

Micro Credential Survey Project

Executive Summary Report

The Rio Salado College (RSC) and Tempe Chamber of Commerce (TCOC) Micro Credential Survey is a project designed to identify the educational programming options that can benefit business and industry in the Greater Tempe Region in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey also served as a means to gauge the potential benefits of professionals earning micro credentials with RSC. A micro credential is a qualification or credential that verifies, validates, and attests that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved and are endorsed by the issuing institution; developed through established governance processes; and are designed to be meaningful and high quality. Micro credentials are designed to be completed in 12 months or less and provide benefits in advancing job skills. TCOC members and affiliated Tempe constituencies were invited to participate in the survey over the summer and fall of 2021 through various outreach methods led by TCOC leadership.

After the initial survey was made available in May 2021, a simplified version was later used starting in late July 2021. This document summarizes findings from the common questions presented in both survey versions.

Key Findings

- 68 businesses participated in the survey in total. The majority were small-sized businesses, with less than 100 employees.
- The majority of respondents indicated an interest in micro credential programming options
- Respondents indicated the highest need for support in hard skills areas of Sales and Marketing Operations, Front Line Staff Management, Customer Service, and Information Technology
- Respondents see potential in their employees gaining training from RSC's Areas of Interest like Business and Management, Computer and Information Technology, and STEM
- Respondents indicated the highest need for support in soft skills areas of Communication, Problem-Solving, and Leadership

Survey Results

The Micro Credential Survey was distributed to TCOC members and affiliated constituencies throughout the summer and early fall of 2021. This document serves as a report of the findings based on the responses of **68 participants** in total. Not all participants answered every question, so percentages are represented based on the number of responses received for that question.

Survey respondents were asked to identify several characteristics of their businesses and companies. Based on responses received, the overwhelming majority of respondents (82%, n=49) reported working at small businesses according to [Gartner's definition of small and midsize businesses](#). Just over half (52%,

n=31) of businesses who reported their size reported having 10 or fewer employees. Consulting, Insurance and Finance, and Hospitality were among the highest reported industries from respondents. Some of the businesses included in “Other” are woodworking, arts & crafts, and public affairs.

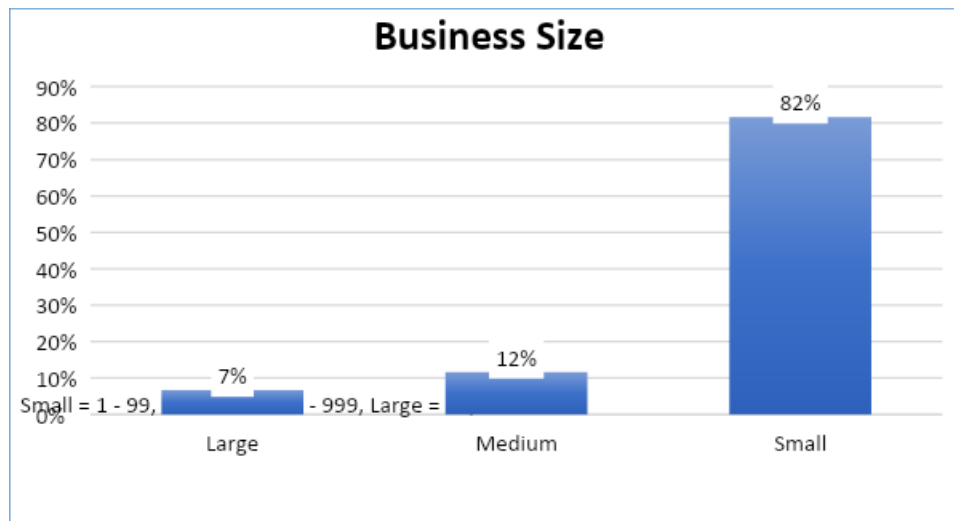


Figure 1. Respondent Business Size

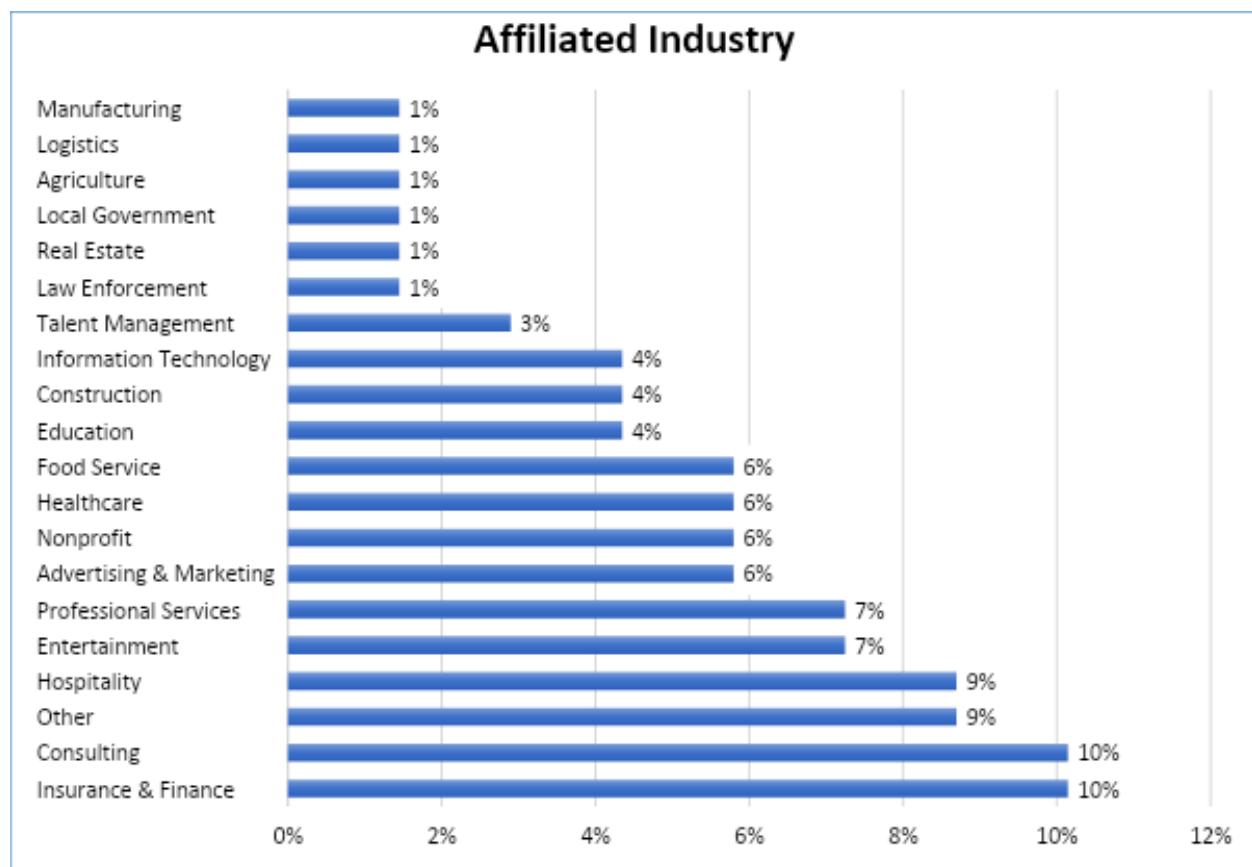


Figure 2. Industry of Respondent Business

This survey was designed to gauge local workforce needs around preparing individuals and businesses with effective workforce education and credentials. As a proven leader in workforce education, RSC is well-positioned to provide flexible and customized solutions for the needs of business and industry. When asked if their business was interested in offering micro credentials, nearly two-thirds of respondents replied affirmatively.

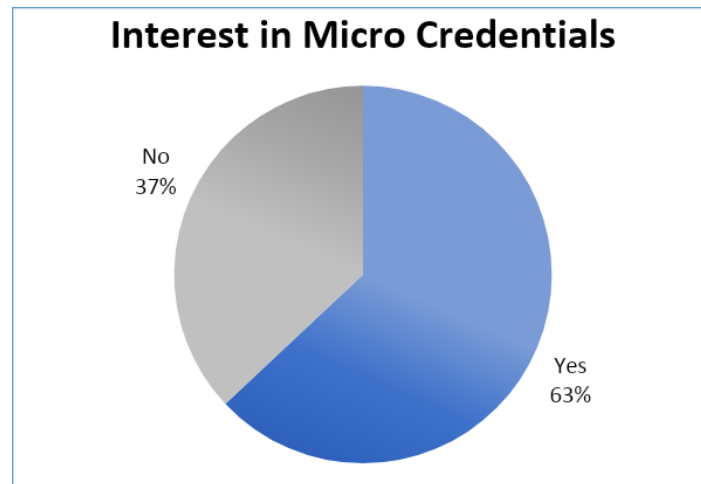


Figure 3. Respondent Interest in Micro Credentials

In order to help guide what types of micro credentials and trainings RSC could develop with the TCOC members in mind, the survey presented RSCs eight [Fields of Interest](#) and asked to identify all that align to their business needs. The 41 businesses that responded produced 110 responses to the Fields of Interest. Over two-thirds of businesses considered training or education in “Business and Management” areas as beneficial to their employees. STEM and Computer and Information Technology are also of high interests, with close to half of the 41 businesses selecting those Fields of Interests.

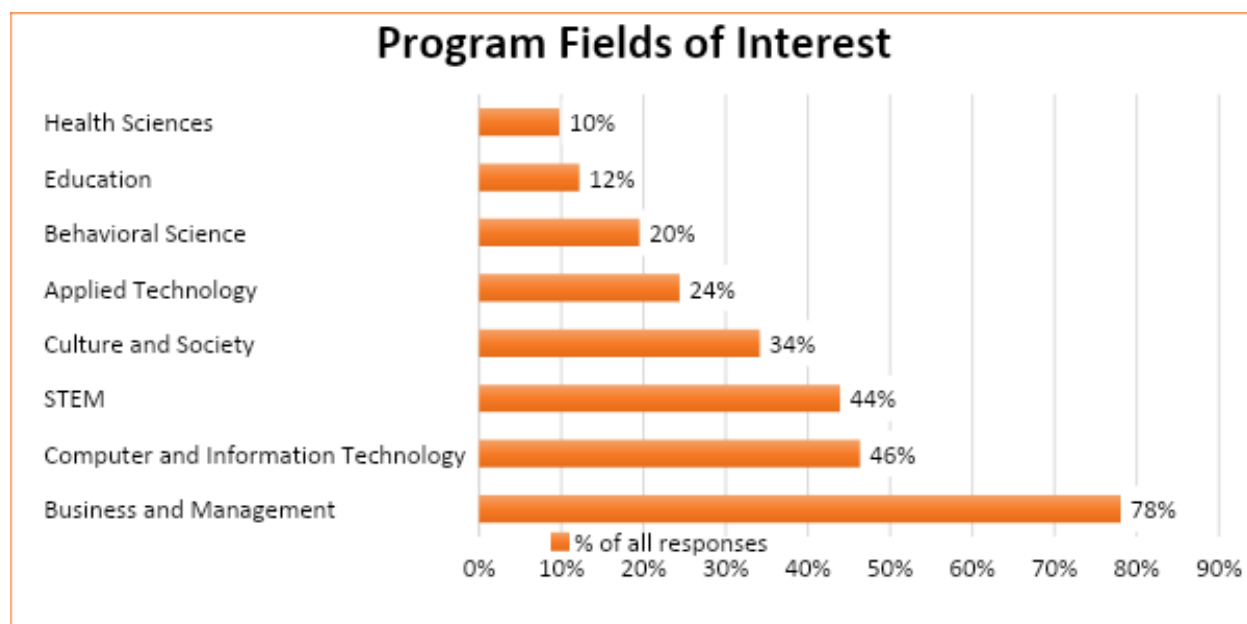


Figure 4. RSC Fields of Interest & Business Needs

Respondents were asked to identify specific professional skills and content areas that were in need of additional support for their business. The 59 businesses that responded provided 201 responses to their potential future skills gaps. The areas of operations, management, customer service, and information technology were among the highest reported areas of need. These content areas align directly to some of RSC's most popular and successful programming options such as Business Management, and Computer and Information Technology.

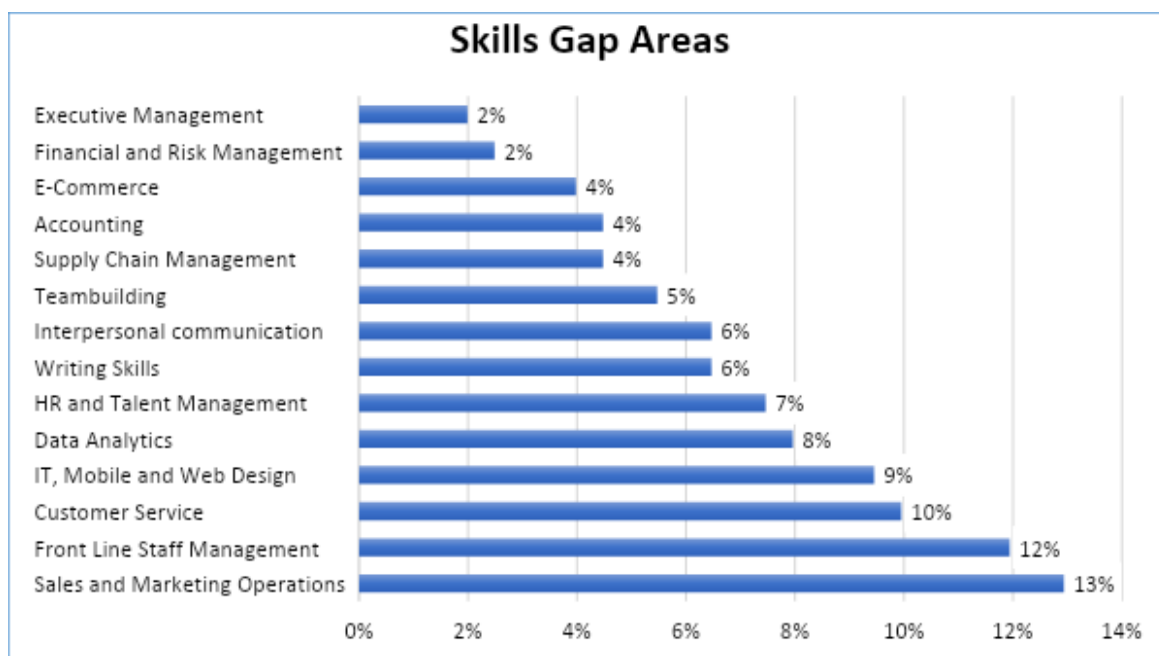


Figure 5. Professional Skills Areas of Need

These skills gaps indicate 21 businesses with concerns about non-technical skills such as Teambuilding, Communication, and Writing – providing 17% of all responses from the question. The survey asked a specific question regarding non-technical, soft skills training that would be of interest for their business. There were 44 businesses who gave 301 total responses regarding soft skills. Communication, problem-solving, and leadership were among the highest reported areas of need.

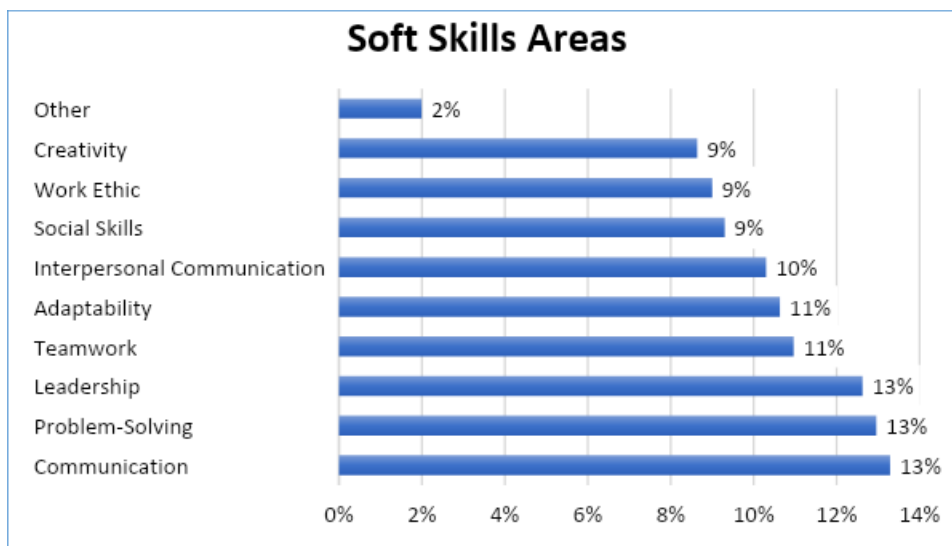


Figure 6. Soft Skills Areas of Need

Survey respondents were asked if their organization would benefit from access to adult basic education resources. RSC is one of the largest providers of adult basic education in the state of Arizona, serving nearly 5,000 learners annually in the areas of High School Equivalency (HSE) test preparation and English language acquisition (ELA). While the majority of respondents were not interested, over one-third of respondents (38%, n=21) indicated they were interested in HSE and / or ELA support.

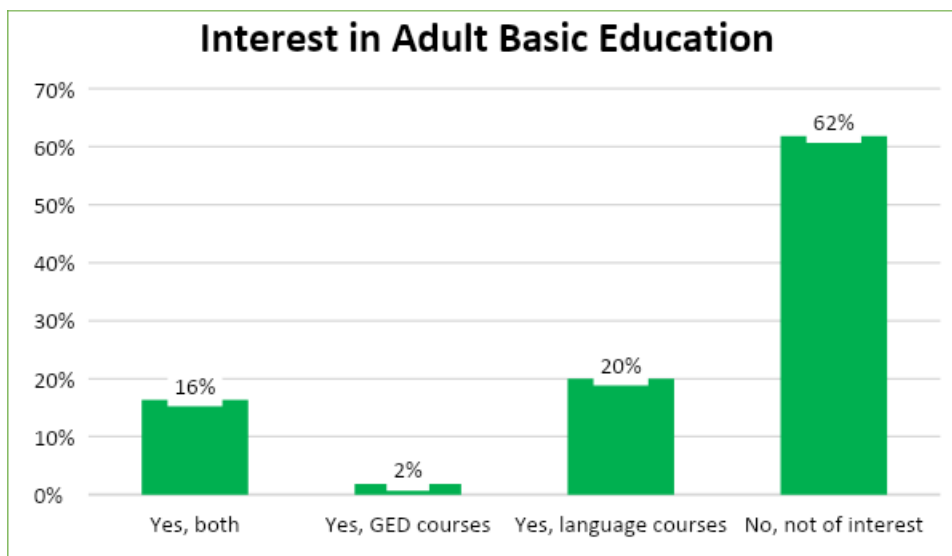


Figure 7. Need for Adult Basic Education

Responses received from the RSC and TCOC Micro Credential survey included insights from a diverse array of business and organizations both in terms of size and affiliated industry. The results indicate that there is an interest in exploring opportunities with micro credentials and specific, targeted areas both in hard and soft skills. RSC and TCOC will continue working to partner to help address the specific educational and workforce opportunities that are needed to support a thriving Tempe economy and community.