

An Analysis of the Poteau Area Labor Force

Summary Report

for

LeFlore County Coalition,
Twin Lakes Coalition,

and

Oklahoma Department of Commerce

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An Analysis of the Poteau Area Labor Force

Sponsored by the LeFlore County Coalition, Twin Lakes Coalition and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, this study examines the availability of labor in the Poteau area. Data were collected by telephone from randomly selected adults in June and July of 1999. The results presented in this report are based on 1,005 interviews targeted to residents of Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore and Sequoyah 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 11.7 percent of workers in the area fit the underemployed criteria.

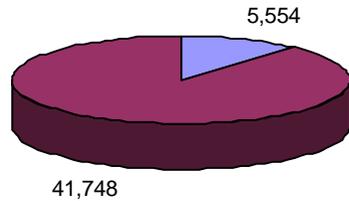
Many of the underemployed are searching for improved job situations. These workers exhibit a variety of occupations and skills. The results show that the median underemployed worker is willing to commute 20 miles or more for a job that pays 10 percent to 15 percent more than current wages.

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

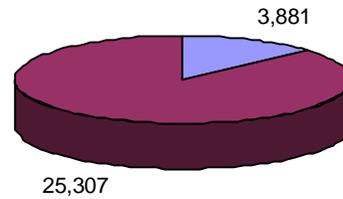
Approximately 5,554 persons in the target area are looking for work that better utilizes their skills and education. In addition, there are 3,881 persons who are currently not working but want to work.

Estimated Persons Who Are Working



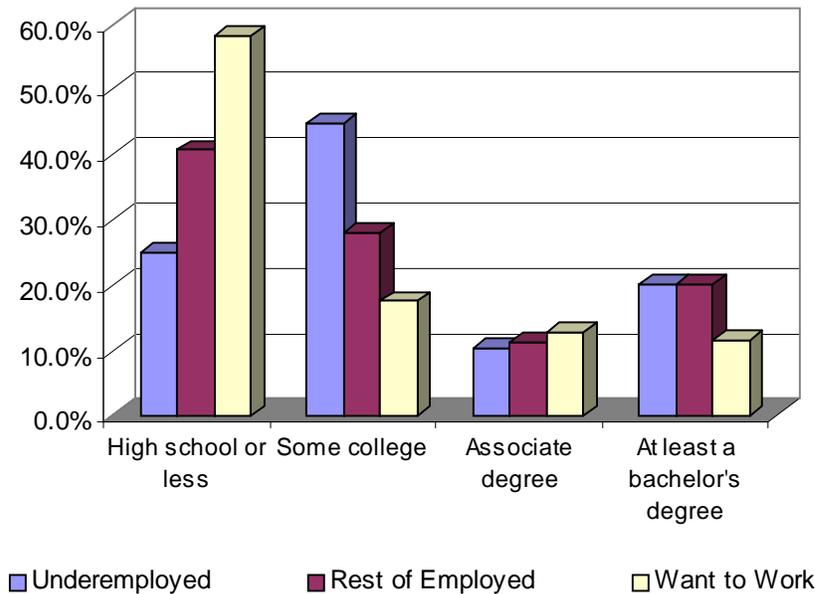
■ Underemployed ■ Rest of Employed

Estimated Persons Who Are Not Working

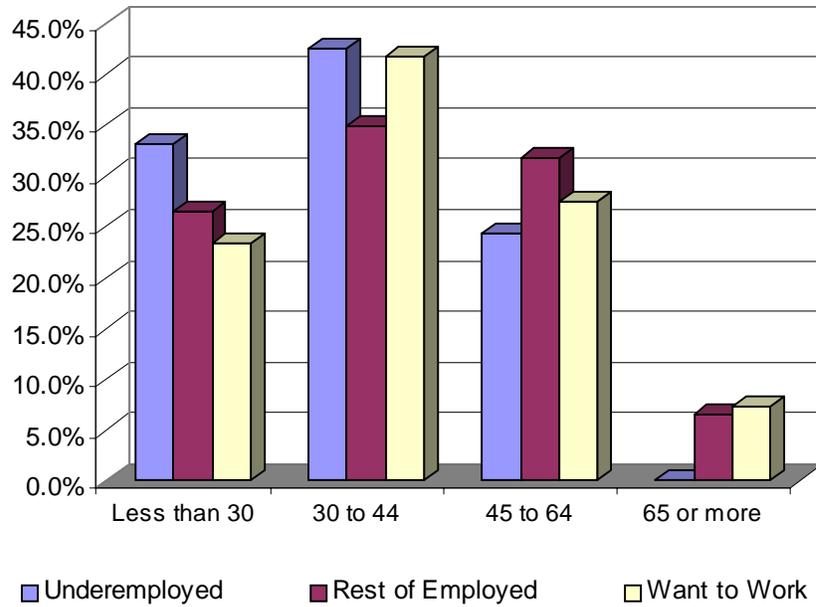


■ Want to Work ■ Don't desire work

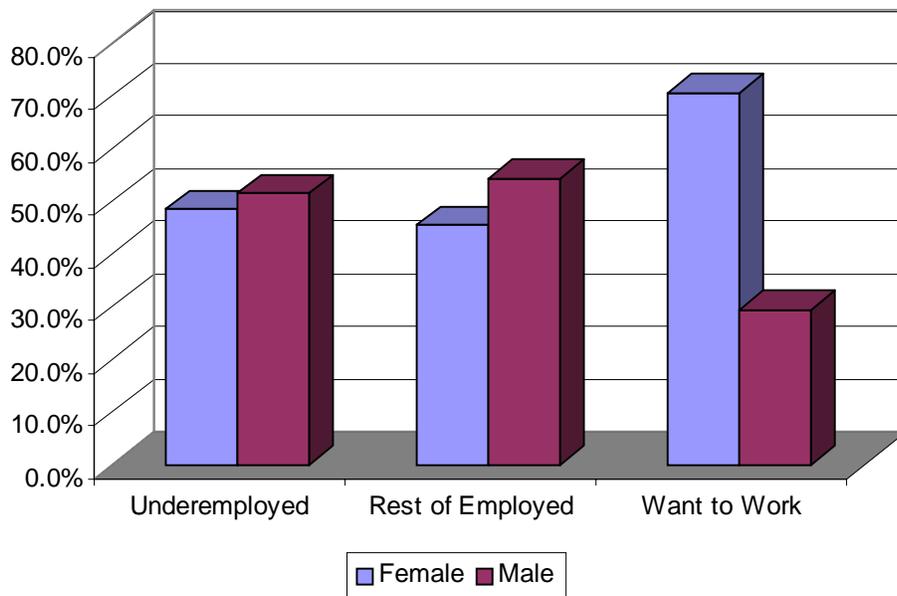
Underemployed workers are as likely to have four-year degrees as other workers while persons who are not working and want to work are less likely to have a bachelor's degree.



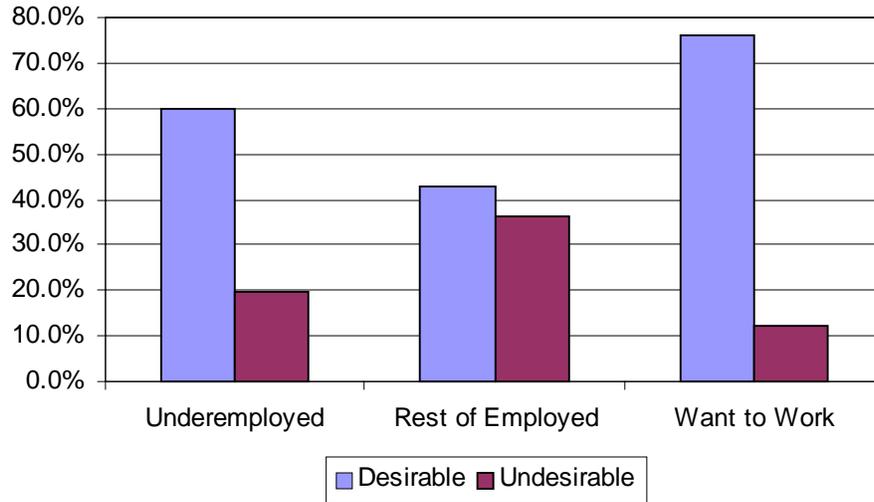
The largest concentration of underemployed workers and persons without a job but who want to work are in the 30 to 44 year old age category.



A slight majority of the underemployed are male while those who are without work but want to work are predominately female.

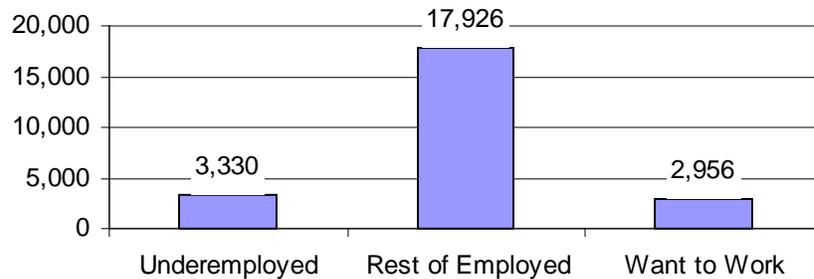


An employment opportunity that pays from \$8 per hour to \$10 per hour is viewed as desirable by 60 percent of the underemployed and by 42.9 percent of the rest of the employed. Seventy-six percent of persons who are without work but want to work view such a job as desirable.



An estimated 24,213 persons living in the Poteau area are interested in a job that pays from \$8 hour to \$10 hour.

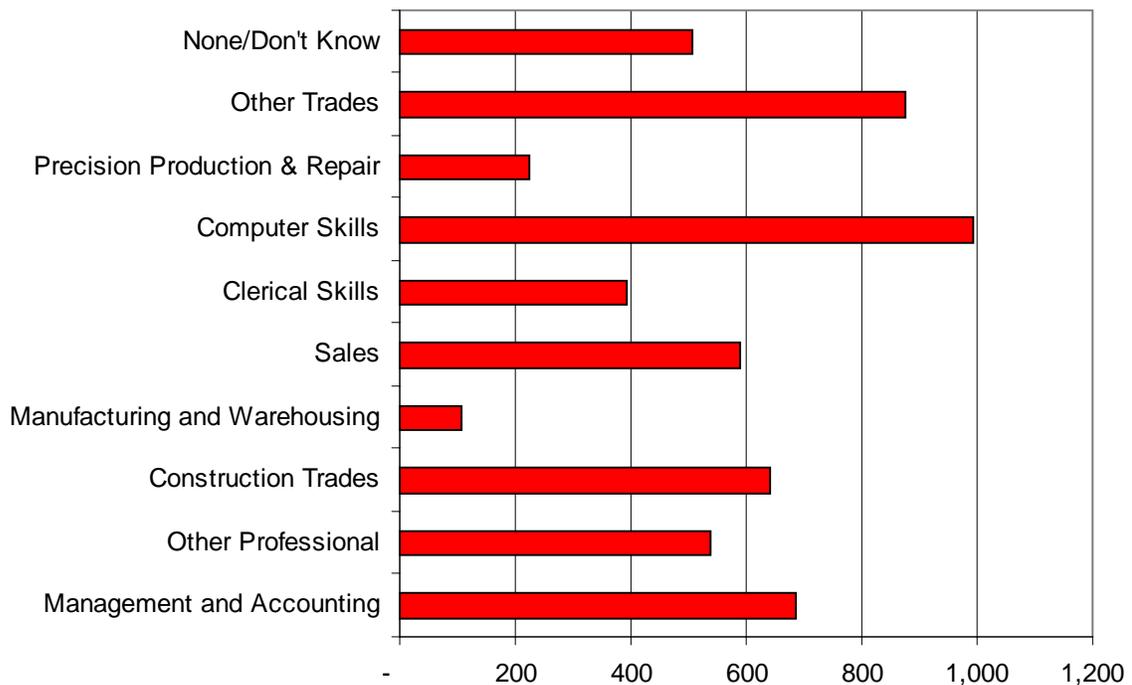
Number of Persons Willing to Work for \$8-\$10 per Hour



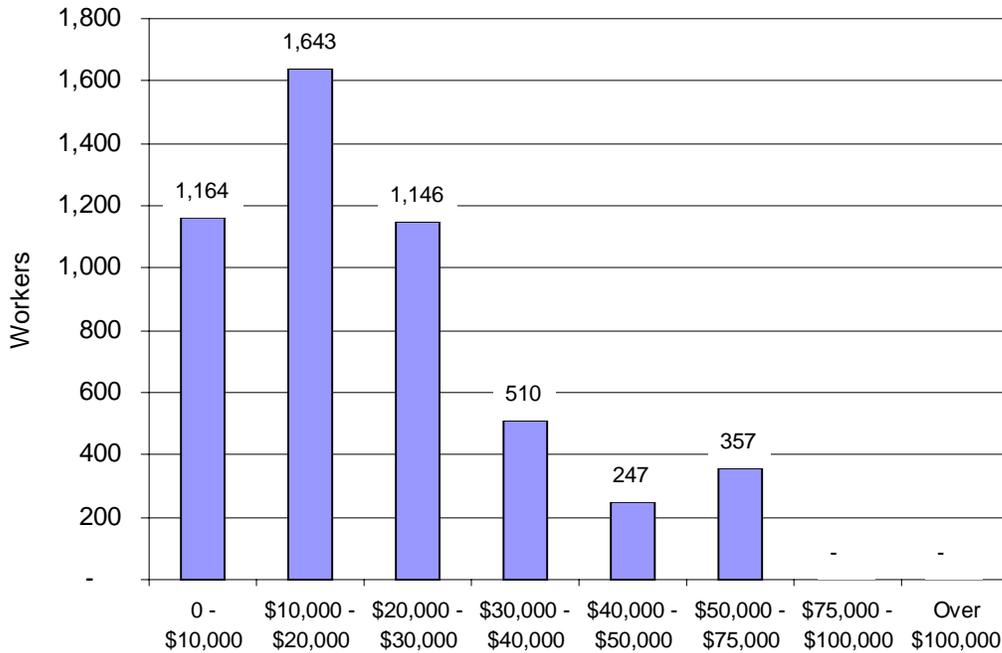
The underemployed work in a variety of occupations and skills, from executives and other professionals to craftsmen and clerks:

	Estimated	
	Workers	Percent
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	515	9.3
Professional Specialty	261	4.7
Technicians and Related Support	0	0.0
Sales	780	14.0
Administrative Support, Including Clerical	1,059	19.1
Service Occupations	830	15.0
Farming, Forestry, and Fishing	165	3.0
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	779	14.0
Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors	516	9.3
Transportation and Material Moving	650	11.7

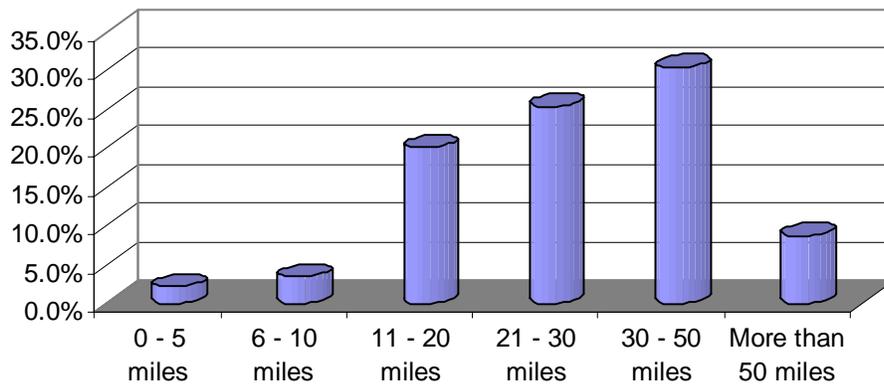
Most of the underemployed have skills they presently are not utilizing. These skills include...



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



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 64 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

Appendix: Distribution of the Sample

County	Interviews	Percent
Haskell	76	7.6%
Latimer	107	10.6%
LeFlore	433	43.1%
Sequoyah	389	38.7%
	1,005	100.0%