

# ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF SWEET GRASS COUNTY

In November 2024, approximately 700 workers employed in Stillwater and Sweetgrass counties were laid off in reductions at the Stillwater Mine. Data included here does not reflect the impacts of this event as data is not yet available. Additionally, confidentiality suppressions restrict the publication of mining industry data for Sweet Grass County. As more becomes available, it will be accessible at [www.lmi.mt.gov](http://www.lmi.mt.gov).

## Labor Market, 2023

**Population:** 3,763

**Labor Force:** 1,909

**Employed:** 1,865

**Unemployed:** 44

**Unemployment Rate:** 2.3%  
(Below Statewide Rate of 2.9%)

## Employment Growth

**70 jobs gained** from 2020 to 2023, about 4% of total jobs.

## Income and Benefits

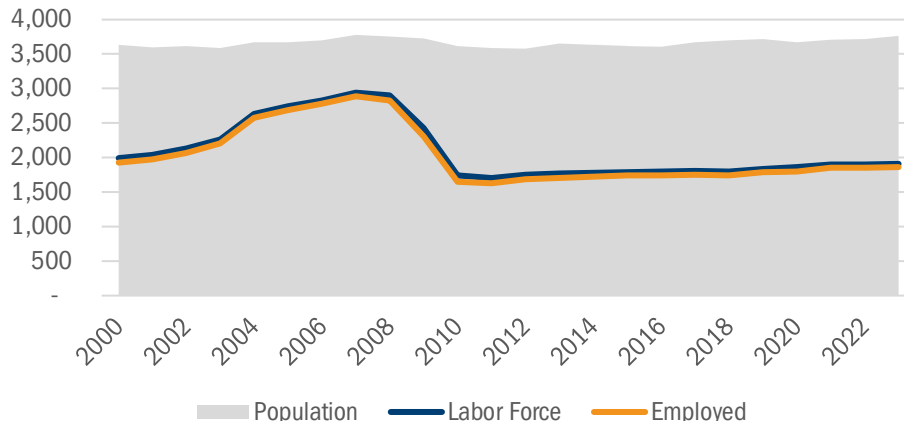
**\$86,457** average household income in 2022, ranking Sweet Grass County **15th** highest among Montana counties.

**4.2%** of households receiving SNAP benefits in last year.

**6.0%** of the population with income below the federal poverty level (below the state average of 12.4%).

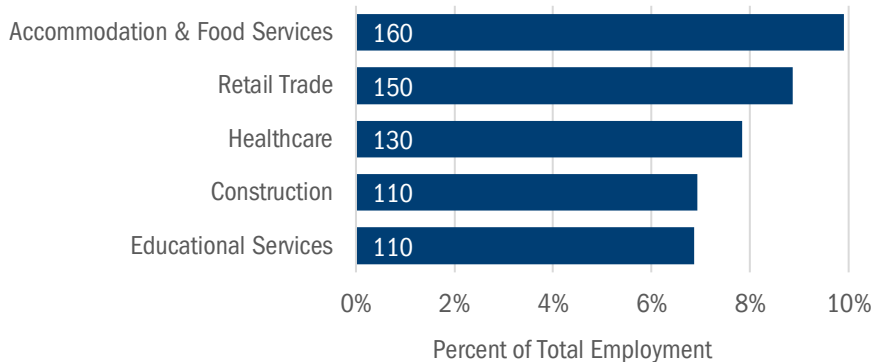
## Workforce Size Sweet Grass County

Employment, Labor Force, and Population



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Population total intercensal tables, Population and Housing Estimates Program, U.S. Census Bureau.

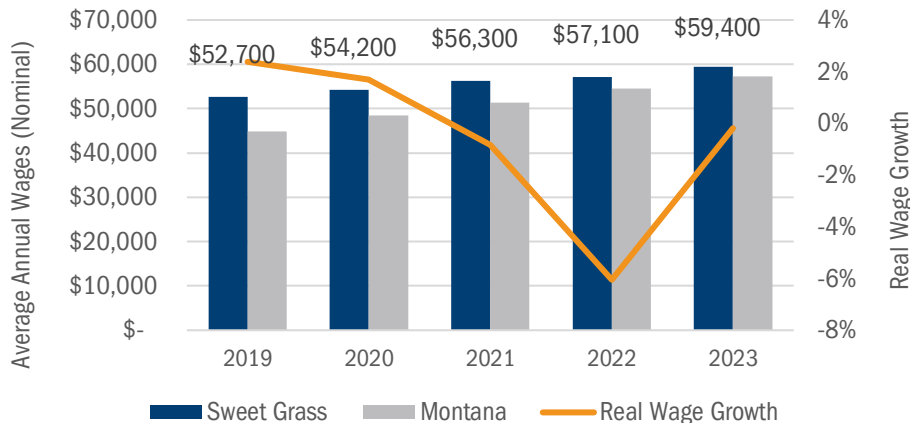
## Top Employing Industries, 2023



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Average Wage and Real Wage Growth

Comparison to Statewide Average



Source: U.S. BLS and Montana Department of Labor & Industry, QCEW and CPI-U. Wages rounded to nearest hundred.



Montana Department of  
**LABOR & INDUSTRY**

Governor Greg Gianforte  
Commissioner Sarah Swanson

**Labor Force Participation**

**62.1%** of Sweet Grass County's population over 15 participates in the labor force, similar to the statewide rate of 63.0%

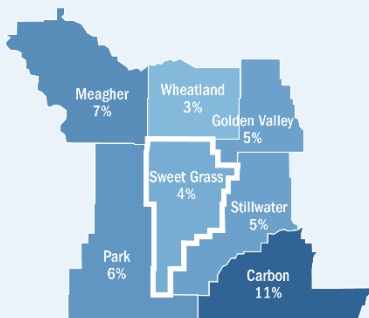
**86.2%** of Sweet Grass County's prime working age population (25 to 54 years old) participates in the labor force, similar to the statewide rate of 84.2%.

**Population Increases in South-Central Montana**

Sweet Grass County had **150 more people move in than out** from 2020 to 2023, about **4%** of the population.

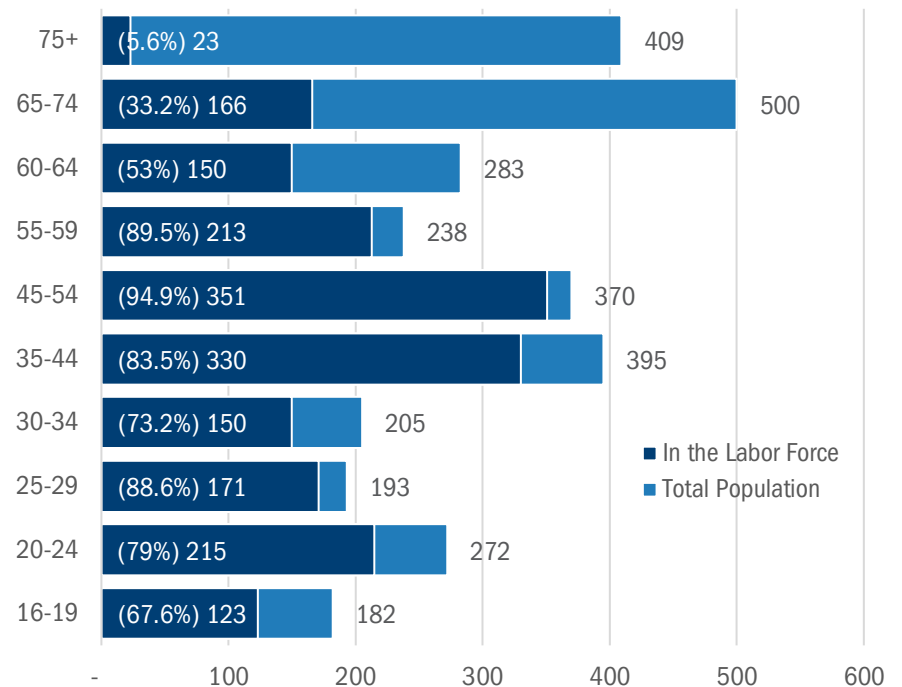
**8.5%** of workers in Sweet Grass County **work from home**, less than the statewide average of 10.6%.

**Net Migration as a Percent of the Population by County**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Resident Population Estimates, Estimated Components of Resident Population Change, and Rates of the Components of Population Changes for States and Counties: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023.

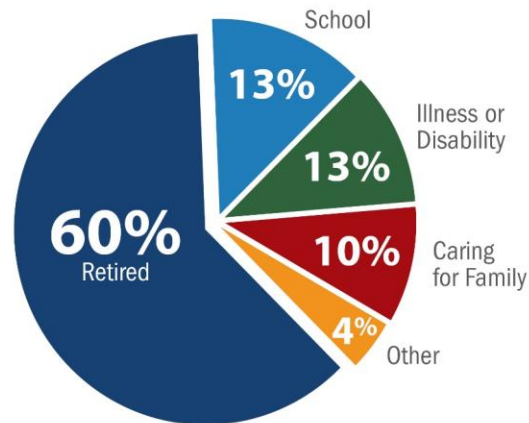
**Population by Age Group and Participation in Labor Force**



Source: Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates. Labor force participation rates are in parentheses.

**Most People Not Working are Retired**

Reasons Not Participating in Montana Labor Force



Source: Current Population Survey (CPS), U.S. BLS and U.S. Census. MTDLI analysis of IPUMS CPS microdata for Montana for Jan through Dec 2023.

**Highest Paying Industries\* Average Annual Wage, 2023**

1. Wholesale Trade - \$91,260
2. Real Estate - \$73,810
3. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services - \$61,279
4. Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation - \$60,650
5. Finance & Insurance - \$54,850

\*Mining industry wages and employment are non-disclosable