COVID-19 WORKER IMPACT SURVEY

COMPLETE RESULTS

SARNIA LAMBTON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

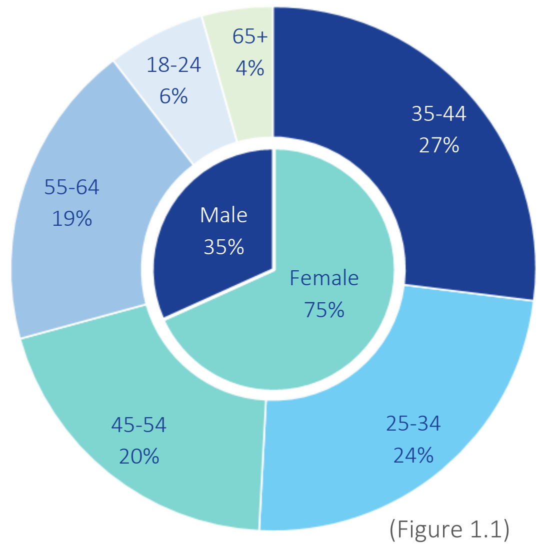
Introduction

The COVID-19 global pandemic lead to a shut down of the many businesses in Sarnia-Lambton beginning on March 17th. It was anticipated this would have a drastic impact on the local workforce. Thus, the COVID-19 Worker Impact Survey was designed to capture a snapshot of the fallout from the lock down, specifically for workers. This survey represents a collaborative effort between seven Workforce Boards across Southwestern Ontario. To maintain conciseness only the results of the data collected from Sarnia-Lambton (297 respondents) are reported here. Complete regional results are available at www.slwdb.org.

Demographic Overview

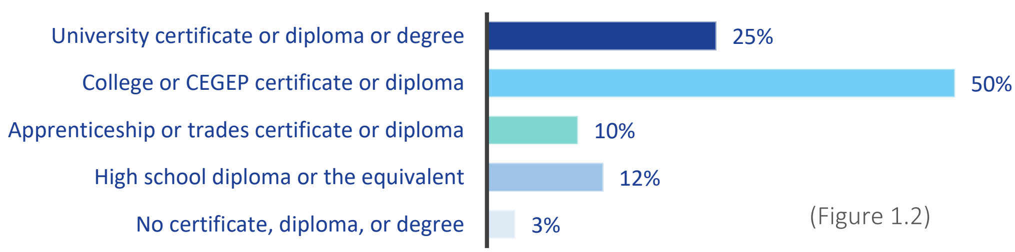
The survey was predominantly completed by females and by those between the ages 35-44 (Figure 1.1). Prior to the lock down the majority of respondents reported being employed in a full-time position (74.4%), while 17.8% were employed in part-time positions. Half of the respondents had completed college, whereas 25% had a university degree (Figure 1.2). The top occupations of respondents are listed in Figure 1.3 with Sales and service being the most widely represented.

Age and gender breakdown



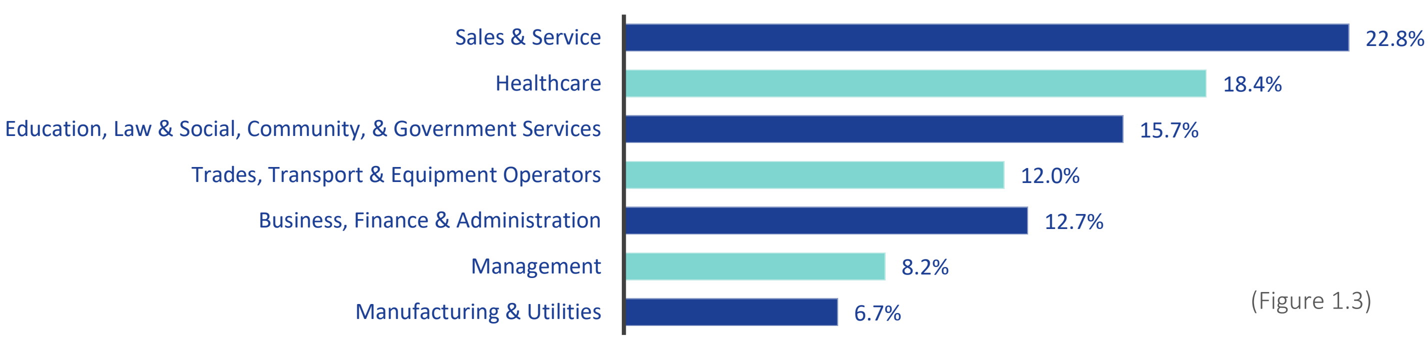
(Figure 1.1)

Education levels of respondents



(Figure 1.2)

Occupation of respondents



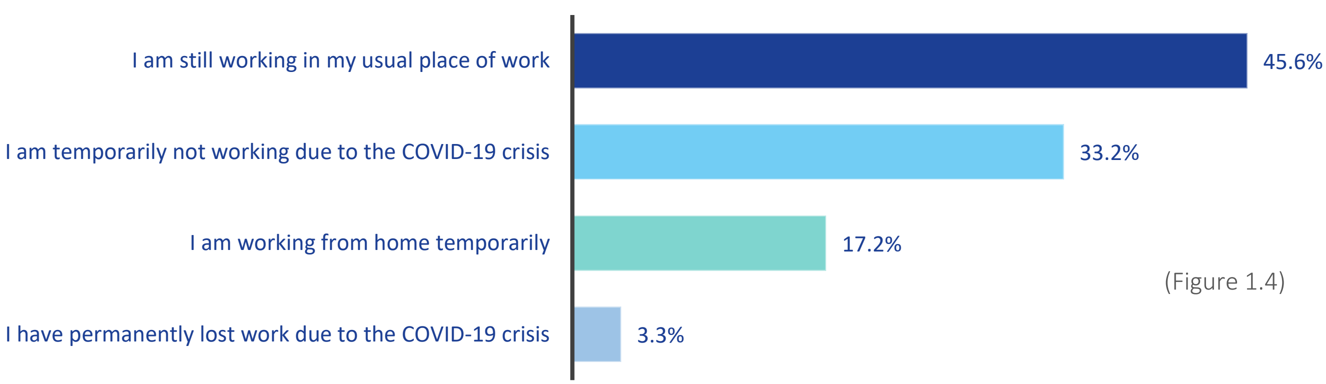
(Figure 1.3)

Job Impact

Approximately 37% of all respondents are out of work due to the COVID-19 crisis, either temporarily or permanently (Figure 1.4). Temporary business shutdown accounted for over a quarter of the reported job loss, while 24% of respondents reported a slowdown in business as the reason for reduction of work (Figure 1.5). Other reasons given by respondents for not working were a requirement to provide care for a dependent, requirement to self-quarantine or inability to get to work/lack of transportation.

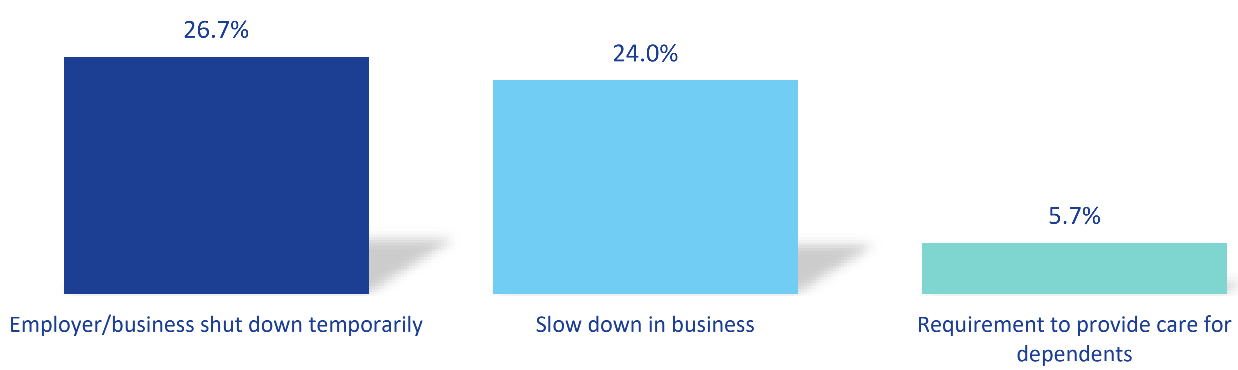
The impact of COVID-19 on the workforce is beyond the metric of working/not working. While 29.2% of respondents report their workload has not been affected by the outbreak, 21.5% report that despite still being in the workforce, they are working less than they did prior to the outbreak. On the other hand, 19% of respondents have experienced an increase in their workload. The top three occupations observed to have increases in workload according to respondents were in health cares & social assistance (29.8%), education (29.4%), and administrative and support & waste management & remediation services (28.6%).

Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Respondents' Employment Status



(Figure 1.4)

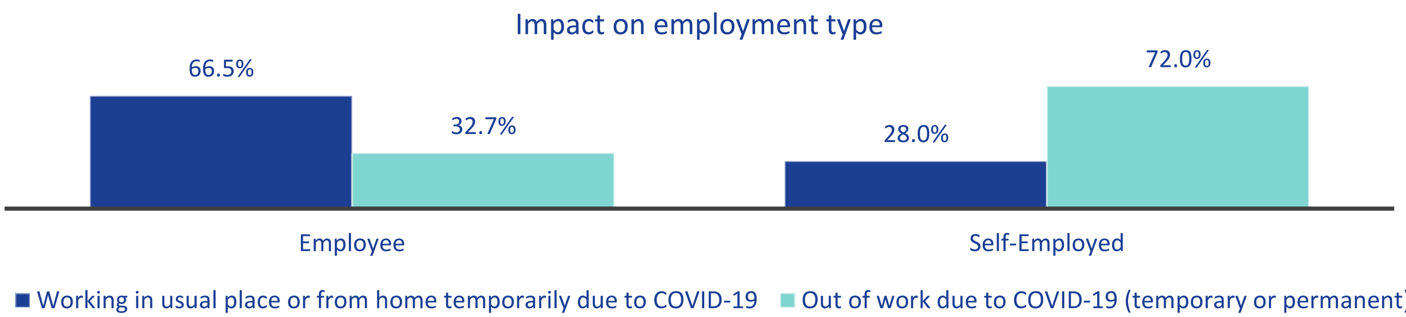
Cause of work reduction



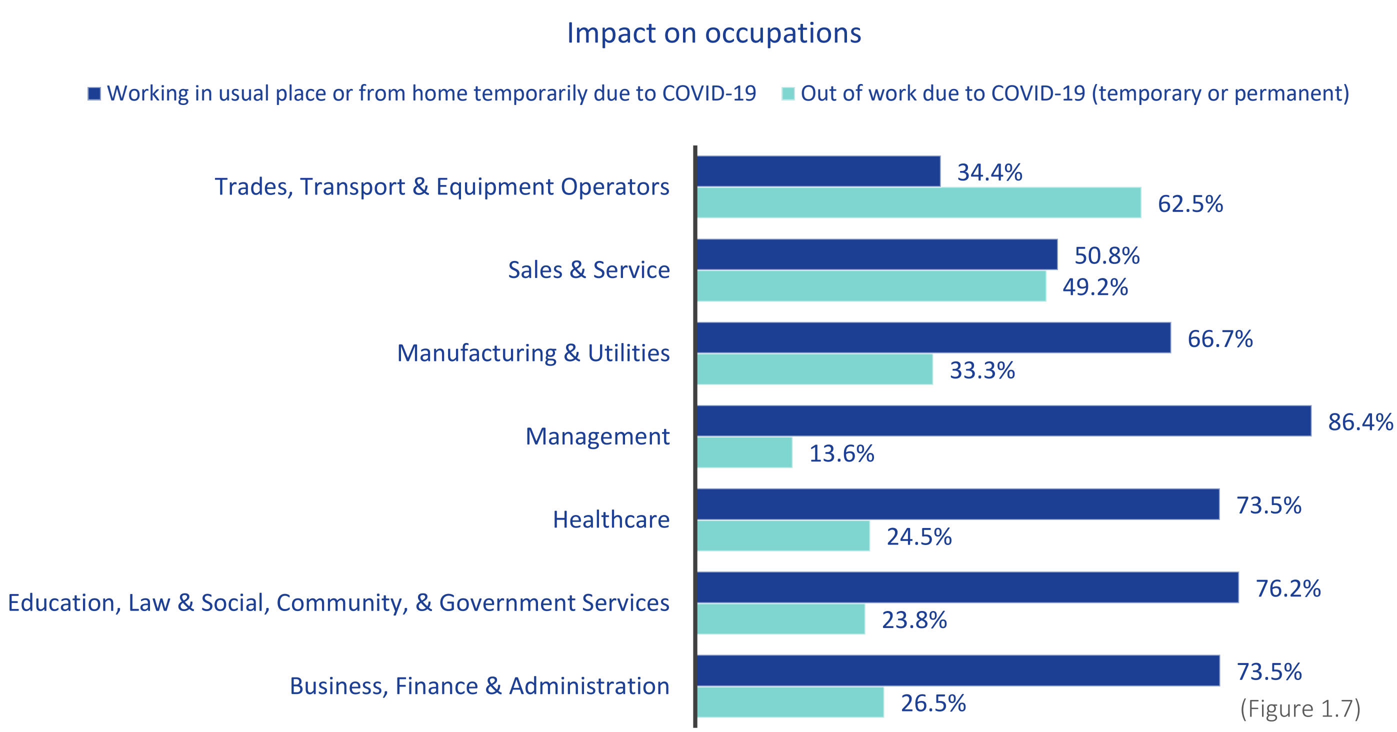
(Figure 1.5)

Occupations most affected by the COVID-19 crisis are 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). In terms of the type of worker impacted by COVID-19. Those who are self-employed described experiencing a bigger impact due to COVID-19 with 72% reporting being out of work. Conversely, only 32.7% of employees indicated they were out of work (Figure 1.6).

The impact on occupations was assessed by asking respondents their occupational category and current employment status. Given the strong and diverse labour force our community has in the trades sectors, it is a notable finding that 62.5% of respondents with occupations in the trades, transport & equipment operators report that they are out of work due to COVID-19 (Figure 1.7). The least impact was seen in the Management category (Figure 1.7).



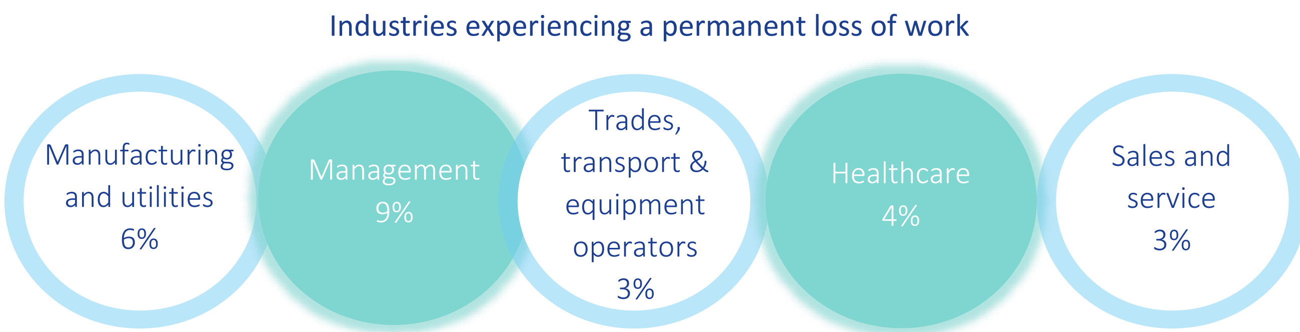
(Figure 1.6)



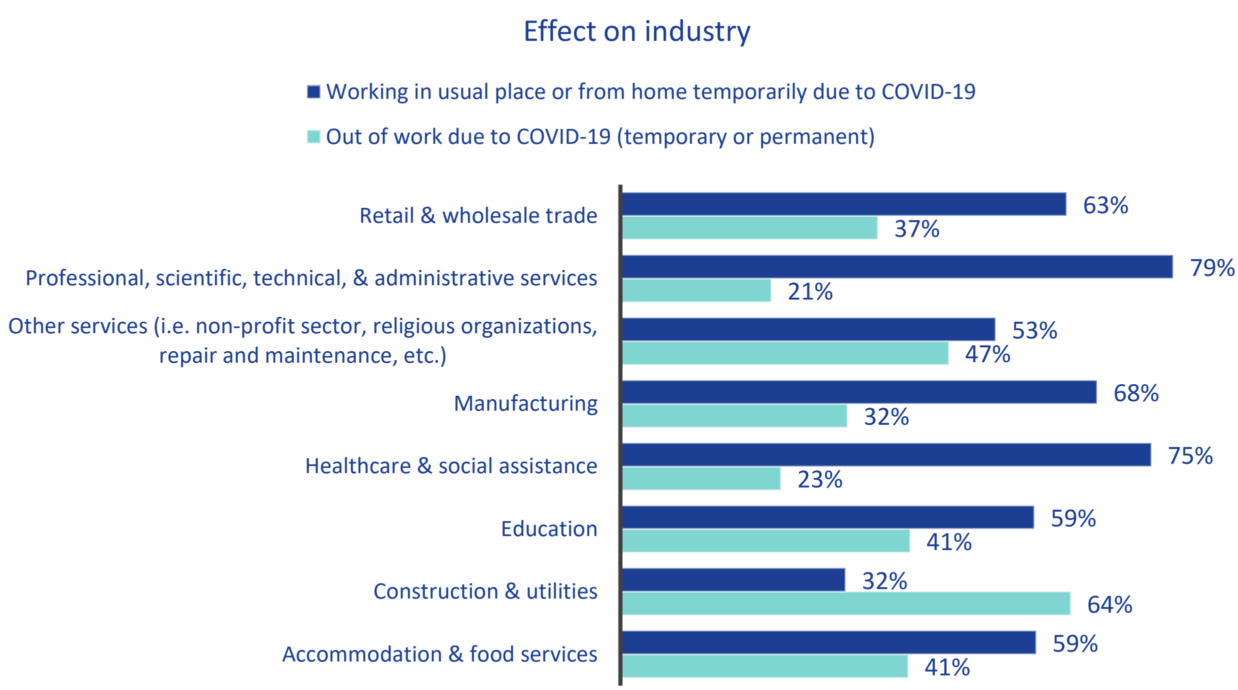
(Figure 1.7)

In terms of permanent job losses, the survey found that only 3.3% of respondents experienced a permanent loss of jobs. Thus, there are very few respondents in each occupational category who have permanently lost their job. Figure 1.8 denotes the percentage in each industry experiencing permanent job loss.

Data was also generated to describe the percentage of respondents in each industry that is experiencing job loss. Over 50% of respondents in the following occupations are out of work temporarily or permanently: arts, entertainment and recreation; construction and utilities; information and cultural industries; and mining. Over 75% of respondents in the following industries are working in their usual place of work or from home: professional, scientific, technical and administrative services; public administration; healthcare and social assistance; finance and real estate; and agriculture, forestry and fishing (Figure 1.9).



(Figure 1.8)



(Figure 1.9)

Household Impact

As a result of the crisis, respondents are worried about being able to pay their monthly bills (62.6%), having enough food for themselves and/or their family (59.9%) and pay their rent or mortgage (52.4%) as seen in Figure 1.10. The vast majority of respondents (79.5%) were aware of the additional supports the government has set up to support workers during the COVID-19.

The toll of COVID-19 on workers extends beyond the financial ramifications. Respondents were broadly asked to describe how COVID-19 is impacting them. Some excerpts are given in Figure 1.11 to describe some of the issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of COVID-19, respondents' main concerns were their ability to:

Pay monthly bills
63%

Have enough food
60%

Pay rent or mortgage
52%

(Figure 1.10)

Examples of Worker Worries during the COVID-19 Crisis

I do want to work, but if I have no transportation (due to limited bus service). It is very stressful because I don't know what source of income I could have. I certainly don't want to apply for O.W. and don't know if I am even eligible. I never had anxiety issues before but am now experiencing anxiety attacks due to the uncertainty of this situation.

Scary....stressful.... not worth the risk especially at a minimum wage job, but need to pay rent. Afraid of bringing virus home to my child and elderly mom.

As a contractor working in the various plants in the Sarnia area and across Canada my work has slowed to a standstill. Most plants have cancelled or delayed projects indefinitely forcing me to file for EI insurance.

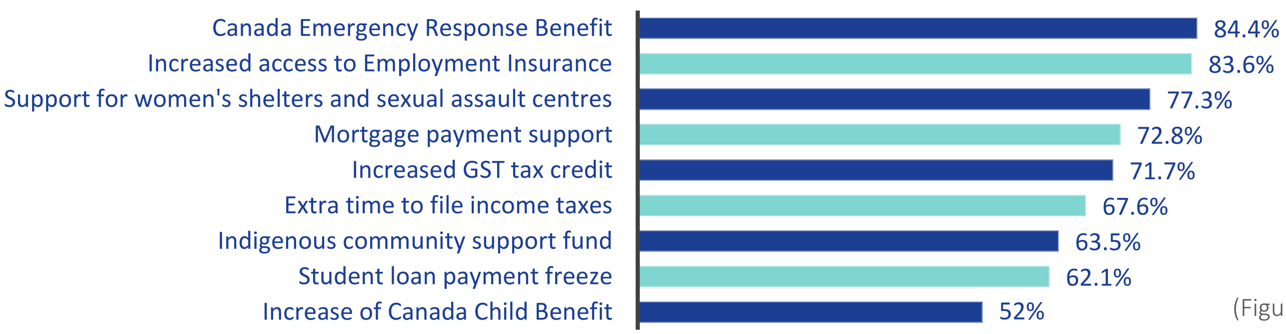
Working from home has been incredibly difficult given the poor internet connection. I am working more hours but getting less done… Add in trying to assist my kids with their online work and let's just say I am praying for the isolation to end.

(Figure 1.11)

Evaluation of Support Programs

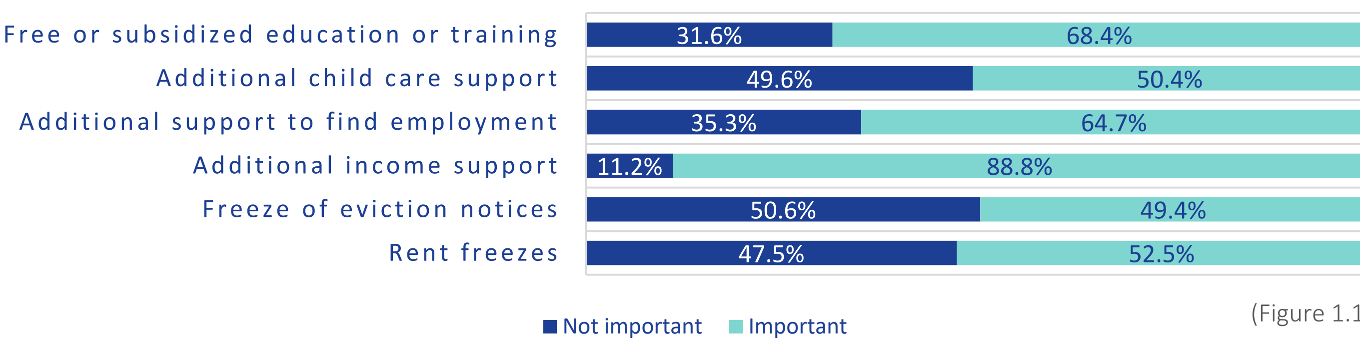
Respondents were asked to rate current and prospective community and government supports. In terms of existing supports all of the supports listed were deemed as important (Figure 1.12). The most important Government initiatives as chosen by respondents was the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (84.4%) and increased access to Employment Insurance (83.6%). For prospective supports the respondents suggested that additional income supports and free or subsidized education or training should be two top priorities (Figure 1.13). Respondents were also asked to qualify how they felt about accessing government supports. To depict their responses a few quotations are utilized to exemplify some of the key issues (Figure 1.14)

Existing supports rated the most important



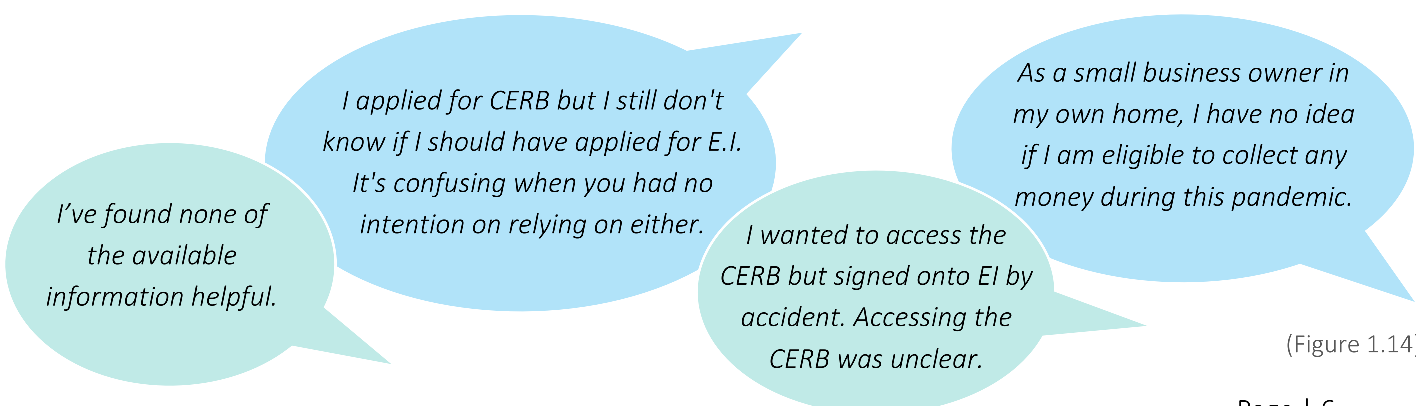
(Figure 1.12)

Importance of prospective supports



(Figure 1.13)

Concerns Related to Access to Government Emergency Supports



(Figure 1.14)

Recovery Planning

As Sarnia-Lambton moves towards the recovery phase post-COVID-19 it is important to explore how the local workforce feels about returning to work and engaging with other members of our community. According to this survey 62.5% of respondents agree that they are confident in their ability to continue working or to find work post-COVID-19. Respondents indicated they are very hopeful for the future as a worker and community member in Sarnia-Lambton. Overall, 58% felt our community will be stronger following the COVID-19 crisis.

SLWDB continues to provide up to date information on government and community supports available during this pandemic. Upcoming projects will include a focus on supporting workers as they navigate back to the workforce. We also will continue to work with community partners and support local employers as they re-open.

(Figure 1.15)

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