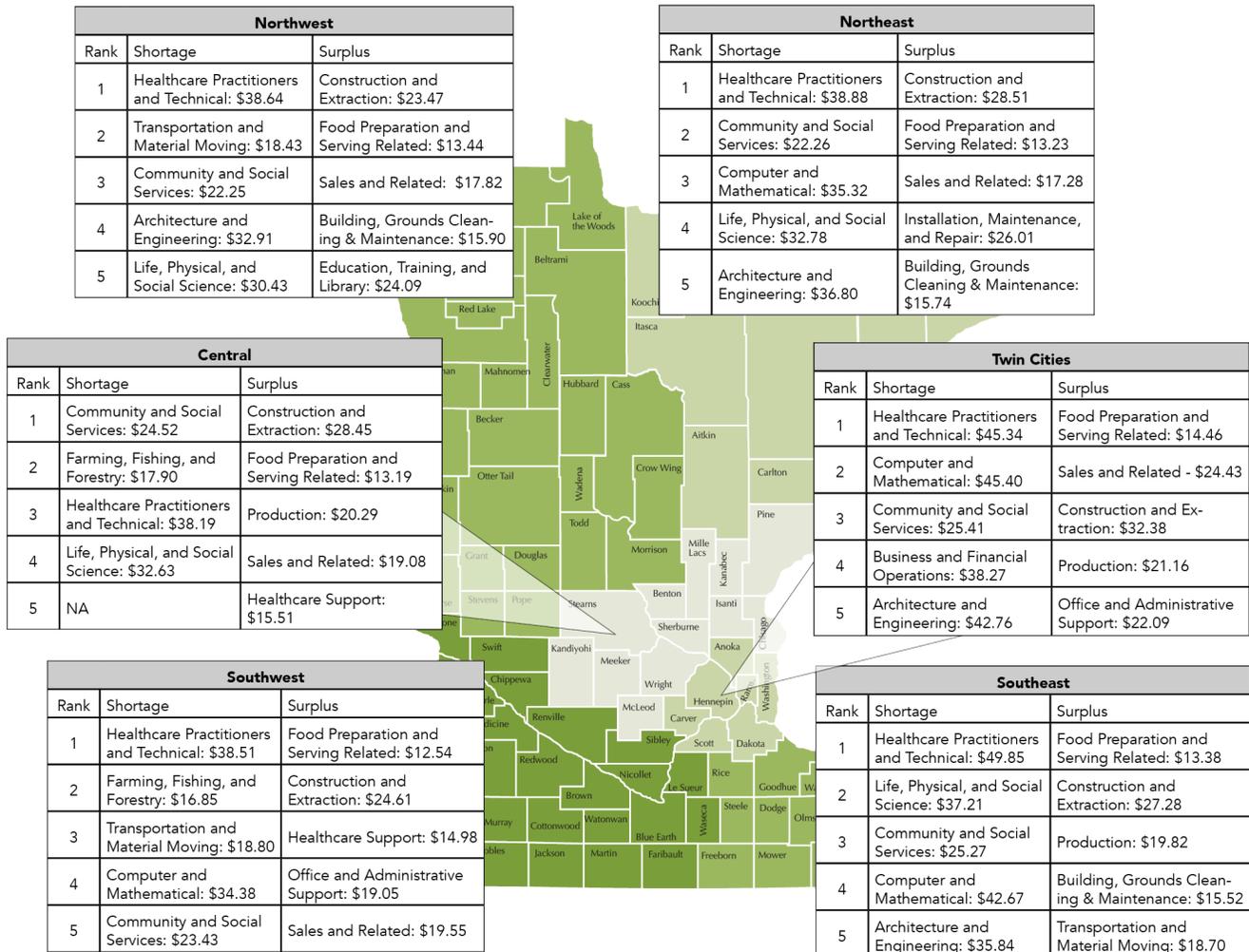


## Pandemic impacts on the rural workforce



Data: MN DEED, National Labor Exchange, Continuous Unemployment Claims

### From workforce shortage with no labor pool to having workforce shortages and a labor pool.

Rural areas have a unique opportunity that workforce development organizations haven't seen for quite some time: a growing supply of available jobs *and* a pool of available workers. But the current situation presents a problem: while unemployment statewide is concentrated in the same small number of occupation groups—services, hospitality—job vacancies are spread across many occupation groups and vary by region. Therefore, many of the individuals currently unemployed do not have the skill sets needed for the in-demand jobs.

The map above shows the occupation groups most in need of workers alongside the occupation groups with the largest surplus of workers by planning region and the average hourly wage for each in that region.

To read the full report, visit our website at [ruralmn.org](http://ruralmn.org).

## *Pandemic impacts on the rural workforce*

Occupation groups projected to have workforce shortage in the next five years	Number of EDRs <sup>1</sup> projected to be impacted (Excluding EDR 11, Metro)	Level of severity (1=most severe, 11=least severe)
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	12 (out of 12)	1.1
Management	12	1.9
Community and Social Service	12	4.3
Business and Financial Operations	11	3.3
Computer and Mathematical	11	5.5
Architecture and Engineering	11	7.3
Life, Physical, and Social Science	10	8.5
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	8	7.8
Legal	8	10.1
Healthcare Support	7	7.4
Construction and Extraction	6	5.5
Educational Instruction and Library	4	9.0

<sup>1</sup>EDR: Economic development region. Source: RealTime Talent, JobsEQ

- ***Current situation is projected to continue***

**Projected shortages:** The table above shows occupational groups projected to face workforce shortages over the next five years in at least one economic development region (EDR). To fill these jobs, workers will need access to retraining, and retraining resources will need to be specific to each region's diverse needs.

**Projected surpluses:** On the flip side, occupations experiencing the largest number of unemployment claims this year—food prep & serving-related, sales-related, and office & administrative support—are projected to continue seeing workforce surpluses over the next five years.

- ***Complexity for workforce development organizations***

**Connecting workers to local services:** Discontinuing unemployment orientations during the pandemic has cut rural workers off from knowledge of and information about their local retraining resources.

**Technology:** Shifting services to a virtual setting has made technology, already a bigger issue for rural residents, a significant barrier for unemployed individuals.

**Stretched thin:** Before the pandemic, rural workforce organizations were already stretched thin dedicating their resources to helping employers find workers. Now, as people get vaccinated and unemployment benefits are allowed to expire, they are expecting an influx of unemployed workers as well this summer.

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