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Image from https://census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/library/photos.html

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NEBRASKA
Good Life, Great Connections.
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Openings & Expansions November
Kermit Spade, Research Analyst

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</tbody>
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Source: Nebraska Department of Labor
Openings and expansions listed are a sampling of activity reported for that month. Some activity may have occurred outside the month. If you have an opening or expansion to report, contact us at LML_NE@nebraska.gov.
This month’s Map Facts explores census tracts and the insights these more granular statistical areas contribute towards our understanding of Nebraska’s workforce. Nestled within Nebraska’s 93 counties are 532 census tracts. These subdivisions are determined by local committees of census data users and, while relatively permanent, can be updated prior to each Decennial Census. (1)

In an effort to better understand Nebraska’s workforce, data is often presented in the context of the state’s nine economic development regions, or its 93 counties. Drilling down to the census tract level (when available) can show variation within a county, allowing analysis, for example, of rural versus urban areas, or specific sections of larger urban centers.

Douglas County has the most census tracts (156), followed by Lancaster (74), Sarpy (43), and Hall (14). There are 56 counties with between two and 11 census tracts, and 33 rural counties each composed of just one single census tract. The largest census tract by total area covers the southern portion of Cherry County, and is large enough to contain all of the state’s smallest 399 census tracts. (2)

The map above shows the percentage of Nebraska’s civilian employed population, ages 16 years and over, who were self-employed in each of Nebraska’s 532 census tracts, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 2013-2017 five-year estimates. Rates of self-employment were generally lower in urban areas, a trend which was more apparent when viewing the data at the census-tract level, as opposed to county or regional levels. (2)

Douglas County (see above), had an overall self-employment rate of 7.6%, with individual census tracts ranging from 0.8% to 21.9%. The Omaha Consortium economic development region, which includes Douglas, Sarpy, Cass, Saunders, and Washington counties, had an overall self-employment rate of 7.9%, with rates ranging from 6.9% in Sarpy County to 13.4% in Saunders County. (2)

The Lincoln MSA had a 7.7% overall self-employment rate, with Lancaster and Seward counties having individual rates of 7.4% and 12.6% respectively. (2)

The Grand Island MSA had an overall self-employment rate of 10.7%, including Hall (8.2%), Hamilton (14.4%), Merrick (16.7%), and Howard (21.2%) counties. While the majority of counties in the Grand Island area had self-employment rates well above the statewide average, the region’s population was concentrated within its urban census tracts in Hall County, where self-employment rates were relatively low. (2)

In an effort to better understand Nebraska’s workforce, data is often presented in the context of the state’s nine economic development regions, or its 93 counties. Drilling down to the census tract level (when available) can show variation within a county, allowing analysis, for example, of rural versus urban areas, or specific sections of larger urban centers.

Sources:
Temporary Workers & the 2020 Census
Andrew Bouwens, Research Analyst

Article I, Section 2 of the United States Constitution requires all residents to complete the Decennial Census every 10 years, in order to determine the number or seats for each state in the House of Representatives, in a process known as apportionment. In 1790, Thomas Jefferson directed the very first national Census, and efforts to count the entire U.S. population have occurred every ten years thereafter. In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will be counting upwards of 330 million people in over 140 million housing units, as well as individuals living in college dormitories, shelters, institutions, and other forms of group housing, and homeless individuals who are not able to be counted at any residential address. This will be a monumental task, as Census workers attempt to take stock of every U.S. resident according to where they reside on April 1, 2020. (1)

As the country prepares for the twenty-third Decennial Census, the Census Bureau is hiring the large number of temporary workers necessary to accomplish the enormous task of counting every single resident of our vast nation. In this article, we will look at who these workers are, what they do, and how long they have to complete their jobs.

To become a temporary census worker, a person must be at least 18 years of age, have a valid email address, and pass an assessment test and a background check. Most Census workers will be required to be a U.S. citizen with a valid Social Security number, although some non-citizens who are legally entitled to work in the United States may be hired as multilingual translators on an as-needed basis. Most of these jobs also require access to a vehicle and a valid driver's license, as well as access to a computer with internet and email. (4)

**Census Takers:** This will be the most common temporary Census job, with hundreds of thousands of workers expected to be hired. Census takers will be tasked with interviewing households and using electronic devices to record resident information in real-time. Hiring for this role will begin in early 2020, with training occurring from March until mid-May. (5)

**Recruiting Assistants:** Workers hired for these roles will be expected to recruit potential workers and work with media, employment agencies, and other groups in order to promote Census employment opportunities. Thousands of individuals will be hired as recruiting assistants, with many already in place. The Census Bureau is expected to hire additional recruiting assistants throughout the 2020 Census process. (5)

**Clerks:** Clerks are needed in each area census office to perform administrative and clerical tasks, including payroll, personnel functions, recruiting, and field operations. Census clerks will typically work regular business hours, but may be flexible in certain areas. Thousands of clerk positions will be available nationwide, with job offers made periodically throughout the Census. (5)

**Supervisors:** Temporary workers will be hired to fill two types of supervisory roles: field supervisors and office operations supervisors. Field supervisors will be expected to monitor census takers and ensure their work is completed correctly and on time. There are thousands of these positions, and most are expected to be filled in January and February 2020. Office Operations supervisors will manage day-to-day activities in area Census offices, supervise clerks, and oversee assignment preparation and tracking. Thousands of temporary workers around the country will be hired as office operations supervisors throughout the course of the Census process. (5)
Currently, the area Census office serving Nebraska, which is based in Lincoln, is offering temporary workers hourly wages between $17.50 and $21.50 per hour, depending on county assignment. Workers will also receive reimbursement for work-related mileage and expenses, where applicable. (6)

The Census Bureau says it will need to hire about 17,000 temporary workers in Nebraska by March, with 3,500 of those jobs based in the Census office in Lincoln. (7)

The highest Census wages are offered in the California counties of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara, where temporary workers can expect to earn $30 per hour. The lowest-paid temporary Census employees, located in counties in North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, receive $13.50 per hour. Nationwide, the average hourly wage for temporary Census workers is $17.40. (6)

The Decennial Census will shape the future for Nebraskans and communities nationwide throughout the next 10 years. Census data will be used to determine Congressional representation, funding allocations, and numerous other important decisions that impact us all. Temporary workers are an essential part of this process, helping to make sure everyone gets counted.

Sources:
**2020 Census: FACTS vs. MYTHS**

1. **MYTH.** The Census has no effect on most regular people’s lives.

   Census data is used to make a wide variety of important decisions that impact your life. The Census determines how many seats your state gets in Congress, guides the allocation of more than $675 billion in federal funds, and helps communities and governments prepare for emergencies, draw up electoral districts, and identify places to build schools, roads, and hospitals. (1)

2. **FACT.** Completing the Census is mandatory.

   All individuals living in households within the United States or its territories are required to be counted once (and only once!) by the Census. (2)

3. **MYTH.** Law enforcement agencies use Census responses to track and arrest law-breakers.

   No law enforcement agency (DHS, ICE, FBI, CIA, etc.) is permitted to access or use personal information collected by the Census for any reason. Census data can only be used for statistical purposes, not to provide identifying information about any individual. (1)
4. **MYTH.** You can respond to the Census online or by phone in English or any of 12 other languages. Materials are also available to guide respondents through the response process in braille, large print, and American Sign Language. (3)

You must respond to the Census in English.

5. **FACT.** The Census Bureau will never ask for sensitive personal information, for payment, or contact you on behalf of a political party. If someone visits your home to collect a Census response and you have concerns about their identity, you can check that they have a valid ID badge with their photograph, a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. Then, if you still have concerns about their identity, you can call **800-923-8282** to speak with a local Census Bureau representative. (4)

The Census Bureau will never ask for your Social Security number, financial information, or for money or donations.

6. **FACT.** The 2020 Census will be the first time the Census Bureau will provide the option to respond online. You can even use your phone or other internet-enabled device. (5)

You can respond to the 2020 Census online or on your mobile device.

7. **MYTH.** Everyone who is alive for any part of the day on April 1, 2020 should be counted in the Census. These individuals should be counted at their home residence, even if they are in the hospital on Census Day. Anyone who dies before April 1, 2020, or who is born after that date, should not be included. (6)

People who are born or die on Census Day are not counted in the Census.
The date of Census Day 2020, which is observed once every 10 years. (7)

The amount by which the total population of the United States increased between 2000 and the last Census conducted in 2010. (9)

The percentage of people who said they were somewhat, very, or extremely likely to fill out the Census form in 2020, according to a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. (10)

The section of the United States Constitution that mandates that the country conduct a census once every 10 years. (2)

The approximate number of employees working in the Census Bureau’s National Processing Center in Jeffersonville, Ind. Today, the NPC is one of the largest employers in the Louisville, Ky. metropolitan statistical area (which includes Jeffersonville, just across the Ohio River and the Kentucky-Indiana state line). (11)

The estimated number of housing units throughout the United States whose occupants will be counted for the 2020 Census. (12)

2020 will be the first time the Census Bureau will accept online responses, in addition to over the phone, by mail, or by speaking to an in-person home canvasser. (13)
The percentage of U.S. residential addresses that will be verified in-field by Census address canvassers. The other 65% of homes were verified in-office by satellite imagery. (13)

The total amount of federal funding distributed to states and communities each year that is allocated based on Census data. (7)

The range of hourly wages available for Census takers in Nebraska. These temporary workers also receive reimbursement for mileage and expenses, where applicable. (14)

The estimated total life-cycle cost of the 2020 Census, according to the Census Bureau’s Life-Cycle Cost Estimate Executive Summary Version 2.0, released in June 2019. (15)

Sources:
Beginning in the spring of 2015, the Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL), Nebraska Department of Economic Development, and the Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln began a collaboration on the Labor Availability Study (LAS)—a project designed to measure labor availability in various regions of Nebraska. NDOL frequently collects varied data about Nebraska workers and provides that information to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The BLS then analyzes the data to estimate, for example, how many people work in various industries and occupations, or how many people work or do not work.

While the BLS and NDOL produce a rich data catalog, neither agency regularly measures the reasons why workers choose whether to accept a job, seek to improve their employment situation, or not work at all. In the context of this report, an ‘improved employment situation’ is not uniform, and depends on the perspective of the individual (e.g., shorter commute, flexible hours, better benefits, etc.). Some data sets consider only certain types of job seekers, such as unemployed individuals, or those who are actively seeking a new job. However, a few key segments of an area’s potential labor pool, such as people who are currently employed but may change jobs given the right opportunity, or those who are outside the labor force (e.g., retired individuals, homemakers, etc.) but who are considering reentry, are often unaccounted for in estimates of labor availability. The Labor Availability Study was developed in order to produce data to fill these gaps. Understanding why people take or leave a job, including the incentives they considered important, helps employers, economic developers, and other stakeholders understand how they might attract new workers and retain existing employees.

The Role of Census Data

Labor Availability Study reports were produced for 10 regions of Nebraska, as well as the state as a whole. To determine which communities should be included in which region, commuting patterns were reviewed for each separate survey area. Data on commuting patterns is available thanks to the Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) data set, which is based on a combination of administrative records, state unemployment insurance reporting, and information gathered by both the Decennial Census and other ongoing surveys managed by the Census Bureau, such as the American Community Survey. (1) The ZIP codes with the highest number of commuters traveling to each report city for work were identified. Additional ZIP codes were added after the city area was defined to combine them into one large survey area that reflects the region from which businesses draw the majority of their workforce.
Census data were also essential to verify that LAS outcomes would be genuinely representative of each local area. BOSR assigned data weights to each response to ensure results matched the demography of each surveyed community as closely as possible. NDOL then analyzed the results and produced the final reports for each region and the state as a whole. (2)

According to Demographic Profile data from the 2010 Decennial Census, the total population of the ZIP codes included in LAS was 1,725,541 individuals, with 1,294,128 of these individuals aged 18 or older. The statewide population of Nebraska in 2010 was 1,826,341, meaning 94.4% of the state’s population was represented in the surveyed ZIP codes. (2)

The estimates for sex from the Labor Availability Study Household Survey results were within 0.2% of Census estimates, and the survey estimates for age were within 1.6% of Census estimates. This demonstrates that the sample shared many properties with the target population. (2)

Since the study began in 2015, more than 21,500 responses from Nebraska ZIP codes were collected and included in the statewide data set. Of these, more than 1,500 responses were from active job seekers. (2)

Based on the percentage of potential job seekers who identified as active job seekers (31.1%), and utilizing 2010 Census population estimates, there were 141,277 active job seekers 18 years old and over in Nebraska in the time frame covered by the surveys. (2)
Labor Availability Study Findings: Active Job Seekers

Employment Status of Active Job Seekers with Bachelor’s Degrees

As seen in the chart above, active job seekers with a bachelor’s degree more often reported being unemployed (9.0%) than being retired (1.0%) or homemakers (0.5%). (2)

Active Job Seekers by Age

Active job seekers with a bachelor’s degree tended to be younger than active job seekers overall. Of those who reported their age, 69.3% of active job seekers with a bachelor’s degree were under the age of 45, while 61.4% of all active job seekers were under 45 years of age. (2)

Survey respondents identified as active job seekers were 48.8% female and 51.2% male. Among non-active job seekers statewide, 51.3% were female and 48.7% were male. Of all those who responded to the gender survey question, regardless of seeker status, 51% were female and 49% were male. (2)
Active job seekers rated the importance of 20 factors that are often considered when choosing a job. The rating scale given to respondents, as seen in the chart above, ranged from ‘not at all important’ to ‘very important.’ Almost 92% of active job seekers rated salary as ‘important’ or ‘very important.’ Salary was one of five factors that 50% or more active job seekers listed as ‘very important.’ The top five most important factors to active job seekers, based on combined ratings of ‘important’ and ‘very important,’ were salary (91.9%), using skills they have (89.1%), a work schedule that fits their needs (87.3%), paid vacation (86.3%), and opportunity for advancement (85.3%). The factors active job seekers most often rated as ‘somewhat important’ or ‘not at all important’ were being near public transportation (87.8%), accessible childcare (81.7%), and working from home/telecommuting (73.8%). (2)
Employed active job seekers also reported any obstacles that they perceived may prevent them from changing their job or reentering the workforce in the next year. As seen in the chart above, the most commonly cited obstacles to changing employment, such as lack of job opportunities in the area, or inadequate pay, benefits, or hours offered at area employers, were job-market-related issues, rather than workforce-related issues, such as job seekers lacking necessary training or experience. More than a third (33.5%) of employed active job seekers indicated that the obstacle of being overqualified may prevent them from changing jobs. (2)
Population data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and responses to the Labor Availability Study allow NDOL to estimate the number of active job seekers in the state. Statewide and local economic development organizations then utilize Labor Availability Study data to help them understand labor market dynamics, plan workforce development strategies, and grow Nebraska’s economy.

Detailed Labor Availability Reports and Hiring and Training Needs Reports for separate areas of Nebraska can be found on the Labor Availability Study publication page at dol.nebraska.gov/las.

Sources:
An initial claim is a request for determination of UI program eligibility filed by an unemployed individual following a separation from an employer. It can serve as an indicator of emerging labor market conditions in the area.¹

Data Sources: [Retrieved: December 2019.]

Average weekly earnings represents the mean pay received by workers for services performed over the course of one week.²

Data Sources: [Retrieved: December 2019.]

This figure represents the average price consumers paid at the pump for a gallon of regular-grade, unleaded gasoline during the specified timeframe. The main components affecting the retail price of gasoline are crude oil prices; costs and profits associated with refining, distribution, and marketing; fluctuations in supply and demand; and federal, state, and local taxes.³

Data Sources: [Retrieved: December 2019.]
The labor force is comprised of all persons age 16 and over in the civilian, noninstitutional population who are either employed or unemployed but available for work and actively seeking employment. It excludes people doing unpaid homemaking or volunteer work, retired people, and people who are not employed and not actively seeking work. The labor force participation rate measures the labor force as a percentage of the total civilian, noninstitutional population, age 16 and over.¹

Data Sources: [Retrieved: December 2019.]

The consumer price index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by consumers for goods and services. It is used to determine the real purchasing power of consumers’ dollars, and as a measure of inflation.⁶

Data Sources: [Retrieved: December 2019.]

The housing price index (HPI) measures the movement of single-family house prices, based on purchases involving conventional mortgages purchased or securitized by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. “Four-quarter” change is relative to the same quarter one year earlier. HPI data are often considered useful for estimating housing affordability and projecting future changes in mortgage default rates.⁵

Data Source: [Retrieved: December 2019.]
NEBRASKA WORKFORCE TRENDS

Employment Data | November
November 2020 County Unemployment Rates

NEBRASKA
November Non-Farm
Total Employment: 1,045,668
Manufacturing: 100,751

Nebraska
(Smooth Seasonally Adjusted)
November Non-Farm Employment: 1,045,668
Manufacturing: 100,751

Economic Region
(Not Seasonally Adjusted)
Central: 2.6%
Mid Plains: 2.8%
Northeast: 2.7%
Panhandle: 3.2%
Sandhills: 2.7%
Southeast: 2.7%

OMAHA MSA
(Not Seasonally Adjusted)
November Unemployment Rate: 2.7%
November Total Non-Farm Employment: 523,618
Manufacturing: 33,814

Largest OTM Increase (Private)
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities: 3,206 (3.3%)
Manufacturing: 525 (1.6%)

Largest OTY Increase (Private)
Mining & Construction: 4,431 (15.0%)
Leisure & Hospitality: 2,867 (5.8%)

GRAND ISLAND MSA
(Not Seasonally Adjusted)
November Unemployment Rate: 2.8%
November Total Non-Farm Employment: 42,330

Largest OTM Increase (Private)
Professional & Business Services: 809 (4.0%)
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities: 418 (1.2%)

Largest OTY Increase (Private)
Education & Health Services: 469 (1.5%)
Professional & Business Services: 453 (2.2%)

Sources: