

Employment Characteristics: Job Inflow and Outflow in Contra Costa County

In the period from 2002 to 2015, the number of jobs in Contra Costa County increased by about 10% (from 299,000 to 330,000). However, the number of people both living and working within the County dropped. In 2002, about 170,000 residents also worked in the County, but by 2015, that had decreased to 168,000, meaning the share of in-county employment dropped from 57% to 51%. This drop in share of county jobs held by county residents started in 2009, the first full year of the Great Recession, and thereafter didn't vary much as a percentage of the total.

During this same period of 2002-2015, Census data shows that the County's population of employed residents grew more than 10%, from 401,000 (2002) to 443,000 (2015), after taking a slight downturn during the recession.

In other words, while the Contra Costa economy has slowly been adding back the jobs lost in the Great Recession, its residents have overall increased participation in the workforce but not inside the County. That 6% decline in share of local jobs means that residents are increasingly finding and keeping employment outside the County, such as in San Francisco, where 13% of employed residents commuted in 2015, or Oakland, attracting 7% of employed residents.

Two major economic implications of this increasing outflow are:

- Traffic congestion on the roads, costing individuals and businesses time and money,
- Loss of consumer spending locally, affecting revenue and ultimately public services.

One goal of the County's economic development program is to support and expand employment opportunities in our County for our County residents, pushing back against the outflow. The better the balance between employee inflow and outflow, the better the quality of life for our residents.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies