



# Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative Survey of Workforce Supply-Side Organizations

Fall 2021

Report Prepared by Guild Consulting





## Highlights of Key Findings and Implications

### EXPECTATION OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES, BY SECTOR

Healthcare is the economic sector that respondents clearly see as having the most opportunities for workforce growth. Both in the short- and long-term.

- For the short-term outlook (within two years), the healthcare sector accounted for 63% of all number one rankings for growth potential, substantially outranking any other sector; 77% of respondents included healthcare as one of their top three picks. Other sectors that ranked below healthcare but were ranked among the top three are:
  - Scientific and Technical Services – 41.7%
  - Hospitality and Tourism – 35.4%
  - Construction – 29.2%
- Looking at the longer term (beyond two years) healthcare still has the most number one rankings (47%). When asked to rank the top three sectors, healthcare remains in first place (68.8% of respondents ranking it among the top three) with scientific and technical services second (47.9%), hospitality and tourism (31.3%), and defense and military related (25.0%).

**Implications:** The survey confirms the importance of the healthcare sector as the primary source for job growth, especially in the short-term, and in the longer-term. Healthcare, then, would be a logical target for an initial focus for funders. If there is sufficient interest and/or resources to go beyond healthcare, follow-up interviews/research can prioritize the importance of the next ranked sectors: science/technology, defense/military, and others to determine alignment with opportunities to move people into growth sectors.

### EXPECTATIONS FOR “PLUS ONE” JOBS

- When asked specifically about the opportunities for “**plus one**” jobs\*, healthcare and scientific/technical services were tied in first place rankings, each receiving 28.3% of first place scores. Following them with 17.4% of first place rankings was the category of defense and military related jobs.

\*Plus One jobs are defined as those with wages sufficient to support one adult and one other person. In Hawai'i, that equates to a wage of approximately \$75,000/year or \$37/hour



- Counting responses in the “top three” the rankings change, with scientific and technical jobs (76.1%) scoring higher than healthcare (60.9%). Defense and military related jobs (41.3%) rank third followed closely by construction (39.1%).

**Implications:** When focusing on opportunities for “plus one” jobs, respondents rank healthcare and science/technical services equally in terms of number one rankings. Defense/military places third – and if the skills required for science/technical and defense/military are related, these two combined would rank substantially higher than healthcare. Construction has been an important source of quality jobs in Hawai‘i, but respondents see more opportunities in healthcare and tech. However, plus one jobs in any of these sectors (even construction and hospitality/tourism) are likely to require a degree of technical proficiency.

## TARGETING SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

Respondents indicate that their programs target Native Hawaiians (76%) and Pacific Islanders (60%), but are less likely to focus on other ethnic groups (African Americans and Hispanics). Despite the high-density of AUW ALICE2 households in Hawai‘i, only 31% of respondents indicate that they specifically target this group (although 58% say they target low wage earners who could be part of the ALICE population).

**Implications:** A focus on the ALICE population by name and its needs presents an opportunity to expand recognition of the term and link programs to the well-developed body of research by AUW.

## GREATEST NEEDS IN DEVELOPING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

The necessary elements for placing more Hawai‘i workers in quality jobs were highlighted in three areas:

- **More opportunities.** 48% of respondents noted the need for more living wage jobs.
- **More resources and better coordination.** 38% of respondents cited the need for more resources devoted to training and 40% expressed the need for better coordination and partnerships to make training programs more effective.
- **Skills development.** 48% of respondents see opportunity in upskilling existing workers; 38% see the need for training workers in specifically needed skill areas.



**Implications:** The expressed need for better coordination is a significant opportunity for developing:

- Common coordination of programs to avoid duplication of services and to synchronize funding across programs with common goals
- Better partnerships between and among government agencies, foundations, educational institutions, and private service providers
- More effective deployment of funds, including developing common metrics for success so that effectiveness can be measured across programs

## **BARRIERS TO ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN WORKFORCE TRAINING**

The primary obstacle to organizational effectiveness in workforce training is the lack of living wage jobs (52%). However, a lack of partnerships (44%) and a lack of a coordinated strategy (40%) were important organizational barriers to achieving program effectiveness.

**Implications:** An initiative to develop frameworks and communication that promote and manage collaboration, partnerships, and strategic alliances is very likely to resonate with suppliers of workforce programs.

## **BARRIERS FOR CLIENTS AND JOB SEEKERS**

The dominant barrier for job seekers in obtaining a plus one job is the need for support services such as childcare, transportation, and other personal support services (63%) and the lack of available jobs (56%). While lack of necessary credentials (46%) was seen as a barrier, lack of a degree (bachelor's at 21% or associate at 8%) were not considered as significant.

**Implications:** Respondents confirm the importance of support or “wraparound” services as important in removing barriers for job seekers. Industry recognized credentials can open opportunities for quality jobs more quickly than degrees.

## **METRICS FOR SUCCESS**

Programs are highly likely to use enrollment (81%) and completion (89%) as measures of success. They are less likely to track the success of participants progressing through a career path.



**Implications:** While enrollment and completion are measures of success for programs, student success in the long term is better measured by metrics such as job placement, retention, and progression. There is an opportunity to develop and promote a more robust rubric for assessing the success of program success by developing or requiring measurements for placement, retention, progression, and salary attainment evaluating workforce funding opportunities.

## **OUTLOOK FOR SUCCESS**

When asked how optimistic they were about the prospects for high quality, “plus one” jobs in Hawai‘i, no respondents indicated that they were extremely optimistic; about 27% were optimistic and 73% were either neutral or pessimistic.

**Implications:** While a sense of pessimism around workforce training is sobering, the survey also indicates a desire for change and that programs would welcome new approaches to collaboration, coordination and funding that could improve programs’ outlooks.



In healthcare, candidates in the front line, lower wage jobs leave due to higher wages in hospitality or retail, thus wasting training time and resources. Hawai'i IT trainees, once in an IT entry-level job, are more likely to remain in IT careers due to better pay.

Interviewees listed a lack of counseling for IT and healthcare job pathways, especially for underrepresented groups.

NFWS members carefully study sector needs and leverage longitudinal success data and wraparound services to design effective career pathways.

**Implications:** Hawai'i needs to support sector partnerships and programs with proven results to build effective career pathways to Living Wage jobs. Often, this means understanding a sector's entry-level skills and expectations, with subsequent opportunities to up-skill via learn-and-earn models, so that more residents can access Living Wage jobs within a few years of entering that sector.