

PUBLIC

PERSPECTIVES

A NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION SERIES ON JOBS, SKILLS TRAINING AND THE ECONOMY

2024 WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT YEAR

for workers, small businesses, and the economy as millions head to the voting booth to weigh in on issues that matter most to their lives. In past election years, workers and businesses identified skills training—ensuring that all workers have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed in jobs critical to American life and the economy—as a top economic priority. In this context, National Skills Coalition commissioned new public opinion research, which reveals that voters emphatically continue to consider skills training one of the most critical issues for America’s future.

NSC’s new research described in this brief affirms that voters believe jobs requiring skills training are the backbone of the economy. Across party lines, race and ethnicity, geographic region, and other characteristics,

they want policymakers to expand skills training opportunities for America’s workers. While voter constituencies differ in their views on our nation’s economic health, expanding skills training stands out as one of the most popular economic proposals across groups of likely voters. What’s more, these voters consider skills training investments to be essential to the success of major industries that drive the economy and impact our country’s health, safety, and quality of life.¹



1. National Skills Coalition commissioned a nationwide online poll of 1000 registered voters. Impact Research conducted the poll between March 11-17, 2024. The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.

What is Skills Training?

Skills training prepares people for jobs that require education past high school, but not a bachelor's degree. This includes career and technical education at community colleges, apprenticeships and work-based learning on job sites, job training at community organizations, and more. The people who do jobs that require skills training build our roads and bridges, care

for us when we are sick, move food and essential goods across the country, keep our utilities running, and so much more.

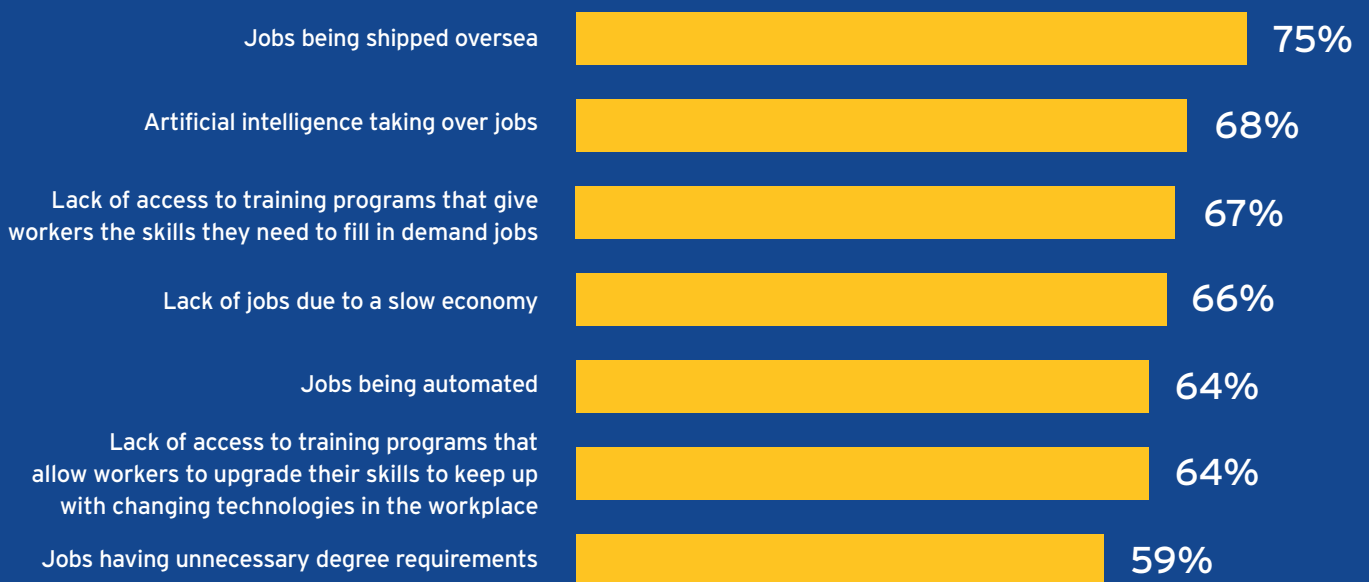
And the businesses that hire them create jobs in our communities and grow local economies. Skills training that is designed with input from employers in high-demand industries and that is structured

to be inclusive of today's typical adult learners—parents, working people, women, people of color, and immigrants, among others—is most successful. Participants in these types of training programs are more likely to be employed, work more consistently, work in jobs with higher wages, and are more likely to earn benefits like health insurance, 401K, etc.²

PUBLIC PERSPECTIVES ON JOBS

Voters perceive lack of access to skills training as a significant challenge facing workers in the current job market. Voters identify a range of issues confronting workers in America, from jobs being shipped overseas (75%) to jobs having unnecessary degree requirements (59%)—and more. Over two-thirds (67%) believe lack of access to training is a serious problem.

PERCENTAGE OF VOTERS WHO VIEW THESE ISSUES AS A SERIOUS PROBLEM FACING WORKERS



2. J-PAL Evidence Review. 2022. "Sectoral Employment Programs as a Path to Quality Jobs: Lessons from Randomized Evaluations" Cambridge, MA: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab.

PUBLIC PERSPECTIVES ON SKILLS TRAINING

Voters overwhelmingly support skills training and candidates who prioritize this issue.

A notable 82% of voters support increasing government funding for skills training in America.

Additionally, 69% are more likely to support a candidate for office who champions increased government funding for skills training in America.

DID YOU KNOW?

The likeliness of voters to support a candidate who champions investments in skills training went up from **59% in 2019** to **69% in 2024**, according to National Skills Coalition polling.



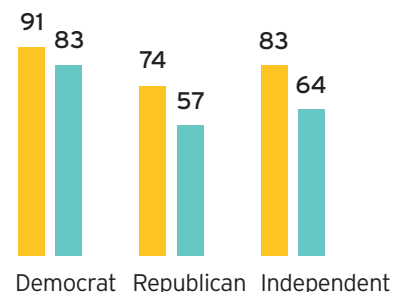
Party Lines

Support for skills training crosses party lines among voters, is a bipartisan issue in a divisive political climate.

Ninety-one percent of Democrats, 74% of Republicans, and 83% of Independents want an increase in public investments in skills training. Additionally, 83% of Democrats, 57% of Republicans, and 64% of Independents are more likely to support a candidate for office who champions increased funding for skills training in America.

Voters across party lines express strong support for skills training policies

In Percentages



- Voters who support increasing government funding for skills training
- Voters who are more likely to support a candidate who champions skills training investments

Race and Ethnicity

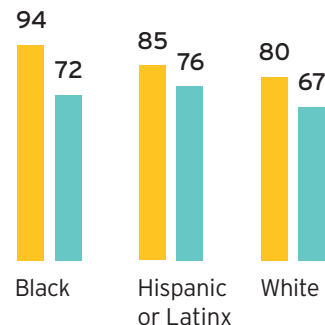
Black, Latino, and White voters agree that skills training is an essential issue for elected officials and our country.³

Ninety-four percent of Black voters, 85% of Hispanic or Latinx voters, and 80% of White voters support increasing public funding for skills training in America.

Additionally, significant majorities in each group would be more likely to support a candidate for public office who prioritizes skill training investments.

Black, Latino, and White express strong support for skills training policies

In Percentages



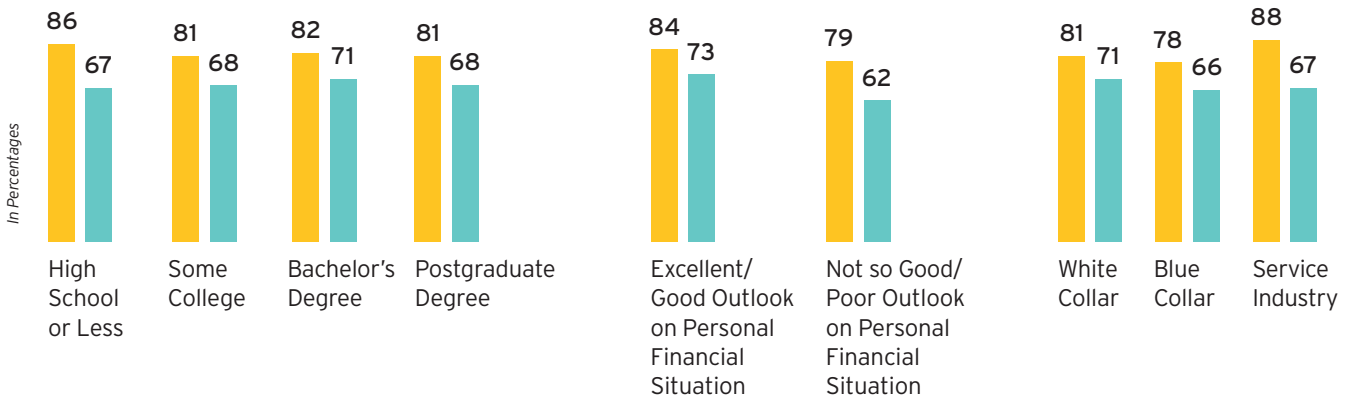
- Voters who support increasing government funding for skills training
- Voters who are more likely to support a candidate who champions skills training investments

3. Due to sample size limitations, we are not able to report findings for other racial and ethnic groups such as Asian American, American Indian or Alaska Native people, or important sub-groups such as Southeast Asian people or groups representing distinct countries of origin.

Education Level and Economic Status

Support for skills training remains uniformly high among voters across educational levels and economic status, with some notable differences. For example, support is high across education levels and regardless of perceptions of financial situation.

SUPPORT FOR SKILLS TRAINING REMAINS UNIFORMLY HIGH AMONG VOTERS ACROSS EDUCATIONAL LEVELS AND ECONOMIC STATUS⁴



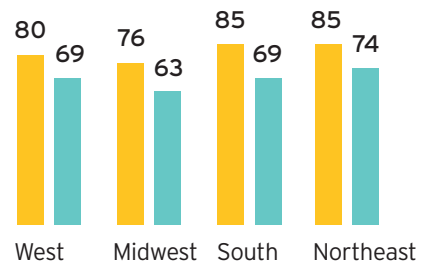
- Voters who support increasing government funding for skills training
- Voters who are more likely to support a candidate who champions skills training investments

Geographic Region

Voters living in all major regions of the country express strong support for skills training policies. Northeasterners and southerners show the strongest support for increased public funding for skills training at 85% support. Support for skills training remains significant in the West (80%) and Midwest (76%). Over two-thirds of voters in all four regions are more likely to support a candidate that supports skills training.

Voters living in all major regions of the country express strong support for skills training policies

In Percentages



- Voters who support increasing government funding for skills training
- Voters who are more likely to support a candidate who champions skills training investments

PUBLIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE ECONOMY

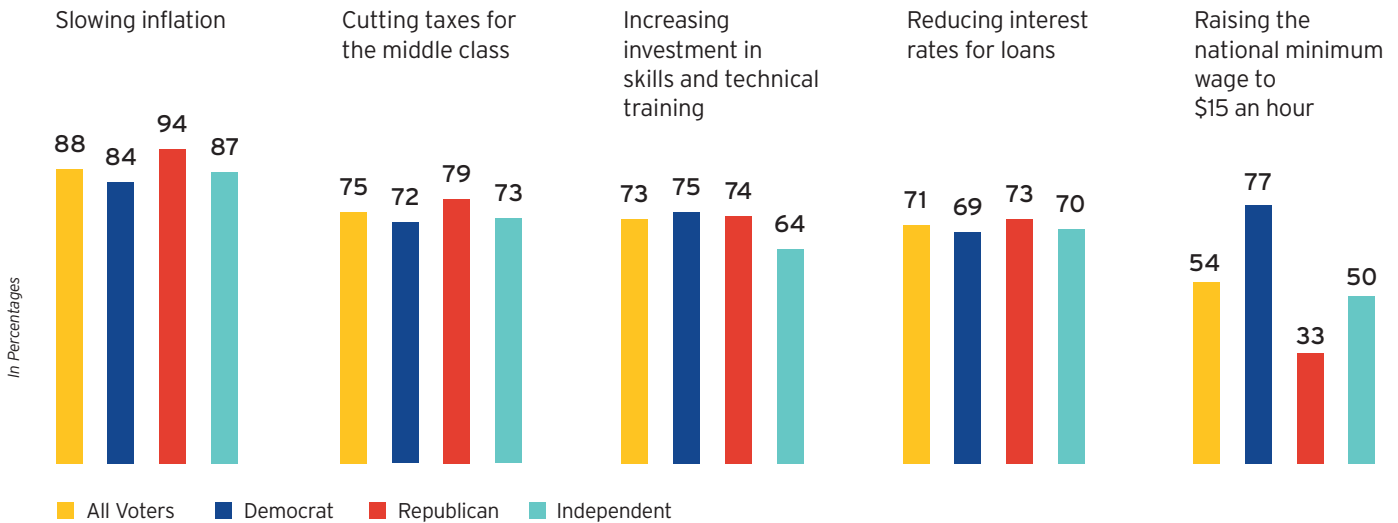
While voters from different political parties significantly differ in their perceptions of the economy, a sizeable majority of voters across party lines consider skills training an important economic solution.

Voters from different political parties express different views of the country's economic health with 56% of Democrats, 10% of Republicans, and 20% of Independents rating the economy as excellent or good.

4. The polling instrument used the following wording: "White collar, like at a desk in an office, Blue Collar, like physical labor or working in a factory, Service industry, like working in a retail store or a hospital."

However, nearly three-quarters (73%) of voters believe expanding skills training is an extremely or very important way to improve the economy, on par with some of the most popular economic proposals. Skills training shows minimal difference in support between Republicans and Democrats compared to other economic proposals.

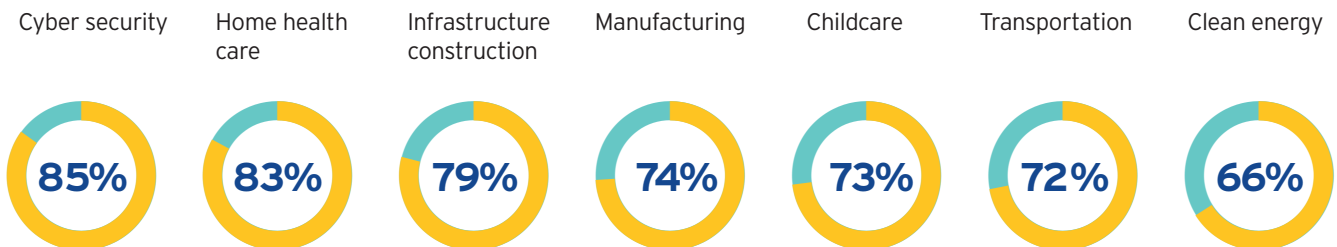
PERCENTAGE OF VOTERS WHO SEE PROPOSALS AS “EXTREMELY” OR “VERY IMPORTANT” FOR IMPROVING THE ECONOMY



PUBLIC PERSPECTIVES ON ESSENTIALS INDUSTRIES

Voters believe that skills training is essential to some of our country’s most essential industries.⁵ Voters believe that skills training is essential to the success of key industries that impact health, safety, quality of life, and economic growth.

PERCENTAGE OF VOTERS WHO THINK SKILLS TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL TO THE INDUSTRY



5. NSC selected industries that have been central to policy conversations during the global pandemic, such as childcare and home health care, as well as industries that are targeted under the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), Inflation Reduction Act, and CHIPS and Science Act (CHIPS), such as clean energy, manufacturing, cyber security, transportation, and infrastructure.

NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION'S 2024 PUBLIC PERSPECTIVES SERIES

This brief is the first in a year-long series analyzing public perspectives of jobs, skills training, and the economy across a range of the most pressing issues facing the nation, including artificial intelligence, eliminating degree requirements in hiring, expanding quality jobs, closing the digital divide, rebuilding the nation's infrastructure, expanding clean energy, the care economy, and others.

To learn more, please visit nationalskillscoalition.org.

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National Skills Coalition fights for inclusive, high-quality skills training so that people have access to a better life, and local businesses see sustained growth. We engage in analysis and technical assistance, organizing, advocacy, and communications to improve state and federal skills policies. Learn more at nationalskillscoalition.org and follow us [@skillscoalition](https://twitter.com/skillscoalition).