EMPLOYER OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY
Executive Summary

In the current era of Zoom meetings, data visualizations, online retail, and more, digitalization is the common and inevitable thread that ties an increasing share of our workplaces together. While the world of work undergoes this digital transformation, the demand for digital skills in the workplace has never been greater.

As this demand continues to develop and transform in the years to come, it is essential that both employers and employees are equipped with the right tools to succeed in this digital economy so that no one gets left behind. However, data shows that Latino workers are the segment of the workforce most at risk of job displacement due to automation and digitalization.[1] With Latinos representing 18% of the US workforce and estimations that they will account for 78% of net new workers between 2020 and 2030[2], ensuring that Latino workers have adequate access to relevant digital skills development programs is of the utmost importance for the future competitiveness and resilience of the US economy.

Given the critical need for a workforce equipped with the right digital skills and the unique challenges faced by the Latino community in this digital age, SHRM Research and the Aspen Institute surveyed

844 HR professionals across eight U.S. cities with notable Latino populations: Atlanta, Chicago, El Paso, Miami, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Antonio, and San Bernardino, to identify the digital skills organizations need both now and in the future, to understand what challenges organizations face in the digital world, and to provide pathways to develop these needed skills and enhance workers' participation in the digital economy. This survey was conducted as part of the "Latino communities and the challenges of the Digital Economy" research project, which aims at documenting the specific challenges and opportunities that different local Latino communities face to thrive in an increasingly digital economy and society. The Aspen Latinos & Society Program, in collaboration with local data partners, will publish 6 case studies with the main takeaways of the project in early 2023.

> Latinos represent 18% of the US workforce and will account for 78% of the net new workers between 2020 and 2030.[2]

[1] *The Future of Work in America, McKinsey & Company, July 2019*
[2] *Hispanics in the Labor Force: 5 Facts, Kevin Dubina, September 2021*

SHRM Research and the Aspen Institute surveyed 844 HR professionals across eight U.S. cities with notable Latino populations to identify the digital skills organizations need both now and in the future.
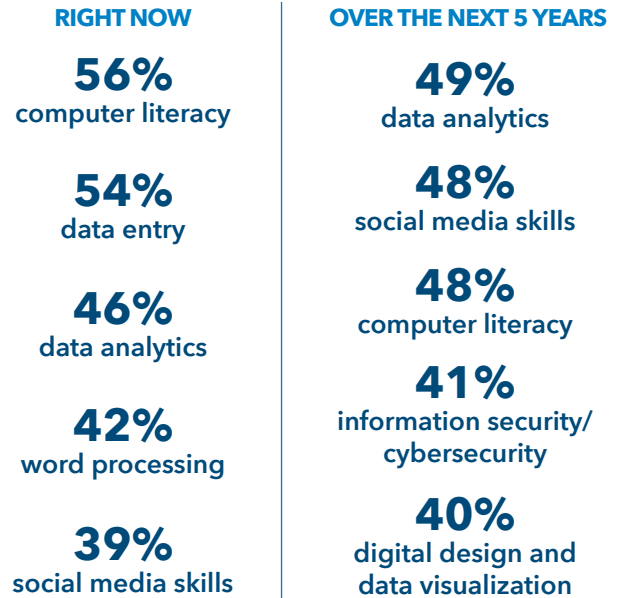
- Atlanta
- Chicago
- El Paso
- Miami
- Philadelphia
- Phoenix
- San Antonio
- San Bernardino

Current and Future Needs

Many organizations are trying to keep up with the fast pace of digitalization, but this reactionary approach will not suffice in the long term. Organizations will need to start thinking proactively about the digital skills of the future and prepare their workforce for potential shifts.

- According to HR professionals, some of the digital skills most in-demand right now are the basic essentials: computer literacy (56%), data entry (54%), and word processing (42%).

- HR professionals anticipate a rise in the demand for more technical digital skills over the next five years and a change in the types of skills needed. For example, they anticipate a rise in demand for skills related to data analytics (49%), social media (48%), cybersecurity (41%), digital design, and data visualization (40%).

In-Demand Digital Skills

RIGHT NOW

56%
computer literacy

54%
data entry

46%
data analytics

42%
word processing

39%
social media skills

OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS

49%
data analytics

48%
social media skills

48%
computer literacy

41%
information security/ cybersecurity

40%
digital design and data visualization

Many organizations are struggling to:

53% Find qualified individuals

45% Upskill their existing workforce for positions that require digital skills

37% Train employees on new tools and technologies

Challenges

Despite the high demand for digital skills, organizations are struggling to find workers who possess these skills. They're also having trouble training and reskilling their existing workforce to meet these needs. To address the skills gap, organizations might need to take a different approach when it comes to identifying employees with the interest, capability, and capacity for digital skills development. It is equally important for organizations to recognize that certain segments of their workforce may have unique needs and that a "one size fits all" approach may not be the most effective when it comes to digital skills training.

- Many organizations are struggling both to find qualified individuals (53%) and to upskill their existing workforce (45%) for positions that require digital skills.

- Almost 2 in 5 HR professionals (37%) say that training employees on new tools and technologies has been a major challenge for their organization.

  - Organizations with a larger percentage of Latino workers (45%) are more likely to say that training employees on new tools and technologies has been a major challenge for their organization than organizations with a smaller percentage of Latino workers (32%) or a medium percentage of Latino workers (34%).

- Time (52%) and budget (43%) constraints are the largest barriers organizations face when it comes to supporting their employee's digital skills development, followed by employees' unwillingness to learn new digital skills (38%).
- Organizations with a larger percentage of Latino workers were more likely than others to report that employees' lack of access to digital resources and a lack of training software/programs in languages other than English make it more difficult for them to support their employees' digital skills development.

Opportunities for Development

Despite the challenges organizations face to support the digital skills development of their workforce, many are taking steps in the right direction—such as prioritizing new technology and digital tools or providing employees with training opportunities.

- While 58% of HR professionals said adopting new technology or digital tools became more of a priority during COVID-19, the same percent (58%) said their budget for digital upskilling did not change. Organizations should consider adjusting their budgets accordingly to realize the benefits of new technologies and digital skills.
- The majority of organizations already provide programs to support their employees' digital skills development such as on-the-job training (75%), informal training by supervisors or coworkers (73%), and occupation-specific training (59%). However, only around half of those who offer these programs (45%-52%) say that these forms of training have been very effective.

What Can Organizations Do to Support Employees' Digital Skills Development?

Nearly 4 in 5 HR professionals in the cities surveyed (77%) say that Latino workers' participation in voluntary digital skills development programs is the same as other workers. Yet 14% say that their participation is lower than other workers. To better engage this critical segment of the workforce, organizations can consider a number of options, such as partnering with local or community-based organizations, providing training in languages other than English, and building rapport with workers, among others.

To address the skills gap, organizations might need to take a different approach when it comes to identifying employees with the interest, capability, and capacity for digital skills development...a "one size fits all" approach may not be the most effective when it comes to digital skills training.

Programs provided to support digital skills development

The majority of organizations already provide programs to support their employees' digital skills development such as:

75%
on-the-job training

73%
informal training by supervisors or coworkers

59%
occupation-specific training

Some organizations rely on partnerships to support the digital skills development of their workforce. The top 3 groups or providers that organizations work with include:

1. Online-only education or training providers (36%)
2. Four-year colleges or universities (20%)
3. Community colleges (18%)

In terms of additional supports that would help organizations upskill or reskill their Latino workforce, HR professionals prioritized the following:

1. Tools to guide the development of in-house digital skills training programs (36%)
2. Information about online digital skills certificate programs (36%)
3. Tools to support partnership development with local training providers (30%)

Organizations with a larger percentage of Latino workers are more likely to say that customized and community-based resources and training—such as tools to support partnerships with local training providers, information about government-funded training programs, and training on how to build trust and rapport with trainees—would help them upskill/reskill their Latino workforce.

Methodology

A sample of 844 HR professionals were surveyed through SHRM membership and a third-party online panel in the following 8 cities: Atlanta, Chicago, El Paso, Miami, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Antonio, and San Bernardino. The survey was administered Thursday, August 25, 2022, to Wednesday, September 28, 2022. Only HR professionals who were currently working for an organization in the cities above were eligible to participate in this survey.

Top 3 groups or providers that organizations work with to support the digital skills development of their workforce:

36% Online-only education or training providers

20% Four-year colleges or universities

18% Community colleges

HR professionals prioritized the following as additional supports that would help upskill or reskill their Latino workforce:

36% Tools to guide the development of in-house digital skills training programs

36% Information about online digital skills certificate programs

30% Tools to support partnership development with local training providers

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Atlanta Quick Facts

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Top 5 In-Demand Digital Skills

RIGHT NOW	OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS
52% Data analytics	**52%** Digital design and data visualization
51% Computer literacy	**49%** Information security / Cybersecurity
49% Information security / Cybersecurity	**46%** Data analytics
48% Data entry	**45%** Digital product management / Digital marketing and content creation
41% Digital design and data visualization	**42%** Computer literacy

Difficulty in upskilling/reskilling individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	El Paso	Philadelphia
52%	50%	47%	46%	43%	42%	41%	37%

Difficulty in finding qualified individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	El Paso	Philadelphia
60%	58%	57%	54%	54%	47%	44%	43%
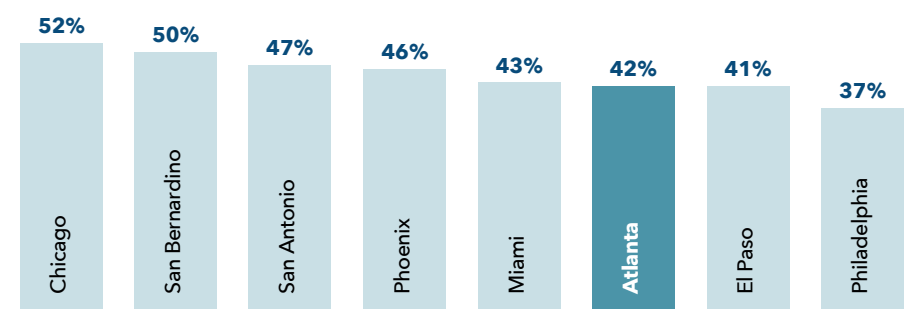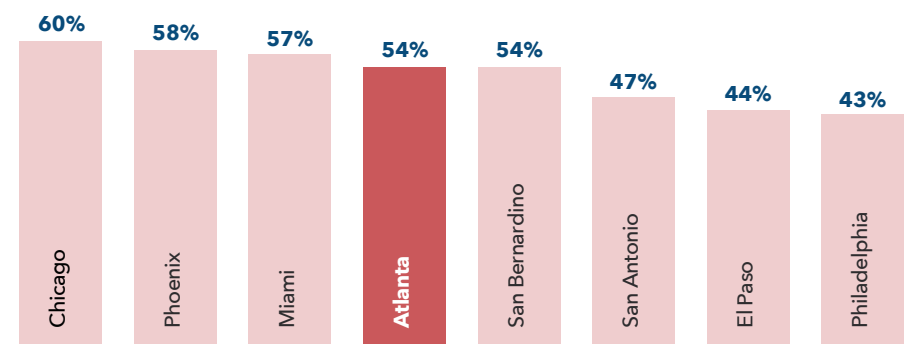
Types of digital skills assessments organizations use to assess job applicants

HR professionals in Atlanta assess the digital skills of applicants through:

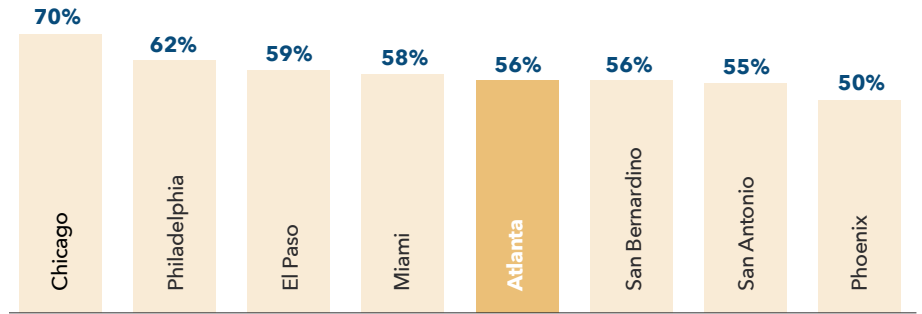**57%** self-assessments

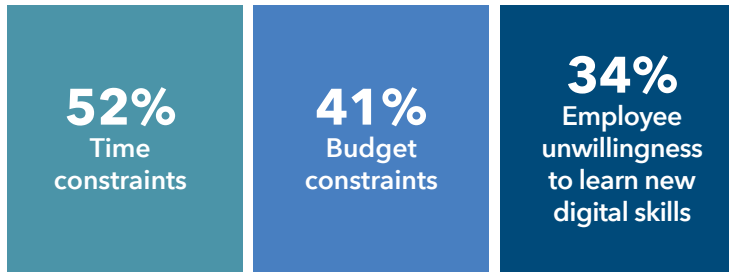**49%** work samples or work simulation tests

41% knowledge tests

Only 43% of HR professionals in Atlanta say that adopting new technology or digital tools is a high/essential priority for their organization.

However, 56% of HR professionals in Atlanta say that **adopting new technology or digital tools became more of a priority** for their organization during COVID-19.

70%	62%	59%	58%	56%	56%	55%	50%
Chicago	Philadelphia	El Paso	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix

Biggest challenges organizations face when it comes to supporting employees' digital skills development

52% Time constraints

41% Budget constraints

34% Employee unwillingness to learn new digital skills

Organizations' preferred partners to develop their workforce's digital skills

40% Online-only education or training providers

19% Four-year colleges or universities

19% Trade Associations

Top tools and resources that would help organizations upskill/reskill their Latino workforce

40% Tools to guide the development of in-house digital skills training programs

38% Information about online digital skills certificate programs

29% Tools to support partnership development with local training providers

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Top 5 In-Demand Digital Skills

RIGHT NOW	OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS
49% Data analytics	**56%** Data analytics
48% Computer literacy	**50%** Information security / Cybersecurity
38% Data entry	**43%** Computer literacy
36% Information security / Cybersecurity	**42%** Social media skills
36% Technology troubleshooting	**38%** Digital design and data visualization

Difficulty in upskilling/reskilling individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	El Paso	Philadelphia
52%	50%	47%	46%	43%	42%	41%	37%

Difficulty in finding qualified individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	El Paso	Philadelphia
60%	58%	57%	54%	54%	47%	44%	43%
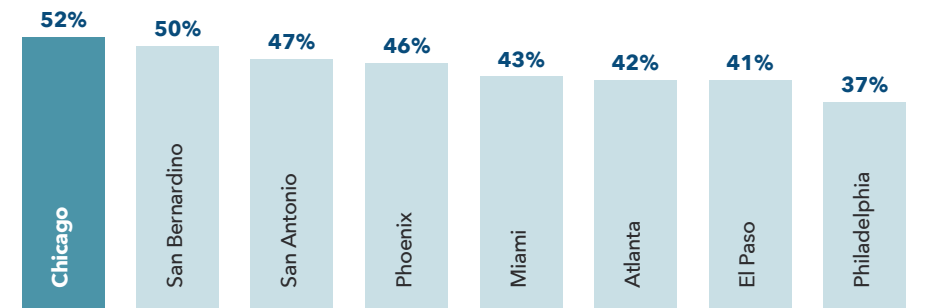
Types of digital skills assessments organizations use to assess job applicants

HR professionals in Chicago assess the digital skills of applicants through:

41% self-assessments

33% knowledge tests

33% work samples or work simulation tests

Only 35% of HR professionals in Chicago say that adopting new technology or digital tools is a high/essential priority for their organization.

However, 70% of HR professionals in Chicago say that **adopting new technology or digital tools became more of a priority** for their organization during COVID-19.
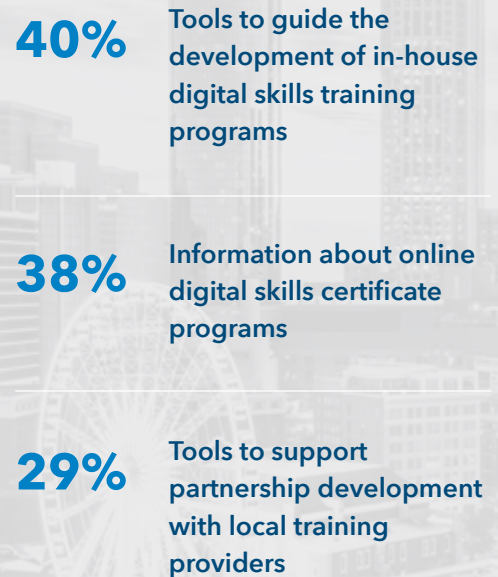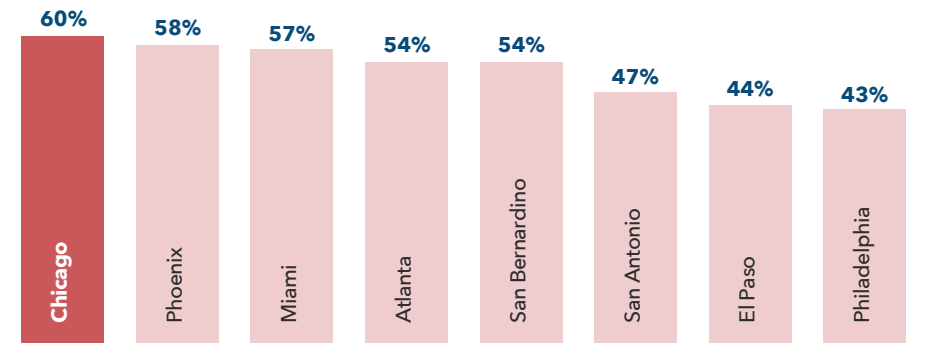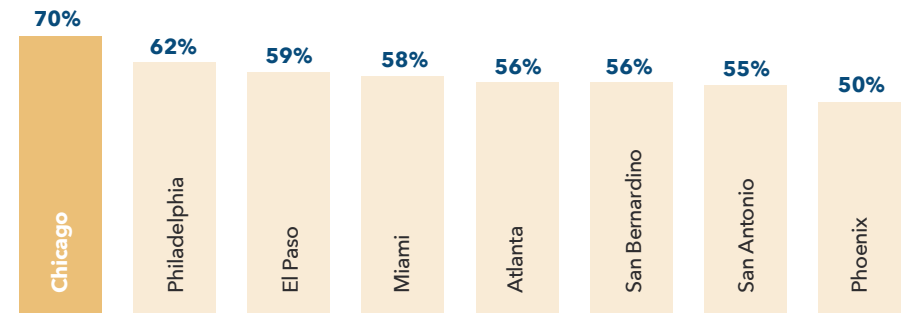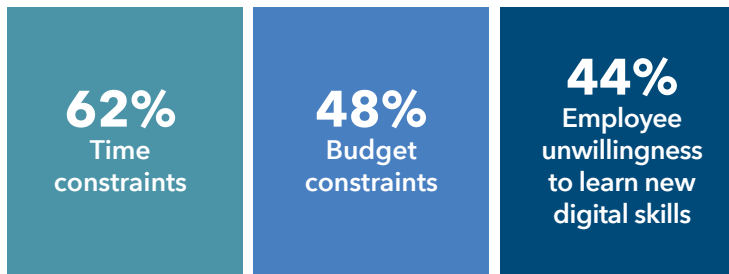
70%	Chicago
62%	Philadelphia
59%	El Paso
58%	Miami
56%	Atlanta
56%	San Bernardino
55%	San Antonio
50%	Phoenix

Biggest challenges organizations face when it comes to supporting employees' digital skills development

62% Time constraints

48% Budget constraints

44% Employee unwillingness to learn new digital skills

Organizations' preferred partners to develop their workforce's digital skills

43% Online-only education or training providers

16% Community colleges

14% Four-year colleges or universities

Top tools and resources that would help organizations upskill/ reskill their Latino workforce

32% Tools to guide the development of in-house digital skills training programs

25% Information about online digital skills certificate programs

22% Tools to support partnership development with local training providers

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Top 5 In-Demand Digital Skills

RIGHT NOW	OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS
67% Data entry	**54%** Data entry
51% Computer literacy	**53%** Social media skills
46% Word processing	**48%** Computer literacy
39% Social media skills	**44%** Word processing
36% Data analytics	**41%** Data analytics

Difficulty in upskilling/reskilling individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	El Paso	Philadelphia
52%	50%	47%	46%	43%	42%	41%	37%

Difficulty in finding qualified individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	El Paso	Philadelphia
60%	58%	57%	54%	54%	47%	44%	43%

Types of digital skills assessments organizations use to assess job applicants

HR professionals in El Paso assess the digital skills of applicants through:

59% self-assessments

59% knowledge tests

54% work samples or work simulation tests

Only 56% of HR professionals in El Paso say that adopting new technology or digital tools is a high/essential priority for their organization.
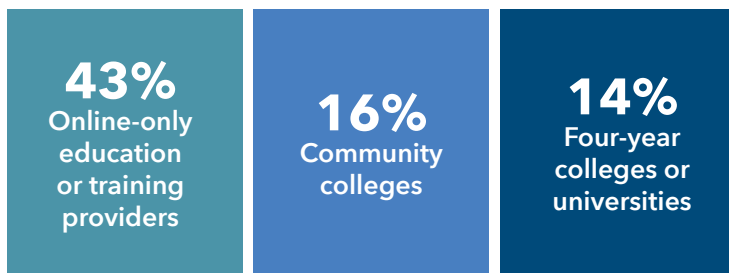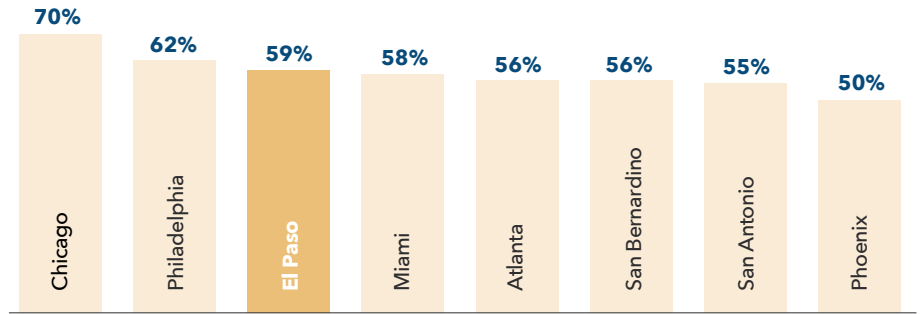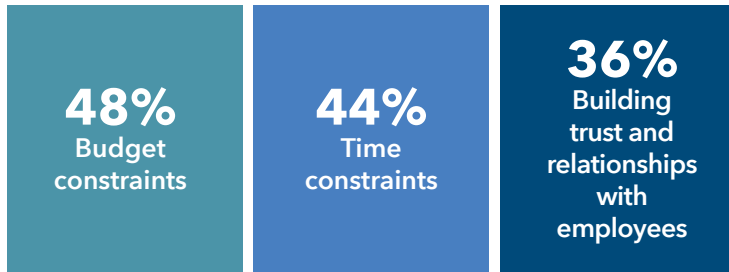
However, 59% of HR professionals in El Paso say that **adopting new technology or digital tools became more of a priority** for their organization during COVID-19.

70%	62%	59%	58%	56%	56%	55%	50%
Chicago	Philadelphia	El Paso	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix

Biggest challenges organizations face when it comes to supporting employees' digital skills development

48% Budget constraints

44% Time constraints

36% Building trust and relationships with employees

Organizations' preferred partners to develop their workforce's digital skills

30% Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

28% Trade schools

26% Community colleges

Top tools and resources that would help organizations upskill/reskill their Latino workforce

46% Training on how to build trust and rapport with trainees

41% Marketing to highlight the benefits of learning new digital skills

36% Tools to guide the development of in-house digital skills training programs

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Top 5 In-Demand Digital Skills

RIGHT NOW	OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS
65% Computer literacy	**54%** Data analytics
54% Data entry	**48%** Computer literacy
49% Social media skills	**45%** Programming, web, and app development / Technology troubleshooting
48% Data analytics	**44%** Social media skills
47% Word processing	**43%** Digital product management visualization

Difficulty in upskilling/reskilling individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	El Paso	Philadelphia
52%	50%	47%	46%	43%	42%	41%	37%

Difficulty in finding qualified individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

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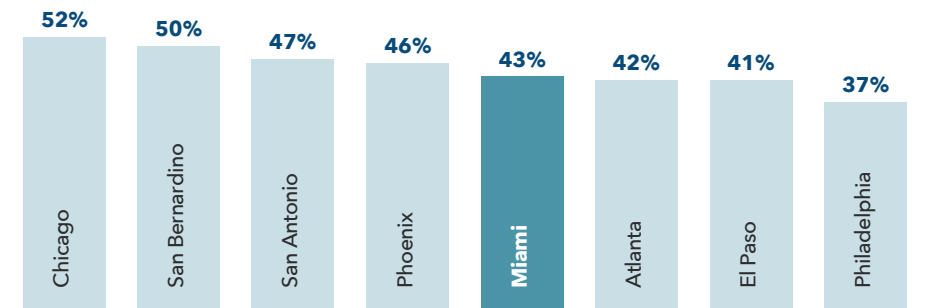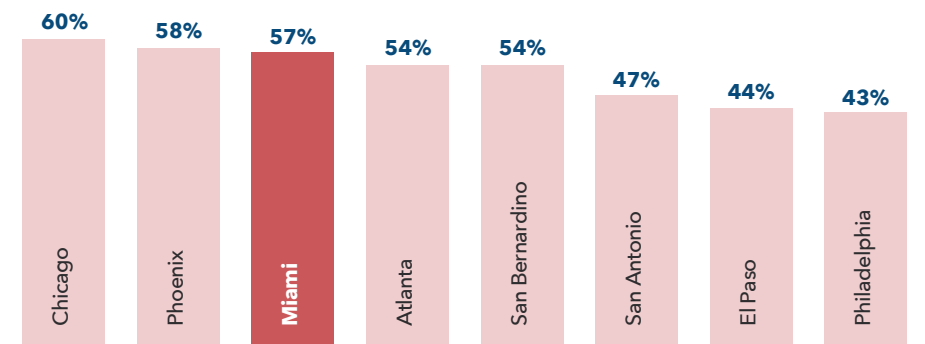
Types of digital skills assessments organizations use to assess job applicants

HR professionals in Miami assess the digital skills of applicants through:

60% self-assessments

56% knowledge tests

55% work samples or work simulation tests

Only 50% of HR professionals in Miami say that adopting new technology or digital tools is a high/essential priority for their organization.

However, 58% of HR professionals in Miami say that **adopting new technology or digital tools became more of a priority** for their organization during COVID-19.
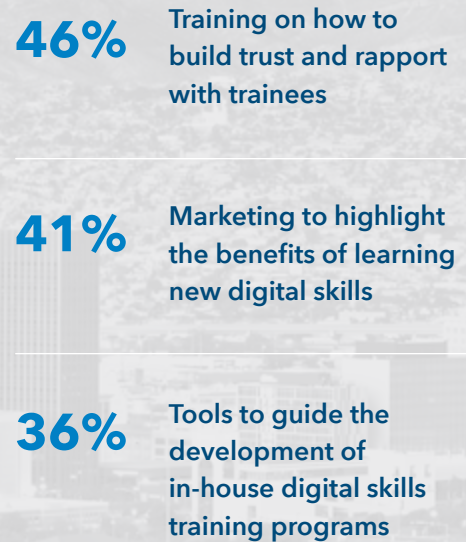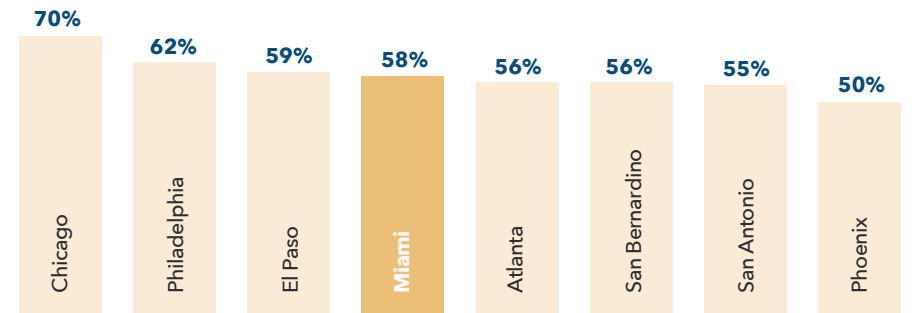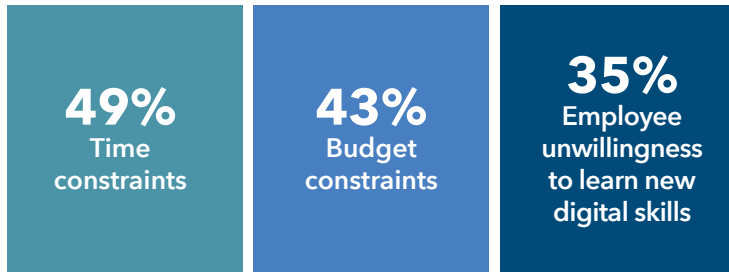
70%	62%	59%	58%	56%	56%	55%	50%
Chicago	Philadelphia	El Paso	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix

Biggest challenges organizations face when it comes to supporting employees' digital skills development

49% Time constraints

43% Budget constraints

35% Employee unwillingness to learn new digital skills

Organizations' preferred partners to develop their workforce's digital skills

39% Online-only education or training providers

27% Four-year colleges or universities

21% Community colleges

Top tools and resources that would help organizations upskill/reskill their Latino workforce

44% Tools to guide the development of in-house digital skills training programs

37% Information about online digital skills certificate programs

35% Marketing to highlight the benefits of learning new digital skills

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Top 5 In-Demand Digital Skills

RIGHT NOW	OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS
65% Computer literacy	**57%** Computer literacy
58% Data entry	**54%** Social media skills
48% Data analytics	**47%** Data analytics
44% Word processing	**44%** Programming, web, and app development
39% Social media skills	**43%** Data entry

Difficulty in upskilling/reskilling individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	El Paso	Philadelphia
52%	50%	47%	46%	43%	42%	41%	37%

Difficulty in finding qualified individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	El Paso	Philadelphia
60%	58%	57%	54%	54%	47%	44%	43%

Types of digital skills assessments organizations use to assess job applicants

HR professionals in Philadelphia assess the digital skills of applicants through:

54% self-assessments

47% work samples or work simulation tests

47% knowledge tests

Only 44% of HR professionals in Philadelphia say that adopting new technology or digital tools is a high/essential priority for their organization.

However, 62% of HR professionals in Philadelphia say that **adopting new technology or digital tools became more of a priority** for their organization during COVID-19.
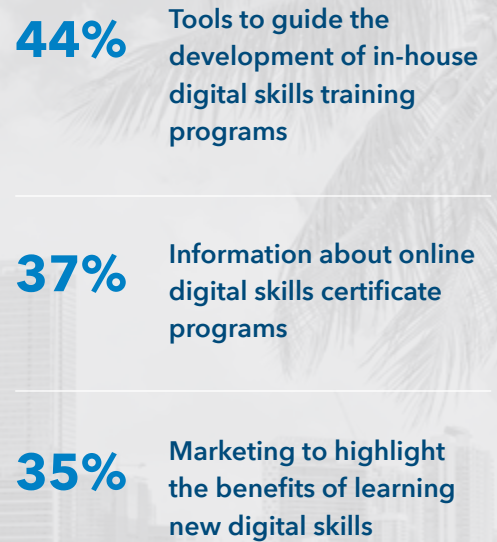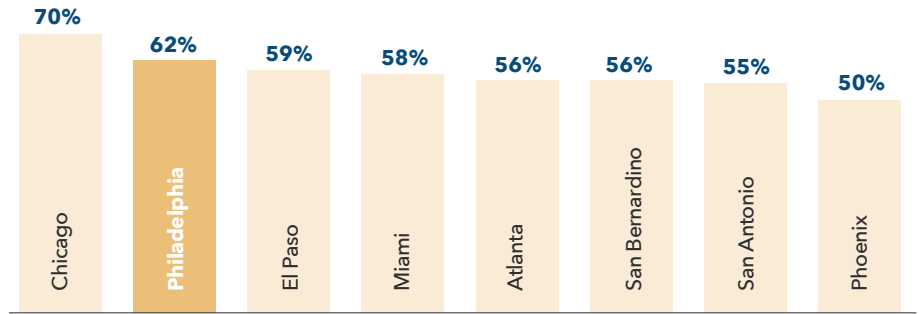
Chicago	Philadelphia	El Paso	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix
70%	62%	59%	58%	56%	56%	55%	50%

Biggest challenges organizations face when it comes to supporting employees' digital skills development

49% Time constraints

39% Budget constraints / Employee unwillingness to learn new digital skills

27% Lack of knowledge about how to develop in-house training programs

Organizations' preferred partners to develop their workforce's digital skills

43% Online-only education or training providers

22% Four-year colleges or universities

20% Community colleges

Top tools and resources that would help organizations upskill/ reskill their Latino workforce

42% Information about online digital skills certificate programs

30% Tools to guide the development of in-house digital skills training programs

28% Tools to support partnership development with local training providers

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Top 5 In-Demand Digital Skills

RIGHT NOW	OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS
65% Computer literacy	**56%** Data analytics
54% Data entry	**52%** Computer literacy
47% Data analytics	**45%** Technology troubleshooting
44% Technology troubleshooting	**44%** Digital design and data visualization
41% Word processing	**43%** Social media skills

Difficulty in upskilling/reskilling individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

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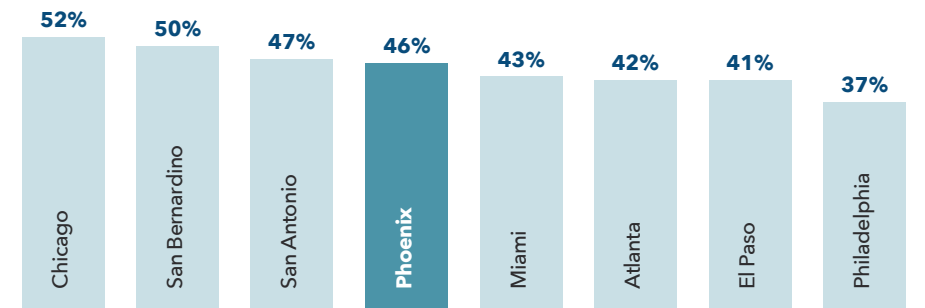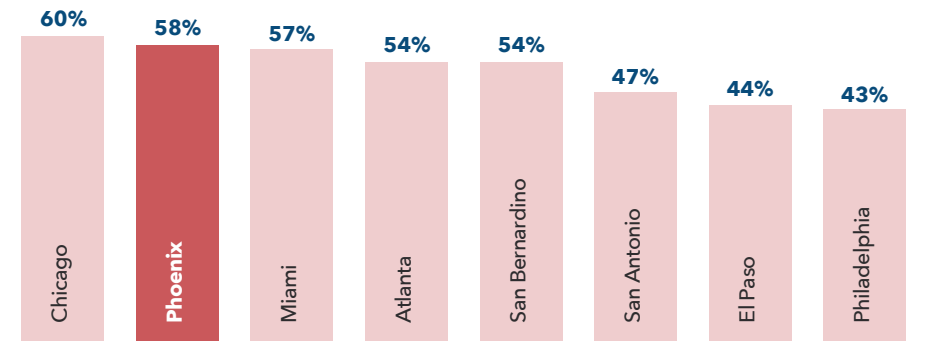
Types of digital skills assessments organizations use to assess job applicants

HR professionals in Phoenix assess the digital skills of applicants through:

44% self-assessments

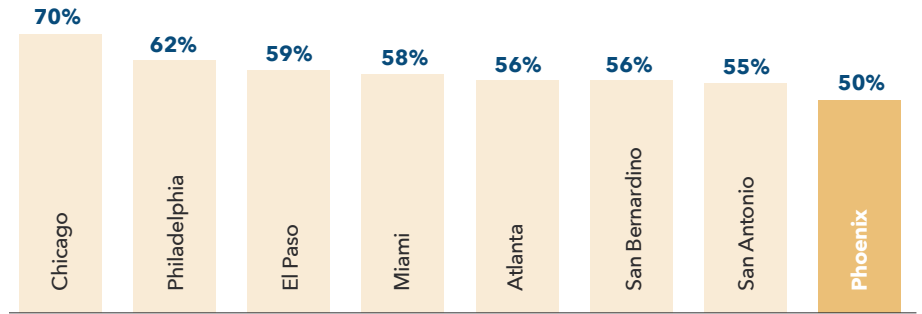**38%** work samples or work simulation tests
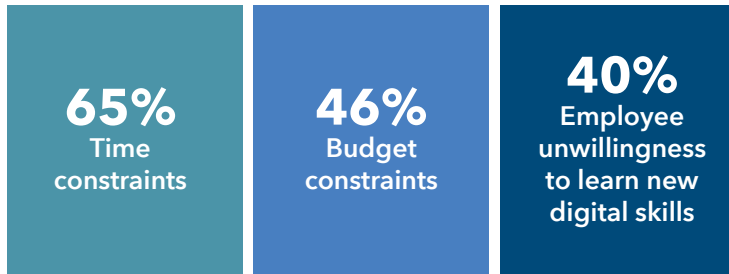
34% knowledge tests

Only 39% of HR professionals in Phoenix say that adopting new technology or digital tools is a high/essential priority for their organization.

However, 50% of HR professionals in Phoenix say that **adopting new technology or digital tools became more of a priority** for their organization during COVID-19.
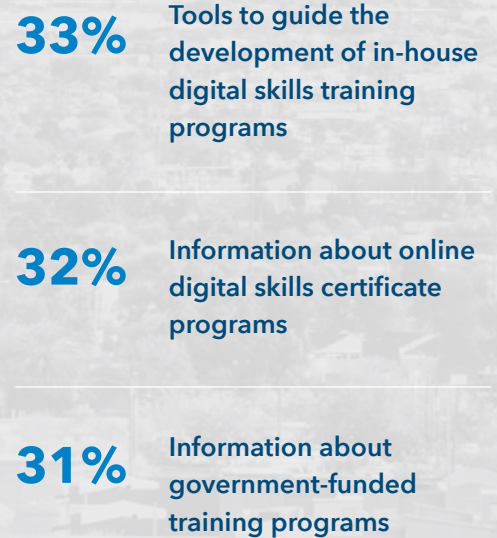
Chicago	Philadelphia	El Paso	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix
70%	62%	59%	58%	56%	56%	55%	50%

Biggest challenges organizations face when it comes to supporting employees' digital skills development

65% Time constraints

46% Budget constraints

40% Employee unwillingness to learn new digital skills

Organizations' preferred partners to develop their workforce's digital skills

39% Online-only education or training providers

15% Four-year colleges or universities

13% Community colleges

Top tools and resources that would help organizations upskill/reskill their Latino workforce

33% Tools to guide the development of in-house digital skills training programs

32% Information about online digital skills certificate programs

31% Information about government-funded training programs

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Top 5 In-Demand Digital Skills

RIGHT NOW	OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS
61% Data entry	**54%** Social media skills
49% Computer literacy	**47%** Data entry
45% Data analytics / Social media skills	**42%** Data analytics / Computer literacy
38% Word processing	**38%** Programming, web, and app development
32% Technology troubleshooting	**35%** Word processing

Difficulty in upskilling/reskilling individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

- Chicago: 52%
- San Bernardino: 50%
- San Antonio: 47%
- Phoenix: 46%
- Miami: 43%
- Atlanta: 42%
- El Paso: 41%
- Philadelphia: 37%

Difficulty in finding qualified individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

- Chicago: 60%
- Phoenix: 58%
- Miami: 57%
- Atlanta: 54%
- San Bernardino: 54%
- San Antonio: 47%
- El Paso: 44%
- Philadelphia: 43%
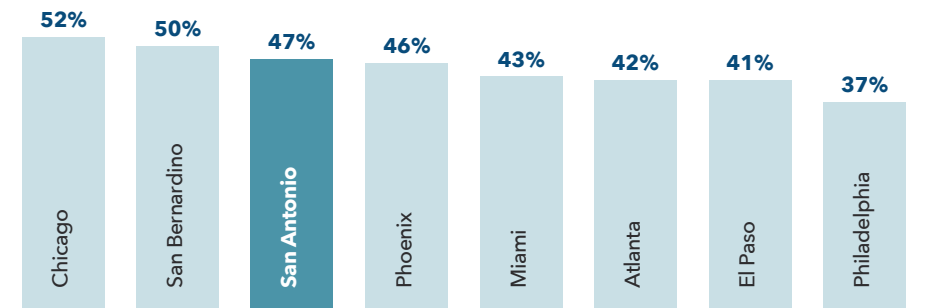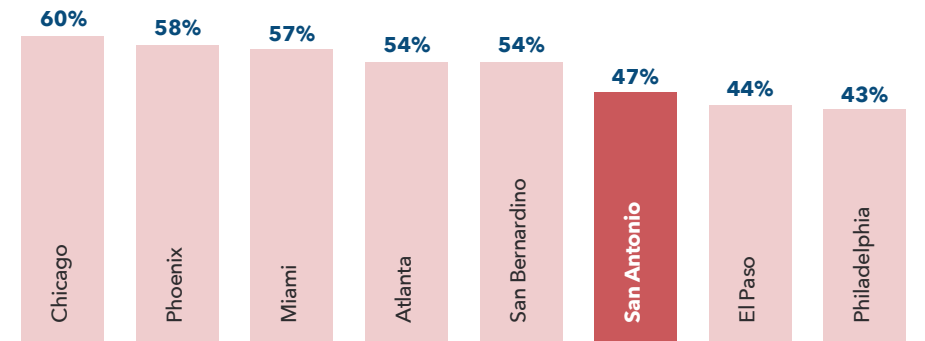
Types of digital skills assessments organizations use to assess job applicants

HR professionals in San Antonio assess the digital skills of applicants through:

71% knowledge tests

57% self-assessments

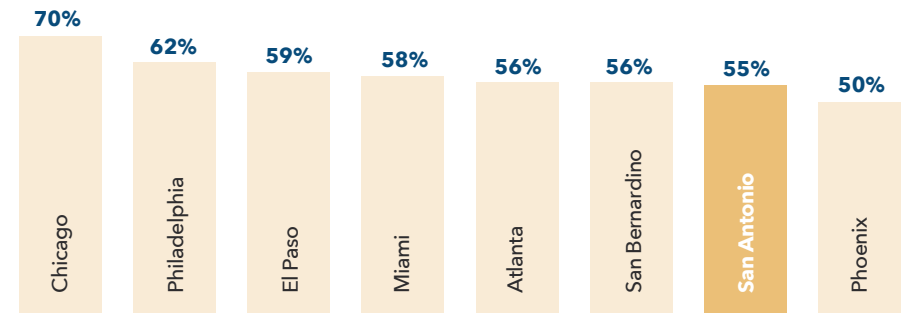**50%** work samples or work simulation tests

Only 51% of HR professionals in San Antonio say that adopting new technology or digital tools is a high/essential priority for their organization.
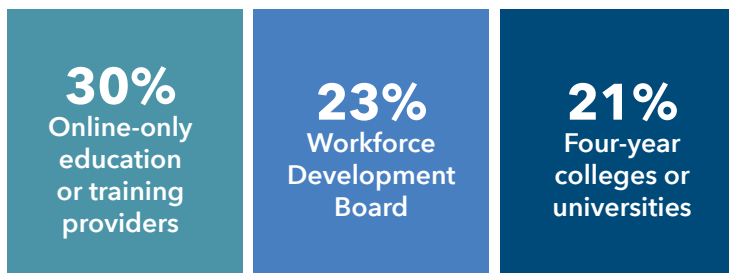
However, 55% of HR professionals in San Antonio say that **adopting new technology or digital tools became more of a priority** for their organization during COVID-19.

70%	62%	59%	58%	56%	56%	55%	50%
Chicago	Philadelphia	El Paso	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix

Biggest challenges organizations face when it comes to supporting employees' digital skills development

41% Budget constraints / Time constraints	**31%** Employee unwillingness to learn new digital skills	**25%** Lack of training software or programs in languages other than English / Building trust

Organizations' preferred partners to develop their workforce's digital skills

30% Online-only education or training providers	**23%** Workforce Development Board	**21%** Four-year colleges or universities

Top tools and resources that would help organizations upskill/ reskill their Latino workforce

47% Information about online digital skills certificate programs

42% Training on how to build trust and rapport with trainees

42% Tools to guide the development of in-house digital skills training programs

San Bernardino Quick Facts

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Top 5 In-Demand Digital Skills

RIGHT NOW	OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS
55% Computer literacy / Data entry	**54%** Data entry
45% Word processing	**52%** Social media skills / Computer literacy
42% Data analytics	**43%** Word processing
38% Social media skills	**42%** Programming, web, and app development
31% Technology troubleshooting	**40%** Data analytics

Difficulty in upskilling/reskilling individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	San Bernardino	San Antonio	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	El Paso	Philadelphia
52%	50%	47%	46%	43%	42%	41%	37%

Difficulty in finding qualified individuals for positions that require the digital skills needed by organizations in the last 12 months

Chicago	Phoenix	Miami	Atlanta	San Bernardino	San Antonio	El Paso	Philadelphia
60%	58%	57%	54%	54%	47%	44%	43%
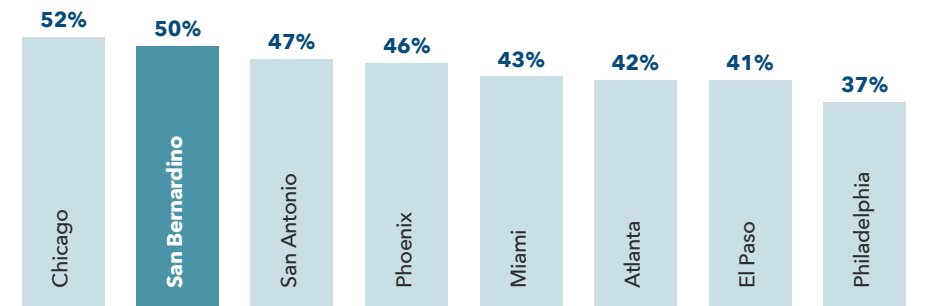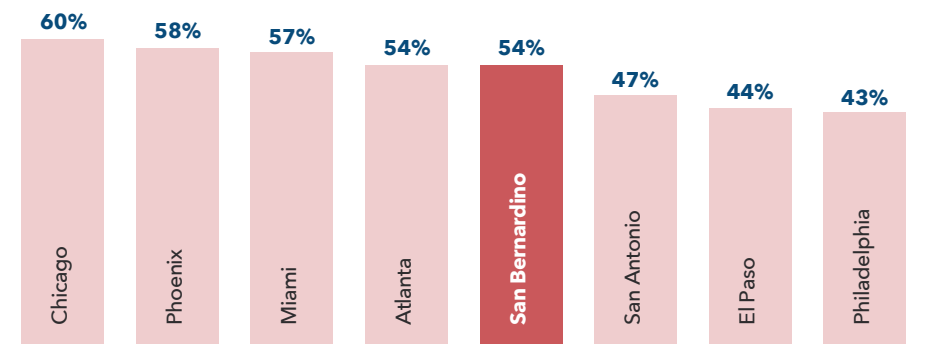
Types of digital skills assessments organizations use to assess job applicants

HR professionals in San Bernardino assess the digital skills of applicants through:

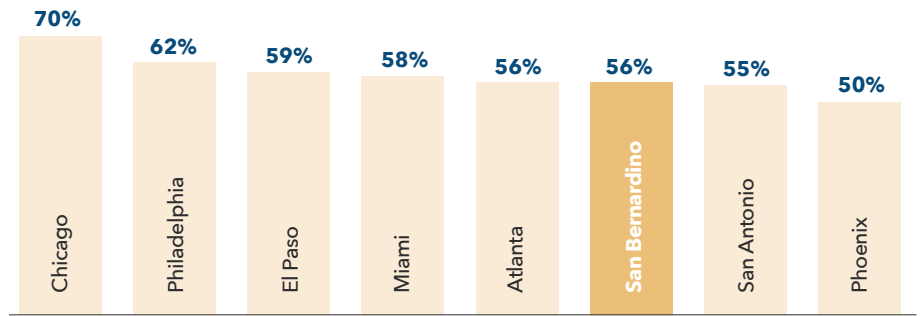**58%** work samples or work simulation tests

57% knowledge tests
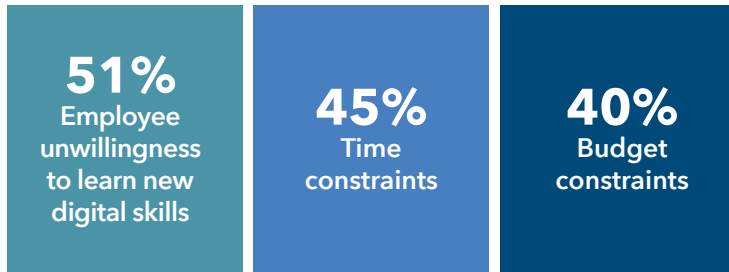
53% self-assessments

Only 42% of HR professionals in San Bernardino say that adopting new technology or digital tools is a high/essential priority for their organization.
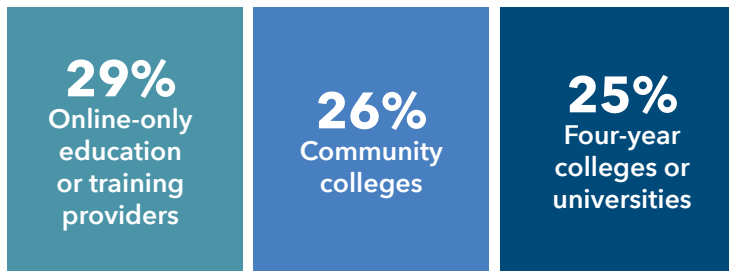
POST-COVID

However, 56% of HR professionals in San Bernardino say that **adopting new technology or digital tools became more of a priority** for their organization during COVID-19.

City	%
Chicago	70%
Philadelphia	62%
El Paso	59%
Miami	58%
Atlanta	56%
San Bernardino	56%
San Antonio	55%
Phoenix	50%

Biggest challenges organizations face when it comes to supporting employees' digital skills development

51% Employee unwillingness to learn new digital skills

45% Time constraints

40% Budget constraints

Organizations' preferred partners to develop their workforce's digital skills

29% Online-only education or training providers

26% Community colleges

25% Four-year colleges or universities

Top tools and resources that would help organizations upskill/reskill their Latino workforce

40% Marketing to highlight the benefits of learning new digital skills

39% Information about online digital skills certificate programs

37% Tools to support partnership development with local training providers

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