

In 2009, seven of the state’s top 10 employers were in the healthcare services industry; major employers in other industries included Microsoft and U.S. Bank (North Dakota Workforce Intelligence Network). The prevalence of healthcare-related employers indicates that this industry is a vital sector of the state’s economy. North Dakota is also home to Appareo Systems, which is the nation’s fastest-growing engineering firm according to Inc.com (#159). North Dakota’s significant and growing employers already reflect its transition away from production industries and toward high-skill service industries such as information services and financial services, and toward highly skilled occupations such as engineering.

TABLE 5: SNAPSHOT OF EDUCATIONAL DEMAND FOR TOTAL JOBS IN NORTH DAKOTA (2008 AND 2018)

	2008	2018	% change
High school dropouts	21,000	23,000	10%
High school graduates	108,000	114,000	6%
Some college	97,000	102,000	5%
Associate’s	57,000	60,000	5%
Bachelor’s	85,000	89,000	5%
Graduate	24,000	25,000	4%

Healthcare support occupations are projected to grow by 11 percent between 2008 and 2018. STEM occupations are the fastest-growing occupations (engineers and technicians at 16%, and computers and science occupations by 26%).

About 277,000 jobs in North Dakota—70 percent of the total—will require some training beyond high school by 2018.

Between 2008 and 2018, new jobs in North Dakota requiring postsecondary education and training will grow by 14,000, whereas jobs for high school graduates and dropouts will grow by only 6,000. In addition, the state is projected to create a total of 120,000 job vacancies, both from newly created jobs and retirements from existing jobs. Of these openings, 80,000 will require individuals with postsecondary credentials, 33,000 will require at least high school diplomas, and 7,000 will be open to high school dropouts.

Nationally, North Dakota ranks 6th in the share of its jobs that will require a Bachelor’s degree by 2018, and 51st in jobs for high school dropouts.

South Dakota

Much like its neighbor to the north, South Dakota held up well as the recession swept through the country. South Dakota’s unemployment rate was 4.9 percent in March 2011, nearly four points less than the national average of 8.8 percent. The state also ranked near the top for GDP growth in 2008 and had the 10th-largest GDP growth last year among all 50 states.

Agriculture, historically, has been the backbone of South Dakota’s economy. Indeed, agriculture contributes an estimated \$3.5 billion to the state’s economy, and accounts for 9.4 percent of the state’s GDP (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011).

TABLE 6: SNAPSHOT OF EDUCATIONAL DEMAND FOR TOTAL JOBS IN SOUTH DAKOTA (2008 AND 2018)

	2008	2018	% change
High school dropouts	34,000	37,000	9%
High school graduates	145,000	156,000	8%
Some college	98,000	107,000	9%
Associate’s	54,000	59,000	9%
Bachelor’s	89,000	98,000	10%
Graduate	28,000	31,000	11%

In 2010, four of the top 10 largest private employers in South Dakota, including Avera and Sanford Health, were associated with the healthcare services industry and related support systems.

Financial services companies Citibank and Wells Fargo, and wholesale and retail trade companies also employ thousands of South Dakota residents. With the impending retirement of Baby Boomers, healthcare will become even more important to South Dakota in coming years, and so will the postsecondary credentials that healthcare workers will hold.

By 2018, 62 percent of all jobs in South Dakota (294,000) will require some training beyond high school.

Between 2008 and 2018, new jobs in South Dakota requiring postsecondary education and training will grow by 25,000, while jobs for high school graduates and dropouts will increase by 14,000.

Over this same period, the state will add 141,000 job, both from new job opportunities and vacancies arising from retirements. Of these vacancies, 85,000 will favor candidates with postsecondary qualifications, 45,000 will favor high school graduates, and 11,000 will be suitable for high school dropouts. South Dakota ranks 19th in the share of its jobs that will require a Bachelor’s degree by 2018, and 41st in jobs for high school dropouts.