



**WORKFORCE
AVAILABILITY STUDY**

FOR

GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

August 2004

**THE WORKFORCE AVAILABILITY STUDY
of
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

August 19, 2004

This is the executive summary of a study commissioned by the Grays Harbor Economic Development Council (EDC) for Grays Harbor County. The study was conducted by The Pathfinders, a Site Selection/Location Analysis Consultant firm (a.k.a. PFResources, Inc).

Funding for this study was provided by:

Grays Harbor EDC
Satsop Development Park Public Development Authority
Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council
Grays Harbor Community College
Port of Grays Harbor
Grays Harbor Public Utility District #1
Worksource Grays Harbor
State of Washington Department of Community Trade and Economic Development

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THE WORKFORCE VERIFICATION AUDIT

The consultant firm retained by the EDC evaluated the labor market in a geographic area consisting of two regions:

1. Within a 30 – 40 mile radius around Aberdeen and Hoquiam -- defined as west county in the report; and
2. A 30 – 40 mile radius around Elma -- defined as East County in the report.

The reports take into consideration workforce from a region that includes five counties: Grays Harbor, Pacific, Mason, Thurston, and Lewis. This area was chosen to represent the most reasonable boundaries of the local labor force market from which an employer was likely to draw its workforce.

Methodology of the Workforce study.

In this study, the consultant firm employed a methodology developed for U.S. Department of Defense projects to determine civilian workforce characteristics and availability in communities across the nation where military installations were scheduled for closure. This methodology was refined by the firm’s senior management to produce the information needed in assessing communities as locations for new or expanded operations.

In this workforce assessment, the consultant firm conducted telephone interviews with individuals throughout the survey area. Those individuals were stratified across age (19 – 54), gender, household income (up to \$100,000), local telephone exchange areas, and zip codes.

The purpose was to ascertain availability for work with a new employer, to determine desired pay rates, and to collect information on age, education, commuting patterns, experience and skills. Sufficient surveys were completed to produce results for the entire population group, which vary by no more than plus or minus 5 %.

RESULTS

The following information is a summary of the pool of workers who are available to a new or expanding employer within the region. East County has a much larger total of workforce due to the fact of the larger population base within the survey radius – nearly 200,000 people in a five-county region

	WEST COUNTY	EAST COUNTY
POPULATION	90,500	186,200
SIZE OF WORKFORCE	36,350	68,200
UNEMPLOYED	2,800	4,400
UNDEREMPLOYED	7,500	15,800
NOT WORKING BUT CONTEMPLATING ENTERING THE WORKFORCE	1,800	2,900
TOTAL AVAILABLE	12,100	23,100

EDUCATION

Education Level	WEST COUNTY	EAST COUNTY
High School Graduate	31%	27%
Some College	37%	41%
Associate degree	12%	12%
College Degree	14%	12%
Graduate Degree	3%	4%
Other	3%	4%

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS OF THE UNDEREMPLOYED

SKILLS	WEST COUNTY	EAST COUNTY
OFFICE/DATA/WORD PROCESSING	4,400	9,600
WAREHOUSE/MATERIAL HANDLING	3,200	7,900
ASSEMBLY/FABRICATION	2,700	6,500
MAINTENANCE	2,900	7,000
TECHNICIAN/QA	1,500	4,300
INDUSTRIAL/MACHINE & WELDING	2,000	5,800
TELECOMMUNICATION	1,700	3,200

The numbers have been rounded and individuals answering the survey may have more than one skill.

DESIRED WAGE RATE

Wage Rate	West County	East County
\$10.99 or less	2,500	5,200
\$11.00 - \$16.99	2,300	5,000
\$17.00 - \$22.99	1,400	2,800
\$Over \$23.00	1,100	2,600

CONCLUSION

Because the information generated by the consultant firm has not been available before and the fact that the region is not an MSA (Metropolitan Statistical area), it has been difficult to determine the number and quality of the workforce available to new or expanding businesses. The information shows that the available workforce is larger, better educated, and more experienced than previously thought.

The information proves that Grays Harbor County has the workforce to supply large and small companies that relocate or expand to our region. Because of the wide variation of skill sets, there are opportunities for Call Centers, Telecommunication centers, as well as light and heavy industrial companies. The information shows that training for these types of companies should be focused on company-specific needs rather than pre-employment entry-level training.

The report also shows that, generally, the Grays Harbor County workforce is above the median when comparing skills, education and experience to their database of other locations. These locations vary from New York City to small towns in Illinois.

Similarly, employers from Grays Harbor County rate their workforce as good to excellent in productivity, skills, availability, and reading/writing/math competencies.

In comparisons to the equivalent 1999 study, the workforce has grown, the underemployed has increased, and the education and experience of the workforce has improved.