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Research Brief on ETI Job Openings Surveys

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Research Brief on ETI Job Openings Surveys

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2016

The Milwaukee job vacancy studies were initiated in 1993 by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute at the request of the City of Milwaukee in collaboration with Milwaukee Area Technical College, the Milwaukee Public Schools, and the Private Industry Council of Milwaukee County, and with funding support from the government partners and the Helen Bader Foundation. In 2006 and 2009 the surveys were expanded from the four counties of the Milwaukee metropolitan area to include all seven counties of the Milwaukee Region.

The Surveys of Job Openings were based on stratified samples of companies listed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development as doing business in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, Waukesha, Racine, Kenosha and Walworth counties. In May 2009, 3,867 companies participated in the survey and several thousand individual job title listings were analyzed for their education and training requirements. Data were collected on expected rates of pay, education and training required, jobsite location, and whether the job was considered difficult to fill. Survey results were tabulated and weighted by size and type of industry and by response rate to project the total number and type of jobs available in the metropolitan area and the region. Data on individual jobs open for hire in the survey week were collected through mail surveys, hundreds of follow-up phone interviews, and review of websites.

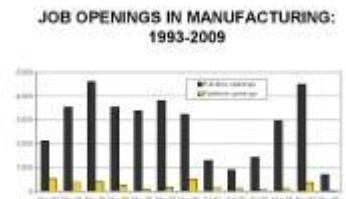
Milwaukee was the first major city in the U.S. to regularly survey job vacancies in order to assess the number and type of jobs available and the level of skill training employers need to fill openings. The findings have been used to meet the needs of the Workforce Investment Act and by local governments and schools to help define their training priorities.

The ETI job openings studies and the manual for conducting such research are archived in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Digital Commons collection at http://dc.uwm.edu/eti_pubs/.

2006 and 2009 Reports Show Uses of the ETI Studies

Survey of Job Openings in the 7 Counties of Southeastern Wisconsin: Week of May 25, 2009

In May of 2009 the seven-county region showed an estimated 7,520 full-time and 3,449 part-time openings. Openings were down by 16,100 from those reported in May 2006. The combination of workers laid off from their jobs and lower openings available led to an unprecedented **job gap** in the Milwaukee area between people seeking work and jobs available. The job gap in the region was 13 to 1 (13 job seekers and people expected to find work compared to 1 full-time opening). The job gap in inner city Milwaukee was 25 to 1.



The **health industry** was the dominant force in the current job market. One out of every four full-time openings and one out of every 3 part-time openings was in a health-related field (either directly providing health care or working for a health-care provider). The largest openings in health were for 731 registered nurses, 689 nursing assistants, 274 health technologists and technicians, 161 licensed practical nurses, 121 health aides, and 92 pharmacists.

Technical training was key for a majority of jobs available in the region. Half of full-time openings and 65% of part-time openings required education, technical training and/or occupation-specific experience beyond high school but short of a four-year college degree.

The labor market had nearly dried up for **unskilled workers** lacking a high school diploma and occupation-specific experience. In May 2006 there were an estimated 6,548 full-time openings for these workers; in May 2009 there were less than 500 such openings. Only 1% of job openings in the health fields were open to unskilled workers lacking a high school diploma.

The "**gender gap**" of decreasing employment for male workers (observed in a 2009 report on Occupational Shifts in Private Industry, based on mandatory company affirmative action filings with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission) was evident in the 2009 job openings survey as well. Job demand for blue collar entry level workers (typically male) took the greatest hits. Full-time openings for handlers, helpers and laborers were down 94% compared to 3 years ago and demand for workers in transportation and material-moving occupations dropped by 71% for full-time openings.

2009 Publications

- Full Report
- PowerPoint presentation for the Regional Workforce Alliance (Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha counties)
- PowerPoint presentation for Tri-County Staff Development (Racine, Kenosha, Walworth counties).
- 1-Page Drilldown Summary for the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

Follow-Up Presentations

September 10, 2009 - "Implications of the Regional Job Openings Survey Results for Delivery of Workforce Investment Services in Milwaukee County" for the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

September 21, 2009 - "Implications of the Regional Job Openings Survey Results for Ex-Offenders in the Local Labor Force" for the Regional Re-entry Planning Committee

October 1, 2009 - "Job Openings in the 7-County Region and Implications for Workforce Training" for the Regional Workforce Alliance (presentations in Sturtevant and Milwaukee)

October 21, 2009 - "Job Openings in Southeast Wisconsin" for the SE Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board

December 16, 2009 - "Jobs Issues for the Tri-County" for the Southeast Wisconsin Workforce Development Area Tri-County Staff Development Session

2006 Reports

- [Assessing Demand and Training for Welders in the Southeast Wisconsin Region](#) prepared for the WOW Workforce Investment Board Inc. and the Regional Workforce Alliance. See also, [Learning About the Welding Job Market in the Southeast Wisconsin Region](#) (2008).
- [An Analysis of Job Openings in the Milwaukee Region: Job Demand and Supply](#) identified job vacancies and commuting patterns in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington, Ozaukee, Racine, Kenosha and Walworth Counties, prepared for the Private Industry Council of Milwaukee County (2006).
- Survey of Job Openings in the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area: Week of May 24, 2006, provides data on current job vacancies and labor force changes since 1993.
 - [Executive Summary](#)
 - [Full Report](#)
- [Job Opportunities for Milwaukee Youth Entering the Labor Force](#), (prepared for the Job Corps), identified fields where targeted training offers opportunities for career building and discusses driver's license needs and challenges for Milwaukee minority youth (2006).
- [Occupational Drill Down of Training Needs in the Milwaukee Metro Area](#) (prepared for Milwaukee Area Technical College), analyzed six occupational areas where technical training is currently in high demand (2006).
- [New Careers for Information Processing Workers in the Health Fields](#) (prepared for MATC), detailed an emerging occupation in health industries with workers with "hybrid skill" (2006).

Methodology

In 1998 John Pawasarat, director of the Employment and Training Institute, was asked to prepare a manual for the U.S. Department of Labor on [Surveying Job Vacancies in Local Labor Markets](#). The manual, available online, provides information on job vacancy survey design, sampling, methodology, weighting, survey administration, data verification, and data analyses issues. Uses of job openings data to assess spatial and skills mismatches within subareas of the labor market and to target training and transportation strategies are also described.

Job Vacancy Surveys in Other Cities and States

Job openings surveys using the Pawasarat methodology have been used by at least 15 states to collect statewide data on labor market needs and to help establish job training priorities.

States using the surveys include: Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah, and Washington.

Metropolitan and regional surveys have been conducted in Atlantic City, Baton Rouge, Boston, Cleveland, Denver, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, and Wichita.

Related ETI Research

The Employment and Training Institute provided technical assistance for local workforce development efforts and prepared research studies on related topics. Research briefs are also available on those subject areas.

- Driver's License Barriers to Employment
- Meeting the Child Care Needs of Employed Parents
- Barriers to Employment: Prison Time
- Workforce Development Technical Assistance and Training
- Online Drill Downs for Employer Diversity, Neighborhood Workforce, and Jobs by Neighborhood, (available for the entire U.S.)
- 1990s Worker Surveys of the Needs of Central City Households