

Executive Summary

The Platte County Labor Basin includes Buchanan, Clay, Clinton, Jackson, and Platte Counties in Missouri and Johnson, Leavenworth, and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas. The purpose of this report is to assess the “Available Labor Pool” in this labor basin, with an emphasis on those interested in light industry employment. The “Available Labor Pool” represents those who are looking for employment or are interested in new jobs for the right employment opportunities.

The Docking Institute’s independent analysis of this labor basin shows that:

- The population of the Platte County Labor Basin is 1,990,136. The Civilian Labor Force is 1,058,004. The Available Labor Pool contains 662,325 individuals.
- Of the *non-working* members of the Available Labor Pool, an estimated 63,619 (9.6%) are currently looking for work and 87,553 (13.2%) are interested in working for the right opportunities. Of the *working* members of the Available Labor Pool, 99,877 (15.1%) are currently looking for work, while 411,275 (62.1%) are interested in different jobs given the right opportunities.
- More than four-fifths (83%) of the Available Labor Pool have at least some college experience and almost all (98.6%) have at least a high school diploma. The average age for members of the Pool is about 44 years old, and men make up more than half (59.4%) of the Pool.
- Almost a fifth (18.5%) of the Available Labor Pool are currently employed as general laborers, while an additional 5.6% work in government services or technical/highly skilled blue-collar occupations. Almost 29% of the Pool work in service sector jobs, while almost a quarter (24.2%) work in professional white-collar jobs. More than a fifth (22.8%) are not currently working.
- More than four-fifths (85.1%) of the Available Labor Pool are “willing to work outside of their primary field of employment for a new or different employment opportunity.”
- Almost a third (31%) of the members of the Available Labor Pool will commute up to 45 minutes, one-way, for an employment opportunity, while 81% will commute up to 30 minutes for employment.
- An estimated 35,103 members (5%) of the Available Labor Pool are interested in a new job at \$10 an hour, 164,256 (25%) are interested at \$15 an hour, and 270,228 (41%) are interested at \$20 an hour.
- The six most important benefits are in order: good salary or hourly pay, good vacation benefits, good retirement benefits, flexible hours or flex-time, good health benefits, and on-the-job training (OJT) or paid training.
- This report includes information regarding three subset of the Available Labor Pool. These subsets are:
 - Those residing “within the necessary commute time” (page 22)
 - Those who consider themselves as “underemployed” (page 28)
 - Those interested in Light Industry employment (page 33)

Some information about each subset follows on the next page.

- **Necessary Commute Time** is defined as a commute time stated by the respondent that is equal to or greater than the commute time necessary for the respondent to travel from his or her ZIP code of residence to the ZIP code at the center of the labor basin. Those within the necessary commute time number 467,226 individuals (70.5% of the entire Available Labor Pool).
- About 11% of those within the “necessary commute time” hold general labor, custodial, delivery, and similar jobs, while 14.2% are currently employed in accounting, engineering, and other jobs working with numbers. Almost a fifth (19%) are currently not working outside the home.
- An estimated 233,166 people (half of this subset) are interested in a new job at \$25 an hour. An estimated 174,290 (37%) are interested in new employment opportunity at \$20 an hour, and 106,537 (23%) are interested in a new job at \$15 an hour. Finally, an estimated 19,158 people (4%) are interested in a new job at \$10.
- **Underemployed workers** are defined as those employed members of the Available Labor Pool who report that 1) their skill levels are greater than their current job requires, 2) they possess higher levels of education than are required on the job, 3) they previously earned a higher income at a similar job, or 4) they are limited in the number of hours that they may work. Of the 511,152 employed members of the Available Labor Pool, more than a fifth (22% or 112,850 individuals) are considered “underemployed.”
- The average age of underemployed workers is about 41 years old. More than half (53.8%) are male, about a not quite half (48.2%) hold *at least* a bachelor’s degree, and almost all (98.7%) have earned a high school diploma.
- More than a quarter (27%) of the underemployed workers are general laborers and 8% are highly skilled blue-collar workers. Most underemployed workers are employed as service sector workers (52%), while 13% hold professional positions.
- **Light industry** work includes assembling consumer electronics, sewing clothing, and/or finishing products produced elsewhere, etc. About a third (34% or 229,827 members) of the Available Labor Pool report a willingness to work in light industry. Of those with light industry experience already (127,504), 28% report production work experience/training and 18% report pre-production experience/training.
- The average age for those interested in light industry employment is about 44 years old, 64% are men. Practically all (98.1%) have a high school diploma, and almost 95% are willing to change fields of employment for a new job.
- The six most important benefits, for those interested in light industry employment are, in order: good salary/hourly pay, on-the-job (OJT) or paid training, good vacation benefits, flexible hours/flex-time, good retirement benefits, and good health benefits.