WISCONSIN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WATER TECHNOLOGY EXCELLENCE

Wisconsin companies are making the solutions to monitor, meter, measure, manage, and more.

LOOK FORWARD ›

FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT WISCONSIN'S WATER TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

THE WATER COUNCIL

Wisconsin is home to The Water Council, a global water hub with
7 INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS and MORE THAN 30 GLOBAL COLLABORATIONS

250+
companies in water technology

INCLUDING

11
global or national headquarters for water technology businesses

WITH

$60 MILLION
in annual revenue each

Home to the NSF-funded
WATER EQUIPMENT & POLICY CENTER
(one of only two such water-focused research centers in the U.S.)

Wisconsin is a
NATIONAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR WASTEWATER SURVEILLANCE
(one of only six such centers in the U.S.)

UW-Milwaukee's
SCHOOL OF FRESHWATER SCIENCES
is the only graduate school in the U.S. solely dedicated to the study of fresh water and the largest water-focused academic research institution on the Great Lakes

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$1.9 BILLION
annual research spending in FY24 at UW-Madison alone

Access to a talent pool of
66,000+
engineering graduates from across the Midwest per year, including **4,500+ from Wisconsin**

14
water technology corporations with R&D operations in Wisconsin

GLOBAL WATER TECHNOLOGY HUB

11

global or national headquarters for water technology business with

$60 MILLION

in annual revenue each

The Water Council, 2025

THE WATER COUNCIL

Wisconsin boasts one of the largest and most mature water technology hubs in the world, with decades of leadership demonstrated by companies such as A. O. Smith Corp., Badger Meter, Kohler Co., and Rockwell Automation, among others. Home to a vibrant research ecosystem and dynamic venture and startup organizations, the state has established a global reputation for excelling in the development and nurturing of new water technologies and processes.

Recognizing the unique status of Milwaukee as a global hub for water technology, civic and business leaders founded **The Water Council** in 2009 as a nonprofit cluster organization dedicated to advancing freshwater technology and water stewardship.

As part of its role connecting the water technology economy, The Water Council leads innovation programming including **BREW 2.0**, a post-accelerator for national and global market-ready startups. Each year, The Water Council brings these startups to Milwaukee for a week of learning and networking, which has led several startups to form partnerships, launch pilots, and open offices in Wisconsin.

WISCONSIN'S LEADERS IN WATER TECHNOLOGY

ABB

KOHLER

A.O. Smith

Rockwell Automation

Badger Meter

VEOLIA

Bradley

wilo

insinkerator

xylem
Let's Solve Water

14

water technology corporations with R&D operations in Wisconsin

The Water Council, 2025

INDUSTRY STRONG. TECHNOLOGY SMART. FUTURE READY.

Wisconsin is a global water hub with

7 INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS and MORE THAN 30 GLOBAL COLLABORATIONS

The Water Council

In Wisconsin, you'll find:

- **A wealth of water technology companies,** from major corporations to startups that are changing the way we monitor, use, and treat water.
- **Research universities** that are leading the way, including the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the only graduate school of freshwater in the nation; the Marquette University Water Quality Center; and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with its cross-disciplinary coordination
- The **Freshwater Collaborative** initiative, linking post-secondary students and degree programs crossing various water, environmental, and biological disciplines across all 13 public Wisconsin universities
- Renowned drinking water and wastewater **utilities** known for their thought leadership and adoption of new technologies and green infrastructure

THE WATER COUNCIL'S INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS INCLUDE:

BRITISH WATER

wateralliance

clean
THE DANISH ENVIRONMENTAL CLUSTER

CWP
CATALANWATERPARTNERSHIP

German Water Partnership
Solutions you can trust.

Interreg
North-West Europe
Water Test Network

BRINGING TOGETHER WORLD WATER LEADERS

Hosted by The Water Council, ReFRESH: Resilience in Freshwater is a curated thought leadership experience for leaders who are ready to refresh how progress happens in water. ReFRESH brings together decision-makers across sectors to explore unexpected partnerships, honest conversations, and commitments to move forward.

The **Kikkoman Foods Foundation** has pledged

$2 MILLION

for the **School of Freshwater Sciences** to construct the most advanced research vessel ever designed for the Great Lakes.

ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE

UW-Madison ranks in the top 3% of U.S. universities for engineering research expenditures and near the top of global rankings.

NCES Higher Education Research and Development Survey

UW-Milwaukee, with its esteemed College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, also ranks as a Tier 1 research university.

Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher education

Wisconsin's water technology market continues to display strong activity and growth. In late 2023, Boston-based **Watts Water Technologies** acquired Milwaukee-based Bradley Corp., giving it a strong foothold 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:

In 2024, the **Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District** announced a first-of-its-kind, $15 million research lab and pilot facility expected to break ground in 2026. The facility will first pilot revolutionary primary clarification processes from **Tomorrow Water**, a subsidiary of South Korea-based BKT, and **Aqua Aerobics**, based in Loves Park, Illinois.

The following year, Milwaukee-based **Rockwell Automation** announced plans to build a new manufacturing facility in southeastern Wisconsin, potentially its largest manufacturing campus globally. Also in 2025, Milwaukee-based **A. O. Smith Corp.** and **Badger Meter** announced major acquisitions.

- **UW-Madison** and **UW-Milwaukee** are both Tier 1 research universities;[1] UW-Madison ranks sixth in the U.S. for research spending, with more than $1.9 billion in research expenditures across all areas in fiscal year 2024.[2]
- The **School of Freshwater Sciences** at UW-Milwaukee is the largest Great Lakes academic research institution and the only graduate school in North America solely dedicated to freshwater issues.
- Centers of excellence at UW-Madison specialize in **advanced materials; computer, data and information sciences; and IoT research.**
- Milwaukee is home to the **Water Equipment & Policy Center**, a National Science Foundation-funded research engine that drives innovation in North America's water industry and promotes coordination among the region's assets to create the next generation of products and processes and advance the water industry. It is one of only two such research centers in the U.S.
- The **UW-Green Bay Water Science Program** is an interdisciplinary undergraduate major that prepares students to play a role in solving the world's water-related challenges with coursework in chemistry, biology, physics, statistics, geoscience, environmental science, and public policy.

Sources: (1) Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education; (2) National Center for Education Statistics Higher Education Research & Development Survey

Access to a talent pool of

66,000+

engineering graduates from across the Midwest per year, including **4,500+ from Wisconsin**

U.S. NCES IPEDS

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP FROM RIGHT HERE IN WISCONSIN

> **Led by The Water Council, Milwaukee's water cluster has established the region as a top global hub for innovation and solutions to the world's water challenges.**
>
> *Brookings Institution*

Situated along the U.S. **"fresh coast,"** Wisconsin is part of a water technology corridor that spans the Lake Michigan coast down to Chicago.

Locating in Wisconsin gives you access to all the advantages of Wisconsin's business climate and potential collaborations in its vibrant water cluster, as well as millions of potential customers in the United States' third-largest metro area.

The Water Council is housed at 247 W Freshwater Way, a converted turn-of-the-century warehouse near downtown Milwaukee. The building includes several water-related businesses and the **Oasis Coworking Community**, a landing pad for global water companies entering North America and U.S. businesses looking to launch, grow, and discover new opportunities.

The **Water Council** offers multiple programs for entrepreneurs—and for companies in the industry to plug into entrepreneurial networks and benefit from their creative ideas. **BREW 2.0** (Business. Research. Entrepreneurship. In Water), the global water technology hub's next-generation post-accelerator program, helps promising water tech innovators from anywhere in the world continue to build momentum on their path to market adoption success.

The **Tech Challenge** is a corporate-sponsored global open innovation program designed to empower anyone with an innovative idea in freshwater technology to vet their concept with professionals from industry-leading companies.

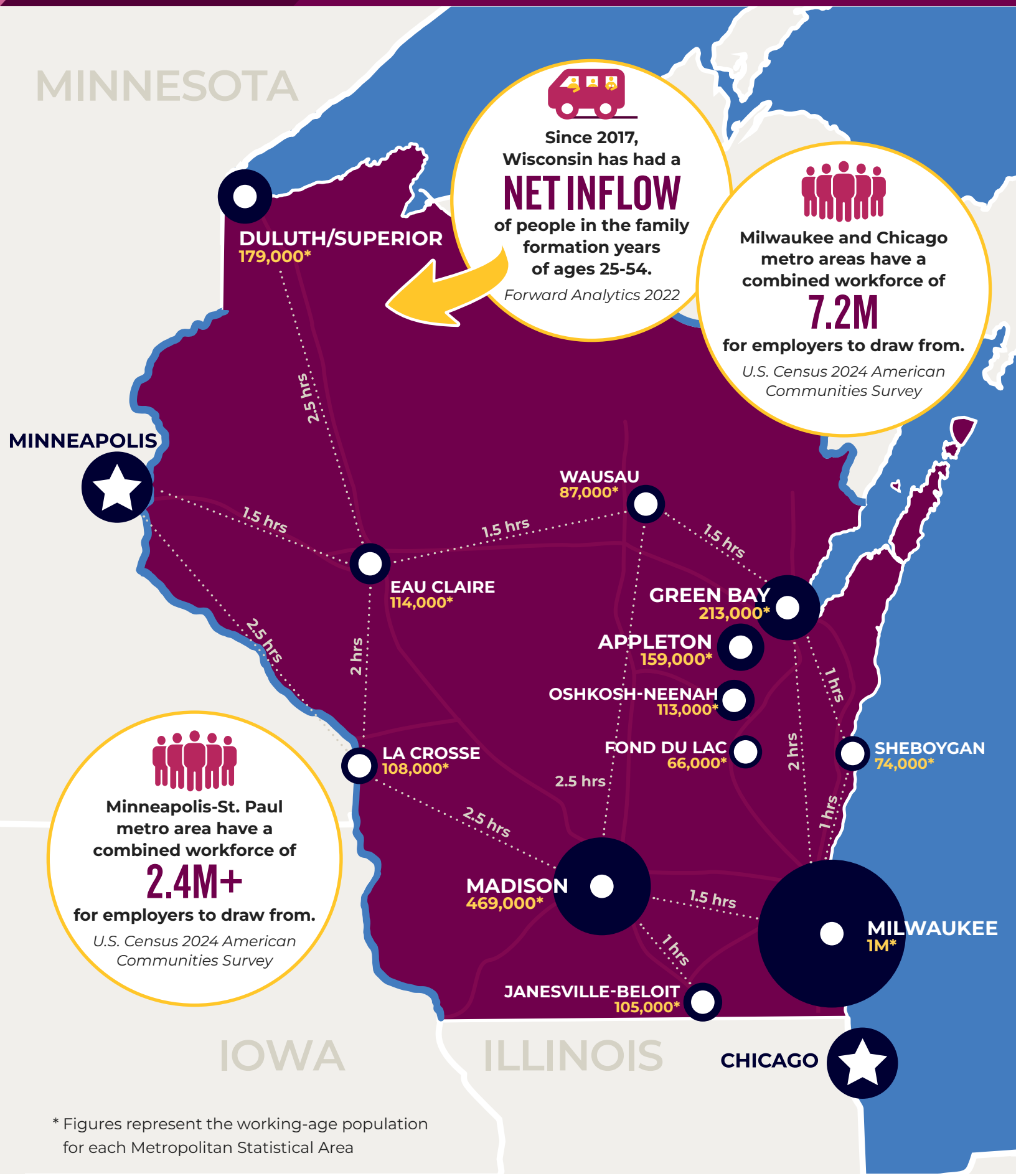
In addition, The Water Council also has extensive water stewardship expertise including the **WAVE: Water Stewardship Verified** program to help companies improve water stewardship planning, performance, and reporting on an enterprise level.

Wisconsin was recently named a **National Center of Excellence for Wastewater Surveillance** through the work of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene at UW-Madison, and the UW-Milwaukee School of Freshwater Sciences. It is one of only four such centers in the nation.

Milwaukee has created the Water Centric City Initiative based on its commitment to seven principles:

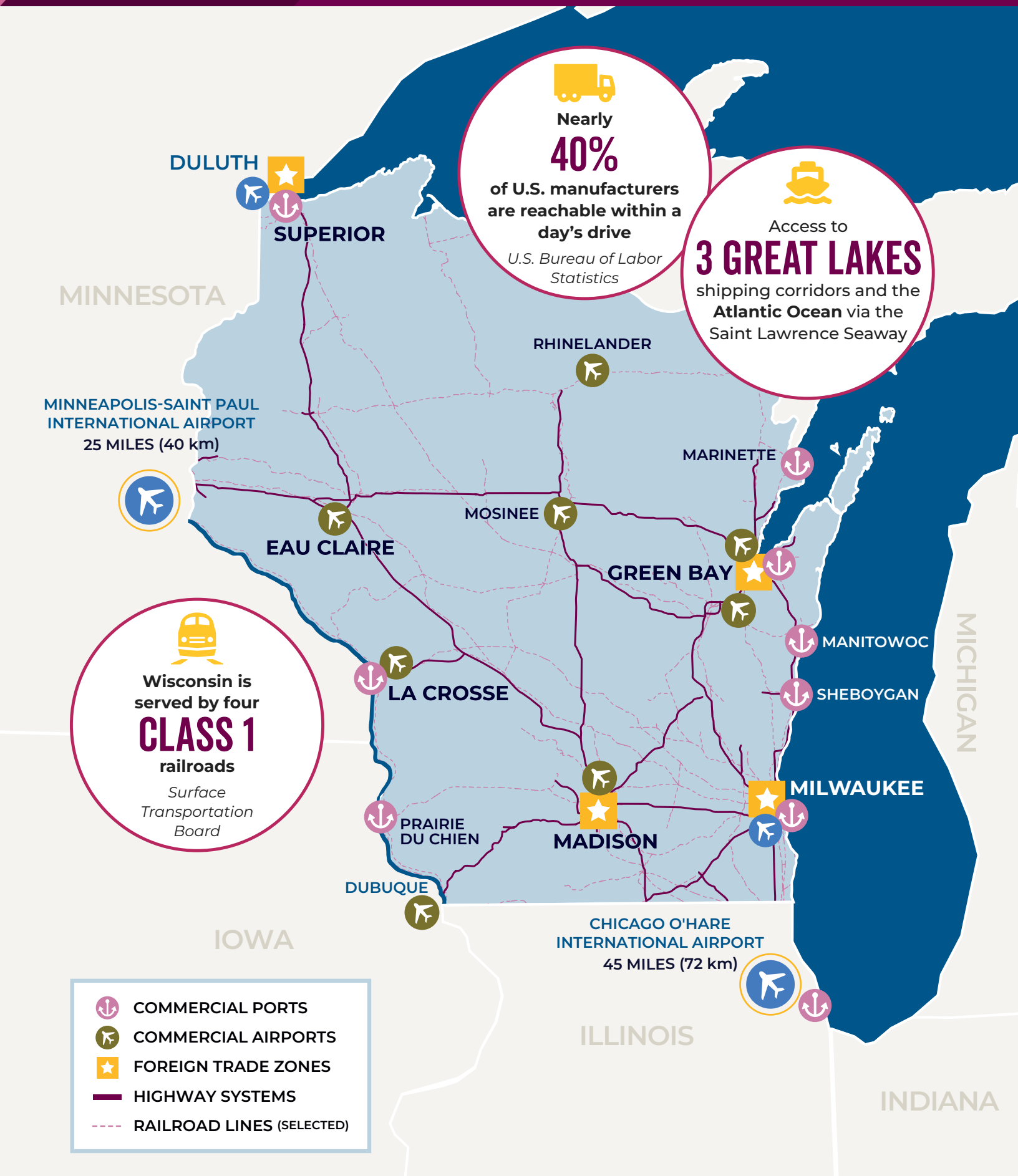
- Applied water research and policy
- Arts, talent, culture, and education
- Fishable, swimmable rivers and water bodies
- Green infrastructure
- Sustainable and healthy water supply
- Water leadership
- Water technology

THE WORKFORCE YOU NEED



* 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

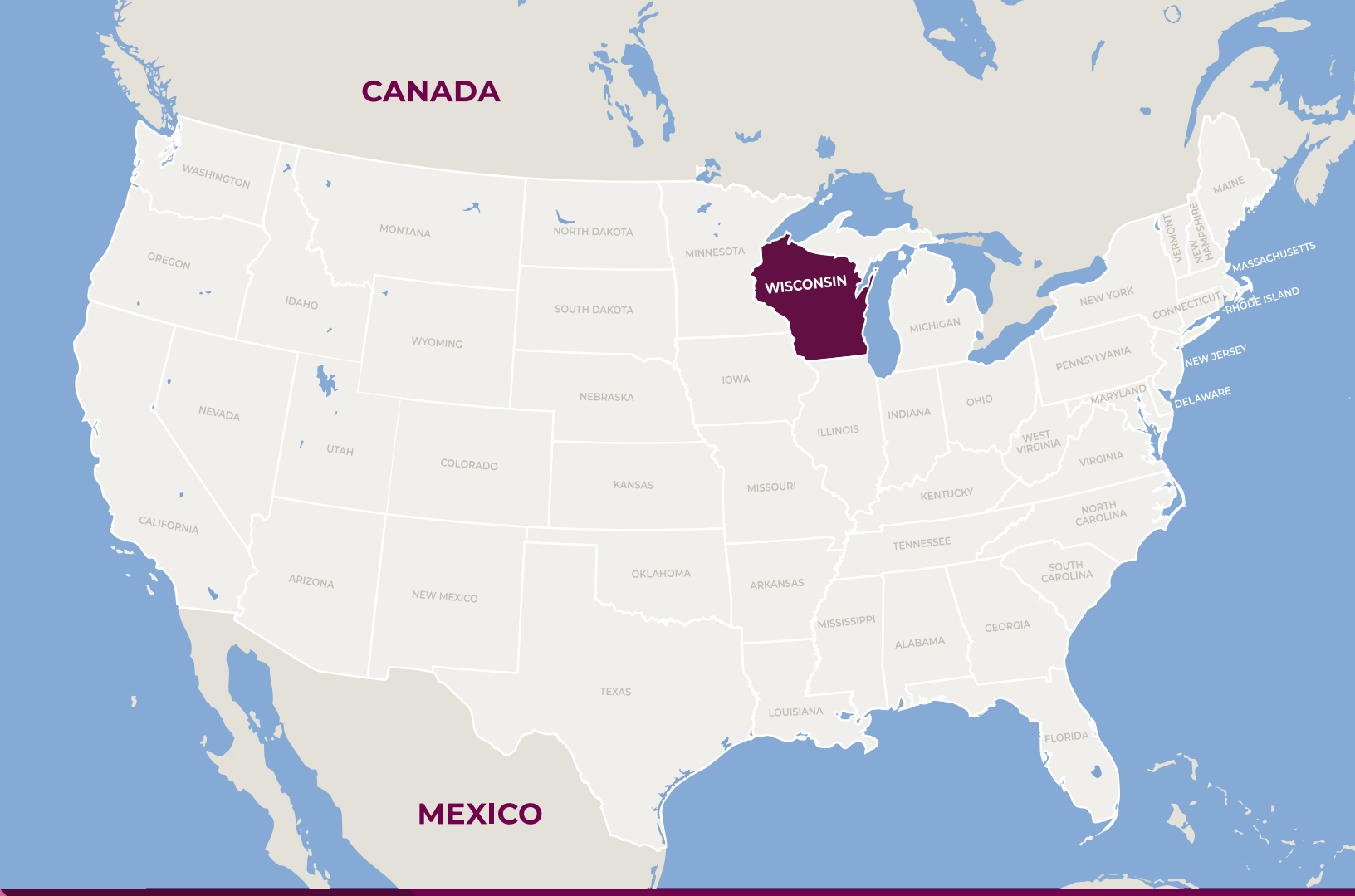
Wisconsin Water Facts, Wisconsin Water Library, UW-Madison

Wisconsin has an estimated

1.2 QUADRILLION GALLONS

of groundwater

Wisconsin Water Facts, Wisconsin Water Library, UW-Madison



DISCOVER THE WISCONSIN ADVANTAGE

FRANCISCO CARRILLO

International Business Development Director

Global Trade and Investment

+1-608-210-6757

francisco.carrillo@wedc.org

Visit wedc.org to learn more.

LOOK FORWARD

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