

# Extension Area 3: Economic Overview

## Ottawa, Erie, Sandusky, Seneca and Huron Counties

Report prepared January 2025 by Kenzie Johnston and Eric Romich, OSU Extension Community Development

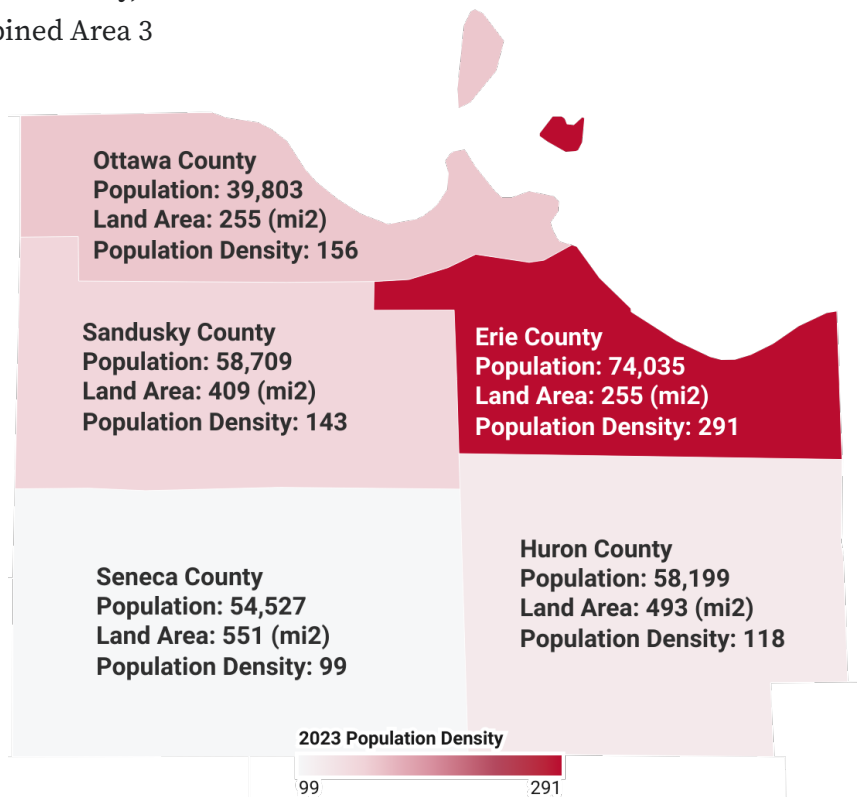
Spring 2025 Edition

### Regional Overview

OSU Extension Area 3 is a five-county area in the north-central part of the state, including Ottawa, Erie, Sandusky, Seneca, and Huron counties. In 2023, the combined Area 3 footprint is 1,962 square miles (mi<sup>2</sup>) supporting a population of 285,573 residents and an overall population density of 145 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, Erie County has the highest population density of 291, followed by Ottawa County with a population density of 156, while Sandusky, Huron, and Seneca counties ranged between 143 to 99 residents per square mile.

Overall, the combined population in Area 3 has remained consistent decreasing slightly by -4.8% from 300,107 in 2001 to a total population of 285,573 in 2023. However, there were some notable shifts in the population trends of individual counties between 2001 and 2023. During this period, Seneca County underwent the largest population decrease of -6.4% to a total of 54,527 in 2023, followed by Erie County and Sandusky County with a population decrease of -6.1% (74,035) and -5.1% (58,709), respectively. Between 2001 and 2023 there were minor shifts in population as Ottawa County had 39,803 residents and Huron County had 58,199 in 2023.

Image 1: OSU Extension Area 3 Population Density



### Key Stats

**Total of 345 Industries**  
**Total Employment of 161,218**  
**Gross Domestic Product \$17.4**

# 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 3 by total output in 2023. Soybean and other oilseed processing was the highest ranked industry with a total output of \$1.5 billion, employing 226 people. Owner-occupied housing was the second ranked industry with a total output of \$1.4 billion. The owner-occupied housing 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 labor or employment income generated in the owner-occupied dwellings sector, as the

employment positions such as property managers and real estate agents are captured in the other real estate sector.

The industry with the third highest output in Area 3 was major household appliance and manufacturing with \$1.1 billion in total output, 1,800 in total employment and an average employee compensation of \$72,872.

Ranked fourth was monetary authorities and depository credit intermediation with a total output of \$999 million.

Of the top 10 industries by total output, the sector with the most employees in the region was limited-service restaurants with 6,229 employees. The average annual income for these workers was \$23,707 per year.

**Table 1: Area 3 Top 10 Industries by Total Output**

Industry Description	Output	Total Employment	Average Employee Compensation
Soybean and other oilseed processing	\$1,503 M	226	\$134,210
Owner-occupied housing	\$1,460 M	N/A	N/A
Major household appliance manufacturing	\$1,103 M	1,800	\$72,872
Monetary authorities and depository credit intermediation	\$999 M	1,655	\$77,105
Hospitals	\$844 M	4,659	\$74,812
Nonferrous metal (exc aluminum) smelting and refining	\$777 M	323	\$120,870
Other real estate	\$746 M	5,518	\$43,114
Other plastics product manufacturing	\$719 M	2,038	\$69,979
Other motor vehicle parts manufacturing	\$713 M	1,412	\$69,731
Limited-service restaurants	\$647 M	6,229	\$23,707

# Area 3 Annual Employment Trends

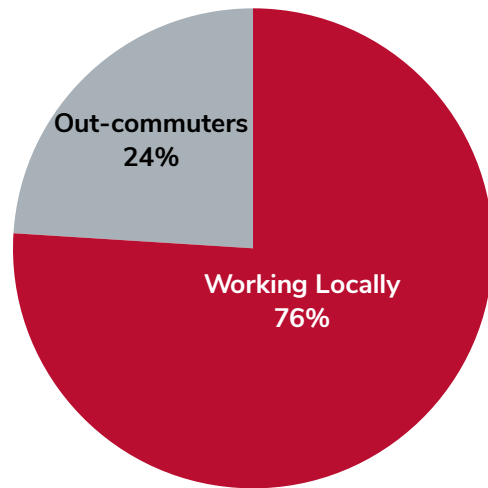
The Total Employment figure reported by IMPLAN represents a full and part-time annual average including the self-employed, all federal, state, and local government employment and military employment (including overseas military).

Chart 1 provides a visual reference of the Area 3 annual employment trends between 2001 and 2022. As shown in the chart, Area 3 experienced even 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 2011 annual employment in Area 3 increased by 3.5% reaching a peak employment of 161,809 jobs in 2022. However, between 2021 and 2022 Area 3 experienced year to year job growth, gaining 8,000 jobs, a 5% increase, leaving an annual employment of 161,809 in 2022. Jobs are down slightly in 2023, reporting 161,218.

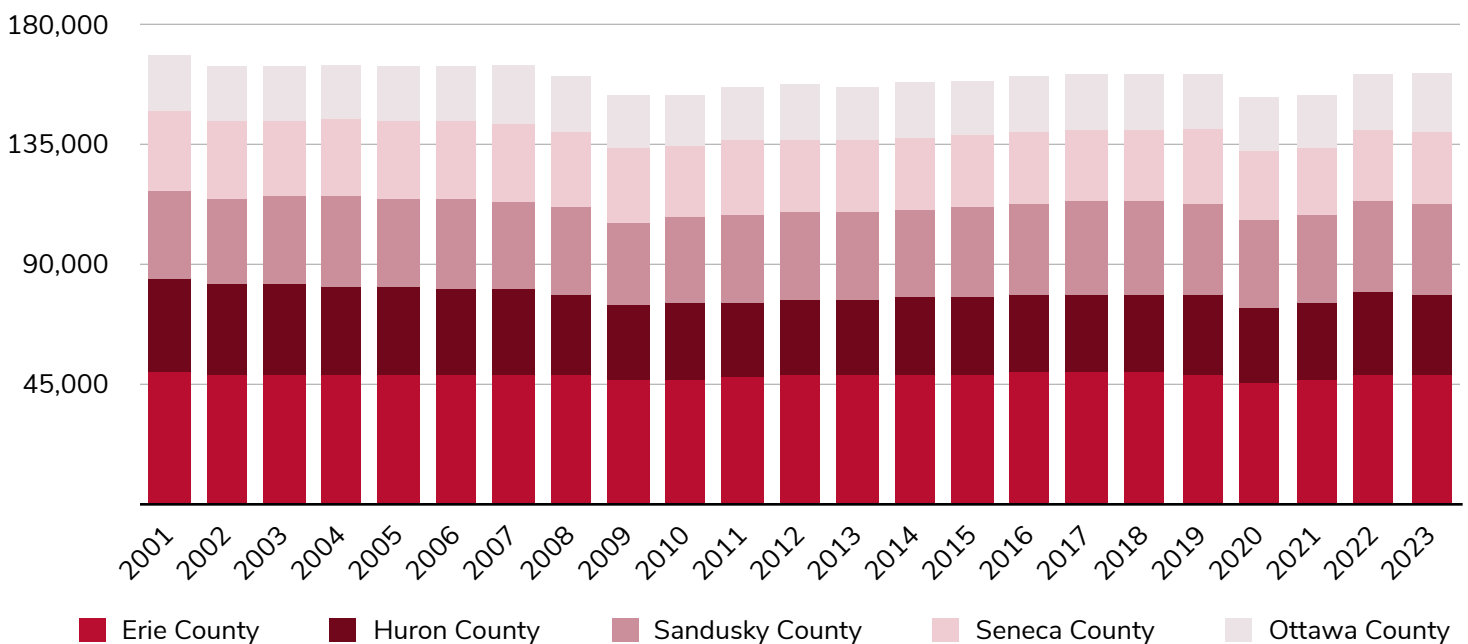
When considering the long-term employment trends by county, Huron County saw the greatest

loss in total employment of -12%, decreasing from 34,506 in 2001 to 30,496 in 2023. Similarly, Seneca County total employment decreased by -9%, from 29,719 jobs in 2001 to 27,146 in 2023. During the same period (2001–2023) Erie County in Area 3 experienced a 3% decline in total employment while Ottawa County had an increase of 3% and Sandusky Counties had a modest increase of 1%.

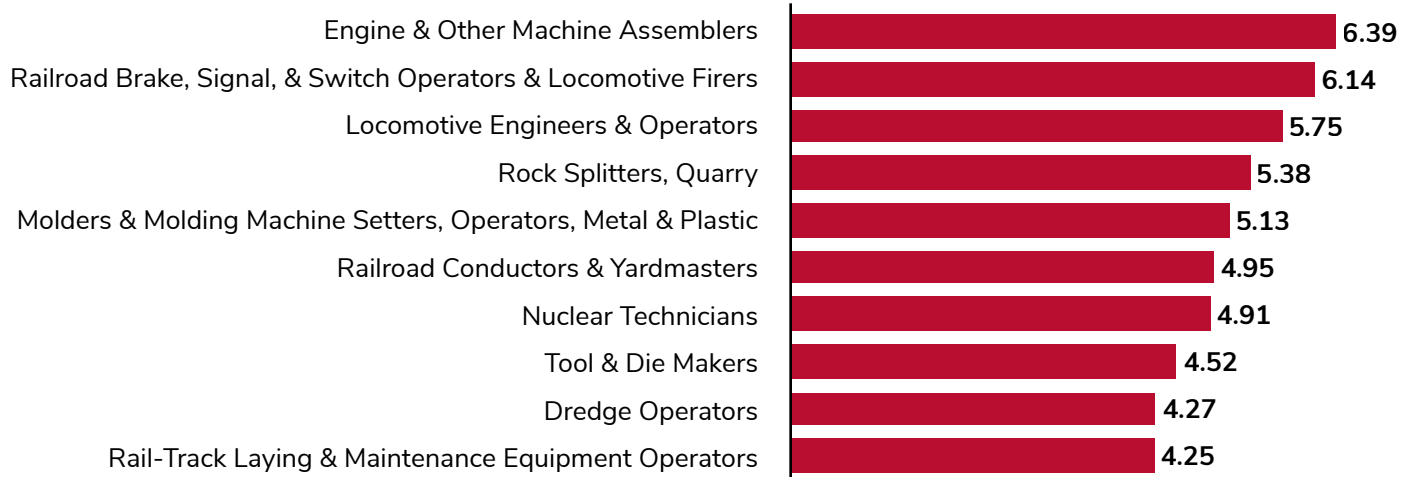
**Chart 1: Area 3 Location of Workforce**



**Chart 2: Area 3 Annual Employment**



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

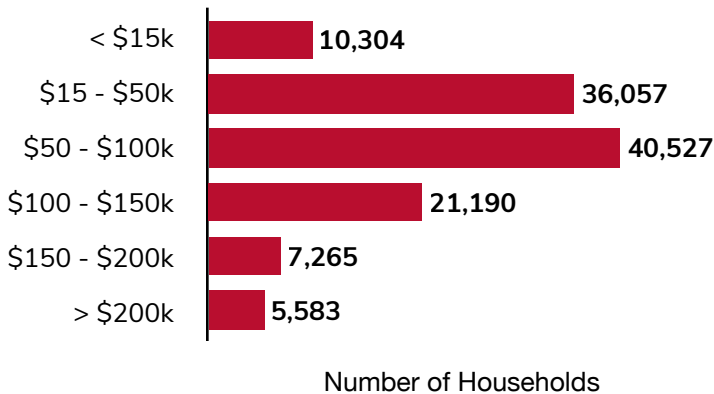


## Occupations by Location Quotient

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 3 demonstrating a significant concentration of workers relative to the nation. In 2023, the top occupation by LQ in Area 3 was engine and other machine assemblers, with an LQ of 6.39. This suggests the region has six times the number of engine and other machine assembler workers compared to the national average. The second highest occupation by LQ in Area 3 was railroad brake, signal, and switch operator workers at 6.14 followed by locomotive engineers and operators with an LQ of 5.75, and rock splitters and quarry workers with an LQ of 5.38.

**Chart 4: Area 3 Households Income**



## Household Income

According to Chart 4, there are roughly 5,583 households with an income of over \$200,000. Much of the Area 3 population falls in the household income range of \$50,000 - \$100,000 with 40,527 households falling within that range. There are 10,304 households that have an income of less than \$15,000 per year.



# Image 2: Average Employee Compensation by County

## 2023 Data and Dollar Year

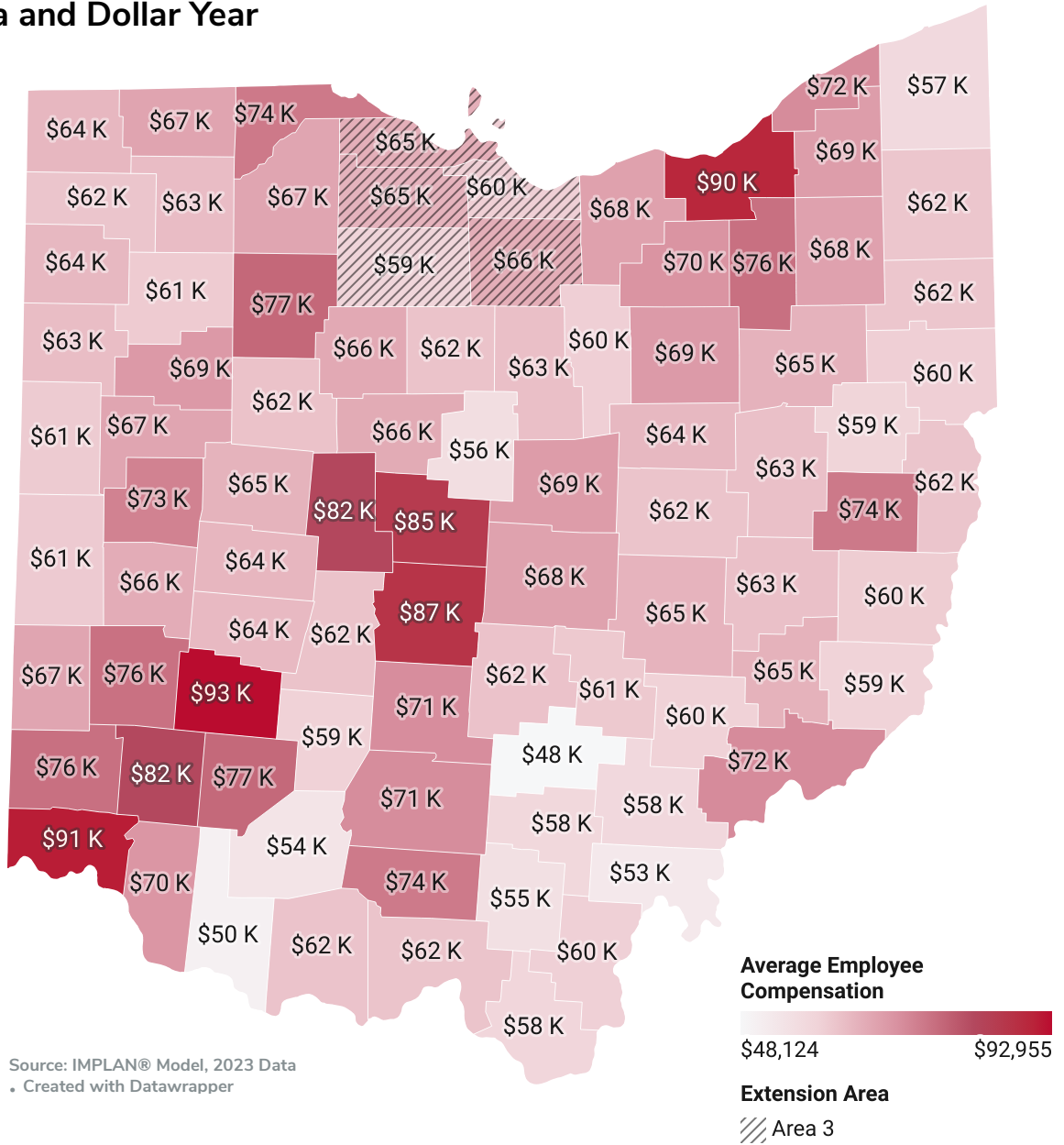


Image 2 illustrates the average employee compensation by county for 2023. Employee Compensation is the total payroll cost of an employee including wages and salaries, all benefits, and payroll taxes. The average employee compensation is calculated as Employee Compensation divided by wage and salary Employment. When comparing counties statewide, Hamilton County had the highest average employee compensation of \$92,955, while Brown 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 5% increase compared to 2022. Of the counties in Area 3, Ottawa County had the highest average employee compensation of \$65,488. The next highest average employee compensation in Area 3 was Huron County (\$65,750) followed by Sandusky County (\$64,826), Erie County (\$60,010), and Seneca County (\$58,553).



### 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).

### OSU Extension IMPLAN Team

Eric Romich, Professor, OSU Extension, Field Specialist. Email: [romich.2@osu.edu](mailto:romich.2@osu.edu))

Nancy Bowen-Ellzey, Associate Professor, OSU Extension, Field Specialist. Email: [bowen-ellzey.1@osu.edu](mailto:bowen-ellzey.1@osu.edu)

Joe Lucente, Associate Professor, OSU Extension, Community Development and Ohio Sea Grant College Program. Email: [lucente.6@osu.edu](mailto:lucente.6@osu.edu)

Amanda Osborne, Extension Educator, OSU Extension Community Development, Cuyahoga County. Email: [osborne.414@osu.edu](mailto:osborne.414@osu.edu)

Kenzie Johnston, Extension Educator, OSU Extension Community Development, Delaware County. Email: [johnston.589@osu.edu](mailto:johnston.589@osu.edu)

Kyle White, Extension Educator, OSU Extension Community Development, Medina County. Email: [white.2811@osu.edu](mailto:white.2811@osu.edu)

Jerold Thomas, Extension Educator, OSU Extension Community Development. Email: [thomas.69@osu.edu](mailto:thomas.69@osu.edu)

### OSU Extension Community Development Mission:

We help communities enhance their well-being and create social, economic and environmental conditions in which they can thrive.

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information, visit [cfaesdiversity.osu.edu](http://cfaesdiversity.osu.edu). For an accessible format of this publication, visit [cfaes.osu.edu/accessibility](http://cfaes.osu.edu/accessibility).