

# Extension Area 10: Economic Overview

## Columbiana, Mahoning, Portage, and Stark Counties

Report prepared January 2025 by Amanda Osborne and Eric Romich, OSU Extension Community Development

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### Regional Overview

OSU Extension Area 10 is a four-county area in the north-east part of the state, including Columbiana, Mahoning, Portage, and Stark counties. In 2023, the combined Area 10 footprint is 2,016 square miles (mi<sup>2</sup>) supporting a population of 861,159 residents and an overall population density of 427 residents per square mile. Population density is a ratio of total population to total land area, simply described as a count of residents per square mile. As illustrated in Image 1, Stark County has the highest population density of 647, followed by Mahoning County with a population density of 543, while Columbiana and Portage counties ranged between 188 to 330 residents per square mile.

#### Key Stats

- Total of 419 Industries**
- Total Employment of 482,312**
- Gross Domestic Product \$48.8 B**

Overall, the combined population in Area 10 has remained consistent decreasing slightly by -3.9% from 896,817 in 2001 to a total population of 861,159 in 2023. However, there were some notable shifts in the population trends of individual counties between 2001 and 2023. Mahoning County experienced the greatest amount of decline as the population decreased by -11.5% from 254,958 in 2001 to 225,596 in 2023. During this period, Columbiana County underwent a population decrease of -10.3% to a total of 100,182 in 2023, and Stark County had a population decrease of -1.3% to a total of 372,716 in 2023. Between 2001 and 2023, Portage County was the only county in Area 10 to experience a population increase (6.5%) with 162,665 residents in 2023.

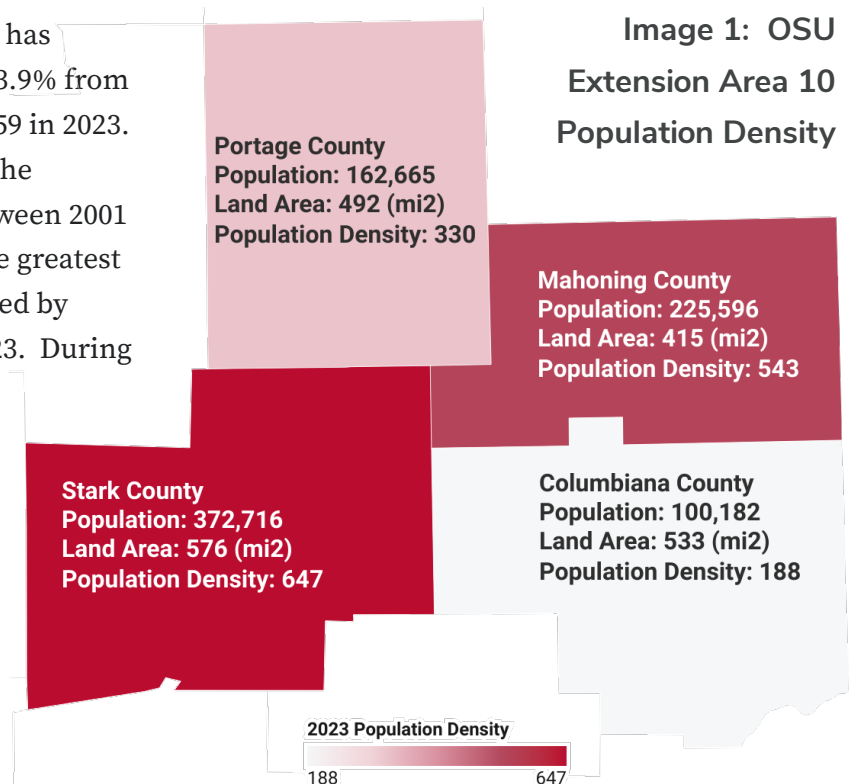


Image 1: OSU Extension Area 10 Population Density

# Regional Industry Sector Overview

IMPLAN defines the total annual production value of each Industry or Commodity as Output. Total output represents the total production value of an industry including intermediate inputs, employee compensation, proprietor income, taxes on production and imports, and other property income.

Table 1 below ranks the top 10 industries in Area 10 by total output in 2023. Petroleum refineries was the highest ranked industry with a total output of \$5.4 billion, supporting 421 jobs, and an average employee compensation of \$255,370. This industry saw a 3.9% increase in output between 2022 and 2023, while the average employee compensation decreased by -7.2%.

The industry with the second highest total output in Area 10 was the iron and steel mills and ferroalloy manufacturing with a total output of \$5.1 billion, supporting 2,591 jobs, and an average employee

compensation of \$124,719. This industry saw a 12.2% increase in output between 2022 and 2023.

The owner-occupied dwellings industry had the third highest total output with a total output of \$4.4 billion. The owner-occupied dwellings sector represents the wealth generated from home ownership. Owning and maintaining a home is also a major area of spending and the owner-occupied dwellings sector captures that economic effect. However, there is no employment or labor income generated in the owner-occupied dwellings sector, as the employment positions such as property managers and real estate agents is captured in the other real estate sector.

Of the top 10 industries by total output, the sector with the most employees in the region was employment and payroll of local government and education with 19,540 employees. The average annual income for these workers was \$69,938 per year.



**Table 1: Area 10 Top 10 Industries by Total Output**

Industry Description	Output	Total Employment	Average Employee Compensation
Petroleum refineries	\$5,426 M	421	\$255,370
Iron and steel mills and ferroalloy manufacturing	\$5,055 M	2,591	\$124,719
Owner-occupied housing	\$4,367 M	N/A	N/A
Hospitals	\$2,524 M	13,854	\$74,878
Other real estate	\$2,456 M	15,990	\$60,070
Monetary authorities and depository credit intermediation	\$1,950 M	3,179	\$81,023
Limited-service restaurants	\$1,848 M	18,099	\$23,336
Offices of physicians	\$1,617 M	9,740	\$135,275
Truck transportation	\$1,614 M	7,787	\$89,217
Employment and payroll of local govt, education	\$1,612 M	19,540	\$69,938

# Area 10 Annual Employment Trends

The Total Employment figure reported by IMPLAN represents a full and part-time annual average including the self-employed, all federal, state, and local government employment and military employment (including overseas military).

Chart 2 provides a visual reference of the Area 10 annual employment trends between 2001 and 2023. As shown in the chart, Area 10 experienced consistent growth between 2002 and 2007 when the U.S. housing market collapsed, stressing global financial markets, and ultimately triggering the U.S. economy into a period of recession. Since 2001 annual employment in Area 10 increased by 2.6%, with a peak employment of 482,312 jobs in 2023. Between 2019 and 2020 Area 10 experienced the greatest year to year job loss, losing 22,561 jobs, leaving an annual employment of 442,884 in 2020. Since 2020, Area 10 has experienced an increase (8.9%) in employment with 39,428 jobs added. As

noted in Chart 1, in 2023 69% of the workforce was local, while 31% were out-commuters.

When considering the long-term employment trends by county, Columbiana County saw the greatest decrease in total employment of -13.3%, decreasing from 48,671 in 2001 to 42,186 in 2023.

Similarly, Mahoning County total employment decreased by -1.4%, from 135,597 jobs in 2001 to 133,724 in 2023. During the same period (2001–2023), Portage County (17%) and Stark County (3.8%) experienced increases in total employment.

Chart 1: Area 10 Location of Workforce

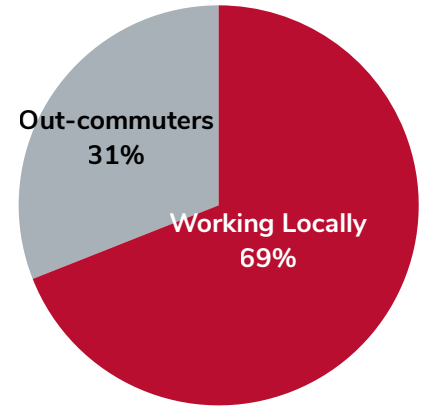
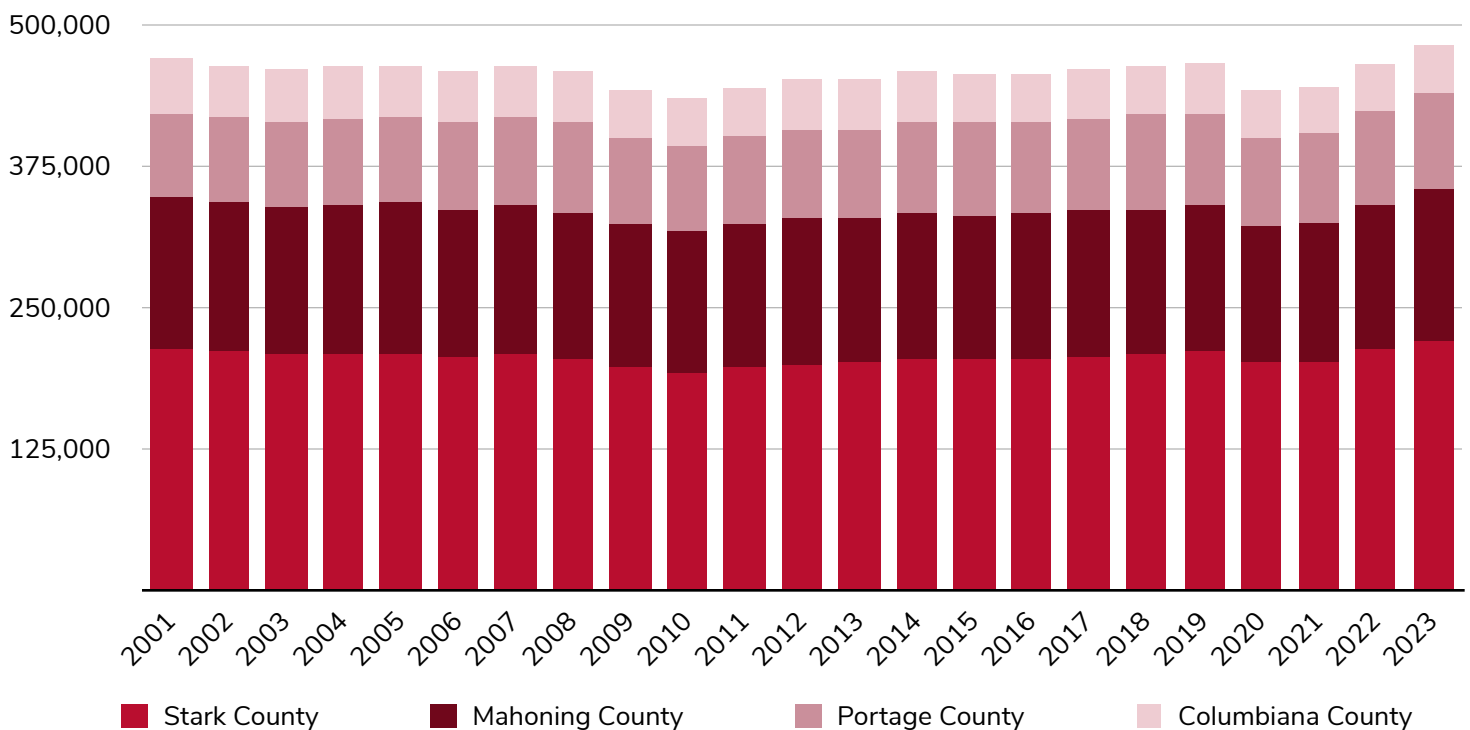
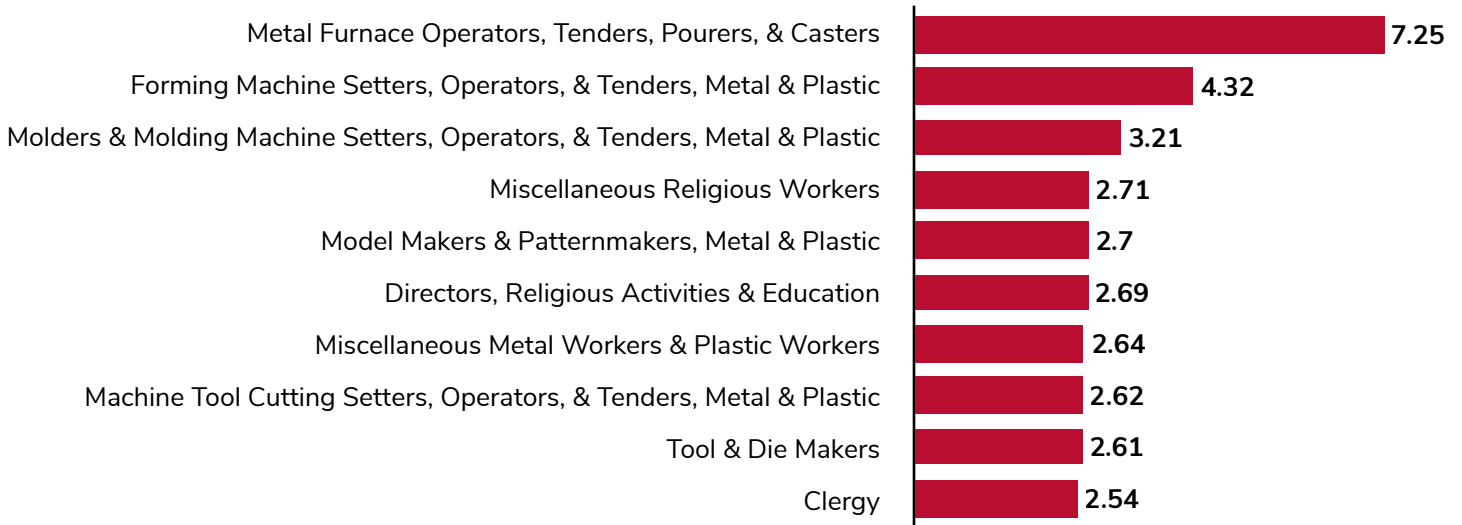


Chart 2: Area 10 Annual Employment



**Chart 3: Area 10 Top 10 Occupations by Location Quotient**

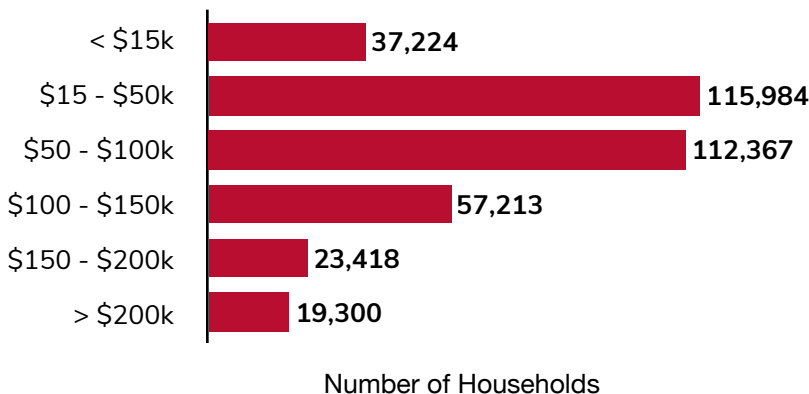


## Occupations by Location Quotient

A location quotient (LQ) is a metric that compares the relative concentration of a local regions workers in a specific industry sector to the concentration of workers nationally in the same sector. An LQ equal to 1 signifies that the local share is equal to the national share, while an LQ greater than 1 means the local share is greater than the national share and is typically an exporter or perhaps has a specialization in that sector. Where there is an occupational concentration, there also tends to be higher core competencies relative to other areas, creating a competitive advantage. In addition, training and education opportunities associated with the occupation are often readily available to meet hiring demands.

Illustrated above, Chart 2 lists the top 10 occupations with the highest LQ in Area 10 demonstrating a significant concentration of workers relative to the nation. In 2023, the top occupation by LQ in Area 10 was metal furnace operators, tenders, pourers and casters, with an LQ of 4.32. This suggests the region has more than four times the number of metal furnace operators, tenders, pourers and casters compared to the national average. The second highest occupation by LQ in Area 10 was foaming machine setters, operators and tenders for metal and plastic at 3.21, followed by miscellaneous religious workers with an LQ of 2.7, and model makers and patternmakers for metal and plastic at 2.69.

**Chart 4: Area 10 Households Income**



## Household Income

Area 10, had 365,506 households in 2023. Illustrated in Chart 4, the majority of the 365,506 households had a household income of \$15k-\$50k (32%) or \$50k-\$100k (31%). In 2023, there were 19,300 households (5%) with an income of over \$200k and 37,224 households (10%) with an income of less than \$15k per year.

## Image 2: Average Employee Compensation by County 2023 Data and Dollar Year

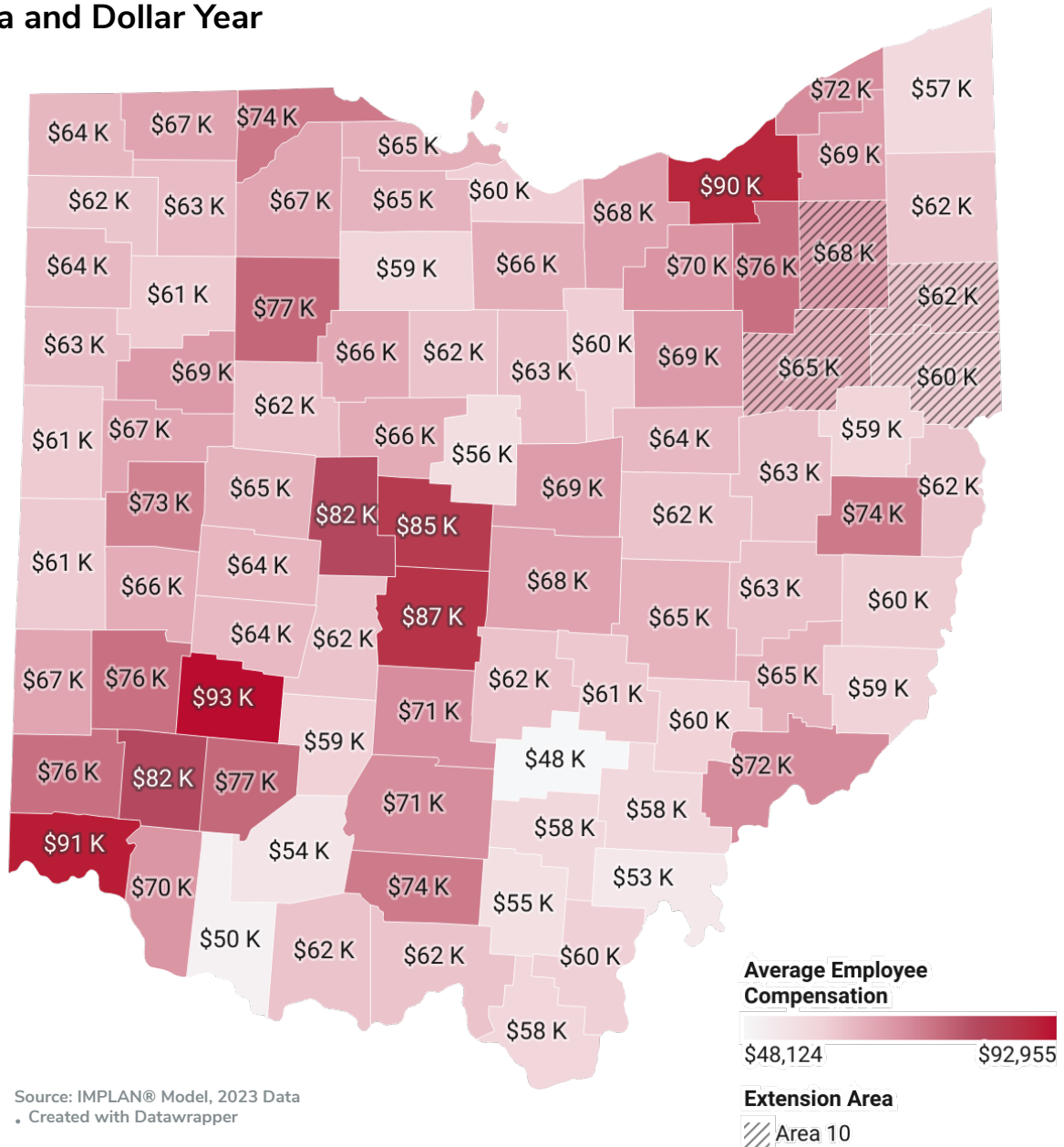


Image 2 illustrates the average employee compensation by county for 2022. Employee Compensation is the total payroll cost of an employee including wages and salaries, all benefits, and payroll taxes. The average employee compensation is calculated as Employee Compensation divided by wage and salary Employment. When comparing counties statewide, Greene County had the highest average employee compensation of \$92,955, while Hocking County posted the lowest county average of \$48,124 in

2023. When combining all Ohio counties, the statewide average employee compensation in 2023 was \$66,126 per worker, which was a 4.1% increase compared to 2022.

Of the counties in Area 10, Portage County had the highest average employee compensation of \$67,931, ranking 28th highest in Ohio. The next highest average employee compensation in Area 10 was Stark County at \$64,979, followed by Mahoning County \$61,559, and Columbiana County \$59,941.



### Modeling Data Source

IMPLAN® model, 2023 Data, using inputs provided by the user and IMPLAN Group LLC, IMPLAN System (data and software), 16905 Northcross Dr., Suite 120, Huntersville, NC 28078. [www.IMPLAN.com](http://www.IMPLAN.com).

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