

2025
**COMPREHENSIVE
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**

DRAFT 11/8/25



Notice to the Public - Rights under Title VI

The Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) assures that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. MAPA further assures every effort will be made to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its programs and activities, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not.

In the event that MAPA distributes Federal aid funds to another entity, MAPA will include Title VI language in all written agreements and will monitor compliance.

MAPA's Title VI Coordinator is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, preparing reports, and other responsibilities as required by Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200 and 49 CFR 21.

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with MAPA. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with MAPA's Title VI Coordinator within one hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Discrimination Complaint Form, please see our web site at mapacog.org or contact the Title VI coordinator:

Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
Title VI Coordinator
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, NE 68102
Phone: (402) 444-6866
Email: civilrights@mapacog.org

Si necesita ayuda con la traducción, comuníquese con la oficina de MAPA utilizando la información de contacto a continuación.

Phone/Teléfono: (402) 444-6866
Email/Correo electrónico: mapa@mapacog.org

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| MAPA CEDS..... | 1 |
| Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA)..... | 2 |
| Functions of MAPA..... | 3 |
| Collaborative Planning in the MAPA Region..... | 4 |
| The CEDS Process..... | 5 |
| 2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY..... | 6 |
| Overview..... | 6 |
| Population..... | 6 |
| Age..... | 9 |
| Race..... | 10 |
| Households and Housing..... | 11 |
| Education..... | 14 |
| 3. ECONOMIC INDICATORS..... | 18 |
| Overview..... | 18 |
| Labor Force..... | 18 |
| Industry Clusters and Employers..... | 20 |
| Underemployment and Labor Availability..... | 23 |
| Employment and Wage Growth..... | 26 |
| Personal Income..... | 27 |
| Income Disparities..... | 29 |
| Poverty..... | 30 |
| Cost of Living..... | 32 |
| 4. REGIONAL ASSESSMENT..... | 33 |
| Overview..... | 33 |
| Stakeholder Survey and Engagement..... | 33 |
| Summary of the Economic State of the MAPA Region..... | 37 |
| 5. STRATEGIC VISION AND PLAN OF ACTION..... | 39 |
| Overview..... | 39 |
| The Heartland 2050 Vision..... | 39 |
| The MAPA Metropolitan Transportation Plan..... | 40 |
| 2025 MAPA CEDS Vision Statement..... | 41 |
| Economic Development Goals, Objectives, and Strategies..... | 41 |
| Implementation Strategy..... | 46 |
| Public and Private Sector Involvement..... | 53 |
| Plan Evaluation and Program Monitoring..... | 53 |
| Civil Rights Policy..... | 54 |

Figures & Tables

- 1. INTRODUCTION..... 1**
 - MAPA Council of Governments Geography..... 2
 - MAPA Organizational Chart..... 3
- 2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY..... 6**
 - Figure 2.1: Population Distribution of the MAPA Region..... 6
 - Figure 2.2: Population Growth of the MAPA Region 1970 to 2023..... 7
 - Table 2.1: Total Net Migration by Decade, 1980-2020..... 8
 - Figure 2.3: Incorporated and Unincorporated Population Growth, 2020 to 2024..... 9
 - Figure 2.4: Age Distribution..... 10
 - Figure 2.5: Future Projected Racial Composition, Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA..... 11
 - Figure 2.6 Share of Annual New Housing Growth..... 12
 - Table 2.2: Households by Type..... 13
 - Figure 2.7: Percent of Households with People Under 18 Years of Age, 2010 and 2018..... 14
 - Figure 2.8: Educational Attainment..... 15
 - Figure 2.9: Educational Attainment by Race, High School Graduate or Higher..... 16
 - Figure 2.10: Educational Attainment by Race, Bachelor’s Degree or Higher..... 16
 - Figure 2.11: Domestic Net Migration, 2010-2022..... 17
- 3. ECONOMIC INDICATORS..... 18**
 - Table 3.1: MAPA Region Labor Force Summary (2024 Annual Averages)..... 18
 - Figure 3.1: Five-Year Unemployment Rate, 2020 to 2024..... 19
 - Table 3.2: Omaha-Council Bluffs Major Employers in 2025..... 21
 - Figure 3.2: County-to-County Commuting Flows, Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA..... 22
 - Figure 3.3: Employment by Industry (Ages 16+)..... 23
 - Figure 3.4: Distribution of Unemployment in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Urban Area..... 24
 - Figure 3.5: Unemployment Rate by Race/Ethnicity, Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA (2023)..... 25
 - Figure 3.6: Change in Average Annual Wage..... 26
 - Figure 3.7 Change in Median Hourly Wage by Race and Educational Attainment..... 27
 - Table 3.3: Per Capita Income by Jurisdiction..... 28
 - Figure 3.8: Per Capita Income by Census Tract in the MAPA Region..... 28
 - Figure 3.9: Equitable Growth Profile, Regional Equity Dividend..... 29
 - Figure 3.10: Percent in Poverty by Jurisdiction..... 30
 - Figure 3.11: HUD Poverty Index, Omaha-Council Bluffs Urban Area..... 31
 - Table 3.4: Cost of Living Comparison, Omaha-Council Bluffs and Select MSAs 2024..... 32

1. INTRODUCTION

MAPA CEDS

The MAPA Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed to create an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the region's economy through the collaboration of public and private sectors. The purpose of this CEDS is to establish a process that will help to create jobs, foster a more stable and diversified economy, and improve living conditions within the MAPA region.

This CEDS document:

- Describes the challenges, opportunities, and resources of the MAPA region;
- Proposes regional economic development goals and strategies; and
- Identifies priority programs and projects for implementation.

The Economic Development Administration Reform Act of 1998 identifies a CEDS as a requirement to apply for assistance under the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Public Works and Economic Adjustment programs. In 2007, EDA designated MAPA as an Economic Development District (EDD). With this designation, MAPA is the principal planning organization for the greater Omaha-Council Bluffs region and is eligible for EDA planning investment assistance. MAPA is responsible for submitting a new CEDS to EDA at least every five years.

EDDs are multi-jurisdictional entities, commonly composed of multiple counties and in certain cases even cross state borders. They help lead the locally-based, regionally driven economic development planning process that leverages the involvement of the public, private and non-profit sectors to establish a strategic blueprint (i.e., an economic development roadmap) for regional collaboration.

As part of the engagement process, this CEDS document will be accessible readily to the economic development stakeholders in the MAPA region. A continuing program of communication and outreach, which encourages broad-based public engagement, participation, and commitment of partners, will be conducted. Policy makers, economic developers, and community-based organizations should be able to use this document as a guide to understand the regional economy and make necessary interventions to foster positive change within their spheres of influence. The strategy should take into account and, where appropriate, incorporate other planning efforts in the MAPA region. The aim is to create a useful tool for local decision-making.

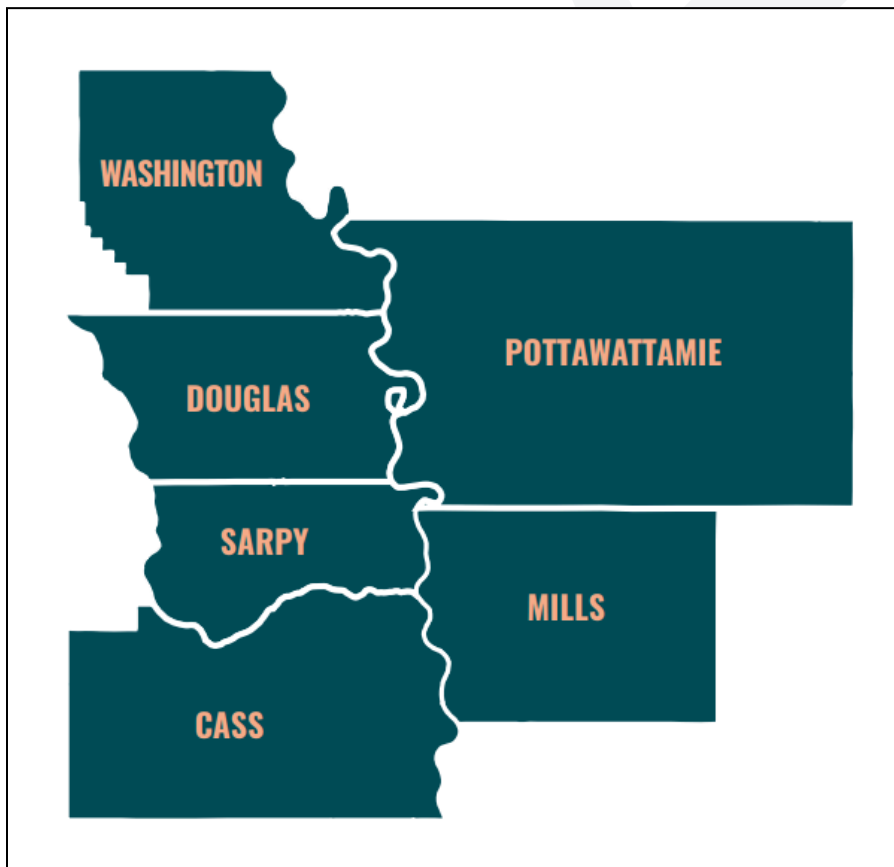
Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA)

MAPA exists to provide local governments with planning and technical support, and to think regionally and long range on the core issues that impact the Greater Omaha-Council Bluffs area.

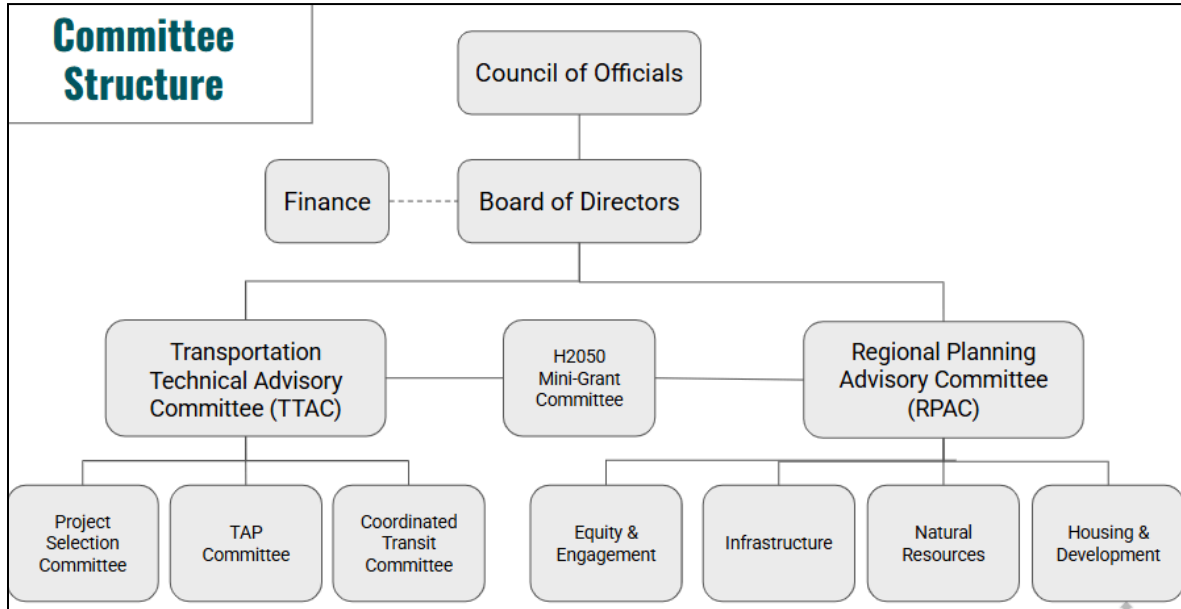
These are issues of mutual benefit such as transportation, infrastructure, housing and natural resources. We work with communities to identify opportunities, secure funding and other resources for critical projects, and build consensus. Our purpose is to promote and preserve the quality of life for a happier, healthier and more vibrant region. As a forum for inter-governmental cooperation, we are uniquely positioned to fill in the gaps as connectors, facilitators, advisors, and implementers. Data and process-driven, we strive to be a trusted, objective resource to local government and public and private stakeholders.

MAPA was created by local governments in 1967 to serve as a regional planning agency. We serve a six-county region that includes Cass, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington Counties in Nebraska, and Mills and Pottawattamie Counties in Iowa. Any governmental entity within MAPA's six-county area can become a member. Current membership consists of six counties, 53 towns, 19 special purpose governmental entities, and one city council. MAPA is governed by a 79-member Council of Officials and a nine-member Board of Directors. All activities established in the agency's work program are carried out by professional and support staff, led by an executive director.

MAPA Council of Governments Geography



MAPA Organizational Chart



Functions of MAPA

Community Development

MAPA has two principal planning functions: transportation and community development. Community development assistance includes activities such as grant writing and administration on behalf of member communities, comprehensive planning, strategic planning and capital needs assessments, meeting facilitation, and other technical support. MAPA also assists its members in identifying and implementing strategies which preserve and expand economic development assets.

Transportation

MAPA serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), or Transportation Management Area (TMA) for Douglas and Sarpy Counties in Nebraska, and the urbanized portion of Pottawattamie County in Iowa. An MPO is an organization which forms policy and allocates funding for transportation, which is mandated and funded by the federal government. The formation of an MPO is required for any urbanized area in the United States with a population greater than 50,000. As an MPO, MAPA produces these primary work items:

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (25-year transportation plan for the MPO area)
- Transportation Improvement Program (six-year program)
- Unified Planning Work Program (annual description of work activities)
- Public Participation Plan (public outreach strategy and document guides)
- Civil Rights Policy (every three years)

MAPA also serves as the facilitator for Regional Planning Affiliation-18 (RPA-18), which is one of 18 RPAs throughout Iowa that provide transportation planning on a regional level outside of urbanized areas. MAPA RPA-18 is composed of Harrison, Mills, Pottawattamie (excluding Council Bluffs), and Shelby Counties in southwest Iowa.

Heartland 2050

Heartland 2050 is a shared vision for the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro region that supports community leaders, giving them a roadmap and identifying strategies that will help them create the kind of place where our children and grandchildren will want to live and work in 2050. Heartland 2050 involves gathering community members and key stakeholders to help grow and unite the region in the decades to come.

Heartland 2050 work is guided by MAPA's Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) and carried out by four implementation committees: Engagement, Housing & Development, Infrastructure and Natural Resources.

Other MAPA Services

MAPA also offers services that do not fall under community development or transportation but can be used in either function. These services are data and information-based primarily, and include community profiles, data and information distribution, and geographic information systems (GIS).

Collaborative Planning in the MAPA Region

The MAPA CEDS builds upon the work of several major planning initiatives that have been conducted in recent years. **Heartland 2050** serves as the regional vision adopted by the MAPA Council of Officials. This long-term regional vision provided the overarching goals and emphasis of the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. The Heartland 2050 project was unveiled in December 2014, following two years of extensive public engagement and committee work. Since 2015, the project has moved to an implementation phase, focused on promoting best practices through events, speakers, site visits, demonstration projects, and other activities. Federal transportation funding available through MAPA has been allocated to conduct local and corridor-level planning that advance the Heartland 2050 vision goals.

The MAPA **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**, formerly called the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), is a vision which guides future infrastructure projects in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area. This planning initiative creates a vision for a stronger, safer, more vibrant region moving into the future. Long range plans cover the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), or Transportation Management Area (TMA). The MAPA CEDS was updated in close coordination with the MTP in an effort to better complement transportation and economic development investments in a strategic manner to implement the regional vision.

The Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce counts approximately 3,000 member businesses and serves as the region's leading economic development organization. The Chamber's overarching economic development campaign is **A GREATER Omaha: A Competitive Economic Development Strategy for 2025-2027**. This plan outlines strategies to grow the Omaha-Council Bluffs economy in a more strategic, targeted, and proactive manner. GREATER Omaha emphasizes growth of existing companies, increased

competition for federal investment, accelerating business clusters, and promotion of an inclusive economy.

Another key initiative of GREATER Omaha is targeted recruitment of companies that create high wage primary jobs in strategic geographic zones, including Omaha’s urban core. In 2022 the Chamber approved the **Omaha Urban Core Strategic Plan**, which focuses on developing downtown and midtown Omaha into a center for employment, housing, and recreation. Other initiatives include new housing, improved public spaces, and a pedestrian-friendly environment that incorporates expanded public transit and bike/pedestrian infrastructure.

The CEDS Process

MAPA’s initial CEDS was developed in 2002. Subsequent updates followed in 2004, 2008, 2014, and 2020. This current MAPA CEDS was completed by MAPA Community and Economic Development staff throughout 2025.

Prior to formal adoption, the MAPA CEDS was made available for public comment and review for 30 days beginning on November 6, 2025. Public notices were posted outside MAPA’s offices and on the agency’s website and social media accounts. The finalized CEDS was approved by the MAPA Board of Directors on December 11, 2025.

In fulfillment of the agency’s Partnership Planning agreement, MAPA will submit an updated CEDS performance report to EDA on or before April 30 of each year, highlighting accomplishments and reflecting changes to regional economic development priorities. MAPA will initiate a new comprehensive update per federal requirements within five years of EDA’s approval of this CEDS.

2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

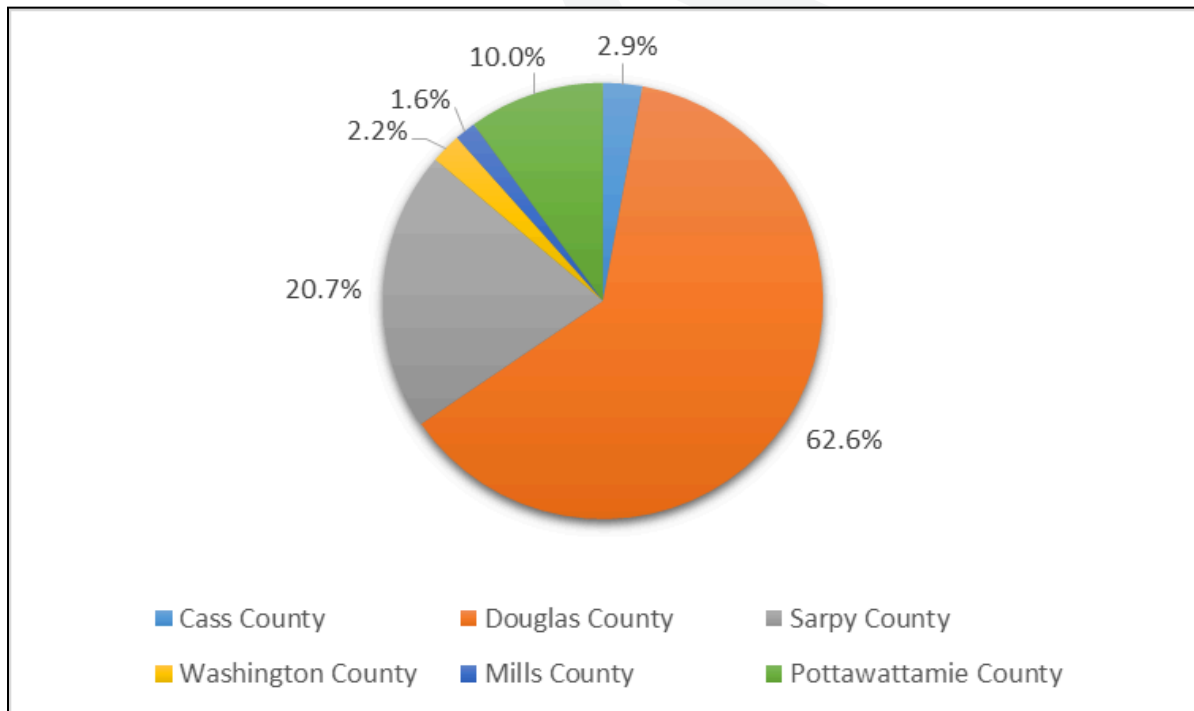
Overview

This chapter summarizes and illustrates population and demographic data for the MAPA region. Topics of focus include population, age, race, household and housing characteristics, and educational attainment.

Population

The MAPA region comprises six counties that represent the eight-county Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The Omaha-Council Bluffs region is an important economic center in the Midwest, and the largest MSA in Nebraska and Iowa with an estimated current population over 1 million, which places it 55th among the U.S.'s metropolitan regions. The MAPA region is home to 935,434 of the MSA's residents according to the U.S. Census. Figure 2.1 illustrates the population distribution of the region by county. Since the 2020 decennial census, the MAPA region's population is estimated to have grown by over 30,000 additional residents.

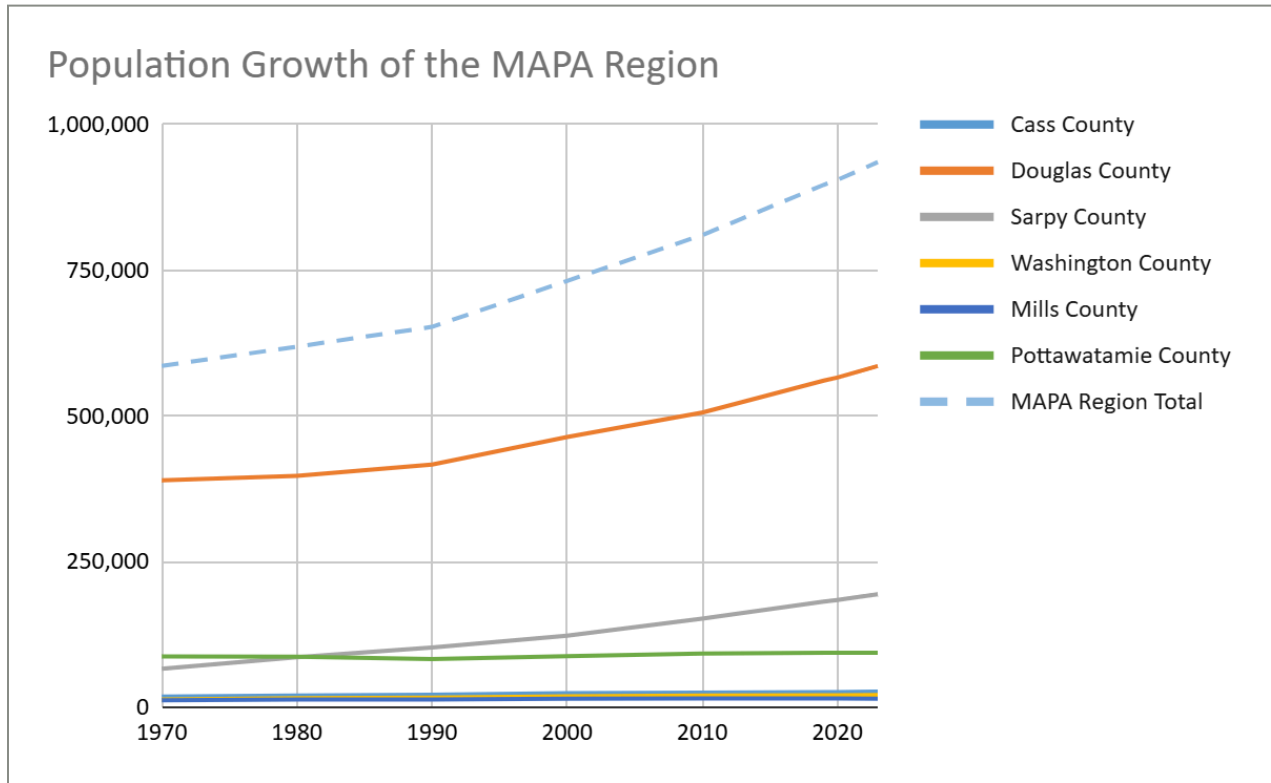
Figure 2.1: Population Distribution of the MAPA Region



Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

The six-county region’s total current population has increased by 60 percent since 1970. This population growth has not been shared equally among all counties. Sarpy County and Douglas County have seen the majority of population growth while the region’s other counties have stagnated or declined. Figure 2.2 shows the growth trend by decade for each of the six MAPA counties as a share of the region’s overall growth.

Figure 2.2: Population Growth of the MAPA Region 1970 to 2023



Source: 2023 and 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

Following a half century of industrial growth driven by industries such as the stockyards and railroads, many residents left the region for other areas of the country, including the “Sun Belt.” From 1990 to 2010, this trend reversed and the region experienced a period of positive domestic net migration. However, since 2010, domestic net migration has been negative with most residents leaving for nearby Lincoln, NE. Table 2.1 shows the trends in net domestic migration from 1980 to 2020.

Between 2020 and 2024, the total number of international immigrants (16,600) moving to the MAPA region was nearly equivalent to the net natural change of the regional population (17,290) – accounting for almost half of the region’s population growth. As the area’s birthrate declines and the population ages, this showcases the importance of international immigration in maintaining positive population growth in the region.

Table 2.1: Total Net Migration by Decade, 1980-2020

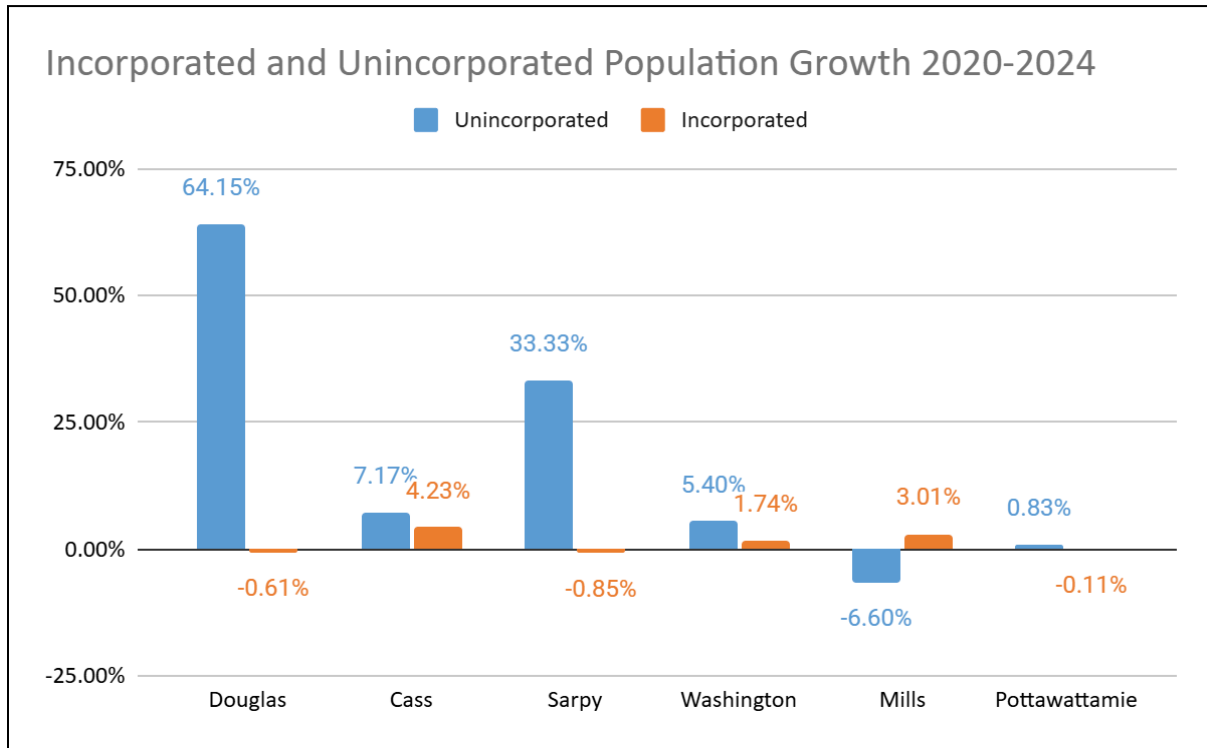
| Jurisdiction | 1980s | 1990s | 2000s | 2010s |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Cass County | -558 | -1,845 | -95 | -758 |
| Douglas County | -14,883 | 6,020 | 8,116 | -7,372 |
| Sarpy County | 2,516 | 3,112 | 18,553 | 44 |
| Washington County | 377 | 1,706 | 870 | -393 |
| Mills County | 270 | 1,690 | 1,167 | 371 |
| Pottawattamie County | -9,274 | -248 | 1,887 | -1,905 |
| MAPA Region Total | -21,552 | 10,435 | 30,498 | -10,013 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County to County Migration Flows 2011-2015 ACS and 2016-2020 ACS

Population change within the MAPA region has increased in suburban and exurban areas, while population decline and economic disinvestment have occurred in many urban neighborhoods during the last 40 years. From 2020-2024, fewer small, rural communities located outside of the urbanized area experienced population decline compared to the previous decade. Only two communities in Washington County, outside of the MPO planning area (Douglas, Sarpy, and western Pottawattamie counties) saw a decline in residents. The largest cities had a decrease in residents while the smaller cities (the “exurbs”) saw an increase in residents. Cities that had seen strong growth in the past stagnated or lost residents due to increased housing prices and increased population density.

In that same period, five of six MAPA counties saw higher growth in unincorporated areas versus incorporated cities. Douglas County saw an unincorporated growth rate of 64 percent while Sarpy County experienced an unincorporated growth rate of 33 percent. Both counties lost residents in incorporated areas. These trends indicate that there is continued and strong demand among a segment of the population to reside in less densely populated locales outside or on the fringes of established communities.

Figure 2.3: Incorporated and Unincorporated Population Growth, 2020 to 2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, City and Town Population Totals 2020-2024, Incorporated Places, Annual Estimates for the Resident Population for Incorporated Places in the United States

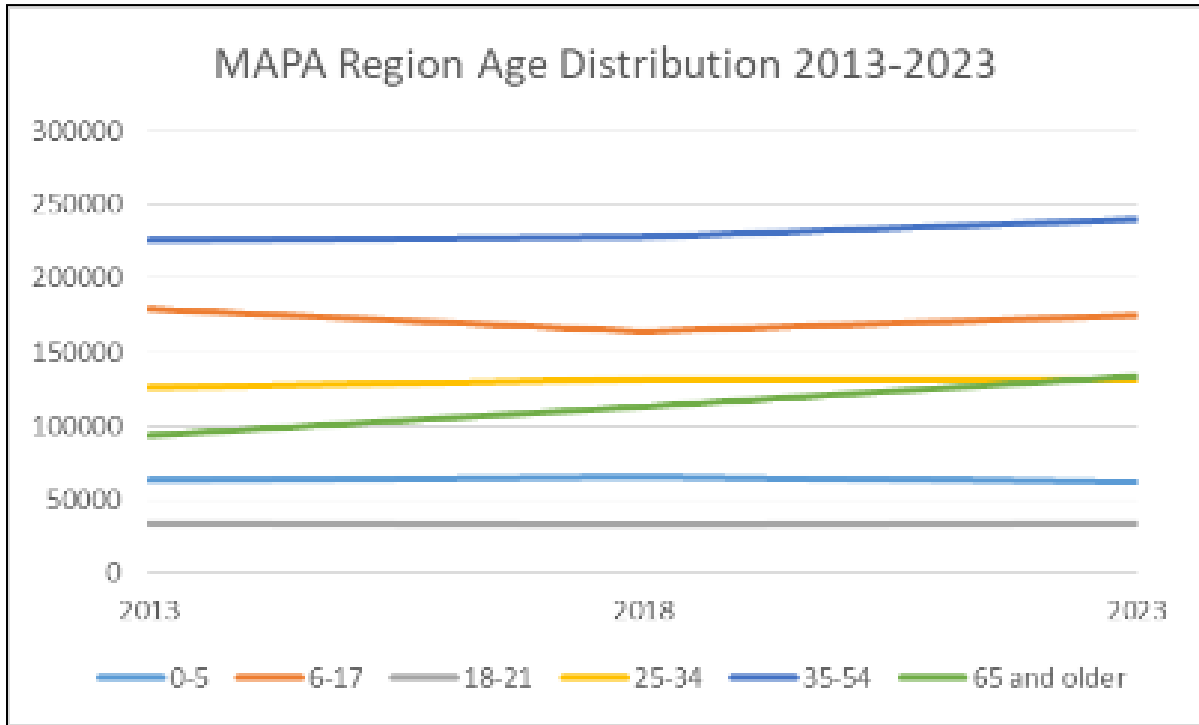
Age

Over the last decade the region experienced a decline in birth rates and an increase in residents over the age of 65. This is consistent with the national trend of an aging population. This trend is expected to continue with the rising cost of childcare and improved healthcare for seniors.

Douglas and Sarpy Counties are the youngest counties in the region by median age, which is 35.5 for both jurisdictions. The remaining counties in the MAPA region have a median age that ranges between 40 and 43.

The region remains concerned about “brain drain.” Young, college-educated adults 24-35 years old are leaving the area to find work. However, anecdotal evidence suggests some younger families are returning to the region via the “boomerang effect,” attracted by a stable job market, low cost of living, and perceived quality of life features such as schools, public safety, etc.

Figure 2.4: Age Distribution



Source: DP05 2013, 2018, 2023 ACS 5 YR Survey Demographic and Housing Estimate, U.S. Census Bureau

The region’s population aged 65 and older is 133,696, an increase of 43 percent from 2013. The baby-boomer generation has now entered largely into retirement years, resulting in older persons constituting a greater share of the total population, 17 percent of the MAPA region based on 2023 data. By 2050, persons older than 65 years of age will comprise at least 16 percent of the region’s population. As a result, a smaller percentage of the total future population will be in the workforce, even though all age ranges are expected to increase in population by 2050.

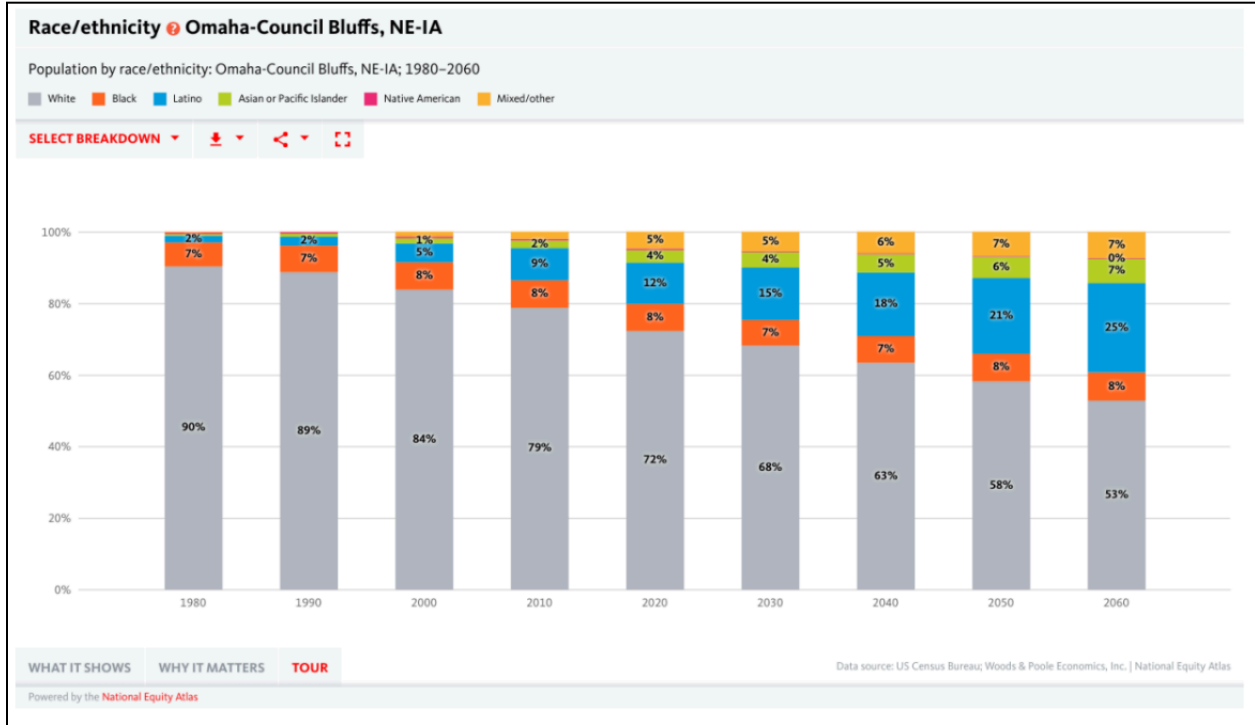
It has been observed that baby-boomers’ social and economic behaviors have departed from previous generations, maintaining a greater level of activity into their later years and often continuing to work, at least on a part-time basis. It is likely these changing behaviors and preferences will impact how communities accommodate the aging demographic in the coming years with regards to housing, service delivery, and transportation.

Race

The population of the MAPA region remains predominantly white but is experiencing a rapidly growing minority population. In the last five years the minority population almost doubled from 16 to 31 percent. Seventy-five percent of the minority population resides in Douglas County, concentrated primarily in urban Omaha. Much of the region’s growth in the minority population can be attributed to the region’s growing Hispanic-Latino population. Fourteen percent of the region’s residents now identify as Hispanic or Latino, three percentage points higher than in 2019. All MAPA counties have seen growth in their

Hispanic-Latino populations since the last decennial census. Figure 2.5 illustrates the MAPA region’s racial composition and its projected changes through 2050.

Figure 2.5: Future Projected Racial Composition, Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA

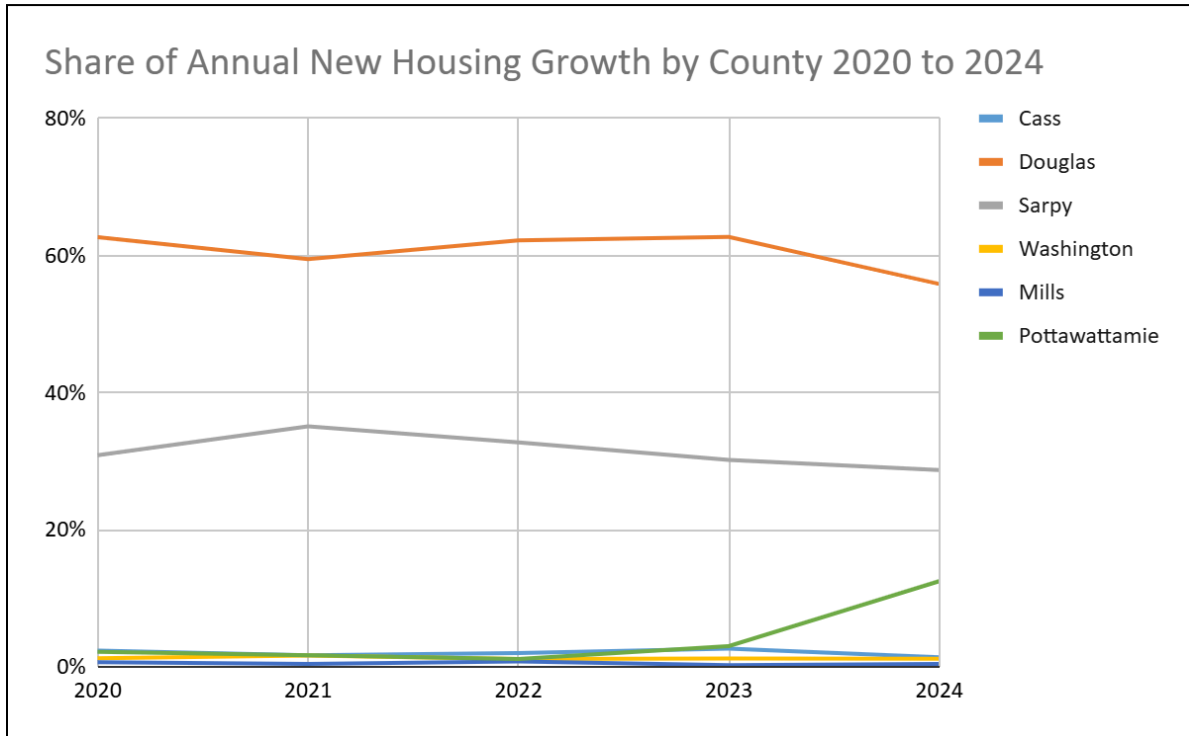


Source: US Census Bureau; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. | National Equity Atlas

Households and Housing

Single-family residential homes are the dominant housing type in the MAPA region. The early concentration of housing in the MAPA region’s urbanized area and incorporated cities has given way over time to lower-density, decentralized development. Land consumption for new development in the region is outpacing population growth. As the region’s largest county by population, Douglas County has been the center of housing activity in the MAPA region historically; however, Sarpy County has gradually accounted for a greater share of new housing over time. Figure 2.6 presents the share of housing growth by county since 2020.

Figure 2.6 Share of Annual New Housing Growth



Source: Greater Omaha Building Permits

Housing Affordability

Recent estimates show that 37 percent of renters and 18 percent of homeowners in the MAPA region spent more than one-third of their income on housing costs, making them housing cost burdened. Low housing supply and high interest rates are inflating rental prices and monthly mortgage costs. From 2018 to 2023, median monthly housing costs for housing units with a mortgage increased 21 percent in the MAPA region. Cass, Sarpy and Douglas Counties saw the greatest percent change in costs. Median gross rent for a two bedroom rental unit increased 26 percent in the region. Washington and Mills Counties saw the greatest percent change in rental unit costs. Sarpy County has both the highest median monthly housing costs for housing units with a mortgage and highest median gross rent.

Housing Availability

The MAPA region and the states of Nebraska and Iowa are currently facing housing shortages. A lack of ready to develop land and a limited construction workforce hamper new construction, especially in rural areas where large appraisal gaps exist. Complex zoning regulations that vary by county impede development and promote upscale single-family housing growth almost exclusively. There is a large demand for low- to moderate-income workforce housing that is not being met. Available housing stock is old and many units need repairs. The need for safe and affordable housing is growing.

In 2023, the MAPA region had a total of 390,571 housing units according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The Omaha Community Foundation’s 2021 Assessment of Housing Affordability, Needs and Priorities estimated the housing shortage for Omaha and Council Bluffs alone to be 17,000 for-sale and 8,000

rental units at market value and 4,500 for-sale and 5,500 rental units of affordable housing. The region will need 80,000 more units by 2040, 40 percent of which will need to be affordable housing, to accommodate projected population growth.

From 2018 to 2023 twenty-four thousand housing units were added to the housing supply. Sarpy County saw an eleven percent increase in housing units and Douglas County saw a seven percent increase in housing units. Sarpy County saw the largest increase in new housing units and only three percent of its units were built in 1939 or earlier. Mills County saw a slight reduction in housing units and thirty percent of its units were built in 1939 or earlier.

The MAPA region’s homeless population declined but the number of unsheltered homeless increased due to lack of general shelters and shelters able to accommodate families.

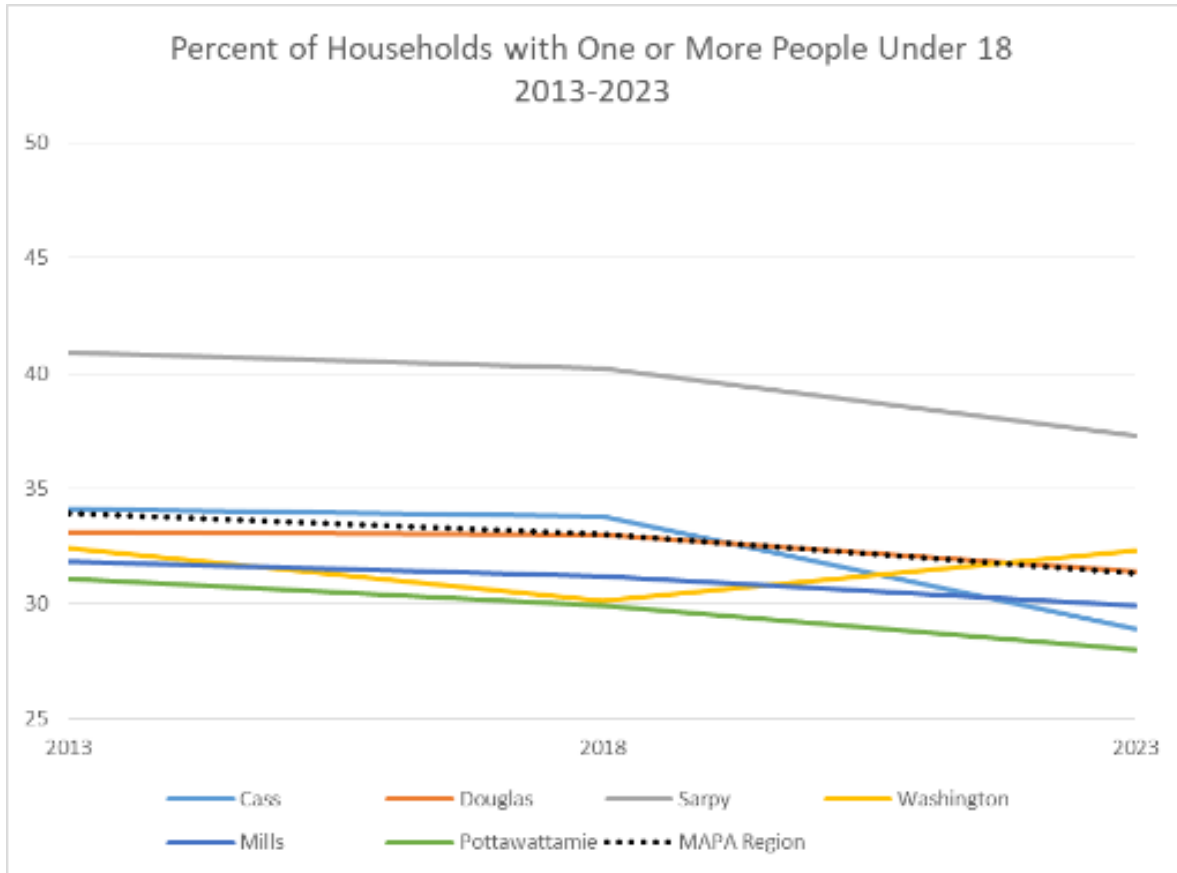
Sarpy County has the highest proportion of family households and the largest average household size in the MAPA region. By contrast, Douglas County has the lowest proportion of family households. Mills County has the largest average family size in the region. Both average household size and average family size of the MAPA region are slightly below the U.S. average. It is expected that both household and family size will decline over time, yet it is likely there will be continued growth in total number of households, especially in Douglas and Sarpy Counties. Future household growth is expected to consist of more householders and families with fewer children and dependents.

Table 2.2: Households by Type

| Jurisdiction | Total Households | % Family Households | % Non Family Households | Average Household Size | Average Family Size |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Cass | 10,561 | 70.5 | 29.5 | 2.53 | 3 |
| Douglas | 235,080 | 71.3 | 39.3 | 2.44 | 3.14 |
| Sarpy | 72,661 | 71.3 | 28.7 | 2.66 | 3.15 |
| Washington | 8,391 | 68.7 | 31.3 | 2.48 | 3.02 |
| Mills | 5,349 | 67.9 | 32.1 | 2.64 | 3.26 |
| Pottawattamie | 37,531 | 62.9 | 37.1 | 2.42 | 3.01 |
| MAPA Region | 369,573 | 63.6 | 36.4 | 2.53 | 3.1 |
| U.S. | 127,482,865 | 64.5 | 55.1 | 2.54 | 3.15 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimate, S1101 Households and Families

Figure 2.7: Percent of Households with People Under 18 Years of Age, 2010 and 2018



Source: S1101 Households and Families, 2023/2018/2013 ACS 5-Year Estimate, U.S. Census Bureau

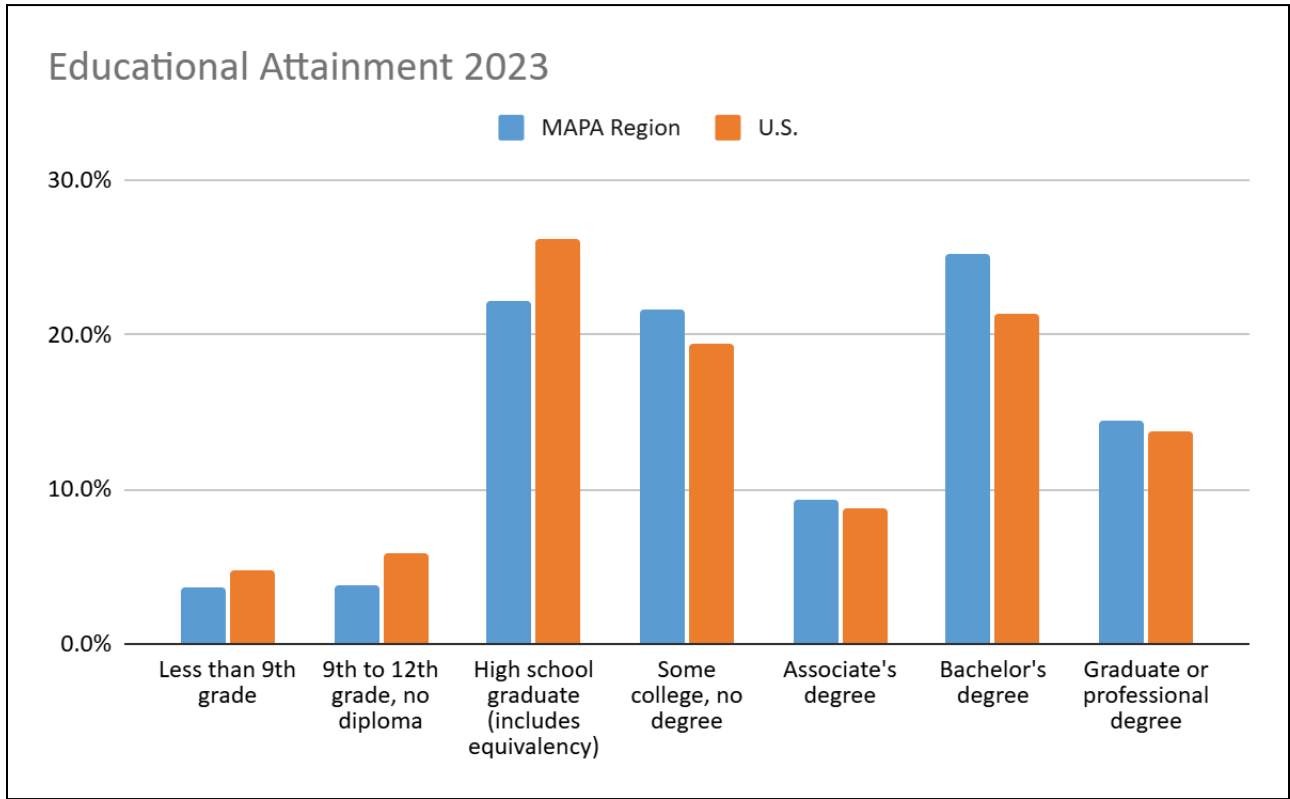
Education

An educated workforce is significant to the prosperity of a region’s economy, and an important aspect of regional competitiveness. Employers require access to a reliable and skilled workforce. For local governments, a well-trained and educated workforce is vital in attracting potential employers that may be looking for communities in which to invest.

There are 34 public school districts in the MAPA region, both urban and rural. The MAPA region is also home to a number of parochial schools and post-secondary institutions, which include Creighton University, the University of Nebraska Omaha, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the latter two being part of the University of Nebraska system.

In 2023 educational attainment levels for the MAPA region population 25 years and older were slightly higher than the overall U.S. Ninety-three percent attained at least a high school education or equivalent, higher than the national rate of 89 percent. The MAPA region’s proportion of the population with at least a bachelor’s degree, 25 percent, was also higher than the national rate of 21 percent. Figure 2.8 illustrates educational attainment in the MAPA region compared to the U.S.

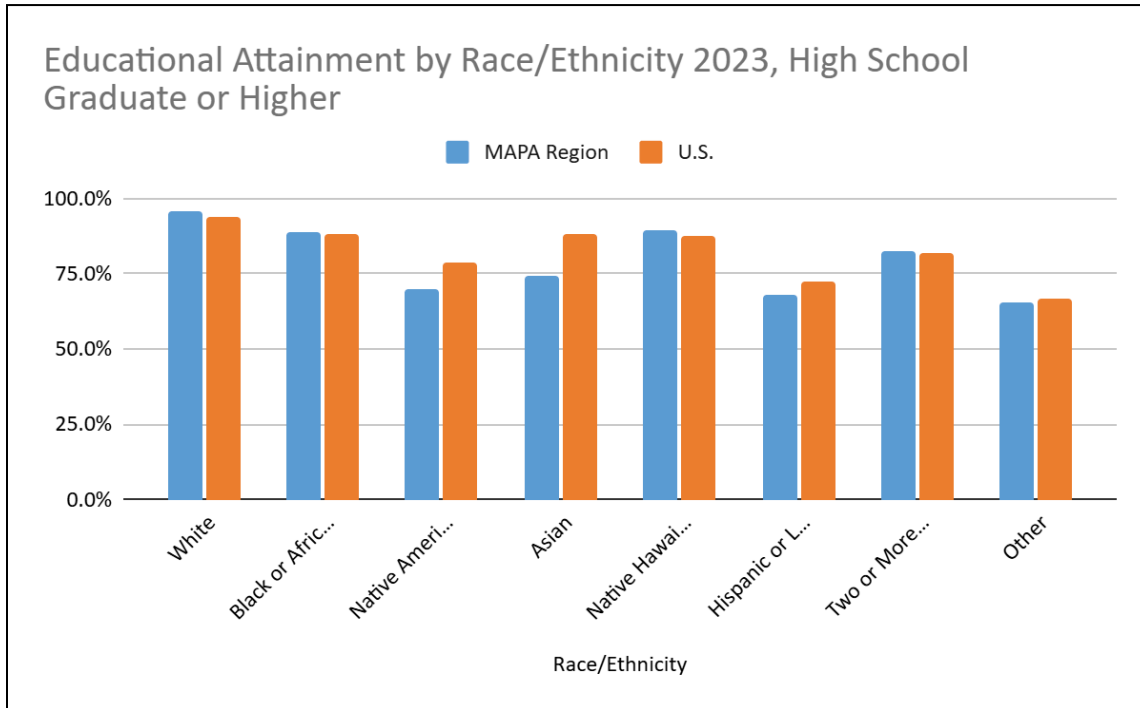
Figure 2.8: Educational Attainment



Source: United States Census Bureau, 2023: ACS 5-Year Estimates, S1501 Educational Attainment

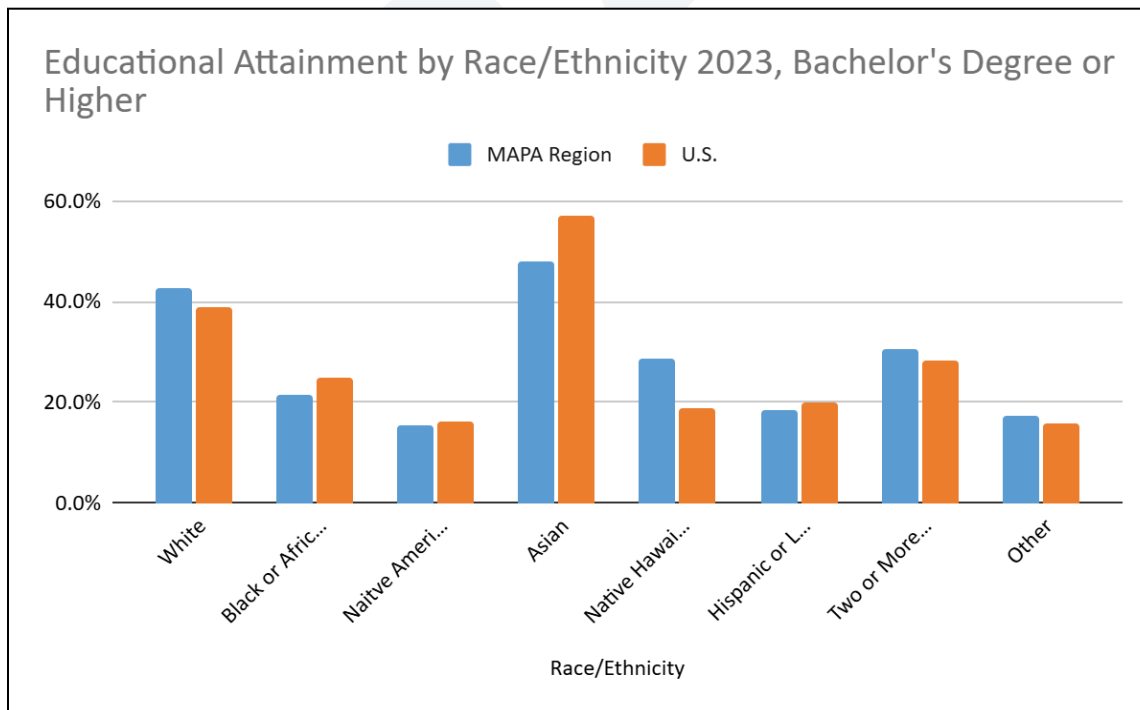
Levels of educational attainment in the MAPA region have been higher historically among whites. In 2023, almost 96 percent of the white population 25 years of age and older attained at least a high school education or higher compared to an average of 78 percent among minorities (not Hispanic or Latino) and only 68 percent among Hispanics and Latinos. Forty-three percent of whites had at least a bachelor’s degree compared to an average 27 percent of minorities (not Hispanic or Latino) and only 18.5 percent of Hispanics and Latinos.

Figure 2.9: Educational Attainment by Race, High School Graduate or Higher



Source: United States Census Bureau, 2023: ACS 5-Year Estimates

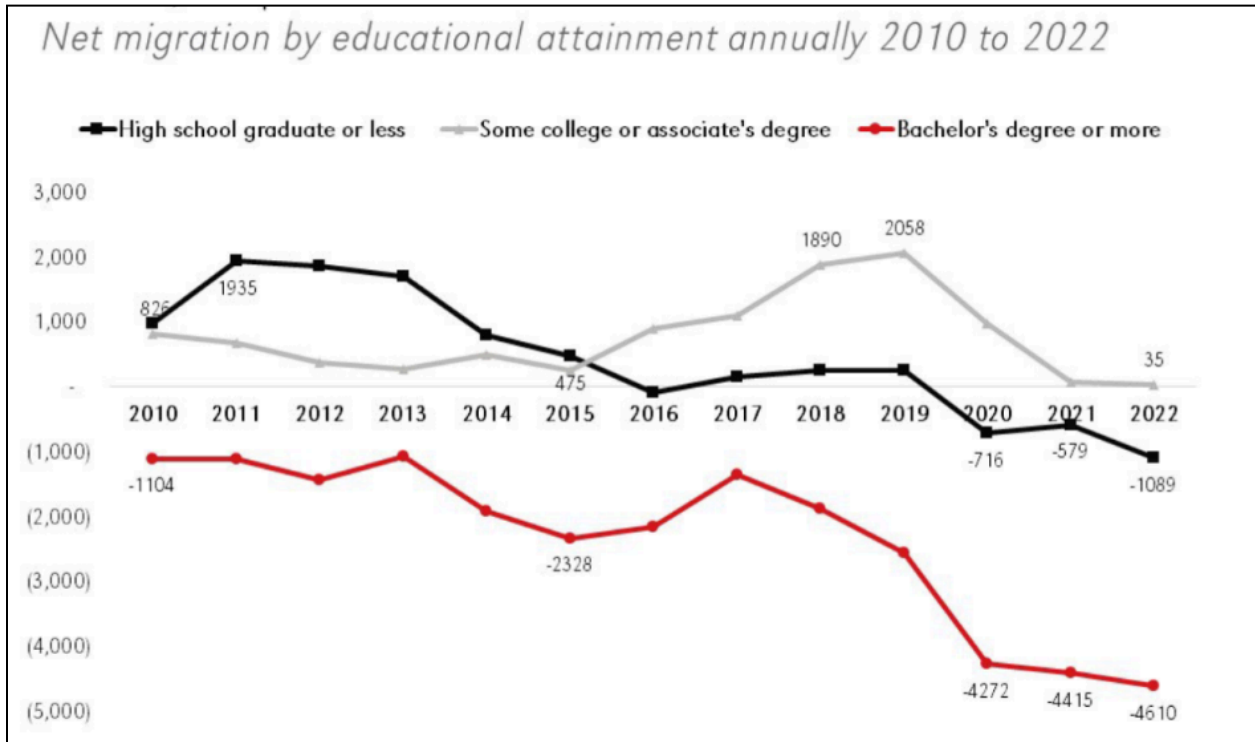
Figure 2.10: Educational Attainment by Race, Bachelor's Degree or Higher



Source: United States Census Bureau, 2023: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Between 2006 and 2010, the Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA lost more than four thousand residents with college degrees. This number is estimated to have doubled between 2011 and 2015. According to a survey conducted by the Greater Omaha Chamber and the University of Nebraska Omaha Center for Public Affairs Research, this loss of educated young residents is attributed to lack of mass transit systems, lack of affordable housing, lack of childcare and less competitive wages.

Figure 2.11: Domestic Net Migration, 2010-2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010-2022 5-Year Estimates. Prepared by UNO CPAR.

There is a strong correlation between education and income. Many of today's high paying jobs require an advanced degree and a knowledge-based skills set. The following chapter will examine income and other financial indicators of economic well-being, as well as circumstances with regards to social and economic equity throughout the MAPA region and among the region's minority and vulnerable populations.

3. ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Overview

Economic development is an important element in community planning. It is a tool used to foster job creation, increase wages, and expand the local tax base. This chapter examines the data and conditions useful in assessing the MAPA region’s economy. Factors discussed in this chapter include labor force characteristics, employment, wages and income, poverty, and cost of living.

Labor Force

Labor force is defined as the population of persons employed and those looking for and available to work. In 2024 there was an annual average of 490,268 people in the MAPA region’s labor force, an increase of almost 3 percent since 2019.

Table 3.1: MAPA Region Labor Force Summary (2024 Annual Averages)

| Jurisdiction | Labor Force | Employed | Unemployed | Unemployment Rate (%) |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Cass County | 13,756 | 13,361 | 395 | 2.8 |
| Douglas County | 308,981 | 299,533 | 9,448 | 3.1 |
| Sarpy County | 100,762 | 98,030 | 2,733 | 2.7 |
| Washington County | 11,536 | 11,255 | 281 | 2.5 |
| Mills County | 7,222 | 6,993 | 229 | 3.2 |
| Pottawattamie County | 48,011 | 46,602 | 1,409 | 3.1 |
| MAPA Region | 490,268 | 475,774 | 14,495 | 2.9 |

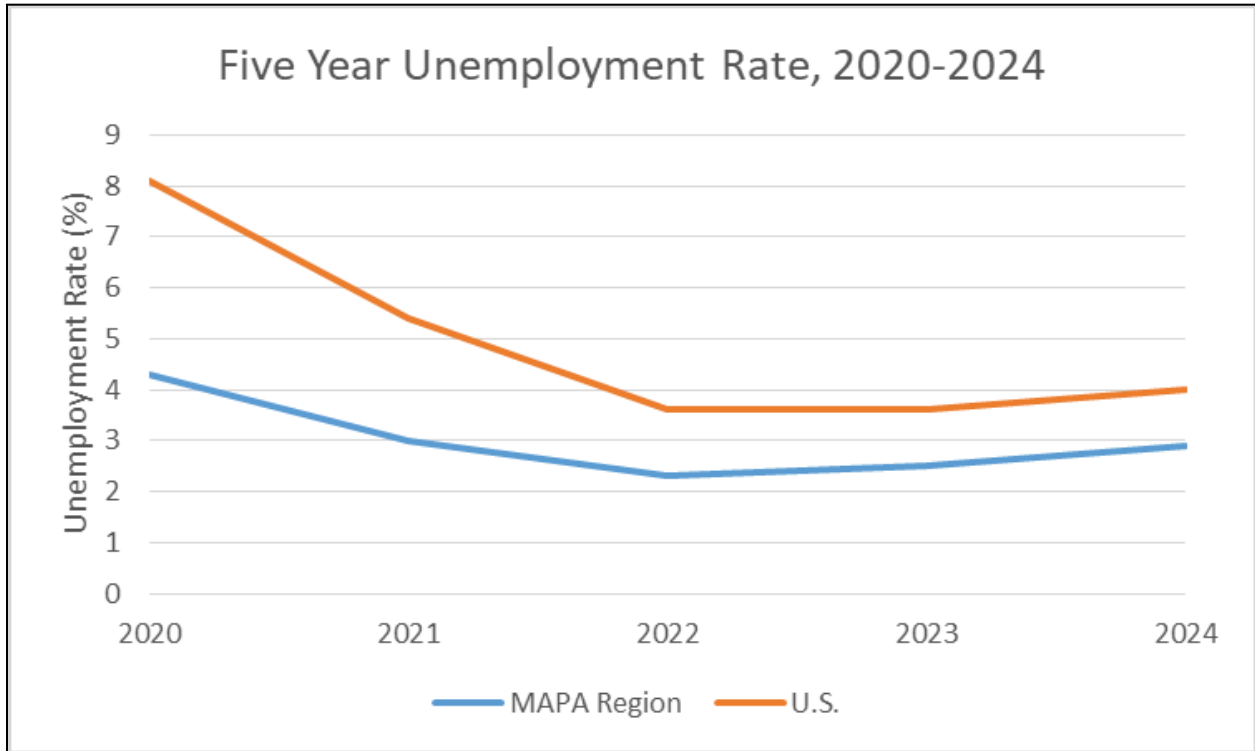
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Historically, the MAPA region has maintained an unemployment rate below the national average. Even in the years following the economic recession that began in 2008, unemployment in the Omaha-Council Bluffs area was at times half that of the U.S. Jobs were shed during the recession years but overall the MAPA region’s economy has demonstrated resilience and an ability to weather economic turmoil well.

The average unemployment rate in the MAPA region in 2024 was 2.9 percent, less than the national unemployment rate of 4 percent. Mainstream economists have identified 4.0 percent as an acceptable rate of unemployment generally. Cass, Sarpy, Pottawattamie and Washington Counties had rates just below three percent and Mills, Pottawattamie and Douglas Counties had rates just above three percent. These low unemployment rates are indicative of the region’s labor shortage. Job vacancies remain high.

This is challenging public and private sector efforts to attract and expand business. Figure 3.1 compares the MAPA region’s average annual unemployment rate to the U.S. over a five-year period.

Figure 3.1: Five-Year Unemployment Rate, 2020 to 2024



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics; FRED St. Louis Fed

Industry Clusters and Employers

The economy of the MAPA region is diversified, thanks largely to regional assets that include centralized location, availability and cost of energy, high labor force participation, and affordable cost of living. Much of the labor activity and production output in the MAPA region can be associated with the following industry clusters:

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Agribusiness | Located in two Midwestern states, the Omaha-Council Bluffs region is a significant agriculture and value-added agriculture hub. Agribusiness companies located in the MAPA region include Cargill, ConAgra Brands, Gaviion, Novozymes, Omaha Steaks, Scoular, Syngenta, Tyson, and Valmont Industries, among others. |
| Finance and Insurance | Four of the region’s top 10 major employers are anchored in the finance and insurance industry. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the finance and insurance industry represented 17 percent (\$13 billion) of the Omaha-Council Bluffs region’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) output in 2023. |
| Health Care | CHI Health, Nebraska Medicine, and Methodist Health System each employ at least 5,000 workers in the region. The University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in Omaha is Nebraska’s public medical and research university – UNMC and its teaching hospital partner Nebraska Medicine have an annual economic impact of \$4.5 billion on Nebraska according to an independent study. |
| Logistics | Major U.S. markets that can be reached in a day’s drive from the MAPA region include Chicago, Denver, Kansas City, Minneapolis, and St. Louis. Other markets on both U.S. coasts and Canada and Mexico can be reached in two to three days via interstate and rail. The region’s centralized location is advantageous to transportation and distribution firms like Union Pacific and Werner Global Logistics, both headquartered in Omaha. |
| National Defense | Offutt Air Force Base, which is the largest employer in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region, houses U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM) and the 55th Wing of the U.S. Air Force. The military presence in the region has attracted defense contractors such as Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin. There are approximately 10,000 military and civilian personnel working at Offutt and roughly 4,400 secondary jobs attributed to the base’s operation according to the Greater Omaha Chamber. |

Omaha is the corporate headquarters to four companies listed on the Fortune 500, which is an annual list compiled by Fortune magazine that ranks the nation’s largest 500 corporations by total revenue. Omaha’s Fortune 500 companies include Berkshire Hathaway, Mutual of Omaha, Kiewit Corporation, and Union Pacific. Three corporations listed on the Fortune 1000 are headquartered or maintain significant operations in Omaha – these include, Valmont Industries, First National Bank of Nebraska and Werner Enterprises.

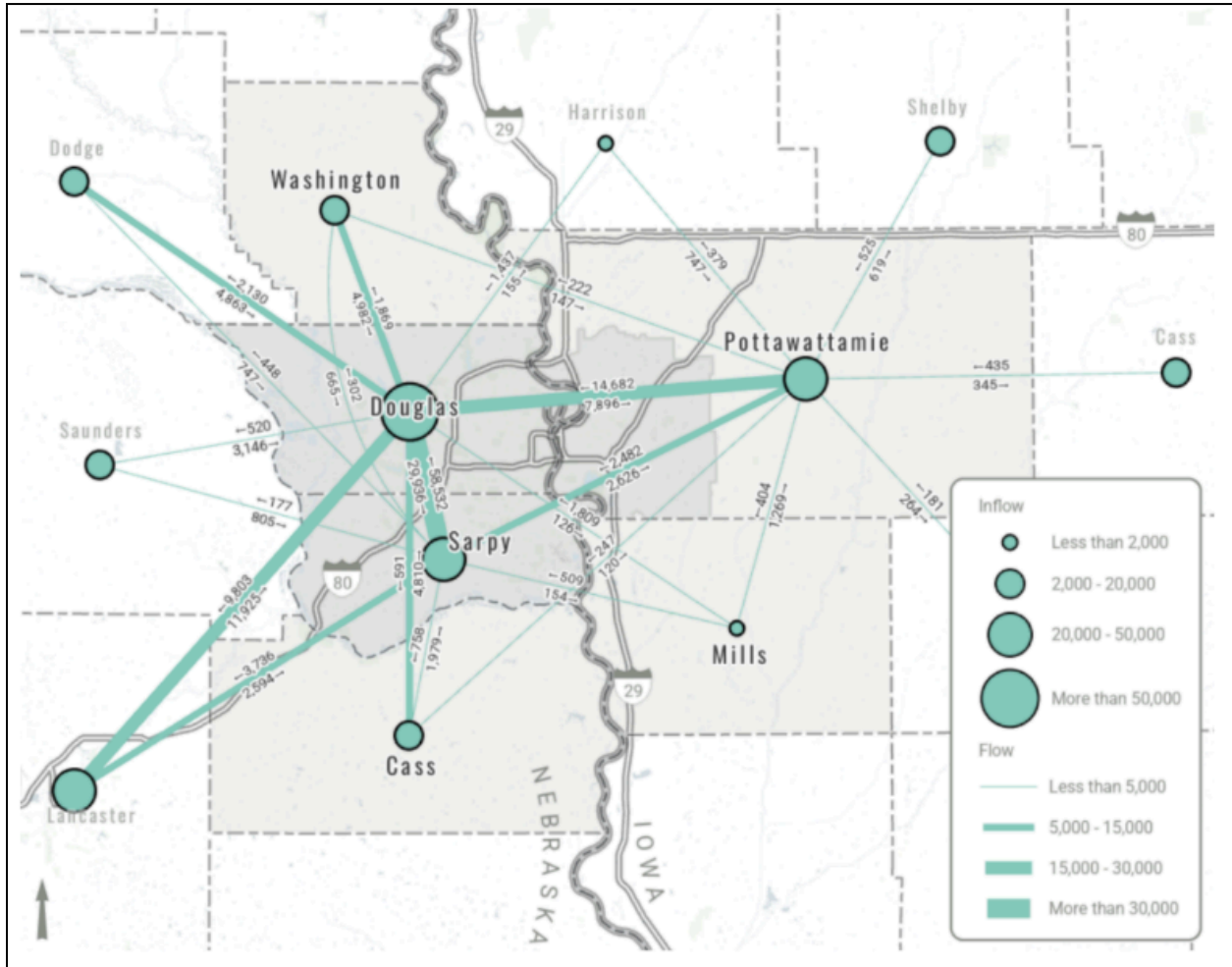
The industry clusters referenced are frequent among the major employers of the Omaha-Council Bluffs region. Table 3.2 lists the top 25 major employers with a workforce of at least 1,000 employees. The majority of major employers in the MAPA region are based in Omaha or urban Pottawattamie and Sarpy Counties. Figure 3.2 illustrates the county-to-county commuter flows for the MAPA region. Douglas County represents the largest share of jobs in the region and has the largest in-flows of commuters on a daily basis.

Table 3.2: Omaha-Council Bluffs Major Employers in 2025

| Company | Number of Employees | Industry |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Offutt Air Force Base | 5,000 and over | Public Administration |
| Nebraska Medicine | 5,000 and over | Health Care and Social Assistance |
| CHI | 5,000 and over | Health Care and Social Assistance |
| Methodist Health System | 5,000 and over | Health Care and Social Assistance |
| First National Bank | 2,500 to 4,999 | Finance and Insurance |
| Mutual of Omaha | 2,500 to 4,999 | Finance and Insurance |
| Fiserv | 2,500 to 4,999 | Information |
| Union Pacific Railroad | 2,500 to 4,999 | Transportation and Warehousing |
| Children's Hospital | 2,500 to 4,999 | Health Care and Social Assistance |
| Valmont Industries | 1,000 to 2,499 | Manufacturing |
| Charles Schwab | 1,000 to 2,499 | Finance and Insurance |
| PayPal | 1,000 to 2,499 | Finance and Insurance |
| Tyson Foods, Inc. | 1,000 to 2,499 | Manufacturing |
| ConAgra | 1,000 to 2,499 | Manufacturing |
| Nebraska Furniture Mart | 1,000 to 2,499 | Retail Trade |
| Creighton University | 1,000 to 2,499 | Educational Services |
| Boys Town | 1,000 to 2,499 | Health Care and Social Assistance |
| Lincoln Premium Poultry | 1,000 to 2,499 | Manufacturing |
| Kiewit Corp. | 1,000 to 2,499 | Construction |
| Horseshoe Casino Council Bluffs | 1,000 to 2,499 | Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation |
| Greater Omaha Packing Co. | 1,000 to 2,499 | Manufacturing |
| Omaha Steaks | 1,000 to 2,499 | Retail Trade |
| Physicians Mutual Insurance Co. | 1,000 to 2,499 | Finance and Insurance |
| Werner Enterprises Inc. | 1,000 to 2,499 | Transportation and Warehousing |
| WholeStone Farms | 1,000 to 2,499 | Manufacturing |

Source: Greater Omaha Chamber

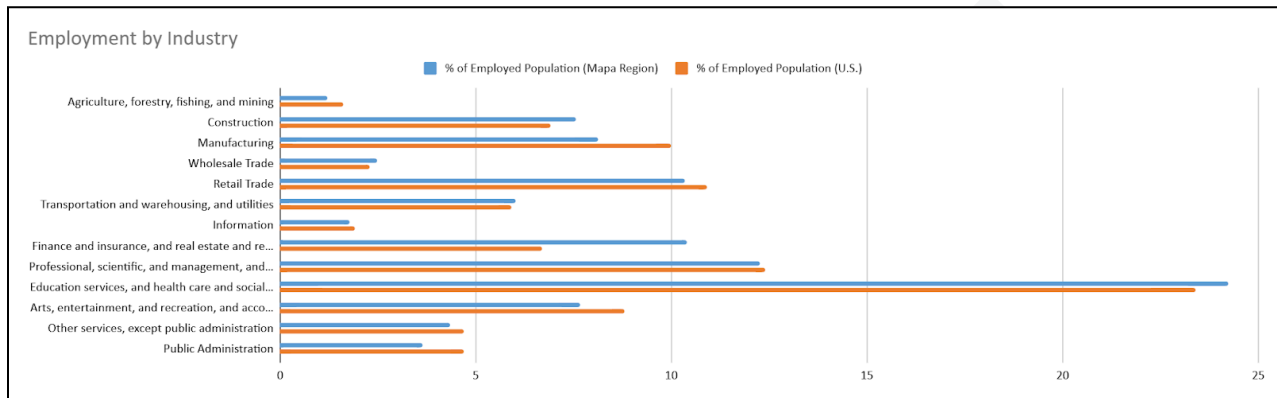
Figure 3.2: County-to-County Commuting Flows, Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA



Source: MAPA GIS

Employment distribution across industries in the MAPA region is similar to the U.S.. However, the MAPA region employs a higher percentage of workers in financial activities: 10.4 percent compared to 6.7 percent overall in the U.S. It also employs a lower percentage of workers in manufacturing: 8.1 percent compared to 10 percent overall in the U.S. The largest industry employment share in the region is 24 percent in education services, health care, and social assistance. Figure 3.3 shows employment distribution by industry in the MAPA region compared to the U.S.

Figure 3.3: Employment by Industry (Ages 16+)



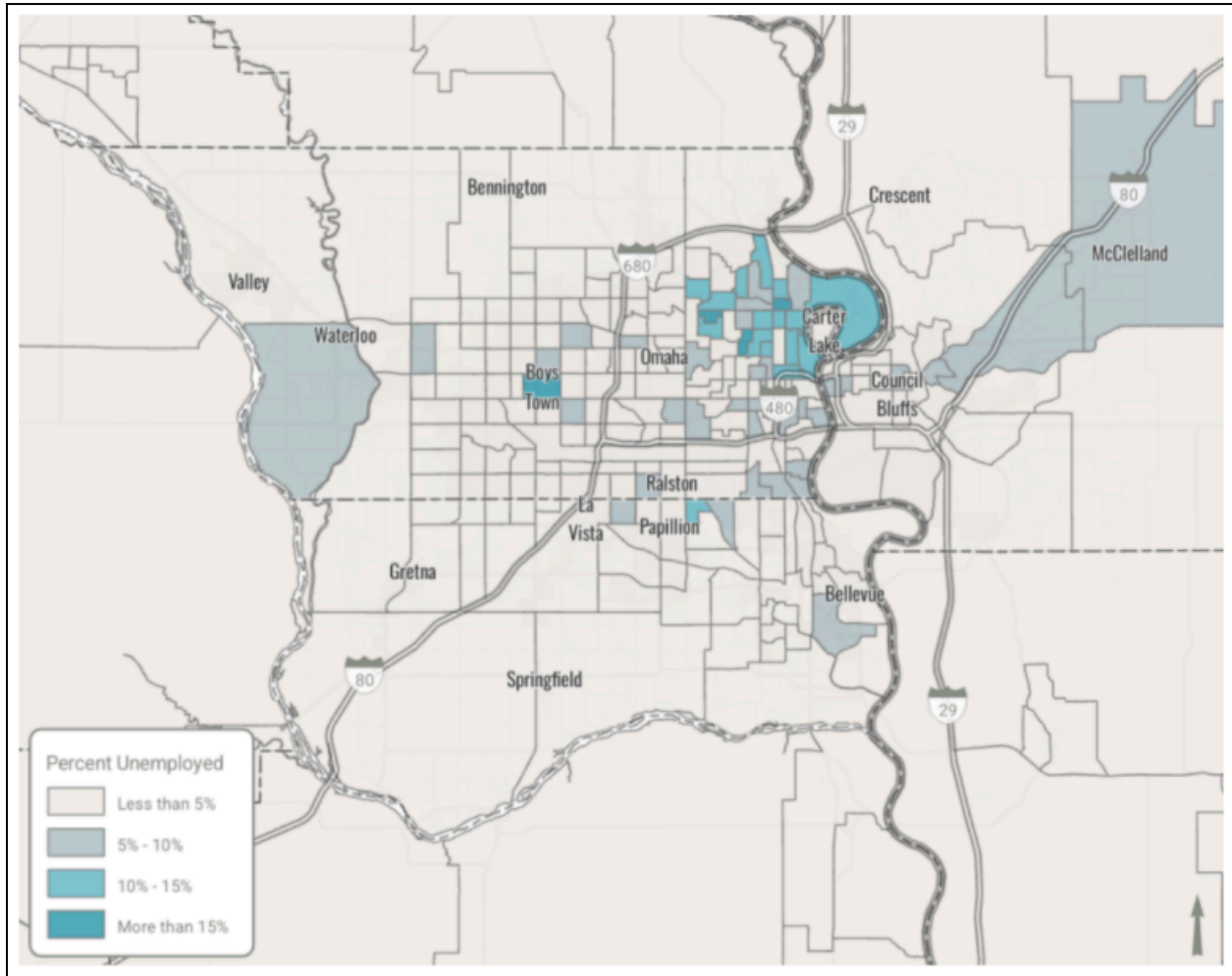
Source: United States Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, C24050

Underemployment and Labor Availability

Low unemployment has been a positive attribute mostly of the MAPA region, but the prevalence of underemployment has been prominent. Many people either lack the skills for higher-paying jobs or have the skills or degree necessary but cannot find a job within their desired career path. The Prosper 2.0 initiative by the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce has made underemployment a key priority in business development within the region. Prioritized initiatives to alleviate the existence of underemployment include skills training, continuing education, and recruitment of new businesses to the region.

Challenges to finding employment are very common in certain areas of the region even during periods of economic growth, most notably North Omaha, South Omaha, and in an area west of downtown Council Bluffs. While the region’s unemployment is normally low and stable, particular census tracts have rates of unemployment more than 15 percent. Figure 3.4 illustrates the distribution of unemployment in the urbanized portion of the MAPA region in 2023. Certain socio economic hurdles exist for persons living in these neighborhoods, many of which do not have reliable transportation to commute to work, or cannot find employment opportunities within the existing transit service area. These barriers have been identified in numerous planning efforts, including MAPA’s **Fair Housing Equity Assessment**, the **Equitable Growth Profile**, and the regional **Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing** efforts among the cities of Omaha, Bellevue, and Council Bluffs.

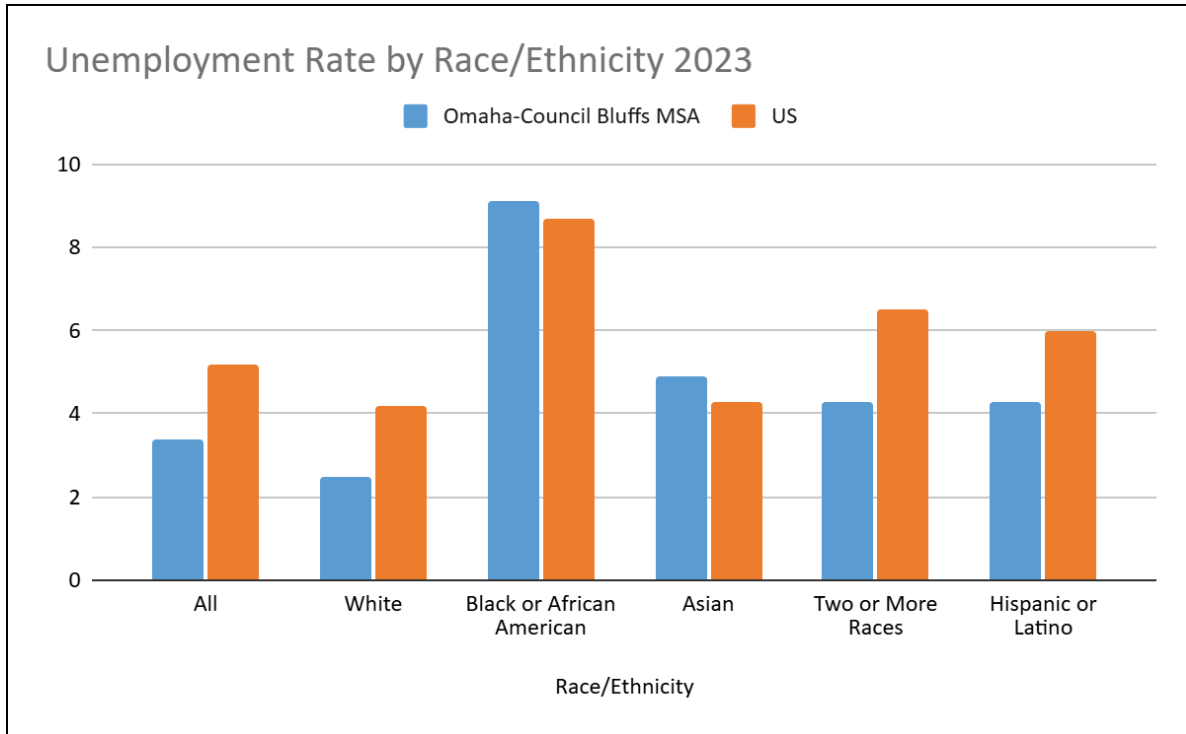
Figure 3.4: Distribution of Unemployment in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Urban Area



Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023 5-Year Estimate

Racial inequities in employment persist in the MAPA region. Total unemployment and unemployment among Whites in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area are below the national average. Unemployment rates for minorities decreased from 2019 to 2023, however, unemployment for African Americans (9.1 percent) and Asians (4.9 percent) remains above the national average.

Figure 3.5: Unemployment Rate by Race/Ethnicity, Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA (2023)



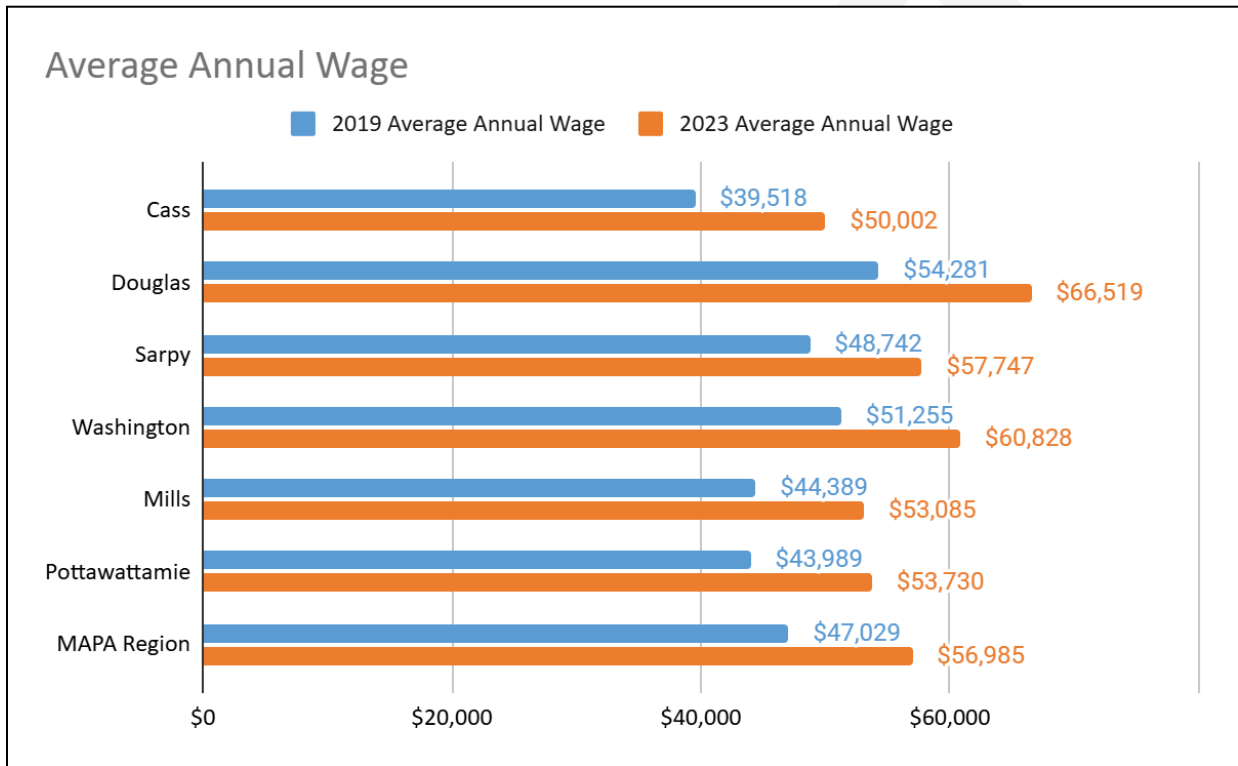
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 ACS 5 Year Estimates S2301 Employment Status

The top three industries reporting the highest percentage of occupations with hiring difficulty in 2022 were construction, accommodation and food services, and health care and social assistance. The most commonly reported reasons for hiring difficulties are not enough applicants, wage demands too high, and lack of work experience.

Employment and Wage Growth

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the total number of employed persons in the MAPA region grew at a rate of 1.2 percent from 2019 to 2023, down from 3.4 percent the previous five years. By comparison, the number of employed persons in the U.S. increased by 2.2 percent from 2019 to 2023, down from 6.4 the previous five years. The average annual wage in the MAPA region in 2023 was \$56,985, an increase of 21.2 percent from 2019. The region’s wages have been behind those in the U.S. In 2023, the average annual wage in the MAPA region was 86 percent of the U.S. This is balanced somewhat by a higher purchasing power due to a relatively low cost of living.

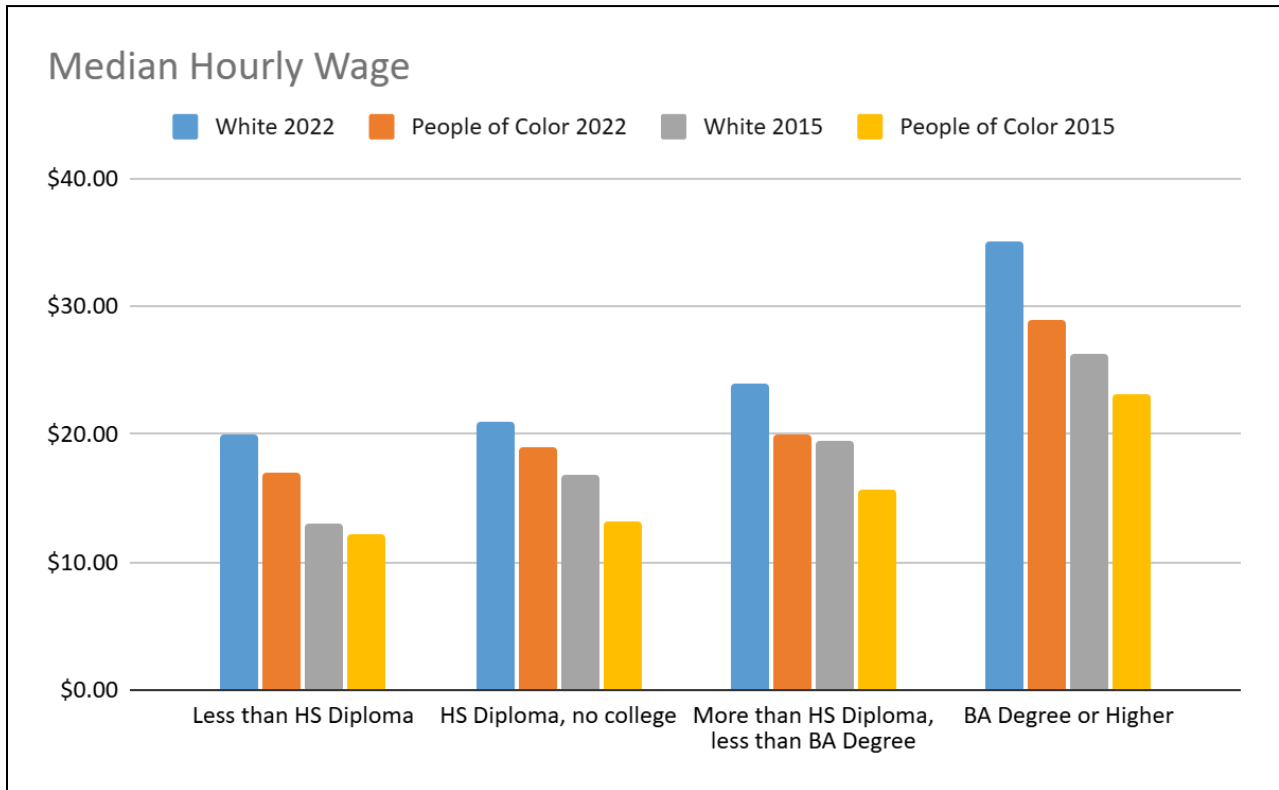
Figure 3.6: Change in Average Annual Wage



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Racial gaps remain even among workers with similar education levels. People of color with a bachelor’s degree or higher earn \$3.00 less per hour than their white counterparts. This results in a yearly salary gap of \$6,000. The fact that racial economic gaps remain, even after controlling for education, reveals the persistence of racial barriers to economic opportunity, including forms of exclusion, that are embedded in regional institutions and systems.

Figure 3.7 Change in Median Hourly Wage by Race and Educational Attainment



Source: National Equity Atlas

Personal Income

Per capita income is a common indicator used typically by local governments to measure the economic well-being of its population. Per capita income consists of the sum of amounts reported separately for wages or salary income, interest, dividends, social security and retirement income, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), public assistance or welfare payments, and other income types. Per capita income is tracked by the Census Bureau.

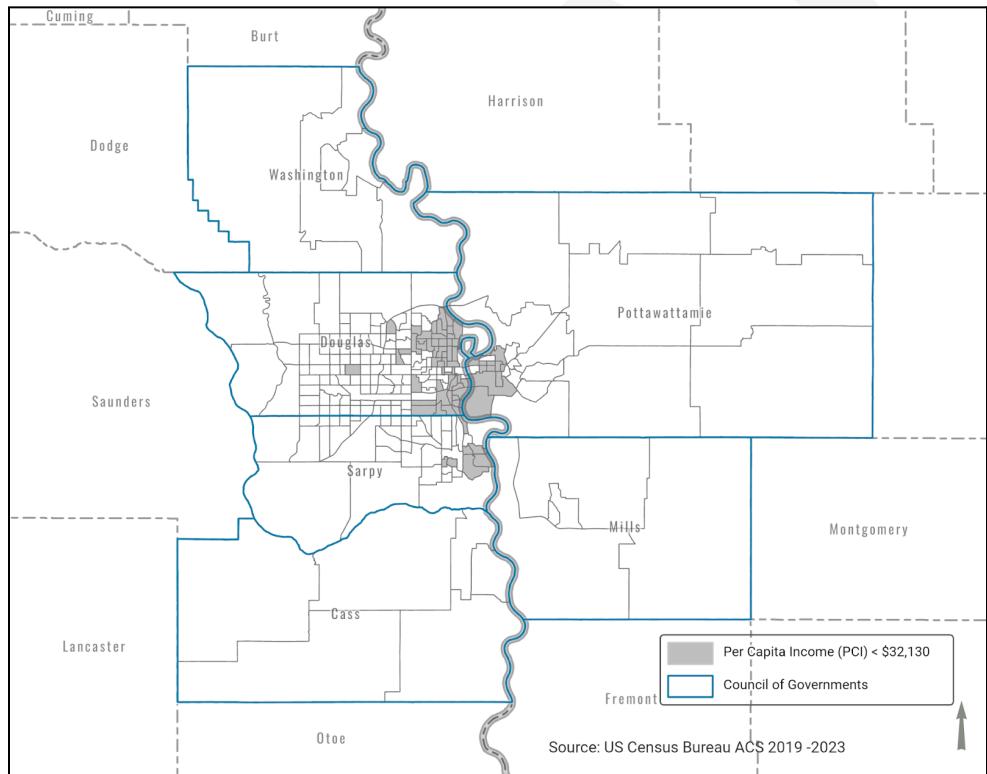
As of 2023, the per capita income of the MAPA region is \$43,409, which is 100.3 percent of the U.S. per capita income. Table 3.3 shows no single county in the MAPA region had a per capita income at or below 80 percent of the U.S., an eligibility criteria for certain EDA grant programs. However, similar to unemployment, there are specific census tracts in the MAPA region – concentrated in parts of Omaha, Bellevue and Council Bluffs – whose residents have much lower per capita income than county, state, and national averages (Figure 3.8).

Table 3.3: Per Capita Income by Jurisdiction

| Jurisdiction | 2023 Per Capita Income | % of U.S. Per Capita Income |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cass | \$43,087 | 99.5 |
| Douglas | \$45,178 | 104.4 |
| Sarpy | \$46,140 | 106.6 |
| Washington | \$46,114 | 106.5 |
| Mills | \$43,081 | 99.5 |
| Pottawattamie | \$36,853 | 85.1 |
| MAPA Region | \$43,409 | 100.3 |
| U.S. | \$43,289 | 100 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5 Year Estimates, DP03 Selected Economic Characteristics

Figure 3.8: Per Capita Income by Census Tract in the MAPA Region

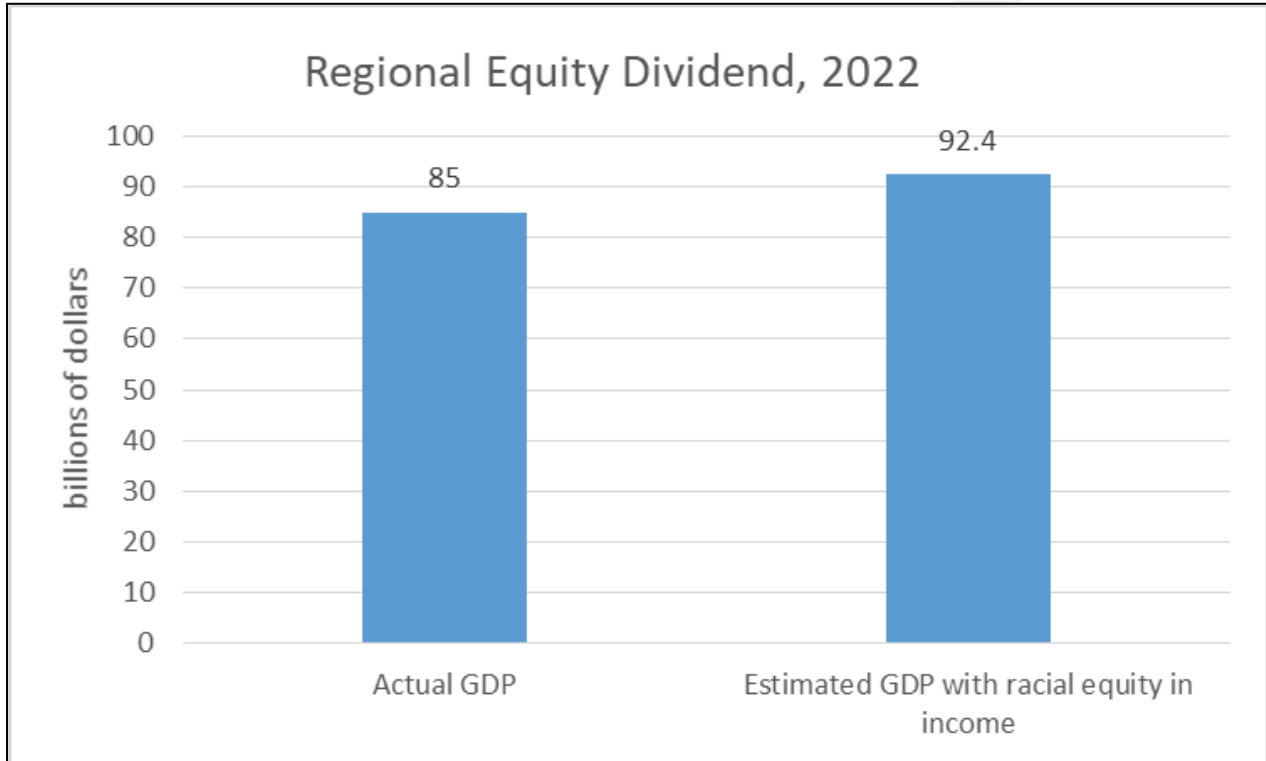


Source: MAPA GIS

Income Disparities

The region’s inequality and racial gaps in income, wages, education, and poverty hinder not only communities of color, but also the region’s economic growth and prosperity as a whole. According to MAPA’s analysis, racial disparities in income led to a \$7.4 billion loss in the region’s GDP, shown in Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9: Equitable Growth Profile, Regional Equity Dividend



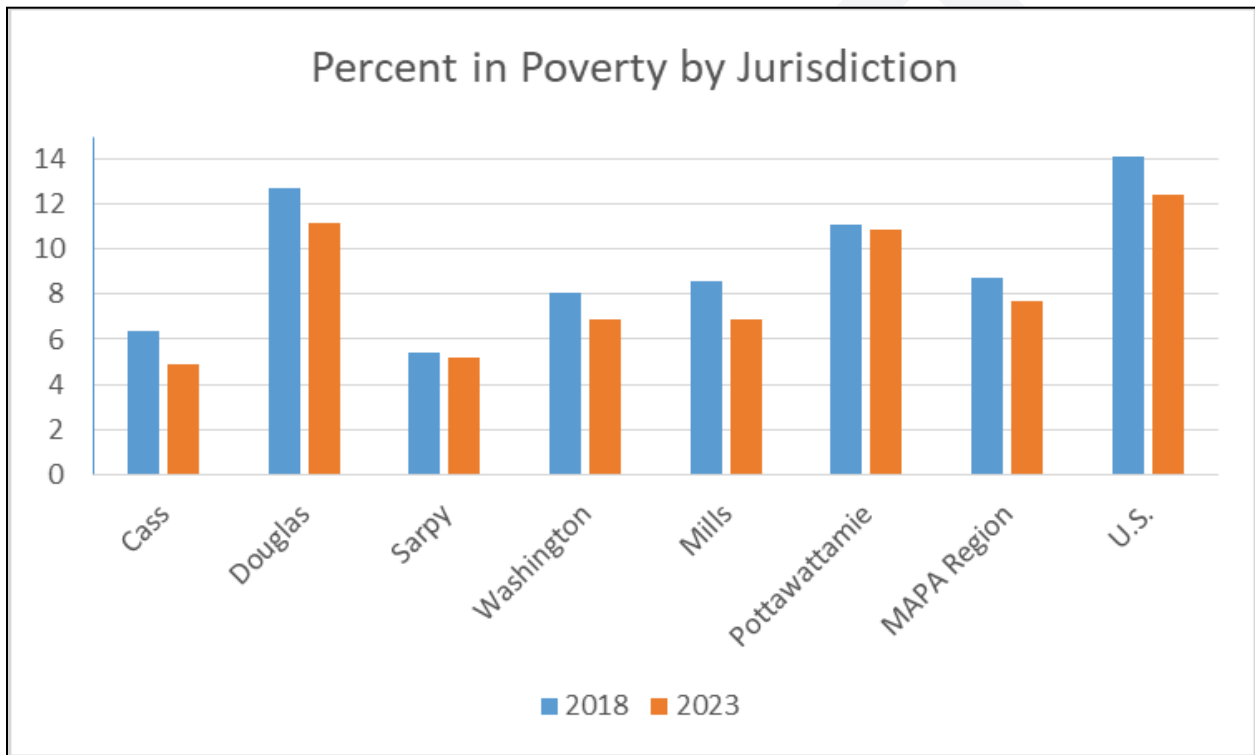
Source: *National Equity Atlas, Racial Equity in Income, Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA*

An inclusive, growing middle class is the hallmark of a prosperous region, but, following the national trends, fewer households earn middle-class incomes in Omaha-Council Bluffs now than in 1979 (40 percent in 1979 vs. 37 percent in 2015), while an increasing share of households are in the lower-income bracket (30 percent in 1979 vs. 36 percent in 2015). Middle-wage jobs, which have provided pathways traditionally to the middle class, are growing at a much higher rate in the region (16 percent) than the U.S. overall (6 percent). The manufacturing sector; however, which provided many good, middle-skill jobs traditionally for people without college degrees, has seen a decline in jobs since 2006, which, fortunately, has not been as severe as in most other regions. Although middle-wage jobs are growing, earnings growth for those in these jobs is slower than for those in high- and low-wage jobs. The middle class also has become more diverse, shifting from 8 percent people of color in 1979 to 15 percent people of color today, yet its composition still does not reflect the region’s racial and ethnic diversity fully.

Poverty

Figure 3.10 shows the region’s poverty rate decreased from 8.7 to 7.7 percent from 2018 to 2023. Douglas and Pottawattamie counties maintained poverty rates higher than the regional rate, but lower than the national rate. However, the Omaha Human Rights and Relations department says the current 2025 Omaha poverty rate is the highest it has been in 10 years. In response, the Omaha City Council passed the Poverty Elimination Action Plan which aims to reduce poverty over the next 5 years. This plan includes initiatives to increase support for Omaha Public Schools, the micro transit pilot program, a minimum wage increase and small business programs and inclusive hiring initiatives.

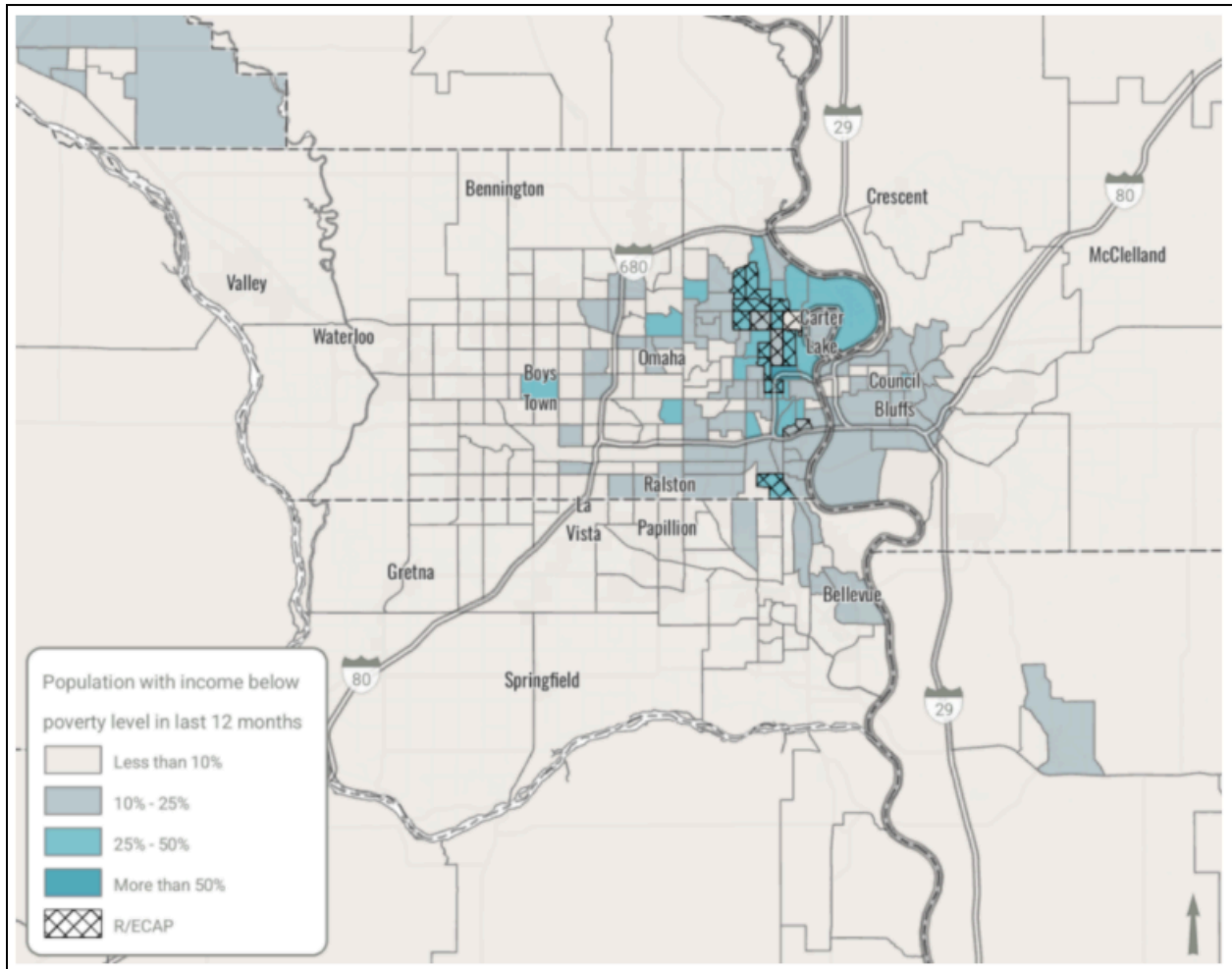
Figure 3.10: Percent in Poverty by Jurisdiction



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2023 and 2018 5 Year Estimates, S1701 Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months

There are an estimated 72,028 people living at or below the poverty line, representing approximately 8.7 percent of the population. The highest concentrations of these low-income individuals are found in northeastern Omaha. Figure 3.11 illustrates HUD’s Poverty Index, which captures the depth and intensity of poverty in a given neighborhood. The index uses both family poverty rates and public assistance receipts, in the form of cash-welfare, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). For populations in poverty in Omaha, access to job centers is a critical need. The area of northeast Omaha that has the highest concentration of poverty is very well served by transit at present. Additionally, high poverty areas of south Omaha and Council Bluffs have low to moderate levels of transit accessibility, limiting the access that residents have in those areas to jobs and educational opportunities.

Figure 3.11: HUD Poverty Index, Omaha-Council Bluffs Urban Area



Source: HUD Poverty Index

Cost of Living

Earnings and personal income are tied closely to the ability of people to pay for essential needs such as housing and transportation. The Midwest region of the U.S. is often known for its affordable cost of living. While this generally remains true in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region, some areas remain unaffordable for persons to live, especially if immobility requires them to live near where they work. As the urban areas of Omaha and Council Bluffs redevelop, concerns of gentrification and forced relocation due to housing costs are a major concern. Table 3.4 shows the 2024 cost of living index for the eight-county MSA and select metropolitan areas in proximity to Omaha-Council Bluffs.

Table 3.4: Cost of Living Comparison, Omaha-Council Bluffs and Select MSAs 2024

| | Omaha-Council Bluffs NE-IA | Des Moines-West Des Moines IA | Kansas City MO-KS | Oklahoma City |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Overall Cost of Living Index | 91.9 | 85.8 | 91.1 | 89.6 |
| Grocery Items | 99 | 99.6 | 97.3 | 95.4 |
| Housing | 82.4 | 66.1 | 87.5 | 80.3 |
| Utilities | 84.3 | 81 | 105.8 | 87.5 |
| Transportation | 94.2 | 93 | 89.1 | 91.4 |
| Health Care | 94.2 | 87.4 | 84 | 89.5 |
| Miscellaneous Goods and Services | 97.6 | 95 | 89.2 | 94.8 |

* The average index for all participating U.S. locations is 100. An index below 100 signifies lower than average relative prices.

Source: C2ER Cost of Living Index, Section 1 Index, 2024 Annual Average Data, Published January 2025

4.REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

Overview

Based on the current data and trends assessed in Chapters 2 and 3, a number of assumptions can be drawn concerning the overall economic and social welfare of the MAPA region. However, data alone are not sufficient to capture a well-rounded assessment. MAPA solicited input from its member communities and stakeholders to collect qualitative information in order to validate and supplement the quantitative findings.

MAPA distributed a community and economic development survey to the region’s municipal jurisdictions, community-based organizations, and economic development organizations. MAPA staff also facilitated focus groups and conducted interviews with economic developers and stakeholders in an effort to seek out anecdotal views and attitudes regarding the current state and future outlook of the region.

Stakeholder Survey and Engagement

An online survey was distributed to local governments, community organizations, and economic development groups within the MAPA region’s six counties. The survey asked 23 questions relevant to local economic development and community planning. One set of questions asked responders to identify perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (also known as a “SWOT” analysis) concerning their communities and the greater region. The following responses do not represent every individual submission. Instead, responses have been condensed into general themes for the purposes of reducing redundancy and limiting misinterpretation.

Community Strengths

- Location—centralized; urban, suburban and rural livability; access to urban and rural amenities
- High labor force participation and low unemployment
- Affordable cost of living
- Low cost of doing business
- Supportive business environment
- Quality of life amenities (e.g., parks and green space, arts and culture, and public safety)
- Strong sense of community among residents
- Quality school districts and post-secondary institutions
- Steady population growth
- Philanthropy and culture of giving
- Resilient people and economy
- Collaborative regional approach to economic development (e.g. Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership)

Community Weaknesses

- Slow population growth
- Labor deficit/shortage—subsequent lagging job growth
- Low wages relative to peer regions
- Aging infrastructure/limited capacity to support current needs and future growth
- Limited public transportation options
- Cost to acquire land and build new housing
- Lack of housing supply at different price points
- Lack of variety in housing types for different demographics
- Declining condition of housing in underinvested neighborhoods and communities
- Limited capacity to enforce local ordinances (e.g. public nuisances, dilapidated buildings)
- Rural population decline—subsequent decrease in local tax revenue needed to support services and utilities
- Rural downtown/Main Street vacancy and dilapidation
- Location—local rural economies must compete with urban Omaha-Council Bluffs
- Lack of local and state incentives to support business attraction and growth
- Barriers to inclusion of underrepresented groups in civic participation and decision making

Community Opportunities

- Continued investments in transportation infrastructure and regional trails
- Planning and implementation of transit-oriented development
- Rehabilitation of rural downtown commercial districts to retain and attract businesses and entrepreneurs
- Adaptive reuse of buildings, facilities, or spaces that have lost function (e.g. schools closed due to population decline and district consolidation)
- Families relocating or returning to the region
- Strategic partnership and support to anchor institutions such as UNMC and Offutt Air Force Base
- Enhanced marketing and promotion of the region's arts and culture amenities
- Labor force work ethic
- Educational institutions equipped to produce skilled talent in growing industries
- Training and capacity building for newly elected officials

Community Threats

- Factors contributing to “brain drain” (e.g. attainable housing, transportation, economic mobility, childcare access, etc.)
- “Not in my backyard” (NIMBY) mentality
- Increasing political division
- Uncertainty regarding federal investment priorities and discretionary grant programs
- Growing frequency and severity of hazardous weather events
- Widening wealth gap and declining middle class
- Home ownership attainability (due to cost and supply)
- Shortage of individuals able or willing to volunteer for public service
- Limited capacity and resources available to newly elected and appointed officials
- Rising costs of building materials and consumer goods and services
- Finding or maintaining community identity in the face of changing socioeconomic dynamics

The survey also asked communities to identify their top areas they consider a hindrance to economic development and growth. Infrastructure development (e.g., water, sewer, roads, etc.) received the highest number of selections. Childcare gaps ranked second and transportation gaps and vacant and/or dilapidated buildings tied for third. Other topics that were highlighted included: broadband limitations, inadequate workforce readiness, declining local tax revenue, lack of social and recreational amenities, and zoning and land use complexities. Communities cited the following infrastructure investments as necessary to expanding economic opportunities: downtown building and streetscape repair and revitalization, fiber internet, water and wastewater capacity upgrades, water and wastewater treatment upgrades, gas and electrical utility redundancy, and street repairs or resurfacing.

MAPA facilitated discussions with executive directors and support staff from the five economic development organizations that represent each county in the MAPA region. These organizations compose part of the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership, which is a consortium that leads many of the economic development efforts throughout the MAPA and larger Omaha-Council Bluffs regions. The Partnership's economic development activities concern business attraction and intelligence, entrepreneurship and innovation, public policy, talent and workforce, among other areas. The Partnership members which MAPA frequently collaborates with and solicited input for the 2025 CEDS update include the Greater Omaha Chamber (City of Omaha/Douglas County), Cass County Nebraska Economic Development Council, Gateway Development Corporation (Washington County), Grow Sarpy, and Advance Southwest Iowa Corporation (Pottawattamie County). The Mills County Economic Development Foundation, though independent of the Partnership, was also consulted in this latest CEDS development process.

Professional economic development stakeholders were asked to convey insights on the current state of the region in an attempt to add further context to the data presented in the preceding chapters and the input received from participating communities. This feedback has been classified and presented under six focus areas which were determined to be the most applicable; they include:

Employment and Labor

- The region has a productive, well-trained labor force.
- The region benefits by having two community colleges and various workforce development resources that provide training for trades and other skills that do not require a four-year degree.
- Efforts must continue to align today's workforce training needs with educational pathways and curriculums.
- Immigrants with professional skills and backgrounds have difficulty finding opportunities in the region. Cultural and language barriers contribute to the problem, but social factors are responsible as well.
- The challenges of an aging workforce are becoming more present. In the coming years, it is anticipated that the number of workers leaving the labor force will equal, if not exceed, the number of new entrants, creating staffing capacity concerns and gaps in organizational leadership.

Financing and Cost of Doing Business

- Cost of living is below the national average and competitive with regions of similar size and demographics.
- There are well-established philanthropic resources throughout the region that aid in social and economic development.
- The lack of large incentive packages and venture capital programs place the region at a competitive disadvantage in attracting outside investment.
- Most economic incentives available in the region are relatively rigid and do not adequately address economic development needs in areas of disinvestment.
- Few incentives or resources (e.g. micro-lending) exist for small businesses.

Housing

- There is a lack of affordable housing throughout the region, especially where job centers are located.
- There is limited mixed housing development in the region, both in the urban and rural areas.
- There is not enough workforce housing available or being built for residents who desire to live in or near the communities they work.

Infrastructure and Transportation

- Eppley Airfield has capacity to expand both passenger and cargo service. Passenger service is provided to both coasts and has added the number of direct flights to more than 30 destinations.
- The presence of Interstates 80 and 29 provide continued opportunities for development in jurisdictions where those corridors traverse.
- Infrastructure in many parts of the region is inadequate to support new businesses and business expansion.
- Although improvements have been made, reliable and affordable broadband is not consistent throughout the entire region.

Land Use and Development

- There is limited availability of industrial park space and state-of-the-art industrial areas/buildings, particularly large-scale industrial sites served by rail.
- Soil contamination due to lead in eastern Omaha continues to pose health and safety risks to residents. Remediation continues but it is a painstaking process.
- Brownfields remediation and wetland mitigation are often detriments to development.

Partnerships and Collaboration

- The Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership network exists and includes a public/private cooperative for unified marketing of the region.
- The local governments in the region support cooperative agreements for services including law enforcement and emergency medical response, joint purchasing, and exchange of water and sewer resources.
- Doing business and providing services in two states can be challenging – intergovernmental cooperation is required.

Summary of the Economic State of the MAPA Region

Overall, the economy of the MAPA region has demonstrated growth and resilience since the last five-year CEDS update. The region's success can be attributed to a productive, skilled, and educated workforce, a diversified economy anchored by successful companies, strong educational and health care institutions, the presence of Offutt Air Force Base and U.S. Strategic Command, as well as a centralized location with a serviceable transportation network in proximity to various major national markets. These and other factors have enabled the MAPA region to see continued population growth, though slow, of 4.3 percent overall since 2019. Douglas and Sarpy Counties are at the center of that growth and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future, although natural development barriers exist in both jurisdictions that will influence land use and development decisions. It also remains to be seen how U.S. immigration policies will affect the region's future population growth.

Today the region has a diverse economy and specializes in agriculture, food processing, finance, insurance, transportation, healthcare and education. In 2023 the region's total real GDP was \$75.3 billion, with a reported \$3.4 billion in exports supporting over 85,500 local jobs. As an economic anchor in the Midwest, the area has significant regional and national importance as a gateway hub, connecting east to west. Its international presence has been growing with top exports of beef, soybeans and harvesting machinery. Its top international trading partners are Canada, Mexico and Japan. It remains to be seen how the current volatile trade environment will affect the region's export economy in the years to come.

Employment growth in Omaha has been slow. Only 12,000 new employees were hired from 2019 to 2024, resulting in an estimated workforce deficit of 68,156 employees. Unemployment in the region remains below the national average, however, this is indicative of the continued Nebraska and Iowa labor shortage. Three out of four Nebraska MAPA counties had annual average unemployment rates below 3 percent in 2024, suggesting they struggle to recruit and retain workers. From 2019 to 2023 the region's average annual wage increased by 21 percent and was 85 percent of the national average annual wage. The Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA cost of living is low and competitive but remains the same while other nearby MSAs have seen a recent reduction in cost of living.

Although growth in the MAPA region's most populous counties has been strong, rural areas have experienced population ageing and decline since the 1980's farm crisis that shuttered main street businesses and resulted in the loss of thousands of family farms. Of the nine communities that have seen trending population decline since 2010, most are in Pottawattamie County. Smaller rural communities in the MAPA region struggle to retain population, businesses, and services when the bulk of jobs and employment opportunities are centered in Omaha and adjacent suburban communities. Furthermore, many segments of the population have migrated out of small towns and denser, older neighborhoods to Sanitary Improvement Districts (SIDs), subdivisions in the suburbs and rural areas used previously for agriculture. The viability of rural communities is complicated by the age, condition, and availability of housing, much of which was built before WWII. Attracting or incentivizing new housing – particularly affordable workforce housing – has been a common concern among communities in the MAPA region's rural communities.

While much of the MAPA region's new growth is in areas undeveloped previously, urban communities like Omaha and Council Bluffs have seen a resurgence in infill redevelopment and adaptive reuse. The

movement toward and prevalence of infill redevelopment caters to changing demographics and preferences. Young professionals – generally white-collar professionals in their 20s and 30s – are a coveted demographic the region is striving to attract by fostering more transit-oriented and mixed-use development that offers cultural, economic, and social amenities. Strides have been made in the efficiency and reliability of the urban area’s public transit system operated by Metro. The region’s first Bus Rapid Transit line (ORBT) launched in November of 2020, and a privately-funded downtown Omaha streetcar project is scheduled for completion in 2028. The region also boasts an extensive recreational trail system with over 863 miles of trails with more under construction. Projects such as these are intended to make the region more competitive in attracting workforce talent and innovative businesses, and improve connectivity to employment opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals.

The region’s infill redevelopment is prevalent in racially diverse and mixed-income urban neighborhoods where there has been disinvestment due to redlining, particularly in eastern Omaha, western Council Bluffs, and pockets of Bellevue. Redevelopment, although a boon to the local tax base, raises the cost of living for housing, pricing out vulnerable residents. Historically, these areas report lower levels of educational attainment, employment, and personal and household incomes than the region as a whole. Their continued disinvestment over time can be attributed to the changing economy and location of job centers, lack of transportation options to those job centers, and the proliferation of suburban growth, among other social and economic factors. Economic conditions in these urban neighborhoods are often overshadowed by the overall success demonstrated on a region-wide scale.

Aside from the continued issues of urban disinvestment and economic inequity, the greater MAPA region has experienced other prominent economic events recently. In 2015, ConAgra Foods moved its headquarters from Omaha to Chicago, resulting in the loss of 1,300 area jobs after almost a century in Omaha. In 2020, like the rest of the country, the region’s communities, residents, and businesses grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, according to a study conducted by the University of Toronto, Omaha made a strong recovery, operating at 90-95 percent of pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2024. The region’s primary commercial airport, Eppley Airfield, is currently undergoing a nearly \$1 billion Build OMA Terminal Modernization Program that is slated to be completed in 2028. A new \$600 million cybersecurity facility called REACH (Research, Engineering, Architecture and Collaboration Hub) will be built in Bellevue on Offutt Air Force Base’s Nuclear Command, Control and Communications Campus, solidifying the region as a leader in cybersecurity.

In 2019, MAPA communities in Nebraska and Iowa endured historic floods that resulted in statewide Presidential Disaster Declarations. Recovery and flood mitigation planning are now priorities for communities along the Missouri River. In 2024 and 2025, the region saw multiple severe storms, producing blizzards, tornadoes, straight line winds and more flooding, resulting in six Presidential Disaster Declarations and millions of dollars in damage. This has placed financial strain on communities during recovery and has adversely affected the local finance and insurance industry. Projects for which affected communities have received or will require funding assistance include, infrastructure repair or replacement and long-range planning and emergency coordination. The increase in severe weather events over the last five years underscores the need to facilitate planning and to implement projects that increase the resiliency of infrastructure, neighborhoods, and businesses against future hazards.

5. STRATEGIC VISION AND PLAN OF ACTION

Overview

The community and stakeholder input summarized in Chapter 4, coupled with the data and demographic trends presented in Chapters 2 and 3 form the basis of the 2025 MAPA CEDS Strategic Vision and Plan of Action.

The Heartland 2050 Vision

The 2025 MAPA CEDS is developed in harmony with Heartland 2050, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), formerly called the Long Range Transportation Plan, and the other planning initiatives undertaken in the region in recent years. As MAPA’s adopted regional vision, Heartland 2050 calls for purposefully probing the fundamental building blocks to community vibrancy. Its mission is to define and promote an actionable course that is closing the gap – in access and opportunity, time and distance, funding and mindshare – while bringing people closer together in a thriving, vibrant community.

Since its inception, Heartland 2050 was developed with a trifurcated focus on People, Places, and Resources. A unique exercise known as “values laddering” utilized a deep dive with focus groups to identify core values of residents. The overwhelming majority of residents enjoy a high quality of life and believe that the region is heading in a positive direction. People note that they enjoy the low cost of living or affordability available. The greatest concerns surround issues of crime and high taxes, particularly property taxes in MAPA’s Nebraska service area.

Ultimately, Heartland 2050 identified **12 Core Values** for the region; many of these apply to the 2025 MAPA CEDS:

Heartland 2050 Core Values

- Retain a high quality of life
- Maintain affordable and fair housing
- Use public resources efficiently for low taxes
- Enhance safety, reduce crime, and eliminate poverty
- Attract good quality jobs
- Attract and retain young professionals
- Maintain excellent educational opportunities
- Ensure high quality health care
- Maintain our strong network of neighborhoods and communities
- Retain small town values that make our region inclusive, family-friendly, welcoming, and accessible
- Expand and enhance transportation choices
- Plan for a future which is sustainable and resilient economically

The MAPA Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Demographic changes and shifting lifestyle preferences in recent years have been driving greater demand for urban, walkable development. And much of the region’s infrastructure, built decades ago, is deteriorating and in need of rehabilitation or replacement. To address the region’s most pressing challenges proactively and position the region for continued economic growth, MAPA continues to partner with the Greater Omaha Chamber, Metro and local communities to build a new regional transportation strategy – bringing diverse stakeholders together to guide the region’s investments. The goals guiding this regional transportation strategy and the MTP are as follows:

Access to Opportunity

- Our multimodal transportation system will enable people to reach their preferred destinations in a reasonable amount of time, regardless of age, ability, or neighborhood.
- We will maximize access to education, employment, and health care for people traveling by any mode.

Economic Growth Throughout the Region

- Our transportation system will help us all prosper as individuals, as communities, and as a region.
- Our transportation system will safely and reliably move freight, as well as people.
- We will catalyze higher value real estate development and neighborhood revitalization through strategic infrastructure investment.

Talent Attraction and Retention

- Our transportation system will contribute to a quality of life that is appealing to local residents and attractive to people living elsewhere.
- Greater Omaha will support a diverse range of lifestyles by offering a variety of enjoyable neighborhoods, from rural to urban.

Stewardship of the Transportation System

- We will take pride in the condition of our existing transportation infrastructure, prioritizing its maintenance and rehabilitation.
- We will account for long-term operations and maintenance costs when planning for future projects.

The 2025 MAPA CEDS vision statement and goals and strategies were created with the values, goals, and guiding principles of Heartland 2050 and the MAPA MTP in mind.

2025 MAPA CEDS Vision Statement

The MAPA region is a dynamic, six-county, two-state region embracing growth and diversity where we enjoy a safe, family-friendly, and healthy lifestyle. The MAPA region will build upon the region's economic strengths to stimulate local economies, sustain the positive economic momentum of today and help the region withstand the inevitable economic downturns. The region will work to minimize poverty, especially in disinvested areas. The MAPA CEDS reflects the region's goal to implement a successful economic development planning process that addresses its economic problems and uses its resources to fulfill its economic potential.

Economic Development Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Economic development goals and strategies for the MAPA region are as follows. These goals and strategies are based on the opportunities and constraints identified in the region, and based on information found in capital improvement plans, strategic plans, and comprehensive plans prepared by or on behalf of member jurisdictions. The order in which they are listed does not imply importance by ranking.

Goal A: Retain, expand, and attract businesses throughout the MAPA region.

Objective

- 1) Align business needs with state and federal programs and incentives available to the private sector.

Strategies

- A. Aid local governments, economic development organizations, and community-based organizations with financial and technical assistance applications to support business and job growth.
- B. Aid recipients of state and federal awards that support business and job growth and fulfill applicable agency/program requirements in which compliance is necessary to implement awarded programs or projects (e.g. environmental reviews, job maintenance, procurement, etc.).

Evaluation Indicators

- Jobs created and retained
- Business start-ups and expansions
- Amount/type of assistance provided

Goal B: Close the disparity gaps in employment, income, housing, and other indicators of social and economic well-being.

Objective

- 1) Provide opportunities for growth and redevelopment in both rural and urban areas of the MAPA region experiencing high rates of poverty and unemployment, disinvestment, and environmental challenges.

Strategies

- A. Aid local governments and nonprofit community and neighborhood development organizations that serve low and moderate income populations primarily with financial and technical assistance applications that support business and job growth, workforce development and training, and affordable housing.
- B. Aid rural local governments with efforts to sustain and expand their tax base with emphasis on downtown commercial districts and industrial development.
- C. Aid local governments and home builders/developers in rehabilitating existing housing and building new units on vacant or abandoned lots.
- D. Seek alternative means and resources that aid in the redevelopment or adaptive reuse of existing buildings or facilities that have closed due to population loss, relocation, disinvestment, or other circumstances.
- E. Promote the use of policies and/or incentives that mitigate and redevelop brownfields and other sites with contamination concerns.

Evaluation Indicators

- Employment rate
- Wages and per capita income
- Poverty rate
- Empty or blighted lots converted to support new housing
- Vacant buildings or facilities repurposed to support new housing or community amenities
- Vacant downtown buildings or districts that have been rehabilitated to occupy commercial/retail businesses
- Remediation of properties with known or suspected environmental contamination

Goal C: Close the racial and ethnic disparity gaps in employment and educational attainment.

Objective

- 1) Improve equitable access to employment and educational opportunities.

Strategies

- A. Promote existing and proposed programs and strategies that work to educate/train the region's workforce with emphasis on undereducated and low- and moderate-income workers.
- B. Promote transit-oriented development and innovative housing solutions which afford more efficient and convenient access to job centers.

Evaluation Indicators

- Number of jobs within 30 minutes of home via auto; within 45 minutes via transit
- Percentage of homes/population centers within 60 minutes of colleges and universities via transit

Goal D: Retain and attract educated, skilled, and well-trained workforce talent.

Objective

- 1) Create a physical and cultural environment that retains, attracts, and develops a highly-skilled, highly-paid workforce across industry clusters.

Strategies

- A. Promote mixed-use and higher density development where practicable that includes housing, commercial, and office space together with connections to bike, pedestrian, and transit options.
- B. Promote and facilitate efforts to expand the variety and affordability of housing.
- C. Aid local governments and economic development organizations in the planning, promotion, and financing of quality of life amenities.

Evaluation Indicators

- Growth in new housing that accommodates various price points and lifestyle preferences
- Number of new workforce housing units
- Percentage of the population within ¼ mile of transit service
- Addition of public amenities (e.g., trail miles, acres of open/green space and other recreational facilities, number of cultural, entertainment, and community facilities)
- Health and safety statistics relative to national averages

Goal E: Improve the efficiency and capacity of local governments in the MAPA region with emphasis on rural communities.

Objective

- 1) Work with local governments to provide the tools and resources necessary to provide optimal representation and service delivery to their residents.

Strategies

- A. Promote and facilitate training for local elected officials, appointees, and staff to maximize effective leadership, management, planning, and economic development practices.
- B. Develop new or update existing local ordinances for member jurisdictions.
- C. Aid member jurisdictions, either individually or collectively, deliver efficient and cost-effective services to their residents.

Evaluation Indicators

- Number of local government representatives that attend trainings and outreach events
- Local governments with codified ordinances
- Affordability and reliability of utilities and services
- Property tax rates

Goal F: Provide infrastructure necessary to support community sustainability and growth, and opportunities for business development and expansion.

Objective

- 1) Plan, finance, and build infrastructure that is modern, efficient and cost effective, and adequate for the needs of residents and local businesses.

Strategies

- A. Aid local governments, economic development organizations, and industrial foundations with site identification, mapping, and other technical assistance necessary to assemble land for business and industrial parks.
- B. Aid local governments, economic development organizations, and private businesses with financial and technical assistance applications to support infrastructure.
- C. Aid local governments in developing strategic plans/infrastructure needs assessments.

Evaluation Indicators

- Priority infrastructure projects funded and implemented
- Failing systems addressed
- Communities with locally approved comprehensive plans and/or strategic plans/infrastructure needs assessments

Goal G: Emphasize and improve disaster preparedness, economic resilience, and environmental stewardship throughout the MAPA region.

Objective

- 1) Ensure that local governments and businesses are prepared and equipped to sustain and recover from social and economic disruptions caused by natural and human-caused disasters or other serious events.

Strategies

- A. Aid local governments with financial assistance applications and management of programs intended to acquire and remove residential structures and essential facilities from identified flood hazard areas.
- B. Support regional coalitions and practices that conserve wetlands, improve air and water quality, and reduce flood risk.
- C. Promote local and regional development practices that do not affect flood-prone or other environmentally-sensitive lands.
- D. Facilitate or participate in multi-jurisdictional pre-disaster mitigation planning efforts.
- E. Collaborate with economic development organizations in creating strategies and practices intended to help local businesses cope during and recover from disaster events and economic downturns.
- F. Support opportunities for regional cooperation in solid waste management and waste diversion.

Evaluation Indicators

- Number of residential and critical facilities removed from the 100-year floodplain
- Projects/practices installed that preserve or re-establish wetlands, improve air and water quality, and reduce flood risk
- New development/construction built in floodplains or other environmentally-sensitive areas
- Jurisdictions covered by pre-disaster mitigation plans locally adopted and approved by FEMA
- Number of business closures and layoffs as a result of economic disruptions
- Progress toward development and adoption of an updated regional Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan

Implementation Strategy

| Goal A: Retain, expand, and attract businesses throughout the MAPA region. | |
|--|--|
| Strategies | Stakeholders |
| A. Aid local governments, economic development organizations, and community-based organizations with financial and technical assistance applications to support business and job growth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City and county governments • Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership and Mills County Economic Development Foundation • New and expanding businesses |
| B. Aid recipients of state and federal awards that support business and job growth and fulfill applicable agency/program requirements in which compliance is necessary to implement awarded programs or projects (e.g. environmental reviews, job maintenance, procurement, etc.). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City and county governments • Businesses eligible for state/federal programs |
| Potential Funding Sources | Timeframe |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private investment • EDA • State departments of economic development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead units of local government • State/federal grant program budget activity for project administration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing |

Goal B - Close the disparity gaps in employment, income, housing, and other indicators of social and economic well-being.

| Strategies | Stakeholders |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Aid local governments and nonprofit community and neighborhood development organizations that serve low- and moderate-income populations primarily with financial and technical assistance applications that support business and job growth, workforce development and training, and affordable housing.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City governments with LMI populations ● Nonprofit community and neighborhood development organizations that serve LMI populations ● Community colleges ● Workforce development organizations |
| <p>B. Aid rural local governments with efforts to sustain and expand their tax base with emphasis on downtown commercial districts and industrial development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City governments ● Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership and Mills County Economic Development Foundation |
| <p>C. Aid local governments and home builders/developers in rehabilitating existing housing and building new units on vacant or abandoned lots.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City governments ● Nonprofit housing trust funds ● Omaha Municipal Land Bank |
| <p>D. Seek alternative means and resources that aid in the redevelopment or adaptive reuse of existing buildings or facilities that have closed due to population loss, relocation, disinvestment, or other circumstances.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City governments ● Nonprofit community and neighborhood development organizations ● Nonprofit and private developers |
| <p>E. Promote the use of policies and/or incentives that mitigate and redevelop brownfields and other sites with contamination concerns.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cities of Omaha and Council Bluffs ● Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance ● U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| Potential Funding Sources | Timeframe |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EDA ● HUD (CDBG program) ● Lead applicant organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HUD (CDBG program) ● Lead units of local government ● Private investment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-term (5 or more years) |

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead applicant organizations ● Nonprofit housing trust funds ● Nonprofit and private home builders/developers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EDA ● HUD (CDBG program) ● Nonprofit housing trust funds ● Nonprofit and private developers ● Lead applicant organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-term (5 or more years) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EDA ● EPA ● Lead units of local government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-term (5 or more years) |

Goal C - Close the racial and ethnic disparity gaps in employment and educational attainment.

| Strategies | Stakeholders |
|---|--|
| A. Promote existing and proposed programs and strategies that work to educate/train the region's workforce with emphasis on undereducated and low- and moderate-income workers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership and Mills County Economic Development Foundation ● Community colleges ● Workforce development organizations ● Private businesses |
| B. Promote transit-oriented development and innovative housing solutions which afford more efficient and convenient access to job centers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City governments (planning/public works) ● Private developers ● Metro Transit Omaha |
| Potential Funding Sources | Timeframe |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EDA ● HUD (CDBG program) ● Community colleges ● Workforce development organizations ● Private businesses/employers ● Private foundations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Private businesses/employers ● Private foundations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medium-term (2-5 years) |

| Goal D - Retain and attract educated, skilled, and well-trained workforce talent. | |
|--|---|
| Strategies | Stakeholders |
| <p>A. Promote mixed-use and higher density development where practicable that includes housing, commercial, and office space together with connections to bike, pedestrian, and transit options.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City governments (planning/public works) ● Private developers ● Metro Transit Omaha |
| <p>B. Promote and facilitate efforts to expand the variety and affordability of housing.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City governments ● Nonprofit housing trust funds ● Nonprofit and private developers ● Private foundations ● State departments of economic development |
| <p>C. Aid local governments and economic development organizations in the planning, promotion, and financing of quality of life amenities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City governments ● Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership and Mills County Economic Development Foundation ● Private foundations ● State departments of economic development |
| Potential Funding Sources | Timeframe |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAPA membership dues and EDA Partnership Planning funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medium-term (2-5 years) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAPA membership dues and EDA Partnership Planning funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-term (5 or more years) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAPA membership dues and EDA Partnership Planning funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing |

Goal E - Improve the efficiency and capacity of local governments in the MAPA region with emphasis on rural communities.

| Strategies | Stakeholders |
|--|--|
| <p>A. Promote and facilitate training for local elected officials, appointees, and staff to maximize effective leadership, management, planning, and economic development practices.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City governments ● Nonprofit community and neighborhood development organizations ● MAPA |
| <p>B. Develop new or update existing local ordinances for member jurisdictions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City and county governments ● MAPA |
| <p>C. Aid member jurisdictions, either individually or collectively, deliver efficient and cost-effective services to their residents.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City governments ● Local and regional utility providers ● State departments of natural resources ● MAPA |
| Potential Funding Sources | Timeframe |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAPA membership dues and EDA Partnership Planning funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local government funds ● MAPA membership dues and EDA Partnership Planning funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medium-term (2-5 years) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAPA membership dues and EDA Partnership Planning funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing |

Goal F - Provide infrastructure necessary to support community sustainability and growth, and opportunities for business development and expansion.

| Strategies | Stakeholders |
|---|--|
| <p>A. Aid local governments, economic development organizations, and industrial foundations with site identification, mapping, and other technical assistance necessary to assemble land for business and industrial parks.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City and county governments ● Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership and Mills County Economic Development Foundation ● Private developers |
| <p>B. Aid local governments, economic development organizations, and private businesses with financial and technical assistance applications to support infrastructure.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City and county governments ● Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership and Mills County Economic Development Foundation ● Private businesses |
| <p>C. Aid local governments in developing strategic plans/infrastructure needs assessments.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City and county governments ● MAPA |
| Potential Funding Sources | Timeframe |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAPA membership dues and EDA Partnership Planning funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-term (5 or more years) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAPA membership dues and EDA Partnership Planning funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAPA membership dues and EDA Partnership Planning funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medium-term (2-5 years) |

Goal G - Emphasize and improve disaster preparedness, economic resilience, and environmental stewardship throughout the MAPA region.

| Strategies | Stakeholders |
|--|--|
| <p>A. Aid local governments with financial assistance applications and management of programs intended to acquire and remove residential structures and essential facilities from identified flood hazard areas.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City and county governments ● Private property owners ● MAPA |
| <p>B. Support regional coalitions and practices that conserve wetlands, improve air and water quality, and reduce flood risk.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● County governments ● Natural resources and conservation districts ● Private property owners |
| <p>C. Promote local and regional development practices that do not affect flood-prone or other environmentally-sensitive lands.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City and county governments (planning & zoning) ● Private developers ● MAPA |
| <p>D. Facilitate or participate in multi-jurisdictional pre-disaster mitigation planning efforts.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All units of local government in designated planning areas including school districts ● County emergency management agencies ● Local residents ● Private businesses/major employers |
| <p>E. Collaborate with economic development organizations in creating strategies and practices intended to help local businesses cope during and recover from disaster events and economic downturns.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership and Mills County Economic Development Foundation ● Private businesses ● Nebraska Enterprise Fund |
| <p>F. Support opportunities for regional cooperation in solid waste management and waste diversion.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City and county governments ● Heartland 2050 Solid Waste Management Working Group ● Local and regional solid waste handlers ● State departments of natural resources ● Private foundations |

| Potential Funding Sources | Timeframe |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FEMA ● State emergency management agencies ● Lead units of local government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-term (5 or more years) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FEMA ● State departments of agriculture ● State departments of natural resources ● Private property owners ● Lead units of local government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medium-term (2-5 years) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No identified resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FEMA ● State emergency management agencies ● Lead units of local government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nebraska Enterprise Fund | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Short-term (within 2 years) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAPA membership dues and EDA Partnership Planning funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medium-term (2-5 years) |

Public and Private Sector Involvement

The process of developing the MAPA CEDS for the region has been successful due largely to contributions from community and private sector leaders. In order for MAPA to function efficiently and effectively, and to create a coordinated economic development dialogue, continued involvement of the public, local government officials, economic developers, and MAPA staff as facilitators will be essential. Many of the activities identified by MAPA in its Partnership Planning program scope of work will aid in the gathering and sharing of information leading to collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries.

With respect to implementation of specific projects and plans, many of the physical projects listed in the MAPA CEDS cannot be completed without private investment or public/private partnerships. More importantly, the completion of significant local and regional planning initiatives cannot be successful without input and participation from citizens and business leaders. Transparency in processes and in public notification will be encouraged and facilitated by MAPA staff whenever possible.

Plan Evaluation and Program Monitoring

MAPA Community and Economic Development Department staff are responsible for monitoring and updating the MAPA CEDS, and will assume responsibility for regular evaluation of both the plan and the projects recommended with direction from the MAPA Board of Directors. The MAPA CEDS will be reviewed and updated annually, with more frequent updates if significant changes in the regional

economy warrant further consideration. This annual monitoring and evaluation will determine progress made in addressing the goals and strategies outlined in the plan. Goals and strategies may also need to be revised to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the MAPA region. Every five years the plan will be revised fully to ensure accuracy of the information it contains. To ensure continued public participation, notice of the annual review will be announced publicly according to the procedures of MAPA's Public Participation Plan. Interested citizens will be given reasonable opportunity to review and provide comments concerning the MAPA CEDS.

Civil Rights Policy

While MAPA cannot dictate to its members whom to appoint, the agency encourages sponsors to consider appointments of women and minorities when possible.

MAPA and its Board of Directors are committed firmly to providing services and employment opportunities on a non-discriminatory basis. All programs are offered to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, disability, political beliefs, and marital or family status. The MAPA Board of Directors has adopted personnel policies which address equal opportunity and civil rights. MAPA actively encourages women, minorities, and low- and moderate-income individuals to become involved in its programs.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact MAPA by phone at (402) 444-6866 or by email at mapa@mapacog.org. Normal business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Central Standard Time.

To contact the U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA) Denver Regional Office, contact the Economic Development Representative at (303) 844-4715.