<u>Chatham County Workforce Development Study (Mar 2014)</u>
Assessment of County Workforce
Barriers to Meaningful Employment

<u>What We Did</u>
1) Research
2) Survey of HR Professionals (90 responses)
3) Interviews of HR Professionals (20 interviews)
4) Focus Groups (6 groups, 55 participants)
       Job-Seekers & Small Business Employers

Interviews with 20 HR Professionals

Armstrong Atlantic State University	**Memorial Univ. Medical Ctr, Dept of Radiology**
Atlantic Radiology Associates, LLC	**Nordic Logistics and Warehousing, LLC**
City of Savannah	**St. Joseph's/Candler Health System**
Colonial Group, Inc.	**Southern Aviation Parts and Services**
DIRTT Environmental Solutions	**Shaw Industries**
Georgia Ports Authority	**Southcoast Medical Group, LLC**
Georgia Power	**The Home Depot - SDC**
Gregory M. Parker, Inc.	**The Savannah Bank**
Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation	**Wells Fargo**
IKEA Distribution Services, Inc.	**Weyerhaeuser**

Overview

Findings about:

    Filling entry-level positions

    Quality of county workforce

Barriers to meaningful employment

    Chatham County

    Similarities from survey, interviews, and

        focus group research.

Research

Is Savannah's Experience Unique? No.

Nationwide Problem

Under-employment: 10 million

7.3 mil: involuntarily part time

2.6 mil: marginally attached

Long-term Unemployed (>27 wks): 5.6 mil

Similar barriers to employment exist

Next...Findings About:
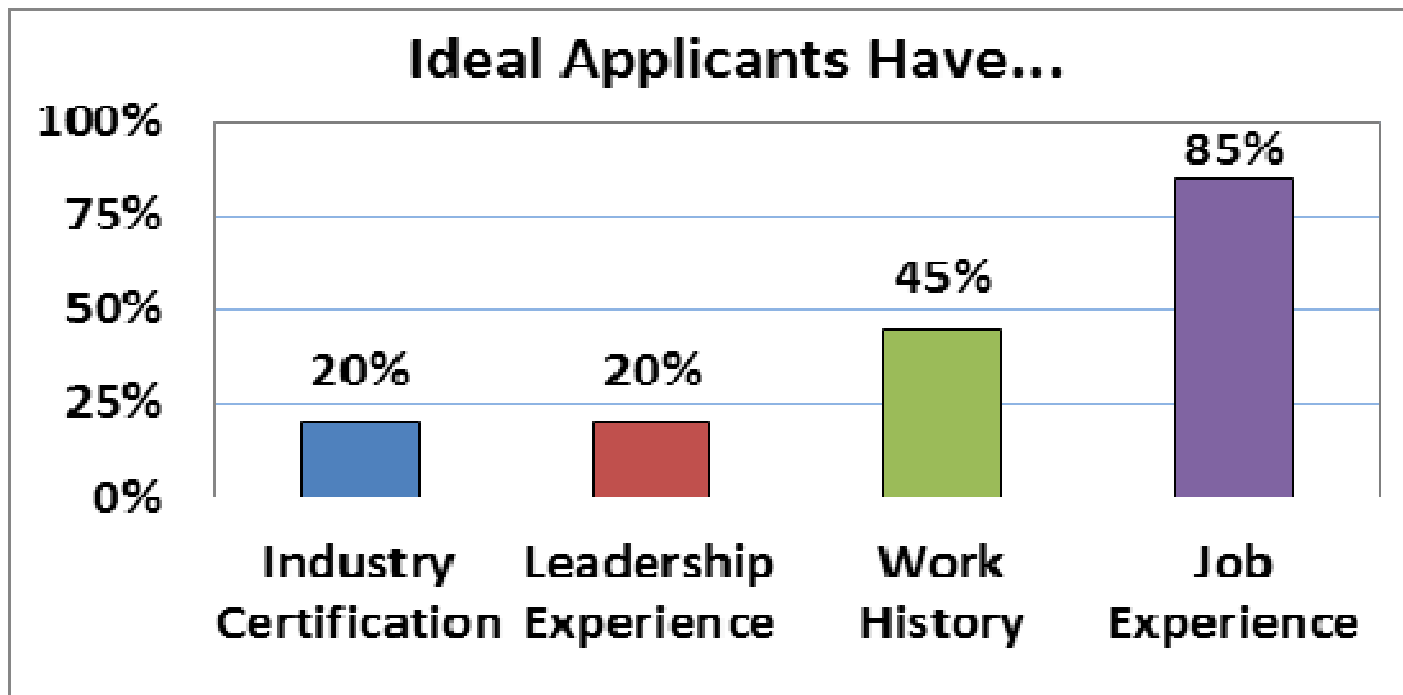
Entry-level positions

    Minimum education: HS/GED

    Maximum education: some college

Quality of county workforce
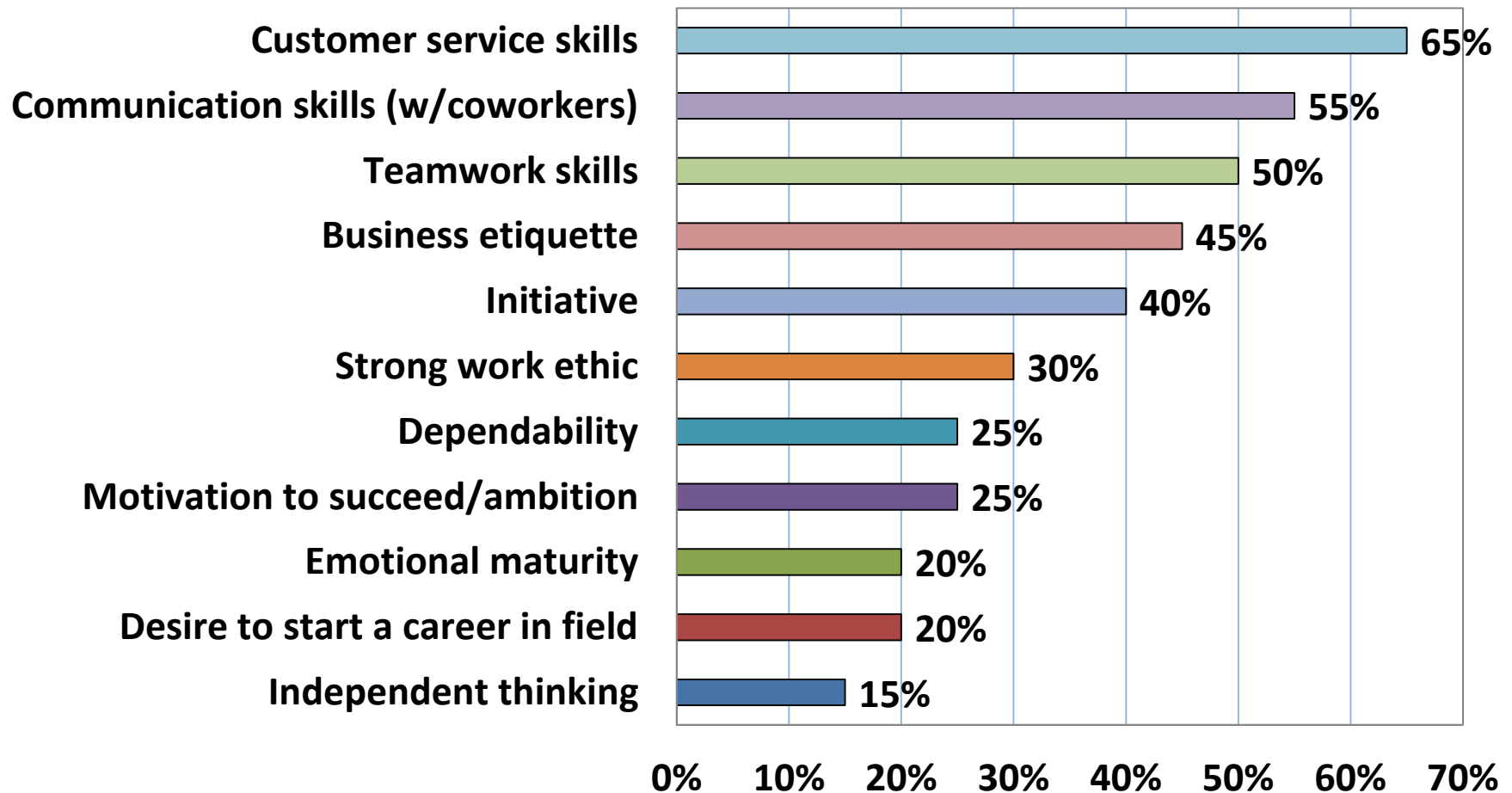
Entry-Level Job Openings
12 openings per 100 employees
29 applicants per job

Ideal Applicants Have...

Category	Percentage
Industry Certification	20%
Leadership Experience	20%
Work History	45%
Job Experience	85%

From HR survey & Interviews

Ideal Soft Skill Attributes in Applicants

Attribute	Percentage
Customer service skills	65%
Communication skills (w/coworkers)	55%
Teamwork skills	50%
Business etiquette	45%
Initiative	40%
Strong work ethic	30%
Dependability	25%
Motivation to succeed/ambition	25%
Emotional maturity	20%
Desire to start a career in field	20%
Independent thinking	15%

The reality, however, is......

From HR Interviews

Assessment of Characteristics of Chatham County Workforce

More Satisfaction	Less Satisfaction
Productivity	Punctuality
Job Safety	Computer Skills
Teamwork	Reading
Attitude	Business Etiquette
Reliability	Math
Attendance	Oral Communication
Work Ethic	Writing

From HR Survey

Employer Perspective:
Soft Skill Deficiencies with Job-Seekers
(% of HR Professionals citing the Problem)

55% - Generational factors
45% - Poor work ethic
30% - Lack of career orientation
20% - Lack of dependability

Separation of home life/workplace

From HR Interviews, Focus Groups

Employer Perspective:
Skill Deficiencies of Job-Seekers
(% of HR Professionals citing the Problem)

60% - Verbal communication
45% - Business etiquette
40% - High school education
20% - Problem solving

HR Interviews

Filling Entry-Level Positions

Employer Reaction to Gaps: Offer Training

67% job training, 23% certification

57% will train "**the right person**"

Employer Search & Hiring

71% search outside Chatham

31% jobs filled with non-Chatham residents

45% say locals do not have the skills needed

33% say they hire underqualified persons

28% contact workforce dev. agency

5% of applicant pool from workforce dev. agency

24% of Openings Require a Specific Cert or Skill Set

such as.....

From HR Survey

(From HR Survey) **Skills Needed**	Specific Skills Requiring Certification Frequency of Mention	Desired Special Skills Frequency of Mention	Sum of Total Employment at Firms Mentioning Skill
Healthcare (RN/NP, etc.)	13	2	5000+
Computer Skills	5	8	5000+
Manufacturing Experience	-	6	1000-1250
Customer Service, Com Skills	-	8	1000-1250
Industry Specific Experience	-	12	250-500
Forklift Operation	5	4	250-500
Equipment Operation	5	4	150-250
CDL Licensed Drivers	3	2	150-250
Safety, OSHA	3	2	150-250
Welding	3	3	150-250
Machine Operator	2	4	150-250
	40 responses	30 responses	

Challenges in Hiring Ideal Candidates

Barriers: (% of HR Reps Citing Problem)

40% - Lack of work experience

25% - Transportation

20% - Poor work history

20% - Military transition

10% - Drug usage

10% - Tattoos/piercings

From HR Interviews

Employers: Perceived Barriers

(Ranking among list of 10 options)

#1 Lack of education/training/skills

#2 Home life of applicants/employees

#3 Criminal record

#4 Transportation

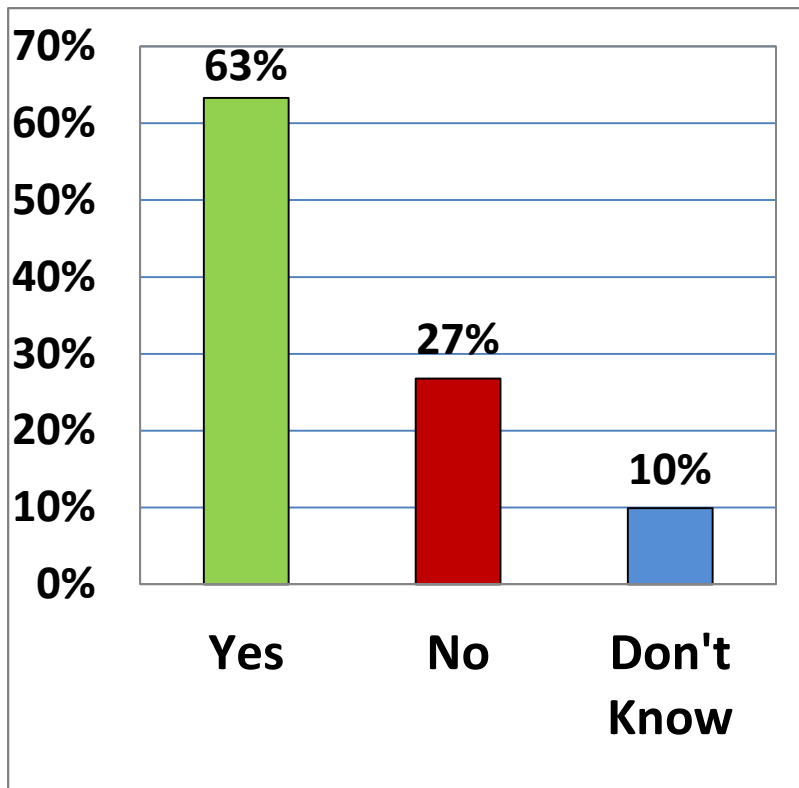# Job Seekers: Perceived Barriers

#1 Criminal record

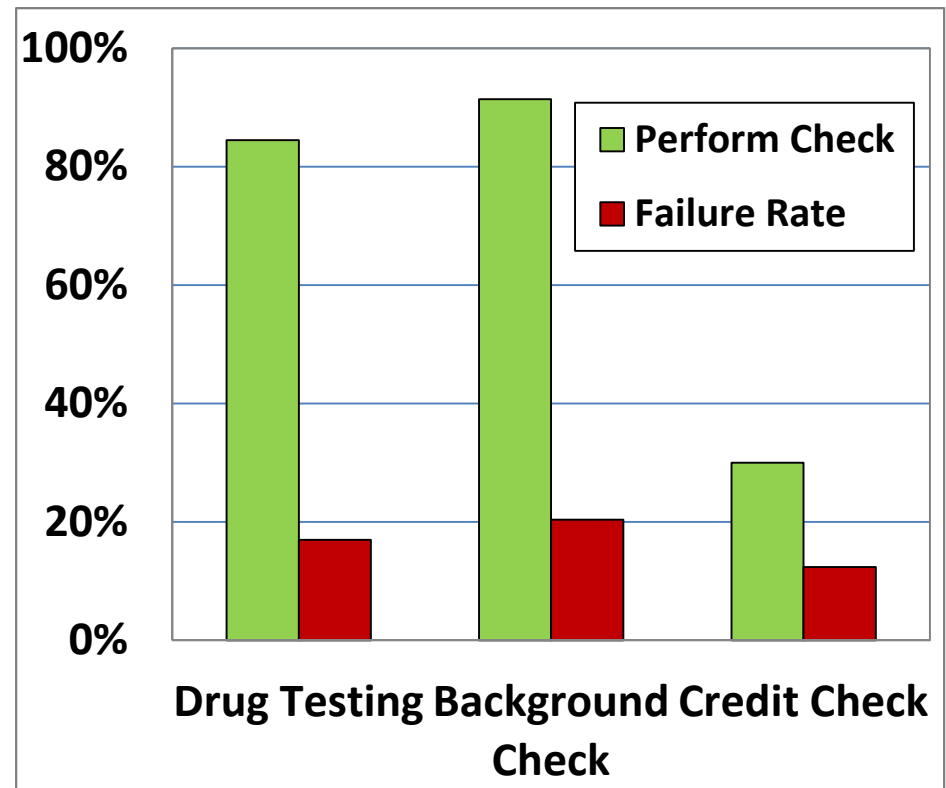#2 Lack of education/training/skills

#3 Transportation

#4 Childcare

From Focus Groups

Barriers to Meaningful Employment

Business Has Access to Public Transportation

Disqualifying Screens

From
HR Survey

Criminal Background

Employers will consider applicants with:

misdemeanor : yes, 81% remain eligible

felony: yes, 21% remain eligible

Willingness to look beyond criminal record.

**From
HR Survey**

Criminal Background

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Willingness to look beyond criminal record.

Job-seekers strongly disagree, however.

- Considered to be a nearly insurmountable barrier
- Job search behavior changed (self-disqualification)

Other Potential Disconnects

Job-seekers:
- undervalue soft skills
- discount adverse effects from home life issues
- see education milestone as challenging in near-
    term BUT employers desire more than
    classroom training
- may overvalue basic educational credential
- discount role of drug usage as barrier
    (but less among those training at Sav. Tech.)

**From Focus
Groups**

Overcoming Barriers (Job-Seekers)

<u>Existing Supports</u>

Friends/Family

Classmates

Teachers

Some knowledge of community support programs

<u>Desired Supports:</u>

Complete GED & obtain work-related experience

Financial supports...childcare, transportation

From Focus Groups

Challenges in Hiring Ideal Candidates
(Job Characteristics & Hiring Process, % HR Reps Citing…)

45% - Low pay
15% - Lack of advancement opportunities
15% - Checklist approach to hiring
15% - Over-reliance on computers in hiring

**From HR
Interviews**

Successes in Hiring Ideal Candidates
(Best Practices, % of HR Reps Citing…)

50% - Higher pay and benefits

45% - In-depth interviewing

45% - In-house advancement opportunities

40% - Consistent, clear work standards

35% - Willing to teach job skills to "the right person"

From HR Interviews

Significant Findings

Skills Gaps

Communication skills (oral, written)

Math and computer skills

45% agree: local applicants lack <u>specific skills</u> needed

Barriers

Education & training (for company/industry)

Transportation

Criminal record

Soft skills

Ideal Candidates have…

Customer service skills

Communication skills (with coworkers)

Teamwork skills

"If your system can't find quality workers in Savannah, then you should look into what's wrong with your system."

"Applicants in the area struggle to understand recruitment and how it works."

"The 'working poor' have little flexibility due to family issues and transportation issues."

"Businesses who operate on the low end of the wage scale should already know why they can't attract quality workers."

"Applicants can take steps like volunteering for nonprofits to practice skills they need to fit HR requirements for jobs (but very infrequently do so)."