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## **Less-Educated Workers In California: A Statistical Abstract**

*Elias Lopez, Ph.D.*

*Prepared at the Request of Senator Richard Polanco,  
Senate Majority Leader*

**AUGUST 2000**

**CRB-00-006**

C A L I F O R N I A R E S E A R C H B U R E A U

# **Less-Educated Workers In California: A Statistical Abstract**

*Elias Lopez, Ph.D.*

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# Preface

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In 1999, nearly one of five adult workers in California lacked a high school degree. In this report, this group is characterized as “Less-Educated Workers.” We know very little about these 2.5 million workers despite their large number and their significant role in the state and national economy.

This report, a statistical abstract, was prepared at the request of Senate Majority Leader Richard G. Polanco (D-Los Angeles) and provides a series of tables describing less-educated workers in California.

The tables include data on age, ethnicity, gender, family structure, employment characteristics, health, nativity, home ownership, and poverty. For contrast, the report includes data on two other groups: workers with a high school diploma or higher level of education (“Better-Educated Workers”) and adults on public assistance.

All the data for the tables are from the 1999 March Current Population Survey, which is a survey of households conducted by the Census Bureau with a sample size that includes over 13,000 Californians.

A note of caution: this report provides data for persons over the age of 18, i.e., adults. It does not include information on their children. This point is worthy of note as the two groups, within the same family, may have different characteristics. Take, for example, the national status of less-educated workers. Table 19 shows that about 70 percent of less-educated workers are foreign born. When a similar analysis is done for their children, one finds the reverse pattern: over 80 percent of the children of these workers were born in the United States. In California, families of mixed legal status are not uncommon. In designing policies for less-educated workers, policymakers may want to also consider the impact that these policies may have on the families of these workers.

## **Definitions:**

*“Less-Educated Workers” = Workers age 19 or over without a high school diploma or equivalent certification.*

*“Better-Educated Workers” = Workers age 19 or over with a high school diploma or more.*

*“Adults on Public Assistance” = persons age 19 or over who received welfare payments any time during the previous year. These public assistance programs include Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Assistance Program, Emergency Assistance, Refugee Assistance, or Indian Assistance. It does not include Food Stamps or Social Security Insurance (SSI).*

# Age, Ethnicity, Gender, & Region

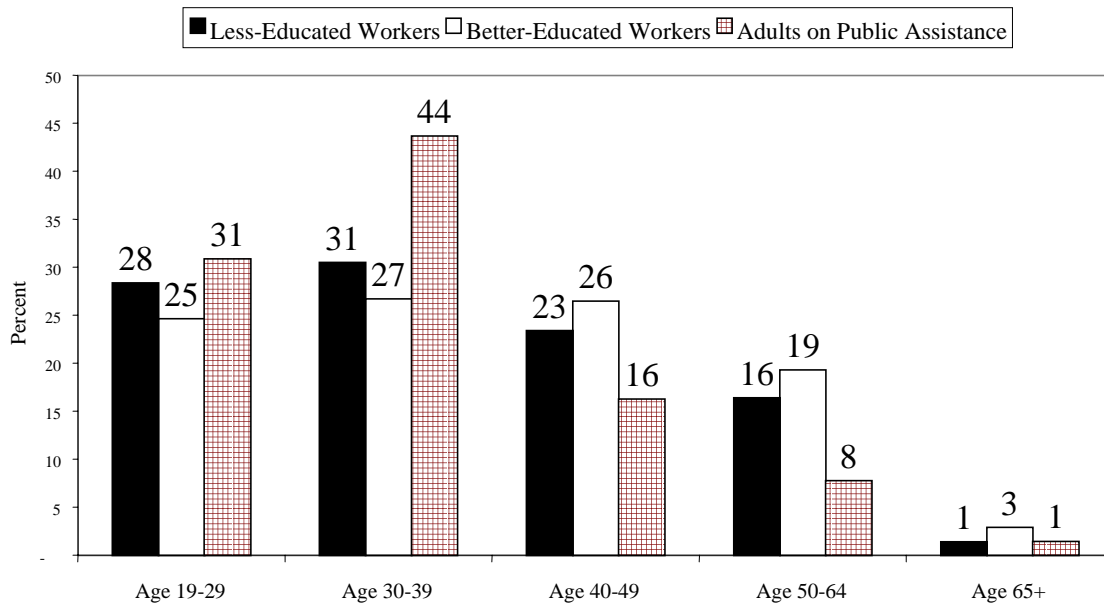
Table 1

## Age Distribution

	<i>Less-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Better-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Adults on Public Assistance</i>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Age 19-29	712,107	28	3,348,833	25	147,327	31
Age 30-39	766,442	31	3,624,816	27	208,541	44
Age 40-49	587,492	23	3,598,117	26	77,684	16
Age 50-64	411,308	16	2,622,224	19	37,075	8
Age 65+	34,701	1	393,498	3	6,834	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>
Median Age:	36		39		33	

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
 Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

## Age Distribution Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

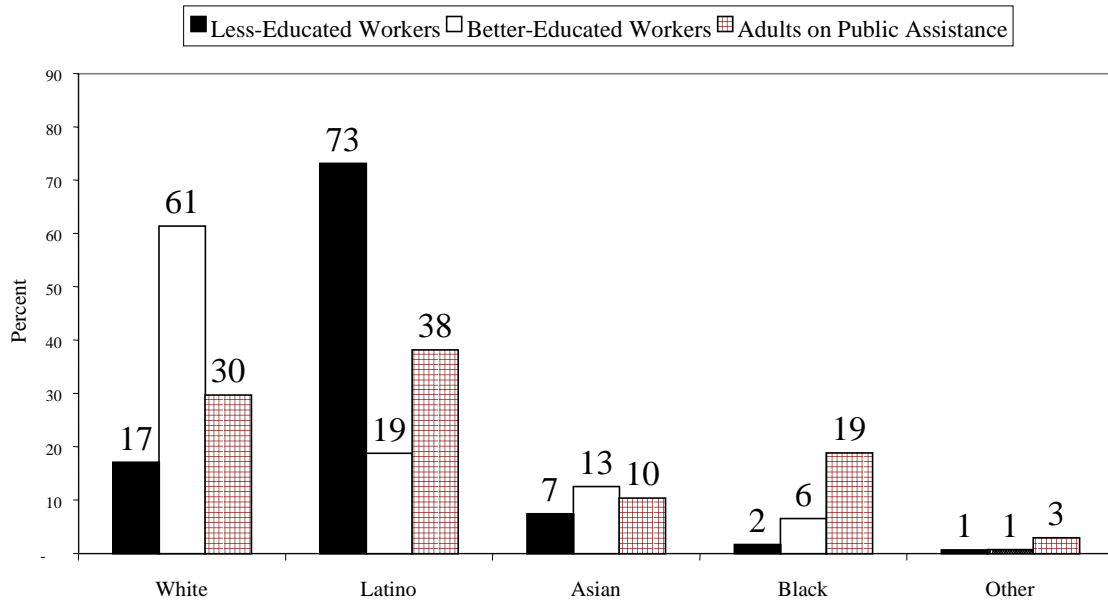
Table 2

Race & Ethnic Distribution

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
White	429,320	17	8,343,416	61	141,855	30
Latino	1,838,118	73	2,553,810	19	182,283	38
Asian	187,285	7	1,708,639	13	49,445	10
Black	41,935	2	881,741	6	89,974	19
Other	15,391	1	99,883	1	13,904	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
 Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Ethnic Distribution**  
 Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



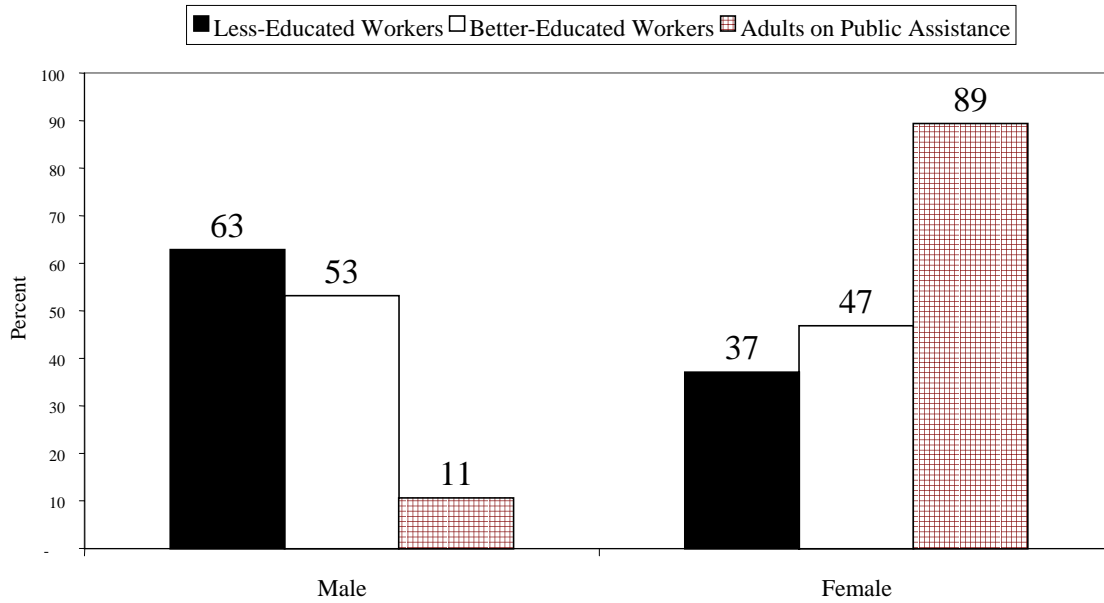
Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

Table 3  
Gender

	<i>Less-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Better-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Adults on Public Assistance</i>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Male	1,579,505	63	7,222,943	53	50,537	11
Female	932,545	37	6,364,545	47	426,923	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Gender**  
**Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999**



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

Table 4  
Region of Residence

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Sacramento Valley	72,179	3	717,359	5	51,651	11
Bay Area	346,840	14	3,236,628	24	30,513	6
San Joaquin Valley	215,758	9	850,276	6	52,819	11
Los Angeles & Orange Counties	1,180,748	47	4,755,192	35	141,477	30
San Diego	145,993	6	1,149,231	8	32,945	7
Rest of California	550,532	22	2,878,802	21	168,055	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

**Counties Included in the Region:**

Sacramento Valley: El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, & Yolo.

Bay Area: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, & Sonoma.

San Joaquin Valley: Kern, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, & Tulare.

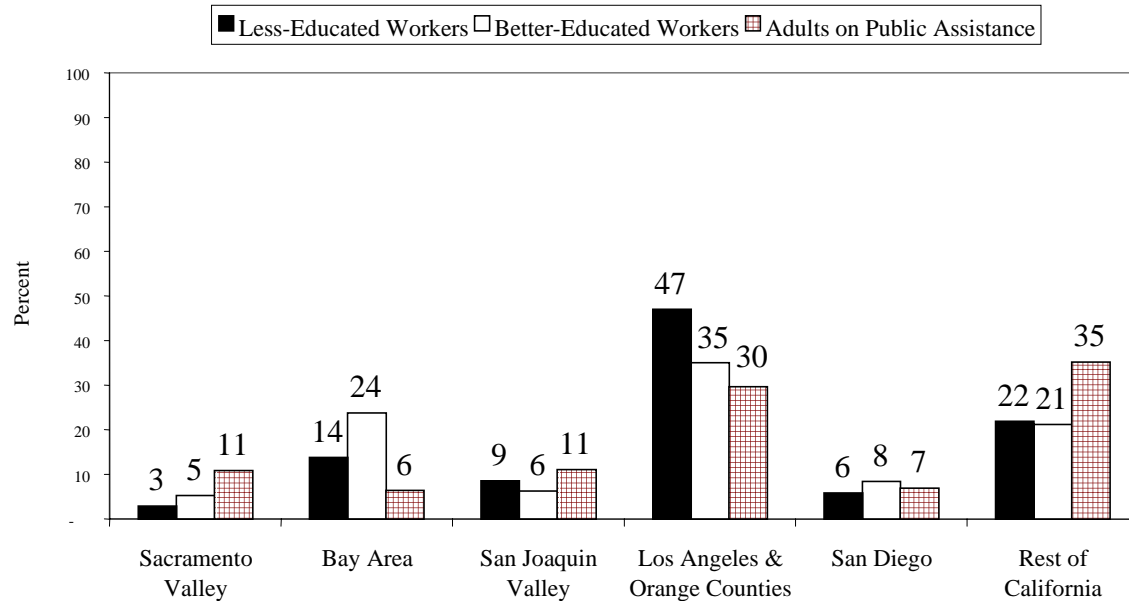
Los Angeles Region: Los Angeles, & Orange Counties.

San Diego: San Diego County.

Please note that the "Rest of California" category includes many counties that would normally be included in the other listed regions. This is a limitation of the data.

Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

Region of Residence  
Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.



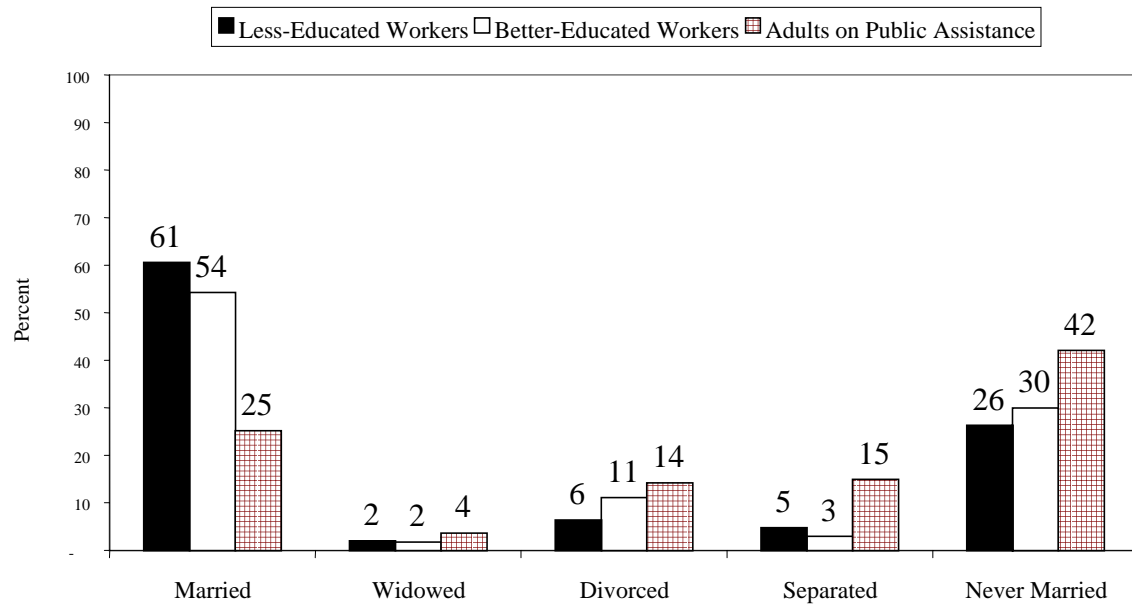
# Family Structure

Table 5  
Marital Status

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Married	1,521,050	61	7,372,705	54	120,115	25
Widowed	49,822	2	230,127	2	17,451	4
Divorced	160,059	6	1,511,629	11	67,872	14
Separated	119,552	5	400,248	3	71,335	15
Never Married	661,566	26	4,072,779	30	200,687	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Marital Status**  
**Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999**



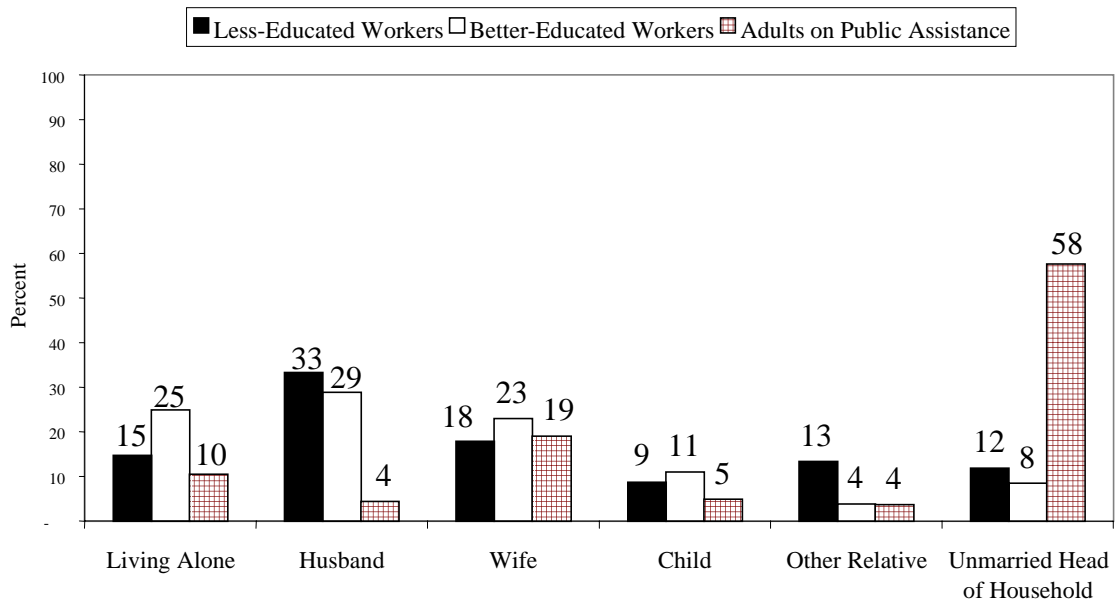
Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

Table 6  
Family Role

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Living Alone	370,808	15	3,381,106	25	49,987	10
Husband	837,554	33	3,927,108	29	20,786	4
Wife	450,430	18	3,121,875	23	90,847	19
Child	217,707	9	1,490,907	11	23,407	5
Other Relative	336,598	13	514,703	4	17,541	4
Unmarried Head of Household	298,952	12	1,151,788	8	274,892	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

Family Role  
Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

# Employment Characteristics

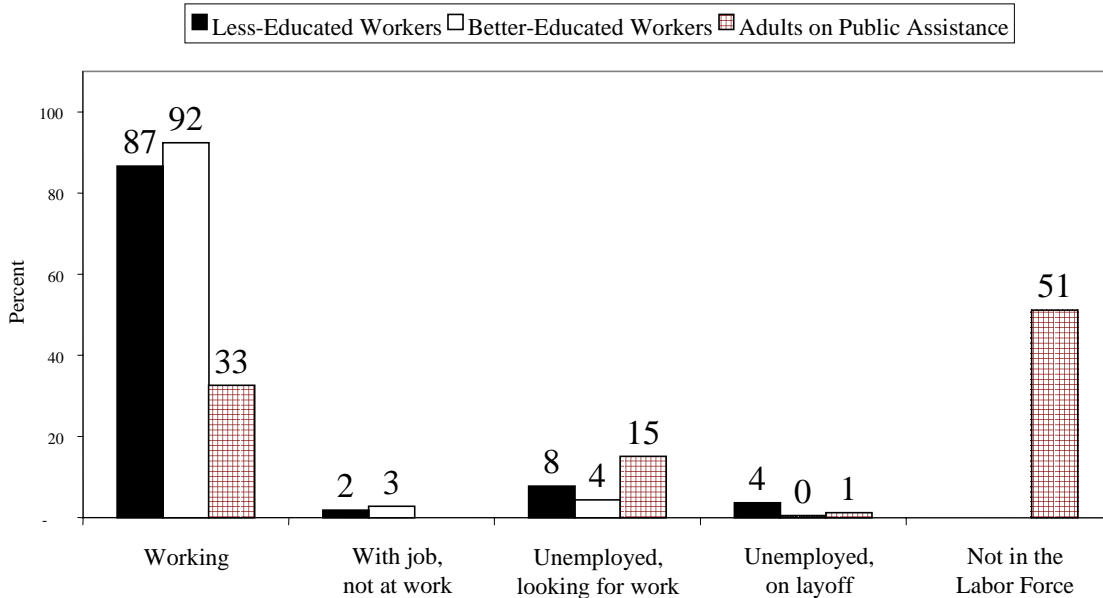
Table 7

## Current Employment Status

	<i>Less-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Better-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Adults on Public Assistance</i>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Working	2,177,868	87	12,562,345	92	155,664	33
With job, not at work	46,223	2	379,728	3		
Unemployed, looking for work	194,689	8	586,688	4	72,020	15
Unemployed, on layoff	93,270	4	58,728	0	5,660	1
Not in the Labor Force					244,118	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
 Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

## Current Employment Status Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



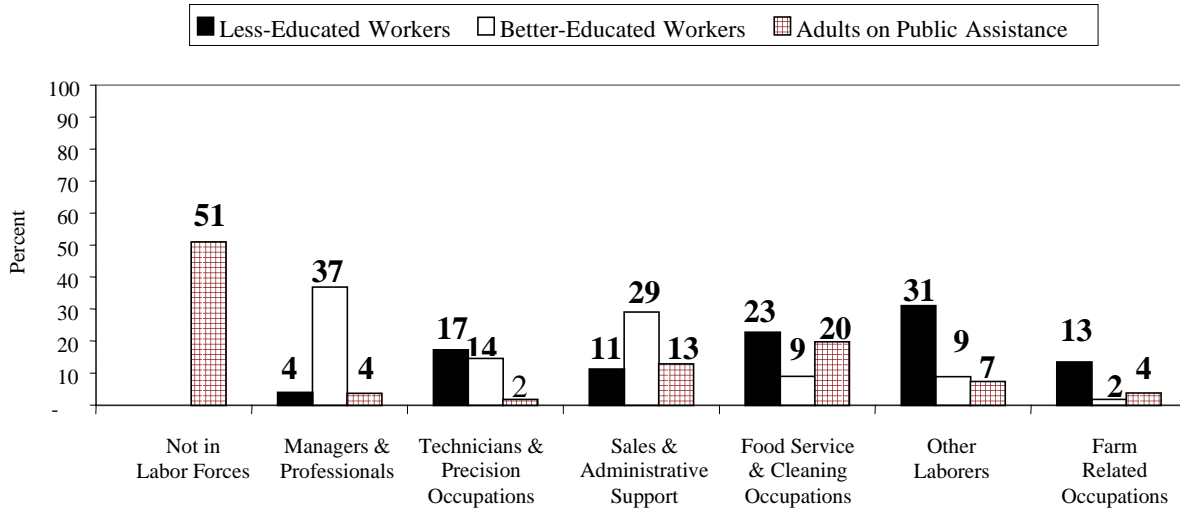
Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

Table 8  
Current Occupation

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Not in Labor Force					243,582	51
Managers & Professionals	100,103	4	5,008,156	37	17,213	4
Technicians & Precision Occupations	433,568	17	1,968,274	14	8,372	2
Sales & Administrative Support	282,760	11	3,942,190	29	61,439	13
Food Service & Cleaning Occupations	570,691	23	1,217,167	9	94,308	20
Other Laborers	780,763	31	1,192,479	9	35,071	7
Farm Related Occupations	338,155	13	239,086	2	17,475	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,506,040</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,567,352</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

Current Occupation  
Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

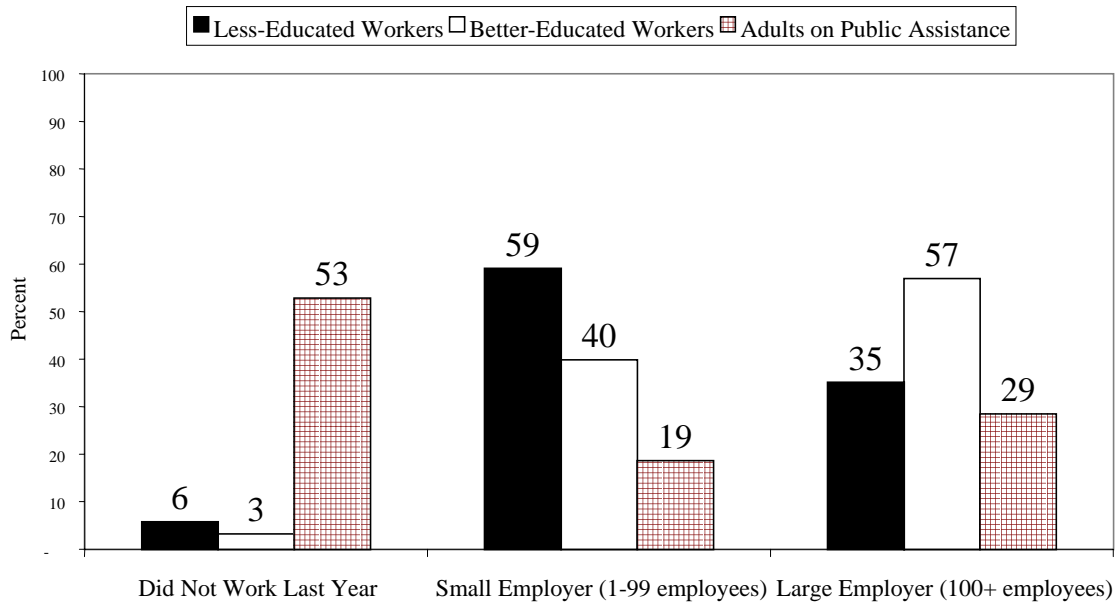
See the appendix for a detailed listing of the occupations.

Table 9  
Employer Size

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Did Not Work Last Year	145,504	6	435,574	3	252,187	53
Small Employer (1-99 employees)	1,483,382	59	5,418,023	40	89,078	19
Large Employer (100+ employees)	883,164	35	7,733,891	57	136,196	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

Employer Size  
Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



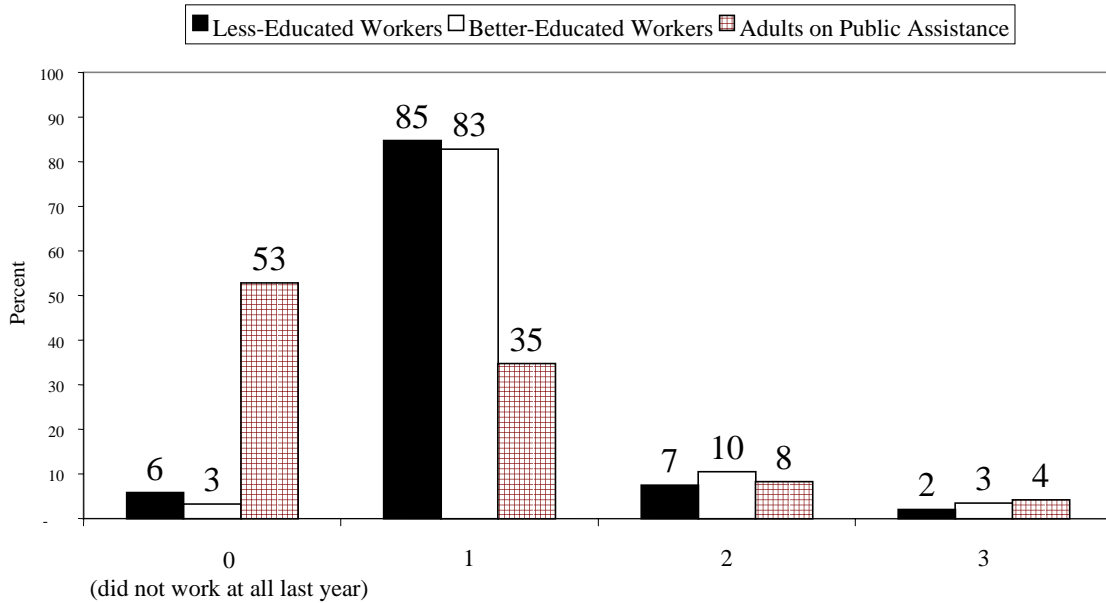
Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

Table 10  
 Worked for How Many Employers Last Year?

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
0 (did not work at all last year)	145,504	6	435,574	3	252,187	53
1	2,128,957	85	11,259,714	83	165,813	35
2	186,351	7	1,424,460	10	39,485	8
3	51,238	2	467,741	3	19,976	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
 Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

Worked for How Many Employers Last Year?  
 Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



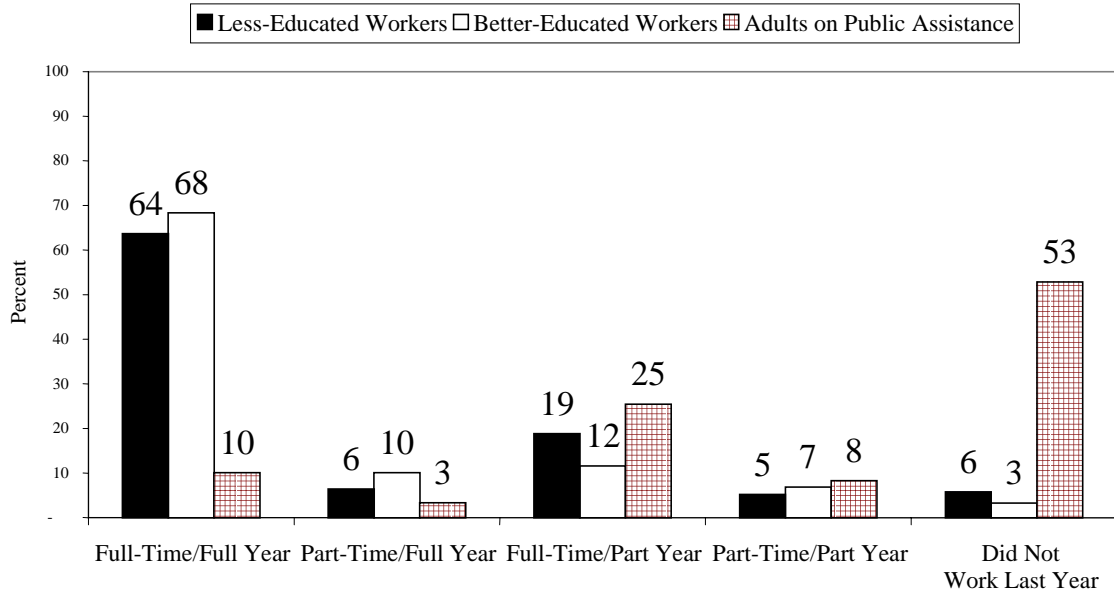
Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

Table 11  
Work Status

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Full-Time/Full Year	1,599,937	64	9,278,039	68	48,270	10
Part-Time/Full Year	161,048	6	1,370,399	10	15,914	3
Full-Time/Part Year	473,982	19	1,578,662	12	121,470	25
Part-Time/Part Year	131,580	5	924,816	7	39,620	8
Did Not Work Last Year	145,504	6	435,574	3	252,187	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

Work Status  
Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

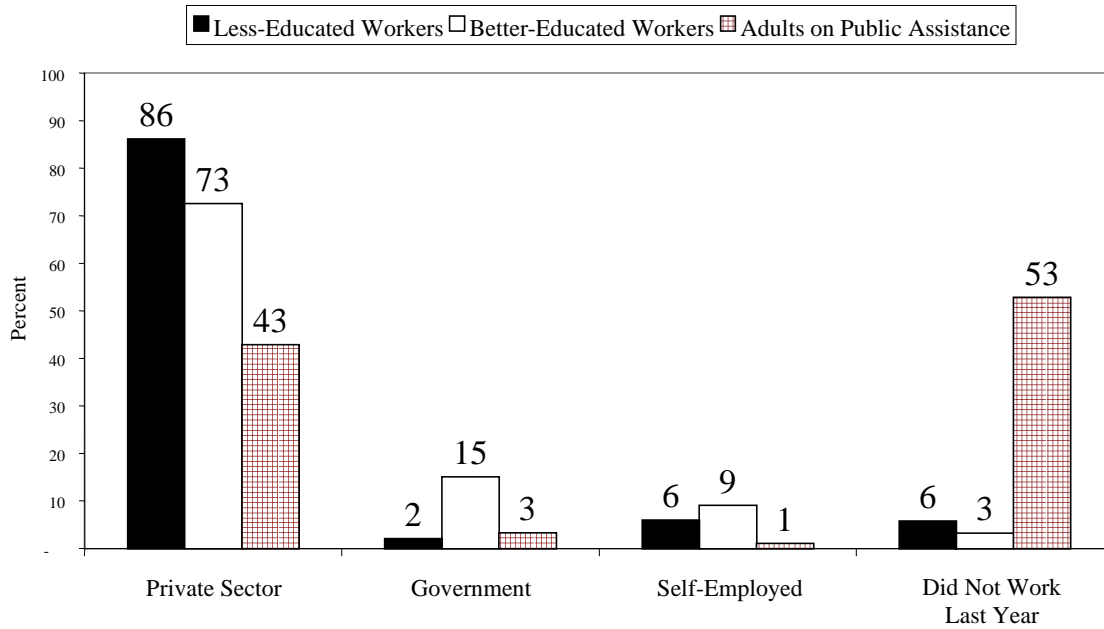
A “full-time” worker is one who worked 35 hours or more per week.  
A “full-year” worker is one who worked 50 weeks or more per year.

Table 12  
Employer Type

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Private Sector	2,165,001	86	9,861,098	73	204,513	43
Government	51,323	2	2,047,257	15	15,773	3
Self-Employed	150,222	6	1,229,588	9	4,988	1
Did Not Work Last Year	145,504	6	435,574	3	252,187	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,573,517</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Employer Type**  
Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.



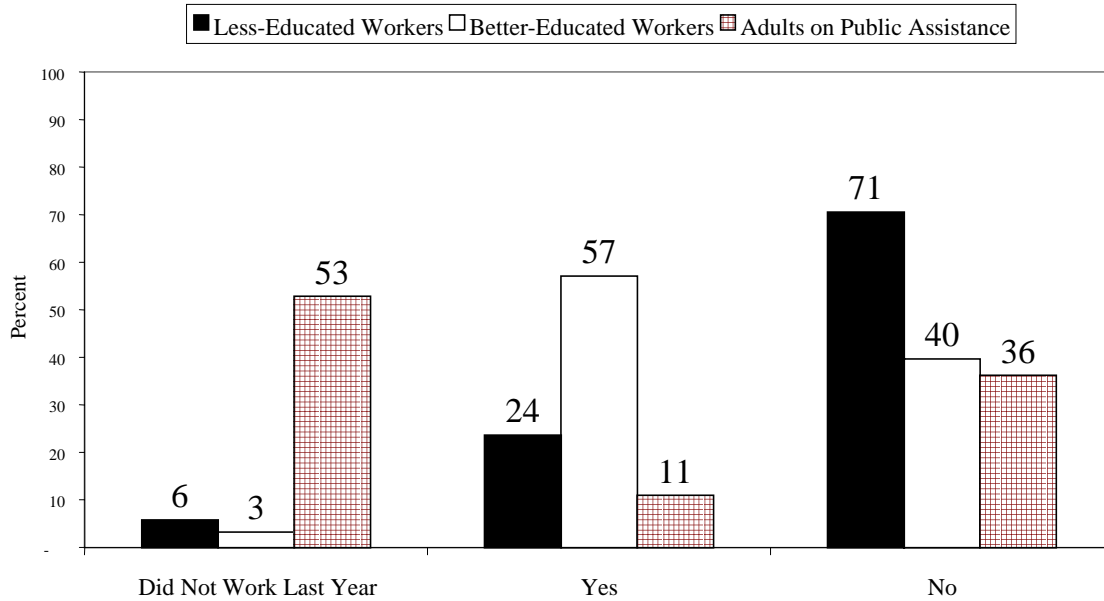
# Pension at Work

Table 13  
Existence of Pension Plan at Work

	<i>Less-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Better-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Adults on Public Assistance</i>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Did Not Work Last Year	145,504	6	435,574	3	252,187	53
Yes	594,808	24	7,761,420	57	52,303	11
No	1,771,738	71	5,390,494	40	172,971	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

## Existence of Pension Plan at Work Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

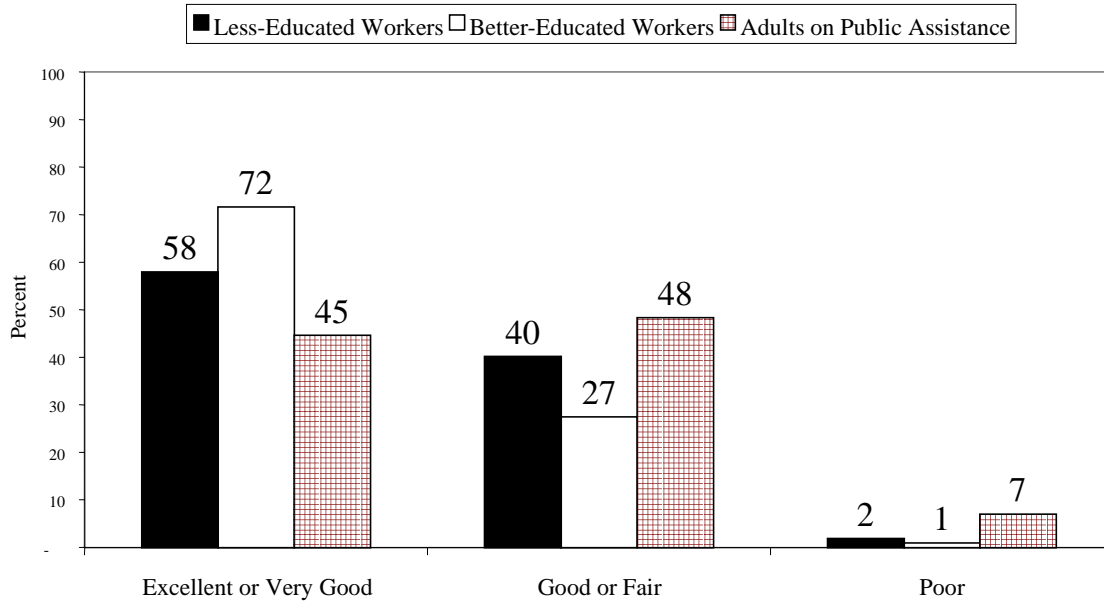
# Health Condition and Insurance

Table 14  
Health Condition

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Excellent or Very Good	1,456,001	58	9,728,796	72	213,139	45
Good or Fair	1,009,222	40	3,729,476	27	230,779	48
Poor	46,826	2	129,216	1	33,542	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Health Condition**  
Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



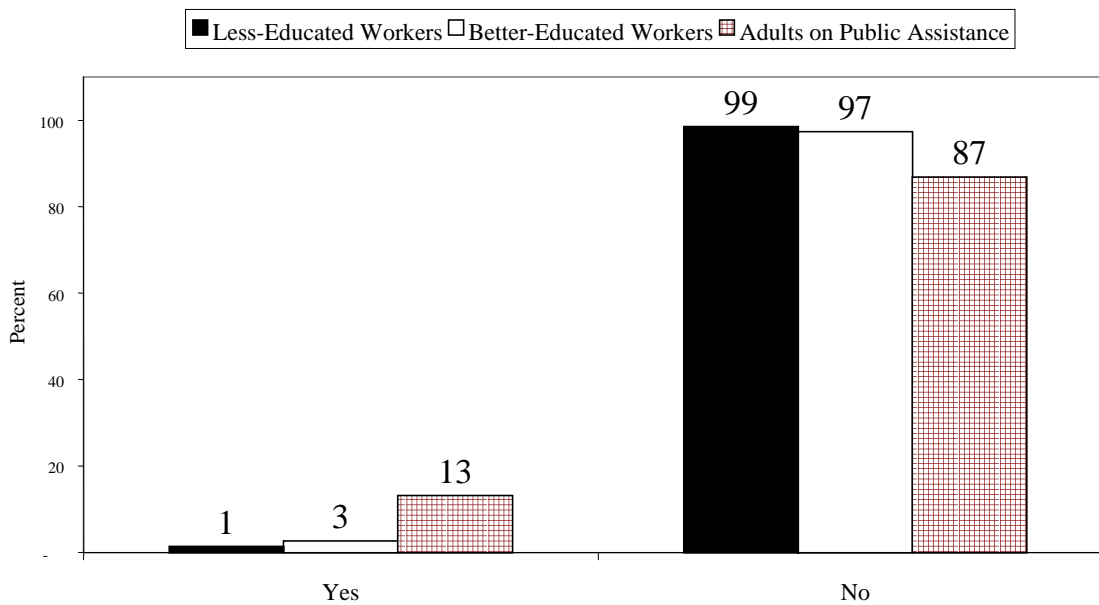
Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

**Table 15**  
**Health or Disability Limits Amount of Work**

	<i>Less-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Better-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Adults on Public Assistance</i>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Yes	35,703	1	359,892	3	62,764	13
No	2,476,347	99	13,227,596	97	414,697	87
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Health or Disability Limits Amount of Work**  
**Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999**



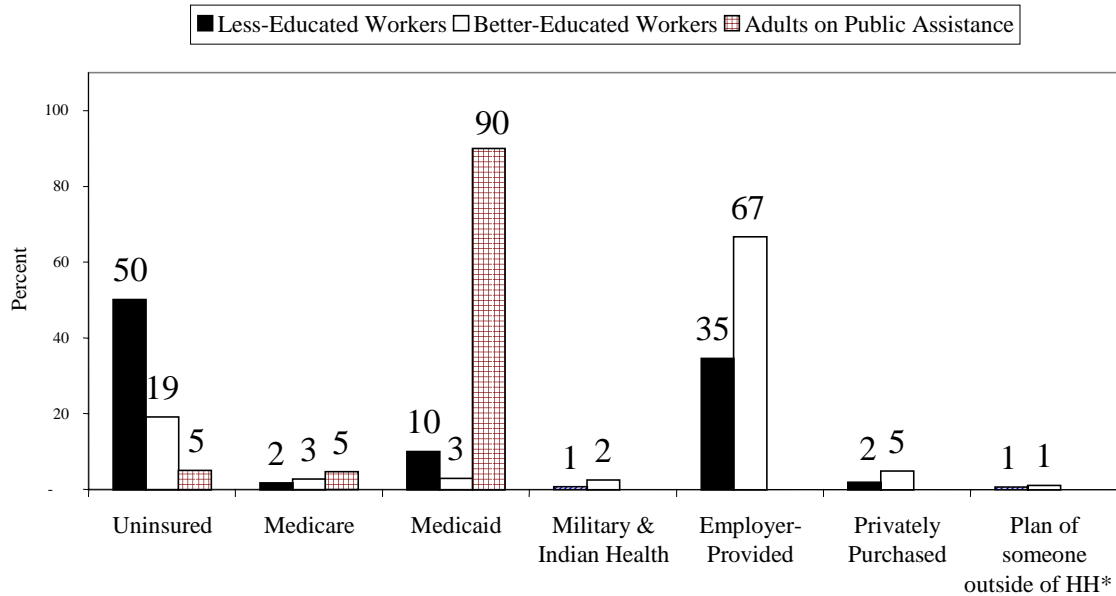
Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

Table 16  
Type of Health Insurance

	<i>Less-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Better-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Adults on Public Assistance</i>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Uninsured	1,259,697	50	2,594,839	19	24,044	5
Medicare	44,574	2	369,119	3	22,374	5
Medicaid	251,619	10	401,694	3	429,793	90
Military & Indian Health	17,816	1	338,801	2		
Employer-Provided	870,664	35	9,066,985	67		
Privately Purchased	48,511	2	661,969	5		
Plan of someone outside of HH*	14,746	1	144,838	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,507,628</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,578,246</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>476,211</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
 Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.  
 \*HH – Head of Household.

**Health Insurance**  
**Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999**



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
 \*HH – Head of Household

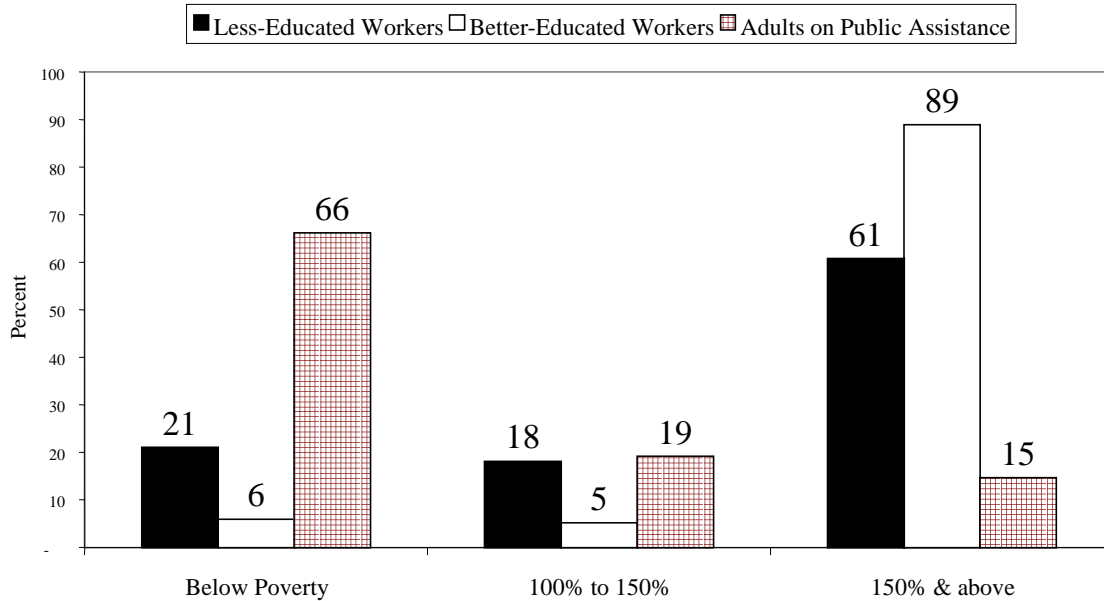
# Poverty & Public Assistance

Table 17  
Poverty Level

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Below Poverty	529,226	21	807,769	6	315,987	66
100% to 150%	455,743	18	701,870	5	91,411	19
150% & above	1,527,081	61	12,077,849	89	70,062	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Poverty Level**  
**Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999**



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

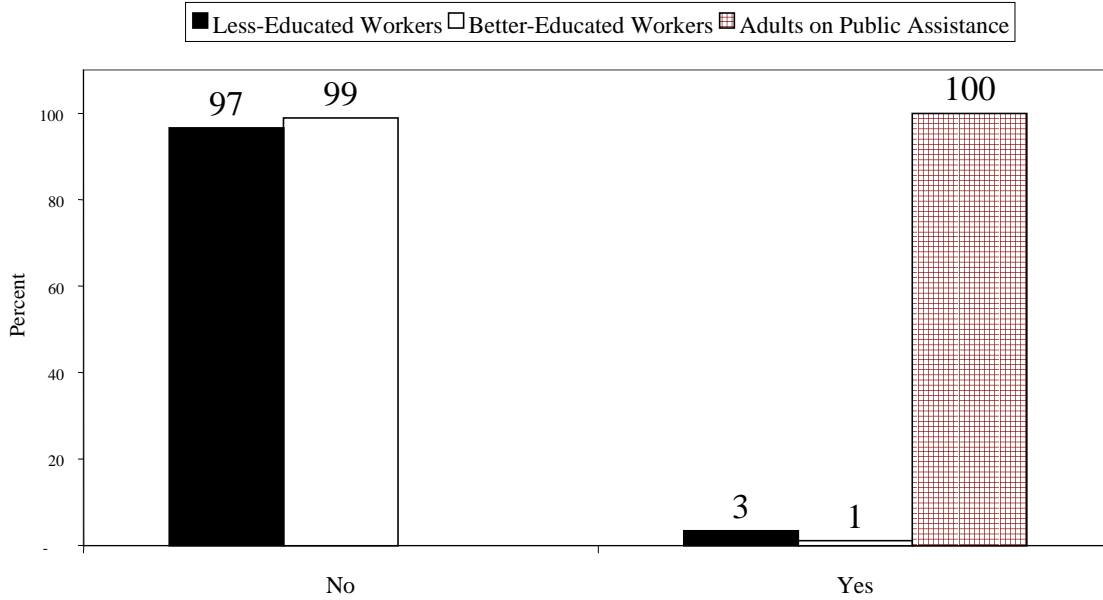
The Census Bureau determines the poverty level. A family of three is considered to be below the federal poverty level if their combined family income is below \$14,150.

**Table 18**  
**On Public Assistance Any Time Last Year**

	<i>Less-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Better-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Adults on Public Assistance</i>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
No	2,427,087	97	13,439,108	99		
Yes	84,963	3	148,380	1	477,460	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
 Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**On Public Assistance Any Time Last Year**  
**Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999**



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

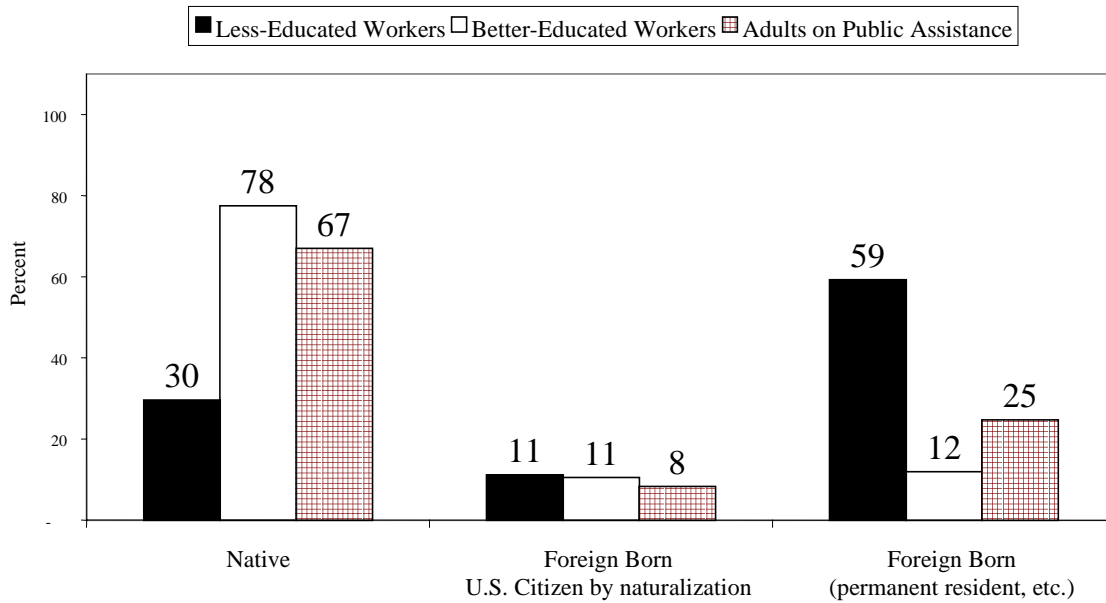
# Citizenship & Nativity

Table 19  
Citizenship Status

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Native	742,999	30	10,532,646	78	320,042	67
Foreign Born, U.S. Citizen by naturalization	278,925	11	1,428,853	11	39,558	8
Foreign Born (permanent resident, etc.)	1,490,126	59	1,625,989	12	117,861	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Foreign Born not U.S. Citizens can be legally here, i.e., Permanent Residents, or undocumented.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Citizenship**  
Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



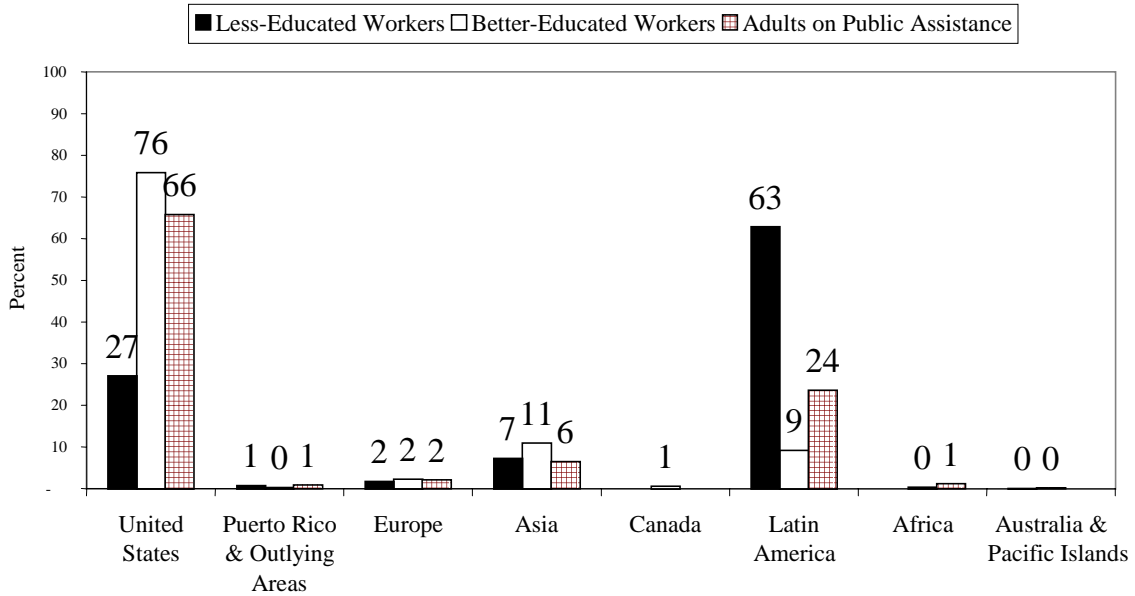
Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

Table 20  
Nativity

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
United States	680,686	27	10,306,693	76	313,958	66
Puerto Rico & Outlying Areas	18,123	1	39,344	0	4,169	1
Europe	44,110	2	312,544	2	10,094	2
Asia	182,123	7	1,493,223	11	30,937	6
Canada			76,718	1		
Latin America	1,578,826	63	1,256,341	9	112,558	24
Africa			43,209	0	5,745	1
Australia & Pacific Islands	1,341	0	24,290	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,505,209</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,552,362</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
 Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Nativity or Place of Birth**  
**Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999**



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.



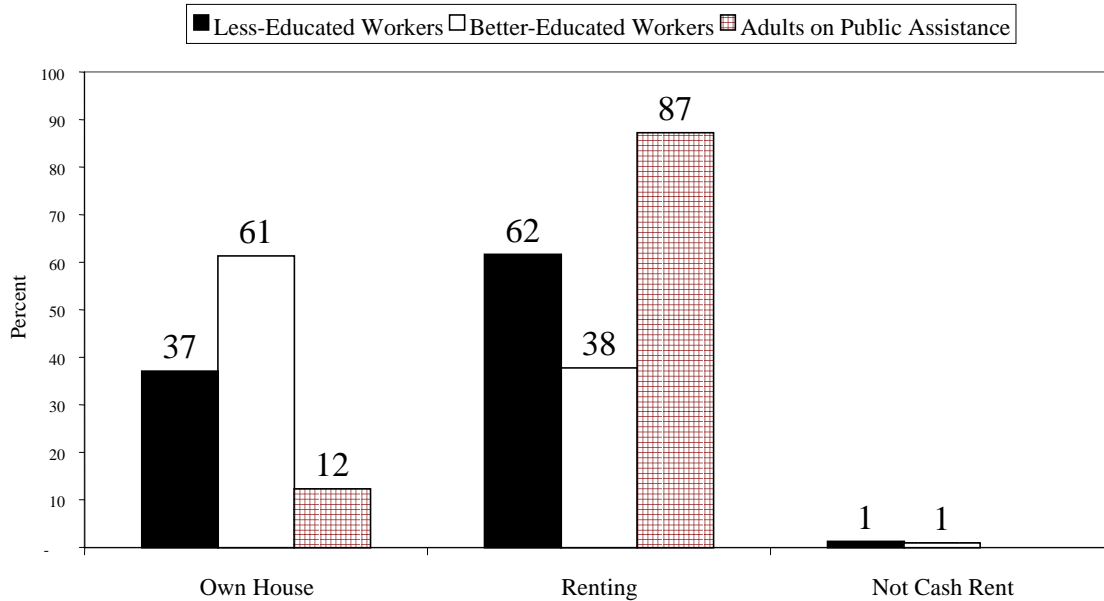
# Home Ownership

Table 21  
Home Ownership

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Own House	932,013	37	8,333,284	61	58,892	12
Renting	1,547,771	62	5,126,960	38	416,494	87
Not Cash Rent	32,266	1	127,244	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>475,385</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Home Ownership**  
Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



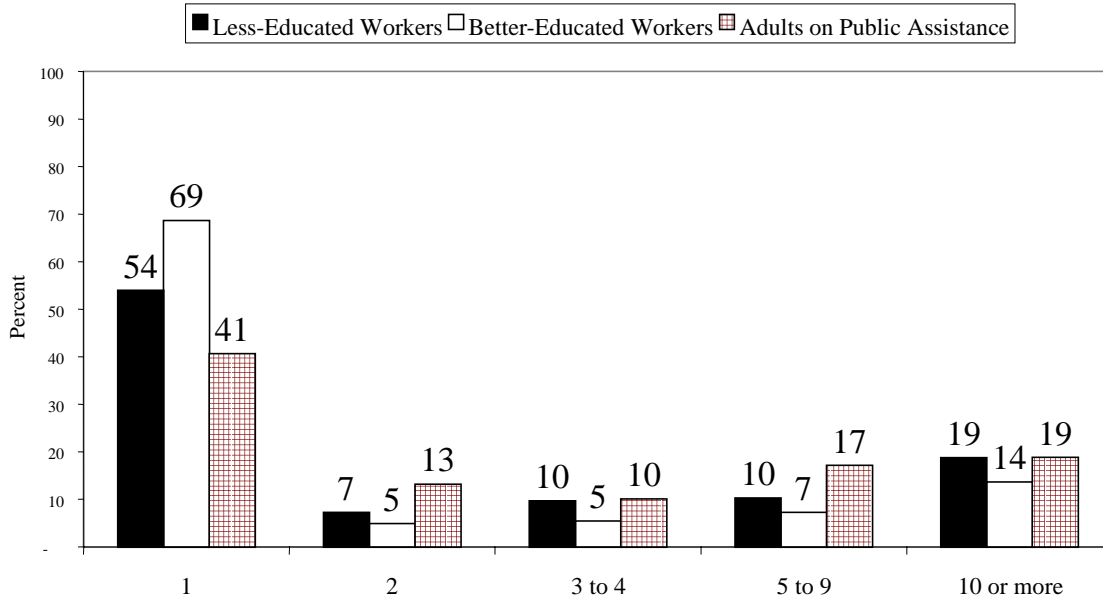
Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

Table 22  
Number of Housing Units in Structure

	Less-Educated Workers		Better-Educated Workers		Adults on Public Assistance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
1	1,355,442	54	9,332,469	69	194,321	41
2	183,186	7	668,916	5	63,044	13
3 to 4	243,296	10	736,734	5	48,072	10
5 to 9	258,863	10	987,410	7	81,952	17
10 or more	471,263	19	1,861,959	14	90,071	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

Number of Housing Units in Structure  
Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999



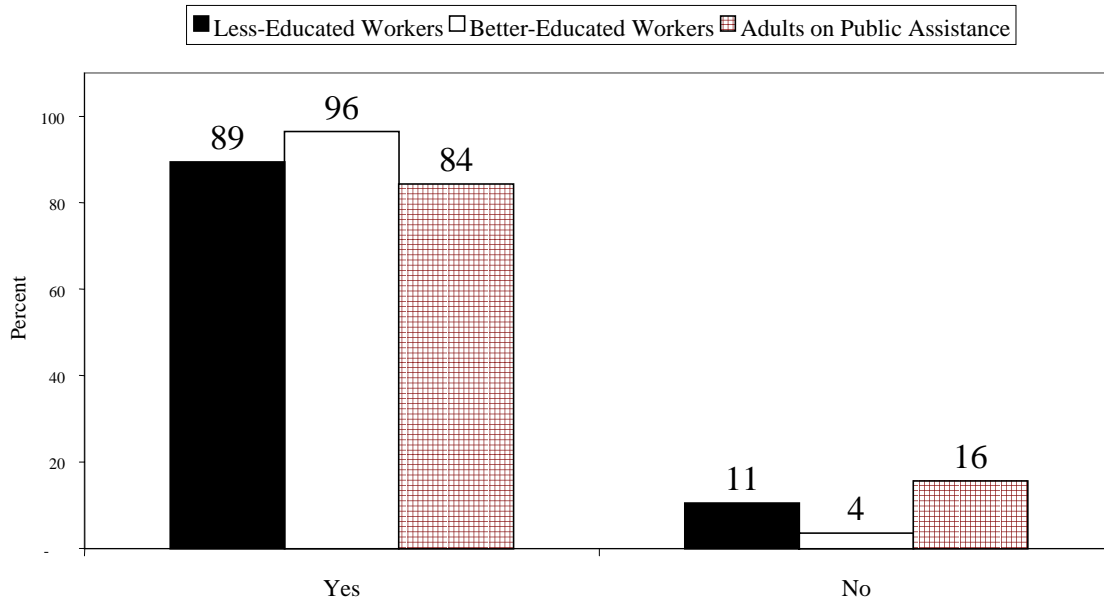
Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

Table 23  
Telephone in Household

	<i>Less-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Better-Educated Workers</i>		<i>Adults on Public Assistance</i>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Persons	%
Yes	2,247,379	89	13,111,082	96	402,737	84
No	264,670	11	476,407	4	74,723	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,512,050</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,587,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>477,460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.  
Figures above are of persons over the age of 18 in California, 1999.

**Telephone in Household**  
**Persons Over the Age of 18, California 1999**



Source: 1999 March Current Population Survey.

## Appendix: Occupational Categories

Managers & Professionals	Public administration Other executive Management related occupations Engineers Mathematical and computer scientists Natural scientists Health diagnosing occupations Health assessment & treating occupations Teachers, college and university Teachers, except college and university Lawyers and judges Other professional specialty occupations
Technicians & Precision Occupations	Health technologists and technicians Engineering and science technicians Technicians, except health, engineering, & science Protective service occupations (except 88B-92) Mechanics and repairers Construction trades Other precision production occupations
Sales & Administrative Support	Supervisors, proprietors, sales Sales representatives, finance, & business Sales reps, commodities, except retail Sales workers, retail & personal services Sales related occupations Supervisors - administrative support Computer equipment operators Secretaries, stenographers, and typists Financial records, processing occupations Mail and message distributing Other administrative support, incl clerical
Food Service & Cleaning Occupations	Private household service occupations Food service occupations Health service occupations Cleaning and building service occupations Personal service occupations
Other Laborers	Machine operators & tenders, not precision Fabricator, assembler, inspector, sampler Motor vehicle operators Other transportation & material moving Construction laborer Freight, stock and material handlers Other laborers
Farm Related Occupations	Farm operators and managers Farm workers and related occupations