

**ICT INITIATIVE  
PHASE I KEY FINDINGS: IN-DEPTH EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS**

**OBJECTIVE → Sharpen research objectives through employer input**

- In addition to number of job openings by ICT occupation, employers recommended the research focus on ICT skill needs by industry sector
- Employers encouraged the research team to assess the work experience of ICT graduates/workers as a way to determine effectiveness of workforce development efforts and to inform continuous improvement in education and training systems
- Researching technology adoption and applications by industry sector was considered extremely important by employers so that applications could be better understood and integrated into education/training programs and prospective ICT workers would be better prepared for the workplace
- When presented a list of target industries for the research (traditional and emerging), employers suggested adding forensic technology and aerospace industries
- Employers strongly recommended the research include small and medium sized businesses in addition to larger employers

**OBJECTIVE → Identify emerging trends & issues in ICT**

- Nationally, the ICT industry did not recover as quickly as many had expected after significant industry reductions in 2001. Both national and local sources confirm little net growth in ICT jobs into 2002/2003
- While slow to recover, projections are much more optimistic for ICT jobs into the future. Some experts feel labor shortages of epidemic proportions could occur over the next few decades world-wide
- Nationally, more and more ICT jobs are found within non-IT companies (9 out of 10 workers in 2003) and these establishments are less likely to move jobs overseas
- Use of ICT consultants was on the increase in 2002 (nationally and locally)
- Work experience continues to be paramount to employers seeking ICT job applicants and new hires
- 2002 data for Northeast Ohio shows an inadequate supply of ICT workers within specific occupations, even at times when IT demand was strong
- No reliable sources of data and information exist about the demand and supply of ICT workers in Northeast Ohio since late 2002
- When NEO employers were asked about ICT trends, they indicated communication skills, project management abilities, work experience, and ability to apply ICT skills to business applications were among the primary skill deficiencies witnessed in recent years. Programmers, network administrators, database administrators, and sales professionals were among the ICT positions identified as the most difficulty to fill. Retention of sales professionals was another key issue for regional employers

**OBJECTIVE → Update the list of IT specialty occupations to assess current demand for workers in Northeast Ohio**

- Corroborating government occupational classifications with ICT business/industry applications is difficult. Based on the literature review, ICT Career Clusters developed by the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education appears to be the most comprehensive and applicable framework of ICT jobs to utilize
- When the framework was shared with employers in NEO, they recommended Project Management, Business Applications (including business technologists, analysts, and application specialists), and ICT Generalists (to accommodate small employers) be added as primary IT functions when the employer survey is conducted

**OBJECTIVE → Recruit employers to participate in the ICT Initiative for Northeast Ohio**

- About 70% of employers participating in-depth interviews said they would be willing to review research findings and help formulate recommendations to ensure an actionable roadmap for ICT workforce development in NEO. Another 22% said they would assist if the time commitment was minimal