

Room to Improve: Underinvestment in low-skill workers

According to the 2012/2014 Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), about 21 million U.S. employees—15 percent of working 16- to 65-year-olds—have low literacy skills. These are workers who are likely to struggle with performing basic tasks, such as reading a label on a medicine bottle, navigating a simple digital text to find specific information, or drawing a conclusion from information in a printed text.



Low-skill workers are less likely than other workers to participate in job-related training¹



Two out of five **low-skill employees** participated in job-related training in the previous year.



In comparison, three out of five **mid- to high-skill employees** participated.

Over half of low-skill workers were either too busy or could not afford participating in job-related training

Two of the most frequently cited reasons for not taking job-related training were...

“I was too busy at work.”

35 percent

“Too expensive. I could not afford it.”

23 percent

Employees find job-related training useful

Training helps low-skill workers’ job performance.

Among low-skill employees who received job-related training in the previous year, 71 percent found it to be “very useful” for their jobs. A lower percentage of mid- to high-skill employees (61 percent) reported the same.

How useful was this training for the job or business you had at that time or still have?

71%

Low-skill employees find it very useful

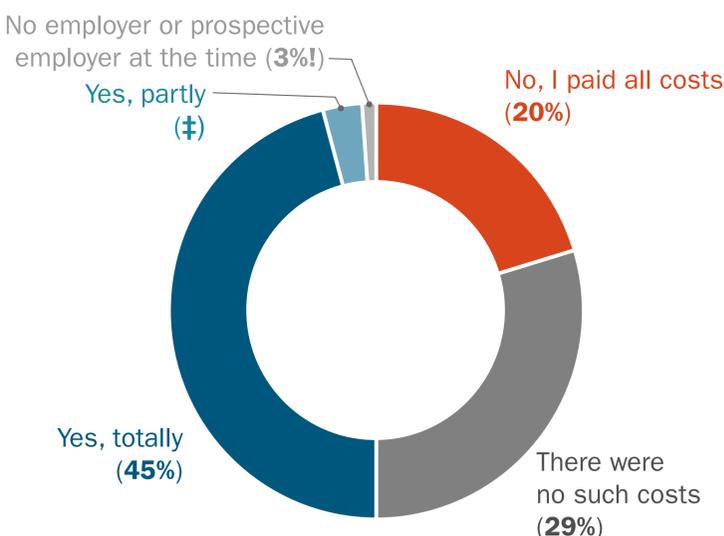
61%

Mid- to high-skill employees find it very useful

Some low-skill workers cover the full cost of their job-related training

Did an employer or prospective employer pay for tuition or registration, exam fees, expenses for books, or other costs resulting from your participation in this activity?

Twenty percent of low-skill employees who received training for their job in the past year had to fund the cost of it.



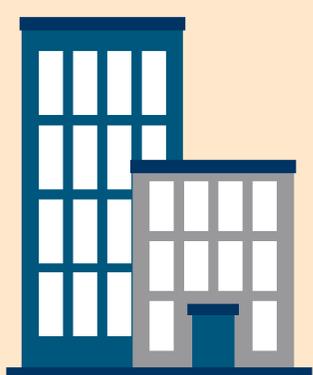
! Interpret data with caution.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

¹ Job-related training includes distance learning courses, seminars or workshops, on the job training, and other nonformal learning activities. These learning activities could be offered on or off the work site.

DATA SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), U.S. PIAAC 2012/2014; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, PIAAC 2012.

Everyone benefits from investing in education and training



BUSINESSES

Businesses that provide support for ongoing training and learning opportunities can benefit from **more productive workers, higher employee satisfaction, lower turnover, and greater flexibility to adopt new technologies more quickly.**



WORKERS

Ongoing training can result in improved job performance and can provide low-skilled workers with **more opportunities for promotion and higher pay.**