Green River Region
Kentucky – Bridging The Talent Gap
Talent Alignment Survey Report

The Graduate! Network’s Bridging The Talent Gap Initiative

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www.bridgingthetalentgap.org
TALENT ALIGNMENT SURVEY RESULTS

The Talent Alignment Survey was administered to HR Professionals and other business leaders from Kentucky from January – March, 2017. In the Green River There were 63 completed surveys and 29 partially completed surveys with missing information. Usable data were derived from a total of 92 respondents.

Organization size among respondents is represented in the following ways:

- 38% represent small businesses (1 – 200 employees)
- 36% represent medium-sized businesses (201 – 1,000 employees)
- 26% represent businesses with more than 1,000 employees

Industries Represented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>7 (7.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; Support</td>
<td>4 (4.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>6 (6.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Entertainment</td>
<td>3 (3.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5 (5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>3 (3.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Insurance</td>
<td>2 (2.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>11 (12.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Agencies</td>
<td>4 (4.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>46 (51.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>3 (3.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal &amp; Laundry Services</td>
<td>1 (1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Scientific &amp; Technical Services</td>
<td>7 (7.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>1 (1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>7 (7.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>2 (2.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>6 (6.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>5 (5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6 (6.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Please note, percentages do not add up to 100% because survey respondents could choose more than one industry cluster.)
Executive Summary of Findings

Community Landscape

• A total of 67% of survey respondents described the economic conditions in their community as positive. Of the industries most represented in the survey, repair and maintenance held the most optimistic view (100% positive). Conversely, the least optimistic industry among those most represented was agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting with 50% holding a positive view of the community’s economic conditions.

• Among the top three industries represented in the survey, 64% of respondents involved in manufacturing viewed economic conditions in their community as positive. 64% of health care and social assistance organizations and 71% of accommodation and food services organizations held similar views.

• 80% report that their respective companies are preparing for moderate to high growth in the next 3-5 years. Among industries most represented in the survey, transportation and warehousing was the most likely to anticipate growth, with 100% of respondents expecting moderate or fast growth. Professional, scientific, and technical services (43%) was the least likely to anticipate growth.

• Among the top three industries represented in the survey, 87% of respondents involved in manufacturing anticipated growth. 82% of health care and social assistance organizations and 57% of accommodation and food services organizations held similar views.

Hiring Landscape

• Among those currently hiring, 85% indicated that recruiting qualified workers is difficult.

• For respondents hiring for new full-time regular positions requiring new and different skills, 73% report it somewhat or very difficult to find qualified individuals for new regular jobs requiring new and different skill sets.

• 82% of the business community is currently hiring for full-time, regular staff. Among those currently hiring for full time positions, 89% are hiring non-management hourly employees while 10% are hiring executive level management.

• Among those currently hiring, 29% are involved in new hires for direct replacements that require new or updated skills, while 22% of respondents are hiring for new positions that require new or updated skills.

• Among applicable respondents, the jobs found most difficult to fill include skilled trades (electricians, carpenters, machinists, mechanics, welders, plumbers (94% somewhat or very difficult), engineers (83% somewhat or very difficult), and managers and executive (74% somewhat or very difficult).
• Somewhat or very easy positions to fill among applicable respondents include administrative support staff (66%), accounting and finance professionals (61%) and customer service representatives (52%).

• The main reasons respondents experience difficulty in hiring include competition from other employers (63%), candidates do not have the right skills for the job (53%), and candidates do not have the right work experience (53%). Only 32% of respondents identified the idea that local education/training system does not produce enough work ready/qualified candidates as a main reason for such difficulty.

Skill Needs Landscape

• Across all basic skills, respondents reported that 63% of high school diploma holders in their labor pool possessed the skills needed for their job. This figure was 78% for technical/community college graduates and 82% for four-year college graduates. The basic skills experiencing the greatest increase in respondents’ opinions were written English and mathematics with an increase in the percent of “yes” responses of 29 percentage points from high school diploma holders to those with a four-year college degree.

• Among basic skills considered, spoken English was rated with the greatest proportion of yes responses among the labor pool with a high school diploma (76%). Among two-year degree holders, spoken English also was rated with the greatest percentage of yes responses (83%). For four-year degree holders in the labor pool, spoken English again was identified with the highest percentage of yes responses (85%).

• Across all academic knowledge and skills, respondents reported that 22% of high school diploma holders in their labor pool possessed the skills needed for their jobs. This figure was 36% for technical/community college graduates and 47% for four-year college graduates. The academic knowledge/skill experiencing the greatest increase in respondents’ opinions was science with an increase in the percent of “yes” responses of 35 percentage points from high school diploma holders to those with a four-year college degree.

• Among academic knowledge and skills considered, science was rated with the greatest proportion of yes responses among the labor pool with a high school diploma (30%). Among two-year degree holders, science also was rated with the greatest percentage of yes responses (59%). For four-year degree holders in the labor pool, science again was identified with the highest percentage of yes responses (65%).

• Across all applied skills, respondents reported that 41% of high school diploma holders in their labor pool possessed the skills needed for their jobs. This figure was 63% for technical/community college graduates and 76% 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
47 percentage points from high school diploma holders to those with a four-year
college degree.

- Among applied skills considered, teamwork/collaboration was rated with the
greatest proportion of yes responses among the labor pool with a high school
diploma (55%). Among two-year degree holders, information technology
application was rated with the greatest percentage of yes responses (70%). For four-
year degree holders in the labor pool, problem solving was identified with the
highest percentage of yes responses (80%).

Learning Landscape

- The education credential with the highest number of respondents expecting
increased need over the next five years was technical college diploma/certificate
with 37% of organizations reporting anticipated increased needs. Workers with an
industry/professional association credential occupied the next highest level of
anticipated need with 32% of organizations projecting increased need in the future.

- Support for learning was mixed across respondents. 71% provide financial support to
pursue college level courses, 55% offer financial support for learning/training that is
not college coursework, 79% provide on-the-job learning or training, and 45%
provide support in non-financial ways. 2% report that their organization does not
provide any of these education benefits.

- Respondents offer a variety of methods supporting education. Among those most
often identified include allowing flexible work schedules to accommodate
employees’ classes (69%), public recognition of employees who have graduated or
achieved significant educational milestones (55%), advising employees on which
degrees will benefit their career (41%), and inviting higher education or other
learning providers to their organization’s location to talk about educational
opportunities (34%).

- On average 50% of financial benefits offered to employees is 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 (70%), followed by a lack
of interest in the programs (38%). Only 6% of respondents say workers do not need
additional education benefits.

- 39% 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.

- 78% of respondents who do not currently partner with education institutions either
definitely or possibly might consider doing so. An additional 16% say they might
consider such a partnership in the future.
• Education was considered influential in helping respondents achieve their organizational goals. On a scale of 1 – 100 the average rating was 74 across all organizational goals, with a low of 69 on the average for recruitment of new employees, and a high of 77 on the average for development of employees’ professional skills. A rating of 1 would indicate no influence and a rating of 100 would indicate that education is very influential.

NOTE: These data are preliminary, representing a snapshot of communities at a specific time. Data will likely change with additional survey completions. Up to date information can be seen on our 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: “Kentucky Society for Human Resource Management, The Graduate! Network Bridging The Talent Gap Project. 2017. The Talent Alignment Survey.” [Note: some survey questions contained in the Talent Alignment Survey are from Society for Human Resource Management’s (SHRM’s) “Local Skills Shortages” survey and were used with permission from SHRM.]

For questions or additional information, please contact Bridgett Strickler, Director of Network Engagement and Co-Principal Investigator, Bridgett.Strickler@Graduate-Network.org