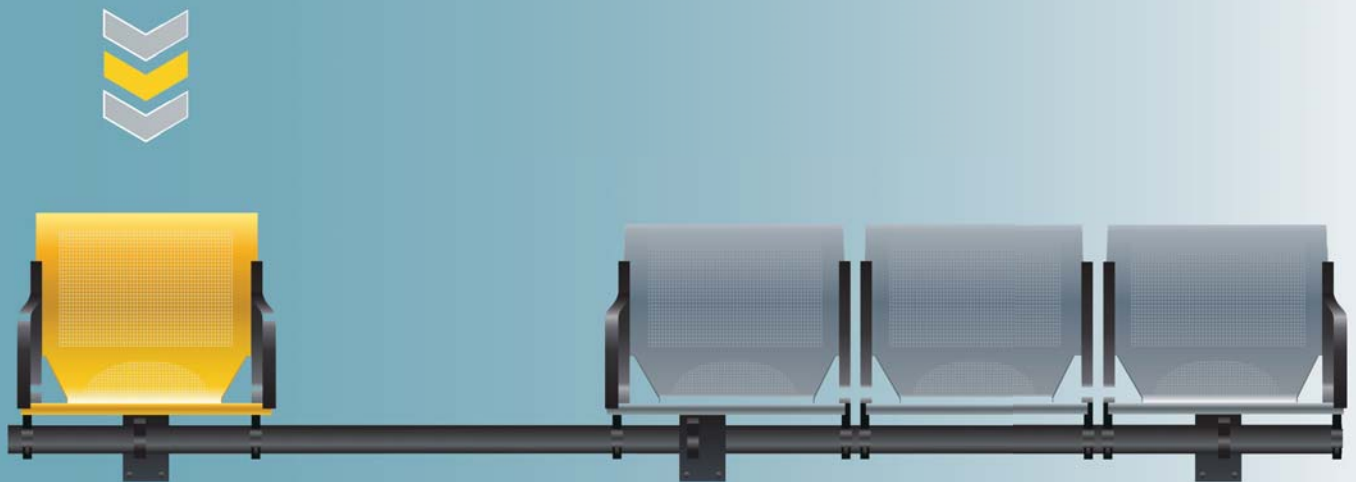


MISSOURI JOB VACANCY SURVEY 2008



Department of Economic Development

Missouri Economic Research and Information Center
&
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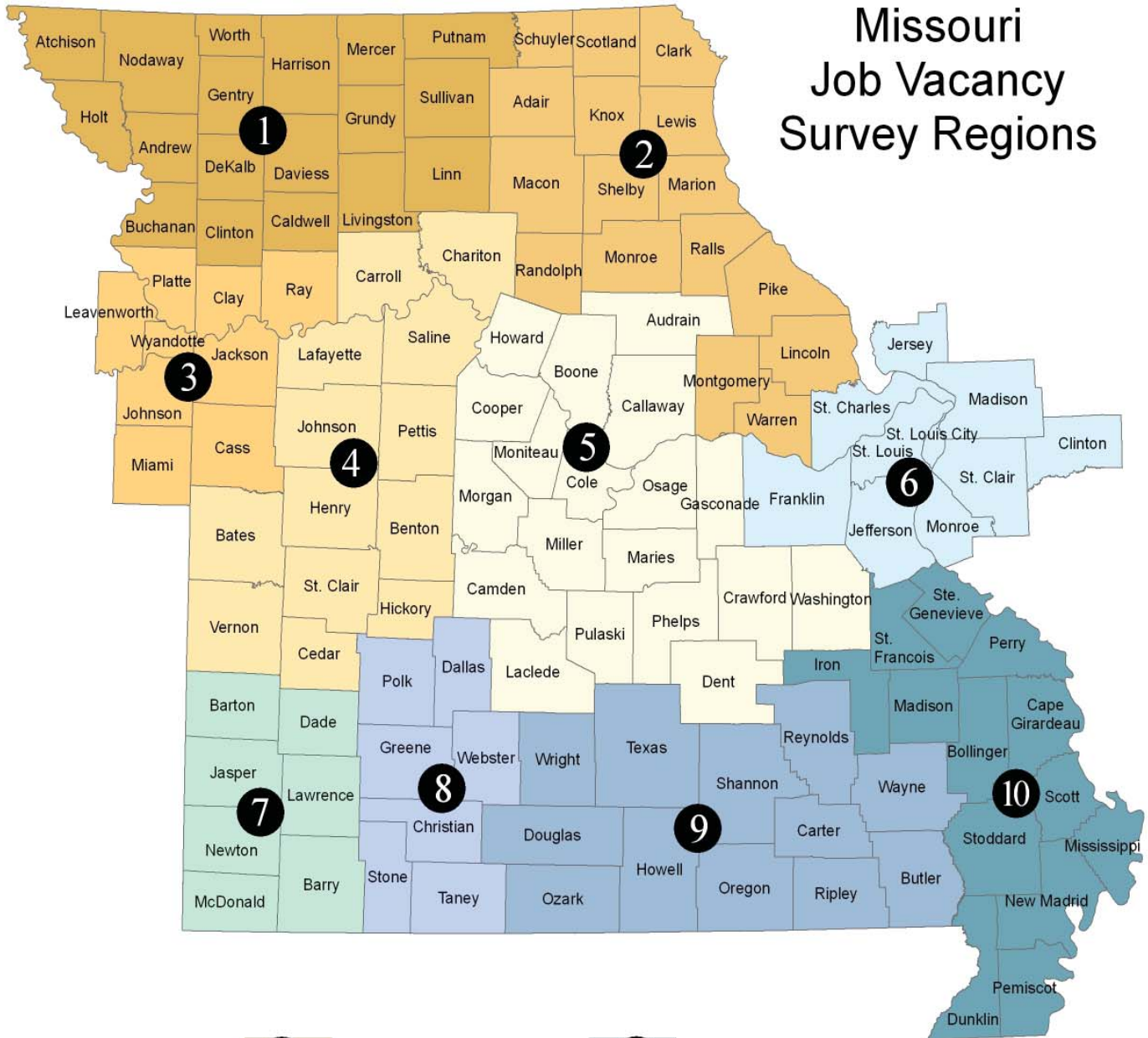
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REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Missouri consists of ten survey regions: Northwest (18), Northeast (16), Kansas City & Vicinity (9), West Central (13), Central (19), St. Louis & Vicinity (10), Southwest (7), Ozark (7), South Central (12), and Southeast (13). The Kansas City & Vicinity and the St. Louis & Vicinity regions cross state borders with counties outside of Missouri.

The number of counties for each region is in parentheses.

Missouri Job Vacancy Survey Regions



- | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Northwest | 6 | Saint Louis and Vicinity |
| 2 | Northeast | 7 | Southwest |
| 3 | Kansas City and Vicinity | 8 | Ozark |
| 4 | West Central | 9 | South Central |
| 5 | Central | 10 | Southeast |

COUNTY & INDUSTRY SUMMARY

The 2008 Missouri Job Vacancy Survey (JVS) revealed that there were an estimated 84,354 job vacancies in Missouri and the outlying counties of the Kansas City and St. Louis regions in Kansas and Illinois. Responses of employers were gathered from questions regarding benefits & incentives offered; education, experience & skills required; competencies important to fill the vacancy; and shortcomings of applicants.

JOB VACANCIES BY TOP 10 COUNTIES

COUNTY	VACANCIES	PERCENT
ST. LOUIS	19,871	24%
JACKSON	12,359	15%
JOHNSON, KS	10,520	13%
ST. LOUIS CITY	6,379	8%
GREENE	5,498	7%
BOONE	2,765	3%
ST. CHARLES	2,563	3%
MADISON, IL	2,465	3%
CLAY	2,369	3%
JASPER	1,791	2%
TOP TEN TOTAL	76,315	81%

It is no surprise that the industry of Health Care & Social Assistance had the most vacancies. Contained within this industry are three of the top ten statewide occupations – registered nurses (4,560), nursing aides, orderlies, & attendants (1,448), and child care workers (1,202).

The industry with the second highest number of vacancies – Accommodation & Food Services contains two of the top three occupations – combined food preparation (4,584) & serving workers and waiters & waitresses (4,160).

Responses were received from 107 counties. Six in ten job vacancies were found in the metro counties of St. Louis, Jackson, Johnson (KS), and St. Louis City.

Respondents in these four counties indicated that the industries with the most vacancies were Health Care and Social Assistance (7,775), Accommodation and Food Services (7,220), and Retail Trade (6,762). These industries also had the most vacancies statewide.

JOB VACANCIES BY INDUSTRY

INDUSTRY	VACANCIES
HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSIST.	16,845
ACCOMMODATION & FOOD SERV.	15,092
RETAIL TRADE	11,652
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	5,144
OTHER SERV. (EXC. PUBLIC ADMIN.)	4,267
MANUFACTURING	4,052
FINANCE & INSURANCE	3,642
ARTS, ENTERT., & RECREATION	3,313
PROFESSIONAL, SCI., & TECH. SERVS.	3,310
CONSTRUCTION	3,015
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	2,761
WHOLESALE TRADE	2,755
TRANSPORT. & WAREHOUSING	2,263
ADMIN. & SUPPORT & WASTE MGMT. & REMEDIATION SERVICES	2,219
REAL ESTATE & RENTAL & LEASING	1,915
INFORMATION	1,602
MGMT. OF COMPANIES & ENTERPR.	208
AG., FORESTRY, FISHING & HUNTING	171
UTILITIES	109
MING., QUARRYING, & OIL EXTR.	19



COMPETENCIES & SHORTCOMINGS

A useful measure in the Missouri Job Vacancy Survey is skill gap information. Skill gaps are the difference between skills needed for a job and those possessed by applicants. This survey addresses skill gaps when distinguishing between competencies (skills needed for a job) and shortcomings (skills possessed by applicants).

WHAT COMPETENCIES ARE IMPORTANT TO THIS POSITION?



Survey results indicate that “soft” skills (communication skills or personality traits) play vital roles in filling openings. These include: *interpersonal skills* (85%) and *habits of punctuality/good hygiene* (73%).

Skill gaps exist when competencies such as these are compared to similar applicant shortcomings.

For instance, important “soft” skill competencies like *interpersonal skills* or *habits of punctuality/good hygiene* are parallel skill sets to the shortcomings employers see as most common in applicants.

These shortcomings include *lack of positive attitude* (63%), *poor customer service skills* (58%), *poor work ethic* (57%), and *poor communication skills* (54%).

A “hard” skill (teachable skill) competency seen as significantly more important from ‘07 to ‘08 was *specific technical skills* (63% vs. 74%).

These increases, along with spikes in rates of applicant shortcomings in similar technical skill areas show clear skill gaps persisting and becoming greater from the ‘07 to ‘08 survey periods.

From ‘07 to ‘08, increases in applicant shortcomings occurred for “hard” or technical skill areas like *poor technical skills* (18% vs. 32%), *poor writing skills* (14% vs. 23%), *lack of computer skills* (10% vs. 21%), and *poor basic math skills* (10% vs. 21%).

WHAT ARE THE SHORTCOMINGS OF APPLICANTS?

RESPONSE	VACANCIES	PERCENT
LACK OF POSITIVE ATTITUDE	34,364	63%
POOR CUSTOMER SERV. SKILLS	31,304	58%
POOR WORK ETHIC	31,178	57%
POOR COMMUNICATION SKILLS	29,409	54%
LACK OF INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE	24,458	45%
POOR TECHNICAL SKILLS	17,214	32%
INABILITY TO UNDERSTAND WRITTEN INFORMATION	16,333	30%
OTHER SHORTCOMINGS	13,145	24%
POOR WRITING SKILLS	12,400	23%
LACK OF COMPUTER SKILLS	11,973	22%
POOR BASIC MATH SKILLS	11,392	21%
NO SHORTCOMINGS	3,809	7%
RESPONDENT TOTAL	54,456	—

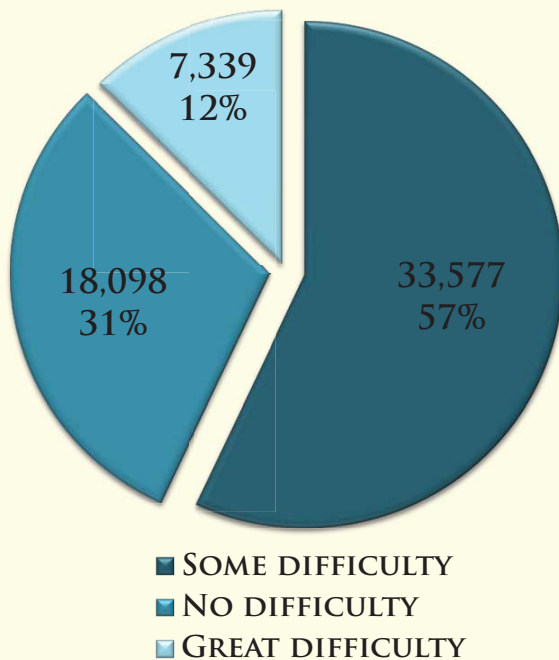
APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

While it is clear Missouri employers have experienced skill gaps in “soft” and “hard” skills, they have found applicants who meet job requirements. Additionally, employers indicated they are not having great difficulty filling vacancies with the required experience necessary. In fact, applicants met job requirements at a greater extent and there was a decreased proportion of vacancies with which employers had great difficulty finding qualified applicants from ‘07 to ‘08.

In the 2008 survey, employers found applicants meeting job requirements either *well* or *very well* for nearly half (48%) of job vacancies. Applicants who met job requirements *well* (36%) increased 11 percent from the previous year’s results, while for those which responded *very well* remained at 12 percent. Those responding *very little* dropped from 11 percent to 8 percent.

While skill gaps did occur across all vacancies, results show that employers had been finding applicants who met overall job requirements at high rates. In fact, the responses with the lowest rates for this question were *matched very little* (8%) and *matched not at all* (2%)

IS THIS POSITION DIFFICULT TO FILL WITH THE REQUIRED EXPERIENCE NEEDED?



HAVE APPLICANTS MET JOB REQUIREMENTS?

RESPONSE	VACANCIES	PERCENT
MATCHED VERY WELL	6,636	12%
MATCHED WELL	19,770	36%
MATCHED SOMEWHAT	23,118	42%
MATCHED VERY LITTLE	4,503	8%
MATCHED NOT AT ALL	843	2%
RESPONDENT TOTAL	54,870	100%

Employers responded they’d had *great difficulty* finding qualified applicants for just 12 percent of vacancies in the ‘08 survey. This was a 7 percent decrease of respondents which indicated they had *great difficulty* finding applicants who met requirements in ‘07 than in ‘08 (19% vs. 12%).

There was, however, an increase in those responding *some difficulty* (53% vs. 57%), but an increase in those responding *no difficulty* (28% vs. 31%) from ‘07 to ‘08.

These results indicate that even as employers may struggle to find applicants with the perfect set of skills, the pool of candidates applying for positions still meet certain minimum job requirements and experience requirements.

INCENTIVES & BENEFITS

Attracting talent to jobs requires the consideration of employers in determining incentives and benefits to offer and applicants in determining which to accept. In survey results each of the past two years, training has been at the top of the list for incentives (on-going training) and benefits (on-the-job training).

WHAT FINANCIAL INCENTIVES ARE OFFERED?

RESPONSE	VACANCIES	PERCENT
ON-GOING TRAINING	46,614	59%
401K	41,290	52%
TUITION REIMBURSEMENT	29,205	37%
BONUSES	28,177	36%
PENSION PROGRAM	18,398	23%
OTHER FINANCIAL INCENTIVES	13,300	17%
NO INCENTIVES	9,637	12%
BASE SALARY PLUS COMMISSION	8,302	11%
STOCK OPTIONS	8,091	10%
SMALL BUSINESS SAR/SAP 401K	2,596	3%
RESPONDENT TOTAL	78,744	—

Though *on-going training* is the largest incentive in the '07 and '08 surveys, it has decreased (69% vs. 59%) over the period, along with most other incentives. The only incentive with an increase from one year to the next was *401K plans*.

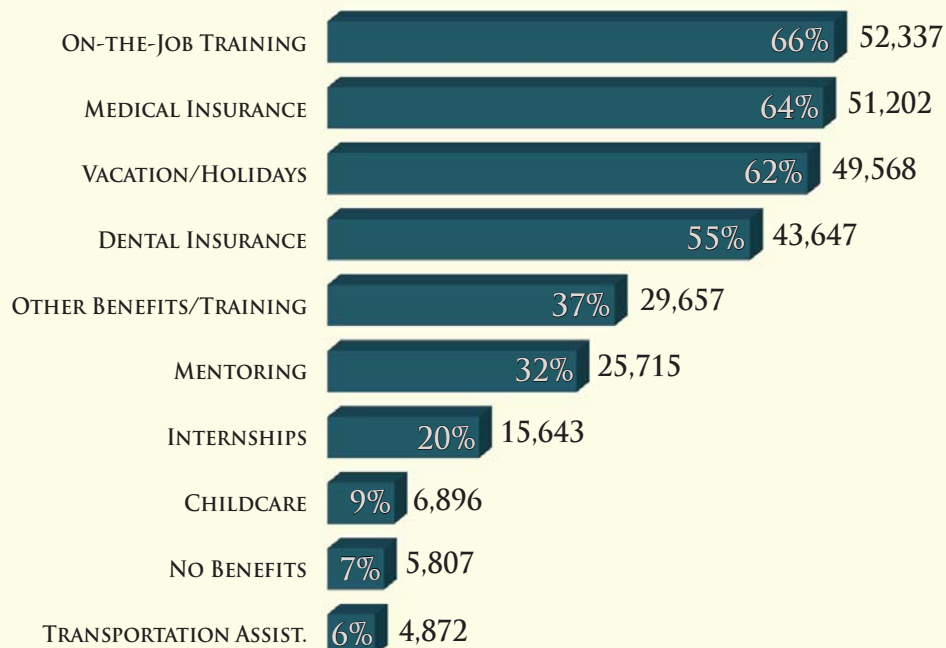
Following the national trend of employers replacing traditional *pension programs* with *401K plans*, this pattern occurred with the state's job vacancies. From '07 to '08, *pension programs* have decreased (30% vs. 23%), while *401K plans* increased (45% vs. 52%).

Medical insurance is one of the most sought after benefits employees look for when considering employment. In the Missouri JVS, 64 percent of all vacancies offered *medical insurance*.

It is more often vacancies which required higher experience and education that provided *medical insurance*.

Medical insurance was a benefit offered for 98 percent of vacancies requiring *10+ years of experience*. Likewise, it was a benefit for 85 percent of vacancies which required a *4-year college degree*.

WHAT BENEFITS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES ARE OFFERED?



EXPERIENCE & EDUCATION

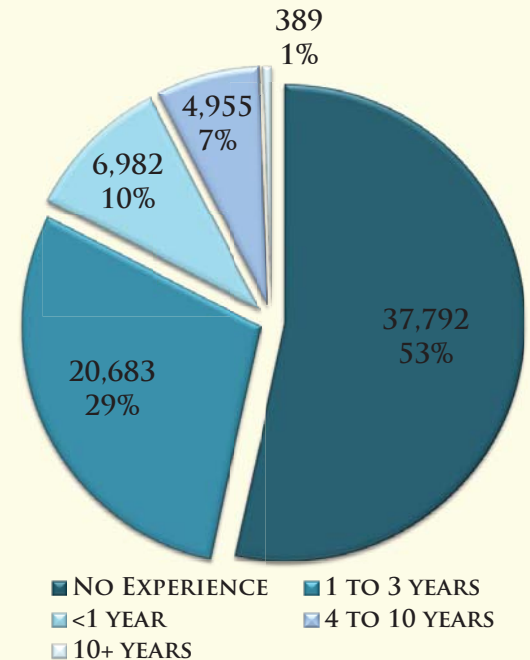
Results of the Missouri JVS showed a rather direct relationship between the level of experience required for open positions and the level of education required. It's clear that as experience required increased for an open position, so too did the level of education and training the vacancy required.

For vacancies which required 4 or more years experience, nearly three-quarters (74%) also required at least a 4-year college degree or some type of certification. Conversely, 8 in ten vacancies which required either no experience or less than one year required just a high school diploma or less.

Breaking it out by industry, vacancies in the sectors of Accommodation & Food Services and Retail Trade require the least experience and education, according to the survey. Combined, 81 percent of vacancies in these two sectors required no experience or less than one year, while 91 percent required a high school diploma or less.

Vacancies which required higher levels of both experience (4 years and more) and education (at least a 4-year college degree or some certification) were concentrated in the industries of Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services and Manufacturing.

WHAT IS THE MINIMUM LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE REQUIRED?



WHAT IS THE MINIMUM LEVEL OF EDUCATION REQUIRED?

RESPONSE	VACANCIES	PERCENT
NONE	7,743	10%
SOME HIGH SCHOOL	18,613	24%
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	24,806	32%
2-YEAR ASSOCIATE DEGREE	3,483	4%
4-YEAR COLLEGE DEGREE	11,360	15%
TECHNICAL CERTIFICATION	1,629	2%
SPECIAL CERTIFICATION	724	1%
PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION	7,127	9%
GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	3,063	4%
RESPONDENT TOTAL	78,548	100%

Employer feedback about education levels and the difficulty to fill openings revealed that the lower education required for a position, the harder it became to fill that vacancy.

For vacancies which required at least a 4-year college degree or some certification, employers responded they had some or great difficulty filling the openings just 34 percent of the time. Those requiring a high school diploma or less answered that 58 percent of vacancies had some or great difficulty filling.

SKILL LEVELS

The skills required for vacancies remained rather consistent over the past two survey periods. The math and reading skills required at above a 10th grade level were virtually unchanged for all vacancies, while speaking skills remained the highest basic skill for both surveys. Decision making, however, went from the third most required thinking skill in the '07 survey to the most required in '08.

WHAT THINKING SKILLS ARE REQUIRED?

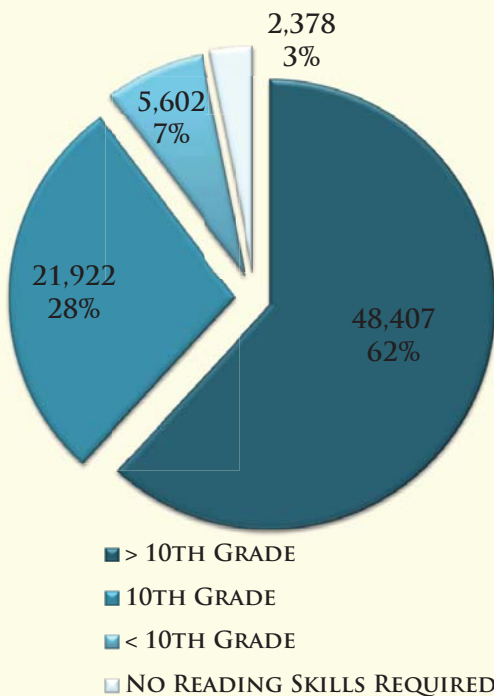
RESPONSE	VACANCIES	PERCENT
DECISION MAKING	63,299	87%
LEARNING NEW SKILLS	62,038	85%
PROBLEM SOLVING	60,277	82%
READING CHARTS	27,207	37%
OTHER THINKING SKILLS	7,970	11%
NO THINKING SKILLS	548	1%
RESPONDENT TOTAL	73,116	—

WHAT BASIC SKILLS ARE REQUIRED?

RESPONSE	VACANCIES	PERCENT
SPEAKING	72,611	96%
LISTENING	67,877	89%
OTHER	20,011	26%
RESPONDENT TOTAL	75,966	100.0%

In the 2008 Missouri JVS, *decision making* was the most important thinking skill required for openings (compared to 82 percent in '07) with employers responding it was required for 87 percent of vacancies.

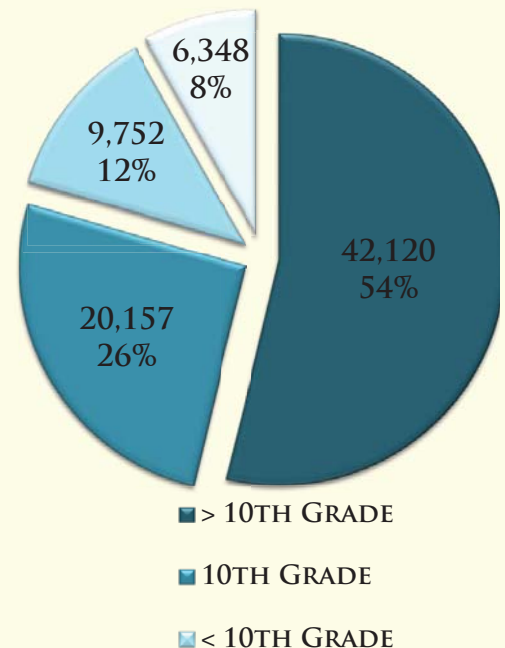
WHAT READING SKILLS ARE REQUIRED?



Over 30 percent of vacancies which required both math and reading skills above a 10th grade level were in Health Care and Social Assistance.

For vacancies which required both math and reading skills below a 10th grade level, 62 percent were in Accommodation and Food Services.

WHAT MATH SKILLS ARE REQUIRED?



CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions can be drawn about Missouri's workforce based on employer responses in the 2008 Job Vacancy Survey. With a second year of surveying available, additional patterns can be identified about skill gaps; benefits & incentives offered for vacancies; and education, experience & skills required of applicants.

Skill Gap Conclusions

- The competency most important to fill vacancies was *interpersonal skills* (85%). This type of "soft" skill area corresponds to common applicant shortcomings in the survey. Corresponding shortcomings include *lack of positive attitude* (63%), *poor customer service skills* (58%), *poor work ethic* (57%), and *poor communication skills* (54%), indicating a clear skills gap for *interpersonal skills*.
- A "hard" skill like *specific technical skills* was an important competency for three-quarters of vacancies. Indicating a skill gap in this area, employers also said applicant shortcomings existed at significant rates for *lack of industry knowledge* (45%) and *poor technical skills* (32%).
- As workforce production becomes more automated, specific skill sets will be necessary to operate computers and mechanical equipment. Recognizing this pattern, employer responses about several "hard" skills increased from '07 to '08: *poor technical skills* (18% vs. 32%), *poor writing skills* (14% vs. 23%), *lack of computer skills* (10% vs. 21%), and *poor basic math skills* (10% vs. 21%).
- Employers found applicants meeting job requirements either *well* or *very well* for nearly half (48%) of job vacancies with those who met requirements *well* (36%) increasing 11 percent from '07 to '08.

Benefit & Incentive Conclusions

- Results suggest that it is more often those vacancies which require higher levels of education and experience that provide *medical insurance*. *Medical insurance* was a benefit for 85 percent of vacancies which required a *4-year college degree* and a benefit for 98 percent of vacancies requiring *10+ years* experience.
- The only incentive to increase in percent of vacancies from '07 to '08 was *401K plans* (45% vs. 52%). Reflecting a national trend of 401K plans replacing pension plans, the Missouri JVS also showed decreases in the percent of vacancies for *pension programs* (30% vs. 23%) from one year to the next.

Education & Experience Conclusions

- Experience and education had a direct relationship to each other. The higher the required experience level, the higher the required education level was for vacancies and vice-versa. For vacancies which required *4 or more years experience*, three-quarters also required at least a *4-year college degree* or some type of *certification*. Likewise, 8 in ten vacancies which required *no experience* or *less than one year* required just a *high school diploma* or less.
- Employer feedback about education levels and the level of difficulty to fill openings revealed that the lower the education required for a position, the harder it became to fill that vacancy. For vacancies requiring at least a *4-year college degree* or some type of *certification*, employers had *some* or *great difficulty* filling the openings for just 34 percent of the vacancies. Those requiring a *high school diploma* or less responded they had *some* or *great difficulty* filling openings for 58 percent of vacancies.