

# Labor Resources for Chester, South Carolina

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This labor force profile examines three issues:

- ◆ labor force characteristics;
- ◆ the availability of labor; and
- ◆ average wages and salaries.

The profile provides county and state statistics, as well as site-specific information on the labor force within 15- and 30-mile commuting distances of Chester.

## Labor Force Characteristics

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The composition and size of a community's labor force is linked very closely with demographic and economic conditions and trends in the region. The following labor force profile provides basic information on the population base and labor force characteristics so that the reader can better assess labor force conditions in the community.

### *Civilian Population*

The civilian population (excluding military personnel) within a 30-mile radius of Chester is approximately 313,695 . This is an increase of 21.2 percent since 1990. In South Carolina, overall, the civilian population has grown by 12.2 percent. During the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, South Carolina's population growth has exceeded both the U.S. and Southeastern averages providing a growing labor supply for business and industry. Conservative projections indicate the population in a 30-mile radius will reach 320,899 by the year 2005.

### *Labor Force*

The total civilian labor force within a 30-mile radius of Chester is 160,987 (Avg. 2001). Within a 15-mile radius, the labor force count is 28,392 . The civilian labor force count represents all non-military employed and unemployed (actively seeking jobs) workers residing in the area.

The median age in South Carolina was 35.4 years (2000), which is roughly the same as the nation-wide average of 35.4. More women participate in the labor force as full-time workers in South Carolina than the national average. The following table summarizes the demographic characteristics of the working-age population in the community, the county, and the state.

**Demographic Characteristics  
Chester, Chester County and South Carolina**

Characteristics	Community		County	South Carolina
	15-mile Radius	30-mile Radius		
<b>Total Civilian Population (2001)</b>	56,963	313,695	34,055	4,012,012
<b>Distribution by Age (2001)</b>				
18 - 24	11.0 %	11.2 %	10.0 %	10.2%
25 - 44	30.5	30.9	29.3	29.5
45 - 54	10.7	10.9	10.5	13.7
55 - 64	8.8	9.0	9.0	10.4
<b>Distribution by Sex (2001)</b>				
Male	47.6 %	47.8 %	47.3 %	48.6%
Female	52.4	52.2	52.7	51.4
<b>Education (Age 16-69)</b>				
High School Graduates	70.3 %	71.2 %	66.4 %	76.1%
1-3 Years of College	23.7	24.6	19.1	26.4
College Graduates	8.7	9.4	5.7	12.0
Post Graduates	4.2	4.4	3.1	5.6

***Employment***

The total non-agricultural wage-and-salary employment for the county was 12,150 (avg. 2001). Employment data include all full- and part-time wage and salaried workers employed in the county. Employment statistics are compiled by place of work. Consequently, these employment statistics are based only on people who work in the county or study area. These people may or may not reside in the county or study area.

**Employment Characteristics  
Chester, Chester County and South Carolina**

Characteristics	Community		County	South Carolina
	15-mile Radius	30-mile Radius		
Employment (Avg 2001):	20,404	111,416	12,150	1,919,400
Percent Change (1990-2000):	10.2 %	14.5 %	(0.2)%	18.8%

### *Employment by Sector*

The following two tables examine the distribution of employment by sector. The table on the left compares employment by sector in 1990 and 2000. The table on the right provides a more detailed analysis of employment within the manufacturing sector in 2000.

#### Chester County

Employment by Sector	1990	2000	Manufacturing Employment	2000
Construction	2.90%	4.03%	Durable	48.95%
			Lumber & Wood	9.09%
Manufacturing	52.40%	40.27%	Furniture	0.00%
			Stone/Clay/Glass	19.10%
Transport/Utilities	2.10%	3.85%	Primary Metals	8.69%
			Fabricated Metal	7.14%
Wholesale/Retail	16.00%	20.89%	Machinery/Not Elec	4.67%
			Elec Equipment	0.00%
Finance/Insur/Real Est	1.40%	1.19%	Transport Equipment	0.25%
			Instruments	0.00%
Services	8.10%	8.87%	Miscellaneous	0.00%
			Non-durable	51.05%
Government	17.10%	20.90%	Food/Kindred Prods	3.19%
			Textiles	25.49%
			Apparel	11.96%
			Paper/Allied Prods	0.00%
			Printing/Publishing	1.06%
			Chemicals	7.16%
			Rubber/Plastic	2.19%
<b>Total County Employment:</b>		12,150	Miscellaneous	0.00%

### *Prime Working Age Group*

In staffing a new facility, prudent management prefers to staff its production work force with workers whose ages form a normal distribution curve. This provides for stability, flexibility and continuity of know-how. Over 50.5 % of the population in the 30-mile radius fall into the prime working age group of 20-54.

### *Work Force Skill Levels*

Overall, South Carolina boasts a higher per capita percentage of craftsmen, operatives, and laborers than the average percentages for the nation or the Southeastern states. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' figures indicate that 33.5 percent of the employees in South Carolina were craftsmen, operatives and laborers in 1998 compared with a 25.3 percent national average.

## Labor Availability

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### *Labor Force Participation Rate*

The labor force participation rate within a 30-mile radius of Chester is 51.3 percent. Within a 15-mile radius the participation rate is 49.8 percent. The labor force participation rate is the percentage which results from dividing the civilian labor force count by the total civilian population. South Carolina's average labor force participation rate is 50.2 percent (2001). The U.S. average participation rate is 50.4 percent.

2001 Labor Force Participation Rates  
Chester, Chester County

	Community		County
	15-mile Radius	30-mile Radius	
Labor Force:	28,392	160,987	15,438
Participation Rate:	49.8 %	51.3 %	45.3 %

### *Unemployment Rate*

The unemployment rate in the county was 9.3 percent (avg. 2001), compared with the state rate of 4.8 percent. By comparison, Chester County's unemployment rate one year previously (avg. 2000) was 7.4 percent, and the state rate was 3.9 percent.

The unemployment rate reflects the number of individuals who are actively seeking work. The unemployment rate should be used in conjunction with other labor force data to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the availability of qualified recruitable labor.

### *Underemployed*

In the 30-mile labor draw area 20.9 % of the resident labor force had individual gross annual earnings of \$12,000 or less per annum in tax year 2001. This is equal to approximately \$5.77 per hour based on a 2,080-hour work year common to business and industry and represents some 33,659 residents. Workers from this relatively low earnings group are among the first to respond to more rewarding job opportunities and are a valuable source of experienced, recruitable workers to new and expanding industry and business.

### *Commuting Patterns*

Approximately 4,729 workers from Chester County commute daily to jobs outside the county. Experience has shown that workers in this group will usually respond to comparable or better employment opportunities closer to home.

### *Persons Not in the Labor Force*

Due to the inherent elasticity of the work force, as more attractive jobs become available, people not currently a part of the labor force or who have withdrawn from the labor force are drawn into the pool of available labor. These people constitute a large group of potential workers who can be recruited to jobs that provide an attractive wage and benefit package. In Chester County there are over 3,599 residents age 18-64 who are currently not participating in the labor force. These are people who are fully capable of entering the labor force, given sufficient opportunity and/or motivation.

### *Persons Reaching Employment Age (18)*

A continuing increase in the number of high school graduates who choose not to go to college, combined with an already relatively youthful population, will provide large numbers of entry-level job candidates in the future. An estimated 46,838 persons in a 30-mile radius reached employment age (18) between 1990 and 2000. Slightly more than 50.9 % are male. Of those graduating from high school, about 61.5 percent continued on with their education. The bulk of the remainder entered the labor force.

#### **Sources of Labor Supply: Chester**

	<b>15-Mile Radius</b>	<b>30-Mile Radius</b>	<b>Chester County</b>
Estimated Number of Residents Age 18 to 64 Who Are Not Currently Participating in the Labor Force	6,245	34,028	3,599
Estimated Number of Residents Who Are Currently Unemployed	1,953	9,427	1,442
Estimated Number of Residents Who reached age 18 Annually (1990 - 2000)	890	4,684	580
Estimated Number of Residents With Gross Annual Earnings of \$12,000 or Less Per Year	6,219	33,659	3,812

### *Employer-Employee Relations*

Employer-Employee relations in South Carolina are very stable and the state consistently ranks as one of the least unionized in the nation. In 2001, South Carolina had the lowest union membership rate in the United States. South Carolina has consistently had one of the lowest work stoppage rates in the United States. In 1999, an average of less than .01% of working time was lost due to strikes in manufacturing and non-manufacturing industries combined.

## Wages and Salaries

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The average wage for all full-time and part-time wage and salaried workers in Chester County was \$26,156 in 2000. As the following table indicates, average wages in South Carolina overall are below the U.S. average.

	2000 Average Weekly Wage	2000 Average Annual Salary	2001 Average Prod. Wages
Chester County	\$503	\$26,156	N/A
South Carolina	\$541	\$28,132	\$10.96/hr.
United States	\$679	\$35,323	\$14.73/hr.

## Conclusion

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In the study area, the major sources of recruitable labor are the underemployed in terms of their gross annual earnings, young adults reaching employment age, those not currently in the work force, job seekers as a result of population growth, commuters and the unemployed. As indicated by the foregoing analysis, this area has a good population and labor force base. Both the population and labor force show positive growth trends, which should continue into the foreseeable future.

**Chester & Chester County, South Carolina**

	<b>County Statistics</b>	<b>15-Mile Radius</b>	<b>30-Mile Radius</b>
<b>Population</b>			
2001 Estimated	34,055	56,963	313,695
2001 Estimated (civilian)	34,055	56,963	313,695
2005 Projected	35,100	59,232	320,899
2005 Projected (civilian)	35,100	59,232	320,899
<b>Persons Age 20-54</b>			
2001 Estimated (civilian)	15,893	28,333	158,535
2001 Percent in Civilian Population	46.7 %	49.7 %	50.5 %
<b>Persons Who Reached Age 18</b>			
Reaching Age 18 between 1990 and 2000	5,796	8,903	46,838
<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>			
2001 Estimated	15,438	28,392	160,987
2001 Labor Force Participation Rate (Labor Force/Population)	45.3 %	49.8 %	51.3 %
2001 Males in Labor Force	8,074	15,115	86,306
2001 Females in Labor Force	7,364	13,277	74,680
<b>Labor Force Change</b>			
Labor force change 1990-2001	(283)	3,151	23,210
<b>Education - (16-69)</b>			
High School Graduates	66.4 %	70.3 %	71.2 %
1-3 Years of College	19.1 %	23.7 %	24.6 %
College Graduates	5.7 %	8.7 %	9.4 %
Post Graduates	3.1 %	4.2 %	4.4 %
<b>Non-Agricultural Employment</b>			
Avg. 2001	12,150	20,404	111,416
<b>Unemployed</b>			
Avg. 2001 - Number	1,442	1,953	9,427
Avg. 2001 - Percent	9.3 %	6.9 %	5.9 %
<b>Characteristics of the Unemployed</b>			
Avg. 2001 - Percent Male	44.0 %	44.5 %	43.8 %
Avg. 2001 - Percent Female	56.0 %	55.5 %	56.2 %
Percent in the 20-54 Age Group	81.8 %	82.6 %	83.8 %
<b>Education Level of the Unemployed</b>			
2001 - 12 years (High School)	49.9 %	43.3 %	36.7 %
2001 - Over 12 Years of School	25.0 %	21.5 %	18.2 %