



Workforce Training and  
Education Coordinating Board

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## EMPLOYER SURVEY: EVEN DURING RECESSION, JOBS GO UNFILLED *Lack of skilled workers slows business expansion, new product development*

OLYMPIA –Despite continued high unemployment, employers are still reporting difficulty in filling certain jobs.

While businesses clearly had an easier time recruiting new employees over the last year compared to before the recession, a recent statewide survey of employers indicates that almost 11,000 Washington firms ended up not filling a position because of difficulty in finding workers with the right skills. In some cases, they reported declining productivity or put on hold expansion plans.

The 2010 Employer Survey was conducted by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), in cooperation with the Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives and the Association of Washington Business. This is the sixth survey since 1999. It's the only comprehensive statewide survey of its kind, shining a light on common workforce issues across a wide range of industries.

This year's survey showed a steep decline in the percentage of employers reporting difficulty in hiring new employees in the last 12 months—from 50 percent in 2007 to 17 percent in 2010. When asked about the consequence of their hiring difficulties, almost 40 percent of those employers who struggled with recruitment said they did not fill a job opening. That percentage, while the lowest in the history of the survey, still translates into 10,900 employers statewide who were unable fill a job opening during the last 12 months.

“With 300,000 unemployed in Washington, it is hard to imagine that some jobs continue to go begging. Our state has done great work in retooling its workforce to meet the needs of employers, but we have more work to do in getting people with the right skills in jobs where they're needed,” said Eleni Papadakis, Workforce Board executive director.

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As has been the case in previous surveys, employers report the greatest difficulty finding candidates with occupational specific skills. In another question that asked about education levels, the highest percentage of employers struggled to find job applicants with a vocational certificate, which typically requires between six months and one year study after high school.

A Workforce Board Skill Gap Analysis conducted this spring showed mid-level positions with the greatest predicted shortages of skilled workers were in occupational areas such as installation, maintenance and repair; accounting and bookkeeping; and nursing, through 2013.

The Workforce Board will review the results of the 2010 Employer Survey at its regular meeting today in the Department of Commerce conference room, Olympia. The Workforce Board develops the comprehensive strategy for the state's workforce system, monitors program results and identifies promising and best practices aimed at helping Washington workers obtain living-wage jobs.

View 2010 Employer Survey results at: [www.wtb.wa.gov/EmployerSurvey.asp](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.*