

Extension Area 8: Economic Overview

Hardin, Wyandot, Marion, Crawford, and Richland Counties

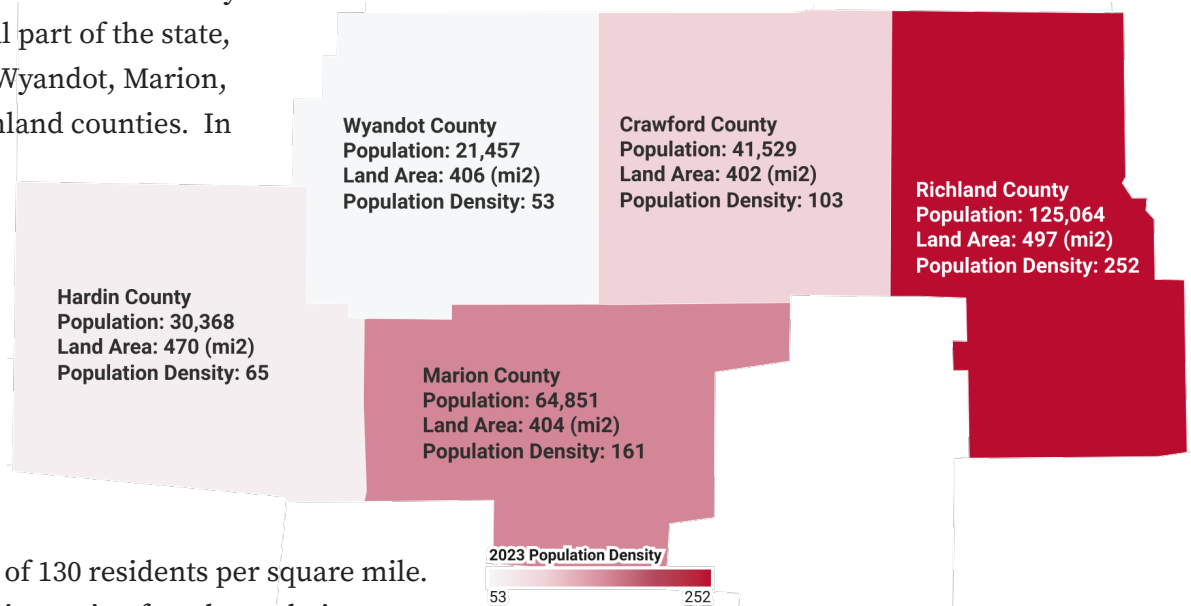
Report prepared January 2025 by Kenzie Johnston and Eric Romich, OSU Extension Community Development

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Regional Overview

OSU Extension Area 8 is a five-county area in the north-central part of the state, including Hardin, Wyandot, Marion, Crawford, and Richland counties. In 2023, the combined Area 8 footprint was 2,179 square miles (mi²) supporting a population of 283,269 residents and an overall population density of 130 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, Richland County had the highest population density of 252, while Marion County was the second highest at 161, followed by Crawford County 103, Hardin County 65, and Wyandot County with 53 residents per square mile.

Image 1: OSU Extension Area 8 Population Density



Key Stats

- Total of 322 Industries**
- Total Employment of 138,710**
- Gross Domestic Product \$14.3 B**

Overall, the combined population in Area 8 remained consistent, yet it decreased slightly by -4% from 295,194 in 2001 to a total population of 283,296 in 2023. However, there were some notable shifts in the population trends of individual counties between 2001 and 2023. Crawford County experienced the greatest amount of loss as the population decreased by -11% from 46,594 in 2001 to 41,529 in 2023. During this period, Wyandot County also underwent a population decline of -5% to a total of 21,457 in 2023, while Hardin County had a population decrease of -4% to a total of 30,368 in 2023. Between 2001 and 2023 there were minor shifts in the population for Marion County with 64,851 residents and Richland County had a population of 125,064 in 2023.

Regional Industry Sector Overview

IMPLAN defines 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. The total Area 8 output from all industries increased by 17% from 27 billion in 2021 to 32 billion in 2022.

Table 1 below ranks the top 10 industries in Area 8 by total output in 2023. Owner-occupied housing had the third greatest total output at \$1,340 million. 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 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.

Iron and steel mills and ferroalloy manufacturing was the second highest ranked industry with a total output of \$1,306 million, supporting 663 jobs, and an average employee compensation of \$134,743. Hospitals ranked third with an output of \$850 million, employing 4,324 people and an average compensation of \$87,820. This is up by nearly 17% in total output, adding 655 jobs from the previous year, an increase of 18%.

The Nitrogenous fertilizer manufacturing recorded the fourth highest total output in Area 8 with a total output of \$778 million, supporting 378 jobs, and an average employee compensation of \$122,852 per year.

Of the top 10 industries by total output, the sector with the most employees in the region was the sector of employment and payroll of local government and education with 7,016 employees. The average annual income for these workers was \$68,205 per year.



Table 1: Area 8 Top 10 Industries by Total Output

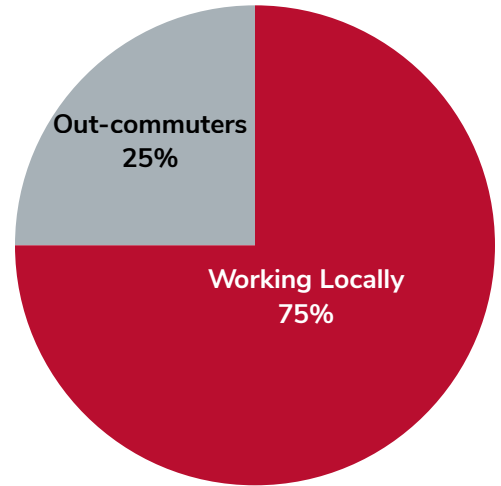
Industry Description	Output	Total Employment	Average Employee Compensation
Owner-occupied housing	\$1,340 M	N/A	N/A
Iron and steel mills and ferroalloy manufacturing	\$1,306 M	663.48	\$134,743
Hospitals	\$850 M	4,324	\$87,820
Nitrogenous fertilizer manufacturing	\$779 M	378	\$122,852
Monetary authorities and depository credit intermediation	\$728 M	1,339	\$67,092
Major household appliance manufacturing	\$727 M	1,200	\$70,540
Other real estate	\$649 M	4,632	\$50,441
Other motor vehicle parts manufacturing	\$632 M	1,240	\$73,715
Paperboard container manufacturing	\$603 M	1,079	\$73,582
* Employment and payroll of local govt, education	\$564 M	7,016	\$68,205

Area 8 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 8 annual employment trends between 2001 and 2023. As shown in the chart, Area 8 experienced slight decline in employment between 2001 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. Between 2010 and 2019 the annual employment in Area 8 increased slightly by 3% from 138,259 in 2010 to 142,230 in 2019. However, between 2019 and 2021 Area 8 experienced a -5% year to year job loss, loosing 6,756 jobs, leaving an annual employment of 134,981 in 2021. Most recently, the year-to-year employment in Area 8 increased by 3,074 between 2021 and 2022. Even more jobs were added in 2023, bringing the new total up to 138,707.

Chart 1: Area 8 Location of Workforce



In 2023, Richland County accounted for 46% of the total employment in Area 8, followed by Marion County with 22%, Crawford County at 13%, and Wyandot County contributing 10%, and Hardin County at 9% of the total. When considering the short-term 5-year employment trends of individual counties from 2019 to 2023, Marion County experienced a decline in total employment of -1,400 jobs, Richland County lost -1,045 jobs, while Hardin County lost -844 jobs, Crawford County lost -458 jobs. During the same period Wyandot County each experienced a slight increase in employment of 271 jobs.

Chart 2: Area 8 Annual Employment

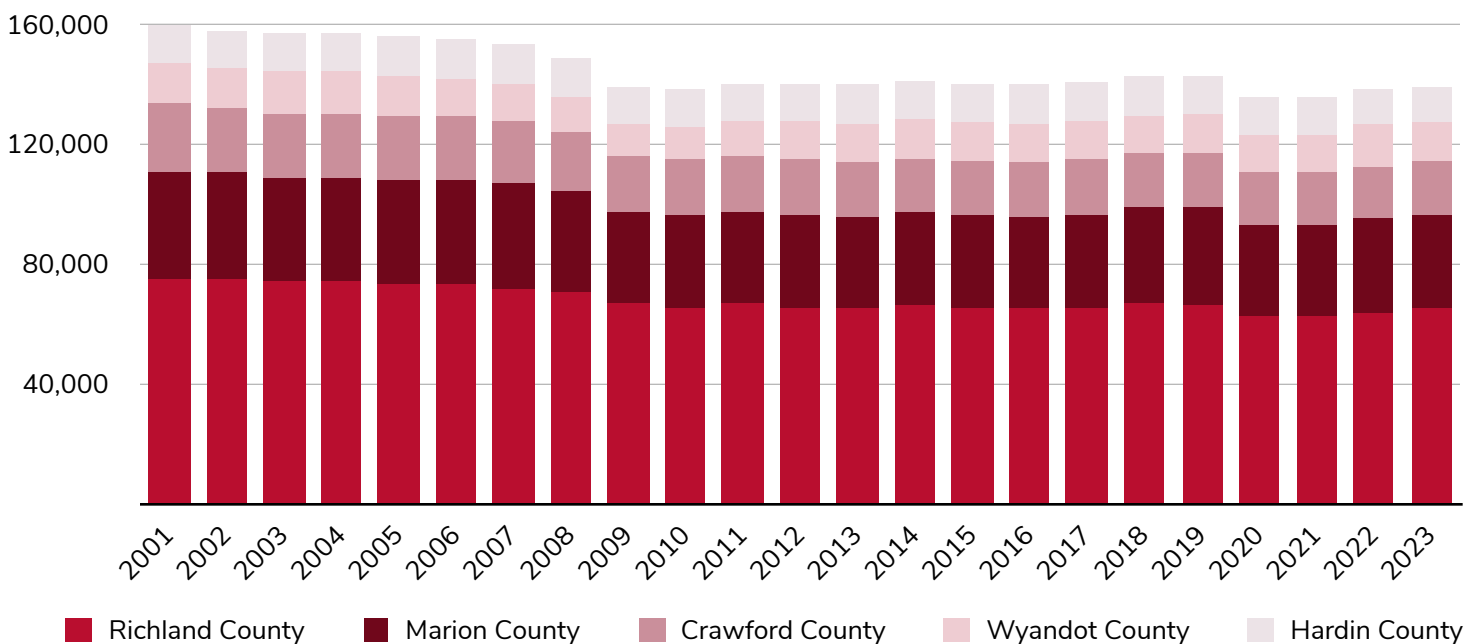
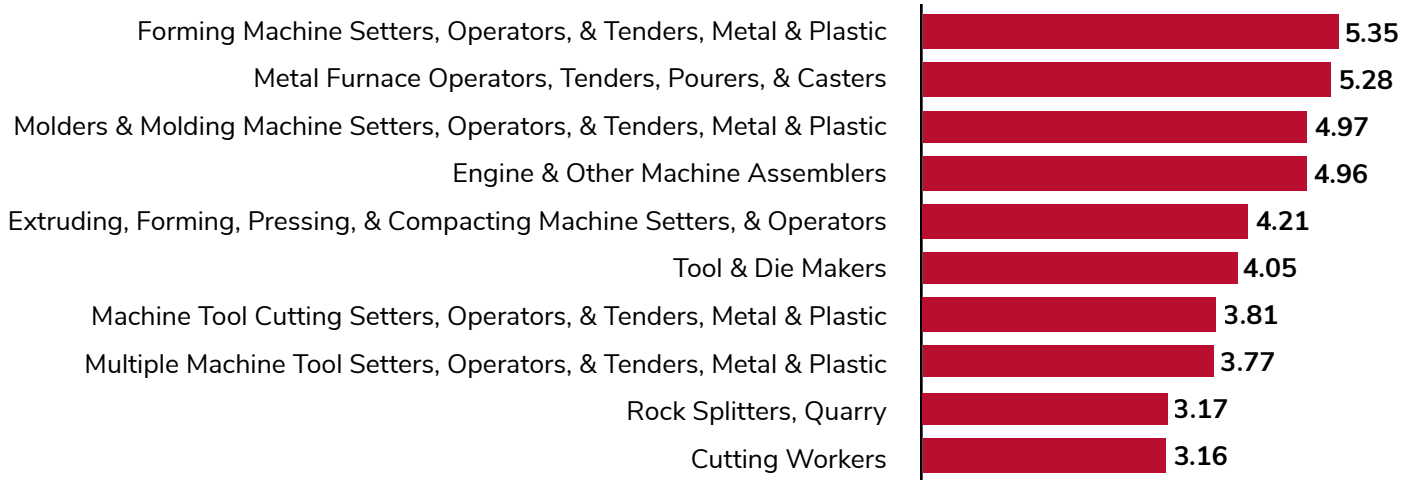


Chart 3: Area 8 Top 10 Occupations by Location Quotient

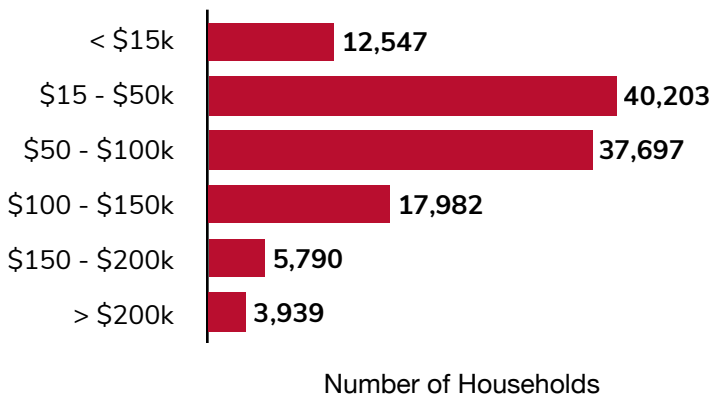


Occupations by Location Quotient

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 8 demonstrating a significant concentration of workers relative to the nation. In 2023, the top occupation by LQ in Area 8 was metal and plastics forming machine setters, operators, tenders, with an LQ of 5.35. This suggests the region has more than five times the number of workers in that industry compared to the national average. The second highest occupation by LQ in Area 8 was metal furnace operators, tenders, pourers and casters at 5.28, followed by molders and molding machine setters, operators, tenders, metal and plastic at 4.97, engine and other machine assemblers at 4.96 and extruding, forming, pressing, and compacting machine setters, operators, and tenders with an LQ of 4.21.

Chart 4: Area 8 Households Income



Household Income

According to Chart 4, there are roughly 3,939 households with an income of over \$200,000. Much of the Area 8 population falls in the household income range of \$15,000 - \$50,000 with 40,203 households falling within that range. There are 12,547 households that have an income of less than \$15,000 per year.

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

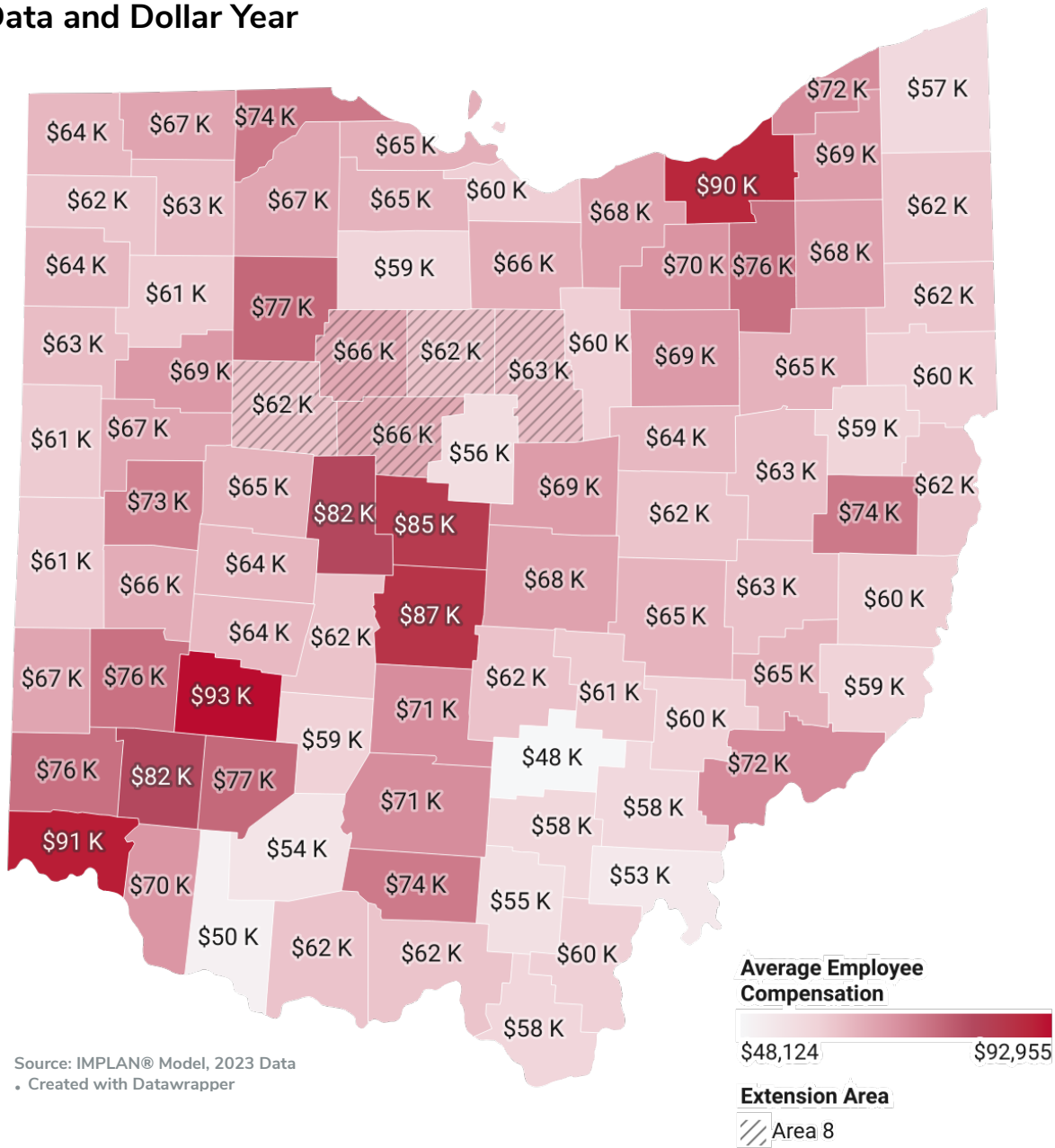


Image 2 illustrates the average employee compensation by county for 2023. Employee Compensation is the total payroll cost of an employee including wages and salaries, all benefits, and payroll taxes. The average employee compensation is calculated as Employee Compensation divided by wage and salary Employment. 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 8, Wyandot County had the highest average employee compensation of \$66,496. The next highest average employee compensation in Area 8 was Marion County at \$66,306, followed by Richland County \$62,722, Hardin County \$62,227, and Crawford County \$62,070.



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.

OSU Extension IMPLAN Team

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

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

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

Amanda Osborne, Extension Educator, OSU Extension Community Development, Cuyahoga County. Email: osborne.414@osu.edu

Kenzie Johnston, Extension Educator, OSU Extension Community Development, Delaware County. Email: johnston.589@osu.edu

Kyle White, Extension Educator, OSU Extension Community Development, Medina County. Email: white.2811@osu.edu

Jerold Thomas, Extension Educator, OSU Extension Community Development. Email: 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.