Regionomics® ColumbusForecast**2025**

From Trends to Insight to Action

## Columbus Forecast: Yet Another Below-Average Year

U.S. economic and employment growth will slow in 2025 given the continued efforts to combat inflation. The economic policies of the new administration and their effects remain uncertain.

Workforce shortages and skill mismatches continued to dog major parts of the Columbus metropolitan statistical area (MSA) economy in 2024, resulting in overall employment growth far below average for a third year. Worker shortages will persist in 2025. The forecast is for growth of 4,500 (0.4%).

MSA employment grew 5,200 (0.5%) in 2024. This includes Regionomics adjustments to preliminary Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates in some sectors.

U.S. employment increased 1.6% in 2024. National forecasters expect a 2025 net employment gain of 1.0%.

Ohio employment increased 0.8% in 2024. Administrative support, private education, and other services employment outperformed the U.S., while financial activities, professional and technical services, management of companies, and state government were notably weak.
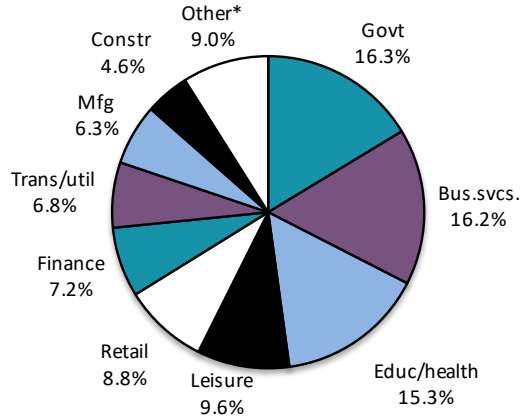

Total Columbus MSA Employment
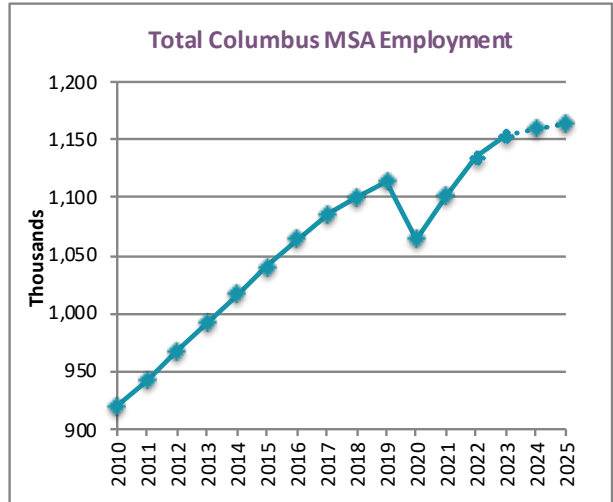
2025 Regionomics® Columbus MSA Forecast

Sector	Percentage change, 2023-2024			MSA employment		MSA Change, 2024-25	
	MSA	Ohio	U.S.	2024	2025	Number	Pct.
Total	**0.5%**	**0.8%**	**1.6%**	**1,159,200**	**1,163,800**	**4,500**	**0.4%**
Construction and mining	5.3%	2.6%	2.6%	53,000	55,100	2,200	4.1%
Manufacturing	(1.7%)	(0.3%)	(0.1%)	73,100	72,500	(700)	(0.9%)
Wholesale trade	(3.0%)	0.4%	0.9%	41,700	41,500	(200)	(0.5%)
Retail trade	(1.4%)	(1.0%)	0.4%	101,900	100,800	(1,100)	(1.1%)
Transportation and utilities	(1.5%)	0.8%	0.6%	78,500	77,700	(800)	(1.0%)
Information	(3.3%)	(3.1%)	(0.7%)	17,800	17,200	(600)	(3.5%)
Financial activities	(1.5%)	(2.9%)	0.5%	83,900	82,900	(1,000)	(1.2%)
Professional and business svcs.	(1.4%)	0.2%	0.5%	187,700	185,300	(2,400)	(1.3%)
Professional and tech. services	(0.1%)	0.2%	1.7%	75,700	75,900	200	0.3%
Management of companies	(1.7%)	(1.2%)	0.1%	38,900	38,400	(500)	(1.2%)
Admin. support and waste svcs.	(3.0%)	0.9%	(0.8%)	72,600	70,900	(1,700)	(2.3%)
Education and health services	4.3%	3.9%	3.9%	177,500	182,700	5,200	3.0%
Private educational services	2.5%	2.9%	1.5%	19,300	19,600	300	1.6%
Healthcare and social services	4.4%	4.0%	4.4%	158,100	163,200	5,100	3.2%
Leisure and hospitality	0.5%	0.7%	2.1%	110,800	111,100	300	0.3%
Other services	2.7%	2.9%	1.4%	44,300	44,800	500	1.2%
Government	2.0%	0.7%	2.7%	189,400	192,100	2,600	1.4%
Federal government	3.1%	2.4%	2.4%	15,200	15,400	300	1.9%
State government	1.5%	(1.0%)	3.0%	80,800	81,700	900	1.1%
Local government	2.0%	1.7%	2.2%	93,500	94,900	1,400	1.5%

Regionomics estimates of 2024 MSA employment in blue. Employment totals and changes rounded to the nearest hundred.

About this Forecast and Regionomics®

This is the 26th annual Columbus MSA forecast by Bill LaFayette, Ph.D., founder and owner, Regionomics®.

Regionomics is a Columbus-based economic and workforce strategy firm focusing on community and regional economies, employment analysis and forecasting, fiscal analysis, and economic and workforce policy.

Dr. LaFayette has 30 years of experience in Central Ohio economic analysis and development. Before founding Regionomics in 2011, he spent 12 years as vice president of economic analysis at the Columbus Chamber and four years with Rickenbacker Port Authority. He is currently an adjunct faculty member of The Ohio State University's John Glenn College of Public Affairs.

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Columbus MSA Employment Distribution

- Other* 9.0%
- Govt 16.3%
- Constr 4.6%
- Mfg 6.3%
- Trans/util 6.8%
- Bus.svcs. 16.2%
- Finance 7.2%
- Retail 8.8%
- Leisure 9.6%
- Educ/health 15.3%

*Wholesale trade, other services, and information.

Cumulative Change, Jan. 2010 - Nov. 2024

Index: 1/2010 = 100

Columbus MSA — Ohio — US
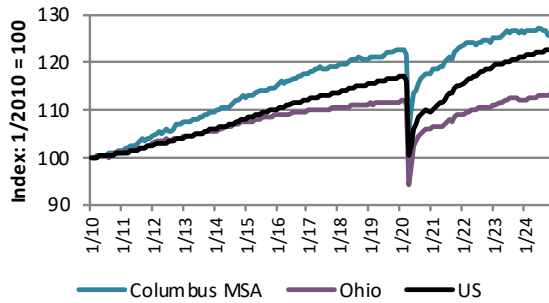
The past two years of employment estimates are preliminary. The forecast includes adjusting likely misestimations. One result is that the 24,000-job loss over the past six months may have been less severe than BLS estimates suggest.

Construction & Mining Employment


Thousands
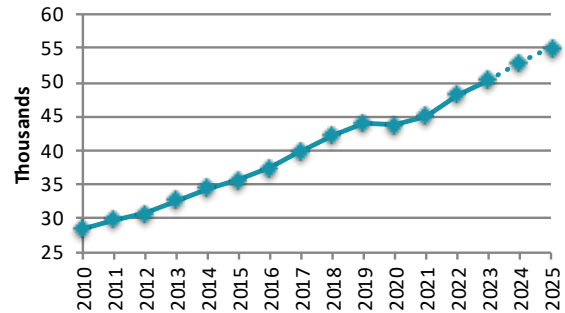
Construction will continue as a bright spot in 2025 as work on numerous large and small projects continues. Workers commuting long distances or temporarily relocating mitigate the regional workforce shortage.

Manufacturing Employment

Thousands
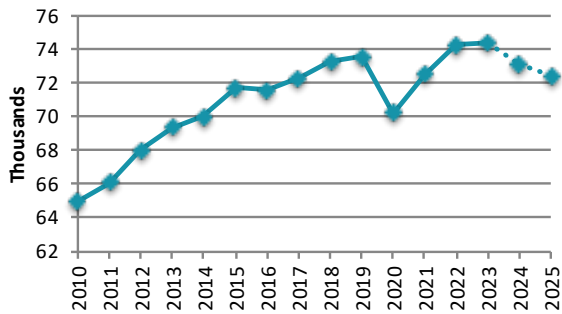
Manufacturing has been much weaker in the MSA than elsewhere, although probably not as weak as BLS estimates suggest. Slowing demand and sticky interest rates will continue to create headwinds for the sector.

Wholesale Trade Employment

Thousands
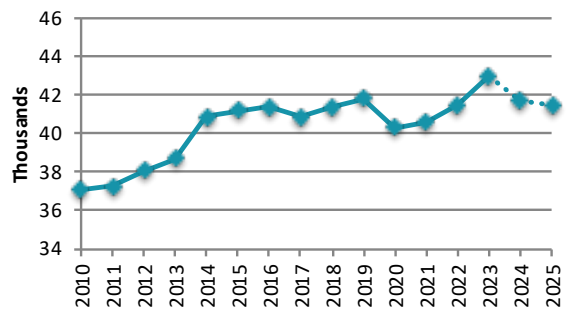
The large decline in wholesale trade employment seems to be a correction of the rapid increase during 2023. Performance during 2025 should be better than last year, although still impacted by the workforce shortage.

Retail Trade Employment

Retail's traditional business model has been challenged both locally and nationally since the mid-2010s. Consumer credit is becoming increasingly stretched; this will challenge the sector here and elsewhere in 2025.

Transportation & Utilities Employment
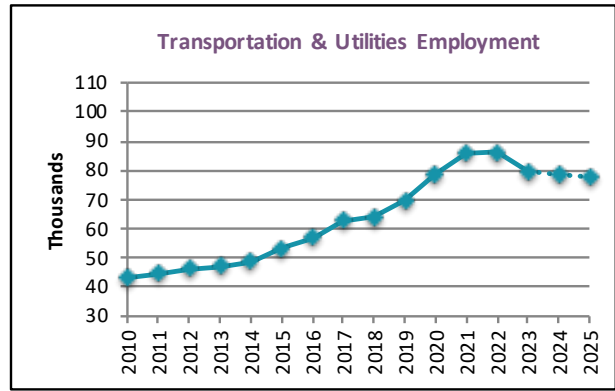
The MSA's high-flying transportation sector reversed course in 2023, but both Ohio and U.S. growth flattened with the unwinding of the COVID-related ramp-up.

Information Employment
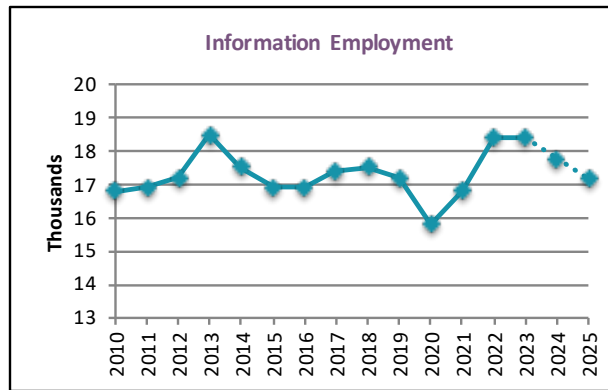
Information employment fell in 2024 and is likely to fall again in 2025. The MSA's burgeoning data center industry is in this sector, but growth there is offset by declines in publishing, broadcasting, and telecommunications.

Financial Activities Employment
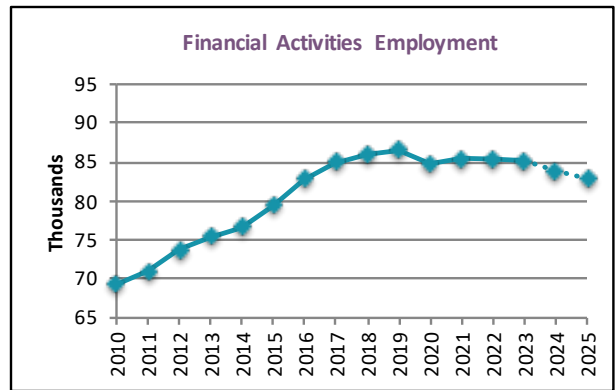
Insurance continues to weigh on financial activities. MSA insurance employment is off 10,200 (25%) since February 2018 after earlier rapid growth. That decline has slowed, but the trend in finance industries seems to have weakened.

## Professional & Business Svcs. Employment
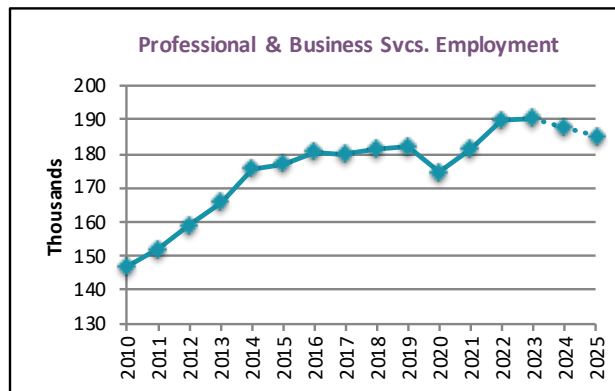
Preliminary estimates show weakness throughout the sector, with administrative and waste services especially weak. That segment's declines are largely due to employment services, including all temporary employment.

Private Education & Healthcare Employment
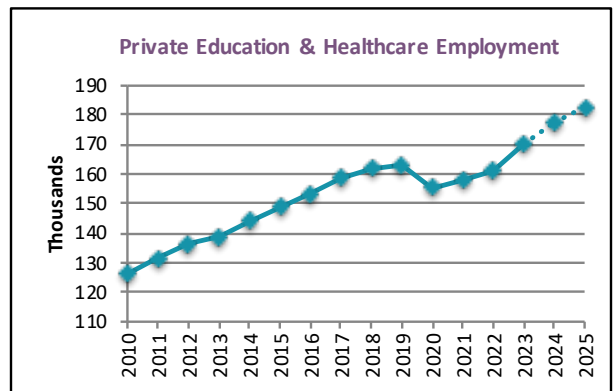
This sector is 89% healthcare, and is one sector keeping pace with national averages. OSU Wexner Medical Center jobs are classified in government, though, and cannot be extracted. Workforce shortages may slow growth in 2025.

Leisure & Hospitality Employment
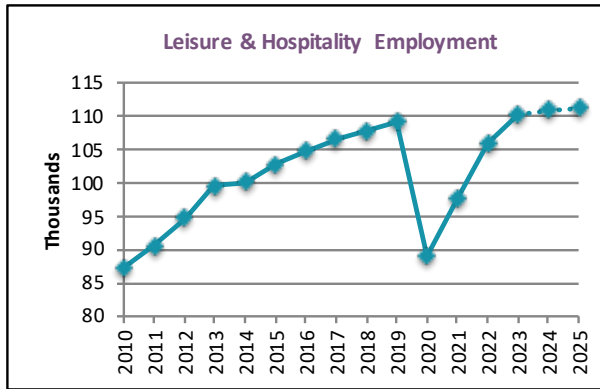
Leisure employment increased at a rate far below average in 2024, probably due to workforce constraints. Based on preliminary numbers, arts and recreation industries' growth was offset by declines in hotels and restaurants.

Other Services Employment
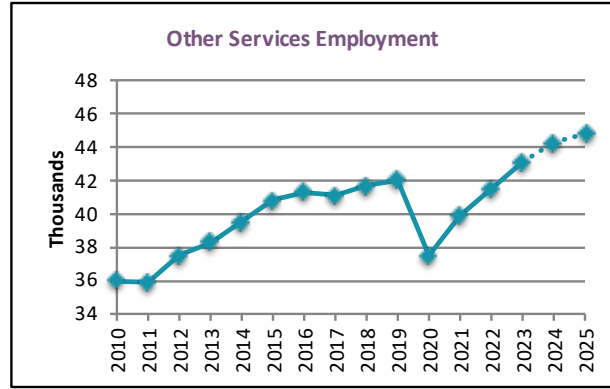
This catch-all sector includes repair services, personal services, religious organizations, grantmakers, and professional and social organizations. Workforce shortages could cause last year's above-average growth to slow in 2025.

Government Employment
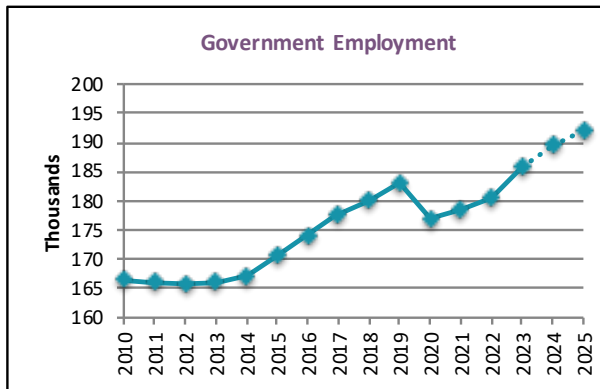
Government did well in 2024 thanks to gains in all three levels, federal, state, and local. Weaker-than-average growth in state and local employment was offset by strength in federal employment growth.

Federal Government Employment
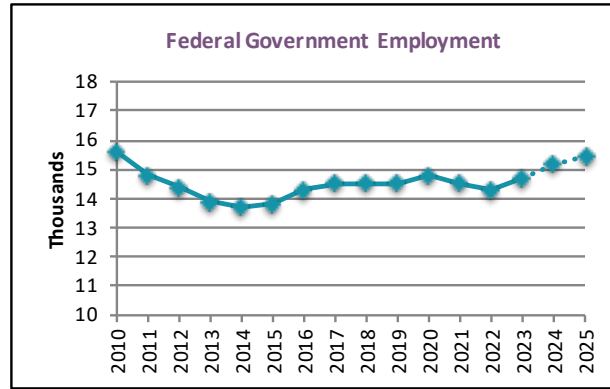
MSA federal employment enjoyed continued growth. No local detail is available, but the national-level growth in defense jobs likely drove job gains at the Defense Supply Center-Columbus.

State Government Employment
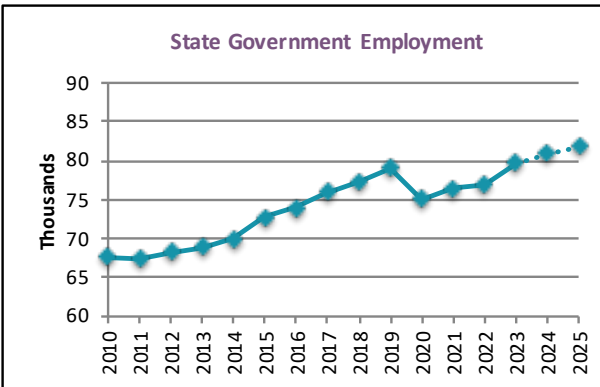
State government education employment (probably including Wexner Medical Center) increased 5.1% in 2024 while other state employment fell 0.6%. The forecast expects slightly slower growth in 2025.

Local Government Employment
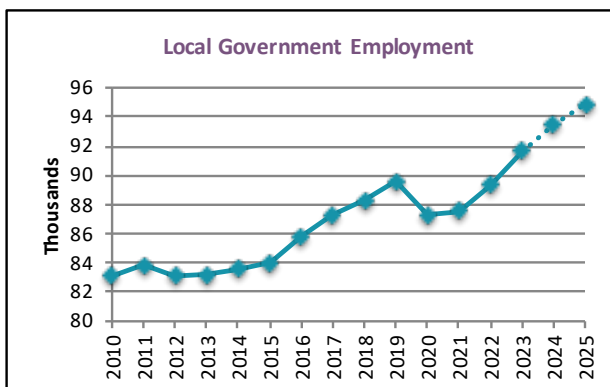
Local government jobs increased in all 10 MSA counties in the first six months of 2024, with the largest percentage growth in Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Perry, and Union Counties. The region's population growth will drive further gains in 2025.