

An Analysis of the Weatherford Area Labor Force

Summary Report

for the

Business Development Center
Southwestern Oklahoma State University

and

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Sponsored by the Business Development Center at Southwestern Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, this study examines the availability of labor in the Weatherford area. Data were collected by telephone from randomly selected adults between April and May 1999. The results presented in this report are based on 1,003 interviews targeted to residents of Beckham, Custer, Roger Mills and Washita Counties.

This study demonstrates that a pool of labor exists among workers who are employed but do not fully utilize their education and skills. We call these workers the *underemployed*. In this study, underemployed workers meet three conditions: 1) they feel they are underutilized in their present employment, 2) they have training or education that is not required by their current job, and 3) they would change jobs in order to better utilize their skills and education. Approximately 11.9 percent of workers in the area fit the underemployed criteria.

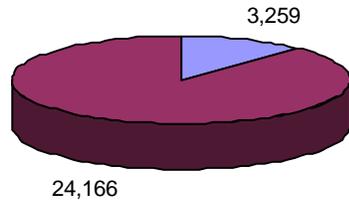
Many of the underemployed are searching for improved job situations. These workers exhibit a variety of occupations and skills. The results show that the median underemployed worker is willing to commute 20 miles or more for a job that pays 10 percent to 15 percent more than current wages.

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.

Highlights Regarding the Underemployed

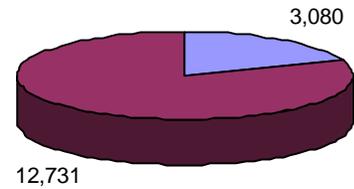
Approximately 3,259 persons in the target area are looking for work that better utilizes their skills and education. In addition, there are 3,080 persons who are currently not working but want to work.

Estimated Persons Who Are Working



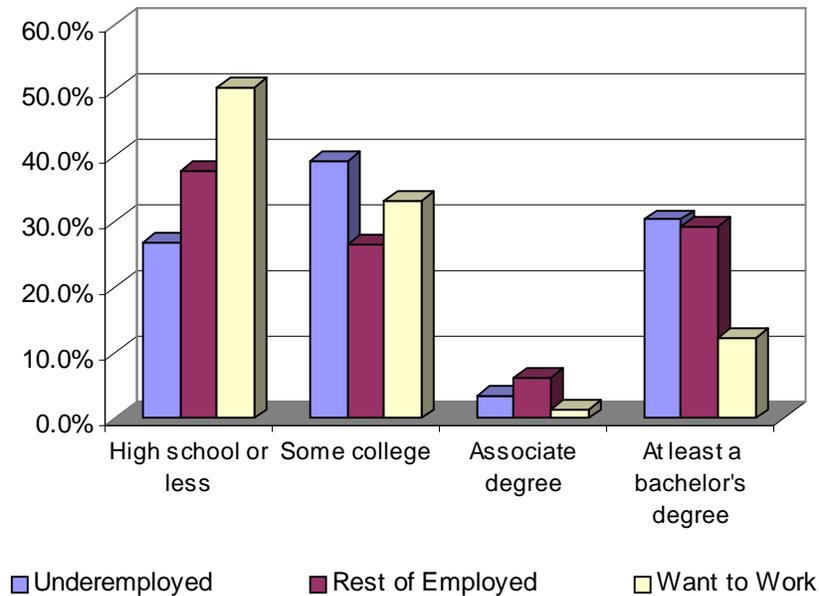
■ Underemployed ■ Rest of Employed

Estimated Persons Who Are Not Working



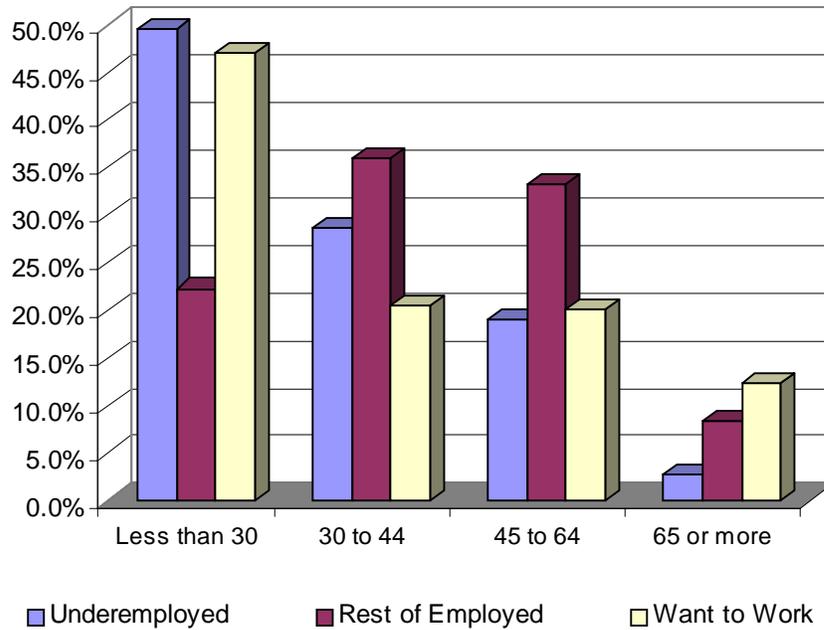
■ Want to Work ■ Don't desire work

A slightly smaller percentage of underemployed workers have four-year degrees than do other workers. Persons who are not working and want to work are less likely to have a post secondary degree.

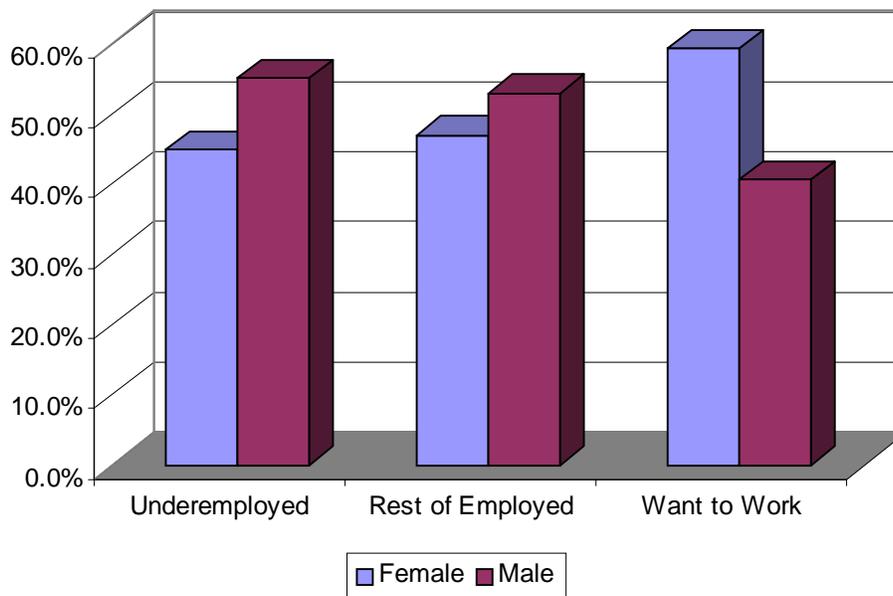


■ Underemployed ■ Rest of Employed ■ Want to Work

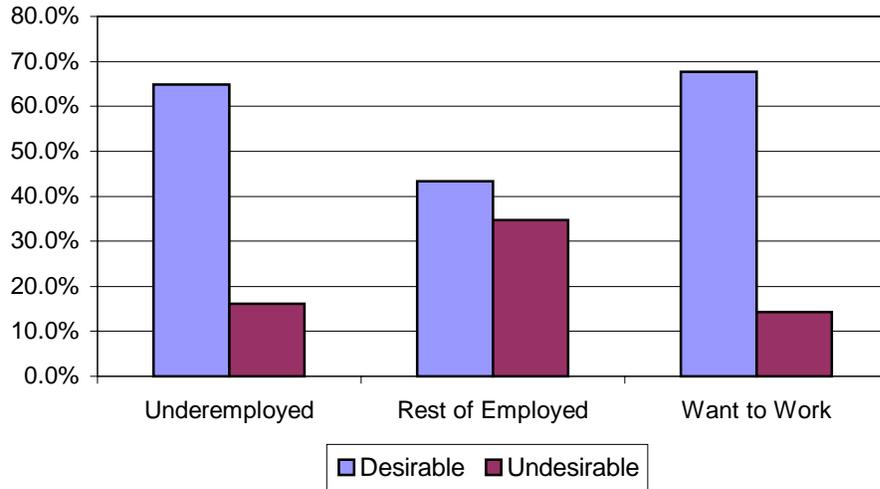
Nearly half of both underemployed workers and persons without a job but who want to work are under thirty years of age.



A majority of the underemployed are male. Those who are without work but want to work are mostly female.

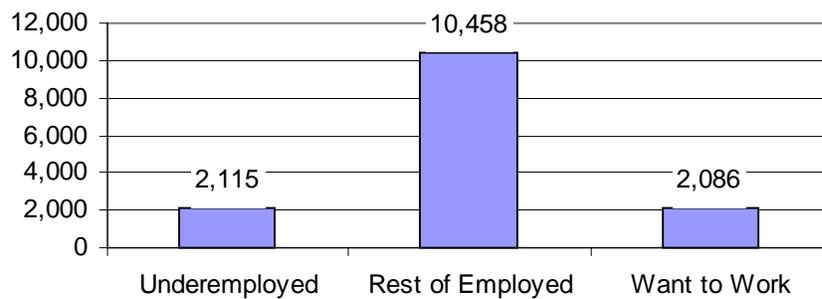


An employment opportunity that pays from \$8 per hour to \$10 per hour is viewed as desirable by 64.9 percent of the underemployed and by 43.3 percent of the rest of the employed. Sixty-eight percent of persons who are without work but want to work view such a job as desirable.



An estimated 14,660 persons living in the Weatherford area are interested in a job that pays from \$8 hour to \$10 hour.

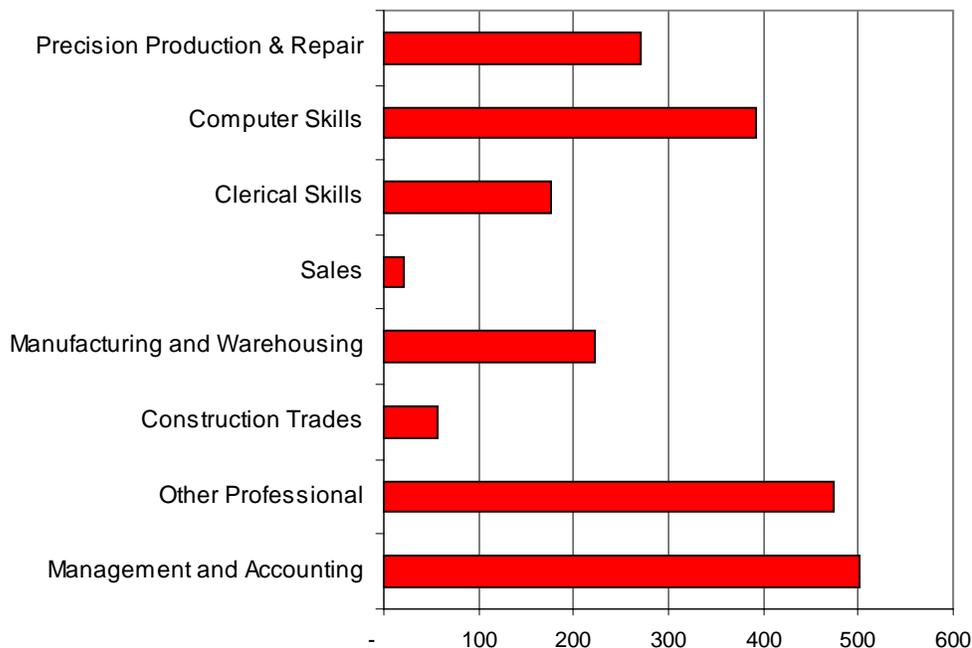
Number of Persons Willing to Work for \$8-\$10 per Hour



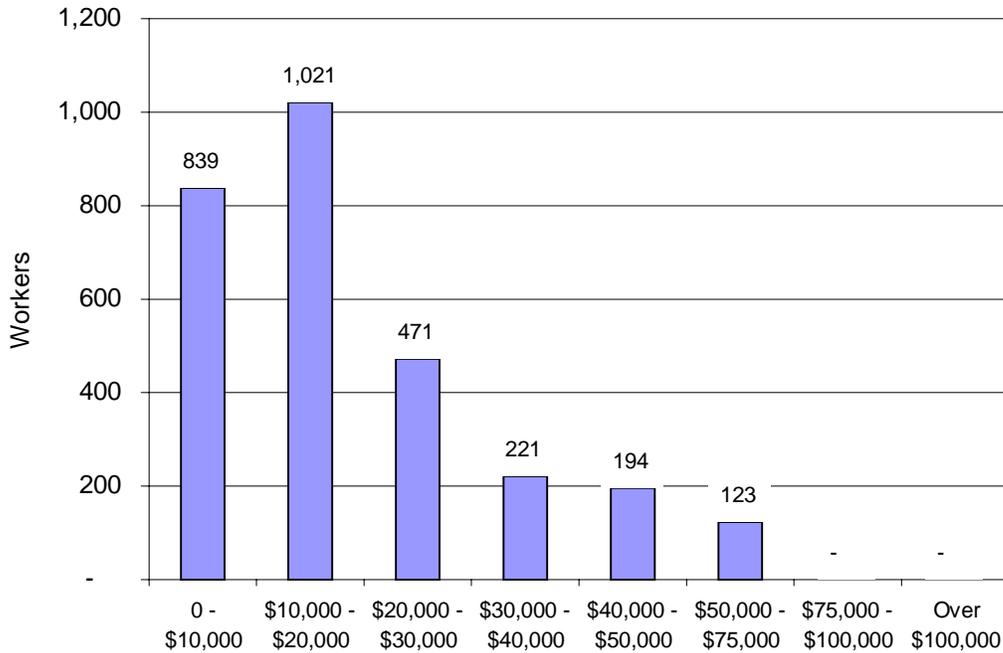
The underemployed work in a variety of occupations and skills, from executives and other professionals to craftsmen and clerks:

	Estimated	
	<u>Workers</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	574	17.6
Professional Specialty	398	12.2
Technicians and Related Support	113	3.5
Sales	428	13.1
Administrative Support, Including Clerical	418	12.8
Service Occupations	627	19.2
Farming, Forestry, and Fishing	160	4.9
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	270	8.3
Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors	182	5.6
Transportation and Material Moving	91	2.8

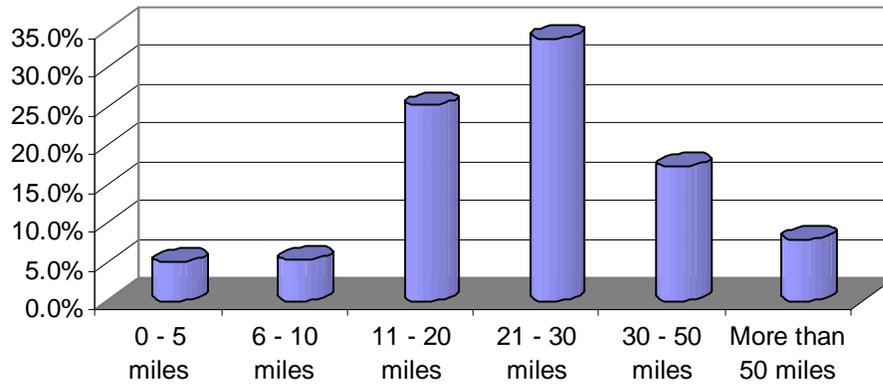
Most of the underemployed have skills they presently are not utilizing. These skills include...



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

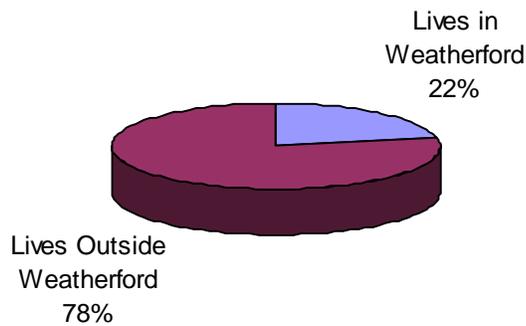


Approximately 59 percent of underemployed workers are willing to commute at least 21 miles to work...



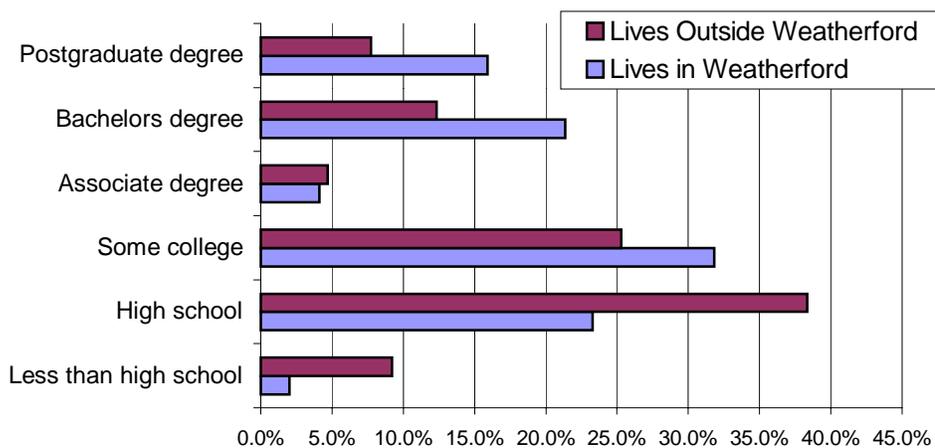
Contrast of Weatherford Residents with the Rest of the Study Area

Twenty-two percent of workers in the study area live in Weatherford while 78 percent live elsewhere in the study area.



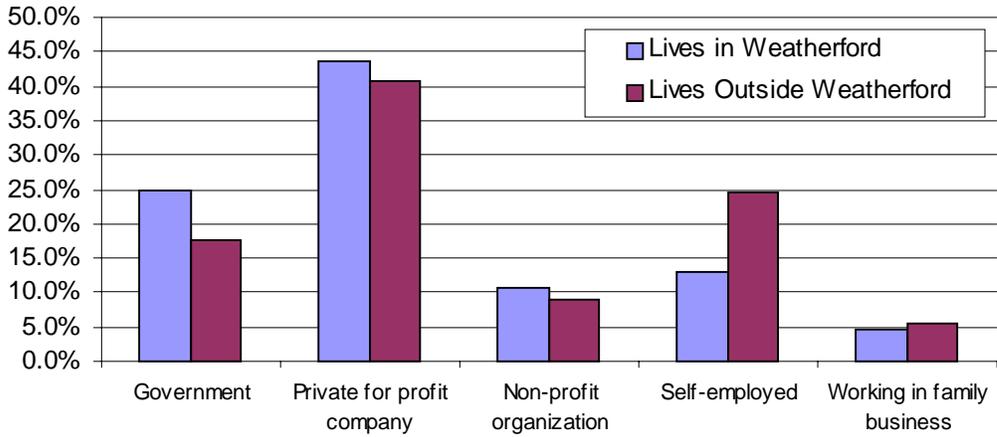
About 32 percent of Weatherford residents have attended some college compared to about 25 percent of those who do not live in Weatherford. About 37 percent of Weatherford residents have at least a bachelor's degree.

Level of Education by Place of Residence



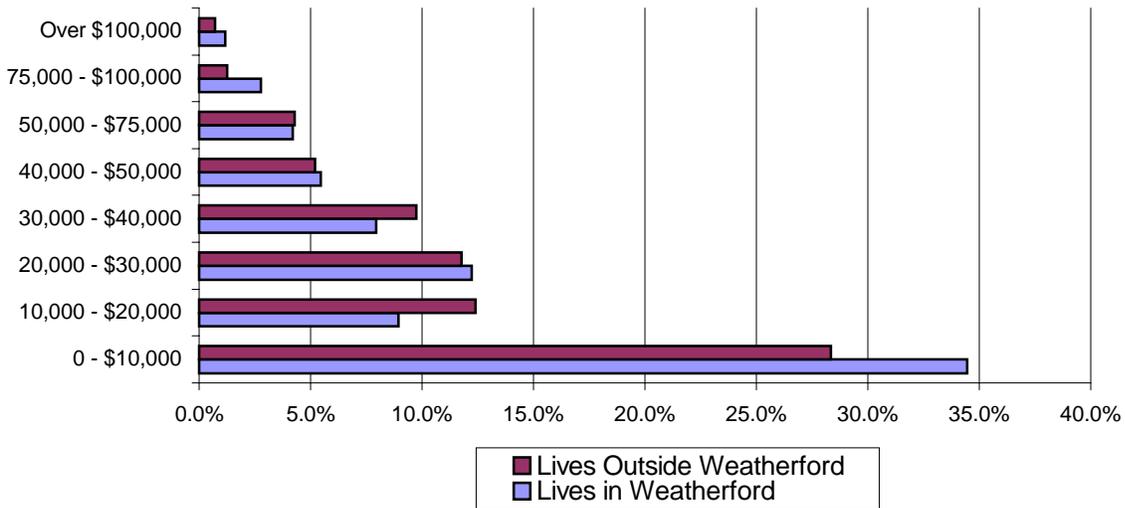
Workers in both groups are concentrated in government and private sector jobs. Those who do not live in the Weatherford area more likely to be self-employed compared with Weatherford residents.

Sector of Employment by Place of Residence



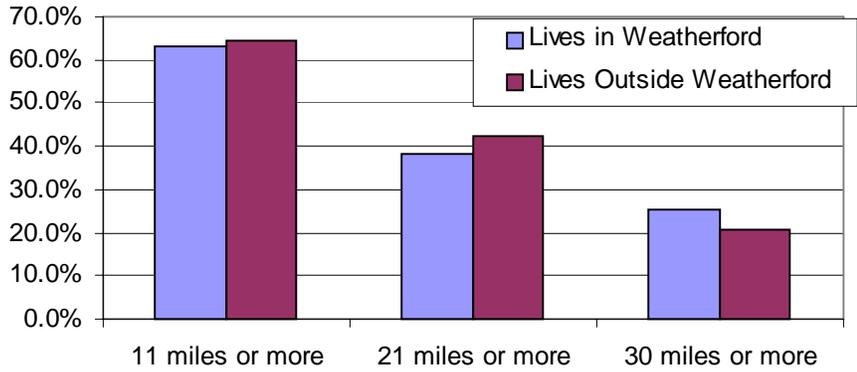
The distribution of earnings for both groups is similar.

Distribution of Earnings by Place of Residence



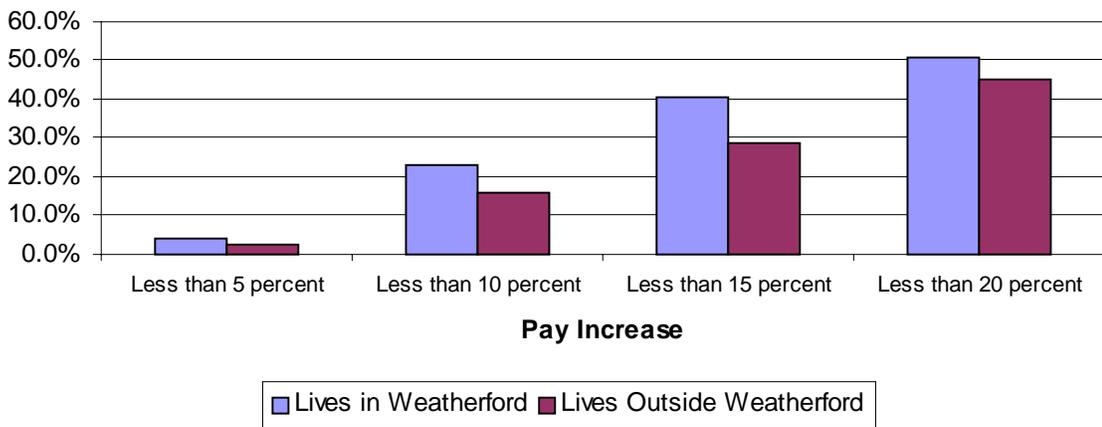
Those who do not live in Weatherford are slightly more willing to commute than are Weatherford residents.

Willingness to Commute by Place of Residence



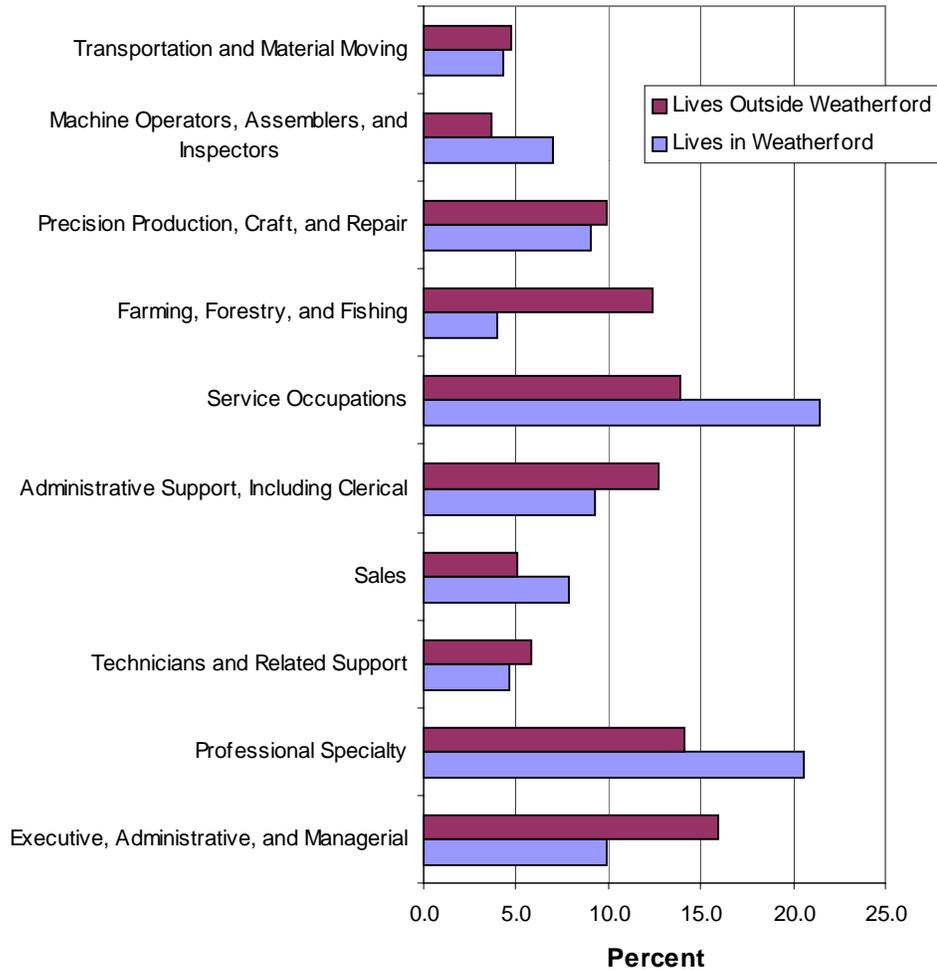
Workers living in Weatherford are more willing to change jobs than workers living outside Weatherford. Forty percent of Weatherford residents would change jobs for a pay increase of 15 percent or less, compared with 29 percent for those who do not live in Weatherford. Also, 22 percent of Weatherford residents and 24 percent of for those who do not live in Weatherford are not interested in changing jobs.

Percent of Workers Willing to Change Jobs by Percent Pay Increase Needed

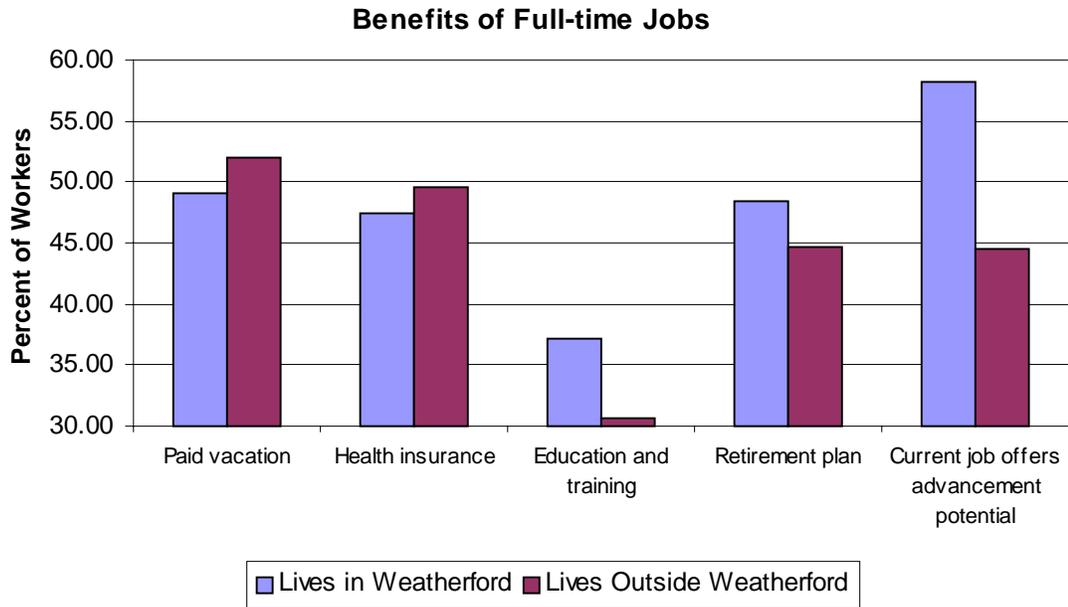


With some exceptions, the distribution of occupations is similar. Most notably, those who do not live in Weatherford are much more likely to be in farming than are Weatherford residents while workers living in Weatherford tend more towards service occupations.

Occupation by Place of Residence



A higher proportion of Weatherford residents receive education and training, retirement and advancement potential while persons living outside Weatherford are more likely to receive paid vacations and health insurance.



Conclusions

Underemployed workers

- A significant pool of labor exists among workers who are not fully utilizing their education and skills
- Many underemployed workers are searching for higher-paying jobs
- The underemployed exhibit a variety of occupations and skills
- About 59 percent are willing to commute 20 miles or more for an increase in pay of 10% to 15%
- Another pool of labor exists among those not working who desire work. These persons typically are less skilled and not as well educated

Comparing Weatherford residents with those who do not live in Weatherford

- On average, earnings for Weatherford residents are slightly higher than for those who do not live in Weatherford.
- Workers who do not live in Weatherford are more resistant to changing jobs compared with Weatherford residents.
- Occupational patterns are similar, but workers who do not live in Weatherford are more concentrated in farming and administrative and managerial jobs while Weatherford residents are more concentrated in professional specialty and service occupations.
- Forty-four percent of Weatherford residents and 41 percent of workers who do not live in Weatherford are employed in private sector positions.
- Weatherford residents are more likely to receive job training, retirement benefits and advancement potential while workers who do not live in Weatherford are more likely to receive paid vacations and health insurance.

Appendix: Distribution of the Sample

County	Interviews	Percent
Beckham	297	29.6
Custer	399	39.8
Roger Mills	62	6.2
Washita	245	24.4
	1,003	100.0