Philadelphia2050 Planning Together

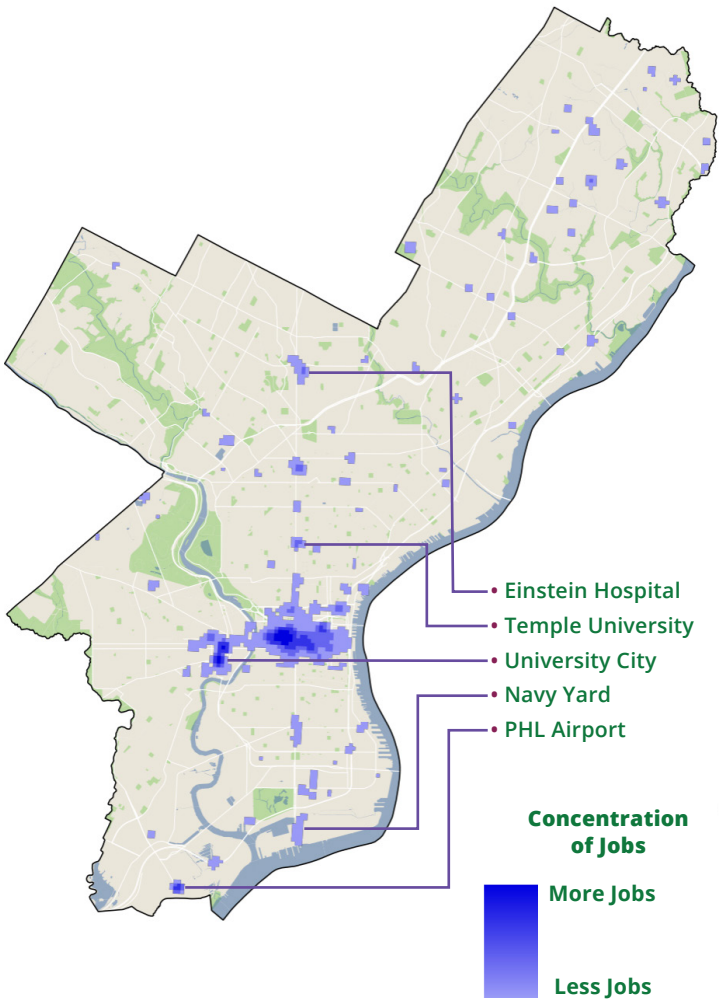
JOBS & ECONOMY

The local economy plays a critical role in the health and vitality of Philadelphia. Planning for an equitable economy and economic development that provides a wide range of jobs, supports businesses, and promotes the economic health and security of Philadelphians is a key element of comprehensive planning.

THE PHILADELPHIA ECONOMY

- **Philadelphia is home to nearly 30,000 businesses and nearly 715,000 jobs.** Three in four Philadelphia businesses are small businesses with under 100 employees. These local businesses play an important role in the vitality of Philadelphia neighborhoods and have a significant impact on the local economy.[1, 2]
- **Over 60% of Philadelphians work for large businesses** with over 500 employees. Large employers have a significant and increasing impact on the city's economy. The number of Philadelphia workers employed by big businesses has grown by nearly 100,000 since 2010. Philadelphia's largest employers are also major drivers of non-residential development and its associated economic impacts. [3, 4]
- **Nearly a third of jobs in Philadelphia are in healthcare and social assistance fields.** Both health and education employers remain strong and growing components of our local and regional economy. The healthcare sector has shown strong and consistent growth nationally. The strength of this sector bolsters job growth in Philadelphia and the region.[5, 6]
- **Between 2010 and 2025, Philadelphia gained nearly 90,000 jobs**, an increase of 14%. From 2020 to 2024, job growth in Philadelphia outpaced job growth in the four surrounding Pennsylvania counties and growth was above the average for the 25 most populous US counties over that period. **Around 350,000 workers commute into Philadelphia each day, and around 275,000 Philadelphia residents commute out.**[7, 8]
- **50% more Philadelphians have a college degree than 10 years ago;** today more than one in three Philadelphians now have a four-year college degree. Philadelphia's ability to attract and retain

Employment Locations for Philadelphia Residents: 2022



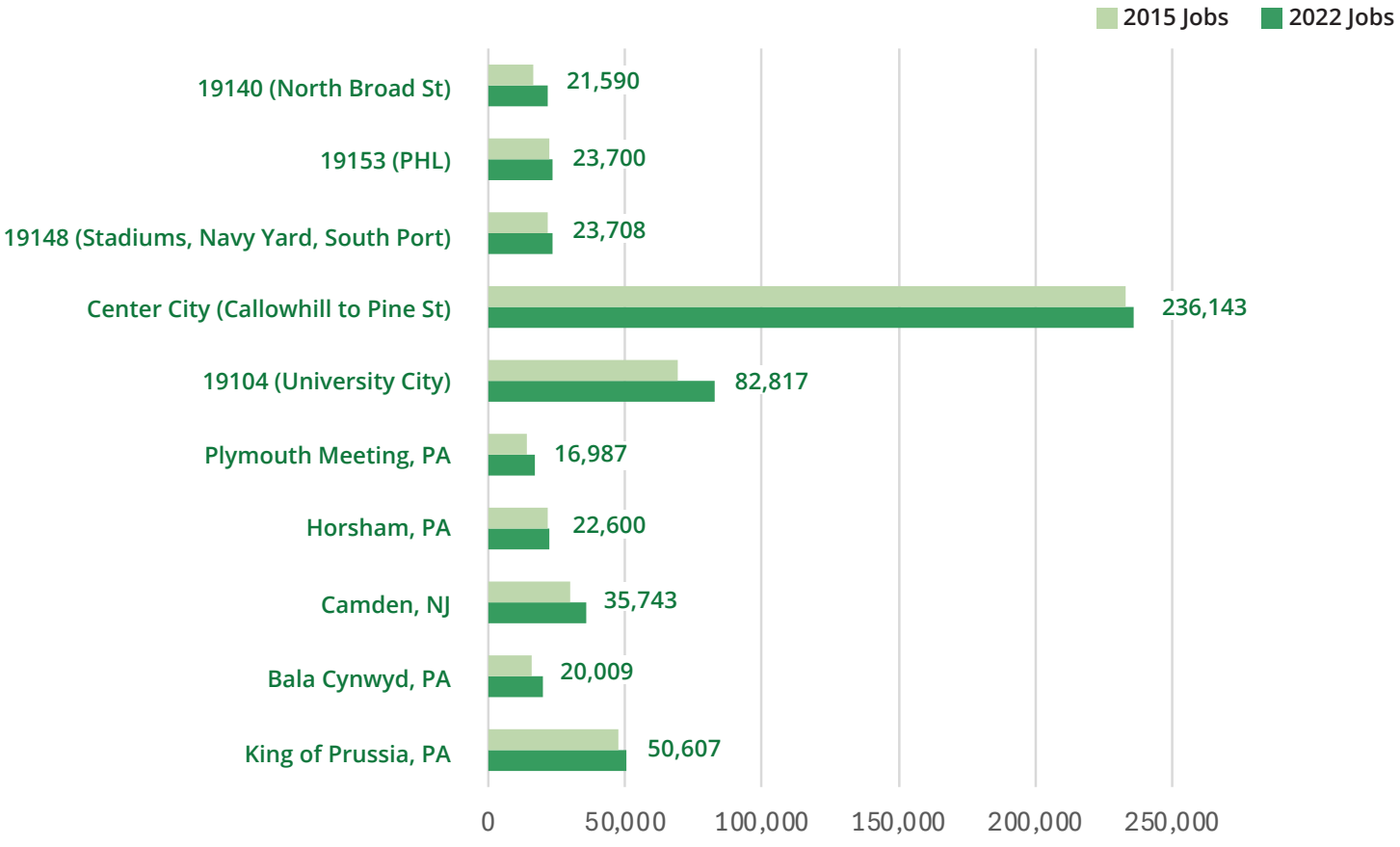
degree-holders and recent graduates supports Philadelphia 's efforts to attract new employers.[9, 10, 11]

- **Median household income in Philadelphia was just over $60,000 in 2023,** compared to a national median of $77,000. Household income gains in Philadelphia have outpaced gains nationally. Middle-income households have seen the most significant gains in income since 2010 compared to high- and lower-income households.

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES IN PHILADELPHIA

- **Nearly three in four regional jobs are located outside of Philadelphia County.** Although Center City and University City are key employment anchors, many of the region's job opportunities are outside of city limits and away from transit corridors. Remote and hybrid work remain well above pre-pandemic levels, with significant fiscal impact for the city and local transit agencies.[12, 13]
- **Full-time employment does not guarantee economic security, and significant barriers exist to economic mobility for the working poor** in Philadelphia. Poverty in Philadelphia (still over 20%) remains a persistent threat to the social and economic security of residents and their communities. Rising costs put significant burdens on Philadelphians with fixed incomes.[14, 15]
- **Household income and wealth still vary significantly by race, ethnicity and geography in Philadelphia.** Black-owned business density—a measure of the number of Black-owned businesses per Black resident—is low compared to peer cities, and women are underrepresented as business owners. Business revenue for minority-owned businesses lags behind rates in comparison cities as well, indicating that significant barriers exist for minority entrepreneurs in Philadelphia.[16, 17]

Major Regional Employment Centers:
Job Numbers, 2015 and 2022



Mayor Cherelle L. Parker's policy focus on economic development and "economic opportunity for all" aims to leverage local strengths and address local economic challenges. Numerous City entities and initiatives support economic opportunity, workforce development, and Philadelphia businesses, including Philadelphia Works, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Department of Commerce. Flagship programs include the City College for Municipal Employment, a partnership among the City of Philadelphia, the Community College of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia School District, and PhilaWorks, Inc. This program provides training to fill City jobs and upskill municipal employees as they climb the career ladder.

In 2025, the Parker administration formally established the Office of Business Impact and Economic Advancement, creating a new direction for the City's contracting and procurement policies through the Philadelphia Small and Local Business Program.

Regional initiatives like the Southeastern Pennsylvania Economic Collaborative and research by the Federal Reserve, the Economy League and others is helping planners and policy makers better understand local barriers and opportunities.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Working to promote Philadelphia's economic health will require careful planning and collaboration. Beyond current challenges, emerging national trends will have local impacts. These trends include the continued growth of e-commerce, increases in automation and artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies and industries. Major developments on long-underutilized land are in planning and in process at the Navy Yard and PhilaPort, at former industrial sites along the Schuylkill, on North Broad Street and elsewhere. Planning efforts through *Philadelphia2050* will help Philadelphians use land and other resources to address economic needs and take advantage of opportunities. Through continued analysis and public engagement, *Philadelphia2050* will look to explore:

- How can planning contribute to educational and economic opportunities, and ensure that communities are connected to employment?
- How can Philadelphia better support businesses and workers, and further economic security and opportunity for all Philadelphians?
- How can Philadelphia's economy and local communities become more resilient to future economic shifts and downturns?
- How can Philadelphia plan, prepare for and leverage emerging technologies, industries and trends?

Endnotes

1 *U.S. Census,* 2022 SUSB Annual Data Tables by Establishment Industry. *2022*
2 *Urban Institute,* Promoting Economic and Community Development by Supporting Small Businesses. *2024*
3 *Pew,* Philadelphia's Tax Burden Differs by Size and Sector. *2024*
4 *U.S. Census,* QWI Explorer. *Approximately 311,859 employees worked for 500+ employee businesses in 2010. In the 2024, the estimate was 404,855.*
5 *Center City District,* Philadelphia Employment Report. *2025*
6 *Rogelberg, Sasha.* Health care has been propping up a shaky labor market. For the first time in over four years, the sector shed thousands of jobs. *2026*
7 *BLS,* Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. *2025*
8 *U.S. Census,* LEHD. *2023*
9 *U.S. Census,* ACS, Educational Attainment in Philadelphia. *2024*
10 *Economy League.* Macro Indicators: Who's Working in Philadelphia? A Look at Employment Gains by Age and Education Since 2010. *2025*
11 *Center City District,* Philadelphia Employment Report. *2025*
12 *Pew,* State of the City. *2025. Middle income households saw a 32% increase in median income from 2013 to 2023. Higher income and lower income households gained slightly less, 30% and 26% respectively.*
13 *Pew,* The Cost of Commuting for Philadelphians | The Pew Charitable Trusts *2019*
14 *Pew,* The Changing Makeup of Philadelphia's Wage and Earnings Tax | The Pew Charitable Trusts. *2025*
15 *Chetty, Dobby, et. al.* Changing Opportunity: Sociological Mechanisms Underlying Growing Class Gaps and Shrinking Race Gaps in Economic Mobility *2025*
16 *U.S. Census,* ACS. *2023*
17 *The Federal Reserve,* The Precarious Road to Asset Building: Illuminating Structures of Inequality in Philadelphia. *2023. The average white household in Philadelphia holds 7 times the wealth of the average Black household.*
18 *Pew,* Business Ownership in Philadelphia and Other Major U.S. Cities | The Pew Charitable Trusts. *2025. Minority-owned businesses in Philadelphia generate 25 to 35% less revenue than minority-owned businesses nationally, and in comparison counties. Philadelphia businesses, in general, generate 15% less than the national average.*

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Philadelphia2050
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Planning and Development
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA