



**Lincoln Vital Signs**

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

# Lincoln Vital Signs 2019

## Be informed. Get involved.

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 have become the centerpiece of a community-wide engagement process to set priorities and take action to make Lincoln even stronger.

### LINCOLN IS PROSPERING AND GROWING STRONGER

Already strong, Lincoln is growing more powerful. Adults are educated and engaged in work. New and existing businesses are creating jobs. Buildings and civic spaces are appearing. Our streets are safe. Greater proportions of our youth are from diverse backgrounds.

Working together, Lincoln has bent the trajectories of homelessness, need for crisis services, and access to high quality childcare.

### AT THE SAME TIME, NOT EVERYONE IS PROSPERING

Lincoln's progress is stymied by persistent areas of weakness. Most Lincoln families have not regained pre-Great Recession income levels. Lincoln's low cost of living does not offset our lower incomes.

Persons from racial and ethnic minority populations struggle to achieve equity in educational attainment, employment, and income. We have unprecedented concentrations of extreme poverty and poor health.



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

- COMMUNITY PROFILE
- ECONOMY & WORKFORCE
- BASIC NEEDS
- EDUCATION
- HEALTH
- SAFETY & SECURITY

### 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, spark connections and spur 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. Through this effort, thousands of people have banded together to help ensure everyone in our city has equitable opportunities to prosper.

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

#### LINCOLN VITAL SIGNS FUNDERS AND ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Buffett Early Childhood Fund  
 City of Lincoln  
 Community Health Endowment  
 Cooper Foundation  
 Duncan Family Trust  
 Foundation for Lincoln  
 Public Schools

Harbor of Dreams  
 Lancaster County  
 Lincoln Partnership for  
 Economic Development  
 Lincoln Community Foundation  
 Nebraska Children & Families  
 Foundation

Peter Kiewit Foundation  
 United Way of Lincoln &  
 Lancaster County  
 University of Nebraska Foundation  
 Woods Charitable Fund

# Lincoln Vital Signs 2019

## 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.

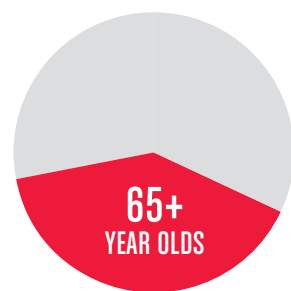
The 2019 Lincoln Vital Signs report features data that provides a shared understanding of our city—both the strengths and challenges.

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 33 thousand people in the last decade and the city benefits from this population growth and increased diversity.

**13%**  
POPULATION  
GROWTH



FASTEST GROWING AGE GROUP

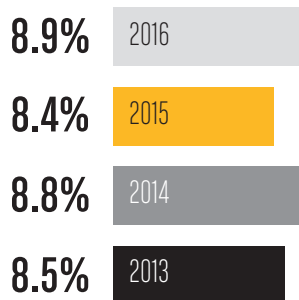
**56%**  
GROWTH IN  
NON-WHITE  
POPULATION

### ECONOMY & WORKFORCE

Lincoln's unemployment rate is 36% lower than the national average – the lowest it's been in 15 years. Jobs created by new businesses increased and rate of the new businesses established held steady.



**24% JOB CREATION  
BY NEW BUSINESSES UP**  
SINCE 2008

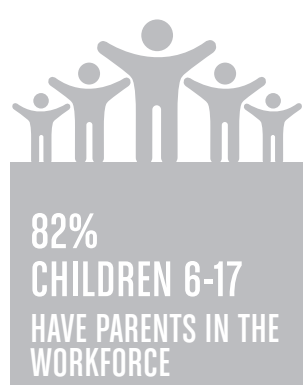


**NEW BUSINESS  
ESTABLISHMENT RATE STEADY**

**2.5%**  
LINCOLN  
UNEMPLOYMENT  
RATE  
AS OF 2018

### CHILDREN

Majority of children in Lincoln have parents in the workforce. Accessible quality early childhood education is a necessity, especially for children living in poverty.



**34%**  
YOUNG CHILDREN 0-5 ENROLLED IN  
STEP UP TO QUALITY PROGRAMS

**9,097**  
CHILDREN IN  
POVERTY



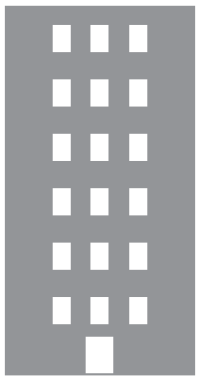
# HOUSEHOLDS

In 2018, 37,004 people were living in households at or below the federal poverty level, the number of students enrolled in free lunch has increased 25% in the past decade, and some households paid more than a third of their income for housing.

11%

DECREASE IN PERSONS IN POVERTY  
SINCE 2009

## PAID OVER 35% OF INCOME ON HOUSING



35%  
RENTERS



14%  
HOMEOWNERS

## LPS STUDENTS ENROLLED IN FREE LUNCH



# EDUCATION

Enrollment in our public schools has continued to grow. Majority of adults in Lincoln have a post-secondary degree and numbers show, the more education attained the lower the poverty rate.

19%

ENROLLMENT GROWTH IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SINCE 2009

## RATE OF POVERTY



53%

ADULTS HAVE A POST-SECONDARY DEGREE

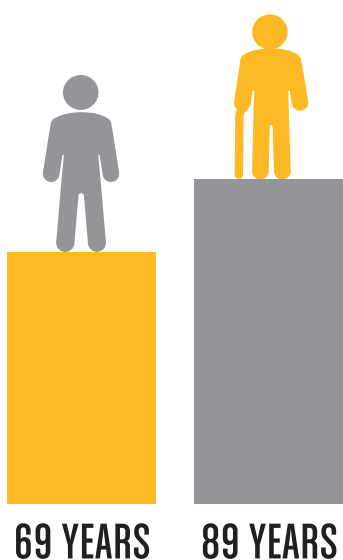
# NEIGHBORHOODS

Lincoln is a safe community with a high overall life expectancy rate but, there is a 20-year gap depending on your neighborhood - especially for those living in extreme poverty census tracts.

27%

LESS PROPERTY CRIME  
SINCE 2009

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



## 7 CENSUS TRACTS IN EXTREME POVERTY



2 YEARS AGO THERE WERE 5

## BROADENING FOCUS: OUR VISION

Prosperity for all means a stronger, more diverse, more innovative community that harnesses our many assets, builds to meet future challenges and creates economic and social opportunities. Making it so everyone prospers in Lincoln is no small undertaking, it is going to take all of us to make this vision a reality.

**With many partners and through multiple community building efforts, the vision for the next five years for Prosper Lincoln is:**

### Early Childhood

All children have access to high quality early childhood care and education which leads to a more available workforce today and smarter workforce tomorrow.

Action strategies for Early Childhood include:

- Promoting Step Up to Quality programs
- Raising funds for early childhood scholarships
- Developing a Lincoln Office for Early Childhood

### Innovative Workforce

People have careers, employers retain skilled talent and there is a culture of innovation that fuels economic success.

Action strategies for Innovative Workforce include:

- Streamlining job training and placement programs
- Attracting talent through recruitment and retention resources
- Creating entrepreneurship opportunities

### Affordable Housing

All residents live in quality housing they can afford which leads to healthier and more stable families.

Action strategies for Affordable Housing include:

- Developing financing programs
- Ensuring health and safety of housing
- Addressing problem properties



### Strong Neighborhoods

All people and places to thrive through engagement and support of local initiatives created by those who live there.

Action strategies for Strong Neighborhoods include:

- Deepening relationships within neighborhoods
- Building capacity through assets of residents
- Accessing support and resources

### Civic Investments

Citizens have sustainable opportunities to work, live and play which will lead to a stronger and more vibrant city.

Action strategies for Civic Investments include:

- Funding sustainable infrastructures
- Building economic drivers
- Investing in community spaces

**As we embark on the next phase of Prosper Lincoln, it's imperative that you do what you can to help continue our momentum toward a more prosperous and equitable Lincoln – for your future and the future of all our families.**

**ON THE  
UP  
BEAT**

## TURN INSIGHT INTO ACTION

Be "On The Upbeat" for Prosper Lincoln by gaining a shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing our community, getting involved and taking action to make our visions for the future a reality.

Learn more at [ProsperLincoln.org](http://ProsperLincoln.org).

### Vital Signs as an Information Source

This is the fifth in a series of Vital Signs reports which also includes 2014, 2015, 2016 Behavioral Health Supplement and 2017.

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 2019 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 2019 was written by Nancy Shank, PhD, MBA; Stacey Hoffman, PhD; and Taylor Smith, MPA; all of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

The complete report and downloadable copy of Lincoln Vital Signs 2019, 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.