



Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating Board

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SURVEY SEEKS BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE ON WASHINGTON'S WORKFORCE *Employers to provide insight on hiring challenges, skill shortages in confidential survey*

OLYMPIA - The state's leading business organization, chamber of commerce executives and a state agency embark this month on a comprehensive survey designed to learn more about the workforce struggles and successes of Washington's employers.

Over 4,000 businesses in Washington will receive a written or phone survey asking about their experience and practices in trying to achieve an adequately skilled workforce. In addition, over 2,400 employers will be contacted by phone to ask about their satisfaction with the skills of recently hired employees.

The surveys were developed and will be analyzed by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), the state agency responsible for planning, monitoring and improving the state's worker training system. The surveys are endorsed by the Association of Washington Business and the Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives.

By asking businesses about their hiring and training experiences, the survey acts as a barometer on how Washington is doing in ensuring its economy has the skilled workers it needs to succeed. The survey has been conducted in alternate years since the 1990's. This year's survey is particularly important given the impact of the recession.

Past surveys have shown that many employers struggle to find enough skilled workers, even in a down economy.

"As we recover from the recession, the notion that employers might not be able to hire trained workers is particularly heartbreaking. By learning about where our skill gaps are, we are better able to channel our training resources and create opportunity for Washington residents," said Eleni Papadakis, executive director of the Workforce Board.

The previous survey (2007) showed that one in three employers had experienced reduced productivity as a result of not finding enough skilled workers. One in four firms reported hiring less qualified candidates who lacked full qualifications for the job.

“From a business perspective, this survey provides hard data that can support our efforts to advocate for system improvements and investments that deliver results—both to employers and the workers they depend on,” said Mike Hudson, project manager for the AWB Institute, a nonprofit affiliate of the Association of Washington Business.

Survey responses are kept confidential so business owners can be completely candid about their hiring experiences and the performance of their workforce.

Business owners and managers are encouraged to take the 15 minutes necessary to fill out and return the confidential survey. The greater the response rate, the better the accuracy. The 2007 Employer Survey had 2,100 responses and included a wide range of employers—from three-person firms to very large companies.

“We are pleased to once again be partnering with the Workforce Board and the AWB Institute,” said Bob Green, president of the Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives. “The few minutes that employers spend with this survey will support our efforts to create a strong economy for Washington workers and businesses.”

Survey results will be published in late fall. To view the 2007 Employer Survey results, see: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/EmployerSurvey.asp>

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The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a partnership of business, labor and government, dedicated to helping Washington residents obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers