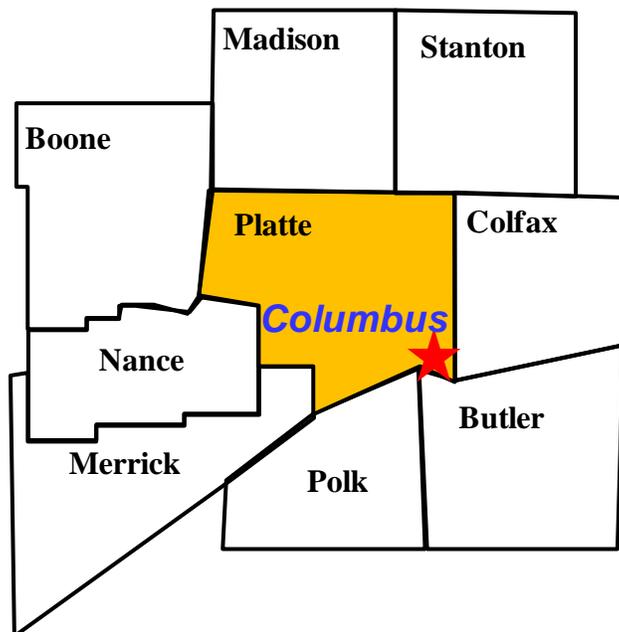


# Labor Supply Factors and Labor Availability for the Columbus (Platte County) Labor Area

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# **Labor Supply Factors and Labor Availability for the Columbus (Platte County) Labor Area**

## **Executive Summary**

The information provided in this report indicates that a prospective new employer providing job opportunities with competitive wages and benefits and offering career opportunities would be a welcome addition to the employment base in Columbus and the Platte County Labor Area. The response to such employment opportunities would be substantial, and as this report shows, there is a sizeable labor force and population base living within the Columbus Labor Area. Some of the pertinent findings of the report include:

- Population in the Columbus Labor Area (Platte County plus the eight contiguous counties) totaled 114,643 people in 2010, with the Platte County population totaling 32,237. Population in Platte County grew by 1.8 percent during the 2000–2010 period, compared to a population decrease of 1.8 percent for the nine-county Columbus Labor Area as a whole.
- Preliminary estimates<sup>1</sup> indicate the Columbus Labor Area labor force totaled 65,201 in 2011, with 62,688 local residents employed in jobs either within or outside the area. A total of 54,937 persons were employed in nonfarm wage and salary jobs<sup>2</sup> located within the area.
- In 2009, 3,729 primary jobs (31.3 percent) held by Columbus City residents and 4,977 primary jobs (33.0 percent) held by Platte County residents were located outside Platte County. This confirms a large number of Platte County residents are commuting to jobs in other counties.
- Average annual wages for all nonfarm wage and salary employees in the Columbus Labor Area were \$5,346 less than the Nebraska average. Within the labor area, Stanton County had the highest average wage, \$47,781 or \$10,464 higher than the Nebraska average. In Platte County, average annual salaries were \$3,948 less than the state average.

The basic conclusion of this report, which follows from the data and analysis presented, is that the Columbus Labor Area and Platte County would be able to provide a significant number of dedicated and skilled workers to meet the needs of additional employers in the area. While this report has not estimated a precise number of people that may be available

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<sup>1</sup> Labor force and workforce values for 2011 are preliminary estimated by Dr. Ken Lemke, Nebraska Public Power District, based on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2011 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>2</sup> Nonfarm wage and salary employment data are derived from businesses subject to State unemployment insurance laws and from Federal agencies subject to the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees program. Nonfarm wage and salary employment data includes 99.7% of all wage and salary civilian employment. Self-employed workers, unpaid family workers, workers in certain not-for-profit organizations, and several other small (primarily seasonal) worker categories are not included.

for a prospective new employer in the Columbus area, it is anticipated that if attractive working conditions with competitive wages and employee benefits were offered, a prospective new employer would be able to select their workforce from a substantial pool of applicants.

## Labor Supply Factors and Labor Availability for the Columbus (Platte County) Labor Area

This report presents selected labor-related and demographic data that provide insights into the labor supply situation in Columbus (Platte County) and the surrounding area.

In reviewing the data presented in this report, it will be evident that the Columbus Labor Area has a sizeable pool of labor to provide for the labor requirements of additional employers in the area, both in the near term and over the long run. Data presented in this report includes tables on labor force, employment, and population for Platte County and for the surrounding counties that make up the potential laborshed area for Columbus. Figure One includes a map outlining the geographic area which has been defined as the Columbus Labor Area.

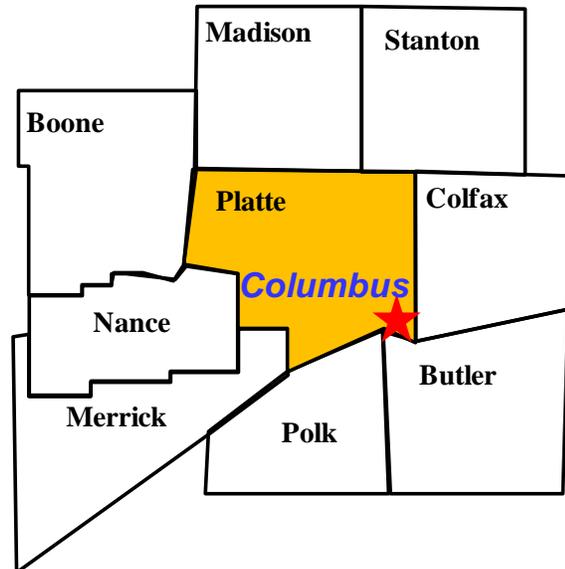
An important resource for new or expanding businesses is a readily available supply of workers. Whether an employer requires 5 or 500 workers, they need to have confidence there will be a sufficient number of workers available to meet their labor requirements. This report is provided as a key analytical tool to identify and quantify the number and selected characteristics of workers available in the Columbus Labor Area.

Available labor supply is defined as the number of persons who would potentially apply for employment when a job becomes available. Potential workers are categorized into two groups; those currently employed who would consider other employment opportunities and those who do not currently have a job.

One factor contributing to the available supply of workers is the willingness of workers already employed to change jobs. Factors influencing this decision are related to wages, fringe benefits, hours, and working conditions. Generally, workers are more inclined to change jobs when the wages and benefits for the potential new job are better and/or when they are optimistic about the economy.

Factors contributing to the available supply of people without jobs include the unemployment rate, labor force participation, and migration. To be classified as unemployed, an individual must have been actively looking for work in the last

**Figure One**  
**Columbus Labor Area**



four weeks, unless they were expecting recall from a layoff or waiting to start a job within 30 days.

There are also potential workers that are classified as not presently in the labor force. These individuals may not be participating in the labor force as employed or unemployed workers for various reasons. They may be unable to work because of school or family responsibilities or they may have an illness that has prevented them from becoming part of the labor force. There may also be workers who have not been able to find employment in the past and have become discouraged or who are no longer actively seeking employment because they perceive there are no attractive job opportunities available in the area. Retired persons are also classified as not in the labor force, although this population group often can provide substantial labor resources for selected business operations. Within the group of persons not currently in the labor force, and therefore not actively seeking employment, are many individuals who would accept a job with attractive working conditions, competitive wages, and employee benefits if one became available.

Population migration is another factor that affects the available labor supply of potential workers who are not presently employed (and may not be seeking work within the local labor market). Persons without jobs and who perceive that there are no job opportunities available locally are the most likely to leave (migrate out) the area for employment opportunities elsewhere.

### Labor Force and Employment

Table One provides data showing labor force and employment trends for the Columbus Labor Area and for Platte County for selected years from 2006 to 2011. Data in Table One (Part A and Part B) provide two alternate measures of employment for two distinct areas. Data presented in Table One, Part A include labor force, unemployment, employment, and nonfarm wage and salary employment data for the entire Columbus Labor Area (see Figure One). As these data indicate, the total labor force and total employment for the laborshed area as a whole both increased, with the area labor force growing by 2.6 percent between 2006 and 2011 and total employment growing by 1.7 percent during the same period.

**Table One**  
**Labor Force and Employment, Columbus Labor Area<sup>(a)</sup>, 2006–2011<sup>(P)</sup>**

**Part A**  
**Labor Force and Employment, Columbus Labor Area<sup>(a)</sup>, 2006–2011<sup>(P)</sup>**

(Place of Residence)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 <sup>(P)</sup>	% Chg. 2006–2011 <sup>(P)</sup>
<b>Labor Force<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>63,566</b>	<b>63,772</b>	<b>64,038</b>	<b>63,345</b>	<b>63,746</b>	<b>65,201</b>	<b>2.6</b>
Unemployment (#)	1,914	1,684	1,849	2,657	2,520	2,513	31.3
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.0	2.6	2.9	4.2	4.0	3.9	(N/A)
Employment	61,652	62,088	62,189	60,688	61,226	62,688	1.7
<b>(Place of Work)</b>							
<b>Nonfarm Employment<sup>(c)</sup></b>	<b>54,547</b>	<b>55,180</b>	<b>55,207</b>	<b>54,343</b>	<b>54,557</b>	<b>54,937</b>	<b>0.7</b>

Table One continued on following page; notes and sources on following page.

**Table One -- Continued**  
**Part B**  
**Labor Force and Employment by Industry, Platte County, NE**

(Place of Residence)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 <sup>(P)</sup>	% Chg. 2005–2011 <sup>(P)</sup>
<b>Labor Force<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>17,644</b>	<b>18,457</b>	<b>18,446</b>	<b>18,163</b>	<b>18,213</b>	<b>18,667</b>	<b>5.8</b>
Unemployment (#)	481	437	523	765	730	742	54.3
Unemployment Rate (%)	2.7	2.4	2.8	4.2	4.0	4.0	(N/A)
Employment	17,163	18,020	17,923	17,398	17,483	17,925	4.4
<b>(Place of Work)</b>							
<b>Nonfarm Employment<sup>(c)</sup></b>	<b>18,167</b>	<b>19,225</b>	<b>19,138</b>	<b>18,693</b>	<b>18,607</b>	<b>18,649</b>	<b>2.7</b>
Goods Producing	7,148	8,206	7,905	7,108	6,762	6,822	-4.6
Manufacturing	5,612	6,288	6,361	5,628	5,460	5,478	-2.4
Natural Resources	427	518	538	499	424	422	-1.2
Construction	1,109	1,400	1,006	981	878	922	-16.9
Service Providing	8,467	8,485	8,674	8,954	9,226	9,206	8.7
Trans., Warehousing & Utilities	3,035	3,004	3,172	3,188	3,252	3,283	8.2
Information	167	165	155	133	128	137	-18.0
Financial Activities	667	652	669	660	651	632	-5.2
Prof. & Bus. Services	1,217	1,155	1,234	1,465	1,697	1,599	31.4
Education & Health Services	1,471	1,545	1,533	1,616	1,671	1,669	13.5
Leisure and Hospitality	1,343	1,451	1,415	1,394	1,341	1,416	5.4
Other Services, except Public	567	513	496	498	486	470	-17.1
Total Government	2,552	2,534	2,559	2,631	2,619	2,621	2.7
Federal Government	102	100	92	89	92	80	-21.6
State Government	122	117	116	121	117	115	-5.7
Local Government	2,328	2,317	2,351	2,421	2,410	2,426	4.2

<sup>(P)</sup> 2011 values are preliminary estimates by Dr. Ken Lemke, Nebraska Public Power District using 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>(a)</sup> The Columbus Labor Area includes Platte County plus Boone, Butler, Colfax, Madison, Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Stanton Counties in Nebraska.

<sup>(b)</sup> The labor force data are measured based on the county of residence, irrespective of the county of employment.

<sup>(c)</sup> The Nonfarm Employment data are for wage and salary employment and are based on the place (county) where the individual is employed, irrespective of the county of residence.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov/cew/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/).

The second employment measure presented for the Columbus Labor Area, nonfarm wage and salary employment increased from 54,547 in 2006 to 54,937 in 2011, an increase of 0.7 percent. In the case of the labor force data (labor force, unemployment, and employment), the respective measures are based on the county of residence. The nonfarm wage and salary employment data are measured based on the county of employment, irrespective of the place of residence of the workers.

The labor force and employment measures presented for Platte County (Table One, Part B) indicate that the total labor force in the county grew by 5.8 percent between 2006

and 2011, with total employment (of people residing in Platte County, irrespective of their county of employment) growing by 4.4 percent during this period. It is also of interest to note that unemployment increased by 54.3 percent, from 481 in 2006 to 742 in 2011.

As previously noted, the second employment measure presented for Platte County, nonfarm wage and salary employment, is based on the county where the person is employed irrespective of their county of residence. Nonfarm wage and salary employment in Platte County grew by 2.7 percent between 2006 and 2011. Data presented in Table One, Part B show that the fastest growing, private employment sector in Platte County during the review period was the Professional & Business Services Sector, recording a 31.4 percent increase between 2006 and 2011. Other economic sectors experiencing significant growth in employment between 2006 and 2011 include Education & Health Services (13.5 percent), Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities (8.2 percent), and Leisure and Hospitality (5.4 percent). In the case of the Total Government Sector, employment in the Federal Government Sector declined by 21.6 percent and employment in the State Government Sector declined by 5.7 percent while Local Government Sector employment grew by 4.2 percent.

A review of the employment data reported for the Columbus Labor Area (Table Two) indicates differences between the nonfarm wage and salary employment reported in each of the counties and the total employment of persons living in these respective areas. In the case of the entire Columbus Labor Area, nonfarm wage and salary employment was reported to be 54,937 in 2011, which was significantly less (7,751) than the reported total employment of persons living within the nine-county Columbus Labor Area.

**Table Two**  
**Labor Force, Employment, and Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment,**  
**Columbus Labor Area, 2011<sup>(P)</sup>**

County	Labor Force 2011 <sup>(P)(a)</sup>	Total Employment 2011 <sup>(P) (a)</sup>	Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment 2011 <sup>(P) (b)</sup>	Total Employment Minus NF W&S Employment	Agricultural Employment 2009 <sup>(c)</sup>
<b>Platte</b>	<b>18,667</b>	<b>17,925</b>	<b>18,649</b>	<b>-724</b>	<b>977</b>
Boone	3,492	3,378	2,274	1,104	696
Butler	4,957	4,776	2,590	2,186	771
Colfax	5,936	5,723	4,759	964	625
Madison	19,180	18,400	20,727	-2,327	720
Merrick	4,227	4,059	2,114	1,945	507
Nance	2,157	2,088	1,001	1,087	386
Polk	3,045	2,940	1,436	1,504	550
Stanton	3,540	3,399	1,387	2,012	618
<b>Labor Area</b>	<b>65,201</b>	<b>62,688</b>	<b>54,937</b>	<b>7,751</b>	<b>5,850</b>

<sup>(P)</sup> 2011 values are preliminary estimates by Dr. Ken Lemke, Nebraska Public Power District using 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>(a)</sup> Labor force and employment data are measured based on the county of residence.

<sup>(b)</sup> Nonfarm Employment data are for wage and salary employment and are based on the place (county) where the individual is employed, irrespective of the the county of residence.

<sup>(c)</sup> Agricultural employment data are for 2008.

Sources: Labor Data - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov/lau/#data](http://www.bls.gov/lau/#data).

Farm Employment Data - U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Accounts Data website: [www.bea.gov/regional/reis/](http://www.bea.gov/regional/reis/).

There are two major reasons for differences in the total employment and nonfarm employment values. First, nonfarm wage and salary employment excludes self-employed workers, unpaid family workers, workers in certain not-for-profit organizations, and several other small (primarily seasonal and farm) worker categories—these workers are included in estimates of total employment. Second estimates of nonfarm wage and salary employment is based on the area where the jobs (businesses) are located while estimates of total employment are based on the area where workers live.

Table Two also includes information on agricultural employment, which includes farm proprietors. Agricultural employment shown in the table shows that 5,850 people were employed in agriculture in 2009 the last year that agricultural employment data were available. It is important to note, that for Nebraska as a whole, approximately 32 percent of farm operators also have a full-time job off the farm and 49 percent work off the farm, either in full- or part-time employment.

The number of nonfarm wage and salary workers in the Columbus Labor Area is shown by major industry sector and by county in Table Three. The reader is reminded that nonfarm wage and salary workers are counted in the county where they are employed. Individuals with more than one job are counted at each establishment (and in each county) where they work. Table Three provides information about the number of workers in the labor area by county and major industry category.

**Table Three**  
**Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment, by Industry Sector**  
**Columbus Labor Area, by County, 2011<sup>(P)</sup>**

County	Manf.	Nat. Res. & Constr.	Trade, Trans. & Util.	Educ. & Health Svc.	Leisure & Hospitality	All Other Svc.	Govt.	Tot. NF W&S
<b>Platte</b>	<b>5,478</b>	<b>1,343</b>	<b>3,283</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>1,416</b>	<b>2,837</b>	<b>2,621</b>	<b>18,647</b>
Boone	174	348	593	240	120	156	643	2,274
Butler	658	264	415	261	86	218	689	2,591
Colfax	0	2,301	856	281	175	454	691	4,758
Madison	3,101	885	5,067	3,188	1,631	3,183	3,675	20,730
Merrick	204	235	431	231	196	242	574	2,113
Nance	0	169	170	138	59	95	373	1,004
Polk	17	206	342	191	43	121	516	1,436
<b>Labor Area</b>	<b>9,632</b>	<b>6,394</b>	<b>11,385</b>	<b>6,199</b>	<b>3,781</b>	<b>7,469</b>	<b>10,080</b>	<b>54,940</b>
<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>93,118</b>	<b>53,585</b>	<b>185,434</b>	<b>121,588</b>	<b>82,228</b>	<b>206,818</b>	<b>158,231</b>	<b>901,002</b>

**Percent of Total Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment**

y	Manf.	Nat. Res. & Constr.	Trade, Trans. & Util.	Educ. & Health Svc.	Leisure & Hospitality	All Other Svc.	Govt.	Tot. NF W&S
Labor Area	17.5	11.6	20.7	11.3	6.9	13.6	18.3	100.0
Nebraska	10.3	5.9	20.6	13.5	9.1	23.0	17.6	100.0

<sup>(P)</sup> 2011 values are preliminary estimates by Dr. Ken Lemke, Nebraska Public Power District using 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov/cew/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/).

In addition to displaying the number of workers by major industry sector, Table Three also compares the percentage distribution of workers by industry in the Columbus Labor Area with the distribution for the State of Nebraska. As these data show, the industry distribution of employment for the Columbus Labor Area is significantly different than that for Nebraska as a whole.

The most significant deviations between Nebraska and the Columbus Labor Area occur in the Manufacturing Sector employment, with 17.5 percent of nonfarm wage and salary workers in the Columbus area employed in that sector, compared to 10.3 percent for Nebraska. Conversely, only 13.6 percent of nonfarm wage and salary workers in the Columbus Labor Area are employed in the All Other Services Sector, compared to 23.0 percent for Nebraska as a whole.

Table Four, Part A provides data showing labor cost comparisons, by county, for all private wage and salary workers for the Columbus Labor Area. It is important to remember that the wage and salary employment is reported by county of employment, and does not provide an indication of the average weekly and annual wage for residents of the respective counties. Obviously, labor cost is an important consideration in any analysis of the labor availability in an area. Pay data for workers covered by unemployment insurance laws in Nebraska are the source of the labor cost information. Average annual pay is calculated by dividing the total payroll for wage and salary workers by the average annual number of employees.

A review of the data in Table Four, Part A indicates that average annual salaries in Platte County (\$33,369 for all wage and salary employees for all private industries) are slightly higher than for the Columbus Labor Area as a whole and all but one of the other counties that make up the area. Also, Platte County average annual salaries are \$3,948 (10.6 percent) less than the state average. Average annual salaries for the Columbus Labor Area (\$31,971) were \$5,346 (14.3 percent) less than the Nebraska average. These data suggest, of course, there would be a positive labor supply response in Platte County to the creation of additional employment opportunities with competitive wages and benefits.

**Table Four**  
**Average Pay, Columbus Labor Area & Nebraska, 2011<sup>(P)</sup>**

**Part A**  
**Average Annual Pay and Average Weekly Wages**  
**All Covered<sup>(a)</sup> Wage and Salary Workers, All Industries**

County	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages	Average Annual Wages
<b>Platte</b>	<b>18,538</b>	<b>\$640</b>	<b>\$33,369</b>
Boone	2,254	\$543	\$28,290
Butler	2,557	\$609	\$31,767
Colfax	4,758	\$571	\$29,798
Madison	20,557	\$606	\$31,583
Merrick	2,130	\$540	\$28,163
Nance	991	\$532	\$27,719
Polk	1,433	\$504	\$26,274
Stanton	1,373	\$916	\$47,781
<b>Labor Area</b>	<b>54,590</b>	<b>\$613</b>	<b>\$31,971</b>
<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>893,980</b>	<b>\$716</b>	<b>\$37,317</b>

Table Four continued on following page; notes and sources on following page.

**Table Four -- Continued  
Part B**

**Average Annual Pay All Covered<sup>(a)</sup> Wage and Salary Workers  
By Selected Industry Groups**

<b>County</b>	<b>Goods-Producing</b>	<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>Construction</b>	<b>Service-Providing</b>	<b>Trade, Transportation, and Utilities</b>	<b>Financial Activities</b>	<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>
<b>Platte</b>	<b>\$40,876</b>	<b>\$42,290</b>	<b>\$36,787</b>	<b>\$25,881</b>	<b>\$27,622</b>	<b>\$39,683</b>	<b>\$23,479</b>	<b>\$9,899</b>
Boone	\$35,346	\$45,563	\$34,322	\$24,060	\$28,118	\$30,399	\$34,262	\$8,774
Butler	\$37,569	\$40,891	\$28,329	\$26,751	\$26,875	\$34,399	\$39,501	\$7,539
Colfax	\$32,776	NA	NA	\$25,039	\$27,466	\$27,189	\$23,995	\$8,506
Madison	\$38,856	\$40,689	\$33,002	\$27,874	\$29,145	\$34,830	\$26,696	\$11,542
Merrick	\$34,379	\$33,965	\$38,150	\$25,839	\$28,603	\$36,237	\$47,244	\$9,211
Nance	\$35,741	NA	\$22,360	\$22,794	\$22,460	\$39,171	\$24,248	\$9,597
Polk	\$28,033	\$13,764	\$25,914	\$24,312	\$26,550	\$30,891	\$20,816	\$7,036
Stanton	\$72,718	NA	NA	\$25,116	\$29,652	\$34,712	\$11,553	\$7,384
<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>\$40,279</b>	<b>\$41,757</b>	<b>\$39,192</b>	<b>\$35,672</b>	<b>\$31,642</b>	<b>\$52,586</b>	<b>\$47,991</b>	<b>\$12,789</b>

<sup>(P)</sup> 2011 values are preliminary estimates by Dr. Ken Lemke, Nebraska Public Power District using 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>(a)</sup> Includes employers that are subject to Nebraska Employment Security Laws.

NA: Data not available, BLS did not provide data due to concerns about possible disclosure of proprietary information.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov/cew/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/).

Table Four, Part B provides average annual wages, by county and by major industry sector, for the counties that make up the Columbus Labor Area. As the data in Table Four, Part A indicate, the highest overall average annual wages in the area are for wage and salary workers employed in Stanton County. The average annual wage for all wage and salary workers (working) in Stanton County was \$47,781 in 2011 which was \$15,810 (49.5 percent) higher than the average for the Columbus Labor Area as a whole, and \$10,464 (28.0 percent) greater than the Nebraska average. A review of the industry specific data for average annual wages for Stanton indicates that the high average annual wage results from the extremely high average wage in the Goods Producing Sector which includes manufacturing, construction, and natural resources.

## Commuting Patterns

Table Five provides data from the 2009 U.S. Census, Local Employment Dynamics Program showing commuting patterns for workers living in the Columbus Labor Area. Data in Table Five indicate, a significant number (and percentage) of workers in the area commuted outside of their county of residence for employment. Data for Platte County indicate that 4,977, or 33.0 percent of the employed workers, commuted to other counties for employment. For seven of the other counties in the Columbus Labor Area, the percentage of commuters was greater than for Platte County, and in most cases substantially greater. In the case of Stanton County, 2,434 or 85.1 percent of employed workers commuted out of their county of residence for employment. Other counties with a high percentage of employed workers commuting to other counties for employment include Polk (69.3 percent), Merrick (68.8 percent), Butler (65.8 percent), Nance (60.1 percent), Colfax (51.7 percent), and Boone with 51.6 percent of employed workers commuting out of their county of residence to work at a primary job.

**Table Five**  
**Commuting Patterns, Columbus Labor Area**  
**Jobs Outside County of Residence, 2009**

County	County Residents Working Outside County	
	Number	Percent
<b>Platte</b>	<b>4,977</b>	<b>33.0</b>
Boone	1,136	51.2
Butler	2,592	65.8
Colfax	2,393	51.6
Madison	5,178	32.5
Merrick	2,193	68.8
Nance	806	60.1
Polk	1,581	69.3
Stanton	2,434	85.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Local Employment Dynamics*.

Table Six provides further detail illustrating the willingness of workers in Columbus and Platte County to travel for employment. In 2009, residents of Platte County worked at a total of 15,062 jobs; a resident could work at more than one job. Of these 15,062 jobs, the largest number, 10,085 or 67.0% percent, were located in Platte County, while 965 or 6.4% percent were located in Douglas County. Other counties with high numbers of workers from Platte County were Colfax (887 jobs), Madison (500 jobs), and Lancaster (414 jobs).

Also in 2009, residents of Columbus worked at a total of 11,902 jobs with the largest number, 8,173 or 68.7% percent located in Platte County. Other counties with high numbers of workers from Columbus were Douglas (744 jobs), Colfax (717 jobs), Madison (365 jobs), and Lancaster (294 jobs).

**Table Six**  
**Commuting Patterns, Columbus Labor Area**  
**Location of Jobs Held by Columbus and Platte County Residents, 2009**

County Where Jobs are Located	Primary Jobs Held by Columbus Residents	% Columbus Residents' Primary Jobs	Primary Jobs Held by Platte County Residents	% Platte County Residents' Primary Jobs
<b>Platte</b>	<b>8,173</b>	<b>68.7%</b>	<b>10,085</b>	<b>67.0%</b>
Douglas	744	6.3%	965	6.4%
Colfax	717	6.0%	887	5.9%
Madison	365	3.1%	500	3.3%
Lancaster	294	2.5%	414	2.7%
All Other Locations	1,609	13.5%	2,211	14.7%
Total Resident Jobs	11,902	100.0%	15,062	100.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Local Employment Dynamics*.

Table Seven provides data showing the willingness of workers in other counties to commute to Columbus and Platte County for employment. In 2009, 5,424 or 41.4 percent of the 13,096 primary jobs in Columbus were held by residents of other counties. Butler County was home to the greatest number of workers commuting into Columbus from outside Platte County, 582 or 4.4 percent, followed by Colfax County 571 or 4.4 percent, Polk County 370 or 2.8 percent, and Madison County 353 or 2.7 percent.

Data in Table Seven indicate 7,386 (42.3 percent) of the 17,471 primary jobs in Platte County were held by workers commuting from other counties. In 2009, Colfax County was home to the greatest number of workers commuting to Platte for primary jobs, 790 or 4.5 percent, followed by Butler County, 748 or 4.3 percent, Madison County, 693 or 4.0 percent, and Polk County 485 or 2.8 percent.

**Table Seven**  
**Commuting Patterns, Columbus Labor Area**  
**Sources of Columbus and Platte County Workers, 2009**

County Where Workers Live	Number of Primary Jobs in Columbus	Percent of Primary Jobs in Columbus	Number of Primary Jobs in Platte County	Percent of Primary Jobs in Platte County
<b>Platte</b>	<b>7,672</b>	<b>58.6%</b>	<b>10,085</b>	<b>57.7%</b>
Colfax	571	4.4%	790	4.5%
Butler	582	4.4%	748	4.3%
Madison	353	2.7%	693	4.0%
Polk	370	2.8%	485	2.8%
Lancaster	346	2.6%	453	2.6%
Nance	241	1.8%	353	2.0%
All Other Locations	2,961	22.6%	3,864	22.1%
Total Primary Jobs	13,096	100.0%	17,471	100.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Local Employment Dynamics*.

Table Eight provides data for Platte County showing the number of primary jobs (Workforce) located in the county and the number of primary jobs held by county residents (Labor Force Employment) by industry in 2009. When the Workforce for an industry exceeds the Labor Force (positive values in the last column of Table Eight), the difference between these values represents the net number of jobs in Platte County held by workers commuting into the county from other areas. If the Workforce is less than the Labor Force (negative values in the last column of Table Seven), the difference represents the net number of jobs held outside of Platte County by county residents.

As data in Table Eight indicate, residents of Platte County were employed in 15,062 primary jobs in 2008, but there were 17,471 primary jobs within the area. This indicates workers from counties outside the study area commuted to at least 2,409 primary jobs within the study area. It is important to note this is an estimate of net in-commuting and most certainly understates the actual number of primary jobs within the area held by residents from outside the study area.

**Table Eight**  
**Primary Jobs, Platte County, 2009**  
**Resident Labor Force and Employers Workforce**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Labor Force Employment (Employment of Area Residents)</b>	<b>Workforce (Area Jobs)</b>	<b>Net Number of Jobs Held by Workers Commuting Into Platte County<sup>(a)</sup></b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	309	438	129
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	38	45	7
Utilities	390	683	293
Construction	1,242	1,555	313
Manufacturing	4,202	5,312	1,110
Wholesale Trade	574	644	70
Retail Trade	1,526	1,661	135
Transportation and Warehousing	399	441	42
Information	171	176	5
Finance and Insurance	604	683	79
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	105	100	-5
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	443	440	-3
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	386	413	27
Management of Companies and Enterprises	154	162	8
Educational Services	1,038	999	-39
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,593	1,772	179
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	132	162	30
Accommodation and Food Services	863	893	30
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	299	320	21
Public Administration	594	572	-22
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,062</b>	<b>17,471</b>	<b>2,409</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> A negative value indicates the net number of primary jobs outside of the area held by Columbus Labor Area Residents.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Local Employment Dynamics*, <http://lehdmap4.did.census.gov/themap4/>.

## Population Trends

The data provided in Table Nine show population trends for the Columbus Labor Area, by county, and for Nebraska for the 1950–2010 period. As these data indicate, the population of the Columbus Labor Area was 116,691 in 2000. The Columbus Labor Area population grew by 9.9 percent from 1950 to 2000 and declined 1.8 percent from 2000 to 2010. Population in Platte County totaled 31,662 in 2000 and had grown by 59.0 percent from 1950 to 2000. During the latest Census decade from 2000 to 2010, Platte County population increased by 1.8 percent, compared to the decrease for the Columbus Labor Area as a whole of 1.8 percent, and to the State rate of growth of 6.7 percent.

**Table Nine**  
**Population in the Columbus Labor Area, by County, and Nebraska**  
**Selected Years, 1950–2010**

COUNTY	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Chg. 1950–2000	% Chg. 2000–10
<b>Platte</b>	<b>19,910</b>	<b>23,992</b>	<b>26,508</b>	<b>28,852</b>	<b>29,820</b>	<b>31,662</b>	<b>32,237</b>	<b>59.0</b>	<b>1.8</b>
Boone	10,721	9,134	8,190	7,391	6,667	6,259	5,505	-41.6	-12.0
Butler	11,432	10,312	9,461	9,330	8,601	8,767	8,395	-23.3	-4.2
Colfax	10,010	9,595	9,498	9,890	9,139	10,441	10,515	4.3	0.7
Madison	24,338	25,145	27,402	31,382	32,655	35,226	34,876	44.7	-1.0
Merrick	8,812	8,363	8,751	8,945	8,042	8,204	7,845	-6.9	-4.4
Nance	6,512	5,635	5,142	4,740	4,275	4,038	3,735	-38.0	-7.5
Polk	8,044	7,210	6,468	6,320	5,675	5,639	5,406	-29.9	-4.1
Stanton	6,387	5,783	5,758	6,549	6,244	6,455	6,129	1.1	-5.1
<b>Labor Area</b>	<b>106,166</b>	<b>105,169</b>	<b>107,178</b>	<b>113,399</b>	<b>111,118</b>	<b>116,691</b>	<b>114,643</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>-1.8</b>
<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>1,325,510</b>	<b>1,411,330</b>	<b>1,483,493</b>	<b>1,569,825</b>	<b>1,578,385</b>	<b>1,711,263</b>	<b>1,826,341</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>6.7</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population, 1950-2010*.

Table Ten shows the age distribution of the resident population. Obviously, the age distribution of the population is important when evaluating the potential labor supply in an area. A key variable is the number of people in the working age populations of the counties making up the Columbus Labor Area. In 2010, there were 16,375 people in Platte County between the ages of 25 and 64, which represented 50.8 percent of the total population, compared to 50.2 percent of the population for the Columbus Labor Area as a whole and 51.4 percent of the Nebraska population in this age range.

**Table Ten**  
**Age Characteristics of the Population, Columbus Labor Area,**  
**by County, and Nebraska, 2010**

County	0-14		15-24		25-44		45-64		65-Older		Median Age
	Number	% <sup>(a)</sup>									
<b>Platte</b>	<b>7,068</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>3,992</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>7,642</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>8,733</b>	<b>27.1</b>	<b>4,802</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>38.2</b>
Boone	1,043	18.9	617	11.2	1,060	19.3	1,621	29.4	1,164	21.1	45.5
Butler	1,689	20.1	869	10.4	1,719	20.5	2,515	30.0	1,603	19.1	44.3
Colfax	2,588	24.6	1,419	13.5	2,593	24.7	2,487	23.7	1,428	13.6	34.2
Madison	7,252	20.8	5,117	14.7	8,037	23.0	9,346	26.8	5,124	14.7	37.1
Merrick	1,557	19.8	917	11.7	1,699	21.7	2,256	28.8	1,416	18.0	42.5
Nance	731	19.6	381	10.2	756	20.2	1,155	30.9	712	19.1	45.0
Polk	1,077	19.9	497	9.2	1,107	20.5	1,656	30.6	1,069	19.8	45.3
Stanton	1,392	22.7	692	11.3	1,457	23.8	1,723	28.1	865	14.1	38.6
<b>Labor Area</b>	<b>24,397</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>14,501</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>26,070</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>31,492</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>18,183</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>38.3</b>
<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>383,542</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>258,206</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>466,014</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>471,902</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>246,677</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>36.2</b>

<sup>(a)</sup> Percent of total population for each respective area.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population, Summary File One, 2010*.

Table Eleven provides information showing population, the natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration for the 1990–1999 period for Nebraska, for Platte County and for the Columbus Labor Area. As these data show, the Columbus Labor Area as a whole had a small rate of net out-migration during the Census decade of the 1990s, while Butler and Colfax Counties experienced net in-migration. As indicated in the table, net out-migration for the Columbus Labor Area as a whole accounted for a population decline of 1,800 people during the decade, contributing to a population decrease equal to 1.6 percent of the population. In the case of Platte County, net out-migration during the 1990s totaled 1,545 people, or 5.2 percent of the 1990 population.

**Table Eleven**  
**Population, Births, Deaths, and Migration**  
**Nebraska and Columbus Labor Area by County, 1990–1999**

County	Population		1990–1999			Net Migration*, 1990–1999	
	1990	2000	Births	Deaths	Nat. Incr.	Number	% 1990 Pop.
<b>Platte</b>	<b>29,820</b>	<b>30,378</b>	<b>4,291</b>	<b>2,188</b>	<b>2,103</b>	<b>-1,545</b>	<b>-5.2</b>
Boone	6,667	6,355	758	693	65	-377	-5.7
Butler	8,601	8,607	1,007	1,014	-7	13	0.2
Colfax	9,139	10,691	1,277	997	280	1,272	13.9
Madison	32,655	34,184	5,164	3,204	1,960	-431	-1.3
Merrick	8,062	8,052	1,021	911	110	-120	-1.5
Nance	4,275	4,057	459	514	-55	-163	-3.8
Polk	5,655	5,518	617	754	-137	0	0.0
Stanton	6,244	6,100	745	440	305	-449	-7.2
<b>Labor Area</b>	<b>111,118</b>	<b>113,942</b>	<b>15,339</b>	<b>10,715</b>	<b>4,624</b>	<b>-1,800</b>	<b>-1.6</b>
<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>1,578,417</b>	<b>1,666,028</b>	<b>217,510</b>	<b>139,754</b>	<b>77,756</b>	<b>9,855</b>	<b>0.6</b>

\* Net Migration from the Bureau of the Census estimates, includes residual component not shown separately.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *County Population Estimates for July 1, 1999 and Population Change for April 1, 1990 to July 1, 1999*.

Table Twelve provides information showing population, the natural increase (births minus deaths), and net migration for the 2000–2009 period. As these data show, the Columbus Labor Area experienced significant net out-migration during this more recent nine-year period. As indicated in the table, out-migration for the Columbus Labor Area as a whole accounted for population decline of 6,997 during the 2000–2009 period, contributing to a population decrease equal to 6.0 percent of the 2000 population. In the case of Platte County, net out-migration during this nine-year period was 1,414, or 4.5 percent of the 2000 population.

**Table Twelve**  
**Population, Births, Deaths, and Migration**  
**Nebraska and Columbus Labor area, by County, 2000–2009**

County	Population		2000–2009			Net Migration, 2000–2009*	
	2000	2009	Births	Deaths	Nat. Incr.	Number	% 2000 Pop.
<b>Platte</b>	<b>31,662</b>	<b>32,237</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>2,276</b>	<b>1,989</b>	<b>-1,414</b>	<b>-4.5</b>
Boone	6,259	5,505	544	628	-84	-670	-10.7
Butler	8,767	8,395	887	932	-45	-327	-3.7
Colfax	10,441	10,515	1,833	869	964	-890	-8.5
Madison	35,226	34,876	5,153	3,214	1,939	-2,289	-6.5
Merrick	8,204	7,845	799	773	26	-385	-4.7
Nance	4,038	3,735	383	504	-121	-182	-4.5
Polk	5,639	5,406	567	580	-13	-220	-3.9
Stanton	6,455	6,129	767	473	294	-620	-9.6
<b>Labor Area</b>	<b>116,691</b>	<b>114,643</b>	<b>15,198</b>	<b>10,249</b>	<b>4,949</b>	<b>-6,997</b>	<b>-6.0</b>
<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>1,711,263</b>	<b>1,826,341</b>	<b>241,832</b>	<b>139,626</b>	<b>102,206</b>	<b>12,872</b>	<b>0.8</b>

\* Net Migration from the Bureau of the Census estimates, includes residual component not shown separately.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population Estimates, 2009, and Components of Population Change, 2000-2009*.

### **Competitive Employment and Career Opportunities**

An employer providing jobs with competitive wages and benefits and offering career opportunities would be a welcome addition to the employment base in the Columbus Labor Area and in Platte County. The expected response to such employment opportunities would be significant, and it is anticipated that there would be an adequate labor supply response for a prospective new employer offering competitive wages and benefits in the Columbus area. The labor force, employment, and demographic data presented in this report illustrate quite clearly that there is a sufficiently large labor force and population base living within the Columbus Labor Area, and that significant numbers of persons living in the area are commuting to other areas for employment.

In conclusion, the data and analysis presented in this report indicate that the Columbus Labor Area and Platte County would be able to provide a significant number of dedicated and skilled workers to meet the needs of additional employers in the area. While this report has not estimated a precise number of people that might be available to a prospective new employer in the Columbus area, it is anticipated that if attractive working conditions with competitive wages and employee benefits were offered, a prospective new employer would be able to select their workforce from a substantial pool of applicants.

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