

## Executive Summary

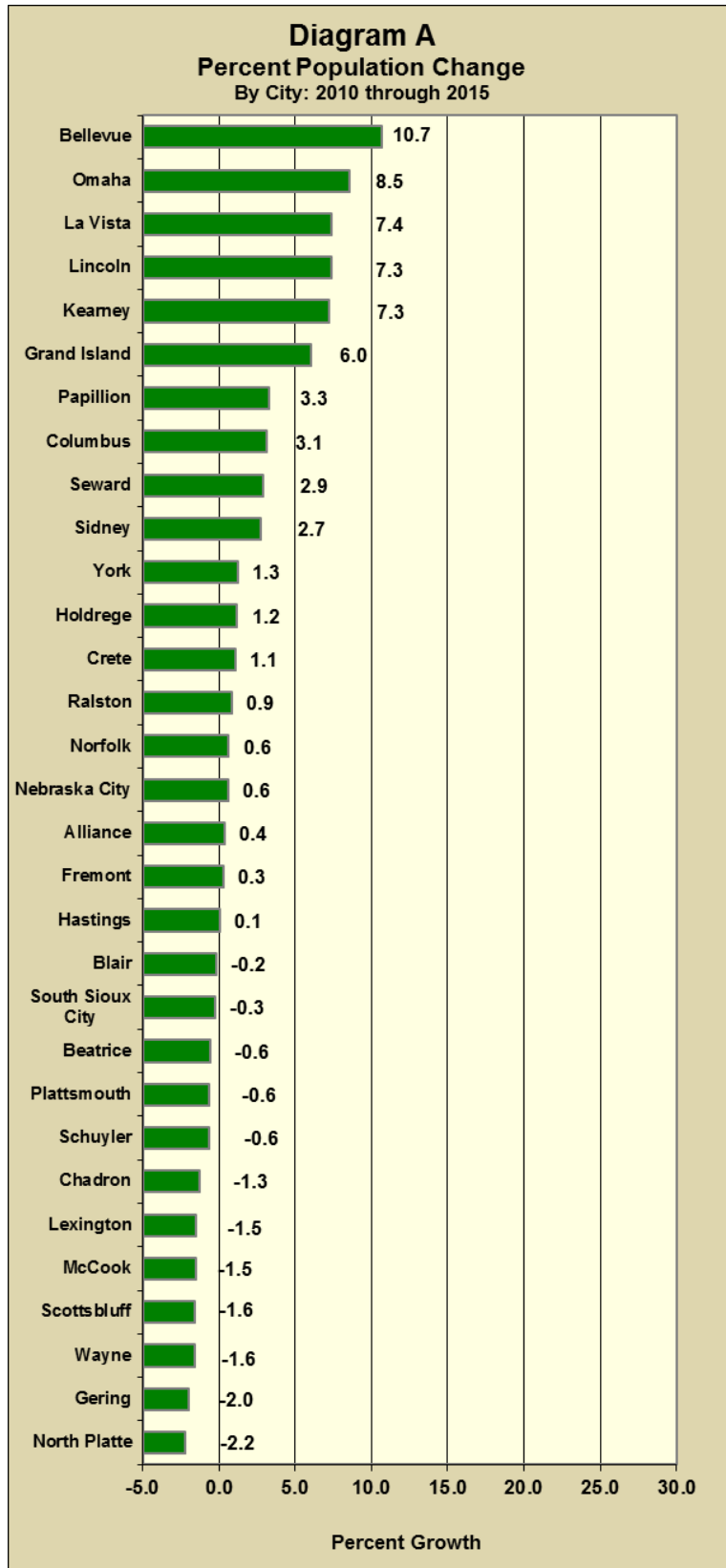
This document reports demographic, economic, and housing statistics for 31 Class I cities in Nebraska.

### Demographics

The U.S. Census Bureau released community level population counts with the 2015 intercensal estimates. These data indicated that statewide population increased by 69,849 persons, or by 3.8 percent over the five year period, from 2010 through 2015. Additionally, these data indicated that 19 of the 31 cities addressed herein expanded in population during that time.

The 31 cities had a combined population of 1,175,262 persons and comprised 62.0 percent of the state's population in 2015. These cities enjoyed an average rate of growth of 6.0 percent from 2010 through 2015, higher than the 3.8 percent growth rate of the population statewide.

However, the rate of change from 2010 to 2015 varied significantly among the cities, with the population in Bellevue rising the fastest, at 10.7 percent. Five other cities also increased by more than 5.0 percent: Grand Island, Kearney, Lincoln La Vista and Omaha, as shown in Diagram A, at right.



While many cities saw positive growth rates through 2015, it was the state’s two most populous cities, Omaha and Lincoln, which saw the most significant increases in total population: 34,927 and 18,969 persons, respectively. Each of the 31 cities’ population change from the 2010 Census to the 2015 current estimate is presented in Table A, below, ranked in order of absolute change.

<b>Table A</b> <b>Population Change by City</b> <b>2010 Decennial Census through July 1, 2015</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Change</b>
Omaha	34,927	Nebraska City	46
Lincoln	18,969	Alliance	31
Bellevue	5,373	Hastings	17
Grand Island	2,920	Blair	-15
Kearney	2,234	South Sioux City	-34
La Vista	1,163	Plattsmouth	-40
Columbus	686	Schuyler	-40
Papillion	616	Beatrice	-71
Seward	203	Chadron	-76
Sidney	185	Wayne	-91
Norfolk	156	McCook	-118
York	98	Lexington	-155
Crete	77	Gering	-166
Fremont	77	Scottsbluff	-237
Holdrege	66	North Platte	-539
Ralston	51	<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>66,313</b>

## Housing

Housing production in Nebraska, as indicated by new construction building permits, was relatively strong during the previous decade, reaching 9,929 units in 2005. The issuance of building permits slowed during 2006, 2007, and 2008, with a total of 8,230, 7,604, and 6,346 units permitted, respectively. In 2011, permitted units continued to decline, with only 5,203 units permitted statewide. However, this number increased sharply to 7,543 units in 2013, and rose by an additional 7,605 permits in 2014. The most recent 2015 data shows permits rose to 8,096, almost reaching pre-recession levels. Permits in these 31 cities in 2015 accounted for 77.5 percent of Nebraska’s total permitted new residential construction; this figure was an decrease from 2014, when permits in these cities represented 77.9 percent of total permitted units statewide.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, permitted construction was more concentrated in the two most populous cities, Omaha and Lincoln, with these two communities comprising 61.6 percent of all of Nebraska’s permitted units in 2015. Although permit activity increased statewide, 14 out of the 31 cities, or 45.2 percent saw a decrease in permitting activity.

<sup>1</sup> No corrections have been made to account for any annexations that may have occurred over this period, thereby potentially increasing permits more than might have been observed without annexation.

**Table B**  
**Permitted Housing Construction**  
**Census Bureau Data**

Towns	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change 14-15
Alliance	1	2	5	28	25	2	18	0	3	2	1	6	5
Beatrice	37	34	25	21	31	5	15	5	8	9	7	7	0
Bellevue	342	383	337	602	563	503	137	104	340	205	415	133	-282
Blair	45	52	30	26	9	12	15	12	17	23	24	26	2
Chadron	9	6	7	9	1	3	2	6	1	5	1	1	0
Columbus	52	62	66	70	86	79	83	52	93	54	60	68	8
Crete	13	36	44	13	7	62	9	5	23	2	2	7	5
Fremont	94	90	53	45	32	29	26	26	32	47	31	36	5
Gering	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.	10	0	-10
Grand Island	211	170	228	323	115	128	103	115	335	208	198	211	13
Hastings	123	60	73	55	26	41	86	62	32	36	58	55	-3
Holdrege	4	8	5	8	19	5	30	10	11	8	7	20	13
Kearney	407	275	177	114	126	80	103	112	192	288	265	164	-101
La Vista	524	231	153	102	106	121	335	107	55	67	42	34	-8
Lexington	7	12	16	9	0	19	19	9	7	4	22	30	8
Lincoln	2,153	1,453	1,175	1,107	666	604	833	923	1092	1,375	1,792	2,353	561
McCook	11	5	6	3	2	3	0	30	32	5	5	24	19
Nebraska City	13	32	15	24	8	8	18	4	5	3	6	5	-1
Norfolk	128	111	76	62	73	40	48	25	41	47	50	43	-7
North Platte	87	49	53	39	31	20	54	26	13	19	16	46	30
Omaha	2,974	3,462	2,902	2,627	2,657	1,868	1,579	1,834	1915	2,570	2,453	2,633	180
Papillion	487	417	367	327	220	239	233	210	390	562	322	262	-60
Plattsmouth	19	24	22	10	15	4	15	4	5	6	4	10	6
Ralston	1	3	1	2	1	2	283	266	4	1	0	0	.
Schuyler	3	8	3	10	5	7	5	5	6	9	5	4	-1
Scottsbluff	26	19	20	27	6	18	17	22	7	25	13	9	-4
Seward	50	46	35	33	22	18	29	15	19	27	35	13	-22
Sidney	23	29	60	43	8	3	3	8	13	84	25	22	-3
South Sioux City	13	17	18	21	18	23	105	12	11	23	16	15	-1
Wayne	12	12	7	5	13	18	9	12	21	47	34	25	-9
York	21	24	12	29	7	31	10	16	27	22	8	12	4
<b>Total Nebraska</b>	<b>10,920</b>	<b>9,929</b>	<b>8,230</b>	<b>7,604</b>	<b>6,346</b>	<b>5,150</b>	<b>5,401</b>	<b>5,203</b>	<b>6,116</b>	<b>7,543</b>	<b>7,605</b>	<b>8,096</b>	<b>491</b>
Cities as % of Total	72.3%	71.8%	72.8%	76.2%	77.2%	77.6%	78.2%	77.6%	77.7%	76.7%	77.9%	77.5%	.

The average value of new single-family construction throughout Nebraska increased from \$200,970 per unit in 2014, to \$200,980 in 2015. This figure excluded the cost of land and any development costs for lot construction such as installation of utilities, roads, and streets. Nevertheless, the average real price of new single-family construction varied significantly among these cities. In 2015, La Vista, Nebraska City and York had the highest prices, with average values of \$337,884, \$300,400 and \$295,943, respectively. Relatively affordable housing was constructed in Schuyler, Chadron and Omaha with average real values of construction of \$157,500, \$152,800 and \$146,147, respectively. These data are presented in Table C, on the following page.

**Table C**  
**Value of New Single-Family Construction**  
**Census Bureau Data**

<b>Towns</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Alliance	80.1	210.6	128.9	276.2	160.2	214.1	132.5	.	341.5	148.3	757.5	182.7
Beatrice	171.7	195.7	219.8	196.4	160.7	218.9	171.3	142.8	230.4	185.3	240.9	225.8
Bellevue	223.7	239.1	223.4	215.6	243.2	176.8	230.7	235.9	252.0	275.8	292.8	276.7
Blair	227.4	231.3	247.0	226.5	222.8	262.9	276.3	242.3	237.2	247.6	267.9	219.4
Chadron	105.0	111.7	73.8	131.2	146.0	150.3	132.8	178.1	183.4	244.1	214.5	152.8
Columbus	245.1	232.5	264.2	265.4	252.7	228.7	241.7	254.1	251.4	236.3	238.3	237.9
Crete	169.0	95.0	150.4	132.2	177.2	75.0	198.2	228.4	242.8	171.4	212.6	184.6
Fremont	200.1	203.2	206.2	178.2	191.3	218.0	167.2	190.5	193.9	244.5	207.4	256.1
Gering	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Grand Island	164.1	165.6	162.0	76.7	149.6	161.0	177.6	183.3	164.3	177.3	192.7	181.7
Hastings	184.7	25.3	185.2	207.0	274.6	246.0	222.0	255.8	244.4	257.8	204.6	217.0
Holdrege	209.4	273.9	265.8	208.1	170.3	259.1	148.3	273.1	236.1	284.2	275.6	254.9
Kearney	122.5	175.1	187.3	200.9	210.9	177.0	208.2	178.5	197.7	195.2	227.2	199.3
La Vista	288.1	285.8	293.2	261.5	224.6	203.6	214.2	209.0	243.5	298.5	317.5	337.9
Lexington	121.4	135.2	145.8	142.5	267.0	139.2	136.2	121.1	144.3	233.5	214.6	212.5
Lincoln	193.8	194.6	204.0	191.6	188.1	172.3	196.1	200.2	200.3	196.7	193.3	205.1
McCook	101.0	157.3	130.4	150.4	85.7	295.5	.	134.6	204.5	216.6	213.1	235.9
Nebraska City	182.0	155.1	129.5	119.2	95.4	148.9	105.3	189.2	193.0	379.8	206.2	300.4
Norfolk	178.6	186.3	186.7	197.4	175.1	176.3	190.0	202.1	184.1	194.4	176.0	205.8
North Platte	290.1	182.0	185.0	167.5	140.6	133.7	103.9	129.3	162.1	157.3	159.8	160.4
Omaha	146.9	132.2	128.3	122.2	116.3	114.7	144.0	140.9	148.2	152.6	150.8	146.1
Papillion	215.4	210.6	212.8	210.4	244.8	274.8	286.7	277.5	299.8	283.9	280.4	291.8
Plattsmouth	127.0	129.8	147.1	154.2	118.8	98.0	138.8	130.2	112.5	217.6	140.9	178.0
Ralston	344.9	207.2	260.5	191.3	74.1	54.9	134.3	119.0	183.5	133.5	.	.
Schuyler	130.9	156.9	227.7	184.1	167.0	139.6	150.9	125.4	187.3	190.6	234.3	157.5
Scottsbluff	182.5	147.3	200.4	178.7	236.1	122.4	181.0	176.4	229.5	222.7	246.1	255.6
Seward	190.3	473.0	280.7	216.9	211.7	214.5	190.5	214.0	199.6	220.2	197.0	195.7
Sidney	216.0	216.7	295.3	184.5	226.4	256.1	333.1	209.5	252.7	341.5	315.3	256.1
South Sioux City	159.5	141.9	143.3	119.5	141.1	139.3	120.8	144.5	154.2	175.1	229.3	193.9
Wayne	186.9	198.4	230.4	103.3	153.2	169.2	203.8	171.3	199.7	166.6	178.5	216.8
York	182.4	189.0	218.0	205.2	216.4	259.8	224.2	288.5	260.8	228.2	237.1	295.9
<b>Total Nebraska</b>	<b>170.77</b>	<b>164.84</b>	<b>171.03</b>	<b>161.43</b>	<b>171.54</b>	<b>163.44</b>	<b>182.58</b>	<b>185.47</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>198.13</b>	<b>200.97</b>	<b>200.98</b>

Table D, on the following page, presents the number of total housing units, as well as occupied and vacant units, for the 31 cities. Homeownership varies throughout the state, with several cities having homeownership rates above 65.0 percent in 2015. Gering had the highest homeownership rate, at 71.6 percent. However, high homeownership rates tend to occur in cities with smaller numbers of housing units. Among the largest cities, homeownership rates were lower, with Lincoln and Omaha having homeownership rates of 56.7 and 57.8 percent, respectively.

Further, 6.6 percent of all housing units in the cities were vacant, representing 32,139 units. Together, Lincoln and Omaha had more than 62.3 percent of that total, or 20,032 vacant units.

**Table D**  
**Value of New Single-Family Construction**  
**2000 Census and 2015 5-year ACS Data**

Towns	2015 five-year ACS					2010 Census
	Owner	Renter	Vacant Units	Total Units	Homeownership 2015	Homeownership 2010
Alliance	2,242	1,388	388	4,018	61.8%	67.0%
Beatrice	3,305	2,098	761	6,164	61.2%	63.4%
Bellevue	13,219	7,379	1,147	21,745	64.2%	66.8%
Blair	2,276	1,019	138	3,433	69.1%	66.8%
Chadron	1,172	1,005	285	2,462	53.8%	50.5%
Columbus	6,096	2,912	471	9,479	67.7%	68.3%
Crete	1,265	1,139	219	2,623	52.6%	57.2%
Fremont	6,500	4,141	633	11,274	61.1%	61.1%
Gering	2,422	961	283	3,666	71.6%	71.9%
Grand Island	11,050	7,671	1,195	19,916	59.0%	61.0%
Hastings	6,707	3,447	650	10,804	66.1%	63.8%
Holdrege	1,627	691	365	2,683	70.2%	70.7%
Kearney	7,018	5,416	706	13,140	56.4%	56.6%
La Vista	3,930	3,038	151	7,119	56.4%	54.6%
Lexington	1,898	1,231	256	3,385	60.7%	62.6%
Lincoln	60,965	46,609	5,444	113,018	56.7%	58.6%
McCook	2,301	1,046	332	3,679	68.7%	65.5%
Nebraska City	2,078	985	250	3,313	67.8%	65.2%
Norfolk	5,885	3,954	602	10,441	59.8%	60.1%
North Platte	6,270	4,197	914	11,381	59.9%	61.1%
Omaha	100,484	73,280	14,588	188,352	57.8%	58.3%
Papillion	5,054	2,389	117	7,560	67.9%	69.7%
Plattsmouth	1,685	873	325	2,883	65.9%	65.1%
Ralston	1,644	958	108	2,710	63.2%	67.2%
Schuyler	1,251	593	106	1,950	67.8%	68.1%
Scottsbluff	3,419	2,574	531	6,524	57.0%	57.7%
Seward	1,673	900	175	2,748	65.0%	68.9%
Sidney	2,064	1,076	299	3,439	65.7%	65.9%
South Sioux City	2,561	1,986	186	4,733	56.3%	56.5%
Wayne	988	1,025	134	2,147	49.1%	54.1%
York	1,927	1,387	380	3,694	58.1%	64.2%
<b>Total Nebraska</b>	<b>486,036</b>	<b>245,311</b>	<b>73,909</b>	<b>805,256</b>	<b>66.5%</b>	<b>67.2%</b>

For each of the past 15 years, a statewide rental vacancy survey has been undertaken; however this is the fourth year in which results for all 31 cities have been tabulated. According to the November 2016 survey, statewide rental vacancy rates increased from 3.6 percent in 2015 to 4.0 percent in 2016. This survey covered 119,376 units in Nebraska, with 105,994 units in these 31 cities, about 88.8 percent of the total. Vacancy rates varied widely among these 31 cities. Housing markets appeared tight in several communities, such as Ralston, Columbus and Schuyler, with vacancy rates below 2.0 percent. The availability of rental units in Alliance, Sidney, and Crete appeared to be greater, with the vacancy rates all exceeding 9.0 percent, as presented in Table E, at right.

<b>Table E</b>			
<b>Vacancy Rate by City</b>			
<b>2016 Rental Vacancy Survey</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Change</b>
Alliance	13.0	Gering	4.3
Sidney	10.0	Omaha	3.8
Crete	9.5	Bellevue	3.7
Beatrice	9.2	Lincoln	3.5
Chadron	8.2	Fremont	3.2
York	6.6	Hastings	3.1
Lexington	6.5	Wayne	3.1
McCook	6.5	Blair	2.9
North Platte	6.2	La Vista	2.9
Scottsbluff	6.2	Norfolk	2.9
Holdrege	5.9	Seward	2.8
Plattsmouth	5.9	Kearney	2.4
Nebraska City	5.6	Ralston	1.9
South Sioux City	5.2	Columbus	1.5
Grand Island	5.1	Schuyler	1.3
Papillion	4.5	<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>3.6</b>

### Summary

Population continued to grow in most of the 31 communities; however, the level of growth varied significantly, ranging from a negative 2.2 percent to a positive 10.7 percent. Housing production statistics indicated that the larger communities, such as Lincoln, and Omaha, generated the most additions to the housing stock during the past year. However, the value of construction softened in several of these areas but remained strong in other areas such as La Vista and Nebraska City. The 2016 rental market survey saw low vacancy rates in most of these 31 cities, with several below 3.0 percent. These factors indicate that opportunities for housing development exist but that more opportunities may currently exist in the rental market, with lower vacancy rates.