

Wisconsin's Forest Products Industry



Forest products in Wisconsin contribute significantly to the state economy, accounting for 11.9% of the manufacturing value of production, as well as 10.8% of jobs and 10.2% of labor income in the manufacturing sector.

There are over 56,000 individuals employed directly in this sector (mostly in paper and wood product manufacturing) and 1,250 establishments. The average labor income is \$81,000 with total income contributing about \$4.5 billion per year to Wisconsin's economy.

When broader economic ripple effects are included, total jobs supported by the forest products industry grow to 124,500 and total annual labor income grows to \$9.2 billion.

Since 2010, the number of employees and total income have decreased by 11% and the number of establishments is down by 17%. More recently, the pandemic has had a significant impact to the industry, leading to substantial changes in both employment and the number of establishments.

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Source: Dahal 2025. Economic Contribution Of The Forest Products Industry TO Wisconsin Economy, 2025 (based on 2023 IMPLAN data)

Photo credits: Wisconsin DNR

Division of Forestry
WI Dept of Natural Resources
2025



“How much does the forest products industry contribute to the state economy?”

Value of production and value-added by industry



Wisconsin’s forest products industries contribute significantly to the economy, 11.9% of the value of production and 9.1% of value-added in the manufacturing sector.

The pulp, paper and products of paper manufacturing industry is a significant contributor both in terms of value of production and value-added.

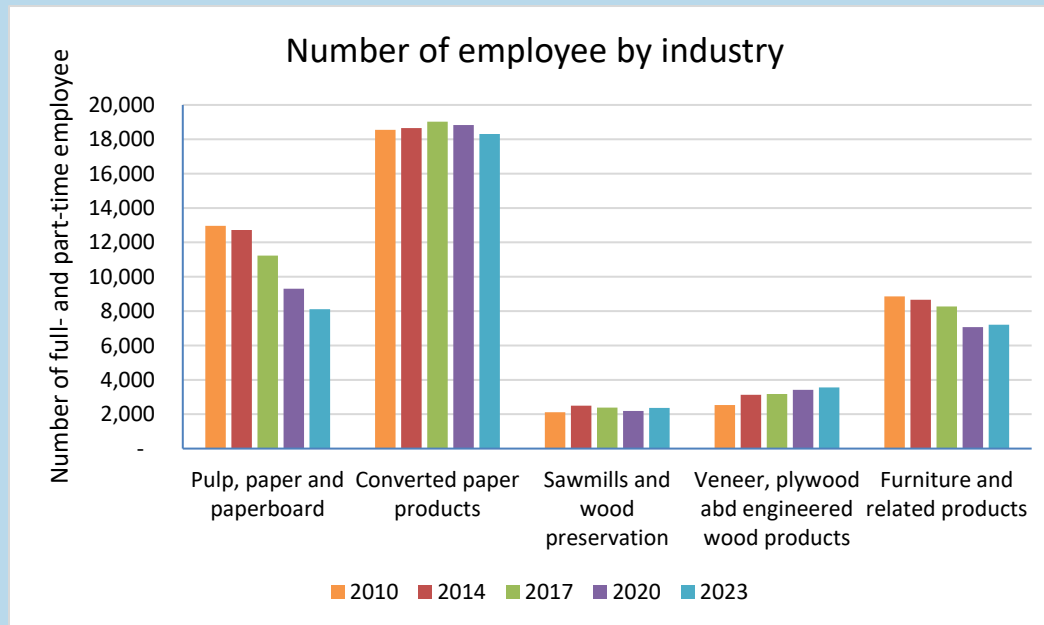
Industry	Total value of Production (\$1,000)	Cost of materials (\$1,000)	Value-added (\$1,000)
Pulp, paper and paperboard	7,217,011	4,958,176	2,258,835
Converted paper products	11,450,326	7,923,401	3,526,926
Sawmills and wood preservation	1,218,649	973,600	245,049
Veneer, plywood and engineered wood products	1,720,340	1,272,425	447,915
Other wood products	3,672,333	2,572,056	1,100,277
Furniture and related products	1,439,250	963,510	475,740
Total forest products manufacturing	26,717,909	18,663,168	8,054,741
Total all manufacturing	225,256,282	178,126,255	88,259,584
Percent of total manufacturing	11.86	10.48	9.13

“How many people work for the forest products industry?”

Number of employees by industry

Wisconsin has about 56,000 employees in the forest products industry (including logging and forestry support activities). About half of these jobs are in pulp, paper and products of paper manufacturing sector. Forest products jobs make up about 11% of all manufacturing jobs.

Since 2010, employment in the forest products industry has declined across most sectors, except for sawmills and wood preservations and veneer, plywood and engineered wood products manufacturing sector. The pulp, paper and paperboard sectors lost over 37.4% of employee since 2010, specifically during pandemic. However, after pandemic, several sectors have begun to show a rebound in employee numbers.



Number of employees by forest products industry (2023)

Industry	Number of employees
Converted paper products	18,306
Other wood products	12,670
Pulp, paper and paperboard	8,115
Furniture and related products	7,208
Forestry and logging	3,789
Veneer, plywood and engineered wood products	3,554
Sawmills and wood preservation	2,371
Total	56,013

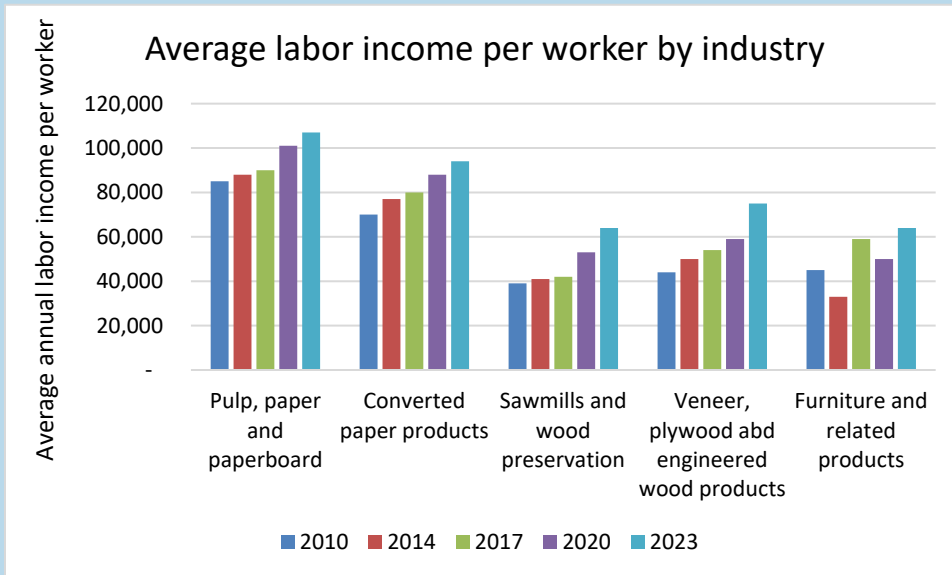
“How much money do employees in the forest products industry make?”

Average annual labor income by industry



The average annual labor income for forest products employees is approximately \$81,000. This is about 6% lower than the average for all manufacturing jobs in Wisconsin (\$87,000) but 22% higher than the average labor income for all industries combined (\$67,000).

Since 2010, average labor income per worker have increased substantially for all forestry sectors.



Average annual wage by forest products industry (2023)

Industry	Average annual wage
Pulp, paper and paperboard	107,000
Converted paper products	94,000
Sawmills and wood preservation	64,000
Veneer, plywood and engineered wood products	75,000
Other wood products	64,000
Furniture and related products	61,000
Forestry and logging	64,000
Forest product industry	81,000

“How many businesses make up the forest products industry?”

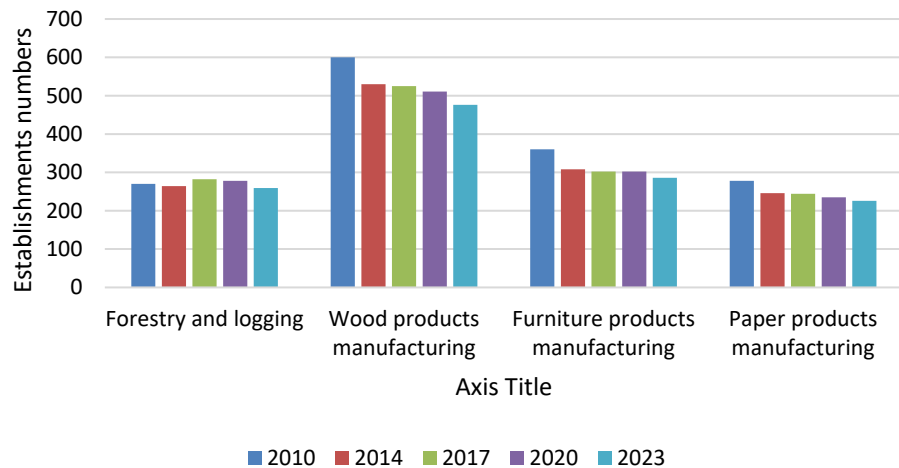
Number of establishments by industry



In 2023, there were about 1,000 active establishments in the forest products manufacturing industry with another 250 in the forestry and logging sectors.

The number of establishments declined by 17% between 2010 and 2023 with the greatest percentage loss occurring in the number of wood product manufacturing establishments, from 600 in 2010 to 476 in 2023, a loss of 20.7%. The number of establishments in forestry and logging decreased by 4.1% and the number of pulp, paper and products of paper manufacturing establishments decreased by 18.7%.

Number of establishments by industry



Number of establishments by forest products industry, 2023

Industry	Establishments numbers
Forestry and logging	259
Wood products manufacturing	476
Furniture products manufacturing	286
Paper products manufacturing	226
Total	1,247

“How much do forest product industry's income contribute to our economy?”

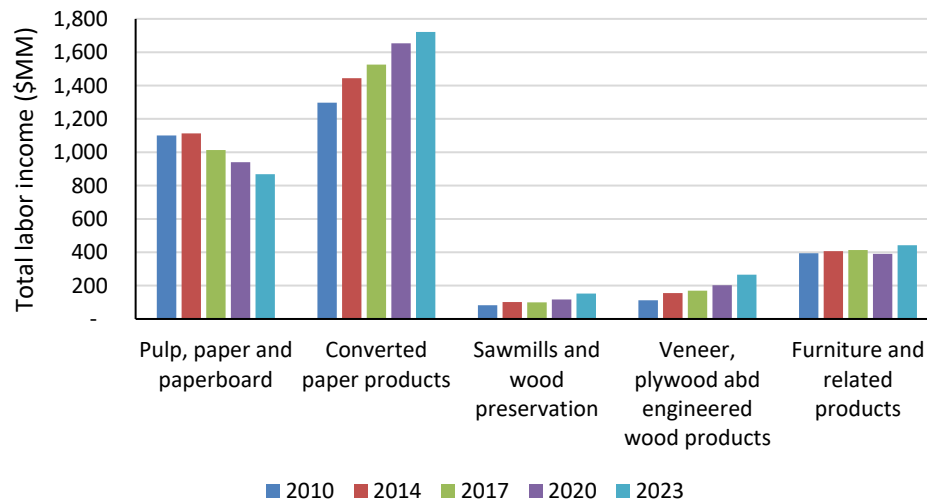
Total labor income by industry

Overall, the forest products industry contributed approximately \$4.5 billion in annual labor income to Wisconsin's economy in 2023, with most sectors experiencing positive growth in labor earnings since 2010.

Between 2010 and 2023, total annual labor income in the pulp, paper, and paperboard manufacturing sector declined by 21.1%, while labor income across the broader forest products industry rose by 23.9% over the same period.



Total annual labor income by industry



Total labor income by forest products industry, 2023

Industry	Total labor income (\$MM)
Pulp, paper and paperboard	868
Converted paper products	1,721
Sawmills and wood preservation	153
Veneer, plywood and engineered wood products	266
Other wood products	816
Furniture and related products	442
Forestry and logging	244
Total labor income	4,510