

North Shore WIB Critical Issues Survey Results

As of 6-22-11

A total of 482 electronic surveys were sent out and 90 surveys were returned for a responses rate of 19%

1. What are the primary challenges facing the North Shore companies in relation to their labor force?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
There are no issues	2	2.2%
Unable to find workers with specific occupational skills	53	59.5%
Unable to find workers with basic core competencies and/or generic skills, e.g., reading, speaking, doing basic math, etc	40	44.9%
Cost of hiring/employing individuals, i.e., health care, other benefits, state assessments like Unemployment Compensation, etc	47	52.8%
Unable to keep skilled workers who leave to work for competitors	16	17.9%
Unable to keep skilled workers who move out of the area	7	7.8%
Don't know	4	4.4%
Other	13	14.6%
Total	89	100%
Answer		
Cost of living discourages some to relocate to the area		
Convincing skilled workers to move to the North Shore		
salary expectations		
training support		
cost of living here		
Increased regulatory burden; other states have more aggressive economic developm		
Pt's, pta's ot's and cota's		
pay		
aging workforce retiring & not retiring		
lean staffing		
larger pool of high end talent is closer to metro Boston		
difficult commute, expecially into Salem		
For non-profits, the lack of skilled workers is compounded by funding challenges		

2. What are the primary issues facing North Shore residents in relation to finding, getting, and keeping quality employment?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
There are no issues	0	0.0%
Continually being laid off by companies	23	26.1%
Lack of knowledge on how to find a job	21	23.8%
Lack of specific skills required by companies in your field	59	67.0%
Lack of knowledge on how to gain these skills	35	39.7%
Lack of time to return to school to gain these skills	33	37.5%
Don't know	10	11.3%
Other	20	22.7%

Total	88	100%
Answer		
Lost in online resume submittal? no \$ for education?		
Attracting employers to our region		
Competition from other unemployed and recent college graduates		
more people in need than jobs available		
Employers who are still unsure about hiring		
lack of funds to pursue training opportunities		
lack of funding to obtain training to gain skills		
Fewer large employers in region		
lack of transportation, lack of job opps., access to training		
Trade job postings		
Unaddressed age discrimination in hiring older worker job seekers.		
Not enough quality jobs are available		
lack of quality jobs		
Not enough good paying jobs available.		
Also perhaps, lack of jobs and lack of money to pay for educational training		
Lack of understanding of what is needed to get and keep a job		
balancing family budgets		
slow and sporadic public transport especially towards metro Boston		
lack of experience and opportunities for it for recent grads		
I would add high cost of living (housing especially) and low pay scales.		

3. What are the primary issues facing North Shore educational providers as they attempt to address these challenges and issues?		
	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Lack of information on local labor force needs	20	22.9%
Lack of funding and/or other support on expanding education/training programs	65	74.7%
Other educational priorities	23	26.4%
Don't know	10	11.4%
Other	16	18.3%
Total	87	100%
Answer		
lack of job opportunities		
Lack of collaborations with local businesses		
Learning takes more time than people have to gain employment		
a combination of things		
smoother continuum, clearer pathways from adult ed. to post-secondary E&T		
Finding people that want to work		
Lack of expectation and accountability of Academic Deans.		
lack of interested students		
lack of jobs, industries living the State or the US.		
We need a quality engineering program on the North Shore.		
help people overcome entrance requirements		
Machining programs being dropped		
We have the programs, but students cannot pay, or don't have the time		
Higher Education moves slowly in regard to curriculum change. Faculty are often		
\$\$\$\$ biggest problem		

lack of state support or plan

4. What are the primary issues facing North Shore economic development and community organizations in relation to the North Shore labor market?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
There are no issues	0	0.0%
Lack of information on local labor force needs	25	29.4%
Lack of coordination/collaboration mechanisms	57	67.0%
Don't know	15	17.6%
Other	19	22.3%
Total	85	100%
Answer		
lack of funding		
Competition from other states		
their clients often lack necessary skill set		
need more jobs		
entrenched bureaucracy with shrinking budgets		
that is the key issue!!!!		
Insufficient staff resources to educate community on available labor market info		
Lack of jobs.		
We need the equivalent of a placement agency for the jobless.		
funding, money		
Improved coordination/collaboration		
need to get construction moving such as development of Lynn waterfront/ downtown		
Issues are know but I see difficulty collaborating them - been going on years.		
local needs info beyone what is provided by WIB		
lack of knowledge of sources of prepared workers		
Difficulty in finding funding		
no regional governmental support		
starting early enough in K-12 for targeted skill sets		
There could be better resource sharing. Funding for WD is shrinking and less acc		

5. For survey participants involved (e.g. as a board member, staff, recipient of services, etc.) in the non-profit community, what do you see as the primary challenges in working with the North Shore labor market?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Lack of knowledge about the North Shore economy	11	14.1%
Lack of relationships with North Shore businesses	31	39.7%
Lack of funding	46	58.9%
Don't Know	9	11.5%
Other	10	12.8%
Total	78	100%
Answer		
cost of living and doing business		
Economic challenges to employers		

from an employer standpoint the market is good
facilities challenges
I am not working for a non-profit.
Coordination of funding sources with educational providers
economy must improve for non profits to flourish
Working collaboratively - too many other priorities
Public & business ignorance about size and diversity of nonprofit sector
gathering resources to match needs

6. What impact has the recession had on hiring/expanding or other workforce development issue with your company or organization?

65 Response(s)
Answer
lack of funding
we have been able to keep the workforce but they have lost most of the overtime which is what a machinist has lived on. customers have felt the recession and everything flows down to us. We received a large contract from England and this is allowing us to expand. we are now seeing a positive growth and we need employees that are skill machinist.
not hiring as much; lack of cost benefit, costs continue to rise
The recession had a large impact on manufacturing technicians within our company. Significant reductions were made due to the fact that we were not manufacturing much product. Reductions were also made to the technical staff (scientists, engineers, designers), but to a lesser extent. (continued below)
In public education, funding or lack thereof, for mandated programs has diluted monies to maintain and grow professional staff.
1. As competitors have struggled we have had the luxury of hiring a number of highly skilled individuals who have willingly accepted a lower wage to join our growing company.
2. Turnover rates have plummeted during this recession leading to a stable workforce
3. Performance at all levels has improved as people are concerned about being replaced
None. We continue to hire and to expand.
We have not added to staff for 3 years
people in the community are not seeking out health care if they do not have health care benefits. For those that are employed and with health benefits, elective surgeries are delayed if they think time away from their employer is at risk.
We are able to get better qualified help and retain them because of the limited opportunities elsewhere
Positions have gone unfilled or part-time employees have been brought on. Budget for professional development is reduced.
The recession is having a tremendous impact on our workforce development. Because of the budget crisis we are unable to hire new employees except for Public Safety.
NA
None at this time because of the infusion of ARRA dollars. However, the FY12 budget will be reduced and ARRA dollars are no longer available. The next 2 years will be very difficult.
The shrinking money allotted to training has negatively impacted the number of people we can serve and created an unstable working environment for employees. Also the time needed to bridge the skills gap is longer than people expect and have to learn the skills needed to be self-sufficient.
greater competition for lesser funds, shrinking infrastructure, lack of commitment by bureaucratic elements.
Many companies have been accustomed to having a smaller work force - fewer people doing more work. Less hiring also translates to savings in salaries, health insurance, other benefits, etc. Although some market segments are showing some growth, many companies are still cautious about hiring extra people - not knowing what the future will hold.
We had to let a part time employee go
High unemployment rate has made it very difficult to place unskilled or low-skilled workers in entry-level jobs.
Our non-profit works with youth among other issues. Few job opportunities for youth other than retail to which there is poor transportation. During recession older adults are taking jobs youth used to have. This will cripple their chances to find full employment in the future. Also little funding from employers to fund youth jobs.
Healthcare funding is largely dependent upon state and federal funds. Whenever the government is facing a deficit these funds are in jeopardy. Healthcare cost continue to rise at a very high rate while reimbursement rates stay the

same or in many cases decrease. In our business 65-70% of our costs are labor. As a result labor suffers.
increase demand for job training education and services
decrease in resources to provide such job training and services
Difficulty in expanding number of jobs (especially adding full-time with benefits) due to funding gaps
As an educational institution we have had a significant increase in enrollment, some of which is, as a result of inability to find employment, attending classes until opportunities increase.
very leary of hiring full time folks
we've hired 9 employees since the beginning of 2011, so no real issues.
Access to higher risk debt capital dried up during the recession. This has forced the sale of more shares in my company, which has been dilutive to the founders. Many companies found it difficult to raise capital at all.
Reduced funding from the state for a state institution has resulted in the need to reduce the workforce, although the work is expanding; therefore, those remaining take on extra work, more stress.
More qualified candidates available for work
Increasing gap between individual's skills and employee's requirements.
As the economy begins to move slowly forward one of the challenges has been for Companies to feel comfortable enough to make investments in hiring new employees as they see an increase in their business.
It resulted in three rounds of layoff, but continued hiring for certain skilled areas in software development. Back on the upswing, but cautiously.
Somes candidates are not as committed to working.
Pool of candidates are unskilled, unmotivated and did not take advantage of opportunities to improve skills while on unemployment.
Companies are being more selective on hires.
Not be able to read our economy and what actions the governemnt might take makes me tentative about expanding or hiring.
Due the economy we had to cut our work force, and freeze salary increases.
Those two actions have led a lot of our skilled worker to leave for other jobs.
As th economy progress in the right direction trying to replace those skilled worker is very hard.
While we are a University, and are seeing some increase in UG and Grad enrollments, the non-credit certificate programs are not being adequately filled. We are told, repeatedly at conferences, that this is the growing field. However, funding ia a big issue for students, and these are expensive programs to develop/run.
In the City of Lynn construction has been nearly at a standstill with the exception of the new VNA building. Development of the waterfront, continued development of the downtown , the expansion of NSCC, the maximization of GE properties by either GE and/or other tenants.
Huge increase in clients who are chronically unemployed with few job opportunities available
We are experiencing a reduction in turnover due to the economy therefore we are not hiring to replace positions. We are not adding new positions due to budget constraints and we are not expanding our business due to economic conditions.
Catholic Charities has been required to only hire/fill positions that have solid funding to support the position long term. It has hampered expansion into areas of community need, because sustainability is a serious concern in this economic environment.
We are not seeing employees who we would assume would be retiring, retiring, ie Nurses beyond the age of 65 not retiring, thus we have employees who have finished nursing school, passed the boards but unable to be hired. Thus employees are not retiring and therefore limiting opportunities for qualified applicants
companies that I work with contracted over the past 2 yrs and are just now starting to feel comfortable enough with an expanding book of business for the months ahead. They would not hire until their existing employees were back to full schedule and until they received contracts for enough work to feel the need to hire.
The economy has impacted our organization in two ways. First, we have less income to use to hire and pay employees. Second, when the economy is down, there is a greater need for our services.
People staying in current roles, not eager to leave for a new opportunity.
Limited hiring opportunities.
Our hiring was frozen coming out of the economic recession - we are now hiring again.
funding and confidence are lowered
My organization is publicly funded, so political change has reduced our funding to put people into subsidized employment. Concurrently, the recession has created a greater need for the service and more people who need the

subsidy.
Very little impact
community colleges pushed to expand workforce development without resources or framework to work within
As to the company I work for, hiring has slowed down due to the slowdown in the economy which has impacted the bank's business. As to the non-profit for which I am a Board member, government funding cuts has resulted in no new hiring and reduced staff as a result of attrition.
freeze on wages and hiring
NO MONEY , NOT ABLE TO EXPAND AND HIRE NEW EMPLOYEES
We have been fortunate that we have continued hiring during this time.
Our workforce has not increased or decreased in size. We are cautiously evaluating each position vacancy and request for an add-to-staff. Employee development and cross-training are ongoing, primarily in-house.
A rise in enrollment at North Shore Community college.
I can honestly say that we have not been impacted by the current recession. We have been able to continue to grow.
Lack of or diminished funding for hiring needed staff and additional resources
Contraction of the workforce
NA
lack of work has lead to a smaller work force
cutbacks in funding sources have impacted ability to hire or expand workforce.and programs. The need for services is up and the revenue is down.
Confidence in hiring. The uncertain future has caused us to hedge longer on hiring than in the past.
taking on more responsibilities for same job & pay
NSCAP received ARRA funding-allowed us to expand WD and job readiness services and create 8 new positions.Last December we had to lay everyone off except for the energy auditor. These positions when filled had a "multiplier" effect. Less staff means more unemployment and less available services.

7. In your opinion, what other critical issues does the North Shore face?

68 Response(s)

Answer

Retaining employees after training. The new program at North Shore Community will help but I think we need to still have a better way at a younger age to recruit these people. I think the state and government if they really mean keep Manufacturing in US Make it a little easier for the employers to able to stay here and do business in Massachusetts.

cost structure makes North Shore and Massachusetts more expensive; legislative and regulatory mandates

(continued from above) With the more recent improvements in our market, the company has increased its staffing to levels comparable to pre-recession levels. This required extensive efforts in recruiting, hiring and training.

Employers faced with the recent recession have made fiscal and tactical adjustments to achieving their mission with less people. They have learned to work more efficiently and thus more profitably. The end result being the unlikelyhood of rebuilding the pre-recession employee base.

From an empirical perspective I personally believe that North Shore residents aren't necessarily aware of job prospects or they may believe that better opportunities are only available with companies located in Boston or the immediate suburbs of Boston or along the 128 corridor.

as a Salem based employer, commuting is an issue. Access to major highways is difficult and limits the pool of applicants.

More quality jobs

Limited public transportation limits people's ability to find job opportunities. Also, employers need more training/education about why its important for them to employ teens and why this should not be a burden to them but an opportunity to shape future employees.

Other critical issues we are facing: Education,Health Care,Housing,Drugs addiction, gangs, crimes and more...

It is my understanding that the largest segment of the NS economy is service based (including health and education). I think we need to develop more strength in segments that are linked to the future-IT (software and hardware), science-based, green/energy efficiency, etc.

Lack of affordable housing

shrinking tax base due to unemployment, spiraling inflation and skilled people and jobs moving out of the area due to lack of support by politicians.

The North Shore has two different groups of job seekers - one group is educated, professional job seekers and the other

group is unskilled, and sometimes untrained workers whose first language is not English. The challenge is how to use limited funds to assist both groups to find employment when their backgrounds are so different.
1. getting people to live and work here - cost of living very high
2. There are very specific skills that are needed and are not being addressed
3. Needs to be greater coordination and collaborataion between organizations. Think there is overlap in some areas and some areas not being addressed at all.
The shortage of affordable fast-track relavent job training programs results in the lack of a trained workforce to meet employer needs on the North Shore.
The job training opportunities that do exist, like the ETeam Machinist Training Program, can't find funding.
One area that could be helpful in matching up job seekers and employers could be promoting www.simplyhired.com This site is a search engine for all types of job postings. If you post a job opening on your company website this site will find it. This could save employers money while giving job seekers a location to easily find the their next job.
lack of jobs, esp. with good career ladders, and esp. in northern most area of NS
not enough low or no cost training opps.
Cape Ann is out of the loop in terms on access to resources to provide local, accessible, affordable trainings
transportation is major barrier to accessing trainings and job opps.
Coordination of economic development activities
Holding onto current employers and attracting new firms with good paying jobs.
Competant hard/working employee's that want to work & waive entitlements
Public Transportation
cost of housing has been and will continue to be an issue
New jobs, increasing energy industry.
Entrepreneurs and growth companies need access to capital, especially debt capital, under reasonable terms. We need more qualified engineers and research technicians. We need more collaboration between educational and training institutions and local companies. We need better internship training programs.
Inadequate public transportation.
Inadequate ESL services for immigrant adults.
Insufficient jobs for new immigrants.
High housing costs.
Reduced funding for higher education; increasingly limited ways for poor/working class/unemployed populations to improve their education and skills.
Having an employment identity e.g. Silicon Valley
Increased training opportunies.
There appears to be a shift developing with State and Federal stimulus funds as private industry is beginning to move forward again. Successfully assessing these shifts will help develop programs and training that alien with the job markets
Funding for early stage companies and for growth.
smaller employers, not having the same resources as larger employers, competing for skilled workers;
lack of interest of students going into machining/manufacturing fields;
vocational schools dropping altogether or merging machine technology programs with other disciplines;
Unacceptable work habits (ie. behaviors, attendance, etc.) from workers
Healthcare cost
There is a lack of quality jobs that pay a living wage with health benefits for the average person
The North Shore had been a manufacturing mecca, and the lack of advertising for these kind of jobs had cost us dearly.
We don't have a line of skilled workers or even an entry level workers standing outside any manufacturing company.
We need to invest and advertise in education. The kind of education that will produce a skilled worker.

Business closing, not enough jobs to go around, funding decreases.
Education of our youth/training of our adult workforce. The new immigrant population is taxing the educational system as well as our workforce development resources.
Mastering of english will improve both the quality of education of our youth and the training of our workforce.
Secondary education is not demanding that students become proficient in reading, writing, math and critical thinking. Thus, they do poorly when they attend college and when they try to find entry-level positions.
Lack of day care and transportation to get to jobs
Lacked of skilled workforce
In my opinion, the North Shore faces a critical issue in preparing single, head of household women for jobs with pay levels that lead to economic self-sufficiency. I see a lot of training programs that lead to jobs that place these female-headed families in the income gap where they lose benefits but still do not make a truly livable wage.
Potential continued consolidation in the financial services area will create increased unemployment. Lack of skilled individuals to fill job vacancies in expanding fields.
Probably the biggest problem facing the NorthShore economy is matching the skill set of the workforce to available jobs and the jobs in emerging industries.
there is still general uncertainty about the economy
NSWIB, educational and non-profit agencies work tirelessly together. Myself not directly involved, I believe the North Shore does well in informing its residents of resource availability for job training, career centers, educational facilities.
Impact of high housing costs on individuals. Many people living on the edge and these individuals often are working so hard to get by that they don't have time to update their skills until they are forced by the layoffs or the threat of job loss.
A shrinking economy, increased health insurance costs and increased fuel costs create a difficult business environment. These variables make it difficult to adjust
Increasing the skill levels of the current applicant pool to meet the needs of jobs available.
Cost of housing and limited public transportation.
Total cost is often non-competitive with other states.
Leadership. Regional collaboration. Vision.
Housing and transportation issues.
Available housing options for mid and low income residents are insufficient.
Getting around on the North Shore without a car is challenging, but that is no different than any other suburban area.
Finding jobs for new workers, recent HS graduates and recent college graduates. Helping unskilled workers to find ways to develop their skills.
Matching available workers with employers
Being able to retrain workers
Long term - matching labor force skills with employer requirements in fast changing economy.
Short and long term - building an inclusive workforce in which majority of new entries will be from minority and new immigrant demographics
Difficulty in permitting residential, commercial, and industrial development, which inhibits growth in our area and encourages potential employees to leave the area.
Fast transit link to downtown.
lack of regional government
LACK OF SOLID INTER CITY/TOWN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, THAT IS AFFORDABLE FOR RIDERS. EX. LIVE IN LYNN EMPLOYMENT IN ROWLEY ON RT 1; LIVE IN DANVERS EMPLOYMENT IN CENTENIAL PARK, ECT
Overall uncertainty about the economy; lack of bi-partisan accomplishment at both the state and federal levels. Heavy new regulatory burdens.
My observation is that employers need workers with higher levels of communication proficiency and mathematical knowledge than in years past. Funding to provide this knowledge is not abundant.
Unemployment is still high. There are many individuals who have run out of unemployment benefits and still do not have jobs. I think the unemployment rate is much higher than reported because these people are no longer being counted in the total.

The majority of business owners are still being prudent about hiring.
The No Shore is an expensive place to live. Because of the recession and its effects, there is more financial need and less resources for individuals and families
Public school funding
Vocational and technical education of recent high school graduates.
technical training in the specific trades
We need to improve public transportation.
In Lynn, we need to address education issues and work toward making all schools great, exciting, and a place that students will want to go to and will learn.
Lynn needs a stronger business community and a reason for people to come to Lynn.
Major businesses leaving the area. All the small manufacturing businesses depend on the larger manufacturers for work. When 1 large company leaves, potentially 4-5 small business can be hurt badly.
Shortage of engineers and scientists
The cost of living is quite high across the N.S.while wages and salaries are lower generally than those in the greater Boston area. More and more jobs require at least 2 yrs. of post-secondary ed. The need for ESOL and college transition services grows with less funding available to accomplish this work.

8. Organization/Partner type (check all that apply)

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Company	34	37.7%
Non-profit	32	35.5%
Elected official	2	2.2%
State agency	3	3.3%
Local community-based partner	9	10.0%
Skills training provider	10	11.1%
State or local education provider	28	31.1%
Other	6	6.6%
Total	90	100%
Answer		
City of Lynn		
Municipality		
trade/business association		
Educational		
Retired; Board member		
community college		