Philadelphia Employment Report 2025

Center City District &
Central Philadelphia
Development Corporation

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Center City District

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Center City District

100 S. Broad Street, Ste 1N, Philadelphia, PA 19110

centercityphila.org

Putting Philadelphia's recent job growth in context, and what it means for the urban core

Employment in Center City and across the entire city of Philadelphia is a critical factor in sustaining a dynamic downtown ecosystem. While our downtown also benefits from a large and growing residential base, highly diversified retail offerings, an arts and culture scene with few peers, a resurgent tourism and convention sector, and a frequently praised restaurant, entertainment, and nighttime economy, a robust and diversified employment base is what catalyzes and supports other sectors of the economy. To thrive, Center City must be a desirable place to work and grow a business.

This report analyzes 15 years of data (2009–2024) to understand Philadelphia's trajectory and explore critical questions related to employment:

Job growth
To what extent has the city grown its employment base through both the Great Recession and the pandemic, which sectors are most active, and how does Philadelphia stand relative to surrounding suburbs and peer cities?

Supply-side dynamics
What is the relationship between employment trends and the Center City office market? Through two economic downturns, have the fundamentals shifted at all between the CBD and the suburbs? And how does the lack of inbound demand from other places threaten our growth prospects?

Talent
In the post-pandemic environment of hybrid work, what role does the geography of talent play in supporting office development and economic growth? To what extent is the talent in our urban core a true competitive advantage?

The report concludes with some actionable recommendations for how to focus resources in the near-term to increase demand for office space and accelerate employment growth in Center City.

CosciaMoos Architecture - Jeffery Totaro

Philadelphia Job Growth Since 2009

Key Takeaways

Recovery has accelerated: Recovery since 2020 is far more robust than after the 2009 downturn, suggesting certain fundamentals have strengthened in the interim.

Office job growth has slowed: While recent momentum is an improvement over previous cycles, the fastest-growing sectors are not users of commercial office space, and growth in office-occupying sectors remains largely flat.

City outpacing suburbs: The city's rate of job growth surpasses that of the four Pennsylvania collar counties as well as the overall metropolitan region.

Among the 25 most populous counties in the U.S., Philadelphia jobs have grown at an above-average rate over the last five years.

Over the past 15 years, Philadelphia's employment experienced uneven growth, with periods of slow movement and disruption followed by strong momentum. Compared to the nation's 25 largest counties, each containing major cities, Philadelphia (both a city and county) began the period ranking last in job growth immediately after the Great Recession (2009-2014), with a 4.1% growth rate well below the 25-county average of 10.8%.

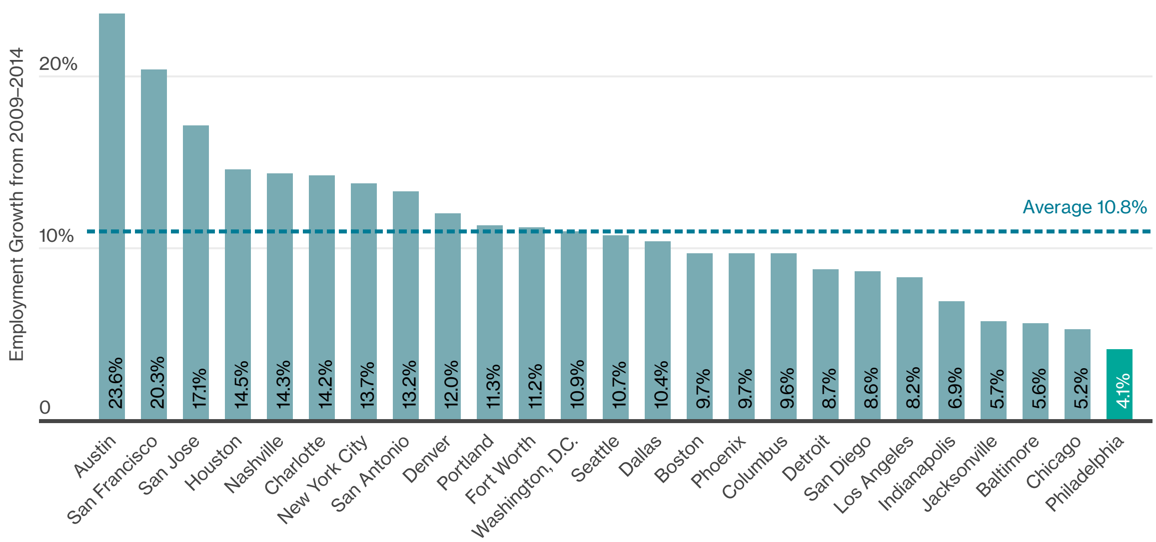
Momentum increased in the next five years as Philadelphia's employment grew 10.4% from 2014 to 2019. Still below the 25-county average of 11.9%, Philadelphia ranked 17th out of 25; gaining jobs at a slower rate than Boston, New York, and many Sun Belt markets.

In terms of employment, Philadelphia was among the most profoundly affected big cities during the height of the pandemic in 2020. The 9.9% decrease in jobs was surpassed only by New York (-12.7%) and San Francisco (-11.4%), and in line with Wayne County (Detroit), Los Angeles County and Washington, DC.

Philadelphia's job gains and losses relative to the other two dozen largest U.S. counties* have improved over the last 15 years.

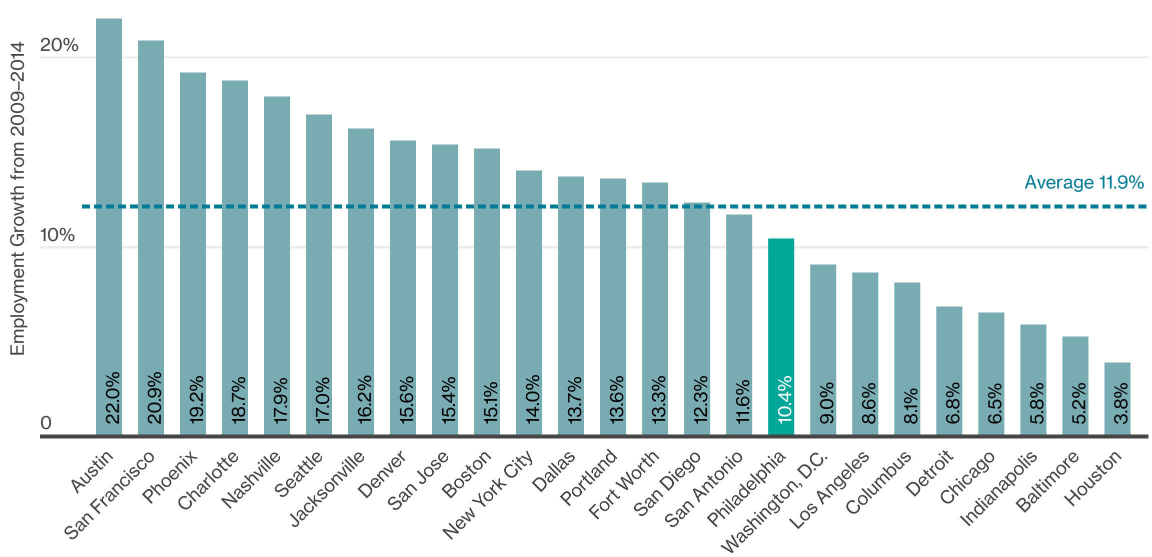
2009-2014:

Philadelphia ranked last in job growth coming out of the Great Recession.



2014-2019:

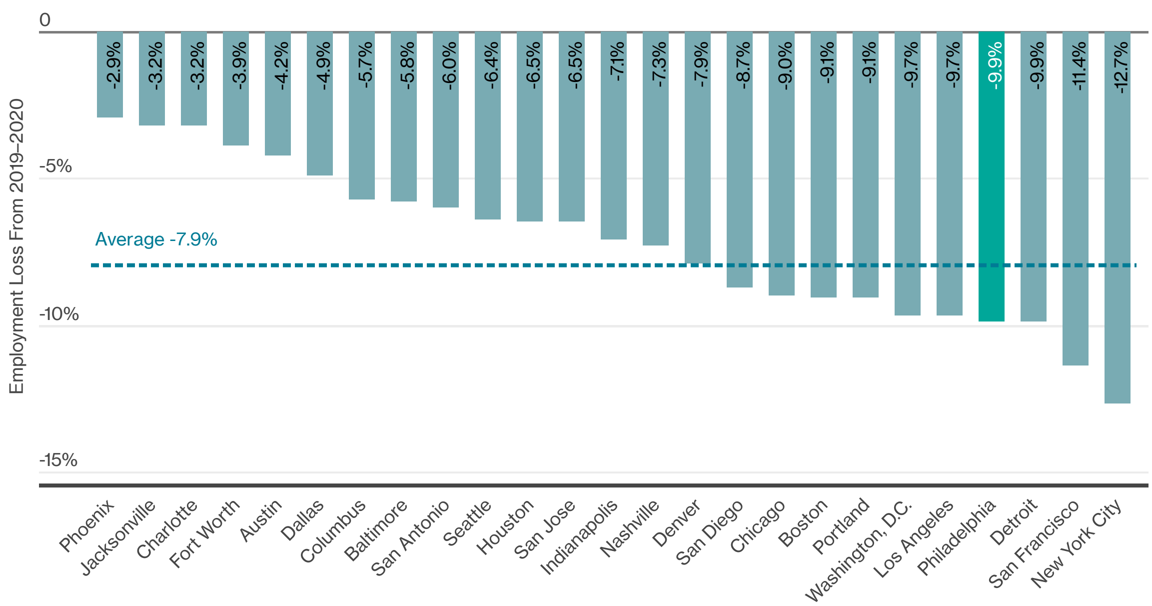
Philadelphia's performance improved notably in the second part of the decade, moving ahead of Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and others as its rate of growth more than doubled.



* These data reflect employment totals in the 25 U.S. counties containing the most jobs. Counties are not always coterminous with cities, but for legibility charts are labeled with the cities that are contained within or occupy a majority of these counties.
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW

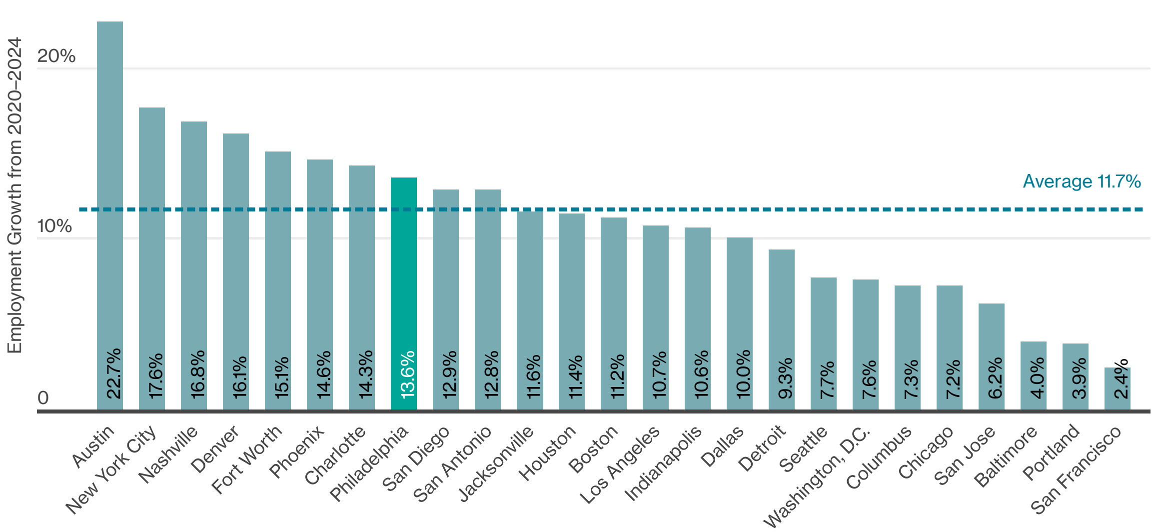
2019-2020:

Philadelphia's performance improved notably in the second part of the decade, moving ahead of Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and others as its rate of growth more than doubled.



2020-2024:

Post-pandemic recovery has been marked by an encouraging shift: Philadelphia's job growth exceeds the average of the 25 largest counties.



Glenmede - courtesy of Gensler

Since 2020, Philadelphia's employment growth has been moderate while greatly exceeding the performance of the previous five-year period at 13.6%. This places the city ahead of the 25-county average of 11.7%, in close company with San Diego and Charlotte. Among the other regions that fell the farthest in the pandemic, Philadelphia rebounded comparatively well: From 2020 to 2024, San Francisco employment rose 2.4%, Washington grew 7.6%, Wayne County (Detroit) 7.7%, and Los Angeles 10.7%. Only New York's 17.6% growth rate has exceeded Philadelphia's. Our city's performance relative to its recent history, and other large cities, speaks to the positive momentum and the employment trends experienced pre-pandemic.

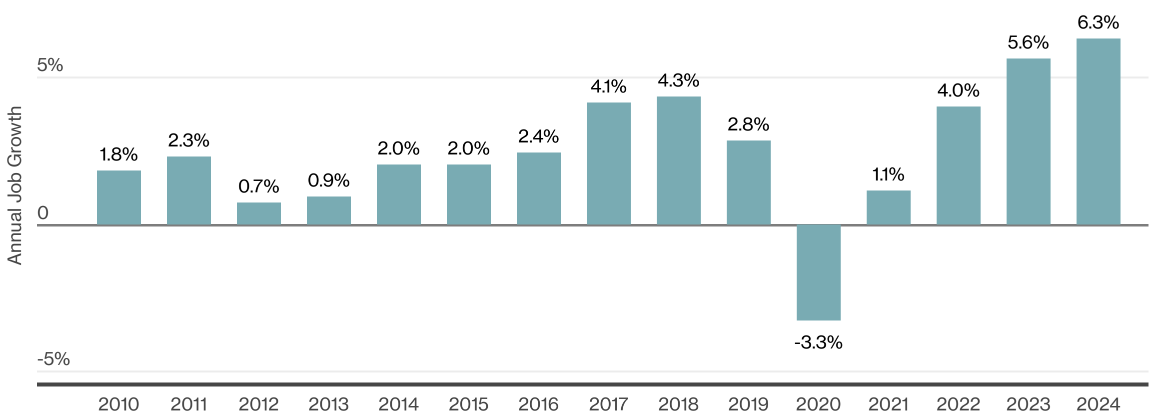
A look at the job sectors driving this growth, however, reveals why our respectable recovery is not being felt more profoundly in Center City, particularly within the office market. The industries driving recent job growth are arts, entertainment, and recreation; accommodation and food services; and "other services," which includes civic associations, repair and maintenance, and personal services. These industries were most affected by job loss in 2020 and have largely rebounded. Zooming out to the full 15-year period of 2009 through 2024, jobs within the arts, entertainment, and recreation; health care and social assistance; administrative support; and professional services have experienced the largest total increases.

Specifically, the health care and social assistance industry remains one of Philadelphia's strongest, growing 44% during this time. In 2009, health care and social assistance accounted for 26% of total jobs in Philadelphia. This industry gained real momentum in 2017 and remains one of the fastest growing in Philadelphia, reaching 32% of total jobs in 2024. The health care and social assistance industry includes ambulatory health care, social assistance, nursing facilities, and hospitals.

Philadelphia Health Care and Social Assistance Annual Growth

Jobs in health care and related areas have grown more consistently than any other sector for the last 15 years. Following a one-year decline in 2020, recent years have seen more rapid growth than even the banner years of the previous decade.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW



By contrast, the sectors that drive occupancy in Center City's office district are largely static. In the most recent five-year period, information, finance and insurance, and retail trade are contracting. The finance and insurance industry has lost a quarter of its employment since 2009. The industries that comprise the office sector — information, finance and insurance, real estate, rental and leasing, professional services, and management of companies and enterprises — collectively have grown only 1% since 2020.

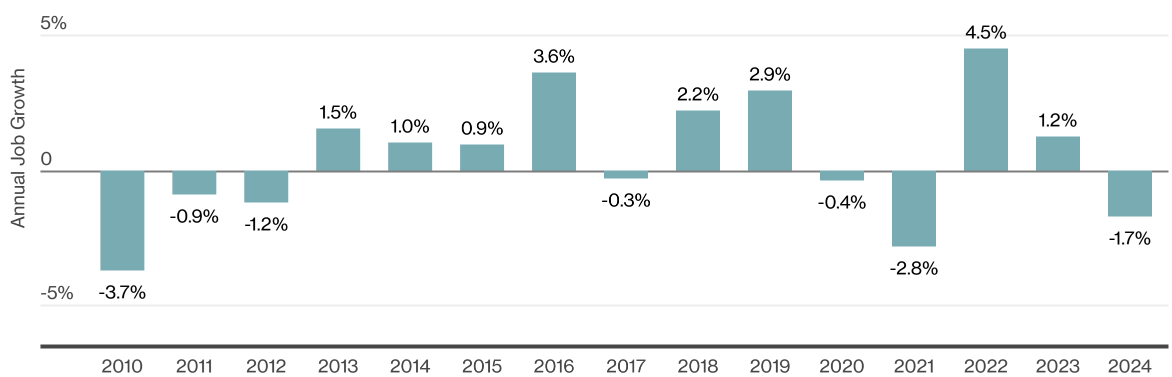
Although overall employment growth in this sector has been minimal over the past 15 years, Philadelphia's performance has outshone neighboring Montgomery County, which dominated our region's office economy for decades. All told, Philadelphia's office-sector jobs have grown 6.8% compared to a decline of -2.3% in Montgomery County. For most of the 15-year period 2009-2024, Montgomery County maintained a larger share of office employment; however, in 2022, Philadelphia surpassed Montgomery County, claiming the greater share and overall number of office-occupying jobs.

Employment Growth Within Office Sector Industries

Sectors that drive office leasing have seen intermittent but inconsistent growth. After a multiyear hangover following the Great Recession, growth was static until the few years just prior to 2020. Since COVID, the total average growth in these sectors is just 1%.

*Office sector industries: Information, Finance and Insurance, Real Estate, Rental and Leasing, Professional Scientific and Technical Services, Management of Companies and Enterprises.

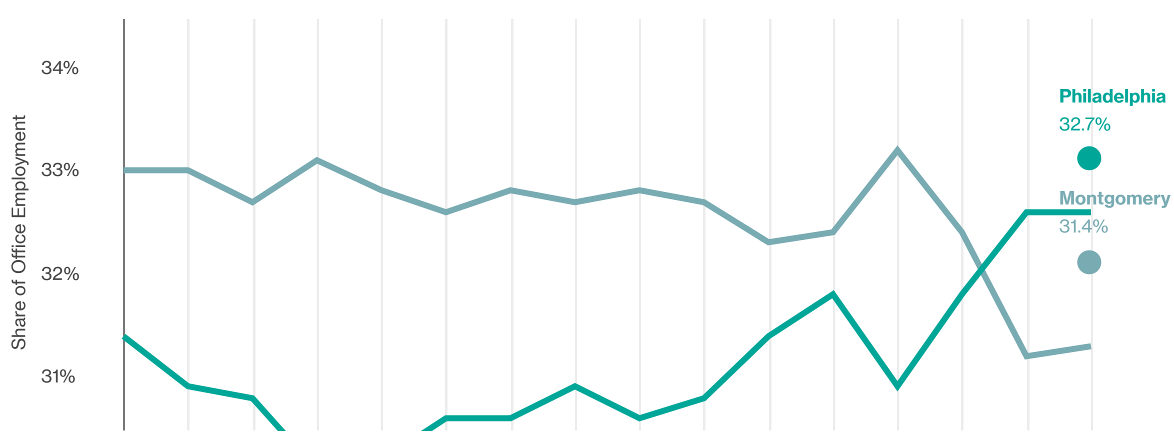
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW



Share of Regional Office Sector Employment

For most of the 15-year period between 2009 and 2024, Montgomery County held a larger share of regional office-sector jobs. In 2022, Philadelphia overtook Montgomery County despite overall minimal growth.

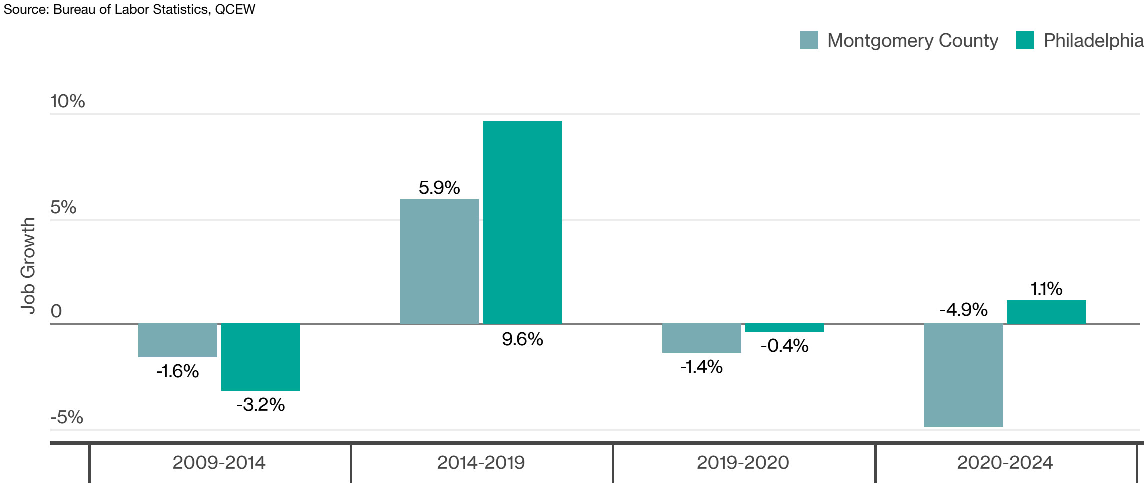
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW



Office Sector Job Growth by County

Over the last decade, Philadelphia's office-sector job growth outpaced Montgomery County's, reflecting stronger relative performance.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW



Caring People Alliance - Jason Varney

Supply-side dynamics: the relationship between job growth and the office market

Key Takeaways

Vacancy increasing everywhere: The downtown and suburban office markets have seen nearly identical increases in vacancy since 2020.

Leasing momentum is subdued: Demand for office space in the urban core is approximately 42% of what it was in 2019 on a square footage basis, shrinking the pie of prospects for landlords.

More demand is a must: Conversions offer a partial supply-side solution, but a healthy Center City office market needs the pool of tenants that want to locate and grow here to expand.

The city's total employment increase since 2009 (17.7%), its compound annual growth rate since that time (1.1%), and its recovery rate since 2020 (13.6%) have all been stronger than the four Pennsylvania collar counties combined and the metropolitan region overall. But this relatively strong job growth performance within a regional context has not been reflected in the performance of the downtown office market, largely due to the sectors of jobs where Philadelphia has seen the largest gains. A decade of outperforming Montgomery County in office job creation has not moved the needle for supply-side fundamentals given the dramatic impacts of 2020.

Employment Change 2009-2024 and Recovery Since 2020

The city's job growth and recovery rates out-perform the suburbs and overall region.

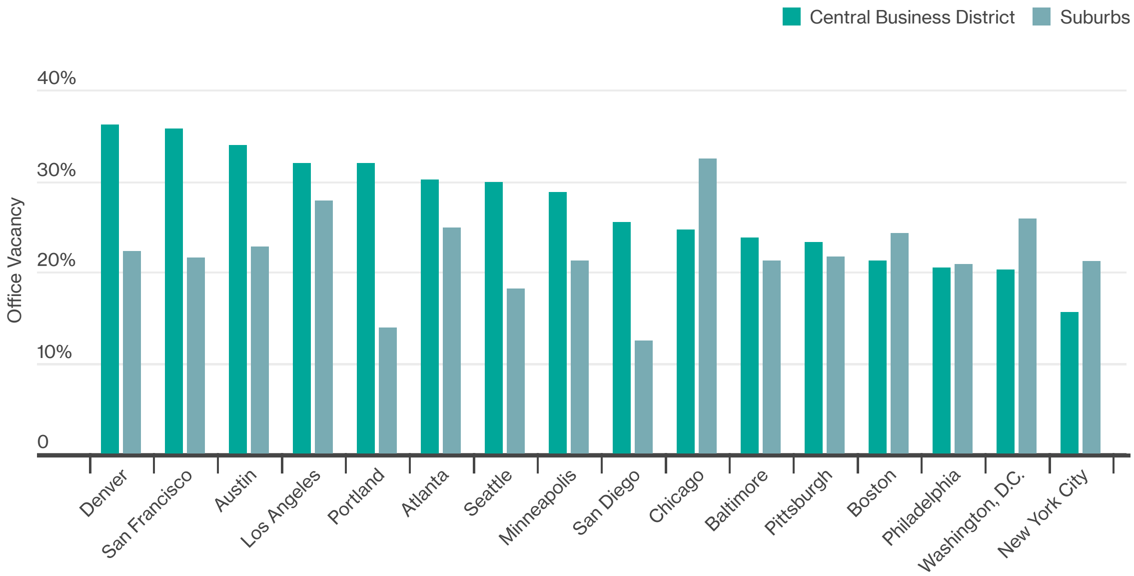
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW

	Philadelphia	Bucks	Chester	Delaware	Montgomery	Collar counties combined	MSA total (11-county region)
Job growth since 2009	17.7%	11.8%	7.0%	9.3%	9.2%	9.3%	13.0%
Compound annual growth rate 2009-2024	1.1%	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%
Recovery since 2020	13.6%	13.0%	6.6%	5.8%	7.4%	8.2%	10.7%

Office Vacancy Rates, Urban & Suburban Markets, as of Q2 2025

Vacancy rates in large U.S. downtowns are as high as 36.1%, while Philadelphia's 20.4% vacancy is in line with the other major cities along the Northeast Corridor.

Source: JLL



As of Q2 2025, data from JLL show that Philadelphia's central business district (CBD)* vacancy rate is 20.4% compared to a suburban vacancy rate of 20.8%. This places Philadelphia in a relatively strong position compared to many large U.S. cities that are experiencing downtown vacancy rates significantly higher than their surrounding suburban office inventories. In fact, only the major Northeast Corridor cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington have lower vacancy rates in their cores than in suburbs.

The relatively high occupancy of Northeast Corridor central business districts is encouraging but still at all-time highs. The structural advantages preventing vacancy from rising to Denver or Austin levels — their walkability, accessibility via transit, and large residential populations living in close proximity — must be capitalized upon to drive up occupancy and stabilize office buildings experiencing financial hardship.

JLL data comparing 47 major U.S. markets show that year-to-date in 2025, vacancy is growing faster in suburban submarkets, which have lost nearly 3 times as much occupancy overall — nearly 7 million square feet of new vacancy — compared to CBD (downtown) submarkets, which have seen a net loss in occupancy of just under 2.4 million square feet. Nationwide, this suggests that suburbs are more in freefall than urban cores, at least in 2025.

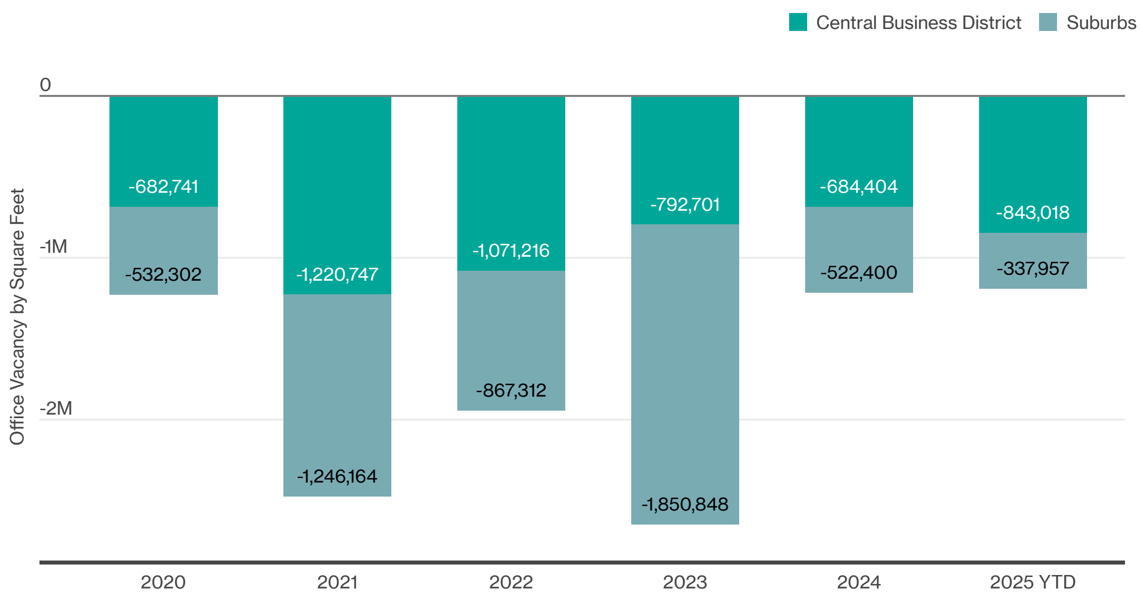
Within our region, the suburbs and city have seen similarly precipitous declines in office occupancy. Each has seen vacancy increase by approximately 5.3 million square feet over the last five years. This manifests differently in a dense high-rise office district than it does in the more scattered and sprawling landscape of suburban office supply, which is punctuated by larger nodes but spread across hundreds of square miles. The loss of foot traffic and ancillary spending is more acute in Center City.

*Central business districts (CBDs) are a term applied to the densest and largest concentrations of urban office supply in major metropolitan areas by commercial real estate firms.

Office Net Absorption since 2020

The central business district and surrounding suburbs have both seen approximately 5.3 million square feet of new vacancy created since 2020.

Source: JLL



Consistent redevelopment on the supply side and below-average leasing on the demand side have conspired to keep the office inventory the same downtown — around 40-45 million square feet — for 40 years, even as the skyline has completely transformed. In that same timespan, suburban office inventory has more than doubled to nearly 100 million square feet today, creating a 30/70 split between urban core and suburban office supply.

This is above average but in keeping with the nationwide norm: JLL data show a 40/60 split across all markets between CBD and suburban product; in fact, just five markets contain a majority of regional office space in their urban cores: Seattle, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York. Philadelphia's downtown contains a below-average share of inventory alongside cities like Atlanta, Miami, Boston, Washington, Baltimore, Denver, San Diego, and Los Angeles.

Over the last 30 years, there has been sufficient demand for office space to maintain healthy occupancy largely through conversions of obsolete office buildings to residential and hospitality. This was and will continue to be a partial and limited solution to the over-supply problem. Bringing new life to distressed properties and new residents to the urban core yield great dividends, but so would diversifying and expanding office tenancy in Center City.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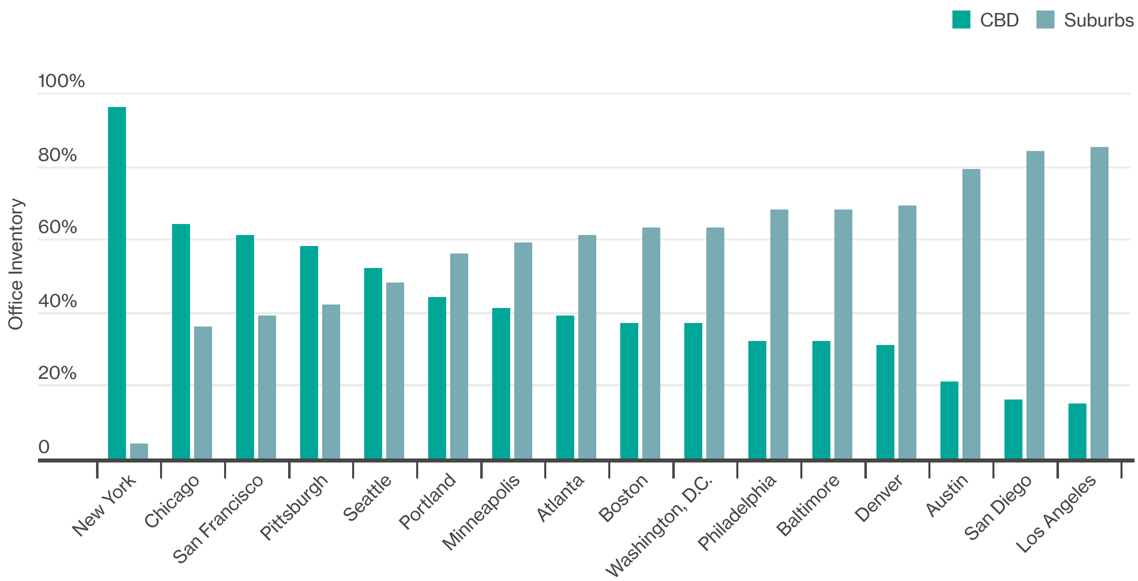
The diffusion of talent and real estate across the entire region complicates the calculus of where to locate a workplace. Office tenants have dozens of submarkets to consider, and many factors can weigh on this decision. Within the Philadelphia market, the last 15 years of leasing activity data show that the suburbs see more leasing activity on average.

The years immediately preceding the pandemic marked the only time that the city had enough momentum to break this trend. In those years, more activity occurred in Center City and University City than all surrounding suburbs combined. After a brief rise that mirrored this in 2021, the post-pandemic trend that has since emerged is a return to the previous normal. It is notable that in the years just before the pandemic struck, the city's job growth and office leasing trends deviated from historic patterns. A convergence of investment, population growth, construction, foot traffic, street life, and overall confidence in the state of Center City were driving stronger office market performance in 2018–2019. This moment has passed, with many of the necessary ingredients now in shorter supply.

Office Inventory Distribution by Major Markets, Q2 2025

Office space in a majority of U.S. regions is primarily outside of cities.

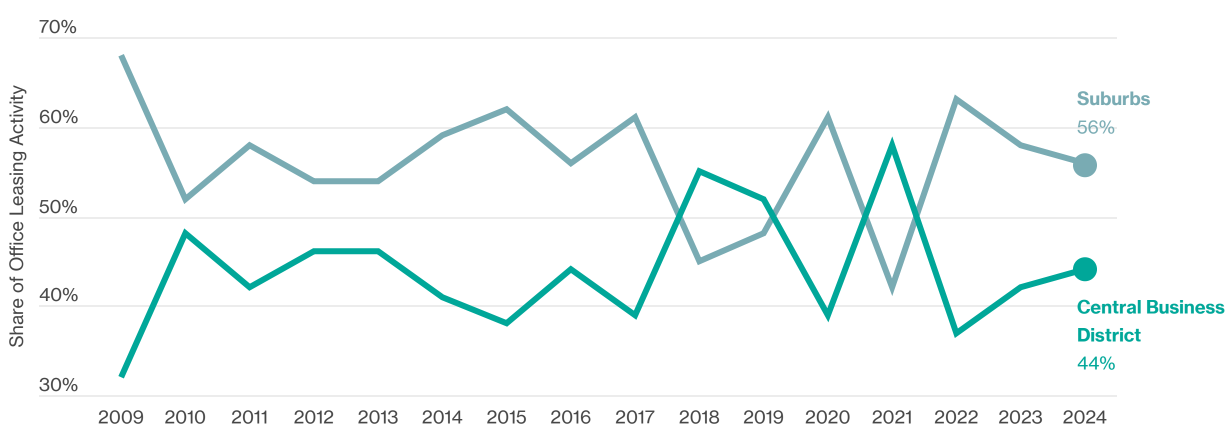
Source: JLL



Office Leasing, Philadelphia CBD & Suburbs

Aside from an encouraging ramp-up in 2018-2019 and a post-pandemic bounce in 2021, the city has never markedly pulled away a higher share of office leasing activity from the surrounding suburbs.

Source: JLL



Weakening tenant demand

The post-pandemic challenge for Philadelphia and the global office market has been a net loss of demand for office space, fueled by many intersecting trends: uncertainty over the direction of workplace strategies; concerns over workforce preferences, including hybrid and fully remote options; and a challenging financial environment that has slowed costly real estate decisions for tenants.

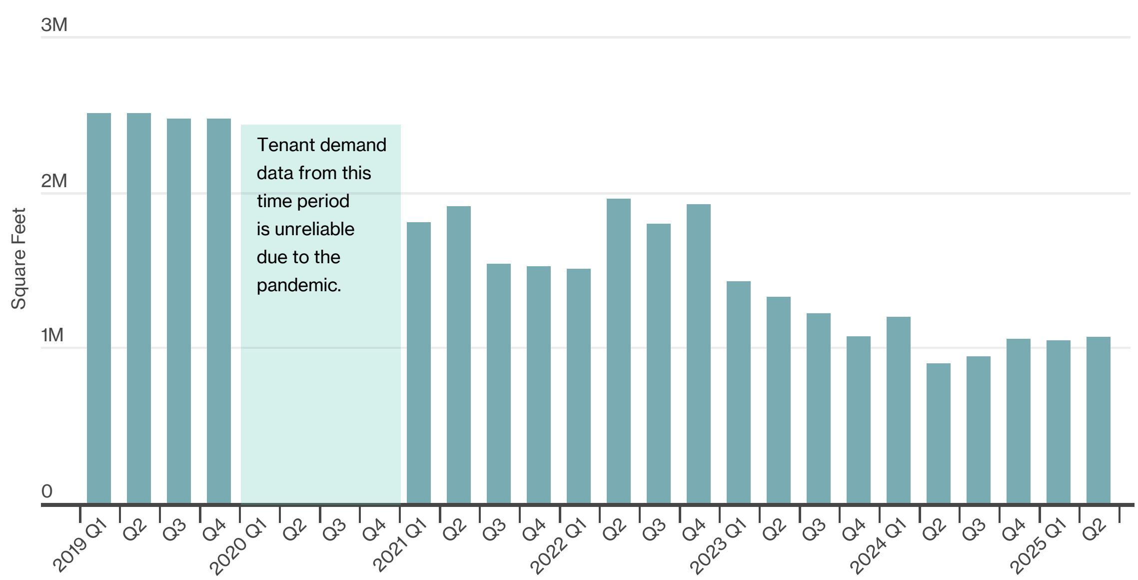
The drop in demand has varied by sector and by submarket. In Philadelphia's CBD, Q2 2025 data from JLL show that average volume is just 42.6% of what it was at the beginning of 2019 on a square footage basis. The number of tenants actively looking for space is also down significantly, leaving fewer prospects for landlords to chase.

The decline of demand has benefitted a small subset of newer buildings through the "flight to quality" whereby a majority of leasing in recent years has occurred in the top 20% or so of downtown buildings. If demand were greater, tenants desiring top-of-the-line space would be more compelled to pursue build-to-suit options as Morgan Lewis and Chubb have done.

Those headquarters decisions were made years ago when total demand was buoyed by inbound leasing: tenants from suburbs or other markets entirely that opted to plant flags or relocate wholesale into the urban core. At one point, JLL tracked a cumulative 3 million square feet of inbound leasing in the CBD, with many of these new arrivals citing talent attraction and retention as their primary decision-driver. While most of these new arrivals had small footprints, their aggregate impact was huge.

Tenant Demand for Office Spaces in Center City Over Time

Source: JLL



Clark Capital, courtesy of Gensler

Select tenants from out of market and the suburbs that leased space in Philadelphia pre-2020.
Tenants from a wide range of sectors including advertising, technology, business services, engineering and design, coworking, life sciences, recruiting, and communications all made decisions to establish Philadelphia locations prior to 2020. This drove occupancy up to historic highs and prompted new office development in boutique "creative" buildings such as 1100 Ludlow.
Source: JLL

Tenant	Size (s.f.)	Building	Year	Industry
HOK	8,800	One Logan	2015	Architecture/design
Carpenter Technology	22,000	1735 Market	2016	Technology
Frank Recruitment Group	21,300	1801 Market	2016	HR/staffing
Vanguard	16,000	2300 Chestnut	2017	Finance
Entercom	67,000	2400 Market	2018	Communications/media
Kambi	7,000	Wanamaker	2018	Technology
Wodify	10,000	1100 Ludlow	2019	Technology
Northern Trust	1,300	2400 Market	2019	Finance
Miramar Global	5,000	Three Logan	2019	HR/staffing
Betterment	7,000	Commerce Square	2019	Fintech

To understand the state of tenant demand, particularly the drop-off in inbound activity since the pandemic, CCD distributed a survey to major commercial real estate companies in Philadelphia and received responses from senior brokers and leaders at firms including Brandywine Realty Trust, CBRE, and JLL via both digital surveys and live conversations. Their feedback is summarized below to contextualize the supply/demand dynamics currently affecting office leasing in Center City.

Key takeaways from these broker conversations and surveys are summarized below:

- 88% of brokers surveyed were involved in inbound leasing deals prior to 2020; in the years since, just 62% of brokers claimed to have worked on any inbound leasing transactions.
- In terms of volume, brokers pre-pandemic reported working on anywhere from five to more than 20 deals involving an out-of-market tenant from the surrounding suburbs or other markets; post-pandemic, responses ranged from two to eight deals involving out-of-market tenants.
- When asked why tenants sought out Center City space prior to the pandemic, the top reason by far was for better access to a larger, younger, and more diverse talent pool. Centrality within the region came in second and needing a Center City location for client interactions was third.
- Since 2020, the reasons driving inbound leasing still touched on some of these points, but other trends emerged. A new desire for “hub and spoke” models of office space climbed in the rankings, suggesting that some tenants feel the need to meet their workforce where they live, or to hedge their bets on location rather than investing heavily in a city or suburban headquarters.
- Several new-to-market law firms have established a presence in Center City since the pandemic. But in every case, their strategy has been to poach talent from Philadelphia’s existing deep bench of legal talent, so these new firms have added to the total count of law firms but have not resulted in any meaningful job growth.
- When asked about tenants currently considering space, brokers revealed a range of answers — from less than 1% to around 10% — when asked what share of active tenants are looking from outside the CBD.
- When asked to describe the main reasons cited by tenant decision-makers for not considering Center City space (or for ultimately deciding against it), perceptions of quality-of-life issues and diminished safety came up in nearly every response, as did an overly complex or burdensome tax structure. **Several brokers alluded to the idea that the “overall product has diminished” since 2020; in other words, the perceived amenity package that comes with a Center City location, or the perceived value-add of providing a Center City space for your workforce, is not as persuasive or powerful an argument as it once was**.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Philadelphia’s talent trajectory, and why it matters more than ever

Key Takeaways

City talent pool has doubled
In the past 12 years, Philadelphia’s talent pool has grown the fastest out of its peer counties, reaching over 260,000 degree holders in 2023 — a 103% increase.

Prime age talent in the city:
70% of Philadelphia’s highly educated population is between the ages of 25 and 34. This means Philadelphia County contains 182,360 advanced degree holders in this critical age group, far outpacing all surrounding counties in both total and growth rate.

Urban core over-indexes on talent:
Greater Center City and University City make up only 8% of Philadelphia’s land area but hold almost a third of the city’s college-educated 25- to 34-year-olds.

Philadelphia has established itself as a leader in the number of educated professionals in the five-county region. Today, the city itself contains more than 260,000 residents with a bachelor’s degree or greater, 70% of whom are between the ages of 25 and 34. Despite inconsistent job growth across sectors and fewer opportunities than other major markets, educated talent continues to cluster in the city at much higher rates than surrounding suburbs. For office workers, the momentum Philadelphia saw leading up to 2020 hinged on Center City being an amenity unto itself; for office-occupying tenants, the value proposition was rooted in the undeniably denser, and more diverse talent pool the city offered, particularly in the urban core. This remains true today.

A quarter century of momentum: Between 2000–2021, while the city's total population grew by 4%, the population of bachelor's degree holders grew 155%, outpacing every major U.S. city over the same timeframe.

Source: Campus Philly

The city, not the suburbs, now anchors Greater Philadelphia's talent pool

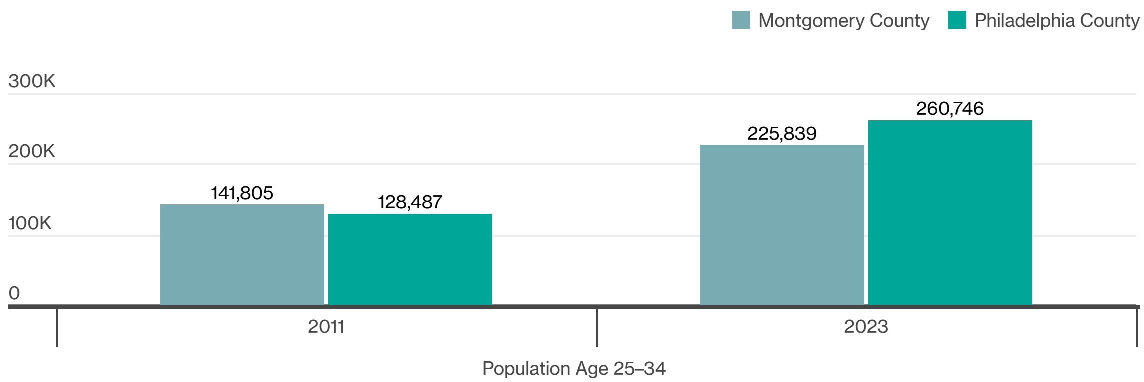
The notion that Philadelphia and other U.S. cities have seen a substantial outmigration of talent to surrounding suburbs in recent years is greatly outdated. Coming out of the Great Recession, Montgomery County was the talent capital of Greater Philadelphia, with more advanced degree holders than the city itself. Over the course of little more than a decade, Philadelphia's dramatic growth in educated residents put the city on top.

Today, the city outpaces the collar counties in both its growth and number of educated residents. In fact, in the past 12 years, Philadelphia nearly doubled its total of degree holders, reaching more than 260,000 in 2023.

Growth in College-Educated Degree Holders Ages 25+ in the Five-County Region

Over the past 12 years, Philadelphia's talent pool grew the fastest out of its peer counties, surpassing even Montgomery County.

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates



Highlighting the exceptional growth of young talent in Philadelphia

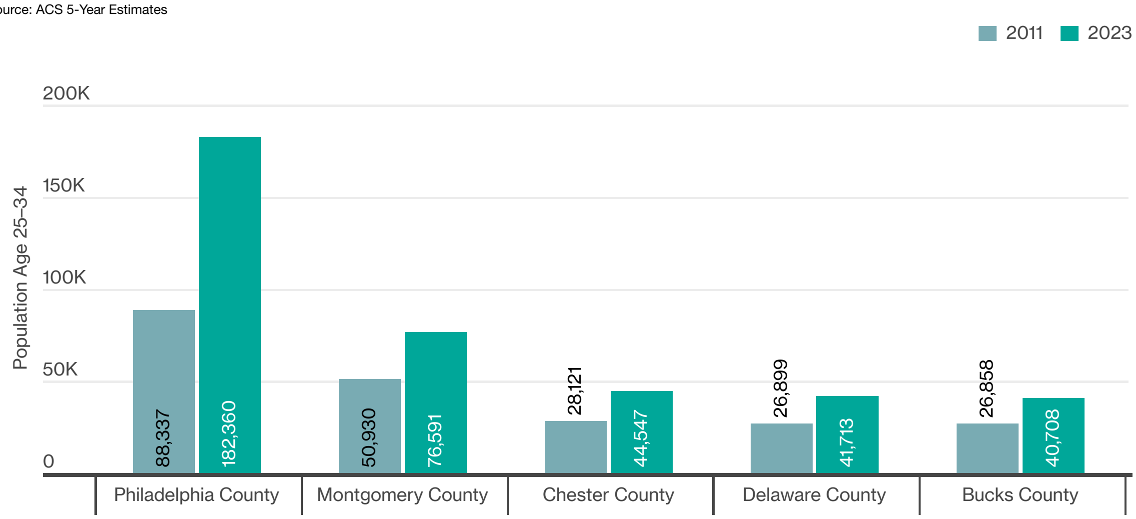
Not only has the overall size of Philadelphia's talent pool grown but so has its population of young talent. Between 2011 and 2023, the number of 25- to 34-year-old degree holders skyrocketed, surpassing every other county in the region.

It's important to stress that the growth of young talent has persisted in the post-pandemic years: a 2022 report from Campus Philly (using data from 2021) tallied 152,000 highly educated 25- to 34-year-olds in the city proper. The data utilized for this report — just two years later — shows another 30,000 highly educated 25- to 34-year-olds now residing in Philadelphia. This impressive two-year growth highlights the magnetism of Philadelphia to draw talent post-COVID, as well as the prevailing trend of highly educated residents choosing city life over the suburbs.

Population of Young Talent Aged 25 to 34 in the Five-County Region

Philadelphia's population of young talent is more than four times Bucks, Delaware, and Chester counties and nearly 2.5 times Montgomery County.

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates



The sheer quantity of younger talent is not the only story here; the rate of change is also impressive. In the course of 12 years, the total change across the collar counties ranged from 50.4% in Montgomery County to 58.4% in Chester County. Philadelphia's 106.4% increase over this same time period is more than double that of Bucks and Montgomery and just shy of doubling Chester and Delaware counties. While flexible work policies have changed the geography of work in recent years, it is clear that at least in the Philadelphia region, the geography of talent remains centered on the city.

The urban core's outsized concentration of talent

The census tracts in Philadelphia with the most dramatic growth of young talent are largely concentrated downtown. Greater Center City and University City make up only 8% of Philly's land area but hold almost a third of the city's college-educated 25- to 34-year-olds — nearly 50,000 people.

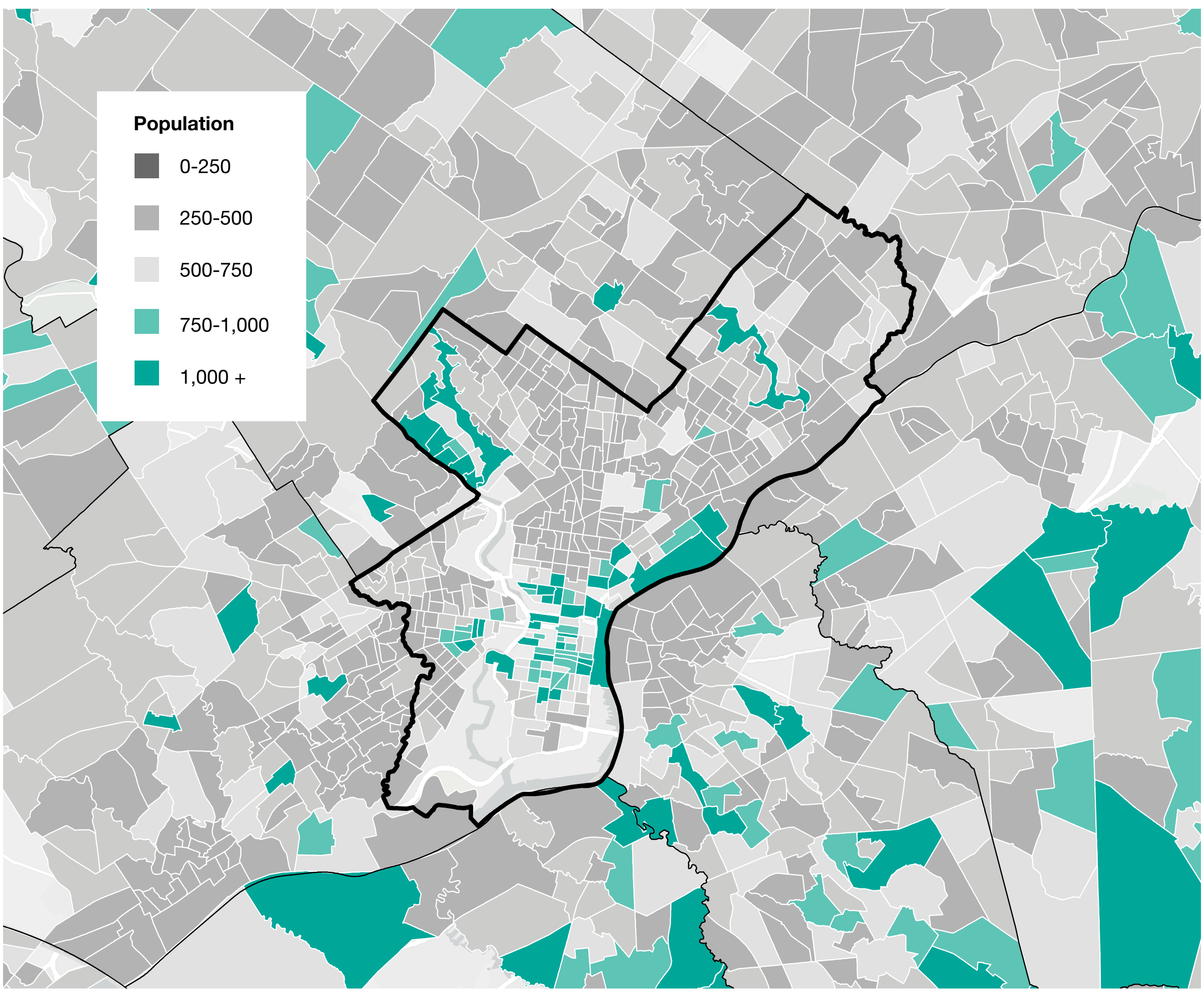
By contrast, Montgomery County — an area 41 times larger than Greater Center City and University City — has fewer than 77,000 college-educated 25- to 34-year-olds, with only 3,200 in King of Prussia and 4,600 in Conshohocken.

To retain and attract top talent, businesses across a variety of sectors should want to be where the talent is: in the city's core. Center City not only concentrates the region's most educated workforce but also offers unmatched accessibility in a walkable, transit-oriented environment. With a looming transit funding crisis, maintaining a presence downtown ensures that the huge talent pool living in and around Center City can continue to reach the office with ease — an essential factor in retention, since those who live closest to work are most likely to return. In this moment, locating in Center City is both a strategic and necessary investment in sustaining Philadelphia's talent advantage and our region's success.

Total Population Aged 25 to 34 With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

College-educated young people are most highly concentrated in Greater Center City.

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates



Center City District - Jeffery Totaro

Conclusion

- Philadelphia's urban core concentration of highly educated talent continues to grow despite the disruptions of 2020. This fact runs counter to prevailing narratives and must be better articulated for tenants considering where to locate or grow within Greater Philadelphia. The intensity of talent in and near Center City is even more relevant amid uncertainty of long-term public transit funding solutions. A more congested and less mobile region will discourage commuting and make work opportunities close to home more appealing.

- CCD research has shown for several years the strong correlation between proximity to the workplace and return-to-office rates. For companies that prioritize workplace culture, employee retention, and a pipeline of younger talent, a Center City location offers advantages given the concentration of talent and transit accessibility.

- CCD's Customer Satisfaction Survey and outreach to real estate professionals and office tenants all confirm ongoing concerns around crime and disorder, particularly from those populations not as frequently in Center City, and despite empirical improvements to crime levels downtown and citywide in recent years. Improving Center City's quality of life and enhancing its reputation as the region's heart of culture, entertainment, and fun are operational imperatives for CCD, but more must be done to reinforce and accelerate investment as well as to improve public perception.

- While our research also reveals that job growth has improved over time and is better today than at other times in recent history, the remaining disconnect is that job growth is not robust enough in office-occupying sectors to meaningfully stabilize or advance Center City's commercial office sector. The significant inbound movement and expansion of tenants downtown experienced notably in 2015-2019 has dissipated, and several of the firms that committed to Center City at that time have reduced or eliminated office space post-pandemic.

- Actions can be taken on multiple fronts to improve Center City's attractiveness and viability as an employment destination. CCD's economic research and operational expertise positions our organization to convene and lead on several fronts. The following recommendations are broken into different topic areas, each of which must be prioritized in its own way to strengthen Center City's position as a place where young talent wants to spend time on and off the job.

Recommendations

The Economic Environment

- **Identify and implement targeted economic development incentives to accelerate investment**: Other areas of the city have benefitted from Keystone Opportunity/Innovation Zone (KOZ/KOIZ) designation. It is time to seriously consider such a designation for the Market Street spine of Center City between the two rivers. There are numerous other state and federal level incentives, including Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZ) and Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID), that should be explored or could serve as models for more tailored incentives. Such an overlay could help finance development at multiple scales, from wholesale redevelopment and construction in more challenged places like Market East, to strengthening deal structures and freeing up capital for new office and retail leases and tenant fit-outs in Market West.

The Pedestrian Environment

- **Extend the vibrancy of Rittenhouse Row north into the office district**: While Philadelphia's prime office corridor is enviably close to a number of vibrant neighborhoods, those in-between blocks matter; the drop-off in foot traffic, nightlife, and variety make a real difference (and can scuttle real estate deals). The positive side is that buildings along Market, JFK Blvd, and Arch have an impressive amount of ground-floor frontage to work with and repurpose. The challenge is that many of these spaces were former banks or pharmacies, and transitioning them into dining, entertainment, or other uses can be expensive, especially given the financial constraints often facing landlords of large office buildings. CCD can convene stakeholders to explore creative programs for incentives or other mechanisms that would enable cash-strapped property owners to fund the tenant improvements necessary to bring more dynamic and desired retailers and restaurants north of Chestnut Street.

- **Identify activation opportunities in plazas and the concourse**. While even a handful of new food and beverage options would have an immediate impact on the look and feel of the office district, a commuter's or visitor's experience invariably includes journeys to and from these businesses. Whether at street level or through the SEPTA concourse, the rise in the unhoused population and the inability of most landlords to fund meaningful streetscape, facade, or public space improvements means that it is common to encounter barren, unpleasant, or otherwise undesirable environments. CCD has a history of making thoughtful, strategic, and historic investments in public parks as well as events and programming that shift perception, create hubs of activity, and add beauty and activity to the public realm. A comprehensive urban design plan for the office district could be a first step to engage stakeholders, identify and rank priorities, and understand the costs associated with an array of improvements.

- **Introduce human-scale design elements along Market Street from river to river:** Our primary east-west arterial's substantial width and the buildings that line it have created conditions that discourage walkability and prioritize vehicular movement. The "road diet" currently underway along Market east of 6th Street serves to remind us that the street can be made more hospitable and inviting to pedestrians. While solutions may differ on the east and west sides of City Hall, a focus on pedestrian safety and comfort can work in concert with new retail concepts to make Market Street feel less like a highway and more like a boulevard appropriate for our already walkable downtown.

Acknowledgements

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