

## Problem Solving: A Local Geo-Skill

Some geo-skills™ are more important than others to an industry, place, or local economy. **Problem solving is a very significant skill for certain industries**, including, for example, financial, electronics, and biotech-related industries.

**In addition, it is very significant to different geographies and workforces.** For example, this workforce skill is **more geographically concentrated in these counties** – Montgomery, North Carolina; Park, Colorado; and Payne, Oklahoma – when compared to the United States. It is a very important skill to their local workplaces.

**It is also very significant for some occupations**, including, for example, mechanical engineers, actuaries, and computer programmers.

**There are 35 core [geo-skills](#)™, including problem solving**, that reveal much about a local workforce. They fortify local workplaces and industries. The geo-skill demographics provide critical information about any location in the United States and are used for locating talent, selecting real estate sites, creating industry training programs, and building local workforces. They show [what skills](#) are most important to local workplaces and specific industries.

### About Problem Solving

**Complex Problem Solving** is the developed capacity used to solve novel, ill-defined problems in complex, real-world settings. It is identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions. (O\*NET, Version 10)

**About Problem Solving:** Problem solving is an inherent part of daily life both in and out of the workplace. It is the process of moving toward a goal. Setting and managing goals are part of everyday problem solving. Every problem is related to someone. Work related problems generally don't solve themselves: they are solved by people.

**Definition:** Problem solving is part of thinking. Considered the most complex of all intellectual functions, problem solving has been defined as a higher-order cognitive process that requires the modulation and control of more routine or fundamental skills (Goldstein & Levin, 1987). It occurs if one does not know how to proceed from a given state to a desired goal.

**Problem solving occurs at all levels of the workforce, workplace, and in all occupations.** Every piece of work, or job task, is part of a larger process that can be made up of smaller ones. All problems, including those related to the world of work, by their nature are contrary to a standard or expectation. People use conscious and unconscious problem-solving techniques within their jobs as part of performing their workplace function. Learning at work is often influenced by the goals of that specific workplace.

Every worker, at every level of the workforce, needs a framework for understanding problems and for developing fundamental strategies for approaching and solving them. Such tools provide workers with portable problem-solving skills that can be used across industries, workplaces, and occupations. The geo-skill demographics show the top skills for an industry or location. There are many ways to use geo-skill information.

### Tip1: Using Geo-Skill™ Information

**Create a core problem solving training module for your community or company.  
Then modify it for your critical local:**

- 1.) Industries,**
- 2.) Occupations, and**
- 3.) Job functions.**