

NEBRASKA WORKFORCE TRENDS

MAY 2025 ISSUE | NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



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Revisions:** Employment
by the Numbers

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Nebraska Production Animal Rural Veterinarian Grant Program

The Nebraska Production Animal Rural Veterinarian Grant Program aims to address the shortage of production animal veterinarians in rural Nebraska.

The program offers grants of up to \$150,000 to recent veterinary graduates or new veterinarians who begin working in eligible rural clinics.

\$1,950,000 is available for grants, allowing funding for up to 13 applicants. To qualify, applicants must:

- Have a doctorate in veterinary medicine and be licensed to practice in Nebraska.
- Commit to residing and practicing in Nebraska for eight years.
- Work in a veterinary clinic where at least 80% of its hours are devoted to production animals in a county with a population of less than 40,000 people.
- Eligible candidates must demonstrate a passion for production animal health and relevant experience. Recipients must report to the Nebraska Department of Labor annually and agree to specific program conditions.

If you have questions or want to apply for a Nebraska Production Animal Rural Veterinarian Grant, please download the form on our website, dol.nebraska.gov/ruralvetgrant, and email the completed form to NDOL.Legal@nebraska.gov.

Vet Fast Facts!

897

Veterinarians currently estimated to be working in Nebraska as of 2022. (2)

19%

Percentage that employment of veterinarians is projected to grow nationwide from 2023 to 2033, much faster than the average for all occupations. (3)

21.7%

Percentage that employment of veterinarians in Nebraska is projected to grow from 2022-2032. This is 16 percent faster than the average for all occupations. (2)

\$83,706

Median annual wage for veterinarians (all types), which is \$35,717 more than the median annual wage for all occupations in the state. (1)

\$1,950,000

Amount available for grants, allowing funding for up to 13 applicants

\$150,000

Amount awarded to each grant recipient

Sources

1. Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, at <https://networks.nebraska.gov/>.
2. Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, Projections, at <https://networks.nebraska.gov/>.
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Veterinarians, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/veterinarians.htm> (accessed April 18, 2025).

Education Demand and Difficulty Hiring Statewide

Marc Bettis, Research Analyst

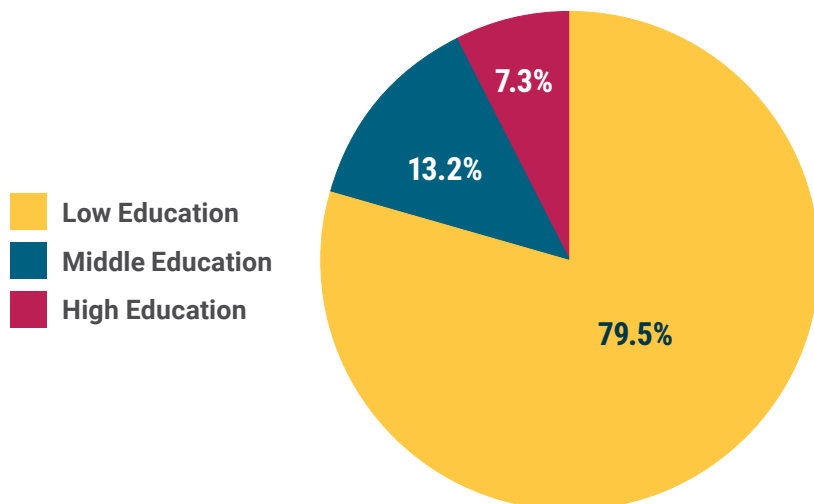
Wages, required education, and required skills all influence each other in local labor markets. Generally, in Nebraska our surveys find higher demand for jobs where employers require less education. Occupational skills deficiencies among applicants is a much more common hiring difficulty for employers rather than formal education.

Through Nebraska’s labor availability surveys, employers provide NDOL with job titles that they frequently hire and that are difficult to hire. Various other data such as wages, education, experience, and reasons for difficulty hiring are collected. For the last three years, our surveys have found that, according to employers, a lack of applicants was the largest driver of difficulty hiring.

A question that might arise is: how does worker education factor into the shortage? Survey data from across the state for 2021-2023 can shed some light on this topic.

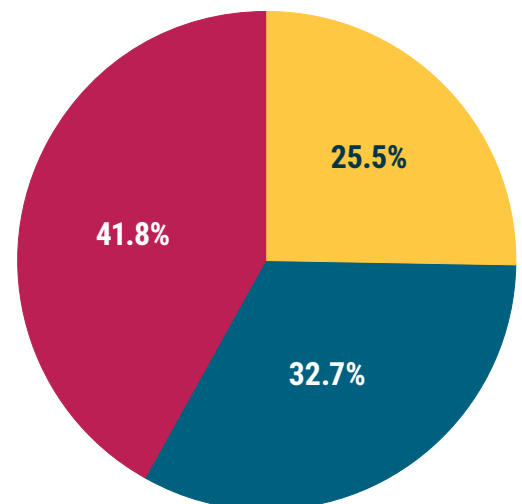
Education Requirement	Occupation Examples
High Education: at least a 4-year degree	Civil engineer, CPA, lead teacher, veterinarian
Middle Education: some degree of post-secondary certification, but less than a 4-year or bachelor’s program	Accountant, auto repair worker, CNA, LPN, paralegal, veterinary technician
Low Education: high school diploma or equivalent	Bartender, construction laborer, cook, farm laborer, receptionist

Frequently Hired Occupations in Labor Availability Study



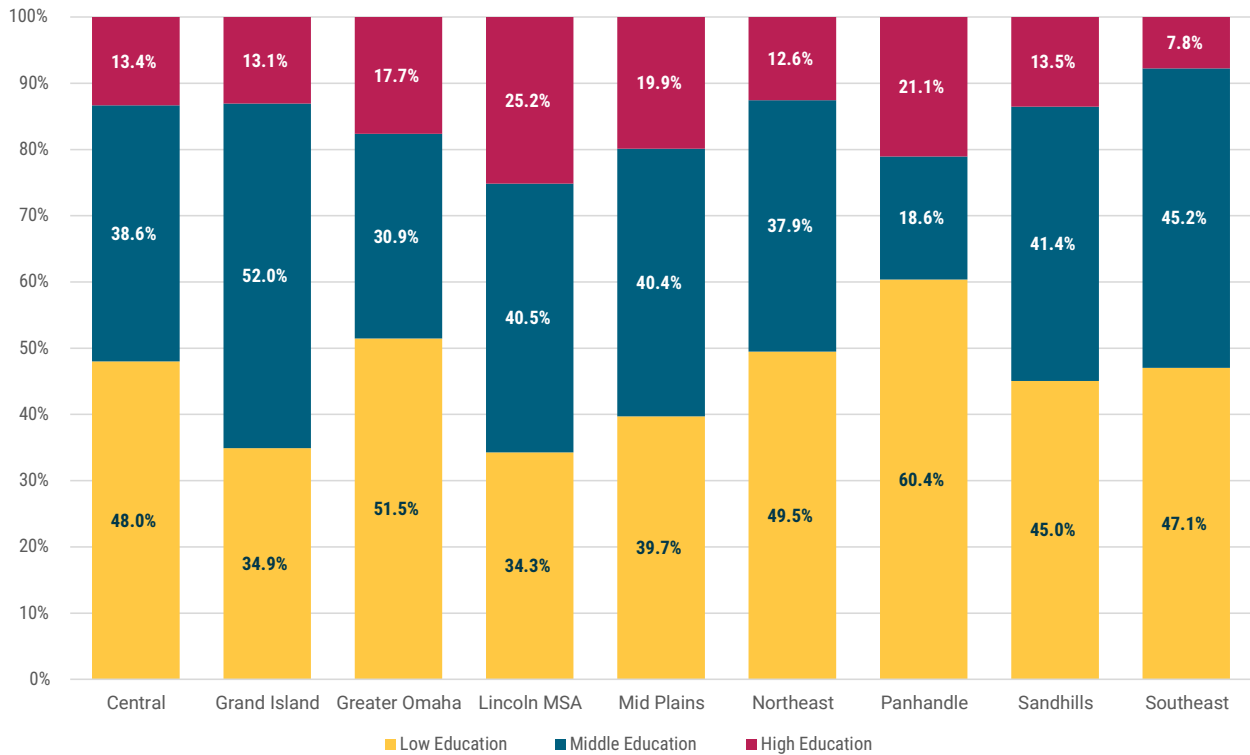
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor. Nebraska Labor Availability Study Survey Data

Labor force in Nebraska, Age 25-64



Source: US Census. Educational Attainment. Table S1501, Nebraska, 2023 ACS 5-Year. [Online] <https://data.census.gov/>

Educational Demand by Region - Difficult to Hire Jobs



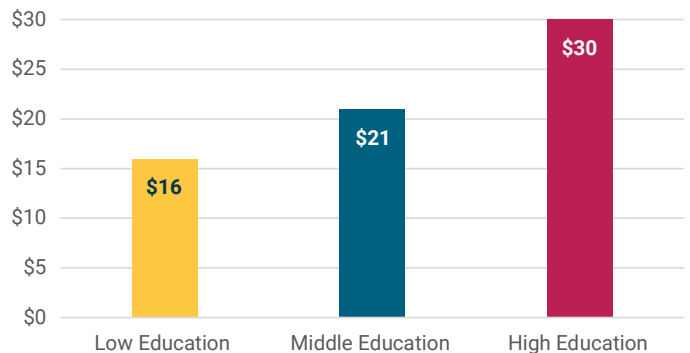
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor. Nebraska Labor Availability Study Survey Data

Only in Lincoln and Grand Island do middle-education job titles outnumber low-education job titles, with Lincoln having the smallest share of low-education job titles. The MidPlains, Sandhills, and Southwest regions had close margins between middle- and low-education jobs. Omaha and the Panhandle had the narrowest regional proportion of middle-education demand.

Wages

A critical labor market factor to these tiers of education is the resulting wages offered. The chart shows the median wages by educational tier. Higher educational requirements for jobs in general correlate to higher wages. The general desirability of higher education credentials is quite high, even if the apparent labor market demand for them is rather low in Nebraska in comparison.

Median Hourly Wages by Education Tier Statewide



Source: Nebraska Department of Labor. Nebraska Labor Availability Study Survey Data

Living Wage Estimates

Living Wage	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
1 Adult	\$20.12	\$35.86	\$46.08	\$61.11
2 Adults (1 Working)	\$28.21	\$34.03	\$38.77	\$41.04
2 Adults (Both Working)	\$14.10	\$20.20	\$25.61	\$29.97

Source: MIT. Living Wage Calculation for Nebraska. [Online] <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/31>.

The living wage estimates for Nebraska highlight why these higher-education credentials, and the job opportunities they open, are so desirable even if apparent demand makes the attainment of those higher-paying jobs extremely competitive in the state.

There is some geographic tilt in these statistics, but not as much as one might suspect. For example, Omaha (\$21.03/hour for no dependent single adult) versus McPherson County (\$20.81/hour for the same adult). The cost of various component goods driving the need of that wage vary regionally, but in total they balance out. For example, housing might cost more in one place but transportation and medical care cost more elsewhere.

Positions in almost all education and wage categories see more difficulty in applicants lacking occupational-specific skills rather than lacking required education in our survey data. The sole exception found is high-education job titles with \$20-\$24.99/hour wages. Employers can react to formal education shortfalls by reducing formal educational requirements, so long as applicants have the necessary occupational skills to perform their assigned duties. However, a shortfall of necessary occupational skills for an occupation doesn't have a similar option to maintain an adequate hiring pool.

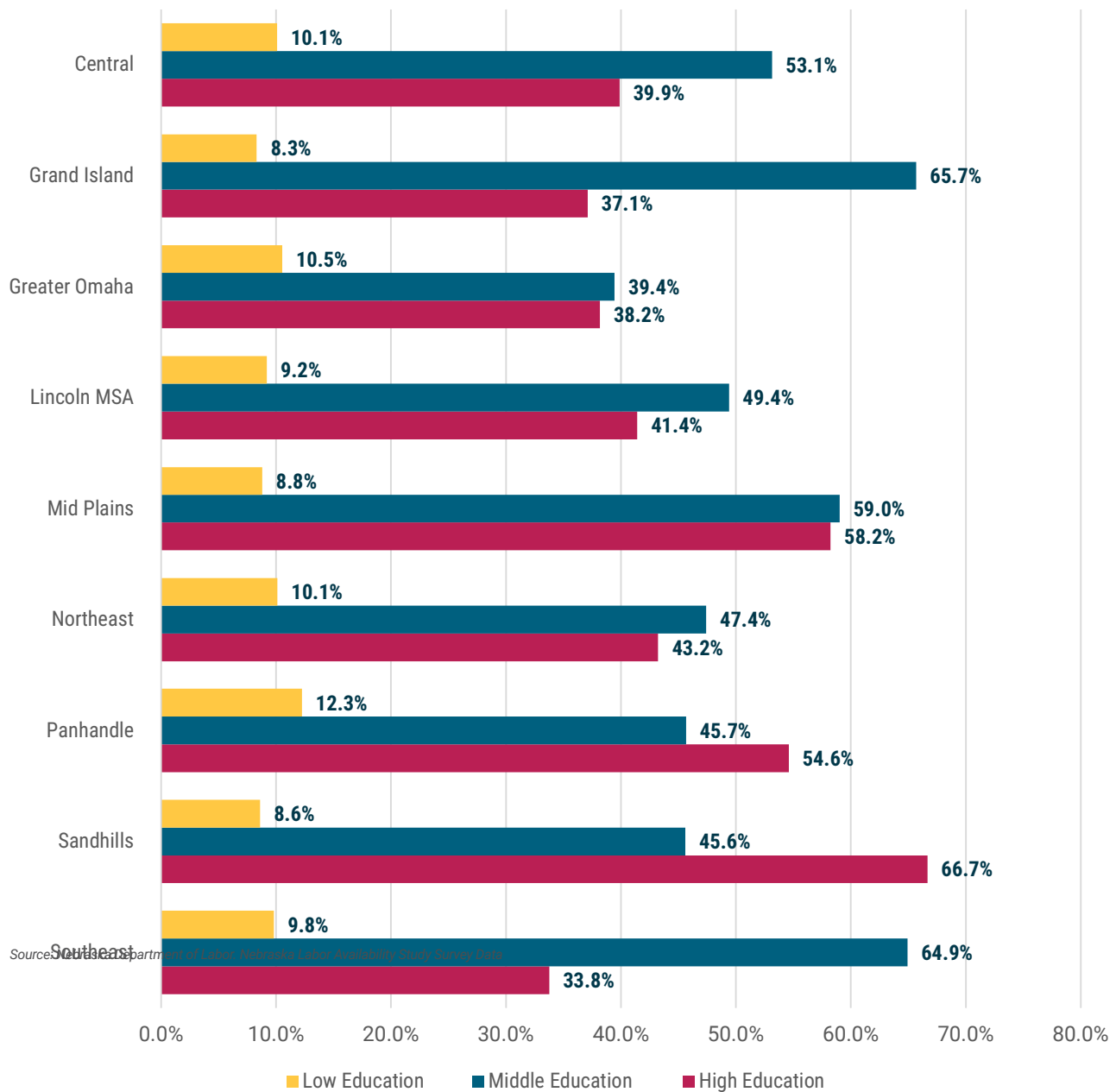
Percentage of Jobs with Hiring Difficulty Due to Lack of Education or Occupation-Specific Skills

Employer Wages	Reasons for Hiring Difficulty	
	Lack of required education	Lack of occupation-specific skills
Low Education		
Under \$15/hr	8.3%	27.0%
\$15 - \$19.99	9.4%	47.8%
\$20 - \$24.99	12.3%	68.1%
\$25 - \$29.99	13.4%	70.8%
\$30 - \$39.99	18.6%	65.6%
\$40+	15.2%	65.3%
Middle Education		
Under \$15/hr	49.9%	70.9%
\$15 - \$19.99	54.5%	63.0%
\$20 - \$24.99	48.0%	73.2%
\$25 - \$29.99	47.9%	67.5%
\$30 - \$39.99	38.3%	49.4%
\$40+	25.2%	34.8%
High Education		
Under \$15/hr	Not Available	Not Available
\$15 - \$19.99	41.1%	63.9%
\$20 - \$24.99	62.5%	56.7%
\$25 - \$29.99	47.0%	54.5%
\$30 - \$39.99	34.5%	53.8%
\$40+	32.2%	43.8%

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor. Nebraska Labor Availability Study Survey Data

In the chart below we can see how often businesses cite “lack of required education” as a difficulty, by both region and education. There is variance between the education levels. However, there is a notable trend across regions. For low-education jobs, the most common in this data set, employers cite this as a difficulty for 7-10 percent of the occupations across all regions. Middle- and high-education jobs in some regions find lack of education equally difficult or up to 20+ percent more difficult. Only in the Sandhills economic development region are survey results showing that high-education jobs are more likely than middle- education jobs to have lack of education as a difficulty in hiring. Middle/high skill jobs are less common across the state in LAS data and are substantially more difficult to hire.

Lack of Education as a Hiring Difficulty by Economic Region



Workplace Safety and Health Consultations Identify Potential Hazards

Grace Johnson, Public Information Officer

Employers know that the intangible costs of industrial accidents and disease, although difficult to measure, are just as real as insurance premium costs. The Nebraska On-Site Safety and Health Consultation Program assists employers in providing their employees with a safe and healthy workplace by helping to identify and correct safety and health hazards in general industry and construction. Identifying these hazards before they become dangerous and expensive problems can lead to a better work environment and long-term savings.

The program is available to any business that has less than 250 employees on-site and 500 nationwide. Services are provided through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and administered through the Nebraska Department of Labor. Consultations are completed at no cost to the business. Results of these consultations are not shared with OSHA.

Services Offered

The On-site Safety and Health Consultation program offers the following services at no cost to employers:

- Walk-through safety and health survey
- Safety and health program assessment
- Employer-employee training
- Ventilation system evaluation
- Air sampling and analysis
- Evaluation of electrical systems and equipment review of machine guarding
- Noise measurements
- Assistance with Personal Protective Equipment
- Comprehensive written reports
- Technical assistance
- Some participants in the program receive exemption from routine OSHA inspections through the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). For more information, visit [osha.gov/sharp](https://www.osha.gov/sharp).

Consultation Process

- 1. ON-SITE VISIT** During the visit an opening conference is held, followed by a walkthrough survey and a safety and health program assessment of the workplace. A closing conference is held to discuss any hazards found.
- 2. EVALUATION AND REPORT** Following the visit, all collected information is evaluated and relevant research conducted. This may include laboratory analysis if air samples are taken. A report detailing all findings and recommendations, including ways to improve the safety and health program, is prepared and forwarded to the employer.
- 3. CORRECTION OF SERIOUS HAZARDS** The report discusses the identified hazards, including any considered to be serious. Corrective action of serious or imminent hazards by the employer is a required part of this program. The employer and consultant set and agree to the time goals for correction of the serious hazards.
- 4. FOLLOW-UP** Once serious hazards have been corrected, employers are asked to confirm and inform NDOL of corrective actions. In a few instances, a return visit may be necessary.

\$22.9 Million

Approximate amount of potential OSHA penalties avoided by businesses through identification and mitigation of hazards in fiscal year 2024

Consultants Will

- Help employers recognize hazards in the workplace
- Suggest general approaches or options for solving a safety or health problem
- Identify kinds of help available to the employer if further assistance is required
- Provide the employer with a written report summarizing findings

Consultants Will Not

- Issue citations or propose penalties for violations of OSHA standards
- Guarantee that any workplace will “pass” an OSHA inspection
- Prescribe specific engineering designs or identify specific firms to solve problems

Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP)

What is SHARP?

SHARP is the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program offered by the Nebraska Department of Labor’s On-site Safety and Health Consultation Program to Nebraska employers. Companies earn SHARP certification by demonstrating a strong commitment to workplace safety and health as reflected in a reduced occupational injury/illness experience and development of a safety and health management program.

Benefits of Participating in SHARP

- Learn how to maintain a safe and healthy workplace through the development and implementation of proven effective safety and health management systems.
- Receive no cost consultative assistance and training provided by qualified professionals experienced in helping employers develop safety and health management programs, and identify safety and health problem areas.
- Meet program requirements to obtain a certificate of recognition from the U.S. Department of Labor/OSHA removing your company from OSHA’s routine inspection list for one year. The Nebraska Department of Labor also presents a certificate of recognition and a SHARP program flag from the Commissioner of Labor and the Governor of the State of Nebraska.
- Employers who continue to meet the requirements will be exempted each year they choose to participate and may also apply for and achieve a two-year exemption after the first year.



Image by peopleimages12 from 123rf

Request a Consultation

Information or consultations may be requested online, by phone, or e-mail.

[dol.nebraska.gov/Forms/
OnsiteConsultationForm](https://dol.nebraska.gov/Forms/OnsiteConsultationForm)

402-471-4717

ndol.safety@nebraska.gov

Certification Process

Certification in the Nebraska SHARP program is a process that includes a comprehensive consultation and a satisfactory review. The company must agree to:

- **A comprehensive safety and health survey** by the Nebraska Department of Labor's OSHA Consultation Program at the facility, which includes a complete safety and health program review.
- **Involve employees** in the development, operations and improvement of all elements of the workplace safety and health program.
- **Work with the consultation program to qualify for the exemption program** during which time the employer will:
 - **Correct all hazards** identified during the survey process.
 - **Implement all elements** of an effective written occupational safety and health management program.
 - **Lower their Injury and Illness Incidence Rates (IIIR)** to below the national average for their industry based on at least one full year's experience, if the rates are not already below the national average.
There are also provisions for employers whose injury and illness rates have been below the national average for at least one year and have all the other required elements in place to enter the program.
 - **Notify the consultation program in advance of any changes** in working conditions or processes that might create new hazards in the workplace.

43

Number of SHARP-designated work locations

1,422

Serious hazards (as defined by OSHA) identified by NDOL consultants in fiscal year 2024

Eligibility

SHARP is available to most companies that meet these eligibility requirements:

- Employ no more than 250 employees at the site and no more than 500 employees at all sites nationwide.
- Have a lost workday injury and illness rate below the average for their industry and be on OSHA's high hazard industry list.
- Be a fixed work site.
- Have at least one year operating history.

For more information on the On-Site Consultation Program, SHARP, and other NDOL programs, go to dol.nebraska.gov/laborstandards.

Visit our website at dol.nebraska.gov/LaborStandards/SHARP/OverviewofSHARP/SHARPCompanies for a list of participating employers.

Nebraskans Urged to be Cautious When Hiring a Contractor

Grace Johnson, Public Information Officer

As the agency enforcing Nebraska's Contractor Registration Act, the Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) reminds Nebraskans to use caution when hiring contractors to repair or remodel their homes and businesses.

Make sure all contractors you speak with are registered with the NDOL and are in compliance with local licensing and building permit requirements. A searchable listing of registered contractors is available at dol.nebraska.gov/conreg/Search

Consumers can minimize the chances of being scammed by an unscrupulous contractor by following these recommendations:

- **Beware of a contractor who makes you an unsolicited offer by showing up at your doorstep with a great deal.**
- **Check references.**
- **Get written estimates, a written contract, proof of insurance, and a written warranty.**

Contractor registration is required of all contractors prior to doing work in Nebraska, but does not ensure quality of work or protect against fraud. However, consumers following the above recommendations can greatly increase their chances of having a positive experience when using the services of a construction contractor. For more information, go to the Nebraska Department of Labor website at dol.nebraska.gov or call 402-471-2239.

Image by andreypopov from 123rf

Roughly **20,000**
Contractors were registered
in Nebraska last year.

Employment of Minors: Trends and Requirements

Grace Johnson, Public Information Officer

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey, the labor force participation rate for 16-19 year-olds has seen an uptick nationwide in recent years, with a March 2025 rate of 37.6 percent.

As the end of the school year approaches, many students begin exploring their employment options. In Nebraska, minors must be at least 14 years of age to be employed. There are a few exceptions, including minors working for their parent's business, minors working in agriculture, and minors working in the performing arts. Fourteen to 15 year old minors not working in detasseling or for their parent's business must obtain an Employment Certificate from the school district in which they reside. Home schooled children may obtain an Employment Certificate by providing proof of age and grade level to the school within their district. The minor must be present in order for a certificate to be issued.

Under Nebraska law, minors 14-15 years of age are not permitted to work more than eight hours a day or 48 hours per week, and not before 6 a.m. or after 10 p.m. Federal child labor rules are stricter. They can be viewed online at www.dol.gov. When both laws apply, the more stringent standard must be observed.

In 2024, NDOL received 2,280 certificates for the employment of minors ages 14-15. So far in 2025, 794 certificates have been received, with a normal seasonal increase occurring since March.

Youth Employment Certificates Received by NDOL

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2025	64	86	177	204	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	531
2024	86	119	137	290	429	258	149	261	184	186	107	74	2,280
2023	157	165	185	287	585	393	135	269	192	172	167	94	2,801
2022	126	114	237	240	415	444	259	283	228	208	177	143	2,874
2021	42	95	101	217	411	447	263	192	262	186	173	179	2,568



Detasseling

Permitted Work Hours:

- Outside of school hours during the month of June, July, and/or August
- Between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. for children ages 12 and 13
- Between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. for children ages 14 and 15
- Child may not work more than 48 hours in any one week
- Child may not work more than nine hours in any one day

Requirements for Detasseling:

- Worker must be at least 12 years old
- Child workers must reside within 75 miles of the location where the labor is to be performed
- The employer must obtain written consent from the child's parent to employ the minor
- The employer must provide at least two supervisors who are 18 years of age or older at each location

Performing Arts Permit

- The Nebraska Department of Labor is authorized to issue a special permit waiving restrictions within the child labor law for children employed in the performing arts.
- Requirements for Performing Arts Permit:
 - The employer must obtain written consent from the child's parent to employ the minor
 - The employment must be found to be in the best interest of the child
 - The special permit form must be completed and submitted to the Nebraska Department of Labor
- Special Permit Form and Fees:
 - A Special Permit is issued for periods up to 90 days and may be renewed by the employer
 - \$10.00 fee for each permit

Special Permit form is available online at dol.nebraska.gov/LaborStandards

Violation of the Child Labor Law

- Those found in violation of Nebraska's Child Labor Law are guilty of a Class II misdemeanor.
- Report violations to the Department of Labor and to the County Attorney.

Hazardous Employment

Restrictions:

- No child may be employed in any work, which due to the nature of the work or place of performance, is dangerous to life or limb, or in which their health may be injured or their morals depraved.
- For additional information regarding hazardous employment or specific jobs/tasks, contact the U.S. Department of Labor at 1-866-487-9243 or visit dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/43-child-labor-non-agriculture

Benchmarking Revisions: Employment by the Numbers

Each spring, employment data is revised as part of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' benchmarking process. This year's revisions included changes to Omaha and Lincoln's employment numbers and upward revisions to leisure and hospitality employment levels statewide. Data comes from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program numbers and Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS).

104,162:

Record nonfarm statewide employment (filled jobs) for the leisure and hospitality industry, reached in June 2024.

1,073,767:

October 2024's statewide labor force, a new record. The labor force is the total of individuals looking for work and those currently working.

17,654:

Average monthly upward revision to Omaha's labor force for 2023 and 2024.

517,094:

Omaha's record high employment level (number of people employed), reached in July 2024.

13:

Number of months in 2023 and 2024 that Omaha's unemployment rate saw no revisions due to benchmarking. January 2023, March 2023, April 2023, October 2024 and November 2024 all saw downward revisions to the unemployment rate.

196,876:

Lincoln's record high total labor force (total of individuals working and looking for work), achieved in October 2024.

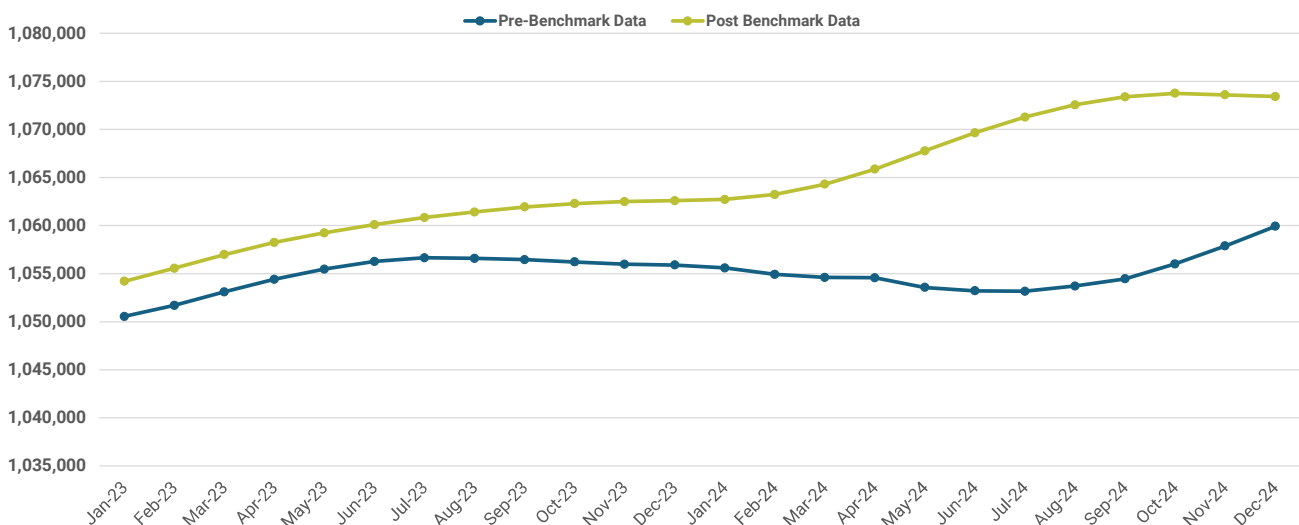
1,042,810:

Statewide record high number of people employed in the labor force, reached in October 2024.

534,816:

Omaha's peak total labor force, achieved in July 2024.

Statewide Labor Force Pre Vs. Post Benchmark



1,063,415

Total Nonfarm Employment (filled jobs)

Not Seasonally Adjusted

for April 2025

Nonfarm employment, the number of filled jobs, was 1,063,415 in April, up 9,903 over the month and 5,727 over the year. Private industries with the most growth month to month were leisure and hospitality (up 3,866 jobs); professional and business services (up 2,543 jobs); and mining and construction (up 1,604 jobs). Private industries with the most over the year growth were private education and health services (up 6,250 jobs); leisure and hospitality (up 1,005 jobs); and other services (up 821 jobs).

Data Source:

NE- Nebraska Department of Labor. Current Employment Statistics. NWorks. networks.nebraska.gov.

28,883

Job count on NWorks as of

May 22, 2025

.....

51,543

Total job count on NWorks for the
month of **April 2025**

This number reflects the number of job openings advertised on NWorks in Nebraska in April 2025.

Data Source:

NE- Nebraska Department of Labor. Online advertised jobs data. NWorks. networks.nebraska.gov.

Labor market information is updated continuously.
For the latest data, visit networks.nebraska.gov or contact us at 800-876-1377 or email NDOL.lmi_ne@nebraska.gov.



Equal Opportunity Employer/Program.
TDD: 1.800.833.7352

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.