

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE
CHICKASHA AREA
LABOR FORCE**

A Summary Report Presented to:

Grady County Economic Development Council
and
Oklahoma Department of Commerce

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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- ~~///~~ An estimated 6,526 workers in the Chickasha Study Area are searching for work that better utilizes their skills and education
- ~~///~~ The underemployed exhibit a variety of occupations and skills
- ~~///~~ About 36 percent of the underemployed hold at least a bachelor's degree
- ~~///~~ About 70 percent of the underemployed are willing to commute 20 miles or more for an increase in pay of 10% to 15%
- ~~///~~ An employment opportunity paying \$8 to \$10 per hour is viewed as desirable by 47 percent of the underemployed
- ~~///~~ An additional pool of labor exists among those who are not working but desire to work

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INTRODUCTION

The Grady County Economic Development Council and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce sponsored this report as part of an ongoing study of labor force characteristics in local areas across the state. This report examines the availability of labor in the Chickasha Area.

The data contained in this report were collected by tele phone from randomly selected adults between November 1999 and January 2000. The results are based on 1,829 interviews of residents in Caddo, Garvin, Grady, McClain and Stephens Counties.

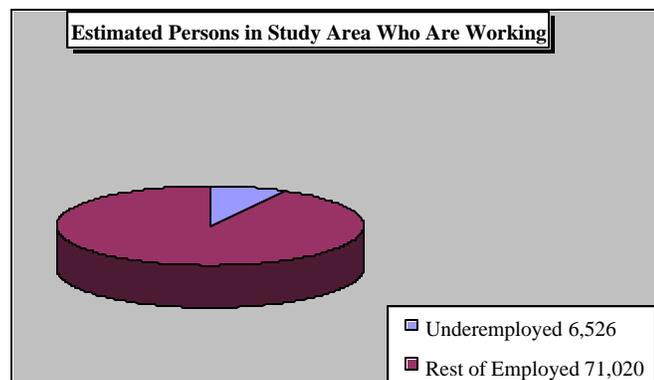
The results demonstrate that a pool of labor exists among workers in area who are employed but do not fully utilize their education and skills. These workers are referred to as “*underemployed*”.

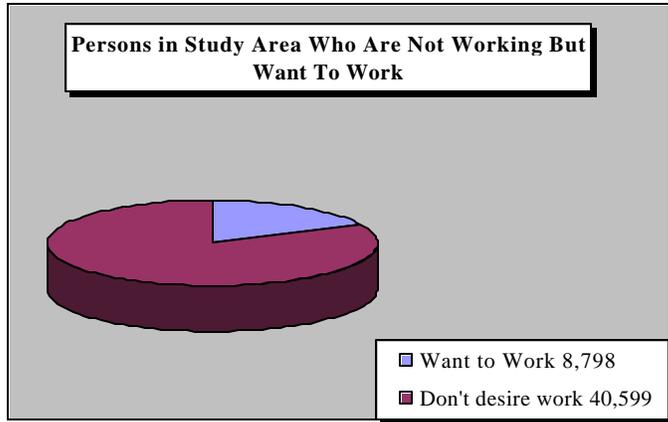
In order to be counted as underemployed in this study, a worker must meet each of the following three conditions:

- ☞ feel they are underutilized in their present employment
- ☞ possess training or education that is not required by their current job, and
- ☞ would change jobs in order to better utilize their skills and education

An estimated 6,526 workers in the study area, or 8.4 percent of all workers in the county, were identified as underemployed using these criteria. Many of these workers are actively searching for improved job situations.

As a group, the underemployed exhibit a wide variety of occupations and skills and the median underemployed worker is willing to commute 20 miles or more for a job that pays 10 percent to 15 percent more than current wages.

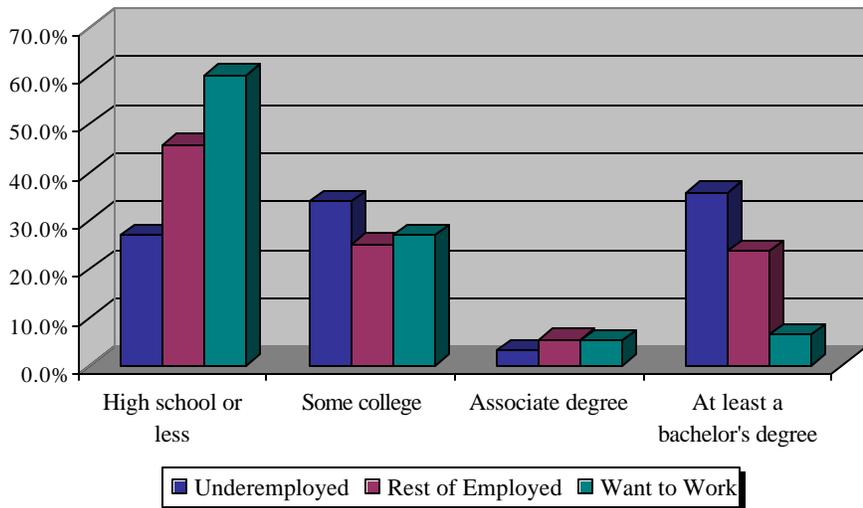




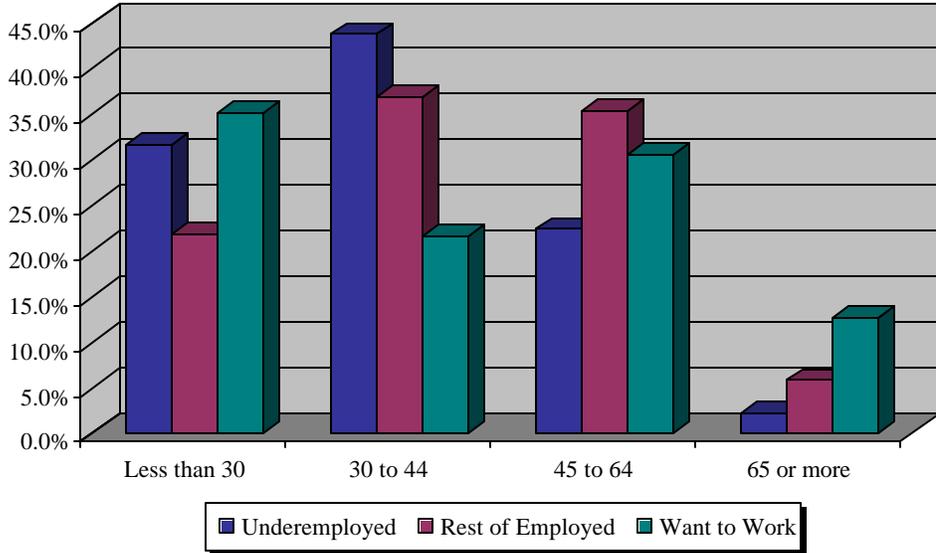
In addition to the underemployed, a smaller pool of labor exists among those who are without work but who want to work. These persons include retirees who wish to return to work for a variety of reasons. In general, those who want to work are less skilled and have less education than does the average worker in the area.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNDEREMPLOYED

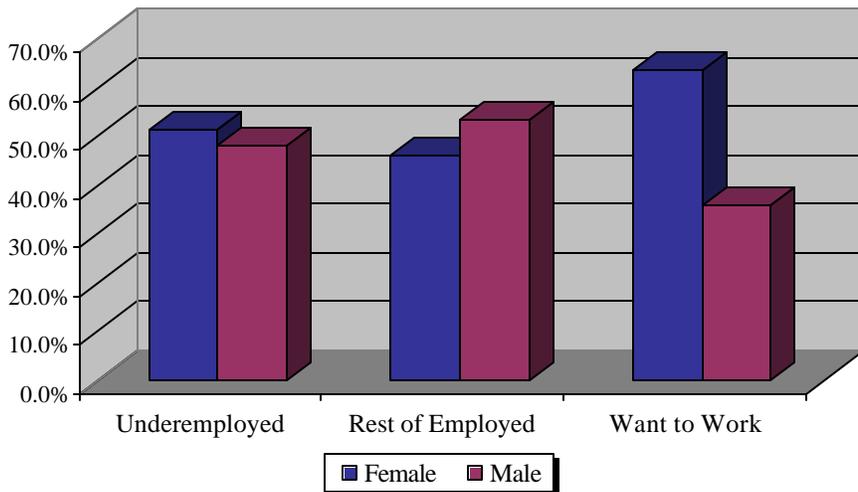
Underemployed workers in the Chickasha Area are more likely to have at least a bachelor's degree than the rest of the employed. Persons who are not working and who want to work are much less likely to have a post secondary degree.



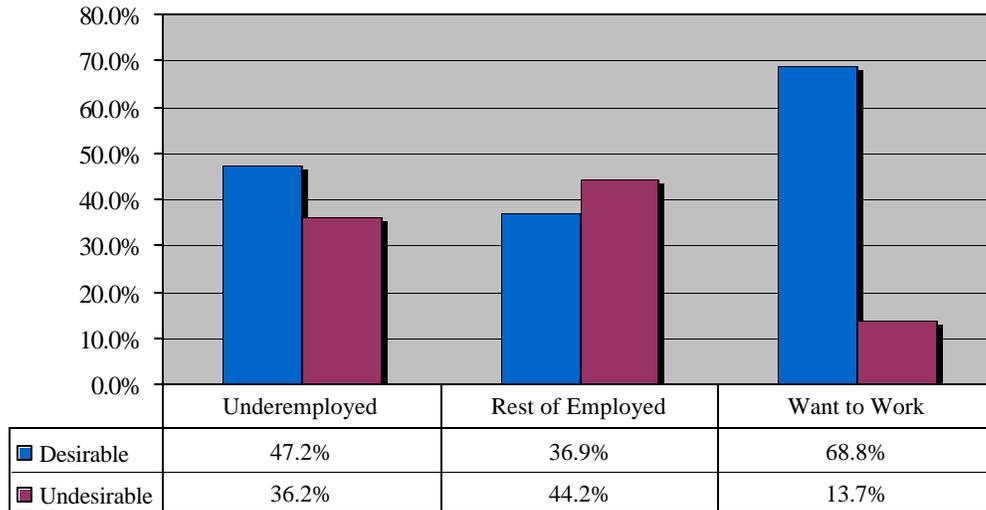
Underemployed workers are typically younger than the rest of the employed or those who are not working but want to work. Seventy-five percent of underemployed workers are less than 44 years of age compared to 59 percent of the rest of employed and 57 percent of those who want to work.



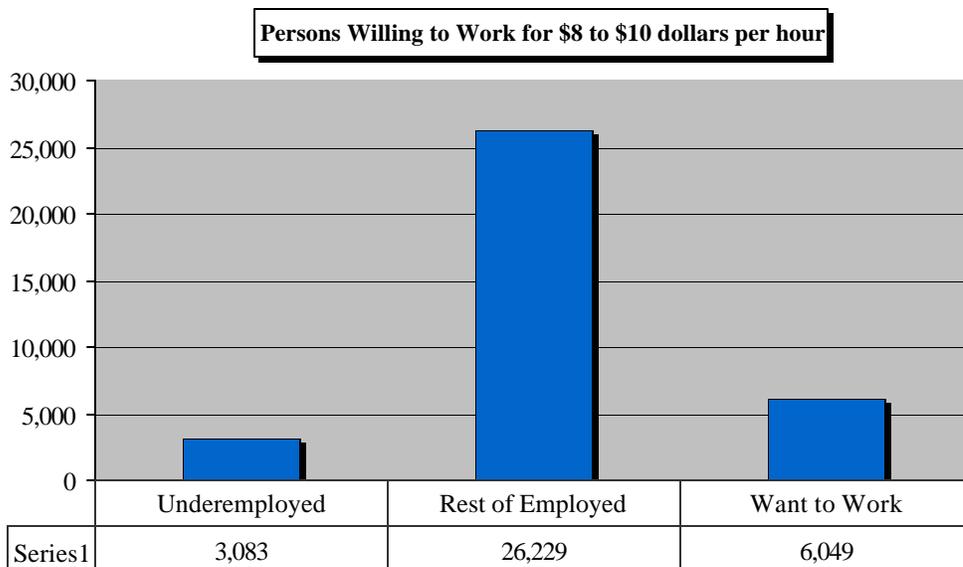
Underemployed females slightly outnumber males in the Study Area while those who aren't working but want to work are predominantly females. Males outnumber females by a slim margin in rest of the employed category.



An employment opportunity that pays from \$8 per hour to \$10 per hour is viewed as desirable by about 47 percent of the underemployed and by 37 percent of the rest of the employed. Sixty-nine percent of persons who are without work but want to work view such a job as desirable.



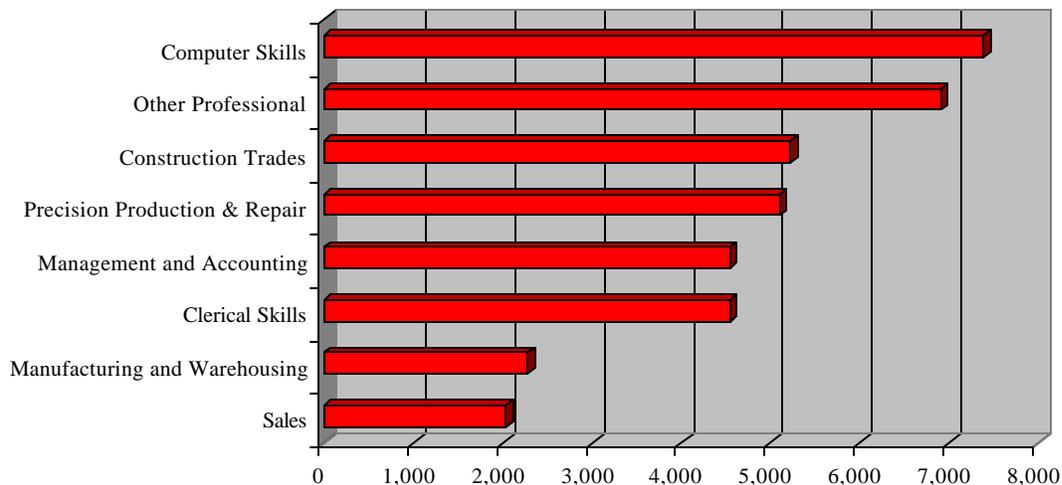
An estimated 35,361 persons living in the study area are interested in a job that pays from \$8 hour to \$10 hour.



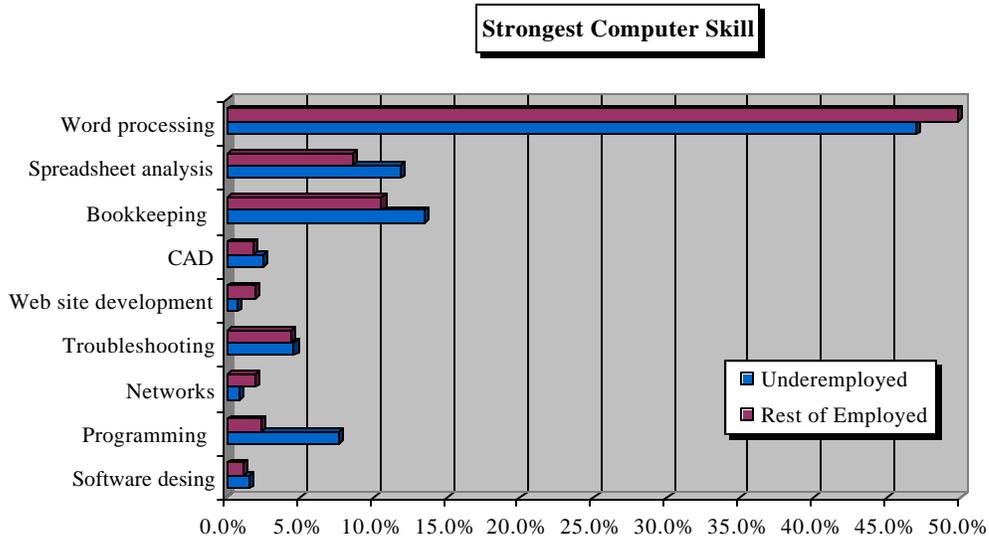
The underemployed work in a variety of occupations and possess a number of diverse skills ranging from executives and other professionals to craftsmen and clerks. Occupational categories with the largest concentrations of the underemployed are the service occupations with 19.5 percent, administrative support with 18.8 followed by the executive and managerial category at 17.5 percent.

Occupations Among the Underemployed Grady County Study Area		
Occupation	Persons	Percent
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	1,133	17.5
Professional Specialty	1,058	16.3
Technicians and Related Support	106	1.6
Sales	602	9.3
Administrative Support, Including Clerical	1,218	18.8
Service Occupations	1,265	19.5
Farming, Forestry, and Fishing	0	0.0
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	367	5.7
Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors	381	5.9
Transportation and Material Moving	343	5.3

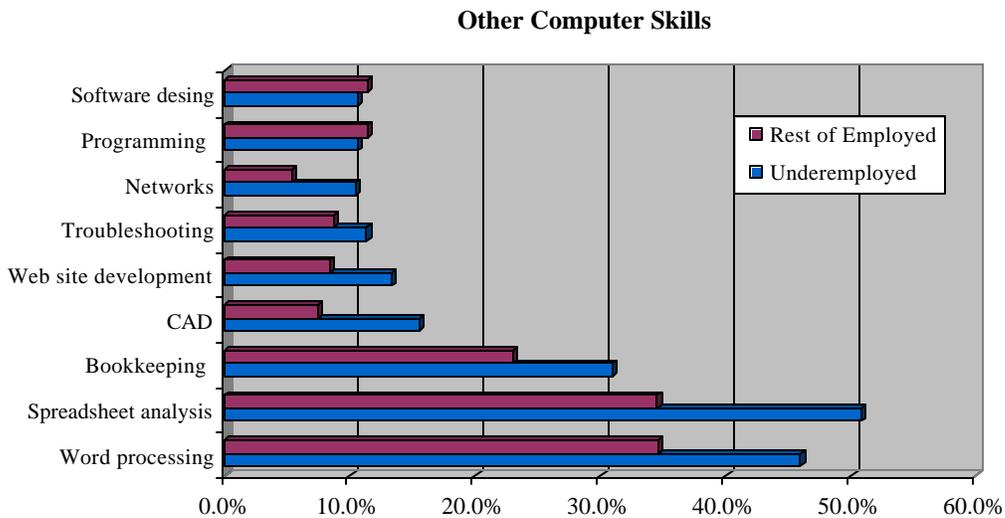
Many of the underemployed in the study area have skills in a variety of occupations and specialties that they presently are not utilizing.



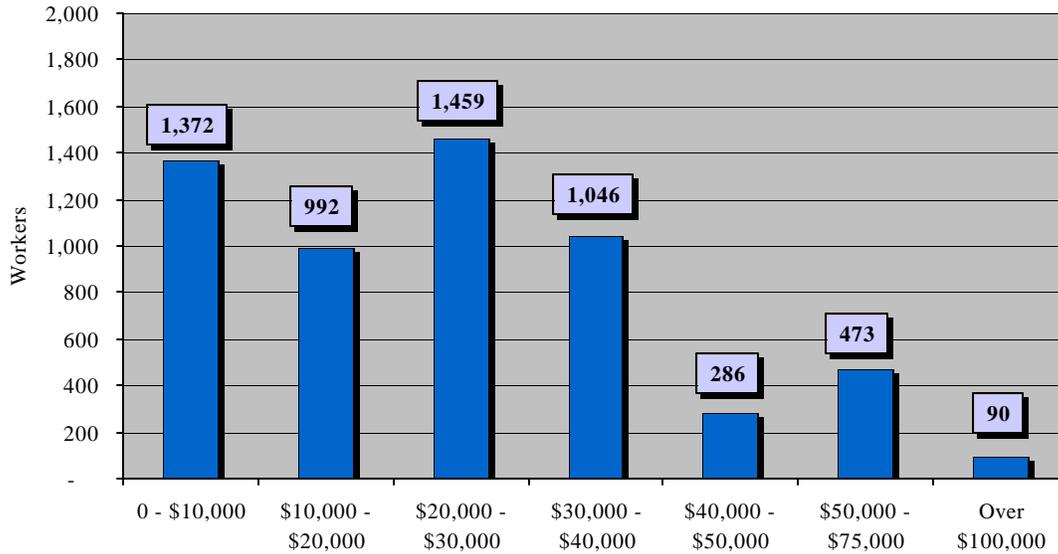
Of those with computer skills, 47 percent of the underemployed and about 50 percent of the rest of the employed identified word processing as their strongest computer skill. Spreadsheet and accounting software were the next most frequently mentioned as the strongest computer skill. The underemployed were about twice as likely to mention a programming language.



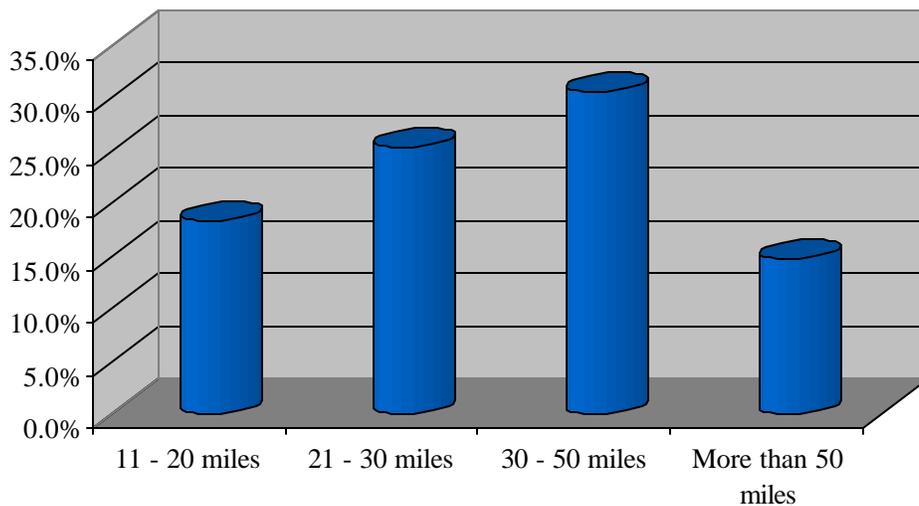
Word processing and spreadsheet software were the two other skills most often reported by underemployed workers. About 30 percent of the underemployed reported some proficiency with bookkeeping software and another 15 percent mentioned computer assisted design.



The typical (median) underemployed worker earns between \$20,000 and \$30,000 a year and would change jobs for a pay increase of between 10 percent and 15 percent.



Approximately 70 percent of underemployed workers are willing to commute at least 21 miles to work and about 45 percent would be willing to travel over 30 miles each week.



To summarize, a pool of labor exists in the Chickasha Study Area consisting of an estimated 6,526 workers who are not fully utilizing their education or training. They are prepared to leave their current employment for an opportunity to better utilize their skills and are willing commute relatively long distances to do so.