

2001

Employment and Education Experiences of MPS Graduates: Class of 1999

Lois M. Quinn

University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, lquinn@uwm.edu

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**Employment and Education Experiences of
Milwaukee Public Schools Graduates:
A Follow-Up Study of the Class of 1999**

October 2000

This study was prepared for the Milwaukee Public Schools by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute and the UWM Institute for Survey and Policy Research. For more information, contact Lois M. Quinn, Employment and Training Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 161 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 6000, Milwaukee, WI 53203. Phone (414) 227-3388.

October 2000

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Employment and Education Experiences of Milwaukee Public Schools Graduates: A Follow-Up Study of the Class of 1999

In Spring of 2000 a follow-up study was conducted of Milwaukee Public Schools students who had graduated in June of 1999 (the Class of 1999) to determine their employment and schooling activities. The parents and guardians of all graduates were sent an introductory letter from Superintendent Spence Korté explaining the purpose of the study along with a written survey form. Families not responding to the initial mailing were contacted by phone during April and May of 2000. Survey responses tend to overrepresent graduates from traditional MPS high schools and to underrepresent families with disconnected or nonpublished phone numbers.

Summary of Findings

- For male graduates, 73 percent were employed including 7 percent in the military, 3 percent in apprenticeship programs, and 27 percent who were working while attending school. Another 18 percent were in postsecondary education programs and not employed.
- For female graduates, 70 percent were employed, including 2 percent in the military, less than 1 percent in apprenticeship programs, and 33 percent who were employed while attending school. Another 20 percent were in postsecondary education programs and not employed.
- Reported wages showed the strong demand for high school graduates in the current economy. Graduates (not in school) reported wages averaging \$8.51 an hour. Graduates earned the highest wages in the construction sector, where reported wages averaged \$12.48 an hour. The lowest reported wages were earned in retail trade companies, yet these wages still averaged \$7.39 an hour.
- Most (82 percent) of the graduates employed full-time earned enough to support two persons above the poverty level, and 90 percent earned enough to support one person above poverty.
- Less than 2 percent of graduates (nearly all males) were participating in an apprenticeship program in the Spring of 2000. On average MPS graduates in apprenticeship programs earned \$2.60 more an hour than other employed graduates.
- About 4 percent of the graduating Class of 1999 had entered the military by Spring of 2000. Fields of training included computer science, civil engineering, surgical technology, fire fighting and military operations.
- Half of the responding graduates in the Class of 1999 were enrolled in postsecondary education. Of these 60 percent attended Wisconsin public universities and colleges (including 21 percent at Milwaukee Area Technical College and 19 percent at UWM), 21 percent attended private universities and colleges, and 11 percent attended public schools out of state.

- About a fourth (23 percent) of employed college students worked full-time during the school year, and another 47 percent worked 20-34 hours a week.
- Females comprised 62 percent of the four-year college survey respondents. They made up 73 percent of students with declared majors in business, 75 percent of declared majors in education, and all of the nursing majors.
- Males made up 38 percent of the four-year college survey respondents yet 75 percent of declared majors in engineering and 69 percent of majors in computer science.
- Males made up half of the MPS graduates in two-year colleges and 94 percent of those enrolled in technical trade areas (automotive, electricity, electronics, carpentry) and 77 percent of majors in computer fields. Females made up 71 percent of majors in liberal arts, 68 percent of business majors, and all of the majors in nursing.
- About 9 percent of the male graduates and 10 percent of the female graduates were not employed, in school, in the military or in an apprenticeship program. These included graduates who were raising children, looking for work, experiencing health programs, with handicapping conditions, and applying for college in the summer or fall.

I. Survey Methodology

In April 2000 the parents and guardians of the Milwaukee Public Schools graduating Class of 1999 were sent an introductory letter from Superintendent Spence Korté explaining the purpose of the follow-up survey and including a written survey form. (See attached.) In April and May phone contacts were made with families not responding to the initial mailing by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institute for Survey and Policy Research. Each available phone number (parent numbers, emergency contacts) was called up to eight times. Over two-thirds (69 percent) of the graduates with family contact data in the computer were reached and all but 3 percent completed the survey.

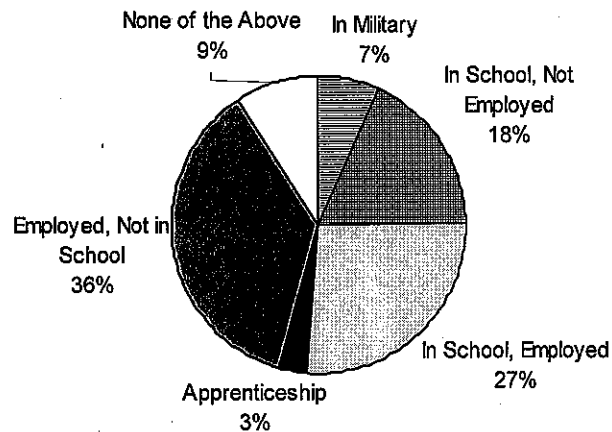
For graduates without family contact records in the computer (including all of the nontraditional and alternative school graduates), phone numbers were identified from commercial phone directories, driver's license and motor vehicle registration files whenever possible. For this population, 14 percent responded to the mail survey and 28 percent were interviewed by phone. In all, 2,021 (59 percent) of the 3,399 graduates were surveyed. The responses tend to overrepresent graduates from traditional MPS high schools and to underrepresent families with disconnected or nonpublished phone numbers.

II. Overview of Activities of MPS Graduates in Spring of 2000

The majority of graduates reporting from the Class of 1999 were employed and almost half were enrolled in postsecondary education in the Spring of 2000.

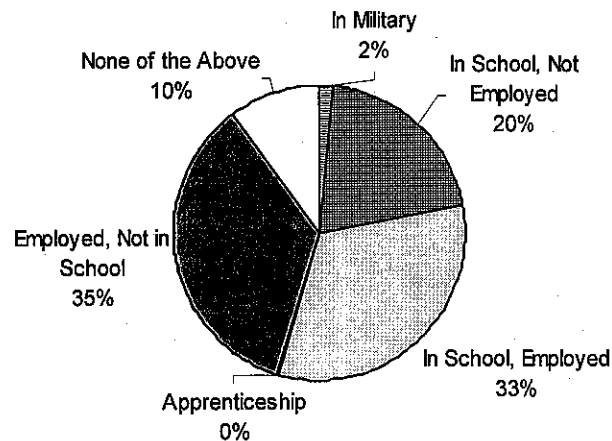
- For male graduates, 73 percent were employed including 7 percent in the military, 3 percent in apprenticeship programs, and 27 percent who were working while attending school.

Spring 2000 Activities of Male Graduates



- For female graduates, 70 percent were employed, including 2 percent in the military, less than 0.2 percent in apprenticeship programs, and 33 percent who were employed while attending school.

Spring 2000 Activities of Female Graduates



- Among ethnic/racial groups, Hispanic males and females were most likely to be employed and not in school. Asian males and females had the highest proportions of graduates attending postsecondary education.

SPRING 2000 ACTIVITIES OF MPS GRADUATES					
MALES	African American	Asian American	Hispanic	Native American	White
In Military	7%	3%	8%	11%	6%
In School, Not Employed	20%	44%	14%	22%	14%
In School, Employed	24%	24%	23%	11%	31%
Apprenticeship	2%	0%	2%	11%	4%
Employed, Not in School	33%	29%	51%	33%	37%
None of the Above	14%	0%	2%	11%	7%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
FEMALES					
In Military	2%	0%	3%	0%	3%
In School, Not Employed	22%	25%	20%	18%	17%
In School, Employed	29%	37%	20%	36%	41%
Apprenticeship	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Employed, Not in School	36%	25%	48%	9%	32%
None of the Above	11%	13%	9%	36%	7%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

III. Employed MPS Graduates Not in School

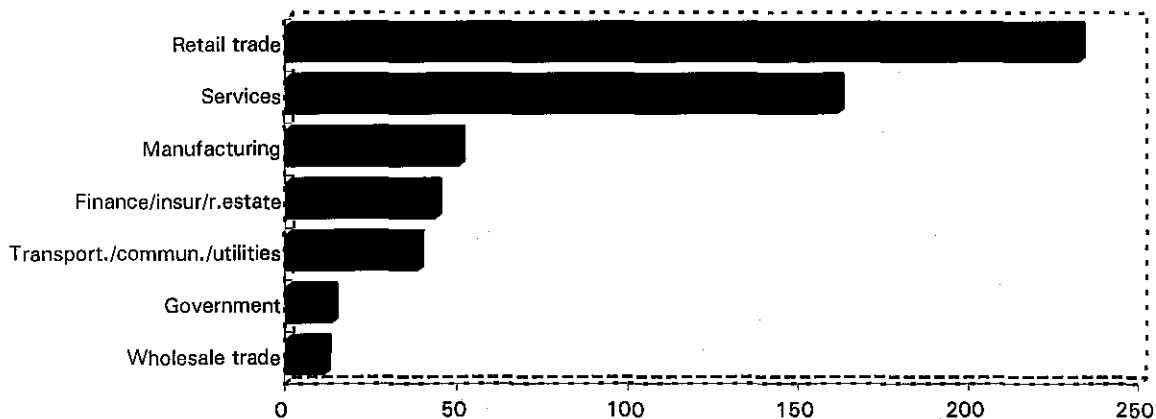
Over a third (36 percent of the males and 35 percent of the females) of the MPS graduates were working in the Spring of 2000 as their primary activity (i.e., not in school, the military or an apprenticeship program). This section analyzes employment by type of work, industrial sector, wages and hours for those graduates where work was their primary activity.

Places of Employment

The majority (72 percent) of employed MPS graduates worked for companies in the retail trade and service industries.

Industrial Sectors Employing MPS Graduates

(Graduates not in school, military, or apprenticeships)



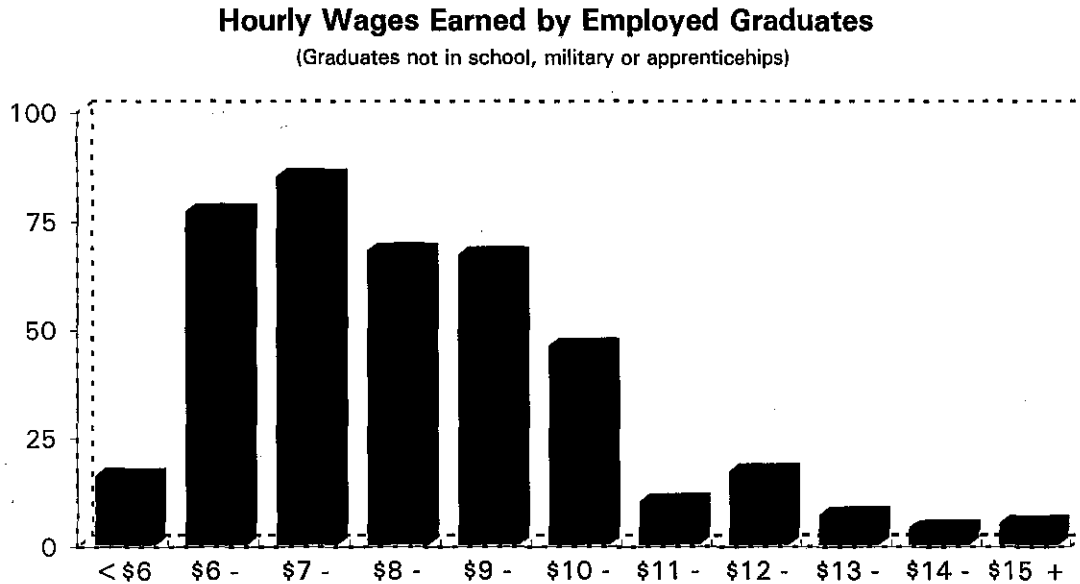
- Retail trade establishments (including department stores, eating and drinking establishments, food stores, apparel stores, and building supply stores) were the largest employers of both males and females, accounting for 44 percent of jobs held by males and 39 percent of jobs held by females.

- Females were more likely than males to work in service industries, where 36 percent of the female graduates were employed. Many of these jobs were in health industries (hospitals, nursing homes, medical clinics and veterinary clinics), day care centers, social service agencies, business services, and recreation services.

- About 13 percent of males and 6 percent of females worked in manufacturing firms.

Wage Rates

About half of the employed graduates in the sample provided their wage rates paid for their current job(s). It is possible that wages for the total population are lower than for those reported.



- The wages reported show the strong demand for high school graduates in the current economy. Graduates reporting wages averaged \$8.51 an hour.
- In Spring 2000 graduates earned the best wages in the construction sector, where reported wages averaged \$12.48 an hour. The lowest reported wages were earned in retail trade companies, yet these wages still averaged \$7.39 an hour.
- Most graduates employed by construction, wholesale trade, and manufacturing firms were working full-time (at least 35 hours per week). More graduates were employed part-time in the transportation/communications/utilities sector, service sector and retail trade.

EMPLOYMENT OF MPS GRADUATES BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

(Graduates not in school, military or apprenticeships)

	Avg. Hourly Wages	% Working Full-Time	Avg. Weekly Wages for Full-Time Workers
Construction	\$12.48	92%	\$543
Manufacturing	\$ 9.59	88%	\$383
Transport/Comm/Util	\$ 9.49	59%	\$421
Wholesale trade	\$ 7.83	91%	\$330
Retail trade	\$ 7.39	74%	\$315
Finance/insur/r.estate	\$ 8.81	81%	\$380
Services	\$ 8.32	73%	\$355
Government	\$10.88	77%	\$436
ALL JOBS	\$ 8.51	76%	\$360

Types of Jobs Held

The largest number of jobs held by MPS graduates were as retail sales clerks and food service workers.

TOP JOBS FOR MPS GRADUATES

(Graduates not in school, military or apprenticeships)

Job Title	Average Reported Wages
Retail sales clerks	\$ 7.50
Food service workers	\$ 7.29
Clerical workers, receptionists	\$ 8.35
Packagers, material handlers, stockers	\$ 8.35
Manufacturing workers	\$ 9.79
Bank tellers, loan officers, insurance workers	\$ 8.36
Health aides (nursing assistants, dietary aides)	\$ 9.30
Day care workers	\$ 6.82
Construction workers	\$13.32
Cleaners and housekeepers	\$ 7.87
Automotive service	\$ 7.88
Indoor laborers	\$ 7.55
Delivery drivers and bus drivers	\$ 8.96
Outdoor laborers	\$10.04
Recreation workers	\$ 7.39

- The most common jobs for male graduates were for packaging/materials handling/stocking, retail sales, food service, manufacturing, construction, automotive service, indoor laborer, and cleaning work.

- The most common jobs for female graduates were as retail sales workers, office workers (clerical and receptionists), food service workers, bank tellers and finance officers, health aides, day care workers, manufacturing workers, packagers/materials handlers/stock clerks.

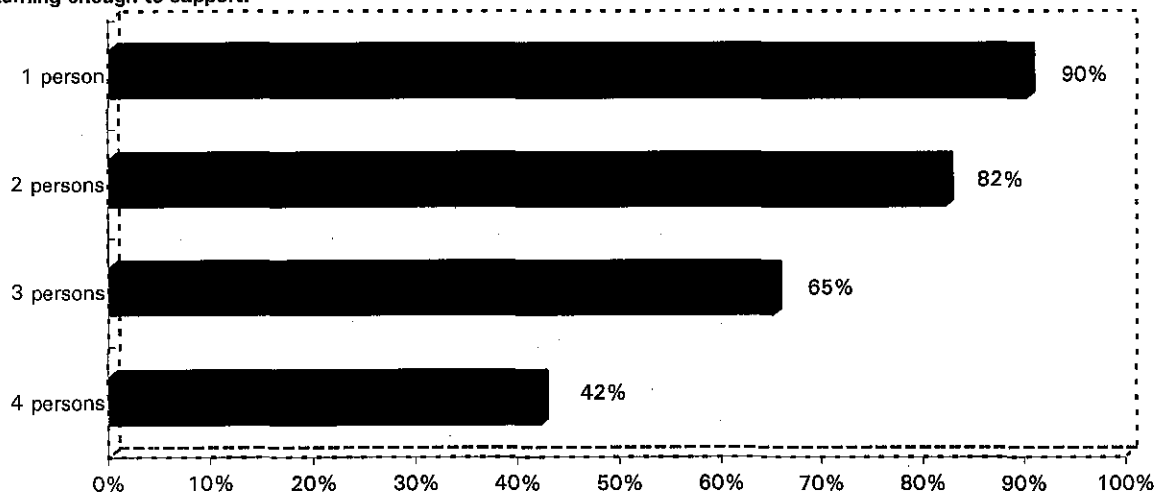
- Among the top jobs for MPS graduates, highest wages were reported for construction workers (\$13.32), outdoor laborers (\$10.04) and manufacturing workers (\$9.30). Lowest wages were reported for day care workers (\$6.82 an hour average), recreation workers (\$7.39) and retail sales clerks (\$7.50 an hour).

Most of the graduates employed full-time earned enough to support two people above the poverty level, according to the current federal guidelines. The federal government has established poverty guidelines at \$8,350 a year for one person, \$11,250 for two people, \$14,150 for three people, and \$19,950 for a family of four.

Employed Graduates Earning Above Poverty Level

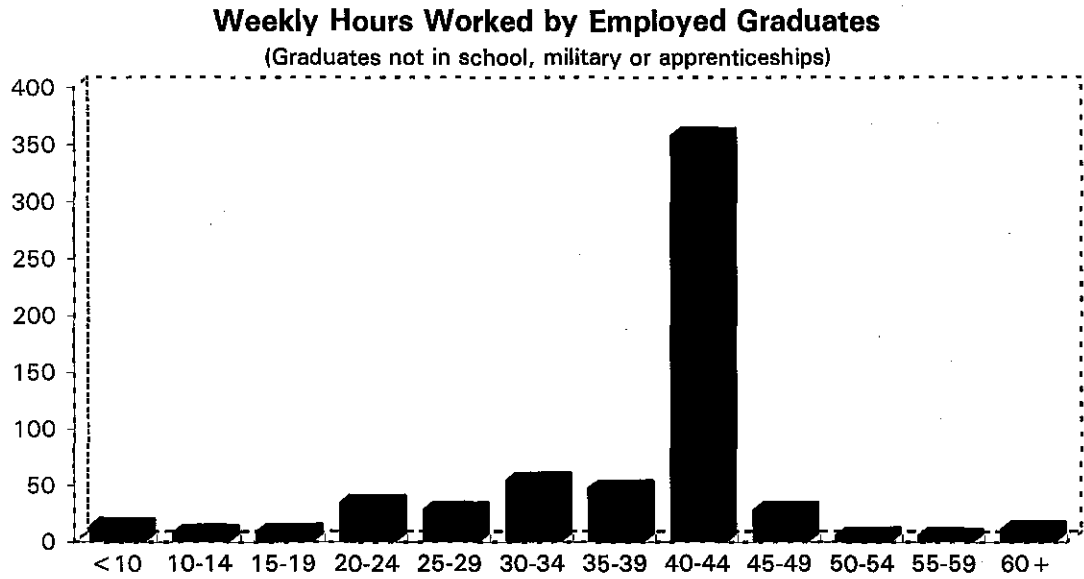
(Graduates not in school, military or apprenticeships)

Earning enough to support:



Hours Worked

Most employed graduates worked full-time, with only 5 percent working less than 20 hours a week and 19 percent working 20-34 hours a week.

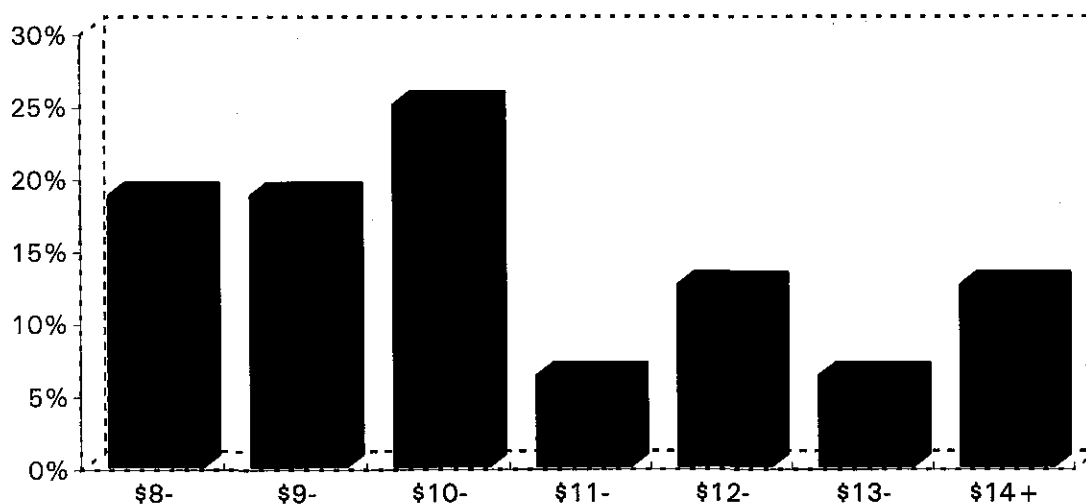


IV. MPS Graduates in Apprenticeship Programs

Less than 2 percent of graduates were participating in an apprenticeship program in the Spring of 2000.

- Nearly all (93 percent) of graduates in apprenticeship programs were males.
- The most common programs were for electricians, carpenters and plumbers.
- Wages reported by apprentices ranged from \$8.00 an hour to \$16.75.
- The mean wage reported by apprentices was \$11.10 an hour and \$309 a week. On average MPS graduates in apprenticeship programs earned \$2.60 more per hour than other employed graduates.

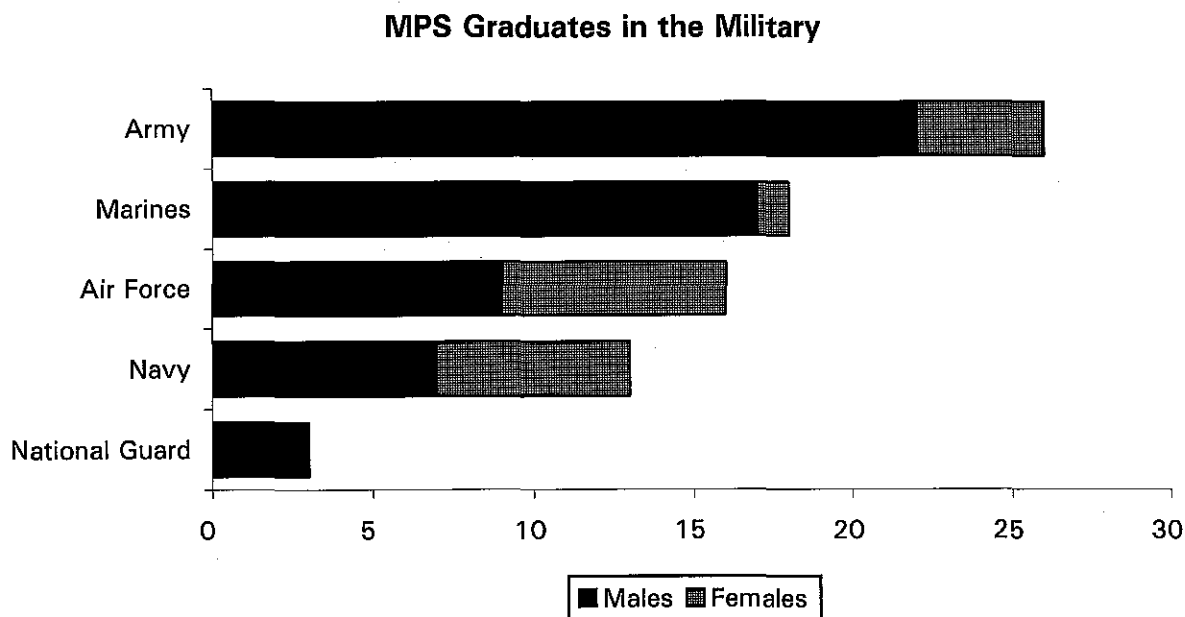
Hourly Wages Earned by Graduates in Apprenticeship Programs



V. MPS Graduates in the Military

About 4 percent of the graduating Class of 1999 had entered the military by Spring of 2000.

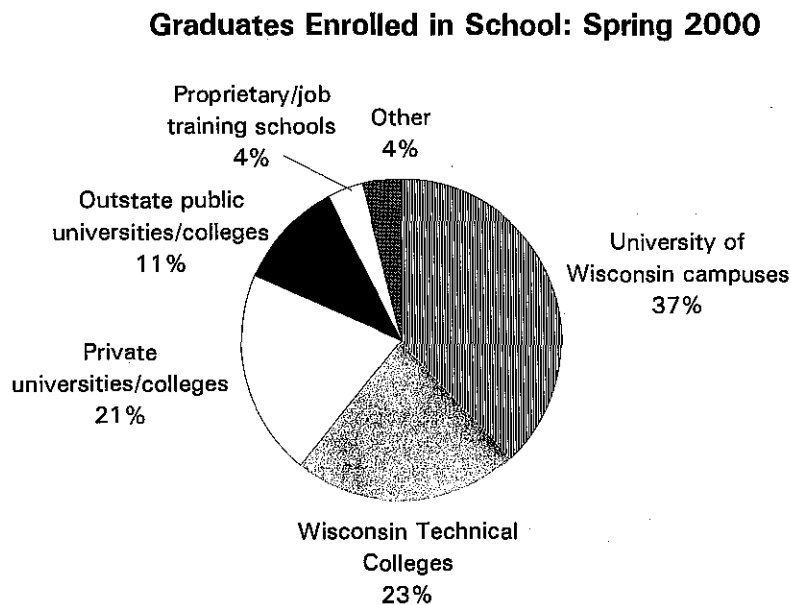
- Three-fourths (76 percent) of those entering the service were males.
- Of male graduates entering the military, 38 percent enlisted in the Army or Army Reserves, 29 percent in the Marine Corps or Marine Corps Reserves, 16 percent in the Air Force, 12 percent in the Navy, and 5 percent in the National Guard.
- Of female graduates entering the military, 39 percent enlisted in the Air Force, 33 percent in the Navy, 22 percent in the Army, and 6 percent in the Marines.
- Many graduates in the services were in training programs. Fields of training included computer science, civil engineering, surgical technology, fire fighting and military operations.



VI. MPS Graduates Seeking Further Education

Half of the responding graduates in the Class of 1999 were enrolled in postsecondary education in Spring 2000.

- Of MPS graduates pursuing further education, 60 percent attended Wisconsin public universities and colleges, 21 percent attended private universities and colleges instate and outstate, and 11 percent attended public schools out of state.



- About 40 percent of the MPS graduates attending postsecondary education were enrolled at Milwaukee Area Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Another 19 percent of students attended other University of Wisconsin schools, with the highest numbers at Madison, Whitewater, Parkside and Oshkosh. Marquette University enrolled the highest number of students attending private schools.

TOP SCHOOLS ATTENDED BY MPS GRADUATES

	% of All Graduates in Postsecondary Education
Milwaukee Area Technical College	21%
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	19%
University of Wisconsin-Madison	6%
Marquette University	5%
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater	4%
University of Wisconsin-Parkside	3%
Alverno College	2%
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh	2%
Waukesha County Technical College	1%

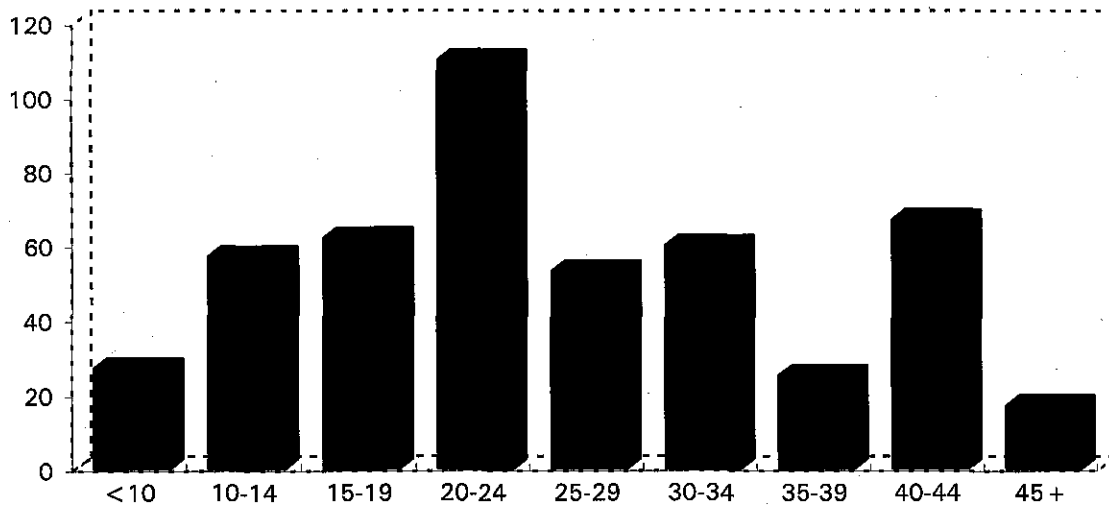
- Half of the graduates attending University of Wisconsin system universities and colleges were enrolled at UW-Milwaukee in Spring 2000.
- Nearly all (93 percent) of those going to Wisconsin Technical College schools attended the Milwaukee Area Technical College, and all but one of the remainder attended Waukesha County Technical College.
- MPS graduates from the Class of 1999 were attending schools in at least 34 of the 50 states. Most (81 percent) attended schools in Wisconsin.
- Very few MPS students took advantage of the state's tuition remission program with Minnesota. Only 2 percent of graduates in postsecondary education attended the University of Minnesota or other state universities in Minnesota.
- Other states with more than ten students attending post-secondary schools included Minnesota, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia and Illinois.

The Employment Status of College Students

The majority (60 percent) of MPS graduates pursuing postsecondary education programs were employed as well during the Spring semester. (Additional students work during the summer and school breaks.)

- About a fourth (23 percent) of employed college students worked full-time while pursuing their postsecondary education. These students earned average wages of \$8.32 and \$341 per week (for those reporting hours and wages).
- About half (47 percent) of employed students worked 20 to 34 hours a week, with wages averaging \$7.86 an hour.
- Another 30 percent of employed students worked less than 20 hours a week.

Weekly Hours Worked by Employed College Students



- The largest numbers of students were working in the retail trade sector (eating and drinking establishments, food stores, department stores, automotive dealers and service stations, building supplies and other retail outlets).

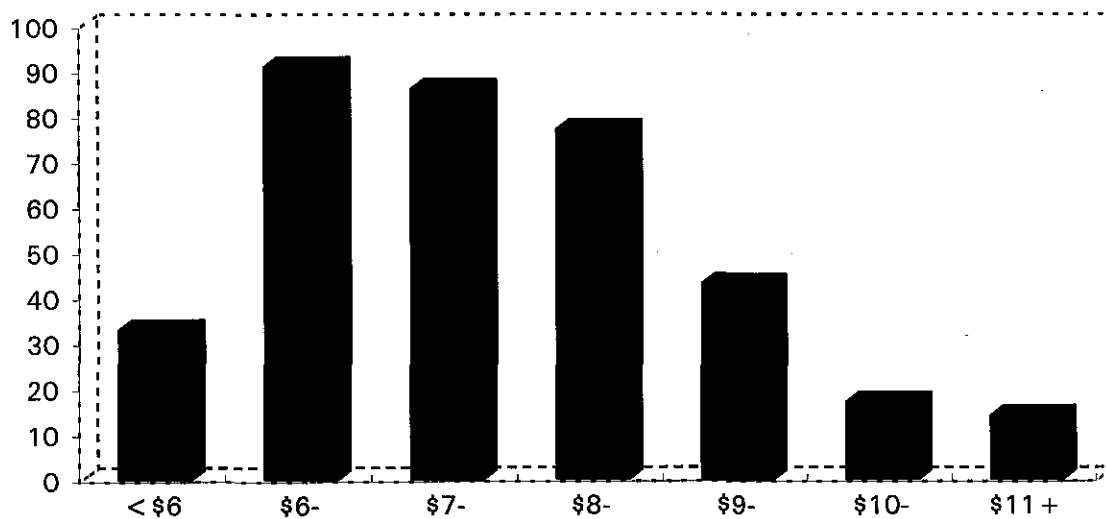
Types of Industries Employing MPS Graduates in Postsecondary Education

Industrial Sector	% of Employed Students	Average Wages*
Retail trade	42%	\$7.40
Education (incl. work-study)	18%	\$6.45
Services (not education or health)	9%	\$7.44
Finance/insurance/real estate	9%	\$8.48
Health services	6%	\$8.84
Government	4%	\$8.29
Transportation, Commun, Utilities	4%	\$9.19
Manufacturing	3%	\$9.26
Construction	1%	\$9.67
TOTAL	100%	\$7.71

*62 percent of employed college students reported their wages in the survey.

- About 18 percent of employed students were working for the school they attended. Most work-study jobs paid lower wages than jobs outside the college or university.

Hourly Wages Earned by Employed College Students



College Majors

As is typically the case, many students in their freshman year of college had not yet chosen a major field of study (or their parents and guardians were not aware of their major). Of those graduates with reported majors, the largest numbers were interested in business, education, social studies and computer science.

MOST POPULAR MAJORS AT FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES (Spring Semester, Freshman Year)

Business (led by business management, accounting, marketing)
Education (elementary, secondary, exceptional)
Social Studies (led by psychology, political science, history)
Computer Science
Science/Math (led by biology, pre-med, environmental science, chemistry)
Engineering
Arts (led by art, music, theatre)

- Females comprised 62 percent of the four-year college survey respondents. They made up 73 percent of students with declared majors in business, 75 percent of declared education majors, 71 percent of social studies majors, and all of the nursing majors.

- Males who comprised 38 percent of four-year college survey respondents made up 75 percent of declared majors in engineering and 69 percent of majors in computer science.

At two year colleges, the most popular majors were business, nursing, liberal arts and computer science.

MOST POPULAR MAJORS AT TWO-YEAR COLLEGES (Spring Semester, Freshman Year)

Business (led by accounting, business management, marketing)
Nursing
Liberal arts
Computer science and technology
Police science/fire science
Auto maintenance and repair
Electricity and electronics

- Males comprised half (50 percent) of two-year college survey respondents and made up 94 percent of majors in technical trade areas (automotive, electricity, electronics, carpentry) and 77 percent of majors in computer fields.
- Females made up 71 percent of majors in liberal arts, 68 percent of majors in business fields and all of the majors in nursing.

VII. MPS Graduates Not at Work and Not in School

About 9 percent of the male graduates and 10 percent of the female graduates were not employed, at school, in the military or in an apprenticeship program. These included graduates who were raising children, looking for work, experiencing health problems, with handicapping conditions (i.e., mentally retarded, developmentally disabled), and applying for college for summer or the fall. Some graduates had left college or were between jobs. Others were helping at home, while several were reported as "doing nothing" or just "hanging out."

Appendix A

Survey Instrument

Cover Letter

Questionnaire



MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

CENTRAL SERVICES BUILDING

5225 West Vliet Street

P.O. Box 2181

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-2181

Phone: (414) 475-8001

Fax: (414) 475-8585

Dear Parents and Guardians of MPS Graduates:

We are proud of our Milwaukee Public Schools' graduates and appreciate the important role you have played in supporting their school work and contributing to their success in high school. We are committed to preparing students who can become productive workers and responsible citizens.

Your assistance is requested in providing us information on your graduate's current school and employment activities to help us continue to improve our educational programs. The survey responses will be summarized. All information on individual students will be kept completely confidential.

I encourage you to enclose a note to me if you have any thoughts or concerns which you wish to share regarding your graduate's experience in high school or after graduation. Parents are our most important school partners, and I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Spence Korté, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Follow-Up Study of Milwaukee Public School Graduates

Survey 3345

PARENT/GUARDIAN OF _____

MILWAUKEE, WI _____

We would appreciate information on your graduate's activities. Please return the survey as soon as possible. (Participation in this survey is voluntary.)

1. Is the graduate currently **attending school**? ☐ Yes ☐ No

IF YES: Name of school _____

What field or program is he/she studying?

2. Is the graduate currently **employed**? ☐ Yes ☐ No

IF YES: What is his/her occupation or job title?

Name of company or type of employer?

How many hours a week does he/she usually work? _____

About how much is he/she paid? _____ an hour

3. Is the graduate in an **apprenticeship program**? ☐ Yes ☐ No

IF YES: Which? _____

4. Is the graduate currently in the **military**? ☐ Yes ☐ No

IF YES: Which branch? _____

5. Is the graduate doing some **other activity**? ☐ Yes Please describe:

Thank you for your help. Please return to MPS Graduate Survey, Milwaukee Public Schools, Office of Guidance and Career Education, P.O. Box 2181, Milwaukee, WI 53201-2181.

Appendix B

Full-Size Graphs for Transparencies

Spring 2000 Activities of Males Graduates

Spring 2000 Activities of Female Graduates

Industrial Sectors Employing MPS Graduates⁵

Hourly Wages Earned by Employed Graduates

Employed Graduates Earning Above Poverty Level

Weekly Hours Worked by Employed Graduates

Hourly Wages Earned by Graduates in Apprenticeship Programs

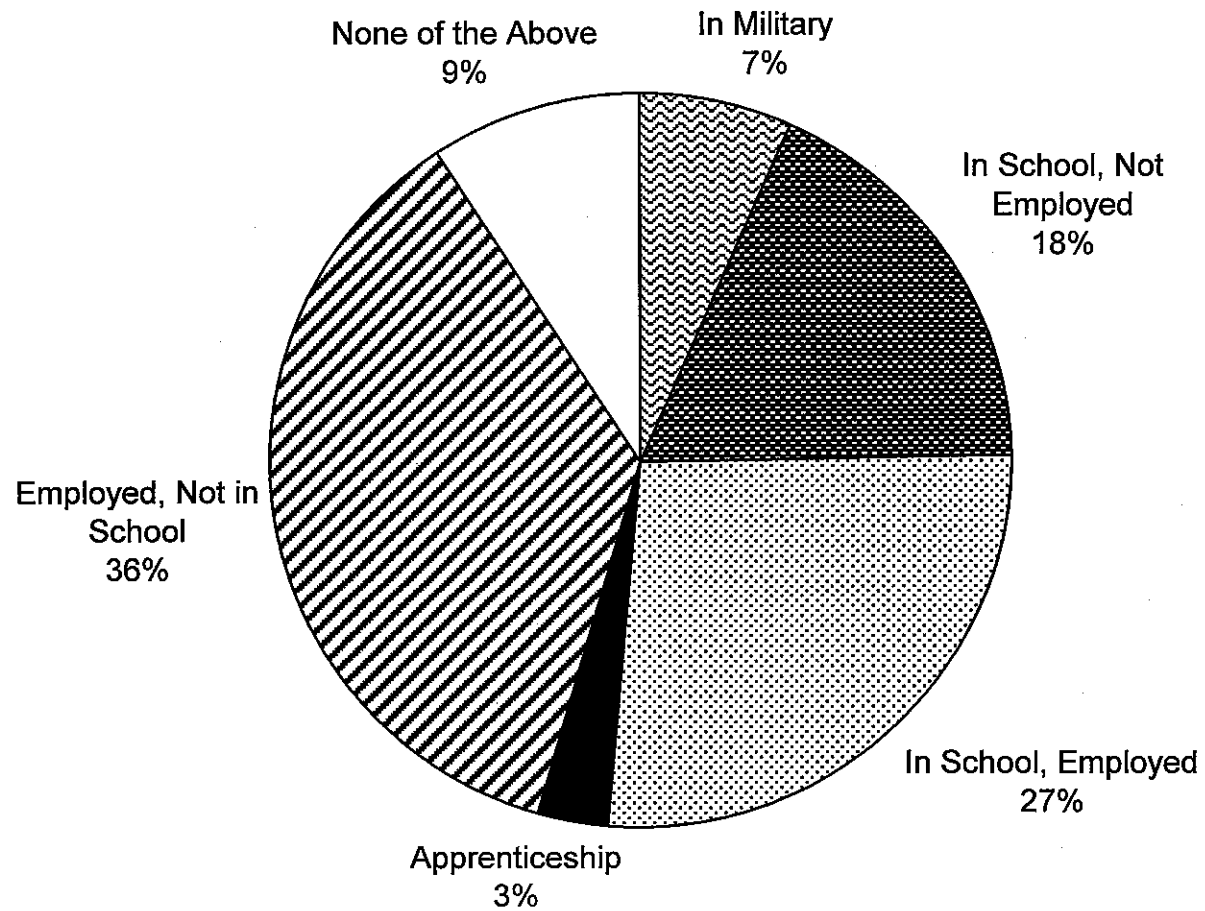
MPS Graduates in the Military

Graduates Enrolled in School: Spring 2000

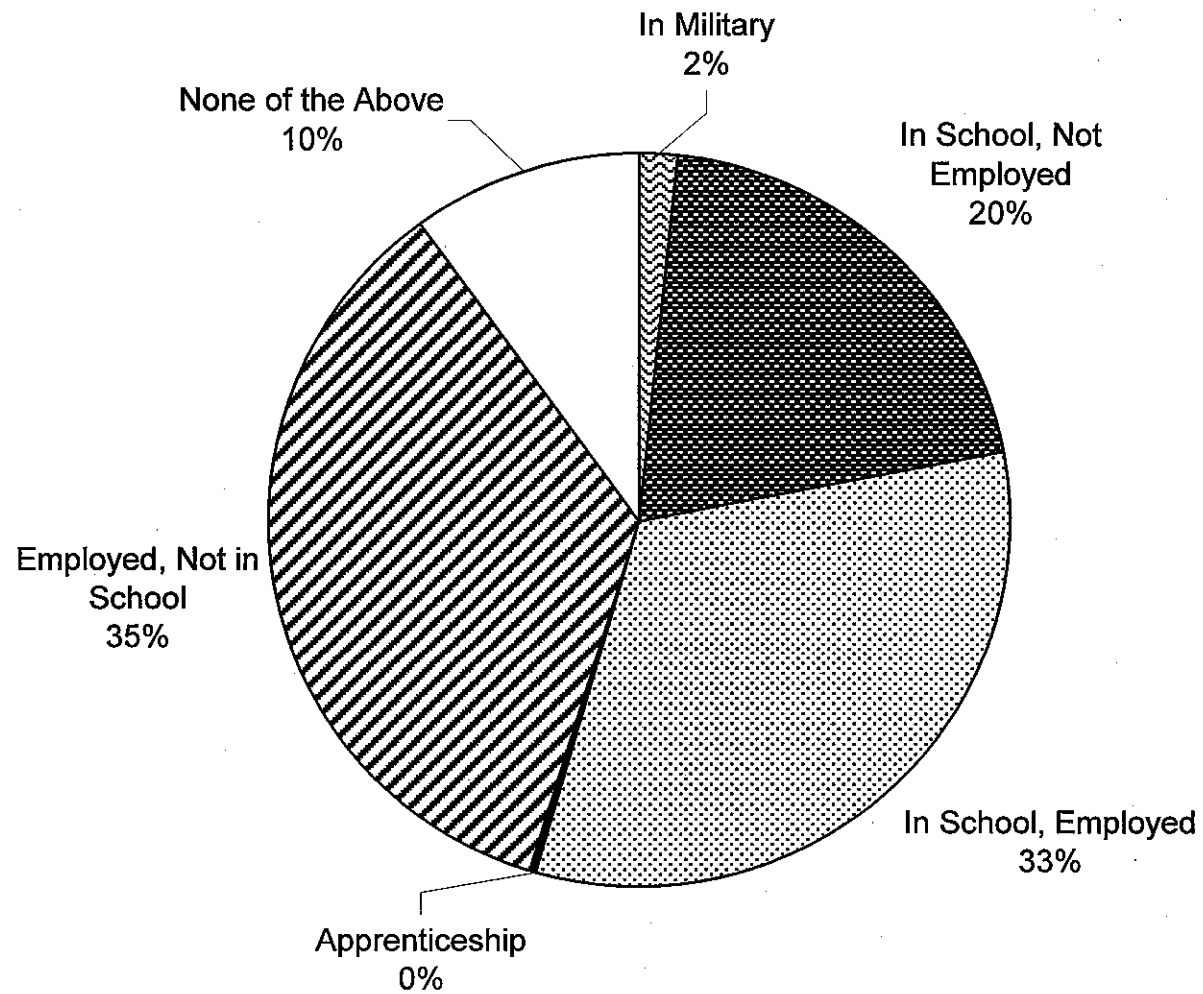
Weekly Hours Worked by Employed College Students

Hourly Wages Earned by Employed College Students

Spring 2000 Activities of Male Graduates

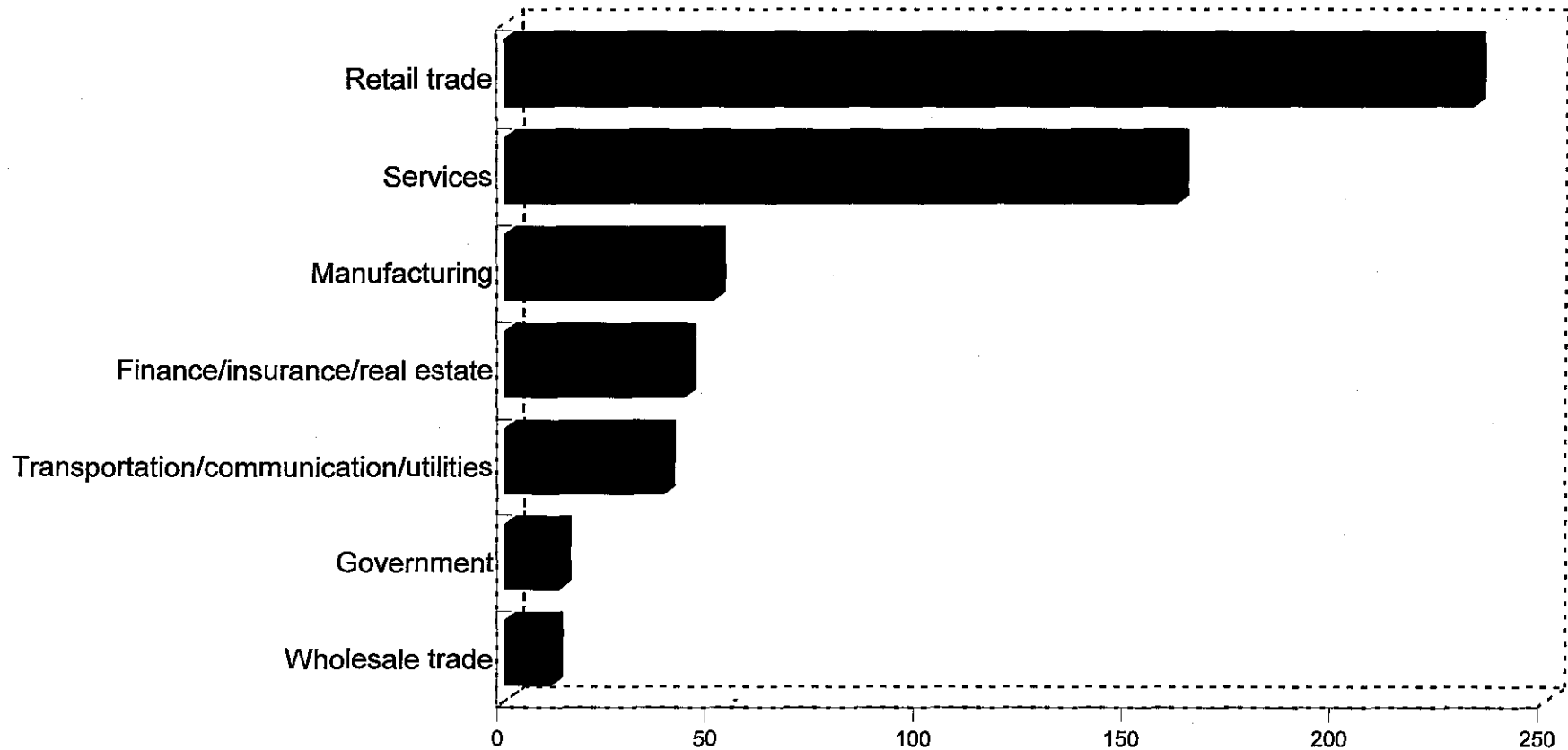


Spring 2000 Activities of Female Graduates

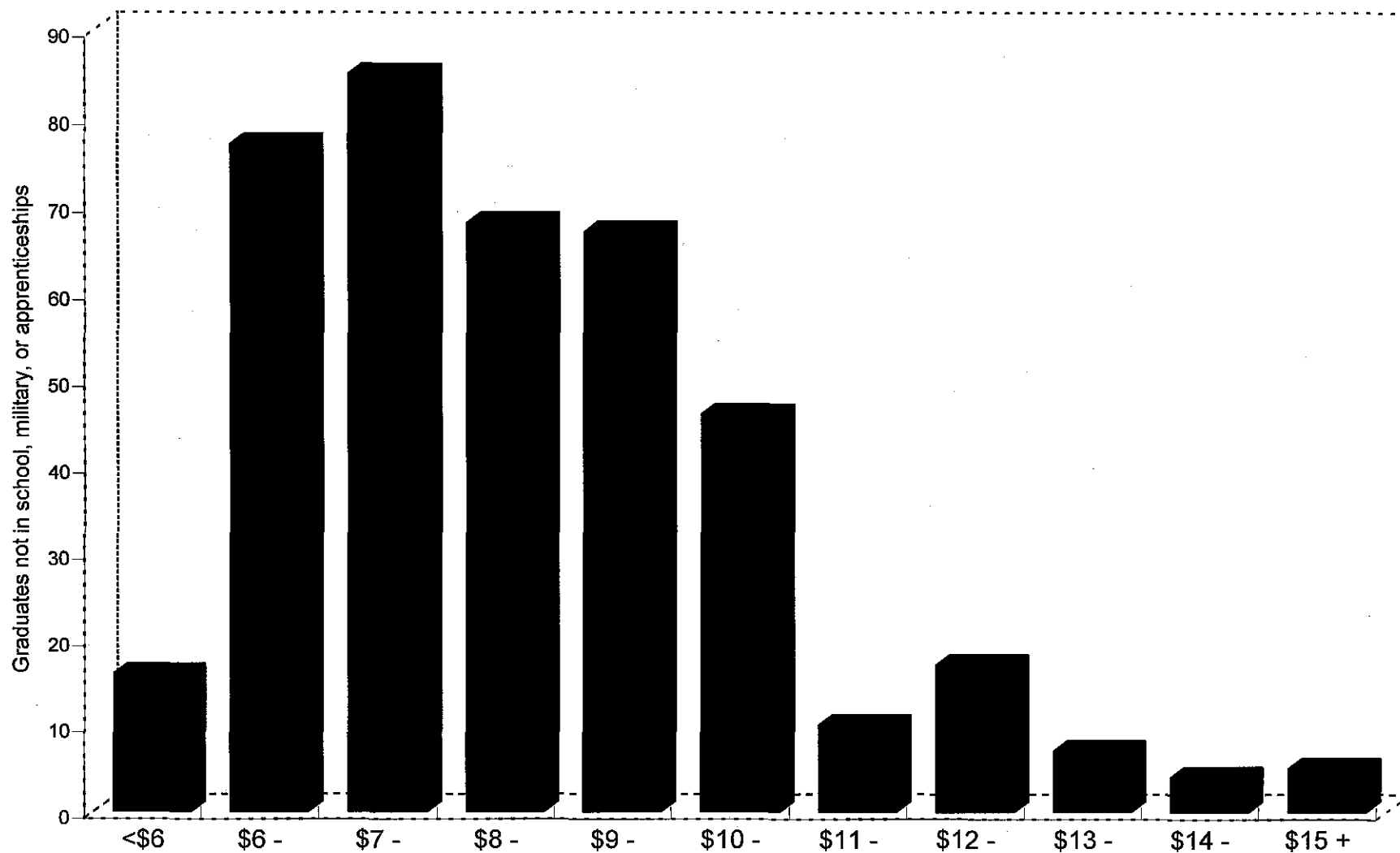


Industrial Sectors Employing MPS Graduates

(Graduates not in school, military, or apprenticeship programs)



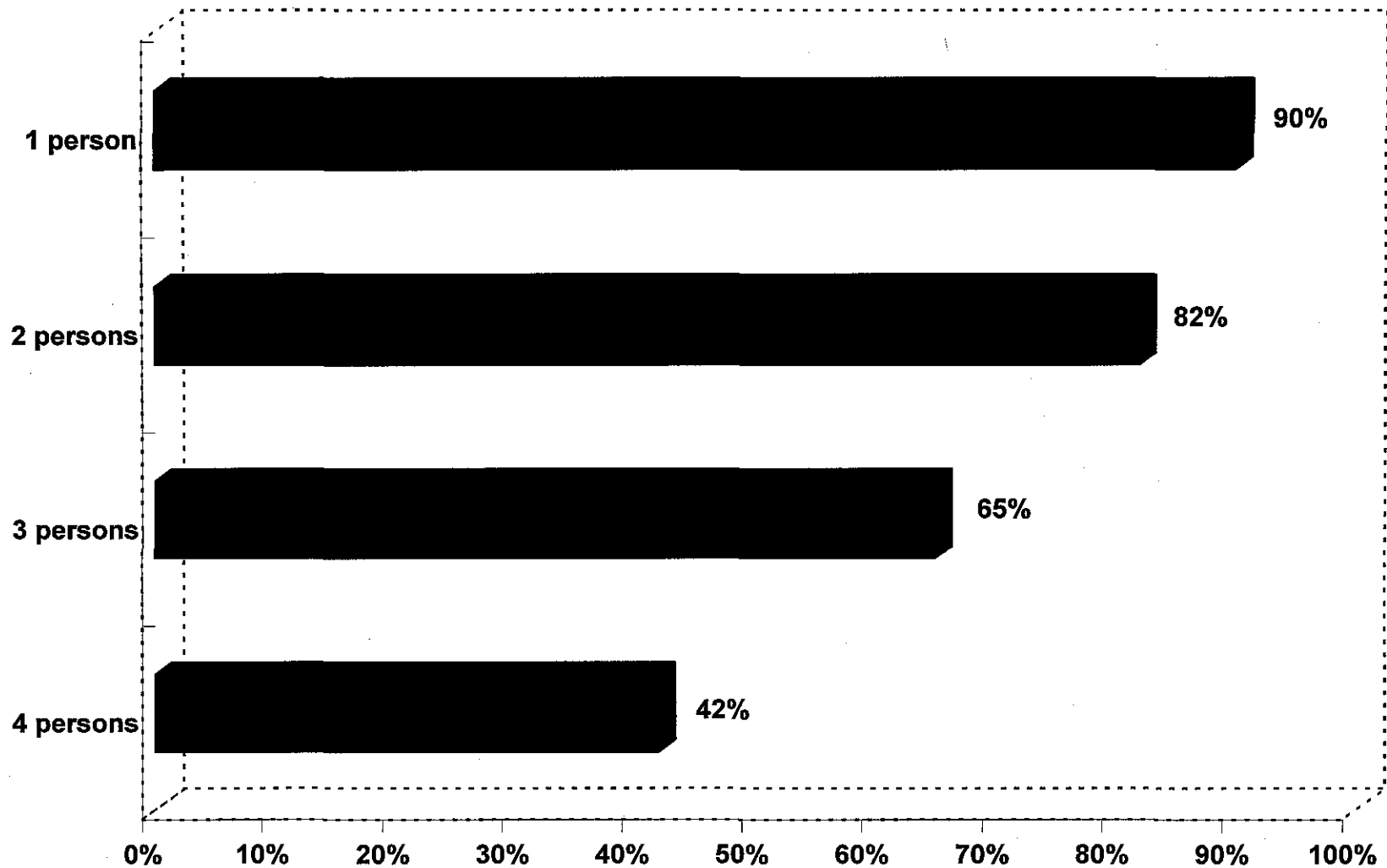
Hourly Wages Earned by Employed Graduates



Reported wages in Spring of 2000, MPS Class of 1999 Follow-Up Survey

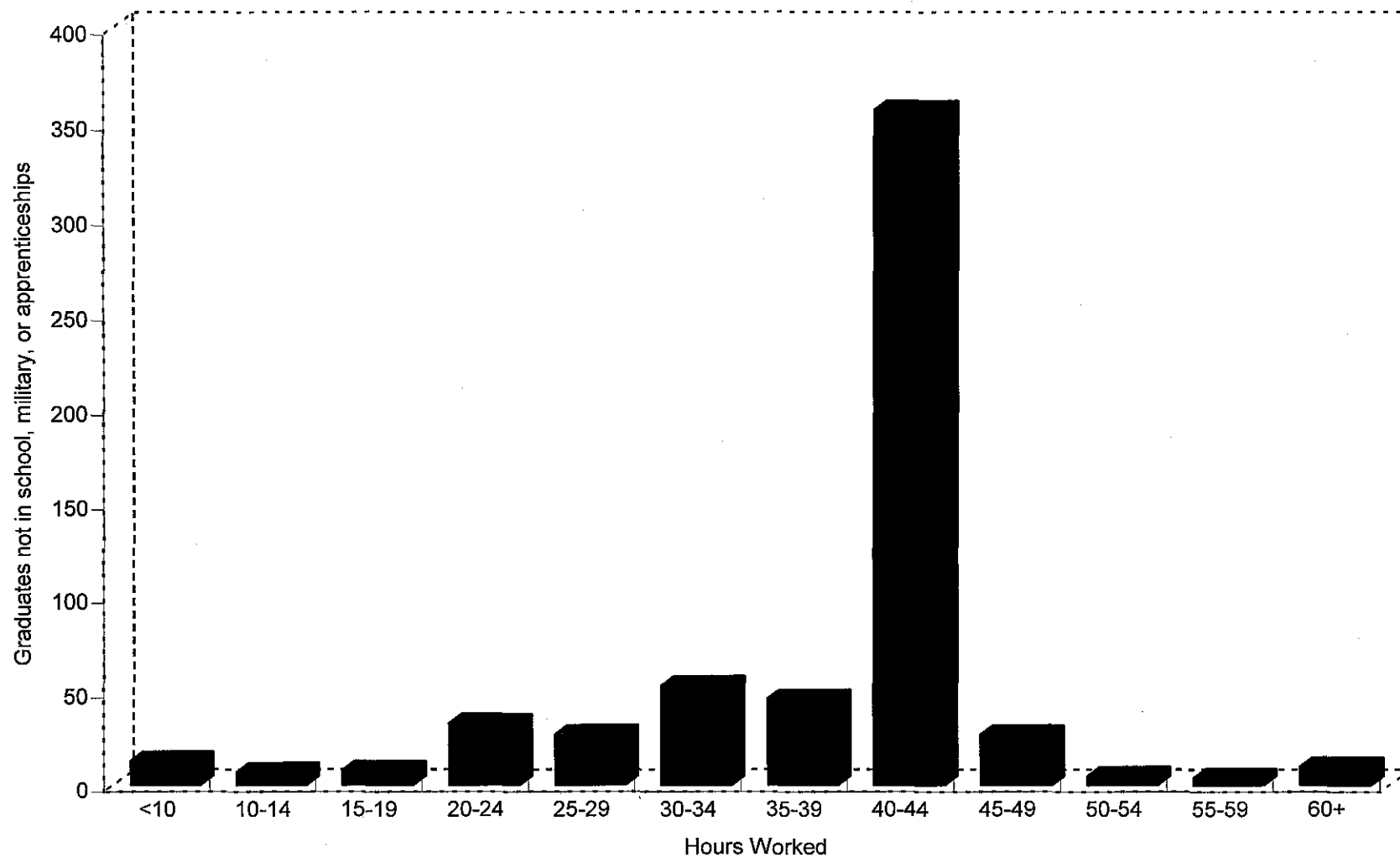
Employed Graduates Earning Above the Poverty Level

Earning enough to support:



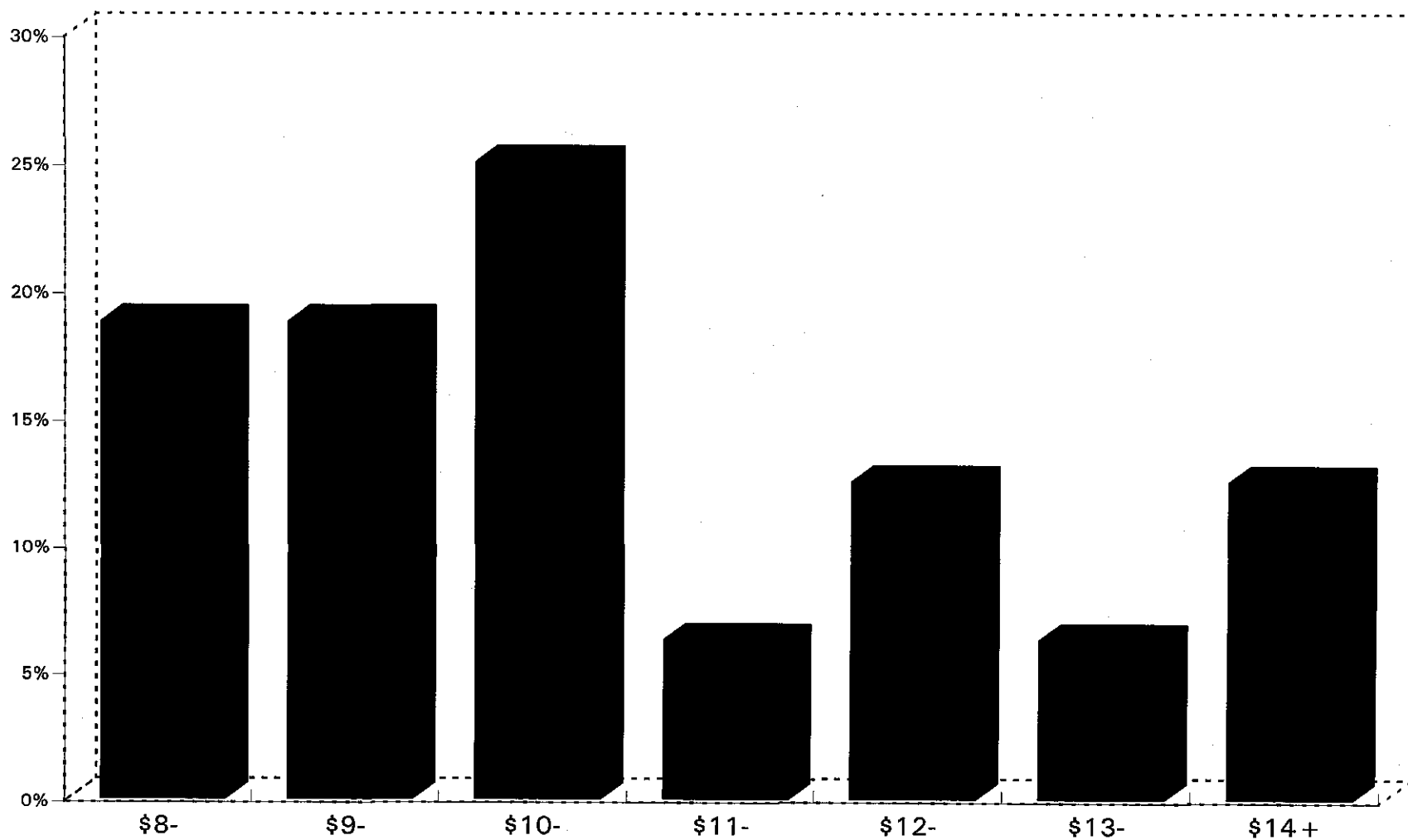
For graduates (not in school) reporting wages and hours in Spring 2000, MPS Class of 1999 Follow-Up Survey

Weekly Hours Worked by Employed Graduates



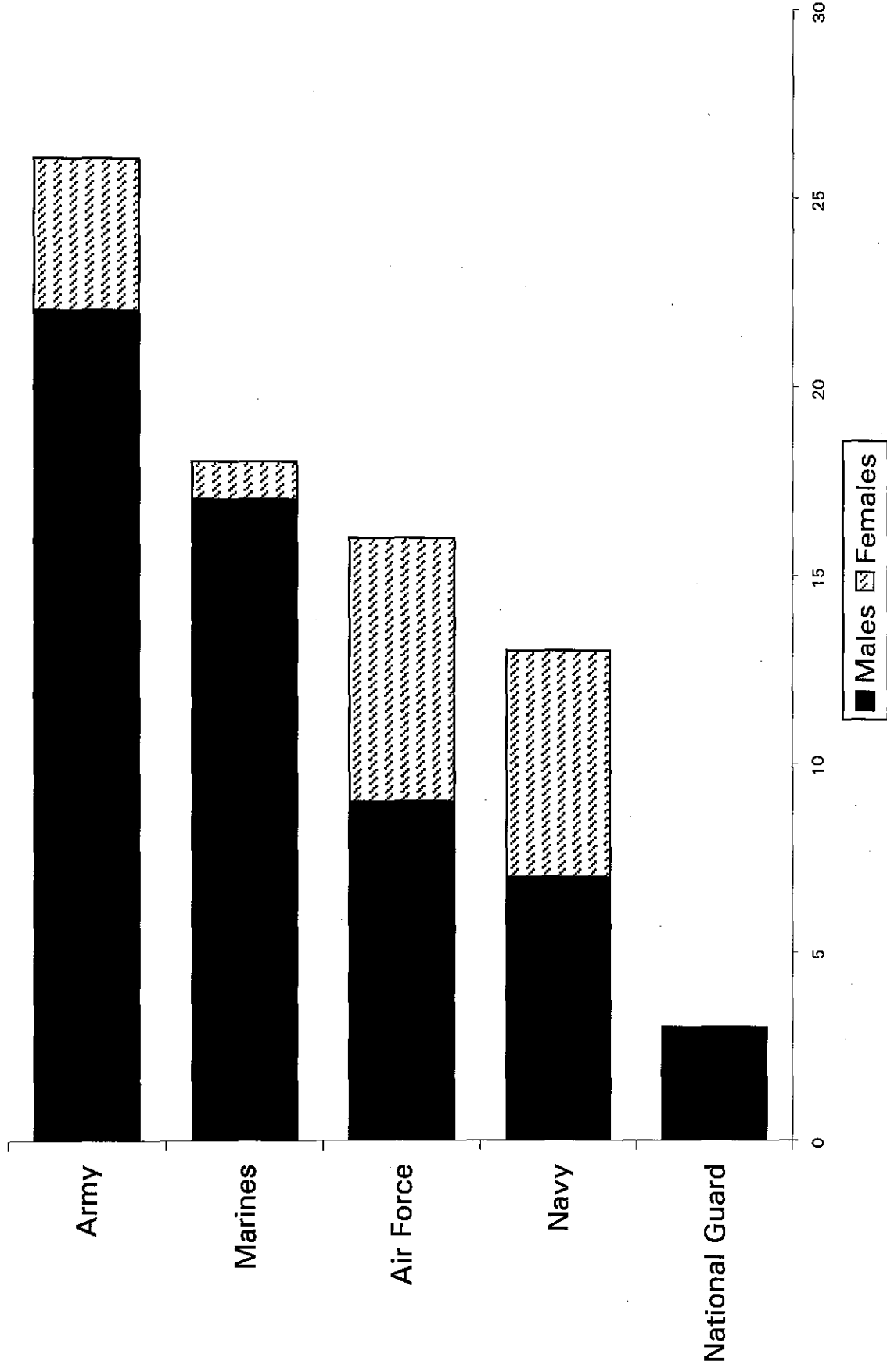
Reported hours worked in Spring of 2000, MPS Class of 1999 Follow-Up Survey

Hourly Wages Earned by Graduates in Apprenticeship Programs



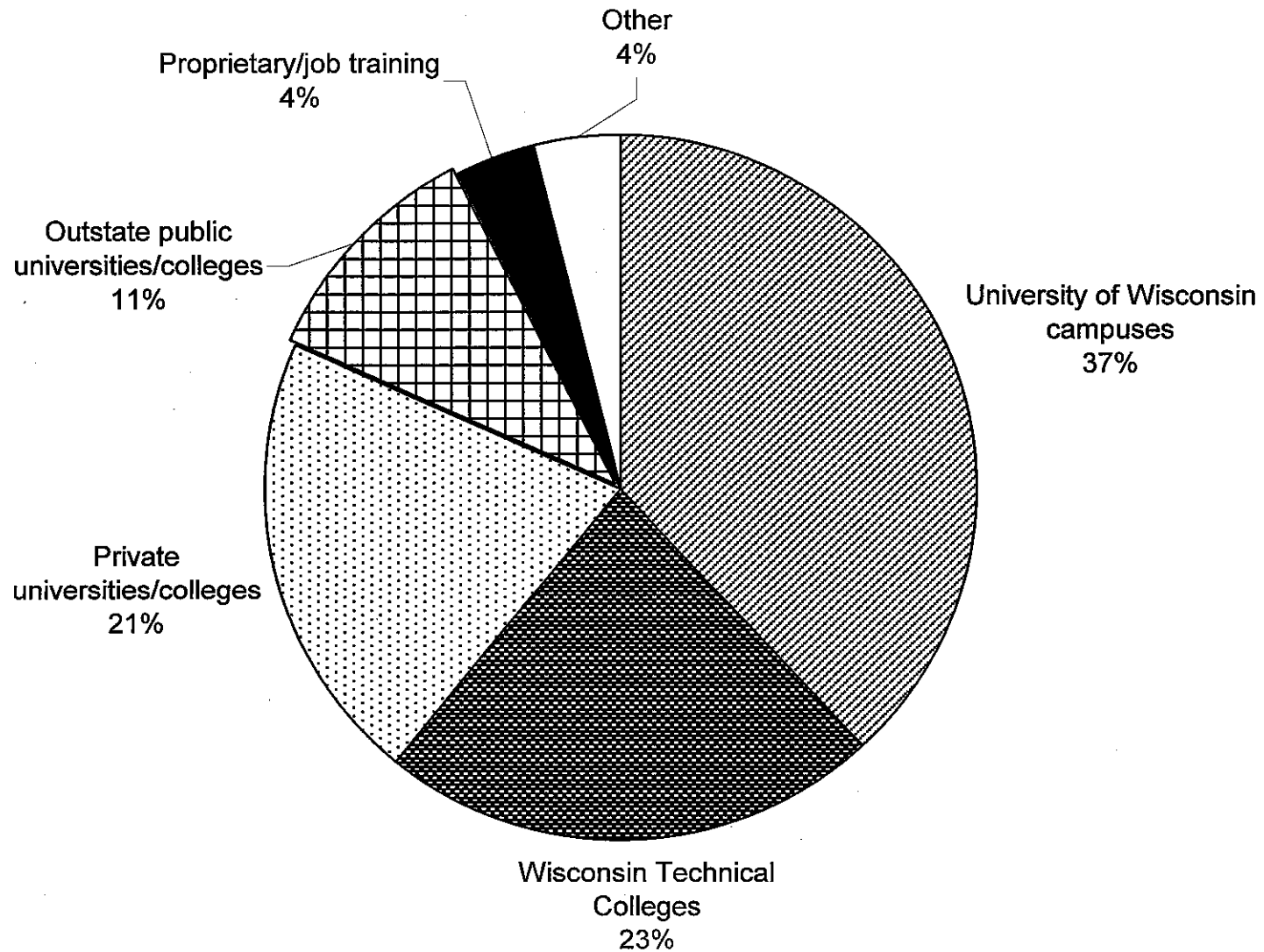
Reported wages in Spring of 2000, MPS Class of 1999 Follow-Up Survey

MPS Graduates in the Military

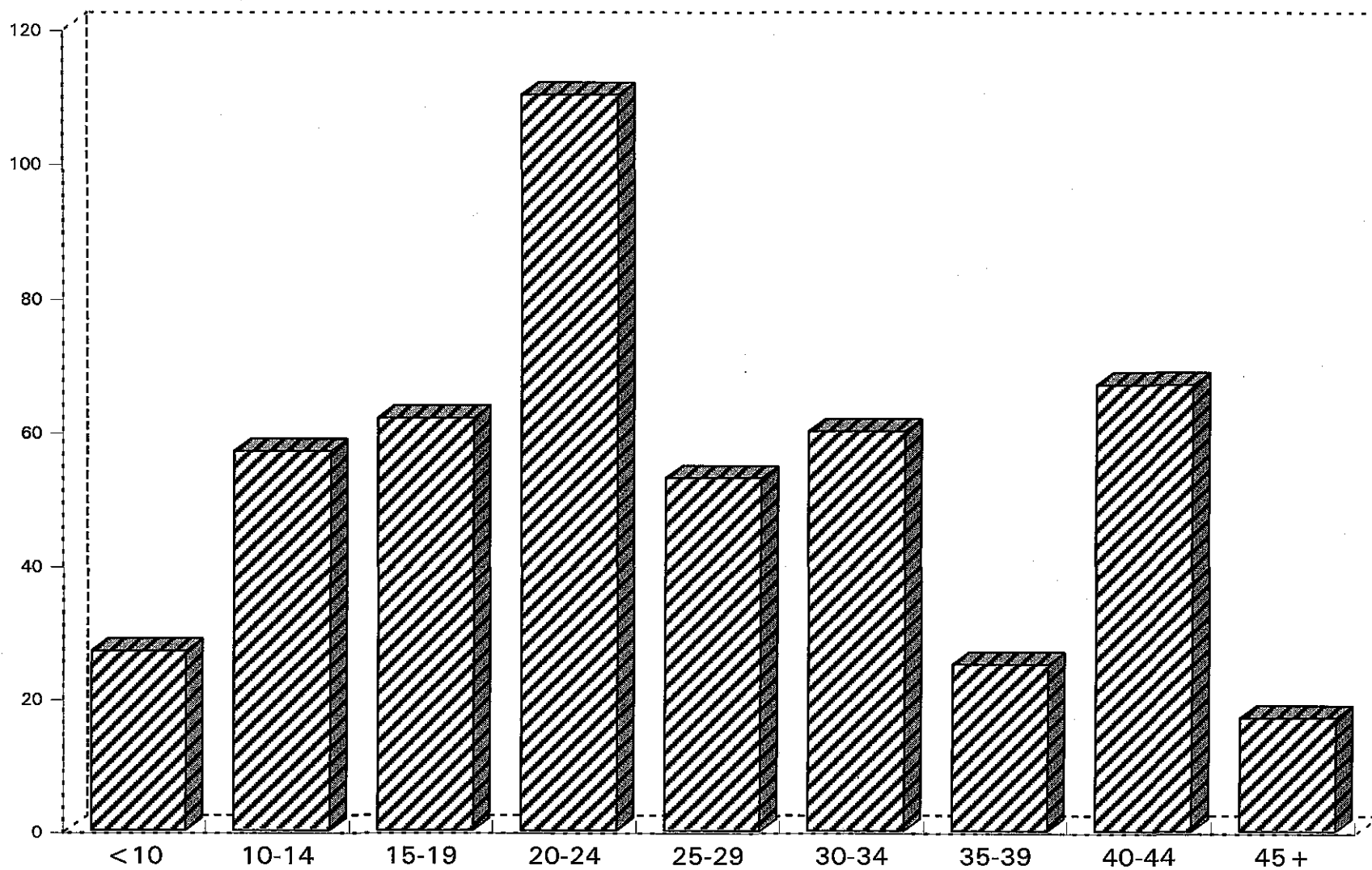


MPS Class of 1999 Follow-Up Survey, Spring 2000.

Graduates Enrolled in School: Spring 2000

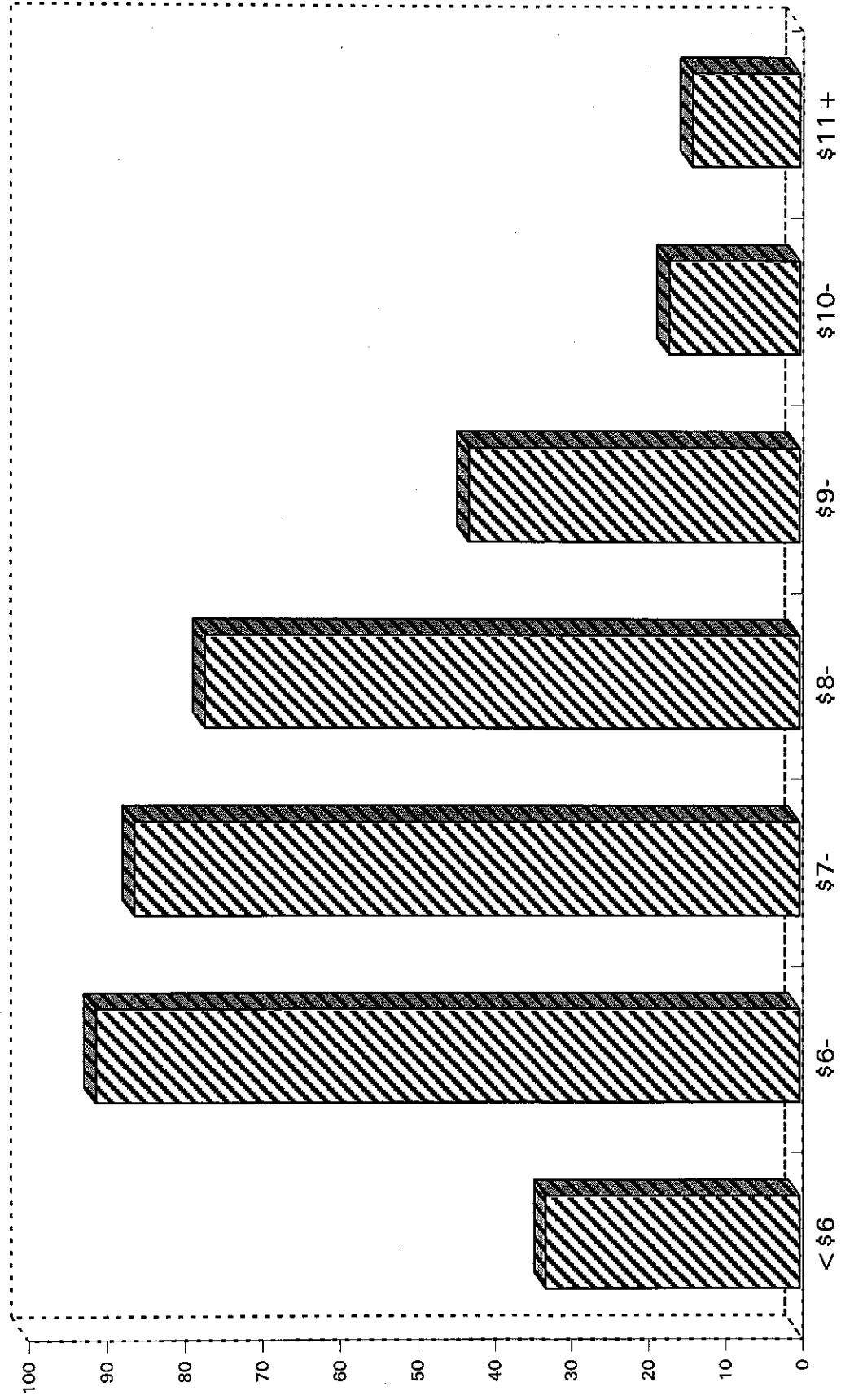


Weekly Hours Worked by Employed College Students



Reported hours worked in Spring 2000, MPS Class of 1999 Follow-Up Survey

Hourly Wages Earned by College Students



Reported wages in Spring of 2000, MPS Class of 1999 Follow-Up Survey