
Making Connections:
A Regional Workforce

Labor Supply Audit

Presented to:
The Greater New Orleans Regional
Community Audit Partnership

By:
The New Orleans Jobs Initiative

*Building a World Class System that Prepares
People for Careers that Sustain Families*

January 2003

Table of Contents

<u>INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT</u>	104
<u>CHAPTER 6: AUDIT DESIGN</u>	105
<u>Workforce Profile</u>	105
<u>Focus Group Research</u>	106
<u>Program Data</u>	106
<u>Analyzing the Data</u>	108
<u>CHAPTER 7: STRUCTURE OF THE REGIONAL LABOR SUPPLY</u>	108
<u>The Regional Labor Force in Recent History</u>	108
<u>The Current Labor Force</u>	110
<u>Identifying the Untapped Labor Force</u>	124
<u>CHAPTER 8: PREPARING A WORKFORCE FOR THE NEW ECONOMY</u>	126
<u>Basic Education and the Labor Supply</u>	126
<u>On-the-Job Skills: Hard Skills, Soft Skills & the Potential Workforce</u>	136
<u>CHAPTER 9: CHALLENGES FOR THE POTENTIAL WORKFORCE</u>	144
<u>Seeking a Job in the New Economy</u>	144
<u>Transportation for a Potential Workforce</u>	148
<u>The Potential Workforce and the Life Cycle</u>	152
<u>Managing Family and Work</u>	154
<u>Criminal Histories as Barriers to Success</u>	169
<u>Disability as a Barrier to Employment</u>	161

<u>CHAPTER 10: Conclusions and Recommendations</u>	164
<u>Acknowledgements</u>	167
<u>References</u>	167
<u>Appendix 1, Focus Group Interview Guide</u>	168
<u>Appendices 2-4 Census Data Profile</u>	See data supplement
<u>Appendix 2, Socio-Economic Profile by Parish</u>	1-46
<u>Appendix 3, Socio-Economic Profile by Race and Parish</u>	1-22
<u>Appendix 4, Employment Profile by Parish</u>	1-24

Introduction and Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this component of the Community Audit is to inform business and industry, jobseekers, program implementers, policymakers and other stakeholders in Louisiana's Workforce Region 1 about the characteristics and situation of the region's supply of labor. This information can highlight the needs and strengths of the actual and potential workforce and point to important solutions to difficult workforce development challenges. It can offer all stakeholders perspective on some of the critical factors which determine success for individual businesses, workers and jobseekers. These insights provide the basis for a cohesive and strategic approach to the region's efforts to grow a highly skilled workforce, which supports a thriving business environment and, ultimately creates shared sustainable improvements to the quality of life for the people of the region.

The New Orleans Jobs Initiative (NOJI), which has a long history of serving businesses and low and moderate-income jobseekers, led the labor supply side of this strategic research project. In the process, NOJI received direction from the Regional Workforce Partnership and assistance from a Supply-Side Advisory Group made up largely of business and workforce practitioners. In addition, many other partners from across the region contributed to the effort's success. The assembled information comes from a variety of sources and is integrated to provide the clearest possible picture of the region's actual and potential workforce.

Along with developing a basic profile of the structure of the whole workforce, the Regional Partnership directed the NOJI Supply-Side Team to focus specifically on describing the situation of people who have not been able to get into or stay in the labor market. Based on this direction, the research was designed to compile information from diverse sources to shape a valid snapshot of the "untapped labor force" as well as the currently employed work force. The idea was to learn as much as possible about how to engage those people who are not attached to the labor market who, with the right preparation, have the potential to fill the demand for skilled workers across the region. The over-riding questions that guide this study focus on the *potential* of the untapped labor force:

- What are the defining characteristics of the untapped labor force?
- What skill sets do people have which have not been put to use or can be built on?
- What have they attempted to do in the past and why have they not yet achieved success?
- What aspirations do those who are not working have and how do those aspirations compare to the real opportunities in the workforce?
- What barriers do they encounter in their efforts to find and keep meaningful employment and career paths?
- What is their experience when they utilize employment and training resources and supportive services?
- Is the untapped labor force concentrated in the lowest-income communities or are potential workers spread throughout each parish?

CHAPTER 6: Audit Design

This study is designed to produce a well-rounded view and calls for both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

<u>Data Needs</u>	<u>Data Sources</u>
<p style="text-align: center;">Workforce Profile</p> <p>Characteristics of unemployed people in each parish and in the high poverty areas of each parish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employment status ▪ Gender ▪ Marital status ▪ Race ▪ Family size ▪ Education Levels ▪ Welfare status ▪ Poverty rates ▪ Criminal Justice System Status ▪ Transportation 	<p style="text-align: center;">Secondary Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2000 U.S. Census Summary File 3 • Louisiana Department of Labor • Department of Education • Adult Education Research • Criminal Justice Systems Data
<p style="text-align: center;">Jobseeker Perspectives</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Characteristics, interests and experiences of people in the “untapped labor market”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Focus Groups</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Community residents who are not attached to the labor force, and/or looking for work</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Program Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments of Literacy Levels, • Assessments of Soft Skills • Assessments of vocational skills • Perspectives from program staff 	<p style="text-align: center;">Provider Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardized tests: ie. TABE, WRAT • Program Specific Tools, assessment & enrollment forms • Interviews with program staff

Workforce Profile

A broad range of measurements from the U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 3 was compiled to create a profile of the regional workforce. This data set includes many social, economic, and housing characteristics and is based on the Census long form, which is administered to a portion of the population. The resulting proportions are inferred to the population as a whole to create estimates. The data was extracted through the U.S. Census’s online American Fact Finder system. Along with a view of the region as a whole, the data was extracted for each of the eight parishes that make up the four

Workforce Investment Board (WIB) areas in Louisiana Workforce Region 1. In order to provide a geographic contrast that highlights areas of each parish where the untapped labor force is the most concentrated, the profile compares the aggregated data for all census tracts in each parish, which are below the Federal Poverty Guideline to the same data for the parish as a whole. Where the data is available through American Fact Finder, key workforce relevant measures are cross-tabulated by social and demographic measures.

In addition to Census data, the Supply Side Team gathered secondary data from other sources that give insight into the labor supply and into barriers to success that potential workers face. The Louisiana Department of Labor was an important source for the most current labor force statistics. The Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office (OPSCO) provided data based on their participation in a national program, the Arrestees Drug Abuse Monitoring Program (ADAM). The data they shared offers important knowledge about the work and education status of arrestees in the OPSCO system and is thus a helpful source of information about people with ex-offender status in the population. In addition, secondary data was collected from the Louisiana Department of Education's web site, and from the Casas.org database of Synthetic Literacy Estimates.

Focus Group Research

The study included a qualitative component to ensure that the experiences and perceptions of people in the untapped workforce informed the process and the conclusions drawn. Over the course of August and September 2002, six focus groups were conducted. To ensure a regional perspective, at least one session was conducted in each of the region's four WIB areas. A total of 34 people participated, with many, but not all, being active jobseekers. Careful attention was paid to see that some of the focus group participants were not in the workforce development system; but rather, were contacted through community-based agencies that did not focus on workforce development. This increased the likelihood that input would give insight into those the system is not reaching at this time. A focus group guide was constructed based on input of the Regional Community Audit Advisory Group (see Appendix 1).

Program Data

Data from programs that serve jobseekers can be an important source that informs the region about those who are trying to get assistance in their search for employment or their efforts to increase their skills and chances of obtaining a quality job. Most employment and training programs do some form of assessment with each enrollee to identify their skills, work experience, training and support service needs. Many use standardized tests and skill inventories as well as program specific, in-house instruments. The information is first used to help the individual plan their career path. When it is maintained in some aggregated form it is often used to report performance to funders. In this case, the data is often "sliced" to show success. Alternately, the program data may be used in proposals for funding to show the neediness of the targeted population. With service delivery and research often occurring in very different worlds, rarely is this data systematically

assembled on a broad basis and analyzed to inform employers, policy makers and program implementers about the characteristics of those who are successful and those who are not. However, when this kind of data is maintained in a useful aggregated fashion, it holds the possibility of making adult education, employment and training programs more data driven and, perhaps, thereby, more effective.

Over the last five years, NOJI, as part of a national workforce development system reform initiative funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, has collected a broad range of data education, skills, and work experience and other socio-economic indicators about the jobseekers who have applied to, enrolled in and progressed through its programs. Although the jobseekers in this database are primarily from Orleans Parish, with about 10% coming from Jefferson Parish, the level of detail available about 594 jobseekers, many of whom who faced serious barriers to workforce success, makes this information useful across the region and beyond.

In order to provide information that allows the community audit to truly get at the untapped labor force, much of the NOJI data has been "sliced" to contrast the characteristics and experience of "unsuccessful participants", with that of "successful participants". In doing so, NOJI intentionally did *not* take a "generous" cut at the data, but rather, included every possible applicant or participant that can be viewed as not having achieved the desired results. Consequently, the data set contains about 70% cases in which a successful outcome of six months of continuous employment was *not* achieved. For the record, NOJI's actual success rate with *enrolled* participants is 63% with six months of continuous employment and 47% with twelve months of continuous employment. To avoid confusion about this issue, the NOJI data in this audit is reported in terms of proportions rather than raw numbers.

As stated above, there are 594 jobseekers with complete data included in this analysis. All completed the NOJI baseline assessment process, although all did not enroll into the program. Some chose not to enroll while others were not accepted by NOJI because they could not pass a drug screen or tested below the 5th grade level in reading or math¹. Others began a program but did not complete it or become employed within six months of leaving. Some completed but never went to work. Still others went to work, but did not remain continuously employed for at least six months. Altogether, this data set contains 417 cases that were categorized as not successful and 177 that were categorized as successful.

In addition to the NOJI data, three other programs supplied data relevant to the region's labor supply:

- The New Orleans Adult Career Center supplied assessment data covering the majority of program year 2001-2002.
- The OPSCO provided data on their literacy assessments of inmates participating in their Principles of Applied Literacy Program (PALS).

¹ Applicants who are not accepted by NOJI because of drug usage or literacy levels are offered referrals to agencies that are equipped to assist them with these issues.

- The National Center for the Urban Community (NCUC) provided program data from their non-custodial parents program. This data included 441 men whose non-custodial children receive some form of public subsidy.

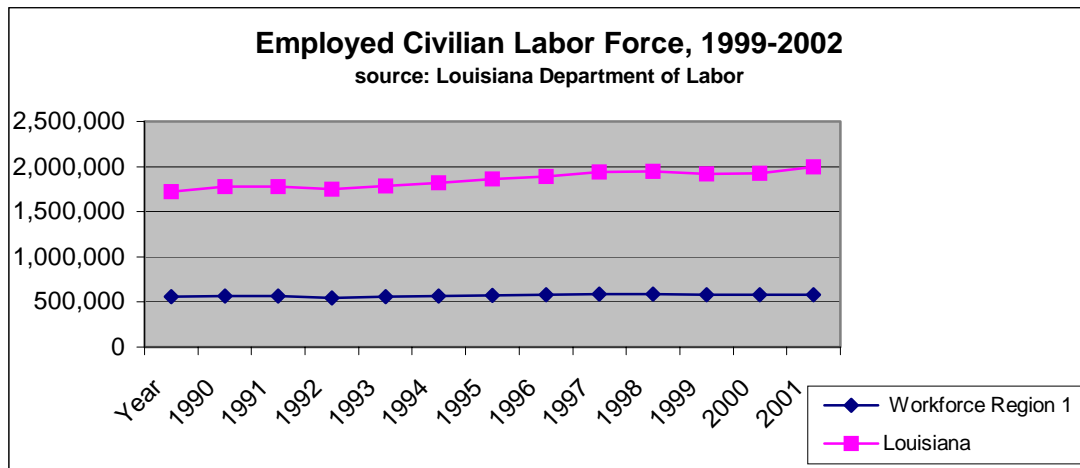
Analyzing the Data

The ambitious research design employed here results in a vast amount of data. The goal of this report is to organize it in a way that puts the various layers into perspective, and, to draw some preliminary conclusions and recommendations. The analysis is intended to create a document useful for ongoing collaborative efforts to refine and improve workforce strategies. Moreover, it is intended to generate dialogue and discussion and to be understood in concert with the Demand Side Audit conducted by MetroVision. The report first examines the overall structure of the regional labor force and then focuses in on the question of defining and describing the “untapped labor force”. The balance of the report examines key challenges for connecting the untapped labor force to career path employment. In turn, the issues of skills and education, managing work and family, transportation, ex justice system status and disability are explored. Throughout the report, the various types of data are integrated with one another to tell the story of the region’s workforce. The Census data, which is extensive, is included within the body of the report in various portions and formats that, are abbreviated from the detailed data in Appendices 2, 3, and 4. Each table within the report shows the Census table number where the expanded data can be found in the appendices.

CHAPTER 7: Structure of the Regional Labor Supply

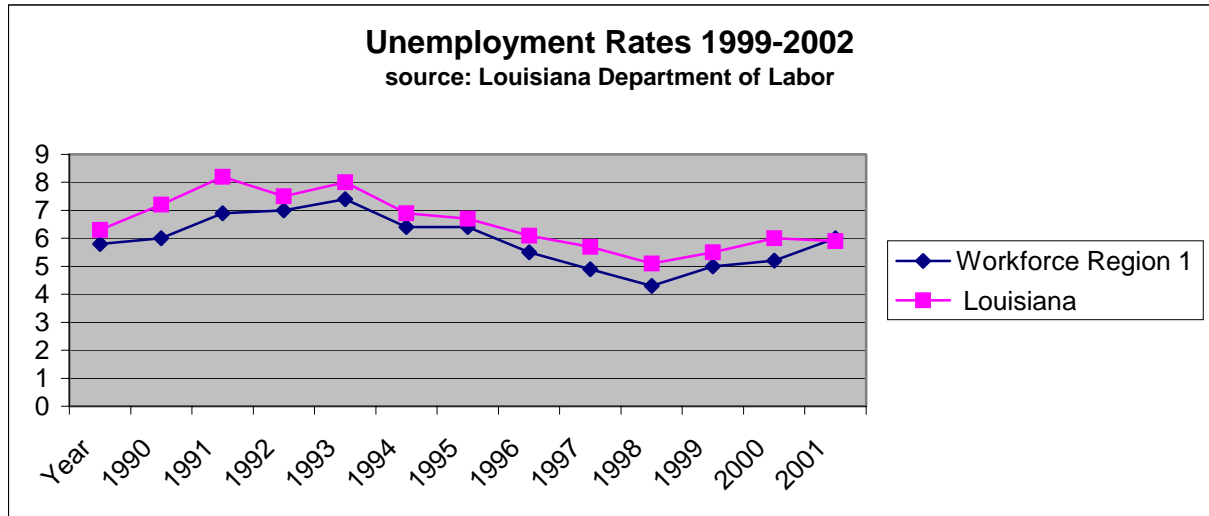
The Regional Labor Force in Recent History

It is helpful to begin by considering the recent history of labor force participation in the region.



In slight contrast to the state of Louisiana, Workforce Region 1 as a whole, has seen a steady number of employed civilians in the labor market over the last twelve years. The

total number of employed workers in the state actually climbed slowly during this period to achieve a 14% increase; while the regions employed labor force only increase 4%. There was less distinction between the state and region patterns of unemployment rates throughout the last decade, with the state rate steadily remaining about a point higher than the region, up until 2002 when they met at about 6%.



As a whole, the region’s workforce appears relatively stable compared to the story told in the parish level data for the same measures (see Appendix 3). In terms of the number of people working, seven of the eight parishes saw a serious decrease between 1992 and 1993 with the downturn in the oil industry, with St. Tammany being the exception. After the early nineties, seven of the parishes, including St. Tammany and excluding Orleans, also saw substantial, steady recoveries and then increases in the number of working people. This trend peaked in 1999 and by 2000 there were job losses in Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist Parishes, and even to a slight extent in St. Tammany. Early on, Orleans Parish’s data follows a similar though more exaggerated trend. As time progresses, however, it deviates from the rest of the region significantly. There were very substantial losses of employed civilians in Orleans in the early nineties, bottoming out in 1992 and then showing a slim upturn in the mid nineties. However, the Orleans employment rate never approached recovering to the pre-1990 levels, as the others did. By 1998, the trend toward recovery fell off again. To get a complete sense of the changes over the nineties and the early part of this decade, it is helpful to compare the proportionate changes in population and civilian employment for each parish. Clearly, St. Tammany has seen the largest increase in **both** population and employed people, with job growth outpacing population growth. Likewise, St. Charles has experienced growth in both indicators. Jefferson, Plaquemines and St. John have basically kept pace between population and employment increases. While there has been a slight job loss in St. Bernard, coupled with a small population increase, here too, the basic trend has been to keep pace between the two indicators. The only strong

negative trend has been in Orleans Parish where the job losses are more than double the population losses.

Summary of Changes in Population and Employed Civilians Between 1990 and 2002									
Data source: Louisiana Occupational Information System (LOIS)	Jefferson	Orleans	Plaque-mines	St. Bernard	St. Charles	St. James	St. John the Baptist	St. Tammany	Work Force Region 1
Changes 1990 to 2002									
# Change in Population	7,160	-12,264	1,182	598	5,635	337	3,048	46,760	50,466
% Change	1.6%	-2.5%	4.6%	0.9%	13.3%	1.6%	7.6%	32.4%	3.9%
# Change in Employed Civilians	3,300	-10,500	400	-100	3,100	300	1,300	22,700	20,500
% Change	1.5%	-5.4%	4.2%	-0.3%	16.7%	3.8%	7.8%	35.0%	3.7%
Change in Unemployment	-0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	-0.9%	0.2%	1.9%	1.5%	-0.7%	0.2%

In the converse of the patterns of employment, unemployment levels rose in the early nineties, fell in the mid nineties and then began to climb again. The patterns over time have been less volatile in unemployment figures. Specifically in Orleans Parish, the rate of employment decline loss is twice the rate of population loss; but this does not show up in Department of Labor unemployment rates. This discrepancy is part of the impetus to learn more about the “untapped labor force.”

The Current Labor Force

The most current available snapshot of labor market participation in the region provides a useful starting point for a deeper look.

Current Labor Force Statistics as of 11/30/2002									
Data source: Louisiana Occupational Information System (LOIS)	Jefferson	Orleans	Plaque-mines	St. Bernard	St. Charles	St. James	St. John the Baptist	St. Tammany	Work Force Region 1
Population in 2000	455,466	484,674	26,757	67,229	48,072	21,216	43,044	191,268	1,337,726
Adult Population (16 yrs. & over in 2000)	354,056	370,138	19,790	52,363	32,295	15,660	31,212	142,988	1,021,502
Civilian Labor Force	230,900	196,200	10,600	30,900	23,000	9,200	19,700	91,700	612,200
Employment	220,100	183,200	10,000	29,000	21,700	8,200	18,000	87,500	577,700
Unemployment	10,800	13,000	600	1,900	1,300	1,000	1,700	4,200	34,500
Unemployment Rate	4.7%	6.6%	5.8%	6.1%	5.6%	10.4%	8.6%	4.6%	5.6%
% of Adult Pop. Employed	62%	49%	51%	55%	67%	52%	58%	61%	57%

The Louisiana and U.S. Departments of Labor (LDOL and USDOL) base their counts of the Civilian Labor Force on two categories of people: the employed and the unemployed. To count employed people, LDOL wage data is used. A person is counted as employed when they have wage data reported to the state. The unemployment counts are based on

unemployment claims filed with LDOL. What these statistics do not count, and what is, in fact, very difficult to get an estimate of, is the many potentially employable adults who are not employed or currently covered by an unemployment claim.

The Regional Workforce Profile extracted from the 2000 U.S. Census is helpful for getting to a more detailed count of the population in relation to employment. While this data is not as current as the monthly figures on the Civilian Labor Force issued by LDOL, it offers a level of detail that assists a deeper analysis of the geographic and social make-up of the region's actual and potential work force. The following tables give an overview of the adult population and labor market participation from the 2000 Census.

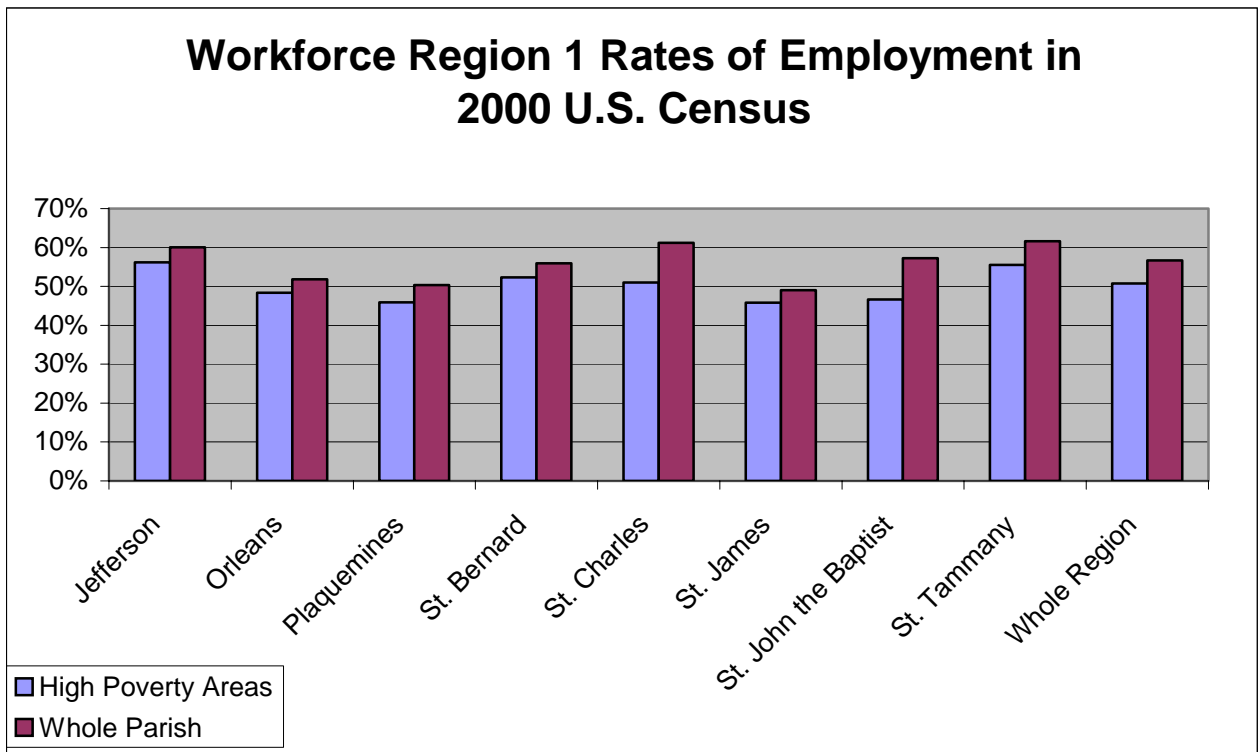
By comparing the LDOL employment in the table titled Current Labor Force Statistics as of 11/30/2002 with the Table titled Labor Force Participation in Region 1 and the Employment Statistics for the Population 16 years and older table, the changes in labor force participation in the last two years can be analyzed. While the overall employment rate for the whole region is still at 57%, there are changes that have occurred within each parish in the relatively short period from the collection of the 2000 Census data to the end of November 2002, which the LDOL data is based on. This has been a challenging period for the entire nation's workforce, with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics² national count of civilian employment peaking at 64.9% in July of 2000 and then dropping to 62.7% by the end of 2002. The recent individual parish losses in rates of civilian employment are therefore, not a surprise.

What is interesting is that a 3% loss in the highly populated Orleans and 1% losses each in St. Tammany and St. Bernard have been offset at the regional level by gains in the other five parishes. Most notably, the St. Charles rate of civilian employment has increased 6% while the rate in St. James has increased 3%. Stakeholders in each of these parishes should consider the degree to which these changes are attributable to changes in the economy and the population. Did St. Charles gain new jobs in the past 2 years or did employed people within the region move into St. Charles? To what extent did Orleans have actual jobs cut in which more residents exited the workforce and counts of labor force participation? Or did employed people leave the parish? In the absence of frequent census counts, answers to these questions may depend on stakeholders' day-to-day experience working with businesses and jobseekers.

The census data also offers contrast between labor force participation for the whole region and for the higher poverty areas. Overall, the whole region has an employment rate six points higher than the rate of the high poverty areas. At a parish level the most extreme differences between whole parish and high poverty areas are in St. Charles and St. John the Baptist Parishes where the difference is ten points, and St. Tammany, where there is a seven-point difference. In the other five parishes, the difference ranges between three and four percentage points.

² See [Civilian Employment-Population rates 1992-2002](#) from the Current Population Survey, extracted through public query of the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics web site at www.bls.gov

Labor Force Participation in Region1, Whole region compared to high poverty areas, Extracted from Census Table PCT35 (Universe: Population 16 years and over)				
	High Poverty Areas		All Areas	
	#	%	#	%
Total	488,523	100%	1,021,502	100%
In Armed Forces	1,524	0%	4,417	0%
Employed in Civilian Labor Force	248,036	51%	578,676	57%
Unemployed	27,875	6%	42,136	4%
Not in labor force	211,088	43%	396,176	39%



P43. EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR THE POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER

Parish	Area Measured	In Armed Forces	Employed in Civilian Labor Force	% of Adult Population Unemployed	Not in labor force
Jefferson	<i>High Poverty Areas</i>	0%	56%	5.1%	38%
	Whole Parish	0%	60%	3.6%	36%
Orleans	<i>High Poverty Areas</i>	0%	48%	6.3%	45%
	Whole Parish	1%	52%	5.5%	42%
Plaquemines	<i>High Poverty Areas</i>	0%	46%	4.0%	50%
	Whole Parish	1%	50%	3.6%	45%
St. Bernard	<i>High Poverty Areas</i>	0%	52%	5.1%	42%
	Whole Parish	0%	56%	3.4%	40%
St. Charles	<i>High Poverty Areas</i>	0%	51%	6.0%	43%
	Whole Parish	0%	61%	3.4%	35%
St. James	<i>High Poverty Areas</i>	0%	46%	6.2%	48%
	Whole Parish	0%	49%	5.5%	45%
St. John the Baptist	<i>High Poverty Areas</i>	0%	47%	4.4%	49%
	Whole Parish	0%	57%	4.2%	38%
St. Tammany	<i>High Poverty Areas</i>	0%	55%	3.1%	41%
	Whole Parish	1%	62%	2.5%	35%
Workforce Region 1	<i>High Poverty Areas</i>	0%	51%	5.7%	43%
	Whole Region	0%	57%	4.1%	39%

A Closer Look at Employment in the Current Labor Force

As indicated above, in 2000 and again in 2002, more than half a million people were employed in Workforce Region 1. This next section examines who, demographically, is in that employed labor force. Examining the race, age and gender patterns of the population in relation to labor force participation can shed light on the specific groups and places in need of targeted and customized strategies for workforce development. The section closes with an examination of what kinds of jobs and industries the employed people are working in.

Women make up more than half the adult population, at 53%. In every age range, employment rates for men and women in the whole region are higher than those in the high poverty areas. However, there is a different pattern based on sex. For men the differences range between 5% and 10%, with the biggest differences being in the middle age ranges, 35 to 44, and 45 to 59. For women, the differences only range between 2% and 5%; although, here again, the biggest differences are in the middle age ranges. It is also notable that the employment rates are significantly lower in the 16 to 24-age range. This is not surprising, given that much of this population is either attending high school or college. In a later section, a closer look will be taken into the relationship between school enrollment, labor force participation and population patterns for youth.

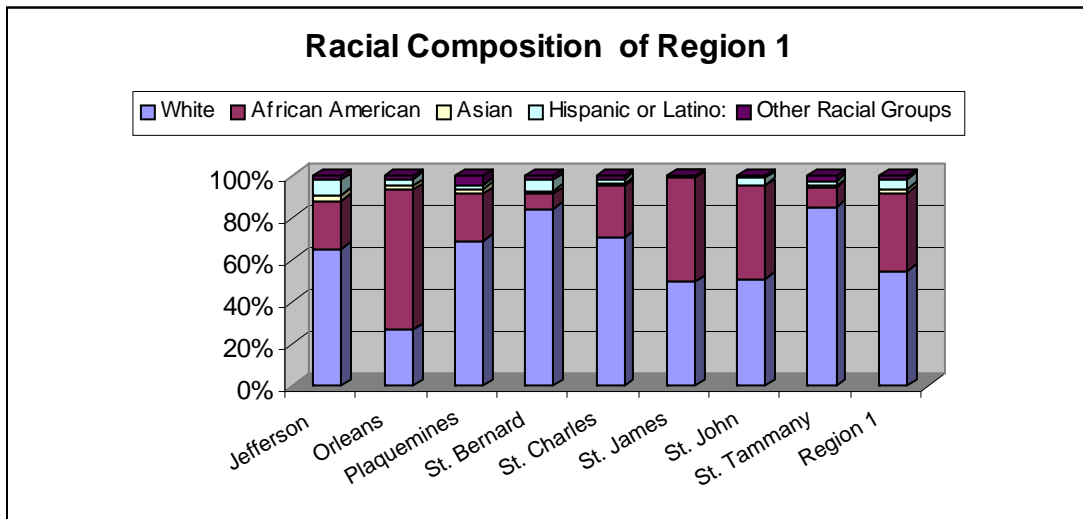
PCT35. SEX BY AGE BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR THE POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER (Universe: Population 16 years and over)

	Workforce Region 1				Workforce Region 1			
	High Poverty Areas		All Areas		High Poverty Areas		All Areas	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Workforce:	488,523	100%	1,021,502	100%				
Male:	226,443	46%	478,379	47%	Female:	262,080	54%	543,123 53%
16 to 24 years:	46,079	20%	83,769	18%	16 to 24 years:	49,449	19%	87,102 16%
In Armed Forces	211	0%	519	1%	In Armed Forces	0	0%	238 0%
Employed Civilian	18,778	41%	38,796	46%	Employed Civilian	21,059	43%	40,328 46%
Unemployed	4,992	11%	7,739	9%	Unemployed	5,679	11%	8,140 9%
Not in labor force	22,098	48%	36,715	44%	Not in labor force	22,632	46%	38,396 44%
25 to 34 years	44,798	20%	87,088	18%	25 to 34 years:	48,684	19%	95,108 18%
In Armed Forces	491	1%	1,279	1%	In Armed Forces	180	0%	365 0%
Employed Civilian	30,953	69%	66,376	76%	Employed Civilian	30,692	63%	63,937 67%
Unemployed	2,637	6%	4,030	5%	Unemployed	3,541	7%	5,097 5%
Not in labor force	10,717	24%	15,403	18%	Not in labor force	14,271	29%	25,709 27%
35 to 44 years:	47,857	21%	104,878	22%	35 to 44 years:	51,375	104%	113,041 130%
In Armed Forces	301	1%	1,165	1%	In Armed Forces	90	0%	347 0%
Employed Civilian	32,459	68%	82,188	78%	Employed Civilian	32,314	63%	76,700 68%
Unemployed	3,081	6%	4,192	4%	Unemployed	2,595	5%	3,821 3%
Not in labor force	12,016	25%	17,333	17%	Not in labor force	16,376	32%	31,749 28%
45 to 59 years:	50,719	22%	119,915	25%	45 to 59 years:	57,370	22%	129,214 24%
In Armed Forces	123	0%	413	0%	In Armed Forces	0	0%	90 0%
Employed Civilian	32,873	65%	90,027	75%	Employed Civilian	33,495	58%	81,597 63%
Unemployed	2,617	5%	4,056	3%	Unemployed	1,908	3%	3,472 3%
Not in labor force	15,106	30%	25,419	21%	Not in labor force	21,918	38%	44,055 34%
60 to 64 years:	10,151	4%	22,191	5%	60 to 64 years:	12,896	0%	26,978 0%
In Armed Forces	0	0%	0	0%	In Armed Forces	0	0%	0 0%
Employed	4,365	43%	10,915	49%	Employed Civilian	4,092	32%	9,286 34%
Unemployed	192	2%	421	2%	Unemployed	184	1%	386 1%
Not in labor force	5,594	55%	10,854	49%	Not in labor force	8,620	67%	17,308 64%
65 years and over:	26,839	12%	60,538	13%	65 years and over:	42,306	16%	91,680 17%
In Armed Forces	0	0%	0	0%	In Armed Forces	0	0%	3,030 3%
Employed Civilian	3,801	14%	10,377	17%	Employed Civilian	3,155	7%	4,795 5%
Unemployed	297	1%	494	1%	Unemployed	152	0%	288 0%
Not in labor force	22,741	85%	49,667	82%	Not in labor force	38,999	92%	83,567 91%

The following charts and the tables P150 and P49, reveals the participation for the four racial groups that are significantly represented in the region’s population. It should be noted that the Census has changed the way it counts race and ethnicity, separating race and Hispanic origin into separate and overlapping categories. In addition, the Census now allows people to identify as more than one racial grouping within the counts of race.

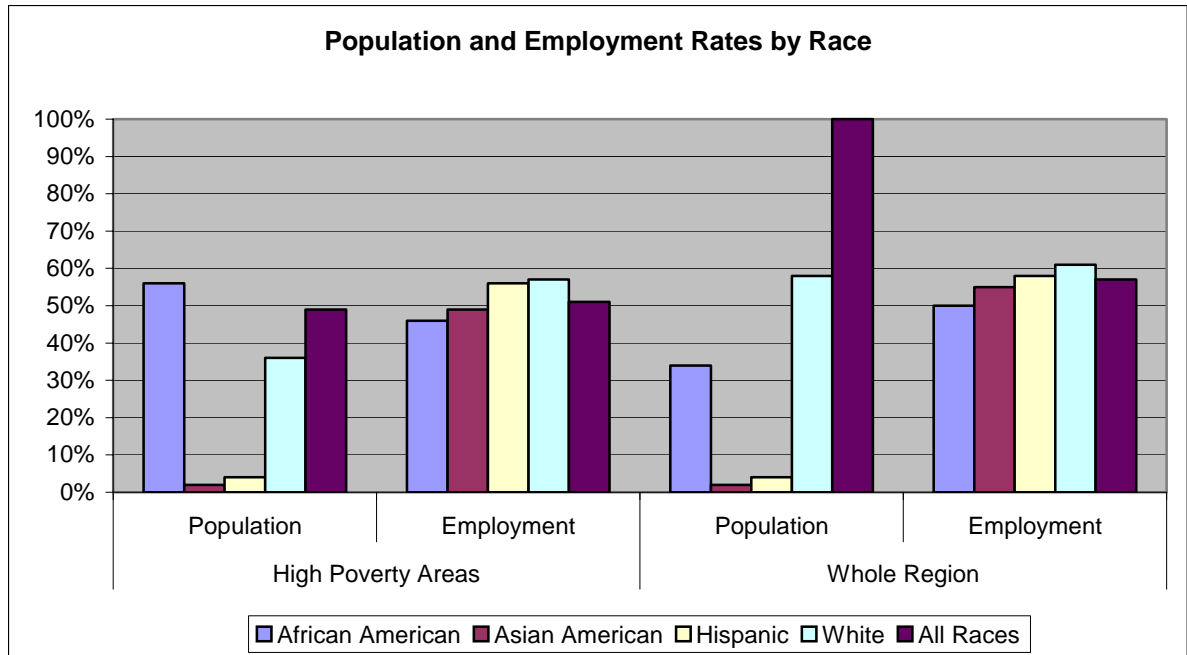
Here, in order to make it useful for reflecting on the “big picture” make-up of this region’s workforce, the data is reported in a fairly traditional manner, with all people identified as Hispanic grouped as one category and those who identified as white, African-American/Black and Asian American without Hispanic origin listed in separate categories.

The basic racial composition of the region’s workforce is overwhelmingly African American and white. Without really diverting from this pattern, Jefferson and St. Bernard have the most racially diverse populations, each having about two-thirds white, 23% and 7% African American, respectively, and the some of the most substantial presence of Asian Americans and Hispanics. With the exception of Orleans, at least 50% of the populations of all parishes are white. St. James and St. John are at the low end of this trend, with 50% and 51% white, respectively. St. Tammany and St. Bernard are on the high end, each having 85% white populations. African Americans comprise 67% of the Orleans population. While their presence in St. Bernard (7%) and St. Tammany (10%) is small, in the other five parishes they make up between 23% and 50% of the population. Asian Americans make up only 2% of the whole region and have the greatest presence in terms of numbers, in Jefferson and Orleans. Hispanics are more spread throughout the region, with the highest concentration in Jefferson at 7%, and at least 2% to 5% in every other parish except St. James.



Turning to the labor force participation data broken out by race and high poverty areas, there is one most obvious and striking population pattern on first look. At the whole region level, and in each parish, high poverty areas are disproportionately African American and white people are under represented in those same areas. At the regional level, there is almost a mirror effect. White people make up 22% less of the population in high poverty areas than in the whole region and African Americans make up 22% more of the high poverty area population.

Interestingly, in most parishes there is not a large distinction in employment rates for whites or African Americans between the high poverty areas and at the whole parish level. Differences range between 0% and 3% lower in high poverty areas for African Americans and between 1% and 4% lower for whites. However, in St. Tammany and St. John Parishes, African Americans who live in high poverty areas have employment rates 9% and 10%, respectively, lower than they do in the parish as a whole. Likewise, in St. John Parish, whites in high poverty areas have an employment rate 8% lower than those in the parish as a whole.



Overall, the rate of employment for the region’s high poverty area is 6% less than that of the region as a whole. The differences between men’s and women’s employment rates differ in the whole region and in the high poverty areas. At the whole region level, the rate for men is 10% higher than that for women, while in the high poverty areas the rate for men is only 6% higher. This pattern holds true for all groups except African Americans. The gender pattern for African Americans is notable because employment rates for men and women are very close to the same at both levels.

P150 SEX BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR THE POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER IN WORKFORCE REGION 1												
	ALL RACES ³				AFRICAN-AMERICAN				ASIAN AMERICAN			
	High Poverty		Whole Parish		High Poverty		Whole Parish		High Poverty		Whole Parish	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total	488,523	100%	1,021,502	100%	274,928	56%	352,347	34%	10,952	2%	21,265	2%
In Armed Forces	1,524	0%	4,417	0%	543	0%	1,189	0%	37	0%	54	0%
Not in labor force	211,088	43%	396,176	39%	126,594	46%	151,191	43%	5,134	47%	8,765	41%
Employed	248,036	51%	578,676	57%	127,058	46%	175,028	50%	5,364	49%	11,693	55%
Unemployed	27,875	6%	42,233	4%	20,958	8%	24,939	7%	417	4%	753	4%
Male:	226,443	46%	478,379	47%	121,093	44%	155,562	44%	5,895	54%	10,870	51%
In Armed Forces	1,126	0%	3,377	1%	349	0%	823	1%	13	0%	30	0%
Not in labor force	88,272	39%	155,391	32%	55,008	45%	65,319	42%	2,353	40%	3,537	33%
Employed	123,229	54%	298,679	62%	55,781	46%	77,666	50%	3,259	55%	6,827	63%
Unemployed	13,816	6%	20,932	4%	9,955	8%	11,754	8%	270	5%	476	4%
Female:	262,080	54%	543,123	53%	153,835	56%	196,785	56%	5,057	46%	10,395	49%
In Armed Forces	398	0%	1,040	0%	194	0%	366	0%	24	0%	24	0%
Not in labor force	122,816	47%	240,785	44%	71,586	47%	85,872	44%	2,781	55%	5,228	50%
Employed	124,807	48%	279,997	52%	71,277	46%	97,362	49%	2,105	42%	4,866	47%
Unemployed	14,059	5%	21,301	4%	11,003	7%	13,185	7%	147	3%	277	3%
	HISPANIC				WHITE, NON-HISPANIC							
	High Poverty		Whole Parish		High Poverty		Whole Parish					
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total	18,880	4%	45,618	4%	174,770	36%	589,071	58%				
In Armed Forces	66	0%	254	1%	826	0%	2,818	0%				
Not in labor force	7,400	39%	16,921	37%	68,375	39%	214,673	36%				
Employed	10,543	56%	26,538	58%	100,107	57%	357,458	61%				
Unemployed	871	5%	1,905	4%	5,462	3%	14,122	2%				
Male:	9,261	49%	21,571	47%	85,556	49%	283,681	48%				
In Armed Forces	66	1%	171	1%	663	1%	2,273	1%				
Not in labor force	2,906	31%	5,969	28%	26,593	31%	78,744	28%				
Employed	5,850	63%	14,484	67%	55,240	65%	195,112	69%				
Unemployed	439	5%	947	4%	3,060	4%	7,552	3%				
Female:	9,619	51%	24,047	53%	89,214	51%	305,390	52%				
In Armed Forces	0	0%	83	0%	163	0%	545	0%				
Not in labor force	4,494	47%	10,952	46%	41,782	47%	135,929	45%				
Employed	4,693	49%	12,054	50%	44,867	50%	162,346	53%				
Unemployed	432	4%	958	4%	2,402	3%	6,570	2%				

³ The four racial groups broken out comprise 98% of the region's population. This column "All Races" includes the 2% of the population from other racial groups such as Native American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and those who belong to more than one racial group.

The Current Workforce and the Labor Market

The next question to be asked is “What kinds of jobs do the workers who live in the region have?” The following table ranks the industries that male and female workers are employed in by the numbers of residents working in each industry the in high poverty areas and in the region as a whole. This ranking is done separately for each parish in Appendix 4. Here, at the regional level, the first striking pattern, unsurprisingly, is that men and women are concentrated in very different industries. Women are most highly concentrated in health care and educational services; and, men are most highly concentrated in construction and manufacturing. Another notable pattern is that, for both genders, workers who live in high poverty areas are more highly concentrated in accommodation and food service.

P49. SEX BY INDUSTRY FOR THE EMPLOYED CIVILIAN POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER, SORTED BY NUMBER IN EACH INDUSTRY

Workforce Region 1					
<u>High Poverty Areas</u>			<u>All Areas</u>		
	#	%		#	%
Total:	248,036	100%	Total:	578,676	100%
Male:	123,229	50%	Male:	298,679	52%
Construction	16,152	13%	Construction	37,252	12%
Manufacturing	14,454	12%	Manufacturing	35,793	12%
Accommodation and food services	12,439	10%	Retail trade	30,498	10%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	12,167	10%	Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services:	30,457	10%
Retail trade	11,421	9%	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	26,730	9%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services:	11,135	9%	Accommodation and food services	22,605	8%
Educational services	6,492	5%	Public administration	17,635	6%
Public administration	6,471	5%	Wholesale trade	15,674	5%
Other services (except public administration)	6,453	5%	Health care and social assistance	15,526	5%
Health care and social assistance	5,975	5%	Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing:	14,625	5%
Wholesale trade	5,558	5%	Other services (except public administration)	14,485	5%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing:	4,787	4%	Educational services	13,997	5%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	4,081	3%	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	9,033	3%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	3,350	3%	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	7,570	3%
Information	2,294	2%	Information	6,799	2%

Workforce Region 1					
High Poverty Areas			All Areas		
	#	%		#	%
Female:	124,807	50%	Female:	279,997	48%
Health care and social assistance	24,375	20%	Health care and social assistance	54,671	20%
Educational services	16,693	13%	Educational services	39,080	14%
Accommodation and food services	16,517	13%	Retail trade	35,506	13%
Retail trade	16,434	13%	Accommodation and food services	27,572	10%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services:	9,675	8%	Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services:	25,524	9%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing:	7,586	6%	Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing:	21,490	8%
Other services (except public administration)	7,384	6%	Other services (except public administration)	15,720	6%
Public administration	7,209	6%	Public administration	15,115	5%
Manufacturing	4,805	4%	Manufacturing	11,332	4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3,682	3%	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	7,996	3%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	3,643	3%	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	7,647	3%
Information	2,339	2%	Wholesale trade	6,252	2%
Wholesale trade	2,099	2%	Information	5,648	2%
Construction	1,714	1%	Construction	4,618	2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	652	1%	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1,826	1%

The following table ranks the specific occupations that male and female workers are employed in, by the number employed, across the region and in the high poverty areas. There are some notable patterns here. For example, men in high poverty areas are more concentrated in construction trades and production occupations than in the region as a whole. Likewise, for women, food and accommodation occupations, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations rank higher in high poverty communities than they do in the regional as a whole. The occupations that earn higher wages and require more professional training do not rank as high in high poverty communities as they do in the region as a whole. For example, for both men and women, management occupations rank higher in the whole region than in the high poverty areas. This pattern is stronger for men where the frequency in the region as a whole is 3% higher than it is in high poverty areas. A similar pattern is found with business and financial occupations. These rankings are available for each parish in Appendix 4.

**P50. SEX BY OCCUPATION FOR THE EMPLOYED CIVILIAN POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER,
SORTED BY NUMBER IN EACH INDUSTRY**

Workforce Region 1					
<u>High Poverty Areas</u>			<u>All Areas</u>		
	#	%		#	%
Total:	248,036	100%	Total:	578,676	100%
Male:	123,229	50%	Male:	298,679	52%
Construction trades workers	13,755	11%	Sales and related occupations	31,888	11%
Production occupations	11,157	9%	Construction trades workers	28,559	10%
Sales and related occupations	9,520	8%	Management occupations, except farmers and farm managers	27,563	9%
Food preparation and serving related occupations	9,250	8%	Production occupations	24,180	8%
Office and administrative support occupations	9,242	7%	Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	21,545	7%
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	8,877	7%	Office and administrative support occupations	21,034	7%
Motor vehicle operators	7,892	6%	Food preparation and serving related occupations	15,675	5%
Management occupations, except farmers and farm managers	7,469	6%	Motor vehicle operators	14,412	5%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	6,376	5%	Business and financial operations occupations	10,817	4%
Material moving workers	5,904	5%	Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	10,776	4%
Education, training, and library occupations	3,573	3%	Architecture and engineering occupations	10,592	4%
Business and financial operations occupations	2,813	2%	Material moving workers	10,500	4%
Architecture and engineering occupations	2,752	2%	Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	9,400	3%
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	2,657	2%	Education, training, and library occupations	8,160	3%
Other protective service workers, including supervisors	2,625	2%	Fire fighting, prevention, and law enforcement workers, including supervisors	7,195	2%
Fire fighting, prevention, and law enforcement workers, including supervisors	2,621	2%	Legal occupations	6,146	2%
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	2,517	2%	Computer and mathematical occupations	5,457	2%
Personal care and service occupations	2,049	2%	Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	5,398	2%
Rail, water and other transportation occupations	1,919	2%	Other protective service workers, including supervisors	4,531	2%
Legal occupations	1,707	1%	Supervisors, construction and extraction workers	4,484	2%
Computer and mathematical occupations	1,517	1%	Personal care and service occupations	4,156	1%
Supervisors, construction and extraction workers	1,510	1%	Rail, water and other transportation occupations	3,902	1%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	1,471	1%	Life, physical, and social science occupations	3,346	1%
Community and social services occupations	1,313	1%	Community and social services occupations	2,926	1%
Life, physical, and social science occupations	952	1%	Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	2,275	1%
Healthcare support occupations	725	1%	Healthcare support occupations	1,273	0%
Supervisors, transportation and material moving workers	431	0%	Supervisors, transportation and material moving workers	1,079	0%

Workforce Region 1					
High Poverty Areas			All Areas		
	#	%		#	%
Extraction workers	374	0%	Extraction workers	670	0%
Farmers and farm managers	173	0%	Aircraft and traffic control occupations	440	0%
Aircraft and traffic control occupations	88	0%	Farmers and farm managers	300	0%
Female:	124,807	50%	Female:	279,997	48%
Office and administrative support occupations	29,373	24%	Office and administrative support occupations	70,002	23%
Sales and related occupations	17,710	14%	Sales and related occupations	38,829	13%
Food preparation and serving related occupations	11,878	10%	Education, training, and library occupations	26,431	9%
Education, training, and library occupations	10,206	8%	Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	22,542	8%
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	7,493	6%	Food preparation and serving related occupations	20,709	7%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	7,387	6%	Management occupations, except farmers and farm managers	18,016	6%
Management occupations, except farmers and farm managers	6,441	5%	Personal care and service occupations	13,199	4%
Personal care and service occupations	6,092	5%	Business and financial operations occupations	12,412	4%
Healthcare support occupations	5,541	4%	Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	10,034	3%
Production occupations	4,474	4%	Healthcare support occupations	9,402	3%
Business and financial operations occupations	4,084	3%	Production occupations	7,413	2%
Community and social services occupations	2,829	2%	Community and social services occupations	5,717	2%
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	1,714	1%	Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	4,424	1%
Other protective service workers, including supervisors	1,358	1%	Legal occupations	4,185	1%
Legal occupations	1,293	1%	Computer and mathematical occupations	2,710	1%
Motor vehicle operators	1,261	1%	Motor vehicle operators	2,163	1%
Material moving workers	1,136	1%	Life, physical, and social science occupations	2,119	1%
Life, physical, and social science occupations	828	1%	Other protective service workers, including supervisors	1,909	1%
Computer and mathematical occupations	827	1%	Material moving workers	1,714	1%
Fire fighting, prevention, and law enforcement workers, including supervisors	632	1%	Architecture and engineering occupations	1,415	0%
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	563	0%	Fire fighting, prevention, and law enforcement workers, including supervisors	1,297	0%
Construction trades workers	546	0%	Construction trades workers	1,144	0%
Architecture and engineering occupations	379	0%	Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	1,037	0%
Rail, water and other transportation occupations	317	0%	Rail, water and other transportation occupations	413	0%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	156	0%	Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	245	0%
Supervisors, transportation and material moving workers	139	0%	Supervisors, transportation and material moving workers	243	0%
Supervisors, construction and extraction workers	77	0%	Supervisors, construction and extraction workers	196	0%

Workforce Region 1					
High Poverty Areas			All Areas		
	#	%		#	%
Farmers and farm managers	40	0%	Farmers and farm managers	84	0%
Extraction workers	33	0%	Extraction workers	48	0%
Aircraft and traffic control occupations	0	0%	Aircraft and traffic control occupations	33	0%

The following table offers one more view of the employed workforce by presenting earnings broken out by those who worked full time, year round and those who did not. First, it should be noted that those who live in high poverty areas are less likely to work full time, and year round, with a 6% difference between the two. This trend is strongest for men, with the rates of full-time year-round employment for men in high poverty areas, being 9% lower than it is for men in the region as a whole. The differences are less pronounced for women with only a 4% difference in the rates.

Among full time, year round workers, there are several clear distinctions between the high poverty areas and the whole region. In the high poverty areas, 45% of the full time, year round workers made less than \$25,000 per year, while only 39% of the workers in the region as a whole made below this level. This pattern is exaggerated among women, with full time, year round women workers having a rate of 72% earning below \$25,000 in high poverty communities while only 52% earn at that level in the region as a whole.

Clearly men have higher rates of full time year round employment than women do; but, once employed, men from high poverty communities experience a smaller earnings differential relative to men across the region, they come closer to earning what men earn across the region. There are a couple of implications here for planning strategies to assist jobseekers from high poverty communities:

- For men, becoming employed and staying is the biggest challenge. Once this is accomplished, they are more likely to make wages close to that of men from the region as a whole.
- For women, becoming employed may not be as difficult. Rather, once women go to work, the wages they receive are likely to be significantly lower than those earned by women across the whole region.

EXTRACTED FROM PCT46. SEX BY WORK EXPERIENCE IN 1999 BY EARNINGS IN 1999 FOR THE POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER (Universe: Population 16 years and over)						
	Region 1		Males in Region 1		Females in Region 1	
	High Poverty		High Poverty		High Poverty	
	Areas	All Areas	Areas	All Areas	Areas	All Areas
Total:	100%	100%	46%	47%	54%	53%
Worked full-time, year-round in 1999:	32%	38%	38%	47%	27%	31%
No earnings	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
With earnings:	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
\$1 to \$7,499	3%	2%	2%	2%	4%	3%
\$7,500 to \$14,999	18%	13%	13%	8%	25%	18%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	28%	23%	24%	18%	33%	31%
\$25,000 to \$39,999	29%	30%	32%	30%	26%	29%
\$40,000 to \$64,999	16%	21%	20%	25%	10%	14%
\$65,000 or more	6%	12%	9%	17%	3%	5%
Other:	68%	62%	62%	53%	73%	69%
No earnings	57%	55%	55%	52%	58%	57%
With earnings:	43%	45%	45%	48%	42%	43%
\$1 to \$7,499	44%	41%	38%	37%	48%	45%
\$7,500 to \$14,999	25%	23%	22%	20%	27%	25%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	15%	15%	17%	16%	14%	15%
\$25,000 to \$39,999	10%	12%	13%	14%	8%	10%
\$40,000 to \$64,999	4%	6%	7%	8%	3%	4%
\$65,000 or more	2%	3%	2%	5%	1%	1%

Identifying the Untapped Labor Force

This next section focuses on identifying and describing the *untapped labor force*. For the purposes of this Audit, this is defined as people who are not employed in the labor market who, with the right preparation, have the potential to fill the demand for skilled workers across the region. Using available data to identify the number of people that fit this description and describing their circumstances involves making some informed estimates. Clearly, the untapped labor supply is inclusive of, but larger than, the pool of people identified as unemployed in either Department of Labor data or Census data. Studying the group that is described as “not in the labor force” is the best way to learn about this other portion of the untapped labor supply.

One piece of Census Bureau research is quite helpful for approaching this problem. In the article Reason People Do Not Work, Mai Weismantle (1996) reports that nationally, about one third of people 15 years and older do not work. The reasons people do not work differ across the life cycle, with events such as pursuing an education, becoming a parent, and becoming eligible to retire with a pension often dictating work status. The following table illustrates the full range of reasons people did not work that was reported in the study, and breaks the data out by race and gender.

Main Reason People in the U.S. Did Not Work in 1996 ⁴	% Age 15 and older	Population Age 20 to 64					
		% Total	% Men	% Women	% African American	% Hispanic	% White
Unable to find work	3.9	7.1	12.9	4.3	13.7	10.1	4.9
On layoff	1.0	2.1	4.0	1.2	2.5	2.4	2.1
Temporary injury or illness	2.0	3.8	5.6	3.0	5.9	4.6	3.2
Chronic illness/disability	13.9	22.5	34.2	16.7	32.3	17.2	21.9
Pregnancy/Childbirth	1.0	1.8	0	2.7	2.2	3.5	1.3
Retired	39.0	13.4	19.5	10.3	6.9	3.3	17.6
Going to school	17.2	9.8	13.7	7.8	9.8	6.5	9.3
Taking care of children/others	13.3	26.6	2.6	38.6	18.1	42.1	25.3
Not interested in working	5.1	7.7	2.2	10.4	3.7	5.2	9.4
Other	3.5	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.0	5.1	5.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

It is possible to come up with a rough estimate of the percentage of the region's "not in the labor force" population that is part of the *potential*, or untapped labor force. First, we must assume that the proportions of each cited reason for not working are similar at the regional level and national level. The next step is to examine the national data on the reasons people do not work and separate them into two categories: the "potentially employable" group, and the "employment not appropriate" group. The combined percentages of the first group give us a national estimate of the proportion of those not in the labor force who are part of the untapped, potential workforce.

For these purposes, the potentially employable group includes: the following categories: Unable to find work, On layoff, Going to school, Not interested in working, and Other. Including "Other" in this category is a judgment-call made to maximize inclusion in the potential labor force group. Most likely, only an unknown percentage of the "Other" group is actually potentially employable. The result of this calculation is an estimate that up to 31.8% of the people over 20 years old who do not work, comprise the potential labor force. The final calculation of the size of the potential labor force involves looking at the two ways non-workers are tabulated in the Census data: as "unemployed" and as "not in the labor force". Our estimate of the potential labor force is arrived at by combining the unemployed group with 31.8% portion of the "not in the labor force" group⁵. Given the inclusiveness of the assumptions made, it is best stated that the untapped labor market within the region is "up to" the amount arrived at in the estimates.

⁴ Data summarized from Weismantle, 1996.

⁵ Again, this calculation is likely to err on the side of inclusion. It is possible that we over-count the unemployed because they are included in the 31.8% of the not in the labor force group as well as in the unemployed group. However, by deliberately erring on the side of inclusion we avoid underestimating the potential labor force, which so often happens.

Based on this analysis, the following table presents a break down of the number and percentage of the region and each parish’s adult population that is likely to be in the potential workforce. This untapped labor force consists of adults who are unemployed workers, who have had jobs and have not kept them, and others who have attempted to enter the workforce and been unsuccessful in getting employed or remaining employed, who say they are not interested in working, those who are not working but in school training for work later on, and those “discouraged workers” who have given up on finding employment.

Estimate of the Untapped Labor Force in Workforce Region 1				
	High Poverty Areas		Whole Region	
	# of Potential Workers	% of Adult Population	# of Potential Workers	% of Adult Population
Workforce Region 1	95,001	19%	168,217	16%
Individual Parishes				
Jefferson	22,403	17%	53,234	15%
Orleans	56,541	21%	69,912	19%
Plaquemines	2,491	20%	3,523	18%
St. Bernard	3,802	19%	8,500	16%
St. Charles	1,694	20%	5,157	15%
St. James	2,342	21%	3,128	20%
St. John the Baptist	2,818	20%	5,137	16%
St. Tammany	2,910	16%	19,626	14%

CHAPTER 8: Preparing A Workforce For The New Economy

Basic Education and the Labor supply

In the New Economy, skills rule the day. Uplifting the standard of living for workers, jobseekers and their families is directly related to skill acquisition. The vast majority of jobs that pay a livable wage are jobs that are based on a set of *New Basic Skills* that include “soft skills” and “hard skills”, and all indications from the labor demand side are that this trend will continue to intensify. Skills will determine a worker’s employability, a family’s livelihood and the region’s economy. Primary education is the foundation that many technical skills are built on. The goal of workforce development should be to create the proverbial “seamless path” between primary education and technical education.

Having knowledge of the performance of the educational systems at all levels and using that knowledge to reform and refine the overall workforce system is critical. The following table illustrates school enrollments in the region as a whole, showing public and private school participation for the population three years old and over. Altogether,

30% of the population is enrolled in school at some level. The majority of enrollees at all levels attend public school, with the size of those majorities being smaller at the nursery school and college levels. It should be noted that two parishes have levels of high school enrollees in private schools that stand out from the others. Jefferson with 36% in private school and St. John with 32% stand out from the other five parishes with levels between 9% and 22%. The significance of this is that data on the High School Graduate Exit Exams only represents public school students and therefore while useful information, is not a good read on the skills levels of the whole population of graduates.

P147 - SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY LEVEL OF SCHOOL BY TYPE OF SCHOOL FOR THE POPULATION 3 YEARS AND OVER				
Workforce Region 1				
	High Poverty		Whole Parish	
	#	%	#	%
Total:	609,978	100%	1,264,965	100%
Enrolled in nursery school, preschool	13,713	2%	28,609	2%
<i>Public school</i>	9,219	67%	13,234	46%
<i>Private school</i>	4,494	33%	15,375	54%
Enrolled in kindergarten	9,988	2%	19,669	2%
<i>Public school</i>	8,340	84%	13,913	71%
<i>Private school</i>	1,648	16%	5,756	29%
Enrolled in grade 1 to grade 8	85,917	14%	166,658	13%
<i>Public school</i>	73,686	86%	125,205	75%
<i>Private school</i>	12,231	14%	41,453	25%
Enrolled in grade 9 to grade 12	41,696	7%	82,837	7%
<i>Public school</i>	36,495	88%	63,392	77%
<i>Private school</i>	5,201	12%	19,445	23%
Enrolled in college	41,094	7%	81,150	6%
<i>Public school</i>	24,054	59%	51,724	64%
<i>Private school</i>	17,040	41%	29,426	36%
Not enrolled in school	417,570	68%	886,042	70%

The following tables report educational attainment data for the adult population. The column for high school completion and equivalency can be seen as a dividing line, a proxy measure outside the existence of a better measure, of the number of people in the workforce have gone on to or are ready to participate in technical training. It should be noted that 23% of adult population in the whole region and 31% in the high poverty areas have not crossed this line into technical readiness. The differences in the rates of people with less than high school/GED attainment between high poverty areas and whole parishes ranges between 1% and 14%. The difference is highest in the more economically segregated communities such as St. Charles (14%) and St. Tammany (11%) and lowest in the parishes where poverty is more evenly distributed throughout the community, such as St. James (1%) and Orleans (5%).

From PCT25. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR THE POPULATION 18 YEARS AND OVER

Parish	Area	Total Adult Population	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate or GED	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Jefferson	High Poverty Areas	100%	10%	21%	33%	22%	3%	8%	3%
	Whole Parish	100%	7%	15%	30%	25%	4%	14%	6%
Orleans	High Poverty Areas	100%	8%	22%	26%	24%	3%	11%	6%
	Whole Parish	100%	7%	18%	24%	24%	3%	14%	9%
Plaquemines	High Poverty Areas	100%	17%	23%	33%	17%	3%	6%	1%
	Whole Parish	100%	13%	19%	33%	21%	4%	8%	2%
St. Bernard	High Poverty Areas	100%	11%	22%	38%	21%	3%	3%	2%
	Whole Parish	100%	9%	17%	37%	23%	4%	6%	2%
St. Charles	High Poverty Areas	100%	9%	26%	35%	19%	3%	5%	2%
	Whole Parish	100%	6%	15%	35%	23%	4%	12%	5%
St. James	High Poverty Areas	100%	8%	19%	42%	17%	3%	6%	3%
	Whole Parish	100%	8%	18%	44%	17%	3%	6%	3%
St. John the Baptist	High Poverty Areas	100%	11%	24%	38%	18%	3%	5%	2%
	Whole Parish	100%	7%	18%	37%	23%	4%	8%	3%
St. Tammany	High Poverty Areas	100%	8%	21%	34%	22%	3%	8%	4%
	Whole Parish	100%	5%	13%	27%	25%	4%	17%	9%
Whole Region	High Poverty Areas	100%	9%	22%	30%	22%	3%	9%	5%
	Whole Parish	100%	7%	16%	28%	24%	4%	13%	7%

P148 SEX BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR THE POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER

	All Races/All Parishes				AFRICAN-AMERICAN			
	High Poverty		Whole Region		High Poverty		Whole Region	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total:	385,834	100%	839,935	100%	214,031	100%	275,843	100%
Male:	176,633	46%	389,010	46%	92,310	43%	119,435	43%
Less than 9th grade	19,709	11%	30,484	8%	11,375	12%	12,866	11%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	37,656	21%	59,523	15%	25,319	27%	29,760	25%
High school graduate or GED	50,725	29%	103,121	27%	27,333	30%	34,868	29%
Some college, no degree	35,628	20%	86,702	22%	18,381	20%	25,638	21%
Associate degree	5,221	3%	14,846	4%	2,314	3%	3,536	3%
Bachelor's degree	17,086	10%	58,397	15%	5,286	6%	8,634	7%
Graduate or professional degree	10,608	6%	35,937	9%	2,302	2%	4,133	3%
Female:	209,201	54%	450,925	54%	121,721	57%	156,408	57%
Less than 9th grade	20,568	10%	31,758	7%	11,621	10%	13,045	8%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	41,867	20%	65,864	15%	29,329	24%	33,599	21%
High school graduate or GED	62,896	30%	135,684	30%	35,077	29%	43,230	28%
Some college, no degree	44,399	21%	102,688	23%	27,835	23%	37,550	24%
Associate degree	7,646	4%	19,893	4%	4,387	4%	6,635	4%
Bachelor's degree	20,658	10%	63,030	14%	9,180	8%	15,143	10%
Graduate or professional degree	11,167	5%	32,008	7%	4,292	4%	7,206	5%

	ASIAN				HISPANIC/LATINO				WHITE, NON-HISPANIC			
	High Poverty		Whole Region		High Poverty		Whole Region		High Poverty		Whole Region	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total:	8,698	100%	17,396	100%	15,006	100%	37,190	100%	148,099	100%	509,506	100%
Male:	4,681	54%	8,863	51%	7,235	48%	17,256	46%	72,407	49%	243,456	48%
Less than 9th grade	1,040	22%	1,359	15%	1,143	16%	2,255	13%	6,151	8%	14,004	6%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	1,039	22%	1,668	19%	1,297	18%	2,798	16%	10,001	14%	25,297	10%
High school graduate or GED	647	14%	1,286	15%	1,652	23%	3,855	22%	21,093	29%	63,112	26%
Some college, no degree	493	11%	1,139	13%	1,647	23%	3,724	22%	15,107	21%	56,201	23%
Associate degree	115	2%	274	3%	210	3%	749	4%	2,582	4%	10,287	4%
Bachelor's degree	631	13%	1,444	16%	827	11%	2,256	13%	10,342	14%	46,063	19%
Graduate or professional degree	716	15%	1,693	19%	459	6%	1,619	9%	7,131	10%	28,492	12%
Female:	4,017	46%	8,533	49%	7,771	52%	19,934	54%	75,692	51%	266,050	52%
Less than 9th grade	1,123	28%	1,686	20%	1,240	16%	2,574	13%	6,584	9%	14,453	5%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	738	18%	1,405	16%	1,626	21%	3,152	16%	10,174	13%	27,708	10%
High school graduate or GED	655	16%	1,481	17%	1,845	24%	4,795	24%	25,319	33%	86,178	32%
Some college, no degree	298	7%	955	11%	1,485	19%	4,460	22%	14,781	20%	59,723	22%
Associate degree	108	3%	311	4%	287	4%	1,095	5%	2,864	4%	11,852	4%
Bachelor's degree	689	17%	1,642	19%	825	11%	2,405	12%	9,964	13%	43,840	16%
Graduate or professional degree	406	10%	1,053	12%	463	6%	1,453	7%	6,006	8%	22,296	8%

The following table gets deeper into what attainment levels mean to actual academic skills. While completion of high school or a GED is often used as a criterion for hiring or entry into further training, it does not necessarily indicate the real acquisition of skills. Graduate Exit Examinations and college preparedness data in Table 29, help make the picture more complete. Clearly, from the data, substantial numbers of high school students who are on the brink of completing their course work are still not able to demonstrate the skills the system intends them to. This pattern stands out particularly in Orleans and St. John, with Jefferson not far behind. Perhaps the most telling piece of data is the first time freshmen who enroll in remedial college courses, with more than half the enrollees from every parish except St. Charles and St. James having more than half of its freshmen enrolled in remediation.

Rates of Passing Louisiana's High School Graduate Exit Examination 1999-2000								
Data Source- Louisiana District Composite Report 1999-2000 LA Department of Education 151 st Annual Financial & Statistical Report 1999-2000								
Graduate Exit Examinations	Jefferson	Orleans	Plaque-mines	St. Bernard	St. Charles	St. James	St. John the Baptist	St. Tammany
Students passing English language arts	76%	60%	84%	88%	87%	85%	72%	93%
Students passing mathematics	70%	49%	78%	86%	89%	68%	67%	86%
Students passing written composition	92%	85%	95%	95%	97%	96%	91%	98%
Students passing science	80%	64%	87%	85%	86%	80%	73%	90%
Students passing social studies	85%	73%	94%	92%	93%	85%	82%	93%
College preparedness								
ACT average comp. Score	18.6	17.3	19.2	19.6	20.2	18	17	21.3
Graduates who were first-time freshmen in a LA college	36%	37%	42%	51%	51%	43%	34%	45%
First-time freshmen in LA enrolled in college remedial courses	58%	64%	56%	51%	30%	44%	60%	27%

While the above data offer a glimpse of skills of young people coming out of the school system, there is still a need to get a read on the actual skills levels of the larger adult population. The best broad-based information available comes from the **Synthetic Estimates of Adult Literacy Proficiency**, done in 1995 by Portland State University and is reported in the following table. These estimates are based on The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), which tests for how well people understand written material, arithmetic, and documents such as maps, graphs and forms. There are 5 possible levels of NALS scores, 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Nationwide, about 20% of people score at the lowest level. In Louisiana, 28% score at this level.

Synthetic Estimates of Adult Literacy Proficiency: prepared by Stephen Reder of Portland State University in 1995. Robert Fountain, director of the Statistical Consulting Laboratory at Portland State University, provided technical advice on statistical procedures, published online at www.casas.org/lit/litcode

Adult Literacy Estimates	Jefferson	Orleans	Plaque-mines	St. Bernard	St. Charles	St. James	St. John the Baptist	St. Tammany
Percent at Level 1	21%	39%	28%	19%	23%	36%	27%	17%
Percent at Level 1 or 2	50%	70%	67%	56%	54%	74%	60%	45%

To tighten the focus, it is helpful to examine what these numbers mean to our knowledge about the potential labor force. The NALS estimates can be multiplied by our estimates of the untapped labor force to give us an estimate of the number of people in each parish who are within the untapped workforce **and** face literacy issues as a serious barrier to workforce success. The following table reports the numbers of people in each parish who are likely to be at each literacy level.

Estimate of Adults in the Potential Labor Force at Literacy Levels 1 & 2						
	<i>Literacy Estimates</i>		High Poverty Areas		Whole Parish	
	Level 1 %	Level 2 %	# at Literacy level 1	# at Literacy Level 2	# at Literacy level 1	# at Literacy Level 2
Jefferson	21%	50%	4,705	11,202	11,179	26,617
Orleans	39%	70%	22,051	39,579	27,266	48,938
Plaquemines	28%	67%	697	1,669	986	2,360
St. Bernard	19%	56%	722	2,129	1,615	4,760
St. Charles	23%	54%	390	915	1,186	2,785
St. James	36%	74%	843	1,733	1,126	2,315
St. John the Baptist	27%	60%	761	1,691	1,387	3,082
St. Tammany	17%	45%	495	1,310	3,336	8,832

Having determined the size and basic skills levels of the untapped labor force, based on an array of secondary data on education and skills, we now look to program data for deeper insight into the potential labor force. As discussed in the research design, NOJI's data set offers a snapshot of this group that, for these purposes, has been analyzed in terms of "successful" and "not successful" program participants. Again, this data is helpful because it offers a view of people in the untapped labor force who are actively trying to get into sustainable employment that pays a livable wage.

In terms of high school/GED completion, there is a 3% difference between those who have experienced success and those who have not. For both groups, the number who have **not** attained high school or GED completion (53% Unsuccessful and 50% Successful) is much higher than it is for Orleans Parish (where the majority of NOJI participants reside) either at the whole parish (25%) or high poverty are level (30%).

Education Levels in the NOJI Data Set		
Educational Attainment	Unsuccessful Participants	Successful Participants
High School Diploma/GED	47%	50%
Technical certificate or diploma	6%	8%
Vocational/occupational skills certificate	17%	16%
Associates Degree	1%	1%
Bachelor's Degree	1%	1%
Master's Degree	0%	0%
Beyond Master's Degree	0%	0%
Other	6%	4%
No Degree	22%	20%
Schooling - Highest Grade Completed	Unsuccessful Participants	Successful Participants
Below 8 th Grade	1%	1%
8 th to 11 th Grade	37%	35%
12 th Grade	41%	42%
13 th to 14 th Year	18%	16%
15 th – 17 th Year (end of 4 year college)	4%	6%
More than 17 years	0%	0%
* This is baseline data recorded at enrollment. Educational attainment questions are “check all that apply”; so, the data are not mutually exclusive.		

Once again, schooling information gives us limited insight that can be deepened by looking at data about actual skills. In this case, we examine program assessments conducted at enrollment to determine the skills that people enter programs with. In NOJI's case, assessment includes drug screening, academic skills measurement using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), career-interest based aptitude tests and the Work Readiness Index (WRI), a tool that assesses basic “soft skills”.

First, we will examine the results of TABE testing. The TABE data is broken out in terms of applicants who enrolled in the program and those who did not. This is key because one of the criteria for program enrollment is reaching 5.0 or 5th grade level on the TABE. Among non-enrollees, then, are people who did not reach those criteria, as well as people who did reach it but chose not to enroll or were screened out by other criteria. The test is administered at three levels increasing in difficulty - Medium, Difficult and Advanced. Applicants take a locator test to determine which of the three levels they will take.

The data shows that 11% of the applicants took the Advanced test. Interestingly, those who did not enroll had higher average scores than those who did. The scores of non-enrollees are, on average, above the 10th grade level, which is the typical requirement for college-level academic and technical programs. In other words, this group of non-enrollees has more options readily available to them because of their higher skills levels.

At the other end of the spectrum, the largest group of test takers is the 49% of the applicants who took the Medium test. Here, the differences in scores between enrollees and non-enrollees are harder to interpret. In this test level, with the exception of Spelling, which shows little variation between enrollees and non-enrollees at all testing levels, all subjects show slightly higher scores for enrollees than non-enrollees. This makes sense, given that people scoring below the 5th grade level in Math or cumulatively in the verbal skills of Reading, Language and Spelling are not enrolled, but referred to intensive literacy services to prepare them to enroll in NOJI's training programs.

The largest group of enrollees have taken the Difficult Test, which is actually the intermediate level. Their scores place them solidly in the 6th to 8th grade levels. There is not a clear pattern of differences between those who enrolled and those who did not. Overall we see that NOJI applicants, a cross section of the untapped labor force in Orleans and Jefferson parishes, have average skills levels in the 6th to 8th grade range and a clear pattern in which Math and Language skills are clearly within the 6th grade range.

Average TABE Test Scores of NOJI Applicants			
TABE Test Data	Total Assessed	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Test Levels			
Medium	49%	36%	55%
Difficult	40%	58%	33%
Advanced	11%	6%	12%
All Levels,			
Math	6.34	6.66	6.23
Reading	7.09	7.39	6.97
Language	6.23	6.17	6.26
Spelling	8.74	8.32	8.89
Medium Level			
Math	5.35	6.13	5.17
Reading	5.69	5.57	5.72
Language	4.70	4.43	4.76
Spelling	7.79	7.98	7.74
Difficult Level			
Math	6.57	6.68	6.50
Reading	7.87	8.22	7.64
Language	7.19	6.85	7.23
Spelling	9.20	8.20	9.83
Advanced Level			
Math	10.06	9.30	10.21
Reading	10.62	9.93	10.76
Language	10.15	9.47	10.29
Spelling	11.38	11.13	11.43

How does this compare with the experience of other programs that serve the potential labor force in the region? The NCUC data about the non-custodial men it serves indicates that 52% of the men did not have High School Diplomas or GEDs and that 25% left school before completing 10th grade. The Women in Community Service Training and Employment program, which serves primarily Orleans and Jefferson Parishes, reports that literacy is the greatest barrier its trainees face. The Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office reports that 47% of its arrestees do not have High School Diplomas or GEDs and that among those who participate in their inmate's literacy program, assessment scores average in the 4th to 6th grade level range. This is not unlike the 5th to 6th grade range reported by Hope House, a literacy and GED provider located in the Lower Garden District of New Orleans which for many years has served the now demolished St. Thomas Public Housing Development.

The question that remains is "What is the perspective of people in the untapped labor force themselves, on this issue of education and basic academic skills?" One of the most outstanding things that arose in every focus group was the awareness of the importance of education, both technical and academic. Many could name their specific skill deficiencies, particularly when it was math. Few identified reading and language skills as a specific challenge. Most who did not have a high school diploma or GED saw it as a

priority because it meant they would be more employable. Many also struggled with the need to complete a GED while having to work and raise a family.

“I always had a problem with thinking I couldn’t do nothing because I didn’t have a high school diploma”

“You can’t get a good job or good benefits without high school or a GED.”

“I started working towards my GED. I quit because I get tired after working all day. If it’s hard, I don’t even want to waste my time. I don’t like to depend on other people. I like to get things myself.”

“I would like to get my GED first; maybe try computers”

“I tried to get a GED at Delgado, It’s hard to work, go to school and take care of your child.”

“Right now, my main focus is to get my GED.”

“I have trouble with math and I know if I want to do better I have to stop being the class clown. When I go back to school I’m going to sit in the front seat for every session and really get into it.”

“I want to go to school for radiology but I have to pay off my old student loan first, find child care and a vehicle and then do a lot of remediation, first.”

One of the focus groups was conducted with a group of people working on GED preparation and Literacy skills at the Orleans Adult Career Center. The computer assisted learning lab was full beyond capacity with learners doubling up on the computers and taking turns to work. The overwhelming message that came through from this group was one of great determination and the belief that completing a GED was critical. It was key for the learning of basic skills, and for the point of proving to themselves and potential employers that they had the discipline to complete something this important.

On-the-Job Skills: Hard Skills and Soft Skills and the Potential Workforce

Aside from educational attainment data, it is next to impossible to find secondary data that gives a broad based, realistic read on the actual skills people in the real and potential workforce have, that they can use on the job. Hence, we rely on program data and input from the focus groups to help us understand these issues. As mentioned above, *hard skills* refers to the technical and other occupational skills involved in actually doing the work on a job. *Soft skills* refers to the often less tangible skills that are required to get along in a work place. They include the formal and informal codes of behavior such as timeliness, appropriate appearance, teamwork, accepting direction, completing assignments, interpersonal skills and more. Soft skills tend to overlap with the notion of “*life skills*” which include many of the same skills, as well as more personal skills like budgeting and managing work and family life. Across the field of workforce development there are many ways of naming this critical set of skills: life skills, soft skills, work or job readiness skills, pre-employment/pre training preparation, pre-vocational skills, to name a few. What is important is not so much the name as the inclusion of a wide range of personal and social abilities that allow successful participation in the workforce.

Workforce development programs generally help jobseekers enter the labor market by providing some or all, of four basic kinds of services: assessment of employability and vocational counseling, skills training to enhance employability (may be hard skills, soft skills, literacy, or job search skills), job placement assistance, and job retention support. It’s helpful to look at the expectations that applicants have when they come to workforce development programs.

In NOJI’s experience, the primary thing people want is to have their skills assessed, to better know their own potential in the workforce. Also, a substantial group saw getting job placement assistance as the most important thing. Although the baseline survey asked applicants to choose one most important priority, a substantial number could not do so and wrote into the “Other” category either that they needed all of the types of assistance or named a combination of two or three of these such as skills training and placement assistance. It is also notable that the successful participants were more likely to identify learning Life Skills as a priority for themselves.

Most Important Thing Enrollees Hope to Gain From NOJI		
Expectations of NOJI	Unsuccessful Participants	Successful Participants
Have skills assessed	36%	36%
Get a job/job placement	25%	23%
Learn how to look for a job/learn interview skills	5%	6%
Learn occupational skills	18%	16%
Improve math/reading skills	5%	1%
Learn life skills (such as conflict resolution, personal finance/budgeting)	7%	11%
Obtain support service assistance (such as child care, transportation)	0%	1%
More than one of the above	4%	6%
TOTAL	100%	100%
* This is baseline data recorded at enrollment.		

Focus on Hard Skills

We turn now to a more in depth look at hard skills in the untapped labor supply. Referring back to the following table, it is notable that 23% and 24% of NOJI participants, report completion of a vocational or technical certification and still are seeking assistance getting on to a career path. In fact, NOJI and other programs are familiar with a pattern of “recycling” from one program to another. At NOJI’s inception, one of the observations of community leaders was that some jobseekers had enough training certificates to paper their walls, but still did not have a sustainable career or any job at all for that matter. Another aspect of recycling is non-completion of training programs. The Tulane Xavier National Center for the Urban Community (NCUC) reports that among the 441 male non-custodial parents who enrolled in their Welfare-to-Work program, 68% had enrolled in a vocational program and received some training; but of those, only 57% actually completed the program they started.

Along these lines, numerous focus group participants reported difficulties completing all the steps necessary to receive certification in their vocational training endeavors. They also reported a great desire and determination to get the needed skills. Often, the barrier of a lack of technical skills was held in place by other barriers, such as child care issues or learning styles that are not being effectively addressed in the classroom.

“When I was working before, I went to Loyola for about a year for computer science, but I didn’t think it was fair to keep my son in computer labs over the weekends.”

“I had paid to take a course in computer repair. The teacher couldn’t speak in a way that was easily understood by everyone. I couldn’t get it. the teacher talked like he was talking to electricians at NASA.”

It doesn’t matter to me how long I have to be in school, as long as I have child care for my children, it really doesn’t matter.”

Many people reported good experiences with vocational training that enhanced their employability. Even though they were currently out of work, the skills they had previously attained gave them faith that they would find a job they wanted. In particular, positive experiences with Delgado Community College and the Louisiana Technical Colleges were mentioned. Still, in almost every focus group, there were people who had negative experiences, especially with proprietary training providers. In many cases people were left in debt without skills or certifications that they needed to pursue the careers they trained for.

“I went back to school for secretarial and paralegal skills. I thought the school was accredited but it wasn’t. I had a 3.4 GPA. I never got a certificate because I missed graduation and then they went out of business. I still have to pay \$6,000 in student loans.”

Many participants were acutely aware of the skills hurdles they would have to get over in order to get hired for jobs. Some spoke of having been surprised by them in the past. Others worried or ruled out those job opportunities because of this. Still, some spoke of preparing themselves to face the hurdles. Other were frustrated that skills they had learned on the job in previous employment were not in any way certified and that was a barrier to getting hired to use those skills.

“I tried to apply at Soul Train Fashions and they gave me a math test before they would give me an application.”

“I am trying to get into welding or ship fitting or carpentry but if you don’t test well, you enter low or not at all.”

“I have been getting ready for the process operator test on my own so I can go to the plant and apply to start at good level”

“I learned bookkeeping on the job. The people I worked for taught me and I worked for them for twelve years. Now I can’t get a job because I don’t have a degree in it”

Focus on Soft Skills

As stated above, *soft skills*, refers to the often less tangible skills that are required to be successful in a work place. They include interpersonal skills needed in the workplace such as teamwork and getting along well with a diversity of people. They also include the ability to perceive and function within the formal and informal rules that make up the culture of a workplace. In more holistic conceptions, they are also conceived in inseparable from basic literacy skills needed to communicate effectively in writing.

Nationally, a tremendous amount of study and attention has been paid to defining these issues in recent years. For example, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)⁶ describes many of the skills referred to here as soft skills as part of the New Basic Skills (see Demand Side report). While many New Basic Skills that integrate literacy and numeracy and critical thinking are required to be able to solve problems; soft skills also go beyond the *ability* to solve problems to the having *attitude* and *motivation* to try to solve them. This is what, NOJI's 21st Century Success Principles Course calls a "Can-Do Attitude". Taken altogether, NOJI has arrived at eight habits, which together make up the essential soft skills.

The Habits of Success

- ⇒ Being on Time
- ⇒ Being Present All Day, Every Day
- ⇒ Accepting and Following Direction
- ⇒ Working Well with Others, Even When Its Difficult
- ⇒ Having a Positive, Not Negative, Attitude Towards The Work
- ⇒ Taking Care Of Personal Appearance Everyday
- ⇒ Getting Things Done Within The Expected Time
- ⇒ Doing A Quality Job At Each Task

By whatever name they are called, there remains this critical range of skills that are neither wholly academic nor technical but play a key role in the success of any employee, whether they are in top management or an entry-level position. One way of measuring them in people who are entering the workforce, was developed by the Denver Workforce Initiative, one of NOJI's sister sites within the Casey Foundation's national Jobs Initiative, is the Work Readiness Index is an assessment instrument containing 40 questions about the world of work. These questions specifically pertain to five areas:

⁶ Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1990

workplace habits and behaviors, workplace attitudes and values, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and coping skills.

The questions were developed by working closely with employers and supervisors and then tested on existing employees. Supervisor assessments of each the level of success of each employee were compared to employee responses to the questions. The questions that were included in the final survey instrument were those answered by successful employees in a consistent pattern. The test is administered at the end of NOJI’s 100 hour 21st Century Success Principles Course. The scores are reported as percentiles. Those with higher scores gave answers that were more like the answers of the most *successful* employees.

Overall, the scores of NOJI graduates to-date rank above three quarters of the existing employees that the test was normed on. Successful participants showed a slightly higher overall score. This is more pronounced in the areas of communications and coping skills. It is notable that these are the areas in which both groups had the lowest scores.

Work Readiness Index Scores of Participants Completing NOJI’s 21st Century Success Principles		
Areas of Assessment	Unsuccessful Participants	Successful Participants
Overall Average	76	78
Habits and Behaviors	84	84
Attitudes and Values	82	83
Communication Skills	61	68
Interpersonal Skills	90	94
Coping Skills	71	76

Turning from our quantitative data on soft skills, to our focus group feedback, in every group, NOJI spoke with people who were unemployed but who could easily call out a substantial list of the characteristics desired in new employees and the issues that got people fired. Indeed knowledge of these basics was not anyone’s shortcoming.

Focus Group Feedback

What do employers want from new employees?

- Punctuality
- Productivity
- Loyalty;
- Responsibility
- Doing your job to the best of your knowledge.
- Honesty
- Teamwork and getting along with others
- Willingness to learn
- Show that you're a good worker"
- Positive work-ready attitude

What gets people fired?

- Not following instructions
- Going against the system
- Not accepting criticism from the boss
- Being late or not showing up, absent all the time
- Defiance of authority
- Having a negative attitude

Many focus group participants were able to describe not only what it took to keep a job but also what it took to advance on one and how to appropriately leave one. Some even demonstrated an ability to see the employer through the eyes of the business owner or manager.

"Moving up takes always being there; letting them know you're interested, communicating about weaknesses in the company"

"You have to start from the bottom and work your way up by being productive."

"You gotta show that you're willing to work, be on time, present every day, getting the job done the way they want it to be done"

"If you want to advance you have to help other people, going beyond what's expected and test up to the next level. See how fast you can produce and make them money"

"The difference between just quitting and resigning is that by resigning, you leave a back door open in case you want to come back"

While a lot of general knowledge of employer expectations was evident in the feedback, there were three critical themes related to soft skills issues that arose consistently. The

first was the issue of trust within the workplace. Numerous participants mentioned issues with trust in the workplace.

“You can’t trust people; you’ll get lost; they’ll trip you up.”

“Sometimes getting fired is not your fault; customers and co-workers will set you up.”

“It’s good to be your own friend on the job. You don’t know who you can trust so you shouldn’t really trust anybody”

While most workplaces experience some level of “trust issues”, successful employees in those workplaces usually have key soft skills such as the ability to work with diverse groups of people, to communicate effectively, and to identify appropriate workplace mentors that can mitigate these issues for many people

Along with trust, a second key theme that emerged relating to soft skills was that of anger. In every focus group, there were participants who spoke of their challenges managing anger in the workplace. Some spoke of it in ways that indicated there might be deeper emotional issues at play. Frequently people lost jobs over anger related incidents. In a few situations, they reported that co-workers or supervisors had helped them get through the situation.

“I have these bad days; getting up on the wrong side of the bed”

“My temper is my problem. I was working at a gas station, and a customer threw a \$10 bill at me to pay for gas she was about to pump. I told her to go get her gas elsewhere. The customer reported me, but my manager took me aside, worked with me and I stayed there until a long time”

“Customers mess with you because they know you can lose your job. I’ll just lose my job.”

“When I make mistakes, I have a poor attitude for hours and hours and then that affects my skills”

“I was always pink slipped because I just couldn’t get along, I would get mad and go off on people”

“I try to be nice, to balance my anger but I have these mood swings”

In many cases, these kinds of issues can be addressed by expanding people's range of skills to respond to conflict. At the same time, it is difficult to ferret out the degree to which these issues can be resolved by new skills of conflict resolution, communication, or anger and stress management, and the extent to which effective mental health care is what is needed. Difficulty managing anger can also be a sign of clinical depression. In a recent 60 Minutes News Show (Nov. 10, 2002) reporter Lesley Stahl investigated the effects of clinical depression on women who receive welfare, documenting cases in which treatment for depression made a profound difference in the ability to care for a family, as well as to become gainfully employed.

Although many people in the potential labor force are not on welfare, many of the stressors associated with poverty that may contribute to depression are just as widespread for the chronically unemployed and underemployed, whether they receive TANF or not. While the 60 Minutes story does not represent scientific research, it is affirmed by the experience of many workforce development case workers and instructors NOJI has spoken with. They report that many of the jobseekers they work with show signs of depression. This also fits with some of the stories focus group participants told about their personal journeys to survive and thrive and make a successful life for themselves.

“That little voice keeps telling you you’re not gonna measure up and you just don’t have a very good attitude. Sometimes it takes medication to get over these things or good counseling”

The implication here is that effectively addressing some dimensions of soft skills in the potential workforce should include the input of mental health professionals. Working together with workforce development providers, screening for these kinds of issues could be built into workforce services in a way that benefits whole families, as well as reducing the frequency of unmanageable anger behavior and other depression related problems in the workplace.

A third theme that was repeated throughout the focus group was that many people had experiences with supervisors and managers who did not themselves model effective soft skills. This can severely hinder efforts to bring along people newly entering or re-entering the workforce.

“My supervisor was disrespectful to everyone who worked under him. He would accuse people of doing things wrong without even checking it out first. “

“My supervisor had a nasty temper and anytime you made a mistake you got yelled at. A lot of people quit.”

“Once when I stayed late, unexpectedly, I told my supervisor about my kids at day care. The supervisor told me, “That’s not my problem. Your kids can just stay there and wait.””

A key employee-retention service that can be offered to firms is supervisor training that addresses the soft skills of the supervisor as well as the employees they supervise. Recently, NOJI provided these services to Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding Systems and saw a profound improvement in new employee retention as a result.

CHAPTER 9: Challenges for the Potential Workforce

Seeking a Job in the New Economy

This section looks at two key issues involved in securing a job in the New Economy. First, we consider the question of identifying the kinds of job to pursue. Next, we look at methods of searching for a job.

When it comes to identifying jobs to pursue, many jobseekers have difficulty identifying what they want to do. Many do not have a realistic sense of what all the possibilities are. The majority of those who did not know exactly what they wanted to do were clear that they wanted something more than what they had done in the past.

“It’s a gray area right now. I could be looking for a job or training for anything.”

“I don’t know what I want to do I just I don’t want to have to struggle to support myself any more.”

“I need more endurance on the job. It’s going to have to be a job that stimulates my mind and keeps my attention.”

“I hate being stuck in the same point. I get bored doing the same things all the time.”

Many focus group participants talked about their aspirations in terms of bad experiences they did not wish to repeat or conditions they did not wish to work under. In almost every case, the occupation named was an outdoor job in construction or manufacturing trades and laboring. In some cases, concerns about needing education also lead to discounting job possibilities.

“My worst job experience was working outside in the rain; getting a rash from handling asbestos. I don’t want that kind of thing again”

“No way will I do plumbing. It just stinks.”

“I am not interested in working outside in the sun.”

“I want a job that doesn’t require education and is not in the sun”

“Working construction and stuff like that is too dangerous and you get to sore”

Among women, the undesirability of outdoor work in the trades was often voiced; but a small cross-section of women found those careers appealing.

I hate being the only female in a non-traditional job. I don’t want to do that again.

“I don’t want to work in the trades I want to be able to dress up every day.”

“I like doing work that’s unusual for a woman. I used to cut down trees. You gotta really know what you’re doing or else people can really get hurt. I really had to work to get that job. I kept trying and didn’t give up. I would like to do it again

Frequently, people had specific personal and family priorities that shaped the choice of jobs to pursue. The two most frequent of these were having schedules that worked with childcare needs and the desire to own a business.

“I need to find a job that fits my children’s schedules”

“What I really want is to own my own business”

A substantial number of focus group participants did have a strong sense of what kind of job they wanted to pursue. The most frequently cited jobs people aspired to were in computers and other office jobs, about half of all jobs named. In most cases, participants stated their intention with a rejoinder about a barrier between them and the job they desired, or about the frustration they experienced because they had not yet secured the job.

“When I made the decision to go back to work everything had changed. Just last year I went to Urban League and I upgraded on Microsoft Word, excel, and Word Perfect and I still can’t get a job. McDonald’s, Burger King... I really don’t want... housekeeping I really don’t want; it’s not like I can’t do housekeeping. I would just like a job in the field that I enjoy, that I have some skills in, with benefits”

“I’m a certified travel agent. I have done data entry; and been a payroll clerk. It’s hard to find a well-paying job. I’ve searched a lot.”

Knowing how to find a job is critical in the New Economy. Most people will not keep one job their whole lives. Employed people must know how to find their *next* job when the current one is over. Among NOJI’s participants, as well as among participants in the Community Audit focus groups, the newspaper was the most popular tool for finding jobs. After that, friends, relatives and personal networks were the most common resource. A smaller, but still significant, portion of jobseekers rely on visiting employers to inquire about hiring opportunities. Beyond that, a small percentage cite other methods such as relying on employment agencies and community organizations.

Most Important Job Search Method Used by NOJI Participants

Job Search Method	Unsuccessful Participants	Successful Participants
Newspaper Ads	48%	55%
Friends/Relatives	37%	34%
Visit Employers	11%	9%
Call Employers	1%	0%
Contact Employment Agencies	2%	1%
Contact Community Organizations	0%	1%
Contact Community Leaders/Officials	0%	1%
Other	2%	0%
TOTAL	100%	101%

In the focus groups, only one person mentioned using online resources to locate jobs. This was surprising, given that two of the focus groups were actually with One Stop customers who spoke well of the services they received at the centers. Still it was clear that the idea of online resources as helpful for job search has not widely caught on. In fact, the one person who did mention using the online resources had concerns that many of the job leads online were already filled by the time he read them and were not updated in a timely manner. This made the online listings seem like a waste of time to him.

Clearly, it will take a focused marketing effort to connect the world jobseekers to online resources in a serious way. The One Stops have come along way toward making online access available to jobseekers. Along with getting word to more jobseekers about these

resources, it is very important that the available information be current, relevant, accessible and user friendly for people in the potential labor force.

A critical issue in the actual search for employment is that a jobseeker be “reachable”. According to the 2000 Census, for the overwhelming number of residents in the region, in high poverty areas and not, telephone service is available. Still there are exceptions, and as might be expected, those without access are most likely to be African Americans in high poverty communities.

HCT32 TELEPHONE SERVICE AVAILABLE BY RACE OF HOUSEHOLDER							
Universe: Occupied housing units							
All Races/All Parishes							
	High Poverty		Whole Parish				
	#	%	#	%			
Total:	238,605	100%	499,006	100%			
With telephone service available	226,480	95%	483,531	97%			
No telephone service available	12,125		15,475	3%			

AFRICAN-AMERICAN								ASIAN			
	High Poverty		Whole Region		High Poverty		Whole Region				
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Total:	132,590	100%	168,943	100%	4,337	100%	8,201	100%			
With telephone service available	123,630	93%	159,112	94%	4,196	97%	8,060	98%			
No telephone service available	8,960	7%	9,831	6%	141	3%	141	2%			

HISPANIC/LATINO				WHITE, NON-HISPANIC				
	High Poverty		Whole Region		High Poverty		Whole Region	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total:	8,852	100%	19,720	100%	92,826	100%	302,142	100%
With telephone service available	8,382	95%	19,059	97%	90,272	97%	297,300	98%
No telephone service available	470	5%	661	3%	2,554	3%	4,842	2%

In spite of the fact that most people have access to phones, several focus group participants said not having a phone was a problem for them and that it was a real impediment to finding a job. In a couple of cases, people talked about the help they got from the One Stop resolving this problem.

“I have been an electrician; a welder; and a boiler operator. I have been trying to get a job but I don’t have a phone for anyone to reach me and that makes it really hard.”

“I don’t have a phone but I keep putting in applications and I call up here at the One Stop everyday for messages.”

Transportation for a Potential Workforce

Transportation is a major consideration for people who are attempting to enter or re-enter employment. In every focus group, transportation was a critical issue affecting the ability to find and keep jobs. In the outlying parishes, the limited services of or altogether absence of public transportation was the major concern. In fact, in the River Parishes, we talked to unemployed people who had by far the highest levels of technical skills and experience; but who had tremendous difficulty finding jobs that they could get to.

In all areas, a frequent problem cited was the challenge of getting to jobs across parish boundaries, especially when those jobs began very early in the morning or had evening hours. The following table indicates across the region, about a third of all employed adults work outside their home parish. Further analysis of the parish level data in Appendix 2 indicates that work outside that working outside the parish of residence is particularly high in the River Parishes and St. Bernard, ranging between 47% and 57%. In every parish and the region as a whole the, high poverty areas have a smaller percentage of residents employed outside the home parish. This trend is strongest in the high poverty areas of Plaquemines and Orleans where only 22% and 20%, respectively, work outside the parish.

P26. PLACE OF WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER--STATE AND COUNTY LEVEL				
	All Parishes			
	High Poverty Areas		All Areas	
	#	%	#	%
Total:	242,819	100%	570,423	100%
Worked in state of residence:	240,766	99%	563,091	99%
Worked in county of residence	176,236	73%	375,225	67%
Worked outside county of residence	64,530	27%	187,866	33%
Worked outside state of residence:	2,053	1%	7,332	1%

Across the region, the vast majority of employed residents drive alone to work. The following table shows that 88% of all employed people in Region 1 travel to work in a private vehicle, either driving alone or in a carpool. For the high poverty areas, it is somewhat lower at 80%. Given the diversity in the transportation situation across parishes, the parish data in Appendix 2 offers a clearer picture. Only Orleans and Jefferson have public transportation systems that convey significant numbers of people to work, with the number being quite small in Jefferson (5%). In St. Bernard, focus group participants stated strong frustration with the very limited bus service to downtown New Orleans.

P30. MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER				
	All Parishes			
	High Poverty Areas		All Areas	
	#	%	#	%
Total:	242,819	100%	570,423	100%
Drove alone	153,912	63%	416,450	73%
Carpooled	41,776	17%	83,547	15%
Public transportation	26,614	11%	31,946	6%
Bicycle	2,349	1%	3,353	1%
Walked	10,277	4%	15,526	3%
Other means	2,693	1%	5,128	1%
Worked at home	4,853	2%	13,751	2%

The NOJI data, which is primarily drawn from people in Orleans and Jefferson who live in high poverty areas, show a distinctly different picture than this overall regional picture. For this group public transportation is the primary mode of transportation. In fact, successful participants are more likely to rely on public transit than on driving themselves or getting a ride. This may be because it is difficult economically to purchase, and/or maintain a car at the same time that you are entering the workforce and trying to become financially stable.

NOJI Participants Means of Transportation to Work		
Transportation to Work	Unsuccessful Participants	Successful Participants
Ride bus or other public transit	52%	61%
Drive a car	41%	36%
Get a ride from someone else	4%	0%
Walk	2%	2%
Work at home	0%	0%
Other	1%	2%
TOTAL	100%	101%

More than 50% of all workers in almost all of the parishes and the high poverty areas within the parishes travel to work in less than thirty minutes. The one exception is that only 47% of the residents of the high poverty areas of St. Bernard travel to work in less than thirty minutes. Significantly, very few of those who arrive at work this quickly utilize public transportation. Proportionately, employed residents of high poverty communities are more likely to take public transportation and travel more than 30 minutes.

P32. TRAVEL TIME TO WORK BY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER WHO DID NOT WORK AT HOME

	All Parishes			
	High Poverty Areas		All Areas	
	#	%	#	%
Total:	236,415	100%	556,672	100%
Public transportation	26,602	11%	31,946	6%
Other means	197,109	83%	488,521	88%
Less than 30 minutes:	149,520	63%	348,200	63%
Public transportation	7,729	5%	9,329	3%
Other means	141,791	95%	338,871	97%
30 to 44 minutes:	50,469	21%	117,187	21%
Public transportation	7,963	16%	9,247	8%
Other means	42,506	84%	107,940	92%
45 to 59 minutes:	17,210	7%	47,072	8%
Public transportation	4,446	26%	5,410	11%
Other means	12,764	74%	41,662	89%
60 or more minutes:	19,216	8%	44,213	8%
Public transportation	6,464	34%	7,960	18%
Other means	12,752	66%	36,253	82%

Given that more proportionately high number of employed residents who rely on private vehicles to travel to work, it is helpful to examine access to vehicle data for all households in the region. Across the region 85% of all households have access to at least one vehicle. In the high poverty areas, it is still high, at 75%. The group that stands out because of low rates of access to vehicles is African Americans in the high poverty areas of the region. In Orleans Parish this is pronounced, 61% access to vehicles in high poverty areas and 65% in the parish as a whole. In the high poverty areas of Orleans, St. Charles and St. James, Hispanic/Latino households also have low rates of vehicle access (68%, 63%, and 67% respectively).

**HCT33 VEHICLES AVAILABLE BY RACE OF HOUSEHOLDER [3] - Universe:
Occupied housing units**

	All Races/All Parishes			
	High Poverty		Whole Parish	
	#	%	#	%
Total:	245,916	100%	499,006	100%
No vehicle available	60,688	25%	76,558	15%
1 or more vehicles available	185,228	75%	422,448	85%

	AFRICAN-AMERICAN				ASIAN			
	High Poverty		Whole Region		High Poverty		Whole Region	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total:	132,590	100%	168,943	100%	4,813	100%	8,201	100%
No vehicle available	45,562	34%	49,367	29%	691	14%	768	9%
1 or more vehicles available	87,028	66%	119,576	71%	4,122	86%	7,433	91%

	HISPANIC/LATINO				WHITE, NON-HISPANIC			
	High Poverty		Whole Region		High Poverty		Whole Region	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total:	15,687	100%	19,720	100%	92,826	100%	302,142	100%
No vehicle available	2,486	16%	2,775	14%	11,949	13%	23,648	8%
1 or more vehicles available	13,201	84%	16,945	86%	80,877	87%	278,494	92%

In order to assess jobseekers readiness for the regional nature of the New Economy, the focus groups were asked what they thought about traveling more than ten miles or to other parishes for jobs. There were three general types of responses. The largest group was conditionally positive about the possibility. They had serious consideration, mostly about transportation, but also about scheduling and childcare:

“I would work in another parish if there’s a bus line that takes you right to the job”

“I would take a job in another parish; but, I may need to catch a cab.”

“If I have to work any night shifts I will have to figure out a way to get home because the buses don’t run late”

“If you have to go a long way to work it’s good to carpool”

THE OTHER TWO TYPES OF RESPONSES IN THE FOCUS GROUPS CAME FROM PEOPLE AT TWO DIFFERENT EXTREMES. ONE GROUPS SIMPLY STATED THAT THEY WOULD NOT WORK OUT OF THEIR HOME PARISH OR FAR AWAY FROM HOME. THE MAIN REASONS GIVEN WERE BECAUSE OF THE DISTANCE FROM FAMILY AND CHILDREN OR NOT DRIVING; BUT, QUITE A FEW PEOPLE JUST SAID NO THEY DID NOT WANT TO WORK IN ANOTHER PARISH. THE FINAL, ALBEIT SMALLEST GROUP OF RESPONDENTS SAID THAT THEY WERE DETERMINED TO WORK WHEREVER, WHENEVER, REGARDLESS WHAT OBSTACLES STOOD IN THEIR WAY:

“I will work anywhere, another parish, out of state. I will find a way to get there”

Job access in the region depends upon flexible transportation in many ways. Many of the jobs that pay the best wages, in industrial plants, shipyards, construction sites, are not on bus lines. This and numerous other factors also make driving to work a critical transportation strategy. As discussed above in reference to NOJI’s participants, for many people entering the workforce, relying on a car as the main mode of transportation can be a challenge. In many cases, the challenge is not only having the car, but also being able to legally use the car.

“I couldn’t get my driver’s license because of a ticket in Minnesota and couldn’t my money together to pay.”

Short of initiation of a broad based regional transportation system that serves all parishes, targeted strategies to increase the ability of the potential workforce to get and maintain legal, reliable transportation are in order. Such strategies might include driver’s license recovery programs, car purchase programs under Individual Development Accounts or other kinds of car purchase programs. Given the region’s current reliance on private vehicles as the main mode of transportation to work, these kinds of strategies could assist many in the potential labor force in surmounting a major barrier.

The Potential Labor Force and the Life Cycle

Important issues for job seekers vary at different points in the lifespan. Here we briefly examine the distinctive issues faced by people in the untapped labor force who are the youngest adults, ages 18-25, and then discuss specific issues for more mature adults, approximately aged 35 and up.

What stood out among the young people who attended the focus groups were the themes of self-esteem, focus and motivation. For many it seemed that the career possibilities were endless, but there was little readiness to start realizing them. They frequently expressed that they wanted jobs they didn't have skills for but were not ready to pursue skills training or higher education. Many spoke of aspirations to eventually pursue skilled careers, but were focused, in the moment, on finding a job that was easy to get, primarily in the service industry. One way to characterize the variety of perspectives that emerged is this:

“I can do anything I set my mind to but...

“...no one will give me the opportunity.” or

”...I’m not ready yet.” or

”...I haven’t thought about when/how I will do it.” or

“...I don’t know what it is I want to do.”

and

“I don’t have an excuse. I don’t think I’m ready. I’ll get motivated sooner or later”

“I’ve started training in computers, hospitality, and nursing assistant. I really love computers. Hospitality training was the best experience. Learning to deal with all personalities was especially helpful. I didn’t care too much for all the lifting in CNA. Now I want to go into electronics. But first, I just want to accomplish one thing – get my GED first. Then there’s no limit.”

A few young people were either in school or were trying to get back into school and had focused career goals. Among this group the need to maintain part time employment was a constant struggle. Two program models were mentioned as either having been helpful to them or ready or appealing as potentially helpful. First, a program that had GED for young parents and child care/pre-school at the same site and times had been a very positive experience and had unfortunately been shut down. Secondly, there was a request for programs with on-the-job training that could replace the need to go to school while providing opportunities for skills development.

Clearly, the feedback from young people pointed to the need for services that assist them in exploring the world of careers and developing the focus, motivation and discipline to pursue skills advancement. In addition, such programming must provide young people with opportunities to earn as they develop their skills.

In the feedback from mature adults in the focus groups, several themes emerged. First, many of these adults generally were determined to utilize the training and experience they already had and did not see new training or education as feasible or desirable.

“I want to work in the field that I already have training in because I can not afford to return to school, money wise and time wise.”

“I don’t want to go back to school. I’ve been trained to work in this field and that is what I want to do.”

There were three kinds of exceptions to this trend. Several mature adults who found their previous occupations to be very stressful had either begun new training or were hoping to do so. Similarly, some wanted work that was less physically demanding and uncomfortable. The third type of exception was among mature adults who had been injured and could not longer do the type of work they had done previously.

“I want to become a truck driver. It seems like it would not be as stressful as other things I’ve done”

“I want to do something I enjoy doing and not be so stressed out.”

“I’m more concerned at my age with being comfortable. I don’t want to go back to welding.”

“I was a pipefitter but ever since I injured my spinal chord I can’t do that work anymore. I guess I will take a computer course because I can’t get hired in my field now”

Managing Family and Work

Of all the social factors that affect people’s motivations and ability to build successful careers, the issue of family stands out as the one jobseekers speak to more than any other. Focus group participants were emphatic about family, primarily children, as the driving

force behind the choice to work as well as behind specific decisions about jobs and careers.

“I want to work to provide for my family”

“I want my children to see me doing well and know that they can too. I am not going to stop ‘til I finish school and get a decent job”

“A good job is one that pays you well enough to put your children in college and their kids, too. You look back when you die, and you’re smiling.”

To further explore the issue of families and work, we first take a broad look at families and work across the region. The census data in the succeeding table offers a detailed view of types of families and the numbers of workers in them. We see that in the region as a whole and across high poverty areas, more than half of all families are married couple families. However, there is a 14% difference in the married couple rate, with the rate in high poverty areas being lower. Examining the numbers of households that have no workers shows that the rate is lowest for these married couple families. Male-headed households are slightly higher in no worker rates while female-headed families have the highest rate of no workers, at 22% in high poverty areas and 19% in the region as a whole. A little over half of all single adult headed families have one worker, with male-headed 5% higher. Married couple families have a relatively low rate of one worker labor force participation, with nearly half having two workers, most commonly husband and wife both working. Finally, married couple families are more than twice as likely to have a third working person in the family than single adult headed families, whether they are male or female.

Looking at the parish level data (see Appendix 2), a couple of notable observations stand out. In Orleans parish, the rate of married couple families is considerably lower than in any other parish, with the number of single adult families actually outnumbering married couple families in the high poverty areas. The level of female headed no worker families is higher than elsewhere as well. In St. James Parish, the rate of female-headed families is not so remarkable. However, the rate of no worker families among female-headed families (27% across both measures) is higher than anywhere else, including Orleans, which has the second highest rate of female-headed households with no workers (24% high poverty and 22% whole parish). Along the same lines, St. James also has noticeably lower one worker family rates, with only 43% in high poverty areas and 44% in the whole region.

One final, parish level pattern that stands out is that in Plaquemines Parish there is an unusually high level of male-headed single adult households. Among these families, there are also higher levels of no worker families and lower levels of one-worker families than for the same group in other parishes.

P48. FAMILY TYPE BY NUMBER OF WORKERS IN FAMILY IN 1999 (Universe: Families)

	All Parishes in Workforce Region 1			
	High Poverty Areas		All Areas	
	#	%	#	%
Total:	155,793	100%	343,201	100%
Married-couple family:	83,065	53%	230,194	67%
No workers	11,499	14%	27,469	12%
1 worker	21,090	25%	56,201	24%
2 workers	40,020	48%	116,959	51%
<i>Husband and wife worked</i>	35,143	88%	105,650	90%
<i>Other</i>	4,877	12%	11,309	10%
3 or more workers	10,456	13%	29,565	13%
<i>Husband and wife worked</i>	9,114	87%	26,467	90%
<i>Other</i>	1,342	13%	3,098	10%
Other family:	72,728	47%	113,007	33%
<i>Male householder, no wife present:</i>	12,611	17%	22,514	20%
No workers	2,100	17%	2,958	13%
1 worker	7,210	57%	12,871	57%
2 workers	2,657	21%	5,425	24%
3 or more workers	644	5%	1,260	6%
<i>Female householder, no husband present:</i>	60,117	83%	90,493	80%
No workers	13,073	22%	16,820	19%
1 worker	31,468	52%	48,032	53%
2 workers	12,253	20%	20,229	22%
3 or more workers	3,323	6%	5,412	6%

For the parents we talked to in focus groups who were not working, but desired to be, childcare was a constantly raised concern. Questions of quality and trustworthiness of providers, flexibility of schedules and accessibility of location all had major importance in decisions about work. Those decisions, in turn, impacted the livelihood of the whole family.

“It would be hard for me to take a job if my child gets sick or I can’t be there to pick her from day care”

“The hardest things about the schedule I had at my last job were not being home and tend to my children and I couldn’t find a service to pick up my kids after school”

“I keep ending up with these 11 to 7 jobs and that doesn’t work with my kids schedule and I can’t do it very long. I end up quitting. Then I have to find another job”

“I am a single parent raising 4 kids; I need to work needs to work while they’re at school so I can be with them when they’re home.”

In considering the region’s demand for child care services, Mothers generally have primary responsibility for caring for children or finding child care, whether they are in single parent or two parent families. Given this, it is helpful to examine census data on the number of women with children of ages that require various types of childcare.

Across the whole region, 32% of the women over 16 years old have children of their own who are under 18 living with them. In the census, women with only children under elementary school ages are reported in one group, while those with both younger and older children are in another and those with only school aged children are reported in a third category. Well over half of the mothers of small children are employed and more than two-thirds of the mothers with only school aged children are employed. This contrasts with the count of all women with out children under 18, who have an employment rate of only 42% in high poverty areas and 46% in the region as a whole. According to our earlier estimate of the untapped labor force, we assume that along with those counted as unemployed, about a third of those counted as “not in the labor force” are probably part of the potential workforce. By this reasoning, mothers in the untapped labor force who are likely to have child care needs make up between 13% and 22% of all mothers in the data.

PCT69 PRESENCE OF OWN CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS BY AGE OF OWN CHILDREN BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR FEMALES 16 YEARS AND OVER

	All Races/All Parishes			
	High Poverty		Whole Region	
	#	%	#	%
Total:	257,725	100%	536,617	100%
With own children under 18 years:	81,111	31%	170,318	32%
Under 6 years only:	18,437	23%	38,317	22%
<i>Employed or in Armed Forces</i>	10,529	57%	23,062	60%
<i>Unemployed</i>	1,465	8%	2,245	6%
Not in labor force	6,443	35%	13,010	34%
Under 6 years and 6 to 17 years:	16,644	21%	33,530	20%
<i>Employed or in Armed Forces</i>	8,796	53%	19,079	57%
<i>Unemployed</i>	1,462	9%	1,945	6%
Not in labor force	6,386	38%	12,506	37%
6 to 17 years only:	46,030	57%	98,471	58%
<i>Employed or in Armed Forces</i>	29,336	64%	67,427	68%
<i>Unemployed</i>	2,455	5%	3,742	4%
Not in labor force	14,239	31%	27,302	28%
No own children under 18 years:	176,614	69%	366,299	68%
<i>Employed or in Armed Forces</i>	74,437	42%	168,078	46%
<i>Unemployed</i>	8,602	5%	13,058	4%
Not in labor force	93,575	53%	185,163	51%

While childcare was the most frequent and immediate concern parents raised about their concerns over finding work and starting careers, it was not the only family related issue. Many parents struggled over the immediate economic imperative to bring in money and its affects on decisions that supported long term benefits for self and family. They spoke of the strategies they employed to make work and training or schooling both possible. They spoke of the stress this placed on their families and of their determination to make it work.

“You can work around your circumstances. If you really want it, it can be done.”

“Dealing with getting my children ready for the day is a lot; but, its worse when I am going to a job that is really stressful and then I have to go to school after that.”

“You have to have a lot of help from your friends to work, be a mom, and go to school.”

“I need to always have at least a part time job while I’m in school. I’ve got children to raise and bills to pay”

While the majority of the feedback focus group respondents shared related to children, many other family-related issues emerged in the dialogue. Some people spoke of the support they got from their extended families while many others spoke of the absence of family support in their lives. Some spoke of abusive relationships that impacted their ability to see themselves in a positive light.

“My mom is going to keep my kids and help with my house after work so I can go to school”

“I was in an abusive relationship with husband. He harassed me on the job so the job fired me. He made me give up on myself”

“I come from a close-knit family but there’s no loyalty. We don’t help each other”

“ I have to work because I don’t want to live under other family members’ support. I want to take care of myself”

The overwhelming sense that the focus groups left was that recognizing the importance of family as a factor in entering the workforce is key. Family can be the most important base of support and the greatest motivation for success. It can also be a source of stress and responsibility that may feel unmanageable for career seekers. The more that the system is able to help strengthen the positive side o f family and this and equip jobseekers

to abate the stresses that emerge, the more successful efforts to connect people to careers will be.

Criminal Histories as a Barrier to Success

Another critical barrier faced by many in the untapped labor force is having a criminal history. For many employers there are real security concerns, which must be considered in hiring, because of the nature of specific occupations. For example, many health care jobs require a clean criminal background check before employment. However, for other jobs, more flexibility is possible and, in many cases, jobseekers with criminal histories become employed, make good workers and stay out of the criminal justice system in the future. A primary deciding factor is often the willingness of the employer to hire jobseekers with criminal histories. For the job seeker this can put someone into a vicious cycle, once any form of attachment to the criminal justice system has occurred.

“Once an interview or an application start asking about my record. I know I can hang it up”

“I feel like a nobody because I’m a convicted felon.”

“It’s harder to stay out of trouble when you can’t get a job because you’ve been to prison”

“I was in prison for 2 years and 6 months and learned a lot in prison: worked in the library and learned filing; worked in the kitchen and washed dishes. I have job skills if someone would give me a chance”

For many people, a criminal history, whether it is having been arrested, convicted, incarcerated or on probation may begin with illegal activity in the “informal economy” related to drugs. Because of this, when those who have criminal histories approach employers, they bring the stigma of their records with them and often the stigma of being thought of as a drug user as well. This is one reason that many programs such as NOJI’s, which specialize in employment assistance for “ex-offenders,” do drug screening as part of their program. It allows job seekers with ex-offender status to approach employers with verification that they are not currently using drugs.

NOJI’s data on enrollees offers a helpful perspective. It shows that there is not much difference in the previous arrest rates of successful and unsuccessful participants. This supports the idea that, with the appropriate supports “ex offenders” can embark on family sustaining careers. What is also noteworthy is that the real difference in success rates is between admitted drug users. Those who admitted to drug use made up a higher portion of the unsuccessful participants than the successful ones.

NOJI Participant Self Reporting of Arrests and Drug Use		
Arrested with the last 12 months?	Unsuccessful Participants	Successful Participants
Yes	15%	16%
No	85%	84%
TOTAL	100%	100%
Used Illegal Drugs Last 12 Months?		
Yes	13%	8%
No	87%	92%
TOTAL	100%	100%

It is important to consider the effect employment, underemployment and unemployment might have on people becoming attached to the criminal justice system. Data on arrestees is helpful for examining the relationship between employment and attachment to the system. The best data currently available is the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program (ADAM) data referenced in the education section above. For Orleans Parish, the ADAM data is based on the employment rates at the time of arrest. When full time and part time employment are considered, rates of employment are actually a little higher for arrestees than they are for the total population in the census. However, the rate of part time, seasonal employment is high and this overall employment may be artificially high because sporadic day laborers are counted as employed. The most distinctive thing in the arrestee data is that nearly a quarter of the arrestees said that they were looking for work at the time that they got arrested. This is the clearest indication that the need and or desire for employment may be related to getting arrested.

Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program Data for Orleans Parish, 2000			
Employment Status at Time of Arrest	Men	Women	All
Working Full time	47.4%	31.6%	43.4%
Working Part Time/Seasonal	16.3%	22.2%	17.5%
Unemployed (looking for work)	24.4%	23.5%	24.0%
Unemployed (Not looking for work)	3.2%	12.4%	5.3%
In School	3.4%	7.3%	4.3%
Retired	.7%	0%	0.5%
Disabled for Work	4.6%	3.0%	4.2%

Clearly the people in the untapped labor force who have criminal histories face barriers that compound other barriers they face. Above all may be the urgency to have a job. Many parolees are required to be employed and to make payments to their parole

officers. Without jobs, they can find themselves back in jail. This may preclude efforts to take the time to enhance skills. Creative collaboration and coordination between the parole system and the One Stop system could begin to address this problem.

Disability as a Barrier to Employment

The final barrier that emerged as significant in this audit was that of disability. This section is not in any way to be an in-depth analysis of the issues of disability and employment. Rather, we will examine issues that came out in the focus groups and then explore an overview from the census.

In the majority of focus groups, we talked to at least one person who had a disability, often related to an injury. The most frequently voiced experience was that an injury left workers unable to do the kind of work they had done in the past. Transitioning into a new career was very difficult and frustrating. As mentioned above, most of the people who reported these kinds of problem worked in manufacturing or construction. Several were attempting to make the transition to office jobs that required computer skills and were having trouble with the academic preparation necessary.

So, what can the census tell us about people with disabilities in the untapped labor force? First about 7% (8% in high poverty areas) of young people ages 16 to 20 have an employment disability and of these, more than half are working, a rate considerably higher than that for non-disabled adults. The older adults, over 20 years old, have an employment disability rate twice as high, at 14% (16% in high poverty areas). Among older disabled adults, employment rates are lower than they are for those who are able bodied.

PCT32. AGE BY EMPLOYMENT DISABILITY BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR THE CIVILIAN NONINSTITUTIONALIZED POPULATION 16 TO 64 YEARS

	All Parishes in Workforce Region 1			
	High Poverty Areas		All Areas	
	#	%	#	%
Total Population:	408,818	100%	854,495	100%
16 to 20 years:	52,504	13%	97,190	11%
<i>With an employment disability:</i>	4,262	8%	7,073	7%
Employed	2,429	57%	4,173	59%
Not employed	1,833	43%	2,900	41%
<i>No employment disability:</i>	48,242	92%	90,117	93%
Employed	14,738	31%	30,973	34%
Not employed	33,504	69%	59,144	66%
21 to 64 years:	356,314	87%	757,305	89%
<i>With an employment disability:</i>	56,894	16%	102,417	14%
Employed	33,031	58%	62,849	61%
Not employed	23,863	42%	39,568	39%
<i>No employment disability:</i>	299,420	84%	654,888	86%
Employed	190,882	64%	462,479	71%
Not employed	108,538	36%	192,409	29%

In terms of enhancing the connections between disabled people and the workforce, Weismantle’s (1996) research on the reasons people do not work, is once again helpful. Based on that analysis those who have with lower education levels are more likely to be not working because of illness or disability. This is supported by our feedback from the focus groups where respondents who had been injured and could not do the work they had previously done, cited their educational challenges as a major barrier to becoming re-employed.

Adults with and with out disabilities are more likely to be enrolled in college than below college level work. However, adults with disabilities who are enrolled in school are more likely to be enrolled below the college level than their non-disabled counterparts. It follows that adults are less likely to be a high school graduate if they are disabled and do not attend school.

PCT33. SEX BY DISABILITY STATUS BY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR THE CIVILIAN NONINSTITUTIONALIZED POPULATION 18 TO 34 YEARS

	All Parishes in Workforce Region 1			
	High Poverty Areas		All Areas	
	#	%	#	%
Total:	68,929	100%	304,267	100%
With a disability:	11,791	17%	46,635	15%
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	1,853	16%	9,529	20%
Below college	752	41%	3,120	33%
College or graduate school	1,101	59%	6,409	67%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	9,938	84%	37,106	80%
Not high school graduate	3,802	38%	12,781	34%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	3,615	36%	12,898	35%
Some college, no degree	1,769	18%	7,254	20%
Associate degree	264	3%	1,144	3%
Bachelor's degree	410	4%	2,298	6%
Graduate or professional degree	78	1%	731	2%
No disability:	57,138	83%	257,632	85%
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	12,776	22%	71,500	28%
Below college	3,375	26%	13,283	19%
College or graduate school	9,401	74%	58,217	81%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	44,362	78%	186,132	72%
Not high school graduate	12,228	28%	37,097	20%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	16,155	36%	56,334	30%
Some college, no degree	9,925	22%	46,802	25%
Associate degree	1,428	3%	7,660	4%
Bachelor's degree	3,581	8%	28,066	15%
Graduate or professional degree	1,045	2%	10,173	5%

“I started a program to be a machinist and the lifting wasn’t bad but I couldn’t be on my feet all day. I finished the program and got the skills but I couldn’t do the job. ”

Finally, it is important to underscore here that for people with disabilities who are seeking to start a career, as with others, a career path must begin with an assessment of skills and abilities and interests. Some disabilities are not as evident as others, to the point that the jobseeker themselves may not term a limitation as a disability. However, the limitation can then become an issue on the job or in training. Consequently, it may take personalized assessment and career exploration to identify the physical demands of potential careers and a jobseeker’s ability to meet them.

CHAPTER 10: Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Emphasize the focus of service delivery on careers rather than jobs. We have done this on paper, but it has not reached jobseekers yet. Many still see the system as a place to get a job for the moment, but do not have faith that the system can help them develop a workable career path and increase their skills.
2. Build and strengthen effective, targeted assessment and career planning. Offer career exploration modules that familiarize career seekers with career pathways that are based on industry cluster demand. These modules should be designed to promote awareness of skilled trade careers, to counter negative myths that exist about specific jobs and careers, and to lay out skill/career advancement pathways. Career planning must include achievement of basic academic skills and work readiness skills, as well as appropriate occupational skills, and must address a wide range of critical barriers to success such as inadequate child care, transportation difficulties, and ex-offender status.
3. For job and career seekers who face multiple barriers to success and qualify for Intensive Services under the Workforce Investment Act, build and strengthen case management with a “holistic” approach. This approach must recognize the critical importance of family for jobseekers in terms of support systems, responsibilities, and as the developing ground for the future workforce. It should recognize the importance of emotional and mental wellness. Overall, case management should help facilitate successful completion of education, vocational and work readiness skill development, entry into, and retention in, the workforce.
4. Create more adult education and training programs that have on-site childcare, that serve youth and adults in a coordinated way; that are available outside normal work hours; and, are accessible by public transportation. These programs might include Workplace Literacy programs accessible to working and non-working adults combined with critical services such as on-site childcare and transportation. Use the Work Keys skill assessment and development system to help people certify the skills they have learned on previous jobs. To do this will require educating employers on how the system works. If successful, jobseekers’ experience-based skills, when certified through Work Keys become more reliable, and therefore portable, from job to job.
5. Continue to strength youth services across the region. Youth who are either still in school, or who are already out of school can benefit from more opportunities to explore careers, learn about the world of work and identify concrete goals. These services should include as many paid on-the-job training programs as possible. Many young people are anxious to learn by doing and to see short term results from the steps they take. The OJT model, when combined with career exploration and planning, workplace literacy and soft skills can assist youth in staying focused while they learn and earn.

6. Enhance the systems' ability to effectively serve:

- a. Workers who must change careers due to injury or other disability,
- b. Job/career seekers who could benefit from mental health,
- c. People who have criminal histories.

This will require strengthening working partnerships between WIBs and agencies such as rehabilitative services, mental health services, and the parole, probation, and court systems. Some enhancements could be relatively simple, such as a basic screening for depression in initial case management sessions followed by an offer of referral to mental health services, if warranted. Other enhancements may take more work and creative problem solving, such as, finding ways to assist ex-offenders in meeting their employment requirements and training for skills advancement simultaneously.

7. Develop creative approaches to the transportation problem. Long-term strategies should focus on public systems that can flexibly transport the workforce throughout the region. Short-term solutions should focus on increasing the ability of low and moderate income workers to obtain and maintain a legal vehicle. The region could come together to develop a program that includes Individual Development Accounts⁷ (IDAs) for car purchase, driver's license recovery programs, and low cost car maintenance programs. For example, the region has several high schools and technical or community colleges with automotive programs. By connecting jobseekers and low to moderate income workers to these programs, they could receive low cost car maintenance.
8. Within each WIB area or Parish, create working groups that include employers, training providers and human services providers to further analyze the regional workforce profile at their local level. There is much to be learned that will assist strategic efforts. For example, local outreach plans can be informed by the geographic data on census tracts with the highest poverty and unemployment.
9. Create systems that can help the region monitor skills and education of the career-seeking population. Compile and monitor assessment data being collected by various institutions in workforce development, at minimum compiling results of TABE scores or other academic assessment results with basic demographic data. The Chancellor of four of the regions' Louisiana Technical Colleges has agreed to supply assessment data from student enrollments to enable the auditing of the flow of students into the colleges. Although a system for collecting and compiling the data has not yet been determined, this could be an important ongoing source of information about the real skills levels of those seeking to improve their skills and career opportunities. One working group of the Regional Workforce Partnership should be organized to take

⁷ An Individual Development Account is a savings program in which participants set a savings goal based on a specific objective, such as the purchase of a home or car or further education. Typically the program contributes some form of match once the participant has attained their savings goal.

responsibility for coordinating a streamlined system that provides ongoing aggregation of information pertaining to participant skills levels.

10. Through a web-based portal, connect job/career seekers with a wide range of workforce development services and information. This resource will have to be intensively marketed to the potential labor force. The One Stops have come a long way toward making online access available to jobseekers. In addition to acquainting more jobseekers with these resources, it is very important that the available information be current, relevant, accessible and user friendly. There is currently a perception that available online resources are not useful to unsophisticated users. This will have to be changed.

Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to the creation of this workforce supply profile:

The NOJI Staff
Dr. Jose Bautista of Xavier University
Judy Potter of the Catholic Charities Independent Living Skills Program
Netty Stokes Perry and Tara Jackson of Catholic Charities
Herma Thomas of Women in Community Service
Peg Reese of Unity for the Homeless
Allison Plyer of the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center
Liza Sherman of MetroVision
Ann Yeoman of the National Center for the Urban Community
Kim LaRue of New Orleans Adult Career Center
Calvin McCall of the Jefferson Westbank One Stop
Don Everhard of Hope House
Anne McKnney of the Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriffs Office
Staff for the region's four WIBs and One Stops
And many others

References

Weismantle, Mai. 1996 Reason People Do Not Work. Household Economic Studies, U.S. Census Bureau Demographic Programs.

60 Minutes News Show. "Depressed And On Welfare" -- Clinical depression may be keeping many welfare recipients from getting back to work and off public assistance. Lesley Stahl reports. Nov. 10th 2002

Appendix 1

Focus Group Questions

Skills and Training

1. When you consider skills that you have, what three things do you do best?
2. If you could get the training you need, what would be a good job for you now?
3. What are some skills that you feel you need help in to prepare you for better employment?
4. Some employers/programs require test taking. How do you feel about taking a test for a job or program placement?
5. What training experiences have you had?
6. What type of job skills would you want to know more about?
7. How do you feel about going back to school to advance your education to further your career?

Finding a Job

1. How do you normally look for a job or hear about job openings?
2. What methods have worked the best?
3. What skills do you have that you could get paid to do?
4. If you could be self-employed now, what sort of work would you do?
5. What is a dead end job?
6. What do you mean when you say a job is a “good job”?
7. Name three jobs that you would consider “good jobs”.
8. How much do you think you should be paid for the skills you have now?
9. What is important to you when looking for a job?
10. If you were offered a good job in another parish, how would you get to the job?
11. When you are selling yourself to an employer, what is your biggest selling point?
12. When you are selling yourself to an employer, what is your weakest selling point?

On the Job

1. How did you usually get to work on your last job?
2. What does your employer want from you?
3. How have your past employers fallen short of your own expectations of them?
4. What do you want from your employers?
5. Why do people get fired from their jobs?
6. What is a dead end job?
7. How do you move up on the job?
8. What are your strengths as a worker?
9. What are your weaknesses as a worker?

Unemployment

1. What are some of the reasons that would make it difficult for you seeking, getting, or maintaining employment?
2. Have you ever worked a temporary position? If so, what happened?
3. Would you take a temporary position? Why?
4. Why do you want to work?
5. How do you feel about not having a job?
6. In your daily life, are you around more employed or unemployed people?
7. Why do people become unemployed?

Provider Questions

1. What are the most common employment obstacles that your participants face?
2. How successful are the people in these programs?
3. How well do unsuccessful people score on these tests?
4. How well do people who finish these program do once they are released?
5. How many people return to the system after finishing or dropping out of these programs?
6. Are the people in these programs required to take standardized tests?

Making Connections:
A Regional Workforce

Demand Audit

Appendixes 2 – 4

Census Data Profile:

Socio-Economic Profile by Parish, Race and Employment by Parish for Laborers in the Region