

## Workforce Supply

- **Jefferson County has a 91,577-strong available labor pool that includes 72,908 underemployed workers who are looking for better jobs and 28,669 unemployed residents.**

The underemployed are willing to commute farther and longer for a better job. For the one-way commute, 39.3 percent are prepared for 20 or more minutes longer and 23.2 percent will go 20 or more extra miles.

Labor force	301,369
Employed	282,700
Underemployment rate	25.8%
Number of underemployed workers	72,908
Unemployed	18,669
<b>Available labor pool</b>	<b>91,577</b>

Note: Based on December 2012 labor force data.

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

- **Congestion slightly eased in the county; commute time declined in 2012 while distance went up. However, congestion will continue being a problem as the county economy recovers and in-commuting rises to meet job growth demands.**

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 better educational attainment than the state but the population has been shrinking.**

	Jefferson County	AL
Population growth, 2000-2010	-0.5%	7.5%
<i>Educational attainment, age 25 and over</i>		
High School or higher	86.7%	81.9%
Bachelor's or higher degree	29.0%	22.0%

Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama and U.S. Census Bureau.

## Workforce Demand

- **Job growth is projected to be faster than the labor force and population growth.**
- **By sector and in decreasing order, the five largest employers in the county provided 173,940 jobs (51.2 percent of the region's 339,670 total) in the first quarter of 2012.**

Industry	Employment	Share
Health Care and Social Assistance	55,277	16.3%
Retail Trade	40,942	12.1%
Educational Services	27,551	8.1%
Finance and Insurance	26,146	7.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	24,024	7.1%

Source: Alabama Department of Labor and U.S. Census Bureau.

- **On average 16,267 jobs were created per quarter from second quarter 2001 to first quarter 2012; quarterly net job flows averaged 586.**

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 mostly in the fields of in health, management, business, and engineering and have a minimum salary of \$81,644. Nine of these do not require a bachelor's or higher degree. Seven of the top 10 are health occupations.**
- **The top five high-demand occupations are:**  
Registered Nurses  
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses  
Home Health Aides  
Lawyers  
Personal Care Aides

- **The top five fast-growing occupations are:**  
Personal Care Aides  
Home Health Aides  
Occupational Therapy Assistants  
Helpers—Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters  
Rehabilitation Counselors

- **Eight jobs are high-earning and in high-demand:**  
Lawyers  
Family and General Practitioners  
Personal Financial Advisors  
Management Analysts  
Medical and Health Services Managers  
Software Developers, Applications  
Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists  
Software Developers, Systems Software

- **The county has 10 jobs that are both fast-growing and in high-demand:**  
Personal Care Aides  
Home Health Aides  
Occupational Therapy Assistants  
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic  
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers  
Physical Therapist Assistants  
Dental Hygienists  
Social and Community Service Managers  
Occupational Therapists  
Medical Secretaries

## Implications for Workforce Development

- **Worker shortfalls of about 57,000 and 86,000 are estimated by 2020 and 2030, respectively, due to low labor force and population growth rates.**

	2020	2030
Total population growth	0.5	0.8
Age 20-64 population growth	-4.0	-8.6
Job growth	7.9	9.4
Worker shortfall (percent)	12.0	18.1
Worker shortfall (number)	56,691	85,529

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

- This is likely to increase in-commuting and worsen congestion. A focus on both worker skills and shortfalls, especially for critical occupations, must be a top priority.
- **Strategies to address skill needs and worker shortfalls should aim at increasing labor force participation, encouraging in-migration, and raising worker productivity.**

Such strategies might include:

1. Improving education and educational 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 and younger 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.

Publicizing both private and public returns to education can encourage individuals to raise their own educational attainment levels and 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 725 single occupations, 88 are expected to decline over the 2010 to 2020 period. Twenty occupations are expected to see a sharp decline of at least six percent, with each losing a minimum of 20 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 needs to be 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.

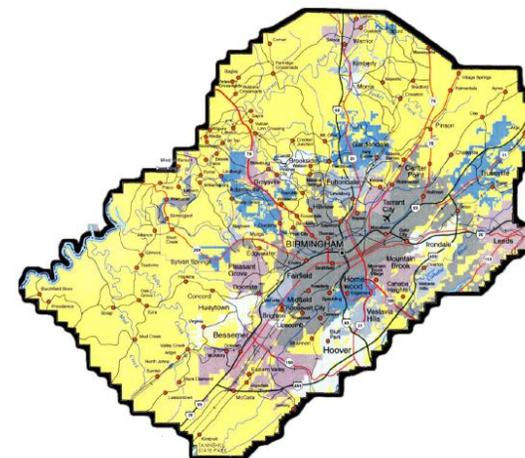
Employers should be an integral part of planning for training as they can help identify future skill needs and any existing gaps.

- **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 given that only one large employment sector is 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 VII: Jefferson County 2012 Summary



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