

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 108
JANUARY 26, 2006**

EMPLOYER SURVEY RESULTS (ADVANCED DRAFT)

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) recently completed its biennial survey of Washington State employers regarding workforce training needs and practices. This tab contains tables showing the results. The results are still marked draft since there has been insufficient time to thoroughly vet them prior to including the results in the Board packet.

The Workforce Board administered the survey during the summer and fall of 2005. The Association of Washington Business assisted with a transmittal letter encouraging employers to respond. The response rate was 2,100 employers, a 17 percent response rate. The margin of error is 2.1 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that if the survey were conducted many times, 95 percent of the time the results would fall within the range + or – 2.1 percent of the results reported here.

Most of the questions ask employers about their workforce training needs and practices during the previous 12 months. This was a period during which the state economy came out of a recession and began to expand rapidly. As a consequence, more employers reported hiring new employees and having difficulty finding qualified job applicants compared to the previous survey two years ago. Sixty-one percent of firms reported hiring new employees in the last 12 months (compared to 55 percent two years ago) and of those firms attempting to hire, 51 percent reported difficulty finding qualified job applicants (compared to 45 percent two years ago). Extrapolating from the survey results, an estimated 69,000 Washington firms had difficulty finding qualified job applicants during the previous 12 months.

As has been the case in every biennial survey of employers, the shortage of vocationally trained workers at the sub-baccalaureate level affected more firms than the shortage of workers at baccalaureate or above levels. The skills that employers report the greatest difficulty finding in job applicants remain occupational-specific skills, such as they wanted to hire an emergency room registered nurse and could not find an applicant that was qualified. After occupational-specific skills, the skills most difficult to find were general workplace skills such as the ability to solve problems, positive work habits, communication, and teamwork skills.

The next steps will be to write-up and publish the results, including results by Workforce Development Area and industry.

Board Action Requested: None. For discussion purposes only.

*Q1. Percent of Firms That Hired New Employees in the Last 12 Months
(All Firms).*

WDA	Yes	Number	Total in WDA
BENTON FRANKLIN	54%	3,389	6,291
EASTERN	49%	3,300	6,725
KING	50%	35,815	71,386
NORTH CENTRAL	52%	4,880	9,463
NORTHWEST	68%	10,497	15,508
OLYMPIC	67%	8,393	12,455
PACIFIC MT	60%	9,820	16,380
PIERCE	68%	13,998	20,477
SNOHOMISH	73%	11,857	16,308
SOUTHWEST	71%	9,321	13,101
SPOKANE	74%	11,833	15,968
TRI-COUNTY	76%	7,387	9,764
STATEWIDE	61%	130,490	213,826

Question 3: In the last 12 months, did your firm/organization have any difficulty finding qualified applicants for any of the jobs you were trying to fill?

Q3. Among Firms Looking, Percent With Difficulty	Percent with Difficulty	Employers who had Difficulty	Number of Employers Attempting to Hire	All Employers	
				Percent	N
BENTON FRANKLIN	28%	955	3,395	15%	6,291
EASTERN	59%	2,261	3,843	34%	6,725
KING	49%	17,855	36,239	25%	71,035
NORTH CENTRAL	67%	3,889	5,790	41%	9,463
NORTHWEST	48%	5,524	11,543	36%	15,508
OLYMPIC	63%	5,287	8,400	42%	12,455
PACIFIC MT	40%	4,061	10,214	25%	16,380
PIERCE	50%	7,002	14,075	34%	20,477
SNOHOMISH	49%	5,753	11,857	35%	16,308
SOUTHWEST	62%	5,784	9,356	44%	13,101
SPOKANE	50%	6,067	12,049	38%	15,968
TRI COUNTY	60%	4,587	7,594	47%	9,764
Statewide	51%	69,025	134,355	32%	213,475

Question 4: How did your firm/organization respond to the difficulty finding qualified applicants?

Q4. Responses to the difficulty finding qualified applicants	Among Employers who had Difficulty	All Firms
	a) Did not fill the opening	40%
b) Hired a less qualified applicant	62%	18%
c) Outsourced the work/service	20%	6%
d) Increased overtime for employees	49%	14%
e) Increased recruiting efforts	52%	15%
f) Increased wages to attract applicants	28%	8%

Question 6: In general, how much difficulty has your firm/organization experienced in the last 12 months finding qualified applicants with the different education levels listed below?

Q6.	Among Employers who had Difficulty	All Employers
Neither a high school diploma or GED	8%	2%
High school diploma or GED	23%	7%
Some college course work	31%	9%
Vocational certificate	31%	9%
Vocational associate degree	29%	9%
Academic associate degree	17%	5%
Baccalaureate degree	18%	5%
Master degree	11%	3%
Doctoral or professional degree	6%	2%

Question 7. How much difficulty has your firm/organization had finding employees with the following skills?

Q7. Firms reporting difficulty finding workers with the following skills	Among Employers who had Difficulty	All Employers
a) Reading skills	24%	7%
b) Writing skills	41%	12%
c) Math Skills	42%	12%
d) Occupation-specific skills	76%	22%
e) Computer skills	43%	12%
f) Team work skills	63%	18%
g) Problem solving or critical thinking skills	70%	21%
h) Communication skills	65%	19%
i) Positive work habits and attitudes	68%	20%
j) Ability to accept supervision	53%	15%
k) Ability to adapt to changes in duties and responsibilities	56%	16%
l) English as a Second Language skills	17%	5%

Question 8. Which of the following has resulted from your firm's difficulty in finding qualified applicants?

Q8. Responses to the difficulty finding qualified applicants	Among Employers who had Difficulty	All Employers
a) Lowered overall productivity	57%	16%
b) Reduced product or service quality	50%	14%
c) Reduced production output or sales	57%	17%
d) Prevented firm from expanding its facilities	27%	8%
e) Prevented firm from developing new products/services	21%	6%
f) Caused firm to move some operations out of Washington	1%	0.2%

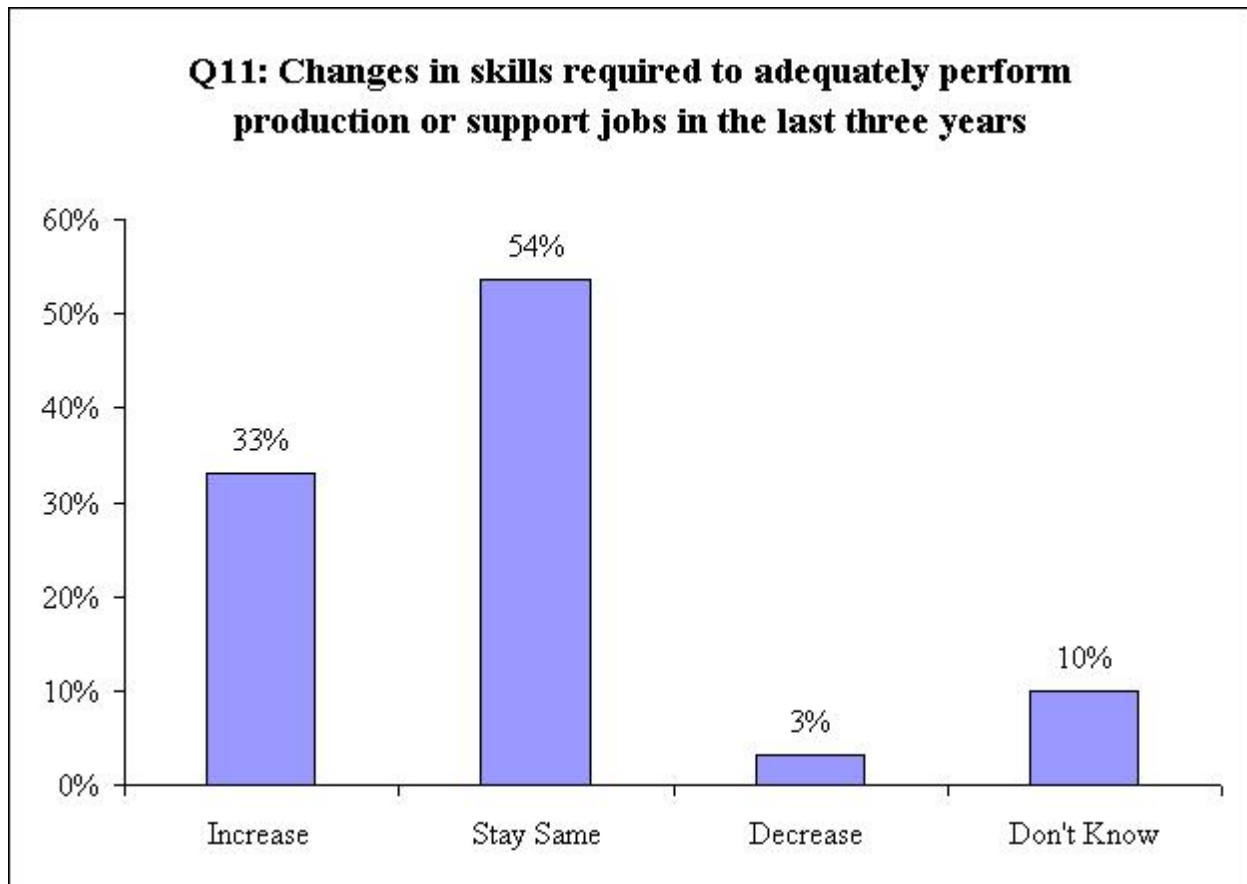
Question 9. How much difficulty has your firm/organization experienced with entry-level workers hired in the last six months demonstrating the following skills?

Q9.	Among Employers who had Difficulty	All Firms
a) Speaks so others can understand	24%	7%
b) Listen actively	44%	13%
c) Read with understanding	33%	10%
d) Observe critically	46%	13%
e) Cooperate with others	40%	12%
f) Resolve conflict and negotiate	44%	13%
g) Use math to solve problems and communicate	35%	10%
h) Solve problems and make decisions	57%	17%
i) Take responsibility for learning	63%	18%
j) Use information and communications technology	36%	11%

Question 10. How will your firm's need for employees with each type of education change in the next few years? (All Firms)

Q10. Educational Level	Increase	Stay about the same	Decrease	Not Needed
Neither a high school diploma or GED	2%	39%	5%	54%
High school diploma or GED	10%	57%	4%	29%
Some college course work	16%	46%	4%	34%
Vocational certificate	15%	39%	1%	45%
Vocational associate degree	9%	36%	1%	54%
Academic associate degree	11%	33%	1%	55%
Baccalaureate degree	14%	31%	1%	54%
Master's degree	6%	26%	1%	67%
Doctoral or professional degree	1%	22%	1%	76%

Question 11. In the last three years, have the skills required to adequately perform production or support jobs increased, decreased, or remained the same?



Question 15. In the last three years, has the percentage of your employers who received classroom training, workshops, or seminars of some kind increased, decreased, or remained the same?

