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

Survey of Scottsbluff Area Businesses about Skill and Training Requirements

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for
The Nebraska Department of Labor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report discusses results from the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training 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 Scottsbluff area employers are searching for and hiring, and the types of difficulties employers face when hiring. The Scottsbluff area includes nine counties in the Panhandle region of Nebraska, including Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan and Sioux counties. The survey also asks about the types of training which employers provide.

Businesses express a fair degree of satisfaction with their current workforce, although concerns are raised about employee leadership, work ethic and an ability to pay attention to detail. While half of employers are somewhat or very concerned about replacing retiring workers, most firms have taken steps or planned to take steps to ease these transitions, through a mix of training and promoting from within or hiring new workers.

Seventy-four percent of employers report that it is difficult to hire workers. The percentage is even higher in blue collar occupations such as installation, maintenance and repair workers, production workers, and transportation and material moving workers. The percentage is also elevated in other select occupations, including health care practitioners and technical support workers, business and financial operations workers, computer and mathematical workers, and personal care and service workers. The primary reason it is difficult to hire is a lack of applicants. More than three in four businesses report that there are too few applicants. In select occupations there also is a significant problem with finding workers who are able to work during required shifts.

Employers also have concerns about the applications they do receive. More than one half of employers (53.8%) indicate that it is difficult to hire because applicants lack work experience. Among other difficulties, 43.8 percent of employers report that applicants lack occupation-specific skills and a similar share (44.2%) that applicants have a poor work history. About one-quarter of employers report applicants have wage demands which are “too high.”

A lack of occupation-specific skill is a particular concern for two white collar and two blue collar occupations. Among white collar workers, the two occupations are computer and mathematical workers and business and financial operations workers. Among blue collar workers, the two occupations are construction and extraction workers and installation, maintenance and repair 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, construction and extraction 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 personal care and service occupation, the construction and extraction occupation and the transportation and material moving occupation. 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 87.6 percent of occupations. Of businesses which provide training, most provide individual training courses or a certification program. The vast majority of employers also provide “on the job” training; for example, by pairing new workers with a more experienced employee or a supervisor. 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 computer and mathematical occupations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

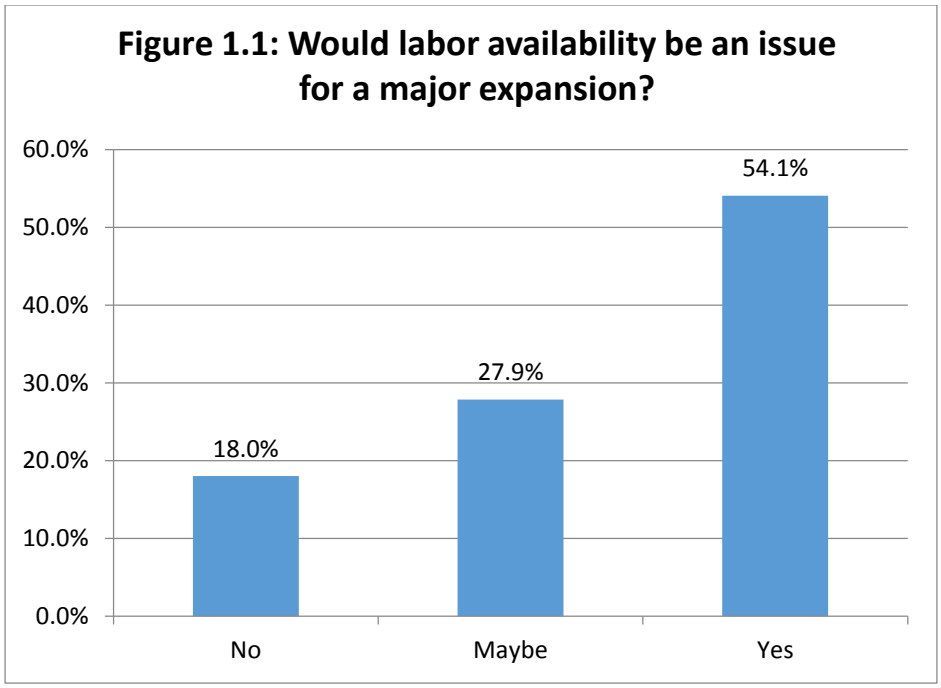
This report discusses the results from a survey of employers in the Scottsbluff area entitled the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs.* This survey was conducted by the Nebraska Department of Labor under contract with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. Responses are analyzed by the UNL Bureau of Business Research. Specifically, this report examines the types of occupations Scottsbluff area employers are searching for and hiring, and the types of degrees, certifications, and skills that the employers require. The Scottsbluff area include nine counties in the Panhandle region of Nebraska, including Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan and Sioux counties. 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.

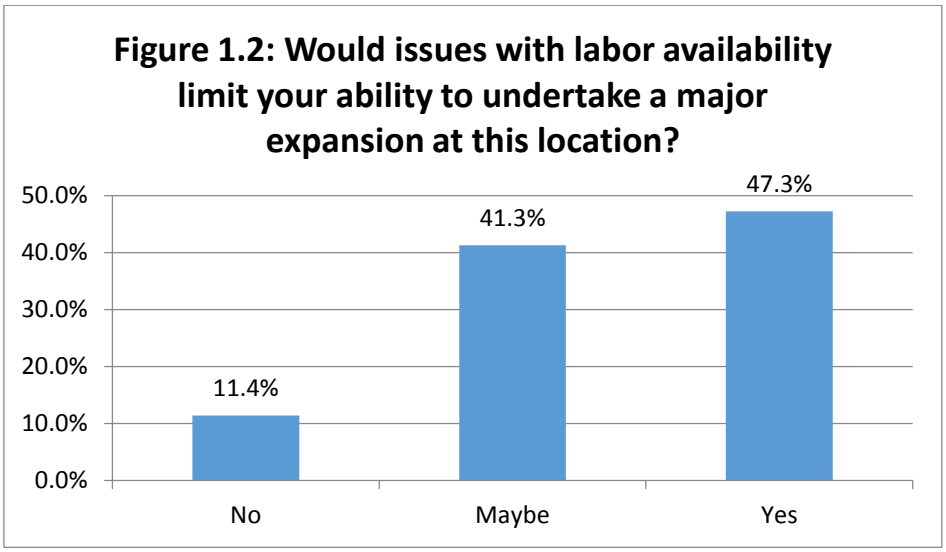
Before turning to the survey methodology, several key results are presented below. These results show the importance of labor force issues and the challenges presented to businesses facing expansion. Figure 1.1 shows the role of worker availability in economic development. Specifically, the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* 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.

A majority of businesses (54.1%) reported that issues with labor availability would be present in the Scottsbluff area if they were asked to consider an expansion. Another quarter of businesses suggested that availability issues might be present (27.9%). Only 18.0 percent reported that they would labor availability issues.

Those that answered "Yes" or "Maybe" to the previous question were also asked specifically about labor availability. Nearly half (47.3%) of respondents reported that labor availability would limit their ability to expand at their present location (Figure 1.2).

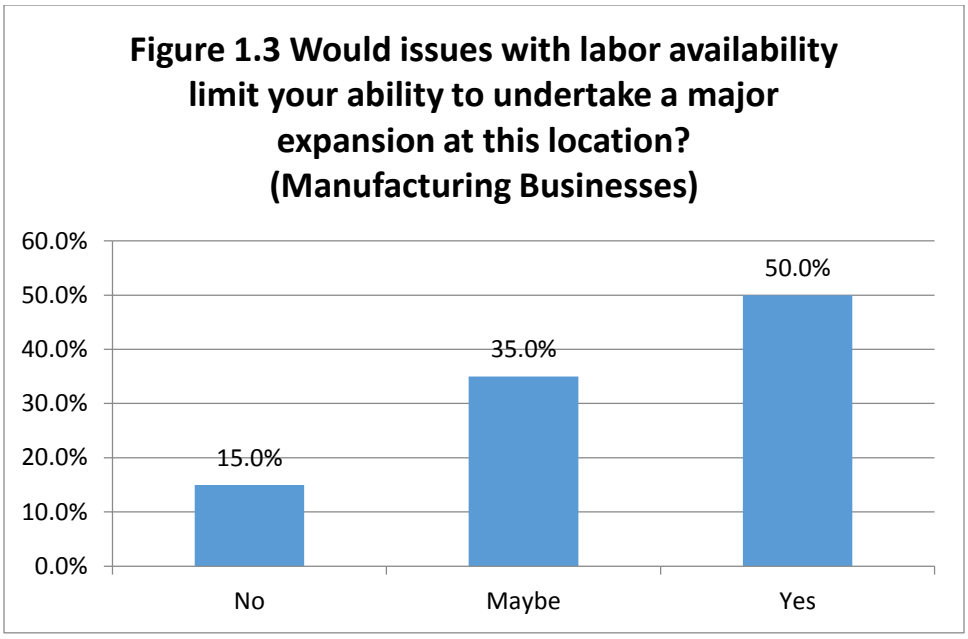


Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Results also can be broken out for the manufacturing industry, a nationally competitive sector with potential to expand wherever business conditions are most favorable. As seen in Figure 1.3, results for the manufacturing industry are similar to results for all industries, which were presented in Figure 1.2. One-half of manufacturing businesses would be limited in their ability to expand, while 35 percent indicated labor availability might limit expansion and 15 percent indicated expansion would not be limited.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training 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 Scottsbluff area. This creates a need to develop a detailed understanding of the labor needs of Scottsbluff area businesses, and the challenges these business face in recruiting workers.
The report will address the variety of issues faced by Scottsbluff area businesses. We begin by discussing the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* which is the source of this data.

2. DETAILS OF THE BUSINESS SURVEY

The *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* of employers was designed to gather detailed information on the hiring and training needs and priorities of Scottsbluff 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 *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training 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 10 or more employees in the Scottsbluff area (Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan and Sioux counties in Nebraska). The Nebraska businesses were taken from the 1st Quarter 2015 NDOL Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. The list of businesses was cleaned to remove duplicate businesses at the same address to ensure each business only received one survey. The final survey list included 549 establishment locations throughout the 9 Nebraska counties listed above, although the majority (281 of 549) were located in Scotts Bluff County.

A total of 248 complete surveys were received as a result of the three mailings for a 45.2 percent response rate. Table 2.1 shows the breakdown of responding businesses according to business size and industry groupings. Results show that the vast majority of responding businesses have less than 50 employees and are in service industries. This result is consistent with our approach of surveying all Scottsbluff area establishment with 10 or more employees. The survey did not specifically target goods-producing businesses or large employers.

Table 2.1: Profile of Responding Businesses		
	Responses	
Group	**Number**	**Share**
Size of Business		
Small (Less than 50 employees)	221	89.1%
Mid-size (50-100 employees)	15	6.0%
Large (More than 100 employees)	12	4.8%
Industry		
Goods-Producing	41	16.5%
Service-Producing	207	83.5%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	68	27.4%
Health Care	35	14.1%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Turning to specific figures, 89.1 percent of respondents were businesses with few than 50 employees. These are designated as small businesses in the discussion of the survey. Another 6.0 percent of businesses have between 50 and 100 employees. These are designated as mid-size businesses. The remaining 4.8 percent of respondents were large employers with more than 100 employees.

Goods-producing businesses accounted for 16.5 percent of respondents. The goods-producing category primarily includes manufacturers and construction businesses but also includes one or two agricultural service-providers. Services businesses accounted for 83.5 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 10 employees as well as a large majority of the respondents to the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*. Table 2.1 also lists the number of responses received from businesses in two primary services sectors. There were 68 responses from wholesale and retail trade businesses and 35 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 10 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 78.9 percent of respondents had been in business for more than 10 years, while just 9.3 percent had been in business for 1 to 5 years and 11.4 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 27.5 percent par-time. Only 4.5 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	9.3%
6 to 10 years	11.4%
More than 10 years	78.9%
Percentage of Employment	
Full-Time	72.5%
Part-Time	27.5%
Seasonal	4.5%
Average Current Job Openings	1.6
Hired or Tried to Hire Last Two Years	97.1%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Responding businesses also were very active in the labor market, with 97.1 percent 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 1.6 job openings at the time that the survey was completed. Therefore businesses responding to the survey had approximately 400 job openings at the time the surveys were completed.

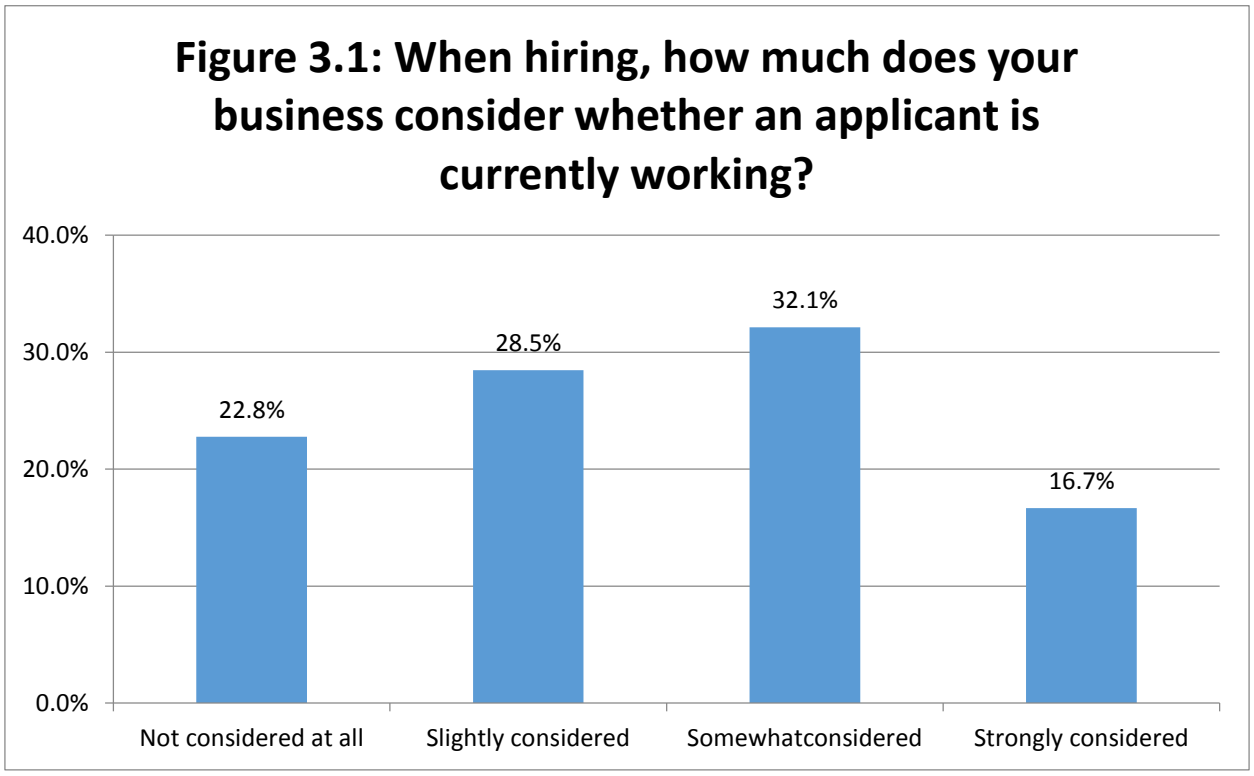
Survey respondents are typically small, established firms, which primarily provide full-time and full-year employment. Most have a significant number of current job openings and have been active in hiring over the last two years. While it may have been desirable to reach a larger sample of young firms,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

3. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

This section describes the key results from the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training 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 and occupation. Results are presented first for newly hired workers before discussion turns to job characteristics for the existing workforce.

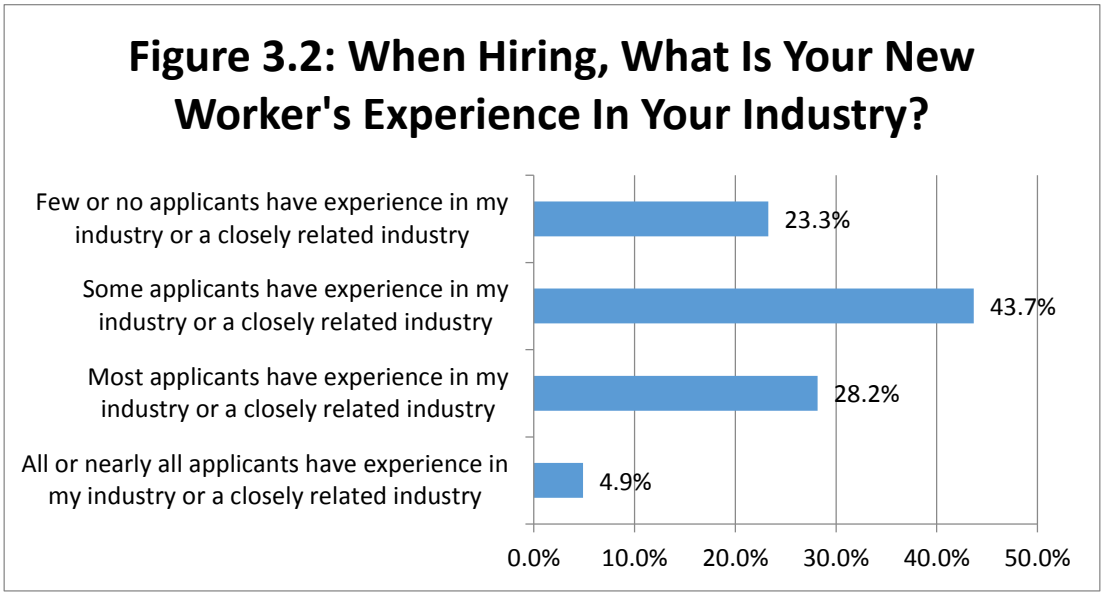
HIRING WORKERS

One initial concern is the employment and occupation background of workers that businesses hire. Business may strongly consider working status implying a preference to hire currently employed workers. As seen in Figure 3.1, just over one in six businesses (16.7%) indicated that employment status is strongly considered. Nearly one-third (32.1%) indicate that employment status is somewhat considered. Just over half of businesses in the Scottsbluff area (51.3%) 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. However, nearly half 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 an area such as the Nebraska Panhandle with a low unemployment rate.



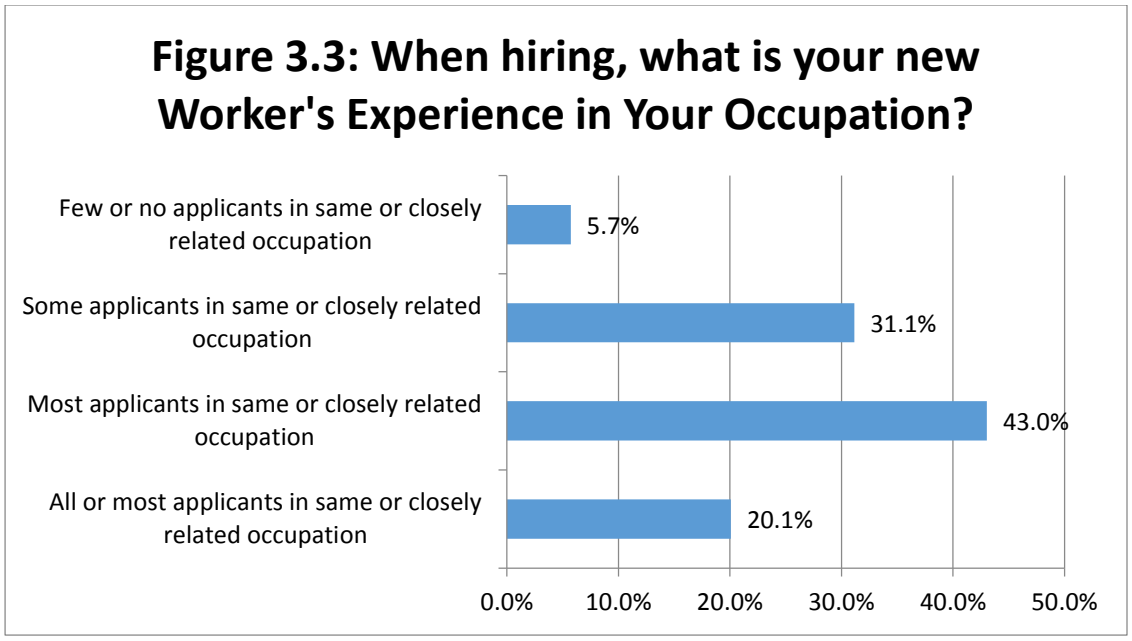
Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

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 4.9 percent of businesses indicated that all or nearly all applicants are from the same industry or a closely related industry. Another 28.2 percent indicated that most applicants had relevant industry experience. More than two-thirds of businesses reported that a smaller share of applicants had experience from the same or a closely related industry. Specifically, 43.7 percent indicated that only some applicants had experience in relevant industry while 23.3 percent indicated that few or no applicants had that experience.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Applicant Experience by Occupation. Figure 3.3 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. Generally speaking, the match by occupation is much stronger than the match by industry, suggesting that most applicants have relevant occupation-specific skill. In particular, 20.1 percent of businesses indicated that all or nearly all of the applicants are from the same occupation or a closely related occupation, while 43.0 percent of businesses reported that most applicants had this relevant background. By contrast, 31.1 percent of businesses indicated that only some applicants had experience in the same occupation or a closely related occupation, and 5.7 percent of businesses reported that few or no applicants had this relevant background.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

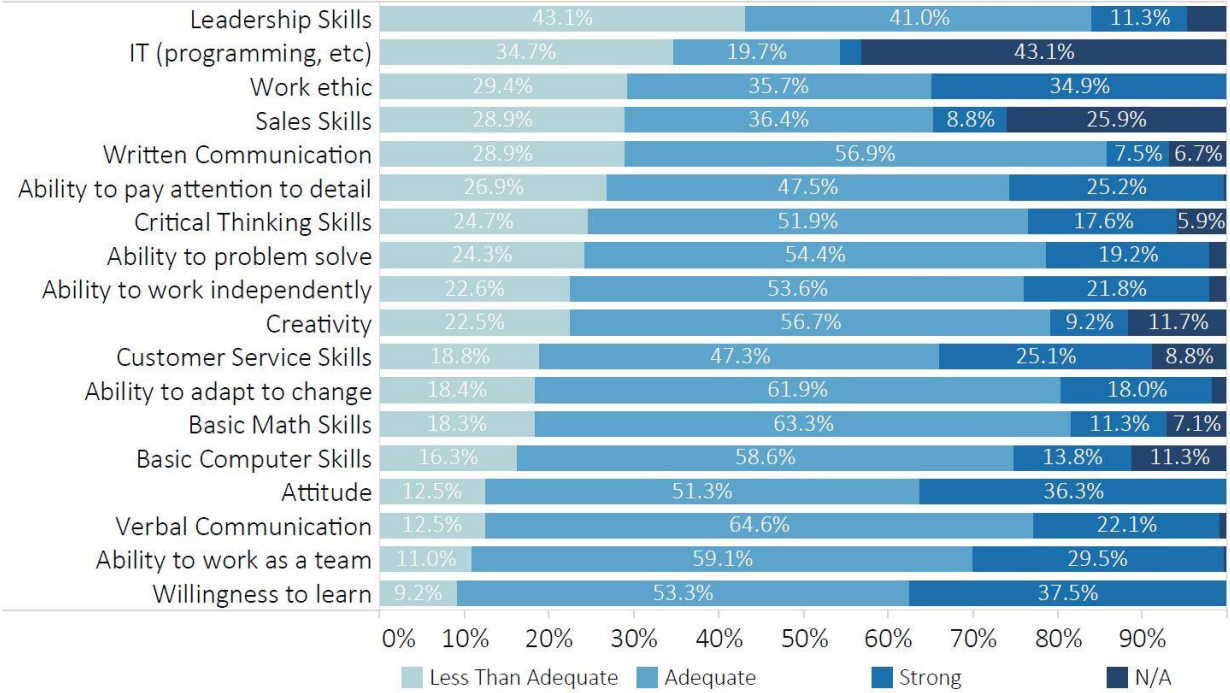
Skills of the applicant pool. When hiring workers, the overall skill level of the applicant pool plays a large role in determining how successful a business will be in matching applicants to positions advertised. The survey asks businesses to rate the overall competency level of applicants based on different 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. Employers gave applicants a "less than adequate" rating for leadership skills 43.1 percent of time and IT skills 34.7 of the time. This result for IT skills is of particular importance due to the fact that programming skills are quickly turning into the core competency for all kinds of workers. Over one quarter of employers also gave applicants a "less than adequate ranking" for work ethic, sales skills, written communication and ability to pay attention to detail.

Interestingly, a relatively large share of applicants also received a rating of "strong" for work ethic and ability to pay attention to detail. Scottsbluff area job applicants seem to be somewhat bifurcated on these two key characteristics.

Applicants fared the best in three skills: willingness to learn, attitude and customer service skills. These traits are consistent with known strengths of the Scottsbluff area 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

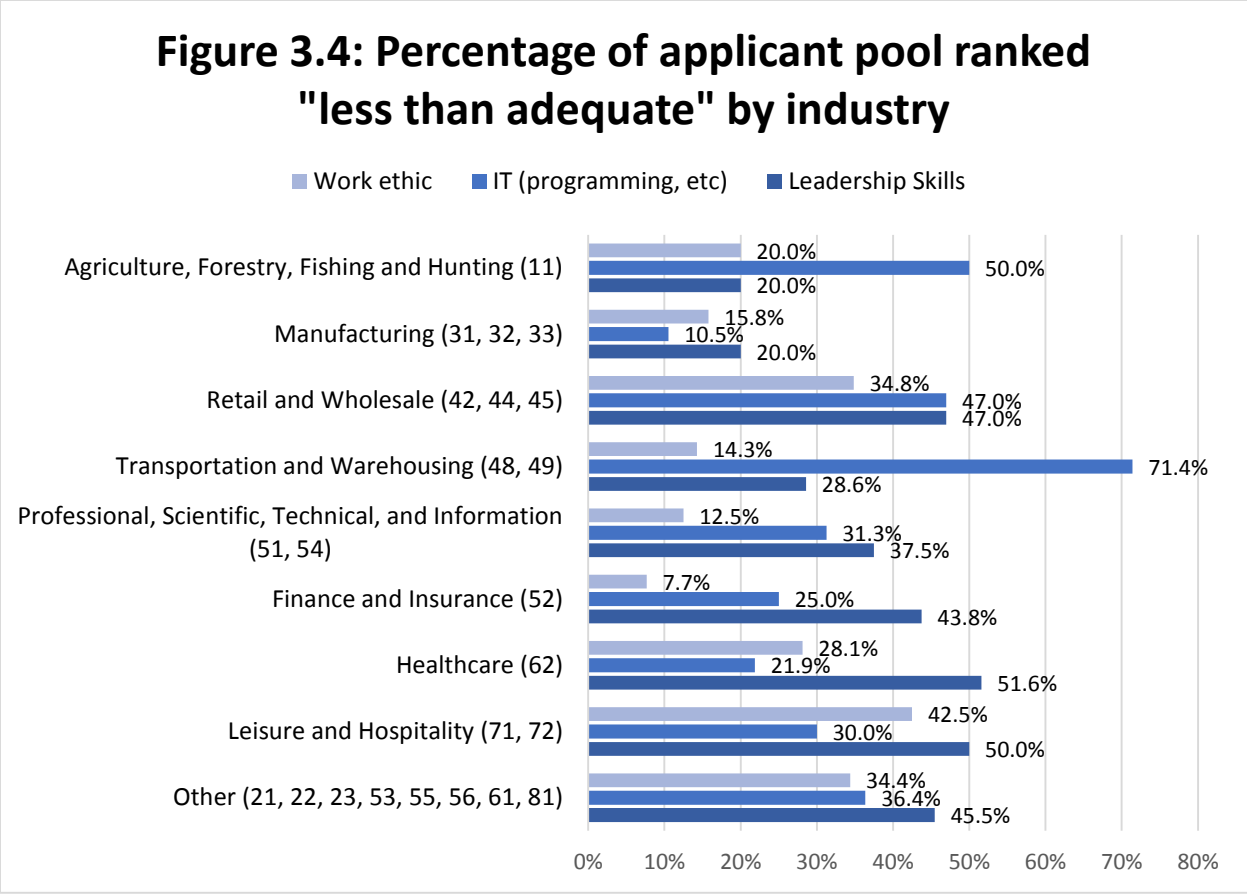


Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Since leadership skills and IT 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 3.4. Work ethic also is examined. A large share of businesses in the Transportation and Warehousing, Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting and Retail and Wholesale industries rank IT skills as "less than adequate." This reinforces the fact that computer skills are important across all industries, including many blue collar industries.

Leadership skills are an issue in a somewhat different set of industries. In particular, a large share of businesses in the Health Care, Leisure and Hospitality and Retail and Wholesale industries rank applicants as "less than adequate." Work ethic is a leading concern for applicants in lower wage service industries, especially the Leisure and Hospitality and Retail and Wholesale.

Note that the Retail and Wholesale industry was among the most likely to report concerns with all three skills. By contrast, businesses in the Manufacturing industry report 20 percent or fewer applicants are "less than adequate" in terms of leadership skills, IT, and work ethic. These results may reflect that the manufacturing industry is able to attract applications from higher quality workers.

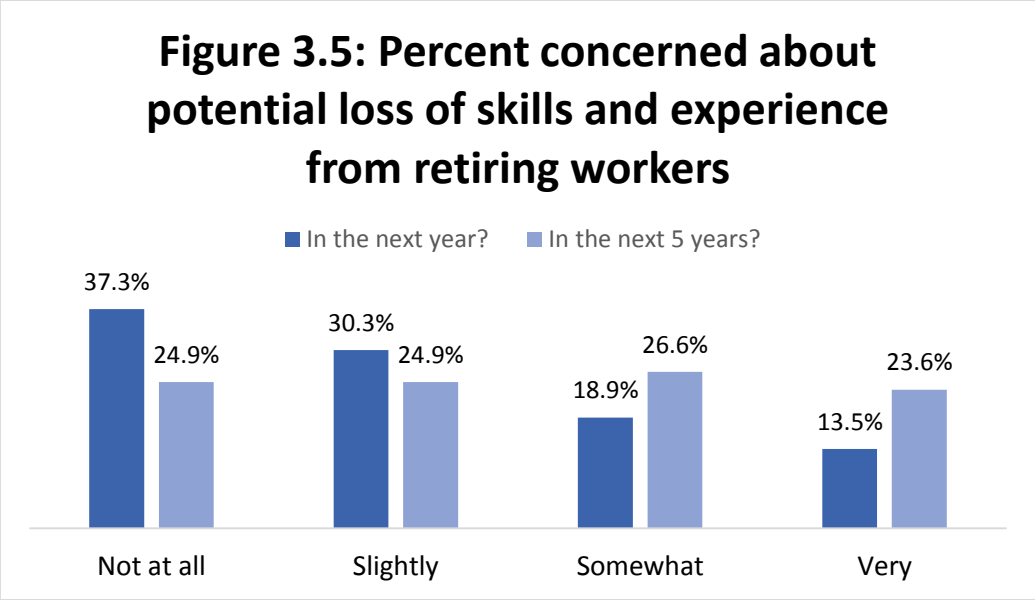


Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

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 *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* 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 3.5.

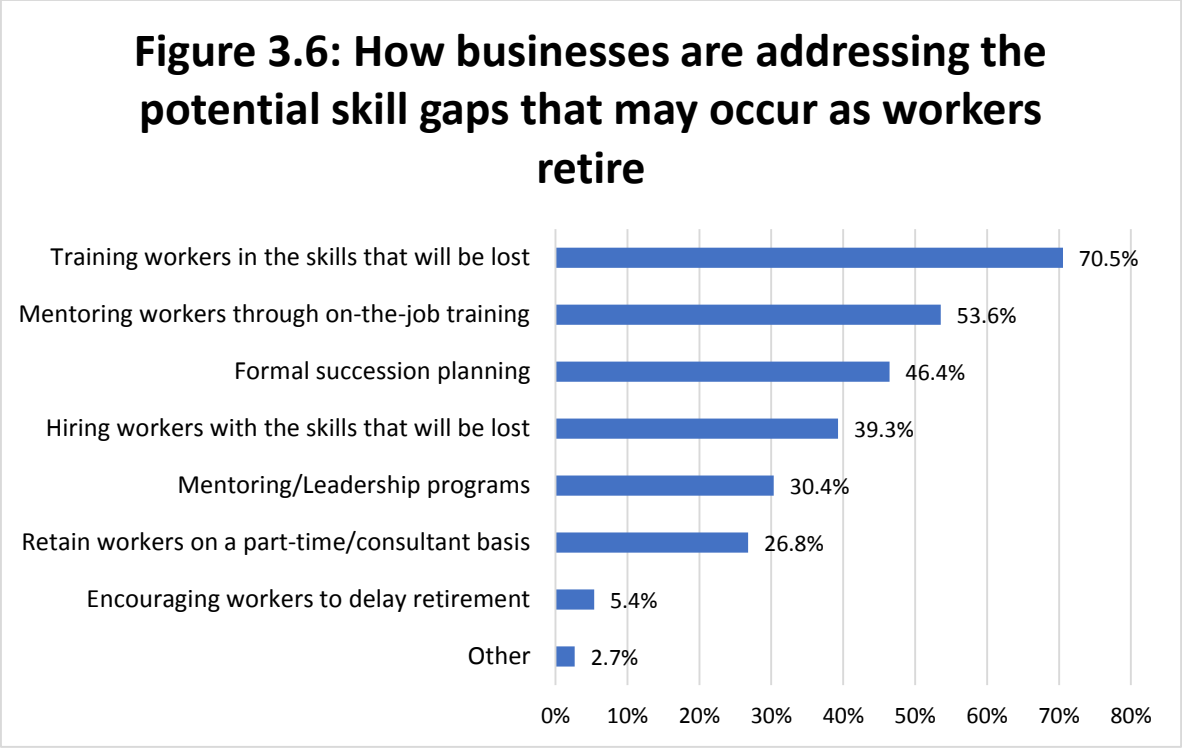
Two-thirds of businesses reported that they were only slightly concerned or not concerned about a loss of skills resulting from retiring workers within the next year. This drops to approximately 50 percent when thinking about the next 5 years.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

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 (88.3%) 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 3.6.).

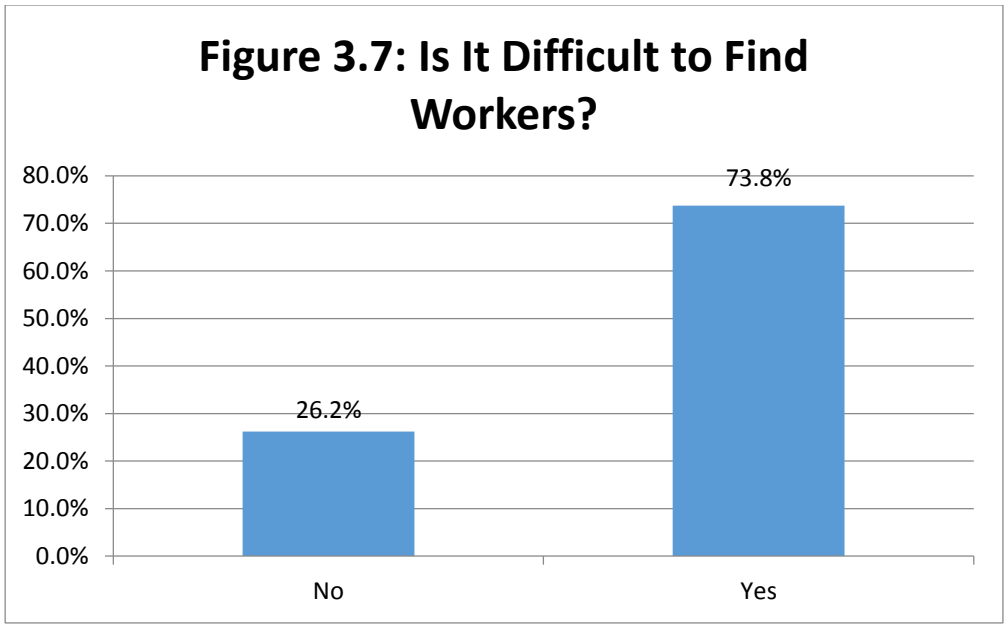
While a significant share of employers were concerned about replacing retiring workers, most firms had taken steps or planned to take steps to make these transitions, through a mix of training and promoting from within or hiring new workers. Hiring new workers with the needed skills, however, was only the fourth most popular option. This raises several questions. Are employers 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 *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

DIFFICULTIES FINDING WORKERS

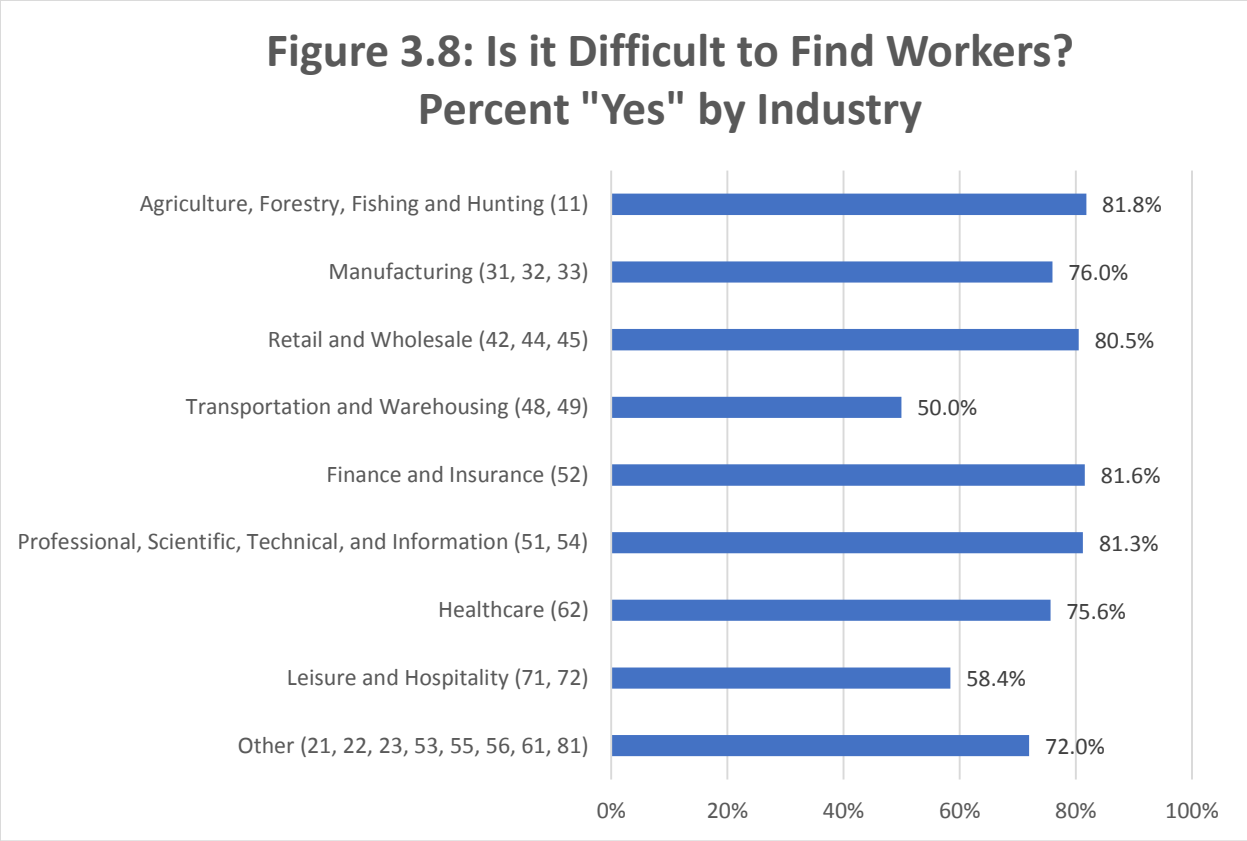
Figures 3.7 – 3.10 look at challenges businesses face in hiring. The survey asked each employer to name the three most common occupations searched for when hiring. Employers then indicated whether or not it was difficult to find workers in these specific occupations, and if there were difficulties, why? Figure 3.7 looks at how often it was difficult to find workers. Businesses reported 73.8 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 7 or 8 of those positions.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training 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 other industries and occupations where the challenge is less severe.

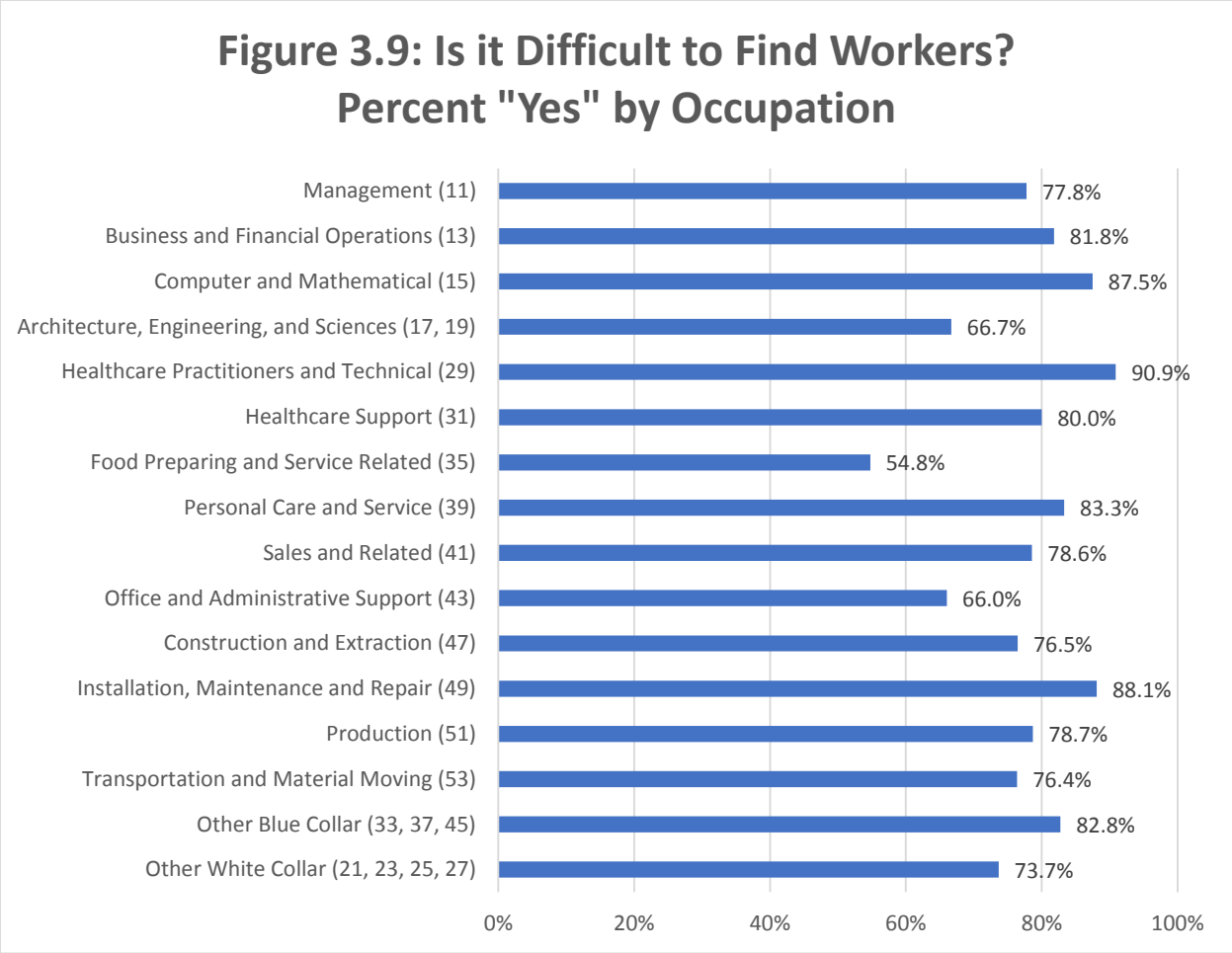
Figure 3.8 begins to address this question by disaggregating the businesses that reported difficulty finding workers and displaying them by industry. A diverse set of production, trade and services industries had the greatest difficulty finding workers. Businesses in the agriculture industry had difficulty finding workers most often, at 81.8 percent of the time. But, three other industries followed close behind including finance and insurance (81.6%), professional, scientific, technical and information (81.3%), and retail and wholesale trade (80.5%). Manufacturing and health care businesses had difficulty 76.0 and 75.6 percent of the time, respectively. The industries where businesses had the least difficulty finding workers were leisure and hospitality (58.4%) and transportation and warehousing (50.0%).



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Difficulty Finding Workers by Occupation. There is even more variation when observing results by occupation (Figure 3.9). Installation, maintenance and repair workers are especially difficult to find, at 88.1 percent. The level of difficulty is also high for other types of blue collar workers: employers report difficulty 78.7 percent for production workers, 76.4 percent for transportation and material movers, and 82.8 percent for all other blue collar workers.

There also is a group of white collar occupations where it is especially difficult to hire workers. These include computer and mathematical workers (87.5%) and business and financial operations workers (81.8%). Healthcare practitioners are the most difficult workers to hire, with businesses reporting difficulty 90.9 percent of the time. Health care support workers are difficult to hire 80.0 percent of the time.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

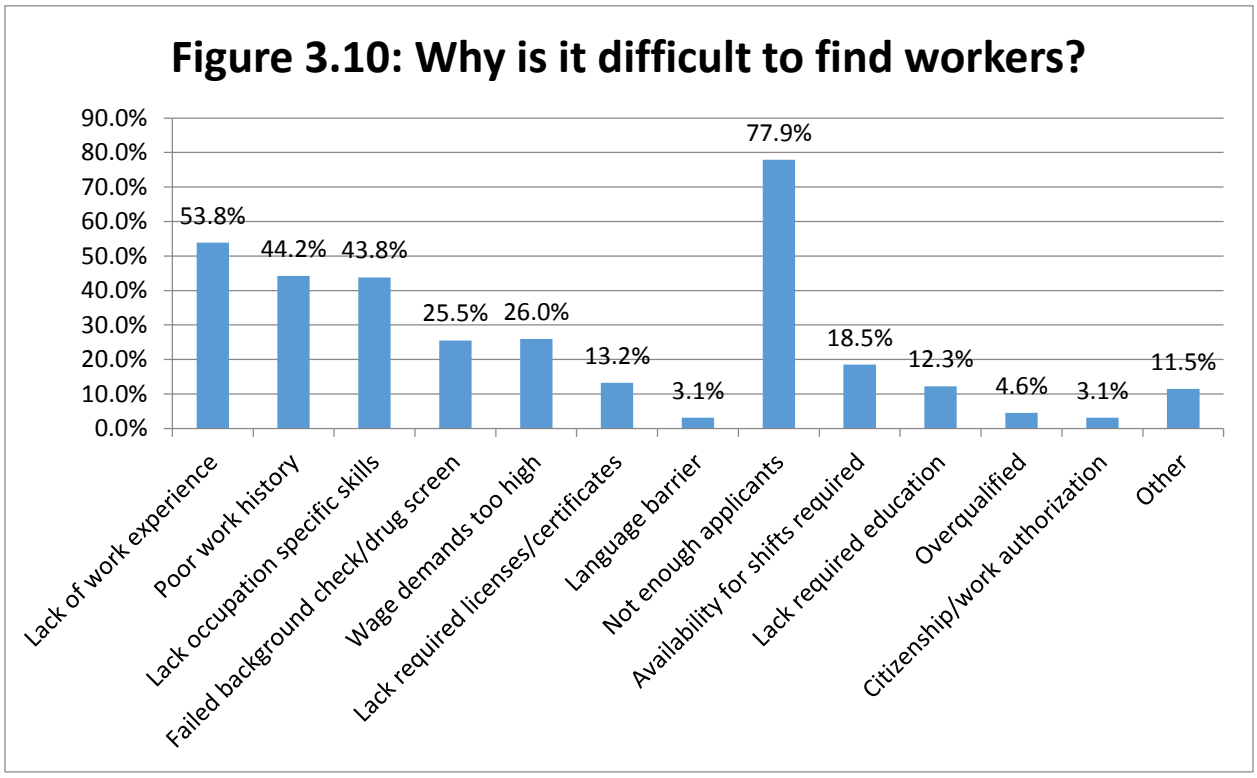
Among other occupations, businesses report that personal care and service workers are difficult to hire 83.3 percent of the time, while sales workers are difficult to hire in 78.6 percent of cases. Hiring is less difficult, however, for other types of service workers. Food preparing and service related workers were reported as difficult to hire just 54.8 percent of the time, while office and administrative workers were difficult to hire in 66.0 percent of cases.

Reasons for Difficulty. When businesses reported difficulty finding workers, they were also asked *why* they faced challenges. Figure 3.10 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 Scottsbluff area businesses. More than three quarters of businesses faced this problem, while 18.5 percent of employers faced the related problems of finding workers available for required shifts. Two factors are likely contributing to this result. First, the Scottsbluff area economy 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.

Worker Training and Experience. Lack of work experience also is a common concern (53.8%) along with a lack of occupation-specific skills (43.8%). 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 13.2 percent of occupations it is difficulty to hire because candidates lacked required licenses and certificates.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Applicant history. Applicant history also was a source of difficulty in hiring with 44.2 percent of employers reporting that job-seekers had a poor work history. A failed background check is mentioned by respondents in 25.5 percent of cases.

Reasons for Difficulty by Industry. The results in Figure 3.10 show a breadth of challenges faced by employers. Employers face the three issues of experience, occupation skill, and poor work history in at least 43 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 manufacturing, the difficulty of finding workers due to a lack of work experience and occupation specific skills is especially acute. There also is an elevated share of employers who report it is difficult to find applicants who can work required shifts. To address these challenges, workers could spend time serving as a “helper” or “laborer” to build their experience in the manufacturing workforce. In agriculture, there also are challenges related to an inability to pass a background check and wage demands which were “too high.”

Wage demands also were a common issue in two other industries. Businesses in the transportation and warehousing industry reported that workers had wage demands which were “too high” in 42.9 percent of cases. The share was 39.0 percent in the health care industry.

Concerns about a poor work history also are heightened in the transportation and warehousing industry. In this industry businesses reported 85.9 percent of the time that poor work history made hiring more difficult. This was by far the highest percentage in any single industry; however the issue also was a challenge for the health care industry, in 54.2 percent of cases.

Poor work history also is an issue for businesses hiring in the leisure and hospitality industry, in 54.2 percent of cases. The industry also has a challenge with work force availability. Leisure and hospitality businesses 79.7 percent of the time reported that it is difficult to hire due to a lack of applicants. This percentage is slightly above the average for all industries. More importantly, businesses reported that it is difficult to find workers who could work the required shifts in 33.9 percent of cases, which is well above the all-industry average.

There are concerns about a lack of work experience in the professional, scientific, technical and information industry.

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	Citizenship/ Work Authorization
Agriculture (NAICS 11)	44.4%	27.8%	44.4%	38.9%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	66.7%	16.7%	0.0%	5.6%	5.6%
Manufacturing (32, 33)	60.5%	36.8%	65.8%	21.1%	26.3%	13.2%	7.9%	71.1%	28.9%	13.2%	2.6%	5.3%
Retail and Wholesale (42, 44, 45)	58.1%	40.3%	48.4%	37.1%	17.7%	16.9%	1.6%	77.4%	9.7%	9.7%	2.4%	0.0%
Transportation and Warehousing (48, 49)	71.4%	85.7%	28.6%	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	0.0%	71.4%	42.9%	0.0%	28.6%	0.0%
Professional, Scientific, Technical, and information (51, 54)	53.8%	19.2%	42.3%	0.0%	19.2%	7.7%	0.0%	76.9%	0.0%	23.1%	7.7%	0.0%
Finance and Insurance (52)	48.4%	22.6%	45.2%	0.0%	35.5%	12.9%	0.0%	77.4%	12.9%	3.2%	16.1%	0.0%
Health Care (62)	52.5%	54.2%	42.4%	33.9%	39.0%	15.3%	5.1%	81.4%	25.4%	32.2%	3.4%	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality (71, 72)	37.3%	54.2%	18.6%	10.2%	13.6%	3.4%	0.0%	79.7%	33.9%	8.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Other (21,23, 53, 55, 56, 61, 81)	63.0%	61.1%	48.1%	31.5%	33.3%	11.1%	5.6%	83.3%	16.7%	5.6%	5.6%	18.5%
Total	53.8%	44.2%	43.8%	25.5%	26.0%	13.2%	3.1%	77.9%	18.5%	12.3%	4.6%	3.1%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

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 were available. Results are shown for a set of other white collar occupations, service occupations, and blue collar occupations.

Analysis begins by looking at white collar occupations. In those occupations, relatively few employers report that a poor work history or a failed background checks make it difficult to hire. A lack of occupation-specific skills and 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. There is no particular source of difficulty in hiring for healthcare practitioners and technical occupations other than a lack of applicants. This may reflect ongoing challenges in attracting and retaining health care professionals in non-metropolitan areas.

The combination of "too high" wage demands, poor work history and failed background checks creates difficulty in hiring workers in service occupations. Among these occupations, poor work history and a failed background check are especially problematic for hiring in healthcare support occupations. "Too high" wage demands are especially problematic when hiring workers 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, especially installation, maintenance and repair occupations and construction and extraction occupations. A lack of occupation specific skills was cited as a difficulty by 68 percent to 77 percent of employers hiring in these occupations. This suggests a significant need for more pre-hire education programs for blue collar workers. A need for licenses and certifications also is reported as challenge for employers hiring in the construction and extraction and the transportation and material moving occupations.

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

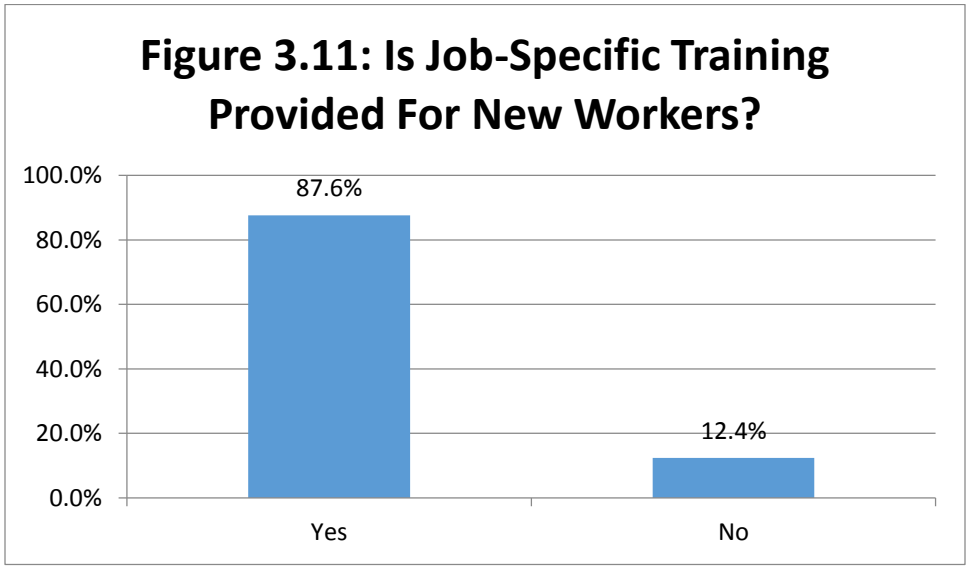
Occupation Names (SOC Code)	Reason Why It is Difficult to Find Workers											
	Lack of work experience	Poor work history	Lack occupation specific skills	Failed Background Check	Wage Demands too high	Lack required licenses/ certificates	Language barrier	Not enough Applicants	Availability for shifts required	Lack required education	Over qualified	Citi-zen-ship
Management (SOC 11)	50%	29%	50%	21%	36%	7%	0%	86%	21%	14%	21%	0%
Business & Financial Operation (13)	61%	28%	61%	0%	28%	6%	0%	72%	0%	6%	17%	0%
Computer & Mathematical (15)	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%	57%	0%	100%	14%	86%	0%	0%
Architecture, Engineering and Sciences (17, 19)	50%	25%	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%	50%	0%	25%	0%	0%
Other White Collar (21, 23, 25, 27)	50%	21%	50%	7%	21%	7%	0%	71%	14%	29%	0%	0%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (29)	25%	25%	25%	20%	25%	10%	5%	70%	15%	25%	5%	0%
Healthcare Support (31)	50%	83%	25%	58%	25%	25%	0%	83%	33%	25%	0%	0%
Food Preparation and Service Related (35)	41%	54%	22%	13%	26%	0%	2%	76%	50%	7%	2%	0%
Personal Care and Service (39)	33%	33%	20%	20%	47%	27%	0%	67%	20%	7%	0%	0%

Table 3.2: Why It is Difficult to Find Workers by Occupation (Continued)												
	Reason Why It is Difficult to Find Workers											
Occupation Names (SOC 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	Citi-zen-ship
Sales and Related (41)	52%	36%	34%	14%	11%	2%	2%	71%	9%	5%	0%	0%
Office and Administrative Support (43)	49%	41%	38%	13%	24%	2%	0%	75%	9%	10%	10%	0%
Construction and Extraction (47)	69%	62%	77%	69%	46%	31%	8%	62%	15%	0%	0%	46%
Installation, Maintenance and Repair (49)	84%	38%	68%	24%	19%	14%	0%	78%	5%	22%	0%	0%
Production (51)	57%	49%	54%	32%	27%	11%	11%	76%	43%	5%	3%	5%
Transportation and Material Moving (53)	48%	55%	43%	52%	41%	52%	2%	62%	17%	5%	5%	5%
Other Blue Collar (33, 37, 45)	46%	42%	38%	33%	25%	8%	17%	88%	33%	4%	4%	13%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

WORKER TRAINING

More than half of all employers (53.4%) report a lack of work experience as a difficulty in hiring. The lack of occupation specific skills is also a concern, cited by 43.8 percent of employers. This suggests a significant need for education and training programs, including post-hire training. Figure 3.11 reports on whether Scottsbluff area employers provide job-specific training after workers are hired. Employers respond that job-specific training is provided to nearly 87.6 percent of new workers. Results are consistent by industry and occupation. Nearly all new workers are receiving post-hire training.

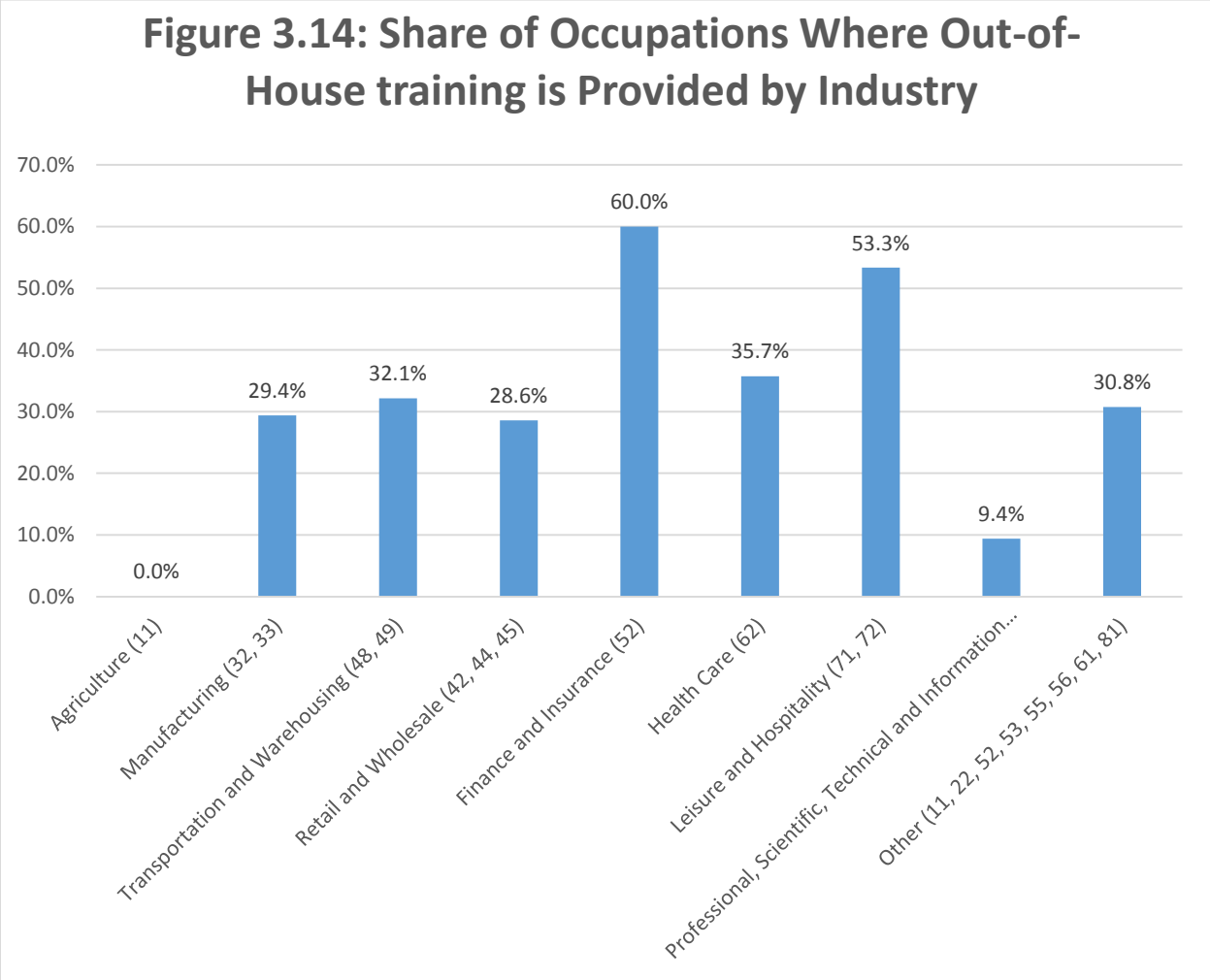


Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

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? Survey results indicate that for employers who provide post-hire training, 95.1 percent provide in-house training. Another 32.2 percent provide out-of-house training opportunities. This suggests ample need for out-of-house training as well as for training providers to bring training opportunities into the state.

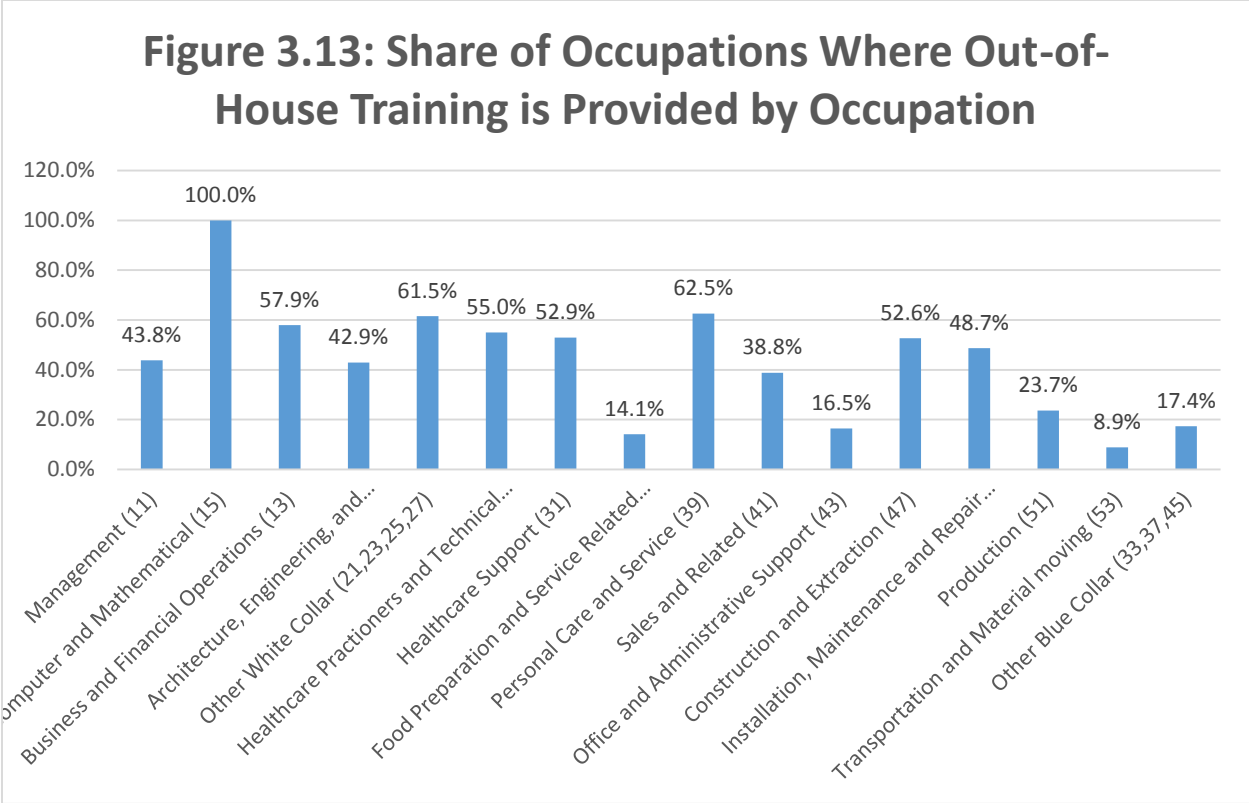
Results regarding in-house training hold for all industries and occupations. The share of employers providing out-of-house training, however, varies quite a bit by industry and occupation. Out-of-house training activity is reported below by industry and occupation, in Tables 3.12 and 3.13.

Out-of-house training by industry. Figure 3.12 shows the share of out-of-house training by industry. Shares ranged from 0.0 to 60.0 percent, depending on the industry. Out-of-house training for new workers is most common in the finance and insurance and the leisure and hospitality industries. Out-of-house training was least common for new hires in the agriculture and the professional, scientific, technical and information industries.



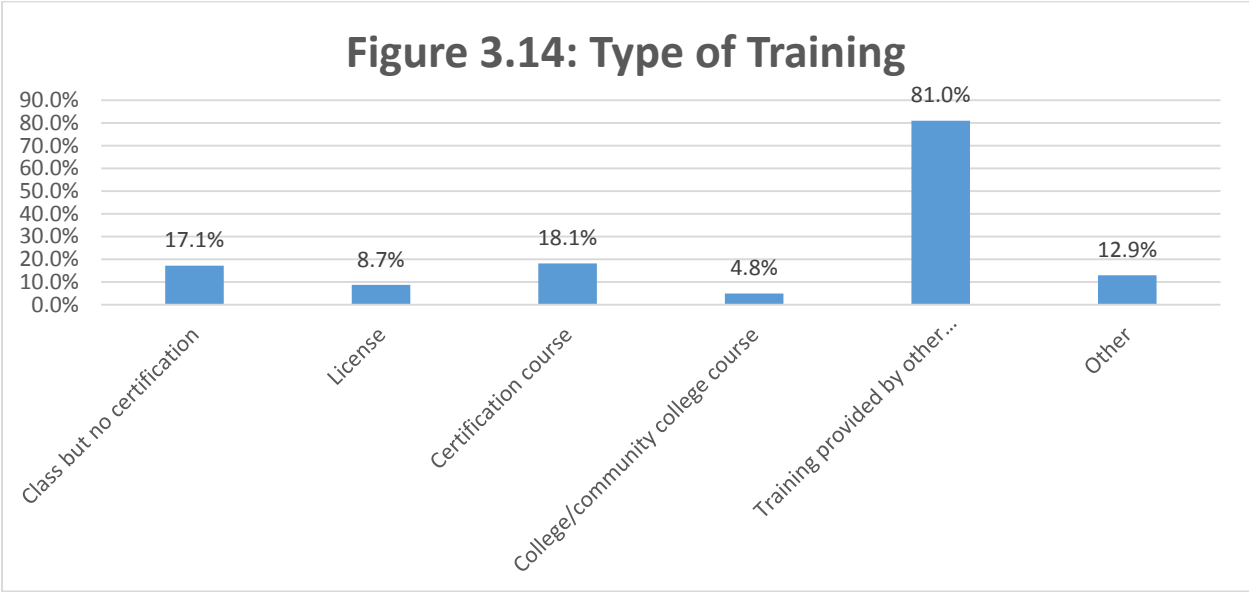
Source UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Out-of-house training by occupation. Figure 3.13 shows the share of out-of-house training by occupation. Out-of-house training is most common for new hires into computer and mathematical occupations. Other white collar occupations with more frequent out-of-house training are: business and financial operations and health care professional and technical occupations. Out-of-house training for new hires is also more frequent in two blue collar occupations, construction and extraction workers and installation, maintenance and repair workers, and one service occupation, personal care and service workers.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training 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 3.14 begins to answer that question. Generally speaking, the interest or ability to provide training appears to fall as the time commitment and cost rises.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Classes and full certification courses are the most common type of training classroom training, provided 17.1 percent and 18.1 percent of cases, respectively. A full certification course would include multiple classes or on-line training sessions. Preparation for a license is provided in 9.7 percent of cases while a college or community college course 4.8 percent. The most common type of training, at 81.0 percent, is on-the-job training provided by other workers or a supervisor.

Training by Industry. Table 3.4 shows the type of training by industry. The share of workers provided with a training class varies. Workers are rarely given the opportunity to take a college course, with the greatest share being in the finance and insurance industry (11.1%).

Table 3.4: Type of Training by Industry

Industry	Class but no certification course	License	Certification Course	College/ Community College Course	Training by Other Worker or Supervisor
Construction (23)	0.0%	15.0%	5.0%	0.0%	95.0%
Manufacturing (31,32,33)	10.9%	8.7%	6.5%	6.5%	84.8%
Retail and Wholesale (42,44,45)	25.0%	8.3%	27.3%	4.5%	84.1%
Transportation and Warehousing (48,49)	41.7%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	83.3%
Professional, Scientific, Technical and Information (51,54)	12.5%	12.5%	4.2%	8.3%	70.8%
Finance and Insurance (52)	25.0%	5.6%	11.1%	11.1%	94.4%
Healthcare (62)	23.3%	9.6%	24.7%	11.0%	71.2%
Leisure and Hospitality (71,72)	7.2%	3.6%	15.7%	0.0%	77.1%
Other (21,22,23, 53,55,56,61,81)	10.0%	11.4%	20.0%	1.4%	80.0%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Training by Occupation. Table 3.5 shows the type of training by occupation. Training is common in all occupations although class-based training is less common for food preparation and service related occupations and in a number of blue collar occupations including production workers, and other blue collar workers. Certification courses were most common for computer and mathematical occupations, installation, maintenance and repair occupations and health care support occupations. Full college or community college courses are most common for computer and mathematical occupations.

Table 3.5: Type of Training by Occupation

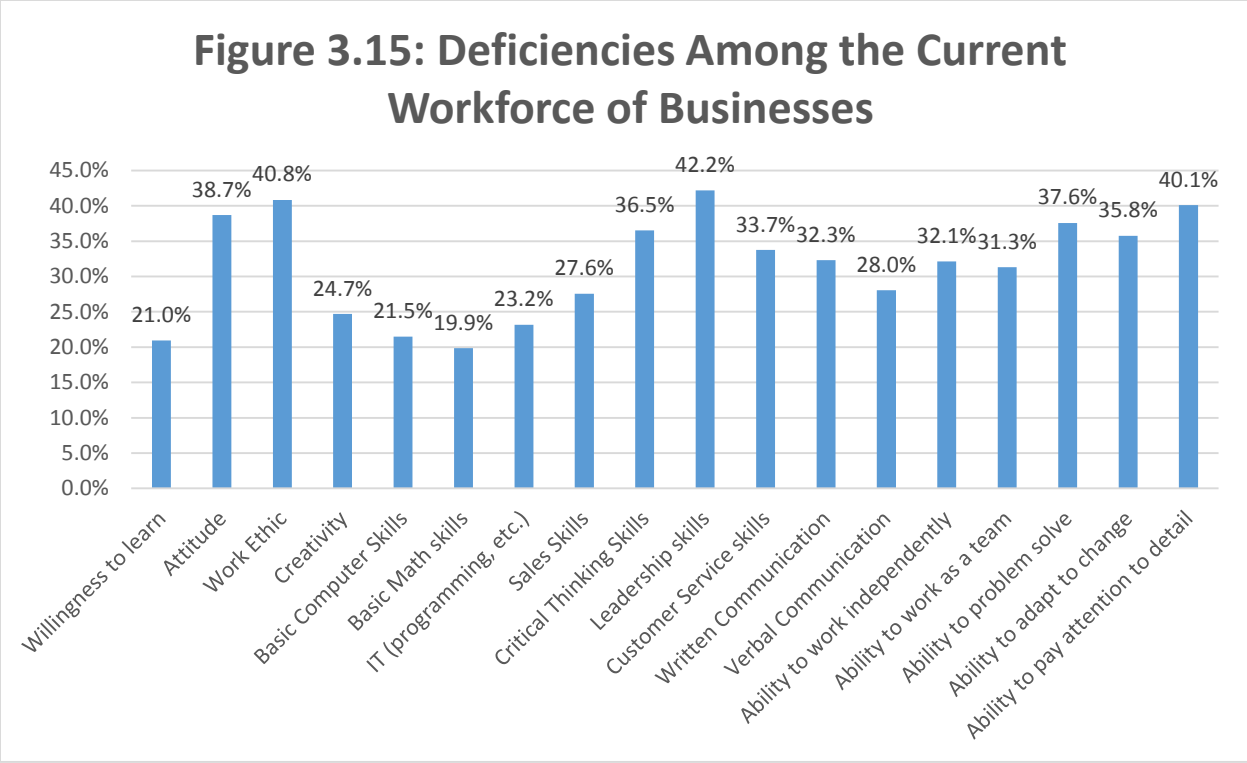
Occupation	Class but no certification	License	Certification course	College/ Community College Course	Training by Other Worker or Supervisor
Management (11)	12.5%	12.5%	25.0%	6.3%	87.5%
Business and Financial Operations (13)	31.6%	5.3%	10.5%	21.1%	84.2%
Computer & Mathematical (15)	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Architecture, Engineering and Sciences (17,19)	42.9%	0.0%	28.6%	14.3%	85.7%
Other White Collar (21,23,25,27)	35.7%	14.3%	7.1%	7.1%	57.1%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (29)	28.6%	23.8%	14.3%	19.0%	66.7%
Healthcare Support (31)	5.9%	17.6%	58.8%	17.6%	70.6%
Food Preparation and Service Related (35)	9.4%	3.1%	12.5%	0.0%	75.0%
Personal Care and Service (39)	12.5%	12.5%	18.8%	6.3%	68.8%
Sales and Related (41)	26.0%	10.0%	22.0%	2.0%	82.0%
Office and Administrative Support (43)	15.2%	0.0%	9.8%	0.0%	87.0%
Construction and Extraction (47)	0.0%	21.1%	10.5%	0.0%	78.9%
Installation, Maintenance and Repair (49)	40.0%	2.5%	47.5%	2.5%	72.5%
Production (51)	5.1%	7.7%	7.7%	5.1%	92.3%
Transportation and Material Moving (53)	14.9%	23.4%	8.5%	0.0%	89.4%
Other Blue Collar (33,37,45)	4.2%	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	87.5%

Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

EXISTING WORKERS

The *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training 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 3.15 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 among the most commonly perceived deficiencies amount current workers. Leadership and critical thinking 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 to devote themselves to writing and analytic assignments.



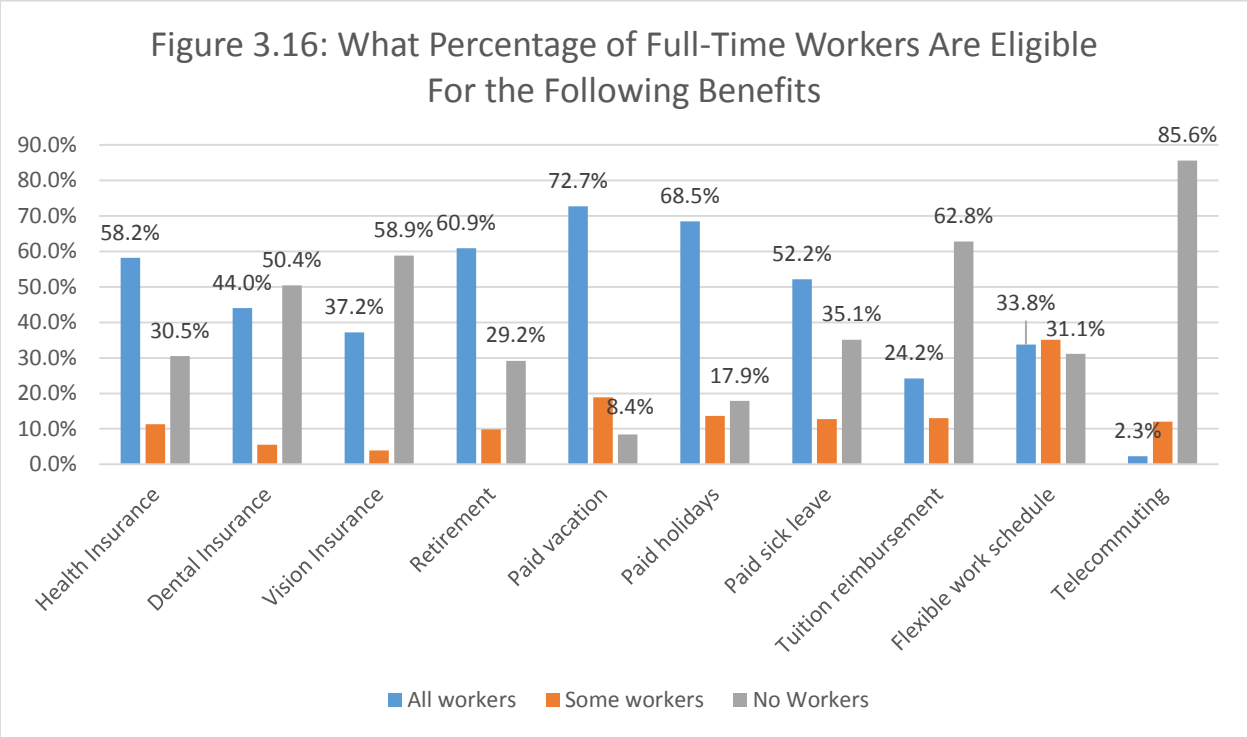
Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

Another common and related set of skill deficiencies involve work ethic, attitude, 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 are less likely to select specific "hard" skills that are often an emphasis of education and training such as computer skills, information technology 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 be 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 3.15.

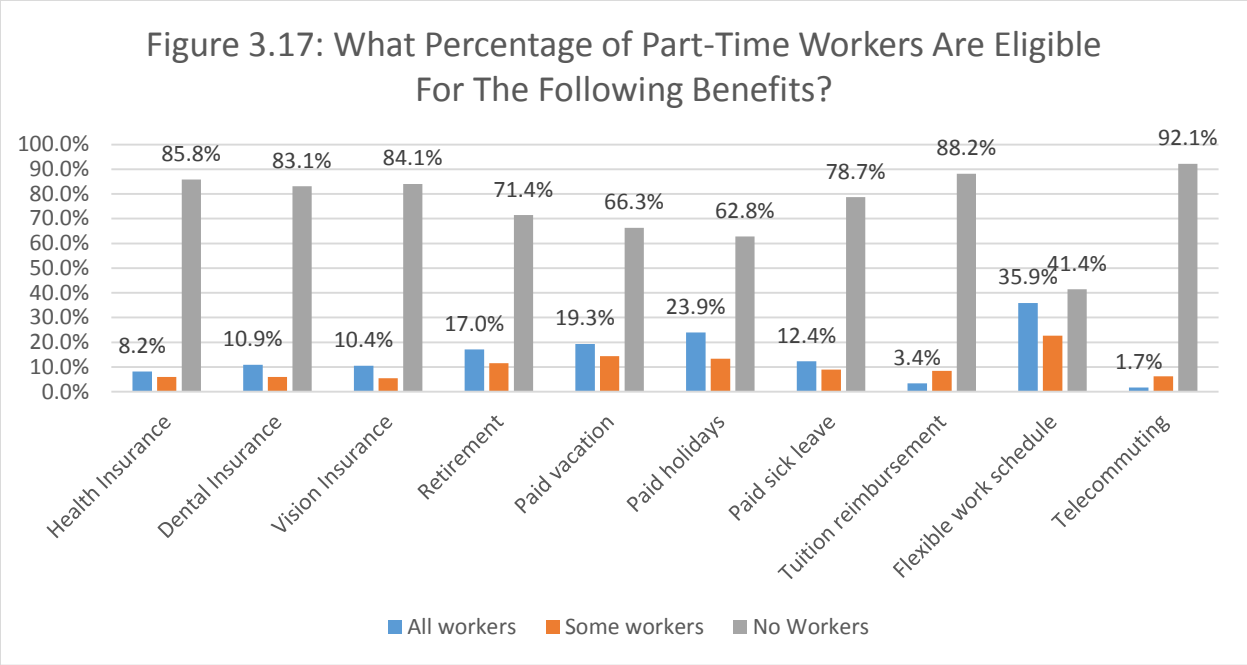
Benefits Provided to Existing Workers. The survey also gathered detailed information about the benefits provided to workers. This information pertains to the ability of businesses to retain their workforce. As seen in Figure 3.16, the survey results reveal the benefits received by full-time workers. A majority of firms (58.2%) offer all workers health care benefits, while 72.7 percent

offer paid vacation and 68.5 percent paid holidays. Sixty-one percent of firms offer retirement benefits to all workers. Dental insurance is available to all workers in 44.0 percent of businesses and vision insurance in 37.2 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 24.2 percent of businesses.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

As would be expected, the level of benefits provided to part-time workers is substantially less. These results are reported in Figure 3.17. Only 8.2 percent of business reported providing health insurance coverage to all of their part-time workers while 6.0 percent reported providing it to some part-time workers. Slightly higher percentages were reported for dental and vision insurance. Tuition reimbursement benefits are provided to even few part-time workers. Between 17.0 percent and 23.9 percent of employers provide retirement benefits, paid vacation and paid holidays to all part-time workers. Part-time employees fared much worse with tuition reimbursement. The large majority of firms (88.2%) offered no tuition reimbursement to any employees. Similar to full-time workers, part-time workers were least likely to be offered any telecommuting benefits.



Source: UNL-BBR calculations based on the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs*

4. PROFILE OF SELECTED OCCUPATIONS

This section provides a summary of information gathered for a set of key occupations throughout the Scottsbluff 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, 9 particular occupations are listed.

Nursing Assistant is the first occupation listed, in Table 4.1. This occupation provides low wages, with an average hourly wage of $10.30. Wages range between $8.00 and $12.40 per hour. The minimum degree requirement at 42.9 percent of employers is a high school degree with 28.6 percent of employers requiring a technical or vocational degree. Another 28.6 percent of employers do not have a minimum education requirement. Seven of eight employers will consider applicants without experience while one in eight have a minimum experience requirements between 1 and 2 years. One hundred percent of employers report that it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation. Eighty-six percent report it is difficult to hire due to a lack of applicants while 57.1 percent indicate that it is difficult to find workers for required shifts. There are few concerns about occupation-specific skills (14.3%) but more concern about a lack of required licenses (42.9%) and work experience (42.9%). Concerns about the quality of applicants are most common. One hundred percent of employers report that it is difficult to hire because applicants have a poor work history while 85.7 percent report applicants cannot pass a background check. Fifty percent of employers provide post-hire certification opportunities while 25 percent provide licensing opportunities or community college courses and 12.5 percent provide training courses. The most common type of post-hire training is on-the-job training by others, at 62.5 percent.

Waiters and Waitresses is the second occupation listed, in Table 4.2. This occupation provides low wages before tips. The hourly wage including tips is not known. One hundred percent of employers have no minimum education requirement for this occupation. Eighty-two percent of employers require no experience while 17.7 percent require 6 months of experience or less. With so few requirements, just 31.3 percent of employers report that it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation. For those employers who report difficulty in hiring, 60 percent indicate there are not enough applicants, while 40 percent report difficulty in finding applicants who can take required shifts. Another 60 percent report a lack of work experience while 40 percent cite a poor work history. The most common type of post-hire training is on-the-job training by others, which is provided by 52.6 percent of employers

Retail Salesperson is the third occupation listed, in Table 4.3. This occupation provides low wages, with an average hourly wage of $12.84. . Some jobs in the occupation, such as automobile salesperson, pay wages which are far above this average. Fifty-two percent of employers require a high school degree 41.2 percent do not have a minimum education

requirement. More than fifty percent of employers (52.9%) will consider workers without experience while 29.4 percent of employers consider workers with 6 months experience or less. A minority of employers require additional work experience. Nearly 70 percent of employers report that it was difficult to hire workers in this occupation. Of these employers, 90.9 percent report it is difficult to hire due to a lack of applicants. Thirty-six percent of employers have concerns about a lack of work experience. There also concerns about the quality of applicants. Specifically, 36.4 percent of employers report that it is difficult to hire because applicants have a poor work history while 18.2 percent report applicants who cannot pass a background check. In terms of post-hire training, 23.5 percent of employers offer training courses while 17.6 percent provide a licensing opportunity. The most common type of post-hire training is once again on-the-job training by others, which is provided at 70.6 percent of employers. .

Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks 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) of $14.33. Wages range between $10 and $30 per hour, indicating that there are some high paying positions in this occupation. Consistent with this, 16.6 percent of employers require an Associate's or Bachelor's degree for this position. Most employers, however, require less education, with 58.3 percent of employers requiring a high school degree and 25 percent having no education requirement. Experience is more of a focus, with 18.2 percent of employers requiring 3 to 5 years of experience and 27.3 percent requiring 1 to 2 years of experience. Just over one-quarter of employers consider workers without experience. Eighty-three percent of employers report that it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation. Among employers who say it is difficult to hire, 90 percent indicate it is difficult due to a lack of applicants, while 50 percent report applicants with a lack of work experience and 30 percent report applicants with a lack of occupation-specific skill. One in six employers provide post-hire training courses but the most common type of post-hire training is one-the-job training by another worker or supervisor, which is provided by 83.3 percent of employers.

Customer Service Representatives is the fifth occupation listed, in Table 4.5. This occupation provides low wages, with an average hourly wage of $11.05. Wages range between $8 and $17 per hour. For 68.8 percent of employers, the minimum education requirement is a high school degree while about 25 percent of employers have no minimum education requirement. The occupation also is potentially accessible for new graduates, with 87.5 percent of employers indicating they consider workers with no experience. The remaining employers require less than 1 year of experience. Despite these minimal requirements, 80 percent of employers indicate it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation, primarily due to a lack of applicants. Eight-five percent of employers report there is a lack of applicants for jobs in this occupation, while 53.8 percent of employers indicate that applicants lack work experience and 30.8 percent a lack occupation specific skills. The quality of applicants is also an issue, with 38.5 percent of employers reporting that it is difficult to hire because applicants have a poor work history, and

15.4 percent reporting that applicants have difficulty passing a background check. In addition, 38.5 percent of employers report it is difficult to hire because applicants have wage demands which are “too high.” After an applicant is hired, 29.4 percent of employers provide a post-hire training course and 11.8 percent provide training for a certification. The most common type of post-hire training is on-the-job training by another worker or a supervisor, which is provided by 84.2 percent of employers.

Stock Clerk and Order Fillers is the sixth occupation listed, in Table 4.6. This occupation provides low wages, with an average hourly wage of $10.45. Wage rates range from $8.00 to $14.00 per hour. In terms of education requirements, 45.5 percent of employers require a high school diploma while 54.6 percent of employers have no minimum education requirement. Employers have few experience requirements, with 72.7 percent of employers willing to consider workers with no experience and the remaining 27.3 percent requiring less than 6 months experience. Despite these minimal requirements, 72.3 percent of employers report that it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation, primarily due to a lack of applicants. Two-thirds of employers report that there is a lack of applicants for jobs in this occupation. The quality of applicants is also an issue with 22.2 percent of employers reporting that it is difficult to hire because applicants have a poor work history and 44.2 of employers indicating that applicants have difficulty passing a background check. The only common type of post-hire training is on-the-job training provided by other workers or supervisors. On-the-job training is provided by 58.3 percent of employers.

Welders, Cutters, Solderers and Brazers is the seventh occupation listed, in Table 4.7. This occupation provides moderate wages, with an average hourly wage of $12.89. Hourly wages range between $9.00 and $18.00. Employers have limited education requirements, with 22.2 percent of employers requiring a high school diploma and 77.8 percent of employers having no minimum education requirement. Employers do expect some work experience, however, with 44.4 percent of employers requiring from 6 months to 1 year of previous experience and 11.1 percent 1 to 2 years of experience. The remaining employers require less than 6 months or no previous experience. Eight out of nine employers report that it is difficult to find workers in this occupation. One common reason is a lack of applicants, as reported by 87.5 percent of employers. A lack of work experience (75.0%), a lack of occupation specific skills (62.5%), and a lack of required licenses and certificates (37.5%) are other common reasons it is difficult to hire. The quality of applicants also can be an issue with 37.5 percent of employers reporting that it is difficult to hire because applicants have a poor work history and 25.0 percent indicating that applicants cannot pass a background check. After a hire is made, 11.1 percent of employers provide a post-hire training course, 22.2 percent provide a training certificate program and 77.8 percent provide on-the-job training by another worker or supervisor.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers 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 $17.26. Hourly wages range from $10.50 to $37.50, suggesting that there are high wage opportunities in this occupation. In terms of education requirement, 52.3 percent of employers require a high school diploma while 42.1 percent have no minimum education requirement. Employers have more experience requirements with 21.1 percent requiring at least 3 years of experience and another 21.1 percent requiring between 1 and 3 years of experience. Another 47.4 employers require at least some experience while just 10.5 percent are willing to consider drivers with no experience. Ninety-five percent of employers report it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation. One common issue is applicants with a lack of the required licenses and certificates. This issue is named by 68.4 percent of employers. Other common issues are a lack of work experience (63.2%) and a lack of occupation specific skills (52.6%). Employers also have concerns about the quality of applicants, with 47.4 percent of employers indicating it is difficult to hire because applicants have a poor work history and 52.6 percent of employers indicating that applicants cannot pass a background check. In addition, 52.6 percent of employers report it is difficult to hire because applicants have wage demands which are "too high." After an applicant is hired, one-third of employers provide applicants with training to earn a required license while 19.0 percent provide a training course. The most common type of training is on-the-job training by another worker or a supervisor, which is provided by 81.0 percent of employers.

Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers, Hand is the ninth occupation listed, in Table 4.9. This occupation provides lower wages, with an average hourly wage of $10.21. There is a tight range of wages, from $8.00 to $12.00 per hour. The majority of employers (72.7%) have no minimum education requirement while 27.3 percent of employers require a high school diploma. The occupation is accessible to inexperienced applicants with 100 percent of employers willing to consider applicants with no work experience. Despite these minimal requirements, 63.6 percent of employers indicate that it is difficult to hire workers in this occupation. A common reason is a lack of applicants, an issue noted by 85.7 percent of employers. There are also significant issues with applicant quality with 85.7 percent of employers reporting that it is difficult to hire because applicants cannot pass a background check and another 42.9 percent noting applicants with a poor work history. When an applicant is hired, 27.3 percent of employers provide a training course but the most common type of training is on-the-job training by another worker or a supervisor, which is provided by 72.7 percent of employers.

Table 4.1: Nursing Assistants (31-1014)			
Wages		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	100% Yes
Mean	$10.30	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
Median	$10.50	Lack of Work Experience	42.9%
High	$12.40	Poor Work History	100.0%
Low	$8.00	Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	14.3%
		Failed Background Check	85.7%
		Wage Demands Too High	28.6%
Education Requirements		Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	42.9%
No minimum requirement	28.6%	Language Barrier	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	42.9%	Not enough applicants	85.7%
Technical/Vocational Degree	28.6%	Availability for shifts required	57.1%
Associate Degree	0.0%	Lack required education	28.6%
Bachelor's Degree	0.0%	Overqualified	0.0%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Citizenship/Work authorization	0.0%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)	Other	0.0%
Special training required	87.5%	**Training Needs**	
License required	42.9%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	85.7%	In-House	37.5%
		Out-of-House	37.5%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	25.0%
No experience required	87.5%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	0.0%	Class But No Certification	12.5%
6-mo to 1 year	0.0%	License	25.0%
1-2 years	12.5%	Certification Course	50.0%
3-5 years	0.0%	College of Community College Course	25.0%
5+ years	0.0%	Training provided by others	62.5%
		N/A: No additional training provided	0.0%
		Other	12.5%

Table 4.2: Waiters and Waitresses (35-3031)			
Wages		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	31.3% Yes
Mean	$5.11	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
Median	$3.00	Lack of Work Experience	60.0%
High	$10.00	Poor Work History	40.0%
Low	$2.00	Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	20.0%
		Failed Background Check	0.0%
		Wage Demands Too High	0.0%
Education Requirements		Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	0.0%
No minimum requirement	100.0%	Language Barrier	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	0.0%	Not enough applicants	60.0%
Technical/Vocational Degree	0.0%	Availability for shifts required	40.0%
Associate Degree	0.0%	Lack required education	20.0%
Bachelor's Degree	0.0%	Overqualified	0.0%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Citizenship/Work authorization	0.0%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)	Other	0.0%
Special training required	33.3%	**Training Needs**	
License required	5.9%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	5.9%	In-House	94.4%
		Out-of-House	0.0%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	5.6%
No experience required	82.4%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	17.7%	Class But No Certification	0.0%
6-mo to 1 year	0.0%	License	5.3%
1-2 years	0.0%	Certification Course	5.3%
3-5 years	0.0%	College of Community College Course	0.0%
5+ years	0.0%	Training provided by others	52.6%
		N/A: No additional training provided	26.3%
		Other	0.0%

Table 4.3: Retail Salesperson (41-2031)	
Wages	
Mean	$12.84
Median	$11.00
High	$24.00
Low	$8.50
Education Requirements	
No minimum requirement	41.2%
High School Diploma/GED	52.9%
Technical/Vocational Degree	5.9%
Associate Degree	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree	0.0%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)
Special training required	43.8%
License required	12.5%
Certificate required	6.3%
Minimum work experience for position	
No experience required	52.9%
6-mo related or less	29.4%
6-mo to 1 year	5.9%
1-2 years	5.9%
3-5 years	0.0%
5+ years	5.9%
It is Difficult to Find Workers?	68.8% Yes
Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?	
Lack of Work Experience	36.4%
Poor Work History	36.4%
Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	9.1%
Failed Background Check	18.2%
Wage Demands Too High	18.2%
Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	0.0%
Language Barrier	9.1%
Not enough applicants	90.9%
Availability for shifts required	9.1%
Lack required education	9.1%
Overqualified	0.0%
Citizenship/Work authorization	0.0%
Other	9.1%
Training Needs	
Where is training provided?	
In-House	66.7%
Out-of-House	0.0%
Both	33.3%
Type of Training Provided	
Class But No Certification	23.5%
License	17.6%
Certification Course	11.8%
College of Community College Course	0.0%
Training provided by others	70.6%
N/A: No additional training provided	17.6%
Other	5.9%

Table 4.4: Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks (43-3031)			
Wages		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	83.3% Yes
Mean	$14.33	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
Median	$14.00	Lack of Work Experience	50.0%
High	$30.00	Poor Work History	20.0%
Low	$10.00	Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	30.0%
		Failed Background Check	0.0%
		Wage Demands Too High	20.0%
Education Requirements		Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	0.0%
No minimum requirement	25.0%	Language Barrier	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	58.3%	Not enough applicants	90.0%
Technical/Vocational Degree	0.0%	Availability for shifts required	0.0%
Associate Degree	8.3%	Lack required education	20.0%
Bachelor's Degree	8.3%	Overqualified	0.0%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Citizenship/Work authorization	0.0%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)	Other	10.0%
Special training required	42.7%	**Training Needs**	
License required	0.0%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	0.0%	In-House	75.0%
		Out-of-House	0.0%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	25.0%
No experience required	27.3%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	9.1%	Class But No Certification	16.7%
6-mo to 1 year	18.2%	License	0.0%
1-2 years	27.3%	Certification Course	0.0%
3-5 years	18.2%	College of Community College Course	0.0%
5+ years	0.0%	Training provided by others	83.3%
		N/A: No additional training provided	8.3%
		Other	25.0%

Table 4.5: Customer Service Representative (43-4051)			
			80%
Wages		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	Yes
Mean	$11.05	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
Median	$10.00	Lack of Work Experience	53.8%
High	$17.00	Poor Work History	38.5%
Low	$8.00	Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	30.8%
		Failed Background Check	15.4%
		Wage Demands Too High	38.5%
Education Requirements		Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	0.0%
No minimum requirement	25.0%	Language Barrier	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	68.8%	Not enough applicants	84.6%
Technical/Vocational Degree	6.3%	Availability for shifts required	0.0%
Associate Degree	0.0%	Lack required education	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree	0.0%	Overqualified	38.5%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Citizenship/Work authorization	0.0%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)	Other	0.0%
Special training required	58.8%	**Training Needs**	
License required	5.9%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	5.9%	In-House	82.4%
		Out-of-House	0.0%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	17.7%
No experience required	87.5%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	6.3%	Class But No Certification	29.4%
6-mo to 1 year	6.3%	License	0.0%
1-2 years	0.0%	Certification Course	11.8%
3-5 years	0.0%	College of Community College Course	0.0%
5+ years	0.0%	Training provided by others	82.4%
		N/A: No additional training provided	11.8%
		Other	5.9%

Table 4.6: Stock Clerk and Order Fillers (43-5081)			
Wages		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	72.3% Yes
Mean	$10.45	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
Median	$10.50	Lack of Work Experience	0.0%
High	$14.00	Poor Work History	22.2%
Low	$8.00	Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	22.2%
		Failed Background Check	44.4%
		Wage Demands Too High	0.0%
Education Requirements		Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	0.0%
No minimum requirement	54.6%	Language Barrier	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	45.5%	Not enough applicants	66.7%
Technical/Vocational Degree	0.0%	Availability for shifts required	0.0%
Associate Degree	0.0%	Lack required education	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree	0.0%	Overqualified	0.0%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Citizenship/Work authorization	0.0%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)	Other	11.1%
Special training required	33.3%	**Training Needs**	
License required	8.3%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	8.3%	In-House	81.8%
		Out-of-House	0.0%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	18.2%
No experience required	72.7%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	27.3%	Class But No Certification	8.3%
6-mo to 1 year	0.0%	License	0.0%
1-2 years	0.0%	Certification Course	8.3%
3-5 years	0.0%	College of Community College Course	0.0%
5+ years	0.0%	Training provided by others	58.3%
		N/A: No additional training provided	16.7%
		Other	16.7%

Table 4.7: Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers (51-4121)			
Wages		**It is Difficult to Find Workers?**	88.9% Yes
Mean	$12.89	**Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?**	
Median	$12.50	Lack of Work Experience	75.0%
High	$18.00	Poor Work History	37.5%
Low	$9.00	Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	62.5%
		Failed Background Check	25.0%
		Wage Demands Too High	25.0%
Education Requirements		Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	37.5%
No minimum requirement	77.8%	Language Barrier	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	22.2%	Not enough applicants	87.5%
Technical/Vocational Degree	0.0%	Availability for shifts required	12.5%
Associate Degree	0.0%	Lack required education	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree	0.0%	Overqualified	12.5%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%	Citizenship/Work authorization	0.0%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)	Other	0.0%
Special training required	33.3%	**Training Needs**	
License required	0.0%	Where is training provided?	
Certificate required	44.4%	In-House	88.9%
		Out-of-House	0.0%
Minimum work experience for position		Both	11.1%
No experience required	22.2%	Type of Training Provided	
6-mo related or less	22.2%	Class But No Certification	11.1%
6-mo to 1 year	44.4%	License	0.0%
1-2 years	11.1%	Certification Course	22.2%
3-5 years	0.0%	College of Community College Course	0.0%
5+ years	0.0%	Training provided by others	77.8%
		N/A: No additional training provided	11.1%
		Other	0.0%

Table 4.8: Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032)	
Wages	
Mean	$17.26
Median	$15.00
High	$37.50
Low	$10.50
Education Requirements	
No minimum requirement	42.1%
High School Diploma/GED	52.3%
Technical/Vocational Degree	0.0%
Associate Degree	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree	5.3%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)
Special training required	84.2%
License required	100.0%
Certificate required	40.0%
Minimum work experience for position	
No experience required	10.5%
6-mo related or less	31.6%
6-mo to 1 year	15.8%
1-2 years	21.1%
3-5 years	10.5%
5+ years	10.5%
	94.7%
It is Difficult to Find Workers?	Yes
Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?	
Lack of Work Experience	63.2%
Poor Work History	47.4%
Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	52.6%
Failed Background Check	52.6%
Wage Demands Too High	52.6%
Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	68.4%
Language Barrier	0.0%
Not enough applicants	47.4%
Availability for shifts required	15.8%
Lack required education	0.0%
Overqualified	0.0%
Citizenship/Work authorization	5.3%
Other	21.1%
Training Needs	
Where is training provided?	
In-House	79.0%
Out-of-House	5.3%
Both	15.8%
Type of Training Provided	
Class But No Certification	19.0%
License	33.3%
Certification Course	9.5%
College of Community College Course	0.0%
Training provided by others	81.0%
N/A: No additional training provided	14.3%
Other	4.8%

Table 4.9: Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (53-7062)	
Wages	
Mean	$10.21
Median	$10.00
High	$12.00
Low	$8.00
Education Requirements	
No minimum requirement	72.7%
High School Diploma/GED	27.3%
Technical/Vocational Degree	0.0%
Associate Degree	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree	0.0%
Master's Degree or Higher	0.0%
Additional requirements?	(% Yes)
Special training required	50.0%
License required	0.0%
Certificate required	10.0%
Minimum work experience for position	
No experience required	100.0%
6-mo related or less	0.0%
6-mo to 1 year	0.0%
1-2 years	0.0%
3-5 years	0.0%
5+ years	0.0%
It is Difficult to Find Workers?	63.6% Yes
Why is It Difficult to Find Workers?	
Lack of Work Experience	14.3%
Poor Work History	42.9%
Lack of Occupation Specific Skills	42.9%
Failed Background Check	71.4%
Wage Demands Too High	14.3%
Lack Required Licenses/Certificates	14.3%
Language Barrier	14.3%
Not enough applicants	85.7%
Availability for shifts required	14.3%
Lack required education	14.3%
Overqualified	14.3%
Citizenship/Work authorization	14.3%
Other	14.3%
Training Needs	
Where is training provided?	
In-House	100.0%
Out-of-House	0.0%
Both	0.0%
Type of Training Provided	
Class But No Certification	27.3%
License	0.0%
Certification Course	0.0%
College of Community College Course	0.0%
Training provided by others	72.7%
N/A: No additional training provided	9.1%
Other	0.0%

5. CONCLUSION

This report utilized the results of the *Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs* to evaluate satisfaction with the 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 was 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 Scottsbluff 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 were areas of concern. Businesses consistently raised concerns about the leadership skills of their workforce. Other areas of concern included work ethic and an ability to pay attention to detail. While half of employers were somewhat or very 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 or hiring new workers.

More generally, 73.8 percent of the time employers report that it is difficult to hire workers. The percentage is even higher in blue collar occupations such as installation, maintenance and repair workers, production workers, and transportation and material moving workers. The percentage is also higher in selected white collar occupations, including health care practitioners and technical support workers, business and financial operations workers and computer and mathematical workers. The difficulty of hiring is lower for two service occupations, food preparing and service related and office and administrative support.

The primary reason for difficulty in hiring is a lack of applicants. Over three in four businesses report that it is difficult to hire because there are too few applicants. Two factors are likely contributing to this result. First, the Scottsbluff 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 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 required shifts.

Beyond the number of applicants, employers also cite specific concerns about applicants which make it more difficulty to hire. More than half of responding businesses (53.8%) indicate that applicants lack work experience, while 43.8 percent report that applicants lack occupation-specific skills and 44.2 percent note applicants with a poor work history make it difficult to hire. About one-quarter of employers report it is difficult to hire because 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 two white collar and two blue collar occupations. Among white collar jobs, the two occupations are computer and mathematical occupations and business and financial operations occupations. 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 occupation is health care support workers. Among blue collar jobs, there is a heightened concern about work history and failed background checks for construction and extraction occupations and transportation and material moving occupations. 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 hiring in select occupations reported that a large share of applicants had wage expectations which were "too high." These occupations were personal care and service workers, construction and extraction workers and transportation and material moving 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 87.6 percent of occupations. Of businesses which provide training, 17.1 percent of employers provide training courses without a certification while 18.1 percent provide certification courses. While 8.7 percent of employers provide licensing courses while 4.8 percent provide a full college or community college course. Four-fifths of 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. Nearly all workers who received training participate in in-house training. However, responding businesses

indicate that out-of-house training is provided to new workers in approximately one-third of the time. Generally speaking, 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 computer and mathematical occupations.

APPENDIX 1: SCOTTSBLUFF SURVEY OF HIRING AND TRAINING NEEDS

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Scottsbluff Survey of Hiring and Training Needs

The following survey is designed to gather information about the hiring and training needs of Scottsbluff 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 October 12. 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) 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
- ○ N/A: not considered

Page 1

7) 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

8) 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

9) 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 11
- ○ Maybe
- ○ Yes

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

- ○ No
- ○ Maybe
- ○ Yes

11) When hiring, please rate the overall competency level for the following work skills for your typical applicant pool. *Note: This question is regarding your typical pool of applicants. Skills of current employees will be addressed in an upcoming question.*

		Less Than Adequate	Adequate	Strong	N/A
A.	Willingness to learn	○	○	○	○
B.	Attitude	○	○	○	○
C.	Work ethic	○	○	○	○
D.	Creativity	○	○	○	○
E.	Basic Computer skills	○	○	○	○
F.	Basic Math skills	○	○	○	○
G.	IT (programming, etc.)	○	○	○	○
H.	Sales skills	○	○	○	○
I.	Critical Thinking skills	○	○	○	○
J.	Leadership skills	○	○	○	○
K.	Customer Service skills	○	○	○	○
L.	Written Communication	○	○	○	○
M.	Verbal Communication	○	○	○	○
N.	Ability to work independently	○	○	○	○
O.	Ability to work as a team	○	○	○	○
P.	Ability to problem solve	○	○	○	○
Q.	Ability to adapt to change	○	○	○	○
R.	Ability to pay attention to detail	○	○	○	○

12) 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

13) 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 15
- ○ No, but plan to ⟶ Go to Question 15

14) 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

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

- ○ Yes
- ○ No ⟶ Go to Question 45 on page 7

16) 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.

17) For occupation 1 listed in question 16, please describe the main duties and responsibilities for workers with this occupation title:

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

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

OR

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

19) 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

20) 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

21) 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

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

- ○ No ⟶ Go to Question 24
- ○ Yes

23) 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/drug screen ○
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. Citizenship/work authorization ○
m. Other *(Please describe)* ○

24) Beyond basic employee orientation, 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 _____
- ○ Training provided by other workers or supervisor
- ○ N/A: No additional training provided
- ○ Other *(Please describe)*

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

- ○ In-house
- ○ Out-of-house

26) For occupation 2 listed in question 16, please describe the main duties and responsibilities for workers with this occupation title:

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

$ ___ . __ per hour

OR

$ ___ , ___ per year

28) 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

29) 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

30) 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

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

- ○ No → Go to Question 33
- ○ Yes

32) 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/drug screen ○
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. Citizenship/work authorization ○
m. Other *(Please describe)* ○

33) Beyond basic employee orientation, 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 _____
- ○ Training provided by other workers or supervisor
- ○ N/A: No additional training provided
- ○ Other *(Please describe)*

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

- ○ In-house
- ○ Out-of-house

35) For occupation 3 listed in question 16, please describe the main duties and responsibilities for workers with this occupation title:

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

$ ___ . __ per hour

OR

$ ___ , ___ per year

37) 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

38) 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

39) 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

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

- ○ No ⟶ Go to Question 42
- ○ Yes

41) 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/drug screen	○
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.	Citizenship/work authorization	○
m.	Other *(Please describe)*	○

42) Beyond basic employee orientation, 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 _____
- ○ Training provided by other workers or supervisor
- ○ N/A: No additional training provided
- ○ Other *(Please describe)*

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

- ○ In-house
- ○ Out-of-house

44) 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/drug screen	○	○
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. Citizenship/work authorization	○	○
M. Other *(please describe)*	○	○

Section 3: About Current Workers

45. 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	○	○	○	○	○	○

46. **a. Please rate the overall skill level required of most workers at your location.** **b. Please indicate if there are deficiencies 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	○	○	○	○	○	○
Basic Math 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	○	○	○	○	○	○

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

48) 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.