



Lincoln Vital Signs

[LincolnVitalSigns.org](http://LincolnVitalSigns.org)

# Lincoln Vital Signs 2017

## Be informed. Get involved.

Lincoln Vital Signs 2017 features more than 10 years of existing data that continues to evolve. This report is designed to provide a shared understanding of both the strengths and the challenges in our city, and it continues the tradition of providing credible, reliable information about Lincoln, compared to its recent past and to other communities in the United States.

Previous reports from 2014 and 2015 became the centerpiece of a community-wide engagement process to set priorities and action to make Lincoln even stronger.

Lincoln Vital Signs is intended to inform conversations, spark connections and spur action.

## WHAT HAS HAPPENED OVER THE LAST DECADE?

Lincoln is experiencing positive economic recovery. Our **educated workforce, low unemployment, low cost of living**, and investments in Lincoln's built **infrastructure** have helped us return to pre-recession economic strength.

1

### Lincoln is rebounding with:

- Even lower unemployment
- Fewer neighborhoods in extreme poverty
- Recovering median income
- Re-attaining average hours worked by employees
- Fewer children living in poverty
- Even lower crime rates
- Booming construction of commercial space
- High workforce participation

Opportunity gaps persist. **Racial and ethnic minorities** continue to face challenges to reach financial stability. **Education** continues to be linked to **income**, and the **neighborhood** where one lives can create barriers to economic success.

2

### There are concerning disparities including:

- Number of persons working full-time while in poverty has doubled
- More than 15% of Lincoln residents live in poverty
- Persons from racial and ethnic minority groups have higher rates of poverty and unemployment
- Nearly half of Lincoln Public School students participate in free and reduced lunch programs
- Lincoln Public School students in poverty and from racial and ethnic minority groups have lower educational achievement
- Across Lincoln neighborhoods, there is as much as a 20-year gap in life expectancy



## LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS PRESENTS LINCOLN'S WELL-BEING IN SIX KEY AREAS

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

The full report is available at [LincolnVitalSigns.org](http://LincolnVitalSigns.org).

## FROM LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS TO PROSPER LINCOLN

In 2014, leaders of Lincoln's largest public and private charitable organizations commissioned Lincoln Vital Signs to help inform decisions and encourage collaboration. Since then, Lincoln Vital Signs reports have been used by funders to target resources, nonprofit agencies for program development, faith community for services planning, business community for recruitment, neighborhood organizations for advocacy and involvement, performing arts as an inspiration for a new musical, and in many other ways.

Community response to Lincoln Vital Signs led to the creation of Prosper Lincoln. Hundreds of people from all sectors of the community participated in prioritizing Lincoln's focuses on Early Childhood, Employment Skills, and Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

Prosper Lincoln has an action-packed strategic plan ([prosperlincoln.org](http://prosperlincoln.org)) to make great progress in these focus areas by year 2020. It is through the power of numbers - working toward a common goal - that our community agenda can impact Lincoln.

### LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS FUNDERS AND ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Abel Foundation  
 City of Lincoln  
 Community Health Endowment  
 Cooper Foundation  
 Educare of Lincoln

Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools  
 Lancaster County  
 Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development  
 Lincoln Community Foundation

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation  
 United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster Counties  
 University of Nebraska Foundation  
 Woods Charitable Fund

# Lincoln Vital Signs 2017

## Be informed. Get involved.

Communities that make the best use of data, like Lincoln, use it to identify and prioritize issues that really matter to their city.

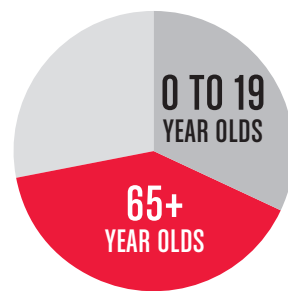
The 2017 Lincoln Vital Signs report features more than 10 years of accumulated data that works to provide a shared understanding of our city—both the strengths and challenges.

By sharing these findings, we hope to inform and inspire us all to take action in making Lincoln even stronger.

### COMMUNITY PROFILE

Lincoln added more than 50 thousand people in the last 10 years and the city benefits from this population growth and increased diversity.

**23%**  
POPULATION  
GROWTH  
SINCE 2005



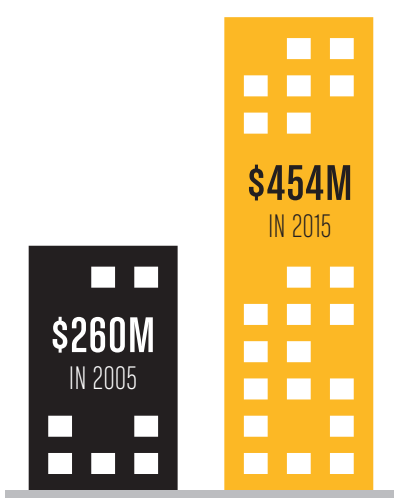
**FASTEST GROWING AGE GROUPS**  
SINCE 2005

**87%**  
GROWTH IN  
NON-WHITE  
POPULATION  
SINCE 2005

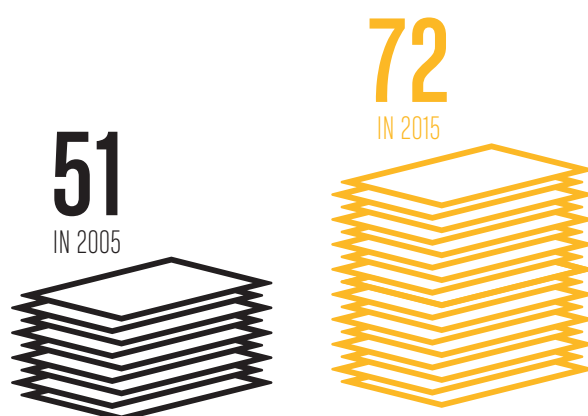
### ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

Over the last 10 years, Lincoln's unemployment rate remained one of the lowest in the U.S., the dollar value of commercial builds nearly doubled and patents filed by residents was on the rise.

**2.6%**  
LINCOLN  
UNEMPLOYMENT  
RATE IS ONE OF  
THE LOWEST IN  
THE NATION



**DOLLAR VALUE OF COMMERCIAL BUILDS**



**PATENTS FILED**

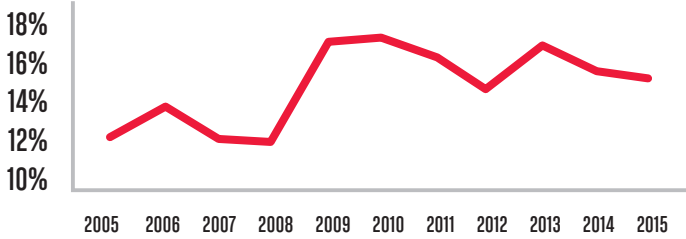


## BASIC NEEDS

Even though our poverty rate is on a trend for better, there are still thousands of children living in poverty and extreme poverty census tracts exist.

**9,581**  
CHILDREN  
IN POVERTY

POPULATION BELOW POVERTY THRESHOLD



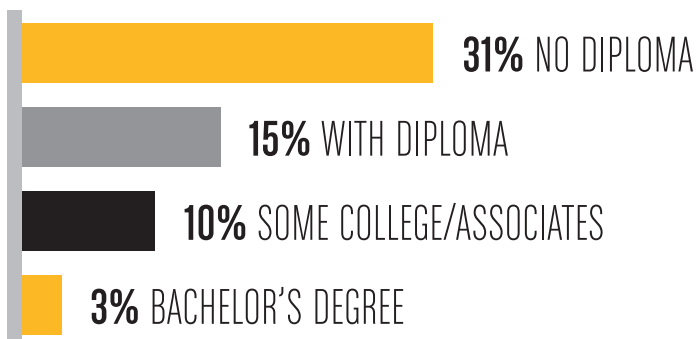
**5** CENSUS TRACTS IN  
EXTREME POVERTY  
NONE 15 YEARS AGO

## EDUCATION

Enrollment in our public schools has continued to grow over the last 10 years. And numbers show, the more education attained the lower the poverty rate.

**22%**  
ENROLLMENT  
GROWTH IN  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SINCE 2005

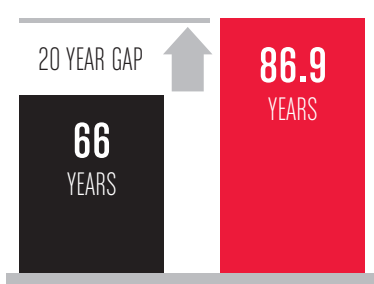
RATE OF POVERTY



## HEALTH

American health is declining. In Lincoln, declines have not been as severe, but are still cause for concern with chronic health factors, such as obesity, diabetes and sexually transmitted diseases, rapidly increasing.

INDIVIDUALS REPORT  
**3**  
DAYS OF POOR  
MENTAL HEALTH  
PER MONTH  
INCREASED SINCE 2005



**20 YEAR GAP IN LIFE EXPECTANCY  
DEPENDING ON YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD**



Learn more about how the place where we live, learn, work and play affects our health at [CHELincoln.org/PlaceMatters](http://CHELincoln.org/PlaceMatters).

## SAFETY

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

**19%**  
MORE PEOPLE  
"ALWAYS FEEL  
SAFE & SECURE  
IN LINCOLN"  
THAN IN 2000

**PROPERTY CRIME  
DOWN  
SINCE 2005**



**VIOLENT CRIME  
DOWN  
SINCE 2005**





## USE LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS TO TURN INSIGHT INTO ACTION STEP UP AND CONNECT TO PROSPER LINCOLN

Guided by the findings from Lincoln Vital Signs as a starting point, Prosper Lincoln was developed through a community-wide engagement process where more than 2,100 ideas were used to create a community agenda focusing on three priority areas:

- Early Childhood
- Employment Skills
- Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Individuals, businesses, nonprofits and many other organizations are already stepping up to connect to the Prosper Lincoln community agenda. Some examples include:

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Businesses are exploring ways to support early childhood education for their employees and the community.
- Parents and volunteers are reading 15 minutes per day to young children.
- Donors are establishing scholarships for future early childhood educators and current preschool students from low income families.
- Lincoln Public Schools began Kindergarten Readiness assessment in the 2017 school year.
- Refugee and new American parents are learning how they can extend their child's school learning at home by reading books and enjoying activities as a family.

### EMPLOYMENT SKILLS

- Neighborhood coalitions are working with area businesses to identify and match skilled workers with open positions.
- Nonprofit case managers are connecting with companies that have career opportunities with benefits at job fairs and business tours.
- Library volunteers are assisting job seekers to find opportunities and complete applications.
- Veterans are bringing their unique skill sets to meet the workforce needs of businesses in our community.
- Businesses are collaborating to create talent pipelines for the building trades, manufacturing and healthcare.

### INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Hundreds of university students are being exposed to internship and employment opportunities with local companies.
- Thanks to scholarships, high school students learned from experts at a national innovation summit held in Lincoln.
- Start-ups are making connections with potential investors.
- The entrepreneurial community is investigating ways for established entrepreneurs to mentor start-ups.
- Lincoln business leaders are exploring recruitment with domestic and international entrepreneurs.



## STEP UP TO PROSPER LINCOLN

Each one of us serves Lincoln in multiple ways – through our work, our neighborhood, our clubs, our family, our house of worship. When we each step up with our time, our talent or our treasure, everyone can prosper in Lincoln.

- How will you step up to nurture every child on a path to success?
- How will you step up to develop job skills in our community?
- How will you step up to create a vibrant culture of innovation?

Be inspired by the progress. **Take action now.**

**“Solving tough national problems like the opportunity gap begins locally, and Prosper Lincoln is leading the way.”**

–Robert D. Putnam, Harvard University, author of *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*



### VITAL SIGNS AS AN INFORMATION SOURCE

This is the fourth in a series of Vital Signs reports which also includes 2014, 2015, and the 2016 Behavioral Health Supplement. Leaders of Lincoln's philanthropic organizations continue to believe that the complex issues facing Lincoln must have collaboration among all sectors of our community to make progress.

Lincoln Vital Signs 2017 continues the tradition of providing credible, reliable information about Lincoln, compared to its recent past and to other communities in the United States.

### ABOUT LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS INDICATORS AND SOURCES:

Lincoln Vital Signs 2017 was written by Nancy Shank, PhD, MBA; Stacey Hoffman, PhD; and Taylor Smith, all of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

The complete report of Lincoln Vital Signs 2017, including data sources and citations, is available at [LincolnVitalSigns.org](http://LincolnVitalSigns.org).

Lincoln Vital Signs will be updated in future years to measure and track community progress and changes.