



Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis

May 24, 2016



INTRODUCTION

Companies need a thoughtful, modern strategy to attract, develop, retain and excite the kinds of people they want to work in and for their business. Companies seek a stronger ability to cultivate core values that lead to a more productive workforce. Creativity, honesty, integrity, a strong work ethic, accountability, and an individual's capacity to execute a vision are sought out by companies because individuals with these values lead the way to change, accomplishment, and new approaches.

This analysis conveys opportunities and challenges in the local and regional labor market specifically by examining the behaviors and attitudes of respondents that live in Kenosha County, but commute elsewhere for their jobs. The analysis draws conclusions based upon those behaviors and attitudes conveyed and offers recommendations to companies to assist them in an opportunity to capture out-commuters, as well as offer some other recommendations designed to enhance their current talent development and recruitment strategies.

The Kenosha County Out-Commuter Survey serves as a qualitative supplement to the Labor Analysis of Kenosha County conducted by W.E. Upjohn Institute (May, 2016) and as a follow-up to the analysis originated by the University of Wisconsin-Parkside's Community Research Division in conjunction with Gary Paul Green of the Department of Community & Environmental Sociology University of Wisconsin-Madison (August, 2001).

The 2000 US Census reported that of the 72,053 employed Kenosha County residents, 31,564 or 44% commuted out of the county for their jobs. A large proportion (66%) of those who were surveyed in Green's 2001 study left Kenosha County to work elsewhere - mainly commuting to Lake County.

The most recent US Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey estimates that of 77,758 employed Kenosha County residents, 34,725 or 45% commute out of the county for work. Of the Kenosha County residents commuting outside of the county for work, just under half (44.4 percent) work in Lake County, 22.23 percent work in Racine County, and 19.8 percent commute to either Cook or Milwaukee counties. The remaining 13.6 percent commute elsewhere.

While commute time has gotten longer, reportedly more challenging and costly, the 2016 response to the perceptions of commuting is basically the same as 2001. The longer the commute the more likely out-commuters would be willing to look for comparable positions and change their jobs—if it means

Of the 77,758 employed Kenosha County residents, 34,725 or **45% commuted out of the county for their jobs (2014).**



they could work closer to home and family. The initial results coincide with the current analysis in that highly educated and experienced employees were less likely to leave their positions and/or give up commuting for



Since 2001, commute time has gotten longer, reportedly more challenging and costly.



a different position. Only 26% of 2016 out-commuters would refuse to consider a new position. A majority of 2001 and 2016 respondents do not believe there is a comparable position.

The current analysis more closely examines the trends and preferences of out commuters. While it is important to capture and convey the current attitudes and behaviors of those that leave Kenosha County every day to work in jobs far from home, it is also strategic to ask and attempt to answer questions that will assist companies in understanding the challenges and opportunities in the regional labor market:

1. **How can companies disrupt the commuting process and attract out-commuters to jobs in Kenosha County?**
2. **How can Kenosha County companies and community leaders use this information to capture those passive candidates in a more deliberate way?**
3. **What barriers are keeping companies from attracting the talent they need today to grow tomorrow?**

ABOUT THE SURVEY

From March 21, 2016 until May 1, 2016 an online Kenosha County Out-Commuter Survey was open for response. Questions were generated in partnership between W.E. Upjohn Institute and the Kenosha Area Business Alliance (KABA) as well as partnerships with Gateway Technical College, UW - Parkside and the Kenosha County Job Center/Workforce Development.

The survey was described in and advertised in the Kenosha News, in municipal newsletters, KABA's website and social media outlets including Linked-In, Twitter and Facebook, as well as 1,000 postcards distributed at public and private organizations throughout Kenosha County during the period that the survey was open for response.

Twenty-seven different questions related to gender, age, company and industry descriptions, professional occupation, time in occupation, job satisfaction factors including salary, benefits, and flexibility were asked in the survey. Questions also revealed key factors that tie evaluation of one's position to technical skill level needed to perform well in the position, experience required and promotional opportunities/career advancement, as well as relationships to supervisors and colleagues.



The survey asked what factors would prompt a respondent to change positions.

In addition, questions focused on commuting times defined by minutes and miles from residence to work. The survey asked what factors are considered as most important to remain in a position and if the respondent had previously worked in Kenosha County. Other questions asked what factors would prompt a respondent to change positions and asked how a respondent looks for and finds positions comparable or better than current conditions.

241 respondents took the survey of which 195 respondents were counted as the survey population (those respondents that answered the surveys completely.) Those 195 surveys were examined, classified into data sets and serve as the basis for the conclusions and recommendations.

A literature review of talent recruitment, commuter behavior and current talent strategies, including technology's current and developing role for the job seeker and for companies is also included in this analysis. The literature is referenced in the conclusions and recommendations of this analysis. The data, its findings and recommendations derived from the survey results will also reveal its limitations.

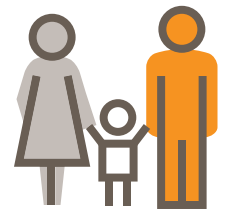
CURRENT KENOSHA COUNTY LABOR MARKET STATISTICS

Kenosha's current unemployment rate is 5.6%, higher than the State of Wisconsin's rate of 4.5% and slightly higher than the national rate of 5.0% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, April, 2016). In 2001 when the original study was conducted, Kenosha County experienced a comparable unemployment rate of less than 5%. Both periods were preceded by double digit unemployment rates and then a swift tightening of the market.

When unemployment levels increase, Kenosha County residents look at a broader region to find work, looking outside of Kenosha County, often to Lake County for higher wages and comparable positions. When unemployment rates drop, those out-commuters seek work closer to home, if available. Since Kenosha County is surrounded by larger markets to the north and south - Kenosha County residents enjoy a diverse range of industries and positions that span from Milwaukee to Chicago.

Population growth in Kenosha County has been fueled by a strong birth rate, which is a reflection of the county's younger population. In 2014, the median age in Kenosha County was 37.4, compared to 39.2 in Wisconsin. In Kenosha County, the population growth rate since the 2010 Census has exceeded the State of Wisconsin and neighboring counties, growing at a rate of 0.6 percent, or 1,067 residents between then and 2015. The current population in the County is 168,437. Kenosha County's overall population growth rate is expected to grow at a rate of 23% by 2040 - outpacing the state's population growth rate of 14% during that same time.

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Kenosha was hit especially hard by the Great Recession – causing an increase in those out of work and to look for jobs outside the County. That, along with Kenosha's proximity to the Illinois border including Chicago, contributes to a high rate of out-migration. Approximately 34,000 Kenosha County residents commute outside of Kenosha County to work. Just under half (44.4%) work in Lake County, 22.23% work in Racine County and 19.8% reported working in either Cook or Milwaukee counties. The remaining 13.6% commute elsewhere.

An aging population combined with high unemployment during and after the Great Recession have caused national, state, and county labor force participation rates to trend downward in recent years. But recent tightening in the job market has attracted a small number of additional participants to enter into the market, causing an increase in participation rates.

44% of Kenosha County out-commuters work in Lake County.

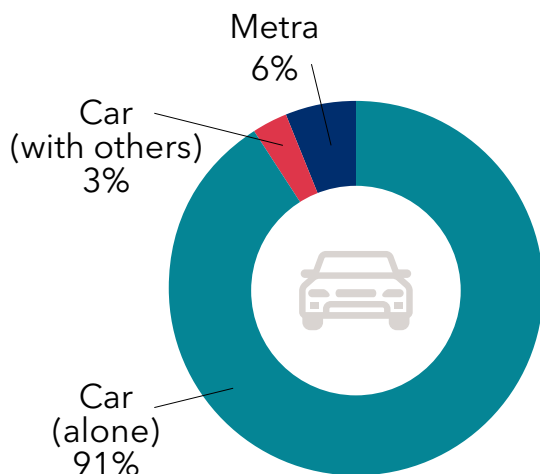


TEN FINDINGS

1. Out-commuters most likely work for positions in healthcare, manufacturing, professional/scientific and technical services. The majority of occupations included management, business/financial, and office/administrative support position.
2. Age ranges of those commuting - majority fall into the 35-44 years and 45-54 range - with an average time on the job of 10 years. Out-commuters characterized themselves as experienced, but not ready to retire.
3. Majority of out-commuters are satisfied with their positions (87% responded positively about their jobs) and yet 84% of those respondents are also open and willing to change jobs for a comparable position in Kenosha County.
4. Long-standing employees that responded to this survey value benefits such as built-up vacation time, healthcare, flex time and seniority they've achieved by working many years for the same employer. These same respondents also answered 'yes' the majority of the time as willing to consider a position comparable in pay and benefits if it meant being closer to home. This number has increased since 2001 and a greater majority today are willing to change jobs now than in the past.
5. The top four reasons out-commuters stay in their positions are wage, job security, benefits and flexibility. If an out-commuter's attitude towards wage and benefits are positive other factors such as relationship with supervisors, culture of the company, advancement opportunities score higher.
6. The top four reasons out-commuters would leave their jobs would be better wages, better promotional opportunities/career advancement, job security and flexibility. Attitudes reflected in the results show out-commuters feel career advancement is often met by changing employers.

7. The average commute time is approximately 42.5 minutes each way or 85 minutes round trip. That number equates to approximately 370 hours per year that Kenosha County residents spend traveling to and from work. The highest commute time reported was 120 minutes one way, and 5-10 minutes was reported as the lowest commute time.
8. Kenosha County exports highly educated persons to our surrounding counties. 73% of out-commuters have a Bachelor's degree or higher in education.
9. Majority of commuters don't believe or don't think a comparable job exists for them in Kenosha County and believe that if comparable positions exist in Kenosha County then those positions will not be comparable in pay and benefits to their current position.
10. Methods used to look for a new position include searching electronic job postings, networking, contacting a recruiter/headhunter or using social media outlets. The majority of these respondents (90%) rely upon job postings: online including Internet searches, newspapers, trade journals, professional organizations, company websites, temporary agencies and job boards). The second highest response to look for a new job would be through networking through their professional organizations or through trusted colleagues.

KEY DATA SETS



MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis

This 2016 result shows **out-commuters rely on driving a car to work and do not typically carpool**. In 2001 the first study also indicated that out-commuters relied on driving alone 91% of the time. However, in 2001 6% of commuters carpooled so that number decreased to 3% in 2016. **The Metra commuter rail made up 1% in 2001 and 6% 2016**. The number of those using public transportation, carpooling, shuttles or similar options has not increased significantly in 15 years.



It is not unusual that as a mid-sized community between two major metro areas, a large portion of employed Kenosha County residents are commuters.

Out-commuters average 42.5 minutes each way

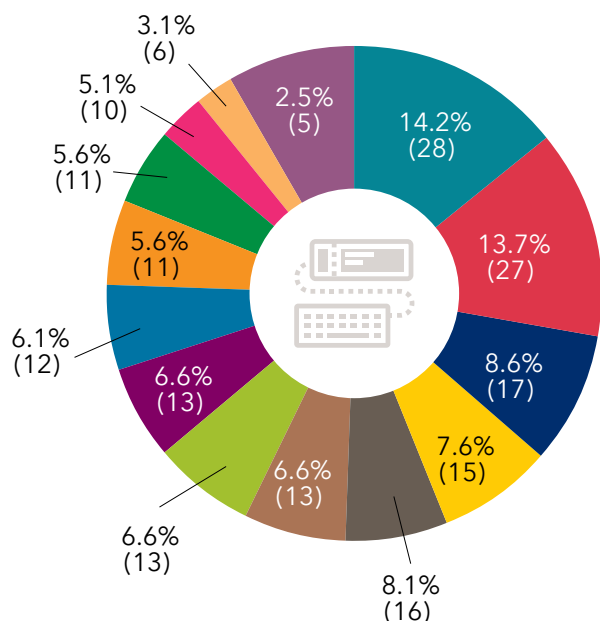
or 85 minutes total travel time. Several hundred hours are spent each year commuting.

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK



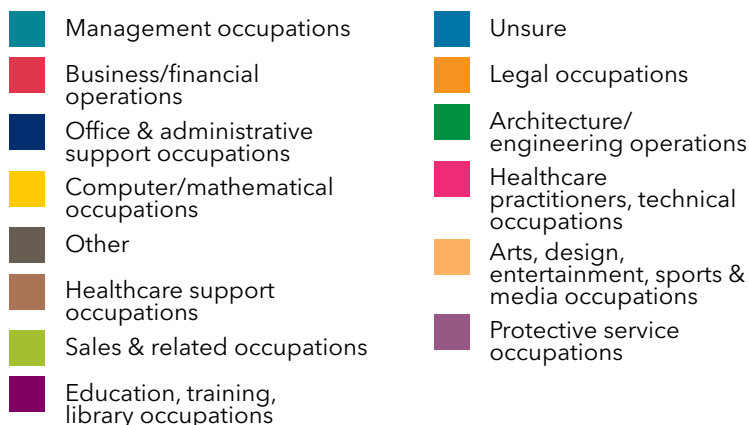
From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis

Travel Time to Work	Total Workers	Percent Distribution	Average Minutes
Less than 10 minutes	0	0	0
10 to 14 minutes	2	1.0	10
15 to 19 minutes	3	1.5	17.3
20 to 24 minutes	14	6.8	20.6
25 to 29 minutes	26	12.7	25.1
30 to 34 minutes	22	10.7	30.2
35 to 44 minutes	54	26.3	38.2
45 to 59 minutes	52	25.4	48.0
60 to 89 minutes	21	10.2	61.9
90 or more minutes	11	5.4	110



JOB CLASSIFICATION

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis

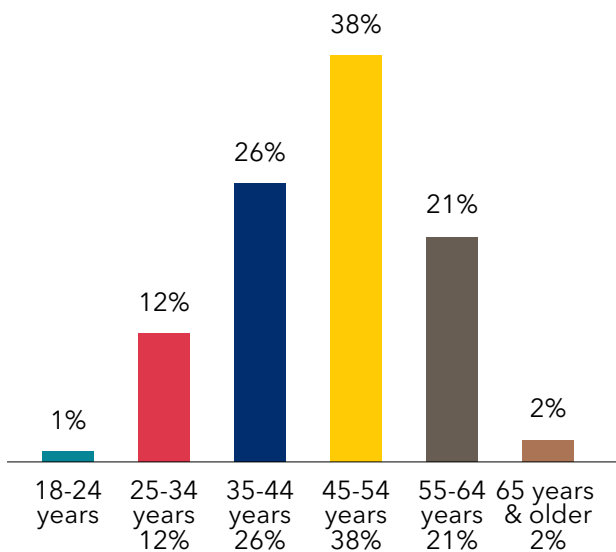


Over 60% of the positions indicated by respondents were in management and professional services. Architectural, office/accounting, scientific, production/logistics consulting and technical services were individually listed professions. Professional opportunities exist more abundantly outside of Kenosha County and there are more individuals working in professional/technical/science industries operating outside of Kenosha County.



AGE

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis



The majority of out-commuters are between the ages of 35-54, however, this statistic may be skewed due to the small sample size. The age range of respondents in the 2001 survey are somewhat consistent with these 2016 results. In 2001 20.3% of respondents fell into the 25-34 age range, while 12% fell into that same age range in 2016. In both surveys, a substantial number respondents in 2001 fell into the 35-44 age range, 32% in 2001 and 26% in 2016. In 2001 and in 2016 the largest proportion of out-commuters fell in the 45-54 age range.

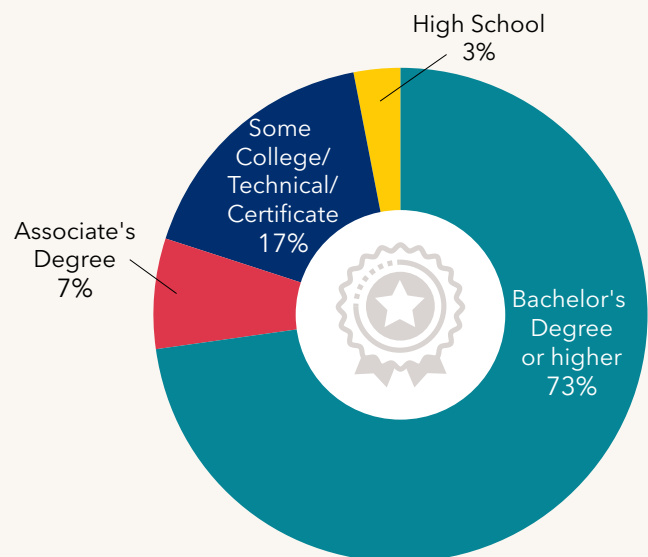
Out-commuters in the 25-44 age ranges present an opportunity to attract a passive workforce to sustain and grow companies while the 45-64 age groups contain an experienced workforce component that could be tapped for positions requiring high levels of experience or consulted after retirement. Many respondents in the older age ranges responded that they would like to entertain opportunities after they retire that would be closer to home.

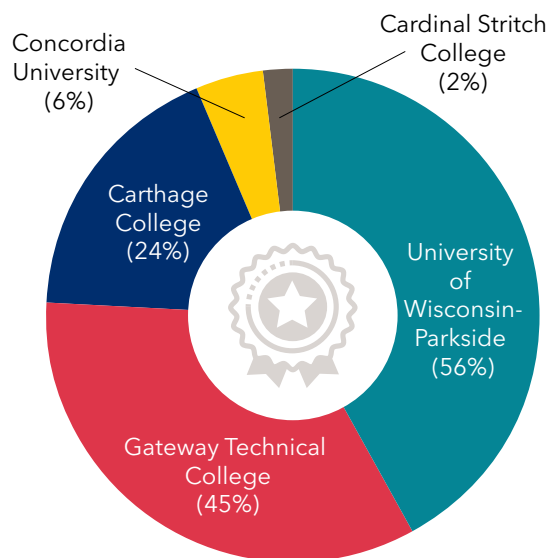
73% of respondents to this 2016 survey indicated they hold a Bachelor's or higher, however, given the small sample size this number may be overstated. In 2001 survey results indicated 39.9% of respondents held a Bachelor's or Higher. This shift shows a highly educated portion of Kenosha County residents choose to live in Kenosha County and work out of the county and that trend has increased significantly since 2001.



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis





EDUCATED AT KENOSHA COUNTY INSTITUTIONS

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis

57% of respondents indicated they were educated in Kenosha County. These respondents reflect that a large proportion of out-commuters are educated in Kenosha County, continue to live in Kenosha County but commute to jobs outside of Kenosha County.

YEARS WORKING FOR THE CURRENT EMPLOYER

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis



Years for Current Employer	Total Workers	Percent Distribution
Less than 1 year	16	8.2%
1 to 5 years	55	28.2%
6 to 10 years	29	14.8%
11 to 15 years	33	16.9%
16 to 20 years	25	12.8%
21 to 25 years	21	10.7%
26 to 30 years	9	4.6%
31 to 35 years	3	1.5%
More than 35 years	4	2%

Respondents indicated they've worked for their current employer an average time of 11 years.

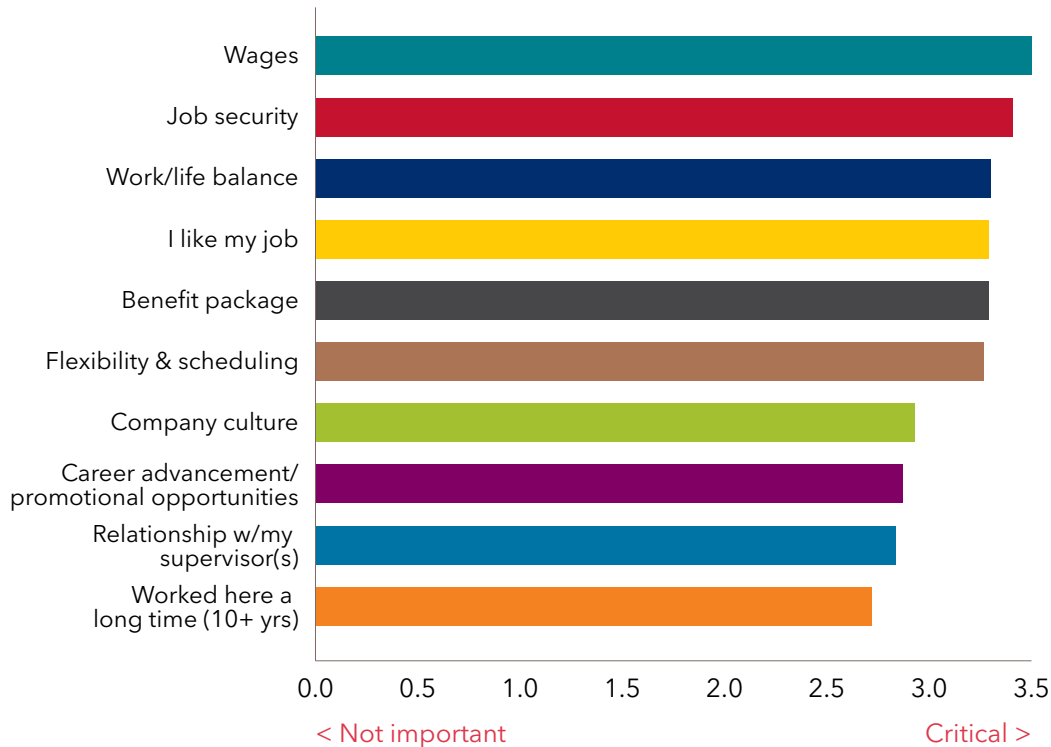
Respondents most frequently responded that they had worked for the same employer for two years and the median response was 10 years. The lowest amount of time recorded was just one month and the highest amount of time recorded for one employer was 41 years. **Most out-commuters believe they've worked a long time for their current employer.**





FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE EMPLOYEES TO STAY WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis



Presenting weighted average on a scale of critical, important, of minor importance, not important.

WHY STAY WITH CURRENT EMPLOYER?

Out-commuters expressed many factors that drive their motivation to stay with their current employers. Having a long term relationship with an employer that advances career opportunities and offers commensurate wages/benefits within a stable environment are leading factors.

"The overall culture of the company is a good fit for me."

"Company offers work/life balance that suits my lifestyle."

"Worked at this company a long time and don't want to lose benefits I've accrued."

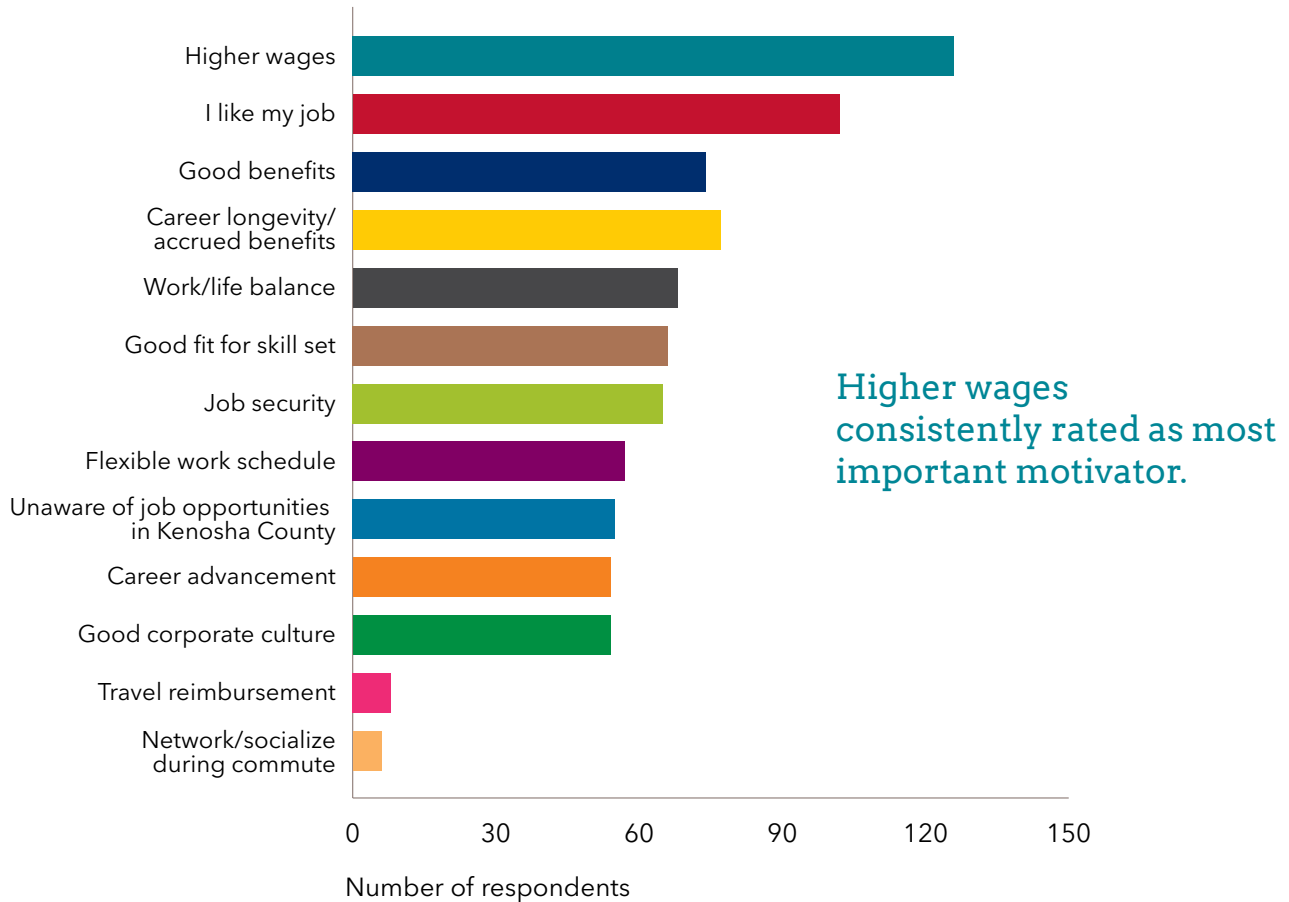
Labor markets are complex, voluntary exchanges, controlled by choices of both the job seeker and the employer. Employers who offer jobs at a more competitive, higher wage, perceived with job security, flexibility and advancement opportunities are more likely able to retain those employees for a long term. If criteria is not met, employees seek out other opportunities.





REASONS WHY PEOPLE COMMUTE OUT

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis



MOTIVATORS TO COMMUTE.

Wages, benefits, work environment, company culture, security and simply liking the job rates highest.

Relationship with supervisors and career advancement , flexibility rank as next tier of importance to employees that make the commute.

"I worked for an employer in Kenosha County and left for higher wages."

"I like my job."

"I am unaware of the career opportunities in Kenosha County."

PROBLEMS WITH THE COMMUTE.

Out-commuters would leave a current employer if wage was equivalent or better in a comparable position. Weather, time lost, traffic, length of commute and its cost were cited as negative factors.

“Ending the commute would be ideal and result in more time for family.”

“I’m tired of commuting.”

“I’ve been driving 30-40 minutes to current company for 28 years a shorter commute would be nice.”

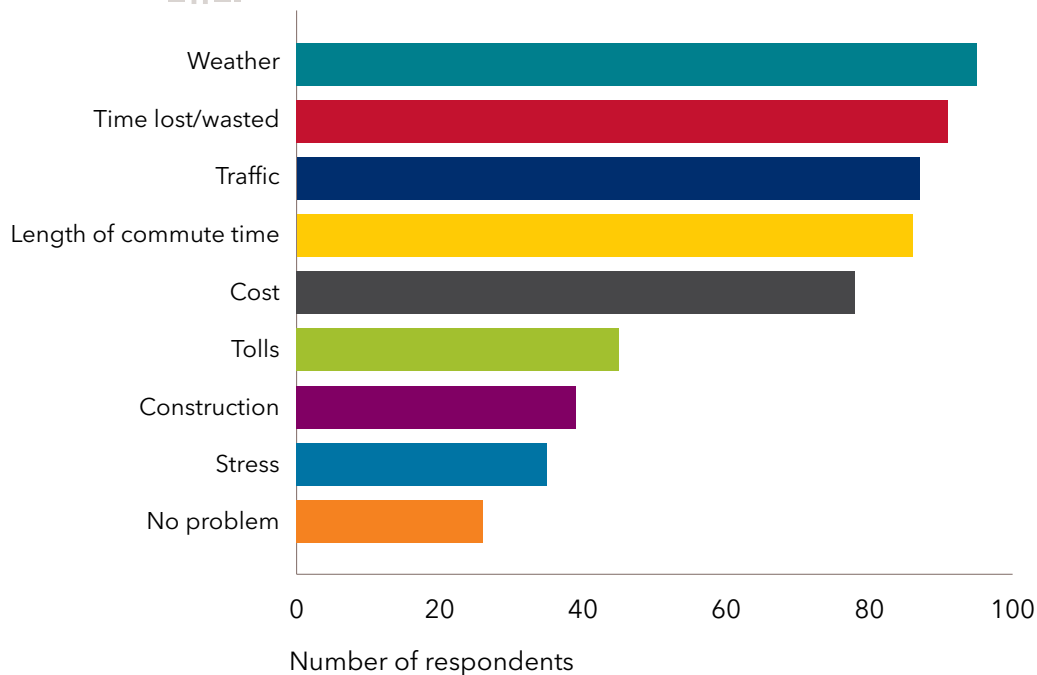
“I’d love to work and live in the same community/save time travelling.”

“Commute is difficult to manage with children/school.”



PROBLEMS WITH COMMUTING

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis



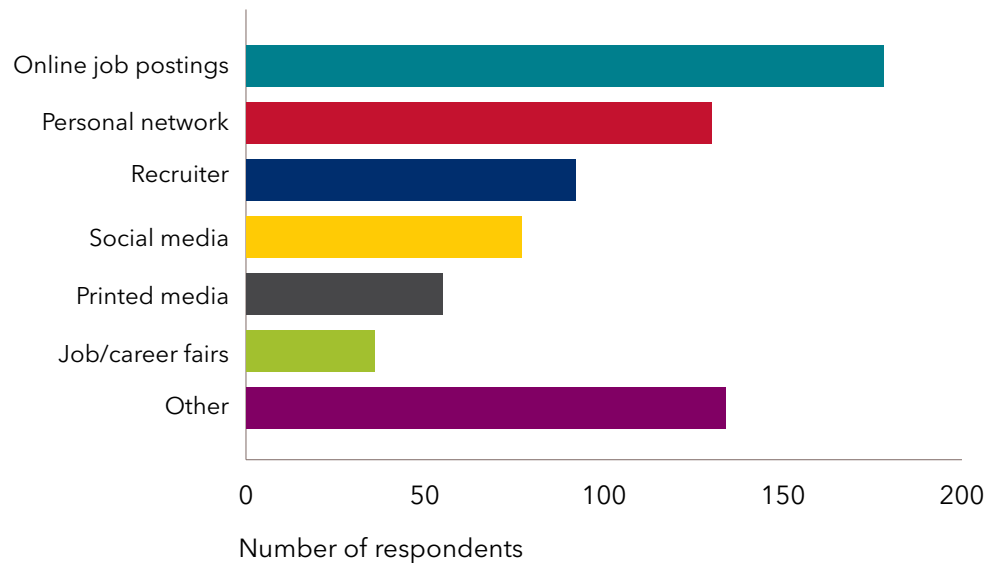
Digital platforms have reshaped how potential job candidates locate and connect with employers, requiring organizations to strengthen the online presence of their employment opportunities.

Utilizing recruiters also ranked high, likely because of the job/skills specificity of the professions of out-commuters. Other job search methods include emailing companies to inquire about job openings, utilizing temp agencies, and applying in-person at an organization.



JOB SEARCH METHODS

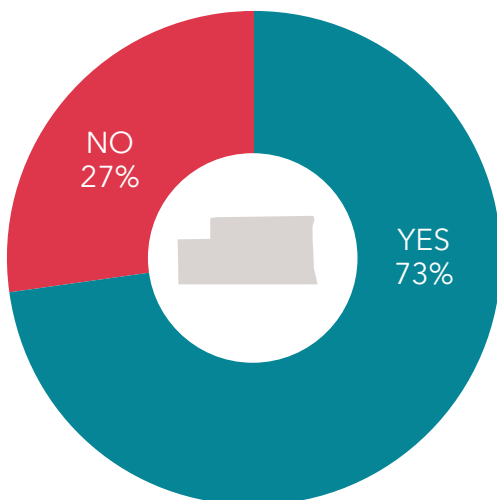
From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis



IN KENOSHA COUNTY

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis

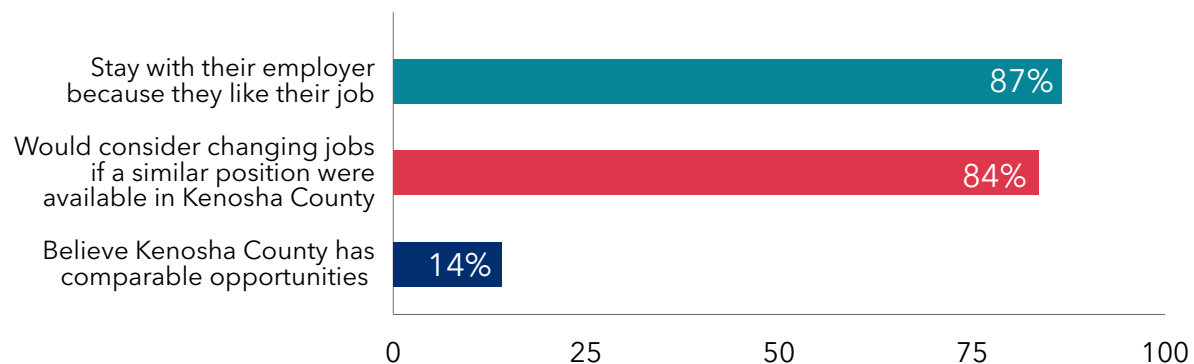
The majority (73%) of survey respondents have never worked in Kenosha County. Of those respondents who previously worked in Kenosha County (27%), some reflected that their previous work experience in Kenosha County was negative – and therefore were less likely to consider a comparable position locally.





OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO INFORM THE PASSIVE CANDIDATE

From the 2016 Kenosha County Out-Commuter Analysis



OPPORTUNITY EXISTS.

Passive candidates are not actively seeking positions because they are employed and haven't seen an equivalent or better opportunity. A high percentage -87%- of out-commuters like their jobs, yet 84% of those out-commuters would be willing to change jobs if a comparable or better job existed.

"I would leave for similar pay, closer opportunity."

"I would leave for a better opportunity in general."



TEN CONCLUSIONS

1. Inefficiencies in the labor market negatively impact company productivity. There is a disconnect between employers and qualified job seekers. Information gaps and timing prevents employers and qualified job seekers from finding one another in order to place individuals in positions best suited for them to succeed.
2. Kenosha County exports top talent. Highly educated, experienced employees are more likely to out-commute because they can access a broader range of opportunities in the region. Many of those talented persons were educated in and near Kenosha County and leave for jobs outside of the County.
3. Those that commute out of Kenosha County have achieved higher educational attainment levels than those residents that live and work in Kenosha County. Out-commuters are experienced employees that have been working for their employer for 10 years or more. In this current survey, 73% of out-commuters hold a bachelor's degree or higher. That number may be overstated due to the small sample size but is consistent with 2001 whereas approximately 40% of those with Bachelor's or higher out-commute.
4. Out-commuters could be considered 'passive job candidates' that, if targeted, would be willing to consider job openings if they had greater access and knowledge about the companies, the company's culture, benefits, advancement structure, stability and flexibility.
5. There is a higher level of transparency today in the labor market. With today's digital environment, active and passive job seekers understand that wage rates that are commensurate with skill level, qualifications and experience. Online talent platforms such as Glassdoor have gathered huge volumes of data regarding both individual workers, employers or work environments. The challenge is to manage perceptions about the company's reputation and brand.
6. The challenge of how to balance and leverage all of the technology and data available without losing the human elements that are fundamental to labor market transactions will become more obvious for both companies and their employees. Even as technology becomes a driving force in narrowing the gap of information between employer and job seeker, human behavior was, is, and will be the core component of successful hiring practices today and key to retaining employees in the future. A company culture that emphasizes strong respect for work/life balance is needed to retain employees but also to dissuade them from looking for other opportunities.

Out-commuters could be considered 'passive job candidates' that, if targeted, would be willing to consider job openings.



7. Aside from the hard costs of actual commuting expenses, out-commuters are also prone to higher absenteeism rates, frequent tardiness, and higher turnover rates, reduced employee engagement, and increased error rates. Over time, these factors negatively impact productivity. An employee feels time is split between family/home and job due to time, cost and added fatigue associated with a longer commute time.
8. The majority of respondents, 84%, regardless of age, education, experience and overall satisfaction with their current job were willing to consider a comparable job within the county.
9. Certain attitudes and experiences affects a person's willingness to change jobs. The time it takes to commute, the number of years the out-commuter has been making the same trip is tied to the respondent's attitude. For example, if an out-commuter has had to commute 45 minutes to an 1 hour each way and has been making the commute for 10 years or more, that out-commuter expressed strong dissatisfaction with making the commute. That out-commuter may not be actively searching for a position but expressed strong willingness to consider a comparable position closer to home.
10. Certain attitudes will affect a person's willingness to stay and retain their job even if a comparable job did exist in Kenosha County. If an out-commuter once held a Kenosha County job and viewed that job unfavorably, resigned, or was discharged, that out-commuter is less likely to consider any future job opportunities in Kenosha County. If an out-commuter believes comparable opportunities do not exist in Kenosha County or would not offer favorable characteristics such as flexibility, or similar terms of employment than it is improbable that out-commuter will seek a position in Kenosha County. If an out-commuter has worked for the same employer for a long time outside of the county, that out-commuter is less likely to consider a comparable job within the county.



The majority of respondents were willing to consider a comparable job within Kenosha County.

TEN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Align business strategy with a community strategy to attract best talent as top tier goal. Leaders of Kenosha County companies and within the community need to work together to make talent recruitment a top priority and enhance Kenosha County's ability to attract, develop, retain and excite employees to succeed in today's competitive environment.
2. Enhance company's presence in online talent platforms and websites where job seekers frequent including posting full time positions and blogs about company

activities on LinkedIn, CareerBuilder, Glassdoor, Indeed, Monster, Vault, Viadeo, Xing. Refer to A Labor Market that Works: Connecting Talent with Opportunity in the Digital Age, McKinsey Global Institute, June 2015.

3. A company's goal should be to align its brand recognition with the goals of job seekers. Values such as flexibility, work/life balance, and career advancement should be emphasized and repeated in job postings.
4. Broaden job posting advertising beyond Kenosha County to recognize the regional labor market pool and include regions such as Milwaukee, Racine, Walworth, Kenosha, Lake, DuPage and Cook Counties. Advertising to an even broader market is worth considering for key positions – particularly for smaller companies. Use all media sources within Kenosha County to advertise and communicate job opportunities and tell the company story to attract highly talented individuals that may not know much about the company.
5. Partner with career advising and academic planning experts within local institutions of higher education, including the UW-Parkside, Carthage College, Gateway Technical College, and Herzing University, to identify high-impact, experiential learning practices to recruit graduates to local opportunities. Internships, job shadowing, mentorships and other experiential learning opportunities can have a synergetic effect for the student, college and business.
6. Utilize resources such as KABA, the Kenosha County Job Center, local colleges and universities, and other non-profit organizations to host collaborative recruitment events which are tailored for passive candidates.
7. Optimize the company's website to feature talent recruitment, development, retention as company priority. Companies that prominently identify and showcase their strengths as an employer, going beyond simply talking about their products or services that will make themselves stand-outs as more attractive to candidates.
8. Develop talent management strategies to include, structured interviews, assessments of candidates' attributes, skills, fit for company, optimize team formation and internal matching, determine best options for training and skill development. Take advantage of talent platforms such as Good.co, PayScale, Pymetrics, ReviewSnap and locally participate in MRA surveys for understanding changes in the regional market for key positions.
9. Training and flexible options communicated early on in the hiring process will lead to better exchanges and more successful matches for companies. Some thoughtful companies arrange a buddy system whereas candidates in the final stages of hiring have access to employees they would be teamed up with if hired. Before and after they are hired, the candidates are free to call on their 'buddy' to ask questions about the work environment, skills needed, relationships, flexibility, stability and so on.

**Broaden
job posting
advertising
beyond
Kenosha
County to
recognize the
regional labor
market pool.**



Companies that tailor messages directly and repeatedly to potential candidates will stand a higher chance of catching their attention and retaining that new employee once hired. For example, a company that allows newly trained employees to participate in business ideation and strategy builds morale early on, as well as expanding business strategy to include diverse idea implementation across a broader spectrum of employees.

10. Tailor separate marketing communications toward the passive candidate, referencing the hard and soft costs that impact an out-commuter's well-being, as well as the benefits of living and working closer to the job.

CLOSING SUMMARY

To compare the study conducted in 2001 to this current 2016 study, many results have remained relatively consistent. Kenosha County's out-commuter phenomenon continues to be a large proportion of the overall regional workforce and should be considered a viable opportunity for attracting candidates locally. The number of new companies that have relocated to Kenosha County over the past decade coupled with the number of existing companies that are actively hiring is putting pressure on wage levels (demand for labor is up and supply is relatively constant). The ability to find qualified candidates is also more difficult as unemployment levels drop below 5-6%.

A notable change since 2001 is the difference in out-commuter attributes, whereas; the number of highly educated out-commuters is demonstrated more intensely in the 2016 results (73% of those with a Bachelor's or higher commute out, compared to 40% in 2001). These highly educated out-commuters see Kenosha County as an affordable, attractive place to live in a region that offers higher paying positions outside the county but still reachable. These individuals have more options for a wider range of positions due to their educational attainment levels connecting to a broader market of jobs to choose from. However, many of these out-commuters are educated in or near Kenosha County. An opportunity exists to persuade those individuals to take jobs locally before deciding to commute out in the first place and that message should be reinforced throughout their academic careers. A stronger regional knowledge of the job opportunities and success of Kenosha County companies can magnify awareness of opportunities locally.

Tapping the shoulder of out-commuters becomes an opportunity for Kenosha County employers to capture some candidates that would consider a comparable position if offered the opportunity. And, even as these out-commuters (or passive candidates) see or identify an opportunity in Kenosha County, it is important to acknowledge the fact that getting them to change jobs is a difficult task. The inertia to stay in a job is strong - liking what you do, liking your



A stronger regional knowledge of the job opportunities and success of Kenosha County companies can magnify awareness of opportunities locally.



colleagues, your boss, room for advancement, stability of your company and industry are all factors that retain good employees. It is difficult to persuade an individual with a good job to risk taking that new job, even if it is more valuable than the current job and closer to home. Even if one decides the commute is no longer worth it, change is difficult. The message to recruit these out-commuters needs to be more direct to capture their attention.

With the onset of new technologies, the opportunity for employers to communicate with these educated, experienced out-commuters has certainly expanded. Existing information gaps impede productivity and threaten future growth of companies and investing in digital platforms is not the only solution but a good place to start. Digital platforms that are designed to bridge the gap between job seekers and employers are adding upgrades that increase the fluidity of the labor market. However, digital platforms are only as useful as the investment companies are willing to make in them. There is also a cost to maintain and update these platforms since messages and positions change frequently.

Companies in Kenosha County as well as in Southeast Wisconsin and Lake County are offering individuals strong opportunities to grow their companies. Many companies outside of Kenosha County are offering flexibility to assist their employees in making their commute less of a burden such as telecommute options or allowance to work longer hours and fewer days per week. If Kenosha County companies wish to compete for these employees, wage is a critical component but other attributes need to be included in the recruitment strategy. How likely is future career advancement? Is there a clear path? How strong is the culture and relationships between employer and employees? How successful is your company amongst peers in the same industry? And, importantly, how does your company communicate to different categories of potential job candidates, students, retirees, versus this out-commuter group that responded to this survey and spend an average of 85 minutes each day commuting to and from work?

Kenosha County has an opportunity to work together with our educational institutions, economic development organizations (KABA) and companies to understand, estimate and communicate critical skills and positions in demand. Together, in Kenosha County, a concerted effort is beginning to take root to improve the matchmaking process between potential candidates and employers.

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