipment (NAICS 444)
- Food and Beverage (NAICS 445)
- Health / Personal Products (NAICS 446)
- Gasoline Stations (NAICS 447)
- Clothing and Accessories (NAICS 448)
- Sporting Goods & Hobbies (NAICS 451)
- General Merchandise (NAICS 452)
- Miscellaneous (NAICS 453)
- Nonstore Retailers (NAICS 454)

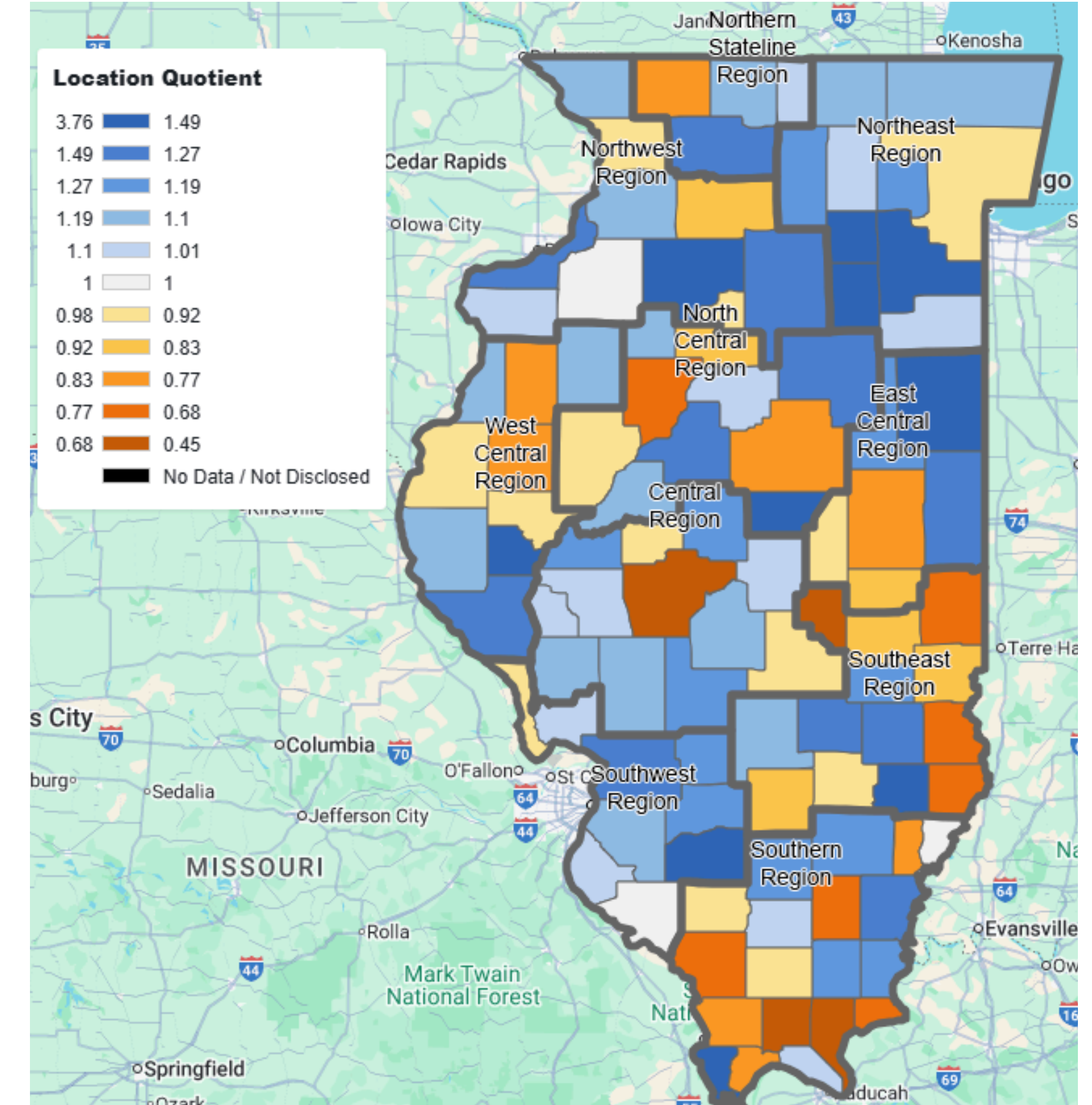
Transportation and Warehousing (NAICS 48-49)

- Air (NAICS 481)
- Rail (NAICS 482)
- Water (NAICS 483)
- Truck (NAICS 484)
- Transit and Ground Passenger (NAICS 485)
- Pipeline (NAICS 486)
- Scenic and Sightseeing (NAICS 487)
- Support Activities (NAICS 488)
- Postal Service (NAICS 491)
- Couriers and Messengers (NAICS 492)
- Warehousing and Storage (NAICS 493)

Employment Change



Employment Concentration

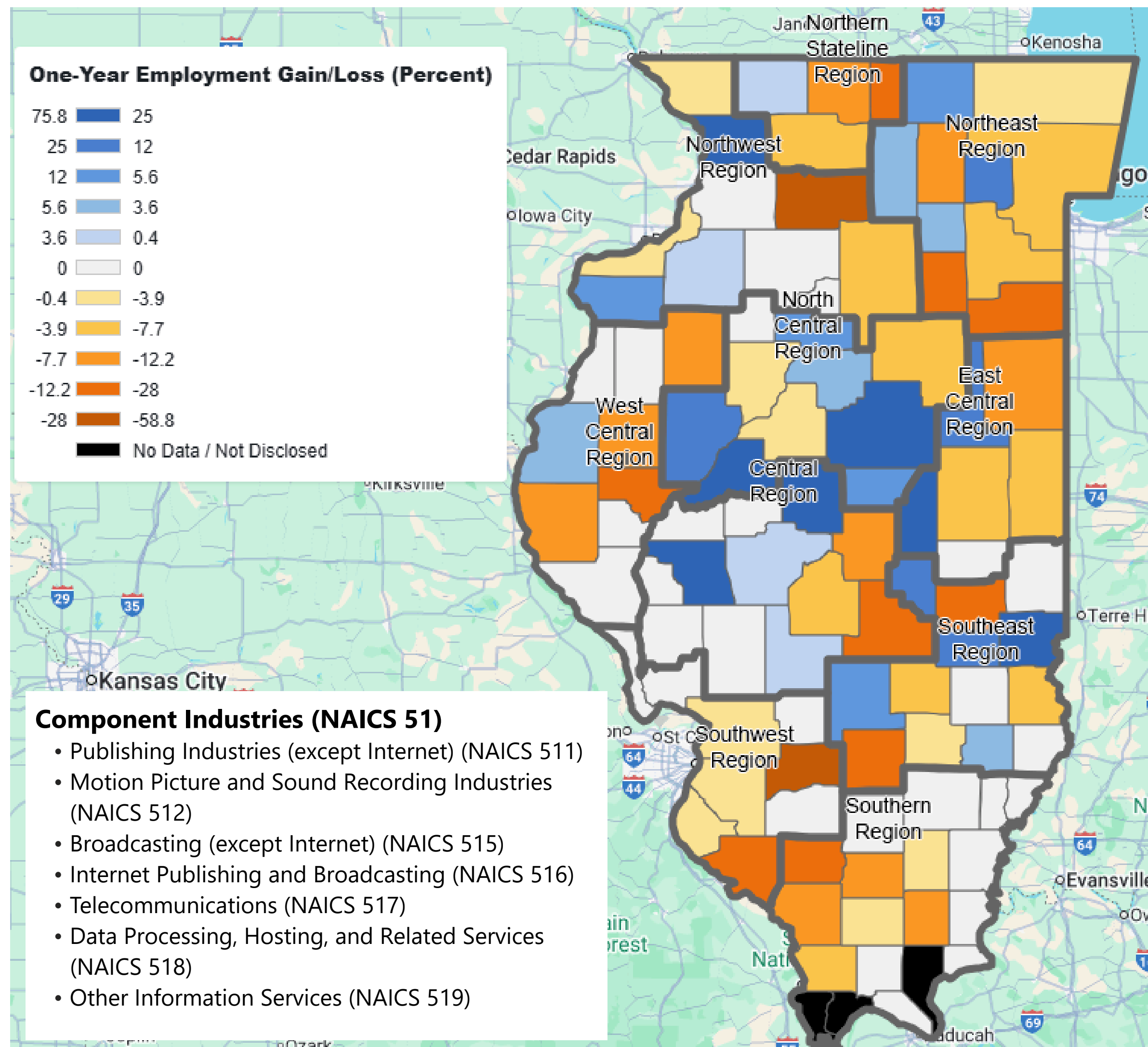


Information Sector

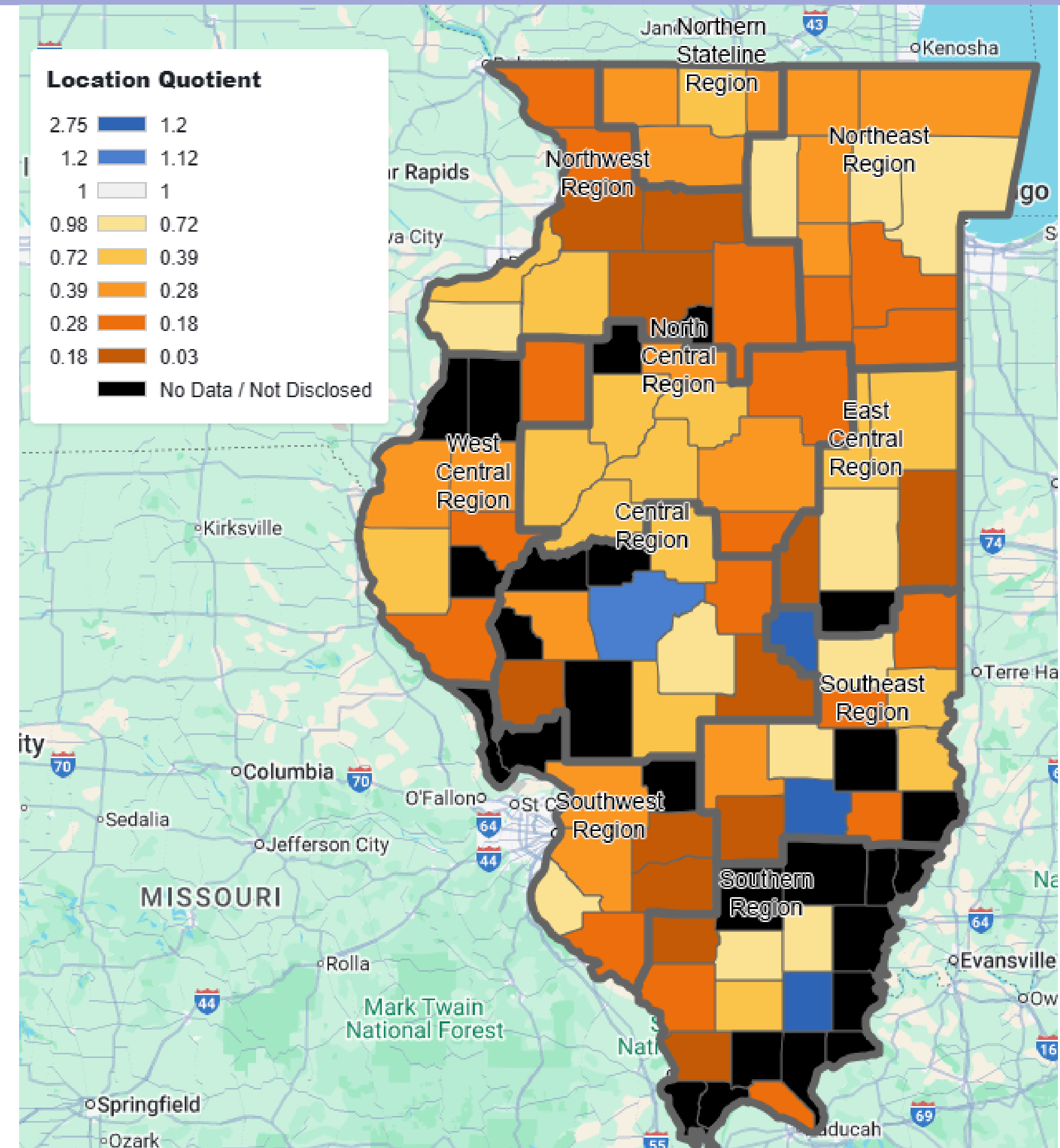
Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change & Q4 2024 Employment Location Quotient

Most IT **occupations** (e.g., programmers) are employed outside of the Information sector.

Employment Change



Employment Concentration

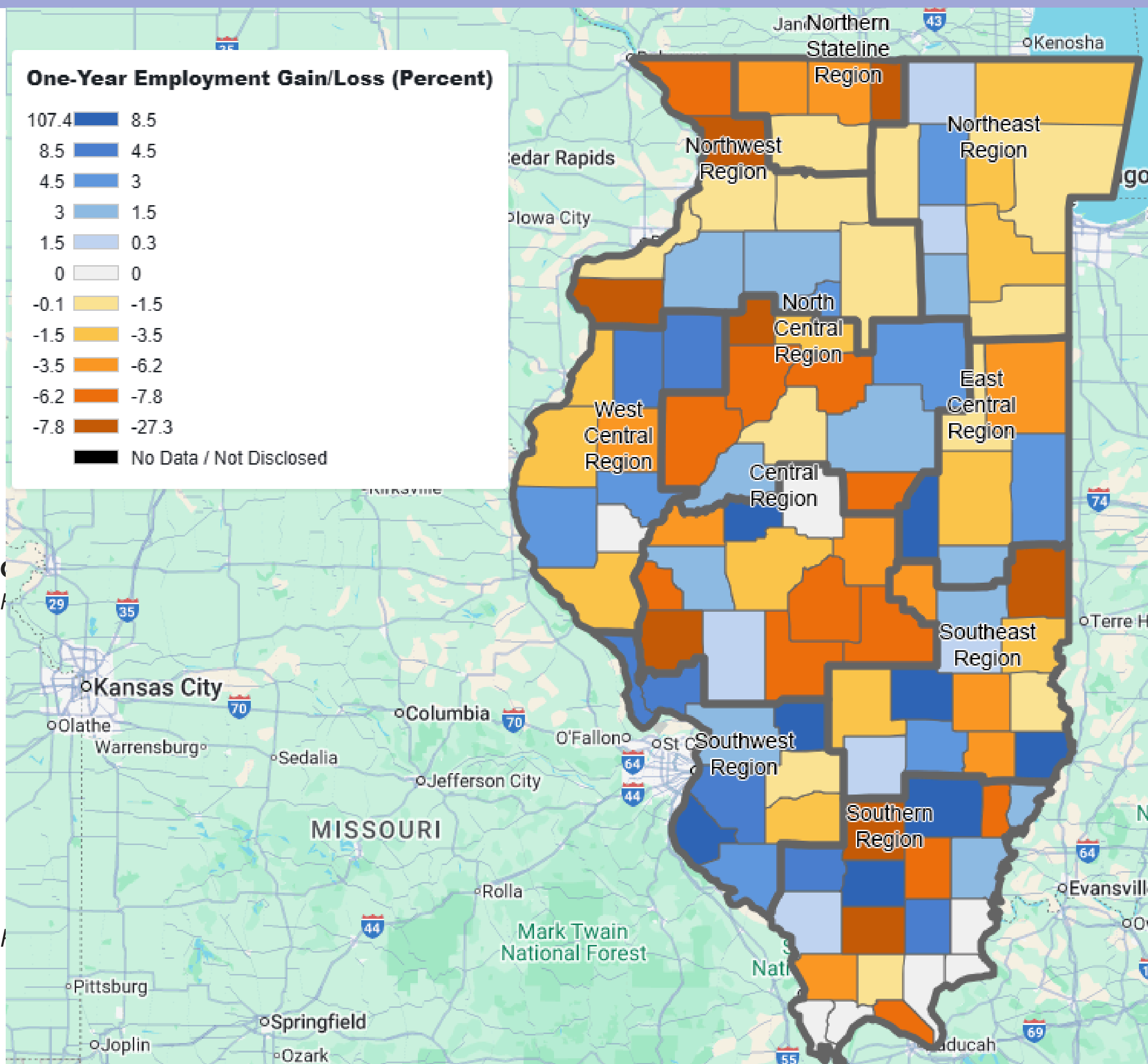


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

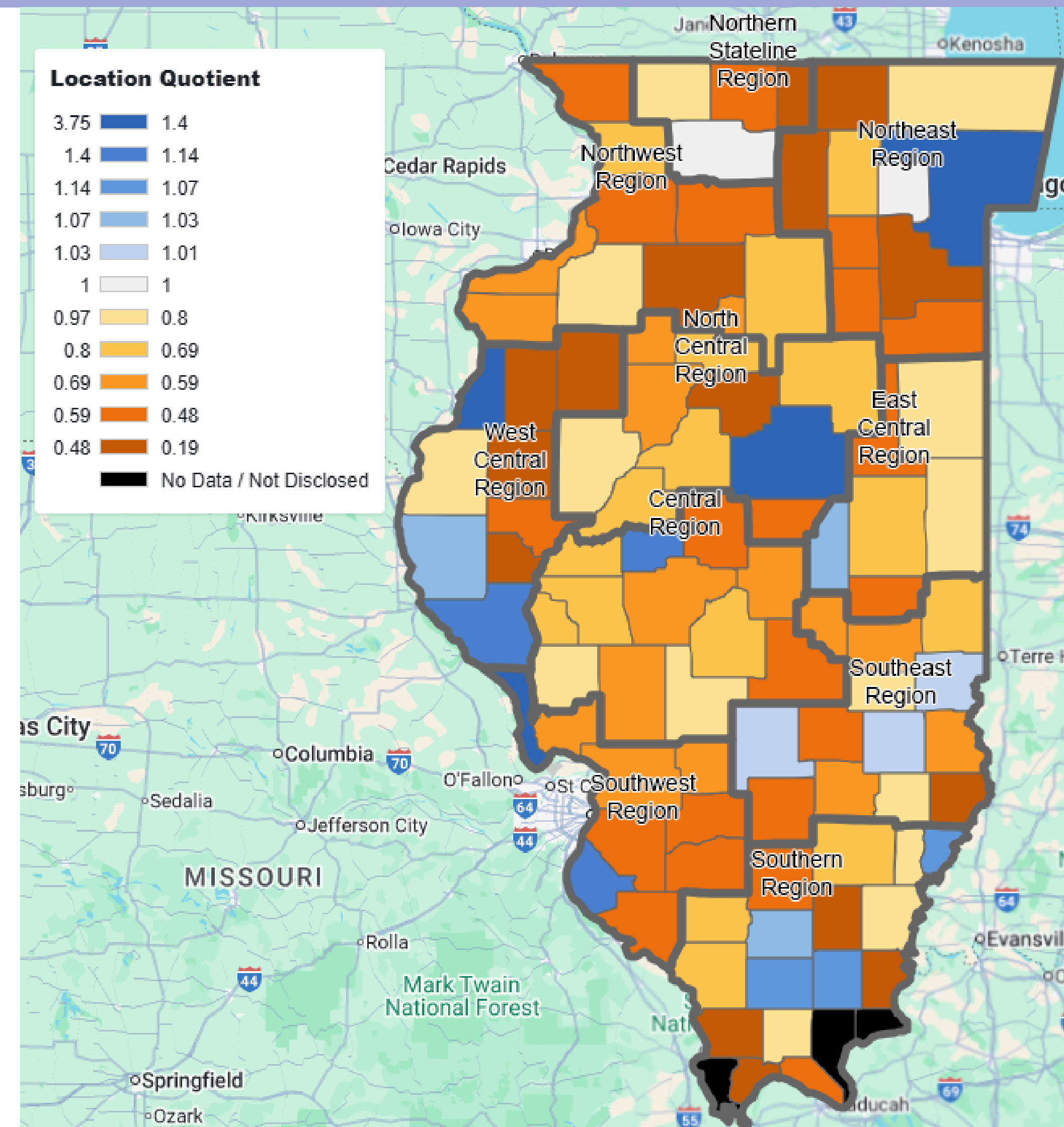
Financial Activities Sector

Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change & Q4 2024 Employment Location Quotient

Employment Change



Employment Concentration

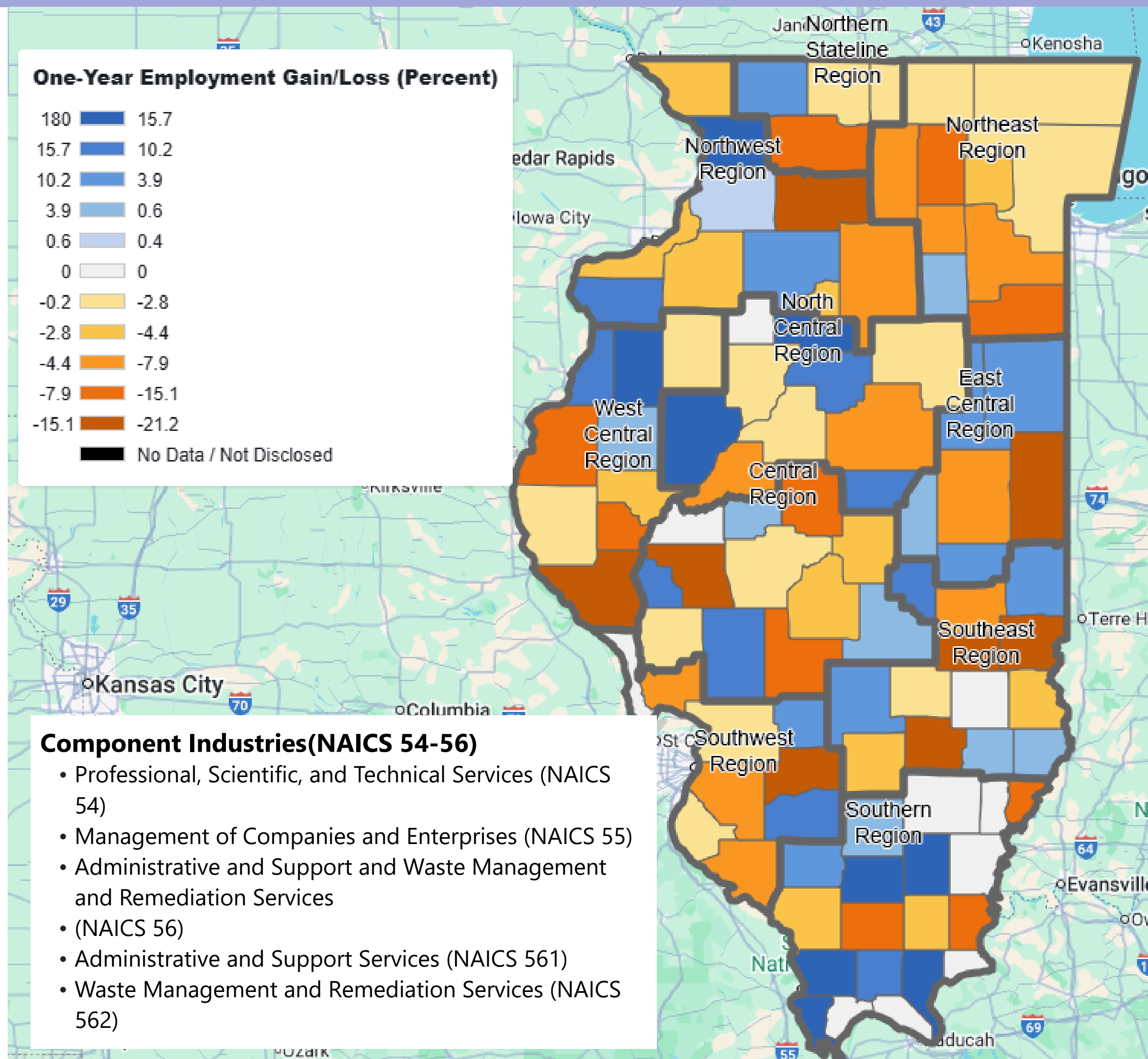


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

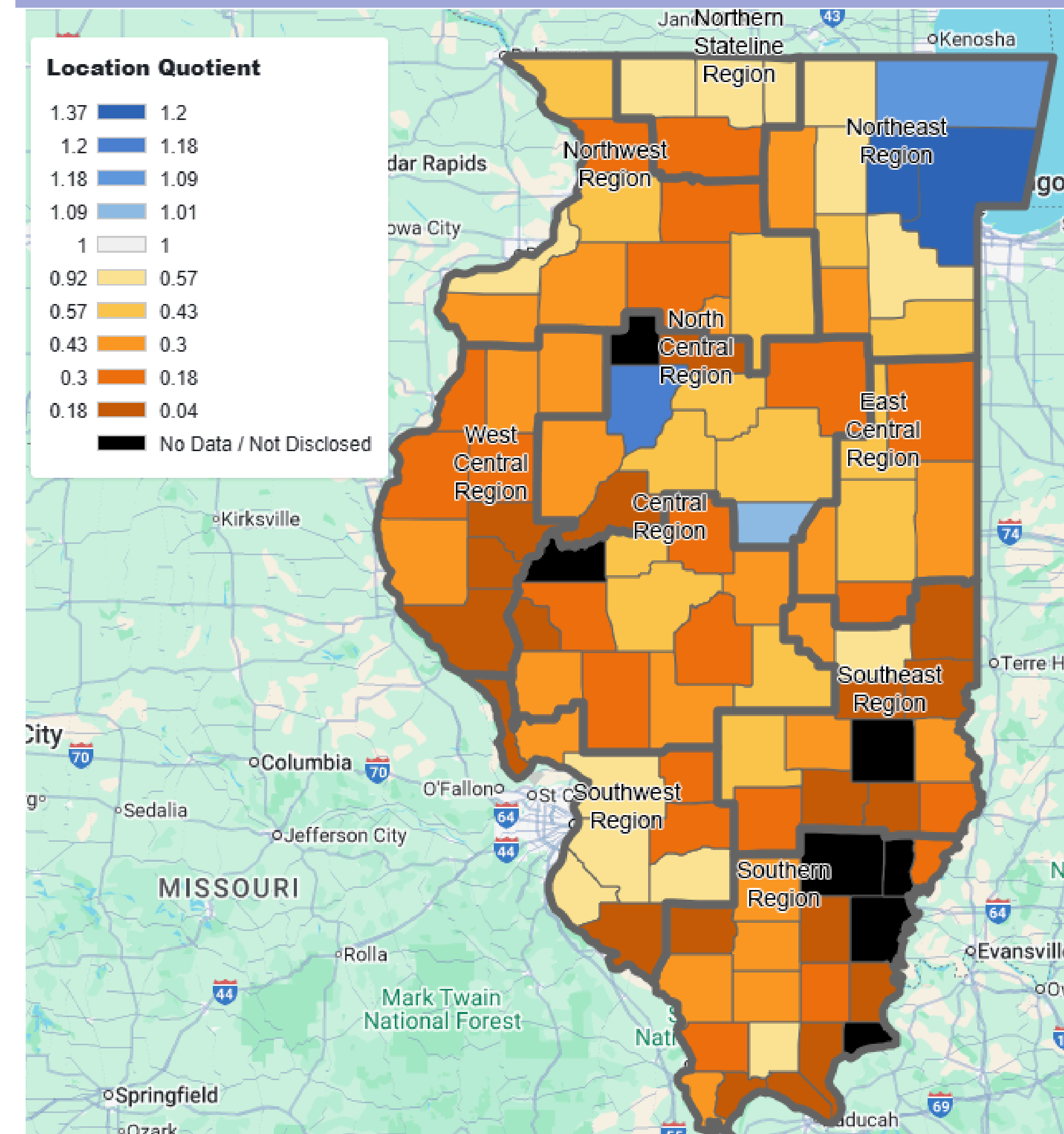
Professional & Business Services Sector

Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change & Q4 2024 Employment Location Quotient

Employment Change



Employment Concentration



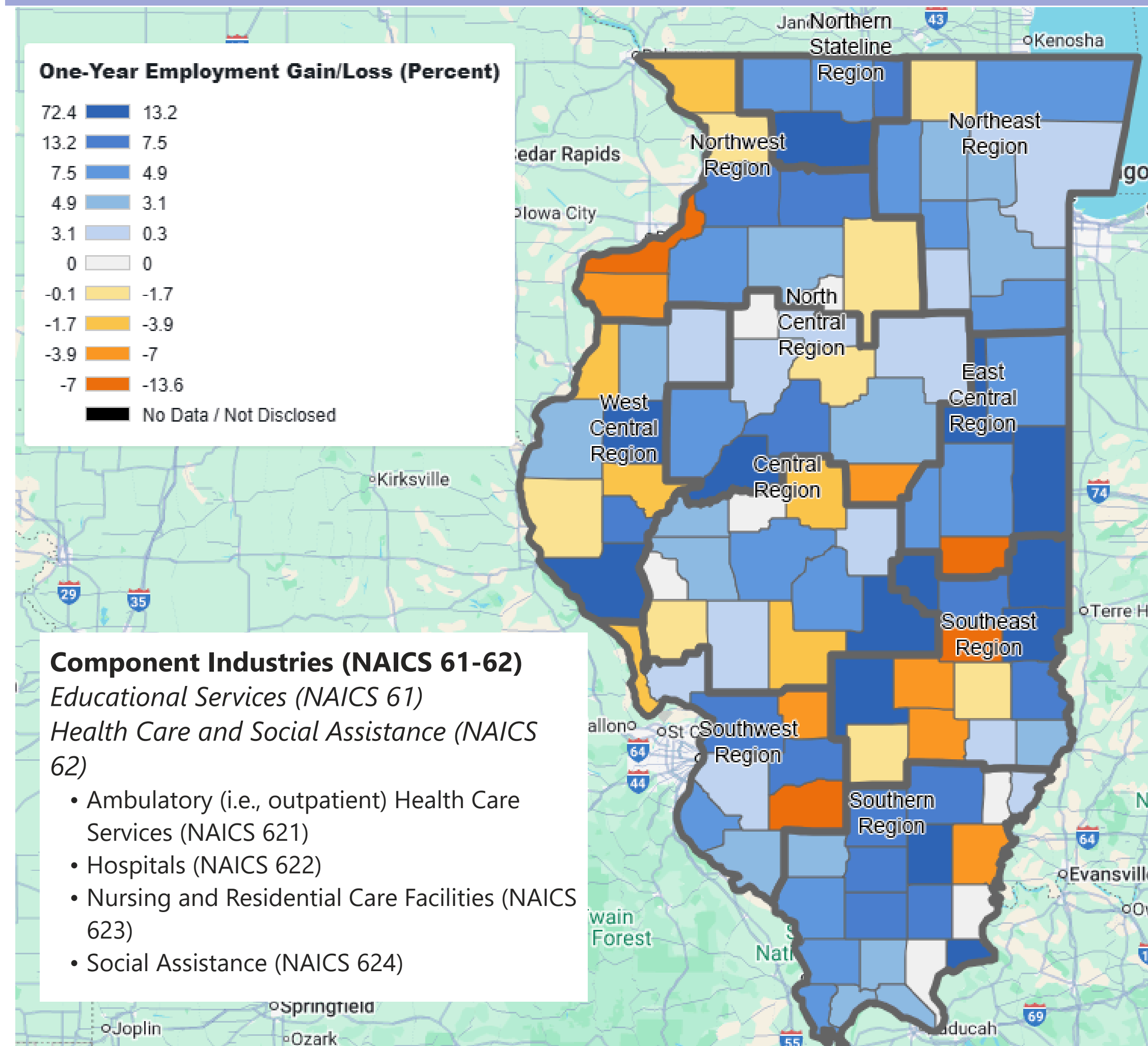
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

Education and Health Services Sector

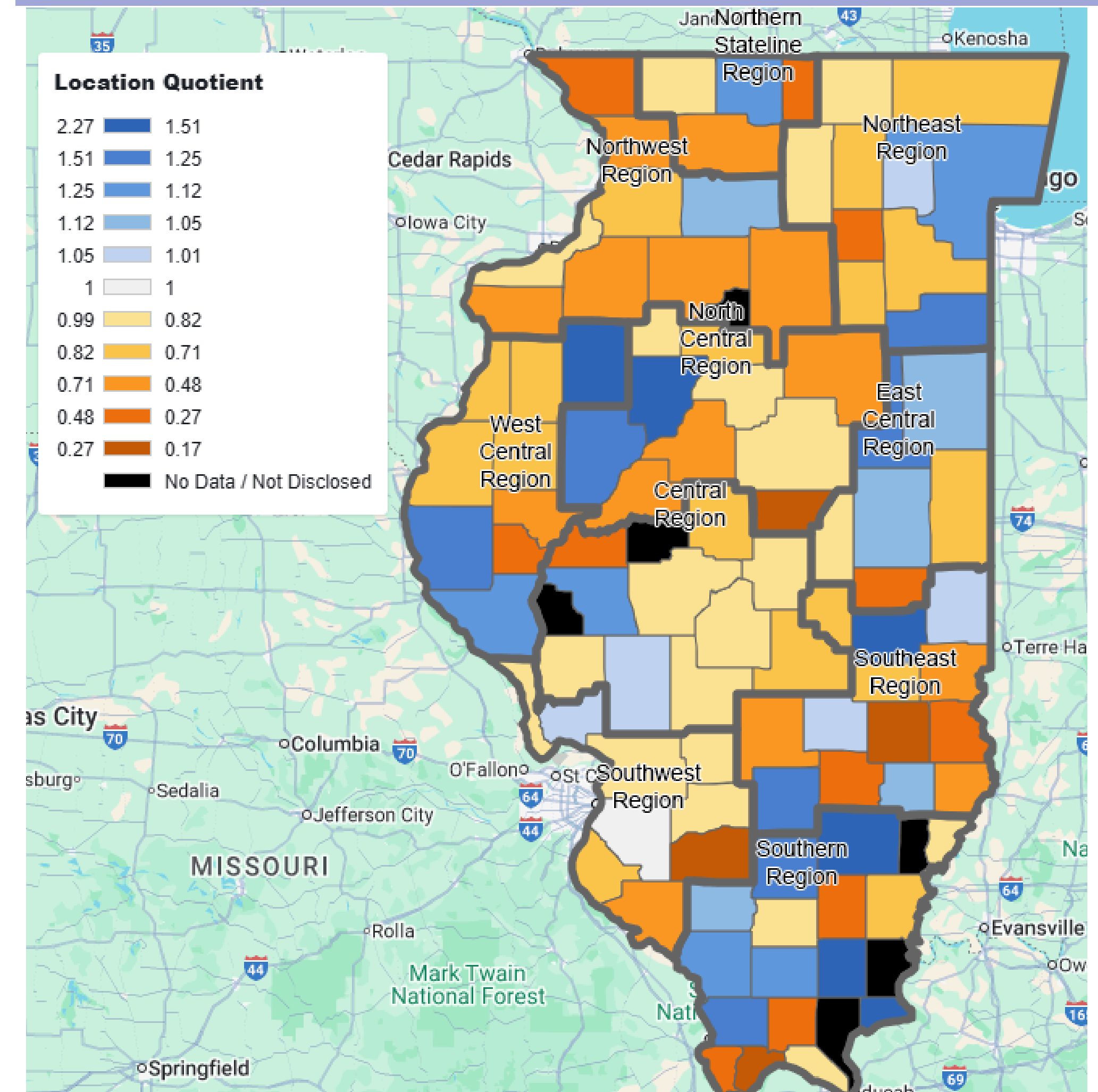
Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change & Q4 2024 Employment Location Quotient

It is not possible to dissect this sector into health care or education alone in some counties, due to suppression.

Employment Change



Employment Concentration

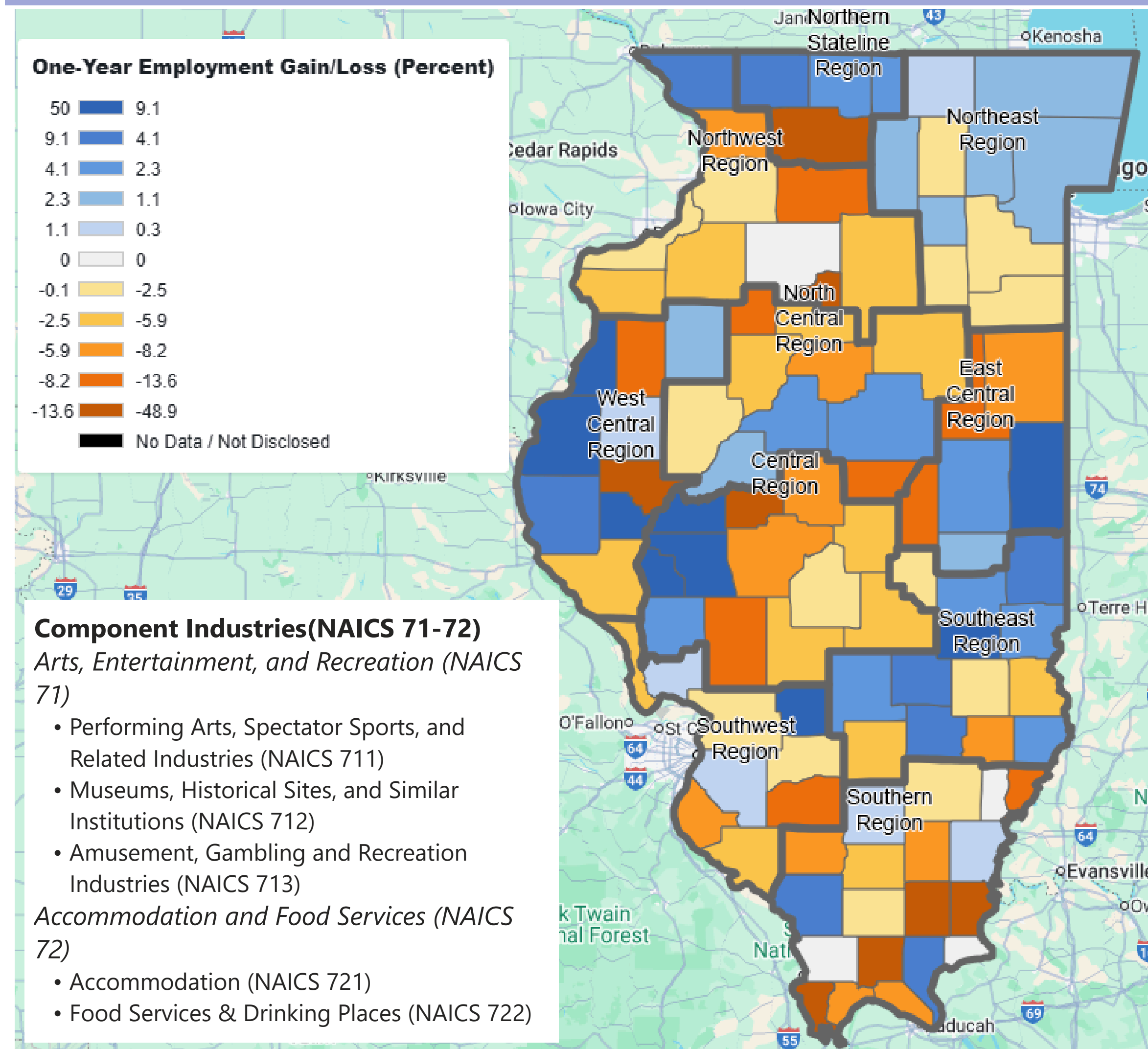


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

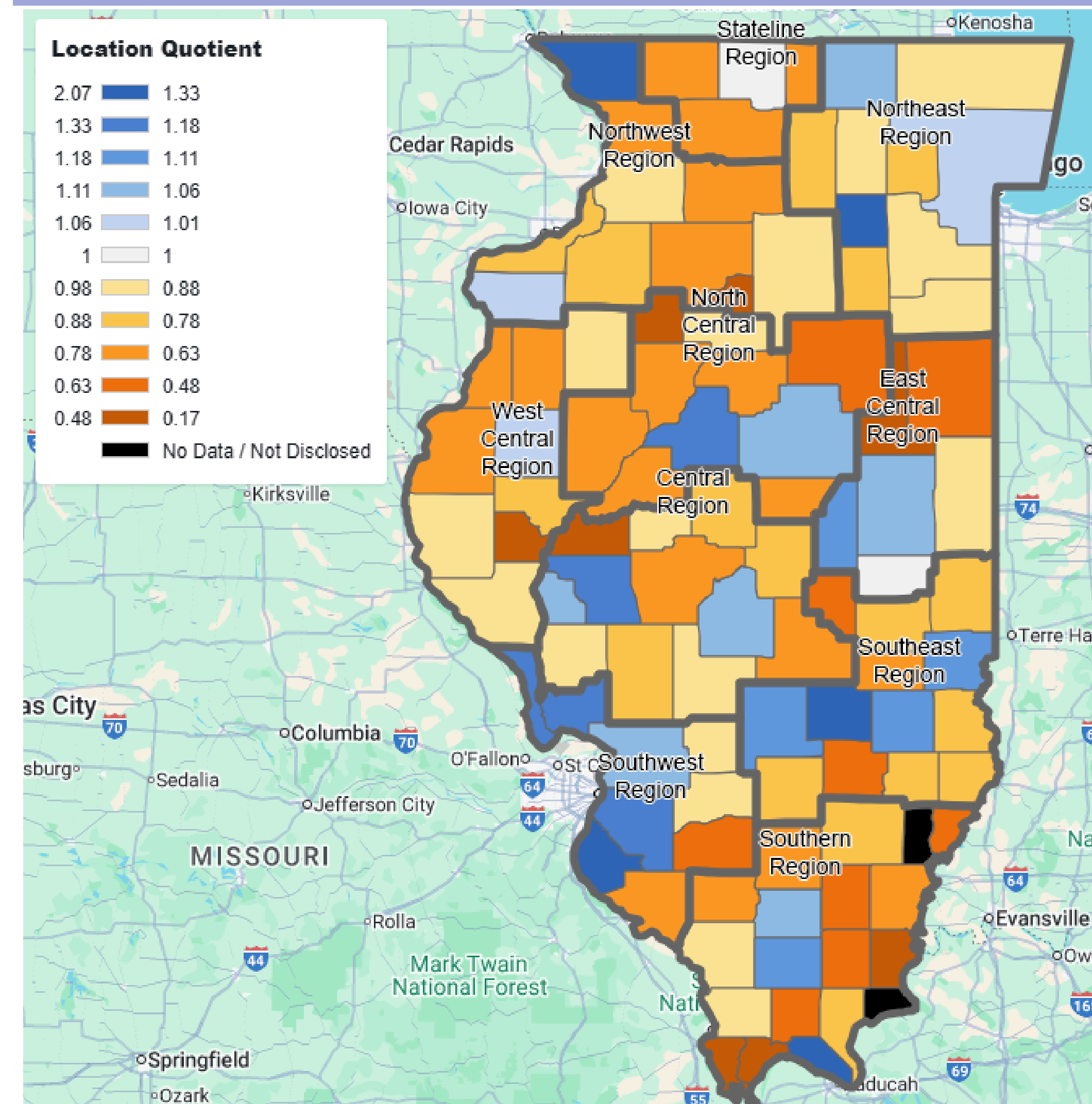
Leisure and Hospitality Sector

Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change & Q4 2024 Employment Location Quotient

Employment Change



Employment Concentration

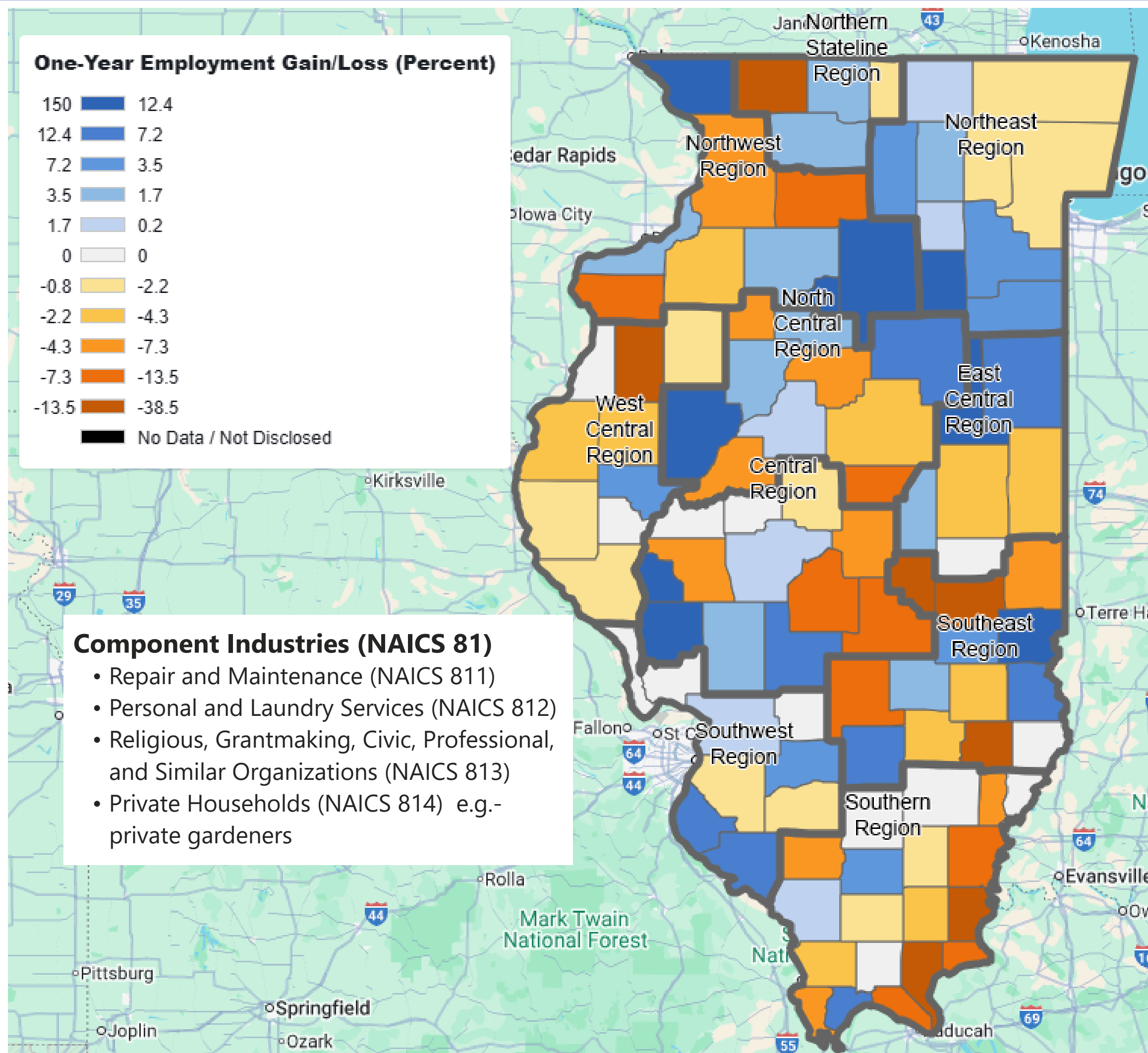


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

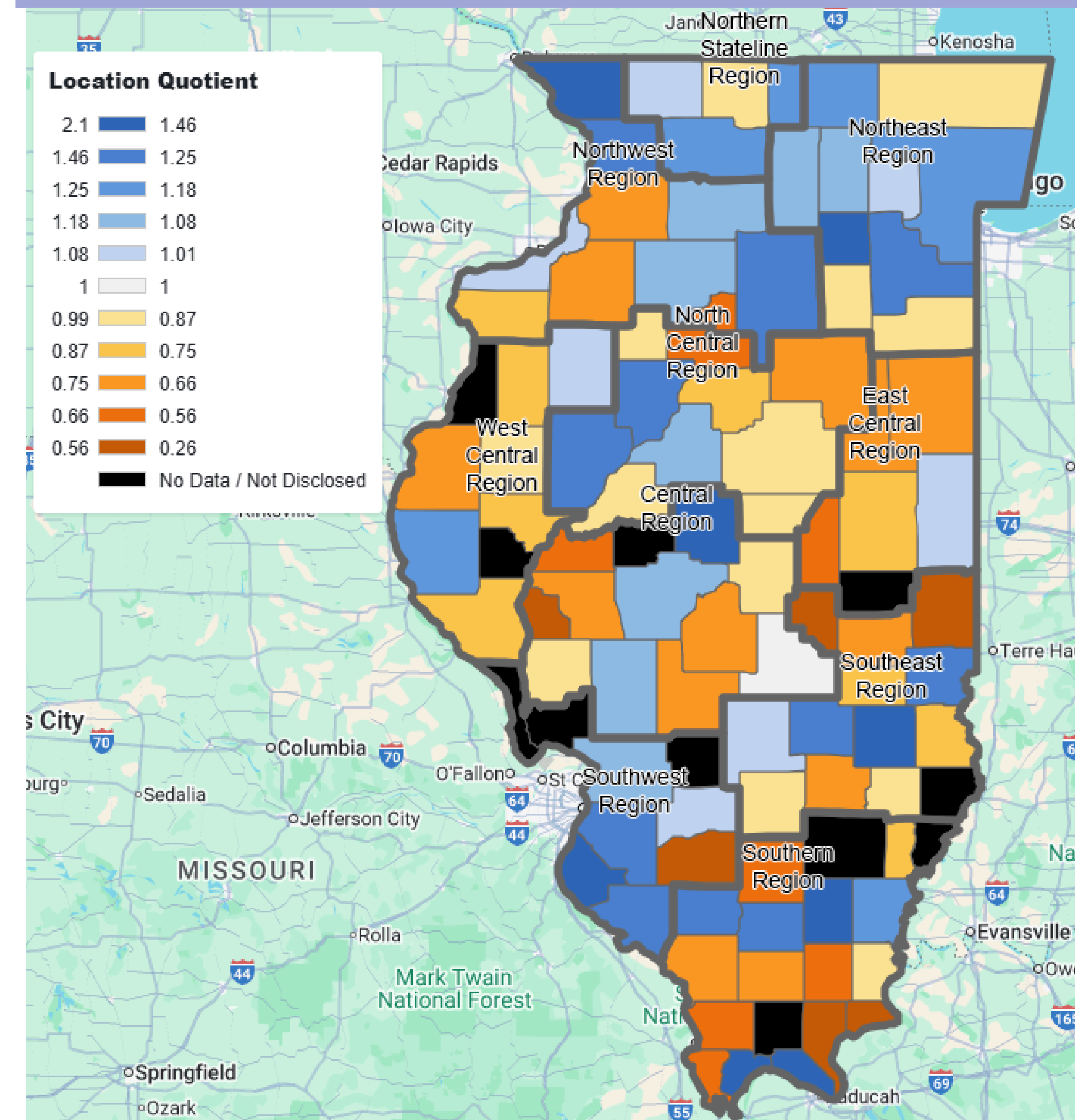
Other Services Sector

Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change & Q4 2024 Employment Location Quotient

Employment Change



Employment Concentration



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

Educational Pipeline



Demand Occupations

- . Typical Education Level**
- . Projected Annual Openings**
- . Skill Requirements**

Higher Education

Enrollments/Completions

Community College Enrollments

Community College Completions

- . Career & Technical Education**
- . By Type of Program**
- . By Career Cluster**

Supply Gaps for Demand Occupations

Selected Demand Occupations by Education Level, West Central Region (1 of 2)

✓ Living wage for one adult - \$23.56

✓ Living wage for a single parent - \$40.41

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections, 2022-2032, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2024, Learn More, Earn More, 2024. Living Wage thresholds from the Living Wage Institute at MIT, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/17>, accessed October 2025.

Requiring a Certificate or License

Occupation	Projected Annual Openings	Entry Wage	Experienced Wage	Skills
Nursing Assistants	247	\$16.38	\$20.98	Service Orientation, Active Listening, Social Perceptiveness
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	213	\$15.59	\$27.48 ✓	Operation Monitoring , Time Management
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	96			Instructing, Active Learning, Active Listening
Childcare Workers	80	\$14.4	\$16.16	Monitoring, Service Orientation, Speaking
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	56	\$16.61	\$27.80 ✓	Equipment Maintenance, Repairing, Troubleshooting
Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	48	\$14.4	\$23.04	Instructing, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness
Medical Assistants	43	\$17.61	\$21.97	Speaking, Active Listening, Reading Comprehension

Requiring an Associate's Degree

Occupation	Projected Annual Openings	Entry Wage	Experienced Wage	Skills
Registered Nurses	131	\$28.85 ✓	\$44.13 ✓	Active Listening, Social Perceptiveness, Service Orientation
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	23	\$15.52	\$21.77	Speaking, Learning Strategies, Instructing
Computer User Support Specialists	14	\$19.22	\$29.93 ✓	Active Listening, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking
Physical Therapist Assistants	10	\$23.78 ✓	\$34.56 ✓	Active Listening, Monitoring, Social Perceptiveness
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	9	\$19.06	\$27.33 ✓	Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Speaking
Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	8	\$23.72 ✓	\$38.57 ✓	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension
Computer Network Support Specialists	7	\$21.29	\$34.61 ✓	Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Decision Making

Selected Demand Occupations by Education Level, West Central Region (2 of 2)

✓ Living wage for one adult - \$23.56 ✓ Living wage for a single parent - \$40.41

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections, 2022-2032, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2024, Learn More, Earn More, 2024. Living Wage thresholds from the Living Wage Institute at MIT, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/17>, accessed October 2025.

Requiring a Bachelor's Degree

Statewide earnings used for Insurance Sales Agents, due to limited data in region.

Occupation	Projected Annual Openings ▼	Entry Wage	Experienced Wage	Skills
General and Operations Managers	197	\$23.5	\$64.94 ✓	Active Listening, Coordination, Monitoring
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	67	\$19.93	\$39.48 ✓	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	59			Instructing, Speaking, Learning Strategies
Accountants and Auditors	47	\$23.39	\$39.27 ✓	Active Listening, Mathematics, Reading Comprehension
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	38	\$18.44	\$33.38 ✓	Reading Comprehension, Listening, Problem Solving
Insurance Sales Agents	29	\$19.76	\$67.06 ✓	Active Listening, Reading Comprehension, Speaking
Management Analysts	21	\$30.46 ✓	\$70.41 ✓	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension

Requirements Beyond Bachelor's Degree

Occupation	Projected Annual Openings ▼	Hourly Entry Wage	Hourly Experienced Wage	Skills
Financial Managers	41	\$36.2 ✓	\$74.64 ✓	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Monitoring
Managers, All Other	32	\$33.81 ✓	\$72.13 ✓	Reading Comprehension, Speaking, Writing
Medical and Health Services Managers	30	\$36.72 ✓	\$65.45 ✓	Speaking, Critical Thinking, Active Listening
Sales Managers	27	\$37.12 ✓	\$86.39 ✓	Persuasion, Active Listening, Speaking
Software Developers	22	\$33.96 ✓	\$58.10 ✓	Programming, Data Structure, Software Testing
Marketing Managers	20	\$31.52 ✓	\$64.11 ✓	Active Learning, Active Listening, Critical Thinking
Lawyers	13	\$27.83 ✓	\$68.97 ✓	Active Listening, Speaking, Reading Comprehension

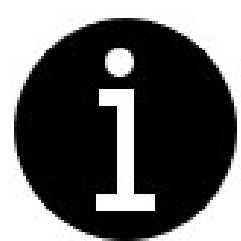
Notes on Demand Occupations



The Demand Occupation Training List is created as a collaborative effort between the DCEO Office of Employment and Training and the NIU Workforce Policy Lab, based on labor market information from the Illinois Department of Employment Security. **Demand Occupations are selected based on projected job openings, earnings potential, education/training requirements, and petitions by local workforce boards.** Eligible training providers must provide training that aligns with demand occupations.



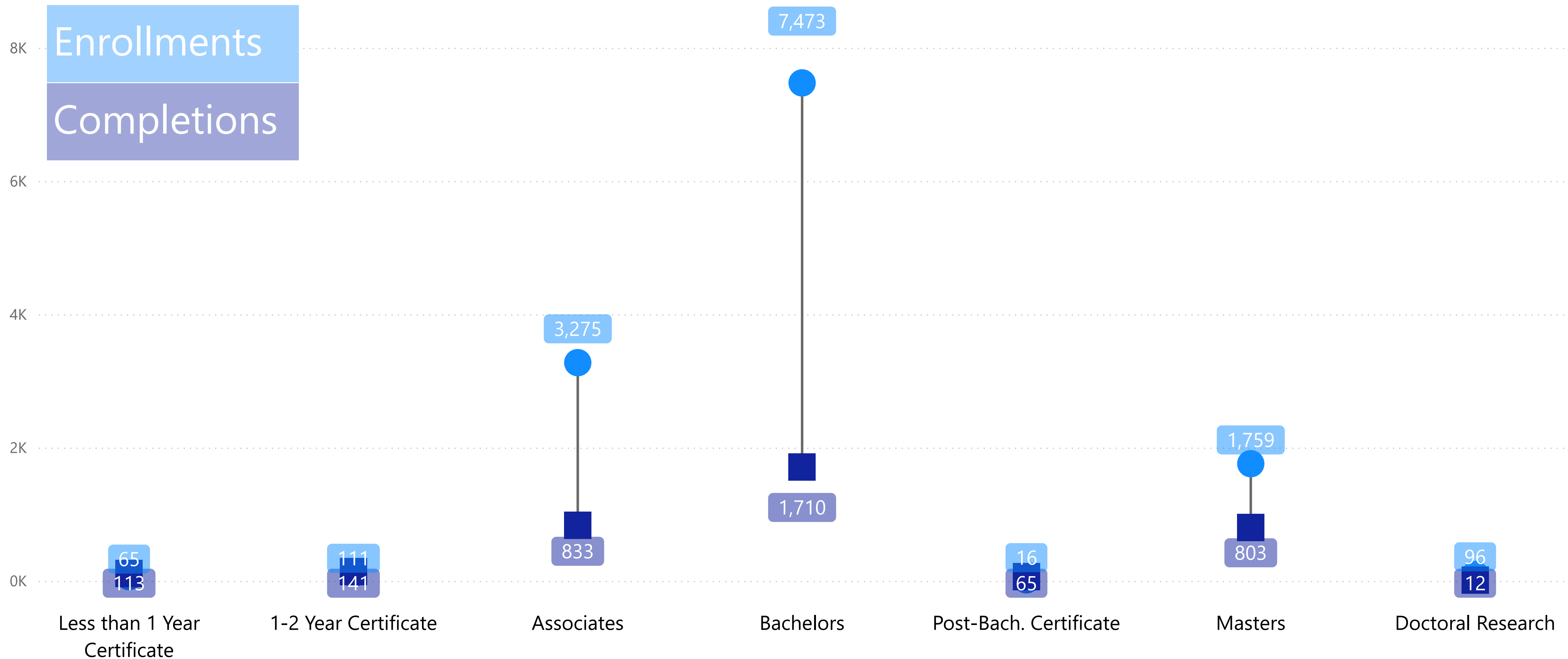
Each year, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) identifies occupations at each education level with a large number of projected annual job openings and high pay for their education categories. These occupations are reported in the **Learn More, Earn More** publication and this report shows those demand occupations from the 2024 edition. They closely follow the Demand Occupation Training List developed by the DCEO Office of Employment and Training and the NIU Workforce Policy Lab, but it also includes jobs at several education and training levels that are not eligible for WIOA funding. For example, the Learn More Earn More publication shows jobs that require short-term on-the-job training and no formal education requirement, but these jobs are not eligible for WIOA-funded training. *Conversely, the full Demand Occupation Training List includes more occupations than those highlighted in Learn More Earn More.*



Occupations on the following pages were selected **based on projected** number of annual job **openings, not necessarily by growth.** Occupations **can have** job **openings** even with projected total employment declines, **due to replacements.** The IDES provides long-term occupational forecasts for all occupations, but care must be taken when comparing percentage growth rates for occupations with fewer jobs in the base year.

West Central Region Enrollments and Completions by Degree level, 2024

Enrollments and graduations are two separate cohorts- e.g., those enrolled in long-term programs in 2024 might not graduate in 2024. Enrollment in some programs might not persist from year to year. Completions in some programs might not correspond directly to labor availability, given that some international students return to their home countries.



Enrollments in short-term certificates might not correspond to completions- learners could enroll in transfer programs.

Source: Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2024.

West Central Region Higher Education Enrollments & Completions by Curriculum

Enrollments and completions are **separate cohorts**- those enrolled in 2024 do not graduate in 2024. Data bars are proportional to size within region.

Bachelor's Degree		
Curriculum	Enrolled	Completed
Business, Management, Marketing	1,151	220
Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting	654	192
Health Professions	697	151
Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities	295	144
Education	616	134
All Other, <2% of Enrollments and Completions	1,193	120
Psychology	398	111
Visual and Performing Arts	369	95
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	311	91
Social Sciences	292	86
Communication, Journalism	235	78
Computer and Information Sciences	243	68
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, Fitness, and Kinesiology	366	57
Physical Sciences	160	51
English Language and Literature/Letters	115	34
History	94	27
Engineering	141	23
Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics	22	15
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	64	7
Mathematics and Statistics	57	6
Total	7,473	1,710

Beyond Bachelor's Degree		
Includes grad certificates, Masters, and Doctoral		
Curriculum	Enrolled	Completed
All Other, <2% of Enrollments and Completions	225	261
Education	782	179
Business, Management, Marketing	204	131
Mathematics and Statistics	53	77
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	115	36
Social Sciences	72	36
Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting	77	35
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, Fitness, and Kinesiology	66	33
Visual and Performing Arts	63	31
Health Professions	44	20
Psychology	54	16
Physical Sciences	34	12
Public Administration and Social Service Professions	19	12
Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities	63	1
Total	1,871	880

Some curriculum categories have been shortened for readability. Many standard curriculum labels include terms like "And Related Activities", etc.

Source: Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2024.

Community College Enrollments by District & College in West Central Region

Below is a summary of recent unduplicated for-credit and non-credit enrollments in community college districts that are primarily located in the region. Examples of non-credit programs include professional development workshops, custom trainings for employers, and hobby/recreational offerings.

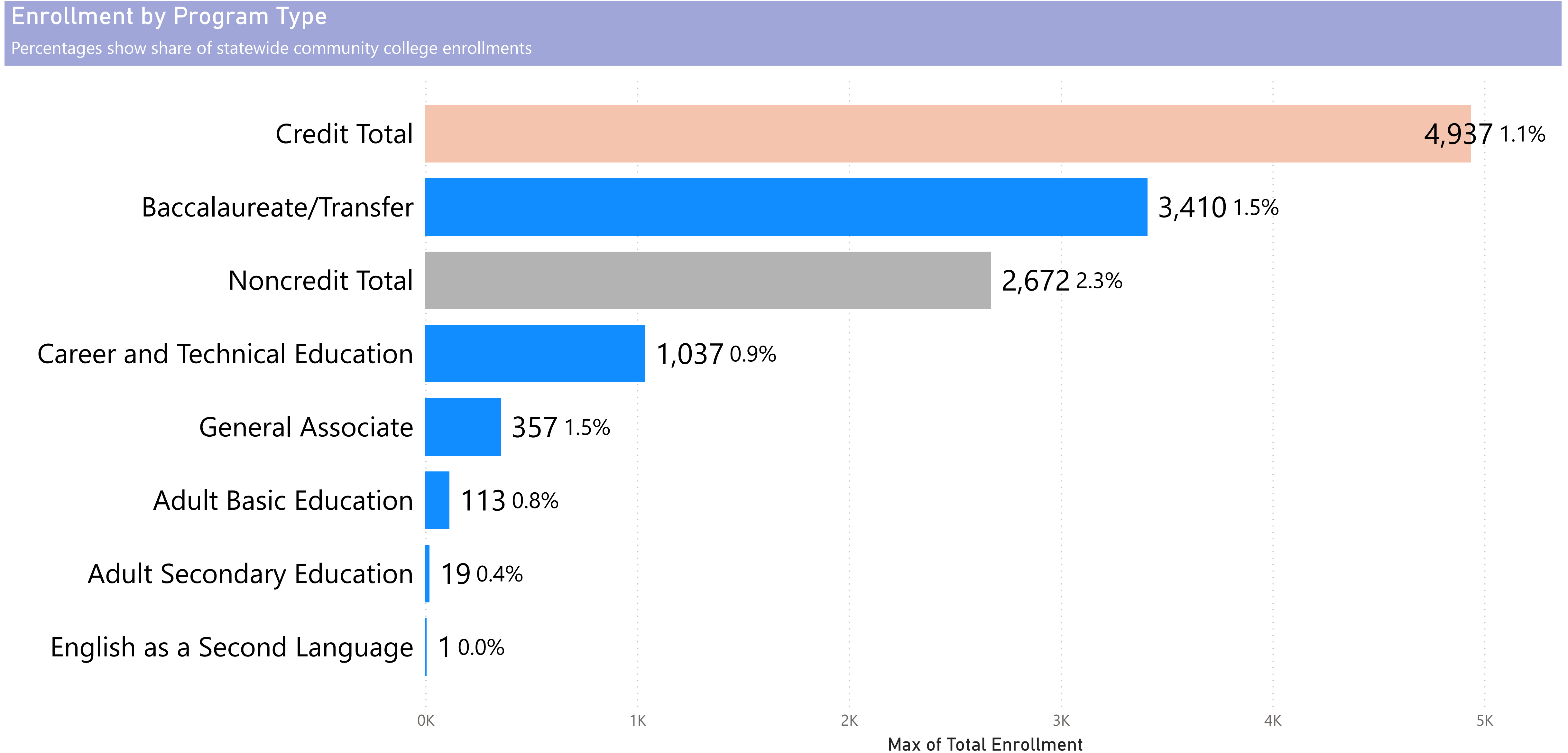
College Name	Credit Total	Baccalaureate/ Transfer	Career and Technical Education	English as a Second Language	General Associate	Adult Basic Education	Adult Secondary Education	Noncredit Total
West Central Region Total	4,937	3,410	1,037	1	357	113	19	2,672
John Wood	2,629	1,923	573	1		113	19	1,349
Carl Sandburg	2,308	1,487	464		357			1,323

Source: Illinois Community College Board, Fiscal Year 2024 Summary of Graduates and Enrollments & ICCB Databook, Tables III-3 and III-9.

Credit Total is the sum of all columns to the right of it, excluding Noncredit Total.

West Central Region Total Community College Enrollments by Program Type

Below is a summary of total community college enrollments in the region for FY2024, including total counts and the share of total statewide enrollments.



Source: Illinois Community College Board, Fiscal Year 2024 Summary of Graduates and Enrollments & ICCB Databook, Tables III-3 and III-9.

Community College Transfer & General Education Completions in West Central Region

Below is a summary of recent graduations in community college districts that are primarily located in the region.

College Name	Associate - Transfer	Associate in Arts	Associate in Engineering Science	Associate in Fine Arts	Associate in Liberal Studies & General Ed	Associate in Science	General Education Core Curriculum Credential	Total
West Central Region Total	443	328	5	1	59	50	176	1,062
Carl Sandburg	255	171		1	59	24	144	654
John Wood	188	157	5			26	32	408

Share of State Completions



Arts

2.7%



Science

1.1%



Engineering

1.3%



Fine Arts

0.7%



Gen. Ed. & Core

1.9%



Liberal Studies

2.8%

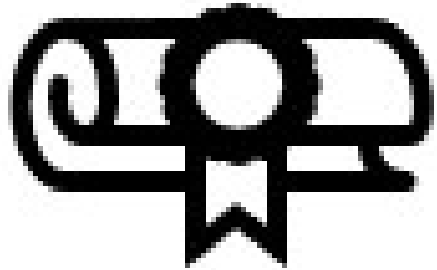
Source: Illinois Community College Board, Fiscal Year 2024 Summary of Graduates and Enrollments & ICCB Databook, Tables III-3 and III-9.

FY24 Career & Technical Education (CTE) Completions in West Central Region

Below is a summary of recent CTE completions in community college districts primarily located in the region.

Completions by State, Region, and Districts in Region

College Name	Associate in Applied Science	Certificate of Less Than One Year	Certificate of One Year or More	Total
West Central Region Total	205	113	141	459
John Wood	121	81	89	291
Carl Sandburg	84	32	52	168



Share of Statewide Completions

Associate in Applied Science

2.3%

Cert. Less than One Year

0.4%

Cert. One Year or More

2.3%

Community College Career Cluster Enrollments in West Central Region

Below is a summary of FY24 enrollments in community college districts that are primarily located in the region.

Count of Enrollments and Share of Statewide Community College Enrollments by Career Cluster

Shading proportional to enrollments within region. Shares do not sum to total- they percent to completions in each career cluster.

Enrollments by career cluster do not sum to total enrollments- they exclude transfer associate programs, noncredit courses, and adult education.

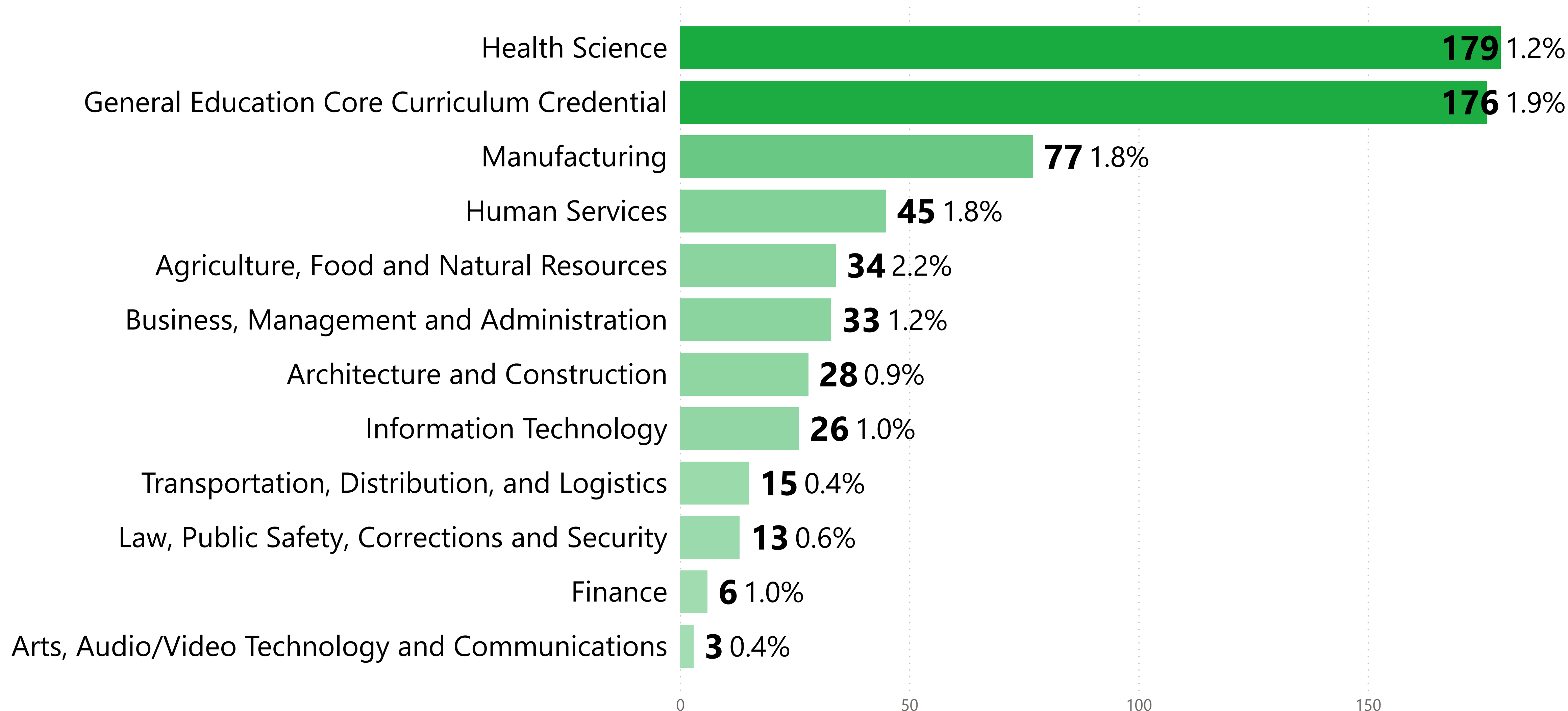
Completions by career cluster are not comparable to enrollments. Learners can change their program of study before they graduate.

Community College Career Cluster Completions in West Central Region

Below is a summary of recent graduations in community college districts that are primarily located in the region.

Count of Completions and Share of Statewide Community College Completions

Shading proportional to completions within region. Shares do not sum to total- they percent to completions in each career cluster.



Career Cluster Enrollments by Community College & District in West Central Region

Below is a summary of recent enrollments in community college districts that are primarily located in the region.

College Name	Agriculture , Food and Natural Resources	Architect ure and Construc tion	Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications	Business, Management and Administration	Finance	Health Science	Human Services	Information Technology	Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security	Manufacturing	Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
West Central Region Total	37	57	9	127	29	436	70	49	51	83	36
John Wood	37	57	9	64	10	198	35	8	38	52	21
Carl Sandburg				63	19	238	35	41	13	31	15

"Other" and
Government
& Public
Administrati
on are
excluded for
space.

Career Cluster Completions by Community College & District in West Central Region

Below is a summary of recent graduations in community college districts that are primarily located in the region.

College Name	Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources	Architecture and Construction	Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications	Business, Management and Administration	Finance	Health Science	Human Services	Information Technology	Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security	Manufacturing	Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
West Central Region Total	<div><div></div><div>34</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>28</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>3</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>33</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>6</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>179</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>45</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>26</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>13</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>77</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>15</div></div>
John Wood	<div><div></div><div>34</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>28</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>3</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>14</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>1</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>104</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>31</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>2</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>12</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>54</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>8</div></div>
Carl Sandburg	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>19</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>5</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>75</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>14</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>24</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>1</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>23</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>7</div></div>

Notes on Community College Completer Data

Care must be taken when viewing educational program data, given that program **completions do not** necessarily **correspond to** the number of **individuals**. **Some** credentials **are stackable**, meaning that the same person completes multiple programs.

Enrollments are unduplicated, but completions are not. In other words, **enrollments show** counts of **individuals while completions show** counts of degrees or **credentials**.

Another limitation of comparing enrollments to completions is that **individuals can change their program of study**. For example, those enrolled in the manufacturing career cluster **might graduate in a different career cluster**.

In this report, we show information from community college **districts primarily located in the region**. In some regions, this **might exclude some districts on borders** between regions.

Below is a summary of all community college districts that are affected by this classification:

- The **Central** region **partially includes Lewis & Clark** (district ID 53601). It is **now** found in the **Southwestern** report.
- The **East Central** region **partially includes Kankakee** (52001). It is **now** found in the **Northeast** report.
- The **Northwest** region **partially includes Highland** (51901). It is **now** found in the **Northern Stateline** report.
- The **Southeastern** region **partially includes Kaskaskia** (50101). It is **now** found in the **Southwestern** report.
- The **Southern** region **partially includes Illinois Eastern** (529). It is **now** found in the **Southeastern** report.

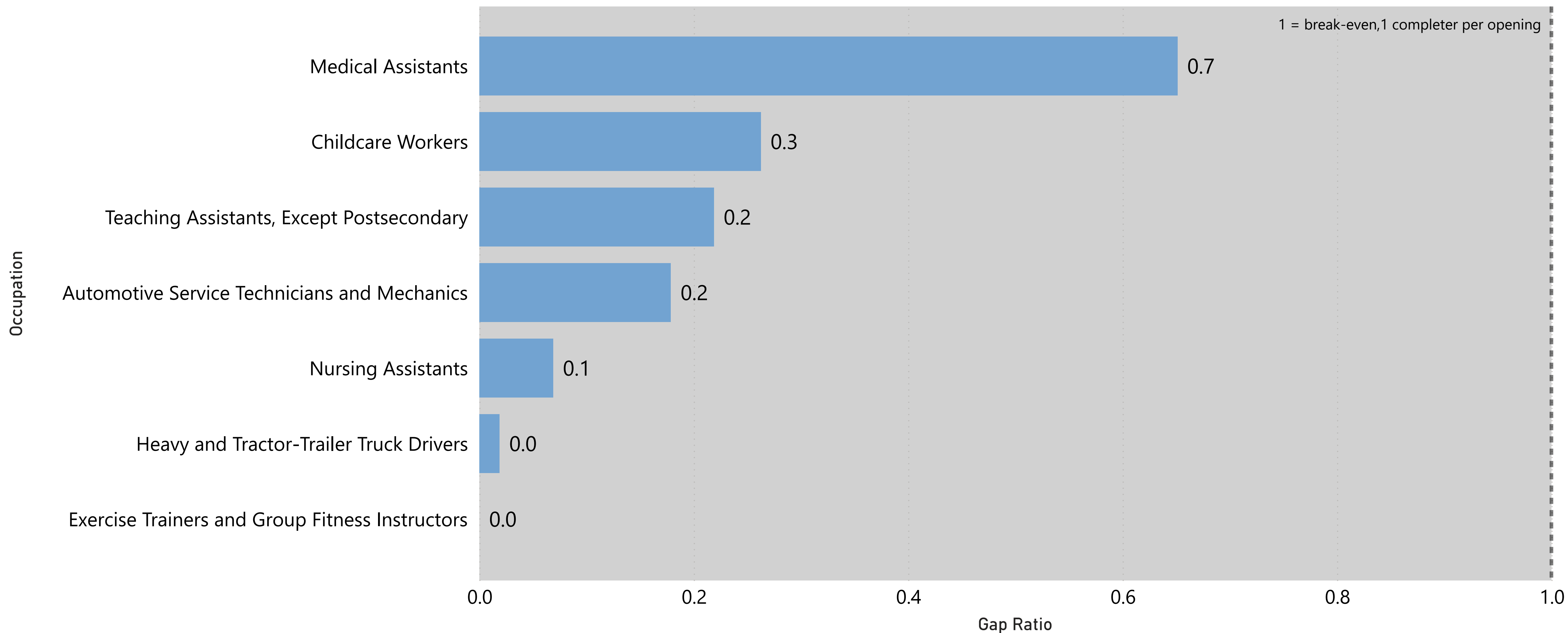
More detailed information for all community colleges is available in the ICCB Databook, available at:

<https://www.iccb.org/divisions/research-and-analytics/#data-book>.

For more information about community college outcomes, see the [Illinois Postsecondary Profiles](#) or the [Postsecondary Employment Outcomes Explorer](#).

West Central Region Supply Gaps for Occupations Requiring a Certificate or License

The supply gap ratio is a proxy measure that provides insight on how closely supply aligns with demand for selected occupations. The calculation of the ratio is supply / demand. In this case, the supply is the number of program completions in the region associated with the occupation and the demand is the estimated number of regional job openings. A gap ratio of one indicates one completer per projected job opening. Gaps lower than one indicate more job openings than completers, and gaps greater than 1 indicate more completers than openings.

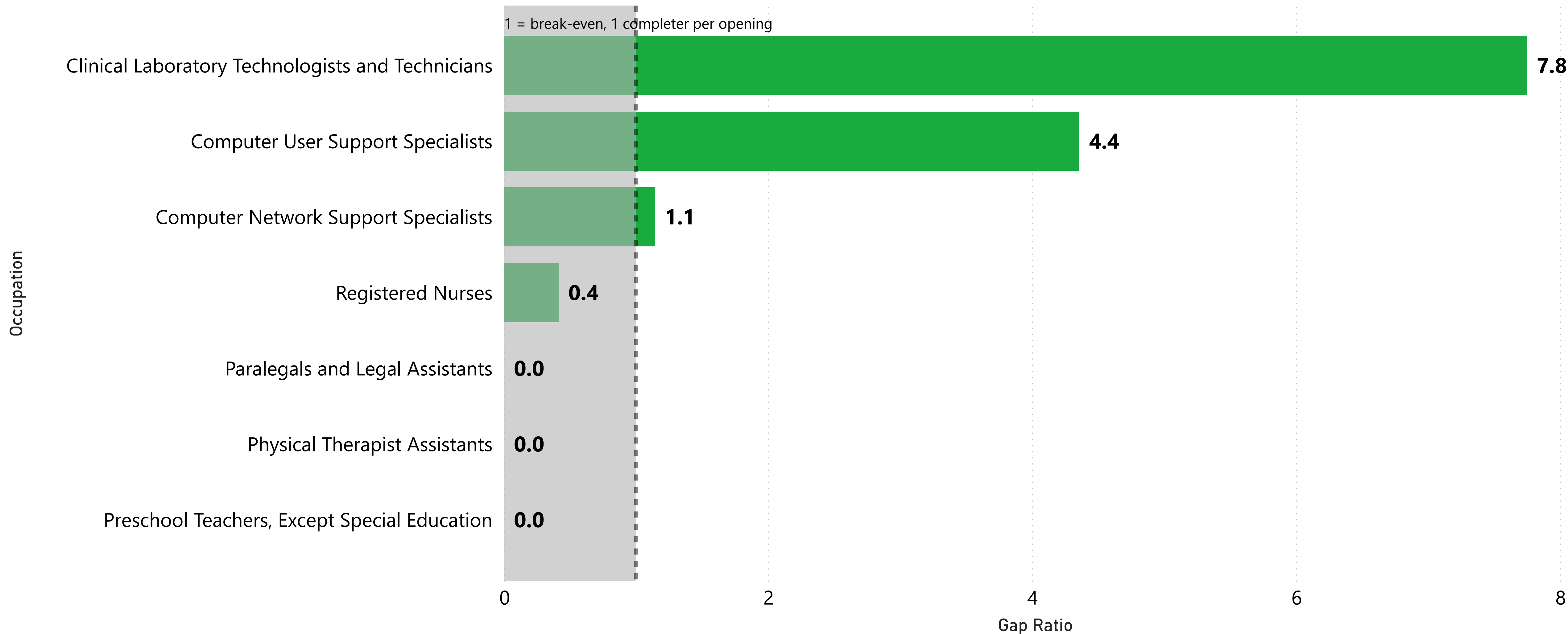


Completers do not include most apprenticeships and true OJT provided solely by employers.

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, & Lightcast, 2024.

West Central Region Supply Gaps for Occupations Requiring an Associate's Degree

The supply gap ratio is a proxy measure that provides insight on how closely supply aligns with demand for selected occupations. The calculation of the ratio is supply / demand. In this case, the supply is the number of program completions in the region associated with the occupation and the demand is the estimated number of regional job openings. A gap ratio of one indicates one completer per projected job opening. Gaps lower than one indicate more job openings than completers, and gaps greater than 1 indicate more completers than openings.

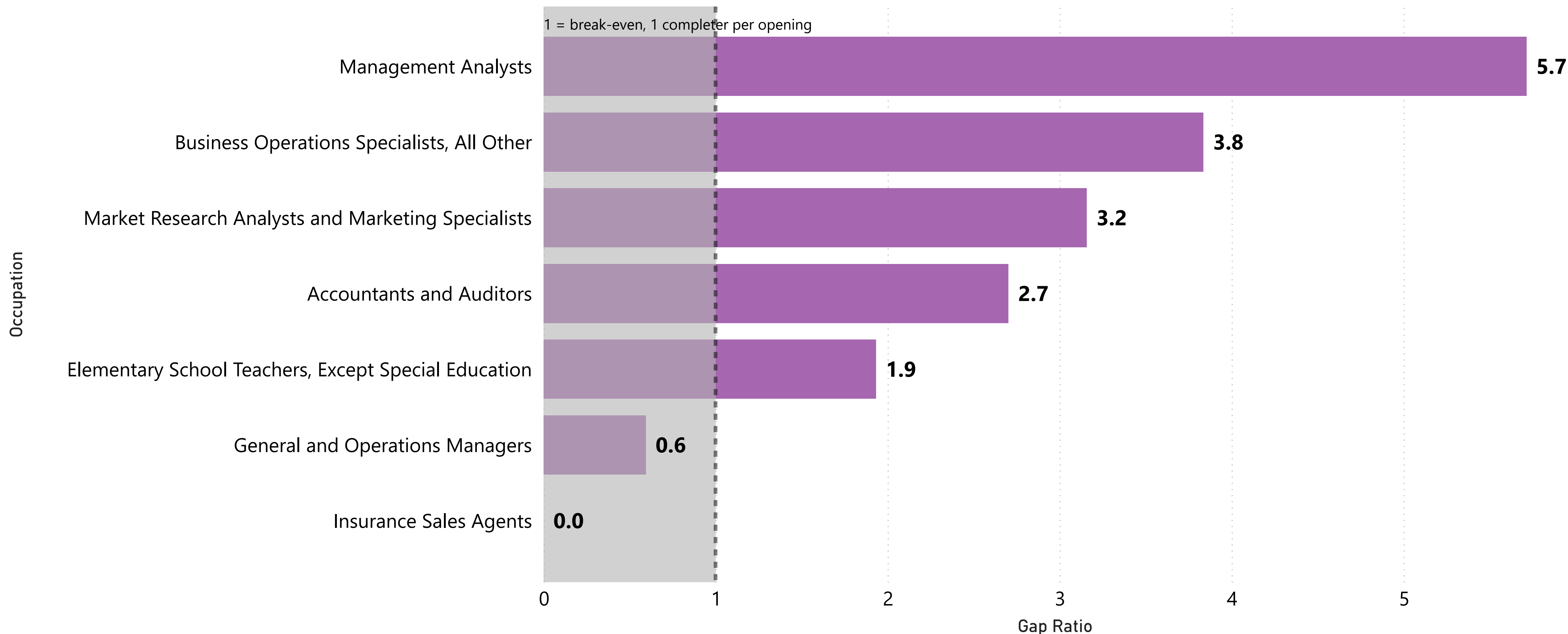


Completers do not include most apprenticeships and true OJT provided solely by employers.

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, & Lightcast, 2024.

West Central Region Supply Gaps for Occupations Requiring a Bachelor's Degree

The supply gap ratio is a proxy measure the provides insight on how closely supply aligns with demand for selected occupations. The calculation of the ratio is supply / demand. In this case, the supply is the number of program completions in the region associated with the occupation and the demand is the estimated number of regional job openings. A gap ratio of one indicates one completer per projected job opening. Gaps lower than one indicate more job openings than completers, and gaps greater than 1 indicate more completers than openings.

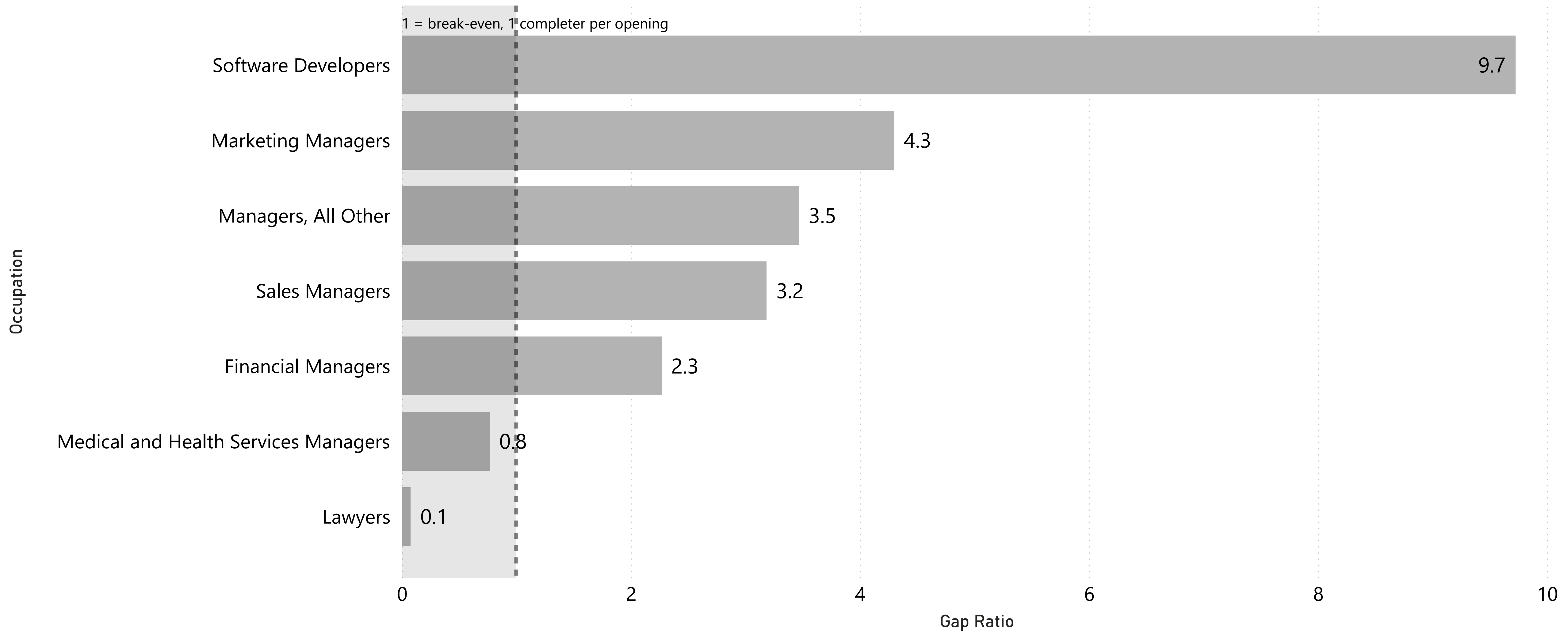


Completers do not include most apprenticeships and true OJT provided solely by employers.

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, & Lightcast, 2024.

West Central Region Supply Gaps for Occupations Requiring Education Beyond a Bachelor's Degree

The supply gap ratio is a proxy measure the provides insight on how closely supply aligns with demand for selected occupations. The calculation of the ratio is supply / demand. In this case, the supply is the number of program completions in the region associated with the occupation and the demand is the estimated number of regional job openings. A gap ratio of one indicates one completer per projected job opening. Gaps lower than one indicate more job openings than completers, and gaps greater than 1 indicate more completers than openings.



Completers do not include most apprenticeships and true OJT provided solely by employers.

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, & Lightcast, 2024.

Caveats and Limitations of Gap Analysis

The gap ratio shows an initial, **high-level comparison of completers to** the projected annual **job openings** in an occupation. It is meant to offer a **starting point** for discussions on gaps in the regional workforce system.

Suitable **completers** are identified via a crosswalk of curriculums to occupations developed by Lightcast. This crosswalk is based on data from the National Center for Educational Statistics and Lightcast's experience serving as a consultant for educational and workforce development agencies. It shows the **curricula typically completed by employees** in a given occupation. Completers exclude degree levels above/below the education level specified on each page.

The gap ratio provides a conservative comparison of recent completions to annual openings. **A gap ratio below 1** (i.e., fewer suitable completers than openings) **might not** necessarily **indicate inability** for employers **to fill positions**. Similarly, gap ratios above 1 might not translate to worker surpluses. Below are several examples of cases where worker availability might differ from the gap ratios.

Worker Availability With Completer Shortage

- . **Upskilling** incumbent workers
- . On-the-job training
- . Career changes by **underemployed workers**
- . **Commuters** or remote workers living outside the region

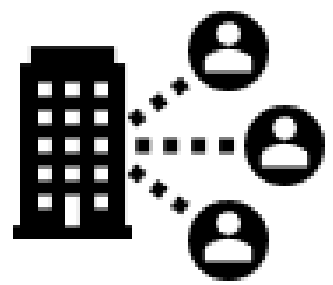
Worker Shortages With Completer Surpluses

- . Turnover- **mismatch of expectations** for education vs workplace
- . Completers **relocate** - hired outside region
 - . Common in regions with a strong university presence
- . **Stacking credentials** - further education before entering labor market
- . Some programs attract international students who return to home countries

Given these limitations in the gap analysis, business engagement will remain a crucial part of the planning process.
The best source for understanding your businesses' employment needs will be the businesses themselves.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Below are several additional data visualization tools that can be used in the regional workforce planning process.



[OnTheMap - Commuter Data](#)

Provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Shows commuter flows for counties, cities, census tracts, and custom geographies.

E.g., county of residence for workers in a specific city. "Where are workers coming from?"



[Clean Energy Jobs Regional Data Packets](#)

Provided by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Climate Jobs Institute. Shows supply of clean energy jobs in economic development regions.



[Skills-Based Occupational Employment Projections Dashboard](#)

Provided by the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Shows projected worker skill demand for economic or workforce development regions.



[Industry Employment Projections Dashboard](#)

Provided by the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Shows employment trends by type of business, for economic or workforce regions.



[Illinois Postsecondary Profiles - Equity Considerations](#)

Provided by Illinois Report Card & Illinois State Board of Education. Shows statewide trends in higher-education attainment by age, race, and sex.