

EMPLOYER *one* survey

2023 Results



SARNIA LAMBTON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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

The views expressed in this report are those of the Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board and do not necessarily represent those of the province. The Government of Ontario and its agencies are not bound by the recommendations of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EmployerOne Survey is a community-wide survey that gathers information directly from local employers to address local workforce needs and identify trends. This report also provides job seekers and employers with data on local hiring trends and recruitment methods for future and career planning.

The survey was created to address:

- Challenges with recruitment, retention, and hard-to-fill positions.
- The challenges faced by small businesses and sole proprietors.

This year we gathered input from 263 local employers with a larger representation from those in Retail trade, Healthcare and social assistance, and Construction. In line with survey results from previous years, employers reported having hard to fill positions, most notably in Retail trade, Other services (except public administration), and Healthcare and social assistance. It is anticipated this hiring need will continue as a majority of employers plan to hire this year.

This report is designed to be informative and comprehensive and delivered in a manner that all can understand and enjoy. We welcome any feedback and questions by contacting:

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BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

Of the 263 businesses that took part in the 10th annual EmployerOne Survey, 18% were established within the past 5 years, while 82% were established more than 5 years ago. Businesses with local head offices accounted for 79% of respondents, while the remaining 21% of businesses were branches with head offices located outside of the region.

The physical landscape of the current workforce varied, as 75% of businesses indicated that staff were working onsite, 5% relied solely on remote work, and 20% utilized a hybrid approach with staff working both remotely and on-site. Sole proprietors primarily worked on site (53%), while a smaller percentage worked hybrid (38%) and remotely (7%).

Figure 1: Physical landscape of current workforce.

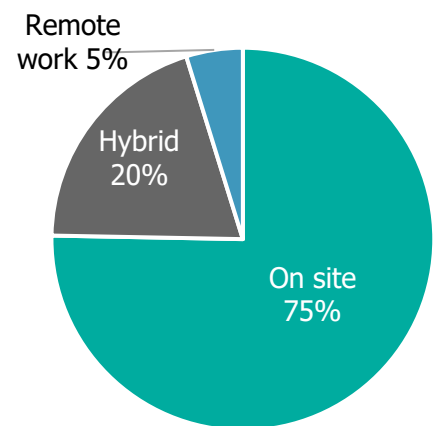
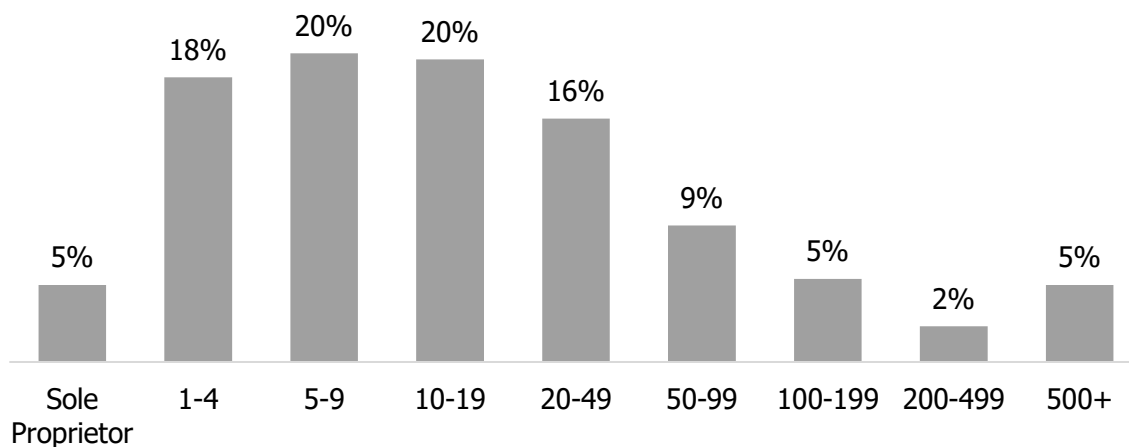


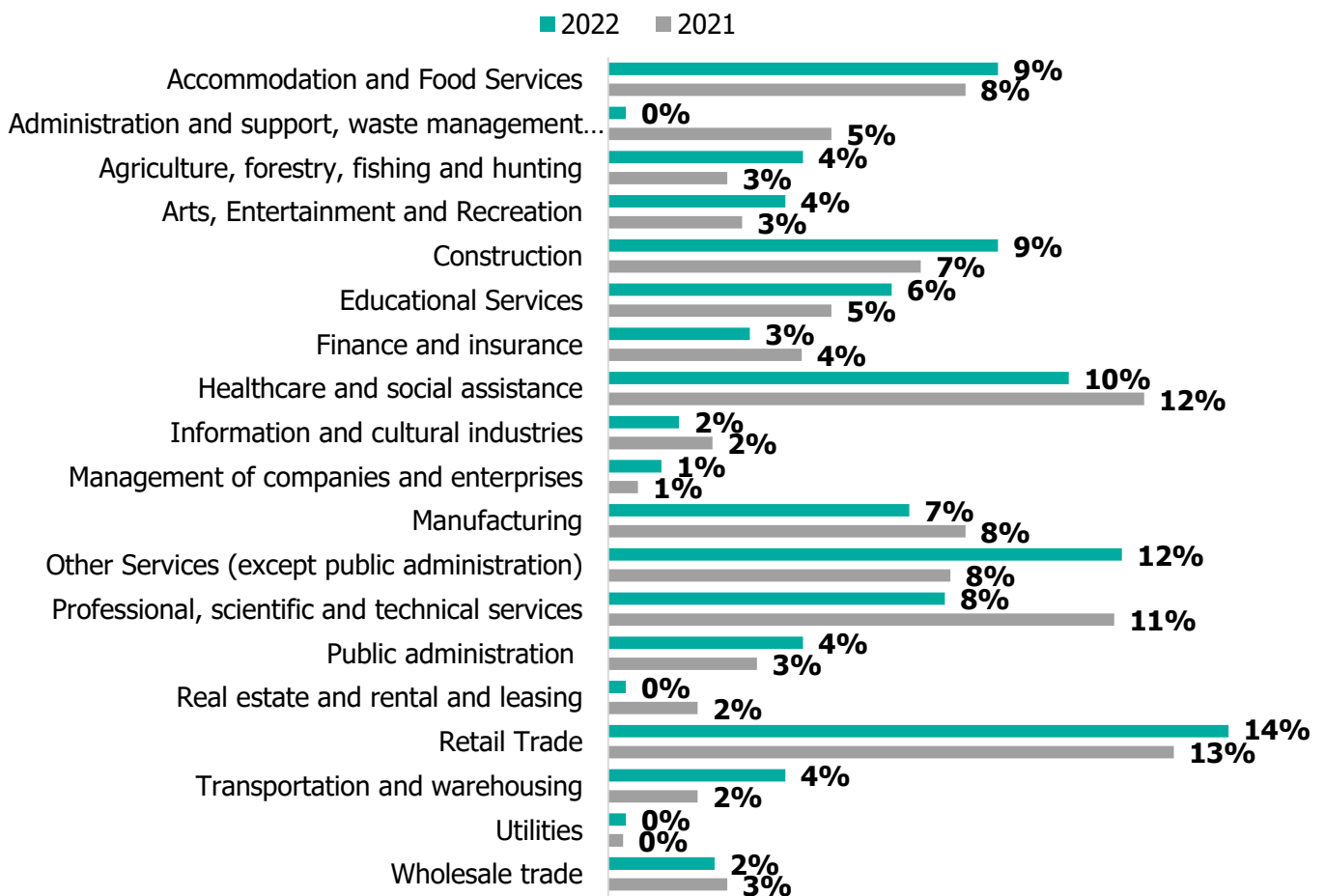
Figure 2: Business size categorization of survey respondents.



INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Compared to the previous year's EmployerOne Survey results, there was an increase in the number of responses from businesses within Other Services (except public administration) (+6), Transport and warehousing (+4), and Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (+3). Industries with the largest decrease in responses from the previous year's EmployerOne Survey were among business operating in Professional, scientific and technical services (-15), Administration and support, waste management and remediation services (-14), and Healthcare and social assistance (-10).

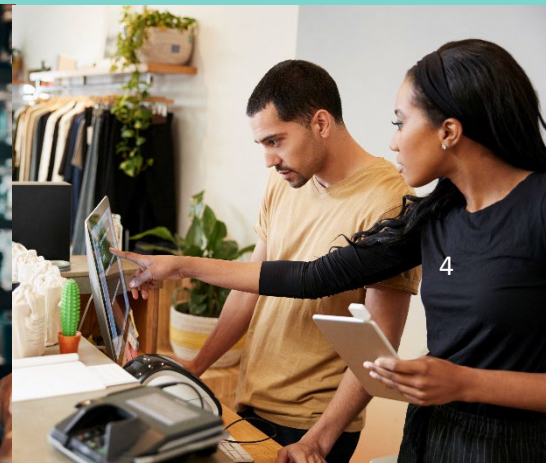
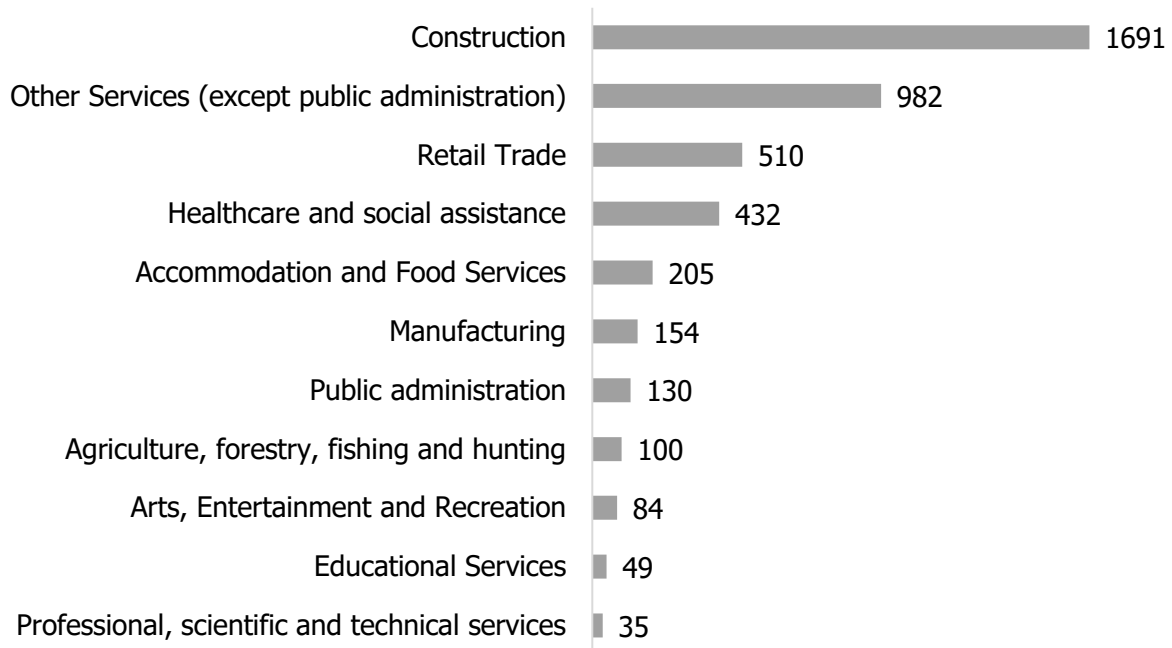
Figure 3: Industry categorization of survey respondents.



2022 HIRING TRENDS

The majority of the businesses with employees, (87%) indicated they had hired an employee within the last 12 months, with an estimated total of 4,512 new hires by 216 organizations. In contrast, there were 4,222 new hires by 272 organizations in the previous year. Employment types varied, as 23% were permanent full-time, 20% were permanent part-time, and 57% were contract/seasonal positions.

Figure 4: Total number of hires by industry categorization.



Overall, 60% of all businesses reported having hard-to-fill positions. This was echoed in 60% of small businesses (1- 99 employees), 80% of medium businesses (100-499 employees) and 54% of large businesses (500+ employees). The primary reasons that positions were hard to fill were a lack of applicants (24%), a lack of qualifications (15%), and lack of work experience (15%). Other reasons suggested by employers that are not listed in the chart below includes applicants who express interest in a position but don't respond to any follow-ups attempts from employers, an inability to offer competitive wages, and unmotivated workers.

Industries that experienced hard to fill positions as a result of not enough applicants include those in Healthcare and social assistance (88%), Construction (77%), Other services (except public administration) (58%), and Accommodation and food services (50%). In addition, industries that experienced hard-to-fill positions due to a lack of qualifications include those in Healthcare and social assistance (44%), Professional, scientific and technical services (66%), and Other services (except public administration) (50%).

Reasons why the positions were hard-to-fill:

- Not enough applicants (24%)
- Lack of qualifications (15%)
- Lack of work experience (15%)
- Lack of motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities (13%)
- Lack of technical skills (9%)
- No applicants at all (7%)
- Other (7%)
- Inability to compete with other employers (6%)
- Company is not accessible by public transit (4%)
- Lack of language skills (2%)
- Inability to assess a foreign educational qualification or credential (1%)

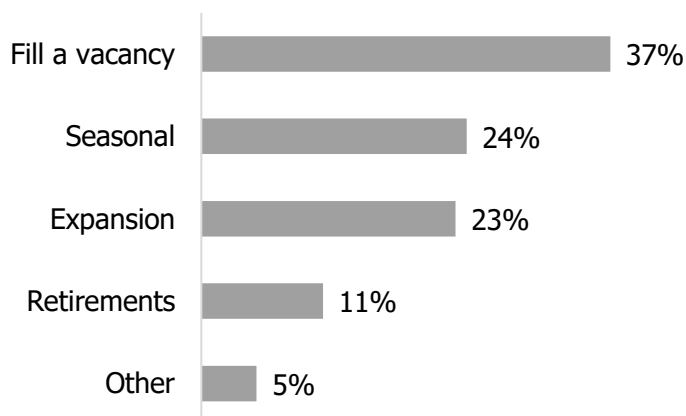


FUTURE HIRES

Looking to the future, 71% of respondents indicated that they expect to hire an estimated 1,295 employees in the coming year. Many of the planned hires will fill a current or expected vacancy or are a result of anticipated business expansions. Industries that anticipate recruiting the largest number of new hires in 2023 include Professional and scientific services (172), Retail trade (125), and Healthcare and social assistance (122).

Industries that expect to hire as a result of expansions include Professional, scientific and technical services (72%), Other services (except public administration) (50%), and Healthcare and social assistance (42%). In contrast, industries that expect to see the most retirements include Manufacturing (41%), Healthcare and social assistance (38%), and Other services (except public administration) (30%).

Figure 5: Expected reasons for hiring in 2023.



Occupations expected to be recruited for in 2023:

Professional and scientific services

- Accountant
- CAD Technician
- Engineer
- HR Advisor/Consultant
- Project Manager
- Receptionist

Retail trade

- Bookkeeper
- Cashier
- Customer Service
- Labour
- Sales Associate
- Store Manager

Healthcare and social assistance

- Child and youth worker
- Cook
- Occupational therapist
- Personal support worker
- Registered Practical Nurse
- Social worker
- Support worker



RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

The top recruitment method identified this year was word of mouth, personal contacts, or informal networks. Survey results from the last year indicated that the top recruitment method used by local employers was online job boards.

Other notable recruitment methods used by local employers include the use of Government and Non-government or community employment service centers or websites, union halls, and newspaper ads.

Although employers continue to rely heavily on the use of word-of-mouth recruitment tactics (31%), the increase in the use of job boards reveals how technology has increased in significance as employers pivot their recruitment strategies.

When rating the availability of qualified workers in the Sarnia Lambton area, employers have indicated an overall slight decrease compared to previous years. Last year 40% of employers indicated that the availability of qualified workers was excellent or good; in contrast, this year only 38% did so.

Top competencies employers look for when recruiting:

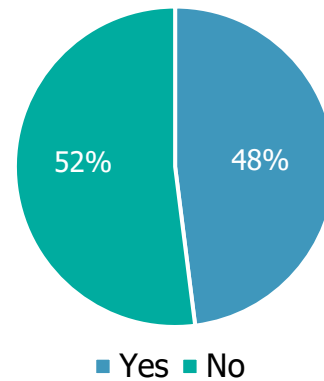
Dependability	13%	Professionalism	7%
Work ethic	13%	Fits with company/mission	6%
Teamwork/interpersonal	11%	Problem solving, reasoning	6%
Self-motivated/ability to work with little or no supervision	10%	Time management/organizational	4%
Customer service	9%	Computer/ digital literacy	2%
Willingness to learn	8%	Analytical/research	1%
Communication (both oral and written)	8%	Creativity	1%

Retention remained a concern for 48% of employers, and similarly 56% of respondents indicated they had a succession plan in place to accommodate projected growth and/or retirements over the next 3 to 5 years. The top industries that indicated a concern for retention include Healthcare and social assistance (15%), Other services (except public administration) (12%), Accommodation and food services (11%), Construction (9%) and Retail trade (9%).

Strategies used by local employers to encourage retention:

- Regular increase in salary (21%)
- Recognition for service and/or outstanding work (19%)
- Employee “perks” (i.e., discounts on merchandise, company-branded clothing, staff celebrations, etc.) (15%)
- Training opportunities (14%)
- Job flexibility (i.e., work from home arrangements, flex time, job sharing) (12%)
- Clear promotional paths or advancement opportunities (7%)
- Regular increases in benefits (6%)
- Job rotation opportunities (4%)
- Other (3%)

Figure 6: Retention a concern.

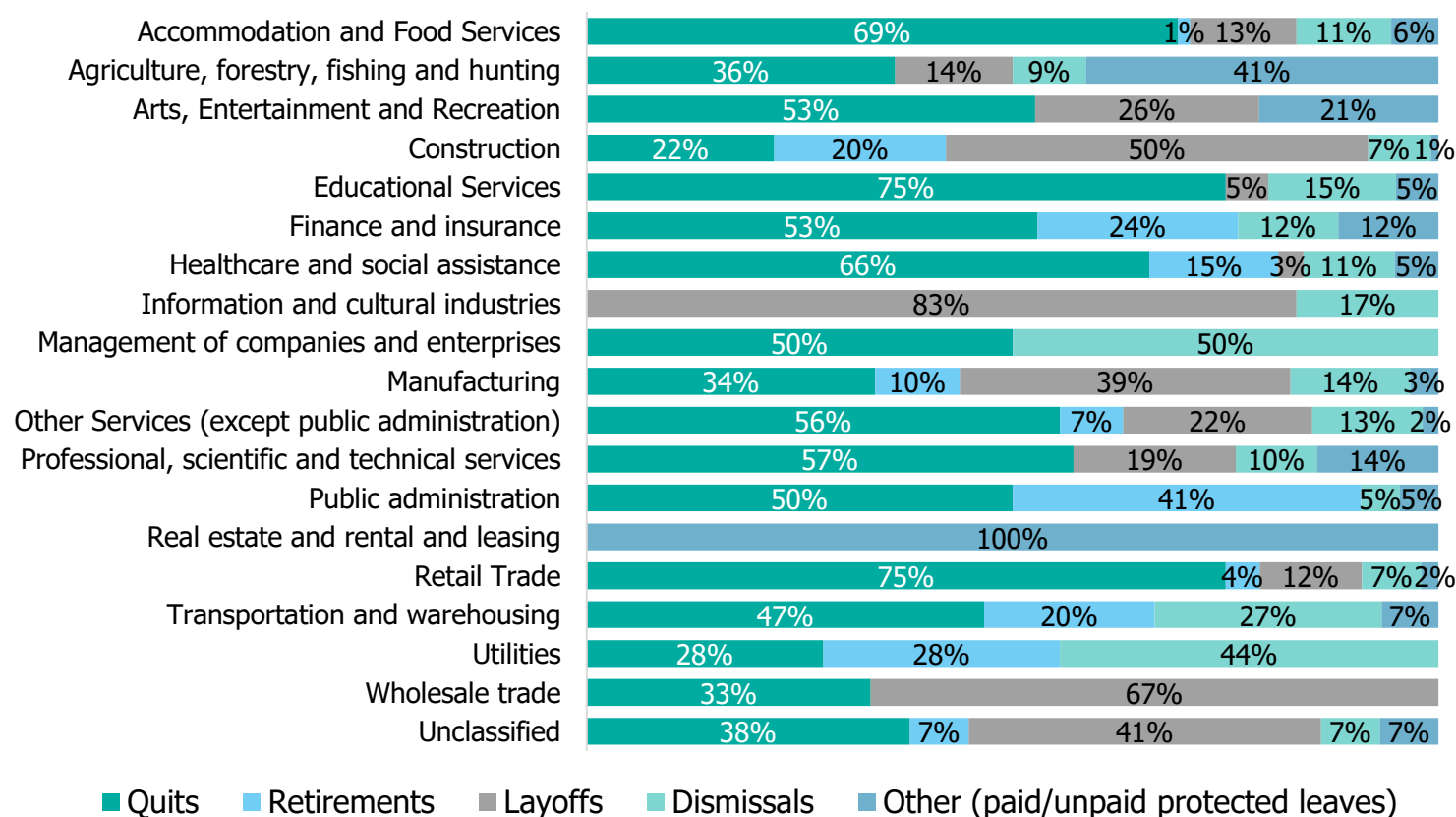


2022 SEPARATIONS

This year respondents reported 1,058 separations. A decrease from last year where respondents reported 4,684 separations (n=272 responses). Industries that experienced the largest number of separations include Healthcare and social assistance (26%), Retail trade (19%), Manufacturing (11%), and Construction (10%).

When we compare the type of separations reported this year compared to last year, there is a drastic contrast. This year, there was an increase in the number of quits (55% compared to 32% last year), a decrease in layoffs (18% compared to 28% last year), a decrease in paid/unpaid protected leaves (6% compared to 20% last year), while dismissals (11%) and retirements (10%) saw a change of less than 1% compared to last year.

Figure 7: Industry categorization of separation types.



INTERNATIONAL TALENT

New to this year's survey, respondents were asked about the likelihood of hiring international talent. The top industries that are most likely to hire international talent are Accommodation and food services (17%), Other services (except public administration) (12%), and Healthcare and social assistance (11%), while the industries that reported they are least likely to hire international talent are Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction (0%), Real estate and rental and leasing (0%), and Utilities (0%).

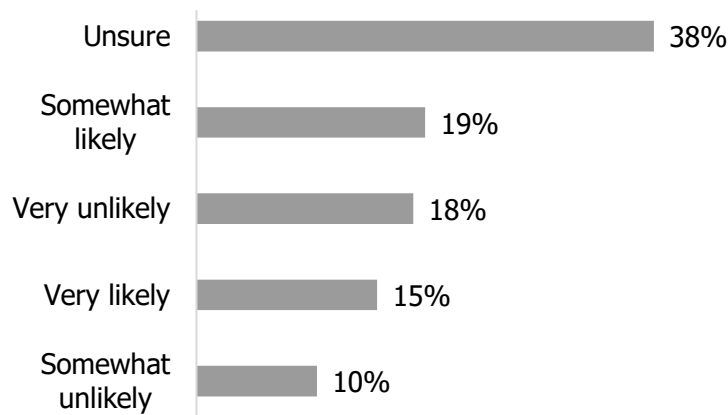
Positions that local employers are going to be hiring in 2023:

- Full-time position (33%)
- Part-time positions (28%)
- Co-op positions (paid or unpaid) (27%)
- Contract/limited term position (12%)

Strategies used by local employers to retain international talent:

- Screening support for evaluating credentials, transferable experience/skills, and language skills (29%)
- Recruitment services to access a pool of qualified immigrant talent (25%)
- Education and training support (21%)
- Mentoring programs for new staff (13%)
- Diversity training for managers and staff (12%)

Figure 8: Likelihood of local employers hiring international talent in 2023.





ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

At the end of the survey, participants are invited to share any additional insights into the current and future trends in their industry,

Trends common across two or more industries:

- In general, diversifying the types of businesses in the community is essential for job growth and creation.
- Businesses across multiple industries reiterated the challenges they are facing in recruitment and retention. Many indicated that attracting and retaining youth is essential for growth.
- Skills gaps and work ethic remain key barriers when hiring new staff, and recent graduates in particular.
- Supports and resources are needed locally to support low-income and homeless populations.
- Many businesses have seen a surge in operating costs such as wages, supplies, and that are expected to negatively impact small businesses in particular.
- An increase in oil prices and the effect of carbon taxes is expected to impact import costs.

Industry-specific trends:

- Skilled trades: access to skilled labour is a challenge as continuous waves of retirements are expected within these occupations.
- Social and community services: more funding is needed to support a robust workforce.
- Accommodation and food services: businesses are experiencing a shift in their traditional business model as many services are moving online, including food order and delivery, lodging, and rental services.



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We invite community feedback on all SLWDB publications:
[Provide feedback on the 2023 EmployerOne Survey Results](#)