

**SEA-TAC AIRPORT**

# Company Survey

MARCH 2017



## **Acknowledgments**

Many thanks to the Walmart Foundation and Jobs for the Future for funding the Delivering the Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL) Workforce Initiative. This report is one of the products of that funding. Port Jobs looks forward to sharing this report with local and national TDL Workforce Initiative partners to collectively build better job pipelines to the Port-related economy. Port Jobs is grateful to Business Government Community Connections (Annie Laurie Armstrong) for compiling this report.

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## **Airport Economy Connects Job Seekers to Career Pathway Opportunities**

A recent economic impact study for the Port of Seattle reported that 18,352 direct jobs are dependent upon activity at Sea-Tac Airport. The airport environment is a productive and exciting one for job seekers and incumbent workers, and helps them get started in careers in hospitality, air cargo, airport fueling, security, customer service, retail, and a host of other occupations with advancement potential. Sea-Tac Airport, the fastest growing airport in the United States, is hiring new employees all the time. Last year alone 1,668 people found employment through Port Jobs' Airport Jobs office, of whom 725 were young adults between 18 and 29 years old. These jobs were at more than 80 different airport companies. The average starting wage at Sea-Tac Airport is now in excess of \$14 per hour.

Young adults working at the airport are informed of multiple opportunities to combine their time working at Sea-Tac with classes at Port Jobs' Airport University (AU) program, which offers incumbent workers opportunities to earn college credits and industry certificates. Additionally, all incumbent workers at the airport are encouraged to apply for college scholarships provided by Alaska Airlines, an AU partner employer.

In order to meet the diverse needs of airport employers, Port Jobs engages employers, posts jobs, facilitates hiring events, and provides job seekers and incumbent workers with assistance to pursue and advance in jobs. Ongoing surveys of employers ensure that the services provided at Airport Jobs are current and well-informed. Port Jobs also ensures that community and technical colleges, K-12 and other partners, including those working as part of the multi-year Annie E. Casey Foundation-funded Generation Work initiative, are aware of career pathway opportunities in the airport.

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## Introduction

Twenty-four employers responded to the Sea-Tac Airport Company Survey distributed by Port Jobs. This information is intended for education, workforce development, human resource staff and others who are assisting job seekers and incumbent workers to advance. The employer feedback in this report is applicable to job seekers of all ages. The report includes practical suggestions to improve the job competitiveness of persons who want to be, or are currently, employed at Sea-Tac Airport.

A list of companies responding to this survey is provided in Appendix A. Key respondents from companies included, in order of frequency: 11 Managers (General, Facility, Operator, Station); 6 Human Resources Staff (Managers, Specialists, Administrators); 3 Recruiters (Senior Recruiters, Outreach Managers); 1 Regional Equity and Compliance Director, 1 Supervisor of Training and Operational Support, 1 Trainer and 1 Vice-President. All key respondents had deep and longstanding relationships with Airport Jobs. Appendix A also lists the number and type of company job placements, as well as employee participation in the Port Jobs Airport University classes and Alaska Airlines Airport University Scholarship program

Companies ranged in size. Twenty-five percent (6) had 50 or fewer employees; twenty-five percent (6) had between 51 and 100 employees; thirty-three percent (8) had 101 – 500 employees; eight percent (2) had between 501 – 1000 employees; and eight percent (2) had more than 1,000 employees.



Each respondent shared the following information about their companies:

- Entry and mid-level hiring needs;
- Main hiring and recruitment sources;
- Observations about applicant preparedness;
- Suggestions for improving applicant preparedness;
- Recommendations for skills which young adults need to get jobs;
- Reasons why young adults and older incumbent workers don't remain in jobs for at least three months;
- Most frequent advancement opportunities from entry-level jobs;
- Strategies for advancing from entry to mid-level jobs;
- Suggestions for Airport University classes needed to build employee skills for their current jobs or for advancement; and
- Emerging hiring and training needs.

## SURVEY RESPONSES

### Most Critical Entry and Mid-Level Hiring Needs

Airport employers reported that there was a critical need for employees in many different areas. High demand entry and mid-level jobs included the following, sorted by major categories:

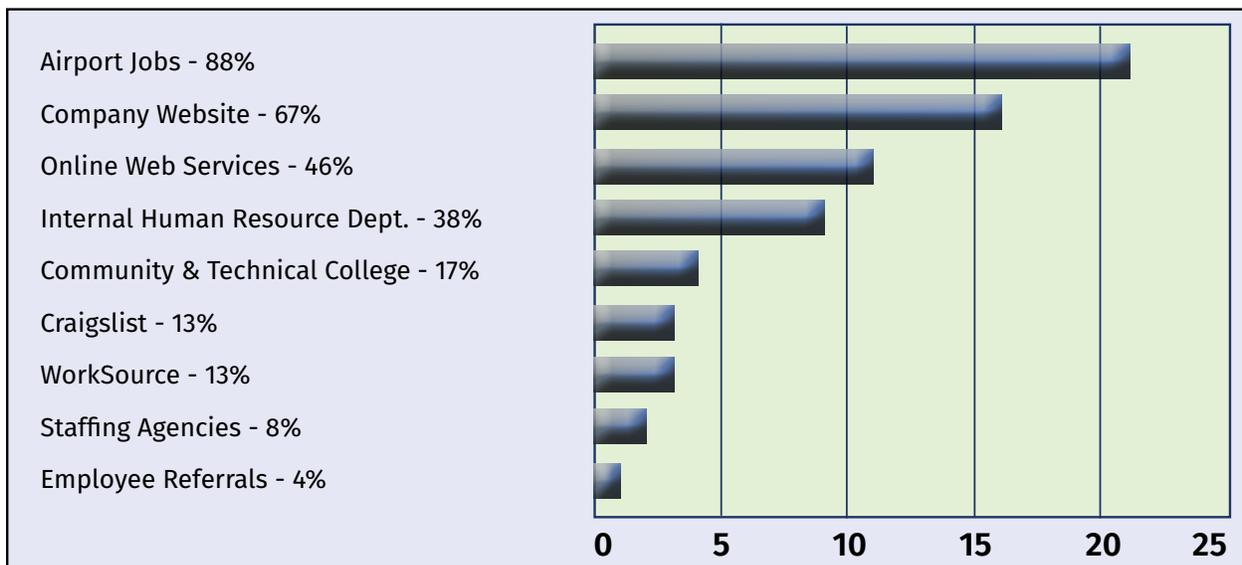
- Air Cargo Warehouse Agent, Cargo Agents, Office Agents
- Ramp Agents, Ground Service Agent
- Passenger Service Agent; Below and Above Wing Customer Service
- Baristas, Bartenders, Cooks and Lead Shift Supervisors
- Fuelers
- Material Handlers to sort packages, load containers move containers to the aircraft, and load aircraft
- Lav/Water Drivers, Floor Technicians, Cabin Cleaners
- Sales Associates, Stock Associates



In addition, a few employers noted that it was particularly difficult to find qualified workers who were willing to work graveyard shift, and persons qualified to enter assistant manager and supervisory jobs.

## Recruitment Hiring Sources

Employers used nine different types of hiring sources. Airport Jobs was the main recruitment source, followed by company websites. Employers reported that they appreciated the screening done by Airport Jobs as they received qualified applicants.



## Level of Applicant Preparedness

Employer responses were evenly split, with a total of 50% of the applicants identified as being either somewhat prepared (46%) or not at all prepared (4%); and an equal percent described as either prepared (29%), well prepared (17%) or very well-prepared (4%).

Employers posed the following recommendations to increase the job preparedness of young adults. Their recommendations fell into three areas.



## **Employer Advice for Young Adults**

### ***Become Familiar with the Airport Job Environment***

- Understand company requirements pertaining to jobs and hours required to work;
- Dress appropriately and cover tattoos and piercings;
- Do research on companies through their websites and job postings; and
- Know what they are getting into regarding the job tasks and around the clock scheduling associated with the airport.

### ***Carefully Prepare Resumes and Job Applications***

- Have a resume;
- Fill out applications completely;
- Bring resumes with them when they come for interviews (even if they were not required);
- Understand that their resumes may be used to quickly assess their literacy and organizational skills;
- Know how to complete on-line applications; and
- Understand interview etiquette.

### ***Meet Core Qualifications***

- Demonstrate an ability to speak English clearly;
- Be drug free;
- Have no felony convictions;
- Meet the minimum job qualifications (and demonstrate this in resumes and job applications);
- Have a work history, and demonstrate this, if appropriate by citing school, faith and other activities;
- Be willing to work “any hours a day, 365 days a year”; and
- Be willing to wear a uniform.

## Specific Skills and Strategies that Can Help Young Adults Get Airport Jobs

Some employers identified other skills and strategies that would help young adult applicants get hired. Critical skills included:

- Customer service skills (for communication with passengers)
- Communication skills (verbal and written); and
- Ability to communicate and comprehend in English.

Desired attributes to reference when applying for work included:

- Underscoring a willingness and ability to multi-task;
- Having a good work history, including volunteer work; and
- Being able to pass a drug and background check.



Twelve (50%) of employers reported that young adults would not necessarily need to have work experience. One said, “Experience is preferred but it is not everything for entry level positions. When applicants show an eagerness to learn, have an understanding about what the position entails, are able to communicate, fit in with company needs (like availability to work flexible days and hours), that matters.” Another employer said, “We hire many people with no experience at all. We train.”

Employers identified a wide range of skills as very helpful for young adults to have when they apply for certain airline/airport-related jobs. Examples include:

- Airframe and PowerPoint license
- Technical skills to learn devices such as scanners and Smart Track devices
- Driving skills (for ramp agent jobs)
- Forklift operating experience
- Barista skills
- Customer service skills (for restaurant industry and other jobs that involve communication with passengers)
- Computer knowledge (for Passenger Service Agent jobs).

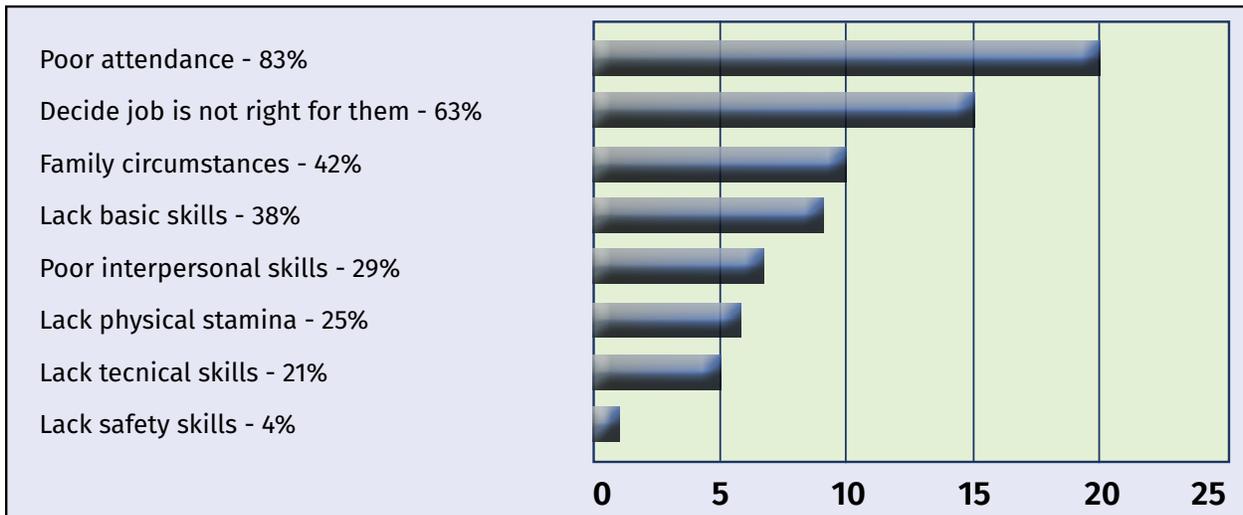
Some employers had very particular demands. For example, one package delivery company requires that applicants live in the United States for the five years prior to application, and that men be registered for the Selective Service. They do not require that applicants have a high school diploma.

Another employer said, “They need to be mature, on time, and absolutely have to be able to live without their cell phone while on the clock. I know this sounds very simple but believe it or not these are some of the bigger issues we are facing.”

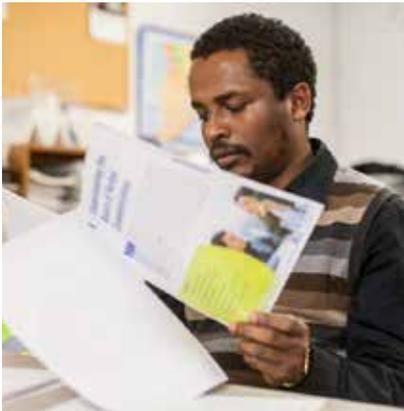
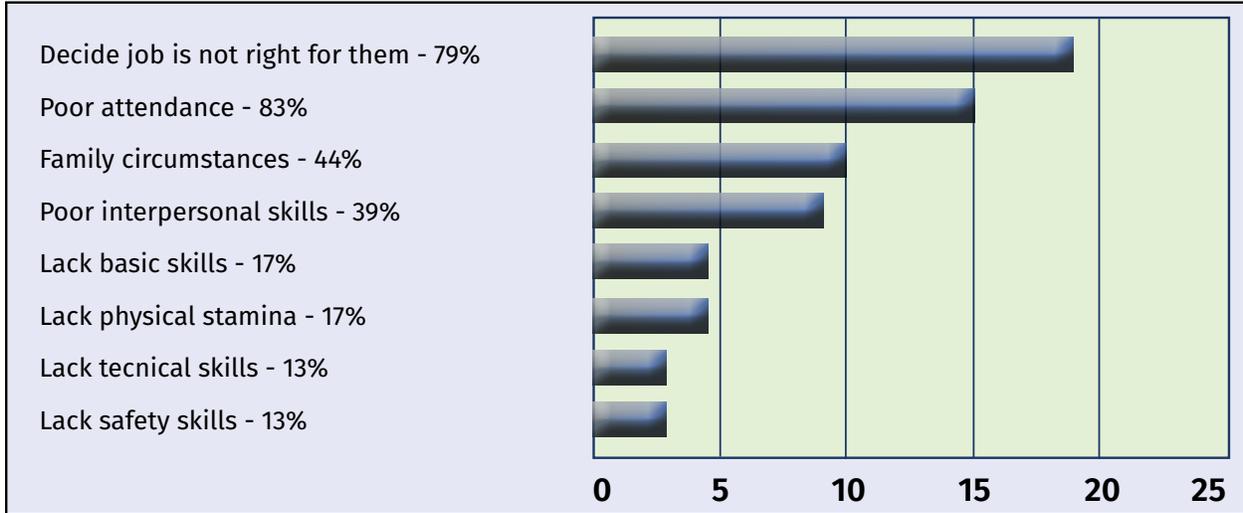
Although the above suggestions were specific to young adults, a review of the job openings listed through Airport Jobs underscores their applicability to Sea-Tac job seekers of all ages.

### **Main Reasons Young Adult Employees Don’t Remain in Their Jobs for at Least Three Months**

In order of frequency, highest to lowest, employers identified the following issues as reasons why young adult workers leave jobs:



## Reasons Why Adult Employees (ages 30+) Don't Remain in Their Jobs for at Least Three Months



## Most Frequent Career Advancement Opportunities

Employers reported many different career advancement opportunities. These included the following advancement pathways:

- Air Cargo Agent to Lead Air Cargo Agent
- Appearance Care (kitchen maintenance) to Food Server
- Lead Wheelchair Attendant to Dispatch
- Customer Service Agent to a Lead Supervisor to Assistant Manager
- Customer Service Agent to Lead Supervisor and Lead Supervisor to Assistant Manager
- Cabin Agent to Lead or Lav/Water Driver
- Customer Service Representative to Supervisor
- Crew to Crew Trainer, Leading to Shift Manager
- Crew to Supervisor
- Material Handlers to Ramp Agents and Shuttle Drivers
- Material Handler to Lead Material Handler
- Moving from one unit (restaurant) to another



- Ramp Agent to Lead to Supervisor
- Sales Associate to Supervisor
- Tech to Lead Tech or Shift Lead

There were many examples of advancement opportunities at the airport. One employer said, “We currently are hiring four supervisors. As long as a new hire is on time, willing to learn and stay dedicated, there is room to grow with the company.” Another employer wrote, “Our airline is always looking for leaders. They do training on the job, along with providing courses to promote advancement. Some upper management jobs do require outside skills and certifications.”

## How to Advance from Entry to Mid-Level Jobs in the Company

Employers offered the following suggestions to incumbent workers who are seeking to advance in the company. They recommended, in order of frequency, that these workers:

- Have good attendance and be on time;
- Be willing to learn all aspects of the job;
- Be a team player;
- Have good communication skills;
- Earn work-related certificates;
- Demonstrate a great work attitude and interpersonal skills;
- Exhibit good work experience;
- Be a leader and problem solver, take on extra tasks;
- Show/express a desire to advance;
- Be resourceful, accountable and reliable;
- Follow policies and procedures, especially adhering to safety rules and protocols;
- Be trustworthy, dependable, and demonstrate a strong work ethic;
- Learn about all the different stations and indicate they want to “grow with the company”; and
- Exhibit a strong interest in their job and the company.

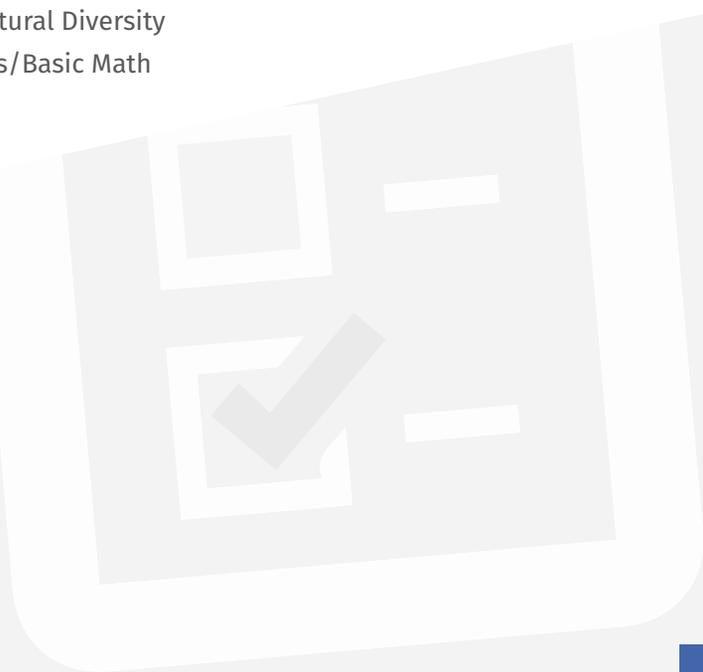
The comments of one employer were reflected in the words of many. “If you want to advance, exceed expectations. Most agents who do not do well just lack the initiative to go beyond just “helping” and become “assistants” to the supervisors.” Another said, “Have a good attendance and performance record and let upper management know.”



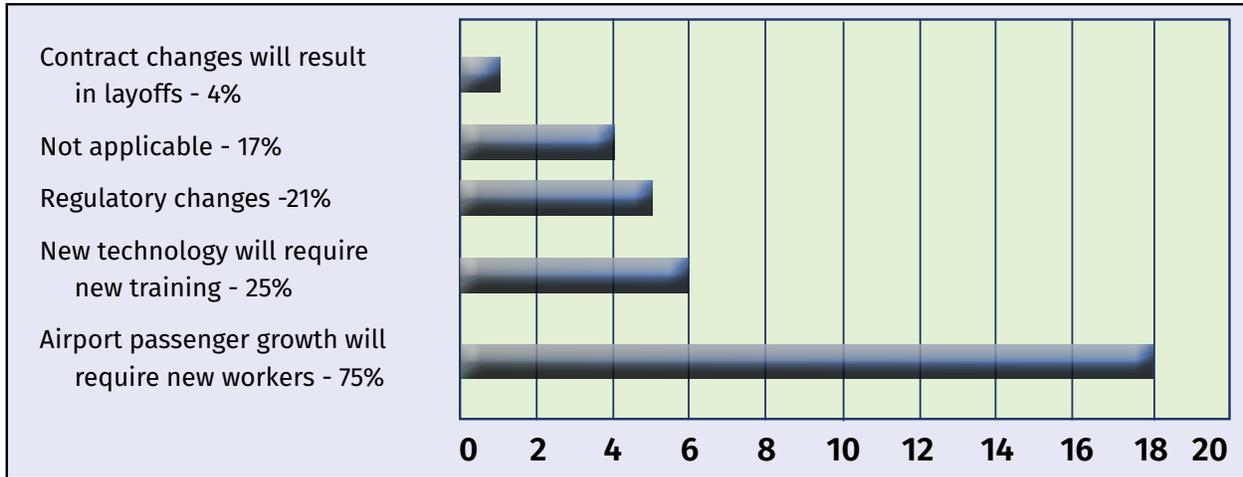
## **Employer Recommendations for Airport University Classes/ to Build Employee Skills for Advancement**

The top ten classes recommended by employers follow, in order of frequency:

- Customer Service
- Communication Skills (people skills, written and verbal communication, English communication/comprehension, English as a Second Language, communication across roles)
- Leadership
- Computer, Word
- Airline Basic Knowledge, everything from security to safety
- OSHA Health and Safety, CPR , Dangerous Goods Training
- Forklift
- Work Ethic, Cultural Diversity
- Business Basics/Basic Math
- Cash Handling



## Changes in the Industry that will Affect Hiring or Training Needs



A few employers also reported that other changes (seasonal, turnover, new stores) will affect their hiring needs. Employers noted that Airport Jobs supports their changing needs by facilitating on-site hiring events and other activities.



## NEXT STEPS

This is the first of a series of employer surveys that Port Jobs will be administering to ensure that the voice of employers continually informs our efforts to support the competitiveness of job seekers who pursue trade, transportation and logistics jobs. Employer feedback also guides the content of Airport University classes, ensuring that course offerings address the needs of employers and incumbent workers. The feedback will also be shared with Airport Jobs community and technical college, K-12 and community-based referral partners, so that all can engage in messaging and career preparation efforts that align with employer demand. Survey results will be updated over time to shine a beacon on industry changes and opportunities.

# APPENDIX A

## Airport Jobs/Airport University data for employer survey respondents Oct 2015 - Oct 2016

Company	Hires	Positions Hired	# of employees who took AU classes	Classes Taken	# of employees who rec. scholarships
Air Serv	118	Cabin Cleaners; Special Services	5	Computers, Customer Service, Workplace safety	0
Alaska Airlines	11	Customer Service Agent (CSA); Cargo CSA	2	10-Key, First Aid/CPR	6
Beechers Cheese	36	Barista; Customer Service; Counter/Sandwich Prep	1	Written/Verbal Communication	1
Delta Air Lines	74	Ramp/Baggage Agent	18	Many, including Computers, Customer Service, Leadership/Management, Homeland Security	19
FedEx	49	Handler	1	Homeland security	1
Filo Foods	13	Customer Service Associate	0		0
Fireworks	13	Sales Associate; Stock Associate	0		0
Gideon Toal Management	0		2	Various, including Computers, Written/Verbal Communication, Emergency Management	1
Hanjin Global Logistics	5	Agent	4	Workplace Safety (OSHA 10, first aid/CPR)	0
HMS Host	164	Food Service; Food Preparation; Barista	6	Computers, Customer Service	0
Hudson-Dufry	96	Sales Associate; Stock Associate	7	Customer Service, Homeland Security, PowerPoint, Leadership/Management	1
ISS	0		3	Workplace Safety (OSHA 10, first aid/CPR)	0
Latrellies Express (Wendys)	50	Crew Member	2	Managing Customer Service	0
Matheson	8	Ramp Agent; Material Handler	0		0
McDonalds	30	Crew Member	0		0
Menzies	146	Ramp Agent	1	First Aid/CPR	3
Pallino Pastaria	13	Crew, Food Prep, Shift Supervisor	0		0
Prospect Int'l Airport Services	41	Wheelchair Agent	2	Customer Service, Computers	1
Sodexo	59	Server, Senior Cook, Dishwasher; Bartender	3	Customer Service, Computers	0
Swissport Cargo	13	Cargo Agent; Mail Agent	1	Homeland Security, Emergency Management	2
Swissport Fueling	37	Fuelers	1	Keyboarding, PowerPoint, Professionalism/Problem Solving	2
Swissport USA	99	Cleaning Agent; Passenger Service Agent; Ramp Agent	4	Computers, First Aid/CPR, OSHA 10, Intelligence Analysis, Customer Svc.	3



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