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 training[^1]**

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 those who received job-related training in the previous year...

- 71% of low-skill employees find it very useful
- 61% of mid- to high-skill employees find it very useful

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

To question, “Did an employer or prospective employer pay for tuition or registration, exam fees, expenses for books, or other costs?” the low-skilled workers answered...

- No employer or prospective employer at the time (3%)
- Yes, totally (45%)
- Yes, partly (‡)
- No, I paid all costs (20%)
- There were no such costs (29%)

[^1]: 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.


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**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.