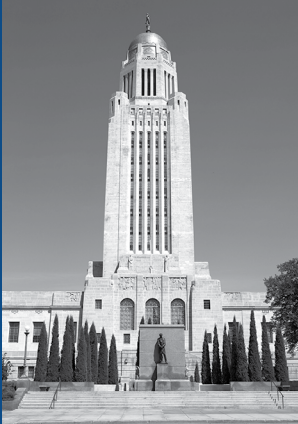


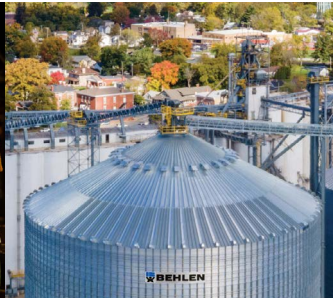
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— NEBRASKA INSIGHTS —



Key Indicators for Nebraska Demographics, Workforce, Economy, Innovation, Quality-of-Life, and Business Climate

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As Nebraska continues to chart its course in a rapidly changing economy, access to clear, reliable, and comparative data has never been more important. Nebraska Insights 2026 was developed to provide policy makers, business leaders, and community partners with an objective, fact-based look at how Nebraska measures up to other states across key indicators that shape our competitiveness and quality of life.

By bringing these data points together in one place, our goal is to equip decision-makers with the insights needed to understand our strengths, recognize our challenges, and identify opportunities for strategic action. Whether the focus is workforce, economic performance, education, or community vitality, this resource offers a foundation for informed policy development and meaningful progress.

Thank you for your commitment to Nebraska's future. We hope Nebraska Insights 2026 serves as a valuable tool as we work together to strengthen our state's economy and ensure long-term prosperity for all Nebraskans.



Tera Norris
President
Nebraska Chamber
Foundation

Nebraska Insights 2026 brings together a focused set of demographic, workforce, economic, innovation, quality-of-life, and business climate indicators that are frequently requested by policymakers, business leaders, and community stakeholders. The indicators included here capture core forces shaping Nebraska's competitiveness and long-term trajectory.

Each visual pairs an indicator value, such as an estimate, rate, or dollar amount, with Nebraska's rank among the 50 states, allowing users to see both the level of each measure and how Nebraska compares nationally.

While the title reflects a 2026 planning horizon, the underlying metrics draw primarily from 2023 and 2024 data, with limited 2025 data where available. Although these data may appear lagged, they come from robust, nationally comparable sources and remain highly relevant for understanding current conditions and informing near-term decisions. Each indicator and data source was selected to ensure reliability, consistency across states, and relevance to today's policy environment.

These visuals are designed as a quick reference to surface key insights rather than a comprehensive assessment of each topic. Their value lies in making complex data accessible and actionable by highlighting trends, gaps, and priority areas. Additional analysis is needed to add context, examine underlying drivers, and translate these insights into targeted strategies, policies, and investments.

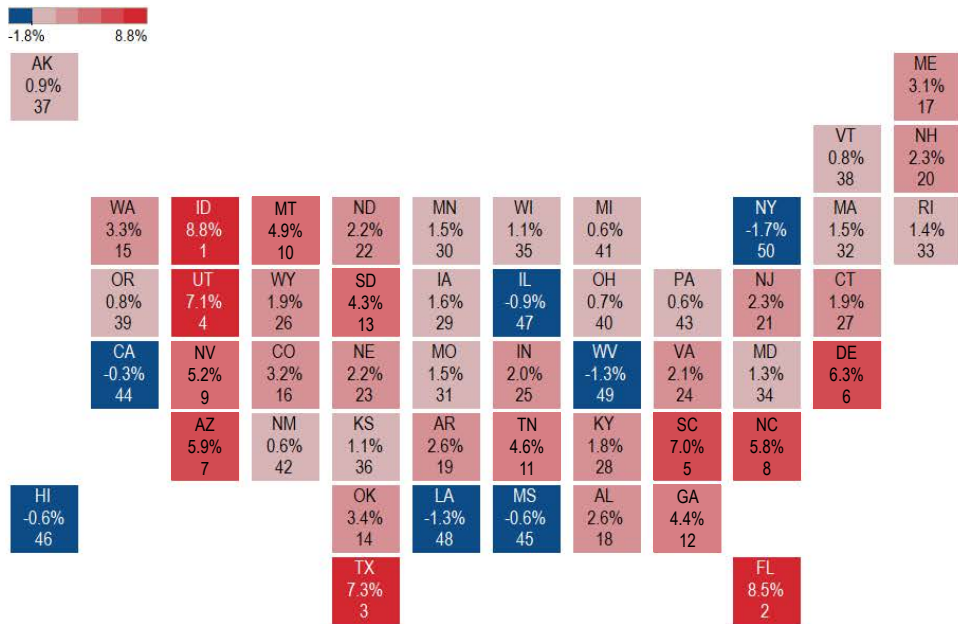
If you have questions about the data, methods, or interpretation — or would like to explore additional indicators — please contact the University of Nebraska at Omaha Center for Public Affairs Research (UNO CPAR) at cpar.unomaha.edu or follow CPAR on LinkedIn, @unocpar.



Josie Gatti Schafer
UNO CPAR Director

Nebraska's Population Growth Is Steady but Moderate

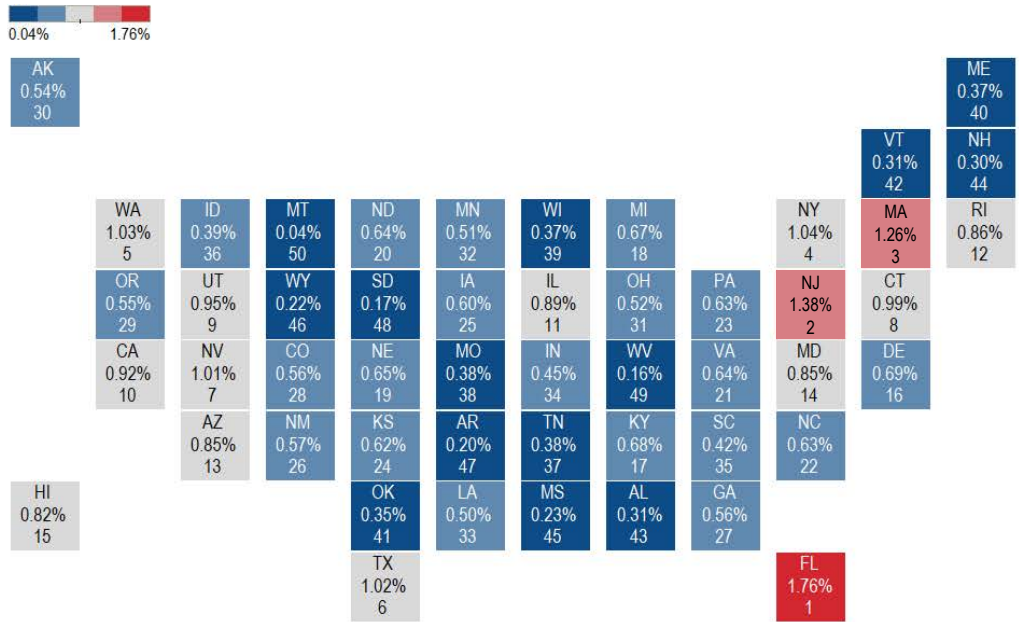
Nebraska's population increased 2.2% from 2020 to 2024, ranking 23rd nationally. This measure reflects overall population change over a four-year period. Nebraska's recent growth aligns with its longer-term pace, following a 7.4% increase from 2010 to 2020 — less than 1% per year but consistently upward.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 Vintage Population Estimates

Nebraska's International Migration Rate Contributes to Population Gains

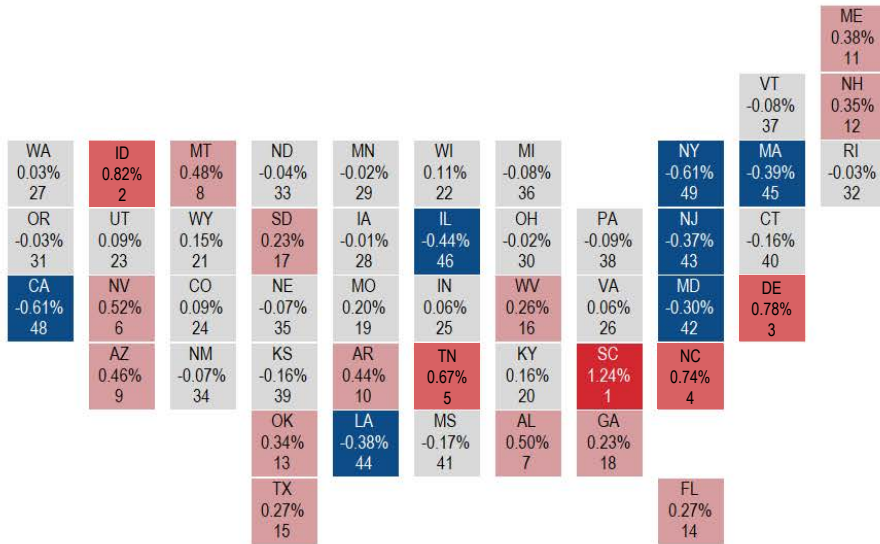
Nebraska's international migration rate from 2023 to 2024 is 0.65% as a share of total population, ranking 19th nationally. This measure reflects the number of people moving to the state from international locations. Nebraska's rate translates to an estimated increase of about 13,000 residents per year. For context, large states such as Texas and Florida record international migration totals near or above 400,000 annually.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 Vintage Population Estimates

Domestic Migration Continues to Drive Population Loss in Nebraska

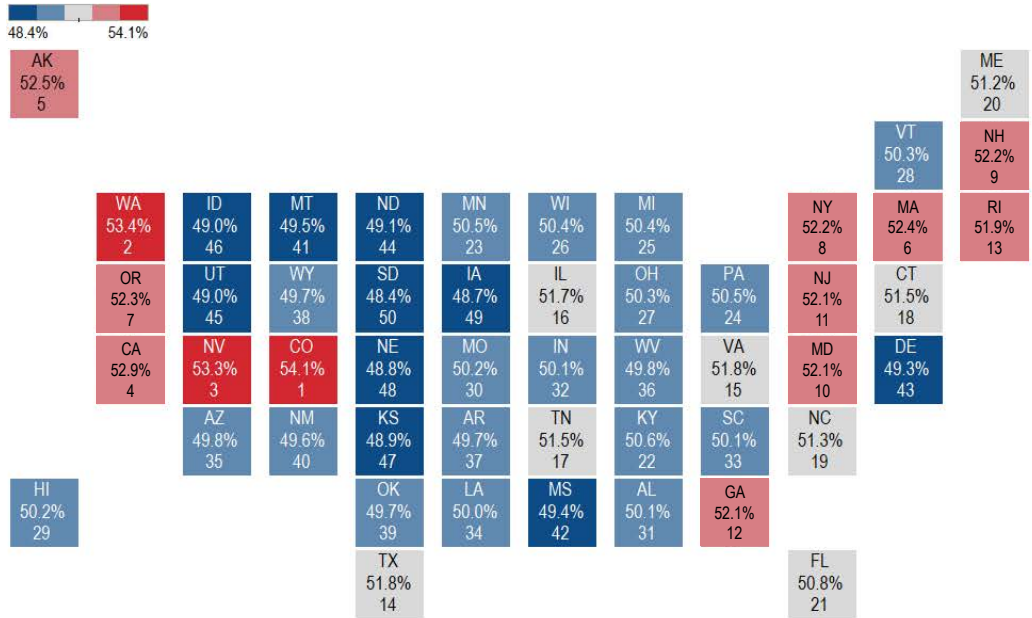
Nebraska's net domestic migration rate from 2023 to 2024 is -0.07% as a share of total population, ranking 35th nationally. This measure reflects the net number of people moving into or out of the state from other parts of the country. Nebraska's rate equates to a net loss of about 1,500 residents per year, fewer than in recent years but still a decline. The loss is larger than in many regional states, including Iowa, which also lost residents but at a lower rate. Within the region, only Kansas experienced a greater domestic migration loss.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 Vintage Population Estimates

Nebraska Has a Small Share of Residents in Their Prime Working Ages

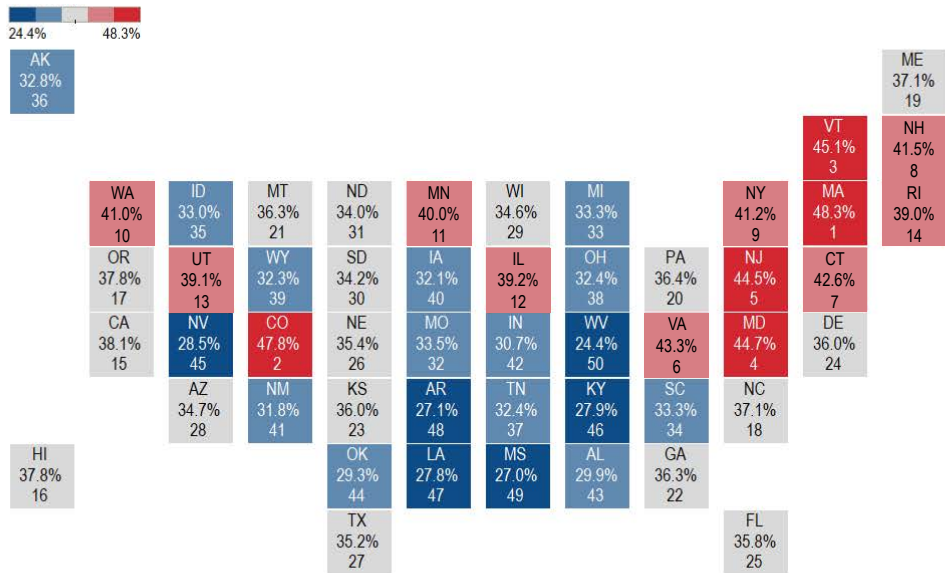
In Nebraska, 48.9% of the population is in the prime working-age range, 25 to 64, ranking 48th nationally. Although state differences on this measure are relatively small, Nebraska's low share and smaller population can create workforce challenges. The state has 978,755 residents in their prime working ages.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Nebraska's Bachelor's Degree Attainment Is Close to the National Average

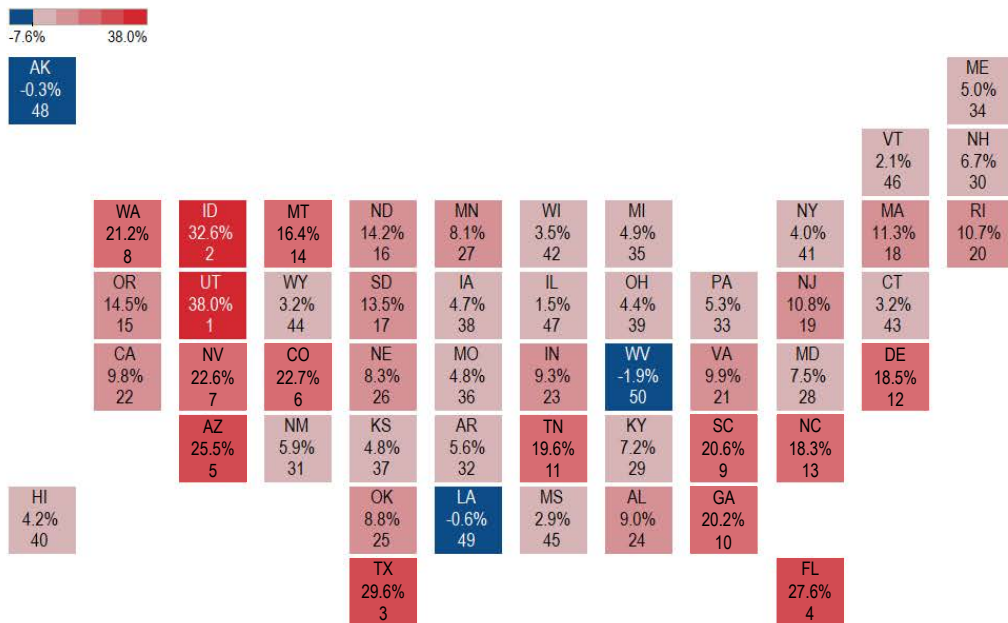
In Nebraska, 35.4% of adults age 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree or higher, ranking 26th nationally. Although a degree does not always correspond to skill or wages, higher educational attainment is strongly associated with higher earnings and access to many of the state's highest-wage jobs. Additionally, nearly 90% of Nebraskans with at least a bachelor's degree participate in the labor force, highlighting the close link between education and workforce engagement. As a result, educational attainment serves as a useful proxy for skill level and earnings potential.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Nebraska's Labor Force Has Grown at a Moderate Rate Since 2010

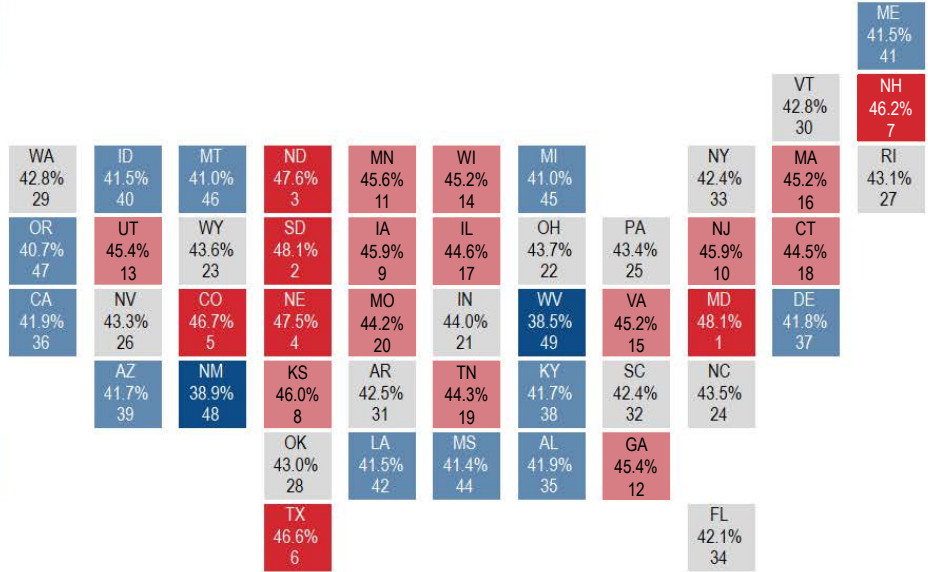
Nebraska's labor force grew 8.3% from 2010 to 2024, ranking 26th nationally. This measure reflects the change in the number of people participating in the labor force over time. Nebraska's rate indicates moderate expansion in its labor force relative to other states.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Nebraska Has One of the Highest Rates of Full-Time Employment

Nebraska's full-time employment rate is 47.5%, ranking 4th nationally. This measure reflects the share of the population age 16 and over that works full time and serves as an indicator of stable employment. Nebraska's high rate indicates a comparatively large proportion of residents engaged in full-time work.

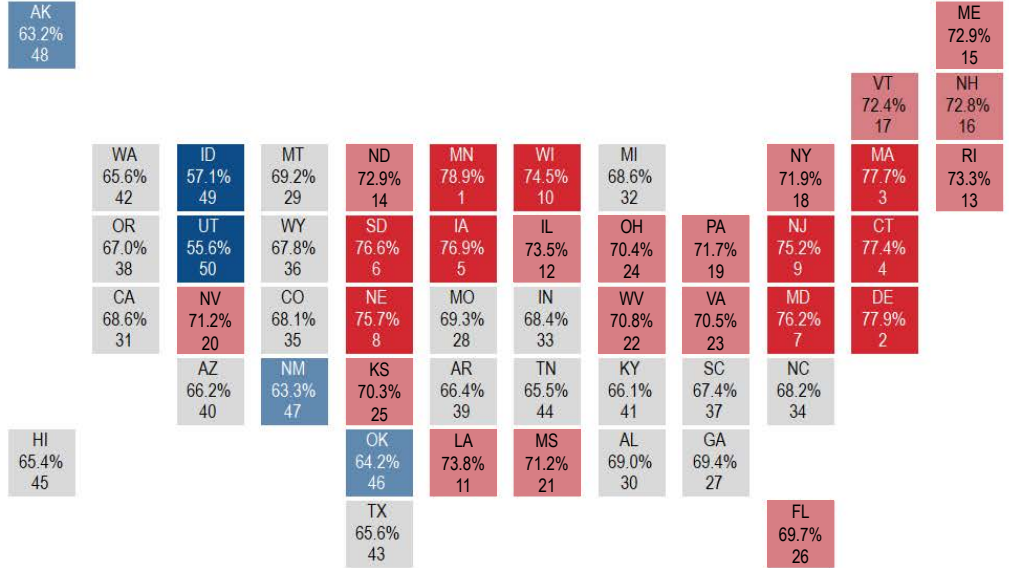
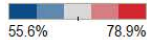


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Nebraska Maintains a High Rate of Labor Force Participation Among Parents of Young Children

Nebraska's rate of families with all parents in the labor force and at least one child under age 6 is 75.7%, ranking 8th nationally.

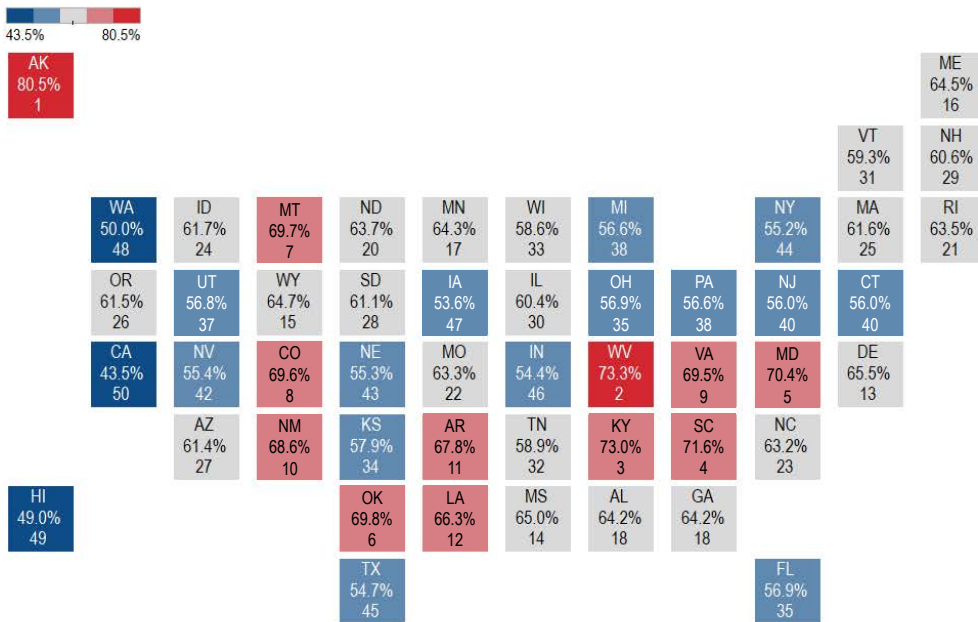
Nebraska's consistently high rate demonstrates the central role of employment in family life across the state.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Nebraska's 2024 Job Openings Rate Shows Moderate Labor Demand

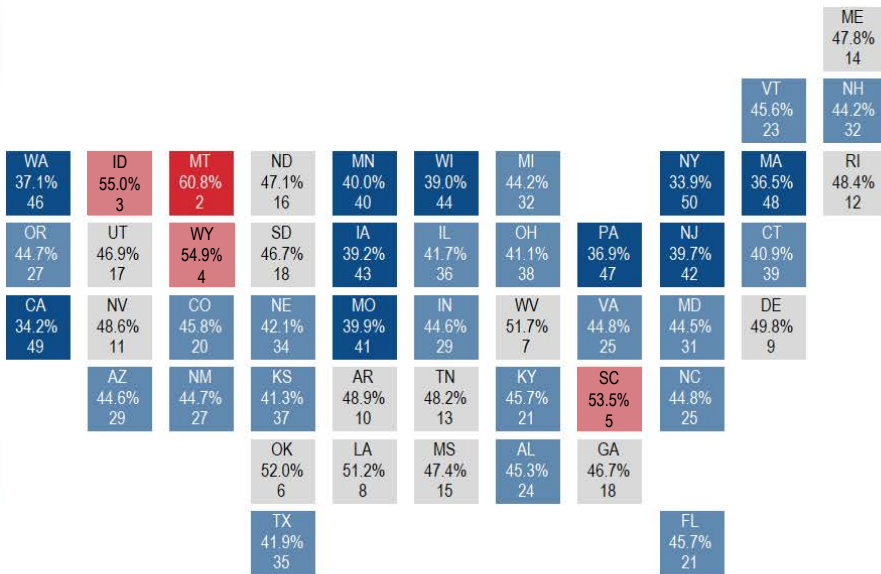
Nebraska records a 2024 job openings rate of 55.3% and ranks 43rd nationally. This rate reflects the level of employer demand for workers relative to the size of the labor market. The job openings rate in Nebraska has declined from 65.8% in 2023, pointing to steady but not elevated demand compared to states with higher openings rates. Throughout much of 2025 the Nebraska Department of Labor reported just under 30,000 open jobs in the state.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (n.d.), Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS); Nebraska Department of Labor, LMI Homepage

Nebraska's 2024 Annualized Hires Rate Indicates Lower Labor-Market Dynamism

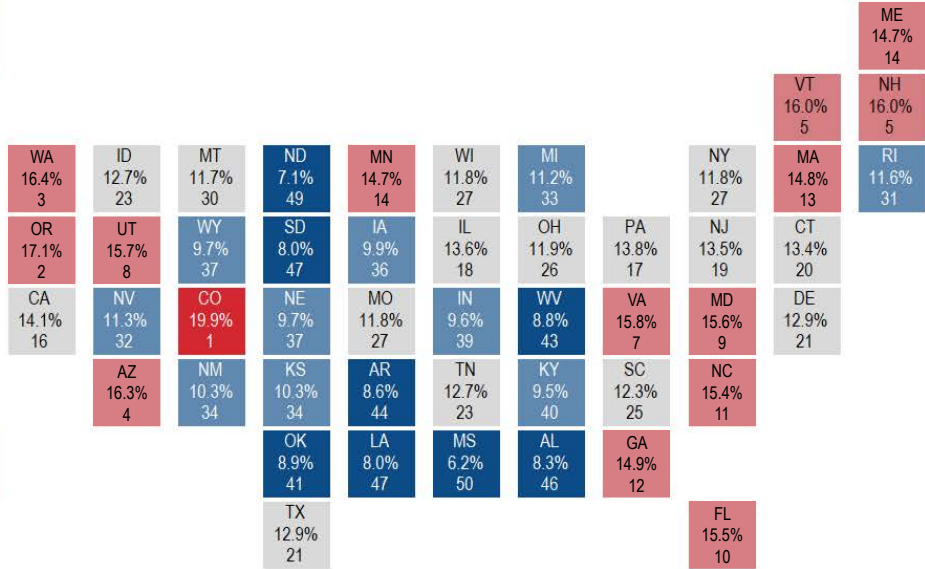
Nebraska posts an annualized hires rate of 42.1% and ranks 34th nationally. This rate reflects the level of hiring activity relative to the size of the labor market. Nebraska's results suggest a stable but less dynamic hiring environment compared to states with greater hiring activity.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (n.d.), Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)

Nebraska's Remote Work Rate Shows Limited Ability to Work From Home

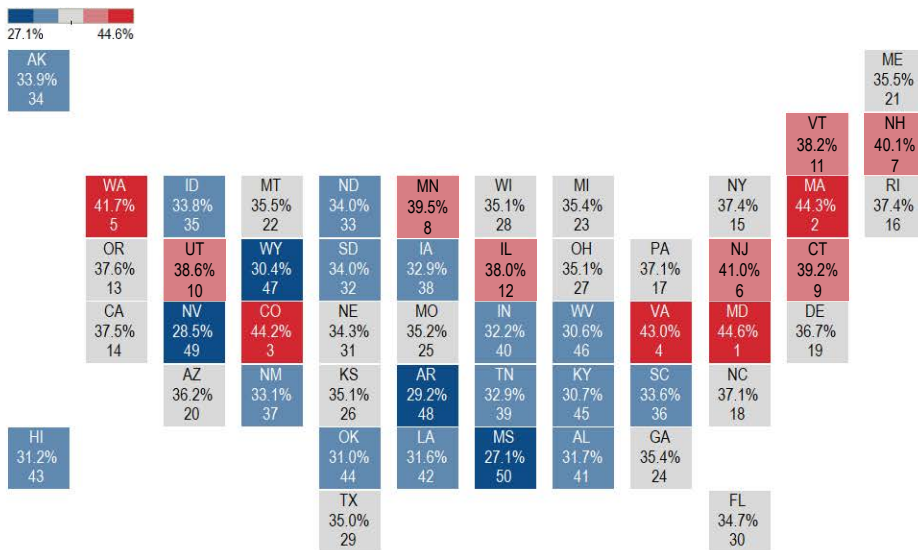
Nebraska reports that 9.7% of its workforce worked entirely from home in 2024, ranking 37th nationally. This measure reflects the share of workers whose jobs allow full-time remote arrangements. Nebraska's position indicates relatively limited access to fully remote work compared to most states.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Nebraska's Density of High-Skill, High-Wage Jobs Shows Moderate National Competitiveness

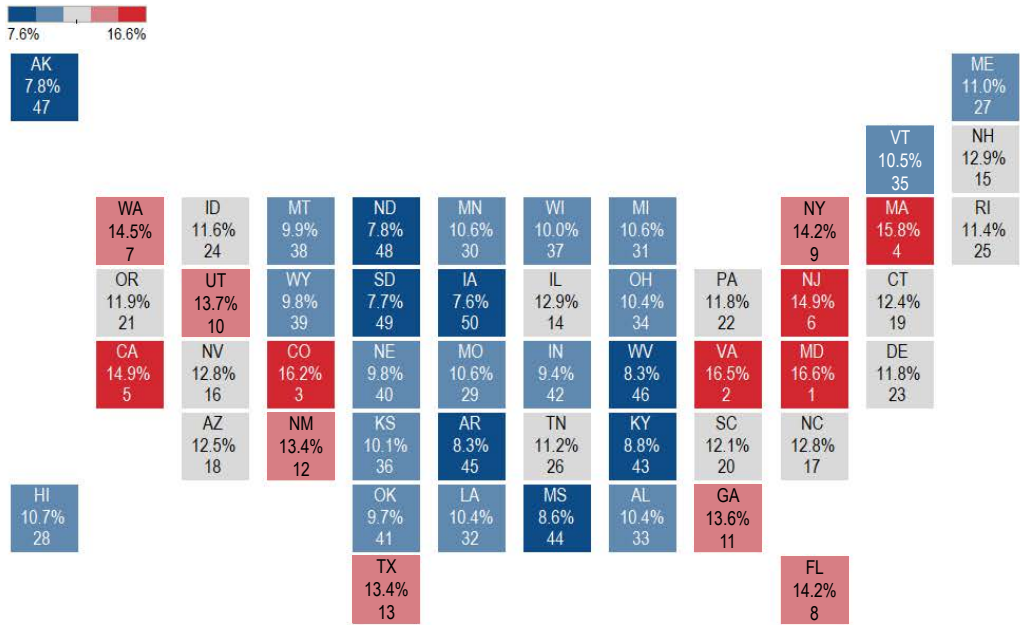
Nebraska's density of high-skill, high-wage jobs is 34.3%, ranking 31st nationally. This measure reflects the share of full-time jobs in fields such as management, business and finance, legal, architecture and engineering, computer and math, life and physical sciences, social sciences, and health diagnosing and treating practitioners. Nebraska's concentration of these jobs is strong within the region but not nationally competitive. UNO CPAR research shows that these occupations are among the most likely to leave the state, underscoring the importance of strengthening Nebraska's high-skill job base.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Nebraska Has a Small Share of Workers in Professional, Scientific, and Management Industries

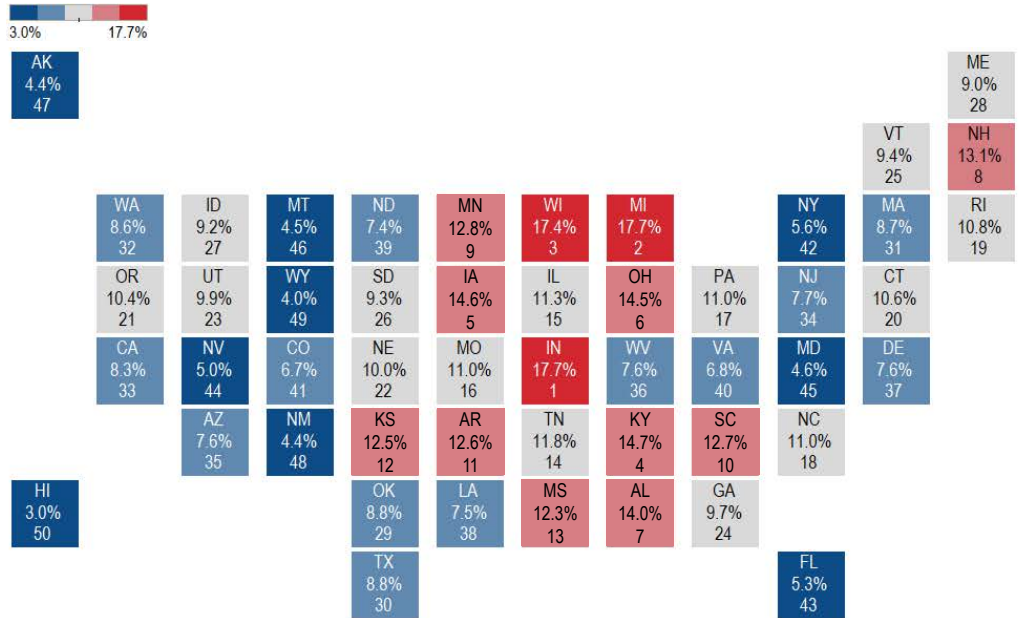
Nebraska's share of workers employed in the professional, scientific, and management sector is 9.8%, ranking 40th nationally. This measure is often used as a proxy for the concentration of higher-skill, higher-wage jobs in a state's economy. Nebraska's low ranking indicates a smaller presence of these occupations compared with most states.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Manufacturing Is a Significant Part of Nebraska's Economy

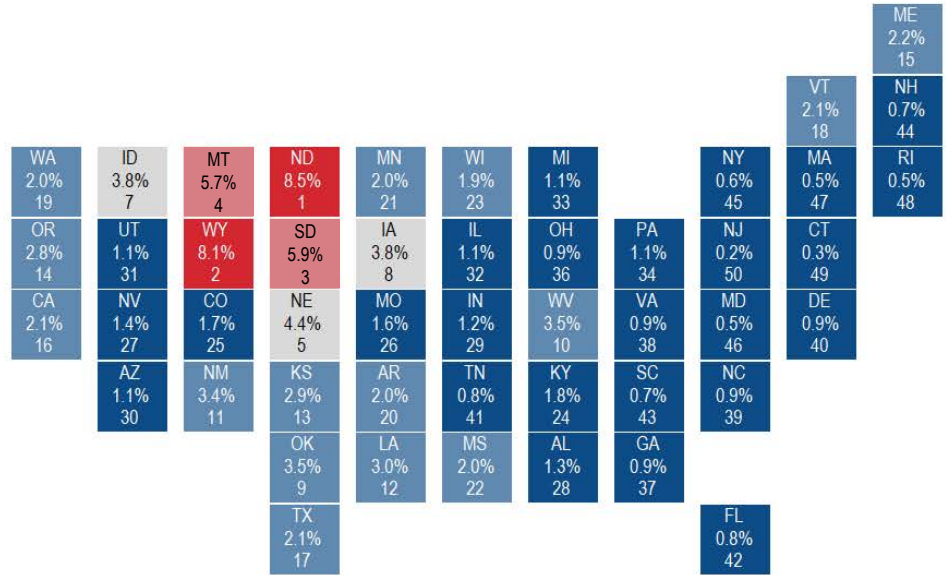
The manufacturing industry employs 10% of Nebraska's workers, ranking 22nd nationally. This sector is typically the state's second-largest contributor to GDP. Thus, it is an important sector to Nebraska's economy. For additional context, manufacturing employment has grown 12% in Nebraska since 2010, a slightly above-average pace compared with other states.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Agriculture Comprises a Small Share of Nebraska's Workforce Despite a High National Ranking

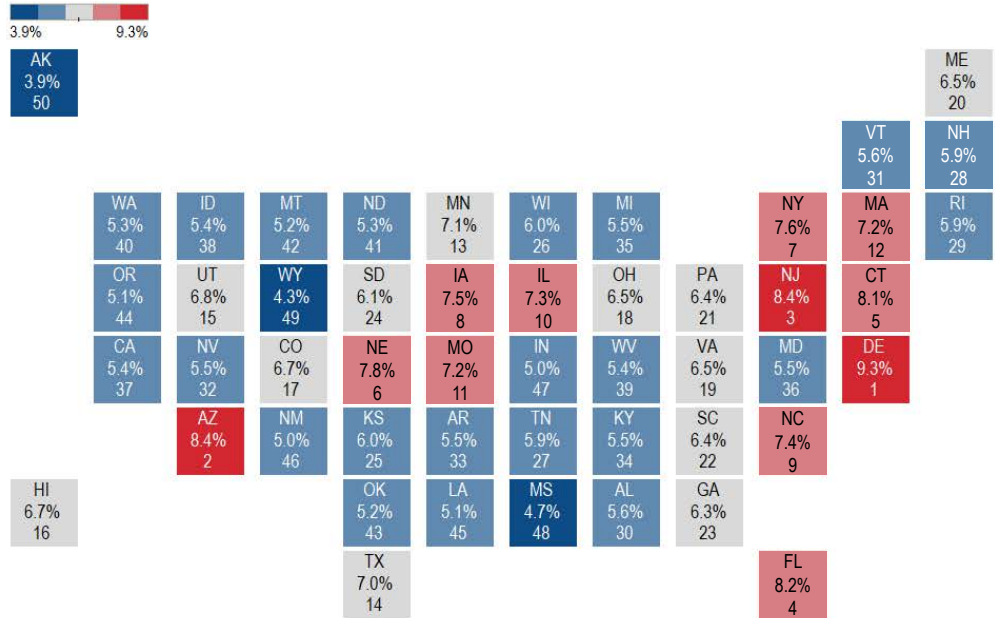
Agriculture and agriculture-related industries employ 4.4% of Nebraska's workforce, ranking 5th nationally. Nebraska's high ranking reflects that more residents work in agriculture than in many other states, even though the sector represents a modest share of total employment. However, agriculture has an extensive history in the state and remains closely tied to many other aspects of Nebraska's economy.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Nebraska Has a Strong Concentration of Jobs in Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate

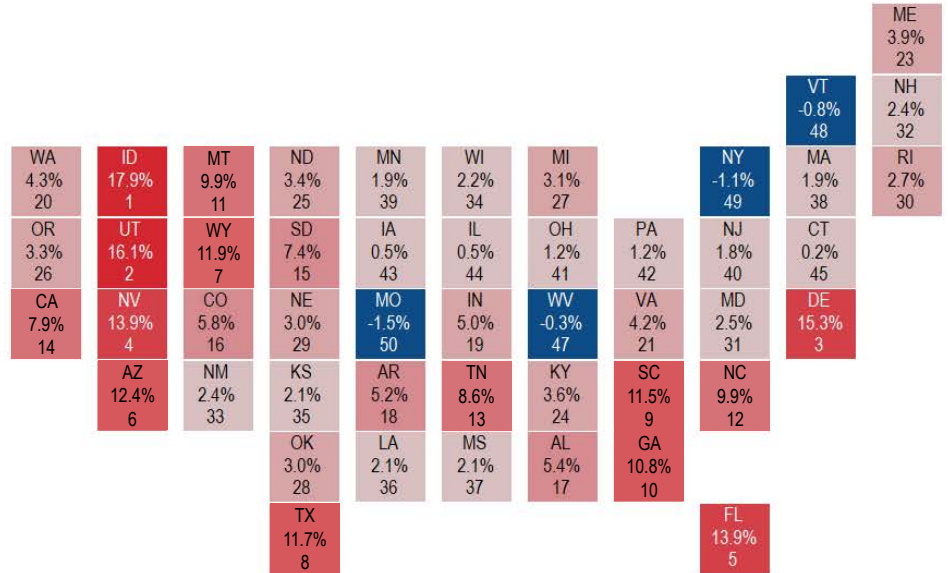
In Nebraska, 7.8% of the workforce is employed in the finance and insurance industry, and the real estate, rental, and leasing sector, ranking 6th nationally. This sector is the state's largest contributor to GDP by value, and the employment share reflects its central role in Nebraska's economy.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Nebraska's Business Establishment Growth Shows Moderate Expansion

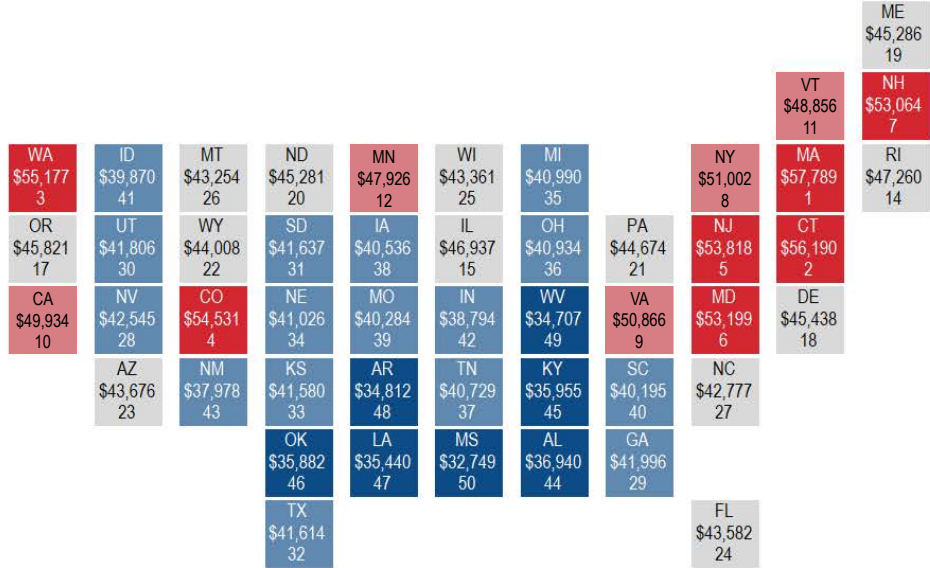
Nebraska had 56,503 business establishments in 2023. From 2018 to 2023, the number of establishments increased 3.0%, reflecting steady but moderate expansion and placing Nebraska near the middle of states. Business establishments are defined as individual physical locations where business activity occurs.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 and 2023 County Business Patterns

Nebraska's Per Capita Income Ranks Below the National Midpoint

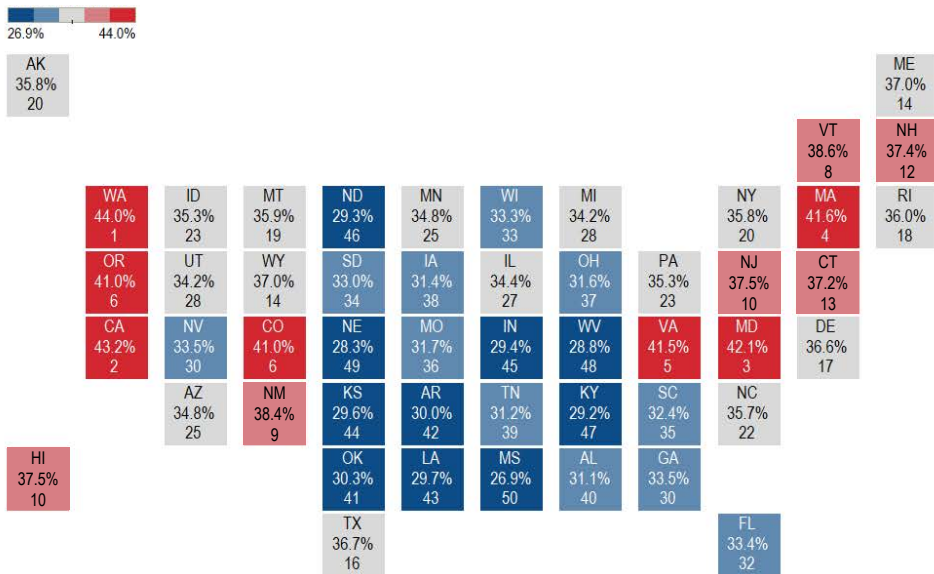
Nebraska's per capita income is \$41,026, ranking 34th nationally. This measure reflects the average income received per person, including both earners and non-earners. Per capita income is useful for comparisons because it standardizes income across states with different populations, allowing a clearer view of overall economic well-being. Nebraska's ranking places it below the national midpoint.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

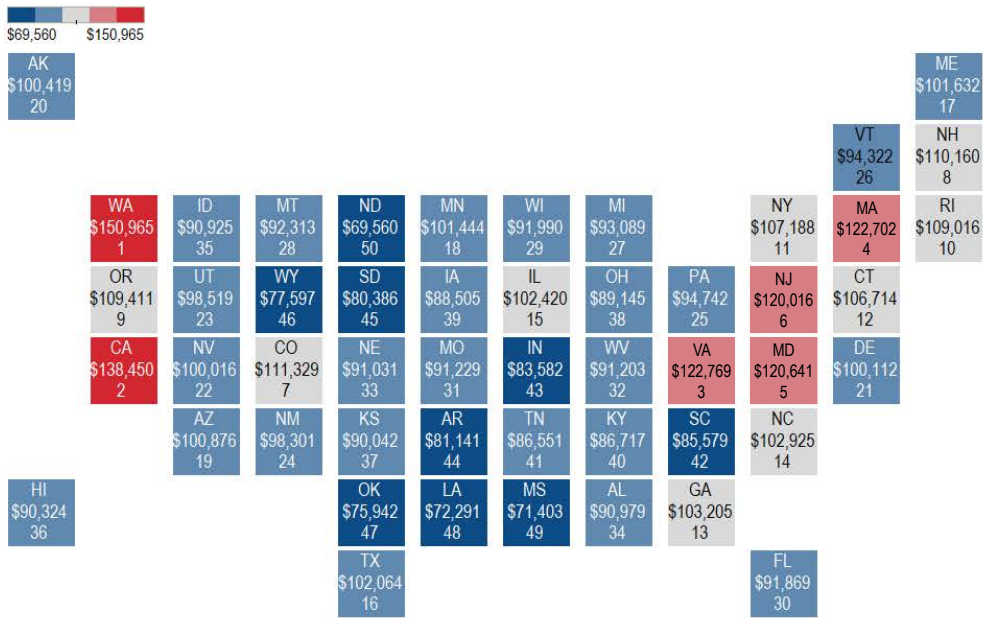
Nebraska Has a Low Share of Adults With Science and Engineering Degrees

In Nebraska, 28.3% of adults age 25 and older with a bachelor's degree hold a degree in science or engineering, ranking 49th nationally. This metric is often used as a proxy for innovation potential because science and engineering fields frequently produce high-value products and technologies. Nebraska has held a low position on this measure for several years, signaling a relatively small pool of science and engineering talent compared with other states.



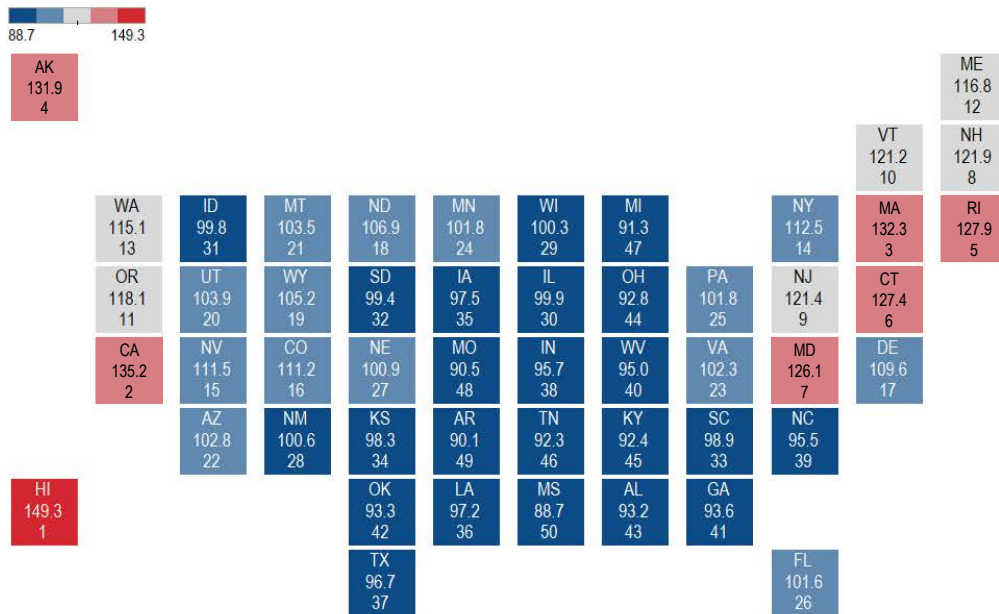
Computer and Math Occupations in Nebraska Offer Less Competitive Median Earnings

Nebraska's median earnings for full-time workers in computer and math occupations are \$91,031, ranking 33rd nationally. This measure reflects pay levels in a high-growth, high-skill field that is central to attracting and retaining technical talent. Nebraska's wages are strong within the region but fall below national levels, which can make it harder to compete for top talent in these occupations.



Nebraska's 2025 Cost of Living Index Shows Average Living Costs

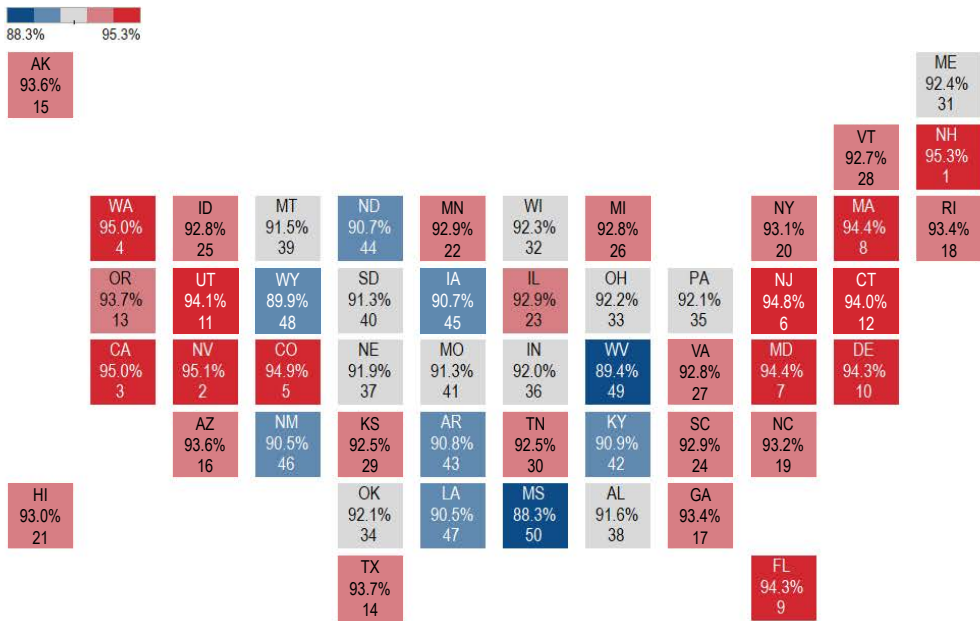
Nebraska reports a 2025 Cost of Living Index of 100.9 and ranks 27th nationally. The index measures relative living costs across states, with values above 100 indicating higher-than-average costs and values below 100 indicating lower costs. State scores range from approximately 88 to 149. Nebraska's position places it near the national average and slightly higher than most states in the region.



Source: The Council for Community and Economic Research, 2025 Cost of Living Index by State

Nebraska's Broadband Access Rate Shows Moderate Coverage

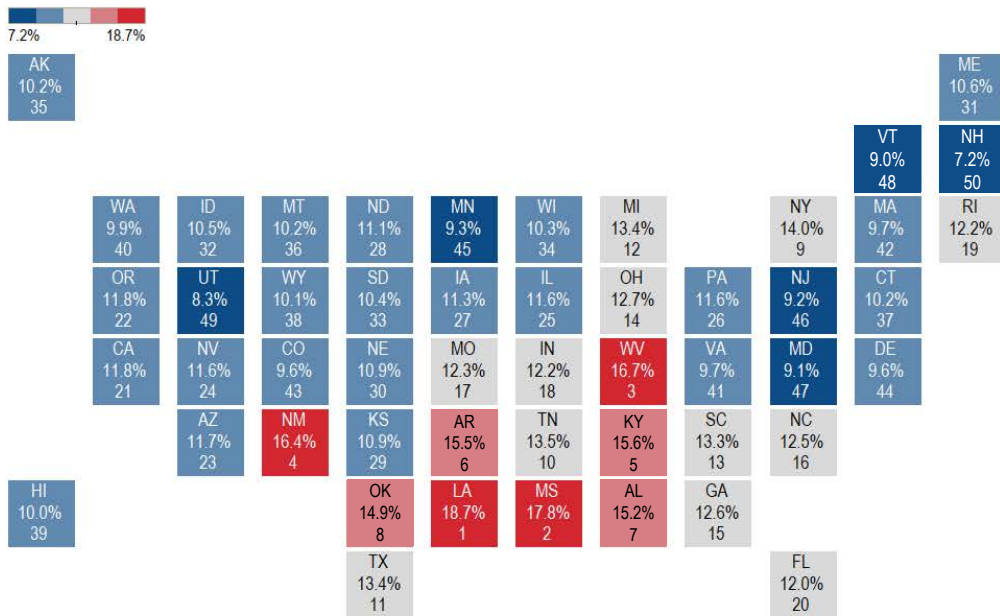
Nebraska reports that 91.7% of its population has access to broadband and ranks 37th nationally. This measure reflects the share of residents who can obtain high-speed internet service. Nebraska's position indicates broad but not comprehensive coverage.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 and 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

Nebraska's Poverty Rate Is Lower Than in Many Other States

Nebraska's official poverty rate is 10.9%, ranking 30th nationally. This measure reflects the share of people living in households with resources below the federal poverty threshold. Nebraska's rate is lower than in many states, indicating a smaller portion of residents experience poverty.

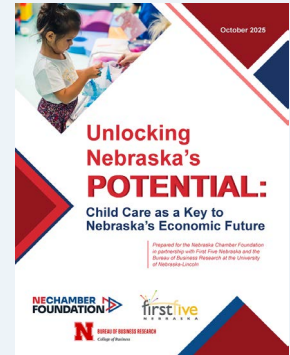
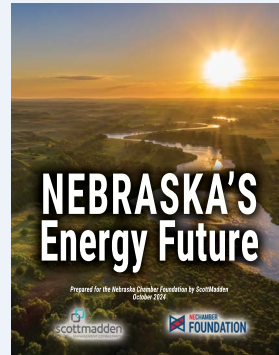


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

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