

WGU Tennessee Education Survey

INTRO: Hello, I'm (first name) and I'm with a market research firm that's conducting a survey about some important issues in Tennessee. I am not trying to sell you anything. Would you mind spending about 15 minutes answering some questions? Your answers will remain confidential.

S1. Are you currently employed, meaning you work at least 30 hours a week? (screen out those who answer no)

S2. Do you or does a member of your household currently work for a media outlet? (screen out those who answer yes)

S3. Are you or is a member of your household employed by the Tennessee state government? (screen out those who answer yes)

S4. Do you or does a member of your household work for a university or other institution of higher learning? (screen out those who answer yes)

S5. Are you registered to vote? (screen out those who answer no)

Q1. In general, when thinking about the value of a college education today, would you say that the overall value most college graduates get back over their lifetime is:

1. Worth more than the cost of attending college	36%	Worth => costs
2. Worth less than the cost	36%	59%
3. About equal to what they pay for college	23%	
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	5%	

Q2. In general, how important do you think it is for someone to have a college degree or a career-related certificate beyond a high school diploma? Would you say it is:

1. Very important	53%	Total important
2. Somewhat important	34%	87%
3. Not very important	9%	
4. Not at all important	3%	
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	1%	

I'm going to read you some statements about education. For each one, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.

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(READ PROMPTS AS NECESSARY TO COMPLETE)

Q3A. A college degree or certification beyond high school is essential for getting a good job.

1. Strongly agree	38%	Total agree
2. Somewhat agree	34%	72%
3. Neither agree nor disagree	8%	
4. Somewhat disagree	12%	Total Disagree
5. Strongly disagree	8%	20%
6. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	-	

Q3B. A college degree or certification beyond high school leads to a higher income.

1. Strongly agree	47%	Total agree
2. Somewhat agree	32%	79%
3. Neither agree nor disagree	8%	
4. Somewhat disagree	7%	Total disagree
5. Strongly disagree	5%	12%
6. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA		

Q4. How about you? What is the highest level of education that you completed?
[READ CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY]

1. Less than high school	1%
2. High school	14%
3. Some college	19%
4. Associate degree or certificate	14%
5. College degree	33%
6. Postgraduate degree (M.A, LLD, Ph.D.)	18%
7. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA [DON'T READ]	1%

Q4A. [ASK if Q4==3] How many semesters did you complete? [READ CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY]

1. 2 semesters or less	28%
2. 3 to 4 semesters	36%
3. 5 or more semesters	30%
4. DON'T KNOW/CAN'T REMEMBER	6%

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Q5. [ASK IF Q4==3|4|5|6] Do you currently have student loan debt?

1. Yes	23%
2. No	77%
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	-

Q6. [ASK IF Q4==5|6] How useful would you say your college education has been in preparing you for a job or career? Would you say:

1. Very useful	52%
2. Somewhat useful	32%
3. Not too useful	7%
4. Not at all useful	8%
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	-

Q7. [ASK IF Q4<=3] For each of the following, please tell me whether or not it has been an obstacle to you in completing a college degree. [RANDOMIZE Q7A-Q7F]

Q7A. Family responsibilities

1. Yes	63%
2. No	33%
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	4%

Q7B. Job or work responsibilities

1. Yes	65%
2. No	30%
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	5%

Q7C. The cost of a degree

1. Yes	67%
2. No	29%
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	4%

Q7D. The difficulty of finding classes that fit your schedule

1. Yes	46%
2. No	48%
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	6%

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Q7E. The time it would take to complete a degree

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 53% |
| 2. No | 42% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 5% |

Q7F. The student loan debt you would have to take on

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 56% |
| 2. No | 39% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 5% |

Q8. Do you think of your current job as a career, as a steppingstone to a career, or do you think of it as just a job to get you by?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1. A career | 64% |
| 2. A steppingstone to a career | 14% |
| 3. Just a job to get you by | 20% |
| 4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 2% |

Q9. [ASK IF Q8==2|3] In general, do you feel you have the education and training necessary to get the kind of job or career you would like to have, or do you need more education and training?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Have necessary education and training | 49% |
| 2. Need more | 47% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 4% |

Q10. [ASK IF Q8==1] In general, do you feel you have the education and training necessary to get ahead in your job or career, OR do you need more education and training?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Have necessary education and training | 83% |
| 2. Need more | 15% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 2% |

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Q11. Do you ever plan to return to school?

1. Yes	16%
2. No	62%
3. Maybe	21%
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	1%

Thanks for sharing your opinions about education with us. Now we would like to ask you a few general questions about college education in Tennessee.

Q12. In terms of higher education and workforce development, how would you rate the following in terms of what should be the top priorities of Governor Bill Lee's administration? Would you say they should be a top priority, a middle priority, a low priority, or not a priority at all?

12A. Affordability of college and technical training

1. Top	58%
2. Middle	30%
3. Low	6%
4. Not at all	3%
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	2%

12B. Access to college and technical training in rural areas

1. Top	57%
2. Middle	31%
3. Low	7%
4. Not at all	3%
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	2%

12C. College readiness

1. Top	53%
2. Middle	33%
3. Low	9%
4. Not at all	3%
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	2%

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12D. Student debt

1. Top	50%
2. Middle	30%
3. Low	12%
4. Not at all	7%
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	2%

12E. Graduation/completion rates

1. Top	49%
2. Middle	35%
3. Low	11%
4. Not at all	3%
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	2%

12F. Ability of graduates to succeed in the workplace

1. Top	57%
2. Middle	28%
3. Low	9%
4. Not at all	4%
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	2%

Q13. Former Governor Haslam devoted a good amount of his time and resources to higher education and workforce development. Do you think Governor Bill Lee's administration should spend more time and resources, about the same, or less than the Haslam administration on higher education and workforce development?

1. More	36%
2. About the same	50%
3. Less than	8%
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	6%

Q14A. How familiar are you with the Drive to 55 initiative? Would you say you are:

1. Very familiar	7%
2. Somewhat familiar	17%
3. Have heard of it but are not familiar	22%
4. Not familiar at all	52%
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	2%

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Q14B. Governor Bill Lee’s predecessor, Bill Haslam, started the Drive to 55, which seeks to equip 55% of Tennesseans with a postsecondary certificate by 2025, primarily through free community college for all Tennesseans who do not hold degrees

How should Governor Bill Lee’s administration proceed with the initiative? Would you say he should:

1. Keep it intact as is	30%
2. Strengthen it by allocating more resources	43%
3. Replace it with a new approach	12%
4. End it entirely	6%
5. DON’T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	9%

Q14C. Since taking office, Governor Bill Lee has focused on increasing higher education opportunities in rural areas. Do you agree or disagree with Gov. Lee’s emphasis on increasing higher education opportunities in rural areas?

1. Strongly agree	53%	Total agree
2. Somewhat agree	28%	81%
3. Neither agree nor disagree	8%	
4. Somewhat disagree	4%	
5. Strongly disagree	3%	
6. DON’T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	4%	

Q15. How would you rate the options most people have for attending college in Tennessee? Would you say they are excellent, good, not very good, or poor?

1. Excellent	19%	Total positive
2. Good	58%	77%
3. Not very good	15%	
4. Poor	3%	
5. DON’T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	5%	

Q16. Do you think Tennessee’s state government should increase its funding for college education, keep it about the same, or decrease the amount it spends?

1. Increase	48%
2. Keep it same	39%
3. Decrease	10%
4. DON’T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	4%

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Q17. When it comes to ensuring that public schools prepare students for college-level work, would you say the Tennessee state government:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Should do more to ensure students are prepared | 61% |
| 2. Is doing a good job at its current level | 26% |
| 3. Or, is already devoting too much money and resources | 8% |
| 4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 6% |

Q18. If you were giving advice to a student entering their senior year of high school today on whether they should pursue a college degree, would you tell them:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. They should definitely pursue a degree | 43% |
| 2. Probably should pursue a degree | 39% |
| 3. Doesn't really matter one way or the other | 10% |
| 4. Definitely no need to pursue a degree | 2% |
| 5. Don't know/no opinion (Do Not Read) | 6% |

Q19. From what you know or understand, do you think Tennessee's colleges and universities provide adequate financial aid for students who want to obtain a college degree? If you don't have an opinion, just say so.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 33% |
| 2. No | 28% |
| 3. No opinion | 32% |
| 4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 7% |

Q20. Do you personally view the problem of student loan debt for people in the United States to be a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. Major problem | 66% |
| 2. Minor problem | 23% |
| 3. Not a problem | 9% |
| 4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 3% |

Q21. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: For Tennessee's economy to compete with other states, it is essential to have an educated workforce. Would you say you:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| 1. Strongly agree | 66% | Total agree
91% |
| 2. Somewhat agree | 26% | |
| 3. Somewhat disagree | 5% | |
| 4. Strongly disagree | 1% | |
| 5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 3% | |

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Now I'd like to ask you about online college education.

Q22. Generally speaking, do you think that online college degree programs are better, about the same, or worse than traditional, in-person degree programs?

1. Better	10%
2. About the same	53%
3. Worse	30%
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	8%

Q23. Generally speaking, do you think that employers rate an employee who has received their college degree from an online degree program the same, better, or worse than a similar applicant who has received their degree from a traditional, in-person degree program?

1. The same	43%
2. Better	9%
3. Worse	38%
4. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	10%

Q24. The nontraditional HOPE scholarship program, funded by our state lottery, provides tuition assistance for qualifying Tennesseans age 25 and older who are returning to college or enrolling for the first time. It is available for those attending two- and four-year colleges in Tennessee, and can be used to pursue degrees through online programs at those schools.

Some people argue that these HOPE scholarships should be available for students enrolled at other state-approved online universities. Would you say you:

1. Strongly agree	29%	Total agree
2. Somewhat agree	39%	68%
3. Somewhat disagree	16%	
4. Strongly disagree	9%	Total disagree
5. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	7%	25%

We're almost done. The final questions are for statistical purposes.

GENDER. (BY OBSERVATION)

1. Male	49%
2. Female	51%

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D1. REGION

Do you live in East, Middle or West Tennessee?

1. West Tennessee	25%
2. Middle Tennessee	35%
3. East Tennessee	40%
4. Don't know (Terminate)	-

D2. AGE

1. 18–34	21%
2. 35–44	20%
3. 45–64	46%
4. 65+	13%

D3. RACE

What is your race or ethnic group?

1. White/Anglo	82%
2. African-American	11%
3. Hispanic/Other	5%
4. Declined	2%

D4. Do you have children living in your residence?

1. Yes	44%
2. No	56%
3. REFUSED	-

D5. Do either of your parents have a degree or certificate beyond high school?

1. Yes	48%
2. No	51%
3. Don't know	1%

D6. What was your total household income for 2018? Would you say: [READ CATEGORIES]

1. Under \$40,000	22%
2. \$40,000 to \$75,000	28%
3. More than \$75,000	45%
4. Declined/Don't Know	5%

D7. These days, many colleges and universities offer courses online. Have you ever taken a course online?

1. Yes	41%
2. No	59%
3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA	-