

COLUMBUS ECONOMIC OUTLOOK



The Butler Center for Research
and Economic Development

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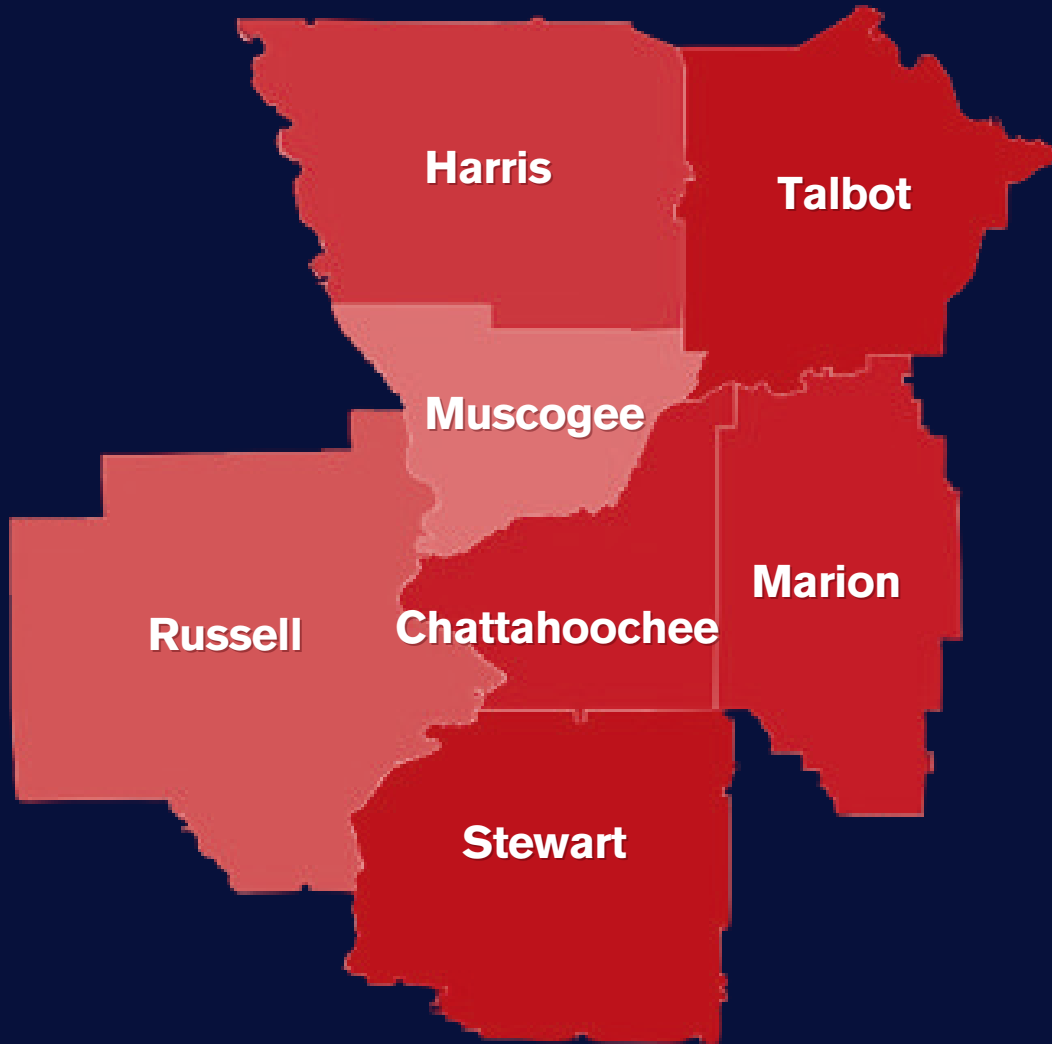
THE ECONOMY

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HOUSING

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EDUCATION



2024



The Butler Center for Research and Economic Development





We serve with care.



The Butler Center is dedicated to promoting sustainable economic growth in the Columbus Area and informing public policy and business decision-making.

We are a valuable resource for local businesses, non-profit organizations, and governments to find opportunities, bring new business and investment to the area, make effective data-driven decisions, and optimize returns on public spending for workforce and economic development.

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Our Services



Economic Research:

Informing local governments and the business community about recent regional and national trends. We investigate economic challenges, and find solutions.



Economic Impact Studies:

Assessing the economic impact of policies, events, and projects on businesses and communities.



Data Analytics:

Utilizing advanced analytical tools and techniques to derive practical insights from raw data.



Business Support:

We identify and solve business problems, assist in finding suitable locations for expansion or relocation, and help businesses make data-driven decisions.

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The Butler Center for Research
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Visit our website to access various
data and economic indicators.

Dear Readers,

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your interest in and support of the *Columbus Economic Outlook*. This publication is a testament to the collective efforts of many dedicated individuals and institutions committed to the economic development of Columbus.

Our deepest thanks go to Columbus State University and Turner College of Business and Technology for their unwavering support and invaluable contributions. We are also profoundly grateful to the Butler and Turner families, whose generous contributions to the university have been instrumental in advancing our mission and fostering a thriving academic environment.

We also wish to acknowledge the broader community, whose insights and engagement have enriched this work. Your participation and feedback are crucial to addressing the economic challenges and opportunities ahead.

For further information or inquiries, please contact the Butler Center for Research and Economic Development. We look forward to your continued support and collaboration in enhancing Columbus's economic landscape.

Thank you once again for your interest and support.

Sincerely,
The Butler Center Team

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Population Trends in Columbus

The population in Columbus has been declining over the last decade, primarily due to out-of-Columbus domestic migration. However, this trend has recently stabilized, with a minimal decline of only 58 individuals in 2023, bringing the population to 324,058. International migration has significantly supported population growth in Columbus over the past decade, with an average annual increase of 0.2%, comparable to the 0.3% growth rate of Georgia and the U.S.

Based on historical and current trends, the Columbus population is projected to decline by 1.85% by 2035, reaching 317,691. In contrast, Georgia and the U.S. are projected to grow by 11.33% and 4.27%, respectively. The anticipated decline in Columbus is largely driven by a 7.83% decrease in the 25 to 40 age group and a 5.48% decrease in the 18 to 24 age group.

Reversing this trend is crucial for boosting Columbus's economic growth. The Butler Center suggests community collaboration to study this trend, identify underlying factors, and find solutions.

Labor Force Participation

Despite having a relatively lower percentage of elderly residents, the labor force participation rate in Columbus has declined over the past decade, reaching 57.1% in 2022, below the national average of 62.6%. This can be partly attributed to a high retired population in Columbus (23.4%) compared to Georgia (14.7%) and the U.S. (17.3%), and higher percentage of disabled population (16.8%). Lower labor force participation may also indicate an imbalance in labor market demand and supply, and a need to align workforce skills with the labor market needs. The high underemployment rate in Columbus (31%) compared to the U.S. (7.4%) supports the labor market imbalance hypothesis. The lack of public transportation, with only 0.8% of residents commuting via public transportation compared to 3.8% in the U.S. and 1.5% in Georgia, may also hinder workforce participation.

Developing human capital through education is essential to increase labor force participation. The Butler Center is willing to collaborate with the business and research community to investigate these trends further and find solutions.

Employment and Wages

Private sector employment in Columbus has recovered from the COVID-19 downturn, surpassing 2019 levels, driven by gains in education and health services, leisure and hospitality, and professional and business services. However, government employment in the Columbus, GA-AL MSA has been declining since its peak of 25,428 in February 2013, reaching 23,529 in May 2024, below pre-pandemic levels. Approximately 12,840 of these employees work for local government agencies.

While the average annual wage in Columbus is around \$50,000, management occupations are the highest paying, with an average annual wage of \$109,200 for 8,499 workers, followed by computer and mathematical occupations at \$98,700 annually for 3,518 jobs. A detailed occupation analysis reveals gaps in fields such as software development, healthcare, management, computer, business, and financial services. The Butler Center's April 2024 Occupation and Awards Gap report, employed detailed educational programs-occupational crosswalk data, found a significant needs for specializations in healthcare management, hospitality management, and e-commerce.

Online job ad counts in Columbus have been increasing over the past year, reflecting strong labor demand. Full-time job ads saw a substantial rise, increasing by 37% (from 5,166 in September 2023 to 7,079 in July 2024), while part-time job ads grew by 5.9% (from 1,622 to 1,718 over the same period). Verbal and written communication remains the most frequently cited soft skill in the ads, with proficiency in Microsoft software applications topping the list for hard skills.

Poverty and Social Issues

Poverty remains a significant concern in Columbus, with 17.9% of the population living below the poverty line, compared to 13.5% in Georgia and 12.5% in the U.S. The percentage of households receiving food stamps (17.5%) and children in single-parent families (48.1%) are also higher than state and national averages. Despite the 16.8% of the Columbus population is being disabled, the medically uninsured rate (11.5%) exceeds the national average (8.7%). Furthermore, 3.5% of teenagers aged 16-19 are neither employed, in the labor force, nor enrolled in education or training programs.

Cost of Living and Housing

The cost of living in Columbus is approximately 8% lower than the national average, with housing costs at 78.5% of the national average. However, when inflation is considered, significant concerns arise regarding wages, housing, and healthcare. Despite having a relatively lower percentage of elderly residents, healthcare costs in Columbus are 33% higher than the national average.

Since the pandemic, prices in the U.S. have risen by 21%, but the average hourly wage in Columbus has only seen a modest increase of 8.3%, from \$24 to \$26. Meanwhile, housing prices have surged dramatically, with the cost of a home now 2.6 times higher than in 1995 and 45% higher than in 2019. This sharp increase has pushed homeownership affordability to its lowest point, as reflected in the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's Home Ownership Affordability Monitor (HOAM) index. The payment-to-income ratio has reached a new high of 40.5% as of March 2024, with the median monthly payment (including taxes, insurance, and PMI) now at \$2,145. Consequently, 43% of occupied units in Columbus are rented, compared to 35% in Georgia and the U.S.

For instance, a family earning \$70,000 annually could afford a \$200,000 home before the pandemic. However, that same home is now valued at \$290,000, necessitating an income of approximately \$100,000 to qualify—a 50% increase in the required income, which many families have not experienced, leaving them unable to afford their first home.

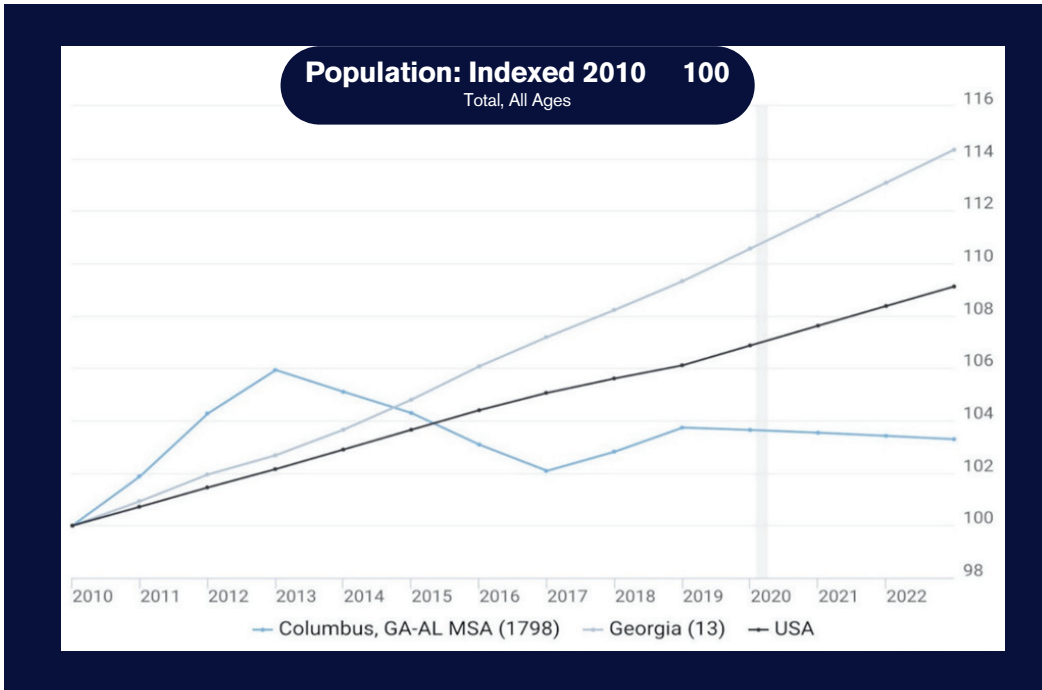
Education

Socioeconomic challenges have affected educational attainment in Columbus; 25% of the population has attended some college but did not complete their degree, significantly higher than the 19.7% for both Georgia and the U.S. Efforts are ongoing from CSU, Turner College, and the Butler Center to reach out to this population and support them in completing their degrees.

DEMOGRAPHICS

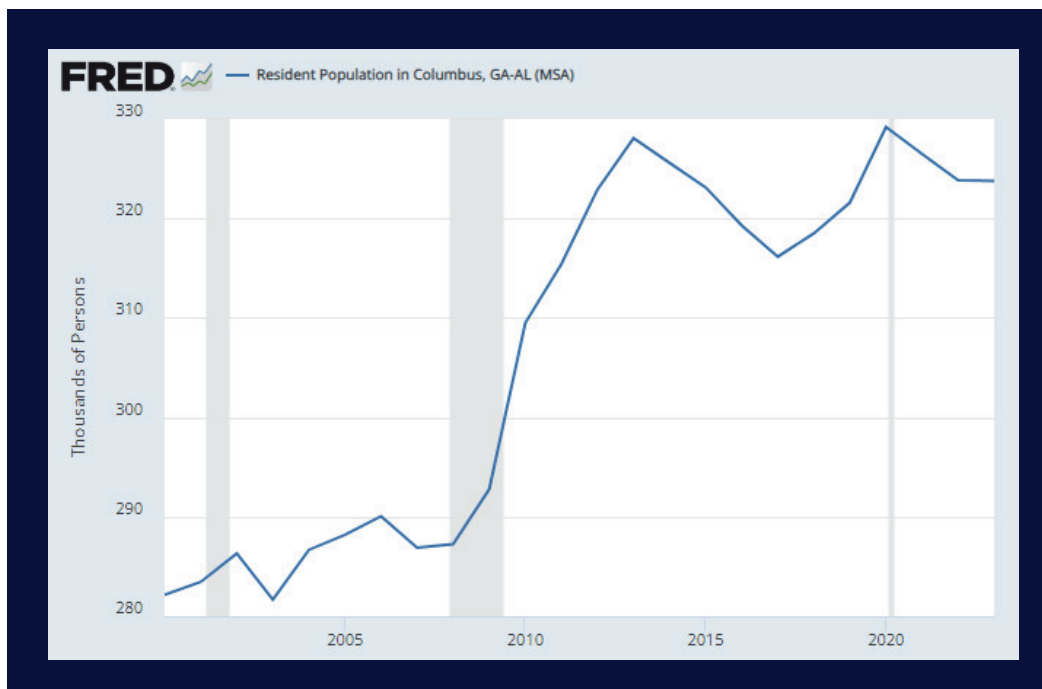
POPULATION SUMMARY

	Population			One Year Change in Population (%)		
	Columbus	Georgia	USA	Columbus	Georgia	USA
2020	329,196	10,732,390	331,526,934			
2021	326,478	10,790,385	332,048,977	-2,718 (-.8%)	57,995 (.5%)	522,043 (.2%)
2022	323,826	10,913,150	333,271,412	-2,652 (-.8%)	122,765 (1.1%)	1,222,435 (.4%)
2023	323,768	11,029,227	334,914,896	-58 (0.0%)	116,077 (1.1%)	1,643,484 (.5%)
	Births			Birth Rate (%)		
2020						
2021	4,139	121,276	3,584,461	1.3	1.1	1.1
2022	4,112	125,599	3,679,254	1.3	1.2	1.1
2023	4,017	125,664	3,653,356	1.2	1.1	1.1
	Deaths			Death Rate (%)		
2020						
2021	4,055	109,501	3,438,423	1.2	1	1
2022	3,960	110,380	3,456,086	1.2	1	1
2023	3,517	97,847	3,148,861	1.1	0.9	0.9
	Net Domestic Migration			Net Domestic Migration Rate (%)		
2020						
2021	2,902	35,341	0	-0.9	0.3	
2022	3,370	80,599	0	-1	0.7	
2023	1,133	58,206	0	-0.3	0.5	
	Net International Migration			Net International Migration Rate (%)		
2020						
2021	156	10,161	376,009	0	0.1	0.1
2022	488	27,010	999,267	0.2	0.2	0.3
2023	581	30,119	1,138,989	0.2	0.3	0.3

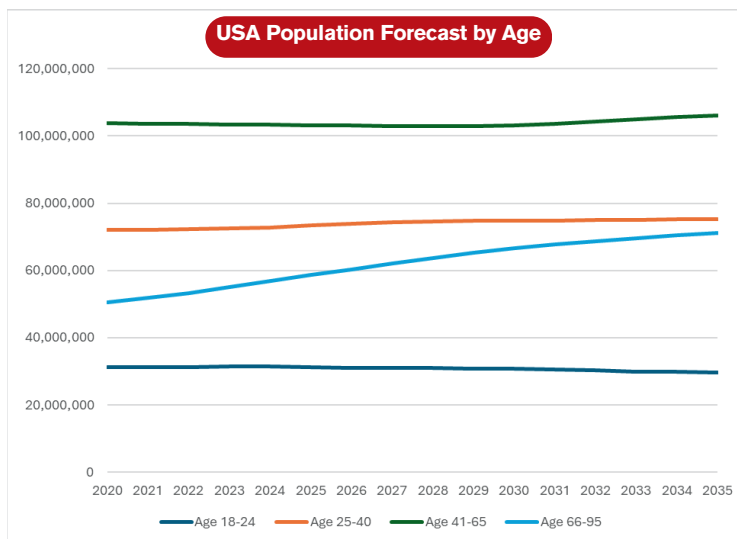
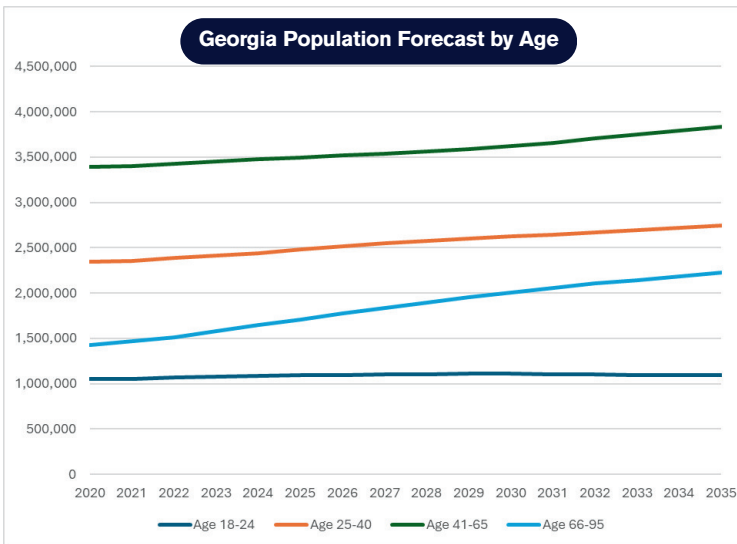
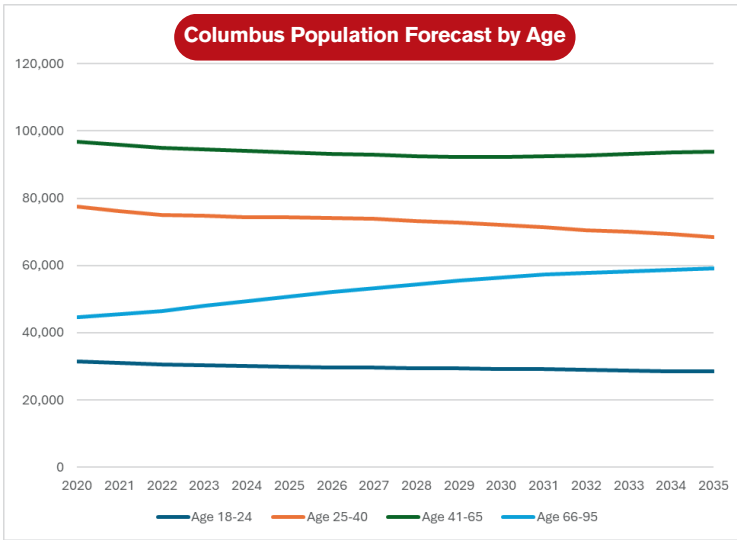


While the population in Georgia and the U.S. has been steadily growing, the population in Columbus, GA (MSA) declined sharply from 2013 to 2017 before returning to growth until 2019, followed by a moderate decline until 2022. It then stabilized in 2023, reaching a population of 324,058. The decline in population was primarily driven by negative domestic migration, which averaged approximately 1% per year. However, international migration supported population growth in Columbus, with an average increase of 0.2%, which is comparable to the 0.3% growth rate of Georgia and the U.S.

The birth rate in Columbus is higher than in Georgia and the U.S., but the death rate in Columbus over the last three years is also higher, at 1.1%, compared to 0.9% for both Georgia and the U.S. This is reflected in the relatively lower percentage of the elderly population, with individuals aged 75 years and older comprising 5.8% of the Columbus population, below the U.S. national average of 6.8%.



POPULATION FORECAST



Based on historical and current population trends, the Columbus population is projected to decline by 1.85% by 2035, reaching 317,691. In contrast, Georgia and the U.S. are projected to grow by 11.33% and 4.27%, respectively.

The elderly population in Columbus is expected to grow by 19.7%, reaching 59,123 by 2035. This growth is comparable to Georgia and the U.S., where the elderly population is expected to increase by 35% and 25%, reaching 2.2 million and 71.1 million, respectively.

In Columbus, the biggest decline (7.83%) is expected among people aged 25 to 40 years. The population of people aged 18 to 24 years is expected to decrease by 5.48%, while those aged 41 to 65 years are projected to slightly decrease by 0.34%.

In Georgia and the U.S., all age groups are projected to increase by 2035, except for the 18 to 24 age group, which is expected to decrease by 5.47% in the U.S. This age group is showing a sluggish increase of 0.63% in Georgia, despite noticeable increases in the remaining age groups.

DEMOGRAPHICS BY GENDER, AGE, AND DENSITY

	Columbus, GA-AL MSA	Georgia	USA	Chattahoochee County	Harris County	Marion County	Muscogee County	Russell County, AL	Stewart County	Talbot County
Population Estimates	323,768	10,722,325	331,097,593	8,661	36,654	7,440	201,877	58,744	4,674	5,718
Male	49.3%	48.90%	49.60%	64.8%	50.7%	49.0%	48.4%	47.8%	69.1%	48.4%
Female	50.7%	51.10%	50.40%	35.2%	49.3%	51.0%	51.6%	52.2%	30.9%	51.6%
Under 18 years old	23.8%	23.40%	22.10%	22.0%	21.3%	20.5%	24.8%	24.1%	10.8%	16.3%
18 to 24	9.6%	9.80%	9.40%	30.7%	8.3%	7.7%	9.5%	8.2%	7.6%	7.5%
25 to 34	15.3%	13.80%	13.70%	27.2%	10.5%	10.0%	15.8%	14.4%	25.7%	10.2%
35 to 44	12.7%	13.20%	12.90%	7.0%	11.9%	12.2%	13.0%	12.8%	22.3%	9.6%
45 to 54	11.6%	13.10%	12.40%	4.7%	14.3%	11.5%	11.2%	12.5%	9.6%	12.2%
55 to 64	12.2%	12.30%	12.90%	5.6%	15.1%	16.8%	11.5%	13.1%	9.6%	18.3%
65 to 74	8.9%	8.80%	9.70%	1.9%	12.3%	12.4%	8.3%	9.2%	7.6%	15.9%
75 and Over	5.8%	5.50%	6.80%	1.0%	6.2%	8.8%	5.7%	5.7%	6.9%	10.0%
People per Square Mile	116.2	191.1	94.8	34.8	79.0	20.3	932.5	91.6	10.2	14.6

Columbus has a slightly higher percentage of younger population compared to Georgia and the U.S. While Muscogee County has the largest percentage of population under 18 years old, Talbot County has the highest percentage of elderly population. Additionally, Columbus has a higher population density per square mile than the U.S., but it is substantially lower than that of Georgia. This population density is driven mainly by Muscogee County. Moreover, Chattahoochee County, being home to Fort Moore, has a higher percentage of males and young adults.

DEMOGRAPHICS BY RACE

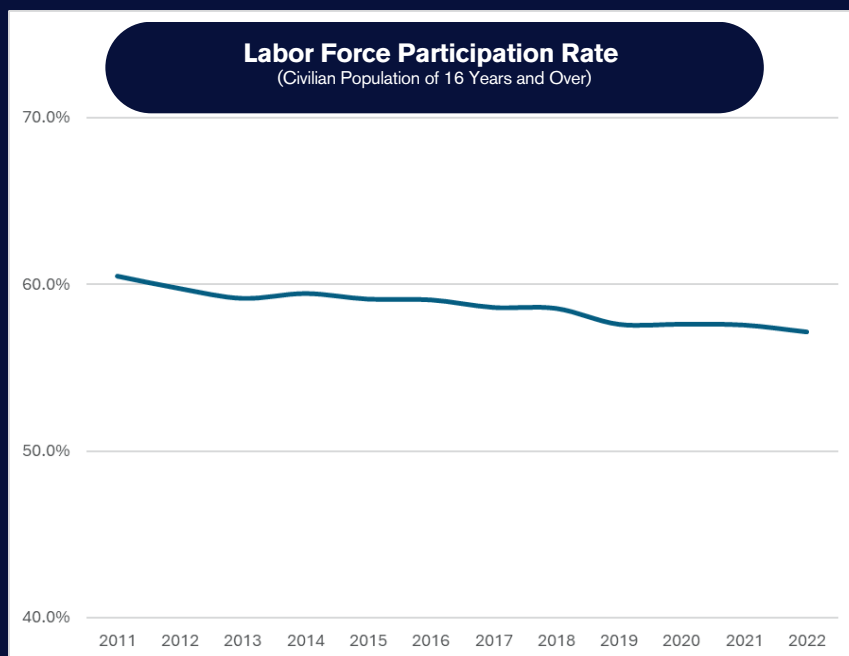
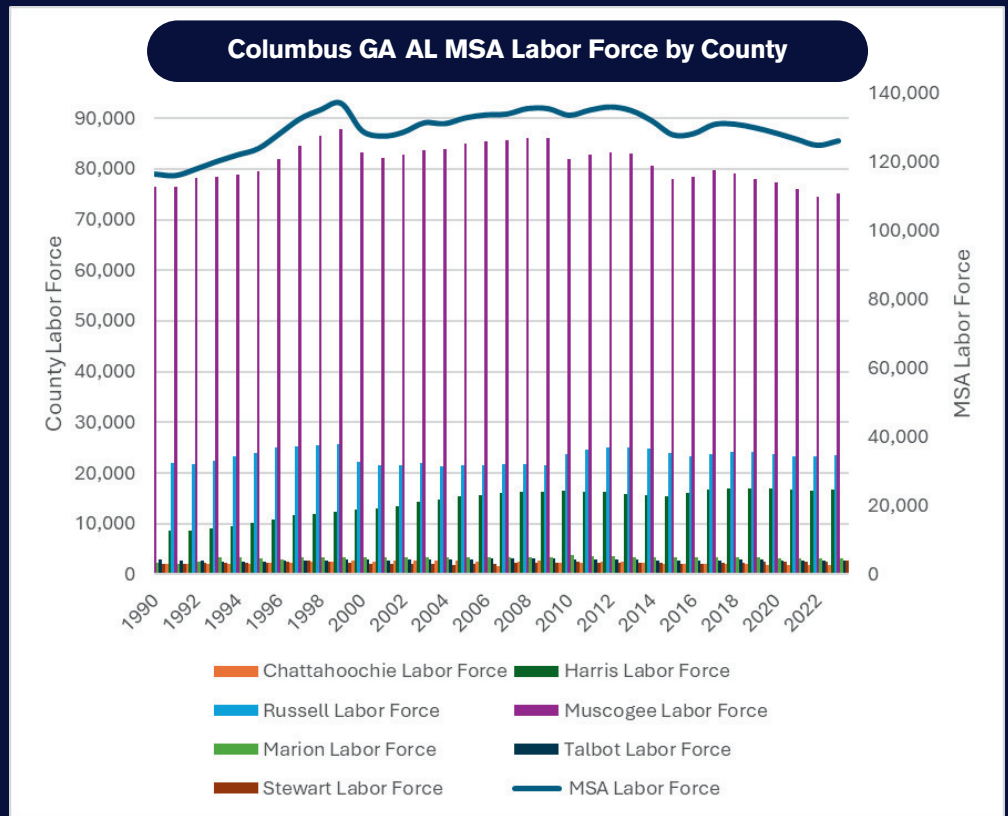
The following table displays the demographic distribution by race across Columbus, GA-AL MSA and its counties.

	Columbus, GA-AL MSA	Chattahoochee County	Harris County	Marion County	Muscogee County	Russell County, AL	Stewart County	Talbot County
White	46.4%	60.6%	77.4%	59.6%	40.6%	46.9%	24.0%	41.0%
African American	42.1%	16.8%	15.6%	29.8%	46.6%	44.9%	61.6%	56.5%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	7.5%	17.6%	4.4%	8.3%	8.0%	5.9%	12.8%	0.9%
Two or More Races	6.0%	10.6%	3.7%	2.6%	6.8%	5.1%	0.8%	1.5%
Some Other Race	3.1%	5.3%	2.6%	6.0%	3.1%	2.0%	10.1%	0.8%
Asian	2.0%	3.6%	0.7%	1.4%	2.6%	0.8%	3.3%	0.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%	2.3%	0.1%	0.7%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR FORCE

The labor force in Columbus, GA AL MSA stood at 126,095 in 2023, significantly lower than the 129,849 in 2019, reflecting the impact of COVID 19 on the labor force in Columbus. Muscogee County has the largest labor force in Columbus with 75,176, followed by Russell County with 23,549, and Harris County with 16,570.

The labor participation rate in Columbus has been declining over the past 10 years, reaching 57.1% in 2022, which is below the national average of 62.6% during that time.



The labor force is defined as the number of individuals aged 16 and older who are either employed or actively seeking employment.

The labor force participation rate is defined as the number of people aged 16 and older who are employed or actively seeking employment, divided by the total non-institutionalized, civilian working-age population.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES

	Columbus, GA-AL MSA	Georgia	USA	Chattahoochee County	Harris County	Marion County	Muscogee County	Russell County, AL	Stewart County	Talbot County
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	57.1%	61.7%	62.6%	53.2%	59.6%	49.1%	58.9%	54.2%	33.5%	51.8%
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	75.7%	81.7%	82.8%	59.8%	81.8%	76.1%	77.4%	72.3%	37.8%	76.3%
Armed Forces Labor Force	5.2%	0.7%	0.5%	58.6%	1.3%	0.0%	4.5%	3.1%	0.2%	0.0%
Veterans	11.7%	5.4%	4.3%	19.3%	9.5%	5.6%	12.3%	12.2%	8.3%	7.6%
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	67.1%	75.9%	77.1%	55.9%	70.9%	43.9%	70.0%	59.5%	42.7%	80.7%
Commute via Public Transportation	0.8%	1.5%	3.8%	4.1%	0.1%	0.5%	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	0.2%
Mean Commute Time (minutes)	22.2			10.0	26.3	35.1	20.2	26.0	36.3	39.2
Percentage of Retired Population	23.4%	14.7%	17.3%							

While Muscogee and Harris Counties have the highest labor force participation rates, Stewart County has the lowest.

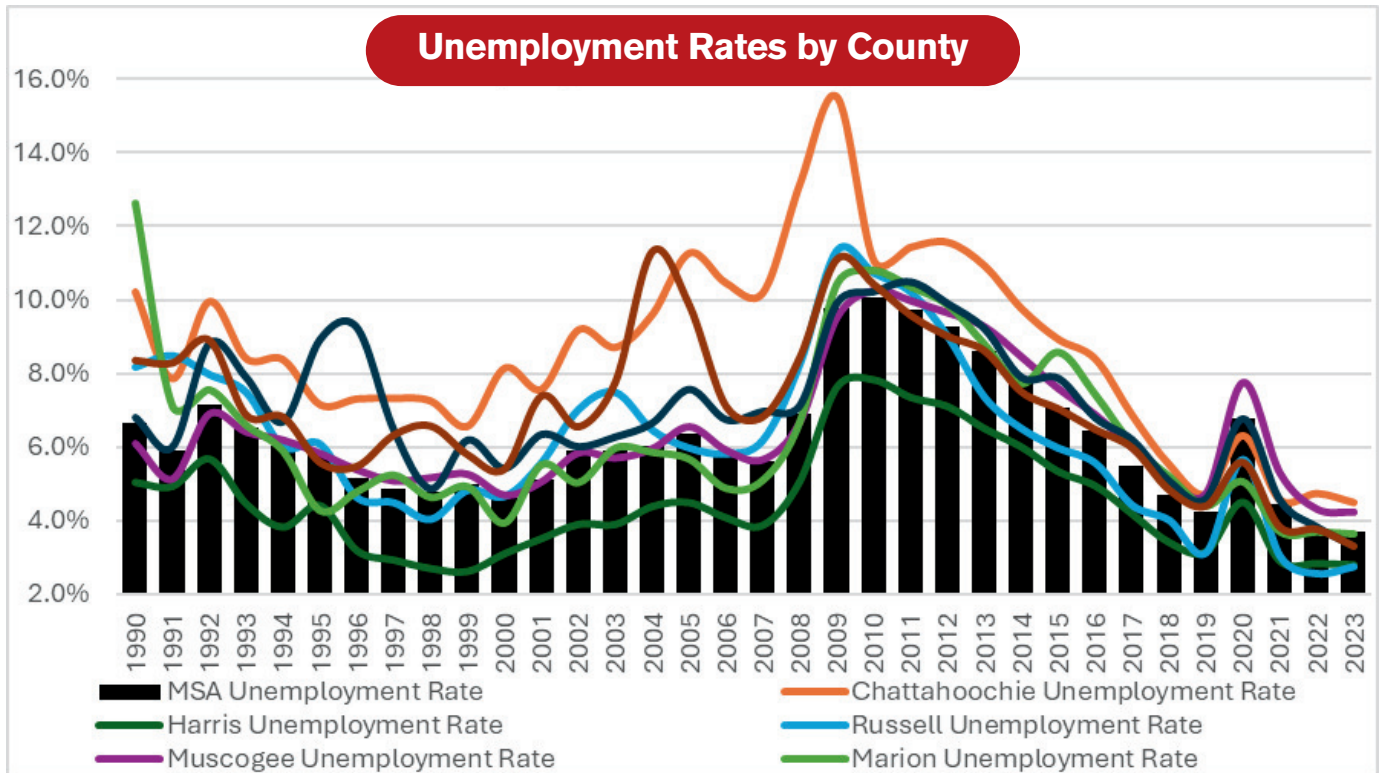
Commuting via public transportation is substantially lower in Columbus compared to the U.S. and Georgia. However, Chattahoochee County shows considerable public transportation usage, exceeding both the state and national averages. The average commuting time in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is 22.2 minutes, with Talbot County having the longest commute time and Chattahoochee County having the shortest.

The retired population in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is significantly higher than the averages for Georgia and the U.S.

The union membership rate in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is comparable to that of Georgia but is significantly lower than the national rate.

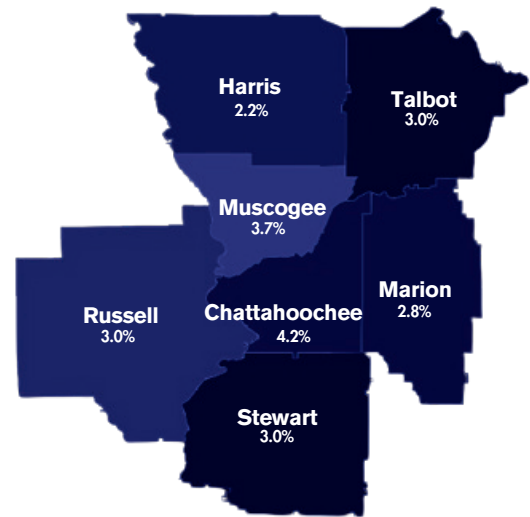
	Columbus, GA-AL MSA	Georgia	USA	Chattahoochee County	Harris County	Marion County	Muscogee County	Russell County, AL	Stewart County	Talbot County
Union Membership										
Total	5.0%	4.50%	10.00%	4.0%	5.2%	5.4%	4.5%	8.2%	4.9%	5.8%
Private Sector	2.9%	2.90%	6.00%	2.5%	3.2%	2.8%	2.7%	4.1%	3.0%	3.5%
Manufacturing	3.7%	3.40%	7.70%	4.1%	3.2%	3.1%	3.6%	4.3%	3.5%	2.8%
Public Sector	14.1%	14.40%	34.00%	15.5%	12.2%	11.8%	12.7%	24.6%	12.2%	11.0%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

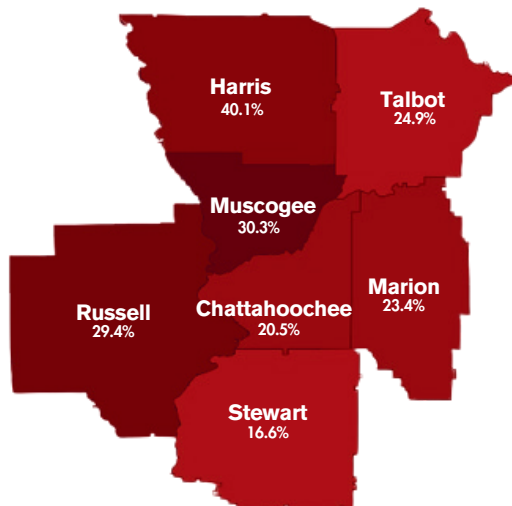


UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The unemployment rate in Columbus, GA-AL MSA was 3.7% in June 2024, which is below the national average of 4.1%. This rate is the lowest in 30 years and is below the pre-COVID rate of 4.2%. Muscogee and Chattahoochee counties have the highest unemployment rates, while Harris County has the lowest unemployment rate.

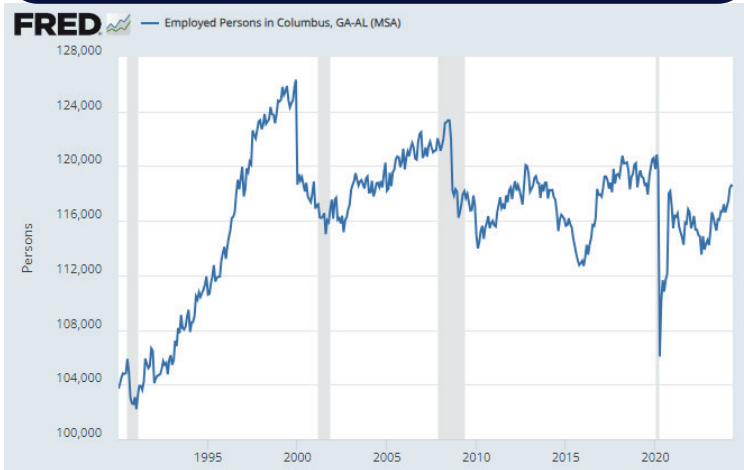


UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE



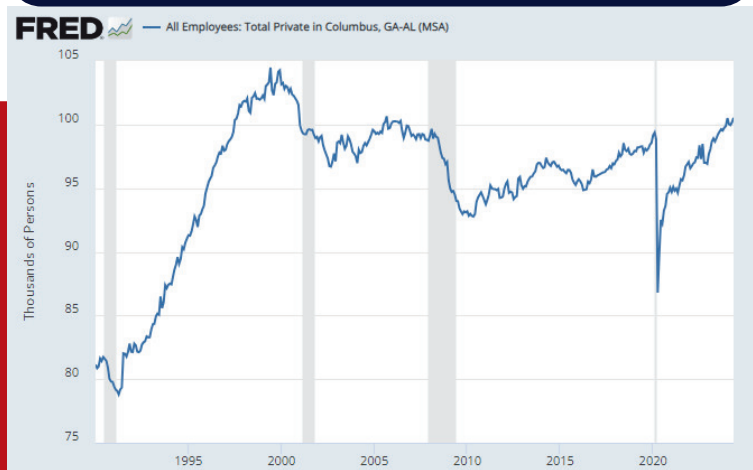
The underemployment rate is the percentage of workers in the labor force who are involuntarily employed in lower-skilled or part-time jobs because they cannot obtain full-time positions that match their skills. Given the U6 unemployment rate of 7.4% published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in June 2024, which includes the underemployed population, it can be inferred that the underemployment rate in all counties within Columbus, GA-AL MSA significantly exceeds the national average.

Employed Persons in Columbus, GA AL MSA



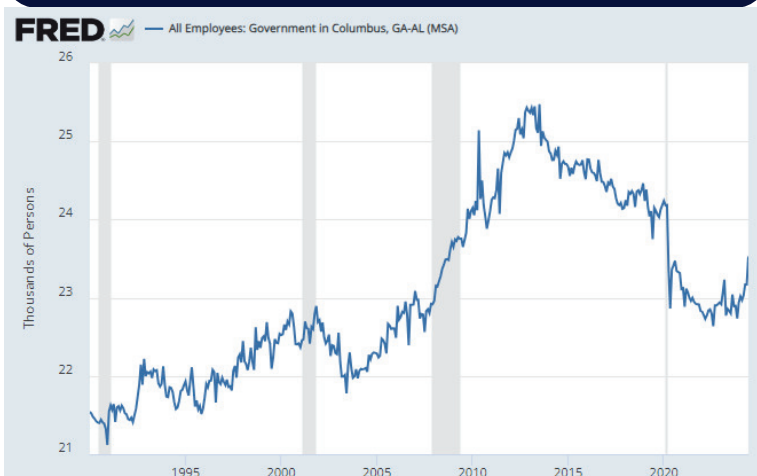
As of May 2024, the number of employed individuals in Columbus, GA-AL MSA stands at 118,550. This figure is below the pre COVID employment level of 120,606 recorded in December 2019, indicating the ongoing impact of the pandemic on employment in the region.

Total Private Employees in Columbus, GA AL (MSA)



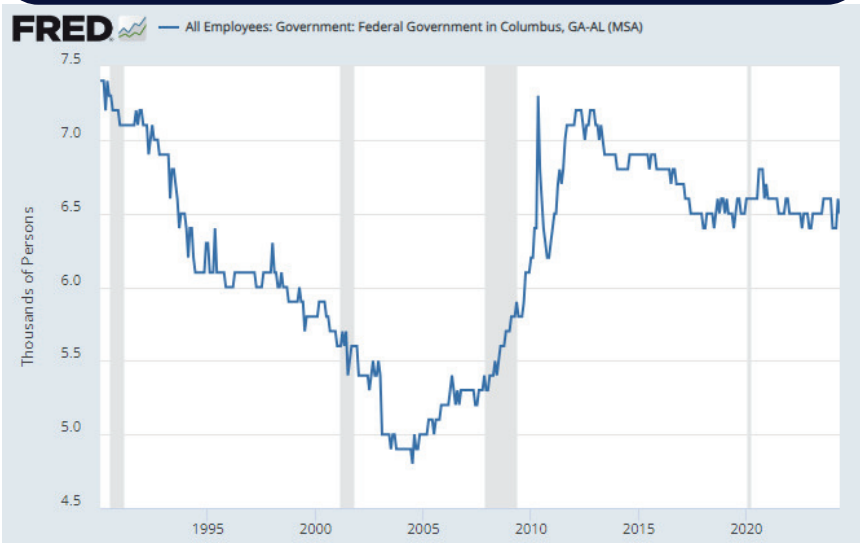
In May 2024, the number of employees in the private sector in Columbus, GA-AL MSA reached 100,926. This figure is higher than the pre-COVID level, indicating a recovery and growth in private sector employment since the pandemic.

Government Employees in Columbus, GA AL (MSA)

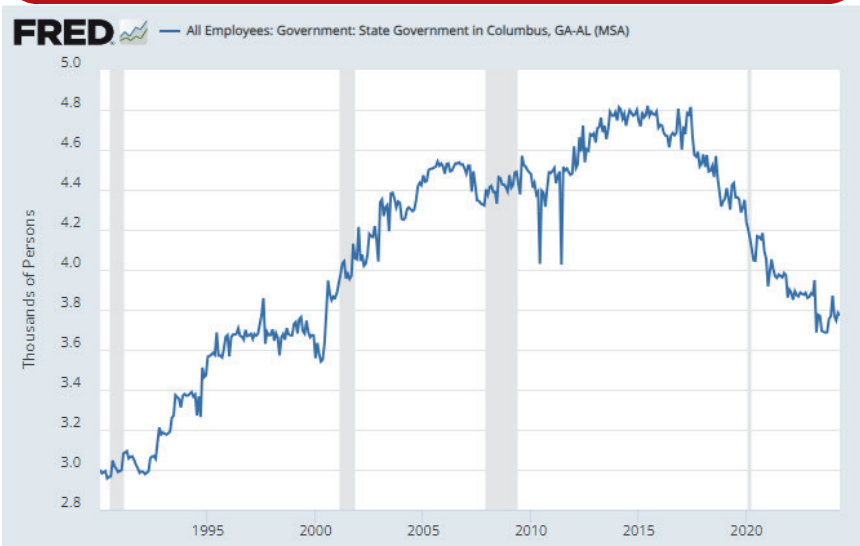


The number of government employees in Columbus, GA-AL MSA has been declining since it peaked at 25,428 in February 2013, reaching 23,529 in May 2024. More than half of these government employees are employed by local government agencies.

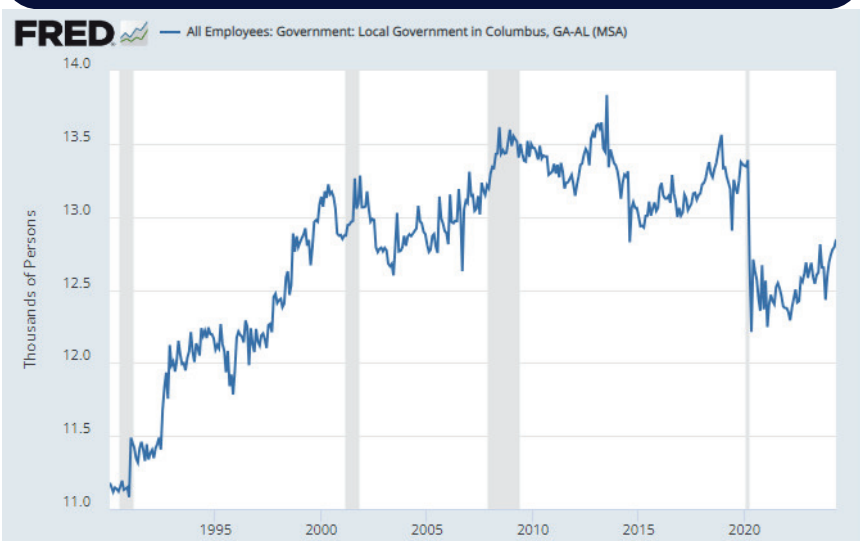
Federal Government



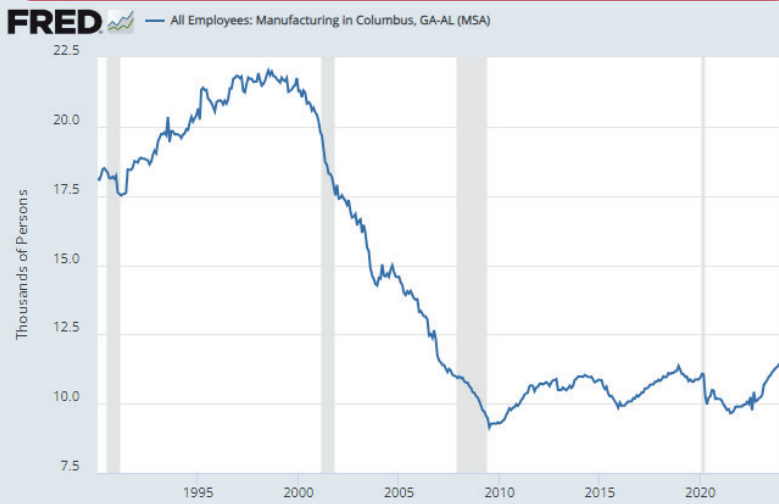
State Government



Local Government

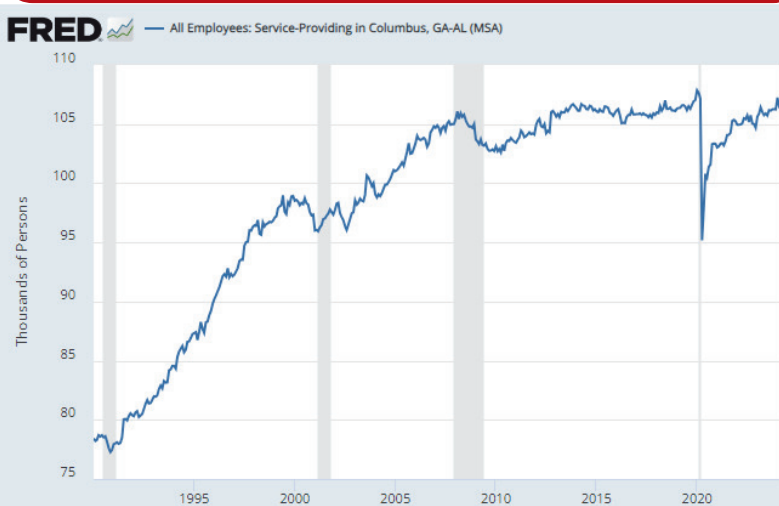


Manufacturing in Columbus, GA AL (MSA)



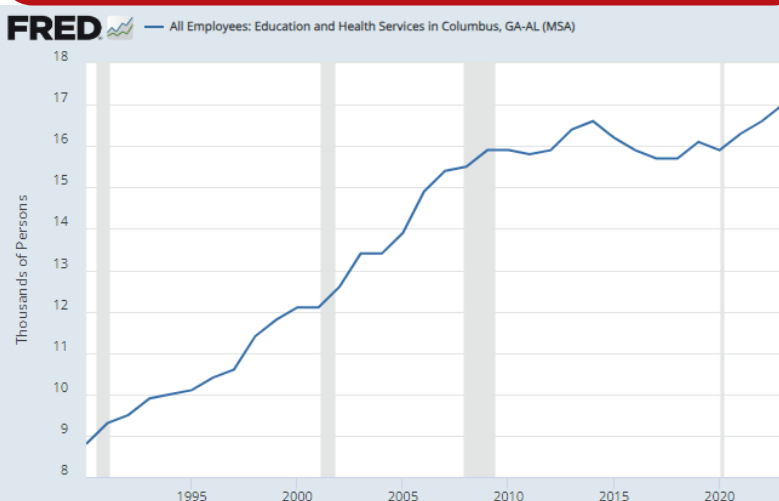
Employment in the manufacturing sector has been declining since it peaked at 21,856 in August 1998. As of June 2024, employment in this sector stands at 11,354. This figure is higher than the pre COVID level of 11,074 recorded in February 2020, indicating some recovery since the pandemic.

Service Sector in Columbus, GA AL (MSA)



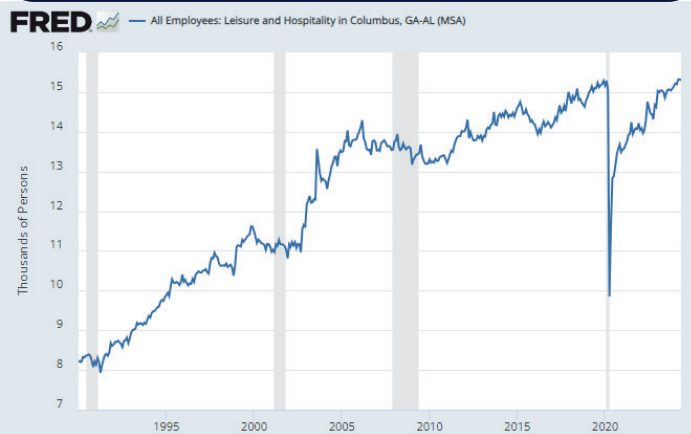
Employment in the service sector has remained stable since the recovery from the 2008 recession. As of June 2024, employment in this sector reached 108,078, which is slightly higher than the pre COVID level.

Education and Health Services



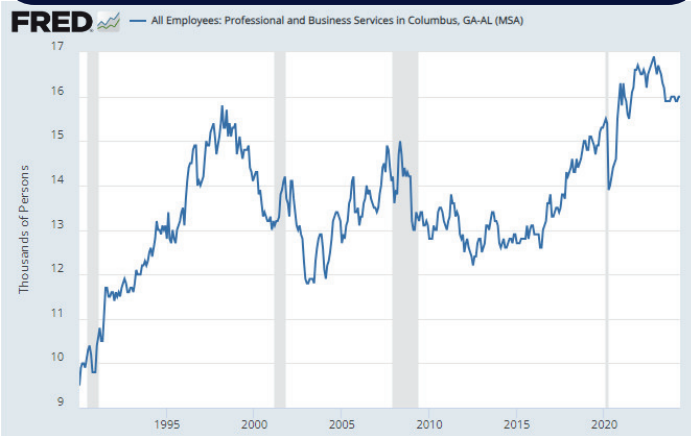
Education and health services employed more than 17,000 individuals, accounting for approximately 16% of all service sector employees.

Leisure and Hospitality

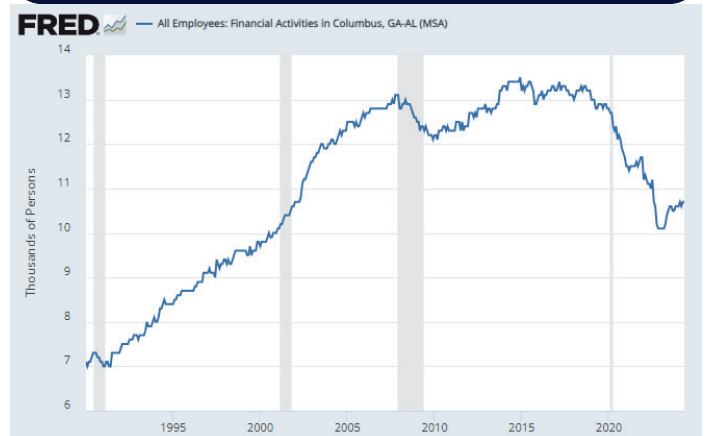


The leisure and hospitality industry has recovered and surpassed its pre-COVID levels, reaching 15,415 employees in June 2024.

Professional and Business Services

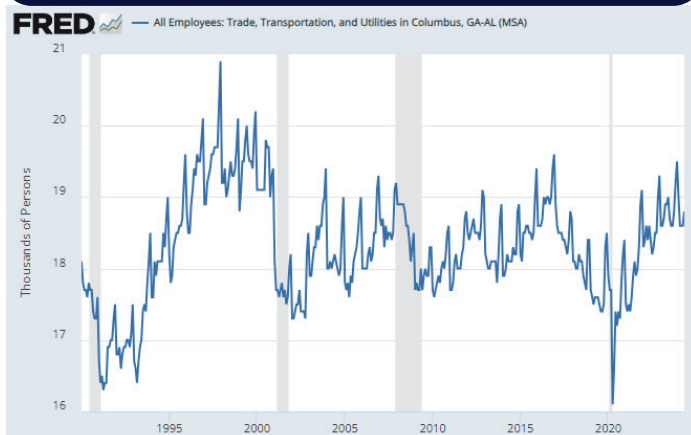


Financial Activities in Columbus, GA AL (MSA)



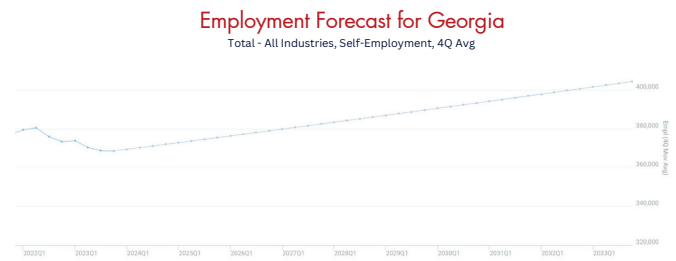
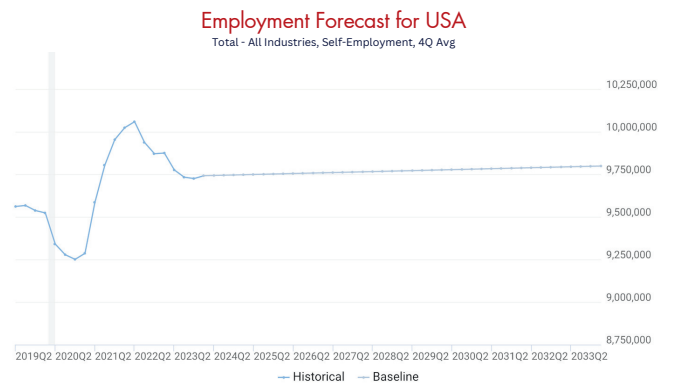
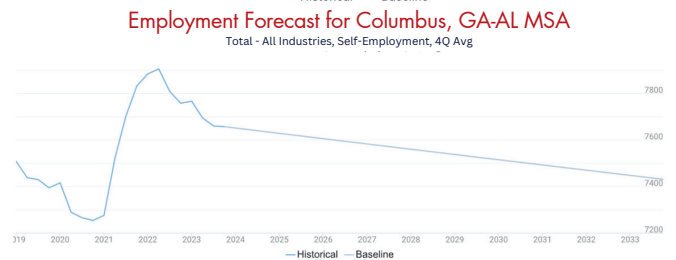
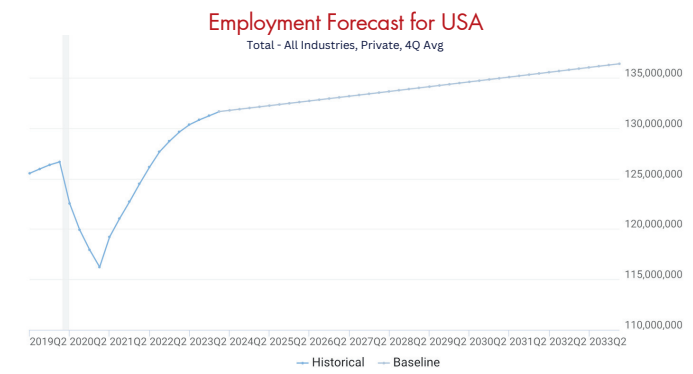
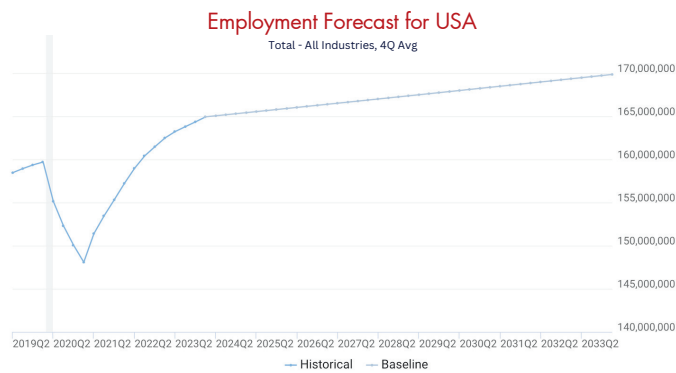
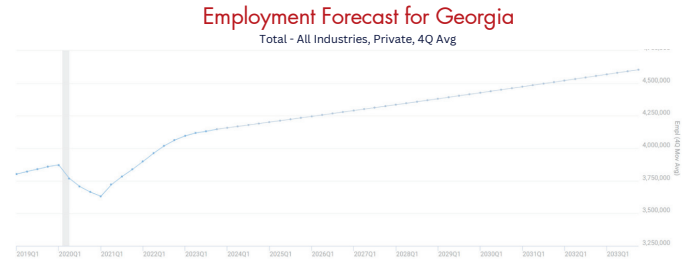
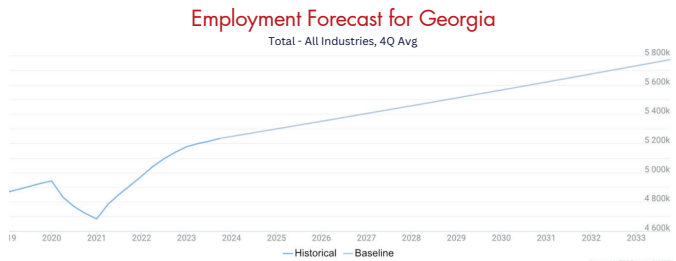
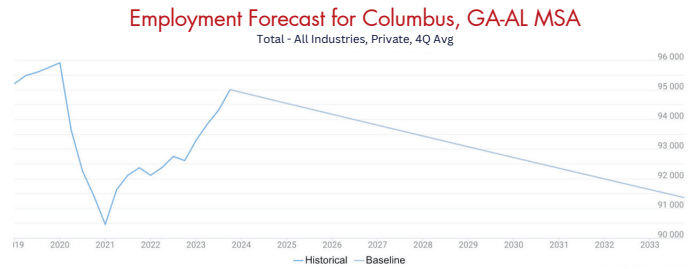
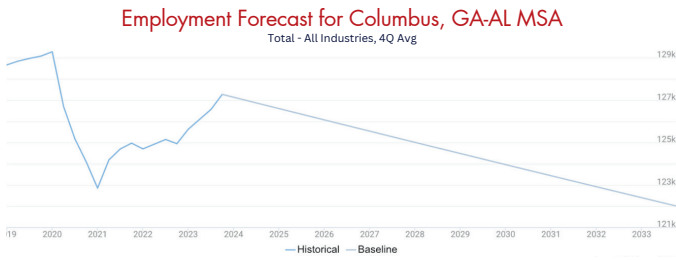
In June 2024, professional, business, and financial activities in Columbus, GA-AL MSA employed 26,600 individuals.

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities



Employment in trade, transportation, and utilities has been stable over the last 20 years, with 18,900 employees as of June 2024.

EMPLOYMENT FORECAST COMPARISON



Given the past population trends, economic factors, and historical employment data derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, employment projections provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that the workforce size in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is expected to shrink by 5,265 jobs (-4.13%) to reach 122,261 by 2034. This includes a reduction of 3,618 jobs in the private sector, 217 self-employed, 584 local government, 137 state government, and 594 federal government jobs. In contrast, the state of Georgia is projected to grow its workforce by 531,890 jobs (10.14%) to reach 5,779,313 by 2034. Meanwhile, the U.S. workforce is expected to grow by 4,914,041 jobs (2.98%) to reach 169,868,103 jobs by 2034.

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Columbus, GA-AL MSA, 2023 Q4

NAICS	Industry	Current			10-Year History			10-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Empl Change	Trend	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	19,629	\$56,742	1.05	-381		-0.2%	19,090	9,204	9,913	-27	0.0%
44	Retail Trade	14,497	\$30,706	1.15	283		0.2%	17,270	8,341	10,481	-1,553	-1.1%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	13,882	\$21,320	1.26	330		0.2%	23,057	10,721	13,082	-746	-0.6%
31	Manufacturing	10,959	\$65,962	1.07	220		0.2%	10,276	4,311	6,459	-494	-0.5%
61	Educational Services	10,350	\$47,218	1.02	-324		-0.3%	8,993	4,657	4,830	-494	-0.5%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	8,574	\$37,386	1.08	1,587		2.1%	9,151	4,118	5,457	-424	-0.5%
92	Public Administration	7,949	\$55,808	1.35	-1,547		-1.8%	6,637	3,126	3,964	-453	-0.6%
52	Finance and Insurance	7,628	\$87,146	1.51	-2,823		-3.1%	5,822	2,598	3,595	-371	-0.5%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	6,228	\$63,567	0.67	253		0.4%	5,112	2,047	3,014	50	0.1%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	6,118	\$29,016	1.14	-572		-0.9%	6,629	2,989	3,864	-224	-0.4%
23	Construction	6,103	\$54,495	0.80	431		0.7%	4,935	2,092	3,072	-229	-0.4%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	3,764	\$48,852	0.60	1,058		3.4%	4,199	1,806	2,332	60	0.2%
42	Wholesale Trade	2,513	\$63,166	0.52	-323		-1.2%	2,234	977	1,458	-201	-0.8%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,156	\$52,079	0.95	82		0.4%	1,960	975	1,063	-78	-0.4%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,078	\$114,264	1.05	767		4.7%	1,796	723	1,052	21	0.1%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,762	\$29,730	0.69	450		3.0%	2,659	1,116	1,518	24	0.1%
51	Information	1,239	\$54,956	0.49	-324		-2.3%	1,031	425	656	-49	-0.4%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	807	\$35,358	0.51	-6		-0.1%	922	462	486	-26	-0.3%
99	Unclassified	425	\$64,388	1.76	256		9.7%	456	204	264	-12	-0.3%
22	Utilities	364	\$90,336	0.56	-21		-0.6%	271	124	179	-33	-0.9%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	256	\$69,759	0.55	52		2.3%	232	90	146	-4	-0.2%
	Total - All Industries	127,282	\$49,493	1.00	-552		0.0%	130,392	59,777	75,877	-5,262	-0.4%

The health care industry is the largest employer in Columbus, GA-AL MSA, followed by retail trade, accommodation, manufacturing, and education. Despite losing 381 jobs in the past 10 years, the health care industry is expected to stabilize over the next decade. Although no new jobs are anticipated, the industry will need 19,090 employees to replace those retiring or transferring to other sectors.

The finance and insurance industry is highly concentrated in Columbus, GA-AL MSA, with a location quotient (LQ)* of 1.51, indicating employment levels above the national average. However, the industry has contracted, losing 2,823 employees over the last 10 years with an average annual decline of 3.1%. Despite this, the sector will require 5,822 workers in the next decade to replace retirees and those moving to other industries. The employment growth rate for the finance and insurance industry is projected to decline by 0.5% annually over the next 10 years. This industry offers the third highest wages in Columbus, averaging \$87,146 annually.

Columbus has a higher concentration of employment in the accommodation and food services industry, with an LQ of 1.26, adding 330 jobs in the past decade. Manufacturing in Columbus also has a slightly higher concentration than the national average, with the sector adding 220 jobs in the last 10 years and offering an average annual wage of \$65,962.

Surprisingly, the educational services industry has lost 324 jobs over the past decade and is expected to shrink by 0.5% annually over the next 10 years. Nevertheless, the industry will need to hire 8,993 employees to replace those exiting the workforce or transferring to other sectors.

The transportation and warehousing industry experienced significant growth of 3.4% annually over the past decade, adding 1,058 jobs. It is expected to add 60 jobs over the next 10 years, with an average annual growth rate of 0.2%. The industry will need to hire 4,199 employees over the next decade.

The management industry has also grown significantly over the past 10 years, adding 767 jobs with an average annual wage of \$114,264. It is expected to grow by 0.1% annually over the next decade, adding 21 new jobs and requiring 1,796 hires to replace exiting workers.

The real estate industry grew moderately by 0.4% over the past decade. However, given current population trends, the workforce in this sector is expected to shrink by 0.4% annually, losing 78 jobs. Despite this, the industry will need to hire 1,960 employees over the next decade to replace those leaving the workforce or transferring to other industries.

The arts, entertainment, and recreation industry grew significantly over the past decade with an average growth rate of 3%, adding 450 jobs. It is expected to add another 24 jobs over the next 10 years.

The management occupation has the highest wage in Columbus, GA-AL MSA, with an average annual salary of \$109,200 and the third lowest unemployment rate. The occupation added 1,448 workers over the past 10 years but is expected to lose 110 workers over the next decade. However, 6,283 relevant positions will need to be filled to replace those leaving the workforce or transferring to other occupations.

The computer and mathematical occupation added 334 new jobs over the past 10 years and is expected to grow significantly by 0.6% annually, adding 230 new jobs. The total hiring demand for this occupation will be 2,332 jobs, accounting for exits and transfers. This occupation is projected to create the highest number of jobs with the highest growth rate, offering the second highest wage in Columbus, GA-AL MSA at \$98,700 annually.

Notes on Industry Snapshot and Occupations Snapshot Table:

For the Industry Snapshot, the analysis used the 2 digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to identify industries.
For the Occupations Snapshot, the analysis used the Major Group 2 digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) to identify occupations.
Total Demand: The total forecast change in employment, including separations and growth demand.
Exits: The demand from separations due to workers leaving the workforce for various reasons such as retirement (defined by the BLS as labor force exits).
Transfers: The demand from separations due to workers moving into different occupations (defined by the BLS as occupational transfers).
Empl Growth: The forecast employment growth demand, not including the changes due to separations.

*LQ: The location quotient is a measure of the relative size of the selected region's industry employment compared to the national average. A number greater than 1.00 means that the industry employment for the region exceeds the industry's national average, and a number less than 1.00 means that it falls short of the industry's national average.

OCCUPATION SNAPSHOT

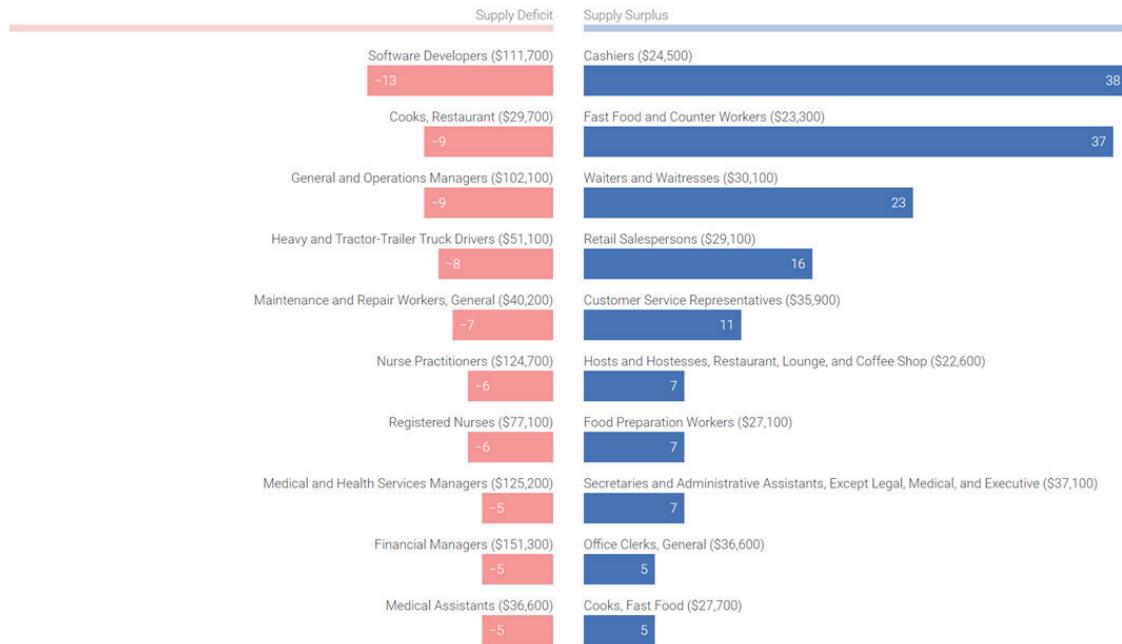
Columbus, GA-AL MSA, 2023 Q4

		Current						10-Year History		10-Year Forecast				
SOC	Occupation	Empl	Mean Ann Wages	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
43 0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	14,919	\$40,100	0.97	530	3.2%	633	-2,539	-1.6%	14,088	7,436	8,501	-1,850	-1.3%
35 0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	12,326	\$27,900	1.20	747	6.0%	640	-168	-0.1%	22,079	10,363	12,394	-678	-0.6%
41 0000	Sales and Related Occupations	12,004	\$41,000	1.07	561	4.5%	1,239	-426	-0.3%	13,979	6,876	8,240	-1,137	-1.0%
53 0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	9,855	\$38,200	0.88	659	5.9%	724	1,154	1.3%	12,269	5,169	7,215	-115	-0.1%
29 0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	8,868	\$86,300	1.19	121	1.4%	2,885	350	0.4%	4,896	2,759	2,151	-14	0.0%
13 0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	8,859	\$77,200	1.09	209	2.4%	459	592	0.7%	6,679	2,672	4,242	-234	-0.3%
11 0000	Management Occupations	8,499	\$109,200	0.89	148	1.7%	796	1,448	1.9%	6,283	2,447	3,946	-110	-0.1%
51 0000	Production Occupations	7,613	\$39,700	1.07	363	4.4%	145	-370	-0.5%	7,567	3,323	4,783	-539	-0.7%
25 0000	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	7,383	\$53,800	1.08	172	2.4%	348	-347	-0.5%	6,039	3,201	3,123	-285	-0.4%
49 0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	4,928	\$49,700	0.99	138	2.6%	440	76	0.2%	4,097	1,882	2,348	-132	-0.3%
31 0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	4,855	\$32,500	0.85	162	3.2%	454	-87	-0.2%	6,920	3,007	3,698	214	0.4%
47 0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	4,502	\$45,100	0.78	251	5.2%	151	31	0.1%	3,688	1,530	2,254	-96	-0.2%
37 0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	4,283	\$31,000	1.03	229	5.2%	241	-114	-0.3%	5,454	2,590	3,011	-146	-0.3%
33 0000	Protective Service Occupations	3,766	\$44,000	1.38	117	3.0%	142	545	1.6%	3,708	1,794	2,141	-227	-0.6%
15 0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	3,518	\$98,700	0.86	72	2.0%	330	334	1.0%	2,332	787	1,315	230	0.6%
39 0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	3,417	\$31,000	1.08	143	4.1%	118	-187	-0.5%	5,679	2,301	3,408	-30	-0.1%
21 0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	2,318	\$49,400	1.01	68	3.0%	419	10	0.0%	2,060	918	1,111	31	0.1%
17 0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	1,828	\$89,100	0.89	32	1.8%	133	-73	-0.4%	1,113	497	666	-49	-0.3%
27 0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	1,672	\$64,100	0.71	63	3.8%	151	105	0.6%	1,587	720	920	-53	-0.3%
19 0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	760	\$74,600	0.68	17	2.3%	92	-86	-1.1%	628	160	480	-12	-0.2%
23 0000	Legal Occupations	697	\$98,100	0.67	6	0.9%	55	-106	-1.4%	396	199	215	-18	-0.3%
45 0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	411	\$39,100	0.55	28	5.3%	2	15	0.4%	578	219	371	-12	-0.3%
00 0000	Total - All Occupations	127,282	\$53,200	1.00	4,835	3.7%	10,594	157	0.0%	132,121	60,850	76,533	-5,262	-0.4%

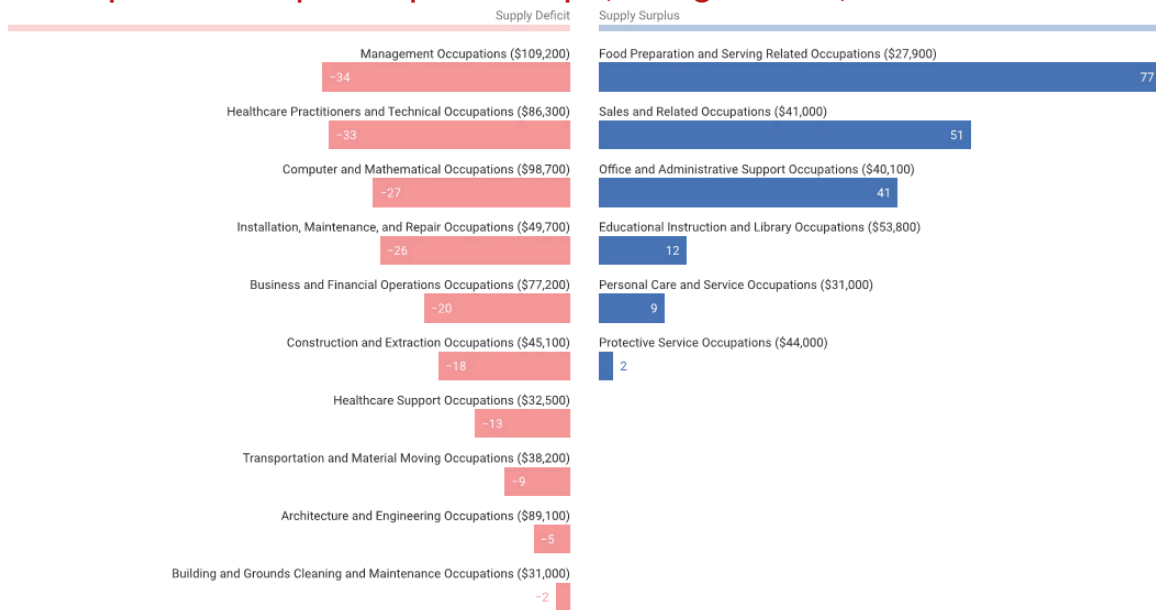
OCCUPATION GAPS

Occupation Gap, Detailed Occupations (6 Digit SOC)

Potential Average Annual Occupation Gaps over 10 Years in Columbus, GA-AL MSA



Occupation Gap, Major Group (2 Digit SOC)

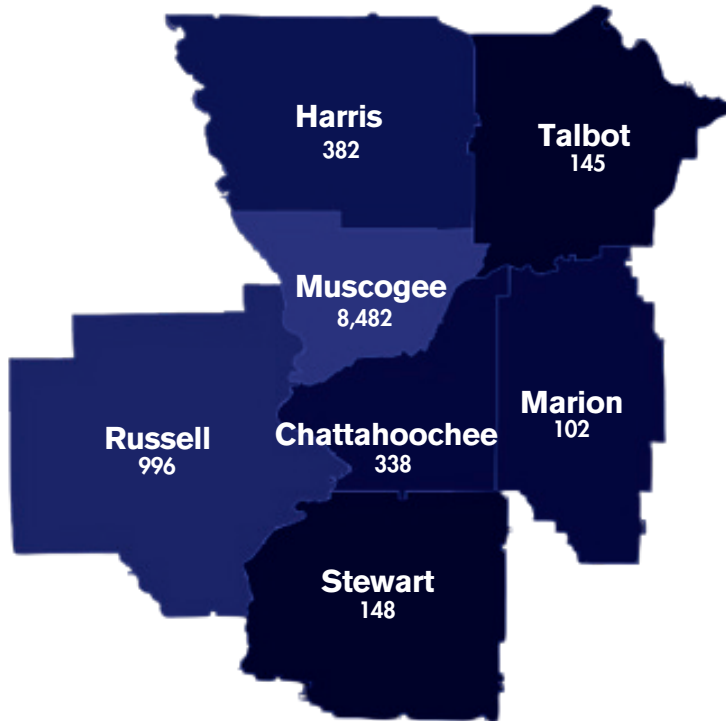


For further clarification, the analysis used the Major Group 2 digit as well as the detailed 6 digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) in the Occupation Gaps analysis. The 2 digit and 6 digit occupation analysis reveals gaps in software developers, healthcare, management, computer, business, and financial services.

A previous Occupation and Awards Gap report, which employed detailed educational programs occupational crosswalk data and was published by the Butler Center in April 2024, indicated a significant need for healthcare management, hospitality management, and e-commerce specialization. To read more about the Occupation and Awards Gaps report, please visit the website.

ONLINE JOB ADS

Columbus, GA-AL MSA



The online job ads map displays the number and the active online job ads within the last 30 days in the Columbus region for all occupations. Online job ads are part of Real Time Intelligence (RTI) data collected from over 45,000 websites and prepared by Chmura.

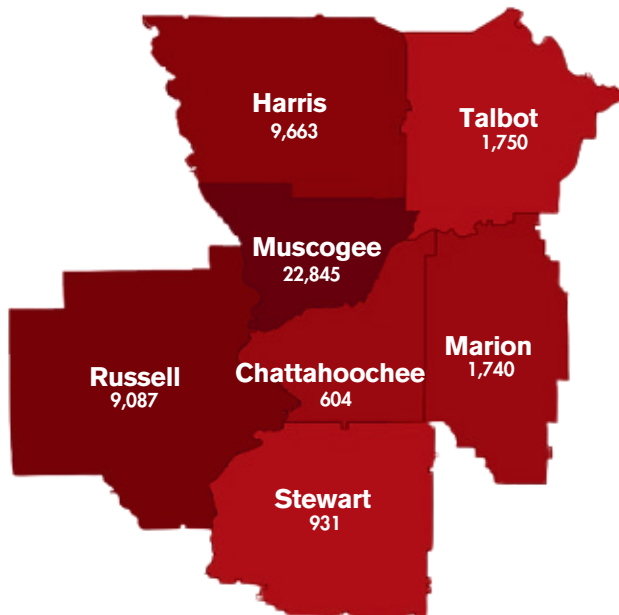
The data shows that Muscogee County has the highest number of online job ads, followed by Russell and Harris Counties. In the last 30 days, there were 10,593 active job ads in the Columbus area. Further analysis reveals that Muscogee County has the 7th highest job ad count among all 159 counties in the state of Georgia.

The online job ads data aligns with the employment distribution data, indicating that Muscogee County has the highest employment in Columbus, GA-AL MSA, followed by Russell and Harris Counties.

Muscogee County has the highest positive net commuting number in Columbus, GA-AL MSA, as a substantial number of people commute from outside the county to work there. Harris and Russell Counties have the highest number of residents who leave their home counties for work. As previously mentioned, the average commuting time in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is 22.2 minutes.

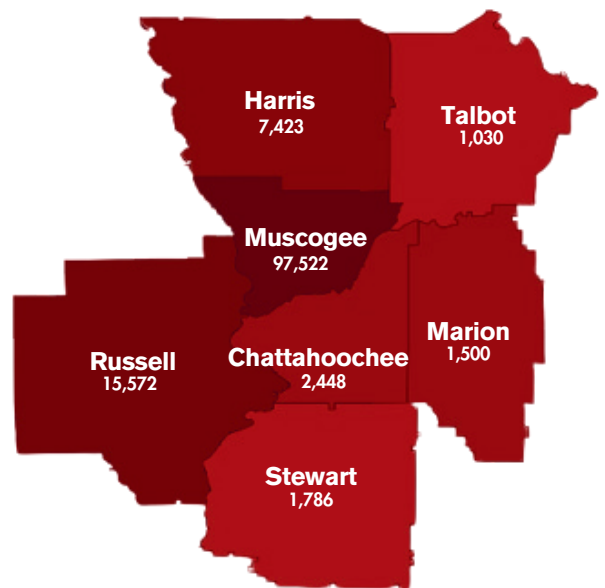
NET COMMUTING

Columbus, GA-AL MSA



EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION

Columbus, GA-AL MSA



COLUMBUS GA-AL MSA ONLINE JOB ADS REPORT

The following charts display the monthly active and newly posted online job ads in the Columbus, GA-AL MSA. The data shows an increase in job ad counts for both part-time and full-time positions in June and July of 2024. However, the increase in active job ads from last year for full-time positions is substantially higher than that of part-time positions: 37% for full-time jobs (from 5,166 jobs in September 2023 to 7,079 in July 2024) compared to 5.9% for part-time jobs (from 1,622 jobs in September 2023 to 1,718 in July 2024).

The number of newly posted full-time job ads increased from 1,308 in May to 1,868 in July 2024, while newly posted part-time job ads increased from 329 in May to 464 in July 2024.

The active online job ads have increased across all education levels:

High school or equivalent: 4.9% (from 2,899 in September 2023 to 3,041 in July 2024)

Bachelor's degree: 17.2% (from 1,548 in September 2023 to 1,814 in July 2024)

Associate degree: 18.1% (from 386 in September 2023 to 456 in July 2024)

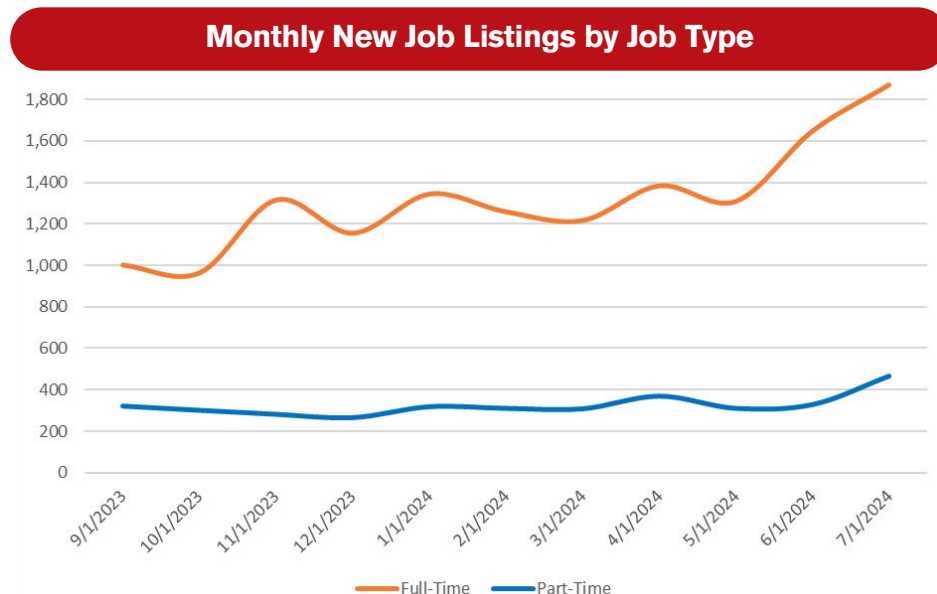
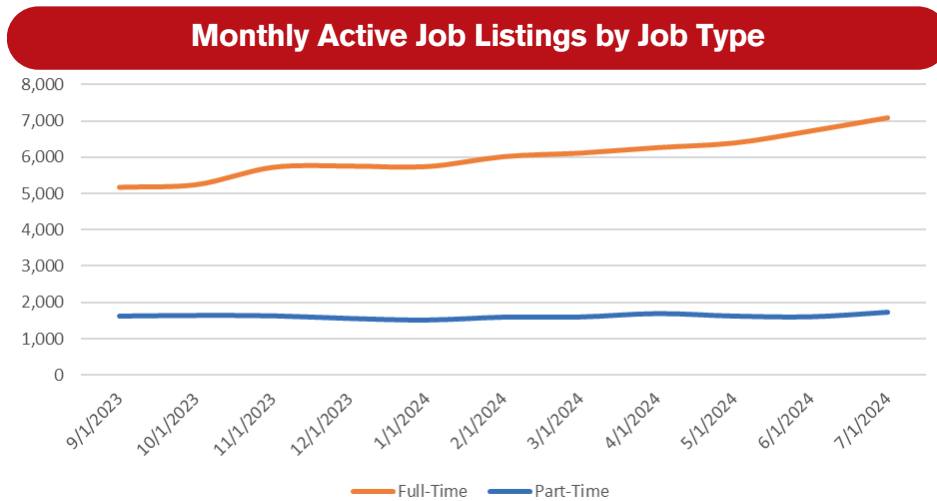
Master's degree: 20.2% (from 361 in September 2023 to 434 in July 2024)

Doctoral degree: 49.2% (from 65 in September 2023 to 97 in July 2024)

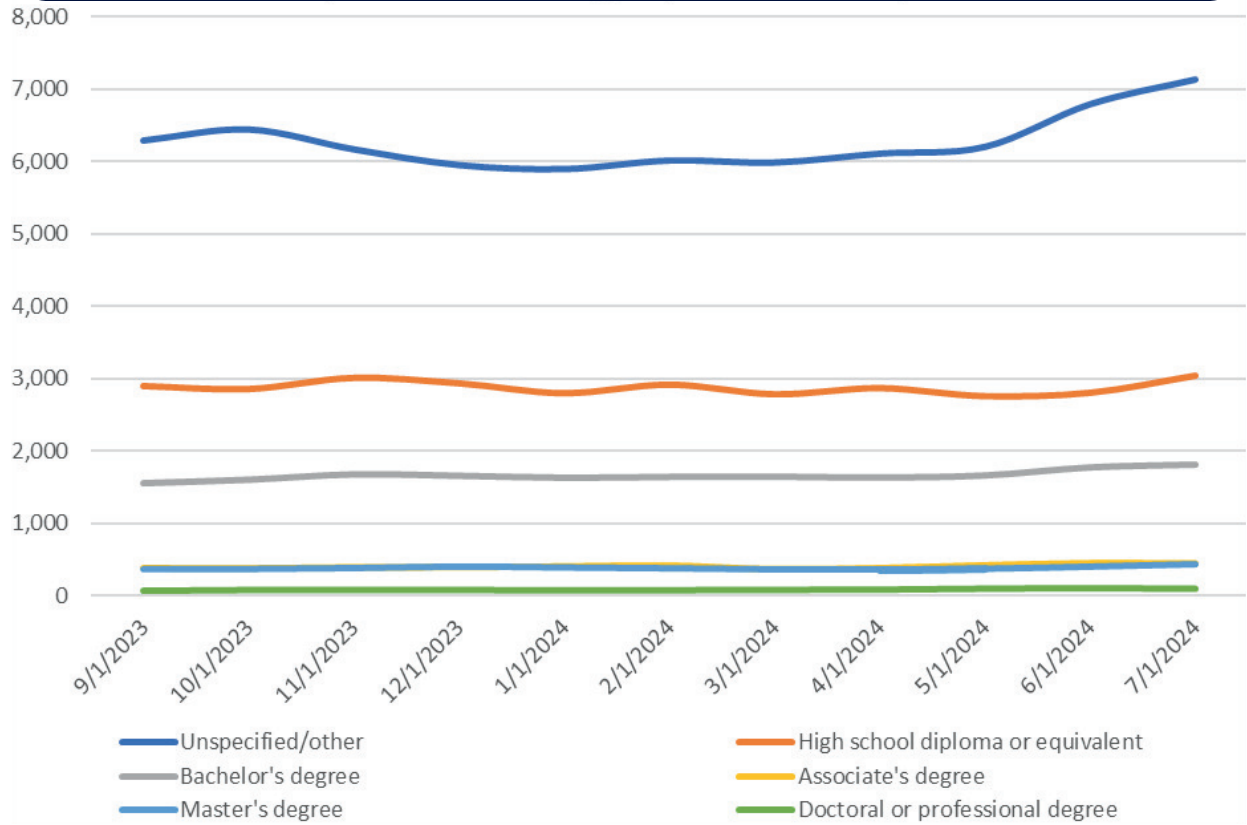
Not specified: 13.5% (from 6,286 in September 2023 to 7,133 in July 2024) *

*Unspecified/other job ads consist of positions that either require licenses or do not specify the type of degree needed. This category includes jobs such as registered nurses, CDL drivers, sales representatives, fast food workers, retail sales workers, and secretaries. It also includes job ads for physicians, dentists, and software developers that did not mention a specific degree.

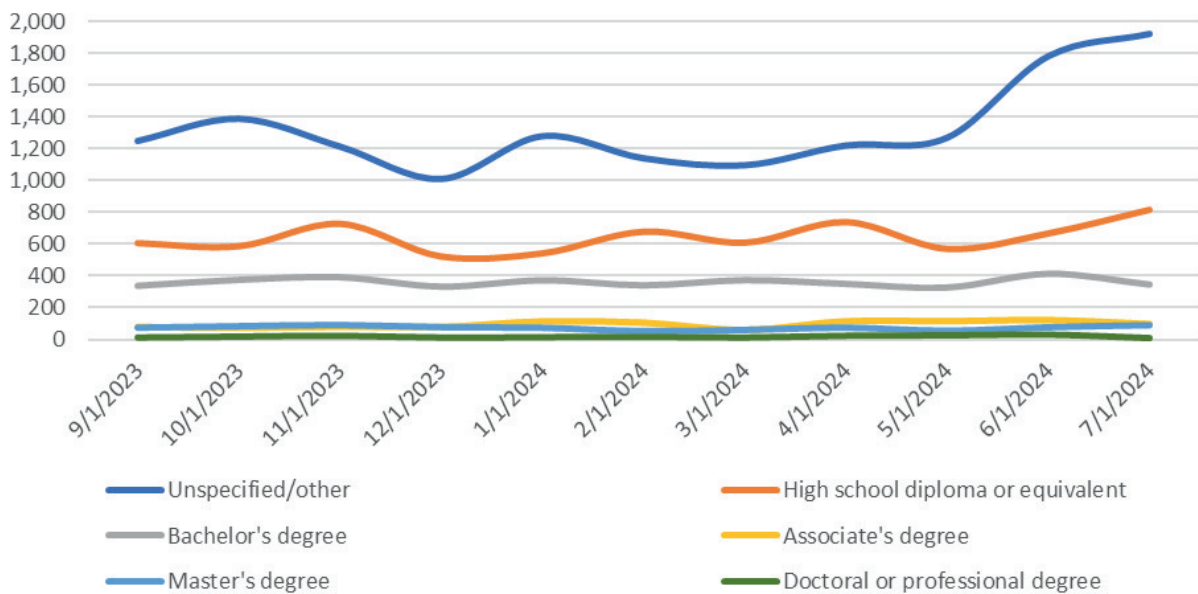
Source: Chmura, JobsEQ, Real Time Intelligence (RTI).



Monthly Active Job Listings by Education Requirement



Monthly New Job Listings by Education Requirement



The following charts highlight the most frequently mentioned soft and hard skills in online job ads from August 2023 to August 2024.

Soft Skills

Skill Name	Active Job Ads		
Communication (Verbal and written skills)	17,145		
Cooperative/Team Player	9,185		
Customer Service	7,447		
Organization	4,755		
Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty	4,326		
Problem Solving	4,269		
Detail Oriented/Meticulous	3,740		
Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership	3,656		
Supervision/Management	3,651		
Interpersonal Relationships/Maintain Relationships	3,581		

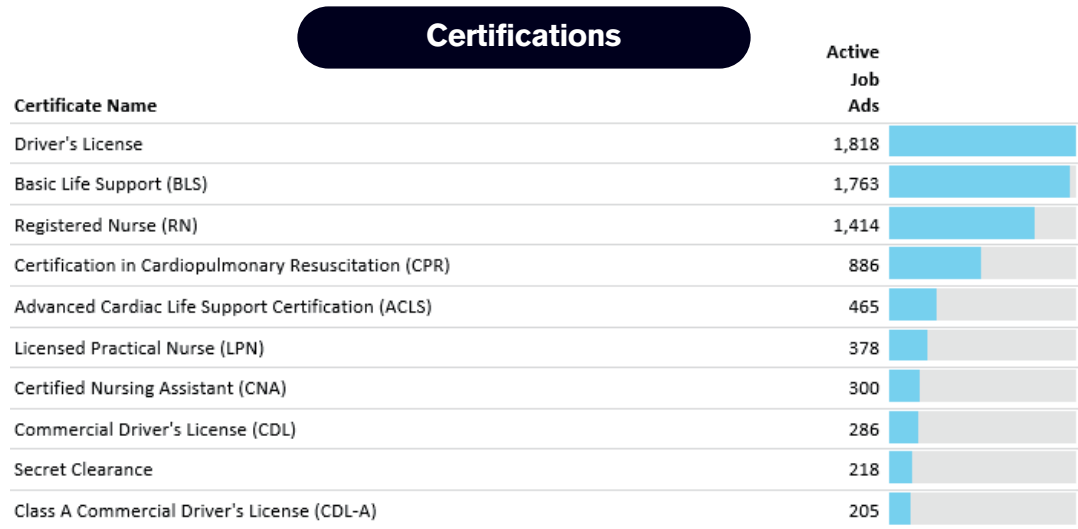
Hard Skills

Skill Name	Active Job Ads	
Microsoft Office	3,130	
Microsoft Excel	2,801	
Ability to Lift 51-100 lbs.	1,755	
Ability to Lift 41-50 lbs.	1,706	
Sales	1,150	
Microsoft PowerPoint	1,078	
Microsoft Word	1,074	
Microsoft Outlook	1,017	
Manufacturing	955	
Retail Sales	888	

Verbal and written communication is the most frequently cited soft skill, while proficiency in Microsoft software applications tops the list for hard skills.

Source: JobsEQ®
 Data reflect online job postings that were active from 8/25/2023 to 8/25/2024
 See JobsEQ online Help for important Technical Notes.

Based on the education programs and occupation crosswalk, the following graph displays the education programs that align with the top demanded jobs in the area. The other two graphs highlight the most frequently mentioned certification and the preferred years of experience in the online job ads.

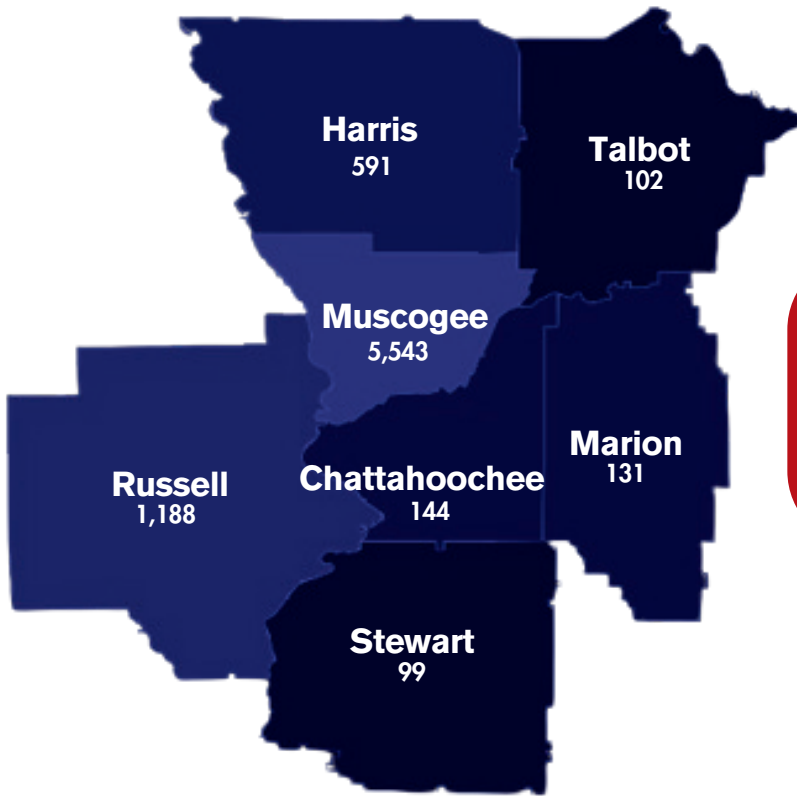
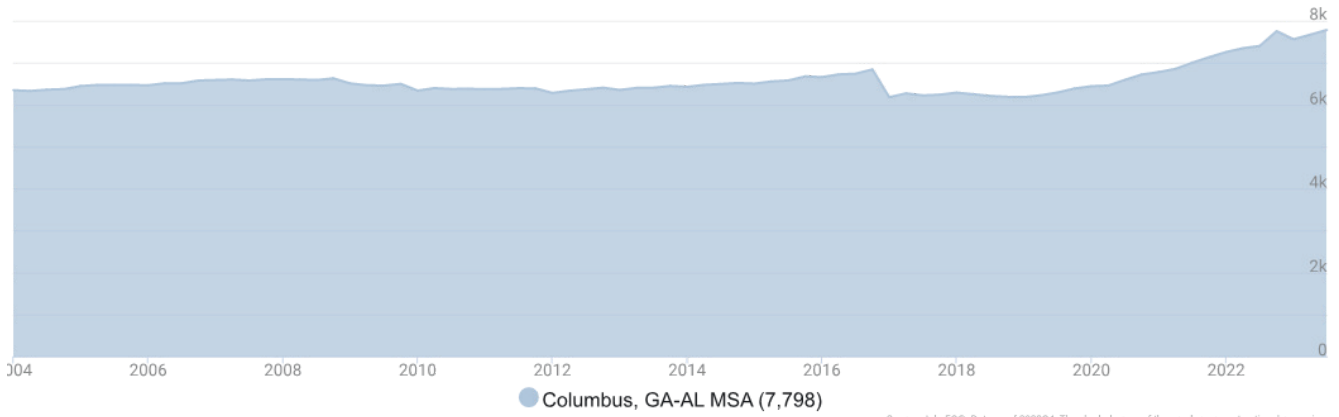


Source: JobsEQ®
 Data reflect online job postings that were active from 8/25/2023 to 8/25/2024
 See JobsEQ online Help for important Technical Notes.

ESTABLISHMENTS

Columbus, GA-AL MSA

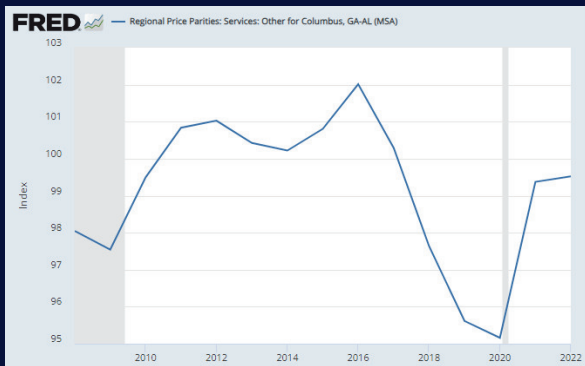
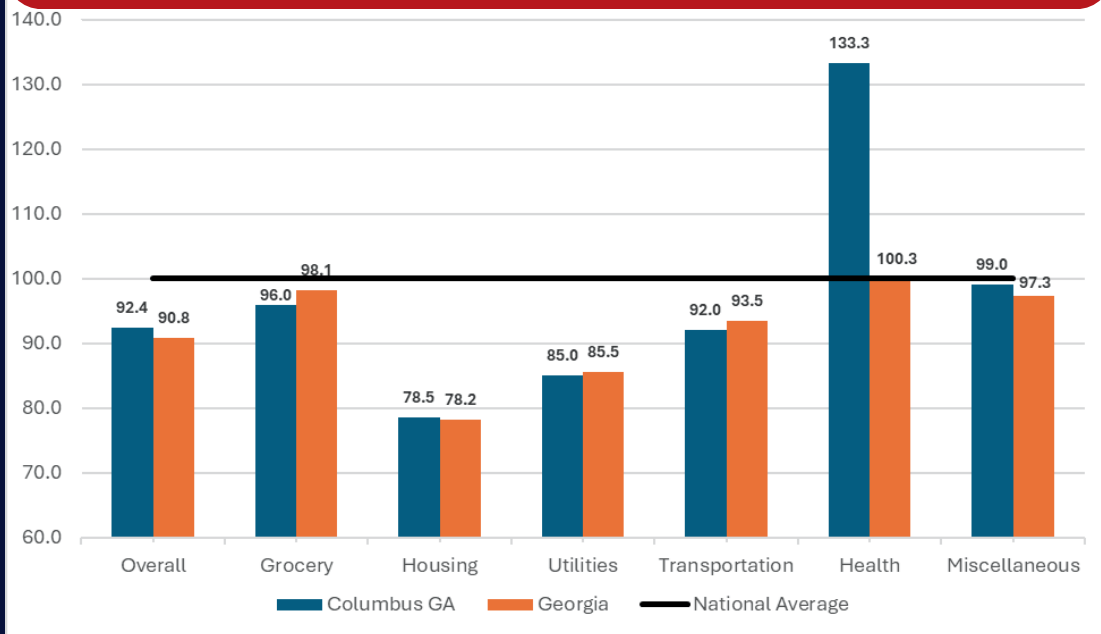
Establishments for Columbus, GA-AL MSA
Covered Employment



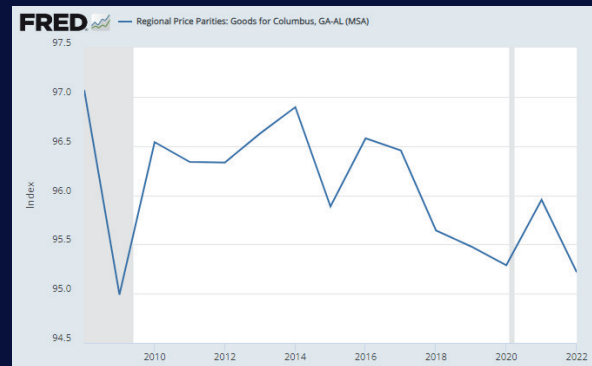
The number of businesses in Columbus, GA AL MSA has remained stable, showing slight growth after the pandemic. The majority of businesses are located in Muscogee County, followed by Russell County.

THE ECONOMY

Cost of Living Index by Major Consumer Spending Category



Services: Other for Columbus, GA AL (MSA)



Goods for Columbus, GA AL (MSA)

The cost of living in Columbus, GA AL MSA is slightly higher than the average cost of living in Georgia but about 8% lower than the national average, primarily due to lower prices for goods. Housing costs in Columbus are substantially lower than the national average, at 78.5% of the average. However, health care costs in Columbus exceed the national average by 33%. Costs for groceries, utilities, and transportation are all lower in Columbus compared to both Georgia and the U.S.

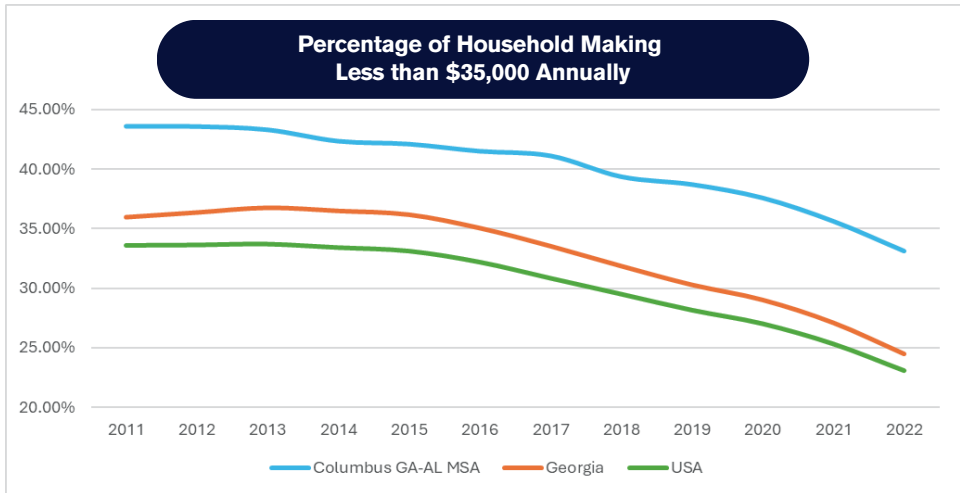
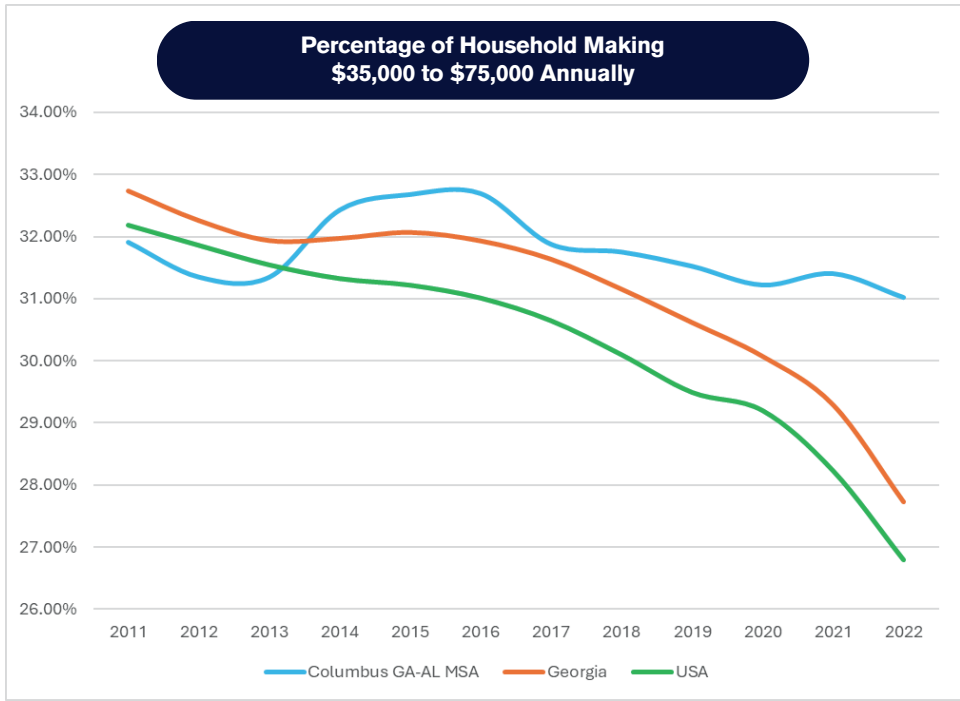
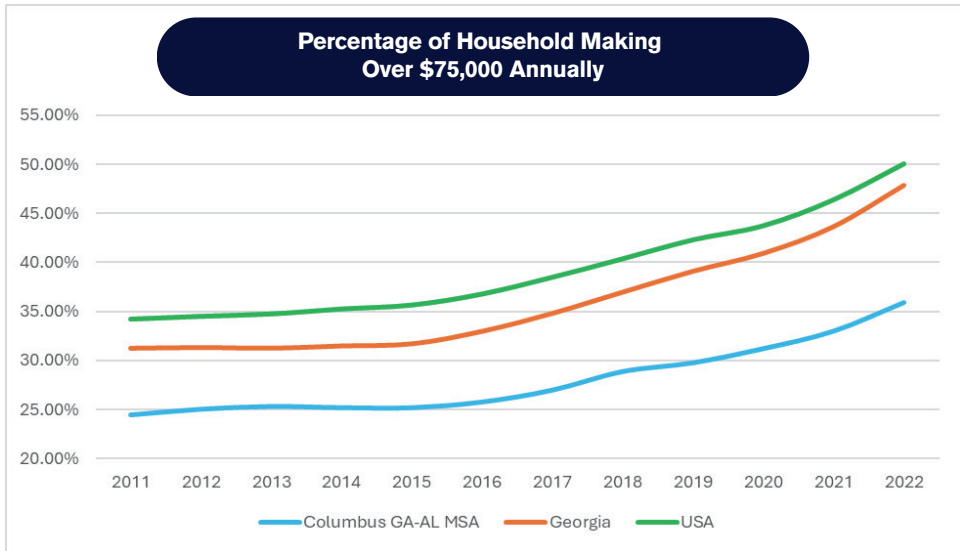
Electricity Rates

	Columbus, GA AL MSA	Georgia	USA	Chattahoochee County	Harris County	Marion County	Muscogee County	Russell County, AL	Stewart County	Talbot County
Residential	\$0.148	\$0.14	\$0.15	\$0.141	\$0.156	\$0.141	\$0.149	\$0.146	\$0.146	\$0.143
Commercial	\$0.132	\$0.12	\$0.13	\$0.129	\$0.135	\$0.129	\$0.131	\$0.140	\$0.133	\$0.129
Industrial	\$0.088	\$0.09	\$0.08	\$0.093	\$0.087	\$0.093	\$0.091	\$0.084	\$0.094	\$0.090

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	Columbus, GA AL MSA	Georgia	USA
Less than \$10,000	7.8%	5.4%	4.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5.4%	3.8%	3.8%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	10.0%	7.5%	7.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.9%	7.9%	7.4%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12.5%	11.2%	10.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	18.6%	16.6%	16.1%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.8%	13.1%	12.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	12.5%	16.6%	17.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	5.0%	8.1%	8.8%
\$200,000 or more	5.6%	10.0%	11.4%

Comparing the income distribution of Columbus, GA AL MSA to that of Georgia and the U.S. reveals income disparities. Columbus has a higher percentage of the population earning less than \$25,000 and a lower percentage earning more than \$75,000 compared to Georgia and the U.S. However, Columbus does have a slightly higher proportion of the population in the middle income brackets compared to both Georgia and the U.S.



OCCUPATION WAGES

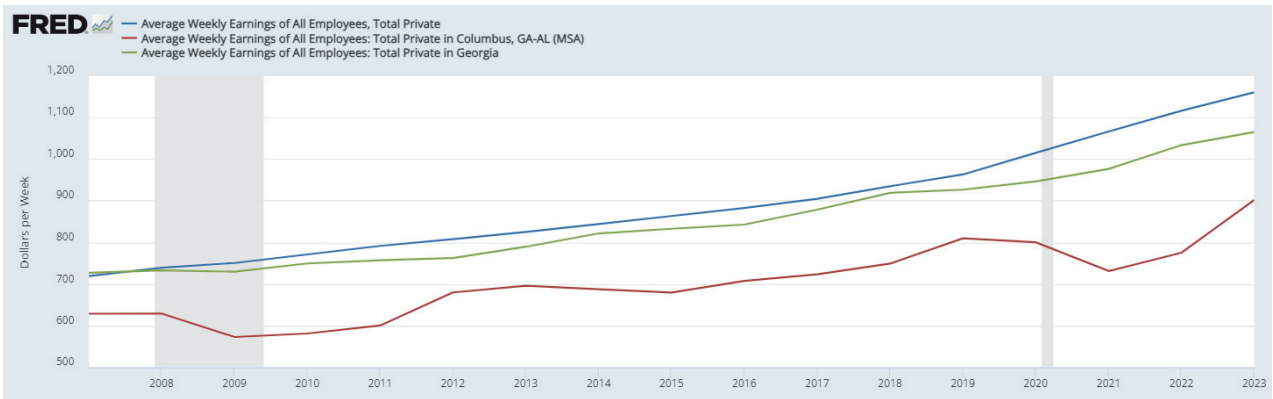
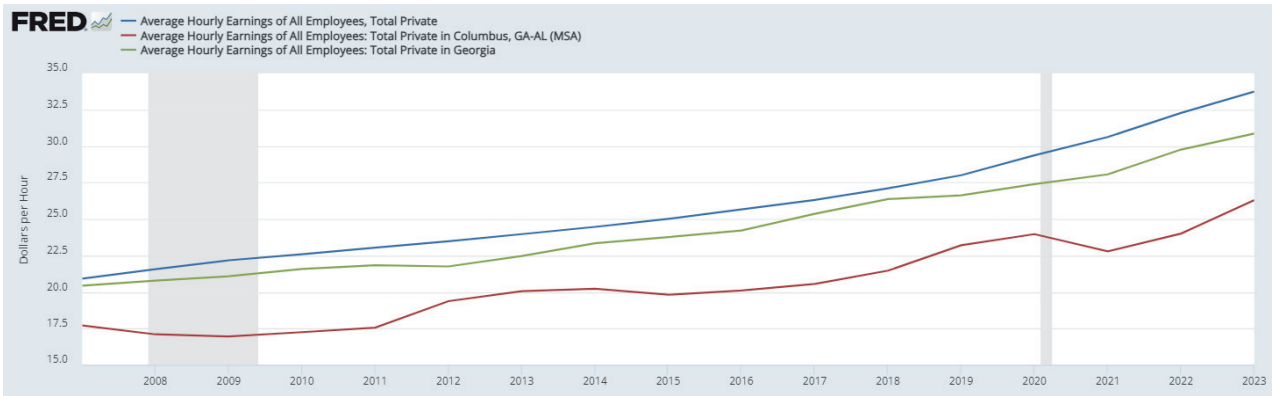
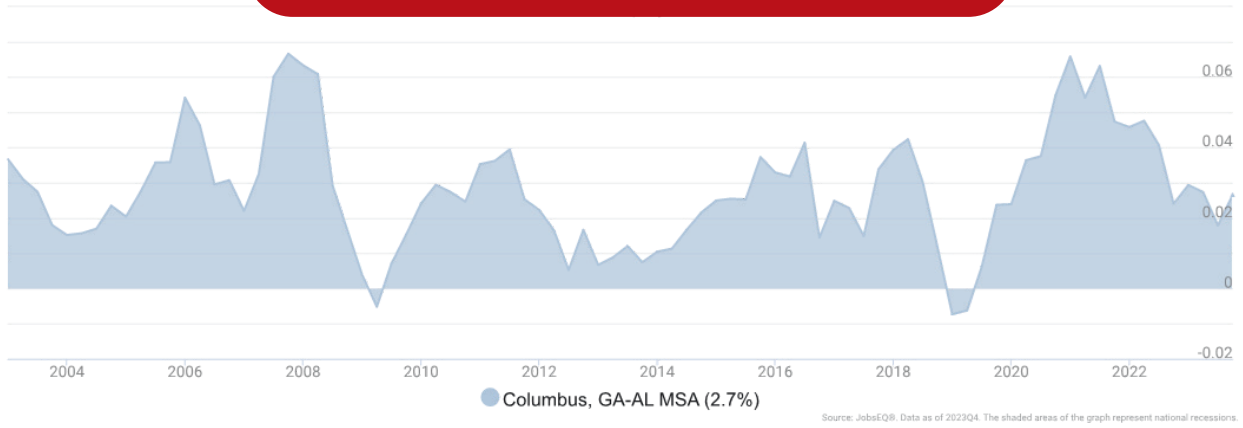
Columbus, GA-AL MSA, 2024 Q1

The following table displays the wage distribution for all 2-digit SOC occupations in Columbus, GA-AL MSA.

					Percentiles				
SOC	Occupation	Mean	Entry Level	Experienced	10%	25%	50% (Median)	75%	90%
11-0000	Management Occupations	\$117,200	\$51,200	\$150,200	\$44,600	\$65,000	\$98,600	\$142,800	\$195,300
23-0000	Legal Occupations	\$102,300	\$39,200	\$133,800	\$34,000	\$48,900	\$68,400	\$129,900	\$197,900
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	\$97,200	\$55,700	\$118,000	\$48,900	\$69,500	\$94,300	\$122,000	\$145,900
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	\$90,900	\$54,400	\$109,200	\$49,400	\$65,200	\$83,800	\$109,400	\$140,100
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	\$87,000	\$43,500	\$108,800	\$39,000	\$53,000	\$71,300	\$91,900	\$132,300
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	\$81,400	\$46,300	\$99,000	\$42,100	\$55,700	\$74,600	\$98,000	\$127,400
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	\$77,700	\$41,800	\$95,700	\$37,900	\$50,600	\$70,600	\$93,200	\$119,700
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	\$62,900	\$30,200	\$79,200	\$27,400	\$36,000	\$51,600	\$76,700	\$107,300
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	\$54,000	\$27,200	\$67,300	\$24,000	\$32,800	\$53,100	\$67,300	\$83,300
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	\$50,900	\$31,800	\$60,400	\$29,300	\$37,200	\$47,100	\$60,900	\$78,700
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	\$50,000	\$31,400	\$59,200	\$29,500	\$36,100	\$46,800	\$60,000	\$73,000
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	\$46,700	\$31,600	\$54,300	\$29,700	\$36,100	\$44,900	\$51,400	\$65,000
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	\$45,900	\$31,600	\$53,100	\$29,900	\$35,400	\$42,500	\$52,300	\$67,300
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	\$42,700	\$22,200	\$52,900	\$21,200	\$24,600	\$30,800	\$47,000	\$74,700
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	\$40,800	\$28,100	\$47,100	\$26,800	\$31,400	\$37,800	\$46,400	\$58,300
51-0000	Production Occupations	\$40,200	\$27,300	\$46,600	\$26,000	\$30,500	\$36,700	\$45,200	\$58,900
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$39,300	\$25,900	\$46,000	\$24,000	\$29,600	\$35,600	\$44,600	\$58,500
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	\$37,300	\$25,500	\$43,200	\$25,100	\$27,000	\$32,000	\$43,400	\$57,900
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	\$34,100	\$24,600	\$38,900	\$23,300	\$27,400	\$32,200	\$38,000	\$45,000
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	\$31,400	\$22,200	\$36,000	\$21,200	\$24,500	\$29,500	\$35,200	\$43,000
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	\$31,400	\$21,000	\$36,500	\$20,100	\$23,100	\$27,900	\$35,000	\$47,800
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	\$27,600	\$19,600	\$31,700	\$18,100	\$21,900	\$26,100	\$31,300	\$37,600
00-0000	Total - All Occupations	\$54,500	\$25,600	\$69,000	\$23,300	\$29,900	\$40,800	\$63,700	\$96,700

The data is published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), imputed and brought forward by Chmura.

Change in the Average Annual Wages for Columbus, GA AL MSA



Wages in Columbus have been growing over the past 20 years, except during the recessions of 2009 and 2020. In 2023, the average hourly wage in Columbus, GA AL MSA is \$26.29, which is below that of Georgia (\$30.85) and the U.S. (\$33.72). With an average of 34.3 hours worked per week, the average worker in Columbus earns \$901.75 per week.

Social and Poverty

	Columbus, GA-AL MSA	Georgia	USA	Chattahoochee County	Harris County	Marion County	Muscogee County	Russell County, AL	Stewart County	Talbot County
Poverty Level (of all people)	17.9%	13.50%	12.50%	16.9%	7.5%	12.4%	18.7%	22.0%	21.9%	18.4%
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	17.5%	12.10%	11.50%	16.7%	9.9%	21.3%	17.6%	20.0%	27.1%	20.1%
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.5%	1.50%	1.40%	0.4%	1.9%	1.5%	1.4%	1.7%	0.9%	1.9%
Disconnected Youth	3.5%	2.90%	2.50%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	3.4%	6.6%	11.5%	3.9%
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	48.1%	38.40%	34.00%	24.5%	21.0%	37.0%	53.3%	46.7%	62.4%	71.3%
Uninsured	11.5%	12.90%	8.70%	5.0%	6.7%	16.9%	12.0%	11.7%	16.5%	13.4%
With a Disability, Age 18-64	16.8%	10.70%	10.50%	9.9%	13.8%	16.1%	16.1%	21.1%	22.8%	18.7%
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	40.7%	43.50%	45.50%	42.7%	51.5%	36.0%	40.0%	39.1%	34.6%	40.6%
Foreign Born	4.7%	10.40%	13.70%	4.4%	2.2%	6.0%	5.2%	2.9%	21.1%	0.2%
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	2.3%	5.50%	8.20%	4.1%	1.0%	3.4%	2.4%	1.2%	14.3%	0.7%

Disconnected youth in our data are young people ages 16-19 who neither employed nor enrolled in an educational institution or training program. They are either unemployed or not in the labor force.

Comparable to the previously discussed income distribution data, the poverty level in Columbus, GA AL MSA is 17.9%, which is substantially higher than that of Georgia and the U.S. Russell and Stewart counties have the highest poverty rates. The percentage of households receiving food stamps and the number of children in single parent families are also significantly higher than in Georgia and the U.S.

Despite a significantly higher percentage of the disabled population, the medically uninsured rate in Columbus is notably higher than the national average (11.5% compared to 8.7%) but slightly lower than Georgia. Additionally, 3.5% of teenagers aged 16-19 are neither employed, in the labor force, nor enrolled in an educational institution or training program.

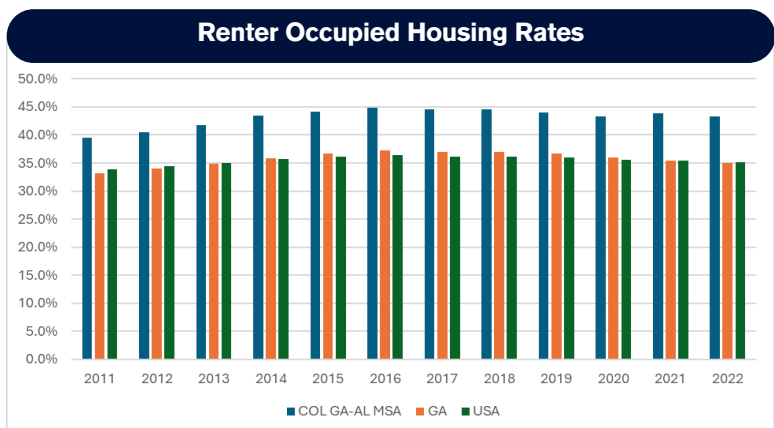
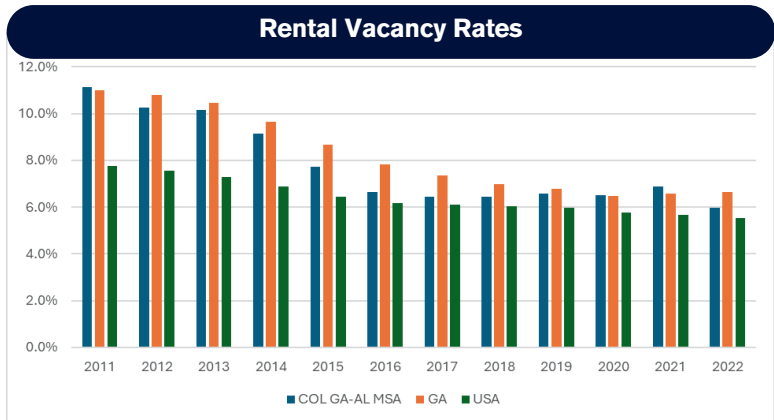
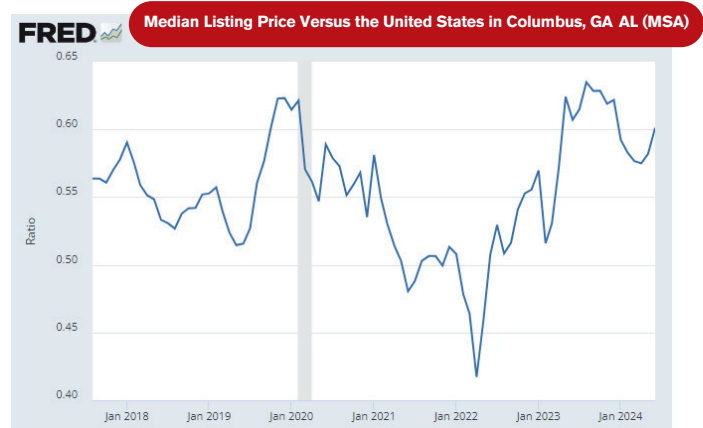
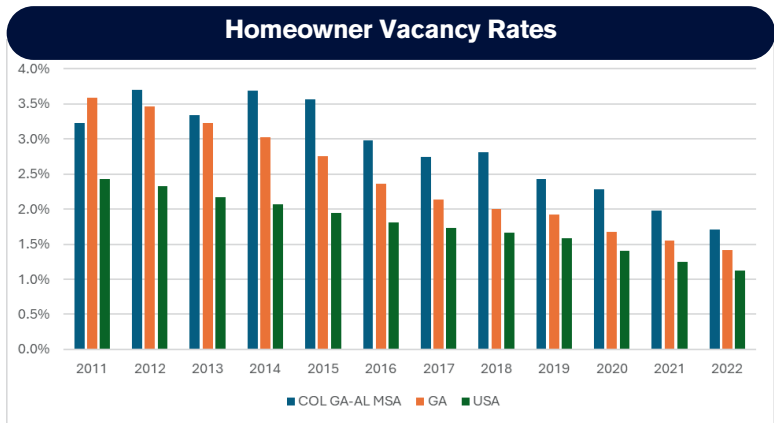
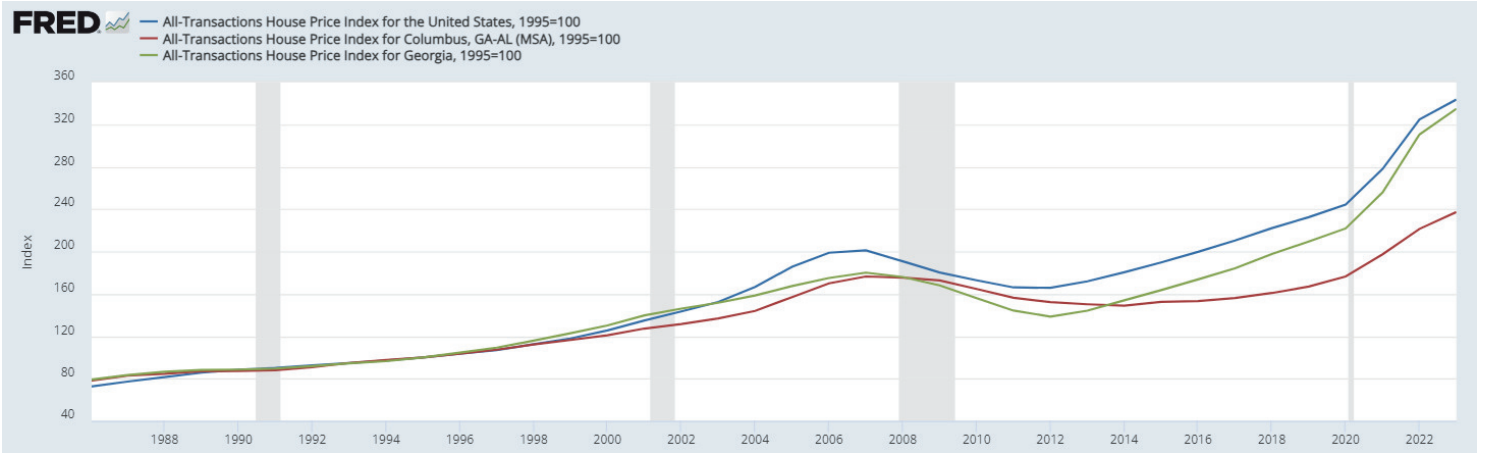
HOUSING

	Columbus, GA AL MSA	Chattahoochee County	Harris County	Marion County	Muscogee County	Russell County, AL	Stewart County	Talbot County
Total Housing Units	143,878	2,971	14,306	3,550	90,488	27,382	2,115	3,066
Median House Value (of owner occupied units)	\$174,157	\$129,300	\$273,200	\$111,300	\$168,400	\$141,900	\$72,500	\$119,400
Homeowner Vacancy	1,241	29	150	23	630	379	12	18
Rental Vacancy	3,570	68	29	19	2,205	1,188	31	30
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	53,949	1,397	1,314	663	40,321	9,111	688	455
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	11,200	14	221	181	8,198	2,075	216	295

	Columbus, GA AL MSA	Georgia	USA	Chattahoochee County	Harris County	Marion County	Muscogee County	Russell County, AL	Stewart County	Talbot County
Homeowner Vacancy	1.7%	1.4%	1.1%	4.4%	1.3%	1.0%	1.6%	2.6%	1.1%	0.9%
Rental Vacancy	6.0%	6.6%	5.5%	3.8%	2.1%	2.7%	5.0%	11.5%	4.2%	6.0%
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	43.3%	35.0%	35.2%	68.8%	10.8%	23.1%	50.5%	38.8%	39.6%	17.9%

Columbus, GA AL MSA has a total of 143,878 housing units, with a vacancy rate of 1.7%, which is higher than both Georgia and the U.S. In Columbus, 43% of the occupied units are rented, compared to 35% in Georgia and the U.S. This reflects a lower percentage of homeownership in Columbus.

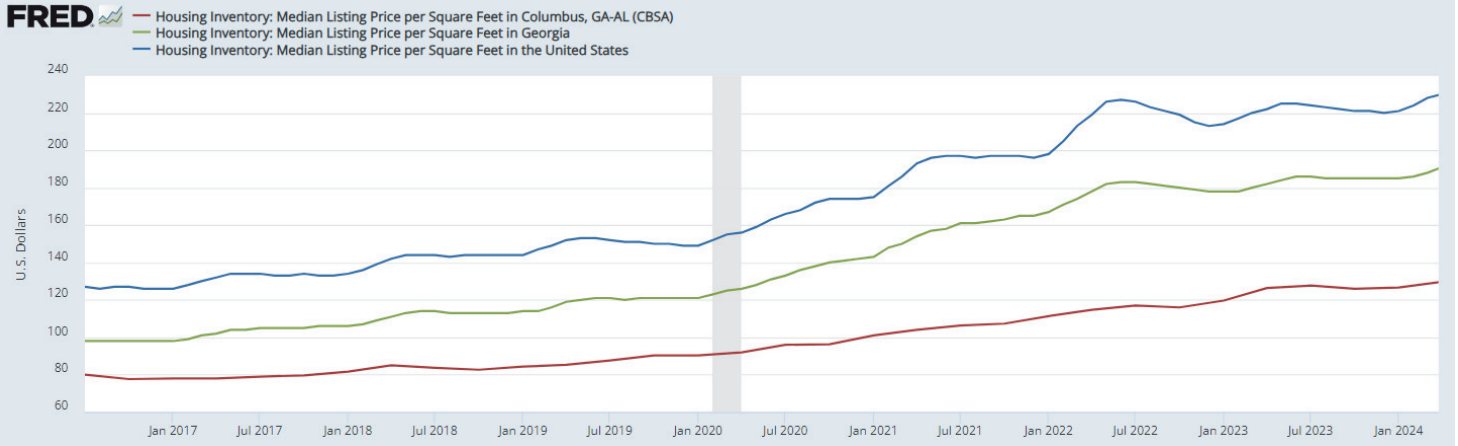
House Price Index Comparison



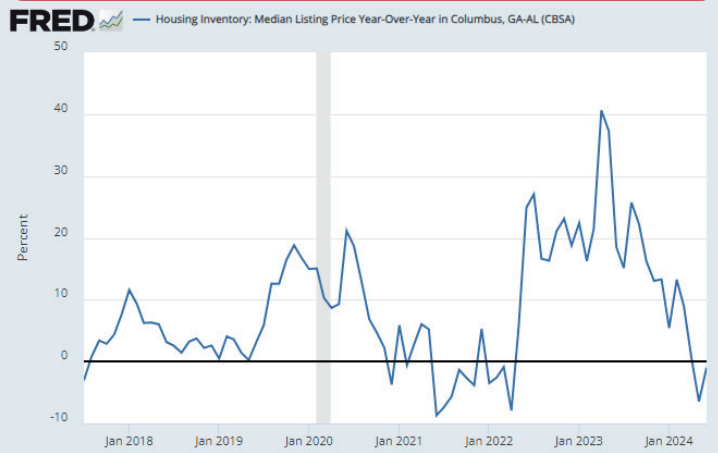
The median house value in Columbus, GA AL MSA stands at \$174,157, which is 60% of the median house value in the U.S. The graph above illustrates the inflation in housing prices in Columbus, Georgia, and the U.S., with 1995 as the base year. The data shows that housing prices in Columbus have more than doubled since 1995, increasing by 137.2%, which is significantly lower than the 234.7% increase for Georgia and 243.5% increase for the U.S.

This data suggests an increasingly tight housing market in the last decade, as both homeowner and rental vacancy rates have been trending significantly downward while rental demand remains robust.

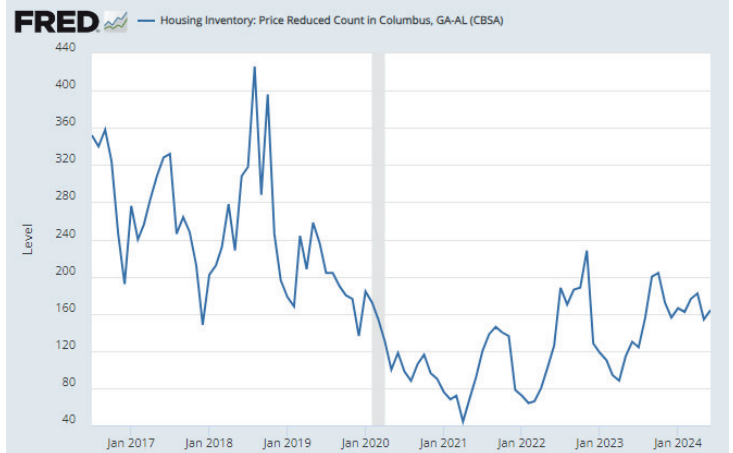
Median Listing Price per Square Feet Comparison



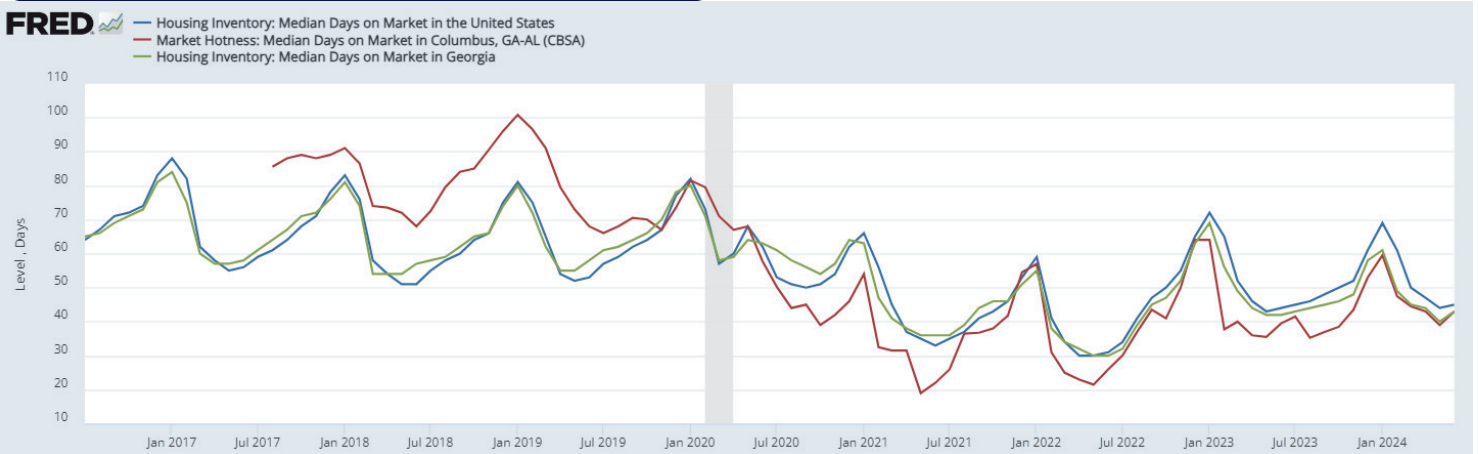
Median Listing Price Year Over Year in Columbus, GA AL (MSA)



Price Reduced Count



Median Days on Market Comparison



The median listing house price in Columbus, GA-AL MSA has been increasing year-over-year (YOY) since the pandemic, reaching \$127 per square foot in January 2024, compared to \$185 per square foot for Georgia and \$221 per square foot for the U.S. The median number of days a house remains on the market in Columbus has been rising since mid-2022 but remains highly comparable to Georgia and slightly lower than the U.S.

Home Ownership Affordability

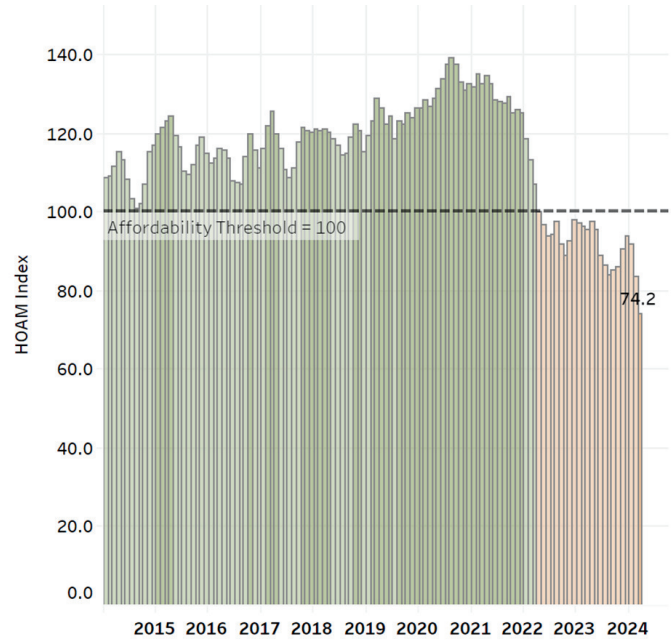
Home ownership affordability in Columbus, GA has hit its lowest level according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's Home Ownership Affordability Monitor (HOAM) index. The payment to income ratio has reached a new high at 40.5%. As of March 2024, the average interest rate on a 30 year mortgage was 6.8%, with the median monthly payment, including taxes, insurance, and PMI, at \$2,145. A look at the GDP in Columbus reveals a widening gap between nominal and real GDP, as inflation erodes consumers' purchasing power, leaving consumers facing higher prices and less to consume.

Columbus, GA-AL

January 2014 to March 2024

Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta Metro Home Ownership Affordability Monitor (HOAM) Index

Index Less than 100 = Unaffordable



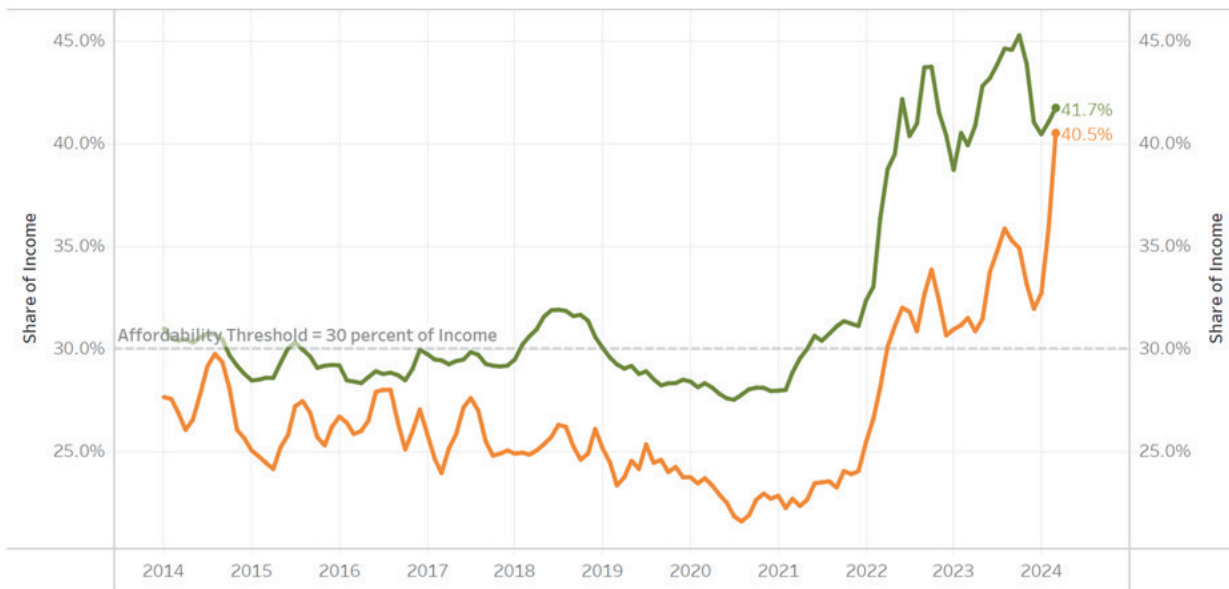
Updated: 5/21/2024

Nation vs Columbus, GA-AL

Share of Income Needed to Own the Median Priced Home

Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta Home Ownership Affordability Monitor

Data through March 2024



■ Metro Area Share of Income
■ U.S. Share of Income

EDUCATION

Educational Attainment

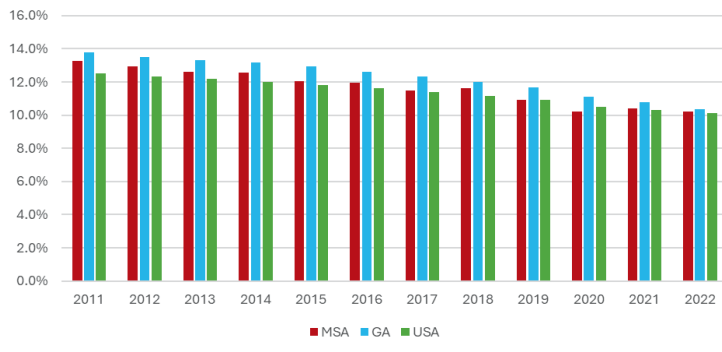
	Columbus, GA-AL MSA	Georgia	USA	Chattahoochee County	Harris County	Marion County	Muscogee County	Russell County, AL	Stewart County	Talbot County
No High School Diploma	10.2%	10.40%	10.10%	3.7%	5.3%	22.8%	9.8%	12.0%	27.8%	10.7%
High School Graduate	27.5%	26.00%	25.10%	22.7%	26.1%	35.0%	26.5%	29.0%	36.0%	46.3%
Some College, No Degree	25.0%	19.70%	19.70%	34.4%	25.2%	20.6%	24.4%	27.2%	18.3%	19.8%
Associate's Degree	10.8%	8.70%	9.20%	8.6%	9.8%	9.5%	10.2%	14.9%	4.3%	7.1%
Bachelor's Degree	16.0%	21.80%	22.40%	20.6%	19.1%	9.5%	17.4%	11.0%	10.6%	9.1%
Postgraduate Degree	10.5%	13.40%	13.40%	10.0%	14.5%	2.5%	11.8%	5.9%	3.0%	7.0%

Columbus, GA AL MSA has a significantly higher number of individuals who have attended some college but did not complete their degree, 25% of the population compared to 19.7% for both Georgia and the U.S. This number is disproportionately higher in Chattahoochee, Russell, Harris, and Muscogee counties. While Chattahoochee and Harris counties have a substantially lower population without a high school diploma compared to the national average, Marion and Stewart counties have a significantly higher percentage of individuals with no high school diploma.

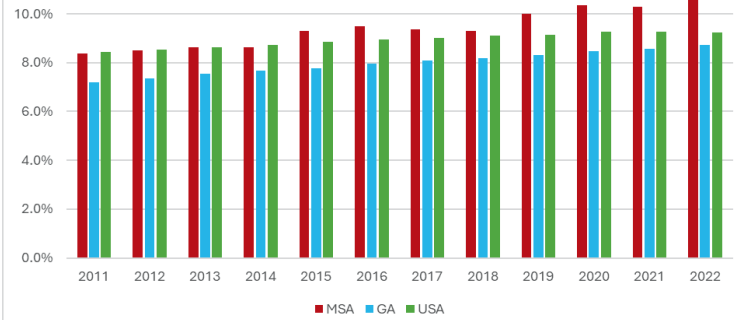
	Columbus, GA AL MSA	Georgia	USA	Chattahoochee County	Harris County	Marion County	Muscogee County	Russell County, AL	Stewart County	Talbot County
Total Enrollment	49,679	1,740,875	49,342,118	956	5,489	1,296	30,085	11,020	416	417
Total Teachers (FTE)	3,157	119,831	3,210,437	58	361	78	2,010	563	47	39
Pupil/Teacher Ratio	16.0	14.5	15.4	16.5	15.2	16.6	15.0	19.6	8.8	10.7
Spending Per Pupil	\$11,063	\$11,686	\$13,514	\$11,346	\$11,144	\$11,219	\$11,404	\$9,420	\$19,486	\$16,784

There are 49,679 K-12 pupils enrolled in Columbus, GA schools, with the highest enrollment in Muscogee County, followed by Russell County. Muscogee County employs about two thirds of the number of teachers in Columbus, Georgia. The pupil to teacher ratio in Columbus is relatively higher compared to Georgia and the U.S., primarily due to Russell County. However, Stewart and Talbot counties have a significantly lower ratio than the national average, while Muscogee County and Harris County are slightly below the national average. Given the cost of living in Columbus, spending per pupil is relatively lower compared to both Georgia and the U.S.

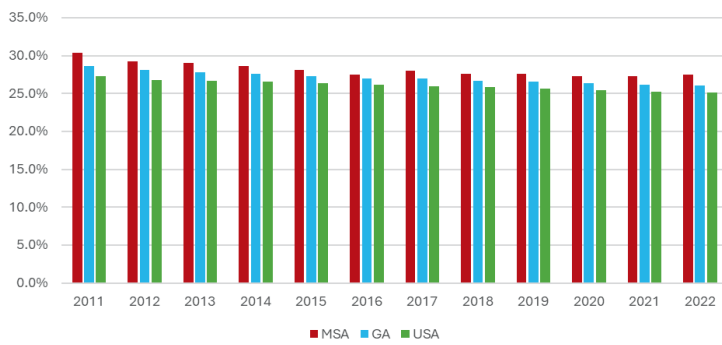
Percent of Population Who Do Not Have a High School Diploma



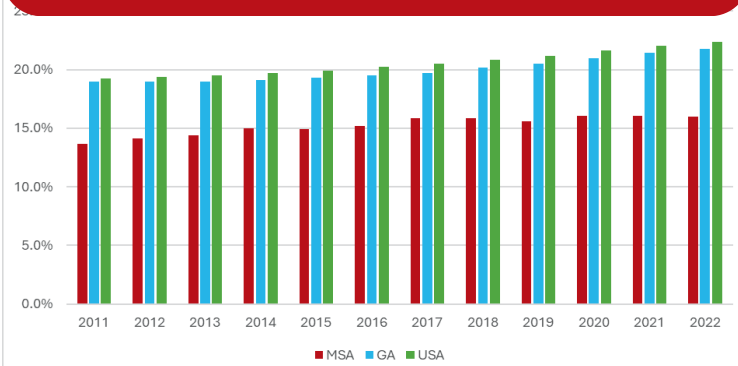
Percent of Population Who Have an Associates Degree



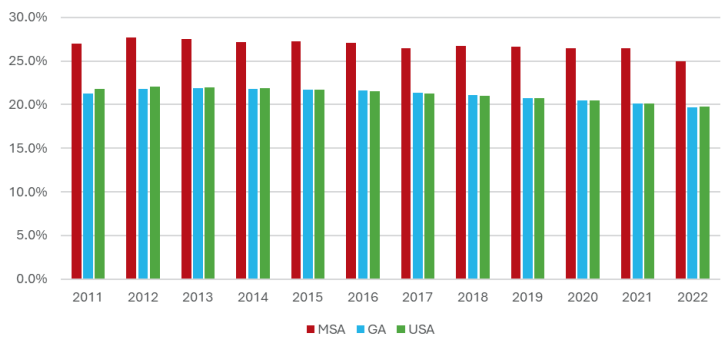
Percent of Population Who Have Only a High School Diploma



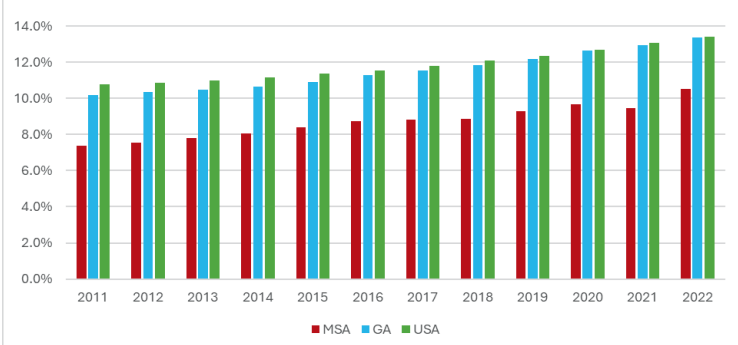
Percent of Population Who Have a Bachelor's Degree



Percent of Population Who Have Some College But No Degree

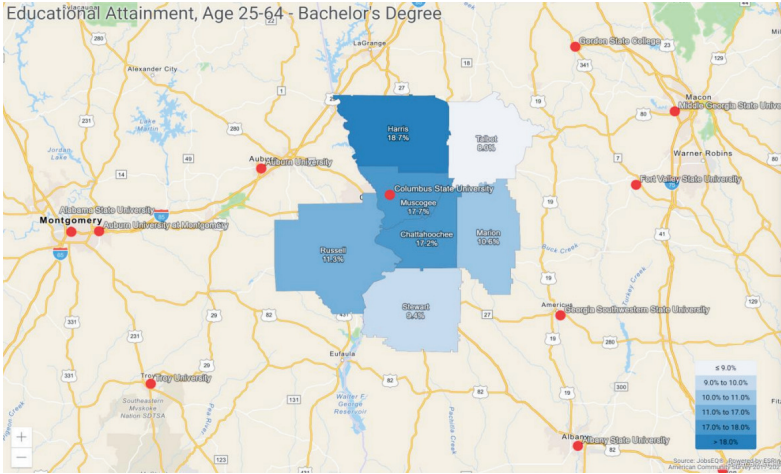


Percent of Population Who Have a Postgraduate Degree

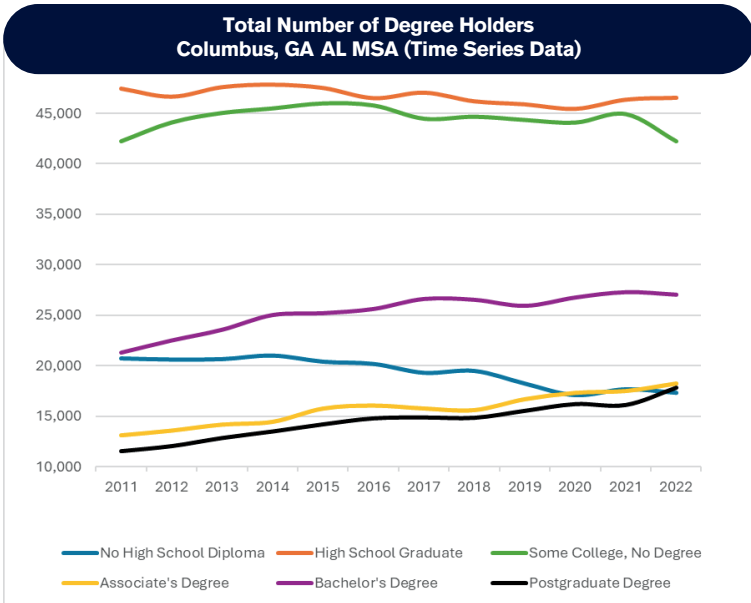
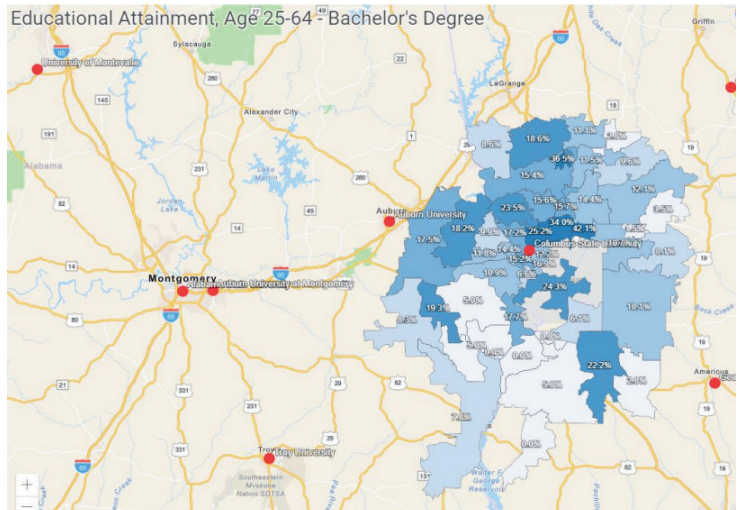
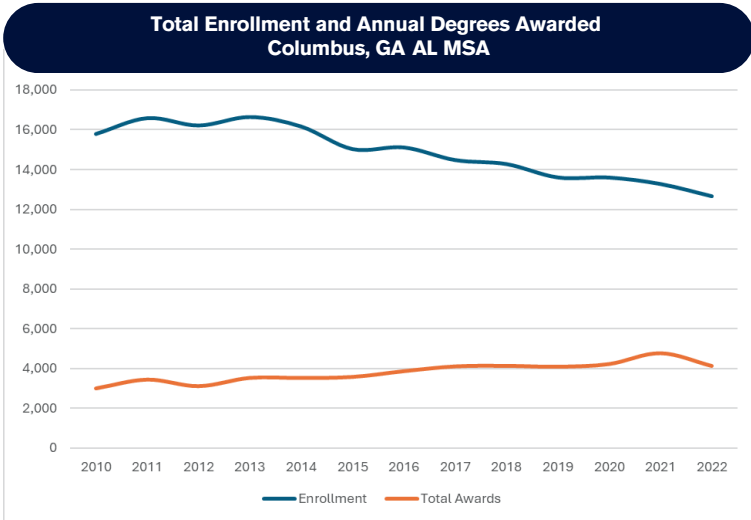


The education attainment graphs above show that Columbus is highly comparable to Georgia and the U.S. in reducing the percentage of the population (ages 25-64) without a high school diploma, high school diploma, or some college experience without a degree, and in increasing the percentage of individuals holding associate and bachelor's degrees. Despite an increase in the percentage of bachelor's degree holders by 2.1 percentage points (from 13.6% to 16.1%), Columbus slightly lags behind Georgia and the U.S., which saw increases of 2.5 and 2.8 percentage points, respectively. Columbus also has a lower percentage of bachelor's degree holders, at 16.1%, compared to 21.5% for Georgia and 22% for the U.S. Similarly, the percentage of the population with postgraduate degrees in Columbus is lower than that of Georgia and the U.S., at 9.5% compared to 13% for Georgia and 13.1% for the U.S.

TOTAL DEGREES

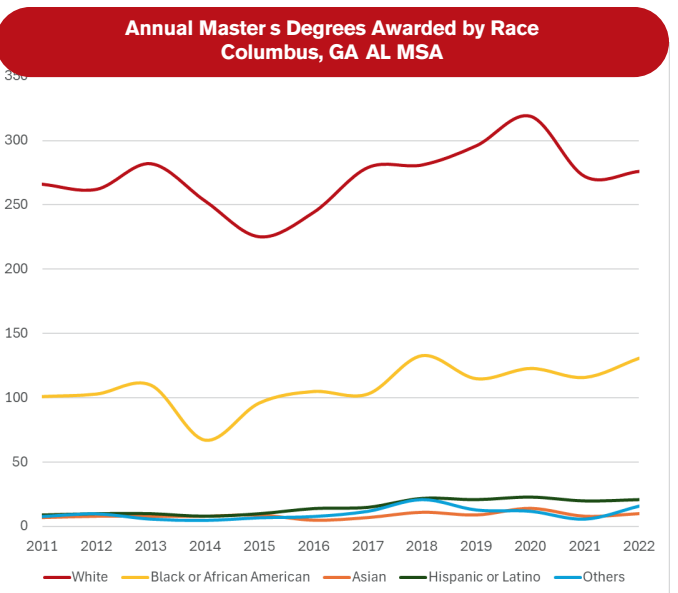
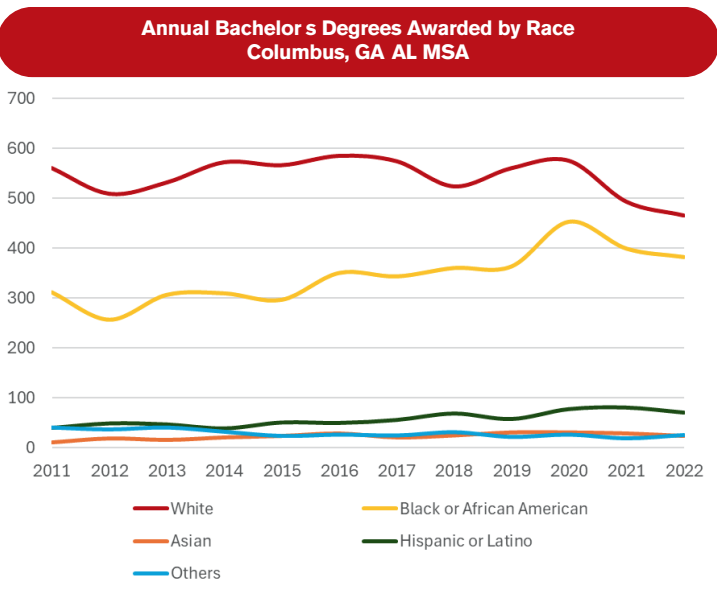
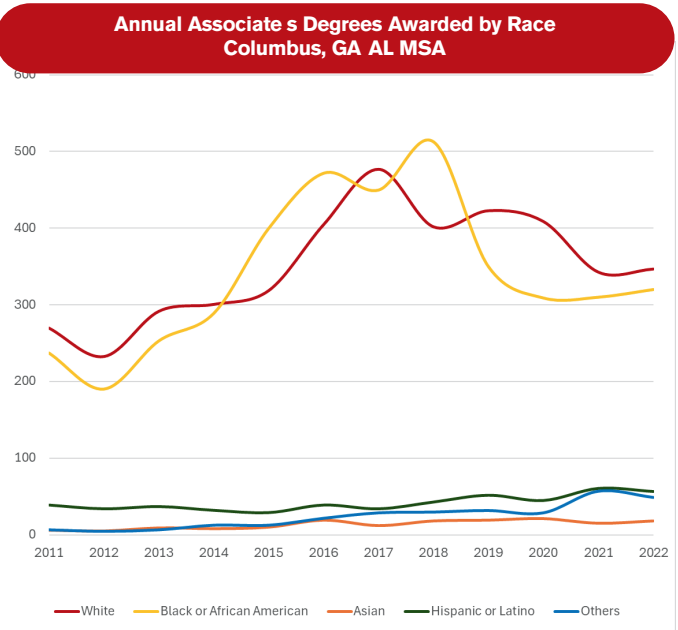
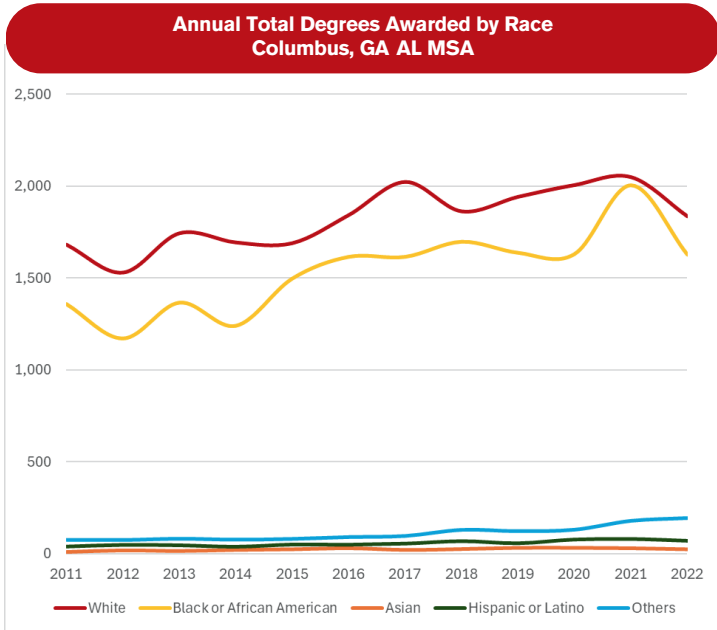


The map displays the percentage of bachelor's degree holders by zip code and county in the Columbus area. Zip codes surrounding Columbus State University show the highest percentage of the population with bachelor's degrees. At the county level, Muscogee and Harris counties have the highest percentages of bachelor's degree holders. This reflects the positive impact of Columbus State University in enhancing the area's human capital.



Enrollment in higher education has been trending downward since 2010, reaching 12,663 in 2022. Despite this decline in enrollment, the number of post-secondary awards increased from 2,989 in 2010 to 4,127 in 2022. This growth is largely due to a significant rise in the number of bachelor's degree holders, which could be attributed to higher retention rates and improved graduation rates. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in the number of postgraduate degree holders over the past decade. In 2022, there were 17,798 postgraduate degree holders in Columbus, up from 11,511 in 2011. Similarly, the number of associate degree holders increased from 13,069 in 2011 to 18,223 in 2022.

DEGREES BY RACE



Others include American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, two or more races and unknown race. The total number of awards data report all types of degrees including certificates, undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate.

White individuals make up 46.4% of the Columbus population, while African Americans constitute 42.1%. However, data shows that there are significantly more White individuals holding degrees compared to African Americans. Nevertheless, the gap has been narrowing and was nearly closed in 2021. In 2022, there were 1,835 White graduates, compared to 1,629 African American graduates, with 24 Asian and 70 Hispanic graduates.

The number of White graduates with bachelor's degrees has declined from 562 in 2011 to 465 in 2022. In contrast, the number of African American bachelor's degree graduates has increased from 312 in 2011 to 383 in 2022. The number of Hispanic and Asian bachelor's degree graduates has also risen, from 39 and 11 in 2011 to 70 and 24 in 2022, respectively.

For associate degrees, the numbers of White and African American graduates are comparable. In 2011, there were 270 White and 253 African American graduates with associate degrees, increasing to 347 White and 320 African American graduates in 2022.

White individuals have consistently had a higher number of master's degree graduates in Columbus, GA AL MSA. In 2011, 266 White individuals graduated with a master's degree compared to 101 African American graduates. By 2022, these numbers had increased to 276 White graduates and 131 African American graduates.

SUMMARY

Demographics

While the population in Georgia and the U.S. has been steadily growing, the population in Columbus, GA (MSA) declined sharply from 2013 to 2017 before returning to growth until 2019, followed by a moderate decline until 2022. It then stabilized in 2023, reaching a population of 324,058. The decline in population was primarily driven by negative domestic migration, which averaged approximately 1% per year. However, international migration supported population growth in Columbus, with an average increase of 0.2%, which is comparable to the 0.3% growth rate of Georgia and the U.S.

The birth rate in Columbus (1.2) is higher than in Georgia and the U.S. (1.1), but the death rate in Columbus over the last three years is also higher, at 1.1%, compared to 0.9% for both Georgia and the U.S. This is reflected in the relatively lower percentage of the elderly population, with individuals aged 75 years and older comprising 5.8% of the Columbus population, below the U.S. national average of 6.8%.

Population Forecast

Based on historical and current population trends, the Columbus population is projected to decline by 1.85% by 2035, reaching 317,691. In contrast, Georgia and the U.S. are projected to grow by 11.33% and 4.27%, respectively.

The elderly population in Columbus is expected to grow by 19.7%, reaching 59,123 by 2035. This growth is comparable to Georgia and the U.S., where the elderly population is expected to increase by 35% and 25%, reaching 2.2 million and 71.1 million, respectively.

In Columbus, the biggest decline in population (-7.83%) is expected among people aged 25 to 40 years. The population of people aged 18 to 24 is expected to decrease by 5.48%, while those aged 41 to 65 are projected to slightly decline by 0.34%.

In Georgia and the U.S., all age groups are projected to increase by 2035, except for the 18-24 age group, which is expected to decrease by 5.47% in the U.S. This age group is showing a sluggish increase of 0.63% in Georgia, despite noticeable gains in the remaining age groups.

Demographics by Gender, Age, and Density

Columbus has a slightly higher percentage of younger population (23.8% of the Columbus population under 18 years old) than Georgia (23.4%) and the U.S. (22.1%). While Muscogee County has the largest percentage (24.8%) of population under 18 years old, Talbot County has the highest percentage of elderly population (25.9% for population age 65 and older). Additionally, Columbus has a higher population density per square mile (116.2) than the U.S. (94.8), but it is substantially lower than that of Georgia (191.1). This population density is driven mainly by Muscogee County (932.5). Moreover, Chattahoochee County, being home to Fort Moore, has a higher percentage of males and young adults.

Employment and Labor Force

The labor force^[1] in Columbus, GA-AL MSA stood at 126,095 in 2023, significantly lower than the 129,849 in 2019, reflecting the impact of COVID-19 on the labor force in Columbus. Muscogee County has the largest labor force in Columbus (75,176), followed by Russell County (23,549), and Harris County (16,570).

The labor participation rate^[1] in Columbus has been declining over the past 10 years, reaching 57.1% in 2022, which is below the national average of 62.6% during that time.

While Muscogee (58.9%) and Harris (59.6%) Counties have the highest labor force participation rates, Stewart County (33.5%) has the lowest.

Commuting via public transportation is substantially lower in Columbus (.8%) compared to the U.S.(3.8%) and Georgia(1.5%). However, Chattahoochee County shows considerable public transportation usage(4.1%), exceeding both the state and national averages. The average commuting time in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is 22.2 minutes, with Talbot County having the longest commute time (39.2 minutes) and Chattahoochee County having the shortest (10 minutes).

The retired population in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is significantly higher (23.4%) than the averages for Georgia (14.7%) and the U.S (17.3%).

The union membership rate in Columbus, GA-AL MSA (5%) is comparable to that of Georgia (4.5%) but is significantly lower than the national rate (10%).

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in Columbus, GA-AL MSA was 3.7% in June 2024, which is below the national average of 4.1%. This rate is the lowest in 30 years and is below the pre-COVID rate of 4.2%. Muscogee and Chattahoochee counties have the highest unemployment rates (3.7% and 4.2%), while Harris County has the lowest unemployment rate (2.2%).

Underemployment Rate [3]

Given the U6 unemployment rate of 7.4% published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in June 2024, which includes the underemployed population, it can be inferred that the underemployment rate in Columbus, GA-AL MSA (31%) significantly exceeds the national average with Harris and Muscogee counties have the highest underemployment (40.1% and 30.3%).

Employed by Type

As of May 2024, the number of employed individuals in Columbus, GA-AL MSA stands at 118,550. This figure is below the pre-COVID employment level of 120,606 recorded in December 2019, indicating the ongoing impact of the pandemic on employment in the region.

Private Sector

In May 2024, the number of employees in the private sector in Columbus, GA-AL MSA reached 100,926. This figure is higher than the pre-COVID level, indicating a recovery and growth in the private sector employment since the pandemic.

Government

The number of government employees in Columbus, GA-AL MSA has been declining since it peaked at 25,428 in February 2013, reaching 23,529 in May 2024. More than half of these government employees are employed by local government agencies.

[1] The labor force is defined as the number of individuals aged 16 and older who are either employed or actively seeking employment.

[2] The labor force participation rate is defined as the number of people aged 16 and older who are employed or actively seeking employment, divided by the total non-institutionalized, civilian working-age population.

[3] The underemployment rate is the percentage of workers in the labor force who are involuntarily employed in lower skilled or part-time jobs because they cannot obtain full-time positions that match their skills

Manufacturing

Employment in the manufacturing sector has been declining since it peaked at 21,856 in August 1998. As of June 2024, employment in this sector stands at 11,354. This figure is higher than the pre-COVID level of 11,074 recorded in February 2020, indicating some recovery since the pandemic.

Service Sector

Employment in the service sector has remained stable since the recovery from the 2008 recession. As of June 2024, employment in this sector reached 108,078, which is slightly higher than the pre-COVID level.

Education and health services employed more than 17,000 individuals, accounting for approximately 16% of all service sector employees.

The leisure and hospitality industry has recovered and surpassed its pre-COVID levels, reaching 15,415 employees in June 2024.

In June 2024, professional, business, and financial activities in Columbus, GA-AL MSA employed 26,600 individuals.

Employment in trade, transportation, and utilities has been stable over the last 20 years, with 18,900 employees as of June 2024.

Employment Forecast

Given the past population trends, economic factors, and historical employment data derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, employment projections provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that the workforce size in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is expected to shrink by 5,265 jobs (-4.13%) to reach 122,261 by 2034. This includes a reduction of 3,618 jobs in the private sector, 217 self-employed, 584 local government, 137 state government, and 594 federal government jobs. In contrast, the state of Georgia is projected to grow its workforce by 531,890 jobs (10.14%) to reach 5,779,313 by 2034. Meanwhile, the U.S. workforce is expected to grow by 4,914,041 jobs (2.98%) to reach 169,868,103 jobs by 2034.

The healthcare industry (19629 workers) is the largest employer in Columbus, GA-AL MSA, followed by retail trade (14497 workers), accommodation (13882 workers), manufacturing (10959 workers), and education (10350 workers). Despite losing 381 jobs in the past 10 years, the healthcare industry is expected to stabilize over the next decade. Although no new jobs are anticipated, the industry will need 19,090 employees to replace those retiring or transferring to other sectors.

The finance and insurance industry is highly concentrated in Columbus, GA-AL MSA, with a location quotient (LQ)[4] of 1.51, indicating employment levels above the national average. However, the industry has contracted, losing 2,823 employees over the last 10 years with an average annual decline of 3.1%. Despite this, the sector will require 5,822 workers in the next decade to replace retirees and those moving to other industries. The employment growth rate for the finance and insurance industry is projected to decline by 0.5% annually over the next 10 years. This industry offers the third highest wages in Columbus, averaging \$87,146 annually.

[4] The location quotient (LQ) is a measure of the relative size of the selected region's industry employment compared to the national average. A number greater than 1.00 means that the industry employment for the region exceeds the industry's national average, and a number less than 1.00 means that it falls short of the industry's national average.

Surprisingly, the educational services industry has lost 324 jobs over the past decade and is expected to shrink by 0.5% annually over the next 10 years. Nevertheless, the industry will need to hire 8,993 employees to replace those exiting the workforce or transferring to other sectors.

The transportation and warehousing industry experienced significant growth of 3.4% annually over the past decade, adding 1,058 jobs. It is expected to add 60 jobs over the next 10 years, with an average annual growth rate of 0.2%. The industry will need to hire 4,199 employees over the next decade.

The management industry has also grown significantly over the past 10 years, adding 767 jobs with an average annual wage of \$114,264. It is expected to grow by 0.1% annually over the next decade, adding 21 new jobs and requiring 1,796 hires to replace exiting workers.

The real estate industry grew moderately by 0.4% over the past decade. However, given current population trends, the workforce in this sector is expected to shrink by 0.4% annually, losing 78 jobs. Despite this, the industry will need to hire 1,960 employees over the next decade to replace those leaving the workforce or transferring to other industries.

The arts, entertainment, and recreation industry grew significantly over the past decade with an average growth rate of 3%, adding 450 jobs. It is expected to add another 24 jobs over the next 10 years.

The management occupation has the highest wage in Columbus, GA-AL MSA, with an average annual salary of \$109,200 and the third lowest unemployment rate (1.7%). The occupation added 1,448 workers over the past 10 years but is expected to lose 110 workers over the next decade. However, 6,283 relevant positions will need to be filled to replace those leaving the workforce or transferring to other occupations.

The computer and mathematical occupation added 334 new jobs over the past 10 years and is expected to grow significantly by 0.6% annually, adding 230 new jobs. The total hiring demand for this occupation will be 2,332 jobs, accounting for exits and transfers. This occupation is projected to create the highest number of jobs with the highest growth rate (.6%), offering the second highest wage in Columbus, GA-AL MSA at \$98,700 annually.

Occupation Gaps

The 2-digit and 6-digit occupation analysis reveals gaps in software developers, healthcare, management, computer, business, and financial services. A previous Occupation and Awards Gap report, which employed detailed educational programs-occupational crosswalk data and was published by the Butler Center in April 2024, indicated a significant need for healthcare management, hospitality management, and e-commerce specialization. To read more about the Occupation and Awards Gaps report, please visit the website.

Online Job Ads [5]

The data shows that Muscogee County has the highest number of online job ads (8,482 job ads), followed by Russell (996 job ads) and Harris (382 job ads) Counties. In the last 30 days, there were 10,593 active job ads in the Columbus area. Further analysis reveals that Muscogee County has the 7th highest job ad count among all 159 counties in the state of Georgia.

The online job ads data aligns with the employment distribution data, indicating that Muscogee County has the highest employment in Columbus, GA-AL MSA, followed by Russell and Harris Counties.

[5] The online job ads map displays the number and the active online job ads within the last 30 days in the Columbus region for all occupations. Online job ads are part of Real Time Intelligence (RTI) data collected from over 45,000 websites and prepared by Chmura.

Muscogee County has the highest positive net commuting number (22,845) in Columbus, GA-AL MSA, as a substantial number of people commute from outside the county to work there. Harris (-9,663) and Russell (-9,087) Counties have the highest number of residents who leave their home counties for work. As previously mentioned, the average commuting time in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is 22.2 minutes.

The number of businesses in Columbus, GA-AL MSA has remained stable (7,798 establishments), showing slight growth after the pandemic. The majority of businesses are located in Muscogee County (5,543), followed by Russell County (1,188).

Cost of Living

The cost of living in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is slightly higher than the average cost of living in Georgia but about 8% lower than the national average, primarily due to lower prices for goods. Housing costs in Columbus are substantially lower than the national average, at 78.5% of the average. However, health care costs in Columbus exceed the national average by 33%. Costs for groceries, utilities, and transportation are all lower in Columbus compared to both Georgia and the U.S.

Household Income

Comparing the income distribution of Columbus, GA-AL MSA to that of Georgia and the U.S. reveals income disparities. Columbus has a higher percentage of the population earning less than \$25,000 and a lower percentage earning more than \$75,000 compared to Georgia and the U.S. However, Columbus does have a slightly higher proportion of the population in the middle-income brackets compared to both Georgia and the U.S. (page 22)

Occupation Wages

Wages in Columbus have been growing over the past 20 years, except during the recessions of 2009 and 2020. In 2023, the average hourly wage in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is \$26.29, which is below that of Georgia (\$30.85) and the U.S. (\$33.72). With an average of 34.3 hours worked per week, the average worker in Columbus earns \$901.75 per week.

Social and Poverty

Comparable to the previously discussed income distribution data, the poverty level in Columbus, GA-AL MSA is 17.9%, which is substantially higher than that of Georgia (13.5%) and the U.S. (12.5%). Russell and Stewart counties have the highest poverty rates (22%). The percentage of households receiving food stamps (17.5%) and the number of children in single-parent families (48.1%) are also significantly higher than in Georgia and the U.S.

Despite a significantly higher percentage of the disabled population (16.8%), the medically uninsured rate in Columbus is notably higher than the national average (11.5% compared to 8.7%) but slightly lower than Georgia (12.9%). Additionally, 3.5% of teenagers aged 16-19 are neither employed, in the labor force, nor enrolled in an educational institution or training program.

Despite a significantly higher percentage of the disabled population (16.8%), the medically uninsured rate in Columbus is notably higher than the national average (11.5% compared to 8.7%) but slightly lower than Georgia (12.9%). Additionally, 3.5% of teenagers aged 16-19 are neither employed, in the labor force, nor enrolled in an educational institution or training program.

Housing

Columbus, GA-AL MSA has a total of 143,878 housing units, with a vacancy rate of 1.7%, which is higher than both Georgia (1.4%) and the U.S. (1.1%). In Columbus, 43% of the occupied units are rented, compared to 35% in Georgia and the U.S. This reflects a lower percentage of homeownership in Columbus.

House Price Index

The median house value in Columbus, GA-AL MSA stands at \$174,157, which is 60% of the median house value in the U.S. The graph (page 28) illustrates the inflation in housing prices in Columbus, Georgia, and the U.S., with 1995 as the base year. The data shows that housing prices in Columbus have more than doubled since 1995, increasing by 137.2%, which is significantly lower than the 234.7% increase for Georgia and 243.5% increase for the U.S.

This data suggests an increasingly tight housing market in the last decade, as both homeowner and rental vacancy rates have been trending significantly downward while rental demand remains robust.

The median listing house price in Columbus, GA-AL MSA has been increasing year-over-year (YOY) since the pandemic, reaching \$127 per square foot in January 2024, compared to \$185 per square foot for Georgia and \$221 per square foot for the U.S. The median number of days a house remains on the market in Columbus has been rising since mid-2022 but remains highly comparable to Georgia and slightly lower than the U.S.

Home ownership affordability in Columbus, GA has hit its lowest level according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's Home Ownership Affordability Monitor (HOAM) index. The payment to income ratio has reached a new high at 40.5%. As of March 2024, the average interest rate on a 30-year mortgage was 6.8%, with the median monthly payment, including taxes, insurance, and PMI, at \$2,145. A look at the GDP in Columbus reveals a widening gap between nominal and real GDP, as inflation erodes consumers' purchasing power, leaving consumers facing higher prices and less to consume.

Education

Columbus, GA-AL MSA has a significantly higher number of individuals who have attended some college but did not complete their degree, 25% of the population compared 19.7% for both Georgia and the U.S. This number is disproportionately higher in Chattahoochee (34%), Russell (27.2%), Harris (25.2%), and Muscogee (24.4%) counties. While Chattahoochee and Harris counties have a substantially lower population without a high school diploma (3.7% and 5.3%) compared to the national average (10.1%), Marion and Stewart counties have a significantly higher percentage of individuals with no high school diploma (28.8% and 27.8%).

The education attainment graphs in page 32 show that Columbus is highly comparable to Georgia and the U.S. in reducing the percentage of the population (ages 25-64) without a high school diploma, high school diploma, or some college experience without a degree, and in increasing the percentage of individuals holding associate and bachelor's degrees. Despite an increase in the percentage of bachelor's degree holders by 2.1 percentage points (from 13.6% to 16.1%), Columbus slightly lags behind Georgia and the U.S., which saw increases of 2.5 and 2.8 percentage points, respectively. Columbus also has a lower percentage of bachelor's degree holders, at 16.1%, compared to 21.5% for Georgia and 22% for the U.S. Similarly, the percentage of the population with postgraduate degrees in Columbus is lower than that of Georgia and the U.S., at 9.5% compared to 13% for Georgia and 13.1% for the U.S.

There are 49,679 K-12 pupils enrolled in Columbus, GA schools, with the highest enrollment in Muscogee County, followed by Russell County. Muscogee County employs about two-thirds of the number of teachers in Columbus, Georgia. The pupil-to-teacher ratio in Columbus (16) is relatively higher compared to Georgia (14.5) and the U.S. (15.4), primarily due to a significant high ration in Russell County (19.6%). Given the cost of living in Columbus, spending per pupil (\$11,063) is relatively lower compared to both Georgia (\$11,686) and the U.S (\$13,514).

Total Degrees

The map (page 33) displays the percentage of bachelor's degree holders by zip code and county in the Columbus area. Zip codes surrounding Columbus State University show the highest percentage of the population with bachelor's degrees. At the county level, Muscogee and Harris counties have the highest percentages of bachelor's degree holders. This reflects the positive impact of Columbus State University in enhancing the area's human capital.

Enrollment in higher education has been trending downward since 2010, reaching 12,663 in 2022. Despite this decline in enrollment, the number of post-secondary awards increased from 2,989 in 2010 to 4,127 in 2022. This growth is largely due to a significant rise in the number of bachelor's degree holders, which could be attributed to higher retention rates and improved graduation rates. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in the number of postgraduate degree holders over the past decade. In 2022, there were 17,798 postgraduate degree holders in Columbus, up from 11,511 in 2011. Similarly, the number of associate degree holders increased from 13,069 in 2011 to 18,223 in 2022.

Degrees by Race

White individuals make up 46.4% of the Columbus population, while African Americans constitute 42.1%. However, data shows that there are significantly more White individuals holding degrees compared to African Americans. Nevertheless, the gap has been narrowing and was nearly closed in 2021. In 2022, there were 1,835 White graduates, compared to 1,629 African American graduates, with 24 Asian and 70 Hispanic graduates.

The number of White graduates with bachelor's degrees has declined from 562 in 2011 to 465 in 2022. In contrast, the number of African American bachelor's degree graduates has increased from 312 in 2011 to 383 in 2022. The number of Hispanic and Asian bachelor's degree graduates has also risen, from 39 and 11 in 2011 to 70 and 24 in 2022, respectively.

For associate degrees, the numbers of White and African American graduates are comparable. In 2011, there were 270 White and 253 African American graduates with associate degrees, increasing to 347 White and 320 African American graduates in 2022.

White individuals have consistently had a higher number of master's degree graduates in Columbus, GA-AL MSA. In 2011, 266 White individuals graduated with a master's degree compared to 101 African American graduates. By 2022, these numbers had increased to 276 White graduates and 131 African American graduates.

Data Sources

Below is a list of data sources used in the Columbus Economic Outlook. This compilation includes various national and regional data sources that provide comprehensive insights into economic trends and statistics.

1. American Community Survey (ACS)
2. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
4. Census Bureau
5. Council for Community and Economic Research
6. County Business Patterns (CBP)
7. Current Employment Statistics (CES)
8. Current Population Survey (CPS)
9. Department of Defense
10. Employment Cost Index (ECI)
11. Employment Projections (EP)
12. JobsEQ Chmura
13. Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)
14. Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD)
15. National Center for Education Statistics
16. National Employment Matrix
17. National Transportation Research Center
18. O*Net™ (Occupational Information Network)
19. Occupational Employment Statistics (OEWS)
20. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)
21. Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI)
22. Real Time Intelligence (RTI)
23. U.S. Energy Information Administration

2024



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and Economic Development