



2024 Workforce Needs Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There has been much discussion around the challenges that employers face when it comes to recruiting the talent needed for their organizations. Recently, the Broken Arrow Economic Development Corporation (BAEDC) surveyed local employers to understand their workforce needs. The survey gathered data on worker demand and required skills, supplemented by insights from a national survey of over 1,400 employees. This information can help economic developers, officials, employers, and educators make informed decisions on workforce development and recruitment.

"The results from the 2024 Workforce Needs Study are important for helping us understand the employer demand for quality talent that possesses the skills needed for their industries. Representatives from 44 organizations across a range of industries participated in our survey," said BAEDC Director of Workforce Development & Talent Attraction De'Andre Fahie. "We hope that this information will be able to provide guidance and discussion for organizations, training providers, and others connected to driving workforce development in our region."

While plans for hiring remain strong in the community, 60% of employers have had difficulty filling at least one position over the past year, particularly in manufacturing, construction, and service-based industries.

Major Industry Responders



Manufacturing



Business & Professional Services



Accommodation & Food Service



Health Care & Social Assistance

KEY FINDINGS



65% of employers anticipate hiring in the next 6-12 months with over half of those being defined small businesses.



A lack of work experience, soft skills, and retention of employees were the top workforce challenges experienced by local employers.



At least 50% of respondents have hiring targeted initiatives for groups such as veterans or recent grads.



More than 63% of employers are aware of the programs and resources available through BAEDC workforce partners.



Difficult to fill positions include engineers, technicians, skilled trade, and healthcare roles.



The greatest hiring trends are from education institutions such as Tulsa Tech, Tulsa Community College, and OSU.

EMPLOYERS SAID...

*“There is a need for more targeted training programs and **partnerships with educational institutions** that can provide specialized training tailored to our industry’s unique requirements. By doing so, we can reduce the training period, improve the efficiency of new hires more rapidly, and enhance overall productivity within our sector.”*

*“Emotional intelligence, grit, resilience, critical thinking, initiative, correct grammar and spelling. **These are things that are not being taught to young people** by their parents, teachers, and mentors.”*

*“**Education to youth before they reach the marketplace**, so they know more about careers in blue collar jobs.”*

NEXT STEPS

Enhancing **collaboration** between employers, educational training providers, and various workforce development systems can address short-term needs, such as **bridging the gap in technical and occupational skills** required by evolving industry demands. Addressing longer-term challenges, such as cultivating a younger workforce to acquire new skills and progress along career pathways, will demand additional time and resources.

Involvement with local workforce development events hosted at K-12 schools will be crucial for employers that are forward-thinking as it relates to the future supply of talent. Registered **apprenticeships, internships**, and other **work-based learning** models should be considered by organizations that recognize a skills gap in the current talent pool.

SUMMARY

Opportunities exist for all the stakeholders in the local workforce development system to increase their engagement with employers to help meet their needs and match jobseekers with quality positions. Employers have the opportunity to play a key role in workforce development by actively collaborating with their community and shaping the future of local talent. A full report of the results from the Workforce Needs Study can be found [here](#), and the additional employee-centered study can be found [here](#).

Why employees left their role within 12 months:



Opportunities



Employers reported a lack of industry awareness, availability and affordability of technical training options, lack of soft skills development in the local workforce



Respondents highlight a lack of career awareness for their industry, yet 36% do not hire interns, and 43% do not offer tours or job shadowing.



43% of respondents do not offer tuition reimbursement or assistance.



38% of respondents lack hiring programs for veterans, individuals with disabilities, or second-chance candidates.



70% of companies utilize online job boards which means streamlined application and recruitment process is critical.*

BROKEN ARROW

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION