

# **An Analysis of the Woodward Area Labor Force**

Summary Report

for the

Woodward Industrial Foundation

and

Oklahoma Department of Commerce

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July 1998

## **An Analysis of the Woodward Area Labor Force**

Sponsored by the Woodward Industrial Foundation and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, this study examines the availability of labor in the Woodward, Oklahoma, area. Data were collected by telephone from randomly selected adults in April, May and June of 1998. The results presented in this report are based on 987 interviews targeted to the six county Woodward area. Woodward residents constitute 48 percent of the sample.

Although the unemployment rate is just 3.1<sup>1</sup> percent in the six county area, 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 12 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 many of the underemployed are 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.

The next section provides comparative survey details regarding the underemployed followed by comparisons of Woodward with the surrounding area.

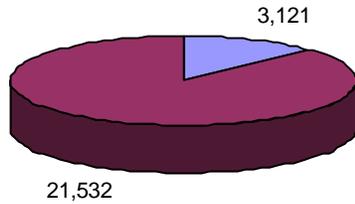
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<sup>1</sup> Oklahoma Employment Security Commission estimate for April 1998.

## Highlights Regarding the Underemployed

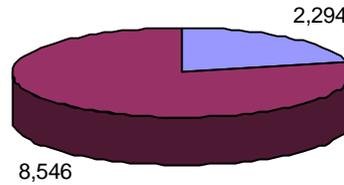
One out of eight workers in the target area, or approximately 3,121 persons, are looking for work that better utilizes their skills and education. Another 2,294 persons who are currently not working want to work.

Estimated Persons Who Are Working



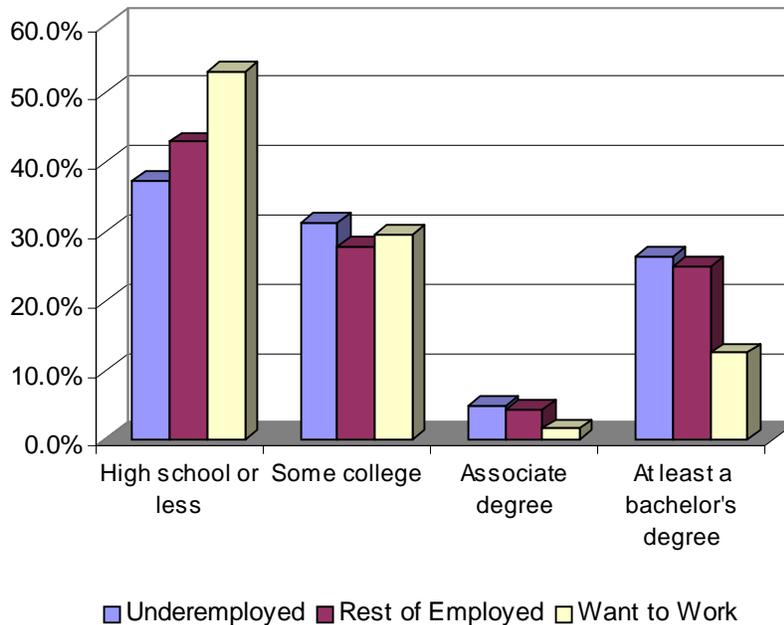
Underemployed Rest of Employed

Estimated Persons Who Are Not Working



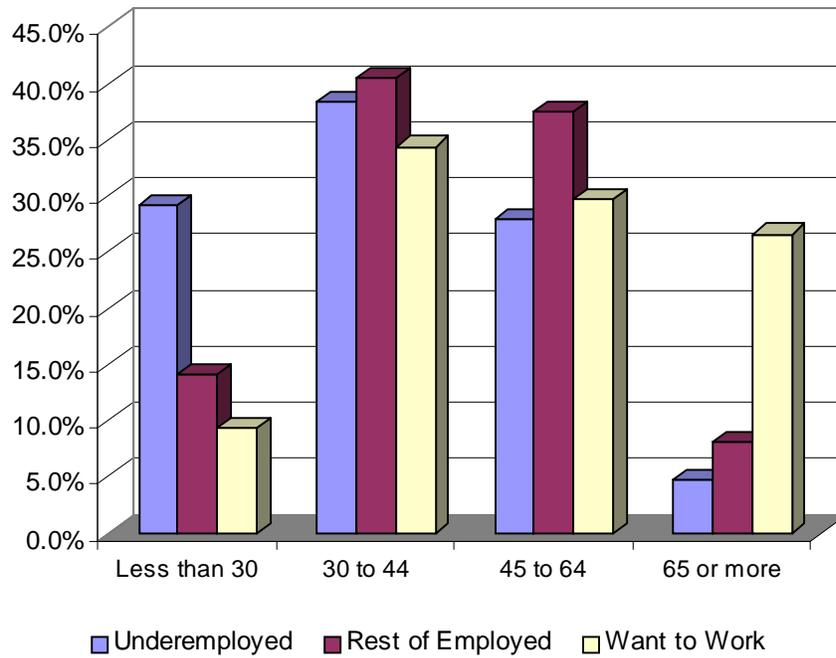
Want to Work Don't desire work

Slightly more underemployed workers have four-year degrees than do other workers. Persons who are not working and want to work have much less education.



Underemployed Rest of Employed Want to Work

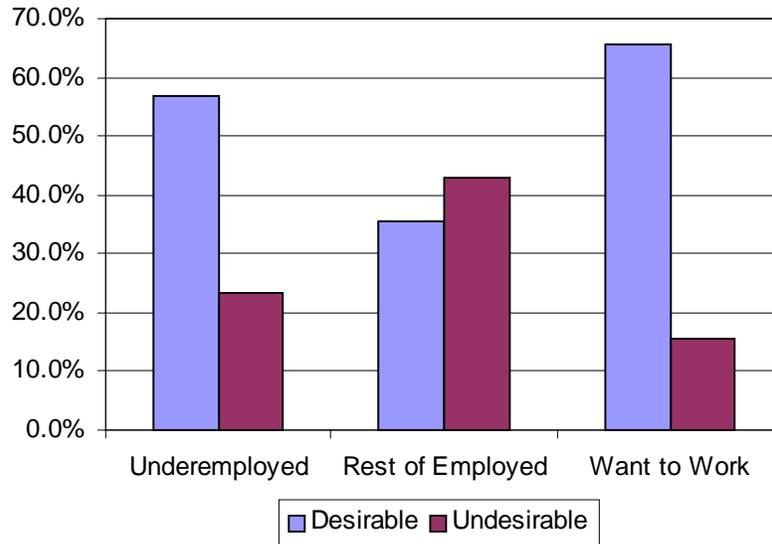
Underemployed workers are younger, but persons without a job but want to work are older.



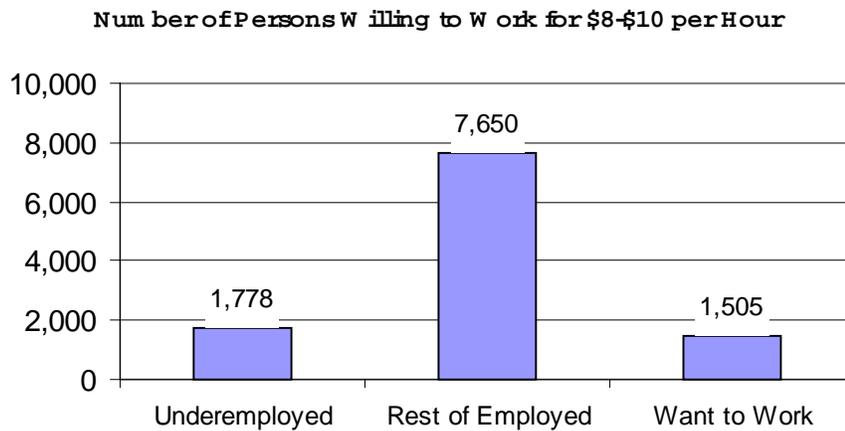
Males constitute a slight majority among the underemployed. Those who are without work but want to work are overwhelmingly female.



An employment opportunity that pays from \$8 per hour to \$10 per hour is viewed as desirable by 57 percent of the underemployed but by just 36 percent of the rest of employed. Approximately 66 percent of persons who are without work but want to work view such a job as desirable.



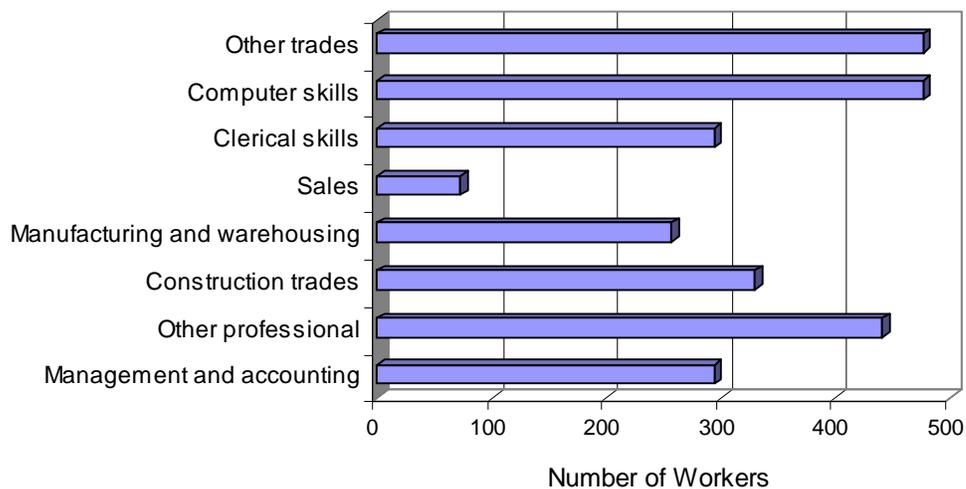
An estimated 10,934 persons living in the Woodward area are interested in a job that pays from \$8 hour to \$10 hour...



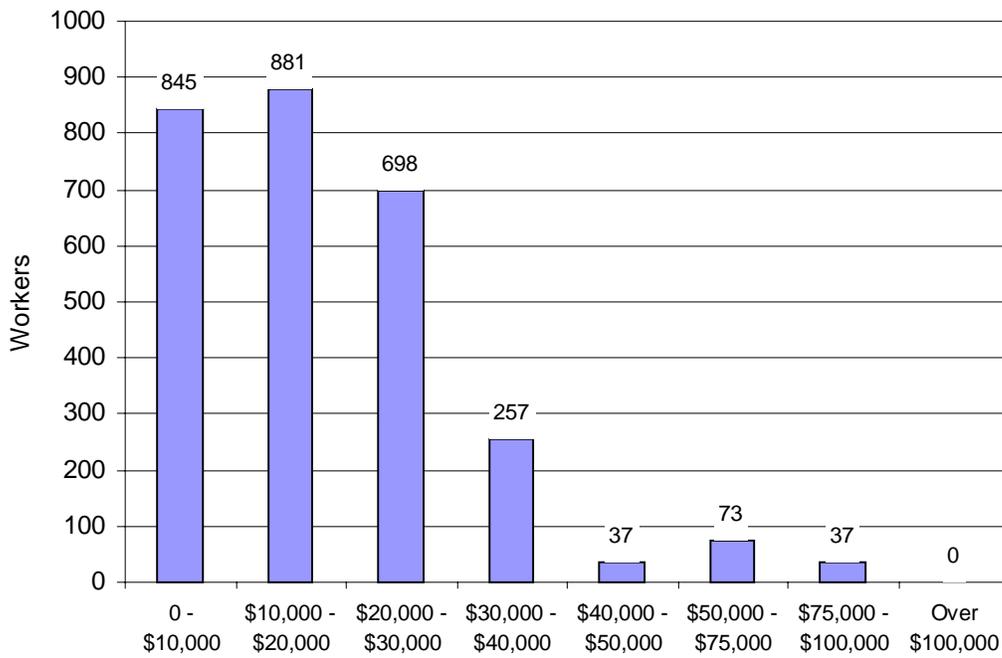
The underemployed work in a variety of occupations and skills, from executives and other professionals to craftsmen and clerks:

	<u>Estimated Workers</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	257	8.2
Professional Specialty	441	14.1
Technicians and Related Support	37	1.2
Sales	257	8.2
Administrative Support, Including Clerical	477	15.3
Service Occupations	441	14.1
Farming, Forestry, and Fishing	110	3.5
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	624	20.0
Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors	37	1.2
Transportation and Material Moving	441	14.1

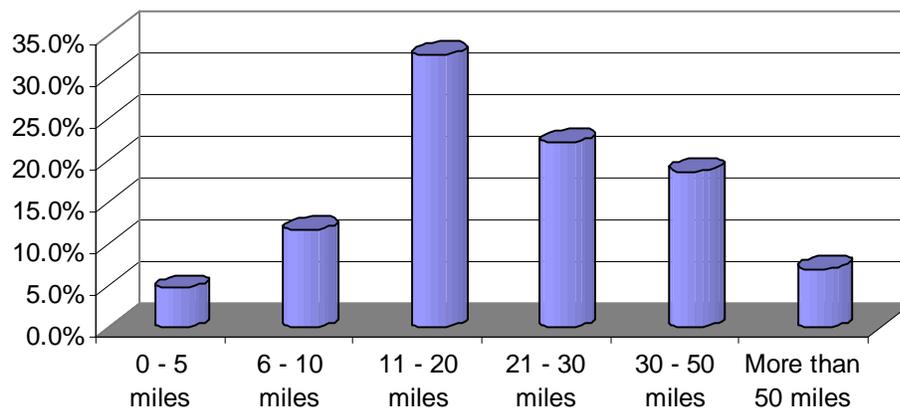
Most of the underemployed have skills they presently are not utilizing. These skills include...



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.



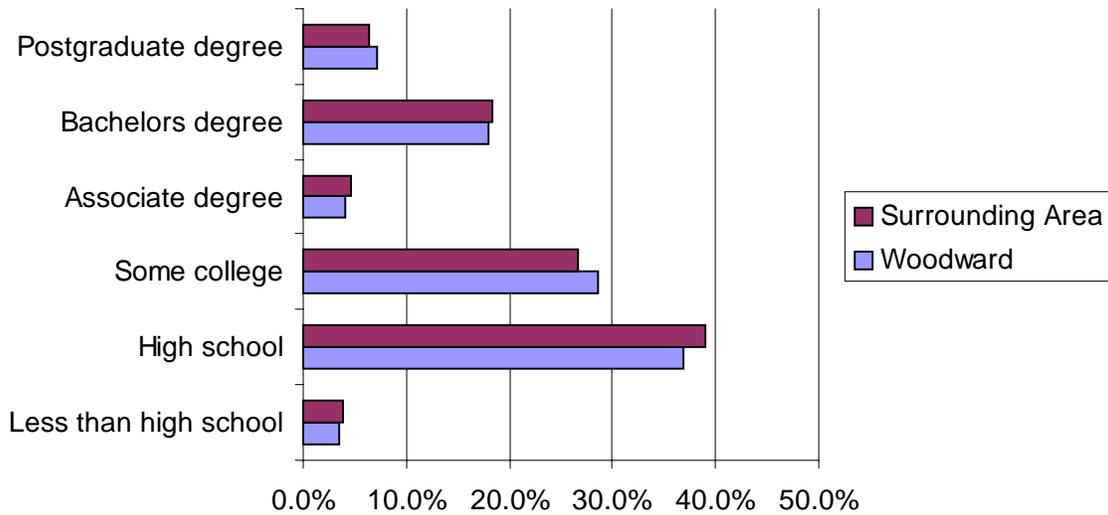
Approximately 48 percent of underemployed workers are willing to commute at least 21 miles to work...



## Contrasting Woodward with the Surrounding Area

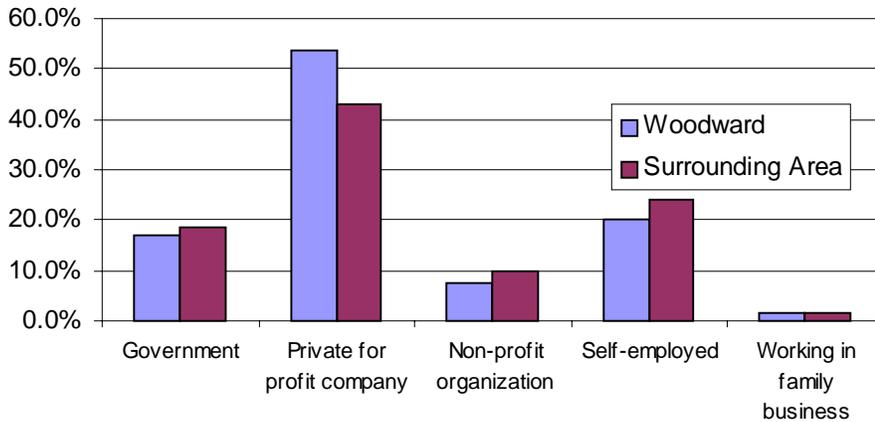
Residents exhibit very similar levels of education: 24.6 percent of workers in the Surrounding Area and 25 percent of Woodward workers have completed at least a Bachelor's degree.

**Level of Education by Place of Residence**



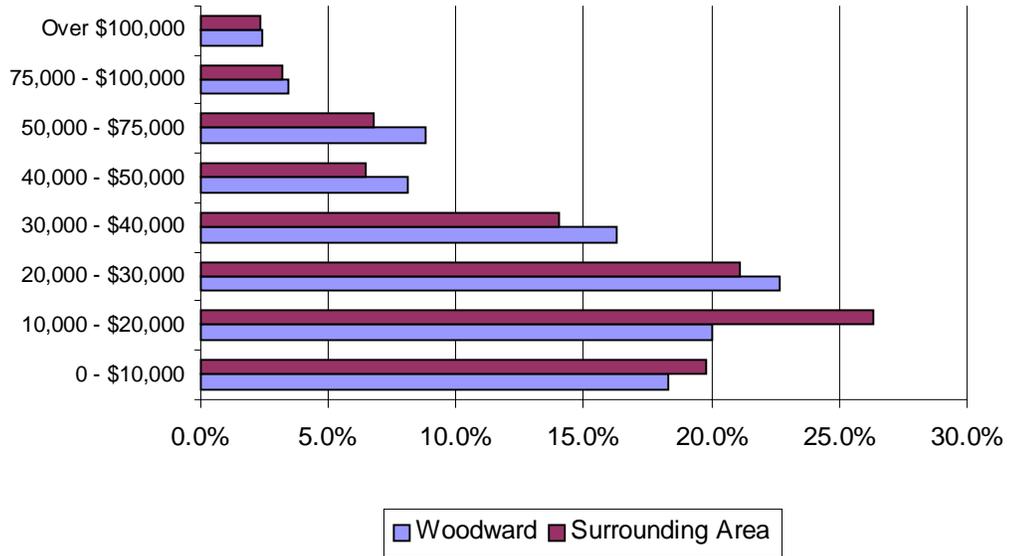
A majority of Woodward residents work for private-sector companies. Workers in the Surrounding Area exhibit a higher tendency toward self-employment.

**Sector of Employment by Place of Residence**



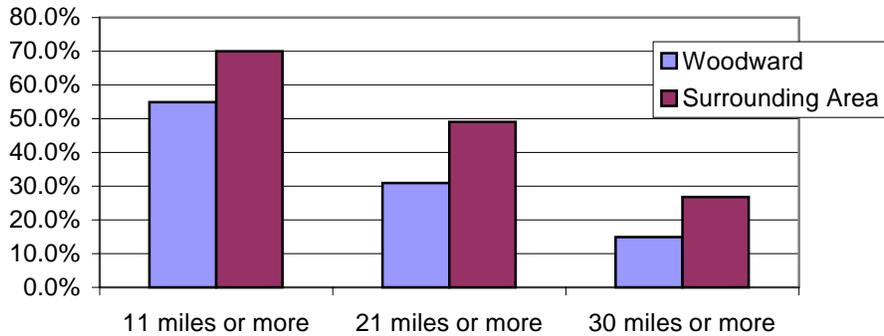
Median earnings are \$20,000 to \$30,000 in both areas. However, Woodward has a higher percentage of workers who earn \$40,000 or more.

**Distribution of Earnings by Place of Residence**



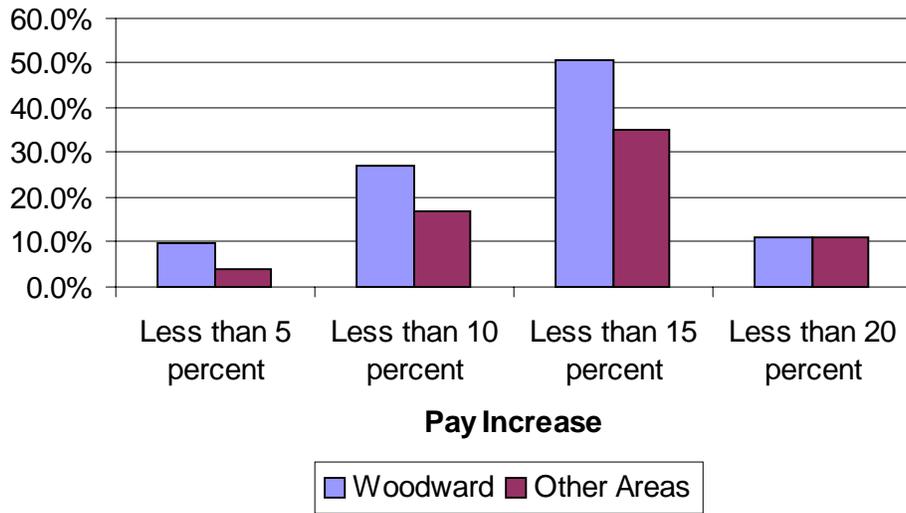
Workers in the Surrounding Area are much more willing to commute: 49 percent of workers in the Surrounding Area are willing to commute 21 miles or more compared with 31 percent for Woodward.

**Willingness to Commute by Place of Residence**



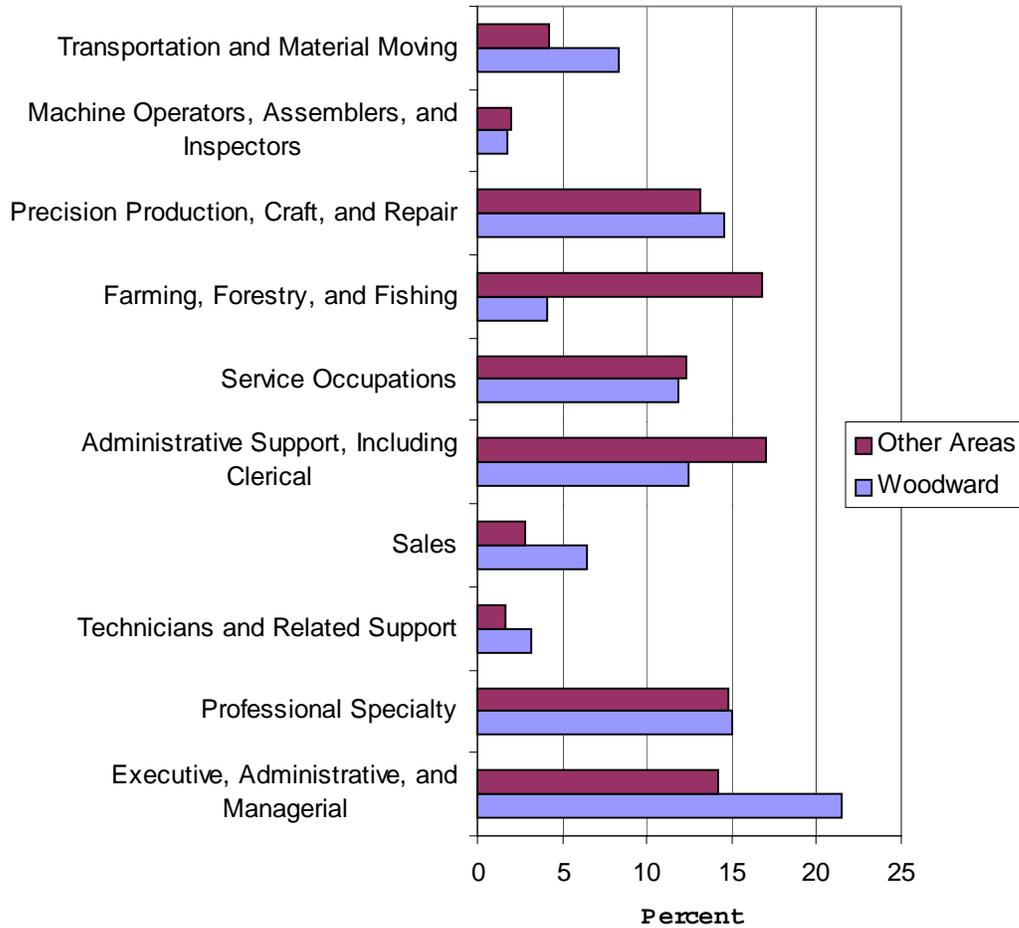
Workers in the Surrounding Area are more resistant to changing jobs. Just 34.9 percent would change jobs for a pay increase of 15 percent or less, compared with 50.6 percent for Woodward residents. Also, 15.8 percent of workers in the Surrounding Area would not change jobs regardless of the pay increase, compared with 11.5 percent of Woodward workers.

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

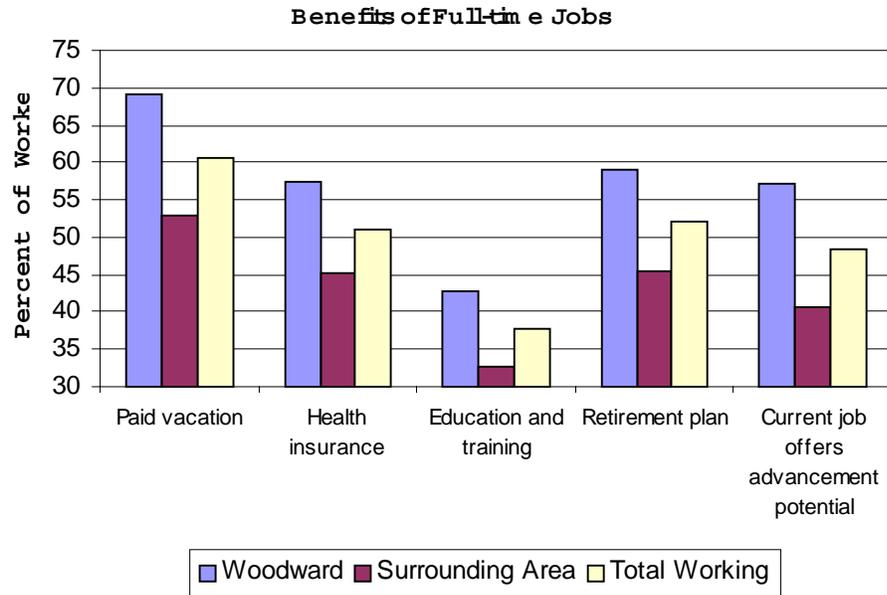


Compared with the Surrounding Area, occupations among Woodward residents tend to be more executive, transportation, and sales jobs. Occupations for the Surrounding Area tend more towards agriculture and administrative support occupations.

Occupation by Place of Residence



Compared with the Surrounding Area, a higher proportion of Woodward workers receive benefits with their jobs.



## Conclusions

- A pool of labor exists in the Woodward area 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
- Many underemployed are willing to commute 20 miles or more for an increase in pay of 10% to 15%
- A smaller 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

City or Area	Number	Percent	County	Number	Percent
Ames	10	1.0%	Dewey	83	8.4%
Arnett	21	2.1%	Ellis	103	10.4%
Buffalo	29	2.9%	Harper	102	10.3%
Camargo	4	0.4%	Major	148	15.0%
Chester	2	0.2%	Woods	34	3.4%
Clearview	2	0.2%	Woodward	515	52.2%
Cleo Springs	10	1.0%	Don't Know	2	0.2%
Fairview	103	10.4%	Total	987	100.0%
Fargo	11	1.1%			
Fay	5	0.5%			
Fort Supply	2	0.2%			
Freedom	16	1.6%			
Gage	13	1.3%			
Isabella	4	0.4%			
Laverne	57	5.8%			
Leedey	15	1.5%			
May	1	0.1%			
Meno	6	0.6%			
Mooreland	36	3.6%			
Oakwood	4	0.4%			
Orienta	1	0.1%			
Putnam	1	0.1%			
Quinlan	3	0.3%			
Rosston	8	0.8%			
Seiling	20	2.0%			
Selman	2	0.2%			
Sharon	2	0.2%			
Shattuck	55	5.6%			
Taloga	7	0.7%			
Vici	27	2.7%			
Waynoka	15	1.5%			
Woodward	473	47.9%			
Rural	9	0.9%			
Don't Know	10	1.0%			
Refused	3	0.3%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>100.0%</b>			