Census data show the labor market for county workers to be local, not regional. 80% work within Milwaukee County.

The U.S. Census American Community Survey (2010) data on commuting patterns for workers in the Milwaukee Region continue to show a very distinct labor market for Milwaukee County workers with only 2% working in the southeast Wisconsin counties (Racine, Kenosha, Walworth, Jefferson). These patterns have changed very little from a decade ago when a similar percentage of county residents (2%) were employed to the south.

Where Milwaukee County residents work

Most of the Milwaukee County residents in the workforce are employed within the county (80%) while 14% work in Waukesha County, 3% in Ozaukee and Washington counties, and only 2% in the southern counties of Racine, Kenosha, Walworth and Jefferson. The labor market for the poorest neighborhoods in Milwaukee is even more concentrated and limited, with 94% of workers employed within the county, 4% in Waukesha County, and only 1.5% in the other 6 suburban/exurban counties.

Milwaukee County adults (ages 18-64) without private transportation are severely limited in finding employment. An estimated 71,116 Milwaukee County adults do not have a vehicle in their household and only 40% of these adults are employed, while 12% are unemployed, 1% have jobs but are not currently working, and nearly half (47%) are not in the labor force. The importance of private transportation access can be seen in the 2010 unemployment rate for workers without a vehicle in their household (22.5%), which was far higher than the rate for workers in households with a vehicle (8.2%).

Prepared by the Employment & Training Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

Monthly Economic Data for Milwaukee County

Unemployment rate: The estimated unemployment dropped from 9.1% in August to 8.0% in September, the lowest rate since January 2009.

Layoff notices: No new announcements in September.

Unemployment insurance: 24,379 laid-off workers received UI in late-October, a slight increase from last month.

BadgerCare Plus: 205,039 residents were covered in September. The number of single adults covered by BC+ was down to 6,743 from 22,963 in Jan. 2010.

Wisconsin Shares: 25,289 children received $10 million in child care subsidies in September.

FoodShare: 282,775 residents received food assistance in August, another all-time monthly high.

“W-2”/TANF Income Support: 9,136 families received W-2 cash assistance payments in September.

Data Sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development (10/29/2012).