

EMPLOYMENT MONTHLY

November 2024



VIRGINIA WORKS



Feature Article:

Virginia's Agricultural Workforce and Cost-effective Green Skills for Smaller Farms with Emphasis on Local Workforce Development Areas

October 2024 Monthly Indicators

(Seasonally Adjusted)

Total Nonfarm Employment



4,250,300

Unemployment



133,596

Labor Force Participation Rate



66.0%

Unemployment Rate



2.9%

Note: Arrows indicate movement from previous month.

Virginia Works
Economic Information & Analytics Division
P.O. Box 25519, Richmond, VA 23260-5519

LMI@virginiaworks.gov

www.VirginiaWorks.com

Current Employment Indicators

Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment (Thousands)



Employment Highlights

- Virginia’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in October remained unchanged at 2.9 percent, which is 0.1 percentage points below the rate from a year ago.
- Virginia’s labor force participation rate remained unchanged at 66.0 percent in October.
- October, the labor force increased by 3,649 to 4,575,255 as the number of unemployed residents increased by 2,245 to 133,596.
- Virginia’s nonagricultural employment, from the monthly establishment survey decreased by 3,000 to 4,250,300.

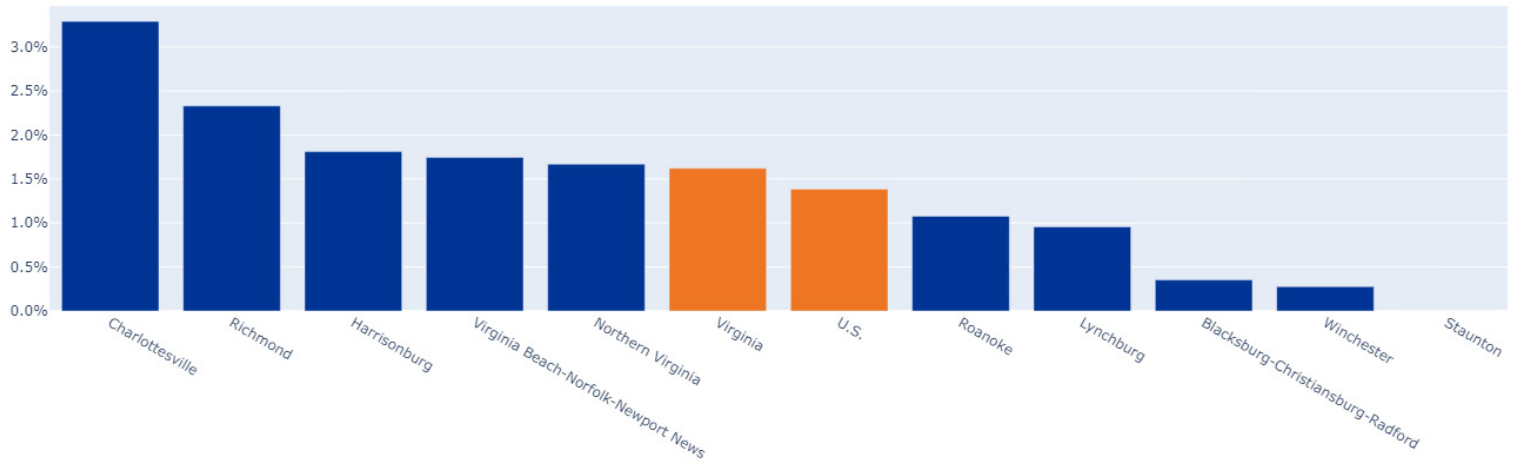
Total Nonfarm Employment by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

(Seasonally Adjusted)

MSA	Employment			October 2023 to October 2024	
	October 2024	September 2024	October 2023	Change	% Change
Virginia	4,250,300	4,253,300	4,182,500	67,800	1.6%
Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford MSA	85,300	85,700	85,000	300	0.4%
Charlottesville MSA	128,700	128,500	124,600	4,100	3.3%
Harrisonburg MSA	73,100	72,800	71,800	1,300	1.8%
Lynchburg MSA	105,600	105,500	104,600	1,000	1.0%
Northern Virginia MSA	1,601,400	1,597,900	1,575,100	26,300	1.7%
Richmond MSA	728,900	730,600	712,300	16,600	2.3%
Roanoke MSA	168,800	168,800	167,000	1,800	1.1%
Staunton MSA	53,900	54,100	53,900	0	0.0%
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News MSA	827,600	826,900	813,400	14,200	1.7%
Winchester MSA	72,400	72,900	72,200	200	0.3%

*Current month's estimates are preliminary.

Fastest Growing Metropolitan Statistical Areas by Employment - Year-over-Year



Total Nonfarm Employment by Industry (Seasonally Adjusted)

Industry	Employment			October 2023 to October 2024	
	October 2024	September 2024	October 2023	Change	% Change
Total Nonfarm	4,250,300	4,253,300	4,182,500	-3,000	1.6%
Total Private	3,500,000	3,503,700	3,443,700	-3,700	1.6%
Goods Producing	484,900	484,700	470,100	200	3.1%
Mining and Logging	7,400	7,300	7,300	100	1.4%
Construction	229,100	228,700	216,600	400	5.8%
Manufacturing	248,400	248,700	246,200	-300	0.9%
Service-Providing	3,765,400	3,768,600	3,712,400	-3,200	1.4%
Private Service Providing	3,015,100	3,019,000	2,973,600	-3,900	1.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	677,000	677,600	673,100	-600	0.6%
Information	70,000	69,700	69,200	300	1.2%
Financial Activities	221,400	220,500	222,100	900	-0.3%
Professional and Business Services	816,300	818,900	803,800	-2,600	1.6%
Education and Health Services	604,400	604,300	588,400	100	2.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	424,000	424,300	415,200	-300	2.1%
Miscellaneous Services	202,000	203,700	201,800	-1,700	0.1%
Government	750,300	749,600	738,800	700	1.6%
Federal Government	191,300	190,900	190,100	400	0.6%
State Government	165,000	165,100	156,800	-100	5.2%
Local Government	394,000	393,600	391,900	400	0.5%

*Current month's estimates are preliminary.

Current Unemployment Indicators

Virginia Unemployment Rate (Percent)



Unemployment Insurance - October 2024

Financial Data

- Trust Fund Balance (millions) \$1,528.1
- Tax Revenue (Monthly) (millions) \$22.4

Benefits Data

- Benefits Paid (Monthly) (millions) \$23.7
- Average Weekly Benefit \$351.96
- Initial Claims (YTD) 111,930

Average Weekly Initial Claims



Initial and Continued Claims

Initial Claims:

- There were 13,459 initial claims in October 2024.
- Initial claims increased by 24.4% over-the-month and increased by 56.3% over-the-year.
- Year-to-date initial claims were 7.6% lower in October 2024 compared to the same period in 2023.

Continued Claims:

- There were 80,684 continued claims in October 2024.
- This was a 7.0% decrease over-the-month and a 7.5% increase over-the-year.
- Year-to-date continued claims were 15.5% higher in October than during the same period in 2023.

Note: Claims counts include interstate and intrastate.

Unemployment Insurance Final Payments

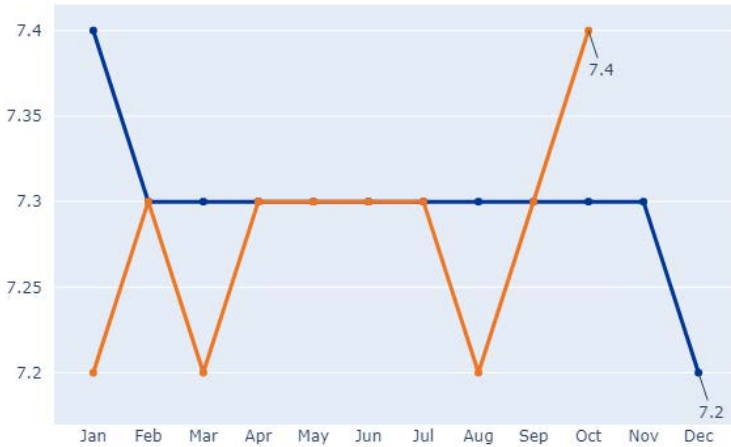


Monthly Claims Data

	Initial Claims	Continued Claims	Recipients	Final Payments
October 2024	13,000	80,684	14,799	1,535
September 2024	10,817	86,770	16,309	1,584
October 2023	8,610	75,060	14,207	1,438

Current Industry Indicators

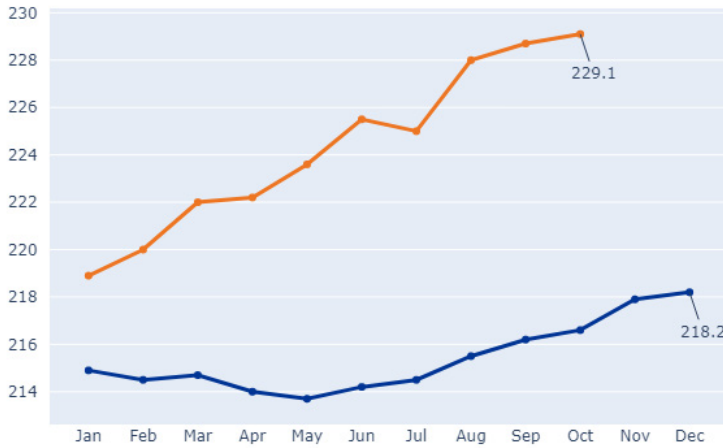
Mining and Logging Employment (Thousands)



Wholesale Trade Employment (Thousands)



Construction Employment (Thousands)



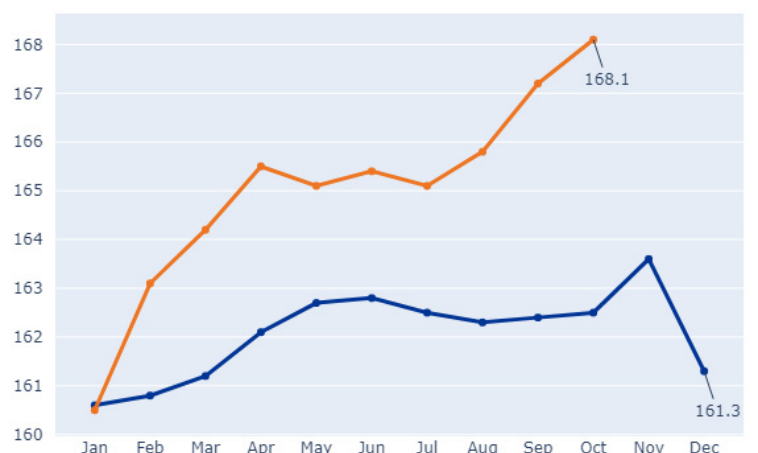
Retail Trade Employment (Thousands)



Manufacturing Employment (Thousands)

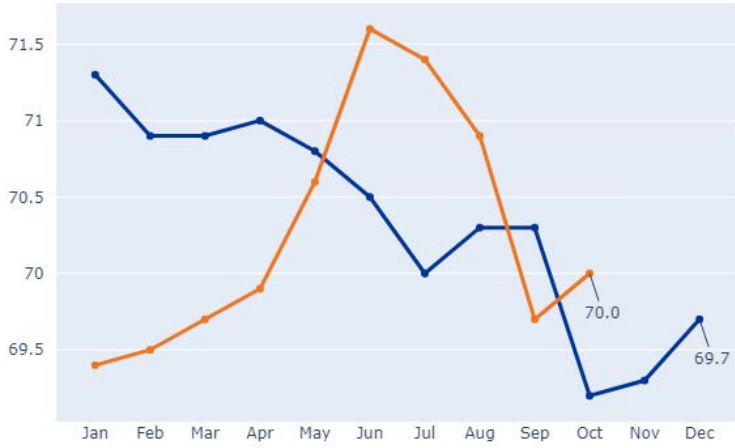


Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities Employment (Thousands)

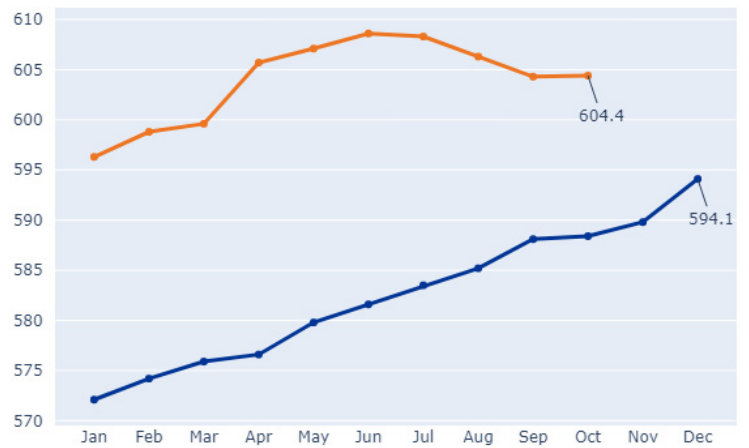


2023 2024 (Seasonally Adjusted)

Information Employment
(Thousands)



Private Education and Health Services Employment
(Thousands)



Finance Employment
(Thousands)



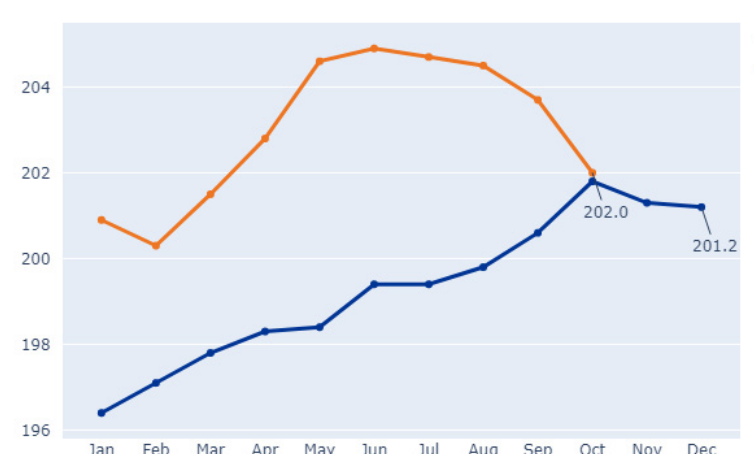
Leisure and Hospitality Services Employment
(Thousands)



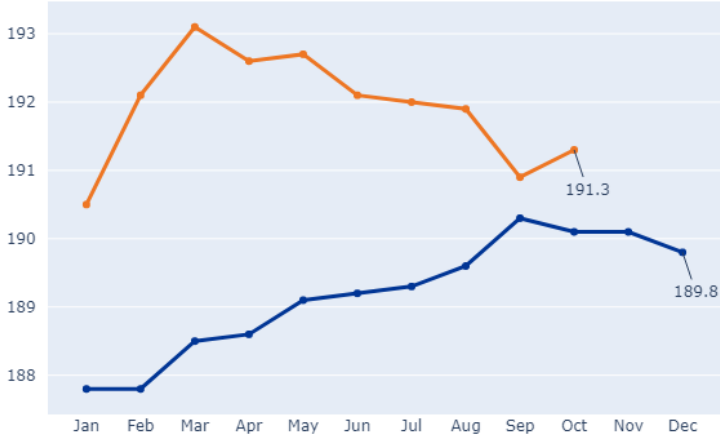
Professional and Business Services Employment
(Thousands)



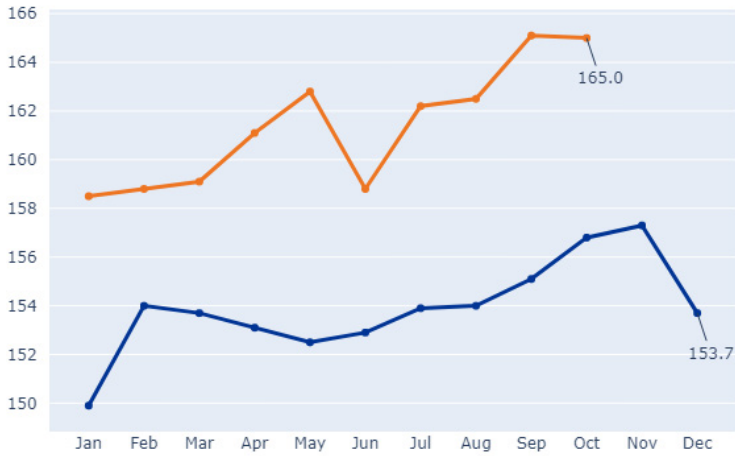
Miscellaneous Services Employment
(Thousands)



Federal Government Employment
(Thousands)



State Government Employment
(Thousands)



Local Government Employment
(Thousands)



Industry Highlights

- In October, private sector employment decreased by 3,700 to 3,500,000 while government employment increased by 700 to 750,300.
- The largest job gain occurred in Financial Activities (+900) to 221,400. The second largest job gain occurred in Government (+700) to 750,300. The third largest job gain occurred in Construction (+400) to 229,100. The other gains were in Information (+300) to 70,000; Education and Health Services (+100) to 604,400; and Mining and Logging (+100) to 7,400.
- The largest job loss occurred in Professional and Business Services (-2,600) to 816,300. The second largest job loss occurred in Miscellaneous Services (-1,700) to 202,000. The third largest job loss occurred in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (-600) to 677,000.



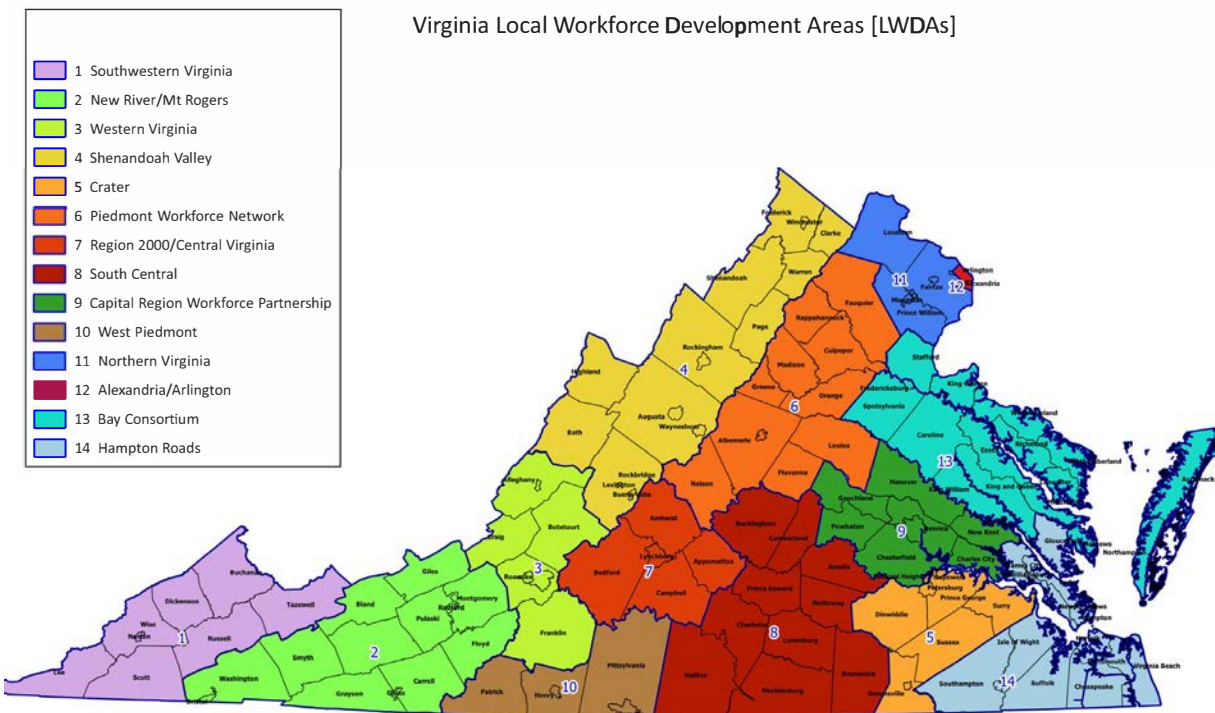


Virginia's Agricultural Workforce and Cost-effective Green Skills for Smaller Farms with Emphasis on Local Workforce Development Areas

Larry Robinson, Senior Economist

This paper uses 2022 Census of Agriculture data, that was released this year, to analyze Virginia's agricultural workforce by regional Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs). Also, since Virginia has many small farms, low-cost green skills that may be particularly attractive to smaller operations that are not using expensive precision agriculture equipment are discussed.

The Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) were formed to focus on local and regional differences, and are an established geographic framework to help enhance workforce skills.



Source: Virginia Works [Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement] Economic Information & Analytics Division, October 2024

The 2022 Census of Agriculture uses a mandatory 24-page census questionnaire to collect information, that results in thousands of data series. Although not a new finding, the Commonwealth's agriculture sector is diversified; statewide - poultry, livestock, and crops have a relatively even share in terms of revenues. There are opportunities to apply Green Skills in each sector.

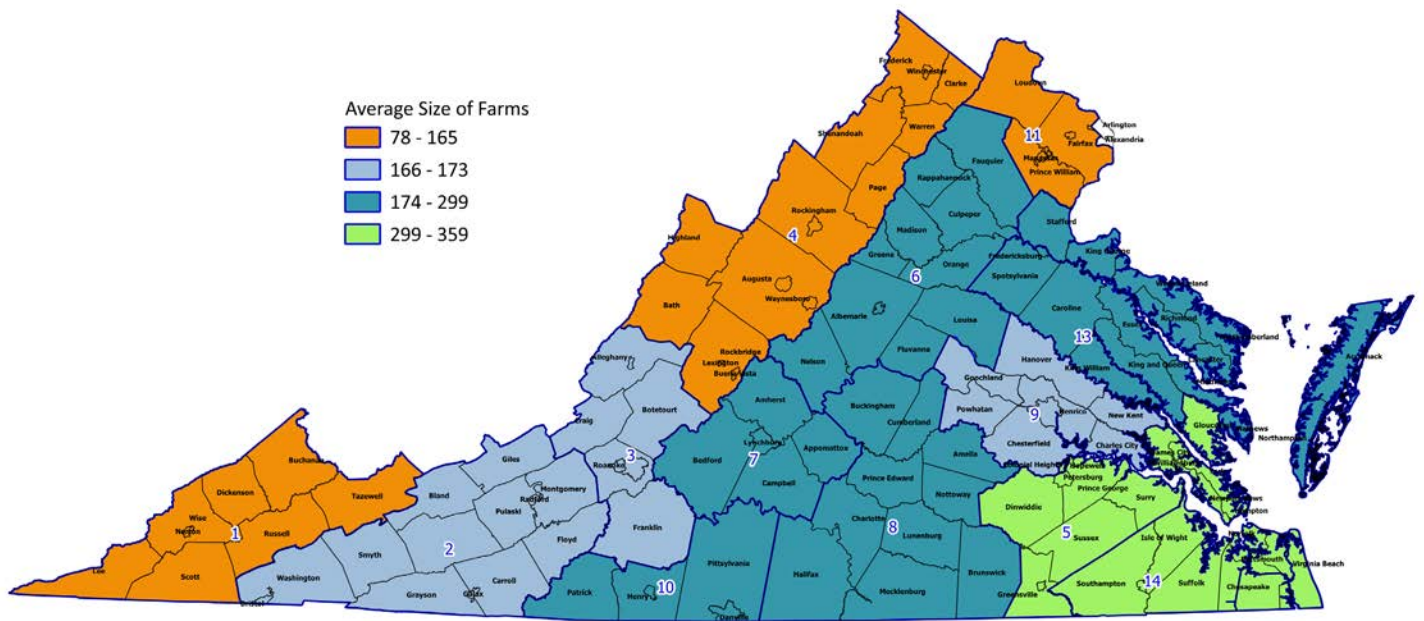
LWDA	Number of Farms	Paid Labor	Unpaid Labor	Ratio	Total Labor	Acreage	Average Acres per Farm
1	3,323	1,412	2,790	1.98	4,202	548,653	165
2	6,272	3,625	5,467	1.51	9,092	1,069,321	170
3	2,020	1,225	1,786	1.46	3,011	334,995	166
4	6,930	6,261	6,139	0.98	12,400	1,051,421	152
5	786	679	572	0.84	1,251	281,872	359
6	5,118	6,126	4,543	0.74	10,669	977,910	191
7	2,555	1,215	2,261	1.86	3,476	449,367	176
8	3,535	2,401	2,695	1.12	5,096	840,719	238
9	1,482	1,481	1,211	0.82	2,692	248,438	168
10	1,763	1,263	1,529	1.21	2,792	359,945	204
11	1,725	1,502	1,689	1.12	3,191	134,137	78
12	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA
13	2,181	3,614	1,835	0.51	5,449	613,739	281
14	1,302	2,324	894	0.38	3,218	399,167	307
Total	38,992	33,128	33,411		66,539	7,309,684	187

Virginia has both small and large farms, and 95 percent of all farms in the Commonwealth have some form of family ownership. This is not the best indicator of “small farms”.

Total or average acreage also may not be the best indicator of what is viewed as a “small farm”. For example, a family farm may have many, very large fields and the fields are completely farmed by family members. On the other hand, poultry raising may use a small number of acres, but employ many paid workers.

Still, even though farms in the middle ranges are closely clustered, it can be useful to view average farm size in acres:

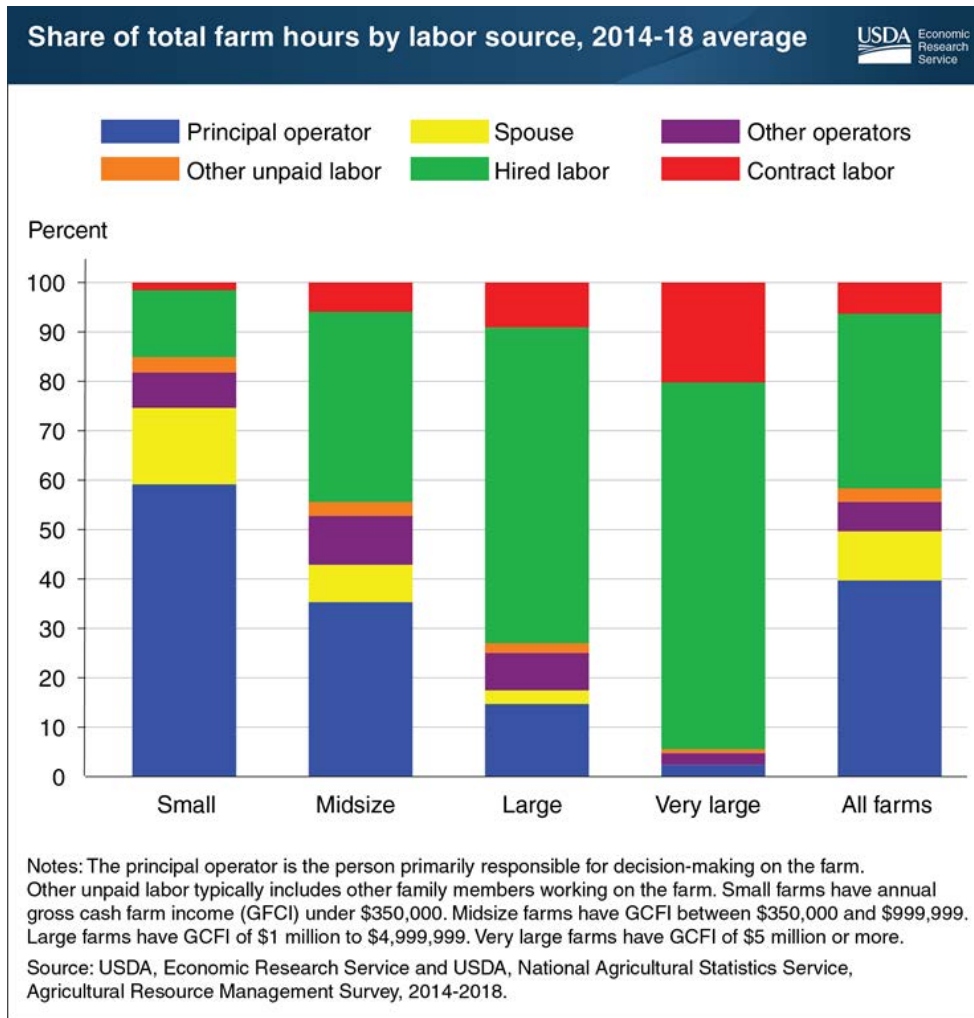
Average Size of Farms by Local Workforce Development Areas



One often-stated goal by agricultural professionals is “To enable farms of all sizes to be profitable and contribute to their local economy, as well as have a positive impact on the environment.”

The agricultural workforce consists of a mixture of two groups of workers: [1] self-employed farm operators and their family members, referred to as “Unpaid Labor” because their remuneration comes out of farm profits rather than a wage; and [2] “Paid Labor” such as hired and contract workers that receive a wage.

A USDA study indicated that small farms averaged nearly 80 percent “Unpaid Labor”, while very large farms were just the opposite – over 90 percent used “Hired Labor” or “Contract Labor”.



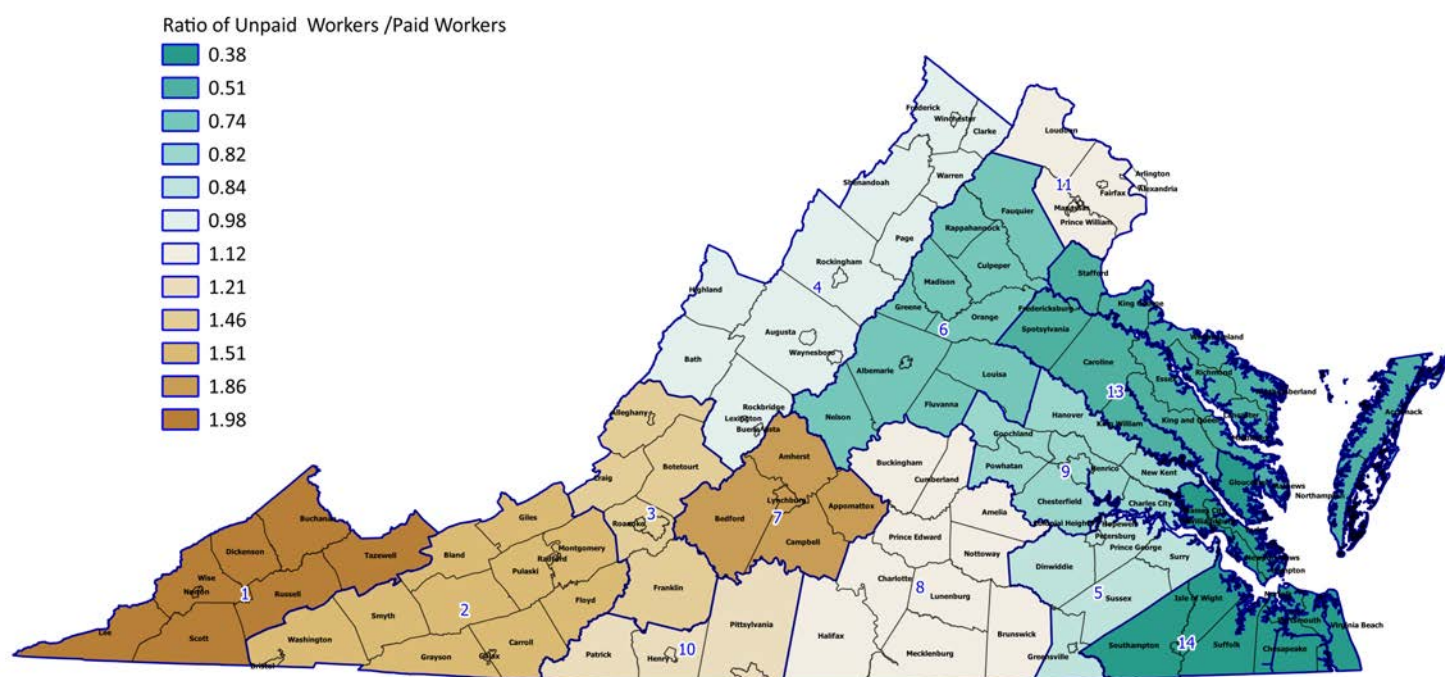
This is a better indicator of what a *small farm* is than the size of a farm in acres.

At the state level in Virginia there are slightly more unpaid workers than hired farm workers [33,411 unpaid vs 33,128 hired workers listed in the 2022 Census of Agriculture]. At the regional level, about half of the LWDAs tend to use more family members than paid workers. On the other hand, roughly half of the LWDAs use more paid workers than unpaid workers.

Geographically, the farms in the southern and western part of Virginia have higher percentage of family labor [unpaid labor] as opposed to farms in the eastern part of the state that use a lower percentage of unpaid labor.

There are many small farms in Virginia, and these along with larger operations, result in a major impact on the state’s economy. However, many small farms may not provide the necessary income to sustain operations. There are farm operators, as well unpaid family members, who often supplement their farm income with non-farm jobs.

There are, of course, many benefits of running a small farm beyond farm income. These include enjoying a better quality of life, keeping a traditional family farm going, helping improve the environment, etc.



Green skills can benefit both small and large farms, but perhaps differently.

Although the term “Green Skills” is more descriptive than “Green Jobs”, the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) did pioneering work two decades ago and developed a two-fold definition of green jobs:

1. Jobs in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources.
2. Jobs in which workers’ duties involve making their establishment’s production processes more environmentally friendly or use fewer natural resources.

The second part of this definition applies perfectly to Green Skills in Agriculture.

The emphasis on improved agricultural practices, and more recently the incorporation of precision agriculture techniques, have increased productivity, while the overall employment trends have shown declines.

As an example, smart planters can disperse seeds, nutrients, and herbicides with an accuracy measured in inches. However, it is crucial that the planter be calibrated often to get optimal results. This is a technical skill that results in more precise dispersions of resources, which is good for both profitability and the environment [and increased wages for the farm technician].

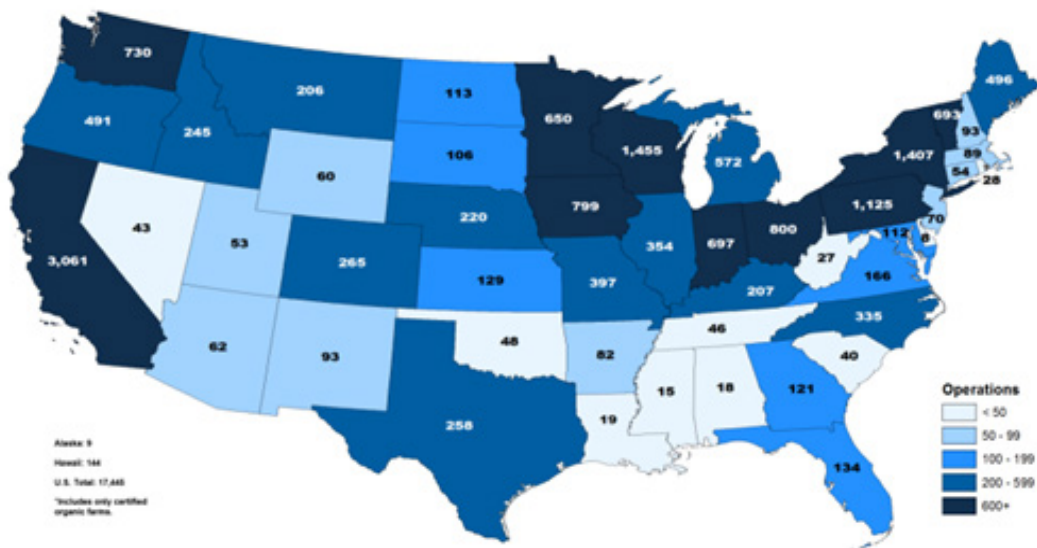
The previous example would apply to farms that find the purchase/lease of a smart planter economically feasible.

There are many lower cost green skills that can have positive environmental impacts, increase productivity, and profitability. For example, rotational grazing for livestock, as well as crop rotation, can be beneficial. These have been widely practiced since the 1930s, but more research over the years have indicated how important biodiversity is, the need for different cover crops, etc. This is a knowledge skill as opposed to an equipment expenditure.

Organic certification can be very beneficial to both the consumer and the environment, and although organic-certified inputs are more expensive, the resulting products command higher prices. Studies have indicated higher profit margins in organic farming.

Organic Farms – States and United States

2021 Organic Survey



Virginia ranks in the middle in the number of organic farms by state. Organic producers are certified by the US Department of Agriculture.

Organic producers use natural processes and materials when developing farming systems – these contribute to soil, crop and livestock nutrition, pest and weed management, and more.

Some organic farming skills can be considered green skills, even if the farm is not certified for organic farming. For example, for organic farms, the PAMS strategy is required which is a strategy for managing pests, weeds, and diseases. [PAMS is an acronym for Prevention, Avoidance, Monitoring, and Suppression]. This can reduce the use of pesticides, etc. and can be cost-effective for the farmer, as well as positive for the environment.

Development of green job skills are crucial. Green job skills can help farms of all sizes, but there are many skills that are not linked to the use of expensive precision agriculture equipment.

Sources:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2022 Census of Agriculture, Organic Farming Requirements, and various other online documents.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], Green Jobs information.

Endnote:

Only the Census of Agriculture captures the full extent of family workers:

FARM LABOR Report the number of paid and unpaid farm or ranch workers who performed agricultural labor on this operation in 2022. Exclude contract labor except where specified (see Item 2). Include family members (paid and unpaid). Include workers such as bookkeepers, office workers, maintenance workers, etc., if their work was primarily associated with agricultural production on this operation. Item 1 - Include any short term or temporary workers who may have worked only a few days. Exclude contract labor. Item 2 - Report the number of migrant workers who worked on the operation for any length of time during 2022. Include both hired and contract labor. The definition of a migrant worker is a farm worker whose employment requires international or domestic travel that prevents the worker from returning to his or her permanent place of residence the same day.



Upcoming News and Events

You are invited to participate in our Super Tuesday In-Person Hiring Event, scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month, from 9am-12pm.

For job seeker registration, simply show up at the office location between 9am-12noon. Arrive early if you are not registered in the VWC system. You are encouraged to register in advance by going to <https://www.vawc.virginia.gov>. See attached flyer for details and list of participating employers!



Hiring Event

PCSI has a mission to create employment opportunities for disabled veterans and other people with disabilities.

Recurring Event Details:

Every Wednesday, 10AM - 1PM

Address:

8400 Radford Ave.
Suite 101
Alexandria, VA 22309

Positions we are hiring for:

Housekeeper I, Housekeeper II, and Floor Technician

[Learn more about event](#)

IN-PERSON SUPER TUESDAY HIRING EVENT

To avoid long waiting lines, please register on our job portal prior to attending this event. Scan QR Code or go to.. www.vawc.virginia.gov

**600 Butler Farm Rd
Hampton VA 23666**

9AM-12PM

Live on-the-spot interviews with top industry-leading employers from the Hampton Roads area, showcasing a wide variety of employment opportunities.

- City of Newport News- HR
- Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)
- Hilton Grand Vacations
- Securitas Security Services
- James City County
- Newport News Behavioral Health
- Peninsula Community Care Center
- AECOM
- City of Hampton
- Didlake, Inc.

VIRGINIA WORKS **VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS** **TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES**

Virginia Works is an Equal Opportunity Employers and Programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Accessibility translation services are available at this event. Servicios de accesibilidad y traducción están disponibles en este evento. VA Relay: 711. This notification is for information purposes only and is not a federally funded activity/event.

IT'S TIME TO GIVE YOUR NURSING CAREER A BOOST!

Elizabeth Crump Hiring Event

Recurring Event Details:

Every Wednesday 11:00 am to 2:30 pm

Address:

3600 Mountain Road
Glen Allen, VA 23060

[Learn more about event](#)

For more Info on Upcoming Job Fairs, visit the Job fair page at

<https://www.vec.virginia.gov/job-fairs>

This monthly newsletter and other LMI publications can be found on the Virginia Works LMI website at: <https://virginiaworks.com/Publications/index>

To receive notice of future issues, please subscribe: www.virginiaworks.gov