

HOW TO

Assess Members' Training Needs



Offering your members access to effective training should be built on facts, not assumptions. That is why it is important to assess your members' needs at the start of the planning process. One way to do this is by conducting a short, targeted survey to capture skill and logistical needs, interest levels and barriers to participation.

Step 1

Keep the survey simple and accessible. Use or adapt the sample survey on the following pages or create your own. Offer it in multiple languages according to your members' needs. Build it in Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, another online survey tool that is mobile-friendly and/or use a paper version — whatever works best for your membership.

Step 2

Distribute your survey through multiple trusted channels to maximize participation: email, text, QR codes at worksites, union meetings and steward networks. Emphasize confidentiality and frame the effort as an investment in member success, not an evaluation. If possible, offer a small incentive or tie participation to broader workforce development benefits to increase response rates. Keep the response window open for 2-3 weeks.

Step 3

Once responses are collected, analyze them across three key areas: skill demand, barriers to participation and logistical preferences. Look for patterns across job classifications and/or geographic regions to prioritize programming. This helps ensure that the class is both relevant and well attended. Even 20-30 responses from a membership base of 200 can provide you with enough data to determine how to move forward.

Step 4

Share a summary of the findings with the membership before announcing any program to solidify trust in follow-through. Then, use the findings to design a pilot program (rather than a full rollout), aligning the topics, scheduling and delivery format with member preferences as you collect additional member feedback throughout the course.

Sample Member Survey



This survey is anonymous. Your responses help our union offer training and education options that best meet your needs and career aspirations.

1. What is your current occupation or job?
2. If you hope to advance into a new occupation or job, please list:
3. What is the zip code where you *work* most often?
4. What is the zip code where you *live*?
5. Which of the following foundational skills would you most like to improve? (Select all that apply)
 - ☐ Reading Comprehension
 - ☐ Math Literacy
 - ☐ GED/High School Equivalency
 - ☐ English as a Second Language (ESL)
 - ☐ Other _____
 - ☐ Do not need to improve
6. What are the biggest challenges to participating in skill-improvement courses? (Select all that apply)
 - ☐ Cost (\$)
 - ☐ Work schedule
 - ☐ Family responsibilities
 - ☐ Transportation
 - ☐ Confidence or comfort level
 - ☐ Language barriers
 - ☐ Other _____
 - ☐ Do not have any challenges in participating
7. If those challenges were addressed, how interested would you be in taking a skill-improvement course?
 - ☐ Very interested
 - ☐ Somewhat interested
 - ☐ Not interested at this time
8. What course format would you prefer?
 - ☐ In-person
 - ☐ Online
 - ☐ Hybrid (mix of in-person and online)
 - ☐ No preference

Sample Member Survey



9. Which time(s) work best for your course participation? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Morning
- ☐ Afternoon
- ☐ Evening
- ☐ Weekday
- ☐ Weekend
- ☐ Online/self-paced (anytime)

10. Where would you prefer classes to be held?

- ☐ Union hall
- ☐ Online (self-paced)
- ☐ Online (live instruction at set times)
- ☐ Community location (library, school, etc.)
- ☐ No preference

11. Have you previously taken foundational skill classes?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

12. Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your learning needs or what would make a learning opportunity work for you?