



Lincoln Vital Signs
LincolnVitalSigns.org

Lincoln Vital Signs 2014.

Be informed. Get involved.

Lincoln Vital Signs was commissioned by philanthropic organizations, the business community, the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County to create a shared understanding of our city—both its strengths and challenges.

OVERALL FINDINGS

 Three overarching themes emerge from the report:

1

Lincoln does many things exceptionally well and these successes should be nurtured. Lincoln is in an enviable position with its **strong economy, highly-educated workforce, strong public education system, high well-being, good health outcomes and effective civic services.**

2

A growing proportion of Lincoln's population faces real need. The recession hit Lincoln later than the rest of the U.S.—in 2009—at which time Lincoln experienced a **48% increase in persons with incomes below the poverty level** from the previous year. The increase is primarily the result of persons falling into poverty; not the result of persons in poverty moving to the city.

3

Lincoln's children are particularly vulnerable. **More than 1 in 5 of Lincoln's children live in poverty**, which translates to **12,500 children**. Most are white children living with a single parent mother. **One-third of homeless persons in Lincoln are children.**



LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS

Lincoln is a growing and changing community. More people are choosing to live and move here, drawn by Lincoln's quality of life, including good schools, livable neighborhoods and arts and cultural opportunities. At the same time, a growing proportion of Lincoln's population faces real need, especially our children. The report presents Lincoln's well-being in seven key areas:

- COMMUNITY PROFILE
- ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE
- BASIC NEEDS
- EDUCATION
- HEALTH
- SAFETY
- COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND CULTURE

It is hoped that this report and companion website, LincolnVitalSigns.org, will help us learn more about ourselves and potentially catalyze action that will make Lincoln even stronger.

LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS LEADERS

Leaders of Lincoln's largest public and private charitable organizations initiated Lincoln Vital Signs to create a more comprehensive understanding of Lincoln for themselves, and a way to share the information with the larger community. They perceived that, despite Lincoln's heralded low unemployment rates, needs in the community are growing. This study seeks to present information about Lincoln's strengths and challenges.

FUNDERS AND ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Abel Foundation | Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| City of Lincoln | Lancaster County | United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County |
| Community Health Endowment | Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development | University of Nebraska Foundation |
| Cooper Foundation | Lincoln Community Foundation | Woods Charitable Fund |
| Educare of Lincoln | | |

View the complete Lincoln Vital Signs report:
LincolnVitalSigns.org

READ ON TO DISCOVER WHAT WE LEARNED, WHY IT IS IMPORTANT, AND HOW YOU CAN HELP MAKE LINCOLN GREATER. →

Lincoln Vital Signs 2014. **Be informed.**

Lincoln Vital Signs is intended to inform conversations, spark connections and spur collaboration. The key indicators provide data, not a plan for action. We offer the information to paint a picture of our collective successes and challenges. It is hoped that the findings will catalyze insight and action among individuals and organizations as we work to develop a vision for the future.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

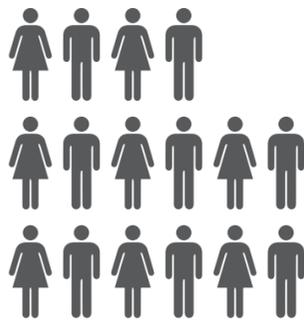
Lincoln's state of well-being is one of the highest in the country and the city benefits from population growth and increased diversity.

55%

**GROWTH IN
NON-WHITE
POPULATION**
SINCE 2005

#1

IN WELL-BEING



16%

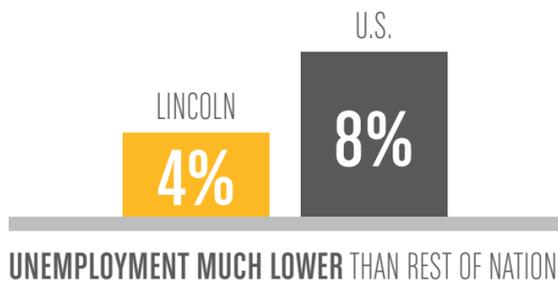
**POPULATION
GROWTH**
SINCE 2000

ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

Although Lincoln has low unemployment and a highly-educated workforce, wages are lower than the national average, even when adjusted for our lower cost of living.



WHEN ADJUSTED
FOR LOWER COST
OF LIVING, LINCOLN
PER CAPITA
INCOME IS **-3%**
BELOW NATIONAL
AVERAGE.



BASIC NEEDS

Lincoln's poverty rate has increased dramatically over the past 10 years and is now higher than the national average.

12,500

**CHILDREN IN POV-
ERTY**
(DOUBLED SINCE 2008)



48%

**POVERTY
RATE INCREASED**
SINCE 2005



6 NEIGHBORHOODS
IN EXTREME POVERTY
(NONE 10 YEARS AGO)

41%

**HOMELESSNESS
INCREASED**
SINCE 2007

MORE THAN
1 IN 5
CHILDREN
LIVE IN POVERTY



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Get involved.



Lincoln Vital Signs

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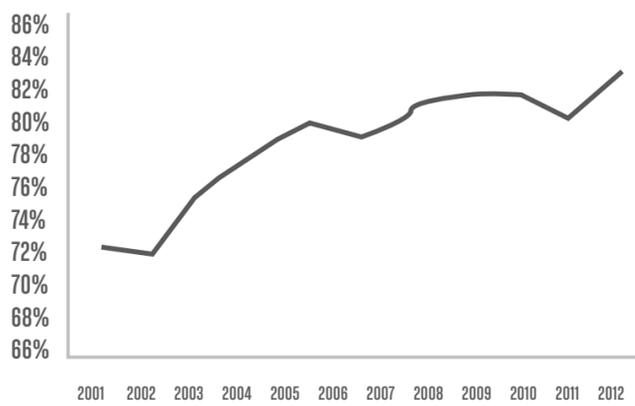
EDUCATION



While facing a 21% increase in enrollment and a 133% increase in the number of students receiving free lunch (a proxy for low income) since 2000, Lincoln Public Schools achievement and graduation rates continue to improve.

LOW INCOME STUDENTS TRAIL THE DISTRICT GRADUATION RATE BY **5%**

LPS GRADUATION RATE



GRADUATION RATES ARE ON AN UPWARD TREND AND EXCEED NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 78%

20%

PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT INCREASED SINCE 2000



HEALTH

American health is declining precipitously. In Lincoln the declines have not been as severe, but are cause for concern.



1/3 OF CHILDREN ARE OBESE



OVERALL CHRONIC DISEASE MORTALITY, OBESITY AND DIABETES RATES BETTER THAN U.S.

VIOLENT CRIME DOWN 2005-2011

33%

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DOWN 2005-2011

30%

SAFETY



Lincoln is a safe community that has a low crime rate.



LINCOLN 4.4% U.S. 4.7%

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHARITY

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & CULTURE

Lincoln residents generously support organizations with their time. Charitable giving is slightly less than the national average.

NEBRASKA 6TH HIGHEST FOR RATE OF VOLUNTEERING.



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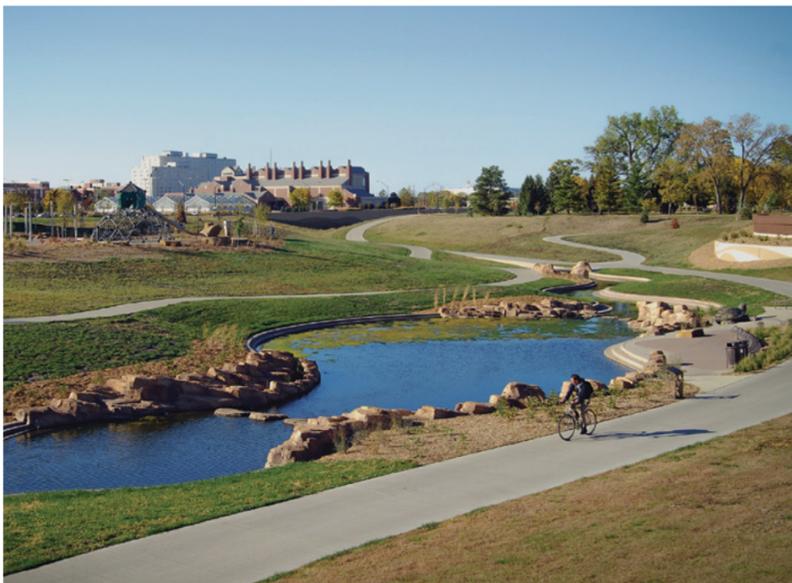
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WHAT IS LINCOLN'S FUTURE?

This study was initiated because leaders of Lincoln's philanthropic organizations were concerned about the federal, state, and local budget cuts to programs for social needs. Lincoln's relatively small philanthropic community cannot single-handedly take up the slack, and neither can local government or the business community. **It is clear that these complex issues will require collaboration among all sectors of our community.**

It is hoped that this study will be a starting point for conversation and connection toward the common goal of ensuring that Lincoln continues to be a vibrant city that provides a high quality of life for all residents.



ABOUT LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS INDICATORS AND SOURCES

Lincoln Vital Signs 2014 was written by **Nancy Shank**, PhD, MBA; **Stacey Hoffman**, PhD, and **Teri Perkins**, MS, MA; all of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

No original data was collected as a part of this study; rather data already available from public sources were used. Data was selected, where possible, representing the City of Lincoln. The authors have denoted when other geographic units were used (Lancaster County, of which Lincoln comprises 90% of the population; the Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is Lancaster and Seward Counties; or Nebraska as a whole).

The complete report and a downloadable copy of Lincoln Vital Signs 2014, including data sources and citations is available at LincolnVitalSigns.org.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

It is up to the people who decide to take action to determine how information in this report is used. Conversation, connection and collaboration are needed. The ultimate message to those who call Lincoln home is: **Be informed. Get Involved.**

It is clear that major initiatives to build Lincoln's success and to tackle the complex issues identified in Lincoln Vital Signs 2014 will require collaboration among all sectors of our community: businesses, families, individuals, non-profit organizations, neighborhoods, philanthropies, government and private organizations. The question is not whether there are leaders, but whether leaders will work together to drive change to achieve a vision that matters.

The following steps are essential to achieve change:

- 1** Read and share this publication.
- 2** Go to the website LincolnVitalSigns.org to read the full report.
- 3** Sign up on the website to participate in future community discussions.



LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS WILL BE UPDATED IN FUTURE YEARS TO MEASURE AND TRACK COMMUNITY PROGRESS AND CHANGES.

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