

Story of the Rust Belt

Population and Manufacturing in the Midwest and Great Lakes

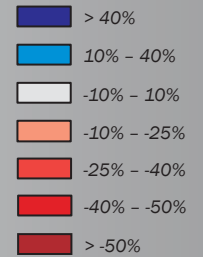
During the second half of the 20th century, many U.S. cities experienced a wave of deindustrialization, particularly those in the Midwest and Great Lakes states, in an area currently known as the Rust Belt. The sudden loss of manufacturing jobs throughout the region put many of these cities in decline, encouraging residents to move elsewhere in search of opportunity; many moved to warmer, sunnier cities in the South and Southwest, in a contrasting region known as the Sun Belt.

Many cities in the Rust Belt are currently undergoing revitalization, led by the creation of new jobs in other sectors of the economy. Some have even increased in population since the beginning of deindustrialization. However, most cities in the Rust Belt have never fully recovered from their population losses.

Manufacturing employment change, 1970-2017



Population change, 1970-2017



The Biggest Losers

Manufacturing Employment

1. Chicago (396,367 jobs lost)
2. Detroit (214,485 jobs lost)
3. Binghamton (149,683 jobs lost)

Population

1. Detroit (838,378 people lost)
2. Chicago (650,507 people lost)
3. Cleveland (365,378 people lost)

Making Gains

Manufacturing Employment

1. Pontiac (20,135 jobs gained)
2. Grand Rapids (15,881 jobs gained)
3. Madison (8,858 jobs gained)

Population

1. Columbus (339,493 person increase)
2. Indianapolis (118,378 person increase)
3. Fort Wayne (88,233 person increase)

Cartographic data sourced from: ESRI, Natural Earth
Population and employment data sourced from:
1970 U.S. Census, American FactFinder, 2017 American Community
Survey (U.S. Census Bureau)

Population data is sourced at the city level
Manufacturing employment data is sourced at the county level,
corresponding to the counties where each city is located

Created by Tristan Mills
Projection: Albers Equal Area Conic
Coordinate System:
North American Datum, 1983