A Bureau of Business Research Report
From the UNL College of Business

Survey of Omaha Businesses about Skill and Training Requirements

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for
The Nebraska Department of Labor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report discusses the results from the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs* conducted by the Nebraska Department of Labor and supported by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The report examines employer satisfaction with their current workforce, the types of occupations Omaha area employers are searching for and hiring, and the types of difficulties employers face when hiring. The survey also asks about the types of training which employers provide.

Businesses expressed a fair degree of satisfaction with their current workforce, although concerns were raised about employee leadership skills. Other areas of concern include critical thinking skills, work ethic, ability to adapt to change and ability to solve problems. While a significant share of employers were concerned about replacing retiring workers, most firms had taken steps or planned to take steps to ease these transitions, through a mix of training and promoting from within, encouraging workers to delay retirement, or hiring new workers.

Sixty-four percent of employers report that it is difficult to hire workers. The percentage is even higher in select blue and white collar occupations, including installation, maintenance and repair workers, construction and extraction workers and computer and mathematical workers. The primary reason it is difficult to hire is a lack of applicants. Nearly three in four businesses report that there are too few applicants. In select occupations, such as in health care, there also is a significant problem with finding workers who are able to work during required shifts.

Employers also had concerns about the applications they did receive. Nearly one half of employers indicate that applicants lack work experience while approximately four in ten businesses report that applicants lack occupation-specific skills and that applicants have a poor work history. About three in ten employers report applicants have wage demands which are “too high.”

A lack of occupation-specific skill is a particular concern for one white collar and two blue collar occupations. The white collar occupation is computer and mathematical workers. Among blue collar workers, the two occupations are installation, maintenance and repair workers and construction and extraction workers. These results suggest that training course should be made available to prepare workers for these occupations. Workers in blue collar occupations also would benefit from formal apprenticeship programs or learning on the job through periods of work as helpers or in other support occupations.

Poor work history and failed background checks also are common concerns for selected service and blue collar occupations, including health care support workers, food preparation and service workers, personal care and service workers, construction workers and transportation and material

moving workers. This suggests a need to design and encourage pathways and practices whereby workers can improve their work history and address issues which are checked on background.

Wage rates also appear to be a barrier to hiring in the health care industry, and for food preparation and service related workers, sales and related workers, personal care and service workers office and administrative support workers. In these occupations, employees, employers, or both need to adjust their wage expectations.

With regards to training, employers report that they provide job-specific training to newly hired workers in 71 percent of occupations. Of businesses which provide training, the most common types of training are individual courses or a certification program. Many employers also provide "on the job" training; for example, by pairing new workers with a mentor. Individual training course are slightly less common in blue collar occupations while full certification courses are most common for health care support occupations, installation, maintenance and repair occupations, and personal care and service occupations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

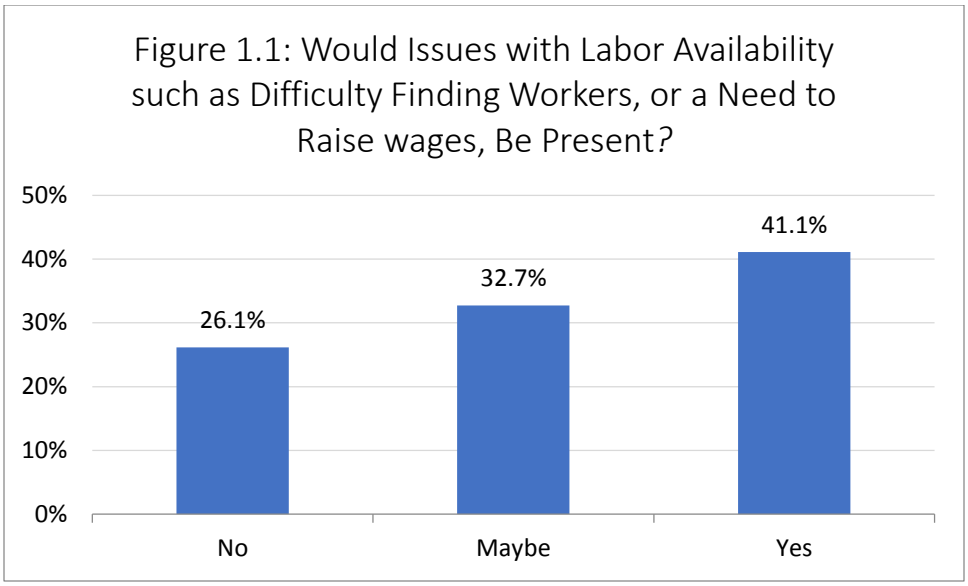
This report discusses the results from a survey of employers in the Omaha Metropolitan area entitled the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs.* This survey was conducted by the Nebraska Department of Labor under contract with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. Responses are analyzed by the UNL Bureau of Business Research. Specifically, this report examines the types of occupations Omaha area employers are searching for and hiring, and the types of degrees, certifications, and skills that the employers require. The survey identifies occupations where employers have difficulty hiring and the types of difficulties encountered. The survey asks about the types of training which employers provide.

The report is organized as follows. The survey process is discussed in Section II. Section III describes the results of the survey. Section IV provides a profile of the top hiring occupations, that is, the occupations which employers are most commonly hiring. Section V is the conclusion. The survey instrument is provided in Appendix 1 and information about the UNL Bureau of Business Research and the project Principal Investigator is provided in Appendix 2.

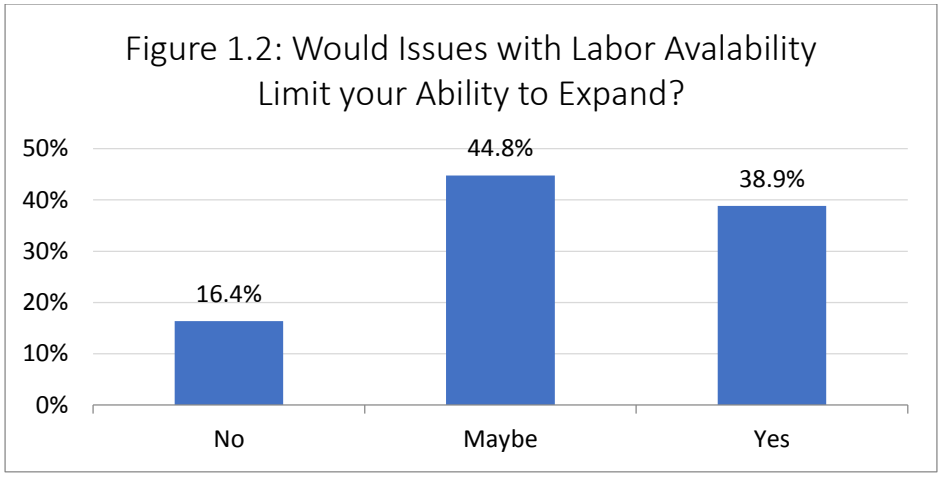
Before turning to the survey methodology, several key results are presented below. These results show the importance of labor force issues and the challenges presented to businesses facing expansion. Figure 1.1 shows the role of worker availability in economic development. Specifically, the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs* survey asked employers the following question: "If asked to consider a possible major expansion at this location, would issues with labor availability such as difficulty finding workers, or a need to raise wages, be present*?"* The responses, both overall and by industry, are revealing.

Over forty percent of businesses (41.1%) reported that they would face difficulty expanding in the Omaha area. Another third of businesses suggested there might be difficulties (32.7%). Only 26.1 percent reported that they would have no concerns facing expansion.

Those that answered "Yes" or "Maybe" to the previous question were also asked specifically about labor availability. Here, 38.9 percent of respondents reported that labor availability would limit their ability to expand at their present location (Figure 1.2).

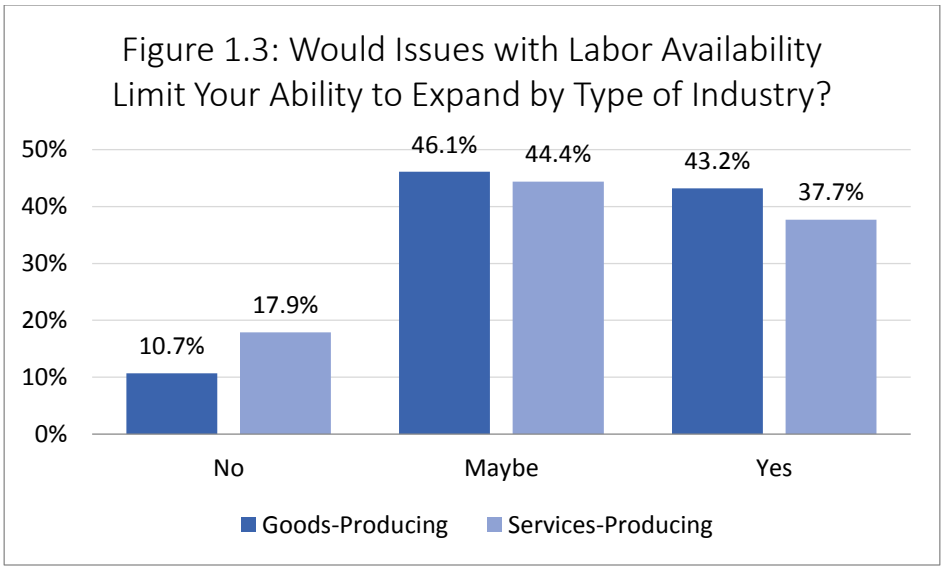


Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Results also can be broken down for two major industry groupings: goods-producing businesses and service-producing businesses. (See Figure 1.3.) Goods-producing businesses include manufacturing, construction, agricultural processing, and utilities. Nearly ninety percent of goods-producing businesses reported issues due to labor availability would affect future expansion. Only 10.7 percent of businesses reported no concerns about finding needed labor. This is closely mirrored in the services-producing industries, although their reported difficulties are slightly smaller. Results suggest that labor availability may be a barrier to growth in both sectors.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

These results demonstrate the need for the current report. Challenges with finding labor are not just an operating concern for business; it is a factor which is impacting economic development in the Omaha area. This creates a need to develop a detailed understanding of the labor needs of Omaha businesses, and the challenges these business face in recruiting workers.

The report will address the variety of issues faced by Omaha area businesses. We begin by discussing the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs* which is the source of this data.

2. DETAILS OF THE BUSINESS SURVEY

The *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs* of employers was designed to gather detailed information on the hiring and training needs and priorities of Omaha area businesses. That information is gathered through a series of questions which examine business preferences for hiring, hiring challenges, key hiring needs, education and training requirements and plans for training new hires. A copy of the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs* is in Appendix 1. The survey was developed in conjunction with the Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NEDED). The survey was administered by the Nebraska Department of Labor.

The survey begins by asking some basic questions about the employment conditions at each establishment such as the age of the business, the share of part- and full-time employees, the share of seasonal employees, the current number of job openings, and preferences for hiring workers in the same occupation and industry. The initial section of the survey also asks about the role of labor availability in potential expansion, gathering the types of information displayed in Figures 1.1 through 1.3. It also asks about the overall competency of the typical applicant pool. Section one concludes with several questions addressing potential issues with a loss of skills or experience from workers retiring. The second section of the survey asks detailed questions about the three most common occupations that each firm is trying to hire or hired recently. Respondents are asked to name and describe each occupation, report average starting wage, minimum required education, licenses and certificates, whether and where training is provided for new employees, whether it is difficult to find workers for the occupation and why. Businesses are also invited to name any other occupations where it is difficult to hire workers. The survey concludes by asking businesses about their current employees including overall skill level and benefits provided.

The survey was mailed to all businesses with 20 or more employees in the Omaha and Council Bluffs area (Douglas, Sarpy, Saunders, Cass, Dodge, and Washington counties in Nebraska, and Harrison, Mills and Pottawattamie Counties in Iowa). The Nebraska businesses were taken from the 4th Quarter 2014 NDOL Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. The Iowa businesses were sent to NDOL from the Iowa Department of Labor using the same methodology.

The list of businesses was cleaned to remove duplicate businesses at the same address to ensure each business only received one survey. After such combinations, the final survey list included 3,818 establishment locations.

A total of 1,330 complete surveys were received as a result of the three mailings for a 34.5 percent response rate. Table 2.1 shows the breakdown of responding businesses according to business size and industry groupings. Results show that many of the responding businesses have less than 50 employees and are in service industries. This result is consistent with our approach

of surveying all Omaha establishment with 20 or more employees. The survey did not specifically target goods-producing businesses or large employers.

Table 2.1: Profile of Responding Businesses

Group	Responses Number	Share
Size of Business		
Small (Less than 50 employees)	837	63.0%
Mid-size (50-100 employees)	285	21.4%
Large (More than 100 employees)	208	15.6%
Industry		
Goods-Producing	264	19.8%
Service-Producing	1066	80.2%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	238	17.9%
Health Care	223	16.8%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Turning to specific figures, 63 percent of respondents were businesses with between 20 and 50 employees. These are designated as small businesses in the discussion of the survey. Another 21 percent of businesses have between 50 and 100 employees. These are designated as mid-size businesses. Approximately 16 percent of respondents were large employers with 100 or more employees.

Goods-producing businesses counted for roughly 20 percent of respondents. The goods-producing category primarily includes manufacturers and construction businesses but also includes one or two agricultural service-providers or a utility. Services businesses accounted for 80 percent of respondents.

Services is a broad category which includes trucking and warehousing, wholesale and retail activity, finance and insurance, information, professional and business services, health care services, leisure and hospitality, and personal services. The sector includes a large majority of the businesses in the economy with more than 20 employees as well as a large majority of the respondents to the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*. Table 2.1 also lists the number of responses received from businesses in two primary services sectors. There were 238 responses from wholesale and retail trade businesses and 223 responses from health care businesses.

Table 2.2 shows several key employment characteristic of the survey responses including the number of years the business has been operating, the average share of full-time versus part-time

workers, the average share of seasonal workers, the average current job openings and the share of respondents which had hired or tried to hire over the last two years. Given the focus on establishments with 20 or more employees, it was expected that the sample would primarily include older, established firms. After all, most new establishments start small and grow over time. However, it is notable that 75.8 percent of respondents had been in business for more than 10 years, while just 10 percent had been in business for 1 to 5 years and 13.8 percent had been in business for 6 to 10 years. Based on a simple average across the responding businesses, 72.5 percent of jobs were full-time versus 27.2 percent par-time. Only 6 percent of jobs at responding business were seasonal.

Table 2.2: Employment Characteristics of Responding Businesses

Measure	Value or Share
Years in Operation	
Less than 1 year	0.4%
1 to 5 years	10.0%
6 to 10 years	13.8%
More than 10 years	75.8%
Percentage of Employment	
Full-Time	72.5%
Part-Time	27.2%
Seasonal	6.0%
Average Current Job Openings	5
Hired or Tried to Hire Last Two Years	98.8%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Responding businesses also were very active in the labor market, with 98.8% of respondents reporting that their business hired or tried to hire employees during the last two years. Respondents also had job openings. On average, responding businesses reported having 5 job openings at the time that the survey was completed. Therefore businesses responding to the survey had approximately 6,500 job openings at the time the surveys were completed.

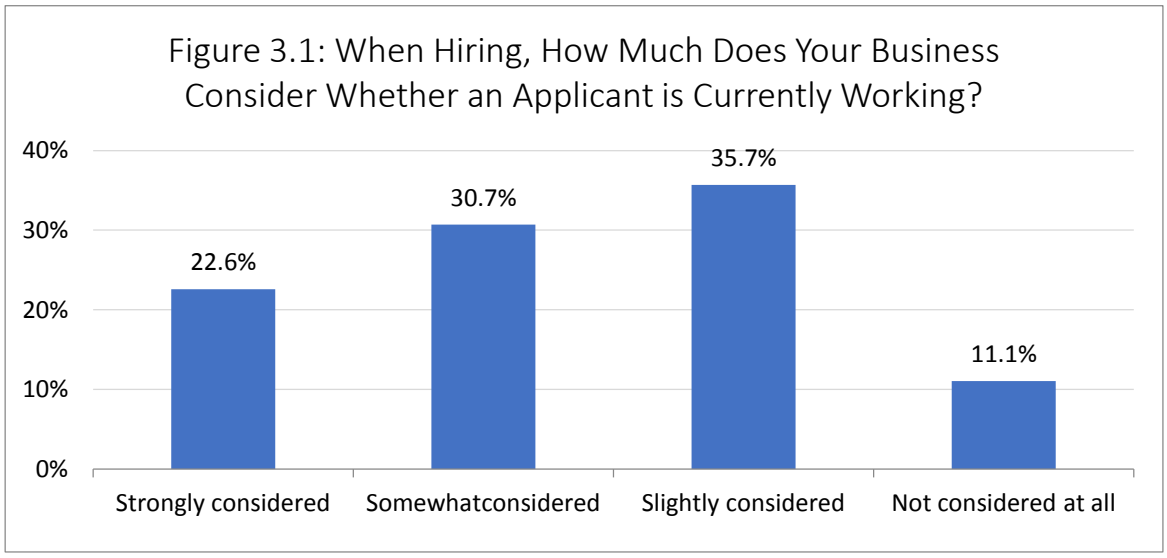
Survey respondents are typically small, established firms, which primarily provide full-time and full-year employment. Most have a significant number of current job openings and have been active in hiring over the last two years. While it may have been desirable to reach a larger sample of young firms, the respondents otherwise are an appropriate group for study in order to provide insights about hiring and training in the Omaha Metropolitan Area.

3. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

This section describes the key results from the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*, including information on the types of workers businesses seek to hire and the occupation skills of these workers. Results are presented for all businesses and by industry. Results also are presented for occupation groups, revealing the education and certification requirements that local employers have for these occupations. Results are presented first for newly hired workers before discussion turns to job characteristics for the existing workforce.

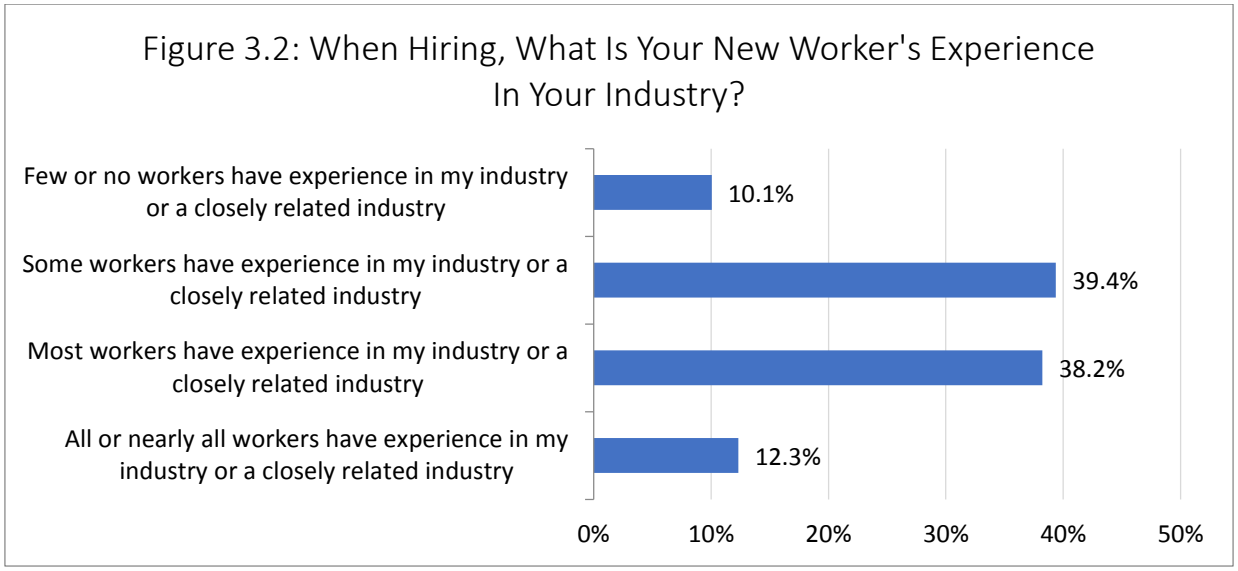
HIRING WORKERS

One preliminary concern is the employment and occupation background of workers that businesses hire. In particular, business may strongly consider working status implying a preference to hire currently employed workers. As seen in Figure 3.1, approximately one in five businesses (22.6%) indicated that employment status is strongly considered. Three in ten indicate that employment status is somewhat considered. Nearly half of businesses in the Omaha area (46.8%) indicate that current employment status is considered only slightly or not considered at all. This last result is encouraging as it suggests that a significant share of businesses are very open to hiring workers who are unemployed or re-entering the workforce. Results also suggest that a majority of businesses have a preference, and perhaps even a strong preference, for hiring workers who are currently working. This has positive implications for economic development in a city such as Omaha with a low unemployment rate.



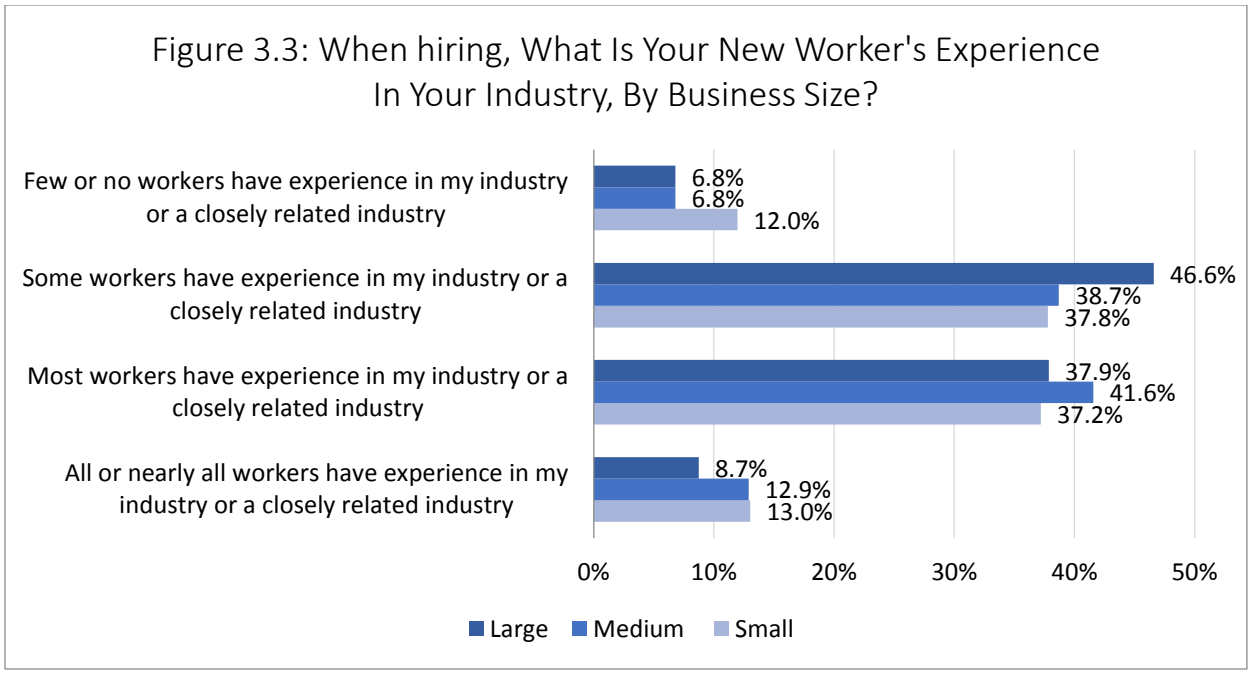
Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Applicant Experience by Industry. Figure 3.2 shows the industry tendencies of applicants when businesses have open positions. Specifically, the figure shows how many applicants have experience in the same or closely related industry. Only 12.3 percent of businesses indicated that all or nearly all applicants are from the same industry or a closely related industry. That said, applicants are frequently from the same industry. Almost eighty percent of businesses (77.6%) indicated that some or most applicants had experience in the same industry or a closely related industry. The remaining 10.1 percent of businesses indicated that few or no applicants had experience in the same industry.



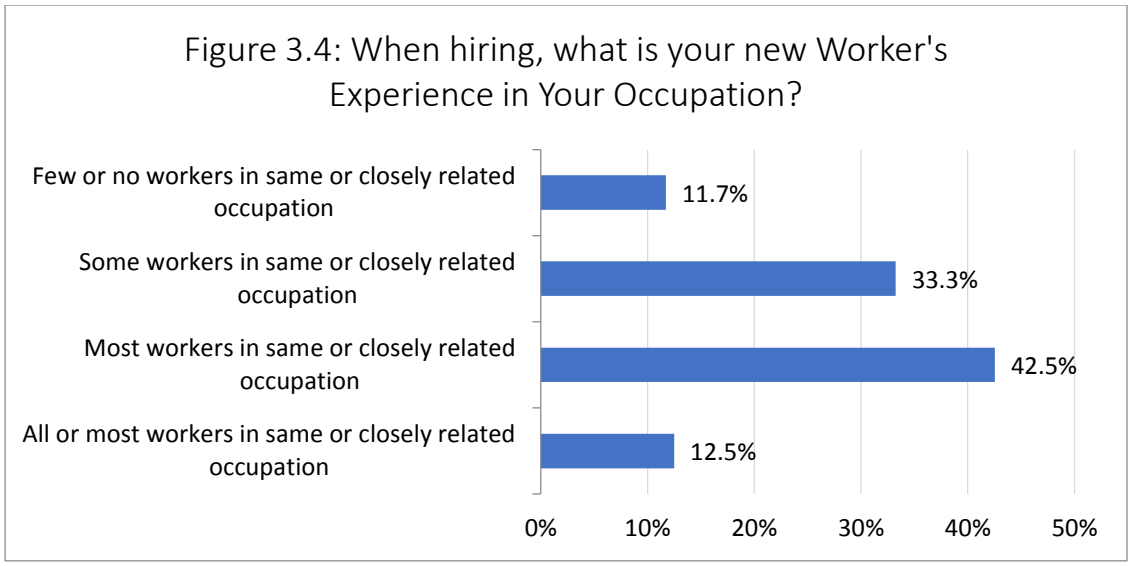
Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Applicant Experience and Business Size. A key question is whether the patterns observed in Figure 3.2 hold across different types of businesses. This is explored in Figure 3.3, which shows industry hiring tendencies reported by small, mid-size and large businesses. Large employers are particularly likely to have applicants from different industries. Over 53 percent of large businesses indicated that applicants had some, few, or no experience in the same industry or a closely related industry.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Applicant Experience by Occupation. Figure 3.4 looks at these same issues from an occupation perspective. Specifically, the figure shows the share of applicants who were in the same occupation or a closely related occupation. These results are comparable to results by industry; 12.5 percent of businesses indicated that all or nearly all of the applicants are from the same occupation or a closely related occupation. Most businesses had at least some applicants from within the same occupation. Roughly 75 percent of businesses indicated that some or most applicants had experience in the same occupation or a closely related occupation. Only 11.7 percent of firms reported having few or no applicants from the same occupation. Results from Figure 3.4 shows that most firms receive a significant share of applications from individuals with occupation-specific experience; however, there also are a significant number of applicants without that match.



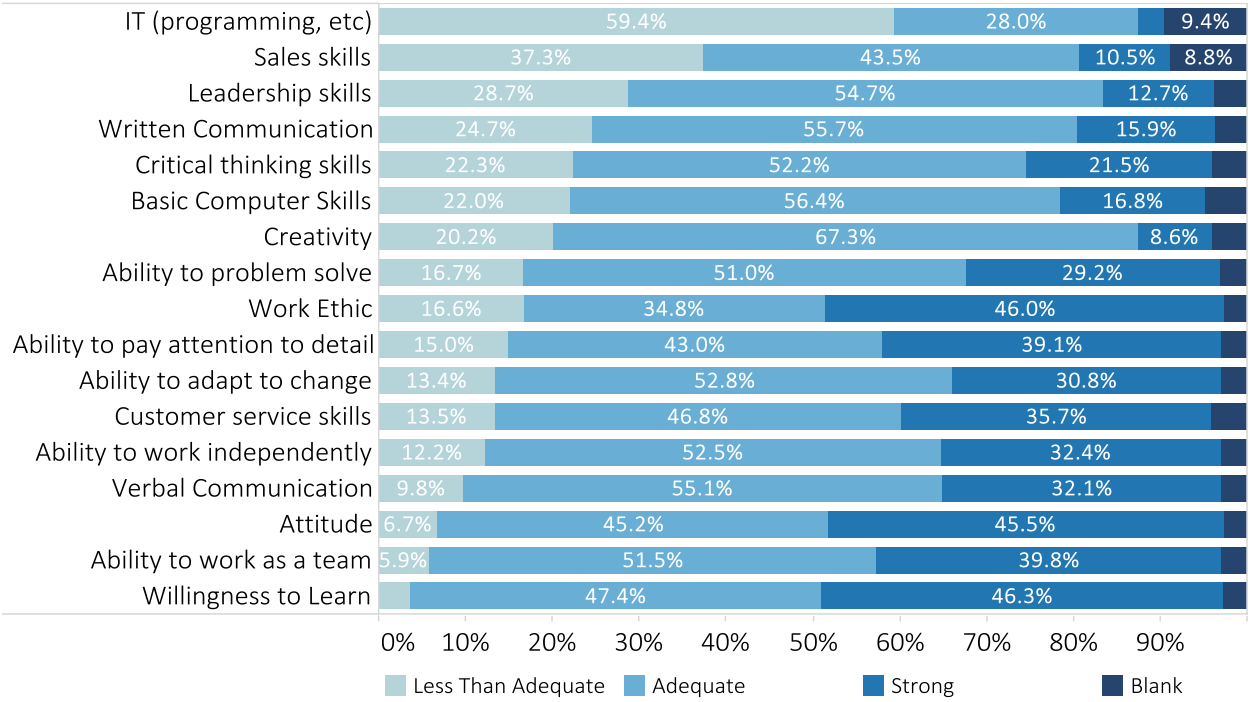
Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Skills of the applicant pool. When hiring workers, the overall skill level of the applicant pool plays a large role in determining how successful a business will be in matching applicants to positions advertised. The survey asks businesses to rate the overall competency level of applicants based on different skills. The results are shown in Table 3.1.

On average, employers rated skill level as "adequate" about 50 percent of the time with a significant share of employers rating skills as "strong." There are a few notable exceptions. Nearly 60 percent of employers rated IT skills as "less than adequate." This is of particular importance due to the fact that programming skills are quickly turning into the core competency for all kinds of workers. Another area of concern for businesses is sales skills. Over a third of employers reported applicants were "less than adequate" in this particular skill. Leadership skills also suffer, with approximately 29 percent of employers also ranking applicants as "less than adequate."

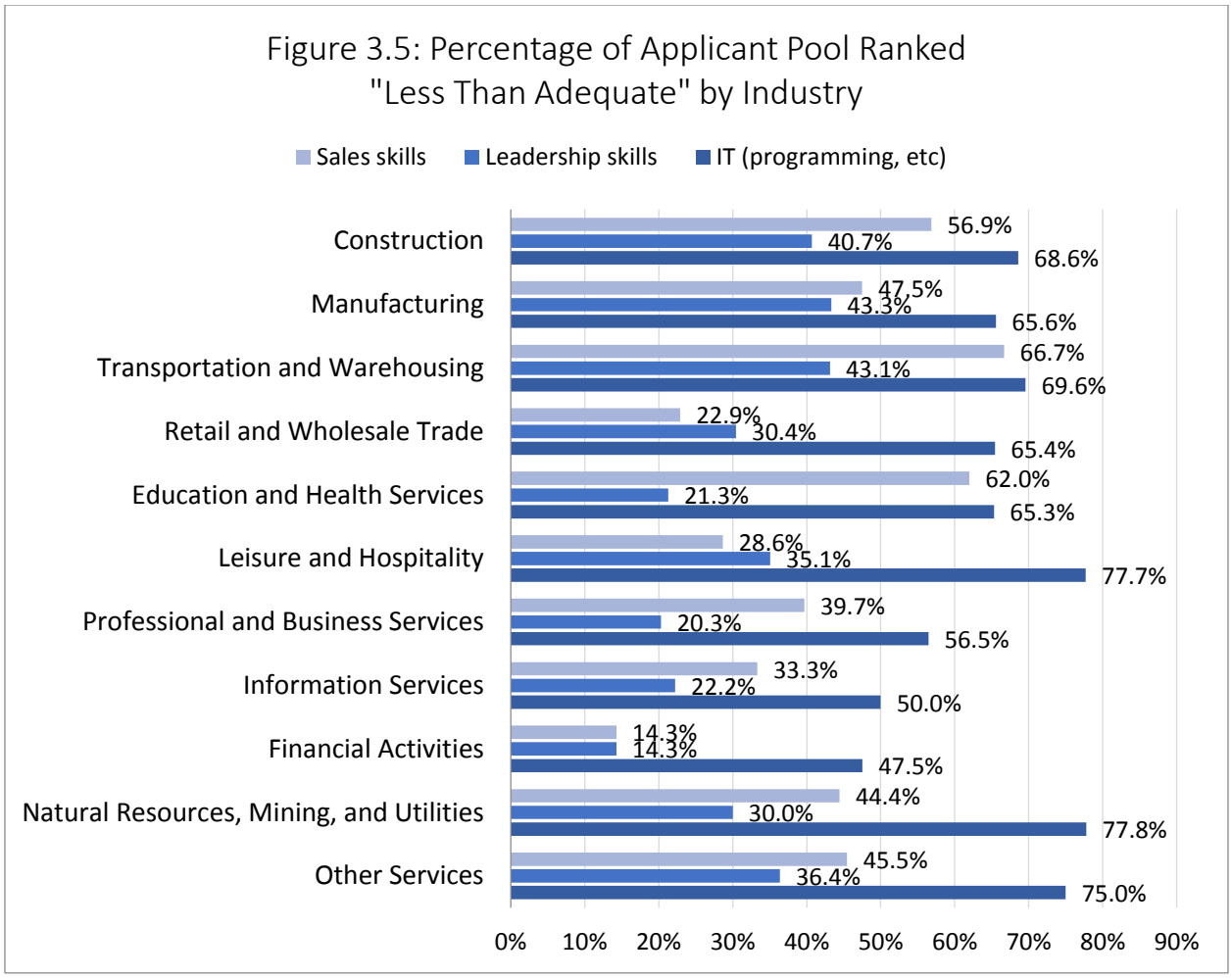
Applicants fared the best in three skills: attitude, willingness to learn, and work ethic. Each of these skills were ranked as "strong" at least 45 percent of the time by businesses. These traits are consistent with known strengths of the Omaha work force including high labor force participation rates and high rates of multiple job holding.

Table 3.1: Overall competency of typical applicant pool for specific skills



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

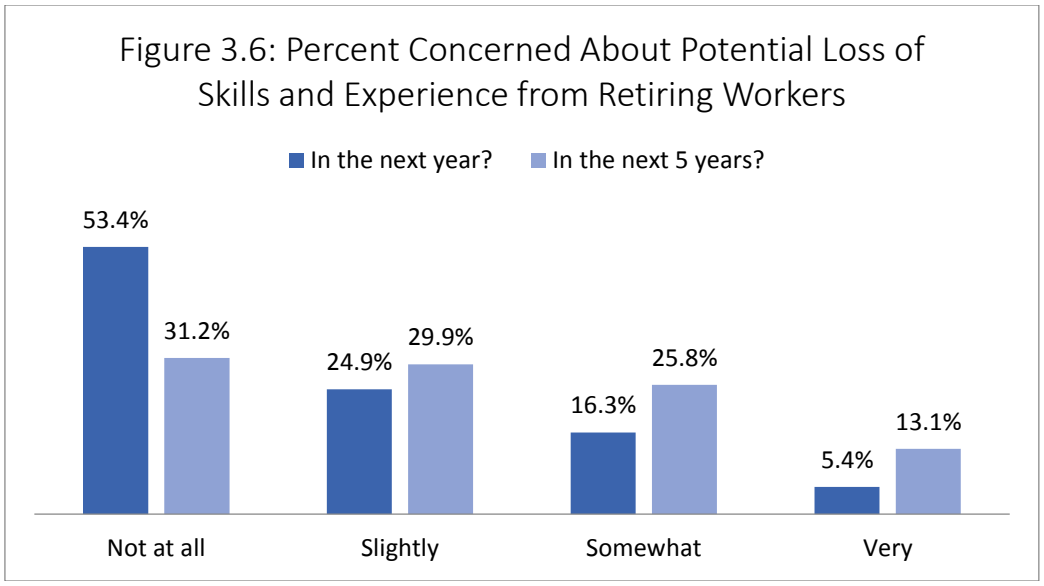
Since IT, sales, and leadership skills are rated so low by employers, it is important to understand if this is true of the entire applicant pool or only effects certain industries. This is examined in Figure 3.5. Every industry, with the exception of Financial Activities, ranks IT skills as "less than adequate" at least 50% of the time. Leisure and Hospitality, Natural Resources, Mining, and Utilities rank applicants as "less than adequate" at least 75% of the time. This reinforces the fact that computer skills are becoming more important to all industries. Manufacturing, Transportation and Warehousing, and Construction industries report the highest percentages of applicants rated "less than adequate" in leadership skills (43.3%, 43.1%, and 40.7% respectively). The Transportation and Warehousing and Construction industries also had a significant numbers of applicants rated "less than adequate" in sales skills as well (66.7% and 56.9%). The Education and Health Services industry also saw applicants with low sales skills, with nearly 62% of applicants "less than adequate."



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

REPLACEMENT OF RETIRING WORKERS

As older workers retire, it is imperative to replace them with new employees. How will these workers be replaced? The survey addresses this issue by asking several questions about retiring workers and how businesses plan to mitigate a potential skills gap. More specifically, the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs* survey asked employers the following: "how concerned are you about the potential loss of skills and experience that may result from workers retiring from this location*?"* Each business was then prompted to think about the question in terms of the next year and in the next 5 years. The results are reported in Figure 3.6.

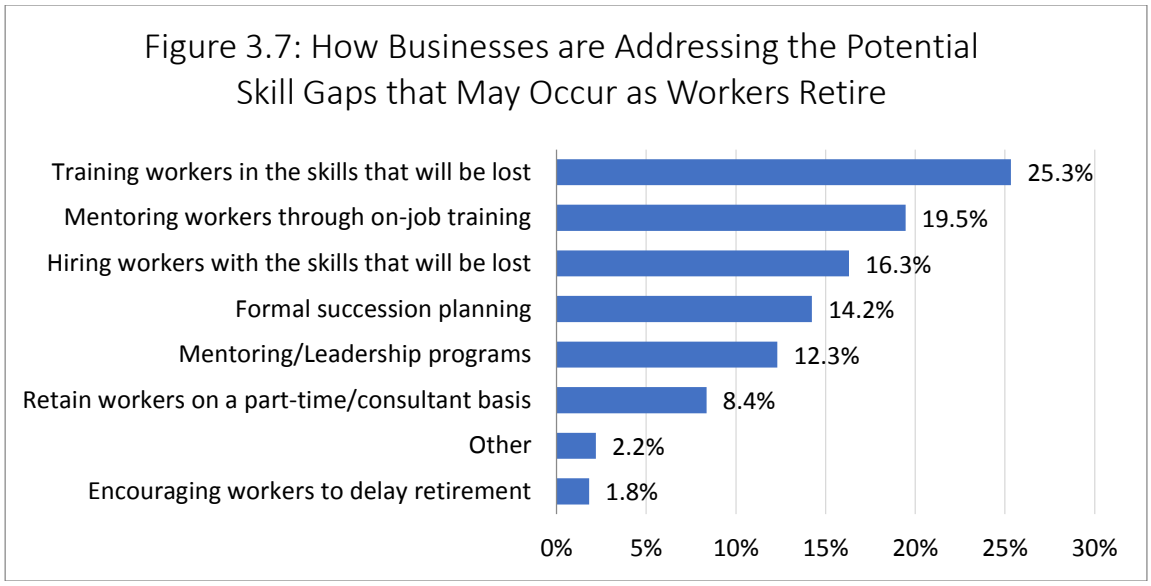


Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Over seventy-five percent of businesses reported that they were only slightly concerned or not concerned about a loss of skills resulting from retiring workers within the next year. This drops to roughly 60 percent when thinking about the next 5 years.

Steps taken to address the potential skills gap. Businesses were then asked if they had taken steps to address the potential skill gaps that may occur due to the retirement of workers. The majority of businesses (89.3%) answered "yes" or "no, but plan to" which highlights the fact that employers are actively thinking about resolving this problem. A follow-up question asked: "how is management at this location addressing potential skill gaps that may result from workers retiring in the near future?" Of the employers responding to this question, the most common answer selected was to train workers in the skills that will be lost. (See Figure 3.7.).

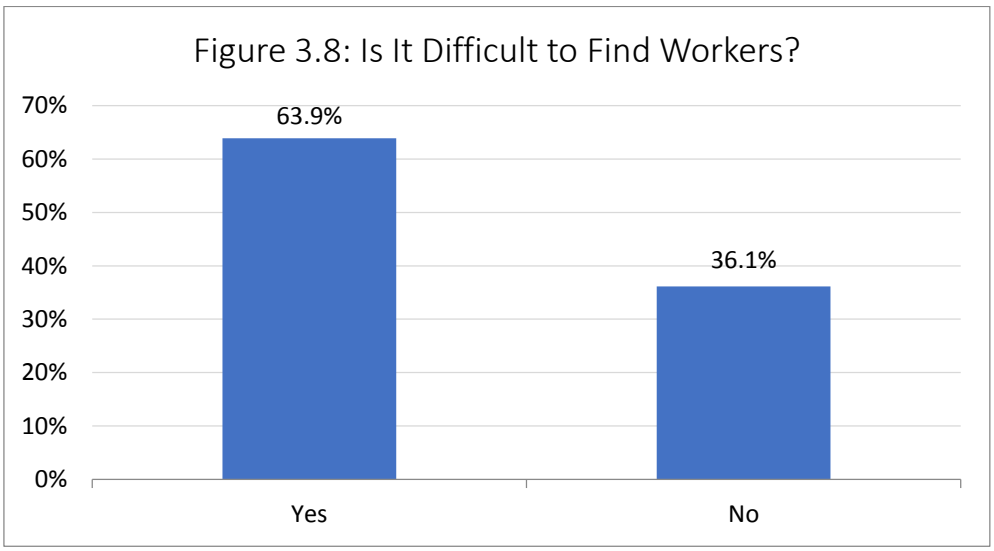
While a significant share of employers were concerned about replacing retiring workers, most firms had taken steps or planned to take steps to make these transitions, through a mix of training and promoting from within, encouraging workers to delay retirement, or hiring new workers. Hiring new workers with the needed skills, however, was only the third most popular option. This raises several questions. Are employers as comfortable with the new workers which they hire? And, do employers feel there is an adequate supply of applicants which have the correct set of skills? These questions are answered in the next section, which addresses employer experiences when hiring.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

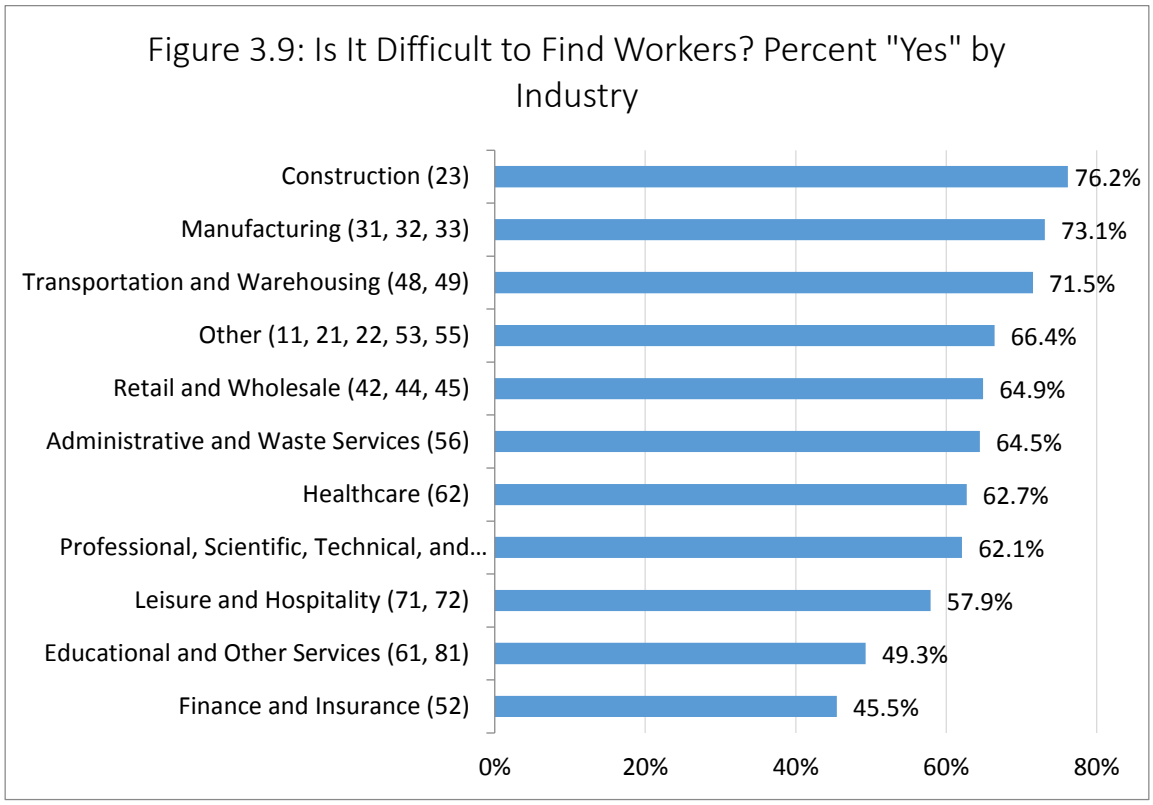
DIFFICULTIES FINDING WORKERS

Figures 3.8 – 3.11 look at challenges businesses face in hiring. The survey asked each employer to name the three most common occupations searched for when hiring. Employers then indicated whether or not it was difficult to find workers in these specific occupations, and if there were difficulties, why? Figure 3.8 looks at how often it was difficult to find workers. Businesses reported 63.9 percent of the time that it was difficult to find workers. This implies that for every 10 workers hired businesses had trouble finding workers for 6 of those positions.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

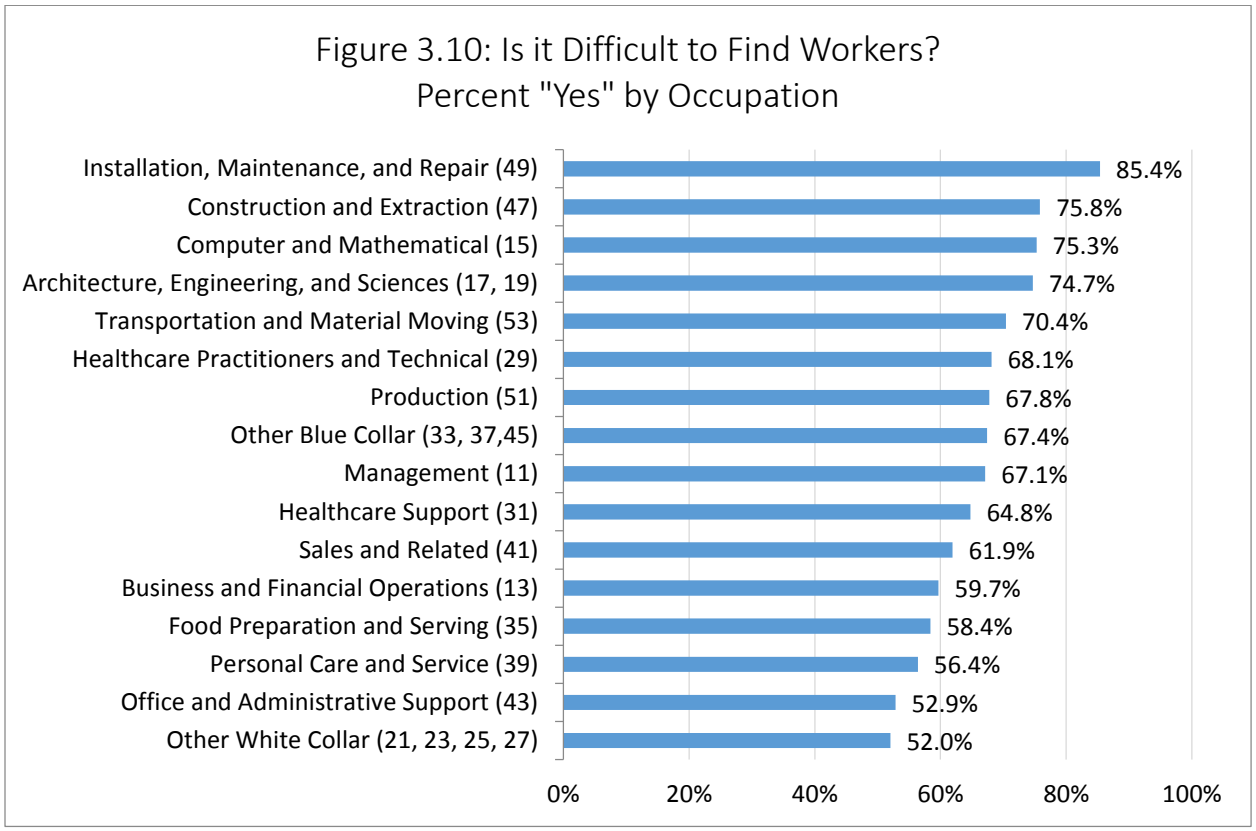
Difficulty Finding Workers by Industry. One natural question arises: is it as difficult to find workers in all industries or occupations? Perhaps there are some industries and occupations where it is very difficult to find workers and others whether the challenge is less severe. Figure 3.9 addresses this question by disaggregating the businesses that reported difficulty finding workers and displaying them by industry. Results indicate several industries where it is nearly always difficult to find workers. This includes the construction, manufacturing and transportation and warehousing industries. All were above seventy percent reporting difficulty. Many industries reported difficulty almost two-thirds of the time. These include professional, scientific, technical and information, retail and wholesale, and the health care industries. Finance and insurance fared the best, reporting that it is difficult to find workers only about 45.5 percent of the time. Overall, the challenge in finding workers is broad-based but was especially elevated in construction, manufacturing, and transportation and warehousing.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Difficulty Finding Workers by Occupation. There is even more variation when observing results by occupation (Figure 3.10). Installation, maintenance and repair workers are especially difficult to find, at 85.4 percent. The level of difficulty drops off, however, for other types of blue collar workers: employers report 75.8 percent for construction and extraction, 70.4 percent for transportation and material movers, 67.8 percent for production, and 67.4 percent for all other blue collar workers. These shares are only slightly above the all-occupation average.

There also is a group of white collar occupations where it is especially difficult to hire workers. These include STEM fields such as computer and mathematical occupations (75.3%) and architecture, engineering, and science occupations (74.7%). Both healthcare support and healthcare practitioners are proving somewhat difficult to find as well. In particular, 68.1 percent of employers reported it was difficult to find practitioners, and 64.8 percent reported it was difficult to find healthcare support workers.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

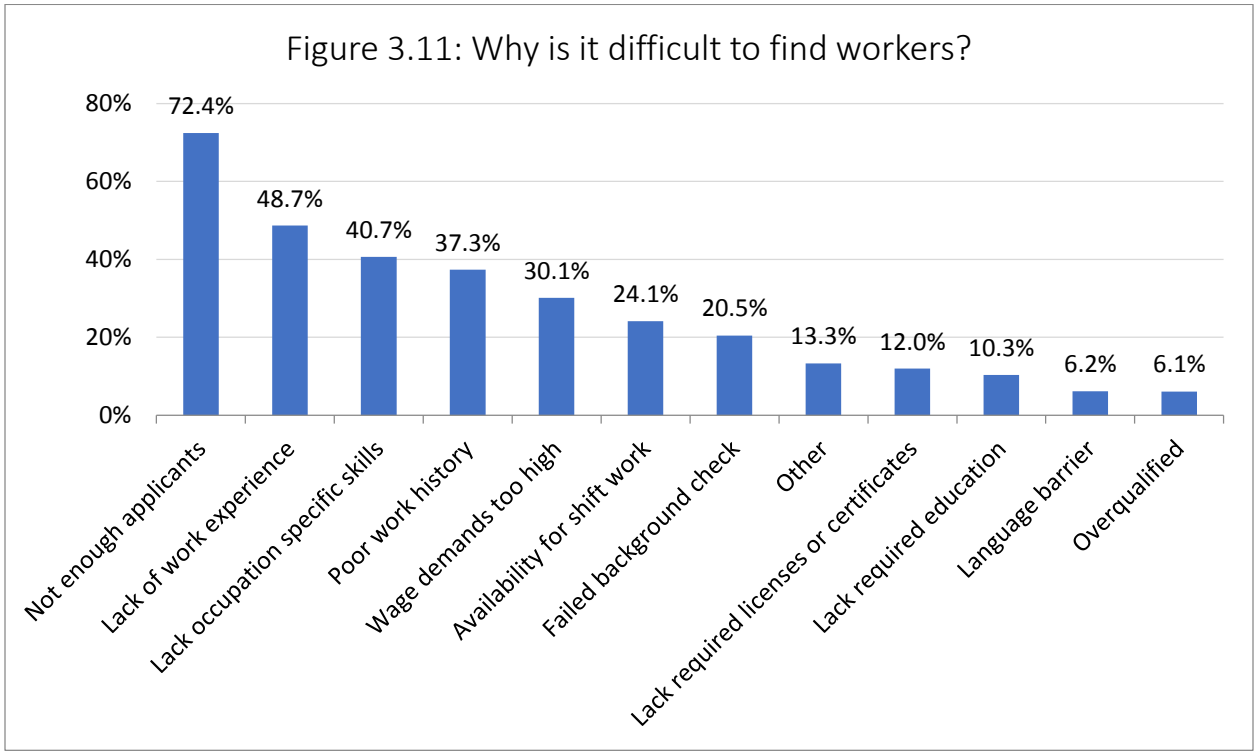
Among other white collar occupations, employers report that it is difficult to find business and financial operations workers (accountants, analysts) 59.7 percent of the time while other white collar workers (teachers, social workers, lawyers) are difficult to find only 52.0 percent of the time. Business also report a more modest level of difficulty in finding workers in sales and related occupations (61.9%), food preparation and service occupations (58.4%), personal care and services occupations (56.4%), and office and administrative support occupations (52.9%).

Reasons for Difficulty. When businesses reported difficulty finding workers, they were also asked *why* they faced challenges. Figure 3.11 reports on the reasons. Businesses were allowed to select from a menu of options and choose any reason that applied. This follow-up question, naturally, was only asked where firms indicated that workers in an occupation were difficult to find.

Number of applicants. Lack of applicants was, by far, the most common factor reported by Omaha businesses. Nearly three in four Omaha businesses faced this problem. Two factors are likely contributing to this result. First, the Omaha Metropolitan Area is at full employment, implying that the supply and demand for workers is roughly in balance. Second, with baby boom age workers beginning to retire in larger numbers, there has been slow growth in the labor force. In health care occupations, there also is a significant problem with finding workers who are able to work in required shifts.

Worker Training and Experience. Lack of work experience also is a common concern (48.7%) followed by lack of occupation-specific skills (40.7%). This is a serious concern. Worker skill partly results from education and training but "learning by doing" through on-the-job experience is also a powerful source of workers skill. Experience also builds team work, reliability, and other characteristics which are valued by employers. In a related result, employers indicate that for 12.0 percent of occupations it is difficult to hire because candidates lacked required licenses and certificates.

Applicant history. Some of the other results in Figure 3.11 are equally as interesting. Thirty-seven percent of respondents indicate that it was difficult to find workers due to a poor work history. A failed background check is mentioned by 20.5 percent of respondents.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Other Occupations These results are confirmed in another part of the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*, when employers were asked to name any other occupations in which it was hard to find workers. Another 405 occupations were reported. Once again, occupation-specific skills and poor work history are the most common concerns. In terms of the occupations named, office and administrative occupations accounted for about 17 percent, followed by food preparation and service related occupations at 14 percent.

Reasons for Difficulty by Industry. The results in Figure 3.11 show a breadth of challenges faced by employers. Employers face the three issues of experience, occupation skill, and poor work history in at least 37 percent of the searches. That is a daunting task. However, these data represent averages across all industries and occupations. The nature of the challenge could vary by industry. Table 3.2 which shows the difficulty in finding workers by industry.

In both construction and manufacturing, the difficulty of finding workers due to a lack of work experience, lack of occupation specific skills, and poor work history. Challenges due to wage demands or the need for specific certifications are less problematic in construction and manufacturing, however. In these industries, the use of lower-paid apprenticeships, whether formal or through periods of serving as a "helper" or "laborer," could help prepare a larger workforce. These also may be an emphasis on helping to re-integrate workers with a poor work history. Some of these workers may be able to do better going forward, but will need to be given opportunities to build their resume.

Industries differed greatly regarding the importance of work history and the related issue of background checks. Concerns about a poor work history were heightened in the transportation and warehousing, leisure and hospitality, administrative and waste services, and retail and wholesale industries. Conversely, concerns about a poor work history or failed background checks were minimal in the professional, scientific, technical services, and information industries.

Table 3.2 also reveals some interest industry variation regarding wage demands. Wage demands which were "too high" had been a moderate source of difficulty in finding workers for business overall, at 30.1 percent. The issue of wage demand, however, is elevated in some industries. In particular, 40.8 percent of businesses in the health care industry report that "too high" wage demands are a source of difficulty in finding workers. Transportation and warehousing workers also demand higher wages at roughly 34.1 percent of the time. This concern also is more common in the retail and wholesale and the "other" industry (which contains banking and insurance businesses). At the same time, concerns about "too high" wage demands were less problematic in most of the other industries, running in the range of 18 percent to 30 percent.

Table 3.2: Why It is Difficult to Find Workers by Industry												
	Reason Why It is Difficult to Find Workers											
Industry Names (NAICS code)	Lack of work experience	Poor work history	Lack occupation specific skills	Failed Background Check	Wage Demands too high	Lack required licenses/ certificates	Language barrier	Not enough Applicants	Availability for shifts required	Lack required education	Over-qualified	Other
Construction (NAICS 23)	62.1%	40.2%	56.3%	26.3%	22.8%	17.0%	3.6%	74.6%	3.1%	9.4%	2.7%	10.8%
Manufacturing (32, 33)	56.0%	38.5%	51.3%	12.0%	30.8%	7.7%	9.4%	69.2%	24.4%	10.7%	4.3%	9.8%
Transportation and Warehousing (48, 49)	70.5%	54.5%	46.6%	43.2%	34.1%	21.6%	17.0%	68.2%	23.9%	13.6%	9.1%	12.5%
Retail and Wholesale (42, 44, 45)	45.7%	43.5%	39.2%	27.4%	32.2%	8.5%	4.3%	68.3%	23.1%	6.3%	8.0%	16.8%
Health Care (62)	42.5%	36.1%	34.7%	23.3%	40.8%	18.3%	3.1%	73.1%	30.8%	18.3%	7.2%	11.1%
Leisure and Hospitality (71, 72)	39.6%	40.5%	22.4%	13.7%	25.4%	1.3%	9.0%	80.6%	51.5%	2.0%	4.7%	13.4%
Finance and Insurance (52)	61.8%	25.5%	49.1%	9.1%	27.3%	18.2%	0.0%	70.9%	1.8%	10.9%	5.5%	12.7%
Administrative and Waste Services (56)	54.3%	44.9%	40.9%	35.4%	31.5%	11.0%	15.7%	72.4%	21.3%	7.1%	6.3%	18.1%
Educational and Other Services (61,81)	25.0%	13.9%	26.4%	11.1%	18.1%	8.3%	8.3%	70.8%	20.8%	11.1%	4.2%	13.9%
Professional, Scientific, Technical, and information (51, 54)	48.9%	14.8%	50.0%	3.3%	21.4%	14.3%	0.5%	73.6%	9.3%	15.9%	7.7%	13.7%
Other (11, 21, 22, 53, 55)	45.1%	38.5%	46.2%	14.3%	34.1%	22.0%	4.4%	68.1%	13.2%	14.3%	6.6%	14.3%
Total	48.7%	37.3%	40.7%	20.5%	30.1%	12.0%	6.2%	72.4%	24.1%	10.3%	6.1%	13.3%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Occupation-specific skills and lack of work experience are a concern of employers across industries. Occupation-specific skills are a source of difficulty at least 50 percent of the time for occupations in construction, manufacturing, transportation, and the professional services industries. These widespread concerns about occupation skill point to the central role of training in preparing the state's work force. The training habits of Omaha Metropolitan Area employers are the focus of the next section of the report. However, before turning to training, results for hiring are re-examined by occupation. This analysis provides an even higher level of granularity, and provides more insights into how the hiring challenges faced by employers vary on a case by case basis.

Reasons for Difficulty by Occupation. Table 3.3 reports the difficulties that employers face when hiring by major occupation group. Individual occupation groups are reported separately when sufficient observations are available. Results are shown for a set of white collar occupations, service occupations, and blue collar occupations. Analysis begins by looking at white collar occupations. In those occupations, very few employers report that a poor work history and failed background checks are a source of difficulty in finding workers to hire, with the exception of poor work history for management occupations. A lack of occupation-specific skills and a lack of work experience, however, are frequent concerns, particularly for computer and mathematical occupations. These results suggest significant opportunity for training to prepare individuals for careers in computer occupations such as computer programming or software development.

"Too high" wage demands are a frequent concern for healthcare professional and technical occupations. This difficulty is selected by 35.5 percent of employers. The combination of "too high" wage demand, poor work history and failed background checks are common concerns for food preparation and services occupations, health support occupations, office and administrative support occupations and for personal care and service occupations.

Turning to blue collar occupations, there is also a heightened concern about work history and failed background checks for construction and extraction occupations and transportation and material moving occupations. A higher share of employers also report a lack of work experience and occupation-specific skills as a difficulty in hiring for blue collar occupations. The lack of occupation specific skills is a particular concern for installation, maintenance and repair occupation, production, occupations and construction and extraction occupations. This is cited as a difficulty by 52 percent to 65 percent of employers hiring in these occupations, suggesting a significant need for more pre-hire education programs for blue collar workers. A need for licenses and certifications is reported for transportation and material moving occupations.

Table 3.2: Why It is Difficult to Find Workers by Occupation

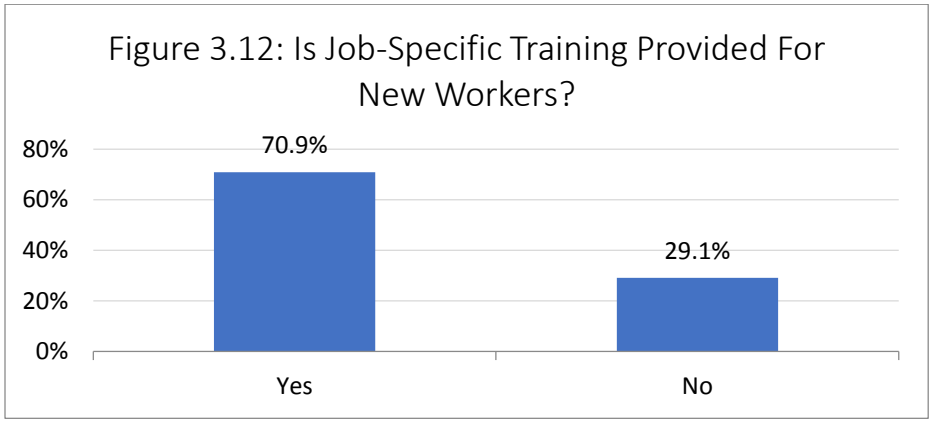
Occupation Names (SOC Code)	Reason Why It is Difficult to Find Workers											
	Lack of work experience	Poor work history	Lack occupation specific skills	Failed Background Check	Wage Demands too high	Lack required licenses/ certificates	Language barrier	Not enough Applicants	Availability for shifts required	Lack required education	Over qualified	Other
Management (SOC 11)	55.1%	30.6%	51.0%	4.1%	24.5%	14.3%	4.1%	69.4%	14.3%	16.3%	6.1%	6.1%
Business & Financial Operation (13)	46.8%	15.6%	51.9%	2.6%	33.8%	9.1%	0.0%	63.6%	2.6%	14.3%	10.4%	18.2%
Computer & Mathematical (15)	57.8%	3.1%	65.6%	1.6%	23.4%	9.4%	1.6%	81.3%	0.0%	23.4%	3.1%	15.6%
Architecture, Engineering and Sciences (17, 19)	49.2%	5.1%	44.1%	0.0%	13.6%	11.9%	0.0%	81.4%	1.7%	25.4%	8.5%	11.9%
Other White Collar (21, 23, 25, 27)	49.4%	9.1%	54.5%	16.9%	37.7%	24.7%	5.2%	66.2%	18.2%	36.4%	9.1%	9.1%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (29)	33.3%	27.0%	25.5%	13.5%	35.5%	20.6%	1.4%	77.3%	29.1%	11.3%	3.5%	14.2%
Healthcare Support (31)	25.3%	59.5%	19.0%	39.2%	32.9%	26.6%	2.5%	67.1%	46.8%	6.3%	3.8%	16.5%
Food Preparation and Service Related (35)	38.2%	43.3%	19.8%	10.9%	24.7%	0.0%	7.7%	77.7%	48.6%	1.2%	4.9%	13.4%
Personal Care and Service (39)	47.7%	43.2%	36.4%	20.5%	39.8%	11.4%	5.7%	89.8%	37.5%	26.1%	11.4%	5.7%

Table 3.2: Why It is Difficult to Find Workers by Occupation (Continued)												
Occupation Names (SOC Code)	Reason Why It is Difficult to Find Workers											
	Lack of work experience	Poor work history	Lack occupation specific skills	Failed Background Check	Wage Demands too high	Lack required licenses/ certificates	Language barrier	Not enough Applicants	Availability for shifts required	Lack required education	Over qualified	Other
Sales and Related (41)	52.1%	33.9%	44.8%	19.8%	35.4%	5.7%	3.1%	66.7%	26.6%	6.3%	7.8%	14.1%
Office and Administrative Support (43)	52.0%	49.8%	41.2%	21.7%	37.2%	2.5%	5.4%	61.4%	26.0%	6.1%	10.8%	15.5%
Construction and Extraction (47)	65.6%	46.3%	58.8%	32.5%	22.5%	16.3%	6.9%	75.6%	3.8%	6.3%	1.9%	14.4%
Installation, Maintenance and Repair (49)	60.8%	32.6%	64.6%	22.7%	22.7%	16.0%	3.9%	78.5%	15.5%	18.2%	3.3%	7.7%
Production (51)	57.2%	42.1%	52.4%	13.8%	29.7%	4.1%	15.9%	66.9%	33.1%	7.6%	5.5%	11.8%
Transportation and Material Moving (53)	44.1%	51.6%	22.3%	41.0%	33.0%	31.9%	7.4%	70.7%	14.4%	2.7%	6.4%	14.9%
Other Blue Collar (33, 37, 45)	37.4%	33.0%	29.7%	35.2%	29.7%	9.9%	20.9%	81.3%	27.5%	8.8%	1.1%	19.8%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

WORKER TRAINING

Nearly half of employers report a lack of work experience as a difficulty in hiring. The lack of occupation specific skills is also a concern, cited by nearly 40.7 percent of employers. These percentages indicate there is a need for education and training programs, including post-hire training. Figure 3.12 reports on whether Omaha Metropolitan Area employers provide job-specific training after workers are hired. Employers respond that job-specific training is provided to nearly 70.9 percent of new workers.



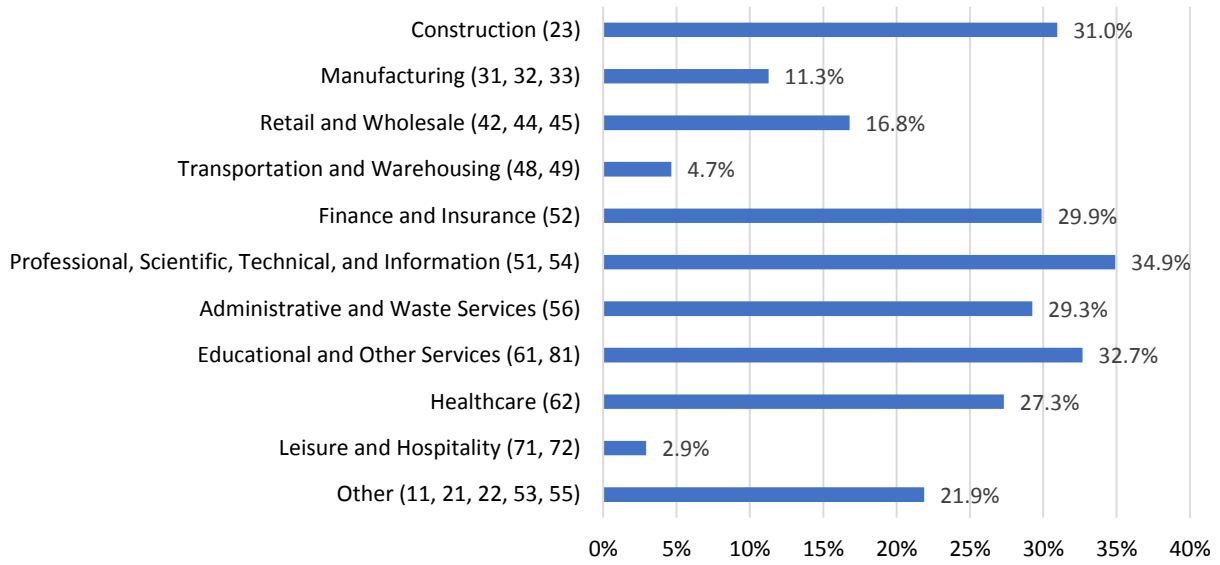
Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Another question is where that training is taking place. Is it only occurring "in house" at the business? If off-site training ("out-of-house") is occurring, how often is it used? Nearly all employers who provide job specific training to new workers choose to provide some in-house training. Specifically, 79.3 percent of employers who provide training provide in house training. Another 16.9 percent of employer provide both in-house and out-of-house training. Just 3.8 percent of employers only provide out-of-house training.

Results regarding in-house training in Figure 3.13 hold for all industries and occupations. The share of employers providing job-specific training in house is above 90 percent in all cases. Shares providing out-of-house training, however, vary quite a bit by industry and occupation.

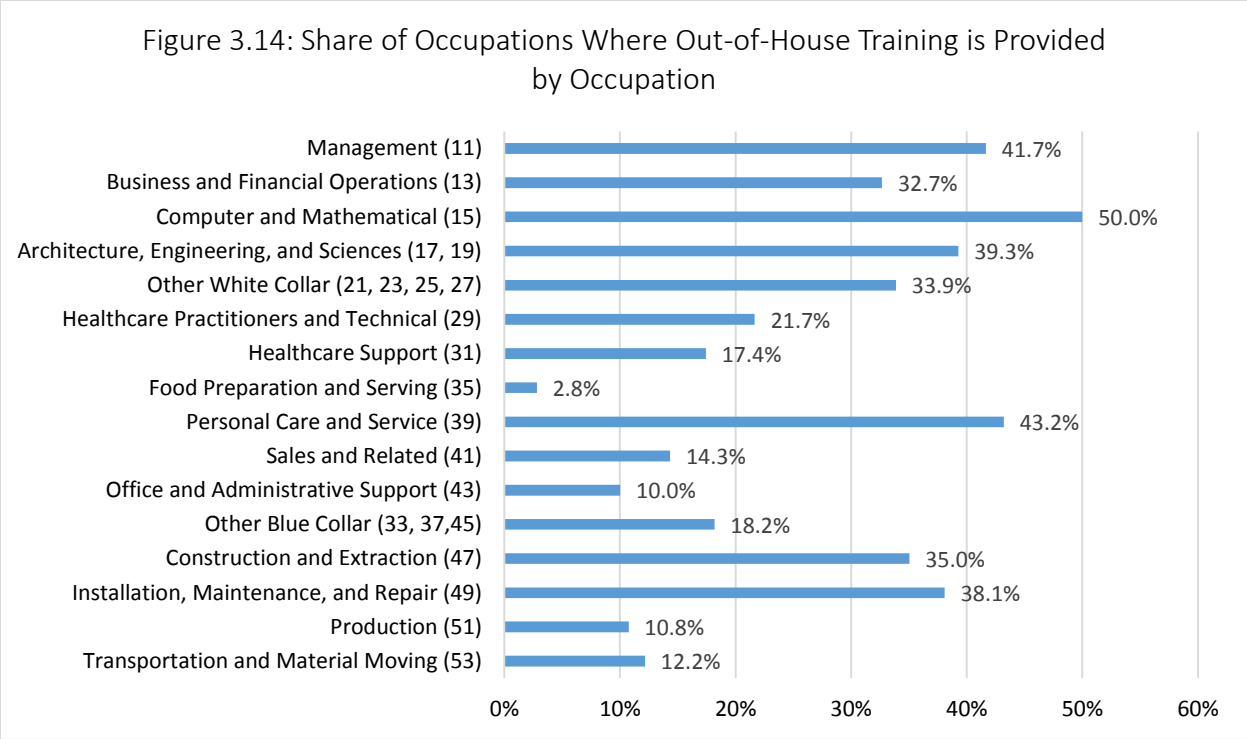
Out-of-house training by industry. Figure 3.13 shows the share of out-of-house training by industry. Most of these new hires also receive in-house training. Shares ranged from 2.9 to 34.9 percent, depending on the industry. Out-of-house training for new workers is most common in professional, scientific and technical, and information industries. The construction, education and other services, finance and insurance, administrative and waste services, and health care industries also provide out-of-house training to a large share of new hires. Out-of-house training is least common in transportation and warehousing and the leisure and hospitality industries.

Figure 3.13: Share of Occupations Where Out-of-House Training is Provided by Industry



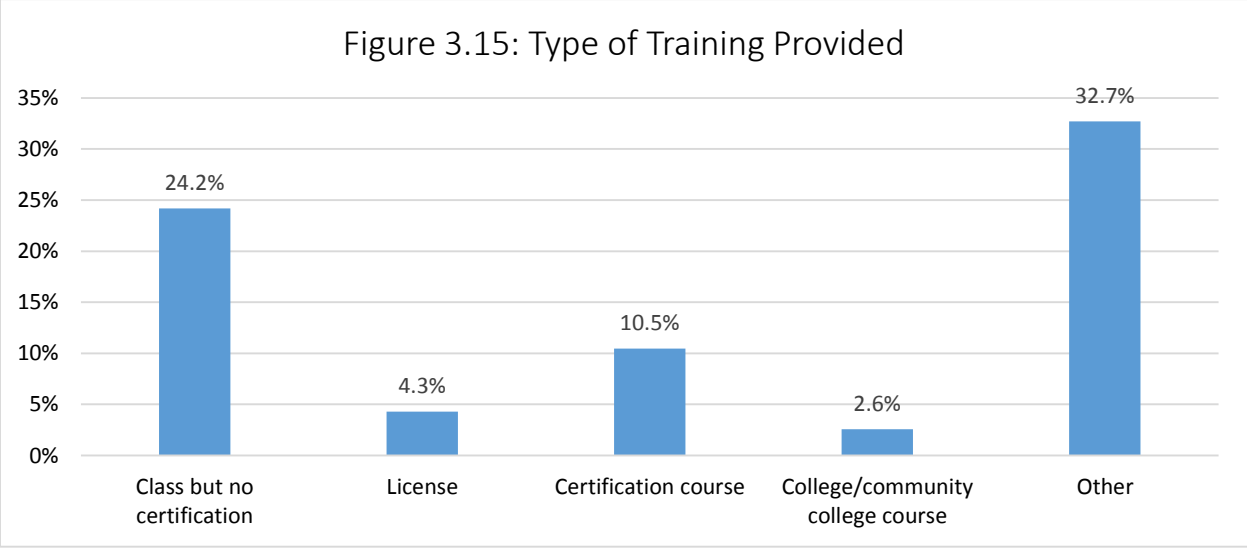
Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Out-of-house training by occupation. Figure 3.14 shows the share of out-of-house training by occupation. Most of these new hires also receive in-house training. Out-of-house training is most common for new hires in white collar occupations and select blue collar and service occupations. Among white collar occupations, out-of-house training is provided to 50.0 percent of new hires in computer and mathematical occupations. Among blue collar occupations, out-of-house training is provided to 38.1 percent of new hires in installation, maintenance and repair occupations and 35.0 percent of construction and extraction occupations. Among service occupations, out-of-house training is provided to 43.2 percent of new hires in personal care and services occupations. Out-of-house training, however, is not common in other service and blue collar occupations.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Since the majority of businesses provide post-hire training of some sort, it is natural to ask what type of training is provided. Figure 3.15 begins to answer that question. Generally speaking, the interest or ability to provide training appears to fall as the time commitment and cost rises. Almost one quarter of employers provide classes to their employees but not full certification courses.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

A full certification course, which would include multiple classes or on-line training sessions yielding a skill certification, is provided by 10.5 percent of employers. Four percent offer some sort of licensure and 2.6 percent of employers provide full college or community college course for their employees. One in three employers also indicate that they provide "other" types of training. An analysis of specific answers reveals that employers are referring to on the job training.

Training by Industry. Table 3.4 shows the type of training by industry. The share of workers provided with a training class varies across industries. Workers are rarely given the opportunity to take a college course, with the greatest share being in the professional, scientific, and technical and information industry (5.0%).

Table 3.4: Type of Training by Industry

Industry	Class but no certification course	License	Certification Course	College or Community College Course	Other
Construction (23)	16.5%	8.8%	14.9%	3.6%	27.5%
Manufacturing (31, 32, 33)	20.5%	2.5%	9.6%	4.0%	41.9%
Retail and Wholesale (42, 44, 45)	27.7%	4.6%	10.9%	1.5%	36.8%
Transportation and Warehousing (48, 49)	27.9%	4.2%	7.9%	1.2%	23.0%
Professional, Scientific, Technical, and Information (51, 54)	20.2%	3.2%	9.4%	5.0%	39.5%
Finance and Insurance (52)	43.5%	12.9%	4.8%	2.7%	22.4%
Administrative and Waste Services (56)	24.5%	3.1%	10.0%	0.4%	27.6%
Educational and Other Services (61, 81)	27.5%	1.6%	11.5%	3.8%	22.0%
Healthcare (62)	27.5%	5.7%	16.7%	4.3%	30.6%
Leisure and Hospitality (71, 72)	17.6%	0.2%	4.0%	0.0%	32.5%
Other (11, 21, 22, 53, 55)	28.7%	6.0%	8.0%	2.0%	38.7%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Training by Occupation. Table 3.5 shows the type of training by occupation. Training is common in all occupations. On-the-job training is especially important for production occupations and for food preparation and serving occupations. Certification courses are most common for healthcare support occupations, installation, maintenance and repair occupations and construction and extraction occupations. Full college or community college courses are most common for computer and mathematical occupations and architecture, engineering and science occupations.

Table 3.5: Type of Training by Occupation

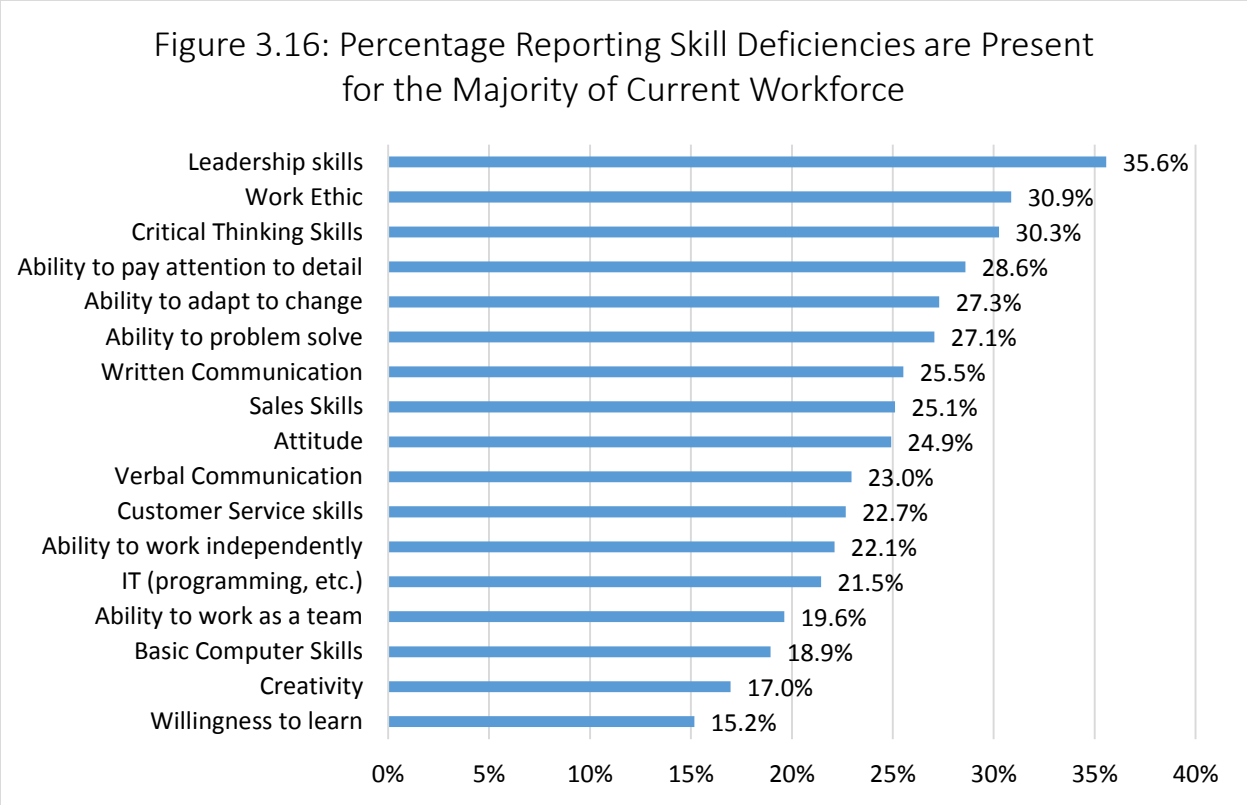
Occupation	Class but no certification course	License	Certification Course	College or Community College Course	Other
Management (11)	32.9%	7.9%	14.5%	0.0%	27.6%
Business and Financial Operations (13)	29.5%	8.3%	9.1%	2.3%	44.7%
Computer and Mathematical (15)	33.0%	1.1%	10.2%	10.2%	47.7%
Architecture, Engineering, and Sciences (17, 19)	23.2%	1.2%	11.0%	9.8%	42.7%
Other White Collar (21, 23, 25, 27)	38.3%	7.8%	15.6%	5.2%	36.4%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (29)	26.6%	10.3%	12.1%	7.5%	40.2%
Healthcare Support (31)	27.7%	6.2%	26.2%	3.1%	40.0%
Other Blue Collar (33, 37,45)	25.0%	2.2%	11.0%	1.5%	35.3%
Food Preparation and Serving (35)	18.2%	0.0%	4.7%	0.0%	36.0%
Personal Care and Service (39)	38.9%	3.1%	24.7%	4.9%	33.3%
Sales and Related (41)	34.3%	5.3%	10.1%	1.9%	41.5%
Office and Administrative Support (43)	32.0%	2.0%	6.7%	1.3%	36.2%
Construction and Extraction (47)	17.6%	8.1%	18.5%	4.5%	30.6%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair (49)	30.0%	8.8%	25.3%	6.0%	33.6%
Production (51)	23.4%	0.5%	9.0%	2.7%	55.0%
Transportation and Material Moving (53)	25.9%	11.9%	10.4%	1.1%	33.1%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

EXISTING WORKERS

The *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs* also examines the characteristics of the existing workforce. Specifically, employers were asked to rate the overall skill level required of existing workers and indicate if there were deficiencies for the majority of the workforce. Figure 3.16 shows their responses. Employers were allowed to select all answers that applied.

Skill Level of Existing Workers. Results indicate that leadership and critical thinking skills are two of the most commonly perceived deficiencies amount current workers. These are among the more sophisticated skills that students are supposed begin building through education and then practice both in and out of the workplace. These results send a clear message to educators that it is critical to continue to devote resources to building these skills and perhaps devote even further resource. These results also send a clear message to students and employees that they must devote themselves to writing and analytic assignments - despite the rigor involved.



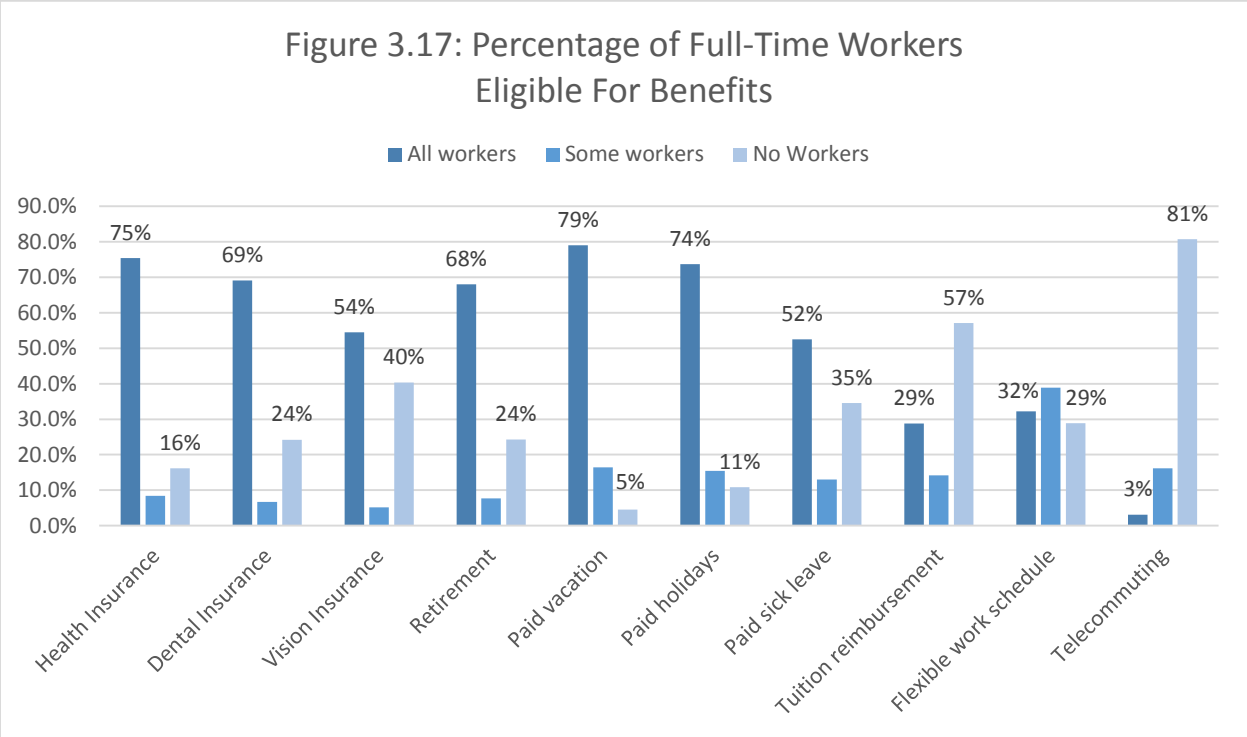
Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

Another common and related set of skill deficiencies involve work ethic, ability to pay attention to detail, ability to adapt to change, and to problem solve. Employers are looking for workers who understand and buy into the mission and goals of the organization, and adapt to meet challenges as they arise with the same vigor as employers. Employers often hope to share the responsibility and work ethic required to meet deadlines, satisfy clients, or win new business. Employees that share that burden create value for employers.

Employers were less likely to select specific "hard" skills that are often an emphasis of education and training such as computer skills, information technology, working in teams, project management and sales skills. These skills have been a point of emphasis in education in recent years and perhaps should be an even greater point of emphasis. The lower frequency with which these deficiencies have been selected could indicate that education and training in this area has been effective. But, there is another potential explanation. It could that these skills, while needed in many occupations, are not needed as often as universal soft skills like work ethic or leadership. This may be the reason for the lower percentages observed in Figure 3.16.

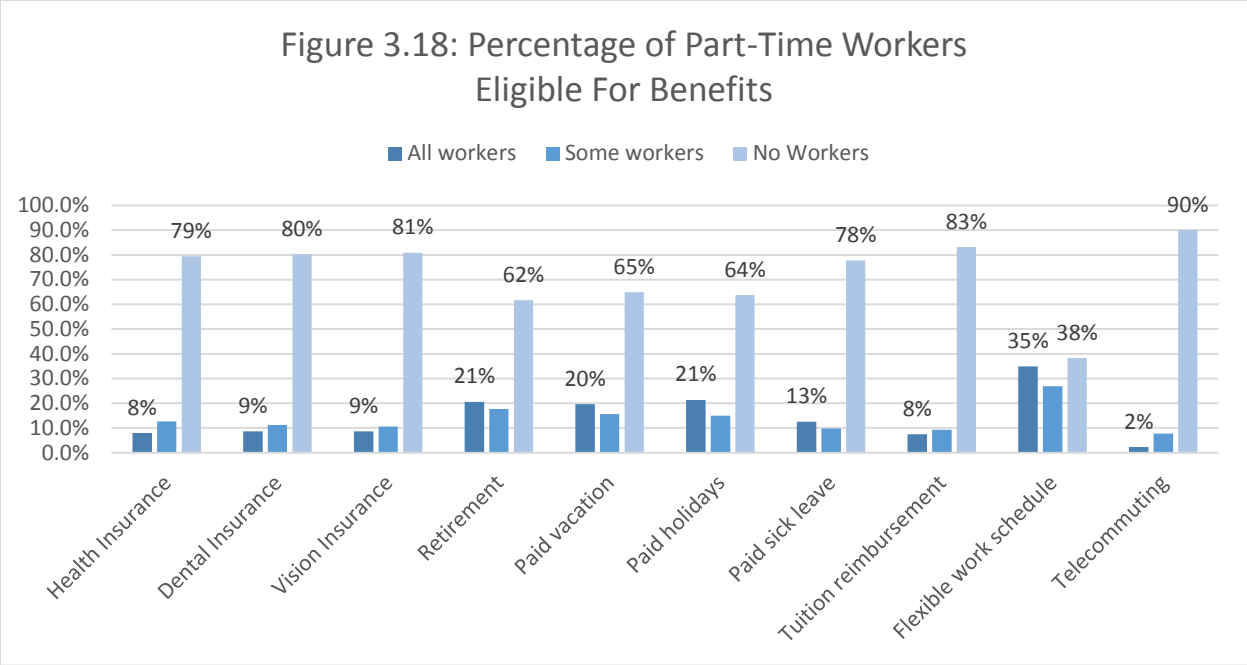
Benefits Provided to Existing Workers. The survey also gathered detailed information about the benefits provided to workers. This information pertains to the ability of businesses to retain their workforce. As seen in Figure 3.17, survey results reveal the benefits received by full-time

workers. Three quarters of businesses offer full-time workers health care benefits while 79 percent offer paid holidays. Sixty-eight percent of firms offer retirement benefits to all workers. Dental insurance is available to all workers in 69 percent of businesses and vision insurance in 54 percent. These benefits also are provided to some workers in another 5 to 10 percent of businesses. Naturally, the value of all these benefits depends on the specific programs offered. The survey also included a question about tuition reimbursement which is important given the emphasis on worker skill in the survey. This benefit was provided to all workers in 29 percent of businesses.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

As would be expected, the level of benefits provided to part-time workers is substantially less. These results are reported in Figure 3.18. Only 8 percent of business report providing health insurance coverage to all of their part-time workers while 12 percent report providing it to some part-time workers. Similar results are reported for dental and vision insurance as well as for tuition reimbursement. Retirement benefits, paid vacation and paid holidays are provided to all part-time workers in one-fifth of firms. The same benefits were offered to only some workers in approximately 16 percent of firms. Part-time employees fared much worse with tuition reimbursement. The large majority of firms (83%) offered no tuition reimbursement to any employees. Similar to full-time workers, part-time workers are least likely to be offered any telecommuting benefits.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs*

4. PROFILE OF SELECTED OCCUPATIONS

This section provides a summary of information gathered for a set of key occupations throughout the Omaha area economy. The occupations were chosen because employers frequently mentioned each as a top occupation when hiring. The chosen occupations also represent a variety of education and training needs. Some commonly hired but lower skill occupations were not included. In total, 12 particular occupations are listed.

Computer Programmers and Developers is the first occupation listed, in Table 4.1. This occupation provides high wages, with an average hourly wage (either reported directly or obtained by dividing the annual salary by 2,000 hours), at $36.15. Two-thirds of employers require a bachelor's degree but one-quarter have a minimum requirement of a technical or associates Degree. More than half of employers require at least 3 years of experience. Just over 90 percent of employers report that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation, with 80 percent indicating that it was difficult due to a lack of applicants. Half of employers indicated that it was difficult to hire because applicants lacked occupation-specific skills while nearly half indicated that applicants lacked experience. Applicant wage demands were a difficulty in just 17 percent of cases. One-third of employers provided training courses after hiring, but on-the-job training was the most common approach. Half of employers provided on-the-job training to new hires.

Computer and Network Support Specialists is the second occupation listed, in Table 4.2. This occupation provides moderate wages, with an average hourly wage (either reported directly or obtained by dividing the annual salary by 2,000 hours), at $19.03. Wages range between $18 and $30 per hour. Nearly two-thirds of employers require a technical or associates degree while around one in five have no specific education requirement. Two-thirds of employers require at least 1 year of experience. Just 44 percent of employers report that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation. In terms of specific difficulties, 38 percent indicated there were not enough applicants, 38 percent reported that applicants lacked occupation specific skills, 32 percent reported applicants lacked work experience and 25% indicated applicants had wage demands which were "too high." One-fourth of employers provided training courses after hiring, with 19 percent providing a certification course. Half of employers provided on-the-job training to new hires.

Registered Nurse is the third occupation listed, in Table 4.3. This occupation provides high wages, with an average hourly wage (either reported directly or obtained by dividing the annual salary by 2,000 hours), at $21.81. Wages range between $12 and $35 per hour. Two-thirds of employers require an associates or a technical degree while around one quarter require a bachelor's degree. Nearly one-third of employers will consider workers without experience and minimum experience requirements are most often between 6 months and 1 year. Just over 70 percent of employers report that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation. Nearly 80

percent report it is difficult to hire due to a lack of applicants while 37 percent indicate that it is difficult to find workers for required shifts. A range of other factors are also at work. There are some concerns about experience (34.9%) and occupation-specific skills (23.2%), but wage also are a frequent concern (37%). There also concerns about the quality of applicants. Specifically, 28 percent of employers report that it is difficult to hire because applicants have a poor work history while 16 percent report applicants who cannot pass a background check. Registered nurses also are required to have a variety of licenses and certifications. For this reason, there is a somewhat lower need for post-hire training than in some occupations. Twenty-one percent of employers provide post-hire courses with 11 percent providing college courses or training for licensing. The most common type of post-hire training, 38 percent, is once again on-the-job training.

Licensed Practical Nurse is the fourth occupation listed, in Table 4.4. This occupation provides moderate wages, with an average hourly wage (either reported directly or obtained by dividing the annual salary by 2,000 hours) at $17.39. Wages range between $14 and $24 per hour. Nearly all employers require an associates or a technical degree. Forty-two percent of employers will consider applicants without experience and 48 percent have minimum experience requirements between 6 months and 2 years. Eighty-four percent of employers report that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation. Eighty-eight percent report it is difficult to hire due to a lack of applicants while 41 percent indicate that it is difficult to find workers for required shifts. Wages are a significant issue with 48 percent of employers reporting it is difficult to hire since applicants who have wage demand which are "too high." There are some concerns about experience (33.3%) and occupation-specific skills (22.2%) and required licenses (22.2%). Thirty-three percent of employers report that it is difficult to hire because applicants have a poor work history while 14 percent report applicants who cannot pass a background check. Twenty-one percent of employers provide post-hire courses and 15.2 percent provide training for licensing. Nine percent provide a college course. The most common type of post-hire training is on-the-job training, at 55 percent.

Nursing Assistant is the fifth occupation listed, in Table 4.5. This occupation provides low wages, with an average hourly wage at $10.81. Wages range between $9 and $15 per hour. The minimum degree requirement is a high school degree at nearly 60 percent of employers with about 30 percent of employers requiring a technical degree. Sixty percent of employers will consider applicants without experience and 33 percent have minimum experience requirements between 6 months and 1 year. Seventy-three percent of employers report that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation. Sixty-five percent report it is difficult to hire due to a lack of applicants while 54 percent indicate that it is difficult to find workers for required shifts. There are few concerns about experience (21.6%) and occupation-specific skills (13.5%) and required licenses (29.7%). The quality of applicants is a common concern with 67 percent of employers reporting that it is difficult to hire because applicants have a poor work history while 47 percent

report applicants who cannot pass a background check. Thirty-two percent of employers provide post-hire courses and 25 percent provide training for a certification. The most common type of post-hire training is on-the-job training, at 39 percent.

Crew Member, Food Truck and Porter is the sixth occupation listed, in Table 4.6. This occupation provides low wages to workers, primarily in the restaurant industry, with an average hourly wage of $9.08. Wages rates range from $7.25 to $12.50 per hour. Workers with less than a high school degree have job opportunities available in the occupation although 19 percent of employers require a high school degree or equivalent. Further, 83 percent of employers require no experience when hiring, with the remaining 17 percent of employers requiring less than 1 year of experience. Seventy-one percent of employers report that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation. Just over 80 percent of employers reported that hiring was difficult due to a lack of applicants while 54 percent indicated that it was difficult to find applicants who could work the required shifts. There were relatively few concerns about applicant experience (24.3%) or occupation specific skill (10.8%) and limited concerns about poor work history (29.7%) or passing a background check (13.5%). The primary concern, along with an adequate supply of applicants, was wage requirements. Nearly half of employers reported that applicants had wage demands which were "too high." On the job training was the most common type of post-hire training, at 46 percent, while 15 percent of new hires received training through course work and 10 percent through a certificate program.

Retail Salesperson is the seventh occupation listed, in Table 4.7. This occupation provides moderate wages, with an average hourly wage of $13.00. Some jobs in the occupation, such as automobile salesperson, pay wages which are far above this average. Workers with a high school degree or less have job opportunities available in the Retail Salesperson occupation. Further, more than half of employers indicated that no experience was necessary. Just over 70 percent of employers reported that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation. Nearly half of employers reported that it was difficult to hire due to a lack of applicants. Just under 40 percent reported that a lack of experience made it difficult to hire while just under 30 percent reported that a lack of occupation-specific skill made hiring difficult. Poor work history was mentioned by one-third of employers while just under 20 percent indicated that there was difficulty with applicants failing a background check. On the job training was the most common type of post-hire training for Retail Salespersons, at 52 percent, while just over one-third of new hires receiving training through coursework.

Account Executive, Account Manager is the eighth occupation listed, in Table 4.8. This occupation provides moderate wages, with an average hourly wage (either reported directly or obtained by dividing the annual salary by 2,000 hours) of $16.57. Wages were in a tight range, between $14 and $20 per hour. One half of employers require a high school degree for this occupation, while the remaining half require a technical, associates, or bachelor's degree. While

over half of employers require between 1 and 5 years of experience, one in five require no experience at all. Seventy percent of employers report that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation. Difficulties were most closely tied with education and occupation specific-experience. Seventy-three percent of employers reported that it was difficult to hire because applicants lacked occupation-specific skills while 66 percent noted a lack of work experience. Among other difficulties, 54 percent indicated that it was difficult to hire due to a lack of applicants while 31 reported a poor work history. Consistent with these concerns about occupation-specific skills, 36 percent of employers provided hires with a training course and 13 percent a certificate course. On-the-job training was utilized by 45 percent of employers.

Customer Service Manager is the ninth occupation listed, in Table 4.9. This occupation provides lower wages, with an average hourly wage (either reported directly or obtained by dividing the annual salary by 2,000 hours) of $12.08. There is a wide range of wages, from $8 to $20 per hour, suggesting potential for moderate wage employment in this occupation. Around 60 percent of employers require a high school degree for this occupation, while 30 percent have no specific educational requirement. While nearly 50 percent of employers require between 6 months and 2 years of experience, nearly 40 percent require no experience at all. Fifty-four percent of employers report that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation. The number and quality of applicants were a primary source of hiring difficulty for this occupation. Fifty-nine percent of employers report that it was difficult to hire because there is a lack of applicants while 37 percent report that it is difficult to find applicants who can work the required shifts. In addition, 59 percent of employers report applicants with a poor work history, and 28 percent report applicants who could not pass a background check. Nearly 50 percent of employers had difficulty due to applicants who lacked work experience. Forty-six percent of employers provided a training course post-hire while 36 percent provided on-the-job training.

Stock Clerks and Order Fillers is the tenth occupation listed, in Table 4.10. This occupation provides lower wages, with an average hourly wage (either reported directly or obtained by dividing the annual salary by 2,000 hours), at $11.31. Wages range between $8 to $18 dollars an hour. Workers with a high school degree or less have job opportunities available in the Retail Salesperson occupation. Further, more than half of employers indicated that no experience was necessary. Just over 60 percent of employers reported that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation. Forty percent of employers reported that it was difficult to hire due to a lack of applicants. Relatively few employers cited a lack of experience or occupation-specific skill as a barrier to hiring but just over one-third of employers indicated that applicants with a poor work history made it difficult to hire while one-quarter cited applicants inability to pass a background check. On-the-job training was the most common type of post-hire training provided by employers.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers is the eleventh occupation listed, in Table 4.11. This occupation provides moderate wages, with an average hourly wage (either reported directly or obtained by dividing the annual salary by 2,000 hours), at $17.00. Wages range between $10 and $30 dollars an hour. Workers with a high school degree or less have job opportunities available in the Retail Salesperson occupation. Half of responding employers expected new workers to have at least one year of experience. Nearly 90 percent of employers reported that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation, with almost two-thirds reporting that there were not enough applicants for job openings in this occupation. Approximately half of employers reported that a lack of work experience made it difficult to hire workers, while one-third of employers reported difficulty with applicants who lacked appropriate licenses. Another problem was that employers often have difficulty hiring workers even when workers have appropriate skills. More than one-third of employers cited applicants with a poor work history while one-quarter reported applicants who could not pass a background check. Nearly 40 percent of employers reported that one-the-job training was provided to newly hired workers with one-quarter of employers provided training classes and nearly one in five provided training which lead to licenses.

Loaders, Experienced Equipment Operators and Warehouse Workers is the twelfth occupation listed, in Table 4.12. This occupation provides moderate wages, with an average hourly wage of $13.43. Wages range between $9 and $29 dollars an hour. Workers with a high school degree or less have job opportunities available in this occupation. Nearly two-third of employers require a high school degree while just over one-third have no specific education requirement. Sixty-percent of employers require new workers to have up to 1 year of work experience while 23 percent require no experience. Two-thirds of employers report that it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation. The main problem is the quality of applicants, with 81 percent of employers indicating that is difficult to hire because applicants have a poor work history and 50 percent reporting that applicants cannot pass a background check. Forty-six percent of employers report that there are not enough applicants with 32 percent reporting that applicants cannot work the required shifts. Fifty percent of employers report it is difficult to hire because applicants lack work experience, while 41 percent report a lack of occupation-specific skills and 23 percent report applicants who lack required licenses and certificates. Twenty-six percent of employers provide a certificate course post-hire while 20 percent provide other courses. Forty percent of employers report that one-the-job training was provided to newly hired workers.

Table 4.1: Computer Programmers and Developers (15-1131, 15-1132, 15-1133, 15-1134)	
Wages*	
Mean	$36.15
Median	$36.25
High	$80.00
Low	$10.00
Education Requirements	
No minimum requirement	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	5.6%
Technical/Vocational Degree	19.4%
Associate Degree	8.3%
Bachelor's Degree	66.7%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)
Special training required	61.1%
License required	8.3%
Certificate required	8.3%
Minimum work experience for position	
No experience required	13.9%
6-mo related or less	2.8%
6-mo to 1 year	11.1%
1-2 years	19.4%
3-5 years	38.8%
5+ years	13.9%
It is Difficult to Find Workers?	91.7% Yes
Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?	
Lack of Work Experience	47.2%
Poor Work History	2.8%
Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	50.0%
Failed Background Check	0.0%
Wage Demands Too High	16.7%
Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	11.1%
Language Barrier	2.8%
Not enough applicants	80.6%
Availability for shifts required	0.0%
Lack required education	27.8%
Overqualified	0.0%
Training Needs	
Where is training provided?	
In-House	59.3%
Out-of-House	7.4%
Both	33.3%
Type of Training Provided	
Class But No Certification	33.3%
License	0.0%
Certification Course	2.8%
College of Community College Course	13.9%
Other (usually OTJ training)	50.0%

Table 4.2: Computer and Network Support Specialists (15-1151, 15-1152)	
Wages*	
Mean	$19.03
Median	$18.00
High	$30.00
Low	$13.52
Education Requirements	
No minimum requirement	18.8%
High School Diploma/GED	6.3%
Technical/Vocational Degree	31.3%
Associate Degree	31.3%
Bachelor's Degree	12.5%
Master's Degree or Higher	
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)
Special training required	53.3%
License required	0.0%
Certificate required	18.8%
Minimum work experience for position	
No experience required	6.3%
6-mo related or less	6.3%
6-mo to 1 year	18.8%
1-2 years	43.8%
3-5 years	25.0%
5+ years	0.0%
It is Difficult to Find Workers?	43.8% Yes
Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?	
Lack of Work Experience	31.3%
Poor Work History	0.0%
Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	37.5%
Failed Background Check	0.0%
Wage Demands Too High	25.0%
Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	6.3%
Language Barrier	0.0%
Not enough applicants	37.5%
Availability for shifts required	0.0%
Lack required education	0.0%
Overqualified	0.0%
Training Needs	
Where is training provided?	
In-House	58.3%
Out-of-House	8.3%
Both	33.3%
Type of Training Provided	
Class But No Certification	25.0%
License	6.3%
Certification Course	18.8%
College of Community College Course	6.3%
Other (usually OTJ training)	50.0%

Table 4.3: Registered Nurse (29-1141)	
Wages*	
Mean	$21.81
Median	$23.13
High	$35.00
Low	$12.00
Education Requirements	
No minimum requirement	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	6.6%
Technical/Vocational Degree	14.8%
Associate Degree	52.5%
Bachelor's Degree	24.6%
Master's Degree or Higher	1.6%
Additional requirements?	
Special training required	91.5%
License required	96.7%
Certificate required	48.1%
Minimum work experience for position	
No experience required	31.2%
6-mo related or less	14.8%
6-mo to 1 year	18.0%
1-2 years	24.6%
3-5 years	9.8%
5+ years	1.6%

It is Difficult to Find Workers?	70.5% Yes
Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?	
Lack of Work Experience	34.9%
Poor Work History	27.9%
Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	23.2%
Failed Background Check	16.3%
Wage Demands Too High	37.2%
Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	14.0%
Language Barrier	0.0%
Not enough applicants	79.1%
Availability for shifts required	37.2%
Lack required education	2.3%
Overqualified	7.0%
Training Needs	
Where is training provided?	
In-House	80.4%
Out-of-House	4.4%
Both	15.2%
Type of Training Provided	
Class But No Certification	20.6%
License	11.1%
Certification Course	4.8%
College of Community College Course	11.1%
Other	38.1%

Table 4.4: Licensed Practical Nurse (29-2061)

Wages*	
Mean	$17.39
Median	$18.00
High	$24.00
Low	$14.00

Education Requirements	
No minimum requirement	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	3.0%
Technical/Vocational Degree	51.5%
Associate Degree	42.4%
Bachelor's Degree	3.0%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%
Additional requirements?	
Special training required	80.7%
License required	97.0%
Certificate required	48.2%

Minimum work experience for position	
No experience required	42.4%
6-mo related or less	3.0%
6-mo to 1 year	21.2%
1-2 years	27.3%
3-5 years	3.0%
5+ years	3.0%

It is Difficult to Find Workers?	84.4% Yes

Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?	
Lack of Work Experience	33.3%
Poor Work History	33.3%
Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	22.2%
Failed Background Check	14.8%
Wage Demands Too High	48.2%
Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	22.2%
Language Barrier	0.0%
Not enough applicants	88.9%
Availability for shifts required	40.7%
Lack required education	0.0%
Overqualified	7.4%

Training Needs	
Where is training provided?	
In-House	76.9%
Out-of-House	0.0%
Both	23.1%
Type of Training Provided	
Class But No Certification	21.2%
License	15.2%
Certification Course	12.1%
College of Community College Course	9.1%
Other	54.6%

Table 4.5: Nursing Assistants (31-1014)			
Wages*		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	72.6% Yes
Mean	$10.81		
Median	$11.00	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
High	$15.00	Lack of Work Experience	21.6%
Low	$9.00	Poor Work History	67.6%
		Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	13.5%
		Failed Background Check	48.7%
Education Requirements		Wage Demands Too High	27.0%
No minimum requirement	9.6%	Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	29.7%
High School Diploma/GED	57.7%	Language Barrier	0.0%
Technical/Vocational Degree	30.8%	Not enough applicants	64.9%
Associate Degree	0.0%	Availability for shifts required	54.1%
Bachelor's Degree	1.9%	Lack required education	5.4%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Overqualified	0.0%
Additional requirements?			
Special training required	100.0%	**Training Needs**	
License required	46.9%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	92.0%	In-House	84.0%
		Out-of-House	8.0%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	8.0%
No experience required	61.1%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	18.5%	Class But No Certification	31.6%
6-mo to 1 year	14.8%	License	5.3%
1-2 years	5.6%	Certification Course	24.6%
3-5 years	0.0%	College of Community College Course	0.0%
5+ years	0.0%	Other	38.6%

Table 4.6: Crew Member, Food Truck, Porter (35-3021)			
Wages*		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	71.2% Yes
Mean	$9.08		
Median	$9.00	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
High	$12.50	Lack of Work Experience	24.3%
Low	$7.25	Poor Work History	29.7%
		Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	10.8%
		Failed Background Check	13.5%
Education Requirements		Wage Demands Too High	48.6%
No minimum requirement	80.8%	Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	19.2%	Language Barrier	8.1%
Technical/Vocational Degree	0.0%	Not enough applicants	81.1%
Associate Degree	0.0%	Availability for shifts required	54.1%
Bachelor's Degree	0.0%	Lack required education	0.0%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Overqualified	10.8%
Additional requirements?			
Special training required	35.3%	**Training Needs**	
License required	4.0%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	24.0%	In-House	94.4%
		Out-of-House	0.0%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	5.6%
No experience required	82.7%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	9.6%	Class But No Certification	15.4%
6-mo to 1 year	7.7%	License	0.0%
1-2 years	0.0%	Certification Course	9.6%
3-5 years	0.0%	College of Community College Course	0.0%
5+ years	0.0%	Other	46.2%

Table 4.7: Retail Salesperson (41-2031)

Wages*	
Mean	$13.00
Median	$11.00
High	$35.00
Low	$5.00

*many of these positions report a base salary plus commission

Education Requirements	
No minimum requirement	38.2%
High School Diploma/GED	55.1%
Technical/Vocational Degree	0.0%
Associate Degree	1.1%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	5.6%

Additional requirements?	(% Yes)
Special training required	39.3%
License required	21.4%
Certificate required	3.4%

Minimum work experience for position	
No experience required	55.7%
6-mo related or less	9.1%
6-mo to 1 year	15.9%
1-2 years	14.8%
3-5 years	3.4%
5+ years	1.1%

It is Difficult to Find Workers?	70.45% Yes

Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?	
Lack of Work Experience	38.9%
Poor Work History	33.3%
Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	28.9%
Failed Background Check	18.9%
Wage Demands Too High	22.2%
Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	3.3%
Language Barrier	3.3%
Not enough applicants	46.7%
Availability for shifts required	24.4%
Lack required education	4.4%
Overqualified	5.6%

Training Needs	
Where is training provided?	
In-House	92.1%
Out-of-House	0.0%
Both	7.9%
Type of Training Provided	
Class But No Certification	34.4%
License	5.6%
Certification Course	12.2%
College of Community College Course	2.2%
Other (usually OTJ training)	52.2%

Table 4.8: Account Executive, Account Manager (41-4012)			
Wages*		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	69.6% Yes
Mean	$16.57		
Median	$16.00	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
High	$20.00	Lack of Work Experience	65.6%
Low	$14.00	Poor Work History	31.3%
		Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	72.9%
		Failed Background Check	6.3%
Education Requirements		Wage Demands Too High	28.1%
No minimum requirement	8.5%	Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	6.3%
High School Diploma/GED	51.1%	Language Barrier	0.0%
Technical/Vocational Degree	10.6%	Not enough applicants	59.4%
Associate Degree	12.8%	Availability for shifts required	6.3%
Bachelor's Degree	17.0%	Lack required education	12.5%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Overqualified	3.1%
Additional requirements?			
Special training required	42.6%	**Training Needs**	
License required	6.5%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	8.5%	In-House	80.5%
		Out-of-House	2.4%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	17.1%
No experience required	19.2%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	6.4%	Class But No Certification	36.2%
6-mo to 1 year	17.0%	License	6.4%
1-2 years	29.8%	Certification Course	12.8%
3-5 years	25.5%	College of Community College Course	4.3%
5+ years	2.1%	Other	44.7%

Table 4.9: Customer Service Representative (43-4051)			
Wages*		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	53.5% Yes
Mean	$12.04		
Median	$12.00	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
High	$22.00	Lack of Work Experience	45.7%
Low	$8.00	Poor Work History	58.7%
		Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	28.3%
		Failed Background Check	28.3%
Education Requirements		Wage Demands Too High	32.6%
No minimum requirement	31.4%	Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	4.3%
High School Diploma/GED	61.6%	Language Barrier	6.5%
Technical/Vocational Degree	1.2%	Not enough applicants	58.7%
Associate Degree	2.3%	Availability for shifts required	37.0%
Bachelor's Degree	3.5%	Lack required education	6.5%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Overqualified	4.4%
Additional requirements?			
Special training required	40.7%	**Training Needs**	
License required	2.4%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	3.7%	In-House	92.9%
		Out-of-House	2.9%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	4.3%
No experience required	38.4%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	8.1%	Class But No Certification	46.1%
6-mo to 1 year	20.9%	License	2.3%
1-2 years	25.6%	Certification Course	5.6%
3-5 years	7.0%	College of Community College Course	1.1%
5+ years	0.0%	Other	36.0%

Table 4.10: Stock Clerks and Order Fillers (43-5081)			
Wages*		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	61.0% Yes
Mean	$11.31		
Median	$11.00	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
High	$18.00	Lack of Work Experience	15.6%
Low	$8.00	Poor Work History	34.4%
		Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	6.7%
		Failed Background Check	25.6%
Education Requirements		Wage Demands Too High	18.9%
No minimum requirement	55.8%	Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	2.2%
High School Diploma/GED	44.2%	Language Barrier	2.2%
Technical/Vocational Degree	0.0%	Not enough applicants	40.0%
Associate Degree	0.0%	Availability for shifts required	20.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Lack required education	0.0%
		Overqualified	3.3%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)		
Special training required	34.9%	**Training Needs**	
License required	9.8%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	14.6%	In-House	95.2%
		Out-of-House	0.0%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	4.8%
No experience required	69.8%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	17.4%	Class But No Certification	23.3%
6-mo to 1 year	5.8%	License	5.6%
1-2 years	7.0%	Certification Course	17.8%
3-5 years	0.0%	College of Community College Course	0.0%
5+ years	0.0%	Other (usually OTJ training)	36.7%

Table 4.11: Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032)

Wages*	
Mean	$18.03
Median	$17.00
High	$30.00
Low	$10.00

*some of these occupations are paid per mile (excluded)

Education Requirements	
No minimum requirement	45.3%
High School Diploma/GED	49.5%
Technical/Vocational Degree	5.3%
Associate Degree	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	0.0%

Additional requirements?	(% Yes)
Special training required	81.3%
License required	99.0%
Certificate required	42.5%

Minimum work experience for position	
No experience required	16.7%
6-mo related or less	11.5%
6-mo to 1 year	19.8%
1-2 years	35.4%
3-5 years	16.7%
5+ years	0.0%

It is Difficult to Find Workers?	88.4% Yes

Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?	
Lack of Work Experience	52.5%
Poor Work History	38.6%
Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	20.8%
Failed Background Check	25.7%
Wage Demands Too High	23.8%
Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	34.7%
Language Barrier	5.9%
Not enough applicants	63.4%
Availability for shifts required	5.0%
Lack required education	3.0%
Overqualified	2.0%

Training Needs	
Where is training provided?	
In-House	88.4%
Out-of-House	5.8%
Both	5.8%
Type of Training Provided	
Class But No Certification	24.8%
License	18.8%
Certification Course	9.9%
College of Community College Course	1.0%
Other (usually OTJ training)	37.6%

Table 4.12: Loaders, Experienced Equipment Operators, Warehouse Labor (53-7051)			
Wages*		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	66.7% Yes
Mean	$13.43		
Median	$13.00	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
High	$28.90	Lack of Work Experience	50.0%
Low	$9.00	Poor Work History	81.8%
		Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	40.9%
		Failed Background Check	50.0%
Education Requirements		Wage Demands Too High	27.3%
No minimum requirement	37.1%	Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	22.7%
High School Diploma/GED	62.9%	Language Barrier	13.6%
Technical/Vocational Degree	0.0%	Not enough applicants	45.5%
Associate Degree	0.0%	Availability for shifts required	31.8%
Bachelor's Degree	0.0%	Lack required education	4.6%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Overqualified	9.1%
Additional requirements?			
Special training required	60.0%	**Training Needs**	
License required	34.3%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	34.3%	In-House	92.6%
		Out-of-House	7.4%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	0.0%
No experience required	22.9%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	20.0%	Class But No Certification	20.0%
6-mo to 1 year	40.0%	License	8.6%
1-2 years	14.3%	Certification Course	25.7%
3-5 years	2.9%	College of Community College Course	2.9%
5+ years	0.0%	Other (usually OTJ training)	40.0%

5. CONCLUSION

This report utilized the results of the *Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs* employer survey to evaluate satisfaction with existing workforce, transition planning for employee retirement, challenges faced by businesses when hiring and the types of training employers provide. The survey also asked whether the availability of labor is a key factor influencing firm expansion. Business responses indicated that the availability of workers is a significant challenge with potential to slow economic growth in the Omaha Metropolitan Area. The challenge is somewhat greater for goods-producing industries like manufacturing than for service-producing industries.

Businesses expressed a fair degree of satisfaction with their current workforce, although there are areas of concern. Businesses consistently raised concerns about the leadership skills of their workforce. Other areas of concern included information technology skills, sales skills, critical thinking skills and work ethic. While a significant share of employers are concerned about replacing retiring workers, most firms had taken steps or planned to take steps to make these transitions, through a mix of training and promoting from within, encouraging workers to delay retirement, or hiring new workers.

More generally, 63.9 percent of the time employers report that it is difficult to hire workers. The percentage is even higher in selected blue and white collar occupations, including installation, maintenance and repair workers, construction and extraction workers, and computer and mathematical workers. The primary reason for difficulty in hiring is a lack of applicants. Nearly three in four businesses reported that it is difficult to hire because there are too few applicants. Two factors are likely contributing to this result. First, the Omaha Metropolitan Area at full employment, implying that the supply and demand for workers is roughly in balance. Second, with baby boom age workers beginning to retire in larger numbers, there will be slow growth in the labor force. The implication is that most applicants come from a slower growing pool of employed workers. In health care occupations, there also is a significant problem with finding workers who are able to work in required shifts.

Beyond the number of applicants, employers also cite specific concerns about applicants. Nearly one half of respondents indicate that applicants lack work experience. Four in ten businesses report that applicants lacked occupation-specific skills which make it difficult to hire, while almost as many employers report that applicants with a poor work history make it difficult to hire. About three in ten employers report applicants have wage demands which are “too high.” Taken together, these issues represent a wide array of challenges in hiring. However, a careful look at these issues by occupation reveal patterns. In particular, employers hiring within a particular occupation may only face one or two significant difficulties, creating a more manageable problem with potentially more actionable solutions.

A lack of occupation specific skill is a particular concern for one white collar and two blue collar occupations. The white occupation is computer and mathematical workers. Among blue collar jobs, the two occupations are installation, maintenance and repair workers and construction and extraction workers. There may be a particular need to have training certification courses available in these industries. Workers in blue collar occupations also would benefit from learning skills on the job whether through formal apprenticeship programs or through periods of lower wage work as helpers and other support occupations.

Poor work history and failed background checks are a more common concern for selected service and blue collar occupations. Among service jobs, the occupations are health care support workers, food preparation and serving related workers and personal care and service workers. Among blue collar jobs, there is a heightened concern about work history and failed background checks for construction and extraction workers and transportation and material moving workers. These results point to a second set of interventions beyond traditional training programs. Particularly, some workers appear to have made themselves difficult to hire due to behaviors that led to a failed background check or a poor work history. One potential area for policy is to design and encourage pathways and practices whereby workers can improve their work history and address issues which are checked on background. Successful efforts in this regard could be very productive for workers and would benefit the business community.

Wage rates also appear to be a barrier to hiring in a third set of occupations. Businesses in the health care industry and six particular occupations report that a large share of applicants had wage expectations which are "too high." These occupations are healthcare practitioners and technical workers, health care support workers, food preparation and service related workers, sales and related workers, personal care and service workers office and administrative support workers. In these occupations, employees, employers, or both need to adjust their wage expectations.

The second goal of this report is to examine the training which businesses provide to newly hired workers. Respondents to the survey report that businesses provide job-specific training to newly hired workers in 71 percent of occupations. Of businesses which provide training, 24.2 percent of employers provide training courses without a certification while 10.5 percent provide certification courses. Four percent of employers provide licensing courses while 2.6 percent provide a full college or community college course. Many employers also provide "on the job" training; for example, by pairing new workers with a mentor.

Large shares of new hires are provided training in all industries and occupations, although training is slightly less common in several blue collar occupations including construction and extraction workers and production workers. Certification courses are most common for health

care support, installation, maintenance and repair occupations, and personal care and service occupations. Full college or community college courses are most common for computer and mathematical workers and architecture, engineering and science workers.

Nearly all workers who receive training participate in in-house training. However, responding businesses indicate that out-of-house training is provided to new workers in 21 percent of occupations. Generally speaking, out-of-house training is more likely for new hires in computer and mathematical occupations, management occupations, architecture, engineering and science occupations, personal care and service occupations, installation, maintenance and repair occupations and construction and extraction occupations.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: GREATER OMAHA SURVEY OF WORKFORCE NEEDS

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Greater Omaha Survey of Workforce Needs

The following survey is designed to gather information about the hiring and training needs of Omaha area employers. This survey has three short sections discussing the characteristics of your organization, requirements for new workers, and your current workforce.

This survey should be completed by an owner, senior manager, human resource personnel or first-line supervisor who is knowledgeable about the hiring and training needs of this company.

Please return this survey by September 9. This survey may be returned to the Office of Labor Market Information using the included postage-paid return envelope, faxed to (402) 471-9867, or e-mailed to NDOL.LMI_NE@nebraska.gov.

The individual completing this survey should provide their contact information below in case the research team needs to contact them with a follow-up question:

Name: | Email:

Section 1: Business Characteristics

1) How many years has this location been operating?

- ○ Less than 1 year
- ○ 1 to 5 years
- ○ 6 to 10 years
- ○ More than 10 years

2) Approximately what percentage of your employees are full-time and what percentage are part-time?

☐ % full-time

☐ % part-time

3) Approximately what percentage of your employees are temporary or seasonal employees? *(Please write 0 if you have no temporary or seasonal employees)*

☐ % temporary or seasonal

4) How many job openings do you currently have at this location? *(Please write "0" if you do not have any job openings)*

☐ Job openings

5) When hiring, how much does your business consider whether an applicant is currently working? *(Select the best answer)*

- ○ Not considered at all
- ○ Slightly considered
- ○ Somewhat considered
- ○ Strongly considered

6) Would a candidate's gap in employment, including time spent unemployed, retired, or as a homemaker, have the potential to affect your company's decision to hire or interview a candidate?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No → Go to Question 8

7) What length of time not employed would cause hesitation about a candidate or affect a hiring or interview decision in a negative way? *(Select the best answer)*

- ○ Less than 1 month
- ○ 1-3 months
- ○ 3-6 months
- ○ 6 months-1 year
- ○ 1 year or more

8) Generally speaking, when hiring, how many applicants have experience in the same occupation or a closely related occupation?

- ○ Few or no workers
- ○ Some workers
- ○ Most workers
- ○ All or nearly all workers

9) Generally speaking, when hiring, how many applicants have experience in your industry or a closely related industry?

- ○ Few or no workers
- ○ Some workers
- ○ Most workers
- ○ All or nearly all workers

10) If asked to consider a possible major expansion at this location, would issues with labor availability, such as difficulty finding workers, or a need to raise wages, be present?

- ○ No → Go to Question 12
- ○ Maybe
- ○ Yes

11) Would issues with labor availability limit your ability to undertake a major expansion at this location?

- ○ No
- ○ Maybe
- ○ Yes

12) When hiring, please rate the overall competency level for the following work skills for your typical applicant pool:

	Less Than Adequate	Adequate	Strong
a. Willingness to Learn	○	○	○
b. Attitude	○	○	○
c. Work ethic	○	○	○
d. Creativity	○	○	○
e. Basic Computer skills	○	○	○
f. IT (programming, etc.)	○	○	○
g. Sales skills	○	○	○
h. Critical Thinking skills	○	○	○
i. Leadership skills	○	○	○
j. Customer Service skills	○	○	○
k. Written Communication	○	○	○
l. Verbal Communication	○	○	○
m. Ability to work independently	○	○	○
n. Ability to work as a team	○	○	○
o. Ability to problem solve	○	○	○
p. Ability to adapt to change	○	○	○
q. Ability to pay attention to detail	○	○	○

13) How concerned are you about the potential loss of skills and experience that may result from workers retiring from this location...

In the next year?	In the next 5 years?
○ Not at all	○ Not at all
○ Slightly	○ Slightly
○ Somewhat	○ Somewhat
○ Very	○ Very

14) Has management at this location taken steps to address potential skill gaps that may result from the retirement of workers in the near future?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No → Go to Question 16
- ○ No, but plan to → Go to Question 16

15) How is management at this location addressing potential skill gaps that may result from workers retiring in the near future? *Check all that apply.*

- ○ Formal succession planning
- ○ Encouraging workers to delay retirement
- ○ Retain workers on a part time/consultant basis
- ○ Mentoring/Leadership programs
- ○ Hiring workers with the skills that will be lost
- ○ Training workers in the skills that will be lost
- ○ Mentoring workers through on-the-job training
- ○ Other *(Please describe)*

Section 2: Requirements for New Workers

16) Has your business hired or tried to hire any new workers in the past 2 years?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No → Go to Question 49 on page 7

17) Think about workers this business is *trying to hire* or *hired recently*. What are the top three occupation titles (by frequency of hire) for workers you have been trying to hire or recently hired?

1.

2.

3.

18) For occupation 1 listed in question 17, please describe the main duties and responsibilities for workers with this occupation title:

19) What is the average starting wage or salary (as appropriate) you are willing to pay workers in occupation 1?

$ [ ][ ][ ] . [ ][ ] per hour

OR

$ [ ][ ][ ] , [ ][ ][ ] per year

20) What is the minimum education required for applicants to occupation 1?

- ○ No minimum education required
- ○ High School Diploma/GED
- ○ Technical/Vocational Degree
- ○ Associate Degree
- ○ Bachelor's Degree
- ○ Master's Degree or Higher

21) Please answer the following questions regarding the minimum qualifications for applicants to occupation 1. *If yes, please specify.*

- Is there special training required?
  - ○ Yes
  - ○ No
- Is there a license required?
  - ○ Yes
  - ○ No
- Is there a certificate required?
  - ○ Yes
  - ○ No

22) What amount of related work experience do applicants need to meet the minimum qualifications for this position?

- ○ No experience required
- ○ 6 months related experience or less
- ○ 6 months-1 year
- ○ 1-2 years
- ○ 3-5 years
- ○ 5+ years

23) Is it difficult to find workers for occupation 1?

- ○ No → Go to Question 25
- ○ Yes

24) Why is it difficult to find workers for occupation 1? *(Check all that apply)*

a.	Lack of work experience	○
b.	Poor work history	○
c.	Lack occupation specific skills	○
d.	Failed background check	○
e.	Wage demands too high	○
f.	Lack required licenses/certificates	○
g.	Language barrier	○
h.	Not enough applicants	○
i.	Availability for shifts required	○
j.	Lack required education	○
k.	Overqualified	○
l.	Other *(Please describe)*	○

25) Beyond basic employee orientation, is additional job-specific training provided for new workers in occupation 1?

- ○ No → Go to Question 28
- ○ Yes

26) Is that training provided in-house or out-of-house? *(Please check all that apply)*

- ○ In-house
- ○ Out-of-house

27) What type of training is provided for workers in occupation 1? *(Check all that apply, please describe)*

- ○ Class but no certification _____
- ○ License
- ○ Certification course _____
- ○ College/community college course _____
- ○ Other *(Please describe)*

28) For occupation 2 listed in question 17, please describe the main duties and responsibilities for workers with this occupation title:

29) What is the average starting wage or salary (as appropriate) you are willing to pay workers in occupation 2?

$ ___ . __ per hour

OR

$ ___ , ___ per year

30) What is the minimum education required for applicants to occupation 2?

- ○ No minimum education required
- ○ High School Diploma/GED
- ○ Technical/Vocational Degree
- ○ Associate Degree
- ○ Bachelor's Degree
- ○ Master's Degree or Higher

31) Please answer the following questions regarding the minimum qualifications for applicants to occupation 2. *If yes, please specify.*

- Is there special training required?
  - ○ Yes
  - ○ No
- Is there a license required?
  - ○ Yes
  - ○ No
- Is there a certificate required?
  - ○ Yes
  - ○ No

32) What amount of related work experience do applicants need to meet the minimum qualifications for this position?

- ○ No experience required
- ○ 6 months related experience or less
- ○ 6 months-1 year
- ○ 1-2 years
- ○ 3-5 years
- ○ 5+ years

33) Is it difficult to find workers for occupation 2?

- ○ No → Go to Question 35
- ○ Yes

34) Why is it difficult to find workers for occupation 2? *(Check all that apply)*

a.	Lack of work experience	○
b.	Poor work history	○
c.	Lack occupation specific skills	○
d.	Failed background check	○
e.	Wage demands too high	○
f.	Lack required licenses/certificates	○
g.	Language barrier	○
h.	Not enough applicants	○
i.	Availability for shifts required	○
j.	Lack required education	○
k.	Overqualified	○
l.	Other *(Please describe)*	○

35) Beyond basic employee orientation, is additional job-specific training provided for new workers in occupation 2?

- ○ No → Go to Question 38
- ○ Yes

36) Is that training provided in-house or out-of-house? *(Please check all that apply)*

- ○ In-house
- ○ Out-of-house

37) What type of training is provided for workers in occupation 2? *(Check all that apply, please describe)*

- ○ Class but no certification _____
- ○ License
- ○ Certification course _____
- ○ College/community college course _____
- ○ Other *(Please describe)*

38) For occupation 3 listed in question 17, please describe the main duties and responsibilities for workers with this occupation title:

39) What is the average starting wage or salary (as appropriate) you are willing to pay workers in occupation 3?

$ ___ . __ per hour

OR

$ ___ , ___ per year

40) What is the minimum education required for applicants to occupation 3?

- ○ No minimum education required
- ○ High School Diploma/GED
- ○ Technical/Vocational Degree
- ○ Associate Degree
- ○ Bachelor's Degree
- ○ Master's Degree or Higher

41) Please answer the following questions regarding the minimum qualifications for applicants to occupation 3. *If yes, please specify.*

- Is there special training required?
  - ○ Yes
  - ○ No
- Is there a license required?
  - ○ Yes
  - ○ No
- Is there a certificate required?
  - ○ Yes
  - ○ No

42) What amount of related work experience do applicants need to meet the minimum qualifications for this position?

- ○ No experience required
- ○ 6 months related experience or less
- ○ 6 months-1 year
- ○ 1-2 years
- ○ 3-5 years
- ○ 5+ years

43) Is it difficult to find workers for occupation 3?

- ○ No → Go to Question 45
- ○ Yes

44) Why is it difficult to find workers for occupation 3? *(Check all that apply)*

a.	Lack of work experience	○
b.	Poor work history	○
c.	Lack occupation specific skills	○
d.	Failed background check	○
e.	Wage demands too high	○
f.	Lack required licenses/certificates	○
g.	Language barrier	○
h.	Not enough applicants	○
i.	Availability for shifts required	○
j.	Lack required education	○
k.	Overqualified	○
l.	Other *(Please describe)*	○

45) Beyond basic employee orientation, is additional job-specific training provided for new workers in occupation 3?

- ○ No → Go to Question 48
- ○ Yes

46) Is that training provided in-house or out-of-house? *(Please check all that apply)*

- ○ In-house
- ○ Out-of-house

47) What type of training is provided for workers in occupation 3? *(Check all that apply, please describe)*

- ○ Class but no certification _____
- ○ License
- ○ Certification course _____
- ○ College/community college course _____
- ○ Other *(Please describe)*

48) Please list any additional occupations (besides the three listed previously) for which it is hard to find workers. In the area below, please describe the duties of that position and indicate why it is difficult to find workers.

	Occupation A	Occupation B
Occupation Title:		
Duties/Responsibilities:		
A. Lack of work experience	○	○
B. Poor work history	○	○
C. Lack occupation specific skills	○	○
D. Failed background check	○	○
E. Wage demands too high	○	○
F. Lack required licenses/certificates	○	○
G. Language barrier	○	○
H. Not enough applicants	○	○
I. Availability for shifts required	○	○
J. Lack required education	○	○
K. Overqualified	○	○
L. Other *(please describe)*	○	○

Section 3: About Current Workers

49. About how many workers at this location are offered the following benefits?

	Full-time employees			Part-time employees		
Amount of workers:	All	Some	None	All	Some	None
A. Health Insurance	○	○	○	○	○	○
B. Dental Insurance	○	○	○	○	○	○
C. Vision Insurance	○	○	○	○	○	○
D. Retirement	○	○	○	○	○	○
E. Paid vacation	○	○	○	○	○	○
F. Paid holidays	○	○	○	○	○	○
G. Paid sick leave	○	○	○	○	○	○
H. Tuition reimbursement	○	○	○	○	○	○
I. Flexible work schedule	○	○	○	○	○	○
J. Telecommuting	○	○	○	○	○	○

50. a. Please rate the overall skill level required of most workers at your location.

b. Please indicate if there are <u>deficiencies</u> for the majority of your workforce in these skills.

	Not typically required	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Yes	No
Willingness to learn	○	○	○	○	○	○
Attitude	○	○	○	○	○	○
Work ethic	○	○	○	○	○	○
Creativity	○	○	○	○	○	○
Basic Computer skills	○	○	○	○	○	○
IT (programming, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sales skills	○	○	○	○	○	○
Critical Thinking skills	○	○	○	○	○	○
Leadership skills	○	○	○	○	○	○
Customer Service skills	○	○	○	○	○	○
Written Communication	○	○	○	○	○	○
Verbal Communication	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ability to work independently	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ability to work as a team	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ability to problem solve	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ability to adapt to change	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ability to pay attention to detail	○	○	○	○	○	○

51) What sort of training do your current workers need?

52) What are the critical new skills which you will need for your business 5 years in the future?

Thank You!

This survey may be returned to the Department of Labor's Office of Labor Market Information using the included postage-paid return envelope, e-mailed to NDOL.LMI_NE@nebraska.gov, or faxed to (402) 471-9867. For questions about this survey, please contact the Office of Labor Market Information at (402) 471-2600 or email NDOL.LMI_NE@nebraska.gov.

APPENDIX 2: ABOUT THE BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH AND KEY PERSONNEL

The Bureau of Business Research

The Bureau of Business Research is a leading source for analysis and information on the Nebraska and Great Plains economy. The Bureau conducts both contract and sponsored research on the economy of states and communities including: 1) economic and fiscal impact analysis; 2) models of the structure and comparative advantage of the current economy; 3) economic, fiscal, and demographic outlooks, and 4) assessments of how economic policy affects industry, labor markets, infrastructure, and the standard of living. The Bureau also competes for research funding from federal government agencies and private foundations from around the nation and contributes to the academic mission of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln through scholarly publication and the education of students. The Bureau website address is www.bbr.unl.edu.

Key Personnel

Dr. Eric Thompson – Principal Investigator

Dr. Eric Thompson is an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He received his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with an emphasis in community economic development. He has served as Director of the Bureau of Business in the College of Business Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln since August 2004.

Under the auspices of the Bureau of Business Research, Dr. Thompson spearheads a quarterly publication, Business in Nebraska. The Bureau partners with the Nebraska Business Forecast Council to dedicate two issues of Business in Nebraska to forecasting the Nebraska business climate, wages and employment outlook. The remaining two issues cover diverse and timely topics facing the state of Nebraska. In 2011, he began publishing a monthly Leading Economic Indicator report. These publications are free and available via email and at the Bureau website, bbr.unl.edu.

Professor Thompson has published 10 peer reviewed articles in journals such as *Journal of Regional Science, American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, and *Regional Science and Urban Economics*. Thompson has served as President of both the Nebraska Economics and Business Association (NEBA) and the Association for University Business and Economic Research (AUBER). His book, co-authored with Professor William Walstad, *Entrepreneurship in Nebraska: Conditions, Attitudes, and Actions,* was published in 2008.

Throughout his career Thompson has received over one hundred national and local grants from organizations such as the U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of State Courts, Nebraska State Historical Society, Platte Institute for Economic Research, Nebraska Department of Roads, and Lincoln Chamber of Commerce.