

House Rural Development Council

Georgia Department of Labor

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Rural Georgia and Economic Barriers

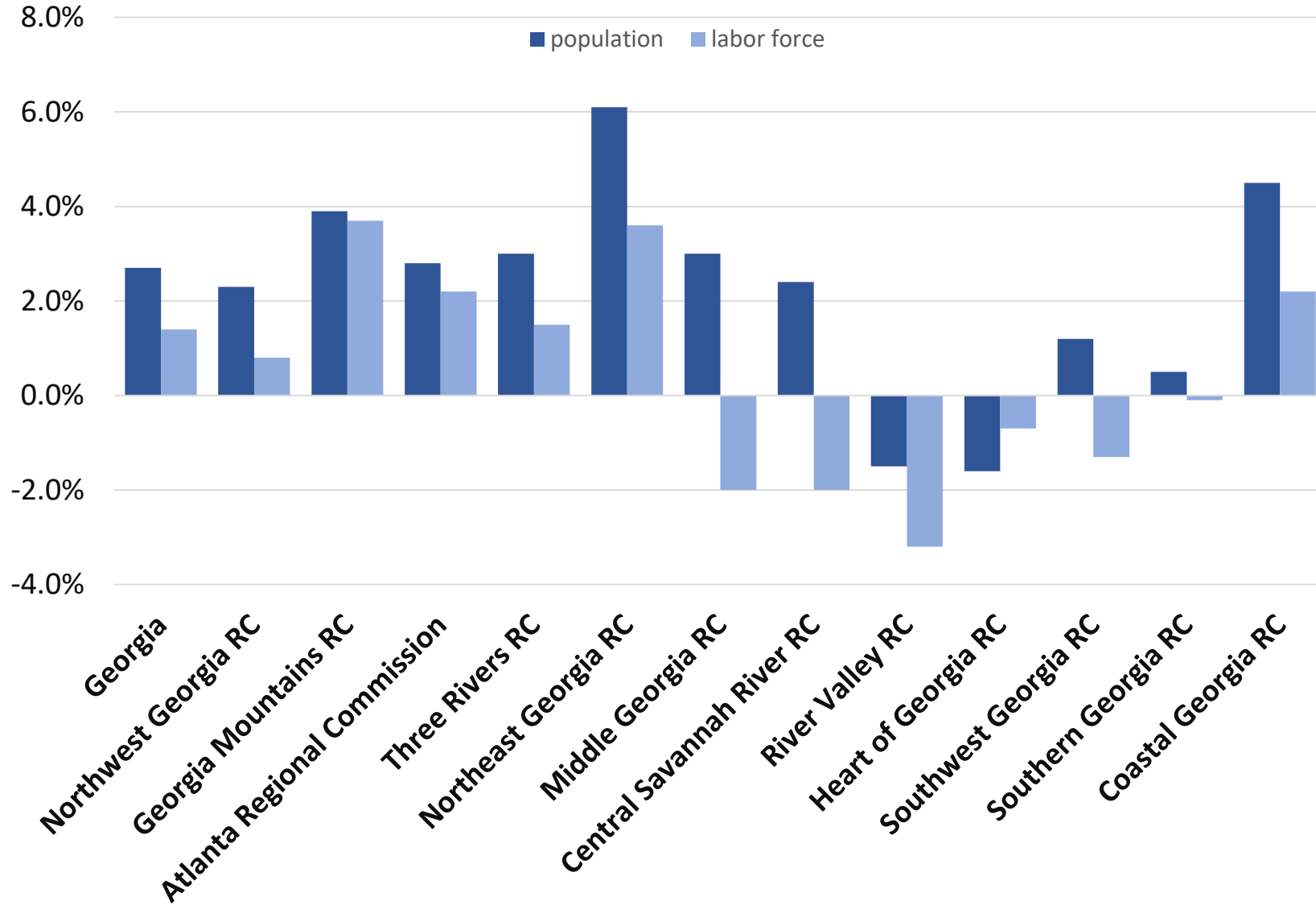
Barriers include a declining workforce, population loss, lack of jobs, lack of trained workforce, uncertainty of health care, lack of access to capital, and rural flight, to name a few.

Rural Georgia – population, labor force, employment

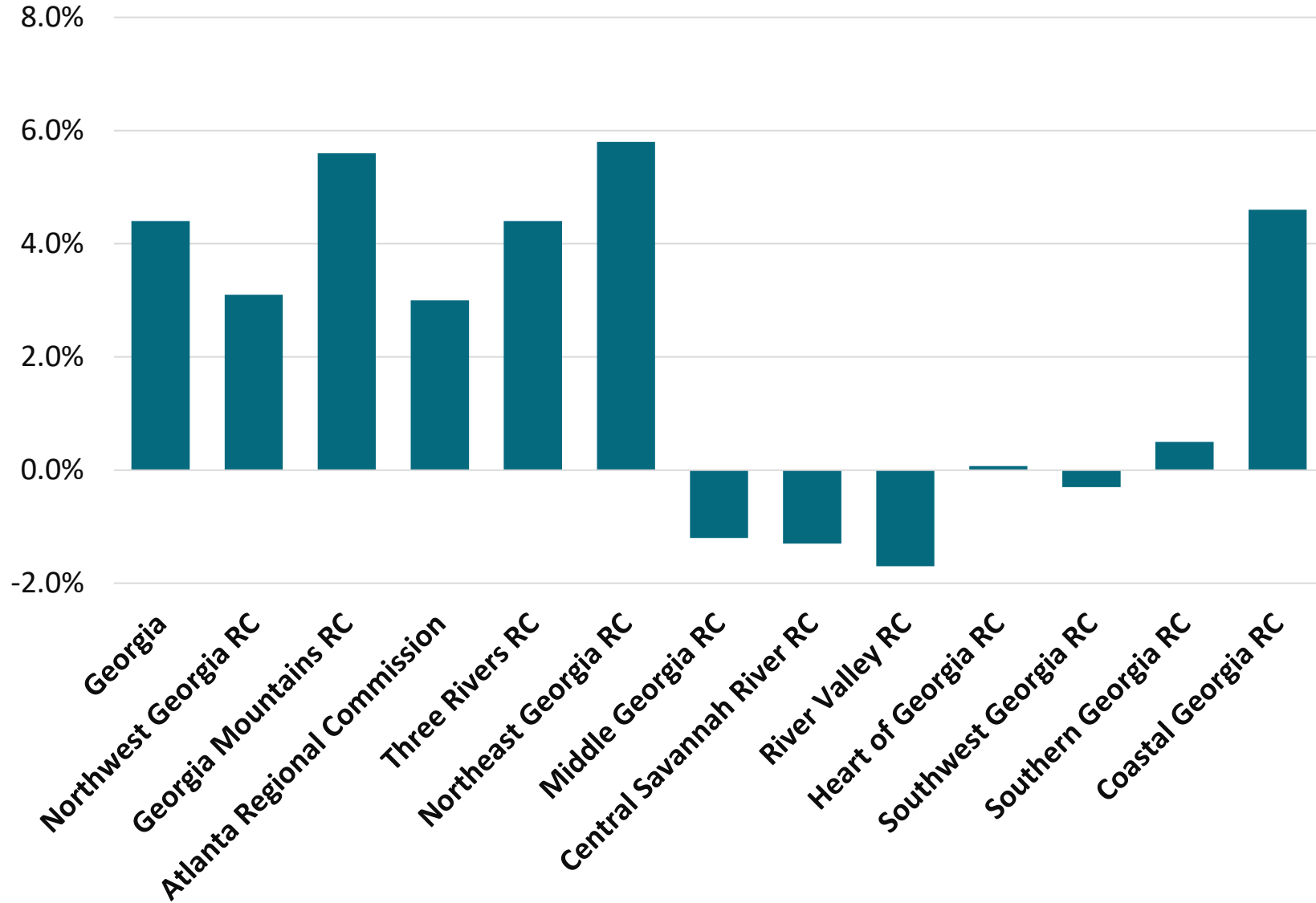
Economic Barriers - high poverty rates, low personal income, low adult literacy rates, low educational attainment

Address Workforce Shortages with a Qualified Workforce – industry growth and potential for growth, education, trade programs, on-the-job training, outreach, career pathway alignment

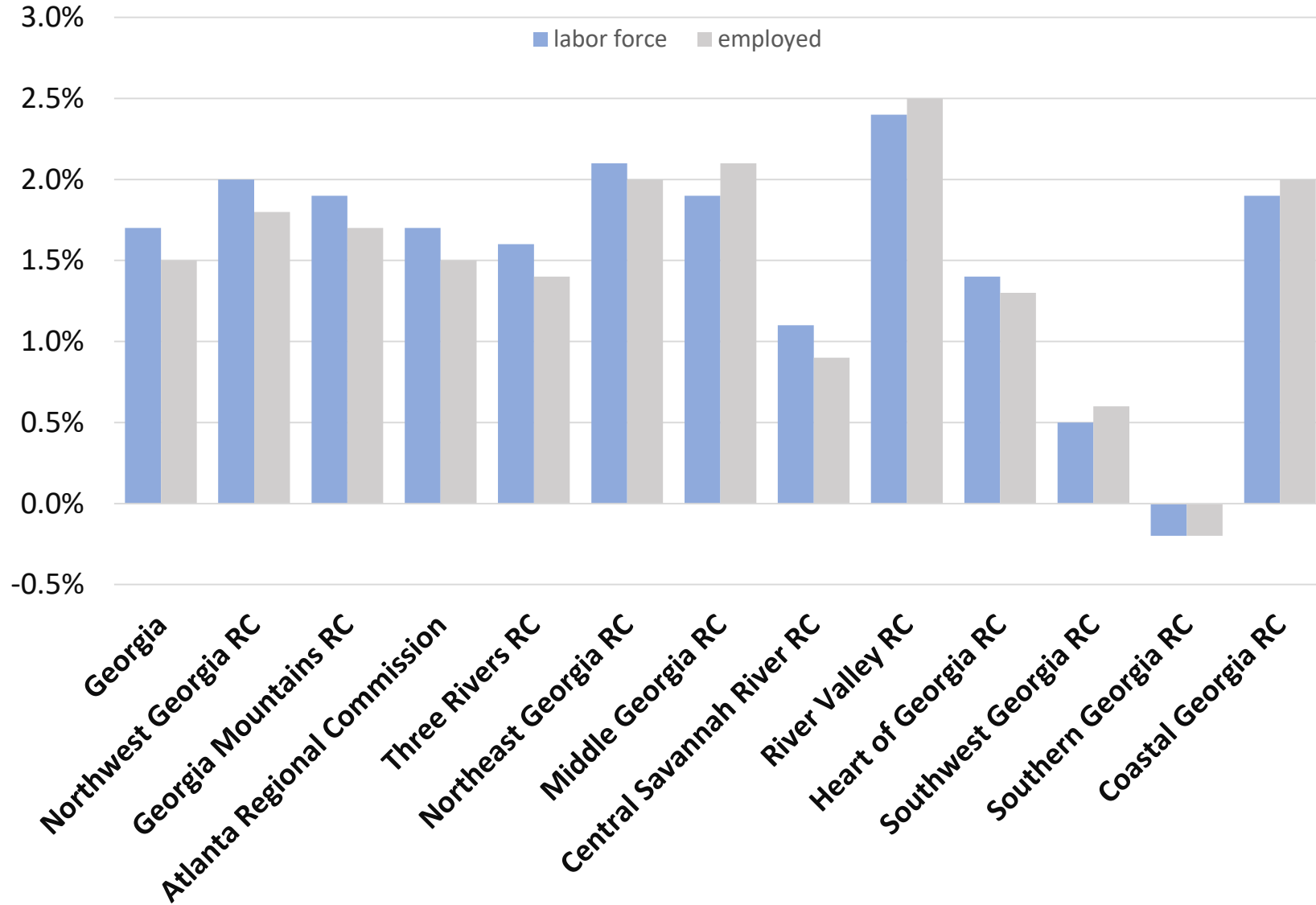
Georgia Regional Commission Areas Population and Labor Force Percent Change 2019-2022



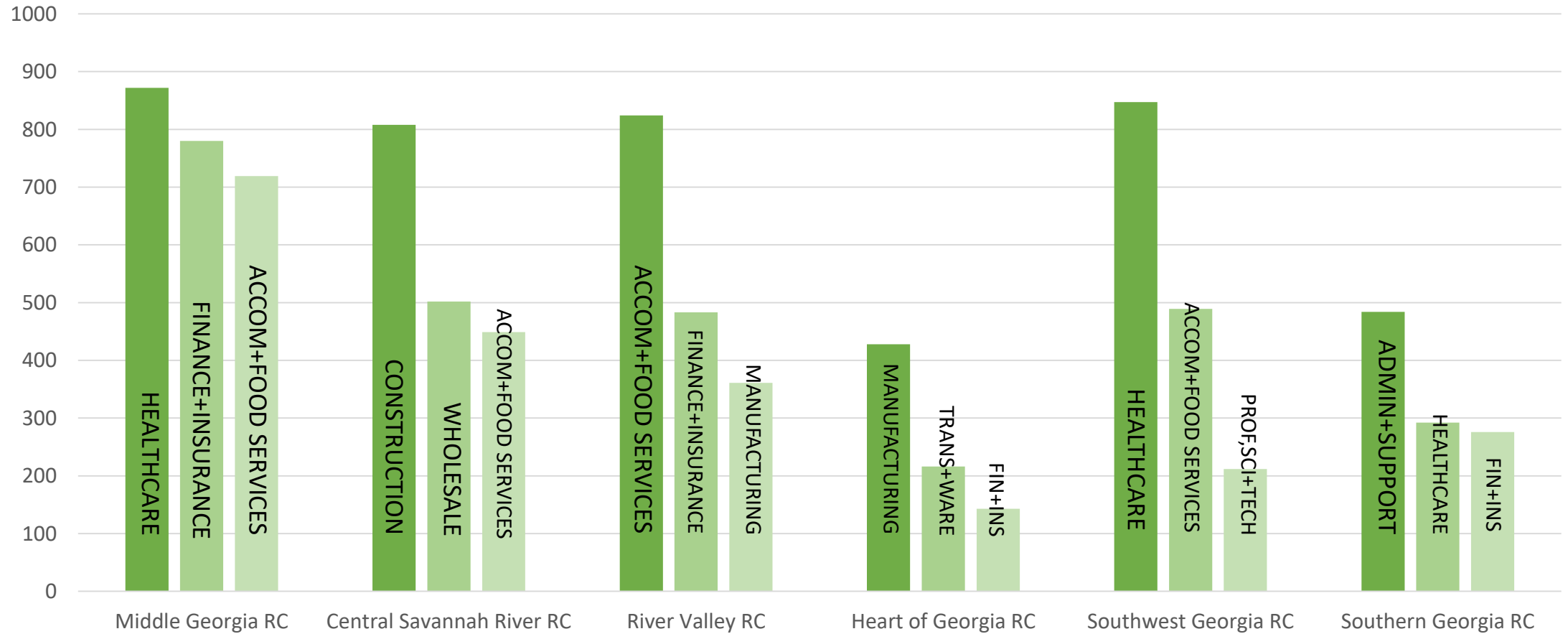
Georgia Regional Commission Areas Average Monthly Employment Percent Change 2019-2022



Georgia Regional Commission Areas Labor Force and Number of Employed Over-the-Year Percent Change July 2022 – July 2023



Middle Georgia, Central Savannah River, River Valley, Heart of Georgia, Southwest Georgia, Southern Georgia
 Average Monthly Employment
 Net Change
 2019-2022



Economic Barriers

Poverty rates and median household income –

- Georgia's poverty rate is 14%.
 - 66 counties are over 20%.
 - 58 of the 66 counties, 88%, are in one of the six regions.
 - 25 counties are over 25%.
 - All 25 counties are in one of the six regions.

- Georgia's median household income is \$62,800.
 - 58 counties are under \$45,000.
 - 51 of the 58 counties, 88%, are in one of the six regions.
 - 23 counties are under \$40,000.
 - All 23 counties are in one of the five regions (Middle GA excluded).

Economic Barriers

Literacy rates and educational attainment –

- Georgia's PIAAC literacy rate is 260, 4th in the south region and 38th nationally.

The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is an international study for measuring, analyzing, and comparing adults' basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and digital problem solving.

- 35 counties are at 240 or below.
 - 33 of the 35 counties, 94%, are in one of the five regions (Middle GA excluded).
- Georgia's data show that all areas of the state trail the Atlanta metro area in post-secondary educational attainment.
 - Of those in the Atlanta metro area labor force between the ages of 18 – 65, 35% have attained a 4-year degree or higher, with Northeast Georgia second at 20%.
 - All other regions of the state have a higher percent with only a high school degree than with post-secondary degrees.

Address Workforce Shortages with a Qualified Workforce

The primary leading sectors in the state in terms of overall employment, regardless of geography, are health care, retail trade, and accommodation and food services, with manufacturing also in the mix in certain areas.

In the Atlanta Regional Commission, this holds true with one exception, robust employment in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector.

Professional, scientific, and technical service jobs include legal, accounting/bookkeeping/tax preparation/payroll, architecture and engineering, specialized design, computer system design, management, scientific, and technical consulting, scientific research and development, and advertising.

Address Workforce Shortages with a Qualified Workforce

As of 2022, Georgia had 48,696 establishments and 321,172 average monthly employment in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector.

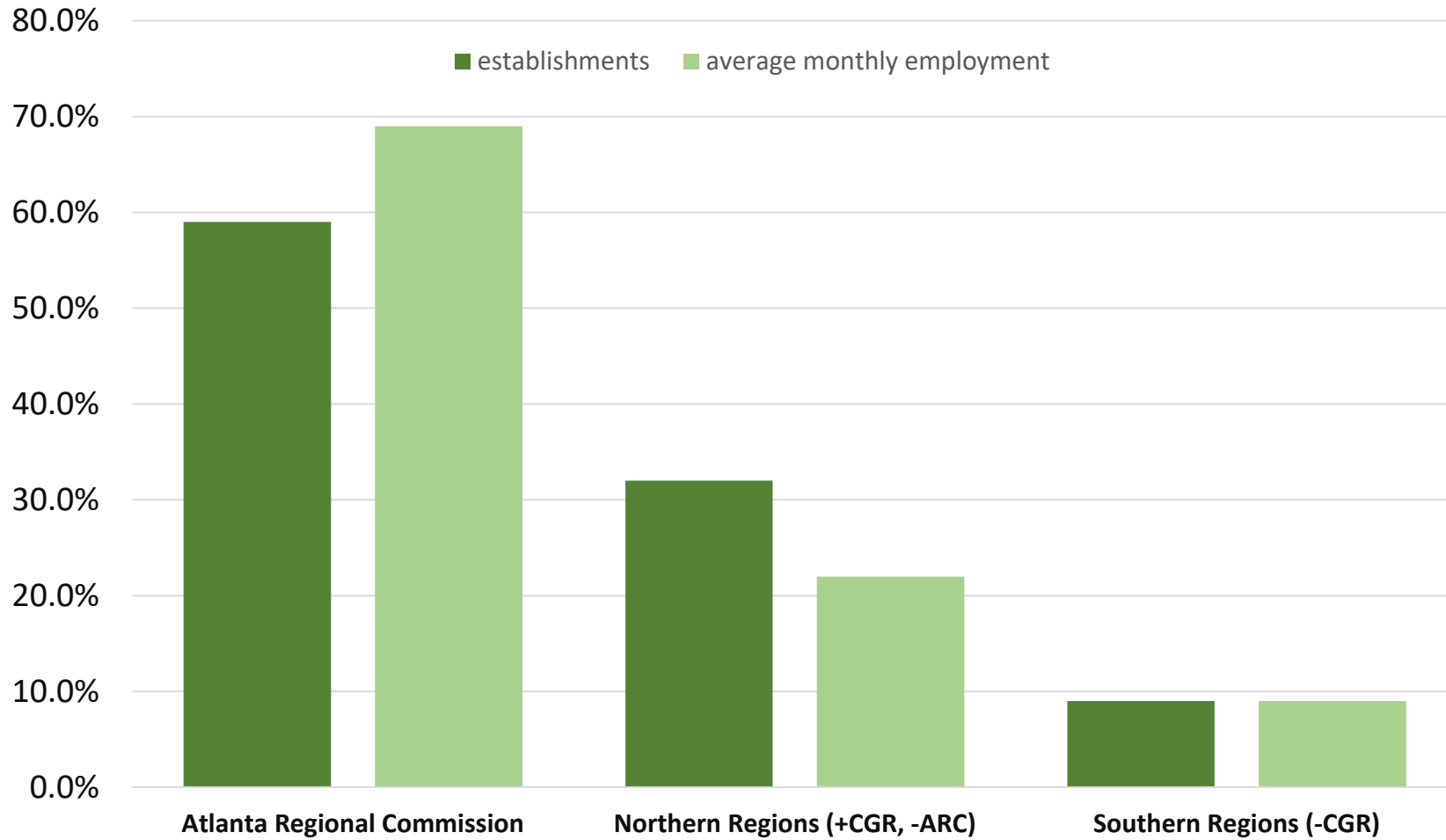
The Atlanta Regional Commission accounted for 59% of establishments and 69% of employment.

Northwest Georgia, Georgia Mountains, Three Rivers, Northeast Georgia, and Coastal Georgia accounted for 32% of establishments and 22% of employment.

Middle Georgia, Central Savannah River, River Valley, Heart of Georgia, Southwest Georgia, and Southern Georgia accounted for 9% of establishments and 9% of employment.

Of these six regions, from 2019 – 2022, only Southwest Georgia had a positive growth rate (5%) in professional, scientific, and technical services.

Georgia Regional Commission Areas Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services Percent of State Total 2022



Address Workforce Shortages with a Qualified Workforce

Trade Programs and On-the-Job Training

There is a need for occupations that do not require a four-year degree. On-the-Job training from apprenticeships, to short-term, moderate, and long-term on-the-job training programs include such occupations as-

- Apprenticeships – Electricians, Plumbers/Pipefitters/Steamfitters, Carpenters.
- Short-term – Retail Sales/Cashiers, Laborers & Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Heavy/Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers.
- Moderate – Accounting/Bookkeeping/Auditing Clerks, Maintenance & Repair Workers, Welders.
- Long-term – Industrial Machinery Mechanics, HVAC Mechanics and Installers, Claims Adjustors/Examiners/Investigators.

Address Workforce Shortages with a Qualified Workforce

Broadband expansion – In 2018, the state launched the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative (GBDI). The initiative calls for the promotion and deployment of broadband services throughout the state to unserved areas. Continue to expand broadband availability and free public WiFi throughout the state.

Outreach to the younger workforce- Mentor young people in soft skills, life skills, job skills and trade skills.

By 2030, the United States for the first time will have more 65-and-older residents than 18-and-younger, as one-fifth of the total population will have reached the traditional retirement age of 65.

Career Pathway Alignment – Focus on partnerships between education institutions, economic developers, and employers/business community.