

NEDA

NORTHEASTERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION

Serving Professional Economic Developers Since 1956



NEDA Professional Development Survey

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the 2004 Northeastern Economic Developers Association (NEDA) Professional Development Survey is to assess current needs and interest in professional development and the possibility of NEDA offering a form of regional professional certification. The data was collected through a self-administered survey sent to all 450 NEDA members and a random sample of 150 non-members, who are members of affiliated state economic development organizations in the Northeast.

A total of 202 completed surveys were returned from the sampling frame of 600 for a response rate of 34 percent. This response rate is comparable to norms for self-administered mail surveys.

Some of the highlights of the survey are as follows:

- ? A great majority of respondents (84.2%) feel that NEDA professional certification would be very or somewhat beneficial to them and/or their staff in future job searches in the state and region.
- ? An overwhelming majority of respondents (81.9%) report that their employer is very or somewhat likely to pay all or a portion of the costs of attaining NEDA professional certification for themselves.
- ? A clear majority of respondents (73.7%) report that their current employer would find NEDA professional certification for them and their staff as very or somewhat beneficial.
- ? An strong majority (86.0%) of respondents think that NEDA should consider expanding their list of annual offerings.
- ? A clear majority of respondents (60.8%) rate the NEDA Advanced Economic Development Seminars as very beneficial.
- ? A sizable majority of respondents (58.6%) have attended NEDA professional development/training courses.
- ? An overwhelming majority of respondents (93.1%) report that relevant and timely topics are a very important factor in determining their professional development and training choices.

Project Overview

Bridgewater State College's Institute for Regional Development, in coordination with the Northeastern Economic Developers Association, designed and administered a mail survey of NEDA members and non-members during the month of August 2004. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a professional certification program for economic developers in NEDA's operating region.

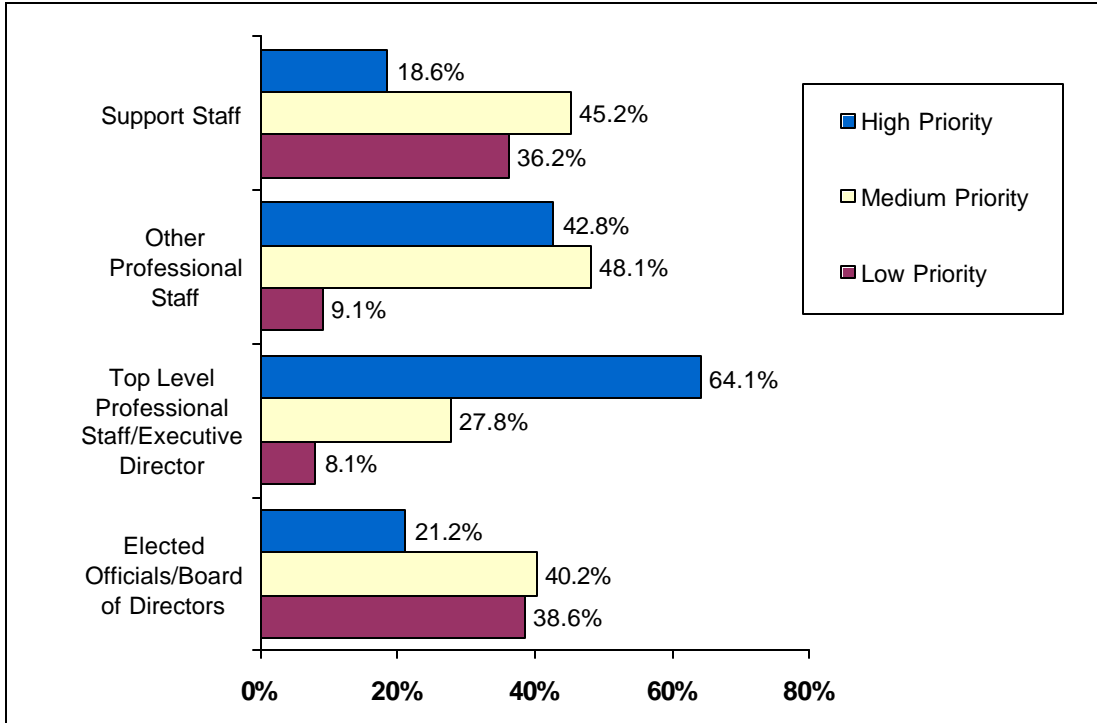
Survey data was collected from all of NEDA's 450 members and a random sample of 150 non-members, who are members of affiliated state economic development organizations in the Northeast. The first survey and participation request was sent on July 23, 2004. A second survey and participation request was emailed on August 17, 2004, followed by a direct mailing on August 19, 2004. On September 9, 2004, the Institute for Regional Development began data input and analysis of the returned questionnaires. A total of 202 surveys were returned from survey participants for a response rate of 34 percent.

Using the latest state-of-the-art statistical software (SPSS for Windows Version 11.5), the data file was inputted and analyzed. Complete protection and confidentiality of the survey database was assured during all phases of data analysis. Access to the database is limited to the project directors and one assistant.

In order to add a more qualitative component to the quantitative survey results the IRD will conduct a focus group at the annual NEDA conference on September 19, 2004, in order to obtain more in-depth information to complement the objective data obtained in the mail survey. The results of the focus group will be an appendix to this report.

General Attitudes on Professional Development and Training

Figure 1
How high a priority would you rate professional development and training in your department/organization for the following types of individuals?



Highlights:

- ? A sizable majority of respondents rate professional development and training a high priority at the top level of the organization (64.1 percent).
- ? A clear majority of respondents also rate professional development and training as a high or medium priority among elected officials/board of directors (61.4 percent).

Table 1
How important are the following factors in determining your professional development and training choices?

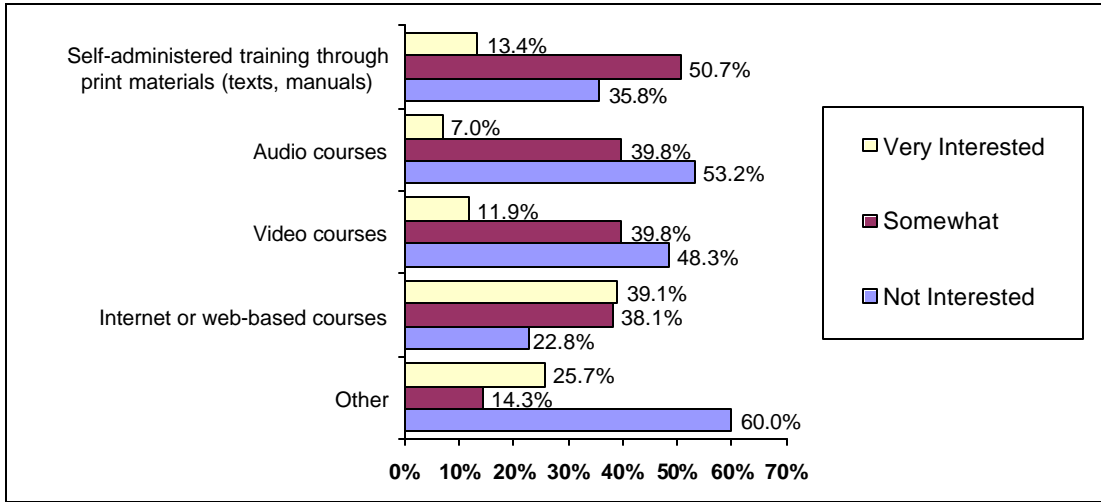
	Very Important	Somewhat	Not Important
Topic is relevant and timely	93.1%	6.9%	0.0%
Trainer’s reputation or quality	63.1%	35.5%	1.5%
Location of training	59.1%	38.4%	2.5%
Registration fee	50.7%	36.9%	12.3%
Timing (day of week/month of year)	49.5%	42.6%	7.9%
Training program linked to professional licensure or certification	34.5%	45.8%	19.7%
Training agency or sponsor	29.1%	51.7%	19.2%
Cancellation policy	8.0%	28.9%	63.2%

Highlights:

- ? An overwhelming majority of respondents (93.1%) report that relevant and timely topics are a very important factor in determining their professional development and training choices.
- ? A clear majority of respondents (63.1%) report they value the trainer’s reputation or quality as a very important factor in determining their professional development and training choices.
- ? The majority of respondents (59.1%) report they value the training location as very important factor in determining their professional development and training choices.

Figure 2

As an alternative to traditional group training sessions, how much interest would you have in the following professional development and training techniques?

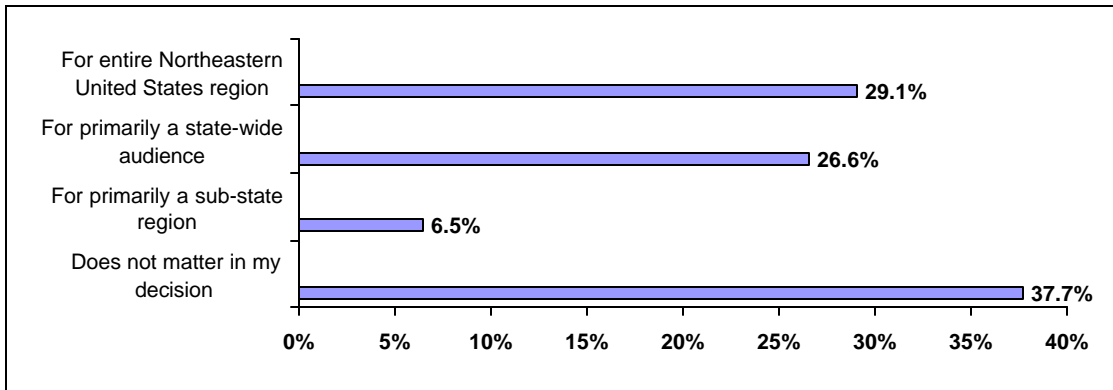


Highlights:

- ? Just over three-quarters of the respondents (77.2%) were very interested or somewhat interested in web-based courses as an alternative to traditional group training sessions.
- ? The majority of respondents were very or somewhat interested in self-administered training through print materials at 64.1 percent.

Figure 3

Do you prefer professional development and training workshops/programs that are:

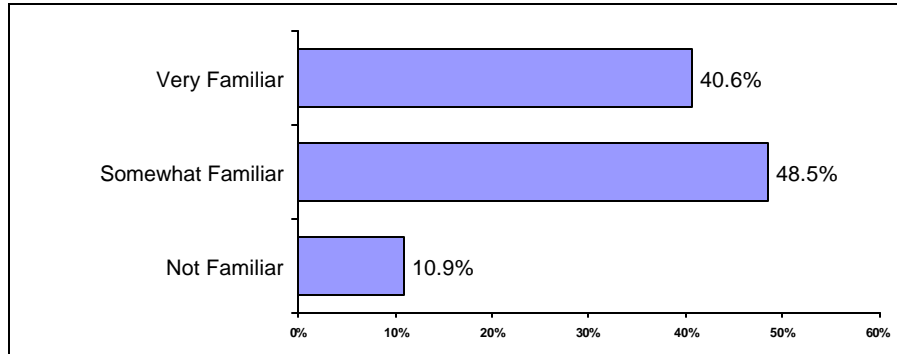


Highlights:

- ? The largest proportion of the respondents (37.7%) report that it does not matter what the target audience is for professional development and training workshops.

NEDA Training

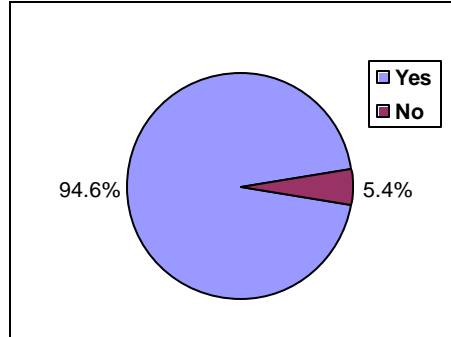
Figure 4
How familiar are you with NEDA professional development/training offerings?



Highlights:

- ? An overwhelming majority of respondents (89.1%) are very or somewhat familiar with NEDA professional development trainings and offerings.

Figure 5
Do you receive information regarding NEDA professional development/training opportunities?*

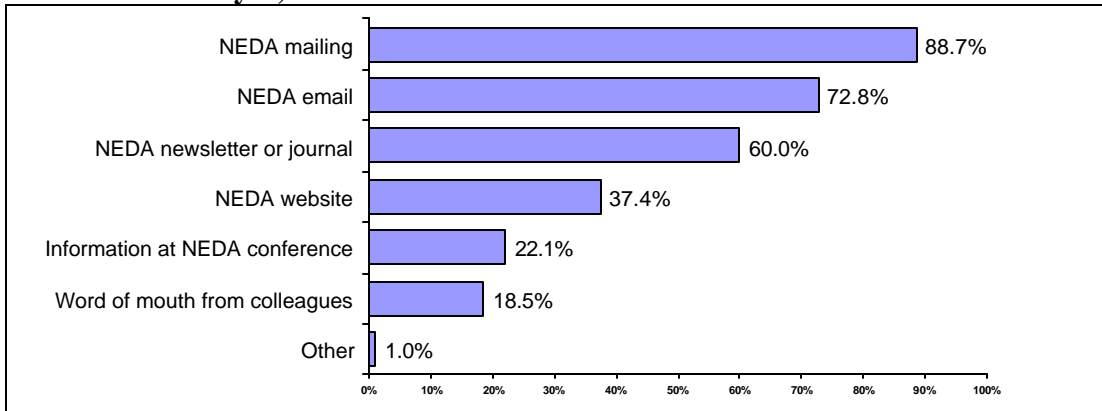


*If respondents answered yes to this question, they were asked to respond to following two questions.

Highlights:

- ? An overwhelming number of respondents receive information regarding NEDA professional development/training opportunities at 94.6 percent.

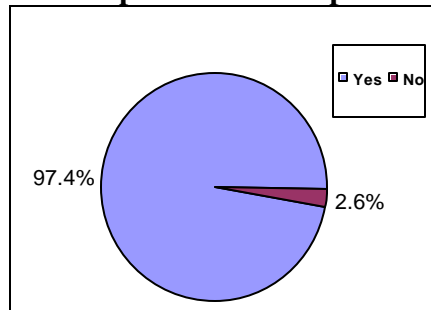
Figure 6
If yes, what are the sources of these advertisements?



Highlights:

- ? A substantial number of respondents (88.7%) receive information about NEDA professional development offerings from NEDA mailings.

Figure 7
If yes, does the material provide adequate information about dates, location, topic, transportation and speakers?



Highlights:

- ? An overwhelming majority (97.4%) of respondents report material provided by NEDA gives adequate information about dates, location, topic, transportation and speakers.

Table 2
Considering all possible sources, how many training courses or sessions have you attended in the past 1-3 years?

None	1-2	3-4	5-6	7 or more
13.0%	14.6%	26.0%	19.3%	27.1%

Highlights:

- ? 45.3 percent of respondents report that they have attended between 3 and 6 training courses or sessions in the past 1-3 years.
- ? 27.1 percent of respondents report that they have attended 7 or more training courses or sessions in the past 1-3 years.

Table 3
In what areas was this training and who was the training vendor?

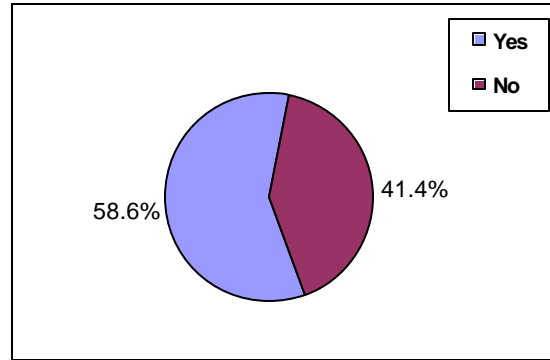
	NEDA	Other National, Regional or State Association	Private Consultant	College or University	In-house	Other
Supervision or general management (N=57)	3.5%	38.6%	19.3%	24.6%	10.5%	3.5%
Communication skills (N=41)	4.9%	26.8%	17.1%	19.5%	19.5%	12.2%
Individual skills (time mgmt, ethics) (N=39)	5.1%	23.1%	41.0%	7.7%	17.9%	5.1%
Finance/budgeting/accounting skills (N=43)	16.3%	34.9%	18.6%	14.0%	11.6%	4.7%
Computer skills (N=52)	3.8%	3.8%	44.2%	17.3%	26.9%	3.8%
Evaluating program effectiveness (N=30)	13.3%	50.0%	13.3%	6.7%	10.0%	6.7%
Business retention/expansion (N=81)	22.2%	58.0%	8.6%	3.7%	2.5%	4.9%
Strategic planning (N=67)	13.4%	50.7%	17.9%	6.0%	7.5%	4.5%
Marketing/Attraction (N=71)	19.7%	63.4%	8.5%	1.4%	4.2%	2.8%
Real estate development and reuse (N=70)	17.1%	62.9%	12.9%	1.4%	2.9%	2.9%
Economic development finance (N=72)	29.2%	59.7%	5.6%	2.8%	0.0%	2.8%
Workforce development (N=52)	11.5%	69.2%	3.8%	1.9%	3.8%	9.6%
Community development (N=62)	17.7%	62.9%	9.7%	1.6%	3.2%	4.8%
Board development/Board relations (N=32)	18.8%	37.5%	15.6%	0.0%	15.6%	12.5%

Highlights:

- ? 81 respondents report that they attended business retention/expansion training in the past 1-3 years, the majority, (58.0%) attended these trainings with other national, regional or state associations.
- ? 72 respondents report they attended economic development finance training in the past 1-3 years the majority, (59.7%) attended these trainings with other national, regional or state associations.

Figure 8

Have you ever attended NEDA professional development/training courses?



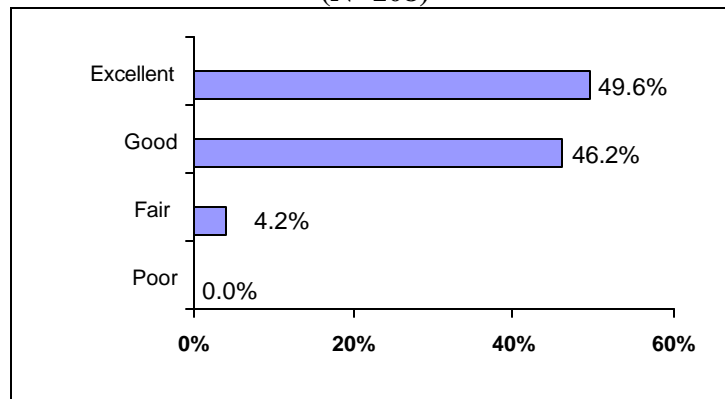
Highlights:

- ? A clear majority of respondents (58.6%) have attended NEDA professional development/training courses.

Figure 9

If yes, how would you rate the overall quality of NEDA courses?

(N=108)



Highlights:

- ? An overwhelming majority of respondents 95.8% of respondents rate the overall quality of NEDA courses as either excellent or good.
- ? No respondents rated the overall quality of NEDA courses as poor.

Table 4

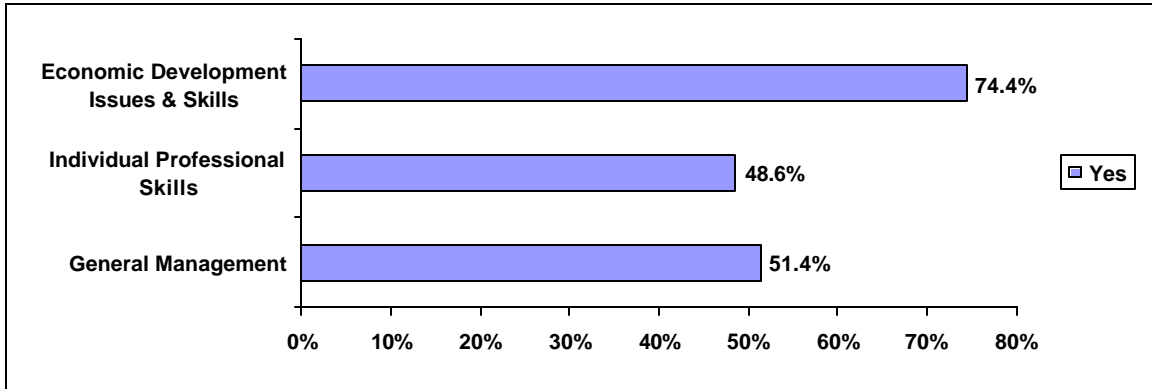
If no, why have you *not* used NEDA?

	Percentage
Not right timing of program (N=100)	32.0%
Location not convenient (N=114)	21.9%
Too expensive (N=114)	10.5%
Didn't receive any information on NEDA trainings (N=100)	9.0%
Didn't know or like trainer (N=100)	2.0%
Other (N=100)	31.0%

Highlights:

- ? 32.0 percent of respondents report that they haven't used NEDA because it was not the right timing of programming.
- ? 21.9 percent of respondents report that they haven't used NEDA because the locations weren't convenient.

Figure 10
Does NEDA offer enough training courses throughout the year in the areas of:

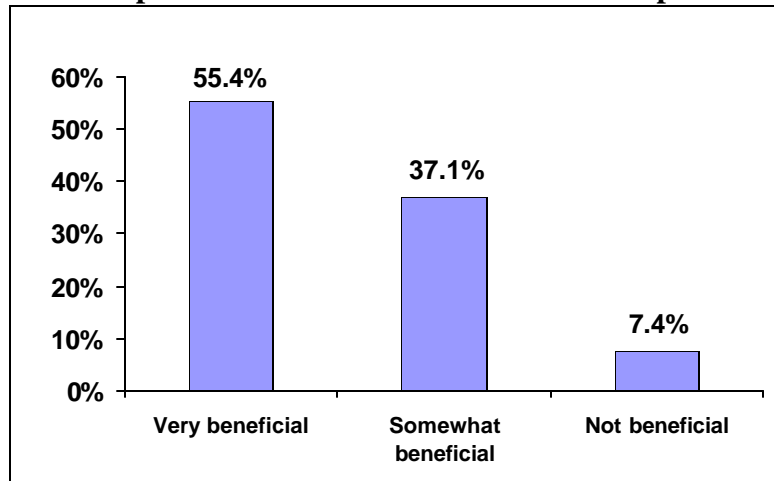


Highlights:

- ? A clear majority of respondents (74.4%) report that NEDA offers enough economic development issues and skills trainings.
- ? 51.4 percent of respondents report that NEDA offers enough general management training courses throughout the year.
- ? Almost half of all respondents report that NEDA offers enough individual professional skills trainings at 46.8 percent.

In your opinion, how beneficial are the recurring annual workshops and programs such as:

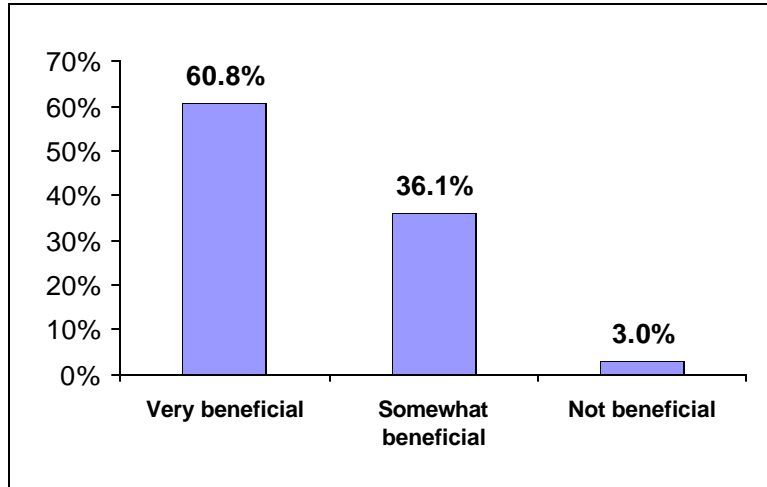
Figure 11
Principles and Practices of Economic Development



Highlights:

- ? A majority of respondents (55.4%) rate NEDA Principles and Practices of Economic Development as very beneficial.

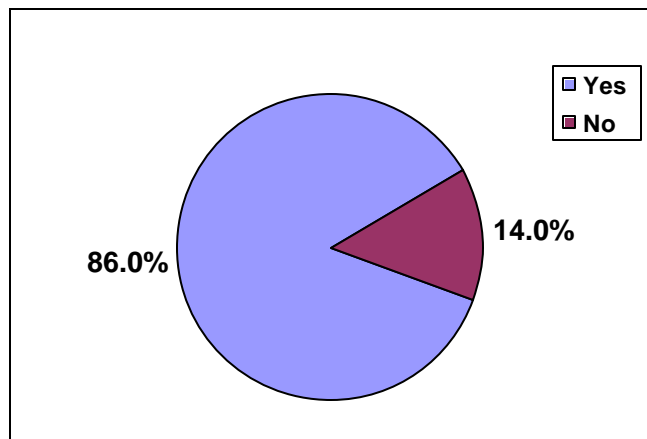
Figure 12
Advanced Economic Development Seminars



Highlights:

- ? A clear majority of respondents (60.8%) rate the NEDA Advanced Economic Development Seminars as very beneficial.

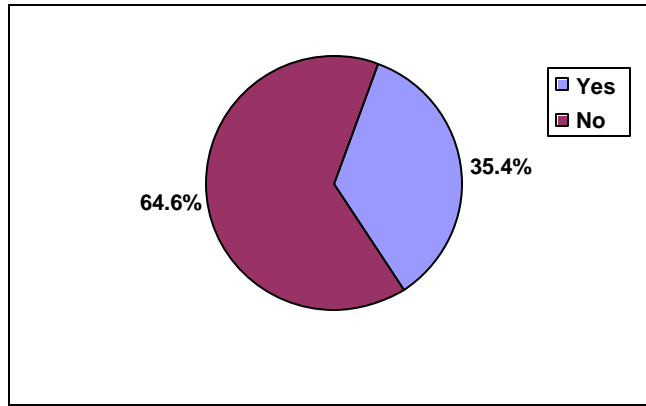
Figure 13
Should NEDA consider expanding the list of annual offerings?



Highlights:

- ? A considerable majority (86.0%) of respondents think that NEDA should consider expanding their list of annual offerings.

Figure 14
Does NEDA offer enough new training topics or workshops on current management issues or innovative programs?



Highlights:

- ? Only 35.4 percent of respondents report that NEDA offers enough new training topics or workshops on current management issues or innovative programs.

Table 5

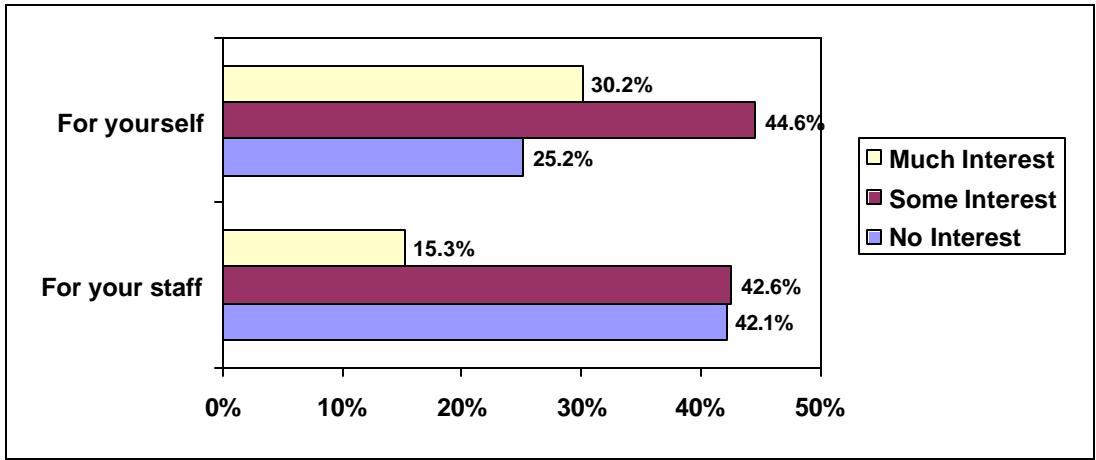
NEDA is considering the feasibility of a professional certification program for economic development professionals in the Northeastern United States. Would you view this NEDA initiative very favorably, somewhat favorably, or no favorably?

Very Favorably	Somewhat Favorably	Not Favorably
44.4%	38.9%	16.7%

Highlights:

- ? A strong majority of respondents (83.3 percent) are very or somewhat favorable of NEDA considering the feasibility of a professional certification program for economic development professionals in the Northeastern United States.

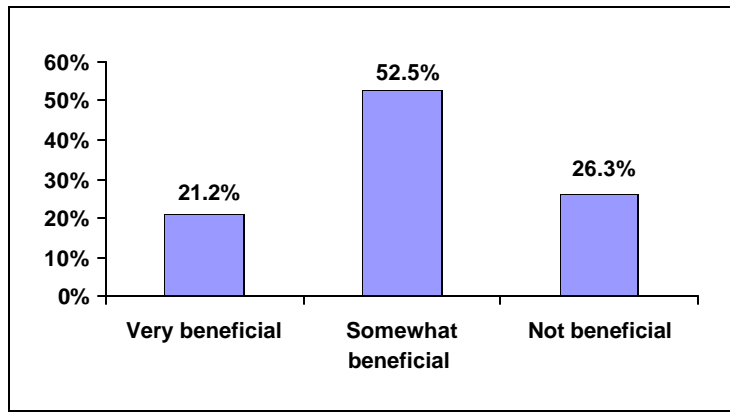
Figure 15
How much interest would you have in obtaining professional certification from NEDA for yourself and your staff members?



Highlights:

- ? A strong majority of respondents (74.8%) have much or some interest in obtaining professional certification from NEDA for themselves.
- ? A majority of respondents (57.9%) have much or some interest in obtaining NEDA professional certification from NEDA for their staff members.

Figure 16
How beneficial would your current employer find NEDA professional certification for you and/or your staff?



Highlights:

- ? A sizable majority of respondents (73.7%) report that their current employer would find NEDA professional certification for them and their staff as very or somewhat beneficial.

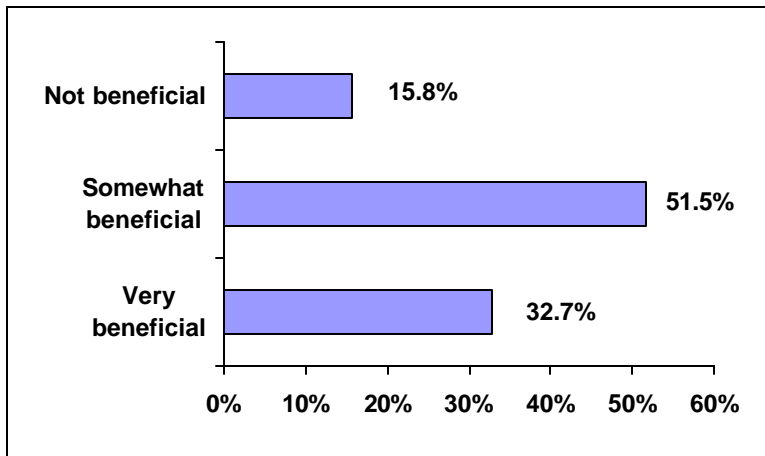
Table 6
How likely is your current employer to pay all or a portion of the costs of attaining NEDA professional certification for you and your staff?

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely
For you?	45.2%	36.7	18.1%
For other members of your staff?	27.2%	35.6%	37.2%

Highlights:

- ? An overwhelming majority of respondents (81.9%) report that their employer is very or somewhat likely to pay all or a portion of the costs of attaining NEDA professional certification for themselves.
- ? A substantial majority of respondents (62.8%) report that their employer is very or somewhat likely to pay all or a portion of the costs of attaining NEDA professional certification for other members of their staff.

Figure 17
How beneficial do you feel that NEDA professional certification would be to you and/or your staff in future job searches in the state and region?



Highlights:

- ? A great majority of respondents (84.2%) feel that NEDA professional certification would be very or somewhat beneficial to them and/or their staff in future job searches in the state and region.

Table 7

If NEDA offers a professional certification program, how important do you think the following characteristics would be:

	Very Important	Somewhat	Not Important
Reasonable length of time for completion	71.4%	24.9%	3.7%
Recognition by jurisdictions in all Northeastern states	67.4%	25.3%	7.4%
Clear test-based standards for attaining certification	65.3%	25.8%	8.9%
Integration of NEDA certification with existing national certifications and trainings	62.2%	28.2%	9.6%
Total expense	57.2%	39.6%	3.2%
Integration of NEDA certification with existing state certifications and trainings	53.4%	33.9%	12.7%
Mix of week-long, weekend, and single day programs	45.3%	47.4%	7.4%
Annual requirement of some continuing education to retain certification	32.8%	50.3%	16.9%
Linking with an accredited four-year college or university	18.4%	52.6%	28.9%

Highlights:

- ? The majority of respondents (71.4%) report that it is very important for the NEDA professional certification program to be completed within a reasonable length of time.
- ? A great majority of respondents (91.1%) report that it is either very or somewhat important for the NEDA professional certification program to have clear test-based standards for attaining certification.
- ? An overwhelming majority of respondents (92.7%) report that it is either very or somewhat important for the NEDA professional certification program to be recognized by jurisdictions in all Northeastern states.

Table 8

In general, what can NEDA do to make their professional development/training programs of greater interest to you?

(N=72)

	Percentage
Specialized, advanced relevant course topics	31.9%
More central locations	23.6%
Develop closer relationship with IEDC (certification, courses, etc.)	11.1%
Affordability	11.1%
Other	9.7%
Specialty Certification	6.9%
Partner with State and National Organizations	5.6%

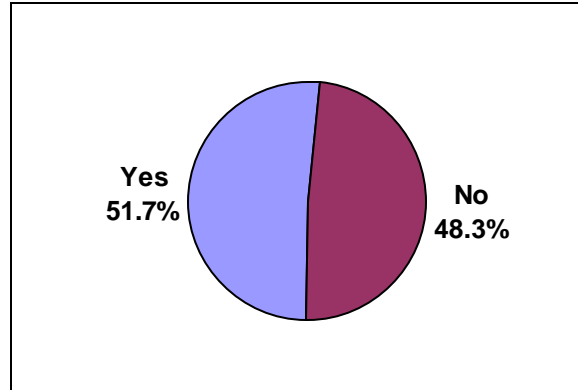
Highlights:

- ? The majority of respondents (55.5%) report that NEDA should create more specialized, advanced and relevant courses to take place in central locations.

Financing for Professional Development and Training

Figure 18

Does your department/organization have a designated training budget for its employees that is *under your control*?



*Respondents were asked to answer other questions based on their answer to this question.

Highlights:

- ? The majority of respondents (51.7%) have a designated training budget for their employees that it under their control.

If Yes:

Table 9

a. How much money was allocated for fiscal year 2004?
N=89

	Percentage
0-\$1,500	33.7%
\$1,501-\$2,500	24.7%
\$2,501-\$5,000	23.6%
\$5,001-\$10,000	11.2%
\$10,001-or more	6.7%

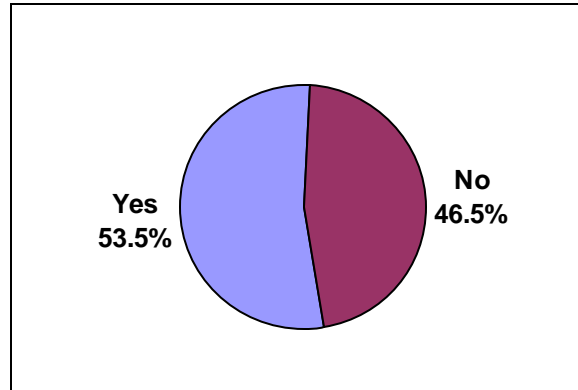
Highlights:

- ? 48.3 percent of respondents have between \$1,501 and \$5,000 allocated for fiscal year 2004 in their training budgets.

Figure 19

b. Does your department/organization develop an annual plan for spending this training money?

N=101



Highlights:

- ? More than half of all respondents (53.5%) report that their department/organization develops an annual plan for spending their training monies.

Table10

c. What percentage of the money is allocated at the beginning of the fiscal year?

N=79

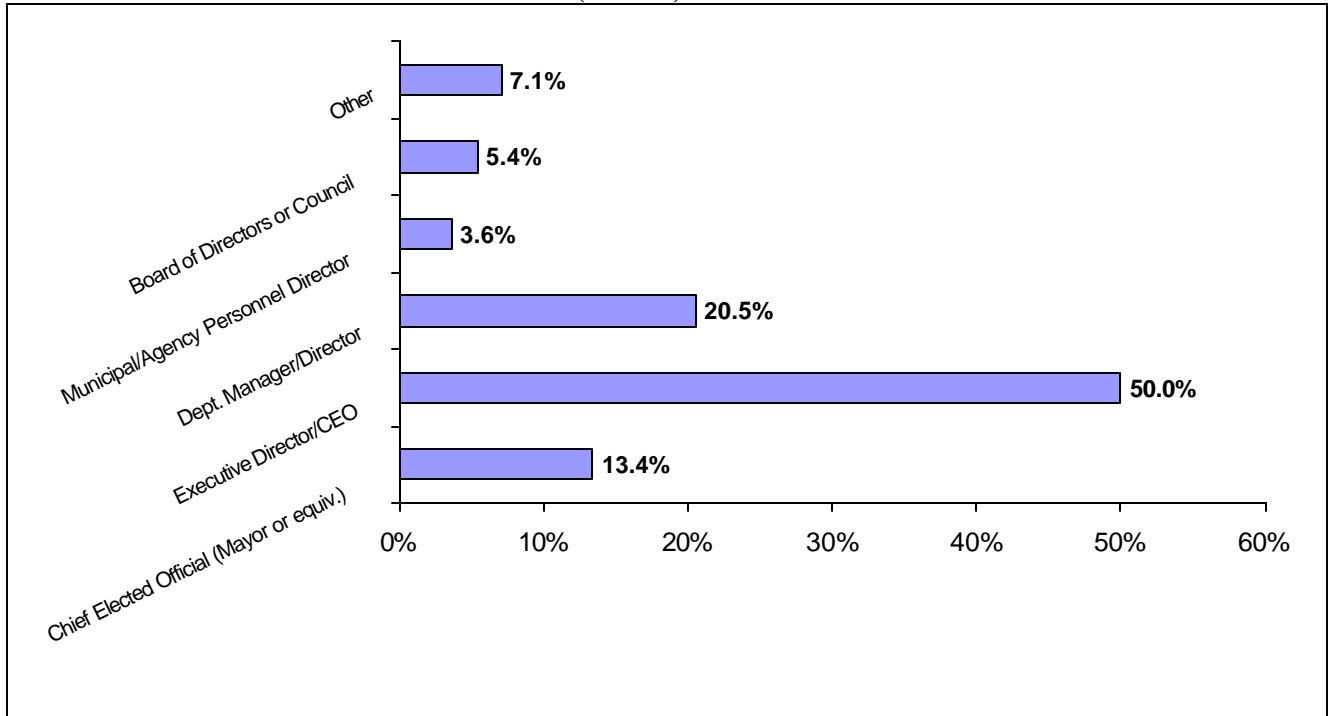
Percentage of money allocated at beginning of fiscal year	Percentage
0-19 Percent	20.3%
20-25 Percent	7.6%
50-75 Percent	7.6%
100 Percent	64.6%

Highlights:

- ? A substantial number of respondents (64.4%) report that 100 percent of their training money is allocated at the beginning of the fiscal year.

If No:

Figure 20
a. Who oversees the training budget for your agency?
 (N=112)



Highlights:

- ? Half of all respondents (50.0%) report that the Executive Director/CEO oversees the training budget.

Table 11
b. How is the professional development/training money allocated?
 N=98

	Percentage
First come, first serve	40.8%
Each subunit/department receives percentage of funds	23.5%
Case by case need	19.4%
Per budgeting	7.1%
CEO/Executive Director sees fit	4.1%
Other	4.1%

Highlights:

- ? 40.8 percent of respondents report that professional development/training money is allocated on a first come first serve basis.

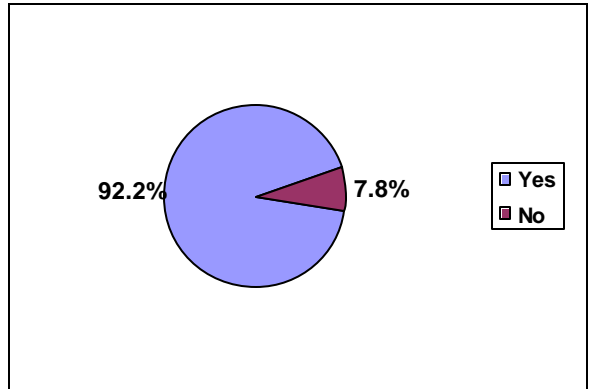
Table 12
c. Are the dollars allocated at the beginning of the fiscal year or on a rolling basis throughout the year?

	Percentage
Beginning of year	60.2%
Rolling basis	28.3%
Both	11.5%

Highlights:

- ? A clear majority of respondents (60.2%) report that training dollars are allocated at the beginning of the fiscal year.

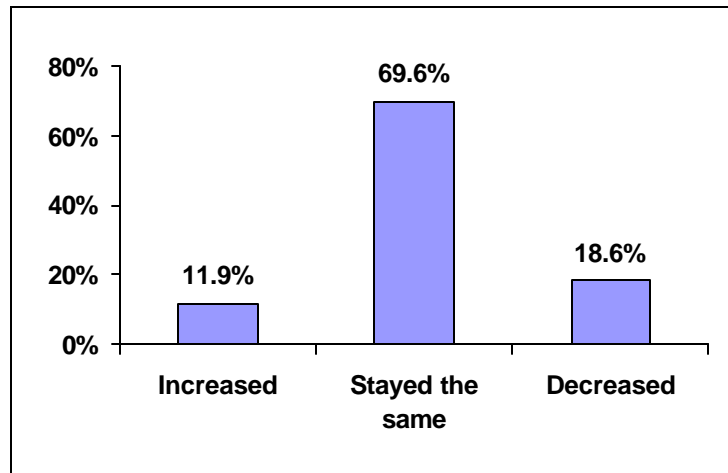
Figure 21
d. Can you request funds if programs of interest come up mid-year?



Highlights:

- ? The great majority of respondents (92.2%) report that they can request funds during the year for programs of interest that come up.

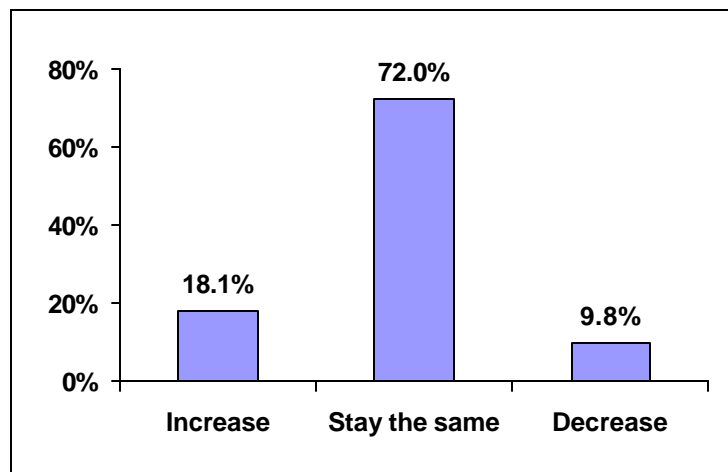
Figure 22
Over the past three years, has your professional development/training money generally increased, decreased, or stayed the same?



Highlights:

- ? The majority of respondents report that over the past three years professional development/training money has generally stayed the same at 69.6 percent.

Figure 23
Over the next few years, do you expect your professional development/training money to increase, decrease, or stay the same?



Highlights:

- ? A strong majority of respondents report that over the next few years they expect professional development/training money to stay the same at 72.0 percent.

About You and Your Organization

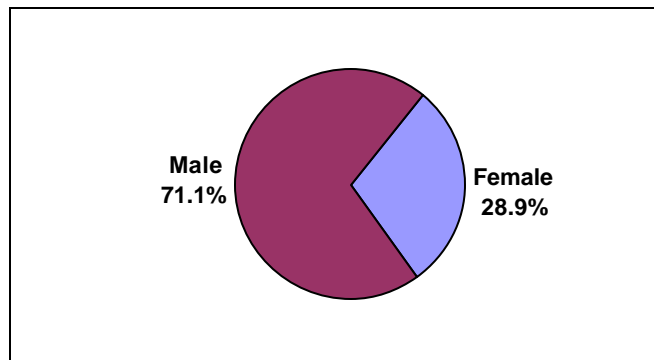
Table 13
What state is your organization in?

	Percent
Connecticut	27.8%
New Hampshire	14.1%
Pennsylvania	13.6%
Massachusetts	10.6%
New Jersey	7.1%
Maine	6.6%
Rhode Island	5.1%
Maryland	4.5%
New York	3.5%
Vermont	3.0%
Delaware	3.0%

Highlights:

- ? The highest number of respondents are from Connecticut at 27.8 percent.

Figure 24
What is your gender?



Highlights:

- ? The clear majority of respondents (71.1%) are male.

Table 14
Which of the following *best* describes your organization?

	Percentage
Non-profit Economic Development Organization	35.7%
Local Government	30.7%
State Government	13.6%
Other	6.6%
Utility	6.5%
Chamber of Commerce	3.5%
For-profit Economic Development Organization	2.0%
Bank/Financial	0.5%
Education	0.5%
Federal Government	0.5%

Highlights:

- ? The two most frequent type of respondents with work for a nonprofit economic development organization or for local government at 35.7 percent and 30.7 percent respectively.

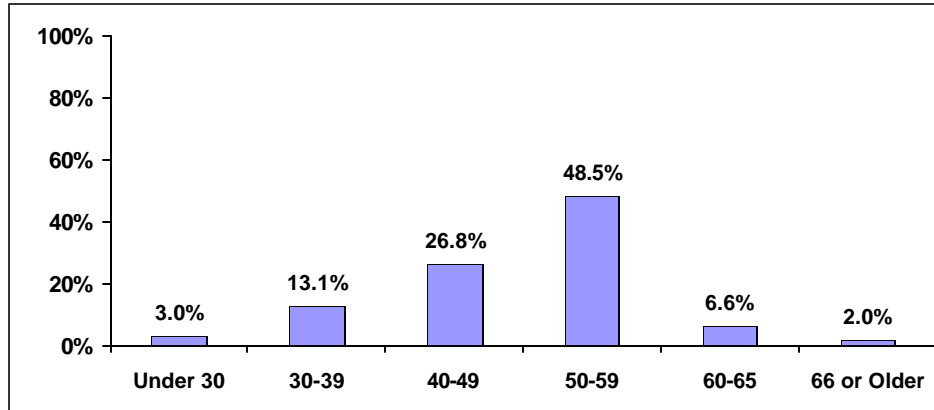
Table 15
Which of the following *most accurately* describes your position?

	Percentage
Executive Director/CEO	41.9%
Assistant/Deputy Director	13.1%
Marketing Executive	6.1%
Business Recruitment Executive	8.1%
Business Retention Executive	4.0%
Top Research Executive	2.0%
Consultant	5.1%
Chief Financial Officer/Comptroller	1.0%
Other	18.7%

Highlights:

- ? 41.9 percent of respondents would describe their position as: Executive Director/CEO.

Figure 25
What is your age?



Highlights:

? Almost half of all respondents are between the ages of 50 and 59.

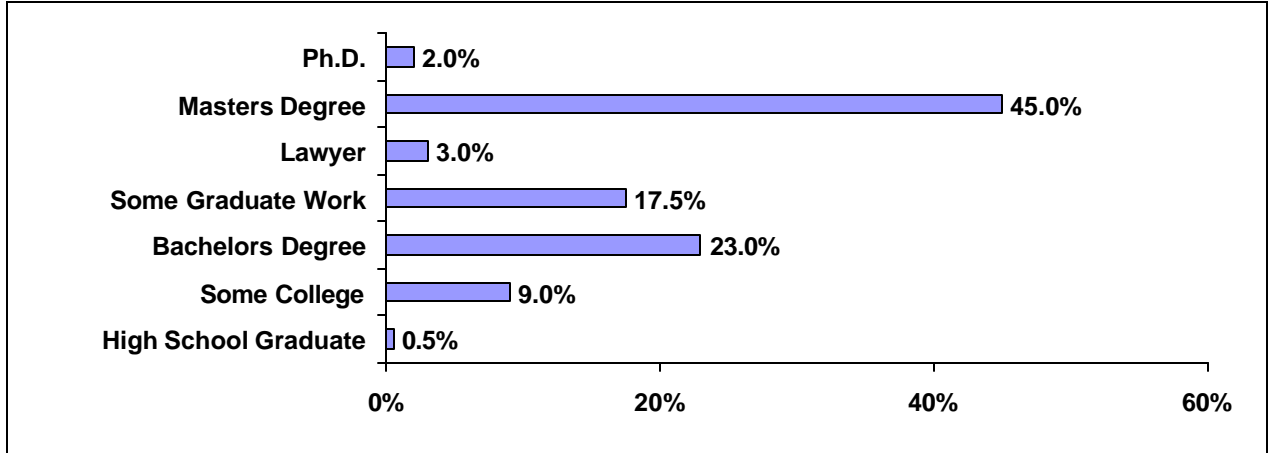
Table 16
Which of the following programs have you completed?

	Percent
NEDA Fundamentals/Principles I and II	42.4%
BEDC	15.7%
EDI	15.2%
IEDC	11.1%
CID/CED/CecD	10.1%
State level ED Certification	19.7%
Licensed Real Estate Broker	8.6%
Certified Planner (AICP)	4.5%
NDC	11.1%
EDFS	2.0%
Other	10.2%

Highlights:

? Over forty percent of all respondents (42.4%) report that they have completed NEDA Fundamentals/Principles I and II.

Figure 26
What is the last grade in school you completed?



Highlights:

- ? The majority of respondents (67.5%) have completed a graduate, law, Ph.D program *or* course work towards a graduate degree.

Table 17
NEDA Member vs. Non-Member

	Percentage
NEDA Member	94.1%
Non-Member (Affiliated state economic development association in the Northeast)	5.9%

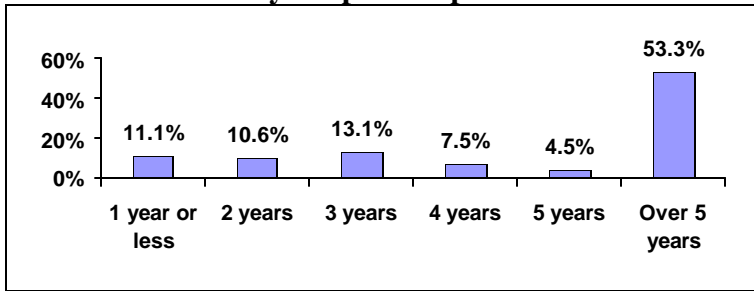
Highlights:

- ? An overwhelming majority (94.1%) of survey respondents are NEDA members.

How many years have you worked...

Figure 27

a. In your present position?

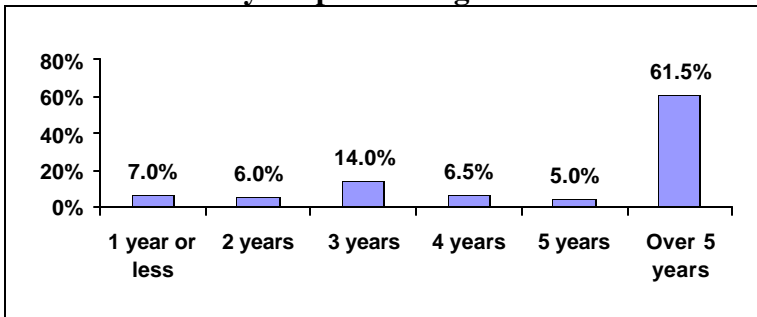


Highlights:

? Over half of all respondents (53.3%) have worked in their present position for over 5 years.

Figure 28

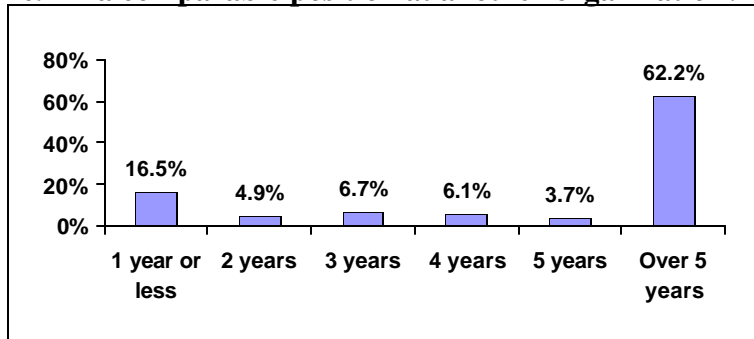
b. At your present organization?



? A strong majority of respondents (61.5%) have worked at their present organization for over 5 years.

Figure 29

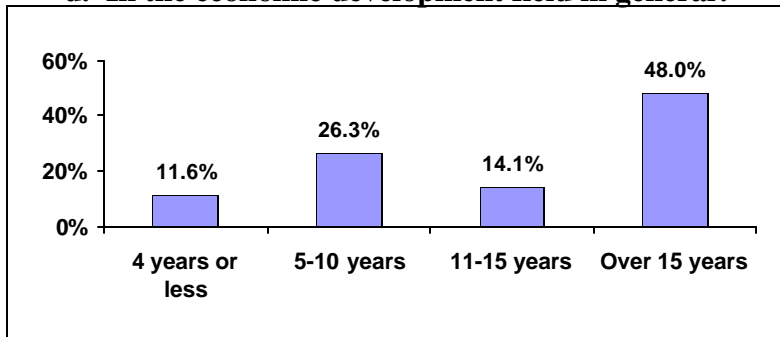
c. In a comparable position at another organization?



? A clear majority of respondents (62.2%) have worked in a comparable position at another organization for over 5 years.

Figure 30

d. In the economic development field in general?



? Almost half of all respondents (48.0%) have worked in the economic development field for over 15 years.



Institute for Regional Development

One of the missions of Bridgewater State College is to serve the Southeastern Massachusetts region by working to enhance its intellectual, economic, cultural and civic well being. To this end, the College established the Institute for Regional Development on September 1, 1996. The Institute serves as the viable focal point for College initiatives related to enhancing the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts. The mission of the Institute is to serve as a resource center for the public, private, and non-profit sectors of Southeastern Massachusetts through applied research, training, and technical assistance programs.

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