

# NEBRASKA WORKFORCE TRENDS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024 ISSUE | NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



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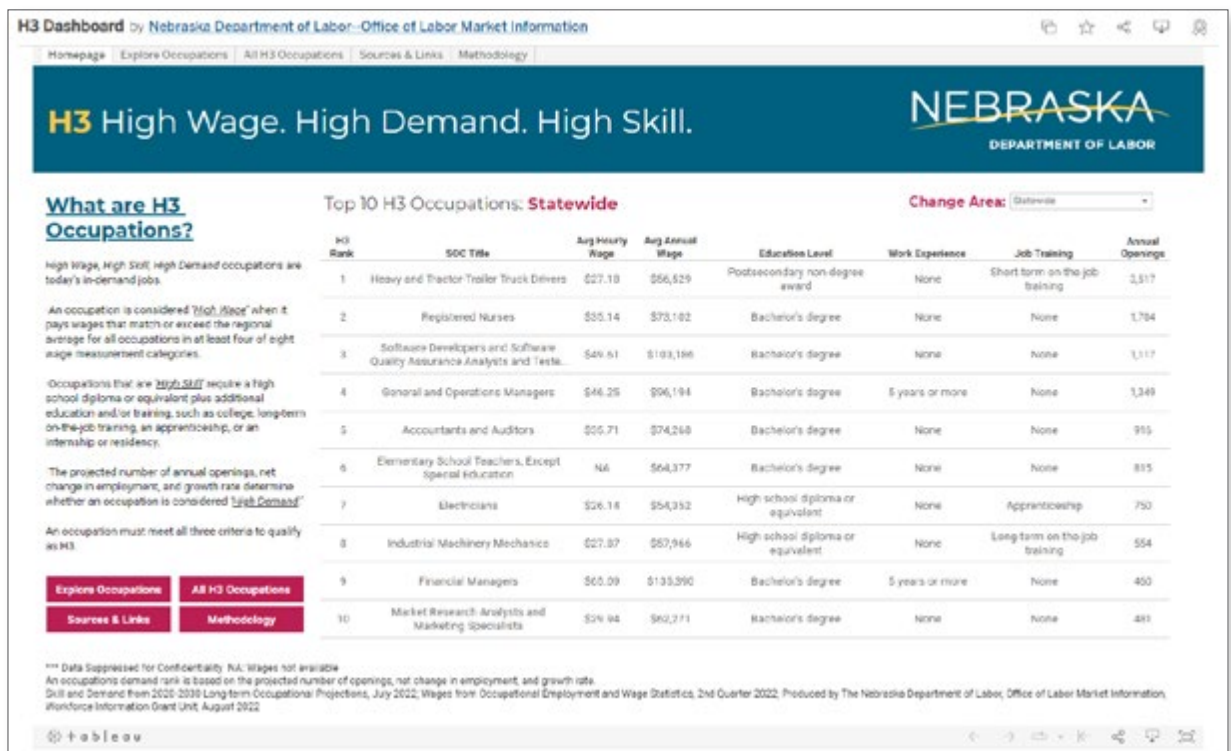
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## New H3 Dashboard

The new High Wage, High Demand, High Skill (H3) Tableau interactive dashboard features rankings, typical education requirements, wages, projections, and H3 indicators for occupations. Data is provided for Nebraska statewide and the economic regions.

Visit [NEworks.nebraska.gov](http://NEworks.nebraska.gov) to view the H3 dashboard.



# 2023 By the Numbers

Grace Johnson & Hillary Lee

## Unemployment Insurance Benefits:

October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023

Total State Benefits Paid:  
**\$67,104,855**

Regular State Initial  
Claims Filed:

**35,018**

Number of layoffs averted  
through the STC Program  
(2022-2023):

**120**

Source: Unemployment Insurance Annual Report

## Employment Statistics:

January – December 2023

Nebraska's Lowest  
Unemployment Rate in 2023:

**1.9**

Record high non-farm  
employment - June 2023:

**1,055,327**

Record high private education  
and health services -  
November 2023

**165,317**

Sources: Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program  
(LAUS), Nebraska Department of Labor; Bureau of  
Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor

## Worker Training Program:

July 1, 2022 – June 30 2023

Worker Training Program  
Grant Applicants:

**134**

Worker Training Program  
grants awarded

**69**

Total Worker Training Grant  
Funds Awarded:

**\$1,214,069**

Source: Worker Training Program Annual Report

## Meatpacking Workers Bill of Rights:

January – December 2023

Number of NDOL visits to  
meatpacking facilities:

**57**

Number of workers employed at  
meatpacking facilities visited:

**34,233**

Total number of employees  
interviewed during the  
visits with an average of five to  
six per facility:

**318**

Source: Meatpacking Industry Workers  
Bill of Rights Annual Report

## Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Activity:

October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023

Total Nebraska RA programs:

**113**

Total active apprentices:

**2,587**

New apprentices added:

**1,450**

Apprentices who completed  
RA programs:

**378**

Number of new occupations added  
to existing programs:

**23**

Source: U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship

# Retail Trade Employment at a Glance

Byron Lefler, Research Analyst

## Recent Trends

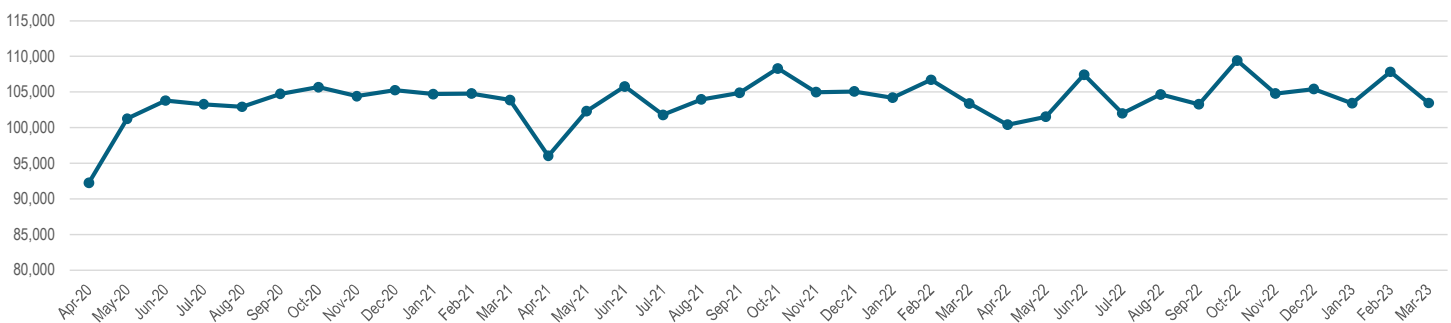
Since the end of 2020, annual average employment levels across all industries have slightly surpassed pre-pandemic levels, as the annual average employment for 2022 was 984,574, an increase of 0.23% since 2019.

Even though employment in the retail industry has not yet gotten back to the pre-pandemic high, there are encouraging signs in the retail industry, beginning with an increase in employment levels during the 2nd quarter of 2021. December 2021 saw retail trade employment levels at 109,432. The last time retail trade employment had been at or above 109,000 was in November 2018.

The retail trade industry has seen a 3.45% increase in employment since the end of 2020, with 2022 annual average employment at 105,136. Post pandemic employment in the retail industry is 5% below the pre-pandemic high seen in 2016 (110,663).

In 2022, the average quarterly employment level was 105,136, a 0.9% decrease from the average quarterly employment levels in the second half of 2021 (106,054). Retail trade employment level continued to drop in 2023, with a March 2023 employment level of 103,445. Employment levels are still up 12% from the Covid-19 pandemic low of 92,247 in April 2020. (1)

## Monthly Retail Trade Employment, April 2020 to March 2023

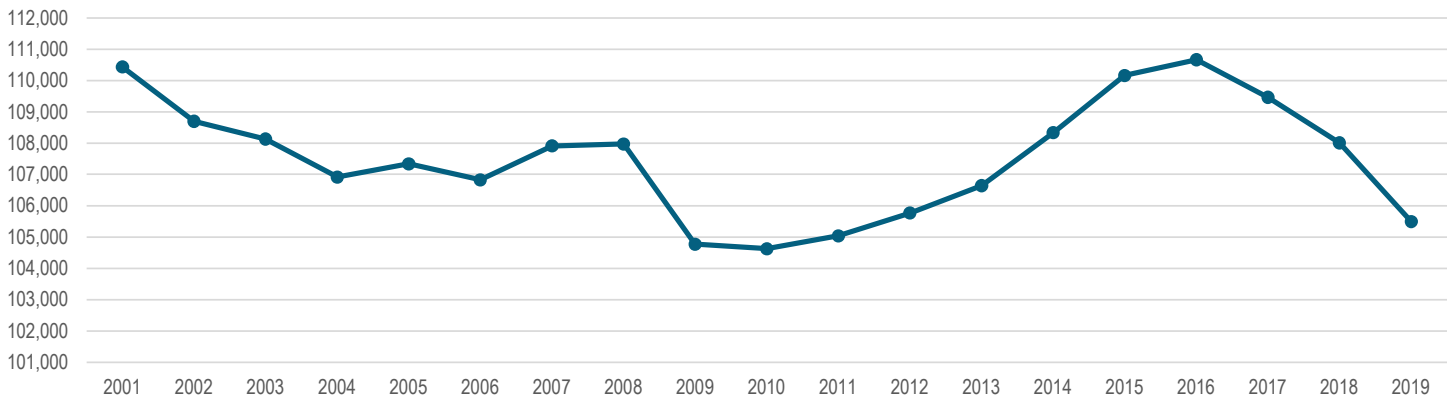


Source: NEworks. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). [Online] October 4, 2023.

## Historical Employment Data

From 2001 to 2019, the average annual employment level for all industries ranged from 874,050 in 2002 to 982,321 in 2019. The retail industry during this same time period had annual average employment levels that ranged from a high of 110,663 in 2016 to a low 104,626 in 2009. Between 2001 and 2019, the retail industry made up between 11 and 12% of the total employment in the state of Nebraska. The only other industry with similar employment was the health care and social assistance industry, which accounted for between 12 and 15% of the total employment in the state of Nebraska between 2001 and 2019. (1)

### Average Annual Retail Trade Employment



Source: NWorks. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). [Online] October 4, 2023.

Within the Retail industry there are two types of establishments, store retailers and non-store retailers. Store retailers are fixed point of sale locations that are located and designed to attract a high volume of walk-in customers. These types of store retailers include selling products for personal and household consumptions, serving business and institutional clients and engaging in after sales services such as repairs and installation. Non-store retailers are establishments who market their merchandise via infomercials, direct-response advertising, paper and electronic catalogs, door-to-door sales, in-home demonstration, selling from portable stalls (street vendor, except food) and distribution through vending machines. (2)

More detailed retail trade industry data such as employment levels by area and industry sub-sector can be found on the labor market information page at [Neworks.nebraska.gov](https://neworks.nebraska.gov). Click the **Industry Employment & Wages** button.

### The retail industry is made up of 12 different sub-sectors which include:

- Motor vehicle and parts dealers
- Furniture and home furnishings stores
- Electronics and appliance stores
- Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers
- Food and beverage stores
- Health and personal care stores
- Gasoline stations
- Clothing and clothing accessories stores
- Sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores
- General merchandise stores
- Miscellaneous store retailers
- Non-store retailers

Source: NWorks. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). [Online] October 4, 2023.

### Sources:

1. NWorks. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). [Online] October 4, 2023. <https://neworks.nebraska.gov/vosnet/analyzer/resultsNew.aspx?session=ind202&qlink=1&plang=E>.
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Industry at a Glance. [Online] November 16, 2023. <https://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag44-45.htm>.

# Labor Availability Spotlight: Barriers to Training for Employees

Marc Bettis, Research Analyst

The Nebraska Department of Labor’s Labor Availability Study collects a wide variety of data about both households and businesses. Beginning with the 2021-2022 survey year, NDOL began collecting employee perceptions about their jobs as either a career, a job to get by, or a steppingstone to a career, as well as what training employers offer to their employees.

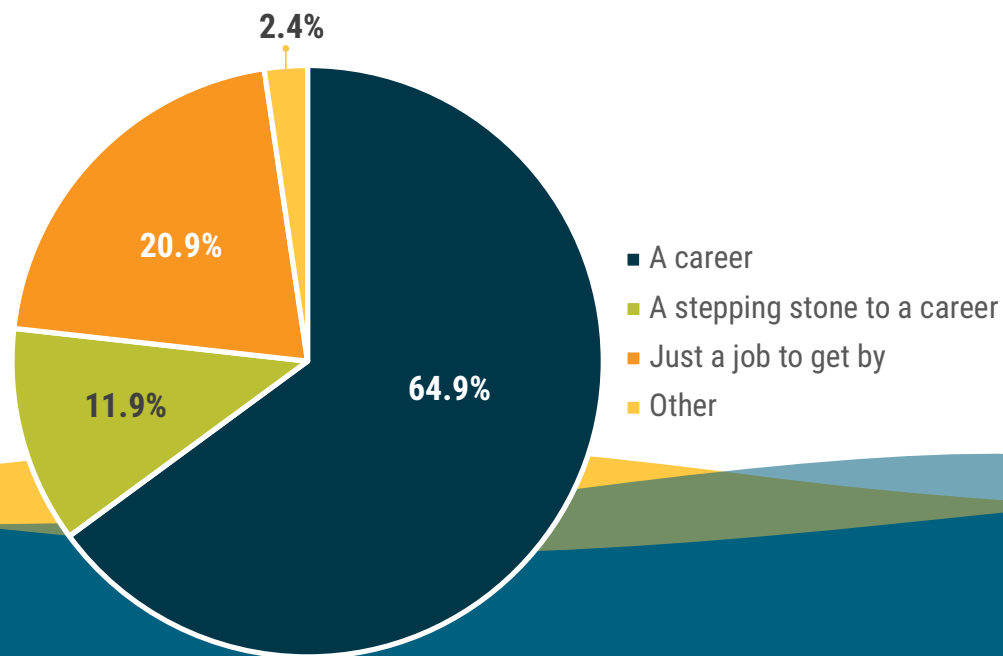
While most Nebraskans surveyed from 2021 to 2023 (see map on page 8) reported an obstacle to improving their employment situation, most employers are willing to upskill and train incoming workers to be proficient at their job duties. Among potential job seekers, there is a high similarity in perceived obstacles to obtaining additional training, regardless of how they perceived their job. Further, gaps between job skills training and apprenticeships being offered by employers are very consistent when viewed by different lenses such as wage or geography.

**POTENTIAL JOB SEEKER** An employed person who answered either ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’ to the question “Are you likely to change jobs in the next year if a suitable job is available?” or a non-employed person who answered ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’ to the question “Are you likely to reenter the workforce in the next year if a suitable job is available?” The potential job seekers group includes all individuals who indicated that they might accept a new job within the next year, given the right circumstances.

## Employment as a Career

The chart shows the percentage of survey respondents who viewed their employment as a career, a stepping stone to a career, or a job to get by. Most potential job seekers (64.9%) viewed their current employment as a career.

Potential Job Seekers’ Perceptions of Their Current Job



## Barriers

Regardless of their perception of their job, potential job seekers had a high level of agreement in there being some barrier (Table 1) to training to improve their employment situation. The labor availability survey supplies several predefined barriers for respondents to select as seen in Table 2.

**Table 1** Potential Job Seekers Reporting a Barrier to Training, by Job Perception

Perception of job	Have Any Barrier
Career	88.8%
Stepping stone to a career	95.9%
Job to get by	94.7%

**31%** of potential job seekers across the state cite lack of training as an obstacle to improving their employment situation.

**Table 2** Barriers to Training by Job Perception

Perception of job	Cost of Training	Desired Training is Unavailable	Distance/transportation to training	Lack of Time for Training	Knowledge of Available Trainings
Career	62.0%	57.2%	56.2%	73.6%	63.1%
Stepping stone to a career	76.8%	66.8%	66.9%	80.2%	67.4%
Job to get by	76.0%	61.3%	70.3%	73.6%	65.6%

Both part time (67.5%) and full-time (78.3%) potential job seekers cited lack of time for training as a barrier. Potential job seekers who cited distance/transportation to training as a barrier were nearly equally likely to live/work in a different city (62.2%) as in the same city (59.7%).

### Respondents Citing Lack of Time for Training

Part-Time Potential Job Seekers	Full-Time Potential Job Seekers
67.5%	78.3%

### Potential Job Seekers Citing Distance/Transportation to Training as a Barrier

Live and work in different cities	62.2%
Live and work in same city	59.7%

**Table 3** Selected Trainings Offered for Difficult To Hire Occupations, by Area

	Job Skills	Apprenticeships
Columbus	69.3%	44.7%
Crete	74.1%	38.5%
Fremont	76.3%	50.2%
Grand Island	69.8%	46.8%
Greater Lincoln	72.4%	40.8%
Greater Omaha	71.9%	42.6%
Hastings	73.4%	45.9%
Kearney	75.9%	49.6%
Lexington	61.6%	47.7%
Norfolk	71.2%	48.7%
Seward	59.9%	41.6%
Wayne	69.2%	52.1%
York	73.7%	46.8%

### Trainings Offered

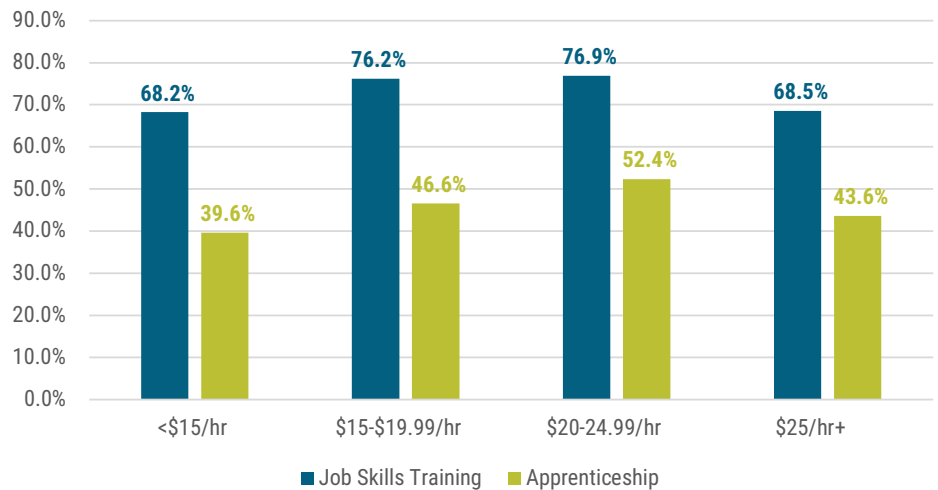
**DEFINITIONS OF FORMAL TRAINING TYPES:**

- **Job Skills:** Upgrade or extend employee skills or qualify workers for a job.
- **Apprenticeships:** Classroom or on-the-job training to become a skilled worker

Table 3 shows the percentage of employers in each survey area who indicated they offered job skills or apprenticeship training for occupations that are difficult to hire.

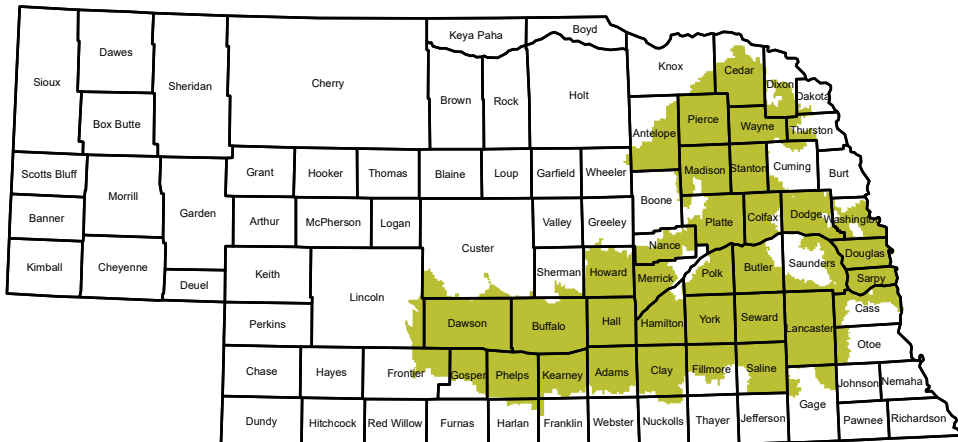
At the higher end, 76.3% of all Fremont employers offered job skills training compared to 59.9% in Seward. The percentage of employers offering apprenticeships ranged from 38.5% in Crete to 50.2% in Fremont.

### Trainings Offered, by Wage for Difficult to Hire Jobs



Training offerings by wage category across all geographic areas. Employers reported that more training is offered in the middle wage categories from \$15 per hour to \$24.99 per hour.

### Map of Survey Areas



Labor availability reports covering the areas shown are available at [Neworks.nebraska.gov](http://Neworks.nebraska.gov).



# 1,053,548

Total Nonfarm Employment (filled jobs)  
Not Seasonally Adjusted  
**for December 2023**

Nonfarm employment, a count of filled jobs, was 1,054,500 in December, down 925 over the month and up 11,473 over the year. Private industries with the most growth month to month were trade, transportation, and utilities (up 2,441 jobs); private education and health services (up 801 jobs); and manufacturing (up 327 jobs). Private industries with the most over the year growth were private education and health services (up 7,619 jobs), leisure and hospitality (up 2,371 jobs), and trade, transportation, and utilities (up 2,308 jobs).

**Data Source:**

NE- Nebraska Department of Labor. Current Employment Statistics. NEworks.  
[networks.nebraska.gov/ces](http://networks.nebraska.gov/ces).

# 33,951

Job count on NEworks as of  
**January 24, 2024**

# 58,456

Total job count on NEworks for the  
month of **December 2023**

This number reflects the number of job openings  
advertised on NEworks in Nebraska in December 2023.

**Data Source:**

NE- Nebraska Department of Labor. Online advertised jobs data. NEworks.  
[networks.nebraska.gov](http://networks.nebraska.gov).

*Labor market information is updated continuously.  
For the latest data, visit [networks.nebraska.gov](http://networks.nebraska.gov) or contact us  
at 800-876-1377 or email [lmi\\_ne@nebraska.gov](mailto:lmi_ne@nebraska.gov).*

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[Labor Market Publications](#)

[Previous Issues](#)

[NEworks.nebraska.gov](http://NEworks.nebraska.gov)



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