

Florida Workforce Needs Study

Statewide Survey
Findings



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Florida Workforce Needs Study | Statewide Survey Findings

The *Florida Workforce Needs Study* continues the Florida Chamber Foundation's workforce -related research focused on ensuring Florida is an international leader in workforce education and training while taking into account Florida's evolving talent and workforce needs. This first-of-its kind job market report provides a comprehensive look at the skills Floridians need to possess in order to shift from now over-supplied occupations to in-demand occupations with more demand than supply - and higher wages.

2021 Workforce Needs Survey

The *2021 Workforce Needs Survey* was developed to inform the *Florida Workforce Needs Study* and better understand the training, recruitment and other workforce-related needs of employers across Florida as we shift to a post-pandemic world. The survey also provided insight into how the pandemic has impacted Florida industries, and employers' ability to respond to resulting economic disruptions.

The *2021 Workforce Needs Survey* consisted of 24 questions designed to gain insights on the following:

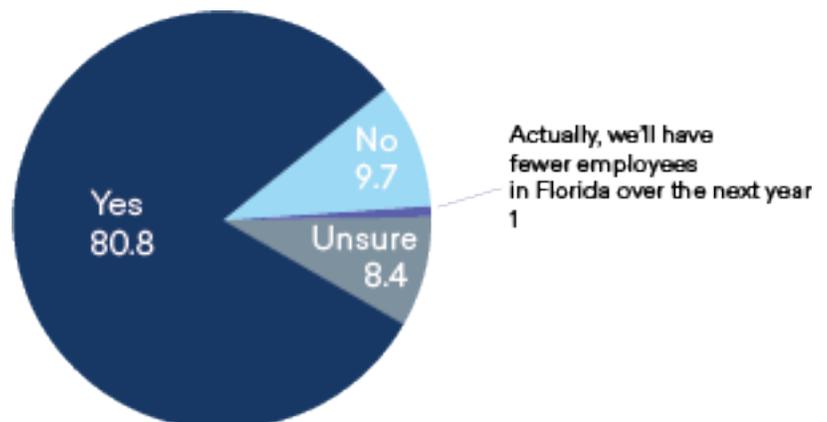
- the skill level of current candidates,
- the disruptions being seen on talent development and hiring as a result of the pandemic,
- work-based learning opportunities and best practices, and
- suggestions for strengthening the skill level of Florida's workforce.

Business and industry leaders, HR professionals, and local chambers of commerce helped generate the more than 1,100 responses from 51 counties across Florida.

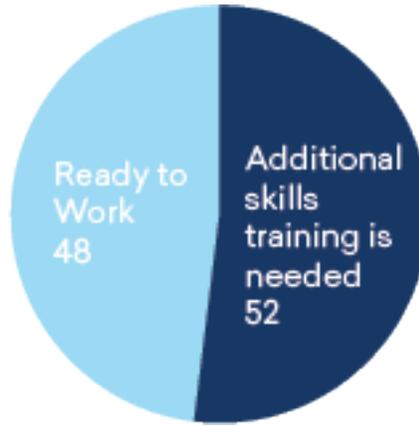
Survey Outcomes

- Gained insight on the skills gap that continues to exist in Florida's workforce
- Demonstrated the importance of technology in responding to mandatory closures as well as the accelerated use of technology even as the state re-opened
- Supported the need to inform Florida businesses and industry leaders on the local and state resources available for training and reskilling the current workforce
- Provided data that will help inform Florida legislative leaders on the changing needs of Florida industries

Question #1:
Over the next year, do you expect to hire new employees in Florida?



Question #2:
Generally speaking, when you hire new employees, are they ready to work or do they need additional skills training?

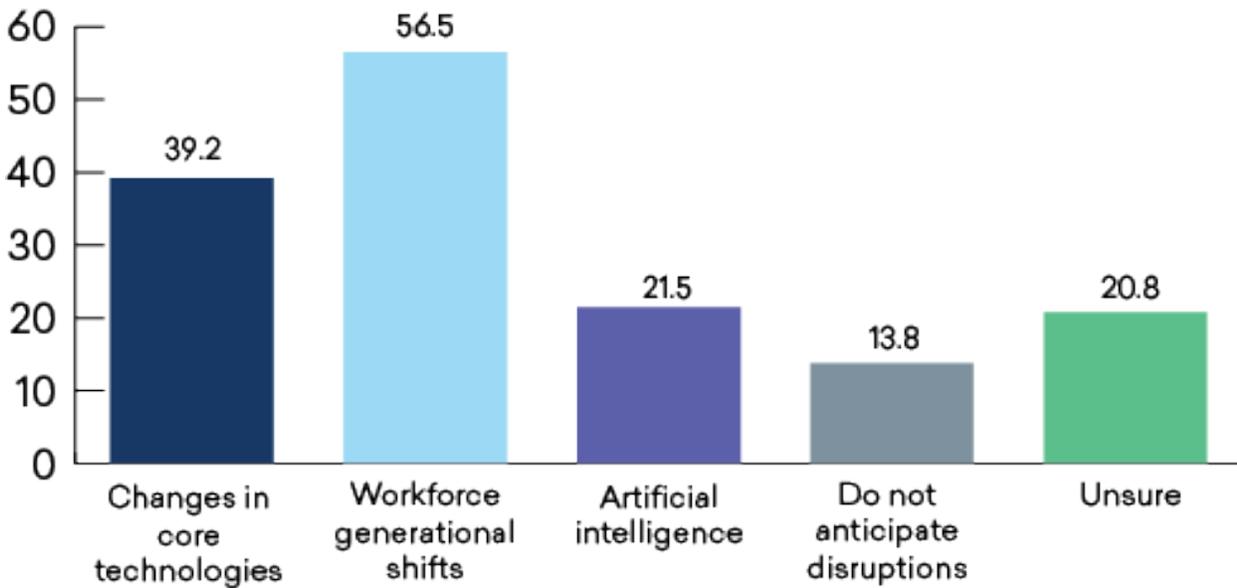


Question #3: If “additional skills training is needed”, please explain.

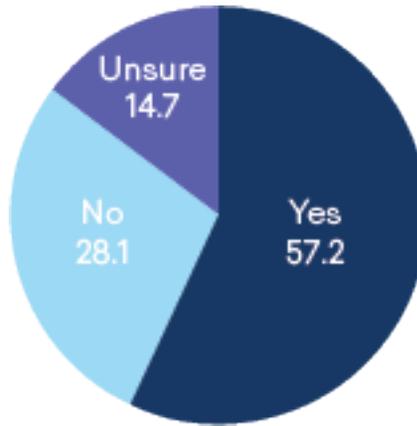
On-the-job training was listed by many of the survey respondents as standard practice in their companies. Whether to understand their company culture, learn custom software or their product line, a significant number of businesses indicated additional training was required of new hires.

Listed as frequently lacking in new hires were employability skills. A number of responses indicated difficulty finding employees with basic skills such as punctuality and understanding how to dress professionally. Other comments discussed a need for better grammar and writing skills, customer service skills, and computer skills.

Question 4: Which of the following do you believe will be disruptive for your business over the next 10 years? Select all that apply.



Question 5:
 If you indicated you anticipate disruptions over the next 10 years, have these potential disruptions slowed or accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

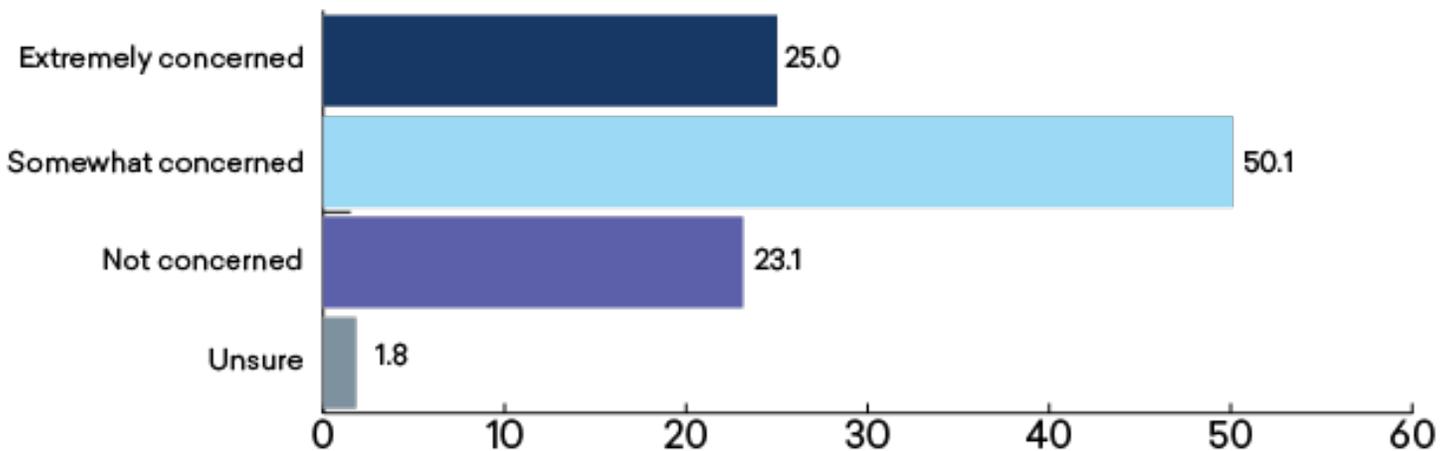


Question 6: How have you modified your talent development or other strategies due to changes in technology?

Respondents indicated a need for more training, particularly on virtual learning and meeting tools as staff worked remotely. Respondents also discussed the need to move certain processes online including going paperless, developing a stronger online presence to meet the needs of customers, and conducting virtual recruiting and hiring.

While some respondents said they were focusing on upskilling and increasing cross-training among current staff, others noted that the technology changes were causing them to look for job applicants with stronger technology skills. A few also indicated that the change to more technology and conducting business virtually allowed them to broaden their recruiting efforts and look for candidates outside of Florida.

Question 7: How concerned are you about the lack of key skills (employability skills, digital skills) as a threat to your business?



Question 8: Is your organization currently engaged in any public-private partnerships regarding workforce training or skills development, including partnerships with local universities, state colleges, technical centers/colleges, or local workforce training organizations?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	39.8%	462
No	57.5%	667
Unsure	2.7%	31
	Total	1,160

Question 9: Does your company provide work-based learning opportunities?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	57.2%	664
No	36.1%	419
Unsure	6.7%	78
	Total	1,161

Question 10: If you selected yes, please indicate the work-based learning opportunities (internships, practicum, on the job learning, career mentorship) provided by your company. Select all that apply.

	Paid	Unpaid	Both Paid & Unpaid	Not Applicable
High School Students	31%	15%	21%	33%
State University Students	47%	13%	27%	13%
State College Students	47%	13%	28%	12%
Private University Students	45%	13%	24%	18%
International Students	18%	8%	14%	60%
Other	27%	8%	18%	47%

Question 11: If you provide work-based learning opportunities, what are the conditions under which these programs have been successful?

Internships were frequently mentioned as successful work-based learning opportunities among survey respondents, and many included the need to have a strong mentor or coach involved in the internship. Partnering with local colleges and universities was also noted as leading to positive outcomes.

When discussing work-based learning opportunities for existing employees, survey responses noted the following as important to success:

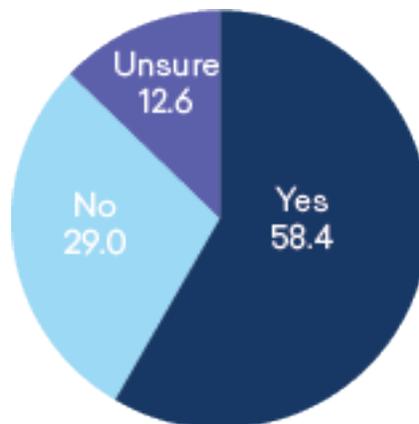
- Provide clear goals with a path towards advancement within the company
- Tie the training to future pay increases
- Provide strong mentorship
- Regular applicant feedback in a circle application
- Offer tuition assistance
- Develop training with the employee's input and feedback
- A good attitude and positive work ethic, willing to learn

Question 12: From your experience, what are best practices in the design, implementing and evaluation of work-based learning programs?

In describing best practices in work-based learning programs, the importance of good mentors was mentioned by numerous respondents. Also noted was the need to develop clearly defined objectives for both the company and the learner, and an understanding of the desired outcomes, with “check-ins” or a “continuous feedback loop” throughout the training program.

Finding the right person, identified by some as having a good attitude, a willingness to learn, and initiative and drive, were attributes noted by a number of respondents as important to a successful program. Other comments noted the need to develop customized training, matching the employee to the skills, incorporating real world or hands-on experience and adapting the program to changing needs.

**Question 13:
Do you anticipate the need to provide your current employees with reskilling/ upskilling to meet emerging workforce needs?**



Question 14: Is your company currently investing in digital (online/virtual) training?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	68.4%	794
No	29.4%	341
Unsure	2.2%	26
	Total	1,161

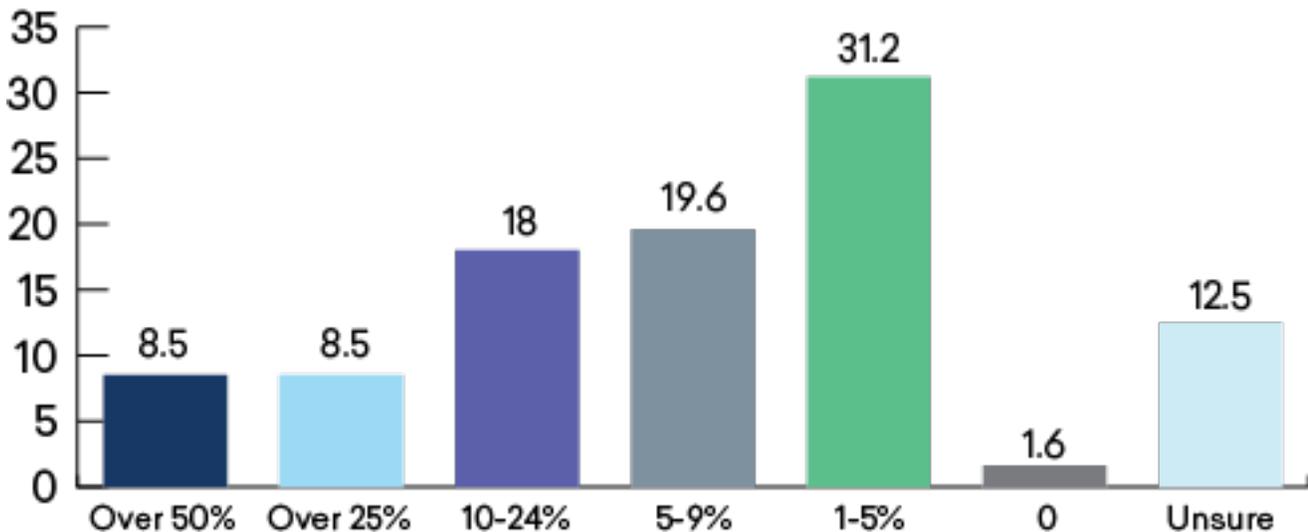
Question 15: Does your company provide tuition reimbursement for reskilling workers?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	38.4%	445
No	54.7%	635
Unsure	6.9%	80
	Total	1,160

Question 16: If you selected yes, at what point in their tenure are employees able to access tuition reimbursement?

Responses to this question varied with tuition reimbursement made available anywhere from immediately upon being hired to after being employed for five years. The majority of the responses indicated employees could access tuition reimbursement following 90 days, six months and, most often, after one year of employment.

Question 17: What percentage of workers take advantage of these programs?



Question 18:

Are you aware of state and/or federal programs to help train employees?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	33.2%	385
No	66.8%	775
	Totals	1,160

Question 19: If you selected yes, does your organization participate? Why or why not?

A number of respondents indicated they were aware of state and federal programs for training but did not use them because they didn't have a need for training or they handled all their training in-house. Some indicated the available programs didn't meet the needs of their industry, they believed their business was too small to participate, or did not quality. A few respondents noted that the process was too cumbersome.

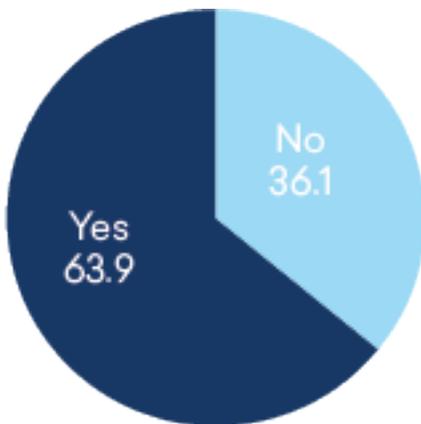
Respondents who answered yes noted the training programs were helpful in upskilling employees, in employee retention, and in offsetting the cost of training. Others indicated the training was a requirement in order to receive federal funding. Responses also stated that they didn't have a need currently but planned on participating in these programs in the future.

Question 20: Please provide the name of any state and/or federal programs your company uses to help train employees.

CareerSource Florida was the most frequently listed program used to help train employees though state universities, local colleges, the Division of Rehabilitation, workforce programs and industry training programs were also listed. The majority of survey respondents who were not familiar with training resources or who were not using these resources were interested in learning more.

Question 21:

If you selected no, are you interested in learning more?



Question 22: The Florida Chamber Foundation leaders want Florida to have the best trained workforce in America. What could Florida leaders do to be a partner in providing education and training to your business and industry?

When responding to this question, raising awareness was frequently mentioned and fell into several categories. Florida leaders should raise awareness about:

- the variety of potential career opportunities among middle and high school students
- business/industry workforce needs among educational organizations
- training resources throughout the state
- federal and state grant opportunities available for workforce training
- where gaps exist between job openings and talent supply

The need for training programs, particularly affordable training programs was also a common response, along with providing more apprenticeship and internship opportunities. Partnerships with educational organizations was another common suggestion, including helping improve communications between workforce and education on the skills that are important to local and regional businesses. Respondents continued to emphasize the need to train students on employability skills

Question 23: What role has the pandemic played in your talent development and/or hiring strategies?

While some respondents did indicate they were not impacted at all, a significant number noted the primary change of the pandemic was the need to move to virtual platforms. According to respondents, the increased use of technology for everything from staff meetings to employee training and new hire recruiting had a significant impact.

Some survey responses discussed the need to lay off staff, as well as either delaying hiring they were planning pre-pandemic, or downsizing as current employees left. Others, however, indicated that with staff working remotely, the ability to hire from outside Florida offered a larger talent pool.

As technology has become a greater focus, some noted that when looking for new employees, they are placing greater emphasis on technical skills. Others are cross-training existing staff in order to ensure their employees can fill multiple roles.

Question 24: If you were in charge of training Florida's future workforce, what would you do to make Florida the best place on the planet for a talented workforce?

A significant number of survey responses focused on the need to introduce career opportunities to kids earlier and to provide more information on career opportunities that do not require a post-secondary degree.

"Teach more soft skills in high school. Have high schools create talent pipelines to both colleges/universities or to workforce development programs and help kids better understand their choices after high schools, including those opportunities that do not include higher education."

"Start early. Provide information at the middle school and high school levels as to opportunities in various career paths. Have focused educational opportunities based on Florida's top industries."

"Increase awareness about career opportunities in serving persons with Developmental/Intellectual disabilities and special needs. Increase training on how to serve persons with special needs".

"Work with schools and technical centers to ensure that students know the careers that are available to them."

Responses also continued to focus on the lack of employability skills, stating that to ensure Florida has a talented workforce, training is required for life skills, financial literacy, soft skills, and developing a good work ethic.

"I would have more leadership trainings for our young leaders, I would pay them for on the job training, preparing them for interviews, help pay for higher education learning for them. Trainings on how to do community relations."

"In order to have a strong workforce, our education system needs to continue to work with schools so that students learn to express themselves well verbally and through the written word. They need these skills in addition to analytical thinking and problem-solving."

Respondents suggested developing training programs that meet the needs of existing businesses and industries, and incentivizing businesses to increase internship opportunities.

"Create a basic training program for all industries important to Florida's economy and provide a minimum pay scale for those who attend and successfully complete the program. Programs developed by the industries themselves."

"Identify the industry sectors that are emerging and growing and train for the fundamentals to enter these fields. Develop an economic vision for 2030 and beyond with state and local leaders."

"I would align workforce development with emerging technologies and industries, BUT still create well rounded, critical thinking individuals with the social skills, communication skills, and leadership skills required to put their talent to work."

"See if you could encourage business owners to come into colleges and universities to guide students on what skills they need in the workforce to succeed. Students often leave college or university with knowledge, but few hands-on skills."

"Provide incentives to companies to train employees to increase talent in Florida, especially for small companies with 50 or less employees."

Suggestions also included the need to provide training or educational options that are affordable for everyone, along with the need for affordable housing and improved transportation options.

"We are working on issues related to attainable housing, transmobility support to lessen commute times, easy access to affordable childcare, schools with strong reputations/outcomes and spousal support for those relocating for their jobs. We've made a lot of progress in Florida to address some of those issues, but we need to be vigilant."

REGISTER FOR OUR PREMIER EVENT OF THE YEAR:

**2021 FUTURE OF FLORIDA FORUM
& ANNUAL MEETING**

Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress, Orlando, FL
October 27-28, 2021

Presented by:  **Fidelity**
INVESTMENTS

Visit flchamber.com/F3 for event details
and registration.

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AKINNON@FLFOUNDATION.ORG**

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“ Despite the setbacks brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have not wavered on the Florida 2030 Blueprint goal to grow Florida to the 10th largest economy in the world by 2030. In order to realize this goal, we must continue strengthening our education system and aligning a high-quality skilled workforce to the future needs of employers. ”

Mark Wilson

Florida Chamber Foundation President

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