

Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board

Employer/Partner Survey

April 2011

Facilitation Services Provided by the Facilitation Center at EKU

www.facilitation.eku.edu

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Introduction & Background Information

From April 1 – May 2, 2011, the Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board (WIB) conducted an online survey of employers and community organizations. Respondents included current partners, as well as, businesses and organizations with no current relationship with the WIB. This survey was conducted to better understand their needs and current and regional workforce trends.

The survey was conducted by the Facilitation Center at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). All responses were anonymous and confidential and sent directly to the Facilitation Center. Only aggregate data is reported. Professional staff from the Facilitation Center also facilitated six community forums throughout the region in April. Both the qualitative insights from the forums and the quantitative data from the survey will be used by the WIB to shape their strategic plan.

The WIB promoted the survey through various methods, including letters, e-mail and Facebook invitations, as well as, announcements through community organizations. Participants at the six community forums were also encouraged to complete the survey and the Mobile Career Center, a customized vehicle with state-of-the-art mobile technology, was available at each forum providing immediate access to the survey.

The survey consisted of 22 closed and four open response questions. A total of 153 people took the survey. Total number of responses per question is indicated with the actual responses. Based on the responses from one of the open ended questions, respondents represented a diverse range of businesses and organizations, including, but not limited to: education, government, healthcare, housing, manufacturing, service providers and tourism.

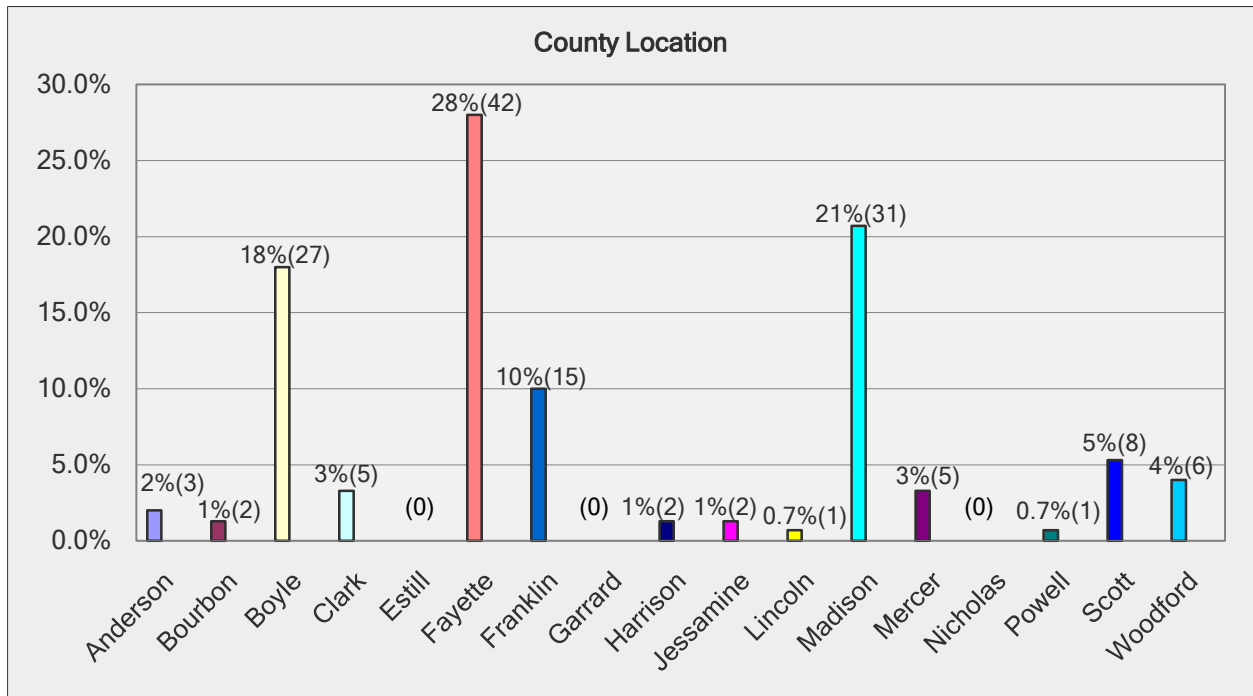
Graph Notes

- 1. Both percentages and actual number of respondents are reflected in most graphs.*
- 2. The number of respondents is indicated in parenthesis.*
- 3. Percentage totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.*
- 4. Respondents only allowed one response unless otherwise indicated.*

Demographics

Q1. In which county is your business/organization located?

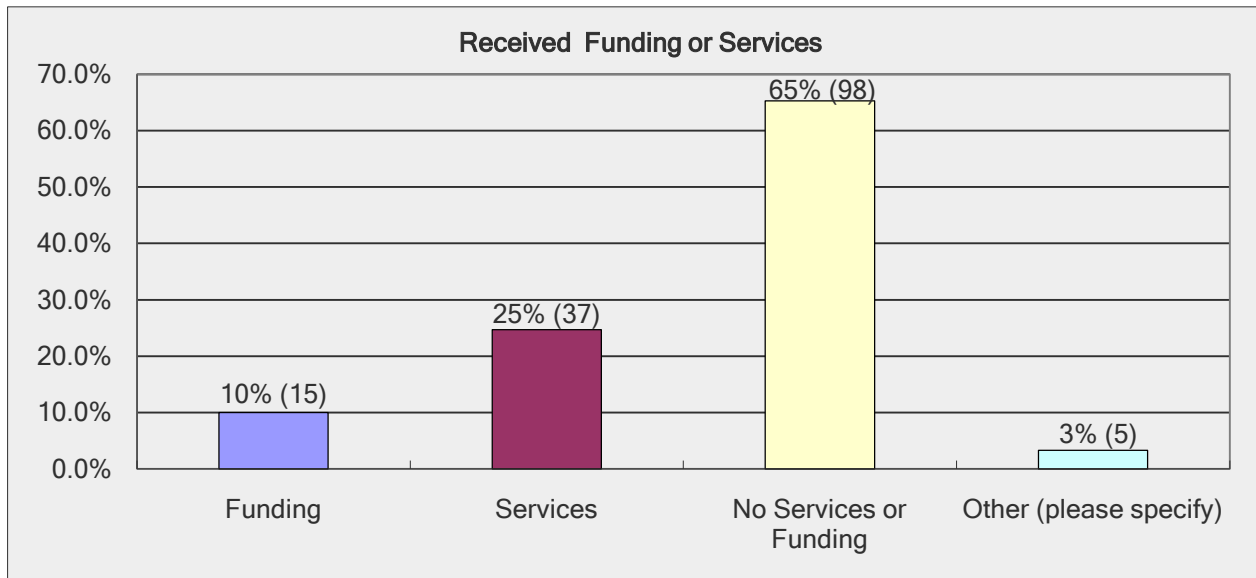
Total Respondents: 150



Note: If a respondents business operated in more than one county, they were advised to select the county in which their headquarters is located, or is a primary location.

Q2. Which of the following have you received from the Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board (WIB) in the last two (2) years?

Total Respondents: 150

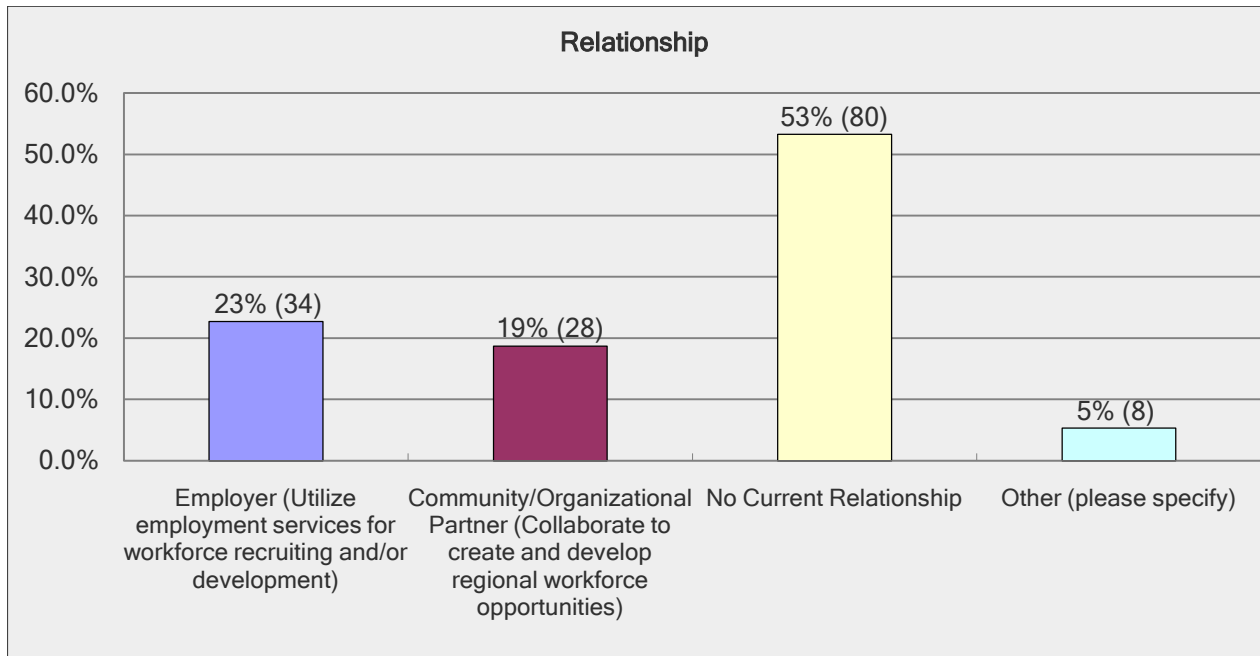


Note: Multiple responses allowed.

Other Responses: Don't Know, Lexington Fayette Urban County Government, Recruitment Support, Volunteer Workers

Q3. Which of the following best describes your organization’s relationship with the WIB?

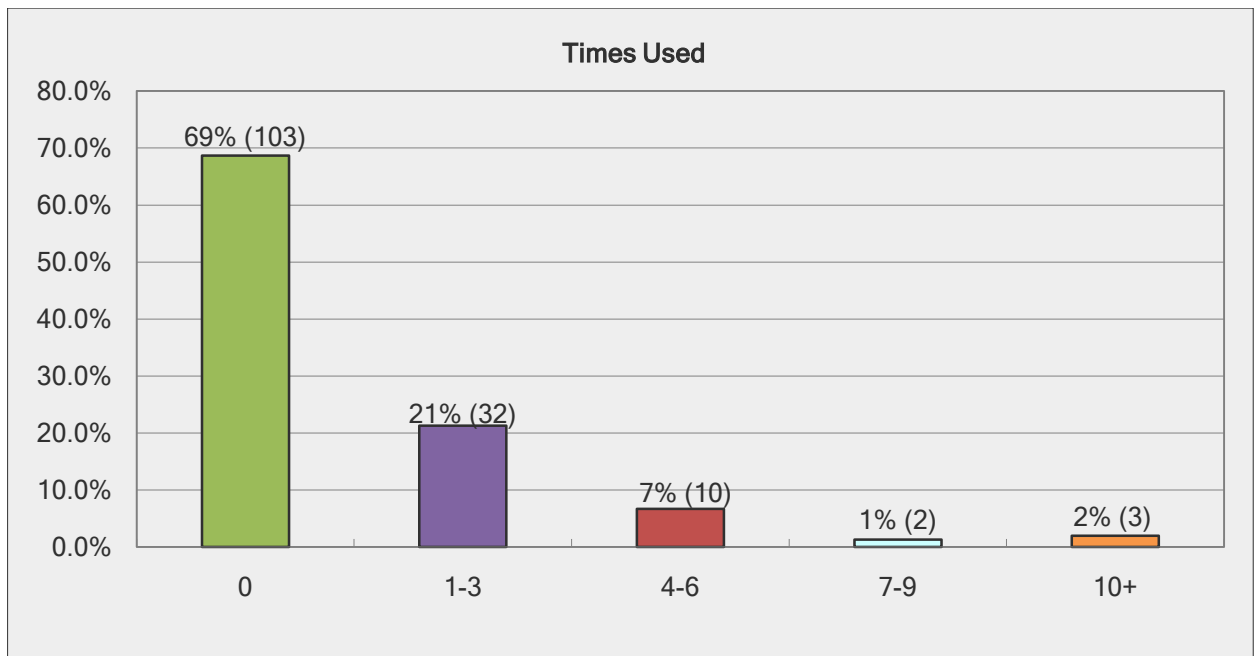
Total Respondents: 150



Other Responses: Associate Member, Community Gardening, Don't Know, Member, Past Board Member, State Government Partner, Training Provider and Employment Services

Q4. How many times have you used WIB services and/or received funding in the last two (2) years?

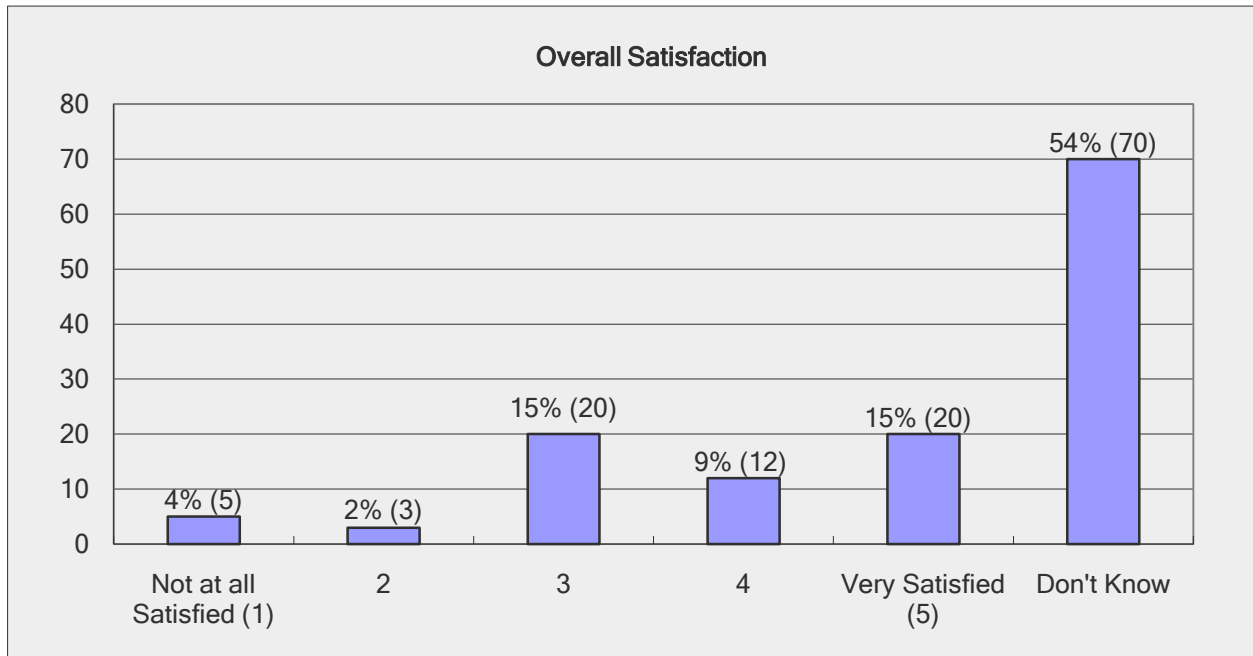
Total Respondents: 150



WIB Performance

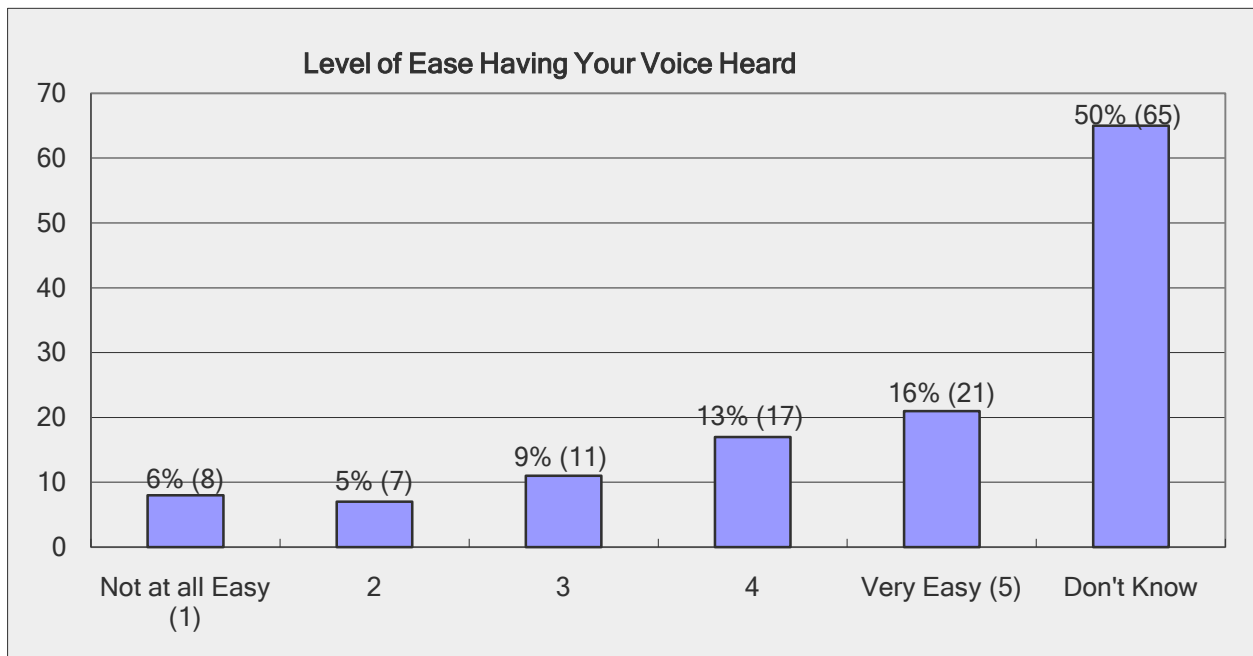
Q5. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board (WIB)?

Total Respondents: 130



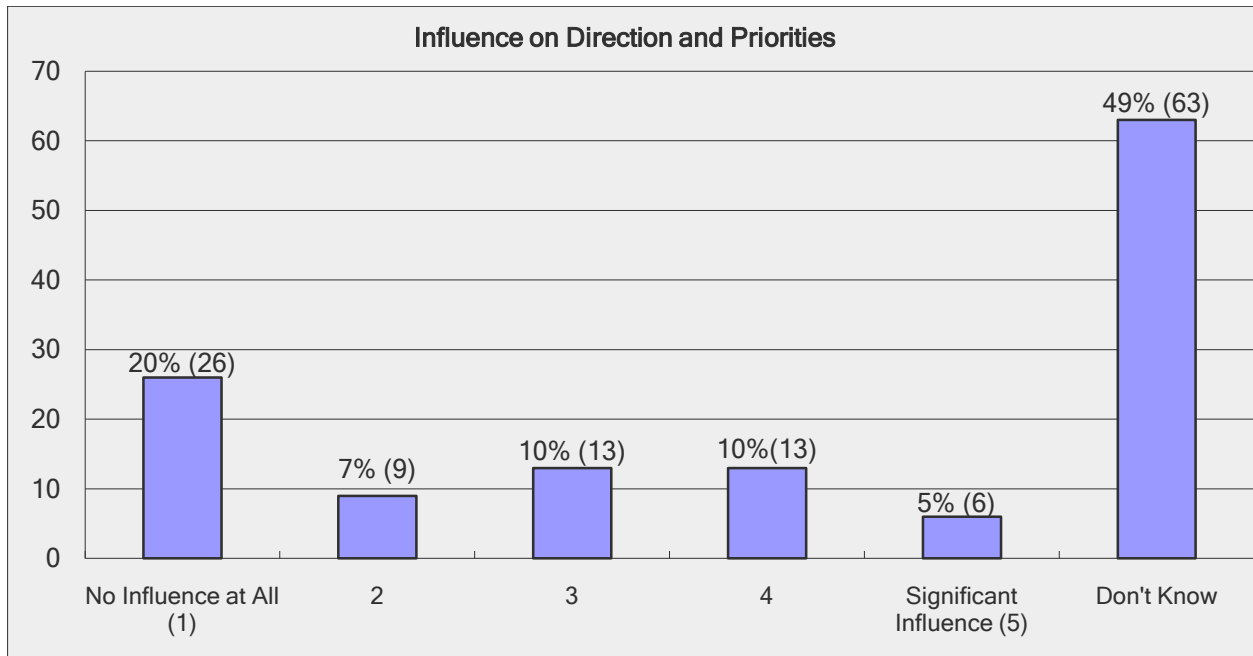
Q6. How easy or difficult do you think it is to have your voice heard by the WIB?

Total Respondents: 129



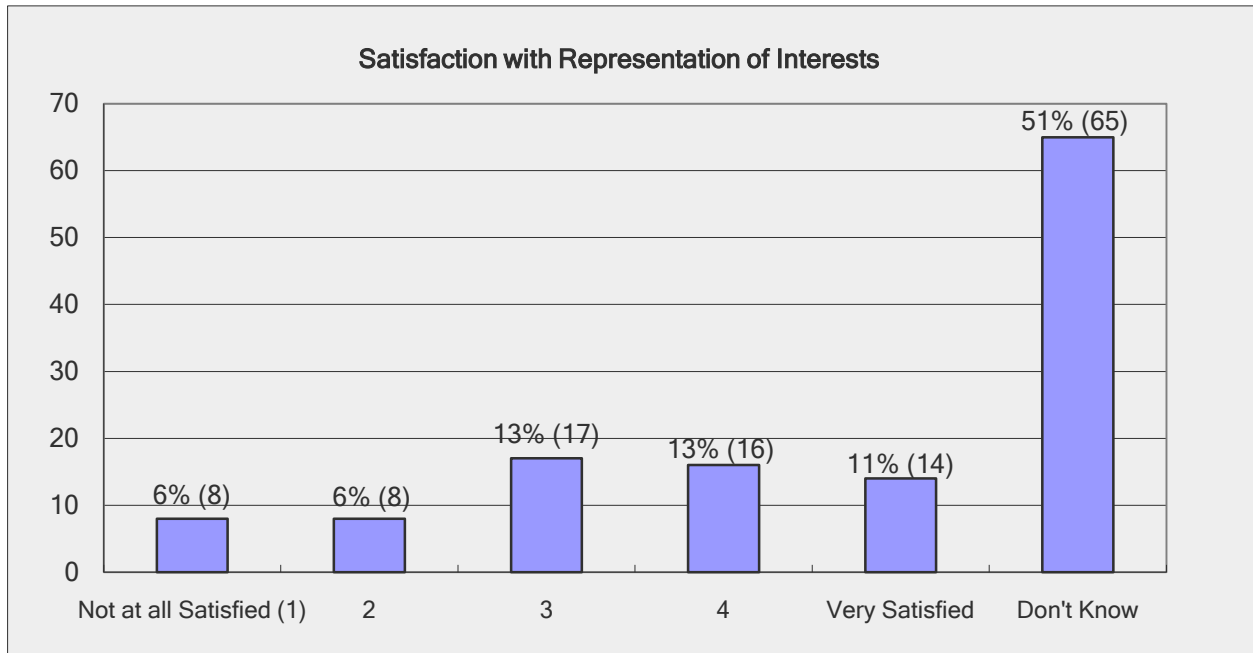
Q7. How much influence do you feel you have on the WIB's direction and priorities?

Total Respondents: 130



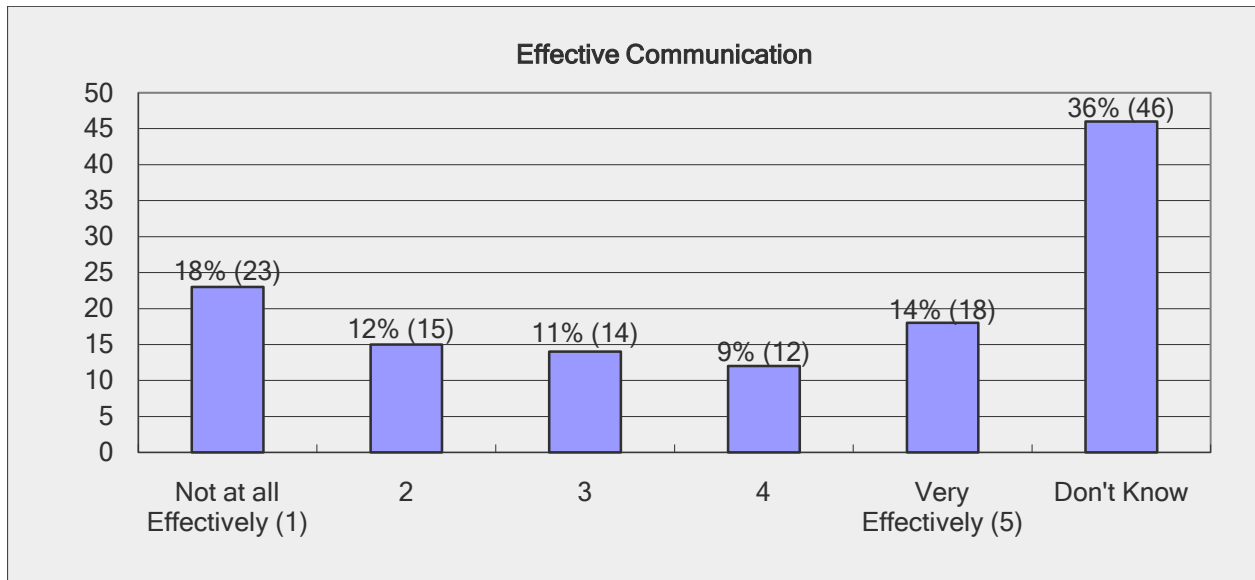
Q8. How satisfied are you that the WIB represents your interests?

Total Respondents: 128



Q9. How effectively do you feel the WIB communicates to you?

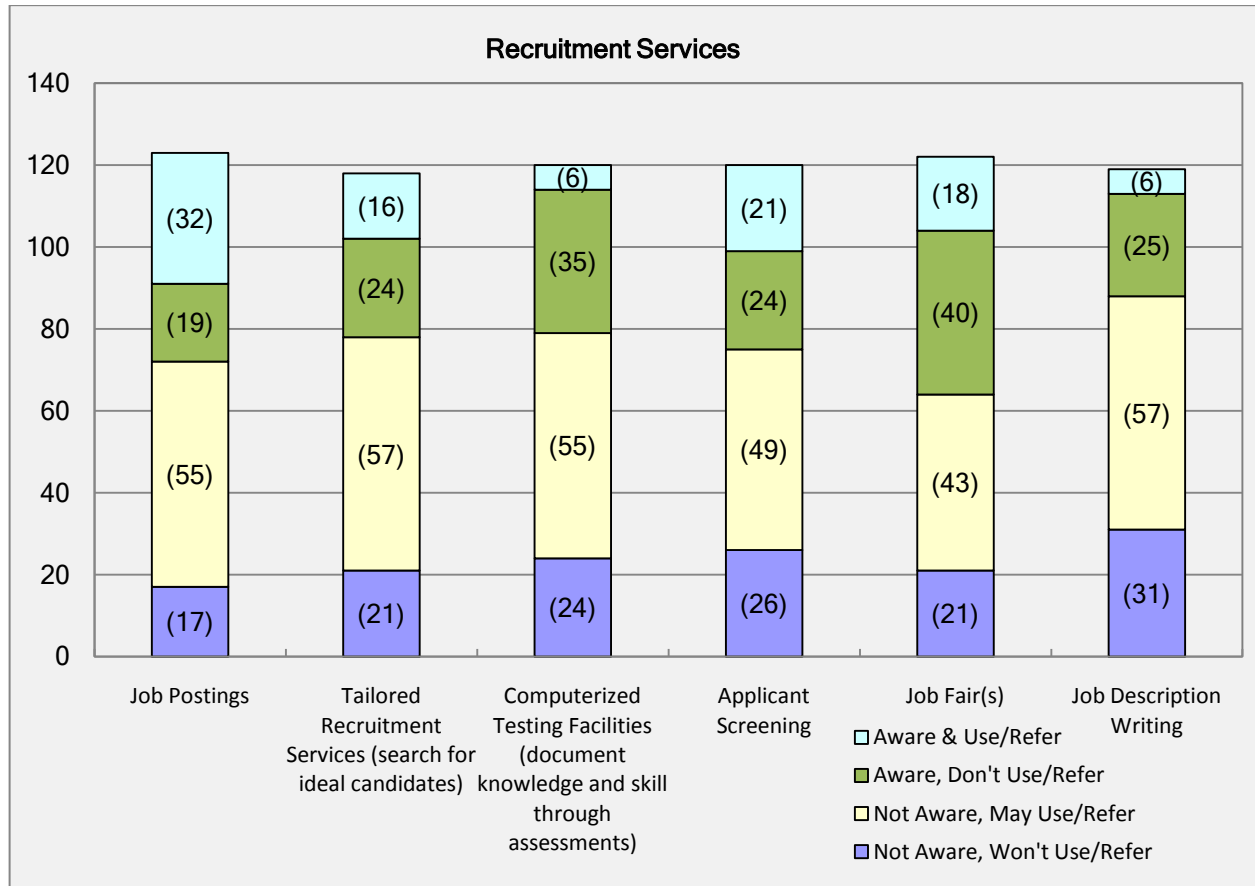
Total Respondents: 128



Awareness and Use of Services

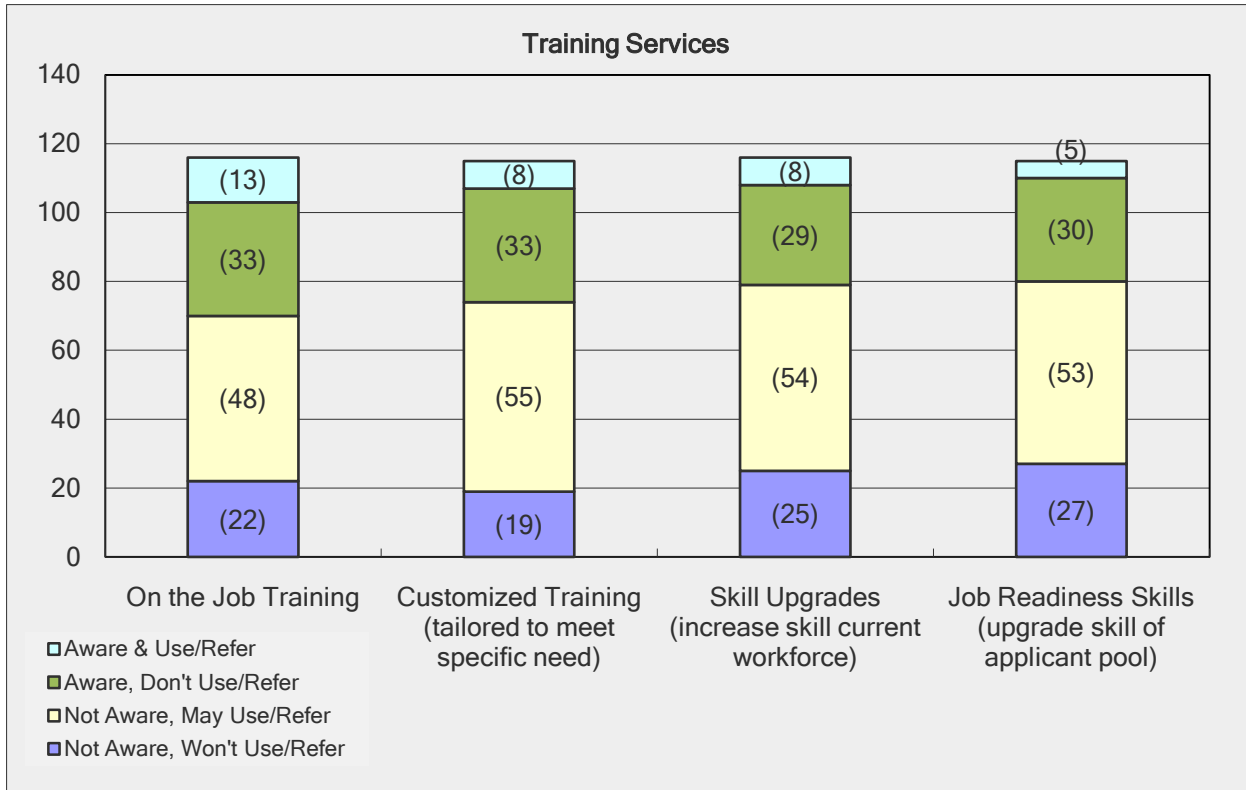
Q10 - Q14. For each service, please indicate your awareness of the service, as well as, whether or not you would use or refer the service.

Total Respondents: Varies from 118-123 depending on service type

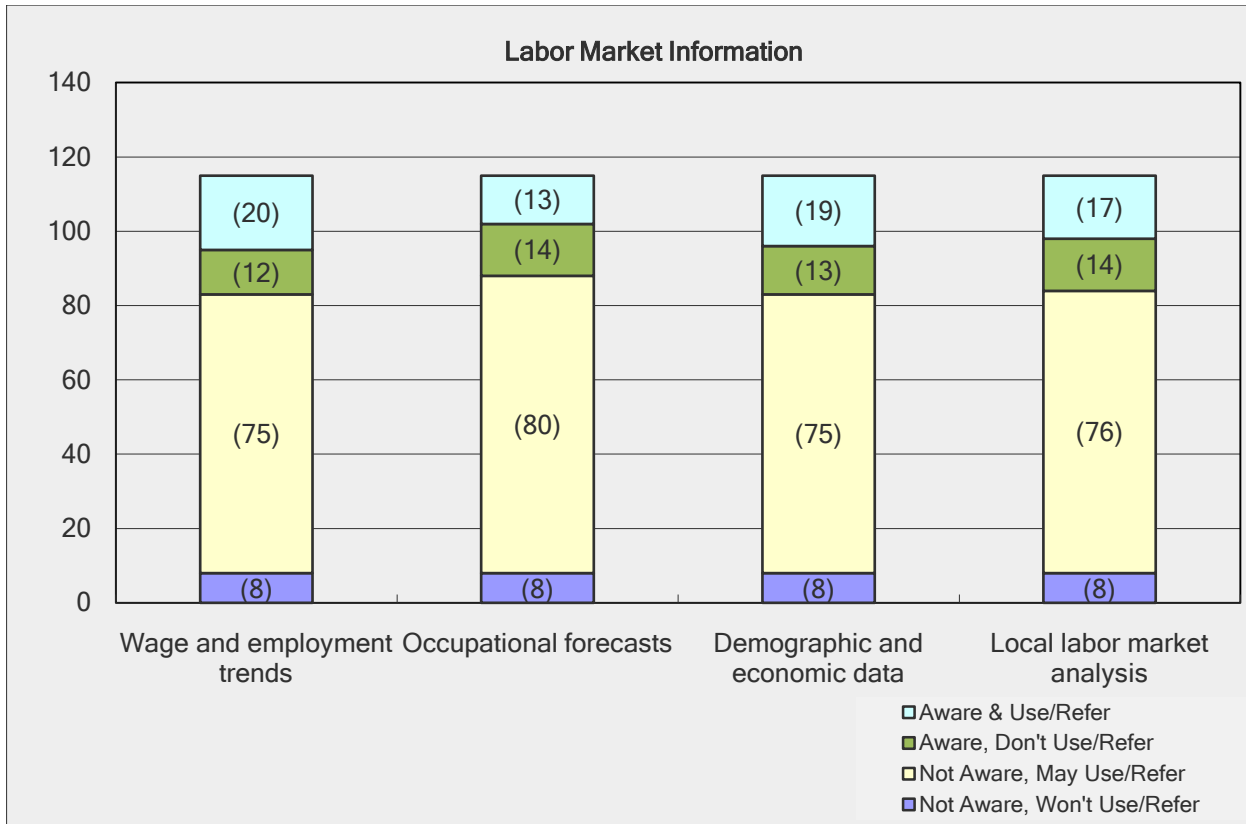


Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board Employer/Partner Survey

Total Respondents: Varies from 115-116 depending on service type

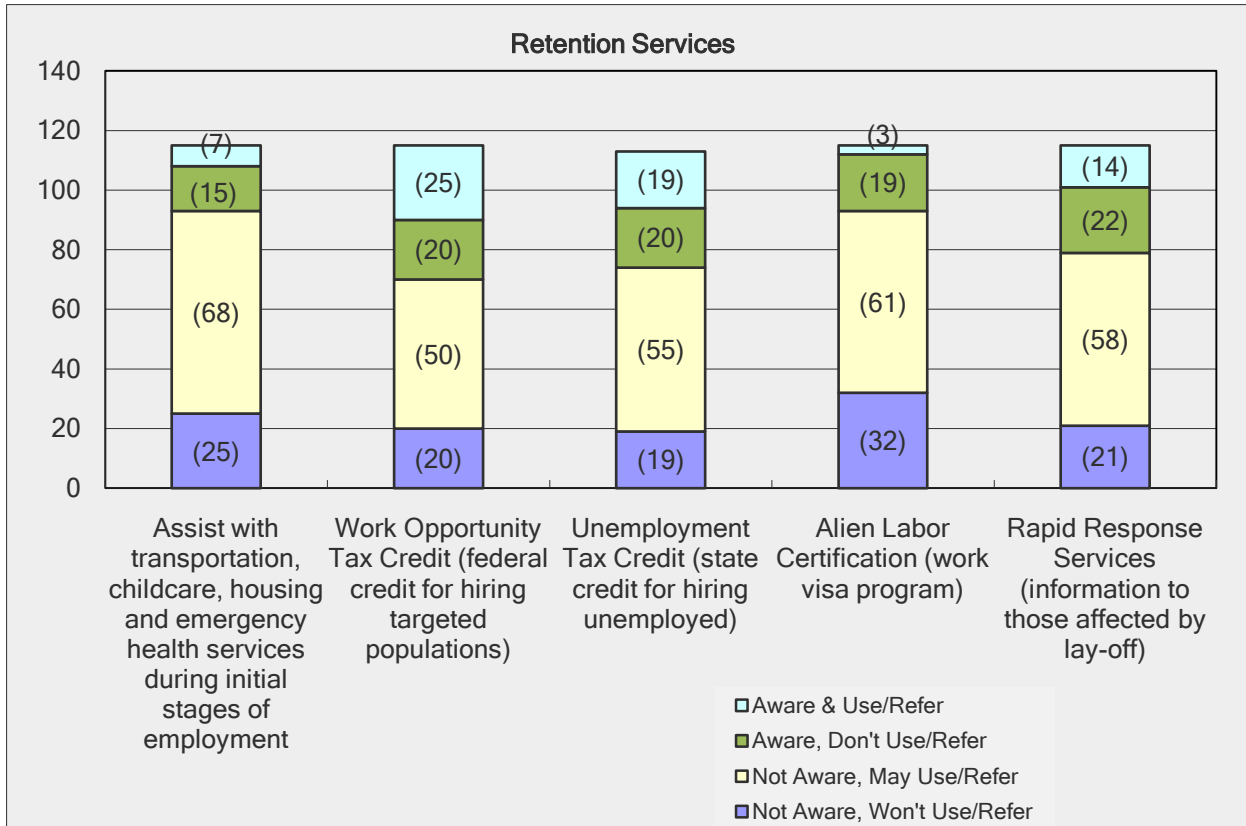


Total Respondents: 115

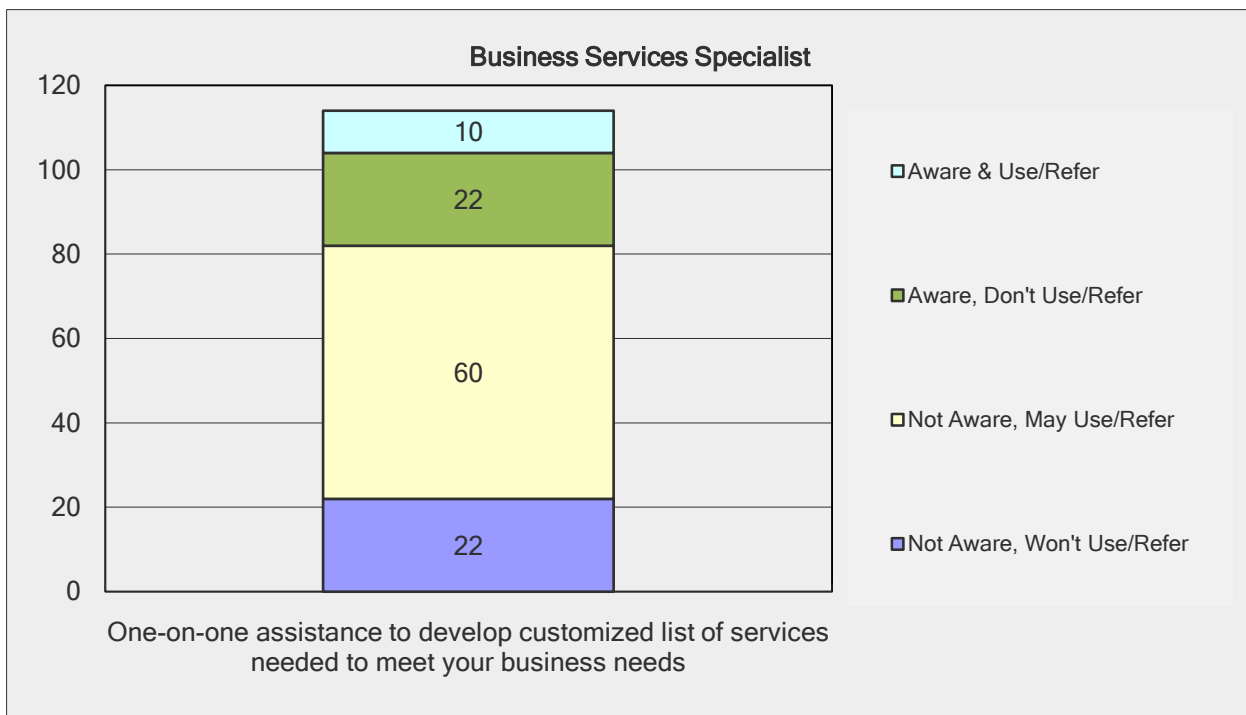


Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board Employer/Partner Survey

Total Respondents: Varies from 113-115 depending on service type



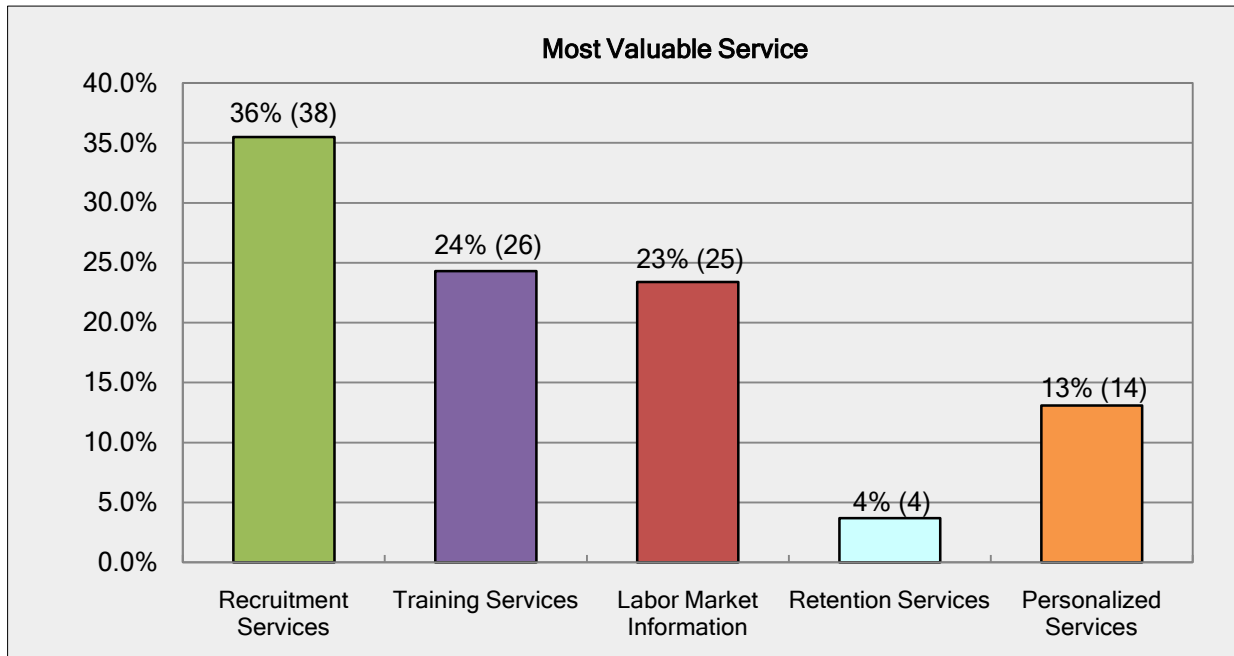
Total Respondents: 114



Value of Services

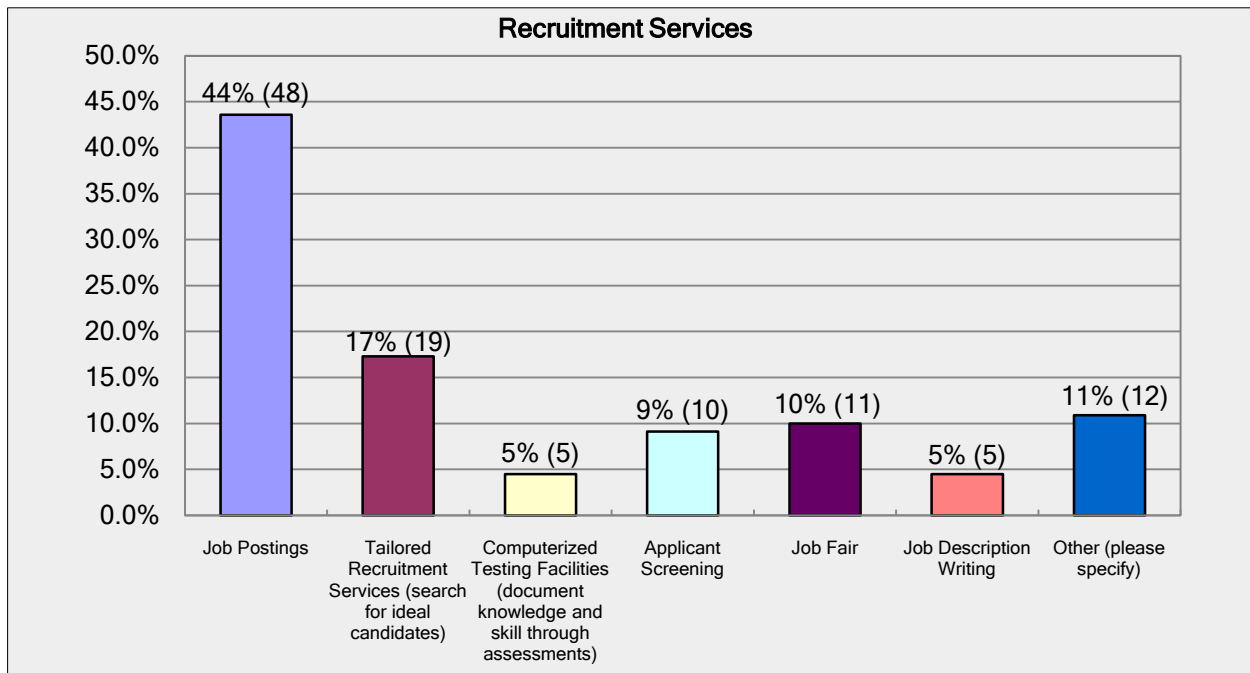
Q15. Which of the following is the most valuable WIB service to your business or organizational mission?

Total Respondents: 107



Q16. Which of the following recruitment services is most valuable to your business or organizational mission?

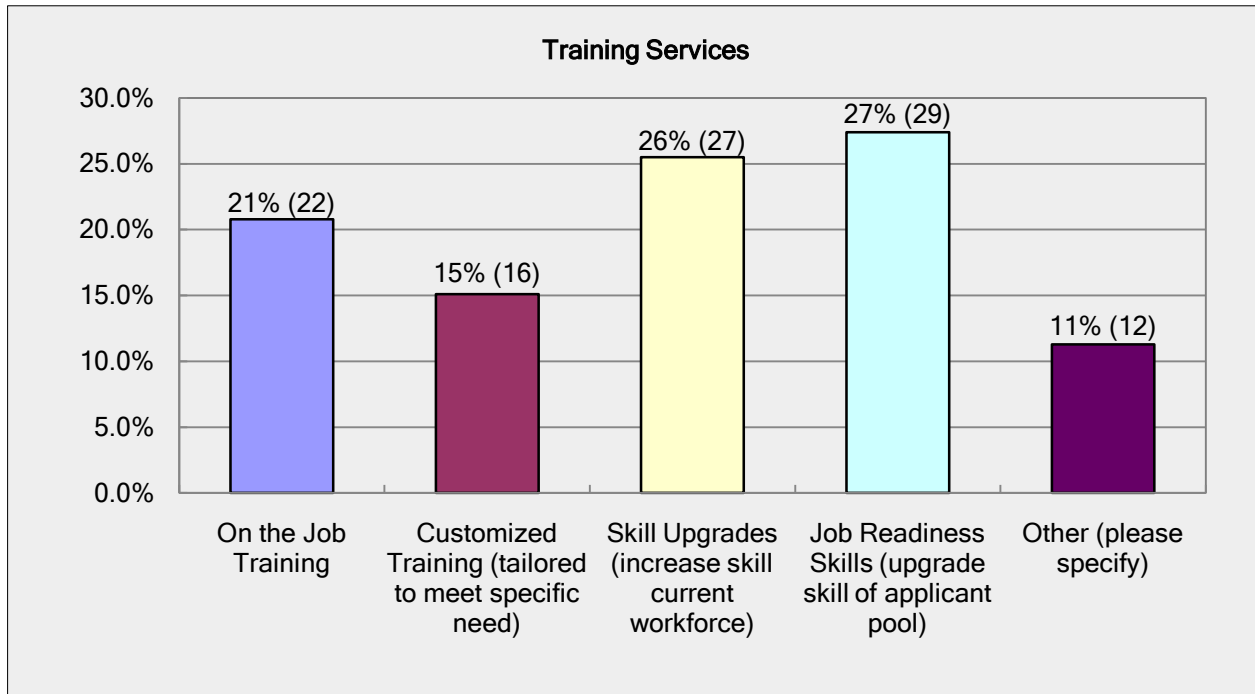
Total Respondents: 110



Other Responses: All are Important, Collaboration, Funding for Specific Programs, Market Outlook, Non-Profit Business Practices and Upgrading Current Operating Practices, None, Unaware, Work for a Large Organization with its Own HR Department, Working with Companies that we Recruit or Companies that Expand

Q17. Which of the following training services is most valuable to your business or organizational mission?

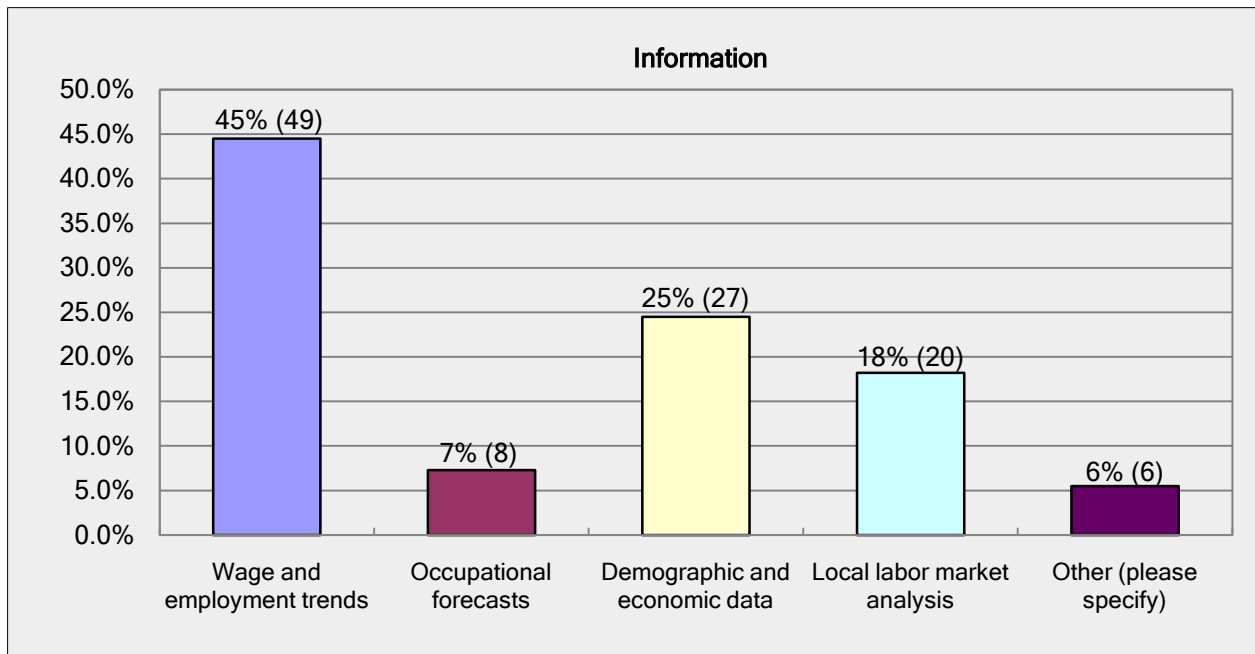
Total Respondents: 106



Other Responses: All, N/A, No Employees, None, Unaware, Unknown, Work for a Large Organization with its Own HR Department

Q18. Which of the following information is most valuable to your business or organizational mission?

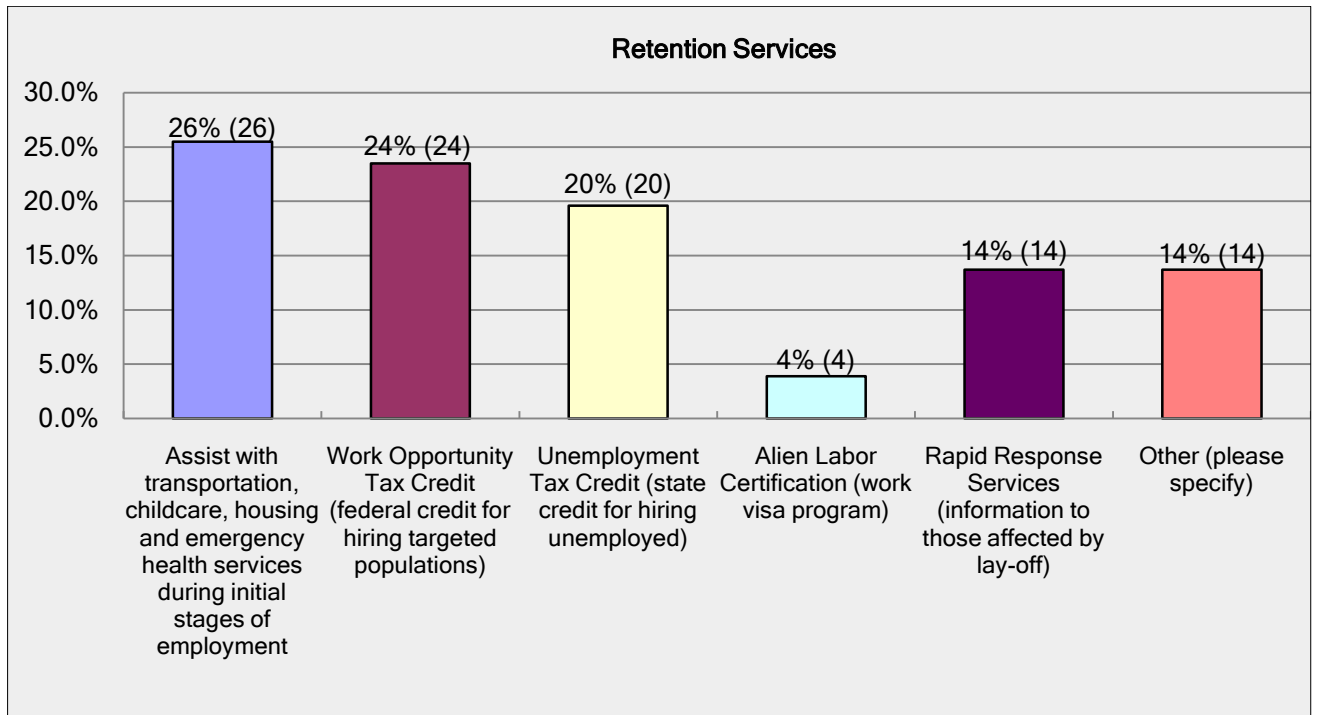
Total Respondents: 110



Other Responses: All, Don't Know, None, Unaware

Q19. Which of the following retention services is most valuable to your business or organizational mission?

Total Respondents: 102

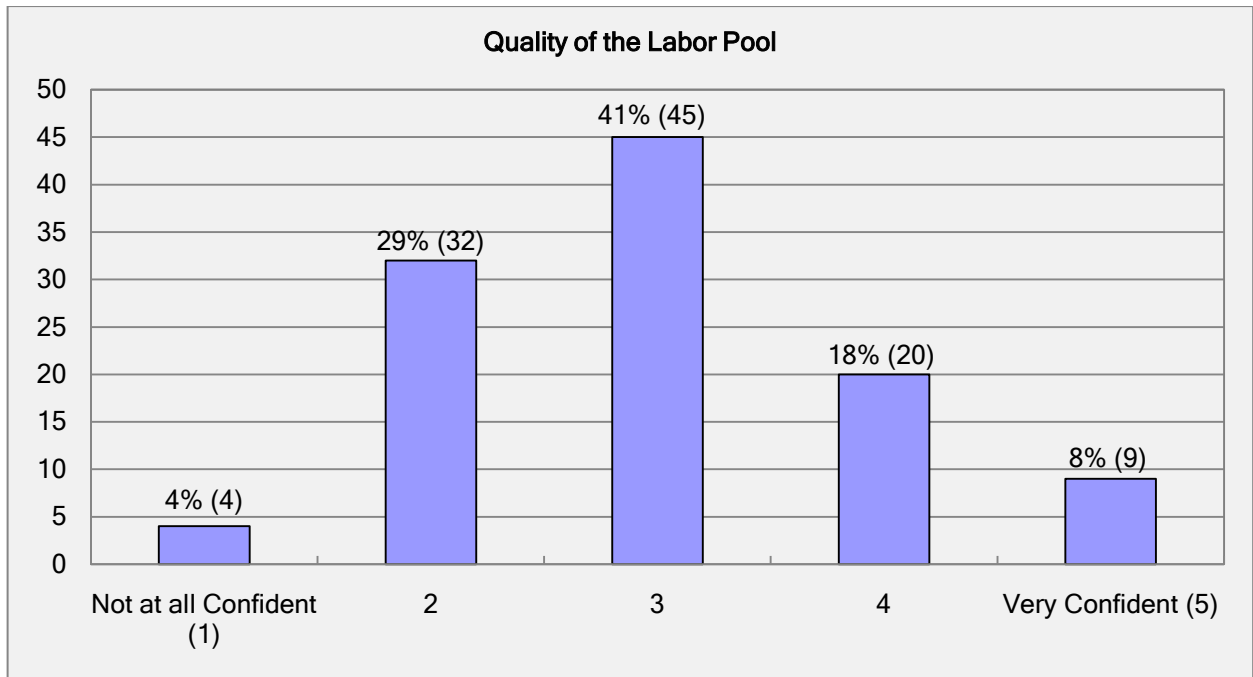


Other Responses: All, Don't Know, Have Not Used, Job Search, N/A, No Employees, None, On-the-Job-Training (OJT), Provide Professional and Personal Development Trainings for Employment Stability, Unaware

Workforce Needs

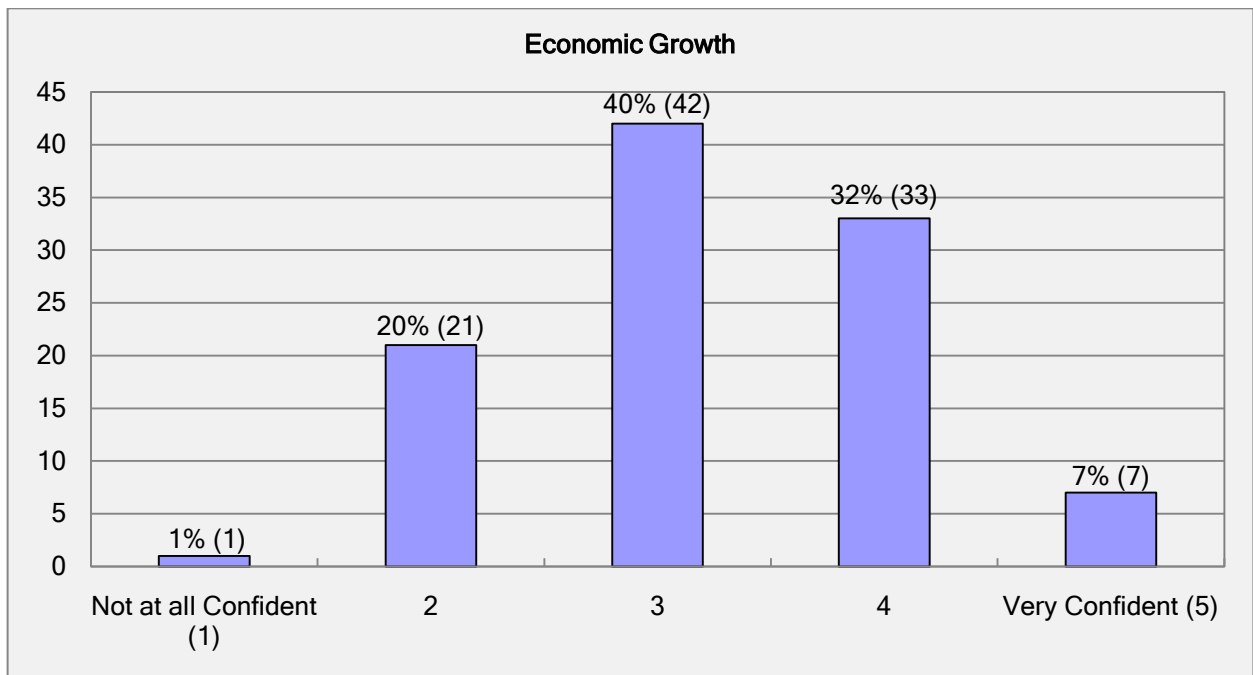
Q20 A. How do you feel about the quality of the labor pool in this region and its ability to meet your needs?

Total Respondents: 110



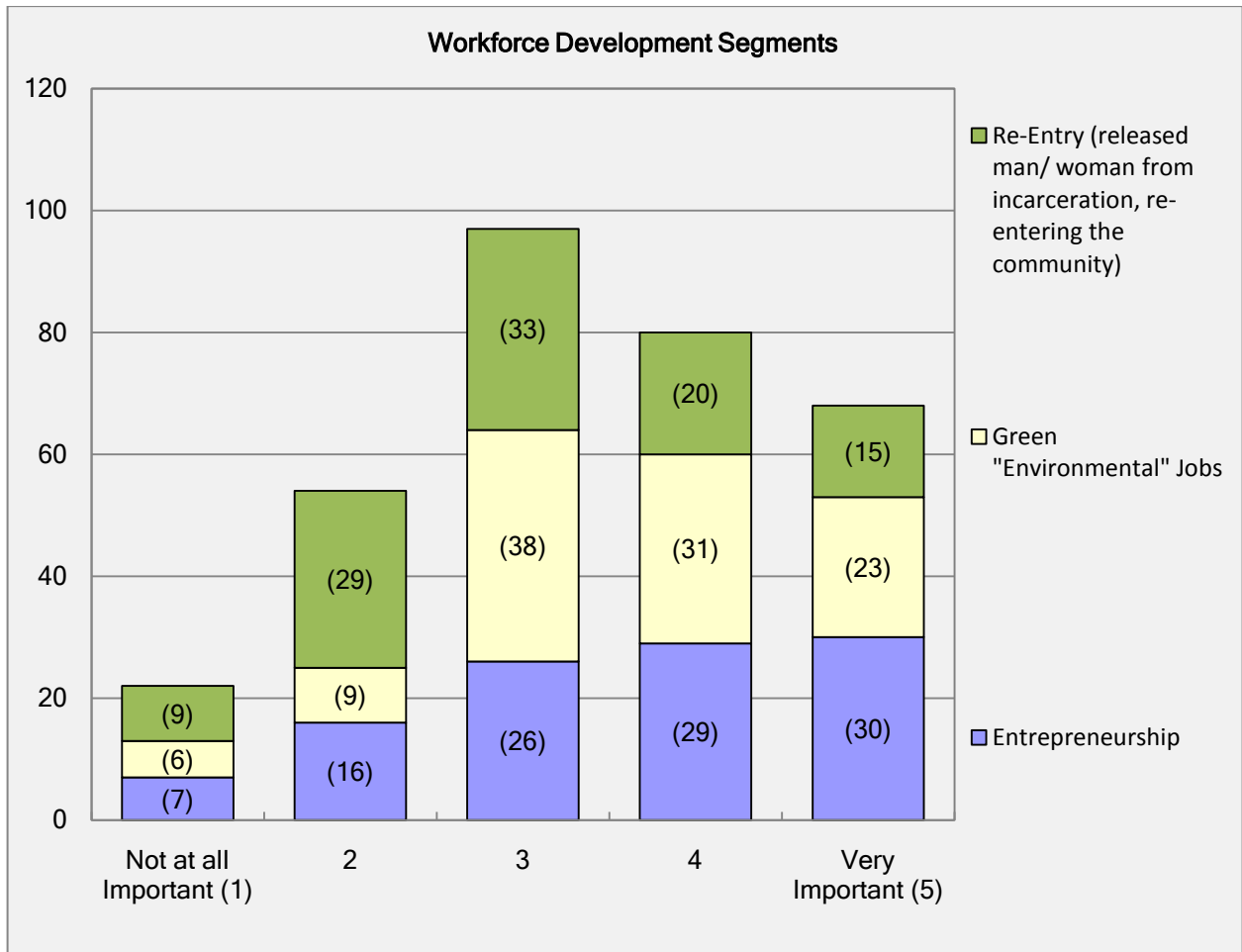
Q20 B. How do you feel about the economic growth potential of this region?

Total Respondents: 104



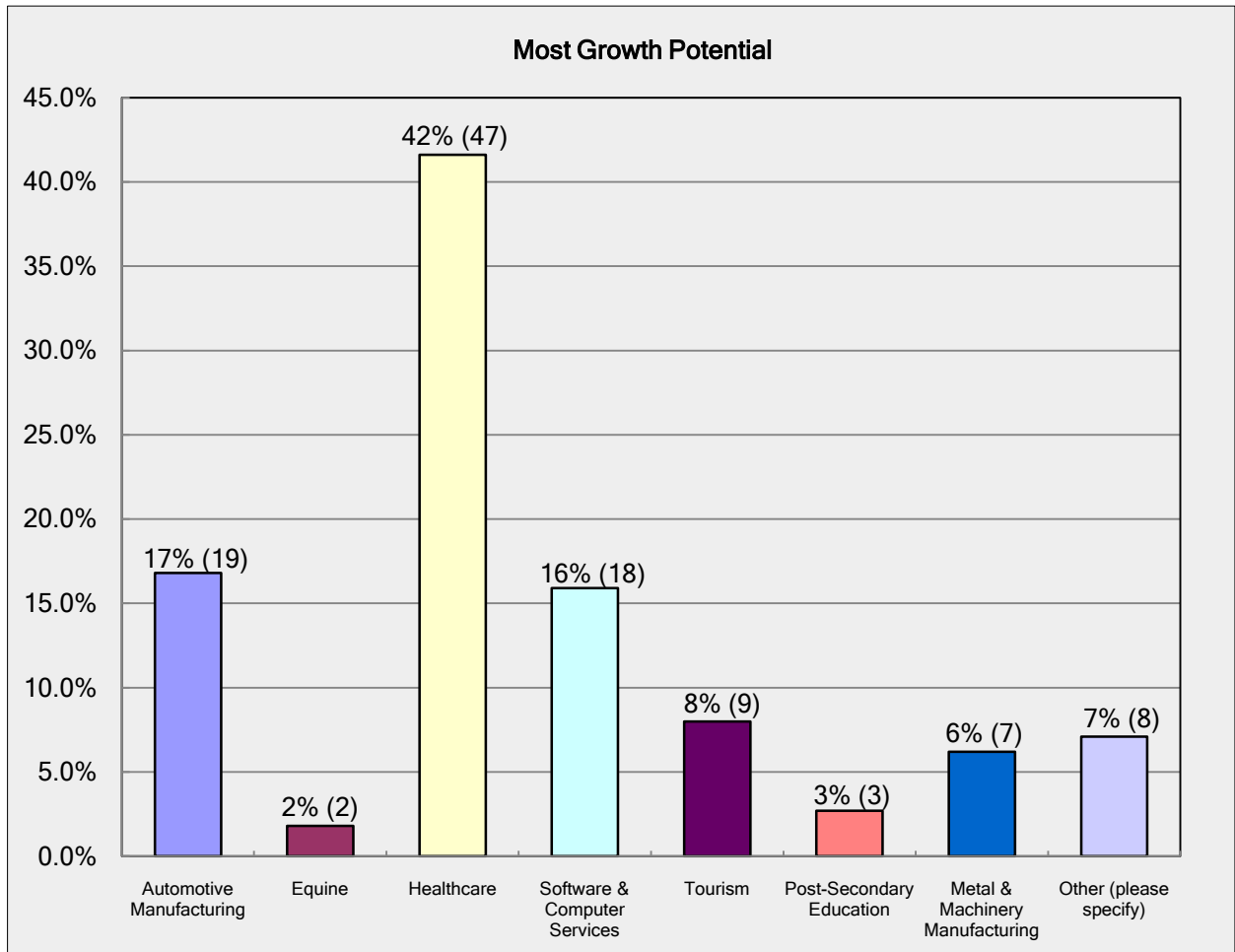
Q21. In your opinion, which of these should be a significant portion of the WIB's Strategic Plan?

Total Respondents: Varies from 106-108 depending on segment



Q22. Which industry do you believe has the most potential for growth in our region?

Total Respondents: 113



Other Responses: All Manufacturing Areas, Alternative Energy, Construction, Don't Know, Energy Related, Green Energy, Manufacturing, Services: HVAC, Plumbing, Electronics, etc.

Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board Employer/Partner Survey Open Responses

Following are the responses to the open-ended questions on the Employer/Partner Survey. Responses have been categorized into topic areas for easier analysis. The percentage next to each topic reflects the percentage of responses related to that topic area. Please note, percents may not total to 100 due to rounding. When the same responses were received multiple times, it is indicated by listing the number of times it was mentioned in parenthesis.

What are the 3 most important actions that the WIB must take in the next 1-5 years to stimulate job growth in the region?

Total Responses: 156

Training 21%

- Better trained worker
- Encourage quality, ongoing training for current employees
- Ensure adequate, fundamental training for potential employees
- Focus on preparing applicants with needed skills and education
- Focus on workplace skills
- Identify skills/training necessary
- Improve employee pool skills
- Increase skill levels of workforce
- Increase training education in specific skill sets
- Internship opportunities
- Job training (4)
- Kentuckians need more education and skill sets
- Offer help with college and career readiness programs
- Provide training
- Skill upgrades
- Skills upgrade training assistance for employer/employees
- Tailor training to specific individuals & groups
- Trained and educated labor force
- Training (4)
- Training & development opportunities
- Training workforce
- Update worker training/increased skills
- Upgrade labor skills
- Work ready skills
- Workforce readiness
- Workforce ready applicants

WIB Structure/Focus 13%

- Allocate resources based on individual community needs
- Anything that can improve any of the problems listed in question #25 (Q25. What 1-3 key weaknesses or barriers exist to workforce development and recruitment in this region?)
- Be more accessible and transparent
- Become a player in economic development
- Continue Work Now and B.L.U.E. Work Programs
- Develop and implement a strategic plan
- Direct support of local economic development

Important actions WIB must take to stimulate job growth in the region...Continued

WIB Structure/Focus...continued

- Don't spend money just because you have it to spend, use it properly or don't spend it
- Eliminate program bureaucracy and duplication
- Empower the WIB to take control of their budgets and who they fund
- Empower the WIB with professional members whose expertise is LISTENED to!
- Empower the WIBs to be autonomous and get rid of the "puppet/rubber stamp" mentality
- Expand
- Funding
- Infrastructure
- Non- Profit
- Recognizing assets and leveraging them
- Respond to client/industry needs
- Spending dollars on "real" critical programs in order to better the workforce/region
- Utilize funding efficiently
- WIB money availability

Marketing and Promotion 13%

- Aggressively market the region to potential employers
- Aggressively promote/implement
- Better communicate services to companies
- Communicate
- Communication
- Educate public
- Let all manufacturing groups know of your services
- Make area aware of what they have to offer
- Make employer's feel a need to use services
- Market to both employers/employees
- Marketing
- Networking
- Networking with other regions
- Outreach (2)
- Promote adventure tourism
- Promote higher paying jobs/skills
- Promote region via websites and start a campaign
- Promote the area
- Public awareness
- Turn around time on critical data (wage, economics, etc) - communication

Collaboration 10%

- Better partnerships with schools and communities
- Collaborate directly with other providers
- Collaboration
- Coordinated strategy between Commerce Lexington, Lexington Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG), WIB and all others
- Employer and employee relations

Important actions WIB must take to stimulate job growth in the region...Continued

Collaboration... continued

- Focus on creating collaborations with educators
- Get more involved with businesses
- Leverage resources with others
- Partnerships
- Sharing best practices
- Transportation network
- Work closely with Chamber
- Work closer with Cabinet for Economic Development?
- Work closer with Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority (KEDFA)?
- Work cooperatively with like organizations
- Work with economic development partners

New Businesses & Industries **10%**

- Align support with sectors being recruited/existing and growing
- Attract more industry
- Attract new businesses to locate in KY
- Develop funding sources for entrepreneurs
- Encourage development of small, local businesses, rather than factory farms, etc.
- Energy production
- Facilitate entrepreneurial sharing
- Financial assistance/guidance for small business development
- Foster funding for start-ups and early stage firms
- Get funding to new business projects
- Increase manufacturing
- Industrial diversity
- New business opportunities
- Recruit foreign businesses to the region
- Small Business
- Support diverse business development

Workforce Recruitment **8%**

- Attract qualified work force
- Bring new populations into the workforce
- Find ways to help students see the potential for careers in the region
- Increased applicant pool
- Make it beneficial for a person drawing unemployment to want an \$8.00 hour part-time job
- More assistance for people who want to work
- More emphasis and assistance for retention of existing jobs
- Provide support to increase supply
- Recruitment (2)
- Retention
- Specialized occupations
- Support large employers in the area and encourage hiring

Important actions WIB must take to stimulate job growth in the region...Continued

Incentives

6%

- Continue grants/tax credits to expanding companies
- Continue grants to subsidize training activities of companies
- Economic incentives and tax breaks
- Find and promote current stimuli to employers
- More employer incentive to hire programs
- Tax credits to offset employer job training investment
- Tax incentives
- Tax incentives for non-manufacturing companies locating to area (industry diversity)
- Temporary payroll tax moratorium for struggling businesses
- Training incentives

Education

7%

- Education (6)
- Education on drug abuse must start earlier
- Educational opportunities to advance current workforce
- English classes for the workplace for new immigrants
- Promote post-secondary education (AA, diploma, certificate)
- Vocational school in southern area of Madison County

Research

4%

- Communicate growth trends to communities/general population
- Help find outside resources for businesses to upgrade to "green"
- Identify occupations in demand
- Identify the key sectors to go after (Angelo Study)
- Provide labor market projections
- Tactile and academic assessments

Job Placement

3%

- Better opportunities
- Re-entry back in the workforce
- Screen applicants carefully
- Work closer with the area industries to try and place unemployed - place workers with jobs

Create Jobs

3%

- Creation of more jobs
- Entry Level opportunities
- Formation of jobs and job descriptions
- Job availability

Existing Businesses & Industries

1%

- Meet equine and farming labor demands
- Careful use of land in the tourism industry

What 1-3 key weaknesses or barriers exist to workforce development and recruitment in this region?

Total Responses: 140

Education

16%

- Basic math
- Basic science
- Cost of post-secondary education
- Education (4)
- Full campus and full service vocational and trade schools
- Lack of adequate education
- Lack of basic education (high school drop-out rate)
- Lack of education (2)
- Lack of education and training
- Lack of knowledge on where to find skills needed
- Low level of high school graduate college readiness
- Poor outcome from elementary education
- Primary education needs to incorporate entrepreneurship
- School systems must be improved
- Secondary education is failing the region
- Secondary education needs to incorporate entrepreneurship
- Students not prepared with problem solving, critical thinking skills
- Workforce education

Workforce Readiness

15%

- Basic job skills undeveloped
- Clients have poor interview skills
- Drive
- Employee pool
- Experience
- Graduating students not being prepared for the reality of the working-world
- Lack of skilled workers
- Lack of skills
- Lack of soft skills
- Lack of strong work ethic among 18-23 age group
- Lack of workplace skills (i.e., attendance, etc.)
- Low literacy levels of potential employees
- Low work ethic
- Many factory closings, leaving many people looking for a job with little other skills
- People are not aware of how to become career ready
- Qualified employees
- Skill level of available pool of applicants
- Skilled workers
- Some people's "entitlement" mentality
- Under skilled workforce
- Work ethic

Key weaknesses or barriers to workforce development and recruitment...continued

WIB Structure/Focus

11%

- Agency driven by bureaucrats who won't listen to WIB members
- Blinders beyond Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding - seems to be changing
- Bluegrass WIB region too large
- Focus is all Lexington based - rest of region are poor cousins who are afterthoughts
- Focus on fewer goals instead of attempting to meet all needs
- Funding
- Has been too staff driven in past
- Lack of underserved voice in future planning
- Mentality that funding is for agency - not programs in region
- No clear roles defined with accountability
- No comprehensive strategy and systems
- No leadership
- Not enough help in main office for clients
- Remoteness of WIB
- Utilizing available funds most effectively

Workforce Recruitment

9%

- Business do not actively recruit through internships or other opportunities
- Competition of cheaper labor
- Ex-offender re-entry
- Extended unemployment insurance is a deterrent for re-entering work force
- Finding candidates who honestly "want" to work
- Illegal's being hired/used to reduce cost
- It would help if we didn't incarcerate 25% of the people in the state
- Lack of aggressive state recruitment efforts
- Lack of professional workforce draw
- Local hiring
- People are not aware of all the available careers in our region
- Small pool of eligible/willing workers

Marketing and Promotion

8%

- Awareness (2)
- Communication
- Communication about services provided
- Communication/implementation
- Continuous communication with area industries
- Lack of public image/identity
- Not clearly understanding incentive to hire program availability
- Not enough publicity nationwide or internationally
- Not knowing all of your services
- Unclear on what assets we have

Key weaknesses or barriers to workforce development and recruitment...continued

Economy

6%

- Two+ years of economic decline and no end date of recession
- Economy
- Economy grow
- Financial and economic stress of employers/companies
- Global
- High cost of living
- National economy
- Present economy
- Slow economy

Training

5%

- Diversified age group - require training, skills, etc.
- Job training
- Lack of training
- Lack of understanding various jobs skills
- Lack of vocational career training
- Soft skills
- Training and education

Transportation

5%

- Rural areas with no public transit
- Lack of transportation and training
- Transportation (3)
- Transportation and gas money
- Transportation network

Collaboration

4%

- Bureaucracy and duplication of services, agencies
- Lack of collaboration with key entities, (i.e., Lexington Fayette Urban County Government)
- No common goals for the community
- Poor communications among groups
- Silos/competition

Substance Abuse

4%

- Drug abuse (2)
- Drug use among younger residents
- Finding candidates who will pass our initial drug test
- Something has to be done about the drugs in the area

Key weaknesses or barriers to workforce development and recruitment...continued

Employee Support 4%

- Affordable housing, child care in the area
- Childcare
- Cut out all of the SSI benefits
- Insufficient support for persons working 2nd/3rd shift
- Providers moving to area

Lack of Jobs 3%

- Jobs
- Lack of manufacturing jobs
- Lack of opportunities
- Too few jobs

Perceptions and Stereotypes 3%

- Education and perception
- Misperception of the value of many jobs (manufacturing, plumbing, etc.)
- Perception that KY is un/undereducated (for recruitment)
- Stereotype of region

Location 2%

- Attractive to shopping and retail conveniences for its employees
- Lack of sites/land for new business
- Need to show inventory of available space and resources

Unemployment Benefits 2%

- Abundance of government entitlements
- Too easy for the unemployed to remain on unemployment benefits - encourages laziness and apathy
- Unemployment benefits

New Businesses & Industry 1%

- Lack of capital funding for early stage companies (low risk tolerance)
- Lack of understanding about what it takes to foster small business growth

Wages/Salary 1%

- Lower wages
- We need decent paying jobs so working people can pay their bills

Health and Wellness >1%

- Lack of health/wellness awareness: rates of smoking, obesity, diabetes, cancer

Existing Businesses & Industry >1%

- Too driven by auto industry and not diversified enough

What 1-3 key strengths or opportunities exist for workforce development and recruitment in this region?

Total Responses: 115

Workforce

17%

- A population that wants to work
- Ability to be trained
- Abundant workforce
- Ample supply of talented individuals
- Available labor pool
- Available workforce
- Diversity of persons
- Excellent people with a strong work ethic
- Good work ethic
- Highly qualified workforce
- Male
- New demographics
- People that want good jobs
- Re-training workforce
- There are a large number of quality local candidates available
- There is talent here that can be used to support entrepreneurs
- Willingness to be trained
- Women & minorities
- Work ethic/desire to work and contribute

Education

15%

- Apprenticeship program
- Educate
- Education/training institutions
- Educational facilities
- Expansion of the UK College and Hospital
- Good education system
- Good educational facilities
- Good schools, both K-12 and post-secondary
- Mid-sized university available
- On-the-job training and ability to receive paid wages
- Opportunities out there to increase skills
- Responsive educational systems
- Several post-secondary institutions in the region to focus efforts on
- Showcase colleges/universities
- The area has better educational prospects than the rest of the state
- Training and skills education
- Youth and cooperative schools

Key strengths or opportunities for workforce development and recruitment...continued

Quality of Life 10%

- Excellent quality of life
- Expansion of other hospitals in Lexington
- Great area to live and work
- Great quality of life for local residents, immigration of young population
- Kentucky, our region, are good places to live
- Local amenities attract new businesses
- Lower cost of living
- Music and arts
- Natural beauty of area
- Quality of life
- Reasonable cost of living
- Southern hospitality

Economy/Economic Development 10%

- Access to resources and funding
- Diverse economic base - not heavily dependent on one economic sector
- Diverse economy of Bluegrass Region
- Economic diversity of area
- Federal resources available
- Growth of Lexington and surrounding counties
- Local economic development organizations
- New business
- Stable employers
- The anticipated economic recovery
- There is money here that needs to be recruited to support entrepreneurs

Collaboration 9%

- Active, energetic mayor in Lexington
- Economic crisis may bring people together, hopefully!
- Existing partnerships
- Focus of new LFUCG administration
- Large number of potential partners
- Opportunities for collaboration (such as the grant meeting)
- Regionalism (2)
- Strong collaborations between public education and community
- Town/gown relationships (continued training and education)

WIB Structure/Focus 9%

- Blue Program
- Darryl Smith!!!!
- Energized Board!!!!
- Less agency driven!
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs**
- Perhaps a new fiscal agent - Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS)?

Key strengths or opportunities for workforce development and recruitment...continued

WIB Structure/Focus...continued

- Several opportunities for educating public about programs for career development/job recruitment
- Stronger WIBs
- Variety of services available from all levels
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

Industry 9%

- Craft market
- Diversified
- Diversity
- Equine (disappearing)
- Farmland for potential new cash crops
- Healthcare (small hospital)
- Tourism
- Tourism as a destination
- Toyota success
- Variety of companies/sectors

Location 6%

- Central location
- Convenient location and close proximity to interstate
- Good IT/tech infrastructure
- Location (3)
- Proximity to urban hubs of Midwest and Southeast

Transportation 5%

- Access to interstate transportation
- Infrastructure
- Interstates, railroads, airports, access to commerce
- Major highways, but not overly congested like Atlanta
- New interstate exits
- Transportation infrastructure

Job Opportunities 3%

- Growing elder care opportunities
- High school/college age video game programming
- Job opportunities
- Stable employment opportunities

Workforce Recruitment 3%

- Individualized screenings
- Recruitment into job placement
- Various agencies that aid in job placement/training

Key strengths or opportunities for workforce development and recruitment...continued

Environment/Green 2%

- Green jobs
- Green jobs (as it relates to alternative fuel/clean coal development)

Wages and Salaries 2%

- Lexington/Louisville pays more
- State government (low wages)

Marketing and Promotion >1%

- Advertisement

Business Incentives >1%

- Tax incentives

What are the current and future trends in your industry or profession that are relevant to economic growth in this region?

Agriculture

- Declining market

Chamber of Commerce

- Educated workforce
- Need for further education in workforce

Civil Engineering

- Decline in new construction

Construction

- Distance learning
- Stagnant

Economic Development

- Investment challenges
- Quality and quantity of workforce

Education

- Advanced and technical degrees
- College and career readiness
- Decreased state funding
- Increase enrollments
- Upgrading literacy skills

Energy

- Renewable

Faith-Based

- Aiding individuals and families in crisis situations

Financial Industry

- Improvement in economy
- Retirement services

Current and future trends that are relevant to economic growth...continued

Government

- Downsizing
- Employees
- Global knowledge and multilingual skills
- Not positive
- Stagnant retaining

Healthcare

- Healthcare related trends
- High demand
- Lack of available services due to few practitioners
- Low supply and high demand with limited educational institutions providing competent graduates
- Women retiring

Housing

- Aging population
- Baby Boomers
- Partnerships

Information Services

- Demand for 'at home', highly skilled, knowledgeable workers

Insurance

- Increase in my business is increase in economy

Legal

- Increasing number of providers

Manufacturing

- Advanced manufacturing
- Consolidation/increased competition
- Expansions
- Flat Economic growth
- Focusing on continued global sales
- Growing technology
- Hold steady
- More automation/computerized system controls
- Production trends hinge on auto sales (affected by national fuel prices)

- Skilled labor force needs

Current and future trends that are relevant to economic growth...continued

Metal Fabrication

- Construction
- Outsourcing

Professional

- IT/Engineering
- Outsourcing

Service Provider

- Automotive down turn
- Growing business as cities' employment grows
- Service providers, techs

Social Services

- Stagnant

Tourism

- Continued growth
- Riverfront development

Welding

- Slight increase in production during first quarter - this is not the norm

Workforce Development

- Growing

Unknown

- Green jobs