

NEBRASKA WORKFORCE TRENDS

SEPTEMBER 2025 ISSUE | NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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Labor Availability Study Results Overview

Statewide Highlights

The Nebraska Department of Labor sent surveys to business establishments with at least three employees and households located in the surveyed areas, which encompasses 86 counties. **These surveys were conducted between May 2021 and October 2023, with 7,138 businesses and 9,968 households responding.**

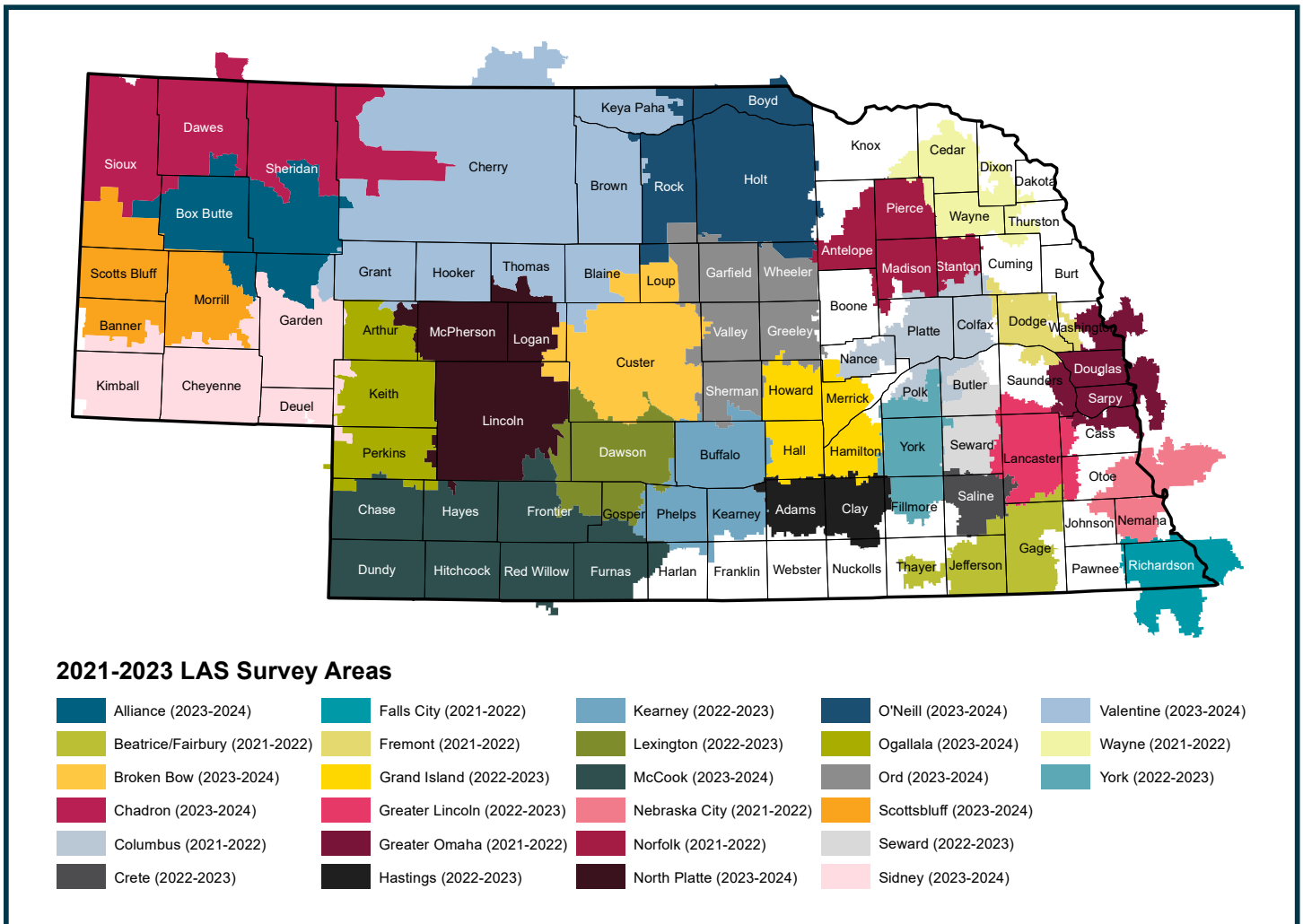
Survey Area Population Age 18+:

1,481,176 ⁽¹⁾

Estimated Total Labor Force:

1,056,798 ⁽²⁾

Surveyed Areas



Statewide Highlights

Top 3 Industries with Greatest Difficulty Hiring

Industries	Percentage of Respondents with Difficulty
Construction	89.5%
Agriculture	89.0%
Wholesale Trade	87.9%

Factors Most Important to Potential Job Seekers When Considering New Employment

- Salary
- Job security/stability
- Paid vacation
- Paid holidays

Top Job Satisfaction Factors for Employed Potential Job Seekers

- Job security/stability
- Work schedule
- Use of existing skills
- Commute Satisfaction

Top Obstacles to Employment for Potential Job Seekers

- Inadequate pay offered at local area employers
- Work schedule flexibility
- Lack of job opportunities in local area

Top 3 Occupation Groups with Greatest Difficulty Hiring

Occupations	Percentage of Respondents with Difficulty
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	92.4%
Construction and Extraction	89.4%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	87.8%

Top 3 Reasons Given by Employers for Hiring Difficulty

Reasons	Percentage of Respondents with Difficulty
Not enough applicants	88.9%
Poor Work History	57.1%
Lack of work experience	55.8%

Now Available on NWorks

To read more from the Nebraska Statewide Labor Availability and Hiring Needs Report, or other Labor Market Information publications, please visit our [Publications page](#).

PAID SICK TIME NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA HEALTHY FAMILIES & WORKPLACES ACT | EFFECTIVE DATE: OCTOBER 1, 2025

The Nebraska Healthy Families and Workplaces Act (paid sick time law) goes into effect soon.

What you need to know as an employer:

- The new law requires businesses with 11 or more employees to provide their employees with paid sick time.
- Employers are required to provide written notice and postings by September 15, 2025. Model notice and poster is available on our website, free of charge, in both English and Spanish.

	Small Businesses	Large Businesses
Employee Count	11 to 19 employees	20 or more employees
Accrual Rate	1 hour paid sick time for every 30 hours worked	
Annual Accrual*	40 hours	56 hours
Carryover	All accrued paid sick time hours carry over from year to year (Unless employer opts to pay out at the end of each year)	
Eligible Reason	Employees may use paid sick time, at their own request, free from retaliation, for themselves, a family member, or like family relationship, for mental or physical illness, preventative medical care, or for closure of school or childcare by order of public health emergency.	

*Employers may offer more leave accrual than the law requires.

Starting October 1, 2025:

- Employees accrue paid sick time after eighty hours of employment and at a minimum of 1 hour paid sick time for every 30 hours worked up to; 40 hours or 56 hours per year, depending on employer size.

Does paid sick time under the Nebraska Healthy Families and Workplaces Act apply to all employers?

- No. The Nebraska Healthy Families and Workplaces Act applies to employers with 11 or more Nebraska employees. Small businesses are employers with 11 to 19 employees. Small businesses must allow employees to accrue up to 40 hours of paid sick time per year. Businesses with 20 or more employees must allow employees to accrue up to 56 hours of paid sick time per year.

Who may use paid sick time?

- Employees may use paid sick time, at their own request, free from retaliation; for themselves, a family member, or like family relationship for; mental or physical illness, preventative medical care, or for closure of school or childcare by order of public health emergency.

Who is exempt from the new paid sick time requirements?

- Individual owner-operators
- Independent contractors
- Individuals who work in Nebraska for fewer than 80 hours in a calendar year
- Individuals who are employed in agricultural employment of a seasonal or other temporary nature
- Employees who are subject to the federal Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act
- Individuals under 16 years of age

Can an existing leave policy satisfy the requirements of the Act?

- Yes, it is possible that an employer's current policy, such as a paid time off policy, already meets the requirements. Employers whose current paid leave policy already meets the requirements of the Act are not required to provide additional paid sick time. Employers may consult with a legal advisor regarding their policy.

Once an employee is hired, when does sick time accrual begin?

- Employees begin accruing paid sick time after 80 hours of consecutive employment. Paid sick time provided to an employee on or after January 1, 2025 and before October 1, 2025, counts toward an employer's obligations under the Act for calendar year 2025.

Can an employer provide an employee with their total annual paid sick time at the beginning of the year (front load) rather than having them accrue them over time?

- Yes, provided the amount that is front loaded is greater than or equal to the amount required within the Act.

Is accrued paid sick time required to be paid out upon separation of employment?

- No. Paid sick time is not required to be paid out upon separation of employment. However, should the employer have a combined PTO policy (vacation and sick), all accrued but unused paid time off is due to the employee as wages pursuant to the Nebraska Wage Payment & Collection Act.

What time increments can an employee use for paid sick time?

- An employee may use paid sick time in either hourly increments or smaller increments if the employer's payroll system accounts for absences in those smaller increments. Employers must allow at least hourly increments.

More information is available here:

dol.nebraska.gov/LaborStandards

dol.nebraska.gov/LaborStandards/PaidSickTime/PSTFAQs

Email: NDOL.LaborStdtrdsInquiries@nebraska.gov

Minimum Wage Increase

Nebraska’s minimum wage will increase to \$15 per hour effective January 1, 2026. In accordance with an initiative passed by voters in November of 2022, the minimum wage will increase \$1.50 each year through 2026, followed by an annual cost of living increase beginning in 2027. The minimum hourly wage for tipped employees is \$2.13 per hour. Employers are responsible for ensuring that wages and tips combined equal at least the minimum wage.

The following minimum wage amounts are scheduled:

- **January 1, 2026:** \$15 per hour
- **January 1, 2027:** The minimum wage will increase based on the cost-of-living increase as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

Information about the minimum wage, including the current workplace poster (shown at right), is available at dol.nebraska.gov/LaborStandards. Labor law specialists are available to answer questions from workers and employers regarding wages in Nebraska and may be contacted at 402-471-2239 or ndol.laborstdrdsinquiries@nebraska.gov.

Minimum Wage in Nebraska

Effective Date	Minimum Hourly Wage Rate
January 1, 2016	\$9.00
January 1, 2023	\$10.50
January 1, 2024	\$12.00
January 1, 2025	\$13.50
January 1, 2026	\$15.00

Beginning January 1, 2027, the minimum wage will increase based on the cost-of-living increase as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

Except as provided below, every employer of four or more persons at any one time shall pay its employees a minimum wage per hour as listed above.

- In the case of employees paid gratuities for services performed, the combined amount of hourly wage and gratuities given to the employee shall equal or exceed the current minimum wage. The hourly wage amount paid to the employee shall be at least \$2.13 per hour and the employer is responsible for making up the difference between the actual hourly wage and gratuities paid to the employee and the current minimum wage.
- Any employer employing student-learners as part of a bona fide vocational training program shall pay such student-learners' wages at a rate of at least 75% of the minimum wage rate.
- An employer may pay a new employee younger than 20 who is not a seasonal or migrant worker a training wage of at least 75% of the federal minimum wage for 90 days from the date the new employee was hired, subject to the terms and conditions described in Neb. Rev. Stat. §48-1203.01.

48-1202. For purposes of the Wage and Hour Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. Employ shall include to permit to work.
2. Employer shall include any individual, partnership, limited liability company, association, corporation, business trust, legal representative, or organized group of persons employing four or more employees at any one time except for seasonal employment of not more than twenty weeks in any calendar year, acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee, but shall not include the United States, the state, or any political subdivision thereof.
 - Employee shall include any individual employed by any employer but shall not include:
 - a. Any individual employed in agriculture;
 - b. Any individual employed as a body-sitter in or about a private home;
 - c. Any individual employed in a bona fide executive, administrative, or professional capacity or as a superintendent or supervisor;
 - d. Any individual employed by the United States or by the state or any political subdivision thereof;
 - e. Any individual engaged in the activities of an educational, charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization when the employer-employee relationship does not in fact exist or when the services rendered to such organization are on a voluntary basis;
 - f. Apprentices and learners otherwise provided by law;
 - g. Veterans in training under supervision of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;
 - h. A child in the employment of his or her parent or a parent in the employment of his or her child; or
 - i. Any person who, directly or indirectly, is receiving any form of federal, state, county, or local aid or welfare and who is physically or mentally disabled and employed in a program of rehabilitation, who shall receive a wage at a level consistent with his or her health, efficiency, and general well-being;
3. Occupational classification shall mean a classification established by the Dictionary of Occupational Titles prepared by the United States Department of Labor; and
4. Wages shall mean all remuneration for personal services, including commissions and bonuses and the cash value of all remunerations in any medium other than cash.

For further information regarding the Nebraska Wage and Hour Act, contact the Nebraska Department of Labor
PHONE 402-471-2239

NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Connections.
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Updated: 11/22/2022

Download this poster at <https://dol.nebraska.gov/LaborStandards/Compliance/RequiredPosters>.

Wage Claims by the Numbers

NDOL is responsible for administering the Wage Payment and Collection Act, which involves conducting investigations regarding possible wages owed to employees. Wage complaints are filed through the Department of Labor’s website, dol.nebraska.gov, and a team of labor law investigators is responsible for determining the amount of wages owed, if any. Since 2023, wage investigations have resulted in over \$2.5 million in wages recovered to employees.

4,096 – Wage complaints filed with NDOL from 2023-2025 (end of FY 6/30/25)

1,673 – Wage complaints received in FY2025 (7/1/24 – 6/30/25)

\$21,326.13 – Largest amount of wages recovered to a single employee in FY2025

\$962,779.50 – Wages paid during the course of investigations in FY2025

81% – Cases investigated in FY2025 resulting in wages being paid to the complainant, when owed

Fast Facts: Nebraska's Older Workers

Rachel Eckloff, Jodie Meyer, and Kermit Spade, Research Analysts

This year, National Employ Older Workers Week will be observed from September 22 to 28. Here are some facts that highlight the ongoing impact of older workers in Nebraska.

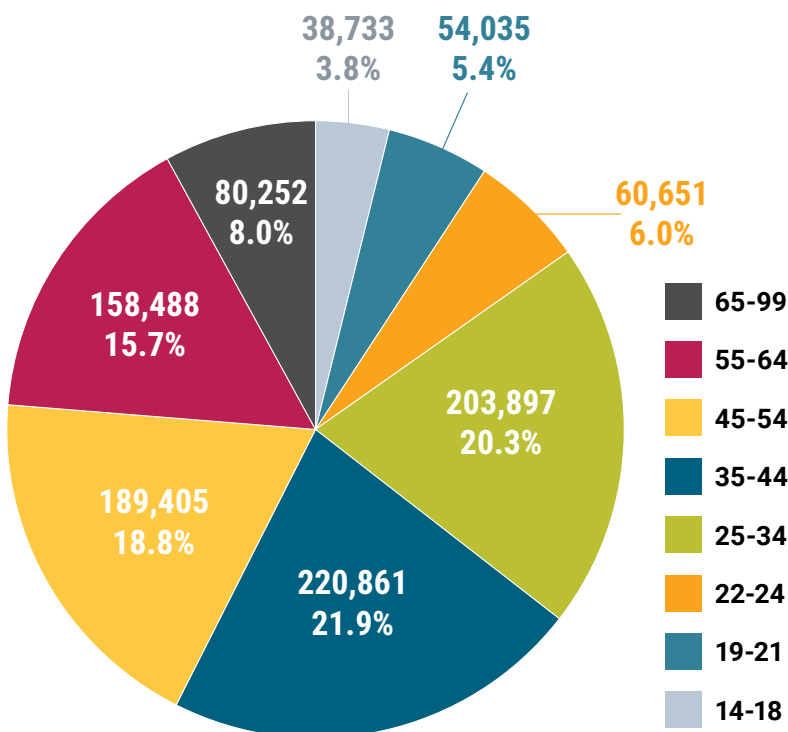
28.8% Percentage of Nebraskans who were 55 or older in 2023. Nebraskans ages 65+ accounted for 17.2% of the state's population. (1)

23.7% Share of Nebraska's jobs filled by workers ages 55 and older in the fourth quarter of 2024. Workers ages 65+ alone accounted for 8.0%. (2)

Percentage of Nebraska Jobs Filled by Workers Ages 65+ by Quarter

	Age 65-99
Q4 2024	8.00%
Q3 2024	7.80%
Q2 2024	7.90%
Q1 2024	7.80%
Q4 2023	7.80%
Q3 2023	7.60%
Q2 2023	7.60%
Q1 2023	7.50%
Q4 2022	7.50%
Q3 2022	7.30%
Q2 2022	7.30%
Q1 2022	7.20%
Q4 2021	7.20%
Q3 2021	7.00%
Q2 2021	7.00%
Q1 2021	6.80%
Q4 2020	6.80%
Q3 2020	6.70%
Q2 2020	6.80%
Q1 2020	7.00%
Q4 2019	7.00%
Q3 2019	6.80%
Q2 2019	6.90%
Q1 2019	6.80%
Q4 2018	6.70%
Q3 2018	6.60%
Q2 2018	6.60%
Q1 2018	6.50%

Share of Nebraska Jobs Filled by Age Group, Q4 2024



U.S. Census Bureau. Quarterly Workforce Indicators, QWI Explorer App. qwexplorer.ces.census.gov.

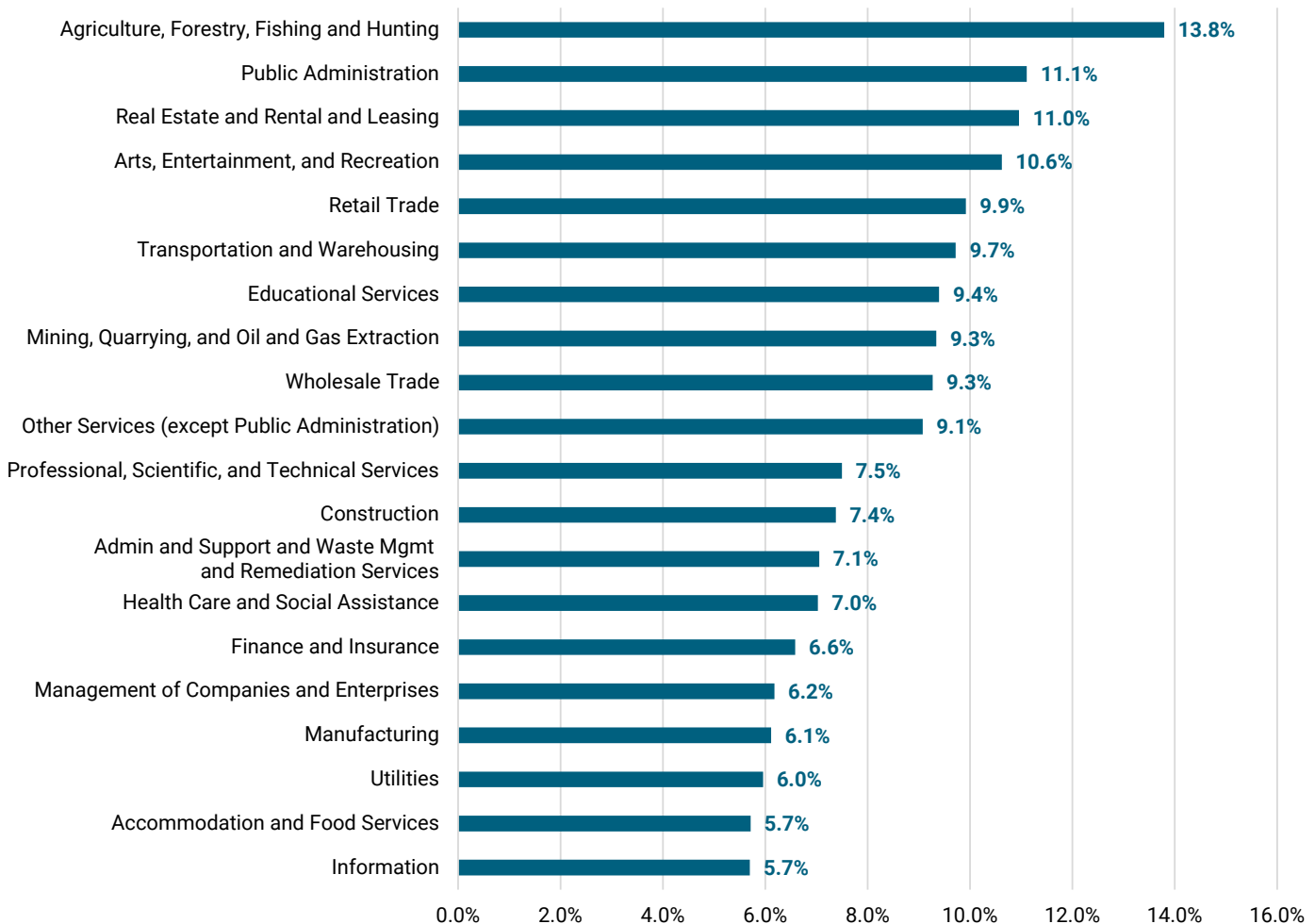
U.S. Census Bureau. Quarterly Workforce Indicators, QWI Explorer App. qwexplorer.ces.census.gov.

#19 In fourth quarter 2024, Nebraska ranked #19 nationally out of states with data available for greatest percentage of jobs filled by workers ages 65 and above, at 8.0%. The national average was 7.9%. The state with the highest percentage of jobs filled by older workers was Hawaii (9.9%), while the state with the lowest was Utah (6.6%). (2)

\$5,824 Average monthly earnings for Nebraska workers ages 55-64 as of the third quarter of 2024. For workers ages 65-99, average monthly earnings were \$4,040. (2)

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting was the Nebraska industry sector with the highest share of jobs filled workers 65 and older (13.8%) as of the fourth quarter of 2024. The sector with the lowest percentage was information (5.7%). (2)

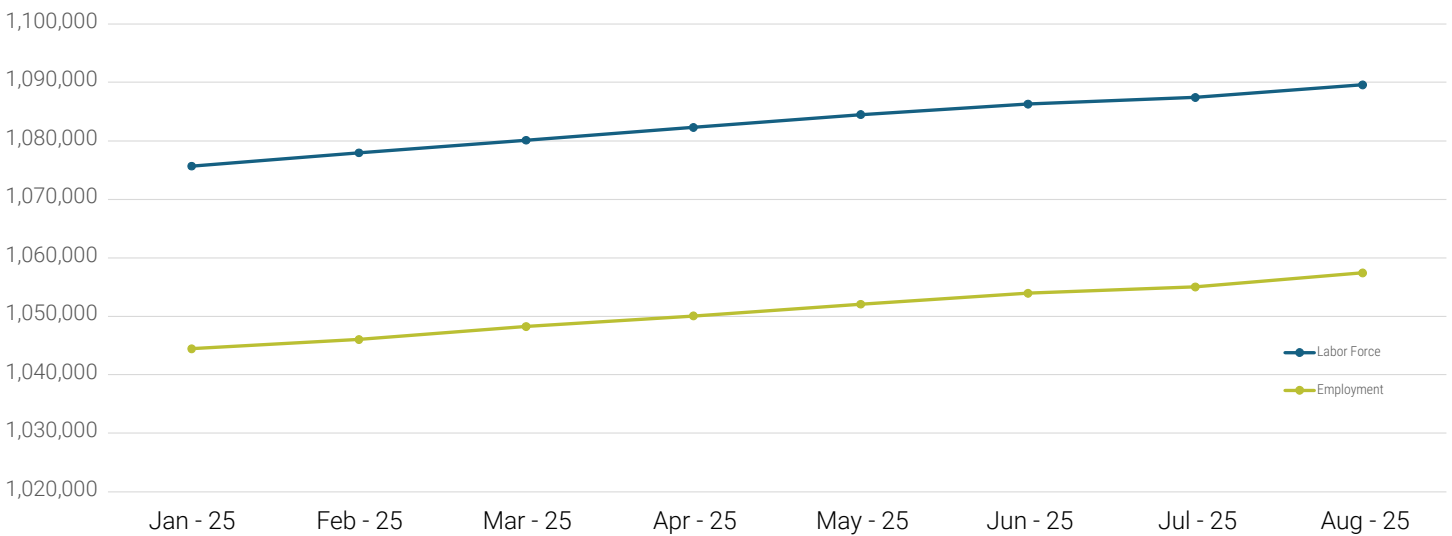
Jobs Filled by Workers Ages 65+ as a Share of Total Employment in Nebraska Industry Sectors, Q4 2024



U.S. Census Bureau. Quarterly Workforce Indicators, QWI Explorer App. qwexplorer.ces.census.gov.

Record Employment and Labor Force Numbers in July 2025

Nebraska's labor force continues to grow. Employed workers and the total labor force (people working or looking for work) have seen record highs every month in 2025. The labor force surpassed 1,089,000 in August, with over 1,057,000 individuals currently employed. Data comes from a Census Bureau survey.



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



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TDD: 1.800.833.7352

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