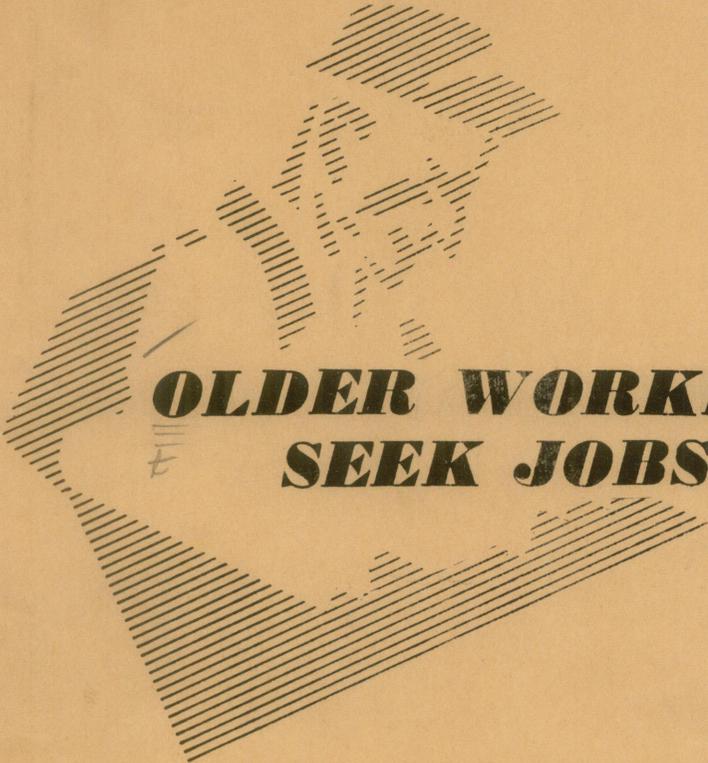


Older workers (1951)



**OLDER WORKERS
SEEK JOBS**

**Survey in Four
Public Employment
Service Offices**

August 1951

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Maurice J. Tobin, Secretary

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Division of Reports and Analysis

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Under the stimulus of expanding manpower requirements in an emergency, employment is expected to rise to all-time highs in 1951 and 1952. Attaining these levels will require that we make the wisest and most effective use of our labor resources. Older persons, both those currently seeking work and those not now in the labor market, constitute an extensive reservoir of trained manpower. During World War II when job opportunities were opened to older workers on an unprecedented scale, 2½ million more than would have been expected under normal conditions entered the employed labor force. The opportunity to participate in the Nation's productive effort must again be made available to older persons, both for their welfare and to strengthen our country's defense program. During the spring of 1950 the Bureau of Employment Security conducted a survey of 342,000 applicants of all ages in local employment service offices in Columbus, Houston, Lancaster, and New York, to determine the extent and nature of the older worker problem. The results of the study are presented here.

OLDER WORKERS SEEK JOBS

"Man wanted—under 40"; "stenographer, not over 35"; "engineer, age limit—50." These phrases reflect the dilemma of age in a youth-conscious world; they epitomize the problem of the older worker who wishes to stay in the productive workforce of the Nation and out of the scrapheap of the "too old."

The United States Employment Service and affiliated State agencies are concerned with this problem because they have a responsibility to assist all workers, without regard to age, to find suitable employment for which they are qualified. They are responsible for the fullest, most effective use of all available manpower resources, and this is particularly important in times of emergency such as face the nation now.

One of the most significant developments in our society in the last century has been the rise in age of the population. In 1900, only 18 out of every 100 persons in the United States had reached their 45th birthday. In 1950, 28 out of every 100 persons were 45 or over. Today there are 42,825,000 persons over 45 in the United States, far too many to be put "on the shelf." From every standpoint such a waste of human beings would be tragic and dangerous.

Through the years, as the population has extended its total-life span, it has decreased its working-life span. At the turn of the century, almost two-thirds of all persons 65 and over were gainfully employed. In April 1950, less than half were working or seeking work. The result is that an ever-growing number of persons are having an ever-longer period of economically nonproductive years. Although retirement at 60 or 65 with an adequate pension may appear to be universally desirable, many persons in the over-60 age group prefer to remain productively employed but are barred from doing so by

public prejudice and employer resistance. In addition to these oldsters, there is a larger group of older workers, in the 45-65 bracket, from whom age discrimination extracts an even heavier toll. These workers must have employment; their and their families' livelihood depends on it, since generally they are not old enough to qualify for retirement pay, even if they have been fortunate enough to be eligible for adequate pension payments.

Nature and Extent of Survey

During the spring of 1950, the Bureau of Employment Security sponsored studies by affiliated State employment security agencies of the problems of unemployment among older-worker job applicants in five local employment service offices: Columbus, Ohio; Houston, Texas; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Los Angeles, California; and New York, New York. The studies were directed not only to the collection of information on the labor market aspects of unemployment among older workers, but also to the development and testing of specialized counseling and placement techniques which would help older workers get suitable employment. The results of this latter phase have already been incorporated in the operating Manual of the Employment Service system. The present analysis deals only with the labor market aspects of the study and is based on information obtained at four of the five public employment offices covered in the survey--Columbus, Houston, Lancaster, and New York.

During the course of this survey the characteristics of 342,000 workers of all ages were reviewed; 13,800 job applicants in Columbus, 13,600 in Houston, and 2,700 in Lancaster; in New York information was collected on 249,500 workers claiming unemployment insurance benefits in April 1950, and on an additional 62,400 job

seekers who contacted the employment service placement offices during the week of May 22-26.

Over 13,000 job openings in the four offices were also analyzed so that the patterns of hiring specifications as they relate to age, could be determined.

How Old is "Old"?

From an employment point of view, it is not possible to define an older worker in terms of the number of birthdays he has celebrated. Some athletes may be "older workers" at 30, while skilled craftsmen at twice that age are eagerly sought by employers. At the National Conference on Aging,^{1/} held in Washington, D. C. last year, an older worker was defined as "one who meets with resistance to employment, continued employment, or reemployment solely because of his age." That the concept of an older worker varies widely, depending on occupation, industry, individual qualities, and labor market conditions, was immediately apparent in the Bureau's study. However, for expediency of analysis and presentation in this study, it was necessary to define older workers arbitrarily as those 45 years of age and over.

The Survey Findings

The findings of the survey, so far as the labor market aspects are concerned, demonstrated:

1. While employment opportunities for older workers vary according to conditions in the labor market and are generally better when labor supplies are limited, even in relatively "tight" areas, age restrictions in hiring are common.

2. Once he becomes unemployed, the older worker remains out of a job for a longer period of time than his younger shopmates. His job tenure, however, is no less secure.

^{1/} Conference on Aging, sponsored by the Federal Security Agency, August 13-15, 1950, Washington, D. C.



Courtesy Library of Congress

Type-setting skill is undiminished by his years.

3. There seems to be a tendency for older workers to "gravitate" toward service jobs and skilled occupations. These occupations, along with the unskilled ones, showed the smallest proportion of age restrictions. Employer resistance was heaviest in the clerical, sales, managerial, and professional fields.

4. The concept of the older worker is an elastic one. Age restrictions vary from 25 years in some occupations to 65 in others.

The Older Jobless

In each of the four areas studied, older workers made up a large part of the job applicants--28 percent in Columbus and Houston, 31 percent in New York, and 40 percent in Lancaster. Nationally, according to estimates by the U. S. Bureau of the Census, the same group accounted for 33 percent of the total unemployed.^{2/}

The proportion of job applicants under 24 years of age in the four survey areas was substantially smaller than among the

^{2/} For purposes of this study, all job applicants are assumed to be unemployed.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Unemployed Persons in U.S. 1/ and of Job Applicants in Selected Employment Service Offices by Age Groups -- April 1950 2/

Area and Sex	Number	Percent of Total in Age Group				
		All Ages	14-24	25-44	45-64	65 & Over
Total						
United States	3,535,000	100	29	38	29	4
Columbus	13,758	100	21	50	25	4
Houston	13,592	100	21	51	26	2
Lancaster	2,715	100	22	38	27	13
New York	62,393	100	21	49	27	3
Men						
United States	2,628,000	100	28	37	30	5
Columbus	10,328	100	20	51	26	3
Houston	10,507	100	19	50	28	3
Lancaster	1,625	100	22	37	25	16
New York	29,633	100	23	44	28	5
Women						
United States	887,000	100	32	42	24	2
Columbus	3,430	100	23	53	22	2
Houston	3,085	100	26	54	20	0
Lancaster	1,090	100	23	39	30	8
New York	32,760	100	20	51	27	2

1/ Source: Bureau of the Census, Monthly Report on the Labor Force, April 1950.

2/ Data for Columbus relate to February 1950 and for New York to May 1950.

total unemployed. This reflects, in part, the fact that young job seekers, lacking wage credits under the unemployment insurance programs, do not utilize the Employment Service as a job channel to the same extent as more experienced workers.

Among employment service job applicants, a higher proportion of men were in the older age groups than women. However, in terms of the total labor force, unemployment generally is more widespread among women workers than men. According to a recent Census report (June 1951), 4.2 percent of the total female labor force is unemployed, compared to 2.6 percent of the male labor force. In almost all age groups, there is more unemployment among women than among men; in the 35-54 age groups, unemployment is much higher among women workers than men, and in the 55 and over group it is about the same.

Occupations of Older Workers^{3/}

A review of the occupational distribution of older applicants showed that a

^{3/} Data for New York are related to unemployment insurance claimants and are not strictly comparable to those for other areas.

considerable majority were concentrated in three major groups: skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled. Significant proportions were also found in the service worker group.

Service occupations include such jobs as waiter, beauty operator, household employee, elevator operator, watchman, etc. Many of these are traditionally among the lower-paid occupations. Skilled occupations, as the term is used by Employment Service offices, include the craftsman-type jobs such as bakers, tailors, carpenters, printers, machinists, etc. Semi-skilled occupations include machine operators, assemblers, bus and truck drivers, telephone linemen, appliance servicemen, etc. Unskilled occupations include most types of laborers.

Approximately 2 out of 3 older applicants in Columbus and Houston were in skilled, semiskilled, or unskilled occupational groups. In Lancaster and New York, 3 out of 4 were in these categories. The proportion who were skilled ranged in the four cities from 19 percent to nearly 37 percent; the proportion who were semi-skilled ranged from 11 to 38 percent, and of unskilled from 12 to 30 percent.

In each area except New York, about 18 percent of the older applicants were classified in service occupations. That this group accounted for only 12 percent of older applicants in New York is due largely to the fact that the data obtained there related only to unemployment insurance claimants, and many service workers do not receive unemployment insurance.

Compared to the proportion of older applicants concentrated in skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled, and service occupational groups, the percent they form of professional and managerial, clerical and sales, and entry groups was very low.

Older Workers Shift to Service and Skilled Occupations

Many factors contribute to a change in a worker's occupation as he grows older. Among these are the acquisition of a higher degree of skill with years

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Job Applicants Among Major Occupational Groups by Area, Sex, and Age Group

Area, Sex, and Age Group	Number	Percent of Total							
		All Occ.	Prof. & Manag.	Cler. & Sales	Serv-ice	Skilled	Semi-Skilled	Un-Skilled	Entry
Columbus, Ohio									
All Applicants	11,831	100	5	16	14	19	20	21	5
Age 45 & over	3,644	100	4	12	18	28	18	20	0
All Men	8,423	100	6	8	10	25	23	23	5
Age 45 & over	2,781	100	4	7	14	34	19	22	0
All Women	3,408	100	3	34	25	4	13	17	4
Age 45 & over	2,545	100	3	27	29	8	16	16	1
Houston, Texas									
All Applicants	13,572	100	5	12	16	25	16	21	5
Age 45 & over	3,960	100	4	10	17	37	11	20	1
All Men	10,507	100	5	6	11	32	13	24	4
Age 45 & over	3,248	100	4	5	15	42	11	22	1
All Women	3,085	100	1	36	32	4	10	12	5
Age 45 & over	612	100	2	35	27	9	12	11	4
Lancaster, Pa.									
All Applicants	2,715	100	3	9	11	17	26	31	3
Age 45 & over	1,090	100	2	5	18	19	26	30	0
All Men	1,625	100	3	8	12	26	20	27	4
Age 45 & over	678	100	2	5	23	28	15	27	0
All Women	1,090	100	1	12	11	3	34	38	1
Age 45 & over	412	100	1	6	9	5	43	35	1
New York, N.Y. 1/									
All Claimants	249,486	100	5	14	10	18	36	16	1
Age 45 & over	103,779	100	4	9	12	25	38	12	0
All Men	148,463	100	6	10	12	21	32	17	2
Age 45 & over	68,645	100	5	7	15	26	34	13	0
All Women	101,023	100	3	21	6	12	43	14	1
Age 45 & over	35,134	100	2	12	7	22	46	11	0

1/ Data for New York include only unemployment insurance claimants.

of experience, the desire to improve his position, physiological changes in the worker which may make change in occupation necessary, technological changes in industry, and, if the older worker loses his job, barriers to reemployment in his usual occupation.

In the four areas studied, occupationally the most significant shifts with advancing age were increases in the proportions of service and skilled workers. Comparison of the occupational distribution of all applicants with that of applicants 45 and over almost invariably showed that for the older worker group the percent in the service and skilled classifications was greater than that for "all applicants," while in practically all other occupational categories the reverse was true.

Considering men and women applicants separately, shifts to skilled and service occupations, leaving smaller proportions in other categories, is even more marked

among men. Older men in the skilled group far outnumbered older men in any other category in Columbus and in Houston. In New York, the proportion of skilled men claimants was substantially greater for the older worker group than for the under-45 worker group. However, more of the older men were semiskilled. The comparatively large proportion of unemployed semiskilled older workers (both men and women) in New York may be attributable in great measure to the seasonal nature of the leading manufacturing industry. Between March and May, estimated employment in apparel and related products dropped 47,000 due to the seasonal lull, thereby causing a sharp rise in the number of claimants.

The sharpest difference between younger and older men in any occupational group was noted in Lancaster. Twenty-three percent of the older men were service workers in contrast to but 4 percent of those under 45 years of age. In each of the other

areas, approximately 15 percent of the older men were service workers, representing marked increases over the proportion of younger men so classified.

Divergence in the social and economic patterns and, perhaps to a lesser extent, in the size and geographical locations of the various areas introduced the most striking differences among the areas in the occupational distribution of both older and younger women. Clerical, sales, and service workers accounted for relatively small proportions of the older women in Lancaster and New York, but for a majority of those in Columbus and Houston. On the other hand, approximately 4 out of every 5 older women applicants in Lancaster and New York were skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled. These groups comprised markedly smaller proportions of the older women in Columbus and Houston. Especially noteworthy was the variation in the proportion of skilled and semiskilled older women among the four areas--from 21 percent in Houston and 24 percent in Columbus to 48 percent in Lancaster and 68 percent in New York. Lancaster's high proportion resulted from the prominence of manufacturing in the area and of the relatively high percentage of women in manufacturing industries. In New York, two major factors were responsible for a marked bias in the occupational distribution--the data relate to claimants only and the preponderance (more than half) of apparel workers among the women claimants.

Changes in the occupational pattern between younger and older women applicants were greatest in the clerical and sales, skilled, and semiskilled groups. The proportion of older women in clerical and sales occupations was smaller, and in skilled and semiskilled larger, than among younger women.

Older Workers Unemployed Longer

In the past several years, the job tenure of the older worker has been strengthened in many ways. Nearly all collective bargaining agreements contain seniority provisions which offer some measure of protection to older employees. However, protection of the employed older worker does not alleviate his problems when he is seeking reemployment. Such



Courtesy Library of Congress

During the war years, women old and young filled gaps in the working force of the country's arsenals.

plans and provisions do not insure continuing employment. Depressed areas and industries develop, even in periods of very high employment. Displacement occurs as individual industries, plants, and occupations shrink or are replaced by others. Such changes throw thousands of workers, including many older workers, into the ranks of the unemployed.

Once unemployed, older workers--and especially those 65 and over--remain out of work for longer periods than younger workers. This fact was illustrated by the length of time applicants had been seeking work in 3 of the areas studied. (Data for New York were biased since they related to claimants only, and included a large number of apparel workers who were laid off in the immediately preceding weeks.)

For example in Houston, 21 percent of the older workers as compared to less than 12 percent of those under 45 years of age had been seeking the assistance of the employment office for more than 20 weeks.

JOB APPLICANTS SEEKING WORK OVER TWENTY WEEKS AS A PERCENT OF ALL APPLICANTS IN AGE GROUPS

APRIL 1950

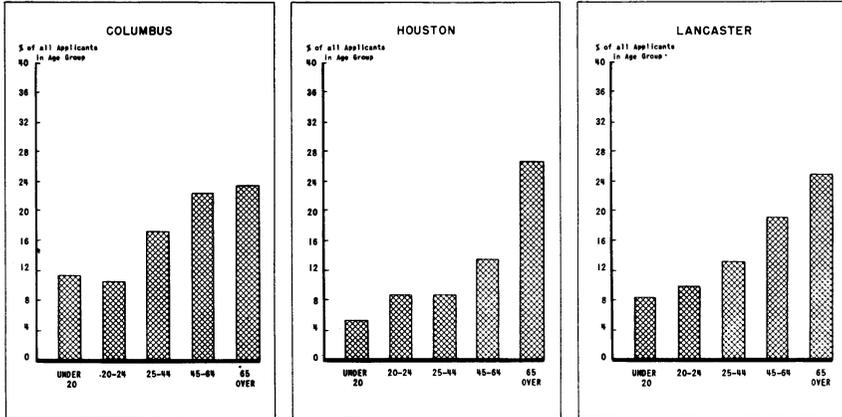


Table 3. Job Applicants Seeking Work Under Four and Over Twenty weeks as a Percent of All Applicants in Age Groups by Area

Age Group	Columbus	Houston	Lancaster	New York ^{1/}
Under 4 Weeks				
Total	24.3	22.1 ^{2/}	26.6	45.7
Under 20	33.7	35.6 ^{2/}	33.1	48.8
20 - 24	27.5	26.3 ^{2/}	32.2	44.1
25 - 44	26.1	23.0	28.7	45.3
45 - 64	18.8	16.2	24.7	47.9
65 & over	18.0	7.5	14.6	36.9
Over 20 Weeks				
Total	17.5	10.1	15.4	10.1
Under 20	11.4	5.3 ^{2/}	8.1	7.6
20 - 24	10.5	8.5 ^{2/}	9.6	10.6
25 - 44	17.2	8.6	13.1	9.5
45 - 64	22.4	13.3	19.1	10.1
65 & over	23.4	26.8	24.9	14.7

^{1/} Data for New York include unemployment insurance claimants only.

^{2/} Includes applicants under 21 years of age.

^{3/} Includes applicants 21 - 24 years of age.

the younger workers (under 45) had been unemployed for so short a time. The proportion unemployed under 4 weeks also covered a wide range among the various age groups--from 8 percent for those 65 years and over up to 36 percent for those under 21 years of age.

Columbus and Lancaster showed similar patterns. In each, a considerably larger proportion of the older than the younger workers had been unemployed for more than 20 weeks.

Restrictive Age Specifications Widespread

Although there is broad divergence in employer attitudes, both formal and informal discriminatory age hiring policies are widespread. In part, such policies stem from a desire to secure the best available workers, which, in the opinion of the employer, oftentimes excludes the older workers. It is a rather general misconception that age is a badge of reduced productivity and efficiency.

The proportion of those unemployed for such a period of time ranged from nearly 27 percent for those 65 years of age and over down to 5 percent for those under 21 years of age. Conversely, 21 percent of those 45 and over had been registered for work less than 4 weeks, whereas 30-percent of

Table 4. Job Orders^{1/} and Openings for Workers Received by Public Employment Offices and Proportion with Age Restrictions by Major Occupational Group, by Sex and Area

Area	Total	Major Occupational Group					
		Prof. & Manag.	Cler. & Sales	Serv-ice	Skilled	Semi-Skilled	Un-Skilled
<u>Total</u>							
<u>Number</u>							
Columbus	3,925	108	1,758	708	410	445	506
Houston	5,295	35	643	1,766	523	624	1,704
Lancaster	511	6	94	188	41	84	98
New York	3,504 ^{2/}	171	664	422	341	1,649	160
<u>Pct. of Tot. with age restr.</u>							
Columbus	72%	73	83	63	45	71	69
Houston	52	86	85	38	46	77	47
Lancaster	60	67	82	42	46	81	58
New York	25	30	54	23	10	9	72
<u>Men</u>							
<u>Number</u>							
Columbus	2,159	93	594	271	397	383	421
Houston	3,626	32	233	689	514	524	1,634
Lancaster	283	5	38	49	41	64	86
New York	764	54	143	236	63	149	58
<u>Pct. of Tot. with age restr.</u>							
Columbus	64%	75	83	42	45	69	64
Houston	50	84	88	30	46	75	45
Lancaster	63	80	82	53	46	80	55
New York	42	28	59	28	46	21	86
<u>Women</u>							
<u>Number</u>							
Columbus	1,776	15	1,164	437	13	62	85
Houston	1,669	3	410	1,077	9	100	70
Lancaster	228	1	56	139	0	20	12
New York	2,282	111	509	183	266	1,080	97
<u>Pct. of Tot. with age restr.</u>							
Columbus	81%	60	82	77	62	82	92
Houston	58	100	83	44	67	90	91
Lancaster	55	0	82	38	0	85	83
New York	24	30	53	16	2	11	67

^{1/} An order is a specific employer's request for one or more workers in one occupation. Data for Columbus and Houston relate to employer orders; data for Lancaster and New York relate to job openings.

^{2/} Includes 97 openings for entry workers which are not shown by occupational group. Also includes 458 openings for either men or women which are not shown under either sex.

It is generally recognized that specifications become less rigid when the labor supply is scarce. However, even in relatively tight labor markets, age hiring restrictions are prevalent. This was evidenced by a study of employer requests for workers and the job openings listed with the public employment offices in three of the four areas conducting the studies. In Columbus, an area of moderate labor surplus in March (unemployment estimated between 5 and 7 percent of the labor force), 72 percent of nearly 4,000 orders^{4/} contained age restrictions. The labor market was tighter in Houston and Lancaster (unemployment estimated between 3 and 5 percent of the labor force) and fewer age restrictions were noted. Nevertheless, 52 percent of 5,300 employer orders in Houston and 60 percent of 500 job openings in Lancaster carried age limitations.

The experience in New York ran contrary to the generally expected increase in rigidity of specifications in areas which have a more abundant labor supply. Despite the fact that a substantial labor surplus (unemployment estimated between 7 and 12 percent in March) existed in New York throughout the period of the survey, only one-fourth of 3,500 job openings showed restrictions on age. New York's relatively low ratio may be attributed largely to the predominance of the needle trades industry which employs large numbers of older persons and which accounts for more than 1 out of every 3 manufacturing workers. The least amount of age discrimination was found in orders in the Needle Trades Office. However, in practice, age restrictions are considerably more common than was indicated by the job openings received. Of some 60,700 placements made by the New York public employment offices during January-March 1950, only 16 percent were placements for persons over 45 years of age.

Age limitations placed on the orders and openings illustrated the varying concepts of an "older worker." For example,

^{4/} An order is a specific employer's request for one or more workers in one occupation.

in Columbus, although more than 4 out of every 5 of the orders containing age restrictions specified workers under 45 years of age, 3 percent placed the maximum age within the range, 55-64. At the other extreme, two-fifths of the restrictive orders called for workers under 35, including more than one-eighth which specified workers under 25. Maximum age contained in the Houston orders followed a similar pattern.

In New York and Lancaster, the ages specified on restricted openings were, on the average, even lower. Although only one-fourth (880) of New York's openings carried an age limitation, 2 out of every 3 of those that were restrictive called for workers under 35. Furthermore, 2 out of every 5 of the 880 job orders specified workers under 25 years of age. The majority of this latter group were for clerical and sales workers.

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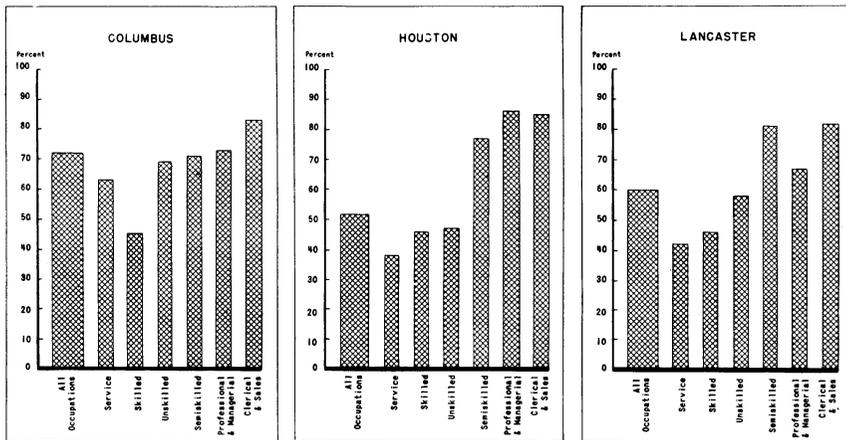
Employer orders received in Columbus and Houston indicated that women workers face more rigid age requirements than men. In the former area, 81 percent of the requests for women workers, compared to 64 percent for men, contained age limitations. The difference was less pronounced in Houston, but still substantial—58 percent for women as compared to 50 percent for men. The reverse situation was true in Lancaster and New York. However, in Lancaster, this resulted from the fact that three-fifths of the openings for women were for service workers—occupations in which fewer age restrictions are imposed; and in New York primarily reflected the lesser amount of age discrimination in the apparel industry. The Queens Industrial Office in New York stated that employers are "usually not restrictive" concerning the age of men in highly skilled occupations but want younger men for unskilled jobs; however, they are "much less willing to hire older women at any skill level."

Less Age Restriction in Skilled and Service Work

No doubt the importance of experience and knowledge causes employers to be less rigid concerning age when hiring workers for highly skilled jobs. Service jobs also

PERCENT OF JOB OPENINGS WITH AGE RESTRICTIONS BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

APRIL 1950



carry fewer age restrictions. But there it is due primarily to the difficulty of attracting younger workers to the less attractive, lower-paying jobs.

All four areas included in the current survey showed that fewer age limitations were placed on skilled and service jobs than on those in other major categories (except semiskilled in New York). Even so, age restrictions were included in more than 3 out of every 5 orders for service workers in Columbus and nearly 1 out of every 2 skilled orders or jobs in Columbus, Houston, and Lancaster. Generally, specifications were the most severe in clerical and sales orders, followed by semiskilled and unskilled.

More Jobs Available in Service and Unskilled Occupations

In absolute numbers, occupations in which opportunities for older worker employment were most favorable were governed to a great extent by the industrial char-

acteristics of the area. For example, nearly three-fifths of the non-restrictive openings in New York were for semiskilled workers, again reflecting the prominence of the apparel industry. However, openings studied in New York excluded those received in the Household Office, which accounted for the small number of service jobs with no age limitations.

Nonrestricted openings for the other three areas indicated that the service and unskilled groups rank first and second, respectively, in the number of jobs for older workers. Such service jobs outnumbered other occupational categories in Houston and Lancaster, and were second in volume in Columbus as well as New York, even though the latter area did not include household jobs. In the three areas together (Columbus, Houston, and Lancaster), unskilled jobs were more than twice the volume in any other group except service. Openings for skilled workers accounted for the third largest nonrestricted group in each of the three areas.

Characteristics of All Applicants

Social and economic conditions in an area exert considerable influence on the composition of the unemployed. This was shown by a review of the characteristics of applicants of all ages registered in the offices covered by the study. While this part of the analysis is not directly related to the problem of the older worker, it does shed some light on the nature of the total unemployed group registered in local employment service offices, of which the older worker is a part.

Two out of every 3 of all applicants in Lancaster as well as of all unemployment insurance claimants in New York (April 1950) were women. An even higher proportion (more than one-half) of the workers studied in New York were women. In sharp contrast, women comprised one-fourth of the estimated total unemployment in the Nation in April 1950, according to the Bureau of the Census. However, in Columbus and Houston, it was found that the proportion of women among job seekers did not vary significantly from the national average among the unemployed.

A considerable difference existed between Columbus and the other three areas in the proportion of veterans among job seekers. More than two-fifths of the men in Columbus as compared to less than one-third in Houston, Lancaster, and New York were veterans.

Still greater variation prevailed among the areas in the proportion of nonwhites

among workers applying for employment--from less than 1 out of 20 in Lancaster to 1 out of 5 in Columbus and 1 out of 4 in Houston and New York. A partial explanation lies in the different racial distribution of the population in these areas. For example, only 2 percent of Lancaster's total residents in contrast to 22 percent of the population in Houston were nonwhite (1940 data). However, other factors are the job-hunting habits and the industrial and occupational characteristics of nonwhite workers in the various areas. In 1947, less than 10 percent of the residents of Columbus and New York were nonwhite according to Census reports.

Handicapped workers also appeared in varying degrees among the job seekers in the four areas. Lancaster again had the smallest proportion--less than 3 percent. At the other extreme, 1 out of every 10 applicants in Columbus had some type of physical handicap which narrowed the possibility of his obtaining suitable employment.

Persons claiming unemployment insurance benefits accounted for slightly less than one-half of the job seekers in Lancaster and more than three-fifths of those in Columbus and Houston. In New York, 2 out of every 3 persons contacting the placement offices during the week in May were claiming benefits. The higher proportion in New York was attributable in part to the seasonal nature of the needle trades industry. Between March and April, claimants from this industry experienced a gain of 40 percent.

