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# Kearney Area Skills Gap Report Final Report

Prepared for the Nebraska Department of Labor

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## Executive Summary

In the fall of 2016, the Nebraska Departments of Labor and Economic Development led efforts to conduct two surveys regarding the skills of workers and skill needs of employers in Central Nebraska, which includes the Kearney, Hastings and Grand Island areas. The two surveys were the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* and the *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*.

The current study utilizes the results of both surveys as well as secondary data about the Kearney area economy to summarize information about job skills and whether a skills gap is found within the area. A skills gap is present if it is difficult for a large share of employers to hire in a particular occupation and there is also a persistent gap between the demand for new workers and the number of individuals entering that occupation. Key questions include: In what part of the labor force, if any, is a skills gap present? And, is the skills gap the result of a lack of education and training opportunities, or are other factors at work? The Kearney area includes all or part of Buffalo, Dawson, Franklin, Gosper, Harlan, Kearney and Phelps counties.

Results of the study suggest that the annual flow of individuals into the workforce in the Kearney area will be less than the projected annual needs of businesses due to net job growth and worker replacement. These annual deficits are found throughout the workforce but especially among blue collar and service occupations. Annual deficits are largest in service occupations, especially sales and related workers and food preparation and serving related workers. Among service and blue collar occupations, these annual deficits are further magnified because a significant share of workers are difficult to hire due to a “poor work history” (which typically means frequent job changes) or an inability to pass a background check.

For the more highly skilled occupations with a deficit of workers, potential employees can be prepared through enhanced training, education, internship and (in some cases) apprenticeship opportunities developed through collaboration between employers, training entities and other education institutions. These enhanced learning opportunities should be combined with additional efforts to inform secondary school students, and their parents, about the earnings and other opportunities afforded by these occupations. A list of specific occupations is below, along with the standard occupation code from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- Registered Nurses (SOC CODE 29-1141)
- Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics (SOC CODE 49-3023)
- Maintenance and Repair Workers, General (SOC CODE 49-9071)
- Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators and Tenders, Metal and Plastic (SOC 51-4081)
- Welders, Cutters, Solderers and Brazers (SOC CODE 51-4121)
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (SOC CODE 53-3032)

Results of the research also support another potential initiative. In particular, many employers indicate that a poor work history or elements of worker’s personal history are a factor in hiring. There appears to be a large group of applicants who have some or all of the relevant occupation-specific skills, but who are still not appealing to employers due to work history or an inability to pass a background check. This raises two key questions: is there a subset of workers in these occupations with potential to change, that is, to become more committed to and a better team member at work? And, how would workers who are able to change be identified and separated from the others? To answer these questions, there

should be extensive discussion with human resources representatives and direct supervisors of workers regarding what practical steps workers can take, if any, over time to change a poor work history into an adequate work history.

Finally, this research does not find that the level of wages in the Kearney area is a significant challenge for hiring. Specifically, in nearly all occupations the wage requirements of individuals seeking work: 1) represent only a moderate increase over their current wage and 2) are within the prevailing wages found within the Kearney area job market. Evidence of a wage-based skills-gap is found in just one occupation group, transportation and material moving workers. Transportation and material moving is a key occupation for the logistics industry.

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## 1. Introduction

During the fall of 2016, the Nebraska Departments of Labor and Economic Development led efforts to survey both households and businesses in Central Nebraska. Surveys were designed to examine the skills and work preferences of regional residents and the skill needs and training practices of local employers. These surveys were the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* and the *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*. The surveyed area included significant portions of Central Nebraska including Adams, Buffalo, Clay, Dawson, Filmore, Franklin, Gosper, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Howard, Kearney, Lincoln, Merrick, Nuckolls, Phelps, Webster and York. Results of the survey can be used to assess the demand for and supply of labor in the Kearney area, which is composed of all or part of Buffalo, Dawson, Franklin, Gosper, Harlan, Kearney and Phelps counties.

Survey results yield detailed information about the skills of the local workforce and the hiring and training activities of area businesses. These results provide significant insight into whether there are skills gaps present in individual occupations within the Kearney area labor market. Such skills gaps are present if a high share of employers find that it is difficult to hire workers for an occupation and there is a persistent gap between the demand for workers and the number of workers entering the occupation.

Survey results also indicate that skills gaps have potential to limit growth of the Kearney area economy. In particular, a large percent of respondents to the *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* indicate that labor availability would be an issue if they were asked to consider a local expansion.

Measuring the skills gap is challenging. After all, both businesses and workers are likely to cite difficulties in the labor market with some frequency. For employers, finding and maintaining a productive work force is one of the key challenges of running a business. Likewise, finding and keeping meaningful employment is one of the key career challenges faced by workers. Sure enough, results from the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* indicate that 78.9 percent of potential job seekers report that a lack of job opportunities in the local area is an obstacle to finding new employment. At the same time, 79.0 percent of employers responding to the *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* indicate that it is difficult to hire workers.

Do these survey responses mean that a broad-based skills gap is present in the Kearney area economy? Not necessarily. After all, as noted above, we would anticipate a certain level of concern by businesses and people given the rigor of the labor market. A more interesting question is: for which occupations is it most difficult to find a worker, or to find a job? Further, to identify a skills gap in a particular occupation, we also must identify factors which are causing a lingering shortfall in the number of qualified and employable workers available to employers.

There are many potential reasons why a skills gap could develop within an occupation.

**Structural change** – Structural change refers to changes in technology, customer demand, or international competition which expand the demand for workers in select occupations (and reduce the demand in others). Time may be required for workers to prepare for these emerging occupations, either through retraining for existing workers or by providing appropriate degree and certificate programs for college, community college and high school students.

**Education and Training Programs** – Appropriate degree and certificate programs are needed to help workers build skills required in the economy. Local education institutions, many of which are part of the public sector, may struggle to identify needed programs or change program offerings to meet the needs of students and employers. Degree and certificate programs also must be sufficiently rigorous to prepare students to meet employer needs.

**Appeal of Occupations** – Even when adequate degree and training programs are available, occupations may fail to attract workers at prevailing wages. The combination of wages, benefits and working conditions at a particular occupation may fail to attract workers relative to other work options available within the economy. Such conditions can arise or grow worse as the economy evolves and can also occur because potential workers have inadequate information about the benefits of a particular occupation, or are steered away from an occupation by family members, mentors, or public perception. At the same time, competitive conditions may prevent local employers from raising pay and benefits in order to enhance the appeal of a particular occupation.

**Taxes on Middle Class Workers** – At prevailing wages, taxes may discourage workers from making investments in their skills through education and training programs. Such monetary investments may not be appealing if too large a share of incremental earnings go to federal, state and local government (either directly through income taxes or indirectly through sales and property taxes). In other words, if the tax burden is too high, workers may not choose to enter skilled occupations where work opportunities are abundant, even when local education and training opportunities are adequate.

**Career Destruction** – A portion of workers at all skill levels may engage in behavior which reduces their employment potential. These workers may have adequate skill and experience for an occupation, but still not appeal to employers. For example, worker may have a criminal record, or fail to pass a drug test or may have a poor work history, as evidenced by frequent job changes or other indicators of an inability to fit into the workplace. In these cases, a skill gap can arise because worker skills cannot or will not be utilized by employers, rather than a lack of skill.

**Social Safety Net** – Public benefits such as Medicaid, TANF or Social Security Disability Income may create a significant disincentive for some workers, particularly lower skills workers, to fully participate in the workforce. This may make it very challenging for employers in some occupations to find an adequate workforce.

**Net Outmigration** – While workers are constantly moving in and out of cities, some cities develop a pattern of sustained net outmigration of workers (the difference between in-migrants and out-migrants) in a wide variety of occupations. Net outmigration may be especially severe in those skilled occupations which are typically filled with younger workers (for example, computer and mathematical occupations), given that younger, educated workers are also the most mobile.

These phenomena can limit the local supply of workers in selected skill groups, leaving employers to note a lack of adequately trained workers, or workers who have a poor work history or wage demands which are too high. This report will utilize data from a variety of sources to identify where a skills gap may be present, including data from the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*, the *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*, and data on projected job openings, the flow of graduates and prevailing wages. We began by comparing the annual job openings generated in each occupation, due to net job growth or the replacement of workers, with the potential annual supply of

new workers to the occupation, due to local graduates, local residents who are not currently working, and net migration.

We also consider the share of existing employed workers who are open to or pursuing a change in jobs, and compare their wage requirements with prevailing market wages. Such “churn” in the labor market is important to provide employers with the best match of experienced, skilled workers.



## 2. Supply and Demand for Workers in the Kearney Area by Occupation

The most basic measure of the balance between supply and demand in an occupation is whether there is a gap of between the number of workers being prepared each year for the occupation and the annual need for new workers to enter that occupation. Over time, the annual flow into and out of the occupation will influence how scarce, and difficult to find, workers become. This chapter compares the number of individuals joining an occupation each year after leaving school (either as a graduate or a non-graduate) or through net in-migration with the number of net openings in an occupation each year due to net job growth or the replacement of workers. This chapter further examines the potential for individuals who are not working to reenter the labor force. This provides an additional source of potential new workers for Kearney area employers.

Lastly, the level of “churn” among the existing workers is examined within each occupation. Churn is the rate at which workers in an occupation move between jobs. It is critical since jobs within a single occupation can differ in terms of requirements for skill and experience. An abundance of new graduates can help fill entry level positions but existing, more experienced workers (i.e. former entry level workers) are needed to fill some openings. Churn is the process which improves the skill match for workers and employers in an occupation. This chapter estimates the percent and number of experienced workers within each occupation who are searching for employment.

### A. Supply versus Demand for Workers by Occupation

The first step is to compare the annual net openings and new entrants to each major occupation group within the Kearney area. Net openings in an occupation is a function of net job growth in that occupation and the need to replace workers.

New entrants to an occupation include local individuals who leave school and net migrants to the Kearney area. Individuals who leave school include both graduates and non-graduates. Graduates are high school graduates (and GED completers), community college graduates or college graduates each year. Non-graduates include individuals who drop out of high school, community college, or college. College and community college graduates are assigned to occupations based on their major field of study. High school graduates and non-graduates are assigned to occupations which do not require a college degree based on the number of annual openings. Analysis also adjusts for the share of graduates and non-graduates who are likely to be active participants in the labor force in any given year. This provides the best estimate of how many “workers” are being added in the area economy each year.

Net openings in the Kearney area labor market are based on projections developed by the Office of Labor Market Information (LMI) of the Nebraska Department of Labor. Specifically, the Nebraska LMI generates projections of the demand for additional workers in an occupation based on net job growth and worker replacement, as part of its *Nebraska 2014-2024 Long-Term Occupational & Industry Projections* publication. Projections are made for the State of Nebraska, metropolitan areas and economic development districts. The Kearney area includes counties which are part of both the Central and Mid-Plains Economic Development Districts. Occupation projections for those districts are shared down to the relevant Kearney area counties and summed in order to generate an occupation projection specifically for the Kearney area. Projections are cumulative for 10 years. Annual openings due to net job growth and worker replacement are estimated by taking one-tenth of the 10-year projection. This estimate of annual job openings is shown in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 also contains estimates of the number of local individuals finishing college or community college in a given year with a potential match to each occupation. The degrees of college graduates are estimated based on fields of study at a set of regional universities, in particular the University of Nebraska – Kearney, Hasting Colleges and the Grand Island campus of Doane College. Data on degrees was obtained from the IPEDS data base (the *College Navigator* web portal) maintained by the U.S. Department of Education. There were approximately 1,220 graduates in 2015-16, the most recent year for which data is available through IPEDS.

Table 2.1: Annual Openings and School Leavers by Occupation Group

Occupation	Annual Openings NDOL	Annual School Leavers			
		College and Community College Graduates	Others	Total	Kearney Area Share of Total
Management	120	71	0	71	30
Business and Financial Operations	38	267	0	267	115
Computer and Mathematical	9	42	0	42	18
Architecture and Engineering	10	26	0	26	11
Life, Physical and Social Sciences	20	265	0	265	114
Community and Social Service	28	83	0	83	36
Legal	4	0	0	0	0
Education, Training and Library	92	146	0	146	63
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	19	86	0	86	37
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers	96	207	0	207	89
Healthcare Support	43	22	57	79	34
Protective Services	19	55	25	80	35
Food Preparation and Serving Related	152	0	203	203	88
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	44	0	59	59	25
Personal Care and Services	53	0	70	70	30
Sales and Related	166	0	222	222	96
Office and Administrative Support	147	60	196	256	111
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	102	5	136	141	61
Construction and Extraction	69	14	92	106	46
Installation, Maintenance and Repair	74	37	99	136	58
Production	139	23	186	209	90
Transportation and Material Movers	127	18	169	187	81

Sources: Nebraska Dept of Labor for job openings and IPEDS, U.S. Department of Education for graduates, and BBR calculations

Notes: 1) Others includes high school dropouts, high school graduates (GED completers) or college or community college non-completers. 2) college or community college graduates and others may not sum to total leavers due to rounding

Most of these college graduates are expected to participate in the labor force in any given year, at least while they are in the prime working age of 25 to 64. In particular, data from the National Center for Education Statistics found that in 2014 87.0 percent of 25 to 64 year olds who completed a Bachelor's degree were in the formal labor market. This participation rate for college and community college graduates was combined with the approximately 1,220 graduates to estimate that 1,065 graduates would be available to participate in the labor force during a given year.

The number of high school graduates in Central Nebraska is estimated based on the number of 2014-2015 high school graduates in Nebraska (23,485), and the share of Nebraska's 15- to 17-year olds who live in these 18 Central Nebraska counties (11.5%). Data on the share of 15- to 17- year olds comes from the U.S. Bureau of Census. The 15- to 17- age range is used since such estimates are regularly generated by the U.S. Bureau of Census for counties and since some 18 year-olds are already attending college. The annual number of high school graduates in Nebraska is based on 22,912 graduates reported in the *2016 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* from the Nebraska's Coordinating Commission on Postsecondary Education and national data from the U.S. Department of Education's *Digest of Education Statistics* indicating that 2.5% of high school-age students attend home school.<sup>1</sup>

Multiplying the annual number of Nebraska high school graduates by the percent of state 15- to 17-year olds in the Central Nebraska area yields an estimated of 2,710 annual high school graduates (including a GED for home school students) in the potential labor market of Kearney. Indeed, commuting patterns suggest that workers in most zip codes in the 18-county labor market area are part of the Kearney labor shed.

How many of those 2,710 high school graduates decide to attend college or community college? According to the *2016 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* 61.6% of the students attended a degree-granting institution (either in-state or out-of-state) within one-year of completing high school. That percentage includes individuals who attend a college or a community college. Therefore, the annual flow of individuals who attend a post-secondary institution is approximately 61.6 percent of 2,710, or 1,670. Those 1,670 individuals include persons who are attending 2-year and 4-year colleges. Data provided in the *2016 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* suggests that 26.4% of high school graduates attend 2-year public colleges (community colleges) with the remaining 73.6% attend public 4-year colleges or private colleges. Applying this 73.6% rate to the 1,670 graduates attending college yields an estimate that 1,230 Central Nebraska high school graduates attend college. The *Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* indicates that overall graduation rate for individuals who begin at a post-secondary institution in Nebraska is 50.0 percent. This implies 615 potential 4-year college graduates each year who attended high school in Central Nebraska. This is less than the 1,220 graduates from Central Nebraska colleges, indicating that the area is a net importer of college students.

Central Community College serves the Central Nebraska region, as well as several other parts of Nebraska. Individuals completing a degree at Central Community College are assigned to a particular occupation based on the match between their degree program and the occupation. The number of graduates by degree program for Central Community College also was obtained from the IPEDS data base (the *College Navigator* web portal) maintained by the U.S. Department of Education. There were

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics (not dated). *Digest of Education Statistics*, Table 206.10: Number and percentage of homeschooled students ages 5 through 17 with a grade equivalent of kindergarten through 12th grade, by selected child, parent, and household characteristics: 2003, 2007, and 2012. Available at: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=91>. Accessed January 21, 2017.

approximately 840 associate's degree graduates in 2015-16, the most recent year for which data is available through IPEDS. A portion of these community college graduates will continue on to college. We assume that the 220 graduates in the general fields of study of life, physical and social sciences will ultimately continue onto college yielding an estimate of 620 associate's degree graduates. Approximately 75 percent of this Central Community College graduates attend the school within the Central Nebraska region. Other graduates of Central Community College study in the northeast region. For example, Columbus, Nebraska in Platte County is served by Central Community College. There are therefore approximately 470 community college graduates in the Central Nebraska region.

Most of these community college graduates are expected to participate in the labor force in any given year while they are in the prime working age of 25 to 64. In particular, data from the National Center for Education Statistics found that in 2014 72.6 percent of 25 to 64 year olds who completed an Associate's Degree were in the formal labor market.<sup>2</sup> This compares to 87.0 percent of 25 to 64 year olds who completed a Bachelor's degree. This participation rate for community college graduates was combined with the approximately 470 graduates to estimate that 360 community college graduates would be available to participate in the labor force during a given year.

The next task is to estimate the annual number of school leavers in three categories: individuals leaving college before graduating, those finishing high school but not pursuing a two- or four-year college degree and those who drop out of high school. Methods for each estimate are described below.

**High School Graduates Not Continuing to College or Community College.** Calculations above estimated that there are 2,710 annual high school graduates (including a GED for home school students) in the Central Nebraska region. How many of those individuals decided not to attend college or community college? The *2016 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* indicated that 61.6 percent of those students attended a degree-granting college or community college (either in-state or out-of-state) within one-year of completing high school. Therefore, the annual flow of individuals who potentially enter the job market as high school graduates is approximately 38.4 percent of 2,710, or 1,040. A portion of these individuals will participate in the labor force in a given year. The National Center for Education Statistics found that 72.0% of 25 to 64 year olds those who completed high school but did not participate in post-secondary education were in the labor market in 2014. This percentage is applied to 1,040 to yield 750 additional labor force participants with a high school degree only.

**High School Dropouts.** The *2016 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* indicated that Nebraska has a four-year high school graduation rate of 90 percent. This graduation rate implies that there is one non-completer for each nine high school graduates. This yields an estimate of approximately 300 high school dropouts in Central Nebraska in any particular year (although some of these individuals will ultimately obtain a GED). The National Center for Education Statistics report found that 59.9 percent of those who did not complete high school were participating in the labor market in 2014. Applying this rate to the population of 300 indicates that high school non-completers contribute 180 additional labor force participants each year.

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<sup>2</sup> Institute for Education Sciences, 2015. "Employment Rates and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment," National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (May). Accessed at [nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_cbc.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cbc.asp)

**College and Community College Non-Completers.** As noted earlier, the *Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* indicates that overall graduation rate for individuals who begin at a post-secondary institution in Nebraska is 50.0 percent. Applying this rate to the 61.6 percent of 2,710 high school graduates who attend college yields an estimate that 835 individuals will potentially enter the local labor market each year without a completing a post-secondary degree. Of these, there were 81 graduates of certificate programs for Licensed Practical Nurse and Certified Driver's License programs which were counted among the community college graduates. Adjusting for this, there were an estimated 750 individuals potentially entering the labor market without a degree (or one of those two certificates). The National Center for Education Statistics report indicates that 77.6 percent of these will enter the labor force, implying 585 additional labor force participants each year.<sup>3</sup>

Altogether, approximately 1,515 high school only completers, high school non-completers, and college non-completers (who did not earn a certificate as a Licensed Practical Nurse or a certificate for a Commercial Driver's License) enter the Central Nebraska labor market each year. These individuals are distributed among the occupations which do not *require* a college or community college degree (although workers may have a degree) including: healthcare support; protective services; food preparation and serving-related; building and grounds; personal care and services; sales, office and administrative support; farming, fishing and forestry; construction and extraction; installation, maintenance and repair; production; and transportation and material moving occupations. The 1,515 individuals are allocated to these occupations based on the share of annual openings.

Results in Table 2.1 show that there is a surplus of school leavers in Central Nebraska relative to annual openings in the Kearney area in most white collar and all blue collar and service occupations. Across all occupations there are an estimated 1,370 more school leavers in Central Nebraska than projected openings in the Kearney area each year.

However, not all Central Nebraska school leavers will choose to work in the Kearney area. After all, the Central Nebraska region also includes other large employment centers such as Grand Island, Hastings and Lexington, as well as many other mid-size and small employment centers. Table 2.1 also shows the number of school leavers by occupation which would be available to the Kearney economy based on its past share of Central Nebraska employment; that is, following historic commuting patterns. In this case, across all occupations there is an estimated annual deficit of 300 school leavers. Deficits are modest for most white collar occupations, although there is an annual deficit for teachers and health care practitioners and technical workers. This result is consistent with ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining doctors and nurses in the region. Annual deficits are common for blue collar and service occupations. There is a significant annual deficit for skilled construction and extraction as well as skilled installation, maintenance and repair workers. The annual deficit of entrants to openings is especially pronounced, at nearly 50 workers per year, for production workers and transportation and material moving workers. Among service occupations, similar large annual deficits are found for sales workers and food preparation and serving related workers. There also are large annual deficits for office and administrative support occupations.

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<sup>3</sup> This estimate assumes that individuals who fail to complete a college or community college degree at a Kearney area post-secondary institution will return to the community where they completed high school. Similarly, Kearney area high school graduates who attended but did not complete post-secondary education in another city would return to the area.

Further, Table 2.1 does not reflect the flow of workers into and out of the Central Nebraska region each year. In particular, Central Nebraska area loses 185 *workers* each year due to net immigration to other regions. Estimates of entrants and openings after net migration are provided in Table 2.2. Estimates for migration are based on U.S. Bureau of Census data for total population. Estimates of total population are converted to estimates of migration by workers utilizing employment to population ratios. After factoring in net outmigration, across all occupations there are an estimated 380 fewer school leavers who will work in the Kearney area than projected openings in the metropolitan area each year.

Table 2.2: Annual Openings and Entrants by Occupation Group, Including Migrants

Occupation	Annual Openings NDOL	Annual Entrants		Kearney Area Share of Total	
		Total Finishers	Net Migration	Total	Share of Total
Management	120	71	-21	49	21
Business and Financial Operations	38	267	-7	261	112
Computer and Mathematical	9	42	-2	41	18
Architecture and Engineering	10	26	-2	24	11
Life, Physical and Social Sciences	20	265	-3	262	113
Community and Social Service	28	83	-5	78	34
Legal	4	0	-1	0	0
Education, Training and Library	92	146	-16	130	56
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	19	86	-3	82	36
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers	96	207	-8	198	86
Healthcare Support	43	79	-4	76	33
Protective Services	19	80	-2	79	34
Food Preparation and Serving Related	152	203	-13	190	82
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	44	59	-4	55	24
Personal Care and Services	53	70	-5	66	28
Sales and Related	166	222	-27	195	84
Office and Administrative Support	147	256	-24	232	100
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	102	141	-14	128	55
Construction and Extraction	69	106	-9	97	42
Installation, Maintenance and Repair	74	136	-10	126	54
Production	139	209	-3	206	89
Transportation and Material Movers	127	187	-3	184	79

Sources: Nebraska Department of Labor for job openings and IPEDS, U.S. Department of Education for graduates, and BBR calculations

Notes: 1) Others includes high school dropouts, high school graduates (GED completers) or college or community college non-completers. 2) college or community college graduates and others may not sum to total leavers due to rounding

Net outmigration also influences the balance between openings and labor market entrants in specific occupation groups. In Table 2.2., estimates of net out-migration by workers are allocated to 5 civilian major occupation categories and for military personnel: 1) management, business, science, arts, 2) service occupations, 3) sales and office occupations, 4) natural resources, construction, and maintenance, 5) production, transportation and material moving and 6) military specific occupations. The Bureau of Census also has data on the frequency of migration within these occupation categories. After making this adjustment, the underlying pattern continues. Annual deficits are limited for many white collar occupations but are significant for blue collar and service occupations.

Further, there is an additional reasons to be concerned about the available supply of new workers. In particular, an assumption throughout the analysis has been that workers entering the labor market would remain viable to work over their lifetime. Yet, in some cases, workers with appropriate training will diminish their ability to utilize those skills by developing a poor work history or personal issues which discourage employers from hiring them. Table 2.3 show the potential size of this problem. The table lists the percentage of business respondents to the *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* who indicated it was difficult to hire workers in part due to: 1) poor work history and 2) failure to pass a background check. These percentages are significant, especially given the existing gap between openings and annual entrants.

Table 2.3: Total Annual Openings and Entrants and Problems with Work History

	Balance And Problems
Annual Openings Kearney Area	1,570
Annual Entrants Central Nebraska	2,760
Annual Entrants Kearney Area	1,190
Share of Applicants with	
Poor Work History	48.3%
Failed Background Check	20.6%

Sources: IPEDS, U.S. Department of Education for graduates and *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* and BBR calculations

*Potential Supply from Area Residents Who Are Not Currently Employed*

While Tables 2.1 through 2.3 addressed the long-term balance between annual openings and entrants in each occupation, it should be noted that there is another potential source to source to bring new workers into the Kearney area economy over the next few years. That sources is area residents who are not currently employed. These individuals can be drawn back into the work force both by providing job opportunities to unemployed workers and drawing back individuals who are currently out of the labor force, such as retirees or homemakers.

Table 2.4 provides information on the population of the Central Nebraska who are not currently employed but are actively seeking work. Data in the table are assembled using responses of individuals in the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*. That survey included a significant number of responses from individuals who indicated that they were unemployed, retired, or were currently homemakers. Respondents provided information both about their previous occupation when they worked in the past and whether they are actively seeking a job at the moment. Approximately 12.8 percent indicated that they would “re-enter the workforce next year if a suitable job is available.” This percentage is much higher than might be expected given the 2% to 3% unemployment rate that prevails in the Kearney area.

However, the difference makes sense given that the criteria for being classified as unemployed are not as strict in the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*. In particular, persons do not need to demonstrate that they have been actively searching beyond a minimum level in recent weeks.

This broader 12.8 percent of individuals who are open to rejoining the workforce implies a chance to add a significant number of new workers to the labor force. In particular, there are approximately 55,710 adults age 16 and above in Central Nebraska (portions of the 18 county region in the Kearney labor shed) classified as out of the labor force or unemployed, including 21,630 from the Kearney area or expected to commute into the Kearney area. The 12.8 percent figure indicates that there are potentially up to 7,160 additional workers for the Central Nebraska economy with 2,780 specifically for the Kearney area economy. Table 2.4 shows the occupations for which these potential workers might be available, based on the previous occupation. Table 2.4 also shows the share who have not worked previously in the formal labor market, and therefore, do not have a previous occupation.

Table 2.4: Number of Jobless Individuals Actively Searching for a Job by Previous Occupation

Occupation	Central Nebraska	Kearney Area
Management	386	150
Business and Financial Operations	447	173
Computer and Mathematical	0	0
Architecture and Engineering	0	0
Life, Physical and Social Sciences	102	39
Community and Social Service	51	20
Legal	0	0
Education, Training and Library	413	160
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	64	25
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers	362	141
Healthcare Support	39	15
Protective Services	272	105
Food Preparation and Serving Related	492	191
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	362	141
Personal Care and Services	181	70
Sales and Related	91	35
Office and Administrative Report	1,696	658
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	64	25
Construction and Extraction	0	0
Installation, Maintenance and Repair	255	99
Production	942	366
Transportation and Material Movers	669	260
Never Worked	272	105

Source: *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*

As seen in Table 2.4, a significant share of these workers are in key blue collar occupations, including production workers and transportation and material moving workers. Among white collar occupations, in Central Nebraska there are approximately 390 individuals with management experience, 450 former



business and financial operations workers, 410 education workers and 360 health care practitioners and technicians. The largest number of potential reentrants, however, are in office and administrative support occupations. Counts of potential workers available for the Kearney area economy are between 35% and 40% as large. Results therefore show the potential over the next few years to plug some of the annual gap between openings and entrants through drawing the unemployed, retired workers and homemakers back into the workforce.

#### B. Job Search among the Currently Employed

Beyond the overall balance of openings and entrants in an occupation, employers have a need for hiring experienced workers. Such positions are often filled by workers who are currently employed. While this can be frustrating for employers who lose workers, this “churn” of workers can be beneficial. In particular, job search by the employed helps experienced workers find the best match between their job and their skills and experience. Finally, workers who are hired away, in turn, leave open positions which create an opportunity, and potentially a better job match, for another worker.

The *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* asked employed workers whether they were actively searching for work, along with questions about their experience and occupation. Survey results indicate that 10.7 percent of currently employed workers are actively searching for a job. This implies that approximately 12,220 employed workers are actively searching at any moment in time. Survey results also can be used to generate statistics about the share and number of employed workers in each occupation who are actively searching for a job. These shares are presented in Table 2.5.

Results in Table 2.5 show great variation in the share of employed workers who are actively seeking a new job. In most occupations, between 7% and 17% of workers were actively seeking new work. The highest shares were transportation and material moving workers (24.3%), food preparation and serving related workers (22.4%), and arts, design, entertainment, sports and media workers (20.9%). At least 11% of workers were actively seeking a new job among blue collar occupations, with 16.4% of construction and extraction workers seeking new work. The shares are less consistent for other groups of workers. Among white collar workers, the share searching for work is slightly higher for business and financial operations workers (11.7%) and architects and engineers (11.2%). For service occupations, the share of workers searching for work is elevated for health care support occupations (15.5%) and personal care and service workers (11.1%).

The largest number of employed workers who are actively seeking a new job are found in select white collar and service occupations. Among white collar workers, the largest number of workers searching for work were in the health care professionals, management and teaching occupations. These are also the white collar occupations with the largest number of workers. Note that farmers and ranchers typically would be classified as farm and ranch managers. Among service workers, there are nearly 950 office and administrative support workers actively seeking new work in the Central Nebraska region. There are a large number of employed blue collar workers actively seeking other work including an estimated 1,150 transportation and material moving workers, 995 production workers, and 800 construction and extraction workers.

As seen in Table 2.5, the total number of employed workers searching for work is more limited if counts are restricted to workers who reside within the Kearney area. However, there are still hundreds of experienced workers available in many occupations.

Table 2.5: Percent and Number of Employed Individuals Who Report Actively Searching for a Job By Occupation

Occupation	Percent Actively Seeking a Job	Number Actively Seeking a Job Central Nebraska	Number Actively Seeking a Job Kearney Area
Management	7.1%	1,162	501
Business and Financial Operations	11.7%	558	241
Computer and Mathematical	7.8%	153	66
Architecture and Engineering	11.2%	196	85
Life, Physical and Social Sciences	7.8%	114	49
Community and Social Service	10.2%	356	153
Legal	9.0%	64	28
Education, Training and Library	9.9%	1,032	445
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	20.9%	353	152
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers	10.1%	1,237	533
Healthcare Support	15.5%	598	258
Protective Services	4.4%	42	18
Food Preparation and Serving Related	22.4%	493	213
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	6.8%	128	55
Personal Care and Services	11.1%	285	123
Sales and Related	7.0%	485	209
Office and Administrative Support	6.7%	948	409
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	11.6%	395	170
Construction and Extraction	16.4%	802	346
Installation, Maintenance and Repair	12.3%	668	288
Production	11.9%	995	429
Transportation and Material Movers	24.3%	1,153	497

Source: *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*

As is evident from Table 2.5, there is a significant number of employed workers actively seeking new employment at any moment in time. In fact, the number of employed workers actively searching for a job typically dwarfs the number of annual entrants to each occupation. Table 2.6 compares the estimated number of employed workers actively searching for a work at a given moment (Table 2.5) with the estimated number of annual of entrants, by occupation (Table 2.2) for Central Nebraska as a whole. For most occupations, there are more experienced workers actively searching for work than new entrants. This highlights the critical role that job search by experienced workers plays in operation of the labor market.

Table 2.6: Relative Abundance of Currently Employed Job-Seekers by Occupation

Occupation	School Finishers		
	and Net Migrants Central Nebraska	Employed But Actively Seeking Work Central Nebraska	Employed But Actively Seeking Work Kearney Area
Management	49	1,162	501
Business and Financial Operations	261	558	241
Computer and Mathematical	41	153	66
Architecture and Engineering	24	196	85
Life, Physical and Social Sciences	262	114	49
Community and Social Service	78	356	153
Legal	0	64	28
Education, Training and Library	130	1,032	445
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	82	353	152
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers	198	1,237	533
Healthcare Support	76	598	258
Protective Services	79	42	18
Food Preparation and Serving Related	190	493	213
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	55	128	55
Personal Care and Services	66	285	123
Sales and Related	195	485	209
Office and Administrative Report	232	948	409
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	128	395	170
Construction and Extraction	97	802	346
Installation, Maintenance and Repair	126	668	288
Production	206	995	429
Transportation and Material Movers	184	1,153	497

Sources: IPEDS, U.S. Department of Education for graduates and *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* and BBR calculations

### 3. Barriers to Employment and the Local Labor Market

The preceding chapter found that there are a significant group of currently employed workers who are actively looking for a new job. In many occupations, there are also individuals who are not currently working who would be likely to enter the workforce if a suitable job is available. These workers represent an important skill resource for Kearney area employers. Two questions about these potential workers come to mind. First, what challenges or barriers do they foresee in seeking new employment? Second, do these challenges appear to represent a skills gap? These two questions are discussed below.

Survey results reported in the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* show the types of barriers perceived by employed workers who would consider changing jobs. The various criteria fall into categories including working conditions, suitability for employment, work schedule, and compensation. Analysis focuses on the currently employed. Workers who are unemployed, retired or otherwise out of the labor force generally did not respond to the question.

Nearly four in five employed potential job seekers (78.9%) cite a lack of job opportunities in the area as a barrier to changing jobs. This result is perhaps surprising given that projected openings exceed new entrants in the Kearney area for blue collar and service occupations, as reported in Chapter 2. However, the result may simply mean that potential job seekers perceive a lack of appropriate job opportunities, that is, job opportunities which match their skills and their ambitions. This perspective is bolstered by the finding that one quarter of employed potential job seekers (25.4%) report facing a barrier to finding new employment because they are “overqualified.” Other common obstacles perceived by potential job seekers relate to compensation and work hours available from local employers. More than three in four (77.1%) cite “inadequate pay offered by local employers” as an obstacle. Inadequate benefits are cited by 65.3 percent of employed potential job seekers. Inadequate hours are cited by 46.1 percent.

Potential seekers also perceive that their own background may limit their potential to find employment. One in three (33.3%) cite a lack of training while 26.6 percent cite a lack of education. Besides skill, workers also are concerned about elements of their work history or personal history which create a perceived barrier. Poor credit history is noted by 8.2 percent of employed potential job seekers. Credit history is sometimes used as a screen by potential employers. Work history is cited by 8.5 percent, while a criminal record is cited as a barrier by 2.5 percent of job seekers.

Results also showed that family considerations create a barrier for some workers. In particular, a lack of childcare is noted by 11.7 percent of employed potential job seekers and family commitments are noted by 26.4 percent. Currently employed workers may have found a position which can accommodate their family commitments, a feature which binds them to that position.

Do these obstacles suggest the presence of a skills gap in the Kearney area? Potentially so, if potential job seekers perceive they have inadequate education or training, or have a life history such as a criminal record which will dissuade employers from utilizing their skills, or if employers offer inadequate wages to attract potential job seekers into the new jobs where their skills are needed. Below we examine this evidence of a skills gap in more detail, by comparing worker assessments with those of employers, and comparing wage expectations with market wages in the Kearney area.

Table 3.1 compares employer perceptions of worker skill with the perceptions of potential job seekers. Employer perceptions come from the report *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*. In

particular, employers were asked whether a series of factors, including occupation skills, make it difficult to hire workers in particular occupations. Employer perceptions of a lack of occupations specific skills from whatever source (a lack of education, lack of training) is similar to the perceptions of potential job seekers. Both perceive a significant problem.

Table 3.1: Employer and Employed Potential Job Seekers Perceptions of Skill and Training

Issue	Employed Potential Job Seekers	Employers Hiring for Specific Occupations
Percent Indicating a Lack of Training is an Obstacle to Changing Jobs	33.3%	
Percent Indicating a Lack of Education is an Obstacle to Changing Jobs	26.6%	
Percent Indicating that Lack of Occupation Specific Skills Makes It Difficult to Hire		35.8%
Percent Indicating that Lack of Required Licenses/Certificates Makes It Difficult to Hire		12.1%

Sources: *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* and *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*

Table 3.2 looks at other workforce issues which influence employability; in particular, facts or tendencies in the background of workers which may reduce or prohibit employability even if workers have the necessary skills for an occupation. The table shows that employers indicate 20.6 percent of the time that failed background checks make it difficult to hire. A background check can include a variety of factors including criminal record, substance abuse, or evidence of credit problems. Results from the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* indicate that some potential job seekers also recognize that difficulties with their background which could be a barrier to employment.

Table 3.2: Employer and Employed Potential Job Seekers Perceptions of Worker Background and History

Issue	Employed Potential Job Seekers	Employers Hiring for Specific Occupations
Percent Indicating Criminal Record is an Obstacle to Employment	2.5%	
Percent Indicating Employment History is an Obstacle to Employment	8.5%	
Percent Indicating Poor Credit History is an Obstacle to Employment	8.2%	
Percent Indicating Failed Background Check Makes It Difficult to Hire		20.6%
Percent Indicating that Poor Work History Makes It Difficult to Hire		48.3%

Sources: *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* and *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*

Table 3.2 also shows that 48.3 percent of employers indicate that a poor work history makes it difficult to hire, as reported in the *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*. Follow-up discussions with employers suggest that poor work history refers to evidence of frequent “job-hopping,” or other indicators that workers do not fit in well at their workplace. Note that there is a large opinion gap

between employers and workers with regards to work history. Nearly one-half of employers indicate that applicants with a poor work history make it difficult to hire but only 8.5 percent of employed job seekers feel that employment history is an obstacle to finding a new job. Such problems can certainly discourage hiring, even when workers have the required skills. This is the largest difference among any of the issues presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

The final issue pertains to the wages and benefits of potential jobs. This is another area where workers and employers have very different perceptions. As was noted above, a majority of potential job seekers see wages or benefits available from local employers as an obstacle to finding a new job. But, just 32.9 percent of employers see wage demands from workers which were “too high” as a cause of difficulty in hiring, according to the results in the report *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*.

This issue is worthy of further study. Fortunately, a wealth of information is available about local wages, including detailed information about the wage desires of workers from the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* and information about the average wages by occupation in the Kearney area from the U.S. Department of Labor. The information can be used to assess whether job seekers have realistic expectations regarding wages in potential new jobs. Realistic expectations would be present if differences in wage expectations among employees and employers do not rise to the level of being a source of a skills gap in the local economy. In particular, the question is whether employed potential job seekers expect to see a very large increase in wages compared to their current job.

A related question is whether the desired wages are high relative to the average wages of workers in that occupation in the Kearney area. While the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* found that potential job seekers desired flexibility and other beneficial job characteristics in new employment, some increase in wages would be expected in order to draw workers to a new job.

Results in Table 3.3 show current wages and desired wages for employed potential job seekers by education attainment category. This is a comparison between the current wage reported by respondents to the *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* from the Kearney labor shed and the minimum wage which would be required for respondents to improve their job situation, assuming a new position met their other most important job condition requirements. Results are presented for potential job seekers who report hourly wages. Results show that most potential job seekers hope for a position which pays \$1.81 to \$2.61 per hour more than their current position, with holders of a Master’s degree or higher looking for the same wage on average. Outside of these advanced degree holders, the desired wage increase in percentage terms ranges between 10.9 percent and 13.2 percent. These percentage differences between current and desired wages are significant but perhaps manageable, that is, in-line with the opening ask of a worker who is being recruited to change positions.

Table 3.3: Current and Desired Wages of Employed Job Seekers by Educational Attainment

Highest Level of Education	Weighted N	Average Current Wages \$	Average Desired Wages \$	Average Wage Differential \$	Percent Wage Differential
Less than High School	21	\$13.77	\$15.58	\$1.81	13.2%
High School Graduate or GED	178	\$15.99	\$18.07	\$2.08	13.0%
Some College	180	\$17.36	\$19.55	\$2.19	12.6%
Certificate	71	\$18.64	\$20.90	\$2.25	12.1%
Associate's Degree	141	\$20.57	\$22.82	\$2.24	10.9%
Bachelor's Degree	138	\$21.24	\$23.85	\$2.61	12.3%
Master's Degree or Higher	36	\$32.17	\$32.17	\$0.00	0.0%

Source: *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*

Additional insights can be generated by comparing the current and desired wages of potential job seekers by occupation. This is done in Table 3.4. Results in Table 3.4 show wide variety in desired wage increases. There are select white collar, service and skilled blue collar occupations where there is a larger wage gap. The average desired wage is \$1.02 per hour higher (4.6%) for construction and extraction workers (SOC 47). Among blue collar workers, the biggest difference is for installation, maintenance and repair workers (SOC 49). Average desired wages are \$4.60 per hour higher (22.2%) for these workers.

The gap between desired and current hourly wages is more modest for service occupations. Desired wages are \$1.95 per hour higher (12.8%) for office and administrative support occupations (SOC 43) and smaller increases are desired for other service occupations, such as personal care and services occupations (SOC 39). The largest increase, at \$3.49 higher (32.5%), is sought by food preparation and serving related workers (SOC 35).

The gap between desired and current wages is also found for white collar workers. The gap is \$3.73 per hour (13.8%) for managers (SOC 11), \$2.45 per hour (14.2%) for teaching, training and library workers (SOC 25), \$5.16 per hour (25.8%) for business and financial operations workers (SOC 13) and \$0.78 per hour (2.8%) for health care practitioners (SOC 29).

The large desired increases which were found in select occupations, such as installation, maintenance and repair workers (SOC 47), food preparation and serving related workers (SOC 35) and business and financial operations workers (SOC 13), suggest that wage expectations could be a source of mismatch in the labor market. Before reaching this interpretation, however, it is worthwhile to examine how desired wages compare with the actual wages found in various occupation groups within the Kearney area labor market. The difference between the desired wages in each occupation group and the average hourly wage in that occupation in the Kearney area can be observed in Table 3.5. Current average hourly wage data for the Kearney area are based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics occupation wage data for the Central Nebraska Non-Metropolitan Area. The Central Nebraska Non-Metropolitan area includes all counties which are part of the Kearney area.

Table 3.4: Current and Desired Wages of All Potential Job Seekers by Occupation Group

Occupation Group	Weighted N	Average Current Wages \$	Average Desired Wages \$	Average Wage Differential \$	Percent Wage Differential
Management Occupations	34	\$27.00	\$30.73	\$3.73	13.8%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	29	\$20.04	\$25.20	\$5.16	25.8%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	10	\$23.69	\$25.65	\$1.96	8.3%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	11	\$28.78	\$34.24	\$5.46	19.0%
Life, Physical and Social Science Occupations	7	\$15.89	\$17.43	\$1.54	9.7%
Community and Social Service Occupations	22	\$21.79	\$19.33	-\$2.46	-11.3%
Legal Occupations	2	\$14.25	\$16.26	\$2.01	14.1%
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	20	\$17.28	\$19.73	\$2.45	14.2%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	7	\$14.60	\$18.14	\$3.55	24.3%
Health Care Practitioners and Technical	96	\$27.55	\$28.33	\$0.78	2.8%
Health Care Support Occupations	42	\$15.82	\$17.17	\$1.35	8.5%
Protective Service Occupations	9	\$21.73	\$24.36	\$2.63	12.1%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	28	\$10.74	\$14.23	\$3.49	32.5%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	20	\$12.37	\$14.56	\$2.19	17.7%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	18	\$12.03	\$12.80	\$0.77	6.4%
Sales and Related Occupations	40	\$16.16	\$17.85	\$1.69	10.4%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	143	\$15.27	\$17.22	\$1.95	12.8%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations	4	\$12.20	\$18.00	\$5.80	47.5%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	46	\$21.37	\$22.39	\$1.02	4.8%
Installation, Maintenance and Repair Occupations	57	\$20.71	\$25.31	\$4.60	22.2%
Production Occupations	107	\$19.16	\$20.50	\$1.34	7.0%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	57	\$15.11	\$18.85	\$3.74	24.8%

Source: *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*

For occupations which typically require a college degree (SOC 11-29), desired wages are often well below the average hourly wage in Kearney area occupations. While this may occur because potential job seekers are on average younger, and therefore, have not yet gained sufficient experience to command the average wage in their occupation, the results suggest that the desired wage increases of college educated potential job seekers are modest and manageable. The two exceptions are architects and engineers (SOC 17) and Community and Social Service Occupations (SOC 21).

In most cases, the same cannot be said of occupations which do not typically require a college degree (SOC 31-53). For all such occupations, the gap between desired and actual hourly wages is negative. Large differences are found for all blue collar occupations and select service occupations including health care support workers (SOC 31), food preparation and serving related occupations (SOC 35), sales and related occupations (SOC 41) and office and administrative support workers (SOC 43). Other service occupations either had a small gap between desired and actual hourly wages or a relatively small sample size.



Table 3.5: Average Desired and Actual Wages of All Potential Job Seekers by Occupation Group

Occupation Group	Weighted N	Average Current Wages \$	Average Desired Wages \$	Average Wage Differential \$	Kearney Area Average Wage (\$) (May 2015)
Management Occupations	34	\$27.00	\$30.73	\$3.73	\$40.31
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	29	\$20.04	\$25.20	\$5.16	\$30.28
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	10	\$23.69	\$25.65	\$1.96	\$27.04
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	11	\$28.78	\$34.24	\$5.46	\$28.30
Life, Physical and Social Science Occupations	7	\$15.89	\$17.43	\$1.54	\$24.27
Community and Social Service Occupations	22	\$21.79	\$19.33	-\$2.46	\$17.46
Legal Occupations	2	\$14.25	\$16.26	\$2.01	\$27.26
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	20	\$17.28	\$19.73	\$2.45	\$21.00
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	7	\$14.60	\$18.14	\$3.55	\$15.11
Health Care Practitioners and Technical	96	\$27.55	\$28.33	\$0.78	\$30.50
Health Care Support Occupations	42	\$15.82	\$17.17	\$1.35	\$13.01
Protective Service Occupations	9	\$21.73	\$24.36	\$2.63	\$18.28
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	28	\$10.74	\$14.23	\$3.49	\$9.78
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	20	\$12.37	\$14.56	\$2.19	\$11.62
Personal Care and Service Occupations	18	\$12.03	\$12.80	\$0.77	\$11.37
Sales and Related Occupations	40	\$16.16	\$17.85	\$1.69	\$15.08
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	143	\$15.27	\$17.22	\$1.95	\$14.45
Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations	4	\$12.20	\$18.00	\$5.80	\$15.92
Construction and Extraction Occupations	46	\$21.37	\$22.39	\$1.02	\$17.16
Installation, Maintenance and Repair Occupations	57	\$20.71	\$25.31	\$4.60	\$19.07
Production Occupations	107	\$19.16	\$20.50	\$1.34	\$16.10
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	57	\$15.11	\$18.85	\$3.74	\$15.97

Source: *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey* and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The gap between desired and actual wages in these occupations may make it especially difficult for employers to find needed workers. But, are employers having difficulty? In other words, are these the occupations where employers note that it is most difficult to find workers? This question is addressed in Table 3.6. For each of the 7 occupations, results are presented regarding the percentage of employers who found that it is difficult to hire workers and the percentage of employers who felt that wage demands are “too high.” Employers reported that it was less difficult than average (79.0%) to find workers in the health care support (SOC 31), administrative and office support (SOC 43) and production (SOC 51) occupations. By contrast, 87.8 percent of employers reported that it is difficult to hire workers in the food preparation and serving related occupation (9% above the all-occupation average), while 86.6 percent of employers report the same for construction and extraction workers along with 82.2 percent of employers for installation, maintenance and repair workers, and 80.2 percent for transportation and material moving workers. However, for three of four of these occupation groups, a

below average share of employers report that wage demands are “too high.” In other words, there was only one occupation, transportation and material movers, where it is especially difficult to find workers, where desired wages are well-above occupation averages and where employers report that there an elevated challenge with wage demands which are too high. Generally, these results suggest that wages are not contributing to the skills gap in any particular occupation.

Table 3.6: Share of Business Respondents in the Survey of Kearney Area Businesses about Skill and Training Requirements Reporting It Was Difficult to Find Workers, By Selected Occupation

Occupation	Percent of Employers Indicating That Wage Demands for the Occupation Were “Too High” (Average = 32.9%)	Percent of Employers Indicating That It Is “Difficult” To Find Workers in Occupation (Average = 79.0%)
Health Care Support Occupations	26.3%	77.2%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	28.0%	87.8%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	34.1%	69.1%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	27.2%	86.6%
Installation, Maintenance and Repair Occupations	22.7%	82.2%
Production Occupations	20.6%	78.1%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	33.6%	80.2%

Source: *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

In summary, both employers and potential employees perceive some common sources of difficulty in hiring. Both perceive that some potential employees lack occupation-specific skills (lack of education, lack of training). Both groups also perceive that a significant number of potential employees have factors in their background which can make hiring difficult even when workers have appropriate skills for a job. In particular, a significant share of employers report that workers have a “poor work history” or would have a difficult time passing a background check. At the same time, there is only limited evidence that the desire for higher wages is a significant source of the skills gap in the Kearney area. The strongest evidence of such a wage-based skills-gap was among transportation and other material moving occupations.

#### 4. Detailed Evaluation of Select Occupations

This section compares information from the employer and household surveys and secondary data from government sources to develop a profile of skill supply and demand in specific occupations. Occupations were selected that have been identified by the Nebraska Department of Labor as a high wage occupation in the region, or where evidence of skills gap was identified in Chapters 2 and 3. Analysis should reveal the nature of the skills gap, if any, found in different occupations. A detailed analysis is provided for the following occupations:

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (SOC CODE 53-3032)

Welders, Cutters, Solderers and Brazers (SOC CODES 51-4121)

Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics (SOC CODE 43-3023)

Registered Nurses (SOC CODE 29-1141)

Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators and Tenders, Metal and Plastic (SOC 51-4081)

Maintenance and Repair Workers, General (SOC CODE 49-9071)

##### A. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (SOC CODE 53-3032)

Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers transport goods from one place to another, often through long haul routes. This is considered a H3 occupation by the Nebraska Department of Labor, meaning it offers higher wage earnings opportunities. Heavy truck drivers also are a primary occupation within the transportation and material moving occupation group. There was a significant annual deficit between the number of job openings and annual and potential entrants into the transportation and material moving occupation in the Kearney area. The mean hourly wage in the Kearney area is \$18.66. Finding workers is challenging in this occupation. As seen in Table 4.1, 82.1 percent of businesses reported that it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation. That is a higher percentage of difficulty than is found for occupations overall.

Table 4.1 also shows the reasons for difficulty in hiring according to Kearney area employers who hire heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers. Hiring heavy truckers is especially challenging due to applicants who lack work experience and workers who fail a background check. Unsurprisingly, there is also a challenge for workers who lack required licenses and certificates. The challenges for hiring in this high wage occupation also relate to finding additional applicants with the required certificate training. Just over three-quarters (77.7%) of Kearney businesses indicate that there are not enough applicants for jobs in this occupation.

Data on annual openings and entrants for the heavy and tractor-trailer truck driver occupation also suggest challenges with the number of applications. As seen in Table 4.1, there are an estimated 20 new openings in this occupation in the Kearney area due to growth in employment and the replacement of workers. At the same time, 31 students graduate from the Bus and Truck Driver certificate program in Central Nebraska each year, with 10 expected to enter the occupation in the Kearney area. There are 26 former truck drivers in the Kearney area who report an interest in re-entering the workforce. These workers could help to close the imbalance between openings and new entrants for a period but are not a permanent solution to the imbalance. There is a need to attract more workers to seek training in the heavy and tractor-trailer truck driver occupation, along with a need for more drivers to maintain their ability to pass relevant background checks.

Table 4.1

Key Findings for the Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers Occupation

Occupation	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (SOC 53-3032)	All Occupations
Percent Indicating It is Difficult to Hire	82.1%	79.0%
Reasons for Difficulty in Hiring		
Lack of Experience	62.7%	44.3%
Poor Work History	58.8%	48.3%
Lack of Occupation-Specific Skills	42.1%	35.8%
Failed Background Check	46.0%	20.6%
Wage Demands Too High	30.1%	32.9%
Lack of Required Licenses/Certificates	39.2%	12.1%
Language Barriers	17.4%	6.4%
Not Enough Applicants	77.7%	79.6%
Availability for Shifts Required	15.4%	30.7%
Lack of Required Education	8.6%	10.8%
Overqualified	0.0%	3.9%
Citizenship/Work Authorization	3.8%	4.1%
Other	23.7%	16.8%
Average Annual Openings	20	
Certificate Graduates – Bus and Truck Driver		
Central Community College	31	
Allocated to Kearney Area	10	
Seeking to Re-Enter the Workforce – In Occupation		
Central Nebraska	67	
Allocated to Kearney Area	26	

Sources: *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*, *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*, *IPEDS*, United States Department of Education and Labor Market Information, Nebraska Department of Labor

#### B. Welders, Cutters, Solderers and Brazers (SOC CODE 51-4121)

Analysis in Chapters 2 and 3 revealed evidence of a skills gap within production occupations in the Kearney area. There was a significant annual deficit between the number of annual job openings and potential entrants into production occupations. Analysis of employment patterns and the key occupations identified by respondents to the *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* indicates that welders, cutters, solderers and brazers (SOC CODES 51-4121) is among the most common skilled production occupations in the Kearney area.

Welders, cutters, solderers and brazers use hand welding, flame cutting, hand soldering or brazing equipment to weld or join metal components or to fill holes, indentations, or seams of fabricated metals products. The mean hourly wage for the occupation in the Kearney area is \$16.56. Survey results indicate that it is challenging to find workers in this occupation. As seen in Table 4.2, 100.0% of businesses reported that it is difficult to hire workers.

Table 4.2 also shows the reasons for difficulty according to Kearney area businesses who hire welders, cutters, solderers and brazers. One hundred percent of Kearney area businesses indicate that there are not enough applicants for jobs in this occupation. Hiring welders, cutters and the like is especially challenging due to applicants who lack work experience. Work history and wage expectations are another important consideration. Finally, businesses which hire welders, cutters, solders and brazers are 10 to 15 percent more likely to report that applicants have a poor work history or wage demands which are “too high.”

Survey results on the difficulty of hiring are not fully supported by data on annual openings and entrants for the welders, cutters, solderers and brazers. As seen in Table 4.2, there are an estimated 7 new openings in this occupation each year in the Kearney area due to growth in employment and the replacement of workers. Approximately 20 students graduate from the Welding Technology/Welder Associate’s degree program at Central Community College each year, but only about 7 would be expected to enter the occupation in the Kearney area. The expected annual number of openings and entrants is therefore the same, suggesting the challenge is in the experience level of applicants rather than the number. Consistent with that, the survey of Central Nebraska households found no former welders, cutters, solderers and brazers who report an interest in re-entering the workforce.

These findings suggest a need to create a more experienced workforce in the welding, cutting, solderer and brazers occupation. Employers may need to be proactive in hiring less experienced workers and may require public help, for example through wage subsidies. In order to address issues with work history, employers also should consider supporting reliable production workers who seek training and degrees in welding occupations.

Table 4.2

Key Findings for the Welders, Cutters, Solderers and Brazers Occupation

Occupation	Welders, Cutters, Solderers and Brazers (SOC 51-4121)	All Occupations
Percent Indicating It is Difficult to Hire	100.0%	79.0%
Reasons for Difficulty in Hiring		
Lack of Experience	81.2%	44.3%
Poor Work History	62.4%	48.3%
Lack of Occupation-Specific Skills	37.6%	35.8%
Failed Background Check	18.8%	20.6%
Wage Demands Too High	43.5%	32.9%
Lack of Required Licenses/Certificates	0.0%	12.1%
Language Barriers	0.0%	6.4%
Not Enough Applicants	100.0%	79.6%
Availability for Shifts Required	0.0%	30.7%
Lack of Required Education	0.0%	10.8%
Overqualified	0.0%	3.9%
Citizenship/Work Authorization	0.0%	4.1%
Other	0.0%	16.8%
Average Annual Openings	7	
Certificate Graduates – Welding Technology		
Central Community College	21	
Allocated to Kearney Area	7	
Seeking to Re-Enter the Workforce – In Occupation		
Central Nebraska	0	
Allocated to Kearney Area	0	

Sources: *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*, *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*, *IPEDS*, United States Department of Education and Labor Market Information, Nebraska Department of Labor

### C. Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics (SOC CODE 49-3023)

Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics diagnose, adjust repair or overhaul automotive vehicles. This is considered an H3 occupation by the Nebraska Department of Labor, meaning it offers higher wage earnings opportunities. Automotive service technicians and mechanics also are one of the primary occupations within the installation, maintenance and repair occupation group. The mean hourly wage for the occupation in the Kearney area is \$16.90. Finally, as seen in Table 4.3, 83.4 percent of businesses reported that it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation. That is a higher percentage of difficulty than is found for occupations overall.

Table 4.3 also shows the reasons for difficulty in hiring according to Kearney area businesses who hire automotive service technicians and mechanics. Ninety percent of Kearney area businesses which hire workers in this occupation indicate that there are not enough applicants. Hiring automotive service technicians and mechanics also is challenging due to applicants who lack appropriate education, required licenses/certificates, experience and occupation-specific skills. These problems are more pronounced than for the average for all occupations.

Data on annual openings and entrants for automotive service technicians and mechanics, however, do not suggest large challenges with the number of applicants. As seen in Table 4.3, there are 8 projected openings in this occupation each year in the Kearney area. Net job growth and the replacement of workers contribute few new openings each year. At the same time, eight students graduate from the Automotive Technicians Associate's Degree program at Central Community College each year. While only three of these eight would be expected to enter the occupation in the Kearney area, our survey of Central Nebraska households indicates that there are several dozen former automotive technicians and mechanics who report an interest in re-entering the workforce. There should be a sufficient supply of potential workers to plug the small discrepancy between openings and entrants in this occupation.

These findings suggest a need to encourage a few more individuals to seek training in automotive technician occupations each year. The required numbers are small, however, so the findings do not necessarily suggest a need for more classes or facilities. Employers also may need to take steps with benefits or other job attributes to draw experienced mechanics back into the work force.

Table 4.3

## Key Findings for the Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics Occupation

Occupation	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics (SOC 49-3023)	
		All Occupations
Percent Indicating It is Difficult to Hire	83.4%	79.0%
Reasons for Difficulty in Hiring		
Lack of Experience	71.5%	44.3%
Poor Work History	61.5%	48.3%
Lack of Occupation-Specific Skills	80.1%	35.8%
Failed Background Check	25.8%	20.6%
Wage Demands Too High	28.5%	32.9%
Lack of Required Licenses/Certificates	29.9%	12.1%
Language Barriers	10.0%	6.4%
Not Enough Applicants	90.0%	79.6%
Availability for Shifts Required	0.0%	30.7%
Lack of Required Education	39.9%	10.8%
Overqualified	0.0%	3.9%
Citizenship/Work Authorization	0.0%	4.1%
Other	15.8%	16.8%
Average Annual Openings	9	
Certificate Graduates – Automotive Technology		
Central Community College	8	
Allocated to Kearney Area	3	
Seeking to Re-Enter the Workforce – In Occupation		
Central Nebraska	67	
Allocated to Kearney Area	26	

Sources: *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*, *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*, *IPEDS*, United States Department of Education and Labor Market Information, Nebraska Department of Labor



#### D. Registered Nurses (29-1141)

Registered nurses assess patient health problems and needs, develop and implement nursing care plans, maintain medical records, administer nursing care to ill, injured, convalescent or disabled patients, advise patients on health maintenance and disease prevention, and provide case management.

Registered nursing is considered an H3 occupation by the Nebraska Department of Labor, meaning it offers higher wage opportunities. Registered nurses also are a primary occupation within the health care practitioners and technical workers occupation group. The mean hourly wage in the Kearney area is \$28.30. Finding workers is challenging in this occupation. As seen in Table 4.4, 81.3 percent of Kearney area businesses reported that it is difficult to hire registered nurses. That is a higher percentage of difficulty than is found for occupations overall.

Table 4.4 also shows the reasons for difficulty in hiring according to Kearney area employers who hire registered nurses. Availability is the primary challenge. Nearly 77 percent of employers indicate that it is difficult to hire because there are not enough applicants for registered nurse positions while 46.2 percent indicate challenges with finding applicants who can work the required shifts. Registered nurses seem to understand these market conditions. An elevated 61.5 percent of businesses report that applicants have wage demands which are too high. There are few if any problems with the quality of workers, with only 7.7 percent of employers reporting that it is difficult to hire because applicants for registered nurse positions lack occupation specific skill or work experience. No business cites poor work history among applicants as a barrier to hiring.

Data on annual openings and entrants for the registered nurse occupation suggest that the challenges are not entirely due to a lack of graduates. As seen in Table 4.4, there are an estimated 32 new job openings each year for registered nurses in the Kearney area due to growth in employment and the replacement of workers. There are 76 graduates with an Associate's Degree in registered nursing from Central Community College, and 25 would be expected to enter the occupation in the Kearney area. There also are baccalaureate graduates from nursing in the Kearney Division of University of Nebraska Medical Center. Together these annual graduates should be sufficient to meet the need for new job openings in the Kearney area, especially since there are an estimated 70 Kearney area residents with experience as a registered nurse who would consider rejoining the labor force if an appropriate opportunity was available. The challenge may be with local employers competing for graduates with job opportunities in larger cities in Nebraska and the region. Employers in the Kearney area may consider how to increase the wages, improve working conditions and enhance the overall appeal of working as a registered nurse. In addition, more students should be encouraged to pursue degrees in nursing either at the community college or college level.

Table 4.4

Key Findings for the Registered Nurses Occupation

Occupation	Registered Nurses (SOC 29-1141)	All Occupations
Percent Indicating It is Difficult to Hire	81.3%	79.0%
Reasons for Difficulty in Hiring		
Lack of Experience	7.7%	44.3%
Poor Work History	0.0%	48.3%
Lack of Occupation-Specific Skills	7.7%	35.8%
Failed Background Check	0.0%	20.6%
Wage Demands Too High	61.5%	32.9%
Lack of Required Licenses/Certificates	23.1%	12.1%
Language Barriers	0.0%	6.4%
Not Enough Applicants	76.9%	79.6%
Availability for Shifts Required	46.2%	30.7%
Lack of Required Education	7.7%	10.8%
Overqualified	0.0%	3.9%
Citizenship/Work Authorization	0.0%	4.1%
Other	15.4%	16.8%
Average Annual Openings	32	
Certificate Graduates – Registered Nursing		
Central Community College	76	
Allocated to Kearney Area	25	
Seeking to Re-Enter the Workforce – In Occupation		
Central Nebraska	181	
Allocate to Kearney Area	70	

Sources: *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*, *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*, *IPEDS*, United States Department of Education and Labor Market Information, Nebraska Department of Labor

#### E. Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators and Tenders, Metal and Plastic (SOC 51-4081)

Analysis in Chapters 2 and 3 revealed evidence of a skills gap within production occupations in the Kearney area. There was a significant annual deficit between the number of job openings and annual and potential entrants into production occupations. Analysis of employment patterns and the key occupations identified by respondents to the *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* indicates that multiple machine tool setters, operators and tenders (SOC CODES 51-4081) is among the most common skilled production occupation in the Kearney area.

Multiple machine tool setters, operators and tenders operate more than one type of cutting or forming machine. The mean hourly wage for the occupation in Nebraska is \$17.59. As seen in Table 4.5, 83.3 percent of businesses in the Kearney area reported that it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation.

Table 4.5 also shows the reasons for difficulty in hiring according to Kearney area businesses who hire multiple machine tool setters, operators and tenders working with metal and plastic. Eighty percent of Kearney area businesses indicate that there are not enough applicants for jobs in this occupation. Hiring is especially challenging due to the experience and education of applicants. Background checks are another important consideration. Forty percent of businesses which hire multiple machine tool setters, operators and tenders report that hiring is difficult because of applicants who fail background checks. This is nearly double the rate across all occupations.

Data on annual openings and entrants for multiple machine tool setters, operators and tenders suggest significant challenges with the number of applicants. As seen in Table 4.5, there are an estimated 20 new openings in this occupation each year in the Kearney area due to net job growth and the replacement of workers. There are a similar number of graduates each year from the Machine Tool Technology Associate's Degree program at Central Community College, but only six would be expected to enter the occupation in the Kearney area. Further, in our survey of Central Nebraska households there are an estimated 25 former multiple machine tool setters, operators and tenders who report an interest in re-entering the workforce. These potential returning workers, however, would only be able to fill the annual gap between openings and new entrants in the occupation for a few years.

These findings suggest a need to encourage more workers to seek training for the multiple machine tool setters, operators and tenders occupation, and to ensure that there are sufficient number of classes available at Central Community College to provide training. Employers also should consider approaches to support reliable production workers who seek training and degrees in machine operator occupations.

Table 4.5

Key Findings for the Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators or Tenders, Metal and Plastic Occupation

Occupation	Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators or Tenders, Metal and Plastic (SOC 51-4081)	All Occupations
Percent Indicating It is Difficult to Hire	83.3%	79.0%
Reasons for Difficulty in Hiring		
Lack of Experience	60.0%	44.3%
Poor Work History	0.0%	48.3%
Lack of Occupation-Specific Skills	60.0%	35.8%
Failed Background Check	40.0%	20.6%
Wage Demands Too High	0.0%	32.9%
Lack of Required Licenses/Certificates	0.0%	12.1%
Language Barriers	0.0%	6.4%
Not Enough Applicants	80.0%	79.6%
Availability for Shifts Required	0.0%	30.7%
Lack of Required Education	0.0%	10.8%
Overqualified	0.0%	3.9%
Citizenship/Work Authorization	0.0%	4.1%
Other	0.0%	16.8%
Average Annual Openings	20	
Certificate Graduates – Machine Tool Technology		
Central Community College	19	
Allocated to Kearney Area	6	
Seeking to Re-Enter the Workforce – In Occupation		
Central Nebraska	64	
Allocated to Kearney Area	25	

Sources: *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*, *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*, *IPEDS*, United States Department of Education and Labor Market Information, Nebraska Department of Labor

#### F. Maintenance and Repair Workers, General (SOC CODE 49-9071)

Maintenance and Repair Workers, General have at least two skills in the installation, maintenance or repair of machines and mechanical equipment. Maintenance and repair workers also are one of the primary occupations within the installation, maintenance and repair occupation group. The mean hourly wage for the occupation in the Kearney area is \$16.21. As seen in Table 4.6, 91.9 percent of businesses reported that it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation. That is a higher percentage of difficulty than is found for occupations overall.

Table 4.6 also shows the reasons for difficulty in hiring according to Kearney area businesses who hire workers in this occupation. Hiring general maintenance and repair workers is primarily challenging due to applicants who lack experience and occupation-specific skills. These problems are more pronounced than for the average for all occupations.

Data on annual openings and entrants for general maintenance and repair workers also suggest an imbalance between opening and applicants. As seen in Table 4.6, there are 14 projected openings in this occupation each year in the Kearney area. At the same time, 11 students graduate from the Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology Associate's Degree program at Central Community College each year. Just 4 of these 11 would be expected to enter the occupation in the Kearney area each year. Further, our survey of Central Nebraska households indicates that there are no former general maintenance and repair workers who report an interest in re-entering the workforce. There appears to be a lack of both experienced workers and new entrants into this occupations in the Kearney area.

These findings suggest a need to encourage a few more individuals to seek training in industrial mechanics and maintenance technology each year. Employer also may need to hire less experienced workers. The state of Nebraska or local agencies could potentially participate through temporary wage subsidies for industrial businesses which hire less experienced maintenance and repair workers.

Table 4.6

## Key Findings for the Maintenance and Repair Workers, General Occupation

Occupation	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General (SOC 49-9071)	All Occupations
Percent Indicating It is Difficult to Hire	91.9%	79.0%
Reasons for Difficulty in Hiring		
Lack of Experience	62.5%	44.3%
Poor Work History	30.9%	48.3%
Lack of Occupation-Specific Skills	55.1%	35.8%
Failed Background Check	30.9%	20.6%
Wage Demands Too High	25.8%	32.9%
Lack of Required Licenses/Certificates	11.7%	12.1%
Language Barriers	0.0%	6.4%
Not Enough Applicants	64.1%	79.6%
Availability for Shifts Required	7.4%	30.7%
Lack of Required Education	14.9%	10.8%
Overqualified	0.0%	3.9%
Citizenship/Work Authorization	0.0%	4.1%
Other	6.6%	16.8%
Average Annual Openings	14	
Certificate Graduates – – Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology		
Central Community College	11	
Allocated to Kearney Area	4	
Seeking to Re-Enter the Workforce – In Occupation		
Central Nebraska	0	
Allocate to Kearney Area	0	

Sources: *Central Nebraska Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*, *Central Nebraska Labor Availability Survey*, *IPEDS*, United States Department of Education and Labor Market Information, Nebraska Department of Labor