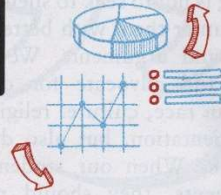# ScoreBoard

By James Trutko

Finding Growth

City leaders are working to strengthen Metro Cleveland's employment future.
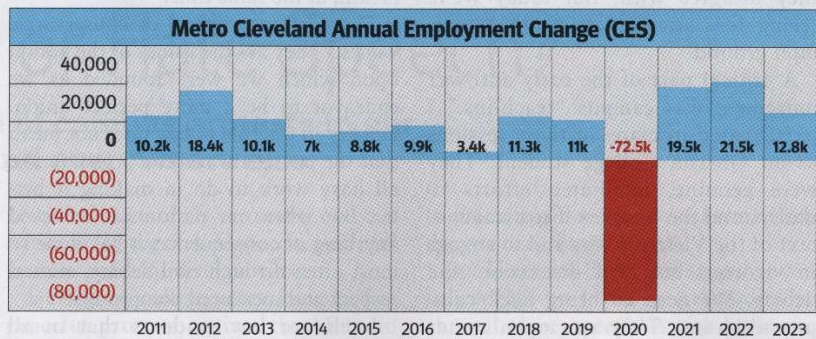
As Metro Cleveland's civic leadership seeks strategies to strengthen economic development, it is easy to fall into the trap of over-emphasizing favored industries and trumpeting positive news. While it is constructive to mobilize the business community and the public with aspirational visions, the most successful plans take advantage of real economic strength that is well documented with data and existing trends that can be amplified with focused effort.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publishes a range of data that can be analyzed to assess the overall momentum of the metropolitan economy and suggest growth industries.

Unfortunately, the local economic development organizations do not provide regular analysis of the data to the public. One example is BLS's Current Employment Statistics (CES), which uses business surveys of employment, earnings and hours to provide industry-specific data.

The chart at right shows the growth of Metro Cleveland employment for a period from 2010 to 2023.

It's not easy to select target industries. Economic development professionals typically look at many industry characteristics and consider philosophical objectives in developing their roster of target industries. The professionals would do well to add backward-looking data analysis to their forward-looking projections. They should add more analysis of existing Current Employment Statistics data to identify strategic industries that have consistent, positive local employment growth over a reasonable length of time. To assess an industry's potential contribution to a sound, long-term strategy, one needs to know how important a sector and a specific industry are to the local economy.

Overall, employment has grown by only 9% since 2010, and the modest

Metro Cleveland Annual Employment Change (CES)

Year	Change
2011	10.2k
2012	18.4k
2013	10.1k
2014	7k
2015	8.8k
2016	9.9k
2017	3.4k
2018	11.3k
2019	11k
2020	-72.5k
2021	19.5k
2022	21.5k
2023	12.8k

Source: BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES)

Metro Cleveland Industry Sector Employment Changes 2010–2023

Industry Sector	2010 Employed	2019 Employed	2023 Employed	2010-23 # Change	2010-23 % Change
Transp. & Utilities	29,300	34,600	38,800	9,500	25%
Construction & Mining	31,600	38,900	40,200	8,600	21%
Wholesale Trade	46,500	52,700	54,400	7,900	15%
Leisure & Hospitality	86,800	105,600	99,400	12,600	13%
Prof. & Bus. Services	133,700	162,200	152,800	19,100	13%
Finance	64,600	66,800	72,800	8,200	11%
Education & Health	186,200	206,300	204,000	17,800	9%
TOTAL NONFARM	991,000	1,081,100	1,062,400	71,400	7%
Mfg/Non-Durables	34,000	35,600	35,700	1,700	5%
Mfg/Durables	82,500	87,800	83,600	1,100	1%
Government	138,500	138,600	133,300	(5,200)	-4%
Retail Trade	100,200	98,300	94,600	(5,600)	-6%
Information	15,800	13,800	14,800	(1,000)	-7%
Other Services	41,300	39,900	38,000	(3,300)	-9%

Source: BLS, CES

growth includes a large number of part-time jobs. The sectoral data shows transportation and utilities, construction and wholesale trade have grown consistently for over a decade but are only moderate-size sectors. The leisure and hospitality and professional/business services sectors are large sectors, but growth has been inconsistent over the period.

Manufacturing, which many regard as fundamental to the local economy, has been below average in growth. Retail trade and other services have contracted, undoubtedly because of the many social and technological changes affecting consumers. The small information technology sector is unexpectedly at the bottom of the chart and may represent a statistical anomaly.

While sectoral analysis can provide useful context, it is not sufficient to underpin strategy development. A more detailed understanding of employment growth by specific industries is essential to allow one to assess how important an industry's growth would be to the community's future.

Consistent growth is also an important metric for good economic development strategies. A high-potential industry would have recovered well from the 2008-2010 recession from 2010 to 2019 and from the technological/social/financial/COVID disruptions from 2019 to 2023. An industry with poor potential would have had a lagging 2010-2019 rebound as well as weak post-COVID performance. ■

Summary: Metro Cleveland Employment Growth By Industry (2010-23)					
Industry	Industry Sector	2023 Employed	Overall Growth # Emp. Change	Overall Growth % Emp. Change	Covid Rebound % Emp. Change
TOTAL NONFARM	Total Nonfarm	1,062,300	71,400	7.2%	-1.7%
Prof., Scientific, & Technical	Professional & Bus.	63,300	11,800	23%	5%
Hospitals	Education & Health	70,000	10,800	18%	4%
Transportation & Warehousing	Transp. & Utilities	36,500	10,400	40%	14%
Insurance Carriers & Related	Finance	33,600	10,000	42%	8%
Accommodations & Food	Leisure & Hospitality	82,800	9,000	12%	-6%
Construction & Mining	Const & Mining	40,200	8,600	27%	3%
Wholesale Trade	Wholesale	54,400	7,900	17%	3%
Other Health & Social Assistance	Education & Health	70,300	7,500	12%	2%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	Leisure & Hospitality	16,600	3,600	28%	-4%
Management of Companies	Professional & Bus.	28,900	3,200	13%	-3%
Private Education	Education & Health	34,600	2,900	9%	-6%
Employment	Professional & Bus.	24,500	2,800	13%	-21%
Mfg/Transportation Equipment	Mfg/Durables	13,000	1,800	16%	-3%
Mfg/Non-Durables	Mfg/Non-Durables	35,700	1,700	5%	0%
Other Admin. & Waste Management	Professional & Bus.	36,100	1,300	4%	-12%
Other Financial	Finance	21,300	1,000	5%	10%
Mfg/Motor Vehicle Parts	Mfg/Durables	7,400	800	12%	-4%
Health/Personal Care Retail	Retail	8,600	800	10%	1%
Other Durable Goods	Mfg/Durables	31,300	400	1%	-3%
Federal Government	Government	20,300	200	1%	4%
Mfg/Fabricated Metals	Mfg/Durables	25,700	0	0%	-7%
State Government	Government	7,000	(300)	-4%	-5%
Local Government/Non Education	Government	58,200	(600)	-1%	-3%
Utilities	Transp. & Utilities	2,300	(900)	-28%	-15%
Information	Information	14,800	(1,000)	-6%	7%
General Merchandise Retail	Retail	18,700	(1,400)	-7%	0%
Primary Metal Manufacturing	Mfg/Durables	6,200	(1,900)	-24%	-10%
Food & Beverage Retail	Retail	20,800	(2,500)	-11%	-2%
Other Retail Trade	Retail	46,500	(2,500)	-5%	-7%
Finance/Credit Intermed.	Finance	17,900	(2,800)	-14%	11%
Other Services	Other Services	38,000	(3,300)	-8%	-5%
Nursing & Residential Care	Education & Health	29,100	(3,400)	-11%	-12%
Local Govt. Education Services	Government	47,800	(4,500)	-9%	-8%

Source: BLS, CES

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