



Workforce Training and Development Survey 2025

BUILDING SOLUTIONS TOGETHER.

Eastern Iowa businesses know the future depends on skilled people, ready to lead, adapt, and grow. This survey—conducted by EICC with 87 employers across healthcare, manufacturing, construction, logistics, education, and government—identifies the most urgent training needs, barriers, and opportunities shaping our regional workforce.

Employer Training Priorities

Employers identified consistent areas of focus for training and development:

Leadership Development
Highest priority across all sectors

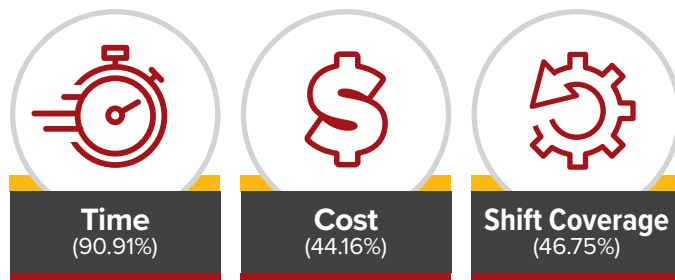
Safety Training
OSHA, industry-specific, specialized programs

Technical/Skilled Trades
CNC machining, welding, electrical maintenance, AutoCAD

Soft Skills
Communication, collaboration, problem-solving

Barriers to Training

Businesses cited common barriers to training:



Employers recommended solutions such as modular formats, onsite training, evening or off-shift options, and expanded access at local facilities.

Emerging Workforce Needs (1–2 Years)

Employers anticipate rapid shifts in demand:



AI, Data Analytics, Robotics



Automation and Mechatronics



Skilled trades shortages

Machinists, welders, process operators

Industry-Specific Needs

- ▶ Healthcare & EMS: CPR/BLS, Phlebotomy, Pharmacy Technician
- ▶ Maintenance & Reliability: Preventive maintenance, hydraulic troubleshooting
- ▶ Machining & Welding: CNC machining, MIG and TIG welding
- ▶ Quality & Process: Lean, Six Sigma, ISO auditing
- ▶ Transportation & Logistics: CDL-A, CDL-B, DOT Hazmat, CDL testing

Themes

Employers emphasized:

- ▶ Generational turnover and succession planning.
- ▶ Retention through professional development.
- ▶ The role of training in building cultures of problem solvers.

EICC Response and Next Steps

EICC is prepared to support employer needs through:

- 1 Expanding customized onsite and modular learning.
- 2 Increasing focus on skilled trades and automation.
- 3 Integrating AI, robotics, and Industry 4.0 into training.
- 4 Partnering on succession pipelines and leadership development.

Together, we are strengthening Eastern Iowa's workforce and building the region's economic future.



Leadership and Career Development

Employers emphasized that developing people is one of the strongest priorities across industries. The clearest needs fall into two areas: everyday workplace skills and preparing supervisors to lead.

Top needs identified:

- ▶ **Problem Solving** – rated as always or frequently needed by most employers, with many calling it an immediate priority.
- ▶ **Time Management & Prioritization** – widely cited as an immediate or short-term skill gap.
- ▶ **Teambuilding** – consistent demand to strengthen collaboration across shifts and teams.
- ▶ **Leadership Development Fundamentals** – one of the most urgent needs overall, with strong employer support.
- ▶ **Coaching & Mentoring** – steady interest as a strategy for succession and retention.
- ▶ **Employment Law for Supervisors** – multiple employers flagged this as an essential compliance need.

The takeaway: Employers are asking for practical, people-centered training that equips workers to solve problems, manage time, and lead teams. Preparing supervisors with leadership skills and HR basics is a priority for strengthening retention and building pipelines.





Technical and Skilled Trades

Employers told us that skilled trades remain the backbone of operations — and the gaps are urgent.

Top needs identified:

- ▶ **Skilled Trades & Maintenance** — preventive maintenance, hydraulics troubleshooting, mechanical drives.
- ▶ **Foundational Technical Skills** — electricity, multimeter use, bearings and lubricants, troubleshooting.
- ▶ **Machining & Welding** — CNC machining, MIG/TIG welding, fabrication, manual mill/lathe skills.
- ▶ **Print Reading & Measurement** — basic print reading across schematics, GD&T, calipers, micrometers.

The takeaway: Employers are clear—without strong technical fundamentals and skilled tradespeople, operations slow down. Building and sustaining these pipelines is critical.

Technology and Digital Skills

Employers stressed that technology adoption is accelerating — from AI to Industry 4.0. The focus is on preparing workers to adapt now and long-term.

Top needs identified:

- ▶ **Automation & Robotics** — PLC basics and advanced PLC, robotics operation and troubleshooting.
- ▶ **Industry 4.0** — introduction to smart systems, data collection, sensors, 3D printing.
- ▶ **AI & Machine Learning** — AI fundamentals, AI agents, Microsoft Copilot as an immediate tool.
- ▶ **Programming** — database development and Python were most relevant.
- ▶ **Microsoft Office** — Excel (especially dashboards), Power BI, Teams/SharePoint remained critical daily tools.

The takeaway: Employers see digital fluency as essential. From Excel dashboards to robotics and AI, technology skills are a must for competitiveness.

Safety and Compliance

Employers said safety is non-negotiable — it protects people and productivity alike.

Top needs identified:

- ▶ **OSHA (10/30)** — consistently the most urgent safety training.
- ▶ **Forklift/Powered Industrial Trucks** — always needed on shop floors.
- ▶ **Lockout/Tagout (LOTO)** — critical for maintenance safety.
- ▶ **CPR/First Aid** — consistently cited as an ongoing need.
- ▶ **Hazard Communication/Hazmat** — steady importance across industries.

The takeaway: Safety training is about keeping teams safe and operations reliable. Employers view it as a constant requirement.

Business and Professional Skills

Employers highlighted that professional effectiveness depends on clear communication and customer focus.

Top needs identified:

- ▶ **Communication** — active listening, fundamentals, business writing, and email etiquette were universal.
- ▶ **Customer Service** — service-provider and phone-based customer service training both cited as immediate.
- ▶ **Business Finance** — a handful of employers identified targeted needs in accounting basics, financial statement literacy, and cash flow.
- ▶ **Entrepreneurship & Small Business** — select employers emphasized strategic planning and succession, with niche needs for start-up support.

The takeaway: Employers want strong communicators and service-oriented staff, backed by practical finance knowledge where relevant.

Industry-Specific Needs

Some training priorities are unique to particular sectors, but no less critical.

Healthcare & Helping Professions

- ▶ Strongest demand for CPR/BLS/First Aid, Phlebotomy, and Pharmacy Technician training.
- ▶ Nurse Aid remains a critical entry-level pathway.

Maintenance & Reliability

- ▶ High priority for preventive maintenance, hydraulics troubleshooting, and process control fundamentals.

Machining & Welding

- ▶ Strong demand for CNC machining, MIG/TIG welding, fabrication, and robotic welding.

Quality & Process Improvement

- ▶ ISO auditing, Lean, and Six Sigma consistently noted as valuable.

Transportation & Logistics

- ▶ Immediate needs: CDL-A, CDL-B, DOT Hazmat, and CDL testing.

The takeaway: Each sector has critical technical skills that sustain production and service delivery. Employers are calling for targeted training to fill these gaps.

Customized solutions for your business.

At EICC, we know one size doesn't fit all. That's why we offer a wide range of training solutions tailored to meet the unique needs of your organization. Whether you're looking to enhance employee skills or get the most value from your training investment, we've got you covered. Many of our public courses have been shaped by the needs of businesses like yours. Contact us today to learn how we can support your team's growth.

Setting up customized training is as easy as 1-2-3:

1. We'll start with a conversation to understand your organization's needs.
2. Next, we'll create a training plan that outlines goals, course content, hours, and a timeline.
3. Finally, we'll deliver the training at one of our campuses or a location that works best for you.

**Give us a call to
learn how we can
help your business.**

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