

Executive Summary

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is contracted by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide career interviews to every subminimum wage earner in Wisconsin, as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. State Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) was the fifth consecutive interview cycle by the UW-Whitewater team. The Wisconsin WIOA Career Interview Project interviewer team completed **3,488 interviews during FY22**, all of which were conducted remotely due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Interview Characteristics

Most respondents received annual interviews (84%) rather than initial or second initial interviews, which are required for workers in their first year of 14c certified employment. The majority of those interviewed were male (57%). Seventy-two percent of all respondents have a legal guardian.

Most workers demonstrated expressive (84%) and receptive (86%) communication strategies to allow them to engage in the career interview discussions. A small number of workers were able to use some expressive communication (13%) and some receptive (11%) communication strategies. There was a significant increase this cycle to 61% (formerly 43%) of those who reported receiving training that helped them develop self-advocacy, self-determination, and/or peer mentoring skills or opportunities, while the remainder stated no training or were unsure of training received.

This cycle continued with remote interviews due to coronavirus pandemic precautions. Again this year, another person was with the 14c employee in the interview space/location. In past years prior to virtual meetings, nearly 90% of interviews were done without a guest. This year, only about three-fourths (73%) of interviews were conducted without guests present. When others were present during interviews (25%), they were most frequently 14c employer staff and employee's family members, including guardians who are related. On occasions when the interview took place while the employee was at home, support staff or family members were present. Of those who had a guest at an interview, 23% had a guest with a high level of participation. Remote interviews did affect the style of interview more than past years, as group interviews occurred only 56% of the time. Group size varied from 2 to 5 individuals. Prior to the pandemic, nearly all interviews were conducted in small groups of 5. Forty-four percent of interviews were independent or individual interviews, because individuals were not allowed to be at the 14c site, there were protocols not to be in small groups on site, or technology only allowed one person at a time.

Workforce Development Area (WDA) 5 and WDA 8 had the most completed interviews (15% each), followed closely by WDA 4 (13%), which is similar to past years. The fewest completed interviews were in WDA 2, with only 3% of total interviews and WDA 6 (4%). For those

unfamiliar with the state, WDA 2 has the highest population of the state (Milwaukee metropolitan region), whereas WDA 6 is a sparsely populated region in the north.

The following data is self-reported by subminimum wage employees. While interviewers do their best to collect the most accurate responses possible, self-reported answers can be influenced by many factors and may not always be factual.

UW-Whitewater's professional interviewers adapted their style of questioning and flow of discussion based upon the communication styles and topics of interest among those interviewed to best engage the individual or group and elicit their responses.

Most respondents reported attending and completing secondary education (83%). Please note that this captures respondents who received a high school diploma, a certificate of completion, or a certificate of attendance. Additionally, GED/HSED recipients are included in the post-secondary education category. Only 9% of respondents pursued any post-secondary education, including taking any courses or beginning an undergraduate program after exiting high school. Those who began or completed some additional education report diverse areas of study.

About a third (37%) of respondents reported past DVR experience, although only 7% reported current involvement with DVR. Another 38% were unable to report their experience with DVR.

Manufacturing activities were the most reported activities at 14c certified employer sites, followed by cleaning. Around 14% were working in the community with or without supports. However, those who did report community employment and/or volunteering had more diversity in the type of activities in these settings compared to 14c certified employment. About 80% had historical vocational activity. Workers reported greater diversity in their historical work experiences and work-related activities compared to their current activities (see data beginning on page number 19).

The majority of respondents reported that their goal was to continue working and reported a diverse array of interests and strategies to pursue employment, including community-based prevocational services and volunteering, in addition to community employment. Anecdotally, as some had put goals for community employment on hold due to concerns with COVID, it now seems respondents are looking to continue with their goals.

It should be noted that current, historical, and future vocational experiences, as well as skills and goals, are not mutually exclusive responses and may include responses from the same person across one or more categories.

Again, during FY22, the novel coronavirus pandemic of 2019 (COVID-19) had an impact on the interview cycle. While UW-Whitewater completed the projected number of interviews, the interview process was adapted in numerous ways to accommodate the realities of the pandemic.

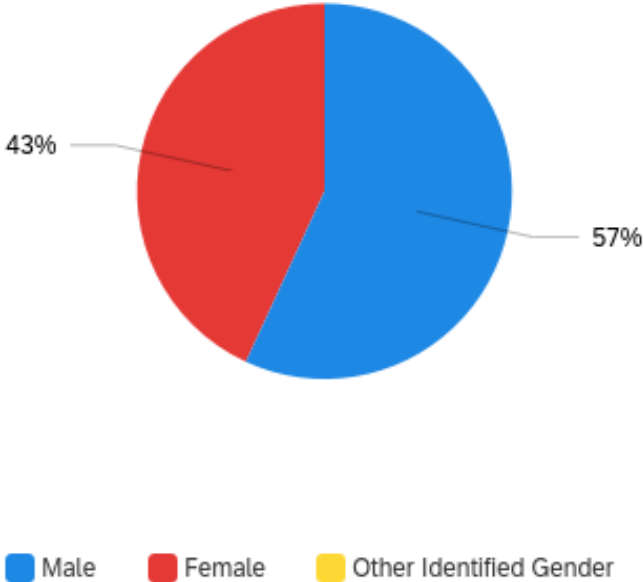
As this was the second full cycle of facilitating remote interviews, interviewers scheduled 7 to 8 weeks in advance with the 14c site coordinators. This was in response to multiple cancellations and rescheduled events that occurred in FY20. By planning for 8-week periods, if a site were to close or have an outbreak in COVID, the interviewer only rescheduled one period of events.

Interviews for the entire FY22 cycle were conducted remotely by phone or video call such as WebEx and Zoom meeting platforms, based on technology and computer access for the 14c employers and 14c employees. The team worked with 14c employers to determine the best modality for remote interviews. The challenges of remote interviews for 14c employers and their staff, including internet connectivity issues, were less significant this cycle as the mode of communicating was well known by most staff and employees. Interviewers oriented 14c employees to using equipment and redirecting attention to the interview, acknowledging the differences with COVID-19 in their lives and employment, and continuing to offer the interviews at a location and time convenient for them due to all these circumstances.

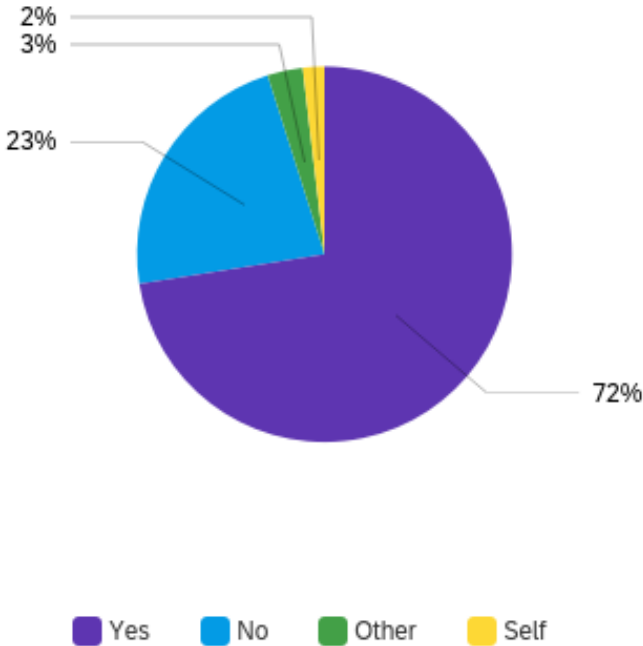
The Department of Labor has been silent on the compliance implications of 14c employees missing or delaying interviews due to COVID-19. However, guidance was released June 2022. While this publication did not specifically address COVID-19, gaps in employment examples were given. Clarification was also provided for 14c employees who change 14c employment locations, which was not clear before this publication. The CITEE team continues to follow the DOL guidance and update procedures to follow the most up to date information.

The following pages include graphics from the FY22 cycle.

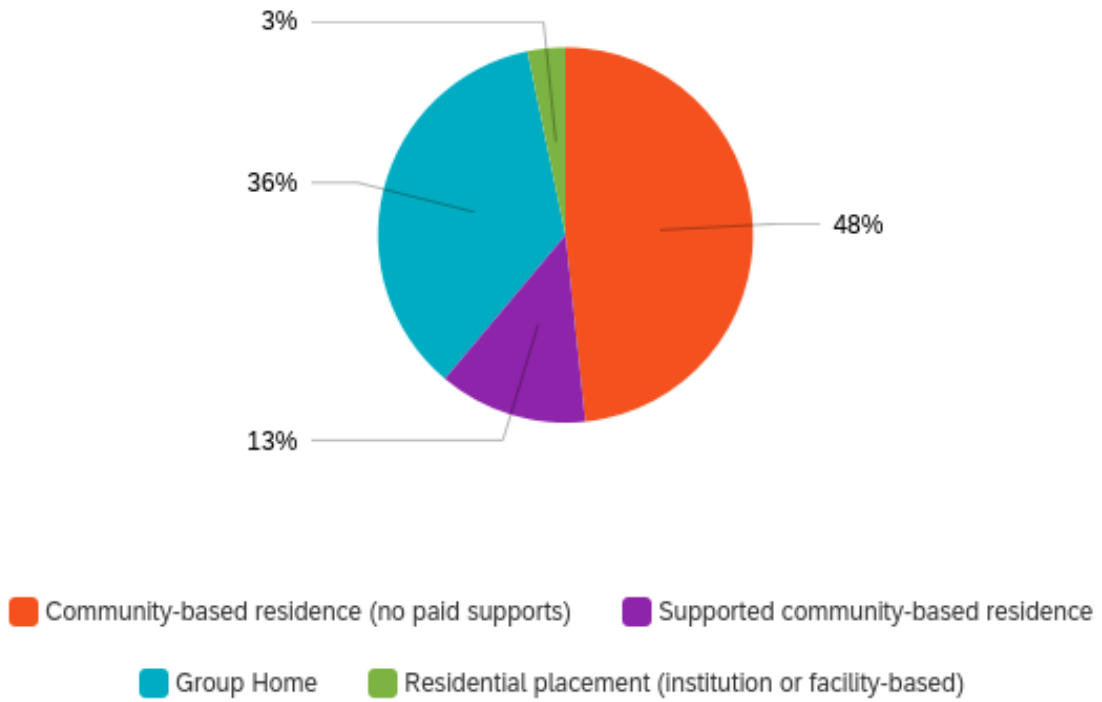
Gender



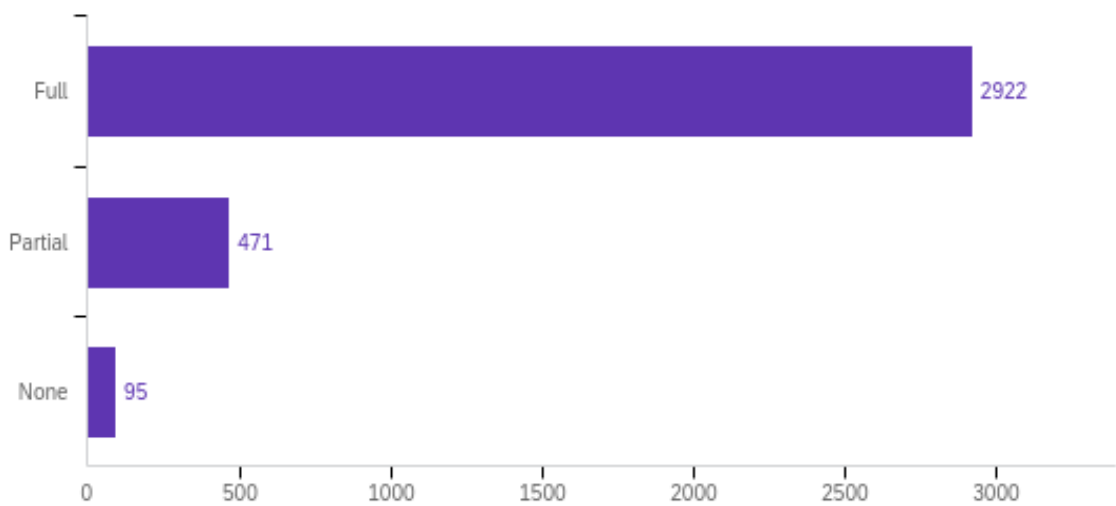
Guardianship



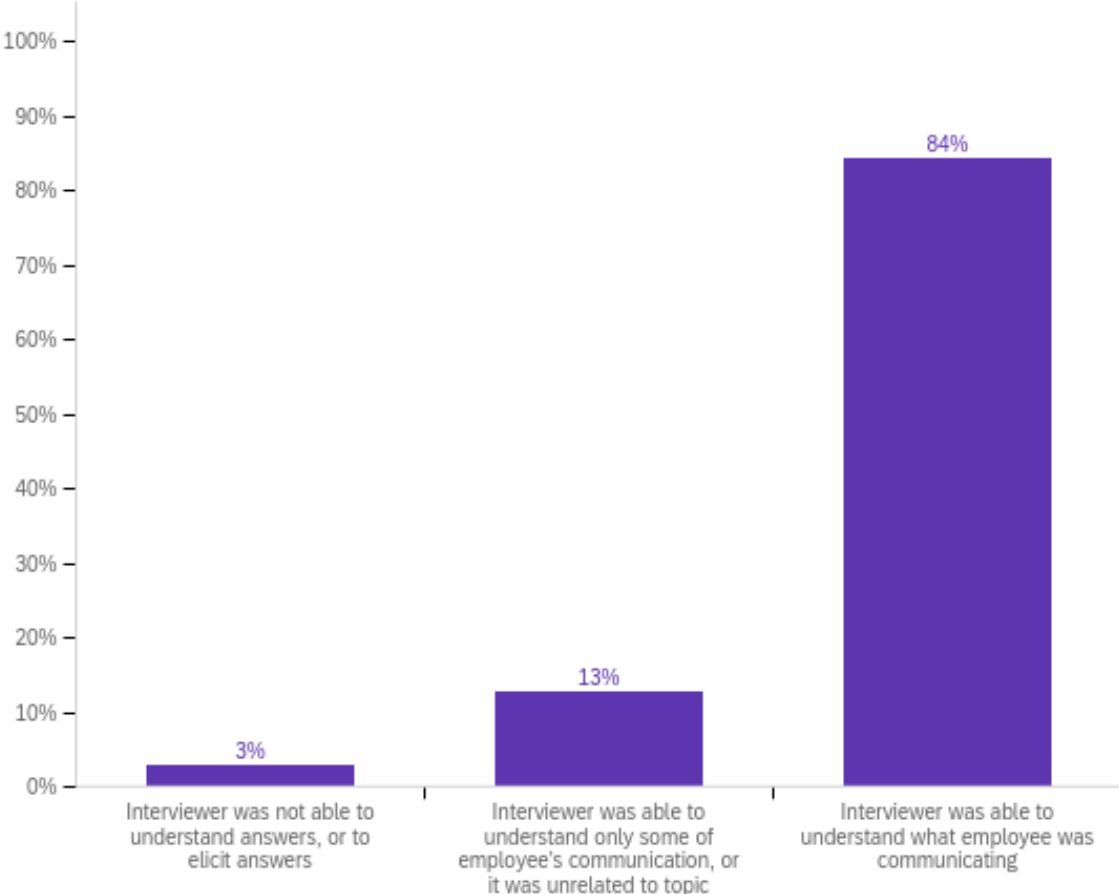
Residence



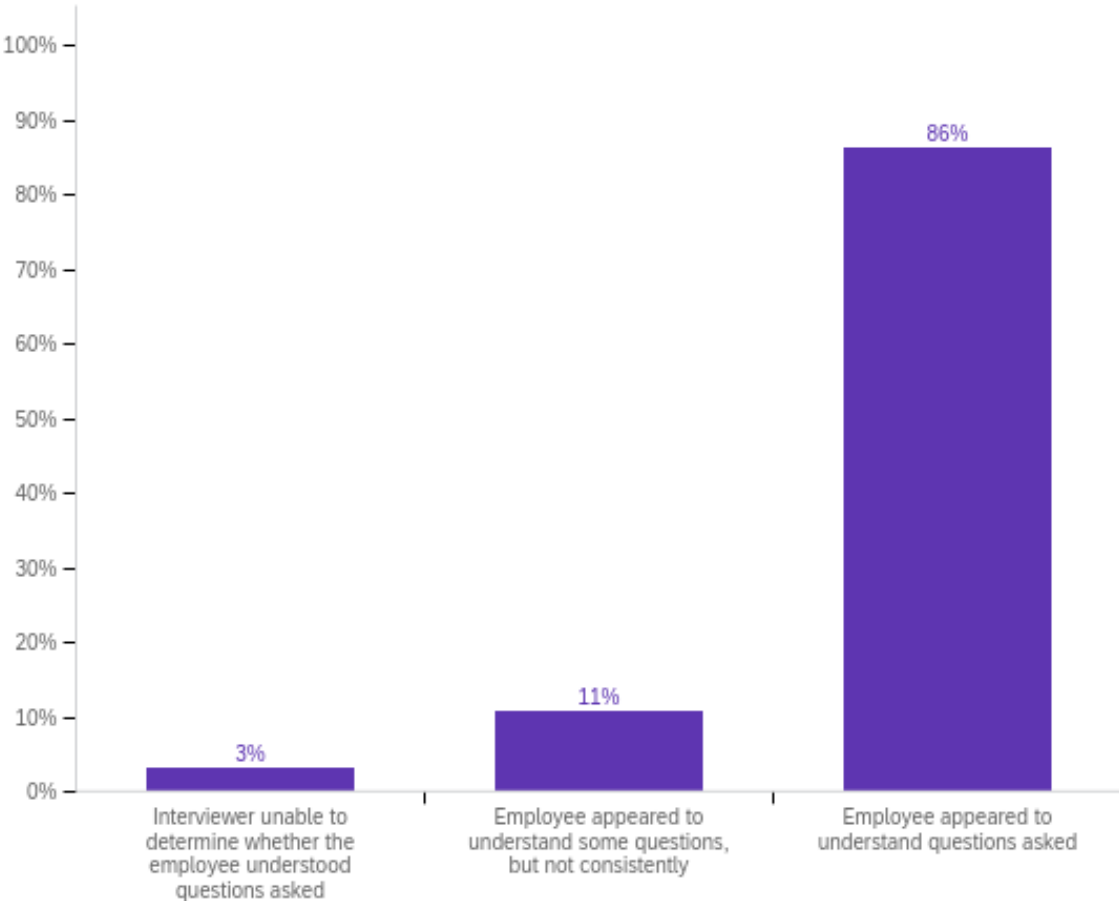
Overall Communication



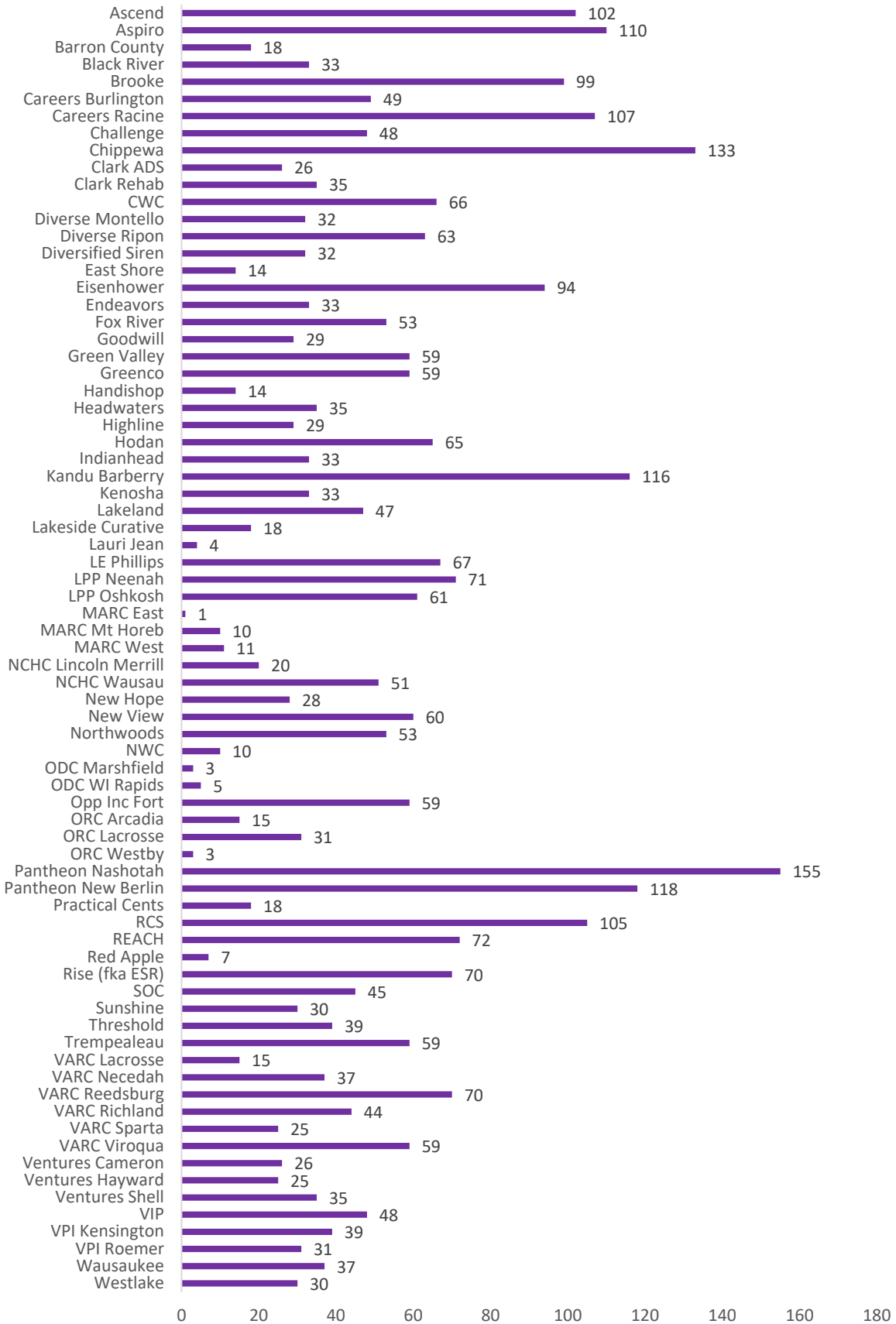
Expressive communication



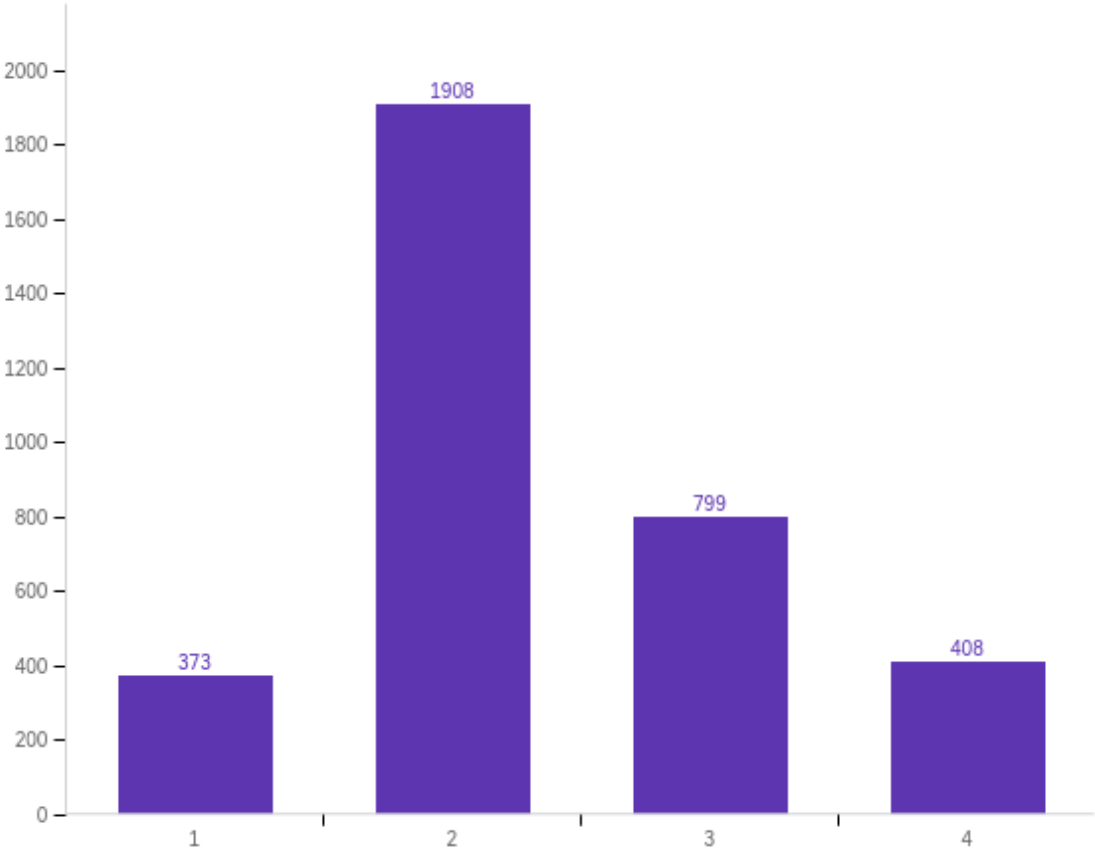
Receptive communication



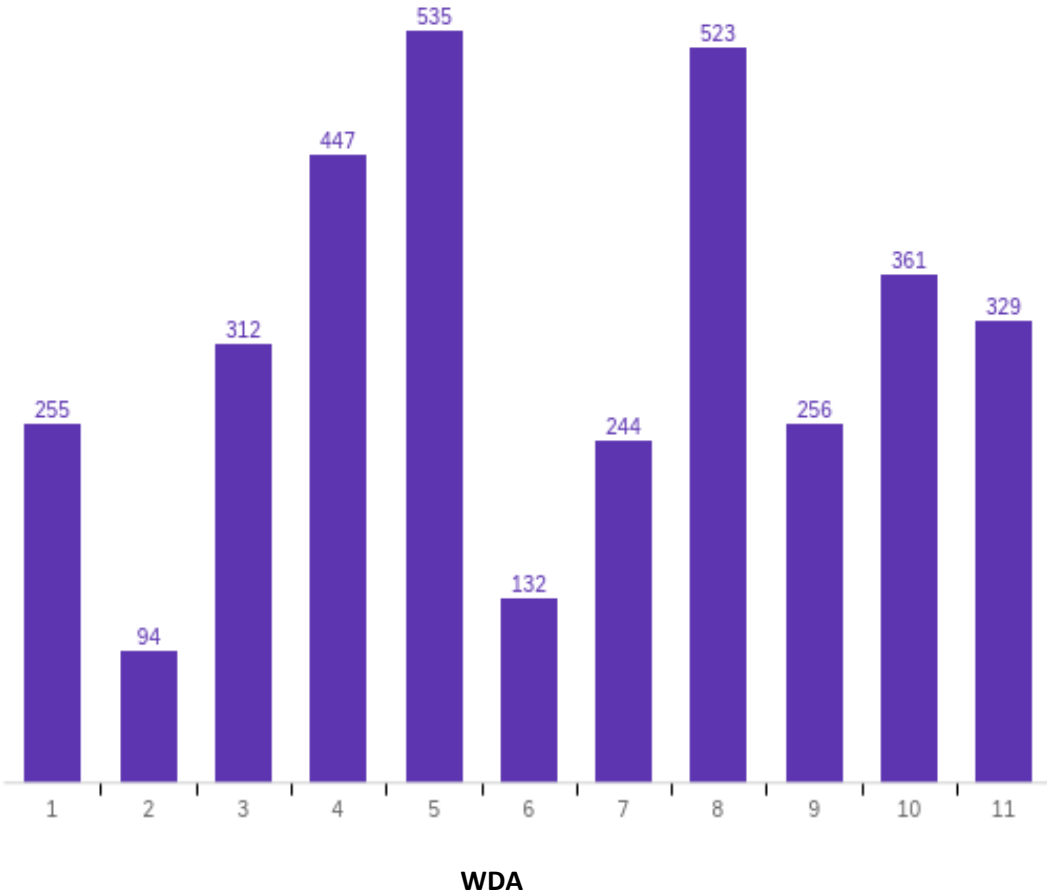
Primary Employer



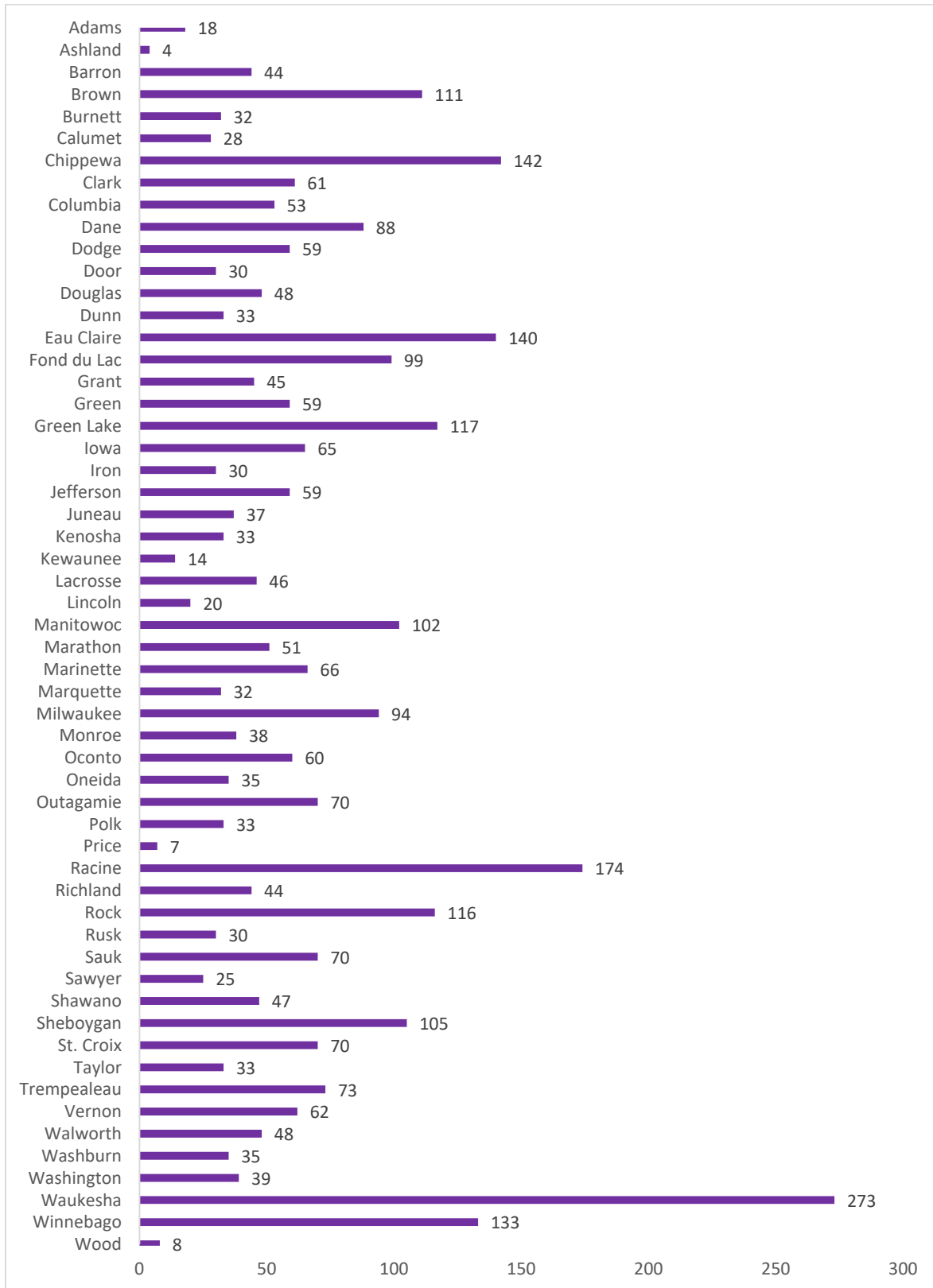
Interviews Completed by Quarter



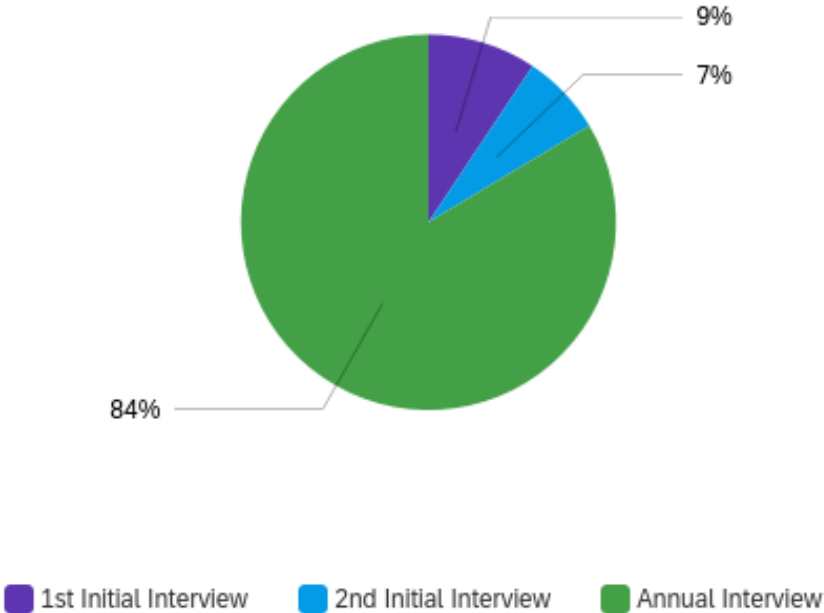
Interviews by Workforce Development Area



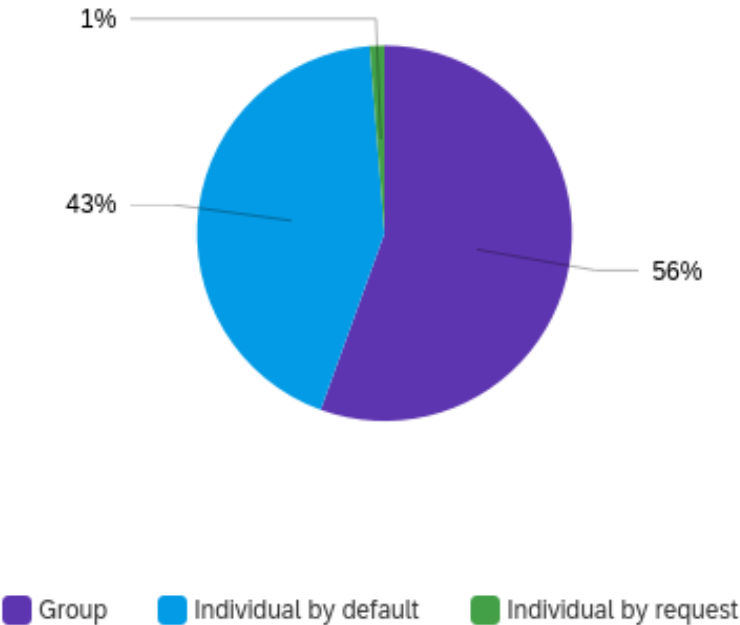
Interviews by County



Interview Type



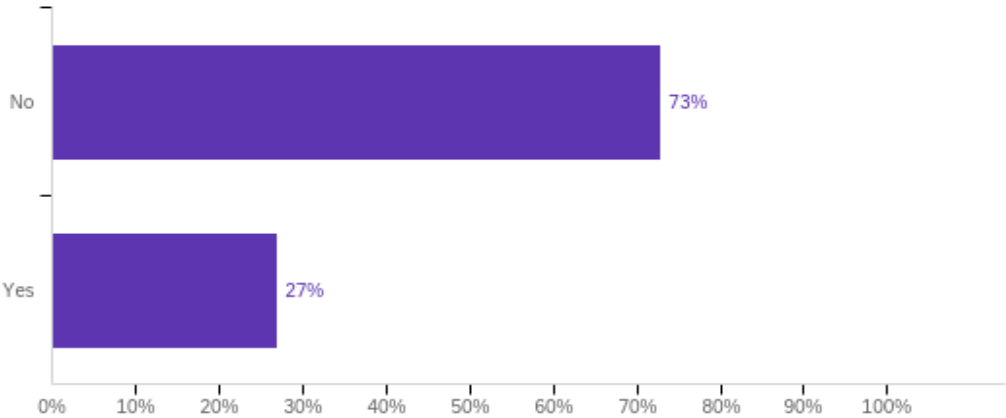
Interview style



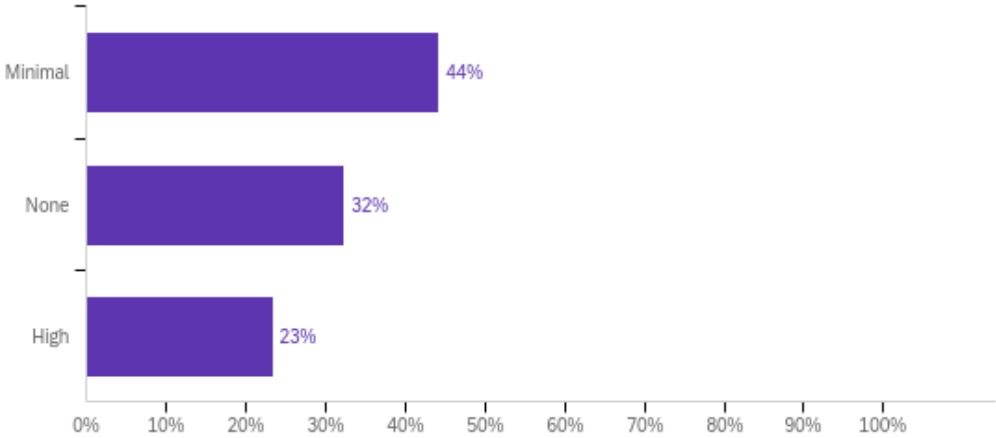
Interview Location



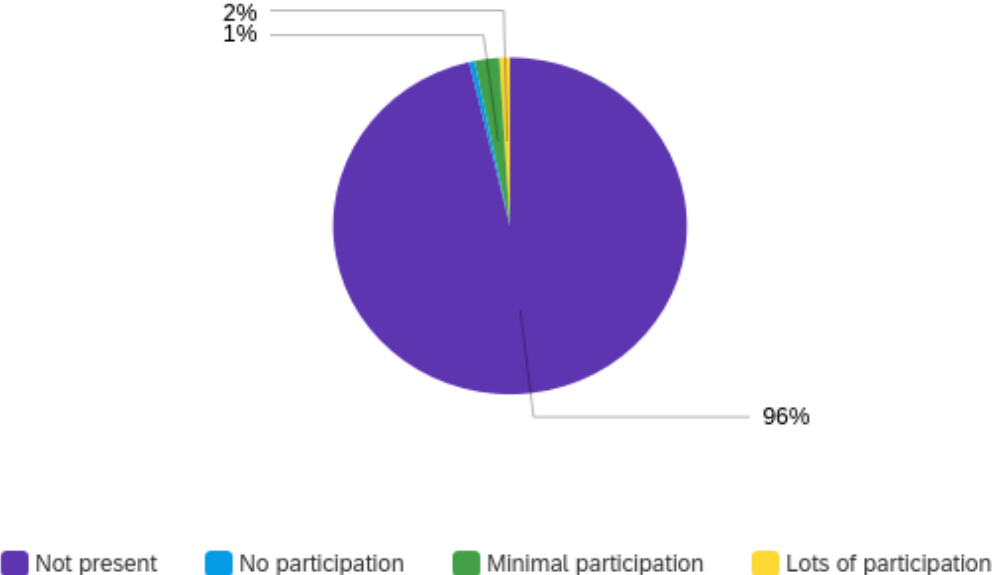
Guests Present



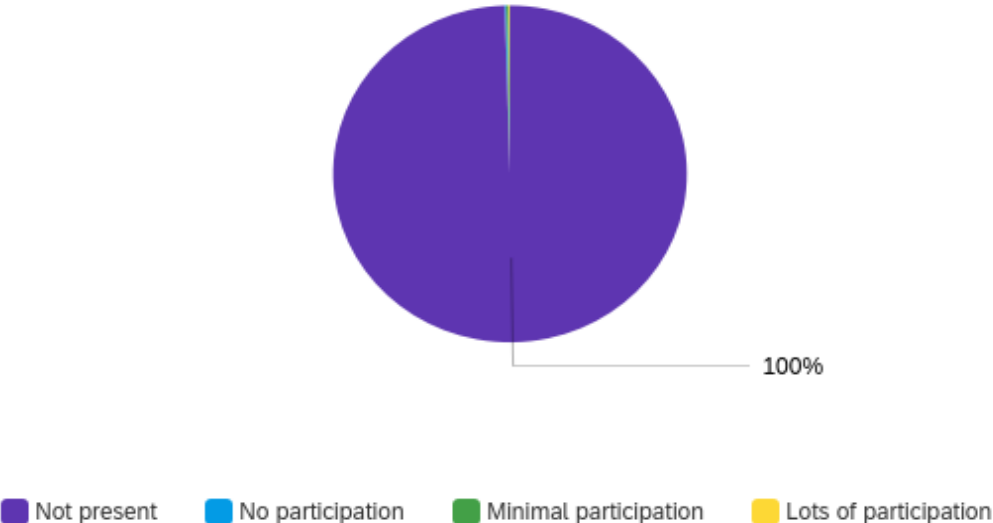
Guest Participation



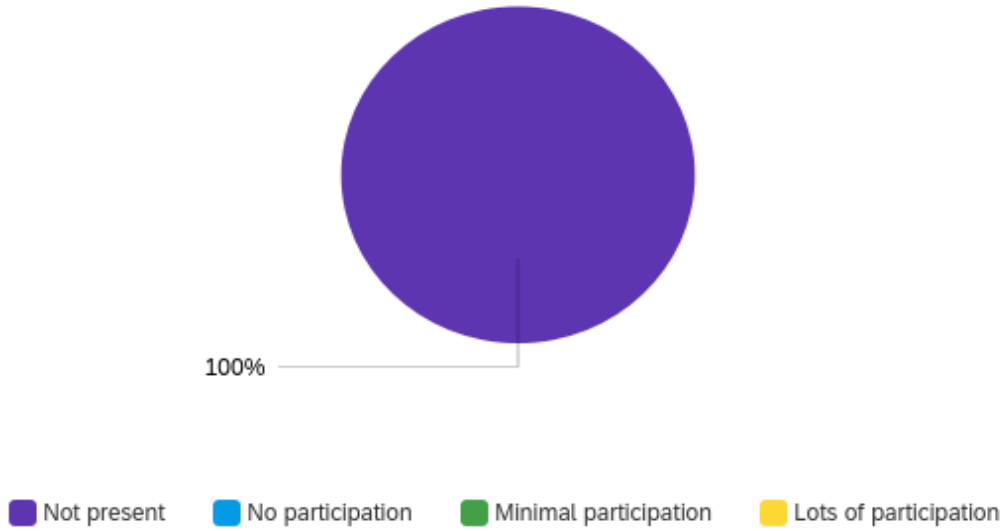
Members of employee's family (including a family member who is a legal guardian) present at interview by participation level



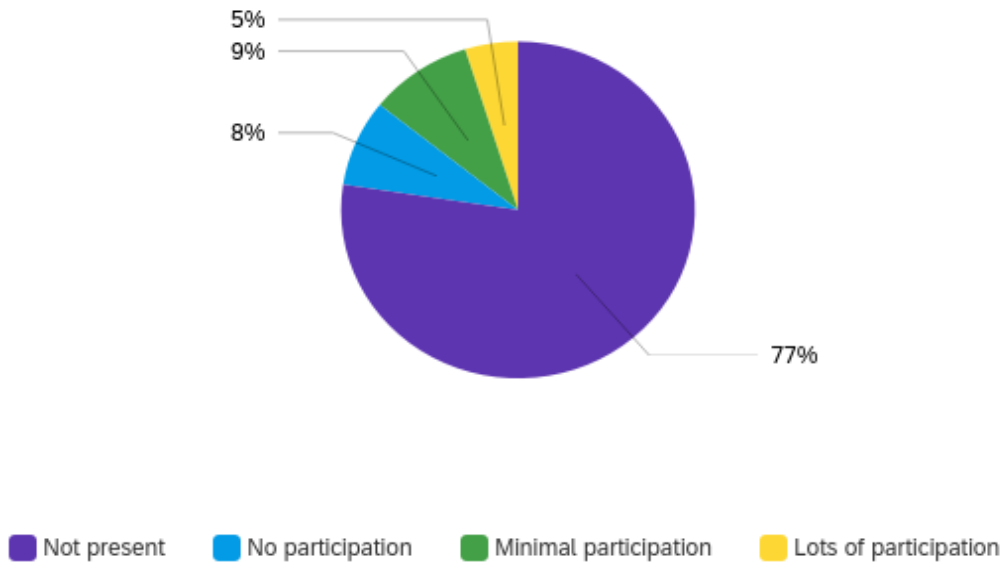
The employee's guardian (unrelated, including corporate or court-appointed) present at interview at interview by participation level



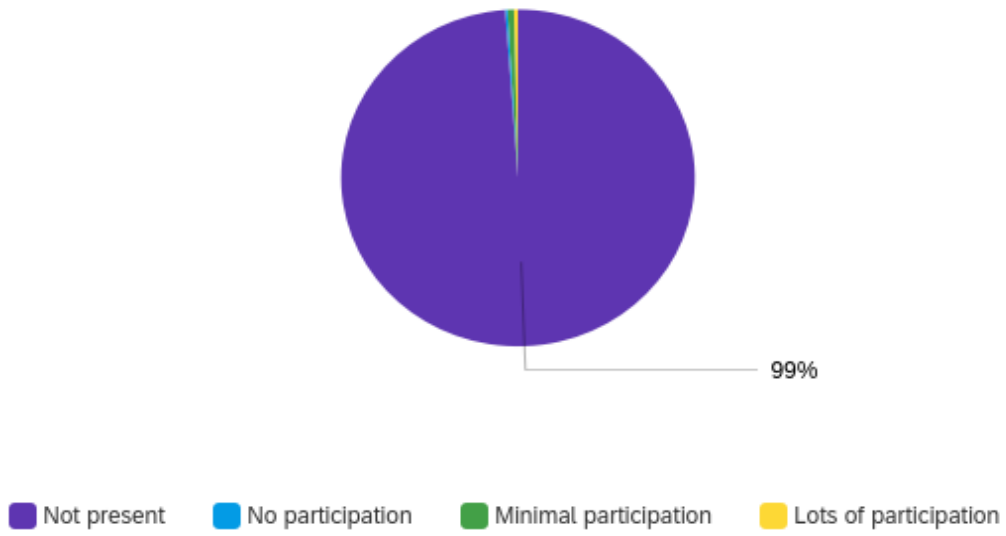
A representative of the employee's IRIS agency, MCO, or other long-term care agency is present at interview by participation level



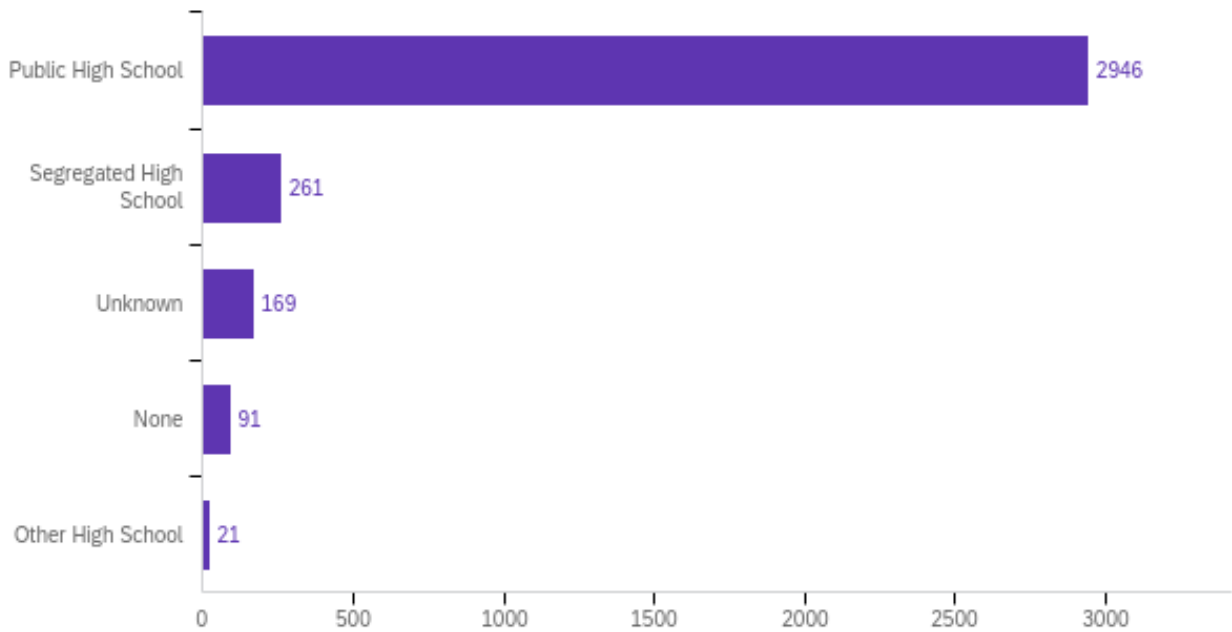
A 14(c) agency staff member is present (must be requested/approved in advance) at interview by participation level



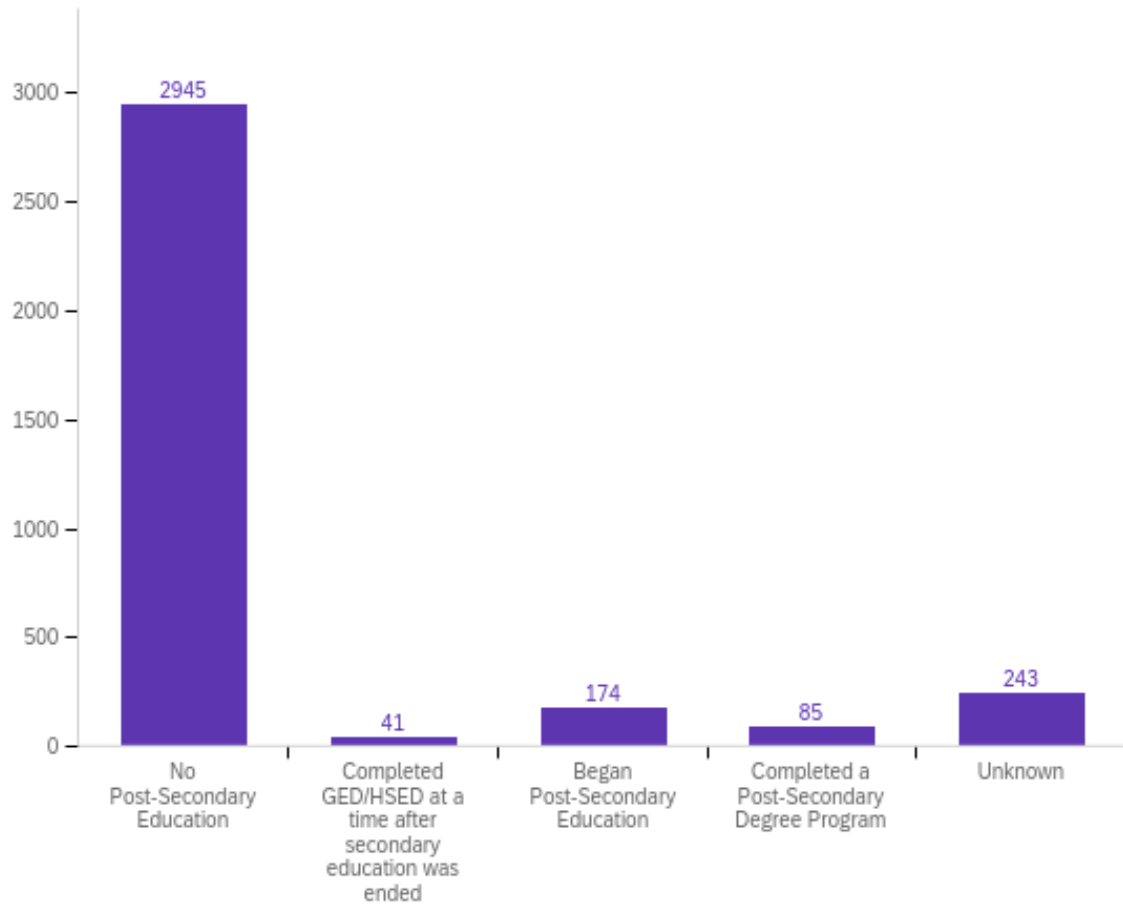
Another individual is present (i.e. group home staff, mentor, etc.) at interview by participation level



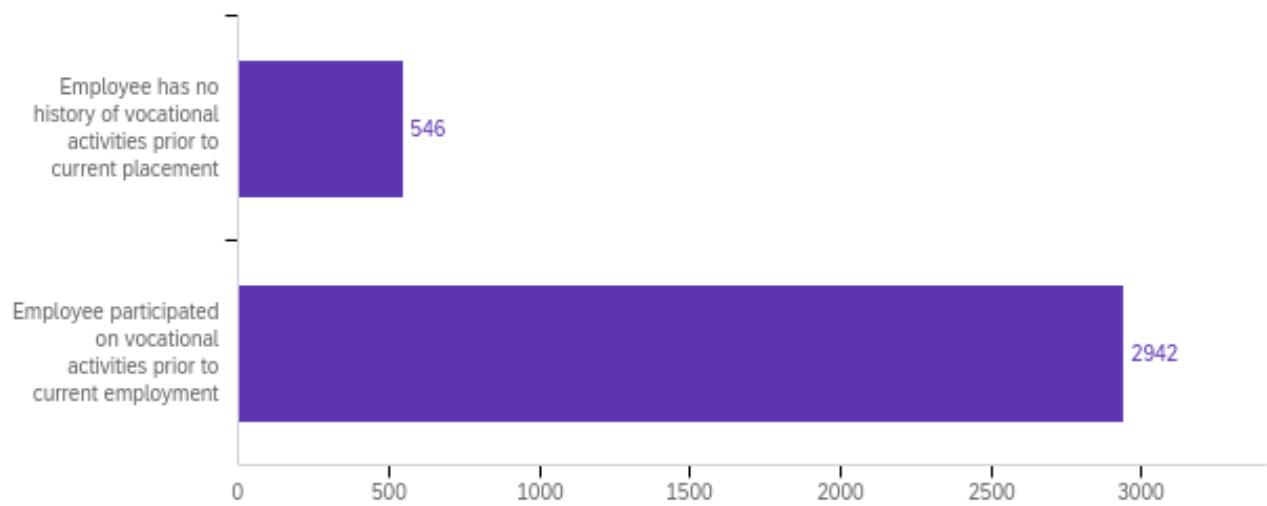
Secondary Education Type



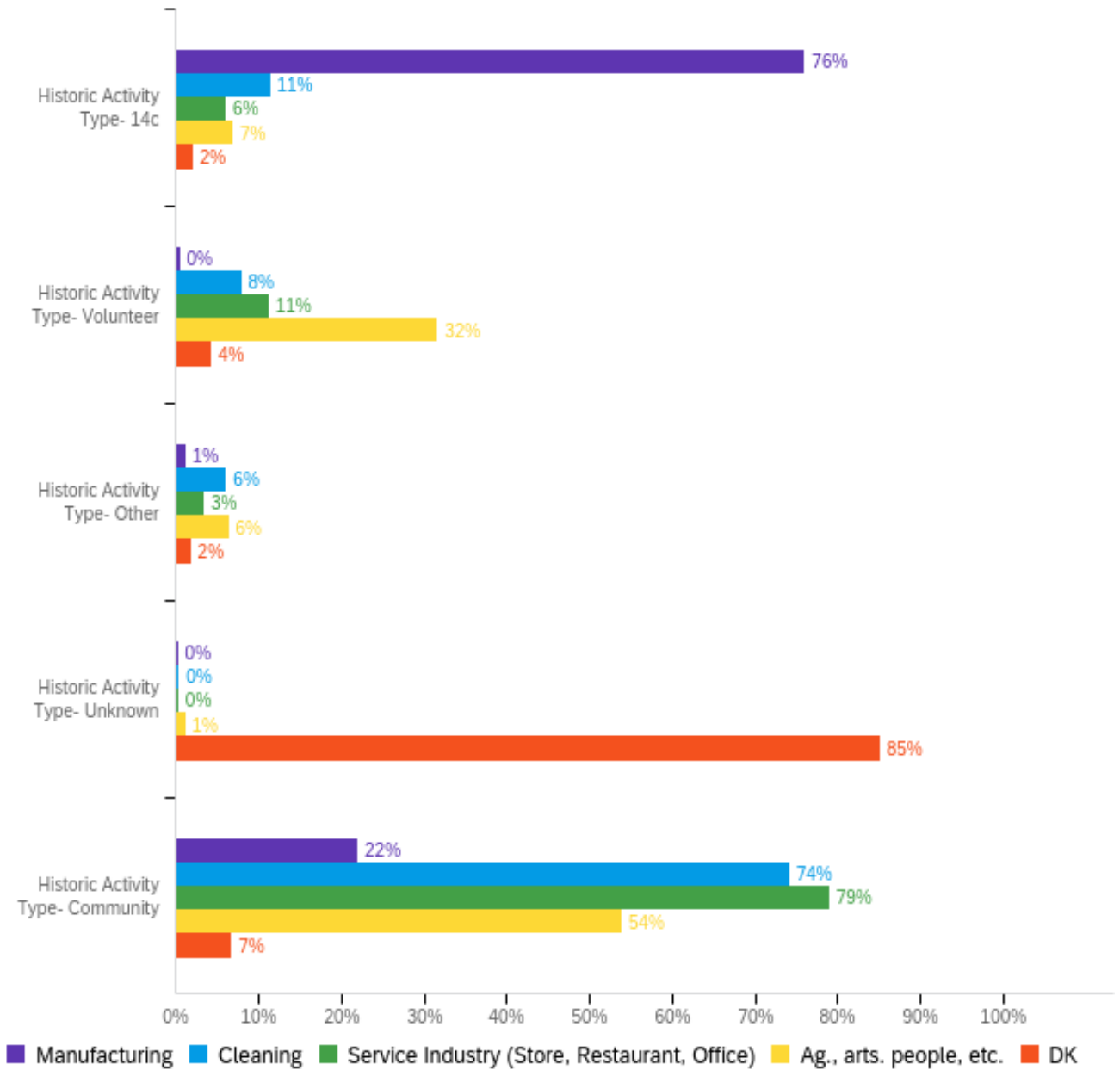
Post-Secondary Education



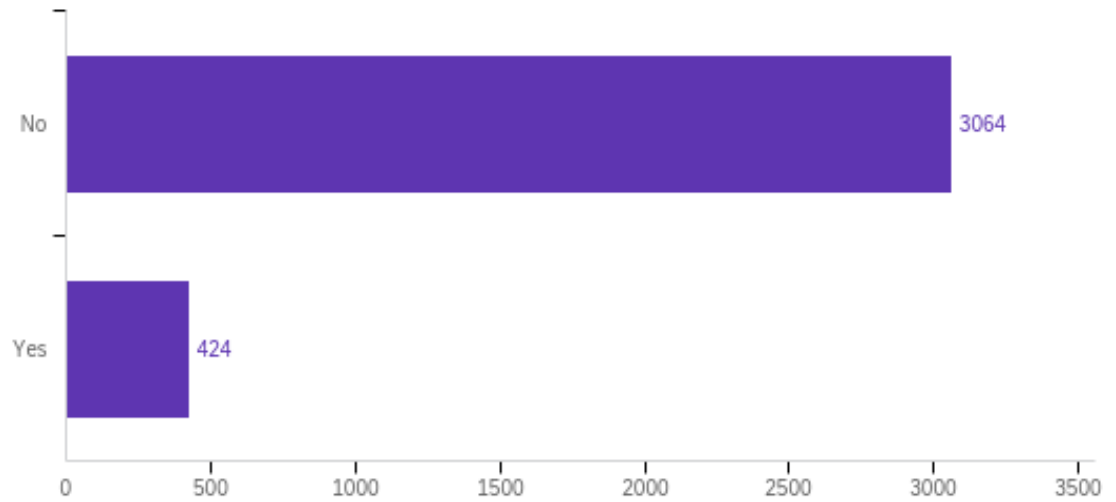
Any Historic Vocational Activities



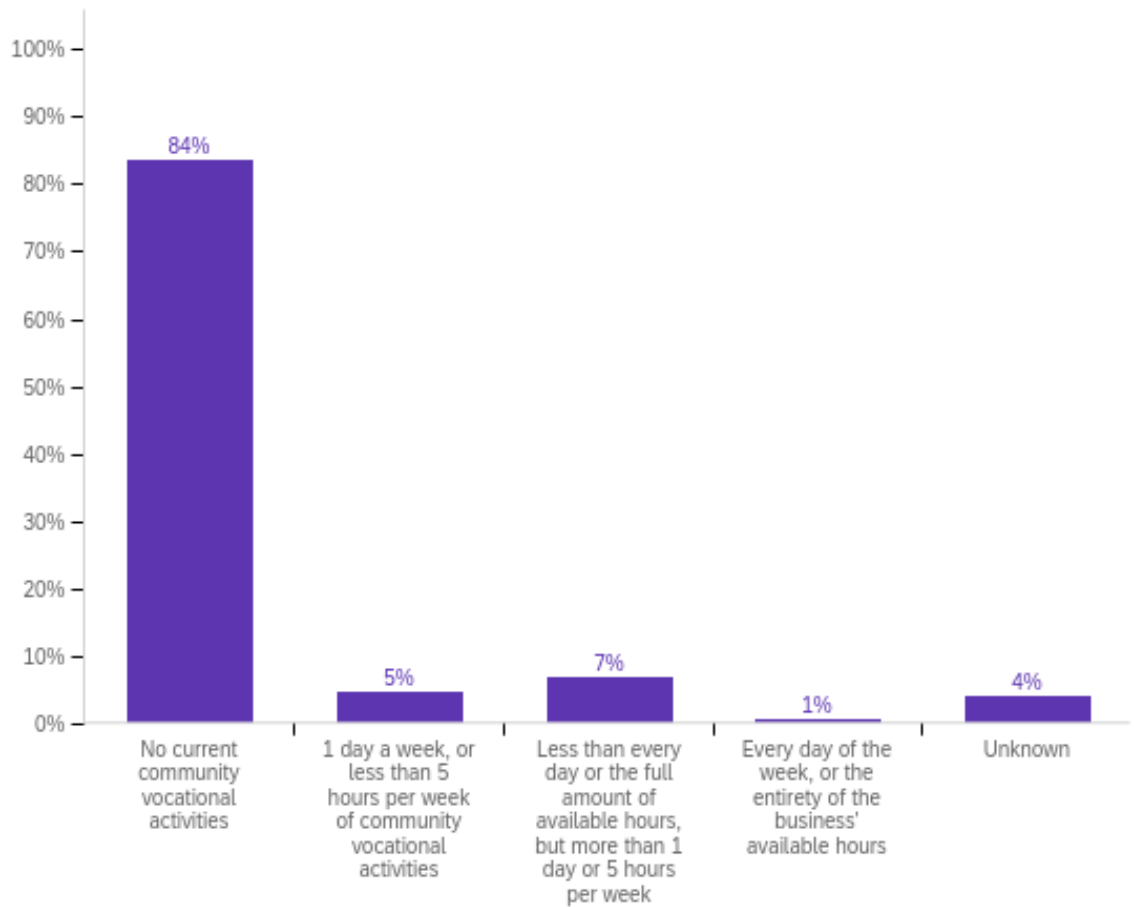
Historic Vocational Activities



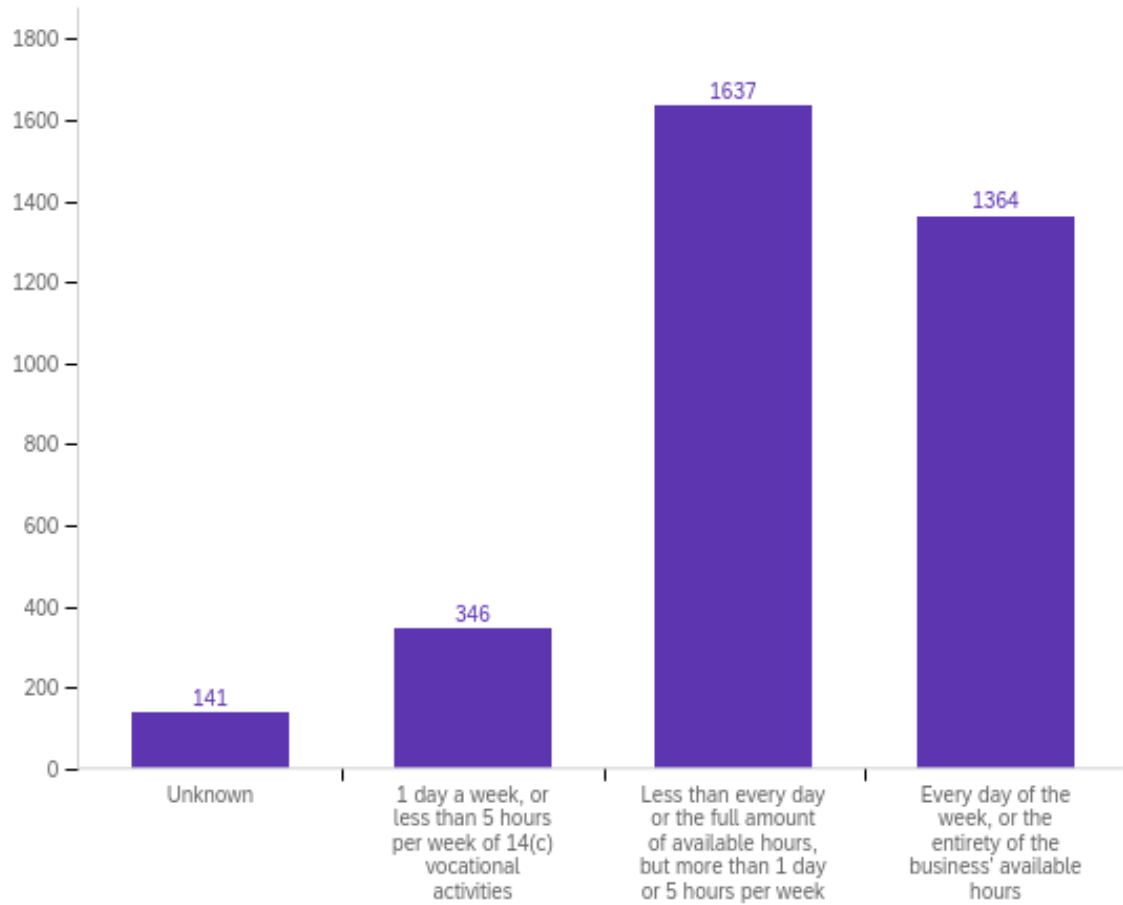
Current Community Hours



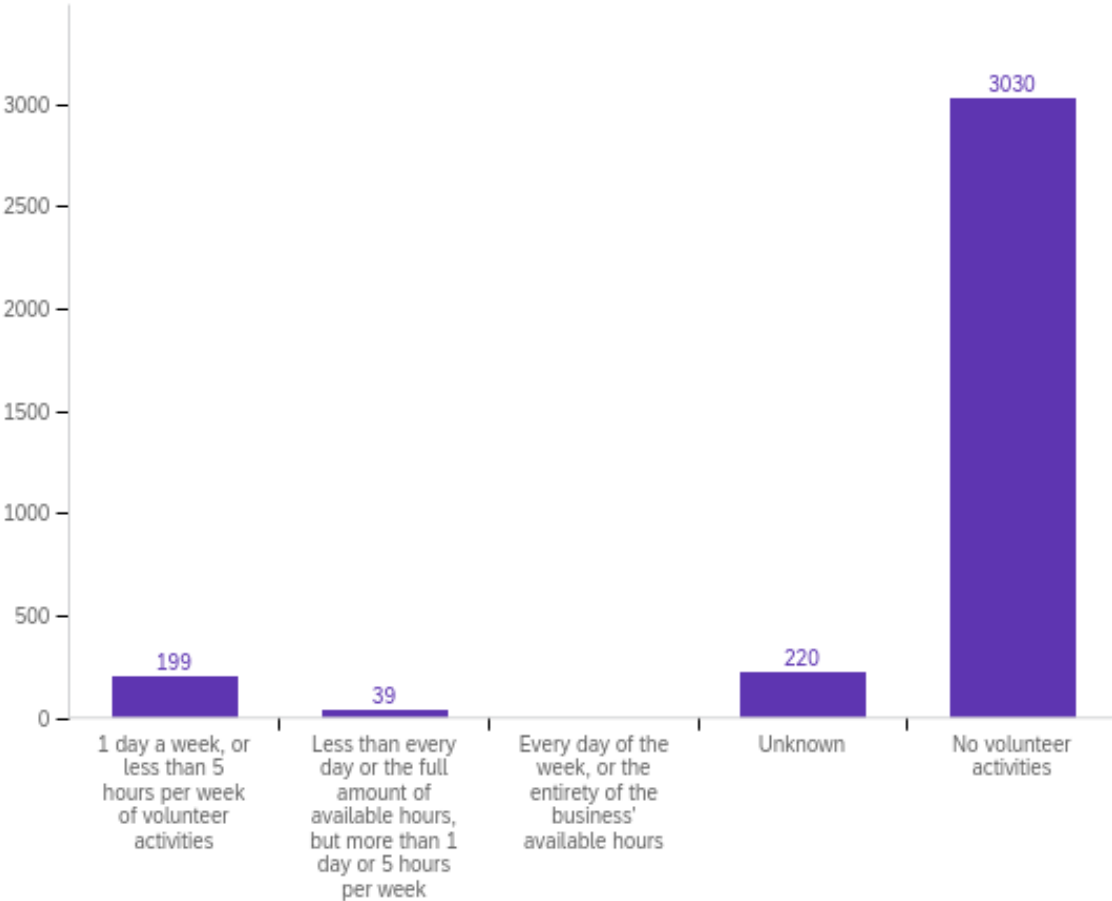
Current Community Hours



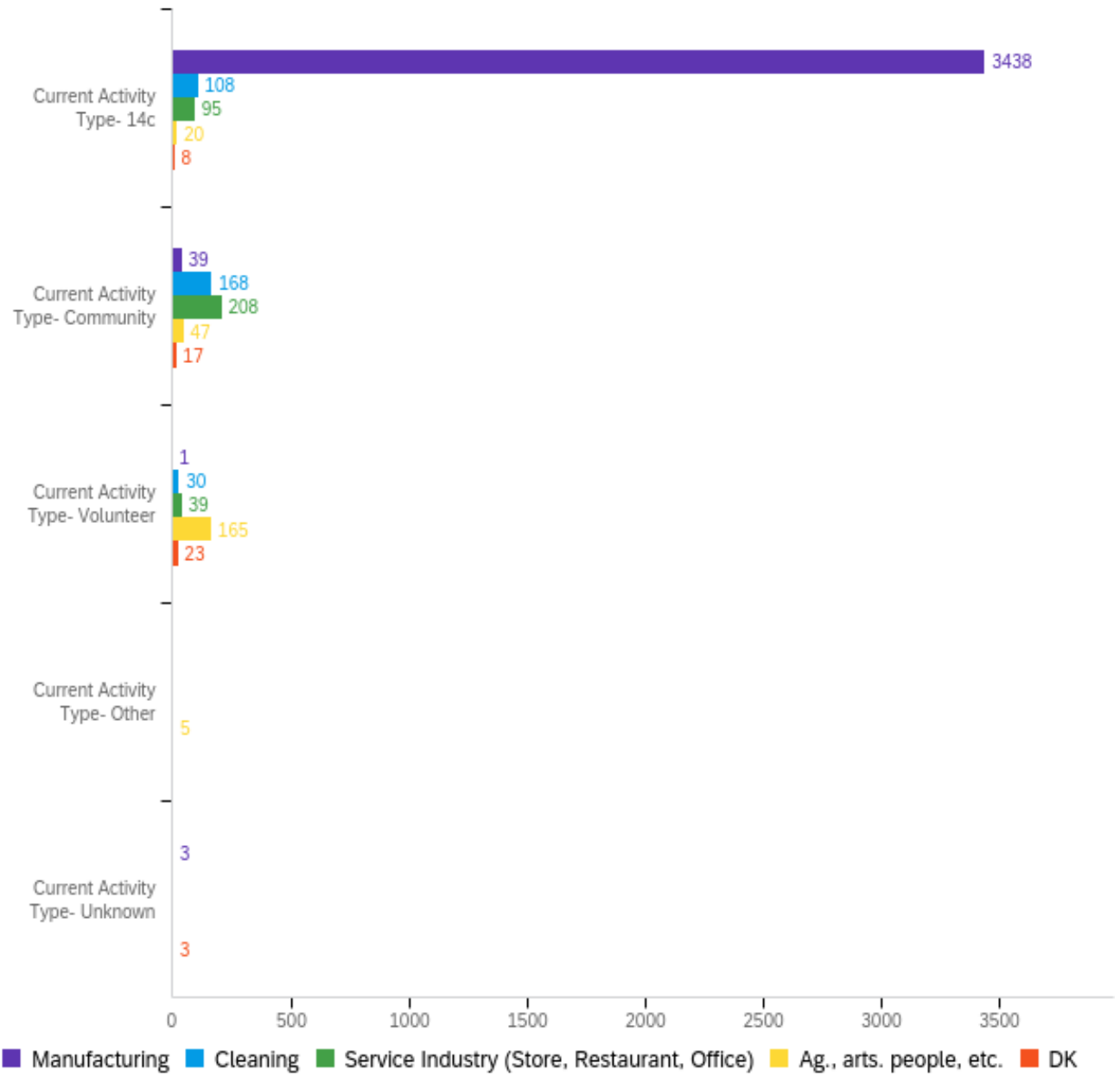
Current 14c Hours



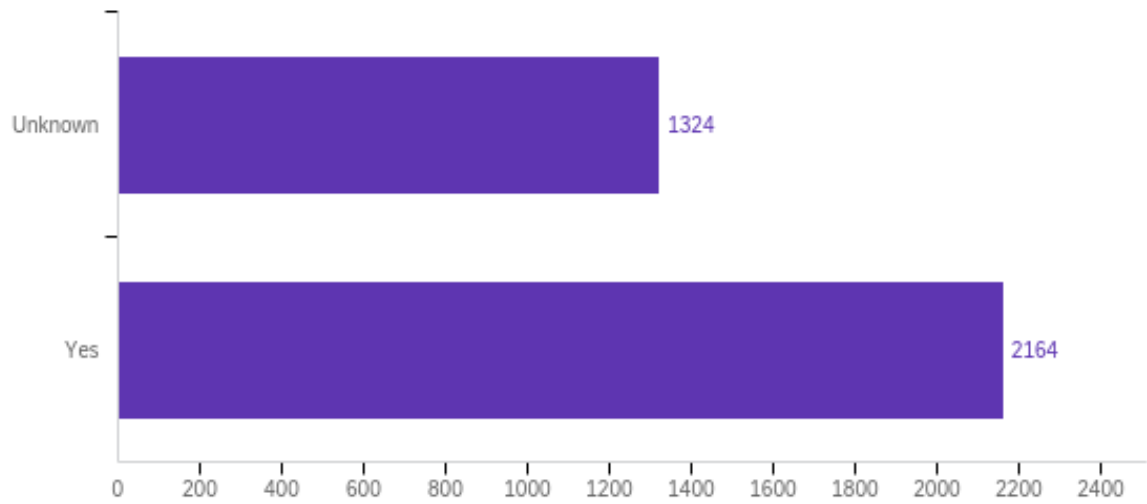
Current Volunteer Hours



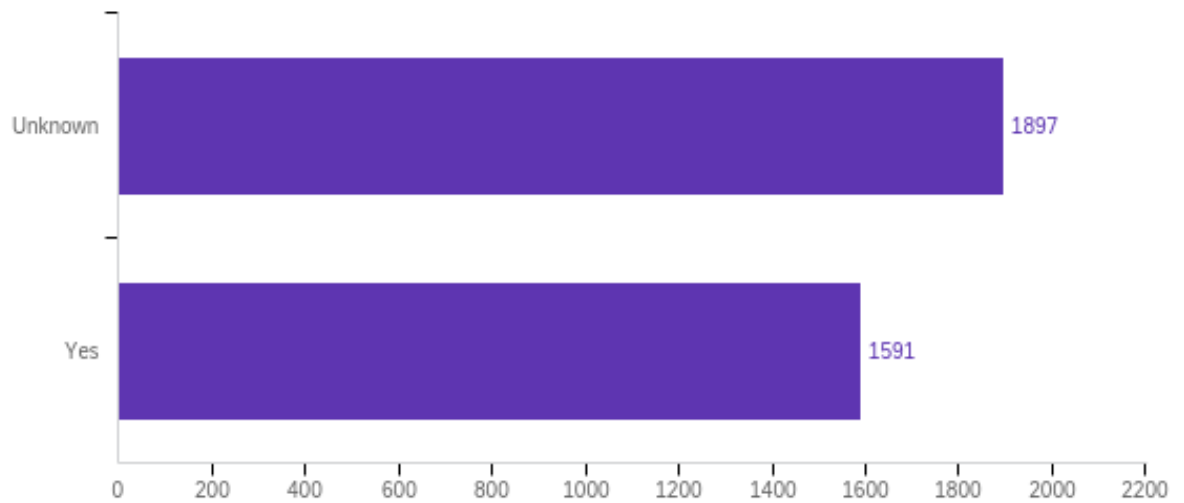
Current Vocational Activities



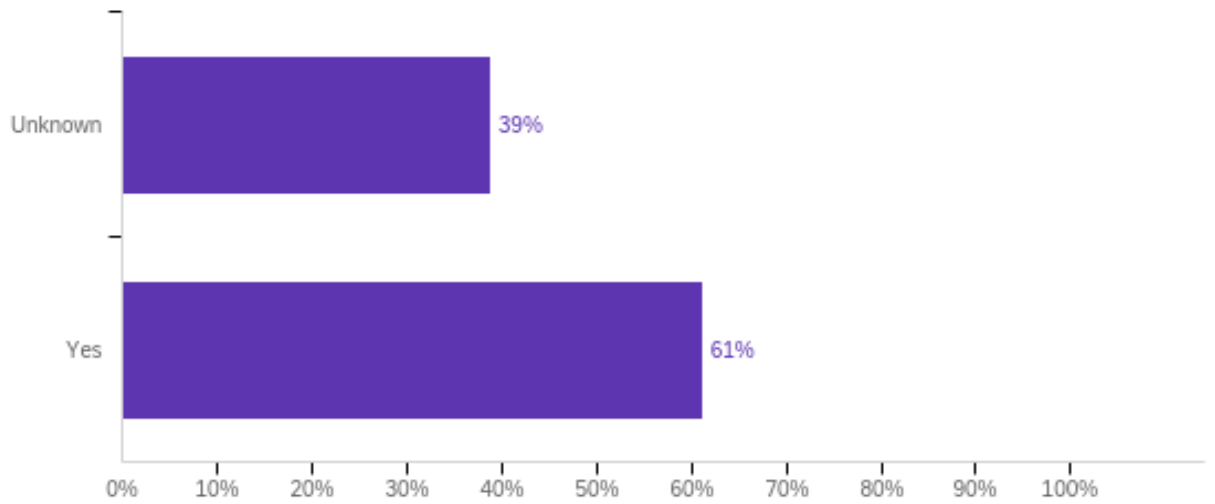
Participated in site-based classes (outside of specific work activities) within the last year



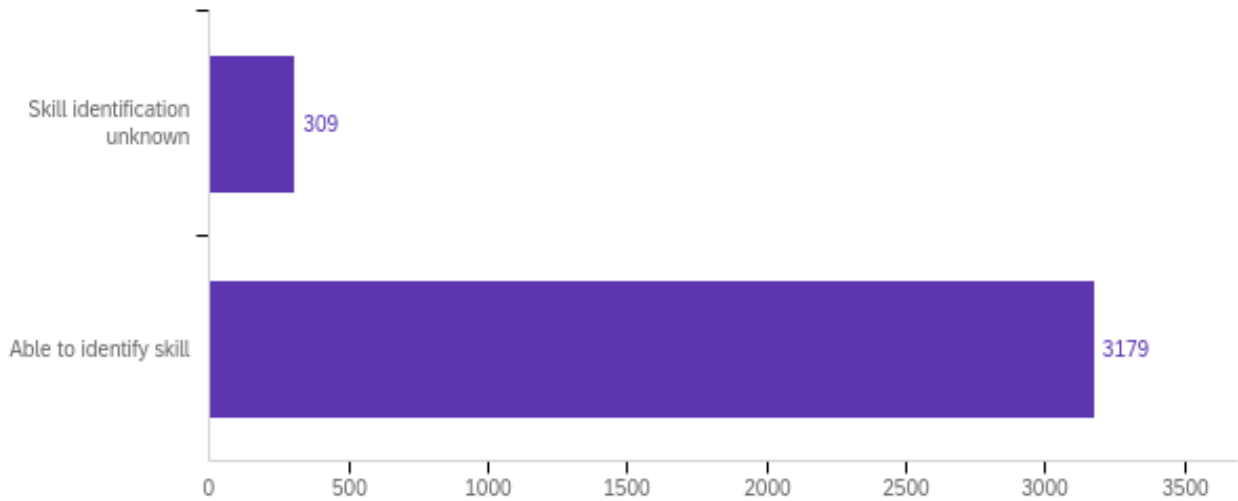
Participated in daily living skills or other community activities within the last year



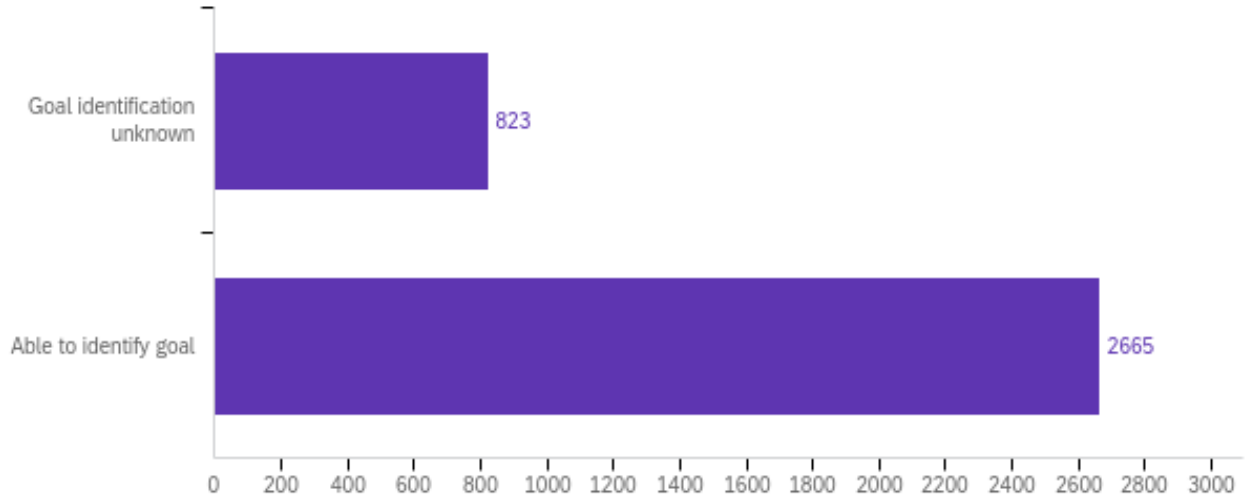
Received training in self-advocacy/self-determination or peer mentoring within the last year



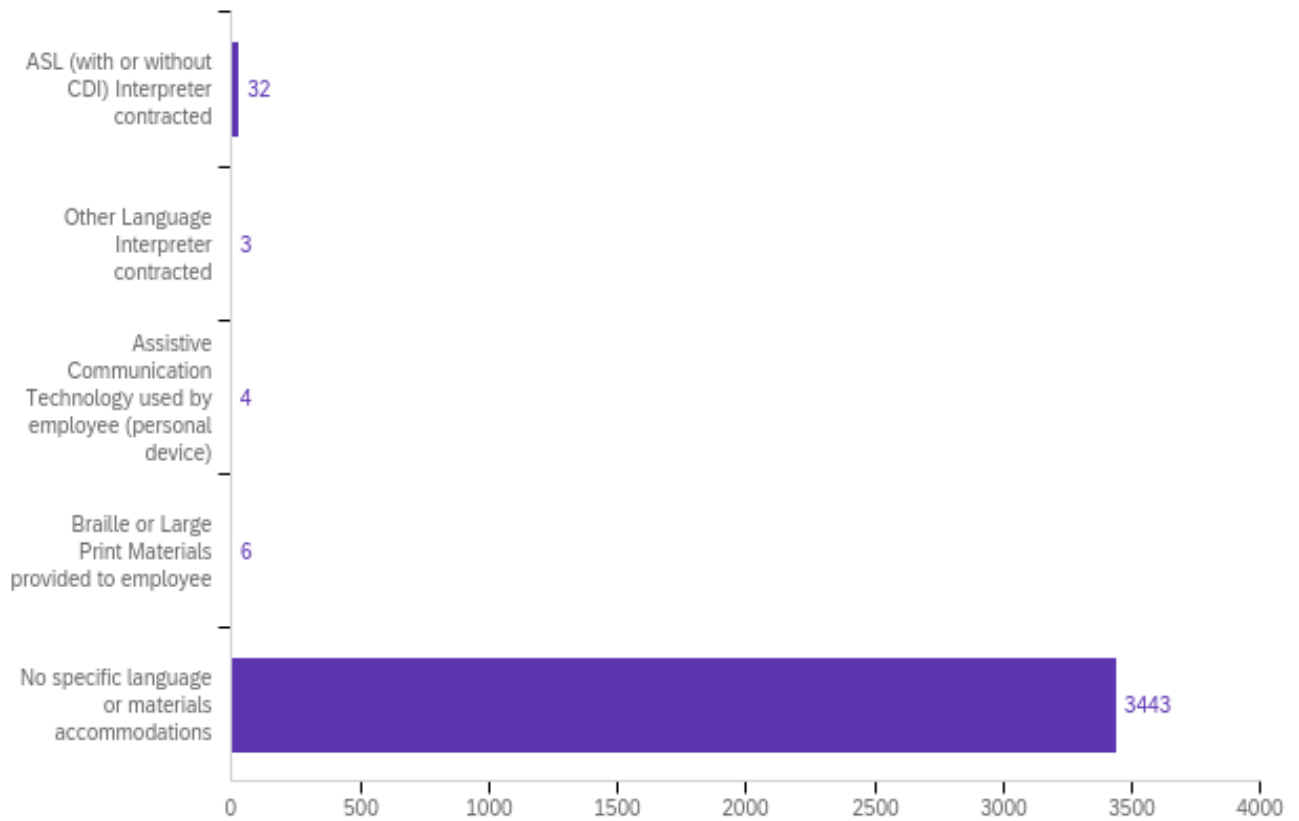
Skill Identification



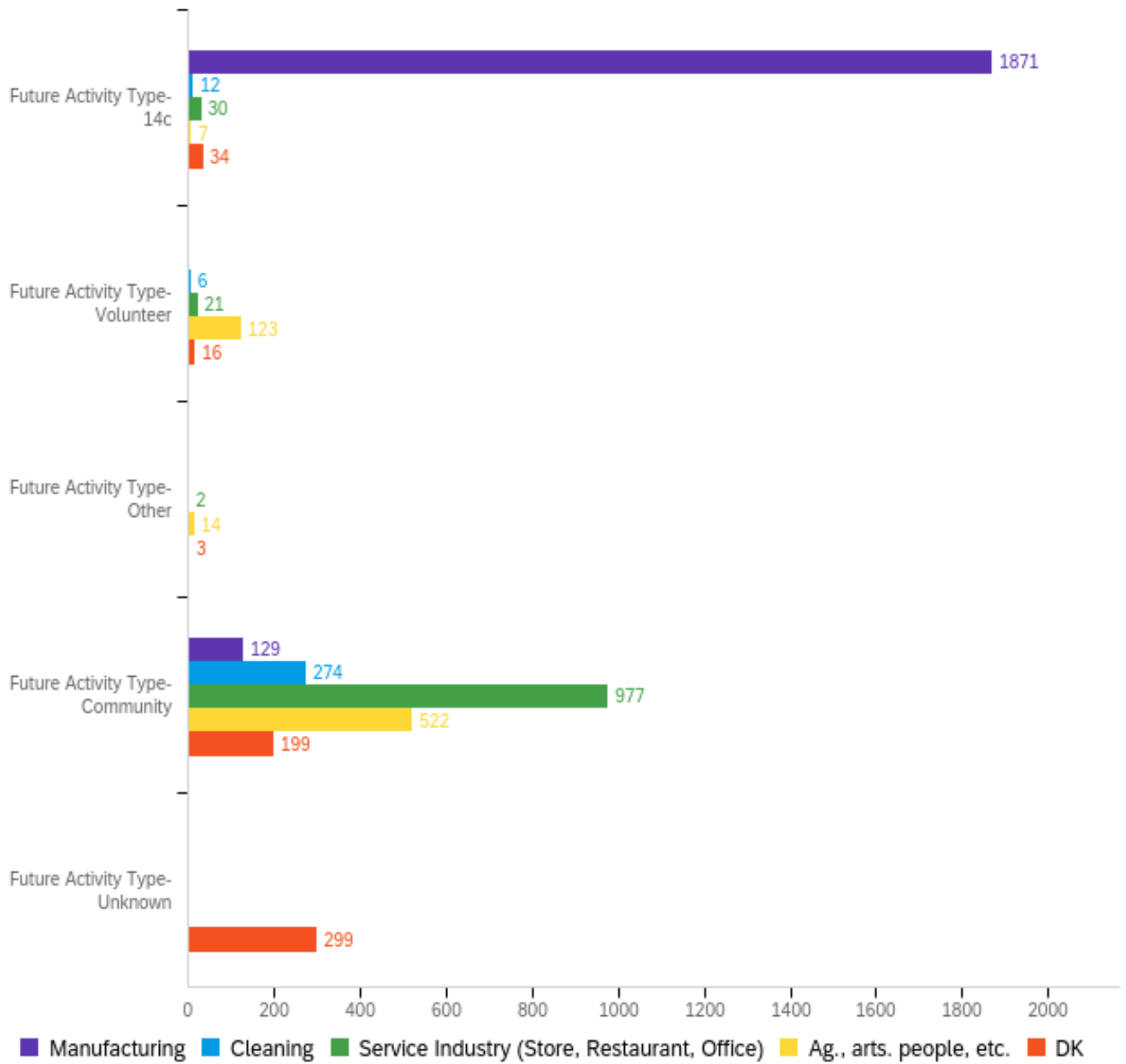
Goal Identification



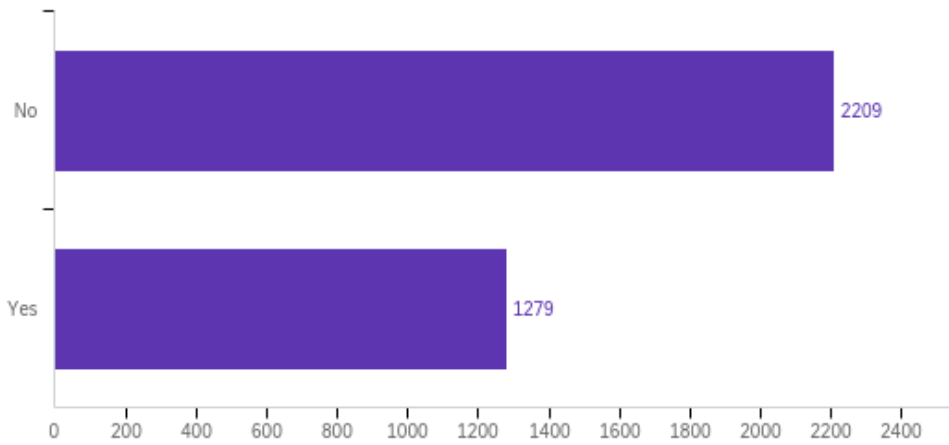
Accommodations Used



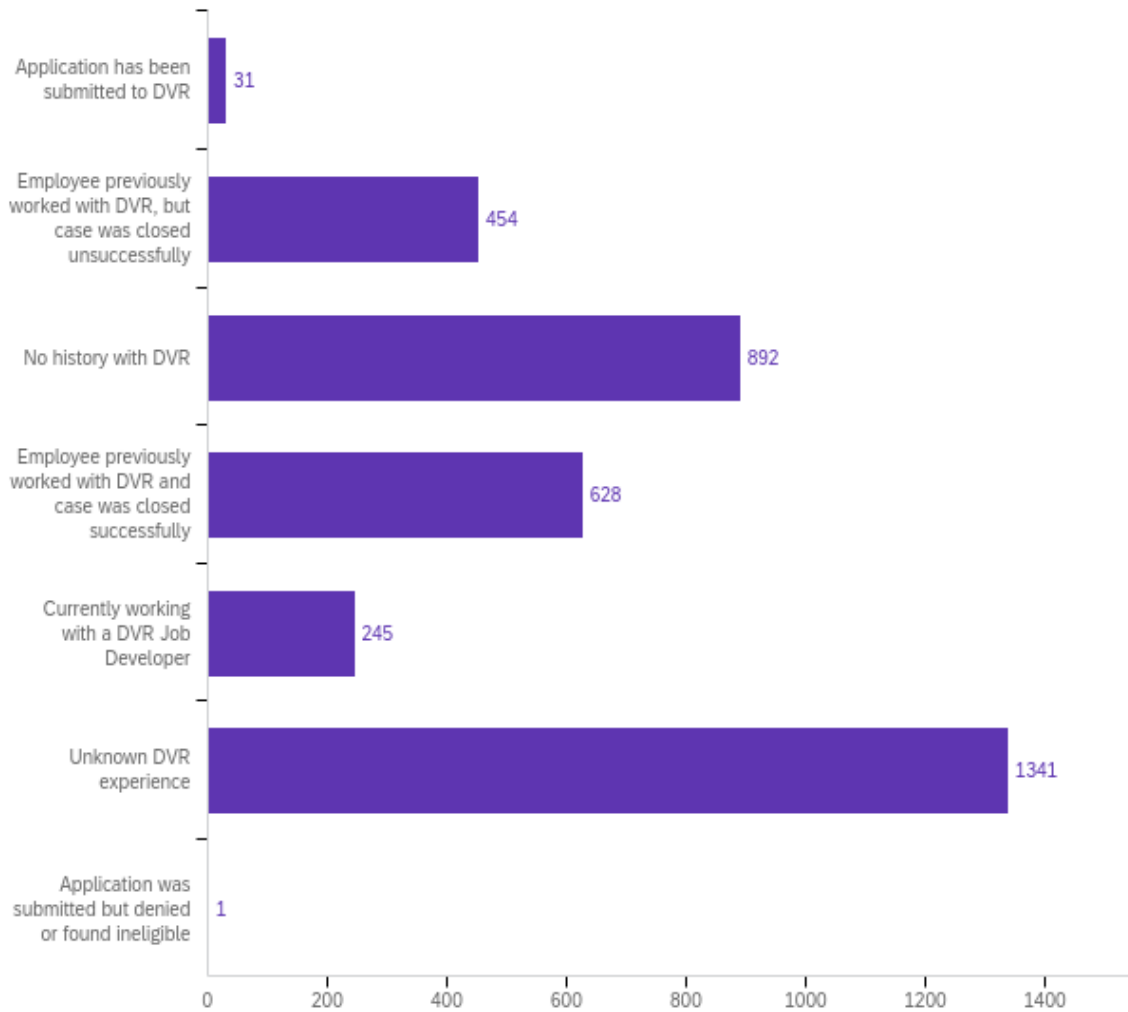
Future Vocational Activities



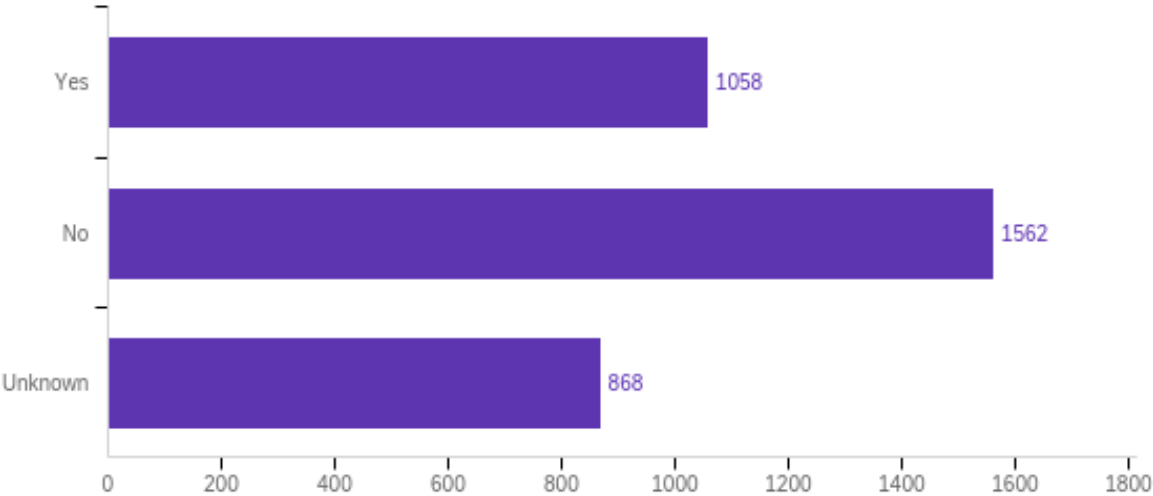
Any DVR History



DVR Experience



DVR Assistance Interest?



Employment Assistance Needs

