



Washington Job Quality Survey Summary Report

May 2025

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TAP & Job Quality Overview

Washington's workforce plan, Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP), is a four-year strategy for a strong and successful workforce development system. This strategy aims to help employers, workers and communities succeed.

Work groups were established in June of 2024 to lead each of the five strategic priority areas, job quality is one of the five strategic priorities within the plan.

For more information on TAP and the overarching strategic priorities visit the Workforce Board's [TAP webpage](#).

In recent years, Washington has worked to identify national and geographically specific job quality models. A job quality definition, model or framework helps organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders:

- Identify areas for improvement.
- Promote employee well-being.
- Enhance overall job satisfaction and productivity.
- Attract and retain talent.
- Foster inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Some specific ways in which having a job quality framework can help with prioritizing job quality investments for these groups:

Organizations:

- Improve wages and benefits: Ensure compensation is competitive and provides a self-sufficiency wage, including access to things like healthcare and retirement plans.
- Enhance workplace culture: Invest in DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility) initiatives and foster respectful, inclusive environments.
- Provide growth opportunities: Offer training, mentorship, and clear advancement paths for employees.
- Ensure job security, safety and predictability: Minimize reliance on precarious work arrangements and provide stable scheduling.

Policymakers:

- Enact fair labor standards: Review wage adequacy, ensure paid leave, and strengthen worker protections.
- Fund workforce development: Invest in training programs, apprenticeships, and upskilling initiatives.
- Promote inclusive employment: Support programs that expand access to good jobs for underrepresented populations.

Stakeholders: (e.g., investors, community leaders, workforce boards)

- Support responsible businesses: Prioritize partnerships and investments in companies that value workers and job quality.
- Facilitate collaboration: Help align efforts across sectors to create local or regional strategies for better jobs.
- Elevate worker voices: Engage directly with workers to understand their needs and experiences in the labor market.

Establishing a job quality framework within Washington’s Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) plan equips organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders with the tools to invest in better jobs, support inclusive economic growth, and ensure that workers across the state have access to stable, equitable, and self-sustaining employment.

Survey Purpose

Rather than adopting an existing national or geographic framework, the work group prioritized hearing directly from Washingtonians first. The TAP job quality work group conducted this survey to understand which specific job quality elements matter most to Washingtonians. The work group aimed to respectfully lift these voices, recognizing the value they bring to strengthening Washington’s overall economic well-being. The goal is to use the key findings, along with other research, to shape strategy, strengthen messaging, and encourage policymakers, employers, funders, workforce development practitioners, and government agencies to take action in advancing job quality across the state.

Executive Summary

The Job Quality Survey highlights some key factors that respondents consider essential for a quality job.

- The survey results underscore the need for:
 - Fair compensation, including benefits
 - Job safety and security, including worker rights and protections for workers to organize or form a union
 - Supportive workplace culture
 - Career growth opportunities
 - An ethical and intentional approach to modern technology and AI adoption

Job quality is a multifaceted and evolving concept. What constitutes a quality job can differ greatly depending on individual needs and values—some may prioritize flexible schedules, union representation or remote work options, while others might focus more on salary, benefits, or long-term stability. Additionally, the ability of employers to offer these job quality components often varies by industry, size, region, or other factors. For instance, tech companies in urban areas may be better equipped to provide remote or hybrid work and higher salaries, while small businesses or rural employers might emphasize job security, organizational culture, and community connection. Understanding and improving job quality requires acknowledging these diverse preferences and constraints.

Respondents told us for a job to be considered a quality job, they expect fair pay and comprehensive benefits, as together, these job quality elements form the foundation of a quality job, promoting financial stability, well-being, and long-term satisfaction for employees and their families. We also heard that they prioritize job security and safe working conditions because they foster stability, enabling employees to stay focused, be more productive, and support their mental well-being. They also told us that the ability to form and join unions, is a fundamental worker right that strengthens other job quality principles by improving pay, benefits, and overall conditions. Respondents also voiced the importance of opportunities for career advancement and professional development, that upward mobility drives economic growth and personal self-worth, while ongoing recognition of employee contributions fosters a sense of value and appreciation.

When it comes to the adoption of modern technologies, including AI, respondents want to see this done in ethical and intentional ways that prioritize workforce development. Technology should be used to support and enhance employee performance—not replace it—with informed, transparent policies guiding its use. While AI adoption in the workplace offers potential for productivity gains and

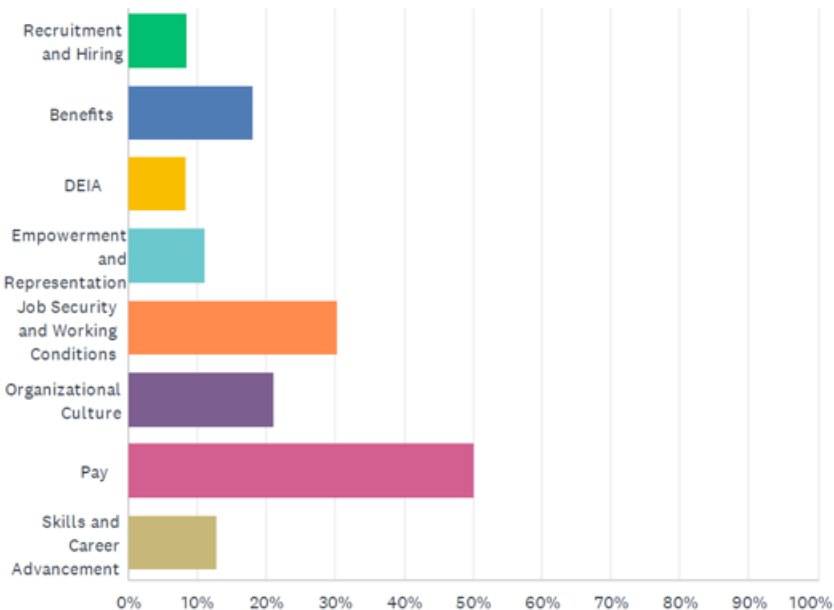
improved job quality, it also introduces significant challenges related to job displacement, skill gaps, and worker well-being. To harness AI's benefits equitably, coordinated efforts—including investments in training, modernized social protections, and inclusive workplace policies—are essential to support high-quality employment and economic resilience. They believe that a quality job begins with fair pay and benefits, but is elevated by an inclusive, engaging culture that fosters mutual growth, employee loyalty, and long-term commitment.

The survey results suggest that organizations aiming to attract and retain talent may consider prioritizing these areas while addressing evolving workplace trends such as AI integration and flexible work arrangements. These insights could inform Washington's efforts to improve job quality through policy, employer engagement, and workforce development. It should be noted that the survey findings are just the first step in developing a job quality framework for Washington state. Additional research and analysis are needed before making formal recommendations.

Key Findings

When asked which of the eight Good Jobs Principles they believe is the most important, respondents reported that the **top three job quality factors** were:

1. Pay (50%)
 2. Job Security and Working Conditions (30%)
 3. Organizational Culture (21%)
- Other factors by the numbers: Benefits (18%), Skills/Career Advancement (13%), Empowerment and Representation (11%), followed by Recruitment and Hiring (9%), and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (8%).



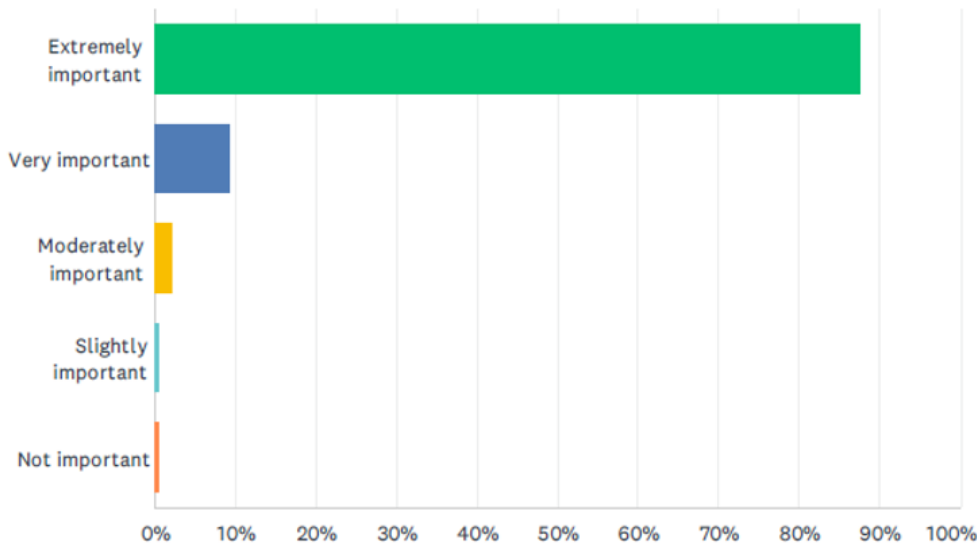
Note: [The U.S. Department of Commerce and Department of Labor's 8 Good Jobs Principles](#) were used as a guiding light in the survey design). Respondents could select more than one answer, so the total percentage for this question is higher than 100%.

"These principles are essential to me because they are interrelated and promote equity for everyone. They are fundamental to the quality jobs." -Survey Respondent

When asked if there were **additional principles** or factors that should be included in defining a good job, many of the respondents' comments fit into the existing eight job quality factors. Several categories outside of the original eight surfaced in many comments, such as **work life balance, well-trained managers/leaders, and flexibility**.

Compensation

- When asked “How important is it for employers to pay a competitive, stable, and predictable living wage?” **97%** of respondents said it was either very important or extremely important, underscoring competitive, stable, and predictable pay as a key job quality factor.



Importance of Competitive, Stable and Predictable Living Wage (Washington Job Quality Survey 24/25)

What this tells us:

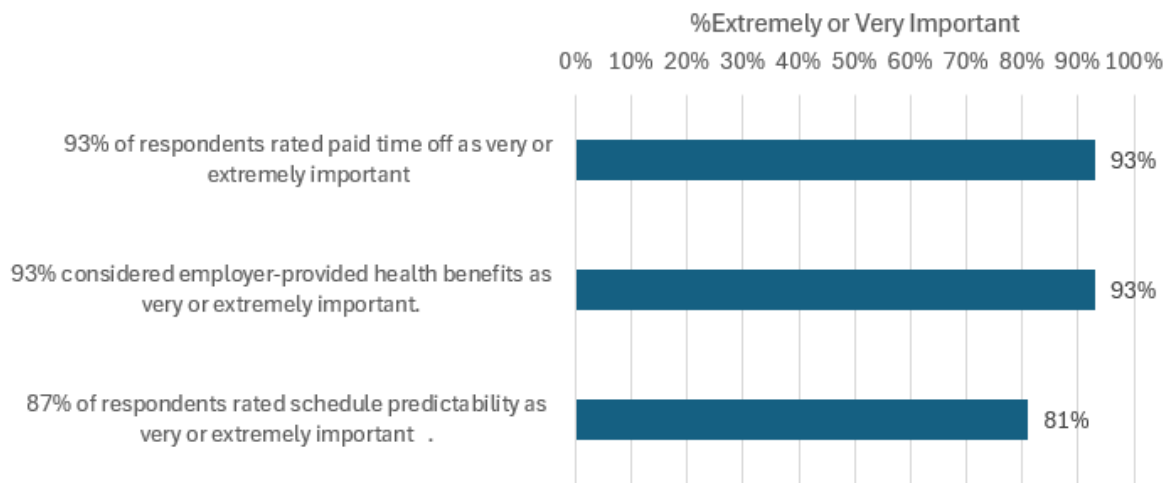
- Wages aren't just about the amount—they're also about consistency and fairness.
- Respondents highly value financial stability and predictability from their employers.

In summary: Fair, steady pay isn't a "nice-to-have"—it's a must-have in the eyes of nearly all workers surveyed.

"Pay is the basic foundation of a job and contributes to the quality of life for the individual and their family." – Survey Respondent

Benefits, Including Flexible Work Arrangements

Job Quality Factors - Benefits



- 93% rated paid time off as very or extremely important.
 - Time to rest and recharge or handle medical, personal or family appointments is a critical component of job quality, not just a perk.
- 93% considered employer-provided health benefits extremely important.
 - Health coverage is viewed as a non-negotiable, essential part of compensation and job security.
- 87% rated schedule predictability as very or extremely important.
 - Workers want control and consistency in their schedules to support work-life balance and personal responsibilities.

These findings underscore that employees are looking for more than just a paycheck—they want stability, well-being, and balance. Offering paid time off, benefits, and predictable schedules are all key to creating high-quality jobs that meet workers' needs and support recruitment and retention for employers.

Flexible Work Arrangements

When asked what types of flexible work arrangements employers should provide, respondents said hybrid work (85%), followed by remote work (77%), flextime (77%), and a compressed workweek (61%).

"Benefits can be a wide range of things, including paid leave and a pension, but other newer benefits, like flexible work hours, flex time off, and others are important to keep your workforce happy and retained." – Survey Respondent

Job Safety, Security

These two findings from the Job Quality Survey highlight that on-the-job safety (physical and psychological) and job security are critical concerns for the workers surveyed. Respondents placed very high value on both safety and job security. They want to feel safe while doing their jobs and feel confident that their jobs won't disappear unexpectedly.

- 93% said that feeling safe on the job was very important.
 - This shows that physical and psychological safety is a top priority for almost all respondents.
- 76% strongly agreed and another 20% agreed that job security is essential.
 - That's 96% total agreement, indicating that having a stable, dependable job matters deeply.



"Job security and safe working conditions significantly impact a sense of stability, allows an employee to focus on their work, be more productive, and can promote mental well-being"

– Survey Respondent

Worker Rights

- **87%** of respondents supported **the right to form and join unions**.
 - 36% of those that took the survey are represented, which suggests a strong public backing for unionization, reflecting widespread recognition of the importance of collective bargaining and worker's rights. One could also conclude that policies favoring union rights might receive substantial public approval.
- **93%** of respondents supported the **right to engage in protected activity** without fear of retaliation.
 - This data indicates there is a strong consensus around the importance of safeguarding workers' rights to participate in activities such as organizing, protesting, or reporting issues without facing negative consequences from their employer. Furthermore, the data underscores a widespread belief in the necessity of protection to ensure a positive work culture that is fair and just.
- **84%** of respondents supported **the right to engage in concerted/coordinated activity** without fear of retaliation.
 - This data shows a strong majority favoring protection for workers who collaborate or act together to address workplace issues, advocate for better conditions, or support each other in disputes. It highlights a widespread belief in the importance of collective action and the need for safeguards to ensure workers can organize without facing adverse consequences.

Worker Rights cont.

Overall, these findings show that workers strongly value their rights to organize, speak up, and take collective action without fear. Freedom of speech or expression, collective action, and protection from retaliation are central to what respondents consider a fair and respectful work environment. Employees want empowerment and representation, not just employment.

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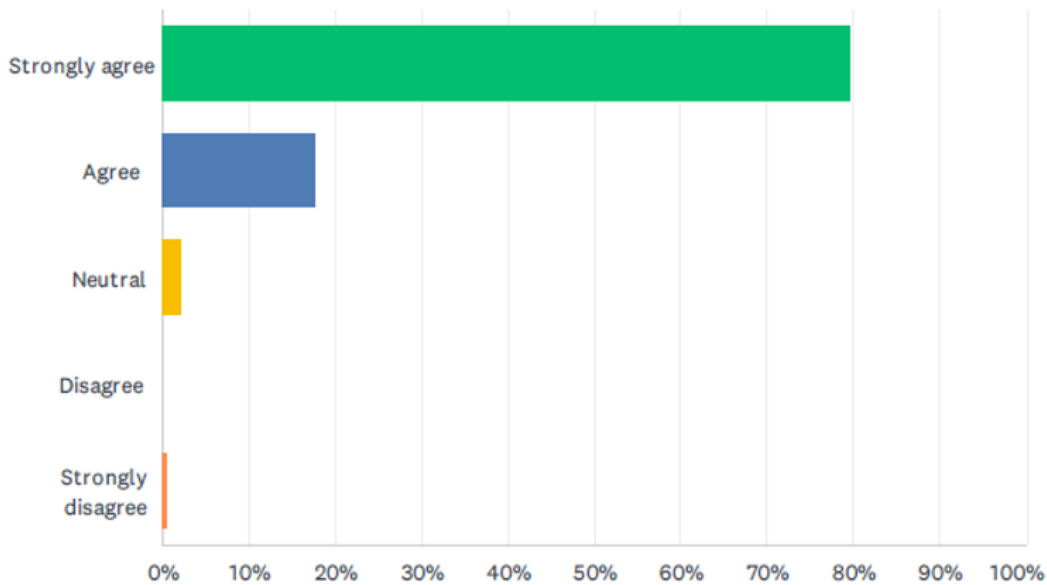
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“Unions support the other principles--unions improve pay, benefits, etc. The ability to form and belong to unions should be a fundamental right of workers.”

-Survey Respondent

Workplace Culture

- An overwhelming majority (97%) of respondents believed that fostering a positive and supportive workplace culture is essential.
 - 79% strongly agreed, showing a very strong conviction.
 - 18% agreed, which still reflects clear support, even if slightly less definite.



Importance of Positive and Supportive Workplace Culture (Washington Job Quality Survey 24/25)

What this tells us:

- A healthy workplace culture is a core expectation, not just a bonus.
- Employees want to work in environments that are respectful, inclusive, and supportive, this means an environment where all individuals are valued, treated with dignity, and empowered to thrive, regardless of their background or role.
- Organizations that invest in positive culture are more likely to attract, engage, and retain talent.

"A quality job starts with fair and equitable pay and benefits. When an employer also incorporates an inclusive and engaging work culture, it creates space for growth and learning opportunities, not only for the employee but the employer as well. When an employee has a stake in the game, they are more likely to become a loyal employee with longevity."

-Survey Respondent

Career Advancement & Professional Development

- **99%** of respondents valued professional development opportunities. With 69% considering them very important and 30% moderately important.
- The most favored strategies included employer-sponsored skills training and certifications during work hours, internal promotions, the opportunity to attend conferences, and tuition assistance.

This highlights a strong demand for employer-supported growth and skill-building.

“Upward mobility is closely tied to economic growth and self-value. It also means that organizations are assessing and valuing contributions on an on-going basis which helps people feel seen and appreciated.” -Survey Respondent

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)

A strong majority of respondents emphasized the importance of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the workplace. More than half (55%) identified DEIA as *essential*, while an additional 23% rated it as *very important*.

This finding underscores that DEIA is not viewed as a supplemental initiative, but rather as a core component of job quality and organizational culture. Workers increasingly expect employers to actively foster inclusive, equitable, and accessible work environments.

“Diversity ensures well rounded organizations and DEIA can address multiple issues in one by using that lens in the workplace. DEIA goes beyond just hiring folks it contributes to culture, ideas, representation, connections with workers, etc.” – Survey Respondent

Recruitment and Hiring

When asked if job postings should be clear and accessible and include detailed descriptions of a variety of aspects, respondents emphasized these aspects:

- Main job functions.
- Clear summary of the role.
- Required skills and competencies.
- Compensation.
- Transparency and clarity in job postings are also extremely important to job seekers. Workers value informative job postings that respect their time and support informed decision-making.

What this tells us:

- Respondents place high importance on clarity and transparency in job postings.
- They want specific information on the core responsibilities, skills and competencies needed, as well as details related to compensation.
- Well-structured, informative postings are seen not just as helpful, but as a sign of respect for the candidate's time and decision-making process.

"The quality aspects of a specific job don't really matter if you are excluded from the opportunity because of unfair recruitment and hiring practices".

-Survey Respondent

Technology & AI in the Workplace

- 84% of respondents believe employers should adopt general AI tools to enhance job performance.
- 64% of respondents said they are very familiar or somewhat familiar with the benefits and disadvantages of the use of AI in the workplace.
- When we examine this data closer, of the respondents that believed employers should adopt AI tools, 58% were very or somewhat familiar with the benefits and disadvantages.

Cybersecurity tools (75%) and collaboration software (73%) were the most familiar and comfortable technologies for respondents. While there is strong support (84%) among respondents for employers to adopt AI tools to improve working conditions and enhance job performance, a smaller proportion (58%) of those supporters are familiar with the potential benefits and drawbacks, highlighting a gap between enthusiasm for AI and understanding of its implications.

This finding suggests that not only should employers consider more education and communication around AI in the workplace to ensure informed support and adoption but also that workers seek meaningful involvement in decision making regarding the integration of AI into their work environment. They likely seek a scenario where AI supplements their work, improves conditions, and enhances their performance without replacing or leaving them behind.

"I think employers should adopt and utilize modern technology, including AI, in thoughtful, ethical ways that help employees develop the skills to use them to benefit the organization. Use should be an informed choice, with clear policies in place to guide use."

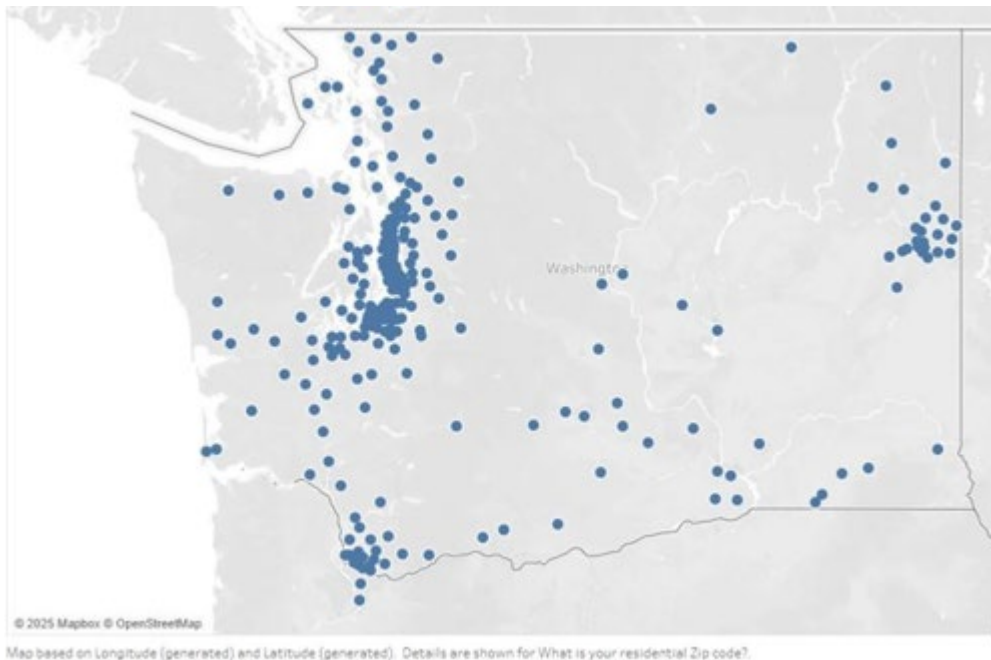
-Survey Respondent

"Technology must be used to improve job performance and assist the workforce, not replace it."

-Survey Respondent

Methodology

- Washington's Job Quality Survey was conducted between November 18, 2024, and February 28, 2025, to assess the experiences and perceptions of job quality among people across the state. The survey targeted adults aged 18 and older, including both employed and unemployed individuals, representing a wide range of occupations and industries. The final survey sample size was 1,068 respondents.
- Data collection was conducted through an online survey. Efforts were made to secure survey responses from people in every corner of the state, including urban, suburban and rural areas, to gain an understanding of the wide-ranging perspectives of what job quality means to Washingtonians. The survey respondent concentration aligns with the state's population density, with King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane and Clark counties being the most populated and generating the most responses.



The above Map represents the location of survey respondents by zip code.

- Methods used to reach survey respondents included articles in multiple agency and labor union newsletters, flyers posted at WorkSource Centers, social media posts, links to the survey in email signatures, a press release, and grassroots outreach by members of the workgroup.

While this survey is considered a convenience sample which can have limitations, the findings still offer insight into the importance of job quality factors like family sustaining wages, benefits, on the job safety and job security, the right to organize a union in the workplace, organizational culture, and other key components of job quality.

Demographic Differences

The Job Quality Survey results may disproportionately reflect the preferences, opinions, or behaviors of the following overrepresented groups in the sample, while underrepresenting those of other groups:

- Industry
 - The survey has a higher percentage of respondents that work in government compared to the overall population (41% vs 16% of state per Employment Security Department data ([Total Covered Employment - ESD Employment by Industry](#)) Other top industries represented in the survey were healthcare and social services.
- Sex
 - The survey reflects a predominantly female-identified respondent group (66%) compared to 50% in Washington.
(U.S. Census Bureau, "Age and Sex," QuickFacts Washington Tables, <<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/WA/PST045224>>, accessed on March 10, 2025.)
- Age
 - The survey sample skews older compared to the American Community Survey with a notably higher percentage of respondents aged 41–55 (39% vs. 19%) and fewer under 18 (0.1% vs. 21%). (2023 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates analyzed by the Workforce Board).
- Education Level
 - The survey data reflects more educated respondents, with 68% of respondents holding a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 40% in the general population. Lower education levels are underrepresented in the survey, particularly those with a high school diploma or less (6% on the survey vs. 29% in Washington). (2023 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates analyzed by the Workforce Board).
- Union Representation
 - 36% of respondents of the survey said they were represented by a union, far exceeding the state figure of 16% per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This percentage may be high due to the large number of survey respondents in the Government/Public Administration industry, 55% of whom said they are union represented.

Opportunities for Further Analysis

Literature Review (*in progress April-June 2025*)

- Compare survey results against national and state models and other research to contextualize findings.

Policy Impact Analysis

- Use the data to evaluate existing labor or workforce policies (e.g., minimum wage laws, paid leave mandates).
- Model how new or proposed policies could address key findings identified in the survey and literature.

Employer Perspective Research (*planned work group activity in year two*)

- Conduct follow-up research with employers and/or industry groups to understand constraints or opportunities.

Next Steps

- Make recommendations for a definition, model and/or framework for job quality in Washington (*based on survey results and other research*).
- Gather industry, system, and community feedback on proposed framework.
- Determine how to measure job quality in the state.
- Develop an implementation plan for applying the framework, including a timeline, resource allocation and materials needs, communications needs, and action steps.
- Determine what policy changes, investments or initiatives could be included in the implementation.

Acknowledgements

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