

Carroll County Economic Development Labor Survey

Prepared by
The Maryland Business Research Partnership
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Executive Summary

The Carroll County Department of Economic Development conducted a mail and phone survey of 155 key Carroll County employers to collect information on a wide variety of labor and economic development issues in Carroll County. The Maryland Business Research Partnership of the University of Baltimore conducted an analysis of the results of this survey for the Carroll County Department of Economic Development. Key findings of the survey are summarized below and are discussed in greater detail in the report.

Recruitment Strategies

- The most effective methods used by firms to recruit employees are by word of mouth/internal referrals (79% of respondents) and the Carroll County Times (55%).

Job Applicants Basic Skills

- Entry-level employee's skills were rated best in team and cooperative skills (31% of responses) and customer service (27%). Entry-level employees received the most frequent negative responses in written communication (28% of responses), problem solving (23%), and reading comprehension (23%).

Labor Demand and Availability

- Occupations where Carroll County firms are currently looking for employees are unskilled manufacturing workers (38% of respondents), truck/trailer tractor driver (31%), material handling laborer (29%), and warehouse workers (28%).
- Occupations where Carroll County firms are anticipating a need for employees in six months are warehouse workers (21% of respondents), agriculture/agribusiness workers (19%), CNC operators (18%), and computer network specialists (18%).
- Occupations where Carroll County firms are projecting a need for employees in a year are customer service representatives (16% of respondents), entry-level clerical workers (16%), and clerical workers with advanced skills (15%).
- The positions for which employers found easy or not difficult to find job candidates for were home health aides (100% of responses), entry-level clerical workers (44%), and telemarketers (42%). Those positions for which surveyed firms found it very difficult and difficult to fill were information systems managers (80% of responses), computer network specialists (77%), experienced engineers (75%), and tool and die makers (75%).

Computer Skills of Job Applicants

- Job applicant's basic keyboarding skills (22% of responses) and use of word processing software (18%) were the skills rated as excellent or good by the largest percentage of responding firms. Use of presentation software and use of spreadsheet software were both rated as below average or poor by the largest percentage of firms at 31% each.

Training and Educational Resources

- Specific areas where companies viewed employee training as either strongly or highly needed included basic skills (reading, math) (39% of responses), team building (39%), interpersonal relations (36%), and technical training (32%).

Quality of Training and Educational Services

- Firms cited Carroll County Community College as providing the best quality training with 32% of respondents rating them as either excellent or good and the Carroll County Career and Technology Center second at 30%.
- High Schools provided the greatest availability of qualified graduates (28% of responses) of all educational providers. Thirty-five percent of firms viewed Carroll County Community College graduates as slightly available or not available and 31% of responding firms viewed the Career and Technology Center graduates as slightly available or not available.

Local Business Climate

- The greatest concern to responding firms was the labor market in Carroll County (35%). Labor quality and availability comprised the majority of this concern with 31% of the total responses. The second greatest overall concern was the quality of life in Carroll County (14%), specifically the traffic and parking (7%). Concerns for the business environment (13%) and taxes (9%) were the third and fourth greatest concerns of the business community in Carroll County.