

Employment Later On: A Resource for the Older Worker in Sarnia Lambton

Sarnia Lambton has an older population. There may be a relatively small supply of potential workers who could fill jobs that become vacant. At the same time, there is an increasing number of older workers who are remaining in or re-entering the workforce. The skills and experience of older workers may become in high demand by employers.

This resource examines workforce trends, challenges and strategies associated with older workers in Sarnia Lambton.

For the purpose of this resource, “older worker” is defined as anyone in the labour force aged 55 and over.

If you are an older worker currently employed or seeking employment, this resource is for you.

Resource Highlights:

- An overview of your age group’s labour force trends in Sarnia Lambton
- Tips to help you to succeed in the workplace
- Strategies to help you look for employment

Information in this resource comes from:

- SLWDB research for this project, including
 - survey responses of 51 local older workers and job seekers
 - survey responses of 13 staff of local Employment Ontario Service Providers
 - consultations with 48 local employers
- SLWDB’s research (e.g. EmployerOne Surveys, Research Reports, etc.)
- Research from other sources
- Statistics Canada data



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Being an Older Worker in Sarnia Lambton:

If you are an older worker in Sarnia Lambton, you are not alone.

One in four workers were 55 years or older in 2016 in Sarnia Lambton.¹

See Figure A, p.8 of this resource for employment numbers for individuals aged 55+ in Sarnia Lambton.

Reasons You May Want Or Need To Work May Include:

➤ **Legislation:**

The removal of mandatory retirement from Ontario legislation in 2006 and from federal legislation in 2012 has made it possible for you to continue working past age 65.²

➤ **Labour market:**

Employment opportunities: the state of the economy and whether there is a high demand for workers.³

➤ **Personal circumstances:**⁴

- **Personal and family health**

Being physically and mentally able to work. Research has shown that some older workers continue to work because they consider work to be linked to their physical and mental well-being (i.e. they may fear that stopping work will lead to a decline in health).

- **Financial considerations**

Your access to private savings, pension plans, health and dental benefits, other family members' income in consideration with additional financial stressors (e.g. support for ailing parents and/or your own children).

- **Quality of the work experience**

Your work is satisfying (e.g., you find the work interesting and/or challenging, have access to flexible work arrangements, supportive environment, etc.).

- **Skills development and recognition**

Desire for ongoing personal and professional growth. You have an interest in trying new or different types of work (may depend on acknowledgment of existing skills and training, i.e. education level achieved, experience, etc.).

¹ Statistics Canada. 2016 Census.

² Research Brief Series. (March 2015). Changing Work, Changing Skills: Challenges and Opportunities for Older Workers in the Modern Economy. Second Volume in an Occasional Series. Presented by Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy. p.2

³ Fields, A., Uppal, S., LaRochelle-Cote, S. (2017). The impact of aging on labour market participation rates. Statistics Canada. Catalogue no. 75-006-X. p.8

⁴ Human Resources Skills Development Canada, (2011). HRSDC Consultations with Older Workers and Employers Summary of What We Heard. SP-1008-08-11E p. ii, iii and 8-19

http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS4-109-2011-eng.pdf

Research has shown that the willingness among some older workers to obtain further training or education is linked to their existing school achievement; those with higher education are more likely to search for and receive training compared to those with lower education.⁵ For information on educational levels of individuals 55 years and over who are in the labour force and for those who are not in the labour force in Sarnia Lambton see Figure B, p. 8.

SLWDB asked older workers and job seekers in Sarnia Lambton, as well as local service providers (those who work with job seekers to find employment), why older workers and job seekers are working or looking for jobs. The answers were similar to those listed above. Some of the most common reasons for wanting/needing work include:

- Financial reasons (supplement Canadian Pension Plan, no company pension plan, cost of living increases, etc.)
- Boredom/want to keep busy
- Enjoy work/job satisfaction
- To stay engaged in workforce and with community
- Desire for lifelong learning

Your Retirement Plans May Be Changing:

Statistics Canada reports that the retirement age of the Canadian population has been on the rise.⁶

- Median age for retirees in Canada was 61.2 years in 2006 and 64.1 years in 2017.
- Median retirement age for self-employed was 64.8 years in 2006 and 67.1 years in 2017.
- Median retirement ages were 64.8 years among private sector employees and 61.4 years among public sector employees.

Note: The median is a way to measure the average in a way that is not heavily influenced by really high or low numbers. The median takes the middle number of a group of ranked numbers.

Like many Canadians, you may be an individual who has delayed your planned retirement, or you may be considering a gradual transition to retirement (i.e. changing from full-time employment to part-time, contract, seasonal, job sharing, etc.).⁷ To learn about types of employment of those aged 55 and over and occupations most commonly held by older workers in Sarnia Lambton see Figures C, D and E, p. 9 and p. 10.

⁵ Research Brief Series. (March 2015). Changing Work, Changing Skills: Challenges & Opportunities for Older Workers in the Modern Economy. Second Volume in an Occasional Series. Presented by Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy p.3

⁶ Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0060-01, retirement age by class of worker, annual

⁷ National Seniors Council. (October 2011). Report on the Labour Force Participation of Seniors and Near Seniors, and Intergenerational Relations. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/nsc-cna/documents/pdf/policy-and-program-development/publications-reports/2011/labour-force-participation/labour_force_participation.pdf

Challenges You May Face While Looking for Work or on the Job:

Some challenges that older workers may face include:⁸

- Geographic mobility (ability to relocate to areas where your skills are in demand)
- Changes in employment across occupations or industries (if your trained occupation is in an industry that is declining, work may be more difficult to find)
- Investments in job search, training and education (your ability and an employer's ability to invest in education and training in consideration of return on that investment)

SLWDB asked older workers, job seekers and local employment service providers in Sarnia Lambton about challenges they perceive or feel that older workers face when seeking employment. The challenges most often reported include:

- Age
- Not current with technology (computers, new equipment, etc.)
- Need skills or education updated
- Health issues

SLWDB also asked older workers, job seekers and employment service providers about the concerns they have with the possibility of returning to work. Main concerns included:

- Knowledge of current technologies
- Health issues (e.g., not being able to do certain tasks, needing time off for appointments, etc.)
- Rigid schedules, work hours
- Experience not recognized
- Generational concerns (e.g., feel younger workers are not valuing or respecting older workers)

To Help You Succeed In Looking For Work or While on the Job:

➤ **Demonstrate a commitment to continuous learning/skills development.**

Keep current with work practices, methods and technologies; these are constantly changing and employers need employees to keep up in order for their business to remain competitive.⁹ You will increase your marketability to employers when you can demonstrate that you are continuing to develop your education and skills.

⁸ Expert Panel on Older Workers. (2008). "Supporting and Engaging Older Workers in the New Economy". http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS4-105-2008-eng.pdf.

⁹ Human Resources Skills Development Canada, (2011). HRSDC Consultations with Older Workers and Employers. Summary of What We Heard. SP-1008-08-11E. p. 25-26. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS4-109-2011-eng.pdf

Access resources that can help with identifying and updating your skills. For job seekers, local Employment Ontario Service Providers (see “To Help Your Job Search” below on this page) have no-cost services to help you develop a plan of action for returning to work. These providers also know of training programs and funding sources that might be available to you for re-training.

➤ **Be aware of and understand generational differences.**

In Sarnia Lambton, workplaces can have five different generations working together. Each generation may have motivations and attitudes that differ from those held by other generations.¹⁰ In order to work effectively in a multi-generational workplace, it is important to understand the different work styles of different generations. For information and strategies on how to work with different generations see SLWDB’s “Working within a Multi-Generational Workforce Infographic” on the slwdb.org website under resources.

➤ **Pay attention to soft skills.**

Employers are looking for employees with good soft skills.

Soft skills are the non-technical, non-specialized skills that are needed in all types of employment. Examples include communication, teamwork, work ethic, decision making, etc. The opposite of soft skills are hard skills. Hard skills are the technical, job-specific, skills gained through education, training programs, certifications, and on-the-job training.¹¹

SLWDB has repeatedly heard, through consultations and surveys with employers, about the value and importance placed on workers’ soft skills. See SLWDB’s EmployerOne Survey Results on the slwdb.org website under our publications tab. To learn more about soft skills and why they are important, plus some strategies for improving yours, visit SLWDB’s “Soft Skills Development Resource for Job Seekers and Employees” on the slwdb.org website under resources.

To Help Your Job Search:

➤ **Learn about resources that can assist you.**

Employment Ontario (EO) Service Providers can assist you with your career plan and your job search (see alphabetical list of local providers on the next page).

¹⁰ Saleh, Krista L. (2011) “Managing to Manage Across Generations at Work”. The Psychology Foundation of Canada. Desjardins Financial Security.

¹¹ Doyle, Alison. (Updated 2018, April 14). “What are Soft Skills”. <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-are-soft-skills-2060852>. Accessed July 17, 2018.

Local EO Service Providers include:

- **Four Winds Community Employment Services:**
9156 Tecumseh Lane, Kettle & Stony Point / phone: 519-786-6780
<https://kettlepoint.org/four-winds-community-employment-services/>
- **Goodwill Career Centre:**
1249 London Rd, Sarnia / phone: 519-332-4333
<http://goodwillekl.com/>
- **Lambton College Community Employment Services:**
4248 Oil Heritage Rd, Petrolia / phone: 519-882-4333
<https://www.lambtoncollege.ca/elc/>
- **The WorkPlace Group:**
265 Front Street N. Suite 107, Sarnia / phone: 519-337-7377
<http://theworkplacegroup.ca/>

“Employment Ontario can help you get training, build skills or find a job. We connect people looking for work with employers looking for workers.”

- Employment Ontario
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/employment-ontario>

- **Ensure your resume is up-to-date and professional.**
Resume formats and styles have changed over time. Seek guidance and assistance from one of the EO Service Providers listed above.
- **Become familiar with the job search tools that employers are using to recruit employees (i.e., referrals and personal contacts, networking, online job sites and social media).**
A Statistics Canada report found that “Older job seekers are less inclined to contact an employer directly and use the Internet, but they are more likely to have mainly looked at job ads.”¹²

Results from the SLWDB EmployerOne Surveys from 2014 – 2018 show that the #1 recruitment method of local employers is personal contacts/word of mouth/referrals/informal networks (you can view annual survey reports on the slwdb.org website under Publications/EmployerOne).

¹² Bernard, Andre. (August 2012). “The job search of the older unemployed”. Statistics Canada. Component of Statistics Canada Catalogue 75-0001-X Perspectives on Labour and Income p.3

To help build your contacts/networks consider: volunteering for a local organization, checking out professional associations in your field and attending business events (such as those held by the Chamber of Commerce).

The second, most preferred method of employers for recruiting is online job boards. Sarnia Lambton posted over 4,500 online jobs in 2017 (see “Online Job Postings Reports” under our publications/labour market reviews section on the slwdb.org website).

There are many online job posting sites; two examples are: Canada Job Bank (www.jobbank.gc.ca) and Indeed (www.indeed.ca).

Are you comfortable with networking and looking for jobs online? If not, those EO Service Providers mentioned above will help you get started.

➤ **Do the research.**

If you are switching careers or considering investing in additional training, speaking with employers and workers about their industry and the types of work that may be available or needed is a good way to determine if your choice might be a good fit. For example, it helps you to answer questions such as: Can you handle the physical demands? Are you able to relocate if it is required? Does our local labour market support the need for this work? These types of interviews are called “information interviews.” Information interviews are particularly helpful if you are concerned about making the wrong choice or wasting time pursuing a job that you would not be satisfied in or able to do.¹³

➤ **Consider alternative work arrangements.**

Alternatives to the traditional full-time job (e.g., job sharing, part-time work, consulting, self-employment, home-based businesses, short-term contracts, etc.) are becoming increasingly available. EO Service Providers can help you search for jobs with alternative work arrangements. If you are interested in learning about self-employment, you might want to check out Sarnia Lambton Business Development Corporation (109 Durand Street, Sarnia. Phone: 519-383-1371), the Business Enterprise Centre of Sarnia-Lambton (Building 1050, Suite 100, 1086 Modeland Road, Sarnia. Phone: 519-332-1820) or The Cube at Lambton College (1457 London Road, Sarnia. Phone: 519-542-7751 ext.3048).

➤ **Maintain a positive attitude.**

Focus on your strengths and abilities. Keep in mind that you have skills and experiences that are valuable to employers. A consultation study conducted by Human Resources and Skills

¹³ Government of Alberta, Employment and Immigration. (2010). WHAT WORKS: Career-building strategies for people from diverse groups. A counsellor Resource. Older Workers. Accessed June 14, 2018. p.8 https://alis.alberta.ca/media/2118/ww_older.pdf

Development Canada discovered that older workers expressed less confidence in their employment prospects than employers did.¹⁴

SLWDB's consultations with local employers show that employers feel there are many benefits older workers may possess. Some of these include:

- Experience and knowledge
- Work ethic, reliability
- Can provide mentorship to others
- Loyal and dedicated
- Well-defined customer service skills

➤ **Highlight what you have to offer as an older worker.**

As an experienced older worker, you have technical, career related skills to highlight on resumes and in interviews. However, do not forget about transferrable/soft skills (such as customer service, work ethic, problem solving, communication skills, teamwork, etc.) which are highly valued by employers. Year after year at SLWDB, we hear from employers about how important soft skills are for employees to have (see EmployerOne Reports on the slwdb.org website under Publications/EmployerOne). To learn more about soft skills visit our "Soft Skills Resource Guide for Job Seekers and Employees" (on the slwdb.org website under resources).

Concluding Remarks:

Our population in Sarnia Lambton is aging and many older workers are remaining in or returning to the workforce. Consultations with local employers indicate that they appreciate and greatly value older workers especially in terms of experience, knowledge and soft skills.

By engaging in continuous skills development, learning about generational differences in the workplace and applying highly valued soft skills, older workers can enhance their labour market value.

For older workers who are looking for work, community supports and services are available to assist and guide you with the latest in labour market information and job search strategies. Employment Ontario Service Provider contact list is on page 5 of this report.

Good luck and all the best for success on your journey.

¹⁴ Human Resources Skills Development Canada, (2011). HRSDC Consultations with Older Workers and Employers Summary of What We Heard. SP-1008-08-11E. p. 32
http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS4-109-2011-eng.pdf

Figure A

One in four workers were 55 years or older in 2016 in Sarnia Lambton.

Older workers increased their presence in the local workforce by 22 percentage points from 2006, as shown in the table below. Most of this increase is from a higher number of employed older workers; however, the number of unemployed older workers has also grown.

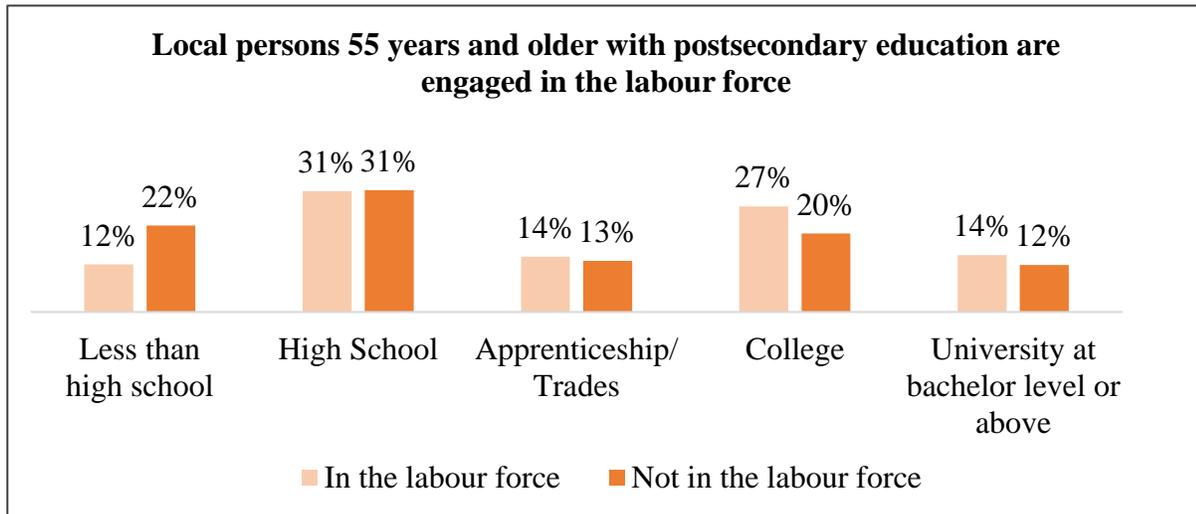
	2006	2016	Percentage change
In the labour force	12,175	14,805	22%
Employed	11,675	14,025	20%
Unemployed	495	785	59%
Not in the labour force	24,990	31,640	27%

Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census. 2006 Census.

Notes: In the labour force includes those employed and unemployed (persons who either have a job or are actively looking for a job). Not in the labour force includes persons who are neither employed nor actively looking for work (e.g., retired, given up looking for work, unable to work for health reasons, etc.).

Figure B

The chart below shows the education levels of local persons age 55 and over by labour force status.



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, custom table.

Figure C

In 2016, there were 14,025 employed older workers (aged 55 and over) in Sarnia Lambton. Data below shows how and where older workers are employed.

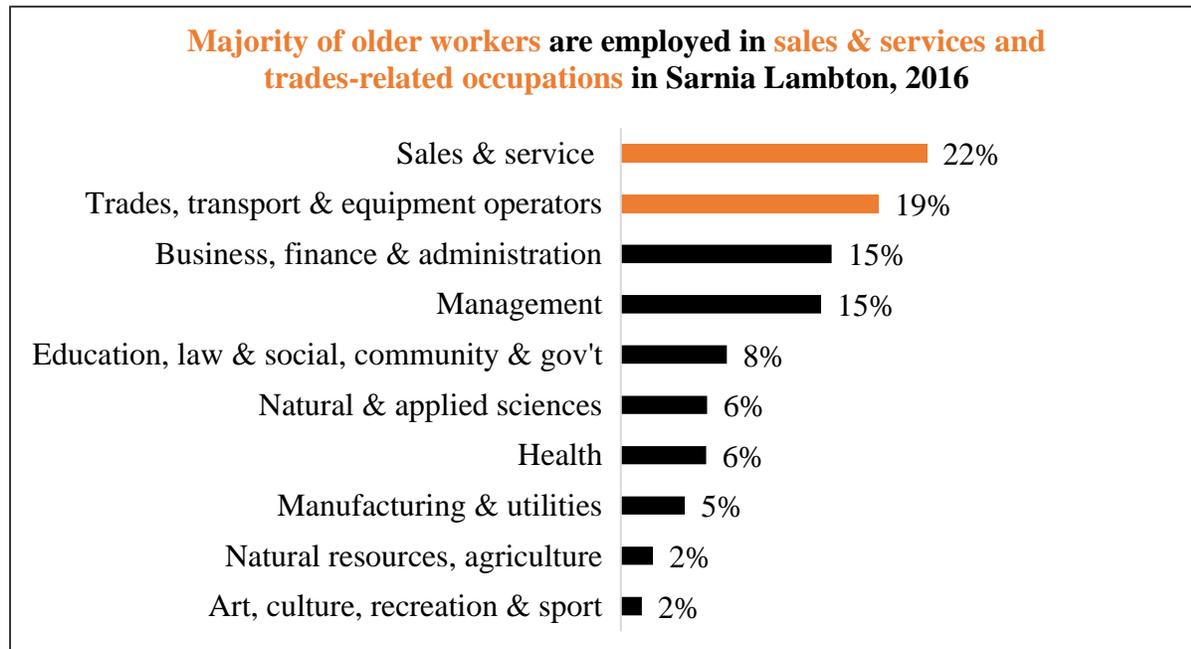
In Sarnia Lambton, among individuals aged 55 and over who worked for an employer in 2015: 8,185 individuals worked mainly full-time weeks 2,830 individuals worked mainly part-time weeks
2,775 local individuals aged 55 and over were self-employed. This represents almost half of all self-employed people in Sarnia Lambton in 2015.

Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, custom data.

Note: Numbers do not add up to 14,025 because the two Census questions had different reference periods.

Figure D

The chart below shows the presence of older workers (aged 55 and over) for each occupational category in Sarnia Lambton.



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, custom table.

Figure E

In Sarnia Lambton, the top three job titles held by older workers include managers in agriculture, transport truck drivers and retail salespersons. The table below shows a partial list of jobs with a relatively high number of older workers.

1 in 3 older workers in Sarnia Lambton are employed in the jobs listed in this table	
Managers in agriculture	655
Transport truck drivers	545
Retail salespersons	455
Retail and wholesale trade managers	380
Janitors, caretakers and building superintendents	365
Administrative officers	275
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	260
Light duty cleaners	255
Cashiers	250
General office support workers	235
Bus drivers, subway operators and other transit operators	225
Administrative assistants	195
General farm workers	185
Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations	185
Elementary school and kindergarten teachers	160
Accounting technicians and bookkeepers	160

Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, custom table.