



# Lincoln Vital Signs

2014



## A NOTE ABOUT THE VITAL SIGNS INDICATORS AND SOURCES

*The Vital Signs indicators for this study are measures of the strength and health of our community as well as the challenges. The indicators are meant to:*

- *reflect fundamental interests and concerns of the community, families, and individuals;*
- *be reliable sources using valid sampling and measurement approaches;*
- *be available for multiple, recent past years, and repeatable for future years; and,*
- *measure outcomes, rather than inputs or outputs.*

*For a number of indicators, national, state, peer, or aspirational community data are provided.<sup>1</sup> The authors have noted in various sections of the report where data are lacking for important aspects in our community's life. No original data were collected as a part of this study; rather data already available from public sources were used. The Appendix provides information about the data sources. Data were selected, where possible, representing the City of Lincoln. The authors have noted when other geographic units were used (Lancaster County, of which Lincoln comprises 90% of the population; the Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is Lancaster and Seward Counties; or Nebraska as a whole).*

*There is some variation in reporting of racial and ethnic categories within the study based on availability from the data source. For most data used in the study, categorization is based on self-identification. At a minimum, the Census Bureau reports five racial categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Persons may choose more than one race. When population sizes of racial groups are small, access to specific data about these populations may be suppressed by the Census Bureau. The Census Bureau also collects Hispanic origin (popularly called "ethnicity"). Ethnicity is a separate and distinct concept from race. That is, an individual may claim any race along with Hispanic origin.<sup>2</sup> For purposes of presentation, race and ethnicity are often reported in a single graphic figure. Further, we have shortened titles of racial/ethnicity categories, in most cases.*

*Over the years, the U.S. Census Bureau has varied its approach to reporting about persons living in group quarters (including data from populations living in college dormitories, correctional facilities, nursing homes). For example, beginning in 2006 race and educational attainment data include persons in group quarters. Calculations for persons in poverty EXCLUDE institutionalized people, people in military group quarters, people in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years old.*

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<sup>1</sup> Peer and aspirational communities used for some comparison are those identified in the Lincoln Economic Dashboard created by the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development. Lincoln's seven peer communities are: Des Moines, Iowa; Lexington, Kentucky; Lansing, Michigan; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Springfield, Missouri; Topeka, Kansas; and Urbana-Champaign, Illinois. Lincoln's five aspirational communities are: Austin, Texas; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Madison, Wisconsin; Raleigh, North Carolina; and Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf>



## AT A GLANCE

### **Community Profile**

*Lincoln's state of well-being is one of the highest in the country and the city benefits from population growth and increased diversity.*

### **Economy and Workforce**

*Although Lincoln has low unemployment and a highly educated workforce, Lincoln's wages are lower than the national average even when adjusted for our lower cost of living.*

### **Basic Needs**

*Lincoln's poverty rate has increased dramatically over the past 10 years and is now higher than the national average.*

### **Education**

*While facing a 21% increase in enrollment and a 133% increase in the number of students receiving free lunch (a proxy for low income) since 2000, Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) achievement and graduation rates continue to improve.*

### **Health**

*American health is declining precipitously; in Lincoln the declines have not been as severe, but are cause for concern.*

### **Safety**

*Lincoln is a safe community that has a low crime rate.*

### **Community Involvement and Culture**

*Lincoln residents support organizations generously with their time, but charitable giving is slightly less than the national average.*



## FUNDERS AND ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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**Nebraska Children and Families Foundation**, Betty Medinger

**United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County**, Brian Wachman, Robin McDannel

**University of Nebraska Foundation**, Liz Lange

**Woods Charitable Fund**, Tom Woods

Leaders of Lincoln's largest public and private charitable organizations desired a more comprehensive understanding of Lincoln for themselves, as well as a way to share that information with the larger community -- resulting in the **Lincoln Vital Signs** report. The need for comprehensive information about Lincoln was spurred, in part, by cuts to government programs. Lincoln's public and philanthropic sectors realized that local funding was unlikely to replace federal funds. Further, they intuited that, despite Lincoln's heralded low unemployment rates, needs in the community were growing. This study seeks to present information about Lincoln's strengths and challenges.

**Lincoln Vital Signs** is intended to inform conversations, spark connections, and spur collaboration. The indicators presented in this study provide data, not a plan for action. Many communities have found that tracking key indicators is a powerful way to understand their community's assets and challenges. This document presents key indicators about Lincoln to paint a picture of our collective successes and challenges. It is hoped that it will catalyze insight and action among individuals and organizations developing a vision for the future.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Lincoln is in an enviable position** with its strong economy, highly-educated workforce, strong public educational system, high well-being, good health outcomes, and effective civic services. However, Lincoln has not escaped the worldwide recession unscathed. A **growing proportion of Lincoln's population faces real need**; among these are Lincoln's children. **Lincoln's diversity is growing** and this presents opportunities, as well as challenges, to the community.

**1. Lincoln does many things exceptionally well and these successes should be nurtured.**

- Lincoln has grown 16% since 2000; largely attributable to people moving to the community.
- Unemployment in Lincoln continues to be much lower than the rest of the nation.
- Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area (Lancaster and Seward counties) is ranked 18th in the country for percent of workers with a college degree.
- Lincoln has a high graduation rate. Overall rates of student proficiency are strong in standardized national testing at the third, fourth, and eighth grades.
- Lincoln's violent crime rate has averaged 44% of the violent crime rate of other comparably-sized cities.
- Lincoln ranked first in overall well-being in the 2012 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index®.
- Lincoln generally receives high marks for lower rates of disease and death for health risks attributable to behaviors.

**2. A growing proportion of Lincoln's population faces real need.**

- Lincoln's per capita income trails the national average by \$4,000, and trails by \$1,400 when adjusted for cost of living.
- The number of people in Lincoln below the poverty threshold increased 48% since 2005 and the city now has a higher rate of poverty than the nation or Nebraska.
- Since 2007, Lincoln's number of homeless individuals has risen 41%.
- In 2000, Lincoln had no neighborhoods in extreme poverty. By 2010, Lincoln had six neighborhoods in extreme poverty.

**3. Lincoln's children fare poorly on many measures.**

- The percent of children in poverty has doubled since 2008, which is now equivalent to national rates. This translates to 12,500 children in Lincoln living in poverty. Since 2009, the age group with the largest proportion in poverty in Lincoln is children (22%).
- Nearly 30% of all families with more than two children have incomes at or below the poverty threshold. For female headed households with more than two children, 68% are at or below the poverty threshold.
- In the 2013 single day count, one-third of homeless individuals were children 19 years of age or younger ( $n = 312$ ); this number has increased 26% since 2007.
- Approximately 44% of Lincoln Public School students participate in the Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program ( $n = 16,077$ ). Most of these students receive free lunch ( $n = 13,315$ ).
- Lincoln's racial and ethnic minority children and children living in poverty have lower educational achievement than do White children.
- Lincoln has a much higher percentage of families with all parents in the workforce than the national average, suggesting that Lincoln may have an elevated need for high quality day care. However, no data for Lincoln could be identified that measures the availability of quality child care or its cost burden to families.
- In Lancaster County, there continues to be a higher percentage of children in foster care than there are nationally. On any given day almost 1,000 children are in out-of-home placements due primarily to parental neglect (58%), parental substance abuse (30%), and substandard housing (25%).
- Approximately one-third of elementary and middle school students are overweight or obese and are not proficient in cardiovascular fitness.



## INTRODUCTION

Cities... are defined by the quality of the ideas they generate, the innovations they spur, and the opportunities they create for people living within and outside the city limits.<sup>3</sup>

Judith Rodin, President  
Rockefeller Foundation

Lincoln is a growing and changing community. **More people are choosing to live and move here.** Many people enjoy Lincoln's quality of life including good schools, livable neighborhoods, and arts and cultural opportunities. **Lincoln Vital Signs** has been commissioned by philanthropic organizations, the business community, the City of Lincoln, and Lancaster County to create a shared understanding of Lincoln. This report presents Lincoln's well-being in seven key areas: **Community Profile, Economy and Workforce, Basic Needs, Education, Health, Safety,** and **Community Involvement and Culture.** The key areas are ordered to provide an overall orientation and then to focus on specific aspects of the community. It is hoped that this and the companion website (*vitalsigns.nebraska.edu*) will help Lincoln learn more about itself and potentially catalyze action that will make Lincoln even stronger.

Three cross-cutting themes emerge from the data:

1. **Lincoln does many things exceptionally well and these successes should be nurtured.** Lincoln is in an enviable position with its strong economy, highly-educated workforce, strong public educational system, high well-being, good health outcomes, and effective civic services. As the United States struggled through the recent recession<sup>4</sup>, Lincoln maintained among the lowest unemployment rates in the nation. Lincoln ranked first in overall well-being among 189 cities. Lincoln has a significantly lower violent crime rate than other similarly-sized communities. Lincoln scores well on chronic disease risk factors with a relatively lower prevalence of diabetes and physical inactivity than other communities. Lincoln Public Schools reports high graduation rates. There have been tremendous investments in Lincoln's

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<sup>3</sup> (Katz & Bradley, 2013)

<sup>4</sup> The official dates of the recent recession were December 2007 – June 2009. The National Bureau of Economic Research defines a recession as a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in real GDP, real income, employment, industrial production, and wholesale-retail sales: <http://www.nber.org/cycles.html>



physical infrastructure, including high-profile private/public investments such as the new Pinnacle Bank Arena, the West Haymarket development, and the Antelope Valley Project. Lincoln should continue to foster a highly-educated workforce: cities with skilled workforces attract more jobs and those jobs pay higher wages, not just for those that are skilled, but also for the less skilled.<sup>5</sup> A classic example of a rising tide raising the level of all boats.

2. **A growing proportion of Lincoln's population faces real need.** The recent recession hit Lincoln later than most of the rest of the United States -- in 2009 -- at which time Lincoln experienced a 49% increase in persons with incomes below the poverty level from the previous year. The increase in poverty is primarily the result of persons falling into poverty who were not previously in poverty; not the result of persons in poverty moving to Lincoln. Since 2008, Lincoln has experienced an 81% increase in households receiving SNAP benefits (Food Stamps), a 30% increase in the number of students receiving free lunch, and a 25% increase in homelessness. Persons in poverty have five times the rate of unemployment than persons not in poverty, yet 60% of persons in poverty (over 16 years of age) worked part-time jobs or worked part of the year. In 2000, Lincoln had no neighborhoods in extreme poverty but now Census estimates suggest that there are six neighborhoods in extreme poverty.<sup>6</sup> Lincoln's low cost of living is not fully able to compensate for Lincoln's low wages. Lincoln must find a way to help individuals move themselves out of poverty through better jobs, education/skills training, or social supports.
  
3. **Lincoln's children are particularly vulnerable.** Over 1 in 5 of Lincoln's children live in poverty (this translates to 12,500 children living in poverty; most of those are white children living with a single parent mother). One-third of homeless persons in Lincoln are children. Poverty in childhood is linked to reduced academic attainment, higher rates of non-marital childbearing, worse health, and continuance of poverty into adulthood, particularly when children live in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty for extended periods of time.<sup>7</sup> Children who are racial and ethnic minorities face even greater challenges: a higher percentage are in poverty and experience lower educational achievement than the White population. Today's children will be

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<sup>5</sup> (Moretti, 2012)

<sup>6</sup> Not including the Census Tract for the main campus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Lincoln Regional Center.

<sup>7</sup> (Magnuson & Votruba-Drzal, 2009)



Lincoln's tomorrow. Efforts must be made to ensure that all Lincoln's children experience the best possible start toward becoming productive, engaged citizens.

What will be Lincoln's future? Recent changes in government funding have created a void of services to those most in need in our community.<sup>8</sup> Lincoln's relatively small philanthropic community cannot single-handedly take up the slack, and neither can local governments or business communities alone. It is clear that complex issues will require **collaboration among all sectors of our community**: businesses, families and individuals, non-profit organizations, philanthropies, and government. This study may be a starting point for conversation and connection toward a common goal of ensuring that Lincoln continues to be a vibrant city that provides a high quality of life for all its residents.

### **Be Informed. Get Involved.**

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<sup>8</sup> Nebraska was allocated over \$1.3 billion through the Recovery Act (2009) which providing funding for a wide variety of infrastructure, services, and stabilization activities . (State of Nebraska, 2013; January 2013 ARRA expenditures. <http://www.recovery.nebraska.gov/docs/pdf/ARRA%20Expenditures%20Summary%20%281-31-2013%29%20web%20copy.pdf>). For example, the Recovery Act provided additional funding to state Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant funds for 2009 and 2010 only. However, Nebraska's TANF Block Grant funds from the federal government when adjusted for inflation, declined 29% between fiscal years 1997 and 2012. (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2013; Nebraska TANF Spending Fact Sheet. <http://www.cbpp.org/files/8-7-12tanf-factsheets/8-7-12tanf-NE.pdf>). Nebraska also received less assistance than other states in some areas. For example, because Nebraska has a low unemployment rate, unemployed Nebraskans are eligible for a maximum of 40 weeks of unemployment insurance (compared to a maximum of 73 weeks available to residents of other states). (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2013; How many weeks of unemployment compensation are available? [http://www.cbpp.org/files/PolicyBasics\\_UI\\_Weeks.pdf](http://www.cbpp.org/files/PolicyBasics_UI_Weeks.pdf)).





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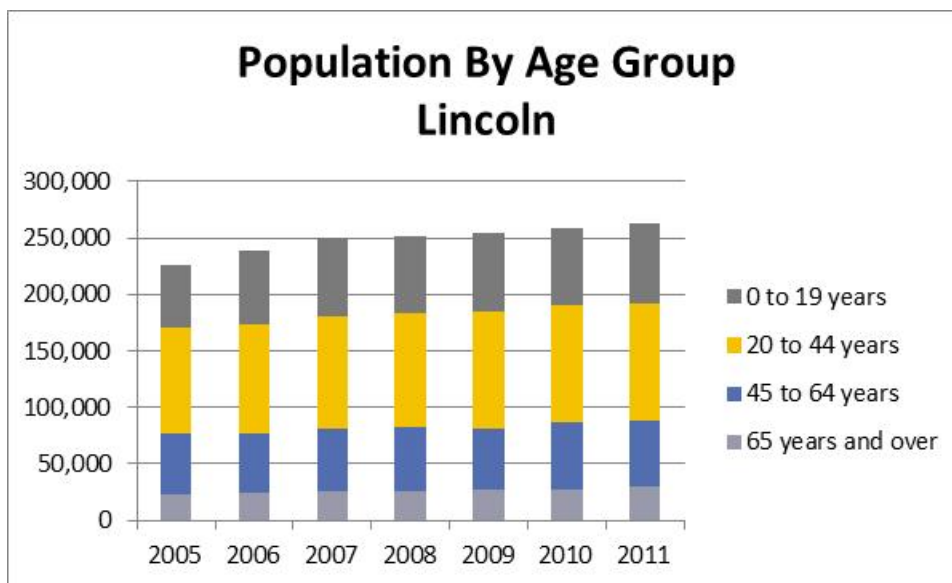
## COMMUNITY PROFILE

*Lincoln is a growing community. In just six years, Lincoln's **overall population has grown by over 36,000 residents**. For the past five years, Lincoln's **growth in children 0 to 19 years of age** has been especially strong. Lincoln is also becoming more **racially and ethnically diverse**: Lincoln's White-only (non-Hispanic/Latino) population has dropped from comprising 87% of Lincoln's overall population (2005) to now comprising 83%. Compared to other cities across the United States, Lincoln gets high marks for **overall well-being**.*

### LINCOLN HAS GROWN 16% SINCE 2000

Similar to other urbanized communities in Nebraska, Lincoln has experienced population growth over the past decade. **Lincoln now has just over 262,000 residents<sup>9</sup>** (up 16% from 2000). Looking over the last decade, Lincoln's middle-aged population (45 – 64 years) experienced the greatest growth. However, looking at a more recent timeframe (2005-2010) reveals that in recent years **the child/youth (0 – 19 years) and elderly (65 years and older) age groups have shown large gains**.

FIGURE 1. POPULATION BY AGE GROUP



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

<sup>9</sup> 2011 U.S. Census estimates



TABLE 1. POPULATION GROWTH BY AGE GROUP

Lincoln Population Change by Age Group	Percentage Increase	
	2000 to 2010	2005 to 2010
<b>0 to 19 years</b>	12%	24%
<b>20 to 44 years</b>	6%	11%
<b>45 to 64 years</b>	35%	10%
<b>65 years and over</b>	18%	18%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and American Community Survey

## LINCOLN'S GROWTH IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO PEOPLE MOVING TO LINCOLN

**Lincoln's growth has been largely attributable to people moving to Lincoln.** In 2011, the population that moved to Lincoln came from other places in Nebraska (4.4%), other places in the United States (2.1%), and other places in the world (0.8%). During the past three years, approximately **8% to 9% of Lincoln's population moved to the city** within the previous 12 months. Lincoln's *natural growth rate* (birth rate minus death rate) has been declining when compared to past years and in 2011 added approximately 1% to Lincoln's population. Lincoln's growth has not been steady throughout the decade. Growth was faster in the early part of the decade. In 2008, Lincoln's population grew only 0.3% and population growth has slowed since then. The slowed population growth since 2008 mirrors national trends.

## HALF OF NEWCOMERS TO LINCOLN ARE YOUNG, WHITE ADULTS

For the past three years, approximately **half of newcomers to Lincoln have been young adults between 18 to 24** years of age. The influx of young people is not surprising given Lincoln's multiple post-secondary educational institutions.

Approximately **85% of persons moving to Lincoln were White**, and most (78%) were non-Hispanic/Latino. However, given Lincoln's relatively small minority population, newcomers to Lincoln may comprise a large proportion of those populations. For example, in 2011, newcomers to Lincoln comprised 16% of the Black population, coming mostly from other Nebraska counties and other states, and 14% of the Asian population, coming mostly from abroad.

## NEWCOMERS HAVE HIGHER RATES OF POVERTY

Persons new to Lincoln have twice the poverty rate<sup>10</sup> as persons who have lived in Lincoln for longer than one year. The percentage of persons below the poverty threshold who are new to Lincoln was 32%, while the rate for the population who has lived in Lincoln for longer than one year was 17%.

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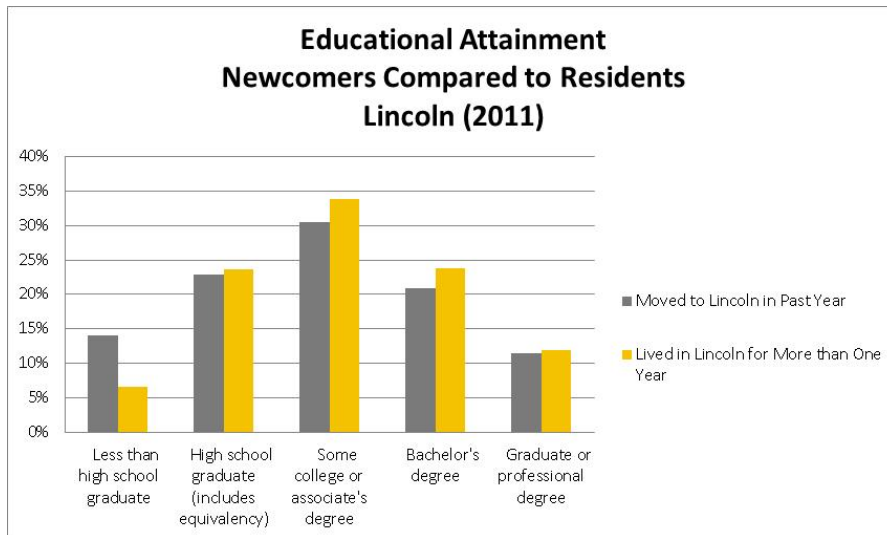
<sup>10</sup> In 2012, the poverty threshold was \$23,283 for a family of four that included two related children less than 18 years of age.



## NEWCOMERS ARE SLIGHTLY LESS EDUCATED

Of newcomers to Lincoln that are 25 years or older, most are high school graduates or have some college, but they are somewhat less well-educated than the rest of Lincoln's population.

FIGURE 2. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF NEWCOMERS

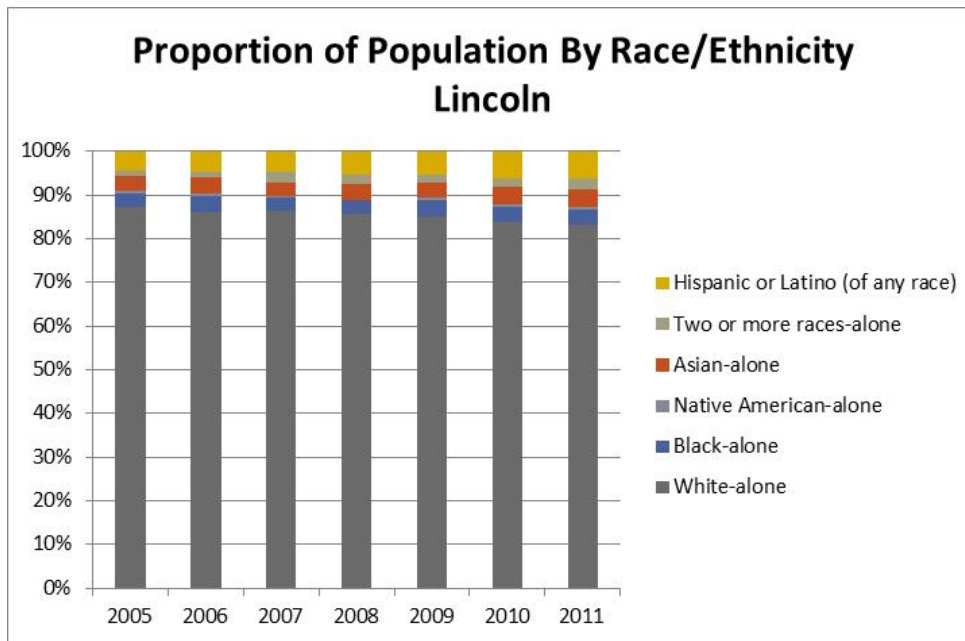


## LINCOLN'S NON-WHITE POPULATION HAS INCREASED 55% SINCE 2005

As of 2011, the majority of Lincoln's population identifies as *White-alone* (non-Hispanic/Latino) (83%). The proportion of the White-alone population has been steadily declining over many years. **The past six years have seen dramatic changes as Lincoln is rapidly becoming a more ethnically and racially diverse community.** From 2005 to 2011, Lincoln's White-alone population increased only 10%, but the non-White population has increased 55%. Since 2005, Lincoln's Hispanic/Latino population has grown 74% (from 9,672 persons to 16,819 persons).



FIGURE 3. POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Note: Groups that make up less than one percent of the population do not appear on the graph

**Lincoln’s diversity will increase as the 18 Years of Age and Under population ages.** Lincoln’s growing diversity is even more striking when considering the newest generation. Within the age group of 18 years of age or younger, the White-alone population comprised less than three-quarters of the population in 2011 (74.3%).

TABLE 2. RACE/ETHNICITY BY AGE GROUP

Age Group	White Non-Hispanic/Latino	Hispanic/Latino	African American	Asian	Native American	Two or More Races
18 Years of Age or Younger	74.30%	9.90%	5.40%	4.40%	0.80%	6.70%
Over 18 Years of Age	86.50%	4.80%	3.30%	3.80%	0.60%	1.30%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Note: Includes ethnic groups that comprise more than 0.5% of population; Hispanic/Latino category has some overlap with other categories

## LINCOLN’S STATE OF WELL-BEING RANKS FIRST IN THE U.S.

Of the 189 Metropolitan Statistical Areas whose residents were surveyed as a part of the 2012 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index®, Lincoln (including Lancaster and Seward counties) was **ranked first in overall well-being**. In the three years that municipal data has been available, Lincoln’s ranking was second in 2010 (behind Boulder, CO), 20<sup>th</sup> in 2011, and first in 2012.

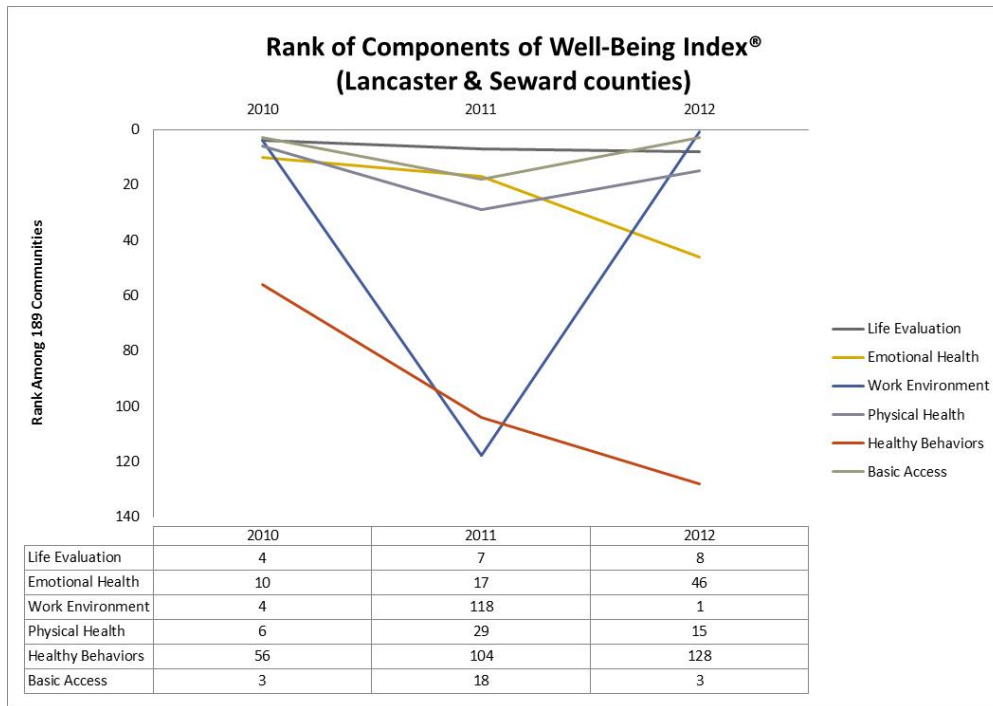
Through phone surveys, individuals are asked questions in six domains: Life Evaluation (present and future), Emotional Health (daily feelings), Physical Health (health experiences), Healthy Behavior (life style habits), Work Environment (job-related feelings and perceptions), and Basic Access (access to food, shelter, healthcare, and



other basic needs).<sup>11</sup> Lincoln has scored well in areas of **basic access (#3 ranking)**, **life evaluation (#8 ranking)**, and **physical health (#15 ranking)**. Lincoln experienced a dramatic drop in **work environment ranking** in 2011 but recovered in 2012, where it achieved a #1 ranking. Compared to its other rankings, **Lincoln scores low on healthy behaviors, and this ranking continued to drop (#128 ranking in 2012).**

State-level well-being information has been available since 2008. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Nebraska has climbed from the middle of rankings to a high of 7<sup>th</sup> in the most recent survey.

FIGURE 4. RANKING FOR COMPONENTS OF THE WELL-BEING INDEX®



Source: Gallup Healthways Well-Being Index®

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.well-beingindex.com/methodology.asp>





## ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

Metropolitan areas concentrate ideas, people, and technology to create a virtuous cycle that generates more innovation, attracts still more people, and makes many of the people and firms that are already there even smarter and more productive.<sup>12</sup>

Bruce Katz & Jennifer Bradley  
Brookings Metropolitan Policy  
Program

*Lincoln has a **strong economy, an educated workforce, a low cost of living, and exciting investments in Lincoln's built infrastructure (witness the changes in Lincoln resulting from the Pinnacle Bank Arena and West Haymarket Development).** Despite these positive trends, Lincoln also has opportunities for improvement. Many economists believe that cities with jobs in science, technology, engineering, math, and creative and innovative industries will continue to grow while cities that lag in those areas will decline. Lincoln is only **average in the percentage of occupations in science, technology, engineering, math, and creative and innovative industries.** Lincoln also has a low cost of living, but it does not fully overcome Lincoln's **low per capita income.** Lincoln's low per capita income is particularly dramatic given that Lincoln has a **high percentage of children with all parents in the workforce** (signaling the need for high-quality day care). Along with state and local reductions to human services, likely **reductions in federal funding** may present challenges in providing services to individual and families.*

### LINCOLN'S UNEMPLOYMENT IS LOWER THAN NEARLY ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE U.S.

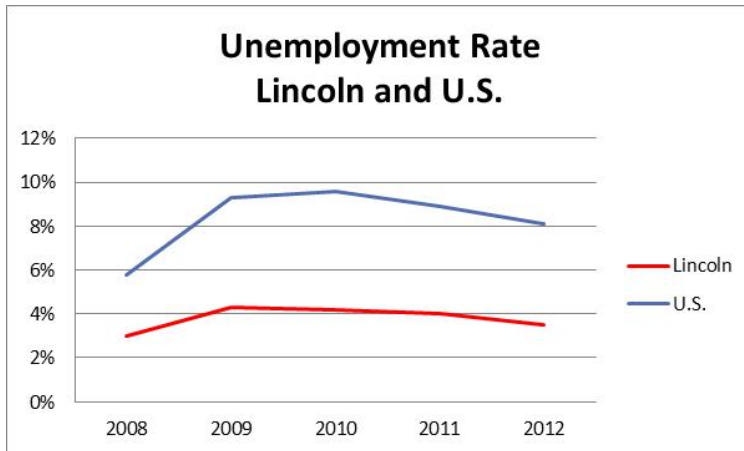
It is widely known in Lincoln that, even during the recent recession, Lincoln had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. **Unemployment in Lincoln continues to be much lower than that of the rest of the nation.**

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<sup>12</sup> (Katz & Bradley, 2013, pp. 34-35)



**FIGURE 5. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**

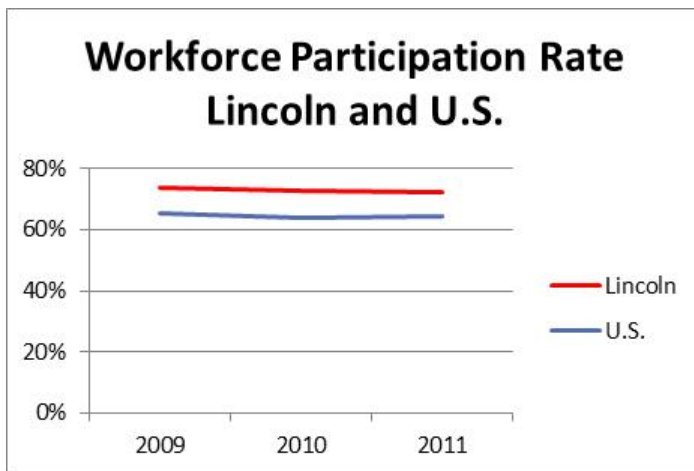


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics

### WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IS HIGH

In Lincoln, a higher percentage of persons over the age of 16 participate in the workforce than is the average nationally. Over the past three years, Lincoln has exceeded the national rate of persons 16 or older participating in the workforce by at least 7%. In 2011, Lincoln's workforce participation was 72%, while the national rate was 65%.

**FIGURE 6. WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION RATE**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

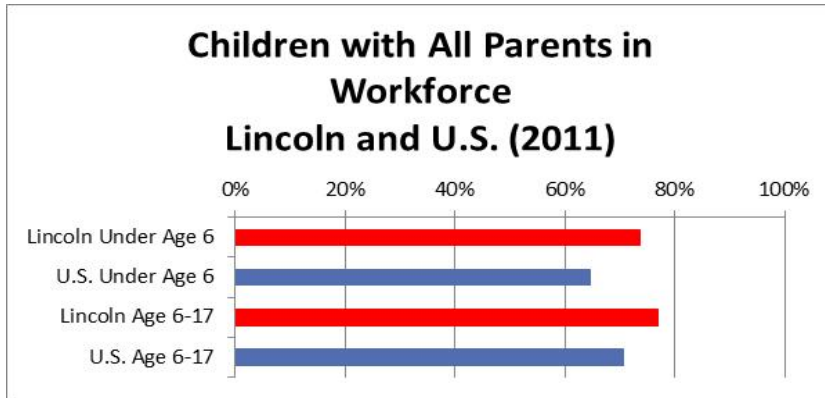
### MANY OF LINCOLN'S CHILDREN HAVE ALL PARENTS IN THE WORKFORCE

The Census Bureau reports the percentage of children that have all parents in the workforce. This figure includes children of two-parent families, both of whom work, as well as one-parent families, with that parent working.



Lincoln has a **much higher percentage of families with all parents in the workforce** than the national average.<sup>13</sup> Nebraska also regularly ranks as one of the top states for percentage of children with all parents in the workforce. The high proportion of children with all parents in the workforce suggests that Lincoln may have an elevated need for high quality day care. However, no data for Lincoln could be identified that measures the availability of quality child care or its cost burden to families.

**FIGURE 7. CHILDREN WITH ALL PARENTS IN WORKFORCE**

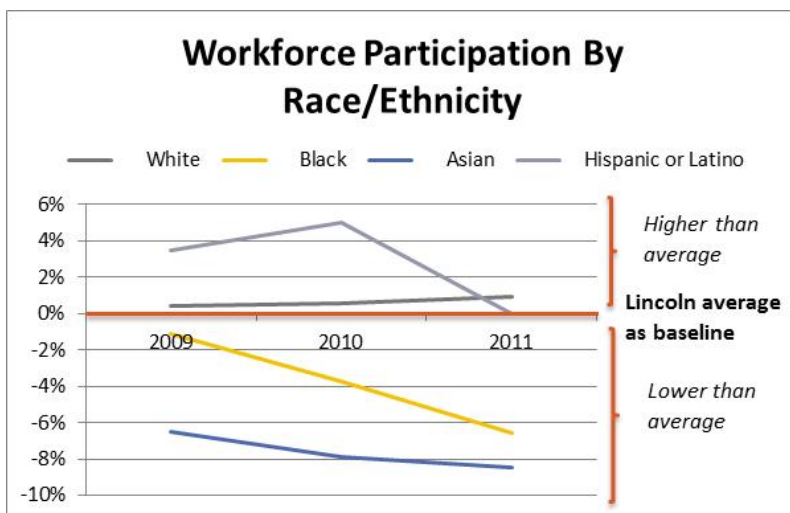


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

**WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT VARY BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Workforce participation rates vary by race or ethnicity. Asians have the lowest workforce participation rate when compared to Lincoln’s overall rate, followed by Blacks. White persons have a slightly higher workforce participation rate than for Lincoln overall. Hispanic/Latinos had a higher rate of workforce participation in 2009 and 2010, but the rate dropped to Lincoln’s overall rate in 2011.

**FIGURE 8. WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

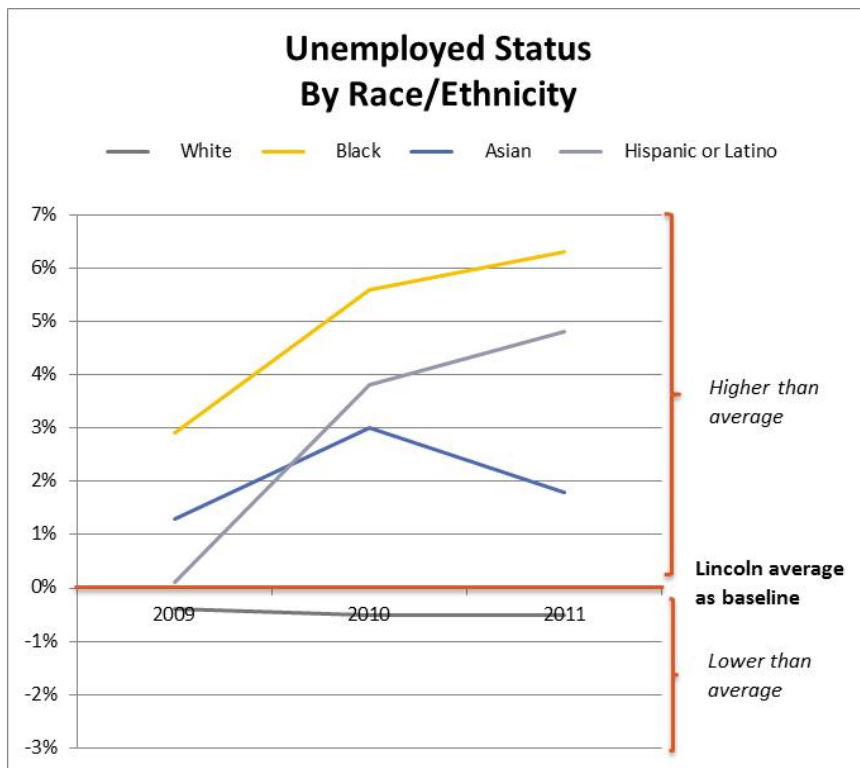
<sup>13</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey



Unemployment rates vary by race or ethnicity. White persons trail Lincoln's overall rate of unemployment for persons 16 years old or older in Lincoln. Blacks have experienced the highest rates of unemployment among racial and ethnic groups, averaging 5% more unemployed persons than Lincoln's overall rate since 2009. Asians averaged 2% and Hispanic/Latinos average 3%.

Those experiencing unemployment in Lincoln are not eligible for unemployment assistance for as long a period as residents in many other states. Because Nebraska has a low unemployment rate, unemployed Nebraskans are eligible for a maximum of 40 weeks of unemployment insurance (compared to a maximum of 73 weeks available to residents of other states)(Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2013, November 11).

FIGURE 9. UNEMPLOYED STATUS BY RACE/ETHNICITY



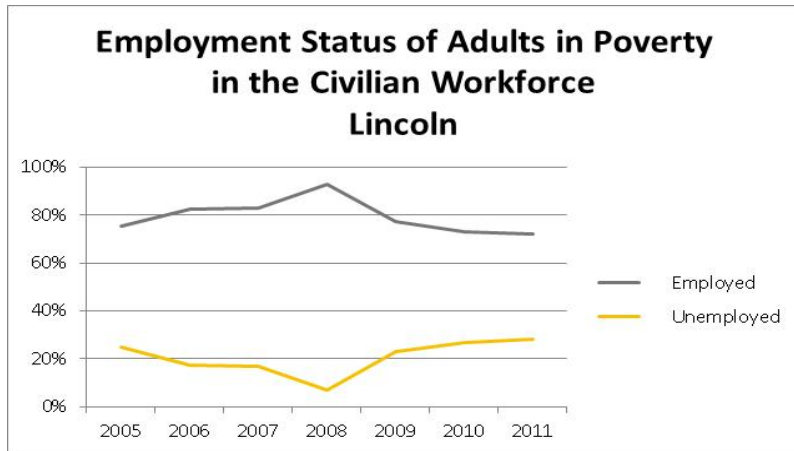
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

#### WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION BY POVERTY STATUS: MOST ADULTS IN POVERTY ARE EMPLOYED

Adults in poverty and in the workforce have experienced an **increase in unemployment since 2009, reaching 28%** in 2011.



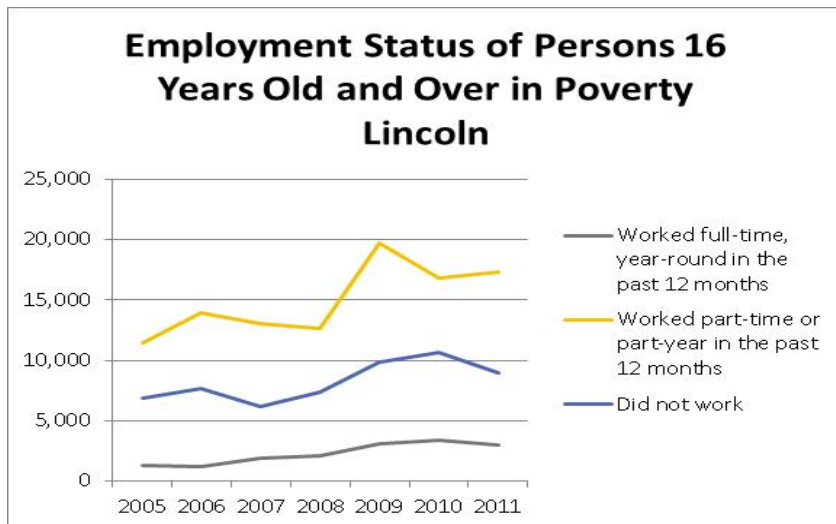
FIGURE 10. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF ADULTS IN POVERTY IN THE WORKFORCE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Of the population of persons 16 years old and older in poverty (regardless of whether they were a part of the workforce, for example, full-time students), **most worked part-time or part-year** during the 12 previous months. There was a 56% increase in persons working part-time or part-year in this population from 2008 to 2009. There has also been an increase in persons working full-time as well as not working.

FIGURE 11. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PERSONS IN POVERTY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



## LINCOLN’S WORKFORCE IS AMONG THE MOST EDUCATED IN THE U.S.

As the number of college graduates in a metropolitan area increases by 10 percent, individuals’ earnings increase by 7.7 percent, no matter how educated they are.<sup>14</sup>

Edward Glaeser  
Harvard University

**Lincoln’s workforce is more highly educated** than that of Nebraska or the nation as a whole when looking at persons 25 or older with at least a high school degree and with a graduate or professional degree. Since 2005, **Lincoln’s workforce with at least a high school degree has exceeded the Nebraska rate by 3% and the national rate by 8%.**<sup>15</sup> The percent of the workforce with at least a high school diploma has been steady since 2005 averaging 93% for Lincoln, 90% for Nebraska, and 85% nationally.

One study ranked the Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area (Lancaster and Seward counties) as the **country’s 18<sup>th</sup> highest for share of workers with a college degree.**<sup>16</sup> Among the top 20 cities with highest percentage of workers with a college degree, however, Lincoln had the lowest average wages for college and high school graduates.

TABLE 3. EDUCATION AND SALARY OF WORKFORCE

City	Rank	Percentage with College Degree	Salary of College Graduates	Salary of High School Graduates
Stamford, CT	1	56%	\$133,479	\$107,301
Washington, DC/MD/VA	2	49%	\$80,872	\$67,140
Boston, MA/NH	3	47%	\$75,173	\$62,423
Madison, WI	4	47%	\$61,888	\$52,542
San Jose, CA	5	47%	\$87,033	\$68,009
Ann Arbor, MI	6	46%	\$65,452	\$55,456
Raleigh-Durham, NC	7	44%	\$63,745	\$50,853
San Francisco-Oakland, CA	8	44%	\$77,381	\$60,546
Fort Collins, CO	9	44%	\$57,391	\$47,007
Seattle-Everett, WA	10	42%	\$68,025	\$55,001
Trenton, NJ	11	42%	\$81,914	\$64,299
Lexington, KY	12	41%	\$55,238	\$44,915
Austin, TX	13	41%	\$62,289	\$48,809
Portland, OR	14	40%	\$57,366	\$48,080
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	15	40%	\$69,955	\$57,187
Denver-Boulder, CO	16	39%	\$64,488	\$50,097
New York-Northeastern NJ	17	38%	\$79,757	\$59,797
<b>Lincoln, NE</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>\$50,401</b>	<b>\$41,837</b>
Santa Cruz, CA	19	38%	\$64,801	\$48,186
Tallahassee, FL	20	38%	\$59,380	\$46,715

Source: Reproduced from Moretti, 2012, p. 94.

<sup>14</sup>(Glaeser, 2011, p. 253)

<sup>15</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

<sup>16</sup> (Moretti, 2012)

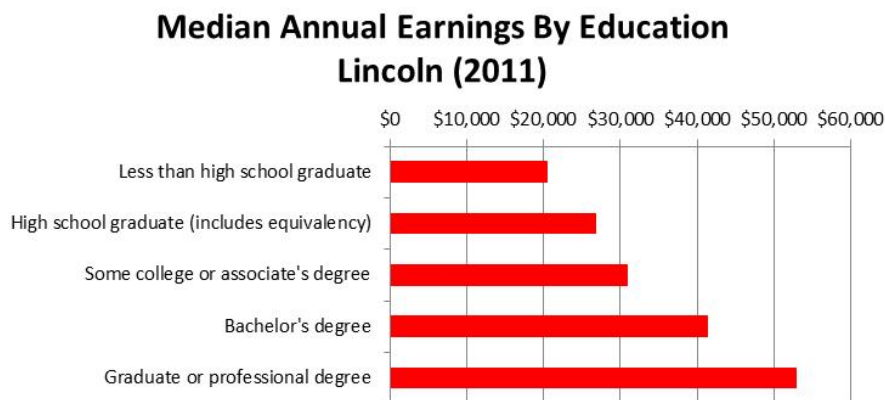


Since 2005, Lincoln's workforce with graduate or professional degrees has exceeded the Nebraska rate by 3% and the national rate by 2%<sup>17</sup>. The percent of the workforce with graduate or professional degrees has been slightly increasing since 2005, averaging 12% for Lincoln, 8% for Nebraska, and 10% nationally.

## MORE HIGHLY EDUCATED PERSONS ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE UNEMPLOYED

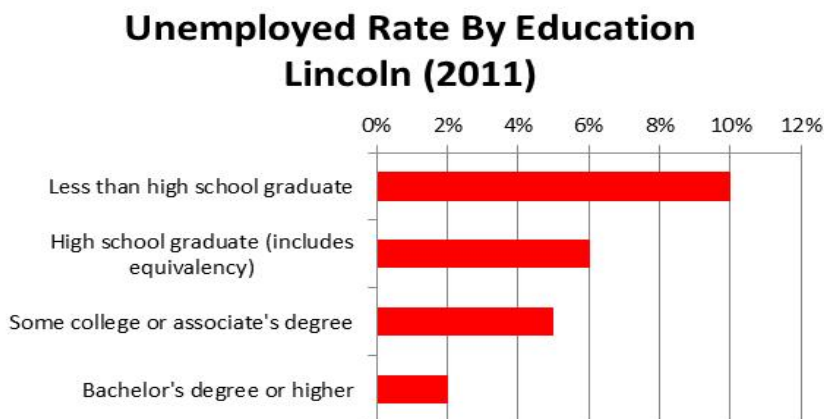
Adults with higher educational attainment have higher incomes/earnings and are less likely to be unemployed than adults with lower educational attainment. Adults who did not graduate from high school **earn half the income** as an adult with a Bachelor's degree. Adults who did not graduate from high school are **500% more likely to be unemployed** than are those who earned a Bachelor's degree.

FIGURE 12. EARNINGS BY EDUCATION



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

FIGURE 13. UNEMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

<sup>17</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

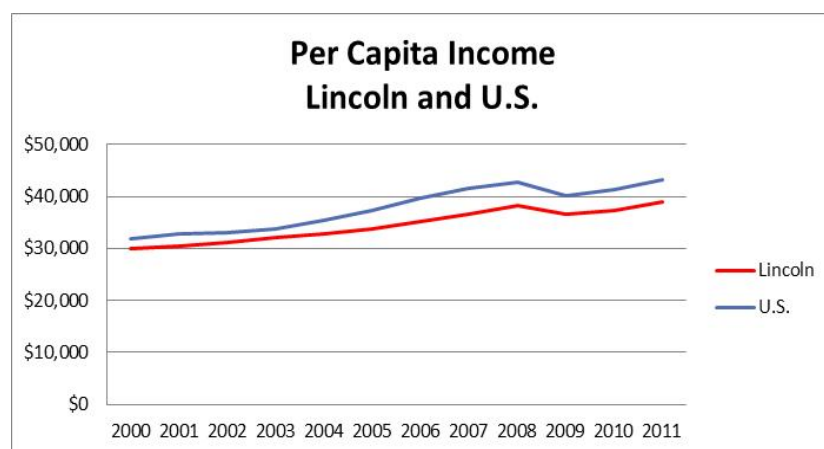


## LINCOLN'S COST OF LIVING AND PER CAPITA INCOME ARE LOW

Living in Lincoln costs less, on average, than does living in other parts of the United States.<sup>18</sup> In recent years the **overall cost of living in Lincoln has been 92 - 93% of the national average.**

Lincoln's per capita income has been steadily increasing, but is **lower than the national per capita income and the gap between Lincoln's and the national per capita income is growing.** The gap between Lincoln and the U.S. has been increasing since before the recent recession. In 2011, Lincoln's per capita income was \$4,000 less than the national average.<sup>19</sup>

FIGURE 14. PER CAPITA INCOME



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Adjusting per capita income by the cost of living measures relative buying power and recognizes that a dollar of income in Lincoln has more buying power than a dollar of income in other areas of the U.S. **When adjusting for Lincoln's lower cost of living, Lincoln's per capita income trails the national average by \$1,394 (or 3%).**

TABLE 4. ADJUSTED PER CAPITA INCOME

Adjusted Per Capita Income, 2011 <sup>20</sup>		
	US average	Lincoln
Unadjusted Per Capita Income	\$43,169	\$39,018
Unadjusted Percentage of US Per Capita Income		90%
Cost of Living Index		93%
Per Capita Income Adjusted by Cost of Living Index	\$43,169	\$41,775
<b>Differential from U.S. Average</b>		
In Dollars		-\$1,394
As a Percentage		-3%

Sources: ACCRA Cost of Living Index, and Bureau of Economic Statistics

<sup>18</sup> Source: ACCRA Cost of Living Index

<sup>19</sup> Source: Bureau of Economic Statistics

<sup>20</sup> Adjusted per capita income is the product of Unadjusted Per Capita Income divided by Cost of Living Rate





## MOST WORKERS ARE EMPLOYED BY PRIVATE COMPANIES

In Lincoln (2011), 76% of people employed are private wage and salary workers; 19% were federal, state, or local government workers; and 5% were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business.

TABLE 5. CIVILIAN WORKFORCE EMPLOYER STATUS

Class of Worker	Number	Percent
Private wage and salary workers	104,982	76%
Government workers	25,554	19%
Self-employed in own (not incorporated) business workers	6,925	5%

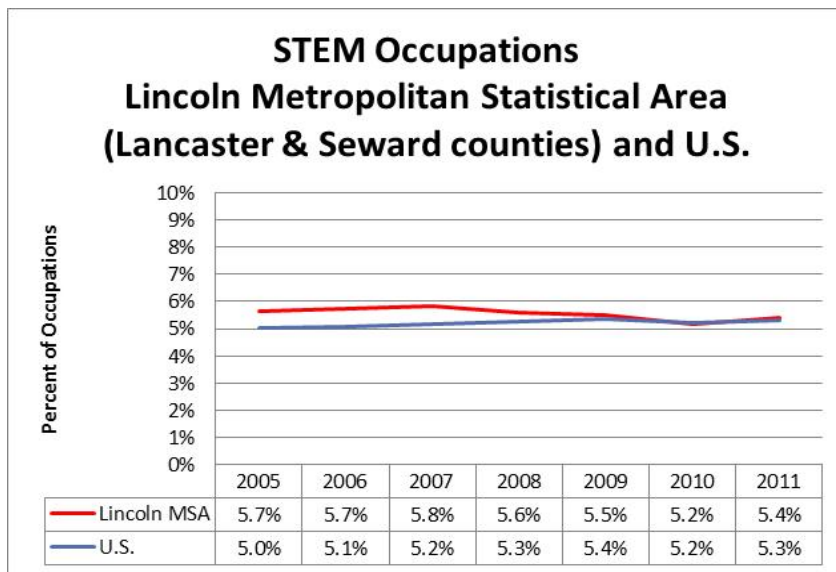
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

## THE PROPORTION OF LINCOLN'S STEM WORKFORCE IS AVERAGE

There is general consensus that the United States long-term global competitiveness will partially hinge on the supply and quality of workers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields.<sup>21</sup> STEM careers are important to communities because they offer high wage jobs that will result in reinvestments back into local economies.<sup>22</sup>

In the Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (Lancaster and Seward counties), **STEM occupations have decreased as a percentage of all occupations**. In Lincoln **5.4% of all occupations are classified as STEM**; this approximates the national percentage (5.3%) of all occupations that are STEM.

FIGURE 15. STEM OCCUPATIONS



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics – Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates

<sup>21</sup> (Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century, 2007)

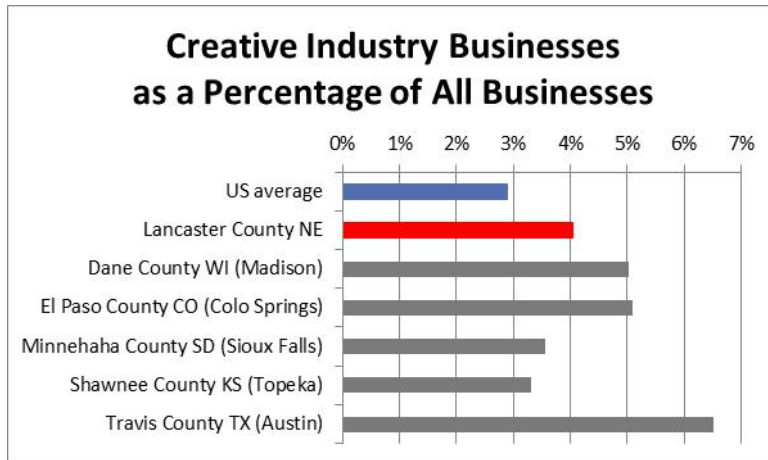
<sup>22</sup> (Rothwell, 2013)



## THE PROPORTION OF LINCOLN'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IS AVERAGE

Arts-related businesses are an important component of a community's culture. *Creative industries* are those with arts-centric Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC), including those in performing arts, visual arts/photography, film/radio/television, design/publishing, and museums. Lincoln has a greater proportion of creative industry businesses (4.0%) than is the average nationally (2.9%). When compared to two of its peer communities, Lincoln exceeds both Minnehaha County, SD (Sioux Falls) and Shawnee County, KS (Topeka). Lincoln trails three of its aspirational communities: Madison, Wisconsin (5.0%), Colorado Springs (5.0%), and Austin, Texas (6.5%).<sup>23</sup>

FIGURE 16. CREATIVE INDUSTRY BUSINESSES



Source: Compiled from the National Arts Index

## NATIONALLY JOBS REQUIRING A MASTER'S DEGREE ARE EXPECTED TO GROW THE FASTEST

It is difficult to know exactly what skills Lincoln residents will need to meet the demands of the future. Anecdotally, there is evidence that right now some Lincoln businesses have jobs available, but cannot find people with the right skills to fit. Nationally, "jobs requiring a master's degree are expected to grow the fastest, while those requiring a high school diploma will experience the slowest growth over the 2010–20 timeframe."<sup>24</sup>

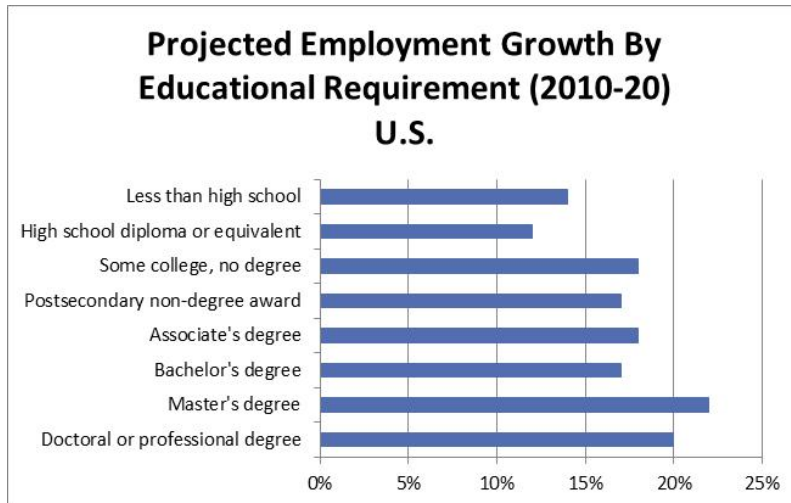
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<sup>23</sup> Peer and aspirational communities used in the study are those identified in the Lincoln Economic Dashboard created by the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development. The communities presented in this comparison were based on availability of information. The peer communities in this comparison are: Minnehaha County, SD (Sioux Falls) and Shawnee County, KS (Topeka). The aspirational communities in this comparison are: Dane County, WI (Madison); El Paso County, CO (Colorado Springs); and Travis County, TX (Austin).

<sup>24</sup> (Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.)



FIGURE 17. NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS



Source: Occupational outlook handbook, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Occupations experiencing the largest numeric growth include those in the fields of healthcare, sales, office and administrative support, education, building and grounds keeping, personal care, and transportation. Nationally, occupations requiring a high school diploma or less will account for the majority—63% —of new jobs between 2010 and 2020.

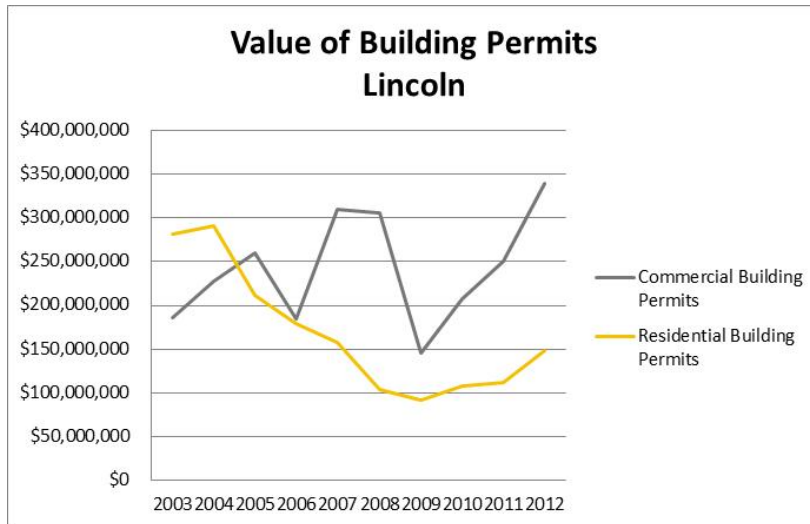
### PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN LINCOLN'S BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE IS GROWING

Lincoln continues to invest in new commercial buildings and residences. The value of **commercial building permits has fluctuated, but has been on an upward trend for the last three years**. Public/private investments have played a substantial role in commercial building activity. For example, in 2012, commercial building permits for the Pinnacle Bank Arena comprised 43% of the total value of commercial building permits.

Residential housing has followed a different trend. After five years of decline in the value of new residential building permits, the value of residential permits began rebounding in 2010. The 2012 value, however, remains lower than values at the first years of the decade. The overall pattern of precipitous declines in the middle part of the decade, with recovery slowly starting near the end of the decade **mirrors the residential building pattern for the United States** as a whole.



FIGURE 18. VALUE OF BUILDING PERMITS



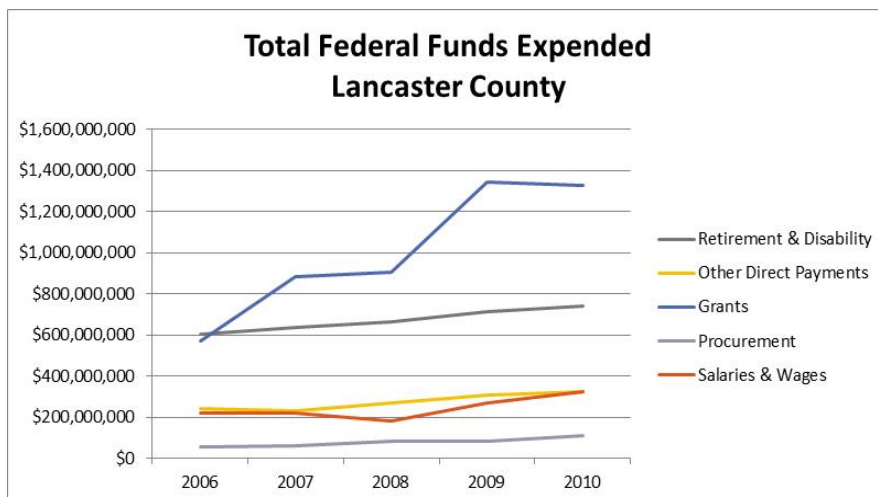
Source: Commercial permit data from City of Lincoln; Residential permit data from U.S. Census Bureau

Note: Residential building permits are those for new privately-owned residential housing units, including multi-family dwellings.

## FEDERAL FUNDS CONTRIBUTE TO LINCOLN'S ECONOMY

The infusion of federal funds contributes to Lincoln's economy in the form of salaries and wages, purchase of goods and services, grants, and cash transfers to individuals. In 2010, total federal funds expended in Lancaster County reached a new high of \$2,822,569,000. Federal grants increased nearly 50% (\$439 million) between 2008 and 2009 as funds for economic recovery were awarded, notably funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. **As those funds have been depleted, it is expected that federal funding will decrease over the next few years.**

FIGURE 19. TOTAL FEDERAL FUNDS EXPENDED

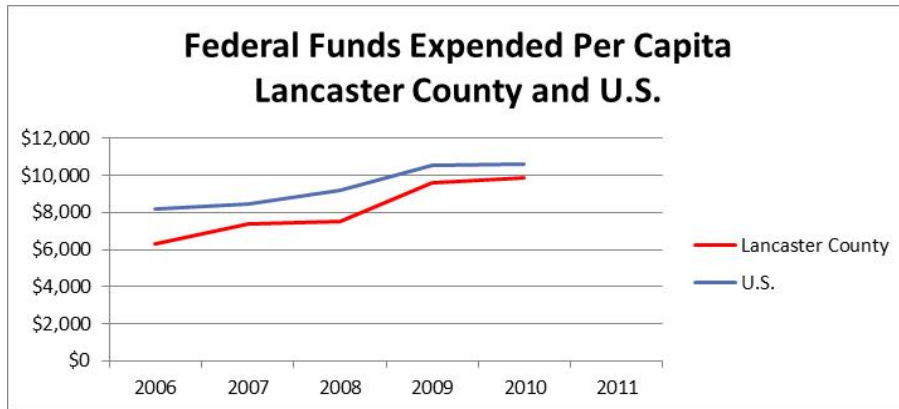


Source: Consolidated Federal Funds Reports



Federal government per capita expenditures in Lancaster County have accelerated to a greater extent than the national per capita increase. In 2010, approximately \$9,900 in federal funds were expended for each person living in Lancaster County.

**FIGURE 20. FEDERAL FUNDS EXPENDED PER CAPITA**



Source: Consolidated Federal Funds Reports



## BASIC NEEDS

The problem of joblessness should be a top-priority item in any public policy discussion focusing on enhancing the status of families.<sup>25</sup>

William Julius Wilson  
Harvard Kennedy School

*Basic needs are the fundamental requirements that must be met in order for individuals to live. Although Lincoln has not experienced the high unemployment rates seen in other areas of the United States, it would be incorrect to assume that in Lincoln residents have been unaffected by the recession. Lincoln's **poverty rate now exceeds the national poverty rate** and the percentage of **children in poverty now matches the national rate**. In Lincoln, the under-18 age group has a higher percentage of persons in poverty than the adult or elderly age groups. The number of **students receiving free lunch has increased 133% since 2000**.<sup>26</sup> Lincoln has **six neighborhoods in extreme poverty** (those with more than 40% of residents in poverty). Homelessness in Lincoln continues to grow, most troublingly among **children who are homeless**. In Lincoln, there has been an increase in the percentage of households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly known as Food Stamps) but Lincoln's rate still trails that of the nation. In other ways, Lincoln appears to provide positive opportunities for individuals to meet their basic needs: Lincoln has a **lower percentage of the population that is uninsured** and a **lower cost of housing** compared to other communities.*

### LINCOLN'S NUMBER OF PERSONS IN POVERTY INCREASED 48% SINCE 2005

The Federal Poverty Level threshold is determined annually based on size of the family, the number of children, and a measure of income needed to purchase food and other essential goods and services.<sup>27, 28</sup> In 2012, for

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<sup>25</sup> (William Julius Wilson, 1987)

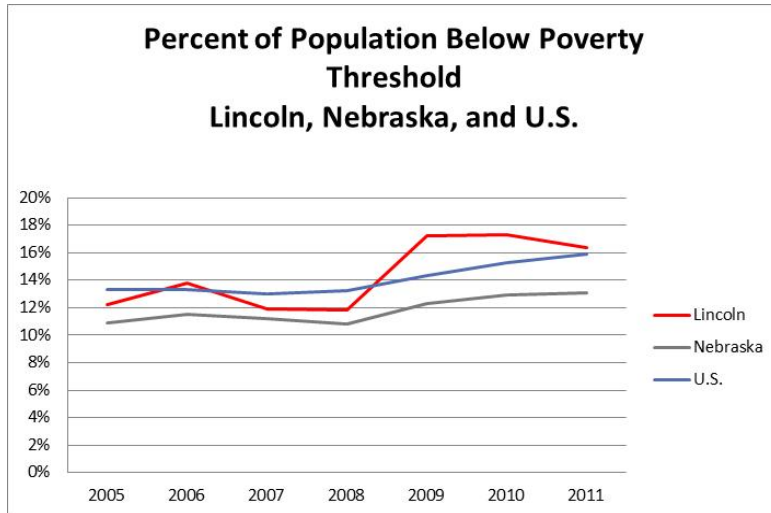
<sup>26</sup> In general, students are eligible for free lunch if their household income is less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. In 2013, students in a family of four with a household income less than \$30,615 would be eligible for free lunch.

<sup>27</sup> Critics have said that the Federal Poverty Threshold, developed in early 1960s, should be improved. The measure uses food costs and a multiplier of three to calculate needed income. Needed income is compared to gross income and does not include in-kind benefits, nor does it recognize increased labor participation of women (and related child care costs), variability in health care costs across populations, or variability of expenses across geographies. These and other factors may underestimate poverty for persons in working families and overestimate poverty for persons in families on public assistance.



example, the poverty threshold was \$23,283 for a family of four that included two related children less than 18 years of age. In Lincoln in 2011, 16% (translating to **40,834 persons**) had incomes that placed them below the poverty threshold. This is a **48% increase in the number of persons below the poverty threshold since 2005** and represents the addition of **13,321 persons** below the poverty threshold. Since 2009, Lincoln has had a **higher percentage of its population below the poverty threshold** than the national or Nebraska rate.

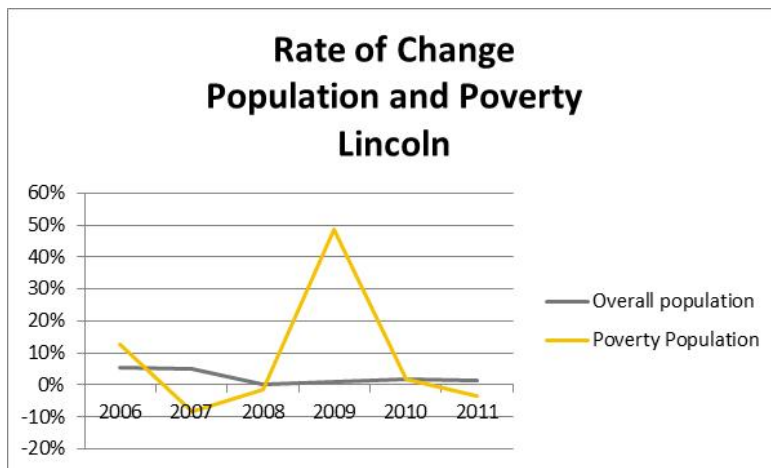
FIGURE 21. PERCENT OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY THRESHOLD



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

The increase of the number of persons in poverty in Lincoln exceeds the city's overall growth. This suggests that **persons who previously did not fall below the poverty threshold have done so**. The last year of the recent recession (**2009**) saw a nearly **50% increase in Lincoln's poverty rate**, from 28,012 (2008) to 41,319 (2009). In 2010 there was a small 2% increase to the population in poverty and in 2011 a 4% decrease.

FIGURE 22. CHANGE IN POPULATION AND POVERTY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

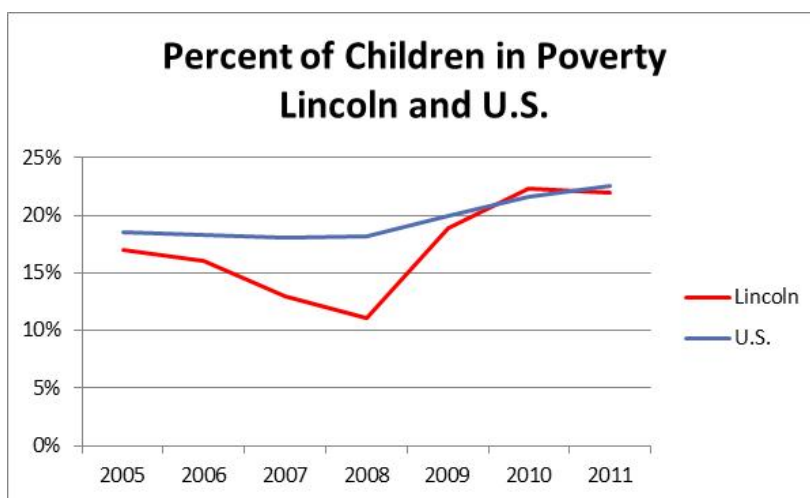


## THE RATE OF CHILDREN IN POVERTY HAS DOUBLED SINCE 2008

Children who live in poverty face tougher odds for achievement than do other children. Children who live in poverty for at least half their childhoods are 90% more likely to leave high school without a diploma and four times more likely to be an unwed teen parent when compared with people who were never poor as a child.<sup>29</sup>

**Lincoln's percent of children whose household incomes fall below the poverty threshold has doubled since 2008, from 11% of children to 22%, and is now equivalent to national rates.** This translates to **12,500 children in Lincoln living in poverty**. Most children in poverty are **White children that are not Hispanic/Latino**, given the composition of the community. However, minority children are more likely to live in poverty than are White children.

FIGURE 23. PERCENT OF CHILDREN IN POVERTY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Since 2009 in Lincoln, **children are the age group with the largest proportion in poverty (22%)**, followed by persons 18 to 64 (16%), and persons 65 years or older (5%). The poverty rate of Lincoln's children is now equivalent to the national rate.

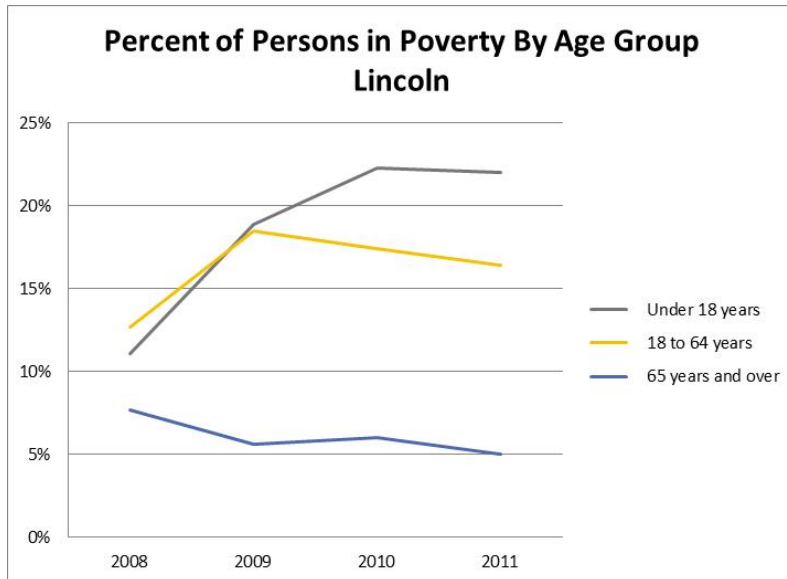
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<sup>29</sup> (Fiester, 2013)





FIGURE 24. PERCENT OF PERSONS IN POVERTY BY AGE GROUP



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

#### FEMALE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLDS AND HOUSEHOLDS WITH MULTIPLE CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE IN POVERTY

Single head of household families, particularly those headed by a female, are more likely to have incomes at or below the poverty threshold. Aggregated data from 2009-2011 indicate that **42% of female-headed households have incomes below the poverty threshold**, compared to 7% of married-couple families.<sup>30</sup> In Lincoln, there are **1,445 married-couple families in poverty and 3,512 female-headed families in poverty.**

Poverty rises with increasing numbers of children in a family. **Nearly 30% of all families, including those that are married couples or single heads of household, with more than two children have incomes at or below the poverty threshold.** For female-headed households with more than two children, 68% are at or below the poverty threshold.

#### MOST PERSONS IN POVERTY ARE WHITE

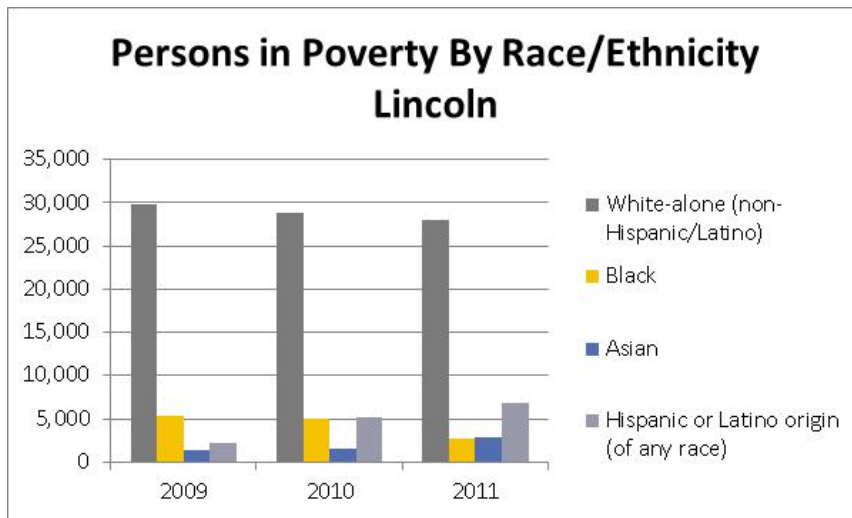
**Most individuals in poverty are White-alone (non-Hispanic/Latino) ( $n = 27,977$ ).** Poverty rates in Lincoln vary by race and ethnicity. For example, rates of poverty among Whites has held steady at 15% since 2009. **Hispanic/Latino (of any race) poverty has increased 151% (from 18% to 44%)** since 2009. Blacks/African Americans had poverty rates of 60% in 2009 and 2010, but that rate dropped to 30% in 2011. Given Lincoln's increasingly diverse population, the high poverty rates among racial and ethnic minorities are cause for concern.

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<sup>30</sup> In 2012, the poverty threshold was \$23,283 for a family of four that included two related children less than 18 years of age.



FIGURE 25. PERSONS IN POVERTY BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

#### NEWER NEW AMERICANS HAVE HIGHER POVERTY RATES

Approximately 19,000 foreign-born persons live in Lincoln. Among that group, **persons who entered the United States in 2000 or later have greater rates of poverty (38%)** than those who entered the United States earlier. Those who entered the United States between 1990 and 1999 have a poverty rate of 26%, while those who entered the United States prior to 1990 have half that rate (13%).

#### POVERTY RATES ARE HIGHER AMONG THOSE WITH LESS EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

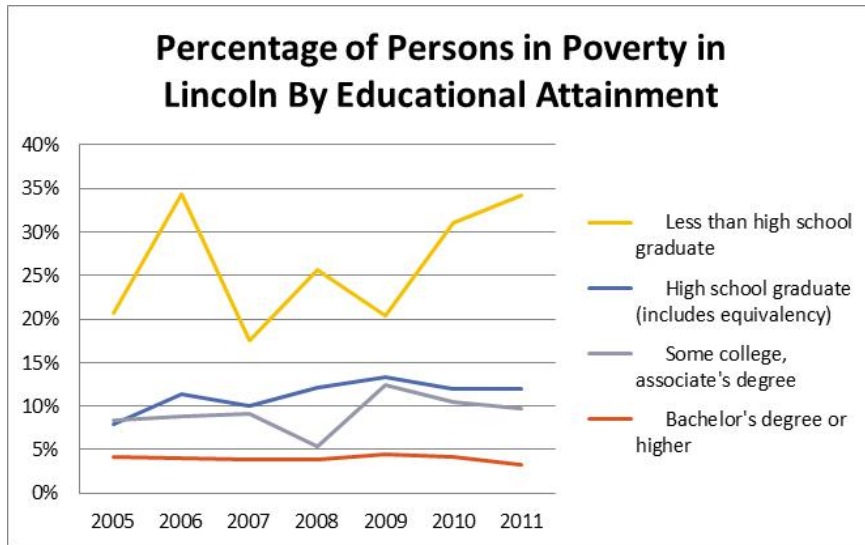
In 2011, Lincoln residents with **less than a high school diploma had dramatically greater poverty rates (34%)** than those who achieved greater levels of educational attainment: high school graduates (12%), some college (10%), bachelor's degree or higher (3%).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Educational enrollment is for the population 3 years old and older.



FIGURE 26. PERCENT OF PERSONS IN POVERTY BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

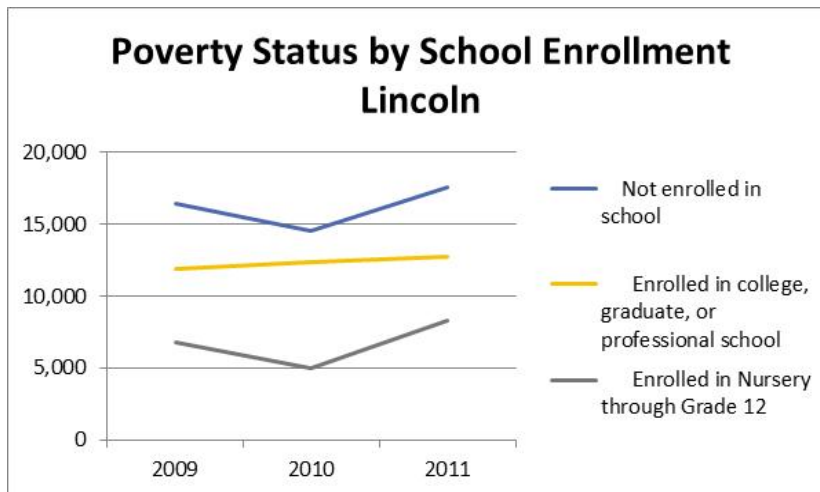


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

#### POVERTY BY ENROLLMENT STATUS

Of persons in poverty, 45% are not enrolled in school.<sup>32</sup> One-third of persons in poverty are enrolled in college or graduate/professional schools. Approximately 22% of persons in poverty are children enrolled in nursery school through grade 12.

FIGURE 27. POVERTY STATUS BY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

<sup>32</sup> Calculated for persons 3 years of age and older



## NEIGHBORHOODS IN EXTREME POVERTY HAVE INCREASED FROM NONE TO SIX

Neighborhoods in extreme poverty are generally considered to be those with more than 40% of residents in poverty. At this concentrated level of poverty, individuals begin to face cultural and social constraints that isolate them from opportunities for economic advancement.<sup>33, 34</sup> In 2000, Lincoln had no neighborhoods in extreme poverty.<sup>35</sup> By 2010, Lincoln had **six neighborhoods in extreme poverty**.<sup>36</sup> Due to changes in the Census' methodology for sampling populations, caution must be exercised when comparing 2000 decennial data with the newer American Community Survey results. However, it appears that the concentration of poverty in specific neighborhoods has increased.

**TABLE 6. LINCOLN CENSUS TRACTS IN EXTREME POVERTY**

Census Tract	Estimate of Individuals at or Below the Poverty Threshold
<b>5</b>	60%
<b>20.01</b>	55%
<b>31.03</b>	47%
<b>4</b>	42%
<b>33.01</b>	41%
<b>20.02</b>	40%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

NOTE: Does not include Census Tract 6, situated directly over the main campus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln or Census Tract 35 which is situated over the Lincoln Regional Center.

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<sup>33</sup> (Quane & Wilson, 2012)

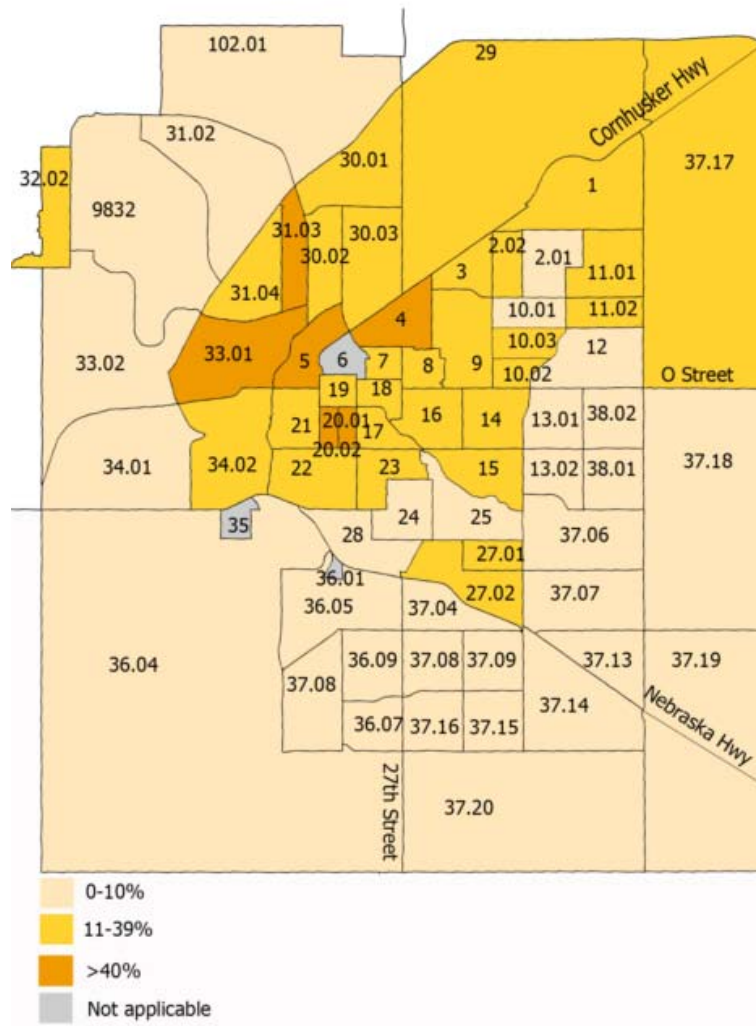
<sup>34</sup> (W. J. Wilson, 2010)

<sup>35</sup> Lincoln has 72 Census Tract neighborhoods. Neighborhoods for which extreme poverty was calculated excludes Census Tract 6, situated directly over the main campus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Census Tract 35, situated over the Lincoln Regional Center.

<sup>36</sup> Estimates using data samples collected 2006-2010 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau). Neighborhoods highlighted as having extreme poverty exclude Census Tract 6, situated directly over the main campus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Census Tract 35, situated over the Lincoln Regional Center.



FIGURE 28. POVERTY BY CENSUS TRACT



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Although each of the extreme poverty neighborhoods has a unique profile, there are some similarities:

- All are relatively young communities with a smaller proportion of persons older than 55 living in them
- All have relatively less educational attainment than Lincoln does as a whole
- All have high percentages of all parents of children under 6 in the labor force, mirroring Lincoln as a whole.
- All comprise at least 75% White population.

Presented in order of most pervasive poverty, below is a profile of each neighborhood.

TABLE 7. PROFILES OF EXTREME POVERTY NEIGHBORHOODS

**Extreme Poverty Neighborhood Profile in Relation to Lincoln as a Whole**



<b>Extreme Poverty Neighborhood Profile in Relation to Lincoln as a Whole</b>	
<p><b>Census Tract 5</b> – Half the neighborhood comprises young adult college students not in labor force, but for those in labor force there is double the unemployment than in Lincoln overall.</p>	<p>Poverty Rate: <b>60%</b>            Age: <b>50% of residents are between 20 to 24 years of age (200% higher than elsewhere in Lincoln).</b>            Family Households: <b>Half the proportion of family households.</b>            Educational Attainment of Adults 25 Years of Age or Older: <b>Similar rate of high school graduates and much lower rate of Bachelor’s graduates.</b>            Educational Enrollment: <b>200% more college students than Lincoln as a whole: 58% of adults in neighborhood are enrolled in college or graduate school.</b>            Enrollment Status of Persons in Poverty: 80% of the persons in poverty are enrolled in college or graduate/professional school.            Unemployment: <b>Double Lincoln’s unemployment rate.</b>            Race/Ethnicity: <b>Similar to Lincoln’s overall profile.</b></p>
<p><b>Census Tract 20.01</b> – Young adult, fewer families working neighborhood with low incomes.</p>	<p>Poverty Rate: <b>55%</b>            Age: <b>There are a greater proportion of 20 to 24 year olds and more children under 5.</b>            Family Households: <b>Half the proportion of family households.</b>            Educational Attainment of Adults 25 Years of Age or Older: <b>Lower rate of high school graduates and somewhat lower rate of Bachelor’s graduates.</b>            Educational Enrollment: <b>Slightly more college students.</b>            Enrollment Status of Persons in Poverty: Almost double the rate of persons in poverty not enrolled in school and approximately half the percentage of children enrolled in school.            Unemployment: <b>Much lower unemployment rate.</b>            Race/Ethnicity: <b>Similar to Lincoln’s overall profile, with twice as many persons with Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.</b></p>
<p><b>Census Tract 31.03</b> – Families with children neighborhood with low educational attainment and higher unemployment</p>	<p>Poverty Rate: <b>47%</b>            Age: <b>There are a greater proportion of children under 18 years of age.</b>            Family Households: <b>50% more family households than in Lincoln as a whole.</b>            Educational Attainment of Adults 25 Years of Age or Older: <b>Lower rate of high school graduates and much lower rate of Bachelor’s graduates.</b>            Educational Enrollment: <b>Half the college students.</b>            Enrollment Status of Persons in Poverty: One-tenth the percentage of persons enrolled in college/graduate school; over double the number of children enrolled in school.            Unemployment: <b>Over 400% of Lincoln’s unemployment rate.</b>            Race/Ethnicity: <b>Similar to Lincoln’s overall profile, with twice as many persons with Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.</b></p>
<p><b>Census Tract 4</b> – Family neighborhood with working households that earn low incomes.</p>	<p>Poverty Rate: <b>42%</b>            Age: <b>There are a greater proportion of 20 to 24 year olds and more children under 5.</b>            Family Households: <b>Similar proportion of family to non-family households as in Lincoln.</b>            Educational Attainment of Adults 25 Years of Age or Older: <b>Lower rate of high school graduates and much lower rate of Bachelor’s graduates.</b>            Educational Enrollment: <b>Slightly more college students.</b>            Enrollment Status of Persons in Poverty: Similar to overall city profile.            Unemployment: <b>Slightly higher unemployment rate.</b>            Race/Ethnicity: <b>Lower proportion of Whites, with a higher proportion of</b></p>



<b>Extreme Poverty Neighborhood Profile in Relation to Lincoln as a Whole</b>	
	<b>Blacks, and Asians. Twice as many Hispanic/Latinos than in Lincoln, as a whole.</b>
<b>Census Tract 33.01</b> – Neighborhood of families and non-family households with mix of college students and working young adults with lower educational attainment, making a wide range of incomes	Poverty Rate: <b>41%</b> Age: <b>There are a greater proportion of 20 to 24 year olds.</b> Family Households: <b>Similar proportion of family to non-family households as in Lincoln.</b> Educational Attainment of Adults 25 Years of Age or Older: <b>Somewhat lower rate of high school graduates and Bachelor’s graduates.</b> Educational Enrollment: <b>Double the college students.</b> Enrollment Status of Persons in Poverty: Over 50% higher proportion of persons enrolled in college/graduate school. Unemployment: <b>Similar to Lincoln’s unemployment rate.</b> Race/Ethnicity: <b>Similar to Lincoln’s overall profile, with more Blacks than other minority groups.</b>
<b>Census Tract 20.02</b> – Young adult, fewer families neighborhood with low educational attainment and higher unemployment.	Poverty Rate: <b>40%</b> Age: <b>There are a greater proportion of 25 to 34 year olds and more children under 5.</b> Family Households: <b>Half the proportion of family households.</b> Educational Attainment of Adults 25 Years of Age or Older: <b>Lower rate of high school graduates and lower rate of Bachelor’s graduates.</b> Educational Enrollment: <b>Slightly more college students.</b> Enrollment Status of Persons in Poverty: Similar to overall city profile. Unemployment: <b>Double Lincoln’s unemployment rate.</b> Race/Ethnicity: <b>Lower proportion of Whites, with a higher proportion of Asians. Three times as many Hispanic/Latinos than in Lincoln, as a whole.</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

## HOMELESSNESS IN LINCOLN HAS GROWN 41% SINCE 2007

The **homeless population in Lincoln has been increasing.**

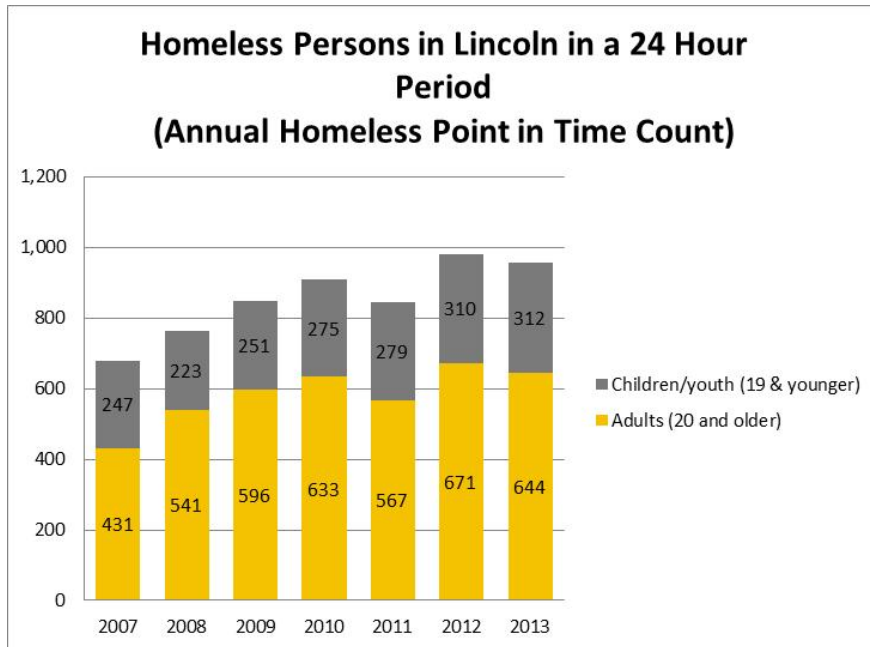
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development mandates that an annual count be conducted of homeless individuals<sup>37</sup> on a specified date. The most recent count was conducted on January 23, 2013. On that day, **956 individuals were counted as homeless.** Since 2007, Lincoln’s number of homeless individuals counted has **risen 41%** (from 678 to 956). In 2013, one-third of homeless individuals **were children 19 years of age or younger (n = 312).** Since 2007, the number of **homeless children on the day of the count has increased 26% (from 247 to 312),** and the number of homeless adults has increased 49% (from 431 to 644).

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<sup>37</sup> The HUD definition of homelessness for the purpose of a point in time homeless count includes only people who are living unsheltered on the streets, in a vehicle or another place not fit for human habitation, or in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. Many people and families considered homeless, or at risk of homelessness, including those in prison/jail, living in hotels/motels or “couch surfing” are NOT included in the count.



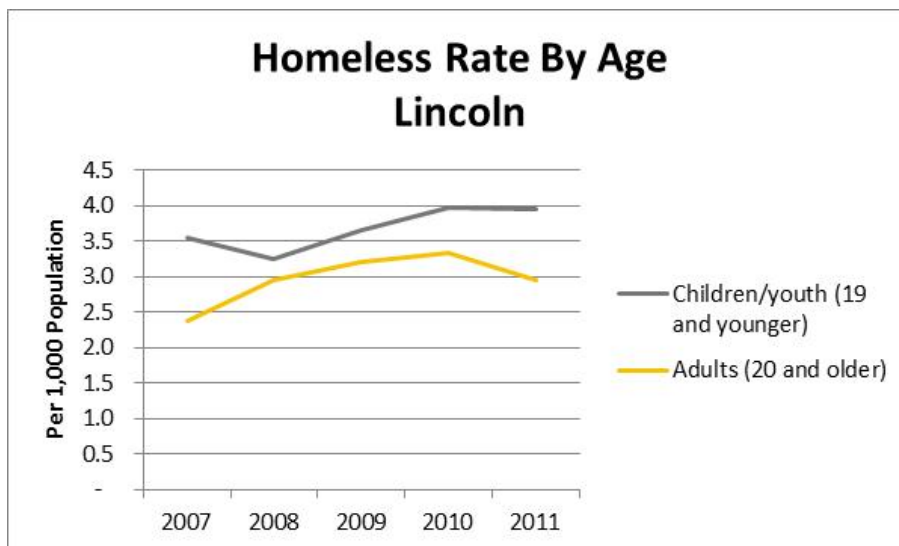
FIGURE 29. HOMELESS PERSONS IN LINCOLN AT POINT IN TIME COUNT



Source: Lincoln Homeless Point in Time Report

When homelessness is viewed as a proportion of the population, a **larger proportion of the 19 and under population is homeless** than is the 20 and over population. In 2012, 4 per thousand children and youth (aged 19 and under) were homeless, compared to 3 per thousand adults (aged 20 and older).

FIGURE 30. HOMELESS RATE BY AGE



Source: Compiled from Lincoln Homeless Point in Time Report and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



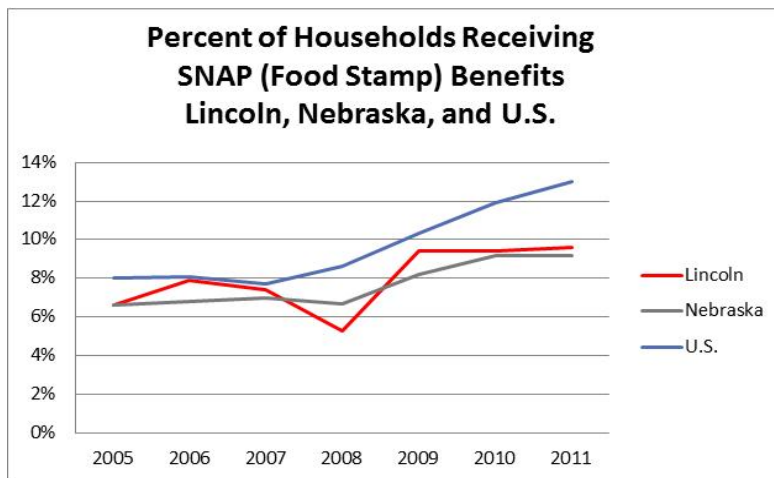


A significant decline in Lincoln’s homeless population occurred in 2011. In that year, Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program funding was made available to Lincoln through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009. Through that program homeless persons received on-going case management, including help in finding and paying for housing. The impact of this funding was primarily a decrease in the number of persons in emergency shelter.

## SNAP AND FREE LUNCH PROGRAM RATES HAVE INCREASED DRAMATICALLY

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program provides financial assistance for food purchases to households with incomes below 130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.<sup>38</sup> Participation in SNAP has increased 81% since 2008: mostly attributable to the large increase between 2008 and 2009.<sup>39</sup> However, a lower percentage of households in Lincoln receive SNAP benefits (9.6%) than nationally (13%). In Nebraska the average monthly benefit per household receiving SNAP is \$279.71.

FIGURE 31. PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING SNAP BENEFITS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Approximately **44% of Lincoln Public School students participate in the Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program (for a total of 16,077 children)**. The number of Lincoln Public School students receiving free lunch has increased **133% since 2000**.<sup>40</sup> Students receiving free lunches totaled 13,315 for the 2013-14 school year. Since 2000, students

<sup>38</sup> Federal Poverty Guidelines are based on size of household and income. In 2013, a four person household with an income less than \$30,615 (the equivalent of 130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines) would be eligible for SNAP benefits.

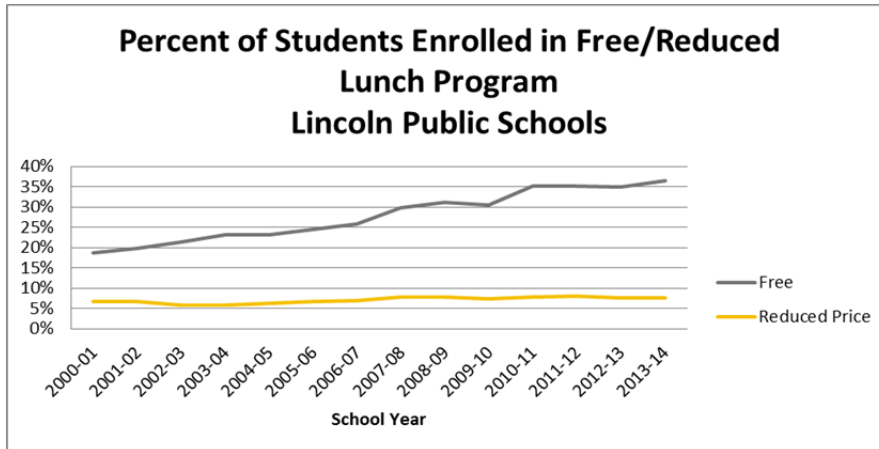
<sup>39</sup> The increase in participation in SNAP may be partially attributable to an expansion in eligibility for benefits under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009). However, a report by the Congressional Budget Office reports that the increase has been primarily driven by the weak economy (Congressional Budget Office, 2012, April).

<sup>40</sup> In general, students are eligible for free lunch if their household income is less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. In 2013, students in a family of four with a household income less than \$30,615 would be eligible for free lunch.



receiving reduced price lunch<sup>41</sup> has held essentially steady (in 2013-14 school year there were 2,762 students receiving reduced price lunches), suggesting that families facing great economic hardship have enrolled, while families facing lesser economic hardship have not enrolled. Lincoln's rate for participation in the free/reduced lunch program appears to be lower than national participation in which 68.2% of all lunches are to students in the program.<sup>42</sup>

FIGURE 32. PERCENT OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN FREE/REDUCED LUNCH PROGRAM



Source: Lincoln Public Schools Statistical Handbooks

## HEALTH INSURANCE RATE IS BETTER THAN U.S. RATE

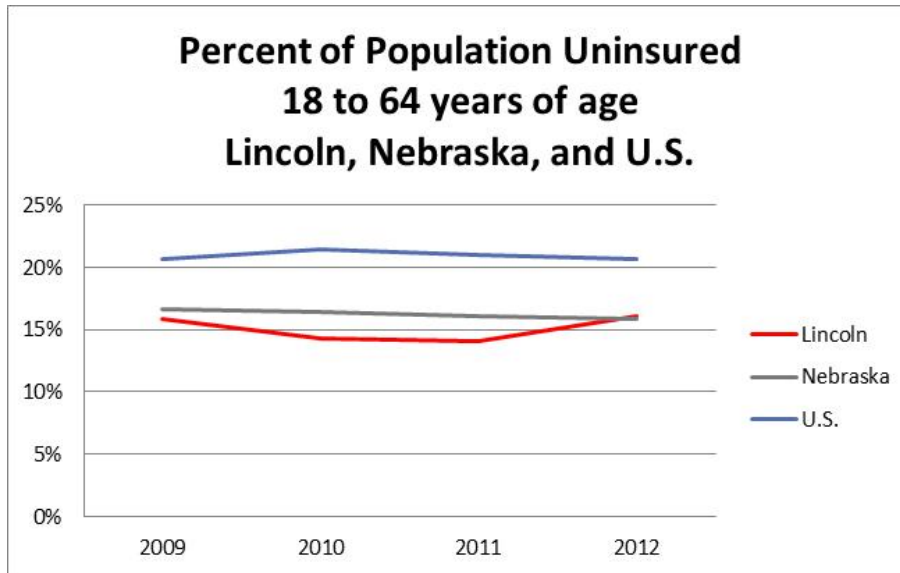
To identify the uninsured, many researchers focus on the 18 to 64 population since there are programs that ensure availability of health insurance to children (the Children's Health Insurance Program, called *Kids Connection* in Nebraska) and elders (Medicare and Medicaid). The **percentage of the population 18 to 64 years of age without health insurance in Lincoln** is lower than the U.S. average. In 2012 there were 27,828 uninsured people in Lincoln's 18 to 64 age group.

<sup>41</sup> In general, students are eligible for reduced price lunch if their household income is less than 185% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. In 2013, students in a family of four with a household income less than \$43,568 would be eligible for reduced lunch.

<sup>42</sup> Statistic for 2012-13 school year, as reported by the U.S.D.A. (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/slsummar.htm>)



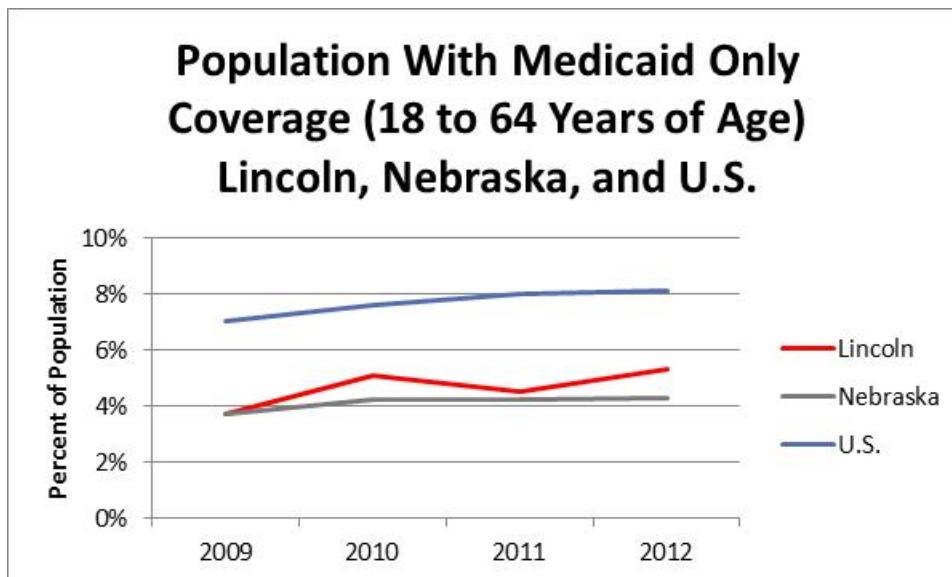
FIGURE 33. PERCENT OF POPULATION UNINSURED



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

In Lincoln, the percentage of persons 18 to 64 years of age with Medicaid only coverage is higher than elsewhere in Nebraska but lower than across the United States. In 2012 there were 9,224 people in the 18 to 64 age group in Lincoln with Medicaid only health coverage.

FIGURE 34. PERCENT OF POPULATION WITH MEDICAID ONLY COVERAGE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

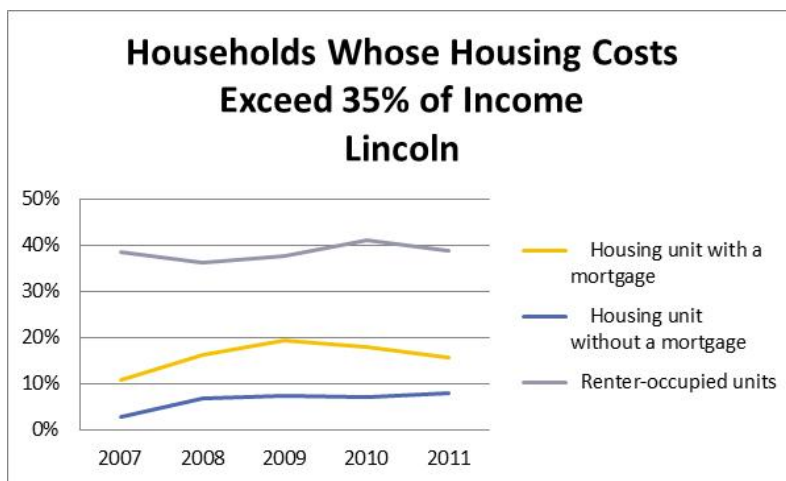


## HOUSING COSTS IN LINCOLN ARE LOW

In Lincoln, low housing costs are a significant component of the lower cost of living. In 2012, the **cost of housing in Lincoln was approximately 82% of the national average.**<sup>43</sup> Low housing costs do not appear to be caused by oversupply: In Lincoln, **homeowner and rental vacancy rates have been similar** to those in the rest of Nebraska and the nation.

A standard measure of housing affordability is the percentage of household income devoted to housing costs. In general, many experts believe that housing costs should not exceed approximately 30% of a household's income, and that the percentage should decrease for households with incomes that are lower.<sup>44</sup> Since 2007, an average of approximately 38% of Lincoln's renting population paid more than 35% of household income on rent.<sup>45</sup> For households carrying a mortgage the percentage has fluctuated, but on average 16% of households paid more than 35% of their household income on housing. Homeowners with no mortgage have the lowest average percentage (6%) of households whose housing costs exceed 35% of income.<sup>46</sup>

**FIGURE 35. HOUSEHOLDS WHOSE HOUSING COSTS EXCEED 35% OF INCOME**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

<sup>43</sup> ACCRA Cost of Living Index

<sup>44</sup> Schwartz, M. & Wilson, E. (n.d.). Who can afford to live in a home?: A look at data from the 2006 American Community Survey. Washington, DC: United State Census Bureau.

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/special-topics/files/who-can-afford.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Data are limited to the household population and exclude the population living in institutions, college dormitories, and other group quarters.

<sup>46</sup> Costs for households with without a mortgage may include home equity loans, real estate taxes, homeowner's insurance, association fees, and utilities.



## EDUCATION

Per capita productivity rises sharply with metropolitan area size if the city is well educated, but not if it isn't.<sup>47</sup>

Edward Glaeser  
Harvard University

*Educational achievement impacts individuals and communities. Individuals with at least a high school diploma earn, on average \$9,000 more per year than do individuals who do not have a diploma.<sup>48</sup> Communities with educated populations are more productive, more innovative, and pay higher salaries.<sup>49</sup> This section of the report focuses on educational achievement of Lincoln's residents.*

*Lincoln is a highly educated community. Lincoln's school age population is growing as is enrollment in Lincoln Public Schools. Lincoln Public School students have been **more proficient than the national average for third grade reading and fourth grade writing proficiency**. Additionally, Lincoln Public Schools' **graduation rate is high** compared to national averages. But there are areas where Lincoln can do better. Children who are racial and ethnic minorities and those who are in poverty fare worse educationally than other children. This gap in achievement appears from the first standardized test in third grade and carries through to lower rates of high school graduation. In Lincoln, there is less variation, by race, in enrollment in college or graduate school.*

### THERE IS LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN BIRTH TO AGE 5

Policymakers should invest in young children, where the return on investment is stronger than low-skill adults. The real question is how to use available funds wisely. The best evidence supports the policy prescription: invest in the very young.<sup>50</sup>

James Heckman, Nobel Laureate Economist  
University of Chicago

Evidence continues to mount that early childhood relationships and experiences impact future physical and mental health, educational attainment, earnings, and relationships.<sup>51</sup> The concept of kindergarten readiness as an

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<sup>47</sup> (Glaeser, 2011, p. 253)

<sup>48</sup> (Carnevale, Rose, & Cheah, n.d.)

<sup>49</sup> (Glaeser, 2011)

<sup>50</sup> (Heckman, 1999, p. 6)

<sup>51</sup> (Shonkoff, 2009)



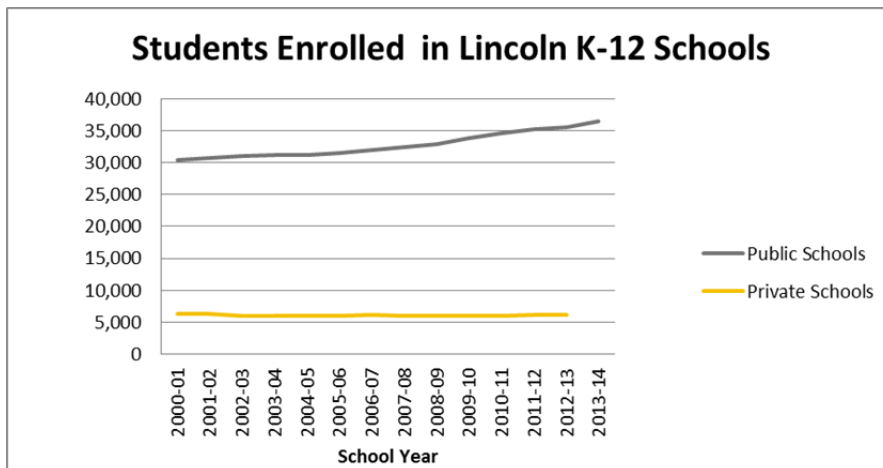
important predictor for future achievement has gained much traction. Unfortunately, data is not available in Lincoln regarding the readiness of incoming kindergarteners. The Nebraska Early Childhood Data Coalition suggests that the **percent of at-risk children<sup>52</sup> enrolled in quality early childhood programs** is a good metric since participation in high quality early childhood care and education programs are “associated with positive effects on children’s cognitive language and social development and overall school readiness, particularly among children at risk”<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, data for this metric are also not readily available.

## K-12 ENROLLMENT IS GROWING

In Lincoln, a majority of children attend public schools. In 2012 (the most recent year that data about private school enrollment is available), approximately 85% of Lincoln students were enrolled in public schools. **Public school enrollment has increased 20% since 2000.** The number of children enrolled in private schools has decreased 1% since 2000. Lincoln Public Schools provides services, such as special education, to eligible private school students.

Although the percentage of children attending private schools is relatively small, the number is large enough that without private schools, Lincoln Public Schools’ infrastructure would have to expand. For example, there are, on average, approximately 500 students in one public elementary school, equivalent to about 8% of private school students. If a large number of children stopped attending private school, or one of the schools closes, this could have a large impact on the public school system.

**FIGURE 36. STUDENT ENROLLMENT**



Sources: Lincoln Public Schools Statistical Handbooks

Note: Does not include home schooling or state-run schools

Note: Data is not yet available on private school enrollment after the 2013-14 school year

<sup>52</sup> Defined by the Nebraska Early Childhood Data Coalition as children whose household incomes are less than or equal to 185% of the poverty threshold.

<sup>53</sup> (Nebraska Early Childhood Data Coalition, n.d., p. 3).



**The Nebraska Department of Education collects no data on private school students other than the number of students enrolled. The remainder of the data presented in this section includes only public school students.**

### THIRD GRADE READING PROFICIENCY IS STRONG BUT VARIES BY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Third grade reading proficiency is the earliest comparable standardized reading test given to all Lincoln Public School students. Third grade reading proficiency measures student achievement at a critical transition point in their educational careers: “until the end of third grade, most students are learning to read. Beginning in fourth grade, however, students begin reading to learn.”<sup>54</sup> Third grade students who do not read proficiently at third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma<sup>55</sup> while third graders who read at or above their level are more likely to graduate and attend college, even when demographic characteristics were included as controls.<sup>56</sup>

Over the past two years, a higher proportion of Lincoln’s third grade students were reading proficient than Nebraska third graders: Lincoln 83% and Nebraska 77% (2012-13 school year). However, reading proficiency varies depending on student characteristics. **Students who receive free/reduced lunch (a proxy for low income students)<sup>57</sup> have a third grade reading proficiency rate approximately 10 percentage points lower than the overall rate.** White and Asian students consistently have higher third grade reading proficiency than other major racial and ethnic groups. These other racial and ethnic minorities do less well than the overall student population. Since 2009, Black students trailed the overall rate by 12%, and Hispanic/Latino students trailed the overall rate by 9%. It should be noted, however, research suggests that the source of variation in educational achievement is primarily linked to family economic status and not race/ethnicity alone.<sup>58, 59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> (Lesnick, Goerge, Smithgall, & Gwynne, 2010, p. 1)

<sup>55</sup> (Fiester, 2013)

<sup>56</sup> (Lesnick, et al., 2010)

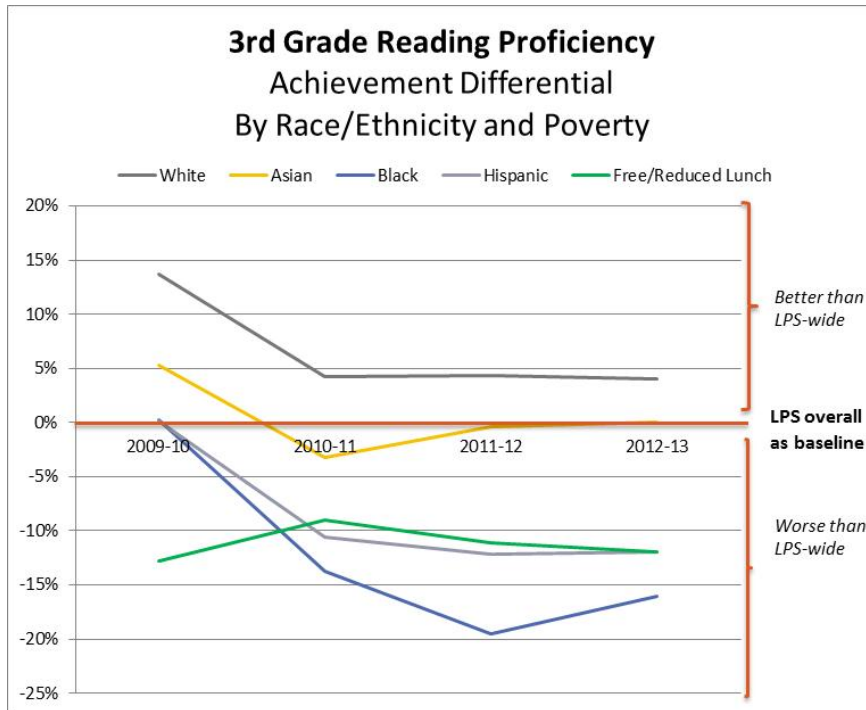
<sup>57</sup> In general, students are eligible for free lunch if their household income is less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. In 2013, students in a family of four with a household income less than \$30,615 would be eligible for free lunch. In general, students are eligible for reduced price lunch if their household income is less than 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. In 2013, students in a family of four with a household income less than \$43,568 would be eligible for reduced lunch. The vast majority of children enrolled in the free/reduced lunch are eligible for free lunch.

<sup>58</sup> (Entwisle & Alexander, 1992)

<sup>59</sup> (Hernandez, 2011)



FIGURE 37. THIRD GRADE READING PROFICIENCY



Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska State of the Schools Reports

## FOURTH GRADE WRITING PROFICIENCY DROPPED THIS PAST YEAR BUT VARIES BY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Along with reading, writing is an important component of literacy. In fourth grade, students take a writing proficiency test. Over the past two years, a greater proportion of Lincoln fourth graders are proficient writers when compared to fourth graders across the state (Lincoln 95%, Nebraska 92%, 2011-12 school year).

**Students receiving free/reduced lunch (a proxy for low income students)<sup>60</sup> have a fourth grade writing proficiency rate approximately 4 percentage points lower than the overall rate.** There is no consistent pattern in fourth grade writing proficiency among major racial and ethnic groups, except that Whites consistently perform better than students of other racial/ethnic categorizations. Since 2009, Asians trailed the overall rate by an

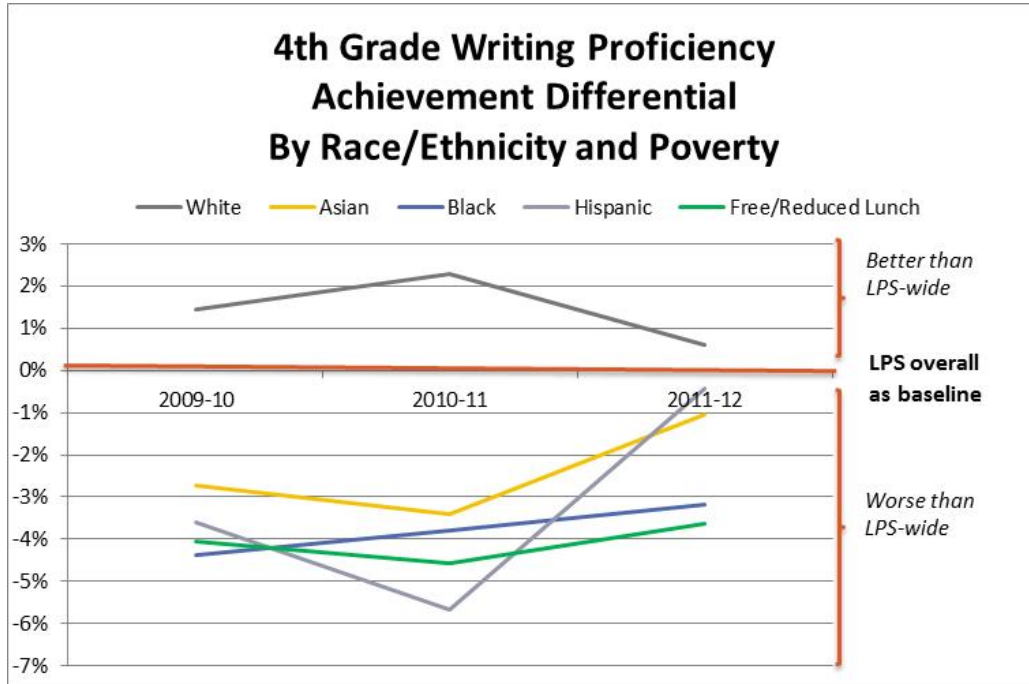
<sup>60</sup> In general, students are eligible for free lunch if their household income is less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. In 2013, students in a family of four with a household income less than \$30,615 would be eligible for free lunch. In general, students are eligible for reduced price lunch if their household income is less than 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. In 2013, students in a family of four with a household income less than \$43,568 would be eligible for reduced lunch. The vast majority of children enrolled in the free/reduced lunch are eligible for free lunch.





average of 2%, Black students by 4%, and Hispanic/Latino students by 3%. As noted earlier, research suggests variation in educational achievement is primarily linked to family economic status.<sup>61, 62, 63</sup>

FIGURE 38. FOURTH GRADE WRITING PROFICIENCY



Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska State of the Schools Reports

## EIGHTH GRADE MATH PROFICIENCY DROPPED THIS PAST YEAR BUT PROFICIENCY VARIES BY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

In eighth grade, students take a math proficiency test. Students who have fallen behind in math by eighth grade are most likely to continue to fall behind.<sup>64</sup> Basic math proficiency is required for day-to-day adult decisions. Higher-level mathematics and science courses are needed to attend and complete college. Over the past two years, a greater proportion of Lincoln eighth graders are proficient in mathematics when compared to eighth graders across the state (Lincoln 69%, Nebraska 66%; 2012-13 school year).

**Students receiving free/reduced lunch (a proxy for low income students)<sup>65</sup> have an eighth grade math proficiency rate nearly 17 percentage points lower than the overall rate.** Whites and Asians consistently perform

<sup>61</sup> (Entwisle & Alexander, 1992)

<sup>62</sup> (Hernandez, 2011)

<sup>63</sup> (Persky, Daane, & Jin, 2003)

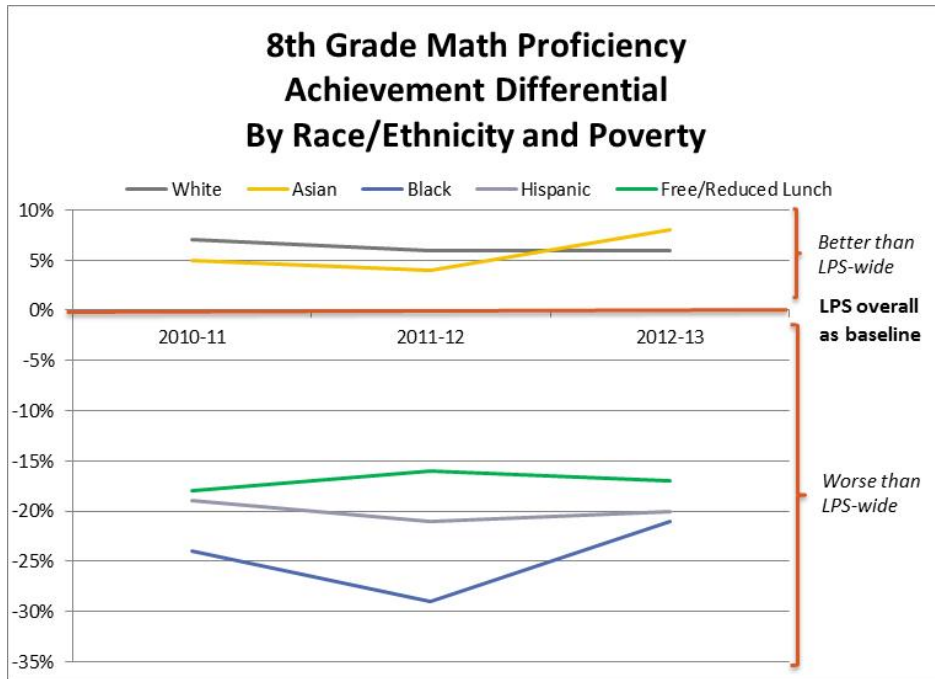
<sup>64</sup> (Rock, Owings, & Lee, 1994)

<sup>65</sup> In general, students are eligible for free lunch if their household income is less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. In 2013, students in a family of four with a household income less than \$30,615 would be eligible for free lunch. In general, students are eligible for reduced price lunch if their household income is less than 185% of



better than students of other racial/ethnic categorizations. Since 2010, White and Asian students outperformed the overall rate by an average of 6%. Black students trail the overall proficiency rate for Lincoln Public Schools by an average of 25% and Hispanic/Latino students trail by 20%.

FIGURE 39. EIGHTH GRADE MATH PROFICIENCY



Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska State of the Schools Reports

## GRADUATION AND DROP-OUT RATES ARE IMPROVING BUT VARY BY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Lincoln and Nebraska have higher graduation rates and lower drop-out rates when compared with the rest of the nation.<sup>66, 67</sup> Nationally, 78% of students receive their high school diploma within four years of starting high school (2010).<sup>68</sup> In that year (2010), Lincoln's rate was 80% and Nebraska's 86%.<sup>69</sup>

the Federal Poverty Guidelines. In 2013, students in a family of four with a household income less than \$43,568 would be eligible for reduced lunch. The vast majority of children enrolled in the free/reduced lunch are eligible for free lunch.

<sup>66</sup> In 2005, the U.S. Department of Education began publishing an official estimate of graduation rates, and all 50 states agreed to adopt a standard method of calculating those rates by 2013. In 2010, Nebraska started tracking graduation using a 4-year cohort rather than all current year seniors.

<sup>67</sup> Dropout rates do not combine with graduation rates to total 100 percent because they do not include students who take longer than four years to graduate or those who earn GED certificates.

<sup>68</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (2013) Public School Graduates and Dropouts from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2009-10; <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013309.pdf>



(Note: Lincoln Public Schools uses a slightly different method of identifying the cohort of students for graduation than the method used by state and federal agencies. For the purposes of comparability, this report uses the state/national methodology. This methodology results in a slightly different rate. For example, the state/national methodology results in a graduation rate of 83% for school year 2011-12, while the Lincoln Public Schools methodology results in a rate of 85%).

Similar to the rest of the nation, Lincoln’s and Nebraska’s graduation rates are on an upward trend.

Lincoln and Nebraska have lower drop-out rates than the national rate (3% in 2010). Lincoln’s dropout rate was 2% and Nebraska’s 1%. Similar to national trends, Lincoln’s and Nebraska’s drop-out rate has been declining.<sup>70</sup>

TABLE 8. GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES

### Lincoln and Nebraska Graduation and Dropout Rates

	Graduation Rate		Dropout Rate	
	Lincoln	Nebraska	Lincoln	Nebraska
2001-02	73%	85%	4%	3%
2002-03	72%	86%	4%	2%
2003-04	77%	87%	4%	2%
2004-05	79%	88%	3%	2%
2005-06	80%	89%	3%	2%
2006-07	79%	89%	3%	2%
2007-08	81%	90%	3%	2%
2008-09	82%	90%	3%	2%
2009-10	82%	90%	3%	1%
2010-11*	80%	86%	2%	1%
2011-12*	83%	88%	2%	1%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska State of the Schools Reports

\*In 2010-11 Nebraska started tracking graduation as the 4-year graduation rate (graduating within 4 years of starting 9th grade).

One study estimated that the impact of halving the non-graduation rate in the Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area would mean a collective \$1.4 million in increased earnings in an average year and \$1.8 million increase in the Gross Regional Product by mid-career.<sup>71</sup>

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES BY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

High school graduation rates vary based on certain student characteristics, such as income and race/ethnicity.

**Low-income students (i.e., those receiving free/reduced lunch) trail the district rate by 5 percentage points.**

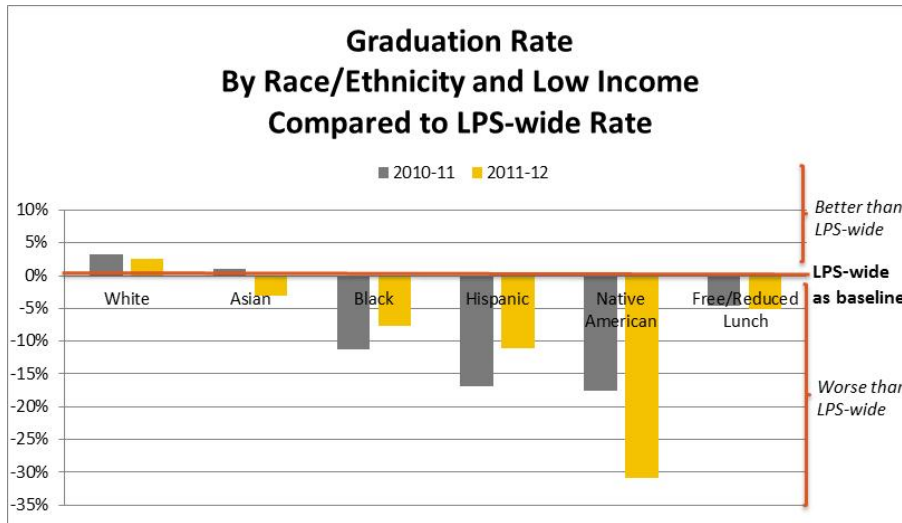
<sup>69</sup> A 100% graduation rate is unlikely, in part because of student mobility out of districts and state and because some special education students continue to receive educational services beyond four years of high school.

<sup>71</sup> Alliance for Excellent Education ([http://www.all4ed.org/publication\\_material/EconMSAcal](http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/EconMSAcal)). Calculated based on 2010 data for the Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area (Lancaster and Seward counties).



Since 2010, White students have exceeded the graduation rate by an average of 3%. Students of other racial and ethnic groups trail the overall graduation rate with Asian students trailing by an average of 1%, Black students by 9%, Hispanic/Latino students by 14%, and Native American students by 24%.

**FIGURE 40. GRADUATION RATE**

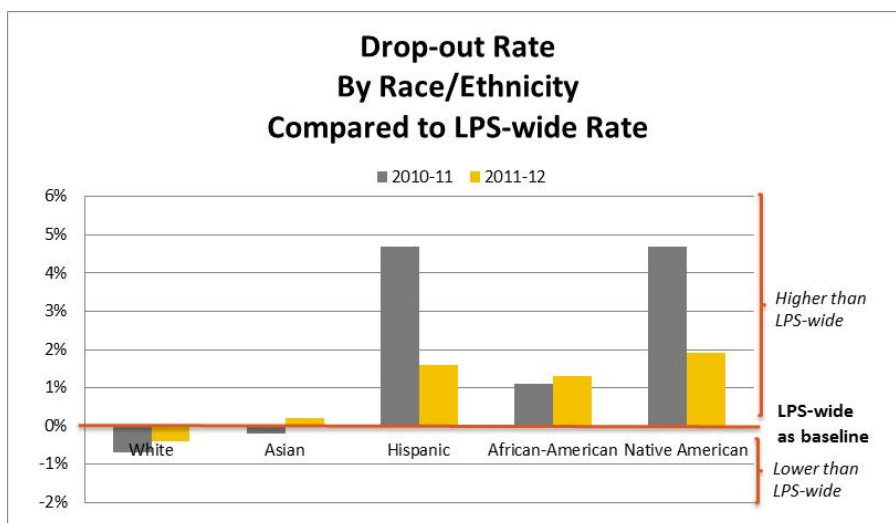


Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska State of the Schools Reports

### HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATES BY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Like graduation rates, high school dropout rates also vary based on student race/ethnicity. Data about dropout rates for low income students (measured by receiving free/reduced lunch) was not available. White and Asian students have a dropout rate lower than the district average, while Black, Hispanic/Latinos, and American Indian/Alaska Native students have dropout rates higher than the average.

**FIGURE 41. DROP-OUT RATE**



Source: Lincoln Public Schools, District Annual Dropout Data

Note: Lincoln Public Schools calculates dropout rate slightly differently than does the Nebraska Department of Education



## MOST OF LINCOLN'S 18 TO 24 YEAR OLDS ARE POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

Lincoln is home to several post-secondary educational institutions, including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Wesleyan, Union College, Southeast Community College, and several private schools. Of persons 18 to 24 years of age, **64% are enrolled in college or graduate school**. Among this age group, females have slightly higher participation in post-secondary enrollment (68% to male 61%). Enrollment rates in post-secondary education are fairly steady across race and ethnicity, with the Asian-alone population having a slightly higher participation rate.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT VARIES BY RACE FOR THOSE 25 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER

In Lincoln, 93% of the population over 25 years of age or older has a high school degree, comparing favorably to Nebraska (90%) and national (85%) rates. Likewise, Lincoln has a higher proportion of residents who have a Bachelor's degree or higher (36%), when compared to Nebraska (28%) or nationally (28%).

Educational attainment varies by race.<sup>72</sup> The White-alone population has the lowest proportion of its population that has achieved, at most, a high school diploma or equivalency. The Black-alone population has the highest proportion of individuals who have some college, but did not complete a degree. The Asian-alone population has both a high proportion of individuals with less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, as well as the highest proportion of individuals with graduate degrees.<sup>73</sup> The Hispanic/Latino population has the highest proportion of individuals with less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education and with less than a high school diploma, and also has the smallest proportion of individuals having received a Bachelor's or Graduate degree.

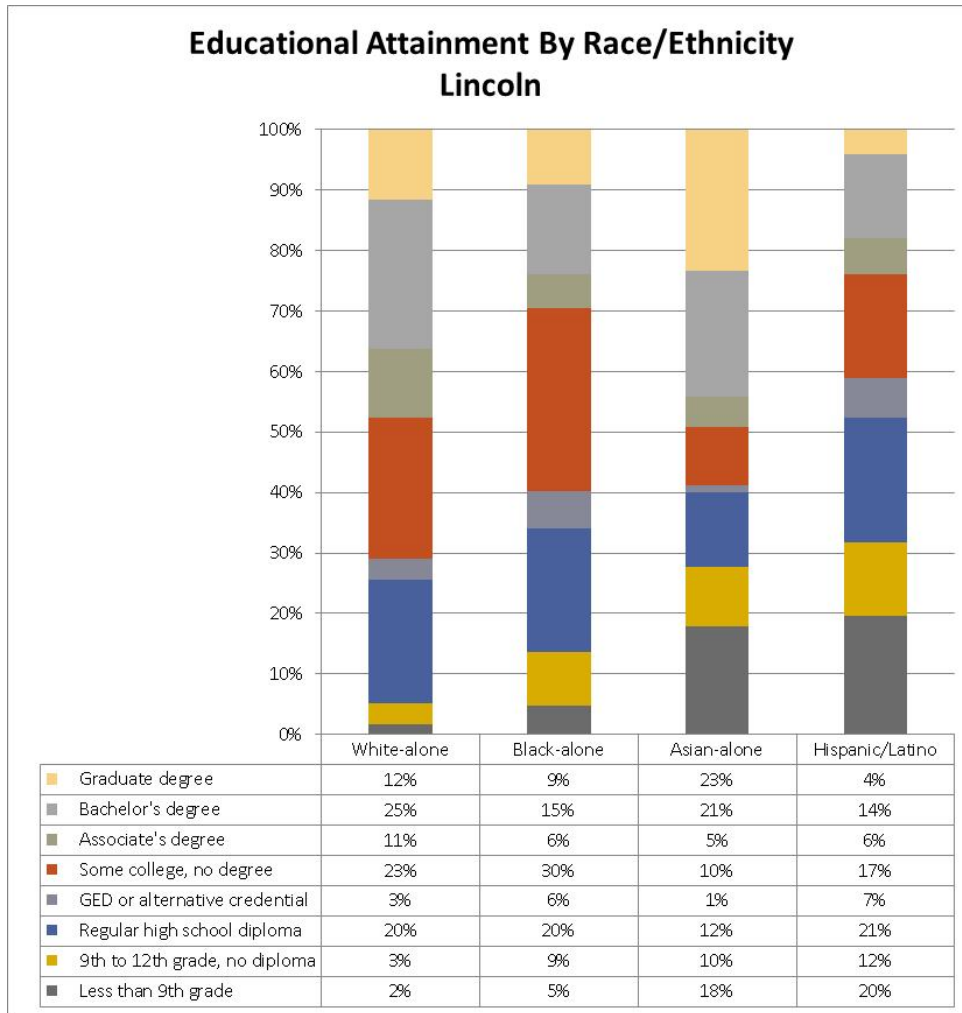
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<sup>72</sup> Data for educational attainment were only available for the race/ethnic categories reported. The Census Bureau did not have data, for example, for the Native American population. This is likely due the relatively small numbers of persons from certain racial/ethnic groups for which the Census would suppress the results so as not to risk individual identification.

<sup>73</sup> Upon examining age data, the combination of the high proportion of Asian individuals with less than a 9th grade education, along with the high proportion of individuals with graduate degrees reflects a generational divide of older persons having achieved less education and younger achieving higher education.



**FIGURE 42. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Note: Population is of those persons 25 years of age and older



## HEALTH

*Five years from now, I want to be able to say to you that we have made progress on becoming the healthiest city in the nation. When we worked together, we were able to reduce tobacco use. We can use that same approach to urge residents to be more active, to make healthy food choices and to lower our obesity rates.*

Chris Beutler, Mayor  
City of Lincoln

*It is widely known that **Americans' health status has declined**. Measures of declining health status include: potential shorter life expectancy for today's youth,<sup>74</sup> behavioral risk factors as the leading cause of mortality (e.g., smoking, poor diet, physical inactivity),<sup>75</sup> increasing rates of chronic disease,<sup>76</sup> near epidemic rates of obesity,<sup>77</sup> and rising health care costs.<sup>78</sup> The health indicators in this section suggest that Lincoln is somewhat healthier than other communities in the United States. Although Lincoln has relatively better health, there is no denying that **Lincoln and the United States have much ground to regain in reversing current poor health trends**.*

### ADULT CHRONIC PHYSICAL HEALTH RISK FACTORS ARE BETTER THAN THOSE OF U.S.

Of the ten leading causes of death in the United States, seven are chronic diseases, and almost half of all Americans live with at least one chronic illness.<sup>79</sup> Underlying many chronic health conditions are risk factors such as tobacco use and exposure, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition. Engaging in healthy behaviors greatly reduces the risk for illness and death due to chronic diseases.

Since 2007, Lancaster County's obesity rate<sup>80</sup> has been lower than the national rate. Lancaster County's rate for diabetes<sup>81</sup> has fluctuated, but is generally lower than the national rate. Lancaster County's physical inactivity<sup>82</sup> rate is lower than national rate.

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<sup>74</sup> (Olshansky et al., 2005)

<sup>75</sup> (Mokdad, Marks, Stroup, & Gerberding, 2004)

<sup>76</sup> (Partnership to fight chronic disease, n.d.)

<sup>77</sup> (Cutler, Glaeser, & Shapiro, 2003)

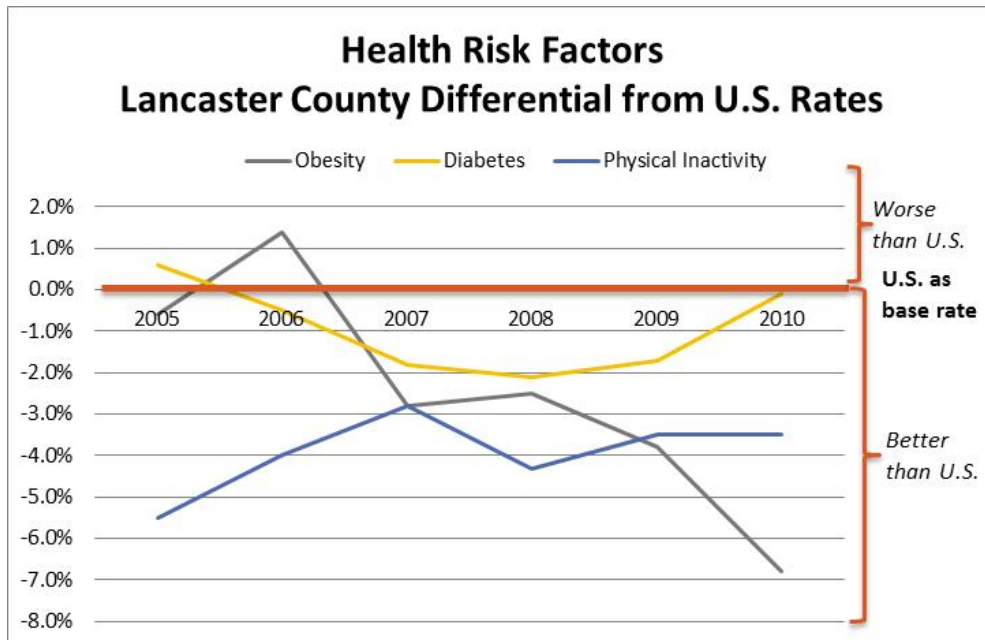
<sup>78</sup> (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2011)

<sup>79</sup> (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011a)

<sup>80</sup> Obesity is defined as having a Body Mass Index of 30 to 99.8 and is calculated based on responses to questions about height and weight. Lancaster County data comes from Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department and is from an over-sample of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention national sample for the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance Survey. Over-sampled data is weighted in the same manner as the national data. National data come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention national sample.



FIGURE 43. HEALTH RISK FACTORS



Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System: Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Note: Age adjusted data were used

### LINCOLN'S RATE OF ACCIDENTAL DEATH IS LOWER THAN NEBRASKA OR U.S.

Accidental deaths are those attributable to motor vehicle or farm accidents, falls, drowning, fire, discharge of firearms, inadvertent poisoning, or other causes. Over the years, **Lincoln has had a lower accidental death rate than Nebraska** as a whole (fluctuating from 4% lower than the State rate in 2008 to 14% in 2009). Over the years, most accidental deaths in Lincoln are attributable to **Motor Vehicle accidents, Falls, and All Other causes**.

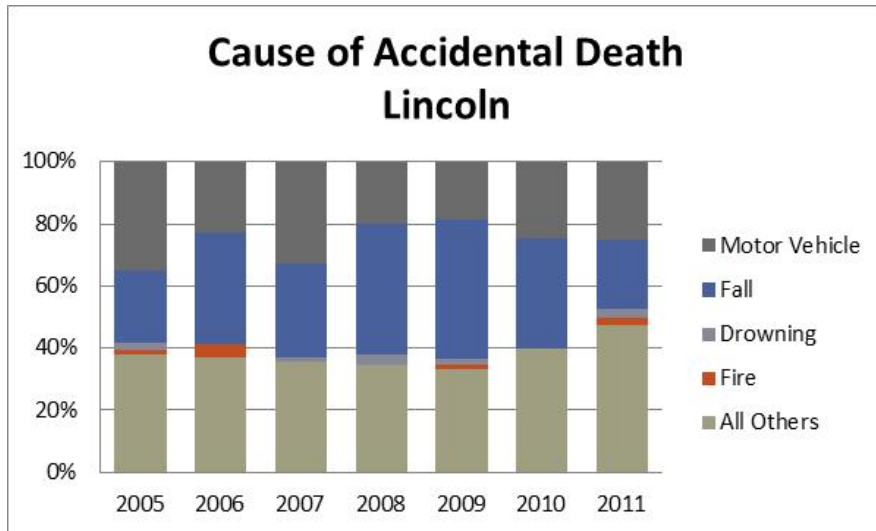
<sup>81</sup> Diabetes rates are based on individual report that they have been diagnosed with diabetes. Lancaster County data comes from Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department and is from an over-sample of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention national sample for the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance Survey. Over-sampled data is weighted in the same manner as the national data. National data come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention national sample.

<sup>82</sup> Physical inactivity is based on persons responding *no* to the question: "During the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise?" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.-b) Lancaster County and national data are from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance Survey. Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department does not over-sample this item.





FIGURE 44. ACCIDENTAL DEATH



Source: Compiled from Data from Vital Statistics, State of Nebraska

### RATE SEXUALLY-TRANSMITTED DISEASES IS TRENDING LOWER IN LINCOLN

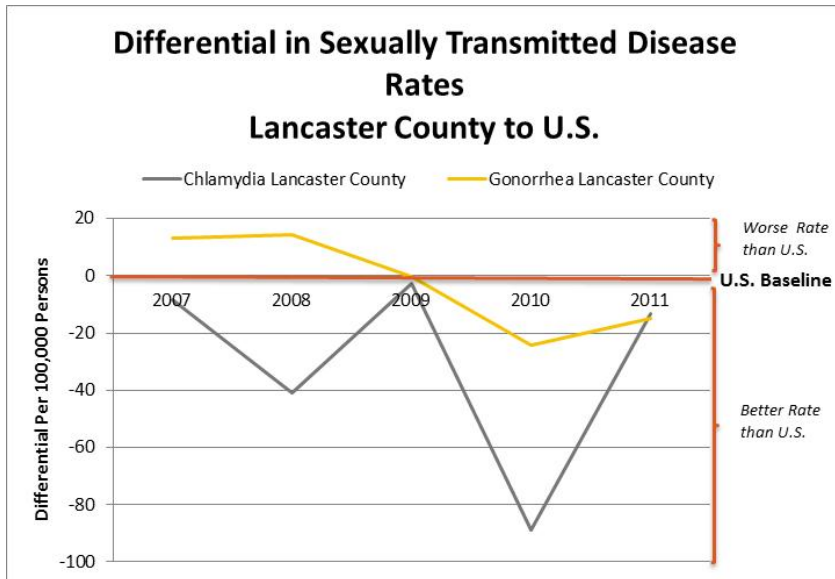
There are national/local comparable data for two types of sexually transmitted diseases: chlamydia and gonorrhea. The rate of chlamydia has been increasing nationally and increasing at a lesser rate in Lincoln. The rate of gonorrhea has fluctuated nationally and locally. Researchers believe that changes in rates may be attributable to changes in screening, variability in the sensitivity of diagnostic tests, and changes in reporting practices.<sup>83, 84</sup> Recently, Lincoln's rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea have been lower than the national rates.

<sup>83</sup> (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011b, p. 1)

<sup>84</sup> Health Indicators Warehouse, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([http://healthindicators.gov/Indicators/Gonorrhea-rate-per-100000\\_10062/Profile](http://healthindicators.gov/Indicators/Gonorrhea-rate-per-100000_10062/Profile))



FIGURE 45. SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE

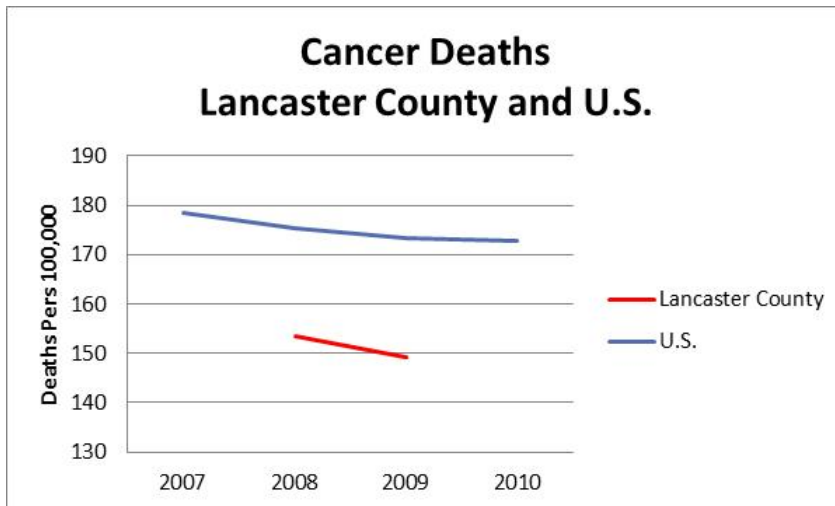


Source: Sexually Transmitted Diseases Surveillance, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### LINCOLN'S CHRONIC DISEASE MORTALITY IS LOWER THAN U.S.

Another measure of health is the number of individuals who die due to chronic diseases. Data on cancer deaths were incomplete, with only two overlapping years (2008, 2009). However, data suggest that **Lancaster County trails the U.S. in death due to cancer.**

FIGURE 46. CANCER DEATHS

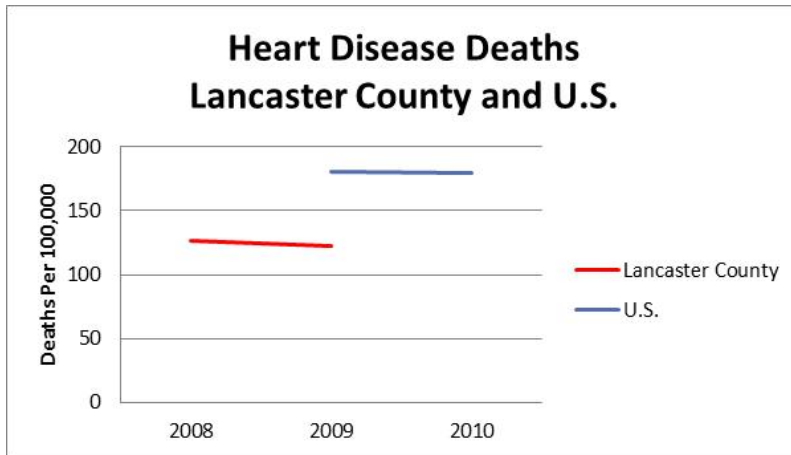


Source: Health Indicators Warehouse, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Note: Age-adjusted data were used

Likewise, although data were incomplete, with only one overlapping year (2009), data suggest that **Lancaster County trails the U.S. in death due to heart disease.**



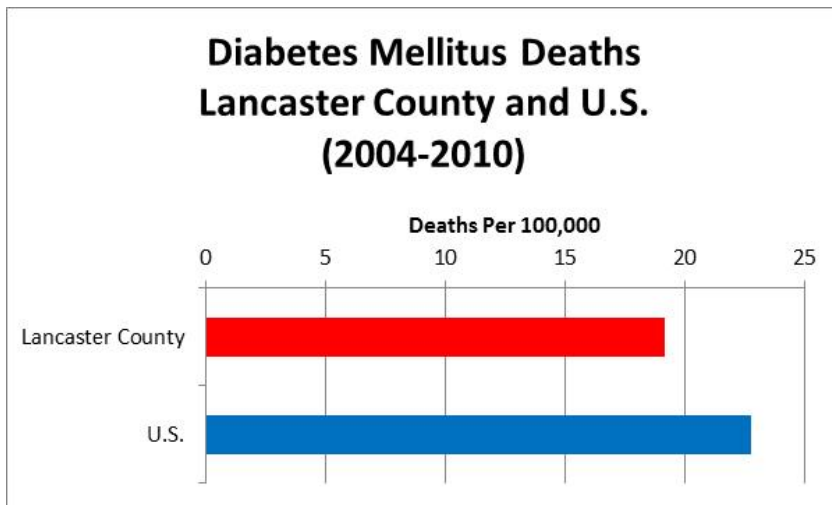
FIGURE 47. HEART DISEASE DEATHS



Source: Heath Indicators Warehouse, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Note: Age-adjusted data were used

Data (available only in multi-year aggregations) suggest that **Lancaster County trails the U.S. in death due to diabetes mellitus.**

FIGURE 48. DIABETES DEATHS



Source: Heath Indicators Warehouse, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Note: Age-adjusted data were used

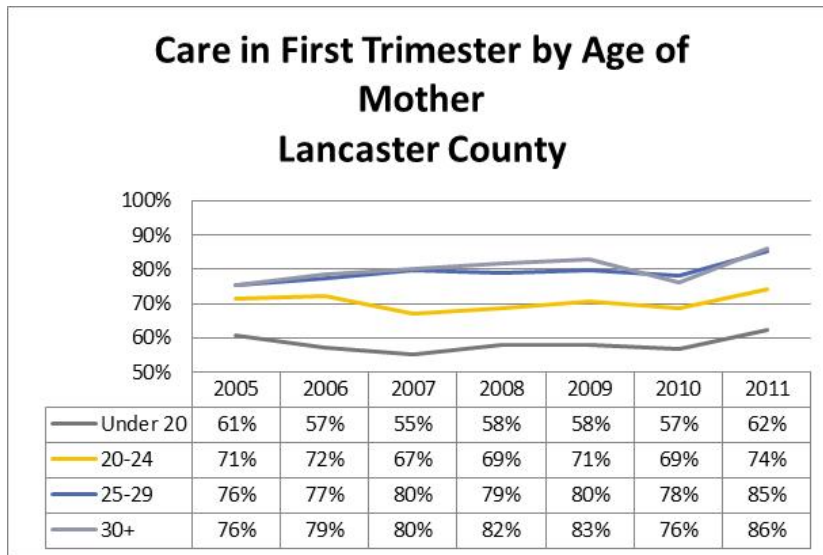
## YOUNGER EXPECTANT WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO RECEIVE PRENATAL CARE

Adequate prenatal care is an important component of healthy pregnancy. Mothers who do not receive prenatal care, or who do not receive it until the third trimester of pregnancy are more likely to have babies with health problems. Women under 20 and their babies have a higher risk for health problems; therefore, prenatal care for them in the first trimester is especially important. In Lincoln as across the U.S., **women younger than 20 years of age are less likely to receive prenatal care in the first trimester** of their pregnancies than are older women. The percentage of women less than 20 years of age receiving care in the first trimester care has remained relatively



low over the past seven years and in 2011 stood at 62%. Because states use different standards for collecting this data, there are no comparable national data.

FIGURE 49. PRENATAL CARE BY AGE OF MOTHER

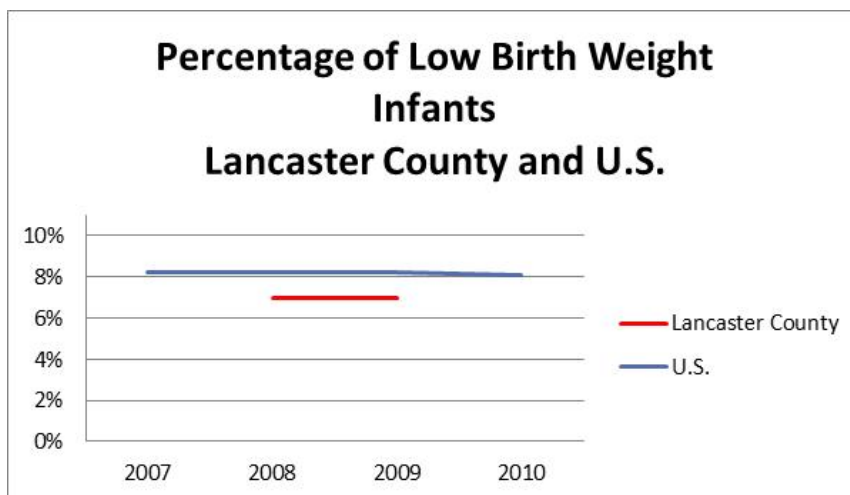


Source: Vital Statistics Report, Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department

## LINCOLN HAS A LOWER RATE OF LOW BIRTH WEIGHT INFANTS

Children who are born at low birth weight (less than 5 lbs, 8 oz) have an increased risk of long-term disability and impaired development. Low birth weight may indicate inadequate prenatal care. Data were incomplete, with only two overlapping years (2008 and 2009). However, data suggest that **Lincoln has a lower percentage of low birth weight infants than does the U.S.**

FIGURE 50. LOW BIRTH WEIGHT INFANTS



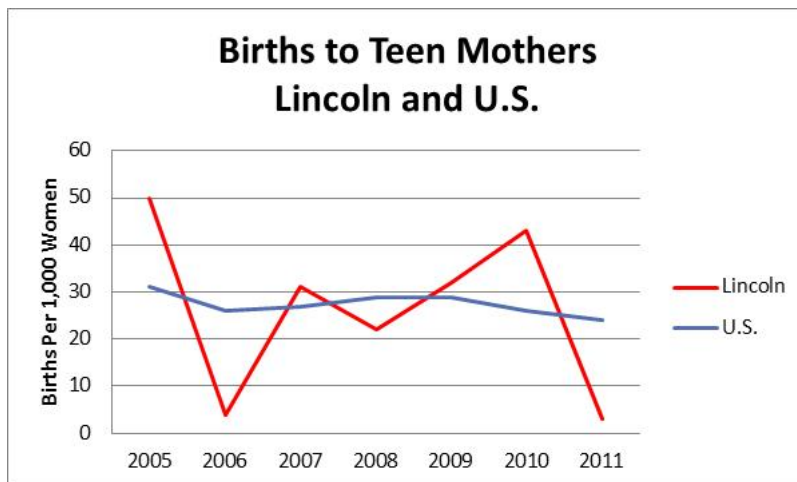
Source: Health Indicators Warehouse, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## THE PERCENTAGE OF BIRTHS TO LINCOLN TEEN MOTHERS FLUCTUATES

Teenage girls who give birth are more likely to drop out of high school and more likely to be in poverty. Research suggests that children born to teen mothers are more likely to be low birth weight, have long-term health problems and have worse educational outcomes; however these issues may be more likely the result of socio-economic (e.g., poverty) and cultural issues rather than the physical fact of young motherhood.<sup>85</sup> In Lincoln the rate of births to teen mothers has fluctuated, **some years much higher than the national rate and other years much lower.**

FIGURE 51. BIRTHS TO TEEN MOTHERS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Note: "Teen mothers" are all childbearing women aged 15 to 19

## RESIDENTS REPORT FEWER POOR MENTAL HEALTH DAYS THAN NATIONALLY

It is well known that mental health is a key component of overall well-being. Mental illness is the leading cause of disability in the United States. Nationally, between 5 and 7 percent of adults experience a serious mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, manic-depressive illness, and severe depressive disorders).<sup>86</sup> Persons with severe mental illness comprise a significant percentage of the homeless,<sup>87</sup> incarcerated,<sup>88</sup> and unemployed populations.<sup>89</sup> There is little information about the prevalence of severe and persistent mental illness in Lincoln.

In Lancaster County, residents report experiencing **fewer poor mental health days** in a month than U.S. residents do.

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<sup>85</sup> (Geronimus & Korenman, 1993)

<sup>86</sup> (Wang, Demler, & Kessler, 2002)

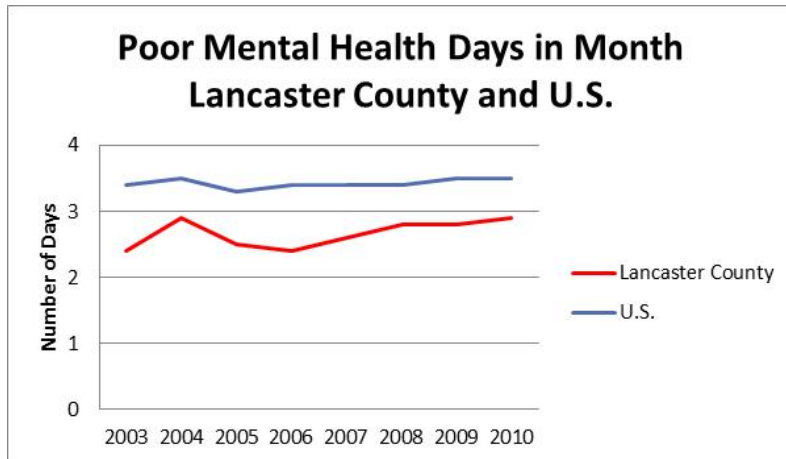
<sup>87</sup> (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006)

<sup>88</sup> (James & Glaze, 2006)

<sup>89</sup> (Dooley, Fielding, & Levi, 1996)



FIGURE 52. POOR MENTAL HEALTH DAYS



Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

## YOUTH PHYSICAL HEALTH IS BEGINNING TO BE MEASURED IN LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In 2012, Lincoln Public Schools began tracking the physical health of public elementary and middle school students using measures of obesity (i.e., Body Mass Index) and cardiovascular fitness proficiency (Lincoln Public Schools Fitness Report). Approximately **two-thirds of elementary and middle school students are normal weight and one-third are overweight or obese.**<sup>90</sup> Approximately **two-thirds of elementary and middle school students are proficient in cardiovascular fitness, and one-third of students are not proficient.** Lincoln Public Schools reports that cardiovascular fitness, but not obesity predicted performance on the Nebraska State Accountability tests for reading and math.

## YOUTH DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE RATES ARE SIMILAR TO U.S. RATES

Illicit drug and alcohol use by youth increases their risk for injury, violence, HIV infection, and other diseases<sup>91</sup> and has a negative association with academic achievement.<sup>92</sup>

Approximately **half of all high school students in Lancaster County used alcohol** during a 30 day period. Approximately **25% of Lancaster County high school students used cigarettes.** Approximately **1 in 5 high school students in Lancaster County used marijuana** during a 30 day period. These rates are approximately equivalent to national data.

<sup>90</sup> Approximately 3% of Lincoln elementary and middle school students are underweight.

<sup>91</sup> (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012).

<sup>92</sup> (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.-a).



## SAFETY

*Researchers from San Francisco State University found that people decide where to live based on whether the community offers opportunities to satisfy basic needs: first safety (93%), and then followed by factors such as jobs (83%), and housing (83%).<sup>93</sup> People want to live in communities where they feel physically free from harm. Harm may occur through intentional victimization, as well as through accidents and health crises. In the United States, victimization rates since the early 1990s have declined.<sup>94</sup> Urbanized areas now have lower overall injury-related mortality rates among all age groups than do more rural areas.<sup>95</sup>*

*Although people in Lincoln do come to harm, on the whole, Lincoln is a safe place to live. **Lincoln has less violent crime than other similarly-sized communities.** Persons living in Lincoln report feeling safe most or all of the time, traffic crash injuries are decreasing, and medical and fire services are effective. However, Lincoln has a **much higher percentage of children who have been removed from their homes for their safety**, for reasons such as neglect, parental substance abuse, and substandard housing.*

### LINCOLN'S CRIME RATE IS LOW

After declining for several years, Lincoln's overall crime rate has remained steady since 2008. In Lincoln, **property crimes comprise most reported offenses**, and their pattern reflects that of the overall rate. Lincoln's property crime rate has consistently trailed the rates of other cities across the United States with populations between 250,000 to 500,000 persons. From 2005 to 2011, **Lincoln's property crime rate dropped from 95% of the property crime rate of other comparably-sized cities to 90%**. Burglary comprises only a small portion of property crimes, but is a good indicator of the overall trend in property crimes. The City of Lincoln has maintained its **goal of having fewer than 842 burglaries per 100,000 persons**.

Lancaster County's domestic violence rate fluctuates, but has declined 30% (from 687 offenses per 100,000 persons in 2005 to 481 offenses per 100,000 persons in 2011).<sup>96</sup>

The lowest rate of crime in Lincoln is for violent crime and it has declined 33% since 2005 (from 547 offenses per 100,000 persons in 2005 to 369 offenses per 100,000 persons in 2011). The City of Lincoln has maintained its goal of having fewer than 555 violent crimes per 100,000 persons.

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<sup>93</sup> (Citro & Michael, 1995).

<sup>94</sup> (Lauritsen & Rezey, 2013)

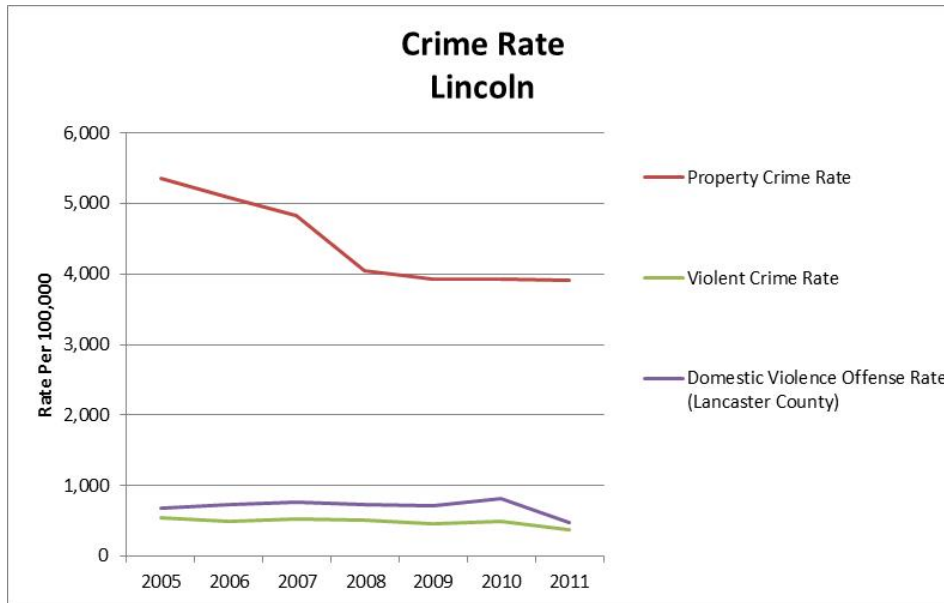
<sup>95</sup> (Myers et al., 2011)

<sup>96</sup> Data for domestic violence offenses are not available for only the City of Lincoln; therefore Lancaster County data are used.



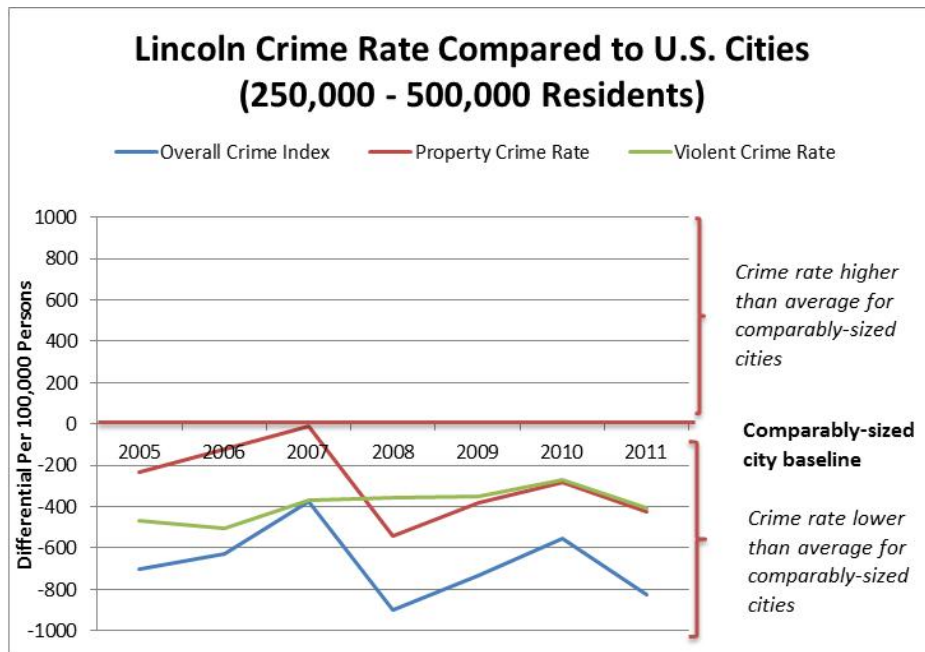
Lincoln's violent crime rate has consistently trailed the rates of other cities across the United States with populations between 250,000 to 500,000 persons. Since 2005, **Lincoln's violent crime rate has averaged 44% of the violent crime rate of other comparably-sized cities.**

**FIGURE 53. CRIME RATE**



Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports; and Nebraska Crime Commission Annual Domestic Violence Reports

**FIGURE 54. CRIME RATE COMPARED TO OTHER CITIES WITH POPULATIONS OF 250,000 - 400,000**



Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports; and Nebraska Crime Commission Annual Domestic Violence Reports

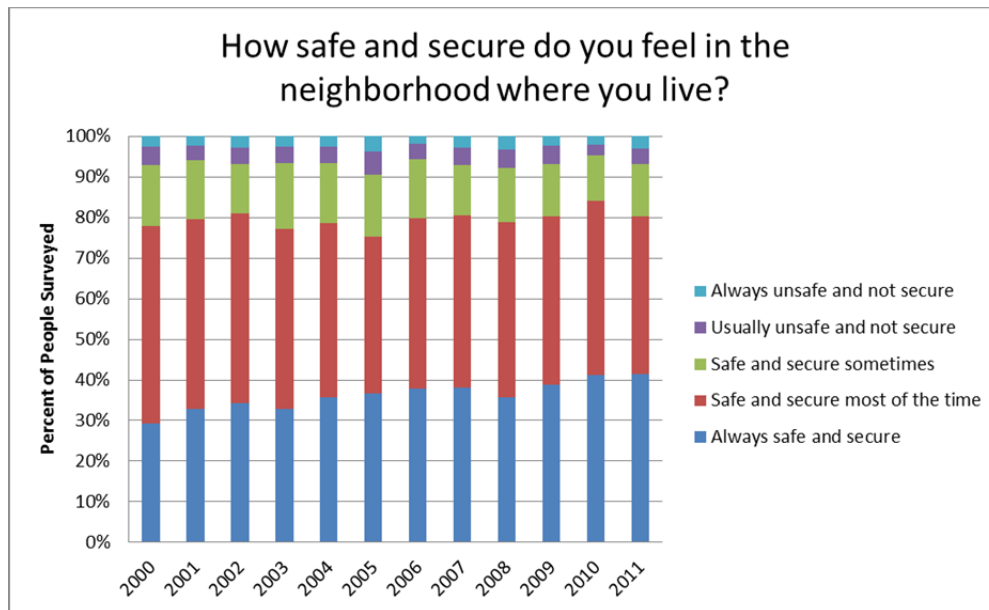




## RESIDENTS FEEL SAFE

People in Lincoln report feeling safe. The Lincoln Police Department, through a contract with Gallup, surveys all individuals who have contact with city police officers. Since 2000, approximately **75-85% of respondents have indicated that they feel safe and secure either *always* or *most of the time***. Of that group, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of individuals who say they *always* feel safe and secure. The high percentage of feelings of safety and security among this population are particularly interesting since the group includes individuals who have had contact with the police department as the result of victimization. A random survey<sup>97</sup> of Lincoln residents found similar results: the majority of respondents were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their neighborhood safety and security (89% in 2010; 75% in 2012).

FIGURE 55. PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY



Source: Lincoln Police Department Quality Service Audit

## MEDICAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAILS CITY GOALS, BUT PROPERTY VALUE SAVED IS HIGH

Lincoln Fire and Rescue responds to medical emergencies with Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). The City of Lincoln's goal is to achieve on-scene presence of an Advanced Life Support EMT in less than 5 minutes for 90% of life threatening medical calls. The actual **response rates have trailed the goal by an average of 12%** for the past six years. According to city officials, the city has been lagging in its goal because the city has been expanding through annexation and there are now housing developments that are not near existing fire stations.

Lincoln Fire and Rescue track the percentage of total property value they save. Over the past eight years, Lincoln Fire and Rescue **saved 96.8% of property value**. The only year this percentage dipped below 97% was in 2011 when it dropped to 89%. This was the year the Lincoln Public Schools' District office was destroyed by fire.

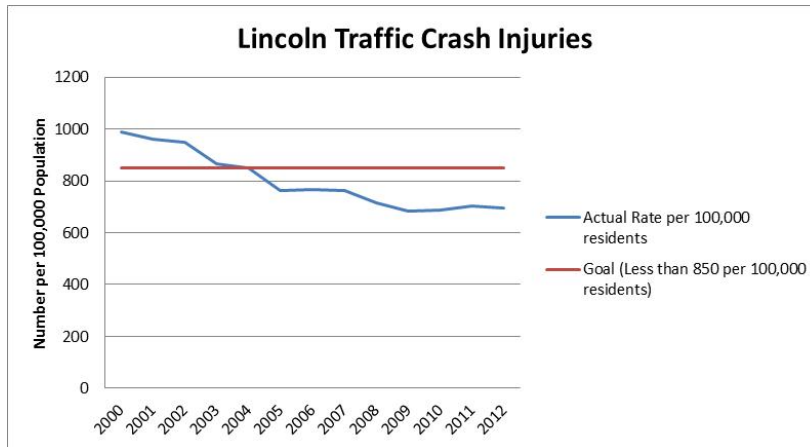
<sup>97</sup> The item was asked as a part of the Taking Charge survey conducted by the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center on behalf of the City of Lincoln. In 2010 the survey was offered as a phone survey and in 2012 the survey was mailed.



## ACCIDENTAL INJURY RATES ARE DECLINING

The rate of traffic crash-related injuries has steadily declined since 2001, from 988 to 696 injuries per 100,000 persons. Since 2004, the rate has **not exceeded the City of Lincoln’s goal of fewer than 850 injuries per 100,000 persons.**

FIGURE 56. TRAFFIC INJURIES



Source: Lincoln Mayor’s Office 2012-2013 Taking Charge Report

## LINCOLN’S JUVENILE PROPERTY CRIME AND DRUG ARRESTS EXCEED, BUT VIOLENT CRIME ARRESTS ARE LOWER THAN THE NATIONAL RATES

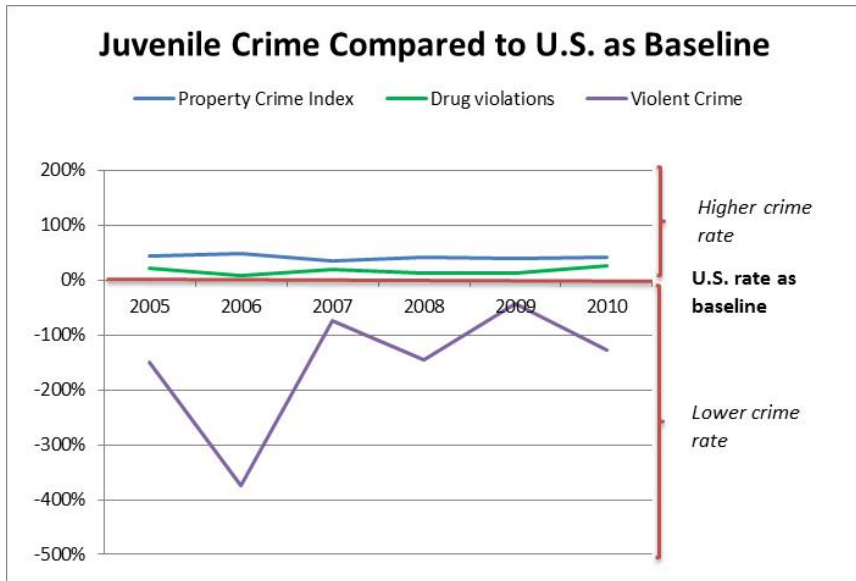
In Lancaster County, most juvenile arrests are for property crimes. Similar to the overall crime rate, property crimes have been decreasing in recent years, locally and nationally<sup>98</sup>. Over the past six years Lincoln’s **juvenile property crime arrest rate has been 34% to 48% higher than the national rate.**<sup>99</sup> Lincoln’s juvenile **violent crime arrest rate has been lower than the national rate over the past six years by 43% to 375%**. Lincoln’s juvenile drug arrest rate has **exceeded the national rate over the past six years by 8% to 26%**.

<sup>98</sup> Statistical Briefing Book, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

<sup>99</sup> Although juvenile arrest rates may largely reflect juvenile behavior, many other factors can affect the magnitude of these rates, such as the attitudes of citizens toward crime, the policies of local law enforcement agencies, and the policies of other components of the justice system.



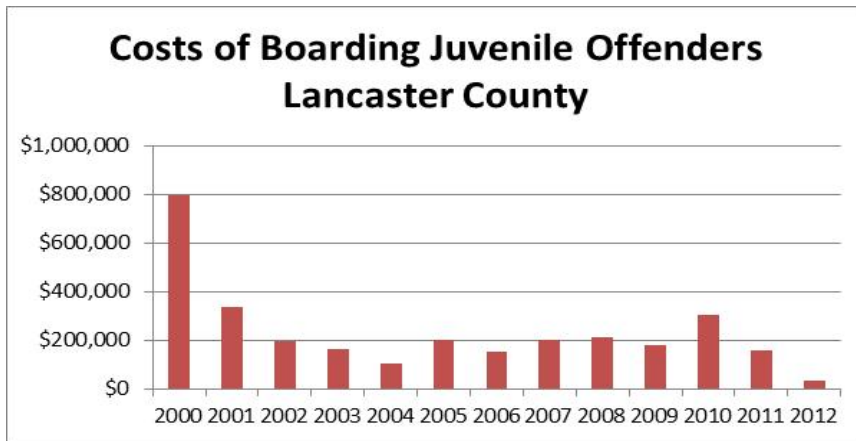
FIGURE 57. JUVENILE CRIME RATES



Source: Nebraska Crime Commission and National Center for Juvenile Justice

Over the past decade, Lancaster County had reduced costs for housing juvenile offenders. Prior to 2001, the County sent many juvenile offenders out of state. Since 2001, fewer juvenile offenders have been sent out of state. In 2011, juvenile offenders were made wards of the state and, as a result, their costs were paid by State dollars rather than County funds.

FIGURE 58. COSTS OF BOARDING JUVENILE OFFENDERS



Source: Lancaster County

### THE RATE OF STUDENTS CARRYING WEAPONS IS SLIGHTLY LOWER THAN NEBRASKA OR NATIONAL RATES

One measure of school safety is student self-report of carrying a weapon to school. Since 1999, the percentage of Lancaster County students reporting they carried a weapon (such as a gun, knife, or club) to school has been fairly



stable, averaging approximately 15%. This percentage is one percentage point lower than the Nebraska average and typically 3-4 percentage points lower than the national average.<sup>100</sup>

## A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ARE IN OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT

“Even after considering background characteristics, poverty level, prior achievement and school effects, students who ever spent time in foster care—regardless of timing of entry, duration in care, or any other specification of that experience—have lower educational outcomes than their peers.”<sup>101</sup>

Nebraska’s child protective custody system has been widely criticized for the high percentages of children that are placed in out-of home care (such as foster care). In Lancaster County, there continues to be a **higher percentage of children in foster care than there are nationally.**<sup>102, 103</sup> Although the percentage of children in out-of-home placement (on a given day through a point in time count) is a relatively small percentage of the population of children in Lincoln, the percentage does represent **almost 1,000 children on a given day** (in 2011, 957 Lincoln children were in out-of-home placements). In 2011, the most common reasons that children were placed in out-of-home care were:<sup>104</sup>

- Neglect (failure to provide for a child’s basic physical, medical, educational, and/or emotional needs): 58%
- Parental substance abuse: 30%
- Substandard housing: 25%
- Children’s behavioral issue (often a symptom of the child’s mental health): 24%
- Physical abuse: 19%
- Domestic violence: 13%
- Parental incarceration: 10%
- Sexual abuse: 7%
- Abandonment by the parent: 7%

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<sup>100</sup> Sources: Nebraska Youth Risk Behavioral Survey – Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department; Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>101</sup> (Lesnick, et al., 2010, p. 27)

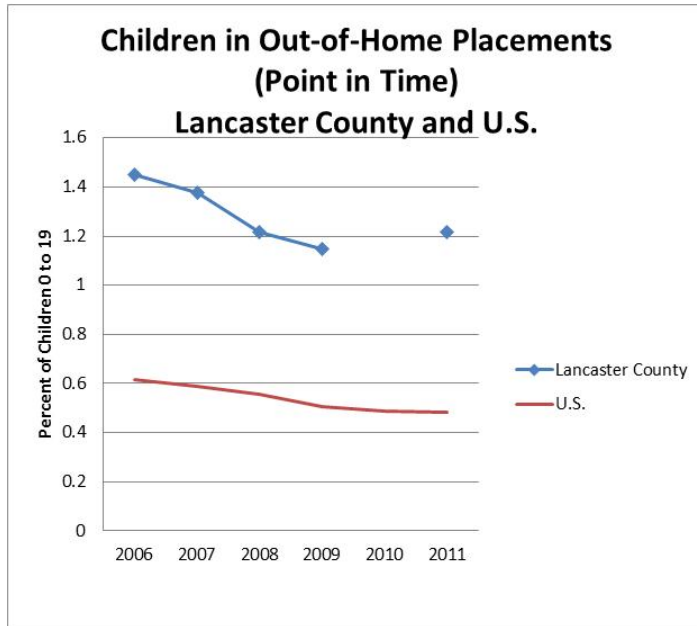
<sup>102</sup> All data is point-in-time. Lancaster County data 2006 through 2009 is for December 30 of those years. Years 2011 and later are reported for June 30; there is no 2010. National data for all years are reported for September 30 of the year.

<sup>103</sup> These figures exclude children who are removed from homes due to juvenile justice interventions.

<sup>104</sup> Figures do not total to 100% since children may be removed from the parental home for multiple reasons.



FIGURE 59. CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME PLACEMENTS



Sources: Nebraska Foster Care Review Office Annual Reports and Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System Annual Reports  
Note: Lancaster County Data for 2010 could not be obtained



## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND CULTURE

*A vibrant community has residents that volunteer, vote, promote social causes, donate to charitable organizations, support the arts, and otherwise participate in creating a sense of place. Lincoln prides itself as being a place where neighbors look out for each other, where there are increasing cultural opportunities, and where people care about strengthening and enhancing our community's amenities. Community involvement can be a difficult concept to measure since it can mean different things to different people and because some of the "connectedness" can be difficult to quantify. The measures we've selected each tap some component of involvement.*

*Our results suggest, perhaps counter to community perceptions, that **Lincoln looks very much like the rest of the country in terms of voting and charitable giving.** Per capita, arts organization revenues are on the lower end when compared to peer communities. Lincoln has somewhat **greater numbers of charitable and arts non-profit organizations.** Nebraskans volunteer at greater rates than residents of other states; however, data is not available to evaluate whether this is true for Lincoln at the city or county level.*

### VOTER TURNOUT IS AVERAGE

Over the past 40 years the percentage of persons who vote in elections has steadily declined nationally, with voters typically being older, more affluent, better educated, and White. Voter turnout is usually higher in years of presidential elections. In Lancaster County, residents vote at about the same rate as the rest of Nebraska and the nation. Lancaster County voters follow the expected pattern of greater turnout in presidential election years (approximately 60% of the 18 and older population) and lesser in non-presidential election years (approximately 40% of the 18 and older population).

### VOLUNTEERING IN NEBRASKA IS STRONG

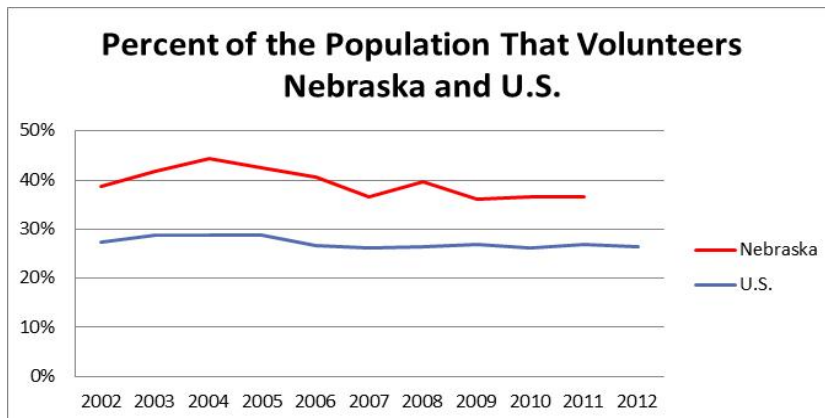
Data on volunteering is only available at the state level. **Nebraska ranks as the sixth highest for rate of volunteering** of the 50 states and Washington DC. Even though rural individuals tend to volunteer at a higher rate than either suburban or urban individuals, Nebraska exceeds the national averages when accounting for place of residence. In 2011, Nebraskans contributed approximately 49.3 million hours of service. Like the rest of the nation, approximately one-third of volunteer hours were committed to religious organizations, followed by educational and social service organizations.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/NE>



FIGURE 60. VOLUNTEERING RATE



Source: Corporation for National Community Services

## INDIVIDUAL CHARITABLE GIVING IS AVERAGE

Two measures of charitable giving are individual giving and organizational charitable giving through foundations. Related to individual giving, the average household in Lincoln contributes about 4.4% of income to charitable organizations.<sup>106</sup> This is **approximately the same percentage as nationally** (4.7%) and in Nebraska (4.1%).

## LINCOLN HAS MANY SMALL CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS

When compared to its peer communities,<sup>107</sup> Lincoln has a comparatively **large number of small private foundations**<sup>108</sup> that report disbursing \$500,000 or less annually. Lincoln, and all but one peer community, has no foundations giving \$5 million or more annually.

## LINCOLN HAS MANY ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS BUT LAGS IN SUPPORTING THEM

Communities where people want to live have flourishing arts and cultural programs. At approximately 23 arts organizations per 100,000 population, Lincoln has a **relatively large number of non-profit arts organizations** when compared to its selected peer and aspirational communities. Only Madison, Wisconsin has a greater number at 26.

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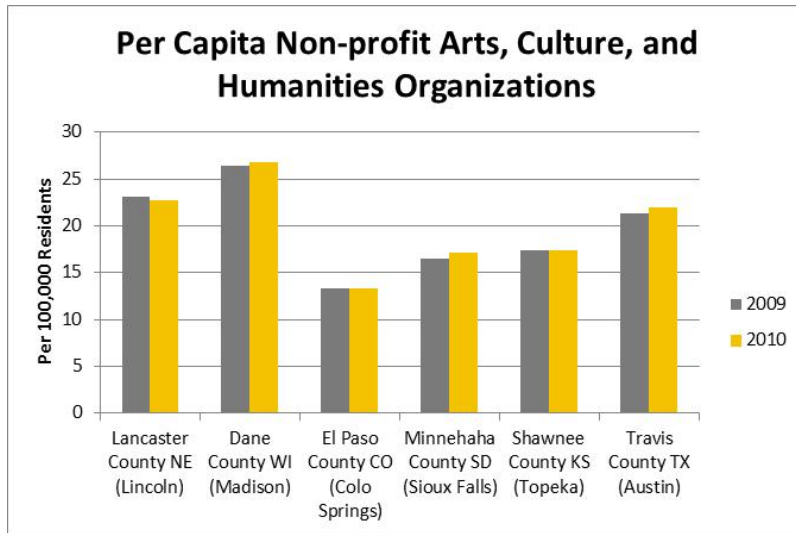
<sup>106</sup> Includes households with incomes of \$50,000 and greater. Source: Chronicle of Philanthropy

<sup>107</sup> Peer and aspirational communities used in this study are those identified in the *Lincoln Economic Dashboard* created by the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development. The communities presented in this comparison were based on availability of information. The peer communities in this comparison are: Minnehaha County, SD (Sioux Falls) and Shawnee County, KS (Topeka). The aspirational communities in this comparison are: Dane County, WI (Madison); El Paso County, CO (Colorado Springs); and Travis County, TX (Austin).

<sup>108</sup> Data do not include charitable foundations that primarily direct giving to a single organization, such as the University of Nebraska Foundation.



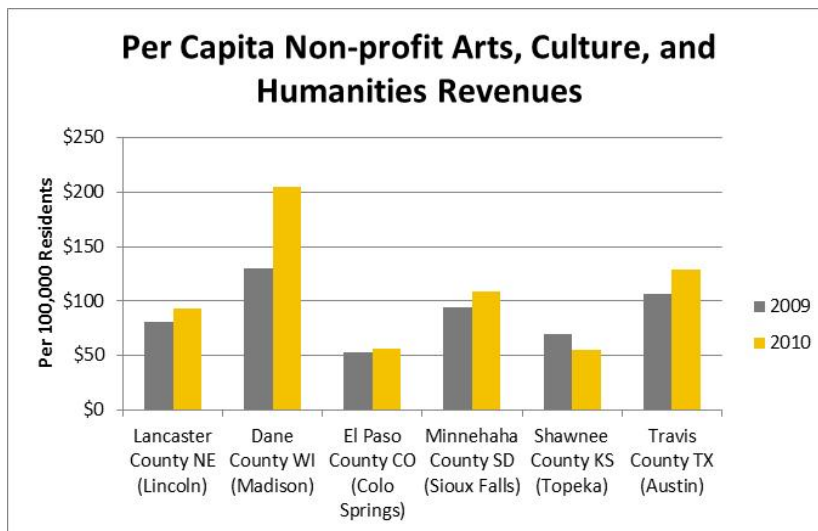
FIGURE 61. ARTS ORGANIZATIONS



Source: Compiled from the National Arts Index

The annual revenues generated by arts and cultural organizations are a proxy for community support of these organizations and for the overall cultural life of a community. **Lincoln lags in per capita support** of these organizations. In Lincoln, per capita expenditures toward non-profit arts is \$85 annually, which is surpassed by Austin, Texas (\$102), Sioux Falls, SD (\$102), and Madison, Wisconsin (\$160).

FIGURE 62. ARTS ORGANIZATION REVENUES



Source: Compiled from the National Arts Index





## WHERE TO GO FROM HERE: USING THIS REPORT

*Data are not enough. There is no super metropolitan computer that can take in information about every metropolis and mechanically spit out the right vision for each community. Once the data are gathered, leaders and stakeholders need to bring all their collective experience and intuition to bear in analyzing and assessing them.*<sup>109</sup>

Bruce Katz & Jennifer Bradley  
Brookings Metropolitan Policy  
Program

How this report is used will depend on the people or combinations of people who decide to take action. Conversation, connection, and collaboration are needed. The ultimate message to those who call Lincoln home is:

**Be Informed. Get Involved.**

How and where does a community start? Knowing what we know, we must plan for what is coming.

How will we continue to nurture the things we are doing exceptionally well?

How will we address the growing proportion of Lincoln's population that faces real need?

How will we ensure that all Lincoln's children become productive, engaged citizens?

How will the community create impact?<sup>110</sup>

- Identify needs
- Convene doers
- Catalyze solutions
- Leverage resources
- Learn what works
- Share knowledge

It is clear that major initiatives and complex issues will require collaboration among all sectors of our community: businesses, families and individuals, non-profit organizations, neighborhoods, philanthropies, government, and private organizations. The question is not *whether* there are leaders but *whether* leaders *will work together* to drive change to achieve a vision that matters. Outlined are essential steps to achieve change.<sup>111</sup>

1. **Common Agenda:** all participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding and a joint approach to addressing it through agreed upon actions.
2. **Shared Measurement:** collecting data and measuring results consistently ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

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<sup>109</sup> (Katz & Bradley, 2013, pp. 196-197)

<sup>110</sup> Adapted from Michigan Foundations' model for creating impact

<sup>111</sup> Adapted from FSG research on collective impact

(<http://www.fsg.org/OurApproach/WhatIsCollectiveImpact.aspx>)



3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
4. **Continuous Communications:** consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives and appreciate common motivation.



## Be Informed. Get Involved.

Visit the **Lincoln Vital Signs** website: [lincolnvitalsigns.org](http://lincolnvitalsigns.org)

You'll find:

- Latest information about the Lincoln Vital Signs project
- Downloadable copies of the full report and executive summary
- Links to relevant data

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Education  
Health  
Safety  
Involvement  
Resources

# Lincoln Vital Signs

Welcome to **Lincoln Vital Signs**. Lincoln Vital Signs is a collaborative project of many of Lincoln's largest public and private charitable organizations. Lincoln Vital Signs has current data about Lincoln in seven key areas: Community Profile, Economy and Workforce, Basic Needs, Education, Health, Safety, and Community Involvement and Culture.

This website debuted in January 2014. We are continuing to add information over the coming months. We invite your **feedback**.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A study like the one reported here relies heavily on the vision and expertise of many individuals and organizations. We gratefully acknowledge support and expertise of the **Funders and Advisory Council members**. This study would not have been possible without the generous contributions of data and expertise from numerous additional individuals and organizations. The authors maintain full responsibility for any errors in data or representation. Special thanks to:

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**Janell Walther**, University of Nebraska Public Policy Center

**Teresa Wanser**, Lincoln Public Schools



## APPENDIX

### DATA SOURCES

#### **Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Annual Reports**

##### **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families**

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/afcars>

The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) collects case-level information from state and tribal title IV-E agencies on all children in foster care and those who have been adopted with title IV-E agency involvement. Title IV-E agencies are required to submit AFCARS data twice a year.

#### **American Chamber of Commerce Research Association (ACCRA) Cost of Living Index (COLI)**

##### **Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER)**

<http://www.coli.org/>

Since 1968, the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER) has collected and published cost of living data comparing city-to-city key consumer costs. However, the voluntary nature of the index means that not every area is covered. The Cost of Living Index is referenced in the U.S. Census Bureau's Statistical Abstract of the U.S. The index is cross-sectional in nature; the overall U.S. average is indexed to 100, and the individual area prices are expressed relative to the U.S. average. The data are reported quarterly.

#### **American Community Survey**

##### **United States Census Bureau**

<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a relatively new survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. It uses a series of monthly samples to produce annually updated data for the same small areas (census tracts and block groups) formerly surveyed via the decennial census long-form sample. Initially, 5 years of samples will be required to produce these small-area data. Once the Census Bureau has collected 5 years of data, new small-area data will be produced annually. The Census Bureau also will produce 3-year and 1-year data products for larger geographic areas. The ACS includes people living in both housing units (HUs) and group quarters (GQs). The ACS is conducted throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico.

#### **Annual Domestic Violence Reports**

##### **Nebraska Crime Commission**

[http://www.ncc.ne.gov/documents/stats\\_report\\_and\\_research.htm#Domestic\\_Assault\\_Series](http://www.ncc.ne.gov/documents/stats_report_and_research.htm#Domestic_Assault_Series)

Data is reported by all local jurisdictions and compiled by the Nebraska Crime Commission on an annual basis. Data collection began in 1999.

#### **Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)**

##### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

[http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/atlas/countydata/County\\_Methods.html#Data\\_Sources\\_and\\_Methodology\\_for](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/atlas/countydata/County_Methods.html#Data_Sources_and_Methodology_for)

The BRFSS is an ongoing, monthly, state-based telephone survey of the adult population. The survey provides state-specific information on behavioral risk factors and preventive health practices. Major changes to BRFSS survey methods began in 2011, meaning that comparison of data prior to 2011 to that after 2011 is not recommended.



## **Consolidated Federal Funds Reports**

### **U.S. Census Bureau**

<http://www.census.gov/govs/cffr/>

The Consolidated Federal Funds Reports were summarized federal government expenditures (or obligations) in state, county, and subcounty areas of the United States, including the District of Columbia and U.S. Outlying Areas. Data was collected from federal departments and agencies and consolidated and tabulated in a standard format by the U.S. Census Bureau, under the auspices of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Funding for the Consolidated Federal Funds Reports was terminated in 2011.

## **Crime in the United States**

### **FBI Uniform Crime Reports**

<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr-publications#Crime>

*Crime in the United States* is an annual publication in which the FBI compiles the volume and rate of violent and property crime offenses for the nation and by state. Individual law enforcement agency data are also provided for those contributors supplying 12 months complete offense data. This report also includes arrest, clearance, and law enforcement employee data. Use the new online UCR Data Tool to research crime statistics for the nation, by state, and by individual law enforcement agency.

## **Decennial Survey**

### **United States Census Bureau**

<http://www.census.gov/2010census/>

The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States. It is mandated by Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution and takes place every 10 years. The data collected by the decennial census determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives and is also used to distribute billions in federal funds to local communities. The 2010 Census represented the most massive participation movement ever witnessed in our country. Approximately 74 percent of the households returned their census forms by mail; the remaining households were counted by census workers walking neighborhoods throughout the United States. National and state population totals from the 2010 Census were released on December 21, 2010.

## **Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index®**

### **Gallup**

<http://www.well-beingindex.com/methodology.asp>

Through phone surveys, individuals are asked questions in six domains: Life Evaluation (present and future), Emotional Health (daily feelings), Physical Health (health experiences), Healthy Behavior (life style habits), Work Environment (job-related feelings and perceptions), and Basic Access (access to food, shelter, healthcare, and other basic needs).

## **Lincoln/Lancaster County Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (Lincoln/Lancaster YRBS)**

### **Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department**

<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/health/data/epi/rptindx.htm>

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey measures the prevalence of health-risk behaviors among adolescents through representative national, state, and local surveys conducted biennially. Data is available from surveys conducted in 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011, and 2013. The national and state surveys use multi-stage cluster sampling to obtain samples of students in grades 9-12 reflecting the geographic, urban-rural, racial, gender, and grade makeup



of the population in those grade levels. In Lancaster County, the survey is conducted in all high schools, in randomly selected classrooms of a required period (second or English period). Parental consent was required beginning in 1997. In the Lancaster County Oversample all public schools (urban and rural) have participated every survey year since 2005. The number of respondents has ranged from 1,095 in 2001 to 444 in 2007 to 1,145 in 2013. The numbers of respondents fluctuates from year to year due to the mix of schools and number of students with parental consent to participate. This disrupted the results to some degree, but was carefully considered in the survey sample and analysis of data. The survey methodology has varied. In the most recent year of the survey (2013), surveys were completed by 1,145 public high school students in Lancaster County and weighted to represent all county students.

### **Health Indicators Warehouse**

#### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

<http://www.healthindicators.gov/>

The Health Indicators Warehouse (HIW) is the data hub of a collaborative effort among government and non-government partners to establish a network of suppliers and demanders of community health data, indicators, and interventions. Its purpose is to help Americans understand health and health care system performance in their communities, thereby sparking and facilitating action to improve performance and value.

### **How America Gives**

#### **Chronicle of Philanthropy**

<http://philanthropy.com/section/How-America-Gives/621/>

Data come from a comprehensive study The Chronicle of Philanthropy conducted to examine giving data by ZIP code and by income level in every city and town in the United States. The study is based on exact dollar amounts released by the Internal Revenue Service showing the value of charitable deductions claimed by American taxpayers. It is not based on extrapolations from spot surveys or statistical models. Comparing levels of giving is always a challenge in part because the cost of living varies greatly across America. To provide a fair analysis, The Chronicle's rankings show the percentage of their income that households donated from the money they had left after paying their taxes and covering housing, food, and other essential expenses. The Chronicle obtained comprehensive tax records from the IRS for 2008, the most recent year for which such data are available, to examine income levels and the sums claimed in charitable contributions for taxpayers in each ZIP code. The IRS releases total amounts donated, but to protect privacy, the agency does not provide data about the specific charities people supported. Because of discrepancies in the data for people with income below \$50,000, The Chronicle's study includes only taxpayers who reported incomes of \$50,000 or more. Readers can use the online edition of this report to find detailed breakdowns, by income level, showing the percentage of income donated by people in various income brackets for each ZIP code.

### **Lincoln Economic Dashboard**

#### **Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development**

[https://vipasuite.com/resources/dyn/files/1106311z6aab74da/\\_fn/LPED+Dashboard+2013.pdf](https://vipasuite.com/resources/dyn/files/1106311z6aab74da/_fn/LPED+Dashboard+2013.pdf)

The Lincoln Economic Dashboard is a joint effort of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research, the Board of Directors of the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development, and the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development Steering Committee. The Dashboard collects and presents data to measure Lincoln's economic performance in comparison to other communities.



### **Lincoln Homeless Point in Time Report**

#### **University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center on Children, Families and the Law**

<http://www.lincolnhomelesscoalition.org/homelessness-awareness/reports/>

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires each Continuum of Care to conduct an unduplicated point-in-time count of all persons who are homeless. Since 2006 the Lincoln Homeless Coalition has conducted the unduplicated count through the Community Services Management Information System (CS-MIS) at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Center on Children, Families, and the Law. CS-MIS counts the number of homeless persons sheltered in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs, and domestic violence shelters provide aggregate counts of unduplicated persons in their shelters. These persons represent the sheltered homeless counts. A street count (unsheltered persons) is conducted by the Lincoln Police Department, Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach, Cedars Street Outreach and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Street count information is then cross referenced with CS-MIS sheltered information to remove duplicates identified in the street count from those identified as sheltered in the CS-MIS count.

### **Lincoln Police Department Quality Service Audit**

#### **City of Lincoln Police Department**

Phone survey conducted by Gallup with people who had contact with a police officer (such as crime victims and people who received traffic tickets), but not arrested for a crime.

### **Lincoln Public Schools Fitness Report**

#### **Lincoln Public Schools**

In 2012, Lincoln Public Schools began collecting data about elementary and middle school student physical fitness. Two dimensions of fitness are measured: cardio-vascular fitness and obesity. All students in grades 3 through 8 take the cardiovascular fitness test unless they have a physical disability or other compelling reason to not participate. Cardio-vascular health is measured using Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run (PACER), a nationally standardized measure of aerobic fitness. Obesity is measured based on Body Mass Index calculations.

### **Lincoln Public Schools Special Education Statistical Handbook**

#### **Lincoln Public Schools**

<http://www.lps.org/post/index.cfm?collection=77>

Lincoln Public Schools Special Education Student Information System (SEIS) data is collected from students' Individual Education Program forms. Lincoln Public Schools reports data to the Nebraska Department of Education for the annual childcount.

### **Lincoln Public Schools Statistical Handbooks**

#### **Lincoln Public Schools**

<http://www.lps.org/post/index.cfm?collection=77>

The Annual Statistical Handbook contains basic statistical information about Lincoln Public Schools. It is intended to provide the user with current information about public education in the community of Lincoln, Nebraska.

### **Local Area Unemployment Statistics**

#### **Bureau of Labor Statistics**

<http://www.bls.gov/lau/>

The Local Area Unemployment Statistics program is a Federal-State cooperative effort that produces monthly estimates of total employment and unemployment. These estimates are key indicators of local economic





conditions. The concepts and definitions underlying LAUS data come from the Current Population Survey (CPS), the household survey that is the official measure of the labor force for the nation. State monthly model estimates are controlled in "real time" to sum to national monthly labor force estimates from the CPS. These models combine current and historical data from the CPS, the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program, and State unemployment insurance (UI) systems. Estimates for seven large areas and their respective balances of State are also model-based. Estimates for the remainder of the substate labor market areas are produced through a building-block approach known as the "Handbook method." This procedure also uses data from several sources, including the CPS, the CES program, State UI systems, and the decennial census, to create estimates that are adjusted to the statewide measures of employment and unemployment. Below the labor market area level, estimates are prepared using disaggregation techniques based on inputs from the decennial census, annual population estimates, and current UI data.

### **National Arts Index**

#### **Americans for the Arts**

[http://www.artsusa.org/information\\_services/arts\\_index/001.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/information_services/arts_index/001.asp)

The National Arts Index, created by Americans for the Arts, distills the health and vitality of arts in the U.S. It is composed of 83 equal-weighted, national-level indicators of arts and culture activity that covers a 13-year period, from 1998 to 2010. Each indicator is updated annually and a new report is produced.

### **National Center for Charitable Statistics**

#### **Urban Institute**

<http://nccsdataweb.urban.org>

NCCS derives its data files primarily from information that tax-exempt nonprofit organizations file with the Internal Revenue Service. IRS databases offer the most comprehensive standardized data on tax-exempt organizations. NCCS employs a range of data checking procedures, but not systematic in-depth verification of every record.

### **National Center for Juvenile Justice**

#### **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime>

Collects and presents information about juvenile participation in the justice system.

### **Nebraska Foster Care Review Office Annual Reports**

<http://www.fcro.nebraska.gov/annualreports.html>

These are annual reports by the Nebraska Foster Care Review Office that summarize data about Nebraska children who are in out of home placement in Nebraska.

### **Nebraska General Election Official Results**

#### **Nebraska Secretary of State**

[http://www.sos.ne.gov/elec/prev\\_elec/](http://www.sos.ne.gov/elec/prev_elec/)

The Secretary of State collects and reports on election related data including election results, voter registration figures, and voter turnout.

### **Nebraska Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (Nebraska YRBS)**

#### **Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services**

<http://bosr.unl.edu/wwwfiles/SHARP/2010NEH%20Questionnaire%20YRBS%20FINAL.pdf>



The survey administered in Nebraska was designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and matches surveys used in other states. The CDC selects a sample for Nebraska using a two-stage cluster sampling design. In the first stage, a random sample of public high schools was selected with probability proportionate to school enrollment. Schools were then recruited to participate. In the second stage, within each of the participating schools, a random sample of classrooms was selected and all students in those classes were targeted for participation. Upon agreeing to participate, schools are supported by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR). BOSR assists the school in selecting an administration date, sends the school the surveys and instructions for administration, receives surveys back from the schools, and sends them to the CDC. The CDC weights the surveys to represent all public high school students in Nebraska.

### **Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates**

#### **Bureau of Labor Statistics**

[http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes\\_data.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_data.htm)

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program produces employment and wage estimates annually for over 800 occupations. These estimates are available for the nation as a whole, for individual States, and for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas; national occupational estimates for specific industries are also available.

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases Surveillance**

#### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats11/default.htm>

Annual reports present surveillance information derived from the official statistics for the reported occurrence of nationally notifiable sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the United States, test positivity and prevalence data from numerous prevalence monitoring initiatives, sentinel surveillance, and national health care services surveys.

### **Statistical Briefing Book**

#### **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)**

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/>

The OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book (SBB) is an online information source via OJJDP's Website. Developed for OJJDP by the National Center for Juvenile Justice, the SBB presents information about juvenile crime and victimization and about youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

### **Statistics & Facts About Nebraska Schools Reports**

#### **Nebraska Department of Education**

<http://drs.education.ne.gov/quickfacts/Pages/DistrictandSchoolInformation.aspx>

This is a series of reports that were included in a publication called Statistics and Facts About Nebraska Schools. The reports include state-level reports, district and school level reports for public districts, nonpublic systems and State Operated systems (Special Purpose Schools). Most of the reports relate to the Fall Membership (student counts as of the last Friday in September, Nebraska's official counting day). Other reports include School District Census by County, and Full-Time Equivalency (F.T.E) of Certificated Personnel by Assignment and Gender.

### **United States Elections Project**

#### **George Mason University**

[http://elections.gmu.edu/voter\\_turnout.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm)

Summary of national and state turnout rates for the eligible population from 1980-2012.



## **Volunteering and Civic Life in America**

### **Corporation for National and Community Service**

*<http://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/research-and-reports/volunteering-america>*

Volunteering and Civic Life in America is a report issued by the Corporation for National and Community Service in partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship. The data for the report was collected through two supplements to the Current Population Survey (CPS): the Volunteer Supplement and the Civic Engagement Supplement. The CPS is a monthly survey of about 60,000 households (approximately 100,000 adults), conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau on behalf of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data are collected on the volunteering, voting, and civic activities of adults age 16 and older for the volunteer supplement and adults 18 and older for the civic supplement. Volunteers are considered individuals who performed unpaid volunteer activities through or for an organization at any point during the 12-month period (from September 1st of the prior year through the survey week in September of the survey year).

## **Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)**

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

*<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>*

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), established in 1991, monitors six categories of priority health-risk behaviors among youths and young adults: 1) behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence; 2) sexual behaviors that contribute to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, other sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancy; 3) tobacco use; 4) alcohol and other drug use; 5) unhealthy dietary behaviors; and 6) physical inactivity. In addition, YRBSS monitors the prevalence of obesity and asthma among this population. YRBSS data are obtained from multiple sources including a national school-based survey conducted by CDC as well as school based state, territorial, tribal, and large urban school district surveys conducted by education and health agencies. These surveys have been conducted biennially since 1991 and include representative samples of students in grades 9–12.



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