Post-Pandemic Recovery Planning Report Summary:
Retail and Wholesale Businesses in Sarnia Lambton

Detailed findings and recommendations for local stakeholders reported in the Post-Pandemic Workforce & Economic Recovery in Sarnia Lambton are available at www.slwdb.org/pandemic-recovery.

Highlight on Local Impacts

- Retail and wholesale industries were one of the top service sector industries in total number of job losses in the Sarnia-Windsor region
  - the proportion of job losses in this sector locally was greater than those reported at the provincial or national level (Statistics Canada)

- Main challenges faced by the sector included:
  - cycles of public health restrictions governing whether public-facing businesses can operate as usual
  - disruption in the product and materials supply chain
  - adapting to virtual service delivery models and e-commerce platforms

- Biggest staffing challenge for these businesses was retention due to a number of factors including:
  - fear of exposure to the public during the pandemic
  - lack of childcare due to school and daycare closures
  - reduced available employment hours leading employees to seek other positions
  - access to government-funded financial support programs

Highlights on Labour and Skills Shortages

- Employers list soft skills as their most in demand skills in short supply
  - customer service, communication skills, strong work ethic

- Digital literacy and social media skills will be an asset in the post-pandemic labour market as the shift to virtual operation models becomes permanently adopted by businesses in these sectors

- Top in demand occupations (June 1 2020 - March 1 2021)

Retail salespersons (NOC 352)	Retail and wholesale trade managers (NOC 0621)	Store shelf stockers, clerks and order fillers (NOC 352)	Cashiers (NOC 6611)
352	**169**	**146**	**102**

Job posting data source:

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Recommendations for Strengthening our Local Workforce

- Review business operations and practices, and consider seeking local expertise on on structural and/or operational changes especially related to technological trends (virtual product and service delivery, cybersecurity)

- Identify skills gaps within your workforce and update best practices for recruiting and retaining proficient employees

- Know your local employment support resources including workforce training and education organizations, human resource specialists and business development supports

- Mental health and resilience will be important skill sets in the new workplace cultures following the turbulence brought by the pandemic

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