

**ONONDAGA CITIZENS LEAGUE  
REPORT #11**

**SYRACUSE AREA WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE:  
HOW DO WE PREPARE?**

Approved

by

Board of Directors  
Onondaga Citizens League  
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## PREFACE

In 1978, several members of the Thursday Morning Roundtable at Syracuse University's University College explored the need for, and the feasibility of, establishing a broad-based citizen organization to study and make recommendations on long-range problems facing Onondaga County. The idea for the citizens group was inspired by the successful 25-year history of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Citizens League, which has been responsible for initiating many of the progressive developments in that metropolitan area.

After much discussion, 21 people, who were active in the community and interested in the concept, were convened by University College Dean Lee Smith, to serve as an advisory board and to develop plans for an Onondaga Citizens League (OCL). They established guidelines for members, prepared and adopted by-laws, and oversaw the operations of the Citizens League in its early months.

The Onondaga Citizens League was incorporated in 1980 and received non-profit, tax-exempt status in 1981. The League's purpose is to encourage citizen education and involvement in public issues and problems. Members study all aspects of selected public issues. They review the facts, make considered judgments on approaches, alternatives and solutions, and develop recommendations to present to the community. The organization's objective is to forestall the development of problems into major crises. The League's mission is to encourage and provide civic education for local residents, not to promote specific legislation or function as a lobbying group.

The Onondaga Citizens League, with a current membership of 200, is open to all residents in Onondaga County. While some choose to join in order to study a specific topic, others join and renew their membership because they support the principle of citizen study of issues of major concern to the community. In its 11-year history, the Citizens League has issued ten reports.

### **Reports of the Onondaga Citizens League:**

"Equality and Fairness in Property Assessment"	June 1979
"Young People in Trouble: Can Our Services Be Organized and Delivered More Effectively?"	May 1980
"The County Legislature: Its Function, Size and Structure"	August 1981
"Declining School Enrollments: Opportunities for Cooperative Adaptations?"	July 1982

- "Onondaga County Public Works Infrastructure:  
Status, Funding and Responsibilities" July 1983
- "Police Services in Onondaga County: A Review  
and Recommendations" August 1984
- "The City and County Charters: Time for  
Revision?" July 1985
- "Blueprints for the Future: Recommendations for  
the Syracuse Area in the Year 2000" July 1987
- "The Role of the Food Industry in the Economy of  
Onondaga County" July 1988
- "Poverty and Its Social Costs: Are There Long-Term  
Solutions?" October 1989

### APPRECIATION

In our community, as in many others, the dedication and active participation of volunteers is an essential ingredient in all civic enterprises. This is especially the case in regard to the work of the Onondaga Citizens League. The League is comprised of volunteers. Officers, board members, committee chairpersons and committee members give freely much of their time and thought to planning and carrying out the work of the League.

The people who contribute the most to an OCL report are the members who volunteer to serve on the study committee. These individuals spend many hours, for more than five or six months, listening to experts on the topic, discussing the issues, reading minutes and other documents and deciding on recommendations. The members serving on this study committee are listed in the Appendix. Those who served as advisors in planning the structure and course of the study are also identified.

The League is especially appreciative of the contributions made by the three leaders of this study--James Murphy, chairman, and Anne Messenger and Patrick Mannion, who served as co-chairs. These three are busy executives in their own enterprises and also serve on a variety of other volunteer boards and committees. They deserve credit for the many hours of meetings and discussions that resulted in this report.

The experts and specialists who addressed the study committee sessions are identified in the Appendix. Their generous contribution of time and thought is much appreciated.

The OCL Board of Directors is grateful to the writer of this report, Laurel Saiz, who also serves as Assistant Director and general writer for OCL.

As it has for 12 years, University College of Syracuse University provided staff support, office and meeting facilities, telephone, mailing and other forms of assistance as a community service to implement the work of the Onondaga Citizens League.

## Introduction

Several themes concerning the workforce in the Syracuse area continually emerged during last year's landmark OCL study, "Poverty and Its Social Costs: Are There Long-Term Solutions?" During that study, business leaders and economic development experts stated time and again that there were countless jobs in the county that were going unfilled, mostly in the technical and service-related fields. In addition, experts testified that the changing economy and revisions in federal regulations would mean new employment and training opportunities for many people currently not in the labor pool.

Much of this discussion of the workforce and employment needs in the Syracuse area built logically upon the past two studies of the Citizens League. OCL's eighth study, "Blueprints for the Future: Syracuse 2000," to a great extent focused on economic development issues and emerging trends in employment. The League's ninth study followed up on one aspect of the economy by focusing on the role of the food industry in terms of employment and financial impact in Onondaga County. It was the poverty study, however, that helped crystalize the need to study intensively the changing workforce and how the community can adapt to those changes and enhance the potential of current and future workers.

The OCL Board of Directors formally voted on the topic for the 1989-90 study at its June 1989 meeting. Three board members, James J. Murphy, Anne L. Messenger and Patrick A. Mannion, were designated as chairpeople, bringing with them a wealth of knowledge regarding the employment needs of the private and public sectors. An 11-member steering committee was convened, and met during the summer and fall of 1989, and throughout the study. These steering committee members, whose names appear in Appendix A, provided the Citizens League with valuable insight and helped shape the study.

More than 70 people signed up for the workforce study, demonstrating the greatest interest shown to date in a Citizens League topic. The committee reflected a broad array of community leaders, including representatives from business, training agencies, educational institutions and other fields, as well as interested citizens from the community at large. Likewise, the expert witnesses called to make presentations before the committee came from many facets of the community.

Sixty-one speakers served as panelists in more than 20 sessions. Of this number, 10 were directors or administrators of educational programs or training agencies, nine were personnel or human service directors or vice presidents, nine were directors of governmental departments or social service agencies, seven were company presidents or vice-presidents and four were economic development experts. Organized labor leaders, economists, guidance counselors and others were also represented.

Many of these speakers provided more than one perspective. For example, OCL's keynote speaker at its annual meeting, Dr. Vernon L. Briggs, a professor of human resources and economics at Cornell's College of Industrial and Labor Relations, was valuable both as an economist well-versed in immigration policy and as an educator. Several business leaders, such as Vincent Foriero of Nixon Gear, Joseph McCarthy of J.C. Penney and Larry Moses of Carpenter Northeast Industries, offered valuable insight into the needs of the private sector, as well as serving as powerful models of how business leaders can become involved with preparing the workforce of the future. A full listing of all the speakers is included in the Appendix.

In responding to the topic, "Syracuse Area Workforce of the Future: How Do We Prepare?" the study committee's task was to answer several related questions: Where are we today? Where will we be in the future? Where do we want to be in the future, and how do we get there? Those questions served as the backbone of the study. This report answers those questions and offers six recommendations directed to business, education, government and labor to help make the suggestions included in this report a reality.

\* \* \*

The OCL workforce study committee realizes that words and phrases describing under-represented ethnic groups are changing; some words are gaining popularity while others are viewed as not entirely appropriate. For example, some prefer "people of color," while others prefer "black" or "African-American." Likewise, "Hispanic" and "Latino" are both used today. Several members of the study committee consulted with their colleagues concerning this issue late in this study. For want of a more generally agreed to term, it was decided that the words "minority" and "minorities" would be used throughout this report. The study committee recognizes that, to a great extent, these "minority" populations (which also include Native Americans and Southeast Asians) are growing both in population size and importance in the United States.



## Demographics and Trends

### A. Demographics

Onondaga County experienced a large increase in population from 1950 to 1970, but has had little population growth in recent years. (See Table One) The birth rate in Onondaga County, at 15.4 live births per thousand of population, is slightly higher than the state average and the rate for other metropolitan counties. The peak birth rate in the 1980s was 16 births per thousand in 1985. Despite these comparatively high birth-rates, Onondaga County's population grew by only .08% from 1980 to 1987. This is because while 21,201 people were born in the county, 24,950 residents moved away. This "outmigration" of residents has offset any increase in population.

The leveling off of growth greatly affects the size of the labor force. With fewer students leaving the school systems and residents continuing to move elsewhere, the supply of new workers is reduced. The slow growth of the labor force in Onondaga County is evident in statistics provided by the New York State Department of Labor (DOL). From 1975 to 1980 the labor force increased by 8.3 percent, while the increase from 1980 to 1985 was 6.5 percent. The growth in Onondaga County's labor force from 1985 to 1989 was just 2.6 percent. According to Roger Evans, a DOL associate economist, these demographic trends mean that "our ability to find perfectly trained and educated personnel is diminished."

**TABLE ONE: CHANGES IN POPULATION IN ONONDAGA COUNTY**

1950	341,719	
1960	423,028	+23.8%
1970	472,835	+11.8%
1980	463,920	- 1.9%
1988	461,535	- 0.5%

**Source:** Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency

As of April 1990, 227,300 of the 235,000 people in Onondaga County's workforce were employed. This includes both part-time and full-time jobs. The number of unemployed totaled 7,700 and the unemployment rate was 3.3 percent. The local rate was far lower than the national rate of 5.2 percent and the state rate of 4.8 percent. The county has had consistently low unemployment for the last three years, after experiencing several years of high unemployment in the mid-1980s due to manufacturing layoffs and plant closings.

The large increase in unemployed and displaced workers caused by Allied's closing and layoffs at Bristol, Carrier and other plants was fortunately short-lived. This is because the economy of the Syracuse area reflects a good mix of businesses and is not

reliant on any one industry. The broad mix of jobs present in the country as a whole is very well represented in the Syracuse area. Regions dominated by one industry, such as oil, mining, auto manufacturing, defense contracting or airline-related manufacturing, suffer long-term, grievous impact when that one source of employment shuts down.

The strength in the county's economy is shown by the fact that the net number of jobs has greatly increased, with most new jobs coming in support and technical fields in the service industries. (See Table Two) From 1979 to 1989, Onondaga County added more than 41,000 new jobs. Most of this increase came in services, with 21,200 new jobs, and trade, with more than 11,000. Recent construction job losses caused by the completion of Nine Mile II in Oswego are offset by the fact that there are record high numbers of workers employed in residential and commercial construction. The biggest loss has come in the manufacturing sector. The manufacturing sector used to have one out of every three jobs; now the ratio is one out of six. The downward shift started shortly after World War II and continued into the mid-1980s, when the county lost 10 percent of its factory jobs in a three-year period--from 1984 to 1987. However, Onondaga County is producing more than ever before. There are fewer assemblers, but more engineers and trained technicians.

**TABLE TWO: EMPLOYMENT TRENDS--JOBS CREATED OR LOST, 1979-1989\***

Services	+21,200
Trade	+11,100
Construction	+ 5,700
Financial, Insurance	+ 4,600
Transportation, Utilities	+ 3,300
Government	+ 2,600
All Other	+ 800
Manufacturing	- 8,200
Total=	+41,100

**Source:** New York State Department of Labor

Services consist of the health sector, including area hospitals, physicians' offices and related medical services; the legal sector, including lawyers and legal services; private education, including Syracuse University and LeMoyne College; and private social service agencies, such as the YWCA and the Association for Retarded Citizens. Services also include travel services, such as hotels and motels; personal services such as barbershops and beauty salons; business services, such as

\* **Note:** Numbers rounded to nearest hundred.

employment agencies and janitorial services; repair services, such as automotive shops and machinery and lawn mower repair; and entertainment, such as movie theaters, amusement parks, golf courses and exercise studios.

Trade includes wholesalers and retailers, as well as restaurants and fast-food establishments. The financial and insurance field includes banking, real estate, security brokers and independent insurance agents. Federal employment includes those in local offices of federal courts, departments and agencies, as well as the Veterans Administration Medical Center. State employment includes those locally employed by state agencies and departments, while local government includes the 18 school districts in Onondaga County, as well as county, town and village governments.

The health field is the biggest service employer in Onondaga County, followed by education. Table Three, which includes the most recent breakdown available, highlights the number of workers employed and their distribution by major economic sector.

**TABLE THREE: EMPLOYMENT: TOTAL NUMBER EMPLOYED & DISTRIBUTION  
ONONDAGA COUNTY--ANNUAL AVERAGE FOR 1989**

Industry	Employment	Percentage
Services	61,310	24%
Trade	61,380	25%
Manufacturing	43,176	17%
Government	36,497	15%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	18,507	7%
Transportation, Public Utilities & Communication	15,123	6%
Construction	12,823	5%
All Other	1,622	1%
Total	<u>250,438*</u>	

**Source:** New York State Department of Labor

The greatest growth in jobs in Onondaga County has occurred among small businesses (See Table Four). The largest increases have been among businesses that employ 10 to 99 workers (with an additional 18,648 jobs) and those that employ 100 to 499 workers

**\* Note:** This figure reflects the number of jobs in Onondaga County, not just the number of county residents employed. In 1980, for example, 17,735 non-county residents were employed in Onondaga County.

(with an additional 13,037 workers). A new job in small business has been created for every job lost in a large business. Eighty percent of the job growth in the future is expected to be in small businesses of fewer than 500 employees.

Much of the increase in the number of jobs is due to an increase in income during that period, according to Evans. The growth in jobs in the 1980s is directly proportional to income gains; with more income, people could afford more goods and services.

**TABLE FOUR: EMPLOYMENT BY SIZE OF BUSINESS  
1980 AND 1989\***

Number of Employees	1980	% of Workforce	1989	% of workforce
0-9	20,010	12	23,908	11
10-99	59,706	35	78,354	38
100-499	38,475	22	51,512	25
500-1000+	53,395	31	55,040	26
Total Workforce:	171,586		208,814	

**Source:** New York State Department of Labor

The current low unemployment rate has one negative implication. Low unemployment is widely viewed as a sign of a region's economic vitality. Certainly the thousands of workers with jobs can attest to the merits of a low unemployment rate. However, low unemployment figures have significant impact in terms of economic development. According to David Krietor, vice-president for economic development for the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, the "number one" issue is workforce availability. When new companies are looking to move into an area, they look at certain regional characteristics, one characteristic of which is the size of the readily available workforce. Such potential companies desire a minimum unemployment rate of 4 percent. This is because a prospective company which plans to employ 500 will most likely have to interview more than 1,500 people to get those 500 employees. Interested corporations want a guarantee of immediate availability of at least that many people. The large layoffs in recent years sparked a surge of interest in the area, Krietor said. Now, the low unemployment rate offers more of a challenge to economic development experts.

**\*Note:** Figures are from the first quarter of each year.

Despite the record numbers of people employed, there continues to be a mismatch between labor supply and demand. Pockets of the economy continue to be experiencing layoffs, while a number of jobs in other areas go unfilled for lack of appropriately qualified workers. Perhaps the most graphic example of this centers around recent personnel changes at General Electric's Syracuse division. In late April, GE announced a reduction of 870 engineers' and technicians' jobs over two years in the ocean systems and government electronics divisions. The job loss was almost evenly divided between salaried and hourly staff and is mostly being accommodated through early retirements, transfers and voluntary separations. Less than a month after that announcement, GE reported that it was looking to hire 100 computer software specialists, mostly in ADA programming, but could not find such specialists locally. Late in June, GE announced the possible loss of 300 additional jobs, because of the loss of a government contract.

This labor mismatch is evident in other businesses. Executives for Nixon Gear Inc., Syracuse China Corp., Eagle Comtronics and Pass & Seymour/LeGrand who spoke before the Citizens League noted they have no trouble finding engineers and other college graduates. They do experience trouble in locating employees for jobs that may not require a college degree, but do require advanced skills and training. "We are constantly looking for technical people," said James N. Pilon, Pass & Seymour's plant manager. Onondaga County Personnel Commissioner Edward Gusty noted that he has a number of vacancies at Jamesville Penitentiary and the Public Safety Building Jail and has a hard time filling word processing and other positions.

The health industry is an area currently suffering from serious shortages. The State University of New York (SUNY) Health Science Center alone consistently has 100 to 150 jobs open, excluding nursing jobs--an area of chronic shortage for all hospitals. The health system and higher education institutions together produce and employ a significant workforce. The health system is expected to expand by more than 20 percent in the next decade. After the year 2000, the demand for health care personnel is expected to increase by 40 percent. The universities are expected to extend into specialized knowledge and information services and systems, which will call for a range of skills and talents.

Lastly, the population in the county is increasingly becoming dispersed. With the construction of new houses in previously rural areas of the county, the population is being redistributed. It is no longer concentrated in and around the City of Syracuse. In addition, the changing composition of households affects population dispersion. There are fewer people per household, because of increased numbers of single-parent families and "non-family" households (people who live alone or who live with people who are not relatives). More housing units are needed to house the same,

or even fewer, numbers of people. Population dispersion places increased pressure on mass transportation and the highway system to get people to and from work.

## **B. Labor Trends**

### **1. The workforce of the future is already employed.**

The lack of population growth means that there will be fewer people entering the workforce. The U.S. Labor Department projects a 1.2 percent rise in the work force in the 1990s, down from 1.9 percent annual growth in the 1980s. In public employment alone in New York State, the number of jobs is expected to grow by 16.5 percent in the next decade, while the state work-age population will grow by only 2 percent, according to Mary Pat Oliker, director of personnel for SUNY Health Science Center. High schools and colleges are not going to be the major source of new workers--75 percent of all workers in the year 2000 are already in the workforce.

This situation represents a reversal from the 1980s when labor was plentiful. The Wall Street Journal notes that "a scarcity of skilled workers and declines in young people entering the workforce are threatening to put the squeeze on corporations in many sectors." Worker scarcity will mean businesses will have to look at previously underutilized sources of employment and sharpen management practices to more effectively employ available workers. For many companies, boosting investment in labor saving equipment will be an attractive option. Most importantly, employers will increasingly have to look to current workers to meet the changing needs of tomorrow. "The biggest source of new employees will be the underemployed and underutilized people currently in the work force," stated Roger Evans.

### **2. The workforce in general is "graying."**

By the end of the century, the median age in the workforce will increase from 36 to 39. Nationally, there will be 1 million fewer people aged 16 to 24, compared to 1986. Locally, there will be 8,906 fewer people (a 12.1 percent decrease) aged 15 to 24 and 13,510 more people aged 50 and over (an 11.1 percent increase).

Labor policies were developed during the first half of the century, predominately in the field of urban manufacturing, where retirement was viewed as a release from a lifetime of hard, often back-breaking work. Now the average age of retirement is 61, but half of people that age are still working. An increasingly older workforce, relatively unchanged retirement policies and a longer and healthier lifespan call for a rethinking of employment policies for older workers. According to Rosalyn Bilford, executive director of the Metropolitan Commission on Aging, the United States has 1.9 million people between the ages of 50 and 64 ready and willing to

work. Of this number, 66 percent would work full-time and 86 percent would work part-time, according to national surveys. Seventy-five percent of this untapped workforce have high school or college diplomas. This older available workforce is predominately women, since women generally outlive men. However, the increasingly high cost of living is requiring more senior citizens to think about reentering the workforce--or entering it for the first time.

The peak outmigration in Onondaga County has occurred among people aged 25 to 35. As the baby-boomers age, the number of people aged 34 to 65 in the county will increase by 25,000. A significant issue is providing jobs to meet the expectations of this aging workforce. Coupled with this is the fact that people today change careers three to five times in their lifetimes.

The national rate of career changes is evident in some local cases. For example, one executive lost his job in a corporate changeover, went into real estate for several years and is now teaching courses in small business. Another began as a magazine editor, worked in governmental relations and is now involved with employee training. Often these job changes are driven by climatic events, such as when the company closes or moves out of town. Many cases of successful career changes were witnessed by the staff of the Worker Reemployment Center, which the Central New York Private Industry Council operated from 1986 to 1988 under a \$1.5 million federal Job Training Partnership Act grant in partnership with Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse. The 800 clients included workers who had been laid off from Allied, Bristol, Carrier and other companies. These displaced workers received training in a variety of occupations and the center had a 81 percent placement rate. A number of those placed found employment in the same occupational sector, such as manufacturing, but in another company. Others changed career paths.

Some career changes are made because of expectations for higher salaries or personal choice. Thomas Arneson, director of the Central New York Regional Education Center for Economic Development, said, "In the value system of the 'baby boomers' the most important value is that work has to have a connection with who you are and provide you with a sense of self." We will need substantial growth in terms of economic development to provide the kinds of jobs desired by the aging workforce. If not, we will see continued outmigration from the county, warned Karen Kitney, supervisor of the planning services division of the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA).

On the other end of the graying workforce is the fact that we are losing numbers of people at the entry level. Traditionally, workers aged 20 to 30 have provided most of the care for the elderly. Since the number of elderly in the county will increase by 40 percent in the coming years, a big question will be where the

entry-level workers for nursing homes and hospitals will come from.

### 3. Most new workers will come from non-traditional populations.

The workforce of the future will have more "non-traditional" workers--women, minorities, immigrants, the disabled and senior citizens--than ever before.

The "traditional" worker--the older white male--has already become a "minority" employee. This group comprised 51.3 percent of the workforce in 1979, but in 1988 made up 47.9 percent of total U.S. employees, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. By the year 2000, white native-born men will make up only 15 percent of new entrants to the labor force, with the remaining 85 percent of new workers coming from the non-traditional sectors of the population.

According to The Population and Labor Force of New York: 1990 to 2050, non-Hispanic whites will make up 75.5 percent of the state's population by the end of this decade, excluding New York City. The number of blacks will increase from 8.9 percent to 11.1 percent, while the number of Hispanics will increase from 6.2 to 10.2 percent. The numbers of Asians will double, from 1.8 to 3.2 percent of the population. (In New York City, the figures will be much higher.)

According to the 1980 Census, 6.4 percent of the population (29,669) in Onondaga County was black (non-Hispanic) and just 1 percent (4,730) was Hispanic. While the numbers of Hispanics are small, they have experienced the highest growth rates locally, as well as nationally. The Education Information Center, a collaborative effort of the Regional Learning Service (RLS) and the Onondaga County Public Library, noted that "Latinos, particularly women, constitute one of the fastest growing segments of the workforce."

Blacks and Hispanics, as potential parts of the work force, are considerably younger than their white counterparts, reported Vernon Briggs of Cornell University's College of Industrial and Labor Relations. The bulk of non-Hispanic whites in the workforce are now mostly in their thirties. A predominate number of black workers are in their twenties, while large numbers of Hispanics are in their teens and have not yet entered the work force. This offers "major challenges given past discrimination" in education and employment, Briggs noted.

Immigration accounted for one-third of the growth of the labor force in the last decade and will account for the large part of the growth by the end of this decade. Half of the immigrants in the country go to California and New York. Ninety-three percent of New York State's immigrants since 1965 have gone to New York City and its surrounding suburbs. Now, one-quarter of the population of New



York City is foreign-born. In Onondaga County, 25,187 people, or 5.4 percent of the population, were foreign-born, according to the 1980 Census.

Not all experts, however, agree on what U.S. immigration policy should constitute. Dr. David L. Birch, author of Job Creation in America, states emphatically that the nation must loosen immigration restrictions to help offset severe labor shortages in many regions. On the other hand, Briggs warns that we are highly dependent on immigrant labor, since our own human and educational services are not producing enough skilled workers. Sixty percent of the Ph.D. degrees awarded in the U.S. go to foreign-born students. At the same time, large numbers of immigrants are low-skilled and know little English. "Basically, the political policies are not related whatsoever to the economic needs of the country. We've got to get control of immigration policy and shift it toward a more economic focus," Briggs told the Citizens League.

The number of women in the labor force will jump from 52.7 percent in 1987 to 62.7 percent at the turn of the century. The number of women in the state labor force will increase by 907,000 to a total of 4.7 million in the year 2000, while the number of male workers will grow by just .7 percent, or 33,000. New York State Labor Commissioner Thomas Hartnett has said that New York will need nearly a million more working women alone in the next decade to avert a major labor shortage.

John Bateman-Ferry, executive director of ARISE, Inc., calls persons with disabilities the country's "largest unemployed minority." Almost 73 percent of the disabled are unemployed; 18.2 percent work full-time and 8.9 percent work part-time. Often, but not always, the disabled can easily enter the workforce with the aid of physical accommodations, such as ramps, modified desks or computers. The majority of accommodations cost less than \$1,000.

These increases in new workers are greatly needed, since the growth of jobs is expected to continue to outstrip population growth. Incorporating these new groups successfully into the economy will call for changes in employers' philosophies and personnel practices. The process of taking into consideration the differing needs and attitudes of new workers, due to their gender, race and cultural backgrounds, is called "managing diversity." Bateman-Ferry pointed out that the majority of accommodations to any new group are "attitude changes"--the most important part of managing cultural diversity.

"Is there a 'tight' labor market because of lack of bodies? Or, are the bodies there, but ones that do not fit the desired mold?" he asks. "Is part of the labor shortage the employers' inability to recognize that, yes indeed, there are people there, but that they are different from the norm?"

Jean Kordalewski, RLS director, adds that changing demographics mean that these groups, which used to be on the "demand side" in the labor supply and demand equation, are now in the "supply side" and businesses are beginning to recruit them. "I hope this means that we are nearing a time when the word 'non-traditional' will not be used. Men and women of all races and backgrounds will be a republic of equals," Kordalewski says.

#### **4. Many workers continue to have low skills; drop-out rates continue to be high.**

High school completion rates do not tell the whole picture about the state of preparedness of the workers of tomorrow. In fact, at first sight, statistics show that compared to 50 years ago, many more students are completing high school today than ever before. National figures show that in 1940, 25 percent of the population graduated from high school. It wasn't until 1953 that the majority of students graduated. In 1980, 66 percent graduated; while 75 percent graduated in 1988. Two-thirds of the graduating students today begin post-secondary education and 17.4 percent of the populace has college degrees--two times the number than in 1960. In 1988, 77.1 percent of New York State high school graduates and about 75 percent of county high school graduates entered some form of post-secondary institution.

While a 75 percent high school completion rate is far lower than that of other Western nations, there are other important related issues when looking at the workforce of the future. The first concerns higher-order skills and the second deals with groups in the population that continue to have greater than average drop-out rates.

Vincent M. Grove, regional staff director for New York State United Teachers' Utica office, told the study committee that despite these generally improving school completion rates, students are actually faring much more poorly in terms of real competency. For example, only 6 percent of students studied can solve multi-step math problems and only 20 percent can accomplish more than simple, basic writing tasks. In terms of math and science skills, the U.S. students fared poorly compared to 11 other countries.

Minorities--who will be expected to fill an increasing proportion of future jobs--continue to have high drop-out rates. The New York State Board of Regents estimates that minority students make up 46 percent of all drop-outs in the state, even though they constitute about 33 percent of the total enrollment. The Regents report that approximately 51 percent of all black students and 56 percent of Hispanic students statewide drop out of school. In Onondaga County, 4.5 percent of the high school students dropped out in the 1987-88 academic year (the most recent figures). There are no local statistics as to what proportion of entering

students will likely complete high school.

Statistics indicate that far fewer minorities complete college than do whites. According to the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Education Statistics, only one out of seven black 1980 high school graduates remained in college for four years, compared to one out of five for whites. Only one out of 10 Hispanic 1980 graduates and one out of 12 Native Americans remained in college after four years. One in three Asian students remained in college, the center reported. Statistics about college completion rates may be misleading, because many students today are taking more than four years and may take off some time to earn money to complete their schooling. The students who do not continue, however, may fall through the cracks in the labor market since they may not have the technical or vocational training to land a good job.

Not surprisingly, 85 percent of high school drop-outs have low basic skills, as do the long-term unemployed and dependent. Workplace Basics: The Skills Employers Want, a report issued by the American Society for Training and Development and the U.S. Department of Labor and written by Anthony P. Carnevale, Leila J. Gainer and Ann S. Meltzer, notes that 72 percent of the unemployed have low basic skills. The report adds that 85 percent of unmarried mothers also have low skills, as do 79 percent of welfare clients and 68 percent of those who have had trouble with the law.

Changes in the labor force, as well as changes in legislation, mean that minorities and single mothers will be tapped more frequently to fill the ranks of needed workers. This is especially true in light of the Family Support Act of 1988, the federal welfare reform legislation. This law calls for welfare clients who are capable of working to attend educational or training programs and is particularly geared toward bringing single mothers into the workplace.

### C. Government Trend

#### 1. Government is providing less funding for programs considered necessary in the past.

Dale Mann told this year's Community Leadership Conference at Minnowbrook that "regulatory and programmatic impulses are at their limits." Mann, a professor and senior research associate at the Center for Education and the American Economy, which is part of Columbia University's Teachers College, underscored the fact that the 1980s were a turning point for how much government was going to pay to keep maintaining federal and state programs. There has been a rethinking of the philosophy of "if you've got a problem, I've got a program to fix it," in which narrowly-focused programs are born and perpetuated. The "New Federalism" has represented a move toward more local control, less government involvement and a growing awareness of the necessity for joining forces to meet common ends.

While there are both good and bad aspects to these changes, local elected officials and leaders in the social services have had to recognize that funding is limited and new techniques are needed to deal with dwindling resources.

Federal employment and training nationwide has completely changed in the last decade, with the elimination of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and the advent of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). In its heyday in the 1970s, CETA funding nationwide totaled \$10 billion; JTPA's budget this year is \$3 billion. The City of Syracuse's CETA program used to receive about \$8 million annually. This program year, the city's JTPA funding totals \$2.5 million (including money from a variety of small funding streams under the JTPA legislation). Strict financial comparisons are not accurate, however, because the two programs are totally different in nature. CETA was primarily a program designed to provide public jobs for large numbers of indigent and disadvantaged people. JTPA is a performance-based program that provides vocational training for the disadvantaged and is strongly geared toward the ultimate placement of these people in unsubsidized positions in the private sector.

The biggest sources of funding under JTPA are the Title IIA "78 percent" category and the Title IIB Summer Jobs category. (See Table 5). The Syracuse Job Partnership Training Agency's (SJTPA) slight increase in funding is due to areas of high unemployment in Syracuse, which are residual effects of the plant closings in the 1980s. Since, JTPA funding is based two-thirds on unemployment and one-third on the number of economically disadvantaged residents, these figures will likely decrease for Syracuse and continue to decrease for Onondaga County. The area has a very low unemployment

TABLE FIVE: FEDERAL FUNDING FOR SJTPA AND OCETA

Agency	1987-88		1990-91	
	78 % Funds	Summer Jobs	78% Funds	Summer Jobs
<b>Syracuse</b>				
JTPA	\$1,189,091	\$600,621	\$1,313,430	\$634,254
OCETA	\$936,749	\$378,556	\$634,343	\$302,965

Source: SJTPA and OCETA

rate, although many people need to be trained to fill existing and future job openings. Lenore Spadafora, planner for the Onondaga County Employment and Training Agency (OCETA), notes, "Unfortunately, the allocation method does not place as great a weight on the number of economically disadvantaged. Regardless of our low unemployment rate, we still have great numbers of the disadvantaged."

Federal cutbacks have significantly affected operations of the New York State Department of Labor. Statewide, DOL had more than 13,000 employees in 1978-79. This fiscal year, DOL statewide has about 5,500 employees. In the intervening years, the local office of DOL has lost more than 100 positions. With about 90 employees, it is less than half the size it was 10 years ago. Such programs as the Worker Incentive Program (WIN), outreach services and satellite offices of the Job Service and Unemployment Insurance programs have been drastically cut back. Anthony Dais, director of the local region for the New York State Department of Labor reports that these cutbacks affect his staff's ability to meet fully the needs of those people who are seeking employment and those businesses that are seeking workers.

#### D. Business Trends

##### 1. Service and technical jobs are calling for different skills.

A general consensus among the expert witnesses who spoke before the Citizens League or the experts whose works were studied by committee members was that "the days when all you needed were a strong back and the willingness to work hard" are long gone. Demands of the present job market are much different than they were even 10 years ago. In the past, a company would hire an employee to run a machine. Now, more often than not, a company hires someone to run a computer that runs a machine.

Sue E. Berryman, director of the Institute on Education and the Economy at Columbia University's Teachers College, writes in her paper, "Education and the Economy: What Should We Teach? When? How? To Whom?," that technological advancement has fostered the move from "mass production" to "flexible production." Mass production, typified by the assembly line instituted by Henry Ford, calls for each worker to do one specialized task over and over again. Flexible production combines "the customizing inherent in craft production at the cost savings of mass production." This technological change has affected jobs both in manufacturing and service industries.

With today's manufacturing technology, the assembly line does not have to be shut down to retool a machine to do a different task. With computerization, retooling is simply a matter of reprogramming. This capability allows for shorter production runs and varied or customized production. Textile production is one area Berryman cites to demonstrate the ramifications of technology on jobs. In the past, production involved long runs of huge amounts of one kind of cloth. Now, with the increased capabilities made possible by such computerized equipment as programmable knitters, operators can make fabric in an array of weaves, colors and finishes. In this industry today, the ratio of low-skilled machine operators to the more highly-trained technicians is far lower than in the past.

Frank O'Connor, regional director for the New York State Department of Economic Development, said the "bench investment" of an individual worker's work station at General Electric used to be anywhere from \$2,000 to \$10,000. That was when GE hired 22,000 people locally. Now it hires about 6,000 employees and a typical "bench investment" can range from \$50,000 to \$500,000, reflecting the shift to higher technology, production and capital investment.

Berryman cites the insurance industry as an example of changing jobs in the service sector. Five different jobs-- messenger, file clerk, customer assistance clerk, claims adjuster and policy writer--have been merged into one, primarily because everything is done with computers, rather than paper files.

Importantly, however, the skills required to do this new, combined job are greater than the skills required by any one of the original five jobs.

Technology is having the greatest impact in the new information-related jobs. The majority of workers in services are engaged in the creation, processing and distribution of information. In 1950, only about 17 percent of all service workers were engaged in "information occupations." By the mid 1980s, this figure had risen to 60 percent.

Technological advancement is affecting a variety of other occupations as well. For example, drivers for package delivery services now must be able to operate computerized routing and dispatch equipment on their trucks. Even cooking equipment in fast-food restaurants is being controlled and operated via computer. Berryman explains how jobs are being defined more broadly:

"The person needs less specific and splintered knowledge and more systematic and abstract knowledge... Flexibility has usually been achieved by reversing Ford's process: moving back up the range of skill levels."

Labor statistics demonstrate these broad changes in the nature and structure of work. In 1900, about 30 percent of the labor force worked as laborers, while only 10 percent were professional, technical or managerial. By 1980, those percentages had roughly reversed--with 6 percent working as laborers and 26 in the second category. According to the American Society for Training and Development, only 4 percent of new jobs today can be filled with people with the lowest skill levels. Bruce Leslie, president of Onondaga Community College (OCC), said that most jobs now require technical skills comparable to an associate's degree.

## **2. Workplace cultures are changing.**

Not only are jobs calling for increased technical skills, but the very fabric of the workplace has been drastically changing. Since jobs are being defined now more broadly and there is more interdependence of jobs, employees are increasingly encouraged to make decisions about processes and procedures and assume more responsibility for overall productivity. For example, companies are using more "work teams," in which team members require knowledge and competence in more than one job. Often, team members are recognized or compensated on the performance of the total team. There is a trend toward greater involvement of employees and their representatives in a broad range of activities that require their cooperation.

A number of companies in Onondaga County have already recognized the need to change. Carrier Corporation has moved from the traditional linear manufacturing process to a work-cell

manufacturing process. Now, each work team is responsible for bringing the full product through the whole process for centralized assembly and is not responsible just for the sub-assembly of components of a product as in the past. The new responsibilities of the work teams include ordering their own parts and quality control.

The T.R. Wickes Corp., which makes automotive electronics, has launched an employee involvement process as the foundation for its total quality program. Employees are expected to participate in work teams, engage in group problem solving and quality improvement and work on new product development. Wickes has been implementing this program for almost two years and it already has borne fruit. A device to unlock car doors electronically came from an idea that originated from workers on the floor, working in a team.

The changing work culture is evident in Crouse-Hinds' plans as it completely replaces its existing foundry. The company is moving beyond different sets of expectations for individuals and instead striving for employee involvement with the whole system. Crouse Hinds is focusing more on technical skills and different approaches for how employees work in various areas. Al-Can Aluminum in Oswego is another company utilizing new production techniques, in many cases borrowed from Japanese companies.

### **3. Economic competition means employers must continue to change the way they do business.**

The economy is, more and more, a global economy. The parts of many products, from copiers to automobiles, are produced in several different countries, and then assembled elsewhere. Because of this worldwide economic integration, companies must now meet global standards of production and be competitive in price, quality and timeliness of delivery. Lester Thurow of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology notes that the United States has been lagging behind such countries as Japan and Korea in incorporating flexible and technically advanced manufacturing systems. "Our principal competitors are simply producing workers better capable of absorbing modern production skills. The lack of these skills is preventing us from achieving the productivity gains that we should be getting," Thurow said.

Companies are striving to maintain their competitive edge. The companies that will be successful in the long run will have to demonstrate continuous improvements in production and quality and will have to reduce costs and expand markets in light of the global economy. These improvements can be brought about by effective planning and being flexible--both in terms of implementing new technologies and developing improved human resource policies. The changing skills and greater flexibility required of employees means that successful companies must foster on-going, company-wide learning in concordance with technological advances.



### Concerns and Implications

- A. **Prospective workers are not coming to the workplace with appropriate skills and abilities; there is an increased need for remedial training.**

Jobs are changing rapidly and becoming more demanding and complex. At the same time, workers' basic skills and advanced technical ability are lagging behind. This combination brings with it the specter of what the Wall Street Journal has termed "smarter jobs, dumber workers." In many cases, the educational backgrounds of new workers have not provided them with the abilities needed by the job market. And for most of the workers of the future--who are already employed in some capacity--the changing workplace will mean they will have to likewise change and acquire more advanced skills.

In his talk before the OCL study committee, OCC President Bruce Leslie referred to the national study, Workplace Basics, noted earlier on page 16. Leslie pointed out that this study found that the average "skill index" of American workers is 2.6, on a scale of 1 to 6. The new technically-oriented jobs require a minimum skill index of 3.6. For example, a skill index of 2 means a person can use compound sentences; an index of 3 means one can understand safety rules and instructions and write simple reports; and 4 means one can write business letters and reports and understand journals and manuals. Leslie noted that 38 percent of Americans need to raise their "skill index."

The language arts and mathematics skills needed by workers today are more sophisticated than in the past. In addition the applications of these skills are changing, becoming more technical and requiring use of higher levels of reasoning and decision making. "General track" students, roughly one third of all high school students, are students who have not completed a college preparatory course of study or a five-unit occupational education program. These students are exposed to a broad shallow experience with no particular concentration and are at great risk of failure on the job and in college.

Thus, preparing the future workforce involves both getting new employees "up to speed" and enabling current employees to adapt to technological and other changes. This emphasis on learning is a crucial part of how we prepare the workforce of tomorrow. Part of the answer lies in public education, particularly in the vocational fields, and part rests with "in-service" or "upgrade" training of the existing workforce.

Since the federal report, A Nation at Risk, was released in 1983, much attention has been given to the lack of preparedness among American students. A current national effort, the federal Education Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), is bringing together business, labor, education and

federal and state officials to define what skills workers will need for the future. "All of the world of work has been transformed, but the schools have not changed at all. Well, damn little," states Arnold Packer, executive director of this commission.

Much of the problem lies not in preparing enough college graduates, but in providing higher-order technical skills, which require advanced schooling--but not necessarily college. In fact, recent employment trends indicate there are more than enough college-educated workers. According to Workplace Basics:

"In a comparison among countries, the more educated and trained half of the American workforce competes well with the white-collar and technical elites of its economic rivals. But the other half of the workforce is not as well prepared, and this is where the U.S. is losing the competitive race."

William J. Spring, in an article in the New England Review, noted two other countries--West Germany and Britain--whose governments are committed to the acquisition of skills by young people who do not go on to college. In the United States, the article noted, we spend about \$4,774 of tax revenue a year for each young person attending higher education, but "only a small amount to help those going directly to work to acquire needed skills." When the college plans fall through for these young people and they find they do not have marketable skills, they often experience "a period of joblessness or sporadic employment [which] does not make for a good start in adult life." Spring advocates having an intermediary institution to "smooth the transition" of these young people from school to employment. The importance of upgrading the image and desirability of vocational trades is discussed elsewhere in this report.

Just as important is training current employees to ensure that the workforce will have the necessary basic skills and appropriate job-specific skills. The American Society for Training and Development, in its report Training America: Learning to Work for the 21st Century, reports that by far the biggest source of growth in productivity lies in employees' learning on the job, rather than prior education or even investment in capital equipment. The report also emphasizes that "job-related training and education bear directly on individual opportunity." People who receive formal training on the job earn 25 percent more than those with no training. People who have had training on a prior job earn 20 percent more than people who had none.

Speakers throughout this workforce study pointed out the need for improvements to public education and for continuous, company-wide education for those employed. As Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock and The Third Wave, writes, "The illiterates of the future will not be those who cannot read, but rather those who

cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."

**B. Employers today believe that "workers just aren't the way they used to be."**

Business executives who spoke before the OCL study committee cited problems in employees' attitudes, performance and dependability. For example, Neil Strodel, vice-president of human resources for Syracuse China, said his company has to train two or three people to get one good person in certain areas of the plant. James Pilon, plant manager for Pass & Seymour/LeGrand, noted the fact that he could not find enough people with adequate skills and the proper work ethic, given the limited numbers of workers that are now available. "Many of the people out there aren't really employable," he said.

The business leaders who spoke during the course of the study indicated they have had better success with bringing back former, retired workers, than hiring new workers. "The retired employees have a fantastic work ethic," Pilon said. Others said they have been very satisfied with the work done by their employees with disabilities. "The disabled workers have superior work habits," said Peter Pavlacka, director of personnel for Eagle Comtronics.

This study revealed that many segments of the workforce are sorely lacking in appropriate skills required by newly-emerging occupations. However, OCL also recognizes that perceptions about the work ethic of the available labor pool are subjective. It would be difficult--perhaps impossible--to assess quantitatively the work ethic of today's workers, compared to those of the past.

**C. Technical and vocational trades continue to be viewed as low-paying and unattractive careers.**

In 1982-83, the Onondaga-Madison Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) had 1,900 students in its two centers; now BOCES administrators feel lucky if they have as many as 800 students in their two centers. This dwindling enrollment has caused many classes and entire programs of study to be eliminated. In one instance, the Onondaga-Madison BOCES (now the Onondaga-Madison-Cortland BOCES) used to have the only BOCES automotive transmission program in New York State. Low enrollment figures caused this to be cut. Vocational counselors Jim Schofield, from the Syracuse City School District, and Chuck West, from BOCES, lament the fact that there are low turnouts for BOCES presentations, while parents "fill the rooms" for information nights on colleges and financial aid.

Al Wolf, principal of Syracuse Central Technical and Vocational Center (Central Tech), and Ron Frey, principal of the BOCES Thompson Road Center, said subliminal messages all around us condition students that a vocational career is somehow not quite good enough. Newspaper articles on local high school graduates

proclaim where the students are going to college, but will likely not mention enrollment in vocational apprenticeship programs. One study committee member said her local school district would not even provide bus transportation when her son opted to enroll in a BOCES program.

These negative messages not only affect a person's self-esteem in the short-run, they can also affect a person's life-long economic standing. A recent University of Michigan report cited by RLS in the fall 1989 issue of its newsletter, Linkletter, stated that a woman who graduates from high school with a general education can expect to make \$648 a month, but will make \$923 with a vocational education background. A man with the same training levels can expect to earn \$1,510 and \$1,755 respectively.

Larry Moses, president of Carpenter Northeast Industries, said, "We need help in teaching people a trade is a very honorable way to make a living." And Pilon stressed, "There is a pride associated with the trades--lucrative fields where you use your hands and brains together. We have to communicate that to young people."

Some efforts are underway to improve the image of vocational trades. In its first year of operation, Project BOOST (Business Opens Opportunities with Schools Together) of the Syracuse-Onondaga County Private Industry Council (PIC)\* has close to 70 speakers from 60 local businesses. These businessmen and women have spoken to more than 1,800 students since January of this year. The School-Business Partnership Program of the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Council was active for about a year and a half. Approximately 24 students were placed in work experiences in five local businesses. Some of these students have decided to seek further training in a technical field, because of this on-site experience. The Small Business Council recently decided to combine forces with Project BOOST, rather than have two separate programs.

The School and Business Alliance (SABA), which was established in 1986, is funded this year by a \$73,000 state grant through the City School District. Its primary objective is to encourage young people who are at risk of dropping out to stay in school, and to a lesser extent to improve the image of technical and vocational trades for these young people. James Gallo, executive director of Laubach Literacy and SABA chairperson, stressed that for many young people, being successful in a vocational education program is the key to completing high school. This past school year, SABA worked primarily with Fowler High School's Occupational Learning Center for students at risk of dropping out. SABA was instrumental in establishing the day care center at Fowler in 1987, making it easier for young parents to remain in school. The Alliance is also

**\*Note:** Formerly the Central New York PIC.

active in encouraging adopt-a-school programs and field trips to businesses, and is highly supportive of Project BOOST's speakers bureau. This coming school year, SABA plans to direct more of its efforts to the middle school level.

"I think we've made some real progress with some of these kids," Gallo said. "There is a big need employer-wise for these vocationally-trained kids. We have to get the kids to understand they don't have to go to college to be successful, but they need their high school diploma to make money."

Throughout the study presentations, it was clear that vocational training must be made as attractive as--and synonymous with--going to college. A number of speakers urged that we review our attitudes about our children's career plans and rethink how we use the words "education" versus "training" and "academic" versus "vocational" education.

**D. Despite numerous channels of communication between education and business, there continues to be a mismatch between appropriately-trained prospective employees and the available jobs.**

By law, public school vocational programs must have an advisory council to help shape their curriculum. These councils act in an advisory capacity to assure that the school's training program is meeting the needs of the community. Vocational programs are reviewed by the State Education Department (SED) every five years to insure that the curriculum is current and appropriate to state-of-art technology and changes in workplace.

For one local example, Central Tech's Occupational Education Advisory Council has 20 members and is made up of people from the business community, school administrators, teachers, and representatives from the public employment and training agencies, the county Department of Social Services and the state DOL. Central Tech's council meets once a month throughout the school year. In addition, Central Tech has an individual "craft committee" for all 16 training programs offered. Each committee is composed of a teacher in the particular field, representatives from local businesses in that trade and a representative of a higher education program, if there is such a program in that occupation. Other school districts' vocational advisory councils and craft committees act in a similar capacity.

The City School District has begun "adopt-a-school" programs, in which a business provides primarily programmatic support, such as by providing equipment or staff assistance. For example, at Central Tech, the nurse assistant, automotive, graphic arts, machine shop and cosmetology programs have all been adopted by businesses in the respective fields.

The Manufacturers Association of Central New York (MACNY) has had a long involvement with school-business communication. In 1974, MACNY, the Chamber of Commerce, community leaders and local school officials saw the need for a mutual effort between business, industry and education. With the help of a SED grant and funding from the private sector, the Community Council on Careers was founded in 1975. The council provided an interface between secondary school students, guidance counselors, local agencies, business and industry. It promoted an experience-based career education program and students got state education credit for work-site experience, said Robert Freund, production manager for Jacquith Industries, who served as the education coordinator for the council.

After a few years, business leaders saw the need for a more definite focus to the council's efforts and, at the same time, funding became difficult. Freund said that the emphasis moved to preparing certified toolmakers and machinists and the Industrial Trades Institute was born in 1979. This institute was in effect up until about four years ago, but lapsed because of a loss of government funding, fewer applicants for the program and a general lack of interest.

MACNY is currently instrumental in implementing an attendance incentive project for Central Tech students.

A number of organizations are currently in the planning stages for a cooperative effort called the Central New York Job and Career Exploration Center. The idea for this center came out of suggestions from the City School District's Occupational Advisory Committee and a sub-committee was formed to help plan it. Also involved are MACNY, the Chamber of Commerce, the New York State DOL, the Community Foundation and other key leaders, said Calvin Birdsong, executive director of the Enterprise Assistance Center and chairperson of the sub-committee. The committee members, who have been discussing the project for about a year, are looking at two model sites in New York City. Birdsong said the center would be a partnership between the school district, private companies and community-based organizations. It would provide student information on jobs, the jobs market and how to prepare for it, and a career assessment. The center will enable students to work in small groups and talk to business people about specific occupations. Plans are to provide help in writing resumes, videotape practice job interviews and offer interactive hands-on activities for the young people, Birdsong said. The district is currently seeking funding for this project.

Larry Moses of Carpenter Northeast Industries and a businessman active in Project BOOST, said part of the answer in bridging the perceived gap in communication between business and schools is better coordination between various entities. "There are almost too many programs working at cross signals--it's like

there is a turf war between all these organizations and everybody seems to have a better idea how to do it," Moses said.

Donna Stoner, vice president of the Small Business Council, said some barriers to an effective flow of communication are due to the fact that education and business are intrinsically different. By nature, business people must be concerned with the bottom line--if they don't continue to make a profit they could lose their business. Thus, they are geared toward more immediate results and need effectively-trained people as soon as they have a job opening. In contrast, Stoner notes, educators are part of a large bureaucracy, in which the results of teaching one student in one course today may not be seen for many years and changes cannot be implemented very quickly. Businesses experience immediate, severe shortages in certain job types and often feel education is not producing enough applicants trained in these fields.

#### **E. Onondaga County is rich in human resources and programs.**

This Citizens League study on the workforce of the future has uncovered no paucity of programs to train the employees of tomorrow. For example, 100 different programs receiving either federal or state dollars are listed by the New York State Job Training Partnership Council. The Education Information Center offers a "hot-line" telephone information service providing information on credit and non-credit courses in close to 600 subjects, ranging from algebra and appliance repair to wall papering and word processing. Many local entities, including the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board, the local New York State Job Service and MACNY, regularly conduct surveys of employment trends and assess what occupational skills employees will need in coming years.

In addition, Syracuse and Onondaga County constitute a regional center with highly-regarded, well-developed education, health and social services systems. Higher education boasts a major research university--Syracuse University; two specialized state universities--the SUNY Health Science Center medical school and other programs of study and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry; LeMoyne College and OCC. The health system includes four major hospitals, several nursing programs, nursing homes, home care and numerous physicians' offices and centers. Onondaga County has 18 public school districts, a regional BOCES, many private and parochial schools, and a variety of proprietary and in-house business training programs. Myriad social services agencies address a range of human problems and offer counseling, educational and self-help programs.

Onondaga County is equally rich in terms of the interest and commitment of the private sector. Business, education and government have already implemented a number of exemplary programs.

For example, local banks, in recognizing that the key to a good staff is retention, have instituted a broad array of in-staff training programs, flexible hours, choices in health care, tuition benefits and cooperative programs with OCC and other local colleges. Local businesses are highly involved with partnerships with education and business organizations. Some of these efforts have been discussed in other sections of this report.

The health care industry has begun major initiatives to assure a sufficient workforce for the health industry. One initiative is a model continuum of nursing education and program to expand health opportunities in pre-employment training. This is being coordinated by an informal consortium of state and local offices of the Departments of Health, Labor and Social Services, SJTPA, the Central New York Health Systems Agency, the Community Health Information and Planning Service, and other specialized education and job training programs (such as PACE, ACCESS and CEOSC). Other health-related initiatives include tuition waiver programs for local nursing schools, a state-funded grant program involving Henninger High School and St. Joseph's Hospital and Health Center, and an SU program for non-traditional students.

**F. Despite these rich resources, there is no focal point of exchange for labor supply and demand.**

At least 20 organizations in the county broker, or directly provide, job training services for economically-disadvantaged individuals. Three major employment and training units exist within two blocks of each other in downtown Syracuse--SJTPA, OCETA and Onondaga County Department of Social Services (DSS), which also has several smaller offices in the community. In addition to the Syracuse-Onondaga County PIC, there are a minimum of 20 additional boards, advisory groups or task forces (such as the Job Service Advisory Board, OCC Educational Advisory Boards and the Business-Education Task Force) that seek private sector input on job training programs.

The city and county job training agencies are beginning to collaborate on planning and providing services, particularly as they join others in implementing the JOBS (Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program) portion of the federal welfare reform legislation. And although they are still operated and administered separately, the two agencies merged in 1989 in terms of being the prime contractor with the state for JTPA funds, allowing the city and county agencies to apply for funding together.

Too often, however, because of the categorical nature of funding, these groups and agencies act independently and very often duplicate services. For example, 15 local agencies recently applied for a state grant funding "supported employment" opportunities for the disabled. Each application was filed independently; none of the



agencies talked to each other. Three separate contracts were awarded to local agencies. Even though the funding was from the same source, under a single title, the funding stream and delivery of services were fragmented. In another case, representatives from two local agencies applying for the same training grant spoke before a local commission at City Hall's Common Council Chambers. Neither agency knew the other was applying for the same grant--to do the same kind of training for the homeless--until they both had attended the meeting.

A recent report that discussed fragmentation on the state level described problems that are inherent in the system. The Need for a Workforce Preparation System in New York State, issued by the New York State Senate Democratic Conference, notes that a lack of a comprehensive state job training policy "leads to a duplication of programs and an inefficient use of scarce resources." Secondly, clients are in need of services from several different agencies. The report stated that since "there is no mechanism currently in place to guide a client from one plateau to another within the system," there are resulting gaps in workforce preparation. Lastly, the state report noted that information is not distributed efficiently within the system. There is no "information system which adequately incorporates relevant data, including economic and labor market information, job and program availability, and financial resources."

These comments are equally relevant on the local level. There is no central place for businesses who are interested in coming into the community to go to access the labor pool. No mechanism exists for a person in need of training to negotiate the complex employment and training system. There is no central clearinghouse for information related to labor supply and demand. The categorical and fragmented nature of government funding and the sheer numbers of programs and agencies result in inefficient communication, duplication of services and lack of quick responsiveness to the pressing needs in the labor market.



## Recommendations

### **A. Economic Development**

The Onondaga Citizens League recognizes that effective economic development planning is an essential element in preparing for the workforce of the future. Fortunately, such planning is being undertaken on a number of fronts. The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board oversees a seven-county economic development district designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the U.S. Department of Commerce. The planning board develops an Overall Economic Development Plan (OEDP) on an annual basis for this seven-county region.

Another group, the Regional Economic Development Council, is made up of representatives from the public and private sectors from each of five counties and the City of Syracuse. The council includes Cayuga, Onondaga, Madison, Cortland and Oswego counties.

COMCO Inc., whose name is an acronym for these counties, was incorporated to enable the council to apply for a revolving loan trust fund and governmental grants. Early this year, COMCO received a \$50,000 grant from the New York State Regional Economic Development Partnership Program to update the Central New York Regional Economic Development Strategy. In turn, COMCO contracted with the Regional Planning Board and appointed a task force. COMCO's updated strategy is scheduled to be completed by this fall and presented to the Regional Economic Development Council for implementation early next year.

This COMCO plan will likely concentrate on the "supply side" of the labor force equation, focusing on human resource development strategies, such as broad skill requirements, for the "basic sector"--those employers that sell goods or provide services outside of the region and generate wealth for the immediate market.

Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. is examining closely several important issues, such as gaps in the educational delivery system and the transfer of technology from research to use in the field. Niagara-Mohawk is working with Syracuse University's Industrial Innovation Extension Service and Columbia University's Center for the Conservation of Human Resources. The utility is also developing a tracking system for business prospects with the New York State Department of Economic Development.

Key people in economic development in Onondaga County continue to meet to exchange ideas and foster collaboration among themselves. For instance, representatives from the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturers Association of Central New York (MACNY), the Metropolitan Development Association (MDA), the city and county offices of economic development, the local office of the New York State Department of Economic Development and

Niagara-Mohawk Power Corp. met in March of 1990 for a two-day "summit" on economic development planning. The OCL workforce study committee applauds those efforts and encourages their continuation.

The OCL workforce study committee encourages the inclusion of the following elements in local economic development plans:

- \* The plans should utilize information gathered by all related business and economic development entities, such as the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board, the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturers Association of Central New York, the Metropolitan Development Association, the New York State Department of Economic Development and the New York State Department of Labor.
- \* The plans should have the commitment of top leaders in the community, who should continue to make it a priority.
- \* The plans should undergo an evaluation on a periodic, at least annual, basis.
- \* Although it was not the focus of this study, the current college-educated workforce is recognized as a vital and valuable resource. To preserve this resource within Onondaga County, OCL recommends that planning for economic development be targeted to assure opportunities for this workforce in order to guard against the outmigration of a highly educated and skilled population.

Any economic development plan should recognize the importance of a community's long-term capacity for economic development, rather than economic growth itself. Dr. Jesse White of the Institute of Politics at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government states:

"The difference is between spurring economic activity on one hand--which is growth--and developing the long-term capacity to generate self-sustaining economic activity, on the other--which is economic development."

This should include a strong, proactive role in creating the type of environment that will create the kinds of new jobs we want for the Syracuse area. An example of economic growth is an increase in the number of jobs in a community; increasing the educational and skills levels of the populace is development. Another example of growth might be successful recruitment of a new software development firm, while improving the local colleges' computer software programs and increasing ties between the colleges and the business community would be development. An economic development plan and a plan to prepare the workforce of the future are clearly

closely interrelated.

## **B. Business, Education, Local Government and Organized Labor**

The Onondaga Citizens League recognizes that a number of local businesses, the educational system, local government and organized labor are taking steps to adapt to the demographic and economic trends affecting the workforce, which have been discussed earlier in this report. OCL applauds such actions and urges that these entities consider inclusion of the following specific recommendations in their workforce plans:

### **BUSINESS**

1. Business should provide flexible and innovative personnel practices and support mechanisms, in order to allow the full participation of those groups that have been under-represented in the labor force:

For all groups, particularly minorities:

- \* Work with such groups as the Urban League of Onondaga County Inc. and the Human Rights Commission of Central New York to provide cultural diversity training\* for supervisors and co-workers.

For women:

- \* Adopt specific measures in personnel policies, such as flex-time, job-sharing, maternity and paternity leaves, and enable parents to attend school meetings and other child-related appointments.
- \* Work with local business organizations and the Onondaga County Child Care Council to develop additional child care options.

For seniors:

- \* Develop and implement specific measures in personnel policies that promote and permit continued participation of older workers as part of workforce activities while

\* **Note:** Cultural diversity training refers to employee training programs designed to enhance knowledge and understanding of groups that are entering the workforce in greater numbers, such as Hispanics, Asians, African-Americans and persons with disabilities. It can include awareness of generational differences, religious differences and lifestyle differences (such as sexual orientation). Cultural diversity training frequently consists of reading materials, videotapes, self-assessment instruments, case studies, discussion groups, workshops and role-playing. It is most frequently geared to middle and first-level managers and junior executives and is in the beginning stages of being utilized for general employee populations.

accommodating their specific needs for employment and avocational activities. Worth investigating are ideas such as flex-time, phased retirement and scaled-down involvement without leaving the work setting, temporary employment, part-time work and job-sharing.

- \* Provide injury prevention and rehabilitation programs.
- \* Restructure pension incentives.

For those with disabilities:

- \* Since the handicapped represent the largest untapped pool of work-ready unemployed individuals, make special efforts to hire them. This may be accomplished by working with local public employment and training agencies such as OCETA and SJTPA to obtain incentives with on-the-job training opportunities.
- \* Work with organizations such as ARISE, Inc. to obtain tax incentives through the Targeted Job Tax Credit Program to provide physical accommodations, such as ramps, modified desks and equipment, and other needed items. Tax incentives can be obtained for up to \$35,000.
- \* Provide awareness training for supervisors and co-workers, since attitude changes are often the most important work-site accommodation needed.

For immigrants:

- \* Work with local school districts which provide English as a Second Language (ESL) and remedial programs to upgrade language and basic skills.

For the educationally disadvantaged:

- \* Continue, expand and enhance efforts involving workplace literacy.
- \* Work with local school districts to provide remedial education to upgrade communications, numerics and problem solving skills.
- \* Work with the providers of adult career counseling services to provide the support necessary for adults to enter in continuing education.

2. Business should develop policies that address the quality and delivery of training and development for workers already employed, recognizing that human resource development is an essential ingredient for the success of businesses' strategic plans:

- \* Work with the Regional Education Center for Economic Development. This center has been operating since 1983 to strengthen the local economy by assisting employers to become more competitive through customized education and training.
- \* Work with the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce and its Small Business Council, the local office of the New York

State Department of Labor, Onondaga Community College and other institutions to develop employee education and training programs.

- \* Provide incentives (financial and otherwise) for employees who avail themselves of increased vocational and professional training. It is particularly important to provide incentives for advancement in entry-level positions.
- \* Create a learning environment in the workplace to teach employees new skills and to facilitate the synergies necessary to bring about improvements in efficiency, quality, new applications and innovations.
- \* Invest in research and development in training including basic research in applied learning, models in best training practices and curriculum in priority areas, such as using training to meet the needs of a diverse workforce.

3. Business should regularly identify the short and long-range knowledge, skills and capabilities required and communicate these needs to educational and training institutions. This should be done with as much lead time as possible, to allow for legislation and budgets to be passed authorizing new curriculum and programs of study.

- \* Work with educational institutions in setting up training institutes in technical trades to meet the immediate need for people in specialized occupational areas. An example of this is the Industrial Trades Institute, which was a collaborate effort of the Community Council on Careers, BOCES and the City School District's Central Technical and Vocational Center.

4. Business should assume a leadership role in upgrading the elementary and secondary educational system in the community:

- \* Help to establish measurable, outcome-oriented goals in the schools.
- \* Dedicate resources (people, money and equipment) to enriching the educational system, including mentoring and teaching.
- \* Participate in vocational curriculum development.

5. Business should help upgrade the status of vocational and technical fields in the economy:

- \* Utilize the Teacher Summer Business Training and Employment Program (through the Regional Education Center for Economic Development) and provide in-service training and experiences for vocational and technical teachers on teacher conference days.
- \* Participate in Project BOOST and the School and

Business Alliance to provide role models and on-site work experiences for young people.

- \* Support the plans for the Central New York Job and Career Exploration Center.
- \* Work with school districts to incorporate information on vocational and technical work at all levels of schooling.
- \* Participate in cooperative educational programs offered by post-secondary institutions.

## EDUCATION

1. Public schools and post-secondary institutions should develop short- and long-range goals and outcome-oriented performance standards to improve learning, since it is the schools' responsibility to prepare the new workers of the future:

- \* Performance expectations for all students in language arts (reading, writing; speaking/listening) and mathematics should be raised to include the "basics" as outlined in the Report of the Statewide Steering Committee on Preparation for Employment and/or Postsecondary Education (See Appendix E)
- \* All educational experiences should incorporate human relations, thinking skills, information systems, and personal and organizational skills as outlined in the report noted above.

2. Public schools and post-secondary institutions should cooperate with business to identify regularly the knowledge, skills and capabilities that will be required by workers of the future.

3. Public schools should inform students of the broad range of career choices that will be available in the future, stressing the opportunities in and importance of the technical and vocational trades:

- \* Develop a comprehensive career awareness program, including life planning and decision making, from kindergarten through grade 12. Information about vocational and occupations careers should not be limited to infrequent, discrete units, but should be part of the overall curriculum.
- \* Recognize the importance of guidance counselors in helping young people make wise educational and career choices. Provide guidance counselors with the necessary resources to provide adequate information to all students.
- \* Continue to work with business to provide vocational career nights, on-site work experiences, mentorships and other programs to increase awareness of career options.
- \* Support the development and implementation of the Central New York Job and Career Exploration Center.



4. High schools and post-secondary institutions should work together in developing technical preparation programs to insure that there is a follow-through from one level to another in specific vocational fields, allowing for advanced training and credentials.

The findings of this study on the workforce of the future clearly show that education is the single most important element in a community's economic success. While earlier OCL studies (noted in the Preface) uncovered the need for education reform, they did not constitute an analysis of the educational system.

The Onondaga Citizens League recognizes the need for a concerted community-wide study of our educational system, process and outcomes. At the same time, the Citizens League recognizes that, in terms of preparing the workforce of the future, education is not limited to elementary and secondary education. Since lifelong learning will be increasingly important, education takes on a broader meaning for the whole populace and includes post-secondary and other institutions as well.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. Local government should take full advantage of the Family Support Act of 1988--the federal welfare reform legislation. This law represents a unique "window of opportunity" for numerous potential workers who are currently on public assistance. The legislation, which must be implemented by October of this year, offers literacy, basic skills and vocational training and provides for extended medical and child care benefits--important tools the public assistance population (mostly women with children) can use to enter employment.

A "JOBS Team" with representatives from a number of organizations is developing plans for Onondaga County in response to this legislation. The Onondaga Citizens League urges that this collaborative team maintain client service as its top priority in paring down the red tape of "the system" as people move from public assistance to employment.

2. Local government should study the concept of the "13th year" of state-funded schooling and lobby the State Legislature for its passage. The "13th year" refers to legislation that has been proposed for the last three years in the State Legislature. It calls for graduating high school seniors to be given a "voucher," enabling them to attend a full-time vocational program for a year, within a specified number of years of their graduation date. This voucher could be used by students to complete a vocational program they started in high school or to enroll in a program in their school district or local BOCES. The legislation calls for the state to provide funding for this additional year of training.

3. Local government should lobby the federal government to remove barriers to employment for senior citizens, such as restrictions regarding Social Security and taxable earnings.

4. Local government should lobby the state to change legislation permitting large city school districts to join Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

5. Local government should assess the ability of the regional transportation network to deal with increasingly dispersed living and job patterns.

#### ORGANIZED LABOR

1. Labor should increase cooperative efforts with the public school system and post-secondary institutions to insure that potential candidates for apprenticeships meet the skill requirements required by the respective trade unions.

2. Labor should continue outreach efforts to incorporate minorities, women, older workers and those with disabilities in apprenticeship programs. These efforts include having apprenticeships offered in conjunction with on-the-job training, and coordinating these with the NYS State Department of Labor, local public employment and training agencies and organizations for the disabled, such as ARISE, Inc. These efforts should also include cooperative planning with employers to offer cultural diversity training.

### C. A Focal Point for Coordination and Collaboration

In order for the most effective workforce planning and preparation to occur, it will be crucial for all components of the system to recognize one entity's central role in fostering coordination and collaboration. These components include business, labor, health, educational institutions, employment and training agencies, information and career counseling agencies, economic development agencies and community-based organizations, as well as city and county government. The entity would serve as the focal point by:

- \* Collecting information on available jobs, supply of workers, the skills required by the jobs and the skills represented by the workforce. The information on these areas should be both short- and long-range.
- \* Providing information and referrals for current and prospective employers.
- \* Providing a forum for effective communication among schools, training agencies, labor groups, business organizations and public employers.
- \* Establishing goals, in cooperation with representatives of the various components, and identifying indicators for evaluation purposes. (Indicators might include school drop-out rates, basic skills levels, placement and retention rates and ability to meet the demand for employees in various job classifications.)
- \* Convening regular meetings of the leading players in the system. (At least one meeting a year with representatives of business, MACNY, MDA, the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, CHIPS, the Central New York School Boards Association, the Central New York Educational Consortium\* and other entities.)
- \* Preparing and releasing an annual report to the community on the system's success in bridging the gap between supply and demand.

**\*Note:** The Central New York Educational Consortium is made up of Syracuse University, LeMoyne College, Onondaga Community College, the State University of New York at Oswego, the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES, the Oswego BOCES, and the Syracuse, East Syracuse-Minoa, Fayetteville-Manlius, Oswego and Fulton school districts.

- \* Marketing, including research, communication and public relations, to inform the community of the services performed by the various segments in the system.

The Onondaga Citizens League recognizes that the Syracuse-Onondaga County Private Industry Council, Inc. (PIC) is the logical entity to provide these coordinating and communication functions in our community. Key business leaders, including the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, MACNY and MDA, with the full support of County Executive Nicholas Pirro and Syracuse Mayor Thomas Young, should recognize the PIC as the focal organization coordinating workforce planning and preparation in the community.

Recognizing the PIC as the workforce's "focal point" would realize the organization's stated mission, in accordance with federal legislation, and bring that mission to fulfillment. The purpose of the Job Partnership Training Act (JTPA) of 1982 is:

"...to establish programs to prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force and to afford job training to those economically disadvantaged individuals facing serious barriers to employment, who are in special need of such training to obtain productive employment."

Private Industry Councils, or PICs, were an essential part of the JTPA legislation of 1982. While PICs in various states and communities differ widely, they are designed by law to serve as entities facilitating a strong public and private partnership. PICs, ideally, work in real partnership with the chief elected officials of the designated service delivery area. By law, the PIC and the elected leaders should operate interdependently.

A PIC provides the broadest representation of all segments of the community. Following the federal mandate, a PIC board is comprised of:

- \* Business (the majority)
- \* Education
- \* Organized Labor
- \* Rehabilitation Agencies
- \* Community-based Organizations
- \* Economic Development Agencies
- \* Public Employment Service
- \* Veterans (a state requirement)

The PIC's membership offers a breadth and balance of community knowledge, expertise in labor force issues and extensive experience in performance, planning and evaluating. Perhaps most importantly, the infusion of the business perspective in this process is critical to the overall success of maintaining a well-trained, ready workforce.

Locally, Onondaga County Executive Nicholas Pirro and Syracuse Mayor Thomas Young each appoint six business people and five others to the Board of Directors.

In essence, the PIC would serve as the "bridge" between the supply side of the workforce system--the educational and training institutions--and the demand side of the spectrum--both public and private employers. It would create a two-way street between supply and demand.

A major function should be to devise a plan for a cohesive workforce preparation and delivery system, using the community's current resources and working with all components of workforce supply and demand. The plan for a cohesive workforce preparation and delivery system should contain the following elements:

- \* The system should be coordinated, even centralized-technologically and physically, where possible.
- \* The system should be market-driven, responsive to the needs of both employers and potential employees.
- \* The system should be performance-based. Each component should realize its own important role in working toward the ultimate success of the program and strive for accountability in meeting the performance-based goals and objectives.
- \* The system should be clearly oriented to serving the structurally unemployed and those individuals most in need of training and employment.

The Onondaga Citizens League recommends that the Syracuse - Onondaga County Private Industry Council, Inc. (PIC) provide these coordinating and communication functions in our community.

In light of the additional duties required by serving as the focusing agent in the community, the Onondaga Citizens League recommends that the staff of the PIC be enlarged and additional resources provided. This should not result in any impact on existing employment-related agency funding.



APPENDICESA. Steering Committee Members

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 Laurie DeSantis  
 Robert DiFlorio  
 Ted Doyle  
 Robert James  
 Gary Livent  
 Patrick Mannion

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 James J. Murphy  
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May 2, 1990

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May 2, 1990

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April 4, 1990

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## E. The Expanded Basics

### Thinking Skills:

- \* problem solving
- \* decision making
- \* reasoning
- \* creative and critical thinking

### Human Relations:

- \* interpersonal skills
- \* working as a member of a team
- \* leadership skills
- \* handling conflict and criticism
- \* working cooperatively and competitively

### Information Systems:

- \* enter, manipulate, retrieve, analyze and synthesize data

### Organizational Skills:

- \* goal setting
- \* coping with deadlines
- \* following directions
- \* setting priorities

### Personal Skills

- \* personal work habits
- \* adaptability
- \* workplace values and ethics
- \* study habits
- \* ability to negotiate the system
- \* personal and civic responsibility
- \* initiative
- \* building self-esteem

**Source:** Report of the Statewide Steering Committee on Preparation for Employment and/or Postsecondary Education. This report calls for "specific levels of competency for these 'expanded basics' to be established by validation studies."