



March - April 2026

LAKESHORE REGION BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ADOPTION & WORKFORCE IMPACT

Lakeshore Advantage surveyed Lakeshore-area companies between March 9 and April 15, 2026, to better understand how employers are adopting artificial intelligence and preparing their workforce for change. Results indicate AI has moved beyond experimentation and is increasingly being integrated into core business functions across the region.

AI adoption across the Lakeshore region is accelerating. Employers are moving beyond experimentation and integrating AI into multiple business functions, with significant anticipated growth in talent management, workforce development, and operational decision-making. The survey findings suggest the region's business community is focused on leveraging AI to augment workforce capabilities, improve productivity, and strengthen competitiveness rather than reduce headcount. Continued investment in employee training, peer learning, and practical implementation support will be critical as adoption expands.

KEY FINDINGS

86% Organizations plan to expand AI use within the next 12 months

67% Report AI is already influencing hiring decisions

3.6 Average departments currently using AI

14% Report workforce reductions from automation

Most organizations report workforce augmentation and reskilling rather than workforce reduction.

WHAT WE LEARNED

- ✓ AI adoption is becoming mainstream across the Lakeshore business community.
- ✓ Employers are focusing on productivity gains and workforce adaptation rather than workforce reduction.
- ✓ Human Resources and Talent Management represent the largest expected area of future AI investment.
- ✓ Employee training and AI literacy remain critical areas for continued development.



SURVEY SNAPSHOT

59

companies represented

64

survey respondents

CURRENT AI ADOPTION BY DEPARTMENT

IT/Cybersecurity	59%
HR/Talent	53%
Sales; Finance	53%
Manufacturing/Operations	44%
Engineering/R&D	42%
Supply Chain/Procurement	25%

WORKFORCE IMPACT

	Current Impact	Expected Impact
Job Transformation	47%	64%
Reskilling/Upskilling	45%	58%
Workforce Reduction	14%	Remains Limited

EMPLOYER SUPPORT PRIORITIES

Share AI Best Practices: Peer examples from regional employers

Advocate for Resources: Funding, grants, and implementation support

Expand Workforce Training: Upskilling and AI literacy resources

Create Peer Networks: Industry-specific AI leadership cohorts

Lakeshore Advantage launched the Business Pulse Survey Series to provide timely insights on issues impacting regional employers. Future surveys will explore workforce, growth, infrastructure, and competitiveness trends across the Lakeshore region.

