

## ISSUE: Jobs and the Economy

**Allegheny County loses 50,000 jobs, the worst record in PA**  
*The county is falling further behind its competitors in PA & OH*

Whatever pressing issue you want to address – education, healthcare, environmental protection – it is easier to do so when you have a robust and vibrant economy creating the necessary resources. Without that economic engine, those problems can be all but impossible to solve.

Unfortunately, Allegheny County is falling short of where we need to be.

Allegheny County has lost more than 50,000 jobs over the past five years, five times more than any other county in the state, according to data compiled by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.<sup>1</sup>

Even on a percentage basis, it's the worst job performance of any major county in the state from 2017 to 2022.

But the troubling comparisons don't stop there. Allegheny County is the worst performing urban core county of any of the major metropolitan regions in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Federal data is necessary to ensure a fair comparison across states. The U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Commerce measure jobs and employment slightly differently. But in either case, Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) is coming in last in the economic competition over the past five years with Philadelphia County (Philadelphia), Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), Franklin County (Columbus), and Hamilton County (Cincinnati).

First, the data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>2</sup> Allegheny lost nearly twice as many jobs over the past five years as Cuyahoga, the worst-performing county in Ohio during that time.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dced.pa.gov/pennsylvania-on-target/> 2017-2022 job loss: 50,596 or 6.6%

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/data/#employment> June to June figures, 2022 is preliminary and subject to change

And from 2021 to 2022, Allegheny County grew the fewest number of jobs among the five urban core counties.

	2017-2022		2021-2022	
	Job Change	% Change	Job Change	% Change
Philadelphia / Philadelphia	12,763	1.9%	37,408	5.8%
PA (Statewide)	44,668	0.8%	222,891	3.9%
OH (Statewide)	1,924	0.0%	156,806	3.0%
Franklin / Columbus	7,960	1.1%	21,296	2.9%
Hamilton / Cincinnati	-7,602	-1.5%	14,217	2.8%
Cuyahoga / Cleveland	-23,312	-3.2%	13,034	1.9%
<b>Allegheny / Pittsburgh</b>	<b>-40,323</b>	<b>-5.7%</b>	<b>10,284</b>	<b>1.6%</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics data

The data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Commerce Department has a broader definition of jobs and employment, notably including jobs within family businesses, which can be useful in capturing a more accurate snapshot, particularly in a dynamic economy that might see growth in small family businesses. But the picture for Allegheny County is not any prettier.

Using the most recent data available,<sup>3</sup> Allegheny County lost five times as many jobs between 2016 and 2021 as Cuyahoga County, Ohio’s worst performer. Philadelphia and the urban core counties in Columbus and Cincinnati all gained jobs during that period.

	2016-2021	
	Job Change	% Change
Philadelphia / Philadelphia	33,382	3.8%
PA (Statewide)	24,898	0.3%
OH (Statewide)	78,965	1.1%
Franklin / Columbus	36,864	3.8%
Hamilton / Cincinnati	7,674	1.2%
Cuyahoga / Cleveland	-2,538	-0.3%
<b>Allegheny / Pittsburgh</b>	<b>-11,925</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis data

<sup>3</sup> <https://apps.bea.gov/itable/?ReqID=70&step=1>

Allegheny County’s economy had not recovered from COVID losses by the end of 2021, unlike its competitors to the West, according to the latest data available from the Commerce Department.<sup>4</sup> Allegheny and Philadelphia County are both larger than any of the central core county economies in Ohio. All of them entered 2022 with economies larger than when the COVID pandemic began.

	<b>GDP (000)</b>	<b>% of 2019 GDP (inflation adjusted)</b>
Franklin / Columbus	\$94,056,835	105.8%
Hamilton / Cincinnati	\$73,246,499	103.4%
OH (Statewide)	\$756,617,233	102.6%
Cuyahoga / Cleveland	\$90,494,428	102.3%
<b>Allegheny / Pittsburgh</b>	<b>\$109,962,856</b>	<b>99.6%</b>
PA (Statewide)	\$844,496,474	99.4%
Philadelphia / Philadelphia	\$116,273,595	99.0%

Source: Calculated from U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis data,

According to the PA DCED analysis, Allegheny County’s job losses came in large part from the hospitality and tourism industries, those serving the local population as well as visitors from outside the region. Those types of jobs tend to have lower wages but are important as a point of entry for lower-skilled workers into the working world.

Because of the loss of so many lower-wage jobs, Allegheny County saw its average annual pay increase from 2017 to 2021 faster than any of the comparison counties, using the most recent Labor Department data available.

	<b>Avg Annual Pay</b>	<b>2017-2021 % Change</b>
Philadelphia / Philadelphia	75,205	16.9%
<b>Allegheny / Pittsburgh</b>	<b>70,997</b>	<b>20.5%</b>
Hamilton / Cincinnati	70,278	19.4%
Cuyahoga / Cleveland	66,586	19.2%
Franklin / Columbus	65,410	19.7%
PA (Statewide)	64,697	19.8%
OH (Statewide)	58,350	18.7%

Allegheny’s Future will have a future research brief diving deeper into what has happened to the Allegheny County job picture, as well as other briefs on the county’s population trends, air quality, and other issues critical to the performance of the economy.

<sup>4</sup> <https://apps.bea.gov/itable/?ReqID=70&step=1>

*Allegheny's Future* is an initiative of **Pittsburgh Works Together** providing research on critical issues facing Allegheny County to County Executive candidates, government officials, the news media, and voters. It is intended to encourage Allegheny County voters to learn about the issues they care about and press candidates to go beyond bumper sticker slogans and explain in detail how they would address today's challenges. More information is available at [www.AlleghenysFuture.com](http://www.AlleghenysFuture.com).

***Pittsburgh Works Together** is a business-organized labor-workforce-economic development alliance working to grow jobs and expand the industries that are the foundation of our economy, including energy, manufacturing, and construction, to provide opportunity for all residents.*