

A Profile of Mansfield, Connecticut

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Situated 23 miles from Hartford in the rolling countryside of eastern Connecticut, Mansfield has grown from a quaint farming community to become the home of a major university. The town was incorporated in 1702 by settlers from nearby Norwich and encompasses about 45 square miles. Early industries included agriculture and textile manufacturing. The town led the U.S. in silk production in the early 19th century. The 1881 formation of the Storrs Agricultural School that later became the University of Connecticut established education as a primary industry for the town. A majority of Mansfield's employment occurs in and around the UConn campus in the Storrs section of town and the recent Storrs Center commercial development seeks to further invigorate the local economy.

Demographics

Mansfield has a population of 26,130 with a UConn-influenced median age of 21.6 years old. Fifty-four percent of the town's population is between 15 and 24 years of age. Tolland County and Connecticut by comparison have median ages

respectively of 37.6 and 39.8 years, and their 15-24 old populations respectively are 20.2 and 13.4 percent. The town has more racial diversity than Tolland County while being less diverse than Connecticut. Its total non-white population is 18.9 percent, roughly double that of Tolland County while less than the state's rate of 21.4 percent. People of Hispanic ethnicity amount to 6.3 percent of the population while Tolland County and Connecticut have Hispanic population rates of 4.2 and 13 percent, as is shown in Table A.

The educational attainment of Mansfield residents is expectedly high. For residents over 25 years old, 32.9 percent have a graduate or professional degree, the highest Census-defined attainment level. The statewide rate is 15.6 percent and Tolland County's rate is 16.8 percent. Fifty-seven percent of Mansfield residents hold either an associate, bachelor's, or graduate/professional degree. The respective rates for Connecticut and Tolland County are 43.0 and 46.4 percent.

Housing

The housing characteristics of

Mansfield differentiate it from other parts of the state. Forty-eight percent of town residents live in "Group Quarters," a Census designation that includes university student housing. The town had 6,072 occupied housing units in 2011, with 4,061 owner-occupied units and 2,011 units rented. Median household income in 2011 was \$70,208 for all housing units. Owner-occupied homes had a median of \$92,731/year while the median for renters was \$27,909/year. This high rent-rate of 32 percent and low median rented household income is characteristic of student-renter population driven by the University. Median rent paid in Mansfield, at \$1,136 is slightly above statewide or county levels, respectively being \$1,020 and \$993 per month. Fifty-two percent of the town's housing stock was built between 1960 and 1989. In comparison, 40 and 46 percent of the housing stock for Connecticut and Tolland County were built during those three decades. Median owner-occupied home value in the town was \$260,300 in 2011, \$6,000 less than the median for Tolland County and \$32,800 less than Connecticut's median.

Unemployment Rate

Anchored by high employment concentration in the low unemployment industry of education, Mansfield's unemployment rate has been consistently below state and national rates in the last 12 years, ranging between 0.5 and 1.4 percentage points below the statewide rate (Chart A). In 2012 the town had an unemployment rate of 7.2 percent while Tolland and Connecticut had rates of 7.4 and 8.4 percent respectively. Since peaking in 2010 at 7.9 percent, the annual average unemployment rate for Mansfield has fallen 0.7 percentage points.

Industry Employment

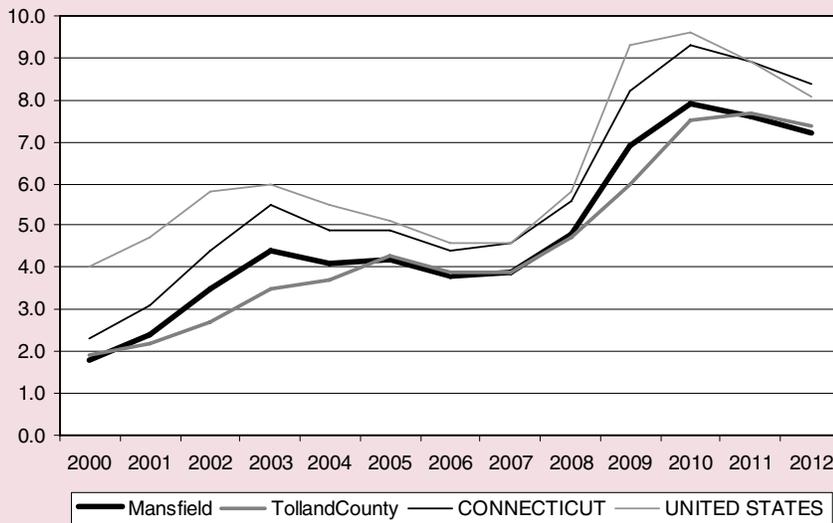
An unsurprising proportion of Mansfield employment is in state-level government, the industry-sector where UConn employees are classified. In 2011, 56.2 percent of area employment was in that sector.

Table A. Demographic Characteristics of Area Residents

	Mansfield		Tolland County		Connecticut	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total population	26,130	100.0%	151,774	100.0%	3,558,172	100.0%
Male	12,819	49.1%	76,423	50.4%	1,731,389	48.7%
Female	13,311	50.9%	75,351	49.6%	1,826,783	51.3%
Under 15 years	2,161	8.2%	25,131	16.5%	667,240	18.8%
15-24 years	14,037	53.7%	30,574	20.2%	477,010	13.4%
25 to 34 years	1,971	7.5%	15,551	10.2%	415,295	11.7%
35 to 44 years	1,563	6.0%	20,117	13.3%	498,244	14.0%
45 to 54 years	2,357	9.0%	24,582	16.2%	568,426	16.0%
55-65 years	1,799	6.9%	17,913	11.8%	432,483	12.2%
Over 65 Years	2,242	8.5%	17,906	11.9%	499,474	14.1%
Median age (years)	21.6	(X)	37.6	(X)	39.8	(X)
Race/Ethnicity						
White	21,195	81.1%	136,758	90.1%	2,796,198	78.6%
Black or African American	1,057	4.0%	4,399	2.9%	347,941	9.8%
Asian	2,567	9.8%	4,962	3.3%	134,108	3.8%
American Indian	13	0.0%	213	0.1%	8,104	0.2%
Some other race	389	1.5%	1,540	1.0%	188,390	5.3%
Two or more races	909	3.5%	3,890	2.6%	82,104	2.3%
Hispanic Ethnicity	1,637	6.3%	6,417	4.2%	463,407	13.0%

Source: 2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

Chart A: Annual Unemployment Rate 2000-12



Accommodations and food services and Health Care and Social Assistance respectively employed 10.3 and 10.2 percent of the area workers. Local Government employed 769 workers, or 6.9 percent of area employment in 2011. Retail Trade is the fifth largest sector and employed 587 workers this past year, or 5.3 percent of the area employment. In total, 89 percent of area employment is concentrated in these five aforementioned industry sectors.

Average annual wage for all workers in Mansfield was \$49,637 in 2011. Wholesale Trade had the highest average annual wage, at \$89,278, while Retail Trade had the lowest with \$22,477.

Commuting Patterns

The commuting pattern of Mansfield workers is an interesting example of extremes. Thirty-one percent of area workers walked to work, for the state and county workforces, rates were 5.5 and 3.0 percent. Over half of town workers commute by car, 29 and 26 percentage points less than state and county rates. The average commutes for Mansfield workers at 18 minutes was much less than the state and county averages of 25 and 26 minutes.

Amenities

The Town has three public elementary schools, one middle school, and a regional high school in Storrs shared with the adjacent

towns of Ashford and Willington. Three volunteer fire departments serve the town. A community center offers a gym and indoor pool. Mansfield’s Open Space Preservation program has acquired and conserved over a thousand acres of woodland area and there are over a dozen combined hiking trails, nature preserves and parks throughout the town.

Storrs Center

The Storrs Center development is a public/private partnership that brings a downtown community element to Mansfield and the Storrs UConn campus. The 51 acre mixed-use site situated on route 195 adds hundreds of apartments and over 60,000 square feet of commercial space to the area while maintaining 24 acres of the site for environmental preservation.

Conclusions

The 19th century donation by Charles and Augustus Storrs that founded what became the University of Connecticut has had a lasting and obvious impact on the town of Mansfield. Residents are highly educated, median income is high and unemployment is consistently lower than state or national levels. Recent economic development projects seek to stimulate economic activity through concentrated mixed-use development that will help further integrate the school with the town while preserving the rural ascetic that typifies the area. ■

Table B - Mansfield Industry Employment

NAICS	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	'11 Avg Wage
All	10,257	10,212	10,407	10,466	10,463	10,907	11,263	11,305	11,093	11,005	11,076	\$49,637
Construction	181	167	158	145	129	143	129	107	96	98	103	\$57,954
Manufacturing	68	43	41	43	47	44	46	45	45	31	35	\$44,480
Wholesale Trade	6	12	11	13	12	**	53	58	57	53	45	\$89,278
Retail Trade	587	591	645	644	650	705	714	660	630	589	587	\$22,477
Information	**	**	**	**	**	44	45	41	53	49	46	\$25,132
Finance and Insurance	101	108	102	100	103	107	96	87	90	90	90	\$44,812
Real Estate	89	111	107	85	84	81	70	57	71	73	73	\$31,455
Profess.Scientif.&Tech.Serv.	271	258	247	241	243	218	226	262	216	294	272	\$68,516
Admin. And Waste Serv.	26	16	12	12	9	13	12	13	**	17	25	\$30,635
Health Care & Social Assistance	878	917	934	969	993	1,015	1,020	1,027	1,082	1,091	1,134	\$42,410
Accommodation and Food Serv.	893	925	1,013	977	974	1,137	1,190	1,163	1,049	1,075	1,139	\$19,442
Other Services	300	304	306	299	309	324	351	371	382	309	312	\$43,662
Govt-All	6,558	6,527	6,588	6,712	6,700	6,844	7,123	7,245	7,144	7,077	7,046	\$58,140
Local	796	822	777	822	852	868	856	852	847	850	769	\$45,253
State	5,727	5,671	5,779	5,860	5,817	5,944	6,226	6,348	6,254	6,185	6,228	\$59,699
Federal	35	34	32	30	31	32	41	45	43	41	48	\$62,374

Source: CT Dept. of Labor. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) ** denotes confidentiality-suppressed data