



FOOD AND BEVERAGE EXCELLENCE

Spanning packaging, processing, flavors, and food safety, Wisconsin's expertise covers the entire supply chain.

LOOK FORWARD ➤

FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT WISCONSIN'S FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY



Nearly
3,900
industry companies



7 OF THE 10
largest food companies in
the world have operations
in Wisconsin



146,000+
industry jobs



Wisconsin is the
#1 U.S. PRODUCER
of cheese, cranberries,
ginseng, dry whey,
milk goats, and
snap beans.



Wisconsin produces
25% OF U.S. CHEESE
and **14% OF U.S. MILK.**



We have a
MASTER CHEESEMAKER CERTIFICATION
on par with French standards
(the only one of its kind
in the U.S.)



Wisconsin is a **WORLD LEADER IN ANIMAL GENETICS**

**WISCONSIN RANKS
#2 IN THE U.S.
FOR THE NUMBER OF
CERTIFIED ORGANIC
FARMS.**

When you locate in Wisconsin, you have access to research partners at UW-Madison and beyond, including the:

- **CENTER FOR DAIRY RESEARCH**
- **FOOD RESEARCH INSTITUTE**
- **MEAT SCIENCE AND ANIMAL BIOLOGICS DISCOVERY BUILDING**

Nearly
3,900
industry companies and

146,000+
industry jobs in
Wisconsin

Lightcast 2025 Q4 Dataset



Wisconsin provides nourishment, from the first seed to the last bite. We're proud of our history in dairy, agriculture, and manufacturing. It made us who we are today, and it's fueling who we'll be tomorrow. It's the reason our growers, processors, packagers, and producers are enhancing food and beverage production at every step of the process, from beginning to end. And it's why entrepreneurs, researchers, and farmers throughout the state are sharing in Wisconsin's culture of innovation to deliver faster, safer, fresher food than ever before.

Helping you get connected within the sector is **FaB Wisconsin**, a statewide industry business network with more than 140 member companies and more than 2,000 industry professionals. FaB addresses **leadership, talent attraction and retention, innovation, food safety compliance, international opportunities, and supply chain management** to build upon Wisconsin's strengths as an ideal location for your food and beverage business.



7 OF THE 10

largest food companies in the world
have operations in Wisconsin

Food Engineering Magazine, Data Axle, 2025

WISCONSIN'S LEADERS IN FOOD AND BEVERAGE





“ We chose Wisconsin due to the shared values of quality, trust, and independence, coupled with its strong work ethic and the warm welcome from the community. We are deeply rooted in Wisconsin now. At HARIBO, we think in generations, and we are here for the long term. ”

Wes Saber

Executive Vice President and
Chief Financial Officer
HARIBO of America Inc.

IN WISCONSIN, WE PRODUCE THE INGREDIENTS YOU NEED FOR YOUR FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCTS.

We not only have a strong agriculture industry. We also have strength in **flavors and seasonings, food science, food safety, food processing machinery, and packaging**—everything you need to get your product from the farm field into the hand of the consumer. Decisions by companies such as Kerry, Schwabe, and Novonesis to locate here speak to Wisconsin's strength in food ingredients.

Organic production and organic products are particular strengths for Wisconsin. Ranking in the top five in the U.S. for acreage of organic field crops,¹ Wisconsin is also one of the top five states for organic production of corn, oats, rye, dry hay, milk, and eggs,¹ and is home to the largest organic dairy cooperative.²

Wisconsin produced more than 32 billion pounds of **milk**—14% of total U.S. production—in 2024.³ We produce more **dry whey** than any other state and rank first among U.S. states in the production of **cranberries, ginseng, milk goats, and snap beans.**⁴



Wisconsin is a **WORLD LEADER** IN ANIMAL GENETICS

We are **No. 1 in cheese production**, with more than 3.5 billion pounds of cheese made here each year⁴—25% of the U.S. total!⁵ Our state's nearly 1,200 licensed cheesemakers produce more than 600 types, styles, and varieties of cheese⁴—nearly double the number of any other state—and regularly win top honors in national and international competitions. The Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association hosts the biennial World Cheese Championship, and the **Master Cheesemaker Certification** offered by the Center for Dairy Research and the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin is the only program of its kind in the U.S.—and on par with European standards.

We're also **No. 1 in production of American, cheddar, Italian, and specialty cheeses** and **No. 2 for Hispanic and mozzarella cheeses.**

Sources: (1) USDA 2021 Organic Survey Report; (2) Organic Valley; (3) U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service; (4) Wisconsin 2025 Agricultural Statistics, DATCP.



WISCONSIN RANKS #2 IN THE U.S. for the number of certified organic farms

USDA 2021 Certified Organic Survey

FROM THE FIRST SEED TO THE LAST BITE

Although farming is a time-honored tradition, farmers must be innovators, too, if they want continued success. Wisconsin excels at developing the technologies that enable farming operations to continue to evolve. With companies such as **ABS Global, Accelerated Genetics, Urus, and Genex**, Wisconsin is a leader in animal genetics—with our state accounting for nearly 60% of total U.S. exports of bovine semen.¹ This technology is becoming increasingly important in terms of sustainability, with the breeding of animals in ways that reduces their energy requirements and decreases methane emissions. Wisconsin's strength in water technology also supports agriculture through innovations in **water management and sustainable irrigation solutions**, and our Qualified New Business Venture Program helps startups attract funding by offering **tax credits for investors**.

MAKING MEAT MORE SUSTAINABLE

Lab-grown meat, also known as cell-cultivated or cultured meat, places cells gathered from animals inside a bioreactor to grow them into tissues and, ultimately, food. The end product can be structured meat (such as steak or pork chops) or unstructured (such as chicken nuggets or hamburgers). The **Suzuki Lab** at UW-Madison is a pioneer in this area, developing the technology to bring these products to market and, at the same time, considering factors such as sustainability, food safety, and public perception. Agricultural technology is also helping to lower the industry's carbon footprint and make farming more sustainable, including through Wisconsin's industry-leading innovations in animal genetics.

Source: (1) U.S. Census data as reported by WISERTrade, 2025.



#1 IN THE U.S.
for food product machinery
manufacturing employment

Lightcast 2025 Q4 Dataset



From the first seed to the last bite

Wisconsin's strength in food and beverages spans all aspects and phases of the industry, creating a robust supply chain that will multiply your company's success.



Food production

Our fertile soil, rich history of farming, and state initiatives to enhance rural quality of life have made our state a haven for small producers as well as larger farms.



Agricultural machinery

Wisconsin is a manufacturing powerhouse, and this translates to ready availability of the equipment and parts farmers need.



Food processing

Industrial machinery is Wisconsin's top export category, and much of this equipment also stays within the state to optimize the efficiency of food and beverage processing plants.



Food science and ingredients

Innovative ingredients serve goals that range from improving shelf life to delighting consumers' taste buds, and Wisconsin has a critical mass of companies in this area as well.



Food safety

Knowing your product is safe for consumption is the foundation of a successful food and beverage business; in Wisconsin, you'll find the expertise to maximize the quality and safety of your products.



Food distribution

Rely on in-state expertise to connect with the infrastructure that brings your goods to market in a seamless and speedy fashion.

THE WORKFORCE YOU NEED

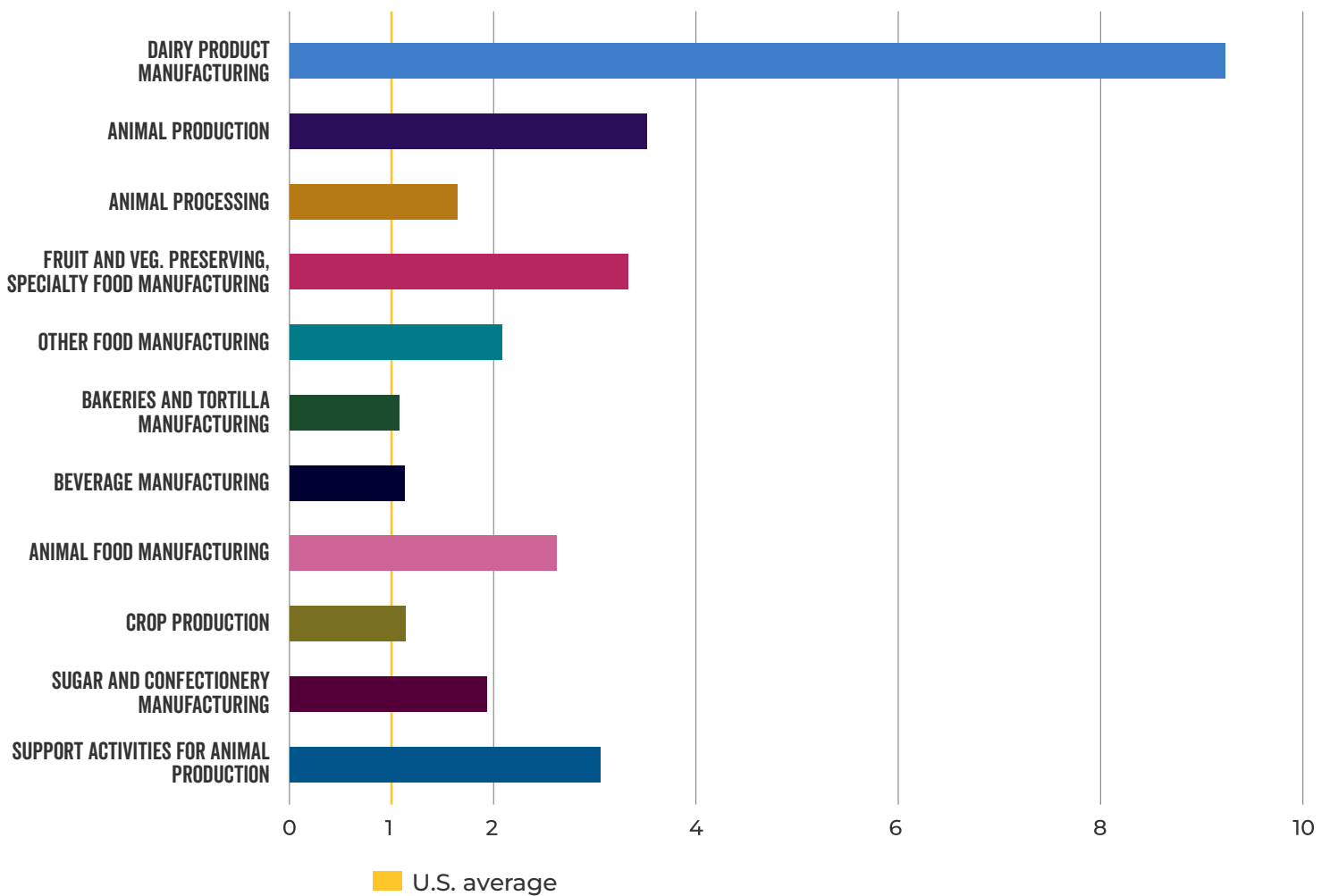


34%

of Wisconsin adults age 25+ have a
BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER.

U.S. Census 2024 American Communities Survey

FOOD AND BEVERAGE EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATION



Lightcast 2025 Q4 Dataset



4,500+

engineering degrees and certificates
awarded in 2024

Lightcast 2025 Q4 Dataset



We pioneered industry-focused workforce development in the U.S. As the first state to develop a technical college system, we have 100+ years of experience training our workforce to fulfill ever-changing requirements. National manufacturing employment concentration data proves the Wisconsin advantage: We offer you a skilled, experienced workforce that's ready to be productive starting on the day you open your doors.

In Wisconsin, our universities lead in research and technology commercialization, supporting partnerships, companies, and policymakers to develop new, innovative products that fill market needs. For example:

- UW-Madison awarded 1,551 degrees in the biological and biomedical sciences in 2024; among these are graduates of the **College of Agricultural and Life Sciences**, established in 1889.¹
- The **UW Center for Dairy Research** in Madison is the nation's leading research laboratory and center of excellence in dairy product formulation.
- The **UW Food Research Institute** in Madison is world renowned for its research and industry-applied expertise in microbiology, food science, dairy science, meat science, veterinary medicine, plant pathology, and food allergies, as well as microbe and toxin detection systems.
- The Universities of Wisconsin **Food Finance Institute** helps food-focused businesses raise the money they need to grow.
- Food packaging professionals are trained through the University of Wisconsin-Stout's nationally recognized **bachelor of science in packaging** program.

- UW's new \$50 million **Meat Science and Animal Biologics Discovery** building opened in 2020. The UW Extension program is a strong partner in the mission to teach and share knowledge through initiatives including its Master Meat Crafter Training Program.
- The **Meat Talent Development Program**, offered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, aims to help attract students to meat careers by providing financial support to students in Wisconsin meat processing training programs, supporting program development, and connecting the meat processing industry with potential employees.
- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls' **Dairy Research Program** is one of the top programs in the nation. With a multimillion-dollar renovation completed in 2020, the pilot dairy plant expands both student training opportunities and services to industry.
- Milwaukee Area Technical College offers an associate degree in **food science technology** that covers the principles of chemistry and biology that ensure food products are safe and meet quality standards.
- Lakeland University offers a **bachelor's degree in food safety and quality** that includes work experience with local employers alongside classroom-based learning.

Source: (1) Lightcast 2025 Q4 Dataset

THE WORKFORCE YOU NEED

MINNESOTA



Since 2017,
Wisconsin has had a
NET INFLOW
of people in the family
formation years
of ages 25-54.

Forward Analytics 2022



Milwaukee and Chicago
metro areas have a
combined workforce of
7.2M
for employers to draw from.

U.S. Census 2024 American
Communities Survey

DULUTH/SUPERIOR
179,000*

2.5 hrs

1.5 hrs

2.5 hrs

2 hrs

EAU CLAIRE
114,000*

1.5 hrs

WAUSAU
87,000*

1.5 hrs

GREEN BAY
213,000*

APPLETON
159,000*

OSHKOSH-NEENAH
113,000*

FOND DU LAC
66,000*

2.5 hrs

LA CROSSE
108,000*

2.5 hrs

MADISON
469,000*

1.5 hrs

JANESVILLE-BELOIT
105,000*

1 hrs

SHEBOYGAN
74,000*

2 hrs

MILWAUKEE
1M*

CHICAGO



Minneapolis-St. Paul
metro area have a
combined workforce of
2.4M+
for employers to draw from.

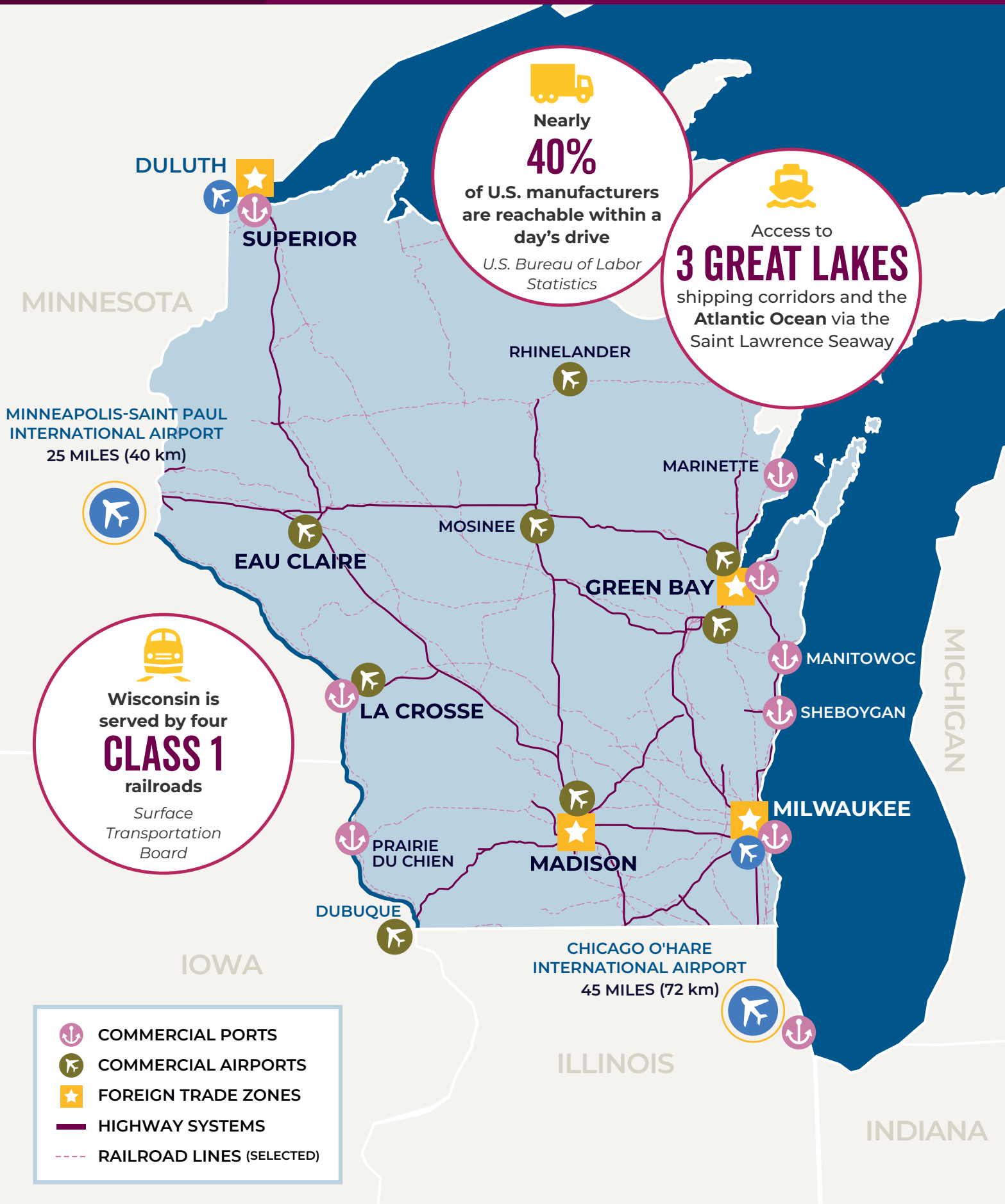
U.S. Census 2024 American
Communities Survey

IOWA

ILLINOIS

* Figures represent the working-age population for each Metropolitan Statistical Area

WELL CONNECTED AND CENTRALLY LOCATED



EASY ACCESS TO GET YOUR GOODS TO MARKET

Wisconsin isn't a single port economy—it has a distributed system across Lake Michigan and Lake Superior, offering access to three different Great Lakes shipping corridors and integration with Class I rail and interstate trucking, creating a multi-port Great Lakes logistics platform.



PORT OF MILWAUKEE:

Fifth-largest port in the Midwest and the only Lake Michigan port approved to serve the Mississippi River inland waterway system with direct barge access to the Illinois River; equipped to handle heavy machinery exports and bulk goods in liquid and solid form with storage available; includes a state-of-the-art agriculture maritime export facility

PORT OF GREEN BAY:

Provides the shortest and most direct route for shipments between the Midwest U.S. and the rest of the world—including overnight delivery; equipped to handle dry bulk commodities, liquids, and oversized cargo



PORT OF DULUTH-SUPERIOR:

The largest and busiest port of the Great Lakes, handling 35 million tons annually; connects to the U.S. East and Gulf coasts via the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Mississippi River, with rail connections to the West Coast



0.4% EFFECTIVE TAX RATE

on income from
manufacturing activities

Wis. Stat. § 71.07(5n)



#4 BEST STATE

to live in

WalletHub, 2026



#1 IN THE U.S.

for manufacturing
employment per capita

Lightcast 2025 Q4 Dataset



VERY LOW RISK

of natural disaster

WEDC analysis of FEMA data



EXCELLENT CREDIT RATING

and fully funded state pension plan,
leading to **low risk of tax increases**

*AA1 Moody's
AA Fitch Ratings*



LOW TAX

low-regulation, business-
welcoming environment



NEARLY 85%

of Wisconsin's borders
are water

*WEDC analysis using a
Wisconsin Department of
Natural Resources map*

Wisconsin borders the
Great Lakes, which
together contain

1/5 OF THE WORLD'S FRESH WATER

*Wisconsin Water Facts, Wisconsin Water
Library, UW-Madison*



Wisconsin has an estimated
**1.2 QUADRILLION
GALLONS**
of groundwater

*Wisconsin Water Facts,
Wisconsin Water Library,
UW-Madison*



DISCOVER THE WISCONSIN ADVANTAGE



SARAH BOWNDS, MBA
Business Attraction Manager

Business and Community Development
+1-608-210-6769
sarah.bownds@wedc.org



MELINDA OSTERBERG
Senior Director, Business Investment and Attraction

Business and Community Development
+1-608-210-6786
melinda.osterberg@wedc.org

Visit wedc.org to learn more.

LOOK FORWARD ➤

WISCONSIN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT