



**Craft Workforce
Development Awards
Benchmarking Report
2017**

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I. Introduction

a. Who We Are

The Greater Baton Rouge Industry Alliance (GBRIA) is a trade association, 501(c)(6) non-profit organization, whose membership includes more than 60 industrial plant facilities located in eight parishes around Baton Rouge. Its members are manufacturers in the petrochemical, paper, bulk storage and other industries. The mission of the organization is to drive solutions to common issues with an emphasis on safety performance and workforce development.

The GBRIA Contractor Workforce Development Committee includes:

Baraynia Robillard	ExxonMobil
Ron Landry	Dow Chemical
Tony Brouillette	Dow Chemical
Joshua Guitreau	Shell Chemical
Charlie Nailor	Americas Styrenics
Glenn Vicknair	Shell Convent Refinery
James Watkins	Dow Chemical
Steve Welch	Occidental Chemical
Bryan Cook	Dow Chemical
Daniel Tate	Eco Services
Jeremy Gibson	Marathon Petroleum
Matt Griscom	Solvay
Dylan White	BASF
Bert Dantin	Mexichem
Gretchen Malone	BASF
Chad Naquin	Olin

b. Purpose of the Awards

The purpose of the GBRIA Craft Workforce Development Excellence Awards is to recognize workforce development efforts of individual firms to convey GBRIA's strong support for improving craft workforce development performance and acknowledging the overall importance of contractors as an extension of a plant's workforce. GBRIA member facilities have encouraged each other and their contractors to invest in comprehensive workforce development programs that address recruitment, assessment, training, career path development and retention. Participation in the nomination process is a strong indicator of a company's leadership and commitment to the goals of workforce development, whether it be a plant or a contractor. GBRIA and its members would like to thank each nominee for participating in this year's event. The awards and benchmarking program entered its 10th year in 2017. The number of companies either self-nominating or nominated by a GBRIA member have been growing each year and this year there are 22.

c. Value of the Survey

The following results were compiled from the survey responses of the 22 participating companies and provide a means to understanding how a contractor company's workforce development program measures up to others in industry. In addition, the survey will be used by GBRIA and its members to help guide efforts to improve workforce development for skilled crafts.

II. 2017 Award Recipients

General Construction & Maintenance

Division I: Action Industries, Inc. (Belle Rose) – Award of Recognition

Division II: APTIM (Baton Rouge) – Award of Merit
Cajun Industries (Baton Rouge)- Award of Merit
Repcon (Gonzales) – Award of Merit

Division III: Performance Contractors (Baton Rouge) – Award of Excellence
Turner Industries Group (Baton Rouge) – Award of Excellence
Jacobs (Baton Rouge) – Award of Excellence
Zachry Group (Geismar) – Award of Merit

Civil and Structural Contractors

Division II: Barriere Construction Co., LLC (Metairie) – Award of Merit

Specialty Trades (Soft Craft)

Division II: Brand Energy Solutions (Prairieville) – Award of Merit
Excel Modular Scaffold & Leasing Corp.(Walker) – Award of Merit

Specialty Trades (Hard Craft)

Division I: Westgate (Port Allen) – Award of Excellence

Division II: EXCEL (Prairieville) – Award of Merit
ISC Constructors (Baton Rouge) – Award of Excellence
MMR Constructors (Baton Rouge) – Award of Merit
Pala Interstate (Baton Rouge) – Award of Excellence
Triad Electric & Control (Baton Rouge) – Award of Merit

Specialty Trades (Technical Support)

Division I

Capitol Ultrasonics (Baton Rouge) – Award of Excellence
JCL Safety Services (Baton Rouge) – Award of Merit
Guardian Compliance (Baton Rouge) – Award of Recognition

Division II:

Pentair/Tracer Construction (Baton Rouge) – Award of Recognition
Turner Specialty Services (Baton Rouge) – Award of Excellence

III. Methodology

a. Benchmarking Process Goals

This benchmarking process is part of an initiative by GBRIA members to gain a better understanding of industrial craft workforce development efforts in the Greater Baton Rouge area. The review data collected was used to:

- 1) Publish this report (all data is confidential and no company is identified or identifiable from this report data) that will allow plants and contractors to benchmark their craft workforce development efforts in order to work toward continuous improvement.
- 2) Serve as a basis for selecting companies with excellent efforts for a GBRIA Craft Workforce Development Excellence Award
- 3) Improve funding programs for workforce development.

b. Procedure

A Call for Nominations and Participation was sent out via email to all GBRIA member firms and area contractors on June 12, 2017. The letter included links to the online nomination form for contractors and plants. Both of these forms were hosted on Survey Monkey. The form included questions designed to evaluate many different components of workforce development from calendar year 2016. Plants were encouraged to nominate their contractors, and contractors were encouraged to request them, and self-nomination was encouraged because going through the process and audit can be a learning experience that can help companies improve their craft workforce development efforts.

Responses were collected between June 12 and July 12, 2017. Afterwards, the Craft Workforce Development Committee reviewed the survey data and the nomination letters. Contractors who responded were then contacted in order to schedule an audit between July 12 and Aug. 14, 2017. Each audit was conducted by representatives of the GBRIA Contractor Workforce Development Committee and Jessica Pranjic, GBRIA's

Manager of Communications and Workforce Development. The audits consisted of interviews with executive personnel to verify and expand upon their responses to the survey.

On Aug. 15, 2017, the committee met to make the final award selections. Based on information collected from the nomination form and the audit, the responses for each question were scored as follows:

- 0 = Non existent/No Evidence
- 1 = Process of Developing/Some Evidence
- 2 = Verbally Supports/Partial Documentation
- 3 = Satisfies Verbally with Supporting Documentation
- 4 = Excellent/Outstanding
- N/A = Not Applicable for Scoring

Each company's scores were totaled and given a percentage score. The committee analyzed the data and selected companies for awards based on the following standard:

- Award of Excellence >80%
- Award of Merit = 60-79%
- Award of Recognition <60%

Award recipients were divided into "General Construction", "Civil and Structural", "Specialty Trades Soft Craft", "Specialty Trades Hard Craft", and "Specialty Trades Technical Support" then subdivided into categories for Division I, Division II, and Division III based on the total number of companywide work hours.

c. Definitions

1. *Accreditation* – Refers to formal certification of curriculum, assessments, instructors and proctors or evaluators for National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) or other Department of Labor (DOL) approved training and assessment programs.
2. *Applicable Work Hours* – The hours worked under the 26 skills payable defined in the GBRIA/ABC Craft Training Partnership (see Appendix A). These hours are further defined as hours worked in the Greater Baton Rouge geographic area, defined here to include St. John Parish, St. James Parish, Ascension Parish, Iberville Parish, Livingston Parish, East Baton Rouge Parish, West Baton Rouge Parish, East Feliciana Parish, West Feliciana Parish, Point Coupee Parish and St. Landry Parish.
3. *Approved Assessment and Verification Processes*– a) The approved programs for merit shop contractors are the NCCER written assessment and performance verification programs. b) The approved programs for union contractors are journey level achievement of union programs or NCCER. c) For crafts where there are no approved (NCCER) skill assessments and performance verifications yet available, documentation by the contractor on how worker skills are assessed is required or where there is an industry accepted assessment program other than NCCER or a union, that program is used.

NOTE: For assessments not yet developed by NCCER, it is expected that employees will be assessed within one year after the assessment becomes available. 1) Skills assessment results in a training

prescription and upgrade training. 2) Skills assessments are intended for trained craft persons with typically 2 or more years of industrial experience in targeted craft. Workers with less than typically 2 years of industrial experience should be enrolled in an approved training program that will prepare them for certification.

4. *Approved Craft Training*– defined as National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) standardized craft training curriculum (a.k.a. Contren) or Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Apprenticeship Training program, or the certification process for welders per section IX of the ASME code (or other recognized standard), or specialty training and/or certification provided by other organizations including the employer of the craft person is acceptable when this type of training and/or certification is not provided by NCCER.

5. A *Certified Craft Person* in the Greater Baton Rouge area, as defined and agreed to jointly by GBRIA and the ABC Pelican Chapter is:

One who has relevant craft work experience as detailed in TABLE 1 and has been certified by one of the following processes:

NCCER Certified Plus

- A. Met cut score on the written assessment in his or her craft
- B. Successful completion of the performance verification

OR

Certification process for welders per section IX of the ASME Code or other recognized industry standard

OR

Specialty and union training and/or certification provided by other organizations including the employer of the craft person, is acceptable when this type of training and/or certification is not provided by NCCER (i.e. refractory worker, lineman, fiber optic technician, heavy equipment operator, etc.)

TABLE 1

Relevant Years of Work Experience/Craft

2	Concrete Finisher
2	Hydroblasting Technician
4	Industrial Boilermaker
3	Industrial Carpenter
4	Industrial Electrician
2	Industrial Insulator
3	Industrial Ironworker
4	Industrial Millwright
2	Industrial Painter
4	Industrial Pipe fitter

- 4 ___ Instrumentation Fitter
- 4 ___ Instrumentation Technician
- 3 ___ Mobile Crane Operator
- 2 ___ Reinforcing Iron & Rebar Worker
- 3 ___ Scaffold Builder
- 2 ___ Refractory Worker
- 4 ___ Lineman
- 4 ___ Fiber Optic Technician
- 3 ___ Heavy Equipment Operator
- 2 ___ Tank Fitter

6. *Certified Union Craft Person*– defined as one who has reached Journeyman status.

7. *Craft Person(s)* – All construction, maintenance, and repair crafts. This includes laborers, helpers and working supervision.

8. *Formal Training and Curriculum*– Training and curriculum refers to either the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) or other industry recognized standard or other DOL approved craft training.

9. *GBRIA/ABC Craft Training Partnership*– When the ABC Pelican Chapter Training Center was built, industry leaders from GBRIA and contractors developed an informal agreement to pay for the school and its ongoing expenses. This agreement is still in place today (See Appendix A).

10. *Number of Craft Persons*– Average employment numbers for the past year; this could be the average of four quarterly measures for the past year. Numbers of field personnel includes supervision for total company, and applies only to U. S. employees.

11. *Past Year or Time Period for Evaluation*– This evaluation covers January 2014- December 2014.

12. *Skills Upgrade Training*– Accredited skills training that assessed craft persons take to upgrade skill deficiencies identified through skills assessments that will prepare them to retest for certification.

13. *Trainees or Apprentices* – Craft persons that are enrolled in craft skills training and have not completed a formal training program.

14. *Uncertified Craft Person(s)*– Craft persons that have completed a formal training program and/or have on-the-job training but have not achieved certified craft person status.

IV. Benchmarking Results

a. Benchmarking Respondents

The 2017 Craft Workforce Development Awards Benchmarking process featured 22 nominees/participants, which included eight General Construction & Maintenance Contractors, one Civil and Structural Contractor, two Specialty Trades Soft Craft Contractors, six Specialty Trades Hard Craft Contractors and five Technical Support Contractors:

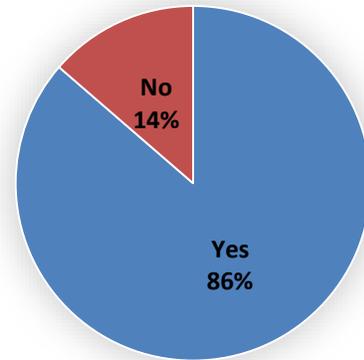
Contractor Companies	Classification	Location
Action Industries	General Construction & Maintenance	Belle Rose
APTIM	General Construction & Maintenance	Baton Rouge
Barriere Construction Co., LLC	Civil and Structural	Metairie
Brand Energy Solutions	Specialty Trade Soft Craft	Prairieville
Cajun Industries	General Construction & Maintenance	Baton Rouge
Capitol Ultrasonics, LLC	Specialty Trade Hard Craft	Baton Rouge
EXCEL	Specialty Trade Hard Craft	Prairieville
Excel Modular Scaffold	Specialty Trade Soft Craft	Walker
Guardian Compliance	Specialty Trade Technical Support	Baton Rouge
ISC Constructors, LLC	Specialty Trade Hard Craft	Baton Rouge
Jacobs	General Construction & Maintenance	Baton Rouge
JCL Safety Services	Specialty Trade Technical Support	Baton Rouge
MMR Constructors	Specialty Trade Hard Craft	Baton Rouge
PALA Interstate, LLC	Specialty Trade Hard Craft	Baton Rouge
Pentair/Tracer Construction	Specialty Trade Technical Support	Baton Rouge
Performance Contractors, Inc.	General Construction & Maintenance	Baton Rouge
Repcon	General Construction & Maintenance	Gonzales
Triad Electric & Controls	Specialty Trade Hard Craft	Baton Rouge
Turner Industries Group, LLC	General Construction & Maintenance	Baton Rouge
Turner Specialty Services	Specialty Trade Technical Support	Baton Rouge
Westgate, LLC	Specialty Trade Hard Craft	Port Allen
Zachry Group	General Construction & Maintenance	Geismar

b. Program Documentation and Management Commitment

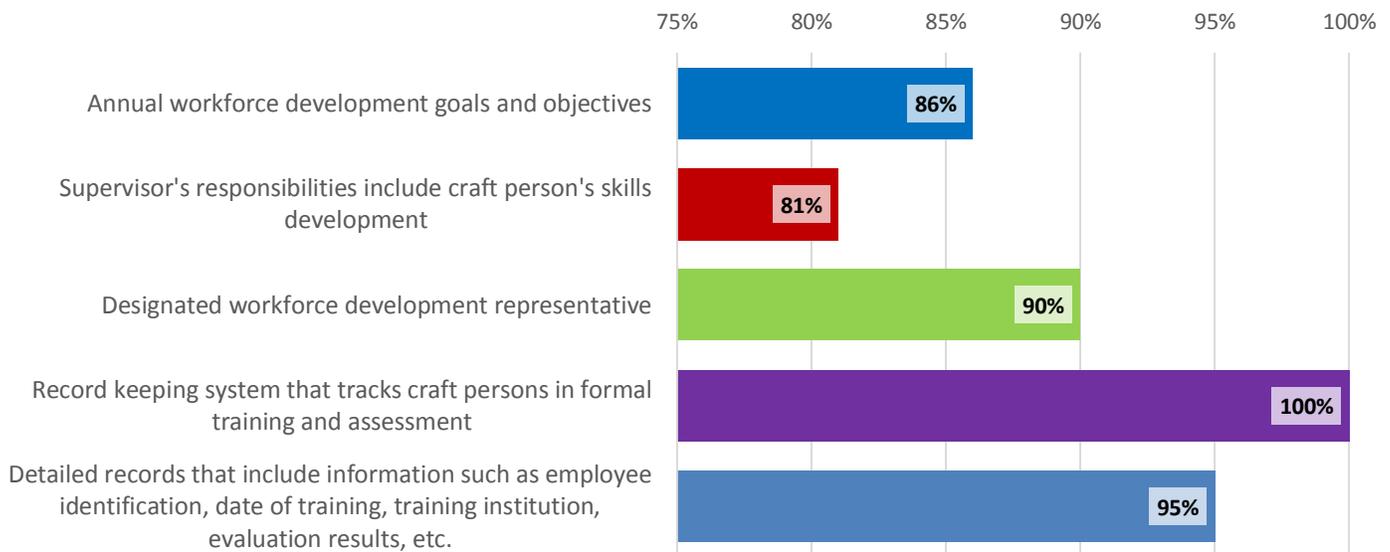
The first set of questions on the survey was intended to evaluate each company's documentation and management commitment processes. Data from responses to the question below indicate that almost all of the respondents already have a formal workforce development program in place.

Responses from another question allowed us to gauge the extent of these programs. All of the respondents said that they had a system in place for tracking craft persons in training and assessment and keep detailed employee records of training information as well as a designated workforce development representative. All companies indicated that they have a record keeping system to track craft persons in formal training and assessment.

Does your company have a formal, written Workforce Development Program?

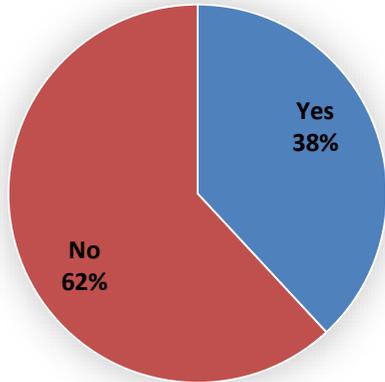


Does your program include the following key elements regarding Management Commitment?



While it is admirable for companies to build their own programs that incorporate these elements, some choose to go the extra mile by insuring that their business partners are also committed to the goal of workforce development. ***Thirty eight reported that they have a policy for evaluating this aspect of their prime or specialty sub-contractors this percentage has decreased slightly from 2016.***

Do you have a policy for evaluating the level of commitment to workforce development from your prime and/or specialty sub-contractors?

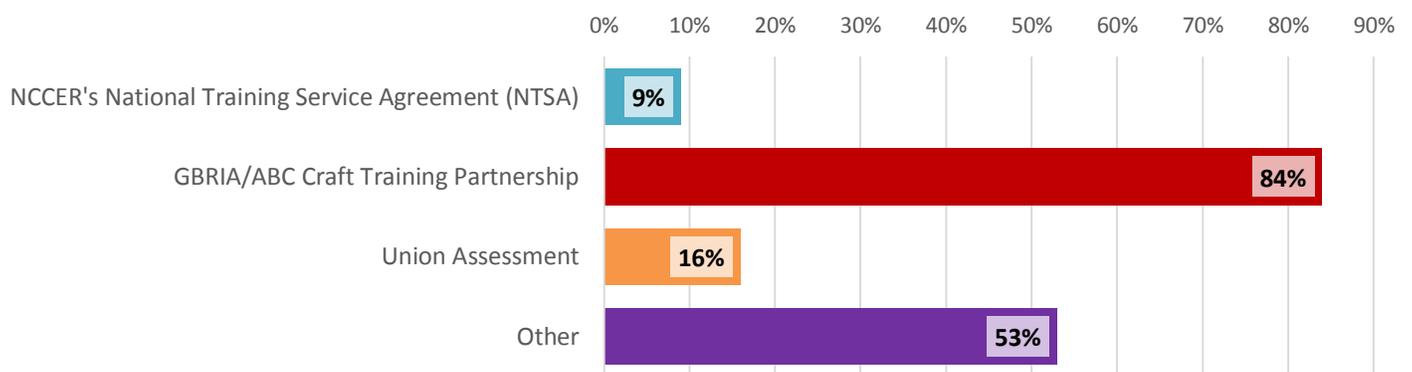


A common goal of GBRIA’s workforce development efforts and the ABC Craft Training Center is the development of an affordable, available, and skilled craft workforce. GBRIA members contribute 7 cents per skilled contract work hour. Contractors also make significant contributions of money and equipment. The data illustrated below indicates that most of the contractors surveyed participate in a program like this one with a 2 percent increase since last year.

The National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) sponsors a National Training Service Agreement, which helps coordinate funding for a company’s training

program. Contractors currently contribute 15 cents per craft-labor hour, which NCCER uses to set up and maintain an individual account. The use of a third party ensures that these funds are only used for approved training-related activities. Fifty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they participated in this program, however the percentage shown is a 6 point decrease from 2016. The respondents who checked the “Other” box listed programs such as internally-developed training and assessment programs, NCCO, NCCER craft training, NCCER Crane & Rigging Endorsed, ACT National Craft Readiness Certificates, and LCTCS.

Does your company participate in any of the following training and assessment programs?



Workforce development, like safety, is actually beneficial for both employers and individual workers, although the benefits for the latter are more readily apparent. According to a 2007 report by the Construction Industry Institute (CII), craft workers achieving NCCER written certification typically receive an additional \$1/hour,

while those achieving performance certification receive another additional \$1/hour or \$4,160 per year for a person working at least 40 hours per week.

Unfortunately, when it comes to employers, workforce development costs are often easier to measure than benefits. In spite of these difficulties, the benchmarking data pictured below illustrates that local firms do recognize the value of workforce development efforts in terms of common metrics such as safety, productivity, work quality, attendance, absenteeism, and turnover rates. The higher wages that more qualified workers command are worth it.

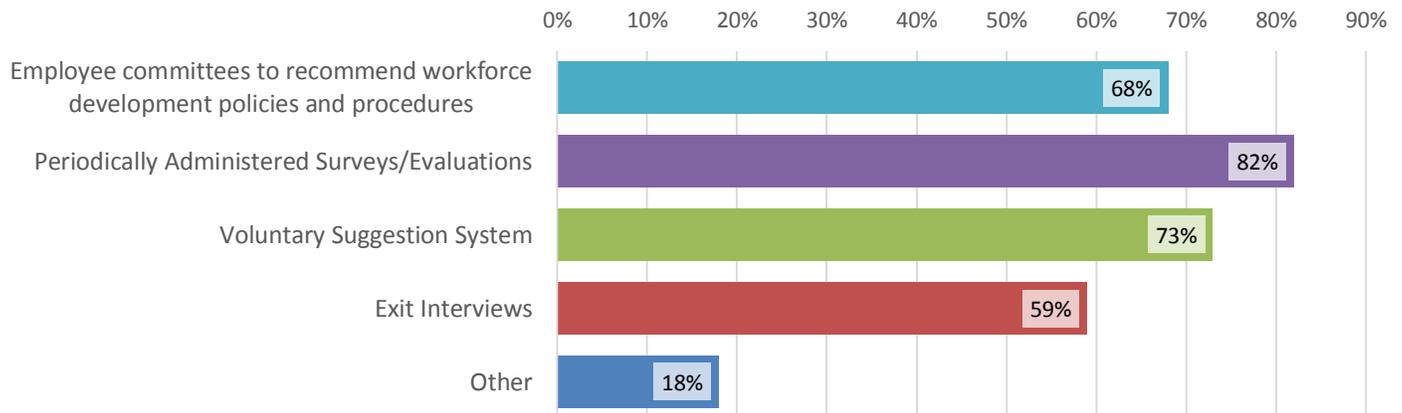
Specifically, all of the respondents reported that workforce development efforts have improved quality of work. A majority reported that workforce development efforts have improved safety and productivity. However, a smaller majority reported improvement in absenteeism and turnover. These results are largely corroborated by data from the 2007 CII Report indicating that investing in workforce development leads to significant productivity increases as well as decreases in turnover, absenteeism, injuries, and rework on both capital projects and ongoing maintenance projects.

Have your company's workforce development efforts improved any of the following?



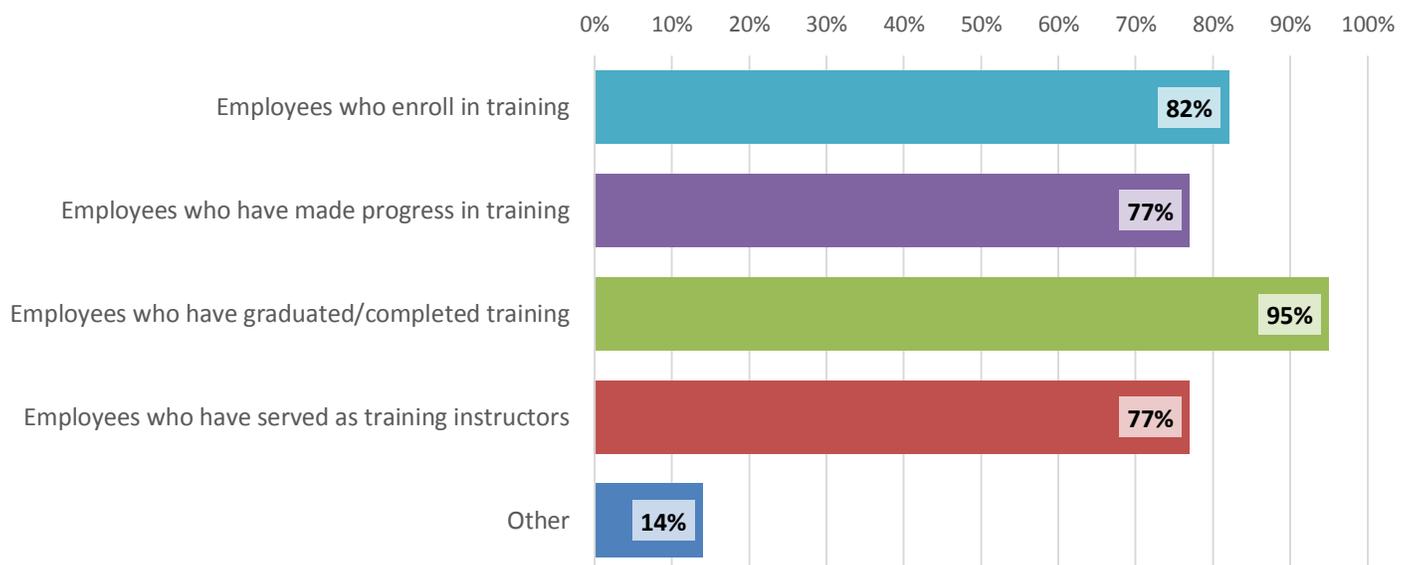
Companies seeking to reap these benefits must take employee feedback into account when creating their programs. Proper employee feedback systems should allow companies to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their current workforce development efforts and make changes to maximize their effectiveness. In response to the question below, the vast majority of participants indicated that their company utilized periodically administered surveys to serve this purpose. A smaller majority reported that their companies used voluntary suggestion systems, employee committees and exit interviews. Less than half reported using other strategies.

In which of the following ways does your company solicit employee feedback with respect to training and workforce development?



One of the simplest ways for employers to encourage workforce development is by recognizing employees' accomplishments. Nearly all of the participants said they provided recognition for graduates of workforce development programs as well as those enrolled in training, while smaller majorities reported that they recognized those who have made progress or instructors. Examples of recognition given to employees included mentions in an employee newsletter, social media or hosting of dinners or lunches for these employees.

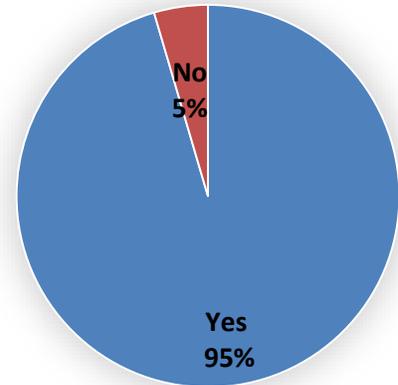
Which of the following groups does your company recognize for training or workforce development accomplishments?



c. Recruitment

This section covers questions relating to the recruitment of crafts in the last calendar year, i.e., 2016. The recruitment process includes defining a job, attracting interest, screening applicants, hiring, and integrating a new employee. Workforce development in terms of recruitment is making this process faster and cheaper without compromising the quality of the employee hired. The existence of a formal process for recruiting new workers can serve as a sign of a company's commitment to workforce development. According to the survey results, a majority of participating companies already have such a process in place and this number shows a 10 percent increase from 2016's report.

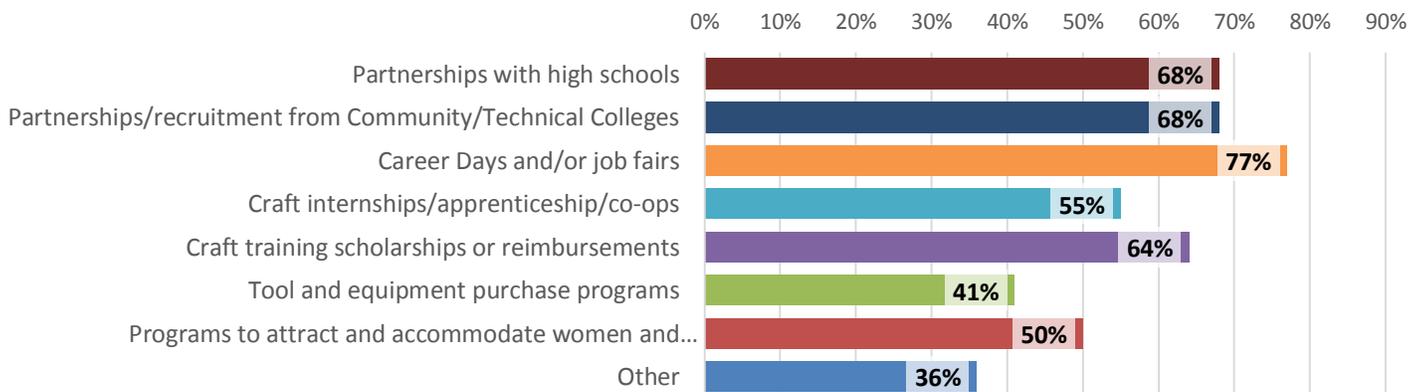
Does your company's workforce development program include a formal, written recruitment process?



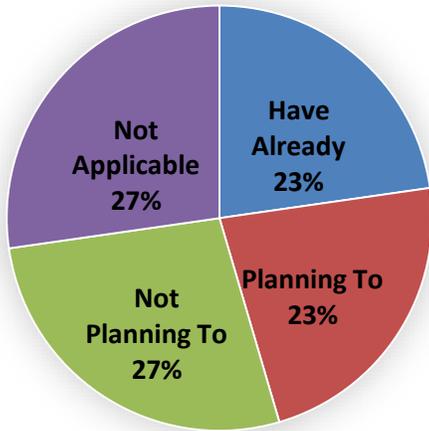
Evaluating the extent and quality of an employer's recruitment process requires us to check for several different components. Since both employers and workers stand to benefit from training, companies sometimes offer scholarships or reimbursements as an incentive. The graph below illustrates that more than half of respondents have participated in partnerships with high schools, community or technical colleges, career days or job fairs, internships and scholarships or reimbursements for craft training in the last calendar year.

In addition, several of the "Other" responses included a dedicated recruiter for military and veteran initiatives; partnering with local workforce commission; applicant tracking systems and incumbent workers training program.

Does your company's recruitment process include the following elements?



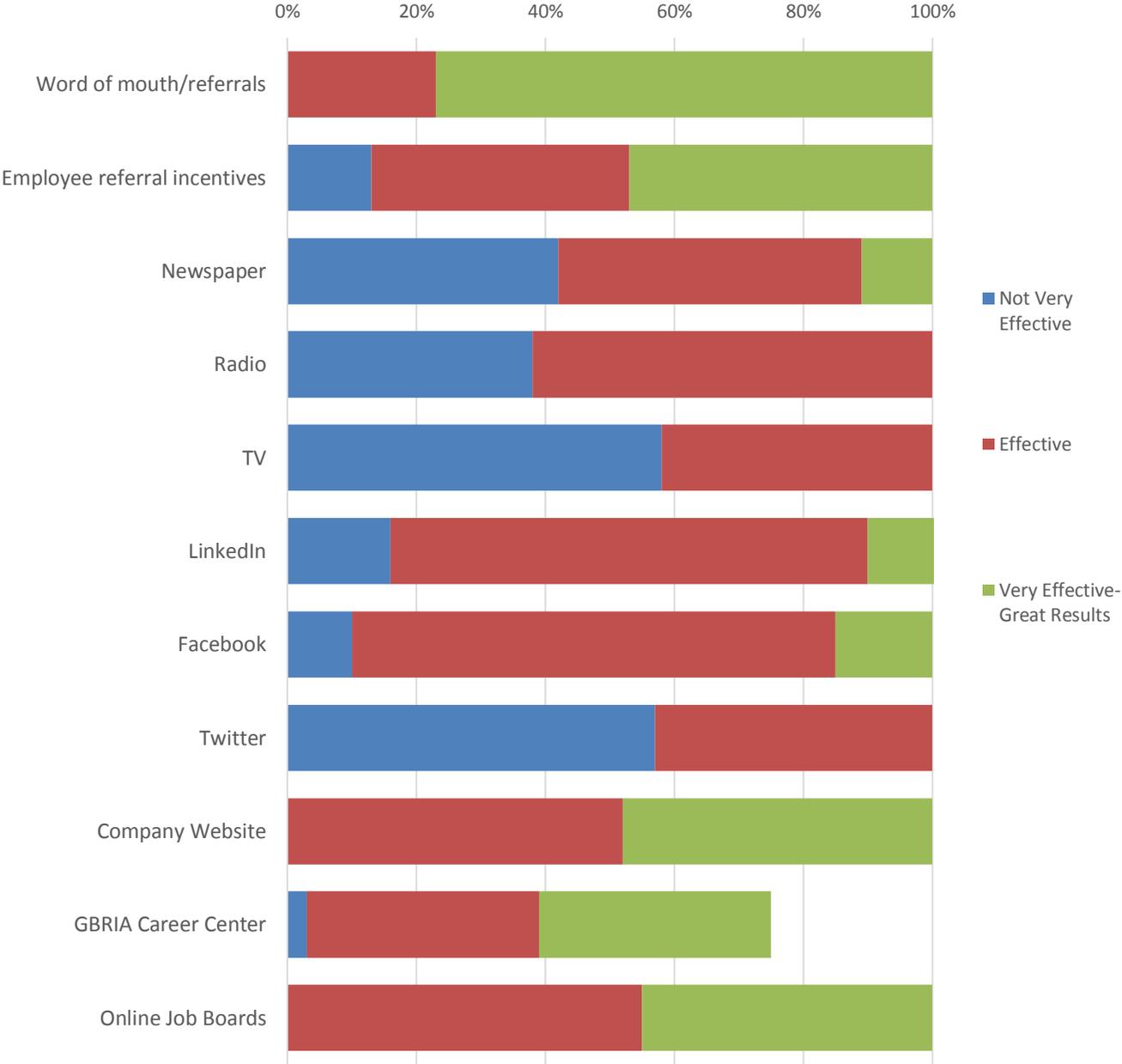
Have you taken or do you plan to take advantage of Louisiana Act 472 (2007)



Internships and apprenticeships provide new workers with valuable hands-on experience. Louisiana Act 472 (2007) encourages apprenticeship by giving employers a tax credit of one dollar for every hour of employment of an eligible apprentice up to 1,000 hours. The adjacent graph illustrates that the majority of the respondents to our survey either do not plan take advantage of this policy or do not believe this policy applies to them. Those who reported that they planned to or have already taken advantage of this policy were in the minority.

In an age of unprecedented advances in communication technology, employers can use a variety of different media to recruit new workers, but in practice some methods are more effective than others. According to the responses illustrated below, general and employee referrals are the most common and effective hiring method. Online job boards and company websites also appear to yield promising results.

When Hiring Employees, what mediums have you used in recruiting and which mediums have been most effective?

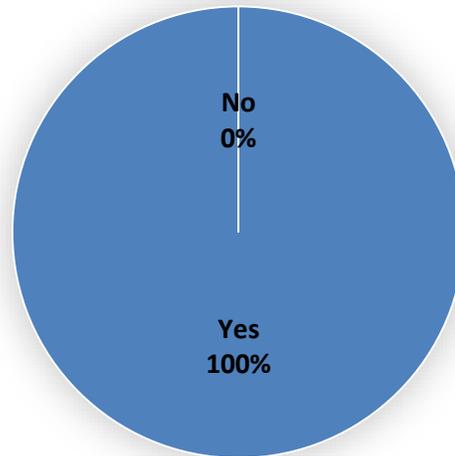


d. Assessment

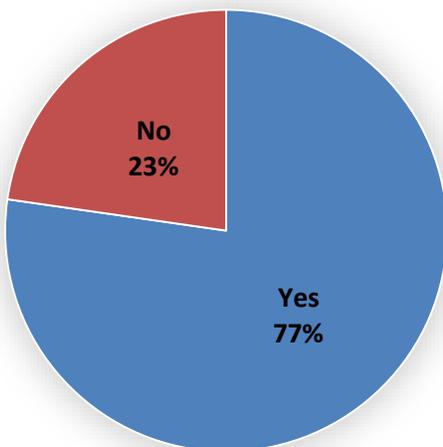
This section covers the activities related to assessing the skills of crafts persons in 2016. The process of assessment includes appraising an employee's skills, documenting the results, and providing feedback on what improvements can be made. This process is used to determine who will be retained, promoted, demoted, or fired. Workforce development in this case entails making this process faster, cheaper, more accurate, and more productive.

The existence of a formal process for evaluating the skills of new workers can serve as a strong sign of a company's commitment to workforce development. For the second year in a row, the benchmarking results indicated that **100 percent** of participants have a formal, written process for classifying new hires according to skill level. As a potential component of that process, the use of a written skills assessment represents a step toward formalization. The graph below shows that a majority of companies that responded use written assessments. Hands-on skill verifications are also an important part of a proper assessment process. In fact, almost all of the companies that responded said they evaluated skill level with some kind of hands on test.

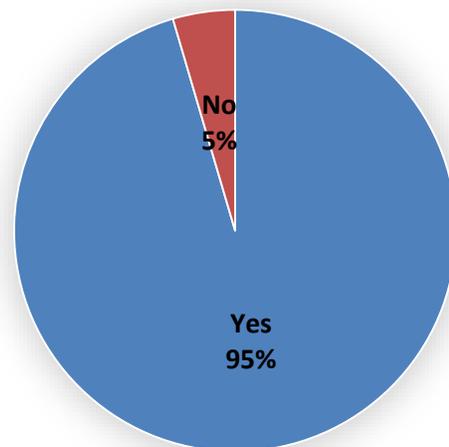
Is a formal, written process used to classify all new hires to a skill level?



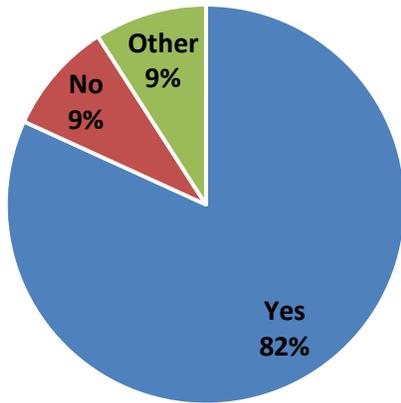
Do you conduct written skills assessments for all new craftpersons?



Do you perform hands-on performance assessments?



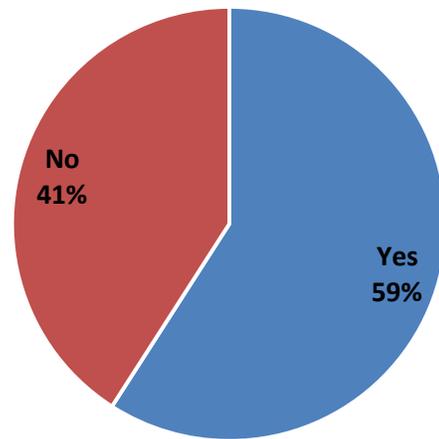
Do you offer skill or upgrade training above and beyond NCCER?



The information gleaned from the assessment process can be put to use for the mutual benefit of employers and employees. More than half the companies that responded indicated that they require employees to enroll in upgrade training to address identified skill deficiencies. Even in cases when employees meet the minimum skill requirements, employers still have an interest in improving their skills. The majority of survey participants indicated that they offered training above and beyond NCCER. This percentage has increased from 70 percent to 82 percent from 2016’s report. Some of the “Other” responses mentioned various areas of skill not covered by NCCER and in-house skills training.

Going one step further, little over half respondents require all of their craft employees to meet some baseline level of certification. Although companies highly value the proficiency of specialized workers, they do recognize the importance of employing versatile workers as well. Versatility also makes it easier for workers to find a job.

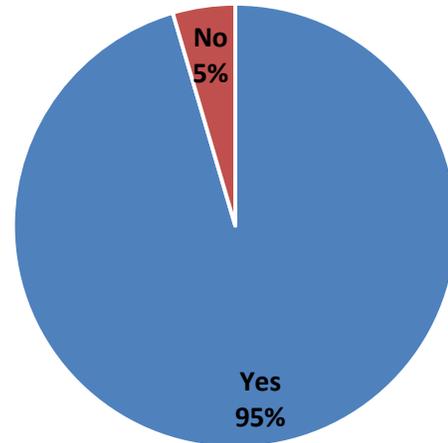
Does your organization require all craft employees to hold certain certifications and/or credentials?



e. Training

Training is the broad process of equipping employees with knowledge and skills in order to improve their work performance. To be clear, the questions in this section refer to activities in the last calendar year. Workforce development involves making this process faster, cheaper, and more effective. Not surprisingly, most of the participating companies indicated that their program encourages employee access to formal craft training and certification and require craft employees to hold certain certifications and/or credentials.

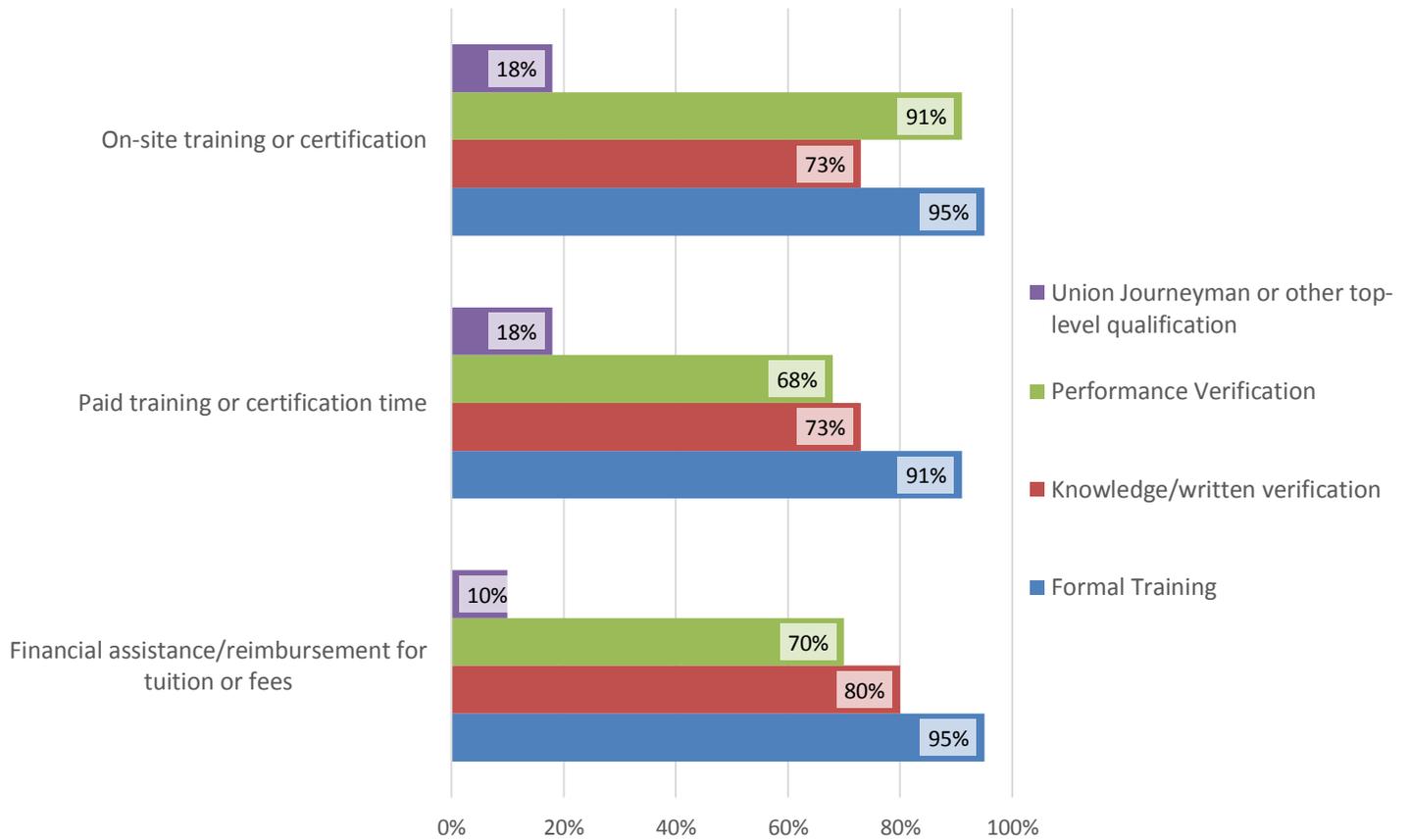
Does your Workforce Development Program Encourage Employee Access to Formal Craft Training and Certification?



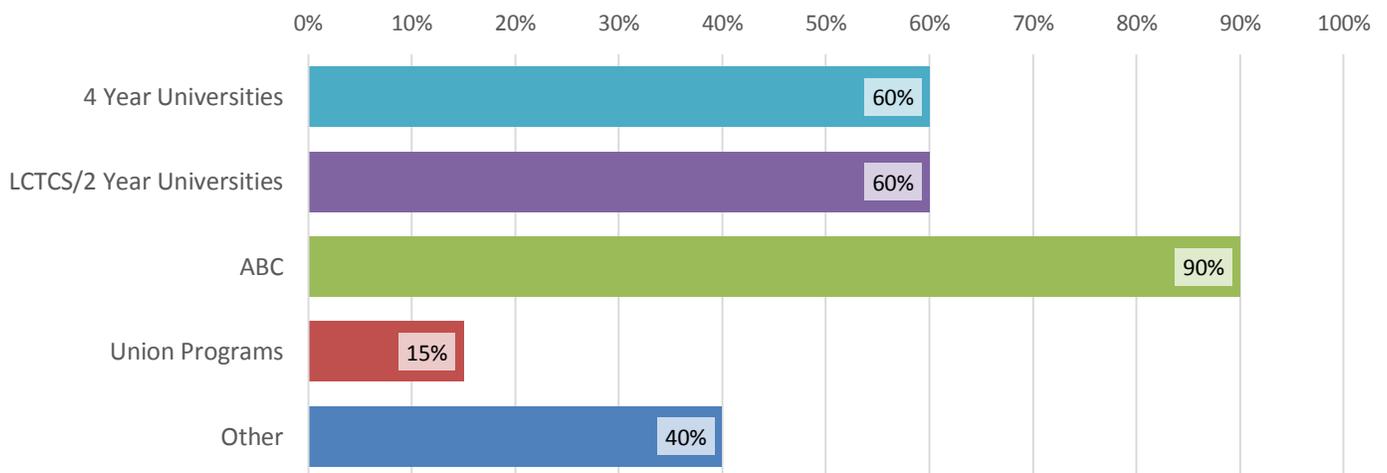
Employer encouragement often comes in financial form, since paying for training is usually the main obstacle for hopeful entrants to the industry as well as for existing employees. Employers often allow for paid training time, but ***the most common scenario is that employers encourage night training and cover the cost of the courses.*** According to the survey results, most respondents offer financial assistance for employees' formal training.

The next question was intended to determine what kind of tuition and fees the participating companies were willing to cover. Most of them indicated that their financial assistance/reimbursement programs applied to ABC, while support for tuition or two year community colleges and four year universities was less common. However, respondents mentioned other programs that receive tuition and fee coverage including specialty training that provides a certification, API, CWI, Rope Access and Advanced NDE, NACE, SSPC, COSS, OSHA, COSM and Board of Certified Safety Professionals.

How does your company facilitate employee access to formal training and certification?



Does your company provide any financial assistance or reimbursement for tuition at the following types of insitutions?



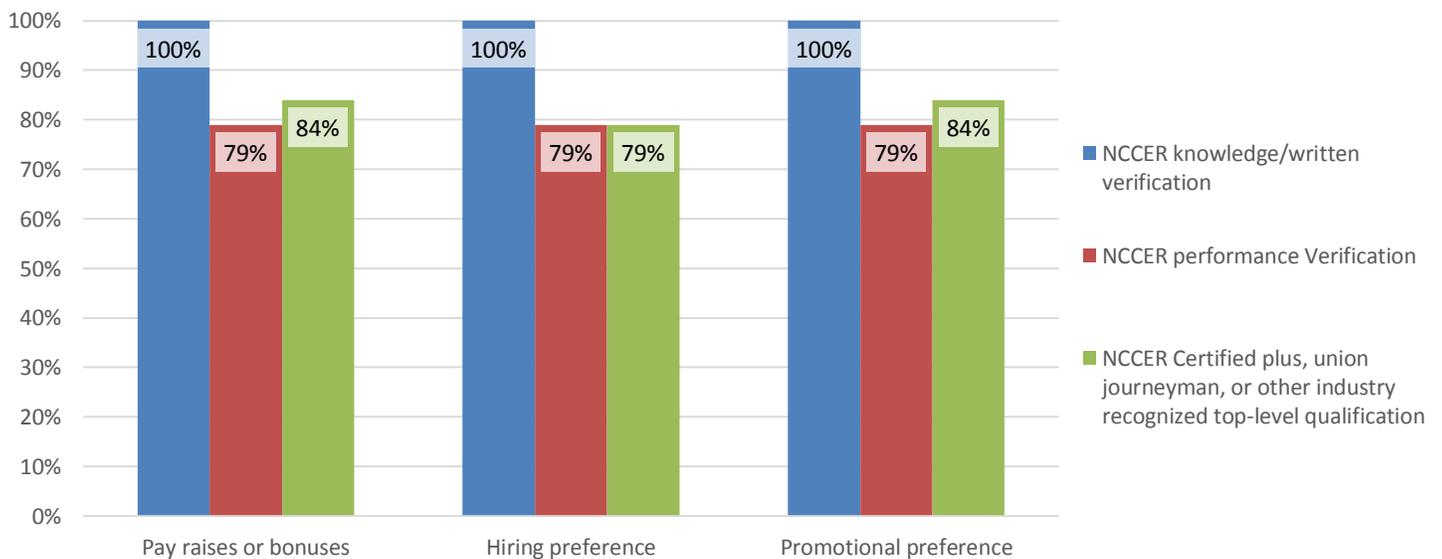
Beyond merely facilitating employee access, employers can offer a number of additional incentives to encourage formal skill training. The data illustrated below indicates that all respondents reward completers of formal training financially or through pay raises or bonuses.

Under which conditions does your company offer the following rewards for formal training?



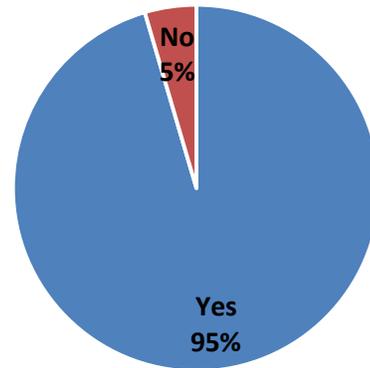
Employers can offer some of the same incentives to encourage formal certification as well. The graph below illustrates that most participants in the survey offer pay raises, hiring preference, and promotional preference for those who achieve NCCER Certified plus, union journeyman or other industry recognized top-level qualification.

Under which conditions does your company offer the following rewards for certification?



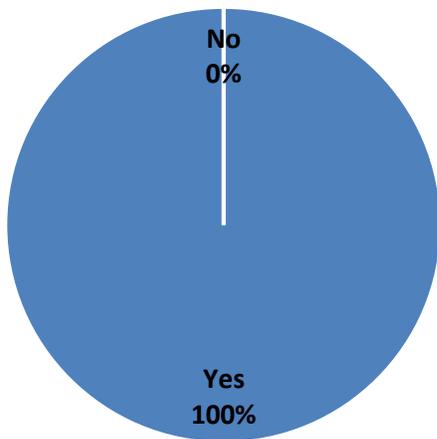
Employees are still likely to need a wide array of skills outside of their craft specialization in order to be effective in the workplace. In fact, most of those surveyed said they supplemented their primary craft training programs with additional resources, this is a 6 percent increase from 2016. According to their answers, these resources include NCCER testing or classification, participation in equipment operator progression program, vendors through the IWTP grant, after work hours welding courses, in-house training centers, BRCC, NCCER training curriculum, Alliance Safety Council, NDT training, LSU Continuing Education and ABC.

Do you supplement your primary craft training program with in-house resources, outside vendors, or other training providers?

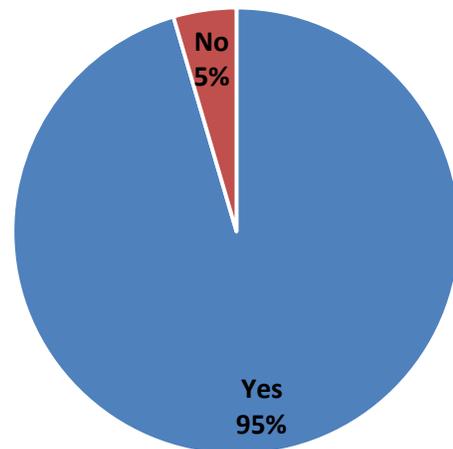


As an example, a good craftsman does not necessarily possess the skills to be a good leader. The results pictured below indicate that 100 percent of the participants' training programs include leadership training for supervisors. Along with these general leadership skills, supervisors also require some more technical skills in order to effectively coordinate other workers.

Does your program include formal leadership courses for supervisors?



Does your program include formal supervisory skills courses?



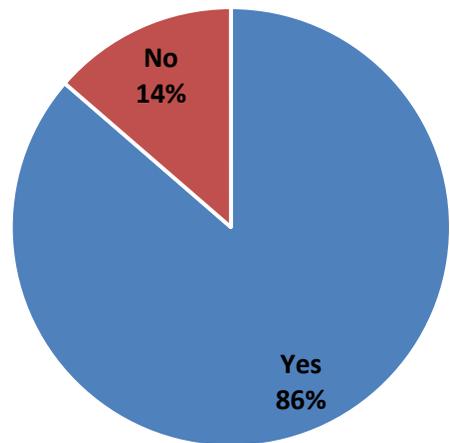
Responses to another question, pictured above, indicate that almost all of the programs also include supervisory skills training to address things like project controls, planning, scheduling, and safety.

f. Career Path Development

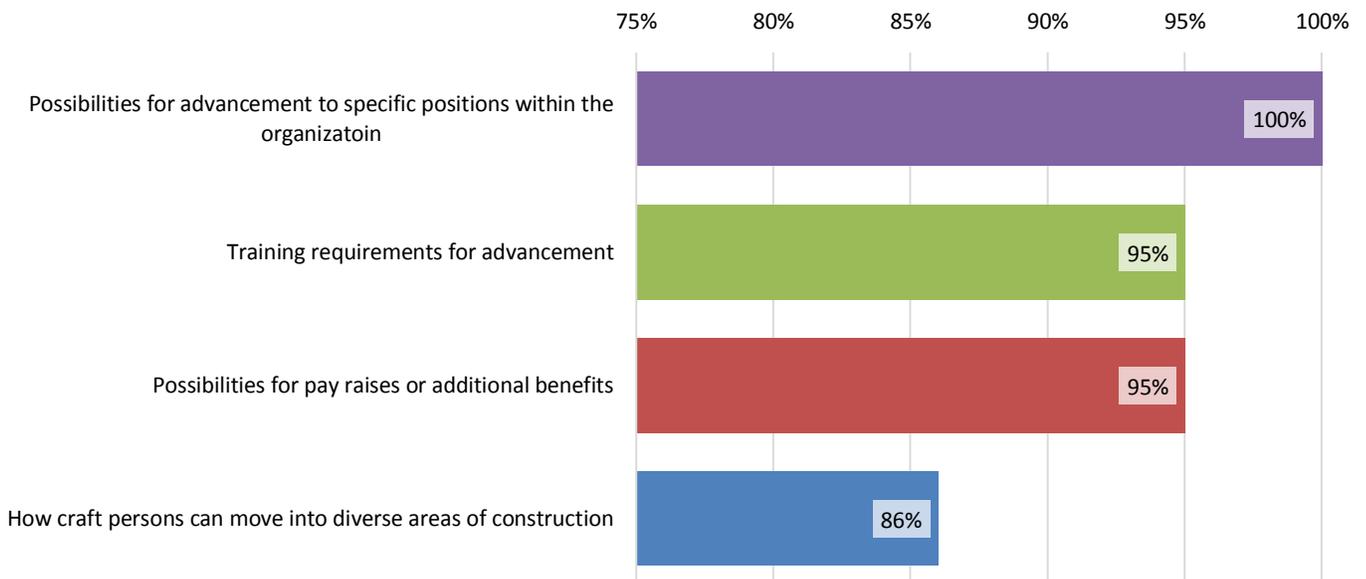
Career Path Development is the process of providing and communicating opportunities for employee advancement. Workforce development entails the creation of more opportunities and more effective communication of these opportunities. The next few questions attempt to gauge the degree to which respondents have committed themselves to career path development within the last calendar year.

Depending on the employer, the extent of career path information provided to workers can vary. The adjacent graph shows that the large majority of participants already have formal, written career paths for their employees. With contractors new to GBRIA’s Workforce Development program, the number of those reporting having a formal, written career path has decreased slightly. Another graph below shows that all respondents’ career paths addressed promotional possibilities and most addressed training requirements.

Does your company have formal, written career paths for its employees?

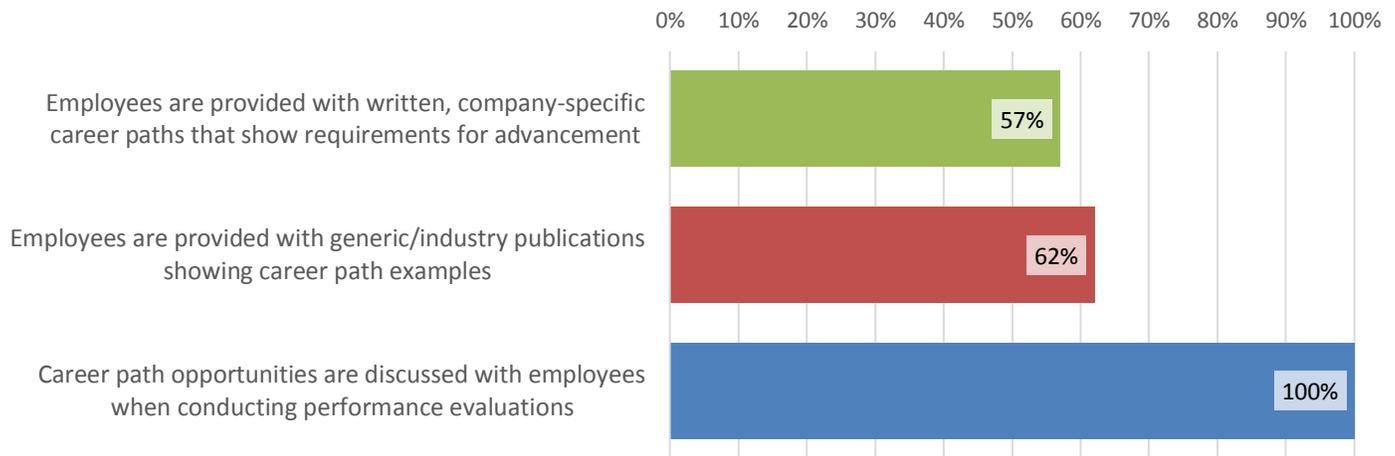


Do your company's career paths include the following key elements?



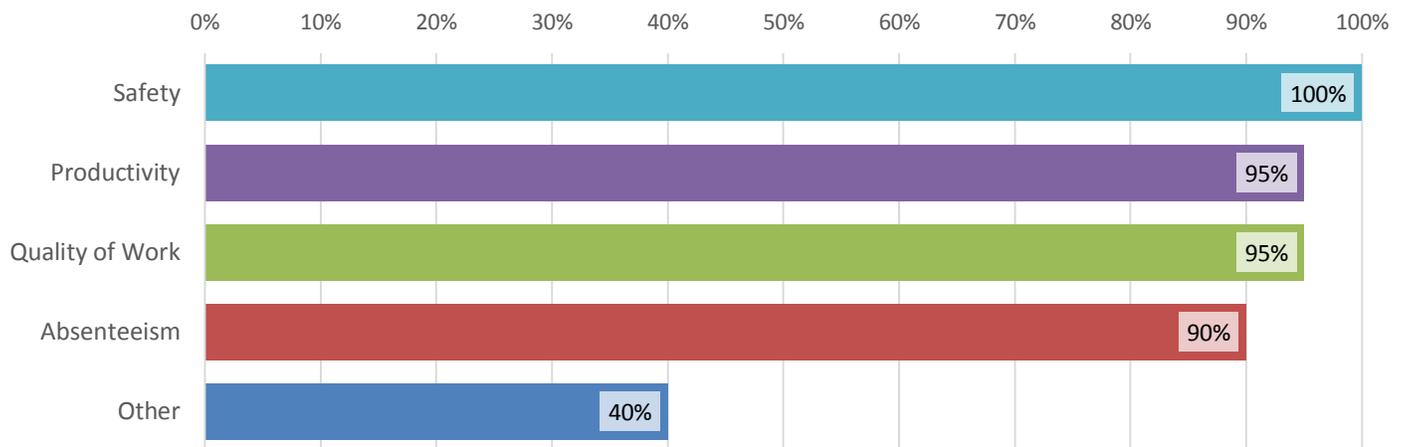
Providing employees with career path examples can be useful for encouraging longer term focus and motivation. All participants indicated that they discussed career path opportunities with their workers during performance evaluations, while 62 percent provided employees with generic career path literature. Fifty-seven percent provided them with written, company-specific documents addressing career paths.

How does your company communicate career path information to its employees?



Clearly, connecting a worker’s career path opportunities to his performance can also be a strong motivator. According to the data represented below, all of the participants’ performance evaluations addressed safety, and most address absenteeism and quality of work and productivity. **Most of the “Other” responses included employee attitude and soft skills as important components of performance reviews.**

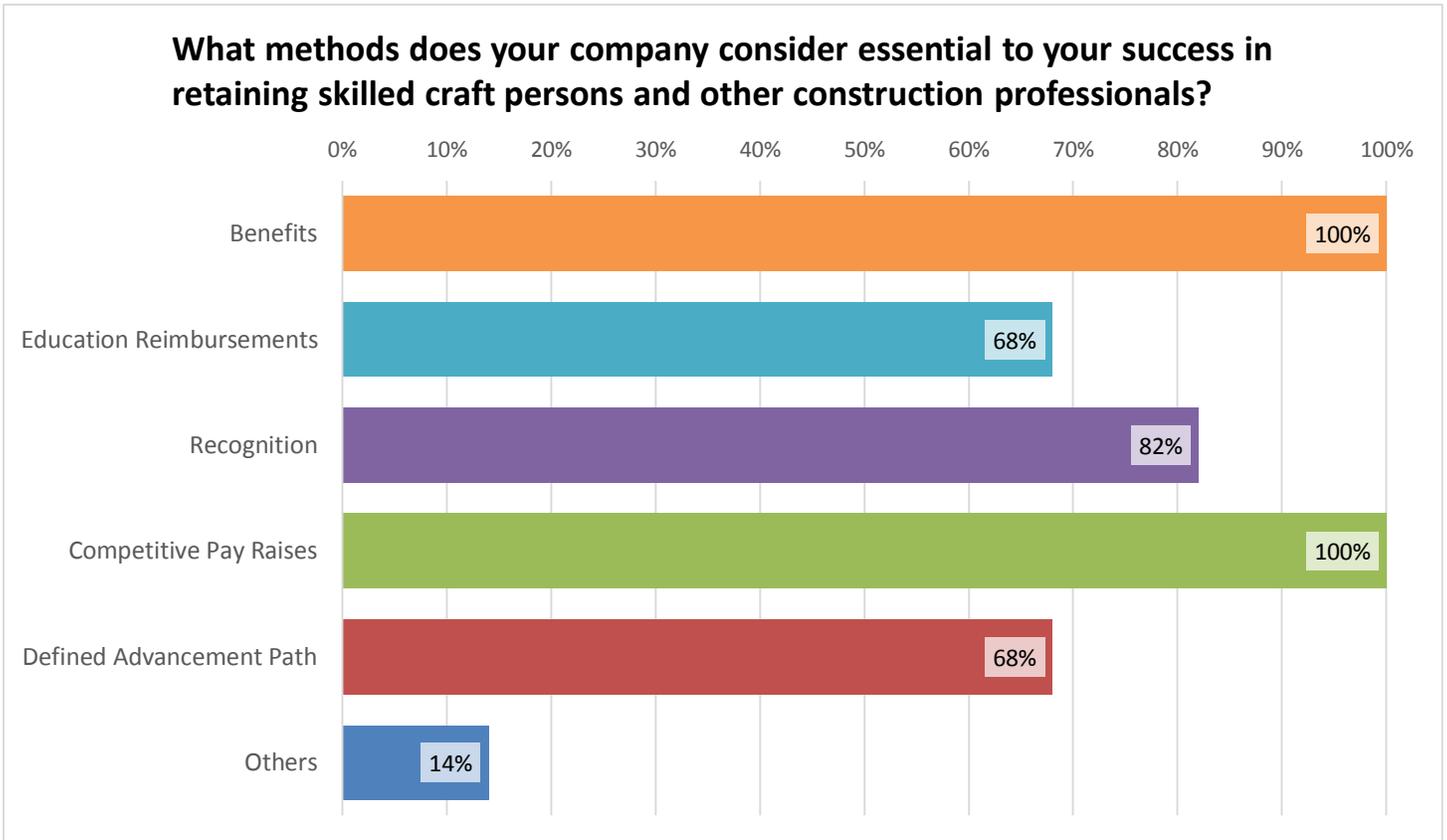
Do your performance evaluations of crafts people include the following criteria?



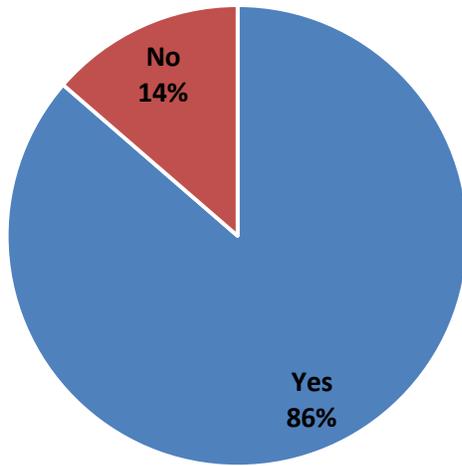
g. Retention

Retention is the process of maintaining a work environment that encourages current employees to remain with the company. The questions in this section are related to activities in the last calendar year. It is well known that high turnover rates correspond to high costs for employers. The average turnover rate for calendar year 2016 among survey respondents was approximately 12 percent, although the answers varied widely based on the size of the company and the different crafts involved. Since the decision to leave or stay is ultimately made by the workers themselves, workforce development in this case is ultimately a matter of enhancing job satisfaction.

There are a number of methods that a company can use to improve job satisfaction. One hundred percent of respondents to our survey indicated that they considered competitive pay rates and benefits essential for retaining skilled craft persons. Additional components of success mentioned in the “Other” blank included job incentives based on project and individual performance, one-on-one foreman training and paid craft training.



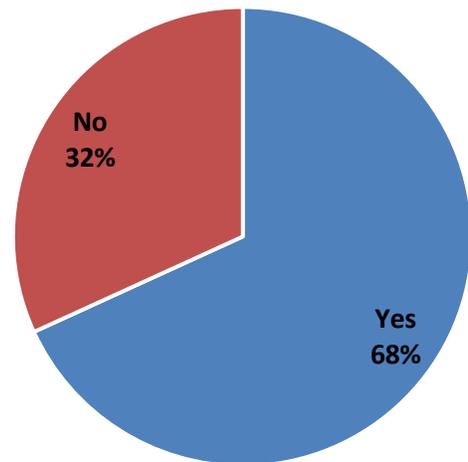
Do you have a system in place to facilitate continuous employment from one project to another for craft persons?



Providing a stable work environment can be difficult due to the irregular nature of contract work. A series of large projects might require companies to hire labor in the short term that becomes unnecessary during a future lull in business. A majority of the survey participants' responses, represented by the graph to the left, indicated that they have a system in place to address this issue.

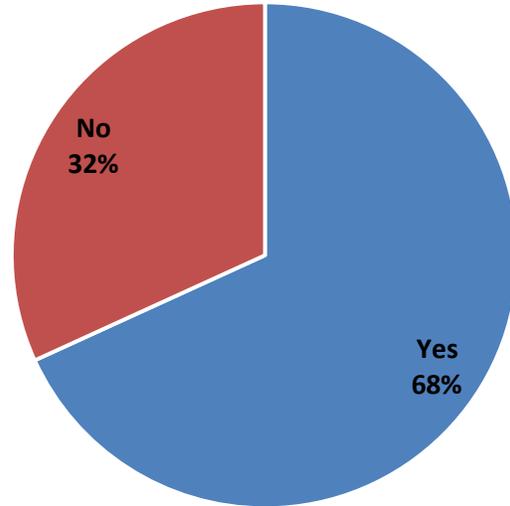
Long commutes inconvenience workers, inclining them to seek work that is closer to their homes. According to a 2011 Harris Interactive poll, 48 percent of people said that commuting has a significant impact on their job satisfaction, and 32 percent considered the commute when they chose their current job. In addition, 15 percent said that they would change jobs in order to shorten their commute (http://www.kronos.com/pr/road-wage-survey.aspx#_edn1). A majority of participants in our survey said that they had a way to make sure that craft persons were given work offers near their homes.

Do you have a system in place to facilitate work offers near a craft person's residence?

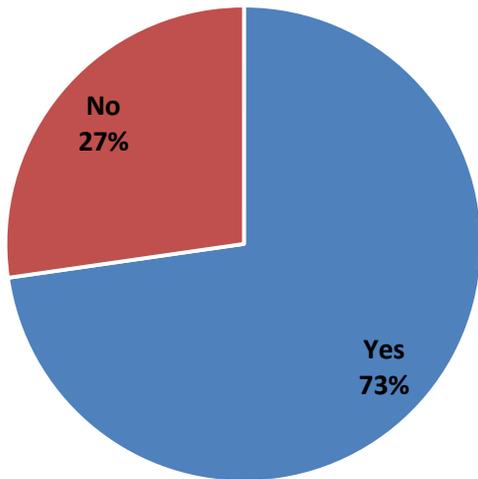


Employees are more satisfied with their jobs when employers reward the effort they've put into getting their certifications. According to the data on the right, most of the survey participants indicated that they offer preferential job placement to those who are certified, either as a GBRIA Craft Person or a Union Journeyman.

Do you offer preferential job placement to those who meet the GBRIA Certified Craft Person definition or have achieved Union Journeyman status?



Do you offer preferential job placement to craft persons who are enrolled in formal craft training?



Workers become more valuable after they complete craft training, so they could be lured to other companies if incentives to stay are not sufficient. The survey results to the left indicate that the large majority of participating companies do offer preferential job placement to craft persons enrolled in formal craft training.

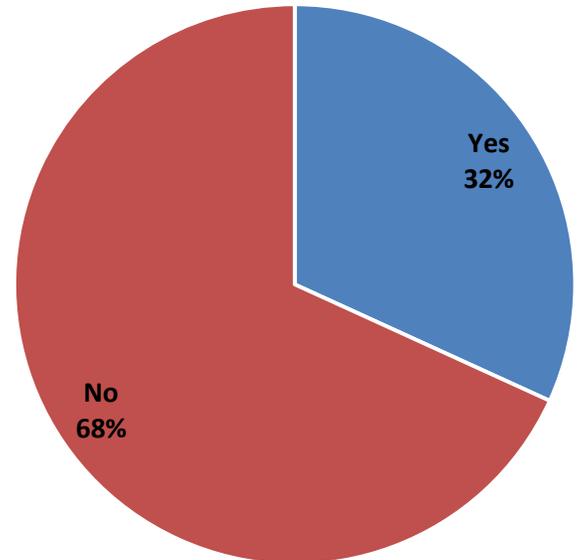
h. Funding Programs

Participation in a program to fund craft training has been an essential part of the commitment to workforce development. Once again, this section reviews various funding activities from the last calendar year.

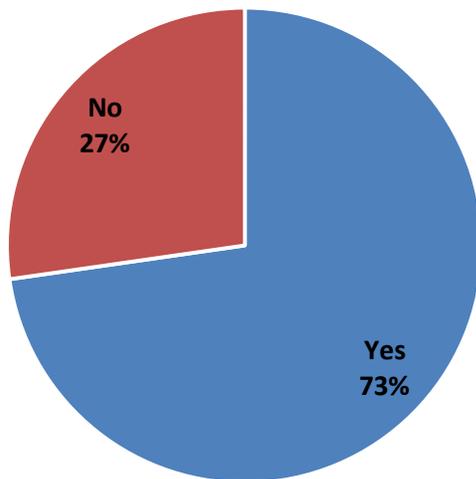
When asked about funding programs other than GBRIA that could help industry in our region, most of the respondents indicated that they were not aware of any. However the “Yes” responses included the following:

- Grants (such as IWTP)
- Construction Users Roundtable (CURT)
- Workforce Innovation & opportunity Act
- Workforce Board OJT Reimbursement
- Skills development fund (TX)
- Alabama DOL Grant
- ABC accreditation
- NCCER cents per manhour (NCCER National Training Service Agreement)

Are you aware of any funding mechanisms other than the GBRIA members/ABC cents/hour or GBRIA member/union cents/hour programs that we could benchmark with to improve industry in our region?



Are you satisfied with the current GBRIA/ABC 7 cents/hour program?



When asked about the current GBRIA/ABC cents per hour program, survey participants mostly claimed to be satisfied with it. However, most of those who weren't satisfied reported that training has not gotten cheaper and 7 cents is not enough and should be the same as Lake Charles or New Orleans. Respondents claim the increase is necessary to help financially fund the school, citing that the summer program was almost cancelled due to budget cuts and the long waiting list for welding and other craft classes that fill up on the first day of sign up.

Some respondents expressed that while ABC has made strides in obtaining funding through grants, partnerships and accreditation; additional resources could allow for them to build the capacity for the training demand of now.

The survey also included a question to gauge participants' satisfaction with union cents/hour programs. Not enough respondents participate in union training programs to draw any conclusions from this question.

i. Review and Awards Program Evaluation

The last question was intended to improve this review and awards program for future years. Participants were asked to provide comments, feedback, or suggestions they had. Some of the feedback we received included:

- Include a question asking how companies excite employees about training
- Focus on a particular workforce development program rather than benchmarking

V. Conclusions

a. State of the Industry

Over the last 10 years, industry plants/owners in the Greater Baton Rouge area have provided more definition and encouragement to contractors to upgrade the skills of their employees. Around 2003, companies began the process of requiring that contractors assess the skills of their employees, using the NCCER assessment tools and provide upgrade training where contractors showed skill gaps. Around 2005, several plants began to offer pay increases for contractors who received written NCCER certification in their craft, or the antithesis – no pay raise, and a classification of “B” craft level for those that chose not to upgrade their skills. Today, from this benchmarking survey, contractors indicated that **93% of GBRIA members require some form of craft certification as part of their prequalification**. Several plants/owners are even requiring that each contract employee’s skill credentials are posted into electronic prequalification databases before the employee can enter and work at the site.

With most plants setting a defined skill certification requirement, the possibility to shift the burden of training costs from industry to individuals is becoming a reality. Training through community and technical colleges has grown tremendously in the past two years relative to specialized, employer-funded schools and is helping to meet the need for skilled workers. It is the vision of GBRIA members to continue to grow public programs while maintaining the existing cents per hour program. Industry plants and contractors, however, must remain engaged in the public programs to ensure a successful outcome is maintained for trainees and employees.

Recruitment of workers is an area that has shown much improvement over the last several years. The State of Louisiana invested in the Build Your Future Louisiana website (www.louisiana.byf.com), which is being used and in the Baton Rouge region, all trade schools report almost full enrollment with only some capacity available during daytime training hours. In addition, much has changed at the high school level to reach students earlier to complete several levels of NCCER training in high school. This is where public funds also are playing a critical role to meet industry’s needs.

Retention of workers in the industry is still an area of concern as turnover is an industry cost that employers bear. Offering competitive wages and benefits are key factors; however, significant employee recognition also plays a big roll.

The highest scoring nominees had:

- Detailed record keeping systems that track employees' training status
- Specific Leadership and Supervisory training as well as additional training for crafts people.
- Clear and formally written workforce development programs, career paths and assessment programs presented.
- Substantial partnership and recruitment programs with high schools and technical colleges.
- Methods for coordinating projects such that craft persons are continuously employed and as close to their residences as possible.
- Evidence/statistics to indicate improvements of safety, productivity, quality of work, absenteeism and turnover resulting from workforce development.
- Recognized employees who have made progress in, or graduated training.
- Provided thorough supporting documentation during interview process.

b. Recommendations

The following recommendations, gleaned from the results of this year's survey, should be useful for contract companies and industry owners alike:

- Make a commitment to craft training that is comparable to the commitment to safety:
 - Set concrete workforce development goals
 - Take commitment to workforce development into consideration when choosing prime and sub-contractors
- Communicating career path information to employees through different occasions such as performance evaluations or providing through general publications.
- Recognize employees involved in every part of the training process, from new enrollees to instructors
- Explain how you provide recognition to employees who enroll or complete training or workforce development accomplishments.
- Participate in programs that enhance the public image of construction and maintenance careers
- Provide all documentation during the interview process

VI. Contact Information

For more information on this awards and benchmarking survey program, please contact Jessica Pranjić, Manager of Communications & Workforce Development.

Greater Baton Rouge Industry Alliance (GBRIA)

8555 United Plaza Blvd., Suite 202

Baton Rouge, LA 70809

Tel: 225-769-0596 (Ext. 17)

Fax: 225-769-0289

www.gbria.org

jessica@gbria.org