

TOMPKINS COUNTY  
STATE  
OF THE  
WORKFORCE  
2003 REPORT



Tompkins

**Workforce  
New York**

*Your connection for working solutions*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The preparation of the *Tompkins County State of The Workforce 2003 Report* was a collaborative effort between the Tompkins County Workforce Development Board, Tompkins County Area Development, and the New York State Department of Labor Research and Statistics Division.

In addition, TATC Consulting, a Washington, D.C. based management consulting company under contract to the New York State Department of Labor, designed and conducted a series of six focus groups. These were held May 21-22, 2003 in Ithaca New York at the Tompkins Workforce New York Career Center to serve as input to the *Tompkins County State of the Workforce 2003 Report*.

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## CALL TO ACTION

The Tompkins County Workforce Development Board must be forward-looking and responsive at all times in order for Tompkins County to remain competitive in the ever-changing and expanding marketplace. To this end, the *Tompkins County State of The Workforce 2003 Report* has been prepared as a planning tool to better align the region's economic development and workforce development initiatives.

The structure of the report is to present issues and challenges facing the Tompkins County workforce, as well as quantitative and qualitative information on a number

of key indicators for gauging the state of the Tompkins County workforce.

The report is intended to stimulate dialog in the economic and workforce development community (e.g., businesses, economic and workforce development experts, citizens, education entities, government agencies, labor organizations, elected officials, community leaders and faith-based and community-based organizations) and to motivate and empower the community to act within their own capacities to aid the Tompkins County Workforce Development Board in establishing priorities and implementing solutions.

## ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

It is the responsibility of the Tompkins County Workforce Development Board to communicate, in an honest and open manner, the issues to be addressed and the questions to be answered. Information from focus groups,<sup>1</sup> labor market experts and resources, and business surveys reveal a number of issues and challenges facing the Tompkins County Workforce. This report targets three issues as having the greatest impact on economic and workforce planning. These are:

1. **Inadequate workforce skills**
2. **Declining public resources**
3. **Unstable workforce**

The following provides additional clarification of the issues as well as the challenges/questions to be addressed.

### INADEQUATE WORKFORCE SKILLS

*How can we assure that the workforce possesses the skills needed by our business community?*

#### EMERGING WORKER SKILLS

##### Issues

Although high school graduation rates and college-educated population exceed national averages, businesses indicate that emerging workers often fail to meet workplace expectations (e.g., basic skills, acceptable workplace behaviors, etc.).

##### Challenges

- *How can we ensure that tomorrow's workers are better prepared to meet business expectations?*
- *Whose responsibility is it?*
- *How can we better educate our emerging workers of occupational and skill demands so that they may make more informed career decisions?*

#### PERCEIVED BIAS AGAINST NON-COLLEGE SKILLS

##### Issues

College completion rates relative to college entry rates indicate that many students entering college may not be best served in a traditional academic setting, yet many students and parents perceive college as the only acceptable option.

In addition, human resource practices often exclude applicants who do not possess a college degree, regardless of demonstrated ability to do the job.

## Challenges

•How can we better provide young people with the full range of options available and the true occupational outlook for all careers, including those that do not require a college degree but can be achieved through technical schools, military training, apprenticeships, etc.?

•Do hiring practices further support this perceived bias against the non-college bound?

## NEED FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

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### Issues

The pace of technological change, the global marketplace, and the mobility of capital and labor create a highly competitive labor market, thereby requiring workers to continuously hone and update their skills.

### Challenges

•Do our secondary and post-secondary institutions provide affordable and accessible education and training opportunities in demand occupations?

•Does our community offer adequate learning opportunities for working adults?

•What role should employers play in providing and paying for training, if any?

•Should limited public resources be invested in upgrading the skills of employed workers?

## DECLINING PUBLIC RESOURCES

### Issues

Employment and training and other related supportive services have and continue to experience reductions in federal, state, and local funding. How will our community address all of the workforce challenges we face in a time of declining public resources?

### Challenges

•How can we better inform our public officials of the long-term impacts on our workforce and our economy?

•How can the Workforce Development Board coordinate and leverage public resources with other resources, such as private sector investments, to improve the state of our workforce?

## UNSTABLE WORKFORCE

*How can we create a stable and sustainable workforce?*

## AN AGING WORKFORCE & LEAKAGE OF YOUNGER WORKERS

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### Issues

An aging workforce combined with a leakage of younger workers threatens the sustainability of our labor force.

### Challenges

•What can we do to retain older workers in occupations experiencing or at risk of experiencing severe skills and worker shortages?

•How can we keep our younger workers here and attract younger workers from elsewhere?

•How can we encourage current and emerging workers to prepare for occupations that are in greatest demand?

## UNDEREMPLOYMENT

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### Issues

There is a growing pool of contingent (non-permanent) workers and seasonal and part-time workers that are experiencing a number of challenges that make it difficult to meet their basic needs.

Some of those challenges are: lack of health insurance; inadequate and/or unaffordable daycare; transportation difficulties and low wages.

### Challenges

•Are we attracting the right jobs for the skills possessed by our local jobseekers?

•How can we better engage business and local, state, and national policymakers in addressing the need for affordable health care coverage, affordable quality daycare, and transportation for nontraditional work hours?

•What can we do as a community to increase the disposable income of low-income workers?

## WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

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### Issues

Growth in minority populations is responsible for all the County's population growth. Furthermore, to be competitive in a global marketplace, businesses need to employ workers with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

### Challenges

•Has Tompkins County established an environment that is welcoming to diverse populations?

•Do local employers provide diversity awareness training and have diversity recruitment programs in place?

•How can the public workforce system support diversity?

# INDICATORS FOR GAUGING THE STATE OF THE WORKFORCE

Four key indicators have been identified to gauge the state of the workforce and progress toward resolving an issue(s). These are:

1. **Competitive Advantages**
2. **Skills Match**
3. **Workforce Funding**
4. **Characteristics of Workforce Participants**

The following table specifies the indicators relevant to each issue. Each indicator is discussed in greater detail below.

**Table 1**

Indicators for Gauging the State of the Workforce

Indicator	Issue		
	Inadequate Workforce	Declining Public Resources	Unstable Workforce
Competitive Advantages	X		X
Skills Match	X		X
Workforce Funding		X	
Characteristics of Workforce Participants	X	X	X

## COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

*Focus group participants expressed a strong sense of community and loyalty to the Tompkins County area. A number of individuals indicated that they would not want to live anywhere else – even if they could not find employment in the area. It did not matter whether individuals grew up in the area or moved here later in life; there were almost unanimous positive feelings towards living in Tompkins County.*

Tompkins County is located in the heart of the Finger Lakes with the City of Ithaca, proclaimed as one of the “best small cities in America,” as its urban core at the south end of Cayuga Lake. Tompkins County offers big city amenities with a small town feel in a beautiful setting with family-friendly communities and a highly educated workforce.

The County is comprised of approximately 96,500 residents, with a resident labor force of 55,100. As the home to more than 2,150 businesses and 58,900 jobs across a wide range of industries, Tompkins County is a regional employment hub. The education services sector

dominates the economy, and the post-secondary academic institutions not only employ and educate many of the County and region’s residents, but also contribute to the diversity and cultural feel of the community.

A highly educated workforce is considered one of our most treasured assets in a time when communities must compete against each other for workers and jobs. Our high school graduation rates and college-educated population far exceed that of the national average.

Although Tompkins County has been impacted by the economic decline over the past 2 years, we continue to maintain modest job growth overall. Our large education services sector and continued net growth in manufacturing jobs have insulated our economy from major swings in unemployment and net job losses that many other areas of the state and country are experiencing.

## SKILLS MATCH

Skills match is a key indicator of how closely the workplace skills required by business match the workplace skills of the available labor pool. More importantly, the “mismatch” between these two sets of skills can have serious consequences for the local economy. For example, it can hinder businesses ability to compete, forcing some to seek workers elsewhere or move their jobs to a more suitable location, and in worst cases, shutdown operations. In addition, not having the skills necessary to meet business needs can impact workers ability to adequately support their families, cause them to leave an area, and/or put additional pressure on the public assistance system.

## NATIONAL TRENDS

*Several businesses reported that the “emerging workforce” (recent high school graduates) is often inadequately prepared to enter the world of work.*

*Community leaders expressed concern about the kids who aren’t college-bound but who need some other training – school districts can’t support them as much as college bound kids – this sector may be falling through the cracks.*

Nationally, experts agree that there is an emerging “skills crisis” that can only be closed by increasing the investment we make in the skills of our workforce. Today, employers estimate that 39 percent of their current workforce and 26 percent of their new hires will have basic skills deficiencies.

“... 60 percent of the new jobs will require skills possessed by only 20 percent of the young people entering the labor market.”<sup>2</sup>

“75 percent of the American Workforce will need to be retrained merely to retain their jobs.”<sup>3</sup>

The skills mismatch will be further exacerbated by a skills shortage due to an aging population in certain industries and occupations. Unless we are able to adequately respond, the problem is likely to grow in severity, as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

**Aging Workforce**

Occupations	Aging Workforce
Engineers & Scientists	52 percent are over age 50
Government Workers	44 percent are 45 years +
Skilled Machinists	Average age is 50
Construction Workers	Average age is 47
Nurses	47 percent retiring over next 7 years
Manufacturing Managers	50 percent retiring over next 7 years
Federal Workforce	35 percent retiring by 2006

The growth of the labor force is also slowing from a 1.6 percent annual rate of growth over the past 50 years, to a projected annual growth rate of only 0.6 percent for the next half-century. Furthermore, it is projected that by 2028, there will be 19 million more jobs than workers.

The following table provides a small example of anticipated national shortages over the next five years:

**Table 3**

**National Shortages**

Occupations	National Shortage
Manufacturing Engineers	100,000
Construction Jobs	550,000
College Professors	195,000
Bookkeepers & Accountants	330,000
Nurses	1,000,000
Teachers	2,000,000
Secretaries	519,000

**LOCAL TRENDS**

Mid-level jobseekers feel that, for many of the jobs, they were either under-qualified (i.e., for jobs requiring high-level technical or scientific skills) or over-qualified (e.g., for retail/service positions)

Many high-end jobseekers indicated that they have skills in areas that are no longer relevant in today’s business environment. Many found themselves out of work and unable to retool themselves or have employers recognize their transferable skills and are finding it financially difficult to obtain additional training or degrees.

Businesses expressed concern over shortages in certain occupations and skills. For example, they stated that there is a skilled trades shortage in the area, particularly related to facilities lines, including the need for centralized training for skilled trades for employers who cannot afford to provide this training by themselves.

One method of assessing local skills match, or mismatch, is the ratio of job applicants to job openings by occupation. Data on job applications and job openings collected through the Tompkins Workforce New York System provides a reasonable basis for such an analysis, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**

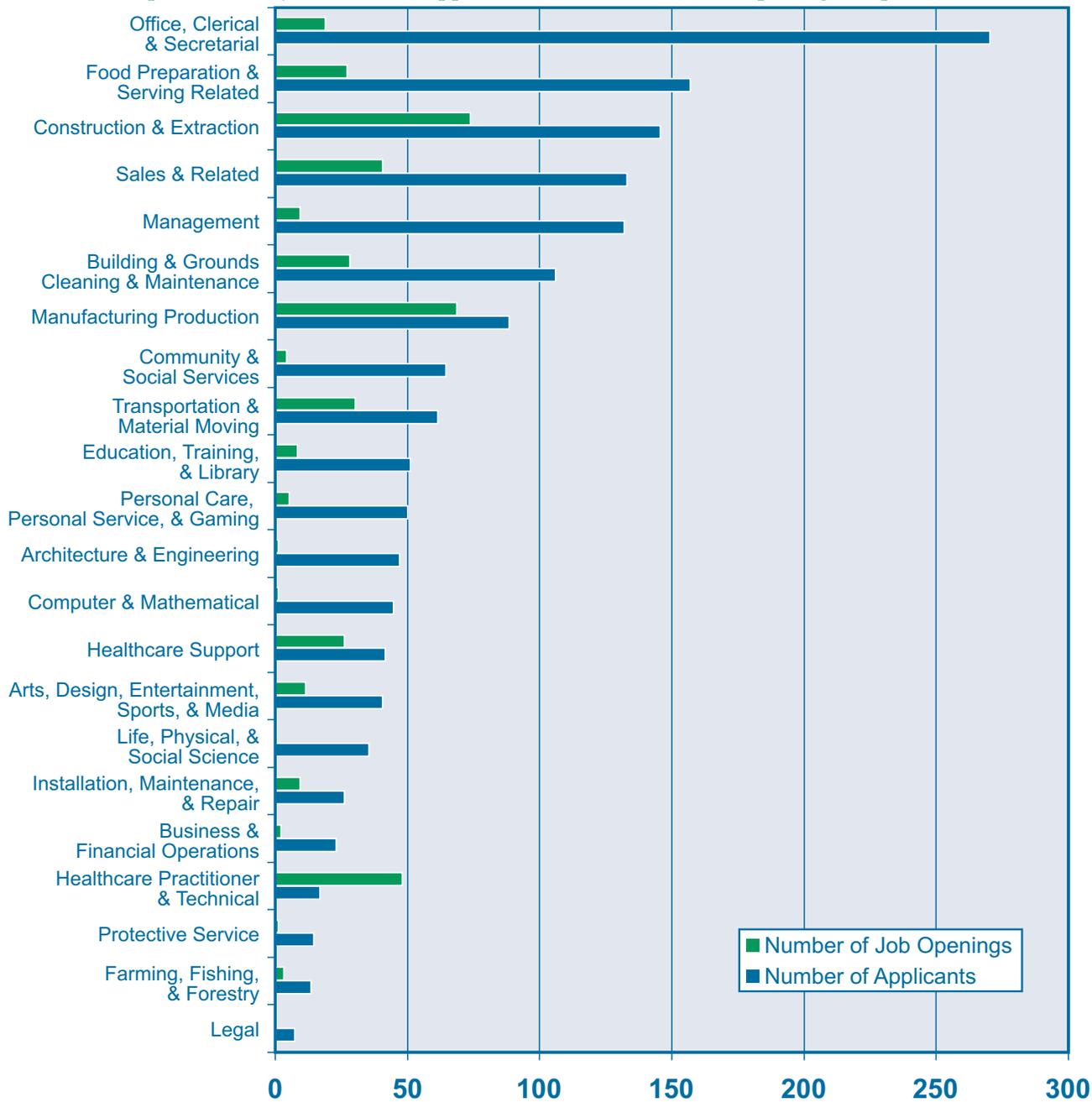
**Comparison of Applicants Registered and Job Openings Filed with NYSDOL**  
April 2003 Tompkins County

Occupational Category	Ratio Applicants to Openings
Business & Financial Operations	11 to 1
Computer & Mathematical	43 to 1
Architecture & Engineering	45 to 1
Life, Physical, & Social Science	No Openings
Community & Social Services	15.5 to 1
Legal	No Openings
Education, Training, & Library	6.1 to 1
Arts, Design, Entertain., Sports, Media	3.5 to 1
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical	.35 to 1
Healthcare Support	1.6 to 1
Protective Service	14 to 1
Food Preparation and Serving Related	5.8 to 1
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	3.8 to 1
Personal Care, Personal Service, & Gaming	9.6 to 1
Sales & Related	3.3 to 1
Office, Clerical & Secretarial	14.4 to 1
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	4.3 to 1
Construction & Extraction	2 to 1
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	2.8 to 1
Production	1.3 to 1
Transportation & Material Moving	2 to 1

Another method of assessing local skills match is by the number of applicants versus the number of openings. Graph 1 emphasizes the occupations in the order of most to least applicants by occupation. There are significantly more applicants than openings to varying degrees, with one exception: Healthcare Practitioner and Technical. This should be of serious concern to policymakers and citizens, particularly with our expanding aging population.

Graph 1:

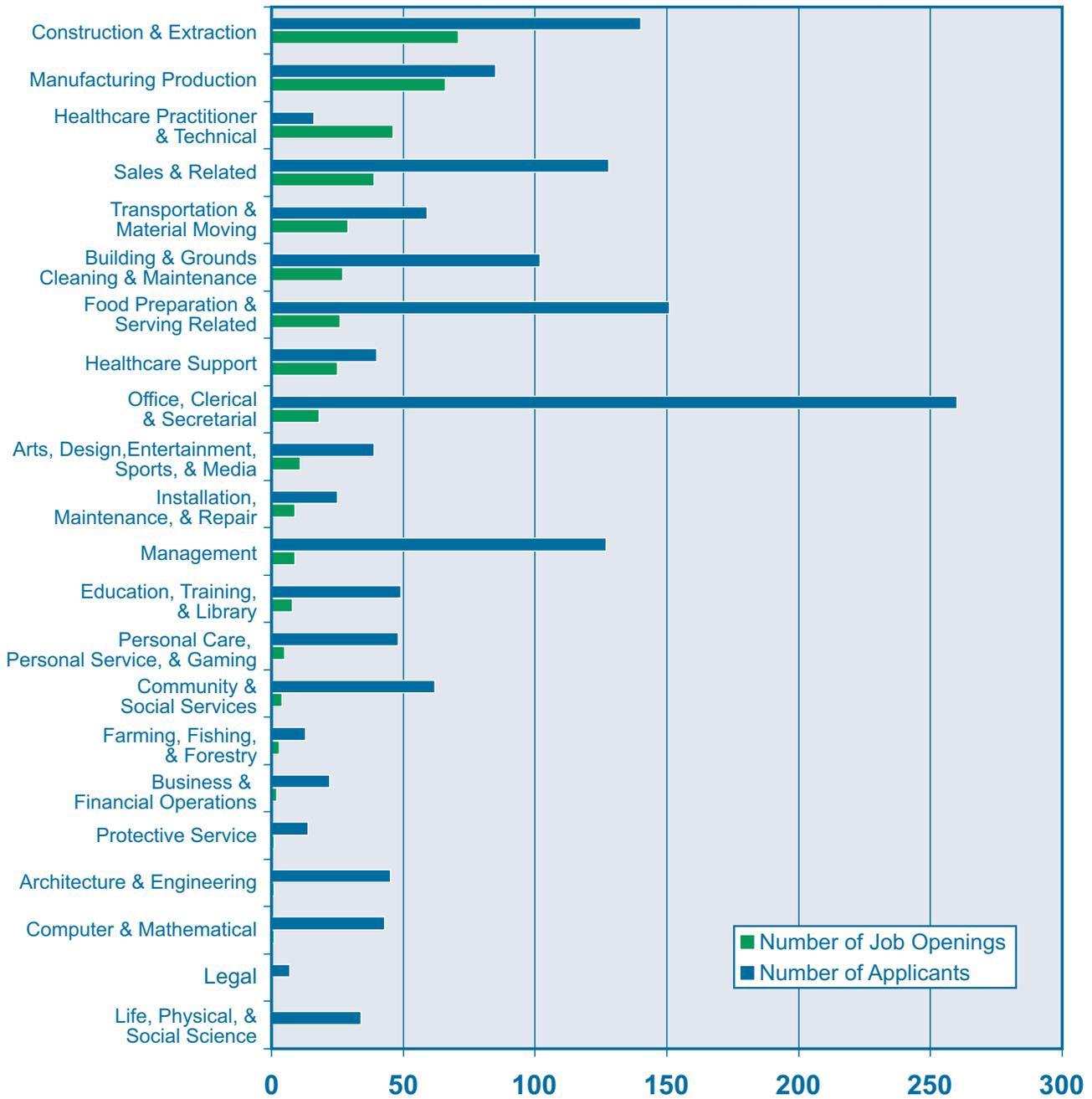
Tompkins County Number of Applicants vs. Number of Job Openings - April 2003



Alternatively, Graph 2 displays the same information, but in the order of most to least job openings by occupation. In April 2003, the most openings were in Construction and Extraction and Manufacturing – Production.

**Graph 2:**

**Tompkins County Number of Job Openings vs. Number of Applicants - April 2003**



## WORKFORCE FUNDING

*“It is clear that budget limitations and other priorities at the federal level will always limit the amount of funds for workforce investment. Thus we must either articulate the crisis, or adapt to funding levels below our desired levels. And we must look for ways to leverage additional dollars for workforce investment.”<sup>4</sup>*

Local, state and federal governments are challenged by the loss of revenue due to the economic slowdown and the increased costs for existing services. This is compounded by the added costs of the War on Terrorism, the War in Iraq and Homeland Security. Similarly, Federal workforce funding to states has been at a steady decline for the past 20 years. Because Tompkins County has a relatively stable economy and large student population, relative to other counties in the State, the County’s allocation of these funds is further limited.

Furthermore, Federal program funding does not allow Tompkins County to deny services to non-county residents, yet funding allocations are based upon the demographics (unemployment, poverty, etc.) of the County’s resident populace. Tompkins County is a regional employment hub with nearly 14,000 in-commuters. Although in-commuters provide many benefits to our economy, many of these workers and other non-County residents access our public employment services. The demand for our services by non-County residents places additional strain on our limited resources. In fact, our current workforce system has reached its full capacity, given current funding levels, yet there continues to be a growing demand for services.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF WORKFORCE PARTICIPANTS

This section presents characteristics of the following workforce participants:

- a. **Businesses – Workforce Demand**
- b. **Individuals – Workforce Supply**
- c. **Tompkins Workforce New York System**

### BUSINESSES

*Business focus group participants indicated that their organizations are either maintaining their current workforce or seeking to expand it. Although they currently are experiencing little difficulty in finding the workers they need to fill their vacancies, they are concerned about the potential increase in turnover at the entry level once the economy begins expanding again.*

### Industry Employment and Earnings

Tables 5 and 6 present Tompkins County industry sector employment and earnings, and average annual wages, respectively.

**Table 5**

Industry Employment and Earnings  
2001 Tompkins County

Industry	% Earning	% Employment
Total, All Industries	100%	100%
Services	58	53
Government	13	13
Manufacturing	12	10
Retail Trade	7	15
Transportation and Public Utilities	4	3
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	3	3
Construction	2	2
Wholesale Trade	1	1

**Table 6**

**Average Annual Wages**  
2001 Tompkins County

Industry	Annual Wages
Total, All Industries	\$32,600
Transportation and Public Utilities	46,500
Manufacturing	39,800
Services	36,000
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	33,500
Wholesale Trade	32,000
Government	31,800
Construction	29,400
Retail Trade	15,100

The services sector dominated Tompkins County's economy, with 58 percent of all earnings, 53 percent of all employment, and \$36,000 in average annual wages. Note that education services comprised approximately 60 percent of employment in the County's services sector. This is largely attributable to Tompkins County being home to Cornell University and Ithaca College, and gives Tompkins County the highest concentration of post-secondary education of any County in New York State.

The Government sector accounted for 13 percent of all earnings, 13 percent of all employment, and \$31,800 in average annual wages. Note that 56 percent of government sector jobs were with kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) schools and the Tompkins-Cortland Community College.

The manufacturing sector, with 12 percent of earnings and 10 percent of employment, had an average annual wage of \$39,800, which is 22 percent above that for all industries (\$32,600).

While the wholesale trade sector had the lowest percentage of earnings (1 percent) and the lowest percentage of employment (1 percent) in the County, the average annual wage of the wholesale trade sector (\$32,000) is comparable with that of all industries.

The highest annual average wage across all sectors of \$46,500 is in the transportation and public utilities sector (with 4 percent of all earnings and 3 percent of all employment).

The lowest average annual wage across all sectors of \$15,100 was in the retail trade sector (with 7 percent of earnings and 15 percent of employment). Note that, 34 percent of retail trade employment was in eating and drinking establishments, and 25 percent of retail trade employment was in food stores. Eating and drinking establishments had an average annual wage of \$10,300 (many of these jobs were part-time and supplemented by tips), and food stores had an average annual wage of \$14,700.

## Job Growth

From 1996 to 2001, covered employment in Tompkins County grew by 4,574 jobs or 11 percent. Industries exceeding the average included manufacturing (715 new jobs or 18.7 percent growth) and services (3,183 new jobs or 14.4 percent growth).

In the manufacturing sector, much of the new job creation reflected the strong demand for automotive related products. In the services sector, job creation centered in education and social services.

Government sector employment grew by 447 jobs or 8.3 percent, with new hiring centered in education services, executive, legislative and general government (except finance). Retail trade employment grew by 340 jobs or 4.9 percent.

**Table 7**

**Industry Growth**  
**Covered Employment**  
1996-2001 Tompkins County

Industry Sector	Employment 2001	Employment 1996	Net Change	
			#	%
Total, All Industries	47,335	42,761	4,574	11.0
Manufacturing	4,543	3,828	715	18.7
Services	25,320	22,137	3,183	14.4
Government	5,842	5,395	447	8.3
Construction	796	752	44	5.9
Retail Trade	7,284	6,944	340	4.9
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	1,459	1,453	6	0.4
Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities	1,443	1,533	-90	-5.9
Wholesale Trade	658	722	-64	-8.9

Note: Detail may not add to total due to rounding.

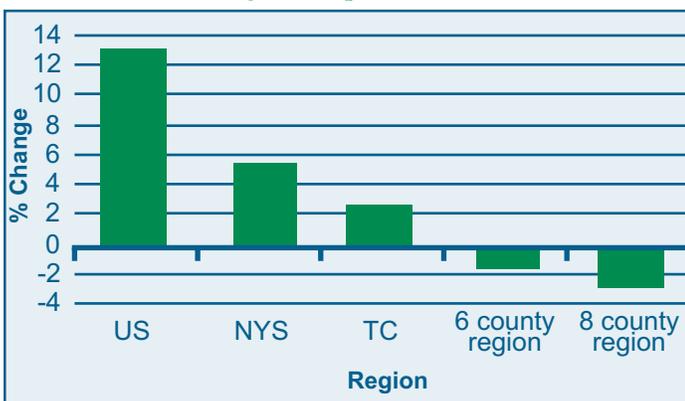
## INDIVIDUALS

### Total Population Growth

From 1990 to 2000, the total population of Tompkins County grew by 2.6 percent from 94,097 to 96,501. During the same period, the permanent (non-college-student) population grew by 2.9 percent from 67,353 to 69,296.<sup>5</sup> This compares to 13.2 percent growth nationally, and 5.5 percent growth of New York State's population. However, the immediate six-county region lost 1.6 percent population. Extending to Syracuse/Onondaga County and Binghamton/Broome County, which are in the labor shed of in-commuters coming to work in Tompkins County, the eight-county region lost 2.7 percent of its population. In this context, the slow growth in Tompkins County looks relatively strong.

#### Graph 4

Percent Change in Population 1990 to 2000



### Aging of the Population and Population Migration

In keeping with the national trend, the County's population is aging. The baby boom generation, which was in the 35-year to 54-year age cohort in 2000, has begun retiring and will start full-scale retirement in 2010.

The aging trend is amplified in the County. Table 8 shows that the 45- to 54-year-old cohort grew by 55.7 percent, compared to 48 percent nationally, as the baby boom generation entered that age bracket in 2000. While this may indicate elevated in-migration, it may also reflect other population anomalies. Whatever the cause, this cohort is somewhat larger in the County than average. Looking at Table 9, which is adjusted to remove college students, the 25- to 34-year-old cohort shrank by 27 percent compared to an 8.2 percent reduction nationally. Even more dramatic are the 35- to 44-year-old cohort figures. That cohort shrank 5.7 percent in 2000 in the County, while it grew 20 percent nationally. These decreases in younger worker cohorts indicate significant out-migration.

Table 8

Change in Age Cohorts 1990 to 2000  
Tompkins County and US

	TC 1990	TC 2000	TC net chg	TC % chg	US % chg
Under 5 yrs	5,262	4,201	-1061	-20.2	5.0
5-9 yrs	5,404	5,168	-236	-4.4	13.4
10-14 yrs	4,751	5,473	722	15.2	19.7
15 yrs	910	1,199	289	31.8	20.4
16 yrs	864	1,135	271	31.4	19.8
17 yrs	944	1,219	275	29.1	18.7
<b>0-17 yrs</b>	<b>18,135</b>	<b>18,395</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>13.7</b>
18 yrs	3,276	3,460	184	5.6	12.3
19 yrs	5,520	5,163	-357	-6.5	3.7
20-24 yrs	16,499	16,408	-91	-0.6	1.7
<b>18-24 yrs</b>	<b>25,295</b>	<b>25,031</b>	<b>-264</b>	<b>-1.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>
25-34 yrs	15,823	12,992	-2831	-17.9	-8.2
35-44 yrs	13,031	12,377	-654	-5.0	20.0
45-54 yrs	7,640	11,893	4253	55.7	48.0
55-64 yrs	5,756	6,566	810	14.1	14.9
<b>25-64 yrs</b>	<b>42,250</b>	<b>43,828</b>	<b>1578</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>15.1</b>
65-74 yrs	4,695	4,643	-52	-1.1	0.9
75-84 yrs	2,817	3,351	534	19.0	23.9
85 yrs & over	905	1,253	348	38.5	41.2
<b>65 yrs &amp; over</b>	<b>8,417</b>	<b>9,247</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>12.2</b>

Source: US Census data. Prepared by TCAD June 2003.

**Table 9**

**Change in Age Cohorts 1990 to 2000,  
Tompkins County and US**

TC age cohorts adjusted to remove enrolled college students

	TC 1990 adj	TC 2000 adj	TC net chg	TC % chg	US % chg
Under 5 yrs	5,262	4,201	-1061	-20.2	5.0
5-9 yrs	5,404	5,168	-236	-4.4	13.4
10-14 yrs	4,751	5,473	722	15.2	19.7
15 yrs	910	1,199	289	31.8	20.4
16 yrs	864	1,135	271	31.4	19.8
17 yrs	944	1,219	275	29.1	18.7
<b>0-17 yrs</b>	<b>18,135</b>	<b>18,395</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>13.7</b>
18 yrs	684	600	-84	-12.3	12.3
19 yrs	755	650	-105	-13.9	3.7
20-24 yrs	2,750	2,293	-457	-16.6	1.7
<b>18-24 yrs</b>	<b>4,189</b>	<b>3,543</b>	<b>-646</b>	<b>-15.4</b>	<b>3.5</b>
25-34 yrs	10,485	7,652	-2833	-27.0	-8.2
35-44 yrs	12,731	12,000	-731	-5.7	20.0
45-54 yrs	7,640	11,893	4253	55.7	48.0
55-64 yrs	5,756	6,566	810	14.1	14.9
<b>25-64 yrs</b>	<b>36,612</b>	<b>38,111</b>	<b>1499</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>15.1</b>
65-74 yrs	4,695	4,643	-52	-1.1	0.9
75-84 yrs	2,817	3,351	534	19.0	23.9
85 yrs & up	905	1,253	348	38.5	41.2
<b>65 yrs &amp; up</b>	<b>8,417</b>	<b>9,247</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>12.2</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>94,097</b>	<b>96,501</b>			
<b>Tot Non-coll Population</b>	<b>67,353</b>	<b>69,296</b>			

Source: US Census data.  
Total number of college students provided by US census.  
Estimates of college student age cohorts by TCAD.

The baby boom’s children, the “baby boomlet,” swelled the ranks of teenagers and 20’s cohorts. Conversely, the shrinking of the 25-34 and 35-44 cohorts is reflected in the shrinking of the cohorts for their children, those under 15-years-old. Out-migration appears to account for a net loss of about 2,000 25- to 34-year-olds and about 1,500 35- to 44-year-olds. This also contributes to reduced population of about 1,400 children under 5 years of age and about 900 children 5- to 9-years-old.

**Population Change by Race**

All of the population growth that Tompkins County experienced from 1990 to 2000 can be attributed to increases in minority population. This trend is expected to continue.

Table 10 looks at the changes in the County’s permanent population by race. From 1990 to 2000, the White population remained essentially unchanged, with a less than 1 percent decrease. The Black and Asian populations each increased by about 13.5 percent. The very small Indian and Native populations also experienced moderate growth of 11.2 percent. The biggest single minority group increase was the Hispanic population, which grew by nearly 80 percent, adding 796 persons (note that about half of the Hispanic population is White). The fairly small Other Race category tripled in size, while the Two or More Races category, which was new in the 2000 Census, identified 1,432 persons. The total non-White population increased from 6.6 percent of the population in 1990 to 9.8 percent of the population in 2000. With the increase in White-Hispanic population added in, minority populations make up about 10.8 percent of the 2000 permanent population.

**Table 10**

**Tompkins County Permanent Population By Race**

	# 2000	% 2000	# 1990	% 1990	90-00 chg	% chg
Total non-enrolled Population	69,296	100.0	67,353	100.0	1,943	2.9
White	62,493	90.2	62,889	93.4	-396	-0.6
Black or African American	2,500	3.6	2,205	3.3	295	13.4
Amer Indian and AK Native	179	0.3	161	0.2	18	11.2
Asian and Hawaiian, Pac Isl	2,203	3.2	1,941	2.9	262	13.5
Some other race	489	0.7	157	0.2	332	211.5
Two or more races	1,432	2.1	NA	NA	1,432	NA
Total non-white population	6,803	9.8	4,464	6.6	2,339	52.4
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,428	2.1	796	1.2	632	79.4

Source: US Census data

## Poverty and Income

Table 11 shows that from 1990 to 2000, poverty rates for individuals dropped from 16.4 percent to 15.4 percent, and for families from 8.2 percent to 6.8 percent. Because of the high number of college students counted as poor individuals, analyzing family poverty and income provides a better picture of how the permanent population is faring.

**Table 11**

Tompkins County Poverty 1990 to 2000

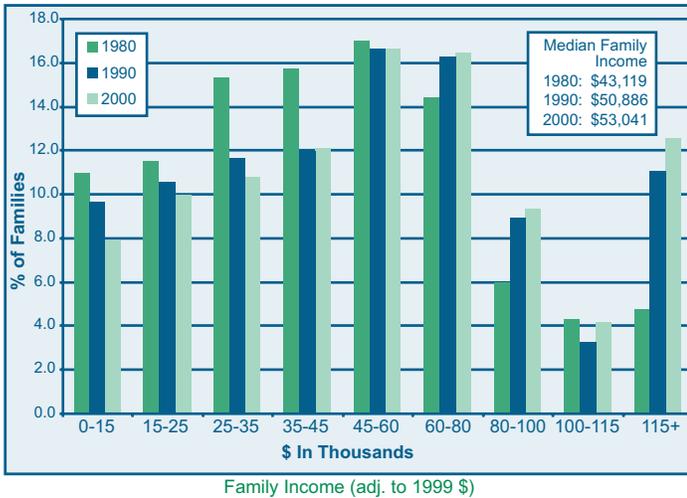
poverty	# 1990	% 1990	# 2000	% 2000
persons	15399	16.4	14905	15.4
families	1578	8.2	1319	6.8

Note: 18- to 24-year-olds made up 58% of persons in poverty in 1990 and 57% of persons in poverty in 2000.  
Source: US Census data. Prepared by TCAD June 2003

Graph 5 shows the Family Income Distribution from 1980 to 2000, adjusted for inflation. Major economic restructuring during the 1980's reduced family poverty between 1980 and 1990 and increased the percent of higher income families significantly. In the 1990's the increase at the higher end was moderate, but income for families in the lower income ranks continued to make significant improvements.

**Graph 5**

Tompkins County Family Income Distribution 1980 to 2000

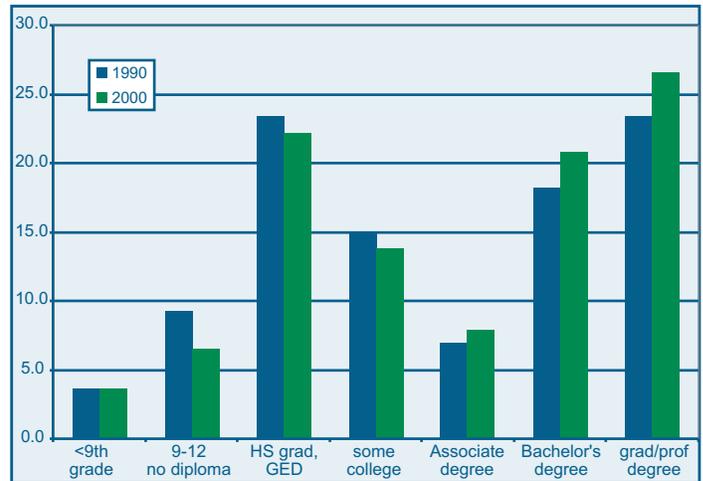


## Graduation Rates

Graph 6 shows that educational attainment of the County's population is improving. From 1990 to 2000 rates of attainment went down for the Some College and lower categories of educational attainment, while rates of attainment increased for Associate Degrees and higher levels of education. There was not a significant increase in graduate level students in the County, so the increase in Bachelor's degrees can be attributed to the permanent population.

**Graph 6**

Tompkins County Change in Education Attainment 1990 to 2000



## Labor Force Dynamics

From a labor force standpoint, the County has lost a large percentage of prime age workers – age 25 to 44, with a reduction of nearly 4,000 permanent residents from 1990 to 2000. The coming generation of workforce under 15-years-old is shrinking much faster than the US. rate. The US as a whole anticipates labor shortages in the coming years.

The reductions in the younger workforce are offset slightly by the increase of baby-boomers, but more importantly by a continued increase of in-commuters from the surrounding counties. In 1990 there were 11,381 in-commuters. This increased by 2,332 to 13,713 in 2000. Out-commuting also increased slightly bringing the net increase in in-commuters to nearly 2,000. (See Table 12).

**Table 12**

**In-Commutation to Tompkins County  
1990 to 2000**

	No. of persons In-Commuting 1990	No. of persons In-Commuting 2000
Broome	261	383
Cayuga	1,372	1,814
Chemung	856	970
Chenango	61	68
Cortland	1,755	2,605
Onondaga	222	500
Schuyler	1,642	1,608
Seneca	1,163	83
Tioga	2,536	2,846
Other Counties	891	1,176
Outside NYS	553	371
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,381</b>	<b>13,713</b>
Out-commuters	3,741	4,075
Net-Incomm's	7,640	9,638

Source: US Census.

The other important factor making up for decreases in the younger workforce is the high labor participation rates. Table 13 shows that labor force participation rates of persons over 35 years of age are higher than US rates for every age bracket, even those 75 years of age and older. The lower participation rates for the age cohorts under 35-years-old reflect a significant percent of college students.

**Table 13**

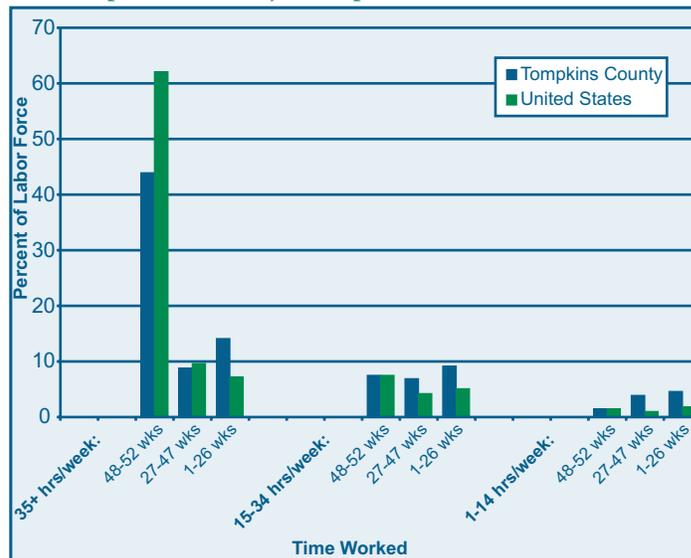
**2000 Labor Participation Rates  
Tompkins County and US**

Age	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
TC In Labor Force:	5,241	9,523	9,778	10,562	10,294	4,373	1,112	304
TC Employed	4,161	8,639	9,355	10,365	10,038	4,252	1,100	282
TC Unemployed	1,058	870	419	191	256	121	12	22
TC Not in labor force	5,736	6,885	3,214	1,815	1,599	2,193	3,531	4,300
TC total	10,977	16,408	12,992	12,377	11,893	6,566	4,643	4,604
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>								
Percent TC	47.7	58.0	75.3	85.3	86.5	66.6	24.0	6.6
Percent US	50.4	74.9	79.1	80.1	79.3	57.9	19.6	6.1

Because of the large student population, part-time work is much more prevalent in the County than in the US. Graph 7 shows that nationally about 62 percent of the workforce works full time – over 35 hours per week for 48 to 52 weeks of the year. The full time figure is only about 44 percent in the county. The percent of part-time workers who work either fewer than 26 weeks per year or fewer than 35 hours per week is consistently higher in the County as compared to the US.

**Graph 7**

**Hours and Weeks Worked in 1999  
By Percent of Labor Force  
Tompkins County Compared to United States**



**TOMPKINS WORKFORCE  
NEW YORK SYSTEM**

*Many of the focus group participants have taken advantage of the services offered by the Tompkins Workforce New York System – either in person or on-line through its web-based career tools. All of the participants who have utilized these services indicated that the resources available through Tompkins Workforce New York System were of great value to them and that staff was supportive, helpful, and courteous.*

The Tompkins Workforce New York System is the operational arm of the Tompkins County Workforce Development Board. The System is comprised of 11 partner organizations<sup>6</sup> and many collaborative relationships. Together, the system provides a myriad of easy-to-access employment and training services to business and jobseekers.

**One-Stop Shopping Approach**

The Tompkins Workforce New York System includes a full-service one-stop career center – the Tompkins Workforce New York Career Center – located in Center Ithaca on the Ithaca Commons. The Tompkins Workforce New York Career Center is the first accredited one-stop in New York State, and is co-operated by the County’s Office of Employment and Training, the New York State Department of Labor, and Challenge Industries, with assistance from several other organizations that provide part-time staffing and services.

The Tompkins Workforce New York System also provides business and individuals access to employment and training services via the Tompkins Workforce New York Web Site (<http://www.TompkinsWorkforceNY.org>); by telephone, and through off-site partner programs.

While the Tompkins Workforce New York System is committed to providing basic employment and training services to all jobseekers and businesses, limited public resources that are in decline require the Tompkins County Workforce Development Board to determine how best to target these services. This is an ongoing discussion, with criteria that frequently changes in response to the current economic climate and availability of alternative resources.

## Targeted Services

*Workforce professionals are concerned that the deemphasis on education and training for Welfare recipients (as a result of Welfare Reform) and the greater focus on getting jobs ultimately will result in an inability of these individuals to “move up” in their careers.*

The Tompkins County Workforce Development Board is exploring service and funding options to meet the needs of jobseekers with substantial barriers, including long-term welfare recipients and individuals with very limited marketable skills and little or no work experience. This plan should begin to take shape and rollout later in 2003.

*The high-end job seekers who participated in the focus groups were all members of the Professional Opportunity Developer’s career group supported through Tompkins Workforce New York. They indicated that their experience with the group was positive and that Workforce New York has provided useful information and ideas to help them with their job search. They especially noted the value of bringing in speakers on various topics who were able to provide information directly relevant to their needs and interests.*

In 2002, the Tompkins Workforce New York Career Center, at the request of several economic development professionals, began to develop services to high-end jobseekers recently laid off due to downsizing in the region. Many of these workers were experiencing unemployment for the first time in their lives and were devastated by the impact on themselves and their families.

One of the concerns expressed by economic developers was that these talented workers would leave the region permanently, further contributing to the anticipated long-term shortage of talent. At the same time, many businesses were known to be making substantial investments in national and international recruitment campaigns for high-end workers.

Subsequently, a career group emerged from the Tompkins Workforce New York System called the Professional Opportunity Developers (POD). The POD provides speakers on topics related to career change, entrepreneurship and job search strategies, and also gives participants opportunities to share ideas, experiences, and frustrations. With at least 23 members securing employment in the last 12 months, this has been an inexpensive service for a population of jobseekers not typically well served by public employment services in the past.

## CLOSING COMMENTS

The *Tompkins County State of The Workforce 2003 Report* is the Tompkins County Workforce Development Board's first effort to highlight and communicate local workforce issues and challenges. Admittedly, there are many workforce issues and challenges which have not been articulated in the report. However, a comprehensive presentation of issues and challenges was not the Board's primary intention.

More importantly, the Board believes the workforce issues and challenges presented in the *Tompkins County State of The Workforce 2003 Report* are sufficient to spur the necessary and welcome dialog with the County's elected officials, business and education leaders, and other interested groups to establish priorities and implement solutions.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> TATC Consulting, a private consulting firm based in Washington, D.C., conducted focus groups that yielded tremendously valuable qualitative data used extensively in this report. Focus groups were held with the following stakeholders: Entry- and mid-level job seekers; High-end job seekers; Small employers; Large employers; Workforce development/education professionals; Community leaders. A copy of the report “Tompkins County State of the Workforce: Analysis of the Focus Group Results” (May, 27, 2003) is available upon request.

<sup>2</sup> Role of Technology in Future Schools by Thomas A. Burkman, The Grand Rapids Press, September 27, 1998

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.cisco.com/warp/public/779/edu/commitment/edu\\_internet/economy/workforce.html.a](http://www.cisco.com/warp/public/779/edu/commitment/edu_internet/economy/workforce.html.a)

<sup>4</sup> A Nation At Risk. Again. The Role of Workforce Investment In Promoting Our Nation’s Security. A summary of key points by Steve Gunderson, The Greystone Group, Fall and winter, 2002

<sup>5</sup> College students comprise 25 percent of the total population in County. These analyses incorporate Census figures as well as local estimates that adjust for the student population in order to provide an understanding of population dynamics. The reader is cautioned that the adjustments do not provide absolute accuracy in numbers.

<sup>6</sup> Office of Employment and Training, New York State Department of Labor, Challenge Industries, Department of Social Services, Tompkins Community Action, Women’s Opportunity Center, Tompkins-Cortland Community College, TST BOCES, County Office for The Aging, Experience Works, Vocational Education Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID).

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