

SONOMA COUNTY ANNUAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SURVEY 2013



Prepared by the Sonoma County Economic Development Board in partnership with the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board, Sonoma County Building Economic Success Together and the Professional Association of Sonoma County for Human Resources



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SONOMA COUNTY ANNUAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

2013

Summer 2013

The Annual Workforce Survey was developed during the Innovation Action Council's Workforce Strategy Taskforce. The survey was distributed to Human Resources Directors during Fall 2012 and sponsored by the Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB), Workforce Investment Board (WIB), Professional Association of Sonoma County for Human Resources (PASCO HR) and Building Economic Success Together (BEST).

This survey is part of an active effort to create a unique informational resource for Sonoma County regarding workforce attraction and retention issues. Due to the general tightening of California labor markets, human resource professionals are playing an increasingly important role in the regional economy. This study aims to generate a basic inventory of local human resource directors' workforce needs and preferences – data that can help inform ongoing efforts to improve Sonoma County's labor economy. This survey will be updated and distributed annually in order to measure the changes in the local workforce and needs of employers.

The EDB encourages interested readers to recommend any ways in which we may improve this report. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at (707) 565-7170.

Sincerely,

Ben Stone
Executive Director



REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The majority of respondents indicated that the greatest workforce concern for the future was “a lack of human capital.”
- Of the Human Resource Directors responding to this survey:
 - 98 percent reported hiring new employees within the past 12 months.
 - 69 percent reported difficulty locating qualified applicants when hiring.
 - About 60 percent reported “lowered overall productivity” as a consequence of their hiring difficulties.
 - About 31 percent of respondents indicated that between 10 and 30 percent of their workforce is eligible to retire in the next two years.
- Respondents also reported that their greatest workforce need was for employees holding bachelor's degrees, associate's degrees, or technical certificates. Employers indicated that applicants of this type were the most difficult to recruit.
- The most sought after employee skills were reported as “communicating articulately,” “thinking critically,” and “solving problems and making decisions.” Employers are not finding these skills in the current workforce.
- **Two-thirds of respondents indicate the need for a common workforce development strategy aligned with employer needs in Sonoma County.** The Annual Workforce Development Survey will provide crucial information on the needs of local employers as our workforce continues to grow and develop. The data captured in this initial report provides insight into the nature of countywide trends and constructs a basic profile of the applicants local firms are currently struggling to recruit.

PREFACE

The 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey Report highlights the importance of skilled and educated workers to the California economy. This report illustrates the current needs, preferences, and projections of local Human Resource Directors throughout Sonoma County. Their stated need for both skilled and educated workers supports the research of groups such as the Bay Area Council Economic Institute, the Public Policy Institute of California, GetREAL, and the California Employment Development Department, suggesting that workforce development, attraction, and retention efforts may be central to the future health of our local economy.

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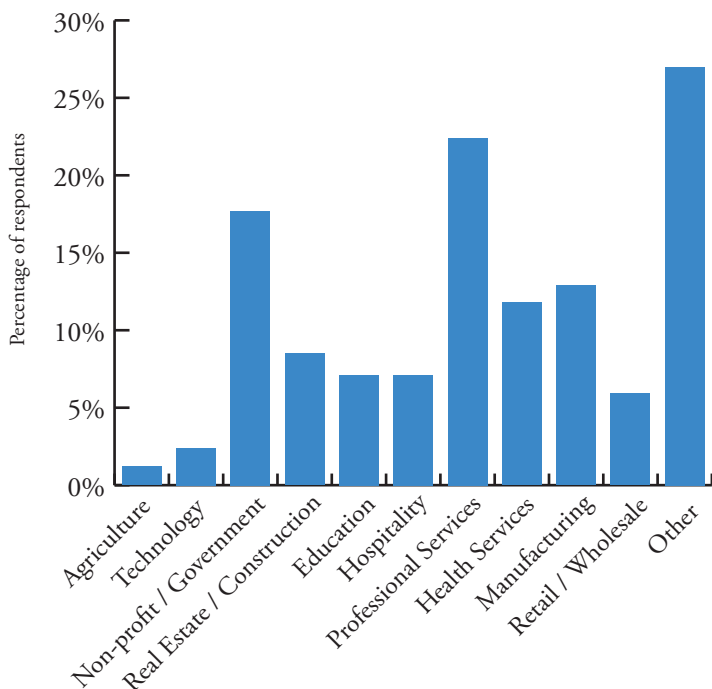
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RESPONDING ORGANIZATIONS PROFILE

The 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey was sent to Human Resources Directors at approximately 300 organizations in Sonoma County. It garnered an above-average response rate of 41 percent. Respondents represented a diverse array of local industries and employers.

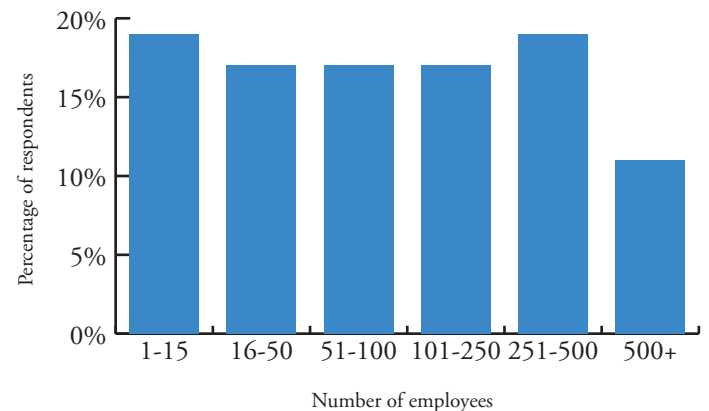
Local sectors represented

Source: 2013 Human Resource Directors Survey



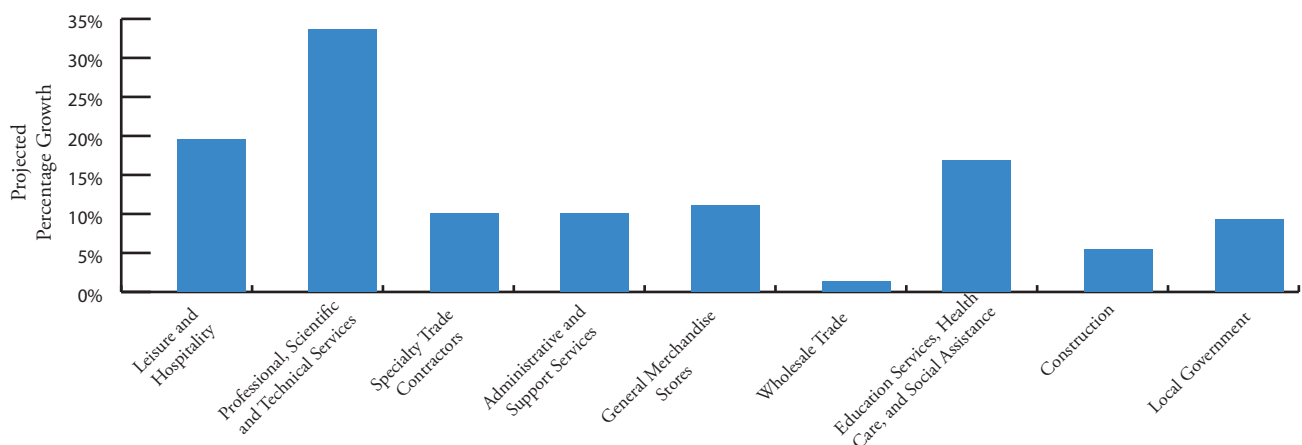
Size of responding organizations (by number of employees)

Source: 2013 Human Resource Directors Survey



Projected Industry Growth, Sonoma County, 2008-2018

Source: Employment Development Department (<http://www.calmis.ca.gov>)



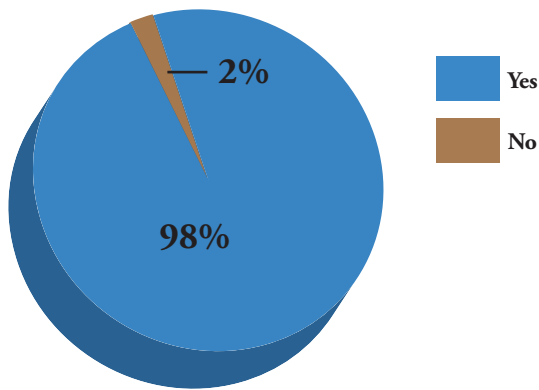
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WORKFORCE ATTRACTION

Nearly all survey respondents reported hiring new employees over the past 12 months. However, two-thirds of this number indicated that they experienced difficulty doing so. In response, employers increased recruiting efforts in a variety of ways. Negative consequences of hiring difficulties were reported by the majority of survey respondents.

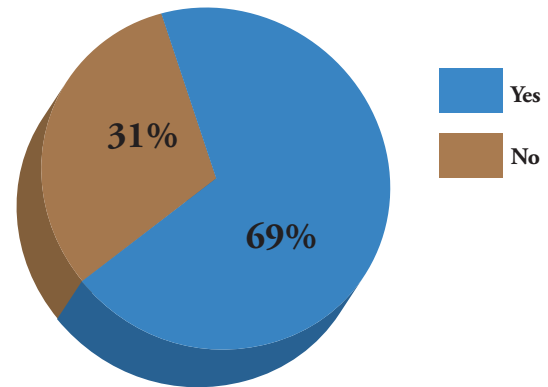
Respondents indicating that their organization had hired new employees within the past 12 months

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



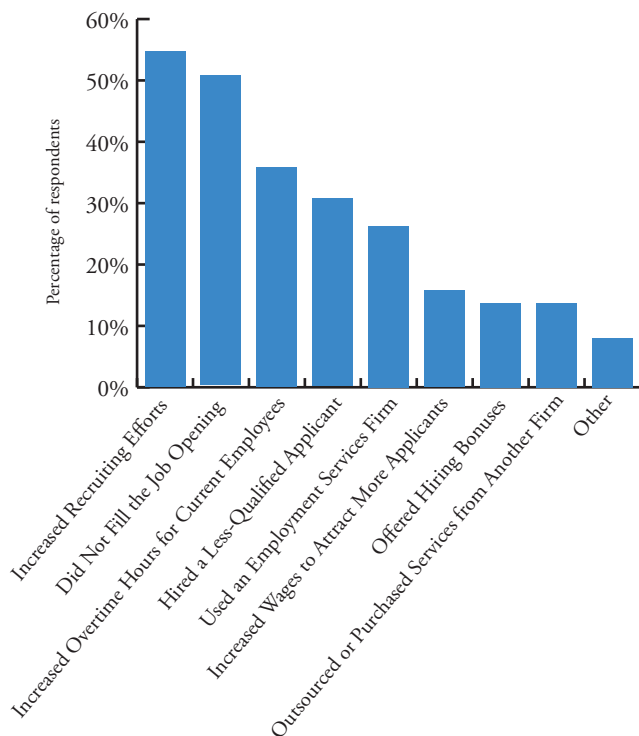
Respondents indicating that their organization experienced difficulty finding qualified applicants over the past 12 months

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



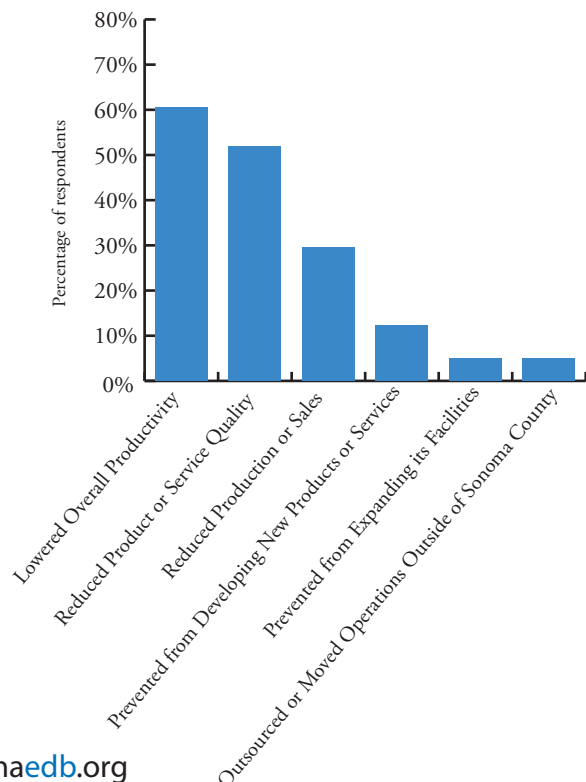
Measures taken by organizations reporting difficulties locating qualified applicants

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



Consequences resulting from difficulty locating qualified applicants

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



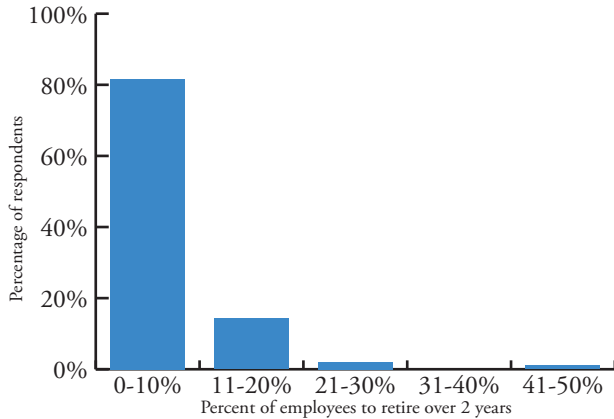
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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Respondents indicated that up to 10% of their workforce will retire in the next two years. As a result, employers will be looking to replace those retirees in addition to filling other open positions. In order to further workforce development, the majority of employers offer some type of employee training, utilizing a variety of local educational institutions.

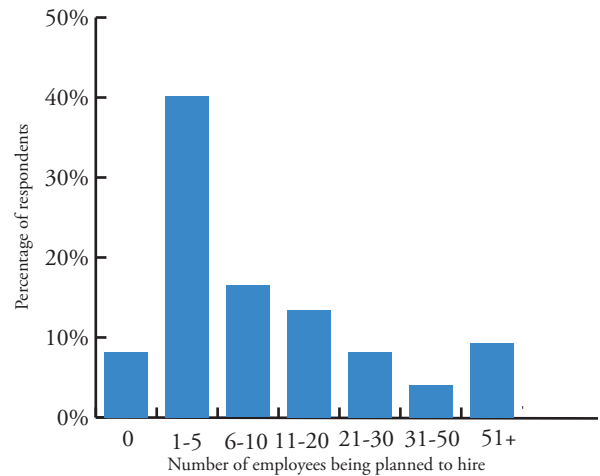
The majority of respondents indicated that between 0-10% of their workforce will retire over the next two years

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



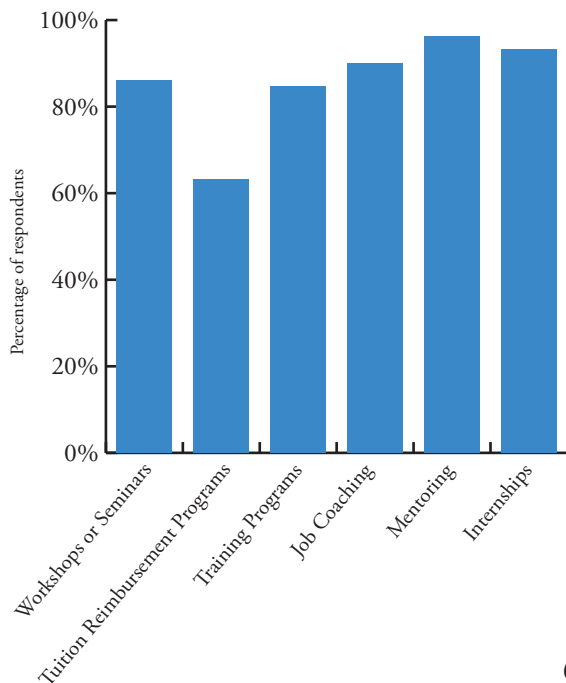
In order to replace retirees and fill other open positions, respondents plan to hire the following number of employees in the next twelve months

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



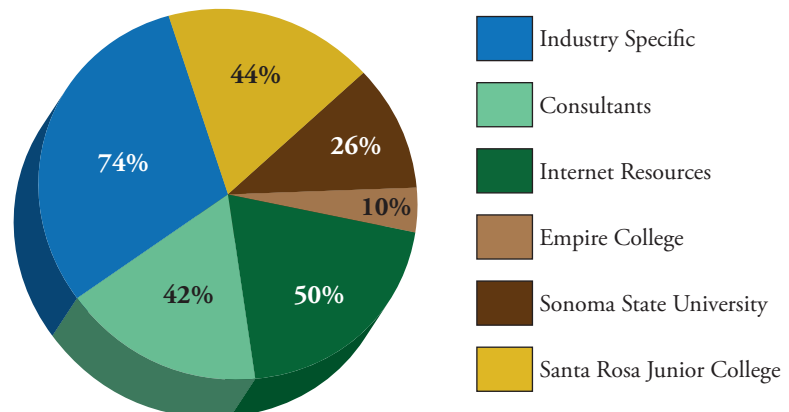
Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that their organizations offer employee training of some kind

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



Respondents that provide employee training utilize the following resources

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey

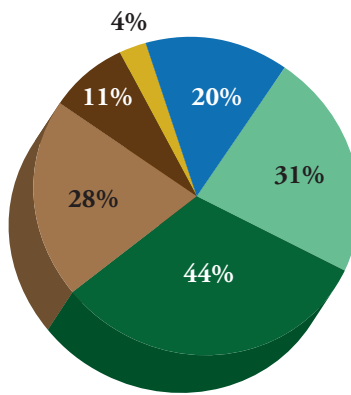
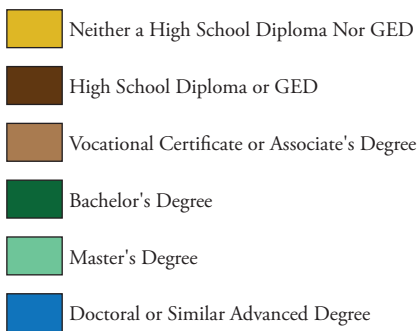


WORKFORCE NEEDS

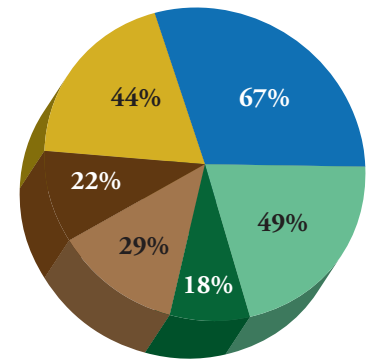
When asked about recruiting efforts, Human Resources Directors reported high levels of difficulty when attempting to attract applicants holding Bachelor's degrees, the degree in highest demand for employers. Few employers needed candidates with advanced professional degrees or without high school diplomas. Respondents could benefit from staff development and recruitment assistance, yet indicated that they did not utilize local services such as Job Link.

Over the past 12 months, respondents experienced the following levels of difficulty while attempting to recruit employees

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



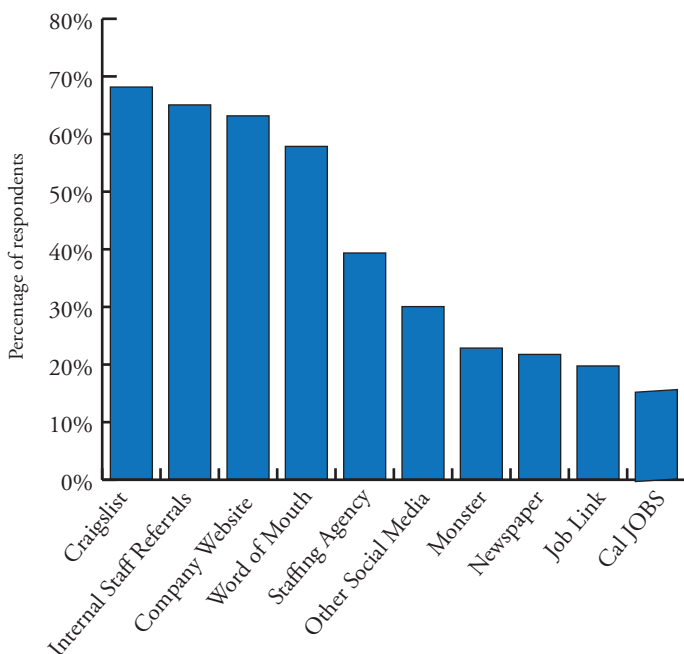
Difficulty Encountered



Degree/Qualification Not Applicable

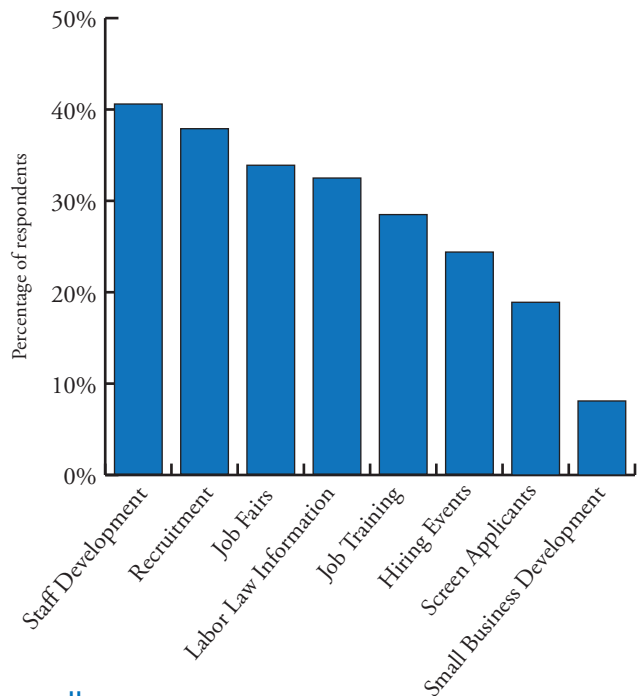
Respondents utilize the following resources to recruit new staff

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



Respondents indicated that their organization could benefit from the following assistance

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey

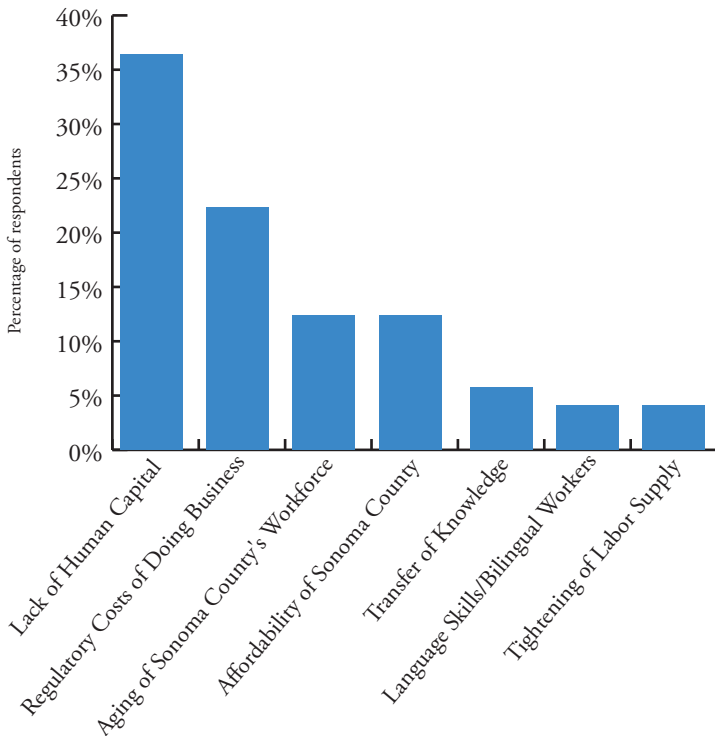


FUTURE OF THE LOCAL WORKFORCE

When asked about the future workforce, employers are most concerned with the lack of human capital in Sonoma County. Despite the high rate of unemployment, employers cannot find the appropriate skills in the current workforce. Respondents identified communication, critical thinking, and soft skills among the most important, yet most difficult, skills to find.

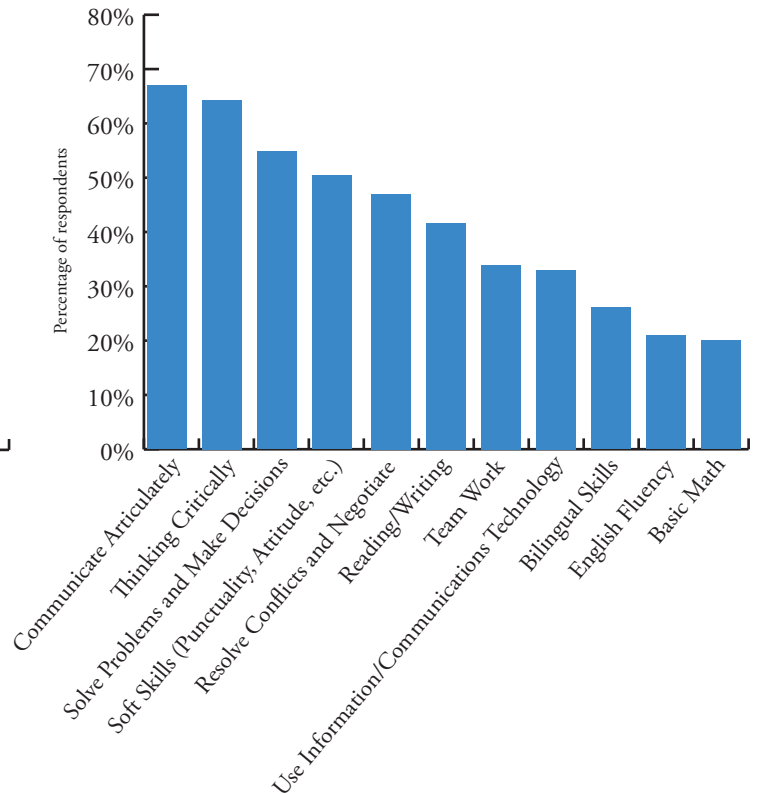
Respondents indicated that they were most concerned about the following workforce issues in Sonoma County's future

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



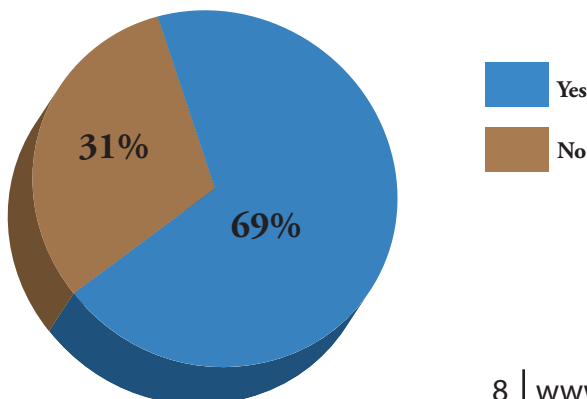
Local employers are seeking the following skills, yet not finding them in the current workforce

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



Two-thirds of respondents want a common workforce development strategy aligned with employer needs

Source: 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey



A partnership agreement has been formed among the Sonoma County Economic Development Board, Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board, Sonoma County Building Economic Success Together (BEST) and Professional Association of Sonoma County for Human Resources (PASCO), along with public school systems, higher educational institutions and local businesses. This community collaborative aims to develop a strategy to prepare job seekers with relevant skills in demand by local businesses, enabling employers to fill available positions and decrease the gap between low levels of hiring and high levels of unemployment.

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METHODOLOGY

The Economic Development Board (EDB) believes all data contained within this report to be accurate and the most current available, but the EDB does not guarantee that this report is accurate or complete. Use of data from a source does not represent an endorsement of any product or service by the EDB, its members, or affiliates. This publication can be made available in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer disk. Requests can be made by calling (707) 565-7170. Please allow 72 hours for your request to be processed.

The Economic Development Board (EDB) conducted the 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey to obtain a general “snapshot” of current conditions in the Sonoma County labor market. Surveys were mailed to over 300 local companies representing many diverse sectors of the local economy, 40 percent of which responded. From these responses, it was possible to discern general trends, and these have been outlined in this report.

Please note that all data contained in this study is based on information self-reported by survey respondents, which was not factually verified by the EDB. The responses were then gathered into a database for analysis. Due to the fact that survey respondents may provide no responses to some questions, the category percentages indicated in the graphs for those questions may not come to 100 percent. Where replies are mutually exclusive, percentages may be slightly off due to rounding. Where replies are not mutually exclusive, percentages may total more than 100 percent.

We intended to obtain averages that provide a general “snapshot” of current Human Resource Directors preferences. Accordingly, the averages have not been weighted by any factor or interest. The data presented is as accurate as the polling technology permits. A response rate of 40 percent is high for an electronic survey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The EDB’s 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey is believed to be the first of its kind in the country, and its findings can help local business and community leaders create useful approaches to future issues in workforce development. This achievement would not have been possible without the aid of the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), the Professional Association of Sonoma County for Human Resources (PASCO) and Sonoma County Building Economic Success Together (BEST) who partnered with the EDB for this initiative. Thanks are also due to the many Sonoma County Human Resource Directors who participated in this study. The willing involvement of these key community partners is critical to the success of this initiative and others like it.

The 2013 Annual Workforce Development Survey was developed by the Innovation Action Council’s Workforce Strategic Taskforce and edited and distributed by EDB Project Coordinator Alexis Blair during the Fall of 2012. This report was developed over the course of her fellowship. Alexis was able to work collaboratively with the WIB and EDB in order to contribute to a variety of programs focused on workforce development.