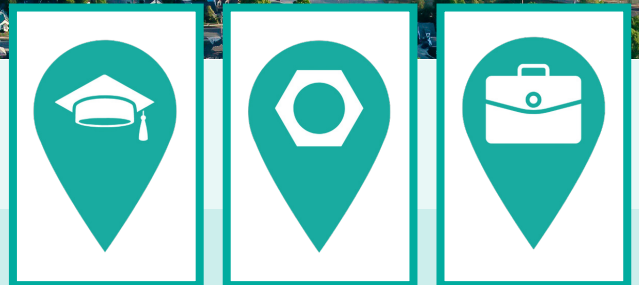


LOCAL LABOUR MARKET PLAN



2020-2021

Table of Contents

- Acknowledgments..... 1
- Data Sources..... 2
- Executive Summary..... 3
- Sarnia Lambton Workforce at a Glance..... 4
- Local Population..... 6
 - Components of Population Change..... 7
 - Migration..... 8
 - Commuting..... 8
 - Education..... 9
 - Apprenticeship: Women in Trades 10
 - International Student Population..... 10
 - Income..... 11
- Occupation Trends..... 13
- Local Business Profile..... 15
- Industry Trends..... 18
- Labour Force Data..... 20
- Job Demand..... 21
 - Job Posting Trends..... 21
 - EmployerOne Survey Highlights..... 22
 - WISL: Work In Sarnia Lambton..... 24
- Impact of COVID-19 on the Labour Force..... 26
- COVID-19 Community Impact..... 28
- COVID-19 Initiatives..... 29
- Employment Ontario Programs..... 30
- Community Consultations..... 33
- 2021-2022 Action Plan..... 35
- Appendix 1: Note on Data Sources..... 39

Acknowledgments

The views expressed in this publication are the views of the Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province.

The Government of Ontario and its agencies are in no way bound by the recommendations contained in this document.

Mission

SLWDB is a diverse and dedicated organization, committed to identifying needs and facilitating solutions to attract, train and retain a viable workforce through community partnerships.

Vision

Growing Sarnia Lambton's workforce for tomorrow's economy.

SLWDB leads Sarnia Lambton in its approach to workforce development and labour market planning. Our team actively engages organizations and community partners in local labour market projects. We also conduct consultations with business owners throughout the year in order to identify needs and facilitate solutions to grow our local workforce.

Network

SLWDB is one of 26 local planning board areas that make up Workforce Planning Ontario. We are funded through the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development to conduct and disseminate local labour market research and engage community stakeholders in a planning process that supports local solutions to local issues.



This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada
and the Government of Ontario

Data Sources

This report combines data from a variety of sources to provide a relevant picture of the local labour market and economic conditions. It is a comprehensive report that is evidence-based and community-driven.

The sources consulted include:

Canadian Business Counts	Labour Force Survey	Census Data	Employment Ontario Data
Talent Neuron Data	EmployerOne Survey Data	Focus Groups & Community Consultations	WISL: Work in Sarnia Lambton

SLWDB makes no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy or completeness of the data referenced. In providing this material, SLWDB does not assume any responsibility or liability. A note on the restrictions and limitations of the above mentioned data sources can be found on page 39.

We invite your feedback on all publications produced by SLWDB. Additional information can be obtained by contacting:

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Executive Summary

The Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board's Local Labour Market Plan is a comprehensive report that seeks to inform the public, job seekers, service providers, and employers on the local labour market. This report brings together our research findings over the last year, including statistical data and input received through community consultations.

This year we had the added challenge of developing a labour market plan during a time of unprecedented change. We hope that the information this report contains will help to direct programming, economic development and workforce planning for the community. Some key themes have emerged this year relating to our workforce including: women in skilled trades, the out migration of youth and how to maintain our workforce needs, the shift in employer needs, connecting newcomers to employment opportunities, the importance of Employment Ontario services, and the shift to remote workforces.

A key component of this report is the Action Plan, which can be found on page 35. We hope that it will serve to engage employers, service providers, job seekers, and other community partners through enhanced community connections. The strategies outlined will further the conversations required to identify opportunities and resolve gaps in the current workforce including: retention of skilled workers, international student recruitment, and navigating the barriers to remote work.

We look forward to continuing the discussion in the coming year.

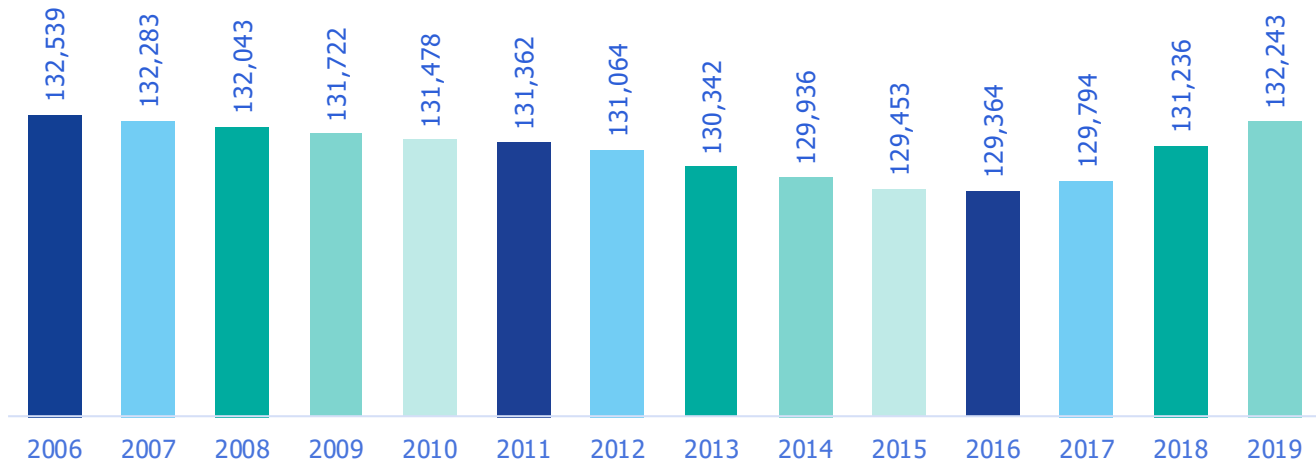
Warmly,



Mikelle Bryson-Campbell, Interim Executive Director
Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board

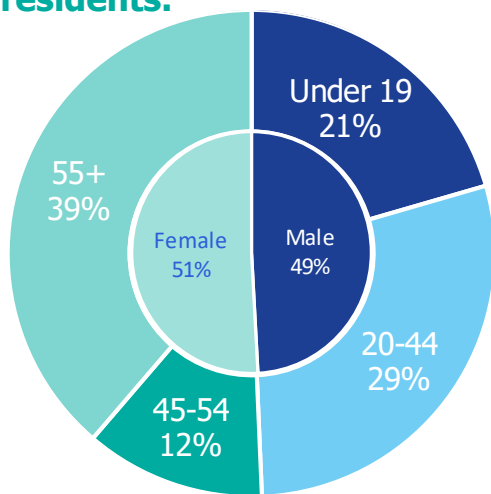
Sarnia Lambton Workforce at a Glance

Figure 1: Population trends from 2006 to 2019.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table: 17-10-0139-01

Figure 2: Age and gender breakdown of Sarnia Lambton residents.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table: 17-10-0139-01

Figure 3: Local Jobs Board.



Figure 4: Top industries with the largest workforce sizes.

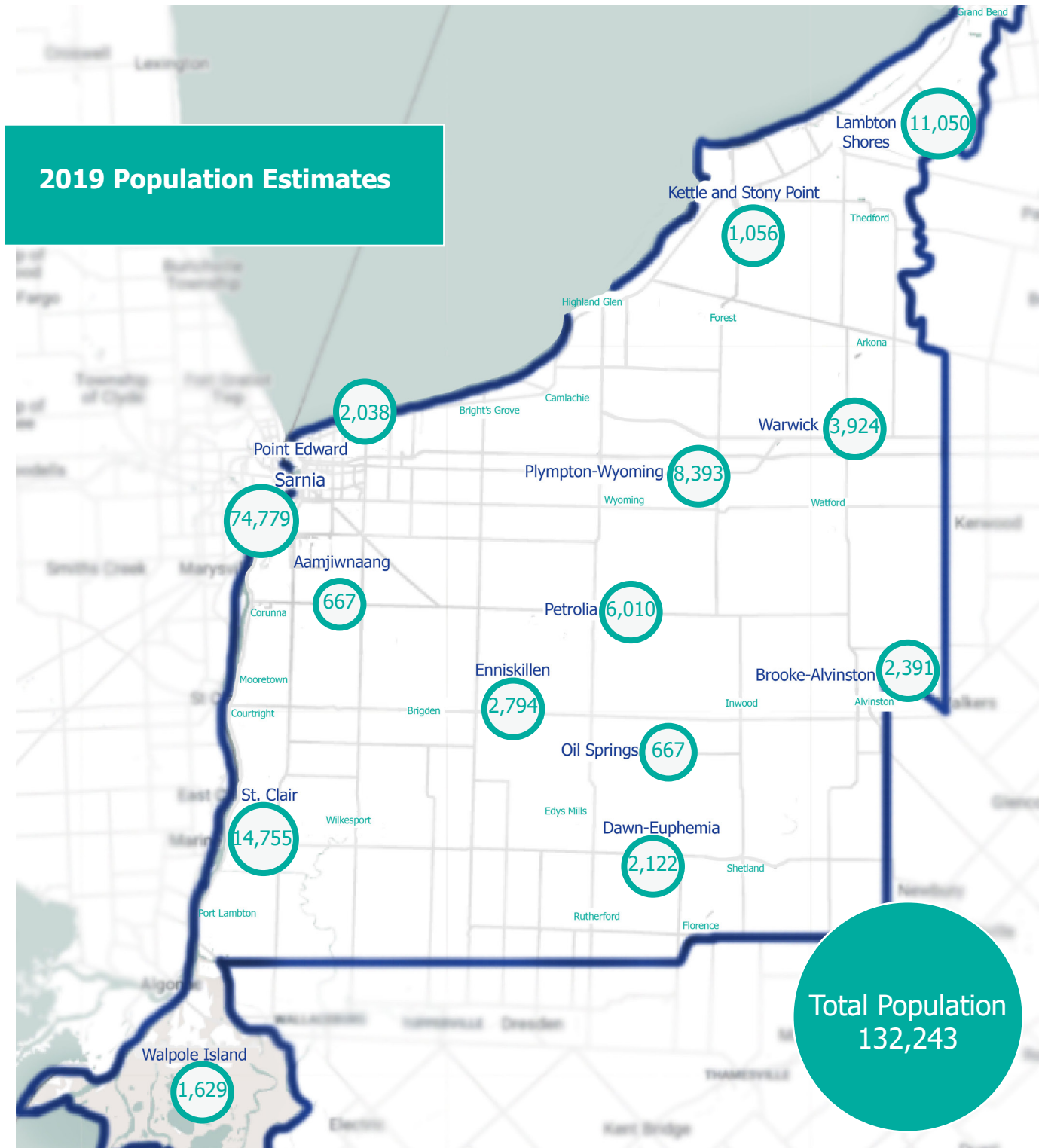


Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T29 POR Boards

Figure 5: Top occupations with the largest labour force sizes.

Sales and service	Trades, transport and equipment operators	Business, finance and administration
14,690	11,225	7,300
in the labour force		

Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T19 POR Boards CD



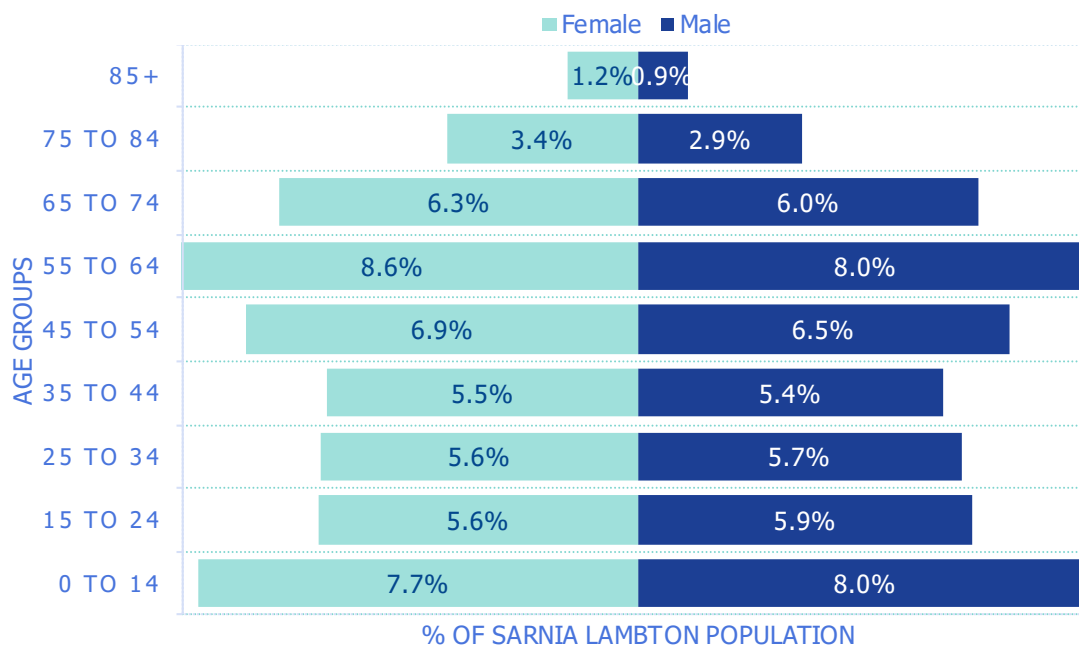
Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0142-01 Population estimates, July 1, by census subdivision, 2016 boundaries

Source: Image modified from: WISL: Work In Sarnia Lambton - www.slwdb.org/wisl/map/

Local Population

With a population of 132,243 people, Lambton County is located at the southern point of Lake Huron. The landscape is both urban and rural with 11 municipalities and three First Nations communities within the county. The average age of the local population is 44 years of age, compared to the Ontario average of 40 years. Those who identify as female account for 51% of the population, with the other 49% identifying as male. The area has an aging population, with the largest percentage of residents, 72%, being between the ages of 45 to 74 years of age. The local workforce is employed predominantly in Sales and service occupations, Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations, and Business, finance and administration occupations.

Figure 6: Age and gender breakdown of Sarnia Lambton Population



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T1 POR Boards CD

Table 1: Number of persons in the labour force by occupation

Occupations	Number of persons in the labour force
6 Sales and service occupations	14,690
7 Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	11,225
1 Business, finance and administration occupations	7,300
0 Management occupations	6,130
4 Occupations in education, law and social, community and gov't services	5,870
3 Health occupations	4,640
2 Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	3,940
9 Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	3,485
8 Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	1,675
5 Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	1,070

Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T19 POR Boards CD

Local Population Continued...

There are three First Nations communities residing in Lambton County, including Aamjiwnaang First Nations, Kettle and Stony Point First Nations, and Walpole Island First Nations. There are approximately 4,607 registered First Nation community members living on reserve in the area, while 5,372 members live off reserve.

Table 2: Indigenous population in Sarnia Lambton living on and off reserve.

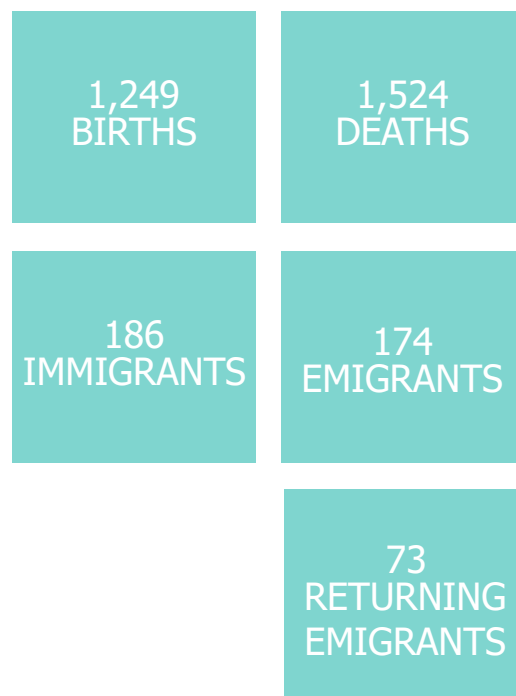
	Aamjiwnaang	Kettle and Stony Point	Walpole Island
2016 Census population	630	1,000	1,585
Registered population	2,474	2,548	4,957
Living on own reserve	896	1,354	2,357
Not living on own reserve	1,578	1,194	2,600
Median age	38 years	46 years	38 years

Sources: Government of Canada. Indigenous and Northern Affairs, First Nation Profile as of July 2020.

Components of Population Change

According to Statistics Canada Census data, factors that influence changes in the population of Sarnia Lambton include: births, deaths, immigration and emigration. There were 1,249 births in Sarnia Lambton for the reference period of 2018/2019. Population projections from the Ontario Ministry of Finance indicate that Lambton's population is expected to increase to 133,300 by 2021 and 134,700 by 2026.¹ Despite the increasing population for Lambton, an open session report by the Planning and Building Department (March 2018) estimated that the City of Sarnia's population will continue to decline over the next decade. As of November 25, 2020 there were 25 deaths locally directly attributed to COVID-19 by the Lambton Public Health Unit.

There were 186 peoples immigrating to the Sarnia Lambton area with 73 of those being returning emigrants who had previously left the area. There was a total of 174 emigrants during the 2018/2019 period. Statistics Canada defines emigrants as Canadian citizens or immigrants who left Canada for a period of time.



Sources: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0140-01 Components of population change by census division, 2016 boundaries

¹ Source: Statistics Canada estimates, 2011-2019, and Ontario Ministry of Finance projections.

Migration

Within the timeframe spanning between 2013 and 2018, roughly 17,108 persons migrated to the area, while 16,191 left the Sarnia Lambton area. The age groups migrating to the area include those between 45-64 years of age, while the age groups with the largest number of persons leaving the area include young adults between 18-24 years of age. Working age adults, aged 25-44 accounted for 29% of those migrating out between 2013 and 2018.

Due to the nature of the aging population, it can be expected that the Health Care industry and health care-related occupations will continue to increase in importance and size, while the overall working age population is expected to decrease. In order to compensate for the decrease in working age adults, immigrants and migrant workers to our area will be important to sustain the local workforce.

Table 3: In and out migration characteristics between 2013 and 2018

Migration Characteristics 2013 - 2018			
Age Group	In-migrants	Out-migrants	Net-migrants
0-17	3,446	2,585	861
18-24	2,094	2,837	-743
25-44	5,565	5,866	-301
45-64	3,946	2,843	1,103
65+	2,057	2,060	-3
Total	17,108	16,191	917

Source: Statistics Canada, 2018 Taxfiler

Commuting

With both urban and rural communities across Sarnia Lambton, the median commuting duration is approximately 15 minutes. According to the 2016 Census, the main mode of transportation used by 42,045 residents to travel between their home and place of work was by vehicle, while 2,175 walked, and 1,025 used public transportation. The commute times are relatively low for the area, however, persons who reside in rural areas of Lambton County typically commute outside of their community to go to their place of work.

Figure 7: Modes of transportation for Sarnia Lambton residents.



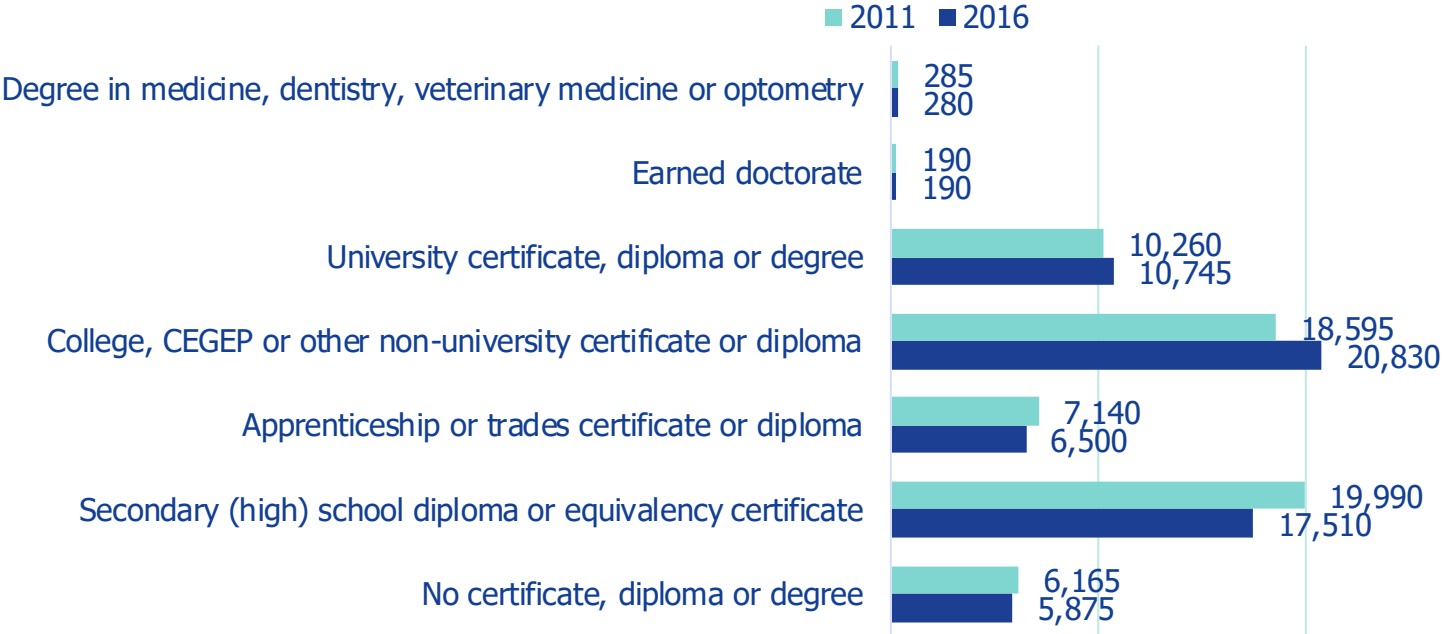
Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T28 POR Boards CD

Education

The education levels of the Sarnia Lambton population align with the occupations and industries with the largest workforce sizes. Of those in the labour force, 90% of residents have some form of certificate, diploma or degree. Secondary school graduates account for 28% of those in the labour force, college graduates comprise 34%, and persons with a university diploma or degree make up 17% of those in the labour force. The Sarnia Lambton area has seen an increase in those holding a college certificate, diploma, or degree between 2011 and 2016, with a decrease in those with secondary school certificates.

Of the 56,485 persons employed during the 2016 Census, 35% had a college level education, 28% had a secondary school level education, and 18% had a university level education. Only 9% of those employed had no form of formal education. The education levels with the highest rate of unemployment include those without formal education (14.8%) and those with a secondary diploma as their highest level of education (9.8%). Those who had education in Apprenticeship accounted for 11% of those employed in 2016, with an unemployment rate of 7.4%.

Figure 8: Changes in educational attainment levels from 2011 to 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T3 POR Boards CD
 Statistics Canada. 2011 Census, Custom Table T3

According to the results of the 2020 EmployerOne Survey findings, employers experience hiring challenges due to skills gaps and hard-to-fill positions that exist due to a lack in qualifications of potential candidates. SLWDB addresses skills gaps in the community by providing interactive sessions and supports to both employers and job seekers. Find out how SLWDB plans to address skills gaps on page 37.

Apprenticeship: Women in Trades

The number of people with apprenticeship or trades certificates decreased between 2011 and 2016. SLWDB's previous research on the in demand skilled trades identified a lack of female representation in the skilled trades, an assertion supported by local statistics. Of the 11,075 persons with a trade certificate or in an apprenticeship only 2,155 are female.² Local job demand data reflects the dire need for skilled trades people locally. Jobs in the skilled trades remain posted to job boards for several months at a time.³ To bridge this supply and demand gap recruitment of men and women in the skilled trades must be a priority. This sentiment is best highlighted by participants in our skilled trade research who said:

“ We especially need more women ”
in this trade. There are literally no
women in the trades.
- Local Employer

“ You used to see ads for the trades ”
to get more women in the trades
but I don't see anything anymore.
- Local Employer

International student population

In fall 2020, 667 international students began their studies at Lambton College, 98% of whom were enrolled in full-time studies. Of those enrolled, 50% were male and 50% were female. In total, 23% were studying at the diploma level and 76% were studying at the post-graduate level. This suggests that the majority of international students had already completed a degree before arriving in Canada. Students have come from 20 different countries, but the vast majority are from the Indian subcontinent (India, Nepal and Sri Lanka).

The list of countries includes:

- Belgium
- Brazil
- Cameroon
- China
- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Hong Kong
- India
- Iran
- Jamaica
- Jordan
- Mexico
- Myanmar
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Spain
- Turkey
- USA
- Vietnam

Figure 9: Data points of countries recruited from.



² Source: Statistics Canada, Apprenticeship Data 2016

³ Source: WISL Data collected October 2020; Talent Neuron Data collected September 2020

Income

The average net employment income in Sarnia Lambton is \$69,298 (Table 4), which is slightly above the Ontario average net income of \$68,628. For Lambton County the average income is slightly higher at \$73,776. Single person average annual household income was \$38,902, Whereas a two-or-more person households in 2016 was \$88,468.⁴

Since the 2016 Census, the minimum wage an employer is responsible for paying an employee in Ontario increased from \$11.60 per hour between October 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017 to \$14.00 per hour between January 1, 2018 to September 30, 2020. Recently, an additional increase was established on October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021 to a minimum wage of \$14.25 per hour.⁵

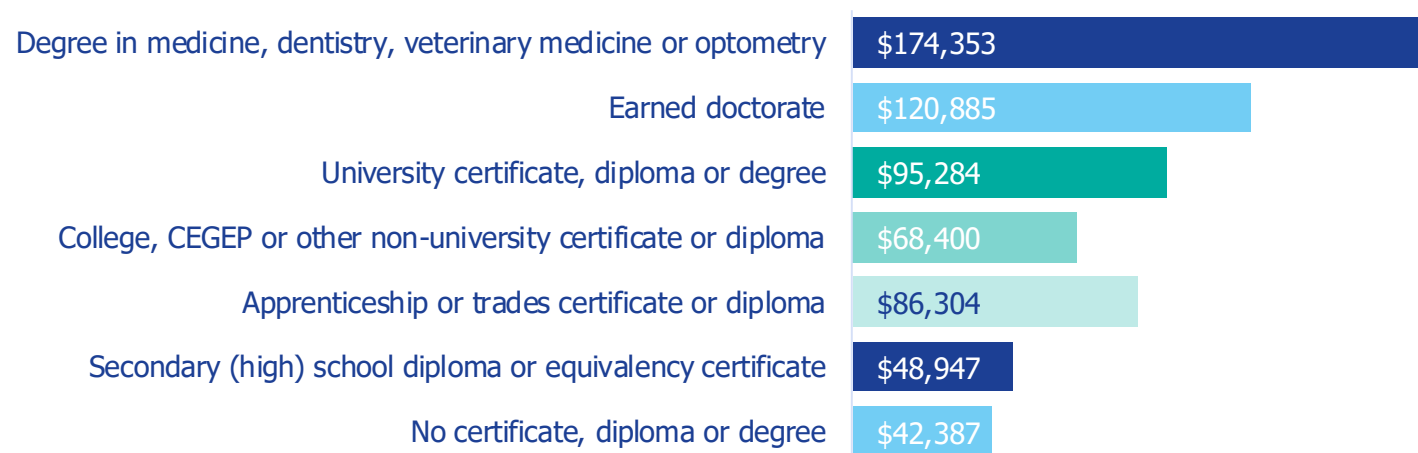
For more information on the changes to Minimum Wage rates in Ontario, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/minimum-wage>

Table 4: Average employment income for Sarnia Lambton residents

	Total	Male	Female
Number of persons in the workforce (2016)	31,530	18,260	13,265
Average net employment income \$	69,298	81,887	51,967

Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T15 POR Boards CD

Figure 10: Average income related to highest level of educational attainment



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T15 POR Boards CD

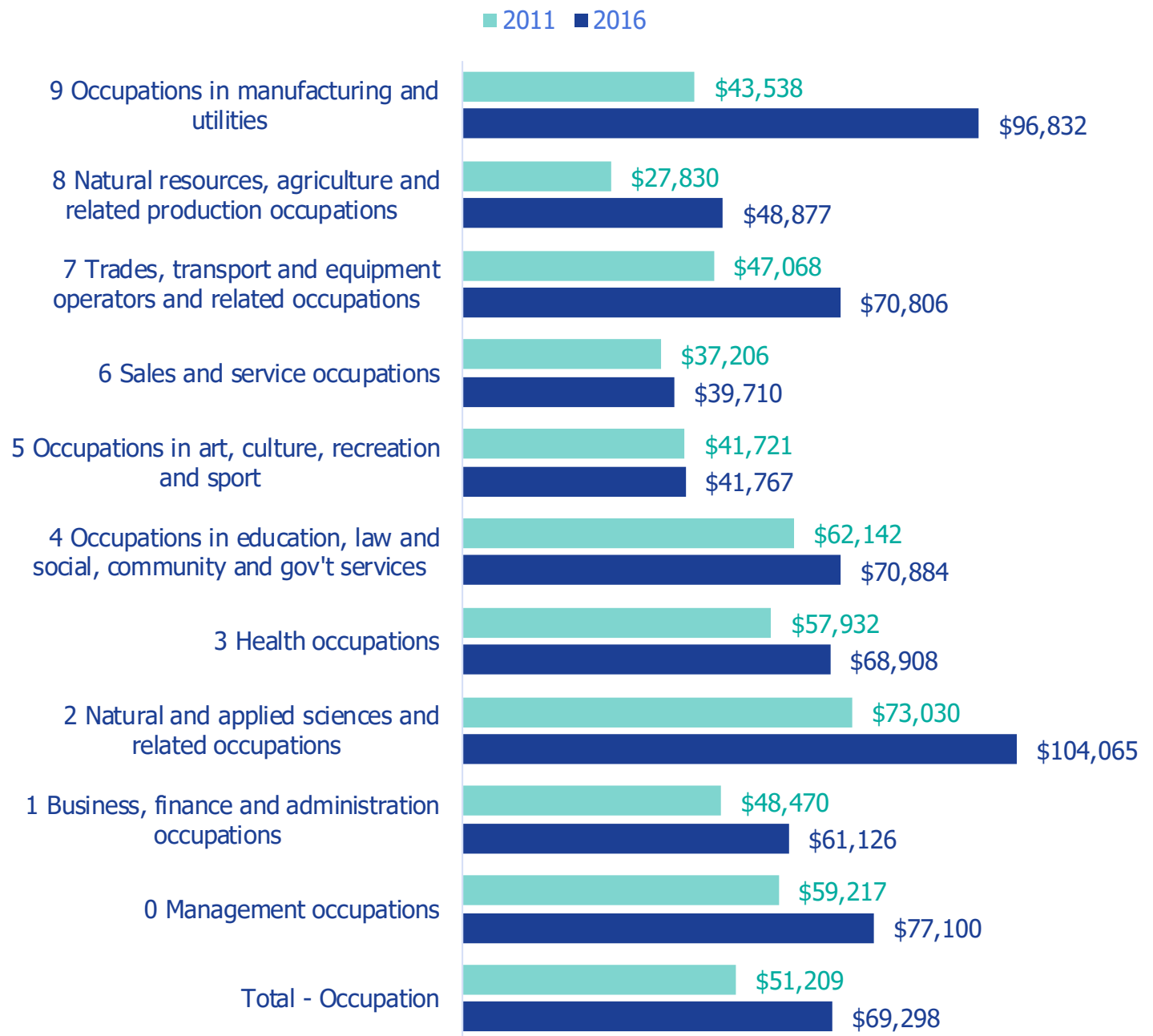
⁴Source: Census Profile, Lambton County, 2016 Census

⁵Source: Government of Ontario, Employment Standards Act, Updated October 2020

Income Continued...

Occupations with the highest average annual income based on 2016 Census data. These include Natural and applied sciences and related occupations, Occupations in manufacturing and utilities, as well as Management occupations (Figure 11). Occupations with the largest workforce sizes include Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations with 6,115 workers, Sales and service occupations with 5,125 workers, and Management occupations with 4,570 workers (Table 5).

Figure 11: Changes in average annual income by occupation in 2011 vs 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T15 POR Boards CD

Occupation Trends

In 2016, there were approximately 60,000 persons in the labour force. The top occupations with the largest labour force sizes in the Sarnia Lambton area include Sales and service, Trades, transport and equipment operators, and Business, finance and administrative occupations. The number of persons working in each occupation decreased from 2011 to 2016, and the Management occupations and Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services had the largest decrease.

Of those in the labour force, 31,530 persons in Sarnia Lambton were working in 2016, with the top occupations by workforce sizes being Management, Business, finance and administration, and Natural and applied sciences and related occupations (Table 5). Although Natural and applied sciences and related occupations had a decrease in the number of persons working between 2011 and 2016, the proportion of the workforce employed in those occupations grew by 2% (Figure 12).

Through consultations with employers, the top occupations identified as continually hard-to-fill include those in the Health care, Business, finance and administration occupations, Education, law and social, community and Government services. Positions were hard to fill due to the lack of qualified workers in the Sarnia Lambton area, and retention was a challenge as wages for these professions were competitive amongst businesses within the industry.

Due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the large number of layoffs caused by the economic shutdown, employers expect that there will be an increase in the number of qualified and skilled candidates in the near future. Services such as the Second Career program have experienced an increase in program usage due to an increase in job seekers looking to re-train or re-skill in order to be competitive as they re-enter the workforce. More information on the Second Career program can be found on page 31.

Table 5: Number of persons working in each occupation in 2011 vs 2016

National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2011 and 2016	Number of persons working 2011	Number of persons working 2016
Total - Occupation - National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2011	58,450	31,530
0 Management occupations	8,885	4,570
1 Business, finance and administration occupations	10,620	4,275
2 Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	3,870	2,695
3 Health occupations	3,310	2,345
4 Occupations in education, law and social, community and gov't services	6,995	3,260
5 Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	720	335
6 Sales and service occupations	9,200	5,125
7 Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	10,495	6,115
8 Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	805	520
9 Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	3,550	2,300

Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T15 POR Boards CD

Occupation Trends Continued...

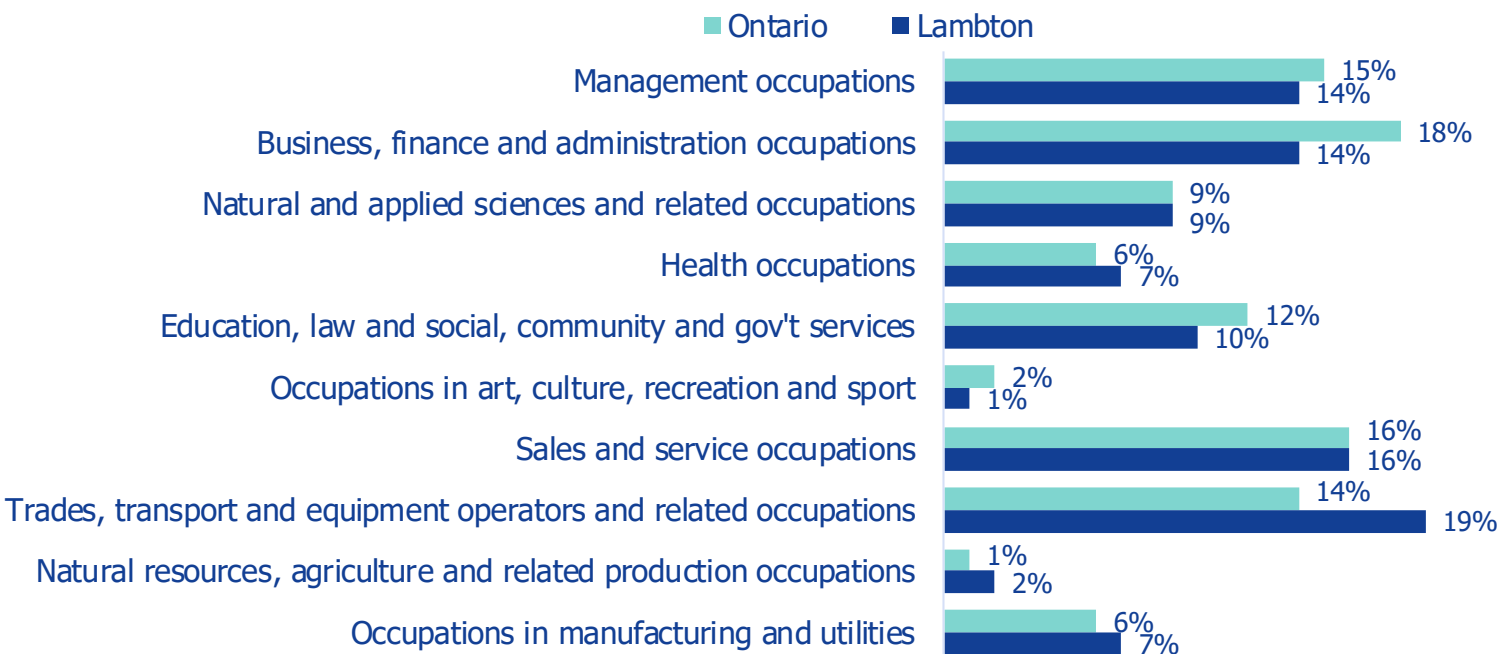
In comparison with Ontario, the Sarnia Lambton area has a significantly higher proportion of people working in the trades, transport and equipment operator related occupations. Figure 12 shows the percentage of the workforce in trades related occupations in Ontario is 14%, compared to Sarnia Lambton where the proportion of trades related workers accounts for 19% of the workforce. The skilled trades are comprised of both union and non-union businesses, with 15 local unions represented in Sarnia Lambton.⁶

Table 6: Population of workforce by occupation as a percentage of the total workforce

	2011		2016	
	Ontario	Lambton	Ontario	Lambton
Management occupations	15%	16%	15%	14%
Business, finance and administration occupations	19%	15%	18%	14%
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	9%	7%	9%	9%
Health occupations	6%	7%	6%	7%
Education, law and social, community and gov't services	12%	10%	12%	10%
Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	2%	1%	2%	1%
Sales and service occupations	17%	18%	16%	16%
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	13%	18%	14%	19%
Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	1%	2%	1%	2%
Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	6%	7%	6%	7%

Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T15 POR Boards CD

Figure 12: Number of persons working by occupation in Ontario vs Lambton, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T15 POR Boards CD

Local Business Profile

There were approximately 10,533 businesses in Sarnia Lambton in June 2020, compared to the 11,113 businesses in June of 2016. Approximately 98% of businesses are considered small businesses while micro businesses with 1-4 employees account for 46% of businesses that have employees. Over 67% of the total businesses are those without employees meaning they are owned and operated by the business owner, also referred to as sole proprietors, and do not retain any employees on payroll (Figure 14).

Industries with the largest increase in business counts both with and without employees between 2016 and 2020 include Real estate, Securities, commodity contracts, and other financial investment and related activities, as well as Religious, grant-making, civic and professional and similar organizations. Meanwhile, business counts that have been subject to decreases include those in the Management of companies and enterprises, Animal production and aquaculture, as well as Professional, scientific and technical service industries.

Through community consultations, we found that due to COVID-19, some businesses are now adapting to the digital requirements accompanied with the changing workforce. Some of the adaptations that businesses are now pursuing include the shift to implementing e-commerce into their operations, curb-side pickup and delivery services, virtual services, and having employees work from home. More work needs to be done to assess how the physical landscape of business has shifted since the pandemic. These adaptations have posed some challenges which are discussed in the Community Consultations section on page 33, however, the businesses that were able to adapt during the pandemic were most successful throughout the pandemic.

Throughout COVID-19, local initiatives were put in place to support local and small businesses. Through community consultations conducted between April and November, businesses expressed their gratitude to the amount of local support provided by residents in Sarnia Lambton. Community groups and businesses collaborated and partnered to support one another through the pandemic, with some pivoting their product or service offerings to accommodate the changes in consumer demands.

Figure 13: Business breakdown

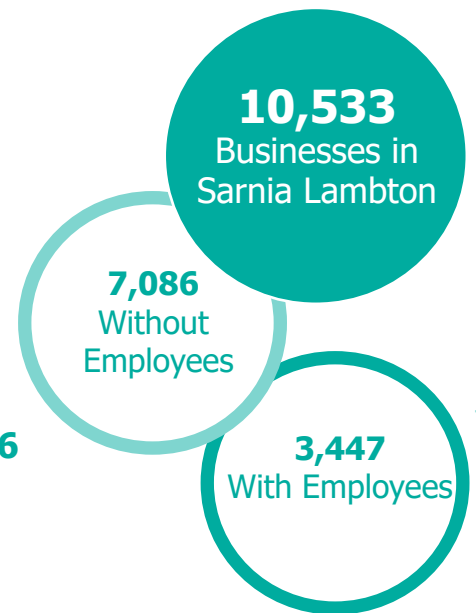
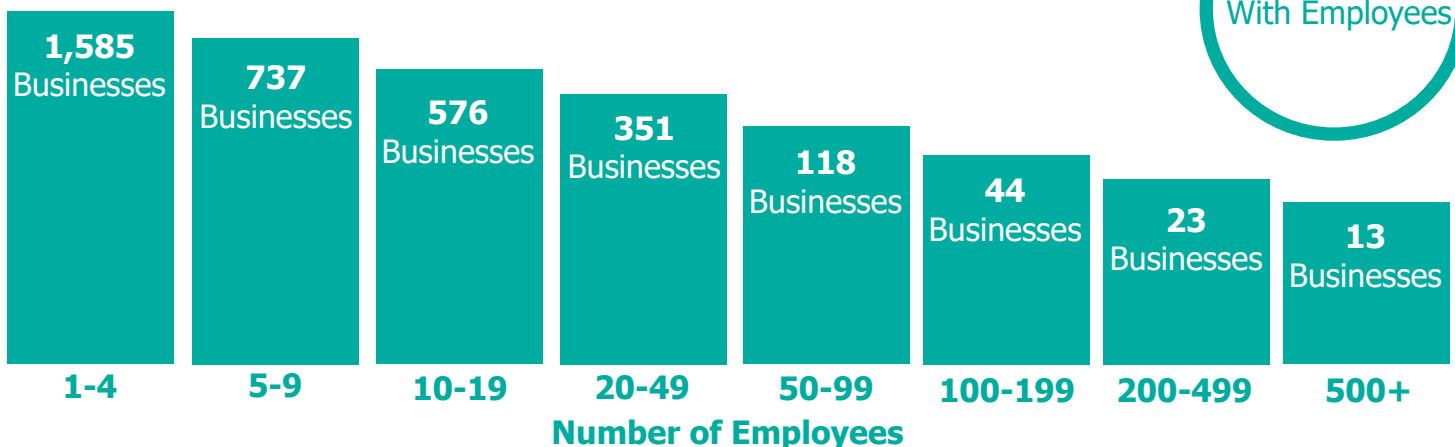


Figure 14: Business counts by employee size range, 2016



Source: Business Counts, June 2020.

Business Increases

Table 7: Business increases by business size range

Top 5 Overall Business Increases	2016	2020	Change
621 - Ambulatory health care services	490	782	292
238 - Specialty trade contractors	583	831	248
531 - Real estate	1,504	1,702	198
813 - Religious, grant-making, civic, and professional and similar organizations	210	401	191
722 - Food services and drinking places	317	505	188

Top 3 increase in businesses without employees	2016	2020	Change
531 - Real estate	1417	1486	69
523 - Securities, commodity contracts, other financial investment activities	275	339	64
813 - Religious, grant-making, civic, and professional and similar organizations	64	125	61

Top 3 increase in small businesses (1 to 99 employees)	2016	2020	Change
531 - Real estate	82	106	24
523 - Securities, commodity contracts, other financial investment activities	41	59	18
621 - Ambulatory health care services	577	595	18

Top 3 increase in medium businesses (100-499 employees)	2016	2020	Change
111 - Crop production	1	3	2
562 - Waste management and remediation services	0	2	2
623 - Nursing and residential care facilities	7	9	2

Top 3 increase in large businesses (500+ employees)	2016	2020	Change
913 - Local, municipal and regional public administration	0	2	2
324 - Petroleum and coal product manufacturing	0	1	1
445 - Food and beverage stores	0	1	1

Source: Business Counts, June 2016, June 2020

Table 7 shows the top business increases for businesses with employees were among those in Ambulatory health care services and Specialty trade contractors. Real estate and Crop production have the largest number of businesses in Sarnia Lambton, and both operate primarily without employees or as a small business with 1-99 employees. Table 8 shows the largest decreases were among those in Management of companies and enterprises and Animal production and aquaculture. Businesses that operate within Animal production and aquaculture sustained a decrease in both businesses with and without employees, with a total decrease of 102 businesses, and an additional decrease in 77 businesses that operate in Crop production.

Business Decreases

Table 8: Business decreases by business size range

Top 5 Overall Business Decreases	2016	2020	Change
551 - Management of companies and enterprises	188	79	-109
112 - Animal production and aquaculture	491	464	-27
518 - Data processing, hosting, and related services	6	2	-4
443 - Electronics and appliance stores	42	40	-2
519 - Other information services	12	10	-2

Top 3 decreases in businesses without employees	2016	2020	Change
551 - Management of companies and enterprises	167	61	-106
112 - Animal production and aquaculture	392	314	-78
541 - Professional, scientific and technical services	542	470	-72

Top 3 decrease in small businesses (1 to 99 employees)	2016	2020	Change
112 - Animal production and aquaculture	102	74	-28
541 - Professional, scientific and technical services	255	231	-24
111 - Crop production	114	92	-22

Top 3 decrease in medium businesses (100-499 employees)	2016	2020	Change
238 - Specialty trade contractors	7	4	-3
445 - Food and beverage stores	4	2	-2
237 - Heavy and civil engineering construction	2	1	-1

Top 3 decrease in large businesses (500+ employees)	2016	2020	Change
237 - Heavy and civil engineering construction	2	1	-1
452 - General merchandise stores	1	0	-1
622 - Hospitals	2	1	-1

Source: Business Counts, June 2016, June 2020

Through consultations, local employers expressed the need for additional supports for sole proprietors and small businesses. To support local businesses, SLWDB will be taking action in 2021 by exploring the needs and challenges created by the shift to a remote workforce.

Industry Trends

In 2016, there were 31,530 employed persons in Sarnia Lambton, whereas in 2006 there were approximately 32,275 employed persons indicating a decrease in the number people working in the area. Sarnia Lambton has a diverse set of industries in the area. The top five industries with the largest workforce sizes are in Manufacturing, Health care and social assistance, Retail trade, Construction, and Education Services (Table 9).

Through consultations with employers, it was found that there continues to be a shortage of Personal Support Workers in the area. As a result of the Health care and social assistance industry experiencing high level of turnover. Due to Sarnia Lambton's aging population there is high demand for occupations within the health care and social assistance industry, however, employers are experiencing challenges retaining current employees and filling vacant positions.

Other industries are impacted by the aging population, for instance, Professional, scientific and technical services where waves of retirements are expected. Succession planning is needed in order to sell or change leadership of existing businesses. Employers indicate that recruitment and retention in this industry is challenging as the candidate supply with the required skills and qualifications is low in Sarnia Lambton area.

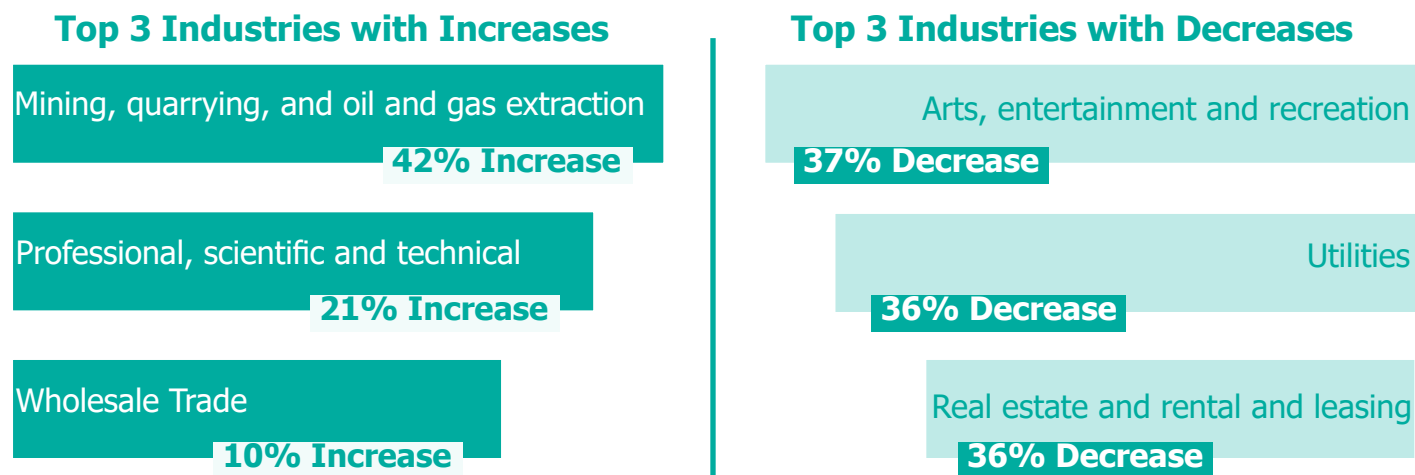
Table 9: Comparison of Sarnia Lambton's employed workforce industry, 2006 vs 2016

Industry	2006	2016	% Difference
Manufacturing	5,005	4,640	-7.3%
Health care and social assistance	3,945	4,065	3.0%
Retail trade	2,900	2,955	1.9%
Construction	2,520	2,740	8.7%
Educational services	2,075	1,825	-12.0%
Professional, scientific and technical services	1,435	1,740	21.3%
Public administration	1,640	1,705	4.0%
Wholesale trade	1,445	1,600	10.7%
Accommodation and food services	1,540	1,575	2.3%
Transportation and warehousing	1,440	1,560	8.3%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,745	1,460	-16.3%
Other services (except public administration)	1,480	1,440	-2.7%
Administrative & support, waste management & remediation services	1,380	1,210	-12.3%
Finance and insurance	950	830	-12.6%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	325	460	41.5%
Real estate and rental and leasing	715	460	-35.7%
Utilities	720	460	-36.1%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	685	435	-36.5%
Information and cultural industries	325	320	-1.5%

Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T16 POR Boards CD
 Statistics Canada. 2006 Census, Custom Table T16 POR Boards CD

Industry Trends Continued...

Figure 15: Top 3 industry increases and decreases from 2006 vs 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016 Census, Custom Table T19 POR Boards CD

In 2019, SLWDB conducted research on the In-Demand Skilled Trades in Sarnia Lambton. Of the 115 employers who took part in the research, the majority suggested there is a drastic need for skilled tradespeople in the local area. Employers anticipate the current shortage will continue and likely increase in the next five years as the current workforce retires and/or largescale projects move forward. The research also identified a need to attract more youth and women to the skilled trades to combat this shortage.

Expected trends due to the impacts of COVID-19 vary across the industries. It was concluded through consultations with employers in industries such as Retail trade, and Accommodation and food services, and Professional, scientific and technical services that a shift to digital is necessary, however, this is not the only challenge faced. According to the Lambton Federation of Agriculture, migrant workers play a vital role in Sarnia Lambton’s agriculture industry. A recent commentary by the Director of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture noted the impact of the pandemic on farmers. Many farmers who benefited from the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program are reporting ongoing labour shortages and subsequent changes to their operations.

Migrant workers are a key workforce accessed by the Agriculture sector. Due to COVID-19, access to migrant workers was restricted in 2020, and is expected to be a challenge going forward. Migrants and immigrants will play a vital role in growing Sarnia Lambton’s workforce as the population ages and domestic working age adults continue to leave the area.

Labour Force Data

The local labour market in Sarnia Lambton has shown steady improvement between 2011 and 2019 with the unemployment rate decreasing at a steady rate, despite the labour force⁷ decreasing slightly from 66,200 people in 2011 to 64,400 people in 2016 (Table 10). The decrease in labour force size is likely attributable to working age adults leaving the area and the aging population in Sarnia Lambton, where continuous waves of retirement are expected within the community across all industries.

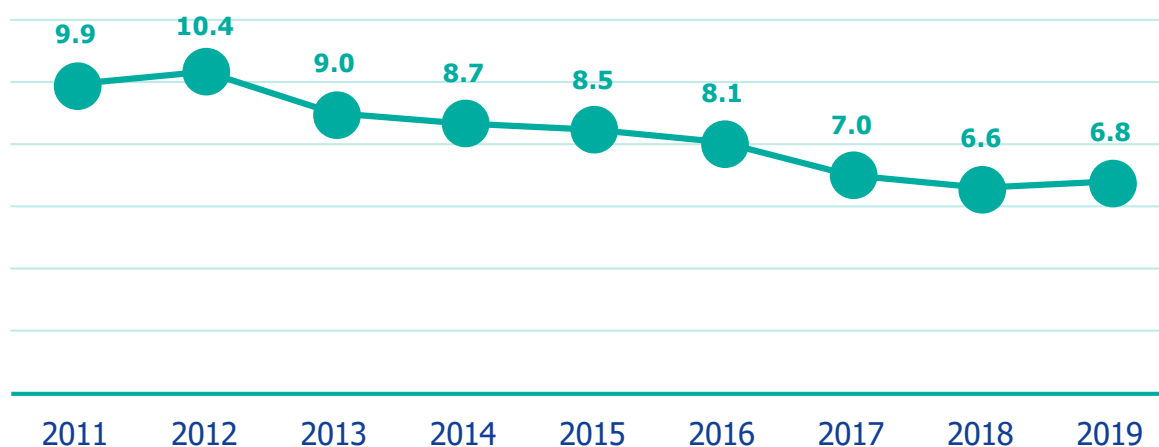
As a result of the impacts of COVID-19, the unemployment rates for 2020 have increased drastically during the months of March to end of May. Unemployment data for 2020 can be found on page 26, currently only Economic Region of Windsor-Sarnia which includes aggregate data for Lambton, Chatham-Kent, and Essex. A glimpse at what SLWDB is doing to support labour force growth post pandemic can be found on page 27.

Table 10: Labour market information for Sarnia Lambton from 2011-2019

CD 3538 Lambton	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Source Population 15+	108.4	108.4	108.3	108.1	107.8	107.7	107.9	108.3	108.8
Participation Rate (%)	61.1	61.7	60.6	60.9	60.7	60.0	59.3	59.1	59.2
Labour Force	66.2	66.9	65.6	65.9	65.4	64.6	63.9	64.0	64.4
Employed	59.6	60.0	59.7	60.1	59.9	59.4	59.4	59.8	60.0
Unemployed	6.6	6.9	5.9	5.7	5.5	5.2	4.5	4.2	4.4
Unemployment Rate (%)	9.9	10.4	9.0	8.7	8.5	8.1	7.0	6.6	6.8
Ontario									
Unemployment Rate (%)	7.9	7.9	7.6	7.3	6.8	6.6	6.0	5.6	5.6

Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey, 2011-2019. Estimates calculated by metro economics

Figure 16: Trend in Sarnia Lambton's unemployment rate from 2011-2019



Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey, 20011-2019. Estimates calculated by metro economics

Definitions:

⁷ Labour force participants are persons 15 years and older who are either employed or unemployed.

- Employed persons are actively working as employees, self-employed persons or unpaid family workers (e.g., on farm), or who hold a job but are on leave (e.g. disability, labour dispute).
- Unemployed persons are actively looking for work or on temporary layoff.

Job Demand

The following section provides insight into online job posting trends in the Sarnia Lambton area, collected from data sources such as Talent Neuron, SLWDB’s annual EmployerOne survey highlights, and SLWDB’s newly launched Jobs Board, WISL: Work in Sarnia Lambton. The data collected by Talent Neuron and WISL only account for jobs posted online, thus it should be noted that not all employers utilize online job boards as a recruitment method. As noted in the EmployerOne Survey, word of mouth remains the top recruitment method by local employers.

Job Posting Trends

The data in this section were collected from Talent Neuron between July 1, 2019 and June 21, 2020. The industries with the top number of hires included Health care and social assistance, Retail trade, and Educational services. There was a total of 3,829 job postings: Sarnia had 2,722 job postings, while the remaining 1,107 postings were posted for jobs within other municipalities within the count.

**Figure 17:
Top 3 Certification
Employers Requested**

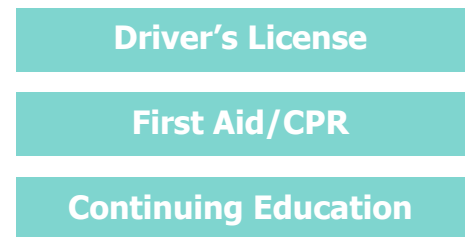


Table 11: Industry breakdown of job postings

Industry	July 1st 2019 - June 30, 2020
Health Care and Social Assistance	521
Retail Trade	352
Educational Services	218
Admin & support, waste mgmt & remediation services	192
Wholesale Trade	164
Other Services (except Public Administration)	161
Finance and Insurance	150
Transportation and Warehousing	149
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	139
Accommodation and Food Services	119

Figure 18: Top 8 occupations with the highest amount of job postings

Transport truck driver 204 Job Postings	Retail salesperson 183 Job Postings	Customer service representatives 142 Job Postings	Home support workers 116 Job Postings
Retail sales supervisor 114 Job Postings	Food attendants & kitchen helpers 80 Job Postings	Sales representative in wholesale trade 77 Job Postings	Automotive service technicians 73 Job Postings

EmployerOne Survey Highlights

The figures in this section provide a snapshot of the data collected through the 2020 EmployerOne Survey. The EmployerOne survey is a community-wide survey that gathers information directly from local employers to help local employers with local workforce needs and assists in identifying trends. The [full report](#) provides job seekers and employers with data on the latest local hiring trends and recruitment methods for future and career planning.

In 2020, the number of business respondents increased to 241, with an increase in employer participation from the Manufacturing and Construction sectors. The employers who participated in the survey reported hiring for over 3,000 new or existing positions. Despite this large number of hires, 42% of employers still indicated they had a number of hard-to-fill positions due to a lack of applicants, lack of qualifications, or lack of work experience. Not surprisingly, employers continued to have ongoing concern regarding employee retention.

Figure 19: Number of survey responses from 2014-2020

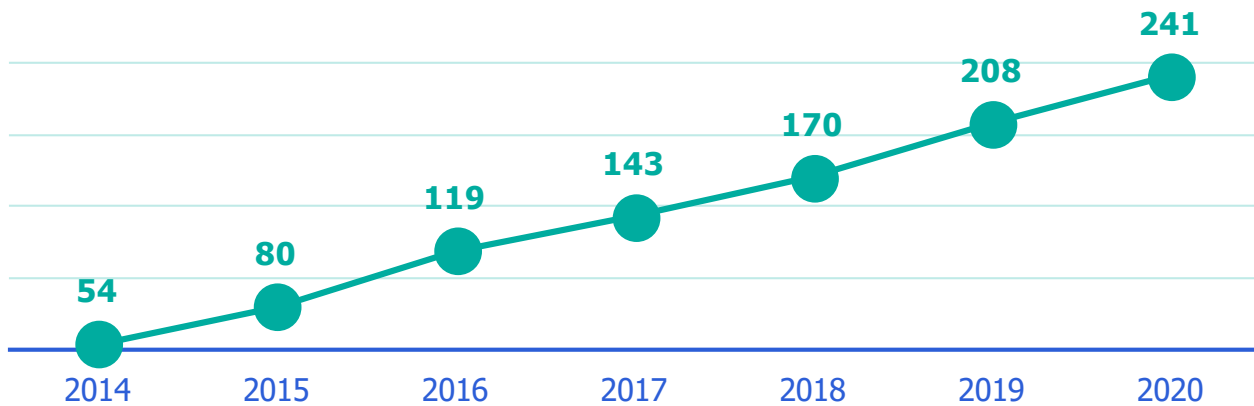


Figure 20: Number of new hires by industry

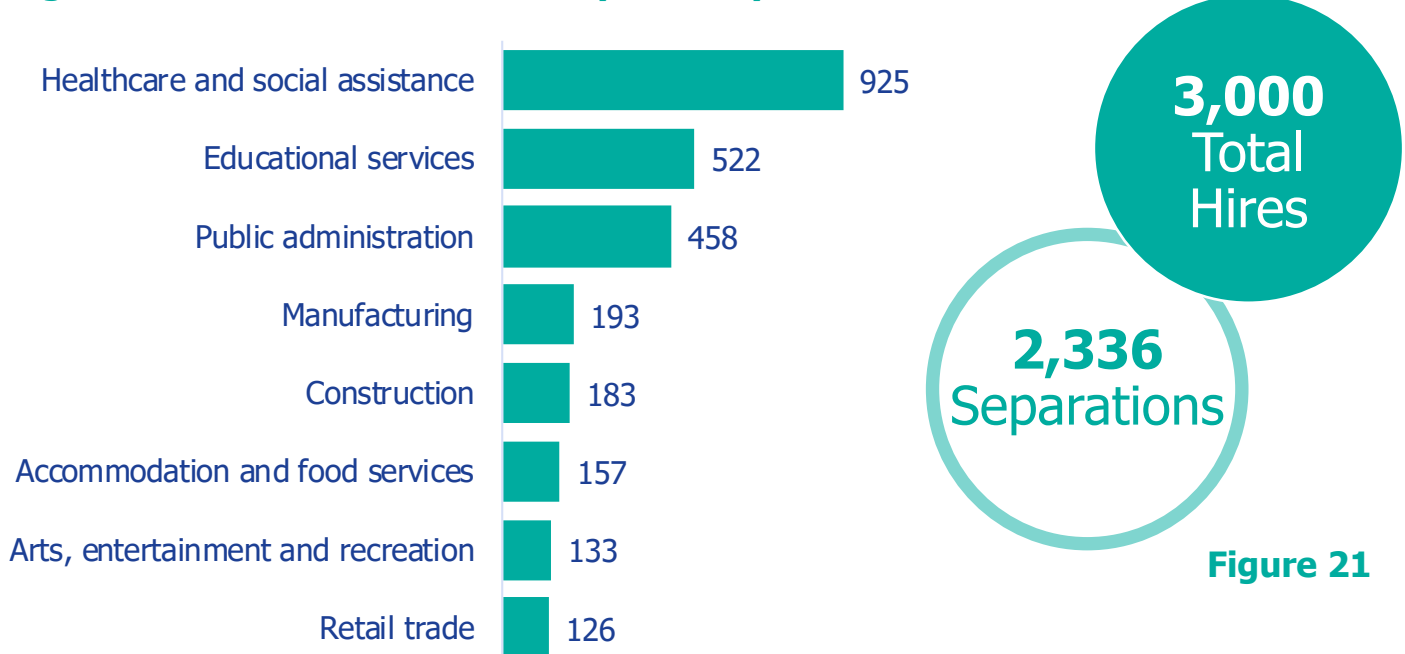


Figure 21

EmployerOne Survey Highlights Continued...

Figure 22: Percentage of businesses that indicated they had hard-to-fill positions

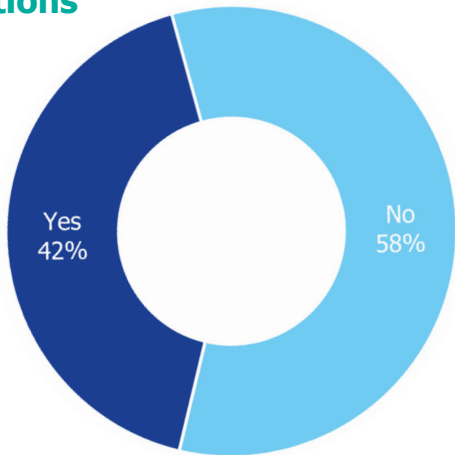


Figure 23: Top 3 reasons positions were hard-to-fill

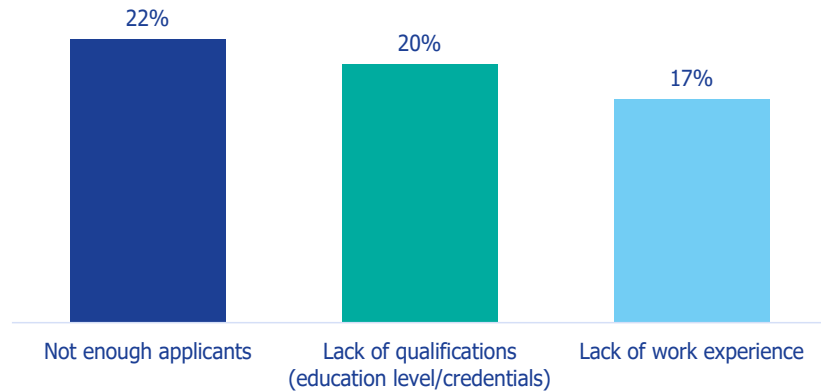


Figure 24: Employment type of hires in 2020

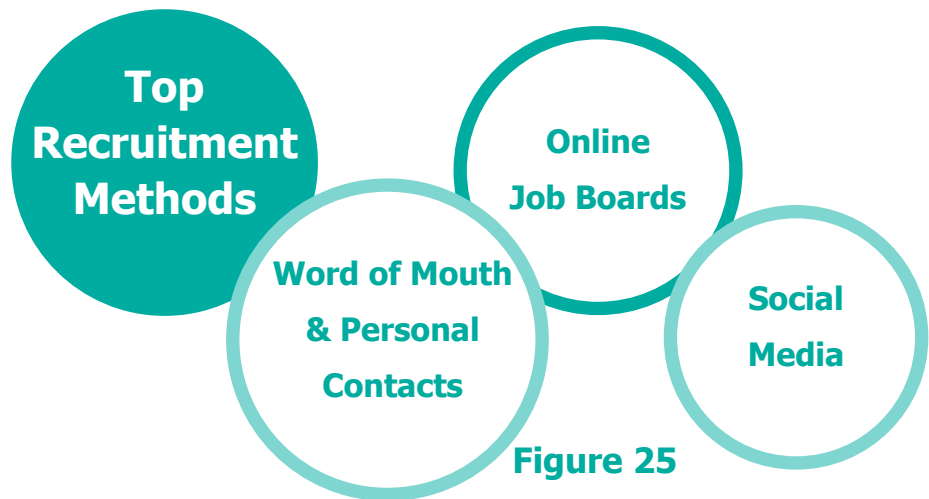
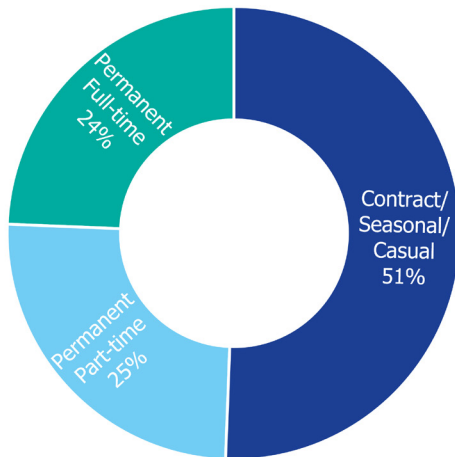
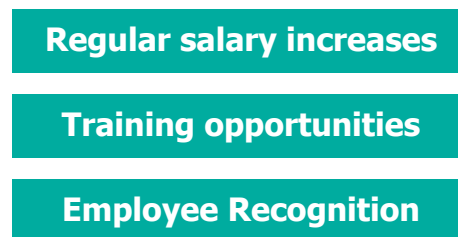


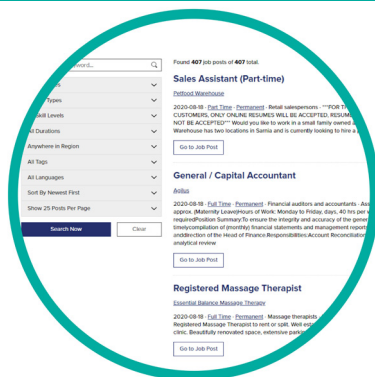
Figure 26: Top competencies employers are looking for:



Figure 27: Top strategies used to encourage retention:



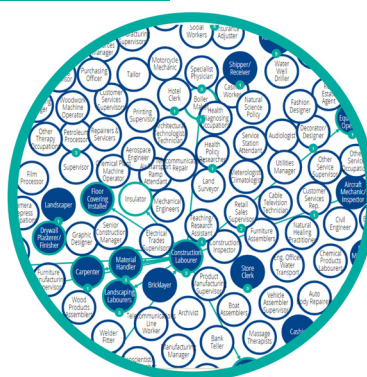
To access the full report, visit:
<https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-EmployerOne-Report.pdf>



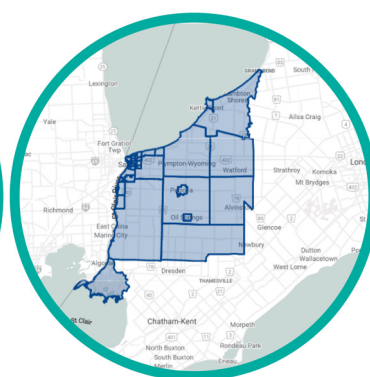
Jobs Board



Jobs Map



Career Explorer



Census Map

AN INTERACTIVE TOOLKIT DESIGNED FOR JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS IN SARNIA LAMBTON

WISL: Work In Sarnia Lambton is an online platform operated by the SLWDB. The interactive toolkit was launched in June of 2020 and is equipped with resources to help support employers searching to connect with local job seekers within our labour force. The WISL tools also help job seekers find the job training, skills development resources, entrepreneur supports and employment service providers in Sarnia Lambton.

Regional Jobs Board

Searchable list of job opportunities found exclusively within the Sarnia Lambton region. These postings are collected by WISL from the top 23 job posting websites for the area, reducing the need to 'hop' between job site search engines.

Regional Jobs Map

Geolocates the job opportunities listed on the Regional Jobs Board onto a map of the Sarnia Lambton region. In addition, built in filters make it easy to view locations for childcare, schools, apprenticeship training, employment service providers and Ontario Disability Support Program centers to help job seekers find job opportunities and resources that best fit their needs, lifestyle and career path.

Regional Career Explorer & Career Library

The Career Explorer is a visual tool that makes finding information about career paths between jobs easier. The Career Library complements the Career Explorer, providing details about occupation description, alternative job titles, median wages, and local employment participation statistics. It also links job seekers to the active occupation job listings on the WISL Job Board and allows users to trace and explore the occupations that lead into a given occupation, as well as the paths that are available as next steps following that career trajectory.

Regional Census Map

Easy to navigate georeferenced census population data for the various areas of Sarnia Lambton. The Census tool is a great resource for employers, entrepreneurs and economic advisors who are interested in having key demographic information from municipalities across Lambton County on a user friendly, easily accessible platform.

WISL connects local job seekers to local employers via a one-stop, user-friendly platform. WISL aggregates all the local job opportunities featured on top 24 job postings websites for the Sarnia Lambton region (listed on WISL FAQs page). Job postings collected by WISL are incorporated into the individual WISL tools including the Job Board, the Job Map, the Career Explorer and Career Library. More information for employers on how to ensure their job postings are featured on WISL is available on the WISL FAQ page.

A Guidebook has been created to help navigate the many tools WISL offers as well as FAQs. Find out how you can:

- Have WISL feature job postings from your company's job board for a one-time only setup fee, no subscriptions required.
- Have your job postings appear on the WISL Jobs Board and Jobs Map by adding your job postings to one of the top 23 job sites that WISL collects from.



- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| » Aboriginal Job Board | » Indigenous Careers |
| » Canadian Executive Search | » Job Bank (Government of Canada) |
| » Career Arc | » Jobilico |
| » Career Builder | » Kijiji |
| » Charity Village | » Local Work |
| » City of Sarnia | » Monster |
| » Commission de la fonction | » Recruit |
| » Community Employment Services – Lambton College | » Simply Hired |
| » County of Lambton | » The Workplace Group - Connects |
| » Eluta | » Work Cabin |
| » Express Employment Professionals | » Workopolis |
| » Indeed | » Wow Jobs |

Access the Guidebook here:
<https://www.slwdb.org/wisl/work-in-Sarnia-Lambton-guidebook/>

Visit the FAQ page here:
www.slwdb.org/wisl/faqs/

Impact of COVID-19 on the Labour Force

The COVID-19 pandemic, declared March 11th 2020, swept the globe leading to economic disruption worldwide. In Canada, the level of impact caused by the public health crisis on the workforce has not been seen since the years of the Great Depression. Ontario declared a State of Emergency March 17th followed by orders for the mandatory closure of all non-essential workplaces March 23rd, 2020. Between the onset of the pandemic in early March to May 2020, the employment rate in the economic region declined by 9.2%. The employment rate started recovering in June, but remains 3.5% lower than pre-COVID-19 at the end of September 2020. This employment rate is marginally lower than that for Ontario (3.4%), and lower than seen nationally (2.4%).⁷

In line with the impact of COVID-19 on employment, the unemployment rate in the economic region rose by 8.2% between early March and May 2020. As lockdown restrictions began to be lifted for some non-essential sectors during Stage 2 of Recovery across Ontario in June, the unemployment rate dropped by 5.2% between June to September. The unemployment rate reported in September (10.2%) remains 3 points higher than observed in February, pre-COVID-19. In comparison, the provincial unemployment rate in September (11%) remains nearly 6 points higher than observed pre-pandemic.⁷

Table 12: Unemployment Rate (%) between February - September 2020

	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Canada	6	7	9	12	13	12	11	10
Ontario	5	6	8	11	13	13	12	11
Windsor-Sarnia, ER	7.2	9.5	11.7	15.4	14.7	13.1	11.3	10.2

Source: Statistics Canada Data: Table 14-10-0293-01

The initial impact of the COVID-19 crisis on employment type was similar for full- and part-time employment positions. Between the onset of the pandemic in March to May 25,700 full time positions were lost while the same measure for part time employment was 24,100. However, the recovery has been uneven for each employment type. Since June, full time employment positions rose to nearly pre-COVID-19 levels with a net loss measured to be 1,100. This is drastically different from 17,700 part-time employment positions that have not yet returned as of September 2020.⁸ Given the sectors that continue to be impacted by the public health measures in place to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 (Technical occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport; Sales and Services occupations), it is unsurprising that recovery of part-time employment has trailed behind that of full-time employment.

⁷ Source: Statistics Canada Data: Table 14-10-0293-01: Labour force characteristics by economic region, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Labour Force Continued...

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Labour force information on employment in Sarnia Lambton was unavailable, however, we were able to provide updates on the labour force statistics for the entire Economic Region 3570 which includes Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Essex.

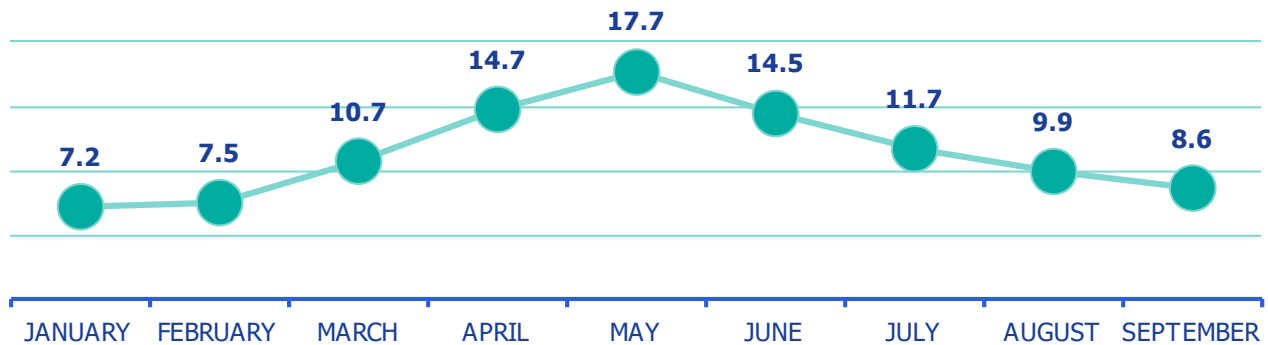
Economic Regions of Ontario:

- Northwest
- Northeast
- Ottawa
- Toronto
- London
- Kingston - Pembroke
- Muskoka - Kawarthas
- Kitchener - Waterloo - Barrie
- Stratford - Bruce Peninsula
- Hamilton - Niagara Peninsula

*Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division



Figure 28: 2020 Unemployment Rate for the Economic Region 3570 which includes Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Essex



Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey, January to September 2020. Estimates calculated by Metro Economics

To support the local community and assist job seekers and employers in Sarnia Lambton, SLWDB launched WISL: Work in Sarnia Lambton. The interactive job search toolkit allows job seekers to locate job postings specifically within Sarnia Lambton from the top 25 job boards and job sites in the area. Along with this tool, SLWDB will also be working to address and promote existing opportunities to re-skill job seekers with the necessary skills to find employment following COVID-19.

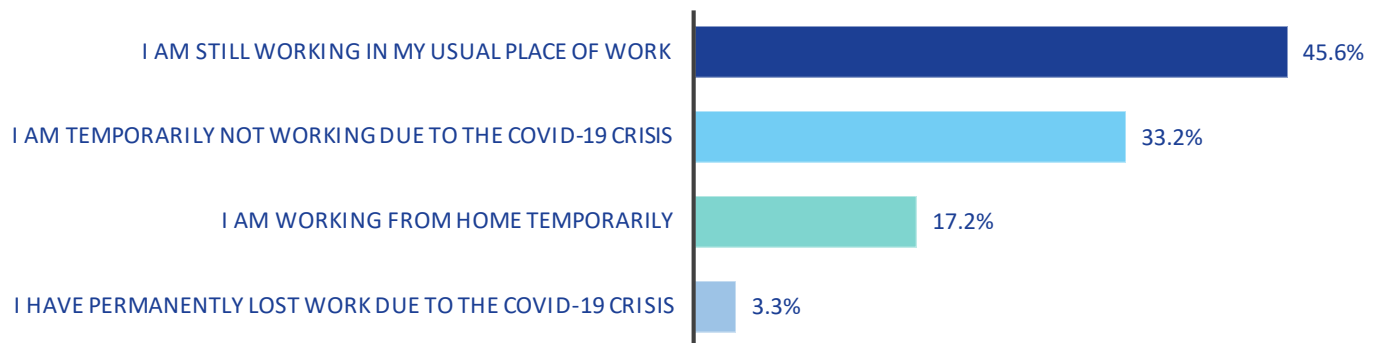
COVID-19 Community Impact

A snapshot of the early impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the labour force in Sarnia Lambton was captured from 297 respondents by the Worker Impact Survey conducted by SLWDB. The occupations most affected by the pandemic were those in the arts, entertainment and recreation (100% of respondents in this occupation are out of work temporarily or permanently) as well as information and cultural industries (80% of respondents in this occupation are out of work temporarily or permanently).

Over 50% of respondents in the following occupations were out of work temporarily or permanently: arts, entertainment and recreation; construction and utilities; information and cultural industries; and mining. In contrast, over 75% of respondents in the following industries were working in their usual place of work or from home: professional, scientific, technical and administrative services; public administration; health care and social assistance; finance and real estate; and agriculture, forestry and fishing. In terms of the type of worker impacted by COVID-19, those who identified as self-employed described experiencing a bigger impact than employees, with 72% reporting being out of work. Conversely, under 33% of employees indicated they were out of work.

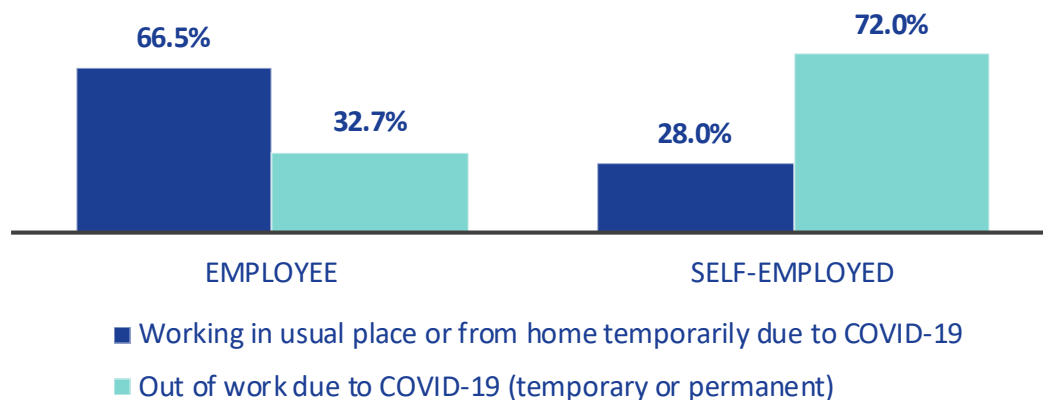
Read the complete Covid-19 Worker Survey Report for additional insights here: <https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-Worker-Impact-Survey-Complete-Results.pdf>

Figure 29: Impact of COVID-19 on respondents' employment status



Source: Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board's COVID-19 Worker Impact Survey Results, 2020.

Figure 30: Impact of COVID-19 on employees vs those self-employed



Source: Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board's COVID-19 Worker Impact Survey Results, 2020.

COVID-19 Initiatives

From the onset of the economic impact of the pandemic, SLWDB recognized the importance of supporting local employers and job seekers through this tumultuous period. SLWDB collaborated with a number of community partners on several initiatives designed to help businesses navigate these uncertain times.

Sarnia-Lambton COVID-19 Business and Economic Task Force: committee comprised of the Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership, the Sarnia Lambton Business Development Corporation, Tourism Sarnia Lambton, the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce, and the Grand Bend and Area Chamber of Commerce. These organizations support economic and workforce development that meet weekly to collect, coordinate and disseminate information on strategies and implement programs to mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on employers and our workforce.

COVID-19 Worker Survey: SLWDB launched a survey designed to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the local workforce.

Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey: SLWDB supported the development and dissemination of a business survey designed to capture a snapshot of the challenges presented by the pandemic on business operations.

Shop Lambton Map: SLWDB supported an initiative to launch an interactive online map of local retail and service delivery businesses at no charge to owners/operators. The aim was to create an easy to navigate visual database of local business information including hours of operations and contact protocols for services to promote and support the SHOP LOCAL campaign.

Scenario Planning: SLWDB spearheaded an initiative to define the future workforce. Through collaborative effort with key partners across economic sectors and community service providers, scenarios representing what the future workforce may look like are being designed to serve as foundations for sector specific plans of actions to support the workforce. The action plans will provide guidance on how businesses can mitigate possible negative impacts of COVID-19 on our labour force over a short, intermediate and long-term timeframe based on the direction and pace of the post-pandemic economic recovery. They will also outline strategies to harness opportunities for our labour force and economy arising post-COVID-19 over a short, intermediate and long-term timeframe.

While we continue to identify immediate challenges to overcome and opportunities to seize, the next step in supporting our businesses and their workforce is to provide guidance on developing a recovery strategy that will create resiliency for the upcoming years. Continued uncertainty about the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as its long-term impacts on the global economy mean that a scenario-based approach is required to plan proactively for these stages of recovery. Our priority is to ensure the sustainability and growth of our labour force in Sarnia Lambton. The blueprint generated through this project will serve as a guide for local employers to understand and prepare for the potential challenges and opportunities awaiting the local labour force beyond the era of COVID-19.

Employment Ontario Programs

Employment Ontario assists job seekers, workers and employers across Ontario by providing services for both public and private sector employment. All facts and figures in this section come from the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development's 2019-2020 Employment Ontario Data for Local Boards. The information presented in this section are for the fiscal year April 1, 2019 to March, 31 2020.

The data elements serve as a basis for local boards and regional networks to have evidence-based discussions with other Employment Ontario service providers and non-Employment Ontario organizations to discuss local challenges such as skills and service gaps, overlaps and under-served populations. Together, Employment Ontario, local boards and regional networks collaborate to develop actions that address local issues in Sarnia Lambton.

Additional information regarding Employment Ontario programs can be found on the Government of Ontario's website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/employment-ontario>

Employment Ontario Programs include:

Employment Service	Canada Ontario Job Grant: Employer	Literacy and Basic Skills	Second Career
Apprenticeship	Canada Ontario Job Grant: Participant	Ontario Employment Assistance Services	Youth Job Connection

Employment Service

Employment Services include a variety of resources and supports that assist individuals and employers. The programs offered address individuals career and employment goals as well as the skilled labour needs of local employers. In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, employment services were provided to 1,669 assisted service clients, and 2,641 unassisted resource and information clients.

The majority of the clients served had previous work history in industries such as Accommodation and Food Services, Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, and Construction.

Employment Ontario Programs Continued...

Apprenticeship

An apprentice is an individual who is receiving or is to receive training in a skilled trade, with the intention of obtaining a Certificate of Qualification. There were 354 new registrations, with 1,162 active apprentices in the previous fiscal year, while 202 Certificates of Apprenticeship were issued. Programs with an increase in the number of new registrations include General Carpenters, Electricians, Industrial Painter and Decorators, and Truck and Coach Technicians. The number of females in the apprenticeship program increased substantially compared to the previous 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Canada Ontario Job Grant

The Canada Ontario Job Grant (COJG) provides employers the opportunity to invest in their workforce through direct financial support to employers who wish to invest in training for their employees. The program provided training opportunities to 25 employers and 76 employees in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Employers saw a 100% increase in trainee productivity as a result of the program.

Literacy and Basic Skills

The Ontario Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program provides adults with the opportunity to develop and apply skills such as communication, numeracy, interpersonal and digital skills. The Literacy and Basic Skills program offered services to 614 clients, with 496 being new clients, and 118 carrying over from the previous fiscal year.

Ontario Employment Assistance Services

Ontario Employment Assistance Services can help people connect with a variety of employment programs. It also has services to help people prepare for and find a job. During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the OEAS program provided services to 496 clients.

Second Career

The Second Career program provides laid off workers the ability to obtain long-term skills training to assist them in finding employment in high demand, high-skilled occupations in Sarnia Lambton. The majority of program participants indicated they found employment within 12 months of completing the program.

Youth Job Connection

The Youth Job Connection (YJC) provides intensive supports beyond traditional job search and placement opportunities to youth ages 15 to 29. The programs aim to support youth in employment, education or training, and who also experience a range of barriers to employment. The program offered services to 133 clients, with an additional 48 participants taking part throughout the summer.

Employment Ontario Service Providers



● **Goodwill Career Centre**
Phone: (519) 332-4333
www.goodwillekl.com



Community
Employment Services

● **Lambton College Community Employment Services**
Phone: (519) 882-4333
www.lambtoncollege.ca/CES/

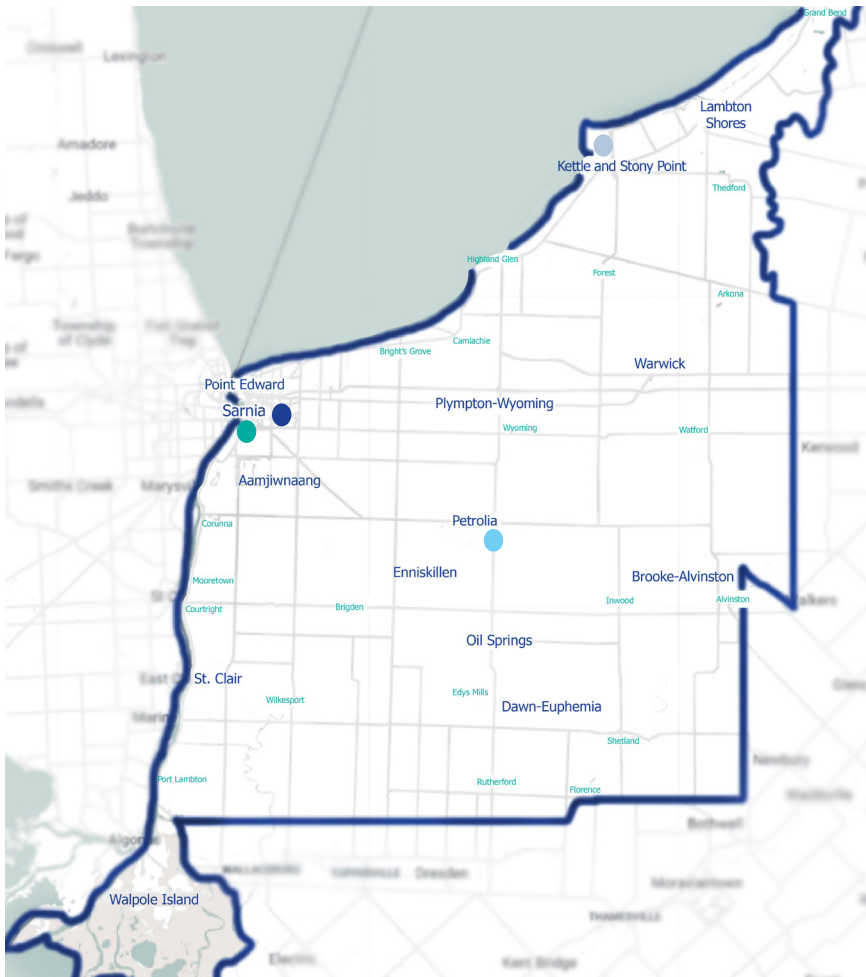


● **The Workplace Group**
Phone: (519) 337-7377
www.theworkplacegroup.ca



**Four Winds
Community Employment Services**

● **Four Winds Community Employment Services**
Phone: (519) 786-6780
www.kettlepoint.org/four-winds-community-employment-services/



Community Consultations

The Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board is committed to identifying needs and finding solutions to attract and retain a viable workforce. We regularly consult with local businesses to learn about employers' experiences and workforce issues. The information gathered helps us better understand our labour market data, which we share with students, job seekers and the public. Consultations were conducted in person, over the phone and virtually.



Some of the key trends that were relevant during 2020 for local employers were related to the impact of COVID-19 on business operations. One of the key challenges included the need for a pivot towards implementing digital business operations to continue to serve consumers while adapting to the changing workforce environments. The shift to either e-commerce, offering services virtually, or working remotely created obstacles for employers, as each presented its own set of challenges. Employers expressed interest in the ability to access local supports to assist with adapting their new working environments, with specific interest in training opportunities to either implement e-commerce into their business, training on virtual softwares and tools as well as the policies and best practices to manage a remote workforce.

Soft skills continued to be a challenge when recruiting, as employers expressed that job seekers lacked basic soft skills and literacy skills when entering the workforce. One of the added challenges due to COVID-19 was the inexperience of job seekers effectively interviewing virtually. There is a local need for additional training in soft skills, with added training on preparing job seekers for the shift to virtual and remote work environments and components. Local agencies that assist job seekers indicated that there has been a shift in the demographics of clients accessing services, with an increase in those aged 40+ now utilizing job placement services due to job losses as a result of COVID-19.

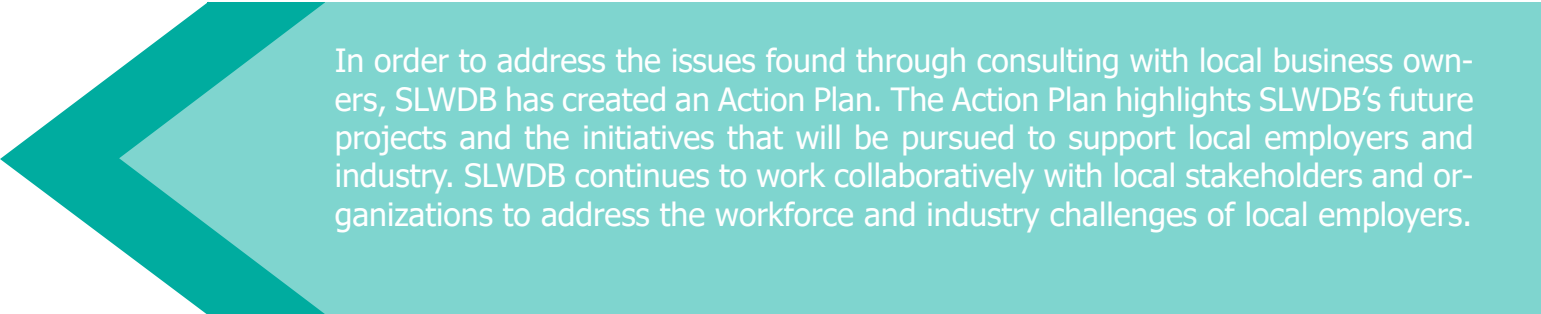
Experiential learning has been identified as a valuable tool when preparing youth for entering the workforce. Through consultations, employers indicated that there is a greater need for experiential learning opportunities for job seekers and youth in the community. Experiential learning involves opportunities such as co-ops or volunteer positions where the job seekers are able to be submerged into the workplace and acquire hands-on training on the job with the guidance of a mentor. Employers that have initiated co-op opportunities have had great success with recruitment afterwards. However, there is concern for how experiential learning opportunities will be impacted due to COVID-19.

Employers indicated that niche and unique skill sets provide the most challenge when recruiting. To assist with increasing retention, employers have implemented strategies to retain employees by offering incentives such as benefits, and increasing employee recognition in cases where employers are unable to compete with the wages of industry competitors. One strategy used when employers are struggling with recruitment is hiring international students. Those businesses who have hired international students either for co-op placements or permanent positions voiced their success and admiration for their outstanding work-ethic.

Professional occupations posed challenges to employers as the skills and qualifications needed to fulfill workforce demand was not sufficient in the Sarnia Lambton area. This led local employers to pursue candidates outside of the area and in other regions of Ontario. Some of the suggestions made include having a recruitment taskforce for each industry that would attract candidates to the local area to decrease the individual cost of recruiting while also increasing the candidate supply. Another successful approach used to increase attraction and retention in professional occupations include mentorship programs similar to experiential learning opportunities where new hires are assigned a mentor who is an existing employee to assist in acclimatizing the employee to the workplace and community culture.

COVID-19 created unprecedented challenges for recruitment, retention and encouraging employees to return to work. There were large amounts of layoffs due to the economic shutdown, creating disincentives for employees as employers struggled to encourage their workforce to return to work. A commonly reported obstacle for returning to work included imitations in accessing childcare. Employers are now having to explore Human Resources policies and procedures in order to mitigate the unprecedented circumstances surrounding the new workplace and workforce environments.

Through consultations, employers expressed the need for additional supports for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Employers indicated a need for community support groups for entrepreneurs, where business owners can openly network and share industry insights to support one another. Local business owners indicated that there is a gap in services within the community, as entrepreneurs have limited access or eligibility for funding and supports. The solution proposed by local employers was to have a support network led by entrepreneurs, for entrepreneurs within the community.



In order to address the issues found through consulting with local business owners, SLWDB has created an Action Plan. The Action Plan highlights SLWDB's future projects and the initiatives that will be pursued to support local employers and industry. SLWDB continues to work collaboratively with local stakeholders and organizations to address the workforce and industry challenges of local employers.

2021-2022 Action Plan

The Action Plan for 2021-2022 is addressing several gaps highlighted in local statistical data and through community consultations. The Action Plan will focus on the recruitment of skilled workers to grow the local workforce and the supports needed in the post pandemic workforce. Additionally, and unique to the Action Plan of 2021-2022, is a focus on strengthening and rebuilding the local workforce following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attracting International Students and Newcomers

Since 2016 Lambton County's population has been steadily decreasing at a loss of 1%. The highest loss has been those of working age (noted in table 3 on page 8). This shortage is also highlighted in the job demand data. Key sectors have postings listed on local job boards for up to 180 days (WISL Job Board Data). We must take action and increase the recruitment and retention of those in the key demographic groups. International students and newcomers represent a group that is educated and motivated to work. This population could potentially fill in the workforce gaps and bolster our economic growth.

Outcomes:

- Increased awareness for the benefit to hiring international students and newcomers.
- Increased partnerships that support our recruitment aims

Past Activities:

- Created a data based infographic to highlight the benefits to attracting international students and newcomers.
- Promoting job posts on social media.

Short-term Goals (completed in 2021/2022):

- SLWDB will investigate further opportunities to share information on the process relating to hiring international students.
- SLWDB will maintain active partnerships with the Local Immigration Partnership and Lambton College to support any advocacy work being done locally.

Long-term Goals (completed by 2025):

- SLWDB will investigate further opportunities to provide information sessions and lead awareness campaigns on the value of hiring newcomers and international students.

Recruiting Women to the Skilled Trade

Our research into the skilled trades demonstrated a gap in the number of women participating in the skilled trades. This gap is demonstrated in both the demand for skilled trade workers locally and the number of women working in the skilled trades. To support local employers find skilled workers, especially for difficult to fill roles, we must focus on recruitment efforts in under-represented demographics, such as women.

Outcomes:

- Increased knowledge on pathways to the skilled trades.
- Increased awareness of the local demand for skilled trade workers and the need to diversify the recruitment initiatives.

Past Activities:

- SLWDB has shared social media campaigns created by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to boost participation of women in the skilled trades.

Short-term Goals (completed in 2021/2022):

- SLWDB will lead an initiative to uncover the barriers to women wanting to enter the skilled trades and a call to action to eliminate these barriers.

Long-term Goals (completed by 2025):

- The identification of barriers can be used to highlight gaps in recruitment strategies and/or create resources to support women along the pathway of apprenticeship training.

The Shifting Physical Workspace

During the first four weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic 17% of the local workforce shifted to working from home (<https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-Worker-Impact-Survey-Results.pdf>). This created a broad shift in the nature of the workplace however, very little data is available to suggest what the nature of the post COVID-19 workplace is locally. Specifically, very little is known as to how local employers are managing a remote workplace and their plan for the future nor do we fully understand how employees are managing the shift to remote work.

Outcomes:

- Increased knowledge of current workplace practices and policies.

Past Activities:

- SLWDB ran a Worker Survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the local workforce.
- SLWDB supported the creation and launch of a Business Survey to assess how local employers were managing through COVID-19 restrictions.

Short-term Goals (completed in 2021/2022):

- SLWDB will collect key information related to the nature of the post COVID-19 workplace.

Long-term Goals (completed by 2025):

- SLWDB will investigate the changes and adjustment to the physical workspace post pandemic.

Reskilling a Post COVID-19 Workforce

When local businesses were mandated to close an estimated 37% of the workforce was permanently or temporarily laid off (<https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-Worker-Impact-Survey-Results.pdf>). How this shifted the need for retraining is virtually unknown. Employment Ontario providers are already reporting seeing a shift in the demographic of the job seeker coming for employment services. During consultations with E.O providers, some providers highlighted that the job seekers of today are in need of skills retraining including digital literacy and understanding the new job market.

Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of what new skills are needed by job seekers.
- Continued engagement with E.O providers to define the needs of job seekers and employers.

Past Activities:

- SLWDB had multiple consultations with E.O. providers to get a sense of the picture of today's job seeker.

Short-term Goals (completed in 2021/2022):

- SLWDB will promote existing opportunities to reskill job seekers with the necessary skills.

Long-term Goals (completed by 2025):

- Disseminate key demographic shifts in job seekers and highlight these skills for employers.

Supporting Local Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs are an integral part of maintaining and boosting our local economy. Data by Statistics Canada suggests that entrepreneurs make up 38% of our workforce. In SLWDB's recent EmployerOne survey it was suggested that more focused work needs to be done with and for entrepreneurs.

Outcomes:

- Increased number of collaborative consultations with local entrepreneurs.

Past Activities:

- SLWDB has added a section to our EmployerOne survey to solicit statistical data on local entrepreneurs.

Short-term Goals (completed in 2021/2022):

- SLWDB will explore the needs of local entrepreneurs and highlight key barriers and facilitators to success.

Long-term Goals (completed by 2025):

- SLWDB will share the barriers and facilitators as identified by entrepreneurs.
- A network of entrepreneurs will be established to facilitate networking.

Mental Health in the Workplace

The link between mental health and maintaining an engaged workforce has been well documented. Mental health has a big impact on the workforce. A report by Centre for Addiction and Mental Health cites research that suggests employees with mental health issues are more likely to be absent from work and for longer periods of time (CAMH Review, 2020). The impact of mental health issues on the local workforce was likely exasperated throughout COVID-19, with over 60% of people reporting to be concerned about having enough money for food and living expenses (COVID-19 Worker Survey, <https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-Worker-Impact-Survey-Results.pdf>). A part of supporting the local workforce will be to connect local employers and job seekers with the appropriate support agencies.

Outcomes:

- Strengthen the collaborative partnerships with social service agencies providing mental health supports.

Past Activities:

- SLWDB has spearheaded a committee to disseminate information to the local workforce on workplace wellness.

Short-term Goals (completed in 2021/2022):

- SLWDB will continue to lead initiatives to connect the workforce with accurate information on mental health.

Long-term Goals (completed by 2025):

- SLWDB will raise awareness on the connection between lost productivity at work and mental health issues.

Appendix 1: Note on Data sources

A Note on Business Counts:

Statistics Canada explicitly advises against making comparisons of business counts over time. Changes have been made to the way in which this data is collected and how it is categorized. As a result, it is not possible to compare year-over-year business counts.

A Note on Data Comparison:

Comparisons of occupational data over time are not advised because of significant changes to the National Occupational Classification (NOC) system since 2006. The 2011 comparisons are also not advised because the data are from the voluntary National Household Survey (NHS), not the long form census.

A Note on Data Suppression:

Published census data goes through a variety of automated and manual processes to determine whether the data needs to be suppressed. This is done primarily for two reasons: to ensure that the identity and characteristics of respondents is not disclosed (which is referred to as confidentiality) and to limit the dissemination of data of unacceptable quality (which is referred to as data quality).

A Note on Data Revision:

Statistics Canada releases initial estimates for a given period (month or quarter), revises them in subsequent periods based on new information, then revises them again in an annual or historical revision process.

A Note on 2011 Census Data:

Every five years, Statistics Canada surveys the population through a mandatory survey called the Census. There are two types of Census surveys: the short form, which asks about personal demographic information (e.g., sex, age, marital status, language), and the long form, which asks questions about identity (e.g., Indigenous, immigrant status, visible minority), educational attainment, housing, employment, among other topics. The mandatory long form census was replaced with the voluntary NHS in 2011 but then reinstated in 2016. The non-response rate was considerably higher in 2011 with the NHS than it was for the Census in 2006 and 2016. A higher non-response rate means there is a greater risk that the people who completed the survey differ from the people who did not complete the survey. This is a concern because diversity of a population will not be captured very well in instances with a high nonresponse rate. Given the difference in quality of these surveys, in this report 2016 Census data is compared with 2006 Census data, not the 2011 NHS.

A Note on Employment Ontario Data:

The Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development shares aggregate data on clients accessing Employment Ontario services, including services from local Employment Service and Literacy and Basic Skills providers. To ensure confidentiality, any data counts between 1 and 9 participants has been suppressed. The data reported reflects closed cases for the previous fiscal year, which ran from April 1, 2019 to March 30, 2020.



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