



**ALBERTA
PERSPECTIVES
SURVEY**

**HIRING
INTENTIONS/
SKILLS TRAINING**

JULY 2025

Contents

3	Introduction and Methodology
6	Key Findings
12	Detailed Findings
26	Respondent Profile – Firmographics

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY



This is the ninth survey in the series focusing on hiring intentions.

This report continues research initiated in March 2020 dealing with labour market issues in Alberta. Many of the original questions have been repeated in subsequent surveys and others have been added.

The overall purpose of the research is to understand the experiences and expectations of Alberta businesses (private sector, public sectors and NGO's) regarding their hiring needs over the next year. To this end, questions probed current staffing needs, incidence of staff shortages and the impact of shortages, and challenges hiring.



Methodology

In all, 320 businesses completed the survey which was administered on the Alberta Perspectives platform by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce to members and other affiliated businesses.

Fielding for the current survey was undertaken between July 10th and July 28th, 2025.

Throughout this report, significant differences are reported between the years of research and demographic segments using the colour code below:

■
■
 ↑↓ Significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence level

KEY FINDINGS

HIRING INTENTIONS

Employers' expectations of increases in workforce size remain unchanged year over year, but this may hide an emerging caution over hiring.

In all, approximately one third of employers (35%) anticipate their needs will increase in the next 12 months and this is largely unchanged from a year and six months ago.

However, the increase noted in January (up to 31%) in those saying their needs will increase over the next six months has dropped back to July 2024 levels.

Moreover, there has been a 5-point uptick in employers reporting they expect the size of their workforce to stay about the same in the next six months – to 63% and the highest level since tracking began. This may well suggest caution given the current uncertain trade and economic environment identified in our June Provincial Priorities Survey . Further input on this theme is the steep decline in those reporting a need to hire senior or mid-level managers.

Perceptions of Change in Size of Workforce
% Saying "Will Increase"

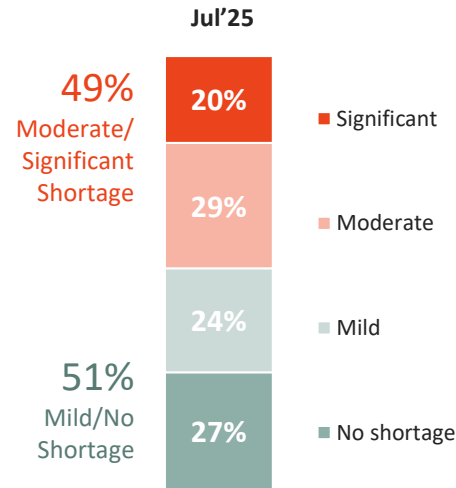


STAFFING SHORTAGES

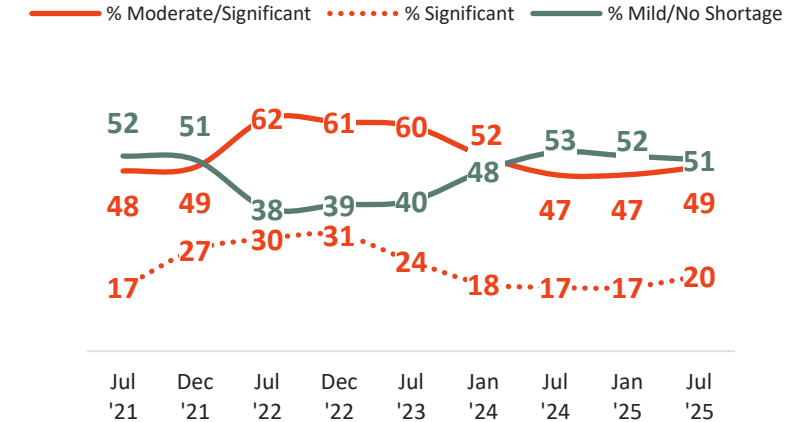
The extent of staffing shortages has remained steady over the past year.

Just under half of employers continue to report they are experiencing a moderate (29%) or significant (20%) staffing shortage. Results remain lower than the high of 62% in July'22 and have returned to 2021 levels.

That said, three-quarters (73%) of Alberta employers continue to indicate they are experiencing some level of staffing shortage.



Extent of Business Experiencing Staffing Shortage



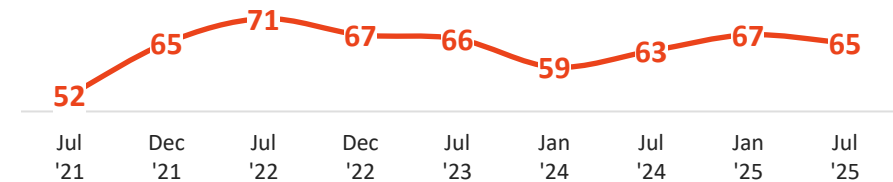
IMPACT ON BUSINESS

Employers experiencing a staffing shortage remained relatively steady this wave after trending up in January 2024.

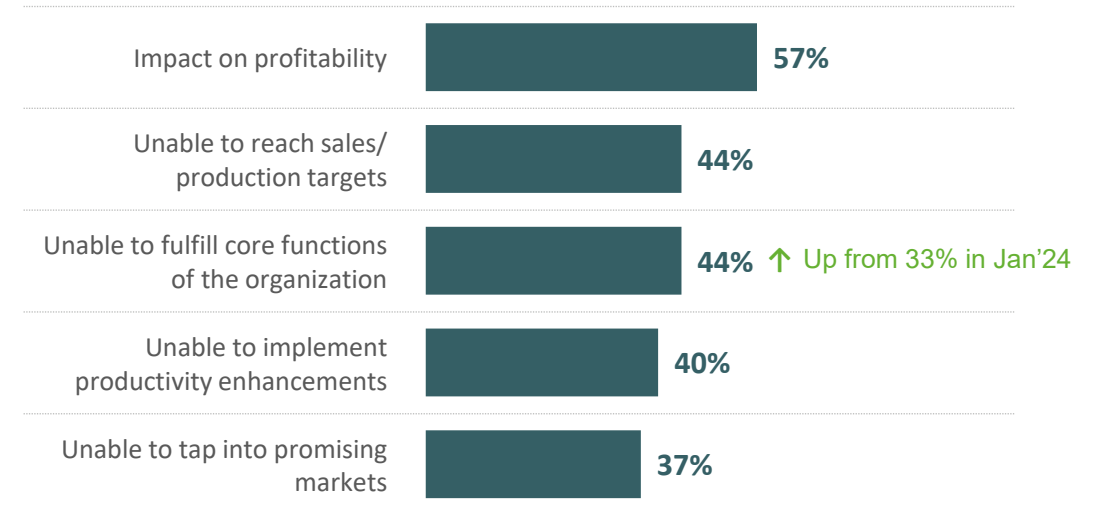
Among employers dealing with a staffing shortage, two-thirds (65%) indicate it is having a ‘moderate’ or ‘significant’ impact on production and sales opportunities – remaining relatively steady after trending up in January 2024.

Along with the impact on production and sales opportunities, staff shortages also continue to have the biggest impact on profitability (57% and unchanged) followed by the ability to reach sales/production targets (44% and directionally down) and fulfilling core functions of the business (44% and up considerably over the last year and a half).

Impact of Staffing Shortage on Production and Sales Opportunities
% Moderate/Significant Impact



Impact of Staff Shortages on Different Aspects of the Business



TOP BARRIERS TO RECRUITING SKILLS NEEDED

The labour market for skills appears to be easing, based on declines in lack of applicants and competition from other employers as barriers.

A lack of technical skills or qualifications continues to be the top barrier whether experiencing a significant, moderate mild, or no staff shortages.

This is followed by lack of people skills or qualifications (30%), but this has declined as a barrier over the last two years.

Top Barriers for Recruiting Skills Your Business Needs



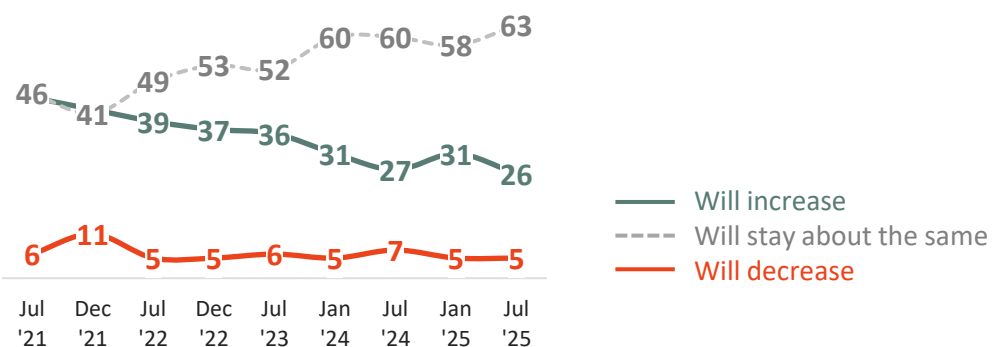
DETAILED FINDINGS

After remaining unchanged in 2024 and the beginning of 2025, there has been an uptick in employers reporting they expect the size of their workforce to stay about the same in the next six months – to 63% and the highest level since tracking began.

- Those anticipating an increase declined an equal 5-points to one-quarter (26%) of employers and is now similar to one year ago.
- Considering the next 12 months, results remain unchanged from January 2025.
- Overall, the short-term uptick in those saying the workforce needs will remain unchanged may indicate some short-term uncertainty or caution arising from the current economic and trade situation.

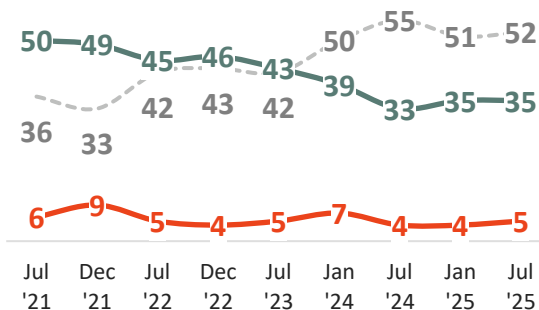
Perceptions of Change in Size of Workforce in Next 6 and 12 months

In the next 6 months ...



("Don't know" responses range from 3% to 7%)

In the next 12 months ...



("Don't know" responses range from 7% to 10%)

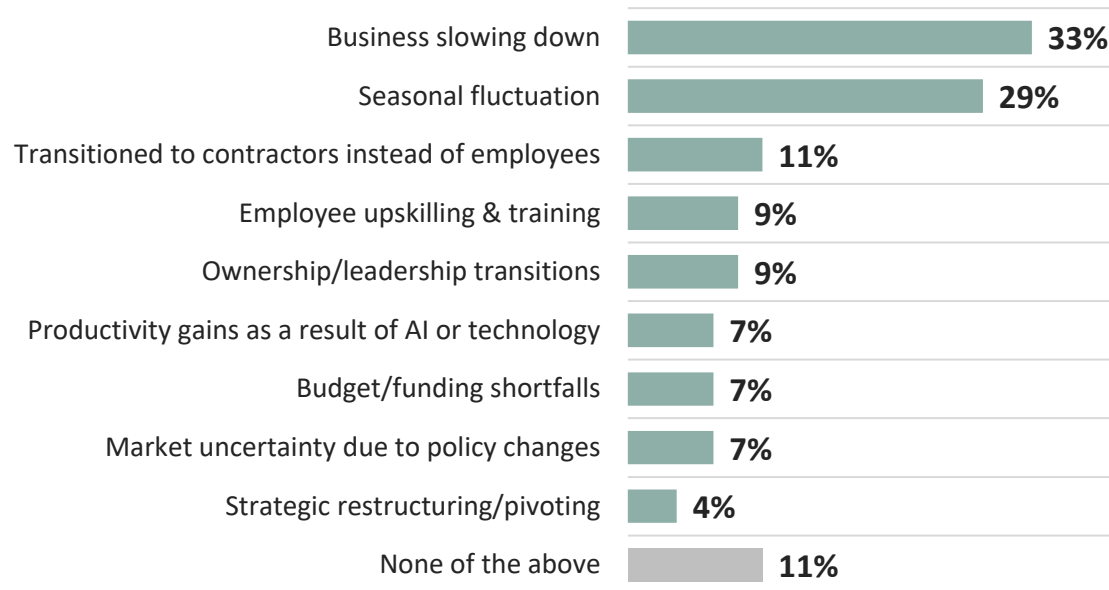
- Level of staffing shortage significantly impacts the expectation of an increased workforce in the next six months. Among organizations that are dealing with a 'significant' staffing shortage, **43%** expect an increase (down from 56% in January 2025 and 54% a year ago) compared to those experiencing a 'moderate' (33%) or mild (25%) staff shortage. This declines to 9% among those experiencing no staff shortages. This pattern is repeated for the next 12 months.
- Employers in the private sector are more likely to anticipate the size of their workforce will increase in the next 6 months (35%) and the next 12 months (48%) than are those in the public or NGO sector (16% and 29%, respectively).

Q1. Aside from any seasonal fluctuations, do you anticipate any change in the size of your workforce relative to the following time periods [in the next 6 months] [in the next 12 months]
 Base: Total sample Jul'21 n=487, Dec'21 n=410, Jul'22 n=560, Dec'22 n=535, Jul'23 n=321, Jan'24 n=322, Jul'24 n=255, Jan'25 n=250, Jul'25 n=339

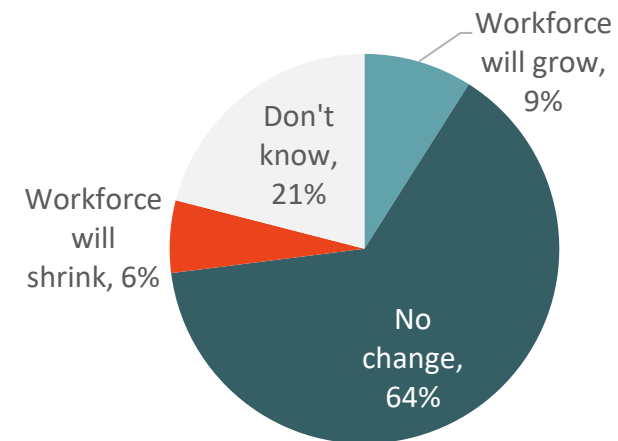
Of the 5% of employers that anticipate their workforce will decrease over the next 6-12 months, the main reasons cited are their business slowing down (33%) or seasonal fluctuations (29%).

- Notably, almost two-thirds (64%) do not think that the size of their workforce will change in the future as a result of Artificial Intelligence, while one-in-five (21%) indicate they 'don't know'. Of interest, those believing there will be a change are more likely to believe their workforce will grow rather than shrink (9% to 6%, respectively).

Main Reason Workforce is Expected to Decrease



Will Size of Workforce Change as a Result of AI?



80% say their business is already prepared for or planning for any AI anticipated changes
(n=25 – caution, small base)

Q32. What is the main reason your workforce will decrease over the next 6/12 months?

Base: Anticipate size of workforce will decrease Jul'25 n=45 (caution, small base size)

Q34. Do you anticipate the size of your workforce changing in the future as a result of AI?

Base: Jul'25 n=284

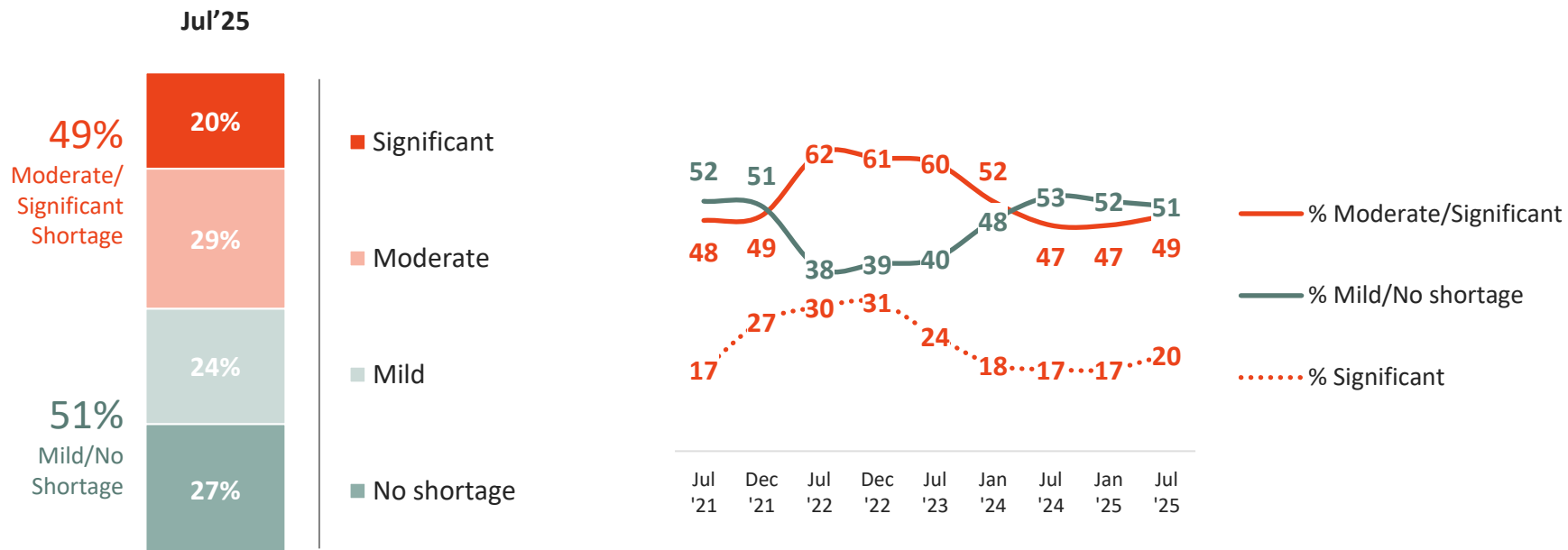
Q35. Is your business already prepared for or planning for those anticipated changes?

Base: Jul'25 n=25 (caution, small base size)

The extent of staffing shortages has remained steady over the past year. Just under half of employers continue to report they are experiencing a moderate (29%) or significant (20%) staffing shortage.

- Results remain lower than the high of 62% in July'22 and have returned to 2021 levels.
- That said, three-quarters (73%) of Alberta employers indicate they are experiencing some level of staffing shortage.

Extent of Business Experiencing Staffing Shortage



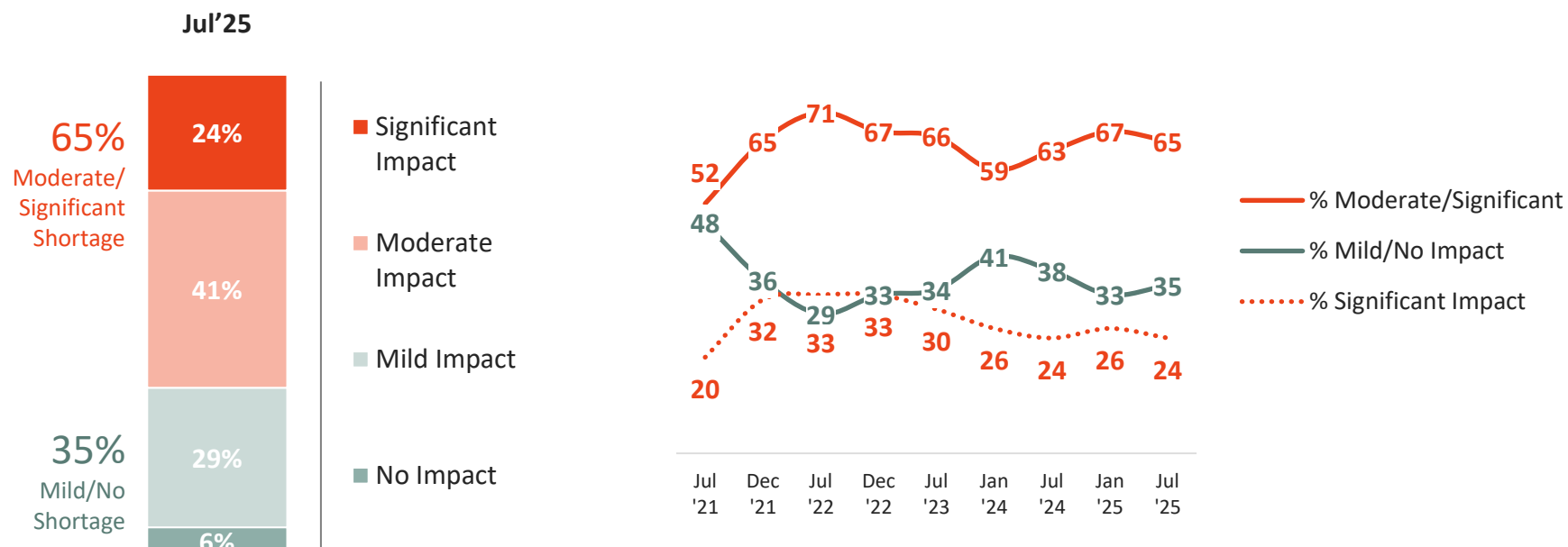
Q3. To what extent is your business currently experiencing a staffing shortage, that is you have insufficient qualified candidates to meet your business needs?

Base: Total Sample Jul'21 n=487, Dec'21 n=410, Jul'22 n=525, Dec'22 n=520, Jul'23 n=297, Jan'24 n=292, Jul'24 n=230, Jan'25 n=254, Jul'25 n=322

Among employers experiencing a staffing shortage, two-thirds (65%) indicate it is having a 'moderate' or 'significant' impact on production and sales opportunities – remaining relatively steady after trending up since January 2024.

- Those reporting a 'significant' impact (24%) has remained steady since January 2024.

Impact of Staffing Shortage on Production and Sales Opportunities



• Businesses currently experiencing a significant staff shortage continue to be the most likely to report they are dealing with the biggest impact on production/sales: seven-in-ten (71%) of this group say the shortage is having a 'significant' impact. This compares to 23% when the shortage is considered moderate.

Q4. How much of an impact, if any, is your staffing shortage causing in loss of production or sales opportunities?

Base: Currently experiencing a staffing shortage Jul'21 n=336, Dec'21 n=287, Jul'22 n=390, Dec'22 n=414, Jul'23 n=251, Jan'24 n=216, Jul'24 n=160, Jan'25 n=171, Jul'25 n=233
(From July'22 those saying a decline in staff at Q1 were not asked the staffing related questions)

Along with the impact on production and sales opportunities, staff shortages also continue to have the biggest impact on profitability (57%) followed by the ability to reach sales/production targets (44% and directionally down) and fulfilling core functions of the business (44%).

- About four-in-ten report it is impacting their ability to implement productivity enhancements (40%) and tap into promising markets (37%).

Impact of Staff Shortages on Different Aspects of the Business

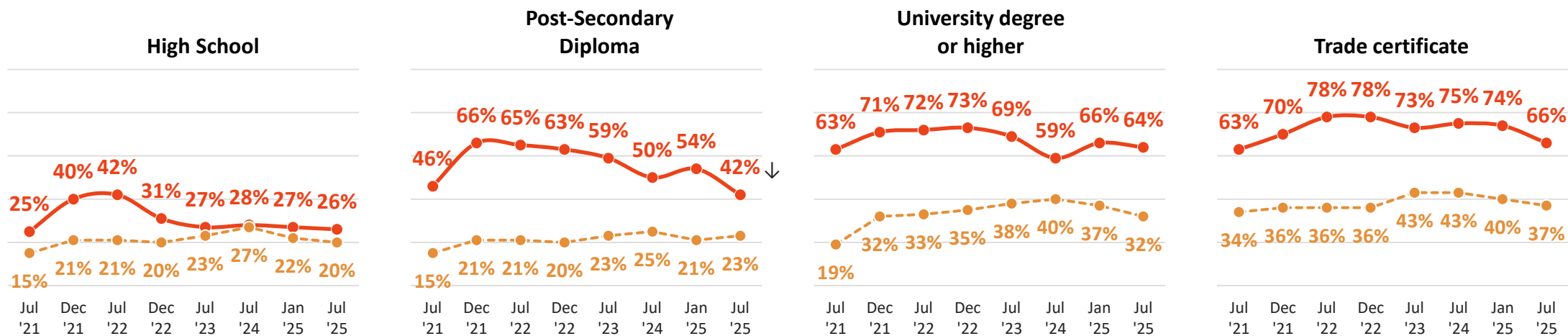
	Jul'25	Trended:				
		Jul'23	Jan'24	Jul'24	Jan'25	Jul'25
Impact on profitability	57%	62%	57%	57%	57%	57%
Unable to reach sales/production targets	44%	41%	46%	47%	50%	44%
Unable to fulfill core functions of the organization	44%	45%	33%	35%	44%	44%
Unable to implement productivity enhancements	40%	37%	37%	38%	40%	40%
Unable to tap into promising markets	37%	38%	49%	40%	42%	37%
Unable to pursue strategic partnerships	30%	28%	29%	25%	21%	30% ↑
Unable to undertake renovations or expansions	23%	32%	25%	24%	26%	23%
Impact on organizations viability	23%	23%	17%	26%	23%	23%
Reduced number of hours of operations	17%	24%	19%	13%	22% ↑	17%
Other	8%	8%	6%	12%	6%	8%
None of these	3%	3%	2%	4%	5%	3%
Don't know	4%	1%	4%	1%	3%	4%

- Among businesses reporting a significant staffing shortage, six-in-ten (58%) say they are unable to fulfill core functions of the organization (on par with a year ago) with 76% reporting it is impacting profitability (up from 65% compared to a year ago). Four-in-ten (37%) indicate it is impacting their viability (similar to a year ago).

Q5. You mentioned that staffing shortage are causing a loss of production or sales opportunities. In addition to any loss of sales or production are these shortages causing any of the following?
 Base: Staffing shortage has a Significant, Moderate or Mild impact Jul'23 n=229, Jan'24 n=200, Jul'24 n=144, Jan'25 n=149, Jul'25 n=212

Among those experiencing staffing shortages, a majority continue to say it is ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ difficult to hire employees with a university degree or higher (64%) or a trade certificate (down directionally to 66% and at the lowest level since July 2021).

- Difficulty hiring people with a post-secondary diploma declined significantly to 42% - after slowly trending down since December 2021 – and is now at the lowest level since tracking began.
- Difficulty hiring employees with a high school education (26%) remains unchanged and the lowest of the education levels.
- While there continues to be the most difficulty hiring people with a university degree or higher or a trade certificate, they are the education levels that businesses report they have not needed to recently hire (32% and 37%, respectively) although these proportions have been trending down.

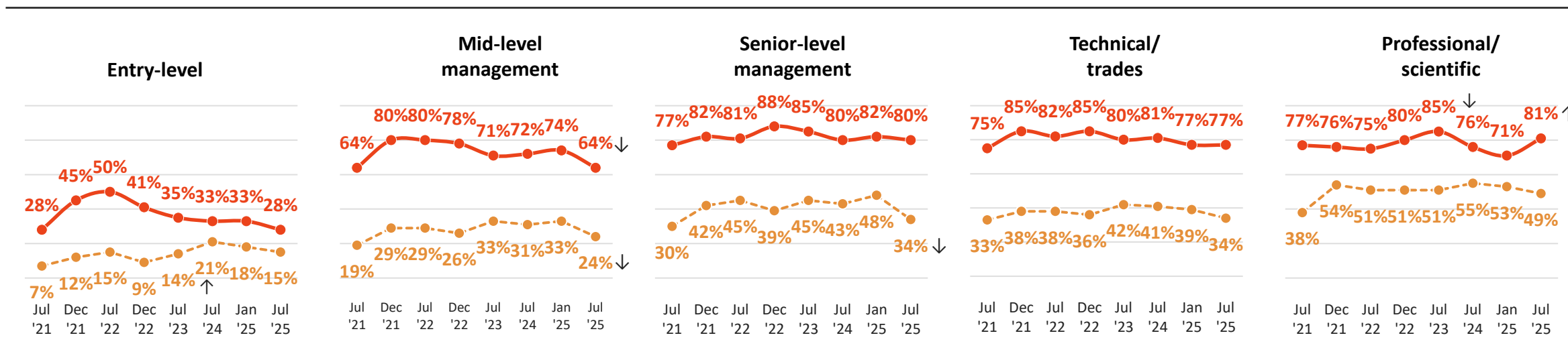


—●— % saying “Very/Somewhat Difficult to hire (re-proportioned to exclude “Have not needed to hire recently” responses)
 ---●--- % saying “Have not needed to hire recently”

Q6. How easy or difficult is it to hire people with the following education levels to manage your business?
 Base: Currently experiencing a staffing shortage Jul’21 n=336, Dec’21 n=287, Jul’22 n=389, Dec’22 n=414, Jul’23 n=297, Jul’24 n=207 (Excludes those reporting No shortage), Jan’25 n=202, Jul’25 n=297
 (From July’22 those saying a decline in staff at Q1 were not asked the staffing related questions)

It remains the most difficult to hire staff for senior-level (80%) management, people with professional or scientific skills (81% and up in July 2025 after declines the previous two waves), or with technical skills/trades (77%).

- There was a 10-point decline measured for difficulty in hiring mid-level management (64%).
- Entry level positions continue to be the least difficult to fill (28%).
- There has been a substantial decline this summer in the proportion of employers saying they have not needed to hire senior (especially) or mid-level management positions. This may also reflect some caution re hiring noted earlier.



—●— % saying “Very/Somewhat Difficult to hire (re-proportioned to exclude “Have not needed to hire recently” responses)
 ---●--- % saying “Have not needed to hire recently”

Q7. How easy or difficult is it to hire people with the following skills to manage your business?

Base: Currently experiencing a staffing shortage Jul'21 n=336, Dec'21 n=287, Jul'22 n=389, Dec'22 n=414, Jul'23 n=297, Jul'24 n=207 (Excludes those reporting No shortage), Jan'25 n=202, Jul'25 n=297 (From July'22 those saying a decline in staff at Q1 were not asked the staffing related questions)

The top barrier for recruiting skills their business needs continues to be a lack of technical skills or qualifications (47% and is trending up), followed by lack of people skills or qualifications (30%), not being able to afford the going rates of staff they would like to hire (29%), and lack of applicants (25% and continuing to trend down).

- Competition from other employers (18%) has been trending down since December 2021 and is now at the lowest level since tracking began.

Top Barriers for Recruiting Skills Your Business Needs

	Mar '20	Mar '21	Jul '21	Dec '21	Jul '22	Dec '22	Jul '23	Jul '24	Jul '25
Lack of technical skills or qualifications	35%	44%	45%	47%	43%	37%	34%	42%	47%
Lack of people skills or qualifications	40%	44%	48%	51%	50%	33%	29%	32%	30%
Can't afford the going rates for the staff we would like to hire	36%	37%	35%	38%	36%	28%	34%	28%	29%
Lack of applicants	28%	42%	54%	59%	48%	39%	43%	29%↓	25%
Competition for skills from other employers	23%	28%	48%	43%	38%	29%	27%	19%	18%
Lack of management and/or leadership skills	19%	17%	31%	29%	21%	11%	10%	13%	17%
Language barriers (English as a second language)	9%	6%	9%	9%	-	-	7%	17%	14%
Candidates unwilling to relocate	18%	23%	20%	19%	18%	9%	12%	7%	12%
High cost of training someone without some basic skills we need	-	-	-	-	28%	14%	13%	10%	12%
Business budget constraints	36%	29%	27%	33%	24%	18%	15%	13%	11%
Applicants do not have accessible housing to relocate	8%	8%	8%	8%	9%	7%	8%	9%	11%
Government regulation for hiring workers from outside Canada	6%	8%	13%	19%	13%	7%	8%	8%	8%
Applicants don't have adequate transportation	9%	10%	9%	13%	16%	5%	5%	7%	6%
Foreign credentials recognition	2%	2%	8%	6%	8%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Candidates cannot pass screening (drug, criminal record check, etc.)	10%	11%	12%	11%	11%	4%	4%	5%	4%
Applicants cannot access adequate childcare	9%	11%	14%	15%	12%	4%	7%	2%	4%
Candidates unwilling to forgo government income support programs	-	-	24%	25%	18%	5%	7%	2%	3%
Interprovincial credential recognition	3%	3%	7%	3%	5%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Lack necessary language skills (require recruits to be bilingual or multilingual)	3%	3%	5%	3%	12%	4%	2%	1%	1%
There are no significant barriers	-	4%	3%	2%	4%	8%	6%	6%	2%
Other	7%	7%	11%	10%	10%	5%	6%	5%	8%
Don't know/not sure	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%

- Businesses experiencing a significant staffing shortage are more likely to cite the barriers of a lack of applicants (41%), candidates unwilling to relocate (20%), and government regulation for hiring workers from outside of Canada (20%) than those with moderate, mild, or no staff shortages.
- A lack of technical skills or qualifications is the top barrier whether experiencing a significant, moderate mild, or no staff shortages.
- By company size, larger companies with 200+ employees are more likely to cite candidates unwilling to relocate (30%).
- Smaller companies with less than 10 employees are more likely to report business budget constraints are a barrier than are larger companies.

Note: Top 3 barriers asked for the most recent two waves, rather than all barriers. Our analysis indicates this has not had a discernable impact on tracking.

Q8. What are the three top barriers for recruiting the skills your business needs? Previous phrasing (Q8) What are the top barriers for recruiting the skills your business needs?

Base: Total sample Mar'20 n=317, Mar'21 n=356, Jul'21 n=336, Dec'21 n=287, Excluding Jul'21 n=151, Dec'21 n=123 who at Q3 said no shortage), Jul'22 n= 482, Dec'22 n=520, Jul'23 n=297, Jul'24 n=204, Jul'25 n=290 (From July'22 those saying a decline in staff at Q1 were not asked the staffing related questions)

Lack of technical skills or qualifications (17%) continues to be identified as the single largest recruitment barrier. This is followed by lack of applicants (13% and unchanged).

- One-in-ten cite not being able to afford the going rates for the staff we would like to hire (10%) and lack of people skills or qualifications (9%).
- Overall, just over one-third (35%) of employers indicate the lack of various types of skills as their largest barrier.
- When all barriers related to cost related issues (can't afford going rate, business budget constraints and competition from other employers) are combined, 24% cite one of these issues as the most important recruiting barrier they face.

Largest Barrier for Recruiting Skills

	Mar'20	Mar'21	Jul'21	Dec'21	Jul'22	Jul'23	Jul'24	Jul'25
Lack of technical skills or qualifications	11%	19%	14%	17%	15%	16%	18%	17%
Lack of applicants	11%	20%	20%	28%	22%	21%	13%	13%
Can't afford the going rates for the staff we would like to hire	18%	16%	9%	12%	11%	17%	12%	10%
Lack of people skills or qualifications	13%	12%	9%	10%	10%	9%	9%	9%
Competition for skills from other employers	5%	5%	14%	10%	11%	8%	9%	7%
Business budget constraints	18%	11%	8%	11%	8%	8%	6%	7%
Lack of management and/or leadership skills	4%	2%	3%	6%	2%	3%	3%	6%
Applicants do not have accessible housing to relocate	-	-	-	-	-	3%	3%	6%
Government regulation for hiring workers from outside Canada	3%	2%	2%	8%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Candidates unwilling to relocate	4%	7%	5%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Language barriers (English as a second language)	-	-	-	-	-	-	4%	3%
High cost of training someone without some basic skills we need	-	-	-	-	4%	3%	2%	3%
Candidates unwilling to forgo government income support programs	-	-	7%	5%	3%	2%	<1%	1%

*Note: The highlighted figures are related to a lack of various types of skill

- Among employers experiencing a significant staff shortage, lack of technical skills or qualifications (31%) is the top cited barrier with a larger proportion indicating this barriers than those experiencing less staff shortages.
- By company size, larger companies with 200+ employees are equally likely to cite lack of technical skills or qualifications (18%) and competition for skills from other employers (18%).

Mentions of 1% or less are not shown in table. They include:

- Candidates cannot pass screening
- Applicants don't have adequate transportation
- Foreign credentials recognition
- Interprovincial credential recognition

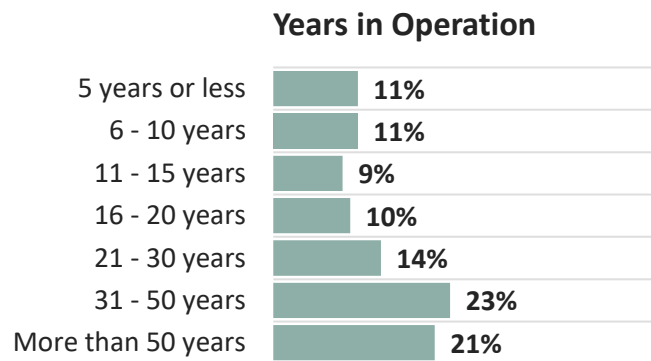
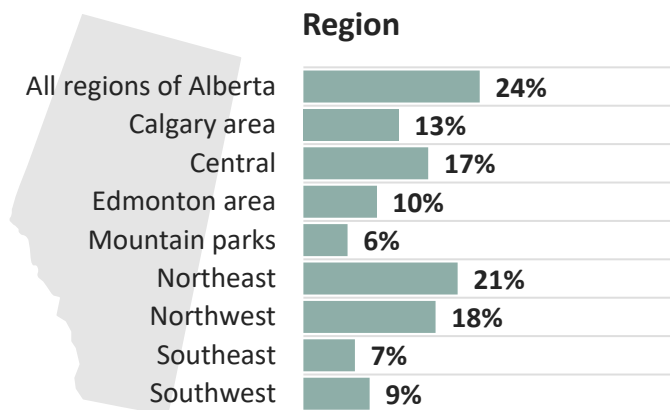
Q8. Which of the barriers you selected is the largest barrier to recruiting the skills your business needs?

Base: Mar'20 n=280, Mar'21 n=343, Jul'21 n=325, Dec'21 n=277, Jul'22 n=451 (Excludes those who answered "No significant barriers", "Don't know/not sure" at Q7 Jul'21 n=9, Dec'21 n=10), Jul'23 n=276, Jul'24 n=201, Jul'25 n=290

(From July'22 those saying a decline in staff at Q1 were not asked the staffing related questions)

RESPONDENT PROFILE - FIRMOGRAPHICS

Respondent Profile – Firmographics



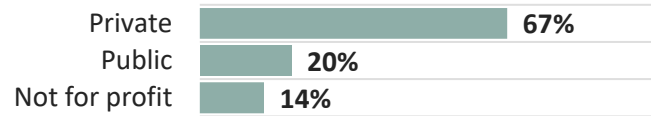
Industry

8%	NET – PRIMARY
4%	Oil and gas
4%	Agriculture
16%	NET – MANUFACTURING
4%	Construction
8%	Manufacturing
4%	Transportation
37%	NET – SERVICE
7%	Retail trade
7%	Food services
4%	Recreation
2%	Accommodation
2%	Waste management
2%	Wholesale trade
1%	Administrative and support
12%	Other services (except public administration)

37%	NET - KNOWLEDGE
12%	Educational services
9%	Professional, scientific, and technical services
4%	Health care
4%	Social assistance
3%	Finance
3%	Insurance
1%	Arts
1%	Public administration

Respondent Profile – Firmographics

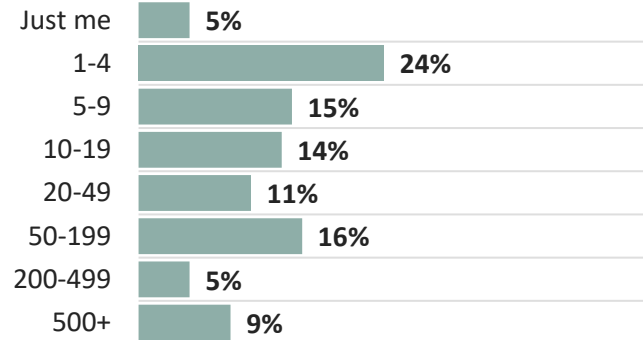
Sector



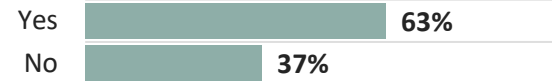
Tourism Industry



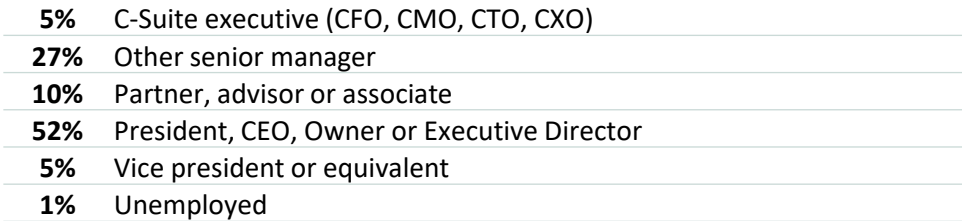
Number of employees in Alberta



Owner/Partner



Job Title



Gender

