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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Nebraska Meatpacking Industry Workers Bill of Rights 2026 Annual Report

December 1, 2026

Equal Opportunity Program/Employer TDD/TTY: 800-833-7352
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Introduction

The position of the Meatpacking Industry Worker Rights Coordinator is established with the purpose of inspecting and reviewing the practices and procedures of meatpacking operations in the state of Nebraska, as they relate to the provisions of the Nebraska Meatpacking Industry Workers Bill of Rights, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 48-2213(2).

The Meatpacking Industry Worker Rights Coordinator's objective is to bring awareness to industry employers and workers by promoting safety and fair employment practices. The coordinator assists employers in complying with state and federal laws and refers issues to the corresponding agencies.

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 48-2213(2), the coordinator is required to submit a report to the members of the Legislature and the Governor on or before December 1 of each year.

Meatpacking Industry Workers Bill of Rights

The Nebraska Department of Labor has worked to build awareness of the Meatpacking Industry Workers Bill of Rights since its enactment in 2000. The coordinator continues to work to educate and inform employers and workers on the Nebraska Meatpacking Industry Workers Bill of Rights, which includes:

1. The right to organize;
2. The right to a safe workplace;
3. The right to adequate facilities and the opportunity to use them;
4. The right to complete information;
5. The right to understand the information provided;
6. The right to existing state and federal benefits and rights;
7. The right to be free from discrimination;
8. The right to continuing training, including training of supervisors;
9. The right to compensation for work performed;
10. The right to seek State help.

Meatpacking Operation Inspection Procedures

The Meatpacking Industry Worker Rights Coordinator performs inspections at meatpacking facilities throughout the state.

During inspections, the coordinator interviews the human resources manager and/or management team regarding their facility and their policies and procedures as they relate to the Bill of Rights.

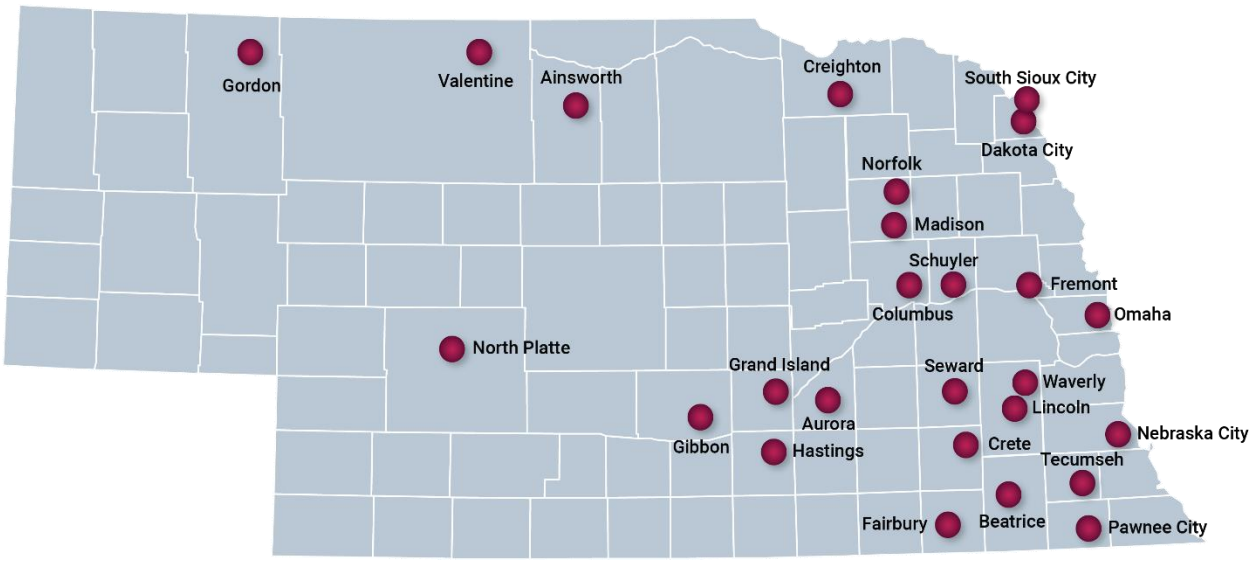
The coordinator tours the facility, which includes the production floors, locker rooms, break rooms, restrooms, poster area, nursing mothers' room, etc. During the tour, the coordinator selects employees to be interviewed privately. After the tour is completed, the coordinator interviews the employees to discuss matters related to the Bill of Rights. The coordinator also distributes handouts with the Bill of Rights, including contact information.

After the visit, the coordinator reviews the facility's policies, completes a detailed report, forwards recommendations to the human resources representative, and refers any issues to the appropriate agency.

2026 Inspections Activity

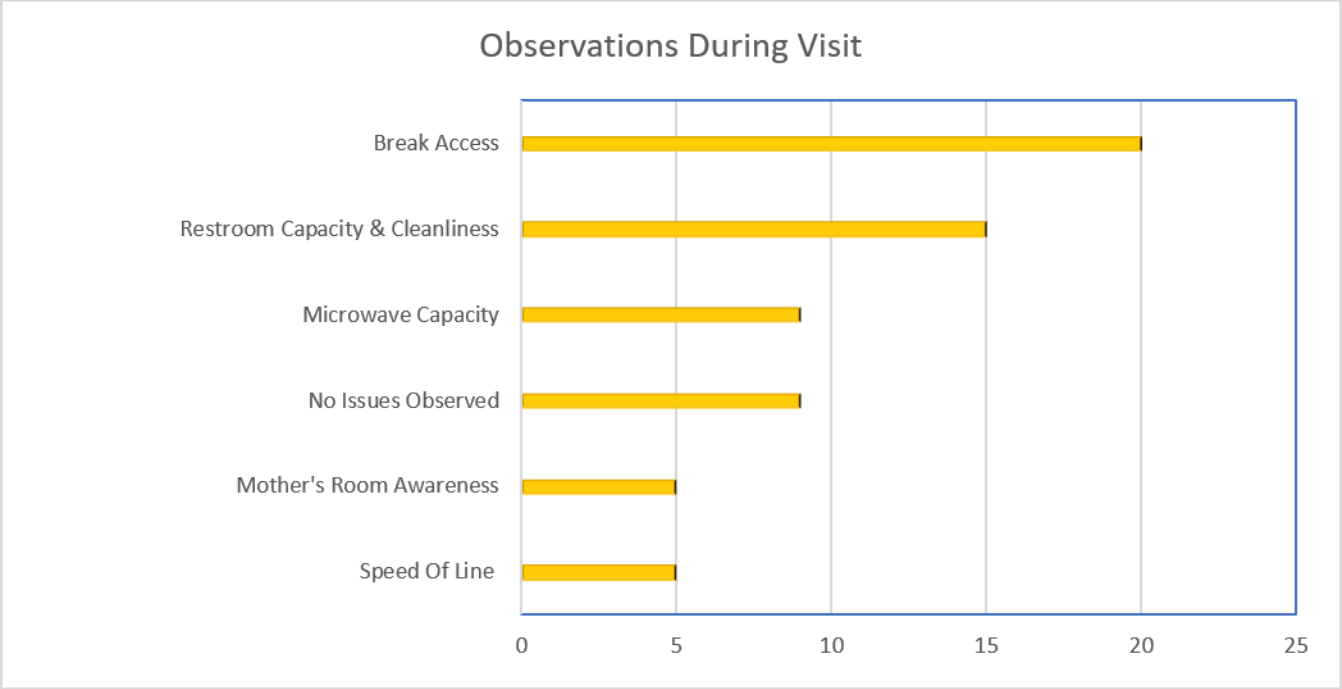
The coordinator completed 40 visits to meatpacking facilities. The facilities visited range in employee count from 5 – 4,108 and employ a combined 27,668 workers.
A total of 308 employees were interviewed during the visits with an average of six to ten per facility.

Cities visited in reporting year:



Observations During Visits

The coordinator made recommendations to employers regarding observed issues and forwarded applicable concerns to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).



Meatpacking Workers Complaints

The coordinator receives complaints through phone calls, emails, wage complaint filings, and interviews conducted during onsite visits. The most common concerns involve misuse of authority, restroom capacity and sanitation, discrimination, microwave capacity, restricted restroom access, production line speed, the lack of a mother's room, and dirty or slippery production floors. The coordinator informs employees of their rights and directs them to the appropriate agency or resource based on the nature of their concern.

The coordinator communicates with the HR managers to address complaints and works with the facility to find the best outcome for the employees. Most of the facilities have been willing to work with the coordinator to make necessary changes for their employees. However, a few facilities have been reluctant to respond to the coordinator's recommendations, or do not respond at all. The Meatpacking Bill of Rights does not permit the coordinator to impose any consequences for noncompliance.

Positive Outcomes

- Strengthened leadership awareness and accountability regarding respectful treatment of associates, effective communication, and employee engagement.
- Enhanced leadership effectiveness through targeted coaching and constructive feedback provided to managers and supervisors.
- Improved consistency and understanding of break period expectations through renewed communications and reinforcement of site policies.
- Wages owed were paid to employees.

General Recommendations

It is recommended that every meatpacking facility provide additional training on workplace safety, enhance ergonomics programs, and promote awareness of employee rights related to workplace injuries, discrimination, and retaliation.

Efforts to enhance awareness of the Meatpacking Workers Bill of Rights and the role of the coordinator are essential to the success of the program.