



Department of Job & Family Services

Labor Market Information



Labor Market Matters

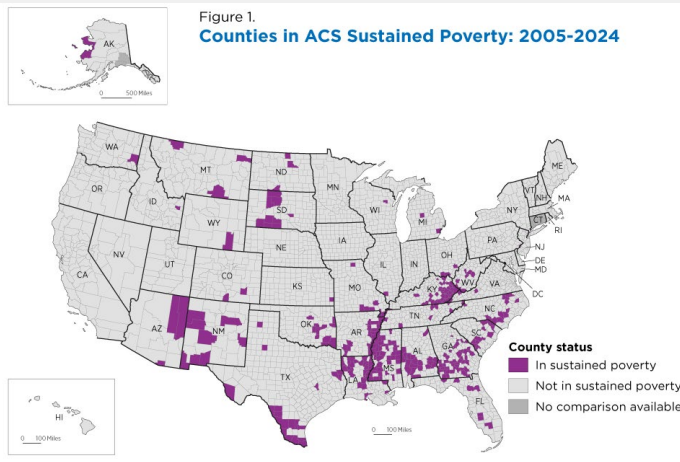
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Source: [census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/stories/2026/02/high-poverty-rates/figure-1-high-poverty-rates.jpg](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/stories/2026/02/high-poverty-rates/figure-1-high-poverty-rates.jpg)

Understanding Poverty: Its Scope, Measurement, and Impact



Across Ohio and the United States, poverty isn't just a number. It's measured in different ways, and these measurements help determine who qualifies for assistance and where communities may need extra support.

Two common measurements are:

- **Federal Poverty Line (FPL)**
Updated each year by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this measure shows how much a household needs for basic living expenses. It changes based on family size.
- **Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL)**
Updated each year by the U.S. Department of Labor, this measure reflects regional cost-of-living differences. Workforce programs like the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act use both the FPL and LLSIL to determine who qualifies as low-income. A person qualifies if their household income is below the higher of these two numbers: the poverty line or 70% of the LLSIL.

Poverty data and labor market information work together to show where people are struggling financially and what jobs or skills are available locally. This helps workforce programs understand community needs and provide training or job opportunities that support stable employment.

You can explore county-level poverty data in the LMI [County Data Hub](#), under "Core Statistics."

The U.S. Census Bureau also collects poverty and income information through several major surveys. Learn more at [census.gov/topics/income-poverty/about.html](https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/about.html)

Matt Damschroder, Director
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Replacements vs. Separations

In the labor market, occupational “separations” might also mean opportunity. In fact, most job openings don’t come from new positions being created. They come from people leaving their current roles, whether they retire, change careers, or step away from the workforce. These separations create opportunities for others!

For years, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimated these openings using a “replacement” method. That older approach assumed people stayed in one occupation for most of their working lives. It also relied on small survey samples, which made the results vary a lot from year to year.

As careers became more mobile and the data improved, BLS shifted to the “separations” method. Instead of guessing how many people **might** leave an occupation, the new method looks at how many people **actually do** leave an occupation. It tracks retirements, career changes, and other exits, and pairs that information with expected job growth or decline.

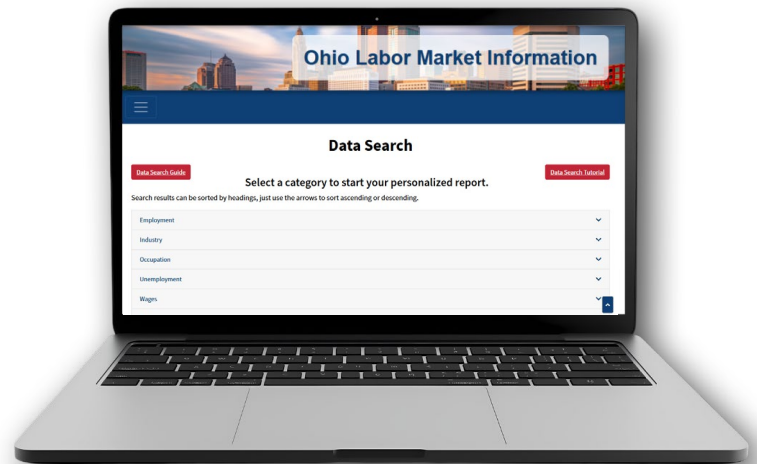
In short, the separations method gives us a clearer picture of how many new workers each field will need.

Better data leads to better decisions – for workforce planners, educators, training programs, and job seekers.

Check out this short BLS short video on [Understanding BLS Projections of Occupational Separations](#).

New Labor Market Numbers You’ll Want to See

New labor market data is available! You can view employment and wage data for the third quarter of 2025 and occupational data for 2025. Explore both updates using LMI’s [Data Search Tool](#). Look for “Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages – QCEW” and “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics – OEWS.



Ohio’s Union Membership Rate

Each year, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports how many workers belong to unions. In 2025, an estimated 11.6% of Ohio’s wage and salary workers – about 605,000 people – were union members.



U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2026). Union members – 2025

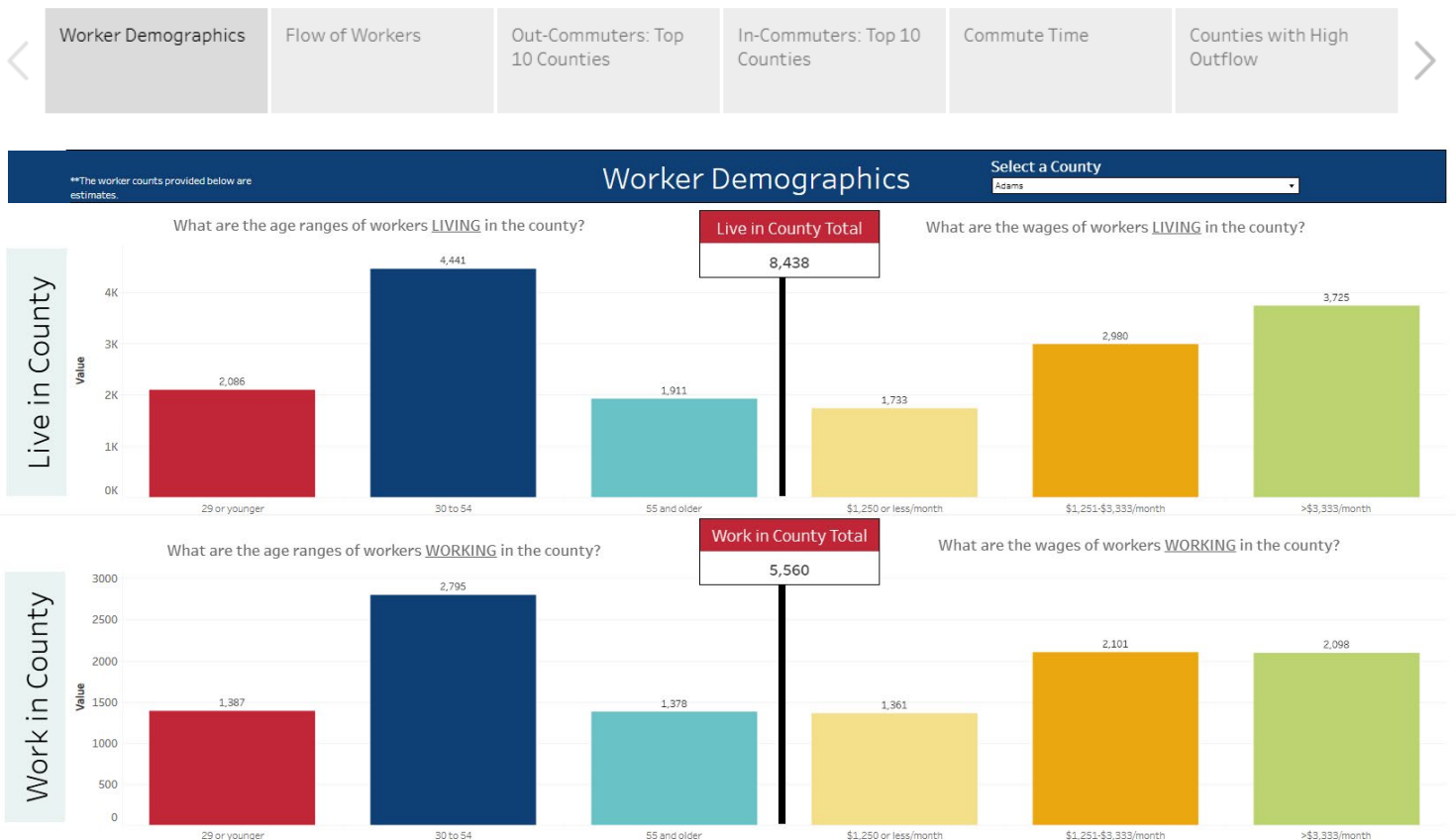
Dashboard Spotlight: Inflow-Outflow

Labor markets don't stop at county lines. Understanding commuting patterns helps show where people live, where they work, and how they move between communities. It also provides useful insights into worker demographics, wages, and commute times.

This dashboard visualizes commuting flows between counties, showing both where workers live and where they travel for work. It highlights key relationships by displaying:

- **Inflow:** Workers commuting into a selected county
- **Outflow:** Residents of that county commuting to work elsewhere
- Net commuting patterns and the demographics of those commuters

You can find the Inflow-Outflow dashboard at <https://ohiolmi.com/DashboardsHomepage>. To explore it, use the arrows beside the menu to move through the different views. You can also click any of the menu boxes to switch perspectives. Selecting a county from the drop-down lists updates the maps, charts, and tables with that county's commuting patterns.



Data Request Spotlight: Labor Force Statistics

When people look for the latest employment numbers for a county, they often start with the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). While QCEW is the most accurate source for establishment-based employment, it's released about six months after the reference period. For more current estimates, the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program offers monthly data on the labor force, employment, and unemployment.

To make these figures easier to understand, here are a few quick definitions:

Civilian labor force: This is the sum of employment and unemployment. This includes people 16 and older who are either working or actively looking for work. It does not include military members, full-time students, homemakers, retirees, or volunteers.

Employment: Includes anyone who worked during the reference week – either full-time or part-time – in any type of job, including unpaid family work. Individuals temporarily absent from work (due to illness, vacation, etc.) are still counted as employed. People with multiple jobs are counted only once.

Unemployment: Refers to individuals who did not work during the reference week, were available to work (except for temporary illness), and had actively looked for a job in the prior four weeks. People on temporary layoffs who are waiting to be recalled are also counted as unemployed, even if they were not actively looking for a job.

Unemployment rate: This is the percentage of the labor force that is unemployed.

Meet the Team: Greg Richey



Greg has been a researcher for Ohio LMI's Workforce Research program since 2017. He joined us in 2014, first as a labor market analyst in what is now the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics program. Later, he transitioned to the Current Employment Statistics program. Currently, he makes long-term projections for industries and occupations in Ohio and its substate regions.

Greg grew up in Dayton. He started his education at Bowling Green State University and went on to earn bachelor's degrees in psychology and political science at The Ohio State University in 2006. He also earned a master's degree in communication from OSU in 2011. Greg lives in Columbus with his cat, Kali. He enjoys cooking and playing piano. He's also trying to learn how to play the theremin.

NEW Learning Labs Scheduled

New [LMI Learning Lab](#) topics are available through 2026. We invite you to attend an upcoming session to learn more about labor market information, ask questions, and explore relevant data and resources.