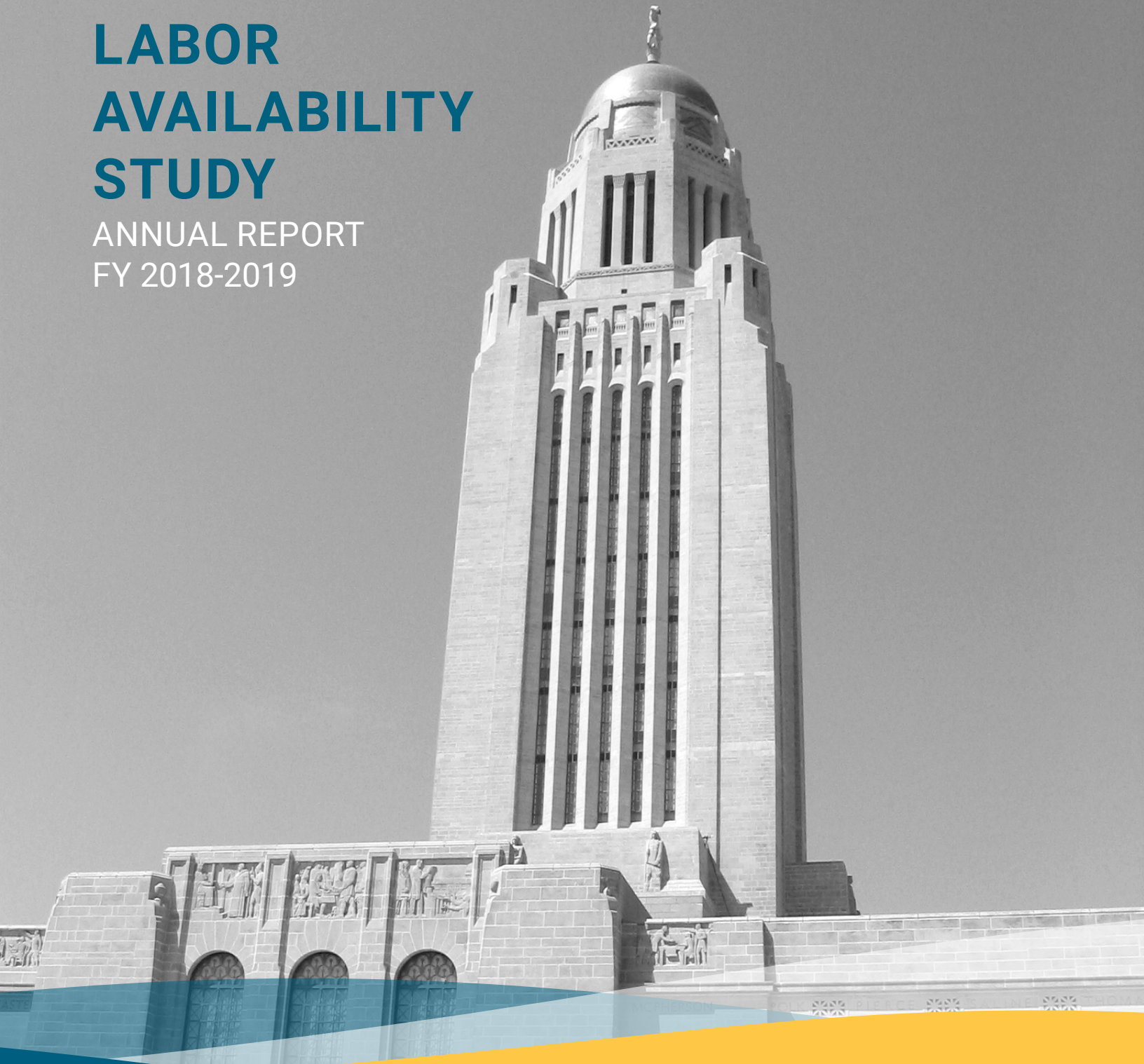


LABOR AVAILABILITY STUDY

ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2018-2019



NEBRASKA

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Submitted: July 2019

Equal Opportunity Program/Employer TDD: 800-833-7352

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Background and Purpose

In 2016, Neb. Rev. Stat. §48-3401 to 48-3407 created the Sector Partnership Program, which allowed the Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) and the Department of Economic Development (DED) to continue collaborating on the research project known as the Labor Availability Study (LAS). The goal of the research project is to conduct labor availability, employer needs, and skills gap studies for selected communities in Nebraska. Neb. Rev. Stat. §48-3401 to 48-3407 states that an annual report shall be provided to the Governor and the Business and Labor Committee detailing the process and results of the labor availability, hiring needs, and skills gap studies.

Funding

LAS funding began with a federal grant and the first pilot studies were funded through the Department of Economic Development's Manufacturing Extension Program. As part of the Sector Partnership Program, the Departments of Labor and Economic Development each initially transferred \$250,000 from the Job Training Cash Fund and \$250,000 from the Nebraska Training and Support Cash Fund. Beginning July 1, 2017, the Nebraska Department of Labor has continued to fund these important surveys through the use of the Nebraska Training and Support Cash Fund.

Planning

LAS pilot projects, beginning in Northeast Nebraska in 2013, laid the groundwork for the FY 2018-2019 iteration of the study. NDOL and DED staff published the pilot LAS reports in the fall of 2014 with the release of the Northeast Nebraska Labor Availability Reports. In FY 2015-2016, a skills gap report was added to the LAS to determine if there was a lack of workers with a particular skill needed by employers in an area. Lessons learned from previous studies were integral in planning the project timeline.

In 2016, seven LAS survey areas were created based on worker commuting patterns to the largest population centers in Nebraska: Omaha, Lincoln, Northeast Nebraska (Columbus, Fremont, Norfolk), Central Nebraska (Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney), Southeast Nebraska (Nebraska City), Southwest Nebraska (North Platte) and the panhandle area of Nebraska (Scottsbluff). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2010 the total population of Nebraska

was 1,826,341 individuals. The LAS survey areas created in 2016, including some zip codes in Iowa and Wyoming, have a total population of 1,796,520 individuals with 1,345,732 individuals age 18 and over.

In FY 2018-2019, NDOL collaborated with DED and with the Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR) and the Bureau of Business Research (BBR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) as in previous iterations of the LAS. Contract agreements were signed between NDOL and BOSR and between NDOL and Dr. Eric Thompson from BBR, who continued his role as author of the skills gap reports. The role of BOSR was to assist NDOL with the household survey questionnaire mailing, data entry, data cleaning, and weighting. NDOL conducted the analysis and reporting of the data collected from households.

The project is designed so that communities can contribute funds in order to receive the locally-tailored LAS reports. In addition, with the dedicated funds awarded under Neb. Rev. Stat. §48-3401 to 48-3407, NDOL staff were able to conduct the Survey of Hiring and Training Needs. Prior to FY 2016-2017, BBR at UNL conducted the survey of businesses. NDOL staff were able to increase the number of reports from one LAS report published in 2016 to ten reports in 2017, and 11 reports in 2018.

In FY 2018-2019, NDOL staff surveyed two areas and compiled two statewide data sets. Business and household surveys were sent to the Sandhills area and the Niobrara River area in Nebraska. The Sandhills area included all or part of 10 counties in Nebraska for the business survey and included two more South Dakota Counties for the household survey. The most populous location in the Sandhills area was Valentine, Nebraska. The Niobrara River area included all or part of 12 counties in Nebraska, and O'Neill was the most populous location in the area (see Figure 1 in the Appendix on [Page 8](#)). Figure 2 in the Appendix (on [Page 8](#)) displays the statewide data area for the compiled hiring and training needs data set (only Nebraska areas were included in the statewide labor availability data set). As displayed in Table 1 in the Appendix (on [Page 9](#)), the total population of the ZIP codes included in the statewide labor availability data set was 1,728,541 individuals (95% of the Nebraska population according to the 2010 Demographic Profile Census data).

Methodology

After commuting patterns were analyzed, business samples were created using Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Enhanced Quarterly Unemployment Insurance (EQUI) files. For the purpose of this study, all privately owned businesses with a minimum average employment of three employees were surveyed. Additional employers were added to the research sample who had appeared to have hired at least one person in the past two years. This helped to ensure that surveyed employers were recently engaged in the hiring and training of employees.

BOSR determined the number of household surveys sent to each zip code in the survey areas based on the worker population in each zip code. For both the Sandhills and Niobrara River areas, the survey sample was 7,000 households. The resident of each randomly-sampled household who was 19 or older and had the next birthday was asked to complete the survey.

NDOL developed household questionnaires and cover letters in collaboration with BOSR. In FY 2018-2019, improvements were made to the questionnaires and cover letters based on feedback and lessons learned from past studies. For example, check-all-that-apply questions were modified so that “no” and “blank” responses were coded correctly in the data. This particular change increased the accuracy of the collected data and the accuracy of the reported results.

DED contacted local areas in Valentine and O’Neill and received support from the Holt County Economic Development organization for the Niobrara River area household survey. The supporting organization’s logo was displayed on household questionnaires printed and mailed by BOSR.

A web page located at <https://dol.nebraska.gov/las> was created in 2016 in order to provide survey recipients additional information about the study and to provide an option to complete the business questionnaire online. All survey data returned by mail to NDOL were entered into the database manually. When respondents completed their survey online, additional data entry by LMI staff was not required. In FY 2018-2019, more than a third of employer questionnaires were returned electronically from the Valentine survey area (36%) and nearly two thirds were returned electronically from the O’Neill survey area (64%).

NDOL has determined that LAS data is usable for 18 to 24 months after publication. Thus, a cycle for each survey area has been implemented to ensure timely and valid LAS reports. LAS surveys will be planned for up to three survey areas each year, or statewide data sets will be compiled, with accompanying reports produced.

NDOL staff cleaned the data and coded respondents’ occupations and academic degrees. Standard Occupational Classification codes were assigned to every job title in the data received from households and businesses, and Classification of Instructional Programs codes were assigned to degree titles in data received from households.

Response rates for the two surveyed areas in 2018 are displayed in the Appendix in Table 2 ([Page 9](#)). These response rates are encouraging considering the length and complexity of the questionnaires sent to households and businesses.

Reports for the two survey areas and the statewide data sets were published prior to the end of the fiscal year (per Neb. Rev. Stat. §48-3401 to 48-3407). All reports were published electronically on the NEworks website. NDOL and DED sent email announcements of the publication of LAS reports with an accompanying fact sheet that included highlighted results. Publication announcements were sent to stakeholders including various educators, state agency staff, respondents, members of the media, and elected officials. The LAS publications page on NEworks is located at <https://neworks.nebraska.gov/gsipub/index.asp?docid=802>.

Summary and Results

Labor Availability Reports

A labor availability report is most focused on the specific groups of people defined as potential job seekers and active job seekers in an area. Table 3 in the Appendix ([Page 9](#)) displays a sample of results from the two areas surveyed in FY 2018-2019 and the compiled statewide data set. A potential job seeker is an employed person who answered either "yes" or "maybe" to the question "Are you likely to change jobs in the next year if a suitable job is available?" A potential job seekers is also a non-employed person who answered "yes" or "maybe" to the question "Are you likely to reenter the workforce in the next year if a suitable job is available?" The potential job seekers group includes all individuals who indicated that they may accept a new job within the next year, given that a suitable job is available. Active job seekers are a subset of potential job seekers who answered "yes" to the question "Are you actively seeking a new job?" Non-active seekers are potential job seekers who may change jobs or reenter the workforce within the next year, but were not actively seeking a job. At the time of survey, there were an estimated 8,567 potential job seekers and 1,982 active job seekers in the O'Neill survey area.

Hiring and Training Needs Reports

Employers were asked to name the top three occupations that are most frequently hired at their location, and they were asked to indicate whether it was difficult to find workers for those occupations. More than 71% of all employers in the statewide data area responded that it was difficult to find workers for the occupations they had most frequently hired. Table 4 in the Appendix ([Page 10](#)) displays the percentages of employers, organized by the industry of their business, who indicated difficulty when finding workers. Table 5 in the Appendix ([Page 11](#)) displays the percentages of employers who said that it was difficult to find workers, organized by the occupation group of the frequently hired job. Employers were prompted with a list of reasons why it might be difficult to find workers and were provided the option to specify other reasons for hiring difficulty. In each surveyed area in FY 2018-2019, and in the statewide data set, the greatest percentage of employers indicated that not receiving enough applicants was a reason for difficulty when finding workers for a particular occupation.

Skills Gap Reports

A method of determining the congruency between the hiring needs of businesses and the available supply of new workers in a labor market is the examination of the annual job openings and annual entrants to an area. Table 6 in the Appendix ([Page 12](#)) displays annual openings and entrants results from the Skills Gap Reports published in FY 2018-2019. The table also lists the percentage of employers who indicated it was difficult to hire workers due to either a poor work history or a failed background check/drug screen.

Dr. Eric Thompson, author of the Skills Gap Reports, stated, "A skills gap is present if it is difficult for a large share of employers to hire in a particular occupation and there is also a persistent gap between the demand for new workers and the number of individuals entering that occupation." An example of an occupation facing a skills gap is displayed in Table 7 in the Appendix ([Page 12](#)). More than 82% of responding O'Neill survey area employers who often hired farmworkers indicated that they have difficulty when finding workers to hire for the job. Furthermore, the estimated average annual openings (15) is greater than the combined number of graduates (11) and workers seeking to re-enter the workforce in the farmworker occupation (0).

Community Partners

Prior to data collection, DED contacted stakeholders in each survey area about the forthcoming study. These contacts often assist NDOL with promotion of the upcoming mail-out to increase response. Community organizations may request to collaborate on custom changes to questionnaires or reports (as with the Greater Omaha Chamber in FY 2017-2018), but no such collaborations were requested in FY 2018-2019. Communities located within survey areas are also able to request that a study is conducted for a particular population or business center (as with Sidney, Nebraska in FY 2017-2018), but no such requests were made in FY 2018-2019.

Community Outreach

FY 2018-2019 reports (Valentine, O'Neill, and Nebraska Statewide) were released in June 2019. After the release of LAS reports, NDOL and DED staff contacted members of the Valentine and O'Neill communities to propose general or specific presentations. Community contacts included NDOL job center managers; high school, community college and university educators; and local economic developers and chamber of commerce staff. Presentations of LAS results are being planned for the Valentine and O'Neill communities in the summer and fall of 2019.

The results of LAS reports are regularly provided to representatives of industry, education and the economic development community through both public presentations and media events. In FY 2018-2019 NDOL staff utilized LAS results for presentations in multiple forums. On September 17, NDOL staff and Dr. Eric Thompson presented LAS results from the Omaha region to the Greater Omaha Chamber. On November 2, Dr. Eric Thompson (UNL) and Dillon Cornett (NDOL) presented "Skills Gaps in Nebraska Regions" for the BBR webinar series (<https://business.unl.edu/outreach/bureau-of-business-research/news-and-events/webinars/>). On February 20-22, LAS results were presented to Business Services Core Partner Teams in Scottsbluff, North Platte, Kearney, and Grand Island. On May 1, LAS results from the Grand Island, Hastings, and Kearney reports were presented at the Central Manufacturing Partnership meeting at Hornady Manufacturing in Alda, Nebraska. On June 3, a Tableau training session utilizing the LAS was led by NDOL staff at the Council for Community and Economic Research annual conference in Saint Louis. LAS

results were presented to the Business Services Team in Lincoln on June 17, and to the Business Services Core Partner Team in Beatrice on June 18.

Dr. Thompson regularly presents the results of skills gaps analyses during media interviews about the Nebraska economy. BBR cites the skills gap research in numerous webinars and public presentations that consider how the skills gap influences the pace of economic growth in Nebraska. Dr. Thompson included data on reasons for challenges when hiring for construction workers in a presentation to the IREM Industry Forecast Breakfast in Omaha on December 5, 2018.

Dr. Thompson also included LAS data in a presentation to the Associated General Contractors Nebraska Chapter in Omaha on January 24, 2019. Dr. Thompson included LAS data related to the reasons for hiring challenges for skilled blue-collar workers in a presentation to the Omaha Estate Planning Council in Omaha on January 14, 2019 and in a presentation to the Nebraska Financial Planners Association in Omaha on January 25, 2019.

Dr. Thompson further utilized LAS data regarding the reasons why it is difficult to hire workers in different occupations in a presentation to the "Future of Work" class for the OLLI program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

DED staff continue to utilize and promote the LAS in their work. DED staff have used elements of these reports to show prospective businesses that it is possible to find workers with the requisite skills, even with low unemployment and high labor force participation rates. LAS provides DED the ability to describe the number of workers that are willing to change jobs or re-enter the workforce in a region which helps to overcome the perceptions elicited by a low unemployment rate and a high labor force participation rate. Additionally, the ability to illustrate the important factors and minimum pay required for someone to consider a new job helps a prospective employer gauge how hard it will be to find a suitable pool of prospective applicants.

Community Feedback

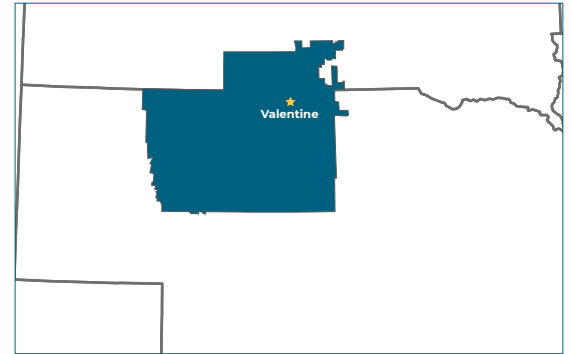
Upon release of the LAS reports, respondents to the business survey are notified of the publication. Once an area's report is released, respondents consistently express their gratitude for the information. Educators and NDOL job center managers are also consistently interested in and appreciative of the information provided by LAS. Additional feedback is provided in the Appendix on [Page 13](#).

Valentine Area Highlights

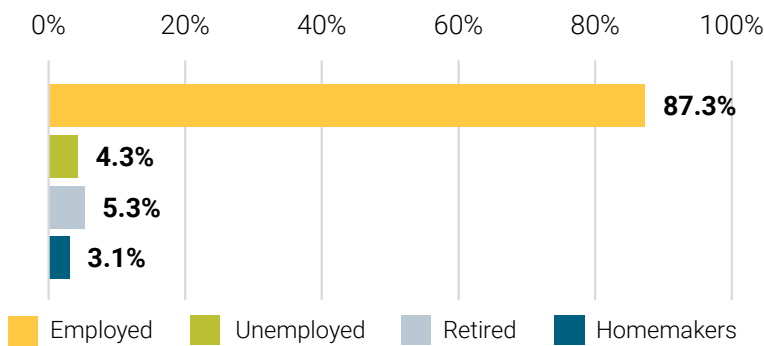
Labor Availability Report Key Findings

18,956	Individuals age 18 or older in the survey area
6,328	Potential job seekers age 18 and older
1,250	Potential job seekers actively searching for work
37.7%	Potential job seekers with a bachelor's degree

Survey Area



Employment Status of Potential Job Seekers

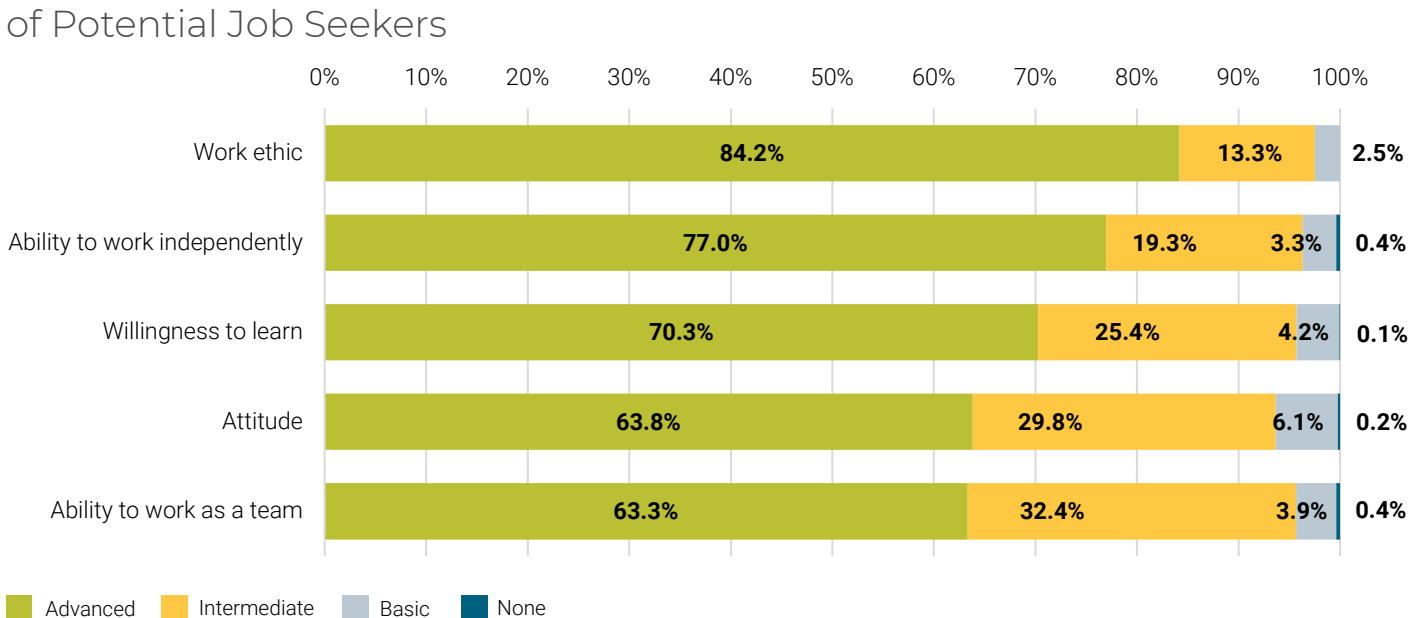


The Labor Availability Study is a questionnaire-based research project aimed at helping workers and businesses make more informed decisions about the workforce and job market in local areas.

Check out the reports on labor availability, business hiring and training needs, and skill gaps on the Labor Availability Study Publication page at:

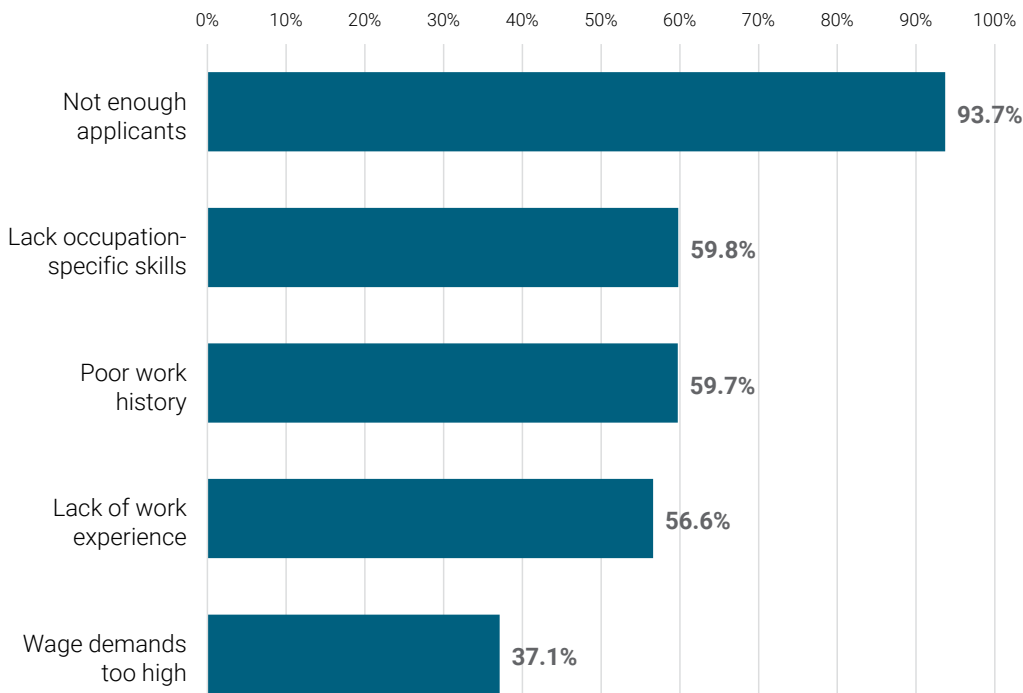
dol.nebraska.gov/las

Top 5 Advanced Reported Skills of Potential Job Seekers

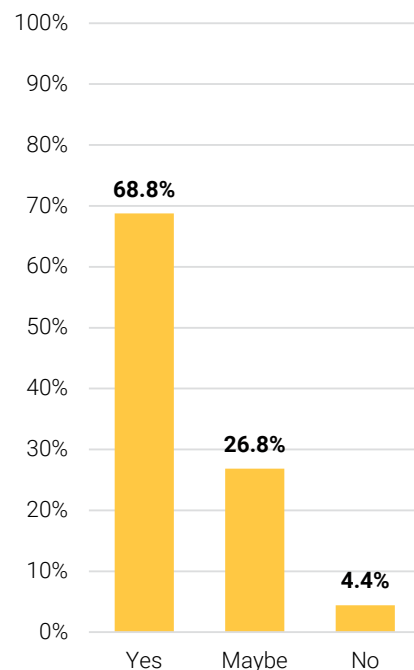


Business Hiring and Training Needs Report Key Findings

Top 5 Reasons for Difficulty Finding Workers



Major Expansion: Issues with Labor Availability



Skills Gap Report

“Over the next decade the number of job openings in the Valentine area will exceed the number of available new workers with the largest gap for health care practitioners, teachers, farm workers and select service occupations. Local and state entities should continue programs to interest young people in careers in agriculture and to attract health care providers and teachers to the region.”

— Eric Thompson
 Director, Bureau of Business Research
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Published June 2019

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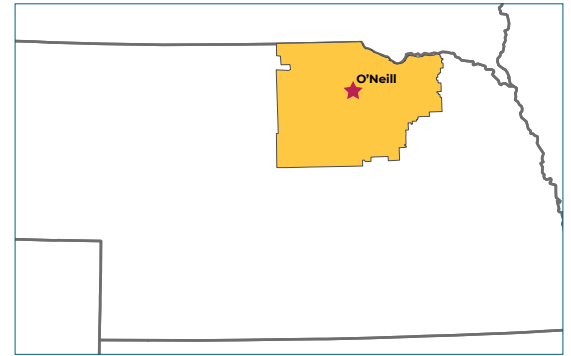
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O'Neill Area Highlights

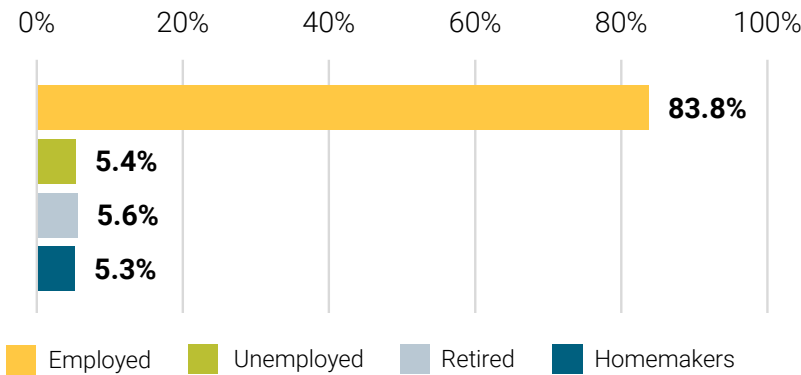
Labor Availability Report Key Findings

28,991	Individuals age 18 or older in the survey area
8,567	Potential job seekers age 18 and older
1,982	Potential job seekers actively searching for work
32.1%	Potential job seekers with a bachelor's degree

Survey Area



Employment Status of Potential Job Seekers

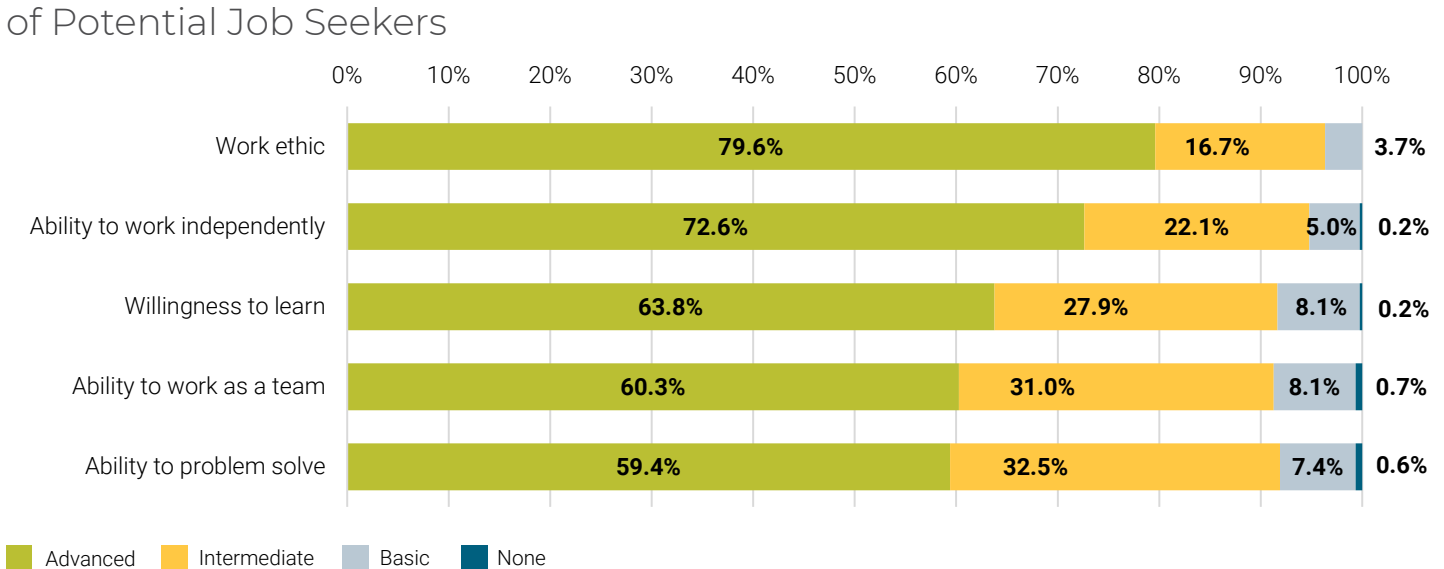


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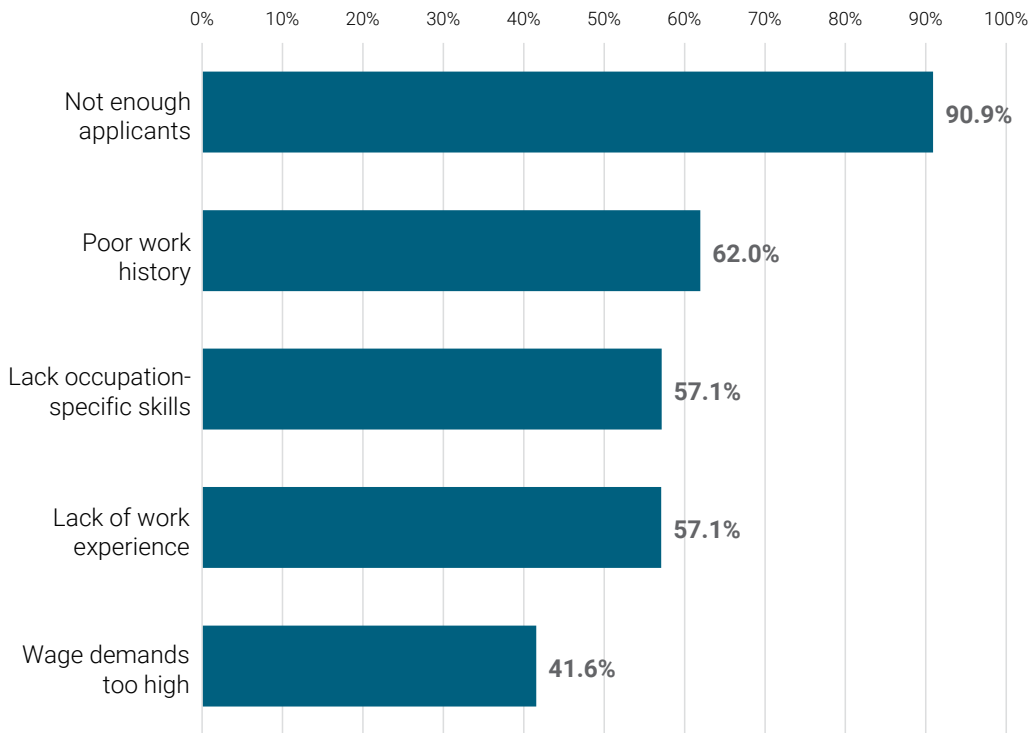
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Top 5 Advanced Reported Skills of Potential Job Seekers

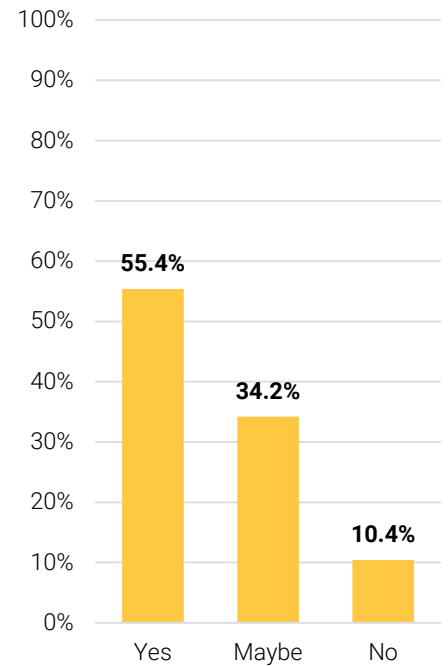


Business Hiring and Training Needs Report Key Findings

Top 5 Reasons for Difficulty Finding Workers



Major Expansion: Issues with Labor Availability



Skills Gap Report

“Over the next decade the number of job openings in the O’Neill area will exceed the number of available new workers with the largest gap for teachers, health care practitioners and farm workers, and significant gaps for most blue collar and service occupations. State and local entities should continue programs to interest young people in careers in agriculture and to attract health care providers and teachers to the region. The local labor market also would benefit from enhanced training, education, internship and apprenticeship opportunities developed through collaboration between employers, training entities and other education institutions.”

— Eric Thompson
 Director, Bureau of Business Research
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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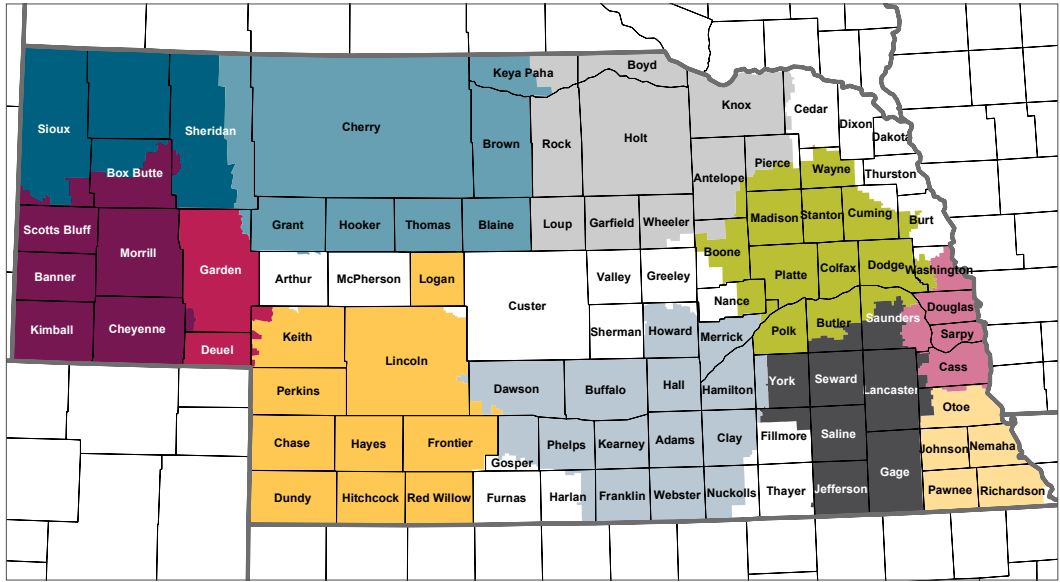
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Statewide Highlights

Labor Availability Report Key Findings



- Survey Areas and Year Published**
- Scottsbluff - 2016
 - Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney - 2017
 - Nebraska City - 2017
 - North Platte - 2017
 - Columbus, Norfolk, Fremont - 2018
 - Omaha - 2018
 - Lincoln - 2018
 - O'Neill - 2019
 - Sidney - 2018
 - Valentine - 2019

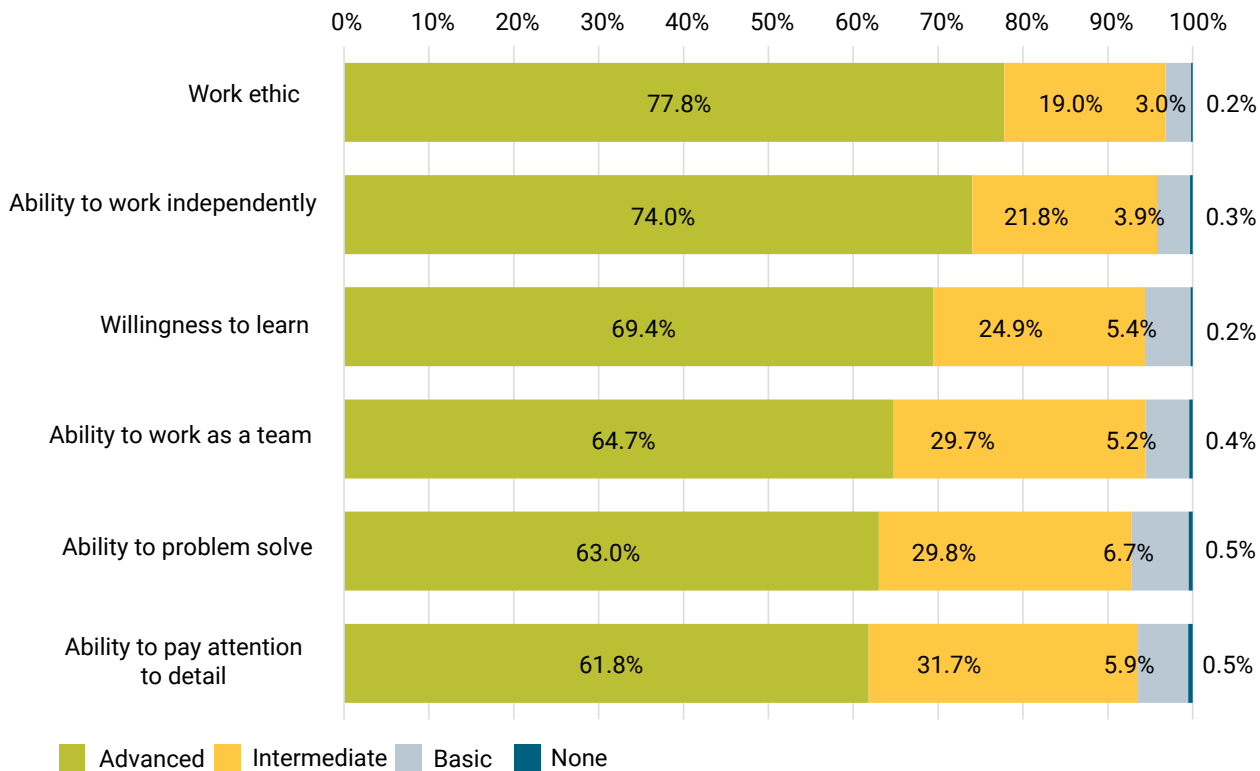
1,294,128	Individuals age 18 and older in statewide data area
454,984	Potential job seekers age 18 and older
141,277	Potential job seekers actively searching for work
49.7%	Potential job seekers with a bachelor's degree

The Labor Availability Study is a questionnaire-based research project aimed at helping workers and businesses make more informed decisions about the workforce and job market in local areas.

Check out the reports on labor availability, business hiring and training needs, and skill gaps on the Labor Market Information Publications page at:

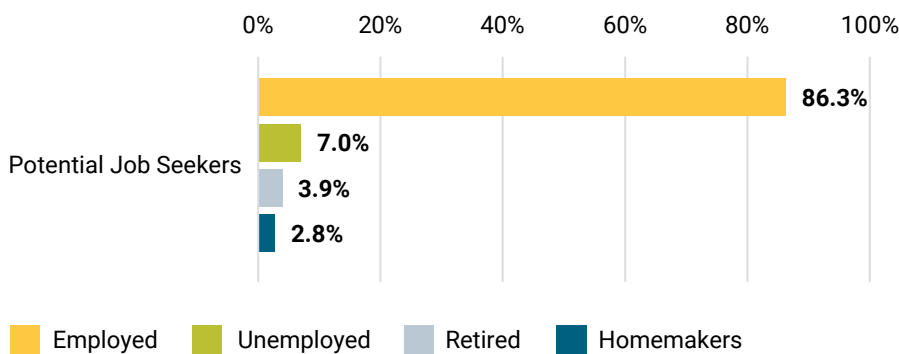
NEworks.nebraska.gov

Reported Skills of Potential Job Seekers



Potential job seekers most often rated themselves as advanced in their work ethic (**77.8%**), ability to work independently (**74.0%**), and willingness to learn (**69.4%**).

Employment Status of Potential Job Seekers

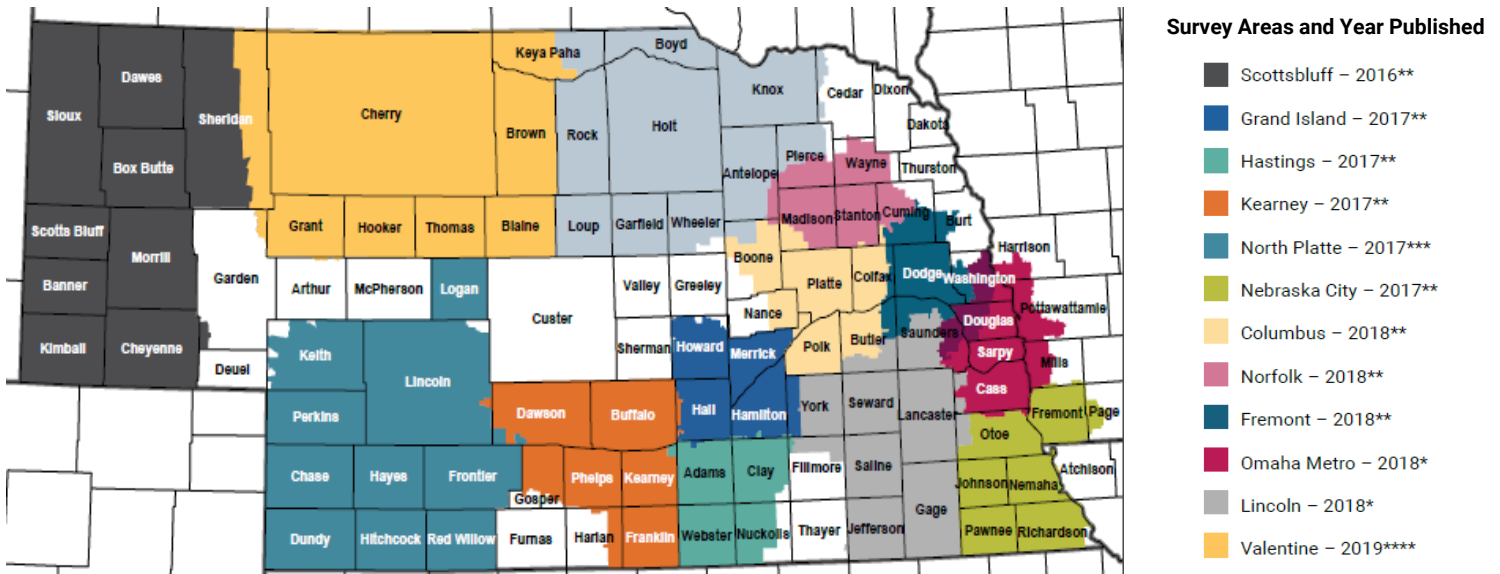


Potential job seekers were most likely to be currently employed (**86.3%**) or unemployed (**7%**). Additionally, most potential job seekers who were actively searching for work already had employment (**80.7%**), but **15.6%** of these active job seekers reported being unemployed.

Released: June 2019

Equal Opportunity Program/Employer TDD: 800.833.7352
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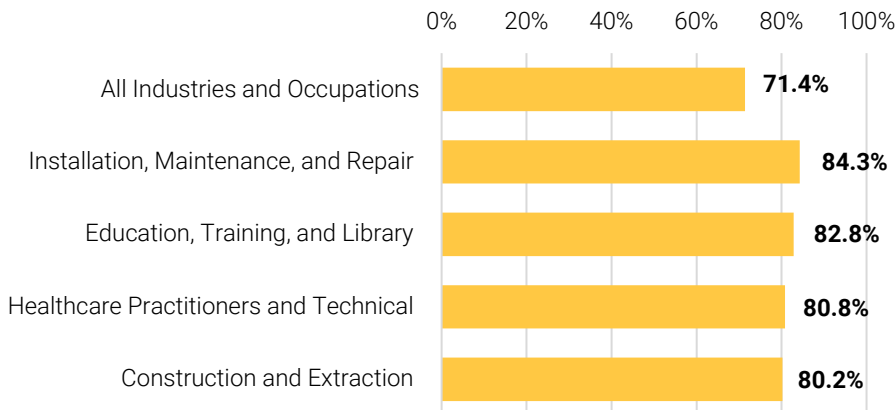
Business Hiring and Training Needs Report Key Findings



*Businesses with 20 or more employees surveyed
 **Businesses with 10 or more employees surveyed

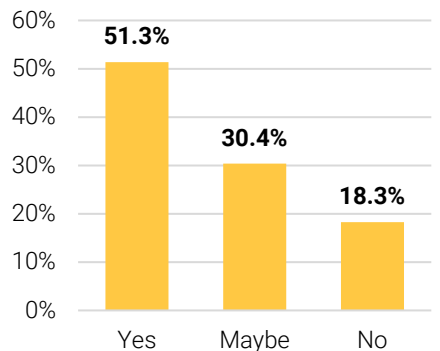
***Businesses with five or more employees surveyed
 ****Businesses with three or more employees or that appeared to have hired one or more employees in the last two years surveyed

Difficulty Finding Workers by Occupation

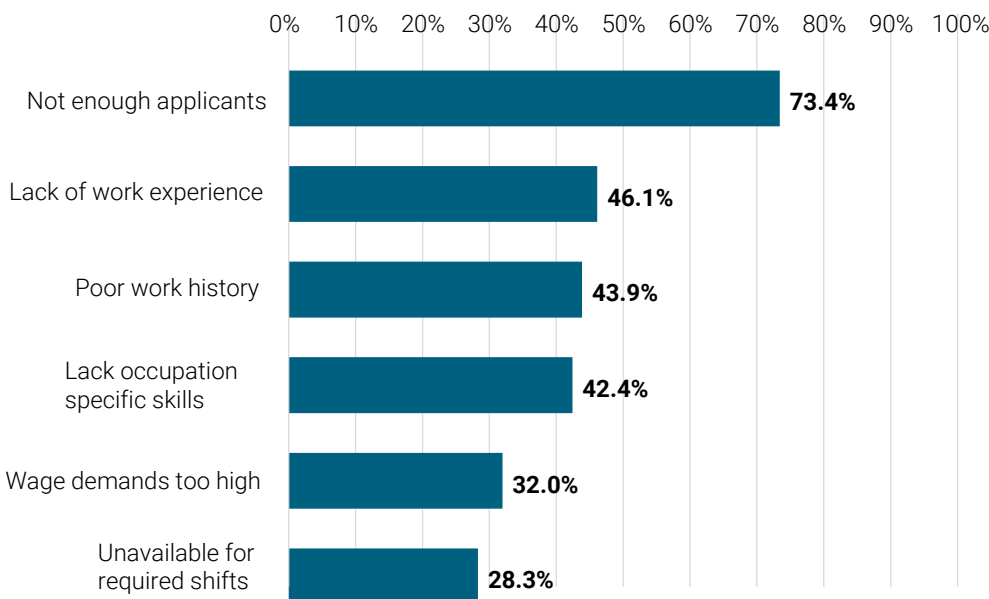


Major Expansion: Issues with Labor Availability

Issues with Labor Availability



Reasons for Difficulty Finding Workers



More than **73%** of Nebraska businesses that reported having difficulty finding workers for a specific job said that not receiving enough applicants was a reason why the search was challenging. Businesses also frequently said workers' lack of work experience (**46.1%**) was a reason that they had difficulty hiring for that occupation, followed by a poor work history (**43.9%**).

Conclusion

In FY 2018-2019, NDOL staff produced four area LAS reports. A labor availability and a hiring and training needs report were published for each of the survey areas (Sandhills and Niobrara River areas), and two statewide reports were published using compiled data from previously collected LAS survey data. These reports were all produced during FY 2018-2019 and they were conducted under budget. Dr. Eric Thompson also produced accompanying skills gap reports for the Sandhills and Niobrara River survey areas.

Recommendations based on data received from households and businesses were largely consistent across the FY 2018-2019 survey areas. LAS household studies identified that there was a relatively large pool of individuals actively seeking work, as well as a large group of potential job seekers, in the Valentine and O'Neill labor market areas. Study findings can be used to understand what is important to these active and potential job seekers and the obstacles they perceive when considering a new job.

In addition, stakeholders can point to the number of potential job seekers in an area and demonstrate that there is a quality local workforce willing to change jobs or reenter the workforce despite the low unemployment rate in Nebraska. Economic developers, educators, employers, legislators and others involved in shaping the local economy can use this information to help existing businesses grow and attract new employers and workers to the area.

Data from FY 2018-2019 LAS hiring and training needs survey areas indicated that employers perceived that they are not finding enough applicants, or that the applicants lacked the required amount of education or work experience. The Nebraska Statewide Hiring and Training Needs report presents results from past survey areas and provides an overall picture of business needs in the state. Data from more specific industries and occupations can now be analyzed using the data set compiled in FY 2018-2019.

Skills gap recommendations were unique to each community, but general themes emerged from the studied areas. Dr. Thompson

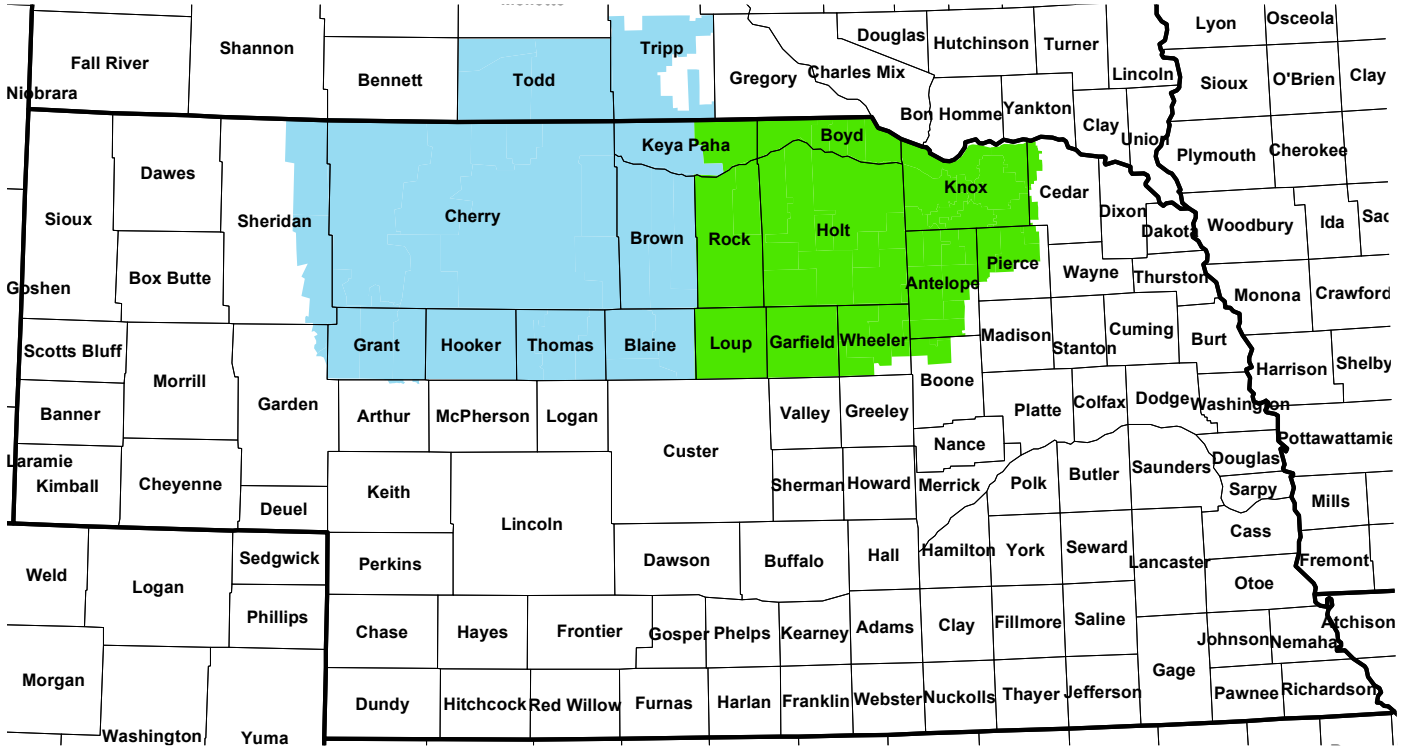
provided evidence that, over the next 10 years, there will be a shortage of most blue-collar labor in the Valentine and O'Neill areas. Shortages are also estimated for teachers and health care practitioners in both survey areas. The annual flow of individuals into the workforce in the Valentine and O'Neill areas is expected fall behind the projected annual needs of businesses partly due to significant outmigration from the Sandhills and Niobrara River regions. Dr. Thompson's analysis determined that wage levels were not a significant hiring challenge among the existing workforce. However, wage levels in the O'Neill and Valentine areas may be an issue for businesses when attracting workers from outside of these regions.

Another highlighted issue for Valentine and O'Neill is the prevalent employer concern about the loss of skills and experience due to retiring workers. Additionally, while Nebraska benefits from a high-quality workforce, many employers worry that a significant portion of potential employees are not reliable or dedicated, and this contributes to the perception of a skills gap in the labor market. Dr. Thompson suggests that employers need to engage in extensive discussions with human resource personnel and direct supervisors to determine if workers can make positive changes to a negatively perceived work history. Dr. Thompson added, "Potential employees can be prepared through enhanced training, education, internship, and apprenticeship opportunities developed through collaboration between employers, training entities and other education institutions."

Preparations have begun on the FY 2019-2020 LAS project. Potential survey areas are being discussed for the Panhandle, Southwest Nebraska, and Central Nebraska areas. NDOL staff plan to produce more content using the statewide data set compiled in FY 2018-2019. Specifically, the creation of more internal and public Tableau dashboard visualizations are planned so that stakeholders may engage interactively with LAS data. New LAS process improvements include an accelerated timeline for survey mailing, additional business screening to increase response rates of employers and updated questionnaires.

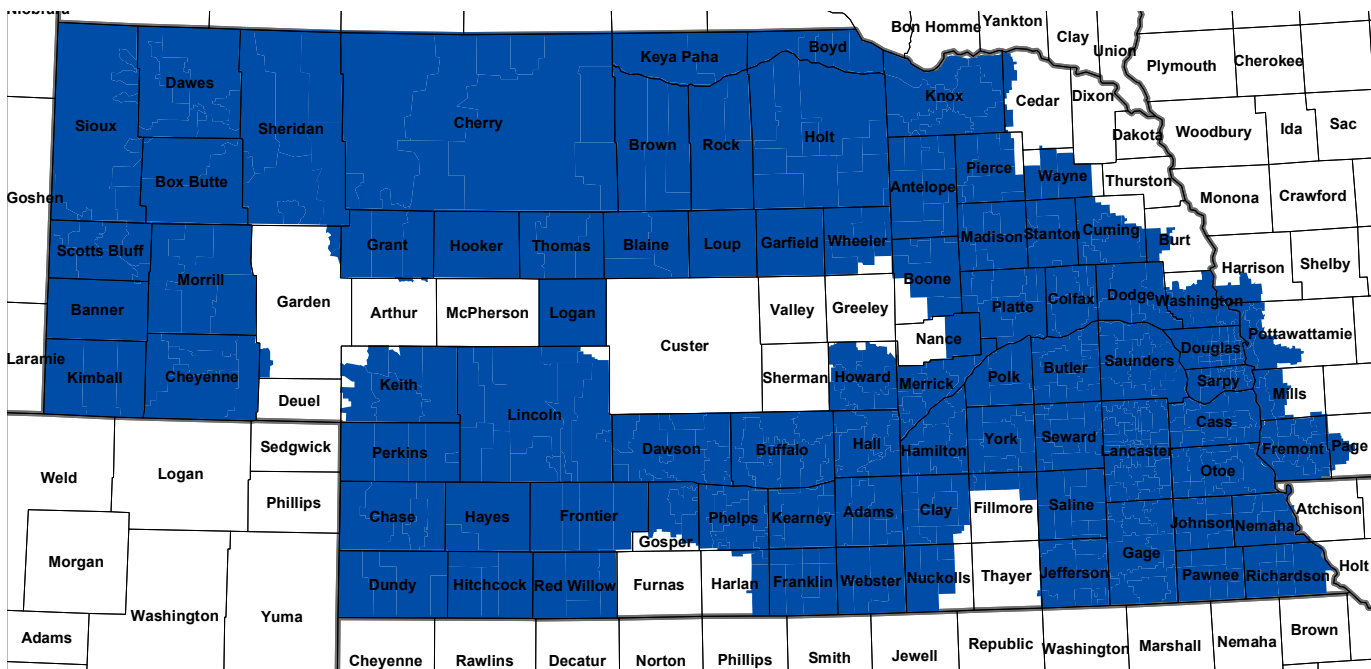
Appendix

Figure 1 Map of Sandhills and Niobrara River Labor Availability Survey Areas



*Valentine and O'Neill Hiring and Training Needs Reports do not include ZIP codes in South Dakota

Figure 2 Map of Statewide Hiring and Training Needs Data Area



*Statewide Labor Availability Data Set only includes Nebraska ZIP codes

The following tables contain highlighted data taken from the FY 2018-2019 LAS Reports. Full details for all areas can be found on the publications page of NEworks.nebraska.gov (<https://neworks.nebraska.gov/gsipub/index.asp?docid=802>).

Table 1 2010 Population of Labor Availability Report Survey Areas and Statewide Data Area

Survey Area	Sandhills Area	Niobrara River Area	The Cornhusker State
Report City	Valentine	O'Neill	Statewide Data Area
Survey Area Population	26,088	37,809	1,728,541
Survey Area Population (Age 18 and Over)	18,956	28,991	1,294,128
Report City Population	2,737	3,705	N/A
Report City Population (Age 18 and Over)	2,154	2,785	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP-1, 2010 Demographic Profile

Table 2 Response Rates

Survey Area	Sandhills Area	Niobrara River Area
Household	23.3%	27.0%
Business	43.9%	57.2%

Table 3 Potential Job Seekers and Active Job Seekers

Survey Area	Sandhills Area	Niobrara River Area	The Cornhusker State
Report City	Valentine	O'Neill	Statewide Data Area
Percent of Respondents who are Potential Job Seekers in Survey Area	33.4%	29.5%	35.2%
Percent of Respondents who are Active Job Seekers in Survey Area	19.7%	23.1%	31.1%
Survey Area Population (Age 18 and Over)	18,956	28,991	1,294,128
Estimated Number of Age 18 and Over Potential Job Seekers in Survey Area	6,328	8,567	454,984
Estimated Number of Active Job Seekers in Survey Area (Age 18 and Over)	1,250	1,982	141,277
City Population (Age 18 and Over)	2,154	2,785	N/A
Estimated Number of Potential Job Seekers in City (Age 18 and Over)	719	823	N/A
Estimated Number of Active Job Seekers in City (Age 18 and Over)	142	190	N/A

Table 4 Percentage of Businesses Indicating Difficulty Finding Workers by Industry

Survey Area	Sandhills Area	Niobrara River Area	The Cornhusker State
Report City	Valentine	O'Neill	Statewide Data Area
All Responding Businesses	90.0%	80.4%	71.4%
Industry			
Accommodation and Food Services	90.0%		69.2%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services			71.6%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	88.4%	81.4%	75.7%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation			63.0%
Construction	81.5%		78.5%
Educational Services			71.0%
Finance and Insurance		77.2%	66.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	90.0%	84.7%	74.2%
Information			61.2%
Management of Companies and Enterprises			76.3%
Manufacturing			74.8%
Other Services (except Public Administration)			63.8%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services			70.9%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing			71.6%
Retail Trade	72.7%	79.8%	69.6%
Transportation and Warehousing			77.5%
Wholesale Trade		80.3%	72.5%

Data for all industries and occupations for each city is not available.

Table 5 Percentage of Businesses Indicating Difficulty Finding Workers by Occupation

Survey Area	Sandhills Area	Niobrara River Area	The Cornhusker State
Report City	Valentine	O'Neill	Statewide Data Area
Occupation			
Architecture and Engineering			78.9%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media			65.9%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance			75.3%
Business and Financial Operations			62.1%
Community and Social Service			58.8%
Computer and Mathematical			70.7%
Construction and Extraction	86.8%		80.2%
Education, Training, and Library			82.8%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	93.0%		77.7%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	93.7%	77.8%	70.8%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical			80.8%
Healthcare Support			78.4%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair		90.1%	84.3%
Legal			67.6%
Life, Physical, and Social Science			75.3%
Management			69.0%
Office and Administrative Support	48.0%	62.4%	58.0%
Personal Care and Service			65.6%
Production			72.9%
Protective Service			71.6%
Sales and Related	76.8%	80.9%	69.3%
Transportation and Material Moving		85.8%	77.4%

Data for all industries and occupations for each city is not available.

Table 6 Area Entrants and Difficulty Hiring Due to Work History or Background Check

The following table contains data taken from the FY 2018-2019 Skills Gap Reports. Full details for all areas can be found on the publications page of NEworks.nebraska.gov (<https://neworks.nebraska.gov/gsipub/index.asp?docid=802>).

Survey Area	Sandhills Area	Niobrara River Area
Report City	Valentine	O’Neill
Annual Net Openings	304	426
Annual Entrants	183	243
Share of Employers Reporting Difficulty due to		
Poor Work History	56.4%	59.0%
Failed Background Check/ Drug Screen	22.9%	24.0%

Table 7 O’Neill Skills Gap Report - Key Findings for the Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch and Aquaculture Animals Occupation

The following table is a sample page taken from the O’Neill Skills Gap Report. Full details for all areas can be found on the publications page of NEworks.nebraska.gov (<https://neworks.nebraska.gov/gsipub/index.asp?docid=802>).

Occupation	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch and Aquaculture Animals (SOC 45-2093)	
	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch and Aquaculture Animals (SOC 45-2093)	All Occupations
Percent Indicating It is Difficult to Hire	82.2%	80.4%
Reasons for Difficulty in Hiring		
Lack of Experience	67.1%	53.7%
Poor Work History	59.3%	59.0%
Lack of Occupation-Specific Skills	52.8%	53.5%
Failed Background Check	22.2%	24.0%
Wage Demands Too High	34.3%	40.2%
Lack of Required Licenses/Certificates	3.7%	18.5%
Language Barriers	22.9%	4.9%
Not Enough Applicants	82.4%	87.5%
Availability for Shifts Required	19.3%	30.5%
Lack of Required Education	7.3%	15.1%
Overqualified	0.0%	5.8%
Citizenship/Work Authorization	26.8%	7.8%
Other	0.0%	1.2%
Average Annual Openings		
Graduates	15	
High School	11	
Seeking to Re-Enter the Workforce – In Occupation	0	
Minimum Experience Requirement		
No experience required	42.3%	58.5%
Experience required but less than 1 year	27.9%	26.1%
1 year or more experience required	29.8%	15.4%

Sources: O’Neill Area Survey of Hiring and Training Needs, O’Neill Area Labor Availability Survey, IPEDS, United States Department of Education and Labor Market Information, Nebraska Department of Labor

Support for the NDOL Labor Availability Study

Department of Economic Development

"The Labor Availability Study (LAS) conducted by the Nebraska Department of Labor, provides DED and other organizations across the state with detailed information regarding workers' and employer's perspective of the labor market that is not available from any other source. This includes skills gaps, which highlight potential careers in which we need more workers. Specifically, DED has used the LAS data to estimate the number of potential job seekers in an area and to analyze workers' actual and desired wages by their occupation and industry for several business recruitment and expansion projects, such as Project Spark, Husky and Pavestone. Furthermore, this data can be used for talent attraction, talent retention, recruiting new companies into the state, and assisting existing companies to expand. Without LAS, DED would have no data on underemployment and would be missing a wealth of information that can be used to better target our programs." - Jennifer Zarek, Melissa Trueblood, Dave Dearmont

Greater Omaha Chamber

"The Nebraska Department of Labor & LMI labor availability studies provide the Greater Omaha Chamber with essential data that is not available anywhere else. Our main uses for this data are to drive decision making on talent initiatives and provide detailed labor market statistics and projections to potential new employers in the Omaha metro. Specifically, we have collaborated with the NDOL on the 2017 Omaha study to append additional questions regarding IT talent in Omaha. This data provided detailed insights from employers on which IT occupations and skills are in demand and where shortages exist in the labor market. We have used this data to guide our Tech Talent Initiative, which is focused on attracting and retaining IT workers. We use the household survey data to help tell the labor story to new companies considering Omaha and local companies looking to expand. This is the only data available on underemployment, which is essential information for new and expanding employers in a tight labor market. The business survey data, along with the skills gap report, help us better understand the current and future needs of local businesses that we must address in order to stay competitive as a business community. In Chamber surveys and interviews with the local business, the biggest reported challenge related to the operation of their company and potential growth is the availability of labor. The level of detail available from the NDOL studies cannot be found elsewhere and helps us to target our efforts related to this challenge. We use it to focus and evaluate our programs on talent retention and attraction, which are vital for continued job growth in the greater Omaha area and Nebraska." - Pete Thompson