



Montana Contractors Association Winter Convention

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How Culture Impacts Recruitment & Retention of Workers

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The Current State of the Construction Workforce

Contractors remain eager to hire



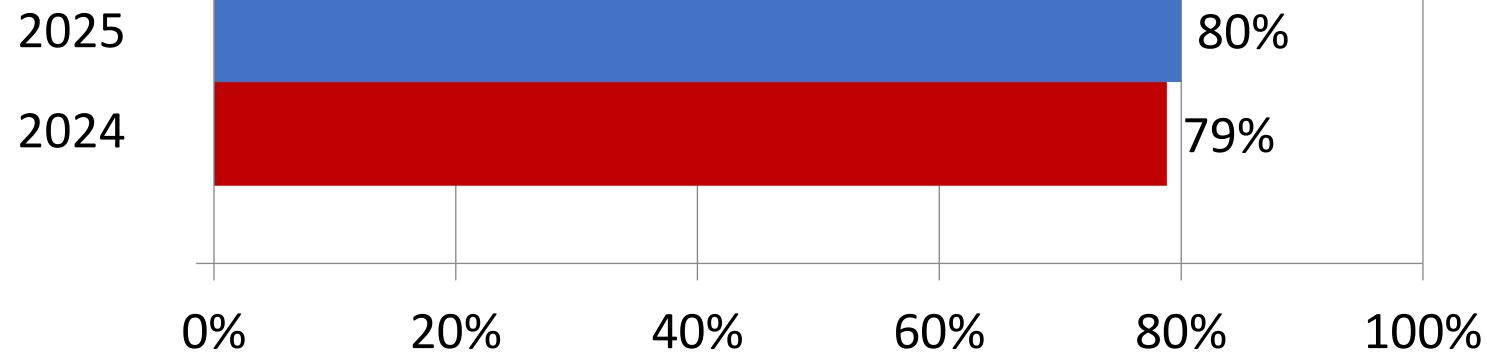
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% of firms with openings for:

hourly craft positions



salaried positions





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Most types of positions remain difficult to fill

% of contractors with openings that report difficulty filling:

Hourly craft positions

2025 92%

2024 94%

Salaried positions

2025 92%

2024 92%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Worker shortages are the most-cited reason for project delays

% of firms experiencing project delays due to:



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Shortage of workers
(ours or subcontractors) 45%

Longer lead times/shortages
of electrical equipment 35%

Government delays 34%

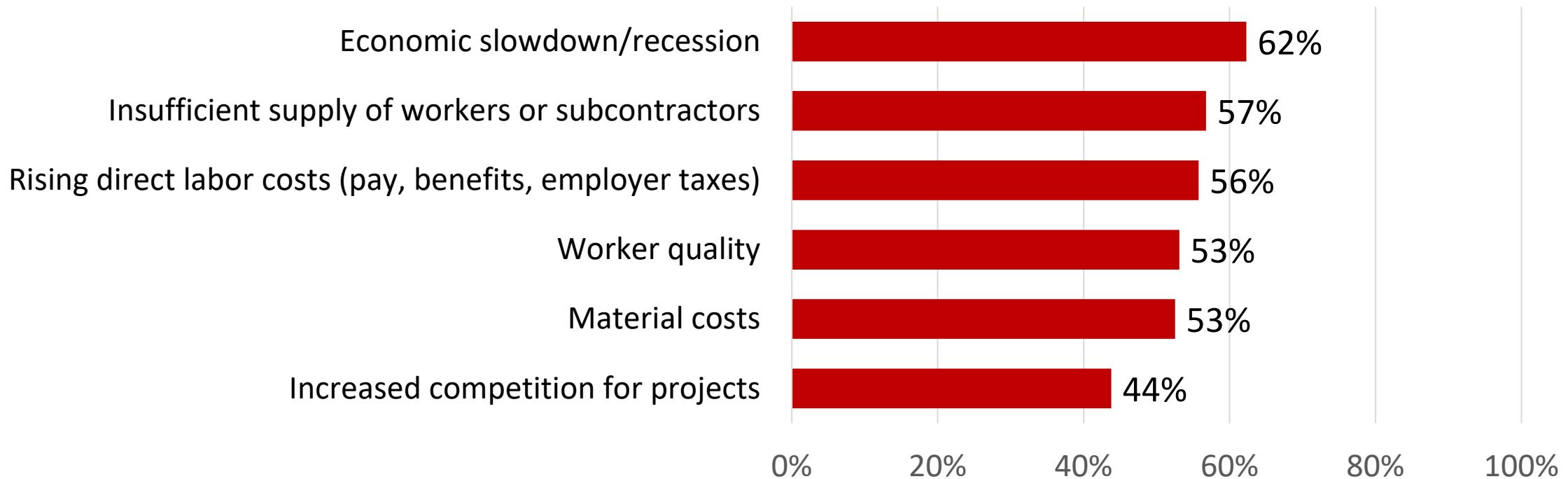
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Firms' major concerns for 2026

% of respondents who listed as a major concern:



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The Workforce is Shrinking



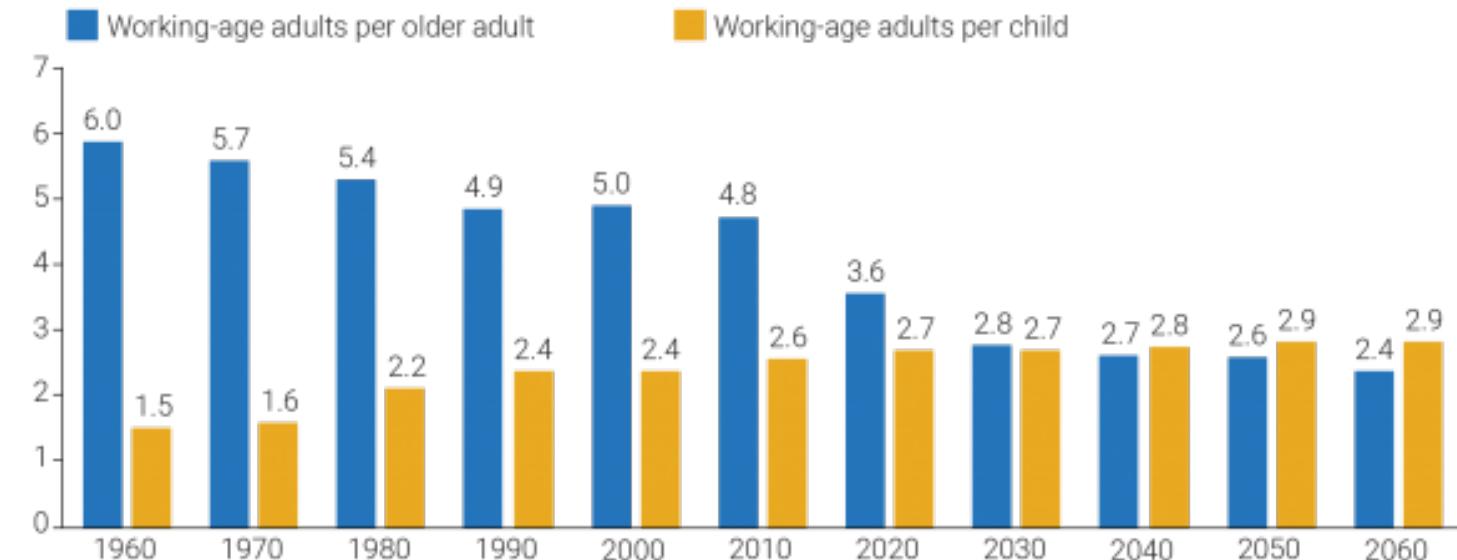
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Fewer Workers &
Children

More Retirees

Nearly 1 in 4

Americans will be 65 or older by
2050





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Firms are Improving Culture to Boost Recruitment & Retention

Cut Gen Z Turnover



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1. They get told the truth before they start.
2. They aren't alone after they get hired.
3. They don't have to guess how they're doing.
4. They have open conversations about how it's going.
5. They know policies and understand why.
6. They have clear conversations about their future.

Assess to Invest



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Assessments validate skills and knowledge to inform personalized development plans that align individual aspirations with organizational goals.

BELIEF IN TRAINING IS CRUCIAL

Retaining Travelers



- Better accommodations - invest in clean, comfortable housing
- Family engagement - paid visits or gestures like sending flowers home to spouses
- Travel incentives - some firms add 15 percent pay increases for employees who travel regularly



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Peopling is Hard

When wages are equal and the available talent pool is small,
leadership becomes the strategy.



target



Naomi Jackson | Plumb HR



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We've told ourselves the same story for ages...

"NOBODY WANTS TO WORK ANY MORE!"

A brief history of capitalists complaining that nobody wants to work for starvation wages

2022	According to a new survey released by TinyPulse, 1 in 5 executive leaders agree with this statement: "No one wants to work". These same leaders cite a "lack of response to job
2014	What has happened to the work ethic in America? Nobody wants to work anymore. It has not always been that way. When I first started to work as a teenager, I saw people work hard.
2006	like nobody wants to work anymore and when they do
1999	"Nobody wants to work anymore," Cecil said. "They all want to work in
1981	off this land last week. But they just fooled around. They didn't want to work. Nobody wants to work anymore.
1979	"Nobody wants to work anymore."
1969	— disgusted businessman called "Nobody Wants to Work Anymore." Talking about un-
1952	everybody was getting too darned lazy and nobody wants to work anymore. That's the truth if I ever heard it.
1940	trouble is everybody is on relief or a pension — nobody wants to work anymore."
1937	ams counties are complaining that "Nobody wants to work anymore."
1922	There is work, it is reported, for 15 it is because nobody wants to work any more unless they can
1916	he answered, "the reason for food scarcity is that nobody wants to work as hard as they used to. I asked a
1905	unreliable. None want to work for wages.
1894	next winter: it is becoming apparent that nobody wants to work these hard times.

... and it still isn't true.



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This isn't about fixing everything today.

It is about how we see the problem and our role in the solution.



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Question 1:

Do Your People See a Future and Their Place in It?



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Work is no longer just a job.

- HONESTY
- ALIGNMENT
- DIRECTION



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Question 2:

Who Do New Hires Experience as 'The Company'?



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Culture is experienced, not explained.

- First impressions happen in the field.
- Supervisors directly shape retention.
- (in case you didn't know it)
Technical skill ≠ People Leader



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Question 3:

If You Were Fully Ready to Support Them,
Who else could be in your talent pool?



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Most Companies Don't Have a Recruiting Problem.

- They have a readiness problem.



Turning insight into Action.

One insight. One action. Start where you are.

- Turn to create groups of 2–4.
- Today we aren't competitors – we're facing the problem together!
- Discuss the handout questions together.
- Look for patterns, not perfect answers.
- Plan for a 10-15 minute discussion.



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QUESTIONS?