

Cooperstown and Surrounding Area Labor Availability Study

A collaboration of:

North Dakota Department of Commerce

University of North Dakota – Social Science Research Institute

Job Service North Dakota

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Major Findings

Summary of Findings

Site developers, economic planners, and others will often refer to the unemployment rate to determine if there is an available labor force. While a consistent measure across the country, it is incomplete. Being unemployed is defined as not working but actively seeking work. However, some individuals who are working would be interested in changing jobs or occupations, others would want additional hours, and some are planning to find work within the year. These individuals are not normally counted as part of the available labor pool in an area. In 2002, the state of North Dakota, in cooperation with local partners, funded a study to measure the available labor pool.

In the area surrounding Cooperstown, there exists an available labor force of 2,900 individuals, or approximately 25 percent of the adult population. The majority of these individuals are currently working, but would be willing to consider alternative jobs. The labor force (those employed and unemployed) is estimated to be 49 percent of the adult population or 5,700 individuals.

Characteristics of the Potential Job Seekers

	<u>Number*</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Potential Job Seekers**	2,900	25.2
Actively Seeking Work	420	3.6
Planning to Look Within the Year	200	1.7
Interested in Changing Jobs	1,720	14.9
Interested in Additional Jobs	890	7.7
Those Discouraged From Looking	470	4.1

*Rounded to the nearest 10.

**The numbers will not total to the Potential Job Seekers, as duplication is possible.

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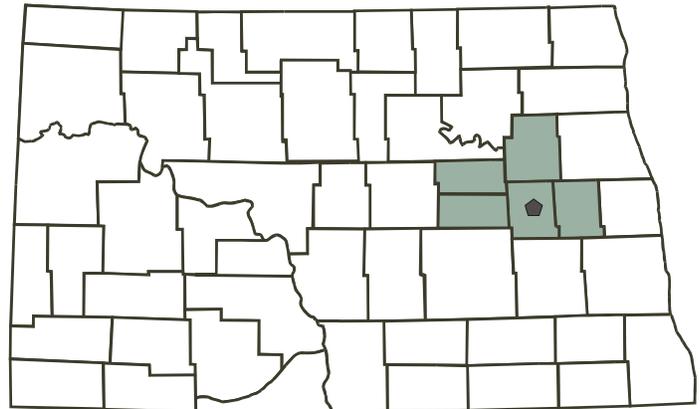
Introduction

Scope of the Study:

During the spring of 2002, the state of North Dakota sponsored a study that to identify the available labor pool in those communities and counties that provided matching funds to conduct a labor availability survey. This was done in collaboration with the Workforce Development Division of the North Dakota Department of Commerce, Job Service North Dakota, and the Social Research Institute (SSRI) at the University of North Dakota.

The purpose of the survey was to explore the potential labor force in and around Cooperstown, located in the central portion of the state. A questionnaire was designed to identify the characteristics and the size of the potential labor force in that area. A telephone survey was conducted by the SSRI, who contacted 1,233 respondents.

The core area for this survey included respondents from Eddy, Foster, Griggs, Nelson, and Steele Counties. These areas were included because of established commuting patterns in and around Cooperstown. The area highlighted in the adjacent map indicates the geographic area included in this report.



Location of Cooperstown and the Area Studied

Potential Job Seekers

Definitions of Potential Job Seekers:

At the time of the study, Job Service North Dakota reported the unemployment rate for Griggs County was around 2.4 percent. The study focused only on adults 18 years and older. That focus is different from the defined labor force used by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Census Bureau, which use 16 years and older. In order to be considered unemployed, one has to be not working and actively seeking work. However, the potential labor pool includes not only those who are actively seeking work, but also those who are working and may be interested in working for another firm. In this survey, the identified Potential Job Seekers (PJSs) were divided into five categories:

1. The unemployed.

Those who are 18 and older, unemployed and actively seeking work.

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2. Individuals who plan to seek a job within the next year.

Those who are not working, not seeking work, but plan to look for work within the year.

3. People who are working, but would be willing to change jobs.

Using Bureau of Labor Statistics definitions, these people would be classified as employed. This group includes those individuals who are presently working who may or may not be actively seeking work, but would consider changing employers.

4. People who are currently working and are willing to take an additional job.

Like the previous group, these individuals would be defined as employed. However, they would be willing to work an additional job and, as such, are part of the available labor pool for different businesses.

5. Individuals who are discouraged and do not look for work.

For the purpose of this study, the discouraged worker is defined as someone who is not working, is not actively seeking work, or planning to find a job within the next year, but would accept a job if it met their minimum acceptable wage requirements.

Population Characteristics

General Population Characteristics:

Based on the 2000 Census, Griggs County has slightly more females (50.1 percent) than males (49.9 percent). The adult population 25 and older is well educated, with 78.7 percent having completed high school, which is slightly lower than the national average (80.4 percent). Compared to the nation, the population of Griggs County is less mobile, with 25.4 percent of the population residing in a different residence than the one where they lived in 1995. Nationally, 46 percent of the population moved from their 1995 residence and lived elsewhere in 2000. The median age for the general population in Griggs County is 45.8.

According to the Cooperstown Economic Development Corporation, the labor market area for Griggs County extends beyond its borders. Using the area identified, the Census reported 11,542 individuals 18 years or older who lived in the five-county area.

Sample Population Characteristics:

The sample gathered for the Cooperstown labor area closely mirrors the general population characteristics. The sample reported slightly more female respondents than males, 50.3 to 49.7 percent. This is within the acceptable range of plus or minus 5 percent. In addition, the unemployment rate reported by the study was 3.6 percent, which is slightly lower than the reported unemployment rate of 4.2 percent for the area. The median age for the respondents was 53 years of age.

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Employment Status:

According to the survey, about 46 percent of the adult population, or approximately 5,290 individuals, are currently working for wages in the Cooperstown labor market area.

Active Labor Force:

The active labor force includes those who are working (5,290) and the 420 who are actively seeking work, or a labor force of 5,710.

Inactive Labor Force:

The inactive labor force includes those who are planning to look for work within the next year (420), as well as those who are discouraged from seeking work (470). These individuals are not included in the unemployment rate, as they are not working or actively seeking work.

Characteristics of the Employed Labor Force

Employed Workers:

The 5,290 employed individuals in the area work an average of 40.2 hours a week. Those involved in farming and agricultural production were most likely to work longer hours than any other group. Those involved in the clerical and sales as well as those in miscellaneous occupations (generally those involved in transportation) worked the fewest average hours, 36.1 hours per week. This indicates a number of part-time jobs in these occupations. The following table reports the average hours worked by occupational group.

Average Hours Worked by Occupations	
<u>Occupational Group</u>	<u>Average Hours Worked</u>
Professional, Technical and Managerial	40.1
Clerical and Sales	35.0
Service	32.5
Farming and Agricultural Production	58.1
Processing	41.1
Machine Trades	48.1
Benchwork	43.4
Structural Work	47.7
Miscellaneous	44.9

Age Distribution:

The median age for those who are working is 43 years of age. The youngest occupational group is comprised of those involved in machine trades with a median age of 35. The oldest groups, with a median age of 45, were those who worked in professional, technical, and managerial occupations or miscellaneous occupations.

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Median Age of Occupations

<u>Occupational Group</u>	<u>Median Age</u>
Professional, Technical and Managerial	45
Clerical and Sales	42
Service	42
Farming and Agricultural Production	44
Processing	42
Machine Trades	35
Benchwork	47
Structural Work	38
Miscellaneous	45

Educational Attainment:

The level of education of those currently working is impressive. The typical worker has at least some college, but this varies as some occupations have differing levels of required education/training. Those in the occupational group of professionals, technicians, and managers have obtained the highest level of education. Typically, these individuals have a college degree. A lower level of formal training is found in three groups: service occupations, machine trades, and miscellaneous occupations. Individuals who are working in these occupations typically have a high school education.

Current Occupation:

The largest occupational group for the Cooperstown labor area consists of professional, technical, and managerial workers. The following table shows the number of employed by occupational group.

Occupations of Those Employed

<u>Occupational Group</u>	<u>Number*</u>	<u>Percentage*</u>
Professional, Technical and Managerial	2,160	37.9
Clerical and Sales	1,240	21.8
Service	840	14.8
Farming and Agricultural Production	390	6.8
Processing	140	2.5
Machine Trades	140	2.5
Benchwork	230	4.1
Structural Work	300	5.2
Miscellaneous	260	4.5
Total	5,700	100.1

* Rounded data

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Trained in Another Occupation:

Thirty-seven percent of those currently employed are working in an occupation different from the one in which they received training. Thirty-one percent of those who are working in clerical and sales were trained as professionals, technicians, and managers. In addition, 42 percent of the professional, technicians, and managers were working in occupations other than the one in which they were trained.

Longevity With Current Employer:

As a group, miscellaneous and structural workers have the longest tenure with their current employer, with an average of 14 years. Those involved in machine trades have been working for their employer for less than 4 years.

Current Wage:

Overall, the median wage (typical) for this area is \$10.00 per hour. As an occupational group, the highest typical wage is found among professional, technical, and managerial workers with a wage of \$13.00 per hour. Farming and agricultural production workers have the most diversity of income. The lowest paid occupational group was involved with service occupations showing a median wage of \$8.45 per hour.

Wages of Those Employed

<u>Occupational Group</u>	<u>Average/Mean</u>	<u>Typical/Median</u>
Professional, Technical and Managerial	\$18.59	\$13.00
Clerical and Sales	9.36	8.72
Service	8.68	8.45
Farming and Agricultural Production	21.10	12.02
Processing	10.76	10.88
Machine Trades	10.93	10.75
Benchwork	10.64	10.00
Structural Work	21.97	12.00
Miscellaneous	<u>14.23</u>	<u>13.49</u>
Total	\$17.04	\$10.00

Job Service North Dakota conducts other surveys that collect information on wages. The Cooperstown labor market area would be considered part of the East Central portion of the state. The wages reported in the labor availability survey are consistent with the wage information gathered from employers.

Current Commute Distance:

The occupational group likely to commute the furthest distance consists of those people involved in machine trades with an average commute of 24 miles. The group that makes the shortest commute was made up of those who work in services occupations with a commute of 5 miles. The furthest distance reported to travel to work was over 160 miles.

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Characteristics of the Available Labor Force

Available Workers:

Those individuals looking for work, planning to seek work, or would consider a different or alternative job were defined as being part of the available labor force. According to the survey, there were 2,900 individuals available for work in the Cooperstown labor area.

Work Status:

The majority of the available labor force is currently employed. Of the available labor force, 70 percent, or 2,030 individuals, are currently working. The majority of the available labor force (73 percent) is interested in working at jobs on a year-round basis. About 210 people, or 37 percent of those who are working part-time (defined as less than 30 hours), would like to work on a full-time basis.

Additional Employment:

According to the survey, about 890 individuals are willing to take on an additional job. Some of these would also be willing to consider a different employer, depending on wages, benefits and working conditions.

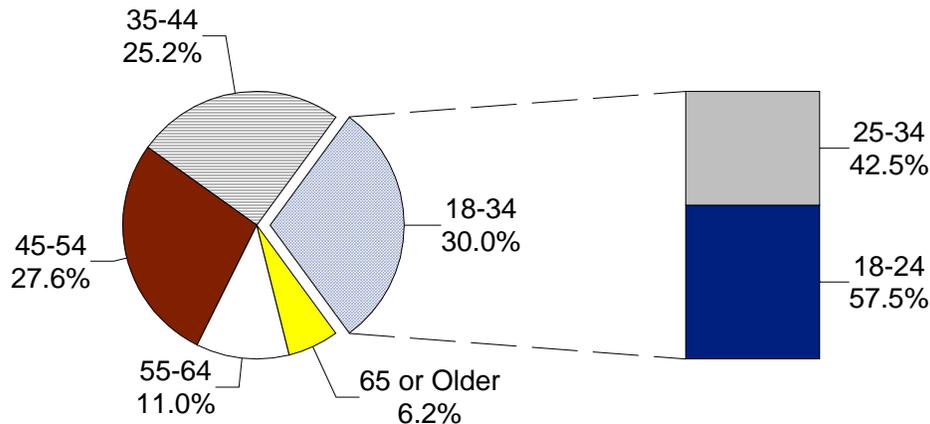
Available for Work in the Next Year:

Approximately 200 individuals reported that they plan to seek work within the next 12 months.

Age Distribution:

Of the available labor force, 870 individuals, or 30 percent, are under the age of 35.

Age Distribution of Respondents



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Educational Attainment:

Almost 28 percent of the available labor force are graduates of a post-secondary program of study.

Educational Attainment of the Available Labor Force

<u>Educational Attainment</u>	<u>Number*</u>	<u>Percentage*</u>
Below HS Diploma or GED	380	13.0
HS Diploma or GED	1,020	35.3
Some College/Vo-Tech	700	24.0
Vo-Tech Graduate	150	5.3
College Degree	460	16.0
Advanced Degree	190	6.3
Total	2,900	99.9

*Rounded Data

Last Held Occupation:

The following table shows the estimated number of individuals who reported their current job classification.

Current Occupation of the Available Labor Force

<u>Occupational Group</u>	<u>Number*</u>	<u>Percentage*</u>
Professional, Technical and Managerial	600	29.5
Clerical and Sales	550	27.2
Service	280	13.8
Farming and Agricultural Production	150	7.4
Processing	60	2.8
Machine Trades	60	2.8
Benchwork	120	6.0
Structural Work	120	6.0
Miscellaneous	90	4.6
Total	2,030	100.1

* Rounded data

Occupations Trained In:

Almost 1,460 people were trained in an occupation other than the one they are, or have been, working in. Approximately 140 of these individuals were trained in fields requiring specialized training, including health and medicine, education, clerical, managerial, and repair and mechanical technicians.

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Minimum Acceptable Wage:

Lowest Acceptable Hourly Wage of Those Currently Working

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Minimum Acceptable Average Wage</u>
Professional, Technical, and Managerial	\$10.55
Clerical and Sales	8.30
Service	6.99
Farming and Agricultural Production	9.31
Processing	9.25
Machine Trades	9.17
Benchwork	9.07
Structural Work	11.42
Miscellaneous	9.32

The median minimum acceptable wage was \$8.45 per hour.

Maximum Distance Willing to Commute:

Those involved in structural work are willing to commute the furthest distance, with a median of 38 miles. The typical distance for the available labor force was around 30 miles or 30 minutes.

Benefits Desired:

The most desired benefit for potential workers was health insurance, followed by a retirement plan, and then paid vacations. This pattern was consistent for all occupational groups.

Main Factor Influencing Decision to Change Jobs:

The single most important factor to entice someone to work at a different job other than his or her current occupation was pay, with 57 percent citing that factor.

Work Schedule Preference:

The majority of the available labor force would like to have some ability to have a flexible schedule at work. They would prefer to work 40 hours a week and to work during the daytime.

Education and Training Willingness by Age Distribution:

The available labor force is well educated, with 36 percent receiving training within the last three years. The type of training included: basic skills, product or sales information, interpersonal skills, how to be better organized, quality improvement, technical skills, and safety.

The available labor force is willing to be trained, if needed, for a different job. However, they would prefer to have on-the-job training, in part to take care of their existing financial responsibilities. Generally speaking, the longer the training, the fewer people who would consider that training. The most popular form of training desired is on-the-job training, with over 61 percent of the available labor force opting for that method.

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Type of Company Desired by the Available Labor Force:

The majority of the available labor force would like to work for a business involved in computer technology and information processing. The least desired firm is one involved in engineering. The following table reports the desirability of different types of companies.

Industry That is of Interest to the Available Labor Force	
<u>Industry</u>	<u>Percentage of Available Labor</u>
Information Computer Technology	70.5
Health Services	47.1
Engineering	32.7
Manufacturing	45.5
Business Services Operation	59.6
Machine Trades or Construction	35.3

The desirability of a particular firm is dependent on the skill sets of the available labor force. For example, of those who have a college degree or higher, about 65 percent would like to work for an information technology firm. This same group would be the least willing to work for a firm involved in engineering.

Interest for Specific Industries by Educational Attainment of Available Labor (Percent)

<u>Industry</u>	<u>No HS Diploma</u>	<u>HS Graduate or (GED)</u>	<u>Some Schooling Post HS</u>	<u>Vo-Tech Graduate</u>	<u>4 Yr College Degree or Higher</u>
Information/Computer Technology	55.3	70.8	76.4	56.3	82.1
Health Services	39.5	52.8	48.6	43.8	47.0
Engineering	50.0	34.0	27.8	25.0	31.3
Manufacturing	52.6	51.9	51.4	18.8	37.3
Business Services Operation	50.0	63.2	66.7	43.8	59.7
Machine Trades or Construction	57.9	41.5	29.2	37.5	23.9

Technical Skills of the Available Labor Force:

The available labor force has a variety of skills it can bring to the workplace. The typical manager had over seven years of experience.

Less than half of the available labor force, 42 percent, reported having experience with office suite software.

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Self-Reported Proficiency of Various Computer/IT Skills (Percent)

<u>Technical Skill</u>	<u>Not Skilled</u>	<u>Some Skills</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Very Skilled</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
Word Processing	1.9	3.2	14.7	10.3	12.2	57.7
Using Spreadsheets	5.8	10.6	14.1	7.7	4.2	57.7
Using Databases	5.1	9.6	17.6	5.1	4.8	57.7
Using Desktop Publishing	8.7	11.9	10.9	4.8	5.8	58.0
Computer Programming	6.7	2.9	1.9	0.6	0.3	87.5
HTML Programming	4.5	2.6	3.5	1.3	0.6	87.5
Installing Computer Hardware	1.9	1.9	3.5	3.5	1.6	87.5

Characteristics of the Discouraged Workforce

Characteristics of the Discouraged:

According to the survey, about 470 people would be defined as discouraged workers. A discouraged worker is someone who does not have a job, is not looking for a job, and is not planning to look for a job, but knows what pay would encourage them to become a part of the labor force.

The median age of the discouraged workers is 46, which is younger than those who are currently working. The most common barrier for these people to seek work is working on a family farm and/or being self-employed. The lack of child care was a barrier for approximately 4 percent of the discouraged workforce.

The discouraged workers, as a group, have slightly higher levels of education when compared to other members of the available labor force. Approximately 29 percent of the discouraged have a college degree or higher. If training were required, 55 percent would like on-the-job training.

This group does not have a great deal of experience as employees, with 75 percent not having worked for an employer within the past two years.

The minimum acceptable wage for the discouraged is \$9.81 per hour. The discouraged workers were more likely to want to work year-round. The average distance the discouraged worker is willing to travel to work is 33 miles.

Benefits Desired:

Discouraged workers desire health insurance, followed by retirement contributions and paid vacations. Flexible scheduling was also highly desired.

The industry that appealed to the discouraged workers was information technology, which is similar to that of the rest of the available labor force. However, the health services industry was less desired by members of the discouraged work force.

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Percentage of Discouraged Workers Interested by Industry

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Information/Computer Technology	71.4
Health Services	37.3
Engineering	39.2
Manufacturing	58.8
Business Services Operation	56.9
Machine Trades or Construction	49.0

How the Study Was Done

A workgroup which consisted of members from the Economic Development Association of North Dakota, local economic development professionals, Job Service North Dakota, the North Dakota Department of Commerce and the North Dakota Workforce Development Council developed and approved a research instrument that was standardized for statewide use, to measure the availability of labor and underemployment. This instrument measured the adult population in and around Cooperstown, North Dakota. The telephone survey included Eddy, Foster, Griggs, Nelson, and Steele Counties.

The study is able to report with 90% confidence, at a level of plus or minus 5%, the characteristics of the available labor for the area around Cooperstown.

To obtain a representative sample for the Cooperstown labor area, a random selection of respondents within households was used during the data collection process. The survey of adults (18 or older) performed by the SSRI was conducted by telephone. A random sample of 10-digit telephone numbers was generated by SSRI for the primary and secondary labor market areas utilizing Genesys Sampling Systems Random Digit Dialing (RDD) in-house software. The list from which the numbers were drawn included only actual North Dakota area codes and telephone bands (that is, blocks of 1,000 consecutive numbers within North Dakota) that had contained a threshold of active residential phone numbers.

Overall, SSRI called 5,226 numbers in the Cooperstown labor area to determine whether each was a working number in contrast to a nonworking number, a commercial/business line, a cell phone, data or fax line, or a nonprimary household telephone. SSRI staff classified 1,988 of these numbers as working residential numbers eligible for interview and successfully interviewed 1,233 of those households. Throughout the study, completed interviews were monitored to determine whether the samples matched population estimates in terms of gender and the age distribution of North Dakota residents age 18 and older.

All interviews were conducted at the SSRI facilities by trained interviewers with supervision and random monitoring for technique and adherence to established procedures. Interviews were conducted afternoons and evenings on weekdays and weekends.

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The most conservative approach of calculating a response rate for telephone surveys is the method adopted by the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO). The CASRO method uses the known status of portions of the sample that are contacted to impute characteristics of portions of the sample that were not reached. The CASRO method of calculating the response rates for primary labor market (Cooperstown labor area) yields a completion rate of 60.3 percent.