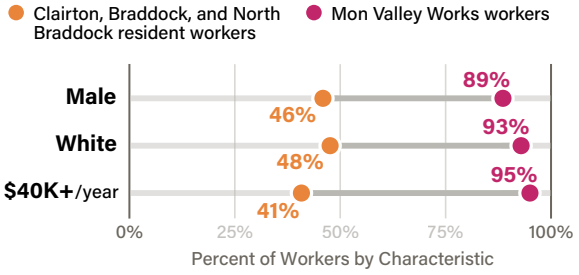
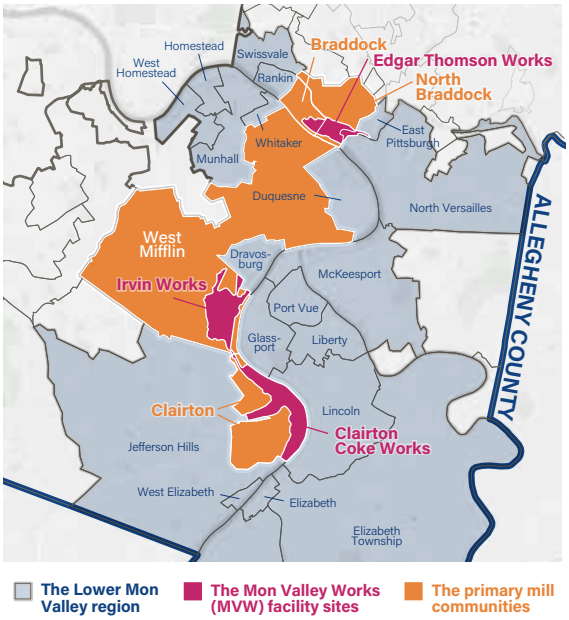
Who works at the Mon Valley Works?

The Mon Valley Works hosts 3,200 high-wage jobs for a primarily white, primarily male workforce.

The Mon Valley Works is made up of three U.S. Steel facilities located along the Monongahela River[1]: a coking plant, a steelmaking plant, and a rolling mill. Together, these were employment sites for 3,212 workers in the most recent year of publicly available data (2023).[2] Historically, mill towns along the Monongahela grew around these facilities and other industrial employment hubs like them. Those communities supplied the facilities with workers, and jobs in the mills provided significant economic benefits through their resident workforce and local supply chains. Today, however, that connection is lacking. The mills employ mostly white, mostly male, and almost exclusively high-income workers, almost none of whom live locally.





1. A fourth facility, the Fairless plant, is a finishing facility in Bucks County in eastern PA; because it is not located in the Mon Valley region it is not included in this analysis.

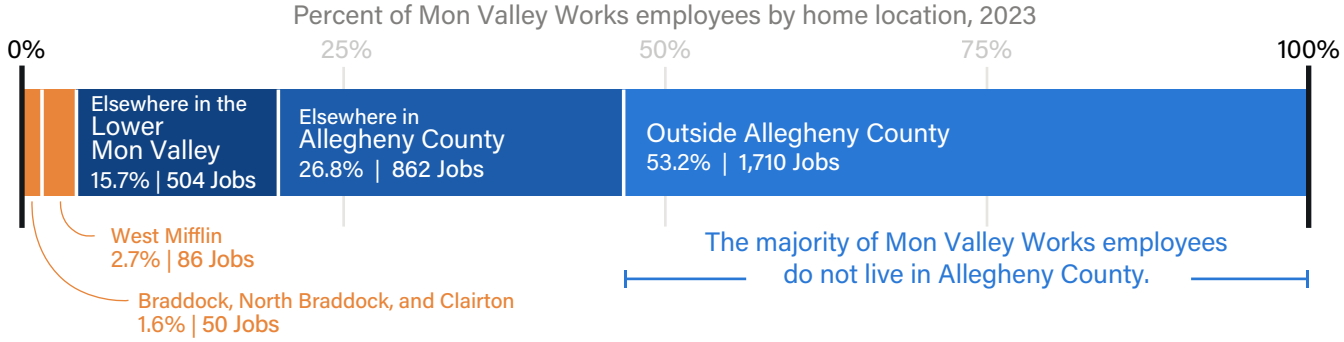
2. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, LEHD LODES8, 2023.

Where do Mon Valley Works employees live?

4.3% local

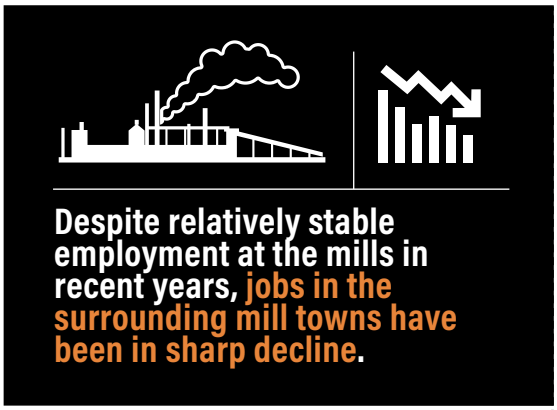
Only 136 of the Mon Valley Works' 3,212 employees live in Braddock, North Braddock, Clairton, or West Mifflin.

According to the most recent data available (2023), just 1.6% of the combined Mon Valley Works workforce — only 50 of 3,212 workers at *any* of the three facilities — lives in Clairton, Braddock, or North Braddock. West Mifflin, where Irvin Works is located, is much larger in population and area, and is home to an additional 86 Mon Valley Works employees, a further 2.7%. These low rates are not explained by a shortage of local workers. These four municipalities combined have 14,579 resident workers. The 20 communities that encompass the remainder of the lower Mon Valley within Allegheny County account for a further 15.7% of Mon Valley Works workers. The remaining four in five workers commute in from outside the area — 26.8% of all workers from the rest of Allegheny County, and an outright majority (53.2%) from other counties, mostly Westmoreland, Fayette, and Washington in PA.



Data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, LEHD LODES8, 2023. Analysis refers to all jobs based on Census Block location. Blocks associated with USS sites based on Allegheny County parcel records, accessed through the Western PA Regional Data Center, July 2026.

Why does it matter?

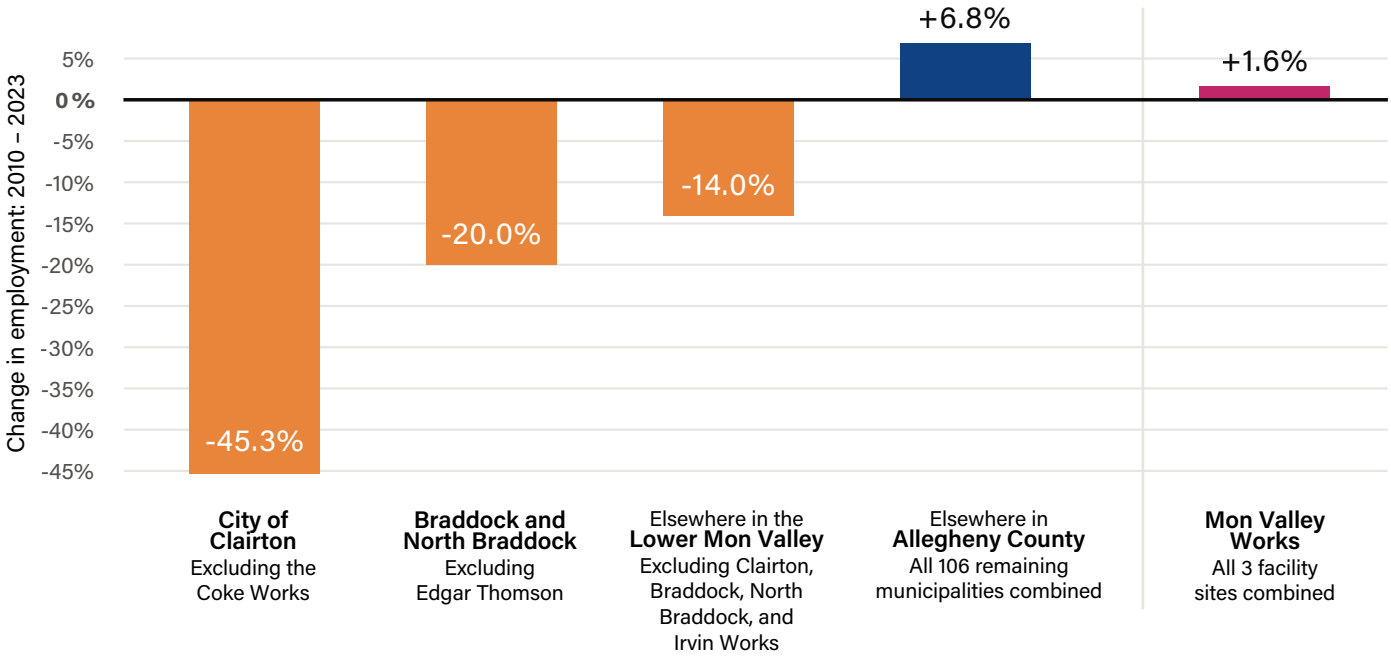


Despite relatively stable employment at the mills in recent years, jobs in the surrounding mill towns have been in sharp decline.

The economic benefits that accrue to large employment centers are not a simple function of how many people work at a given site. Businesses and employees that have strong connections to the communities where they work — with local workforces, patrons, partnerships, and supply chains — provide significant secondary and tertiary benefits to those municipalities. Historically these mills provided economic uplift of exactly this nature to the communities that surrounded them, and historically wealth and economic activity resulted. While that came with a significant pollution burden, there were at least clear economic benefits to these mill towns. **Today, that economic uplift is no longer seen in the data** — especially in Braddock, North Braddock, and Clairton — as the majority of mill employees commute to work from outside of the Mon Valley, taking most of their taxes[3], housing value, and household spending with them. The outcome in mill communities has been economic decline, despite continued employment at the mills themselves, as shown below.

3. In Pennsylvania, earned income tax accrues primarily to the municipality of residence.

Change in Employment
By Job Location: 2010–2023



The wider Pittsburgh region saw dramatic declines in population and employment through the second half of the 20th century, but Allegheny County at large has since seen a significant rebound, especially through technology, higher education, and medical sector employment. In the Mon Valley, however, and *especially* in the mill communities, these declines are ongoing. Despite stable employment at the Mon Valley Works facilities themselves (including modest job growth since 2010), the communities of Clairton, Braddock, and North Braddock have seen massive job loss outside of the mills, as has the rest of the lower Mon Valley to a lesser extent. Although the wider Pittsburgh region has converted to a new economic model, this evidence suggests that **the Mon Valley Works, Allegheny County's last remaining integrated steelmaking facility, has continued to function at the expense of the communities it once benefited.**

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, LEHD LODES8, 2010 and 2023. Job counts refer to total workplace-place jobs based on LEHD data for cited years. Municipal totals are by county subdivision. "Lower Mon Valley" follows the 24-municipality footprint used throughout this analysis, listed on page 1.