

Executive Summary of the City of Norman, Oklahoma Labor Force Study

This report is an analysis of the Norman, Oklahoma labor force data. The entire survey was conducted in all of Cleveland and McClain counties but this analysis only concerns data from residents of Norman in Cleveland County.

In the Norman a considerable portion of the adult population are not employed for a variety of reasons. This group includes the retired, disabled, students, homemakers, and the unemployed. This study found that approximately 30,522 members of the adult population are not currently working. Of this group, the majority, 85.9%, indicate that they are not interested in working outside the home or they are unable to do so.

This study has identified 19,958 workers who are currently available for *other* work. The categories of Job Shifters and the Underemployed (described below) are included in this estimate. **Some workers are both Job Shifters and Underemployed, so the total number of workers in both categories is somewhat less than their sum.** Additionally, there are those adults who are not working but want to work (Job Seekers), and those workers who are not underemployed and have not looked for work in the past three months (Job Keepers), which can be included in the pool of potential workers. These two groups total another 54,784 potential workers for a grand total of approximately 74,742 adults who are either in the labor force or want to be in it.

Roughly 14,479 workers in the labor market area have looked for other work in the past three months. Of all the methods used to look for other work the slim majority, 50.8%, were active. The reasons why the Job Shifters were looking for work were varied but the primary reason for 78.4% of people was in order to get higher pay and/or better benefits.

The data from this study estimates that 17.1%, or 12,131, of all adult workers are currently underemployed. To be classified as Underemployed a worker must:

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

Job Keepers are those individuals who have not been identified as being underemployed and have not looked for work within the past three months. This group makes up 71.3% of all workers.

Job Seekers are those people who are not currently employed but want to work. Four point two percent of all adults in Norman are represented by this category.

The percentage of workers in Norman with a least a Bachelors degree is about half of the current work force and about 86% of the workers have had at least some college.

Almost fifty percent of city residents had not moved in the past five years and an additional 24.3% remained in the same county. About 16% had moved from a different county in the same state but only an additional 10.8% had moved from a different state or country.

Of all workers, 80.9% have full-time positions. Of those workers with part time jobs 33.3% would like to have a full-time position with just one employer.

As the wage rate increases, so does the number of people who are willing to work.

Although Job Keepers by definition are those workers who are not interested in changing jobs, about 20,000 still find a job of \$14 per hour plus benefits to be either “attractive” or “very attractive”. Of the Underemployed, 45.2% of workers indicated that they would be willing to change jobs for an increase in pay of 15% or less. Around 47.4% of Job

Shifters were likely to change jobs for a 15% increase or less and Job Keepers were, not surprisingly, the group least likely to say they would change jobs for a pay increase of 15% or less with only 28.7% of workers. Of Job Keepers only 38.8% claimed to not be interested in changing jobs at all.

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

The majority of workers lives and works in the same county. About 75% of the remaining workers are employed in Oklahoma County. Over half of all workers (51.1%) indicate a willingness to commute distances of 21 miles or more to their job.