

Arlington

Travel, Tourism, and Sports Industry Workforce Needs Assessment Report

Prepared for the Travel & Sports Legacy Foundation
by CNM
January 2022



INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Travel and Sports Legacy Foundation (TSLF) in Arlington retained CNM to assess workforce needs in the travel, tourism, and sports industry in Arlington. The assessment was designed to answer the following questions:

- What do employees, employers, students, and educators identify as
 - Needs within the industry both now and in the future?
 - Issues existing within the industry both now and in the future?
- Do these issues pertain to topics such as: career development/advancement, education and training, ability to earn a living, transportation, recruitment/hiring, childcare, and culture of the organization?

This executive summary report summarizes the methodology and key findings of the needs assessment, as well as CNM's recommendations to TSLF for future action. Detailed appendices accompanying the report provide greater detail on the research and findings.

METHODOLOGY

Surveys

Development: Questions developed in collaboration with the TSLF Executive Director and members of the TSLF board

Content: Questions addressed current and future needs in the industry; childcare; transportation; wages; career advancement; and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training

Participants:

- Students (n=120)
- Educators (n=12)
- Industry employees in Arlington (n=30)
- Industry employers in Arlington (n=6)

Administration: Administered online (SurveyMonkey) between April 2021 and January 2022

Duration: Average 10 minutes (24 to 29 questions)

Interviews

Development: Questions developed in collaboration with the TSLF Executive Director, based on survey results and the current economic environment

Content: Questions addressed employee recruitment and retention; educator and student/employee support; key skill development; career advancement; and DEI

Participants: Employers (n=10) and educators (n=7) within the industry in Arlington, including:

- Arlington Independent School District
- Crowne Plaza
- Loews
- Sheraton
- Six Flags Over Texas
- Tarrant County College
- Texas Live!
- Texas Rangers
- University of Texas at Arlington

Administration: Held via Zoom in November 2021

Duration: 45 – 60 minutes each

METHODOLOGY continued

Data analysis

- Analysis of data was performed using excel and the reporting function of SurveyMonkey.
- No statistical significance tests were run to determine whether differences between groups were statistically significant (i.e., $p < .05$).

Key Findings

Employee Needs and Supports

1. Job security/advancement, salary, and flexible schedules were identified as three of the most important current issues in the industry by all four groups surveyed.
2. Job security/advancement, compassionate leadership, and reduction in staff turnover/increased staff retention were identified as three top benefits that would most appeal to employees in the industry in the future by all four groups surveyed.
3. Employees and students identified opportunities for career advancement, competitive salaries, and job security as important supports to retain employees.

Issues Existing in the Industry

4. Employers during interviews reported greater career advancement opportunities for seasonal and lower-skill positions, with low turnover among full-time positions limiting career advancement for higher-skilled employees.
5. Employers report only moderate success recruiting and retaining employees.
6. Employees and students differ in beliefs on whether working in the industry is a career.
7. Employers, educators, employees, and students believe the industry has a positive impact on Arlington.

Barriers to Industry Success

6. According to employers and educators transportation is a barrier to accessing industry jobs among students and employees.
7. Partnerships between Arlington educators and employers can be difficult to form due to limited staff capacity for developing industry relationships and launching programs.
8. Organizational efforts to address DEI vary widely.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, CNM recommends that TSLF take the following actions to strengthen the travel, tourism, and sports industry in Arlington:

1. Host informational events for students and their parents to increase awareness of internships and employment opportunities in the industry in Arlington.
2. Facilitate the development of relationships between Arlington educators and industry employers by sharing contacts and connecting key officials.
3. Convene educators and employers to identify, prioritize, and plan supplemental student workforce development programs, such as apprenticeships.
4. Coordinate with educators, employers, and public authorities to expand student and employee knowledge of and access to public transportation opportunities (e.g., Via Rideshare).
5. Convene employers to consider potential childcare options or other benefits to support working parents (e.g., stipends, on-site care, family health insurance, etc.).

KEY FINDINGS:

Current Issues in the Industry

Employers, employees, educators, and students all ranked job security/ advancement, salary, and flexible schedules as three of the most important current issues in the industry, based on survey results.

Job Security/Advancement. On the survey, a higher proportion of students and educators ranked this as one of the top five issues in the industry compared to employers or employees.

Salary. Groups disagreed whether the industry provides a living wage.

- On the survey, half of employees and nearly half of students believe the industry provides a living wage. Of the high school and college students surveyed, college students were the only group of students to report that working in the industry did not provide a living wage. In contrast, less than one fourth of employers and about one third of educators believe the industry provides a living wage.
- Gender differences existed for employees surveyed. More female employees reported that working in the industry did not provide a living wage than did male employees.
- In interviews, educators who indicated that students were not provided a living wage indicated that wage levels could hinder recruitment. Some employers indicated that students may not want to enter an industry offering low entry-level wages with the hope of higher paying positions after gaining experience.

Flexible Schedules. On the survey, a majority of students and employees indicated that it is important their job offers flexible schedules. More high school students on the survey noted the importance of flexible schedules than did college students. During interviews, employers discussed flexible schedules as one support service or accommodation they often provide employees, though access to flexibility varies by role.

Note: See slides 19, 26, 28, and 29 for survey data for this page.

KEY FINDINGS:

Most Appealing Future Benefits

Employers, employees, educators, and students all ranked job security/ advancement, compassionate leadership, and reduced staff turnover/increased staff retention as three of the top benefits that would most appeal to employees in the industry in the future, based on survey results.

Job Security/Advancement. In interviews, employers indicated that employees obtain job advancement through on the job training and working their way up.

Compassionate Leadership. Employers were asked during interviews what support services or accommodations might persist five to ten years from now. Employers focused on concrete actions demonstrating compassionate leadership, such as doing check-ins with employees, being flexible with scheduling, etc.

Staff Turnover/Retention. Based on interviews, employer strategies to promote staff retention include holding check-ins with employees, offering recognition for work well done, offering increased wages or retention bonuses, and putting emphasis on additional training needs.

Note: See slide 20 to see employers, employees, educators, and students top ranked items.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:

Support Services to Retain Employees

Respondents identified a variety of support services and accommodations to ensure employees stay in the industry in the future.

Childcare. Based on survey results, stakeholders differ based on whether childcare would be beneficial to employees.

- The majority of employees, employers, and educators who participated in the surveys agreed it would be beneficial if employers offered childcare assistance for employees. The majority also agreed it would be beneficial if employers offered on-site childcare. Gender differences did exist for students and employees. More females rated either form of childcare as important compared to males.
- Of those surveyed, employers rated childcare assistance as more beneficial than on-site childcare, while employees rated them equally beneficial.

Incentives. When it comes to incentives to stay in the industry, employees and students who participated in the survey both ranked career advancement, competitive salary, and job security as the top things necessary for them to stay in the industry.

- Many employers mentioned during interviews that PTO was a support service that would be necessary to keep/retain employees.

Future Supports. Employers and educators were asked in interviews what support services or accommodations would continue to be important in the future.

- All employers interviewed mentioned flexible schedules. Many employers also discussed continued childcare support services.
- Educators who were interviewed discussed future support services pertaining to financial assistance.

Note: See slides 23, 24, and 25 for survey data for this page.

KEY FINDINGS:

Career Advancement

Opportunities for career advancement are variable. Employers reported during interviews greater career advancement opportunity for seasonal and lower-skill positions, with turnover among full-time positions limiting career advancement for higher-skilled employees.

Education Level. Employers and educators lack consensus on whether the industry offers clear paths to career advancement for individuals without at least an associate degree.

- Based on survey results, a majority of employers report that there are only somewhat clear paths to career advancement for those without a college degree. Educators are more divided.
- Educators noted during interviews that internships, certificates, and mentorship helped students advance in their careers.

Employment Type. Employers noted during interviews greater career advancement opportunities for lower-level, seasonal employees than regular full-time employees.

- During interviews, employers attributed the difference to low turnover among full-time employees. Essentially, full-time employees have lower turnover, thus decreasing the opportunities for advancement in these positions. This is not to say advancement does not occur, but that these opportunities are often limited.
- All employers mentioned in interviews company efforts to promote from within and offer on-the-job training.

Note: See slide 28 for survey data pertaining to education level.

KEY FINDINGS:

Recruitment and Retention

Employees from the industry come from different sectors. Employers perceive they are only somewhat successful in recruiting and retaining top employees.

Employees. When asked during interviews how they find new employees, all employers mentioned a variety of sectors.

- Niche industry (e.g., nightclub manager) and professional (e.g., attorneys, development staff) positions are staffed with former employees of organizations in and beyond Arlington.
- General employees, such as cashiers, back of house staff, or seasonal staff often come from the Arlington area.

Recruitment. Based on survey and interview results, employers perceive their ability to recruit and retain employees as limited.

- A majority of employers said on the survey that their organization was only “somewhat successful” in recruiting top candidates for entry level positions.
- According to interviews, ability to recruit and retain employees is highly dependent on job type: recruitment for full-time jobs, skilled trade jobs, and house keeping staff is difficult, whereas recruitment for cashiers, ride operators, and seasonal staff is easier.

Note: See slides 31 for survey data pertaining to recruitment.

KEY FINDINGS:

Perceptions of Industry

Employees and students differ on whether or not they view working in the industry as a career. Employers, employees, students, and educators believe the tourism industry has a positive affect on Arlington.

Career or Job. Employees view working in the industry as a career; students are more divided in their opinions.

- The majority of employees (85%) view working in the industry as a career. By comparison, just over half of students view working in the industry as a career. Roughly 11% of employees and almost one third of students view working in the industry as a job to hold them over until they find something better.
- Student responses differed between college and high school students. Over two thirds of college students viewed working in the industry as a career, whereas one third of high school students viewed it as a career.

Positive Impact. Educators, students, employees, and employers all have positive views of the tourism industry in Arlington.

- Educators, students, employees, and employers were asked on the survey whether they believe that tourism has a positive or negative impact on the city of Arlington. Roughly 91% of the educators, students, employees, and employers surveyed reported that tourism has a positive impact on Arlington.

Note: See slide 32 for survey data for these results.

KEY FINDINGS:

Transportation

Transportation is a barrier that can prevent students or employees from finding work, and public transportation options are not well known.

Transportation Barriers. Employers and educators noted in interviews that lack of adequate transportation (whether public or personal) affects employment opportunities and Arlington's economy.

- Employers and educators reported in interviews that transportation was a major barrier for employees and students. One employer mentioned that while Via Rideshare is a good option, it does not replace mass public transportation. Nine tenths of employees and students reported relying on a private vehicle to get to work on the survey.
- Interview participants noted that a lack of affordable public transportation means workers may be commuting to Arlington for work from other cities. If employees are not living in Arlington, the city economy loses rent and property tax revenue.

Public Knowledge. Knowledge of public transportation options differs by whether someone is a student or employee in the industry, as evidenced by survey results.

- One-third of students who participated in the survey have heard of Via Rideshare.
- Almost two-thirds of employees who participated in the survey have heard of Via Rideshare.

Note: See slide 30 for survey data related to knowledge of public transportation options.

KEY FINDINGS:

Industry Partnerships

Partnerships between Arlington educators and employers can be difficult to form due to limited staff capacity for developing industry relationships and launching programs.

Types of Partnerships. In interviews, educators reported partnering with employers in the following ways:

- Internships and practicums
- Guest speakers
- Job fairs

Establishing Partnerships. Educators also discussed during interviews the difficulty in establishing new partnerships with industry employers.

- Many educators reported that it is difficult to build a strong network of employers to contact with questions or requests.
- It is often not clear who should be contacted with certain requests (e.g., guest speaker request or field trip request).
- This lack of information often means that opportunities to connect students with information on the local travel and hospitality industry are missed.

KEY FINDINGS:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Employers and educators have programs available to help increase industry DEI. Organizational training on DEI topics is somewhat, but not fully, sufficient.

DEI Programs. Employers and educators suggested different ways to improve DEI within the industry.

- Educators reported during interviews that DEI is primarily pursued through standard school policies and practices, such as having an office for accommodations or offering scholarship opportunities.
- Employers reported during interviews building DEI committees or councils or changing staff policies (e.g., dress code policies). Many partner with outside organizations.

DEI Training. Views on whether organizational training on DEI is sufficient differs between employers and employees.

- Based on survey results, two-thirds of employers believe the DEI training they receive is somewhat sufficient. Just over one-third of employees believe the DEI training they receive is somewhat sufficient. Some employees believe the training is not sufficient at all.

Note: See slide 31 for survey data pertaining to DEI training.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS: Student and Employee Skill Development

Soft skills are critically important for student success in the industry. Students develop these skills in school and strengthen these skills while working.

Current/Future Skills. Employers, employees, educators, and students who participated in the surveys all ranked various soft skills as necessary for success in the industry now and in the future.

- All four groups ranked maintaining a professional demeanor and problem solving as two of the most important skills necessary for current success in the industry. All four groups ranked maintaining a professional demeanor as one of the most important skills necessary future success in the industry.
- During interviews, all educators and employers mentioned how critical soft skills are for success in the industry. Employers discussed looking for potential employees with the necessary soft skills as they could teach technical skills on the job.

Skill Development. The development of necessary skills often started in school and was reinforced in on-the-job training.

- Employers mentioned during interviews that employees gain necessary technical skills through on-the-job training or through certificate programs. Soft skills were reinforced during every day work. Educators agreed with this assessment. Many educators tried to cover soft skills during class.

Note: See slides 21 and 22 for survey data for these results.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:

Supplemental Programs

Educators agreed that supplemental programs or opportunities could be beneficial for student success, and these should include both parents and students. However, the types of programs offered should be given careful consideration.

Supplemental Programs. During the interview, educators were asked what supplemental programs might be beneficial for student success. Educators listed a variety of supplemental programs that could be useful.

- Many educators discussed the need for additional guest speaker opportunities, especially to discuss career path options. Educators noted that this type of opportunity would be beneficial for both parents and students.
- Educators also mentioned expanding current program offerings such as offering programs pertaining to sports (e.g., sports management or sports entertainment).
- Some educators were hesitant to use an apprenticeship model for students. Educators discussed having high course loads and worried an apprenticeship model would take too much time to develop without additional support from school administrators.

APPENDICES

1. Issues Now
2. Most Appealing Future Benefits
3. Skills Necessary Now
4. Skills Necessary in Future
5. Employee and Student Incentives to Stay in the Industry
6. Employee and Student Support: Childcare
7. Employee and Student Support: Childcare Continued
8. Employee and Student Support: Schedules
9. Employee and Student Support: Training to Be Successful
10. Employee and Student Support: Advancement and Living Wage
11. Employee and Student Support: Living Wage Continued
12. Employee and Student Support: Transportation
13. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
14. Perceptions of Industry

**Note. All tables and charts reported in the appendices come from survey data.*

Issues Now

	Employers	Employees	Educators	Students
Job security/advancement	X	X	X	X
Adequate salary	X	X	X	X
Irregular working hours	X	X	X	X
Staff turnover/retention	X	X	X	
Transportation			X	X
Lack of affordable childcare	X			
Ongoing training		X		
Changing expectations of customers		X		
Lack of compassionate leadership				X

Employers, employees, educators, and students were asked on the **survey** to rank the top five issues currently facing the industry. All four groups ranked job security/ advancement, adequate salary, and irregularly working hours as current issues in the industry.

Most Appealing Future Benefits

	Employers	Employees	Educators	Students
Increased assurance of job security/advancement	X	X	X	X
Increased compassionate leadership/positive relationships with managers and supervisors	X	X	X	X
Reduction in staff turnover/increasing staff retention	X	X	X	X
Ongoing educational training	X	X		X
Ongoing technological training		X	X	X
Adequate childcare	X			
Transportation to get to and from work/job interviews			X	

Employers, employees, educators, and students were asked on the **survey** to rank the top five benefits needed in the future. All four groups ranked job security/advancement, compassionate leadership, and staff retention as important.

Skills Necessary Now

	Employers	Employees	Educators	Students
Maintaining a professional demeanor	X	X	X	X
Problem solving	X	X	X	X
Being sensitive to others' needs and feelings		X	X	X
Anticipating future needs of customers	X			
Adapting to change		X		X
Ensuring customer satisfaction	X	X		
Making quick decisions in face of pressure	X			
Critical thinking			X	
Working in a group			X	
Conveying information clearly to customers				X

Employers, employees, educators, and students were asked on the **survey** to rank the top five skills currently necessary to succeed in the industry. All four groups ranked maintaining a professional demeanor and problem solving as skills needed to succeed in the industry now.

Skills Necessary Future

	Employers	Employees	Educators	Students
Maintaining a professional demeanor	X	X	X	X
Adapting to change		X	X	X
Being sensitive to others' needs and feelings			X	X
Anticipating change		X	X	X
Ensuring customer satisfaction	X	X		
Problem solving		X		X
Critical thinking	X		X	
Anticipating future needs of customer	X			
Making quick decisions in the face of pressure	X			

Employers, employees, educators, and students were asked on the **survey** to rank the top five skills necessary to succeed in the industry in the future. All four groups ranked maintaining a professional demeanor as a skill necessary to succeed in the industry in the future.

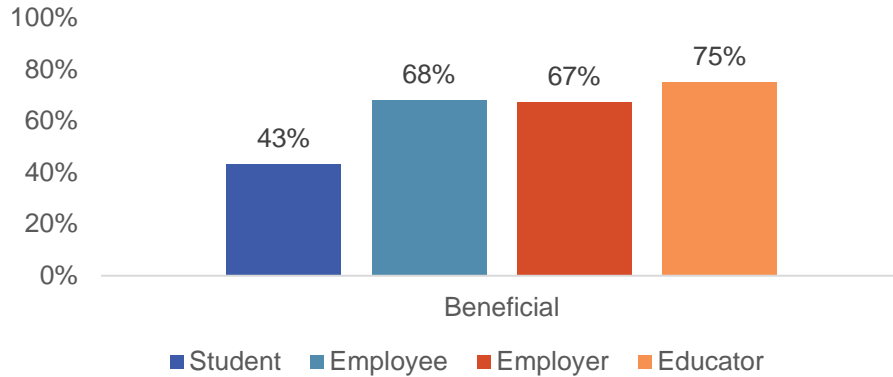
Employee and Student Incentives to Stay in Industry

	Employees	Students
Career advancement	X	X
Competitive salary	X	X
Job security	X	X
Positive relationship with supervisor or manager	X	
Recognition of good work	X	
Ongoing training and support		X
Tuition reimbursement college courses and certificates		X

Employees and students were asked on the **survey** to rank the top five incentives needed to stay in the industry. Employees and students both ranked career advancement, competitive salary, and job security as important incentives to stay in the industry.

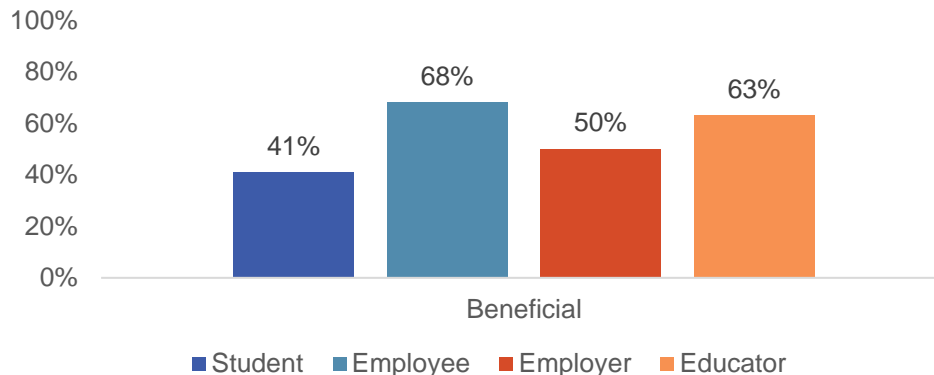
Employee and Student Support Childcare

Beneficial if Employer Offered Childcare Assistance



Employees rate childcare assistance and on-site childcare as equally beneficial, whereas employers and educators rate childcare assistance as more beneficial than on-site childcare. Responses were classified as beneficial by combining the following response options: very beneficial an extremely beneficial.

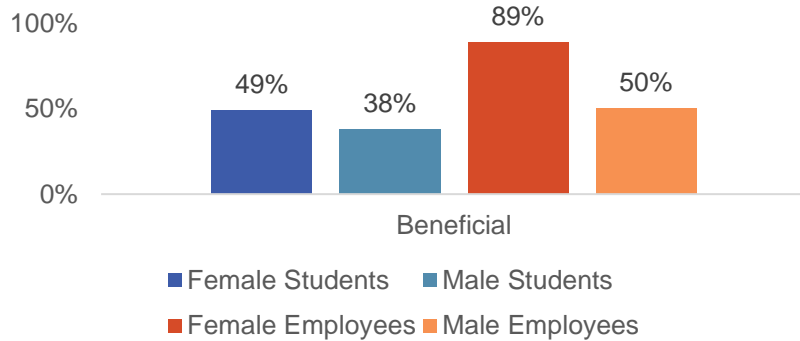
Beneficial if Employer Offered On-Site Childcare



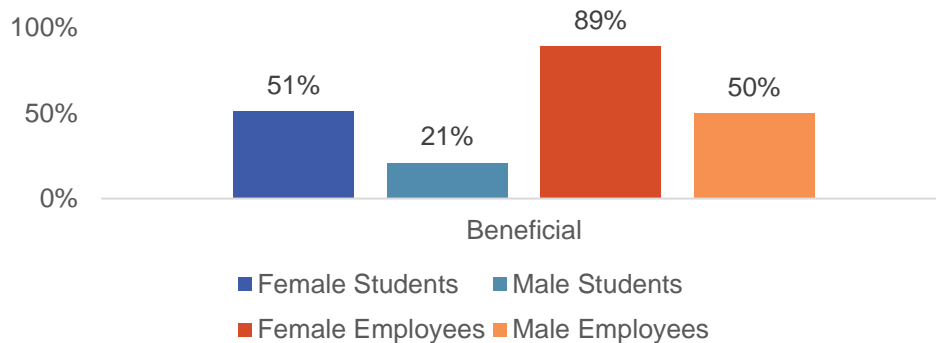
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Employee and Student Support Childcare Continued

Beneficial if Employer Offered Childcare Assistance by Student and Employee Gender



Beneficial if Employer Offered On-Site Childcare by Student and Employee Gender

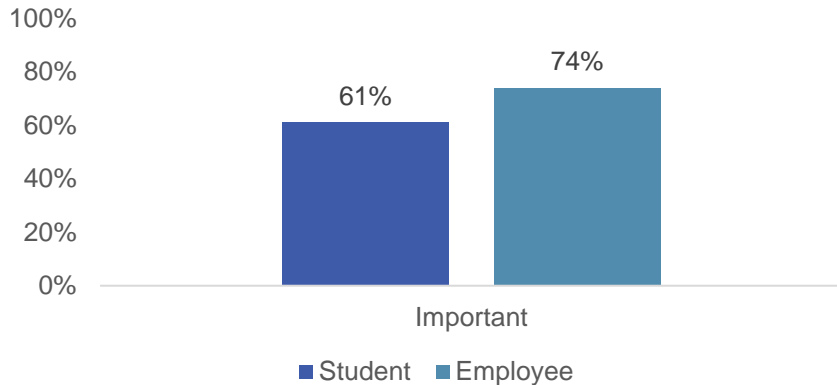


Female students and female employees rated childcare in either form as more important than their male counterparts. Female employees rated childcare assistance and on-site childcare as equally important. Responses were classified as beneficial by combining the following response options: very beneficial an extremely beneficial.

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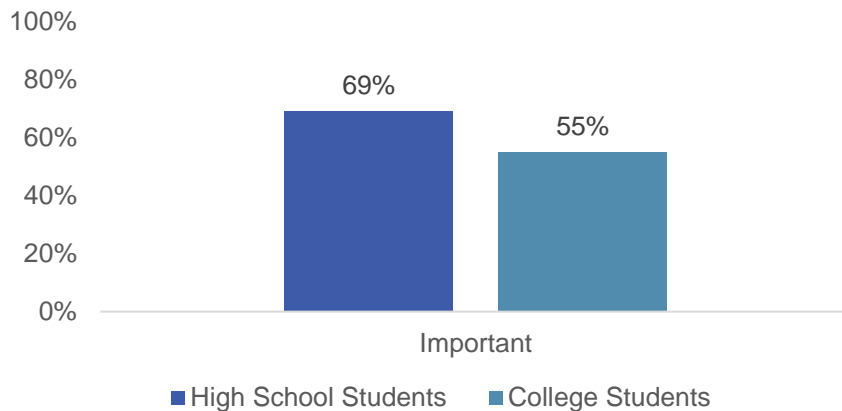
Employee and Student Support Schedules

Important Job Offers Flexible Schedules



Students and employees both rate flexible scheduling as an important job benefit. Responses were classified as important by combining the following response options: very important and extremely important.

Student Rating of Important Job Offers Flexible Schedules by Student Type



A higher percentage of high school students rated having a flexible schedule as important compared to college students. Responses were classified as important by combining the following response options: very important and extremely important.

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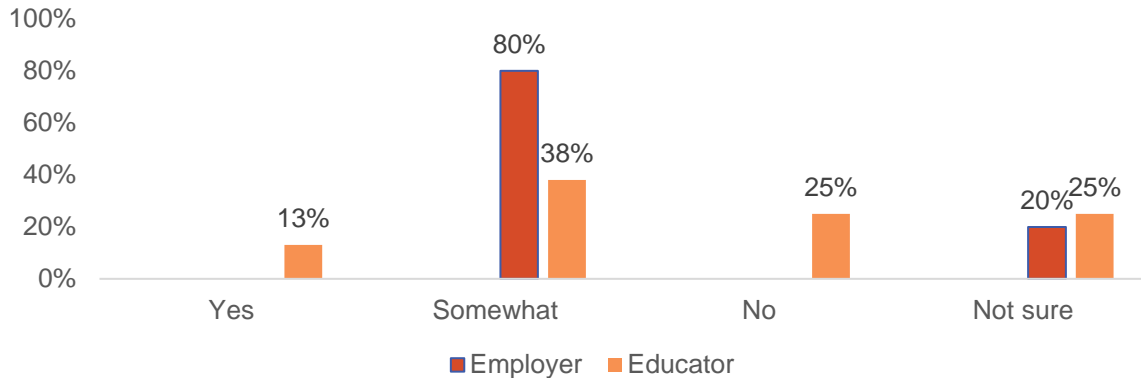
Employee and Student Support Training to be Successful

	Student (n=111)	Employees (n=27)	Employer (n=5)	Educator (n=8)
Event Planning	52%	37%	20%	75%
Food and Beverage	50%	48%	20%	75%
Lodging	23%	37%	20%	38%
Recreation and Entertainment	42%	19%	0%	63%
Sports Management	32%	33%	20%	50%
Technology	53%	40%	40%	50%
Travel and Tourism	60%	30%	0%	50%

Employers, employees, students, and educators were asked on the **surveys** which areas of the industry employees needed the most training in order to be successful. This was a check all that applies question, so percentages do not add to 100%. Forty percent or more of students, employees, employers, and educators agreed that technology was one area where employees and students need the most training to be successful.

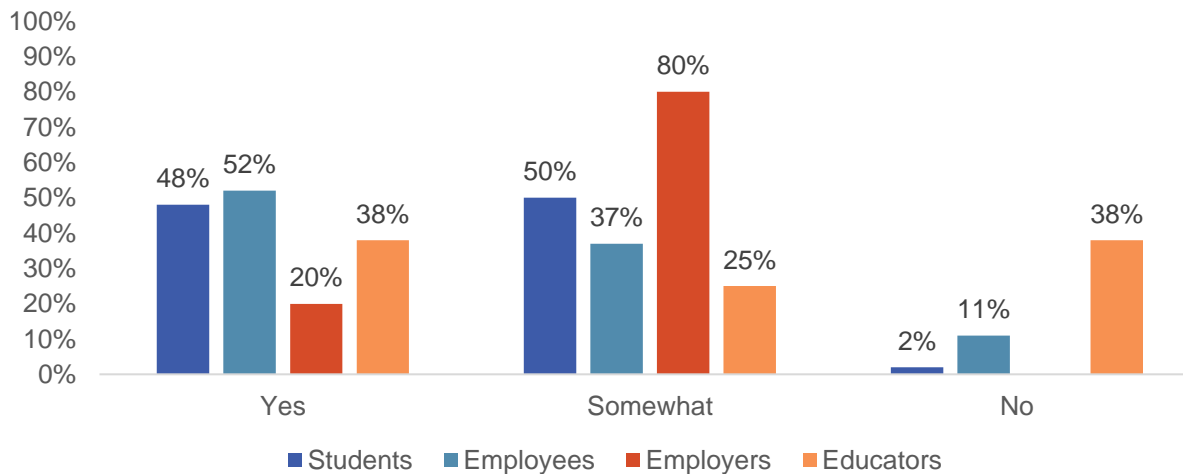
Employee and Student Support Advancement and Living Wage

Employer and Educator Perception of Employee Career Advancement With no College Degree



A majority of employers believe there is a somewhat clear path to career advancement for those without a college degree. Educators are more divided in their opinions.

Does Working in Industry Provide a Living Wage



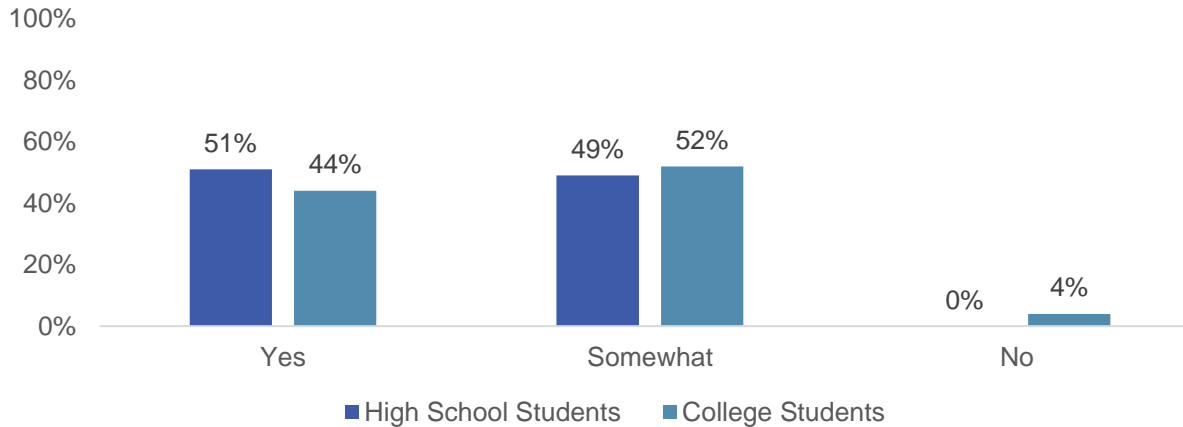
Half of employees and nearly half of students believe working in the industry provides a living wage. Less than one fourth of employers and over one third of educators believe working in the industry provides a living wage.

This page comes from survey data.

Employee and Student Support

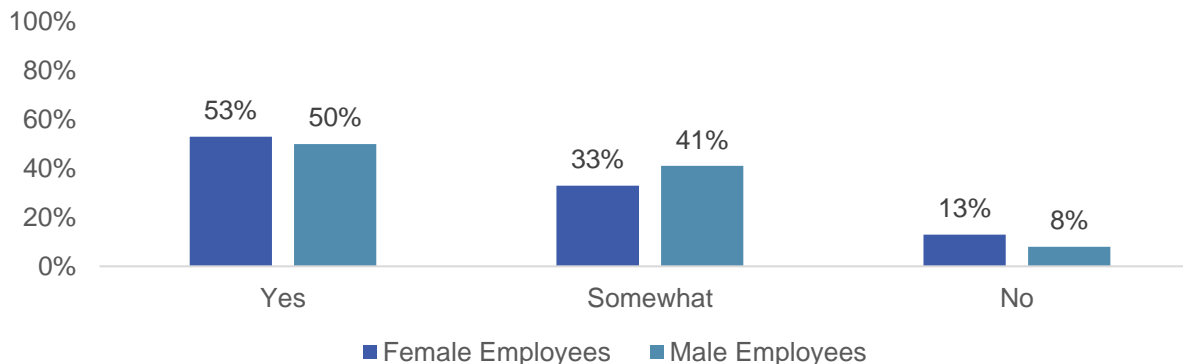
Living Wage Continued

Student View of Whether Working in Industry Provides a Living Wage by Student Type



College students were the only ones to mention that working in the industry did not provide a living wage; no high school students selected “no” to this question.

Employee View of Whether Working in Industry Provides a Living Wage by Employee Gender

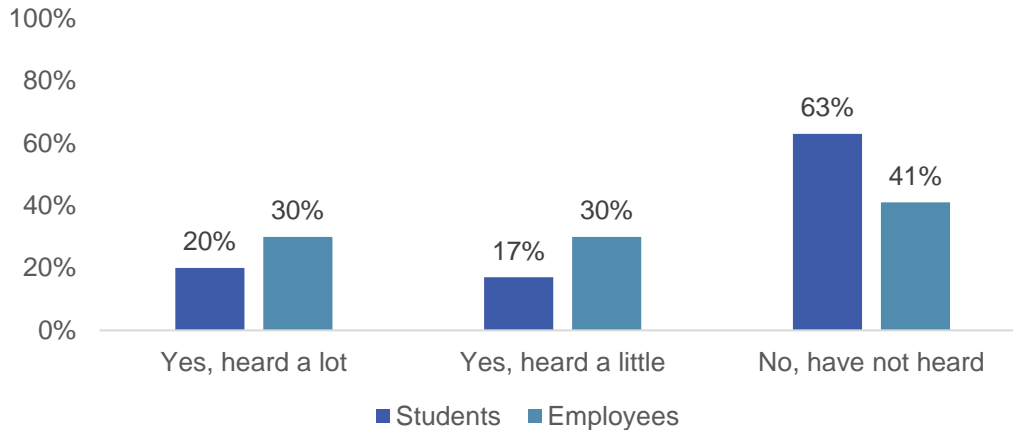


A slightly higher proportion of female employees believe working in the industry does not provide a living wage compared to male employees.

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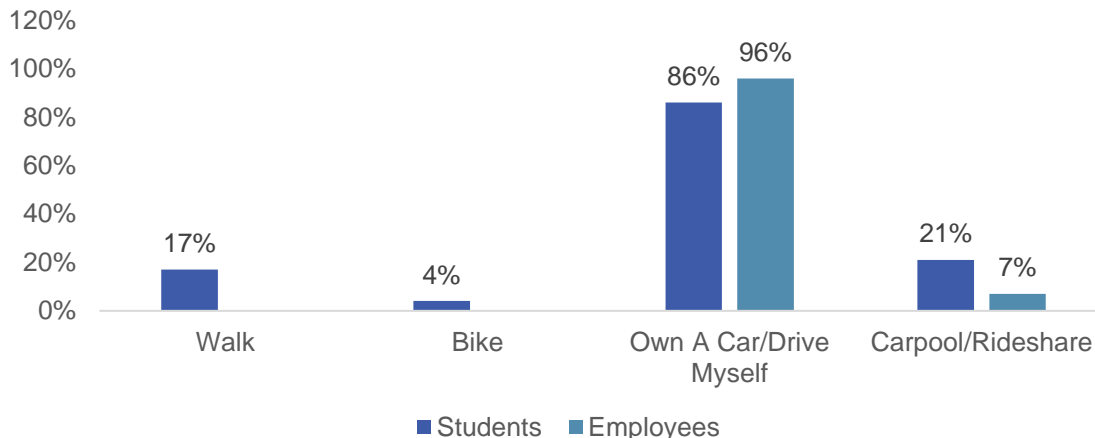
Employee and Student Support Transportation

Student and Employee Heard of Via Rideshare



A majority of students have not heard of Via Rideshare. The majority of employees, however, have heard of Via Rideshare.

How Students and Employees Get to Work

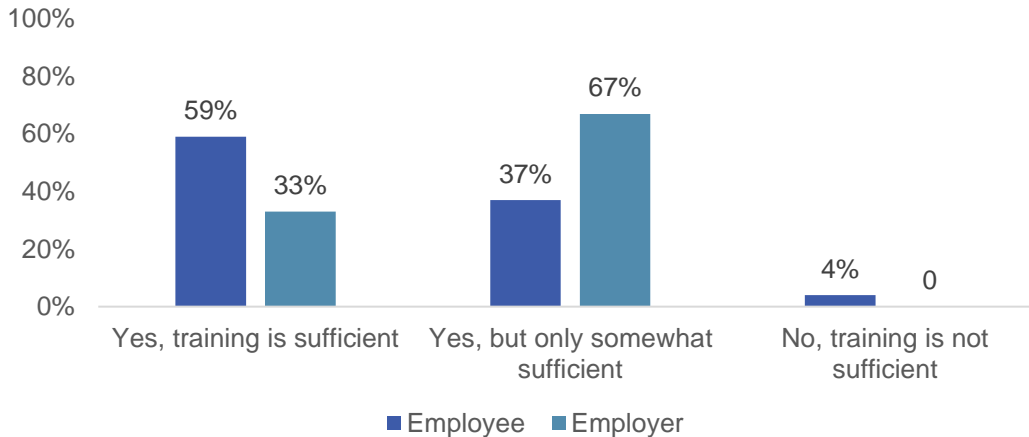


A majority of students and employees drive themselves to work.

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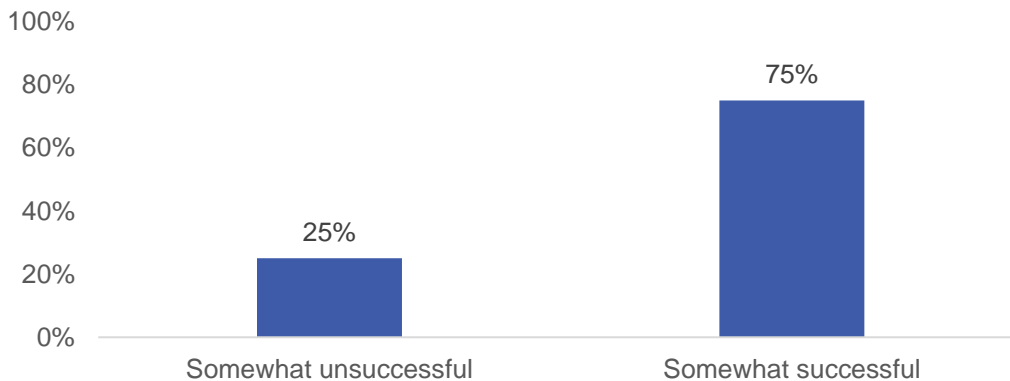
Recruitment and DEI

Employee and Employer View of Whether Training on DEI Is Sufficient



A majority of employers believe their training on DEI topics is only somewhat sufficient; a majority of employees believe their training on DEI topics is sufficient.

Employer Success Recruiting Top Candidates (Employer Only Question)

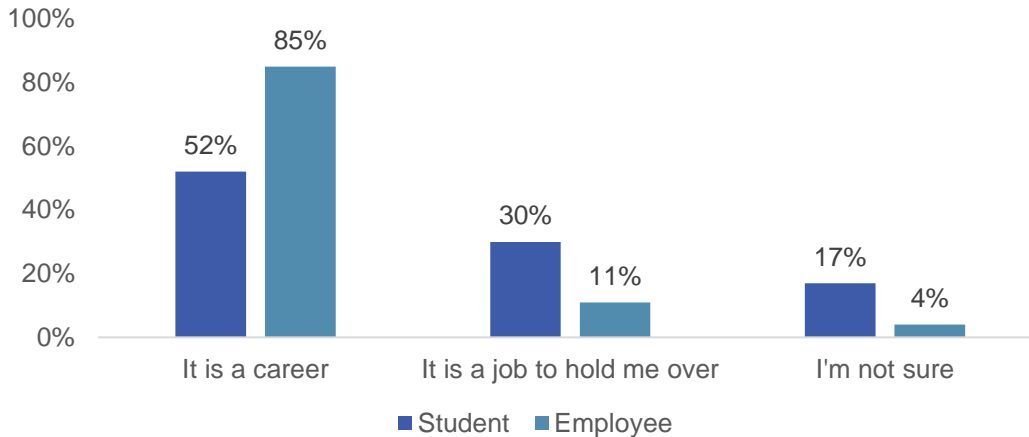


A majority of employers believe they are only somewhat successful in recruiting top candidates for entry level positions.

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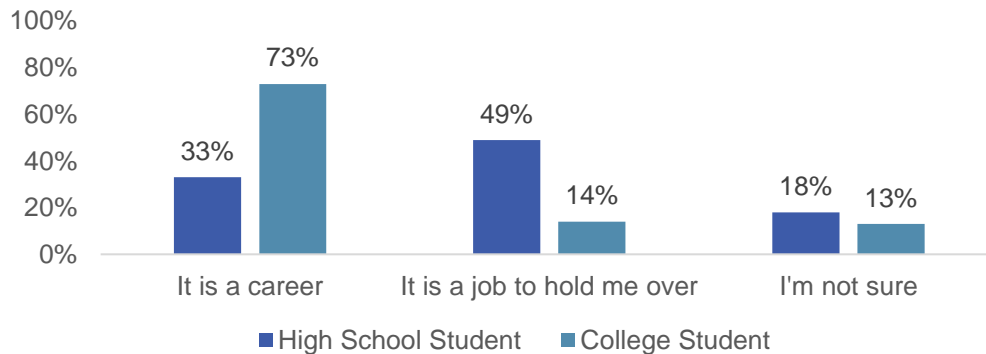
Perceptions of Industry

Students and Employees View Working in Industry as Career or Job



The majority of employees believe that working in the industry is a career, whereas just over half of students view working in the industry as a career.

Students View Working in Industry as Career or Job by Student Type



A higher proportion of college students viewed working in the industry as a career compared to high school students.

This page comes from survey data.



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