Public Viewpoint: COVID-19 Work and Education Survey
Reskilling and Changing Careers in the Midst of COVID-19
June 24, 2020
Public Viewpoint

• A weekly survey of 1,000 American adults that is representative of the population on the basis of:
  • Age
  • Gender
  • Educational attainment
  • Race/ethnicity
  • Nine geographic census regions
• 11,000+ responses from March 25-June 11 combined for group comparisons
• Weekly surveys, March 25-May 28
• Biweekly surveys, June-October
Key Topics from Prior Weeks

- Work Impact of COVID-19
- Education Disruption
- Disproportionate Impact on Communities of Color
- Differential Impact by Generation
- Future Education Plans
- New Jobs
25% of adults plan to enroll in an education or training program within the next six months

Likelihood of enrolling in an education/training program by time horizon

This Week’s Theme: Workers Looking to Reskill

1. Who is most interested in changing job fields?

2. Which fields are workers looking to move into?

3. What is motivating them to make a change?

4. What are their perspectives with respect to education and training?
Key Findings

1. **One out of three workers say they would change their field of work if they lost their job.** Interest in changing fields is especially high for workers with a bachelor’s degree or higher (39%) but also robust for workers with a high school degree or less (33%).

2. **Workers interested in changing job fields say they are most likely to transition into information technology, finance, or business fields such as human resources, consulting, and communication.** Among workers interested in changing fields, 18 percent say they are interested in a career in business; 14 percent want to work in information technology; and 9 percent want to work in finance.

3. **Workers’ motivations for wanting to change fields are split evenly between those wanting to earn more money or climb a career ladder and nonfinancial motivations such as more autonomy, better fit, or more meaningful work.** Half of workers looking to change fields said earning more money (34%), having a more stable paycheck (8%), or having more opportunities to advance (9%) were their primary motivations, while 30 percent of these workers wanted a better fit or more purposeful work and 18 percent wanted more control over their work lives.

4. **While many workers who are looking to make a career transition need to reskill, less than half of Americans say they have access to the education and training they want.** Americans with a bachelor’s degree are more likely to say they have access to the education and training they want (55%), compared to those with a high school education or less (38%).

5. **Americans strongly prefer nondegree programs, skills training, and online learning over the alternatives.** Sixty-two percent prefer nondegree and skills training options over degree programs. Forty-six percent prefer online learning programs, compared to 30 percent who prefer in-person programs and 23 percent who prefer employer-based programs.
# Job Field Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Field</th>
<th>Subcategories/Example Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Information technology</td>
<td>Tech support, computer program, telecommunications workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Manufacturing</td>
<td>Assemblers, machinists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Finance</td>
<td>Accountants, loan officers, tellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Education</td>
<td>Teachers, college faculty, K-12 and higher education administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Health care</td>
<td>Nurses, doctors, allied health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Transportation/utilities</td>
<td>Truck drivers, electrical powerline installers/repairers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Retail</td>
<td>Retail workers, cashiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Construction/extraction</td>
<td>Construction workers, skilled trades, agriculture, mining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  Government</td>
<td>Public servants, defense, aerospace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Leisure/hospitality</td>
<td>Restaurants, food, hotel workers, sports, airlines and travel, casinos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Business</td>
<td>Human resources, consulting and business services, insurance, real estate, communication, organization, sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Personal care/services</td>
<td>Barbers, childcare, fitness trainers, skincare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interest in Changing Job Fields
35% of workers say they would change job fields if they lost their job

If I were to lose my job because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) events, I would look for a job in a career field that is different from what I currently do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing of workers planning to change fields if they lose their job</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college/associate degree/certificate</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or less</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Workers in information technology, finance, and manufacturing jobs are the most likely to say they would change fields.

If I were to lose my job because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) events, I would look for a job in a career field that is different from what I currently do.

Share of workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Field</th>
<th>Share of Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information technology</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/energy</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care/service</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure/hospitality</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction/extraction</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Workers looking to change fields are most interested in transitioning into business and information technology

If you were to lose your job, which industry/sector would you be interested in working in? Please rank your top 3 choices.

- Business (18%)
- IT (14%)
- Finance (9%)
- Education (8%)
- Government (8%)
- Leisure/hospitality (8%)
- Transportation (8%)
- Health care (8%)
- Construction (8%)
- Retail (6%)
- Personal care (4%)
- Manufacturing (2%)

Workers looking to change fields

Health care, retail, and manufacturing have many job openings relative to workers’ interest in transferring into these fields.

Job openings (April 2020)

- Business: 1,000,000
- Health care: 970,000
- Government: 690,000
- Retail: 510,000
- Leisure/hospitality: 450,000
- Information technology*: 419,000
- Manufacturing: 310,000
- Construction: 270,000
- Transportation/utilities: 220,000
- Finance: 190,000
- Education: 100,000

Motivations for Changing Job Fields
Motivations for Changing Fields

If you were to change your field of work, what would be the most important reasons? Please rank your top 3 choices.

FINANCIAL / ADVANCEMENT
- Earn more money
- Have more opportunities to advance
- Have a more consistent paycheck

CONTROL
- Have more control over my workload and schedule
- Reduce my stress from work

PURPOSE / FIT
- Do work that helps more people
- Do work that is more stimulating
- Find a better fit for my talents
Half of workers are motivated primarily by improving their finances or advancing their career.

Most important reason for wanting to change job fields:

- 52% Financial/advancement
- 30% Purpose/fit
- 18% Control

It’s not just the money: Two out of three workers say their primary motivation for changing fields is not earning more money

Most important reason for wanting to change job fields

- Earn more money, 34%
- Have more control over my workload and schedule, 8%
- Reduce my stress from work, 10%
- Do work that is more stimulating, 7%
- Find a better fit for my talents, 10%
- Do work that helps more people, 13%
- Have a more consistent paycheck, 8%
- Have more opportunities to advance, 9%
Education Perspectives
Less than half of Americans have access to the education and training they want.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I can access the education or training I want.

- **Bachelor's degree or higher**
  - Strongly agree: 15%
  - Agree: 40%

- **Some college/associate degree/certificate**
  - Strongly agree: 12%
  - Agree: 27%

- **High school or less**
  - Strongly agree: 12%
  - Agree: 26%
Only 39% of Americans believe getting more education would be worth it

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Getting more education or training would be worth the cost.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college/associate degree/certificate</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or less</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of Americans, especially those with a high school education or less, prefer nondegree programs and skills training options over degree programs.

If you were to enroll in additional education or training sometime within the next six months, what would be your goal?

- Bachelor's degree or higher: 60% (Nondegree/skills training), 40% (Degree programs)
- Some college/associate degree/certificate: 56% (Nondegree/skills training), 44% (Degree programs)
- High school or less: 71% (Nondegree/skills training), 29% (Degree programs)

Americans mostly value online options over in-person or work-based learning

If you had $5,000 available to invest in your future education or training, where would you prefer to spend it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>In-person</th>
<th>Work-based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college/associate degree/certificate</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or less</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Millions of workers will be looking to reskill or upskill. Are learning providers prepared to adapt?
Learn more at StradaEducation.org/PublicViewpoint or email consumervoice@stradaeducation.org
Methodology

• Weekly tracking of education consumers’ perceptions of COVID-19’s impact on postsecondary education and work in the United States, completed by Heart+Mind Strategies on behalf of Strada Center for Consumer Insights

• Online survey of Americans ages 18 and above

• Representative of the general population in age, gender, geographic region, educational attainment, and race/ethnicity

• Current report for survey results from March 25–June 11: n = 11,064

• A theoretical margin of error based on a probability sample of size 1,000 would be +/- 3.1% at 95% confidence. This is not a probability-based sample, and a margin of error cannot be estimated. Based on experience, we believe the sampling error would be at least this number.

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