Albuquerque
Bridging The Talent Gap Employer Community Report

This project is made possible with support from Walmart

The Graduate! Network’s Bridging The Talent Gap Initiative

Submitted January 2019
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http://graduate-network.org
www.bridgingthetalentgap.org
The Bridging The Talent Gap Survey was administered to HR professionals and other business leaders from August 27, 2018 through December 31, 2018. There were 209 completed or partially completed surveys.

**Executive Summary of Findings**

**Community Landscape**

Organization size among respondents is represented in the following ways:

- Sixty-seven percent represent small businesses (1 – 200 employees)
- Seventeen percent represent medium-sized businesses (201 – 1,000 employees)
- Sixteen percent represent businesses with more than 1,000 employees

**Industries Represented**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Agencies</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Laundry Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair and Maintenance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Please note, percentages do not add up to 100% because survey respondents could choose more than one industry cluster).
• A total of 42 percent of survey respondents described the economic conditions in their community as positive. Of the industries most represented in the survey (N > 5) the finance and insurance sector and the construction sector held the most optimistic view (55 percent positive for each group). Conversely, the least optimistic industry among those most represented was the repair and maintenance sector, with thirteen percent holding a positive view of the community’s economic conditions.

• Eighty-six percent of respondents report that their respective companies are preparing for moderate to high growth in the next 3-5 years. Among industries most represented (N > 5), 93 percent of the information group anticipate moderate to fast growth. The retail trade group is the least likely (67 percent) to anticipate growth among survey respondents.

Skill Needs Landscape

• Across all basic, multi-lingual, and applied skills, respondents reported that 49 percent of high school diploma holders in their labor pool possessed the skills needed for their jobs. This figure was 59 percent for technical/community college graduates and 65 percent for four-year college graduates.

• Across all applied skills (information technology application, teamwork/collaboration, diversity, problem solving and leadership), respondents reported that 44 percent of high school diploma holders in their labor pool possessed the skills needed for their jobs. This figure was 62 percent for technical/community college graduates and 71 percent for four-year college graduates. The applied skill experiencing the greatest increase in respondents’ opinions was problem solving with an increase in the percent of “yes” responses of 37 percentage points from high school diploma holders to those with a four-year college degree.

Hiring Landscape

• Among all respondents, 91 percent are hiring for full-time positions. Seventy-three percent of employers find it difficult to recruit for certain positions, while 79 percent say it is difficult to retain certain positions.

• Among applicable respondents, the jobs found most difficult to fill include engineers (87 difficult) and skilled trades (electricians, carpenters, machinists, mechanics, welders, plumbers) (83 difficult).

• The least difficult jobs to fill in the community include administrative support staff (39 percent difficult) and hourly laborers (48 percent difficult).

• The main reasons respondents experience difficulty in hiring include lack of the right skills for the job (50 percent), lack of the right work experience (49 percent), and competition from other employers (48 percent).
Learning Landscape

• The education credential with the greatest percentage of respondents expecting increased need over the next five years was an industry/professional association credential (45 percent).

• Support for learning was mixed across respondents. Forty-nine percent provide financial support to pursue college level courses, 55 percent offer financial support for learning/training that is not college coursework, 84 percent provide on-the-job learning or training, and 62 percent provide support in non-financial ways. Six percent report that their organization does not provide any of these education benefits at this time.

• Respondents offer a variety of methods supporting education. Among those most often identified include allowing flexible work schedules to accommodate employees’ classes (73 percent), creating work schedules that accommodate class schedules for the entire semester (51 percent), and public recognition for graduation or achievement of significant educational milestones (48 percent.)

• On average 42 percent of financial benefits offered to employees is not utilized annually. The main reasons given for learning benefits not being utilized more fully involve workers being too busy or committed otherwise to pursue learning (77 percent), followed by lack of interest in learning benefits programs (30 percent).

• Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated that they did not currently work with a local education provider to assess skill gaps that can be addressed through educational institutions’ program offerings and curricula.

• Eighty-five percent of respondents who do not currently partner with education institutions either definitely or would possibly might consider doing so.

• Education was considered influential in helping respondents achieve their organizational goals. On a scale of 0 – 100 the average rating was 83 across all organizational goals, with a low of 74, for the of increasing profits/savings, and a high of 83 on the average for the goal of increasing customer/client satisfaction. A rating of 0 would indicate no influence and a rating of 100 would indicate that education is very influential.

NOTE: These data represent a snapshot of your community at a specific time. It is always advisable to take care in generalizing survey information to the community at large. Up to date information can be seen on your community’s interactive data dashboard at https://www.bridgingthetalentgap.org/dashboard/.

Use of any of these data in external or internal publications should be noted as follows: “The Graduate! Network Bridging The Talent Gap Initiative. [Year of report publication]. The Bridging The Talent Gap Employer Survey” [Note: some survey questions contained in the survey are from the
Society for Human Resource Management’s (SHRM’s) “Local Skills Shortages” survey and were used with permission from SHRM.

For questions or additional information about The Graduate! Network’s Bridging The Talent Gap initiative, please contact Bridgett Strickler, Director of Network Engagement and Co-Principal Investigator, Bridgett.Strickler@Graduate-Network.org.

For questions or additional information about how you can get involved with leaders in Albuquerque and take action on these data, please contact Teri Wimborne at teri.wimborne@uwcnm.org.
Introduction

Thank you for participating in the Bridging The Talent Gap Employer Survey. This survey is an integral outreach of The Graduate! Network, a national organization dedicated to working in communities across the U. S. to provide education opportunity for adults seeking to complete their post-secondary credentials. In Albuquerque, we have partnered with Mission: Graduate and Graduate! ABQ to do this work. Your input on this survey lays the ground work for consideration of the ways your community can best concentrate efforts to connect your needs with the education and learning resources in your community. Your responses equip business, education and government leaders with vital information to guide thinking and response to the areas of concern reflected in the results covered in this report. At its core, the business community’s responses on the Bridging The Talent Gap Employer Survey provide an honest and objective window into the viewpoints of employers in your area. This report seeks to provide context – by summarizing how your region has responded – and focus – by revealing your community’s specific perspective on key issues concerning hiring challenges, skill gaps among your labor pool, and the roles education and learning play in helping you address these issues and achieve your organization’s goals.

This initiative is a critical building block for your community’s quality of life. Without an educated and work-ready labor pool we cannot thrive economically. The survey has amplified your voice, and leaders in your community are listening, eager to share ideas, and ready to take action with you. One way you can take action now is to consider using the Landscape reflections in this report. We also invite you to explore the interactive data dashboard for your community at https://bridgingthetalentgap.org. In the coming months Mission: Graduate and Graduate! ABQ will reach out to explore solutions. We look forward to working together!

The Business Community Landscape

Respondent Profile

The Bridging The Talent Gap Survey was administered to HR professionals and other business leaders from August 27, 2018 through December 31, 2018. There were 209 completed or partially completed surveys.

Small organizations (1 – 200 employees) were the most represented among survey respondents with 67 percent of respondents identifying themselves in this category. Other organization sizes represented in the survey included 17 percent of respondents from medium-sized organizations (201 – 1,000 employees), and 16 percent of respondents from large organizations (more than 1,000 employees).

The distribution of industries represented among survey respondents can be seen in the Industry Table below. Those industries most represented among the survey respondents include the educational services sector, health care and social assistance sector, and professional, scientific, and technical services sector.
Industry | Number | Percent
--- | --- | ---
Accommodation and Food Services | 7 | 3%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 13 | 6%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 3 | 1%
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Construction | 23 | 11%
Educational Services | 38 | 18%
Finance and Insurance | 22 | 11%
Health Care and Social Assistance | 38 | 18%
Government Agencies | 19 | 9%
Information | 16 | 8%
Manufacturing | 14 | 7%
Mining | 1 | 0%
Personal and Laundry Services | 2 | 1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 38 | 18%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 6 | 3%
Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations | 9 | 4%
Repair and Maintenance | 8 | 4%
Retail Trade | 9 | 4%
Transportation and Warehousing | 7 | 3%
Utilities | 4 | 2%
Wholesale Trade | 5 | 2%
Other | 28 | 14%

Economic Outlook

The chart below shows a total of 42 percent of survey respondents describing economic conditions in their community as positive. Of the industries most represented in the survey, the finance and insurance sector, and the construction sector held the most optimistic view (55 percent each). Conversely, the least optimistic industry among those most represented was the repair and maintenance sector, with 13 percent holding a positive view of the community’s economic conditions.

The chart below indicates optimism each respondent had regarding their own organization. Eighty-six percent of respondents report that their respective companies are preparing for moderate to high growth in the next 3-5 years. The industry most optimistic about future growth was the information
sector (93 percent anticipating growth). The accommodation and food services group is the least likely (67 percent) to anticipate growth among survey respondents.

![Projected growth (3 - 5 years)](chart)

**Landscape Reflection**

- How do economic conditions in your area affect your ability to plan for and ensure a well-educated, well prepared work force?
- How might your community take advantage of local resources offered by local colleges and learning providers (e.g., subject matter experts for your business focus, curriculum to upgrade job skills, push for employees to complete credentials).
- What economic forces are driving your organization’s expectations of growth?
- How will this affect the hiring of new employees and the skills upgrades needed for your existing workforce?
- If you would like to learn more about how you can take action on these data, please contact Teri Wimborne at teri.wimborne@uwcnm.org.
- Graduate! ABQ is a FREE program which helps adults start or return to college. Through a collaboration between Workforce Connection, higher education, and community based organizations, we are working to make post-secondary education more accessible to adults who have never been to college and those who have, but may not have yet earned a certificate or degree. We help adults:
  - Take the steps to get into college.
  - Figure out how to pay for it.
  - Connect with the people they need to know.
  - For more information visit https://missiongraduatnm.org/graduate-abq/
The Skill Needs Landscape

Across all skills, respondents reported that 49 percent of high school diploma holders in their labor pool possessed the skills needed for their jobs. This figure was 59 percent for technical/community college graduates and 65 percent for four-year college graduates.

From the perspective of the employers in your community completing the survey, it is worthwhile to explore the value added to completion of post-secondary credentials. Technical/community college graduates experienced a gain of nine percent in the proportion of respondents saying this segment of the labor pool possessed the skills being considered compared to high school diploma holders. Four-year college degree holders among the labor pool experienced a gain of 16 percent in possessing skills employers need compared to high school diploma holders.

Basic Skills. Virtually all beneficial work skillsets are built on the foundation of a solid mastery of basic skills. Employers’ opinions of their labor pool as a function of education achievement can be seen in the chart below.

![Basic Skills Chart]

Applied Skills. Employers’ perspectives of applied skills possessed by high school diploma recipients versus four-year college degree holders is shown below. The proportion of employer respondents who said high school diploma holders in the labor pool possess the listed skills are shown in the light-tone bars. These proportions can be compared with those in the labor pool holding a four-year degree, who are represented by the dark bars. These differences provide some insight into the value added by the completion of post-secondary credentials, especially regarding applied skills.

Multilingual Skills. In recent years, the increase in ethnic and language group diversity has placed a premium on workers with multilingual skills. The chart below shows the level of these skills employers see in their labor pools’ skill level as impacted by education attainment.

Multilingual Skills: Percent of respondents saying labor pool possesses skill: High school diploma holders versus four-year degree holders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>High school diploma holders</th>
<th>Four-year degree holders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual/multilingual spoken communication</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual/multilingual reading comprehension</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual/multilingual written communication</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Landscape Reflection

• What skills that are most resistant to education and learning are important to your community (i.e., those skills that don’t change significantly with education attainment)? What steps might be taken to address this issue?

• What are the issues you are facing with the applied skills (for example, diversity, leadership, problem solving, teamwork and collaboration, and technical skills) that might benefit from partnerships with local colleges and universities, and other community organizations?

• From the perspective of businesses in your community, there is a general acknowledgement that a four-year degree provides substantial increases in the labor pool possessing these applied skills. How might your community take advantage of these gains?

• Are there specific workforce groups or certain industry sectors in your community who could benefit from a targeted approach to encourage degree completion?

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The Hiring Landscape

Among respondents completing the survey, hiring is a critical area of concern. Multiple categories of hiring present considerable difficulty in finding good candidates, as the chart below indicates. Hiring for engineers, skilled trades (electricians, carpenters, machinists, welders, plumbers), and high-skill medical (nurses, doctors, specialists) were rated as the top three positions that are somewhat or very difficult to fill by respondents for whom these positions were applicable. In comparison, those positions easiest to fill include administrative support staff, hourly laborers, and customer service representatives.

The reasons organizations in your community had difficulty in hiring qualified candidates for full-time regular positions is shown in the chart below. The most often mentioned reasons include lack of the right skills for the job, lack of the right work experience, and competition from other employers.
Reasons organizations have difficulty hiring qualified candidates for full-time regular positions

- Lack of the right skills for the job: 50%
- Lack of the right work experience: 49%
- Competition from other employers: 48%
- Low number of applicants: 46%
- Qualified candidates are not within our pay range: 44%
- Lack of education/training: 31%
- Lack of needed credentials/certifications: 30%
- Qualified candidates not interested in moving to our local area: 27%
- Local education system does not produce work-ready candidates: 25%
- Lack of interest in type of job: 24%
- Candidates are overqualified: 8%
- Don't know: 2%

NOTE: Total percentages are greater than 100% because respondents could choose multiple categories.
Landscape Reflection

- What are some ways these responses underscore the difficulty your community is facing in finding qualified candidates for needed positions?
- What are some ways these responses underscore the difficulty your community is facing in finding qualified candidates for needed positions?
- One solution many communities and organizations pursue is to identify those already who are part of your workforce who would be good candidates for advancement with additional education, training, or focused experience. Regardless of your circumstances, greater numbers of candidates increase the likelihood of finding qualified individuals, especially in those jobs for which competition is more intense. It may be beneficial to consider use of pre-hiring, apprenticeships, or other partnering opportunities with local colleges and universities. Curricula and specialized training can often be created that optimize the skills you need in job candidates.
The Learning Landscape

There is broad-based support for education among your community’s employers. The table below shows the percent of employers completing the survey who identified various ways they support education for their employees. Keep in mind that any given employer respondent may select as many means of supporting education as they offer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of education support provided by the employer</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We provide financial support for our employees to pursue college level courses.</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We provide financial support for our employees to pursue education, learning or training provided by outside agencies that is not college coursework.</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We provide on-the-job internal education, learning or training for our employees.</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We provide support for our employees to pursue education, learning or training in other ways besides financial support.</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None at this time</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning has become an essential focus for employers who seek to optimize success. Ability to adjust to and thrive in a global marketplace requires an agile workforce who can learn new skills efficiently. Survey respondents reinforced this insight as can be seen in the graphs below. The chart below shows the relationship between the importance of each of a set of nine organization goals and the influence of education in achieving that goal. Respondents were asked to rate these factors on a scale of 0 (not influential/important at all) to 100 (very influential/important).

**Increasing customer/client satisfaction**

- Not influential/important
- Neutral
- Very influential/important

**Worker retention**

- Not influential/important
- Neutral
- Very influential/important

**Increasing employee engagement/organizational loyalty**

- Not influential/important
- Neutral
- Very influential/important
In the figure, each goal is shown with its associated community average importance rating from the local employer community (dark blue bar) compared to the community average influence of education on achieving that goal (light blue bar). The more to the right the bars extend, the higher the average importance and influence ratings. All bars that extend to the right of the 50-point rating mark (indicating a neutral rating) can be considered important and influential.

The business community respondents’ most important goals included increasing customer/client satisfaction (average rating = 89), and worker retention (average rating = 87). Organizational goals most influenced by education included increasing customer/client satisfaction (average rating = 83) and worker retention (average rating = 81).
The influence of education on organizational success is underscored when the anticipated need for employees with credentials beyond high school is considered. The figure below shows your community organizations’ expected increased need for graduates at various levels over the next five years. The credential with the greatest anticipated increased need is an industry or professional association credential with 45 percent of respondents anticipating increased need over the next five years.

The change in anticipated increased need for post-secondary education credentials points to the need to encourage and assist those in the workplace to pursue and persevere to complete their education goals. Respondents in your community report that 42 percent of their education benefits are not utilized. Unfortunately, there are multiple barriers and competing responsibilities for workers wanting to initiate or continue with their education. The chart below reflects community employers’ perspectives on the reasons their employees do not take advantage of employer benefits for learning.
Finally, the charts below represent partnership opportunities in your community by exploring the level of collaboration between businesses, and local education and learning providers in your area. The top chart shows the degree to which businesses work with education to assess skill gaps that can be addressed through programs and curriculum. A total of 67 percent of respondents do not currently partner with or don’t know if they partner with educational systems in your area.

Does your organization work with local education and training providers to help them assess local skills gaps that can be addressed through their program offerings and curricula? (percent of total responses)

- Yes 33%
- No 53%
- Don't know 13%
The bottom chart indicates area organizations’ general willingness to partner with education and learning providers to support education, learning or training for employees. Of all respondents, 10 percent indicate they already do so. The chart shows that of those who do not currently partner with education institutions 85 percent expressed interest in such partnerships now or in the future.

Would your organization consider partnering with a local post-secondary institution or other learning provider to support education, learning or training for your employees? (Among those not currently partnering)

- Yes, definitely, 23%
- Possibly, but I need to learn more about partnering to make a good decision, 54%
- Not at this time, but I might be interested in the future, 8%
- Not at this time and do not anticipate any partnering in the foreseeable future, 15%
- Not at this time and do not anticipate any partnering in the foreseeable future, 15%

Landscape Reflection

- Which goals explored in this survey are important to your community and how influential is education in achieving them?
- If there are important goals that reflect little influence from education, how might your community address these weaknesses (internal goals) or threats (external goals) by exploring education partnerships?
- How might you build on the strengths and opportunities you already have for those goals in which education is influential?
- For employers who already have an education support benefit for employees, how might you enhance and expand its effectiveness in getting more employees to take advantage of it?
- For organizations who do not have an education support benefit, how might this benefit help you achieve organizational goals and address skill gaps among your employees?
- What opportunities might exist in your area to explore education partnerships, and what areas in your business would most benefit from such partnership?
Thank you for your input in this important effort for your community. We hope the information from this report is thought provoking and generates some ideas which can be explored collaboratively with community groups and educational/learning institutions in your community.

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