

WAGE & LABOR AVAILABILITY REPORT FOR THE NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA STUDY AREA

Final Report to the
North Platte Area Chamber &
Development Corporation

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings from a wage and labor survey administered to a sample of households in the North Platte Study Area between July 11 and July 31, 2013. The findings will provide local economic development officials and human resource managers information regarding the demographic composition and worker location, commuting preferences, skills and experience, and wage and benefit preferences of the available workers in the North Platte Study Area.

The North Platte Study Area is defined as nine Nebraska counties – Lincoln County and its eight adjacent counties (Custer, Dawson, Frontier, Hayes, Keith, Logan, McPherson, and Perkins). Given there are approximately 63,000 people ages 20 to 70 years old living in the North Platte Study Area, it is estimated that there are about 49,355 available workers in the North Platte Study Area, 8,256 of which are estimated to be currently Underemployed Available Workers and 41,099 of which are estimated to be Employed Available Workers.

Underemployed Available Workers are defined as persons who are (1) Unemployed – currently looking for full-time or part-time work, (2) Underemployed – involuntarily working part-time; prefer to be working more hours per week, (3) Discouraged – not currently looking for work but want and are available for work if a job could be found, or (4) Looking – employed but are currently looking for a new job. These available workers represent workers who are “standing ready” for a job, and thus, are most available if new jobs became available in the North Platte Study Area and the skills and experience necessary for the jobs match those of these available workers.

Employed Available Workers are defined as persons who are either employed full-time or voluntarily part-time and who are not currently looking for a new job. Because these workers have jobs, they are higher quality workers, on average, than the Underemployed Available Workers. Therefore, these workers are available in the sense that they may have an incentive to switch to a new job if a new employer in the North Platte Study Area offers an attractive enough compensation package.

Overall, the results indicate:

- Employed Available Workers are more educated and have higher household incomes than Underemployed Available Workers.
- The majority of both groups of workers live and work in North Platte, other communities in Lincoln County, or Dawson County.
- The majority of both groups of workers currently commute fewer than 20 miles to work but nearly 50% would be willing to commute more than 20 miles to work.
- The largest number of workers in both groups are employed in the Medical/Health Care and Government/Education industries.

- Employed Available Workers have more years of experience than Underemployed Available Workers: 50% of Employed Available Workers have more than 10 years of experience compared to 32% of Underemployed Available Workers.
- The top skill used at work for both groups is Customer Service. The top skill that workers do not have but would be willing to learn in both groups is Telecommunication skills.
- On average, Underemployed Available Workers earn \$15-\$16.99 per hour compared to \$19-20.99 per hour among Employed Available Workers. On average, both groups of workers desire to be paid more per hour: \$17-\$18.99 per hour for Underemployed Available Workers and \$23-\$24.99 per hour for Employed Available Workers, on average.
- For both groups, the top four “extremely important” job desirability factors are the same: (1) Be full-time work, (2) Salary, (3) Insurance benefits, and (4) Retirement benefits.

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I. Introduction

The Center for Rural Research and Development (CRRD) at the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) conducted a wage and labor survey in the North Platte area between July 11 and July 31, 2013. The wage and labor survey was sponsored by the North Platte Area Chamber & Development Corporation. The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings from the survey and provide local economic development officials and human resource managers information regarding the demographic composition and worker location, commuting preferences, skills and experience, and wage and benefit preferences of the available workers in the North Platte Study Area.

II. Methodology

A. Study Region

As shown in Figure 1, the North Platte Study Area includes nine Nebraska counties: Custer County, Dawson County, Frontier County, Hayes County, Keith County, Lincoln County, Logan County, McPherson County, and Perkins County. From 2011 to 2012, two of the nine counties (identified in green) experienced a nonnegative change in population whereas the remaining counties experienced a slight decline in population. On net, population growth in the study area from 2011 to 2012 was 0.4 percent.

Figure 1. North Platte Study Area

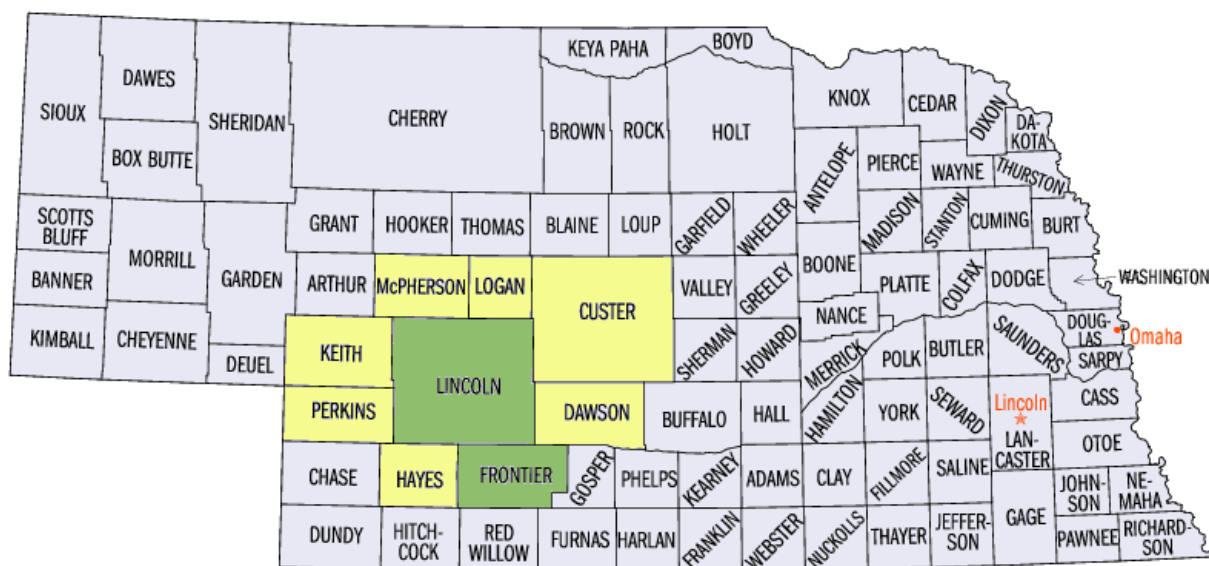
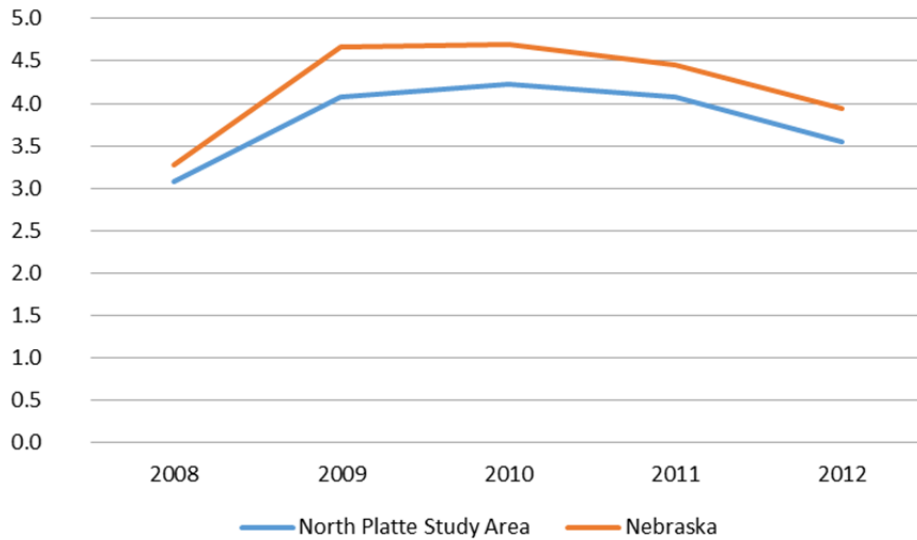


Figure 2 shows the unemployment rates for the North Platte Study Area and Nebraska from 2008 to 2012. The trend in unemployment for the North Platte Study Area is similar to the Nebraska trend. Rates increased slightly from 2008 to 2010 but have fallen since 2010. Overall, the unemployment rate is slightly lower in the North Platte Study Area compared to Nebraska. In 2012, the North Platte Study Area unemployment rate was 3.6 percent compared to 3.9 percent for Nebraska.

Figure 2: Unemployment Rates for the North Platte Study Area vs. Nebraska, 2008 - 2012



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

B. Study Design

The North Platte Area Chamber & Development Corporation approved a customized survey instrument (see Appendix) and survey distribution plan. A list of household addresses for Custer, Dawson, Frontier, Hayes, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, and Perkins counties was purchased and a proportional stratified random sample of 8,000 households was drawn. Of the 8,000 selected, a total of 880 questionnaires were returned. Table 1 presents the 2012 Census population estimates for each county in the study area. The majority of people in the study area reside in Lincoln (41.4 percent), Dawson (27.8 percent), Custer (12.3 percent), and Keith (9.4 percent) counties. Of the returned questionnaires, the majority of the respondents stated their primary residence was also in one of these counties: Lincoln (53.9 percent), Dawson (22.3 percent), Keith (10.2 percent), and Custer (6.3 percent) counties.

Table 1: North Platte Study Area Population & Sample Distribution

Study Area	2012 Population Estimate		Sample
	Number	%	%
Custer County	10,740	12.3	6.3
Dawson County	24,220	27.8	22.3
Frontier County	2,741	3.1	2.1
Hayes County	953	1.1	0.4
Keith County	8,220	9.4	10.2
Lincoln County	36,099	41.4	53.9
Logan County	765	0.9	1.0
McPherson County	509	0.6	0.6
Perkins County	2,931	3.4	3.3
Total	87,178	100	100

C. Available Workers

To understand the demographic composition and worker location, commuting preferences, skills and experience, and wage and benefit preferences of the available workers in the North Platte Study Area, two separate groups of workers are identified.

Group 1: Underemployed Available Workers

The first group of workers is denoted Underemployed Available Workers and include those survey respondents who identified themselves as one of the following:

1. Unemployed – currently looking for full-time or part-time work
2. Underemployed – involuntarily working part-time; prefer to be working more hours per week
3. Discouraged – not currently looking for work but want and are available for work if a job could be found
4. Looking – employed but are currently looking for a new job

This group of available workers is defined more broadly than the standard unemployed worker classification. However, it captures workers who are “standing ready” for a job, and thus, who are most available if new jobs became available in the North Platte Study Area and the skills and experience necessary for the jobs match those of these available workers.

Group 2: Employed Available Workers

The second group of workers are denoted Employed Available Workers and include those survey respondents who identified themselves as either employed full-time or voluntarily part-time and who are not currently looking for a new job. That is, these workers are generally happy with their current jobs, and thus, are not the most likely to be available if new jobs become available in the North Platte Study Area. However, because these workers have jobs, they may be higher quality workers, on average, than the Underemployed Available Workers.

Therefore, these workers are available in the sense that they may have an incentive to switch to a new job if a new employer in the North Platte Study Area offers an attractive enough compensation package.

Unavailable Workers

If survey respondents are not classified as either an Underemployed Available Worker or an Employed Available Worker, then they are not available.

Summary

Table 2 summarizes the sample by availability status. Approximately 16 percent of the sample is classified as Underemployed Available Workers, 78 percent are classified as Employed Available Workers, and the remaining 6 percent are not available. The 2012 Census population estimates indicate there are approximately 63,000 people ages 20 to 70 years old living in the North Platte Study Area. Thus, it is estimated that there are approximately 49,355 available workers in the North Platte Study Area, 8,256 of which are estimated to be currently Underemployed Available Workers and 41,099 of which are estimated to be Employed Available Workers.

Table 2: Sample by Availability Status

Group	Description	Sample	%	Estimate
1	Unemployed	16	1.8	964
	Underemployed	19	2.2	1,145
	Discouraged	4	0.5	241
	Looking	98	11.2	5,906
	Group 1: Underemployed Available Workers	137	15.7	8,256
2	Employed - Full-time and not looking	627	71.7	37,784
	Employed - Part-time and not looking	55	6.3	3,314
	Group 2: Employed Available Workers	682	78.0	41,099
Not Available	Retired	18	2.1	1,085
	Student	3	0.3	181
	Homemaker	27	3.1	1,627
	Not seeking work	7	0.8	422
	Not Available	55	6.3	3,314
Total Usable Responses		874	100	100
Dropped from sample due to missing employment info.		6		
Total Responses		880		

III. Results

Tables 3-11 summarize the available workers in the North Platte Study Area by demographic composition and worker location, commuting preferences, skills and experience, and wage and benefit preferences.

A. Demographic Composition and Worker Location

Table 3 presents demographic information about North Platte Study Area workers by availability status. Each panel represents a demographic factor, and column 1 presents sample frequencies and percent frequencies for Underemployed Available Workers and column 2 presents similar information for Employed Available Workers.

The first panel indicates that the majority of survey respondents identifying themselves as either Underemployed Available or Employed Available are women. The second panel indicates that the age distribution for Underemployed Available and Employed Available Workers is similar. Approximately 80% of the respondents are middle aged (35-54 years old), approximately 16% are young adults (25-34 years old), and the remaining are younger than 25 or older than 55 years old.

The third and fourth panels show that Employed Available Workers have more years of education and higher household income than Underemployed Available Workers. This is consistent with the notion that because Employed Available Workers maintain jobs, they may be higher quality workers, on average, than the Underemployed Available Workers. Approximately 39% of Employed Available Workers have a four-year college degree or more compared to about 30% of Underemployed Available Workers. Moreover, about 44% of Employed Available Workers have household incomes of more than \$55,850 compared to 25% of Underemployed Available workers.

The last panel suggests that Employed Available Workers tend to have more individuals in the household compared to Underemployed Available Workers. That is, about 45% of Employed Available Workers have four individuals or more in the household compared to 34% of Underemployed Available Workers.

Table 3: Demographic Information by Availability Status

	Group 1: Underemployed Available		Group 2: Employed Available	
	Sample	%	Sample	%
Gender				
Missing	3		14	
Male	53	39.6	288	43.1
Female	81	60.4	380	56.9
Age				
Missing	2		10	
19-24	3	2.2	3	0.4
25-34	24	17.8	105	15.6
35-44	58	43.0	268	39.9
45-54	49	36.3	278	41.4
55-64	1	0.7	12	1.8
65+	0	0.0	6	0.9
Highest Level of Education				
Missing	2		9	
High school graduate/GED	21	15.6	101	15.0
Some college, but no degree	34	25.2	118	17.5
Technical/Vocational graduate	14	10.4	69	10.3
Associates/2 year Degree	26	19.3	125	18.6
4-Year college graduate	31	23.0	175	26.0
Graduate Degree	9	6.7	85	12.6
Household Income				
Missing	25		310	
Less than \$36,200	43	38.4	89	23.9
\$36,200 < \$41,400	16	14.3	27	7.3
\$41,400 < \$46,550	8	7.1	24	6.5
\$46,550 < \$51,700	7	6.3	38	10.2
\$51,700 < \$55,850	10	8.9	31	8.3
\$55,850 < \$60,000	9	8.0	45	12.1
\$60,000 < \$64,150	7	6.3	28	7.5
\$64,150 < \$68,250	12	10.7	90	24.2
Household Size				
Missing	3		15	
1	24	17.9	79	11.8
2	32	23.9	162	24.3
3	33	24.6	122	18.3
4	25	18.7	162	24.3
5	12	9.0	99	14.8
6 or more	8	6.0	43	6.4

Table 4 shows that about 87% of Underemployed Available Workers and 74% of Employed Available Workers reside in North Platte, other communities within Lincoln County, or in Dawson County. After these locations, the next most likely county that either type of worker resides in is Keith County and then Custer County. Similar to resident location, the majority of workers in both groups have jobs in North Platte, other communities within Lincoln County, or in Dawson County: 85% of Underemployed Available Workers and 77% of Employed Available Workers.

Table 4: Location of Primary Residence and Workplace by Availability Status

County	Primary Residence				Workplace			
	Group 1: Underemployed Available		Group 2: Employed Available		Group 1: Underemployed Available ^a		Group 2: Employed Available	
	Sample	%	Sample	%	Sample	%	Sample	%
Missing	4		15		3		24	
North Platte	53	39.8	257	38.5	64	56.1	325	49.4
Lincoln County, but not in North Platte	24	18.0	97	14.5	6	5.3	48	7.3
Dawson County	38	28.6	140	21.0	27	23.7	134	20.4
Custer County	5	3.8	46	6.9	3	2.6	41	6.2
Keith County	7	5.3	73	10.9	8	7.0	64	9.7
Perkins County	2	1.5	25	3.7	1	0.9	25	3.8
Frontier County	4	3.0	13	1.9	5	4.4	12	1.8
Hayes County	0	0.0	3	0.4	0	0.0	2	0.3
Logan County	0	0.0	8	1.2	0	0.0	4	0.6
McPherson County	0	0.0	5	0.7	0	0.0	3	0.5

^aExcludes unemployed workers because they have no workplace.

B. Commuting Distances and Preferences

Table 5 indicates that for available workers in each group, the majority commute less than 20 miles to work. That is, approximately 67% of workers in each group commute between zero and ten miles to work and about 13% of workers in each group commute between 11 and 20 miles to work. Only about 3% of Underemployed Available Workers and 5% of Employed Available Workers currently commute more than 50 miles to work.

Although current commuting distances are relatively short for the majority of available workers in the North Platte Study Area, these workers indicate that they would be willing to commute longer distances. Approximately 49% of Underemployed Available Workers and 47% of Employed Available Workers would be willing to commute 21 miles or more to work. Currently, only 19% of Underemployed Available Workers and 14% of Employed Available Workers are doing so.

Table 5: Commuting Distances by Available Status

	Currently Commuting				Willing to Commute			
	Group 1: Underemployed Available ^a		Group 2: Employed Available		Group 1: Underemployed Available		Group 2: Employed Available	
Miles	Sample	%	Sample	%	Sample	%	Sample	%
Missing	0		4		5		40	
I work from home	1	0.9	42	6.2	-	-	-	-
0-10 miles	80	68.4	445	65.6	27	20.5	169	26.3
11-20 miles	14	12.0	94	13.9	40	30.3	173	26.9
21-30 miles	11	9.4	31	4.6	28	21.2	160	24.9
31-40 miles	3	2.6	27	4.0	13	9.8	61	9.5
41-50 miles	4	3.4	7	1.0	14	10.6	49	7.6
more than 50 miles	4	3.4	32	4.7	10	7.6	30	4.7

^aExcludes unemployed workers because they have no workplace.

C. Skills and Experience

Table 6 shows the industries in which Underemployed Available Workers and Employed Available Workers are employed. For both types of workers, there tends to be concentration in the Medical/Health Care and Government/Education industries. For Employed Available Workers, the next most likely industries to be employed in are the Agricultural (12%) and Transportation/CDL (8%) industries. For Underemployed Available Workers, the next most likely industries are Retail/Wholesale (9.6%) and Maintenance/Repair and Manufacturing/Assembly (both 9%). The fewest number of workers in both groups are employed in the Communications and Distribution industries. Also, relatively few of the Underemployed Available are employed in the Transportation/CDL industry (3.5%).

Table 6: Current Employment by Industry and Availability Status

Industry	Group 1: Underemployed Available ^a		Group 2: Employed Available	
	Sample	%	Sample	%
Missing	3		7	
Agriculture	7	6.1	78	11.6
Retail/Wholesale	11	9.6	38	5.6
Medical/Health Care	21	18.4	120	17.8
Gov't/ Education	14	12.3	153	22.7
Communications	2	1.8	1	0.1
Maintenance/Repair	10	8.8	39	5.8
Manufacturing/Assembly	10	8.8	13	1.9
Transportation/CDL	4	3.5	53	7.9
Sales/Services	9	7.9	41	6.1
Construction/Trade	5	4.4	24	3.6
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	8	7.0	33	4.9
Distribution	3	2.6	7	1.0
Other	10	8.8	75	11.1

^aExcludes unemployed workers because they have no workplace.

Table 7 presents a variety of skills that workers either (1) use at work, (2) have but do not use at work, or (3) do not have but would be willing to learn. The top panel shows percent frequencies for Underemployed Available Workers and the bottom panel shows similar information for Employed Available Workers. The skill that most workers in both groups use at work is Customer Services skills (55% of Employed Available Workers and 62% of Underemployed Available Workers) followed by Office operations/Clerical skills (43% of Employed Available Workers and 36% of Underemployed Available Workers). Also, 42% of Employed Available Workers use Management skills at work and 30% use Accounting/bookkeeping skills at work. For Underemployed Available Workers, 35% use Sales skills at work and 29% use Management skills at work. The least common skill that both groups of workers use at work is Telecommunication skills.

In terms of skills that workers have but do not use at work, the most common among both groups of workers is Sales (24% of Employed Available Workers and 21% of Underemployed Available Workers). In terms of skills that workers do not have but would learn, the most common among both groups of worker is Telecommunication skills (26% of Employed Available Workers and 32% of Underemployed Available Workers). Also, 22% of Employed Available Workers and 27% of Underemployed Available Workers do not have Transportation/CDL skills but would be willing to learn them.

Table 7: Job Skills by Use and Availability Status

	Have, but do		Don't have, but	
	Use at work	not use at work	would learn	Don't have
Group 1: Underemployed Available	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Sales	35	21	15	29
Welding	14	14	28	44
Machine operator	27	13	17	43
Management	29	29	17	25
Transportation/CDL	14	6	27	53
Warehouse/Distribution	13	17	21	50
Accounting/bookkeeping	22	20	22	36
Construction trades	8	12	28	52
Electronics/Engineering	9	5	28	58
Customer Service	62	13	5	20
Office operations/ clerical	36	15	15	34
Health sciences/ Medical	15	10	26	48
Manufacturing/Assembly/Fabrication	17	13	21	49
Maintenance/Repair/Installation	22	9	16	52
Telecommunications (Networking/fiberoptic	5	4	32	59
Information technology/ computer support	13	7	30	50

	Have, but do		Don't have, but	
	Use at work	not use at work	would learn	Don't have
Group 2: Employed Available	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Sales	28	24	12	36
Welding	14	11	21	55
Machine operator	22	9	15	54
Management	42	17	12	29
Transportation/CDL	18	6	22	54
Warehouse/Distribution	10	10	18	62
Accounting/bookkeeping	30	14	18	38
Construction trades	11	12	20	57
Electronics/Engineering	8	4	24	63
Customer Service	55	12	8	25
Office operations/ clerical	43	12	12	33
Health sciences/ Medical	18	5	25	52
Manufacturing/Assembly/Fabrication	12	8	20	61
Maintenance/Repair/Installation	23	8	16	54
Telecommunications (Networking/fiberoptic	8	5	26	61
Information technology/ computer support	18	6	23	52

Table 8 shows that Employed Available Workers have more experience than Underemployed Available Workers. Approximately 50% of Employed Available Workers have 11 or more years of experience compared to 32% of Underemployed Available Workers. Employed Available Workers having more experience is consistent with this group of workers also having more education and higher household incomes. That is, the benefits of education include higher earnings potential, more intellectually rewarding job opportunities, and fewer spells of unemployment. Thus, because Employed Available Workers, on average, appear to be higher quality workers than the Underemployed Available Workers, a more attractive compensation package most likely will have to be offered to these workers to entice them to switch to a new job.

Table 8: Years of Experience by Availability Status

Years	Group 1: Underemployed Available ^a		Group 2: Employed Available	
	Sample	%	Sample	%
Missing	1		5	
less than 1	16	13.8	33	4.9
1-5	33	28.4	153	22.6
6-10	30	25.9	156	23.0
11-15	12	10.3	118	17.4
more than 15	25	21.6	217	32.1

^aExcludes unemployed workers because they have no workplace.

D. Wage and Benefit Preferences

The average current hourly wage rate for Underemployed Available Workers is \$15-\$16.99 per hour, whereas for Employed Available Workers, it is \$19-\$20.99 per hour. Table 9 shows the distribution of current wage rates by availability status. Approximately 60% of Underemployed Available Workers earn \$16.99 or less per hour compared to 34% of Employed Available Workers. As expected, both groups of workers prefer to be paid more per hour. On average, the desired hourly wage rate for Underemployed Available Workers is one pay bracket higher than what is currently being paid (\$17-\$18.99 per hour), whereas for Employed Available Workers, it is two pay brackets higher (\$23-\$24.99 per hour). The last two columns of Table 9, show the distribution of desired wage rates.

Table 9: Current and Desired Wages by Availability Status

Hourly Rate	Equivalent Annual Salary	Current Wages or Salary				Desired Wages or Salary			
		Group 1: Underemployed Available ^a		Group 2: Employed Available		Group 1: Underemployed Available		Group 2: Employed Available	
		Sample	%	Sample	%	Sample	%	Sample	%
Missing		0		11		4		59	
\$8.99 or less	\$18,700 or less	14	12.0	40	6.0	2	1.5	0	0.0
\$9-\$10.99	\$18,701-\$22,900	19	16.2	29	4.3	7	5.3	7	1.1
\$11-\$12.99	\$22,901-\$27,000	14	12.0	47	7.0	15	11.3	16	2.6
\$13-\$14.99	\$27,001-\$31,200	15	12.8	57	8.5	18	13.5	30	4.8
\$15-\$16.99	\$31,201-\$35,400	8	6.8	58	8.6	22	16.5	63	10.1
\$17-\$18.99	\$35,401-\$39,500	9	7.7	48	7.2	14	10.5	36	5.8
\$19-\$20.99	\$39,501-\$43,700	4	3.4	47	7.0	16	12.0	46	7.4
\$21-\$22.99	\$43,701-\$47,900	3	2.6	38	5.7	5	3.8	45	7.2
\$23-\$24.99	\$47,901-\$52,000	10	8.5	41	6.1	5	3.8	47	7.5
\$25-\$26.99	\$52,001-\$56,200	8	6.8	57	8.5	5	3.8	51	8.2
\$27-\$28.99	\$56,201-\$60,300	7	6.0	48	7.2	7	5.3	28	4.5
\$29-\$30.99	\$60,301-\$64,500	1	0.9	29	4.3	6	4.5	47	7.5
\$31-\$32.99	\$64,501-\$68,700	2	1.7	13	1.9	2	1.5	24	3.9
\$33-\$34.99	\$68,701-\$72,800	0	0.0	26	3.9	2	1.5	22	3.5
\$35 or more	\$72,801 or more	3	2.6	93	13.9	7	5.3	161	25.8

^aExcludes unemployed workers because they have no workplace.

Table 10 shows that other than paid holidays, employers in the North Platte Study Area are not likely to provide paid benefits.

Table 10: Employer-Provided Benefits

Benefit	Group 1: Underemployed Available ^a		Group 2: Employed Available	
	Sample	%	Sample	%
Missing	15		84	
Holidays	97	95.1	573	95.8
Vacation days	1	1.0	9	1.5
Retirement plan	0	0.0	1	0.2
Sick days	1	1.0	0	0.0
Medical/dental insurance	0	0.0	5	0.8
Employee wellness	0	0.0	1	0.2
Personal paid time off	0	0.0	2	0.3
Flexible spending accounts (daycare & medical expenses)	1	1.0	2	0.3
Jury/court/military leave	0	0.0	0	0.0
Reimbursed expenses (mileage, continuing ed)	1	1.0	3	0.5
Other financial savings or investment plans	1	1.0	2	0.3

^aExcludes unemployed workers because they have no workplace.

Table 11 ranks various factors that influence job desirability by level of importance. The top panel presents the results for Underemployed Available Workers and the bottom panel presents similar results for Employed Available Workers. For both groups, the top four “extremely important” job desirability factors are the same: (1) Be full-time work, (2) Salary, (3) Insurance benefits, and (4) Retirement benefits. The least “extremely important” job desirability factor for both groups is “Use skills you have but don’t use in present job.”

Table 11: Factors Influencing Job Desirability

	Extremely Important (%)	Very Important (%)	Somewhat Important (%)	Somewhat Important (%)
Group 1: Underemployed Available				
Be full-time work	71	13	12	4
Salary	62	28	8	2
Insurance benefits	54	24	14	7
Retirement benefits	45	28	20	8
Location	41	32	20	7
Be a daytime job	38	28	24	10
Opportunity for advancement	36	33	26	5
Flexible schedule	25	33	26	16
Paid training programs	18	24	37	21
Physical working environment	16	18	45	20
Use skills you have but don't use in present job	10	29	46	15
Group 2: Employed Available				
	Extremely Important (%)	Very Important (%)	Somewhat Important (%)	Somewhat Important (%)
Be full-time work	66	22	8	3
Salary	61	28	10	1
Insurance benefits	57	24	12	7
Retirement benefits	50	29	17	4
Be a daytime job	46	27	19	8
Location	45	35	16	4
Opportunity for advancement	34	34	25	7
Flexible schedule	34	31	23	13
Paid training programs	17	26	38	19
Physical working environment	13	29	41	17
Use skills you have but don't use in present job	6	16	51	27

IV. Conclusions

This report summarizes wage and labor survey data collected for a sample of households in the North Platte Study Area between July 11 and July 31, 2013. Given there are approximately 63,000 people ages 20 to 70 years old living in the North Platte Study Area, it is estimated that there are about 49,355 available workers in the North Platte Study Area, 8,256 of which are estimated to be currently Underemployed Available Workers and 41,099 of which are estimated to be Employed Available Workers.

Underemployed Available Workers are defined as persons who are (1) Unemployed – currently looking for full-time or part-time work, (2) Underemployed – involuntarily working part-time; prefer to be working more hours per week, (3) Discouraged – not currently looking for work but want and are available for work if a job could be found, or (4) Looking – employed but are currently looking for a new job. These available workers represent workers who are “standing ready” for a job, and thus, who are most available if new jobs became available in the North Platte Study Area and the skills and experience necessary for the jobs match those of these available workers.

Employed Available Workers are defined as persons who are either employed full-time or voluntarily part-time and who are not currently looking for a new job. Because these workers have jobs, they are higher quality workers, on average, than the Underemployed Available Workers. Therefore, these workers are available in the sense that they may have an incentive to switch to a new job if a new employer in the North Platte Study Area offers an attractive enough compensation package.

Overall, the results indicate:

- Employed Available Workers are more educated and have higher household incomes than Underemployed Available Workers.
- The majority of both groups of workers live and work in North Platte, other communities in Lincoln County, or Dawson County.
- The majority of both groups of workers currently commute fewer than 20 miles to work but nearly 50% would be willing to commute more than 20 miles to work.
- The largest number of workers in both groups are employed in the Medical/Health Care and Government/Education industries.
- Employed Available Workers have more years of experience than Underemployed Available Workers: 50% of Employed Available Workers have more than 10 years of experience compared to 32% of Underemployed Available Workers.
- The top skill used at work for both groups is Customer Service. The top skill that workers do not have but would be willing to learn in both groups is Telecommunication skills.
- On average, Underemployed Available Workers earn \$15-\$16.99 per hour compared to \$19-20.99 per hour among Employed Available Workers. On average, both groups of workers desire to be paid more per hour: \$17-\$18.99 per hour for Underemployed

Available Workers and \$23-\$24.99 per hour for Employed Available Workers, on average.

- For both groups, the top four “extremely important” job desirability factors are the same: (1) Be full-time work, (2) Salary, (3) Insurance benefits, and (4) Retirement benefits.

V. Appendix

July 11, 2013

[Title] [First Name] [Last Name]
[Primary Address]
[City], [State] [ZIPcode]

Dear [First Name] [Last Name]:

The Center for Rural Research and Development (CRRD) from the University of Nebraska at Kearney has been hired to complete a Wage and Labor Study for the North Platte Area Chamber & Development Corporation. We request your voluntary participation in completing the attached questionnaire as the results may be used to help make decisions regarding the recruitment, retention, and expansion of businesses and jobs in the North Platte area. This survey information will be kept confidential and only the combined results will be reported and used to evaluate the current climate of employment and opportunities for economic development and employment growth.

The questionnaire has been mailed to you directly from the CRRD and all completed surveys should be returned via the enclosed business reply envelope (directly to the CRRD) to maintain confidentiality of the survey.

Please **RETURN THE SURVEY IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED BY WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2013.**

No one at the North Platte Area Chamber & Development Corporation or any one in North Platte or Lincoln County will ever have access to individual surveys. Survey participants must be 19 years of age or older to complete this survey. All survey information will be compiled and documented by CRRD. If you have any questions about the survey, you may contact:

Shawn C. Kaskie PCED, MA – Director
308-865-8135 or
kaskiesc@unk.edu

OR Dr. Bree Dority, Economics
308-865-8343 or
doritybl@unk.edu

Thank you for your time. Your input will help economic development efforts in your town and county.

Sincerely,

Shawn Kaskie
Center for Rural Research and Development
University of Nebraska at Kearney, College of Business & Technology
West Center 125E, 1917 West 24th Street
Kearney, NE 68849

Please fill in marks like this: ●

NOT like this: ○



Please complete a separate survey for every interested wage earner in the household.

1. Are you presently employed? YES ○ NO ○ (Skip to Q3)

2. If YES how would you describe your employment status? Full-time ○ Voluntary part-time ○ Involuntary part-time; I would prefer to be working more hours per week ○

3. If NO, are you: currently looking for full-time work (skip to Q28) ○ retired (STOP here) ○ currently looking for part-time work (skip to Q28) ○ student (STOP here) ○ NOT currently looking for work, but would like to work if I could find a job (skip to Q28) ○ a homemaker (STOP here) ○ not seeking employment (STOP here) ○

4. In what area(s) are you currently employed? (primary employer = most wages paid or most hours worked) Primary Secondary Agriculture ○ ○ Retail/Wholesale ○ ○ Medical/Health Care ○ ○ Gov't/ Education ○ ○ Communications ○ ○ Maintenance/Repair ○ ○ Manufacturing/Assembly ○ ○ Transportation/CDL ○ ○ Sales/Services ○ ○ Construction/Trade ○ ○ Finance/Insurance/Real Estate ○ ○ Distribution ○ ○ Other ○ ○

5. How many years have you had the primary job identified in Question #4: less than 1 ○ 6-10 ○ 1-5 ○ 11-15 ○ more than 15 ○

6. How many miles do you currently commute to work? I work from home ○ 21-30 miles ○ 0-10 miles ○ 31-40 miles ○ 11-20 miles ○ 41-50 miles ○ more than 50 miles ○

7. Where is your workplace located? In North Platte ○ In Keith County ○ In Lincoln County, but not in North Platte ○ In Perkins County ○ In Dawson County ○ In Frontier County ○ In Custer County ○ In Hayes County ○ In Logan County ○ In McPherson County ○

8. Does your employer provide the following paid benefits? holidays ○ flexible spending accounts (daycare & medical expenses) ○ vacation days ○ jury/court/military leave ○ retirement plan ○ reimbursed expenses (mileage, continuing ed) ○ sick days ○ medical/dental insurance ○ employee wellness ○ Other financial savings or investment plans ○ personal paid time off ○

For the following list of skills, please indicate if you use the skill at work, B) have the skill, but do not use it at work, or C) do not have the skill, but would be willing to learn it

	use at work	have, but do not use at work	don't have, but would learn
9. Sales	○	○	○
10. Welding	○	○	○
11. Machine operator	○	○	○
12. Management	○	○	○
13. Transportation/CDL	○	○	○
14. Warehouse/Distribution	○	○	○
15. Accounting/bookkeeping	○	○	○
16. Construction trades	○	○	○
17. Electronics/Engineering	○	○	○
18. Customer Service	○	○	○
19. Office operations/ clerical	○	○	○
20. Health sciences/ Medical	○	○	○
21. Manufacturing/ Assembly/Fabrication	○	○	○
22. Maintenance/Repair/ Installation	○	○	○
23. Telecommunications (Networking/fiberoptics)	○	○	○
24. Information technology/ computer support	○	○	○

25. Do you desire a new job-one in which you possess the necessary skills, education and experience? No, I am happy with my current job ○ Yes ○

26. Are you looking for a different job now? No ○ Yes ○

27. What is your present pay rate/salary? Hourly (Annual-Full Time) \$8.99 (\$18,700) or less ○ \$9-\$10.99 (\$18,701-\$22,900) ○ \$11-\$12.99 (\$22,901-\$27,000) ○ \$13-\$14.99 (\$27,001-\$31,200) ○ \$15-\$16.99 (\$31,201-\$35,400) ○ \$17-\$18.99 (\$35,401-\$39,500) ○ \$19-\$20.99 (\$39,501-\$43,700) ○ \$21-\$22.99 (\$43,701-\$47,900) ○ \$23-\$24.99 (\$47,901-\$52,000) ○ \$25-\$26.99 (\$52,001-\$56,200) ○ \$27-\$28.99 (\$56,201-\$60,300) ○ \$29-\$30.99 (\$60,301-\$64,500) ○ \$31-\$32.99 (\$64,501-\$68,700) ○ \$33-\$34.99 (\$68,701-\$72,800) ○ \$35 (\$72,801) or more ○

Please rate how important the following items are for you to take a new job:

(Please use this scale: **E**=Extremely Important, **V**=Very Important, **I**=Important, **S**=Somewhat Important, **N**=Not Important)

- | | E | V | I | S | N |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 28. Salary | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 29. Location | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 30. Insurance benefits | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 31. Retirement benefits | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 32. Flexible schedule | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 33. Paid training programs | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 34. Provide on-site day care | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 35. Be a daytime job | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 36. Be full-time work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 37. Be part-time work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 38. Have union membership | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 39. Opportunity for advancement | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 40. Physical working environment | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 41. Use skills you have but don't use in present job | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

42. For what pay rate/salary would you be willing to take a new job? (Assuming you would be satisfied with the items in Questions 28-41)

- Hourly (Annual-Full Time)
- \$8.99 (\$18,700) or less
 - \$9-\$10.99 (\$18,701-\$22,900)
 - \$11-\$12.99 (\$22,901-\$27,000)
 - \$13-\$14.99 (\$27,001-\$31,200)
 - \$15-\$16.99 (\$31,201-\$35,400)
 - \$17-\$18.99 (\$35,401-\$39,500)
 - \$19-\$20.99 (\$39,501-\$43,700)
 - \$21-\$22.99 (\$43,701-\$47,900)
 - \$23-\$24.99 (\$47,901-\$52,000)
 - \$25-\$26.99 (\$52,001-\$56,200)
 - \$27-\$28.99 (\$56,201-\$60,300)
 - \$29-\$30.99 (\$60,301-\$64,500)
 - \$31-\$32.99 (\$64,501-\$68,700)
 - \$33-\$34.99 (\$68,701-\$72,800)
 - \$35 (\$72,801) or more

43. Under the above conditions, how many miles would you be willing to commute for another job?

- 0-10 miles
- 11-20 miles
- 21-30 miles
- 31-40 miles
- 41-50 miles
- more than 50 miles

44. What is your highest level of education?

- High school graduate/GED
- Some college, but no degree
- Technical/Vocational graduate
- Associates/2 year Degree
- 4-Year college graduate
- Graduate Degree

45. What is your age?

- 19-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

46. Including your self, how many people live in your household?

- 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8

47. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

48. My household's total gross family income last year was LESS THAN:

- \$36,200
- \$41,400
- \$46,550
- \$51,700
- \$55,850
- \$60,000
- \$64,150
- \$68,250

49. Where is your primary residence?

- In North Platte
- In Lincoln County, but not in North Platte
- In Dawson County
- In Custer County
- In Keith County
- In Perkins County
- In Frontier County
- In Hayes County
- In Logan County
- In McPherson County

(This space was left blank intentionally)