St. Louis Community College

2024 STATE OF THE ST. LOUIS
WORKFORCE

St. Louis
Community
College

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Foreword

The workforce landscape for 2024 is full of contradictions. In many ways, there is a return to balance in the economy. Key statistics are returning to pre-pandemic levels, and the rollercoaster that everyone experienced from 2020 - 2023 is starting to stabilize. Unemployment rates remain low. Labor supply and demand are coming into balance, at rates higher than 2019. Healthy real wage growth should continue to outpace inflation and sustain consumer spending, the backbone of the U.S. economy.

In contrast, other influences in the economy are exerting themselves and creating new stressors for workers and employers alike. Interest rates remain high. Many businesses have low interest debt coming due and some may not be able to afford the higher payments based on current interest rates or even qualify for the loan amid tightening credit conditions. Orders for manufacturing and construction are beginning to slow, signaling slower economic growth. As we see in the Spotlight on Startups, 2023 produced 2,127 fewer startups in the St. Louis area than in 2022. The aging workforce is starting to impact labor market participation rates; with more people opting for retirement, there are fewer workers to perform the same work.

Whatever the future brings, St. Louis Community College is prepared to support the region's workforce and companies with the education needed to step into the jobs of 2024 and beyond. Six new buildings will open throughout 2025, each fully equipped with the state-of-the art equipment needed to learn about working in health care, automotive, finance, tech and advanced manufacturing. The programs within these buildings will serve individuals in our community, ranging from high school students and recent graduates to adult workers, online students and lifelong learners. Wherever you are in your learning journey, we have a class, a program, or a degree that can assist you in achieving your next step of professional growth or personal enrichment.

As we learned in this year's employer survey, many employers do not fund continued training and education for workers. If that is the case, I urge you to explore the options at St. Louis Community College: education for in-demand fields, flexible learning formats, and affordable tuition. Online tuition has been lowered for all students outside St. Louis City and County. Government financial aid, grants, and scholarships are available to qualifying students. It's worth talking with an advisor to understand your choices and take a step towards a new job or new career. The world is moving forward after the pandemic, and we want the workers of St. Louis to be ready for their next opportunity.

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The 2024 State of the St. Louis Workforce report provides a comprehensive overview of the regional economic and workforce trends. The report highlights an industry sector each year to track trends that are key to the region. This report includes a spotlight on the health care industry, the largest employment sector for the St. Louis region, and a longtime creator of research and startups. The St. Louis area holds 48% of Missouri's jobs in health care. (Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Averages, 2023 Q1-3, 2022 Q4).

The 2024 State of the St. Louis Workforce report continues to be supported by the partnerships with our region's top economic and workforce institutions. The Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) has been a longtime partner, providing economic data.

The report includes labor market information from public sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau. Additional information is provided by analytical tools such as Chmura JobsEQ and Lightcast™ to provide insight on trends and forecasts. We also appreciate the continued support of our workforce development collaborators, including the Regional Business Council, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis and the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

We would like to thank and acknowledge our employers, our research partners and our media partner, without whom we would not be able to bring this informative report to the region. We hope that you find the report valuable and use its findings for the benefit of your organization and our community.

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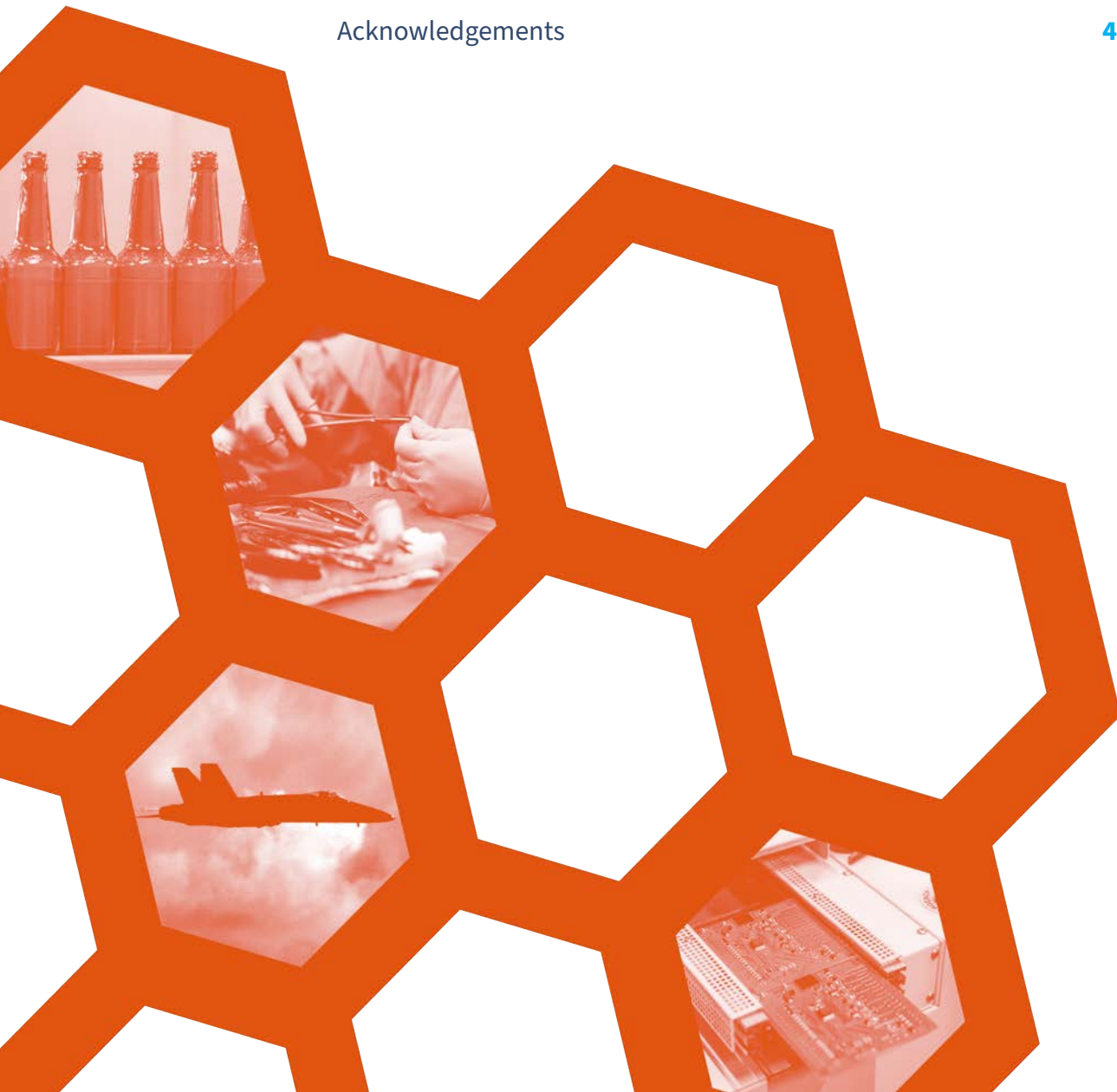
Methodology

The 2024 State of the St. Louis Workforce report includes four distinct sections: The St. Louis Economy, a compilation of labor market information using public and proprietary sources and tools; the Employer Survey; and two Spotlight sections, focusing on Startups and Health Care.

St. Louis Economy

This section includes an analysis of available data from public sources, including the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics and the United States Census Bureau, which describes the characteristics of the labor force and correlates unemployment with various labor force demographics. Analysis of real-time labor market demand is aggregated through the proprietary Lightcast™ tool, which searches web-based job boards to discern the level of demand for certain occupations, and the skills and certifications that employers are requesting.

Employer Survey

The State of the St. Louis Workforce report utilizes first-person telephonic interviews of regional employers. Each of the 2024 survey interviews averaged 20 minutes to complete. During April, 2024, 600 local companies in 16 industry categories were surveyed. These companies covered the 23 two-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes that represent a composite picture of the St. Louis regional economy.

Employer Respondents by NAICS*

NAICS	Category Description	Businesses Surveyed	Percent
NAICS 23	Construction	43	7.2%
NAICS 31-33	Manufacturing	31	5.2%
NAICS 42	Wholesale trade	30	5.0%
NAICS 44-45	Retail trade	90	15.0%
NAICS 48-49	Transportation and warehousing	12	2.0%
NAICS 51	Information	8	1.3%
NAICS 52	Finance and insurance	34	5.7%
NAICS 53	Real estate and rental and leasing	24	4.0%
NAICS 54	Professional and technical services	53	8.8%
NAICS 56	Administrative and waste services	16	2.7%
NAICS 61	Educational services	5	0.8%
NAICS 62	Health care and social assistance	108	18.0%
NAICS 71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	22	3.7%
NAICS 72	Accommodation and food services	74	12.3%
NAICS 81	Other services	36	6.0%
	Other small sectors and unclassified*	14	2.3%
	Total	**600**	**100.00%**

*North American Industry Classification System

Survey respondents were asked 22 questions, some with multiple parts, related to hiring trends, job applicants, skill needs and training budgets. Companies interviewed for the survey were selected randomly within each of the 16 industry categories from a categorized list of the 42,192 businesses in the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that employed five or more employees from the Reference USA employer database provided by the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC). The survey instrument is provided in the Appendix to this report.

Spotlight on…

This year's report highlights two key aspects of our regional economy with additional data and analysis: startups and the jobs they create, and the health care sector.

Spotlight on Startups explores the creation of first-time jobs in the St. Louis region. Through analysis supplied by MOSourceLink, this section showcases the number of new firms and the new first-time jobs that they create in the Missouri portion of the St. Louis MSA.

For this identification of new jobs, a new startup is identified with the first appearance of firm records in the employer file in the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). Individual records of wages paid for Unemployment Insurance serve as the trigger for identifying new jobs.

In this method, new startups are new establishments. Only employees that were hired for wages paid for Unemployment Insurance are counted as employees, whether full-time or part-time, and do not include those who are self-employed or contract employees.

The Spotlight on Health Care section focuses on the size of the industry in the region, its workforce and the challenges it faces.

1,495,200

The size of the St. Louis workforce, the largest ever, as of May 2024.

U.S. Department of Labor

St. Louis Economy

The bi-state St. Louis, Missouri-Illinois Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes 15 counties in Missouri and Illinois with an estimated population of over 2.8 million.

St. Louis MSA Job Count by County

Calhoun 680
Macoupin 9,289
Jersey 4,716
Lincoln 11,453
Bond 3,847
Madison 93,884
St. Charles 146,927
Warren 7,165
St. Louis County 576,660
Clinton 10,989
St. Clair 80,740
Franklin 35,559
Jefferson 44,288
Monroe 8,127
St. Louis City 195,936

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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application, Primary Jobs (public and private sector) 2020.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2022, the area had a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of $209 billion in current dollars (not adjusted for inflation). This was a 9% increase from $192 billion in 2021, and a 19% increase over the pre-pandemic GDP of $175 billion in 2019. Private Sector businesses accounted for 92% of the region's output, with Government accounting for the remaining 8%. The seven Missouri counties in the St. Louis MSA account for nearly 44% of Missouri's economic performance.

Employment

The St. Louis MSA has a diverse economy with a labor force of over 1.3 million in 2023 that work in a wide range of industries. Health Care & Social Assistance makes up 16% of total employment, followed closely by Wholesale & Retail Trade, which makes up 14.9% of total employment. Health Care & Social Assistance jobs increased by over 27,000, or 14% over the last 10 years. Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities also had a large increase in employment over the last 10 years, increasing by over 13,000 employees (24.5%). Although it is still the second largest employing industry group, Wholesale and Retail Trade had the largest numeric decrease over the 10-year period, declining by 2,663 jobs, or a 1.3% drop. Overall, the St. Louis economy increased by 91,000 employees (7.1%) from 2013 - 2023.

St. Louis MSA Industry Employment

Industry	2023	2013
Health Care and Social Assistance	221,084	193,730
Wholesale & Retail Trade	205,851	208,514
Leisure & Hospitality	151,813	149,077
Manufacturing	120,035	109,685
Educational Services	109,444	105,868
Administrative and Support Services	91,842	87,923
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	91,576	74,722
Construction	75,592	62,410
Finance and Insurance	74,045	69,332
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	67,552	54,268
Other Services	41,624	43,672
Management of Companies and Enterprises	41,084	42,466
Public Administration	31,013	31,826
Information	30,187	31,142
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	21,784	19,523
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining & Quarrying	4,887	3,804

Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Averages

Unemployment

Unemployment rates in the St. Louis MSA slowly increased over the past year, from 2.7% in April 2023 to 3.4% in March 2024. Over the past year, unemployment rates for the St. Louis MSA have been consistently lower than the national rate.

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate by Quarter
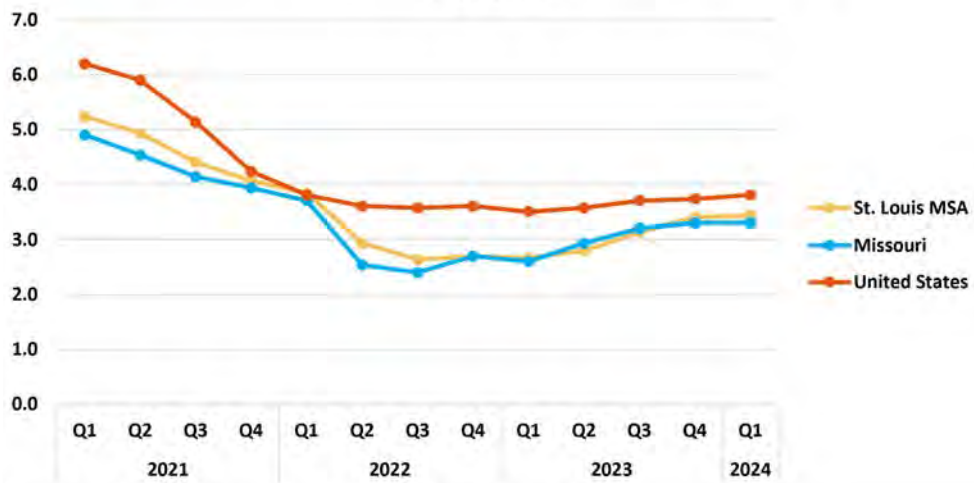
Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Unemployment Demographics

Unemployment rates vary greatly with age and sex. The largest differences in unemployment rates between males and females were in the youngest age groups. For workers aged 20-21, males have a 12.3% unemployment rate, while female workers have only a 5.8% rate. Unemployment rates between males and females were nearly equal in the 35-59 age groups. In 2022, St. Louis MSA unemployment rates for all ages were 4.2% in males and 3.7% in females.

St. Louis MSA Age of the Workforce

Legend: ■ 2013 ■ 2023

Age group	2013	2023
14-18	2%	3%
19-21	5%	5%
22-24	6%	6%
25-34	22%	21%
35-44	21%	22%
45-54	23%	19%
55-64	16%	17%
65+	5%	7%
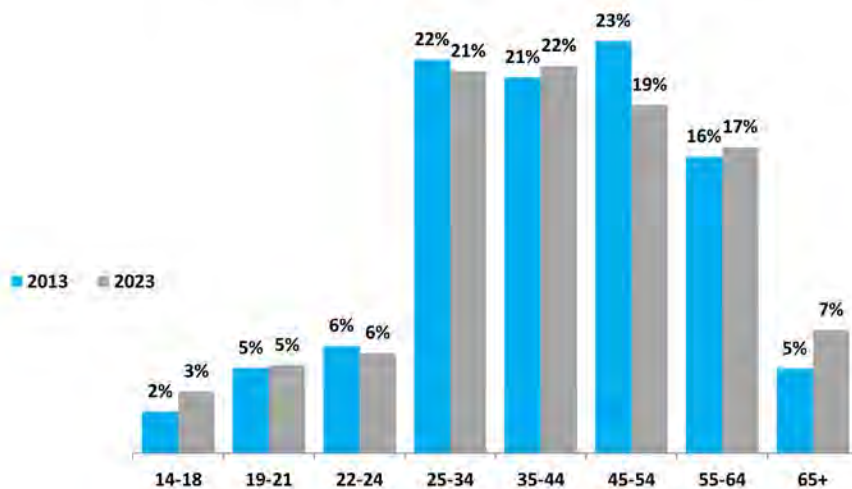
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, QWI Explorer. Data accessed March 2024

Workforce Demographics

In 2023, the 35-44 age group had the largest share of the St. Louis area's workforce at 22%. The St. Louis age profile has changed over time. The share of workers in the oldest age groups has increased over the last 10 years, while the share of workers in the 45-54 years age group has decreased. With one-fourth of the workforce age 55 or older, St. Louis follows the national trend of an aging workforce.

Educational Attainment

Nearly one-half (46%) of the region's population age 25 and older have a high school diploma but no post-secondary degree. This is lower than the state rate of 51% and higher than the national rate of 45%. In St. Louis, 39% of workers hold a bachelor's degree or greater, which is higher than both the state (33%) and national (36%) rates.

Educational Attainment of the Population*

■ St. Louis ■ Missouri

Category	St. Louis	Missouri
No High School diploma	7%	9%
High school graduate (or equivalent)	25%	30%
Some college, no degree	21%	21%
Associate degree	9%	8%
Bachelor's degree	23%	20%
Graduate or professional degree	16%	13%
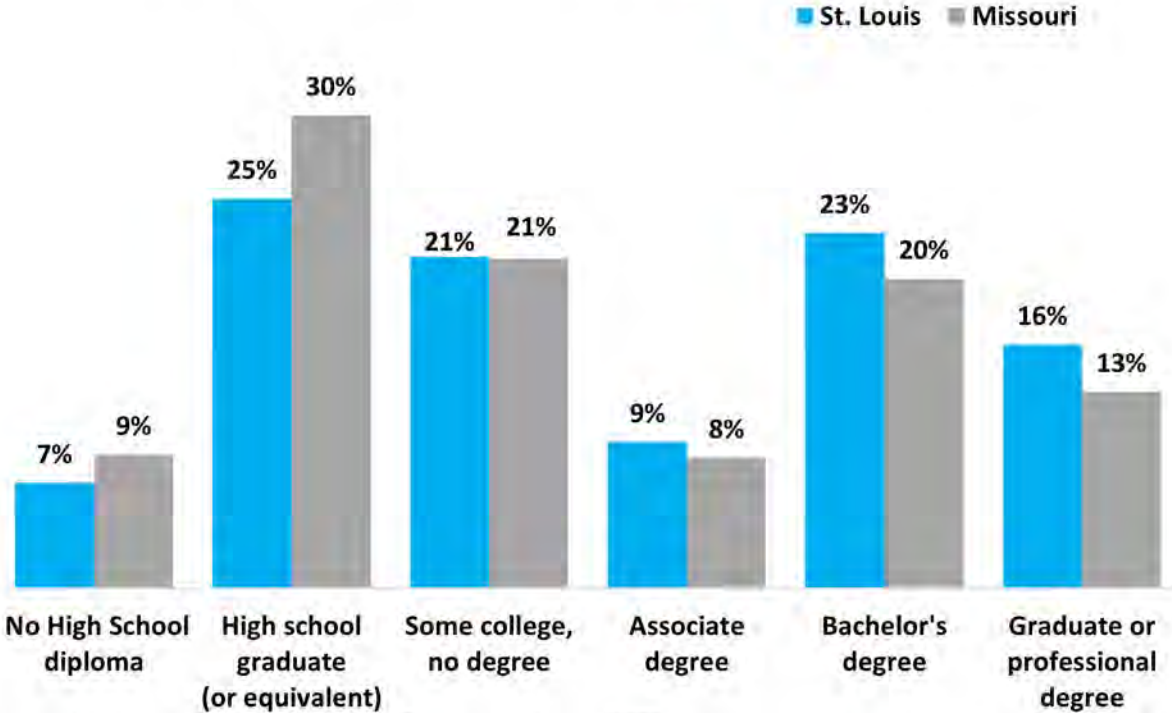
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2022 1-year estimates.
*Population age 25 and over

St. Louis MSA data for 2022 shows that unemployment rates decrease, and income increases with additional education levels. A bachelor's degree or higher, compared to a high school diploma, reduces the unemployment rate by 4 percentage points and increases median annual earnings by $36,560 on average.

Unemployment Rates and Earnings
by Education Population 25 years and older

	Unemployment Rates	Educational Attainment	Median Earnings
Missouri	7.6%	Less than high school graduate	$28,414
	4.1%	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	$35,612
	3.0%	Some college or associate's degree	$41,874
	1.4%	Bachelor's degree or higher	$64,294
St. Louis MSA	9.0%	Less than high school graduate	$29,787
	5.6%	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	$36,458
	3.0%	Some college or associate's degree	$44,825
	1.7%	Bachelor's degree or higher	$73,019

*Bachelor's ($57,693) and graduate ($70,894) degree medians.
Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

The highest unemployment rates and lowest wages belong to workers with less than a high school education. Unemployment rates for those without a high school diploma or GED are 3.4 percentage points higher than those with a high school diploma or equivalent. The gap increases to 6 percentage points when compared to those with some college or an associate's degree.

Missouri shows similar trends, with workers who do not have a high school education experiencing an unemployment rate of 7.6%, and those with a bachelor's degree or higher having an unemployment rate of 1.4%. Less experienced and/or less educated job seekers often have a more difficult time finding quality employment.

Current Job Demand

Job postings provide a way to measure current employment demand. Over the past year, there were over 346,000 online job postings in the St. Louis MSA, down 23% from the previous year's 450,000 postings.

Of the online job postings for the St. Louis MSA from May 2023 to April 2024, the overall top-posted job was registered nurses (29,730). This was followed by retail salespersons (9,270). Software developers remained the third most posted job, (6,580), though with 37% drop in postings from last year. Two of the top occupations were management and supervisor jobs, two were health care practitioners, two were transportation-related, two were IT roles and two were sales occupations.

Top Job Postings

Now
High School Education or Less and/or Short-Term Training

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Online Job Ads
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	9,270
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	5,950
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4,470
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,200

Next
Moderate/Long-Term Training to Associate Degree

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Online Job Ads
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	5,860
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5,820
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	5,100

Later
Bachelor's Degree or Higher

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Online Job Ads
29-1141	Registered Nurses	29,730
15-1252	Software Developers	6,580
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	5,260
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	4,370

Source: Lightcast™, Online Job Ads May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024

Skills and Qualifications

In the St. Louis MSA, communication was the top skill demand of employers, requested in 32% of total job postings. Other top-demanded common skills continue to include customer service, management, and leadership. Registered nurse was the occupation with the most job postings, and nursing was the top requested specialized skill, followed by project management and merchandising.

Last year's second and third most requested skills, marketing and auditing, dropped to fourth and fifth this year. Microsoft® Office and its products such as Word®, Excel®, PowerPoint® and Access® are the most requested software skills across all occupations and industries. Other top requested software and programming skills included *SQL* and *Python*.

Top Qualifications	Online Job Ads
Registered Nurse (RN)	37,020
Valid Driver's License	31,920
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	22,140
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	9,730
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	9,580
Security Clearance	8,140
Secret Clearance	5,310
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	4,850
Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification	4,590
Nurse Practitioner (APRN-CNP)	3,340

Source: Lightcast™, Online Job Ads May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024

Top Common Skills	Online Job Ads	% of Total Postings
Communication	109,750	32%
Customer Service	86,180	25%
Management	73,720	21%
Leadership	52,600	15%
Sales	51,930	15%
Operations	51,400	15%
Problem Solving	41,260	12%
Detailed Oriented	40,120	12%
Planning	33,380	10%
Writing	30,540	9%

Source: Lightcast™, Online Job Ads May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024

Top Specialized Skills	Online Job Ads	% of Total Postings
Nursing	34,710	10%
Project Management	19,250	6%
Merchandising	19,190	6%
Marketing	17,630	5%
Auditing	16,390	5%
Data Entry	15,100	4%
Accounting	14,090	4%
Warehousing	13,010	4%
Selling Techniques	13,010	4%
Machinery	12,800	4%

Source: Lightcast™, Online Job Ads May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024

Top Software Skills	Online Job Ads	% of Total Postings
SQL (Programming Language)	5,630	2%
Python (Programming Language)	4,500	1%
Spreadsheets	3,970	1%
SAP Applications	3,840	1%
Java (Programming Language)	3,650	1%
Epic EMR	3,540	1%
Operating Systems	3,310	1%
Amazon Web Services	3,210	1%
Salesforce	3,160	1%
JIRA	2,600	1%

Source: Lightcast™, Online Job Ads May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024

Employer Survey

The 2024 employer survey marks the 16th annual telephone survey of companies throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area. The goal is to understand the hiring trends, business climate, occupational skills, and demands from businesses across the St. Louis region. This year's survey included 600 companies in 16 employer categories across 23 industry segments as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). These companies represent a composite picture of the regional industries and economy.

A statistically significant sample was surveyed from each industry category for the St. Louis MSA. Geographically, the firms interviewed also represented the entire St. Louis MSA. The number of employers surveyed in each industry category are listed in the Methodology section.

Although the companies interviewed reflect a wide range of sizes as measured by number of employees, as with past years, the majority of the respondents for this year's survey consisted of small- and mid-sized businesses with fewer than 50 employees. Companies employing fewer than five employees were not selected for interview. (See the Spotlight on Startups section on page 39 for information on new jobs created by startups.)

Each employer was asked a series of 22 questions, several with multiple parts, to understand their hiring outlooks and challenges, as well as practices that either created barriers to, or opportunities for, employment and advancement.

Employment Size of Firms Surveyed

41%
39%
20%

- 5 to 10   - 11 to 49   - 50 or more
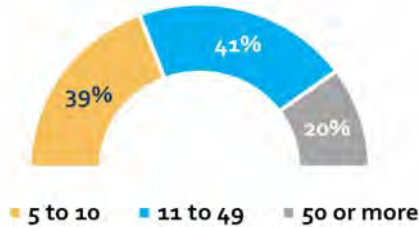
This year's survey continued to pose questions that examine partnerships to help firms source talent, work-based learning experiences for students and young adults, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives at firms. New questions were introduced regarding remote work policies, training expenditures and skills-based hiring. The specific survey questions are provided in the Appendix.

Hiring Trends

National trends in hiring continued to be filled with mixed signals. The persistence of higher interest rates may cause some companies to be reluctant to expand and hire new employees. The quarterly job statistics told a different story, with job gains consistently beating the forecasts. Job growth continued over the last year and in May 2024, St. Louis had the largest workforce in its history at 1,459,200.

Employers in the survey have historically taken an optimistic view of their employment outlook: forecasts filled with hiring often turn into a reality of less hiring and more companies shedding employees by the next survey. Whether it is an overly optimistic outlook or later adjustments due to economic factors, this is a consistent trend in the survey results.

The Past Year

Fewer companies reported hiring in 2024 than in 2023, with more companies keeping the same number of employees or decreasing their staff. Only 28% of employers reported increased employment in the 2024 survey, down slightly from 30% in 2023, and much lower than pre-pandemic levels that approached 37 percent.

More employers maintained the same employment levels during 2024 compared to previous years. Fifty-seven percent of companies surveyed kept employment levels the same, down from 54% last year. Overall, surveyed companies decreased their headcount by 15%, which is very typical over the last decade, except for the pandemic blip in 2021.

Change in Employment Levels over the Last 12 Months

Increased Significantly
- 2024: 10%
- 2023: 12%
- 2021: 7%
- 2019: 10%
- 2013: 6%

Increased Slightly
- 2024: 18%
- 2023: 17%
- 2021: 15%
- 2019: 27%
- 2013: 27%

Remained the Same as Before
- 2024: 5
- 2023: 54%
- 2021: 47%
- 2019: 48%
- 2013: 53%

Decreased Slightly
- 2024: 11%
- 2023: 11%
- 2021: 17%
- 2019: 13%
- 2013: 11%

Decreased Significantly
- 2024: 4%
- 2023: 5%
- 2021: 14%
- 2019: 2%
- 2013: 2%
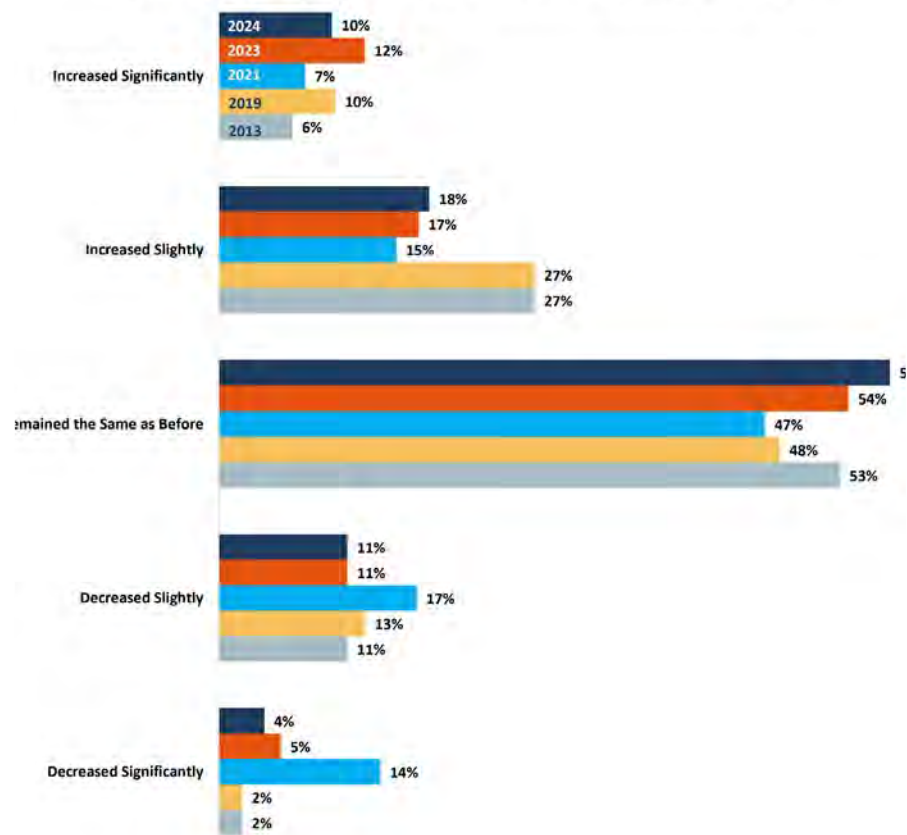
Looking Ahead

The forecast is trending towards slightly less hiring and more companies keeping the same number of employees. Approximately 43% of employers reported that they planned to increase employment levels, down slightly from 46% last year. Fifty-four percent of companies indicated that they plan to remain at the same employment levels, a level of inactivity that was consistently reported between the Recession and the start of the pandemic in 2020.

Only 3% of companies are expecting to reduce their headcount over the next year. This will likely prove to be unrealistic, especially as more companies see low interest rate debt come due, and are faced with the reality that current revenues may not be able to cover the interest expense at the current higher interest rates.

Future Plans to Change Employment Levels in the Next 12 Months

Increase Significantly
- 2024: 12%
- 2023: 13%
- 2021: 21%
- 2019: 7%
- 2013: 6%

Increase Slightly
- 2024: 31%
- 2023: 33%
- 2021: 41%
- 2019: 32%
- 2013: 27%

Remain the Same as Before
- 2024: 54%
- 2023: 51%
- 2021: 35%
- 2019: 57%
- 2013: 53%

Decrease Slightly
- 2024: 2%
- 2023: 3%
- 2021: 2%
- 2019: 3%
- 2013: 11%

Decrease Significantly
- 2024: 1%
- 2023: 1%
- 2021: 1%
- 2019: 2%
- 2013: 2%
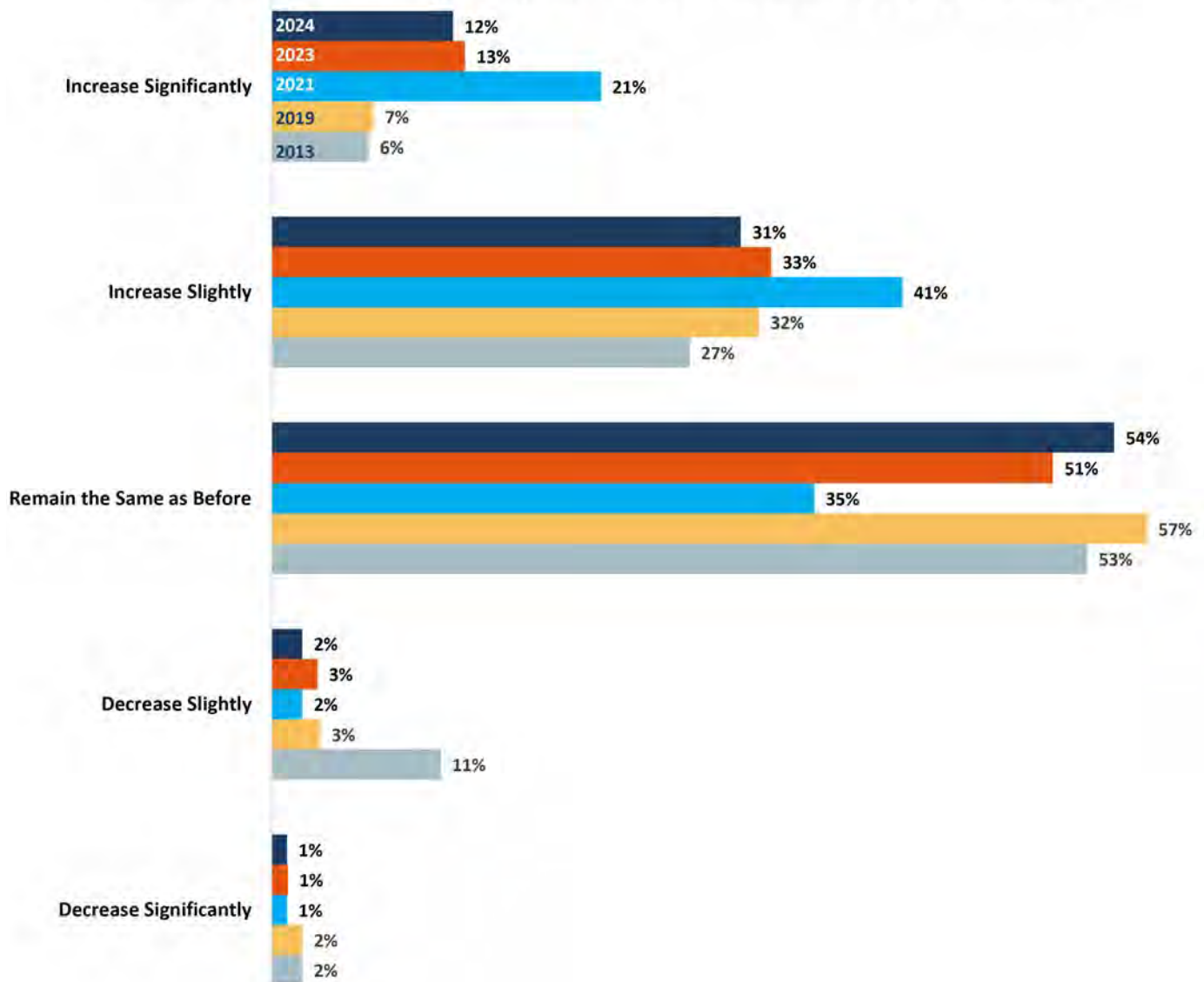
Expanding Employment

The State of the St. Louis Workforce survey asked employers about perceived barriers to expanding employment.

Barriers and Skill Gaps

Employers continued to identify a shortage of workers with knowledge or skills (53%) as their top barrier to expanding employment. Economic conditions and government policies or regulations rebounded from last year, increasing by 4% and 5%, respectively. The lack of transportation access and lack of childcare access remain a constant barrier in the survey responses. These two factors have changed very little over the last decade.

Potential Barriers to Expanding Employment

Shortage of Workers with Knowledge or Skills
- 2024: 53%
- 2023: 46%
- 2021: 58%
- 2019: 46%
- 2013: 38%

Economic Conditions
- 2024: 18%
- 2023: 14%
- 2021: 40%
- 2019: 30%
- 2013: 50%

Government Policies or Regulations
- 2024: 10%
- 2023: 5%
- 2021: 36%
- 2019: 22%
- 2013: 37%

Lack of Transportation Access
- 2024: 16%
- 2023: 15%
- 2021: 19%
- 2019: 18%
- 2013: 13%

Lack of Childcare Access
- 2024: 14%
- 2023: 13%
- 2021: 21%
- 2019: 12%
- 2013: 13%

Lack of information regarding the occupation
- 2024: 9%
- 2023: 9%
- 2021: 13%
- 2019: 10%
- 2013: 12%

Shortage of Available Training Programs
- 2024: 13%
- 2023: 8%
- 2021: 13%
- 2019: 11%
- 2013: 12%

Employment Training

In a new series of questions, the survey explored barriers that workers may experience in participating in training on the job. Employers reported that nearly 50% of their workers had no barriers to receiving training. A quarter of employees were expected to complete training on their own time, while another 19% find it difficult to fit training into the work day.

Barriers Faced by Employees Interested in Training

Category	Percentage
Have not encountered any barriers to receiving training	47%
Completing training on personal time is a barrier	25%
Work responsibilities restrict availability to participate	19%
The organization cannot sponsor the cost of training	6%
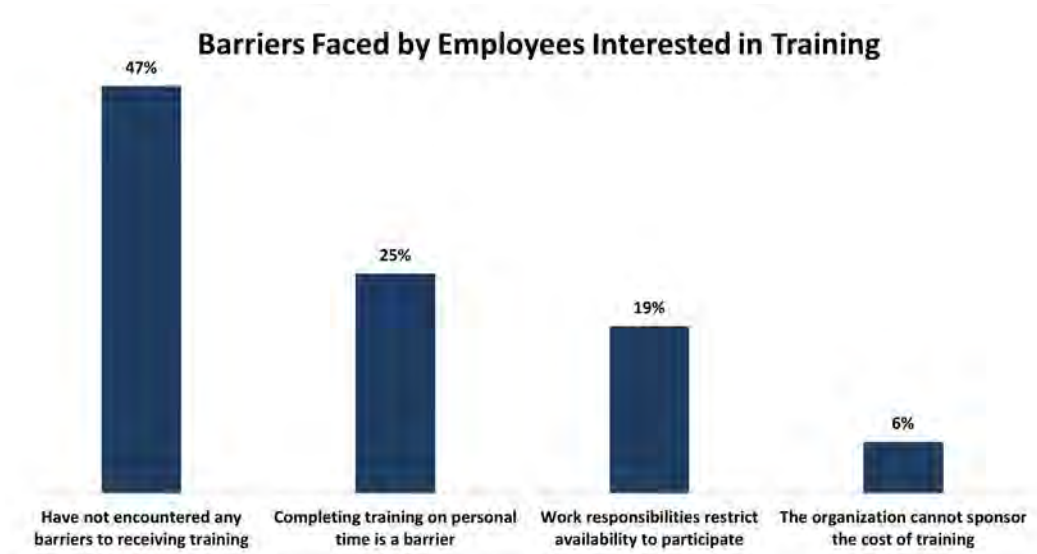
Twenty-four percent of companies reported that they spend no money on employee training. Another 42% of companies spend $500 or less per employee on training, which could significantly limit training opportunities and career growth.

Annual Amount Spent on Training per Employee

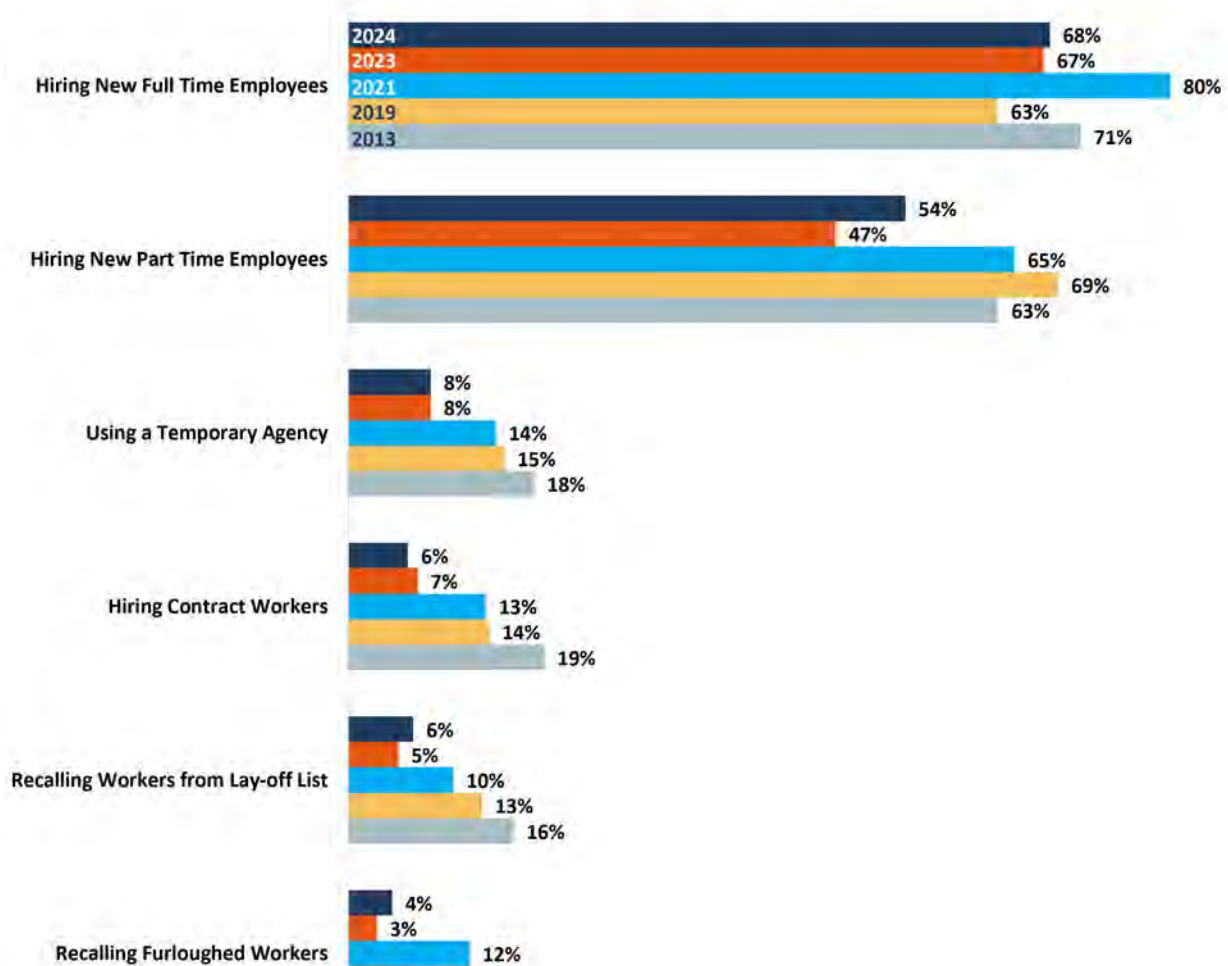| Category	Percentage
More than $1,500	11%
$1,000-$1,500	12%
$501-$999	12%
$201-$500	27%
Up to $200	15%
We do not spend any money on training	24%

Adding Employees

Hiring new full-time workers remained the preferred option for employers that wish to add workers, with 68% of companies reporting this choice. This continues to be the top choice for most companies for over a decade.

Hiring part-time workers rebounded in this year's survey responses, up 7% to 54% of surveyed companies. Companies that are struggling to find qualified full-time applicants may be turning to part-time workers to fill roles. All other options for hiring remained steady, albeit at very low levels, including hiring temps or contract workers, lay-off recalls and furloughed worker recalls.

Methods to Add Workers

Hiring New Full Time Employees
- 2024: 68%
- 2023: 67%
- 2021: 80%
- 2019: 63%
- 2013: 71%

Hiring New Part Time Employees
- 2024: 54%
- 2023: 47%
- 2021: 65%
- 2019: 69%
- 2013: 63%

Using a Temporary Agency
- 2024: 8%
- 2023: 8%
- 2021: 14%
- 2019: 15%
- 2013: 18%

Hiring Contract Workers
- 2024: 6%
- 2023: 7%
- 2021: 13%
- 2019: 14%
- 2013: 19%

Recalling Workers from Lay-off List
- 2024: 6%
- 2023: 5%
- 2021: 10%
- 2019: 13%
- 2013: 16%

Recalling Furloughed Workers
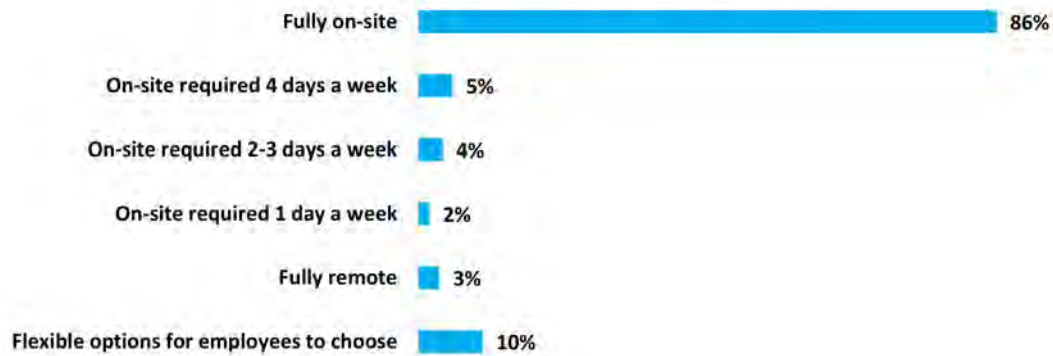- 2024: 4%
- 2023: 3%
- 2021: 12%

Remote Work

In 2020, the pandemic pushed companies to determine which jobs could work off-site and still be productive. No other aspect of the pandemic effected so many parts of a company: HR policy, long-term real estate needs, remote hires, internal communication and culture, and the ability to collaborate. The trends in 2024 indicate a recommitment to offices and real estate, fewer fully remote workers, and a refocusing on the need for collaboration and in-person interaction. Companies appear to be settling into their policies on remote work for the foreseeable future.

Employers Remote Work Policy
(more than one answer could be selected)

Category	Percent
Fully on-site	86%
On-site required 4 days a week	5%
On-site required 2-3 days a week	4%
On-site required 1 day a week	2%
Fully remote	3%
Flexible options for employees to choose	10%

Prior to the pandemic, it is estimated that 6% of employees worked remotely in any way. The 2024 survey indicates that for the St. Louis region, 3% of companies offer fully remote work options. Four percent require workers to be on-site one to three days each week. Another 5% require staff to be on-site four days each week. Ten percent of companies allow flexibility on how many days the employees report in-person. The remaining 86% of companies require workers to be fully on-site each week.

Most employers appear to be getting comfortable with their remote work policies with 87% of companies expecting no change in policies in the next year. Eight percent expect to increase the number of workers with remote work options, and only 5% anticipate decreasing their remote work arrangements.

Expected change in number of remote workers over the next 12 months

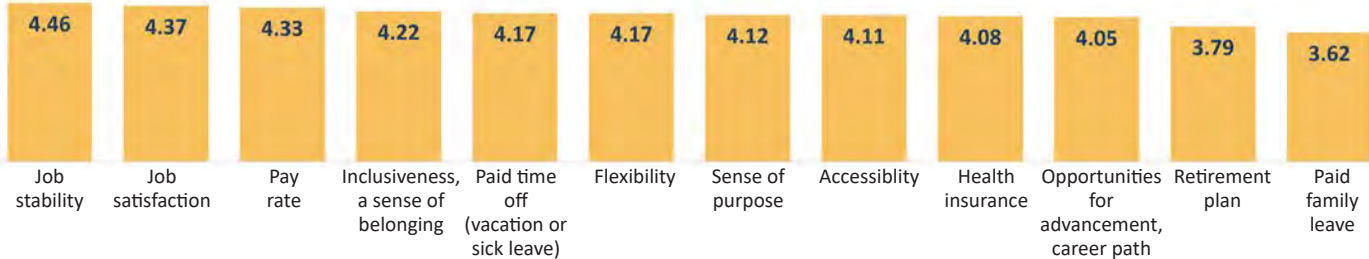|	2024	2023	2021	2022
Increase	8%	12%	22%	10%
Stay the same	87%	75%	59%	49%
Decrease	5%	12%	19%	41%
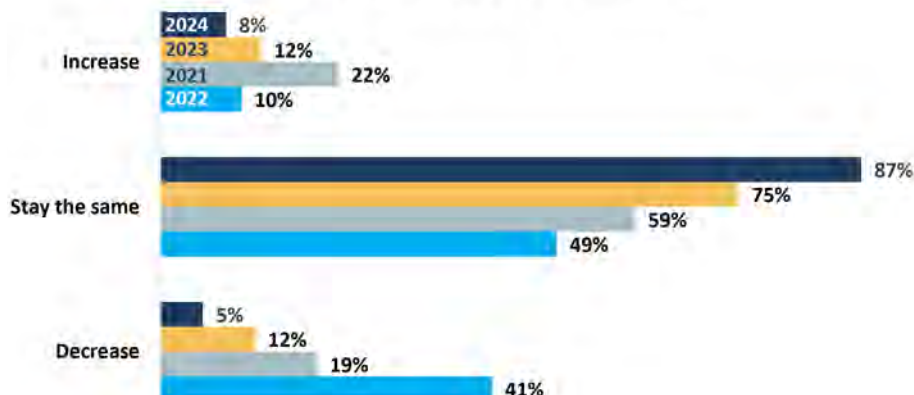
What Makes a "Good Job?"

This question was added to the survey a few years ago, and the responses have been fairly consistent each year. Four responses stay in the top four spots: job stability, job satisfaction, pay rate, inclusiveness and a sense of belonging. The order varies from year-to-year, but these are the highest rated characteristics. The lowest ranked items each year are: opportunities for advancement / career path, retirement plan, and paid family leave. The characteristics that sit in the middle juggle rankings slightly, but rarely rise to the top or drop to the bottom of the list. This year, paid time off (vacation or sick leave) made the largest jump in the ranking, from 9 in 2023 to 5 in 2024.

It is important to remember that this is the employer's view of the characteristics of a good job. During the pandemic, employees' priorities changed due to the stresses and risk that they experienced based on their job and family situation. A survey by the Federal Reserve of workers that were impacted by the pandemic found that workers prioritized flexibility, opportunities with a career path and pay commensurate with responsibilities.

Characteristics of a "Good Job"

Characteristic	Rating
Job stability	4.46
Job satisfaction	4.37
Pay rate	4.33
Inclusiveness, a sense of belonging	4.22
Paid time off (vacation or sick leave)	4.17
Flexibility	4.17
Sense of purpose	4.12
Accessiblity	4.11
Health insurance	4.08
Opportunities for advancement, career path	4.05
Retirement plan	3.79
Paid family leave	3.62

Shortcomings of Job Applicants

Each year, the survey questions employers about the possible shortcomings they see in job applicants. Poor work habits continue to lead the list with 67% of employers noting it, the highest response to this question in over a decade. Lack of general business or industry knowledge continues in second place, increasing 5% to 57% of companies. Lack of communication and lack of critical thinking and problem solving round out the top four responses again in 2024, all with over 50% of employers reporting these as observed shortcomings in job applicants.

Shortcomings Seen in Job Applicants

Legend: 2024, 2023, 2021, 2019, 2013

Poor Work Habits (Ethic)
- 2024: 67%
- 2023: 64%
- 2021: 65%
- 2019: 66%
- 2013: 56%

Lack of General Business or Industry Knowledge
- 2024: 57%
- 2023: 52%
- 2021: 57%
- 2019: 44%
- 2013: 50%

Lack of Communication or Interpersonal Skills
- 2024: 52%
- 2023: 51%
- 2021: 53%
- 2019: 56%
- 2013: 59%

Lack of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- 2024: 53%
- 2023: 50%
- 2021: 56%
- 2019: 49%
- 2013: 55%

Unwillingness or Inability to Learn
- 2024: 42%
- 2023: 43%
- 2021: 44%
- 2019: 38%
- 2013: 24%

Inability to Think Creatively
- 2024: 45%
- 2023: 42%
- 2021: 52%
- 2019: 39%
- 2013: 44%

Lack of Teamwork or Collaboration
- 2024: 41%
- 2023: 40%
- 2021: 42%
- 2019: 47%
- 2013: 35%

Lack of Technical Skills Specific to the Job
- 2024: 43%
- 2023: 40%
- 2021: 45%
- 2019: 39%
- 2013: 41%

Lack of Writing Skills
- 2024: 33%
- 2023: 30%
- 2021: 36%
- 2019: 43%
- 2013: 44%

Lack of General Computer Skills
- 2024: 31%
- 2023: 29%
- 2021: 30%
- 2019: 26%
- 2013: 26%

Inability to Understand Written & Graphical Information
- 2024: 29%
- 2023: 29%
- 2021: 31%
- 2019: 28%
- 2013: 30%

Lack of Basic Math Skills
- 2024: 33%
- 2023: 29%
- 2021: 33%
- 2019: 34%
- 2013: 29%

Inability to Pass a Drug Test
- 2024: 31%
- 2023: 28%
- 2021: 28%

Inability to Interact with Different Cultures or Socio-Economic Backgrounds
- 2024: 32%
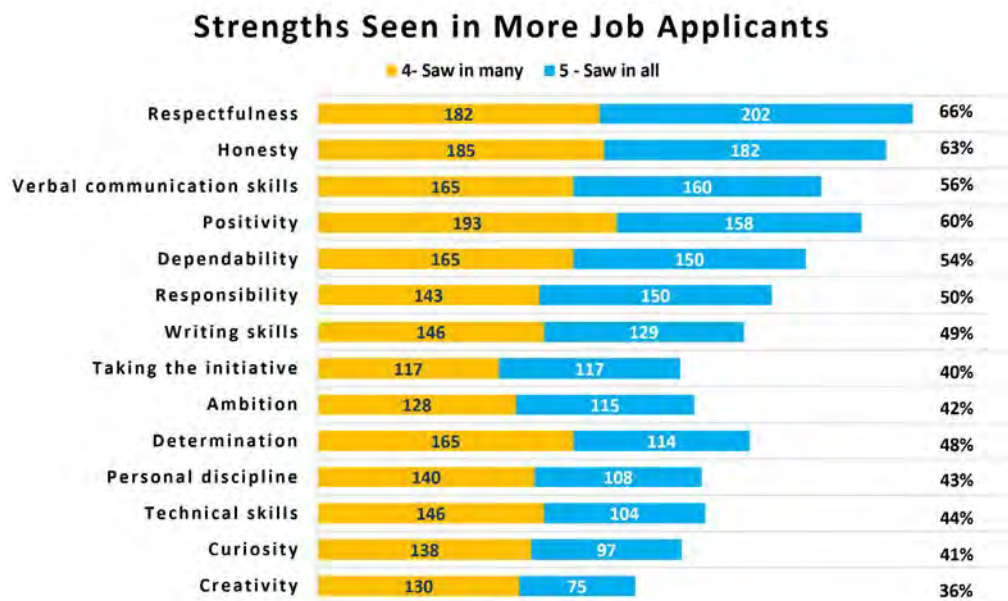- 2023: 26%
- 2021: 23%
- 2019: 42%

With a shortage of workers and job applicants in most industries, a lack of industry knowledge ranks higher on the list than it traditionally does. Two other skill areas that are worth watching for the foreseeable future are writing skills and basic math skills. Both subjects are testing significantly lower in all grade levels since the pandemic. The older students that may be struggling to work at "grade level" with these skills are now finishing high school and moving into college and jobs. Employers may need to identify ways to support these young workers and provide additional training.

The "soft skills" or "essential skills" that help employee job success are still observed to be shortcomings in applicants. Both the pandemic's impact and political divisions may be contributing to these areas of concern. Higher rates of conflict and the inability to interact with different cultures or socio-economic backgrounds are experienced more frequently by employers. Encouraging collaboration and teamwork is difficult when these frictions are present in more workplaces.

Another area of concern is a job applicant's inability to pass a drug test. Nearly a third of surveyed companies identified this as a challenge in hiring. With marijuana legalized in Missouri, llinois and 22 other states (and 38 states legalizing medical marijuana), more employers may experience challenges with job applicants and workers failing drug tests. Being a legalized drug does not make it safe on the job site nor acceptable for the compliance with government contracts, a requirement that workers may not understand.
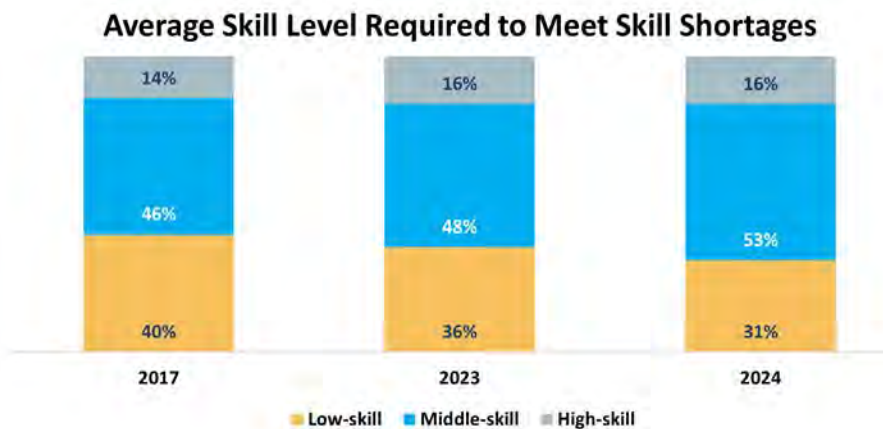
Strengths Seen in Job Applicants

In contrast with the shortcomings seen in job applicants, we also surveyed the perceived strengths of job applicants. This is the third year of surveying for this question and results were very similar to last year's results with respectfulness, honesty and positivity as the top characteristics that were seen in many or all job applicants by employers. Dependability, determination and personal discipline were all noted as occurring more frequently by companies than in last year's survey.

Strengths Seen in More Job Applicants

● 4- Saw in many   ■ 5 - Saw in all

Characteristic	4 - Saw in many	5 - Saw in all	%
Respectfulness	182	202	66%
Honesty	185	182	63%
Verbal communication skills	165	160	56%
Positivity	193	158	60%
Dependability	165	150	54%
Responsibility	143	150	50%
Writing skills	146	129	49%
Taking the initiative	117	117	40%
Ambition	128	115	42%
Determination	165	114	48%
Personal discipline	140	108	43%
Technical skills	146	104	44%
Curiosity	138	97	41%
Creativity	130	75	36%

Shortage of Applicants

The slight easing of unemployment rates in St. Louis is balanced with the continued expansion of companies. Skilled workers in most fields are hard to find, though there is less of a hiring frenzy or motivation to increase wages than we saw over the last several years. The number of businesses in the survey reporting a shortage of skilled applicants has dropped from 63% in 2022 to 46% in 2023.

The number of available job seekers is not in perfect alignment with the skill needs in the region, with some industries experiencing a larger gap in skilled workers. The health care sector continues to struggle with significant churn following the pandemic. It takes years to replace workers that may have exited the industry or to fill new jobs created by an aging workforce moving into retirement.

Average Skill Level Required to Meet Skill Shortages

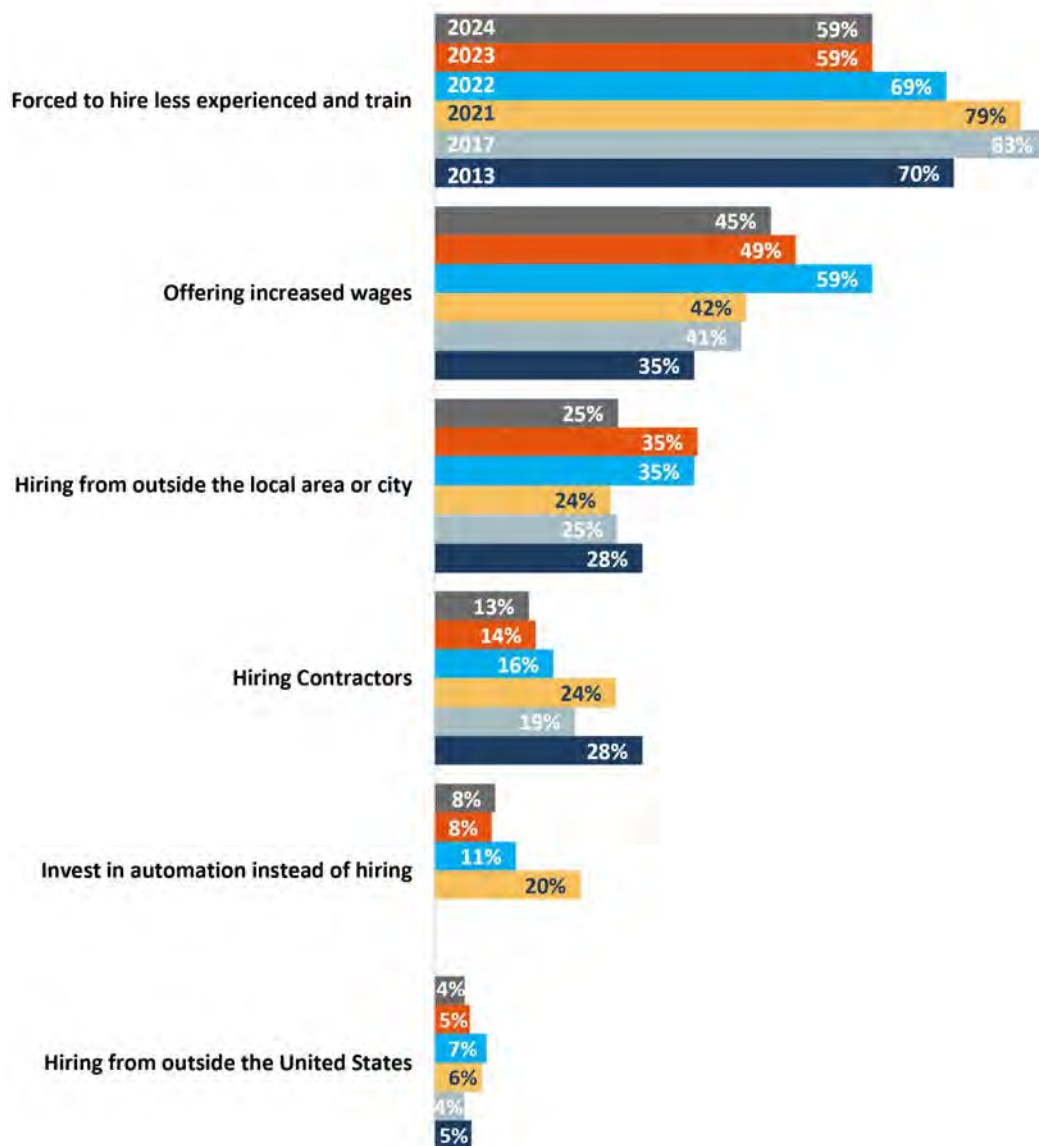|	2017	2023	2024
High-skill	14%	16%	16%
Middle-skill	46%	48%	53%
Low-skill	40%	36%	31%

Low-skill   Middle-skill   High-skill

The IT industry, on the other hand, saw a significant drop in job postings by the end of 2023. Between the use of AI and a shrinking demand for IT jobs, companies were significantly reevaluating their IT hiring needs. Larger IT companies that laid off workers provided skilled candidates to fill openings for other firms across the industry.

During COVID, we saw a shift in need for more high-skill and low-skill workers to meet skill shortages. The most recent two years of survey results indicate a return closer to pre-COVID levels. The need for high skill workers remains important to 16% of companies, down from 27% in 2022. Middle-skills are needed by 53% of employers, a surge of 15% from 2022 survey results, up from 38%. Low-skill needs have slipped to 31% of employers reporting, a 5% drop since last year.

The survey asked what measures companies were taking to meet the skill shortages. Fifty-nine percent of employers again reported that they hire less experienced workers and train them, the same response rate as last year. The second most common response continues to be offering increased wages at 45% of companies, down 4% from last year's 49%, and a 14% drop from the 2022 response of 59%.

Nearly a third fewer companies hired from outside the local area, dropping from 35% to 25% of companies. This change is consistent with more companies requiring workers to report to work in-person, and few companies offering fully remote positions. Other forms of hiring, including hiring contractors or offshore talent, and investing in automation, follow at a distance and stayed at nearly the same response rates as last year.
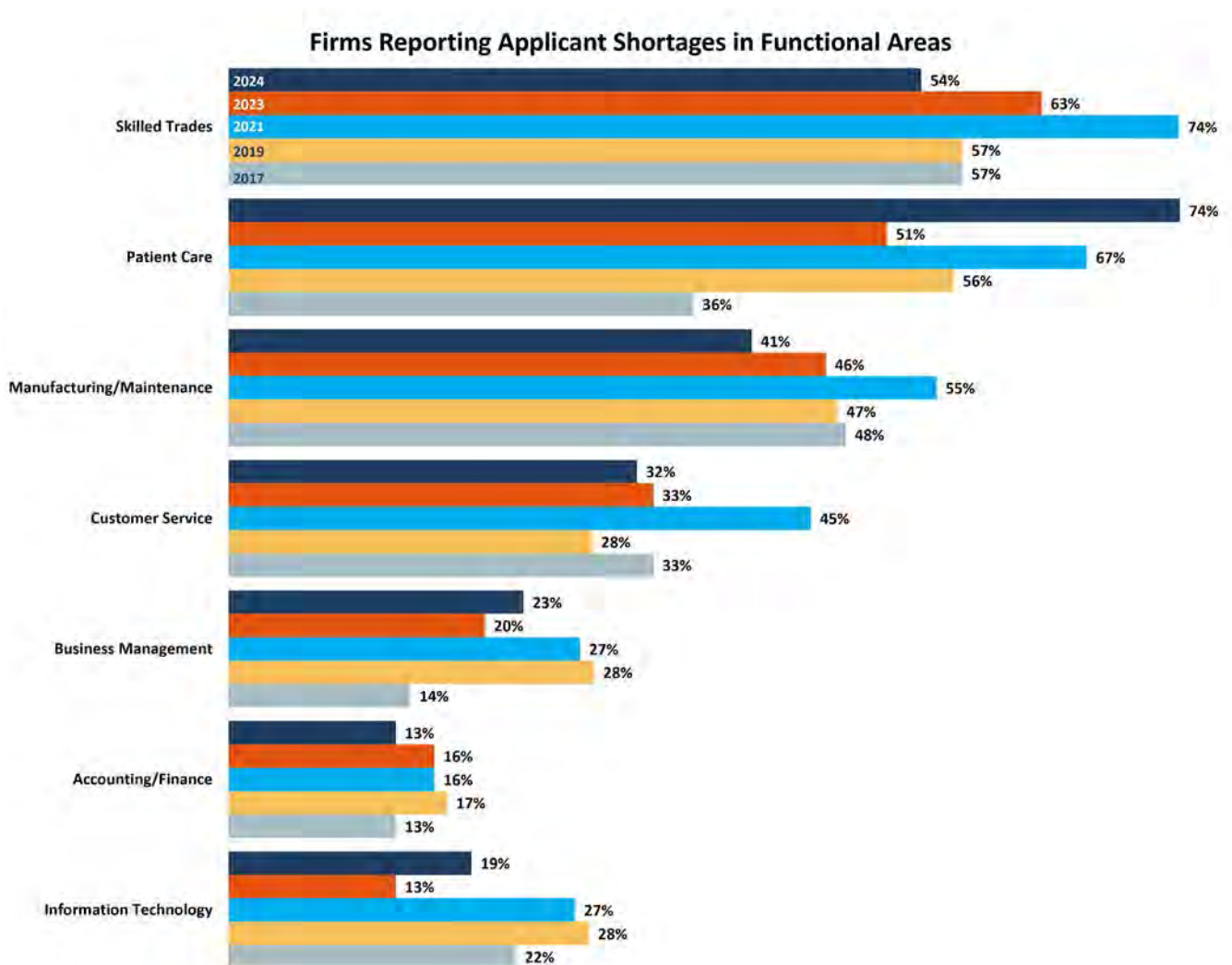
Measures Taken to Meet the Skill Shortages of Applicants

Forced to hire less experienced and train
- 2024: 59%
- 2023: 59%
- 2022: 69%
- 2021: 79%
- 2017: 83%
- 2013: 70%

Offering increased wages
- 45%
- 49%
- 59%
- 42%
- 41%
- 35%

Hiring from outside the local area or city
- 25%
- 35%
- 35%
- 24%
- 25%
- 28%

Hiring Contractors
- 13%
- 14%
- 16%
- 24%
- 19%
- 28%

Invest in automation instead of hiring
- 8%
- 8%
- 11%
- 20%

Hiring from outside the United States
- 4%
- 5%
- 7%
- 6%
- 4%
- 5%

Skills Shortages in Functional Areas

Since 2017, the survey has asked employers about their workforce in seven key functional business areas: accounting/finance, business management, customer service, information technology, manufacturing/maintenance, patient care and skilled trades.
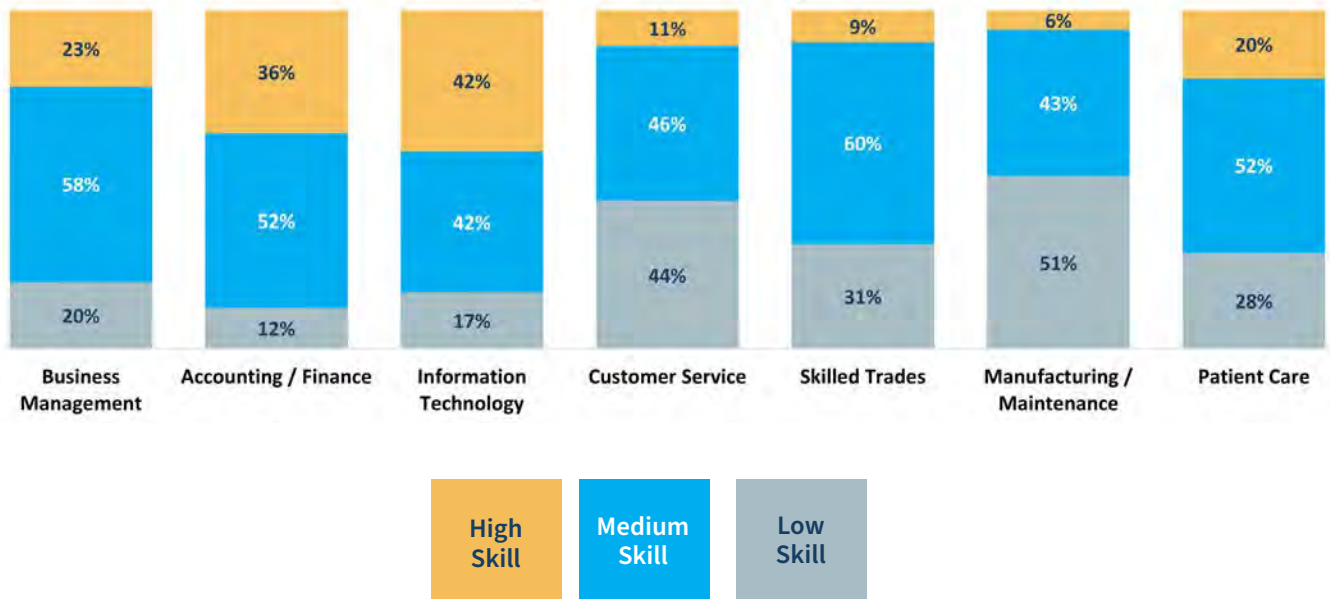
Surveyed companies were asked if they employ workers in these functional areas and whether they are having difficulty finding skilled applicants for open positions. Compared to last year, more companies were experiencing a shortage of applicants in business management, information technology and patient care, while fewer companies reported a shortage of applicants in accounting, customer service, manufacturing and skilled trades. Patient care has the highest applicant shortage, with 74% of surveyed firms reporting a shortage of applicants, up 23% from the 2023 survey. Skilled trades and manufacturing/maintenance both showed fewer firms indicating a shortage of applicants, though significant numbers of companies in the survey are still struggling to hire: 54% of skilled trades firms and 41% of manufacturing firms.

Firms Reporting Applicant Shortages in Functional Areas

Skilled Trades
- 2024: 54%
- 2023: 63%
- 2021: 74%
- 2019: 57%
- 2017: 57%

Patient Care
- 2024: 74%
- 2023: 51%
- 2021: 67%
- 2019: 56%
- 2017: 36%

Manufacturing/Maintenance
- 2024: 41%
- 2023: 46%
- 2021: 55%
- 2019: 47%
- 2017: 48%

Customer Service
- 2024: 32%
- 2023: 33%
- 2021: 45%
- 2019: 28%
- 2017: 33%

Business Management
- 2024: 23%
- 2023: 20%
- 2021: 27%
- 2019: 28%
- 2017: 14%

Accounting/Finance
- 2024: 13%
- 2023: 16%
- 2021: 16%
- 2019: 17%
- 2017: 13%

Information Technology
- 2024: 19%
- 2023: 13%
- 2021: 27%
- 2019: 28%
- 2017: 22%

Employers were given a choice of high-skill, middle-skill, or low-skill to gauge the skill level required to meet the shortages in each of the seven functional areas.
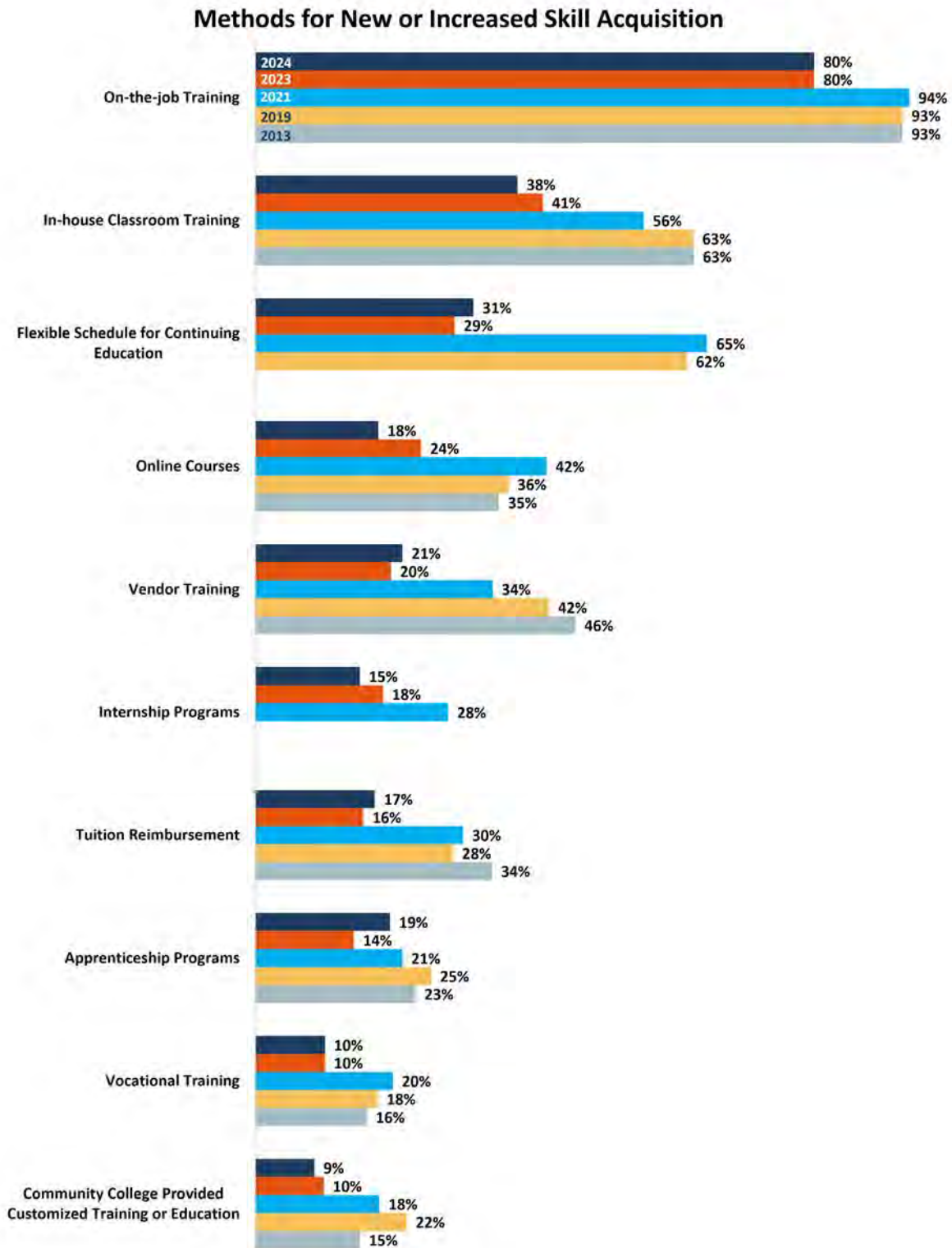
The need for middle-skill applicants continued to expand in 2024. All functional areas, except Information Technology, saw an increase in the need for middle-skill applicants. Three areas noted increases of 10% or more: Business Management, Accounting/Finance and Patient Care. High-skill needs were the same or lower in all functional areas, except for Information Technology. The need for low-skill applicants was split across functional areas. Business Management, Skilled Trades and Manufacturing/Maintenance saw increases of 5 to 8 percent.

Applicant Skill Levels Sought

	Business Management	Accounting / Finance	Information Technology	Customer Service	Skilled Trades	Manufacturing / Maintenance	Patient Care
High Skill	23%	36%	42%	11%	9%	6%	20%
Medium Skill	58%	52%	42%	46%	60%	43%	52%
Low Skill	20%	12%	17%	44%	31%	51%	28%

High Skill   Medium Skill   Low Skill

Methods of Skill Acquisition

The companies in this year's survey reported less or about the same level of usage of most training options. On-the-job training remained the most common method (80% of employers) to assist workers in obtaining new or increased skills. This is the same rate as last year.
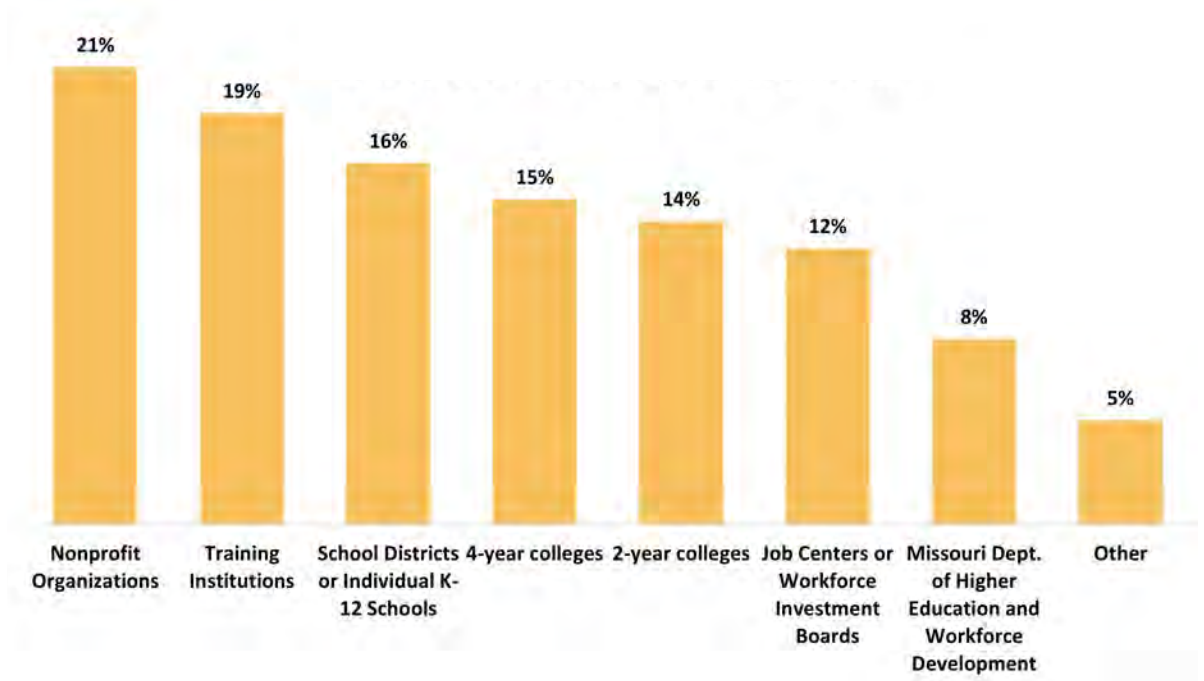
Methods for New or Increased Skill Acquisition

On-the-job Training
- 2024: 80%
- 2023: 80%
- 2021: 94%
- 2019: 93%
- 2013: 93%

In-house Classroom Training
- 2024: 38%
- 2023: 41%
- 2021: 56%
- 2019: 63%
- 2013: 63%

Flexible Schedule for Continuing Education
- 2024: 31%
- 2023: 29%
- 2021: 65%
- 2019: 62%

Online Courses
- 2024: 18%
- 2023: 24%
- 2021: 42%
- 2019: 36%
- 2013: 35%

Vendor Training
- 2024: 21%
- 2023: 20%
- 2021: 34%
- 2019: 42%
- 2013: 46%

Internship Programs
- 2024: 15%
- 2023: 18%
- 2021: 28%

Tuition Reimbursement
- 2024: 17%
- 2023: 16%
- 2021: 30%
- 2019: 28%
- 2013: 34%

Apprenticeship Programs
- 2024: 19%
- 2023: 14%
- 2021: 21%
- 2019: 25%
- 2013: 23%

Vocational Training
- 2024: 10%
- 2023: 10%
- 2021: 20%
- 2019: 18%
- 2013: 16%

Community College Provided Customized Training or Education
- 2024: 9%
- 2023: 10%
- 2021: 18%
- 2019: 22%
- 2013: 15%

Only four methods of skill acquistion had a significant shift. Apprenticeship programs increased by 5% to 19%. Registered apprenticeships are being promoted heavily at the federal and state level, with some financial incentives being offered, though many companies hesitate to take on the administration and paperwork. The other three methods experienced declines. Online courses dropped by 6% and internship programs and in-house classroom training each dropped by 3 percent.

Given the drop in use of reported training methods over the last decade, and the stagnation of training options during the pandemic, additional questions were added to the survey for further explanation. Training and reskilling workers will continue to be a key facet of economic growth, as employers strive to retain and support their workers, and as workers acquire new skills or upgrade their skills to remain employable and explore new options.

Sourcing Talent

Overall, companies are using more partnerships to source talent. Every partner option expanded over last year's survey results. Companies are starting to react to the difficult hiring market of the last few years by shifting how they approach hiring; going to the same sources isn't yielding the hires they need. Last year's survey saw the start of that shakeup, with 4-year colleges dropping from their long-held position as the top choice for companies as partners, replaced by nonprofit organizations. This year, training institutions made a 7% jump to 19% of companies selecting it as the second most used partnership to source talent, up from fifth place last year.

Current Partnerships to Source Talent

Bar chart values:
- Nonprofit Organizations: 21%
- Training Institutions: 19%
- School Districts or Individual K-12 Schools: 16%
- 4-year colleges: 15%
- 2-year colleges: 14%
- Job Centers or Workforce Investment Boards: 12%
- Missouri Dept. of Higher Education and Workforce Development: 8%
- Other: 5%

School districts are holding steady as the third most-used source by 16% of companies surveyed. Companies recognize the importance of promoting their industry to younger students that are exploring career options. Skilled trades and manufacturing have been working to correct decades-old stereotypes and raise awareness of the current work environment, the need for family-supporting salaries, and exploring available career paths. Now, other companies are seeing the value of promoting careers in their industries to a younger audience, working to spark interest in middle school and high school students.

Two- and four-year colleges are the next most used sources, with 14% and 15% of companies utilizing these partners, respectively. With declining enrollment rates at most 4-year colleges due to lower birth rates and increased speculation of the value of a degree by students (and parents), companies cannot rely on them as a main source of candidates as they did in the past. Two-year colleges also face redefined company partnership roles, raising awareness of their role as a hub for short-term workforce skills training, providing custom training for employers and incumbent workers, and serving as a valued educator for local communities.

The job centers and workforce investment boards (8%) and Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD) (5%) remain the least utilized resources among the choices. These entities are funded by state and local governments, providing employment assistance including job matching, business counseling, job assessments and more.

Missouri employers can find their local job center at jobs.mo.gov.
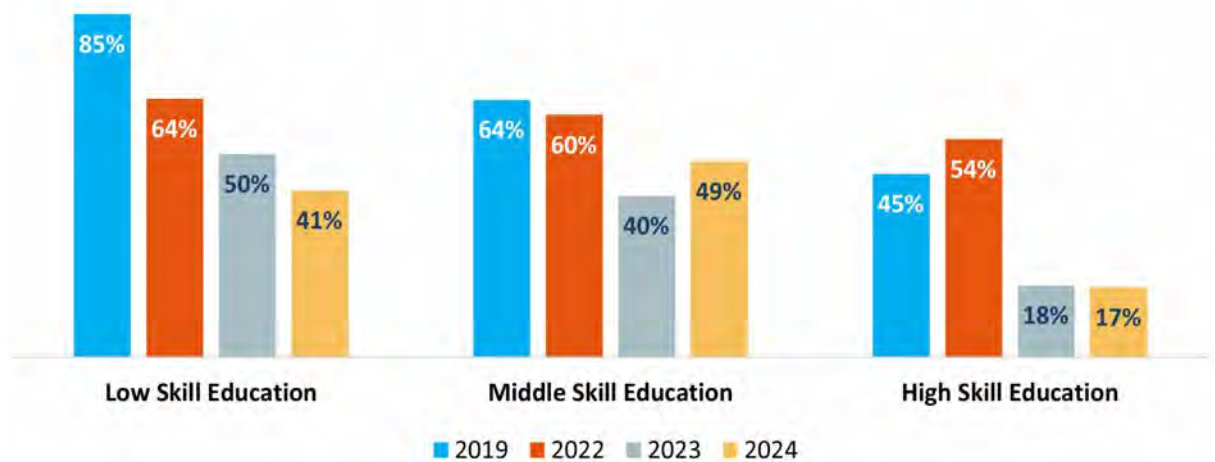
Education Requirements

While more companies are requiring experience for most of their jobs, the requirements for education shifted significantly last year, and are continuing the trend this year.

These levels are defined as high-skill (requiring a four-year degree or higher), middle-skill (requiring training or education beyond a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree), or low-skill (requiring a high school diploma or less).

The number of employers with positions for high-skill employees has trended upwards since 2017, leveling out in 2022 at 54%. Last year, that dropped to only 18% of employers seeking high-skill employees and continues at that rate with 17% in 2024. Employers have used a four-year degree as screening criteria for candidates, though there is a national trend to remove degrees from job postings to allow for a larger pool of candidates.

The number of employers with middle-skill education positions increased from 40% in 2023 to 49% in 2024. Employers continue to report fewer low-skill education positions, falling from 50% in 2023 to 41% of employers in 2024. This overall trend could be a combination of fewer companies hiring and more companies relying on experience criteria rather than education requirements.
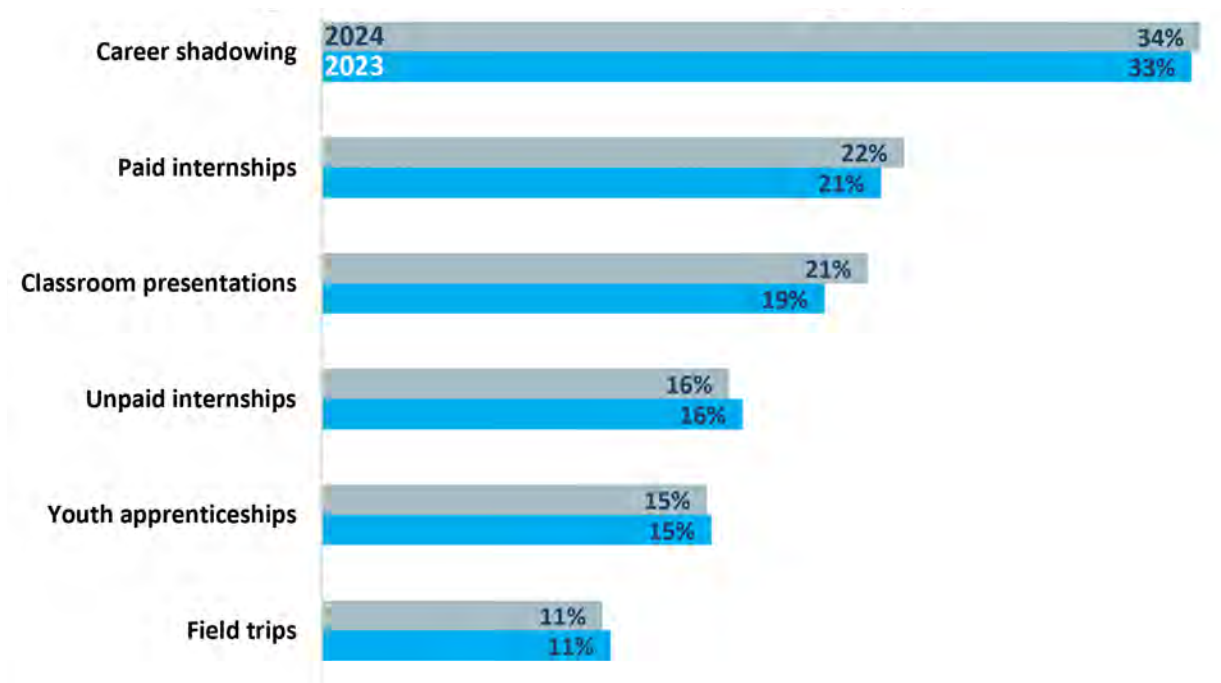
Employers with Jobs at Specified Education Levels

Low Skill Education: 85% (2019), 64% (2022), 50% (2023), 41% (2024)
Middle Skill Education: 64% (2019), 60% (2022), 40% (2023), 49% (2024)
High Skill Education: 45% (2019), 54% (2022), 18% (2023), 17% (2024)

Legend: ■ 2019 ■ 2022 ■ 2023 ■ 2024

Experience Opportunities for Young Adults

As many employers continue to broaden their recruiting efforts toward younger candidates, we asked a survey question for the third year about offering work-based learning experiences for students and young adults. This year, responses were nearly identical to 2023. About a third of companies in the survey offer career shadowing. Only one in five companies offer paid internships or are available to give classroom presentations. And only one in ten offers field trips for schools. These are valuable experiences for students and can assist with developing a connection at a company, but all of these efforts take time and resources when done well. If a company is already short-handed, it can feel difficult to add these activities. Every effort by companies to offer these opportunities to the youth in our region has a significant impact on many lives as students explore their career options.

Young Adult Work-based Learning Experiences Offered

Experience	2024	2023
Career shadowing	34%	33%
Paid internships	22%	21%
Classroom presentations	21%	19%
Unpaid internships	16%	16%
Youth apprenticeships	15%	15%
Field trips	11%	11%

Employment Barriers

The survey examines a range of barriers to employment, including background checks and criminal convictions. While these screening tools may be designed to protect a company, they also eliminate job candidates who could be qualified and may have been convicted of lesser, non-violent offenses. Missouri releases 97% of incarcerated offenders back into the community. Consistently being excluded as a potential hire perpetuates a cycle of joblessness, under employment and poverty, and contributes to a recidivism rate of over 40 percent.

Over 10,000 adults from the St. Louis MSA are incarcerated. While the number of incarcerated individuals is higher in the urban areas of our state, the rate of incarceration is much higher, and rising, in the rural counties. Missouri has the third highest rate of prison admissions in the country. A felony conviction follows that individual for the rest of their life, permanently impacting options for employment, housing and more. The cumulative number of convicted felons impacts our workforce and communities when they are excluded from opportunities for living wage jobs.

Pre-employment Screening Checks

While pre-employment screening checks tend to be applied to either all or no job candidates for a company, the overall use of these screening tools by companies in the survey consistently dropped from 2020 to 2023. Criminal checks, drug screens, eVerify checks, and professional license or certification checks each dropped by 16% or more over the four year period. Financial checks and social media checks each dropped by 10%.

2024 saw a reversal of that trend, with every category of screening showing an increase in usage by companies surveyed this year. Criminal checks, financial checks, and drug screens each reported a 6% to 7% increase. Other screening checks saw smaller increases of 1% to 3%.

Companies Requiring Pre-employment Screening Checks

Legend: 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

Criminal check: 74%, 74%, 57%, 63%
Financial check: 16%, 21%, 11%, 17%
Drug screen: 52%, 45%, 29%, 36%
eVerify check: 42%, 40%, 19%, 21%
Social media check: 29%, 26%, 16%, 19%
Professional license or certification check: 50%, 47%, 26%, 27%
Check by an outside service: 31%, 25%, 18%, 12%
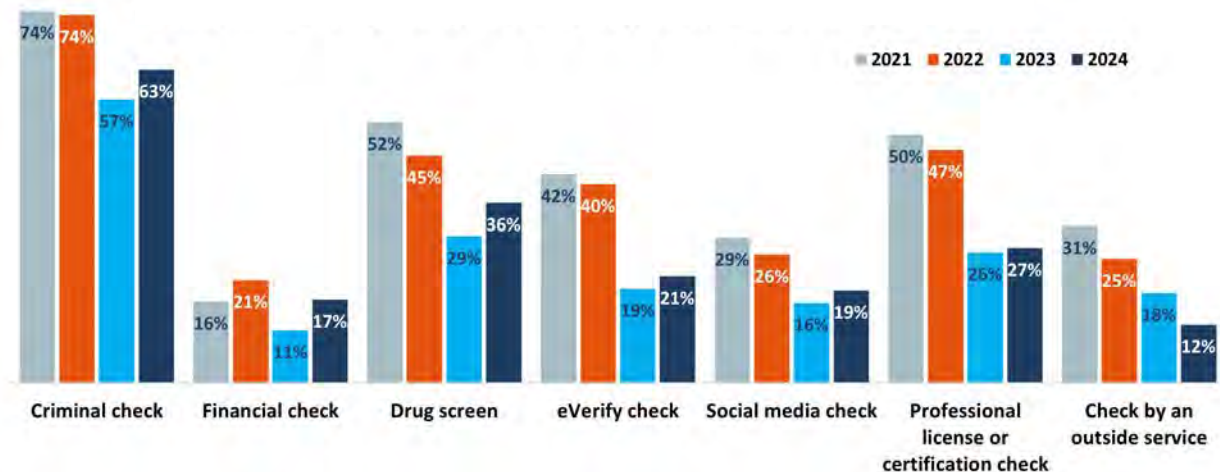
Justice-Involved Individuals

Twenty-two percent of respondents stated that they would not consider hiring an applicant with a felony conviction who had completed their sentence and/or probation, increasing from 19% last year. This is the second year in a row that the response rate increased, although the position of employers on this topic has not changed significantly since the question was introduced in 2015.

For 2024, 51% of the companies responded that it would depend on the felony, up 6% from 45% last year. One in six employers (16%) stated that they would hire an applicant that had been convicted of a felony offense for any job for which the candidate was qualified.

Employer Positions for Justice-involved Individuals
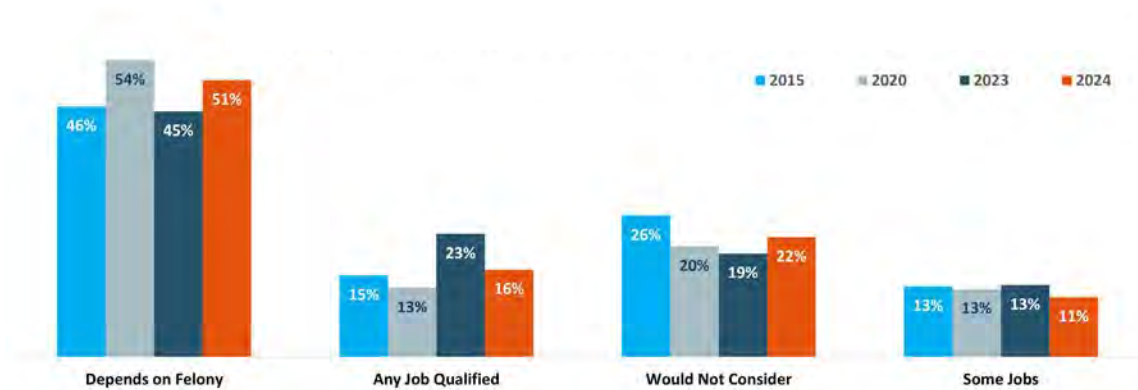
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives are programs and policies that aim to promote representation and encourage participation of employees from all walks of life. Employees want to feel a sense of belonging at work, which companies note as a top four characteristic of a good job.

The survey initiated questions about DEI efforts in 2022. For 2024, there are significant increases in businesses including DEI statements on their website/handbook (5% increase to 52% of companies), having a DEI strategy or plan (a 7% increase to 36% of companies), and staffing a DEI committee (6% increase to 22% of companies). These are encouraging steps seeing more companies institutionalizing DEI efforts.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Aspects Incorporated by Employer
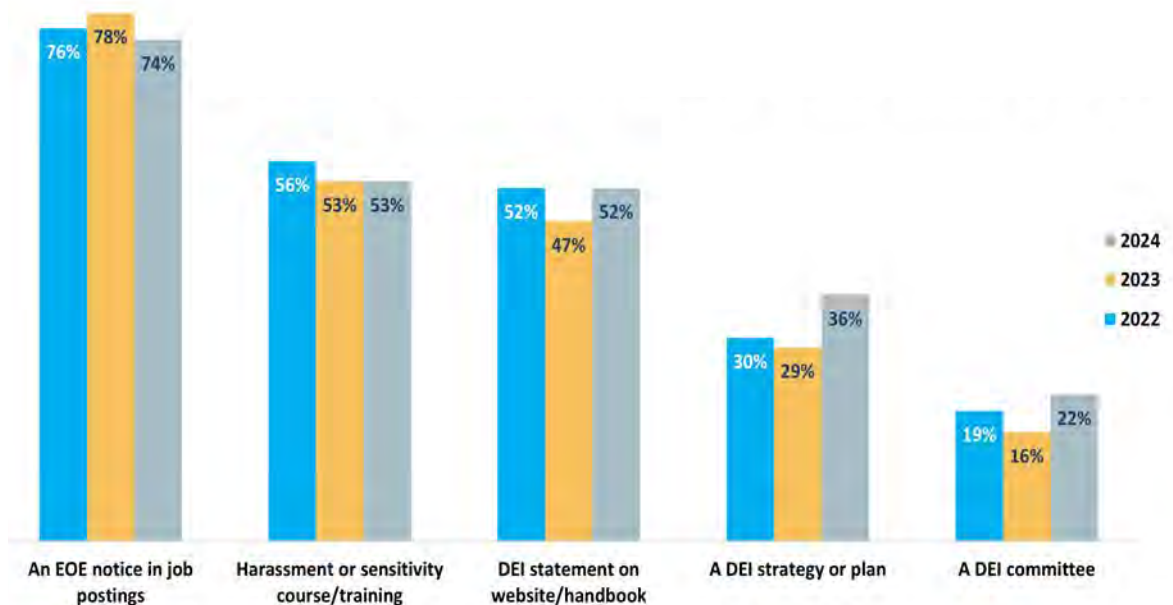
Spotlight on Startups

This year's report sees the impact of economic uncertainty taking its toll on the creation of companies and on young companies hiring their first employees. Startups and the ideas that launch them do not inherently stop or slow during times of economic hardship. Recessions typically see an increase in startup creation. What frequently impacts startups the most is customers cutting back on orders or key supporting businesses changing course. Currently,access to credit may be more difficult due to higher interest rates and banks tightening lending requirements. Venture capital investment is dramatically different than two or three years ago, with a drop in available investment and more selective investment strategies cutting out companies who would have received funding previously. Locally, there are fewer accelerators, resulting in fewer companies receiving that first infusion of investment.

Startup Creation

This report identifies a first-year startup as a firm hiring its first employee. 2023 saw a significant decline in the number of startups that were created and hiring their first employees. After a six-year stretch of steady startup creation of approximately 7,300 companies per year from 2017 to 2022, there was a drop to 5,653 companies in 2023. This is a 27% drop from 2022, and only slightly above the 5,380 companies created in 2016 as the country was stepping out of the recession.

St. Louis Region First-time Startups by Year

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
5,793	5,380	7,995	7,275	7,103	7,399	7,320	7,780	5,653
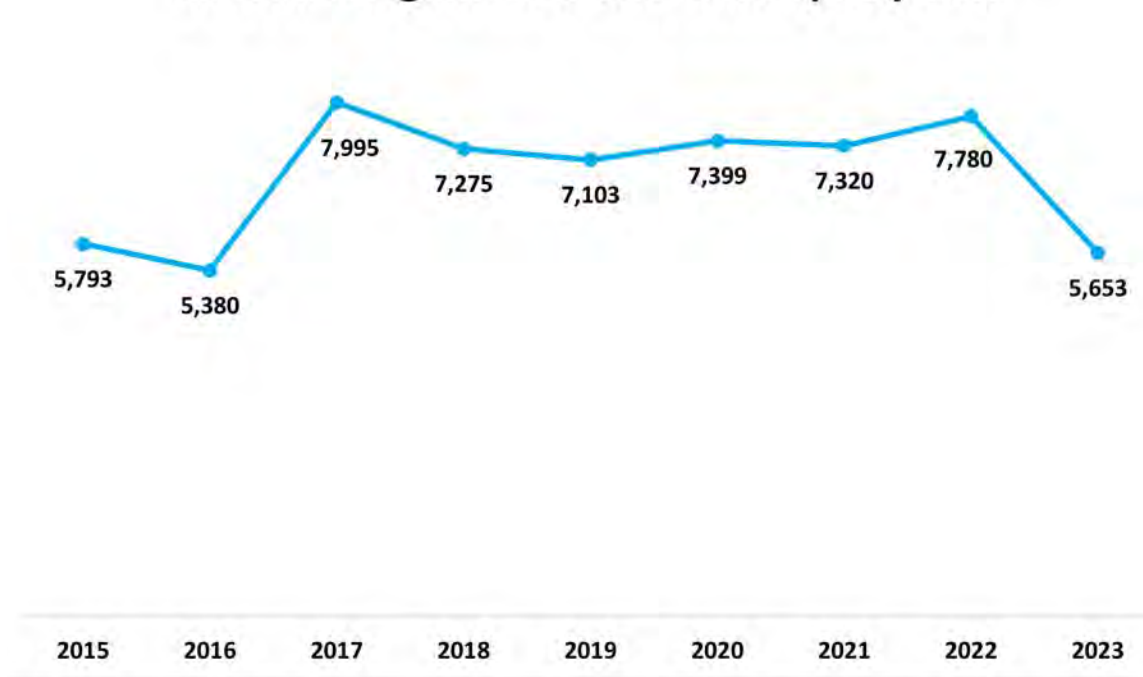
Job Creation by First-Time Employers

The 5,653 startups were first-time employers for our region, creating 11,663 new jobs in 2023. St. Louis is a significant contributor to the overall job growth for Missouri, contributing 37% of the 31,212 new jobs from startups across the state, and 40% of the 13,977 new startups. The St. Louis area comprises about 40% of the state's economy.

New job creation by first-year startups in the St. Louis area dropped from 15,313 in 2022 to 11,663 in 2023, a 24% decline. After six years of steady job creation, this is the lowest year for job creation since the data survey began in 2015. On average, first-year startups contribute 14,447 new jobs EACH YEAR, for a total of 130,030 new jobs from 2015 - 2023. For that same time period, the St. Louis MSA grew by 95,743 jobs, which means that the startups were responsible for the net gain in new jobs.

St. Louis Region Jobs Created by First-time Startups by Year
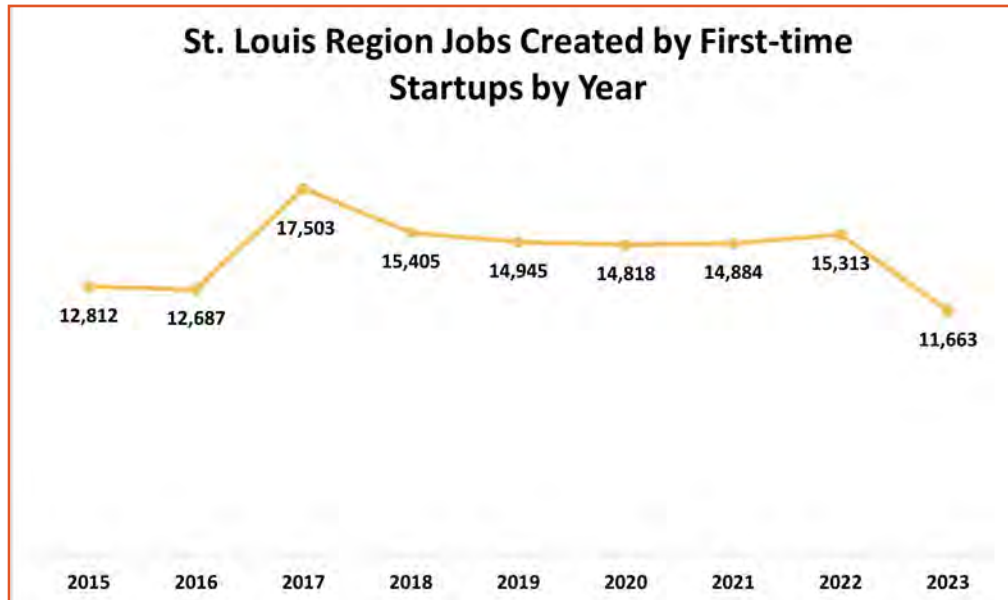
Over time, some startups will thrive and continue to add employees; others will struggle and cut back on workers or eventually close. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, about 20% of new businesses fail in their first year. Within four years, 55% of first-time businesses in Missouri will have shuttered. Even with those odds of failure, the businesses that do succeed will continue to add employees and make up for the losses of those that failed. For instance, first-year businesses in St. Louis that launched in 2019 created 14,830 new jobs. Those firms employed over 15,100 workers by 2021. After that, the employment level dropped, registering at 12,589 in 2023. Over time, the strongest startups will continue to hire more and more workers, making up for the firms that have gone out of business.

For the St. Louis area, this cumulative effect means that during the span from 2019 to 2023, the new jobs from each year total 71,146. Once the job growth and company closures are factored in, the cumulative job contributions from startups in the St. Louis region from 2019 to 2023 are 65,180.

Startups by Geography

Across Missouri, most of the startups cluster in the population centers of Kansas City, Columbia, Springfield, Joplin, Cape Girardeau and St. Louis. St. Louis County has the highest density of first-year startups of any county in the state, as noted by the deep orange color. Startups and entrepreneurs are present in every county across the state, as shown in this heat map from MOSourcelink's Show Me Jobs report.
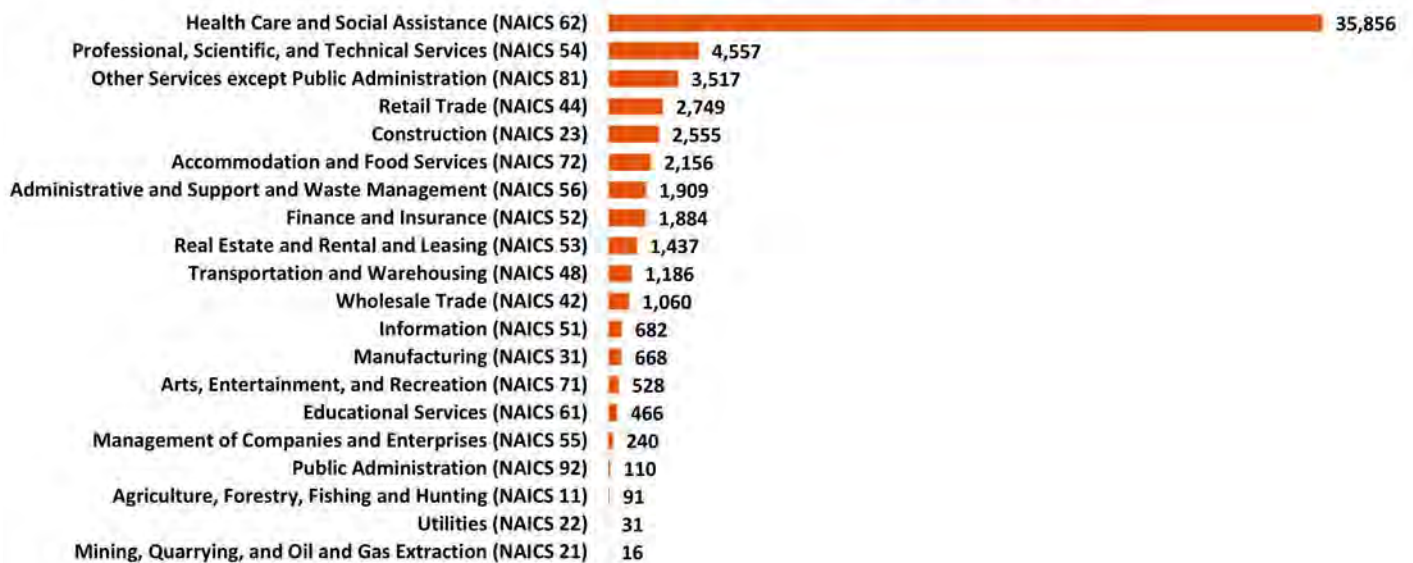
Density of Startups by Geography
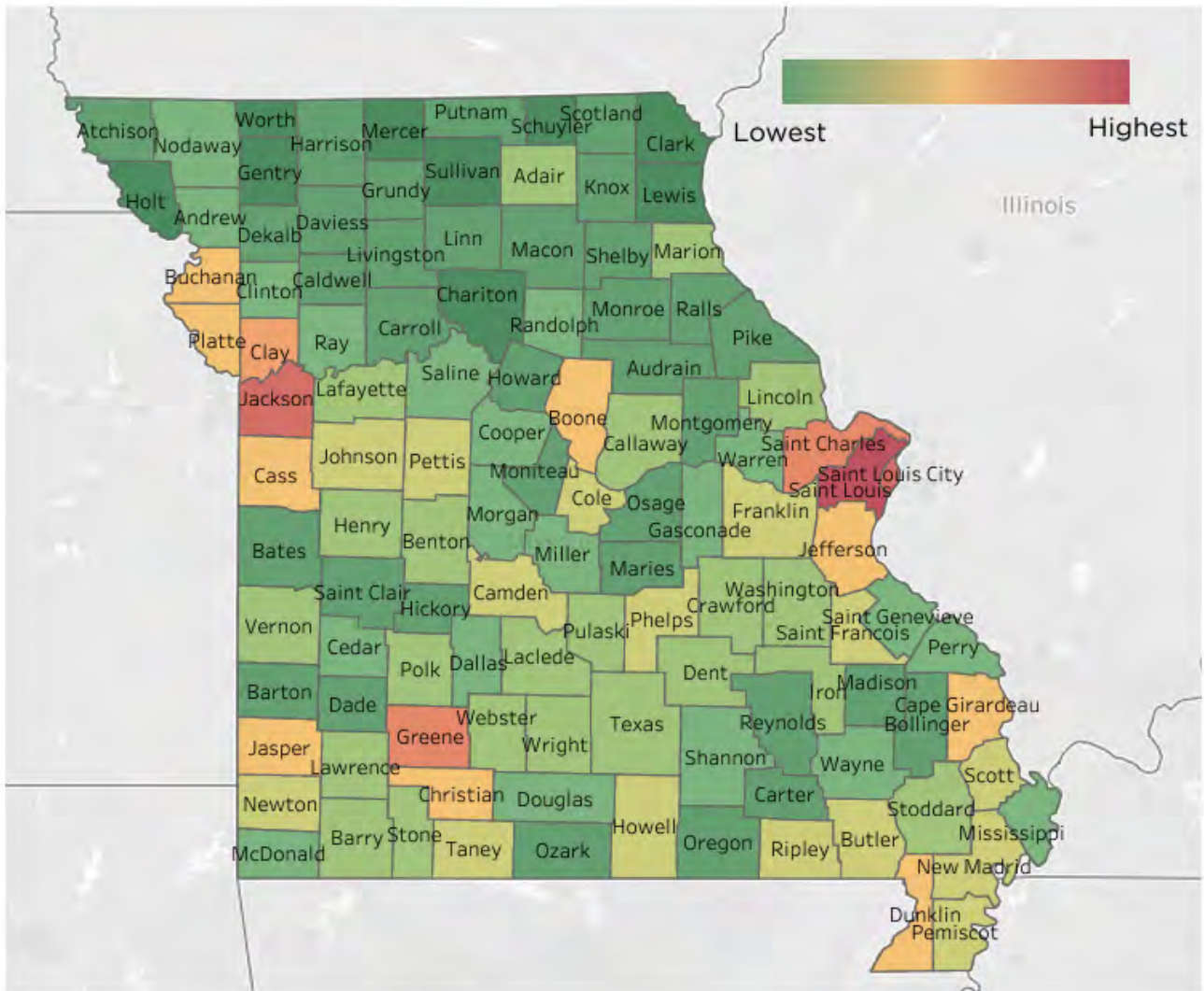
Startups by Industry Sector

St. Louis startups appear in the same industry sectors as the larger companies in our region. The health care and social assistance sector is the largest employer in the St. Louis MSA and continues to be the largest two-digit-NAICS code sector for both startups and job creation. Since 2015, over 32,800 startups were launched in this industry sector, or 41.3% of all the first-year startups during this timeframe. Over 34% of jobs created by first-year startups are from the health care and social assistance NAICS code category.

The second largest number of first-year startups is again in the professional, scientific and technical services NAICS code with 4,001 first-year startups born since 2016, or 7% of new startups. This sector is also responsible for 7% of new jobs created. For 2023, the new jobs in this sector fell by 27% from the previous year. This is concerning, as these jobs tend to be higher paying positions.
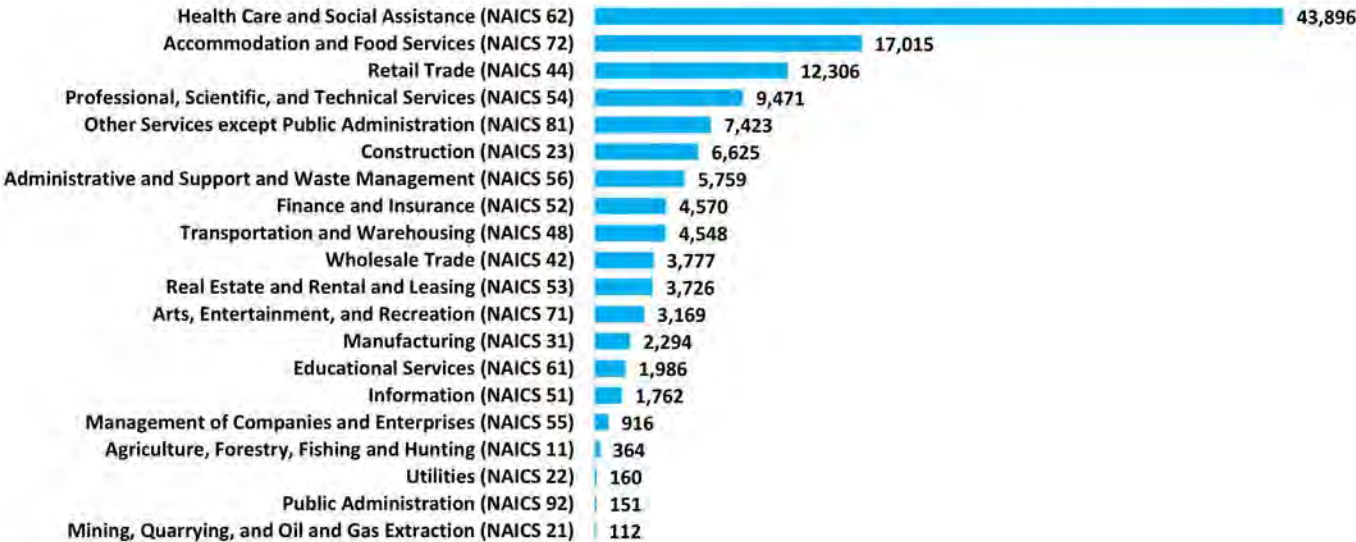
The industries rounding out the top five for startup creation are retail trade, accommodation and food services, and construction. These five industry sectors consistently post the most startups across Missouri.

St. Louis Region Startups by Industry (2015-2023)

Industry	Startups
Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62)	35,856
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (NAICS 54)	4,557
Other Services except Public Administration (NAICS 81)	3,517
Retail Trade (NAICS 44)	2,749
Construction (NAICS 23)	2,555
Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS 72)	2,156
Administrative and Support and Waste Management (NAICS 56)	1,909
Finance and Insurance (NAICS 52)	1,884
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (NAICS 53)	1,437
Transportation and Warehousing (NAICS 48)	1,186
Wholesale Trade (NAICS 42)	1,060
Information (NAICS 51)	682
Manufacturing (NAICS 31)	668
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (NAICS 71)	528
Educational Services (NAICS 61)	466
Management of Companies and Enterprises (NAICS 55)	240
Public Administration (NAICS 92)	110
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (NAICS 11)	91
Utilities (NAICS 22)	31
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (NAICS 21)	16

The top sectors for job creation are also in these five industries, though in different concentrations. For instance, Retail Trade accounts for 4.9% of startups, but 10.7% of new jobs. Accommodations and Food is similar, with 4.2% of startups providing 15.2% of the new jobs. Jobs in these sectors, however, tend to be lower wage positions. Startups in health care, science and technical areas typically produce higher paying jobs, though they create relatively fewer positions compared to the number of startups in each of these areas.

St. Louis Region Jobs Created by Startups (2015-2023)

Sector	Jobs
Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62)	43,896
Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS 72)	17,015
Retail Trade (NAICS 44)	12,306
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (NAICS 54)	9,471
Other Services except Public Administration (NAICS 81)	7,423
Construction (NAICS 23)	6,625
Administrative and Support and Waste Management (NAICS 56)	5,759
Finance and Insurance (NAICS 52)	4,570
Transportation and Warehousing (NAICS 48)	4,548
Wholesale Trade (NAICS 42)	3,777
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (NAICS 53)	3,726
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (NAICS 71)	3,169
Manufacturing (NAICS 31)	2,294
Educational Services (NAICS 61)	1,986
Information (NAICS 51)	1,762
Management of Companies and Enterprises (NAICS 55)	916
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (NAICS 11)	364
Utilities (NAICS 22)	160
Public Administration (NAICS 92)	151
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (NAICS 21)	112

Conclusion

The first-year startup data highlights several trends. In the St. Louis region, a small percent of startups are high growth companies in the tech or science space. These are often startups that you might hear about in the media. They are typically funded through venture capital investment and require a great deal of capital to conduct research or build technical solutions.

Only 1% of startups nationally are funded by venture capital. The vast majority of startups in the data are traditional small businesses, selling goods and services in their local community. These companies are funded through debt or from revenue created by the business. Companies repay debt, whereas with venture capital, they must sell the company or have a public stock offering in order to repay investors.

Startup Job Creation Methodology

A new startup is identified with the first appearance of firm records in the employer file with no predecessor record in the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). The QCEW contains individual records of wages paid for Unemployment Insurance (UI). In this method, new startups are new establishments. The QCEW data set does not include entities that only include those who are self-employed or contract employees.

Firm-level job counts average employer-reported monthly employment in the QCEW employer file for quarterly observations. The number of jobs includes any employment –full-time, part-time and multiple jobs – but does not include those who are self-employed.

This report draws from raw QCEW data, and the statistical methods used for calculating total employment differs from the methods used from QCEW data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The bureau uses a six-step statistical test that MOSourceLink is unable to replicate.
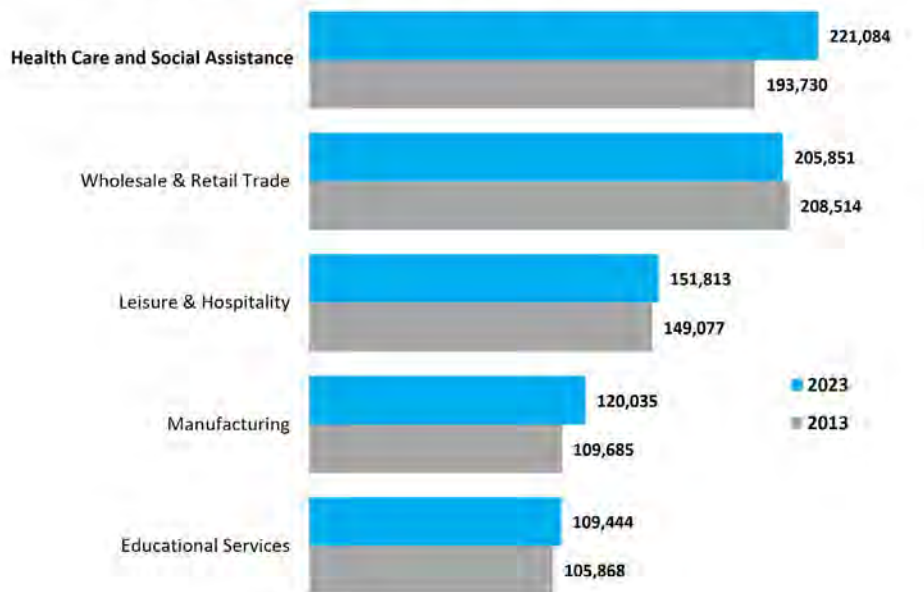
The number of startups for each year counts the number of new firms with fewer than 20 employees in each quarter for a year. The number of new jobs from startups is the number of jobs in Quarter 4 from new firms identified in Quarters 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Spotlight on Health Care

Health Care in St. Louis

Health care is a key industry for St. Louis: it is the largest industry by employment for the region with 221,084 workers, or 14.8% of the workforce. One of every seven workers in St. Louis is part of the health care industry. The last decade saw an addition of 27,350 health care workers–a 14% increase.

Top Five St. Louis Industry Employment

Industry	2023	2013
Health Care and Social Assistance	221,084	193,730
Wholesale & Retail Trade	205,851	208,514
Leisure & Hospitality	151,813	149,077
Manufacturing	120,035	109,685
Educational Services	109,444	105,868

Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Averages

The region is home to over 161 licensed hospitals and health systems that provide care to millions of people from Missouri, Illinois and beyond. Leading health systems based in St. Louis like BJC HealthCare, SSM Health and Mercy Health operate dozens of hospitals, specialty clinics, ambulatory surgical centers, and urgent care facilities. They are investing billions in developing new treatment centers, building expansions to their campuses and adopting cutting-edge technologies to meet patient needs. Additionally, St. Louis is home to Washington University and Saint Louis University, which supply healthcare expertise as well as extensive research funding. The partnerships between industry, academia and the startup community help move innovative discoveries from concept and lab into new therapies and technologies for patient care.

Health systems and companies across Missouri account for 9% of Missouri's GDP. Health care and social assistance produces $18.6 billion in economic activity for the St. Louis region, and over $34.6 billion for Missouri.
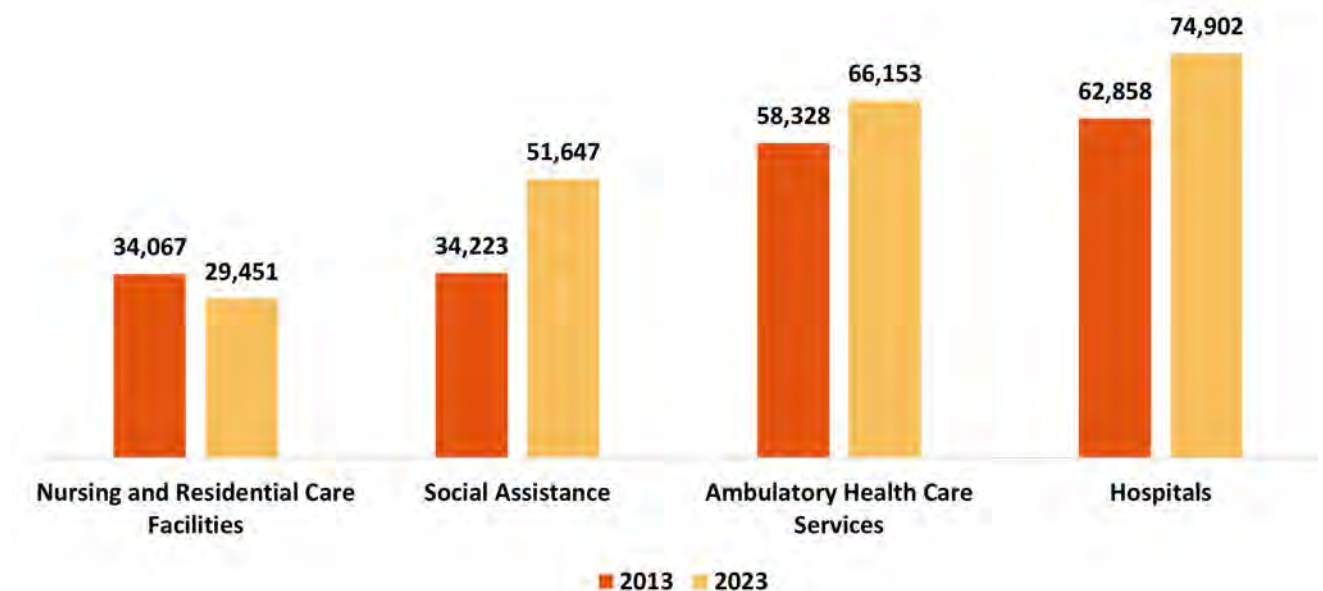
Changes in the Health Care Sector

Over the last 10 years, health care jobs have continued to grow in the same parts of our community where they were strongest a decade ago. The top medical centers continue to grow in the areas with the largest concentrations of people. St. Louis County leads health care employment with 100,200 workers, a 12% increase from 2013. St. Louis City remains the second largest concentration of healthcare workers, up 29% in the last decade, and St. Charles is still the third largest concentration with 21,080 health care staff, with a 39% increase over the last ten years.

On the Illinois side of the St. Louis MSA, St. Clair and Madison counties are a close tie, each home to nearly 14,500 health care workers. The growth has been slower in these areas, with a 7% increase in Madison County and 3% in St. Clair County.

Jefferson County in Missouri, is the next largest group of health care workers with 6,400. This is a 22% increase over 2013. The other counties in the St. Louis MSA have much smaller numbers of health care workers, ranging from a few hundred to 2,800 workers. The healthcare workforce for most of these counties grew slightly, and a few saw slight declines in workers. Across all these smaller counties, the total changes over a decade amount to fewer than 10,000 workers, a fraction of the health care workforce in the five largest counties in the region.

The health care industry is divided into four major subsectors: Hospitals, Ambulatory Health Care Services, Social Assistance, and Nursing and Residential Care Facilities. Hospitals are the largest employment subsector with 74,900 workers. Ambulatory Health Care Services, is the second largest subsector with 66,200 workers that provide health care services to patients requiring outpatient services and who are not bedridden. Social Assistance employs nearly 52,000 workers, and Nursing and Residential Care Facilities have almost 30,000 workers in the St. Louis MSA.

St. Louis MSA Health Care Employment by Subsector

Bar chart comparing 2013 and 2023 health care employment by subsector:
- Nursing and Residential Care Facilities: 34,067 (2013), 29,451 (2023)
- Social Assistance: 34,223 (2013), 51,647 (2023)
- Ambulatory Health Care Services: 58,328 (2013), 66,153 (2023)
- Hospitals: 62,858 (2013), 74,902 (2023)

Legend: ■ 2013 ■ 2023

The top three employment subsectors each increased employment significantly since 2013, with Hospitals increasing its workforce by 16%. Ambulatory Health Care Services saw a 12% increase in workers, and Social Assistance saw a significant 34% increase over 2013. Nursing and Residential Care Facilities remained the smallest subsector and lost 13.5% of workers over the last decade.

The Future of Health Care

Health care organizations, both in the St. Louis region and nationally, face significant challenges. With vacancy rates over 17% for key jobs such as registered nurses, and turnover rates even higher for many roles, hospitals and other health care facilities struggle to maintain consistency in staffing and patient care. The academic and training institutions also experience similar challenges. They struggle to pay experienced instructors a wage that is competitive with what they could earn if they were practicing in a health care facility or in the business community. Additionally, over 90% of instructors indicate that they will retire within five years. Training new workers takes time, between classroom instruction and clinical experience, so quick replacements are not realistic.

Fortunately, many health care organizations have already taken a creative approach to hiring and training. Through earn-and-learn models, new candidates have the opportunity to work within a hospital or health care system while they are still in training. This allows the student to work on their training while gaining valuable experience and earning a paycheck. One model in the region involves the student being hired by the health system as they start training, putting them immediately on payroll, having access to benefits, and utilizing education funds to cover the cost of training. Another model provides a significant stipend while the student is in school and allows for part-time work options. Both models have the student/employee commit a period of time to the health company following their training.

Either model gives the worker a chance to start a career and takes the risk out of changing jobs. With estimates of 60-70% of the U.S. workforce living paycheck to paycheck, these are real solutions that put career growth in the hands of workers that would not be able to leave a job and go through training or education for months without another source of income.

Some regional health care organizations have also been at the forefront of discussions about hiring skills over hiring degrees. This can be a pivotal and often difficult change for a company. Working through long-held assumptions of what is required for a job can be time-consuming and difficult for some organizations. It's encouraging to see the health care industry tackle this opportunity as a way of opening the door to more employees.

Acknowledgements

State of the St. Louis Workforce Speakers and Panel

The State of the St. Louis Workforce event on August 7, 2024, featured Philip Payne, Chief Data Scientist from Washington University School of Medicine. His talk focused on the future of AI in health care. At the event, with Dr. Pittman moderating, the panel discussed what's ahead for the health care industry workforce in St. Louis and healthcare as a barrier to employment.

Visit **stlcc.edu/STLworkforce** to access a link to the event recording and to download this report.

Biographies

Philip Payne, PhD, FACMI, FAMIA, FAIMBE, FIAHSI
Washington UniversitySchool of Medicine, Chief Data Scientist

Philip Payne is an authority on AI in healthcare, leading research on AI for bio-molecular and clinical phenotypes, electronic health records, health care IT and data sharing platforms. He is the Associate Dean for Health Information and Data Science, Chief Data Scientist at Washington University School of Medicine, and Director of the Institute for Informatics, Data Science, and Biostatistics.

Andwele Jolly, DPT, MBA, MHA
St. Louis Integrated Health Network, President and CEO

Andwele Jolly advances health equity in St. Louis, focusing on historically excluded communities. He collaborates with Federally Qualified Health Centers, major health care systems, public health departments, and community partners to enhance health care equity, quality, access, and affordability.

Danish Nagda, MD
Rezilient Health, Founder and CEO

As a physician and caregiver for his father, Danish Nagda co-founded a patient-centered, member-based organization delivering high-quality health care that bridges the gap between in-person and current telehealth care offerings. Prior to founding Rezilient, Danish founded Schoology, the first social learning platform, which now has over 20 million users in 130 countries.

Catina O'Leary, PhD, MSW
Health Literacy Media, President and CEO

Catina O'Leary believes "easy-to-understand" and "accurate" are not mutually exclusive, advocating for health literacy to empower people with clear, accurate information. A licensed master social worker, Catina has led research at Washington University, focusing on connecting at-risk individuals with resources to improve health behaviors and outcomes.

Jill Williams, MEd, SHRM-SCP
Missouri Hospital Association, Vice President of Workforce Development

Jill Williams initiates and implements workforce projects and programs that address Missouri hospitals' workforce needs and manages the facilitation and continuous improvement of nurse expansion initiatives. She is a member of the Missouri Workforce Development Board, the DESE Career and Technical Education Advisory Council and several health care workforce, nursing, and human resources groups, committees and organizations.

Jeff Pittman, PhD
St. Louis Community College, Chancellor

Jeff Pittman leads STLCC Tranformed, a multi-year, multi-campus and $500 million initiative that ensures the College continues to meet the region's ever changing and ever-increasing workforce development demands. His work continues STLCC's tradition of providing quality, affordable and accessible education and workforce training for all St. Louis area residents in support of area businesses.

Phyllis Ellison, MBA
St. Louis Community College, Associate Vice Chancellor, Workforce Solutions Group

Phyllis Ellison leads the College's corporate and community workforce development programs, personal enrichment education, professional development and entrepreneurial initiatives that meet the expanding training and skill development needs of local, regional and national businesses in a range of industries.

Appendix:
State of the St. Louis Workforce Employer Survey 2024

The employer survey was conducted as phone interviews on weekdays starting April 1, 2024 and ending April 25, 2024. Only complete surveys are used in this report.

Initial Question Employees
First, including yourself, how many employees does your company CURRENTLY employ in your area?

Less than 5 (Thank & Terminate)	01
5 to 10	02
11 to 49	03
50 or more	04
(Do not read) Refuse - Thank & Terminate	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure - Thank & Terminate	98

1. Over the past 12 months, would you say your employment levels have increased significantly (by 15% or more), increased slightly (by less than 15%), remained the same as before, decreased slightly (by less than 15%), or decreased significantly (by 15% or more)?

Increased significantly, by 15% or more	01
Increased slightly, by less than 15%	02
Remained the same as before	03
Decreased slightly, by less than 15%	04
Decreased significantly, by 15% or more	05
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

2. Looking ahead over the next 12 months, how does your business PLAN to change your employment levels? Would you say your employment levels will increase significantly (by 15% or more), increase slightly (by less than 15%), remain the same as before, decrease slightly (by less than 15%), or decrease significantly (by 15% or more)?

Increase significantly, by 15% or more	01
Increase slightly, by less than 15%	02
Remain the same as before	03
Decrease slightly, by less than 15%	04
Decrease significantly, by 15% or more	05
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

3. If you were to add employees in the next 12 months, which of the following methods would you use?
(Read list; enter code for each method would use; enter all that apply.)

Recalling furloughed workers	01
Recalling workers from a lay-off list	02
Hiring new full-time employees	03
Hiring new part-time employees	04
Hiring contract workers	05
Using a temporary agency	06
(Do not read) Not applicable -Not wanting to add employees	95
(Do not read) Would not use any listed method	96
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

4a. Please tell me if you have encountered the following barriers to expanding your employment level.
(Rotate barriers; ask "Any other barrier?" last)

Shortage of workers with knowledge or skills	01
Shortage of available training programs	02
Economic conditions	03
Government policies or regulations	04
Lack of information regarding the occupation	05
Lack of access to transportation to get to work	06
Lack of access to child care	07
Any other barrier? (If "Yes" - Record)	08
(Do not read) Have not encountered any barriers to expanding employment level	95
(Do not read) Not applicable - Not expanding employment level	96
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

4b. (Re: each barrier named on Q.4a)
Please tell me how large of a barrier each is to your business using a 1-to-5 scale where 1 is "insignificant" and 5 is a "critical barrier." You may also use any number between 1 and 5. And, if an item is not applicable to your business, please tell me so.

96 - Not applicable
97 - Refuse
98 - Don't know/Not sure

Shortage of workers with knowledge or skills	__
Shortage of available training programs	__
Economic conditions	__
Government policies or regulations	__
Lack of information regarding the occupation	__
Lack of access to transportation to get to work	__
Lack of access to child care	__
Other barrier	__

5a. What is your company's current policy on remote work?
(Read list; enter code for each applicable policy type; enter all that apply.)

Fully on-site	01
Fully remote	02
On-site required 4 days a week	03
On-site required 2-3 days a week	04
On-site required 1 day a week	05
Flexible options for employees to choose	06
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

5b. Under your current work policy, what percentage of employees work under each of the following arrangements?
Answers MUST total 100%

Fully on-site	__
Fully remote	__
On-site required 4 days a week	__
On-site required 2-3 days a week	__
On-site required 1 day a week	__
Flexible options for employees to choose	__
(Do not read) Refuse	__
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	__

5c. Do you expect the number of your remote workers to increase, stay the same, or decrease over the next 12 months?

Increase	01
Stay the same	02
Decrease	03
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6. Next, I am going to read some possible shortcomings of job applicants and ask if you have or have not seen these characteristics in a significant number of applicants during the last 12 months. I would then like you to rank the importance of that shortcoming to your business on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 is "not at all important" and 5 is "very important."

6a-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with "Poor work habits" (including attendance, punctuality, and attention to job).

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6a-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) 98 - Don't know/Not sure	
Poor work habits	__

6b-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with a "Lack of general knowledge about business or industry."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6b-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) 98 - Don't know/Not sure	
Lack of general knowledge about business or industry	__

6c-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with a "Lack of ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6c-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) 98 - Don't know/Not sure	
Lack of ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds	__

6d-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with a "Lack of communication or interpersonal skills."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6d-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) 98 - Don't know/Not sure	
Lack of communication or interpersonal skills	__

6e-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with a "Lack of willingness to learn or inability to learn."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6e-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) 98 - Don't know/Not sure	
Lack of willingness to learn or inability to learn	__

6f-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with a "Lack of teamwork or collaboration."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6f-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) 98 - Don't know/Not sure	
Lack of teamwork or collaboration	__

6g-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with a "Lack of general computer skills."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6g-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) 98 - Don't know/Not sure	
Lack of general computer skill	__

6h-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with a "Lack of critical thinking and problem solving."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6h-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) 98 - Don't know/Not sure	
Lack of critical thinking and problem solving	__

6i-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with an "Inability to think creatively or 'out of the box'."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6i-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

    (Do not read) 98 - Don't know/Not sure

    Inability to think creatively or 'out of the box'   __

6j-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with a "Lack of writing skills."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6j-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98
Lack of writing skills	__

6k-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with a "Lack of basic math skills."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6k-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98
Lack of basic math skills	__

6l-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with a "Lack of technical skills specific to the job."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6l-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98
Lack of technical skills specific to the job	__

6m-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with an "Inability to understand written and graphical information."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6m-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98
Inability to understand written and graphical information	__

6n-1. Please tell me if you have or have not noticed a significant number of applicants with an "Inability to pass a drug test or has a substance abuse issue."

Have seen this characteristic in job applicants	01
Have not seen this characteristic in job applicants	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

6n-2. On the 1 to 5 scale, how important is this applicant shortcoming to your business?

(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98
Inability to pass a drug test or has a substance abuse issue	__

7. Now we would like you to share the strengths you have seen in job applicants during the last 12 months. Please rank each strength on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 is "did not see this strength in any applicants" and 5 is "saw this strength in all applicants."

(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98
7a. Determination	
7b. Personal discipline	
7c. Creativity	
7d. Respectfulness	
7e. Honesty	
7f. Curiosity	
7g. Verbal communication skills	
7h. Writing skills	
7i. Technical skills	
7j. Taking the initiative	
7k. Responsibility	
7l. Positivity	
7m. Ambition	
7n. Dependability	

8a. Are you experiencing a shortage of skilled applicants for your organization?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 8)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

8b. (If experiencing shortage of skilled applicants per Q.8a)
Please tell me the skill level required to meet your skill shortages. Approximately what percentage of the SHORTAGES you are experiencing require high-skill applicants (those with a 4-year degree or higher); middle-skill applicants (training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree); and low-skill applicants (high school or less). What percent of positions require …
Answers MUST total 100%

Refuse	97
Don't know/Not sure	98
High-skill, requiring a 4-year degree or higher	__
Middle-skill, training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree	__
Low-skill, requiring high school or less	__

8c. (If experiencing shortage of skilled applicants per Q.8a)
Please tell me if you are taking any of the following measures to meet the skill shortages of applicants.

Hiring from outside the St. Louis area	01
Hiring from outside the United States	02
Hiring contractors	03
Forced to hire less experienced workers and then train them	04
Invest in automation instead of hiring	05
Offering increased wages due to shortage of experienced workers	06
(Do not read) Not taking any of listed measures	96
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

9. What is your business' plan to transition from a degree-centered hiring approach to a more skills-based approach for hiring new talent (e.g., eliminating Bachelor's degree requirement)?

We have already made the transition	01
We are in the process of transitioning	02
We are considering transitioning	03
We are not planning or considering a transition	04
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

10. Which of the following methods do you use to assist current workers to address your company's need for new or increased skills? (Read list; enter all that apply.)

In-house classroom training	01
On-the-job training	02
Vendor training	03
Apprenticeship programs	04
Internship programs	05
Community college provided customized training or education	06
Vocational training	07
Tuition reimbursement	08
Online courses	09
Provide flexible schedule for outside continuing education	10
(Do not read) Not applicable – Do not need new or increased skills	95
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

11a. What do you think your employees' attitudes are, in general, toward upskilling/reskilling training?

Interested:

Interested and actively engages in training	01
Interested but training is not available	02
Neutral	03
Not interested in training	04
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

11b. (If interested in training per Q.11a)
What barriers do your employees interested in training experience? (Read list; enter all that apply.)

Work responsibilities restrict availability to participate	01
Completing training on personal time is a barrier	02
The organization cannot sponsor the cost of training	03
Any other barrier? (If "Yes" – Record)	04
Have not encountered any barriers to receiving training	95
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

11c. Approximately how much do you spend on training per year per employee?

Up to $200	01
$201-$500	02
$501-$999	03
$1,000-$1,500	04
More than $1,500	05
We do not spend any money on training	95
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

12. What type of tuition reimbursement does your company provide?

Full degree reimbursement	01
A set dollar amount per year or per employee, please specify: _____	02
A set number of courses available to employee or per year, please specify: _____	03
Other	04
We do not offer any tuition reimbursement	95
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13. Now we have some questions about your company's workforce by job function.

13a. Do you employ staff in the Accounting or Finance function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13b)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13aa. (If employ staff in Accounting or Finance function per Q.13a)
Are you seeing a shortage of skilled applicants in the Accounting or Finance function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13b)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13aaa. (If seeing shortage of skilled applicants in the Accounting or Finance function per Q.13aa)
Please tell me the skill level of applicants required to meet your Accounting or Finance skill shortages. Approximately what percentage of the shortages you are experiencing require high-skill applicants (those with a 4-year degree or higher); middle-skill applicants (training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree); a nd low-skill applicants (high school or less).
What percent of positions require ...
Answers MUST total 100%

Refuse	97
Don't know/Not sure	98
High-skill, requiring a 4-year degree or higher	__
Middle-skill, training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree	__
Low-skill, requiring high school or less	__

13b. Do you employ staff in the Information Technology function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13c)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13bb. (If employ staff in Information Technology function per Q.13b)
Are you seeing a shortage of skilled applicants in the Information Technology function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13c)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13bbb. (If seeing shortage of skilled applicants in the Information Technology function per Q.13bb)
Please tell me the skill level of applicants required to meet your Information Technology skill shortages. Approximately what percentage of the shortages you are experiencing require high-skill applicants (those with a 4-year degree or higher); middle-skill applicants (training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree); and low-skill applicants (high school or less).
What percent of positions require ...
Answers MUST total 100%

Refuse	97
Don't know/Not sure	98
High-skill, requiring a 4-year degree or higher	__
Middle-skill, training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree	__
Low-skill, requiring high school or less	__

13c. Do you employ staff in the Customer Service function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13d)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13cc. (If employ staff in Customer Service function per Q.13c) Are you seeing a shortage of skilled applicants in the Customer Service function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13d)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13ccc. (If seeing shortage of skilled applicants in the Customer Service function per Q.13cc)
Please tell me the skill level of applicants required to meet your Customer Service skill shortages. Approximately what percentage of the shortages you are experiencing require high-skill applicants (those with a 4-year degree or higher); middle-skill applicants (training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree); and low-skill applicants (high school or less).
What percent of positions require ...
Answers MUST total 100%

Refuse	97
Don't know/Not sure	98
High-skill, requiring a 4-year degree or higher	__
Middle-skill, training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree	__
Low-skill, requiring high school or less	__

13d. Do you employ staff in the Business Management function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13e)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13dd. (If employ staff in Business Management function per Q.9d) Are you seeing a shortage of skilled applicants in the Business Management function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13e)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13ddd. (If seeing shortage of skilled applicants in the Business Management function per Q.13dd)
Please tell me the skill level of applicants required to meet your Business Management skill shortages. Approximately what percentage of the shortages you are experiencing require high-skill applicants (those with a 4-year degree or higher); middle-skill applicants (training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree); and low-skill applicants (high school or less).
What percent of positions require ...
Answers MUST total 100%

Refuse	97
Don't know/Not sure	98
High-skill, requiring a 4-year degree or higher	__
Middle-skill, training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree	__
Low-skill, requiring high school or less	__

13e. Do you employ staff in the Skilled Trades function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13f)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13ee. (If employ staff in Skilled Trades function per Q.13e)
Are you seeing a shortage of skilled applicants in the Skilled Trades function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13f)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13eee. (If seeing shortage of skilled applicants in the Skilled Trades function per Q.13ee)
Please tell me the skill level of applicants required to meet your Skilled Trades skill shortages. Approximately what percentage of the shortages you are experiencing require high-skill applicants (those with a 4-year degree or higher); middle-skill applicants (training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree); and low-skill applicants (high school or less).
What percent of positions require ...
Answers MUST total 100%

Refuse	97
Don't know/Not sure	98
High-skill, requiring a 4-year degree or higher	__
Middle-skill, training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree	__
Low-skill, requiring high school or less	__

13f. Do you employ staff in the Manufacturing, Production & Maintenance function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13g)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13ff. (If employ staff in Manufacturing, Production & Maintenance function per Q.13f) Are you seeing a shortage of skilled applicants in the Manufacturing,Production & Maintenance function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 13g)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13fff. (If seeing shortage of skilled applicants in the Manufacturing, Production & Maintenance function per Q.13ff)
Please tell me the skill level of applicants required to meet your Manufacturing, Production and Maintenance skill shortages. Approximately what percentage of the shortages you are experiencing require high-skill applicants (those with a 4-year degree or higher); middle-skill applicants (training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree); and low-skill applicants (high school or less).
What percent of positions require ...
Answers MUST total 100%

Refuse	97
Don't know/Not sure	98
High-skill, requiring a 4-year degree or higher	__
Middle-skill, training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree	__
Low-skill, requiring high school or less	__

13g. Do you employ staff in the Patient Care function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 14)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13gg. (If employ staff in Patient Care function per Q.13g)
Are you seeing a shortage of skilled applicants in the Patient Care function?

Yes	01
No (if "no" skip to question 14)	02
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

13ggg. (If seeing shortage of skilled applicants in the Patient Care function per Q.13gg) Please tell me the skill level of applicants required to meet your Patient Care skill shortages. Approximately what percentage of the shortages you are experiencing require high-skill applicants (those with a 4-year degree or higher); middle-skill applicants (training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree); and low-skill applicants (high school or less). What percent of positions require ...
Answers MUST total 100%

Refuse	97
Don't know/Not sure	98
High-skill, requiring a 4-year degree or higher	__
Middle-skill, training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree	__
Low-skill, requiring high school or less	__

14. In your business, what percentage of your TOTAL positions requires each of the following levels of experience?
What percent of positions require ...

Answers MUST total 100% Refuse	97
Don't know/Not sure	98
A minimum of 4 or more years of experience	__
A minimum of 1 to 3 years of experience	__
Some experience, but less than 1 year	__
No Experience	__

15. In your business, what percentage of your TOTAL positions require each of the following levels of education as a minimum requirement? What percent of positions require...
Answers MUST total 100%

Refuse	97
Don't know/Not sure	98
High-skill, requiring a 4-year degree or higher	__
Middle-skill, training or education beyond high school, but less than a 4-year degree	__
Low-skill, requiring high school or less	__

16. What percentage of jobs in your business are available for individuals with industry relevant short-term training, meaning not more than 6 months past high school?

No jobs	01
1 to 49% of jobs	02
50 to 100% of jobs	03
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

17. Do you offer any of the following work-based learning experiences for students and young adults?

(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

17a. Paid internships

Yes	01
No	02

17b. Unpaid internships

Yes	01
No	02

17c. Career shadowing

Yes	01
No	02

17d. Field trips

Yes	01
No	02

17e. Classroom presentations

Yes	01
No	02

17f. Youth apprenticeships

Yes	01
No	02

17g. (If 17a through 17f are all "No") Would you be interested in offering work-based learning experiences for students and young adults?

Yes	01
No	02

18. Do you currently have partnerships with any of the following organizations to help you source talent?

(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

18a. Job Centers or Workforce Investment Boards

Yes	01
No	02

18b. School districts or individual K-12 schools

Yes	01
No	02

18c. 2-year colleges

Yes	01
No	02

18d. 4-year colleges

Yes	01
No	02

18e. Training institutions

Yes	01
No	02

18f. Nonprofit organizations

Yes	01
No	02

18g. Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development

Yes	01
No	02

18h. Other (please record)

Yes	01
No	02

19. What percentage of jobs in your firm receives each of the following types
of background checks prior to hire?

Criminal check, percentage	__
Financial check, percentage	__
Drug screen, percentage	__
eVerify check, percentage	
Social media check, percentage	
Professional license or certification check, percentage	
Check by an outside service, percentage	__

20. What aspects of DEI – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 – does your business incorporate?

(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

20a. A DEI strategy or plan

Yes	01
No	02

20b. An Equal Opportunity Employer notice in job postings

Yes	01
No	02

20c. A DEI statement on your website or in a handbook

Yes	01
No	02

20d. A DEI committee

Yes	01
No	02

20e. Harassment or sensitivity course or training

Yes	01
No	02

21. Which statement best describes your company's position
on hiring an applicant convicted of a felony offense who has
completed their sentence and/or probation?
(Read list; single response only)

Would not consider applicant for any position	01
Depends on the nature of the felony and the time since the offense	02
Would consider for some jobs but not for others	03
Would consider the applicant for any job for which they are qualified	04
(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98

22. Finally, we want to understand the characteristics that best define
a "good" job. Please rank the importance of each of the following
 job characteristics on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 is "not at all important"
and 5 is "very important."

(Do not read) Refuse	97
(Do not read) Don't know/Not sure	98
Health Insurance	__
Pay rate	__
Sense of purpose	__
Accessibility	__
Retirement plan	__
Job stability	__
Paid time off (vacation or sick leave)	__
Flexibility	__
Paid family leave	__
Inclusiveness, a sense of belonging	__
Job satisfaction	__
Opportunities for advancement or a career path	__

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