For Immediate Release
September 8, 2026

Columbus Partnership Media Contact
Jon Keeling
614-657-5917
jk@columbuspartnership.com

Columbus Metro Once Again Leads Midwest in Job Creation and Wage Growth

Columbus accounts for 14% of U.S. net job growth, adding more than twice as many jobs as Chicago and Indianapolis combined

Columbus, OH — The Columbus metro added 11,977 jobs and led every major Midwest metro in year-over-year job growth, according to newly released Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Employment grew by 1.10% from March 2025 to March 2026, more than 18 times the national growth rate of 0.06%. Columbus posted the sixth-fastest rate among the nation's 56 largest metropolitan areas, those with populations of one million or more.

The entire United States added a net 85,572 jobs during the same period. Columbus accounted for 14% of that national increase despite representing less than 1% of total U.S. employment.

"Leading the Midwest in job creation tells us companies and talent have confidence in the Columbus Region and the future they can build here," said Corrine Burger, interim CEO of the Columbus Partnership. "That position was earned over many years by employers, public leaders, educators and communities working together."

The Columbus metro's job growth stood apart within the Midwest. The metro added 11,977 jobs, more than twice the combined gains of Chicago and Indianapolis, which ranked second and third in the Midwest with 3,544 and 2,214 jobs added, respectively.

Total quarterly wages across the Columbus metro grew by 6.9% to more than $22 billion, an increase of more than $1.4 billion from the first quarter of 2025. Columbus' total wage growth rate was nearly 70% faster than the national rate of 4.1% and ranked third among the nation's largest metros.

Columbus was the only Midwest metro to place among the national top 10 for job growth rate, total jobs added and growth in total quarterly wages.

"Job growth at this scale reflects an economy where one investment creates demand for the next," said Mark Berven, chair of the One Columbus Executive Committee and president and

chief operating officer of Nationwide Property & Casualty. “That broader economic impact is helping the Columbus Region lead the Midwest. We are seeing more demand and need for manufacturers, engineers and skilled trades.”

The QCEW is widely regarded as the nation’s most comprehensive and authoritative measure of local employment and wage trends. It draws from unemployment insurance records covering more than 95% of U.S. jobs, giving it a far broader foundation than sample-based reports. BLS uses QCEW data to benchmark its monthly payroll estimates, making it the premier source for assessing actual employment change across states and metropolitan areas.

Numbers to know:

- **More than 18 times the national job-growth rate.** Columbus employment grew by 1.10% compared with 0.06% nationally.
- **11,977 jobs added in one year.** Columbus accounted for 14% of the entire country’s net employment growth from March 2025–March 2026.
- **More than twice the combined job growth of Chicago and Indianapolis.** Those metros added a combined 5,758 jobs, fewer than half the 11,977 added in Columbus.
- **The Midwest’s only top-10 metro across all three major measures.** Columbus placed in the national top 10 for job growth rate, total jobs added and total wage growth.
- **68% faster total wage growth than the nation.** Total quarterly wages grew by 6.9% in Columbus compared with 4.1% nationally.
- **More than $22 billion in quarterly wages,** an increase of more than $1.4 billion from the first quarter of 2025.

The first-quarter 2026 figures are preliminary and subject to revision.

###

About the Columbus Partnership

The Columbus Partnership is a nonprofit organization of CEOs from Columbus’ leading businesses and institutions. Through our membership and other ally organizations across Central Ohio, the Partnership upholds a shared vision to make Columbus the most prosperous region in the country. The Columbus Partnership team also includes One Columbus, one of the nation’s top economic development teams that serves the 11-county Columbus Region; and Smart Columbus, an innovation lab that applies technology to advance community good. The Columbus Partnership team works to help create jobs and attract capital investment, expand access to opportunity, and improve the economic competitiveness of the Columbus Region. Learn more at columbusregion.com.

About One Columbus

As the economic development organization for the 11-county Columbus Region, One Columbus’ mission is to lead a comprehensive regional growth strategy that develops and

attracts the world's most competitive companies, grows a highly adaptive workforce, prepares our communities for the future and inspires corporate, academic and public innovation throughout the Columbus Region. One Columbus expertly guides companies through the location decision process. Through strategic business outreach and customized research, the One Columbus team leverages public, private and institutional partnerships to grow the Columbus Region's economy and strengthen its national and international competitiveness. Funding is received from more than 300 private organizations, local governments, academic institutions and JobsOhio. Learn more at ColumbusRegion.com.