

## Workforce Supply

- Mobile County has a 70,076-strong available labor pool that includes 57,223 underemployed workers who are looking for better jobs, as well as 12,853 unemployed residents.

The underemployed are willing to commute for longer times and distances for a better job compared to all workers. For the one-way commute, about 47.8 percent are prepared to travel 20 or more minutes longer and 41.3 percent will go 20 or more extra miles.

Labor Force	184,539
Employed	171,686
Underemployment rate	33.3%
Number of underemployed workers	57,223
Unemployed	12,853
<b>Available labor pool</b>	<b>70,076</b>

Note: Based on March 2016 labor force data.

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

- Commute time and distance were slightly down in 2015 compared to the previous year. This suggests that congestion eased in the county. However, congestion is likely to worsen as the county recovers from the last recession.

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.

- Mobile County has lower population growth than the state, but similar educational attainment.

	Mobile County	AL
Population growth, 2010-2015	0.6%	1.7%
<i>Educational attainment, age 25 and over</i>		
High School or higher	84.9%	83.7%
Bachelor's or higher degree	21.4%	23.1%

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

## Workforce Demand

- Employment is currently lagging labor force and population growth, but is expected to grow faster in the longer term.
- By sector the five largest employers in the county provided 94,050 jobs (56.2 percent of the county's 167,488 total) in the first quarter of 2015.

Industry	Employment	Share
Health Care and Social Assistance	23,543	14.1%
Retail Trade	21,178	12.6%
Manufacturing	19,060	11.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	15,356	9.2%
Educational Services	14,913	8.9%

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

- On average 8,843 jobs were created per quarter from second quarter 2001 to first quarter 2015; quarterly net job flows averaged 832.

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 top five high-demand occupations are:

Registered Nurses  
 Computer User Support Specialists  
 Personal Care Aides  
 Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians  
 Home Health Aides

- The top five fast-growing occupations are:

Personal Care Aides  
 Physical Therapist Assistants  
 Diagnostic Medical Sonographers  
 Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians  
 Helpers—Brickmasons, Blockmasons, Stonemasons, and Tile and Marble Setters

- The 50 highest earning occupations have an average salary range of \$79,194 to \$276,411 and many are in management, engineering, and health fields. Only three of these do not require a bachelor's or higher degree. Eight of the top 10 are health occupations.

- Eight jobs are high-earning and in high-demand:

Construction Managers  
 Pharmacists  
 Computer and Information Systems Managers  
 Medical and Health Services Managers  
 Anesthesiologists  
 Nurse Practitioners  
 Operations Research Analysts  
 Surgeons

- The county has 14 jobs that are both fast-growing and in high-demand:

Personal Care Aides  
 Physical Therapist Assistants  
 Diagnostic Medical Sonographers  
 Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians  
 Computer User Support Specialists  
 Physical Therapists  
 Database Administrators  
 Home Health Aides  
 Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists  
 Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders  
 Software Developers, Systems Software  
 Occupational Therapists  
 Medical Equipment Repairers  
 Nurse Practitioners

- One occupation is high-earning, fast-growing, and in high-demand:

Nurse Practitioners

## Implications for Workforce Development

- From a 2012 base, worker shortfalls of about 22,300 and 43,900 are projected for 2022 and 2030, respectively.

Change from 2012	2022	2030
Total population growth	3.5	5.1
Age 20-64 population growth	-1.8	-4.9
Job growth	10.8	19.7
Worker shortfall (percent)	12.5	24.7
Worker shortfall (number)	22,306	43,928

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

A focus on worker skills and expected shortfalls, especially critical occupations, must be a top priority through 2030.

- **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 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.

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 population and labor force growth rates.

Of the county's 730 single occupations, 43 are expected to decline over the 2012 to 2022 period. Nineteen occupations are expected to see a relatively sharp decline of at least eight percent, with each losing a minimum of 10 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 technical and systems skills while the scale of training should 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 continue targeting high-earning industries and workforce development should ensure availability of workers for such industries.**

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

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

# State of the Workforce Report X: Mobile County 2015 Summary



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