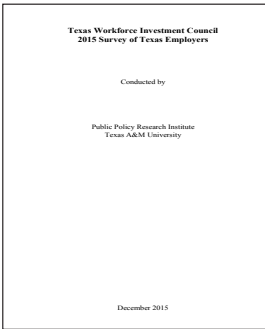


Texas Workforce Investment Council 2015 Survey of Texas Employers



The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council) is committed to advocating for a workforce system that meets the needs of Texas’ businesses and workers. To that end, a survey was conducted to understand the challenges facing businesses in hiring qualified workers. One significant challenge identified by employers was a lack of technical skills and qualifications. This summary provides a brief overview of the survey report.

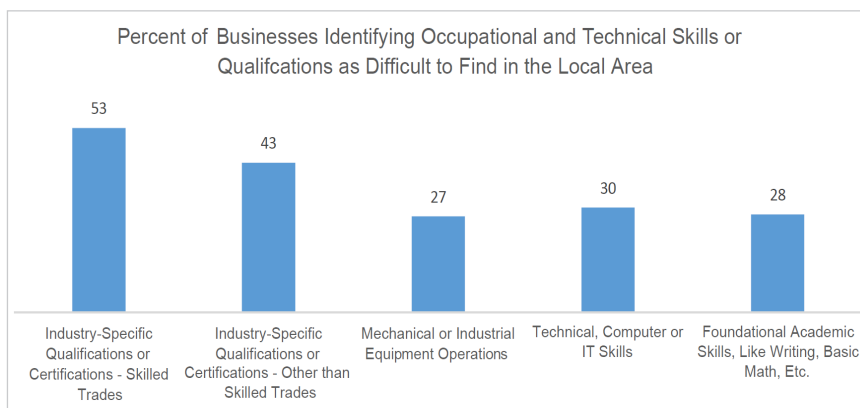
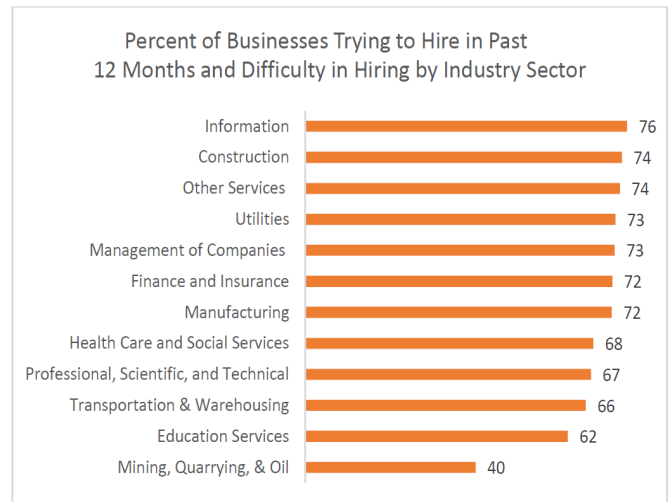
Background

Texas Government Code directs the Council to evaluate the effectiveness of the workforce development system. The survey of Texas employers, administered by the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University, was timed to coincide with the Council’s implementation of the new system strategic plan and was designed to consider issues from a workforce system level. The 26-question online survey received responses from 2,738 employers, which provided a representative sample of Texas businesses. The survey addressed what types of workers are needed, what skills and qualifications are required, and what types of job openings have proven most difficult to fill in the past 12 months.

Significant Findings

Seventy-eight percent of employers surveyed from 12 industry sectors in Texas indicated that maintaining a skilled and flexible workforce is the most important factor to the future success of the company. Workforce was ranked considerably higher than increasing customer satisfaction or producing new products. However, more than two-thirds of businesses that tried to hire new workers in the past 12 months reported at least some difficulty in hiring qualified applicants.

The most cited challenge in filling positions was a lack of relevant work experience. Educational credentials were not ranked as highly as work experience, suggesting that occupational training programs and student intern- and externships are important supplements to two-year or four-year degree programs.



Technical skills and qualifications such as industry-specific certifications for skilled trades and other occupations were identified as the qualifications most difficult to find. Employers also reported recruiting less qualified workers and addressing skills deficiencies through in-house trainers and on-the-job training. However, the education levels identified for the most difficult to fill positions indicate that employers are looking for no less than a high school diploma, as well as industry-based certifications and some postsecondary education or an associate’s degree.

Conclusions

The findings of the survey highlight the importance of maintaining a highly skilled and flexible workforce. The results complement other studies on workforce skills shortages as well as support information received from system stakeholders during the development phase of the system strategic plan. The survey findings point to hiring difficulty and offer information about how employers are addressing challenges with hiring new workers. Responses suggest that employers also look to other credentials—such as industry-based certifications, certificates, licensure, and completion of work-based learning through apprenticeship programs—to determine the skills and qualifications of job applicants. This presents a unique opportunity for the workforce system to meet the needs of Texas’ businesses and workers.