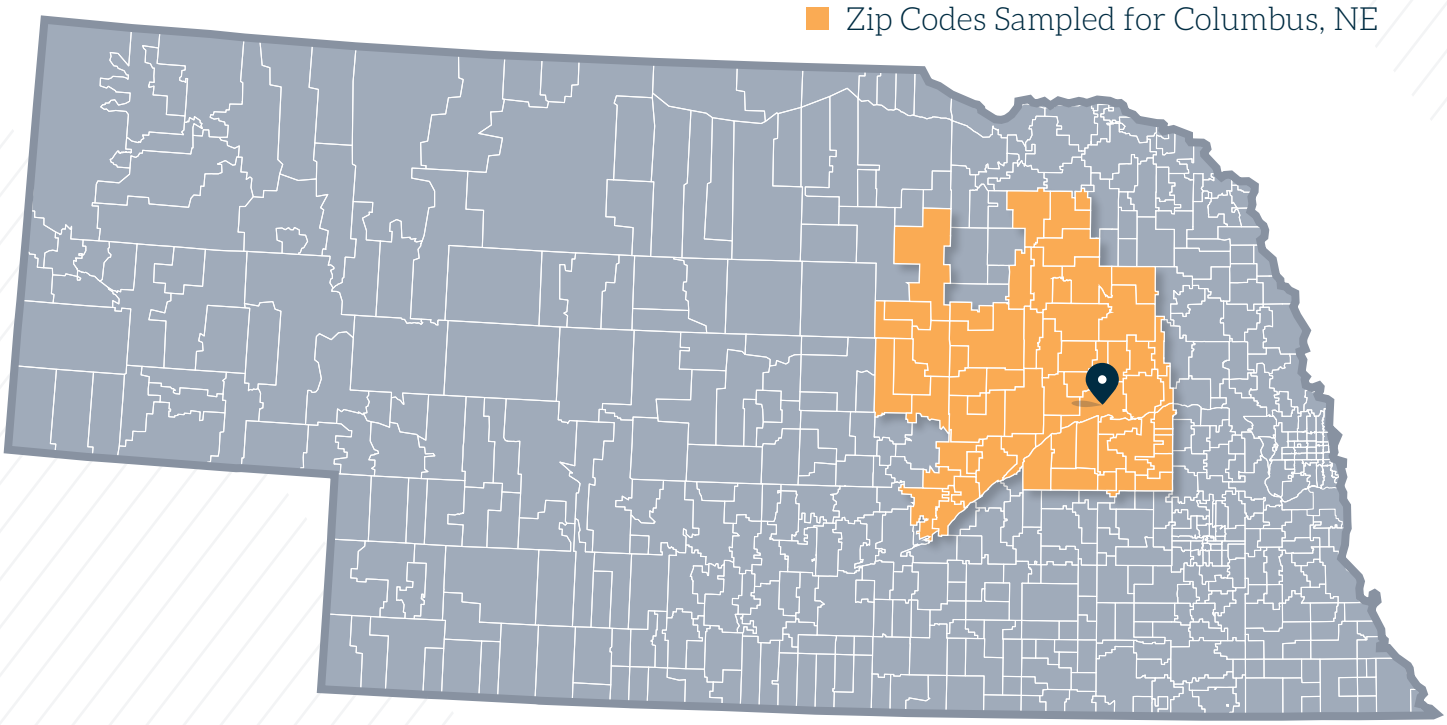
NEBRASKA LABOR AVAILABILITY STUDY COLUMBUS

The Nebraska Departments of Economic Development and Labor (DED & DOL), with support from the University Of Nebraska - Lincoln, Bureau Of Sociological Research (BOSR), have undertaken a study to measure labor availability in northeast Nebraska. Respondents provided information about their current employment status and their perspective on future employment changes. Six communities in the region were highlighted: Columbus, Fremont, Norfolk, South Sioux City, Wayne, and West Point. This brief examines the findings for Columbus, Nebraska.



131,473

POPULATION 18 AND OLDER
OF TOTAL SAMPLED AREA

35,544

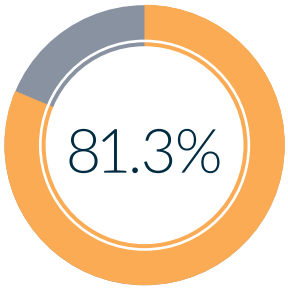
OF THESE PEOPLE ARE
POTENTIAL JOB SEEKERS

25,832

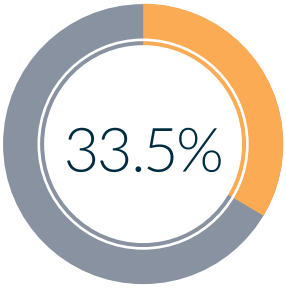
OF POTENTIAL JOB SEEKERS ARE **CURRENTLY EMPLOYED.** STATISTICS FOR THESE JOB SEEKERS:

3,195 of these 25,832 are veterans

Willingness to Commute



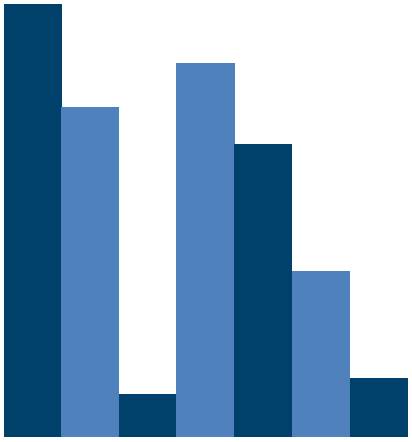
willing to commute 15 minutes or more for a new job



willing to commute 30 minutes or more for a new job

Median Wage Required to Change Job

Highest Level of Education



High school graduate / GED	25.5%
Some college	19.5%
Technical or vocational degree	2.5%
Associate's or 2-year degree	22.1%
Bachelor's or 4-year degree	17.2%
Graduate or professional degree	9.8%
Other / unknown	3.5%

Top factors in choosing new work, by order of importance:

1. Salary
2. Use skills you have
3. Work schedule that fits my needs
4. Level of responsibilities
5. Retirement benefits

Top barriers in finding new work, by order of importance:

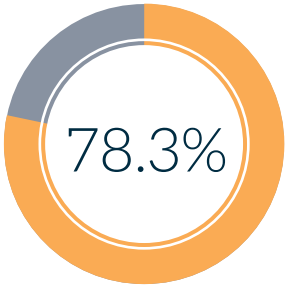
1. Inadequate pay offered at area employers
2. Lack of job opportunities in the area
3. Inadequate benefits at area employers
4. Inadequate hours offered at area employers
5. Family commitments

9,711

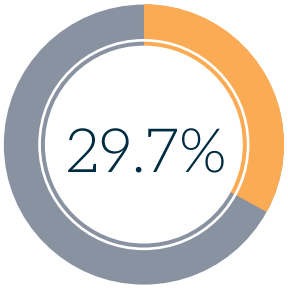
OF THOSE POTENTIAL JOB SEEKERS ARE **CURRENTLY NOT EMPLOYED.** STATISTICS FOR THESE JOB SEEKERS:

1,201 of these 9,711 are veterans

Willingness to Commute



willing to commute 15 minutes or more for a new job



willing to commute 30 minutes or more for a new job

$10 Median $/hr minimum pay to enter or re-enter work force, given that a suitable job is available.

More than 98% of those looking to enter or re-enter the labor force would be willing to retrain or learn new skills. **98%**

Highest Level of Education

High school graduate / GED	26.7%
Some college	21.6%
Technical or vocational degree	2.4%
Associate's or 2-year degree	28.8%
Bachelor's or 4-year degree	16.7%
Graduate or professional degree	3.8%
Other / unknown	0%

Top factors in choosing new work, by order of importance:

1. Use skills you have
2. Level of responsibilities
3. Salary
4. Work schedule that fits your needs
5. Opportunity for advancement

Top barriers in finding new work, by order of importance:

1. Lack of job opportunities in the area
2. Family commitments
3. Inadequate pay offered at area employers
4. Inadequate hours offered at area employers
5. Disability

FULL REPORT - The Nebraska Department of Labor, Office of Labor Market Information (NDOL LMI) has compiled detailed reports on the response data from each of the six highlighted communities. These reports delve much deeper into the data collected, and supplement and contextualize findings with demographic data from the US Census Bureau, employment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and other detailed resources.

Reports feature:
-Detailed geography and demographics
-Regional commuting patterns
-Skills and education of the area's labor force
-Hours worked and compensation/benefits expectations
-Analysis of what entices workers in the area to seek new employment or change jobs
-Analysis of barriers to improving employment experienced by area workers.

Copies of these reports can be obtained at https://neworks.nebraska.gov/analyzer

METHODOLOGY - The Nebraska Labor Availability Study of Northeast Nebraska was commissioned by DED. The survey was conducted by mail by the BOSR with data analysis and production of the final results completed by the Nebraska Department of Labor, Office of Labor Market Information.

The survey questionnaire was designed by DED and DOL in consultation with BOSR. The survey area was defined based on commuting data from the US Census Bureau and focused on six communities in northeastern Nebraska: Columbus, Fremont, Norfolk, South Sioux City, Wayne, and West Point. A random sample of households within the defined area were mailed a survey with instructions that the adult age 19 or older with the next birthday complete and return the questionnaire. Households in Iowa and South Dakota were included in the sample as there was sufficient commuting from zip codes in these states into northeast Nebraska to include them.

Each household in the survey sample was sent a letter followed by a survey questionnaire approximately one week later. Non-respondents received three additional follow-up mailings (a reminder postcard and two additional survey packets). Data collection began in October 2013 and ended in January 2014.

The sample was comprised of 12,000 households and 3,164 responses were received, for an adjusted response rate (accounting for undeliverable mail with no forwarding address) of 29.7 percent.