



Critical Mass Insights

Helping America's
most influential voices

know what to say to America.

Using Audio to Raise Awareness & Interest in Trade/Vocational School

May 2026

Key Highlights from Study

- An overwhelming majority of mid-lower income listeners are seeking ways to increase earning potential and want to learn about alternative career paths.
- AI is changing how consumers think about trade school, with those who have a HS degree or less and even those with higher education levels believing trade school can offer similar or greater financial opportunities than college.
- In general, though, most consumers are not as informed about trade school, with most learning about them from High School counselors/teachers. This leaves an opportunity to educate, particularly career changers, about the earning potential.
- Audio advertising and personality driven content can drive knowledge and perceptions around vocational school opportunities.

Consumers with HHI Less than \$75K are Seeking Better Career Opportunities

Less than a third **VERY CONFIDENT** in their current career path and future earning potential

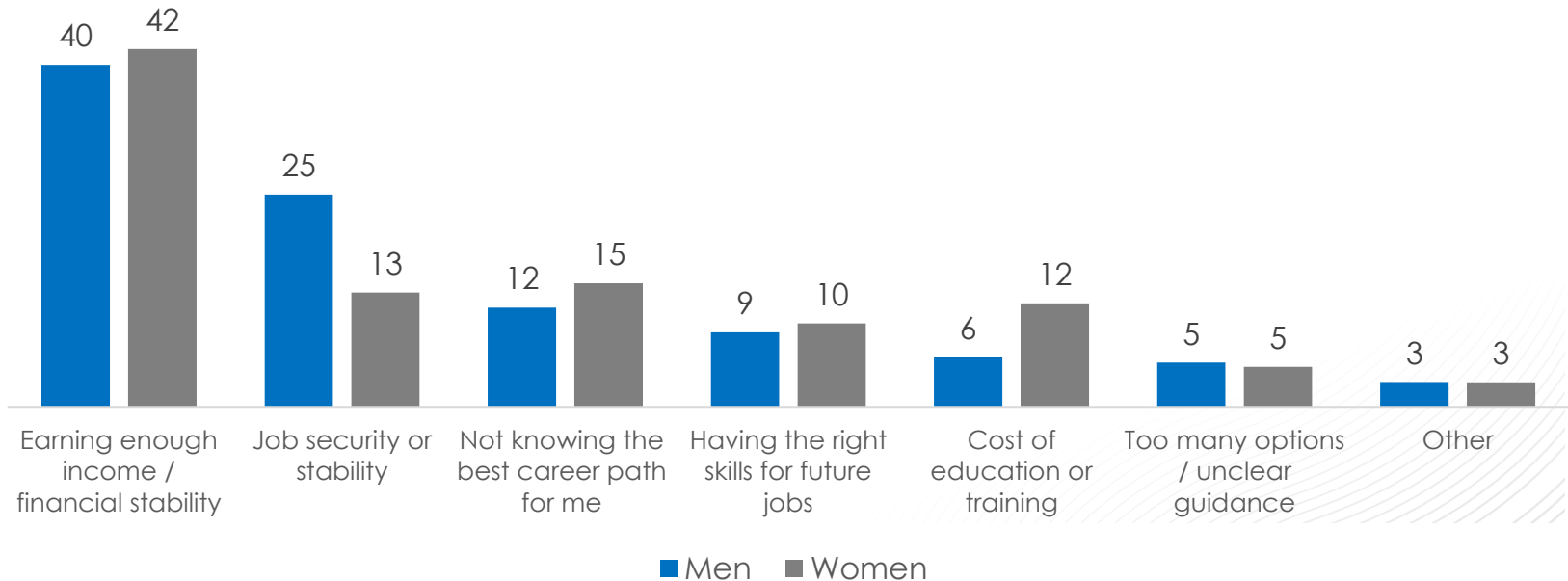
82% say they are interested in learning about alternative career paths such as trade or vocational careers

98% say “I’m looking for ways to increase my income.”



For Both Men and Women, Financial Stability is the #1 Concern When They Think About Future Careers

% who say the following is their primary concern about future career



AI is Impacting How Consumers Think About Trade School as an Alternative Opportunity

65% of listeners say “I am concerned AI could negatively impact my job.”

Nearly half agree that “there are better options that can be just as good or better than college.”

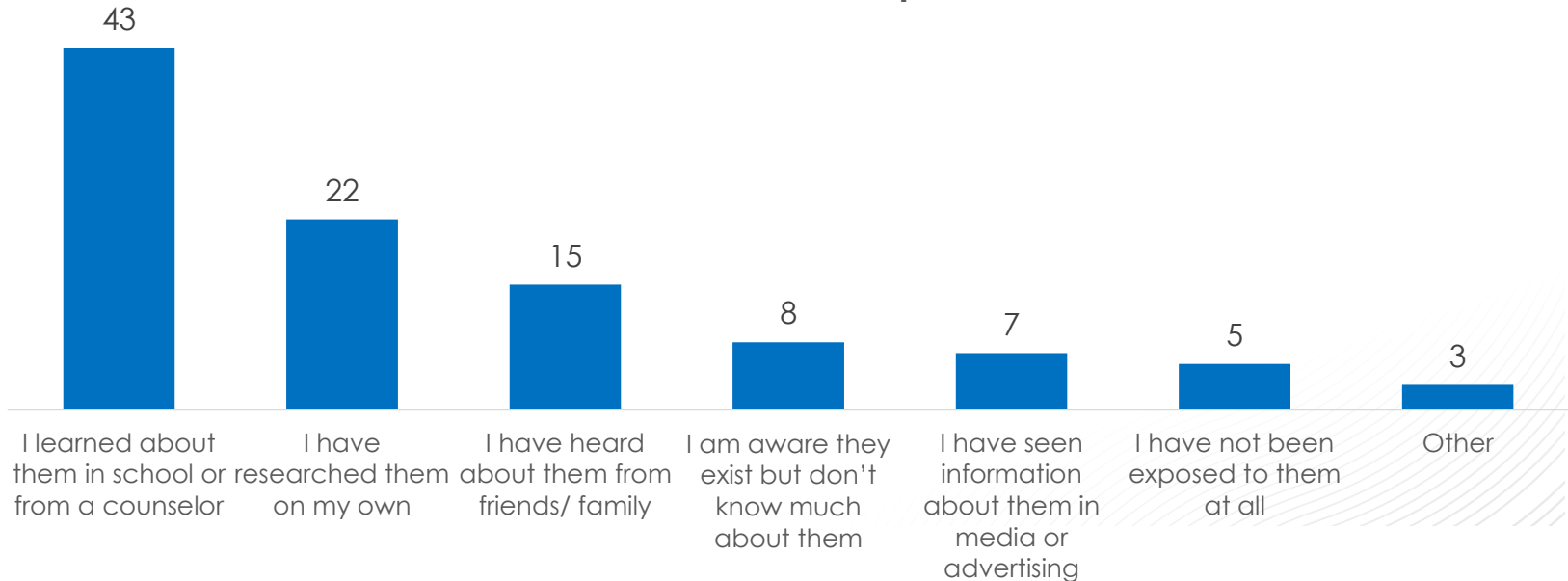
But less than a quarter believe the earning potential can be more with a trade than a college degree.

- Those with high school or less degrees are **33% more likely** and interestingly those with a graduate degree are **14% more likely** to believe that.



82% of Listeners are Familiar with Trade Schools, with Few Learning About Them from Media

% Which of the following best describes your exposure to trade or vocational career options?



Raise Awareness of Vocational/Trade Schools with Radio and Podcast Listeners

Nearly
7 in 10

Listeners say “I’m more likely to explore new opportunities I hear on the radio/podcasts”.

Radio Reaches
9 in 10

Listeners who have some college/high school degrees

63%

Of listeners say “I trust my favorite radio/podcast hosts when it comes to providing info and recommendations on how to increase my income”.

Radio listeners are nearly
20%
more likely

to say they are looking for a higher paying job right now



Radio Reaches Trade School/Vocational School Students with Rock, Country, Urban Top Formats

Radio Reaches Over

82%

of vocational/trade school students monthly

Top Radio Formats

Mainstream Rock (127i)

Classic Country (122i)

Urban Contemporary (118i)

Urban AC (116i)

Classic Rock (109i)

Top Podcast Topics

TV & Film (127i)

History (112i)

Music (108i)

THANKS FOR WORKING WITH



For additional insights and information, please contact:

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METHODOLOGY

DATES OF FIELDING: May 2026

N=860 Adults 18-44 Radio Listeners with HHI <\$75K

Demos:

- 45% of participants aged A18-34, 55% 35-44
- 43% employed full time, 14% employed part time, 14% temporarily unemployed, 9% self employed, 8% homemaker, 12% other