

Overview Of The State

In many ways, Ohio is typical of the United States as a whole. Its population is representatively diverse, stemming from internal migration from the North and South and European influences. A state in which agriculture has been the mainstay for more than 150 years, it now represents the urbanized, industrialized American of the early 21st century.

Land and Terrain

Ranking 35th among the state in land area, Ohio's 88 counties cover 41,222 square miles, including 247 square miles of inland water and 3,457 square miles of Lake Erie. The State extends 225 miles from east to west and 215 miles from north to south.

The percentages of land use by major categories are:

Agriculture	60%
Forestland (public and private)	33%
Urban	3%
Other	4%

Data obtained from The Ohio Department of Developments State Profile

Ohio is one of 13 States which comprise the Appalachian Region. Of its 88 counties, 29 counties within Ohio have been designated as part of the Appalachian Region. These counties are located south of the diagonal line, which runs from the southwest to northeast portion of the State. Known for its scenic, mountainous ranges, this Region is also recognized for its high poverty rates. Close to one-half of the counties in this Region have between 22% and 29% of all persons living in poverty, as compared to the State average of 10.31%.

Population Demographics

Ohio is the 7th largest State in population in the United States. Although Ohio's population continues to increase slightly, decreases have occurred and are expected to continue in many counties in northern, eastern, and southeastern parts of the State.

About three fourths of its 11,353,140 population (2000 Census) is classified as urban, while 26% of its population is classified as rural. All minority groups comprise 16% of the total population, with the African American population representing 11.5%. In rural areas, minority groups comprise only 2.3% of the total rural population.

One of the most important long term demographic trends that will affect Ohio, as well as much of the U.S., is the aging of its population. Because of longer life expectancies and relatively low birth rates, the fastest growing age groups will be the middle aged and the elderly. Those communities experiencing a population decline usually will maintain a greater proportion of the middle aged and elderly, compared to those with static or increases in population.

Cities and Municipalities

Ohio has seven cities with populations over 100,000. Only three other States have more cities of this size.

Columbus, the state capital and the largest city, is located in the center of Ohio. A busy convention and business center, Columbus also produces iron and steel products as well as machinery and electrical equipment. It is also the site of the nationally acclaimed The Ohio State University.

Over 941 incorporated municipalities exist throughout Ohio ranging in size from over 100 persons (15 municipalities) to over 100,000 persons (6 municipalities). A total of 561 of the 941 communities have over 1,000 or fewer persons and, cumulatively, have experienced a net population decline.

Employment

Significant changes in employment have occurred over the past 20-25 years, reflective of changing economic circumstances resulting from de-industrialization. The most ubiquitous change has been the decline of employment in the manufacturing sector, particularly in steel, auto, and rubber plants. Ohio has also experienced a significant employment declines in the natural resources mining sector, especially high sulfur coal. Today, services (i.e. health professions) provide the largest employment followed by trade, manufacturing, government/public education, finance/insurance/real estate, construction, agriculture, and mining.

Ohio's unemployment rate remains slightly under the national average (6.3 vs. 6.4) and reflecting the slow national economy. Among the state's 88 counties, unemployment rates ranged from a low of 3.6 percents to a high of 16.6 percent. These adverse unemployment trends are experienced predominantly by about one half of Ohio's 29 Appalachian counties. However, total employment in Ohio is expected to increase 11% over the 10-year period from 2000-2010--a projected gain of nearly 660,000 jobs (Ohio Dept. of Development 6/03 data). Ohio's gross state product was \$390 billion in 2002, making Ohio the seventh largest state economy. Ohio is ranked third among the 50 states in manufacturing gross state product.

Agriculture, Industry, and Transportation

Ohio is located in the heart of the nation's industrial region, Ohio is strategically situated on the great inland waterways and crisscrossed by the interstate roadway system. Sixty percent of all U.S. households lie within 600 miles of Ohio, and more than 50 percent of the Canadian market is within the same range. Ohio is a leading agricultural state. Food and agriculture is the #1 industry. Forty-four percent of Ohio is considered prime farmland, 99% of the farms are owned by farm families. Ohio has 14,900,000 total farm acres and 80,000 farms averaging 206 acres in size. Ohio produces 200 different crops however corn and soybean are considered our "top crops". Like other states in the corn belt Ohio raises many cattle (1.25 billion head to be exact), hogs, sheep, and poultry. Over 10,000 active dairy farms supply a vast market in the States industrial centers. In addition to grains Ohio harvests over 11 million acres of crops (potatoes, truck crops, grapes, apples, and other fruits, and some tobacco). The number of farms and the average size of farms in Ohio has increased over the last decade, however, the amount of farm acres has decreased slightly (approximately 1 percent).

Ohio ranks third among states in the area of manufacturing. Ohio's manufacturing sector employs 865,000 people. The state's factories lead the nation in the production of steel, rubber, and plastics, and fabricated metals. Approximately one quarter of its workers are employed in the State's 17,500 manufacturing companies. Ohio also is a leading producer of automobiles and trucks. The manufacturing of transportation equipment is the largest industry, and more trucks are assembled in Ohio than in any other state.

The states two leading export commodities are machinery and vehicles. Ohio firms ship products to 303 countries, and the state accounts for about 4.2% of the U.S. export total (Ohio Dept. of Development 6/03 data).

Although coal mining reached its zenith in the late 1970's and early 1980's, almost half of the total value of Ohio's mineral production is derived from coal and about 90% of the States electricity is generated from coal.

The State's rail, highway, and waterway systems provide timely transportation of agricultural and industrial products, thus ensuring national and global competitiveness.

National Resources and Recreation

One of Ohio's greatest natural resources is its geological makeup which provides fuel and raw materials for the State's \$72-billion manufacturing industry. Ohio's proximity to the Great Lakes has also resulted in many commercial advantages, including the shipping of iron ore and coal. Lake Erie fisheries also provide significant natural wealth.

Another natural resource is Ohio's forest acreage, which covers one fourth of the land area. Over 1 million acres of state parks, scenic forests, and other outdoor recreation areas account for a large part of the State's tourist industry.

Ohio also contains some of the most important archaeological sites in North America. The state's prehistoric Indian mounds, Amish country, underground railroad, civil war sites, and other historical attractions draw millions of visitors annually.

Ohio Demographic

A review of statistical data reveals the existence of several underserved groups exist in Ohio. The following maps indicate the underserved groups and the distribution of these groups in Ohio. Such information has been used to develop specific areas for targeting USDA programs. The State Food and Agriculture Council (FAC) as well as the State Outreach Council (SOC) realize the demographics are changing and every effort is and will continue to be made to locate these individuals within their counties. Further efforts will be made to locate key community leaders within the underserved groups and to promote USDA programs and services with these individuals.

The following maps were compiled from various sources of which identified the underserved groups and the distribution of each group in Ohio. Data sources include:

1997 Census of Agriculture
2000 General Census Data
2002 U.S. Agriculture Statistics Data
2003 Ohio Department of Development Data

These maps will be updated as new census are published to ensure targeting of programs and services is appropriate.