

Lincoln Vital Signs 2025



Be informed. Get involved.



Lincoln Vital Signs 2025

Communities that focus on what really matters to the people who live there continue to grow and prosper, like Lincoln.

The data gathered in the Lincoln Vital Signs 2025 report helps us understand the strengths and challenges of our city.

Now it's your turn to use these findings to be informed and get involved in what matters most to make Lincoln even stronger.

Key Findings



Population trends will shape future need for services and initiatives:

- In the past decade, the 65+ population has grown 8 times faster than other age groups.
- People moving into Lincoln is driving overall population growth.

Already strong, Lincoln is flourishing in many areas:

- Our workforce is highly educated and new businesses creating new jobs contributes to a robust economy.
- Lincoln's unemployment rate is consistently one of the lowest in the nation and is now lower than in 2019.
- Lincoln is a safe community to live in.

Some areas of weakness persist:

- Income adjusted for cost of living has been falling behind that of other metropolitan areas for over a decade, and this gap is widening.
- Childcare costs continue to rise.
- Health of Lincoln's residents is better than for the U.S. overall, but deaths due to heart disease and to cancer are approaching national rates.

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ABOUT LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS

Lincoln Vital Signs provides credible, reliable information about Lincoln, compared to its recent past and to other communities in the U.S.

The 2025 report was prepared by Stacey Hoffman, Ph.D., Taylor Smith, Sarah Erdmann, and Madeleine Grimm of the University of Nebraska Policy Center.

View the complete report at LincolnVitalSigns.org.

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COMMUNITY PROFILE

Lincoln added more than 26,000 people in the past decade, and the city benefits from this population growth. Population trends such as our growing 65 and older and Latino/a and/or Hispanic populations will shape Lincoln's future.

23%

Growth in residents of color
Since 2013

10%

Population growth
Over the past decade



**65+
Year
Olds**

Growing 8x faster than
other age groups

BASIC NEEDS – HOUSING

Homelessness has significantly declined in the last 10 years and is believed to be attributable to increased support of homeless persons through the Rapid Rehousing program, permanent supportive housing programs, and domestic violence housing programs.

50%

Decrease in adults experiencing homelessness
Since 2012



Paid more than 30% of
their income on housing

11.9%

of households spend more than
half their income on housing

BASIC NEEDS – POVERTY

Poverty increased shortly after 2020, but as of 2023 has returned to the level seen in 2019.

12%

People at or below the
federal poverty level



2

census tracts in
extreme poverty
10 years ago, there were six

13%

Retirement age
residents (65 or older)
living in poverty

**Doubled
From 2019**

28%

Decrease in children
living in poverty

BASIC NEEDS – FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity has increased. Lancaster County now has a similar rate of food insecurity as Nebraska and the U.S. as a whole.



8%

More people considered food insecure
Since 2019

27%

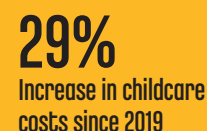
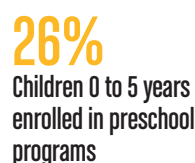
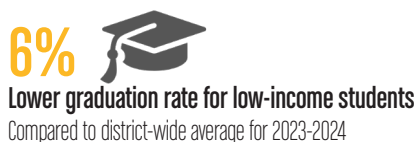
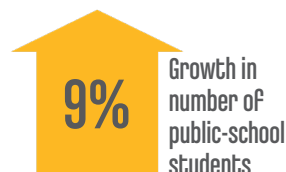
More children considered food insecure
Since 2019

51%

of LPS students
enrolled in free
lunch

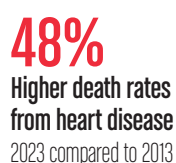
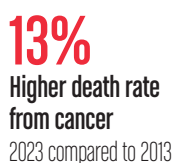
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN

Enrollment in our public schools has continued to grow. The LPS student population is becoming more diverse, with students of color comprising 39%. There are significant disparities for low income students in key academic proficiency areas and high school graduation rates.



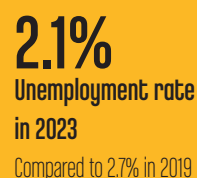
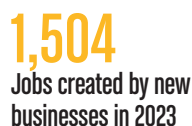
HEALTH

Lincoln is a safe community with low numbers of deaths from preventable diseases compared to the U.S. as a whole. However, deaths from cancer and heart disease have been increasing as well as Lincoln Police Department calls related to mental health.



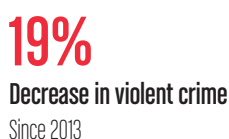
ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

Lincoln's unemployment rate is 1.5 percentage points lower than the national average and is consistently among the lowest in the nation. Jobs created by new businesses helped Lincoln's economic recovery after 2020. Disparities exist in unemployment rates among people of color.



SAFETY AND SECURITY

Both property crime and violent crime rates have declined in Lincoln over the past decade, reflecting national trends. Lincoln's violent crime rate is consistently about half that of comparably sized U.S. cities.



10 Years of Lincoln Vital Signs



The idea of using data to gain a shared community-wide understanding about our city was sparked in 2012 by Lincoln's largest private and public charitable organizations – resulting in the first Lincoln Vital Signs report in 2014.

Since then, the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center has prepared seven individual data reports, including last year's special focus issue on race and equity in our community.

Notable trends in the data have developed over the past 10 years:



Lincoln continues to have:

- Low unemployment
- A highly educated workforce
- New business growth driving job creation



Income adjusted for cost-of-living trails comparably sized cities and this gap has been widening.



The number of neighborhoods in extreme poverty has decreased from six to two.

- However, neither census tract currently in extreme poverty was listed in the first report.



The cost of childcare is rapidly increasing.

- Since the first reported data in 2013, the cost of infant care in a licensed childcare center has increased 35%.



The number of adults and children experiencing homelessness has declined.



Historical events have impacted student test scores.

- Matching the national trend, test scores declined for two years after schools re-opened following the COVID-19 pandemic. Scores have since recovered.



Lincoln's rates of death from preventable diseases are lower than national rates.

- However, local and national deaths due to heart disease are increasing and Lincoln's rates are increasing faster than national rates.
- National deaths due to cancer have been steady while Lincoln's rates are increasing.



Crime rates continue to be lower than comparably sized cities, and the rates are declining.

Lincoln Vital Signs is intended to inform conversations, spark connections and spur collaboration. Learn more at LincolnVitalSigns.org.



**Lincoln
Vital Signs**

Go Ahead, Jump In and Prosper Lincoln



Ever since 2014, we've been busy learning the ropes and taking action to make Lincoln even better. Because of people, like you, coming together with a shared focus on prosperity for all in our community – Prosper Lincoln is in full swing. Now it's time to find new opportunities to jump in!

SHARED GOALS FOR PROSPER LINCOLN 3.0

Using insights from community conversations from all sectors in the city and key metrics from Lincoln Vital Signs, these areas were determined as the focus for Prosper Lincoln 3.0.

CONNECTIONS

Goal: All people thrive through community engagement and social connections.

You can jump into making a difference in the Connections focus area by:

- Increasing opportunities for people to improve their economic status.
- Supporting engagement within neighborhoods.
- Building neighborhood initiatives that are resident-led.

HOUSING

Goal: All residents live in quality housing they can afford.

You can jump into making a difference in the Housing focus area by:

- Building knowledge about the need for quality housing.
- Investing in housing solutions.
- Advocating for policies that support affordable, quality housing.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Goal: All children are flourishing socially, emotionally, physically, and educationally.

You can jump into making a difference in the Early Childhood focus area by:

- Enhancing equitable access to high-quality early education.
- Building knowledge about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and advancing efforts to reduce them.
- Advocating for policies that support early childhood initiatives.

Learn more about how you can get involved and jump in at ProsperLincoln.org.

