

Summary of Results – March 2018

Survey Background and Approach

In 2015, a total of 4,836 people experienced fatal work-related injuries and another 2.9 million people experienced non-fatal work-related injuries and illnesses in the private sector alone. Research indicates workers who are young, in temporary or contingent employment arrangements, or new to a job—populations often served by American Job Centers—are at an especially high risk of experiencing a work-related injury or illness. Training on foundational workplace health and safety knowledge and skills can help prepare American Job Center program participants for future job-specific training so they can benefit from and contribute to safe, healthy, and productive workplaces.

The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) conducted an online survey to learn more about whether workforce boards are playing or can play a role in providing workplace health and safety training to the participants they are preparing for employment. The results from this survey will inform the development of free health and safety training programs customized to meet the needs of the workforce development sector.

Survey invitations were sent by NAWB to 567 Executive Directors of local workforce development boards (and state boards for those states without local boards). Ninety-three individuals completed the survey between January 16-31, 2018, for a response rate of 16.4%. Some respondents did not answer all of the questions. The number of responses for each data point is indicated in [brackets]. For some questions, respondents were allowed to select more than one response, so percentages do not sum up to 100%.

About Respondents/Boards

- Respondents represent workforce development boards that reside within all regions of the country (including U.S. territories). [87]
- Respondents described the areas served by the American Job Centers within their board's region as rural (80.5%), urban (57.5%), and suburban (43.7%). [87]
- Almost half of the boards (44.2%) employed between 1 and 5 (FTE) professional staff members, followed by 6-10 (19.8%), more than 40 (15.1%), 11-20 (11.6%), and 21-40 (9.3%). [86]
- Respondents indicated there were between 1 and 31 American Job Centers within their board's region, with an average of 4.65. [83]
- Respondents indicated American Job Center participants were employed across the spectrum of industries; most commonly Healthcare and Human Services (82.8%); Manufacturing (82.8%); Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities (71.3%); Services (63.2%); and Construction (52.9%). [87]
- A majority of respondents (81.6%) indicated the American Job Centers within their board's region work with temporary staffing companies to provide work experience and/or employment opportunities for their program participants. [87]

Perceived Importance & Barriers

- A majority of respondents (82.6%) felt it was moderately to extremely important for American Job Center program participants in their board's region to receive general workplace health and safety training prior to entering the workforce. [92]
 - When asked who should provide this training, the most common responses were American Job Centers (63.3%) and community colleges (57.8%). Less common responses were

youth/labor organizations, such as unions and apprenticeship programs (32.2%), and other organizations, such as employers and community-based organizations (42.2%). [90]

- A majority of respondents (67.4%) indicated it was moderately to extremely likely that employers in their board's region would give a hiring preference to a person who had received general workplace health and safety training, as compared to someone who had not. [92]
- When asked about the barriers to delivering general workplace health and safety training in the workforce development sector, the most common responses were a lack of:
 - Trained staff within American Job Centers to provide training (74.1%);
 - Training materials tailored for the workforce development sector (65.9%);
 - Time (45.9%);
 - Space (14.1%); and
 - Other training resources (14.1%). [85]

Current Training Practices

- When asked if any of the American Job Centers in their board's region provide general workplace health and safety training to their program participants, 19 (20.4%) said yes, 50 (53.8%) said no, and 24 (25.8%) were unsure.
- Of the 19 who said yes:
 - Seven (43.8%) said all of the American Job Centers in their board's region provide such training, and 9 (56.2%) said only some of the American Job Centers in their board's region provide such training. [16]
 - Half (50%) said \leq 20% of program participants receive this training, 5.6% said between 21% and 40% of program participants receive this training, 11.1% said between 41% and 60% of participants receive this training, 5.6% said between 61% and 80% of participants receive this training, and 27.8% said it depends. [18]
 - When asked which organizations their board considers to be trusted sources of workplace health and safety information and training materials, the most common response was the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA; 94.4%), followed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH; 33.3%), the Education and Training Administration (ETA; 27.8%), Workers' compensation carriers (27.8%), and Other (22.2%). [18]
- The 50 respondents who indicated the American Job Centers in their board's region do not provide general workplace health and safety training were asked why this is the case. Common responses included:
 - The perception that only job-specific health and safety training is needed/required (34.1%);
 - A lack of demand from employers/job seekers (29.5%);
 - The aforementioned barriers (e.g., lack of trained staff, training materials, time) (25%);
 - They had never considered giving this type of training (13.6%); and
 - There are other organizations that provide this training for their program participants (6.8%). [44]

Training Need and Expectations

- When asked if their board would consider adopting a new, free general workplace health and safety training program designed for the workforce development sector for use by American Job Centers in their region, 63 (69.2%) said yes, 3 (3.3%) said no, and 25 (27.5%) said it depends. [91]
- Of the 88 who indicated yes or it depends:

- Half (50.7%) indicated all program participants should receive this training, a quarter (24.7%) indicated youth should receive this training, and 45.2% specified other specific types of program participants that should receive this training. [73]
- The preferred delivery method for this type of training was computer/web-based (65.1%), followed by in person training by American Job Center Staff (53%), Video (47%), and in person training by an outside trainer (38.6%). [83]
- The ideal amount of time for this type of training was 1-2 hours (38.6%), followed by < 1 hour (22.9%) and 2-3 hours (14.5%). [83]
- The preferred source/s for this type of training was OSHA (74.4%), followed by NIOSH (37.8%) and ETA (36.6%). [82]

Summary

Survey respondents represent diverse workforce boards in terms of geographic location, size, number of American Job Centers, and industries served. A majority of respondents felt it was important for American Job Center program participants to receive general workplace health and safety training prior to entering the workforce; however, many American Job Center program participants do not currently receive this training. Respondents expressed a willingness to consider adopting a new, free general workplace health and safety training program designed for the workforce development sector. In order to facilitate adoption of a new training program, time and space limitations and staff training needs must be taken into consideration.

When interpreting these findings, it is important to note that these results only reflect the views of a portion (16.4%) of Executive Directors of local (and some state) workforce development boards.

NIOSH Research Opportunity

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which is part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is currently conducting a research study to better understand and develop a new, free workplace safety and health training program customized to meet the unique needs of American Job Centers and the individuals they serve. This new training program will provide American Job Centers and others in the workforce development sector with much-needed materials to teach their program participants foundational workplace safety and health knowledge and skills.

If you are interested in learning more about and/or participating in this study, please contact Lauren Menger-Ogle, NIOSH/CDC, at lmenger-ogle@cdc.gov or 513.533.6876.