



# EmployerOne

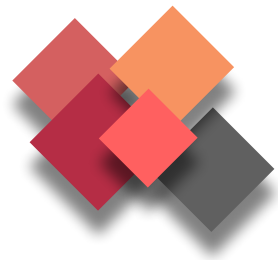
SURVEY OBSERVATIONS 2019

BRUCE  
GREY  
HURON  
PERTH





# Acknowledgments



Four County Labour Market Planning Board (FCLMPB) is a community-directed, not-for-profit corporation assisting Bruce, Grey, Huron, and Perth counties in its approach to workforce development and labour market planning. Our mission is to plan and promote local labour market strategies to meet the challenges of a changing economy.

We wish to thank the following:

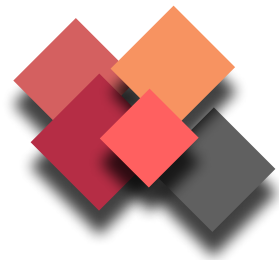
## Memorandum of Understanding Partners:

- The Centres for Employment and Learning of the Avon Maitland District School Board
- Conestoga Career Centre
- Corporation of the County of Bruce
- Corporation of the County of Grey
- Corporation of the County of Perth
- Fanshawe College
- Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology
- Huron Manufacturing Association (HMA)
- Kincardine and District Chamber of Commerce
- Municipality of Brockton
- Municipality of North Perth
- Municipality of South Huron
- Ontario Co-op Association
- Partners in Employment
- QUILL Learning Network
- Sara Mann and Research Team
- Saugeen Economic Development Corporation (SEDC)
- Town of Goderich
- Town of Hanover
- Township of Perth East
- VPI Working Solutions
- Wiarton and District Chamber of Commerce
- YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce

Business Owners and Managers that assisted by completing the survey  
Staff of the Four County Labour Market Planning Board



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# Highlight Observations

**LOCAL LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE**

INCREASED



BETWEEN 2017 & 2018

**LOCAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**

DECREASED



BETWEEN 2017 & 2018

**2018 LOCAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**

LOWEST



IN ONTARIO

COMPARED TO LAST YEAR'S RESULTS, A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS REPORTED:



**HIRING AT LEAST**

**1** EMPLOYEE DURING THE PREVIOUS YEAR

**PLANNING TO HIRE**

*at least* **1** EMPLOYEE IN 2019

**NEW HIRES WILL BE**

**FULL-TIME** IN MOST OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES



UTILIZING EITHER **EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO** *or* **PAID RECRUITING AGENCIES**



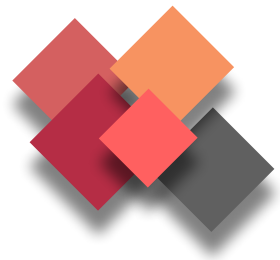
EXPANDING *their search for workers* **BEYOND THE LOCAL REGION**

**SUPPORTING** EMPLOYEE TRAINING



IN 4 OF 5 OF OUR TOP SECTORS *a higher percentage of employers were able to* **PROVIDE TRAINING** COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

COMPARED TO LAST YEAR'S RESULTS,  
A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS REPORTED:



**DISSATISFACTION**

*with the*

AVAILABILITY OF  
QUALIFIED WORKERS



**X** *Experiencing at least*  
**1** **EMPLOYEE  
SEPARATION**  
DURING THE PREVIOUS YEAR

A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF

**DISMISSALS**

*were reported*

COMPARED TO THE  
PREVIOUS YEAR



EXPERIENCING

*at least*

**1**

**HARD-TO-FILL  
POSITION**



SPENDING  
OVER A YEAR



*trying to fill*



**HARD-TO-FILL  
POSITIONS**



**"LACK OF MOTIVATION, ATTITUDE OR INTERPERSONAL ABILITIES"**

**"LACK OF QUALIFICATIONS"**

AS KEY REASONS FOR WHICH POSITIONS WERE HARD-TO-FILL

**"WORK ETHIC, DEDICATION, DEPENDABILITY"**



AS A TOP COMPETENCY REQUIRED FOR HARD-TO-FILL POSITIONS



## Background

The EmployerOne Survey was conducted for the fifth time in January 2019 in the four county region, which includes the counties of Bruce, Grey, Huron, and Perth. In total, 499 businesses responded to the survey; 436 businesses completed all questions and 63 businesses completed some of the questions in the survey. Collectively, respondents represent 29,267 employees. These business respondents continue to provide valuable insights into changes in the local labour market.

The ongoing goal of this survey is to gather information about employers' successes and challenges in the workplace. Information from EmployerOne is continually shared within our communities, assisting local organizations that require up-to-date data for funding applications, project proposals, strategic planning, and program implementations throughout the region. In September 2018, the Planning Board produced a Four Year Review, highlighting trends and changes from the first four years of EmployerOne. Where applicable, relevant information from that report has been included in this document. The complete Four Year Review report is available on our website at: <http://www.planningboard.ca/reports/employerone-survey-observations/employerone-4-year-review/>.

For the first time in 2018, the Planning Board conducted a survey of employees and job seekers in our region, collecting information from 758 respondents. This supply-side labour market information has allowed us to compare parallel factors between labour supply and labour demand. Where these comparisons are possible, information from the 2018 Employee Survey report has been included to provide additional context for 2019 EmployerOne results. The complete Employee Survey report is available on our website at: <http://www.planningboard.ca/reports/employee-survey/>.

## Methodology

For the purposes of this report, only responses from the 436 completed surveys have been included.

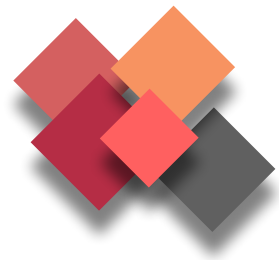
For the purposes of this report, Perth County includes Stratford and St Marys.

Based on business counts for 2018 (including only businesses with one or more employees), completed survey responses represent 4.0% of all businesses in the four county area.

Based on business counts for 2018, the aggregate survey results have a confidence level of 95% ± 5. Despite a smaller sample size compared to last year, the confidence level and confidence interval remain the same for this year's survey, giving us a similarly representative sample of local businesses.



# General Labour Market Conditions



Between 2017 and 2018, the unemployment rate for Stratford-Bruce Peninsula – encompassing Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth counties – decreased from 4.5% to 3.7%, occupying the lowest annual average of any economic region in Ontario. This also represents the lowest annual unemployment rate for our region since at least 2001. Between 2017 and 2018, the provincial unemployment rate declined by only 0.4 percentage points from 6.0% to 5.6%.

The employment rate, the share of the labour force that is employed, in the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula economic region increased from 60.4% in 2017 to 62.7% in 2018, representing the highest regional employment rate since 2011. The participation rate, the share of the population that is participating in the labour market, increased from 63.2% to 65.2% between 2017 and 2018, now representing the highest local rate since 2011. This was also one of Ontario's highest labour market participation rates in 2018.

The local labour pool grew by 5,700 between 2017 and 2018. During the same period, employment grew by 6,800, a considerably faster growth than occurred during the same period last year (+3,500). Full-time employment accounted for the majority of the annual increase in 2018 (+7,200). This increase was mildly offset by a loss of 300 part-time jobs.

Low unemployment and high participation rates continue to reflect a local labour market in which there are few people available for work who are not already employed. Those remaining in unemployment may have multiple barriers to employment and/or have mismatches of skills, location, preferred type of work, and desirability of available jobs. For more detailed information concerning the challenges faced by job seekers in our region, please refer to the "Snapshot on Unemployment" in our 2018 Employee Survey report (<http://www.planningboard.ca/reports/employee-survey/>).

While the province of Ontario is experiencing labour shortages, based on our local unemployment and participation rates, this shortage is particularly pronounced in the four county region. EmployerOne 2019 survey results suggest that employers in Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth are experiencing increasing and long-term challenges meeting their labour force needs. Growing and maintaining our local labour force will require exploring innovative ways to attract and retain employees. Focusing on employers who are experiencing successes may also yield valuable information that can be adapted by businesses who are experiencing challenges. In 2019-2020, the Planning Board will be focusing our research on understanding the factors that are contributing to successes for local employers, so we can continue to share this knowledge more broadly within our communities.



# Availability of Qualified Workers

When employers were asked how they rate the availability of qualified workers in the four county area, they responded as follows:

**EXCELLENT**  
**2%**

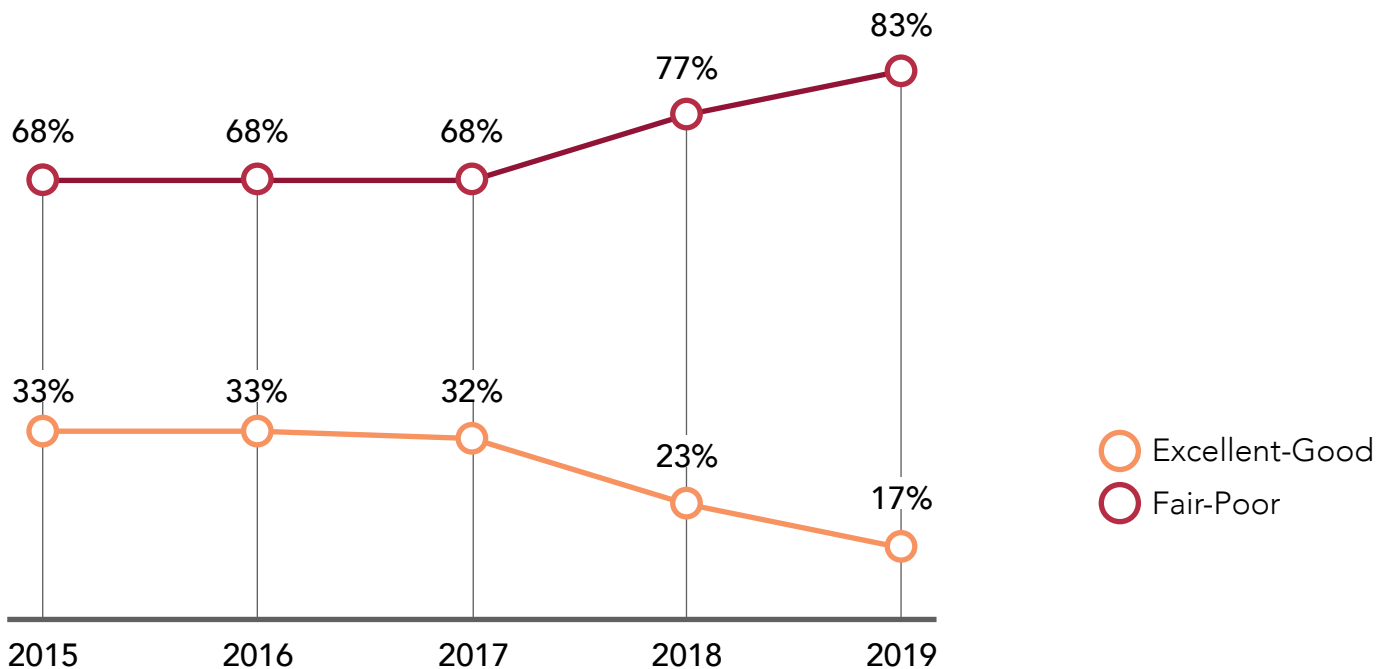
**GOOD**  
**15%**

**FAIR**  
**33%**

**POOR**  
**50%**

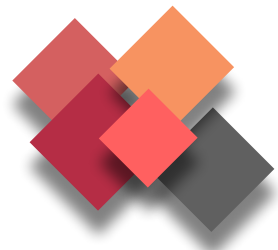
When we look at a five-year trend, in the last two years we see a widening gap between the percentage of employers who rated the availability of qualified workers as excellent-good and those who rated workers as fair-poor. While responses between 2015 and 2017 remained constant, there was a significant increase in 2018 – and again in 2019 – in the percentage of employers who were dissatisfied with the availability of qualified workers.

## AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED WORKERS OVER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD



\* Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding

# AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED WORKERS BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR



In the majority of sectors, the percentage of employers who rated the availability of qualified workers as either excellent or good decreased between 2018 and 2019. Therefore, in most sectors, a higher percentage of employers responding to this year's survey rated the availability of qualified workers as either fair or poor. An increase of more than 5% of employers who rated the availability of qualified workers as excellent or good were found in only one sector: Arts, entertainment and recreation.

	EXCELLENT-GOOD	VS. 2018
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	7%	
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>	3%	
<b>HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE</b>	30%	
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>	7%	
<b>WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE</b>	20%	
Accommodation and food services	0%	
Arts, entertainment and recreation	41%	
Finance and insurance	15%	
Information and cultural industries	58%	
Other services (except public administration)	25%	
Professional, scientific and technical services	16%	
Public administration	8%	
Transportation and warehousing	8%	

\* Top five industrial sectors in the four county area are highlighted

\*\* Includes only sectors in which ten or more employers responded in both 2018 and 2019

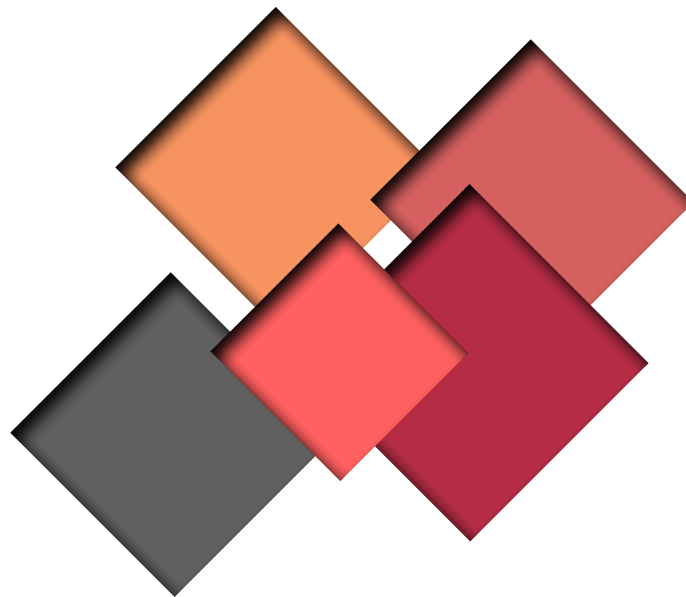
\*\*\* Increase/decrease represents a change of at least 5%. Where nothing is indicated, there was a difference of less than 5% compared to last year's survey results. Slight increase/slight decrease represents change of less than 5%.



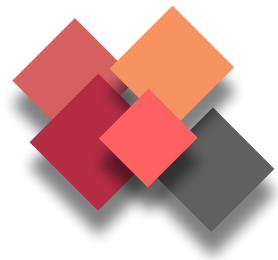
## AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED WORKERS BY BUSINESS SIZE

The highest percentage of employers who rated the availability of qualified workers as excellent or good were businesses with between 20 and 49 employees. The lowest percentage of employers who rated the availability of qualified workers as excellent or good were businesses with between 50 and 99 employees. There does not appear to be a correlation between business size and how employers rate the availability of qualified workers.

BUSINESS SIZE	EXCELLENT - GOOD	FAIR - POOR
1 - 4	22%	78%
5 - 9	13%	87%
10 - 19	14%	86%
20 - 49	23%	77%
50 - 99	9%	91%
100 +	13%	87%



# Employment Dynamics in 2018



## HIRING AND SEPARATIONS

### HIRING

Eighty-four percent of surveyed employers hired at least one employee in 2018, which is a slight increase over last year in which 82% of employers reported hiring during the previous year. The hiring dynamics reported in January 2019 do not differ significantly from what employers reported in January 2018. However, despite fewer survey responses overall, the total number of hires reported by this year's surveyed businesses is over 1,000 more.

#### TOTAL NUMBER OF HIRES

2018 SURVEY

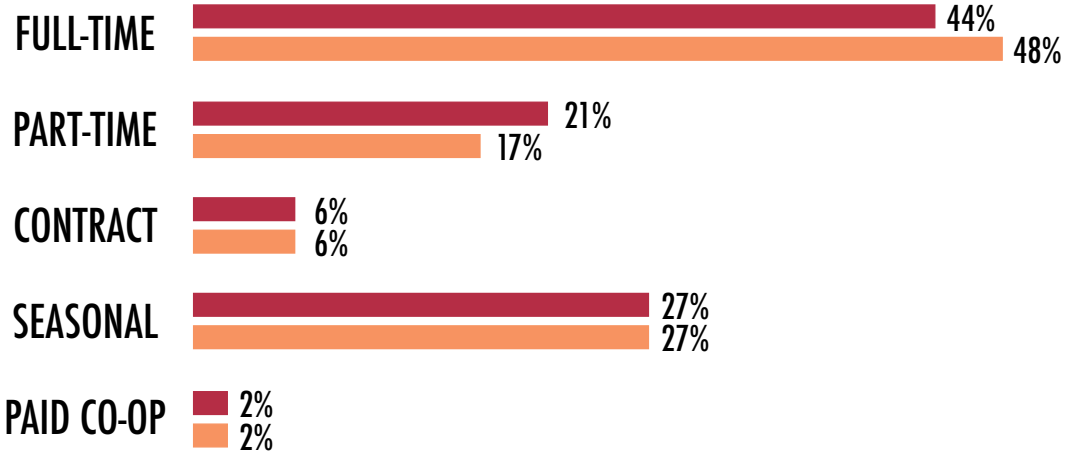
**7,750**

REPORTING 2017 ACTIVITY

2019 SURVEY

**8,837**

REPORTING 2018 ACTIVITY



■ 2018 ■ 2019

### SEPARATIONS

Seventy-one percent of surveyed employers experienced at least one separation in 2018, which is a slight increase over last year in which 68% of employers reported employee separations during the previous year. Compared to 2018, this year there was a significant increase in the percentage of separations that were dismissals. There was also a significant decrease in temporary layoffs.

#### TOTAL NUMBER OF SEPARATIONS

2018 SURVEY

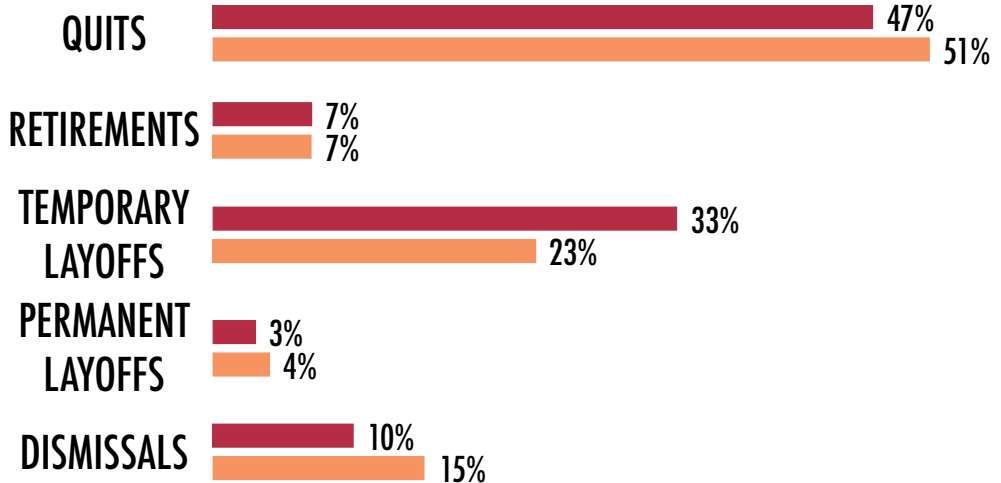
**7,061**

REPORTING 2017 ACTIVITY

2019 SURVEY

**6,939**

REPORTING 2018 ACTIVITY



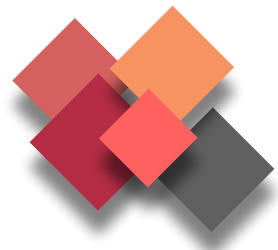
■ 2018 ■ 2019

As in previous years, in 2019 the majority of employee separations reported during the previous year were voluntary. Based on this year's responses, 51% of employees who left positions quit their jobs. In order to provide supply-side information to contextualize these responses from employers, the recent Employee Survey has given us insight into why local employees are choosing to leave their jobs (<http://www.planningboard.ca/reports/employee-survey/>). When surveyed about why they quit a job during the last year, the most frequently reported reasons for leaving were as follows. Awareness of these challenges may help employers develop or improve guidelines and policies to more effectively meet the needs of their current employees:

REASON FOR LEAVING	PERCENTAGE
I experienced harassment or bullying	37%
My schedule was unpredictable	31%
I found a different job that paid more	26%*
I was not using my skills/experience/education/training in my work	26%*
There were no opportunities for variety at work (i.e., learning new things, moving into a different role)	26%*
I was not given enough hours	25%
I had health concerns (including mental health) that required me to leave my job	24%
There was no grievance process for addressing concerns in the workplace	22%

Total does not equal 100% because respondents were asked to select up to three responses  
\*Tied for third most frequent response

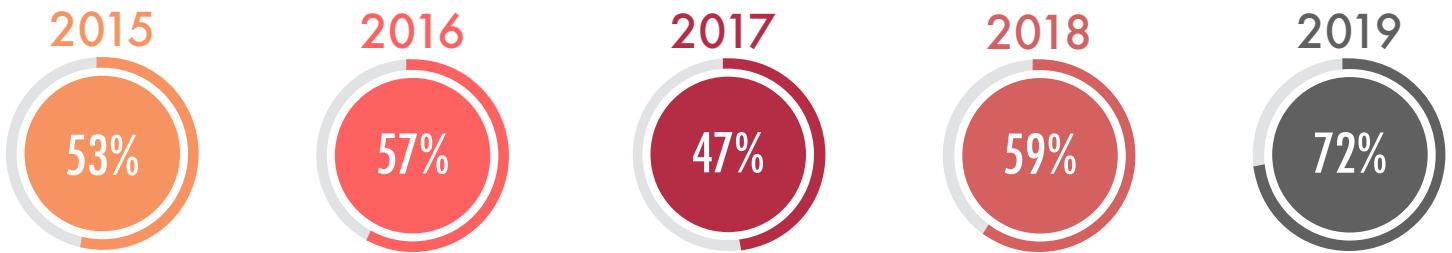
# HIRING CHALLENGES



The percentage of employers reporting that they had hard-to-fill positions during the previous year is one measure of how the low unemployment and high participation rates in our region are contributing to ongoing challenges for local businesses. With fewer people available in the labour pool, an increasing percentage of employers reported that they had long-term hard-to-fill positions in 2018.

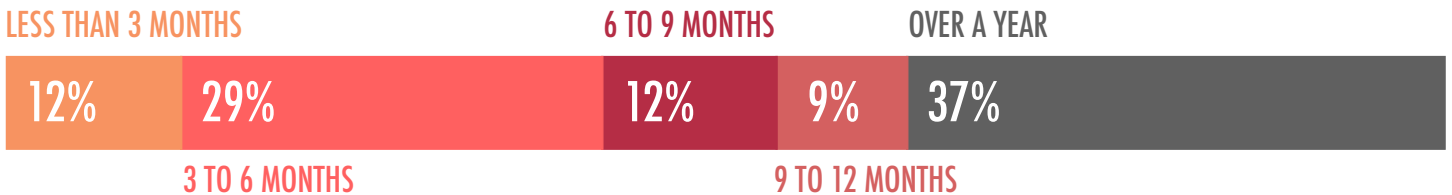
72% of surveyed employers reported that they had hard-to-fill positions during the previous year, which was considerably higher than in any previous survey year.

## PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS REPORTING HARD-TO-FILL POSITIONS



The percentage of employers reporting long-term hard-to-fill-positions – those who spent, on average, more than a year trying to fill vacancies – was 37%, which represented an increase of 8% compared to the previous year.

When asked how long they have been trying to fill these positions, employers reported the following:



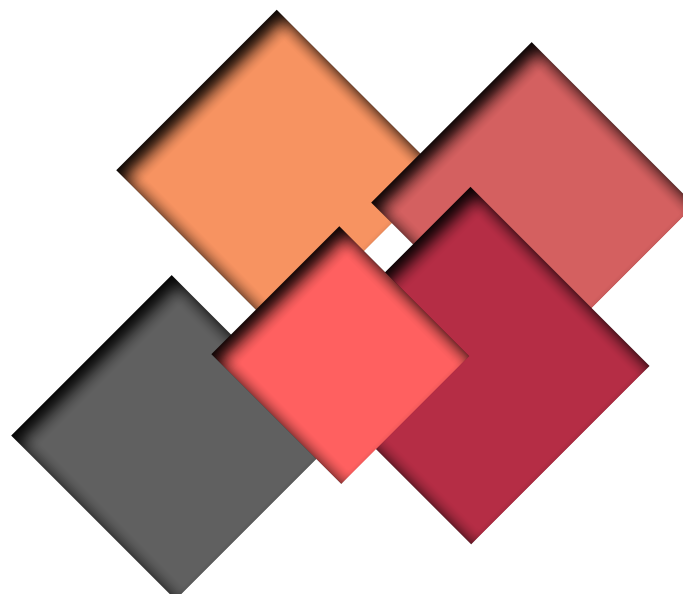
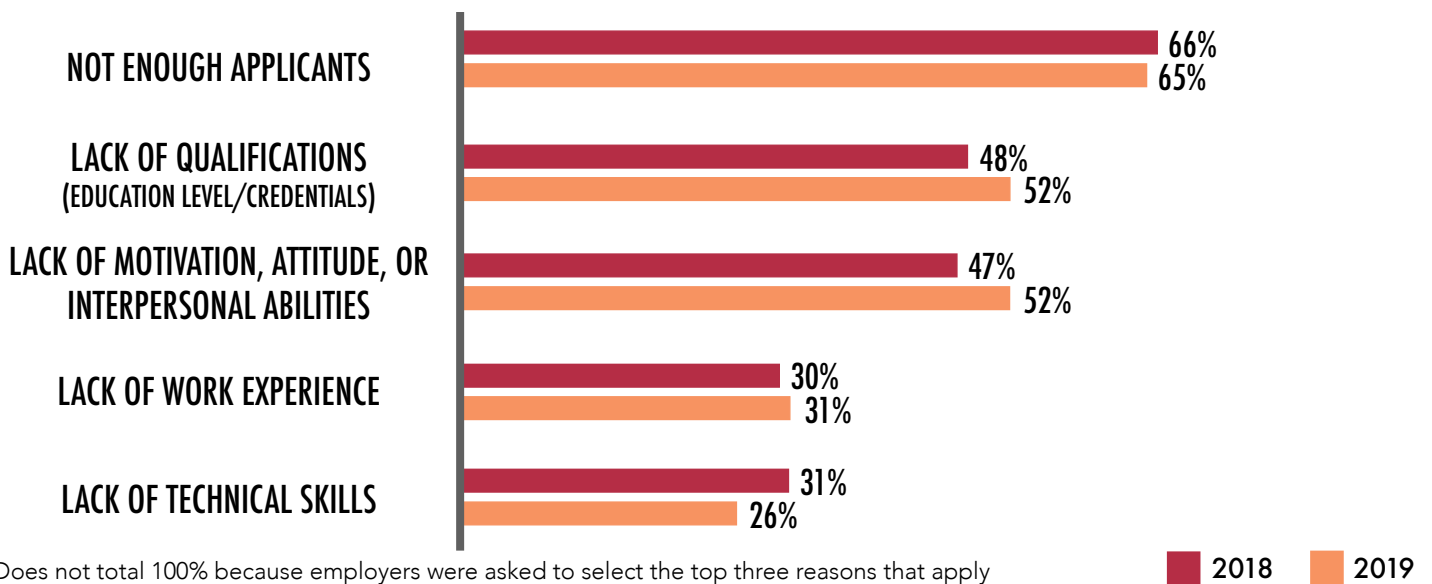
\* Does not total 100% due to rounding

By comparison, in our recent Employee Survey, 25% of job seekers reported that they have spent over a year looking for work:



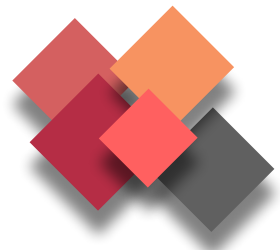
The relatively high percentages of both long-term hard-to-fill positions and long-term job seekers is problematic. This disconnect between labour demand and labour supply emphasizes the need to focus on mismatches – of skills, of location, of type of work, of salary – between jobs that remain chronically unfilled and individuals who are looking for work. When looking at skills mismatches in particular, we need to understand that job seekers almost always have workplace skills, but they are not necessarily the right skills for the jobs available.

The top reasons for which employers reported that positions were hard-to-fill are as follows. Between 2018 and 2019, there were increases in the percentage of employers reporting “lack of qualifications” and “lack of motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities.” There was a decrease in the percentage of employers reporting “lack of technical skills,” and no significant change in the remaining two categories.



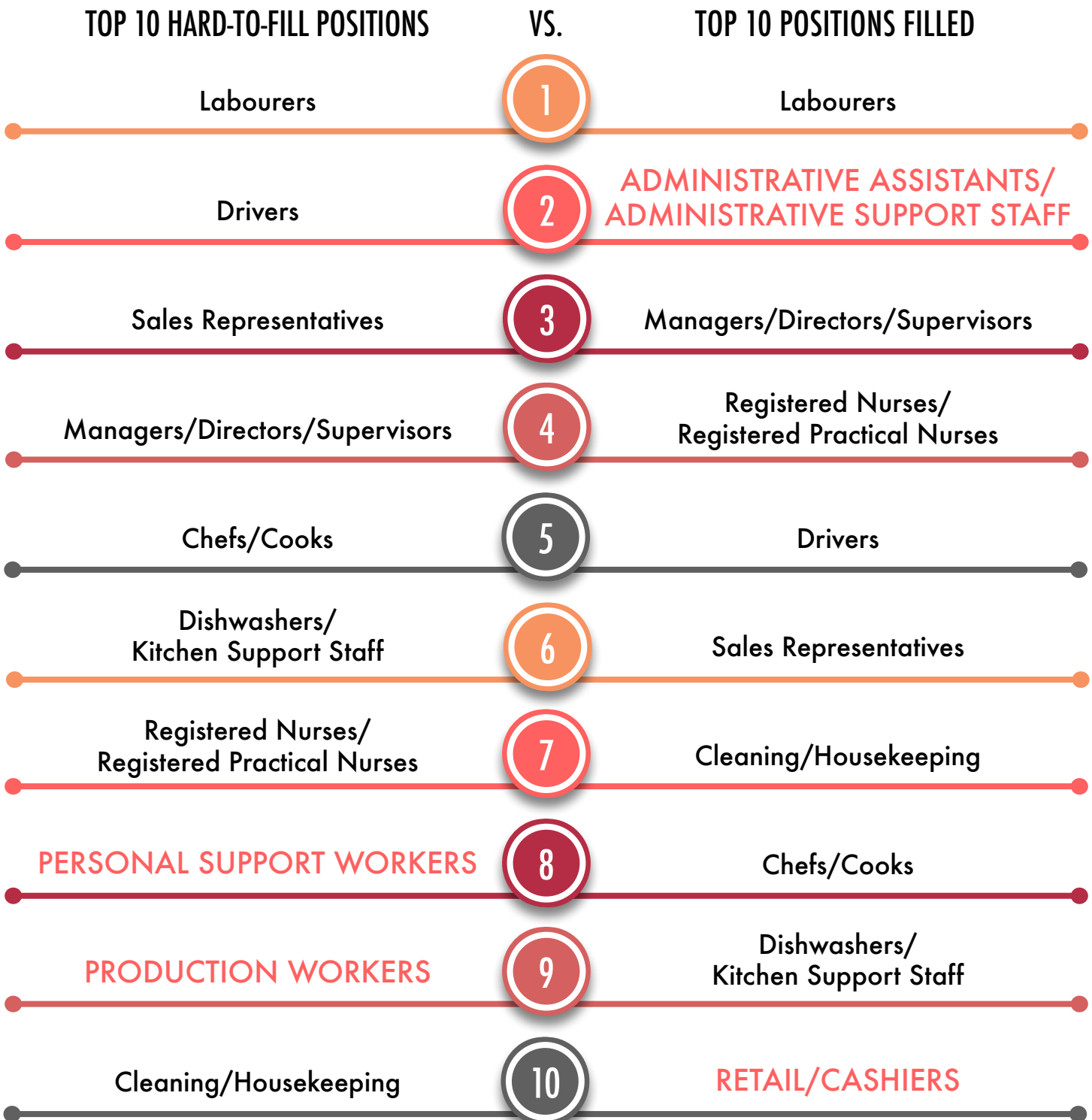


# TOP HARD-TO-FILL POSITIONS

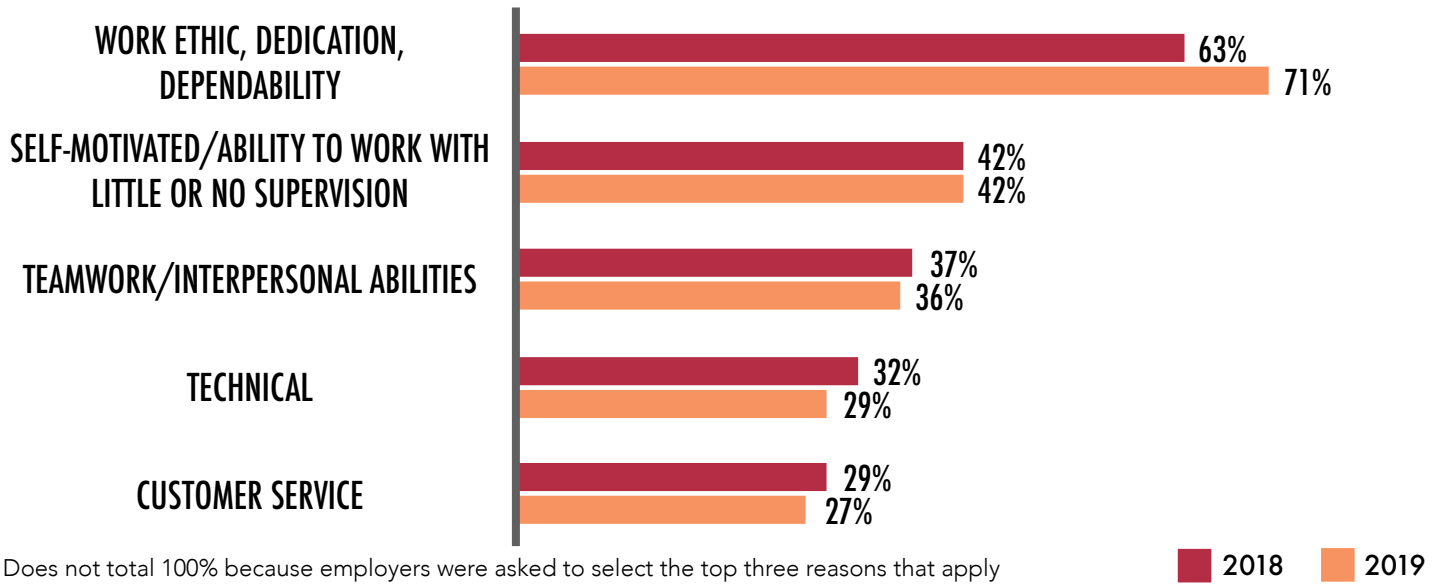


We asked employers which positions were hard-to-fill in 2018. We also asked which positions they successfully filled in 2018. The top ten responses to each question are compared below. The majority of occupations appear on both lists; those that do not are highlighted.

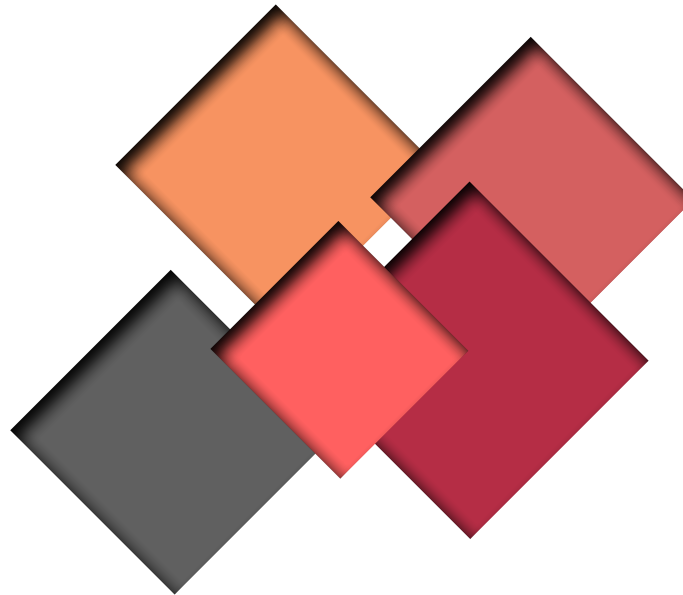
Compared to previous years, in this year's survey a higher percentage of top positions in both categories require some type of post-secondary training.



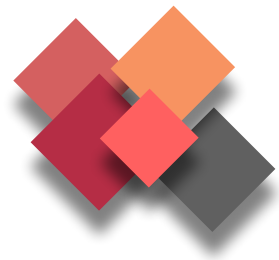
## TOP COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR HARD-TO-FILL POSITIONS:



Compared to 2018, the most significant increase was in the percentage of employers who selected “work ethic, dedication, dependability” as a top competency. This was chosen by nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of survey respondents with hard-to-fill positions. The next most frequently mentioned response was chosen by fewer than half of respondents; this suggests that work ethic may be significantly more important to employers than any other workplace competency measured in this survey.



# Anticipated Hires and Recruitment



## ANTICIPATED HIRES

Eighty percent of surveyed respondents anticipate hiring in 2019, representing an increase of 5% compared to last year's survey results and a total of 4,407 potential new hires across the region in the year ahead. A breakdown of anticipated hires by type of work is as follows:

	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	CONTRACT	SEASONAL
MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES	78%	9%	3%	9%
PROFESSIONALS	77%	12%	6%	5%
TECHNICAL	78%	7%	5%	10%
TRADES (JOURNEYPERSON)	82%	5%	1%	12%
APPRENTICES	83%	4%	2%	12%
SALES AND MARKETING	65%	12%	11%	12%
ADMINISTRATIVE AND CLERICAL	48%	31%	8%	13%
PRODUCTION WORKERS	71%	9%	1%	19%
SERVICE WORKERS	27%	40%	5%	28%

\* Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding

Compared to last year, more full-time positions are anticipated in 2019 in every category except:

- ADMINISTRATIVE AND CLERICAL
- SERVICE WORKERS

# METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

While the top five recruitment methods remain unchanged compared to last year, in this year's survey employers reported relying more on their company's own internet site and less on social media than was reported in 2018.

## TOP 5 RECRUITMENT METHODS



\* Does not total 100% because employers were asked to select their top three recruitment methods

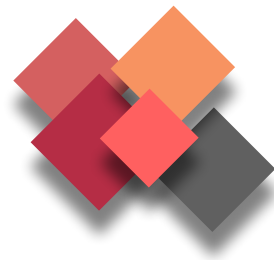
For our top five sectors, the following shows whether or not employers in each sector used each of the top five recruitment methods more or less than the average for all respondents.

	WORD OF MOUTH	ONLINE JOB BOARDS	COMPANY'S INTERNET SITE	SOCIAL MEDIA	NEWSPAPER ADS
<b>AVERAGE FOR ALL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>					
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>					
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>					
<b>WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE</b>					
<b>HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE</b>					

\* Increase/decrease represents a difference of at least 5%. Slight increase/slight decrease represents a change of less than 5%.



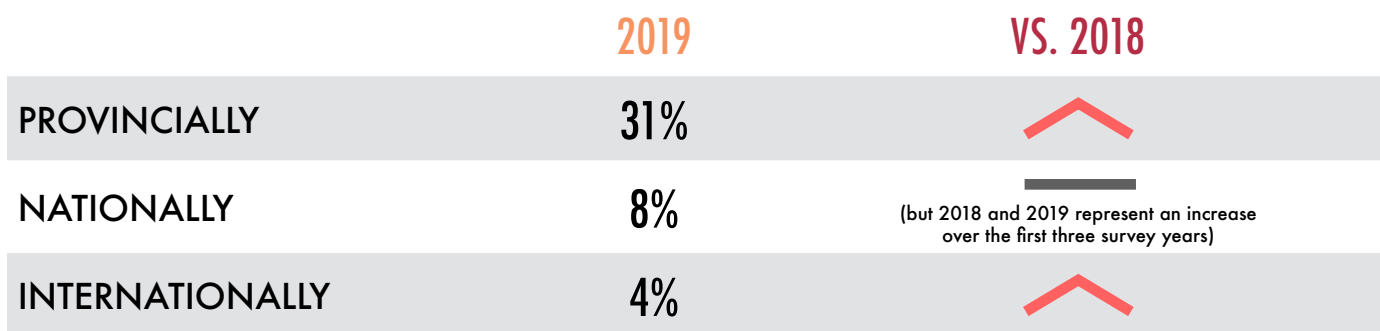
## GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF RECRUITMENT



Over the past five years, there has been an increase in the percentage of employers who are recruiting workers from beyond the immediate geographical region. In this year's survey, 31% of employers reported expanding their search for workers to elsewhere in Ontario. This represents a 4% increase compared to last year. This year, the highest percentage of employers reported looking provincially for employees since we began collecting survey data in January 2015.

In both 2018 and 2019, 8% of employers reported that they looked nationally for workers, representing an increase over the previous three years. In 2019, a higher percentage of employers also reported expanding their search for workers beyond Canada.

The trend in recruitment appears to be an expansion of geographical boundaries beyond the four county region since 2015.



\*Slight increase/slight decrease represents a change of less than 5%.



## EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AGENCY USE

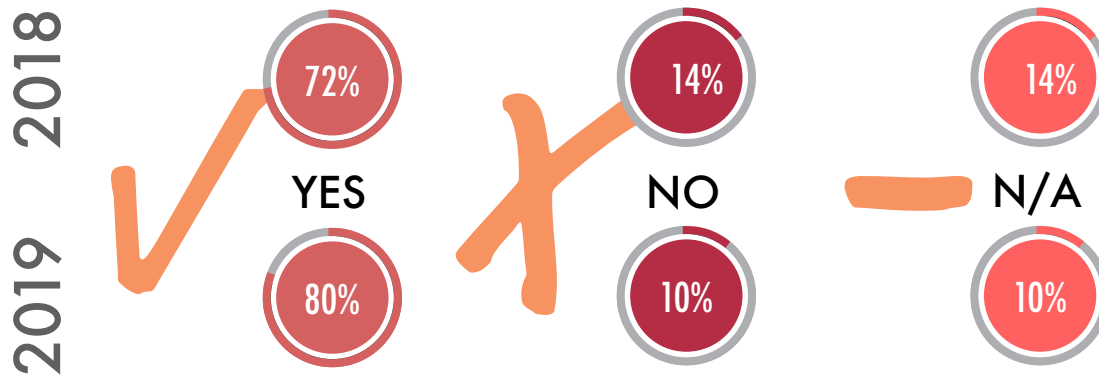
In this year's survey, there was a significant increase in respondents' use of both Employment Ontario service providers and paid recruitment agencies. Eleven percent more employers reported using Employment Ontario service providers to assist with their search for workers. Five percent more employers reported using paid recruitment agencies.

SERVICE USED	2018	2019
EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO SERVICE PROVIDER	27%	38%
PAID RECRUITMENT AGENCY	12%	17%

The trend over the last five years is that employers are seeking out more outside assistance in their search for workers. As the unemployment rate decreases, and the percentage of employers reporting hard-to-fill positions increases, more employers are using these services.

# Business Investment in Training

As in previous years, the majority of responding employers indicated that they were able to provide or support employee training during the previous year. Compared to 2018 survey data, a higher percentage of this year's respondents reported that they were able to support training (80% compared to 72%):



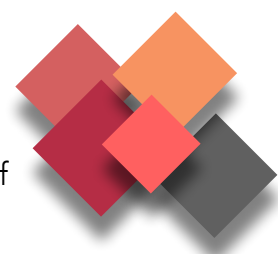
Twenty-five percent of surveyed employers indicated that they had no barriers preventing them from providing training, representing a decrease of 8% compared to last year's survey results. Of those who did have barriers, the top responses remained relatively unchanged compared to last year:

BARRIER	2019
COST	41%
RELEVANT TRAINING IS NOT OFFERED LOCALLY	35%
LOSS OF PRODUCTIVITY DURING TRAINING TIME	31%
LOSING TRAINED EMPLOYEES TO OTHER BUSINESSES	26%
DISTANCE TO TRAINING FACILITY	25%

\*Does not total 100% because employers were asked to select the top three reasons that apply

In the comments section, the most frequently mentioned obstacle to training was a lack of employees willing to be trained. These employers referred to a lack of motivation to receive training. This is particularly noteworthy because in our recent Employee Survey, one of the key comments mentioned by employees and job seekers was limited training opportunities. There may be a mismatch between what employers are offering as training and what employees would like to learn (<http://www.planningboard.ca/reports/employee-survey/>).

# ABILITY TO PROVIDE TRAINING BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR



Compared to last year's results, many sectors reported an increase in the percentage of employers who were able to offer training.

SECTOR	PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS THAT PROVIDED TRAINING	VS. 2018
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	<b>68%</b>	
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>	<b>88%</b>	
<b>HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>88%</b>	
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>	<b>80%</b>	
<b>WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE</b>	<b>65%</b>	
Accommodation and food services	76%	
Arts, entertainment and recreation	73%	
Finance and insurance	100%	
Information and cultural industries	75%	
Other services (except public administration)	79%	
Professional, scientific and technical services	84%	
Public administration	100%	
Transportation and warehousing	83%	

\* Top five industrial sectors in the four county area are highlighted

\*\* Includes only sectors in which ten or more employers responded in both 2018 and 2019

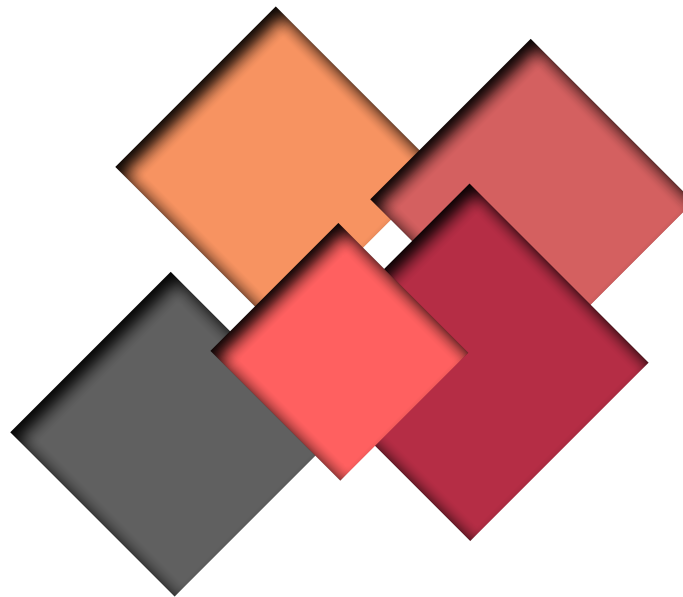
\*\*\* Increase/decrease represents a change of at least 5%. Slight increase/slight decrease represents a change of less than 5%.



## ABILITY TO PROVIDE TRAINING BY BUSINESS SIZE

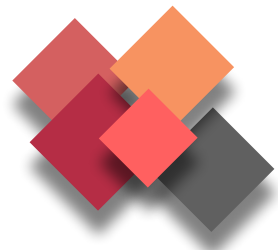
Compared to larger businesses, a smaller percentage of businesses with fewer than ten employees reported that they were able to provide training during the previous year. This suggests that as business size increases, an employer's ability to provide training opportunities may also increase.

BUSINESS SIZE	PERCENTAGE OF BUSINESSES ABLE TO PROVIDE TRAINING
1 - 4	60%
5 - 9	66%
10 - 19	89%
20 - 49	90%
50 - 99	84%
100 +	95%





# Comments from Employers



1. Employers most frequently commented that employees and potential employees lack a strong work ethic. Nearly half of these comments focused, in particular, on the lack of work ethic amongst young people. In order to contextualize these comments from local employers, two things are important to keep in mind:
  - **First:** In our recent Employee Survey, younger workers (under 29 years old) were the most likely to report holding more than one job, desiring – but not securing – full-time employment, struggling for over a year to find work, and reporting that they quit employment because they were not given enough hours. These obstacles could be impacting how workers in this age group are being perceived.
  - **Second:** There is often a widespread perception that younger generations lack the same work ethic held by their older colleagues. Although Millennials may have different workplace expectations, research does not support the view that younger generations lack the work ethic of their older coworkers.<sup>1</sup>
2. The second comment most frequently mentioned by surveyed employers was chronic housing limitations – both availability and cost – for potential employees. Many employers described challenges with recruitment because of housing shortages, limited rental housing, and/or high costs of both purchased and rental housing in communities throughout the four county region.
3. The third most frequent comment from employers in this year’s survey was that potential employees are simply not interested in the types of jobs available. Some employers referred to struggles finding employees who are willing to work shifts or work on weekends, while others described challenges finding employees who want to work full-time or part-time. Other employers mentioned challenges finding employees to fill particular types of roles, work in certain work environments, or be employed in certain industries.

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<sup>1</sup> Deal, Jennifer J. <https://www.strategy-business.com/article/12102?gko=0334d> [Retrieved February 2019].  
Berson, Susan A. “Managing Millennials: Bridging This Generation Gap Takes Time, Talking” in ABA Journal, Vol. 101, No. 1 (January 2015), p. 34.  
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Smola, Karen Way and Charlotte D. Sutton, “Generational Differences: Revisiting Generational Work Values for the New Millennium” in Journal of Organizational Behavior, Vol. 23, No. 4, (June, 2002), pp. 363-382.

## *Factors Related to Employer Success*

This year's EmployerOne report reflects greater challenges and lower satisfaction for local employers. In January 2019, a higher percentage of employers reported experiencing hard-to-fill positions during the previous year and a higher percentage rated the availability of qualified workers as fair or poor. As noted earlier, these are likely results of a tight labour market in which the unemployment rate is extremely low and the labour market participation rate remains high.

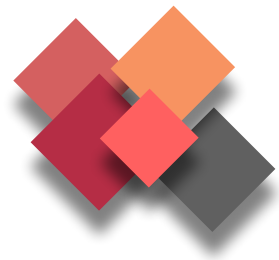
However, not all employers reported experiencing difficulties during the past year. Although correlation and causation are not the same, we can correlate certain variables with more positive employer experiences. Employers who did not experience hard-to-fill positions in 2018 and employers who rated the availability of qualified workers as excellent or good are two employer groups whose experiences could be categorized as more successful than average, based on overall survey results. This section will explore responses to other survey questions that seem to be atypical of these two groups, and might be factors we can correlate with greater employer success. Although survey responses for each group are presented separately, there is significant overlap between the two groups as employers who did not have hard-to-fill positions were many of the same employers who rated the availability of qualified workers more favourably.

### **EMPLOYERS WITHOUT HARD-TO-FILL POSITIONS**

122 surveyed employers did not have hard-to-fill positions in 2018. As a group, these 122 employers shared the following characteristics:

1. They experienced different separation dynamics: Those employers who did not have hard-to-fill positions were less likely to have experienced separations due to quits or dismissals.
2. They used different recruitment strategies: These employers were more likely to have relied on unsolicited resumes when searching for new employees.
3. They were **not** more likely to have:
  - a. Expanded their search for workers beyond the local region
  - b. Used either Employment Ontario service providers or paid recruitment agencies
  - c. Offered training to their employees during the previous year

# EMPLOYERS WHO RATED THE AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED WORKERS AS EXCELLENT OR GOOD



Employers who rated the availability of qualified workers as excellent or good represented 73 survey respondents. As a group, these 73 employers shared the following characteristics:

1. They used different recruitment strategies: These employers were significantly more likely to have relied on trade or professional association publications/sites when searching for new employees.
2. They had fewer long-term hard-to-fill positions: These employers struggled for shorter periods of time to fill hard-to-fill positions, and very few spent over a year trying to find employees.
3. They were **not** more likely to have:
  - a. Expanded their search for workers beyond the local region
  - b. Used either Employment Ontario service providers or paid recruitment agencies
  - c. Offered training to their employees during the previous year

## *Conclusion*

In 2018, the four county region had the lowest unemployment rate, paired with one of the highest labour force participation rates, in the province. The impact this has had on local worker shortages was more pronounced in the fifth year of this survey. Some employers mentioned an inability to take on additional work or expand, or the inevitability of closing or retiring earlier than planned because of long-term vacancies and lack of available employees.

One of the most significant measures of a tight labour market is the number of long-term hard-to-fill positions. According to Statistics Canada, “long-term job vacancies, defined as positions for which recruitment efforts had been ongoing for 90 days or more, represented 9% of all Canadian job vacancies in 2016.”<sup>2</sup> By this definition, long-term job vacancies represented 88% of local hard-to-fill positions in 2018, based on this year’s EmployerOne survey. This suggests that job vacancies in our region have far surpassed the national average for length of time they remain unfilled.

Despite ongoing challenges, employers experienced many successes during the previous year. In particular, those without hard-to-fill positions and those who rated the availability of qualified workers more favourably can be further investigated. In 2019-2020, the Planning Board will be focusing on understanding the labour market experiences of those employers in our region who appear to be experiencing fewer challenges. This information can then be generalized and shared in an effort to help those who are struggling more with the effects of a tight labour market. Additionally, promoting local training programs that focus on upskilling workers to align their skills with available job opportunities will help connect employers with individuals who are available to work. Finally, exploring innovative retention strategies to minimize employee turnover will continue to be a key component of maintaining a resilient local workforce.

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2 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/180220/dq180220b-eng.htm> [Retrieved January 2019].



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