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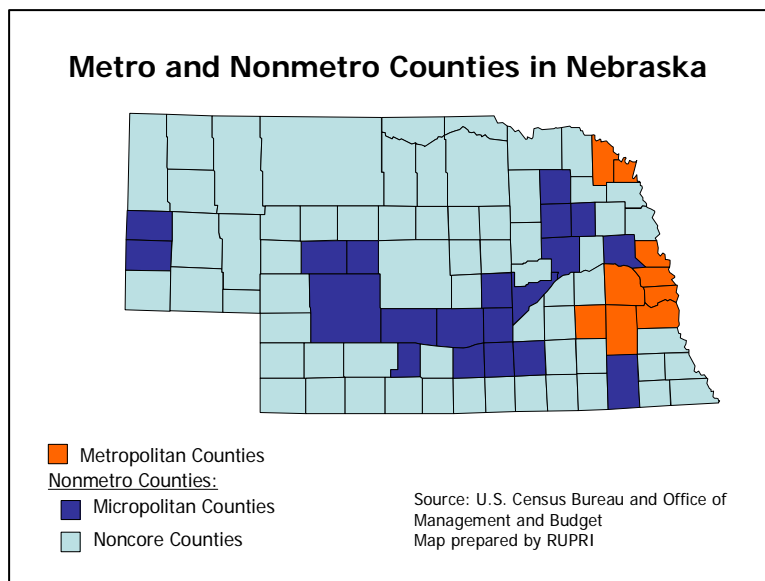
Demographic and Economic Profile

Nebraska

Updated May 2006

Metro and Nonmetro Counties in Nebraska

Based on the most recent listing of core based statistical areas by the Office of Management and Budget (December 2005), 9 counties in Nebraska are part of metropolitan areas, and 20 counties are part of micropolitan areas. Micropolitan areas are a new category that includes an urban area with a population of 10,000 to 49,999 plus surrounding counties that are linked through commuting ties. These areas often represent important economic and trade centers in rural areas. The remaining 64 counties in Nebraska are considered noncore counties. Using these classifications and the population estimates for 2005, 56.9 percent of Nebraska residents live in metropolitan areas, 22.8 percent live in micropolitan areas, and 20.3 percent live in noncore areas.

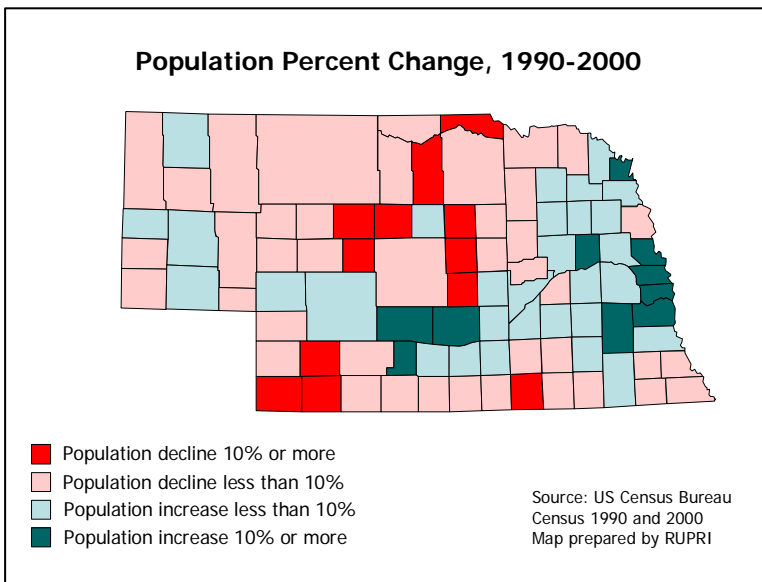


Population

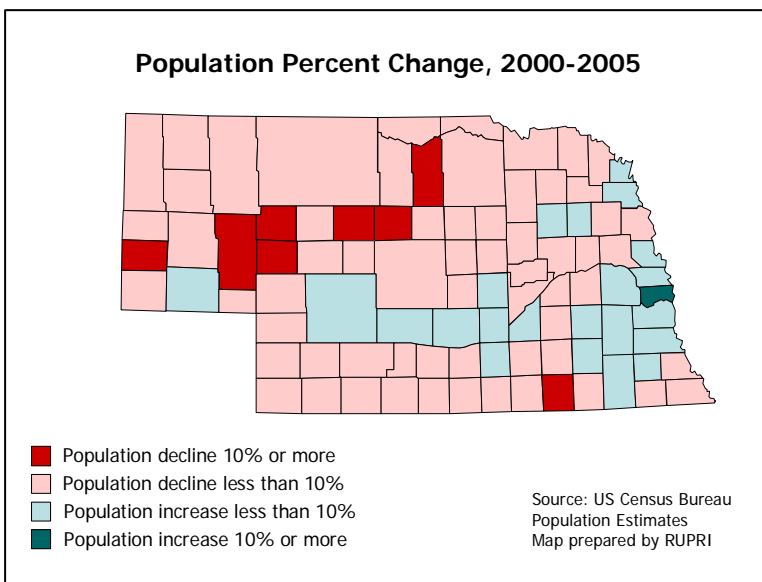
Nebraska's population in 2005 was 1,758,787, up 2.8 percent from the 2000 Census. During the 1990s, the population in Nebraska grew by 8.4 percent. Nationally, population increased 13.1 percent during the 1990s, and 5.3 percent from April 2000 to July 2005. Within Nebraska, population growth in the metropolitan areas has outpaced other areas, and noncore areas lost population during both time periods.

Percent Change in Population		
Area:	1990-2000	2000-2005
U.S.	13.1%	5.3%
Nebraska	8.4%	2.8%
Metropolitan	13.9%	6.1%
Nonmetropolitan	2.3%	-1.3%
Micropolitan	7.0%	1.3%
Noncore	-2.2%	-4.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

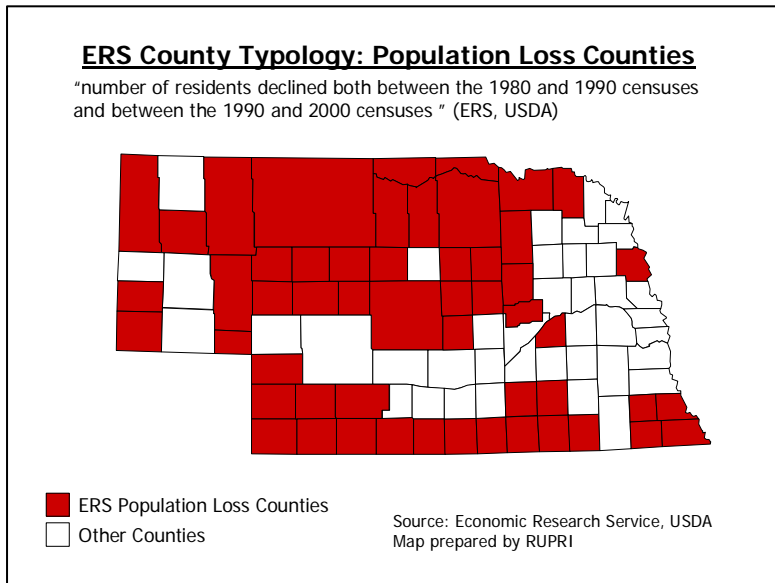


During the 1990s, 53 counties in Nebraska lost population - all of them nonmetro. Only 10 counties had population gains of 10 percent or more - six metro and four nonmetro counties.



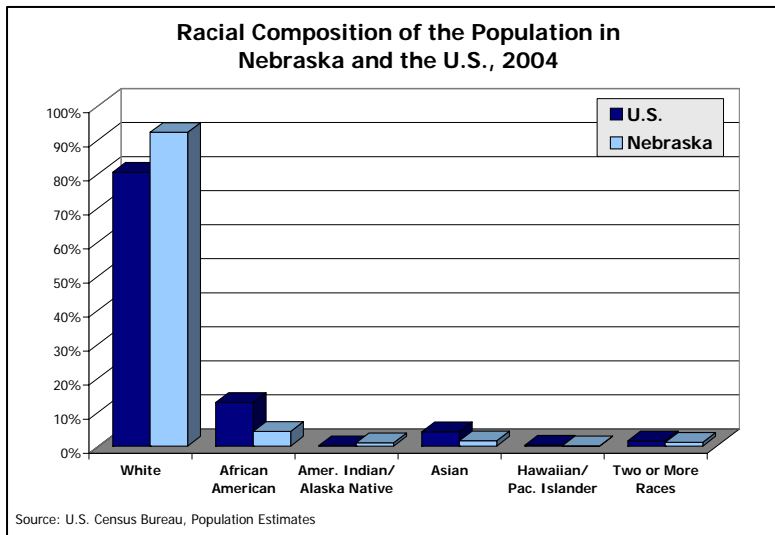
From 2000 to 2005, 70 counties in Nebraska lost population, most of them (69) were nonmetro, and all of the 8 counties that had population losses of 10 percent or more were nonmetro. Only one county experienced population growth of over 10 percent during this time period - Sarpy County in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area (13.7%).

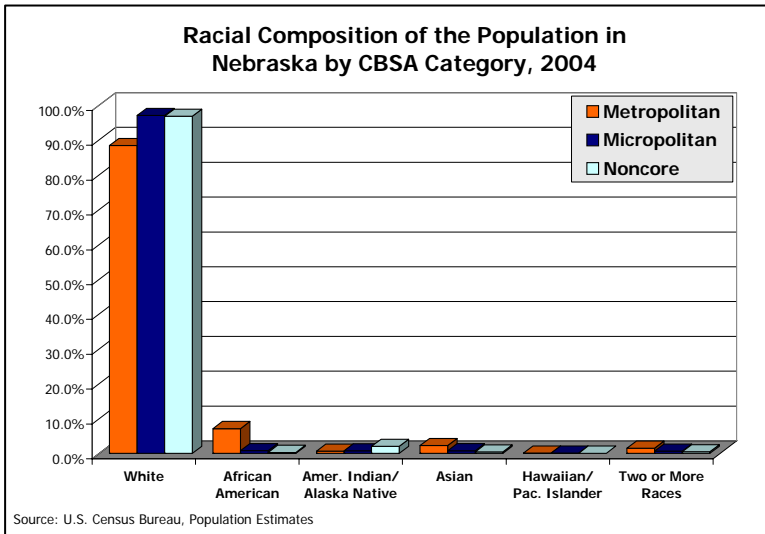
The Economic Research Service, USDA, classifies counties as population loss counties if they experienced population losses during the 1980s and the 1990s. In Nebraska, 53 counties, all nonmetro, are classified as population loss counties.



Race / Ethnicity

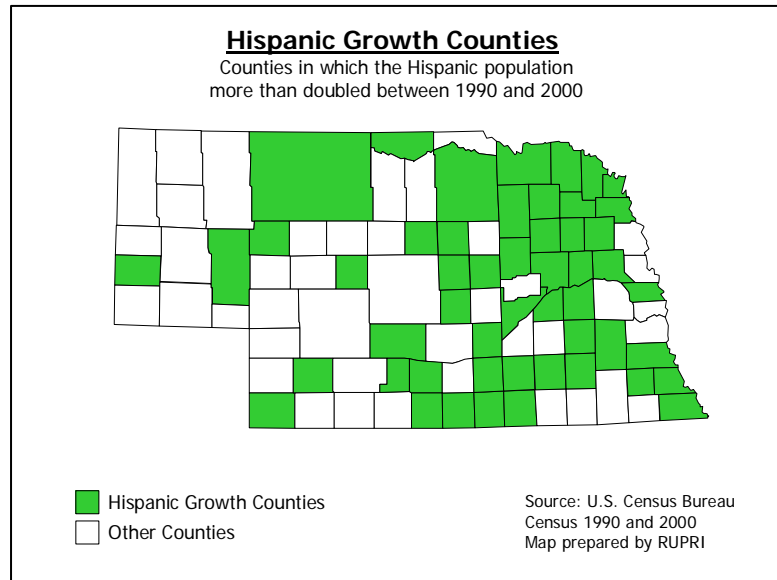
The population of Nebraska is 92.1 percent white and 4.3 percent African American. Nationally, the population is 80.4 percent white and 12.8 percent African American (2004 Census Bureau population estimates). Native Americans make up 0.9 percent of the total Nebraska population, but in Thurston County, Native Americans account for the majority of the population (52%). People of Hispanic origin make up 6.9 percent of Nebraska’s population, compared to 14.1 percent of the total U.S. population.



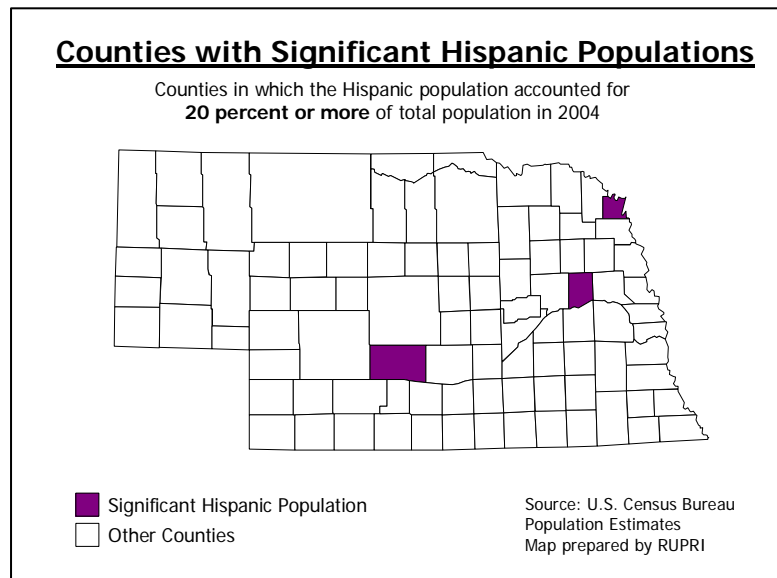


Within Nebraska, the metropolitan population is 88.4 percent white and 7.1 percent African American. The micropolitan population is 97.1 percent white and 0.8 percent African American, and the noncore population is 96.8 percent white and 0.3 percent African American.

People of Hispanic origin make up 6.6 percent of the metropolitan population, 10.2 percent of the micropolitan population, and 3.8 percent of the noncore population. Many areas have experienced significant growth in Hispanic populations over the last decade. The map to the right shows the counties in which the Hispanic population more than doubled during the 1990s.

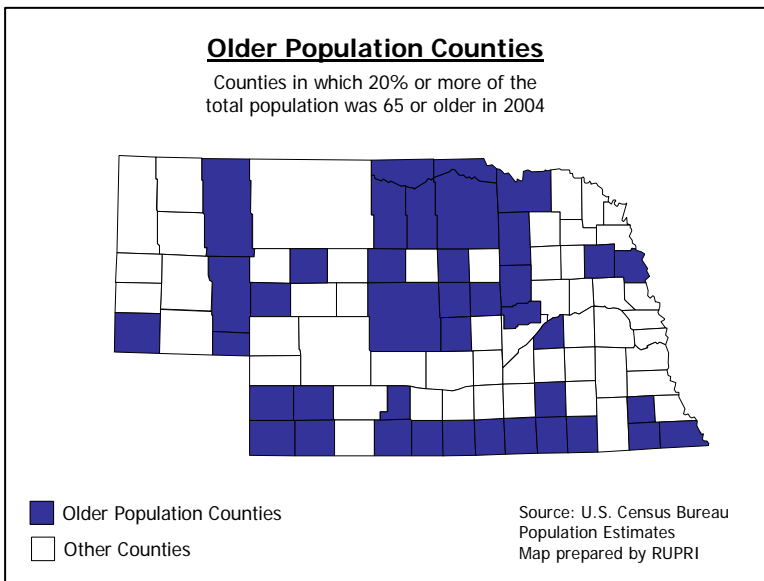
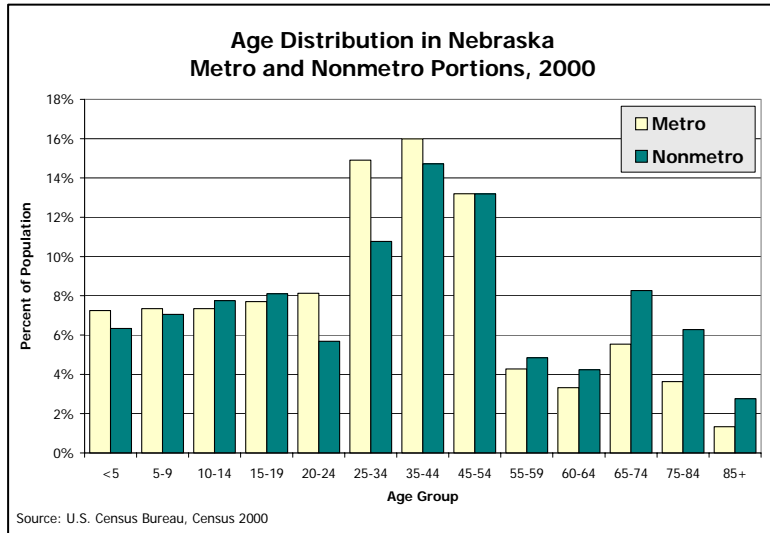


While in many cases these percent changes represent small numbers and portions of the total population, people of Hispanic origin do account for a significant portion of the population in several Nebraska counties. Hispanics make up over 20 percent of the population in Dakota (28.2%), Dawson (29.5%), and Colfax (30.7%) counties, shown in the map to the right.

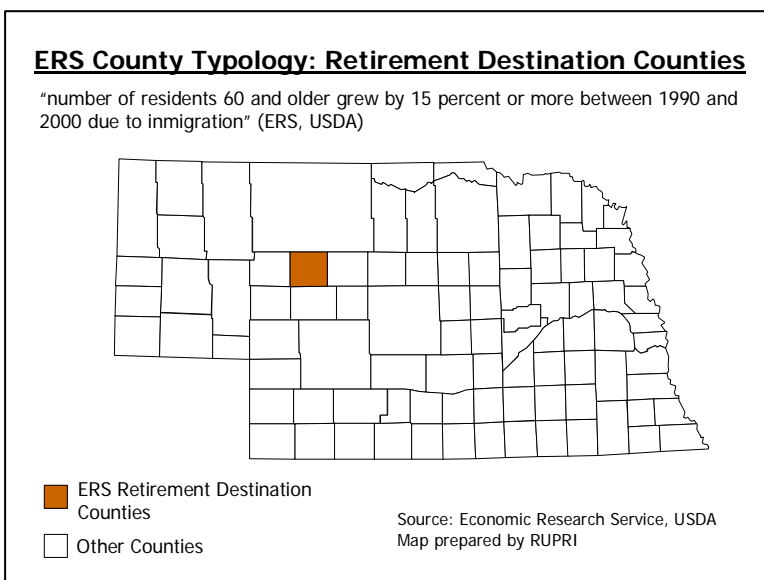


Age

The age distribution of the metro and nonmetro population in Nebraska is shown in the chart to the right. The percent of the population in the 20 to 44 age groups is higher in the metro areas, while the percent of the population over 65 is greater in the nonmetro areas.



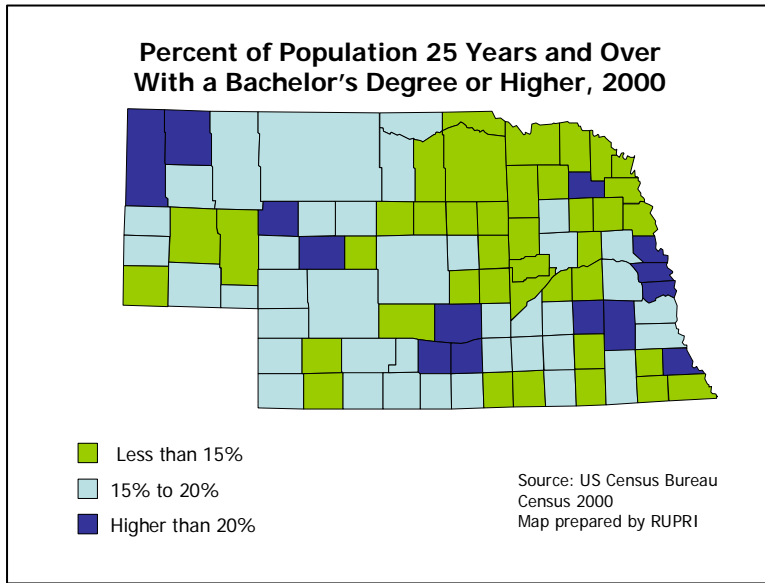
In several Nebraska counties the population age 65 and over represents a significant portion of total population. In the 40 counties shown to the left, the population age 65 and over accounts for over 20 percent of total population. All of these counties are nonmetropolitan.



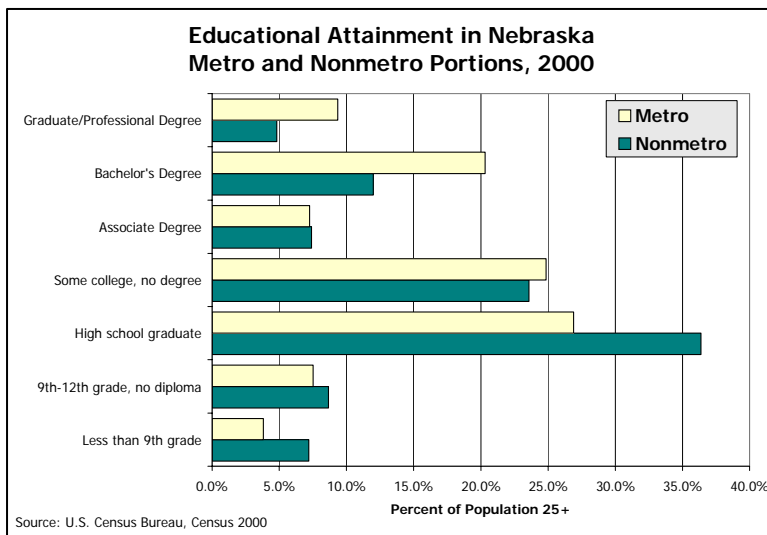
The Economic Research Service classifies counties as retirement destination counties based on the population change due to immigration. In Nebraska, Hooker County is classified as a retirement destination county.

Educational Attainment

The percent of the population age 25 and over that has earned a Bachelor's degree or higher is 24.4 percent in the U.S. and 23.7 percent in Nebraska. In metro areas of Nebraska, this percentage is 29.7, compared to only 17.7 in micropolitan areas and 15.9 percent in noncore areas. In only 14 counties did over 20 percent of the population earn a B.S. or higher (5 metro and 9 nonmetro counties).

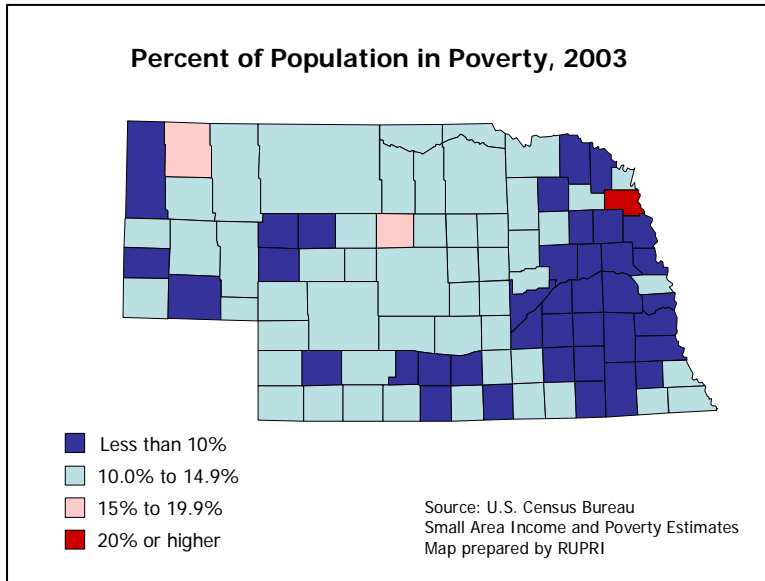


The chart below compares the educational attainment of Nebraska's metro and nonmetro populations. The percent of the population with high educational attainment (Bachelor's Degree or higher) is greater in the metro areas, while the percent of the population with low educational attainment (high school degree or lower) is greater in the nonmetro areas.

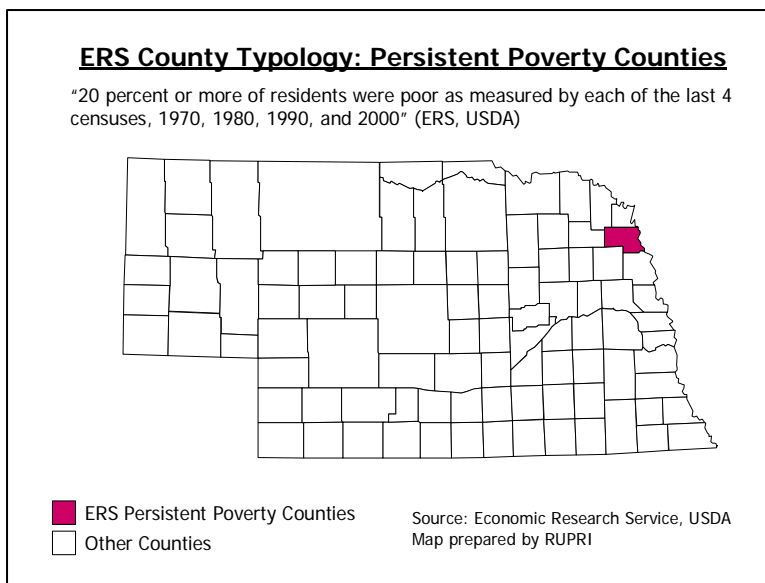


Poverty

The poverty rate in Nebraska in 2003 was 10.0 percent, compared to 12.5 percent for the U.S. (Census Bureau estimates). The poverty rates in Nebraska counties ranged from 5.5 percent in Sarpy County to 20.3 percent in Thurston County.

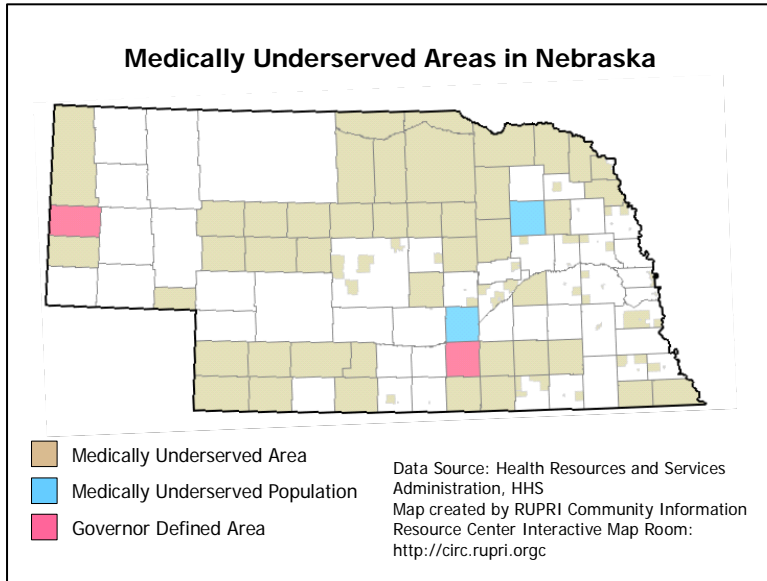


The Economic Research Service defines persistent poverty counties as those counties with poverty rates of 20 percent of more in each census from 1970 through 2000. Nationally, 386 counties are classified as persistent poverty counties, with one of them located in Nebraska (Thurston County).

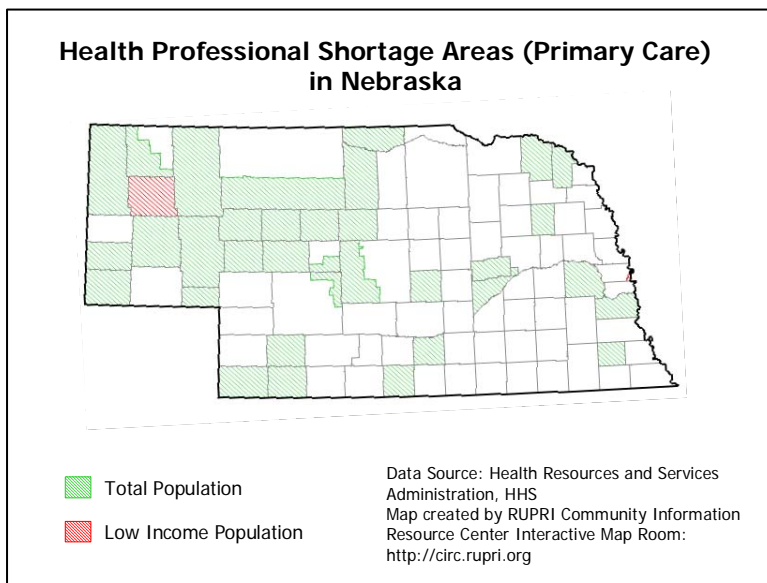


Health Care Services

The designation of areas or populations as medically underserved is based on an index of four variables - the ratio of primary medical care physicians per 1,000 population, the infant mortality rate, the percent of the population with incomes below the poverty level, and the percent of the population age 65 and over (Health Resources and Services Administration, HHS). Within Nebraska, several areas of the state are considered medically underserved, shown in the map below.

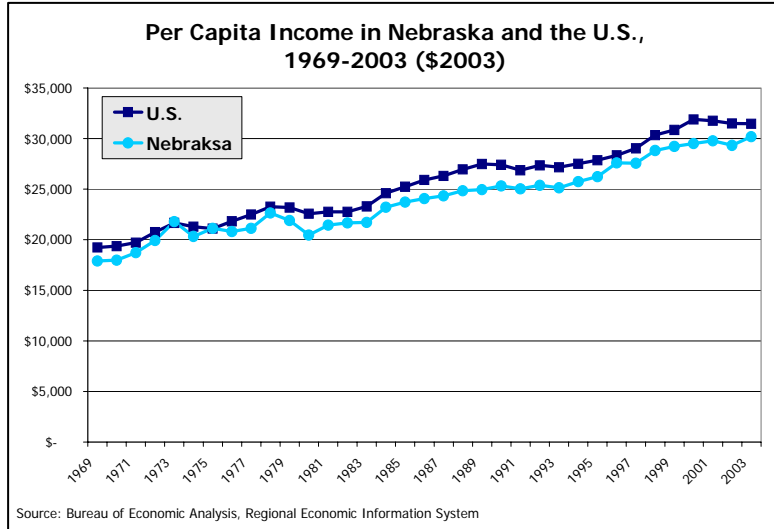


Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) are those areas that “may have shortages of primary medical care, dental or mental health providers and may be urban or rural areas, population groups, or medical or other public facilities” (Health Resources and Services Administration, HHS). Within Nebraska, many areas of the state are designated as primary care HPSAs for the total or low income populations.

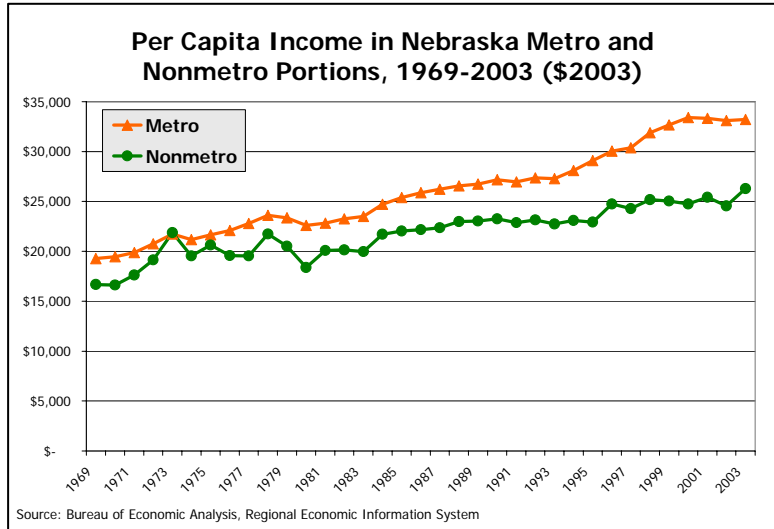


Per Capita Income

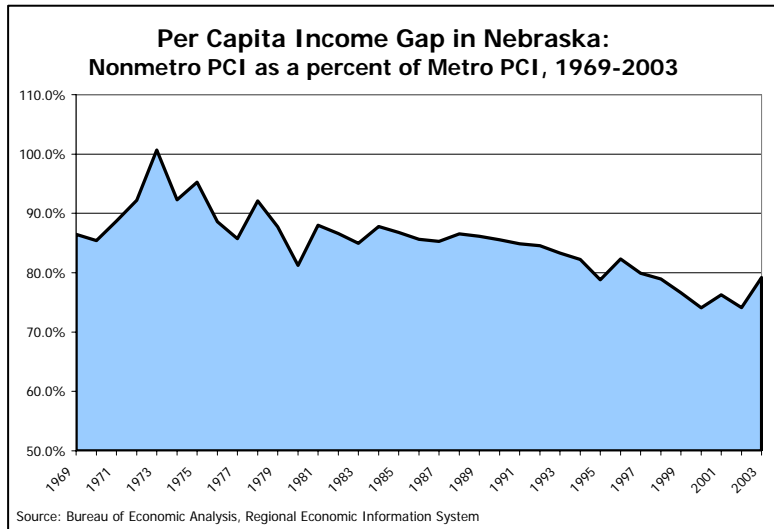
Nebraska's per capita income has closely mirrored the nation, with Nebraska's income lagging slightly behind over most of the past several decades. In 2003, per capita income in Nebraska was \$30,179, compared to \$31,472 for the U.S.



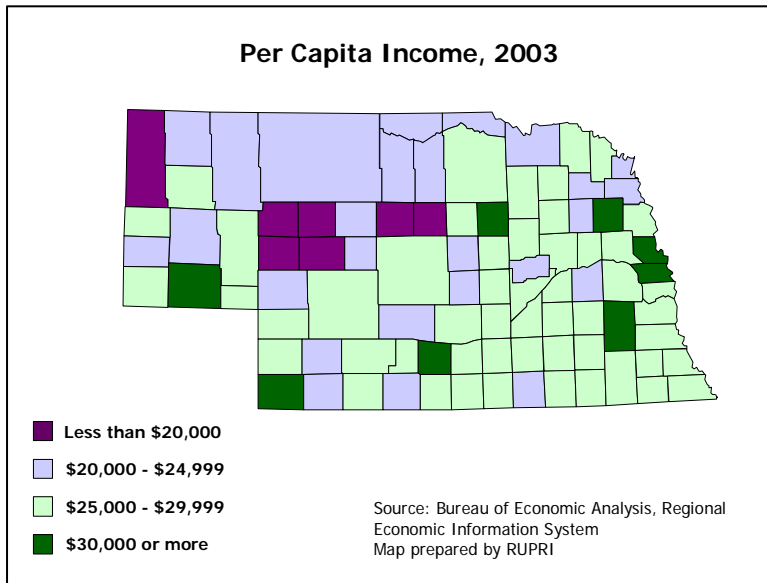
Nonmetro per capita income in Nebraska has lagged behind metro through most of the past several decades, with the exception of 1973. In 2003, metro per capita income was \$33,204, compared to \$26,295 in nonmetro areas.



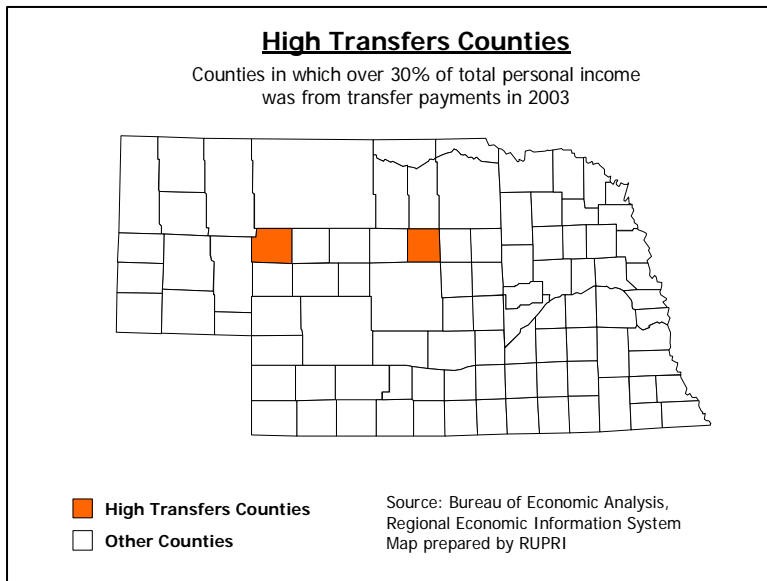
The per capita income gap between metro and nonmetro areas is measured with nonmetro per capita income as a percent of metro. In Nebraska, the gap has widened since the early 1970s, increasing significantly during the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 2003, nonmetro per capita income was 79.2 percent of metro per capita income.



Within Nebraska, per capita income in 2003 ranged from \$12,819 in Loup County to \$36,672 in Douglas County. Seven counties, all nonmetro, had per capita income less than \$20,000 in 2003.

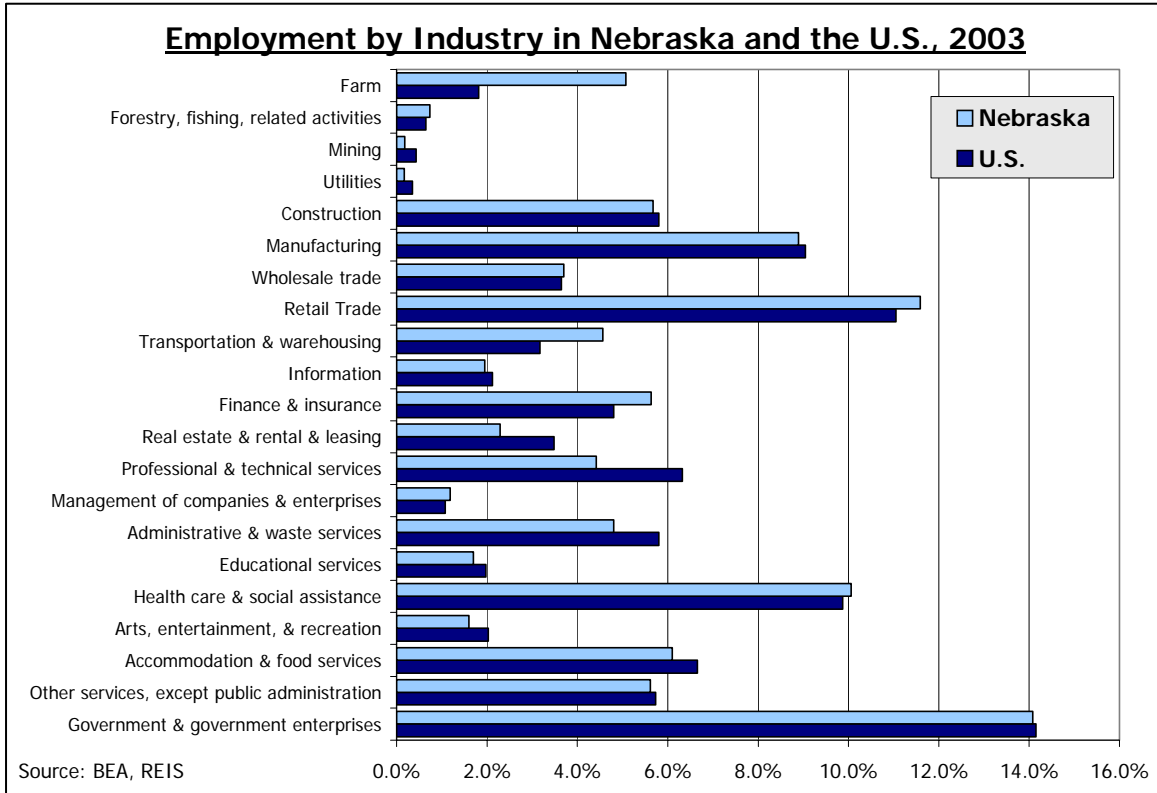


Transfer payments include retirement and disability payments, social security benefits, public assistance, and medical benefits. In Nebraska, two counties' incomes rely heavily on transfer payments - Loup and Grant Counties.

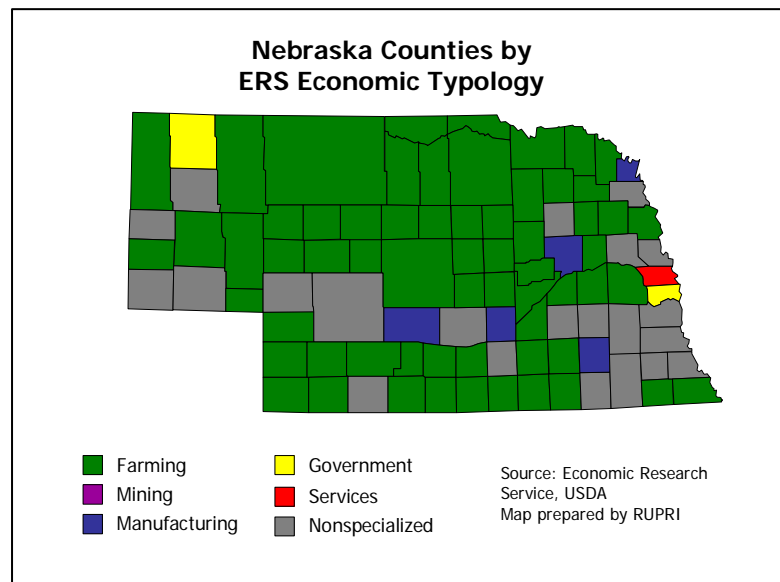


Employment Structure

In 2003, government and government enterprises accounted for the largest shares of total employment both in Nebraska (14.1%) and the U.S. (14.2%). Retail trade was the second largest employment sector, accounting for 11.6 percent of Nebraska employment and 11.0 percent of the U.S. employment.

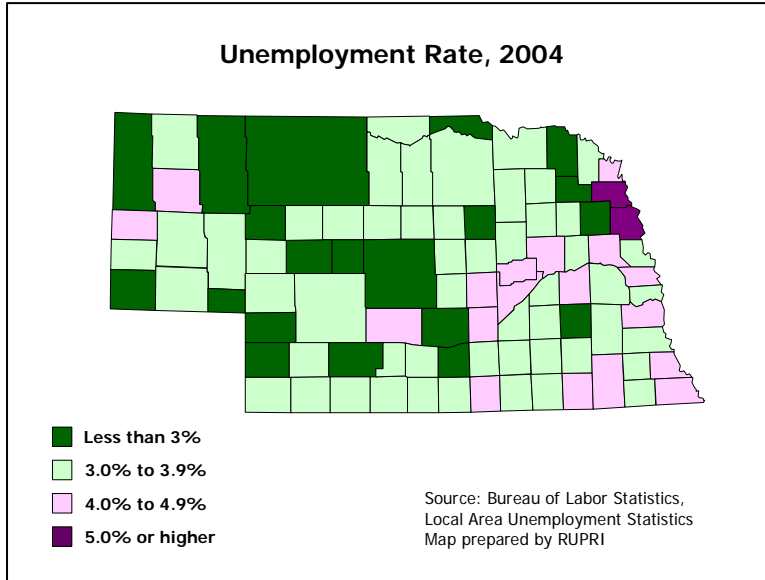


The ERS Economic Typology classifies counties into one of five industry categories of specialization or as nonspecialized. The map to the right shows the classification of Nebraska counties by this typology. The map illustrates the importance of farming to the Nebraska economy.



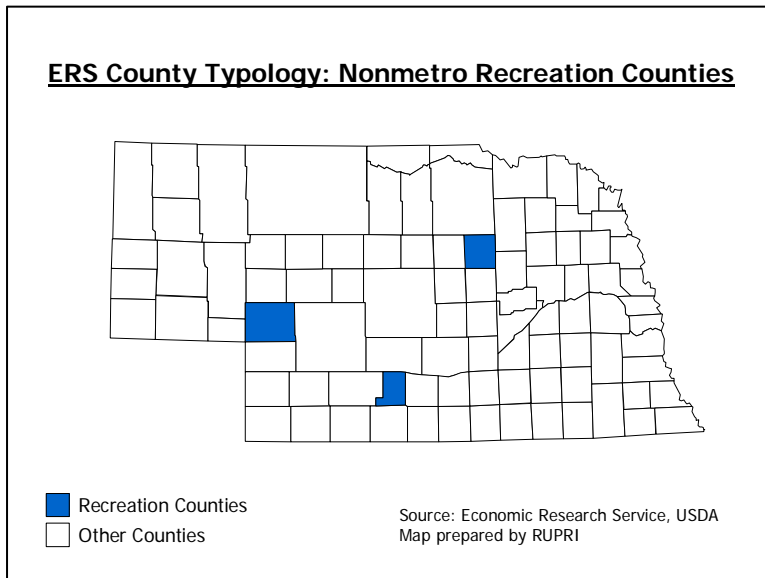
Unemployment

In 2004 the unemployment rate in Nebraska was 3.8 percent and the rate for the nation was 5.5 percent. Within Nebraska, the unemployment rate ranged from 1.6 percent in McPherson County to 7.7 percent in Thurston County.



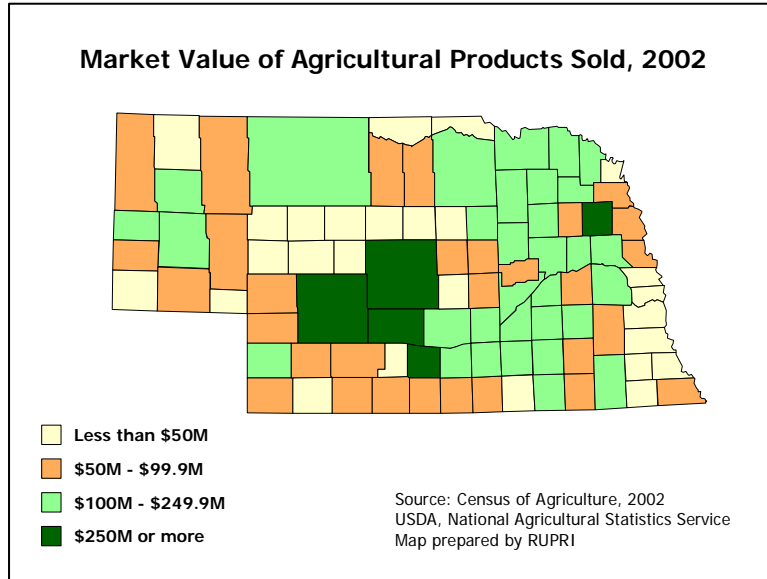
Recreation Counties

The Economic Research Service's classification of nonmetro recreation counties captures the recreational opportunities and development in many rural parts of the nation. The classification is based on a number of factors, including employment and income derived from recreation-related activities, seasonal housing units within the county, and receipts from hotels and motels. Nationally, 334 counties are classified as nonmetro recreation counties, with three located in Nebraska.

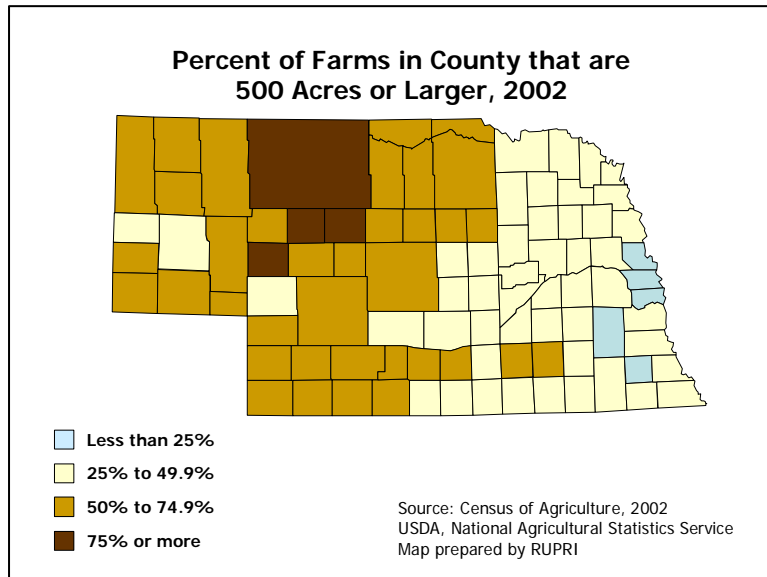


Agriculture

Agriculture is an important industry throughout much of Nebraska. Sixty-three counties are classified by the Economic Research Service as farming dependent (see map on page 11). The map below shows the value of agricultural products sold in 2002 for Nebraska counties.

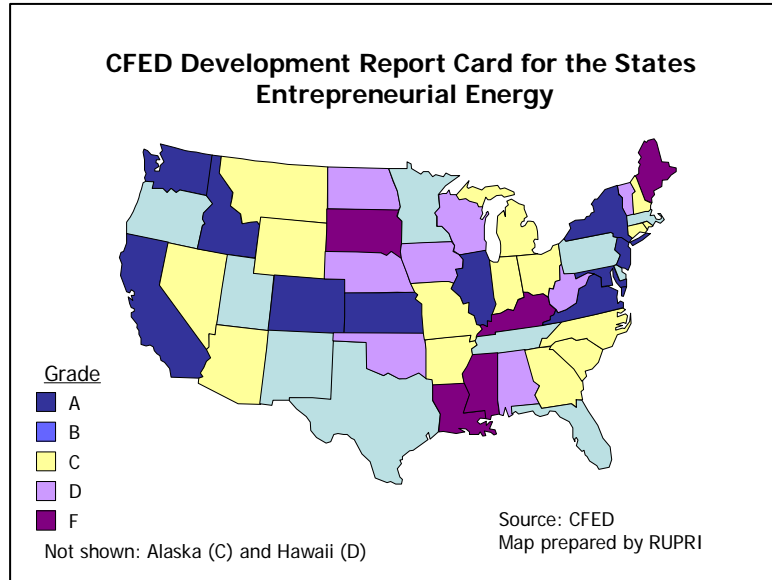


Average farm size in Nebraska is 930 acres, and over 41 percent of farms in the state are 500 acres or larger. As shown in the map below, the largest farms in Nebraska are in the western part of the state. In Arthur, Cherry, Hooker, and Thomas Counties, over 75 percent of the farms are 500 acres or larger.

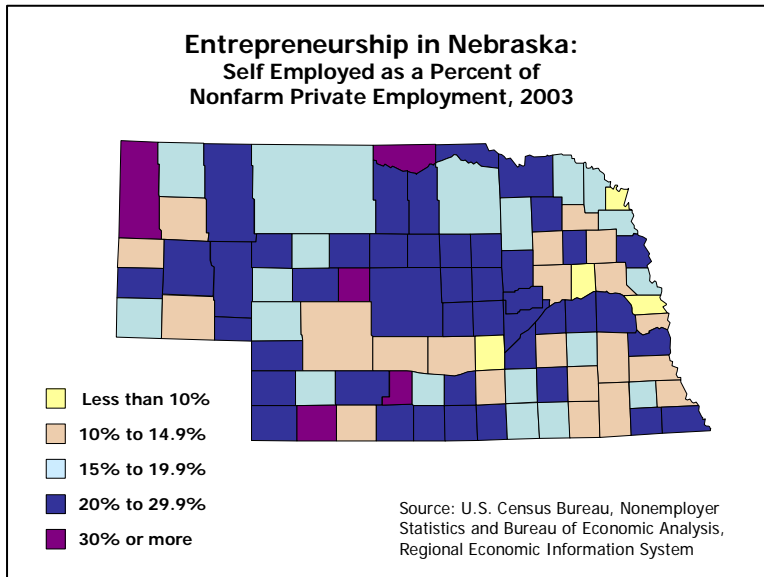


Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is an important component to economic development today. Unfortunately, data that allow us to measure entrepreneurial activity and trends is difficult to ascertain, particularly at the county level. The *CFED Development Report Card for the States* rates each state on its entrepreneurial energy, “evaluating the extent to which new firms are generated and whether they are contributing to employment growth.” While this is a state-level ranking, it provides useful insight as to how a state is performing. Nebraska’s rating on this indicator is “D.”



As mentioned, county level indicators of entrepreneurship are difficult to ascertain, but a good indicator is the proportion of workers that are self employed. The map below shows self employed workers as a percent of nonfarm private employment in the county.



Data Sources and References

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<http://www.bea.gov/ea/regional/reis/>

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

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CFED Development Report Card for the States

<http://drc.cfed.org/>

Economic Research Service, USDA, 2004 County Typology

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Rurality/Typology/>

Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, Designations of Health Professional Shortage Areas and Medically Underserved Areas and Populations

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National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

2002 Census of Agriculture

http://www.nass.usda.gov/Census_of_Agriculture/index.asp

Office of Management and Budget, Statistical Area Definitions and Guidance on Their Uses

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/bulletins/fy05/b05-02.html>

RUPRI Community Information Resource Center Interactive Map Room

<http://circ.rupri.org/>

U.S. Census Bureau

Census 2000

<http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>

Population Estimates

<http://www.census.gov/popest/estimates.php>

Metropolitan and Micropolitan Area Classifications

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metrodef.html>

Nonemployer Statistics

<http://www.census.gov/epcd/nonemployer/>

Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/saibe/saibe.html>

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