

Richardson County Labor Basin

Labor Availability Analysis

Atchison MO • Brown KS • Doniphan KS • Holt MO • Johnson NE
Nemaha KS • Nemaha NE • Pawnee NE • Richardson NE



Prepared For

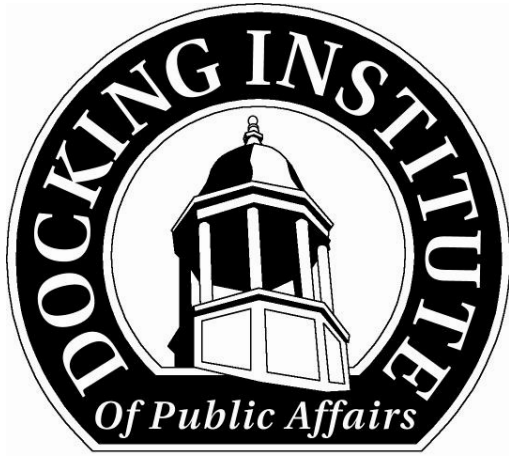
Falls City Economic Development and Growth Enterprise, Inc. (EDGE)

By

The Docking Institute of Public Affairs

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Mission:

To Facilitate Effective Public Policy Decision-Making.

The staff of the Docking Institute of Public Affairs and its University Center for Survey Research are dedicated to serving the people of Kansas and surrounding states.

Richardson County Labor Basin Labor Availability Analysis

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Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	ii
List of Figures	iii
List of Maps.....	iv
Glossary of Terms.....	v
Executive Summary	1
The Richardson County Labor Basin	3
The Richardson County Labor Basin’s Available Labor Pool	4
Current Skills and Work Experiences	9
Educational Experience, Skills Self-Assessment, and Job Satisfaction	16
Considerations for Employment.....	19
Wage Demands	22
<i>Wage Demands (of those Indicating a Willingness to Commute)</i>	24
<i>Wage Demands by Occupational Sector (for those Indicating a Willingness to Commute)</i>	25
Underutilization/Underemployment Among Available Labor Pool Workers	27
Methodology	30
<i>Explaining the Civilian Labor Force</i>	30
<i>Defining the Available Labor Pool</i>	30
<i>Survey Research Methods</i>	31
Appendix I: Current Employment Status of Available Labor Pool.....	33
Appendix II: Hourly Wage to Annual Salary Conversion Chart.....	34

List of Tables

Table 1: Age, Gender, and Education Levels of Available Labor Pool	7
Table 2: Major Occupational Categories of Available Labor.....	8
Table 3: Current Work Experience plus Previous Work or Training Experience	9
Table 4a: Previous Employment of Workers Employed Less Than Three Years	14
Table 4b: Reason for Leaving Previous Job	14
Table 5: Job Satisfaction Among Available Labor Pool and Non-Available Labor Pool	18
Table 6: Available Labor by Commute Minutes	20
Table 7: Desired Benefits and Current Benefits Offered.....	21
Table 8: Cumulative Wage Demands by Occupational Sector (for those Indicating a Willingness to Commute)	25
Table 9: Highest Level of Education Achieved Among Underutilized/Underemployed.....	28
Table 10: Population and Employment/Labor Figures for the Richardson County Labor Basin.	30
Table 11: Survey Research Methods.....	32

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Available Labor Pool for the Richardson County Labor Basin.....	5
Figure 2: Occupational Sectors of Available Labor (Employed Only)	8
Figure 3: Current Work Experience plus Previous Work or Training Experience	10
Figure 4: Work Experience / Willing to Work in Field.....	11
Figure 5: Work Experience in Manufacturing or Processing Plant.....	12
Figure 6: Work Experience in Distribution Center or Warehouse	12
Figure 7: Employed and Non-Employed Members of the Available Labor Pool	13
Figure 8: Current Job More / Less than Three Years	13
Figure 9: Previous Full-Time Job	13
Figure 10: Undergraduate College Major.....	16
Figure 11: Attending / Attended Technical School.....	16
Figure 12: Technical Degree.....	17
Figure 13: Skills Self-Assessment	17
Figure 14: Job Satisfaction among Working Available Labor Pool	18
Figure 15: Willing to Work Outside of Primary Field	19
Figure 16: Willingness to Work Second Shift.....	19
Figure 17: Willingness to Rotating Shift	19
Figure 18: Willingness to Work Weekend Shift.....	19
Figure 19: Available Labor by Commute Minutes	20
Figure 20: Benefits Very Important to Change Employment.....	21
Figure 21: Available Labor by Hourly Wage	22
Figure 22: Desired Wages and Minutes Willing to Travel	23
Figure 23: Available Labor by Hourly Wage (for those Indicating a Willingness to Commute)...	24
Figure 24: Employed and Unemployed Members of the Available Labor Pool.....	27
Figure 25: Underutilized/Underemployed Workers	27
Figure 26: Reasons for Underutilization/Underemployment	28
Figure 27: Occupational Sectors of Underutilized/Underemployed Workers	29
Figure 28: Willing to Change Job to Better Use Skills/Education	29

List of Maps

Map 1: Richardson County Labor Basin	3
Map 2: Percent of Total Available Labor in Basin by Zip Code.....	6
Map 3: Workplaces by Zip Code	15
Map 4: Percent of Total Available Labor in Basin by Zip Code (Indicating a Willingness to Commute)	26

Glossary of Terms

Richardson County Labor Basin – The Richardson County Labor Basin includes nine counties in Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri. The counties in Nebraska include Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, and Richardson. The counties in Kansas include Brown, Doniphan, and Nemaha. The counties in Missouri include Atchison and Holt.

Civilian Labor Force – The Civilian Labor Force represents “the civilian non-institutional population, 16 years of age and over classified as employed or unemployed.” The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines “non-institutional civilians” as those individuals who are not inmates in institutions and who are not on active duty in the Armed Forces; and “unemployed civilians” as civilians available for work and who had “made specific efforts to find employment” in the previous four weeks.

Available Labor Pool – The Available Labor Pool is composed of workers and potential categorized as either 1) currently not working *but* looking for employment, 2) currently employed (full- or part-time) *and* looking for other full-time employment, 3) currently not working in any manner *but* willing to consider different employment for the *right opportunity*, and 4) currently employed and not looking, *but* willing to consider different employment for the *right opportunity*.

Desired Wage – The desired wage is the hourly wage that a respondent would consider accepting to take a new or different job given the right opportunities. If a respondent offered a yearly salary instead of an hourly wage, the yearly salary was divided by 2,080 to convert the salary to an hourly wage.

Minutes Willing to Travel – “Minutes Willing to Travel” indicates the minutes that a respondent is willing to travel, one way, for a new or different job opportunity given the right opportunities.

Necessary Travel Time – “Necessary Travel Time” is the number of minutes that a respondent indicates he or she is willing to travel that is equal to or greater than the estimated travel time necessary for the respondent to actually commute from his or her zip code of residence to the zip code at the center of the labor basin. For example, a respondent that is willing to travel for 30 minutes, one-way, for a new or different job and that lives an estimated 15 minutes from Falls City is considered “willing to commute the necessary travel time” for a new job.

Willing to Commute Available Labor Pool – The “willing to commute Available Labor Pool” is subset of the Available Labor Pool that is composed of those members of the Available Labor Pool that are willing to travel the necessary travel time for a new or different job opportunity.

Underutilization/Underemployment – Individuals that perceive themselves as possessing skills and/or training levels that exceed the responsibilities of their current job are considered underutilized/underemployed.

Job Sectors – “Job sectors” include General Labor, High-Skilled Blue Collar, Service Sector, and Professional White Collar. Examples of each include:

General Labor includes occupations such as cleaning, construction, delivery, and maintenance.

High-Skill Blue Collar includes occupations such as police, fire-fighting, postal worker, welding, high-skilled mechanics, computer technician, and lab technician.

Service Sector includes occupations such as clerical worker, waitress, retail sales clerk, bookkeeping, para-professional, certified nurse’s assistant, licensed practical nurse, and small business manager.

Professional White Collar includes occupations such as teacher, administrator, business executive, professional sales, doctor, lawyer, professor, and engineer.

Richardson County Labor Basin Labor Availability Analysis

Executive Summary

The Richardson County Labor Basin includes counties in Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri. The purpose of this report is to assess the “Available Labor Pool” in this labor basin. The “Available Labor Pool” represents those who indicate that they are looking for employment or would consider changing their jobs for the right employment opportunity.

The Docking Institute’s independent analysis of this labor basin shows that:

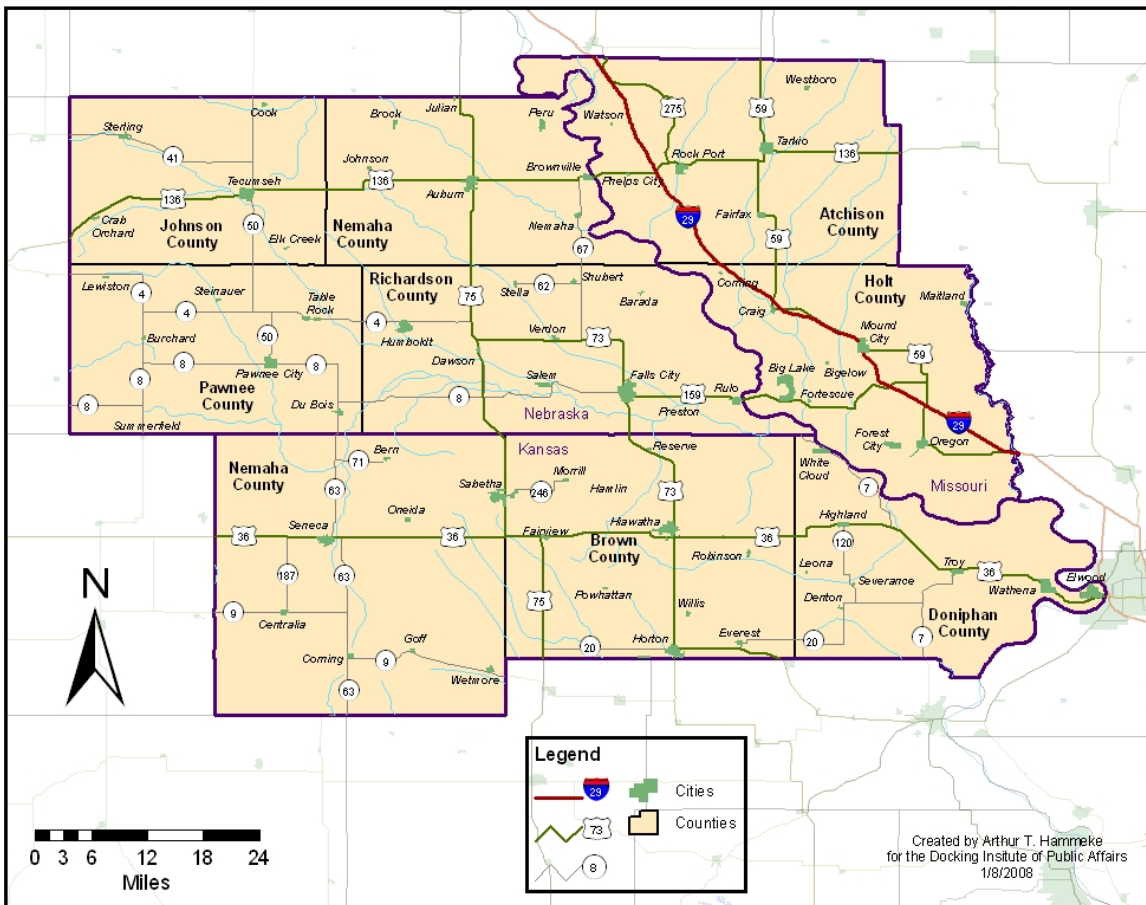
- The population of the Richardson County Labor Basin is estimated to be 62,985. About 21% of the population (or 13,274 individuals) are considered to be part of the Available Labor Pool.
- Of the Available Labor Pool an estimated 737 (5.6%) non-working and 3,171 (23.9%) working individuals are *looking* for new employment, while 664 (5.0%) non-working and 8,702 (65.6%) working individuals would *consider* new and/or different employment for the right opportunities.
- Almost 65% of the Available Labor Pool has at least some college experience and slightly more than 96% has at least a high school diploma. The average age for members of the Available Labor Pool is about 44 years old and women make up 52% of the Available Labor Pool. Almost 22% indicate that they speak “at least a little” Spanish.
- An estimated 2,874 members of the Available Labor Pool currently work in general labor occupations (such as cleaning, construction, delivery, and maintenance), while an additional 1,550 work in government services occupations (such as police and fire) or technical/high skill blue collar occupations (such as welder and lab technician).
- An estimated 4,949 members of the Available Labor Pool currently work in service sector occupations (such as clerical worker, retail sales clerk, certified nurse’s assistant, small business manager), while an additional 2,521 work in white-collar professional occupations (such as administrator, doctor, teacher, and professional sales).
- When asked if they need “much training, some training, or no training” to take a job requiring various skills, majorities of Available Labor Pool members report needing “no training” for jobs requiring them to work in team settings (83%), to use math (58%), and to manage others (51%). On the other hand, most Available Labor Pool members report needing at least “some training” in writing (55%), public speaking (61%), and computer operations (71%).
- About 91% of the Available Labor Pool indicates that they are “willing to work outside of their primary field of employment for a new or different employment opportunity.”
- Of the *employed members* of the Available Labor Pool, 2,550 (21%) have been employed in their current job for less than three years.

- Almost 41% of the members of the Available Labor Pool will commute up to 45 minutes, one way, for an employment opportunity. Slightly more than 86% will commute up to 30 minutes, one way, for employment.
- The most important desired benefits in order are good health benefits, good salary or hourly wage, on-the-job or paid training, good retirement benefits, and good vacation benefits.
- An estimated 7,162 people (54% of the Available Labor Pool) are interested in a new job at \$15 an hour, 4,538 (34%) are interested at \$12 an hour, and 1,800 (14%) are interested at \$9 an hour.
- Of the 11,873 members in the subset of *employed members* of the Available Labor Pool, 4,552 (38%) consider themselves underutilized.

The Richardson County Labor Basin

The Richardson County Labor Basin includes nine counties located in southeastern Nebraska, northeastern Kansas and northwestern Missouri (see Map 1 below). The criterion used to include a county in this labor basin is whether it contains communities from which, it can be reasonably assumed, individuals may commute to the center of the labor basin (Falls City) for an employment opportunity. In the case of the Richardson County Labor Basin, it can be reasonably assumed that individuals may commute from (and within) one of the nine neighboring counties because these counties contain: 1) communities that are sufficiently isolated but with adequate transportation access leading to Falls City, and 2) communities that are within an hour's commute time to the center of the labor basin.

Map 1: Richardson County Labor Basin



The Richardson County Labor Basin has a total population of approximately 62,985, and a Civilian Labor Force of 33,883. There is an unemployment rate of 3.9%, and this research effort suggests that there is an ample supply of available labor for a new employer and/or expanded employment.

The Docking Institute's analysis suggests that the basin contains an Available Labor Pool of 13,274 individuals. The Available Labor Pool is composed of workers categorized as either 1) currently not working *but* looking for full-time employment, 2) currently employed (full- or part-

time) *and* looking for other full-time employment, 3) currently not working in any manner *but* willing to consider full-time employment for the *right opportunity*, and 4) currently employed and not looking, *but* willing to consider different full-time employment for the *right opportunity*. Please see the Methodology section – page 30 – for more information about the Institute’s Available Labor Pool analysis methodology and the survey research methods used for this report.

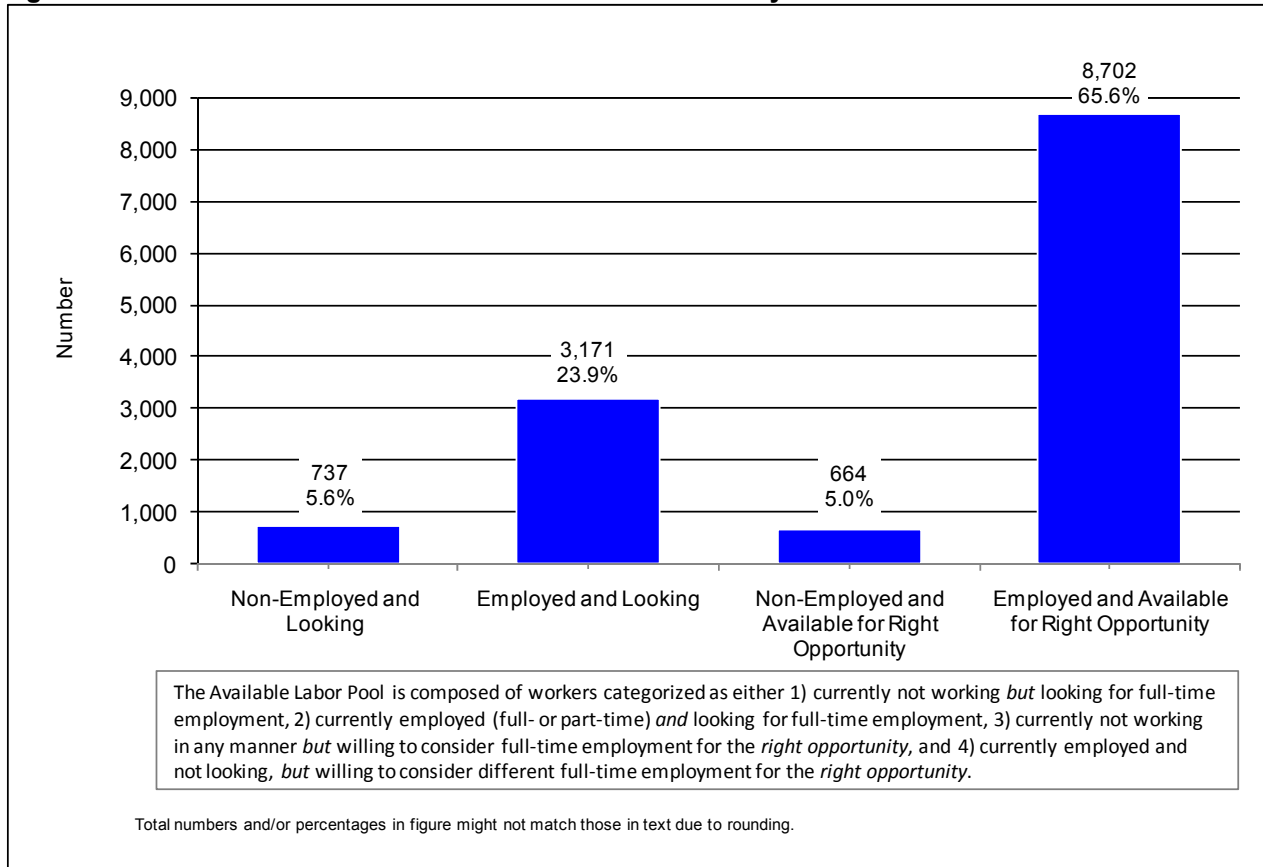
The Richardson County Labor Basin’s Available Labor Pool

This section of the report assesses the characteristics of the Available Labor Pool in the Richardson County Labor Basin by answering the following questions:

- What proportion of the labor force – employed, unemployed, homemaker, student, retired, and disabled – would seriously consider applying for a new full-time employment opportunity?
- What skills do those who would consider a new employment opportunity have?
- What type of jobs have these workers and potential workers had in the past?
- What types of considerations (pay, benefits, commute time) shape their decision-making?
- What are some of the characteristics of the general laborers, skilled blue-collar workers, service and support workers, and professional white-collar workers?
- What proportion of the Available Labor Pool is willing to change fields of employment?
- What work shifts are the Available Labor Pool willing to work?
- What is the level of job satisfaction among the Available Labor Pool and non-Available Labor Pool?
- What proportion of the employed Available Labor Pool is considered “underutilized/underemployed“?
- What are some of the characteristics of those underutilized workers?

It is estimated that 737 (5.6% of the Available Labor Pool) non-employed¹ and 3,171 (23.9%) employed individuals are *currently looking* for new or different full-time employment, and 664 (5.0%) non-employed individuals and 8,702 (65.6%) employed individuals *would consider* new or different full-time employment for the right opportunities.

Figure 1: The Available Labor Pool for the Richardson County Labor Basin



¹ The terms “non-employed” and “non-working” refer to officially unemployed members of the Civilian Labor Force as well as any non-employed/non-working full-time students, homemakers, retirees, and disabled individuals.

Map 2 shows how each zip code in the basin compares to all other zip codes in terms of the percent of total available labor in the Richardson County Labor Basin. Each zip code is grouped into one of five categories specified in the legend. Ten percent and more of the available labor are located in zip code areas within Richardson County. Between 5% and 9.99% of the available labor is also located within Nemaha County in Nebraska, and Brown and Doniphan Counties in Kansas. Between 3% and 4.99% of the available labor pool is located within Johnson County in Nebraska, Nemaha County in Kansas, and Atchison and Holt Counties in Missouri.

Map 2: Percent of Total Available Labor in Basin by Zip Code

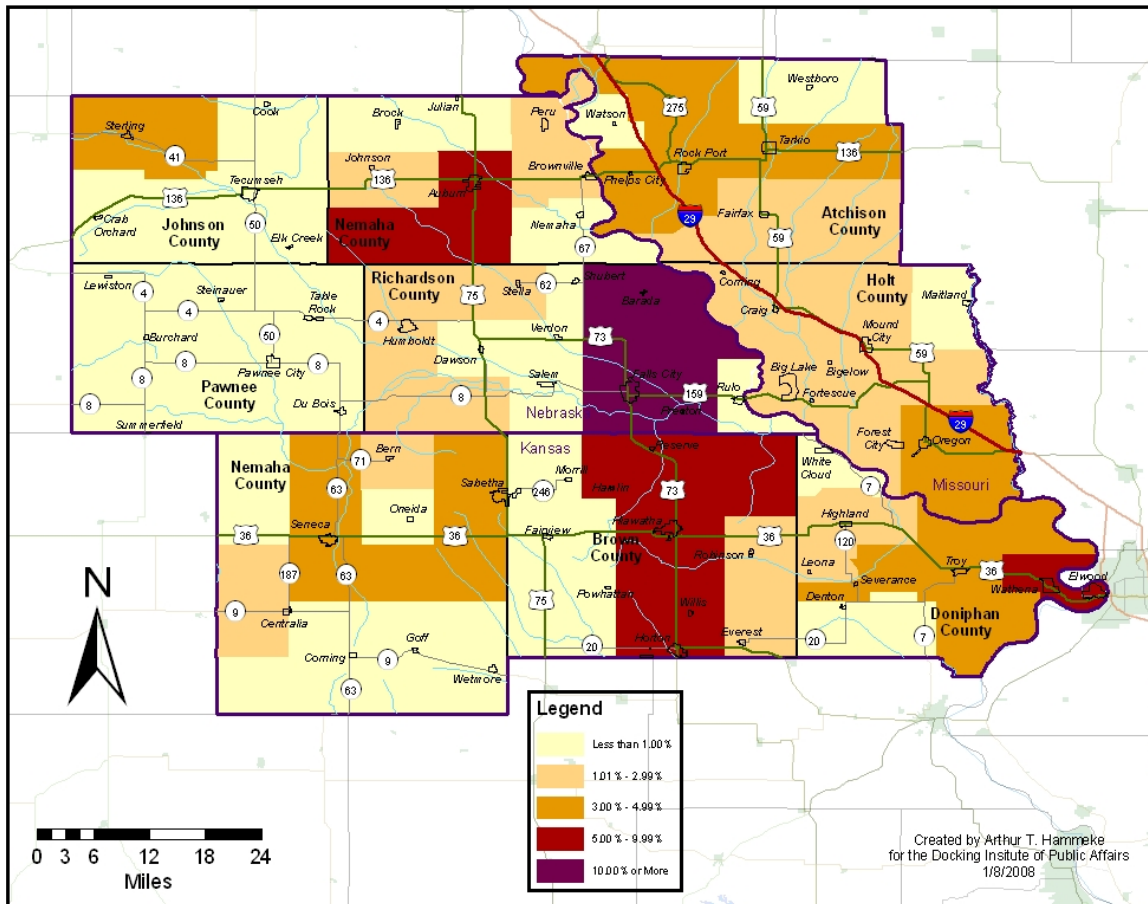


Table 1 shows the gender, age, and education levels of the 13,274-member Available Labor Pool. Slightly more than 52% percent are women, and the average age is about 44. Most (96.3%) have at least a high school diploma, about two-thirds (64.5%) have at least some college education, and more than a quarter (26.6%) have at least a bachelor's degree.

Table 1: Age, Gender, and Education Levels of Available Labor Pool

Age	Age in 2007		
Range	18 to 76		
Average	44		
Median	45		
Gender	Number	Percent	
Female	6,913	52.1	
Male	6,360	47.9	
Total	13,274	100	
Highest Level of Education Achieved	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Doctoral Degree	77	0.6	0.6
Masters Degree	999	7.5	8.1
Bachelors Degree	2,461	18.5	26.6
Associates Degree	1,547	11.7	38.3
Some College (including current students)	3,478	26.2	64.5
High School Diploma	4,219	31.8	96.3
Less HS Diploma	493	3.7	100
Total	13,274	100	
"Do you speak Spanish?"	Number	Percent	
"Yes"	2,885	21.7	
<i>Speak Very Well</i>	151	5.2	} <i>These percentages represent portions of 21.7%</i>
<i>Speak Fairly Well</i>	316	11.0	
<i>Speak Only a Little</i>	2,417	83.8	
		100	

Total numbers or percentages in table might not match those in text due to rounding.

Table 2 shows the various occupational categories of the 13,274-member Available Labor Pool. General labor occupations represent 21.6% of the entire Available Labor Pool, while high-skilled blue-collar jobs make up 11.7%. Traditional service-related occupations represent 37.3% of the Available Labor Pool, while professional occupations represent 19% of the Available Labor Pool.

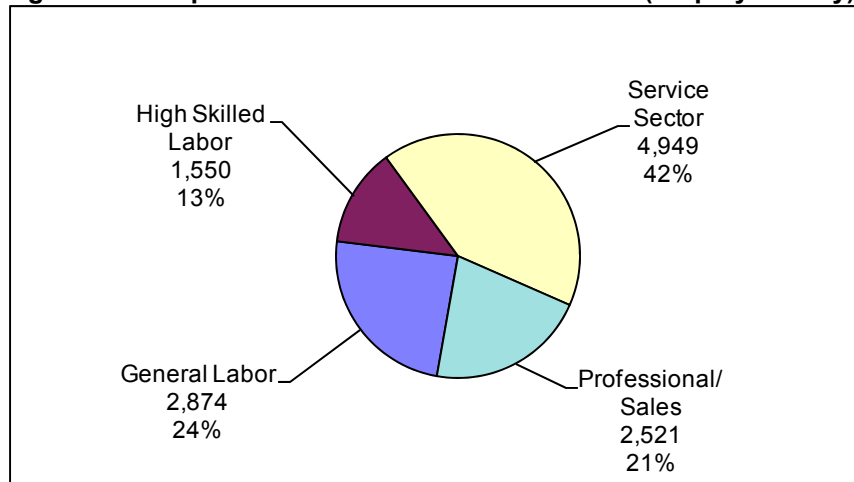
Table 2: Major Occupational Categories of Available Labor

	Number	Percent	Years at Job	
			Mean	Median
General Labor/Cleaning/Farm Labor/Delivery	1,432	10.8	9.7	5.6
Maintenance/Factory Work	1,150	8.7	6.7	3.0
Trucking/Heavy Equipment Operation	291	2.2	14.5	12.7
Total General Labor	2,874	21.6	10.3	7.1
Gov't Service/Protective Service	504	3.8	9.1	9.0
Technician/Mechanic/Welder	1,046	7.9	14.9	13.3
Total Highly-Skilled Labor	1,550	11.7	12.0	11.2
Customer Service/Receptionist/Food Service	1,296	9.8	8.3	7.0
Clerical/Secretarial	1,584	11.9	8.4	6.0
Social Service/Para-Professional/Nursing	1,640	12.4	5.9	4.4
Office Manager/Small Business Owner	429	3.2	11.0	4.6
Total Service Sector	4,949	37.3	8.4	5.5
Gov't & Business Professional/Sales	1,110	8.4	14.4	16.1
Educator/Counselor/Doctor/Attorney	1,411	10.6	13.6	13.4
Total Professional	2,521	19.0	14.0	14.7
Homemakers/Unemployed	1,161	8.7	n/a	n/a
Students	82	0.6	n/a	n/a
Retired/Disabled	138	1.0	n/a	n/a
Total Non-Employed	1,380	10.4		
Total	13,274	100		

Total numbers or percentages in table might not match those in text due to rounding.

Figure 2 shows the occupational sectors of the *employed members* of the Available Labor Pool only. The *percentages* shown in Figure 2 differ from those presented in Table 2 because the table includes non-working Available Labor Pool members. Appendix I provides a detailed list of occupations.

Figure 2: Occupational Sectors of Available Labor (Employed Only)



Current Skills and Work Experiences

To gain perspective on the types of workers who are available for new and/or different employment in the Richardson County Labor Basin, survey respondents were asked questions assessing work skills and previous work experience.

Table 3 and Figure 3 (next page) show the current employment status and previous work or training experience of Available Labor Pool members. Table 3 shows the number of workers currently employed in various job categories, as well as the number of workers that have previous work or training experience. The table also shows the sum of working Available Labor Pool members currently employed in a job category *plus* those that indicate previous training or experience in that particular field.

It is estimated, for example, that 769 members of the Available Labor Pool in the Richardson County Labor Basin are currently employed as general labor, construction, cleaners, and similar positions. An additional 315 Available Labor Pool members in the basin indicate previous employment experience or training in one of those jobs, for a total of 1,084 individuals.

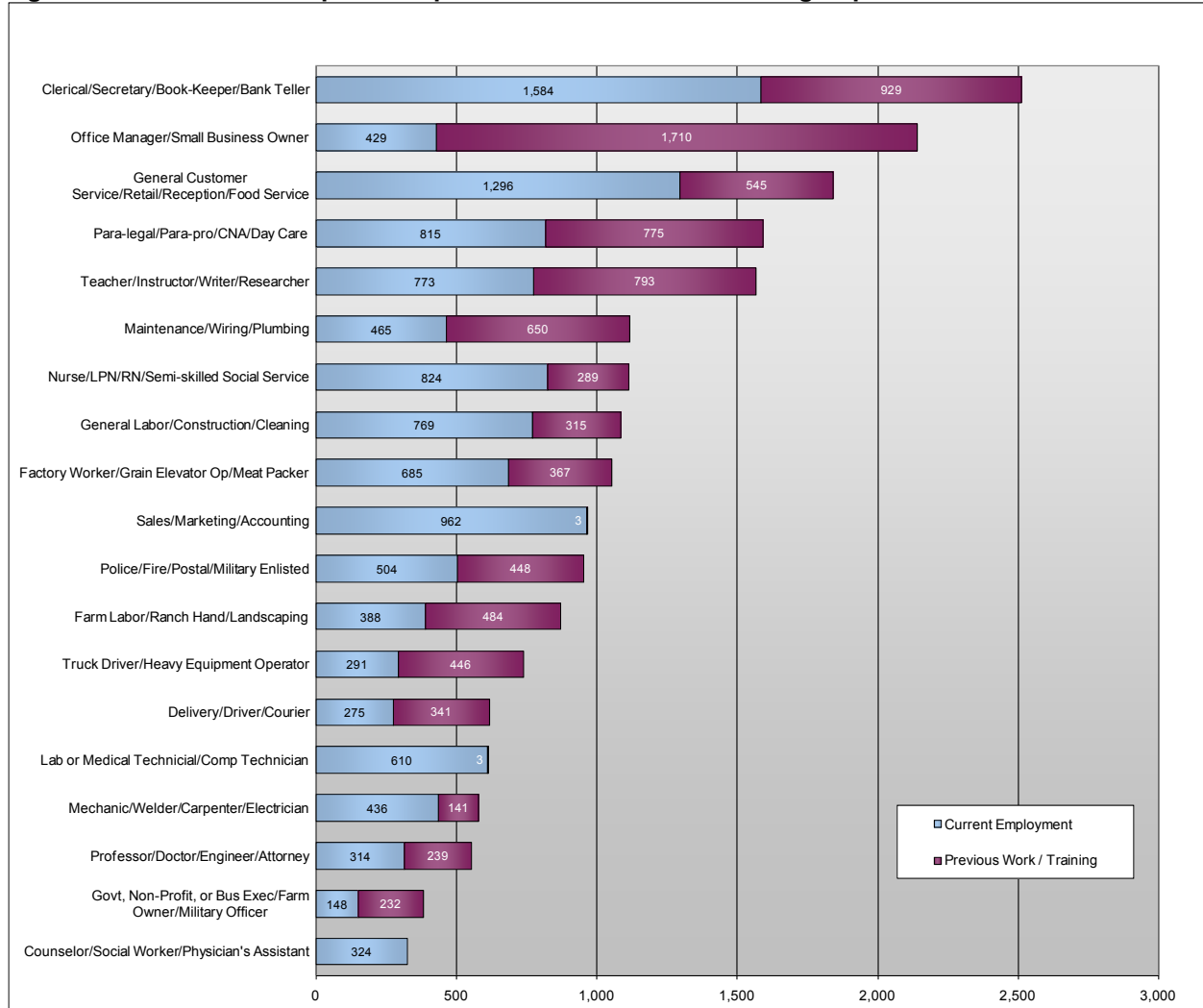
Table 3: Current Work Experience plus Previous Work or Training Experience

	Current Employment*	Previous Work/Training*	Current plus Previous Work or Training**
	Number +	Number =	Number
General Labor/Construction/Cleaning	769	315	1,084
Farm Labor/Ranch Hand/Landscaping	388	484	872
Delivery/Driver/Courier	275	341	616
Maintenance/Wiring/Plumbing	465	650	1,115
Factory Worker/Grain Elevator Op/Meat Packer	685	367	1,053
Truck Driver/Heavy Equipment Operator	291	446	738
Police/Fire/Postal/Military Enlisted	504	448	952
Mechanic/Welder/Carpenter/Electrician	436	141	577
Lab or Medical Technical/Comp Technician	610	3	612
General Customer Service/Retail/Reception/Food Service	1,296	545	1,841
Clerical/Secretary/Book-Keeper/Bank Teller	1,584	929	2,513
Para-legal/Para-pro/CNA/Day Care	815	775	1,590
Nurse/LPN/RN/Semi-skilled Social Service	824	289	1,113
Office Manager/Small Business Owner	429	1,710	2,139
Teacher/Instructor/Writer/Researcher	773	793	1,566
Sales/Marketing/Accounting	962	3	965
Govt, Non-Profit, or Bus Exec/Farm Owner/Military Officer	148	232	380
Counselor/Social Worker/Physician's Assistant	324	0	324
Professor/Doctor/Engineer/Attorney	314	239	553
Total	11,893	8,709	

* Retired, disabled, non-working students, homemakers are not included.
 ** An individual member of the ALP is counted only once within each employment category.
 Total numbers or percentages in table might not match those in text due to rounding.

Figure 3 shows the same information as that presented in Table 3, but in graphic format. Many Available Labor Pool members report current work experience or previous work/training as clerical workers, book-keepers, bank tellers, and similar positions that often require some face-to-face interaction with the public as well as some quantitative or organizational skills. There are 1,584 working Available Labor Pool members currently employed in this category and 929 previously employed/trained in this category, for a total of 2,513 individuals.

Figure 3: Current Work Experience plus Previous Work or Training Experience



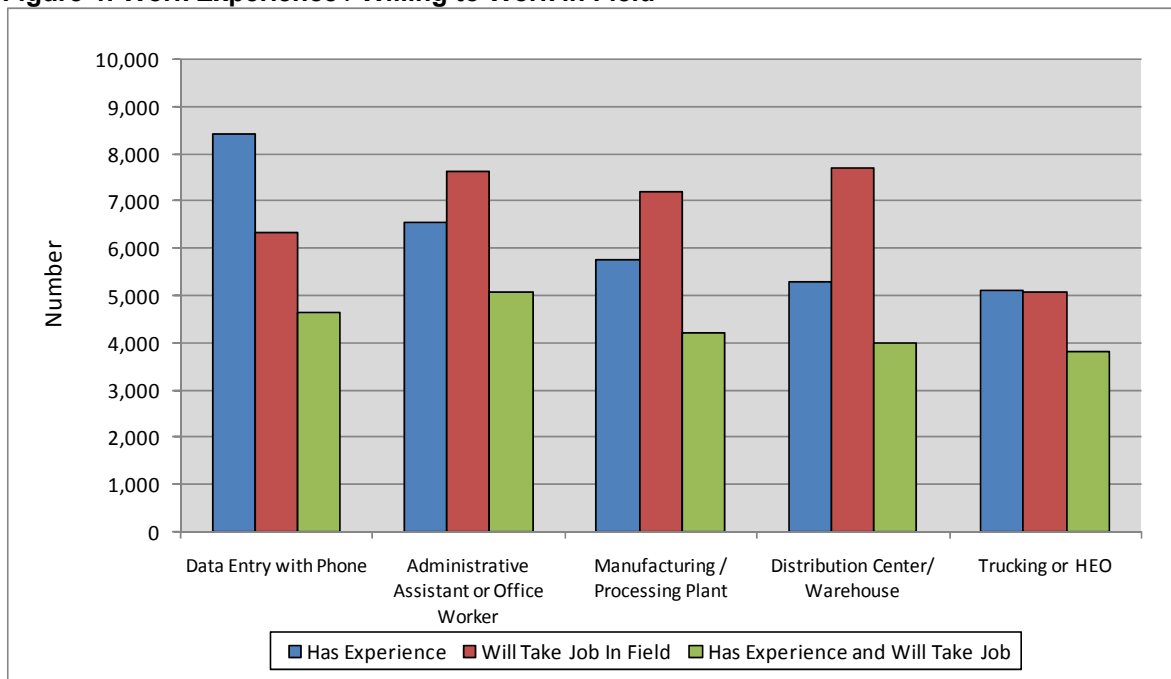
In addition to collecting data regarding the current employment status and previous work or training experience through a series of “open-ended” survey questions (the results of which are shown in the previous table and figure), respondents were asked about the five specific employment areas listed in Figure 4. Respondents were first asked if they had training or work experience in a specific field and then if they would take a job in that field regardless of their prior training or experience.

The figure indicates that an estimated 8,437 individuals (or 64% of the Available Labor Pool) report having training and/or experience in data entry with telephone operation, while fewer (6,330 individuals or about 48% of the Available Labor Pool) would consider employment in that field. Almost half (49%) of the Available Labor Pool (or an estimated 6,556 individuals) have training and/or experience in professional office environments as office workers or administrative assistants, while more (57% or about 7,622 individuals) indicate that they would take a job in that field.

Less than half (43%) of the Available Labor Pool (or an estimated 5,746 individuals) suggest that they have training or experience working in a manufacturing plant and 40% have training or experience in a distribution center or warehouse. More (54% and 58%, respectively) would consider a job in these fields.

The third column shows the percent and estimated number that have experience or training in a field **and** are willing to work in that field again.

Figure 4: Work Experience / Willing to Work in Field



Survey respondents who indicated that they had worked in manufacturing and processing and those that indicated that they had worked in distribution/warehousing were asked additional questions to assess the type of work they performed at those jobs. Figures 5 and 6 show the responses to those questions.

Figure 5: Work Experience in Manufacturing or Processing Plant

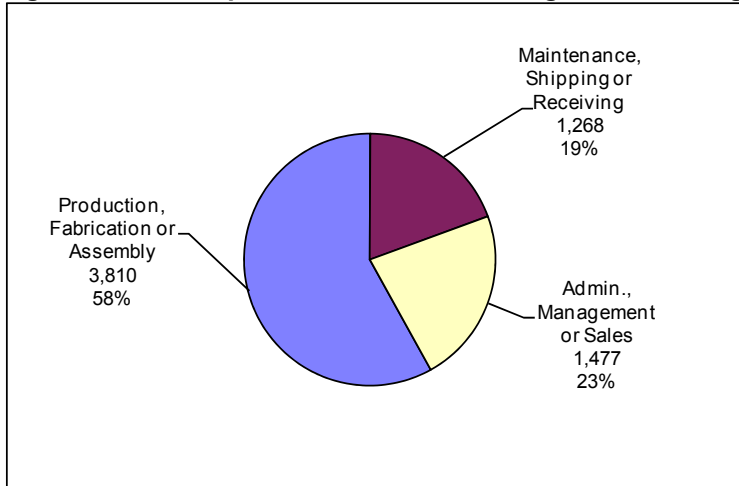
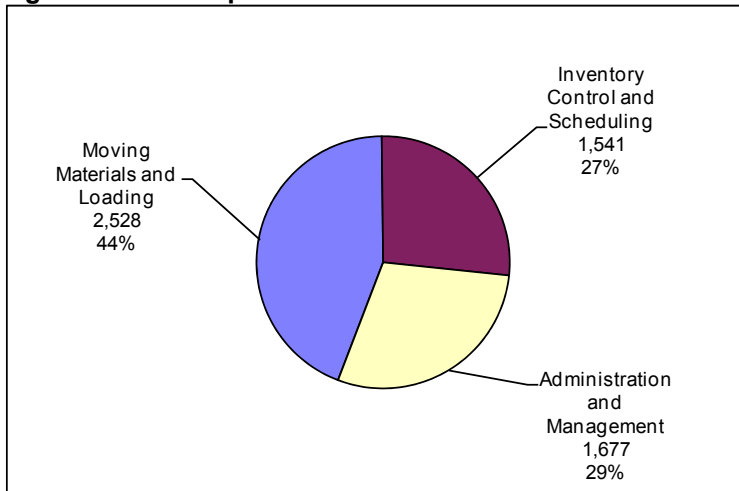


Figure 6: Work Experience in Distribution Center or Warehouse



Employed Available Labor Pool members that indicated that they had worked at their current jobs for less than three years were asked if they had previous full-time employment. Figure 7 shows that most of the Available Labor Pool is employed (89% or 11,893 individuals) and Figure 8 shows that 21% (2,550 individuals) of the employed Available Labor Pool have held their current work positions for less than three years. Of these workers, 70% (1,792 individuals) have had previous full-time employment (see Figure 9).

Figure 7: Employed and Non-Employed Members of the Available Labor Pool

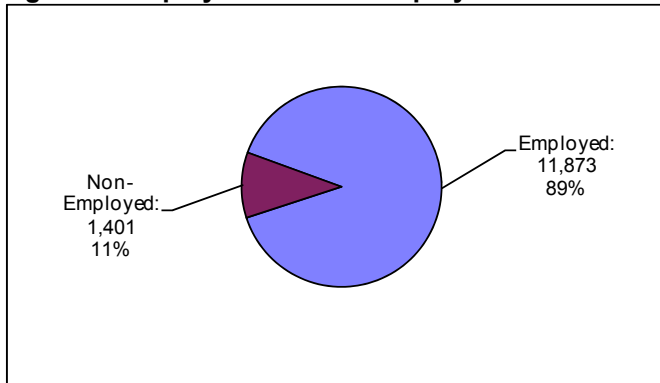


Figure 8: Current Job More / Less than Three Years

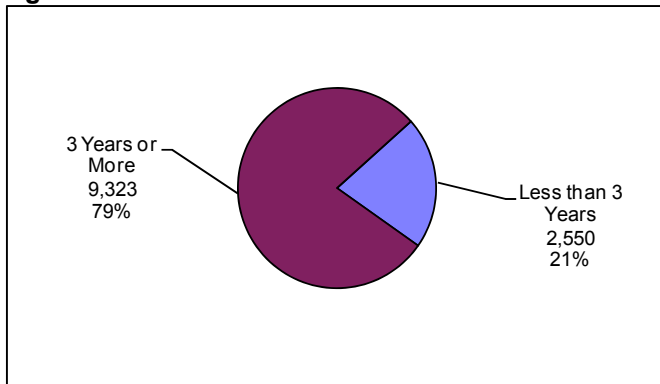


Figure 9: Previous Full-Time Job

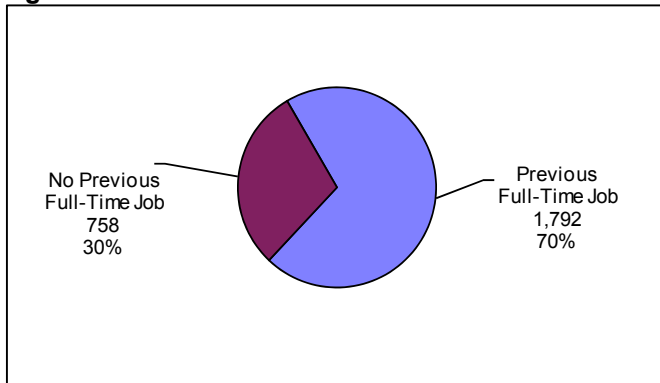


Table 4a shows the previous employment categories for the workers employed for less than three years. The respondents represented in Table 4a were asked for the reasons that they left their previous employers. Table 4b shows the responses to this question².

Table 4a: Previous Employment of Workers Employed Less Than Three Years

	Previous Employment of Employed <3 Years	
	Number	Percent
General Labor/Construction/Cleaning	224	12.5
Farm Labor/Ranch Hand/Landscaping	75	4.2
Truck Driver/Heavy Equipment Operator	75	4.2
Police/Fire/Postal/Military Enlisted	299	16.7
General Customer Service/Retail/Reception/Food Service	299	16.7
Clerical/Secretary/Book-Keeper/Bank Teller	149	8.3
Para-legal/Para-pro/CNA/Day Care	224	12.5
Nurse/LPN/RN/Semi-skilled Social Service	75	4.2
Office Manager/Small Business Owner	299	16.7
Professor/Doctor/Engineer/Attorney	75	4.2
Total	1,792	100

Total numbers or percentages in table might not match those in text due to rounding.

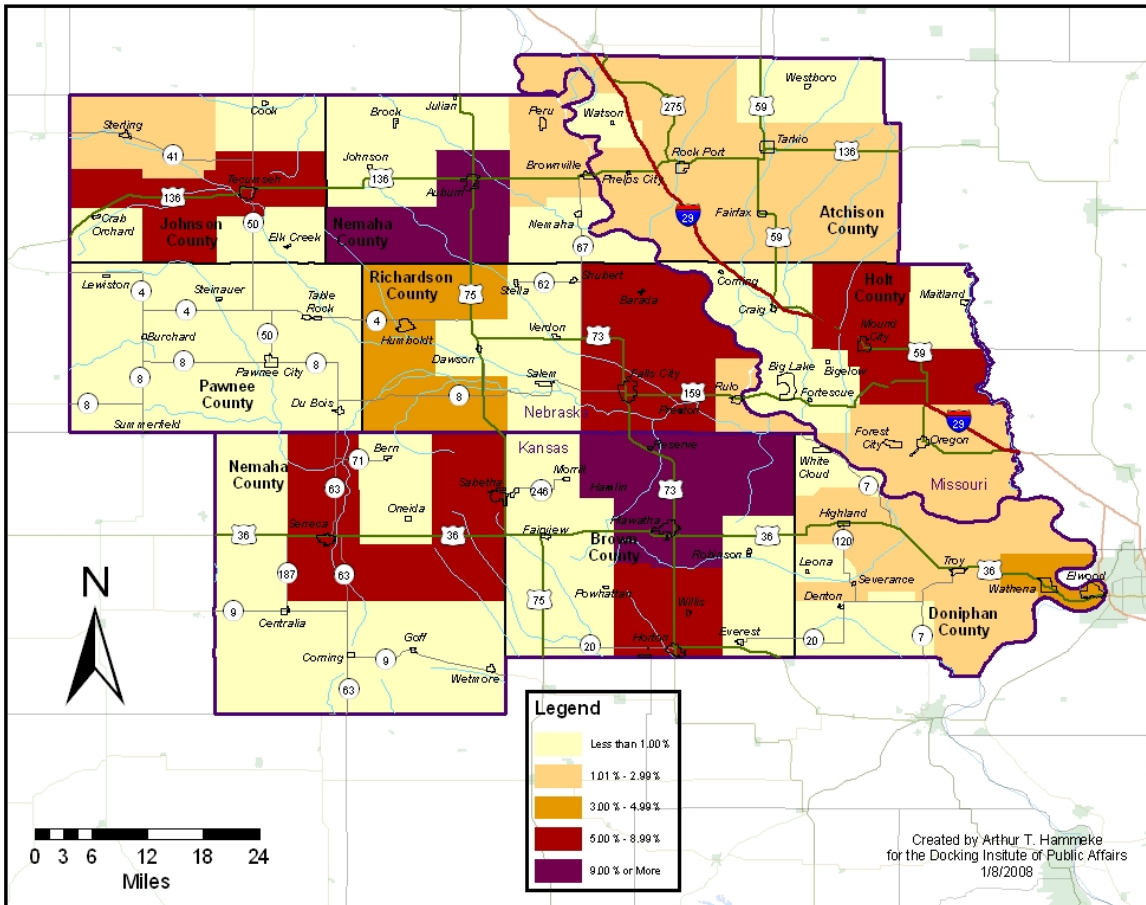
Table 4b: Reason for Leaving Previous Job

Reason for Leaving Previous Job	Previous Employment of Employed <3 Years
	Number of Respondents
Better Pay at New Job	6
Career Change	6
New Job Closer to Home	2
Place of Employment Closed	2
Day Shift Work (Previous Job was Night Shift)	1
Limited Advancement at Previous Job	1
Limited Hours at Previous Job	1
Moved for Husband's Employment	1
Needed Health Insurance	1
Previous job was Too Stressful	1
Surgery Limited Mobility	1
Went Back to School	1
Total	24

² The numbers shown in Table 4a are extrapolated to the larger population to maintain consistency with previous tables and figures. The numbers in Table 4b are not extrapolated, but show the number of actual respondents.

Working Available Labor Pool members were asked for the zip code of their workplaces. Map 3 shows the locations of employers with the basin by zip code area. Each zip code is grouped into one of five categories specified in the legend. Nine percent or more of the workplaces are located in Nemaha County in Nebraska and Brown County in Kansas. Between 5% and 8.99% of the employers are also located in Johnson and Richardson Counties in Nebraska, Holt County in Missouri, and Nemaha County in Kansas.

Map 3: Workplaces by Zip Code



Educational Experience, Skills Self-Assessment, and Job Satisfaction

Respondents that had completed at least some college or are currently enrolled in a community college, college, or university were asked to provide their major area of study. Answer options included:

Social Sciences: Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, Politics and Social Work.

Biological Sciences and Health: Biology, Agriculture, Nursing, Pre-med, Pre-vet and Human Performance.

Physical Sciences and Engineering: Physics, Geology, Chemistry and Engineering.

Business and Economics: Management, Accounting, Finance, Marketing and Economics.

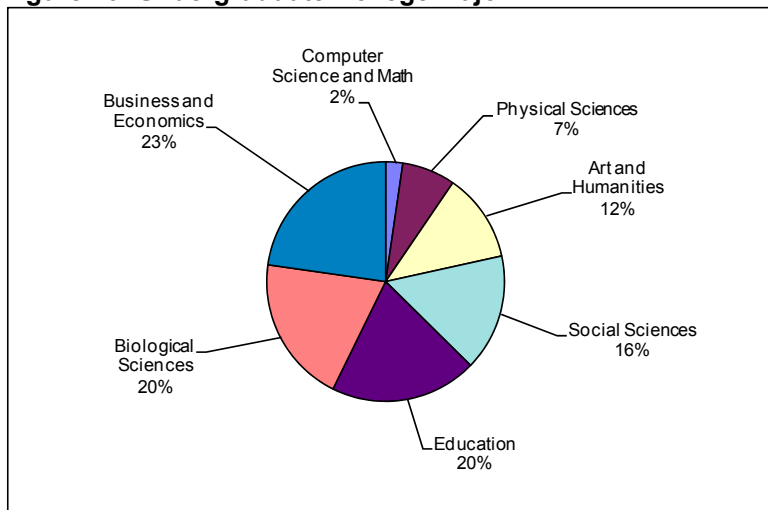
Education: Elementary and Secondary Teaching.

Computer Science and Math: Computer Programming or Technology, Networking, Web Design and Math.

Arts and Humanities: Art, Music, History, Philosophy and Languages.

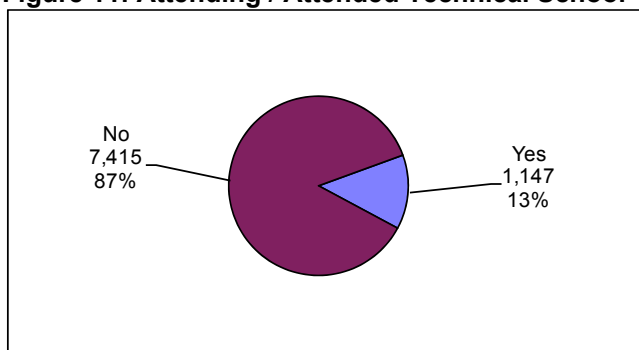
The figure below shows that most Available Labor Pool members indicate a major in Business and Economics (23%), Biological Sciences (20%), or Education (20%). Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities round out the top five with another 16% and 12%, respectively.

Figure 10: Undergraduate College Major



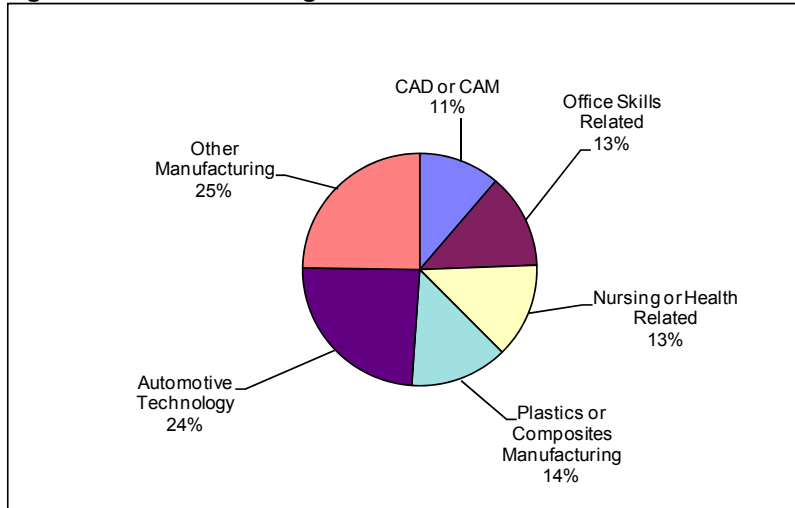
All respondents that had completed at least some college were asked: “Are you attending technical school now or have you received a technical degree?” Figure 11 shows that 13% of the respondents hold a technical degree or are working on one at the present time.

Figure 11: Attending / Attended Technical School



Respondents answering “yes” to the above question were asked if their degree or education was in one of the fields shown in Figure 12. The figure shows that 24% of the respondents that are pursuing a technical degree or that have received a technical degree indicate they are studying (or have studied) automotive technology, while another 14% are studying (or have studied) plastics or composites manufacturing. The majority of respondents (25%) selected the “Other Manufacturing” category.

Figure 12: Technical Degree



Survey respondents were also asked questions assessing their need for training in various skill areas that employers often desire. Figure 13 shows majorities of Available Labor Pool members report needing “no training” for a job requiring working in team settings (83%), math (58%), and management (51%). On the other hand, most report needing *at least* “some training” in either writing (55%), public speaking (61%), or computer operations (71%).

Figure 13: Skills Self-Assessment

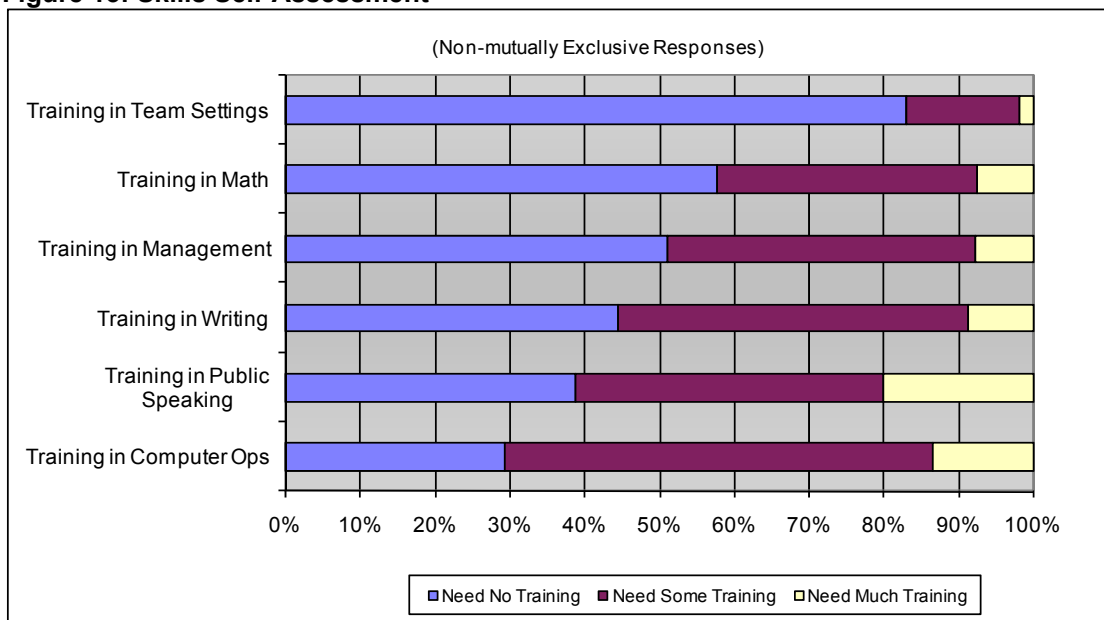


Figure 14 and Table 5 show responses to questions regarding job satisfaction. The figure and table report responses from *working survey respondents* only. The figure shows that about 49% of the working Available Labor Pool respondents “strongly agree” with a statement suggesting that they “enjoy the things I do,” while about 42% “mildly agree” with that statement.

Figure 14: Job Satisfaction Among Working Available Labor Pool

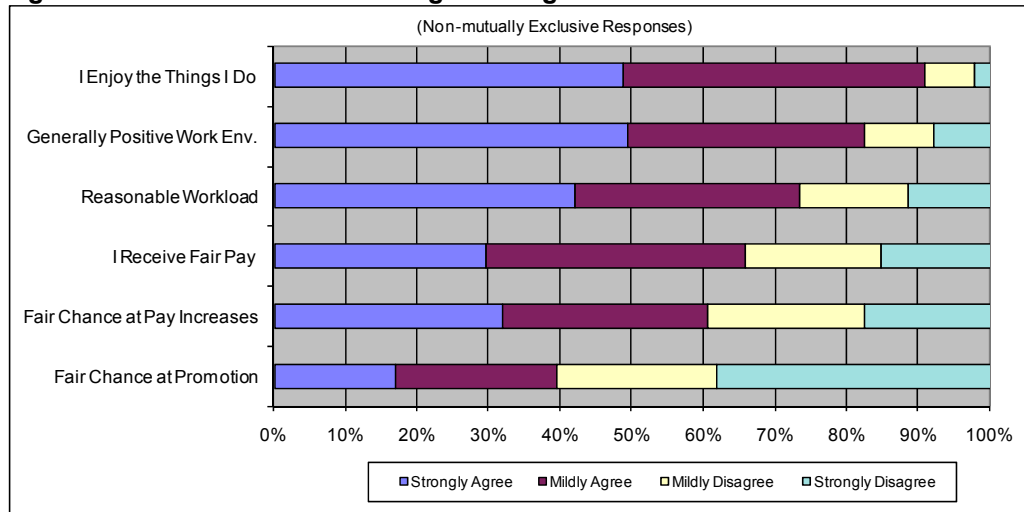


Table 5 shows combined “strongly agree” and “mildly agree” percentages only. The table also shows the responses of Available Labor Pool members *and* non-Available Labor Pool members. The table shows that 91% of the working Available Labor Pool members “strongly agree” or “mildly agree” with the statement regarding “enjoying the things I do,” while nearly 99% of the survey respondents that are working non-Available Labor Pool members suggest the same.

The statement with the largest percentages of disagreement between Available Labor Pool members and non-Available Labor Pool workers is with regards to having a “reasonable work load.” About 73% of the working Available Labor Pool respondents indicate that they “strongly agree” or “mildly agree” that they have reasonable workloads, whereas about 17% more (or almost 90%) of the non-Available Labor Pool workers feel the same way. Clearly, those workers who fit the definition of available labor used in this study tend to be less satisfied with their current job than non-Available Labor Pool respondents.

Table 5: Job Satisfaction Among Available Labor Pool and Non-Available Labor Pool

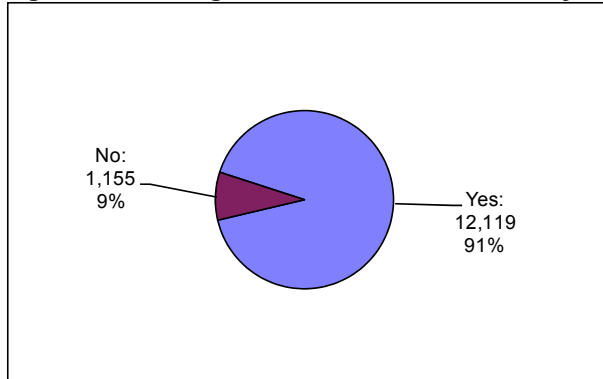
	Strongly and Mildly Agree	
	ALP Only Percent	Non-ALP Only Percent
I Enjoy the Things I Do	90.8	98.7
Generally Positive Work Env.	82.4	94.2
Reasonable Workload	73.4	89.5
I Receive Fair Pay	65.7	79.1
Fair Chance at Pay Increases	60.6	65.7
Fair Chance at Promotion	39.4	53.0

Total numbers or percentages in table might not match those in text due to rounding.

Considerations for Employment

An important consideration for many employers looking to locate or expand operations is whether workers are willing to pursue new employment opportunities. Some workers may be available for new employment but are unwilling to switch from their current job to a different type of position. A large percentage of those unwilling to change their jobs, might limit the types of employers that can enter the labor basin. This does not seem to be the case in the Richardson County Labor Basin, however. Figure 15 indicates that 12,119 (91%) members of the Available Labor Pool are willing to accept positions outside of their primary fields of employment.

Figure 15: Willing to Work Outside of Primary Field



Figures 16, 17, and 18 show responses to three questions regarding work shifts. Respondents were asked if they would be willing to work a second or night shift for the right opportunities, whether they are willing to work rotating shifts, and if they would be willing to work on weekends for the right opportunities.

Figure 16 shows the responses to the first question, with 44% suggesting that they are *not willing* to work a second or night shift, while 56% indicate that they are willing to do so. Figure 17 shows the response to the second question. Here 63% indicate that they are *not willing* to work rotating shifts and 37% suggest that they are willing to do so. Figure 18 shows that 51% suggest that they are *not willing* to work weekend shifts and 49% are willing to do so.

Figure 16: Willingness to Work Second Shift

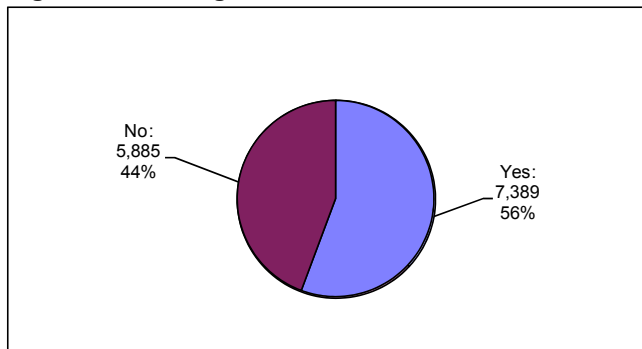


Figure 17: Willingness to Work Rotating Shift

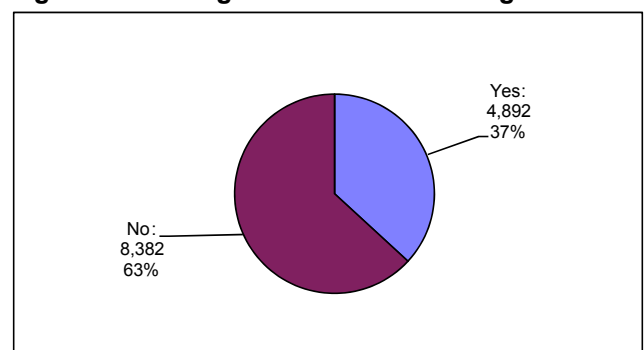
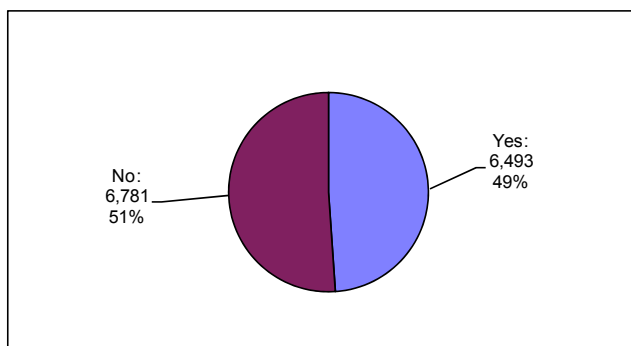


Figure 18: Willingness to Work Weekend Shift



Another important consideration for many employers is whether workers are willing to commute for a new or different employment opportunity. Figure 19 and Table 6 suggest that the Available Labor Pool in the Richardson County Labor Basin is open to commuting. Almost 41% of the members of the Available Labor Pool will commute up to 45 minutes, one way, for an employment opportunity, while about 86% will commute up to 30 minutes for employment. Almost 97% will travel up to 15 minutes for employment.

Figure 19: Available Labor by Commute Minutes

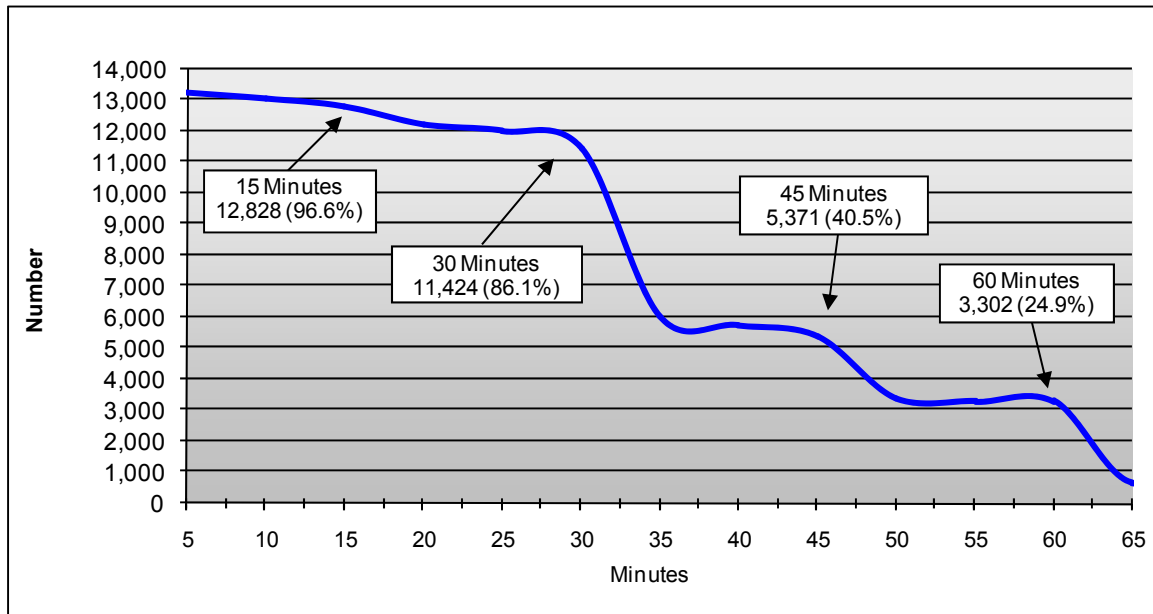


Table 6: Available Labor by Commute Minutes

	Number	Cumulative Percent
More than 60 Minutes	667	5.0
Up to 60 Minutes	3,302	24.9
Up to 55 Minutes	3,302	24.9
Up to 50 Minutes	3,387	25.5
Up to 45 Minutes	5,371	40.5
Up to 40 Minutes	5,727	43.1
Up to 35 Minutes	5,727	43.1
Up to 30 Minutes	11,424	86.1
Up to 25 Minutes	11,424	86.1
Up to 20 Minutes	12,228	92.1
Up to 15 Minutes	12,828	96.6
Up to 10 Minutes	13,065	98.4
Up to 5 Minutes	13,274	100

Total numbers or percentages in table might not match those in text due to rounding.

Figure 20 shows various benefits affecting the decisions of current workers to take a different job and potential workers to take a new job. The five most important benefits are, in order, good health benefits, good salary or hourly pay, on-the-job or paid training, good retirement benefits, and good vacation benefits. Each of these five benefits received 80% or more support from survey respondents.

Figure 20: Benefits Very Important to Change Employment

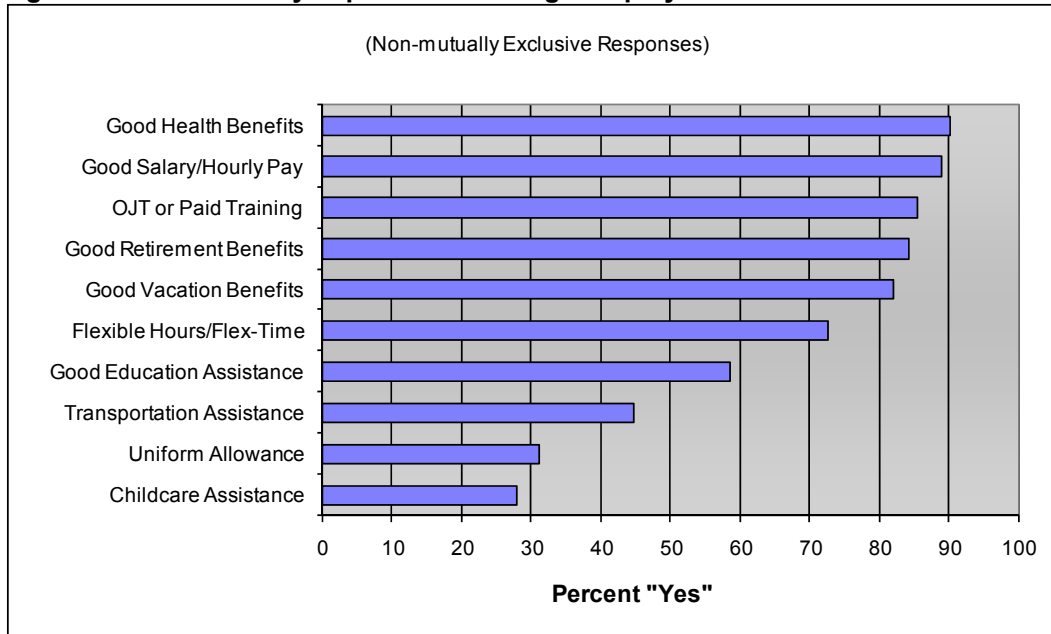


Table 7 lists some of these benefits, as well as percentages of Available Labor Pool members that are currently offered these benefits. The figures in the left percent column indicate the percentages of all Available Labor Pool members that suggest a benefit is an *important* consideration in taking a new or different job, while the figures on the right show the percentages of *working members* of the Available Labor Pool that are offered the benefit by their employers.

Table 7: Desired Benefits and Current Benefits Offered

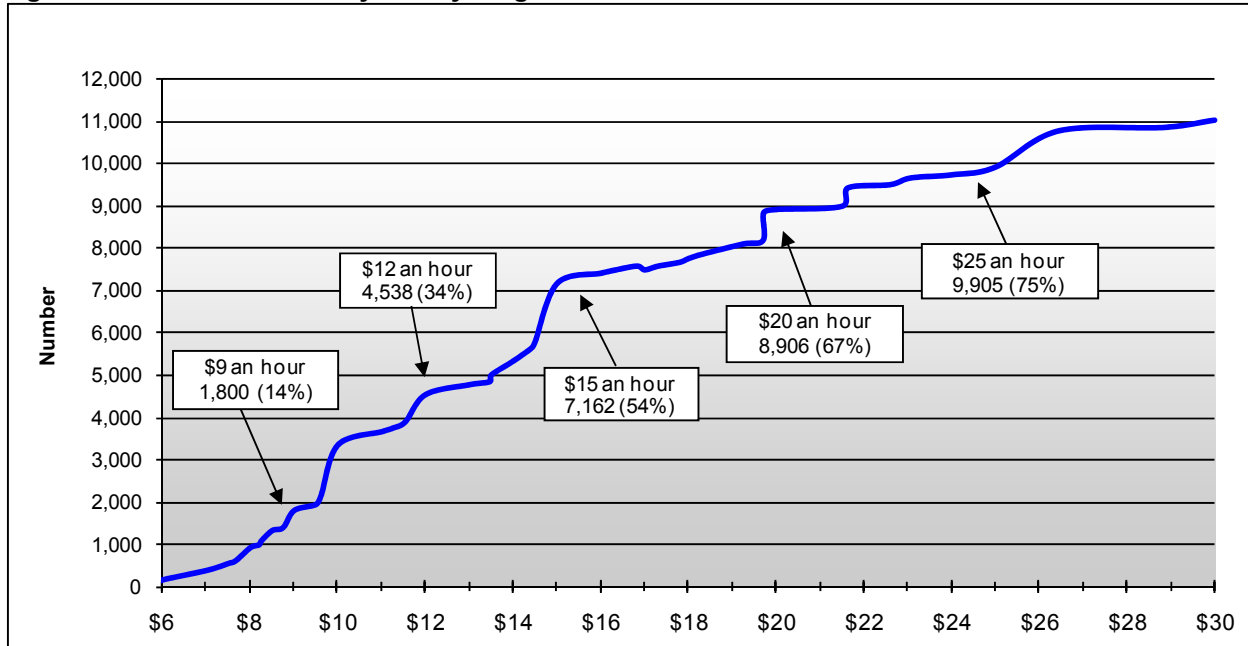
	Benefit Important to Change Jobs Percent	Benefit Currently Offered*
Good Health Benefits	90.0	77.0
OJT or Paid Training	85.3	74.6
Good Retirement Benefits	84.2	71.9
Good Vacation Benefits	82.0	73.0
Flexible Hours/Flex-Time	72.6	48.7
Good Education Assistance	58.4	51.8
Transportation Assistance	44.6	11.4
Uniform Allowance	30.9	22.3
Childcare Assistance	27.8	5.5

* This column represents responses from working ALP members only.

Wage Demands

Wage demands are another important consideration for employers and economic developers. Figure 21 shows desired wages for members of the Available Labor Pool. It is estimated that 9,905 people (or 75% of the available labor) are interested in a new job at \$25 an hour³. Approximately 8,906 (or 67%) members of the labor pool are interested in new employment opportunity at \$20 an hour, while 7,162 (54%) are interested at \$15 an hour. Finally, an estimated 4,538 people (34%) are interested in a new job at \$12 an hour and 1,800 (14%) at \$9 an hour.

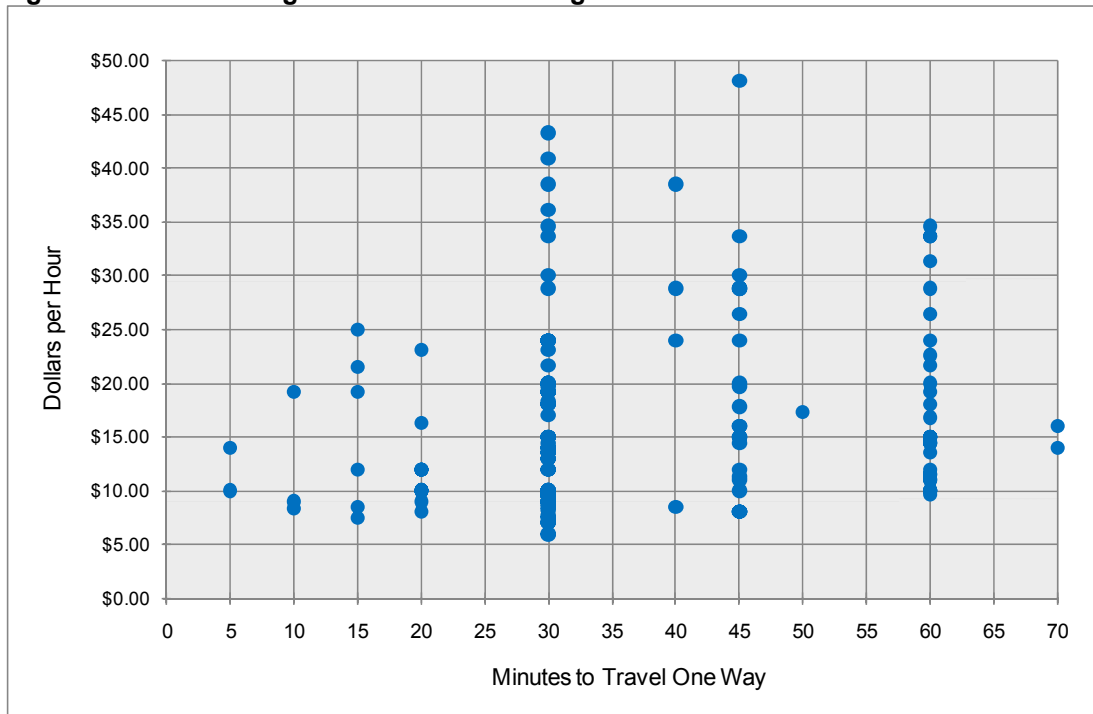
Figure 21: Available Labor by Hourly Wage



³ See Appendix II for an hourly wage/annual salary conversion chart.

Figure 22 shows data regarding minutes willing to travel one way for a new job and desired hourly wage. The figure shows that, in general, respondents desiring hire wages are more willing than others to travel more minutes for an employment opportunity. However, respondents willing to travel 30 minutes for a job desire wages ranging from about \$6 to \$44 and respondents willing to travel 60 minutes desire wages ranging from about \$9 to \$35. These findings suggest that there is *not* a linear correlation between minutes willing to travel and desired wages.

Figure 22: Desired Wages and Minutes Willing to Travel



Wage Demands (of those Indicating a Willingness to Commute)

To present an even more refined picture regarding the number of workers who would seriously consider a new employment opportunity, the data in this section includes *only those respondents* that are determined to be “willing to commute the necessary travel time” for a new or different job opportunity. “Necessary travel time” is defined as a travel time stated by the respondent that is equal to or greater than the travel time necessary for the respondent to commute from his or her zip code of residence to the zip code at the center of the labor basin. For example, a respondent that is willing to travel for 30 minutes, one-way, for a new or different job opportunity and that lives an estimated 15 minutes from Falls City is considered “willing to commute the necessary travel time” for a new job. Data from these respondents are included in this section of the report.

Figure 23: Available Labor by Hourly Wage (for those Indicating a Willingness to Commute)

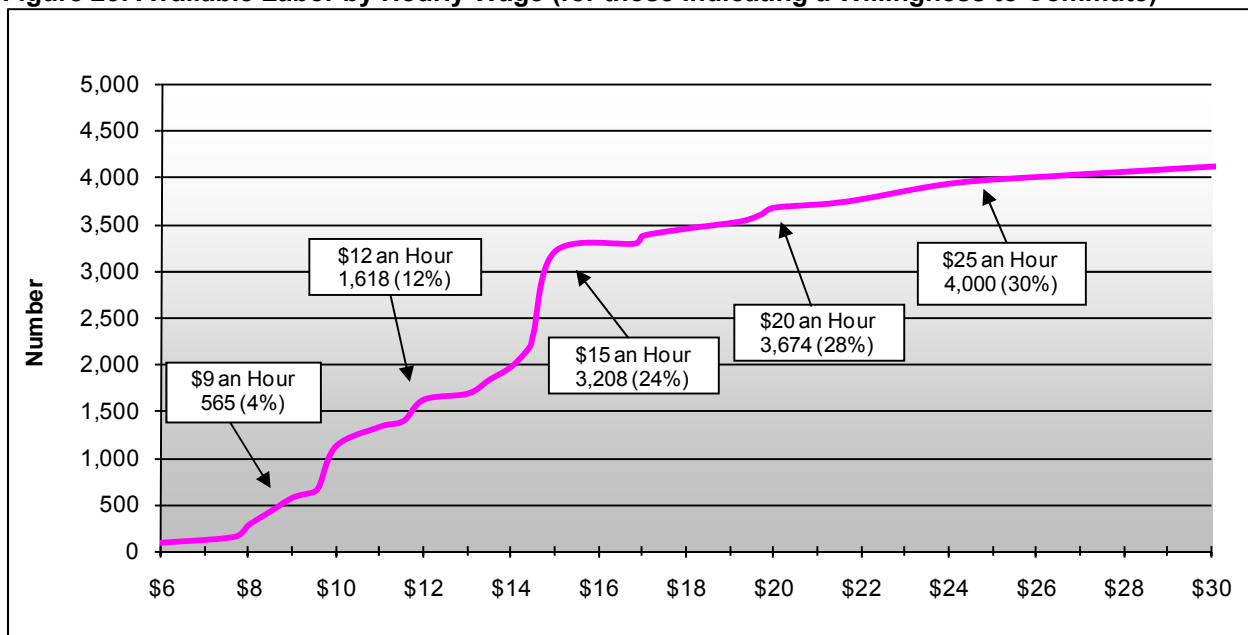


Figure 23 shows the wage demands for the Available Labor Pool members that are “willing to commute.” It is estimated that 4,000 people (or 30%) are interested in a new job at \$25 an hour. Approximately 3,674 (or 28%) members of the labor pool are interested in new employment opportunity at \$20 an hour, while 3,208 (24%) are interested at \$15 an hour. Finally, about 1,618 people (12%) are interested in a new job at \$12 an hour and 565 (4%) at \$9 an hour.

The figure above suggests the obvious: that the higher the wage, the larger the pool of available labor. For example, 565 members of the Available Labor Pool that are “willing to commute” are available for a new or different job at \$9.00 an hour. At \$10.00 an hour, however, the size of the available labor increases to 1,120 members. This represents an increase of 555 individuals.

The graph also highlights various “wage preference plateaus” that may be of interest to current and potential employers. A wage preference plateau is a situation in which an increase in wage results in an insignificant or small increase in available labor. For example, as previously noted, 1,120 members of available labor are interested in a job at \$10.00 an hour. At \$11.00 an hour there are an estimated 1,325 individuals available. So, while there is certainly an increase in

the number of available workers at this higher wage rate, the increase is estimated to be only 205 individuals. An additional wage plateaus can be seen between \$12 and \$13 (a 64-individual increase), \$15 and \$17 (a 164-individual increase), and between \$17 and \$18 (a 77-individual increase).

Wage Demands by Occupational Sector (for those Indicating a Willingness to Commute)

Another way to examine the wage demands of a labor basin’s Available Labor Pool is by occupational sector. Table 8 shows wage demand data for general labor and service sector workers that are willing to change fields of employment and thus, are presumably potential workers for either of these two sectors. Specifically, the table below includes data from respondents that:

- 1 are willing to commute the necessary travel time from his/her community to the center of the labor basin, *and*
- 2 are willing to change their primary field of employment (for example: service sector employment to general labor employment), *and*
- 3a are currently non-employed, *or*
- 3b are employed as general laborers or service sector employees.

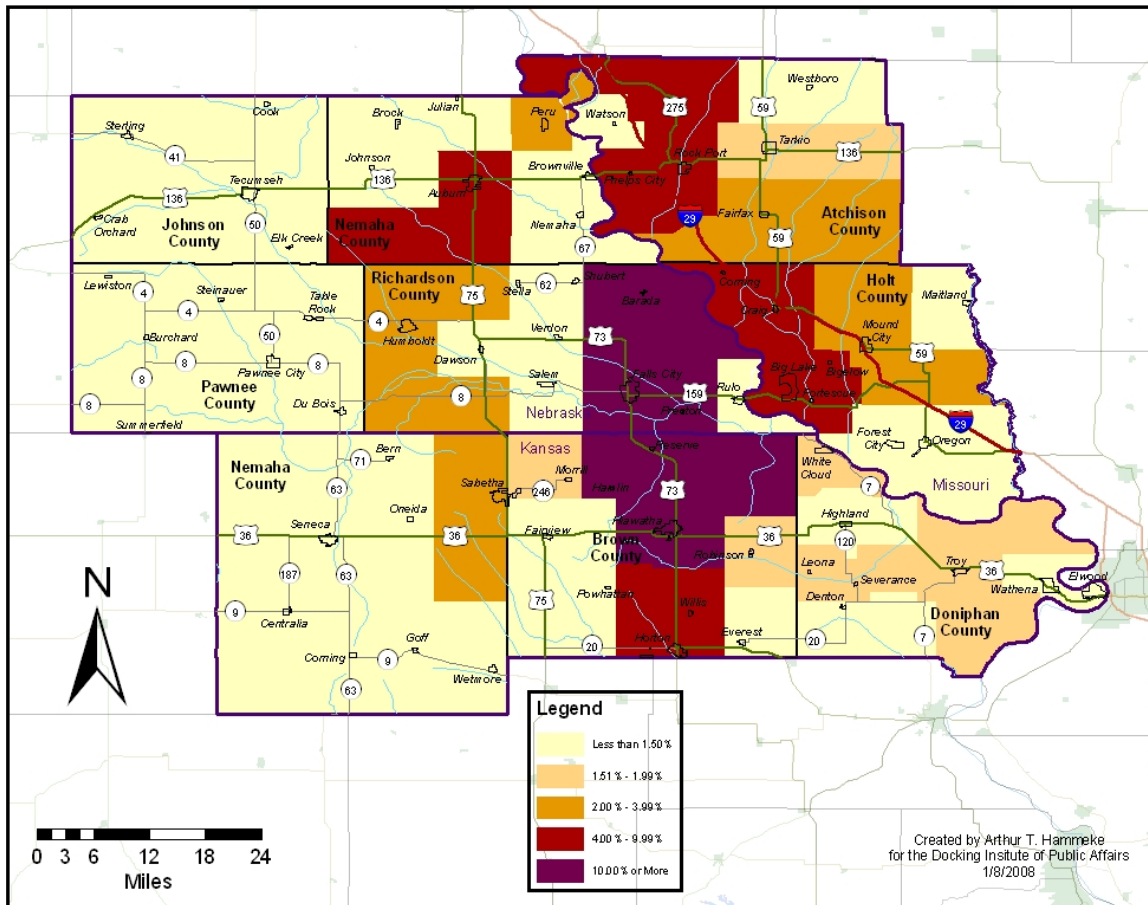
Table 8: Cumulative Wage Demands by Occupational Sector (for those Indicating a Willingness to Commute)

	Mobile General Labor		Mobile Service Sector	
	(N= 43)	(+/- 14.9% MoE)	(N= 43.7)	(+/- 14.8% MoE)
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>
\$30 or More	3,173	100%	3,225	100%
Up to \$30	3,096	98%	3,148	98%
Up to \$27	3,096	98%	3,081	96%
Up to \$24	3,014	95%	2,999	93%
Up to \$21	2,950	93%	2,935	91%
Up to \$18	2,725	86%	2,710	84%
Up to \$15	1,813	57%	1,809	56%
Up to \$12	1,326	42%	1,256	39%
Up to \$9	420	13%	420	13%
Up to \$6	82	3%	82	3%

Table 8 allows a general laborer or service sector worker to be classified in both sectors if he or she indicates a willingness to change fields of employment. Additionally, it is assumed that a non-working Available Labor Pool member will take a job (all things being equal) in either the general labor sector or the service sector. High-skilled blue-collar workers and professional white-collar workers are excluded from Table 8 because it is presumed that, as a general rule, people in occupations such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, machinists, electricians, etc... are unlikely to transfer into lower-skilled general labor and service/support occupations. It is also presumed that, because professional and highly skilled occupations require extensive education and/or training, lower-skilled general laborers and service sector workers are unable to transfer to higher-skilled labor or professional positions - at least in the near term.

Map 3 shows how each zip code in the basin compares to all other zip codes in terms of the percent of available labor in the Richardson County Labor Basin that are *willing to travel the necessary commute time* for a new or different job. Each zip code is grouped into one of five categories specified in the legend. Ten percent or more of the willing to commute Available Labor Pool is located within Richardson County in Nebraska and Brown County of Kansas. Between 4.00% and 9.99% of the willing to commute Available Labor Pool is also located in Nemaha County in Nebraska, and Atchison and Holt Counties in Missouri.

Map 4: Percent of Total Available Labor in Basin by Zip Code (Indicating a Willingness to Commute)



Underutilization/Underemployment Among Available Labor Pool Workers

Underutilization/Underemployment — individuals possessing skills and/or training levels that exceed the responsibilities of their current job — is a significant issue in many communities. To assess underutilization in the Richardson County Labor Basin, *employed members of the Available Labor Pool* were presented with a scenario describing underutilization/underemployment⁴. They were then asked a series of questions assessing if they perceived themselves as underutilized/underemployed because: 1) their skill level is greater than their current job requires, 2) they possess higher levels of education than is required on the job, 3) they earned a higher income at a similar job previously, or 4) they were limited in the number of hours that they could work.

Of the 11,873 *employed members* of the Available Labor Pool (shown in Figure 24), more than a third answered “yes” to one or more of the questions presented above and are considered underutilized/underemployed. Figure 25 shows that the underutilized/underemployed workers represent 38% (or 4,552 individuals) of the employed members of the Available Labor Pool.

Figure 24: Employed and Unemployed Members of the Available Labor Pool

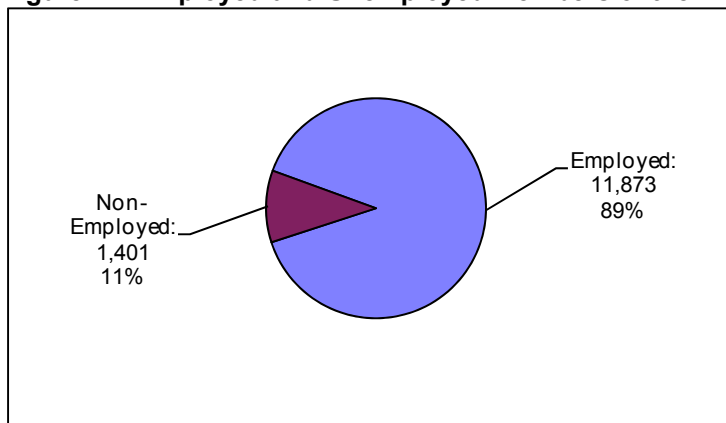
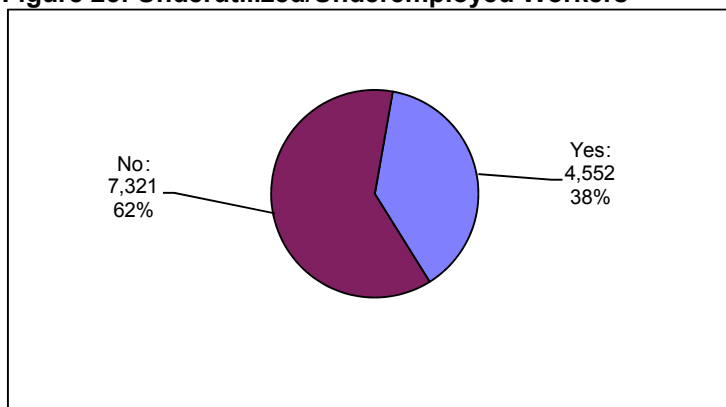


Figure 25: Underutilized/Underemployed Workers



⁴ “Because of circumstances, some workers have jobs that do not fully match their skills, education, or experiences. For example, a master plumber taking tickets at a movie theater would be a mismatch between skill level and job requirements. Do you consider yourself an underutilized worker because....?”

Figure 26 shows the percentages of the positive responses (i.e., “yes” answers) to the various measures of underutilization/underemployment. About 31% of this subset of the Available Labor Pool considers themselves as underutilized/underemployed because they possess education levels exceeding those needed for their current jobs and 30% have skills that are not being used currently on the job. About 22% had previous but similar jobs that provided more income, while about 12% suggest they are not offered enough work hours.

Figure 26: Reasons for Underutilization/Underemployment

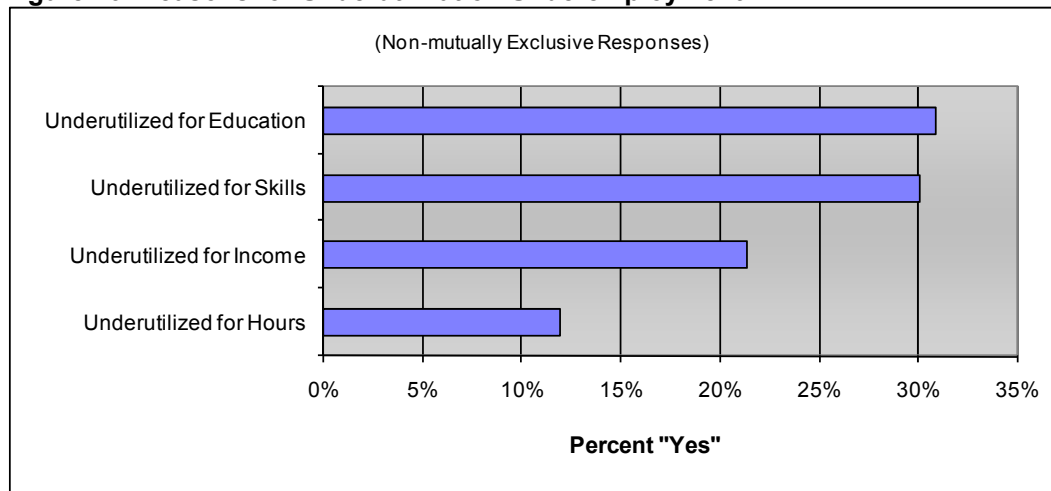


Table 9 and Figure 27 (next page) show some characteristics of the underutilized/underemployed members of the Available Labor Pool. Table 9 indicates that the education level of the underutilized/underemployed workers compares to the overall Available Labor Pool with about 65% having at least some college education and 42% having completed associates degrees. (Table 1 shows that 64.5% of the entire Available Labor Pool has some college experience and 38.3% has completed an associate’s degree).

Table 9: Highest Level of Education Achieved Among Underutilized/Underemployed

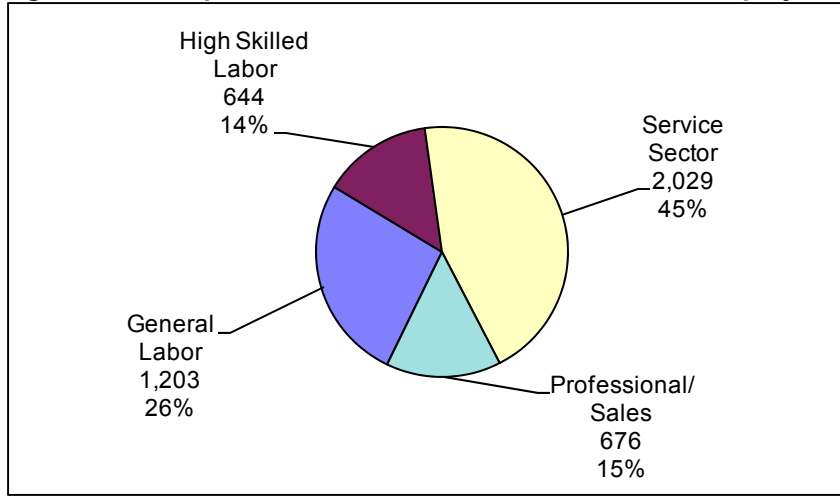
	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Doctoral Degree	66	1.4	1.4
Masters Degree	0	0.0	1.4
Bachelors Degree	1,125	24.7	26.2
Associates Degree	721	15.8	42.0
Some College	1,046	23.0	65.0
High School Diploma Only	1,456	32.0	97.0
Less HS Diploma	138	3.0	100.0
Total	4,552	100	

Total numbers or percentages in table might not match those in text due to rounding.

Figure 27 shows that 26% of the underutilized workers are employed as general laborers and 14% are employed as skilled blue-collar workers. The highest percentage of underutilized workers is employed as service sector and support workers (45%), while fewer (15%) hold professional positions.

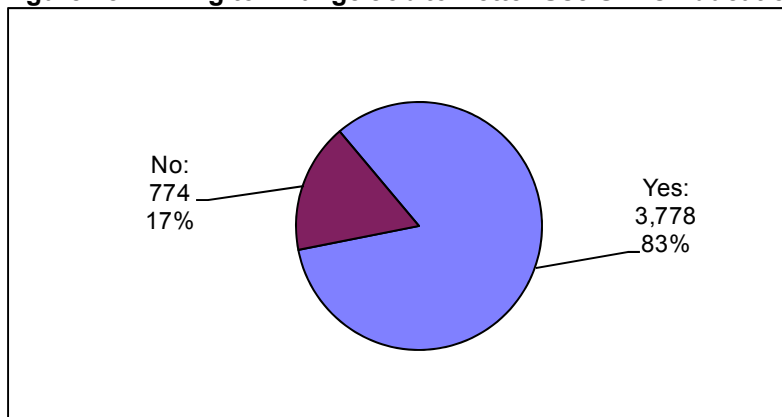
Comparing Figure 27 with Figure 2 suggests that fewer professional workers consider themselves underutilized/underemployed than do general laborers and service workers. Figure 2 shows that the subset of working Available Labor Pool members consists of: 24% general laborers, 13% skilled-laborers, 42% service workers, and 21% professionals.

Figure 27: Occupational Sectors of Underutilized/Underemployed Workers



Respondents indicating that they were underutilized/underemployed were also asked a follow-up question addressing the willingness to change jobs in order for them to better utilize their skills and/or education. Figure 28 suggests that many – 83% (or 3,778 individuals) – of the underutilized workers are willing to change jobs to address underutilization/underemployment.

Figure 28: Willing to Change Job to Better Use Skills/Education



Methodology

The Richardson County Labor Basin has a total population of approximately 62,985, and a Civilian Labor Force of 33,883. An estimated 32,558 people are currently employed and the unemployment rate is 3.9%. The Docking Institute's analysis suggests that the basin contains an Available Labor Pool of 13,274 individuals.

Table 10: Population and Employment/Labor Figures for the Richardson County Labor Basin

Richardson County Labor Basin in 2007	
Labor Basin Population	62,985
Civilian Labor Force	33,883
Employed	32,558
Unemployment Rate	3.9%
Available Labor Pool	13,274

Explaining the Civilian Labor Force

Traditional methods of assessing the dynamics of the labor force have concentrated on what the Bureau of Labor Statistics calls the Civilian Labor Force. The Civilian Labor Force represents “the civilian non-institutional population, 16 years of age and over classified as employed or unemployed.” The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines “non-institutional civilians” as those individuals who are not inmates in institutions and who are not on active duty in the Armed Forces; and “unemployed civilians” as civilians available for work and who had “made specific efforts to find employment” in the previous four weeks.

While a review of Civilian Labor Force statistics represents the starting point for understanding the labor force in the Richardson County Labor Basin, there are some limitations associated with these statistics. These limitations occur because the Civilian Labor Force *excludes* individuals who may be willing and able to be gainfully employed but have not made specific efforts to find employment in the last four weeks. These individuals may include full-time students, homemakers, the unemployed who are no longer seeking employment, military personnel who may be leaving military employment in the near future and retired individuals who may be available for work but have not been looking for work recently.

In addition, most new employers draw their workforce from those who are presently employed, not those who are unemployed. As such, Census-based and Bureau of Labor Statistics data (such as the Civilian Labor Force) do not specifically address the possibility of workers moving from one industry to another in search of other employment opportunities.

Defining the Available Labor Pool

An alternative to the Civilian Labor Force is the “Available Labor Pool⁵.” The Available Labor Pool is composed of workers categorized as either 1) currently not working *but* looking for

⁵ The Available Labor Pool includes potential workers excluded from the Civilian Labor Force (such as full-time students willing to take a job, homemakers who have not yet sought employment, military personnel who may be leaving military employment in the near future, and retired individuals who may be willing and able to be gainfully employed).

employment, 2) currently employed (full- or part-time) *and* looking for other full-time employment, 3) currently not working in any manner *but* willing to consider different employment for the *right opportunity*, and 4) currently employed and not looking, *but* willing to consider different employment for the *right opportunity*.

There are two key differences between the Civilian Labor Force and the Available Labor Pool. First, the Available Labor Pool methodology expands the pool of potential workers by including workers excluded from the Civilian Labor Force⁶. Secondly, the number of potential workers is then *restricted* to those workers who indicate they are looking for work or that are available for new employment. The advantage of this methodology is that it allows researchers to examine those members of the labor pool who have a propensity to consider a job opportunity given their employment expectations. Even with these restrictions, it should be noted that, in practice, not all members of the Available Labor Pool would apply for a new job opportunity. However, the Available Labor Pool figure for a labor basin reveals to current employers and potential employers better information about the quantity and quality of the labor pool than do Civilian Labor Force data and unemployment statistics. The Available Labor Pool for the Richardson County Labor Basin includes 13,274 individuals. This represents a substantial number of workers and potential workers for employers to draw upon in the Richardson County Labor Basin.

Survey Research Methods

Data for this study was collected from a random digit telephone survey⁷ of adults living in nine counties in southeastern Nebraska, northeastern Kansas and northwestern Missouri. Surveying took place from October 29, 2007 to December 12, 2007, using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. A total of 1,382 households were successfully contacted during the data collection period, and a randomly selected adult⁸ in each was asked to participate in the study. In 843 households the selected adult agreed to be interviewed. This represents a cooperation rate of 61% and a margin of error of +/-3.4%.

Survey respondents that were 65 years of age or older and retired or over 65 and not working and not interested in a new or different job were not asked the entire battery of survey questions and are not included in the analysis of this report. The remaining respondents (all other working and non-working respondents) total to 479, and are considered eligible respondents. Of the 479 cooperating and eligible respondents, 37.6% (or 180) indicated that they were available for new

⁶ The number that is added to the Civilian Labor Force is derived by taking from the survey the total number of full-time students, homemakers, military, retirees, and long-term unemployed, who state that they are seeking or available for employment and are within a reasonable commute distance to the center of the labor basin, and dividing this number by the total number of respondents. This quotient is then multiplied by the total number of people in the labor basin who are 18 to 65 years old.

⁷ The telephone numbers were assembled by randomly generating suffixes within specific area codes and prefixes. As such, unlisted numbers were included in this sample, minimizing the potential for response bias. Known business, fax, modem, and disconnected numbers were screened from the sample in efforts to reach households only (and to minimize surveyor dialing time).

Up to eight attempts were made to contact each respondent during three calling periods (10 AM to Noon, 2 PM to 4 PM, and 6 PM to 9 PM). Initial refusals were re-attempted by specially trained "refusal converters," which aided in the cooperation rate.

⁸ Surveyors requested to "speak with an adult over the age of 17 that has had the most recent birthday."

or different employment and/or were looking for a new or different job. This subgroup is considered the Available Labor Pool for the Richardson County Labor Basin. Responses from 180 individuals provides a margin of error of +/- 7.3%. Table 11 below summarizes this information.

Table 11: Survey Research Methods

Survey Methodology	
Dates of Interviewing	Oct. 29 - Dec. 12, 2007
Total Household Contacts	1,382
Total Number of Completions	843
Cooperation Rate	61.0%
Margin of Error for Completions	+/- 3.4%
Cooperating and Eligible Respondents	479
Subgroup of Available/Looking Respondents	180
Margin of Error for Available/Looking	+/- 7.3%

The study sponsors and Institute personnel agreed upon the survey items used, with the former identifying the study objectives and the latter developing items and methodologies that were valid, reliable, and unbiased. Question wording and design of the survey instrument are the property of the Docking Institute. A detailed summary of the method of analysis used in this report can be found in Joseph A. Aistrup, Michael S. Walker, and Brett A. Zollinger, "The Kansas Labor Force Survey: The Available Labor Pool and Underemployment." *Kansas Department of Human Resources*, 2002.

Appendix I: Current Employment Status of Available Labor Pool

	Current Employment Status of ALP	
	Number	Percent
General Labor/Construction/Cleaning	769	5.8
Farm Labor/Ranch Hand/Landscaping	388	2.9
Delivery/Driver/Courier	275	2.1
Maintenance/Wiring/Plumbing	465	3.5
Factory Worker/Grain Elevator Op/Meat Packer	685	5.2
Truck Driver/Heavy Equipment Operator	291	2.2
Police/Fire/Postal/Military Enlisted	504	3.8
Mechanic/Welder/Carpenter/Electrician	436	3.3
Lab or Medical Technical/Comp Technician	610	4.6
Other Blue Collar	0	0.0
General Customer Service/Retail/Reception/Food Service	1,296	9.8
Clerical/Secretary/Book-Keeper/Bank Teller	1,584	11.9
Para-legal/Para-pro/CNA/Day Care	815	6.1
Nurse/LPN/RN/Semi-skilled Social Service	824	6.2
Office Manager/Small Business Owner	429	3.2
Teacher/Instructor/Writer/Researcher	773	5.8
Sales/Marketing/Accounting	962	7.2
Govt, Non-Profit, or Bus Exec/Farm Owner/Military Officer	148	1.1
Counselor/Social Worker/Physician's Assistant	324	2.4
Professor/Doctor/Engineer/Attorney	314	2.4
Other White Collar	0	0.0
Homemaker	592	4.5
Full-Time Student	82	0.6
Unemployed	570	4.3
Retired	138	1.0
Disabled	0	0.0
Total	13,274	100

Total numbers or percentages in table might not match those in text due to rounding.

Appendix II: Hourly Wage to Annual Salary Conversion Chart

Hourly Wage	Annual Salary	Hourly Wage	Annual Salary
\$5.00	\$10,400		
\$5.50	\$11,440		
\$6.00	\$12,480		
\$6.50	\$13,520		
\$7.00	\$14,560		
\$7.50	\$15,600		
\$8.00	\$16,640		
\$8.50	\$17,680		
\$9.00	\$18,720		
\$9.50	\$19,760		
\$10.00	\$20,800		
\$10.50	\$21,840		
\$11.00	\$22,880		
\$11.50	\$23,920		
\$12.00	\$24,960		
\$12.50	\$26,000		
\$13.00	\$27,040		
\$13.50	\$28,080		
\$14.00	\$29,120		
\$14.50	\$30,160		
\$15.00	\$31,200		
\$15.50	\$32,240		
\$16.00	\$33,280		
\$16.50	\$34,320		
\$17.00	\$35,360		
\$17.50	\$36,400		
\$18.00	\$37,440		
\$18.50	\$38,480		
\$19.00	\$39,520		
\$19.50	\$40,560		
\$20.00	\$41,600		
\$20.50	\$42,640		
\$21.00	\$43,680		
\$21.50	\$44,720		
\$22.00	\$45,760		
\$22.50	\$46,800		
\$23.00	\$47,840		
\$23.50	\$48,880		
\$24.00	\$49,920		
\$24.50	\$50,960		
\$25.00	\$52,000		
\$25.50	\$53,040		
\$26.00	\$54,080		
\$26.50	\$55,120		
\$27.00	\$56,160		
\$27.50	\$57,200		
\$28.00	\$58,240		
\$28.50	\$59,280		
\$29.00	\$60,320		
\$29.50	\$61,360		
		\$30.00	\$62,400
		\$30.50	\$63,440
		\$31.00	\$64,480
		\$31.50	\$65,520
		\$32.00	\$66,560
		\$32.50	\$67,600
		\$33.00	\$68,640
		\$33.50	\$69,680
		\$34.00	\$70,720
		\$34.50	\$71,760
		\$35.00	\$72,800
		\$35.50	\$73,840
		\$36.00	\$74,880
		\$36.50	\$75,920
		\$37.00	\$76,960
		\$37.50	\$78,000
		\$38.00	\$79,040
		\$38.50	\$80,080
		\$39.00	\$81,120
		\$39.50	\$82,160
		\$40.00	\$83,200
		\$40.50	\$84,240
		\$41.00	\$85,280
		\$41.50	\$86,320
		\$42.00	\$87,360
		\$42.50	\$88,400
		\$43.00	\$89,440
		\$43.50	\$90,480
		\$44.00	\$91,520
		\$44.50	\$92,560
		\$45.00	\$93,600
		\$45.50	\$94,640
		\$46.00	\$95,680
		\$46.50	\$96,720
		\$47.00	\$97,760
		\$47.50	\$98,800
		\$48.00	\$99,840
		\$48.50	\$100,880
		\$49.00	\$101,920
		\$49.50	\$102,960
		\$50.00	\$104,000