



# The High Demand for **DURABLE SKILLS**

# What are the most common characteristics employers look for in potential employees? Durable Skills.



**U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION**  
Center for Education and Workforce

*"Companies will continue to compete on innovation and talent like never before which makes the use, sharing, and transparency of skills data across stakeholder groups even more important to the world of work. Collective action around durable skills is one way to ensure Americans have the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow, and the economy has the skilled workforce it needs to grow."*

—**CHERYL OLDHAM**, Senior Vice President of Education and Workforce,  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation



*"Organizations remain dependent on an economy where HR professionals and talent acquisition specialists are the principal consumers of skills data. Leveraging transparency in skills data, especially for durable skills, is the key lever in making organizational development and competitive advantage a reality. Durable skills data at their fingertips will make HR professionals more effective and their organizations even more successful."*

—**ALEXANDER ALONSO**, PhD, SHRM-SCP,  
Chief Knowledge Officer, SHRM



*"The debate over the future of work confirms the many challenges we face in preparing young people for an increasingly complex digital world. It is imperative we expand career pathway opportunities centered around job-ready training, industry-recognized credentials, and a continuous learning mindset focusing equally on technical and durable skills."*

—**TODD THIBODEAUX**,  
president and CEO, CompTIA



*"The men and women who manufacture in the United States are called upon to produce an amazing variety of products, especially as we continue to serve on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. From the supplies that make our lives easier and safer to the medicines, vaccines, and treatments that make our lives healthier, manufacturing employees create the world of today and tomorrow. It is the durable skills of these employees, the creativity and teamwork, that makes innovation possible and brings these new and vital products to life."*

—**CAROLYN LEE**, Executive Director,  
The Manufacturing Institute



*"The only thing certain about the future is its uncertainty. The jobs of the future, and the professional skills needed for them, continue to evolve. So, for students to have the best opportunity to succeed they need to learn how to learn, how to communicate, and how to think. There's nothing 'soft' about these skills - they set the foundation for a mindset of continuous learning that is most needed once they leave school and join a work environment none of us can predict."*

—**EVAN LEYBOURN**, CEO, Business Agility Institute



*"Contractors are at the heart of infrastructure in every community across America. The technical skills of today's craft professionals are second to none, but it's absolutely essential that they have the durable skills to be able to contribute and succeed in this dynamic workforce."*

—**GREG SIZEMORE**, Vice President of HSE and Workforce Development,  
Associated Builders and Contractors



*"Business leaders, creative workers, and arts educators have known for a long time that creativity, critical thinking, empathy, and creative problem solving are what's going to drive the next boom in our national economy. Coming together to center these durable skills in the future education of our children is crucial to the U.S.'s future global success and the social and economic success of local communities."*

—**CLAY LORD**, Vice President of Strategic Impact,  
Americans for the Arts



*"The hotel and lodging industry exemplifies the American Dream, fostering development, upward mobility, and exciting life-long careers. As an industry built around hospitality, we recognize the important role durable skills play in helping our associates provide unparalleled guest experiences and innovate to build the future of the industry."*

—**ROSANNA MAIETTA**, President & CEO,  
AHLA Foundation



# Overview

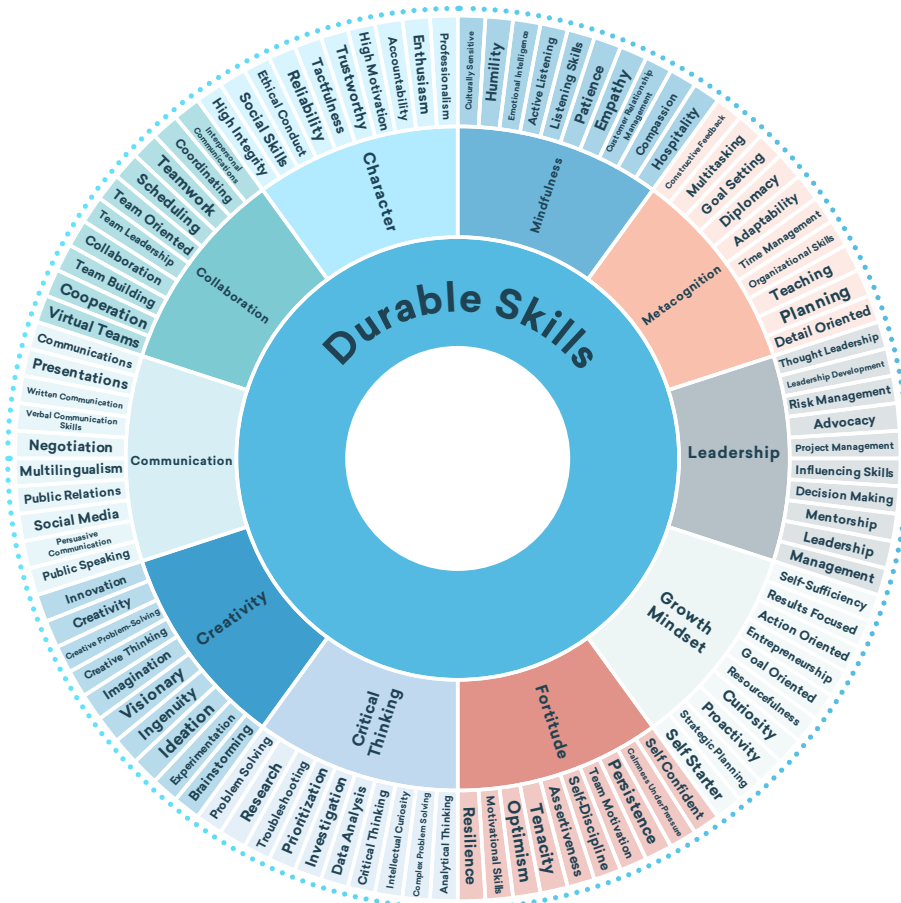


**F**OR THE PAST 40 YEARS, the primary purpose of our schools has been to maximize academic achievement. However, over that time, the world has greatly changed. We believe the purpose of schools today is to ensure students can think critically and creatively, collaborate effectively with others, apply skills and knowledge to solving real problems, and find meaningful, fulfilling ways to contribute to the world and their community.

In an era when technical skills are evolving at an unprecedented pace, there is an important set of durable ‘soft skills’ that last throughout an entire career—how we use what we know (critical thinking, communication, etc.) and our character skills. America Succeeds’ Durable Skills initiative seeks to ensure every individual is prepared with the soft skills necessary for success in the workforce regardless of educational attainment, career path, or industry sector.

## Defining Durable Skills

Our hypothesis is that every job in every sector requires Durable Skills. Based on Emsi Burning Glass’s database of tens of millions of employer job postings from the past two years, we started by categorizing 100 of the most in-demand **Durable Skills** into 10 major themes or **competencies**.



### COMPETENCY DESCRIPTIONS

- **Leadership:** Directing efforts and delivering results
- **Character:** personal and professional conduct
- **Collaboration:** teamwork and connection
- **Communication:** Information exchange and management
- **Creativity:** New ideas and novel solutions
- **Critical Thinking:** Informed ideas and effective solutions
- **Metacognition:** Self understanding and personal management
- **Mindfulness:** Interpersonal and self awareness
- **Growth Mindset:** Improvement and aspiration
- **Fortitude:** Constitution and inspiration

# Our Approach



## Improving Pathways from Education to Employment

Although the need for inclusive, soft skills-based education and hiring was apparent long before the pandemic, COVID-19 greatly accelerated existing trends. As we look toward economic recovery—and overcoming the inequities exacerbated by this past year—it has become even more critical to ensure every individual is prepared or upskilled with the Durable Skills necessary for long-term success in the workforce. By focusing on common competencies instead of diverse technical needs, we have an opportunity to help a broader and more inclusive group of learners and workers advance in career pathways for employees' and employers' mutual benefit.



WE STUDIED  
**82 MILLION**  
US JOB POSTINGS  
FROM THE PAST  
**2 YEARS**



ACROSS  
**22 SECTORS**  
USING 2020 SOC-2  
OCCUPATIONAL  
**DATA**



**61%**  
OF THOSE US JOB  
POSTINGS REQUESTED  
**AT LEAST ONE**  
**DURABLE SKILL**

**62.5 MILLION US JOBS** DEMANDED DURABLE SKILLS

Employers, parents, state leaders, and policymakers are aligned in their desire to provide students a solid foundation for the future. Business leaders across industries are aligned around the skills demanded in every career. It is our belief that by working together, we can ensure that students and communities become more resilient in the rapidly evolving world of work.

---

## DATA AND METHODS

Emsi Burning Glass's job postings data are gathered by scraping over 100,000 websites, including company career sites, national and local job boards, and job posting aggregators. Postings for over 1.5 million companies are scraped and deduplicated to account for multiple postings of the same job on different websites. Job postings [from 2019 through 2020] were analyzed to assess the prevalence of Durable Skills at both the national and state level. Results are presented in aggregate and also broken out by competency, occupation and industry.

# National Analysis

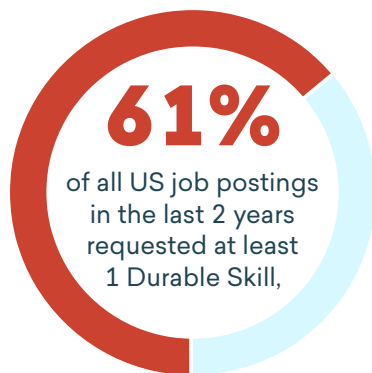


We defined  
**100** Durable Skills  
grouped in  
**10** Competencies

Almost  
**29M**  
US postings  
requested  
Communications

The **TOP 5**  
Durable Skills  
were requested  
**3.8x** more than  
the top 5 Hard skills

**7** of the **10**  
most-requested skills  
were Durable Skills



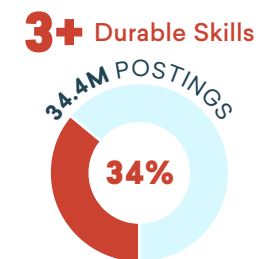
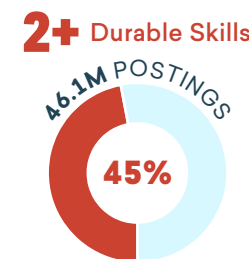
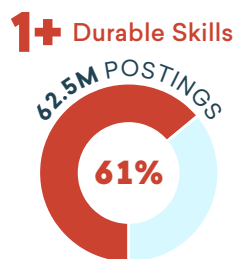
and **~80%** of all the US job postings  
in half of all occupations (SOC-2)

Over **34M** US postings  
(34%) requested at least  
**3** Durable Skills



In evaluating data about Durable Skills, it is necessary to keep in mind that the data reflect language used in job postings; employers have adopted some standard language for common human competencies, such as Leadership and Communication, but others are often evaluated less explicitly during the interview stage of hiring. As a result, Durable Skills may be crucial and may not be proportionately represented in the data.

## A MAJORITY OF US JOB POSTINGS REQUEST DURABLE SKILLS



SOC-2	Occupation	At Least 1 Durable Skill	At Least 2 Durable Skills
11	Management	91%	81%
13	Business & Financial Operations	86%	73%
43	Office & Administrative Support	86%	69%
55	Military-Only	85%	50%
41	Sales & Related	83%	68%
33	Protective Service	82%	63%
17	Architecture & Engineering	81%	65%
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	80%	63%
19	Life, Physical, & Social Science	78%	61%
25	Educational Instruction & Library	78%	55%
15	Computer & Mathematical	77%	60%
21	Community & Social Service	77%	59%
35	Food Preparation & Serving Related	74%	47%
23	Legal	67%	46%
49	Installation, Maintenance & Repair	67%	46%
51	Production	60%	40%
31	Healthcare Support	56%	30%
37	Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	55%	33%
47	Construction & Extraction	50%	30%
45	Farming, Fishing & Forestry	47%	31%
29	Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	43%	25%
39	Personal Care & Service	35%	20%
53	Transportation & Material Moving	22%	11%

Source: Emsi Burning Glass Job Postings

# Kansas Analysis



WE STUDIED  
**1.2 MILLION**  
JOB POSTINGS  
FROM THE PAST  
**2 YEARS**



ACROSS  
**22 OCCUPATIONS,**  
**20 INDUSTRIES,**  
AND OVER  
**19,500 COMPANIES**

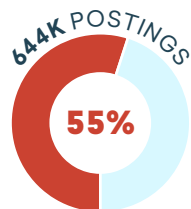


**55%**  
OF THOSE JOB  
POSTINGS REQUESTED  
**AT LEAST ONE**  
**DURABLE SKILL**

**644K KANSAS JOBS** DEMANDED DURABLE SKILLS

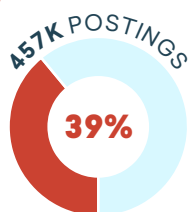
## A MAJORITY OF KANSAS JOB POSTINGS REQUEST DURABLE SKILLS

### 1+ Durable Skills



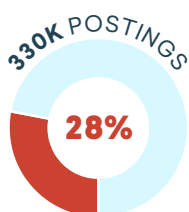
Almost  
**433K**  
postings  
requested  
Communications

### 2+ Durable Skills



The **TOP 5**  
Durable Skills  
were requested  
**3.4x** more than  
the top 5 Hard skills

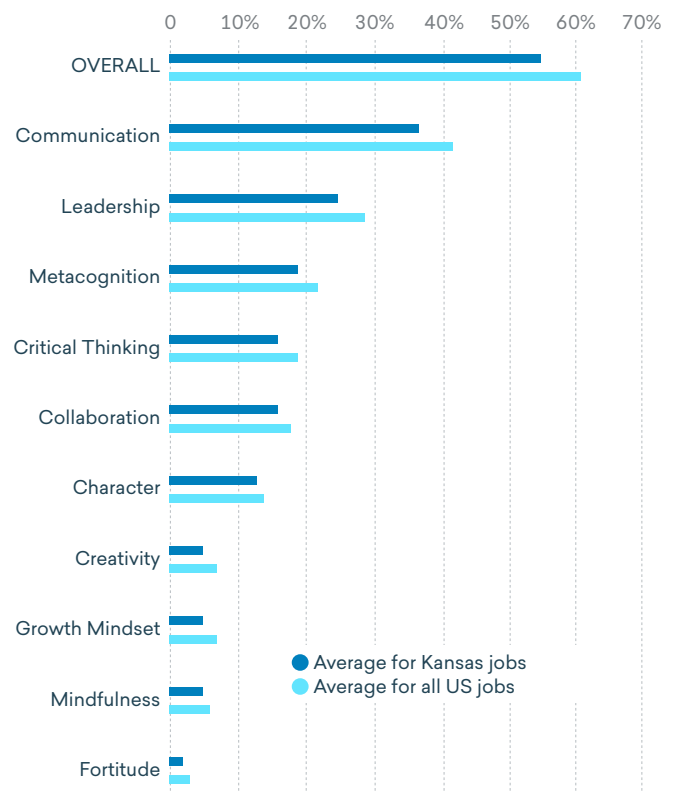
### 3+ Durable Skills



**6** of the **10**  
most-requested skills  
were Durable Skills

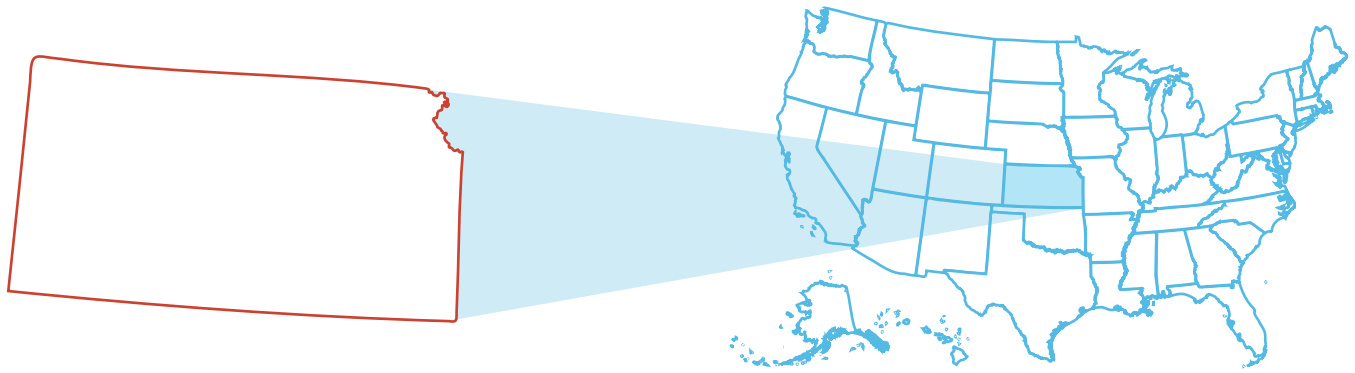
## How does Kansas compare in its demand for Durable Skills?

### % FREQUENCY OF DURABLE SKILLS\* IN KANSAS VS. US JOB POSTINGS



\* Postings with 1+ durable skills per competency  
Source: Emsi Burning Glass Job Postings





**IN KANSAS, 5 OCCUPATION SECTORS ARE SEEKING DURABLE SKILLS >1% MORE FREQUENTLY THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.**

SOCS-2	Occupation	# Postings with 3+ Durable Skills	% Postings with 3+ Durable Skills	Difference vs % Postings US
41	Sales and Related	54,866	41%	-10%
11	Management	47,698	63%	-4%
43	Office and Administrative Support	39,868	49%	-2%
15	Computer and Mathematical	33,178	45%	-1%
13	Business and Financial Operations	25,049	51%	-5%
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	24,658	16%	0%
25	Educational Instruction and Library	12,796	36%	2%
17	Architecture and Engineering	12,593	48%	1%
35	Food Preparation and Serving Related	12,322	24%	-1%
53	Transportation and Material Moving	11,212	4%	-1%
49	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	10,547	27%	-1%
51	Production	8,285	25%	1%
21	Community and Social Service	7,741	43%	1%
31	Healthcare Support	6,791	20%	3%
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	6,389	42%	-4%
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science	3,994	43%	-2%
33	Protective Service	3,523	36%	-12%
37	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	2,684	16%	-2%
39	Personal Care and Service	2,047	11%	-1%
47	Construction and Extraction	2,041	14%	-3%
23	Legal	1,189	28%	-3%
45	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	189	11%	-7%

SOCS = Standard Occupation Classification System

Source: Emsi Burning Glass Job Postings

**IN KANSAS, 2 INDUSTRIES ARE SEEKING DURABLE SKILLS >10% MORE FREQUENTLY THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.**

NAICS-2	Industry	# Postings with 3+ Durable Skills	% Postings with 3+ Durable Skills	Difference vs % Postings US
44	Retail Trade	48,182	43%	-4%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	38,787	44%	-1%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	37,758	30%	-1%
56	Admin. & Support & Waste Mgmt. & Remediation Services	33,987	21%	-2%
31	Manufacturing	29,703	49%	-6%
52	Finance and Insurance	24,578	37%	-21%
99	Unclassified	20,140	20%	-3%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	18,394	32%	0%
51	Information	16,439	53%	-6%
61	Educational Services	13,594	38%	-3%
42	Wholesale Trade	9,952	47%	-2%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	6,946	35%	-3%
23	Construction	6,885	23%	-11%
92	Public Administration	6,318	25%	-13%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	5,469	3%	-1%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4,536	36%	-10%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,800	66%	12%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,661	43%	-7%
22	Utilities	1,015	39%	-10%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	825	50%	10%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	806	28%	-14%

NAICS = North American Industries Classification System

Source: Emsi Burning Glass Job Postings



Aligned has positioned itself as the business voice for education transformation across both Kansas and Missouri. Education is the engine of a community, providing knowledge and experience to everyone. As a systems-change organization, Aligned harnesses the power and influence of the business community to ensure that all students achieve their greatest potential and communities can capitalize on a creative and talented workforce. As business leaders, Aligned values the importance of a healthy and prosperous community. To this end, Aligned serves as a non-partisan convener of stakeholders that can educate and influence local, state and national policymakers on a regular basis to drive reform efforts.



America Succeeds is a non-profit organization committed to improving educational opportunity, outcomes, and equity by harnessing the power and acumen of the business community in accelerating systems change.

Our organization is uniquely positioned between business and the education policy sector—acting as an “education voice to business” nationally and a “business voice for education” at the state-level. Our work bridges these two distinct constituencies, with advocacy efforts aimed at larger culture change and policy efforts that ultimately help us achieve our vision of preparing every student to succeed in the competitive global economy and contribute to their local community.



Emsi Burning Glass is a labor market analytics firm dedicated to driving economic prosperity using data. To do this, we inform and connect three critical audiences: people looking for work, employers looking for skilled employees, and educators looking to build relevant academic programs.

With over 20 years of experience, Emsi Burning Glass currently partners with thousands of colleges, businesses, and communities. Our one-of-a-kind database combines job posting analytics, alumni outcomes profile data, and localized traditional labor market data to provide the most comprehensive picture of the labor market possible.