



Authored by:

Lisa Catanzarite, Ph.D.

Sanaz Sazegar

Dominique Williams



Talent Needs of L.A. Area Tech Employers



Table of Contents

Survey Context	3
Organization Type	4
Hiring and HR Influence	6
Talent Challenges	7
Inclusivity Commitments: DEI and Systems-Involvement	8
Concerns Surrounding Hiring Systems-Involved Individuals	10
Summary	12

Survey Context

In the spring of 2022, UNITE-LA led an informational survey of Los Angeles area employers in technology-related firms to learn about their needs, challenges and priorities in recruiting and retaining workers. The survey was developed by UNITE-LA in partnership with the L.A. County Justice Care and Opportunities Department (JCOD), formerly the Office of Diversion and Reentry, and included specific questions on inclusive hiring policies and practices that may support workers who have prior involvement with the criminal legal system.

The UNITE-LA team, JCOD and LA-Tech.org disseminated the survey via email and digital flyer to L.A. area tech employers. In addition, UNITE-LA performed individual outreach to target employers. The UNITE-LA team also advertised the survey and shared a hard copy of the invitation flyer with employers at an

in-person event held by LA-Tech.org. The flyer announced a survey incentive: the opportunity to win a \$50 Amazon gift card.

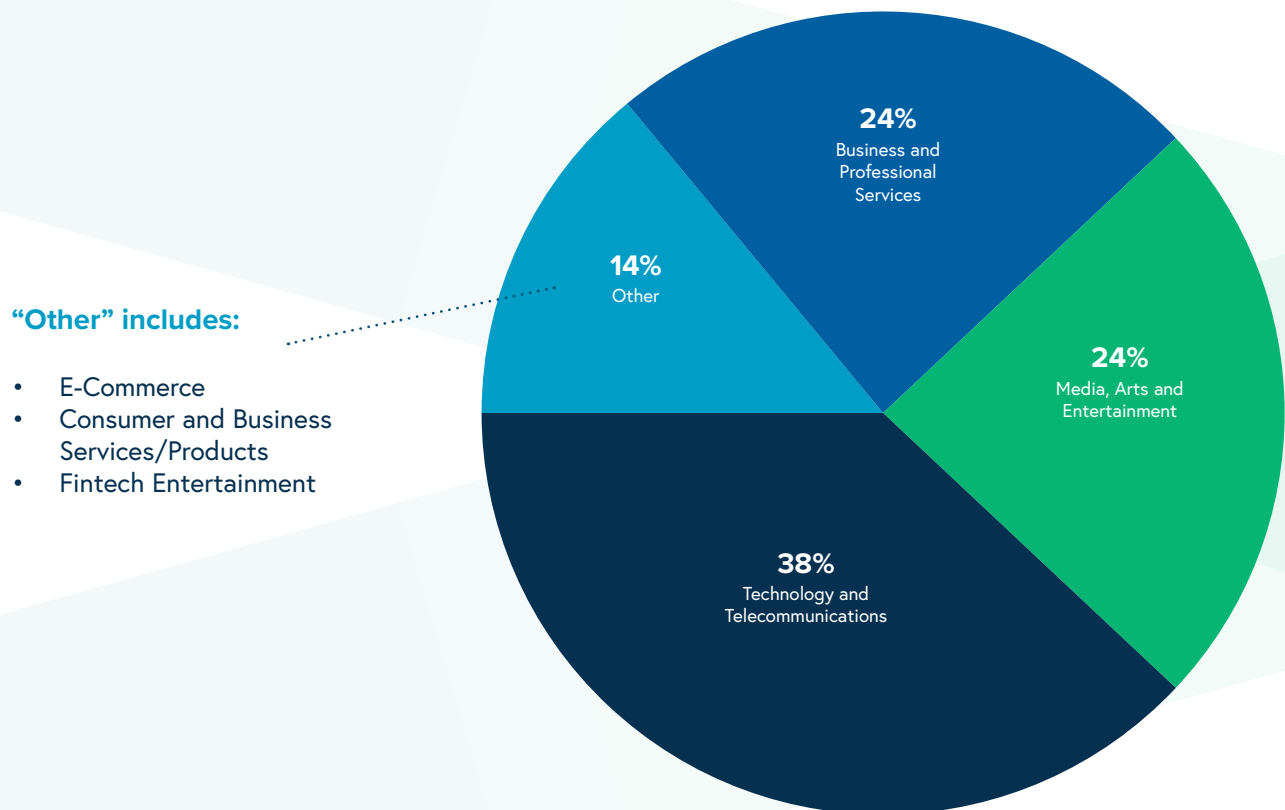
Results for our survey of 21 tech employers are presented in this report, with brief narrative summaries of select, key results in the following areas: organization type; individual respondent's hiring and human resources (HR) influence; talent needs and challenges; inclusivity commitments; and employers' approach to hiring systems-involved individuals (SII).



Organization Type

Thirty-eight percent of respondents are in Technology/Telecommunications followed by Business and Professional Services and Media (24 percent), and Arts and Entertainment (24 percent). The remaining respondents (14 percent) described their sector as "other" – including e-commerce, fintech and consumer/business services/products. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Organization Sector



Organization size varies widely: A combined 43 percent of respondents work at an organization of 100 people or less (including 19 percent in small firms with less than 26 employees; 10 percent are in firms with 26-50 employees, and 14 percent in firms with staffs of 51-100). Another 38 percent are in organizations with 101-250 workers, and a combined 19 percent are organizations with 500 or more employees (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Organization Size

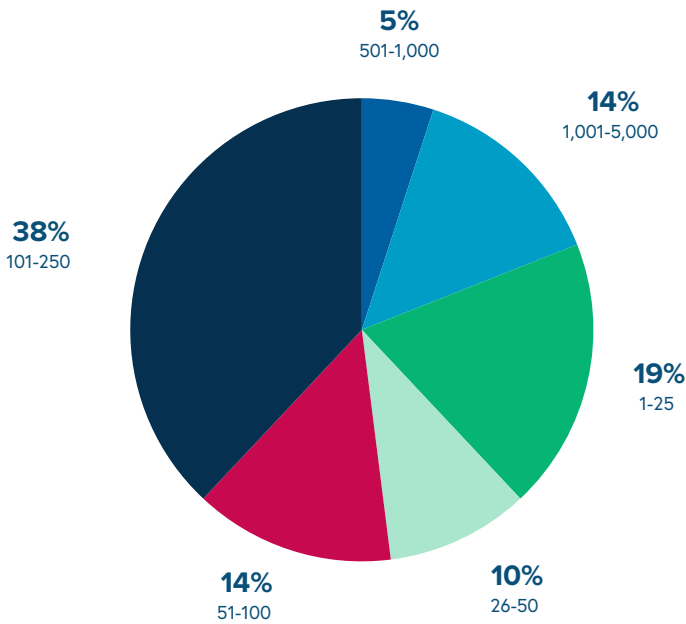
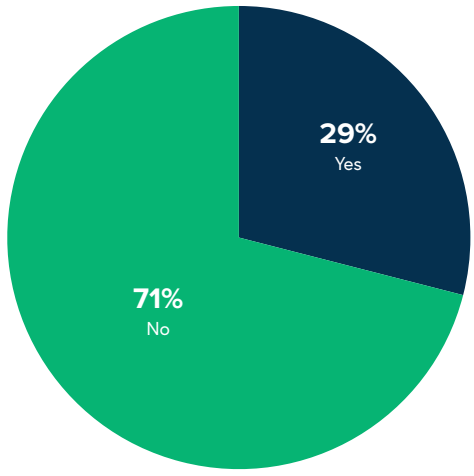


Figure 3: Company is Part of a Larger Organization



Seventy-one percent of respondents work for a company that is a part of a larger organization (Figure 3). Yet, the vast majority of respondents make hiring decisions (79 percent, Figure 4) and have influence over HR policies, systems and procedures at their organizations (79 percent, Figure 5).

Hiring and HR Influence

Figure 4: Hiring Decisions Influence

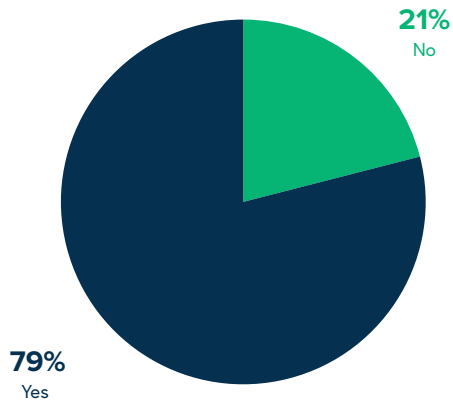
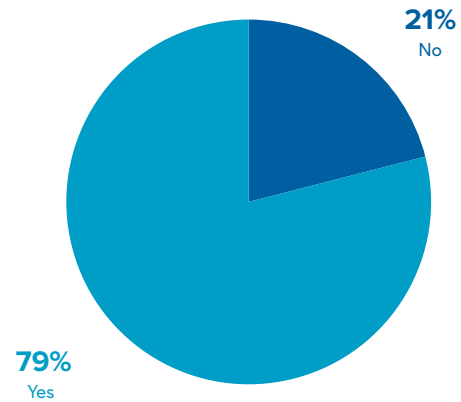
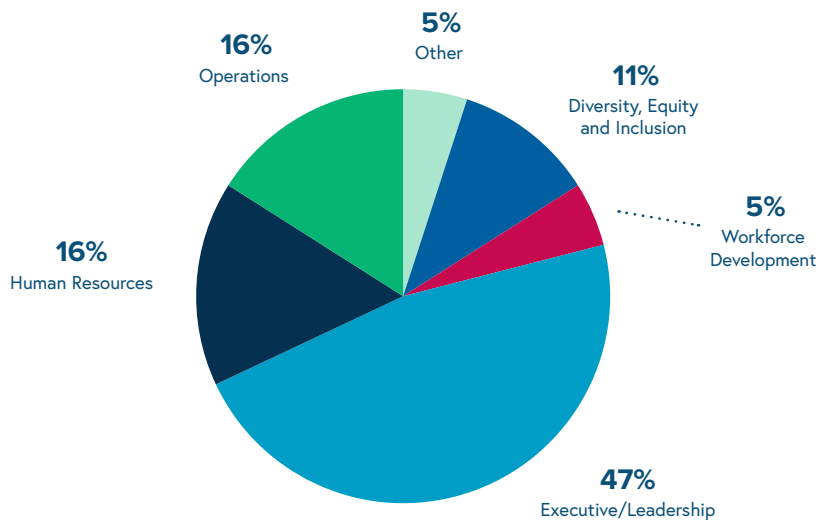


Figure 5: HR Policy Influence



Positions held by respondents are as follows. Forty-seven percent described their work role as falling under the 'Executive and/or Leadership' category (Figure 6). The remaining roles were split among Operations (16 percent), Human Resources (16 percent), Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) (11 percent), Workforce Development (5 percent) and Other (5 percent).

Figure 6: Respondent Position

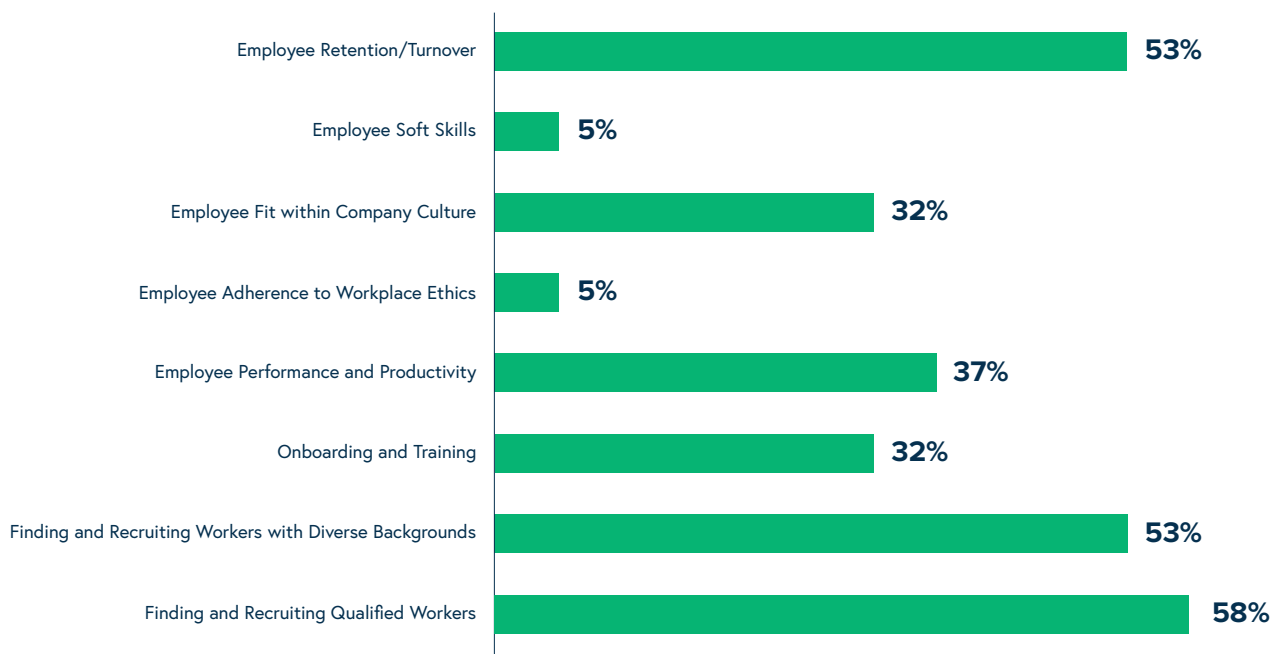




Talent Challenges

Figure 7 displays current talent challenges faced by employers. Findings on key talent challenges for L.A. area tech employers are consistent with the current tight labor market and the great resignation. The most common challenge cited by employers was finding and recruiting qualified workers (58 percent), followed by finding and recruiting workers from diverse backgrounds, and employee retention/turnover (both at 53 percent). About a third of employers reported challenges with performance and productivity (37 percent), onboarding and training (32 percent), and employee fit within company culture (32 percent). Very few tech employers in our sample (5 percent) reported challenges with employee soft skills and employee adherence to workplace ethics.

Figure 7: Current Talent Challenges

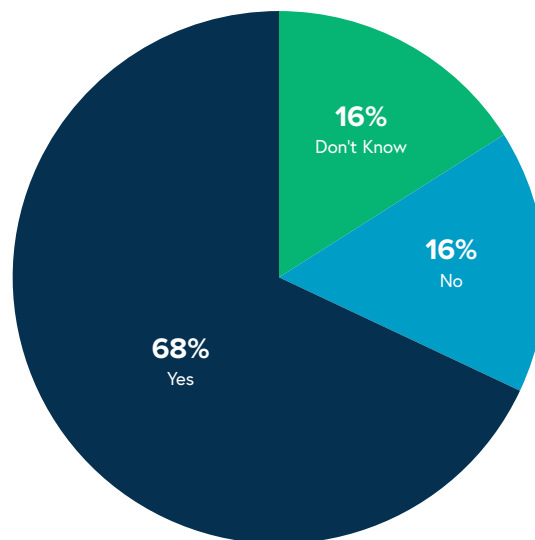




Inclusivity Commitments: DEI and Systems-Involvement

We asked employers about their general commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Thirteen respondents (68 percent) said their company did have a stated and explicit commitment to DEI (Figure 8).

Figure 8: DEI Commitment



We further explored inclusivity with respect to workers or potential workers with prior legal system involvement. Almost 4 in 10 reported that their company was open to hiring SII, but most respondents (58 percent) were unsure (Figure 9).

Do companies have specific practices and policies in place that support people with a record of arrest or conviction? Figure 10 shows that 21 percent reported having such policies, an equal number reported not having them, and 58 percent were unsure.

Figure 9:
Openness/Interest in Hiring SII

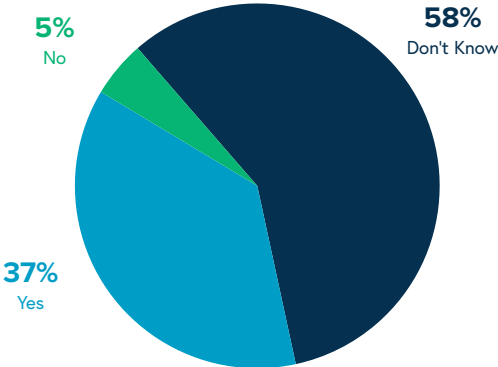
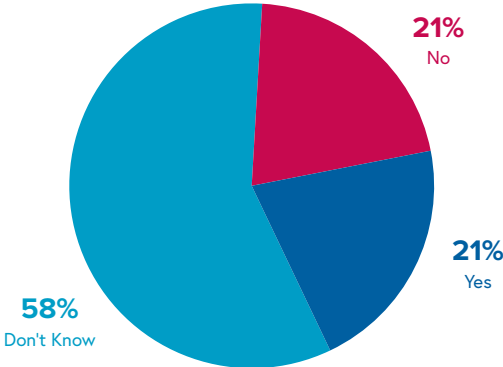


Figure 10:
SII-Supportive Practices and Policies



What about companies' stated commitments to hiring SII's? Fifty-three percent of respondents were unsure if their organization had any stated commitment to hiring people with a record of arrest or conviction, forty-three percent had no stated commitment, and five percent have a stated commitment (Figure 11).

Figure 12 shows 26 percent of employers in our sample reported that their company had hired someone with a record of arrest or conviction, while 63 percent were unsure, and 11 percent have not hired SII's.

Figure 11:
Company Commitment to Hiring SII

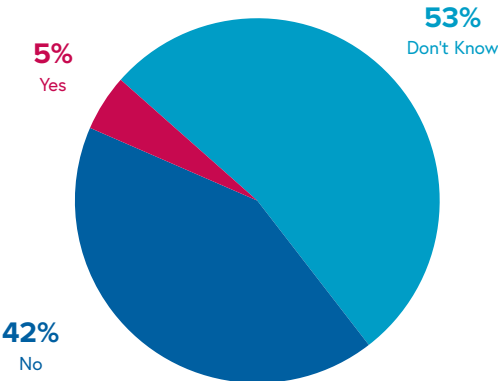
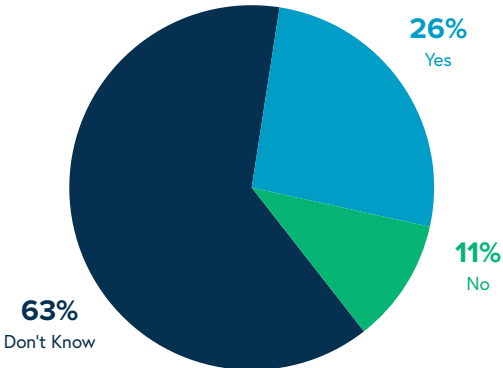


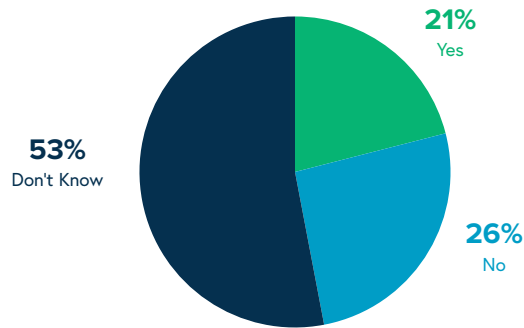
Figure 12:
Past/Present Hiring of SII



Concerns Surrounding Hiring Systems-Involved Individuals

Most respondents (53 percent) were unsure if their company has concerns about hiring a person with a record of arrest or conviction (Figure 13). Twenty-six percent reported no concerns, and 21 percent of respondents reported that their company had concerns.

Figure 13: Company Concern with Hiring SII



Employers who reported concerns further specified what those concerns might be. This was a tiny subset of our sample: four employers. Three respondents (i.e., 75 percent of this subset) named client and customer concerns (Figure 14). Two employers were concerned with potential liability to the brand, and two were concerned that SIIs would need

additional support that the company did not have resources to provide. One respondent expressed apprehension about the candidate's ability to perform the job well, one named current employee concerns, and one named legal/regulatory reasons. (One employer clicked "other," but did not elaborate.)

Figure 14: Specific Concerns when Hiring SII



What factors matter most when employers consider an applicant with a record of arrest or conviction? The most important factor—named by two-thirds of employers—was the type of involvement with the criminal legal system. Next, employers named the ability to run a background check after a conditional job offer

is made (39 percent). Twenty-two percent of respondents had no particular concerns with SII. One respondent's concern was related to type of crime, "If they were involved with hacking, that would be a problem," and two reported that they weren't familiar enough with company hiring policies to weigh in.

Figure 15: Factors when Considering Hiring SII

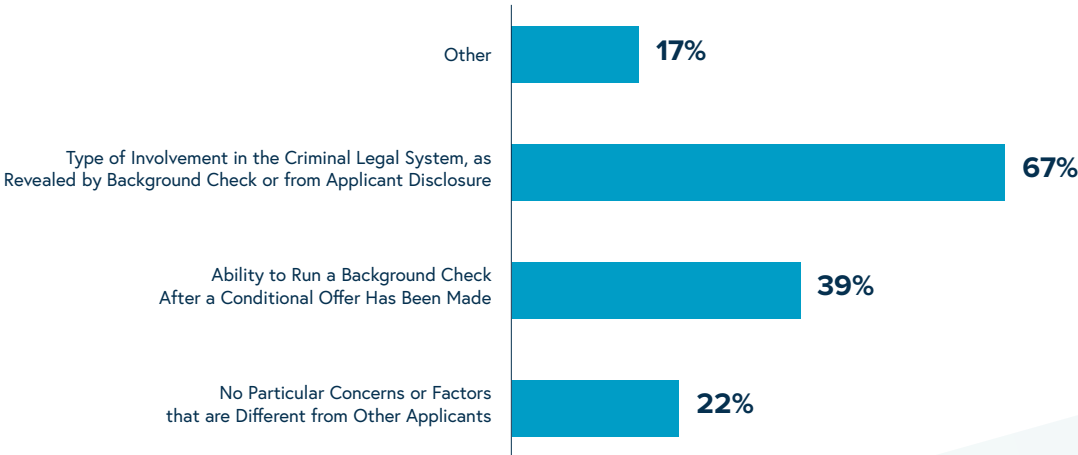
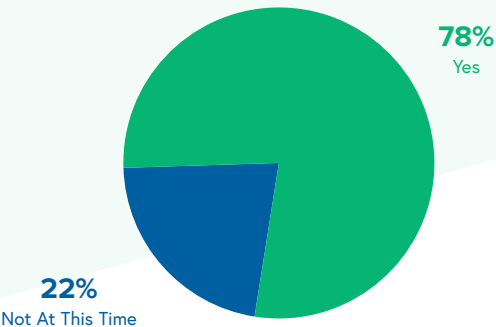


Figure 16: Interest in Learning Best Practices for Hiring/Retaining SII

Finally, we asked employers about their interest in learning how to apply best practices for hiring and retaining people with a record of arrest or conviction, and the vast majority (78 percent) responded affirmatively.



Summary

The Survey of Tech Employer Talent Challenges provides important information relevant to the future possibilities for inclusion of SII into this sector. The survey captured responses from a range of tech employers – across sectors, organization size and company subsidiary status.

Employers are facing significant challenges with recruitment and retention, as is true in other sectors. More than half of tech employers in our sample reported challenges with: finding and recruiting qualified workers (58 percent); employee retention/turnover (53 percent); and finding and recruiting workers with diverse backgrounds (53 percent).

More than two-thirds of L.A. area tech employers reported formal commitments to DEI, but companies varied in terms of their specific policies and commitments to hiring SII. Most employers are not yet explicitly committed to hiring people with records. However, about a quarter had already done so. Thirty-seven percent reported a general openness/interest in hiring people with a conviction or arrest. Strikingly, most respondents were unaware of

their company's current commitments and practices with respect to SII, despite having influence over HR policies. This suggests that SII hiring is a nascent topic at these firms. This is consistent with our finding that the vast majority of tech employers (78 percent) expressed interest in learning more about best practices for hiring and retaining SII.

Systems-involved Angelenos represent an important potential labor pool for the growing tech sector, and L.A. area tech employers appear to be open and interested in this potential workforce. UNITE-LA utilized the results of this data collection effort to craft and launch our 2022 Business Accelerator program for tech employers, which provided tailored information and best practices for supporting SII employment in the tech sector. We will continue to work with tech employers and look forward to the further inclusion of SII as key contributors to our region's development as a tech hub.



In Partnership With:

