

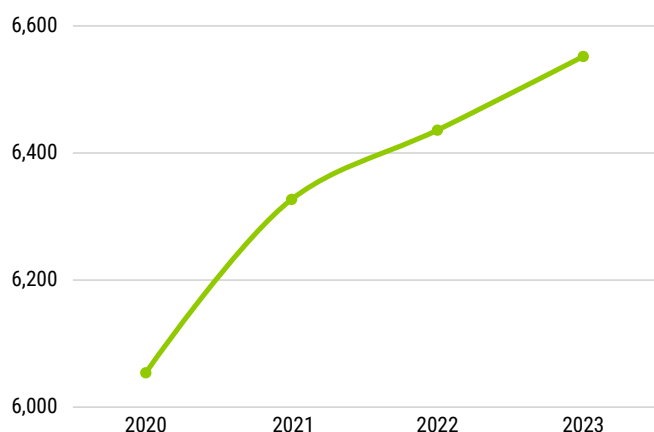
BEAR LAKE COUNTY

Population
6,552

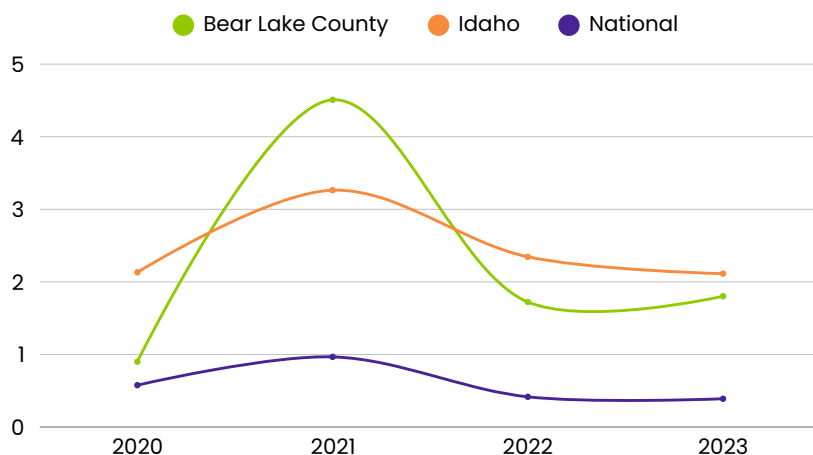


SOURCE: Bear Lake County Sheriff's Office Facebook Page

POPULATION



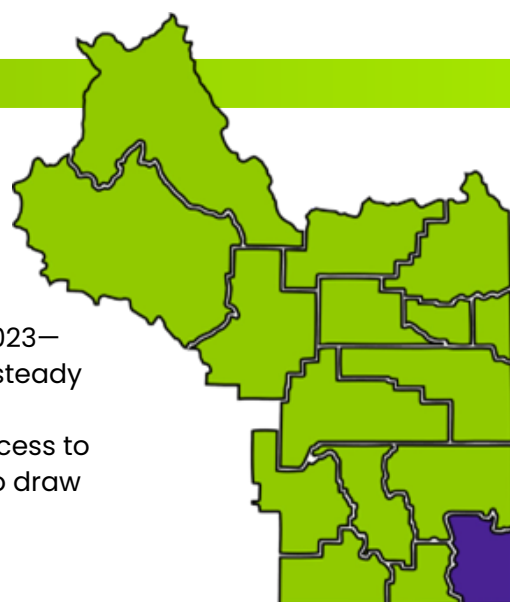
POPULATION PERCENTAGE CHANGE



U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP05?t=Population+Total&g=010XX00US_040XX00US16_050XX00US16007. Accessed on 23 Jun 2025.

BEAR LAKE COUNTY ON THE RISE

Bear Lake County's population has grown from 6,054 in 2020 to 6,552 in 2023—an increase of over 8%, outpacing many rural counties in the region. This steady growth highlights the county's appeal as a destination for those seeking affordable living, outdoor recreation, and a tight-knit community. With access to Bear Lake, scenic byways, and year-round activities, the area continues to draw both new residents and returning families looking to put down roots.

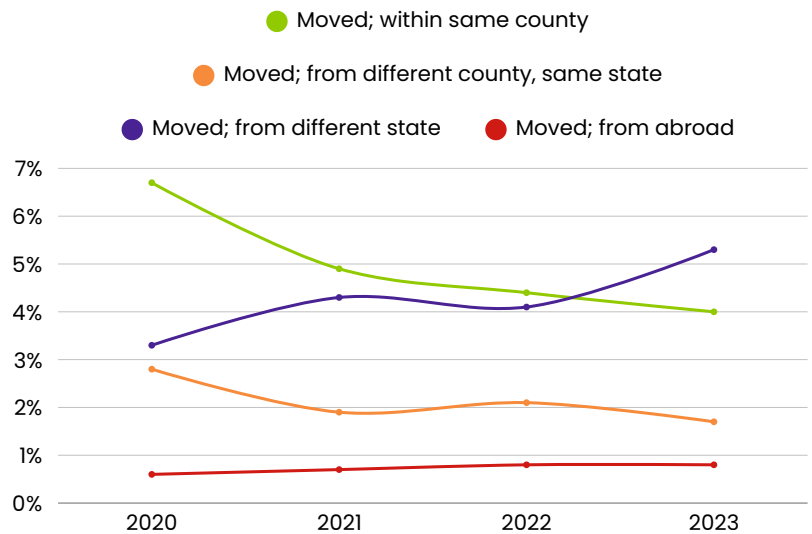


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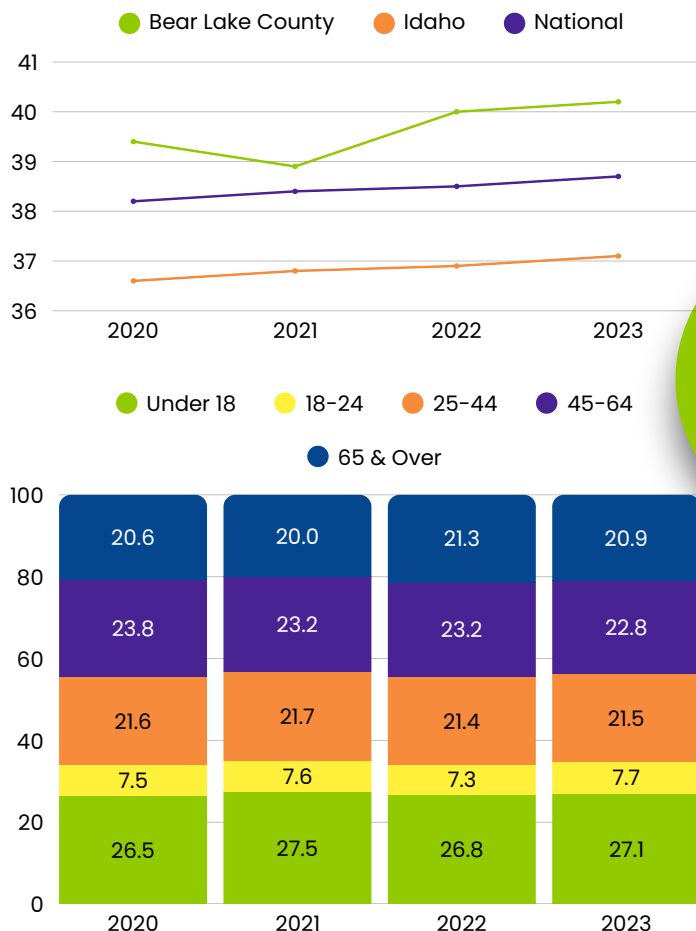
GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY IN BEAR LAKE COUNTY

Bear Lake County continues to see steady in-migration, especially from out of state. In 2023, 5.3% of residents moved in from another state, up from previous years. Meanwhile, local moves within the county declined from 4.9% in 2021 to 4.0% in 2023, suggesting increased residential stability. In-state migration remained steady, and 0.8% of residents moved in from abroad in both 2022 and 2023. Overall, the data reflects a county that is attracting new residents while seeing fewer people relocate within or leave the area.



U.S. Census Bureau. "GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS IN THE UNITED STATES." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0701, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2021.S0701?q=migration&g=050XX00US16007>. Accessed on 23 Jun 2025.

MEDIAN AGE



A COMMUNITY IN BALANCE: YOUTHFUL ENERGY MEETS LASTING STABILITY IN BEAR LAKE COUNTY

Bear Lake County's median age rose from 39.4 in 2020 to 40.2 in 2023, reflecting a gradual aging trend that's consistent with rural communities across Idaho. Still, the county continues to maintain a healthy age balance, with a strong presence of youth and working-age adults. The share of residents under 18 has remained high, growing from 26.5% in 2020 to 27.1% in 2023, suggesting that young families are choosing to settle in the area. The 25-44 age group, representing the core working population, has held steady at around 21.5%, while the 65+ population has remained just over 20%, pointing to the county's appeal for retirees seeking a quieter lifestyle in a scenic, close-knit community. These trends highlight Bear Lake County as a place that offers affordability, outdoor access, and family-friendly living—a rare mix that continues to attract both younger households and long-term residents looking to stay.

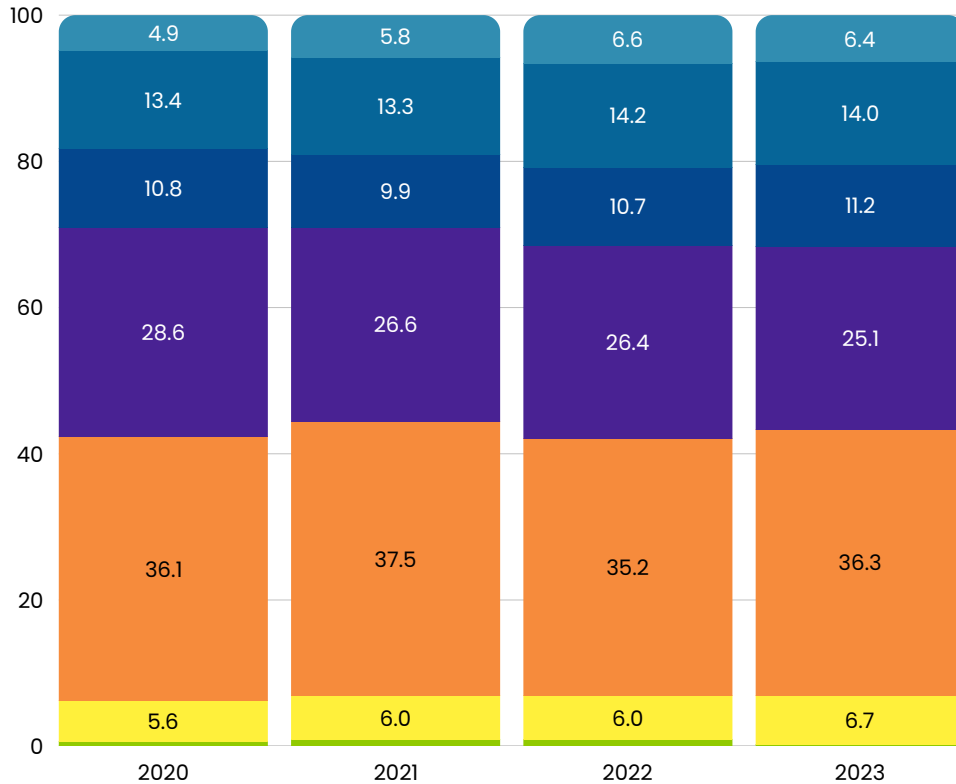
U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Age and Sex." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S0101?q=age&g=050XX00US16007>. Accessed on 23 Jun 2025.

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EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

- Less than 9th grade
- 9th - 12th grade, No diploma
- High school graduate (includes equivalency)
- Some college, No degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree



Between 2020 and 2023, educational attainment among adults 25 and older in Bear Lake County showed modest shifts.

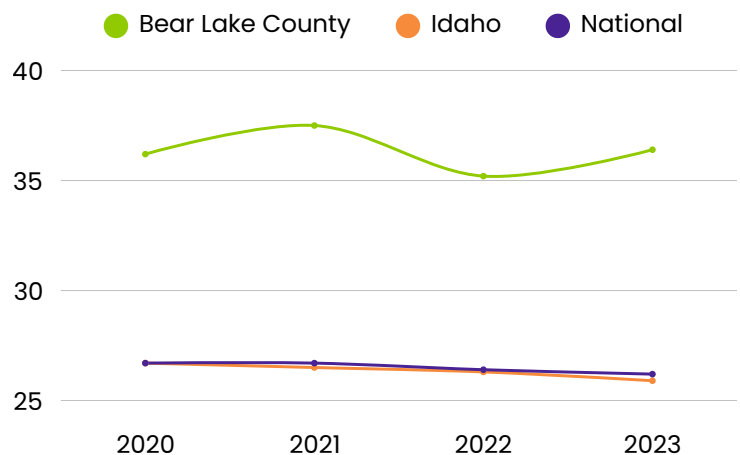
The share of residents without a high school diploma remained low, with those having less than a 9th-grade education falling from 0.6% to 0.3% and those with some high school but no diploma rising slightly from 5.6% to 6.7%. High school graduates comprised the largest share of adults, fluctuating around 35–37% over the period. The proportion of residents with some college but no degree declined from 28.6% to 25.1%, while associate's degree attainment increased modestly from 10.8% to 11.2%. Bachelor's degree holders rose slightly from 13.4% to 14.0%, and graduate or professional degree attainment increased from 4.9% to 6.4%. Overall, Bear Lake County reflects a stable educational profile with high levels of high school completion and gradual growth in higher education attainment.



U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Educational Attainment." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1501, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1501?t=Educational+Attainment&g=050XX00US16007>. Accessed on 24 Jun 2025.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES

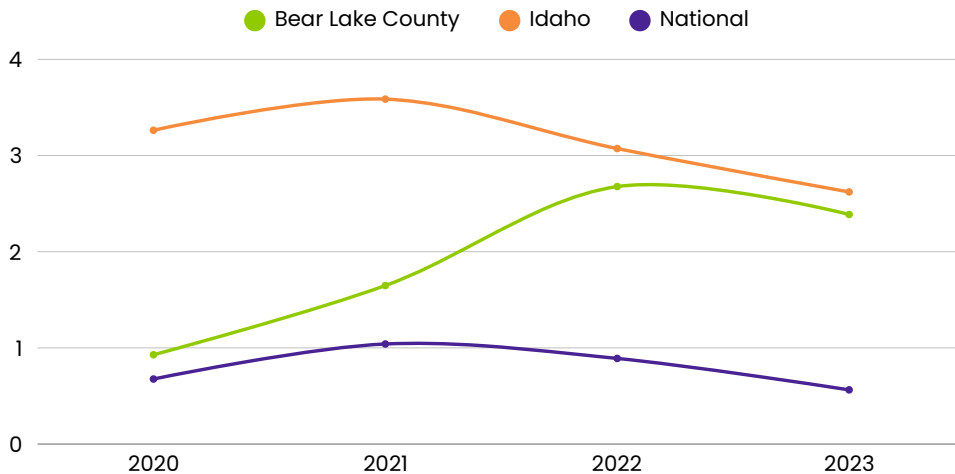
From 2020 to 2023, Bear Lake County's high school graduation rates remained consistently above both state and national averages. In 2020, roughly 36.2% of residents had completed high school, compared with 26.7% in Idaho and the United States. Rates rose to 37.5% in 2021 before declining to 35.2% in 2022 and rising again to 36.4% in 2023, while Idaho and national rates experienced only slight decreases over the same period. Overall, Bear Lake County continues to demonstrate high levels of high school completion relative to broader averages, reflecting a strong foundational educational profile among adults.



U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Educational Attainment." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1501, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1501?t=Educational+Attainment&g=050XX00US16007>. Accessed on 24 Jun 2025.

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JOB GROWTH



Bear Lake County has experienced consistent job growth from 2020 to 2023, with employment gains each year among residents age 16 and older. While growth was modest in 2020 at 0.9%, the county gained momentum with increases of 1.6% in 2021, 2.7% in 2022, and 2.4% in 2023. These rates consistently outpaced national averages and reflect a strong local labor market. Bear Lake's steady employment growth highlights the area's economic stability and its appeal as a place to live and work.

U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Selected Economic Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2023.DP03?t=Employment+and+Labor+Force+Status&g=010XX00US_040XX00US16_050XX00US16007. Accessed on 24 Jun 2025.



KEY EMPLOYERS

Bear Lake County's economy is anchored by a strong mix of public and private employers that provide steady, community-based jobs. The largest employer, Bear Lake Memorial Hospital, supports between 250–499 jobs and plays a vital role in local healthcare and economic stability. Other major public sector employers include the Bear Lake School District and county and city governments, underscoring the importance of public services in the region. On the private side, businesses like Broulim's Foodtown, Resource Management, and longstanding local companies such as Jensen Lumber and Gundersen Hardware provide diverse employment opportunities. This balanced mix of industries—from healthcare and education to retail and natural resource management—reflects a resilient local economy with deep community roots.

Top Employers	Ownership	Employment Range
Bear Lake Memorial Hospital	Local Government	250-499
Bear Lake School District	Local Government	100-249
Bear Lake County	Local Government	50-99
Resource Management	Private	50-99
Broulim's Foodtown	Private	50-99
U.S. Forest Service	Federal Government	15-49
Coopers North Beach	Private	15-49
City of Montpelier	Local Government	15-49
Gundersen Hardware Inc Db Gunderse	Private	15-49
Jensen Lumber Company	Private	15-49

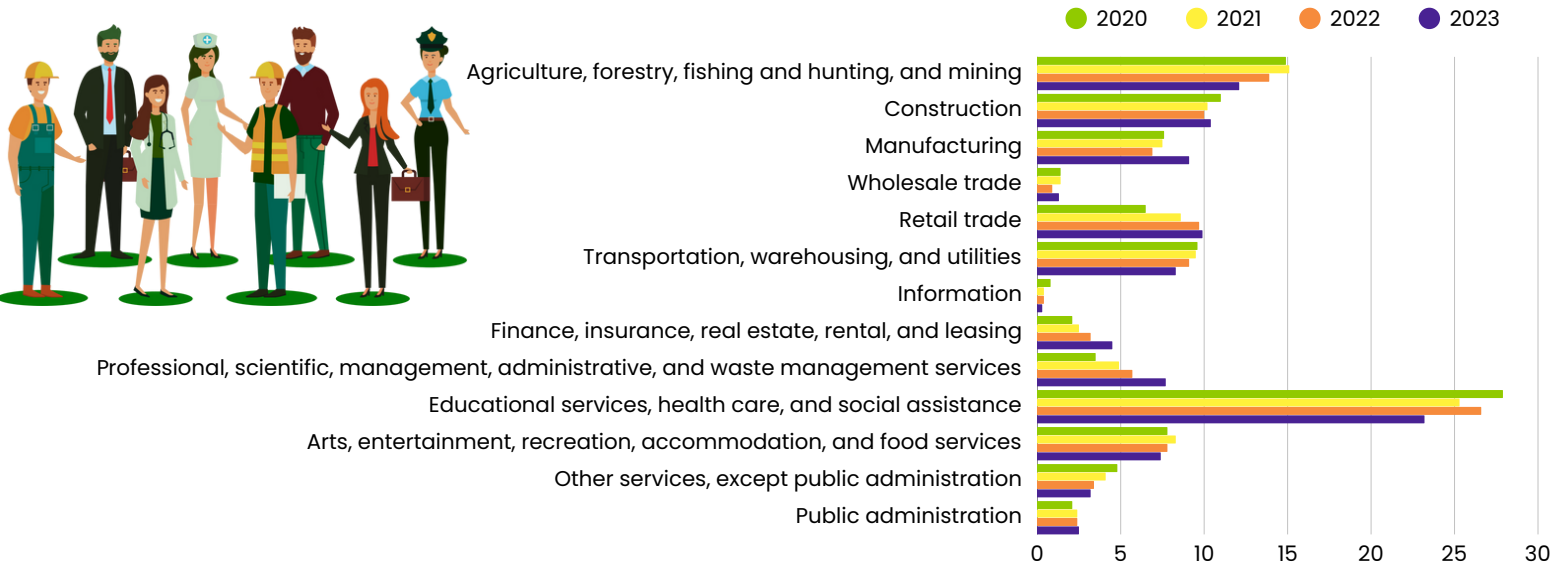
Idaho Department of Labor. Bear Lake County Labor Force and Economic Profile. May 2025, lmi.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/BearLakeProfile.pdf.

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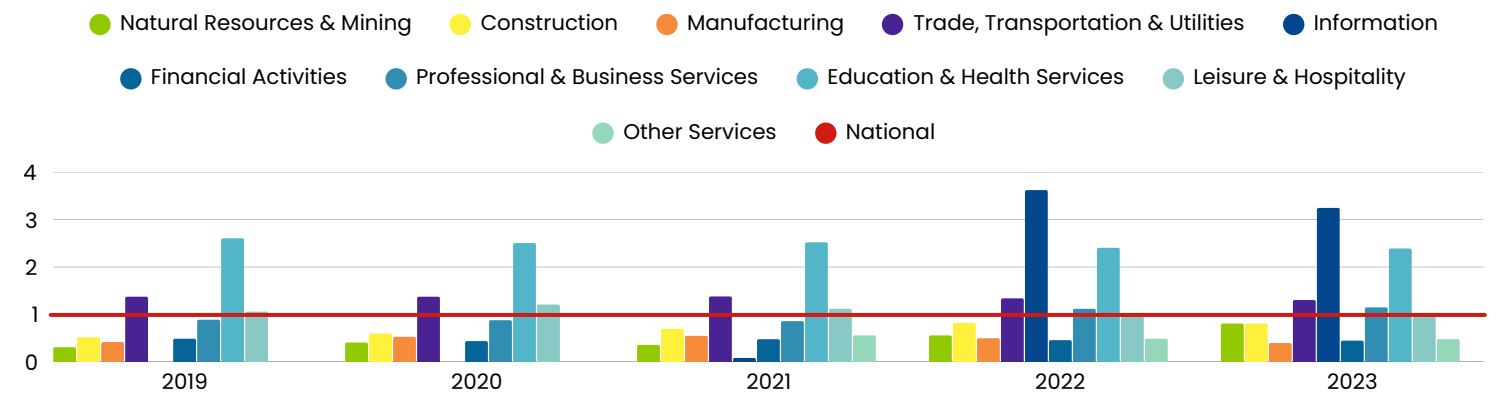
EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

From 2020 to 2023, Education and Health Services remained the largest employment sector in Bear Lake County, though its share declined from 27.9% to 23.2%. Retail Trade grew steadily during this period, rising from 6.5% to 9.9%, while Professional and Administrative Services more than doubled, reaching 7.7% in 2023. Finance and Real Estate also saw notable growth, increasing from 2.1% to 4.5%. Manufacturing rebounded to 9.1% in 2023 after a dip in previous years. Meanwhile, Agriculture and Mining declined from 14.9% to 12.1%, and sectors like Construction, Public Administration, and Transportation/Utilities remained relatively stable. Smaller industries such as Information and Wholesale Trade consistently held less than 2% of total employment. These trends point to a diversifying economy with gradual movement toward services and value-added industries.



U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Selected Economic Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP03?t=Industry&g=050XX00US16007>. Accessed on 24 Jun 2025.

LOCATION QUOTIENT

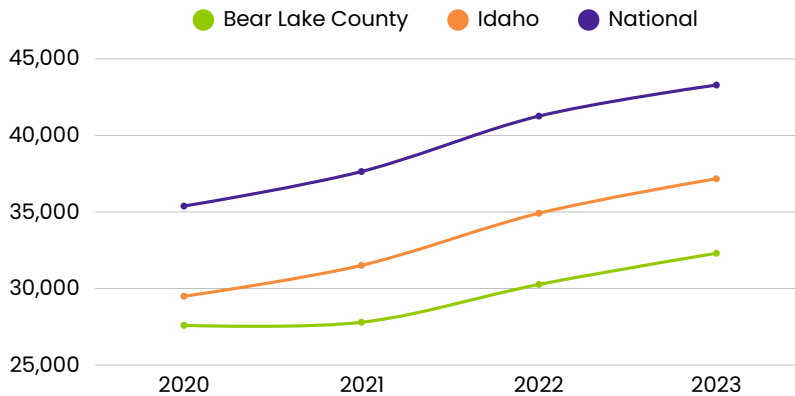


Bureau of Labor Statistics. QCEW Data Files – Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2024, www.bls.gov/cew/downloadable-data-files.htm.

Location quotient measures how concentrated an industry's employment is in a region compared to the national average. In Bear Lake County, the Education and Health Services sector consistently shows strong regional specialization, with location quotients above 2.3 from 2019 to 2023. The Trade, Transportation, and Utilities sector also remains a key part of the local economy, with location quotients ranging from 1.3 to 1.38—indicating a higher-than-average concentration of employment. Notably, the Information sector experienced a sharp increase in 2022 and 2023, reaching location quotients above 3.2, which suggests emerging regional strength. Natural Resources and Mining also grew steadily, from a location quotient of 0.31 in 2019 to 0.81 in 2023, though it still remains below the national average. Other industries, such as Construction and Professional and Business Services, maintain a moderate presence, highlighting Bear Lake County's evolving economic landscape.

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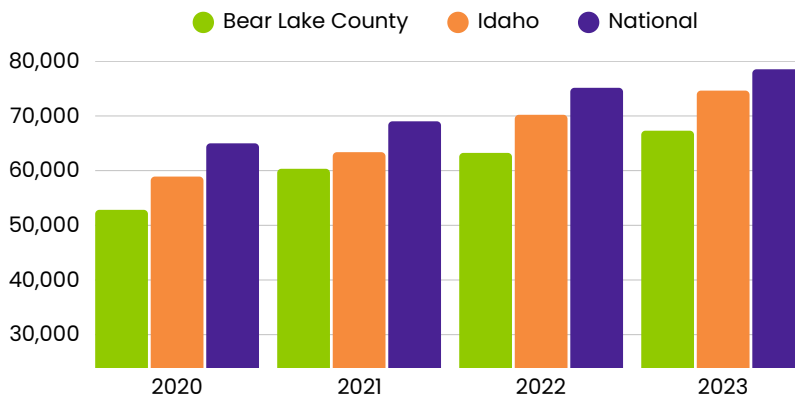
INCOME PER CAPITA



Per capita income in Bear Lake County has shown steady improvement in recent years. In 2020, the average income per person was \$27,596 and increased to \$32,301 by 2023—a gain of nearly \$5,000. While still trailing behind the state and national averages, Bear Lake County is making consistent progress. These increases suggest gradual economic strengthening and improving financial conditions for individual residents across the county.

U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Selected Economic Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP03?t=Industry&g=050XX00US16007>. Accessed on 25 Jun 2025.

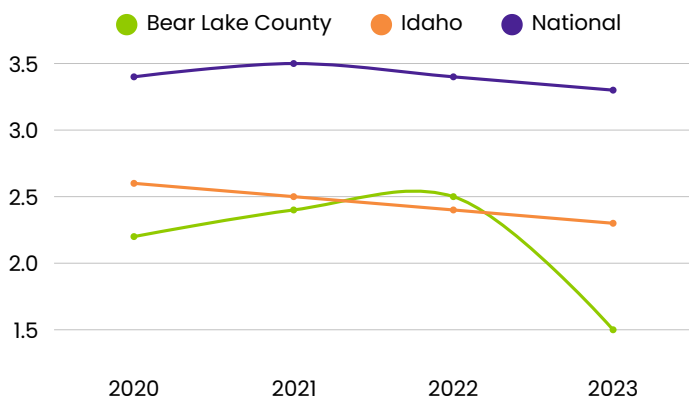
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Bear Lake County has seen steady growth in median household income over the past four years. In 2020, the median income was \$52,829 and rose to \$67,304 by 2023—an increase of more than \$14,000. While income levels remain below the Idaho and national averages, the county has experienced consistent year-over-year gains, closing the gap significantly. This upward trend reflects a strengthening local economy and improved economic opportunities for residents.

U.S. Census Bureau. "SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2020.DP03?t=Industry&g=050XX00US16007>. Accessed on 25 Jun 2025.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



Bear Lake County has maintained consistently low unemployment rates over the past four years, often outperforming both state and national averages. In 2020, the county's unemployment rate was just 2.2% and remained relatively stable through 2022. By 2023, it dropped even further to 1.5%, significantly lower than Idaho's 2.3% and the national rate of 3.3%. These low rates reflect a healthy local labor market and strong employment conditions for Bear Lake County residents.

U.S. Census Bureau. "SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2020.DP03?q=unemployment&g=050XX00US16005>. Accessed on 18 Jun 2025.

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COST OF LIVING

Household Size	Living Wage	Poverty Wage	Minimum Wage
1 Adult	\$21.36	\$7.52	\$7.25
1 Adult 1 Child	\$36.05	\$10.17	\$7.25
1 Adult 2 Child	\$44.59	\$12.81	\$7.25
1 Adult 3 Child	\$56.87	\$15.46	\$7.25
2 Adult (1 Work)	\$30.03	\$10.17	\$7.25
2 Adult (1 Work) 1 Child	\$36.37	\$12.81	\$7.25
2 Adult (1 Work) 2 Child	\$40.68	\$15.46	\$7.25
2 Adult (1 Work) 3 Child	\$46.81	\$18.10	\$7.25
2 Adult	\$15.02	\$5.08	\$7.25
2 Adult 1 Child	\$20.77	\$6.41	\$7.25
2 Adult 2 Child	\$25.26	\$7.73	\$7.25
2 Adult 3 Child	\$30.22	\$9.05	\$7.25

According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, the cost of living in Bear Lake County, Idaho, reflects significant variation based on household size and composition. A single adult must earn \$21.36 per hour to meet basic living expenses—nearly three times the federal minimum wage of \$7.25. For families, the required wage increases substantially: a single adult with one child needs \$36.05/hour, while a two-adult household with three children (one working adult) requires \$46.81/hour. These figures highlight the growing gap between wages and basic living costs, particularly for families with children. Poverty wage thresholds remain far below these levels, underscoring the economic challenges faced by low-income households in the county.

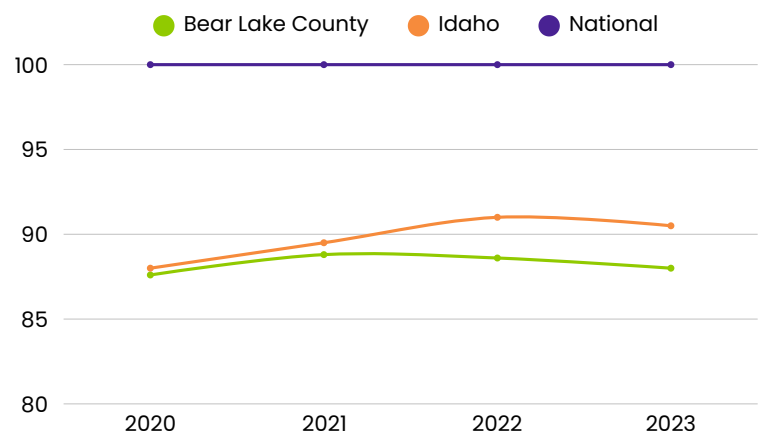
POVERTY

In 2023, approximately 10.2 percent of Bear Lake County residents were included in the population for whom poverty status is determined. This figure is close to state and national averages, reflecting both progress and ongoing challenges in addressing household needs. Continued investment in workforce opportunities, housing, healthcare, and education will be important to strengthen economic stability and improve quality of life for families in the county.

Glasmeier, Amy K. Living Wage Calculator: Bear Lake County, Idaho. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2025, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/16007>. Accessed 9 July 2025.

U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1701?q=poverty&g=050XX00US16007>. Accessed on 16 Sep 2025.

Between 2020 and 2023, Bear Lake County's cost of living index remained relatively stable, ranging from 87.6 in 2020 to 88.0 in 2023. These values reflect a consistent affordability advantage compared to many areas, indicating that residents generally face lower-than-average expenses for housing, goods, and services. The slight increase over the period suggests modest cost growth, but overall, the county continues to offer a manageable cost of living. This stability supports both household sustainability and economic attractiveness for individuals and families considering relocation or long-term residence in the area.

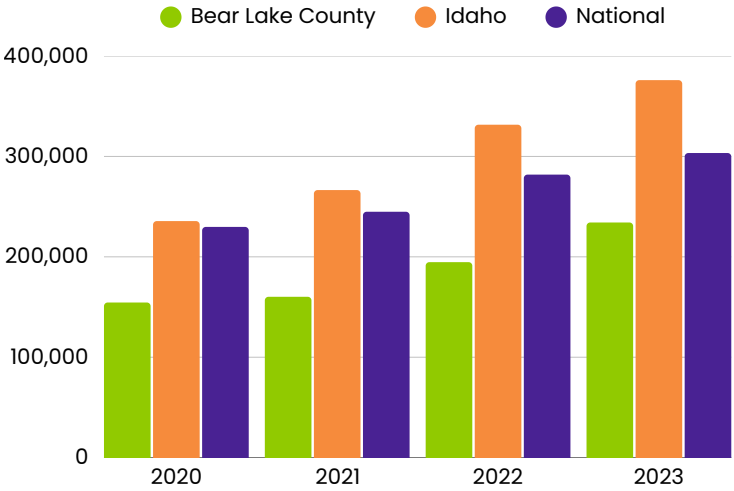


Idaho Department of Labor. Idaho Economic and Labor Market Information: Cost of Living and Regional Economic Data. 2023, <https://lmi.idaho.gov/>. Accessed 10 July 2025.

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MEDIAN HOME VALUE

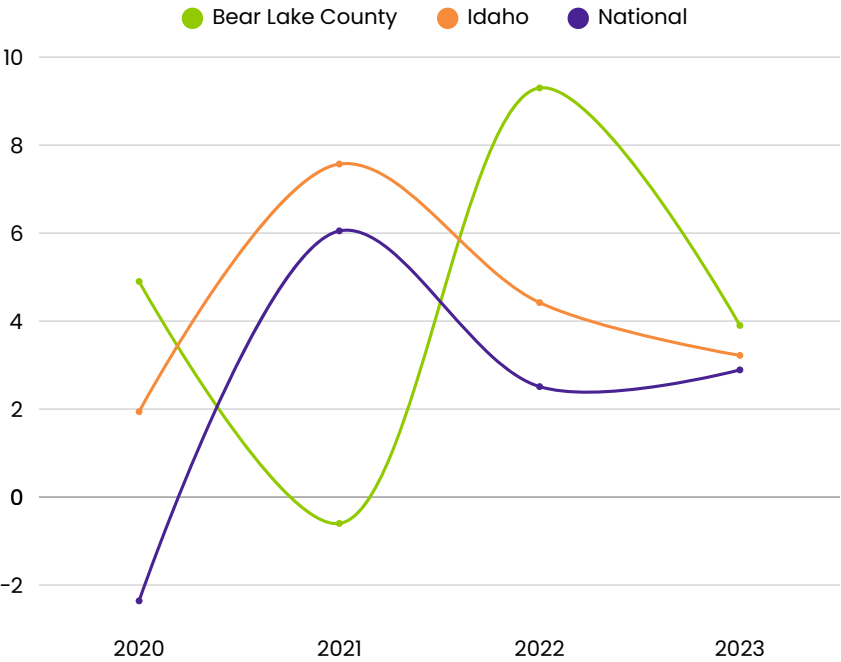


In Bear Lake County, median home values have climbed significantly in recent years, rising from \$154,500 in 2020 to \$234,200 in 2023—a 52% increase over four years. Despite this strong growth, Bear Lake County remains more affordable than both the Idaho state median of \$376,000 and the national median of \$303,400 as of 2023. This combination of rising property values and relative affordability makes Bear Lake County an attractive option for buyers looking for long-term growth in a rural setting.

U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Median Value (Dollars)." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25077, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B25077?t=Housing+Value+and+Purchase+Price&g=010XX00US_040XX00US16_050XX00US16005,16007. Accessed on 3 Jul 2025.



Bear Lake County's GDP growth has fluctuated in recent years, reflecting local economic conditions and sector-level shifts. In 2020, the county saw a 4.9% increase in GDP, showing early signs of resilience despite broader uncertainty. This momentum slowed in 2021, with a slight decline of -0.6%, signaling possible disruptions or adjustments in key industries. Growth rebounded in 2022 with a strong 9.3% increase—marking the county's highest gain in recent years—and continued with steady growth of 3.9% in 2023. These year-to-year changes highlight the variable nature of Bear Lake County's economy, with periods of strong expansion followed by modest contraction or stabilization. Overall, the data suggest a community capable of adapting to shifting conditions while maintaining long-term economic momentum.



U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Gross Domestic Product by County and Metropolitan Area, 2023. BEA Regional Facts, December 4 2024, U.S. Department of Commerce, <https://www.bea.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/lagdp1224.pdf>. Accessed July 3 2025.

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