



Benchmarking Central Ohio 2009 Overview and Highlights

March 2009

About the project

Benchmarking Central Ohio 2009 assesses how the 8-county Columbus metropolitan area¹ is doing, in comparison to 15 other metro areas², using a panel of 61 diverse indicators. The indicators focus on four broad areas—population vitality, economic strength, personal prosperity, and community well-being—each of which describes a facet of the community that contributes to economic competitiveness. The research was commissioned by The Columbus Partnership, a CEO organization of 30 top business and community leaders in central Ohio whose mission is to improve the economy of central Ohio and be a catalyst for growth in the region. The report was prepared by Community Research Partners (CRP), a nonprofit research center that strengthens Ohio communities through data, information, and knowledge.

Benchmarking 2009 represents the third year of the project. Although three years do not necessarily represent a definitive trend, this report provides the latest data available and continues the process of tracking trends over time. As in the past, we strive to maintain consistency in the data to allow comparisons with data in previous reports; however, some changes were made based on feedback from the Benchmarking Advisory Group and data availability. The following are new in the 2009 report:

- **New Patterns across Indicators charts:** For the Patterns across Indicators charts, the key indicator was changed for three of the sections. The new key indicators are High Tech Industries, Foreclosures, and Volunteering
- **New Benchmarking 2007 to 2009 Trends chart:** A new Columbus trend chart shows how the Columbus metro area's rankings have moved up or down relative to the other metros.
- **New and revised indicators:** Volunteering was added as a new indicator in the 2009 report, and the Arts Establishments indicator was revised to distinguish larger cultural institutions. These are explained further in Appendix A.
- **Data source changes:** There are some changes in data definitions, methodologies, and sources that may impact comparisons between the 2009 and the previous two reports. These are explained in the indicator definition and Appendix A.

The full *Benchmarking Central Ohio 2009* report can be downloaded from the Columbus Partnership website, www.columbuspartnership.com, or from the Community Research Partners website, www.communityresearchpartners.org. For more information about the project, contact The Columbus Partnership at 614-225-0500 or CRP at 614-224-5917, ext. 100.

¹ Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Morrow, Pickaway, Union counties

² Austin, Charlotte, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Louisville, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Nashville, Portland OR, Raleigh, San Diego

The Columbus Metro Area Profile³

1. Population Vitality

Indicators of population growth, racial and ethnic diversity, and age diversity

Compared to the other metros, Columbus had moderate population growth, a young population, and less racial and ethnic diversity.

- **Moderate population growth:** The Columbus metro area population growth ranked 8th among the 16 metros and ranked 7th in the birth rate.
- **A younger population:** Columbus was the 4th youngest in median age and 5th lowest in persons age 65+.
- **Less racial and ethnic diversity overall, but many new immigrants:** Columbus ranked 11th in percent foreign born and 13th percent minority population; but 2nd in percent of *new* foreign-born residents (those who entered the U.S. in 2000 or after).

2. Economic Strength

Indicators of industry and occupation distribution, business and employment growth, investment, productivity, and the workforce

The Columbus metro area's economic strength indicators showed a positive picture, with approximately equal numbers of top and middle tier rankings, and few bottom tier rankings.

Columbus Top Tier Rankings (rank 1-5):

- **Job distribution:** Columbus had high concentrations of employment in the government (#4); professional and business services (#4); financial activities (#4); and transportation, warehousing, and utilities (#3) sectors.
- **Job growth:** The Columbus metro far outpaced all other metros (#1) in employment increase in the transportation, warehousing and utilities sector.
- **Large companies:** Columbus ranked 4th in the number of Fortune 1,000 companies.
- **Occupations:** Columbus ranked in the top tier in percent sales and office occupations (#4); management, professional, and related occupations (#5); and IT occupations (#3).
- **Workforce:** Columbus ranks in the top tier in 18-24 year olds enrolled in higher education (#3), percent population age 25-34 (#2), and new residents with a bachelor's degree (#1).
- **Unemployment:** Columbus had a relatively low unemployment rate (#3 rank).

Columbus Bottom Tier Rankings (rank 12-16):

- **Job growth/loss:** Columbus ranked near the bottom in job change in the manufacturing (#12), retail trade (#16), and financial activities (#12) sectors.
- **Employer business firms:** Columbus had a low ranking in employment change in all business firms (#15) and in the change in the number of business firms (#12).
- **Very small businesses:** Columbus ranked low (#13) in small business (fewer than 20 employees) birth to death ratio, and 13th in "births" of very small businesses.
- **Venture capital:** Columbus ranked 12th in venture capital investment over a 10-year period.

³ In most cases, a #1 ranking indicates both "highest" and "best," and a #16 ranking indicates both "lowest" and "worst." For some indicators (e.g. unemployment, poverty, crime), the lowest number is best. In these cases, data are ranked with the lowest number as #1 and the highest number as #16.

3. Personal Prosperity

Indicators of personal income, economic hardship, homeownership and housing affordability, and economic equity.

The Columbus metro area's personal prosperity indicators nearly all fell in the bottom half of the rankings, with only 2 top tier rankings among the 17 indicators, and 11 bottom tier rankings.

Columbus Top Tier Rankings (rank 1-5):

- **Income gap:** Columbus had a smaller gap between the top and bottom income groups (#5) than many of the other metros.
- **Housing affordability:** Columbus ranked 4th in owner housing affordability.

Columbus Bottom Tier Rankings (rank 12-16):

- **Income:** Columbus ranked low in median household income (#13), households with incomes above \$75,000 (#12), and investment income as a percent of personal income (#15).
- **Poverty, public assistance, and self-sufficiency income:** Columbus ranked at the bottom in persons below the poverty level (#16) and near the bottom in persons receiving public assistance (#14). Columbus ranked #12 in persons with incomes below 200% of poverty.
- **Births to teens:** Columbus ranked low (#15) in births to unmarried women age 15-29.
- **Housing:** Columbus had a low ranking in home foreclosures (#13) and homeownership (#12).
- **Pre-K enrollment:** Columbus ranked 13th in 3- and 4-year olds enrolled in school.
- **Home internet use:** Columbus was near the bottom (#15) in use of the Internet at home.

4. Community Wellbeing

Indicators of health, safety, civic life, transportation, environmental quality, and cultural and leisure activities.

The Columbus metro area's community wellbeing indicator rankings were spread across the board, with no large groupings in any of the tiers.

Columbus Top Tier Rankings (rank 1-5):

- **Hospitals:** Columbus ranked 4th in the number of hospital beds per 100,000 population.
- **Volunteering:** Columbus had a high rate of persons reporting volunteer activity (#4) and average annual volunteer hours (#5).
- **Commute times:** Columbus had fewer workers who commute 25+ minutes (#3) and low hours of traffic delay per person (#5).
- **Libraries and sports:** Columbus ranked 2nd in library circulation and library collections (#4) and 5th in the number of professional sports teams.
- **Air quality:** Columbus had a high ranking in days with good air quality days (#5) and unhealthy air quality days (#1).

Columbus Bottom Tier Rankings (rank 12-16):

- **Obesity:** Columbus ranked last in adults who are obese (#16).
- **Property crime:** Columbus was in the bottom tier in the property crime rate (#12)
- **Public transit usage:** Columbus ranked low (#14) in change in public transit usage and passenger miles (#14).

- **Carpooling:** Columbus ranked near the bottom (#15) in carpooling as a means to commute to work.
- **Wi-Fi:** Columbus had a low ranking (#13) in the number of per capita Wi-Fi hot spots.
- **Arts establishments:** Columbus ranked near the bottom (15th) in number of arts establishments per capita and in the number of performing arts companies (#13)..
- **Local government:** Columbus ranked in the bottom tier (#12) in the number of local government units per 100,000 population.

Columbus 3-Year Trends

One objective of the Benchmarking project is to monitor how Columbus performs against other performance, but due to an improvement or worsening of performance in other regions.

The following table provides an overview of these trends. For most of the indicator groupings the trends are mixed, with some rankings going up and some going down. However, the Personal Prosperity indicators show a clear downward trend, with 10 indicator rankings moving down and only one moving up.

| Indicator Grouping | Number of Indicators with: | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|
| | Rank going up | Rank going down | Mixed movement | No change |
| Population Vitality | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Economic Strength | 5 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| Personal Prosperity | 1 | 10 | 2 | 4 |
| Community Wellbeing | 7 | 7 | 1 | 2 |

Three indicators are not included because data is only available for one year. See report for methodology used to determine trends and trends by indicator.

How the Indicators Reflect Current Economic Conditions

In the 2009 report, a number of the business and housing indicators reflect decline in economic conditions across all 16 metro areas, mirroring current affairs in the national economy. Since some of the data in the report are 2-3 years old, this means that the beginning of current economic problems could be seen in some cases several years ago. These economic conditions were evident in the following indicators:

- Six metro areas had a net loss of business firms, compared to two in the 2008 report
- All metro areas had increased unemployment rates
- 13 metros had an increase in foreclosure rates
- 15 metros had a drop in residential building permits
- Owner housing became more affordable across all metro areas

Patterns Across Indicators

The beginning of each of the four sections of *Benchmarking 2009* has a graphic that lines up the metro areas based on their ranking on one key indicator from that section and shows other indicators with rankings most and least similar to that key indicator. The following tables provide an overview of these Patterns Across Indicators matrices.

1. How does the Columbus metro area (rank #8) compare to high population growth metros and low population growth metros?

| Highest growth metros | Lowest growth metros |
|--|---|
| Raleigh (1), Austin (2), Charlotte (3), Nashville (4), Jacksonville (5) | Cincinnati (12), Chicago (13), San Diego (14), Milwaukee (15), Cleveland (16) |
| <p><i>Columbus is similar to highest growth metros in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low population age 65+ • Low median age • High transportation, warehousing, and utility sector job growth • Low percent investment income • Low percent of children age 3-4 enrolled in school • High percent of adults who are obese | <p><i>Columbus is similar to lowest growth metros in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low change in number of business firms • Low small business births • High new residents with graduate degrees • High owner housing affordability • Low workers who commute 25+ minutes • High library circulation |
| <p><i>Other "top tier" characteristics of highest growth metros:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High change in number of business firms • High small business births • High venture capital • High prime working age population • High number of professional and business services employment growth • High residential building permits • Low households without a vehicle | |

Indicator 1.01: Percent population change, 2002-2007 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates)

2. How does the Columbus metro area (rank #10) compare to metros with high, High Tech Location Quotients and metros with low, High Tech Location Quotients?

| Most high tech metros | Least high tech metros |
|---|---|
| Austin (1), Portland (2), San Diego (3), Raleigh (4), Indianapolis (5) | Cincinnati (12), Jacksonville (13), Charlotte (14), Cleveland (15), Louisville (16) |
| <p><i>Columbus is similar to highest high tech metros in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low median age • High percent of management and professional occupations • Low percent investment income • Low percent of children ages 3-4 enrolled in school • Low homeownership • Low public transportation usage | <p><i>Columbus is similar to lowest high tech metros in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low persons per household • Low median household income • Low percent of households with income \$75,000+ • High people per Wi-Fi hotspot • High transportation, warehousing, and utilities employment • High transportation, warehousing, and utilities job growth • High housing affordability • High percent of workers who commute 25+ minutes |
| <p><i>Other “top tier” characteristics of most high tech metros:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High foreign born population • High persons per household • High persons 25+ with graduate degree • High median household income • High households with income \$75,000+ • Low tax returns claiming Earned Income Tax Credit • Low adults who smoke • Low people per Wi-Fi hotspot | |

Indicator 2.08: High Tech GDP Location Quotient, 2007 (Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007)

3. How does the Columbus metro area (rank #13) compare to low foreclosure metros and high foreclosure metros?

| Lowest foreclosure metros | Highest foreclosure metros |
|---|--|
| Austin (1), Raleigh (2), Minneapolis (3), Portland (4), Louisville (5) | Cleveland (12), Columbus (13), Indianapolis (14), Jacksonville (15), San Diego (16) |
| <p><i>Columbus is similar to lowest foreclosure rate metros in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low persons age 65 and older • High management and professional occupations • High persons who volunteer • Low percent investment income • Low percent of children ages 3-4 enrolled in school | <p><i>Columbus is similar to highest foreclosure rate metros in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low arts establishments • High professional and business services employment • High transportation, warehousing and utilities employment • High owner housing affordability • High workers walking, biking, or using public transportation • High library circulation |
| <p><i>Other “top tier” characteristics of lowest foreclosure metros:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High venture capital investment • High population of prime working age • High residential building permits • Low renter housing affordability • Low adults who smoke • High tax returns with charitable contributions • High arts establishments per 1,000 population | |

Indicator 3.14: Number of households per foreclosure, 2008 (Source: RealtyTrac: U.S. Metropolitan Foreclosure Market Report, 3rd quarter 2008)

4. How does the Columbus metro area (rank #4) compare to high volunteer metros and low volunteer metros?

| Highest volunteer metros | Lowest volunteer metros |
|--|--|
| Minneapolis (1), Portland (2), Austin (3), Columbus (4), Milwaukee (5) | Nashville (1), San Diego (2), Raleigh (3), Chicago (4), Jacksonville (5) |
| <p><i>Columbus is similar to highest volunteer metros in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High management and professional occupations • Low unemployment rate • Low income gap ratio • High days with good air quality • Low minority population • Low change in number of business firms • High persons below poverty level • High teen births • Low percent of children ages 3-4 enrolled in school • High government units per 1,000 population • Low change in public transportation usage | <p><i>Columbus is similar to lowest volunteer metros in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High foreclosures • High professional and business services sector employment |
| <p><i>Other “top tier” characteristics of highest volunteer metros:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High per capita income • Low tax returns claiming Earned Income Tax Credits • Low adults without health insurance • High tax returns claiming charitable contributions • High workers walking, biking, or using public transportation | |

Indicator 4.15: Overall Volunteer rate, 2005-2007 (Source: Corporation for National and Community Service, 2005-2007);

The volunteer rate is defined as the percentage of individuals who responded on the Current Population Survey’s Volunteer Supplement that they had performed unpaid volunteer activities at any point during the 12-month period that preceded the survey.