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DEPARTMENTS OF
LABOR & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Fremont

LABOR AVAILABILITY REPORT

Northeast Nebraska

PUBLISHED SPRING 2018

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Executive **Summary**

Results of the Northeast Nebraska Labor Availability Survey, which included all or parts of 17 counties in the northeast region of Nebraska, including Madison, Platte, and Dodge counties, revealed that there were an estimated 37,355 potential job seekers, age 18 and over, in the survey area during the fall of 2017. The majority of potential job seekers in the survey area were currently employed (88.4%). Others were out of work or seeking to reenter the workforce after time spent in retirement or homemaking.

Potential job seekers indicated that they were willing to take new work or change jobs in the next year if a suitable job presented itself. The median minimum pay that potential job seekers required to improve their employment situation was $52,750 in annual salary, or $15 per hour (salaried and hourly paid employees were calculated separately). The median tenure of employed potential job seekers at their current job was 62 months, or just over five years. Over 35% of potential job seekers reported they held a bachelor's or 4-year degree. Potential job seekers indicated salary, health insurance, and a work schedule that fits their needs as the most important factors in improving their employment situation. Potential job seekers indicated lack of job opportunities in the area, inadequate pay offered at area employers and inadequate benefits offered by area employers as the most common obstacles to improving their employment situation.

Active job seekers are a subset of potential job seekers who reported they were actively seeking a new job. An estimated 9,436 active job seekers, 18 and over, were seeking employment in the survey area at the time of the study. The median minimum pay that active job seekers required to improve their employment situation was $15 for hourly employees and $50,000 a year for salaried employees. Most active job seekers were employed (84.5%) and the median job tenure of active seekers was just under four years (46 months). More than 32% of active seekers held a bachelor's degree and the most important factors were the same as potential job seekers: salary, health insurance, and a work schedule that would fit their needs. The most common obstacles to active job seekers were the same as those reported by potential job seekers: lack of job opportunities in the area, inadequate pay offered, and inadequate benefits offered by area employers.

This study has identified that there is a large pool of individuals actively seeking work, as well as potential job seekers, in the Fremont labor market area. The findings can be used to better understand what is important to these active and potential job seekers and the barriers they may see to accepting a new job. Economic developers, educators, employers, legislators, and others involved in shaping the local economy can use this information to help existing businesses grow and attract new employers and workers to the area.

Table 1 Potential Job Seeker and Active Job Seeker Statistics

Statistic	Potential Job Seekers		Active Job Seekers	
Estimated Total in Survey Area (18 and over)	**37,355**		**9,436**	
Median Minimum Pay Required to Change Jobs	**Hourly**	**$15**	**Hourly**	**$15**
	Yearly	**$52,750**	**Yearly**	**$50,000**
Percent Employed	**88.4%**		**84.5%**	
Median Tenure of Employed Job Seekers	**62 months**		**46 months**	
Seekers with a Bachelor's or 4-year Degree	**35.4%**		**32.4%**	
Most Important Factors in Improving Employment Situation	**Salary, Health insurance, Work schedule that fits their needs**		**Salary, Health insurance, Work schedule that fits their needs**	
Most Common Obstacles to Improving Employment Situation	**Lack of job opportunities in the area, Inadequate pay offered at area employers, Inadequate benefits at area employers**		**Lack of job opportunities in the area, Inadequate pay offered at area employers, Inadequate benefits at area employers**	

Introduction to Labor Availability

Labor availability describes how many people within a given area are available and willing to take a new job. Labor availability has two components: **geographical** and **human**.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL COMPONENT OF LABOR AVAILABILITY narrows down the labor pool to those who are located near or those willing to travel to a specific location to work.

THE HUMAN COMPONENT OF LABOR AVAILABILITY depends upon the characteristics of the potential workforce in the area. People take, keep, and change jobs for a variety of reasons. Salary and benefits are important, but other factors, including convenience, security, family obligations, personal fulfillment, age, gender, education, and training, contribute to workers' employment decisions. These motivations and demographic characteristics determine labor availability within a region.

Reports have been published for multiple laborshed areas in Nebraska. For all of the Nebraska Labor Availability Study reports, visit:

dol.nebraska.gov/las

Measuring Labor Availability

Beginning in the fall of 2017, the Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL), Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) and the Bureau of Sociological Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (BOSR), began a collaboration on a project designed to measure labor availability in northeast Nebraska.

NDOL frequently collects varied data about Nebraska workers and provides that information to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The BLS then analyzes the data to estimate, for example, how many people work in different industries and occupations or how many people work or do not work. While the BLS and NDOL produce a rich data catalog, neither agency regularly measures the reasons why workers choose to not improve their employment situation or not work at all.

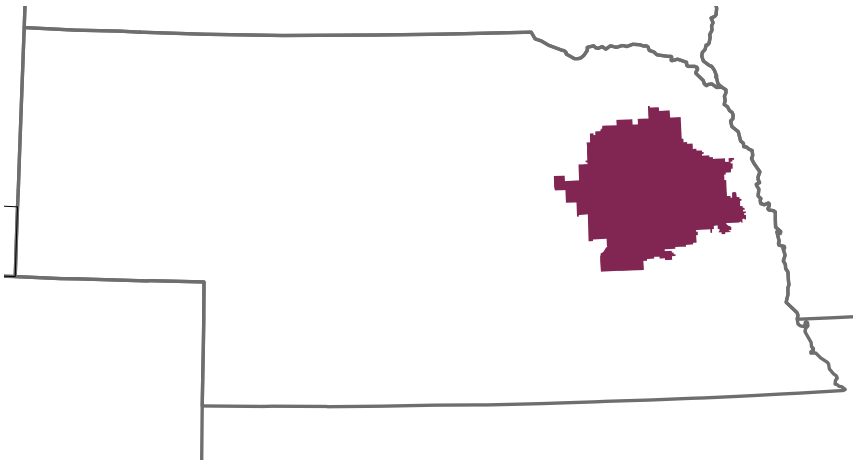
Furthermore, there are some datasets available that count only certain types of job seekers, such as unemployed individuals or active job seekers, as part of the labor pool. However, a few key segments of the labor pool, such as people who are currently employed but may change jobs given the right opportunity, or those who are not working but may reenter the labor force, are often unaccounted for in estimates of labor availability. Details about this portion of the labor pool as well as unemployed or active job seekers in a local labor pool are useful to economic developers and business site selectors. This study aims to supplement BLS and NDOL data with information about worker motivations in Nebraska. Understanding why people take a job helps stakeholders understand how an employer might attract new workers. In addition, understanding the characteristics of the current labor force and the incentives required for residents to change jobs could shed light on how communities might improve the local labor force.

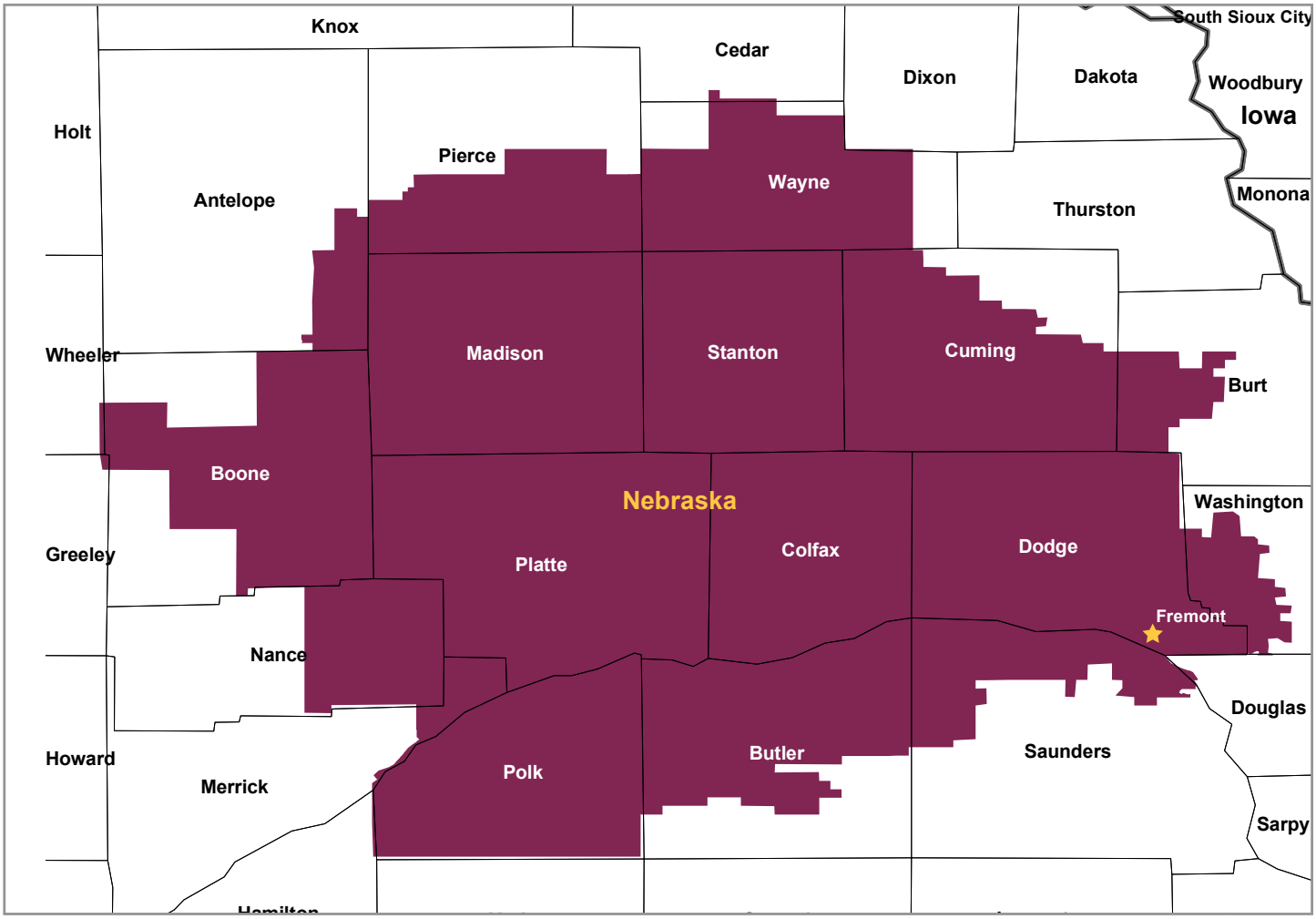
In order to create a dataset that was comparable to the adult population of the survey area, respondents were assigned weights by BOSR to be as representative of the survey area as possible. Utilizing these data weights, the demographic characteristics of respondents for the most part tended to follow Census estimates. For example, the estimates for gender from the survey results were within 0.2% of Census estimates, and the survey estimates for age were within 0.7% of Census estimates. This is encouraging, as it means the sample shares many properties with the target population. An explanation of the methodology used for this survey is in the appendix.

Survey **Area**

The northeast Nebraska survey area is displayed on this page. According to 2010 Demographic Profile Census data, the total population of the survey area was 166,865 individuals, and the population of the city of Fremont was 26,397, with 20,006 people ages 18 and over. In this report, ZIP codes of potential commuters to Fremont were identified as the area of interest, and the sample design was based on these commuter patterns. The survey asked the adult age 19 or over, who had the next birthday, to respond to the survey. In total, BOSR received 2,054 responses from the survey area. A full list of the number of responses by ZIP code, as well as the methodology for defining the survey area, is included on **page 34**.

Survey Area Map - Northeast Nebraska





Results - Potential Job Seekers

POTENTIAL JOB SEEKER An employed person who answered either 'yes' or 'maybe' to the question "Are you likely to change jobs in the next year if a suitable job is available?" or a non-employed person who answered 'yes' or 'maybe' to the question "Are you likely to reenter the workforce in the next year if a suitable job is available?" The potential job seekers group includes all individuals who indicated that they may accept a new job within the next year, given the right circumstances. Potential job seekers are also referred to as seekers in this report

ACTIVE JOB SEEKER A subset of potential job seeker who answered 'yes' to the question "Are you actively seeking a new job?"

NON-SEEKER An employed person who responded 'no' to the question "Are you likely to change jobs in the next year if a suitable job is available?" or a non-employed person who responded 'no' to the question "Are you likely to reenter the workforce in the next year if a suitable job is available?" The non-seeker group includes all individuals who stated that they won't accept a new job in the next year.

In the northeast Nebraska survey area, an estimated **37,355 people age 18 and over (29.9% of respondents)** identified as potential job seekers.

Counted in Census data from the 2010 Demographic Profile were 26,397 individuals and 20,006 individuals age 18 and over in the city of Fremont, Nebraska. Based on the percentage of respondents identifying as potential job seekers in the entire survey area (29.9%), and 2010 Census data there were an estimated 5,972 potential job seekers 18 years old and over in the city of Fremont at the time of this survey. More than 25% of potential job seekers in the survey area reported they were actively seeking a new job. Based on the percentage of active job seekers there were an estimated 1,509 active job seekers age 18 and over in Fremont. According to Census data, 166,865 individuals lived in the survey area in 2010 with 125,140 individuals being 18 years old or older. Therefore, an estimated 37,355 individuals age 18 or over in the survey area were potential job seekers and 9,436 individuals were active job seekers.

Typically, when estimating the potential labor pool for an area, there is a focus on people already working in the occupation(s) of interest, unemployed individuals with experience in an occupation, or recent graduates with specific educational backgrounds. While data on those working in an occupation is often available, information about the unemployed and graduates is frequently incomplete. There are also untapped labor pools including retirees or homemakers who may reenter the labor force if the right situation were to arise. The Northeast Nebraska Labor Availability Survey sought to capture a more complete estimate of potential job seekers than is available through other data sources.

Much of the Fremont Labor Availability Report is focused on potential job seekers, as they represent a comprehensive pool of people who may be willing to accept new employment. Nearly 30% of respondents to this survey indicated they were potential job seekers. Survey responses were applied to the U.S. Census Bureau population estimates for people age 18 and over in the city of Fremont. The study authors believe that this is a reasonable estimate because the weighted survey results closely match Census estimates.

General Characteristics of Potential Job Seekers and Non-Seekers

In the survey, respondents were asked to identify if they were employed, unemployed, retired, or a homemaker. Those respondents who indicated that they were unemployed, retired, or a homemaker were considered non-employed. Included in the non-employed and employed groups are recent graduates and current students. The employed and non-employed were instructed to answer separate sets of follow-up questions. Questions about future employment were posed to all respondents except those who indicated that they were both non-employed and non-seekers. The questionnaire ended with survey respondents providing information about their age, gender, education, and skill level. Discussed in this section of results are general characteristics of potential job seekers and non-seekers.

Figure 1 Employment Status

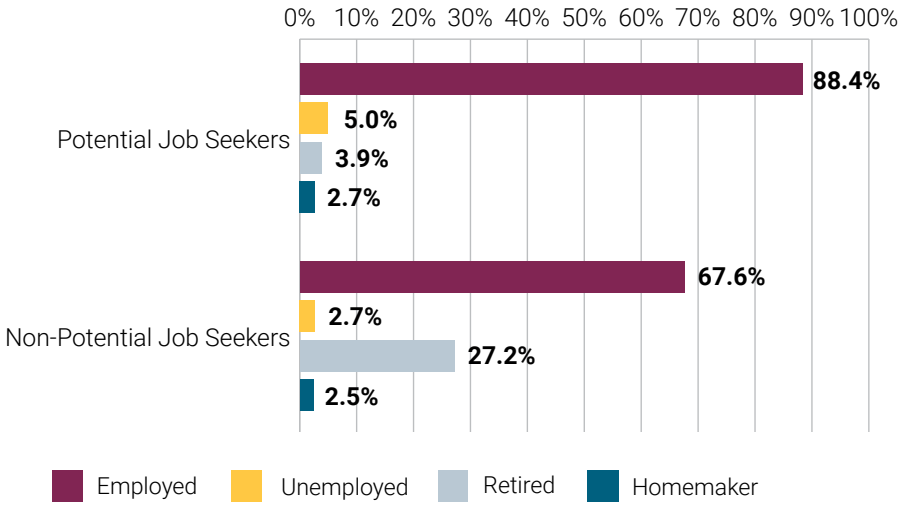
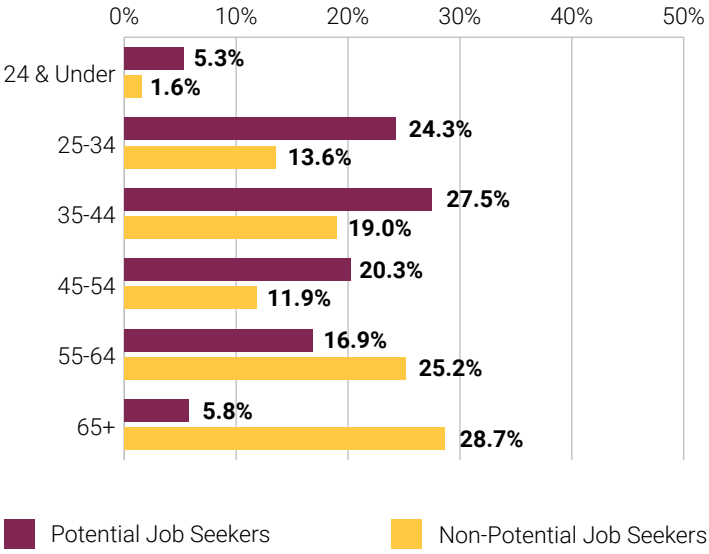


Figure 2 Age

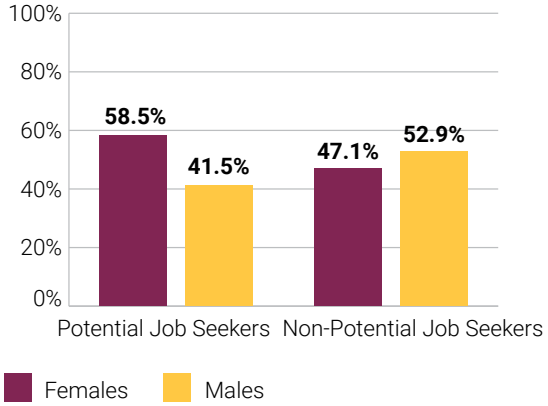


Potential job seekers tended to be younger than non-seekers (see Figure 2). Of those who reported their age, 57.1% of potential job seekers were under the age of 45, and 34.2% of non-seekers were under 45 years of age. Among non-seekers, 28.7% were 65 years old or older. Individuals age 65 and over may be more likely to be non-seekers due to retirement.

Younger respondents may have been more likely to respond that they were potential job seekers because they were not as established in their careers, so they may have been more willing to seek career advancement through new employment.

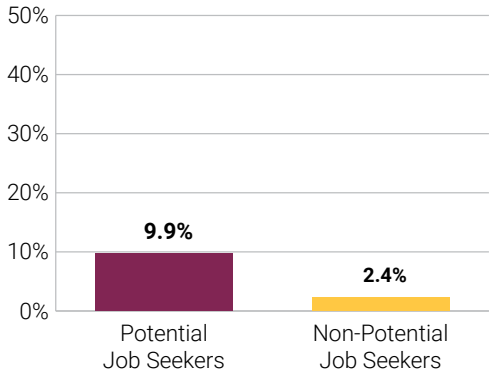
As seen in Figure 1, most potential job seekers reported that they were employed (88.4%). A relatively low percentage of potential job seekers were either unemployed (5%) or homemakers (2.7%). Non-seekers more often reported being retired (27.2%) than potential job seekers (3.9%). When only considering non-employed potential job seekers, most reported that they were unemployed (42.7%), 34% stated that they were retired, and 23.3% stated that they were homemakers.

Figure 3 Gender



Potential job seekers were comprised of 58.5% females and 41.5% males (see Figure 3).

Figure 4 Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity by Seeker Status



Of those who reported their ethnicity, 4.7% of all survey respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino. As seen in Figure 4, just under 10% of potential job seekers and 2.4% of non-seekers identified as Hispanic or Latino.

White was the most common race reported by potential job seekers at 95.8%. Black or African American (0.5%), Asian (1%), American Indian or Alaska native (1.5%) respondents were also represented in the data. No respondents considered themselves native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Potential job seekers were slightly more likely to be minorities than non-seekers. Over 4% of potential seekers were non-white, including those reporting two or more races, compared to 1.4% of non-seekers.

Potential job seekers were less likely to be veterans than non-seekers (see Figure 5). Veterans composed 4.4% of potential job seekers compared to 10.2% of non-seekers. Over 75% of veterans who responded to the survey were 55 years of age or older.

Respondents were asked a series of questions addressing their education (see Figure 6). Nearly 96% of potential job seekers responded yes when asked, "Are you a high school graduate or do you have a GED?" Those who responded yes were then asked whether they held higher level degrees. Over 20% of potential job seekers responded that they held a technical or vocational degree and 29.1% held an associate or 2-year degree. More than 35% affirmed they held a bachelor's or 4-year degree and 19.3% responded they held a graduate or professional degree. Some respondents held multiple degrees at the time of survey. Over 6% of potential job seekers reported they are currently attending, and 9.3% of potential job seekers are planning to attend a trade/vocational school, community college, or 4-year college.

Figure 5 Veteran Status

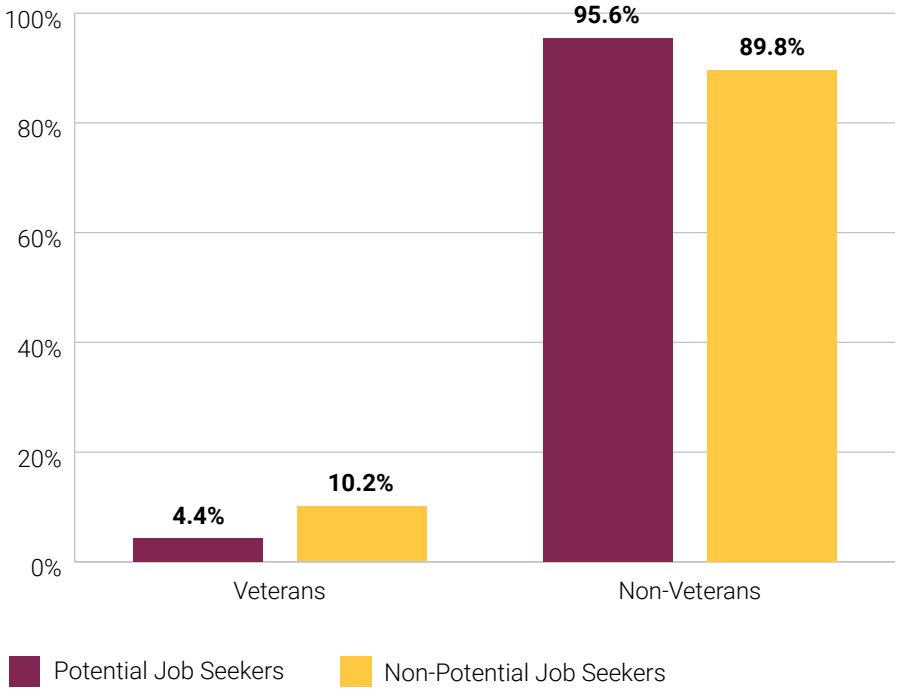


Figure 6 Educational Attainment of Potential Job Seekers

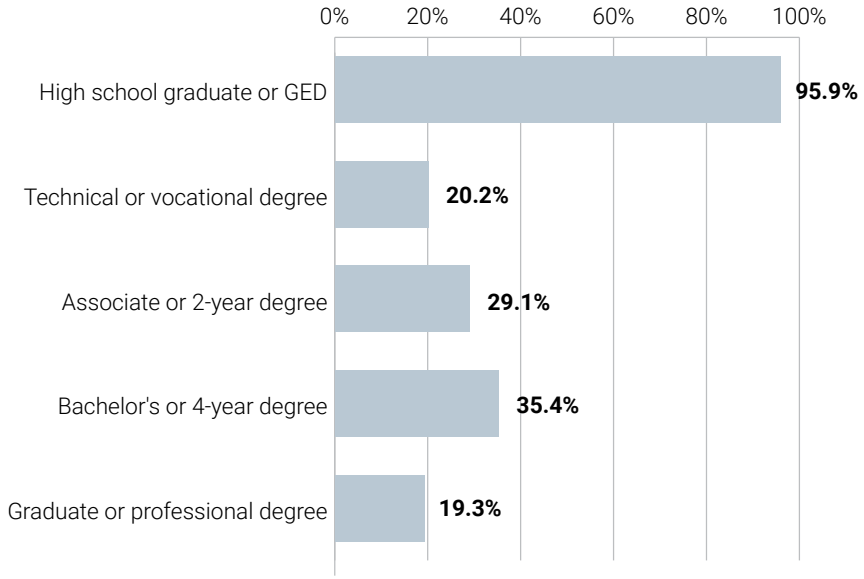
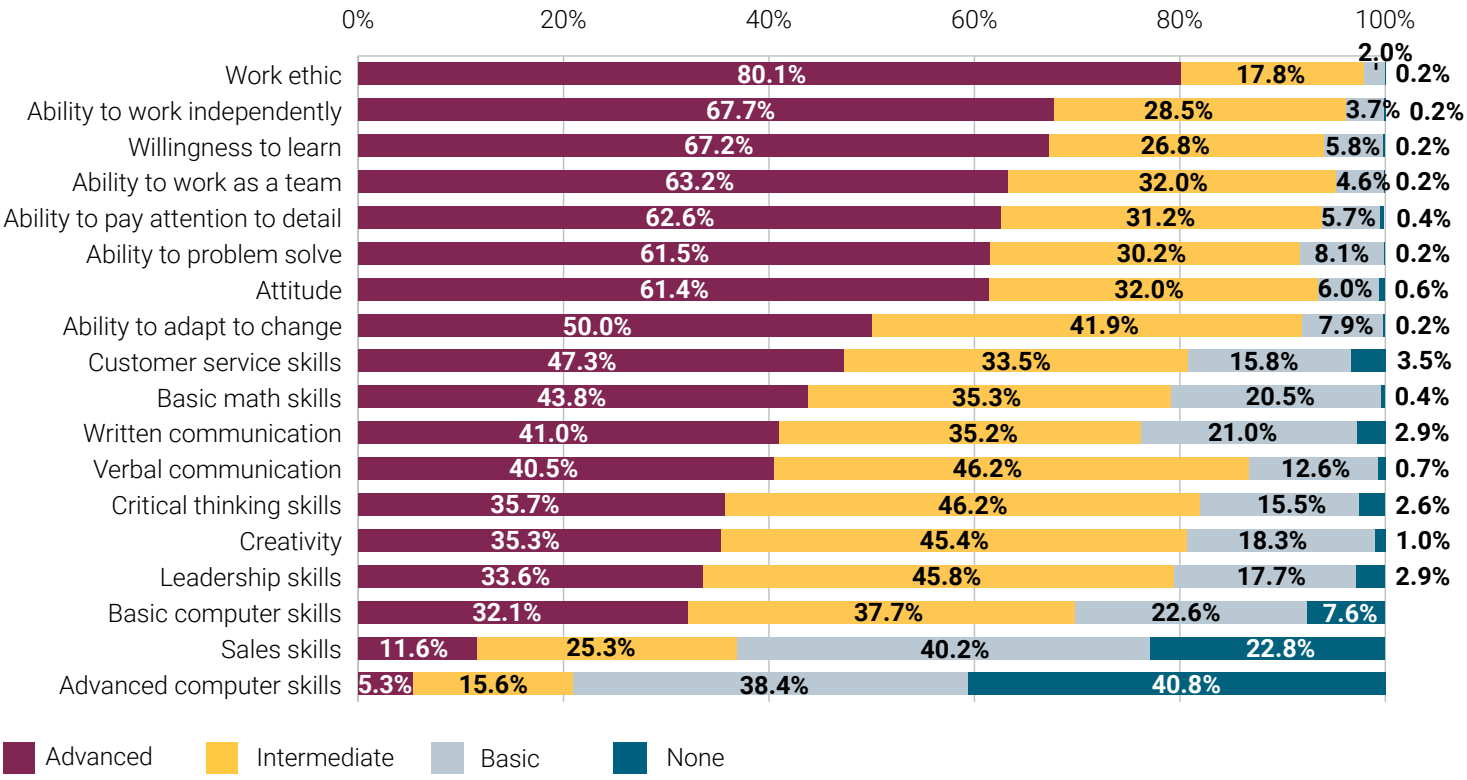
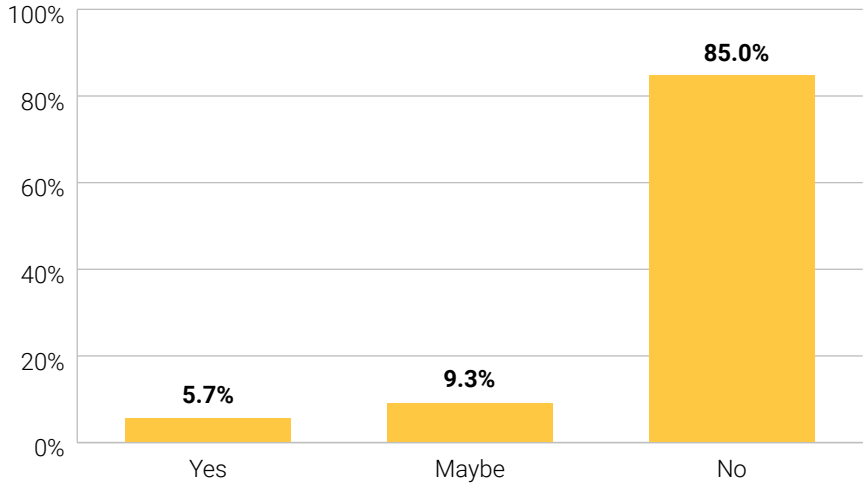


Figure 7 **Reported Skills** of Potential Job Seekers



Potential job seekers rated themselves on various skills using the following rating scale: none, basic, intermediate, and advanced (see Figure 7). At least 69.8% of respondents rated themselves as advanced or intermediate in all listed skills except sales skills (36.9%) and advanced computer skills (20.9%). Potential job seekers most often rated themselves as advanced in their work ethic (80.1%), ability to work independently (67.7%), and willingness to learn (67.2%).

Figure 8 **Employed Potential Job Seekers** Retiring within Five Years



Of employed potential job seekers who answered questions regarding their retirement plans, the vast majority (85%) did not plan to retire in the next 5 years (see Figure 8). The remaining currently employed potential job seekers in the area stated that they were either planning to retire (5.7%) or may retire (9.3%) in the next five years.

Employment Characteristics of Potential Job Seekers

Survey respondents answered questions about the industry of their employer (Figure 9) and their current occupation (Figure 10). The largest percentage of employed potential job seekers worked in health care and social assistance (22.8%), followed by manufacturing (14%) and education (12.1%).

Currently employed potential job seekers who reported their occupation (see Figure 10) were most often employed in the office and administrative support (18.6%) occupation group, followed by production (10.5%), and healthcare practitioners and technical (10%) occupations.

The percentage of workers employed by both industry and occupation do not correspond directly with other data published by the NDOL. This may be partially due to the fact that survey data was self-reported versus NDOL information collected via other sources, but also that data reported in Figures 9 and 10 is specific to potential job seekers and not everyone employed.

For those in office and administrative support occupations, the skills most often reported as advanced were work ethic (79.2%), ability to work independently (73%), and ability to pay attention to detail (70.1%). Workers in production occupations most often reported advanced skill in their work ethic (80%), ability to work as a team (72.3%), and willingness to learn (69.6%). Healthcare practitioner and technical employees most often reported being advanced in their work ethic (82.4%), willingness to learn (76%), and their ability to problem solve (73.2%).

Figure 9 Industry of Employment of Potential Job Seekers

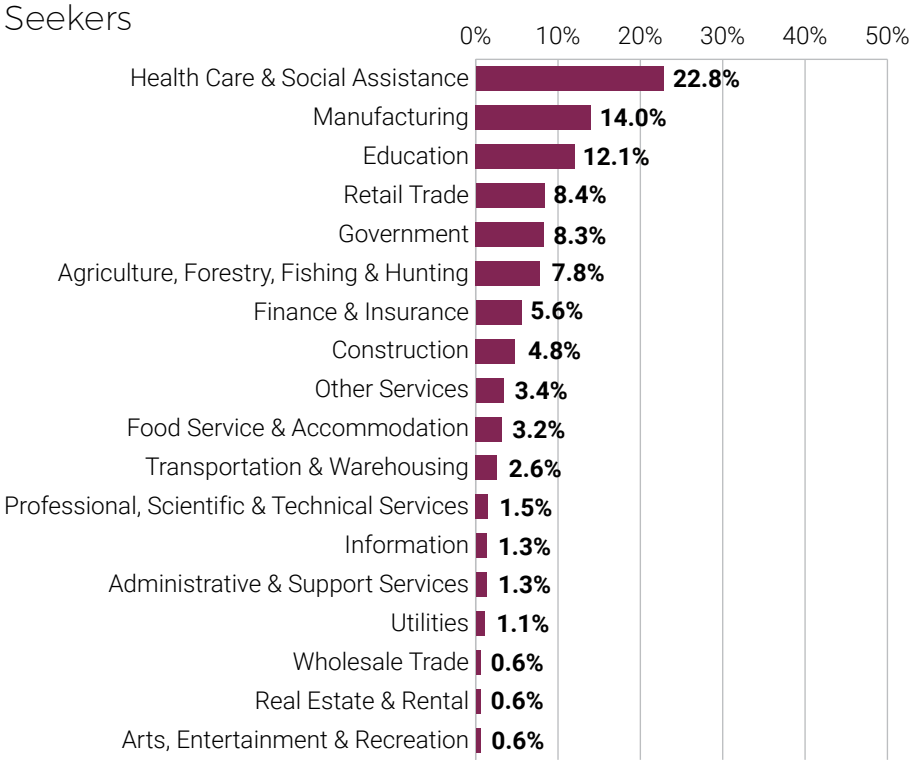


Figure 10 Occupation of Employment of Potential Job Seekers

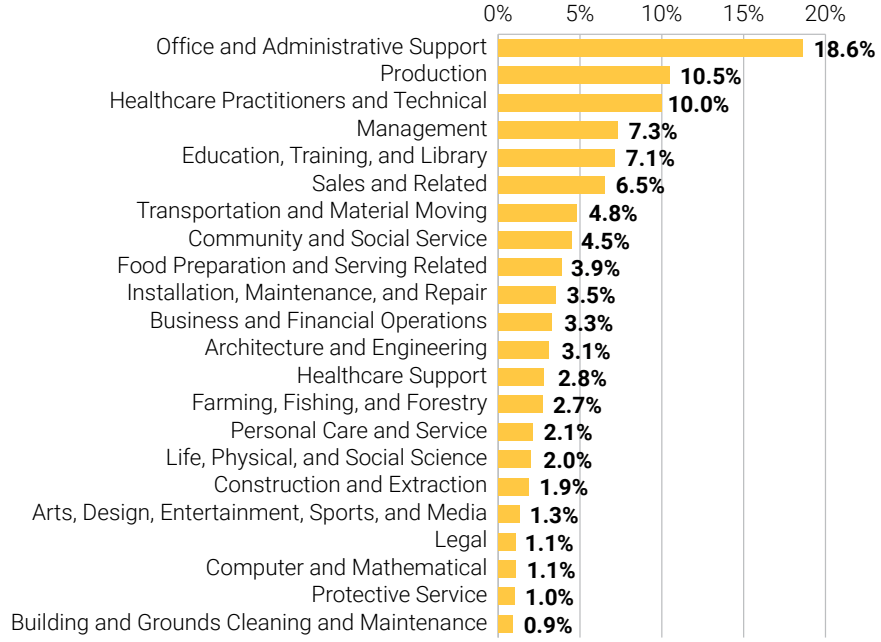


Figure 11 **Previous Industry** of Non-Employed Potential Job Seekers

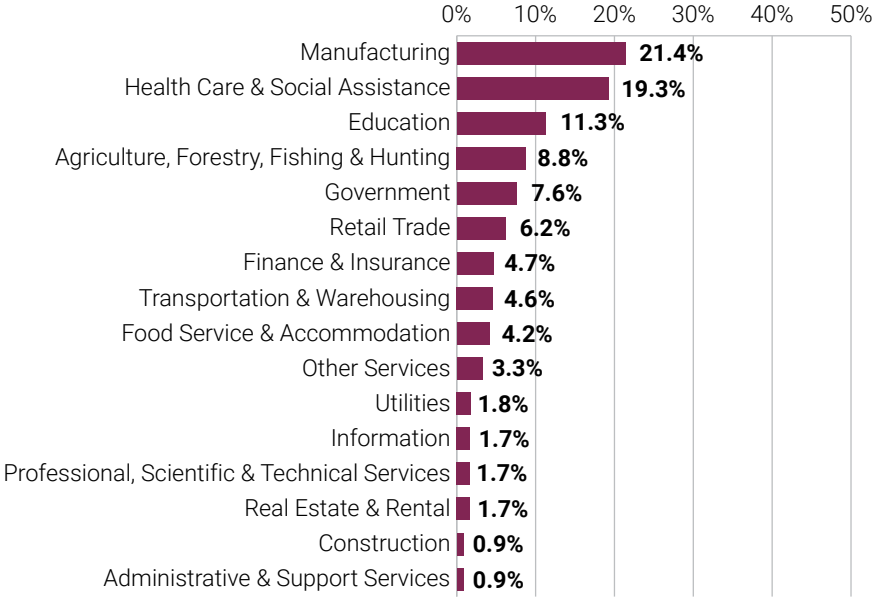
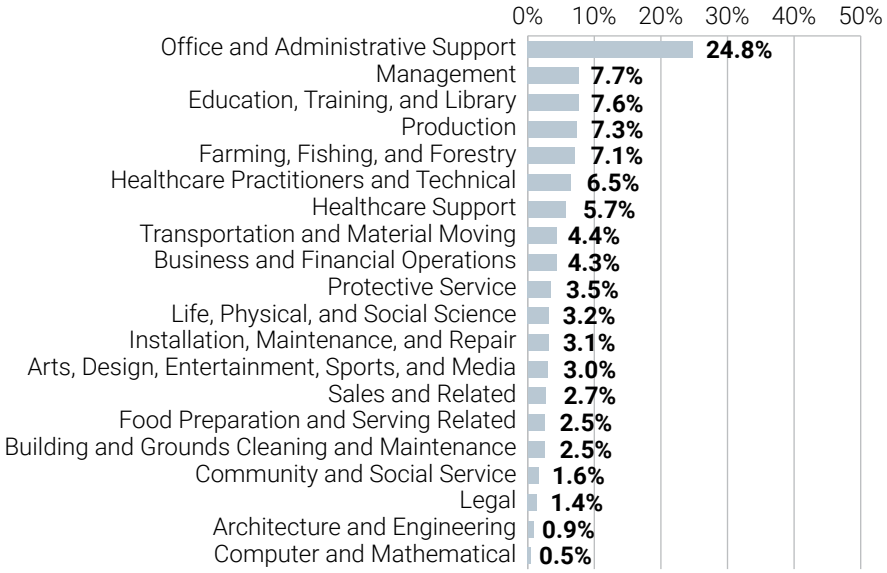


Figure 12 **Previous Occupation** of Non-Employed Potential Job Seekers



As seen in Figure 11, the greatest percentage of non-employed (unemployed, retired, or homemaker) potential job seekers previously held employment in the manufacturing (21.4%) industry, followed by the health care and social assistance (19.3%), and education industries (11.3%). Respondents were able to select an 'other' industry and specify that industry, but all specified industries were reclassified into listed industries.

Non-employed potential job seekers also provided the job title they held at their previous employer, which was categorized into an occupational group (Figure 12). The greatest percentage of non-employed potential job seekers previously held a job in the office and administrative support (24.8%) occupation group, followed by the management (7.7%) and education, training, and library (7.6%) occupation groups.

As seen in Figure 13, a greater portion of non-employed potential job seekers had been so for one year or more at the time of this survey (49.9%) compared to unemployed potential job seekers (20.3%). Non-employed includes those who selected retired, homemaker, or unemployed; unemployed is a subset of the non-employed.

Figure 13 **Time Spent Non-Employed** of Non-Employed Potential Job Seekers

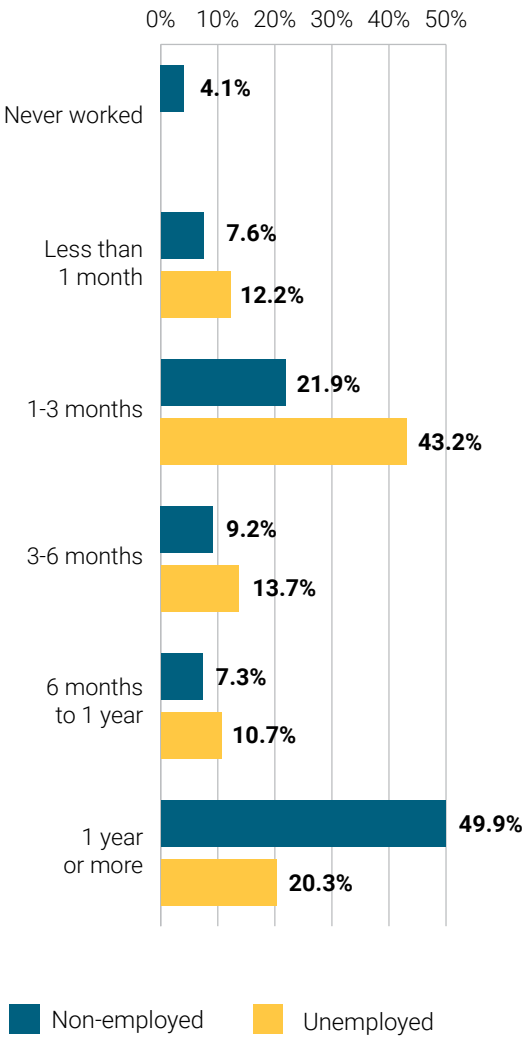
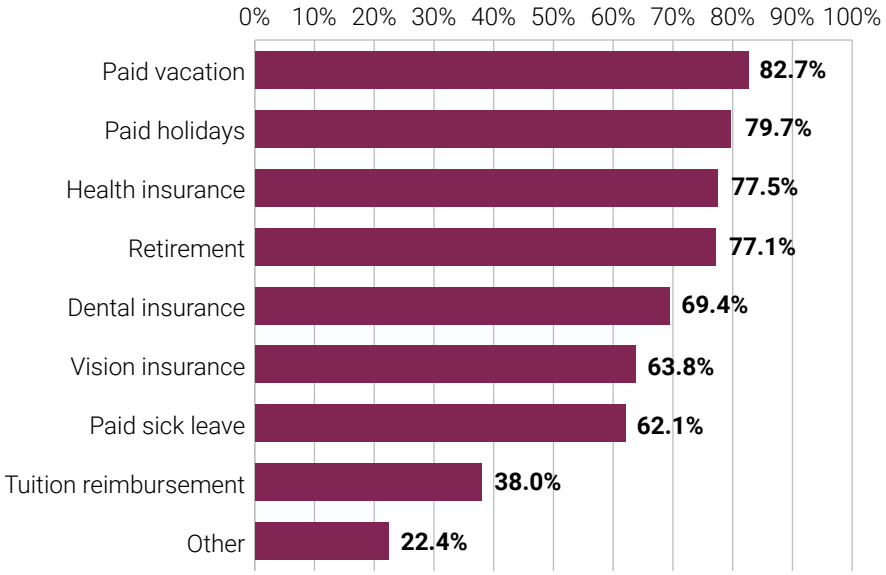
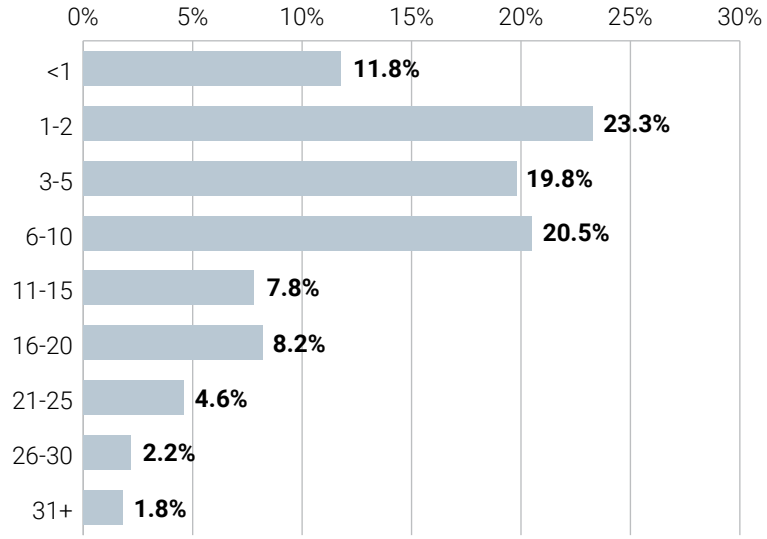


Figure 14 **Benefits Offered** to Employed Seekers



Employed potential job seekers indicated whether their primary employer offered any of the benefits listed in Figure 14. Primary employers offered a majority of employed potential job seekers paid vacation, paid holidays, health insurance, retirement, dental insurance, vision insurance, and paid sick leave. Nearly 20% of employed potential job seekers reported they received a benefit not listed in the question. The other specified benefits included a 401K, discounted products, a health savings account, and life insurance, among others.

Figure 15 **Job Tenure** of Employed Seekers



As seen in Figure 15, over 75% of employed potential job seekers reported being at their current job for 10 years or less. Of this majority, over 23% had been at their current job for one to two years.

Figure 16.1 **Current Annual Salary** of Employed Seekers

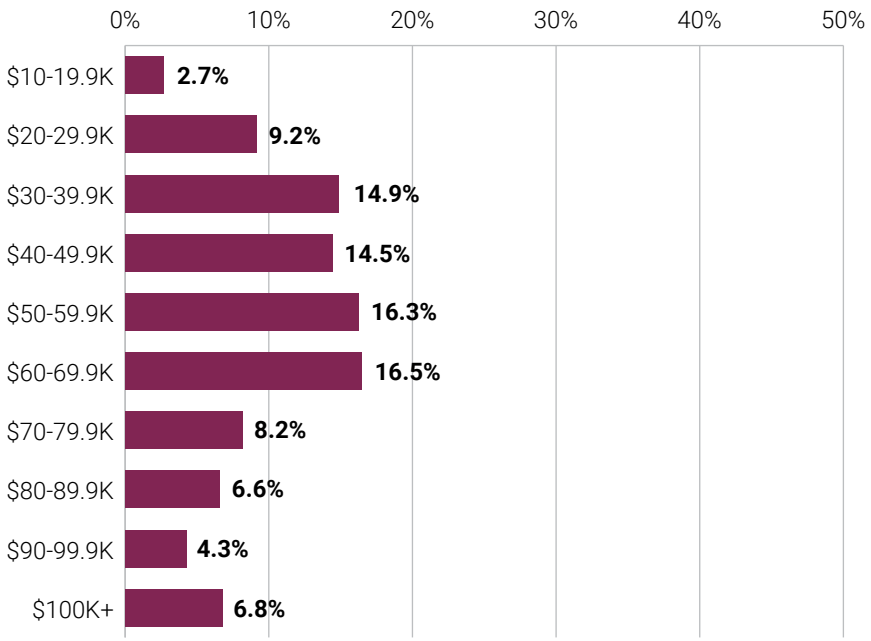
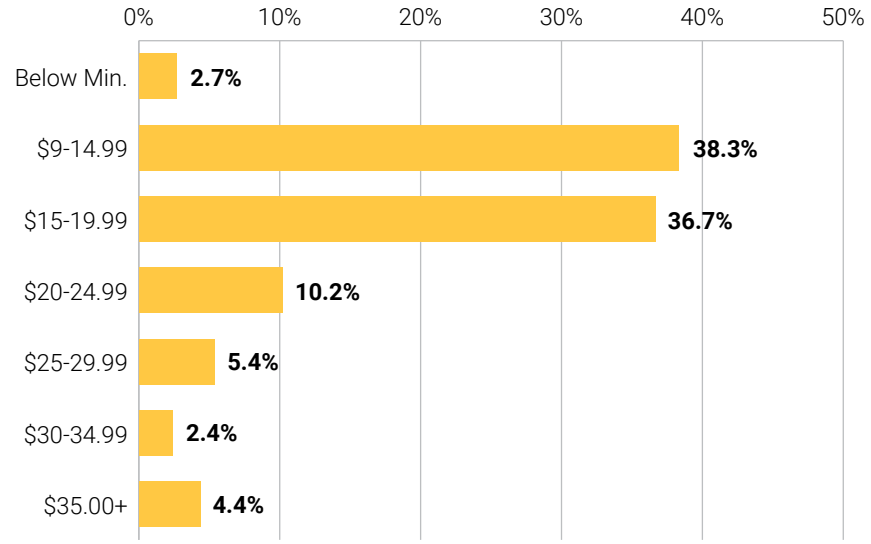


Figure 16.2 **Current Hourly Wage** of Employed Seekers



Respondents were asked about their current and past pay rates and were given the option to report an hourly wage, an annual salary, or both. Annual salaries and hourly wages were calculated separately. Pay was not converted from wages to salaries or vice versa, and if a respondent reported both an annual salary and an hourly wage, they were included in both analyses. As seen in Figure 16.1, the greatest percentage of employed potential job seekers, who reported current pay figures in annual salary, reported earning between $60,000 and $69,999 a year (16.5%). Over 62% of potential job seekers earned $30,000 to $69,999 annually.

Displayed in Figure 16.2, the greatest percentage of employed potential job seekers earning hourly wages earned $9 to $14.99 per hour (38.3%), and over 22% of potential job seekers employed in hourly positions earned over $20 per hour. The minimum wage in Nebraska was $9 per hour at the time of survey. Some respondents who earned less than $9 per hour were tipped employees who did not include tips in their average hourly wage.

Employed potential job seekers stated their current one-way commute, in minutes (yellow bars), and all potential job seekers reported the maximum one-way commute time they would accept (red bars) (Figure 17). Potential job seekers, as a whole, appear to be willing to accept a longer commute than the current commute time of most employed potential job seekers. The greatest percentage of employed potential job seekers commute five to nine minutes one-way to their primary employer (24.4%). Over 32% of all potential job seekers would accept a one-way commute of up to 29 minutes. Furthermore, 80.6% of employed potential job seekers travel less than 30 minutes one-way to their primary employer, but 67.4% of all potential job seekers would accept a one-way commute of 30 minutes or more.

As displayed in Figure 18, employed potential job seekers' satisfaction with their commute time appears to increase as commute time decreases.

Figure 17 Current and Maximum Commute Time of Employed Seekers

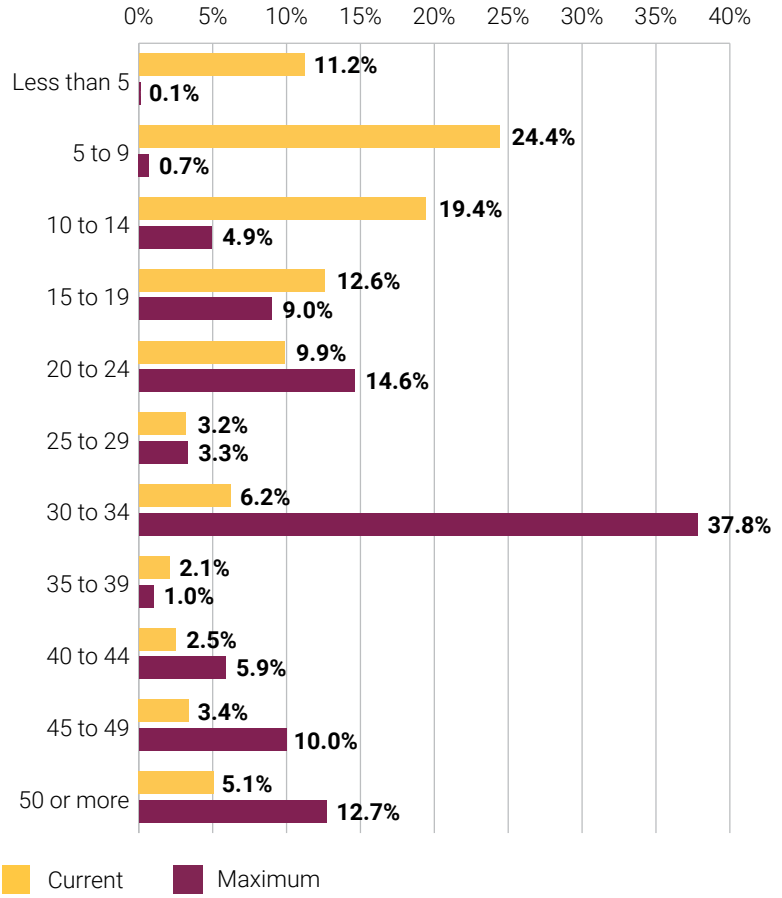
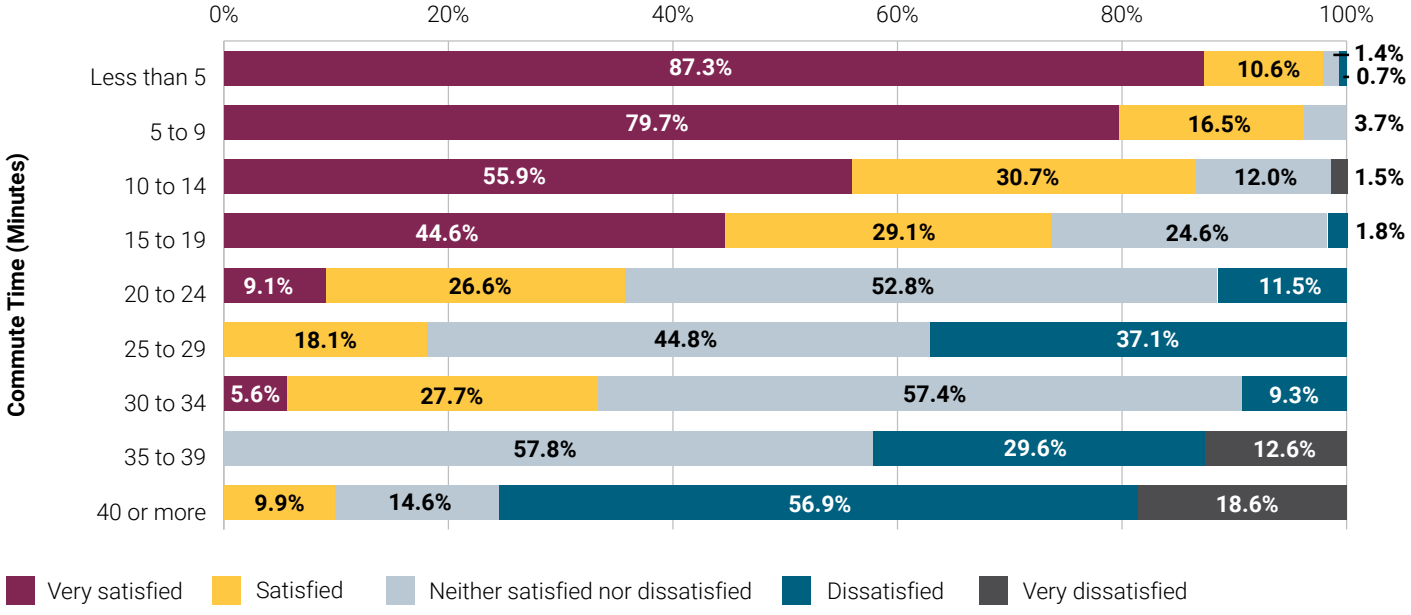


Figure 18 Satisfaction with Current Commute Time of Employed Seekers



As seen in Figure 18 on the previous page, 35.8% of employed potential job seekers were satisfied or very satisfied with a one-way commute time of 20 to 24 minutes, but only 18.1% were satisfied or very satisfied with a 25 to 29 minute commute. No respondents were very dissatisfied with their less-than 10 minute commute, but 18.6% of employed potential job seekers who commute 40 minutes or more were very dissatisfied. Based on the results displayed in Figures 17 and 18, potential job seekers overall appeared to be willing to accept a longer commute than the current commute times of employed potential job seekers (Figure 17), but employed potential job seekers who did commute 25 minutes or more reported greater dissatisfaction than those who commuted less than 25 minutes (Figure 18).

Figure 19.1 Minimum Annual Salary Required

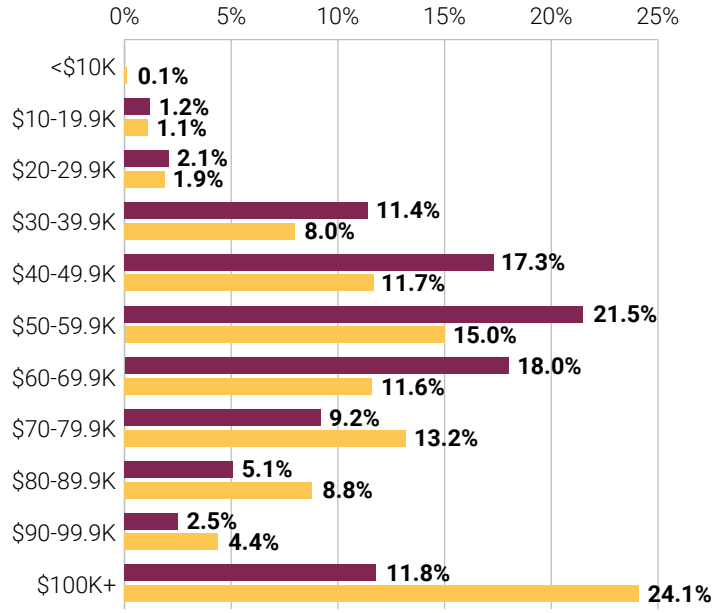
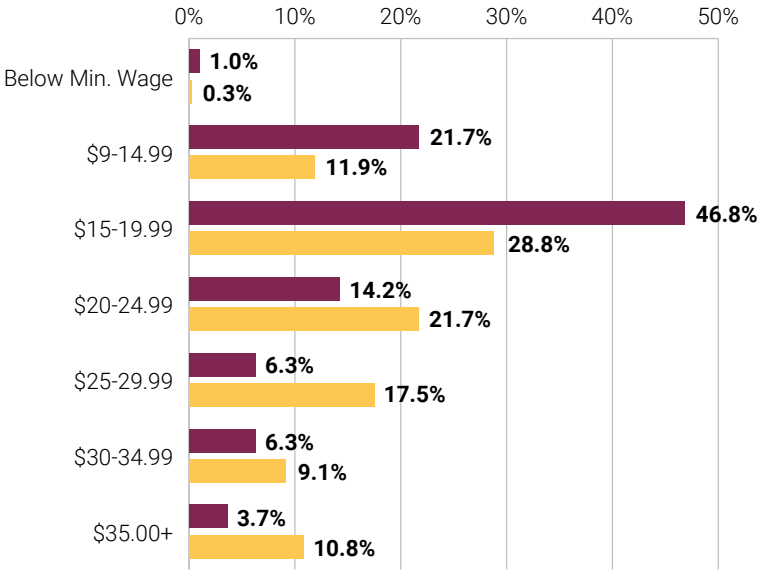


Figure 19.2 Minimum Hourly Wage Required



Future Employment of Potential Job Seekers

Survey respondents answered the question, "If a job were available that met your most important criteria, what is the minimum pay you would require to improve your employment situation?" As seen in Figures 19.1 and 19.2, potential job seekers and non-seekers had different requirements. Respondents gave either a minimum annual salary or minimum hourly wage. Included in the analysis are respondents who provided data regarding their desired wage regardless of their current employment situation.

Potential job seekers generally required less pay to improve their employment situation than those who were non-seekers. The median required minimum hourly wage for potential job seekers to improve their employment situation was $15 per hour compared to $20 per hour for non-seekers. The median required minimum annual salary for potential job seekers to improve their employment situation was $52,750 per year and was $70,000 per year for non-seekers. Over 53% of potential job seekers and 37.8% of non-seekers would accept a new job for less than $60,000 per year. Nearly 70% of potential job seekers and 41% of non-seekers would take a job for less than $20 per hour.

Potential Job Seekers

Non-Potential Job Seekers

Displayed in Figures 20.1 and 20.2 is the difference between potential job seekers' current pay and their minimum pay required to improve their employment situation. Only responses that listed both current pay and minimum pay required to change jobs were included in the analysis. Differences were greater for those who are salaried compared to those in hourly positions.

Over 48% of potential job seekers stated that they would accept either an annual salary decrease or no increase in salary to improve their employment situation; similarly, 43% of non-potential job seekers would accept a pay decrease or no increase to change jobs. A greater percentage of non-seekers reported they would require a $1,000 to $9,999 raise (19.2%) to change jobs compared to potential job seekers (12.6%).

As seen in Figure 20.2, the difference between potential job seekers and non-seekers was smallest when examining those who would require a $4-$4.99 per hour raise to change jobs (5% and 5.6%, respectively).

Figure 20.1 Minimum Annual Salary Increase Required

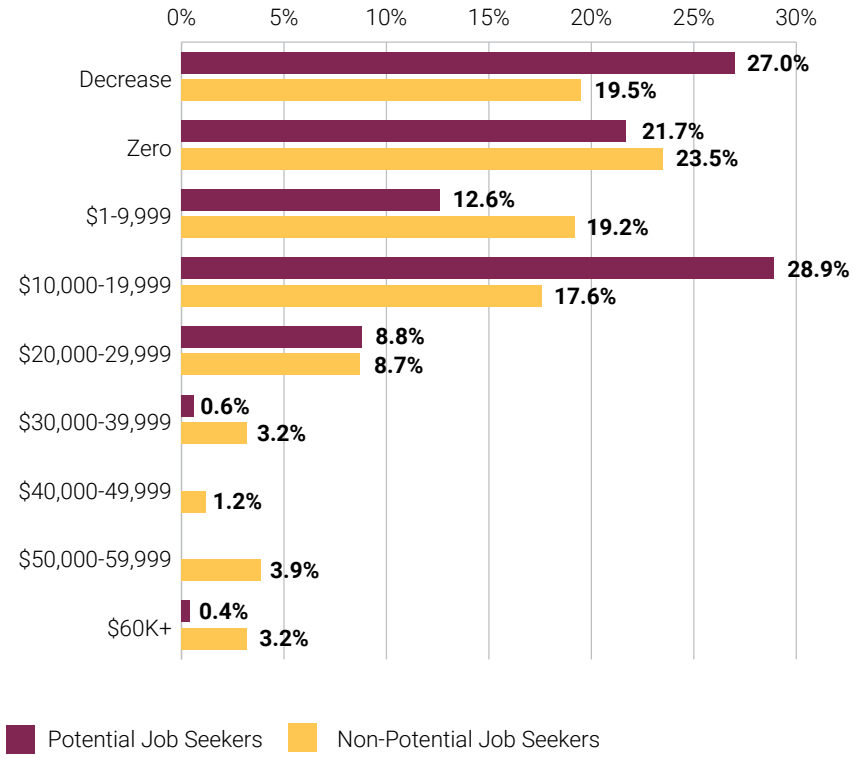


Figure 20.2 Minimum Hourly Wage Increase Required

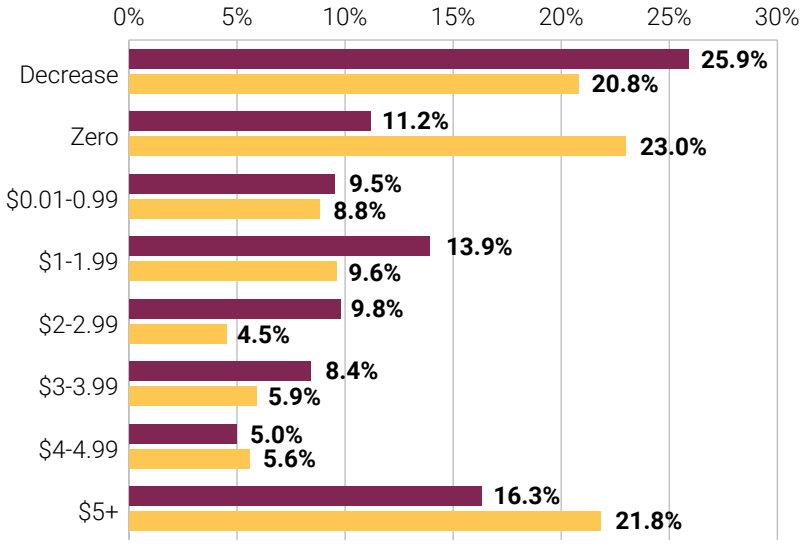


Figure 21.1 Minimum Annual Salary Increase Required in Percent of Current Pay

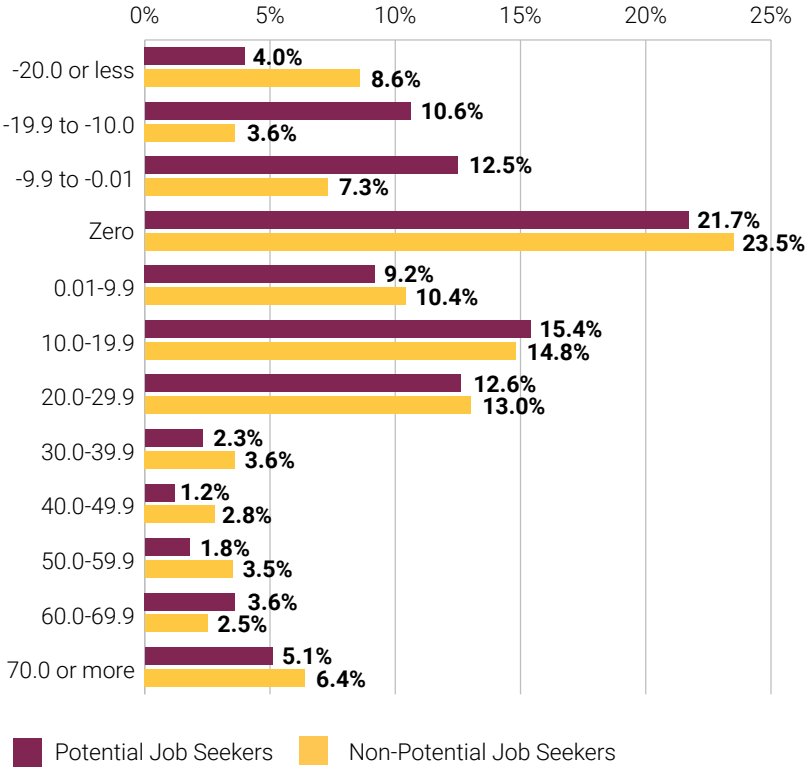


Figure 21.2 Minimum Hourly Wage Increase Required in Percent of Current Pay

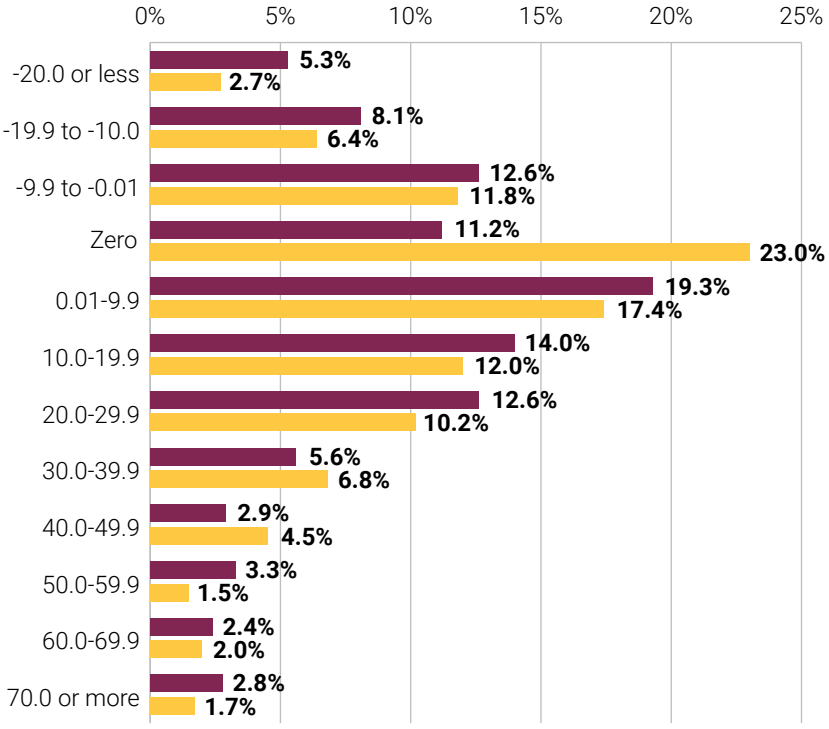


Figure 21.1 and Figure 21.2 display the pay increase respondents reported they would require to improve their employment situation as a percent of their current income for both potential job seekers and non-seekers.

As seen in Figure 21.1, non-seekers tended to require an annual salary increase that would amount to a greater percentage of their current salary than would potential job seekers. According to survey results, 14% of potential job seekers would require a 30% or greater raise in order to improve their employment situation compared to 18.8% of non-seekers. Over 19% of non-potential job seekers reported that they would accept a pay decrease while 27% of potential job seekers would accept a decrease in pay.

Results displayed in Figure 21.2 come from respondents who answered questions about their current hourly wages and minimum pay required to change jobs. The greatest difference between potential job seekers and non-seekers in the percent difference of required pay as a percent of their current income was in the zero increase group (11.8%). More potential job seekers earning an hourly wage would require a raise (62.9%), in terms of the percent of their current pay, than potential job seekers who earn annual salaries (51.3%).

Figure 22.1 and Figure 22.2 display the comparison between potential job seekers' current pay and their minimum pay required to improve their employment situation. Only those identified as potential job seekers who reported both their current wages and minimum pay required to improve their employment situation are included in the analysis.

As displayed in Figure 22.1, the greatest difference between current salary and minimum salary required by potential job seekers was observed for those who earn or desire $20,000 to $29,999 annually (7.1%). The greatest percentage of potential job seekers reported that they currently earn between $60,000 and $69,999 annually (16.5%) and require a salary between $50,000 and $59,999 (21.5%). More than 26% of potential job seekers earned less than $30,000 per year, but only 14.6% of potential job seekers reported their minimum salary required to change jobs was less than $30,000 annually. Nearly 26% of potential job seekers earned over $70,000 annually, and 28.6% of potential job seekers reported they would require a minimum salary of over $70,000 to improve their employment situation.

Hourly employees most likely would require a raise, at minimum, to consider an improvement in their employment situation. Nearly 41% of hourly employees earned less than $15 per hour and 77.2% of hourly workers would require $15 or more to improve their employment situation (see Figure 22.2).

Figure 22.1 Minimum Required to Change Jobs

Current and Minimum Annual Salary of Seekers

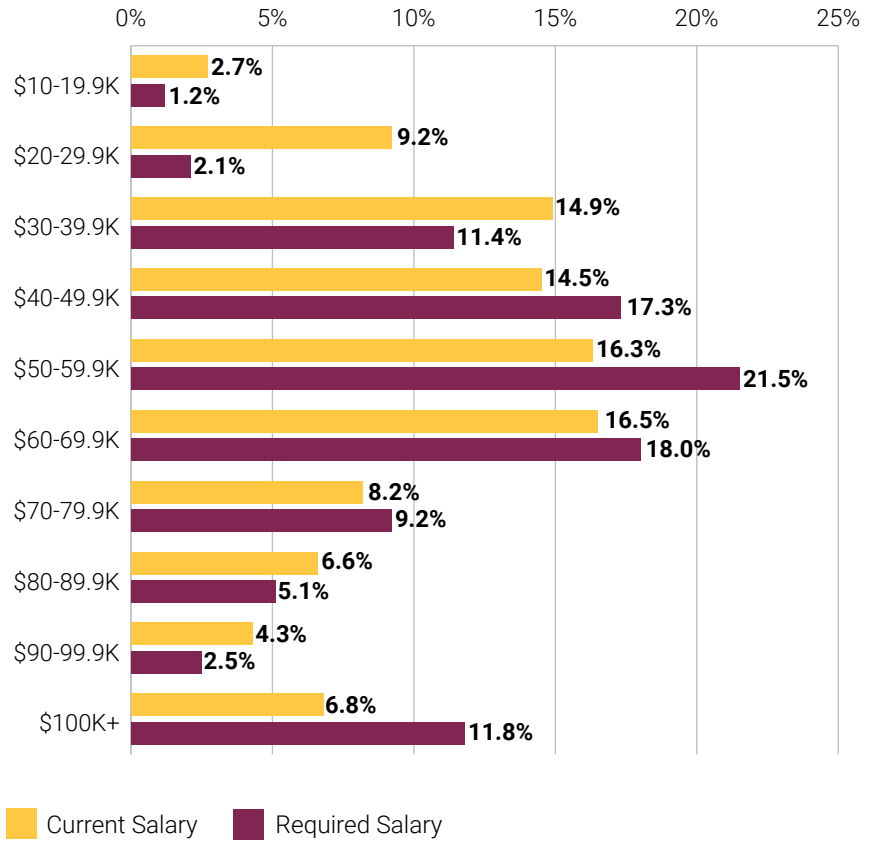


Figure 22.2 Minimum Required to Change Jobs

Current and Minimum Hourly Wage of Seekers

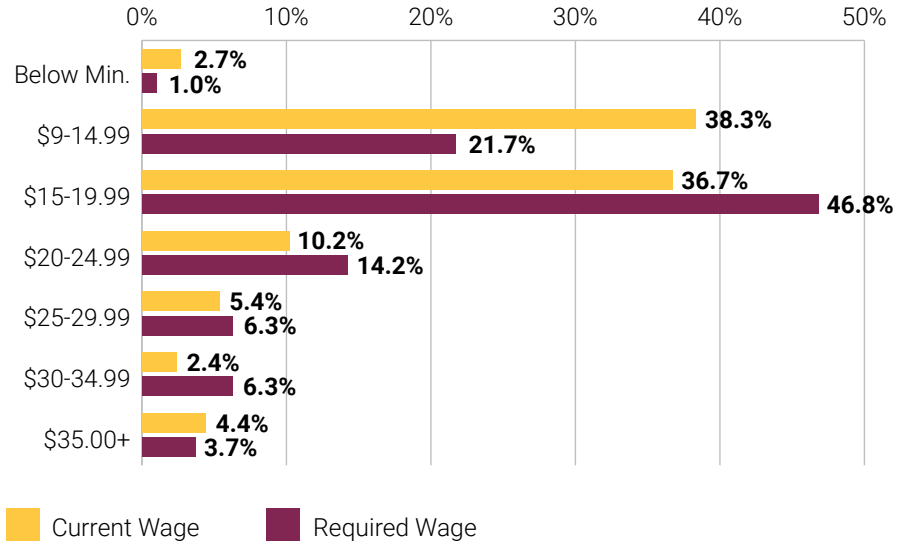
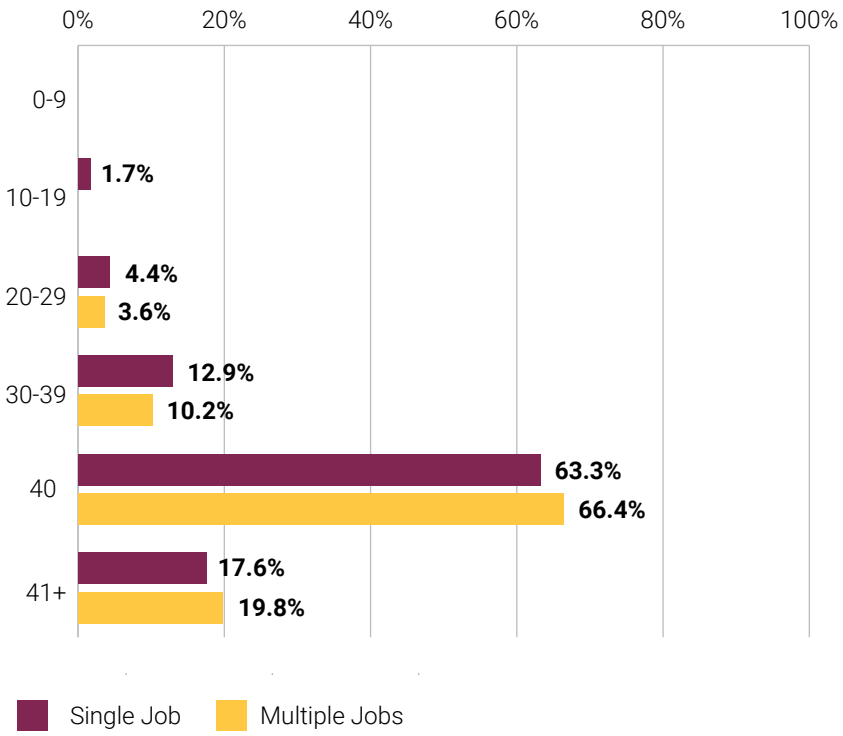


Figure 23 **Hours of Work Per Week Desired** by Number of Jobs



The majority of employed potential job seekers wanted to work 40 hours a week at their primary employer, regardless of whether they were currently working a single job or multiple jobs (see Figure 23). Of those who provided both an employment status and a number of work hours per week desired, 76.2% of those who held a single job and 76.6% of those who held multiple jobs wanted to work between 30 and 40 hours per week at their primary employer.

As displayed in Figure 24, most potential job seekers under age 65 wanted to work 40 hours per week at their primary employer. Potential job seekers ages 65+ wanted to work fewer hours per week in general compared to younger age groups. Based on the results displayed in Figure 24, a portion of potential job seekers, primarily between the ages of 25 and 54, reported they were willing to work overtime. In addition, a portion of potential job seekers reported they would be interested in working fewer than 40 hours per week.

Figure 24 **Hours of Work Per Week Desired** by Age Group

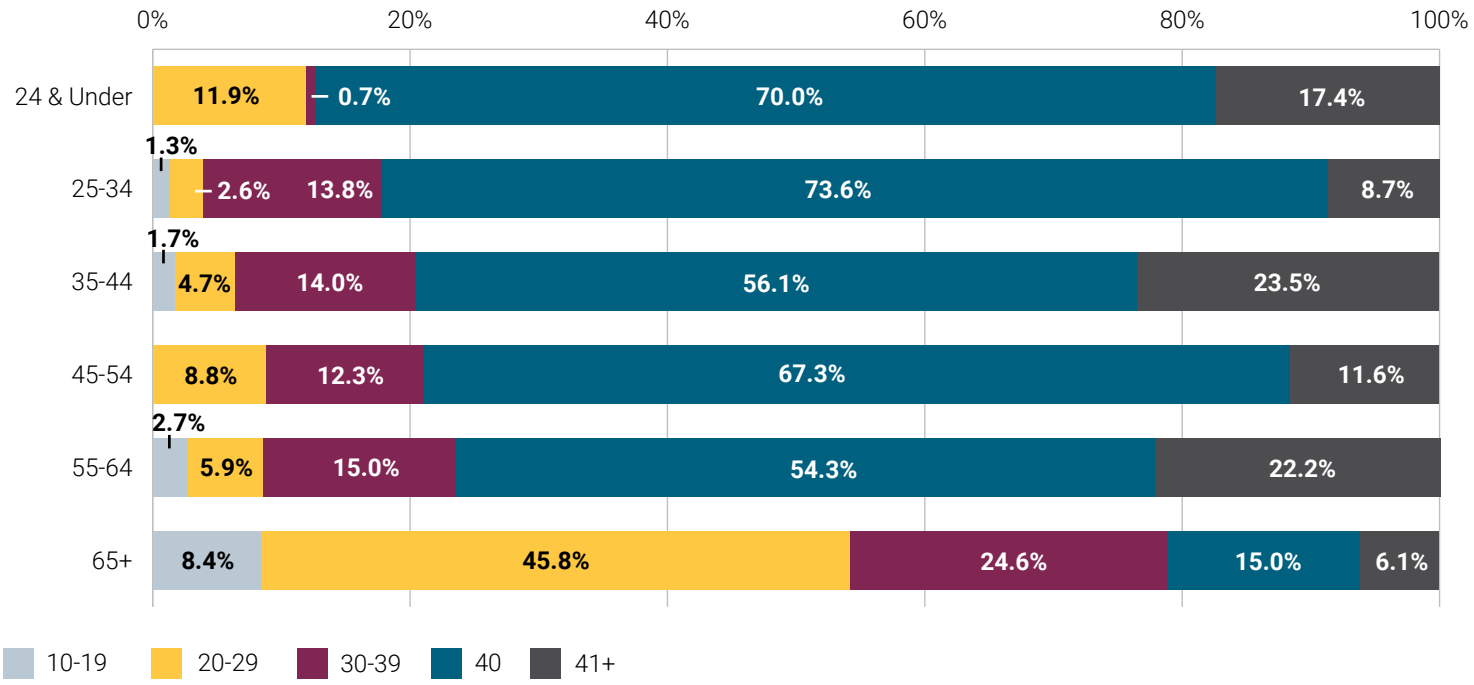
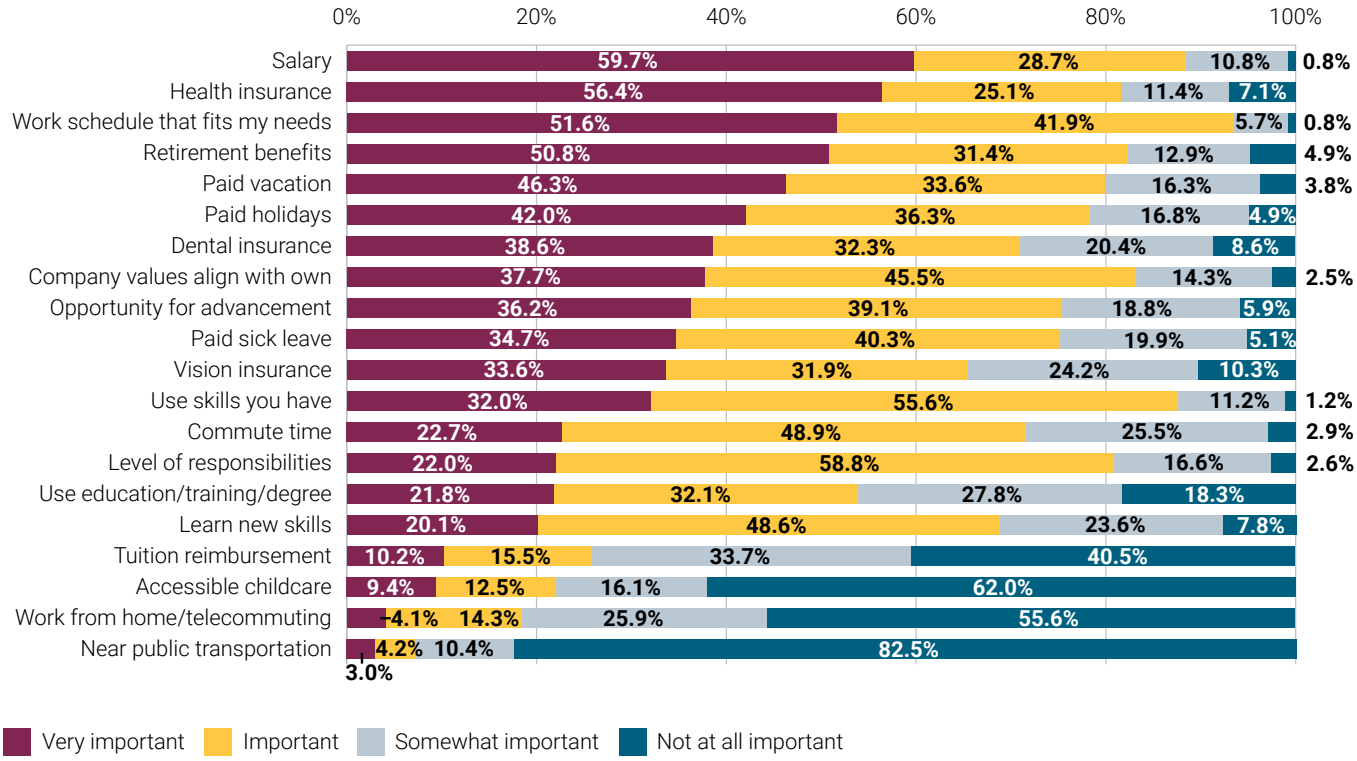


Figure 25 **Important Factors** of Potential Job Seekers



Potential job seekers in the northeast Nebraska area rated the importance of 20 factors frequently considered when choosing a place of employment. The rating scale given to respondents, as seen in Figure 25, ranged from not at all important to very important. Blank responses were not included in the analysis of important factors.

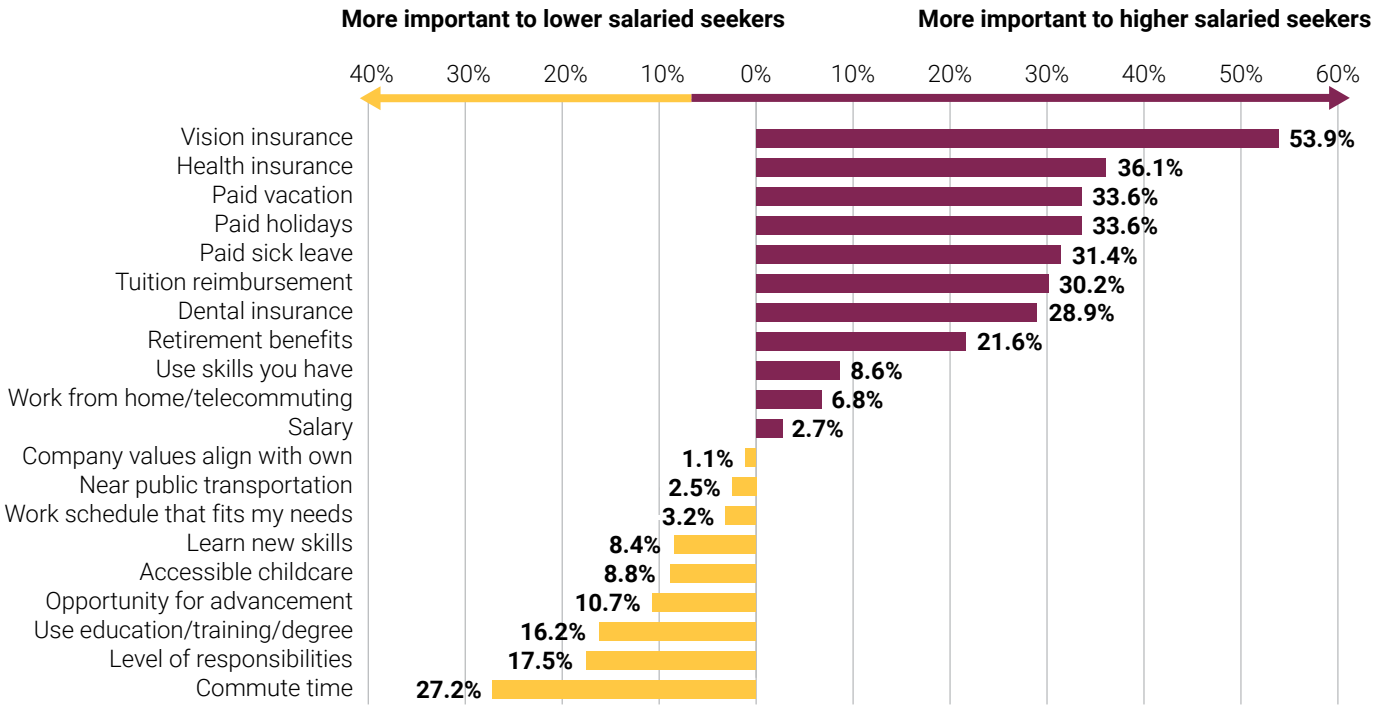
More than 88% of potential job seekers rated salary as very important or important. Salary was one of four factors that over half of respondents listed as very important. The top five most important factors to potential seekers based on combined ratings of important and very important were work schedule (93.5%), salary (88.4%), use skills you have (87.6%), company values align with own (83.2%), and retirement benefits (82.2%).

The factors most often rated as not at all important or somewhat important by potential job seekers were being near public transportation (92.9%), work from home/telecommuting (81.5%), and accessible childcare (78.1%).

Beginning on the next page, Figure 26.1, Figure 26.2, and Figure 27 display the difference between groups of respondents who ranked each important factor very important or important. Figure 26.1 and 26.2 display this difference among income groups. For the purposes of this analysis, hourly employees who earned $12 or less an hour and salaried employees who earned $25,000 or less a year were considered low-income. High-income potential job seekers were those who earned $36 or more an hour or those who earned $75,000 or more a year. For example, 92% of those in the high salary group responded that salary was important or very important compared to 89.3% of those in the low salary group resulting in a 2.7% difference.

Salaried employees, seen in Figure 26.1 on the next page, were more likely to value vision insurance and health insurance if they were in the high-income group compared to the factors 'level of responsibilities' and 'commute time' for low-income employees.

Figure 26.1 Difference in Important Factors by Annual Salary



As displayed in Figure 26.2, work from home/telecommuting, dental insurance, and health insurance, among other factors, were more important to potential seekers making at least $36 an hour than to those making under $12 hourly. Opportunity for advancement and paid vacation, among other factors, were more important to those making $12 and under compared to the high-income group.

Figure 26.2 Difference in Important Factors by Hourly Wage

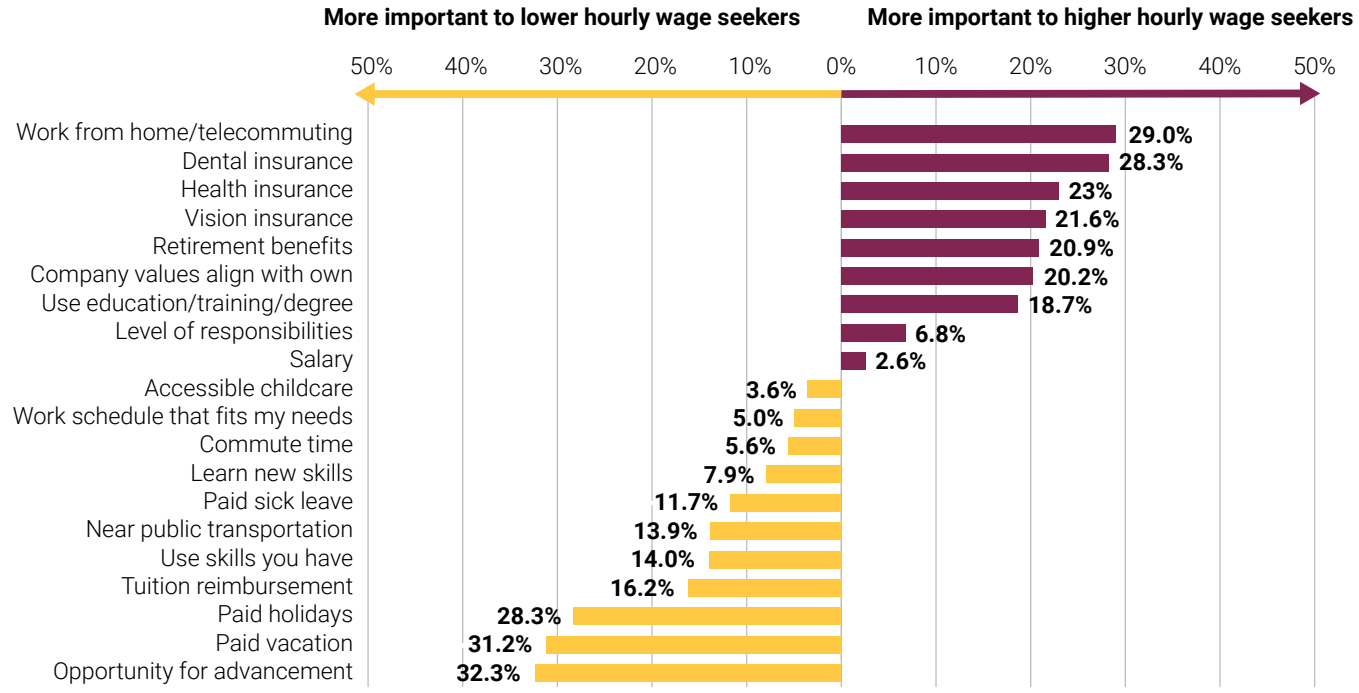
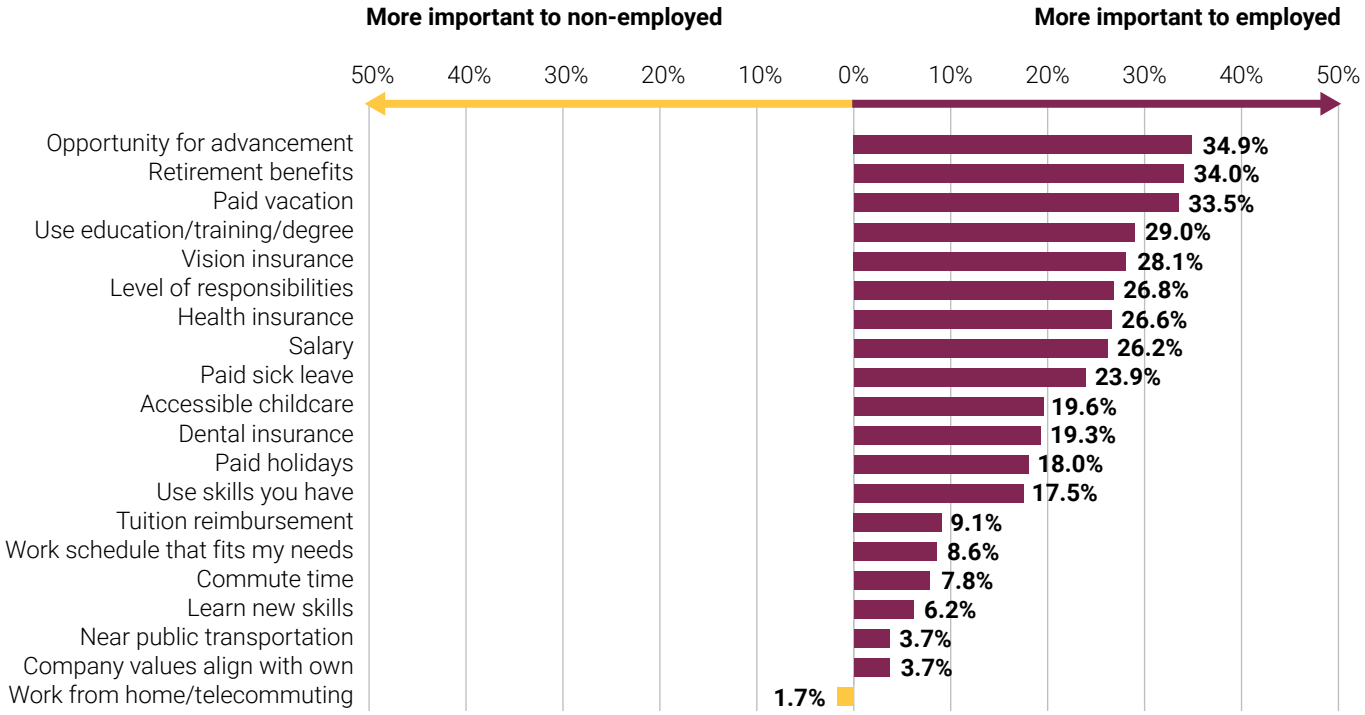


Figure 27 Difference in Important Factors by Employment Status



Shown in Figure 27 is the difference in important factors for employed and non-employed potential job seekers. For example, 79.1% of employed potential job seekers rated the factor 'opportunity for advancement' as important or very important, and 44.2% of non-employed potential job seekers rated advancement opportunity as important or very important (34.9% difference). Working from home/ telecommuting was important to 1.7% more non-employed than the employed.

The results displayed in Figure 28 indicate that over 54% of potential job seekers were willing to go to school to complete a certificate or degree in the next year, and over 93% of potential job seekers in the area were willing to attend employer-sponsored training.

Figure 28 Willingness to Obtain Training in the Next Year

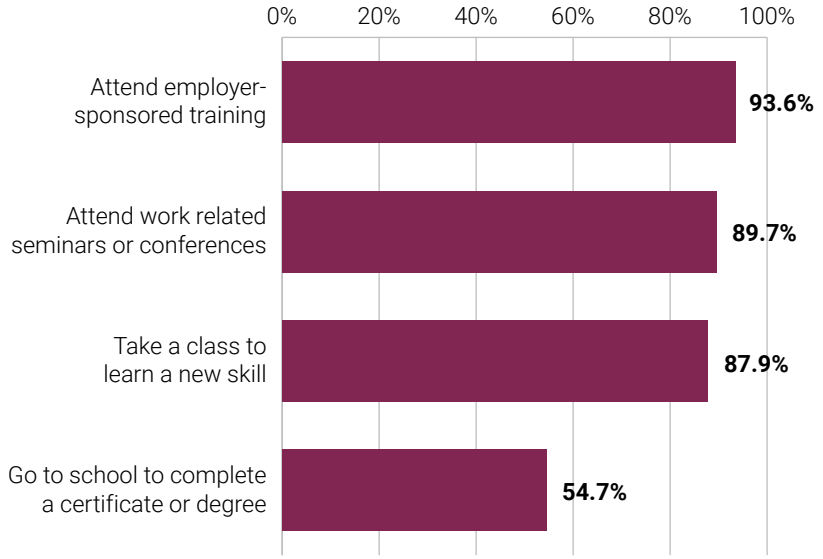


Figure 29 Barriers to Obtaining Training

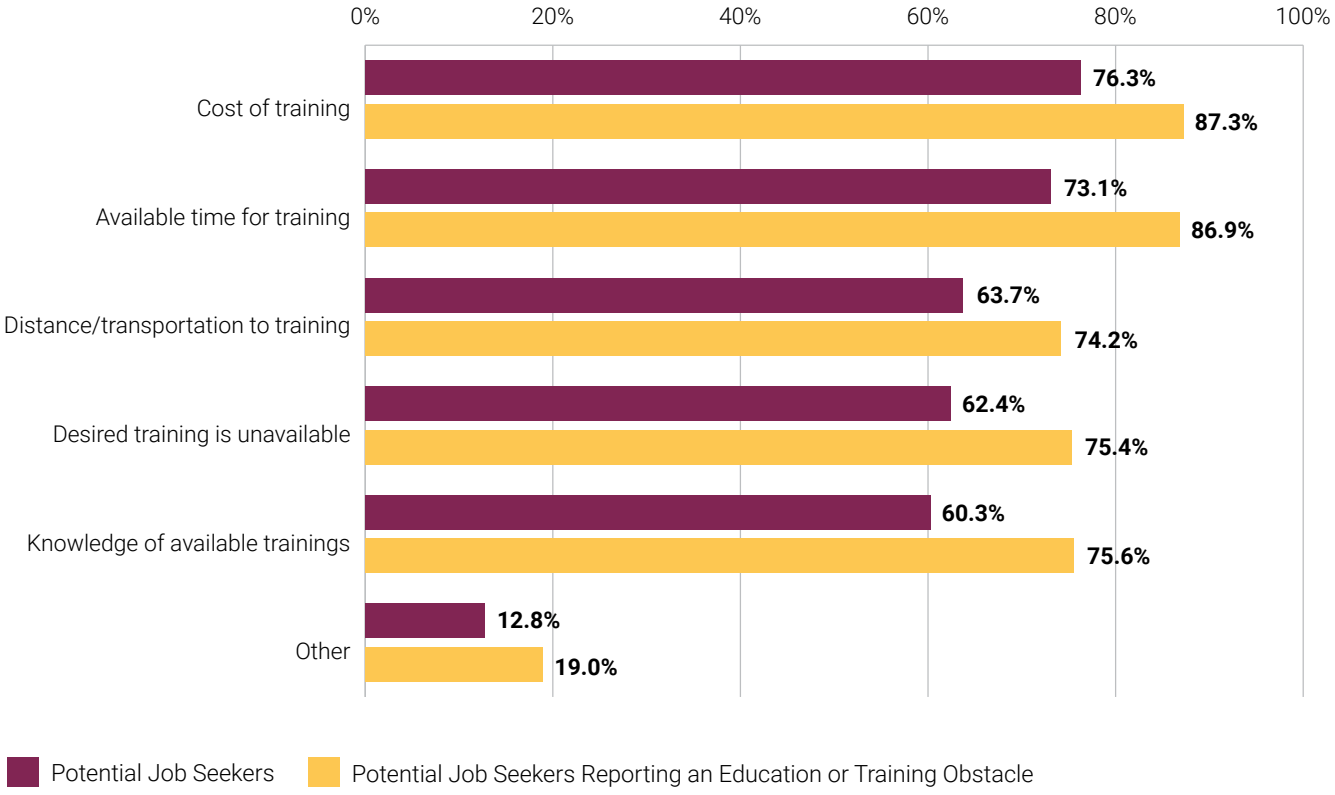


Figure 29 displays the percent of potential job seekers who indicated there was some kind of barrier to obtaining training in the next year (red bars) and potential job seekers who reported that a lack of training or a lack of education was an obstacle to changing jobs or reentering the workforce (yellow bars). Respondents were able to choose from any of the barriers or specify a barrier not listed. Compared to potential job seekers as a whole, greater percentages of seekers that reported education or training as an obstacle said that each item listed below was a barrier to obtaining training. Other barriers to obtaining training potential job seekers specified included family commitments and medical issues.

Survey respondents reported any obstacles that may prevent them from changing their job or reentering the workforce in the next year. As seen in Figure 30, the most commonly-cited obstacles to employment (lack of job opportunities, inadequate pay, inadequate benefits, and inadequate hours) were job market-related issues rather than the workforce-related issues such as having a lack of experience or training. Respondents were able to write in other obstacles they face when changing jobs. Some examples included age and current business commitments.

Respondents provided their level of skill and reported whether they were using particular skills in their current position. Figure 31 displays the results for employed potential job seekers who reported that being overqualified was an obstacle preventing them from changing jobs. Included in the analysis are only those who reported being either intermediate or advanced in the listed skill. Nearly 59% of employed and overqualified potential job seekers who reported being either intermediate or advanced in advanced computer skills were not using this skill in their current position. It is unknown whether these potential job seekers are in a position where advanced computer skills are part of their job description, but this figure reveals that there may be potential job seekers who are not using all of their skills in their current position.

Figure 30 Obstacles to Employment

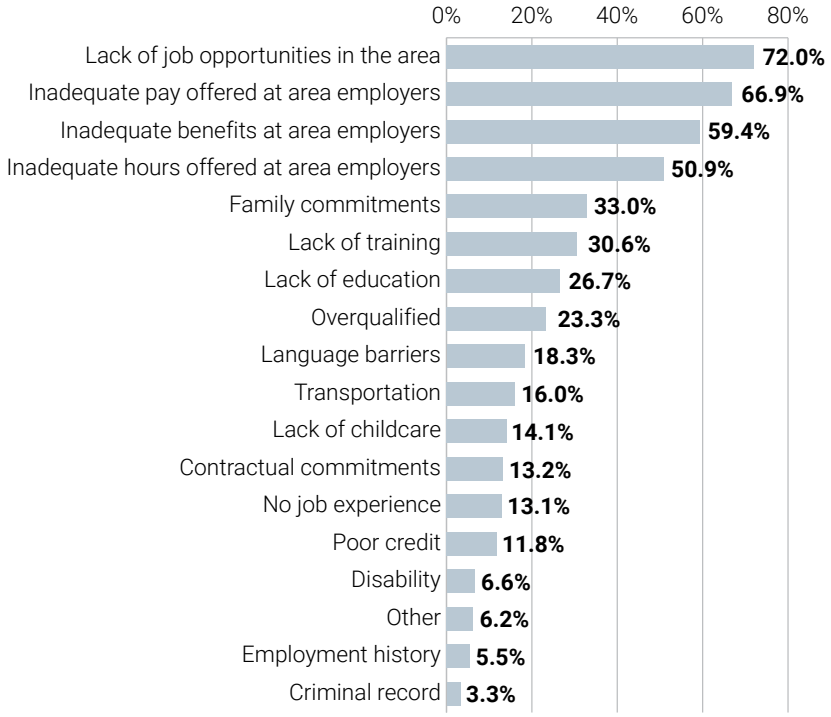
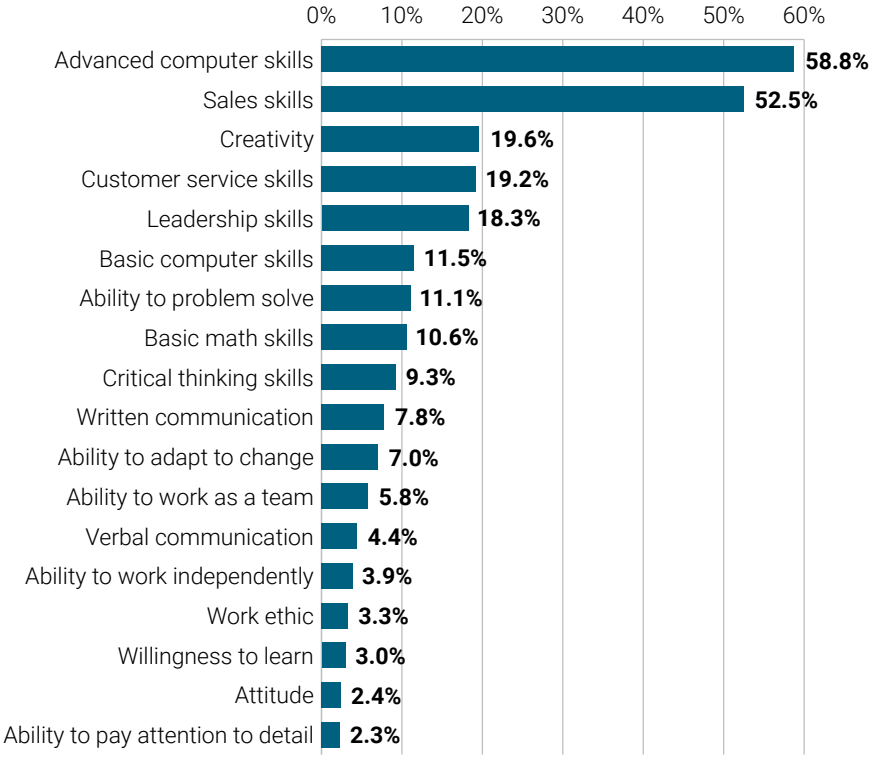


Figure 31 Unused Skills of Overqualified Employed Potential Job Seekers



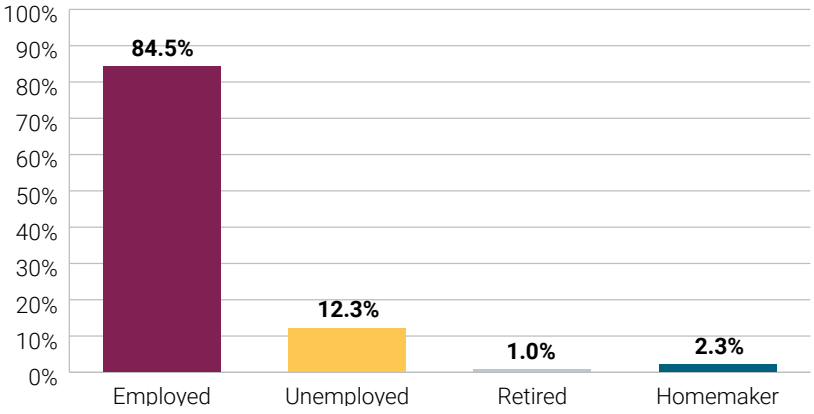
Results - Active Job Seekers

Active job seekers are a subset of potential job seekers who answered 'yes' to the question "Are you actively seeking a new job?" Non-active seekers are potential job seekers who may change jobs or reenter the workforce within the next year, but were not actively seeking a job. In the northeast Nebraska survey area, 25.3% of potential job seekers were actively seeking a new job. This represents an estimated 1,509 individuals, age 18 years and over, who were actively seeking a new job in Fremont.

General Characteristics of Active Job Seekers

According to survey results, most people actively searching for work already had employment, but 15.6% of active job seekers were non-employed (see Figure 32).

Figure 32 Employment Status



More than 40% of non-employed active job seekers had been non-employed for seven months or longer (see Figure 33). More than 42% of individuals actively looking for work have been non-employed for three months or less, but all active job seekers who responded indicated they were employed at one time.

Figure 33 Time Spent Non-Employed

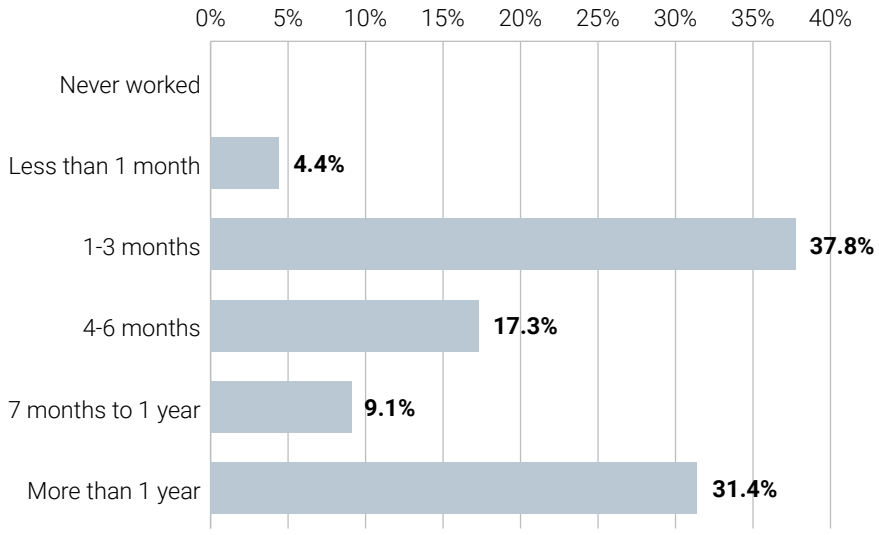
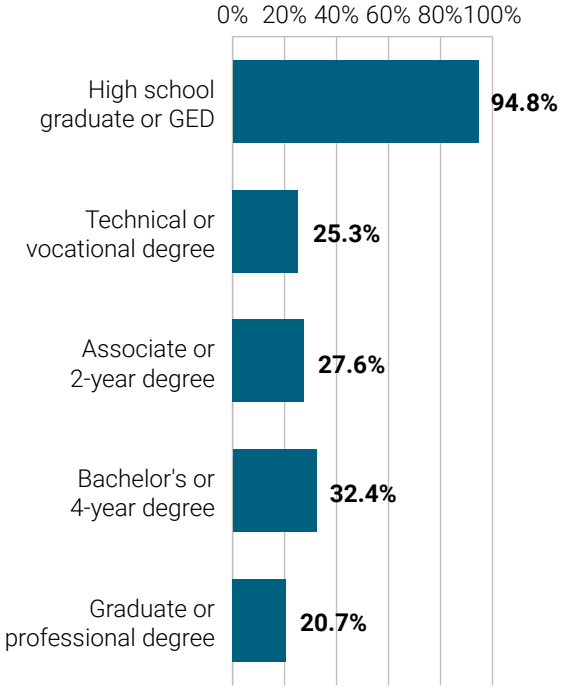
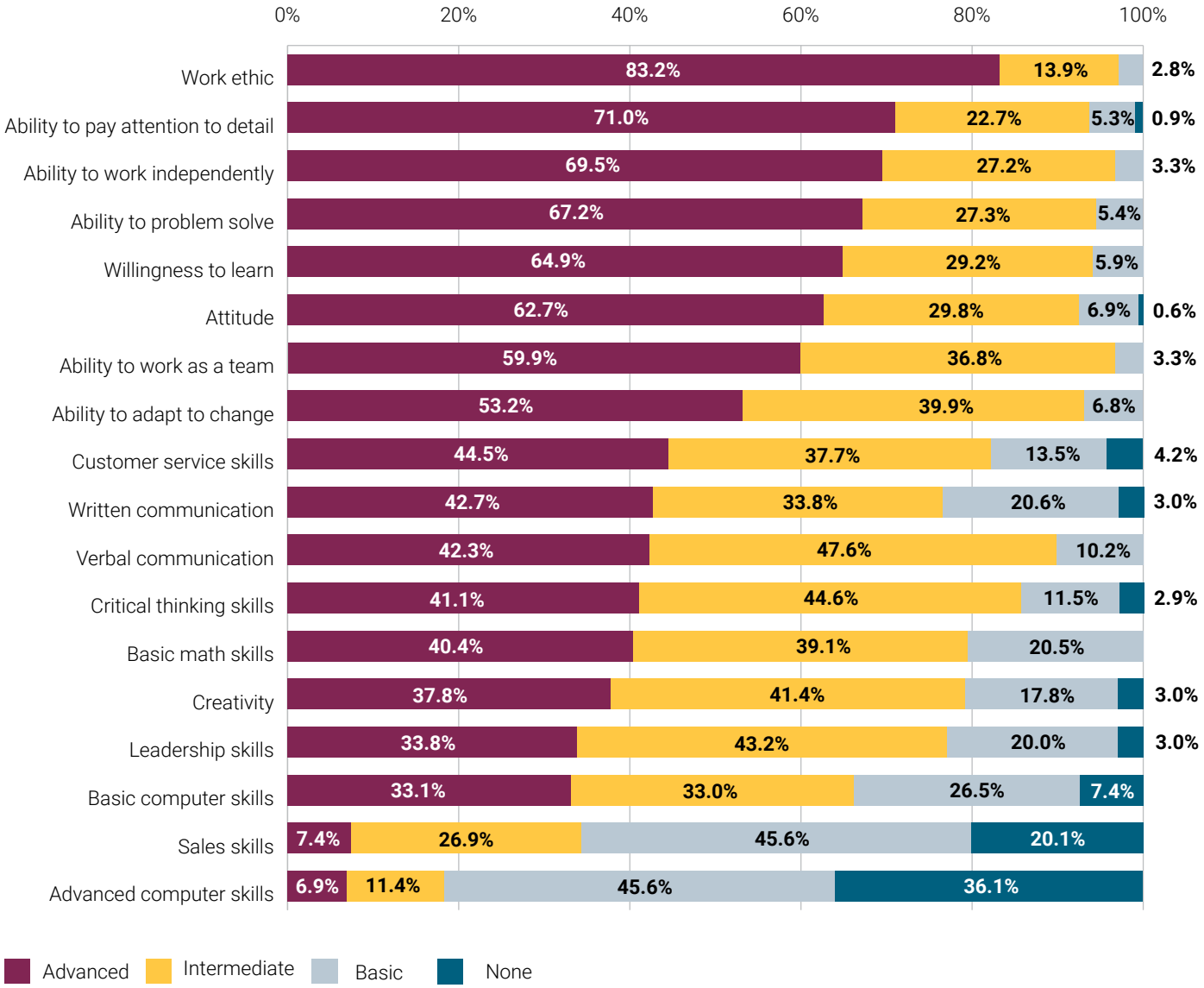


Figure 34 Educational Attainment



Similar to potential job seekers, over 94% active job seekers were GED holders or high school graduates (see Figure 34). More than 25% of active job seekers responded that they held a technical or vocational degree and 27.6% held an associate or 2-year degree. More than 32% affirmed they held a bachelor's or 4-year degree and 20.7% responded they held a graduate or professional degree. Some respondents held multiple degrees at the time of survey. A portion of active job seekers reported they are currently attending a school or college (14%), and 13% of active job seekers are planning to attend a trade/vocational school, community college, or 4-year college.

Figure 35 **Reported Skills** of Active Job Seekers

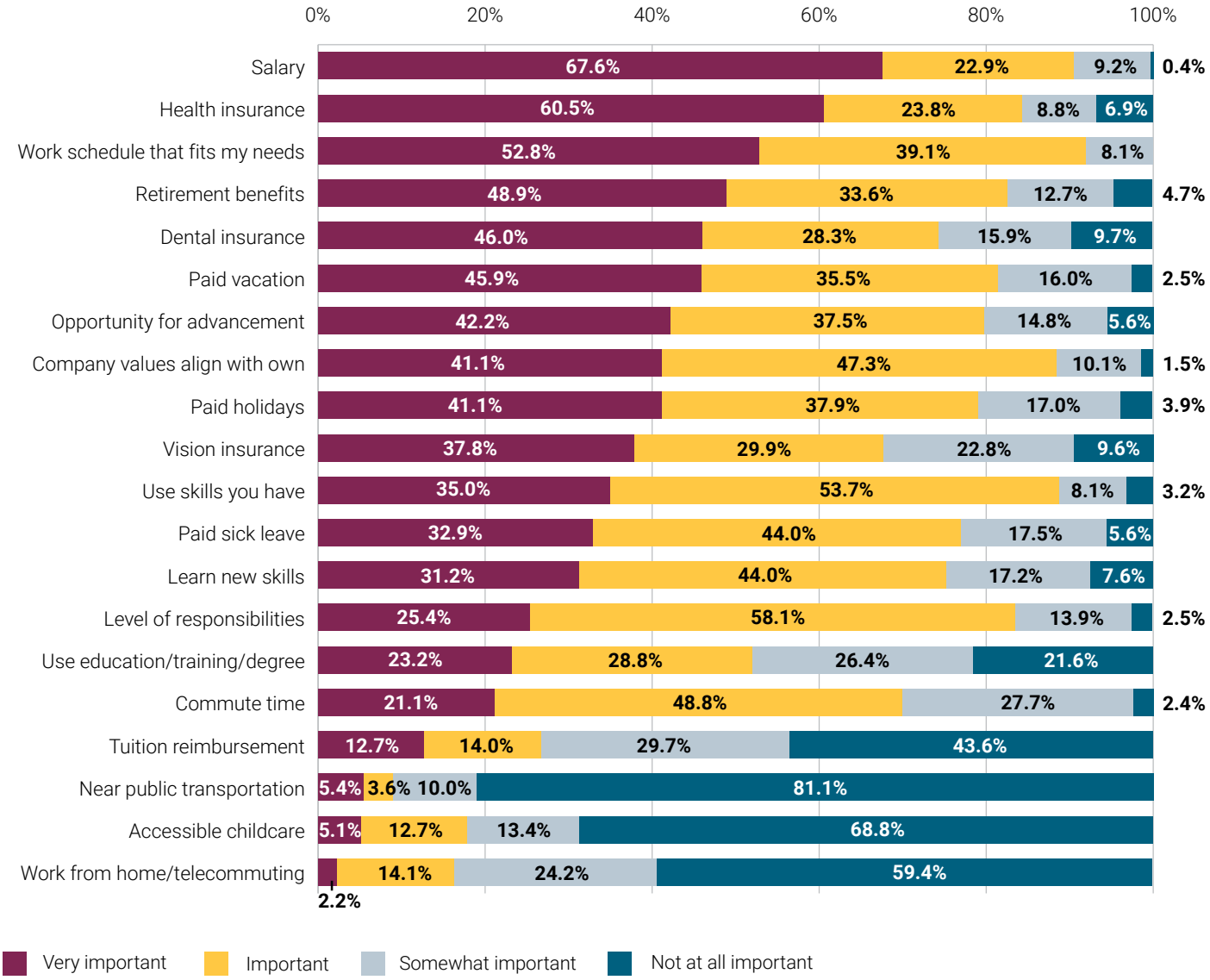


Active job seekers were asked to rate themselves on the skills listed in Figure 35. Respondents rated their skill level as basic, intermediate, advanced or indicated they had no skill. Only active job seekers who reported a skill level were included in this analysis. The top eight skills most often rated as advanced, including work ethic and attitude, were skills that no more than 0.9% of active job seekers rated as 'none' (or having no skill). Over 66% of those currently seeking work rated themselves as advanced or intermediate in all of the prompted skills except sales skills (34.3%) and advanced computer skills (18.3%). Sales and advanced computer skills (e.g., programming, website design, etc.) are likely not job requirements for many workers, but skills such as attitude and willingness to learn are universal.

Future Employment of Active Job Seekers

Considering what is important when choosing a new job, respondents rated each item listed in Figure 36 as not at all important to very important. When choosing a new job, 91.9% of active seekers rated 'work schedule that fits my needs' as important or very important. At least 52% of active seekers rated all factors as very important or important except for tuition reimbursement, working from home, being near public transportation, and accessible childcare.

Figure 36 **Important Factors** of Active Job Seekers



Displayed in Figure 37.1 and 37.2 is the difference between active job seekers' current pay and their minimum pay required to improve their employment situation. Only respondents who listed both their current and minimum pay required to change jobs were included in each of the analyses.

Figure 37.1 illustrates the responses of active job seekers and potential job seekers who provided current and required annual salaries. Active job seekers were less likely to require no pay increase or a decrease (40%) compared to potential job seekers (48.7%). Nearly 22% of active job seekers would require less than a $10,000 raise to improve their employment situation compared to 12.6% of potential job seekers.

Figure 37.2 displays active and potential job seekers who reported current and required pay in hourly wages. Active seekers were more likely to require a raise of $2 to $2.99 in hourly pay or require a $4 to $4.99 wage raise compared to potential job seekers. However, a greater percentage of potential job seekers (16.3%) would require over $5 more an hour to change jobs or reenter the workforce compared to active job seekers (14.3%).

Figure 37.1 **Minimum Annual Salary Increase Required** to Change Jobs

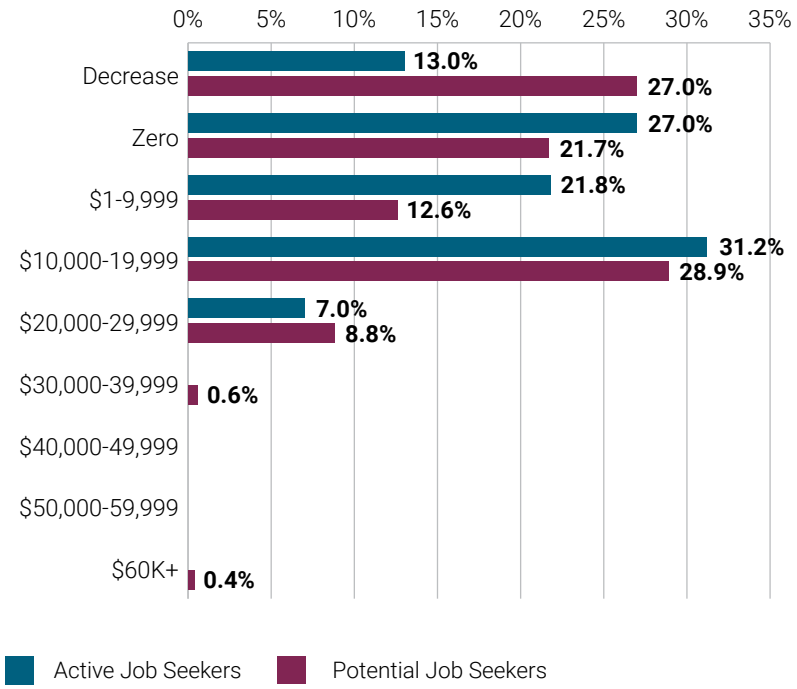


Figure 37.2 **Minimum Hourly Wage Increase Required** to Change Jobs

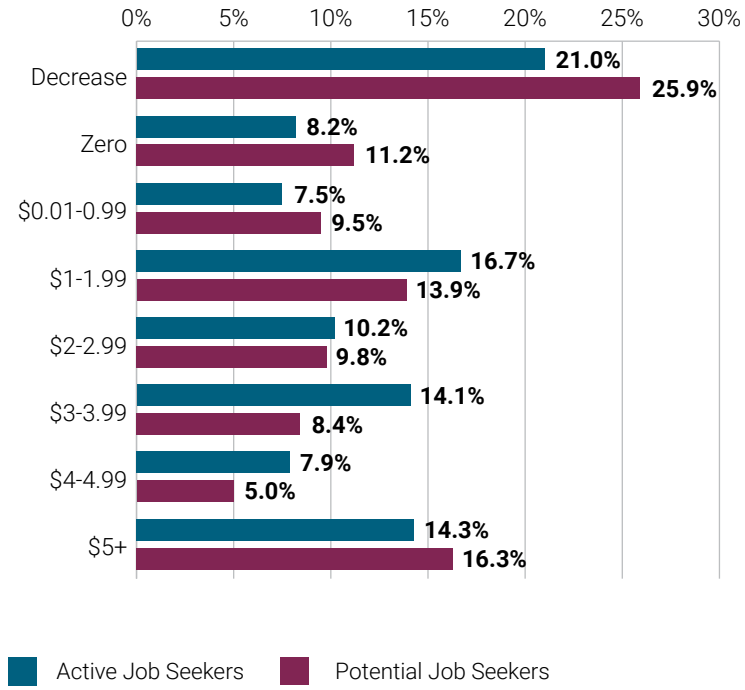


Figure 38 Willingness to Obtain Training

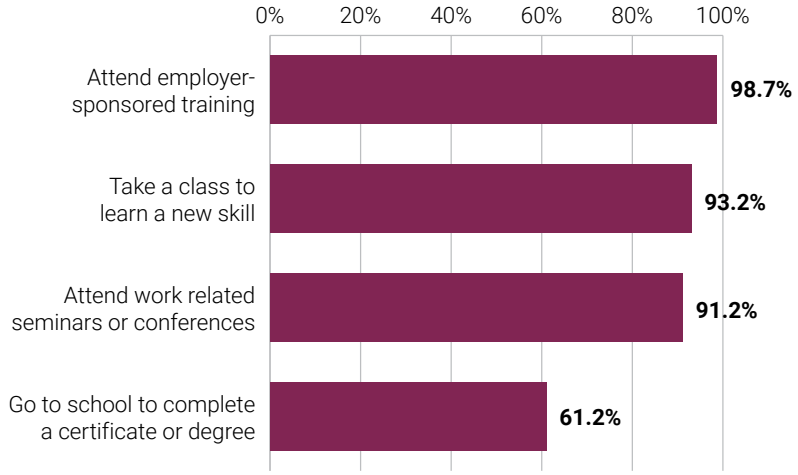
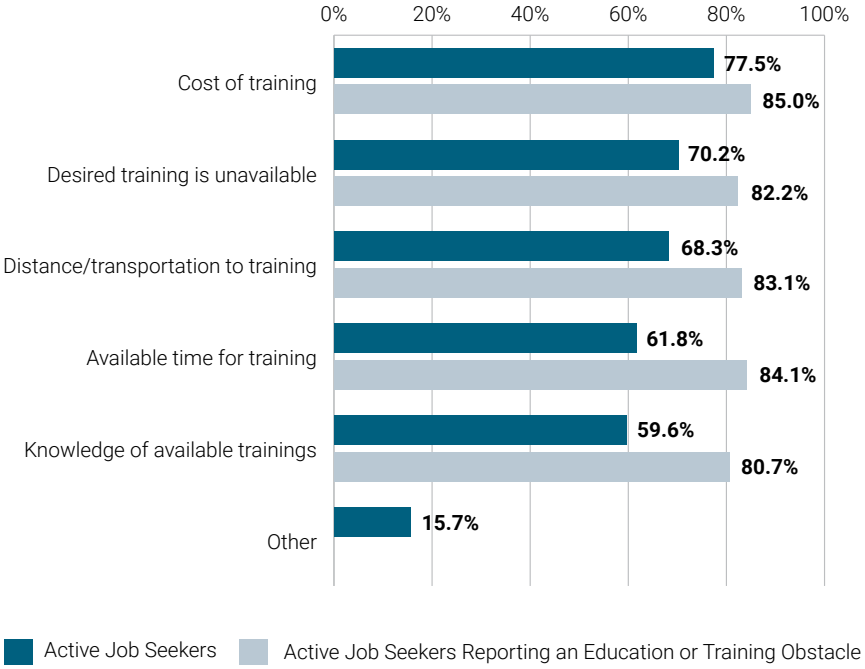


Figure 39 Barriers to Obtaining Training



Active job seekers reported whether they would be willing to obtain different types of training in the next year to improve their employment situation. Figure 38 displays the results that 98.7% of active job seekers were willing to attend employer-sponsored training, 93.2% were willing to take a class to learn a new skill, 91.2% were willing to attend work related seminars, and over 61% of active job seekers are willing to go to school to obtain a certificate or degree.

Active job seekers and active job seekers who reported that a lack of training or a lack of education was an obstacle to changing jobs or reentering the workforce reported any barriers to them obtaining training in the next year (see Figure 39). Over 77% of active job seekers reported that the cost of training was a barrier to obtaining training. Active job seekers who reported that a lack of education or training was an obstacle to changing jobs or reentering the workforce were more likely to say that there was a barrier to obtaining training than active job seekers as a whole. Other barriers to training active job seekers specified included age and the lack pay reimbursement for training.

As displayed in Figure 40, active job seekers were able to select any obstacles listed or specify another obstacle that may prevent them from changing jobs or reentering the workforce in the next year. Many active job seekers indicated that a lack of job opportunities in the area was an obstacle to them changing jobs or reentering the workforce within the next year (80%). As seen with potential job seekers as a whole, the subset of active job seekers most commonly cited obstacles to employment that were job market-related issues (e.g., pay offered, hours offered) rather than workforce-related issues, such as being overqualified or inexperienced. Write-in obstacles that may prevent active job seekers from changing jobs or reentering the workforce were related to age and the time between a job offer and first day of work being too long.

Employed active job seekers also reported whether they were currently using each skill in their current position. Included in Figure 41 are employed active job seekers who indicated an overqualification obstacle to employment and reported at least an intermediate level of skill. Over 46% of active job seekers reported not using sales skills despite their intermediate or advanced skill level. Based on these findings, some individuals currently looking for work have skills they are not using in their current position, and may be prevented or may perceive that they are prevented from changing jobs due to their overqualification.

Figure 40 Obstacles to Employment

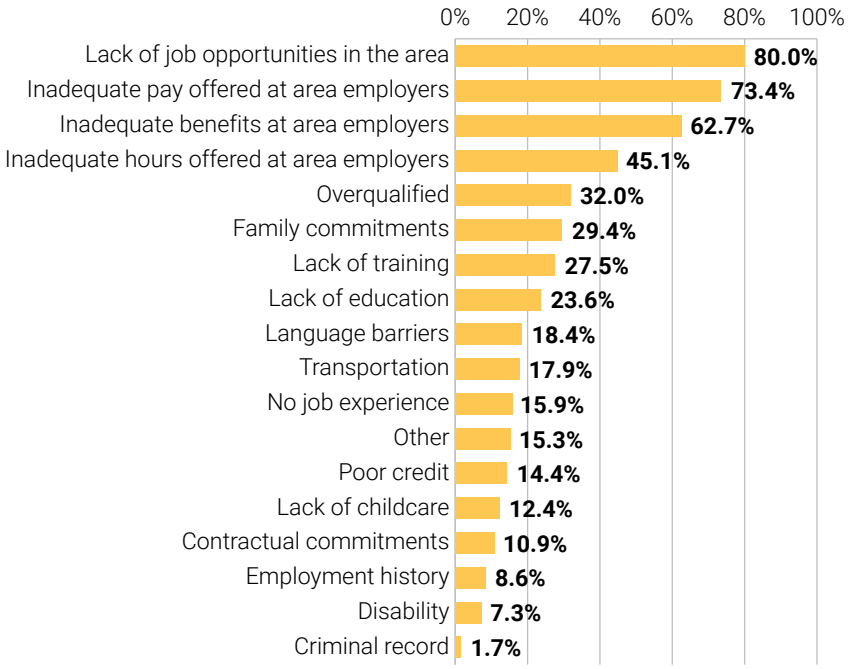
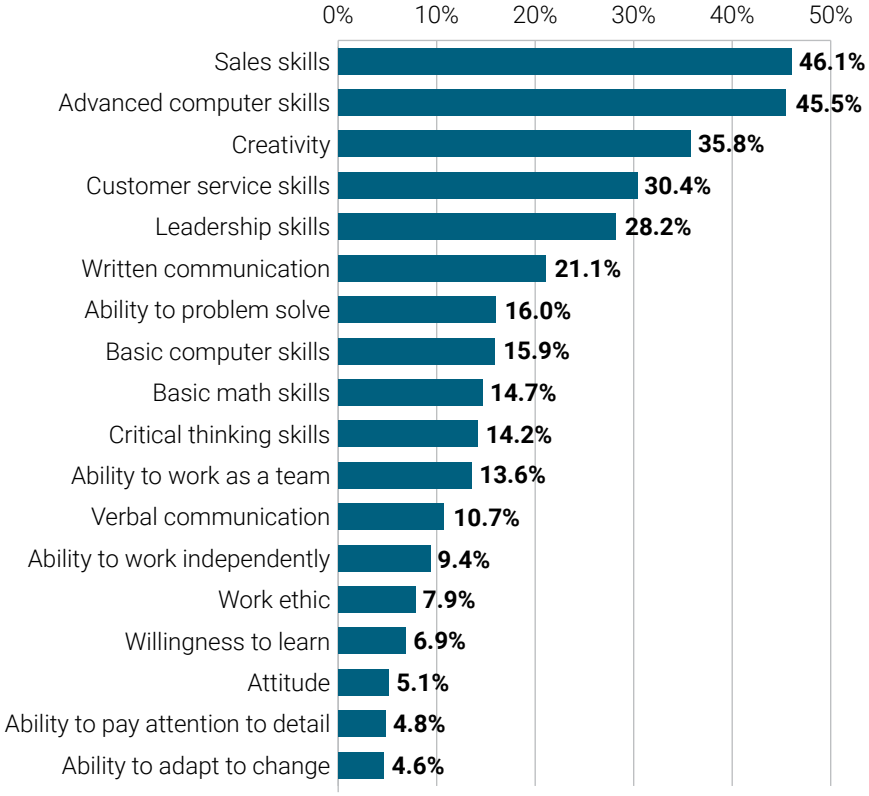


Figure 41 Unused Skills of Overqualified Employed Active Job Seekers



Conclusion

Many factors can affect labor availability in a regional labor market. Geography, pay and benefits, education and skill requirements, work schedules, and many other factors are considered in someone's decision to take a job. The Fremont Labor Availability Report examined these factors.

Nearly 52% of potential job seekers, defined as survey respondents who were willing to accept a new job or change jobs if it were suitable and available, were between the ages 25 and 44 and 88.4% were employed. The greatest percentage (16.5%) of salaried potential job seekers reported earning between $60,000 and $69,999 a year. Over 38% of potential job seekers who earned hourly wages were paid between $9 and $14.99 per hour. Most employed potential job seekers had been working for their primary employer for 10 years or less (75.3%). Many potential job seekers rated themselves as advanced in their work ethic (80.1%), ability to work independently (67.7%), and willingness to learn (67.2%). When choosing a job, the factors most often rated as important or very important by potential job seekers were work schedule that fits needs (93.5%), salary (88.4%), using the skills they have (87.6%), company values align with own (83.2%), and retirement benefits (82.2%). While all factors were not universally important, there appeared to be portions of potential job seekers to whom certain factors were very important. Employers who address particular concerns (e.g., accessible childcare) may find applicants who were otherwise unable or unwilling to change jobs or re-enter the workforce due to other factors.

Over 84% of potential job seekers who were actively seeking work were employed and 12.3% of active job seekers were unemployed (Figure 32). Of those who were non-employed but actively seeking work, 31.4% had not worked for at least one year or more (Figure 33). Nearly 95% of active job seekers reported obtaining a high school diploma/GED and 32.4% of active job seekers hold a bachelor's degree.

Many active job seekers rated themselves as advanced in their work ethic (83.2%), ability to pay attention to detail (71%), and their ability to work independently (69.5%). When choosing a job, the factors most often rated as important or very important by active job seekers were a work schedule that fits their needs (93.5%), salary (88.4%), using the skills they have (87.6%), company values align with own (83.2%), and retirement benefits (82.2%). The obstacles to employment most often cited by active job seekers were a lack of job opportunities in the area (80%), inadequate pay offered (73.4%), and inadequate benefits offered at area employers (62.7%).

Most active job seekers were willing to obtain training by attending an employer-sponsored training (98.7%) or by attending school to complete a certificate or degree (61.2%). However, active job seekers reported there were barriers to obtaining training including the cost of training (77.5%), and the desired training is unavailable (70.2%). The percentage of active job seekers who reported barriers to training increased when examining those who stated a lack of training or education was an obstacle to them changing employment or reentering the workforce in the next year.

This study has identified that there is a large pool of individuals actively seeking work, as well as potential job seekers, in the Fremont labor market area. The findings can be used to better understand what is important to these active and potential job seekers and the barriers they may see to accepting a new job. Economic developers, educators, employers, legislators, and others involved in shaping the local economy can use this information to help existing businesses grow and attract new employers and workers to the area.

Number of Responses **by Zip Code**

ZIP Codes	Number of Responses
68001	<5
68002	35
68014	<5
68015	10
68025 (Fremont)	**397**
68031	26
68036	5
68044	6
68045	26
68050	8
68057	18
68601	344
68620	49
68621	8
68624	13
68629	11
68632	43
68633	19
68640	15
68641	22
68642	19
68643	10
68647	8
68648	<5
68649	17

ZIP Codes	Number of Responses
68651	16
68653	**6**
68658	13
68659	<5
68660	17
68661	45
68662	14
68666	24
68701	380
68715	25
68716	8
68740	9
68748	22
68752	12
68758	20
68767	42
68768	10
68779	**26**
68781	23
68787	77
68788	64
68790	9
68791	20
Grand Total	**2004**

Methodology

The Northeast Nebraska Labor Availability Survey was commissioned by the Nebraska Legislature. Data collection, survey processing, and assignment of data weights were conducted by BOSR at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. NDOL analyzed results and produced the final report. Comparable reports are available for many other Nebraska communities at dol.nebraska.gov/las.

The goals of the Northeast Nebraska Labor Availability Survey were to obtain an estimated count of the total labor supply for the northeast Nebraska area including Columbus, and to obtain the characteristics of those who will potentially seek new employment or reenter the labor force.

The survey questionnaire was adapted from previous survey projects conducted in other areas of Nebraska. The questionnaire was created and modified by NDOL, NDED, and BOSR. BOSR provided assistance with question development, formatting, and layout. Improvements were made to the questionnaire based on results of studies in other areas.

Commuting patterns were reviewed for the northeast Nebraska area. The ZIP codes with the highest number of commuters traveling to Columbus, Norfolk, and Fremont for work were identified. Additional ZIP codes were added after the city area defined to combine them into one large survey area that reflects the region from which businesses draw the majority of their workforce.

BOSR mailed the surveys and collected responses. Directions included with the survey asked the adult (age 19 or older) in each household with the next birthday to complete the survey. In order to fully understand the characteristics of the area workforce, individuals were asked to complete the form regardless of whether they were currently employed or self-employed, unemployed, retired, a homemaker, or otherwise out of the workforce.

Data collection began in August of 2017 with the mailing of initial survey packets to all selected households. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, questionnaire and postage-paid return envelope. A postcard reminder and two additional mailings were sent to non-respondents.

A total of 2,054 individuals completed the survey. A portion of these responses were included in the Fremont analysis. Of the original sample of 7,000 households, 513 surveys were returned as undeliverable with no known forwarding address available. The adjusted response rate, accounting for undeliverable mail, was 33.2%.

Data entry was completed by professional data-entry staff at BOSR. Responses from each questionnaire were entered by two data entry workers. Any discrepancies between the two entries were reviewed and resolved by BOSR supervisory staff to ensure high quality data. The data cleaning process was conducted to create consistency within the data sets prior to analysis.

Initial data cleaning was conducted by BOSR to review responses and verify that the skip patterns on the questionnaire were followed. BOSR also reviewed the ZIP codes provided by respondents and those outside of the area of interest were given a special code. Weights were assigned to responses by the BOSR to make the responses as representative of the survey areas as possible. Additional data cleaning was conducted by NDOL to resolve issues with some of the detailed data. For example, respondents were asked to provide the industry of their primary employer. When "Other" was chosen and the response provided fit within one of the categories provided, the response was moved to that category. Another example of detailed data cleaning was in classifying respondents' educational attainment. When respondents reported more than one degree type, only the highest level of education was used.

All interrelated questions were examined to ensure consistent reporting by each respondent and data was cleaned or removed as necessary.

Additionally, several open-ended survey questions were consistently coded prior to starting the data analysis. Staff from the Occupational Employment Statistics unit in the NDOL assigned Standard Occupational Classification codes to occupations reported. NDOL staff assigned Classification of Instructional Programs codes to responses regarding educational attainment. All other open-ended questions were reviewed as well to create consistent codes to use in the survey analysis.

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