



Wyandot County, OH Employer Survey

A survey of employer workforce needs

Summary and Highlights

August 2015

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**Wyandot County, OH
Employer Workforce Survey
Summary and Highlights**

August 2015

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Executive Summary and Key Findings

Employers from all areas of Wyandot County were asked to participate in an anonymous survey to assist community and policy leaders in the identification of strengths and weaknesses in the local workforce. The survey included questions about the responding firms, workforce recruiting difficulties, and their changing workforce needs over the next 5 years. This initial workforce survey effort was made available but not sent directly to all Wyandot County businesses. The Carey Area Chamber of Commerce and Upper Sandusky Area Chamber of Commerce both sent notice of the survey by email to roughly 200 total Wyandot County employers. There were 42 total responses received comprising firms of various industries and size. The following summary provides key findings extrapolated from the aggregated response data.

Recruiting Difficulties Lead to Negative Effects on Employers and their Employees.

Over 50 percent of those responding to the survey reported they had difficulty recruiting employees within the last 12 months.

The lack of available labor for which local firms are demanding has not only impacted their operations, but their employees as well. In response to not meeting desired recruitment levels,

Firms with recruiting difficulty reported the following top 3 outcomes as a result:

- Reduced production output or sales (28 percent)
- Reduced product or service quality (22 percent)
- Lowered overall productivity (19 percent)

most firms reported increasing their recruitment efforts that leads to more time and investment to finding qualified labor. Respondents also increased overtime hours for current employees or simply did not fill open positions. This increased workload on incumbent employees can lead to negative outcomes for business operations. The highest recorded response of those who reported having recruiting difficulties primarily

Although most respondents with recruiting difficulty increased their recruiting efforts (26 percent), many others chose to increase overtime hours for current employees (23 percent) or just simply not hire anyone at all (21 percent).

attributed reduced production output or sales and reduced product or service quality to the issue.

Skills Gaps Exist in the Labor Pool and Educational Requirements are on the Rise.

The survey results show the areas where local employers found the skills to be most lacking in potential candidates:

1. Work Habits (76 percent)
2. Problem Solving (74 percent)
3. Communication (74 percent)

The industries reporting the most difficulty in their recruiting efforts over the past 3 months were:

1. Information Technology (100 percent)
2. Agriculture (100 percent)
3. Manufacturing (83 percent)

The survey data collected shows that basic skills and educational requirements continue to increase for jobs across the board. Half of the respondents indicated that the skills required for primary, front-line employees had increased over the past 3 years. When asked for the demand on educational attainment requirements over the next 5 years, respondents indicated they expect somewhat of an increase across all educational levels with a college degree having the largest increase in demand.

When asked how their needs for employees of various educational attainment levels would change over the next 5 years, respondents noted only the following as decreasing in demand:

- Neither a high school diploma nor a GED (30 percent)
- High school or GED (5 percent)
- Some college beyond high school (5 percent)

The top education level needs to increase over the next 5 years were:

1. College Degree – BS, BA (41 percent)
2. Academic Vocational School Degree – AA, AS (36 percent)
3. Vocational School Degree, Certificate, Diploma (31 percent)

Opportunities for Employment and Employer Workforce Needs Will Continue to Rise.

Although Wyandot County may be classified as rural and is the seventh least populated county in the state of Ohio, it thrives with current and future employment opportunities. The survey asked respondents to report on currently available positions within their

Out of the 42 survey respondents there are:

- 165 positions currently available
- 1,400+ positions that will be available over the next 5 years

organizations as well as their projected need 5 years into the future. Just as the need for increased training and education is forecasted to increase in the near future, so is the need for available workforce in general. Out of

just the 42 respondents to this initial workforce survey questionnaire, over 1,400 positions are projected to be available over the next 5 years. These are positions that respondents project will open due to regular turnover and through replacement positions due to events such as retirements and business expansions.

Methodology

Survey forms for this study were developed based on examples of workforce survey initiatives around the country. With the assistance of Wyandot County Office of Economic Development (WCOED) board member and retired chemist for ExxonMobil, Dr. Douglas Frisch, survey questions were derived from previous examples based on sought after information. The survey questions were then narrowly tailored for relevancy in an effort to increase participation rates.

The primary purpose of the survey questions was to look at workforce-related issues and opportunities among Wyandot County employers. Issues in the available labor pool had consistently surfaced in the WCOED's Business Retention & Expansion Program data. These concerns expressed a need for deeper insight into how these issues impact local business, and where exactly the skills and training gaps lie. Data collected by this survey also identified areas of opportunity for local employment including the potential need for an increasingly educated workforce and corresponding opportunities in the near future. The survey focused on needs and changes in local workforce over the next 5 years as it is the WCOED's intent to provide this survey study on a frequent basis (i.e. bi-annually).

The finalized survey was distributed through various means by the WCOED and also through the Carey Area Chamber of Commerce and Upper Sandusky Area Chamber of Commerce email distribution lists. The 42 surveys were all received electronically during a three month period of May through July 2015.

Questionnaire topics included:

- General company Information
- Workforce structures
- Workforce educational attainment levels
- Recruiting difficulty
- Workforce outlook
- Salaries

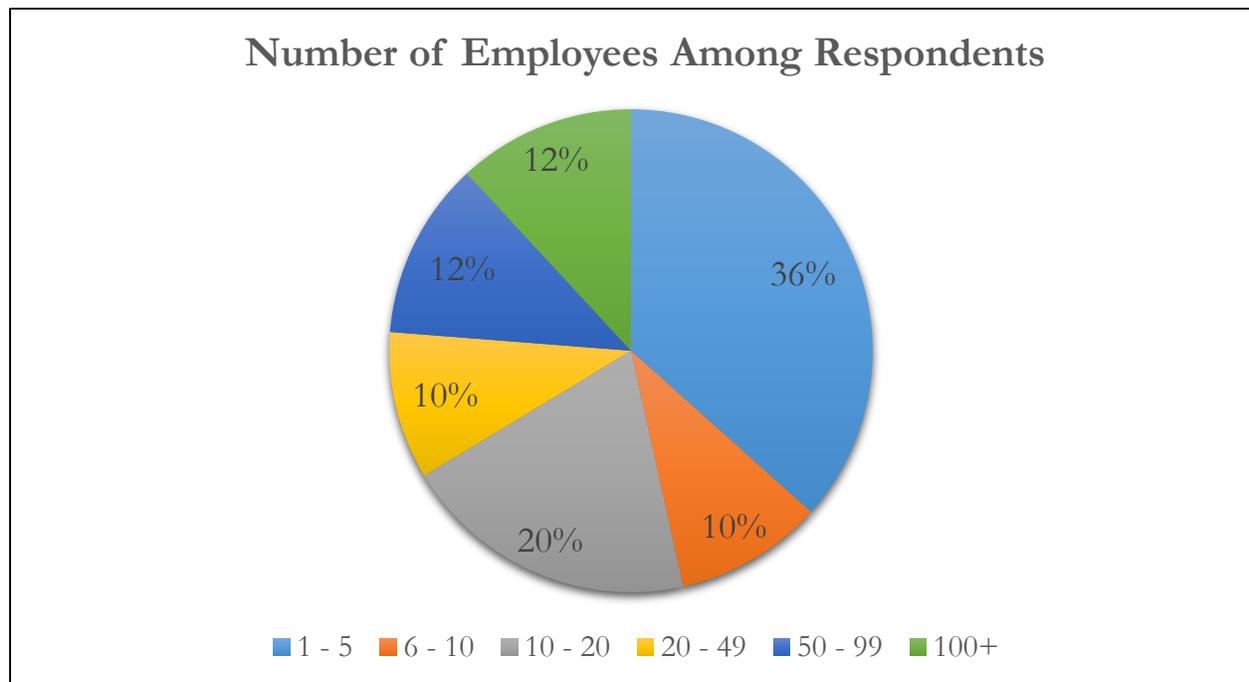
The WCOED Executive Director served as the survey administrator and utilized SurveyGold software to build the survey and collect responses. The aggregated data was then extrapolated and analyzed using the same software program as well as Microsoft Excel. The following visual representations were generated to help provide a visual narration of the aggregated data.

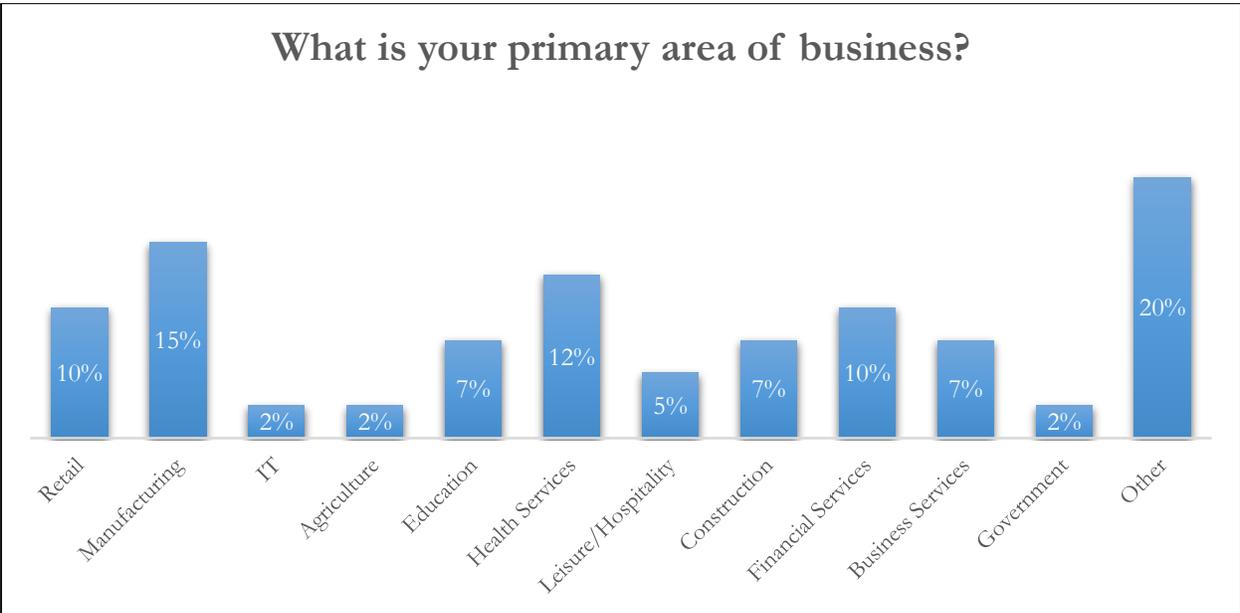
Note: The survey questionnaire is included later in this document for reference.

Employer Survey Highlights

This section provides aggregated data placed in charts and graphs making it easier to interpret. The graphics are followed by short descriptions and interpretations of highlights from the corresponding data.

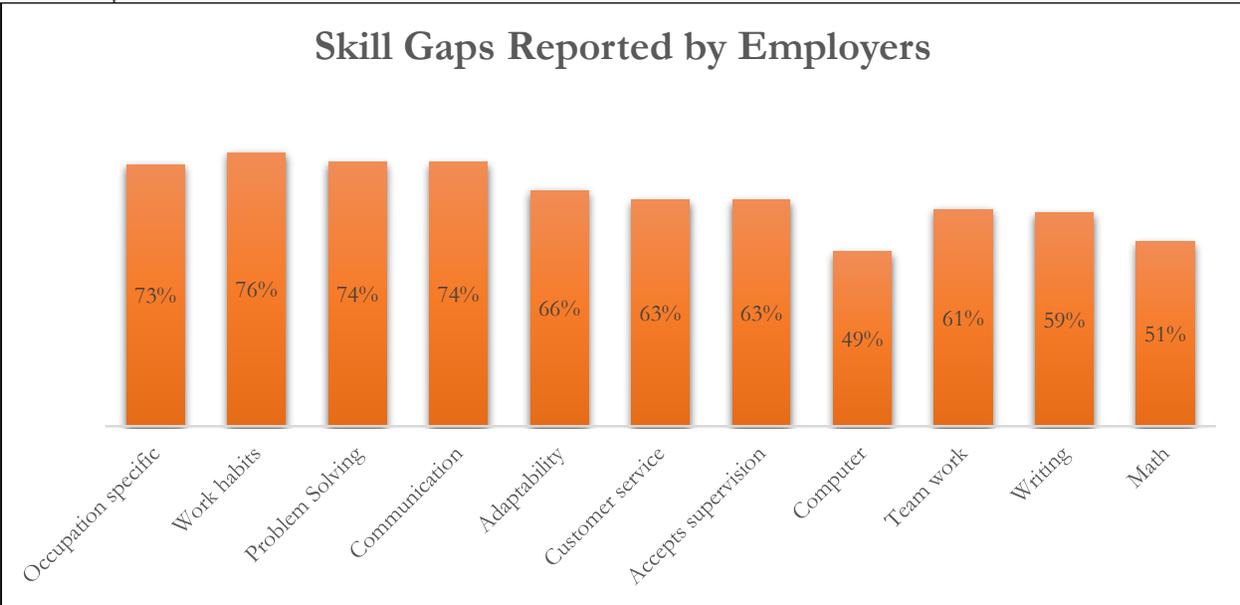
Respondent Characteristics





Respondents to the survey encompassed a wide range of firms both in their size and type, and comprised a well-rounded sampling of the businesses found in Wyandot County. The majority of respondents (36 percent) only consisted of 5 employees or less, the next largest group of respondents (20 percent) consisted of 10 – 20 employees, and only 12 percent of 100 or more employees. The majority of survey respondents (59 percent) were a service producing firm, while only 17 percent produced goods only. Roughly a quarter of respondents produced both goods and services. The respondents fell into a wide range of industry sectors as well with Manufacturing making up the largest industry of respondents at 15 percent. 20 percent of respondents classified themselves under the 'Other' response option and noted they were from unlisted industry sectors such as Staffing, Employment, Equipment repairs, and artisan.

Skill Gaps Identified



There were a high number of skill categories that were ranked by over half of respondents as lacking in potential employees and individuals they had hired. The graph above shows the most commonly seen skill gaps in the local workforce. Although occupation specific skills falls within the top-3, the majority of the top remaining competency areas are those that are learned many times indirectly, informally, or in early stages of education. The competencies or gaps that area employers see as the most lacking in potential employees were:

1. Work Habits (76 percent)
2. Problem Solving (74 percent)
3. Communication (74 percent)

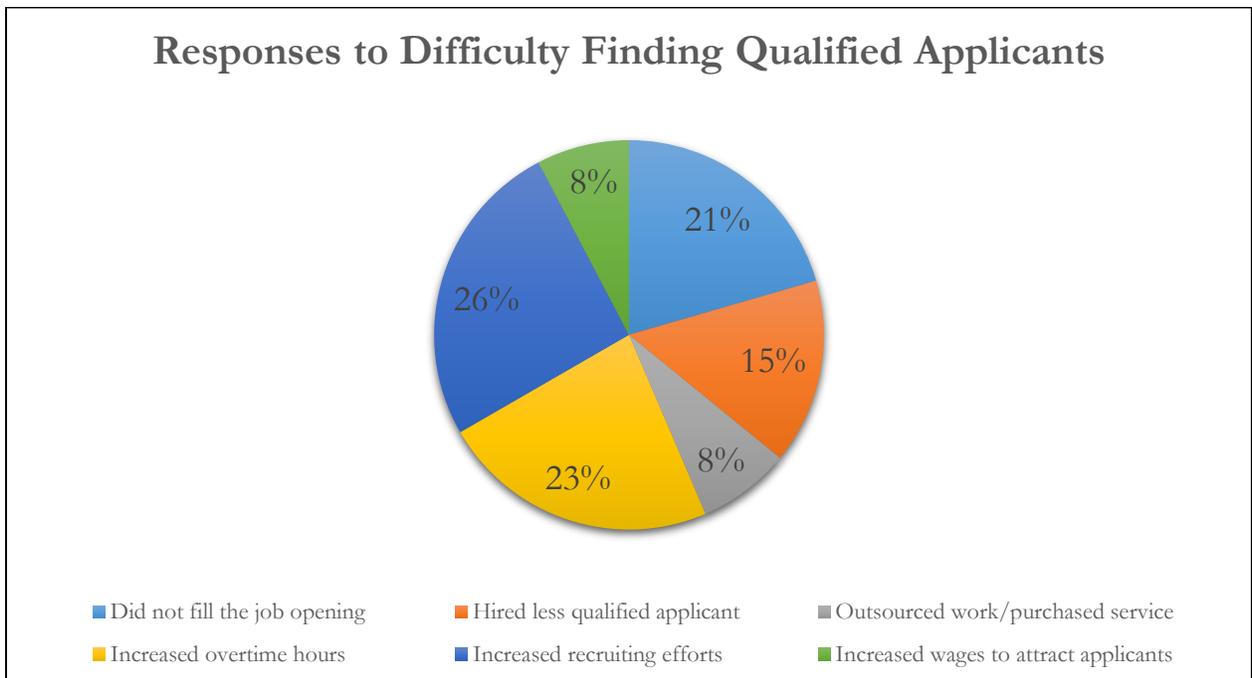


Recruiting Difficulties Identified & its Effects

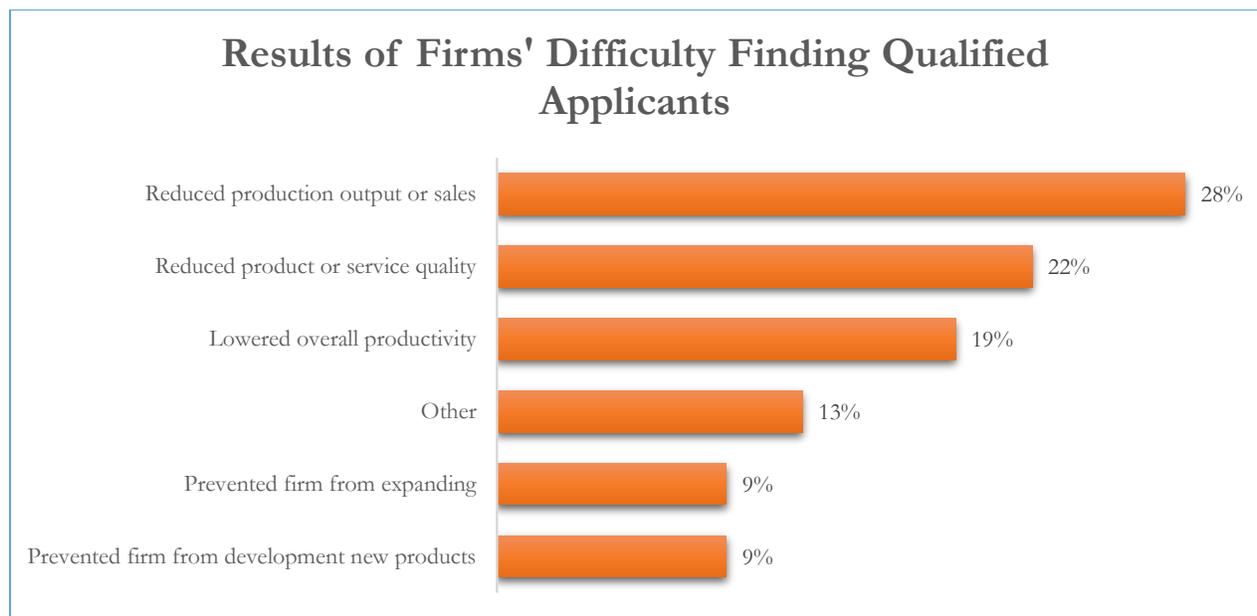


The survey identified which industries were experiencing the most difficulty recruiting new employees. The top reporting industries included those with needs for high workforce numbers or labor intensive industries such as manufacturers to more specialized fields such as information technology. Industries who reported most frequently having difficulty recruiting employees over the past 3-months were:

1. Information Technology (100 percent)
2. Agriculture (100 percent)
3. Manufacturing (83 percent)



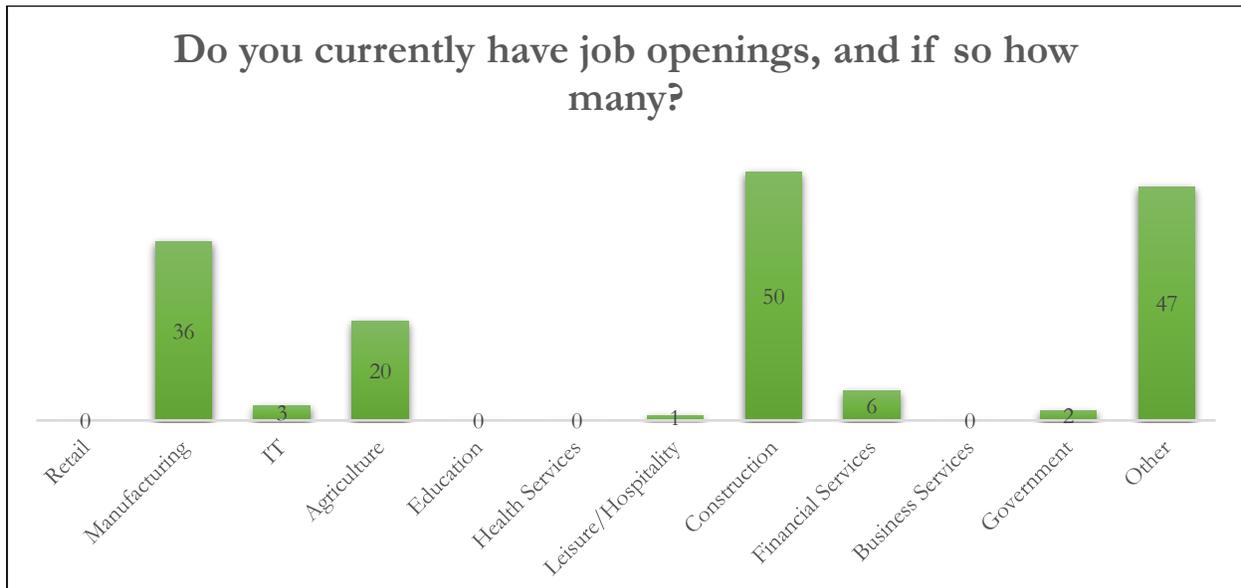
Of those who reported difficulty recruiting over the past 12 months, roughly one-quarter (26 percent) indicated they increased recruiting efforts to fill open positions. While this would be a preferred method to overcome recruiting difficulty, it may not be feasible for all local firms due to the potential and increased costs and time associated in expanding recruitment efforts. Another 23 percent of respondents reported increasing overtime hours for current workers to overcome difficulty in finding needed labor. Although this response may benefit some, it is again a costly scenario in which current workers are paid higher wages to perform functions that potential new employees would have performed at regular wages. The third highest ranked response to not finding needed employees by employers was to leave positions unfilled.



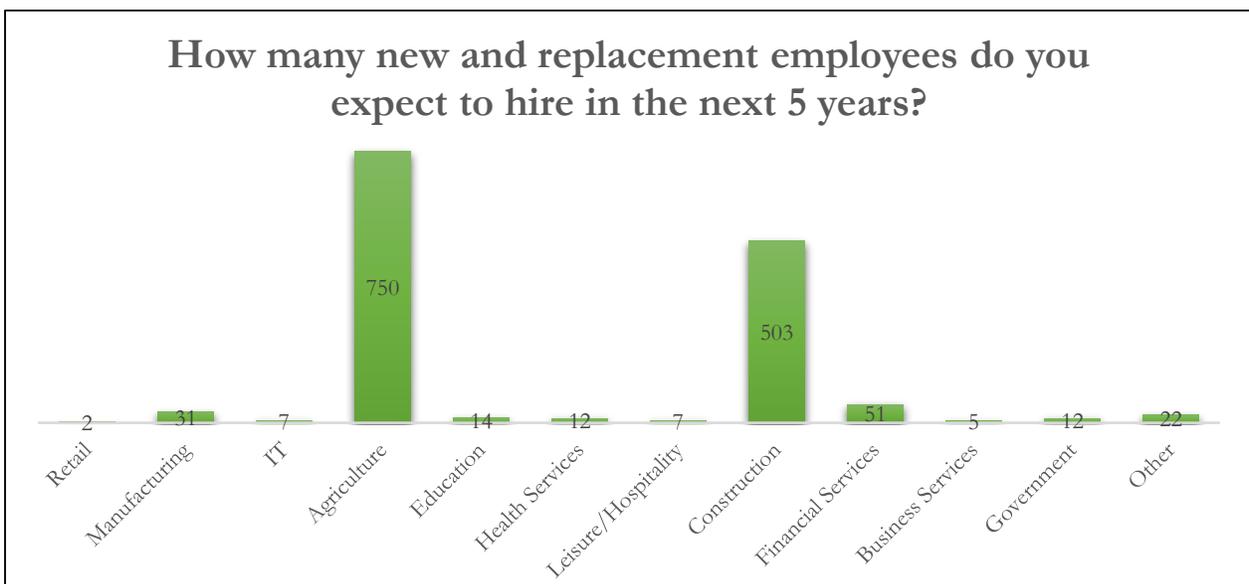
Firms who reported having difficulty recruiting also reported detriment to their business as a result. 28% reported a reduction in production output or sales due to a lack of needed labor keeping up with production demand. Along the same lines, 22% reported a reduction in product or service quality. This result makes sense when a smaller amount of personnel is performing the work normally of many more. Comments provided under the 'Other' response option included others had to take increased workloads to make up for the inability to recruit new labor, or that the firm incurred increased costs as a result. In general, both the responses to and results of not finding needed qualified applicants brings local firms a negative result to their bottom line whether it be direct or indirect.

Current and Projected Workforce Needs

Note: The data contained in this section includes only the 42 responding firms, which may skew the 'by industry' charts below. The large employee count industries, such as manufacturing, did not have had many survey respondents, which may result in less of a show of demand for workers in that industry.

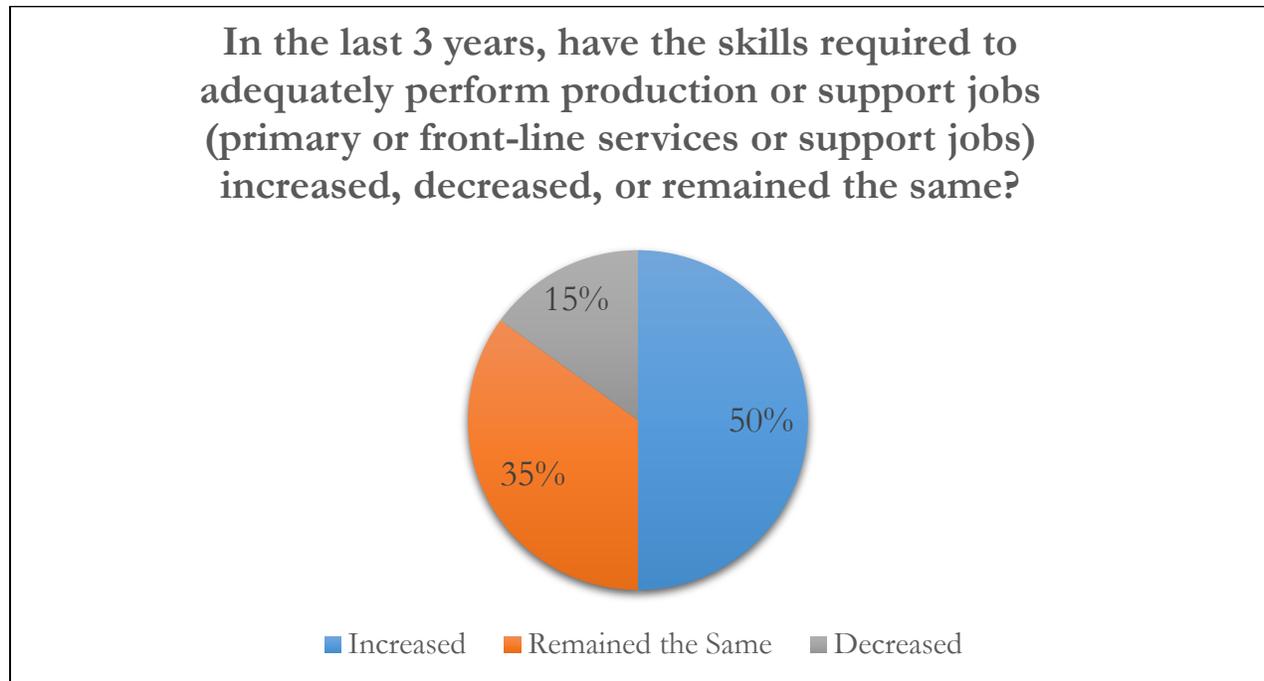


When asked how many current job openings they had, a total of 165 openings were reported by the respondents. Others who reported having no current openings commented that a spot could be made for the right candidate. This data collected from the 42 respondents shows that although Wyandot County is rural and has a low population density, the demand for open positions is always prevalent.



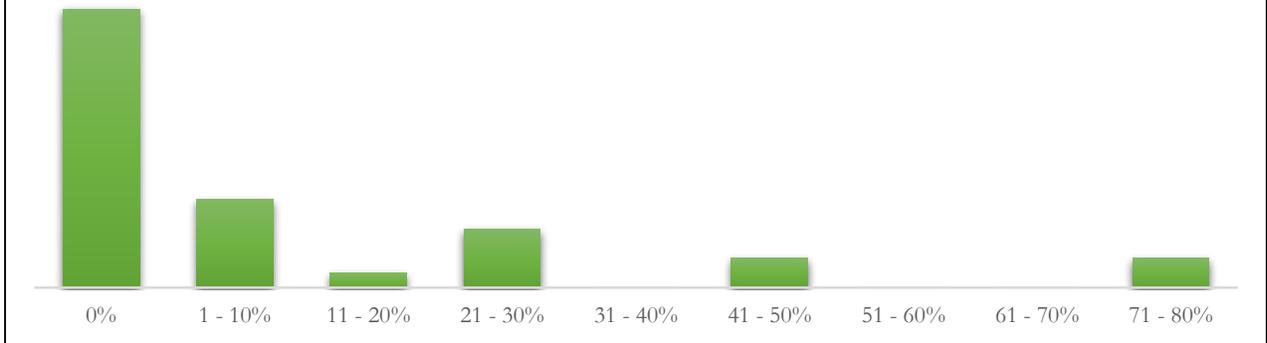
Data collected also shows that the demand for labor will continue well into the future. Outside of the demand for labor created by regular turnover, the large percentage of the local workforce nearing retirement age will cause an even larger need for available workforce in the near future. To the question, "How many new and replacement employees do you expect to hire in the next 5 years because of expansion, retirements, leaving, firing, etc.?", survey participants responded with a combined total of over 1,400 employees.

Training and Educational Needs



Results of the survey show that the skills necessary to perform the basic, or what once were 'low-skill' jobs, have increased over the past 3 years. Half of the respondents indicated that the most basic jobs within their organization (primary, front-line services or support jobs) have seen an increase in the skill levels needed to carry them out. Only 15 percent reported a decrease in the skills needed for these types of positions.

Approximately what percent of your current employees would you say need further college level training in a formal program in order to reach the current level of productivity and competence that your company needs?



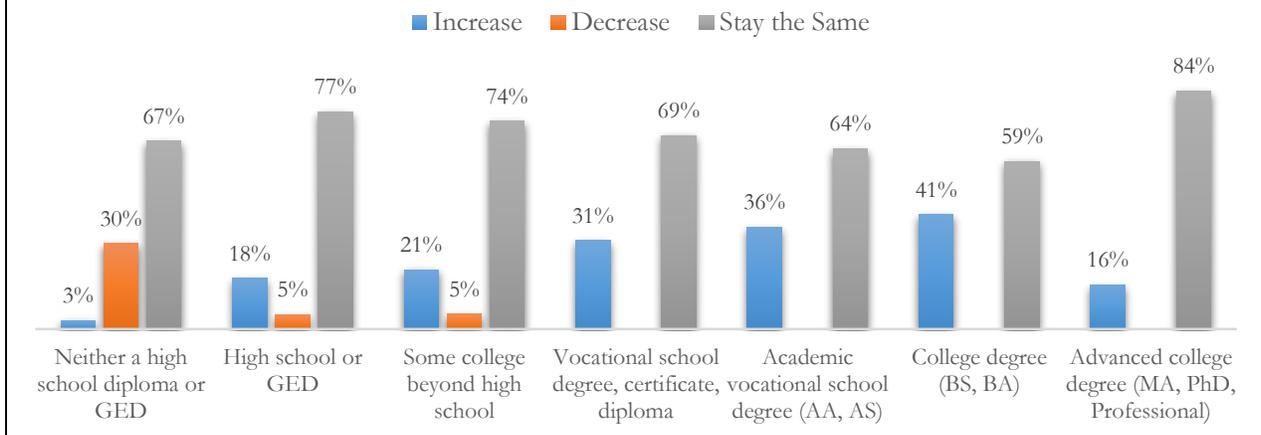
The majority of respondents reported their current employees do not need college level training to meet the competencies required by the position. Although while not a majority, nearly the same amount of respondents reported that some percentage of their current workforce did need college level training.

Current Workforce Breakdown by Educational Attainment Level

Neither HS Diploma or GED	HS Diploma or GED	Some College Beyond High School	Vocational School Degree, Certificate, Diploma	Academic Vocational School Degree (AA, AS)	College Degree (BS, BA)	Advanced College Degree (MA, PhD)
2%	38%	19%	17%	14%	26%	17%

The current workforce education levels of respondents fell primarily into two categories: those that have a high school diploma or GED and those with a college degree. The table above provides the reported average percentage of respondents' total workforce for each educational attainment level listed.

How will your firm's need for employees with each of the types of education listed below change in the next 5 years?



Respondents reported a decrease only in the lowest levels of requested or required educational attainment levels for future employees over the next 5 years. All educational attainment levels saw an increase in demand by Wyandot County. As the required level of education increases so does employer demand with the exception of the 'Advanced degree' category. Although 41 percent of respondents reported their demand for College degree candidates would increase and 31 percent would require more vocational school degree candidates, the majority of respondents did indicate their requirement for each educational attainment level would remain the same over the next 5 years.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The survey findings show that the workforce related needs of employers in Wyandot County continue to grow. These are needs in terms of the not only the numbers in the available workforce, but in basic competencies, job specific skill sets, and required educational levels. When employers cannot find available labor, there is a detriment to their bottom line as well as their incumbent workforce.

To assist local employers in their continued profitable growth and the workforce in the surrounding labor shed; community, educational, business, and policy leaders should be made aware of these challenges faced within the labor pool. Increasing awareness is the first step to developing measures to prepare for the increasing workforce requirements expected even in the near future. It is also recommended that this workforce survey effort be conducted on a regular basis (e.g. yearly or bi-annually) with an increasing number of local business. Increasing the number of respondents and response rate will help to increase the accuracy of collected data as well as adjusting the survey questionnaire to best derive the most important or sought after data.

The Survey

2015 Wyandot County Workforce Survey

Please answer the following questions as they relate to your organization's workforce needs and practices. This information will be kept confidential and only reported in aggregate format.

Please provide the following if desired:

First Name:

Last Name:

Title:

Company:

Address:

City:

Phone:

Email:

General Information

1. Does your business provide goods, services, or both?

- Goods
- Services
- Both

2. What is your primary area of business?

- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Information Technology
- Agriculture
- Education
- Health Services
- Leisure / Hospitality
- Construction
- Financial Services
- Business Services
- Government (Federal, State, Local)
- Other:

3. How many employees do you currently have?

- 1 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 49
- 50 - 99
- 100+

4. What is the percentage breakdown of your workforce based on the employee types below?

(Total for all responses should equal 100%)

Part-time hourly	
Full-time hourly	
Salary	

5. What is the percentage breakdown of these current employees based on educational attainment level?

(Total for all responses should equal 100%)

Neither high school nor GED		
High school or GED		
Some college beyond high school		
Vocational school degree, certificate, diploma		
Academic vocational school degree (AA, AS)		
College degree (BS, BA)		
Advanced college degree (MA, PhD, Professional		

6. How will your firm's need for employees with each of the types of education listed below change in the next 5 years?

(Select one option for each applicable)

	Increase	Stay the Same	Decrease
Neither high school nor GED			
High school or GED			
Some college beyond high school			
Vocational school degree, certificate, diploma			
Academic vocational school degree (AA, AS)			
College degree (BS, BA)			
Advanced college degree (MA, PhD, Professional			

Recruiting Difficulty

7. Over the last 12 months, have you had any difficulty finding qualified applicants for jobs you were trying to fill?

- Yes
- No

Recruiting Difficulty cont.

8. What do you believe is the primary reason for this difficulty?

9. How did your firm respond to the difficulty finding qualified applicants?

- Did not fill the job opening
- Hired a less qualified applicant
- Outsourced work or purchased services from another firm
- Increased overtime hours for current workers
- Increased recruiting efforts

- Increased wages to attract more applicants
- Other:

10. Which of the following has resulted from your firm's difficulty finding qualified applicants?

- Lowered overall productivity
- Reduced product or service quality
- Reduced production output or sales
- Prevented your firm from expanding its facilities
- Prevented your firm from developing new products or services
- Caused your firm to move some operations out of Wyandot County
- Other:

11. In your hiring of individuals with high school, some college and vocational school credentials, how much difficulty has your company had finding employees with the following skills?

(Select one option for each applicable)

	Much	Some	None
Occupation specific skills			
Work habits			
Problem solving			
Communication			
Adaptability			
Customer service			
Accepts supervision			
Computer skills			
Team work			
Writing			
Math			

Recruiting Difficulty 3

12. Which one of those skills was the most critical to your hiring decision, or the skill which automatically eliminated a candidate?

- Occupation specific skills
- Work habits
- Problem solving
- Communication
- Adaptability
- Customer service
- Accepts supervision
- Computer skills
- Team work
- Writing
- Math
- Other:

Workforce Outlook

13. Do you currently have job openings, and if so how many?

14. How many new and replacement employees do you expect to hire in the next 5 years because of expansion, retirements, leaving, firing, etc.?

15. In the last 3 years, have the skills required to adequately perform production or support jobs (primary or front-line services or support jobs) increased, decreased, or remained the same?

- Increased
- Decreased
- Remained the Same

16. Approximately what percent of your current employees would you say need further college level training in a formal program in order to reach the current level of productivity and competence that your company needs?

17. For each educational level listed, indicate the percentage increment above the lowest wage starting salary that your organization would pay for each level of educational achievement listed below.

If you do not hire at that level indicate "NA". (Example: If your organization hires employees without a HS diploma or GED, that would be your baseline starting salary and you would enter 0% in the corresponding box. If a College degree employee would make 30% more starting out than a candidate with no HS diploma or GED then 30% would be entered in to the corresponding box.)

Neither high school nor GED	
High school or GED	
Some college beyond high school	
Vocational school degree, certificate, diploma	
Academic vocational school degree (AA, AS)	
College degree (BS, BA)	
Advanced college degree (MA, PhD, Professional)	



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The Wyandot County Office of Economic Development is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization. The WCOED partners with the Wyandot County Board of Commissioners to fund a full-time Economic Development Director in Wyandot County. As such, the WCOED Executive Director also serves in a leadership capacity for the Wyandot County Regional Planning Commission.