

## Workforce Supply

- **Jefferson County has a 73,201-strong available labor pool that includes 60,544 underemployed workers who are looking for better jobs, as well as 12,657 unemployed residents.**

The underemployed are willing to commute farther and longer for a better job. For the one-way commute, 35 percent are prepared for 20 or more minutes longer and 23 percent will go 20 or more extra miles.

Labor force	318,434
Employed	305,777
Underemployment rate	19.8%
Number of underemployed workers	60,544
Unemployed	12,657
<b>Available labor pool</b>	<b>73,201</b>

Note: Based on May 2008 labor force data.

Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama and Alabama Department of Industrial Relations.

- **More people are traveling to work and commute distance is up in 2008, but commute time remains roughly the same. Congestion is rising.**

Continuous maintenance and development of the county's transportation infrastructure and systems is essential because impeding the mobility of workers and the flow of goods can slow economic development.

- **Jefferson County has higher educational attainment, but slower population growth than the state.**

Of the county's age 25 and over population, 80.9 percent were high school graduates and 24.6 percent held bachelor's or higher degrees in 2000. For the state as a whole, 75.3 percent were high school graduates and 19.0 percent held bachelor's or higher degrees. The county's population growth from 1990 to 2000 amounted to 1.6 percent, compared to 10.1 percent for the state. The 2000 to 2010 projected population growth is 1.8 percent for Jefferson County and 8.8 percent for Alabama. Growth of the prime working age group (20-64) and youth (0-19) will lag that of the total population through 2025, as the 65 and over population increases rapidly.

## Workforce Demand

- **Employment is currently growing faster than the labor force and population.**
- **In decreasing order, the five largest employment sectors in the county are health care and social assistance; retail trade; manufacturing; accommodation and food services; and educational services.**

These five sectors provided 189,649 jobs, about half the county total in the second quarter of 2007. Two of these leading employers had wages that were above the county's average monthly wage of \$3,513.

- **On average 17,956 jobs were created per quarter from second quarter 2001 to second quarter 2007; quarterly net job flows averaged 974.**

Job creation is the number of new jobs that are created either by new businesses or through expansion of existing firms. Net job flows reflect the difference between current and previous employment at all businesses.

- **The 50 highest earning occupations are in the fields of management, health, engineering, postsecondary education, computer, legal, and science and have a minimum salary of \$72,312. Four of these do not require a bachelor's or higher degree. Five of the top 10 are health occupations.**
- **The top five high-demand occupations are:** Registered Nurses; Customer Service Representatives; Accountants and Auditors; Home Health Aides; and Management Analysts.
- **The top five fast-growing occupations are:** Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists; Biological Technicians; Network Systems and Data Communication Analysts; Home Health Aides; and Industrial Engineers.
- **Four occupations are high-earning, fast-growing, and in high-demand:** Management Analysts  
Personal Financial Advisors  
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software  
Physical Therapists

- **Ten jobs are high-earning and in high-demand:** Management Analysts  
Pharmacists  
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents  
Personal Financial Advisors  
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software  
Medical and Health Services Managers  
Physical Therapists  
Veterinarians  
Mathematical Science Teachers, Postsecondary  
Business Teachers, Postsecondary
- **The county has 25 jobs that are both fast-growing and in high-demand:** Registered Nurses  
Home Health Aides  
Management Analysts  
Pharmacy Technicians  
Medical Assistants  
Clergy  
Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts  
Computer Software Engineers, Applications  
Personal Financial Advisors  
Personal and Home Care Aides  
Dental Hygienists  
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software  
Dental Assistants  
Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary  
Financial Analysts  
Directors, Religious Activities and Education  
Biological Technicians  
Physical Therapist Assistants  
Vocational Education Teachers, Postsecondary  
Physician Assistants  
Physical Therapists  
Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary  
Industrial Engineers  
Materials Engineers  
Occupational Therapists

## Implications for Workforce Development

- Worker shortfalls of about 52,200 and 124,300 are estimated by 2016 and 2025, respectively, due to strong economic output growth combined with low or declining labor force and population growth rates and low labor force participation, despite high educational attainment in the county.

- Strategies to address these shortfalls should aim at increasing labor force participation, encouraging immigration, and raising worker productivity.

Such strategies might include:

1. Improving education and education funding
2. Continuing and enhancing programs to assess, retrain, and place dislocated workers
3. Focusing on hard-to-serve populations (e.g. out-of-school youth)
4. Using economic opportunities to attract new residents
5. Facilitating in-commuting
6. Encouraging older worker participation

- Investment in education/training and skills development is crucial.

Improving education is important because: (a) a highly educated and productive workforce is a critical economic development asset, (b) productivity rises with additional education, (c) more educated people are more likely to work, and (d) education yields high private and social rates of return on investment.

Workforce development must view all of education and other programs (e.g. adult education, career technical training, worker retraining, career readiness, etc.) as one system.

Financial support for workforce development may require tax reform at state and local levels and should provide for flexibility as workforce needs change over time and demand different priorities.

Publicizing both private and public returns to education can encourage individuals to raise their own educational attainment levels and also promote public and legislative support for education.

Higher incomes that come with improved educational attainment and work skills would help increase personal income for the county as well as raise additional local (county and city) tax revenues. This is important, especially for a county that has low or declining population and labor force growth rates.

Of the county's 856 occupations and occupational categories, 95 are expected to decline over the 2006 to 2016 period. Twenty-five occupations are expected to see a sharp decline of at least 7 percent, with each losing a minimum of 30 jobs. Education and training for declining occupations should slow accordingly.

- Skill and education requirements keep rising. In the future, more jobs will require postsecondary education and training at a minimum.

The importance of basic skills generally and for high-demand, high-growth, and high-earning jobs indicates a strong need for training in these skills.

The pace of training needs to increase for systems, complex problem solving, and social skills while the scale of training is raised for basic and social skills.

Ideally, all high school graduates should possess basic skills so that postsecondary and higher education can focus on other and more complex skills.

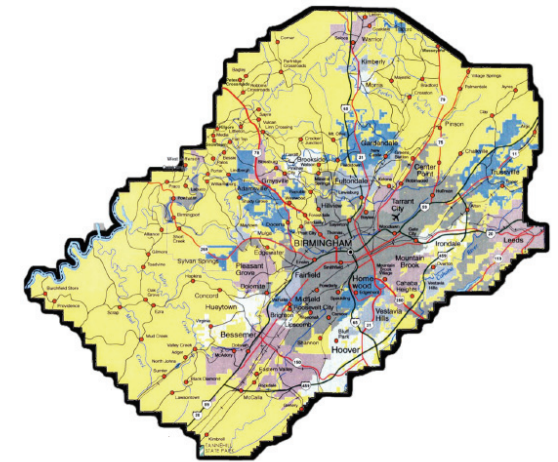
Employers should be an integral part of planning for training as they can help identify future skill needs and any existing gaps.

- Economic development should target high-earning industries and workforce development should ensure availability of workers for such industries.

Economic development should aim to diversify and strengthen the Jefferson County economy by retaining, expanding, and attracting more high-wage providing industries. This is necessary despite having two large employment sectors paying higher than average wages.

- Workforce development and economic development can together build a strong and well-diversified Jefferson County economy. Indeed, one cannot achieve success without the other.

# State of the Workforce Report III: Jefferson County 2008 Summary



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*For more information contact:*  
Governor's Office of Workforce Development  
Phone: (334) 353-1686  
<http://www.owd.alabama.gov>