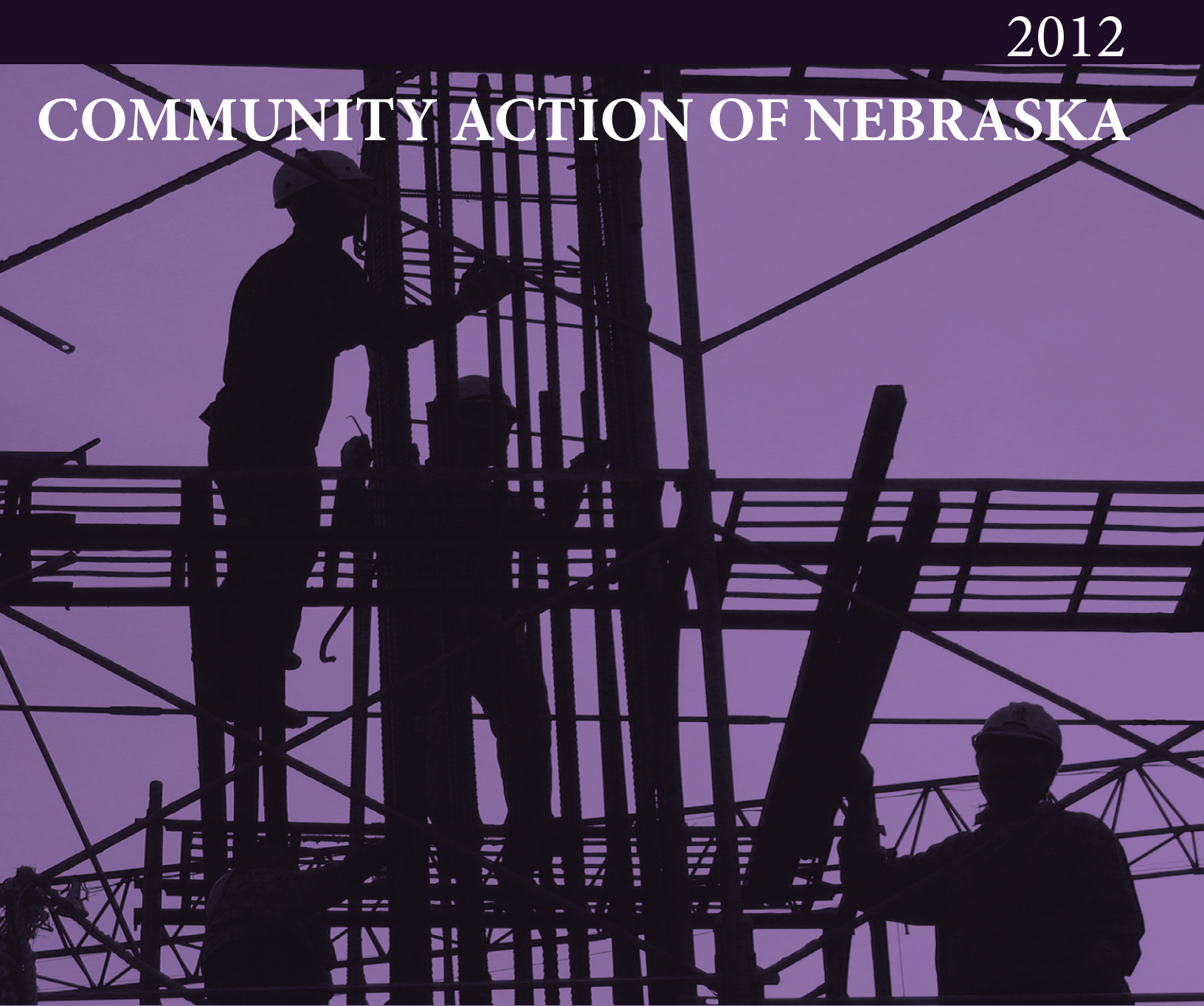


2012

COMMUNITY ACTION OF NEBRASKA



Statewide and Regional Community Assessment on Employment, Barriers to Employment and Training Needs



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Acknowledgements

This report was funded by the State of Nebraska's Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Funds. We are truly thankful for Jennifer Dreibelbis, Community Services Block Grant Program Specialist, and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Children and Family Services for their generous support of this project.

Community Action of Nebraska expresses its sincere appreciation to Ionia Research Director, Joseph Nitzke, PhD, for the data analysis and assistance with the development of this report. We would also like to thank Joseph Blankenau PhD, Professor of Political Science of Wayne State College for his assistance with the development of the survey and methodologies.

We are grateful to the thousands of Nebraskans who took the time to fill out the survey. This report would not have been possible without their cooperation.

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History of Community Action

President Lyndon B. Johnson and the Congress of the United States proclaimed a national "War on Poverty" by enacting the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Community Action Agencies (CAAs) were created to assist in this declaration, and provide a variety of services at the community level to help individuals achieve self-sufficiency. Today there are more than 1,000 CAAs across the United States working toward a common goal of eliminating the causes and conditions of poverty.

The CAAs in Nebraska are private non-profit organizations that do this important work in a variety of ways by assessing the needs and resources of low-income people; devising strategies for eliminating poverty; identifying sources of financial support for their work; advocating on behalf of low-income people; mobilizing community resources; and administering a variety of programs. Common programs offered by CAAs include employment assistance, financial stability, assets development, Weatherization, Head Start and Early Head Start, food assistance, housing assistance, utility assistance, and more.

The Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

SUMMARY

Community Action of Nebraska conducted the 2012 Community Assessment Survey between June 26, 2012 and July 11, 2012, mailing 10,000 surveys to randomly selected residents all across Nebraska.

The purpose of this survey was to better understand employment, as well as the extent of underemployment in Nebraska. Community Action Agencies in Nebraska will use the results to increase employment services and enhance career development programs to serve the needs of their communities.

This survey report was intended to complement the more comprehensive State and Regional Community Assessment completed in 2010, the 2011 survey on financial behaviors, and future documents developed by Community Action of Nebraska. This report, along with the 2010 and 2011 reports, are available at www.canhelp.org.

The survey was funded by the nine Community Action Agencies of Nebraska and the Department of Health and Human Services. Community Action Agencies are non-profit organizations dedicated to helping low-income people achieve economic stability in all 93 counties in Nebraska.

The assessment survey asked questions covering a wide range of topics including, but not limited to: employment status, barriers to employment, barriers for employment improvement, education and training needs, and work values and characteristics.

Employment Status

Survey participants were asked several questions that described their employment status: If unemployed, how long they had been seeking employment; if employed, the number of hours they worked each week; and if they were able to earn enough to meet their basic needs. Survey participants could have selected more than one option.

Responses included:

- 53% of all respondents reported they worked full-time
- 21% of all respondents reported that they were retired and were not seeking employment
- 13% of all respondents reported that they were self-employed
- 13% of all respondents reported that they worked part-time
- 25% of all respondents were not working

Overall, 17% of respondents reported that they had been seeking employment over the past year. Respondents age 45 to 64 were the largest groups that had been seeking employment over the past year (51%-61%). Of those ages 25 to 44, 19% had sought employment over the past year.

Of all respondents, 18% reported that their employment income was insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Of all working respondents, 48% reported having worked 40-49 hours per week, and 24% reported having worked at least 50 hours per week.

Education and Training Needs

Survey participants were asked to rate their skills and abilities. Sixty-five percent of respondents reported they believed they had the education/training to be competitive in the job market; 23% of respondents reported they did not believe they had the skills to compete in the job market; 12% of respondents reported they were unsure.

Of all respondents, 10% reported they did not have access to opportunities to acquire or improve their workplace skills. Of those who reported not having access to opportunities to acquire or improve their workplace skills, 20% did not believe that training was available, and 23% were unsure that training was available.

Survey participants were given a list of 12 possible educational/training opportunities that would improve their employment situation. Of all respondents, 39% reported they did not need educational/training opportunities. Of those who selected educational/training topics:

- 54% selected Computer Skills
- 33% selected College Courses
- 28% selected Leadership Skills
- 27% selected Certifications
- 19% selected Advancement Skills

Characteristics

Survey participants were asked to choose the top three characteristics that were important to them in their work environment. Of the 11 characteristics listed, Trustworthiness and Honesty were selected by 49% of respondents overall. Other top choices included Work Ethic (48%), a Positive Attitude (45%), and Respect (43%).

Responses varied both by gender and level of educational attainment. By gender, males valued Work Ethic more (50%) than females (46%). Additionally, males valued Positive Attitude (35%) more than females (25%). Females included Respect among their top three characteristics (49%), compared to males (37%). Important characteristics varied across levels of educational attainment. The levels ranged from high school or less, some college and college degree. The characteristic of Trustworthiness increased with educational attainment from 43% to 52%. The characteristic of Reliability decreased from 35% for those with a High School diploma to 28% for those with a college degree or above.





Employment Self-Assessment

Survey participants were asked to reflect on their work situation and assess their job skills, qualifications, pay, and overall job satisfaction.

Of those who responded:

- 65% reported that they had the skills needed for their job and that their skills were utilized
- 14% reported that they were overqualified and not all of their skills were utilized
- 40% reported that their pay was adequate for their job, while 28% said it was not
- 52% reported that they were satisfied with their current job, while 48% were not

Responses varied relative to educational attainment. Educational attainment levels ranged from high school or less, some college to college degree. The percentage of respondents who felt their talents and skills were utilized increased with their level of educational attainment from 50% to 70%. The percentage of respondents who reported they had the skills needed for their job also increased with the level of educational attainment from 61% for respondents who had earned a high school diploma or less to 69% who had earned a college degree.

Satisfaction with pay increased with the level of educational attainment from 29% for respondents who had earned a high school diploma or less to 49% for those who had earned a college degree. However, 31% of those who had earned a high school diploma or less (and some college) said their pay was not adequate for the work they did. The percentage decreased to 22% for those who had earned a college degree or above. Job satisfaction increased relative to the level of educational attainment from 48% to 57%.

Barriers for Employment or Improving Current Employment Status

Thirty-three percent of the survey respondents reported that there were barriers to obtaining or improving their employment status. Limited Job Opportunities was identified as a barrier by 40% of respondents. One in four respondents reported that Education Level, Physical Health Issues, and the Cost of Training were barriers to obtaining or improving their employment status.

Among the demographical characteristics, reported responses differed significantly by level of educational attainment. For example:

- As the level of educational attainment increased, Physical Health Issues decreased as a barrier from 39% to 19% for those who had earned a college degree
- No high school diploma was a barrier for 12% of respondents with less than a high school diploma
- Limited Job Opportunities as a barrier, increased with the level of educational attainment from 33% to 51%
- Disability as a barrier, decreased from 24% to 8% as the level of educational attainment increased

FINDINGS

Employment Status

Survey participants were asked several questions about their employment status. If unemployed, participants were asked how long they had been seeking employment; if employed, participants were asked about the number of hours they worked per week, and if they were able to earn enough income to meet their basic needs.

Of all respondents, 51% reported having worked either full or part-time over the past year. 16% were retired, and not looking for work; 10% were self-employed, and 3.4% were unemployed. Approximately, 17% of all respondents reported that they had been seeking employment over the past year, and 35% had not been seeking employment.

Table 1 illustrates the length of time that respondents had been searching for employment based on their age. Of all respondents, 17% reported that they had been seeking employment over the past year. Of these, respondents age 45 to 64 represented the largest group of those who had been seeking employment for each time frame (51%-61%).

Respondents age 25 to 44 represented approximately 19%-26% of those who had been seeking employment. As shown in Figure 1, there were more respondents age 45 to 64 who had been seeking employment for longer periods of time than any other age group.

Figure 1: Percent Seeking Employment by Age

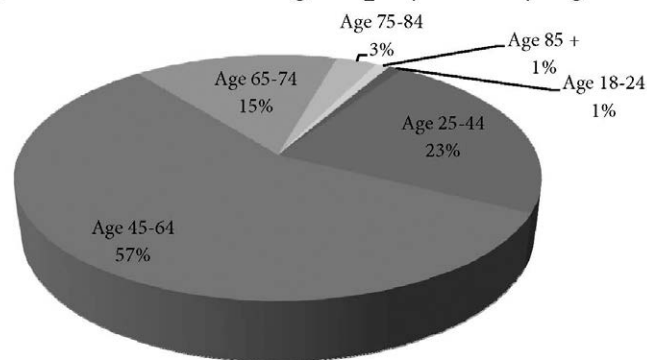


Table 1: Length of Time Seeking Employment by Age Group				
If unemployed, how long have you been seeking employment (by percent)?				
Age	Less than 2 months	2 to 6 months	More than 6 months	Total seeking employment
18-24	1.5	0.8	0.0	0.7
25-44	22.7	26.2	19.2	23.4
45-64	60.6	58.5	50.7	56.9
65-74	9.1	12.3	26.0	15.2
75-84	3.0	2.3	2.7	2.6
85+	3.0	0.0	1.4	1.1

Number of Hours Worked Per Week

Survey participants were asked several questions relating to their employment status and the number of hours they worked per week. Of the respondents who were working:

- 15% worked fewer than 29 hours per week
- 28% worked fewer than 39 hours per week
- 48% worked 40 to 49 hours per week
- 24% worked at least 50 hours per week

Respondents also reported the following relating to their employment status:

- 53% reported having worked full-time
- 21% were retired and were seeking employment
- 13% were self-employed
- 13% reported having worked part-time
- 27% were not working

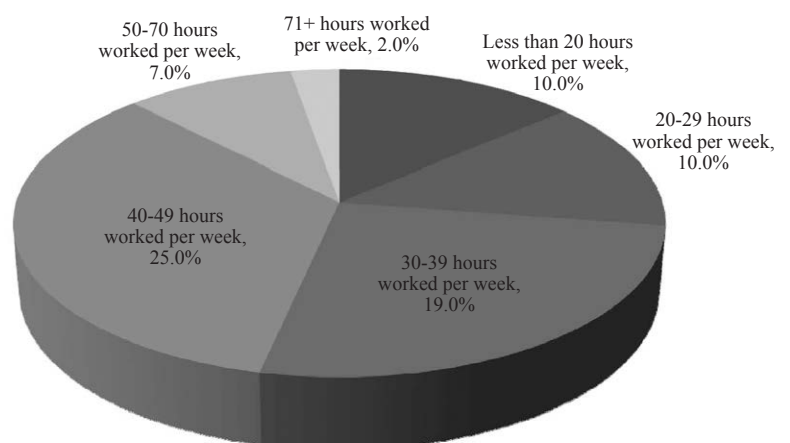
Overall, 17% of respondents reported that they had been seeking employment. Respondents age 45 to 64 were the largest group who had been seeking employment (51%-61%). Of those ages 25 to 44, 19% had been seeking employment over the past year.

The results from this survey indicated that families who were struggling were in fact working, yet unable to meet their basic needs. Approximately one in five respondents (18%) reported that their employment income was insufficient to meet their needs. Of all employed respondents, 48% worked 40-49 hours per week, and 24% worked at least 50 hours per week.

Similarly, Nebraska Appleseed, Center for Law in the Public Interest published an article titled *Nebraska's Opportunity Scorecard: How Our State Measures up for Working Families*. The report stated that “nearly one in three working families in Nebraska struggle to make ends meet - this represents 63,565 families with 146,270 children.” **Due to the similarity of the data results of this survey, and the Nebraska Appleseed results, it can be inferred that families in Nebraska, while employed, are still unable to make ends meet, which is indicative of underemployment.**

Figure 2: Income Does Not Meet Basic Needs and Hours Respondents Worked per Week

Figure 2 illustrates the breakdown of respondents who reported that their employment income did not meet their basic needs. One in four respondents (27%) reported that they were not working, and 25% reported that they were working 40 to 49 hours per week. The figure reflects total hours worked, including respondents who had worked one or more jobs, and those who were self-employed.



Data through Words and Experiences

Ever since he was a teenager, Blake had suffered from addiction issues. He was living in a halfway house for adult men recovering from substance dependence, but was not ready to transition into his own apartment yet. His addiction issues left him with tremendous debt and many legal issues. Blake was working two jobs to make ends meet, and his bicycle was his only mode of transportation. He was feeling overwhelmed and afraid that he wouldn't be able to afford to live on his own.



With guidance from his case manager at Central Nebraska Community Services, Blake set goals, learned how to budget, and began tracking his living expenses. Blake also received guidance in aftercare, and continued to be a highly motivated worker. He is now living in safe and affordable housing. He has successfully paid off \$2,464 of his debt and has placed \$500 in his savings account. Blake is now confident in his ability to be financially responsible.

Education and Training Needs

Survey participants were asked if they had sufficient education to be competitive in the job market, whether education and training was available to them, and which education/training opportunities were most important to them.

Sixty five percent of respondents reported they believed they had the education/training to be competitive in the job market. However, 23% of respondents reported that they did not believe they had the education/training to be competitive in the job market, and one in six (12%) were unsure.

Of the 23% of respondents who reported that they did not feel they had the education/training, 10% reported they did not have access to the education/training to be competitive in the job market, while 18% of respondents were unsure.

Of all working respondents, 20% reported they did not have the education/training to improve their employment status. This same 20% reported they believed training was available, while 23% were unsure. By gender, 25% of female respondents reported they did not feel they had the education/training necessary to advance at their job, compared to 21% of male respondents. The same gender proportion held true for rural (25%) versus urban (22%) respondents.

Survey participants were given a list of 12 possible education/training opportunities that would improve their employment situation. Approximately 61% of respondents reported they needed education/training opportunities, while 39% did not indicate a need.

The top five education/training opportunities that respondents reported would help them to improve or obtain employment included:

- Computer Skills, 54%
- College Courses, 33%
- Leadership Skills, 28%
- Certifications, 27%
- Advancement Skills, 19%

Data through Words and Experiences

In 2008, Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska saw one of its biggest cities lose their Workforce Development office. The impact was seen almost immediately as many clients were requesting assistance with job placement services. It was clear from the 2010 Statewide Community Action Needs Assessment that the lack of employment and employment services were a huge issue for Nebraskans. In 2010, Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska applied for a grant through the local Keno Lottery Trust Fund. Funds in



the amount of \$2,500 were received and used for assisting individuals with obtaining certifications to increase their wages. The two most common requests for certification assistance were for Medication Aide and Certified Nursing Assistant. The agency was able to assist nine individuals with the funding received. Of those nine individuals, five enrolled in the Medication Aide class; four were successful in the completion of the certification, for an 80% success rate; three enrolled in the Certified Nursing Assistant class, and all three completed the certification for a 100% success rate.

Due to the increase in wage individuals receive once obtaining the certifications, the amount of taxable income returned to the individual and the community is approximately a 40-44% increase in one year. For a \$310 investment in the certification

training, individuals would see an increase in income of approximately \$8,500 per year. This also led to an increase in self-sufficiency and a decrease in the dependency on public assistance programs. The benefits also extend to the business community as they will have a larger pool of highly skilled workers to fill open positions.

Based on the \$310 investment in the certification training and the increase in income of approximately \$8,500 per year, the return on investment is a 26% ROI or 1:26. For every dollar spent, \$26 is generated back in to the community. Through this grant program, seven individuals increased their annual income by about \$8,500 each for a total of \$59,500. The agency was able to help individuals earn \$59,500 more with just a \$2,500 grant.

Table 2 provides all of the survey responses for those who sought education/training to improve their employment situation. Please note: Respondents could have selected more than one option.

Table 2: Education and Training Needs	Percent of Respondents
Computer skills	54.1
College courses	33.3
Leadership skills	27.6
Certification (e.g., CNA, welding, CDL)	27.0
Advancement skills	18.9
Resume	15.6
Oral/written communication	15.2
Time Management	14.7
Customer service skills	10.7
Office equipment	10.4
GED	2.8

Differences Observed by Gender

According to Table 3, the top five skills reported by respondents were the same by gender but ranked in a different order. Both genders ranked Computer Skills as their number one skill. College Courses was ranked significantly higher among female respondents compared to males (30.7%). However, Certification was ranked significantly higher among male respondents (35.7%), compared to females (19%).

Table 3: Top Five Education/Training Opportunities by Gender					
Males			Females		
Rank	Skills	Percent of Respondents	Rank	Skill	Percent of Respondents
1	Computer skills	54.3	1	Computer skills	54.2
2	Certification	35.7	2	College courses	36.0
3	Leadership skills	32.1	3	Leadership skills	23.8
4	College courses	30.7	4	Certification	19.0
5	Advancement skills	19.3	5	Advancement skills	18.4

Data through Words and Experiences

John was working as a land-surveyor-in-training, and Jane had been injured on the job. The resulting surgeries, therapy, and medical treatments totaled more than \$10,000 in expenses that were not covered by the Johnson's insurance plan.

The Career Development Program at Northeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership (NENCAP), leveraged funding from the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), to cover utility bills so that the Johnson's could focus on dealing with the lost income and expenses. This also allowed John to continue his education. John has now successfully obtained his designation as a Licensed Land Surveyor. NENCAP's Career Development Program helped put together a financing/business plan, and the Johnson's were able to start their own land surveying business.

Less than two years ago the Johnson's were looking at bankruptcy. Today, they have more than twice the income, and have paid off all of their credit card bills and most of their medical debt. Because of the new family business, Jane has been able to return to work as the Office Manager. She is now training to learn to draft the surveys prepared by her husband. Because of the Johnson's hard work, and the assistance they received through NENCAP, they are back on their feet and have found a new direction in life.

Data through Words and Experiences



Prior to working with Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska's (CAPWN) Asset Building Choices (ABC) program, Natasha had limited work experience, and the longest period of time she had worked at a set location was six months. Natasha's future didn't look very bright, but today things are looking much different.

"I went through (ABC's) Employment Boot Camp and that was extremely beneficial to me," Natasha said. "I loved it. It was nice to learn the things that I could do to better myself as an employee. I learned about hygiene, managing stress, interviewing information, making eye contact, and using just simple tips. Everything I do at work and in my personal and public life represents the company I am working for."

Today, Natasha is working as a secretary in an office and has been on the job for almost a year. "What I learned through CAPWN's ABC program has been an absolutely valuable life lesson," Natasha added. "Now I can focus on my professional goals, and on being the best employee that I possibly can."

Data through Words and Experiences



Kaitlyn was a parent involved in the Early Head Start program at Northwest Community Action Partnership (NCAP). As a parent of two children, Kaitlyn wanted to make a better life for her and her young family. She set ambitious goals, one of which was to gain quality employment to afford a larger living space for her and her growing family.

During the summer of 2012, Kaitlyn was required to volunteer 20 hours per week through ResCare Workforce Services. She was excited to learn that she would be able to volunteer in one of the Head Start kitchens, and could gain both cooking experience and knowledge from one of the head cooks. While volunteering, Kaitlyn proved to have excellent attendance and was very dependable. She showed motivation to learn all she could and was enjoying the time that she got to spend in the Head Start Center. When an opening for a full-time cook became available, Kaitlyn was encouraged by staff and her Home Visitor to apply for the position. Kaitlyn was offered a full-time position with NCAP and is currently a cook in one of the Alliance Head Start Centers.

Kaitlyn enjoys her work and is truly a success story to both her family and NCAP. Helping to provide volunteers with on-the-job training and experience is an example of how key partnerships can make a difference in the life of a family.

Barriers for Employment and Improving Current Employment

Survey participants were presented with 16 different barriers to employment or improving their current employment situation, and could select all that applied to their employment situation.

Of all respondents, 33.4% reported that they were experiencing barriers to improving their employment situation (see Table 4). Limited Job Opportunities was identified as the top barrier by 40% of all respondents. The three subsequent barriers included: Education Level, Physical Health Issues, and Cost of Training respectively.



Table 4: Barriers to Improving Employment Status		
	Barriers	Percent of Respondents
1	Limited job opportunities	40.3
2	Education level	28.3
3	Physical health issues	27.4
4	Cost of training	24.2
5	Disability—unable to work	15.3
6	Work experience	14.4
7	Reading skill level	10.9
8	Mental health issues	9.4
9	No high school diploma or GED	8.1
10	Required tools/equipment	7.4
11	Lack of child care	7.4
12	Fear of losing public benefits	6.7
13	Transportation	5.2
14	Citizenship status	3.3
15	Criminal history	3.1
16	Lack of elder care	3.1

Responses were analyzed based on the demographics of respondents, and several key trends emerged. The following factors were greater barriers for rural respondents than their urban counterparts:

- Physical Health (32% rural, 25% urban)
- Limited Job Opportunities (46% rural, 38% urban)

However, education level was reported as a barrier by a greater proportion of urban (31%) than rural (22%) respondents.

Based on gender, Physical Health was a greater barrier for male respondents (30%) than female respondents (25%). Likewise, Mental Health was reported as a greater barrier by male respondents (12%) than female respondents (7%).

When barriers were compared against the educational levels of respondents the following information was reported:

- As the level of educational attainment increased the number of respondents who reported Physical Health Issues as a barrier to employment decreased by half (39% to 19%)
- No High School Diploma was a barrier for 12% of those without a high school diploma
- As the level of educational attainment increased, Mental Health Issues was reported more frequently as a barrier from 8% to 11%
- As the level of educational attainment increased, Limited Job Opportunities was reported more frequently from 33% to 51%
- As the level of educational attainment decreased, Disability as a barrier was reported less frequently from 24% to 8%

Data through Words and Experiences

After fleeing her home, Erica, who was pregnant, and had a three year old child in tow, found herself at a local domestic violence shelter after leaving an abusive relationship. With no income and no place to live she applied for the Supportive Housing Program at Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties. Within a week she acquired housing and a vehicle, and gave birth to her 2nd child. Erica began working toward her goals with support from her Family Advocate.

Erica found daycare for her children, began two new jobs within a month, and obtained a loan from a family member to finish her last year of college. Eager to make a better life for herself and her family, she applied to the Community Action IDA (Individual Development Account) program to help save money for a down payment on a home. She also applied to enroll her children in Community Action's Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Erica has worked really hard to change her life and her experience has been, in her words, "life changing."

Arthur is a great example of someone successfully meeting the challenge of family reunification through outpatient treatment and case management services offered at Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership (ENCAP).

Arthur came to ENCAP in need of a court ordered bio-psychosocial assessment to address behavioral issues that had led to incarcerations and conflicts with family members. Initially, Arthur was cynical about counseling because of his negative experiences in the past. However, Arthur worked hard and attended therapy sessions and was successful at improving his self-image. He became highly motivated to do better not only in his relationships, but in obtaining a better career to improve his earning potential.



Through ENCAP's Family Development Services program, and various community partnerships, Arthur enrolled at Metro Community College with the goal of obtaining his Commercial Driver's License (CDL). After months of hard work, in May 2012, Arthur stopped by ENCAP to celebrate his success. He had completed the CDL program, and invited staff out to see his new tractor that will enable him to establish his own trucking business and be better means of financial support for his family.



Nikki was recently divorced and struggled to raise three children on her own when she came to Southeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership looking for assistance. Because of her situation, Nikki qualified for the 2 year Project First program which provided her with budgeting and financial literacy education, and assisted her with utilities, rent, and food over the past 18 months. As a result, Nikki has found the time to focus on achieving her educational and career aspirations as a registered nurse in the health care field. Quality employment will help Nikki gain financial independence, which is important to her and her family.

Nikki is grateful for learning how to properly budget and manage her finances. Over the past twelve months, Nikki has been able to put \$1,200 into a savings account and still provide her children with a warm, safe home, transportation, and nutritious food. Through sheer determination, Nikki's confidence has grown tremendously and she feels excited about her future.

WORK ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Survey participants were asked to select three characteristics from a list of eleven that were important to them in their work environment (see Table 5).

The most frequently reported characteristics were:

- Trustworthiness/Honesty (49%)
- Work Ethic (48%)
- Positive Attitude (45%)
- Respect (43%)

Most of the characteristics reported were consistent among urban and rural respondents, with the exception of Respect, which was selected by 46% of urban respondents, compared to 38% of rural respondents.

Based on gender, 50% of male respondents valued Work Ethic more than female respondents (46%). Additionally, 35% of male respondents reported that they valued Reliability more than female respondents (25%). However, 49% of female respondents reported that they valued Respect compared to 37% of male respondents.

As the level of educational attainment increased among respondents, the frequency of the following characteristics also increased:

- Trustworthiness/Honesty (43% to 52%)
- Respect (38% to 48%)
- Positive Attitude (43% to 47%)
- Communication (30% to 36%)

The frequency of the following characteristics decreased as the level of educational attainment increased:

- Reliability (35% for high school or less; 28% for college degree and more)
- Good Hygiene (14% to 4%)
- Clothing (5% to 2%)

Table 5: Work Environment Characteristics	
Characteristics	Percent of Respondents
Trustworthiness/honesty	48.9
Work ethic	47.8
Positive attitude	44.7
Respect	43.2
Communication	33.2
Reliability	29.8
Service oriented/customer service	18.4
Time management	12.1
Good hygiene	7.7
Non-discrimination	5.8
Clothing	2.9

Survey participants were asked to assess their personal skills, job qualifications, pay, and overall job satisfaction for their current employment situation.

Skills

- 65% of respondents reported that they had sufficient employment skills; 63% of respondents reported that they felt their skills were being utilized
- 14% of respondents reported that they felt they were overqualified for their job; they had more skills than needed for their job; and not all of their skills were being utilized
- Urban respondents were somewhat more positive about their skills being utilized (65% compared to 60% rural) and that they had the skills required (66% compared to 63% rural) for their current employment situation

Pay and Job Satisfaction:

- 40% of respondents reported that their pay was adequate for their job, while 28% reported that it was not
- 52% of respondents reported that they were satisfied with their employment situation

Work Environment by Educational Attainment

Skills

- The belief that talents and skills were being utilized increased with level of education from 50% with a high school diploma or less to 70% with a college degree
- The percentage of respondents who said they had the necessary skills for their job also increased with level of education from 61% with a high school diploma or less to 69% with a college degree
- As the level of education increased, the belief that respondents were overqualified for their jobs also increased from 5% with a high school diploma or less to 16% with a college degree

Pay and Job Satisfaction

- Satisfaction with pay increased with education from 29% for those with a high school diploma or less to 49% for those with a college degree. However, 31% of those with a high school diploma or less (and some college) said their pay was not adequate for the work they do. Pay dissatisfaction decreased to 22% for those with at least a college degree
- Job satisfaction increases with levels of education (48% with a high school diploma to 57% with a college degree)
- While similar proportions of females (39%) and males (42%) reported that their pay was adequate, 30% of female respondents reported that their pay was inadequate, compared to 25% of males

Data through Words and Experiences

Jackie and her two children were deserted by the children's father just six months after Jackie's second child was born. Eviction forced them to move in with Jackie's mother, and due to the lack of available jobs, Jackie was soon forced into another move. This move took Jackie to the home of her best friend where she immediately began applying for jobs.

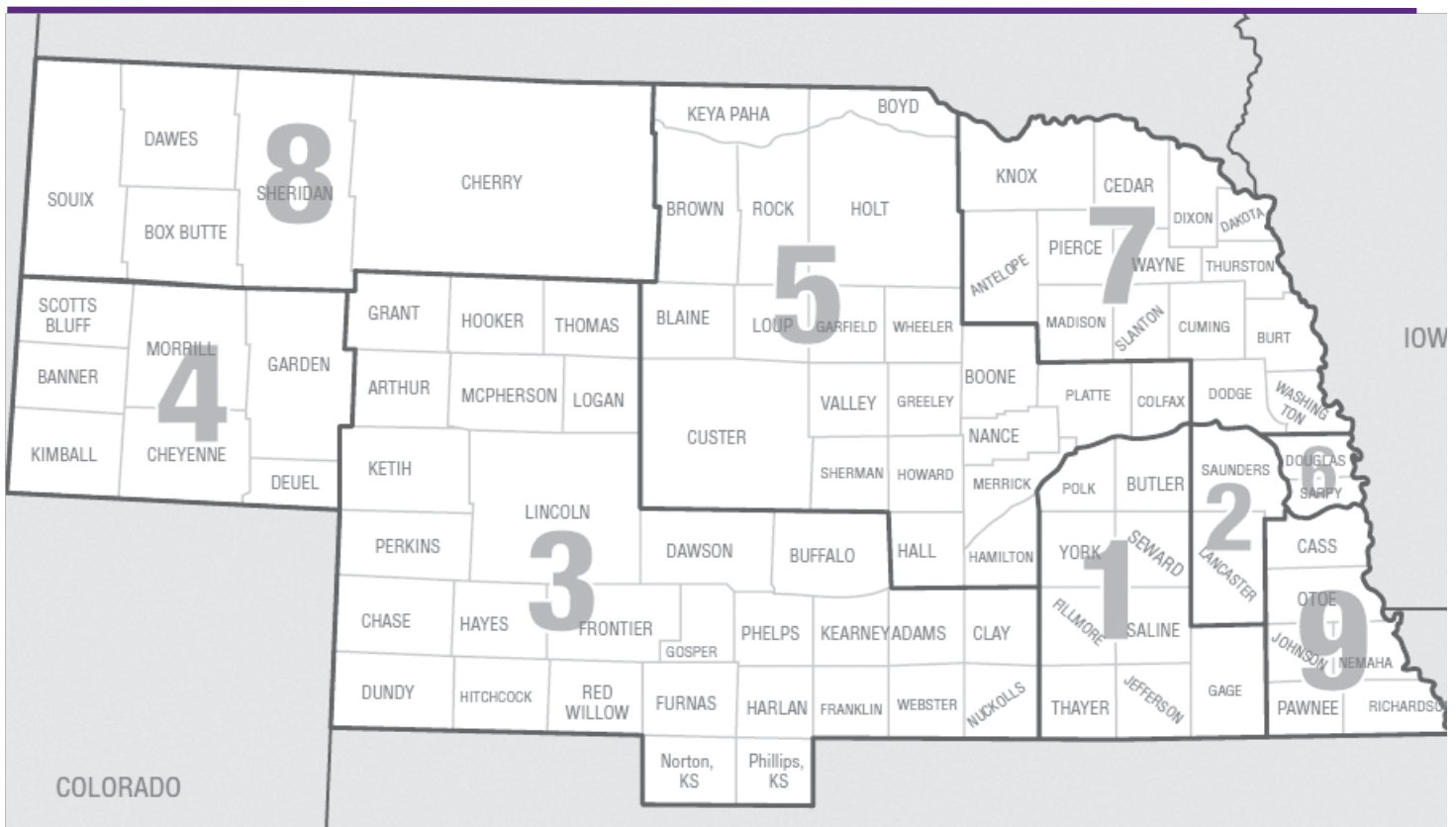
With no income, Jackie applied for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) to help with expenses until she could find adequate employment. In order to be eligible to receive TANF benefits, participants must volunteer 20 hours per week. The volunteer requirement brought Jackie to Blue Valley Community Action Partnership (BVCA).

At BVCA Jackie volunteered with many of the programs including Head Start, WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), holiday giving, clothing recycling, and the food pantry. When a position for a Center Aide within Head Start became available, she applied and got the job! Jackie was then accepted into BVCA's housing program. In addition, Jackie's kids were enrolled in WIC and Head Start programs. Jackie's success can be attributed to her strength and determination to succeed.



Regional Community Assessment Data

1. Blue Valley Community Action Partnership, Inc.
2. Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties
3. Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska
4. Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska
5. Central Nebraska Community Services, Inc.
6. Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership, Inc.
7. Northeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership, Inc.
8. Northwest Community Action Partnership
9. Southeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership



Blue Valley Community Action Partnership

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Serving the Counties of: In Nebraska; Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Polk, Saline, Seward, Thayer, & York
In Kansas; Smith (*Head Start only*)

2012 Survey Report Highlights

Rank	Top 5 Barriers for Employment or Improving Current Employment
1	Limited Job Opportunities
2	Physical Health Issues
3	Disability – unable to work
4	Education Level
5	Cost of Training

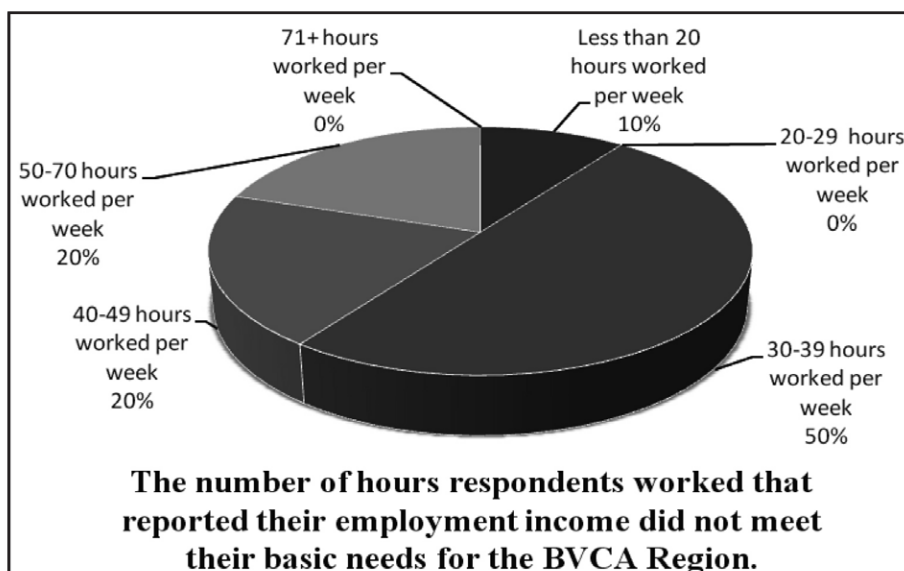
Limited job opportunities were identified as a barrier for obtaining employment or improving their current employment situation by 35% of all survey respondents

Top 5 Characteristics That are Important In The Work Environment

Survey respondents were asked to choose the top three characteristics that were important to them in their work environment. Of the 11 characteristics listed, the top five responses were:

1. Work Ethic 51%
2. Trustworthiness/Honesty 50%
3. Positive Attitude 44%
4. Respect 41%
5. Communication 36%

Rank	Top 5 Education and Training Needs	%
1	Computer Skills	60%
2	College Courses	40%
3	Certification	27%
4	Leadership Training	24%
5	Advancement Skills	18%



15% of all survey respondents stated that their current employment income is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Of these, 40% were working 40 or more hours per week.

Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties

Main Offices:	Executive Director:	Telephone:	Website:
210 "O" St. , Lincoln, NE 68508	Vi See	(402) 471-4515	www.communityactionatwork.org

Serving the Counties of: Lancaster and Saunders

2012 Survey Report Highlights

Rank	Top 5 Barriers for Employment or Improving Current Employment
1	Limited Job Opportunities
2	Education Level
3	Cost of Training
4	Physical Health Issues
5	Work Experience

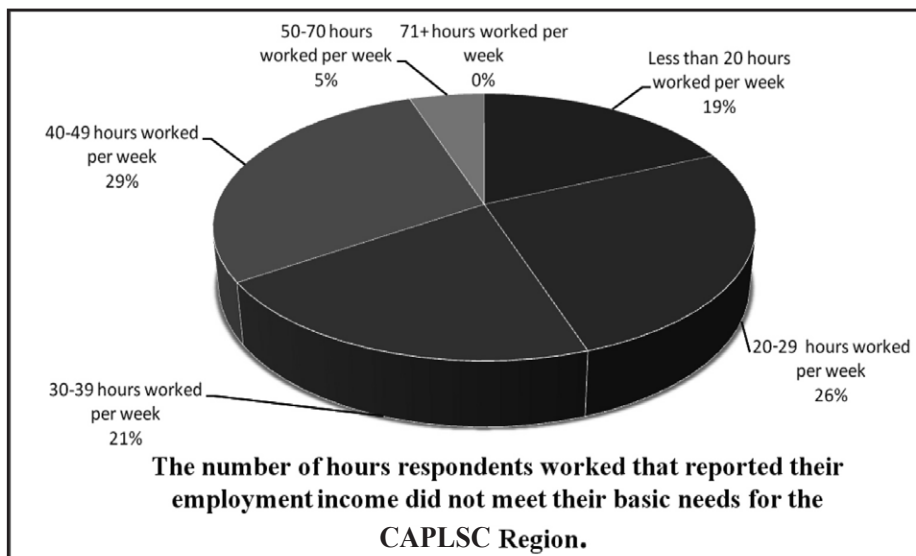
Limited job opportunities were identified as a barrier for obtaining employment or improving their current employment situation by 40% of all survey respondents

Top 5 Characteristics That are Important In The Work Environment

Survey respondents were asked to choose the top three characteristics that were important to them in their work environment. Of the 11 characteristics listed, the top five responses were:

1. Respect 50%
2. Trustworthiness/Honesty 49%
3. Work Ethic 47%
4. Positive Attitude 46%
5. Communication 32%

Rank	Top 5 Education and Training Needs	%
1	Computer Skills	51%
2	College Courses	36%
3	Certifications	28%
4	Leadership Training	27%
5	Resume	20%



16% of all survey respondents stated that their current employment income is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Of these, 34% were working 40 or more hours per week.

Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska

Main Offices:	Executive Director:	Telephone:	Website:
16 W 11 th Street, Kearney, NE 68847	Karen K. Lueck, CCAP	(308) 865-5675	www.communityactionmidne.com

Through the administrative office in Kearney and 29 satellite offices, Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska serves 139 communities in 27 south central counties in Nebraska and two counties in Kansas

2012 Survey Report Highlights

Rank	Top 5 Barriers for Employment or Improving Current Employment
1	Limited Job Opportunities
2	Physical Health Issues
3	Education Level
4	Cost of Training
5	Disability – unable to work

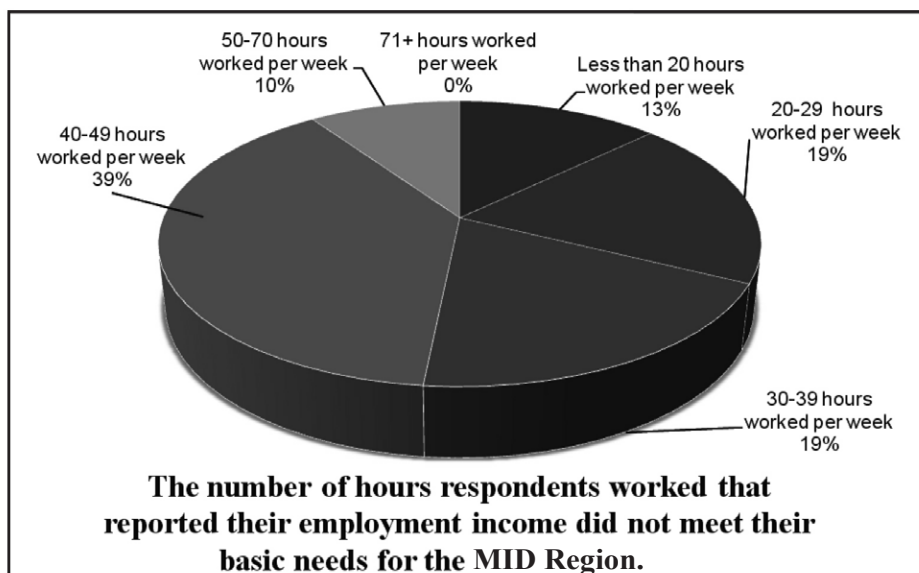
Limited job opportunities were identified as a barrier for obtaining employment or improving their current employment situation by 46% of all survey respondents

Top 5 Characteristics That are Important In The Work Environment

Survey respondents were asked to choose the top three characteristics that were important to them in their work environment. Of the 11 characteristics listed, the top five responses were:

1. Trustworthiness/Honesty 57%
2. Work Ethic 45%
3. Positive Attitude 41%
4. Respect 40%
5. Reliability 36%

Rank	Top 5 Education and Training Needs	%
1	Computer Skills	50%
2	Certifications	30%
3	Leadership Skills	29%
4	College Courses	25%
5	Advancement Skills	24%



20% of all survey respondents stated that their current employment income is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Of these, 49% were working 40 or more hours per week.

Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska

Main Offices:	Executive Director:	Telephone:	Website:
3350 10 th St., Gering, NE 69341	Jan Fitts	(308) 635-3089	www.capwn.org

Serving the Counties of: Banner, Cheyenne, Deuel, Garden, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff,
and for Migrant Head Start; Box Butte County

2012 Survey Report Highlights

Rank	Top 5 Barriers for Employment or Improving Current Employment
1	Limited Job Opportunities
2	Education Level
3	Physical Health Issues
4	Cost of Training
5	Work Experience

Limited job opportunities were identified as a barrier for obtaining employment or improving their current employment situation by 41% of all survey respondents

Top 5 Characteristics That are Important In The Work Environment

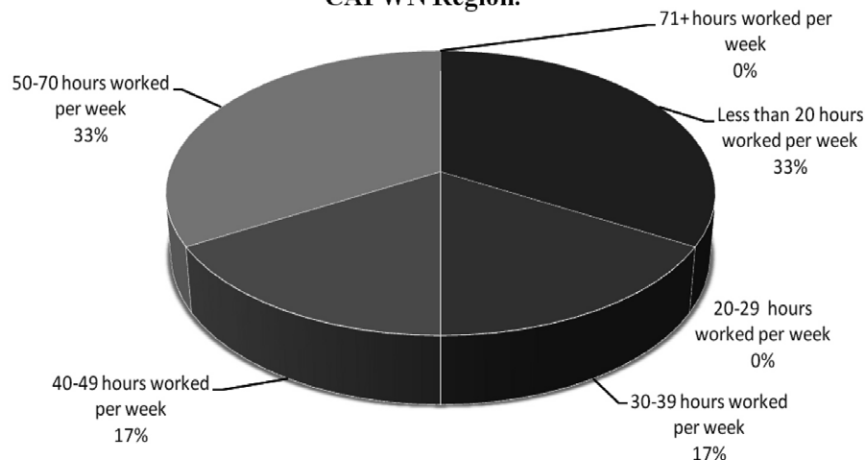
Survey respondents were asked to choose the top three characteristics that were important to them in their work environment. Of the 11 characteristics listed, the top five responses were:

1. Trustworthiness/Honesty 57%
2. Work Ethic 45%
3. Positive Attitude 41%
4. Respect 40%
5. Reliability 36%

Rank	Top 5 Education and Training Needs	%
1	Computer Skills	67%
2	Certifications	19%
3	College Courses	17%
4	Leadership Training	14%
5	Oral / Written Communication	14%



The number of hours respondents worked that reported their employment income did not meet their basic needs for the CAPWN Region.



18% of all survey respondents stated that their current employment income is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Of these, 50% were working 40 or more hours per week.

Central Nebraska Community Services

Main Offices:	Executive Director:	Telephone:	Website:
626 N Street, Loup City, NE 68853	Jose Zapata	(308) 745-0780	www.welcome2cnscs.com

Serving the Counties of: Blaine, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Colfax, Custer, Garfield, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Holt, Howard, Keya Paha, Loup, Merrick, Nance, Platte, Rock, Sherman, Valley, and Wheeler

2012 Survey Report Highlights

Rank	Top 5 Barriers for Employment or Improving Current Employment
1	Limited Job Opportunities
2	Physical Health Issues
3	Education Level
4	Cost of Training
5	Work Experience

Limited job opportunities were identified as a barrier for obtaining employment or improving their current employment situation by 40% of all survey respondents

Top 5 Characteristics That are Important In The Work Environment

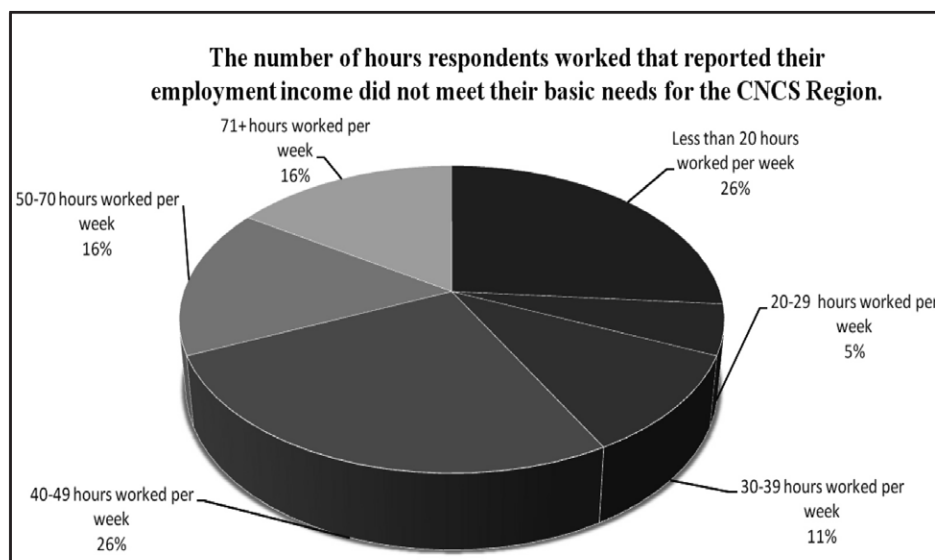
Survey respondents were asked to choose the top three characteristics that were important to them in their work environment. Of the 11 characteristics listed, the top five responses were:

1. Trustworthiness/Honesty 57%
2. Work Ethic 45%
3. Positive Attitude 41%
4. Respect 40%
5. Reliability 36%

Rank	Top 5 Education and Training Needs	%
1	Computer Skills	57%
2	College Courses	31%
3	Certifications	23%
4	Leadership Training	20%
5	Resume and Advancement Skills	16%



*Central Nebraska
Community Services*
Partnering with individuals and
families to end poverty through
community-based solutions



18% of all survey respondents stated that their current employment income is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Of these, 58% were working 40 or more hours per week.

Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership

Main Offices:

2406 Fowler Ave. Omaha, NE 68111

Executive Director:

 Karen Watson (*Interim*)

Telephone:

(402) 453-5656

Website:
www.encapomaha.org

Serving the Counties of: Douglas and Sarpy

2012 Survey Report Highlights

Rank	Top 5 Barriers for Employment or Improving Current Employment
1	Limited Job Opportunities
2	Education Level
3	Cost of Training
4	Physical Health Issues
5	Disability

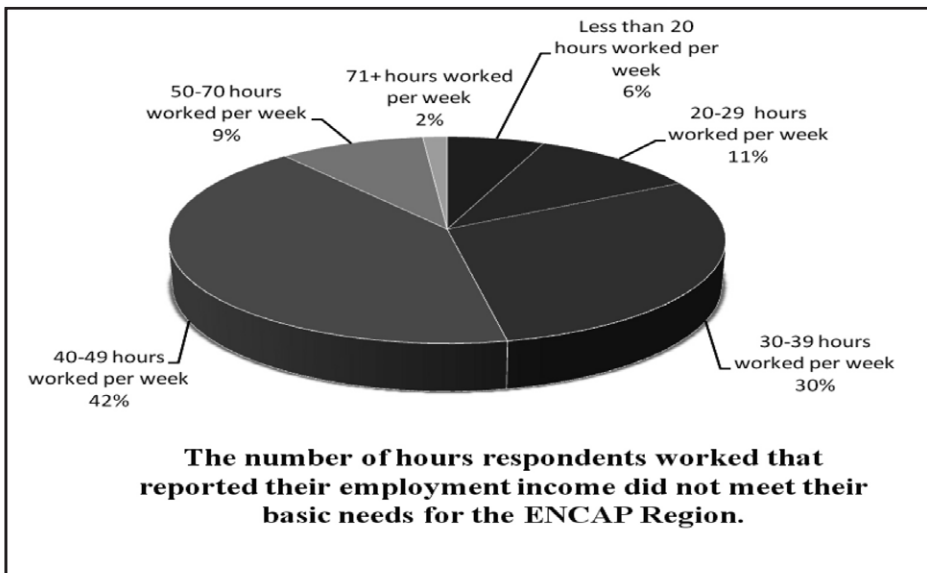
Limited job opportunities were identified as a barrier for obtaining employment or improving their current employment situation by 40% of all survey respondents

Top 5 Characteristics That are Important In The Work Environment

Survey respondents were asked to choose the top three characteristics that were important to them in their work environment. Of the 11 characteristics listed, the top five responses were:

1. Work Ethic 49%
2. Trustworthiness/Honesty 47%
3. Positive Attitude 46%
4. Respect 46%
5. Communication 37%

Rank	Top 5 Education and Training Needs	%
1	Computer Skills	53%
2	College Courses	37%
3	Leadership Skills	33%
4	Certifications	26%
5	Advancement Skills	21%



20% of all survey respondents stated that their current employment income is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Of these, 53% were working 40 or more hours per week.

Northeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership

Main Offices:	Executive Director:	Telephone:	Website:
603 Earl St, Pender, NE 68047	Robin Snyder	(402) 385-6300	www.nencap.org

Serving the Counties of: Antelope, Burt, Cedar, Cuming, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Stanton, Thurston, Washington and Wayne

2012 Survey Report Highlights

Rank	Top 5 Barriers for Employment or Improving Current Employment
1	Limited Job Opportunities
2	Cost of Training
3	Education Level
4	Physical Health Issues
5	Work Experience

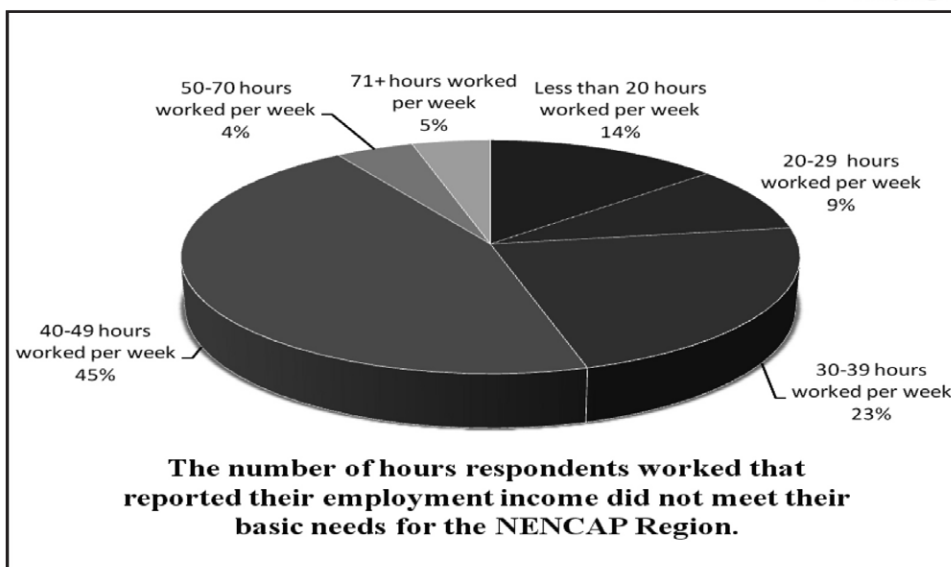
Limited job opportunities were identified as a barrier for obtaining employment or improving their current employment situation by 40% of all survey respondents

Top 5 Characteristics That are Important In The Work Environment

Survey respondents were asked to choose the top three characteristics that were important to them in their work environment. Of the 11 characteristics listed, the top five responses were:

1. Trustworthiness/Honesty 50%
2. Work Ethic 47%
3. Respect 43%
4. Positive Attitude 41%
5. Communication 34%

Rank	Top 5 Education and Training Needs	%
1	Computer Skills	54%
2	College Courses	33%
3	Leadership Skills	28%
4	Certifications	27%
5	Advancement Skills	19%



17% of all survey respondents stated that their current employment income is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Of these, 58% were working 40 or more hours per week.

Northwest Community Action Partnership

Main Offices:

270 Pine Street, Chadron, NE 69337

Executive Director:

Antonio "Hank" Martin

Telephone:

(308) 432-3393

Website:

www.ncap.info

Serving the Counties of: Box Butte, Cherry, Dawes, Sheridan, and Sioux

2012 Survey Report Highlights

Rank	Top 5 Barriers for Employment or Improving Current Employment
1	Limited Job Opportunities
2	Cost of Training
3	Physical Health Issues
4	Education Level
5	Work Experience

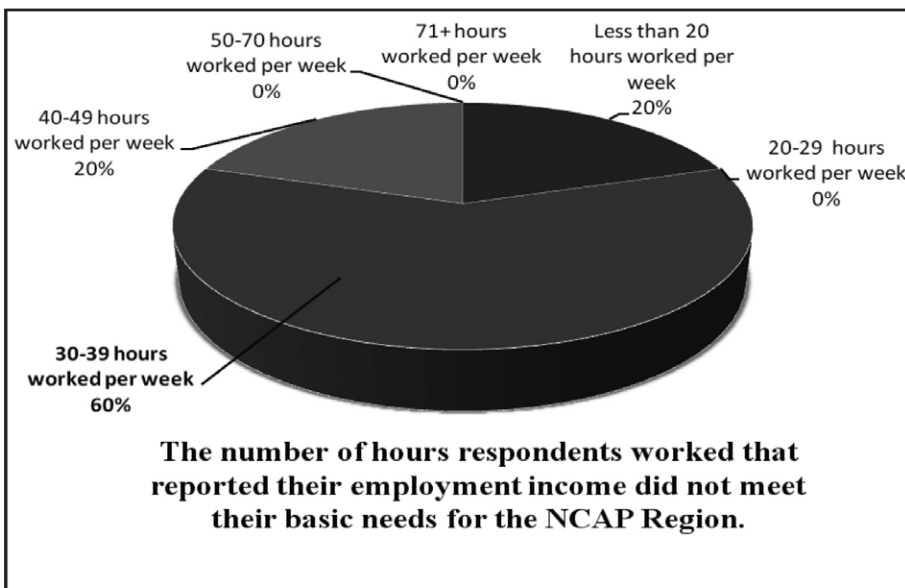
Limited job opportunities were identified as a barrier for obtaining employment or improving their current employment situation by 46% of all survey respondents

Top 5 Characteristics That are Important In The Work Environment

Survey respondents were asked to choose the top three characteristics that were important to them in their work environment. Of the 11 characteristics listed, the top five responses were:

1. Work Ethic 71%
2. Positive Attitude 54%
3. Trustworthiness/Honesty 46%
4. Reliability 43%
5. Customer Service 17%

Rank	Top 5 Education and Training Needs	%
1	Computer Skills	67%
2	Certifications	33%
3	College Courses	13%
4	Oral and Written Communication	13%
5	Resume and Advancement Skills	13%



21% of all survey respondents stated that their current employment income is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Of these, 20% were working 40 or more hours per week.

Southeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership

Main Offices:	Executive Director:	Telephone:	Website:
802 Fourth Street, Humboldt, NE 68376	Vicky McNealy	(402) 862-2411	www.senca.org

Serving the Counties of: Cass, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, and Richardson
Weatherization also serves Sarpy County

2012 Survey Report Highlights

Rank	Top 5 Barriers for Employment or Improving Current Employment
1	Limited Job Opportunities
2	Cost of Training
3	Education Level
4	Physical Health Issues
5	Transportation

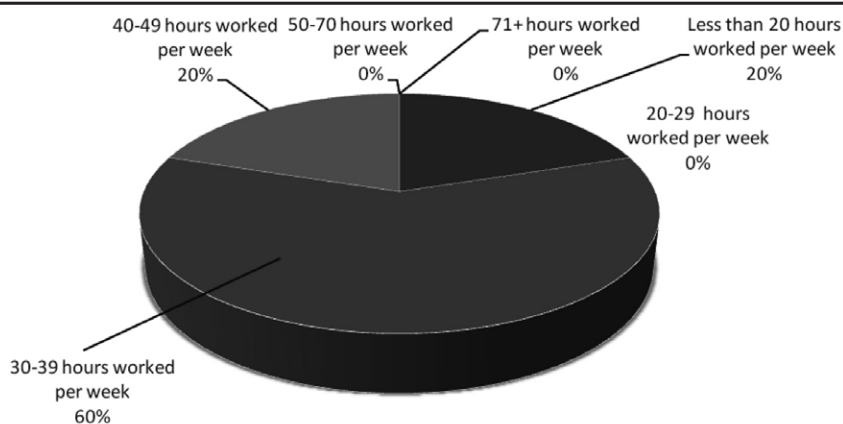
Limited job opportunities were identified as a barrier for obtaining employment or improving their current employment situation by 41% of all survey respondents

Top 5 Characteristics That are Important In The Work Environment

Survey respondents were asked to choose the top three characteristics that were important to them in their work environment. Of the 11 characteristics listed, the top five responses were:

1. Trustworthiness/Honesty 54%
2. Positive Attitude 46%
3. Work Ethic 45%
4. Respect 43%
5. Communication 29%

Rank	Top 5 Education and Training Needs	%
1	Computer Skills	55%
2	College Courses	31%
3	Leadership Skills	31%
4	Certifications	28%
5	Resume & Advancement Skills	14%



The number of hours respondents worked that reported their employment income did not meet their basic needs for the SENCA Region.

15% of all survey respondents stated that their current employment income is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Of these, 20% were working 40 or more hours per week.

METHODOLOGY

This report details findings from a survey conducted by Community Action of Nebraska (CAN) during the summer of 2012. The survey focused on issues related to employment including:

- The extent to which respondents possessed skills and training to make them competitive
- Whether or not they had access to education/ training opportunities
- The types of education/ training they felt would improve their employment situation
- What they viewed as barriers to advancement in their job
- How they viewed their employment situation in terms of skills possessed, skills needed, compensation, and job satisfaction

Demographic questions included those related to household type (including children), age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, income, and county of residence.

Seven questions on the survey allowed for multiple responses (e.g. select all that apply). These responses were analyzed using multiple response sets in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS®) in which those sets were constructed from multiple variables in the data file. Multiple response sets were treated as categorical variables.

The Multiple Response feature generates frequencies that show responses 1) as a percent of all selected responses and 2) as a percent of cases. Results could then be displayed as frequencies or as crosstabs. Throughout this report, the percent of respondents is used for comparisons of the selections by respondents.

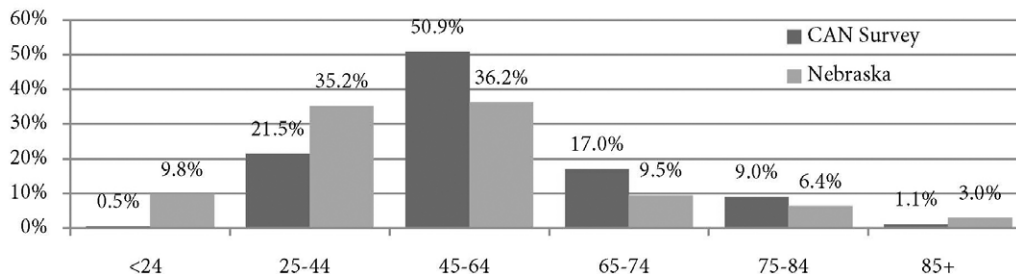
Regional reports were developed for each of the nine Community Action Agencies, separating responses specific to the agency's service area. The structure of each report includes an opening section with the statewide summary from this report, and continues with data for the agency service area.

The survey was mailed out to 10,000 households across Nebraska using a mailing list of randomly-selected adults in the state of Nebraska during the summer of 2012. Demographic information from the following categories was collected: age, employment, gender, and household traits, such as income and the presence of children in the household. The response rate was a statistically significant 16.25%.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Data from the demographic questions provided insight into the socio-economic characteristics of respondents as a basis for comparing responses to the topics of interest. The demographic questions included the following characteristics: rural/urban areas, gender, race, ethnicity, age, income, education, household type, and the presence of children in the household. In summary, the response rate by gender was similar to that of the gender breakdown for the State of Nebraska with 48% of respondents who were male and 52% who were female.

Figure 3: Survey Age Demographics



- Among Nebraska's adult population, according to census data, 10% were age 20 to 24. That group was underrepresented in this survey response (1%), which is a commonly underrepresented group in survey research
- In this survey, 22% of the respondents were age 25 to 44 compared to 35% for the state, according to census data. Conversely, there was a larger number of respondents age 45 to 84 compared to the state
- For the purposes of additional comparison, respondents were categorized as urban or rural based on the county in which they resided. Rural respondents were generally older. For example, 25% of urban respondents were in the 25 to 44 age category compared to 15% of those living in rural areas
- 51% of respondents were in the 45 to 64 age category, similar for both urban and rural respondents

Household Type

The survey contained several questions relating to the number of adults and children (and the age of children) in each household.

- Of all respondent households, 22% were single adult households
- The average number of persons (adults and children) in each household was 2.4, with a range of one through a household of seven.

Children

Of all respondent households, 28% included children under the age of 18. In Nebraska, 32% of all households have children under the age of 18. Of those (allowing for more than one child per household):

- 36.8% have children 0 to 5 years old
- 42% have children 6 to 11 years old
- 58% have children 12 to 18 years old

Table 6: Number of People Living in the Household and Household Type					
Number living in household	Respondents	Percent	Household Type	Respondents	Percent
I live alone	349	21.5	Single adult no children	260	16.0
2 people	696	42.9	Single parent with one or more children	147	9.1
3 people	205	12.6	Two or more adults no children	663	40.9
4 people	160	10.0	Two or more adults with one or more children	441	27.2
5 people	97	6.0	Single grandparent with grandchildren	6	.4
6 people	31	1.9	Two grandparents with grandchildren	23	1.4
7 or more people	17	1.0			
Total Valid	1,555	95.9	Total Valid	1,540	95.0
Missing	66	4.1	Missing	81	5.0
Grand Total	1,621	100.0	Grand Total	1,621	100.0

Veteran Status

According to current estimates from the U.S. Census, 10.5% of Nebraska adults indicated they were veterans. In this survey, 14.4% of respondents reported that they were veterans.

Race/Ethnicity

Nearly all respondent households were Caucasian/White (95%). Other races/ethnicities include: African American/Black (1.8%); Asian (0.6%); Native American (0.5%); Multi-Racial (2%); and Hispanic (2.3%).

Education

Survey respondents who reported on their level of education had higher levels of educational attainment than Nebraska residents overall, as demonstrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Educational Attainment

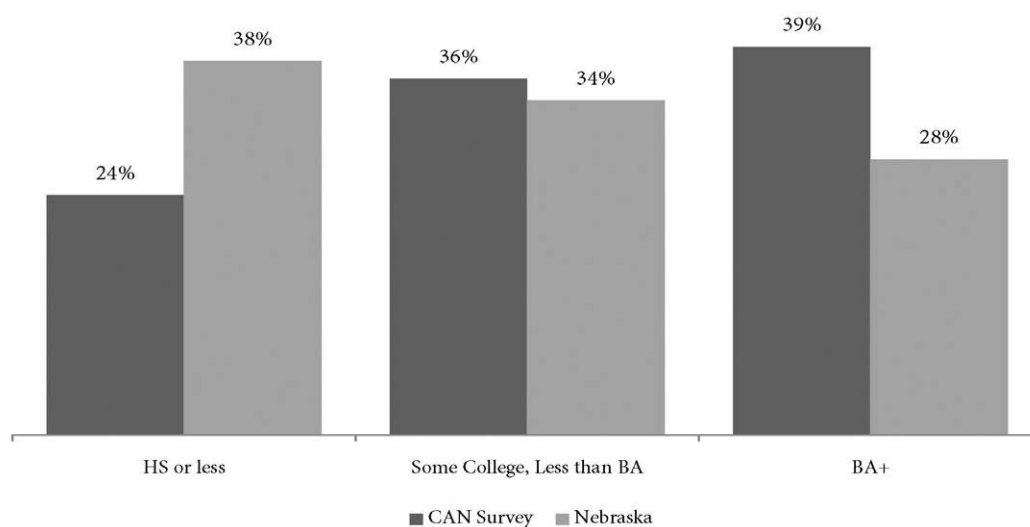
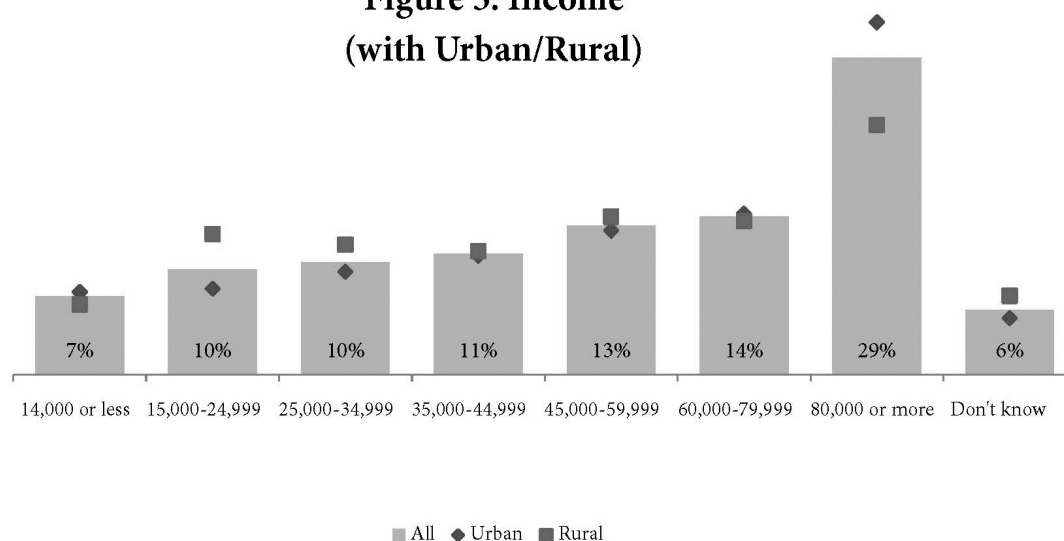


Table 7: Educational Level Compared to Nebraska Census

Level of Education	Respondents	Percent	Nebraska (25 and over, Census)	Percent
8th grade or less	10	0.6	Less than 9th grade	3.9
9th, 10th, 11th grade	31	2.0	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5.1
High school diploma or GED	345	21.8	High school graduate (or GED)	29.0
Some college but no degree	295	18.6	Some college, no degree	24.4
Technical/vocational or associates degree	279	17.6	Associate's degree	9.6
Bachelor's degree	374	23.6	Bachelor's degree	18.9
Master's degree	195	12.3	Graduate or professional degree	9.1
Doctorate or professional degree	56	3.5		
Total Valid	1,585	97.8	-----	----
Missing	36	2.2	----	----
Grand Total	1,621	100.0	Grand Total	100.0

**Figure 5: Income
(with Urban/Rural)**

Household income for respondents in urban areas was generally higher than income for respondents in rural areas. For example, 31% of those in rural areas reported income of less than \$35,000 compared to 25% in urban areas. Similarly, 32% of respondents in urban areas reported income above \$80,000 compared to 23% of those from rural areas (see Figure 5).

Helping People, Changing Lives

