

Hispanic population supporting Milwaukee region's workforce

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Milwaukee's Hispanic population has been growing steadily over the past two decades, supporting the region's workforce and balancing out population losses in other demographics.

Still, Hispanics are largely underrepresented in higher-paying occupations, according to the latest report from the Wisconsin Policy Forum.

The report, titled "Upward Mobility," shows the four-county Milwaukee area has gained nearly 76,000 Hispanic residents between 2000 and 2017, accounting for all of the region's net employment growth during that time.

Over the same timeframe, the region lost nearly 69,000 white residents, while other groups increased moderately. As noted by WPF, the region's overall population would have largely stayed flat without the boost from the growing Hispanic presence.

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, WPF has created a chart comparing the concentration of Hispanic workers to median annual wages. For all the occupations listed on the chart, the concentration of Hispanic workers is higher in jobs that tend to earn less.

For example, farming, fishing and forestry jobs have the highest concentration of Hispanic workers, and the median annual wage for these jobs is between \$30,000

and \$40,000.

The concentration of Hispanics is much lower in jobs with higher median annual wages. That means Hispanics are underrepresented in management, architecture and engineering, legal, computer science and other high-wage jobs.

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