

**Executive Summary of the Eastern Oklahoma (Okmulgee Break-Out) Area Labor
Force Study**

This report is a labor force study of the Far Eastern Oklahoma (Okmulgee break-out) area labor force which examines the availability of labor in selected zip codes within the seven county area of Creek, Hughes, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okmulgee, Okfuskee, and Tulsa.

In the Far Eastern Oklahoma (Okmulgee break-out) area a considerable portion of the adult population are not employed for a variety of reasons. This group includes the retired, disabled, students, homemakers, and the unemployed. This study found that approximately 35,061 members of the adult population are not currently working. Of this group, the majority, 84.6%, indicate that they are not interested in working outside the home or they are unable to do so.

This study has identified 10,788 workers who are currently available for *other* work. The categories of Job Shifters and the Underemployed (described below) are included in this estimate. **Some workers are both Job Shifters and Underemployed, so the total number of workers in both categories is somewhat less than their sum.** Additionally, there are those adults who are not working but want to work (Job Seekers), and those workers who are not underemployed and have not looked for work in the past three months (Job Keepers), which can be included in the pool of potential workers. These two groups total another 68,775 potential workers for a grand total of approximately 79,563 adults who are either in the labor force or want to be in it.

Roughly 8,091 workers in the labor market area have looked for other work in the past three months. Of all the methods used to look for other work at least 27.2%, were

active. The reasons why the Job Shifters were looking for work were varied but the primary reason for 23.1% of people was in order to get higher pay and/or better benefits. Another 38.5% are looking to work closer to home and 15.4% want a change in career.

The data from this study estimates that 4,720 of all adult workers are currently underemployed. To be classified as Underemployed a worker must:

- 1) feel underutilized in their present employment,
- 2) possess training and/or education that is not required by their present job, **and**
- 3) be willing to change jobs to better utilize their skills.

Job Keepers are those individuals who have not been identified as being underemployed and have not looked for work within the past three months. This group makes up 63,381 people.

Job seekers are those people who are not currently employed but want to work. Four-point-nine percent of all adults in the Far Eastern Oklahoma (Okmulgee break-out) area are represented by this category.

The percentage of workers in the Far Eastern Oklahoma (Okmulgee break-out) area with a least a Bachelors degree is about one-fourth of the current work force and about two-thirds of the workers have had at least some college.

About fifty-five percent had not moved in the past five years and an additional 21.6% remained in the same county. Sixteen-point-seven percent had moved from a different county in the same state but only an additional 5.6% had moved from a different state or country.

Of all workers 86.4% have full-time positions (defined as working at least 35 hours per week). Of those workers with part time jobs 46.7% would like to have a full-time position with just one employer.

As the wage rate increases, so does the number of people who are willing to work. Although Job Keepers by definition are those workers who are not interested in changing jobs, about 40,656 still find a job of \$20 per hour plus benefits to be either “attractive” or “very attractive”. Of the Underemployed, 71.4% of workers indicated that they would be willing to change jobs for an increase in pay of 15% or less. Around (75% of Job Shifters were likely to change jobs for a 15% increase or less and Job Keepers were the group least likely to say they would change jobs for a pay increase of 15% or less with only 50 of workers. Only 14.9% of Job Keepers claimed to not be interested in changing jobs at all.

Workers who did not currently have a package of benefits were also asked what pay raise would be necessary for them to change jobs if benefits were included with that job. The Job Shifters were most likely to be willing to change jobs under such circumstances.

About sixty-seven percent of workers live and work in the same county and at all but about six percent of workers are employed in an area outside the study area. Over half of all workers (51.4%) indicate a willingness to commute distances of 21 miles or more to their job.