Public Viewpoint: COVID-19 Work and Education Research

How To Help Americans Get Back to Work

February 24, 2021
Jobs are coming back, but the road to recovery may be long

Employment level (in millions)

Millions of Americans are struggling, especially those with less education

Unemployed workers

- February: 6M
- April: 23M
- December: 10.1M

Unemployed workers by educational attainment

- Bachelor's degree or higher: 2.1M
- High school diploma or less: 3.3M
- Some college or associate degree: 2.2M

Data Sources

Public Viewpoint (2020 to 2021)
• Regular, nationally representative survey of 1,000 adults 18 and older

Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey (2020)
• Nationally representative survey of 23,000-plus adults ages 18 to 65
• Two waves: April to June 2020 and October to December 2020

Strada-Gallup Employer Survey (2018)
• Nationally representative survey of 1,100-plus hiring managers
Hiring and Advancement
A substantial majority of Americans believe employers should hire based on **skills** and **work experience**, but less than half say their employers are willing to do so.

Employers should hire job candidates who have the required skills and work experience, even if they don’t have a college degree.

69%

In my field of work, employers are willing to consider hiring job candidates who have the required skills and work experience, even if they don’t have a college degree.

48%

Agree/strongly agree
Black Americans and Latinos are more likely to believe our hiring and advancement systems are unfair

Thinking about why you may feel your opportunities to advance at work or find a good job may be limited, please rate each of the following for how well they describe your situation:

- There aren’t opportunities for people who look like me
  - Agreed/strongly agreed: 37% (Black/Latino), 22% (White)

- The (hiring and advancement) system is unfair
  - Agreed/strongly agreed: 37% (Black/Latino), 24% (White)

Both workers and employers say skills and work experience are more important for hiring and advancement

*Share who say factor is very important*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Workers (Getting a raise, promotion, or new job)</th>
<th>Workers (Getting my current job)</th>
<th>Employers (Hiring a new employee)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills and work experience</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (level, credential, field of study, GPA)</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional network/connections</td>
<td>37%</td>
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Employer-Provided Education Benefits
Most Americans say support for their learning and career development would make them more likely to stay with an employer

*If an employer offered support for my ongoing education and career development, I would be more likely to accept a job offer or to remain employed with this employer.*
2 in 5 Americans say they learn best when their employer is involved; those without college degrees are more likely to prefer learning on their own or alternatives to college.

The best way to learn the skills I need to succeed and advance at work is through:

- Employer: 20% (All), 22% (No college degree), 23% (College degree)
- Partnerships between colleges and employers: 14% (All), 11% (No college degree), 26% (College degree)
- Colleges and universities: 17% (All), 21% (No college degree), 21% (College degree)
- Training providers other than colleges: 27% (All), 31% (No college degree), 10% (College degree)
- Learning on my own: 18% (All), 19% (No college degree), 20% (College degree)

Americans believe funding for education and training should be a shared responsibility

What percentage of education and training should be funded by:

- State and federal governments
- Individuals and their families
- Employers

Key Findings

Hiring and Advancement

• A substantial majority of Americans believe employers should hire based on skills and work experience, rather than college degrees. Seven in 10 Americans agree employers should hire job candidates who have the required skills and work experience, even if they don’t have a college degree. Meanwhile, less than half of Americans say employers in their field are willing to hire skilled workers without degrees.

• Workers and employers say skills and experience matter more than education when it comes to getting a job or advancing in your career. Eighty-six percent of workers say skills and work experience are important factors for getting a raise, promotion, or new job, compared to 63 percent who say education-related factors, such as education level, having a degree or credential, and field of study are important.

Employer-Provided Education Benefits

• Most Americans, including those without college degrees, say they would be more likely to accept a job offer or stay with an employer that supports their learning and advancement. Three in 5 Americans agree employer support for ongoing education and career development would make them more likely to accept a job offer or stay with that employer.

• While Americans have diverse preferences for the best way to learn to advance at work, 2 in 5 say they learn best when their employer is involved. Americans without college degrees are twice as likely as college graduates to prefer training providers other than colleges, and 50 percent more likely to prefer learning on their own.

• Americans, including those without college degrees, believe financing education and training should be a shared responsibility among individuals, governments, and employers. On average, Americans say individuals and their families should pay for 35 percent of the costs of education and training; state and federal governments should fund 35 percent; and employers should cover 30 percent of the costs.
Learn more at StradaEducation.org/PublicViewpoint or email consumervoice@stradaeducation.org
Methodology

• The Strada Public Viewpoint survey was fielded regularly by Heart+Mind Strategies from March 2020 to January 2021. Data are weighted based on the Current Population Survey on the basis of age, race/ethnicity, education, and gender. This presentation uses data from October 2020, n=1,129, and January 2021, n=1,015.

• The 2020 Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey is a nationally representative mail- and web-based survey of U.S. adults ages 18 to 65; n=23,120.

• The 2018 Strada-Gallup Employer Survey is a nationally representative web-based survey of U.S. adults involved in hiring decisions; n=1,139.

• Please contact Strada Center for Education Consumer Insights with questions or information requests at consumervoice@stradaeducation.org or learn more at StradaEducation.org/PublicViewpoint.

*The categories for the respective Likert scales vary slightly across these questions but represent 4 or higher. The “getting a raise, promotion, or new job” category includes “a great deal/quite a bit;” the “getting my current job” category includes “very/extremely important;” and the “hiring managers” category includes “very important.”