

An Economic Profile of the City of Lawton (2010-2018)¹

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to chronicle the economic performance of the city of Lawton relative to the economies of the state of Oklahoma and the United States during the eight-year period from 2010 to 2018. The great recession of 2007 and 2008 had a relatively insignificant economic impact on the Lawton economy compared to the nation. The City of Lawton and the Oklahoma economy escaped the brunt of the financial crisis-induced recession because of the inherent strength of local and state economies and the large federal presence in Lawton. The national and most regional economies started gathering momentum within a couple of years of the end of the recession. It will be interesting to explore how the local, state and national economies performed since the end of great recession.

1. Introduction

The city of Lawton is in Comanche County in the southwest part of Oklahoma. Comanche County is one of Oklahoma's 77 counties and ranks 5th in the state in terms of population. The county was home to more than 120,400 residents in 2018. Lawton has in its backyard the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, the oldest managed wildlife refuge in the United States.

Lawton houses one of the nation's largest artillery bases, Fort Sill. The U.S. Army Fires Center of Excellence located in Fort Center combines both the U.S. Army Artillery Center U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery Center and School. Fort Sill is also the largest employer in Lawton contributing significantly to the local economy through retail spending and housing purchases by permanent soldiers stationed at the base. Lawton is very well positioned economically for the Fort Sill military base. Located along the Interstate 44 corridor and within about one-hour distance from Oklahoma City and Wichita Falls, Lawton is connected to the major airport hub, Dallas by American Airlines Group via the Lawton Ft. Sill Regional Airport.

Lawton has a solid manufacturing base supported by Goodyear Tire and Rubber manufacturing plant, Republic Paperboard Company, Bar-S Food, and Silver-Line Plastics. The Goodyear plant is the company's largest tire manufacturing plant in North America, producing more than 60,000 tires a day and employing 2,400 people. Besides Goodyear, Cameron University, Great Plains Technology Center (GPTC), the Lawton public school system, Comanche County Memorial Hospital, Southwestern Medical Center and retail outlets are the major employers. Lawton is also home of the headquarters of regional banks such as City National Bank and Trust Company and Fort Sill National Bank. The educational life of the city is enriched by the presence of Cameron University and Great Plains Technology center. The cultural life is improved by the Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton Theater, various music, theater and other live performances, and cultural events offered by Cameron University.

The objective of this paper is to review the economic performance of the city of Lawton during the period, 2010-2018. Since the last census took place in 2010 and most of the latest estimates of the economic data we are interested in are available until 2018, we chose the period 2010-2018 for our

study.³ In some cases, we included 2000 data to investigate changes between major economic variables between the last two census periods.

2. Demographics

According to United States census estimates, Lawton had a population of 92,859 as of July 1, 2018. The city experienced a 4.4% population growth between 2000 and 2010; however, the city population declined by 4.1% between 2010 and 2018, as shown in Table 1. During the time period from 2010 to 2018, the state of Oklahoma and the United States experienced population growth rates of 5.1% and 6% respectively. The decline in the city population since 2010 can be attributed to reductions in military personnel and civilian labor force in Fort Sill.⁴

Population distribution by age groups

Demographic profiles for Lawton, Oklahoma and the U.S.A. by different age-groups are shown in Table 2. Both Lawton and Oklahoma have the highest proportions of population in younger age groups, 15-24 and 25-34. By contrast, the leading age group for the nation is 45-54. The percentages of population aged 65 and over are similar among the three geographical entities. Figures 1 and 2 show the distribution of population by age groups in Lawton for years 2010 and 2018. Lawton experienced a decline in younger population between ages 15 and 34 in the age-group, 20-24. The city witnessed a surge in population in older age group, 55-59. The increase in older population can be explained by the normal aging of population, but also by the exodus of younger population in search of education and jobs elsewhere.

Table 3 shows the median ages of the Lawton, Oklahoma and the USA. The median age is lower in Lawton (30.8) than in the state (36.3) and the nation (37.2). Thus, the city has a younger population compared to the state and the nation by median age, which confirms the findings above by the age-group distribution.⁵

Table 1: Population

	Lawton	Oklahoma	USA
2000	92,757	3,145,576	281,421,906
2010	96,867	3,751,583	308,758,105
2018	92,859	3,943,079	327,167,434
Average annual growth (2000-2010)	4.4%	19.3%	9.7%
Average annual growth (2010-2018)	-4.1%	5.1%	6.0%

Source: Quickfacts, U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2: Population by Age Groups in 2018 (in percent)

Age Group	Lawton	Oklahoma	United States
Under 5	6.1	6.5	6.1
5 to 14	12.6	13.7	12.6
15 to 24	13.1	13.6	13.1
25 to 34	14.0	13.8	14.0
35 to 44	12.6	12.5	12.6
45 to 54	12.7	11.6	12.7
55 to 64	12.9	12.5	12.9
65 to 74	9.3	9.2	9.3
75 to 84	4.7	4.7	4.7
85 and over	2.0	1.8	2.0

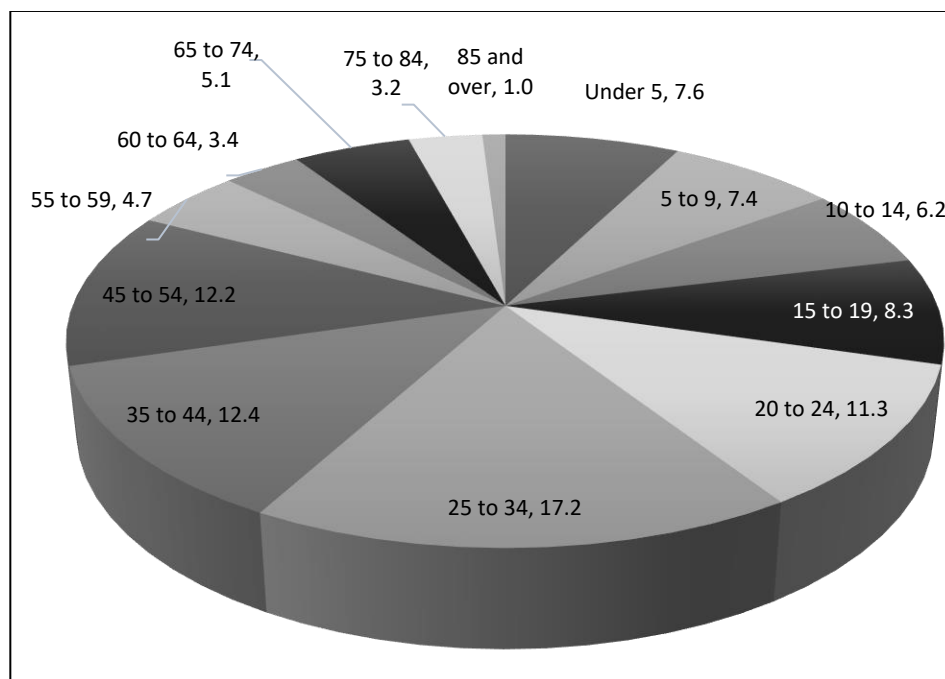
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3: Median age in 2018

	Lawton	Oklahoma	United States
Median age	30.8	36.3	37.2
Male	44.7	49	49.2
Female	55.3	51	50.8

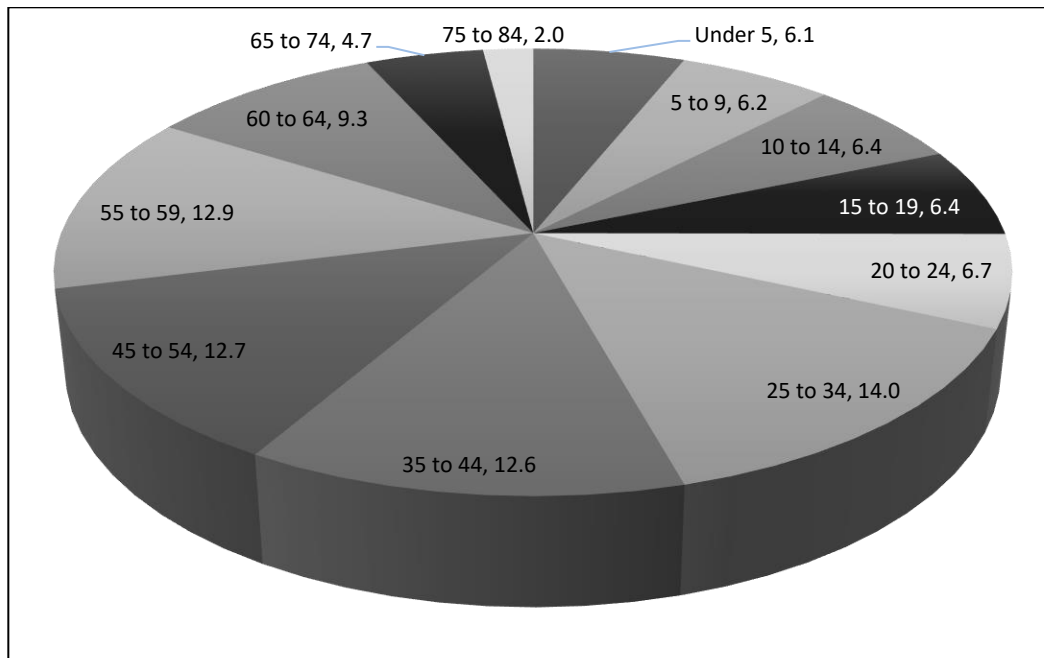
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 1: Distribution of Population by Age Groups in Lawton – 2010 (in percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010 American Community Surveys)

Figure 2: Distribution of Population by Age Groups in Lawton – 2018 (in percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2018 American Community Survey estimate)

Race, Ethnicity and Gender

Population by race groups as of July 1, 2018 is shown in Table 4. The largest race group in Lawton, is Caucasian, constituting 58.5% of the population, with the next largest being African American at 20.4%, then Hispanic at 13.8%, Native American with 5%, and Asian or Pacific Islander with 3.4 %. The percentages of Caucasian population in the state and nation are 74.3% and 76.6% respectively. In Lawton, the Caucasian population slightly declined from 60.3% in 2010 to 58.5% in 2018. The second largest race group, ‘Blacks or African Americans (AA)’, accounted for 20.4% of Lawton population in 2017. Lawton has a higher proportion of ‘Black or African Population’ than the state and the nation. The ‘Black or African Population’ portion of the population has slightly declined from 2010 to 2017. ‘Hispanic population’ is the third highest group in Lawton. The proportion of ‘Hispanic population’ is higher in Lawton than in Oklahoma but lower than in the United States.

Table 4: Distribution of Population by Races – 2018 (in percent)

Race	Lawton	Oklahoma	United States
White alone, percent	58.5	74.3	76.6
Black or African American alone, percent	20.4	7.8	13.4
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	5	9.2	1.3
Asian alone and Native Hawaiian and other pacific Islander	3.4	2.5	6.0
Hispanic or Latino, percent	13.8	10.6	18.1

Source: Quick facts, U.S. Census Bureau (2010 and 2017)

Lawton has a higher proportion of male population than both the state and the nation as shown in Table 5. This can be explained by the presence of a military base which has normally a higher male population.

Table 5: Gender Composition (in percent)

Region	2000		2010		2018	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Lawton	52.1	47.9	51.9	48.1	51.2	48.2
Oklahoma	49.1	50.9	49.5	50.5	49.5	50.5
United States	49.1	50.9	49.2	50.8	49.2	50.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010 and 2017 American Community Surveys)

Household Characteristics

According to the 2010 Census, there were 34,901 households in Lawton in 2010. The average household size decreased slightly from 2.61 in 2000 to 2.48 in 2010. The average family size was 3.08 in 2010, which was slightly lower than the average family size (3.12) in 2000. Families accounted for 64.5% of all households in 2010, a reduction from 70.9% in 2000. Thirty two percent of households had children under 18 years, slightly down from 39.6% in 2000. About 16% of all households were headed by females.

3. Income and Employment

Income profile

Table 6 shows per capita personal incomes for 2000, 2010 and 2018.⁴ In 2018, Lawton had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$41,509. This PCPI ranked 288th in the United States and was 78 percent of the national average, \$53,217. Lawton experienced an annual average growth rate of 1.7% between 2010 and 2018, a sharp decline from annual growth rate of 6.1% between 2000 and 2010. Oklahoma experienced similar trends between 2010 and 2018. The annual average growth rate of PCPI slightly increased from 2010 to 2018. The lackluster growth in Lawton’s per capita personal income

during this period may be attributed to the loss of high paid civilian jobs in Fort Sill in recent years. According to a study by the Lawton-Fort Sill 2019 Economic Review and Outlook, Lawton metropolitan area lost a total of 3000 military and civilian jobs but gained 500 private sector jobs with a net loss of 2500 jobs.⁴

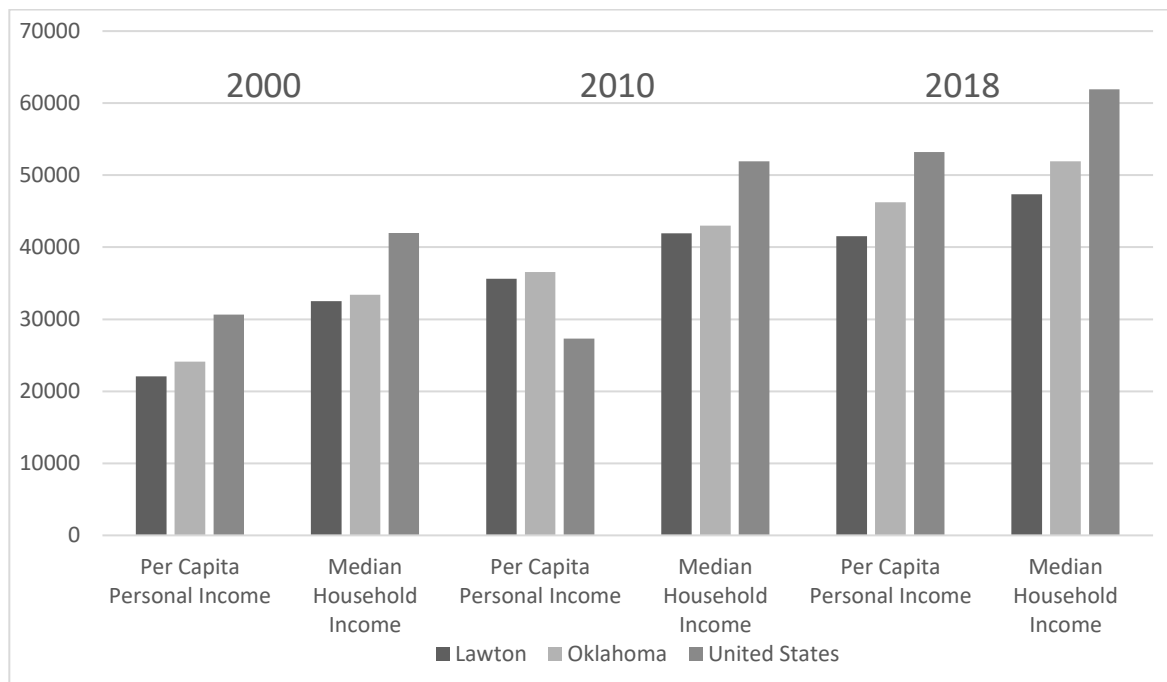
Table 6: Per Capita Personal income

Year	Lawton	Oklahoma	USA
2000	\$22,067	\$24,096	\$30,657
2010	\$35,617	\$36,544	\$40,566
2018	\$41,509	\$46,233	\$53,217
Average annual growth (2000-2010)	6.1%	5.2%	3.2%
Average annual growth (2010-2018)	1.7%	2.7%	3.4%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

In addition to per capita personal income, we also reported median household and median family incomes in Lawton, Oklahoma and the United States for years, 2000, 2010 and 2018 in Figure 2. In all the three categories, Lawton has lower incomes than those in Oklahoma and the USA. The average median household incomes in 2016 dollars for the period 2012-2016 stand at \$43,674, \$48, 038 and \$55, 322, in Lawton, Oklahoma and the USA respectively.

Figure 3: Income by different categories

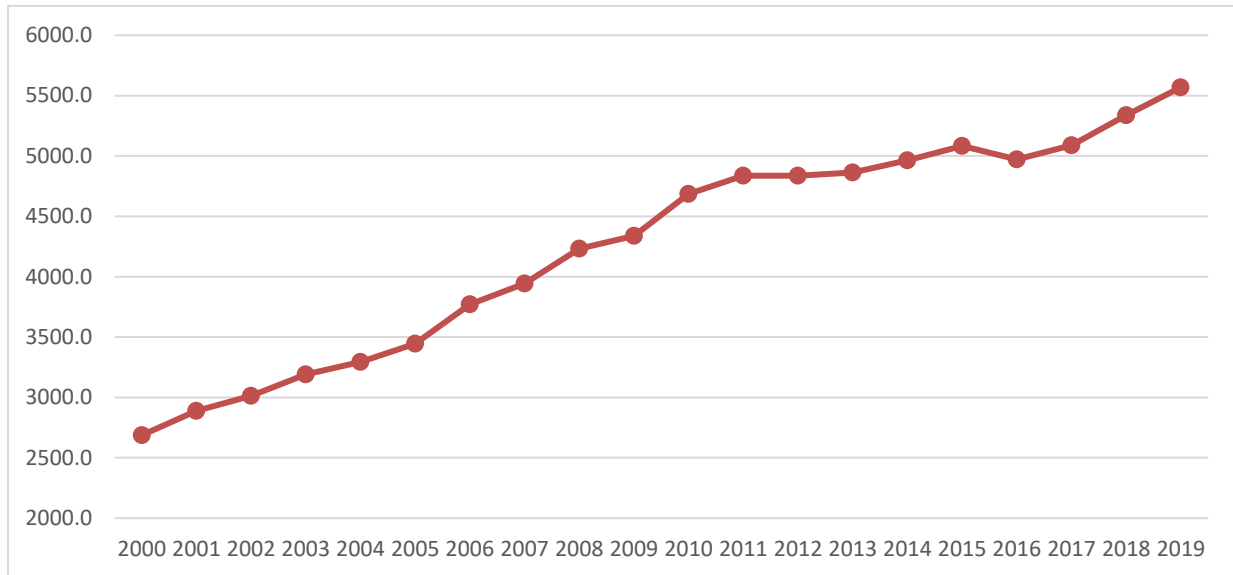


Source: U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Surveys

Figure 4 shows personal income for Lawton during the nine-year period from 2010 to 2019. Personal income grew at an annual average rate of 3% or more, reaching a peak at 7.32% in 2008, just

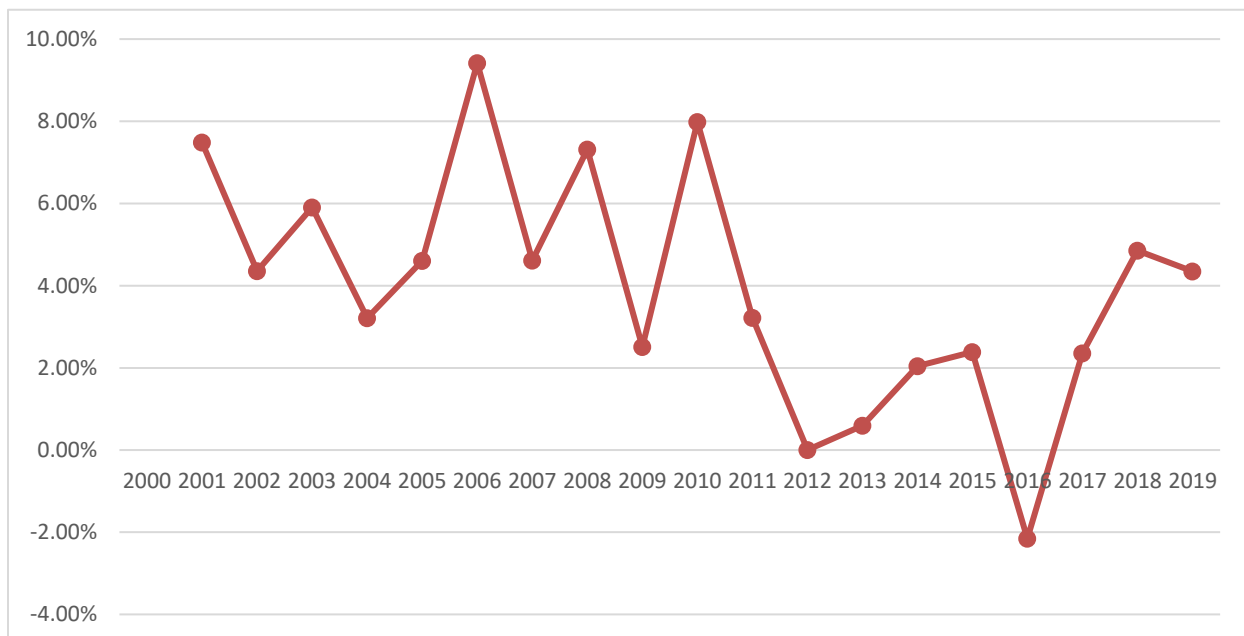
when the final crisis was underway. However, the growth slowed down to 2.51% in 2009 in the aftermath of the recession. The year 2010 witnessed a strong growth in PCPI in the city, but after that year, personal income grew at a much slower rate and declined in 2016 by 2%. During this same year, federal civilian and military earnings dipped to the lowest level in recent years, declining about 16% from its peak in 2010.⁵ During the 2014 to 2016 period, the federal share of total Lawton metro household earnings declined by 6%. We can conclude that the Lawton economy is more driven by the dynamics of federal civilian spending than the waves of the national economy.

Figure 4: Personal Income in Lawton (million dollars)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Surveys

Figure 5: Personal Income Growth Rate in Lawton



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Surveys

Cost of Living

An important advantage of Lawton is its low cost of living. The Council for Community and Economic Research compares costs of living in over 250 locations in all 50 states, allowing them to publish the Cost of Living Index. The nationwide average is 100 and each index for different categories of commodity groups is interpreted as a percentage of the average of all locations. Table 7 illustrates cost of living by different broad commodity and service groups in Lawton. The overall cost of living has slightly increased in Lawton during the period 2010-2018. Only the healthcare costs have gone up substantially (30%). Lawton has a lower cost of living than the nation for major commodity groups except transportation and healthcare. Healthcare costs are 22 percentage points higher than the national average. As shown in Figure 3, Lawton's cost of living has on average been slightly higher than that of either Oklahoma City or Tulsa.

The property tax rates vary from \$75 to \$110 per \$1,000 of assessed value. To determine the assessment value, Comanche county applies an assessment ratio of 11.25 per cent to market value of property with \$1000 homestead exemption for primary residence.

Table 7: Cost of Living in Lawton

Year	Composite Index	Grocery Items	Housing	Utilities	Transportation	Health Care	Misc. Goods and Services
2007	89.5	97.5	76	93.4	98.8	92.5	93.2
2008	92.4	99.7	79	93.3	96.5	92.5	99.9
2009	86.7	91.1	77.2	81.8	101.9	93.8	88.4
2010	93.8	96.3	86.8	87.7	106.9	96	96.6
2011	95.6	95	98.2	93.1	104.2	94.6	91.7
2012	97.3	96.2	89.4	93.1	111.5	104.9	99.1
2013	96.2	86.5	92.4	86.5	108.1	103.4	100.4
2014	94.2	94.9	91	87.6	101.3	102.1	95.1
2015	92.2	99.5	90	88.3	95.4	105.4	89.5
2016	87.8	89.1	84.4	83.6	102.1	100.6	85.8
2017	90.9	83.4	84	89.9	99.9	115.1	94.2
2018	90.7	101.1	77.6	90.2	99.4	122.8	91.6

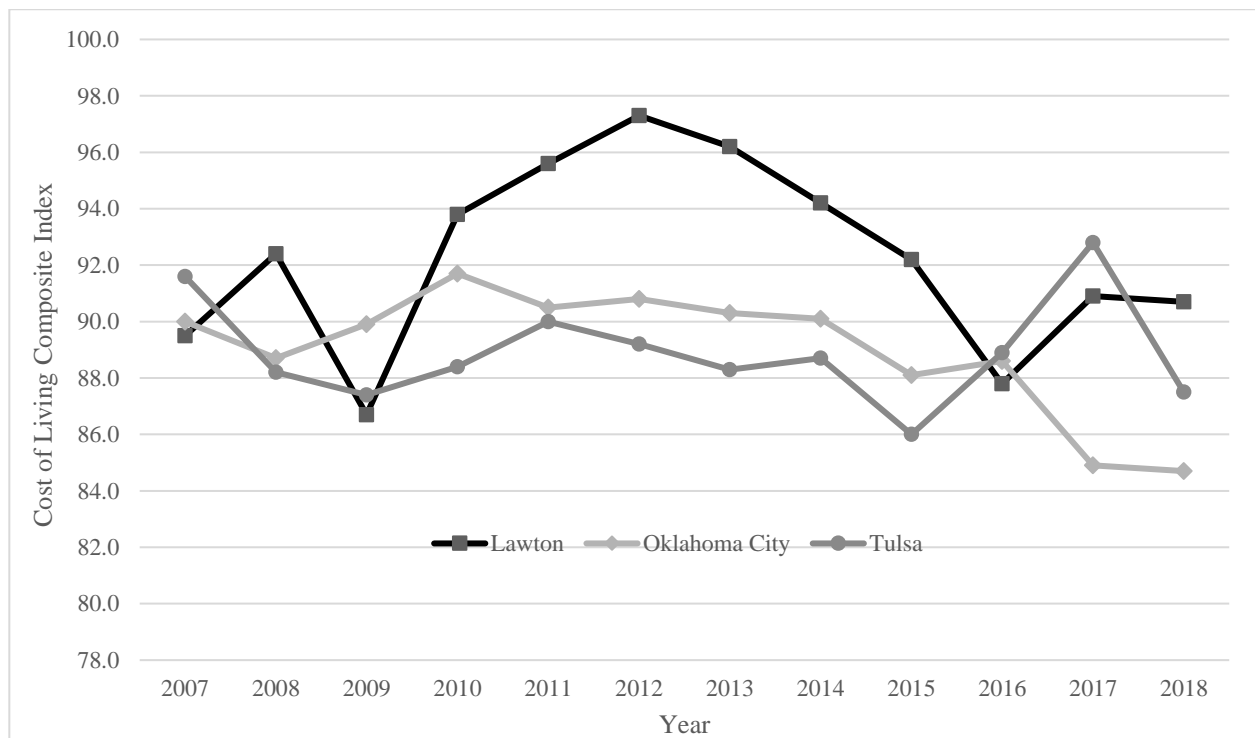
Source: Council for Community and Economic research (C2ER), Cost of living Index

Table 8: Cost of Living index in selected cities in Oklahoma

Year	Lawton	Oklahoma City	Tulsa
2007	89.5	90	91.6
2008	92.4	88.7	88.2
2009	86.7	89.9	87.4
2010	93.8	91.7	88.4
2011	95.6	90.5	90
2012	97.3	90.8	89.2
2013	96.2	90.3	88.3
2014	94.2	90.1	88.7
2015	92.2	88.1	86
2016	87.8	88.6	88.9
2017	90.9	84.9	92.8
2018	90.7	84.7	87.5

Source: Council for Community and Economic research (C2ER), Cost of living Index

Figure 3: Cost of Living in Selected Oklahoma Cities



Source: Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER)

Labor Market conditions

The civilian labor force participation rate was 55.3% in Lawton in 2018. The civilian participation rate increased by about 6% between 2000 and 2010 in Lawton, but slightly declined between 2010 and 2018. Both the state of Oklahoma and the USA showed a slightly declining trend in the civilian participation rate since 2000. The last column in Table 9 shows unemployment rates in Lawton, Oklahoma and the United States for years, 2000, 2010 and 2018. The national unemployment reached its lowest level in 49 years at 3.7% in 2018. The unemployment rates in Lawton and Oklahoma were 3.9% and 3.7% respectively in 2018.

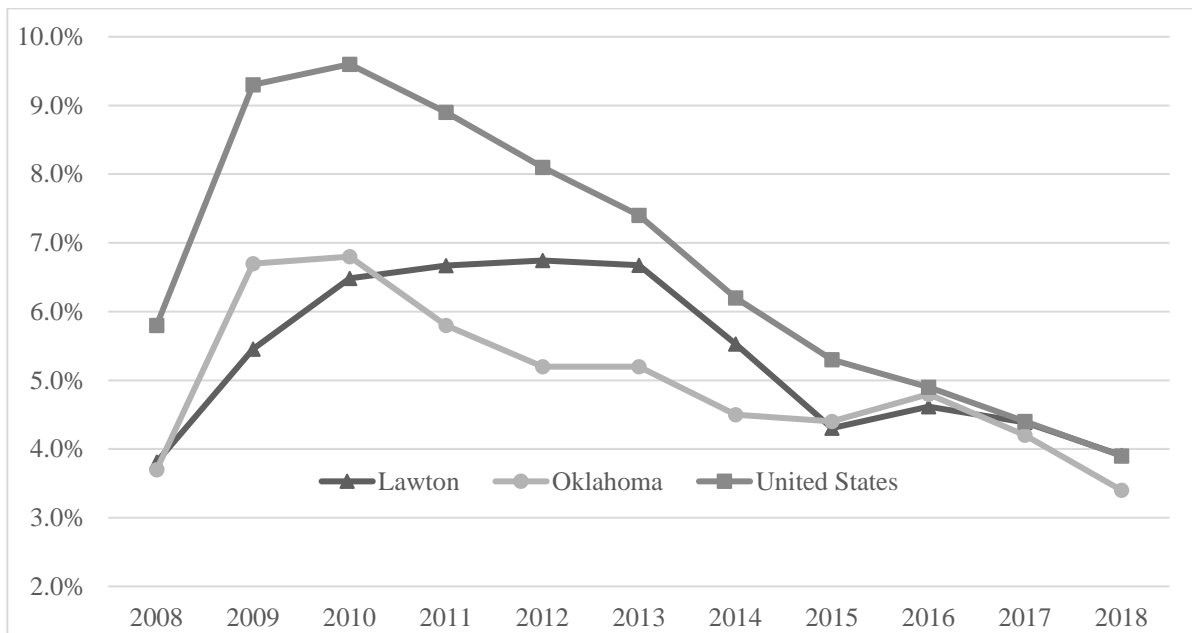
Table 9: Labor Force Participation

Lawton					
Year	Labor Force	Participation Rate	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
2000	46,168	49.8%	44,525	1,643	3.6%
2010	54,506	55.7%	51,342	3,164	5.8%
2018	51,315	55.3%	49,330	1,884	3.9%
Oklahoma					
2000	1,660,870	64.4%	1,610,266	50,604	3.0%
2010	1,767,722	62.4 %	1,648,126	119,596	6.8%
2018	2,413,164	61.2%	2,333,530	79,634	3.3%
The United States					
2000	188,834,099	67.1%	181,337,385	7,496,713	4.0%
2010	200,117,100	64.7%	180,885,846	19,231,253	9.6%
2018	205,788,316	62.9%	198,235,884	7,552,431	3.7%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Overall, labor markets for the national and regional economies marked significant improvements since the end of the great recession in June 2009. Figure 4 shows the unemployment rates for Lawton, Oklahoma over the period from 2008 to 2018. The national unemployment rate has been higher than both the city and the state for the period shown. In addition, the national unemployment rate was much more drastically affected by the global recession than the Oklahoma state or the city of Lawton. The unemployment rates peaked for the state and nation in 2010 and gradually declined since then. Interestingly, the unemployment rate in Lawton remained almost flat between 2011 and 2013, reaching peak in 2012 and started declining sharply since 2014. The Oklahoma unemployment was higher than that of Lawton in the aftermath of the recession in 2009 and 2010, but the state unemployment rate dipped below the Lawton unemployment rate from 2011 to 2014 and the two rates started tracking closely each other since 2015.

Figure 4: Unemployment Rates (2008-2018)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Employment pattern by type of industry

This section reports employment pattern by percentages of people employed in major industry groups as presented in Table 10. There are many similarities among the local, state and national economies. ‘Educational services, health care and social assistance’ was the leading job creation industry employing the highest percentage of the civilian population in Lawton. This industry employed 11,638 people or 23.1% of the total civilian employed population in Lawton. Oklahoma and the United States accounted for similar percentages of employment in this industry with 22.4% and 23.1% respectively. ‘Retail trade’ employed 6,619 workers, the second highest percentage, 11.4% in Lawton. The third largest industry in Lawton is ‘Professional, scientific and management, et. al.’ which employed 5,324 workers or 11.3%. The fourth highest job creation industry is manufacturing which accounted for 10.3% of civilian employment.

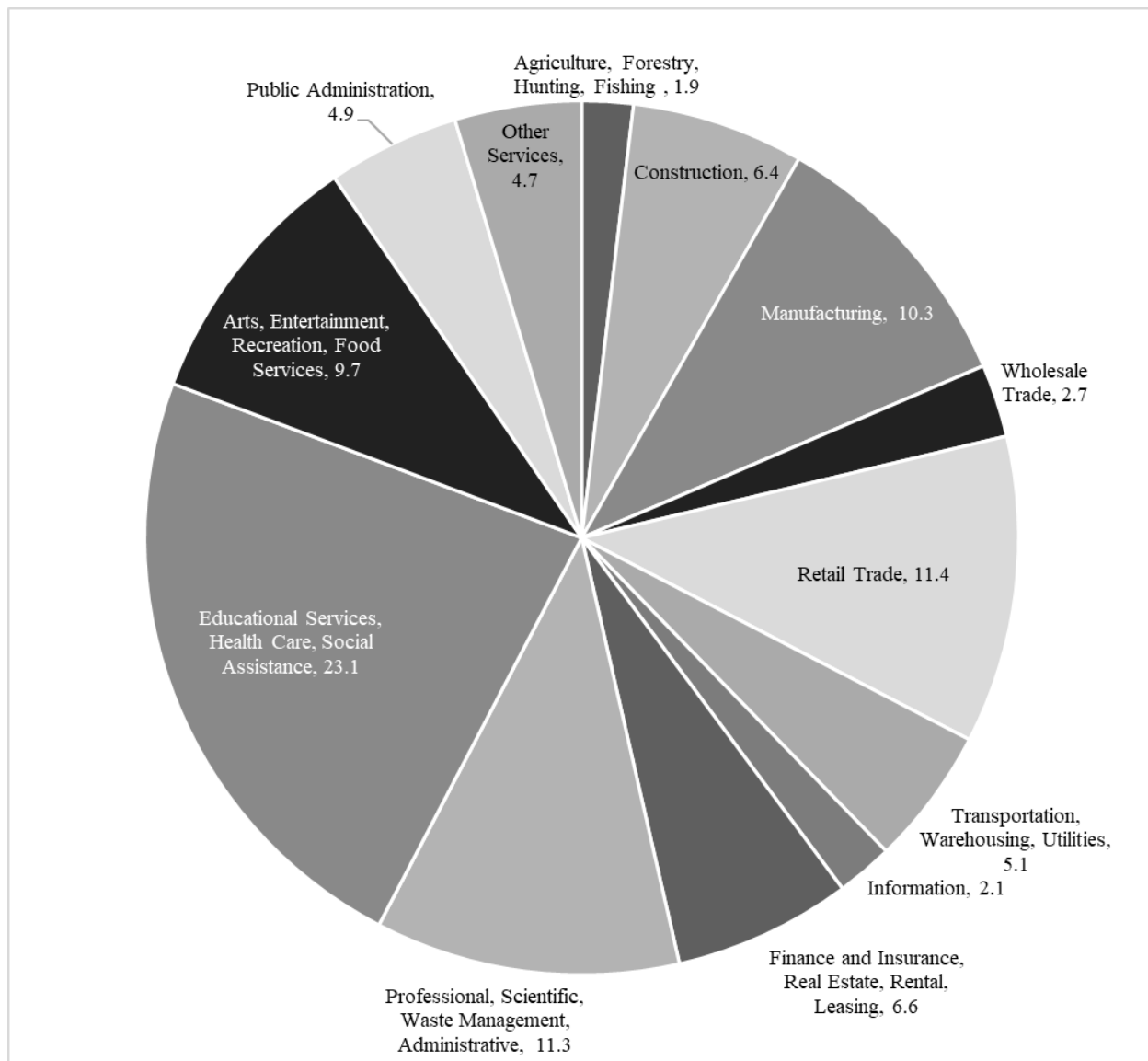
Percentage distributions of employment by major industries in Lawton for 2017 are presented in Figure 5. Distribution of employment changed only slightly across all industries between 2010 and 2017, with less than only one percent change for each industry.

Table 10: Employment by industries (Percentage of total civilian employment)

Industries	Lawton	Oklahoma	United States
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.1	22.4	23.1
Retail trade	11.4	11.6	11.3
Public administration	4.9	6.2	4.6
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.7	9.4	9.7
Manufacturing	10.3	9.8	10.2
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.3	8.3	11.4
Construction	6.4	7.1	6.5
Other services, except public administration	4.7	5.2	4.9
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6.6	5.6	6.6
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.1	5.1	5.2
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.9	5.1	1.8
Information	2.1	1.8	2.1
Wholesale trade	2.7	2.6	2.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2017 American Community Survey)

Figure 5: Employment by Industries in Lawton – 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2017 American Community Survey)

Employment pattern by Occupations

Employment patterns by broad occupation groups for Lawton, Oklahoma and the USA are shown in Table 11. Lawton had a total of 43,190 employees in 2017, which represents about 45.6% of the city population. The highest percentage (17.6%) of the civilian population was employed in ‘Office and Administrative Support Occupations’. ‘Sales and Related Occupations’ employed the second highest percentage of the employed population, employing 10.9% of civilian population. The third highest category is the ‘Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations’ employing about 10.7% of all civilian population.

Table 11: Employment by Major Occupations – 2017

All Occupations	Lawton	Oklahoma	United States
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	7,620 (17.64%)	255,960 (16.27%)	21,965,480 (15.41%)
Sales and Related Occupations	4,710 (10.91%)	162,610 (10.34%)	14,522,580 (10.19%)
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	4,600 (10.65%)	156,740 (9.96%)	13,193,090 (9.26%)
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	3,210 (7.43%)	91,970 (5.85%)	8,727,710 (6.12%)
Production Occupations	3,150 (7.29%)	102,570 (6.52%)	9,024,560 (6.33%)
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	2,660 (6.16%)	96,150 (6.11%)	8,506,740 (5.97%)
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	2,350 (5.44%)	106,020 (6.74%)	9,978,390 (7.00%)
Management Occupations	2,090 (4.84%)	87,330 (5.55%)	7,280,330 (5.11%)
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	1,980 (4.58%)	71,820 (4.57%)	5,528,390 (3.88%)
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	1,740 (4.03%)	69,400 (4.41%)	7,472,750 (5.24%)
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	1,500 (3.47%)		4,424,440 (3.10%)
Construction and Extraction Occupations	1,390 (3.22%)	81,480 (5.18%)	5,728,460 (4.02)

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table 12 shows employment by broad industry groups for the year 2018. Service sector contributes to 82.4% of total nonfarm jobs in Lawton as compared to 80.4% in Oklahoma and 71.1%. The top four service producing industries are retail trade (21%), leisure and hospitality (19.9%), professional and Business services (18.6%), Education and Health services (16.2%). Together these four areas constitute three-quarters of total service sector of employment. The other significant industry is 'Financial Activities' accounting for 9% of total employment.

Goods producing sector accounts for about 17% of private sector jobs in Lawton. Manufacturing sector constitutes about two-thirds of the goods producing sector. Construction, mining and logging accounts for 32% of jobs.

As reported in Table 12, private sector jobs account for 67% of total nonfarm jobs in Lawton. These jobs account for 79.1% and 85% of all nonfarm jobs in Oklahoma and United States respectively. A relatively high number of federal civilian jobs accounts for higher percentage of public sector jobs in Lawton as compared Oklahoma and USA.

Table 12: Employment by Industry Groups – 2018 (in percent)

	Lawton	Oklahoma	United States
Total Private as share of total nonfarm	67.0	79.1	85.0
<i>Good Producing as share of total private employment</i>	17.6	19.6	16.3
<i>Construction, mining and logging</i>	32.2	50.1	6.3
<i>Manufacturing</i>	67.8	49.9	10.0
Service providing as a share total private nonfarm	82.4	80.4	71.1
<i>Trade, Transportation and Utilities</i>	28.5	28.5	21.9
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	1.9	5.6	4.7
<i>Retail Trade</i>	21.0	16.7	12.5
<i>Transportation, warehouse and utilities</i>	5.4	6.2	4.2
<i>Information</i>	1.9	1.8	2.2
<i>Financial Activities</i>	9.1	7.4	6.8
<i>Professional and Business Services</i>	18.6	17.7	16.5
<i>Educational and Health Services</i>	16.2	22.0	15.7
<i>Leisure and Hospitality</i>	19.9	16.1	13.0
<i>Other Services</i>	1.6	6.5	4.6
Government as a share of total nonfarm	32.9	20.9	17.6
<i>Federal Government</i>	25.6	13.9	12.5
<i>State Government</i>	10.5	23.7	23
<i>Local Government</i>	63.8	62.4	64.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

4. Education

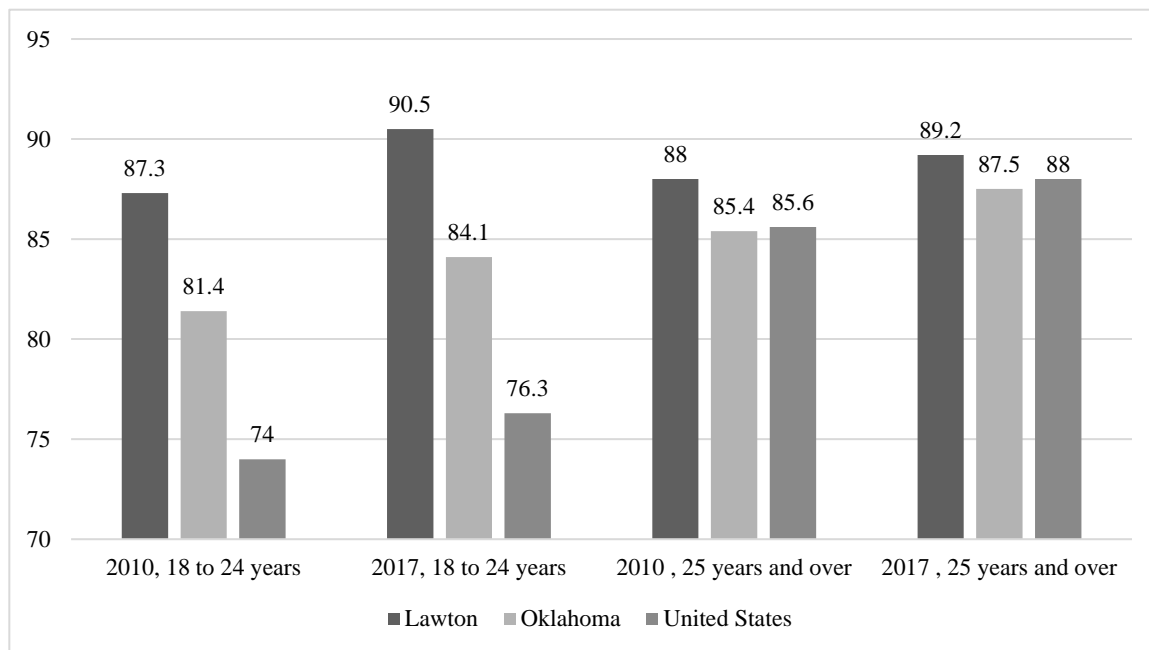
Table 13 shows average graduation rates for ‘high school or higher’ and ‘bachelor’s degree or higher’ degree holders among people aged 25 years and over for the period, 2012-2016. Lawton has a slightly higher graduation rate (88.8%) than either the state (87.3%) or the nation (87%) for the ‘high school graduate and higher group’. However, Lawton degree attainment for ‘bachelor’s degree (19.5%) and above’ falls behind that of Oklahoma (24.5%) or the USA (30.3%).

Table 13: High School and Bachelor’s Degree Graduation rates – 2012 to 2016

Degree	Lawton	Oklahoma	United States
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016	88.80%	87.30%	87.00%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016	19.50%	24.50%	30.30%

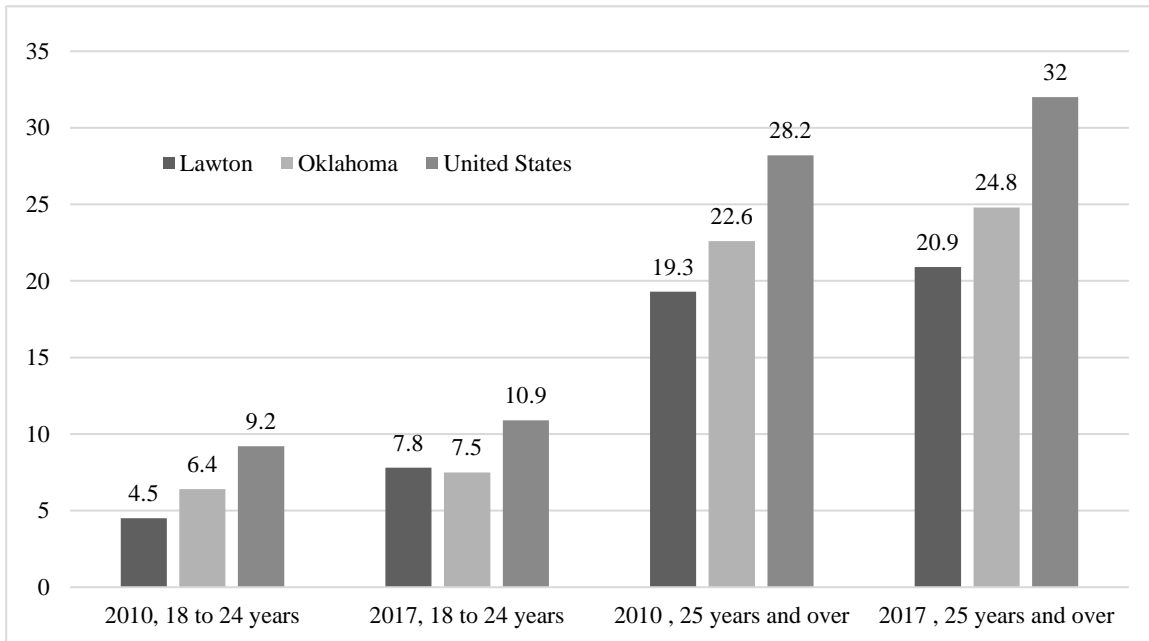
Figure 6 shows the high school and above graduation rates for students 18 to 24 years and 25 years and above for years 2010 and 2017. Both age groups show higher rates of graduation for Lawton than those of Oklahoma and the USA. For example, Lawton had 90.5% high school graduation rate, while Oklahoma and the USA had 84.1% and 76.3% graduation rates respectively. But for age groups 25 and over, Lawton still had a lead in the degree attainment, but the difference with the state and the nation narrowed down substantially. Figure 8 shows public educational spending per student from year 2007 to 2020. Educational spending increased by \$2000 during the period, while educational spending increased by \$800 and remained flat for Oklahoma.

Figure 6: Percentage of High School Graduation or Above



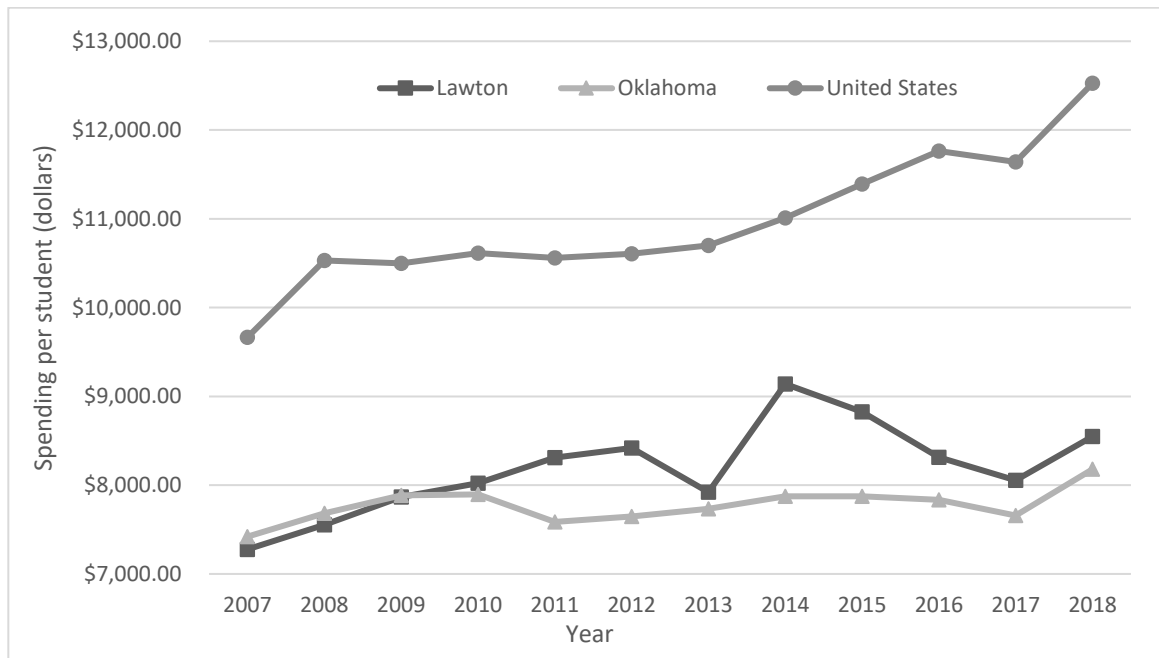
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010 and 2017 American Community Survey)

Figure 7: Percentage of Bachelor's Degree Completion or Above



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010 and 2017 American Community Survey) and 2018 Lawton-Fort Sill Economic Review and Forecast

Figure 8: Per Student Education Spending



Source: Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

5. Conclusion

The paper presents a snapshot of local, regional and national economies during the last decade. Even though the Lawton economy tracks closely state and national economies, certain characteristics of the city economy stand out. Lawton population has experienced a negative growth during the 2010-18 period and a bulge in older population. Other demographic characteristics such as race, gender age groups are very similar to those of the state and the nation. Per capita personal income, median household income, and median family income are all considerably less than those for the state and the nation. Growth rate in per capita income of Lawton exceeded those of the nation and the state in the previous decade, 2000-2010, but growth during the period, 2010-2018, has been slower than the state and the nation. The lackluster growth in the period can be explained by cutbacks in federal civilian and military spending in Fort Sill military base. The cost of living is slightly lower than the national average, with the exceptions of transportation and healthcare that are more expensive. The unemployment rate is lower than the national average but tends to stay higher than the state average. The composition of industries does not seem to have changed in the past ten years. Lawton has a higher rate of high school graduation than those of the state and the nation for all age groups. However, bachelor's degree completion rate for Lawton is lower than the United States by 3 percent for the 18 to 24-year age group and 11 percent lower for individuals 25 years or older.

Endnotes

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²Graduate student and research assistant.

³In some cases where 2018 data are not available, we used 2017 data.

⁴Economic Reviews and Forecast, 2019, Lawton Fort Sill Economic Development Corporation.

⁵Throughout the paper, the city of Lawton, the state of Oklahoma and the United States of America are sometimes referred to as the city, the state and the nation, respectively.

⁶Snead, Mark C. (2019). Economic Review and Outlook, May 15, 2019.

⁷Ibid.

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