

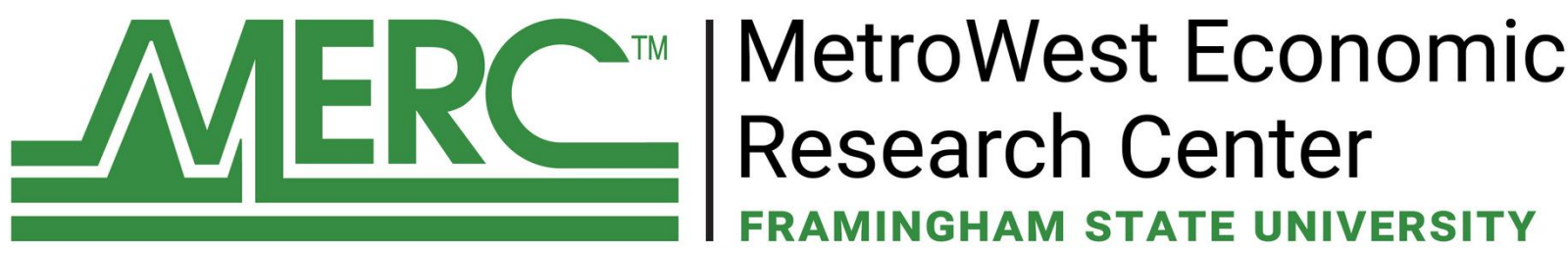
ECONOMIC REVIEW

Post-Pandemic State of Employment: Is Greater Marlborough Back to Work?



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This article examines the most recent employment data for the Greater Marlborough Region (GMR), comprised of Hudson, Marlborough, Northborough, and Westborough. There were nearly 77,500 jobs in GMR in 2024, a figure that captures all jobs held by individuals working within the region, regardless of whether or not they reside there. The average annual wage, calculated by dividing the gross annual payroll by the total annual employment, exceeded \$98,500, reflecting earnings across all occupations and industries. GMR also had more than 4,300 establishments, referring to individual physical locations where businesses operate across the region.

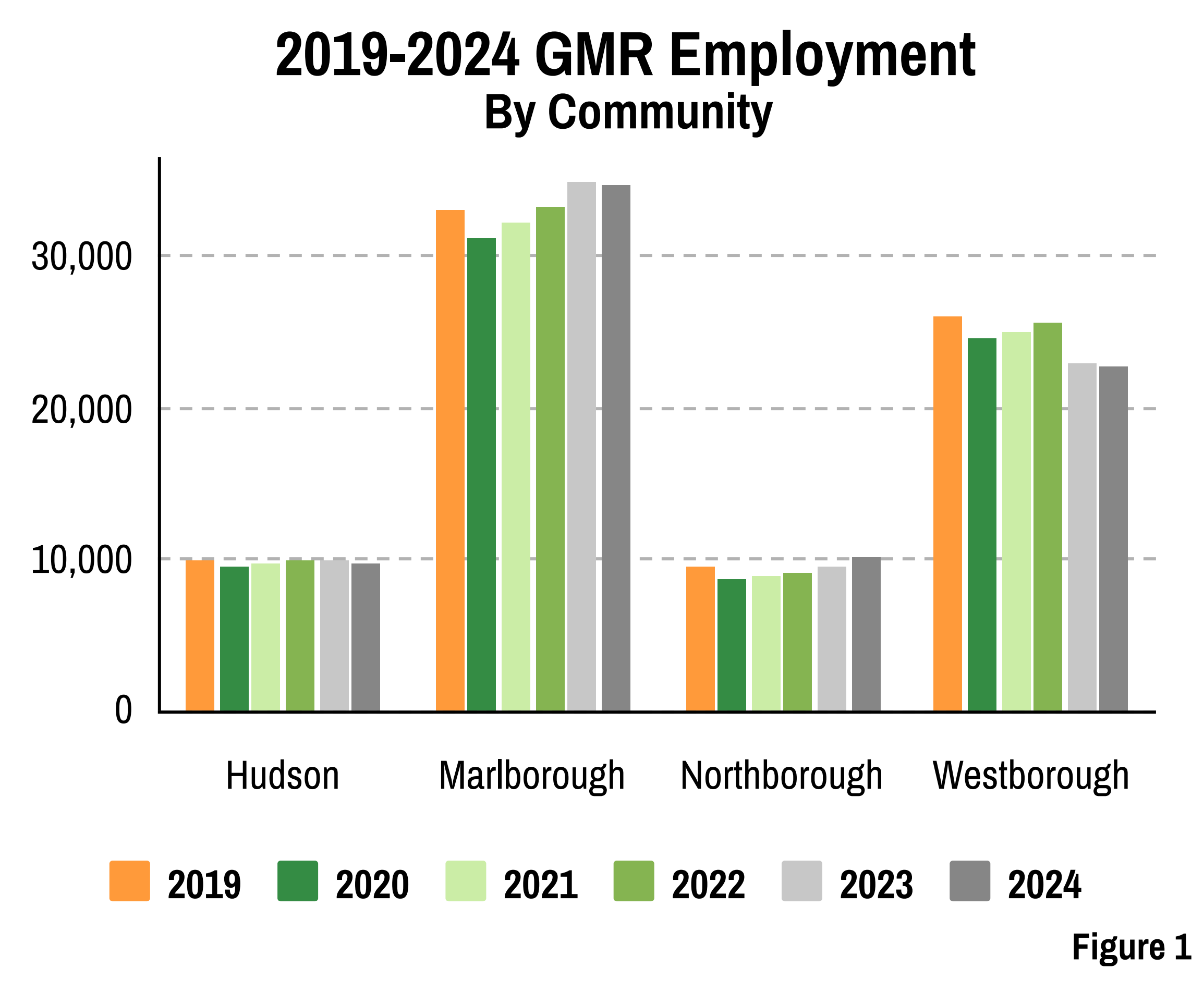


Figure 1

Figure 1 depicts a six-year employment trend across GMR communities from 2019 to 2024. This graph highlights how the four communities navigated COVID-19’s impact on the job market and their respective employment figures through the years. Among the four communities, Marlborough and Northborough were the only ones to fully rebound from the pandemic’s impact.

Marlborough, the region’s employment anchor, saw its job count rise from roughly 33,000 in 2019 to over 34,800 in 2024. Although it experienced slight declines during the pandemic years, it was the first community to recover, reaching nearly 33,300 jobs by 2022.

Since then, Marlborough has shown a modest upward trend, though it lost around 40 jobs between 2023 and 2024.

Jobs in **Northborough** rose at a relatively higher rate compared to other communities in GMR. After a slow recovery that began in 2023, the town’s employment peaked in 2024, surpassing 10,000 jobs for the first time since MERC has tracked this data.

In contrast, **Hudson** has struggled to regain its pre-pandemic employment levels. It had approximately 10,000 jobs in 2019 but since then it has never been able to reach that benchmark. However, from 2021 to 2023 it surpassed 9,800 jobs and came close to 9,900. From 2023 to 2024, Hudson lost approximately 250 jobs.

Meanwhile, **Westborough** experienced a sharp downturn, particularly between 2022 and 2023, when it lost more than 2,800 jobs. This steep decline suggests a contraction in job opportunities and may signal a concerning trend for the town’s economic outlook.



2023-2024 GMR Employment Percentage Change
By Community

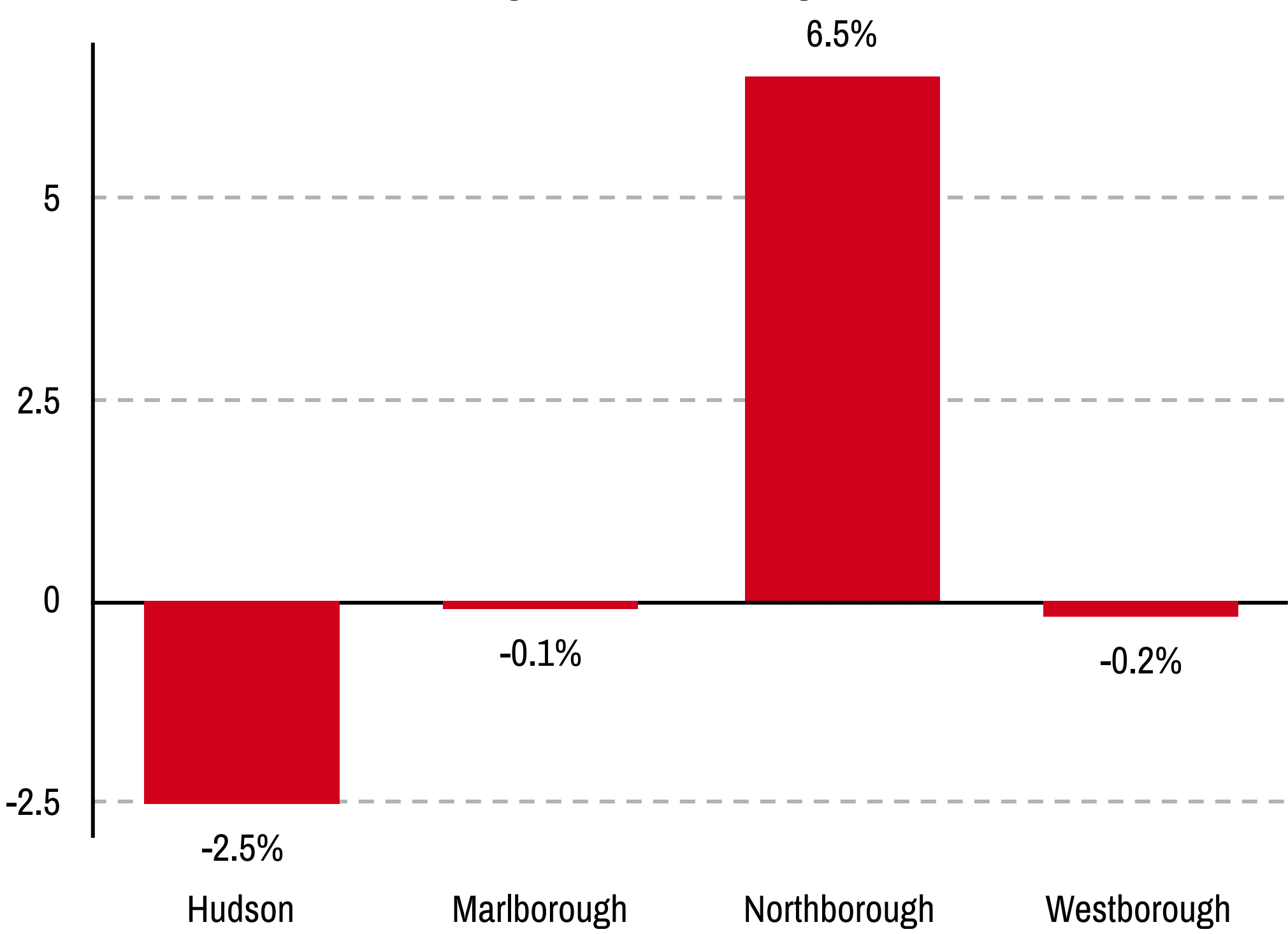


Figure 2

The most recent employment data from 2023 to 2024, as shown in Figure 2, reveals a varied economic performance across communities in GMR. Northborough stands out as the only community with positive employment growth, recording a 6.5% increase. Interestingly, this gain occurred despite a -2.4% decline in the number of establishments (as portrayed by Figure 3), suggesting that existing businesses in Northborough expanded their workforces. Marlborough, by contrast, experienced a slight employment decline of just 0.1% but saw the largest drop in establishments—nearly -4%—which may indicate a wave of business closures or consolidations that have not yet translated into significant job losses.

Hudson faced the most pronounced downturn, with employment falling by 2.5% and establishments shrinking by -1.7%. These figures signal a broader local slowdown, possibly driven by smaller firms closing or downsizing. Westborough saw a modest employment decrease of 0.2%, along with a -1.5% reduction in establishments, indicating a mild contraction in business activity. To summarize, all communities experienced a decline in establishments. This trend suggests a regional contraction in the number of businesses, even as some areas like Northborough manage to grow jobs.

2023-2024 GMR Establishment Percentage Change
By Community

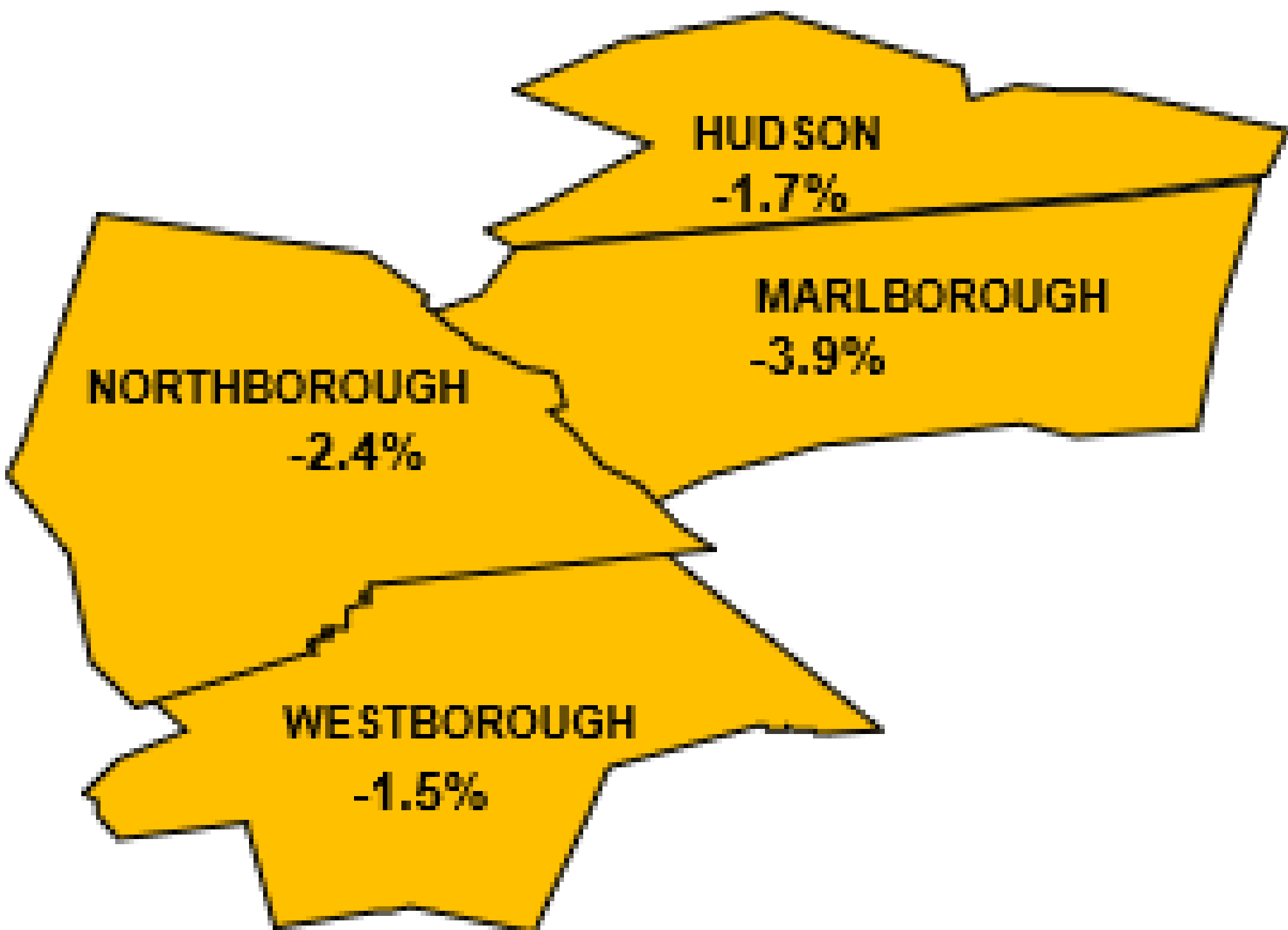


Figure 3

2023-2024 GMR Average Wage Percentage Change
By Selected Supersector

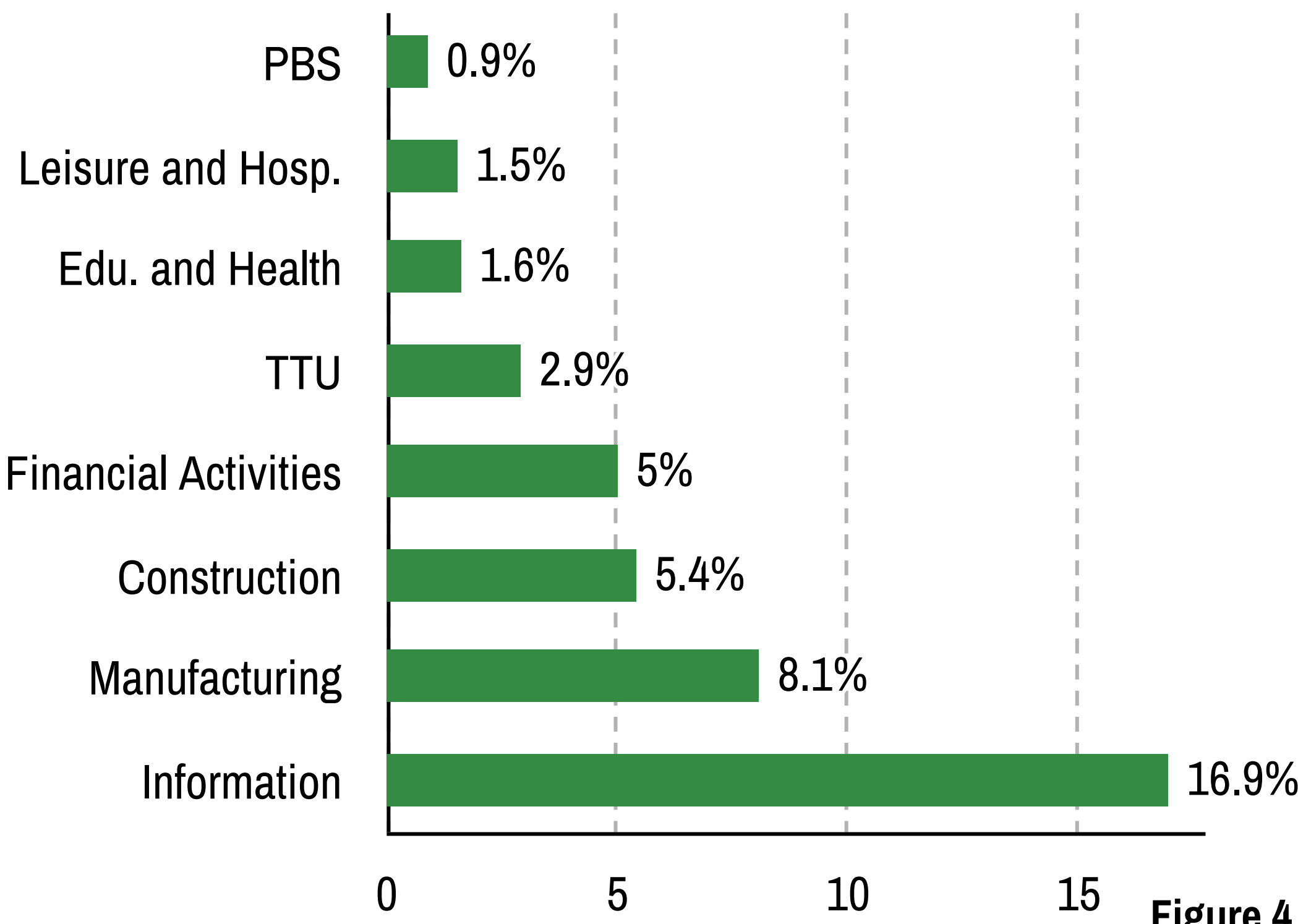


Figure 4

By analyzing the selected eight supersectors, the data in Figure 4 highlights which fields are driving regional wage increases—and which are falling behind. GMR’s average wage has steadily climbed from nearly \$82,000 in 2019 to over \$98,500 in 2024. This 20% increase reflects the region’s overall economic expansion. The **Information** supersector presented the highest average wage increase from 2023 to 2024 by almost 17%, indicating a strong demand for tech-related roles in GMR. **Manufacturing and Construction** also showed notable increases of over 8% and 5%, suggesting wage pressures in skilled trade and production respectively. **Financial Activities** rose by 5%, reflecting solid growth in banking, insurance, and related fields. **Trade, Transportation, & Utilities (TTU)** increased by almost 3%, while **Education & Health Services** and **Leisure & Hospitality** had modest gains of 1.6% and 1.5%, respectively. **Professional & Business Services (PBS)** reported the lowest wage growth between 2023 and 2024, at a 0.9% increase, which may point to wage stagnation in office-based or consulting roles. Overall, this graph shows that wage growth is uneven across sectors, with tech-related roles leading, while service-oriented and professional sectors lag.

In conclusion, the 2024 employment data for the Greater Marlborough Region shows **uneven recovery** across its four communities. Marlborough remains the region’s primary employment driver with over 34,800 positions, while Northborough saw the strongest growth, surpassing 10,000 jobs despite fewer establishments. Hudson continues to decline, recording slightly over 9,600 jobs, while Westborough's job contraction may indicate major industry changes in the town. Region-wide, GMR maintains approximately 77,500 jobs and more than 4,300 establishments. As a whole, the region has recovered from the pandemic; however, recovery timelines vary across communities. Marlborough was the first to return to pre-pandemic employment levels in 2022, followed by Northborough in 2023. Hudson and Westborough remain just below full recovery, indicating continued progress but not yet a complete return to pre-pandemic job levels. Wage growth is led by Tech, Manufacturing, and Construction, with the average annual wage of GMR in 2024 rising to over \$98,500.