



I-DRIVE CRA WORKFORCE FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Report, Authorship and Analysis

Polis Institute Team

Bahiyyah Maroon, Ph.D.

Katherine Philp, Ed.D., M.P.H.

Nicole Robles

Christine Hughes

Chris Ramos



Report Funding and Co-Creation

Renuka Sastri

Sr Professional, Workforce & Economic Development
I-Drive CRA
Orange County Administration
Renuka.sastri@ocfl.net

Marthaly Irizarry, MPA

Economic Trade and Tourism Development
Office of Mayor Jerry L. Demings
Orange County Administration

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Founded in 1998, the International Drive Community Redevelopment Agency has grown its focus of impact substantially over the years. There are an estimated 27,577 residents housed in 13,344 housing units within the I-Drive CRA footprint. At the same time, approximately 1,800 companies exist in the footprint and they provide over 90,000 jobs filled by both people who live in the area and people who commute in.

In the spring of 2023, Orange County Administration engaged [Polis Institute](#) to conduct focus groups with people who work and/or live in the International Drive area. A series of focus groups were held on the overarching topic of career and job advancement. Subtopics were included to generate a full portrait of the needs of people in the I-Drive area specific to employment development. In all, eighty-seven people participated. Analysis of their perspectives and survey feedback revealed key themes for advancing employment development in the area.

Among people working and living in the I-Drive area, priority areas for support in advancing job development and career pathways are:

- Support in Strengthening Social Capital & Social Networks
- Career Assistance - Including targeted trainings & mentorship
- Financial Assistance - In areas of transportation, housing, childcare and more
- Healthcare Assistance - Help with access to healthcare and to mental health services
- Life Planning Assistance - Financial planning and life coaching support



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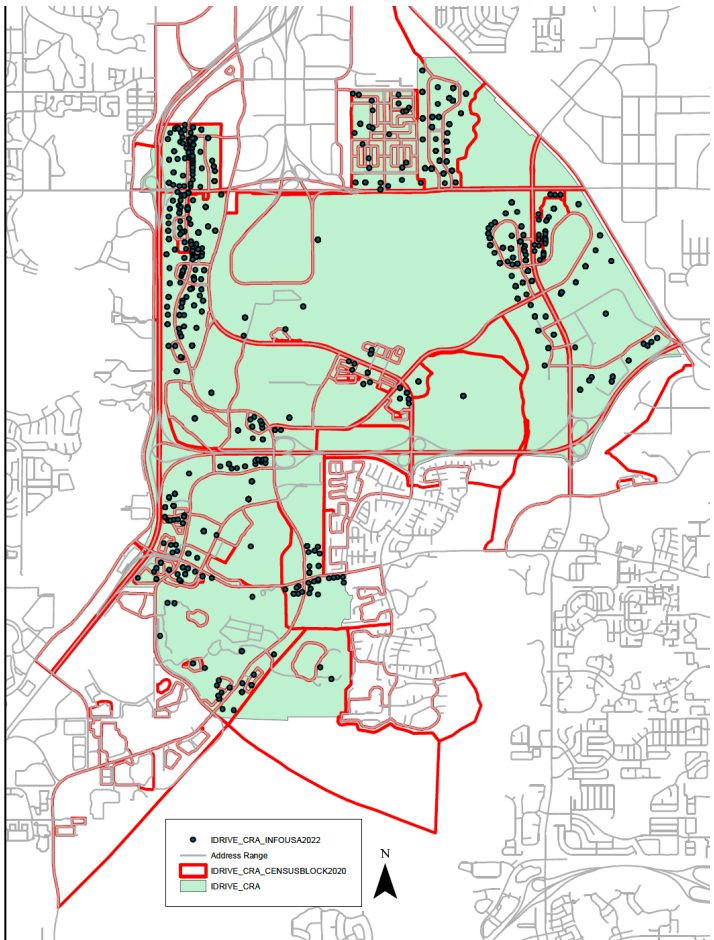
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CONTEXT

Founded in 1998, the International Drive Community Redevelopment Agency has grown its focus of impact substantially over the years. There are an estimated 27,577 residents housed in 13,344 housing units within the I-Drive CRA footprint. At the same time, approximately 1,800 companies exist in the footprint and they provide over 90,000 jobs filled by both people who live in the area and people who commute in.

Initially emphasizing transportation projects, today the I-Drive CRA encompasses five key elements of work. Each Key Plan Element encompasses a range of initiative focuses.

The purpose of this report is to provide insights gleaned from employees who live and/or work in the I-Drive footprint. The insights are intended to assist decision makers as they determine the



best approaches for employment training programs serving people in the I-Drive footprint.

Key Plan Element	Major Category of Focus
Transportation	Roadway Improvements
	Transit Capital & Operations
	Pedestrian Mobility & Safety
	Technology & Other
Attainable & Affordable Housing	Direct Support or Incentives
	Other Programs
Economic Development	Economic Diversification
	Employment Training
Community, Cultural, & Institutional Programs	Youth & Senior Programs & Projects

FOCUS GROUP OVERVIEW



The I-Drive Focus Groups were conducted over five sessions in the spring of 2023. A total of 87 people participated in the focus groups.

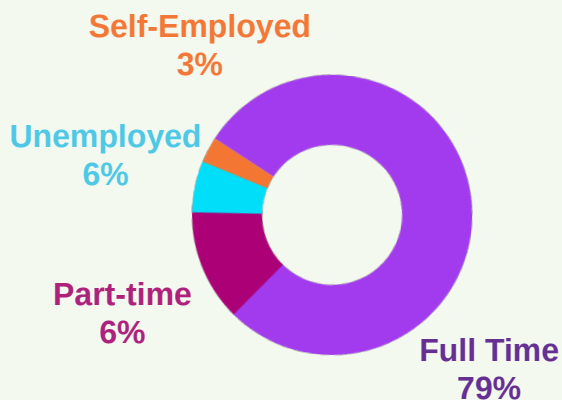
100% of focus group participants work in the I-Drive area. 14% of participants live and work in the area. And 86% of participants work in the area but live elsewhere.

Participants were asked a series of questions on the following topics: Job training and career advancement, childcare, transportation, and entrepreneurship. Each section included opportunities for respondents to rate answers “yes” or “no” and to engage in open-ended conversations in response to structured queries. Participants also completed surveys prior to the start of each focus group. The data from the surveys, closed responses, and open ended questions has been analyzed to identify top priorities for career development and training support requested by people working and/or living in the I-Drive area.

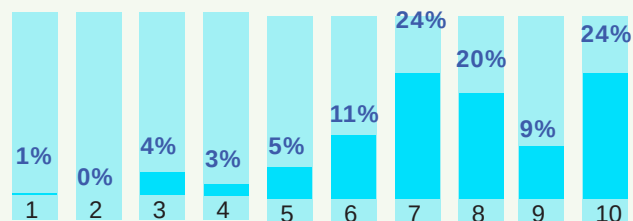
SECTION ONE: FOCUS GROUP CONTEXT

Focus group participants completed a short survey before the start of group questions and discussion. The survey results provide context for how people feel about their jobs and what they are currently doing in the area of career and job advancement. Demographic information gathered from the surveys is provided in Appendix I.

What is your current work status?



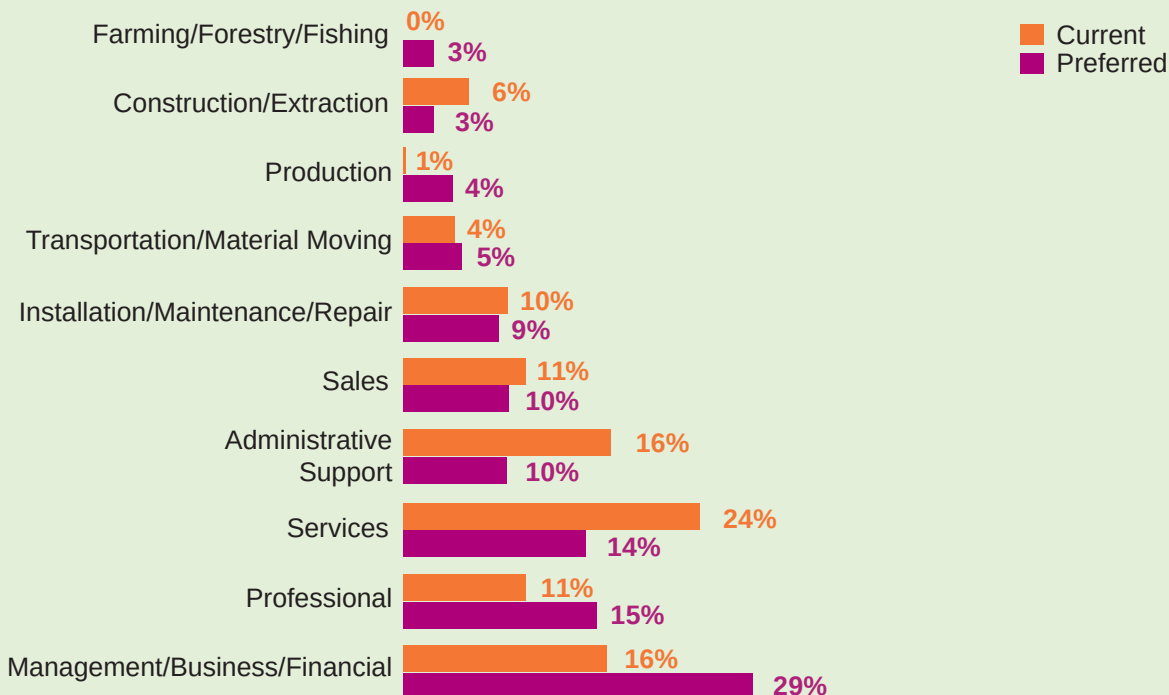
How prepared do you currently feel to advance your career opportunities?



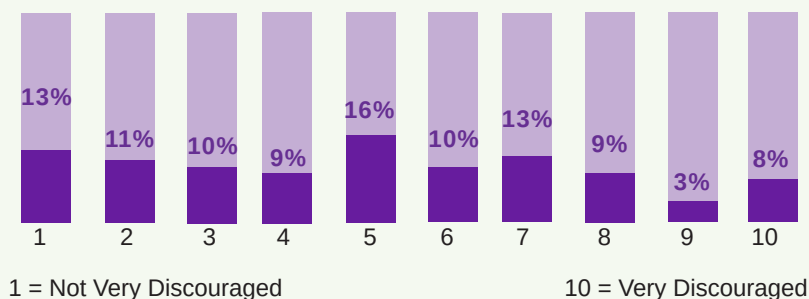
1 = Not Very Prepared

10 = Very Prepared

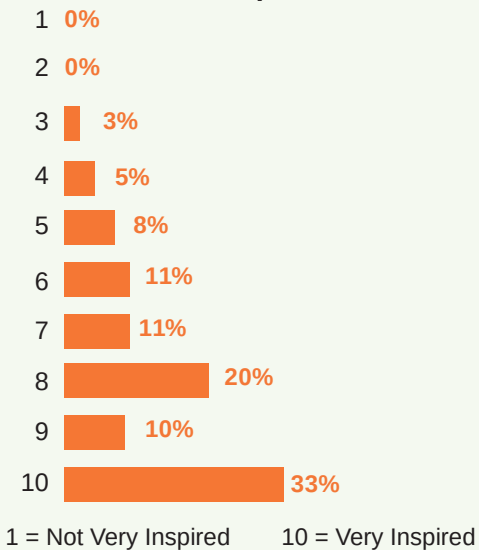
Current vs. Preferred Career Field



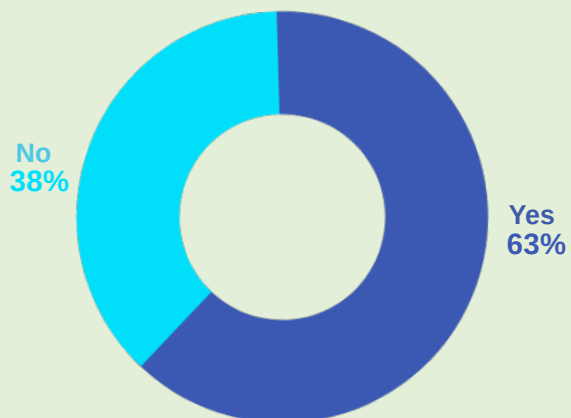
How discouraged do you feel about your career currently?



How inspired do you feel about your career potential?



Are you satisfied with your current job or career situation?

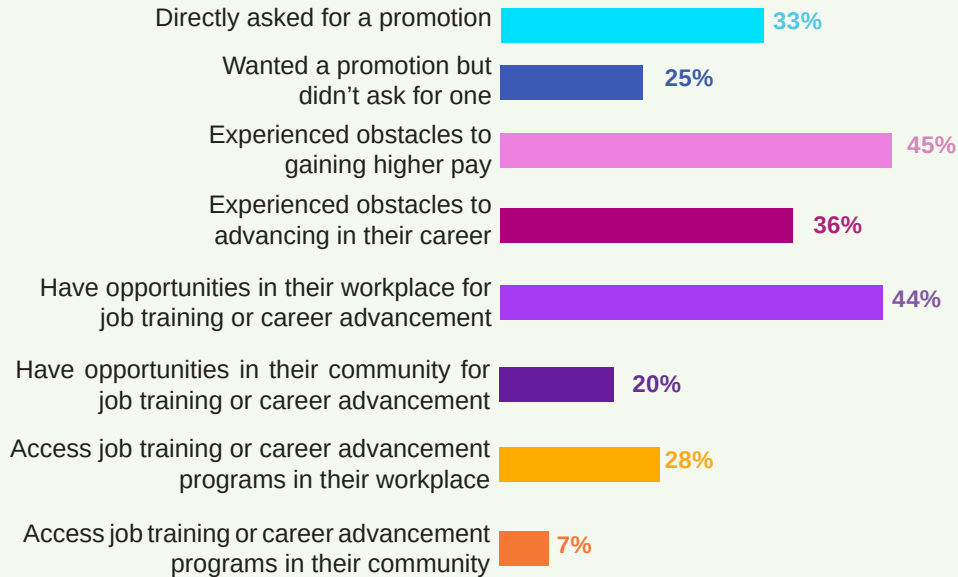




Training & Career Development Response Overviews

We asked respondents a series of questions to gauge how involved or not they already are in the growth of their career and job tracks. Less than 1/3rd of people have asked for a promotion during their career. A quarter of people have wanted to ask for promotions but didn't. Although 45% of people said they experience obstacles to increasing their pay only 36% report obstacles to advancing their careers.

Respondents Who:



The majority of focus group participants (66%) said that their workplaces do not offer them training or career advancement opportunities. This does not mean that most employers don't offer training, but it does show that most employees are unaware of training and career advancement programs through their employers. At the same time, 80% of respondents were unaware of or don't have access to training and career advancement programming in their community.

Responses suggest that the majority of people who are aware of workplace training and advancement programs, do seize those opportunities. 44% of people have access to employer based opportunities and 28% of people utilize those programs (more than half). By contrast, although 20% of people said their communities have similar resources, only slightly more than 1/3rd (7%) actually utilize community based training and advancement programs.



SECTION TWO: TRAINING & CAREER ADVANCEMENT BARRIERS

Participants were asked through a variety of prompts to identify barriers to career advancement and engagement in trainings. Following are the findings of barriers that emerged as themes throughout the five focus groups.

Among people who do not access trainings or career advancement opportunities key barriers cited were:

- A lack of time
- Inconvenient training hours
- No access to the training (Hard to find out about & lack of specific information on the training)
- Training not offered for their industry or not related to their job
- A lack of capacity due to already doing different training
- A lack of support from employer & personal network
- No financial capacity to participate.
- Not eligible for training assistance or not selected for training

Among people who have participated in trainings or advancement opportunities, the challenges they faced ran along key themes that include:

- The amount of time it required (Scheduling/Time Management)
- Lack of support from management to accommodate participation



Available Participation Time

Lack of available time emerged as a leading barrier to participating in training programs, often due to family obligations or long work hours. Shift workers stressed the difficulty of finding programs that fit their schedules.

Participants cited challenges with accessing training due to limited schedules or care giving duties, noting that even online courses meant to improve accessibility were often offered at inconvenient times.

Organizational support for training and development varied. Some respondents said that their managers supported time allocations for training, but other participants felt widespread (rather than sporadic) support would encourage more participation.

“Now you have to get permission from your supervisors to attend those and it takes you away from your workplace. So if you are an integral part of their program, then you may not get the permission that you need.”

While many participants cited lack of available time as a major barrier, the majority of people (66%) simultaneously said they are willing to devote extra hours each week to training. Among people willing to devote additional time, 74% said they would spend up to two hours a week on career advancement and training.

Respondents Who Are:



There is a clear disconnect between people's willingness to spend time and their actual ability to allocate time.



Credits & Relevance to Career Track

Trainings were described as either not relevant to the job or focused only on the basic competencies of the job.

Many participants stressed that when they do take trainings offered, credit for those trainings is not directly linked to their career track - giving them no tangible benefit for participation. Participants said they would like to see more trainings that are directly linked to promotion and advancement pathways.

A key theme emerged indicating a desire among employees to have access to trainings that prepare them for management positions. This theme is reflected in the fact that while only 16% people are currently in management/business/financial occupations, 29% of people want to be in those occupations.

Participants stressed that they were willing to spend extra time in training but only if they saw a clear opportunity for advancement.

"I can sacrifice hours, especially if it's working overtime, [whatever] it's gonna take as long as I advance...knowing that I have that security in my new career."

"Training...should be to promote you also. So if you're seeking promotion, that will enable you to seek and get a better chance of promotion."

To increase participation in trainings that advance careers, employers will need to create clearer guidelines that show the exact advancement pathway a given training links to.



Opportunity Awareness & Eligibility

Respondents said they were often not aware of training or career advancement opportunities until after the option was closed. People reported hearing about training from colleagues after they'd concluded. People also reported not being alerted to job openings unless they intentionally went into employers' career pages on websites rather than receiving any announcement via email or postings in break areas. This seemingly small disconnect actually had a big impact on people's stated work morale. The lack of easily accessible information on training and job opportunities contributed to people feeling "excluded," and "left out," of their company's advancement tracks.

Several participants of smaller employers noted that there is no internal position or department at their organization to help

guide career development or connect them to training resources.

Many respondents said that the programs they are aware of come with eligibility requirements. People cited income limits as a key source of frustration indicating that despite not meeting income limits for things like tuition assistance, they could still not afford the programs on their own. Other respondents said that programs that do offer social supports such as transportation or childcare also have income limits - especially when offered through community

based entities. Again, such eligibility limits were a notable deterrent to taking part in programming.

"I've never been in a program because I've never found where to access those types of programs."

"If there was an organized section of the company that was always focused on advancing careers and it was a well known [resource]... you know, 'make sure to sign up for your next opportunity, look what these guys finished in this class,' ...I personally would have more likelihood to join in."



Additional Key Issue Areas: Childcare, Transportation, Housing

We also asked respondents to talk about childcare and transportation. The goal of these question sets was to identify broader issues that may challenge people in maintaining jobs or advancing in their careers.

Childcare

One fifth of respondents indicated they have childcare responsibilities. Respondents to questions about childcare overwhelmingly reported serious challenges in this area. Several participants cited the high cost of childcare as a major barrier. While some indicated work-subsidized child care had been helpful, it was not noted to be widely available to most workers.

In addition to barriers to traditional daycare, parents of school-aged children said that resources are difficult to find, if they exist at all. In particular, programs for middle and high school students whose parents work long hours or have long commutes expressed concern about how long their children could be unsupervised. Finding childcare during school breaks is also a challenge for parents.

"(My daughter is) not in childcare anymore. She used to be because I used to work at the facility and I would get a discount, but since I currently don't work there anymore, they charge full price and it's too expensive. With the amount of pay that I get from a different job, it's just not worth it."

"My kids didn't have that opportunity to go into a daycare or any program like that because they are so expensive. My sister right now has her son in daycare three or four times a week and it's almost the price of her rent."

"After school is not the only time that parents may need assistance. (There's) a random teacher workday off. I guess I'm taking off from work...spring break, winter break, summer. There are no programs that offer anything for middle school students. And I have a middle schooler starting high school. If there were (no programs) for middle school, there's less than none for high school students that cannot be left alone for an 11 hour day because I have to get to and from work."

"I feel that (my daughter) needs a little bit more help. I can help her. But with my job, I don't get off till 10:30, 11 o'clock. So once I get home, she's in the bed and she's asleep. So if I can get an after school program that can help her, like maybe with her homework or something... You know, they can help her with that. Being that I'm at work."

“There’s lots of individuals at my job, they have children and they have to travel so far. If there’s an emergency, they have to go so far to get to their kids because there’s no childcare that’s kind of close to international drive.”

Transportation

Among the majority of respondents transportation emerged as a major obstacle to both work-life balance and career advancement. 13% of people said that lack of reliable transportation prevents them from getting to work at times. The majority of participants (71%) drive independently to work. Only 3% carpool to work. Although only 7% reported using public transportation to work, those who do cited significant problems including transit time and cost.

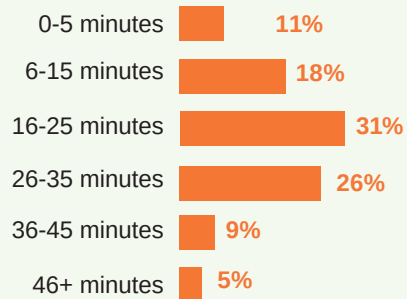
A notable percentage of people (17%) are remote workers. It bears pointing out that across focus groups, people who aren’t remote workers and who primarily utilize computers to do their work expressed deep frustration for not being able to work remotely.

For people driving, the cost of gas, wear and tear on vehicles, and the cost of tolls, were points of intense frustration. Traffic congestion in the I-4 corridor and along other roads also came up repeatedly as an area of distress bordering on anger.

Among respondents who work in the hospitality sector, a large number talked about the lack of proximate parking at their jobs. They voiced a common concern about being required to park relatively far from their job sites, because proximate parking is reserved for guests and visitors.

Stressful commutes were also a common theme across focus groups. Participants noted that the cost of living near the I-drive area prevented them from securing nearby housing, and living far away meant increased wear and tear on vehicles, as well as a significant amount of money spent on fuel and tolls.

How long is your commute to work?



There was a notable mismatch between the conversational responses to questions about driving to work and the average commute time (24 minutes) of participants. On paper, people spend an hour a day commuting on average. Yet in discussion transportation to and from work was by far the most expressive portion of focus group interactions. The frustration of one respondent captures the generalized sentiment of many participants:

“Actually pay us enough money so we can live near where we work. It’s not effective to give us a gas stipend if we’re still in the traffic. Like if you would pay us a wage so we could live closer to our work, we wouldn’t have to be stuck in traffic for hours at night. We could just go to work in 15 minutes. So I think the best solution would just be to make sure that you’re offering a wage that is actually livable and even more than livable for someone who can actually take care of what they need to and then live a comfortable life in the area.”

This concern also highlights the intersection of wages, affordable housing, and transportation. When average salaries are not in line with the average cost of homes and rentals in an area it impacts the transportation realities faced by workers. The challenge is the link between normative pay scales, the median cost of homes, and the lack of affordable housing.

Housing

Focus group questions did not include a specific section on housing. But this issue area emerged repeatedly across sessions. People pointed frequently to a lack of affordable housing in the area. People also shared that housing assistance programs are not easily accessible or widely known. There was a general consensus that more affordable housing should be available and that more could be done to connect employees with information on housing down payment and loan assistance programs.

“We can move closer to international drive where we work, (if there’s more) opportunity of home ownership for those that probably think that they never have the capability (of owning a home).”

“I heard something recently that they’re developing different areas of Orlando where they want to build new businesses...and they are actually building a lot of affordable housing outside of the iDrive area. But it would be nice, since iDrive corridor is such a big focus, especially with this focus group, that they consider (building housing) for people who work near iDrive.”

“So I know Orange County has (housing assistance) programs, but it’s not something that’s readily available or known to a lot of folks. There’s a young man, um, in his thirties at my job and I went and dug out the information when I bought my house and gave it to him because he never ...knew about those types of down payment assistance programs that the county offers.”

“I should not work 40 hours a week and still need to have a second job or a roommate or having to do some type of something to get money to be able to pass some place to stay. ... rent in like a studio apartment, it’s \$1,600! I don’t even make 1600 on one paycheck.”

SECTION THREE: SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

There were two different tracks for solution areas that emerged in the focus groups. The first track concerns how to increase participation in job training and career advancement opportunities. Answering this question was the primary purpose of the focus group research.

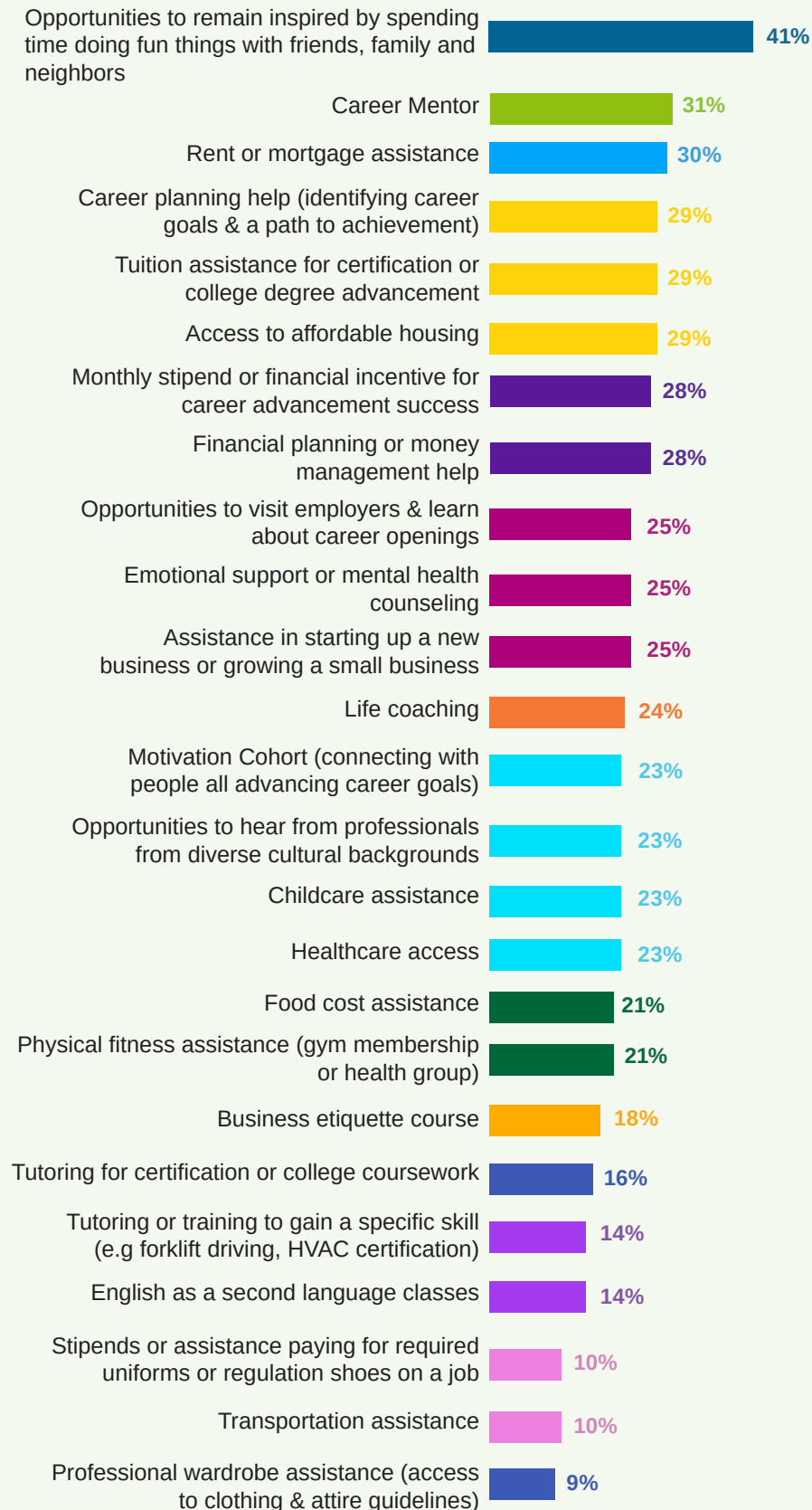
The second track concerns how to increase people’s ability to maintain work life balance as employees in the I-Drive area. The second track was not the primary purpose of the focus groups. However, the challenges people shared related to childcare access, transportation, and accessible housing made it clear that there is a broader concern among employees for how to navigate work amidst these structural life obstacles. While some of the concerns generated by this track of issues will be addressed through the focus on training and career development, the broader matter of structural issues undermining overall work life balance are beyond the scope of this report.

When focus group participants were asked what types of support and services are most important to career success offered a range of responses including:

- Personal/Administrative training
- Healthcare
- Higher wages
- Onsite childcare
- Managerial training opportunities
- Transportation stipends
- Job duties related training
- Access to attainable housing

In addition to conversational responses, participants answered a survey question shedding light on what supports would be most helpful to advance their job and career growth. Results are shown in the following chart.

Areas of assistance that will be most helpful in supporting job or career development



To utilize these responses for strategic decision making, we organized responses into categories of career assistance, financial assistance, life planning assistance, healthcare, and social capital building.



Career Assistance Supports

Along with indicating career support they would most benefit from, people also identified factors that would inspire them to take part in training programs. The top rated factors are:

1. The training leads to a certification that directly advances careers
2. The training has a high relevance to job responsibilities
3. Training time is compensated
4. Trainings are conducted during work hours
5. Better access to timely information about trainings and job openings
6. Free or sponsored training

Core motivations to take part in trainings are:

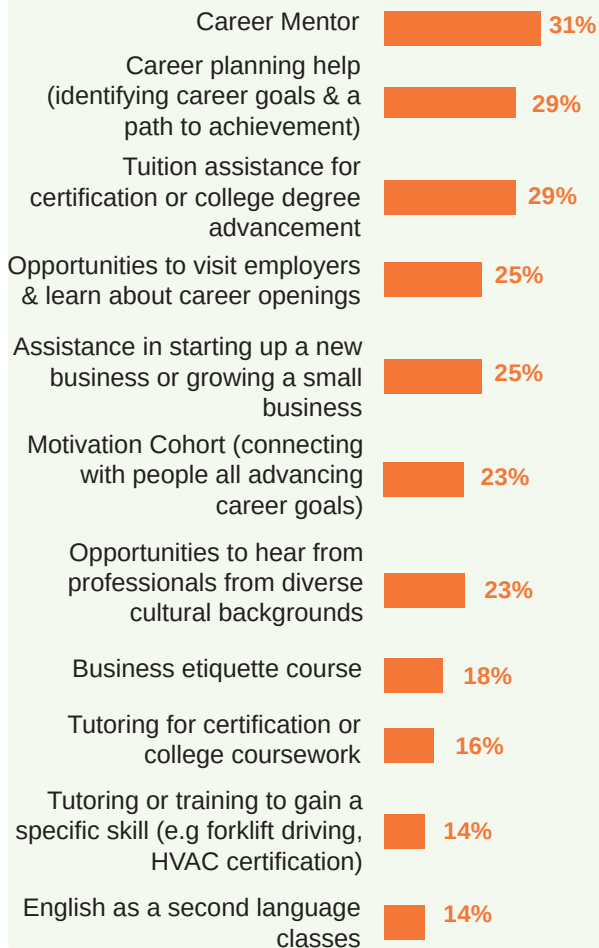
1. Money (Increased pay with advancement)
2. Professional advancement
3. Self Fulfillment
4. Family
5. Job security
6. Job confidence
7. Skill development

Among people who said they actively enroll in trainings and pursue career advancement there were several key benefits people cited, which are:

- Business networking
- Gaining valuable knowledge
- Career advancement
- Increase in wages
- Training on equipment
- Additional paid work hours
- New license acquisition

These responses can be utilized in developing messaging for programming that will genuinely resonate with people considering taking training or participating in a career advancement program.

Career Assistance Needs



The responses of focus group participants show that steps can be taken by employers and community based organizations to elevate enrollment in career advancement tracks and training programs. Recommendations to improve job advancement results and training participation include ensuring that:

- Systematic guidance is offered for people who want to advance their careers: this may be done internally or in partnership with external entities
- Training is clearly linked to advancement pathway or opportunity that increases income opportunities or job security

- Training is offered at a time that is accessible or can be completed asynchronously
- There are shadowing/cross-departmental exposure opportunities
- Mentorship programming is offered
- Internal networking opportunities across departments or divisions are programmed into the workforce experience
- Peer cohorts are established to motivate and support employees pursuing career/job advancement
- Speakers and trainers reflect a diversity of backgrounds

Employers can support the advancement of employees and contractors in their training pathways by:

- Clearly defining advancement pathways that show direct links between a given training, a given training or certification, and the career track they propel
- Identifying skills requirements for advanced positions and providing guidelines showing the skill set, trainings improving those skill sets (internally or externally offered), and related positions linking to trainings
- Providing financial incentives including stipends for completion, free trainings, tuition or course payment assistance
- Offering ESL courses AND offering training programs in other languages
- Giving employees access to tutors who can assist the learning process
- Increasing awareness of opportunities and measuring the response
 - Establish baselines of existing training enrollment rates and of internal applicant rates for job openings
 - Make a monthly or bi-weekly commitment to offer company-wide messaging related to career advancement (inspirational messaging, clear information on upcoming trainings, and job openings)
 - If it is not already centralized, provide a point of contact for internal advancement & training information and ensure access is available to all employees
 - Deliver messaging via multiple languages

Community based entities are best positioned to support people's requests for:

- Entrepreneurship programs.
- Long term advancement courses (certifications or college degrees).
- Business etiquette classes
- Additional ESL offerings





Terminology Findings

The terminology that employers and community based entities use to engage employees can impact enrollment rate outcomes. For this reason, focus groups participants were asked to share what terminology most appeals to them when it comes to job development and training programs. They rated the appeal of “Workforce development”, “Talent development,” and “Career development.” While popular with policy makers and others, the term “workforce development” appeals the least to employees.

“Workforce development sounds like I’m a mouse and a wheel. Just doing things as a robot. I do not like that at all. Talent development makes me feel as though you are personally extracting my talents and making sure that you’re growing me as a person that I want to become. And then career development, yes, because we all want to have that...having a career sounds better than having a job.”

The majority of people (56%) prefer the term “career development”. 25% of people prefer the term “talent development”. A full 26% of people found none of the terms inspiring. Only 2% of people said “workforce development” is a preferred term. It’s strongly recommended that programs or initiatives utilize the term Career Development or Talent Development.



Financial Assistance

Requests for financial assistance across a range of areas coincided with qualitative input during focus group conversations. Some forms of financial assistance are best addressed by employers working in partnership with external entities to both defray costs and to enhance services. Recommended partnerships include:

- Employers and Dress for Success or retail organizations able to offer discounts
- Gyms/ YMCAs and employers partnering for discounted membership and cohort-driven fitness programs
- Employers and Second Harvest Food Bank, US Hunger and other nonprofit organizations partnering to provide access to low-cost or no cost food boxes.
 - Because of the stigmas attached to food assistance, these partnerships may be best fulfilled through messaging agreements. For instance, providing employees with frequent information on volunteer opportunities at these organizations is also a way to inform employees of the resources they offer without raising concerns of stigma.

Finance Assistance Request



30%

Rent or mortgage assistance



29%

Access to affordable housing



28%

Stipend or \$ incentive for career advancement



23%

Childcare assistance



21%

Food cost assistance
Physical fitness assistance (gym membership or health group)



10%

Required uniforms/shoes assistance
Transportation assistance



9%

Professional wardrobe assistance



Housing

In the area of housing, people generally focused on a perceived need for dramatically increased wages to address the cost of housing. Some respondents also recommended that more affordable housing be built. And a smaller number of respondents indicated that more can be done to link employees directly to housing assistance and loan assistance programs in Orange County.

Community based and government entities are best positioned to offer housing assistance to employees. Establishing formal partnerships or informal agreements ensuring employees are aware of resources in Orange County can address people's requests for housing assistance by tapping into existing systems and programs.



Childcare

For people with children, we asked what would improve experiences with childcare services used during work hours or during training hours outside of work. Responses in order of importance were:

- Financial assistance with the cost of childcare
- Onsite Childcare
- Higher quality of available childcare
- Lower cost of available childcare
- More options for high quality childcare with alternative hours that are not just 9-5

While direct financial support was a request among one quarter of respondents, such support is clearly needed in tandem with other resources including access to higher quality care and care during flexible hours.

Employers can leverage existing resources by ensuring their teams are aware of enrollment drives (for example VPK) and well ranked service providers in the area. This requires acting in partnership with entities such as the Early Learning Coalition

and potentially independent early learning childcare providers.

Employer based training programs can include a question about the need for childcare on registration forms. Employers should also coordinate or contract with childcare providers to offer services during training hours during off-work hours programming. Providing childcare during an activity is a model many community based nonprofits already utilize to sustain high enrollment rates. Learning partnerships with such entities can be a powerful resource for establishing a system of consistent childcare support for programming offered outside of work hours.



Transportation

All participants were asked to share their views on how to improve work related transportation challenges. Requests for transportation assistance can be fulfilled by providing:

- Transportation Stipends
- Bus passes
- Shuttles from employee parking to work sites
- Employer sponsored emergency roadside assistance

People also talked about the need for broader structural improvements to ease the stress of getting to and from work. These improvements include:

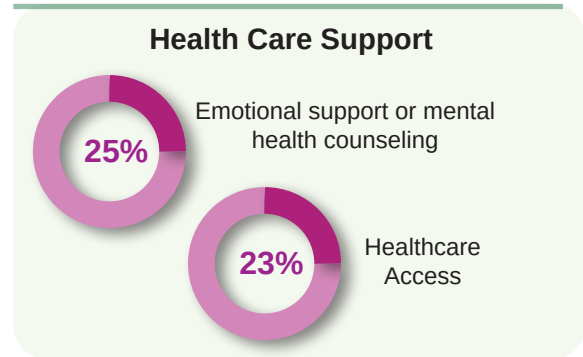
- Safer walking areas
- Infrastructure work that decreases traffic congestion
- Public transportation improvements (fewer stops/ shorter ride times)





Healthcare

For employees or contractors that are not eligible for or cannot afford employer offered healthcare, the need for access can be addressed by linking teams to affordable healthcare options during annual open enrollment windows. Employers can promote open enrollment by working in partnership with community based entities that guide people through the enrollment process.



Mental health care is a need that has risen nationally in recent years and this phenomena is true among people working in the I-Drive area as well. There are a range of obstacles to accessing mental healthcare including lack of insurance, high co-pays, limits on care, and a lack of available providers taking new clients. A coordinated and systematic initiative will be necessary to help overcome the obstacles and address people’s need for mental health resources.



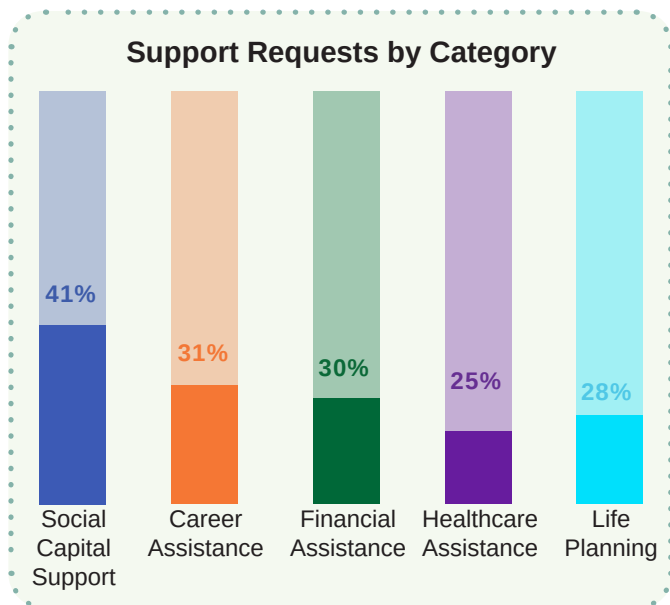
Life Planning Assistance

The top two life planning resources people identified as important are financial planning and life coaching, which were requested by 28% and 24% of respondents respectively. Both of these resources can be provided to people living and working in the area through leveraged relationships with community based organizations. Strategically, it’s important to identify those organizations that provide free or low cost financial planning. In addition, organizations offering free or low-cost life coaching services should be identified and engaged to serve initiatives in partnership.



Social Capital Building

It may seem counterintuitive that a request for social events with friends and family (social capital) was the highest rated need to advance and grow careers. But increasingly prominent research on the role of social capital and supportive networks shows that people’s careers are tightly linked to how strong their supportive networks are and how high their social capital is. Further, social activities with friends and family are shown to increase people’s wellbeing rates. And strong wellbeing for individuals is vital to sustaining the challenges and stress of career advancement.



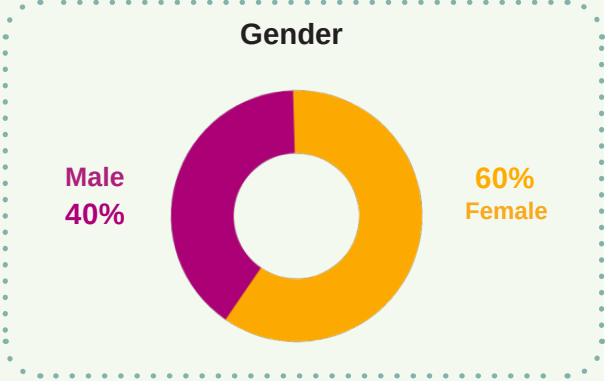
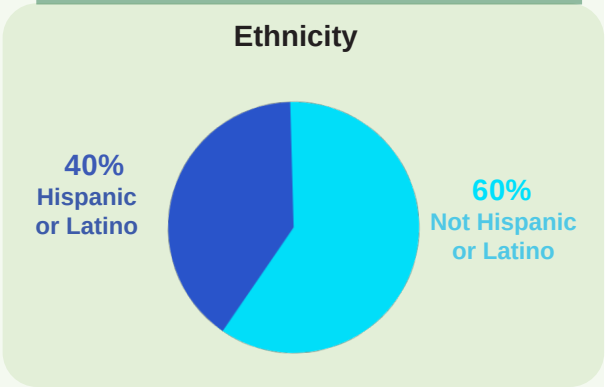
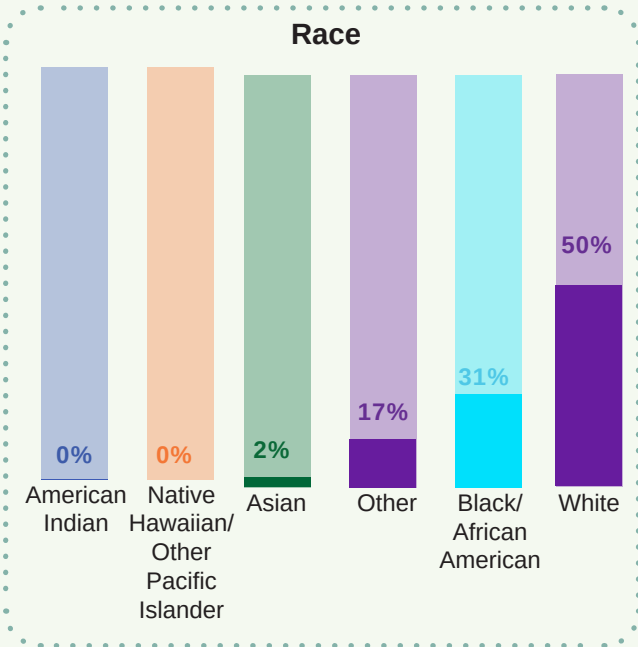
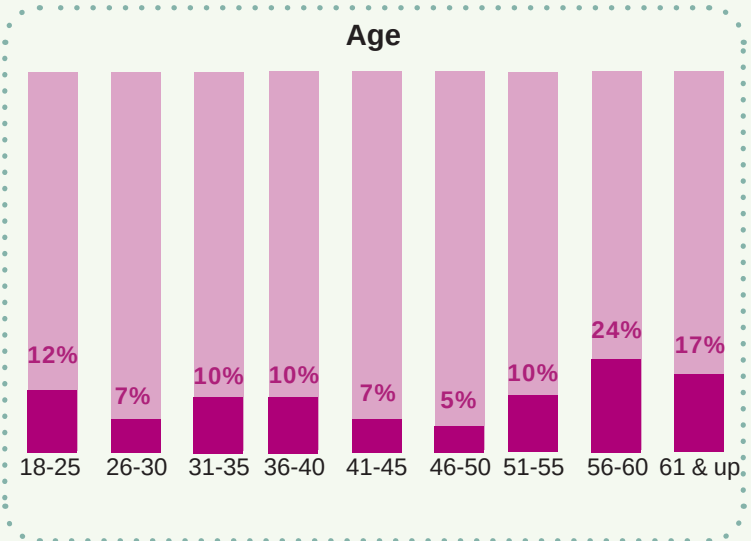
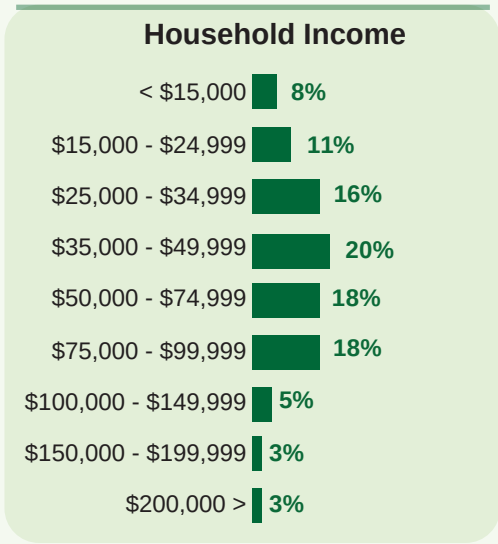
Partnerships between community based organizations and employers can set the stage for creating occasions in which employees can socialize with family and friends. While easily overlooked, this particular activity may generate a high rate of return in terms of motivating, inspiring, and ultimately supporting employees on their job advancement pathways.



Conclusion

The goal of the I-Drive employee focus groups was to understand the barriers to and potential solutions for job and career advancement programming for people living and working in the I-Drive area. The voices of people living and working in the I-Drive footprint show that directed supports in areas of career advancement, financial assistance, life planning, healthcare, and social capital building are central to empowering people as they seek to further their job pathways. To fulfill the supportive needs identified community based organizations, government agencies, and employers will need to collaborate and coordinate for strategic impact.

APPENDIX I: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS



APPENDIX II: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- A.** On a scale of one to ten how inspired do you feel about your career potential? (1 being low inspiration and 10 being high) Circle One
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- B.** On a scale of one to ten how discouraged do you feel about your career currently? (1 being not very discouraged and 10 being very discouraged) Circle One
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- C.** On a scale of one to ten how prepared do you currently feel to advance your career opportunities? (1 being not very prepared and 10 being prepared) Circle One
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- D.** How long is your commute to work? (Please enter the amount of time it takes in minutes) _____ Minutes
- E.** Have you ever enrolled in college? (Check one)
 Yes No
- G.** Do you have a high school diploma or GED? (Check one)
 Yes No
- H.** Do you have an associate's degree? (Check one)
 Yes No
- I.** Do you have a technical or professional certification? (Check one)
 Yes No
- J.** What is your current work status? (Check one)
 Unemployed Full Time
 Self-employed Part Time
- K.** Are you satisfied with your current job or career situation? (Check one)
 Yes No
- L.** What is your preferred job or career field? (Occupations list)
 Management/Business/Financial
 Professional
 Sales
 Administrative Support
 Services
 Farming/Forestry/Fishing
 Construction/Extraction
 Installation/Maintenance/Repair
 Production
 Transportation/Material Moving
- M.** What is your current job or career field? (Occupations list)
 Management/Business/Financial
 Professional
 Sales
 Administrative Support
 Services
 Farming/Forestry/Fishing
 Construction/Extraction
 Installation/Maintenance/Repair
 Production
 Transportation/Material Moving
- N.** How many years of experience do you have in your preferred job or career field? (If less than a year please enter 0) _____ Minutes
- O.** How many years of experience do you have in your current job or career field? (If less than a year please enter 0) _____ Minutes
- P.** Do you have any certifications or have you completed any training for your preferred job or career field? (Check one)
 Yes No

Q. What areas of assistance would be most helpful to you in supporting your job growth or career development. (Select all that apply)

- Child Care assistance
- Tuition assistance for certification or college degree advancement
- Rent or mortgage assistance
- Career Mentor
- Motivation Cohort (connecting with people all advancing career goals)
- Opportunities to visit employers & learn about career openings
- Professional wardrobe assistance. (access to clothing & attire guidelines)
- Stipends or assistance paying for required uniforms or regulation shoes on a job
- Food cost assistance
- English as a second language class
- Tutoring for certification or college coursework
- Tutoring or training to gain a specific skill. (e.g forklift driving, I HVAC certification)
- Business etiquette course
- Transportation assistance
- Life Coach
- Financial planning or money management help
- Access to affordable housing
- Career planning help. (identifying career goals & a path to achievement)
- Emotional support or mental health counseling
- Healthcare access
- Physical fitness assistance (gym membership or health group)
- Monthly stipend or financial incentive for career advancement success
- Opportunities to hear from professionals from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Assistance in starting up a new business or growing a small business
- Opportunities to stay inspired by spending time doing fun things with friends, family and neighbors.

APPENDIX III: FOCUS GROUP FACILITATION QUESTIONS

SECTION ONE

Section One A

For these questions, you will hold up your Blue card if the answer is yes. If the answer is no you won't raise your hand at all. So hold up a blue card for yes answers. Any questions?

- Have you ever asked directly for a promotion?
- Have you ever wanted to ask for a promotion but not made the request?
- Do you experience obstacles to gaining higher pay?
- Do you experience obstacles to advancing in your career?
- Do you have opportunities in your workplace for job training or career advancement programs?
- Do you have opportunities in your community for job training or career advancement programs?
- Do you access job training or career advancement programs in your workplace?
- Do you access job training or career advancement programs in your community?

Section One B

We're going to take a deeper dive into your perspectives. I'm going to ask you open-ended questions and you are each welcome and encouraged to respond.

For those who have not accessed job training or career advancement opportunities, what has kept you from being part of a career program?

For those who have not been involved in job training or career advancement opportunities, what would make you choose to be part of a program for your career in the future?

For those of you who said you have accessed job training or career advancement opportunities, what kinds of programs or opportunities have you been part of?

- What do you feel were the benefits of participating?
- What were the challenges of participating?

SECTION TWO

Section Two A

For these questions, you will hold up your Blue card if the answer is yes. If the answer is no you won't raise your hand at all. So hold up a blue card for yes answers. Any questions?

- Would you be willing to devote extra hours every week to advancing your earning potential and increasing your career opportunities?

If you answered yes to that please raise your blue card each time you hear a number of Let's deep dive into the support and resources you feel employers or community organizations should or could provide that would help you succeed in career development: (Open Ended answers).

- Would you be willing to devote an extra two hours per week for one year to your career growth?
- Would you be willing to devote an extra five hours per week for one year to your career growth?

- Would you be willing to devote an extra ten hours per week for one year to your career growth?
- Would you be willing to devote an extra twenty hours per week for one year to your career growth?

Section Two B

Now we'll ask you to share your opinions more broadly on this topic area. Spending extra time on career development can be demanding. For those of you who said you'd be willing to spend the time, we'd like to hear from you about why.

- What reasons motivate you to spend extra time on career development?

We've heard a lot of responses.

- What are the top two motivators in the opinion of this group? What are the top two motivators that can get you to spend extra time on career development?
- Let's deep dive into the support and resources you feel employers or community organizations should or could provide that would help you succeed in career development: (Open Ended answers).

Prompts

(Using survey drop down list ask for specific recommendations except for Transportation & Childcare - section 4).

SECTION THREE

Focus group participants completed a short survey before the start of group questions and discussion. The survey results provide context for how people feel about their jobs and what they are currently doing in the area of career and job advancement. Demographic information gathered from the surveys is provided in Appendix I.

Section Three A

For these questions, you will again hold up your Blue card if the answer is yes. If the answer is no you won't raise your hand at all. So hold up a blue card for yes answers. Any questions?

- Do you feel inspired by the term workforce development?
- Do you feel inspired by the term talent development?
- Do you feel inspired by the term career development?

Section Three B

Similar to what we did on the previous topic area, we'll deep dive into your opinions now.

- Which term inspires you the most and why? Workforce development, talent development, career development, which inspires you the most and why?

SECTION FOUR

Section Four A

For these questions, you will again hold up your Blue card if the answer is yes. If the answer is no you won't raise your hand at all. So hold up a blue card for yes answers. Any questions?

This topic is Transportation

- Do you usually use a car to get to and from work?
- Do you usually carpool to get to and from work?
- Do you usually take the bus or other public transportation to get to and from work?
- If a work shuttle were offered, would you prefer to take a work shuttle to and from work?
- Does a lack of reliable transportation ever keep you from getting to work?

Deep Dive

What would help your transportation to and from work go smoothly? (Open ended).

Prompts

Gas stipends, work shuttle, emergency fund for car repairs, public transportation stipends, expressway passes.

Section Four B

For these questions, you will again hold up your Blue card if the answer is yes. If the answer is no you won't raise your hand at all. So hold up a blue card for yes answers. Any questions?

This topic is Childcare

The following questions are for people who are caretakers/parents/ guardians of children

- Do you have affordable childcare/ after school care for your child or children while you are at work?
- Do you feel your childcare/ after school provider offers a top quality experience for your child/ children?
- If you were to participate in training or career education outside of work hours would you have access to affordable childcare options?

Deep Dive

Let's talk about specific services that you or your child needs from a childcare or afterschool care provider? What would help you and your child/ children have a better experience with services that would make you feel more assured during work hours or training hours outside of work: (Open answers period).

Prompts

Ask specifically for input on operating hours, work site childcare, special needs staff, transportation (for children to get to and from childcare/ after school care), scholarship, cost subsidies)

SECTION FIVE

This section is for those of you with side business or second job.

Prompts

Please raise your blue card if you have a side business that you run.

Please raise your blue card if you have a second job working for someone else.

Raise your blue card if you face any of the following barriers in your side work or second job:

- lack of necessary equipment, funding
- lack of space
- lack of business knowledge
- lack of transportation, childcare
- lack of access to a marketplace/customers

Deep Dive

What kind of side business or second job do you have? Please state if it is a second job or a side business you run.

What are the rewards of your side business or second job?

SECTION SIX

This is our final section. Thank you all for your participation today. In this closing section we want to hear your final thoughts on the best options for training and career development support. This is a ten minute open conversation for you to share your ideas and thoughts.

Prompts

- What types of employer based training programs and support do you think are most important to advance your job and career goals?
- What types of support and helpful services would be most important for you to succeed in a training or career development program?

Request for closing thoughts and suggestions.

I-DRIVE CRA WORKFORCE FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

