

EMPLOYER NEEDS SURVEY RESULTS



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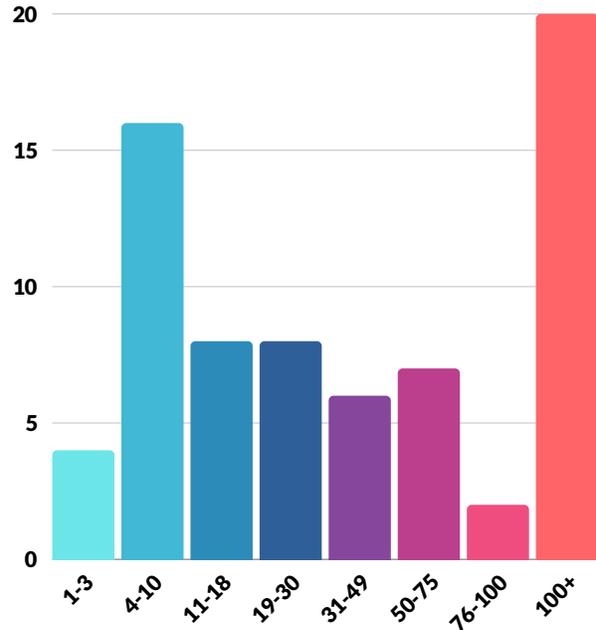
Accredited Chamber
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SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

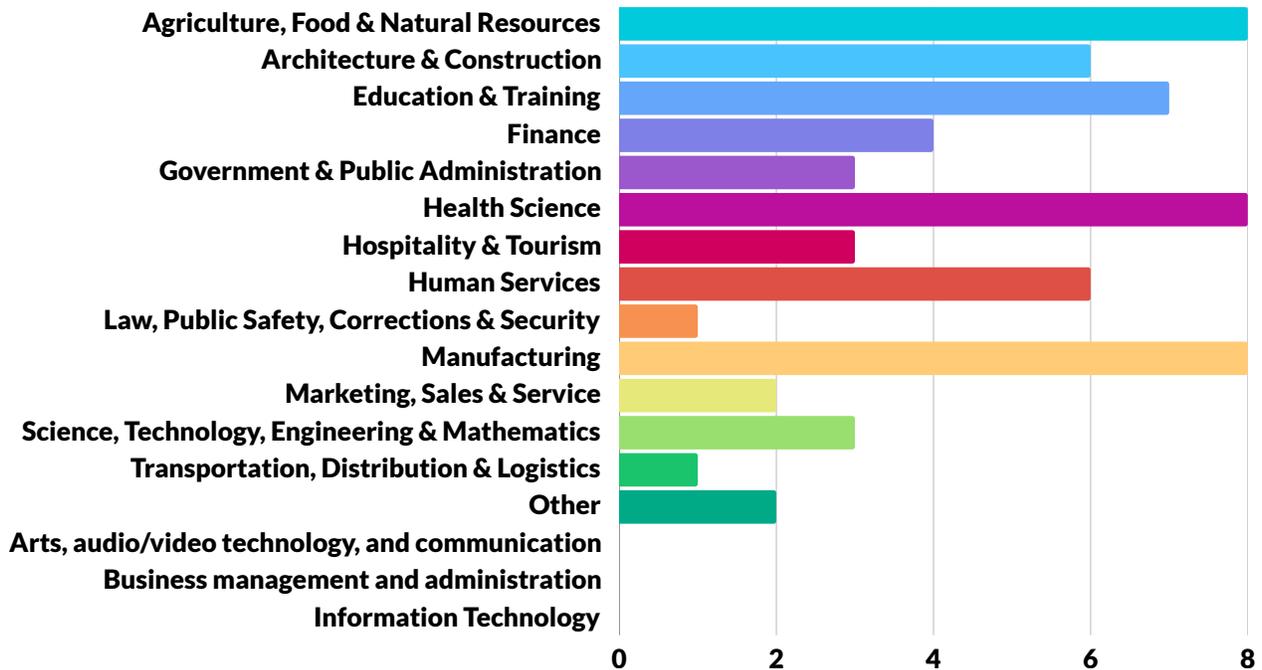
Our 2025 Employer Needs Survey asked a variety of questions in an effort to help our Workforce Advisory Council to establish goals and a plan of work to address our members' business needs. Demographic questions were included to determine the businesses that participated.

A total of 71 companies completed the survey anonymously and the data on this page indicates the company size and industry of those companies.

Company Size

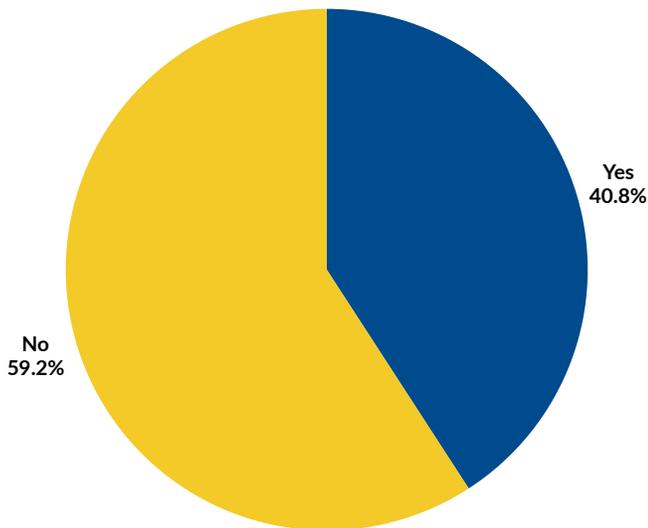


Surveys completed by Industry

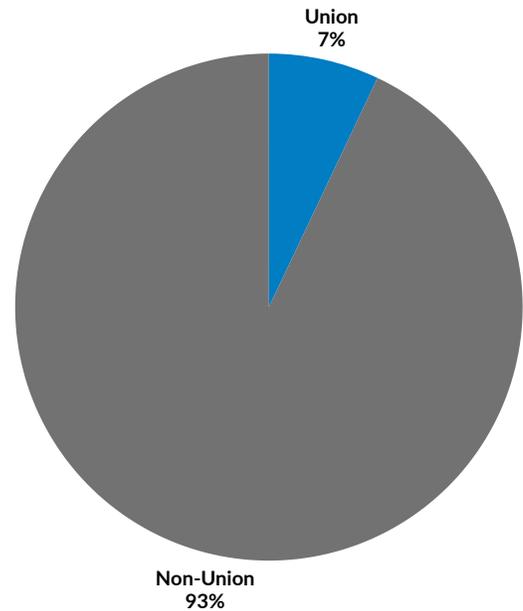


DEMOGRAPHICS CONTINUED...

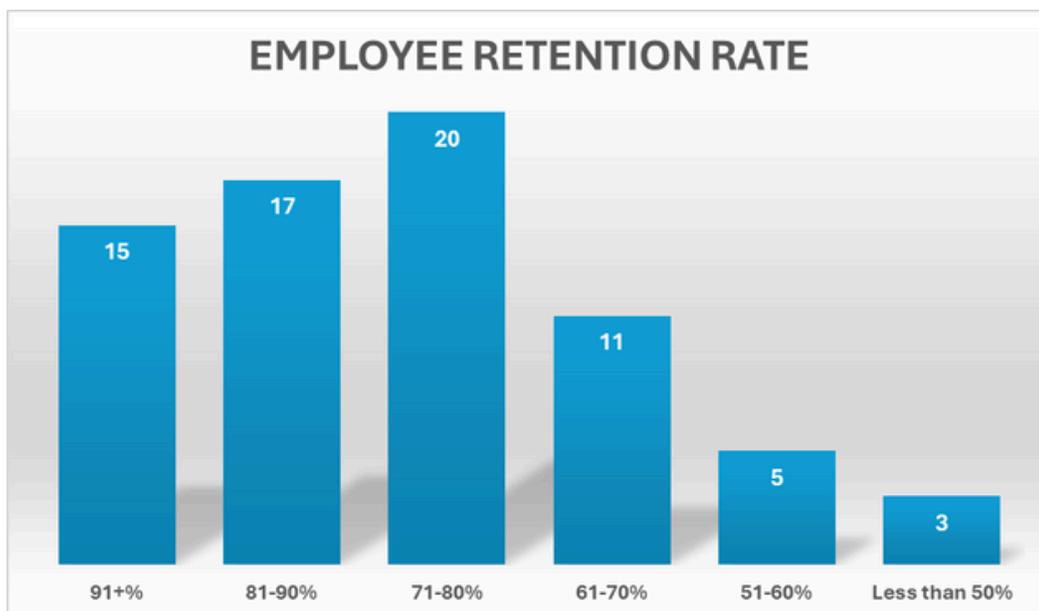
Companies that hire with prior incarceration history



Union Representation



A **good employee retention rate** is generally considered to be 90% or higher, though this varies by industry, company size, and market conditions. While only 15 companies rated themselves as above 90%, an additional 37 companies indicated a retention rate above 70%. This is a good sign for a job market currently known for a lot of turnover.





TRAINING OPTIONS

Employers are often taking the lead to offer their own training programs through various methods. What better way to get qualified workers than to train them yourself or offer training directly by the employer, but through a local training provider. These programs are a great way to keep youth engaged with local employers and are important to prevent them from moving out of the area.



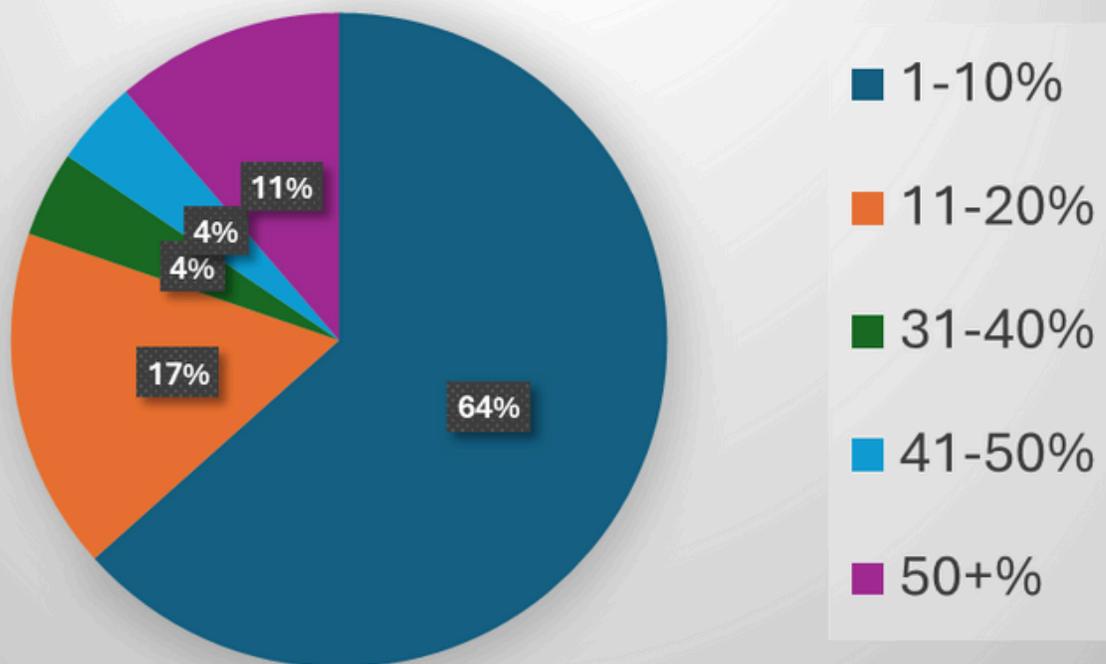
Our previous survey in 2023 indicated that many employers were interested in expanding these offerings. In 2025, we see that many employers are currently offering some sort of training program with paid internships being most common and job shadowing a close second. There are still only 12 companies offering apprenticeship programs, which is best for high level skilled positions. There is more growth that needs to take place in this area in order to fill our worker shortage.



PROBLEM

Another strategy for training that employer often utilize is to offer paid employee development or tuition reimbursement programs. Companies that offer these types of programs represented 2/3^{ds} of our respondents, but 64% of the respondents also stated that 1-10% of their workers are utilizing these programs. Why so few? Are employees aware of the programs? Are the programs offered valuable to the employees? This is a concerning result that will need to be explored further.

Employees that utilize these programs

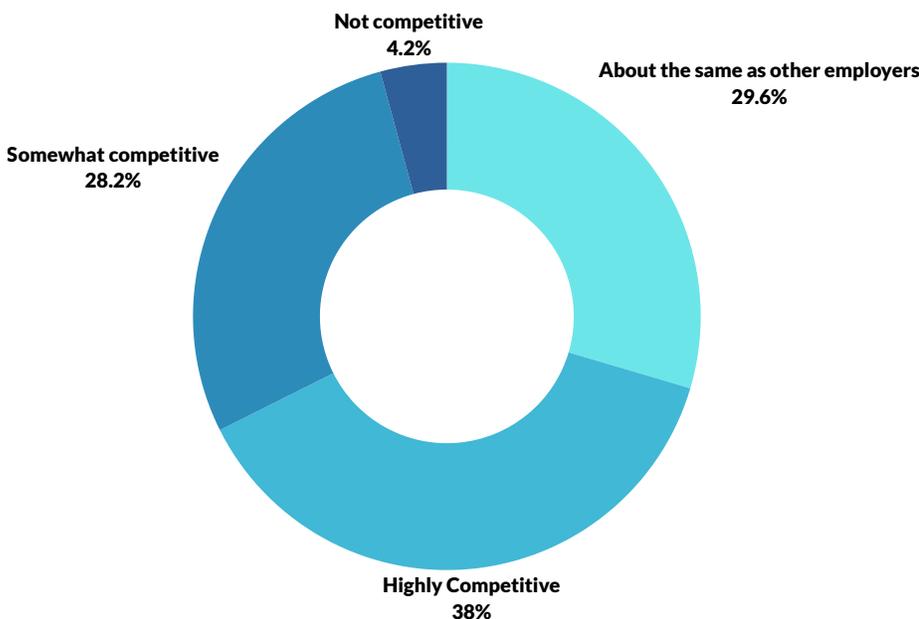


LACK OF QUALIFIED WORKERS



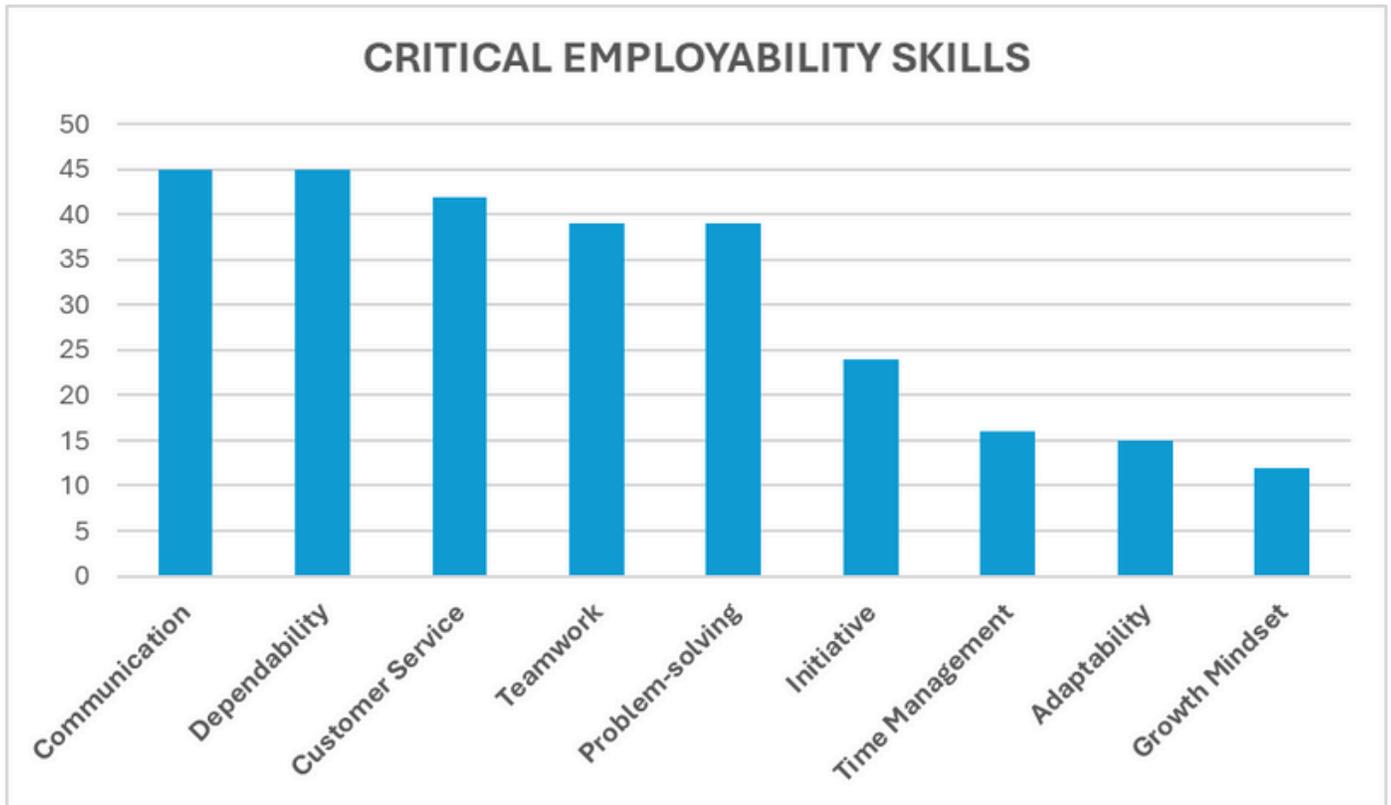
We find it of no surprise that a lack of qualified workers is the leading challenge identified by our local employers. Development of a talent pipeline is the key need that needs to be addressed right now.

Wage Comparison



Ironically, when asked if employers thought their wages were competitive, 96% of companies responding to the survey rated themselves as having a wage about the same or more competitive than other area employers. Yet, one of the big workforce challenges listed above is competitive compensation. This is most likely a difference between what employers want to pay verses what employees want to be paid.

CRITICAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS NEEDS

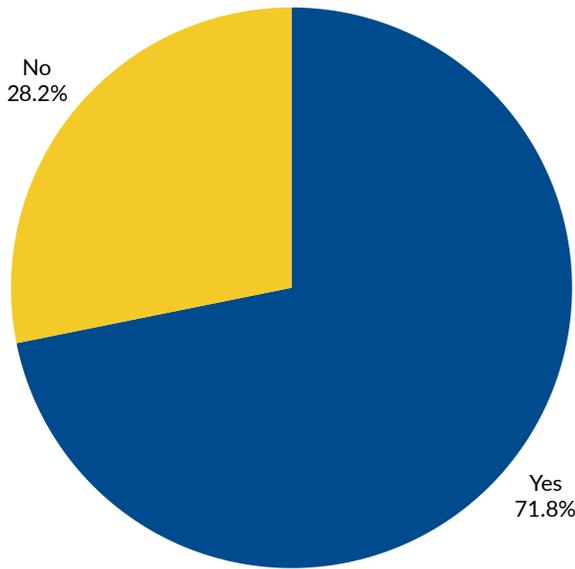


We hear a lot from our members wanting more basic employability skills from both applicants and existing employees so we asked which employability skills are most critical to success in your workplace. While all were rated pretty high, the highest needs were pretty clear.

Survey completers shared additional comments about the lack of employability skills:

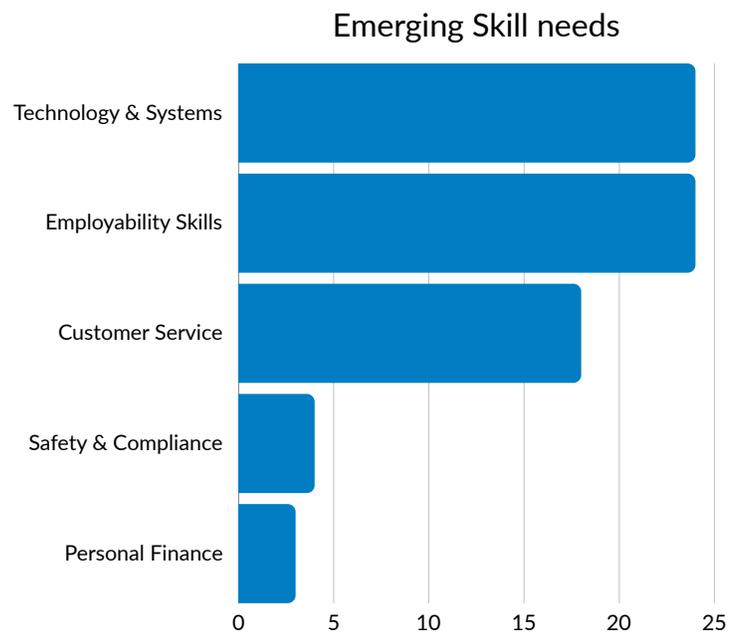
- Resilience and accountability are missing
- Staying on task and taking the initiative to jump in without being told
- No one wants to show up - attendance issues
- Time management and critical thinking
- Loyalty and appreciation
- Where is the strong work ethic
- Effective communication across all settings

EMERGING INDUSTRY TRENDS



It is not uncommon to see emerging industry trends driving the growth of employee needs for business so its not surprising that over 71% of our completers indicated that their company is affected by an emerging industry trend.

What are those skill needs? Technology and employability skills including customer service top the list. We keep seeing those basic employability skills popping up across the survey responses.

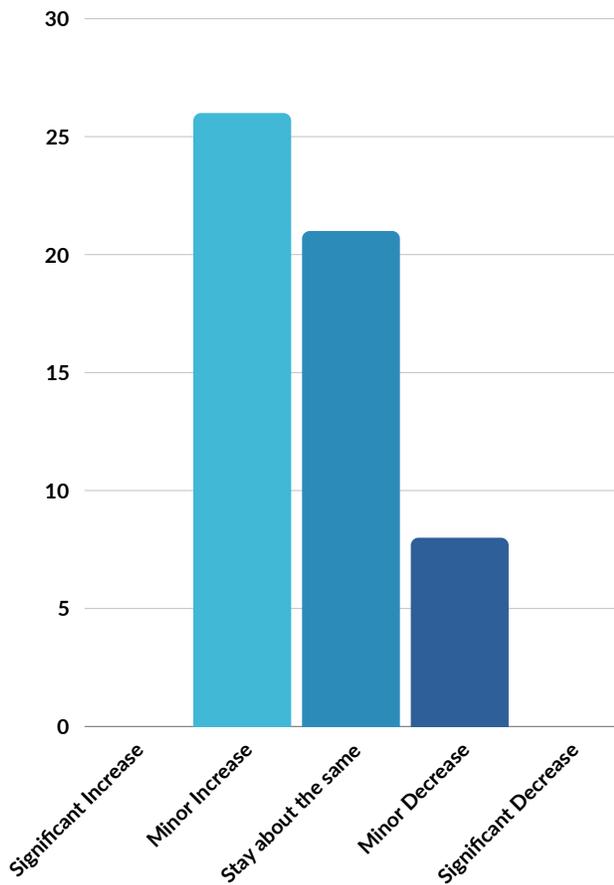


We anticipated that AI could have an impact on workforce through a potential reduction in staff, but this was found to not be an issue with 903 of respondents saying there would be no reduction or only a minor reduction in staff in response to AI.

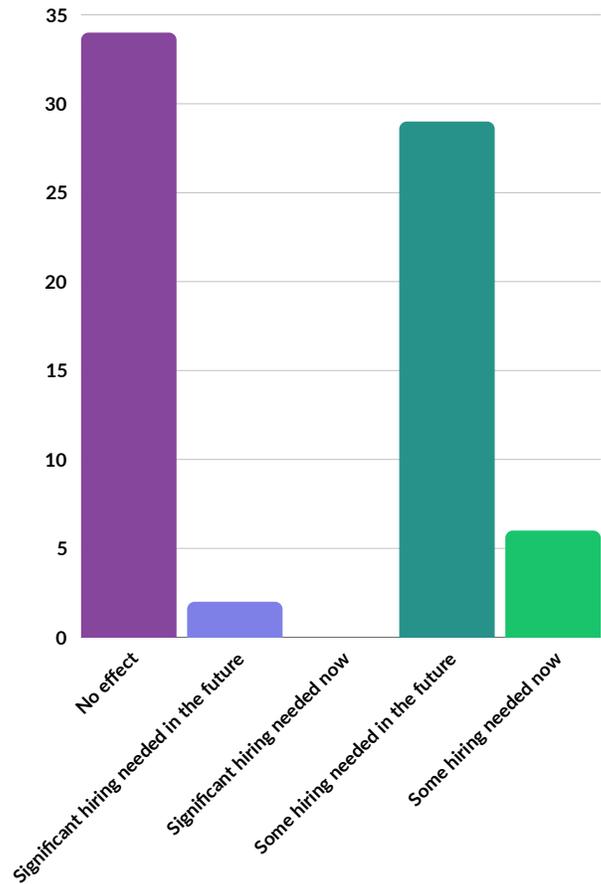
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Planning for the future is a big key to business success so as we look at workforce needs, we ask the following questions. The answers to these questions indicate that a potential increase in the hiring needs that we are experiencing now. We already identified a lack of workers now so we are anticipating that need to increase in the next 1-3 years.

Within the next 1-3 years, do you anticipate a reduction or increase in your local workforce?



How will the retirement of current employees affect your business in the next 1-3 years?



TOP NEEDED ROLES

If we plan for growth, we need to know where the growth will be in each business. According to the survey, the biggest need will be leadership and Management roles as well as skilled trades, sales & marketing and customer service.

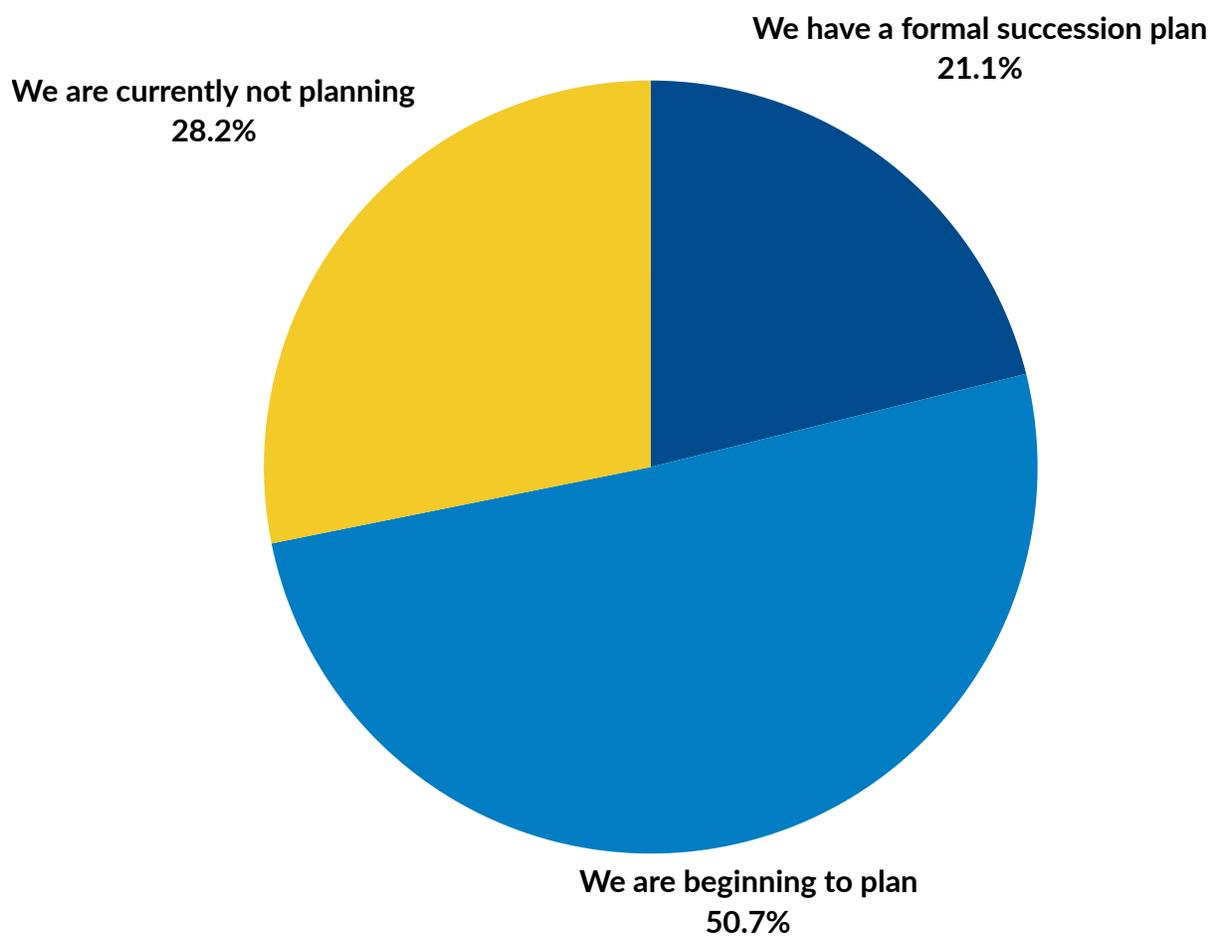


Similarly, the biggest need for training was also in leadership & management with skilled trades and customer service rated high as well. While this is not represented in the numbers of our survey, state data will also tell us that there is a huge need for teaching/education and healthcare positions too. Our survey respondents reflect a large majority of different industries that don't need those roles, but we still know that our hospitals and education systems are still in need.

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

If leadership & management are the biggest need, it is surprising that only 15 companies out of 71 state they have a plan. A large portion are just beginning to plan. This may be code for we don't have a plan and we don't want to admit it.

Is this something that companies need assistance with?



WHEN YOU DON'T GET THE JOB OFFER



What are the top 3 barriers that prevent you from making a job offer to applicants?

Poor interview Performance
44

Inadequate credentials or experience
40

Poor employability skills
39

Background check concerns
19

Unmet salary expectations
18

Lack of transportation
15

Poor interview performance is not a surprise, but inadequate credentials or experience indicates an issue with a lack of talent that was identified previously.

Employability skills are coming up again. We are seeing the same needs pops up in different areas of our survey indicating such a huge need.

RETAINING TALENT

Remember, our respondents reported good retention rates.

Our employers are the best ones to tell us about their greatest strategies for retaining top talent!



- Healthy team culture & strong relationships
- Competitive Compensation
- Offering flexible work arrangements
- Providing professional growth opportunities
- Inclusion in decision making or strategic work
- Recognition and rewards

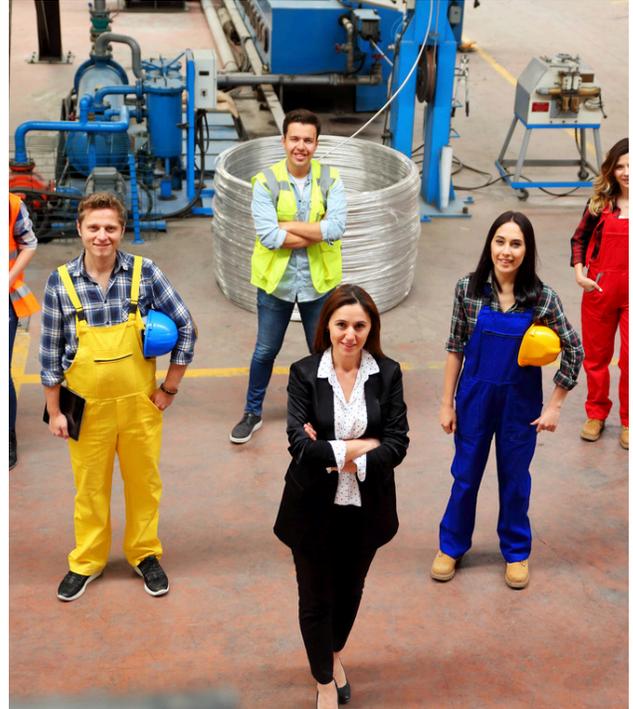
If your organization is struggling with retaining talent, these are the items that you need to consider. Is your company meeting these employee needs?

SURVEY RECAP



Employability skills continue to be an issue and we need to address this now.

Lack of qualified workers is our greatest challenge. The chamber is actively creating strategies in workforce and education to build a clear talent pipeline to feed applicants into open positions.



Is your company also doing what it needs to do to retain their current talent?

Succession planning is key for our future. Only 15 out of 71 have a current plan for retirements or leadership succession. Do organizations need help with this? Do they need additional resources in other areas?



Ghosting is a two-way street during the application and interview process. We get the same feedback from applicants and employers stating that they never heard back from the other. Please make sure that your business is following effective hiring strategies.

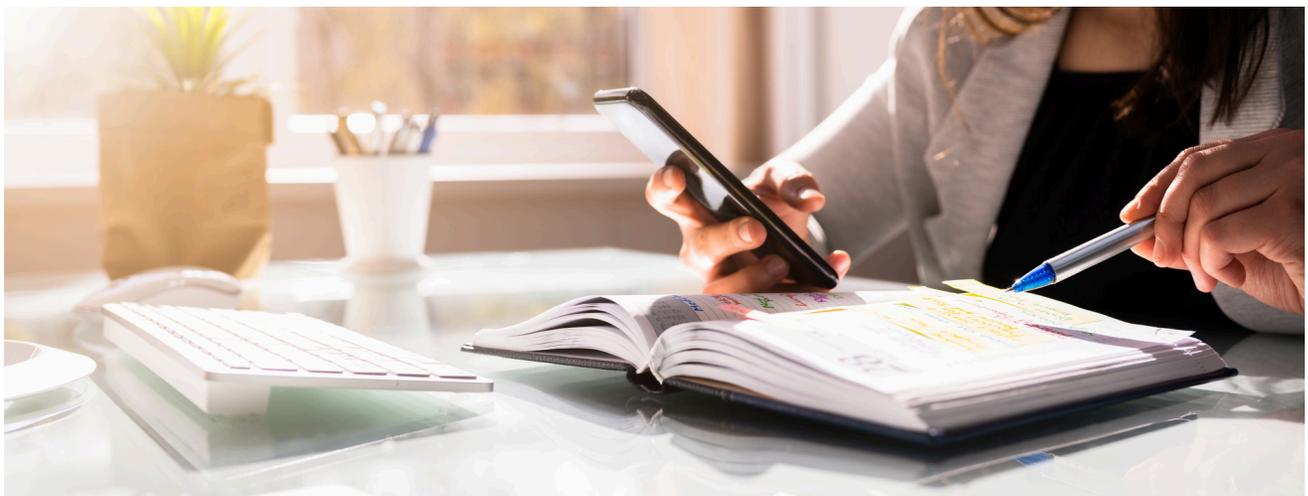
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

As we review this data and consider what it reveals, it's important to not only reflect on the present but also to think strategically about 2026 and the years ahead. The insights we have gained are more than numbers on a page, they represent real trends, challenges, and opportunities that directly shape the trajectory of our businesses and community.

Moving forward requires intentional action. After identifying the gaps that hold businesses back, we need to now amplify the strengths that set our region apart and foster innovation that keeps us competitive in an evolving marketplace. Success will depend on strengthening collaboration between business leaders, workforce development professionals, educators, and community partners. By aligning goals and resources, we can create an ecosystem that nurtures talent and encourages investment.

OUR ROADMAP TO SUCCESS:

- Foster stronger communication and collaboration between businesses, educators, and community and workforce partners.
- Strengthen the local talent pipeline through clear pathways to current and future jobs, paired with education and community resources that help job seekers grow their skills.
- Increase retention of local youth by creating meaningful connections and expanding community engagement.
- Tackle employability skill challenges by offering resources to support both businesses and individuals.
- Enhance workforce development by providing targeted training for priority business issues.



THANK YOU



WE ARE READY TO ASSIST YOU



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