



American workers seek local upskilling opportunities to overcome job anxieties

Historic low unemployment paints a rosy view of the U.S. labor market. But, despite a current unemployment rate of 3.5%, a new survey reveals workers still have anxieties around career opportunities, job security and having the right skills for the jobs available.

For example, more than half of American workers are concerned about the availability of jobs in their state and 4 in 10 believe there are few jobs available that meet their skillsets, according to the latest edition of [Prudential's Pulse of the American Worker Survey](#), conducted in November by Morning Consult.

These anxieties were seen across geographies and communities. Urban workers, for instance, showed concerns about job security, with 4 in 10 expressing worry. Meanwhile, rural workers show deep concerns about job opportunities—with nearly half (46%) stressing that their community does not have enough jobs.

The survey explores how location and geography influence workers' outlook and impact their job opportunities. Most workers want a short commute, with 88% saying they wouldn't travel more than an hour, even for their dream job. And if they can't find the right career opportunity, 6 in 10 say they are willing to relocate.

Workers also placed an emphasis on the importance of communities' ability to help workers develop and retain skills. Workers in the survey favor community investments in education and job training, with 37% saying such a policy would have the biggest impact on their community. This topped the list ahead of small business loans and infrastructure investments.

Workers see a role across stakeholder groups—including community colleges, universities, the business community and employers—for providing opportunities to build new skills. These “upskilling” investments could address the top three areas where workers say they need the most help in improving their job prospects: covering the cost of training, expanding access to training programs and facilitating more free time in their day to participate.

For more of the survey findings, see the fact sheet for the latest edition of [Prudential's Pulse of the American Worker Survey: The Geography of Jobs, Opportunity Across America](#).

The Pulse of the American Worker Survey was conducted on behalf of Prudential by Morning Consult from November 5 to 14, 2019, among a national sample of 1,000 employed adults (age 18 and over) and 250 employed adults (age 18 and over) from six select states. States were selected from those with the lowest rates of unemployment (Idaho, Iowa and North Dakota) and among the highest rates of unemployment (Arizona, Michigan and Mississippi) as well as to reflect geographic diversity. Unemployment rates were based on the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment report (September 2019). The interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of employed adults in each geographic area based on age, race/ethnicity, and gender. National results have a margin of error of ± 3 percentage points and state-level results have a margin of error of ± 6 percentage points. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

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