

# The State of the Workforce Report for the Metropolitan Chicago Region

## Executive Summary

# 2003

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**The Workforce Boards**  
OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

## Acknowledgements

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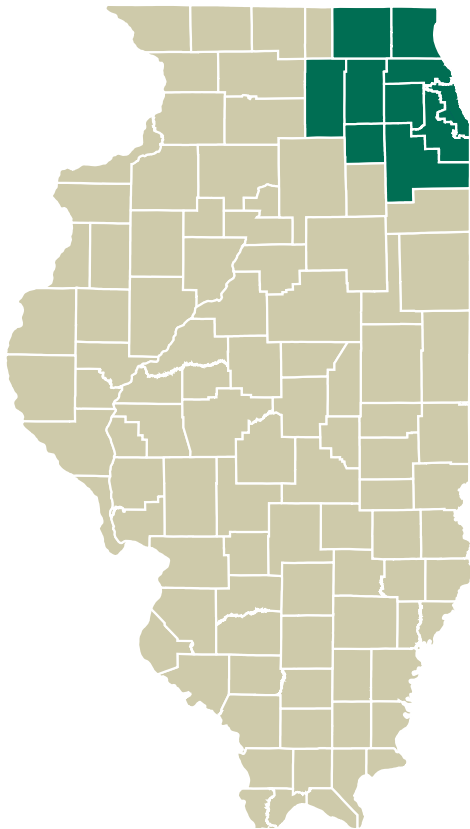
## What is the State of the Workforce Report?

The State of the Workforce Report is an analysis of the Metropolitan Chicago Region's workforce demand, workforce supply, emerging workforce, and quality of life. The full report (available at [www.workforceboardsmetrochicago.org](http://www.workforceboardsmetrochicago.org)) provides extensive data and storyline interpretation about the region and how it compares to other metropolitan regions in the country. This briefing highlights some of the major findings.

## What is the Metropolitan Chicago Region?

The Metropolitan Chicago workforce region consists of eight different workforce development areas in northeast Illinois: City of Chicago and DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, North and Northeast Cook, South and West Suburban Cook and Will counties.

# HOW IS THE METROPOLITAN CHICAGO REGION DOING?



Metropolitan Chicago is one of the top twenty metropolitan regions in the nation. Eight metro regions were chosen for comparison based on comparable size and historical significance (New York, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia); geographic economical development rivalry (Dallas and Denver), and emerging new economies (Boston, San Diego, and San Francisco). Compared to other metropolitan regions, Chicago has many assets:

- ✓ Tremendous industrial diversity.
- ✓ Strength in business services, particularly in the financial sector.
- ✓ Projected growth in manufacturing, one of only three metropolitan regions predicted to have such growth among the nation's top twenty.
- ✓ Home to 36 headquarters for Fortune 500 companies and 199 headquarters (1999 figures) for public companies with more than 500 employees.
- ✓ Younger population than the national average.
- ✓ Competitive quality of life compared to other major metropolitan regions.

However, Metropolitan Chicago also has many challenges to address in order to maintain and improve its competitive position:

- ✓ Recent job losses have been severe and recovery is likely to be slow.
- ✓ The health services sector is experiencing skill and labor shortages.
- ✓ Manufacturing suffers from skill gaps.
- ✓ Regional employers are investing less in worker training than the national average.
- ✓ Many youth and adults are "at risk."
- ✓ Housing may be more affordable than some other urban regions, but it is still too high for the average worker.

## METROPOLITAN CHICAGO REGION

# WORKFORCE DEMAND

The Chicago region's diversity of industry offers a buffer against economic storms that strike a particular sector. Its composition is remarkably similar to the average of the top twenty regions in the country (Table 1):

Manufacturing declined over the past ten years, from 577,200 workers in 1992 to 496,400 in 2002. Despite this reduction, Metro Chicago is the only one of the 9 comparison areas projected to see growth in manufacturing in 2003 (Table 2), and one of only 3 of the top 20 metropolitan areas in the country.

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**While it is important to have a good supply of entry-level jobs, most workers look to progress to more challenging and better paying employment throughout their work lives.**

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Over the same ten-year period, professional services rose from 495,000 employees in 1992 to 655,000 in 2002. Other sectors enjoying large gains included private education services (+32%), health services and social assistance (+25.3%), leisure and hospitality (+25.2%), local government/education (+23.4%) and construction (36.2%).

The health services sector is of particular interest, not only because of the generally aging population and emphasis on biomedical research, but also because it provides both high-paying occupations at more advanced levels and many opportunities at the entry-level

According to a survey of fourteen area hospitals, conducted by the Metropolitan Chicago Health Care Council in fall of 2001:

- Approximately 1,500 Registered Nurses are projected to be in demand over the next three years.

- Approximately 400 Certified Nursing Assistants, 100 Radiology Technologists, 85 Specialty Nurses, and 50 Respiratory Therapists and Phlebotomists are also projected to be in demand over the next three years.
- On average, it takes between 6 weeks and 16 months to fill a high demand position, and at least one hospital spends as much as \$500,000 a year on advertising for high demand positions.

The Metro Chicago region has higher rates of employment in management, business and finance, and office and administrative than the nation; likewise it also has higher rates of production and transportation and material moving occupations. This indicates both an "office economy" as well as a "production" and "distribution" economy. The region's top five occupational clusters by size of employment are office and administrative (18.9%), production (11.0%), sales and related (9.7%), transportation and material moving (8.0%), and management (7.6%).

Four of the top five and six of the top ten occupations are information technology-related. With the exception of police patrol officers all top 10 occupations require a high level of education and training (Table 3).

In addition to having many high skill, high wage occupations, the region also offers opportunities for entry-level workers. The largest occupations by size include retail salespersons, cashiers, laborers, office clerks, janitors, waiters and waitresses, customer service representatives, and stock clerks. While it is important to have a good supply of entry-level jobs, most workers look to progress to more challenging and better paying employment throughout their work lives. People in these positions need to be assisted in improving their skills to move up the economic ladder, freeing their jobs for new labor force entrants.

Table 1: 2003 Employment Shares

	Manufacturing	Services	Trade	Transportation Communications & Public Utilities	Finance	Government	Construction and Mining
Chicago Region	14.2%	33.1%	22.5%	6.1%	7.5%	12.0%	4.6%
Average, Top 20 Regions	11.0%	34.7%	22.0%	5.7%	7.3%	14.1%	5.2%

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors

Table 2: 2003 Projected Growth in Key Employment Sectors by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

Growth	Total Employment	Manufacturing	Services	Trade	Transportation, Communication & Public Utilities	Finance	Government	Construction/ Mining
Chicago	0.8%	0.4%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%	1.0%	0.7%	2.3%
Boston	0.5%	-0.7%	1.9%	-0.3%	0.5%	0.0%	-0.5%	-0.1%
Dallas	0.8%	-1.6%	1.6%	0.1%	1.1%	0.5%	2.4%	1.4%
Denver	1.2%	-0.4%	2.4%	0.6%	1.5%	-0.3%	2.0%	-0.4%
Los Angeles	0.5%	-0.8%	1.9%	0.1%	1.3%	-0.7%	-0.6%	1.1%
New York	0.6%	-1.0%	1.2%	0.6%	0.9%	1.6%	-0.9%	1.3%
Philadelphia	0.8%	-0.9%	2.2%	0.3%	1.2%	0.6%	-0.1%	-0.6%
San Diego	1.9%	-0.4%	2.7%	2.0%	2.6%	2.0%	1.4%	1.8%
San Francisco	0.0%	-0.8%	0.9%	-0.5%	0.7%	-0.8%	-1.1%	-1.5%
Top 20 Average	0.9%	-0.6%	1.7%	0.5%	1.1%	0.9%	0.5%	0.7%

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors

Table 3: Chicago Region's Top 10 Occupations Based on Current Employment, Projected Growth and Annual Wage

Occupational Title	1998 Employment	Rank by Employment	Projected Ten Year Growth	Ranking of Occupational Growth Over Ten Years	Average Annual Wage	Rank by Wage	Education & Training Code	Overall Ranking
1. Systems Analysts	27,236	37	91%	4	\$62,429	37	1	78
2. Computer Engineers	15,097	65	98%	3	\$66,656	23	1	91
3. Managers of Engineers, Natural Sciences, Computer Information Systems	12,688	85	39%	24	\$79,400	12	1	121
4. Computer Programmers	33,563	29	36%	32	\$54,294	82	1	143
5. Police Patrol Officers	20,083	52	28%	62	\$61,776	41	3	155
6. Managers of Advertising, Marketing, Promotions, Public Relations and Sales	20,723	50	23%	93	\$65,002	28	1	171
7. Engineers, NEC	18,582	56	33%	43	\$55,520	77	1	176
8. Physicians and Surgeons	21,058	49	20%	119	\$83,465	9	1	177
9. Securities, Commodities, Financial Services Sales	13,648	80	30%	54	\$58,096	60	1	194
10. Computer Scientists, NEC	5,191	186	114%	1	\$78,383	13	1	200

Source: Illinois Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

# METROPOLITAN CHICAGO REGION

# WORKFORCE SUPPLY

The Chicago region is younger than the U.S. average and many metropolitan areas. This is good news for the region since there is a national shortage of younger workers now and shortages are projected for the future as well (Figure 1).

Metro Chicago's labor force participation rate is higher than that of the U.S. and many areas, but trails such areas as Denver, Dallas, San Francisco, and Boston. Nearly one out of every three Metro Chicago area residents over the age of 16 is not participating in the workforce (Figure 2).

**Metro Chicago's rate of individuals with a college degree is greater than the national rate (36% compared to 31%).**

Labor force participation may be improved by ensuring that demographic groups that have barriers to participation are assisted in overcoming their challenges. This includes immigrants with English language difficulties, individuals with low educational attainment, the disabled, and ex-offenders.

The Metro Chicago region has higher rates of people speaking English "not very well" or "not at all" (total of 7%) than does the nation (4%), although Metro Chicago's rate is far below that of its size competitors, New York and Los Angeles. Still, the 7% who report difficulty in English communication represent 579,094 people who may not be able to function effectively in the local labor market (Figure 3).

The workforce is relatively well educated. Metro Chicago's rate of individuals with a college degree is greater than the national rate (36% compared to 31%), and higher than all other metro areas studied other than Boston, Denver, San Diego, and San Francisco. "College degrees" includes individuals with two-year degrees (Figure 4).

However, there is a significant difference in the educational levels of the population by race. Asians have the highest rates of educational attainment, with 64% of that demographic group having an associate's degree or higher. Whites have significantly higher rates of bachelor's and graduate degrees than do blacks or Hispanics, and Hispanics lag behind both whites and blacks in associate degree attainment. Educational attainment levels often correlate to underemployment and poverty (Table 4). Increasing educational attainment among minority populations would increase economic equality as well as contribute to the region's productivity.

Ex-offenders are a large demographic group in the metropolitan area. Ten Chicago zip codes received 25% of Illinois prisoners released in 2000, 2001, and 2002. Most prisoners return to a relatively small number of heavily disadvantaged minority neighborhoods, where they remain largely beyond the sphere of the mainstream society's awareness and concern. Incarceration carries a significant 10 to 20 percent "wage penalty." On average, ex-prisoners experience no real wage increases in their twenties and thirties, when young men who have never

Table 4: Educational Attainment Percentages by Race and Ethnicity

	Less than 9th	9th to 12th, no diploma	High school graduate	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate/Prof degree
White	6%	8%	25%	21%	6%	21%	13%
Black	6%	20%	26%	27%	6%	6%	5%
Asian	7%	6%	12%	12%	6%	35%	23%
Hispanic	22%	22%	26%	15%	4%	7%	4%

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

been incarcerated tend to experience rapid wage growth. Prison time serves to channel individuals away from skilled occupations and into jobs characterized by low wages, limited job stability, and fewer opportunities for advancement. Offenders returning to society after completing their prison sentence provide an opportunity for the city and region to address critical skill shortage areas with a segment of the population heretofore finding great difficulty in entering and progressing in the labor market.

Many individuals with disabilities also struggle to find employment. The Metro Chicago region has a lower disability unemployment rate than the U.S. average, but Boston, Dallas, Denver, and San Francisco all have lower rates of unemployment among individuals with disabilities than does the Chicago region. As in many other areas of comparison, Metro Chicago rates in the “average” range.

Average Age by MSA, 2000

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

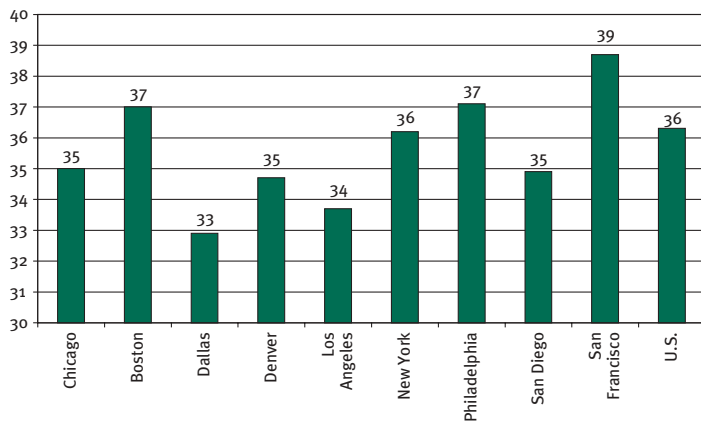


Figure 1

Civilian Labor Force Participation by MSA, 2000

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

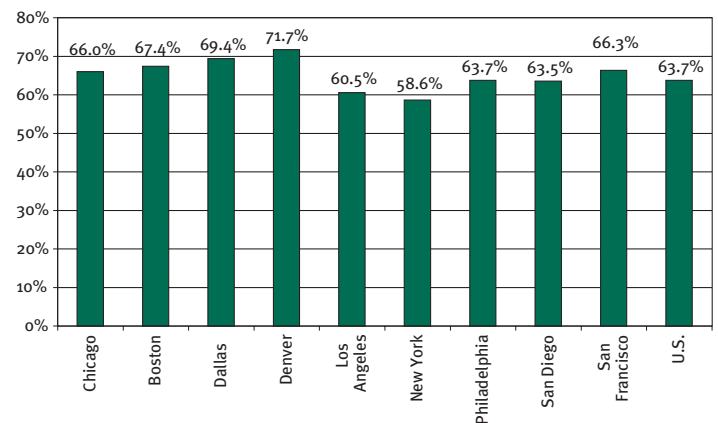


Figure 2

Population Speaking English "Not Well" or "Not At All" as a Second Language by MSA, 2000

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

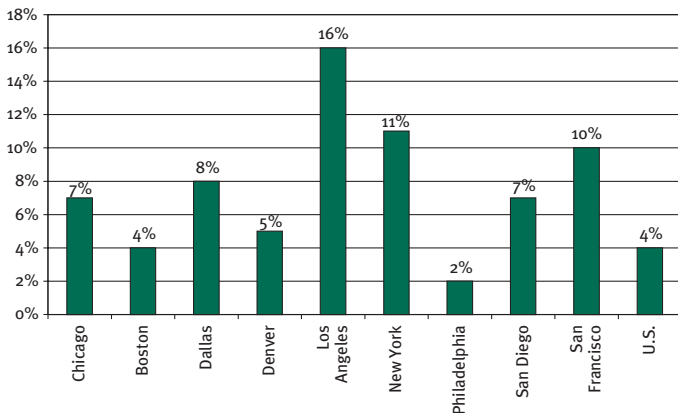


Figure 3

Educational Attainment of Adults 25 Years and Older by MSA, 2000

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

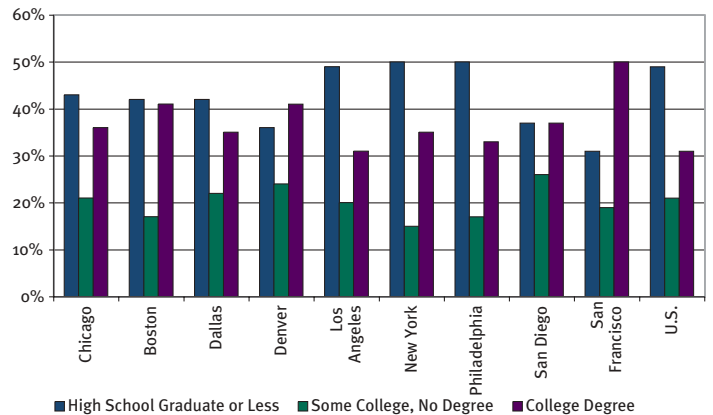


Figure 4

## METROPOLITAN CHICAGO REGION

# EMERGING WORKFORCE

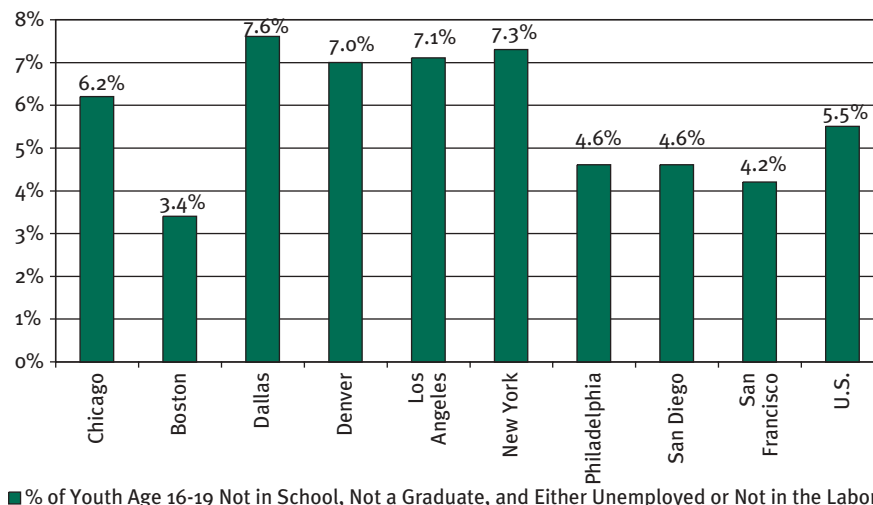
While the metro area enjoys a relatively youthful population, there are troubling signs among the youth population, including social inequality in the education system. There is a clear correlation between low-income areas and the scores on standardized achievement tests (Map 1). High poverty areas tend to see high rates of absenteeism, less positive attitudes about school, and less parental involvement. Helping bring up educational achievement in these lower-income areas so that “no child is left behind” will be a challenge for the entire region, given that there is one labor market that shares both the well-educated and the not-so-well-educated.

Many youth are “at risk,” including thousands in the suburban counties. Troubled young people are not strictly an urban issue. The Chicago metropolitan region has higher rates of at-risk youth than the U.S. but lower rates than Dallas, Denver, New York, and Los Angeles (Figure 5).

While the Chicago region holds advantages over many areas, the rate of at-risk youth is high enough to warrant consideration and policy action. Low-income youth face particularly difficult hurdles to accessing and benefiting from the strong regional labor market. The region can help move youth to maturity and productivity by ensuring that they have the best possible career information and career awareness from an early age to enable them to make better decisions about their future. Youth can also be better prepared through implementation of a “21st century curriculum” at the K-12 level. Such a curriculum would focus on skills needed for tomorrow’s jobs, including Analytical Skills and Problem Solving, Business Organization and Environment, Coordination and Communication Skills, Project and Process Flow Skills, Core Computer Software and Hardware Skills, and Core Field of Study Skills.

Percent of Youth At-Risk by MSA, 2000

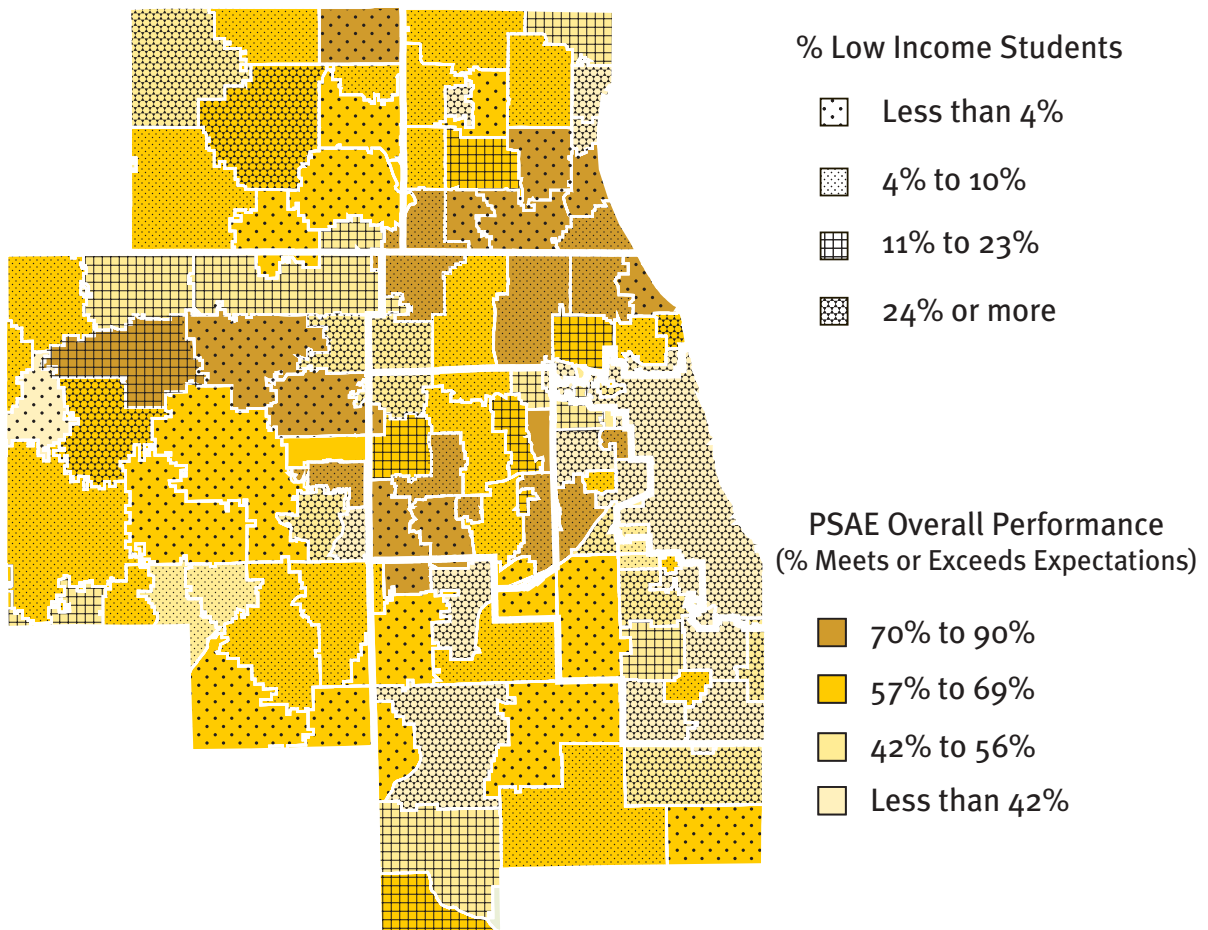
Source: US Census Bureau 2000



■ % of Youth Age 16-19 Not in School, Not a Graduate, and Either Unemployed or Not in the Labor Force

# Percent of Low Income Students in Public Schools Compared to PSAE <sup>1</sup> Composite Scores (2001-02 School Year)

Source: Illinois State Board of Education



Map 1

<sup>1</sup> The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) measures the performance of grade 11 students in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social science in the State of Illinois.

# METROPOLITAN CHICAGO REGION

## QUALITY OF LIFE

The Metro Chicago region has tremendous quality of life assets including two world-class airports, acres of museum campuses, miles of shoreline and beaches, hundreds of festivals and concerts, thousands of restaurants, hundreds of theatre companies, and numerous pro sports franchises as well as farms, woods, small towns, and suburban communities. Within a short distance, residents can go from urban amenities to rural scenery. Yet, quality of life extends beyond these components to include factors such as growth and sprawl, and transportation and housing, issues that are typically intermingled.

Transportation is a major workforce issue as it contributes to where workers and businesses decide to locate. Cook County and the City of Chicago remain the leading employment centers of the region's economy while the population grows much faster in the collar counties. Movement between collar counties has increased rapidly as well. Between 1990 and 2000, 125% more people began driving from homes in DuPage County to work in Will County; 67% more people now commute from Lake County to McHenry County; and

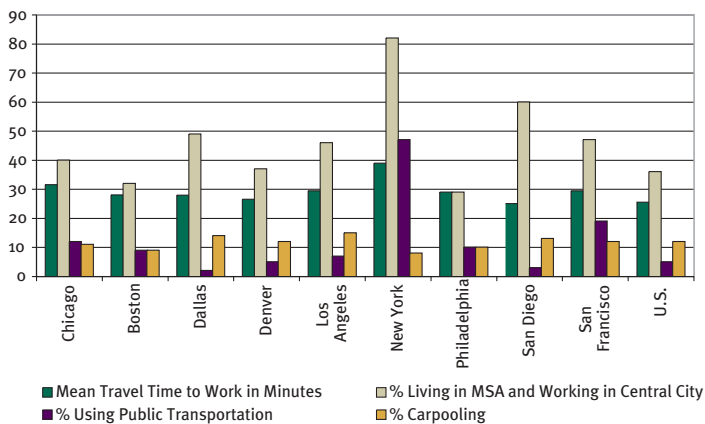
95% more people now commute from Kane County to Lake County. This speaks to the need for increased transportation options in these communities.

Only 40% of the population both lives in the region and works in the City of Chicago. This contrasts with the New York region, where over 80% of the region's residents work in the City of New York (Figure 6).

Along with transportation, housing is a major workforce issue. The Chicago region's housing cost is relatively moderate compared to most other comparison areas. Of the largest areas, Metro Chicago definitely has the competitive living advantage (Figure 7). Economists generally believe that 30% of monthly gross income is the maximum that should be spent on housing in order to sustain a healthy standard of living. The Metro Chicago region has a higher rate of homeowners who spend over 30% of their monthly income than does the nation (25% spending more than 30% as opposed to 22% in the nation) and only a slightly lower rental rate above 30% (36% compared to 37%).

Transportation Indicators for Work by MSA, 2000

Source: US Census Bureau 2000



Housing Affordability by MSA, 2000

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

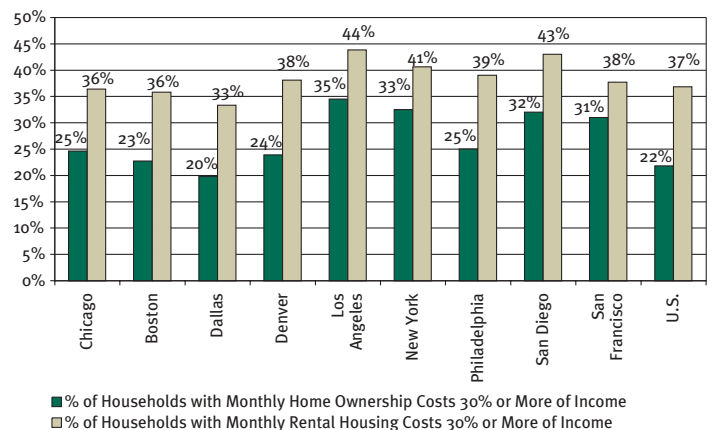


Figure 6

Figure 7

Racial Distribution by MSA, 2000

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

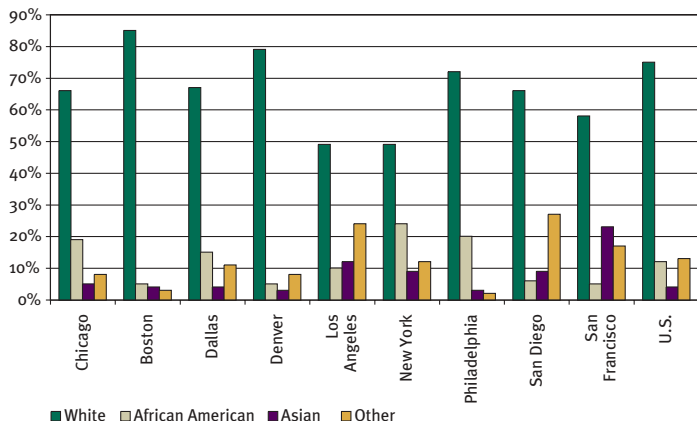


Figure 8

Having a lower rate of people exceeding the 30% threshold is desirable; to this extent, Metro Chicago fares better than the Los Angeles, New York, San Diego, and San Francisco areas.

Diversity has not typically been considered a quality of life issue, but as our society becomes more diverse, community indicators of diversity are becoming more important and can be a consideration in where people and businesses locate. The Chicago metropolitan region is considerably more homogeneous than are New York and Los Angeles. However, the Chicago region is less homogeneous than the national average and many of the areas studied (Figure 8).

“Hispanic” is an ethnic designation rather than racial. Hispanic individuals may be of any race. The Chicago region has a higher proportion of Hispanic population than many areas studied, but trails Los Angeles (where nearly 1 in 2 are of Hispanic origin), New York, and Dallas. Los Angeles and New York have nearly twice the rate of foreign-born citizens as does Metro Chicago. However, Metro Chicago’s rate of foreign-born citizens is 6% higher than the national rate (11%). Nationally, immigrants account-

Poverty Indicators by MSA, 1999

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

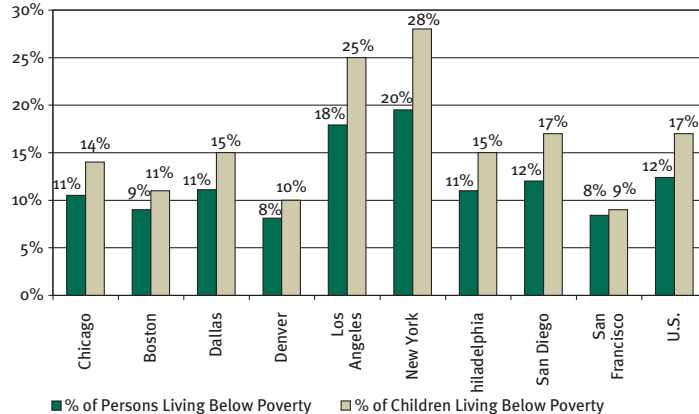


Figure 9

ed for all the growth among workers under 35 during the last decade, and most labor force growth over the next twenty years is predicted to be driven by immigrants. Higher rates of foreign born and culturally diverse populations not only factor into increased vitality in a region, but also contribute to economic growth.

Relative to other metropolitan areas, Metro Chicago personal incomes are higher and poverty is lower. Metropolitan Chicago’s poverty rate is substantially lower than that of its traditional large rivals, the Los Angeles and New York City areas (Figure 9). However, socioeconomic inequality hurts the overall quality of life in any community. City of Chicago residents on average have the lowest incomes in the region. While some of the highest paying jobs are located in the city, workers who live elsewhere hold many of those jobs. Conversely, data from the suburban areas around Chicago shows that while highly paid chief executives and managers are commuting into the city, many lower paid blue-collar workers are commuting out of the city to jobs in the surrounding areas where they cannot afford to live.

## METROPOLITAN CHICAGO REGION

# THE BOTTOM LINE

*The Chicago region's greatest strength is the diversity of its industries.*

The region is not overly dependent on any one sector, unlike Detroit and Cleveland (manufacturing); Las Vegas and Miami (tourism); San Jose and Austin (high tech); Atlanta and Dallas (telecommunications); or New York and Charlotte (finance). A January 2003 report prepared for the U.S. Conference of Mayors by Global Insight gave the Chicago metropolitan area a top ranking on the diversity index. The region has had significant growth in business services, especially financial, which may be a key to future development. While the region is expected to be just slightly behind the average among top metropolitan economies in job growth in 2003, it is one of only three metro areas (of the top 20 areas in the country) that is not anticipating declines in any key employment sector.

*Recent job losses have been severe, and recovery may be slow. The jobs that are in highest demand tend to be low paying and more likely to be part-time and prone to layoffs.*

The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the Metro Chicago region lost 57,400 jobs in 2002. The New York region, which has a larger employment base than Metro Chicago was runner-up with only 45,100 jobs lost. Metro Chicago's diverse industry base will help in its recovery since some sub-sectors will grow (especially business services) while others decline.

*The Chicago region is relatively prosperous, but many youth and adults have been left behind. Skill development to raise employment and income is a regional issue, requiring regional solutions.*

Although the poverty rate for the region as a whole is below that of the U.S. average, there are thousands of people in poverty, even in the collar counties where tiny percentages hide absolute numbers that should not be ignored. The central city has significantly higher concentrations of people in poverty, many of whom live in lower-cost urban housing but commute to the suburbs to work, while the more highly educated can afford suburban housing and commute in to the city for professional and managerial jobs. The imbalance between skills, jobs, housing and "haves and have-nots" is an issue across the region. Minorities have been harder hit by the current recession than the majority white population, further exacerbating the problem.

*The Chicago region enjoys a higher quality of life compared to other metro regions.*

Personal income is above average, poverty rates are substantially below those of the other two largest metro regions (New York and Los Angeles), adults tend to be well educated, the population tends to be younger, housing is more affordable than in many comparison regions, and the area is rich in cultural advantages and tourist attractions. Despite the continuing shift of population and job share from the urban core to the collar counties, the region still ranks 68th out of 83 metropolitan areas on an index of urban sprawl (where a rank of 1 is most sprawling and 83rd is least sprawling).

## The Next Steps

The eight Workforce Boards that represent the metropolitan Chicago region are engaged in a nationally unique collaboration to address regional workforce opportunities and challenges. Consistent with the analysis on page 10, action is either underway or planned on several fronts including:

*Identify and meet the workforce needs of the major sectors of the region's diverse economy.*

**DESIRED STATE:**

Public workforce investment is organized based upon key industry sectors and is flexibly responsive to the needs of those industries and of those working in or seeking to work in those industries.

**FIRST STEP:**

Continue to initiate regional industry sector approaches which strategically address skill shortages and build the supply pipeline.

*Ensure that young people are able to successfully transition into work.*

**DESIRED STATE:**

Youth are aware of the region's good jobs, career paths and skill-building options to acquire the high skill/high growth jobs.

**FIRST STEP:**

Create accurate, understandable career information for the region's key industry sectors, including career pathway maps, wage data, and skill sets, and share them widely through multiple mediums.

*Continue to foster regional thinking and coordinated initiatives, reflecting the interconnectedness of Metro Chicago as a labor market.*

**DESIRED STATE:**

State and local policymakers approach workforce development questions where appropriate on a regional basis, aligning closely with the labor market drawn upon by most Metro Chicago employers.

**FIRST STEP:**

Strengthen the capacity of the Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago to continue to improve their ability to collaborate on the identification of crucial workforce issues and to develop comprehensive, effective action plans in response.

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