

Impacted Worker Survey

Part 2 - Challenges Connecting to Employment

60% of workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic identified barriers to returning to work.

In the summer of 2020, the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) and Department of Employment Services (DOES) surveyed unemployed Washington, DC-area workers to identify challenges and supports residents may need as they consider entering or returning to employment.

Building on the previous Edsight that highlighted supports workers need to pursue employment opportunities, this Edsight explores challenges that area residents face as they pursue employment opportunities amid the pandemic; addressing these factors will be critical as the city reopens, recovers, and seeks to grow.

Survey results have informed the work of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME), WIC, and other workforce agency partners as the District develops programs and supports to launch an inclusive workforce recovery.

A total of 3,180 individuals completed the survey, with representation across all wards, income levels, and employment industries. For detailed survey respondent demographic information, reference the Edsight, “Impacted Worker Survey Part 1- Getting Residents Back to Work.”

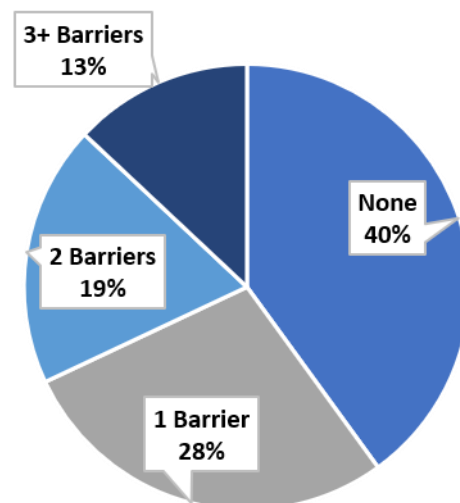
Barriers to Employment

In the survey, respondents were asked to identify challenges they may face as they return to work. As shown in Figure 1, 1,911 individuals, making up 60% of survey respondents, reported at least one barrier to employment. Of the survey respondents, 13% or 401 respondents identified three or more barriers to returning to work.

The barriers that community members faced were not equally distributed across income levels. Based on responses, 70% of respondents making less than \$25,000 annually reported at least one barrier, compared to less than half of residents with incomes above \$100,000.

continued

Figure 1: How many barriers do survey respondents face in returning to the workforce?



Source: 2020 Impacted Worker Survey, WIC

Barriers to Employment by Category

The challenges identified by survey respondents fell into three primary categories: education, skills and support navigation; caregiving; and wraparound services (as shown in Figure 2). Respondents could select more than one barrier, so responses total to more than 100%.

Education, Skills, and Support Navigation

The need to develop new skills or complete education and training was the most commonly reported challenge, reported by 22% of respondents. Additionally, 16% of respondents expressed that they did not know where to start looking for a job.

Of residents working in the hospitality and tourism sector, nearly 40% reported that education, skills, and navigation of resources, supports, and career opportunities were a barrier to them returning to employment.

Wrap-Around Supports

More than a quarter of respondents identified a need for additional wrap-around

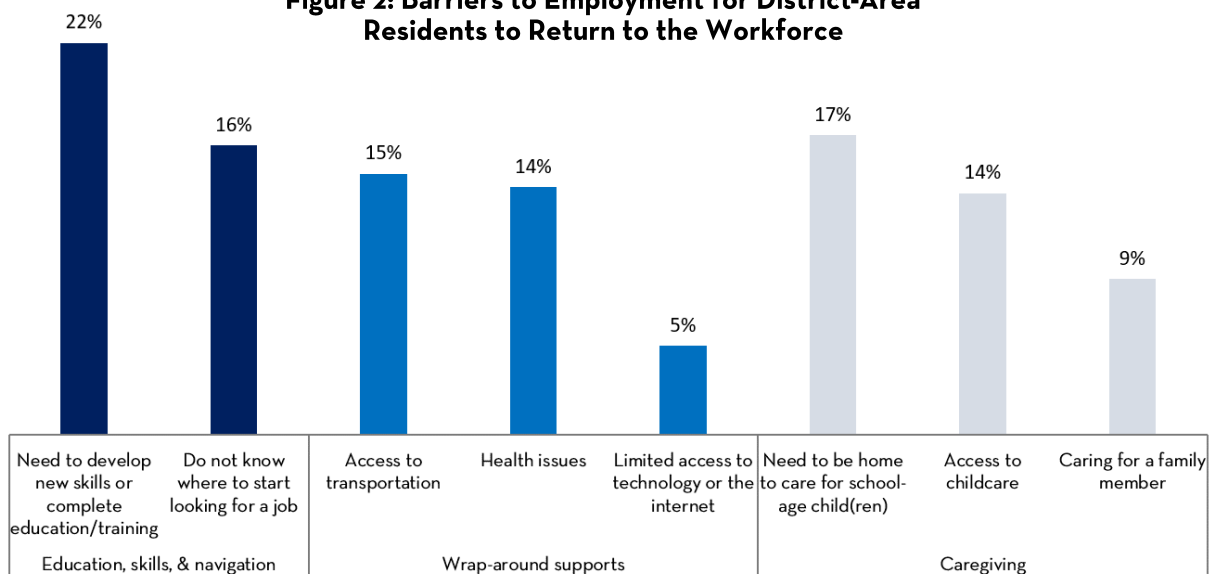
supports as a limiting factor in their ability to return to work. This included 15% of respondents highlighting transportation access challenges, 14% citing health issues, and 5% struggling with limited access to technology or the internet. As the survey was delivered digitally, it may under-represented the demand for technology as those without access may have been unable to complete the survey.

Caregiving Services

Of the 26% of respondents who faced a caregiving barrier, 17% reported a need to be home to care for school-aged children, 14% could not access childcare services, and 9% noted that caring for a family member would limit their ability to return to work. At the time that the survey was delivered, most PreK-12 schools were not offering in-person learning opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information on the survey data, please visit the Workforce Investment Council's [website](#).

Figure 2: Barriers to Employment for District-Area Residents to Return to the Workforce



Note: Respondents could select more than one barrier so total responses equal more than 100%.
Source: 2020 Impacted Worker Survey, WIC

Feedback: Email Edsight.DME@dc.gov