

EMPLOYERone survey

2024 Results





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The views expressed in this report are those 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 any recommendations contained in this document.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EmployerOne Survey is an annual survey conducted within the Sarnia Lambton community to gather information directly from local employers regarding their workforce needs and hiring trends. The report generated from this survey provides job seekers and employers with valuable insights into the local job market and recruitment methods for future and career planning.

The survey aims to address several challenges such as recruitment, retention, and hard-to-fill positions. It also focuses on the challenges faced by small businesses and sole proprietors. By collecting data from local employers, the survey helps to identify any gaps in the job market and provides an opportunity for stakeholders to work together to address them.

This year, the survey received responses from 304 local businesses representing various sectors of the economy. Notably, there was increased participation from industries such as Educational Services, Professional, scientific, and technical services, Retail, and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, indicating a broad spectrum of employer engagement. This level of participation is a testament to the importance and relevance of the survey to local businesses.

The report is designed to be informative, comprehensive, and easily understandable. We welcome any feedback or questions. You can reach us by contacting:

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BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

Of the 304 businesses that took part in the 11th annual EmployerOne Survey, 22% were established within the past 5 years, while 78% 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 76% of businesses indicated that staff were working onsite, 5% relied solely on remote work, and 19% utilized a hybrid approach with staff working both remotely and on-site. Sole proprietors primarily worked on site (45%), while a smaller percentage worked hybrid (35%) and remotely (20%).

Figure 1: Physical landscape of current workforce.

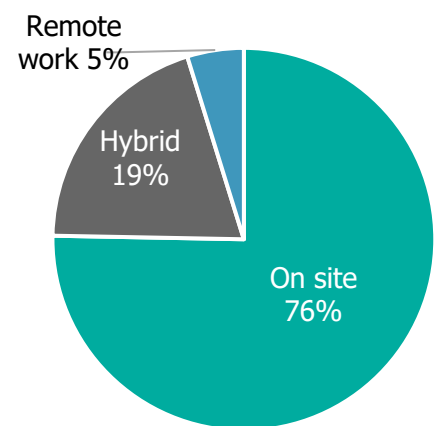
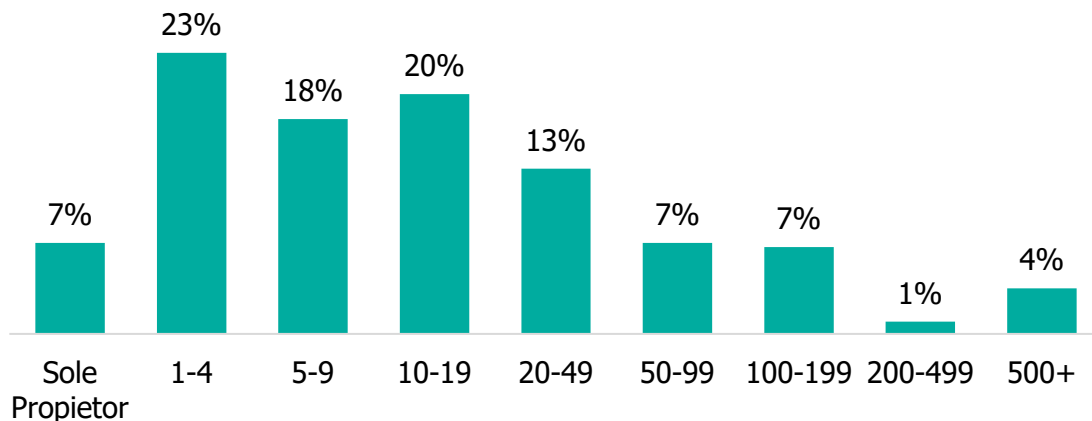


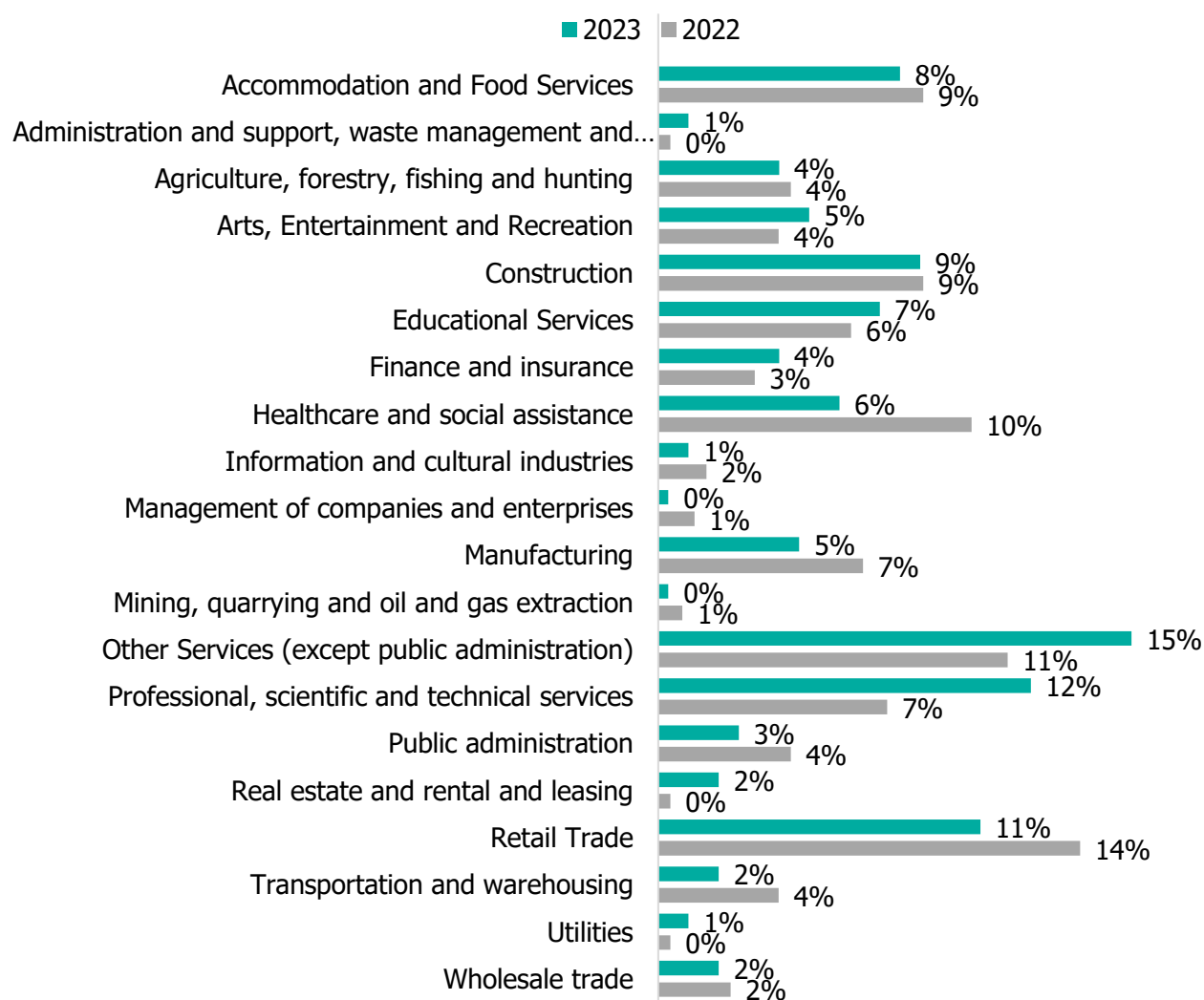
Figure 2: Business size categorization of survey respondents.



INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Compared to the previous year's data, there were shifts in business participation across various sectors. Particularly noteworthy were the increases in responses from businesses in Other Services (except public administration) (+4), Professional, scientific, and technical services (+5%) and Real estate and rental and leasing (+2%). Conversely, there were decreases in responses from sectors such as Healthcare and social assistance (-4), and Retail Trade (-3%).

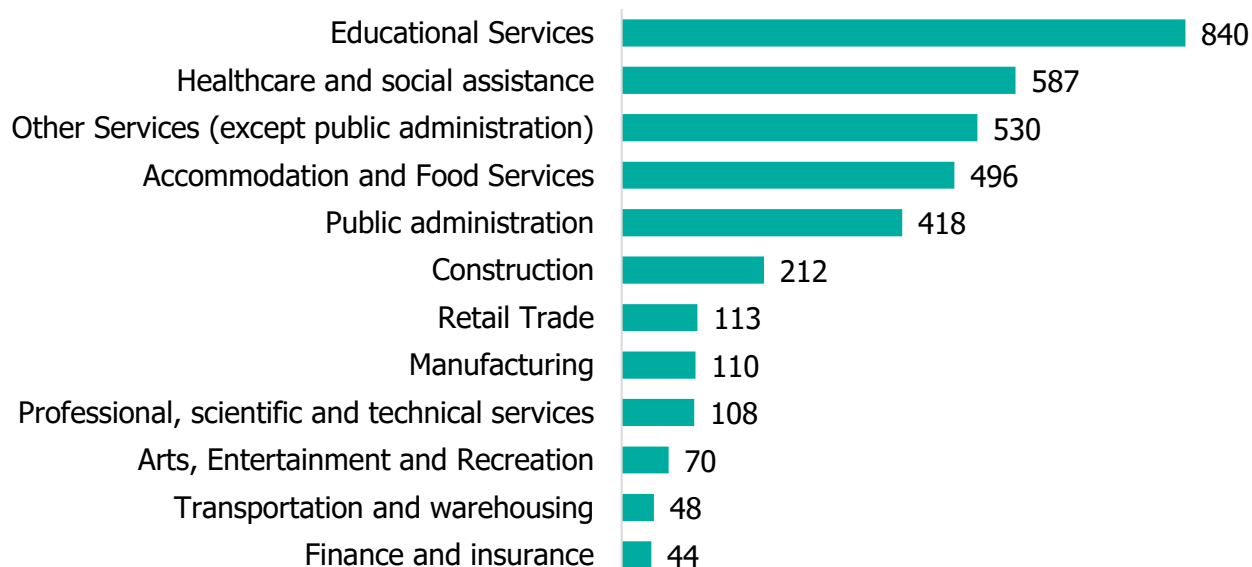
Figure 3: Industry categorization of survey respondents.



2023 HIRING TRENDS

Most of the businesses with employees (78%) indicated they had hired an employee within the last 12 months, with an estimated total of 3,663 new hires by 228 organizations. In contrast, there were 4,512 new hires by 216 organizations in the previous year. Employment types varied, as 39% were permanent full-time, 24% were permanent part-time, and 37% were contract/seasonal positions.

Figure 4: Total number of hires by industry categorization.



Overall, 61% of all businesses reported having hard-to-fill positions. This was echoed in 60% of small businesses (1- 99 employees), 70% of medium businesses (100-499 employees) and 80% of large businesses (500+ employees). The primary reasons that positions were hard to fill were a lack of applicants (19%), a lack of qualifications (17%), and lack of work experience (16%). Other reasons suggested by employers, not listed in the chart, include challenges in competing with wage offerings, high turnover rates among hired individuals, and specific licensing requirements.

Industries facing the greatest challenge due to a lack of applicants included Public administration (100%), Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (100%), Transportation and warehousing (75%), and Healthcare and social assistance (73%). On the other hand, sectors encountering difficulty due to insufficient qualifications were Real estate and rental and leasing (100%), Educational Services (71%), Finance and insurance (67%), Manufacturing (63%), and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (63%).

Reasons why the positions were hard-to-fill:

- Not enough applicants (19%)
- Lack of qualifications (17%)
- Lack of work experience (16%)
- Lack of motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities (12%)
- Lack of technical skills (9%)
- No applicants at all (5%)
- Other (5%)
- Inability to compete with other employers (5%)
- Lack of language skills (4%)
- Company is not accessible by public transit (3%)
- Inability to assess a foreign educational qualification or credential (1%)

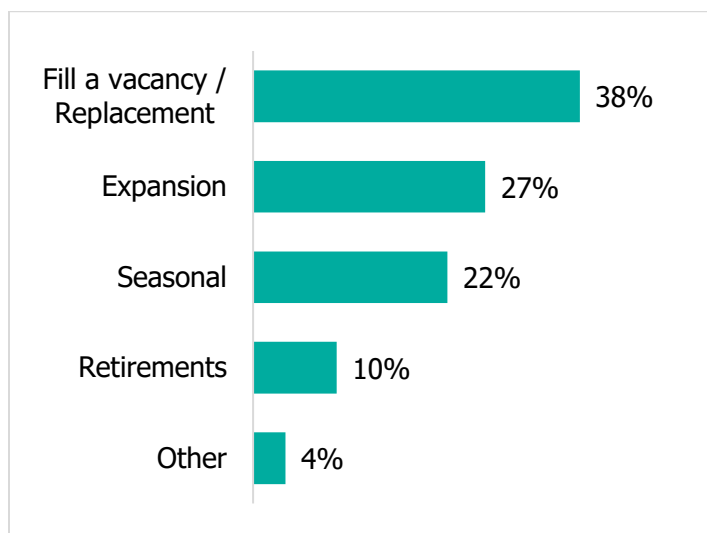


FUTURE HIRES

Looking to the future, 65% of respondents indicated that they expect to hire an estimated 1,769 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 2024 include Educational Services (432), Public administration (413), and Healthcare and social assistance (251).

Industries that expect to hire as a result of expansions include Real estate and rental and leasing (100%), Finance and insurance (83%), and Healthcare and social assistance (73%). In contrast, industries that expect to see the most retirements include Public administration (75%), Manufacturing (55%), and Utilities (50%).

Figure 5: Expected reasons for hiring in 2024.



Occupations expected to be recruited for in 2024:

Educational Services

- Teachers
- Educational Assistants
- Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE)
- Childcare Assistants
- Custodians
- Occasional Teachers
- Music Teachers

Public administration

- Parks and Recreation Laborers
- Customer Service Assistants
- Deputy Treasurer/Tax Collector
- Constables
- Branch Assistants/Library Positions
- Summer Students
- Contract Workers/Responders

Healthcare and Social Assistance

- Personal Support Workers (PSW)
- Registered Practical Nurses (RPN)
- Registered Nurses (RN)
- Physicians
- Occupational Therapists
- Social Workers
- Speech-Language Pathologists

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

When asked about recruitment and retention there was a shift towards online platforms, with online job boards emerging as the primary method at 37%. This is an increase from last year, indicating a departure from traditional methods like word of mouth, which now stands at 30%. Social media's role has also grown, representing 12% of responses, while non-government or community employment service centers or websites increased to 5%.

Meanwhile, traditional methods such as newspaper ads, job fairs, and on-site job signs accounted for only 1% of responses. These findings highlight an increased reliance on digital channels in recruitment strategies.

When rating the availability of qualified workers, employers have indicated a slight increase compared to previous years. Last year, 38% of employers indicated that the availability of qualified workers was excellent or good; in contrast, this year, 49% did so.

Top competencies employers look for when recruiting:

Dependability 14%

Self-motivated/ability to work with little or no supervision 12%

Work ethic 11%

Teamwork/interpersonal 10%

Communication (both oral and written) 9%

Willingness to learn 9%

Customer service 7%

Problem solving, reasoning 7%

Professionalism 6%

Fits with company/mission 6%

Time management/organizational 3%

Other (please specify) 3%

Computer/digital literacy 2%

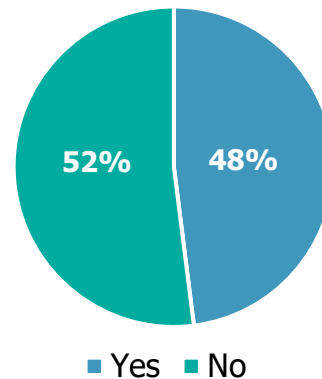
Creativity 1%

Retention remains a concern for nearly half of employers. Similar to last year, 48% of employers expressed a concern with retaining staff. Additionally, 51% of respondents reported having succession plans to manage anticipated growth and impending retirements over the next 3 to 5 years. Among the industries expressing heightened retention concerns are Construction (15%), Other Services (except public administration) (13%), Healthcare and social assistance (10%), Professional, scientific and technical services (10%), and Retail Trade (10%).

Strategies used by local employers to encourage retention:

- Regular increase in salary (24%)
- Recognition for service and/or outstanding work (19%)
- Employee “perks” (i.e., discounts on merchandise, company-branded clothing, staff celebrations, etc.) (14%)
- Training opportunities (13%)
- Job flexibility (i.e., work from home arrangements, flex time, job sharing) (9%)
- Clear promotional paths or advancement opportunities (7%)
- Regular increases in benefits (6%)
- Job rotation opportunities (3%)
- Other (4%)

Figure 6: Retention a concern.

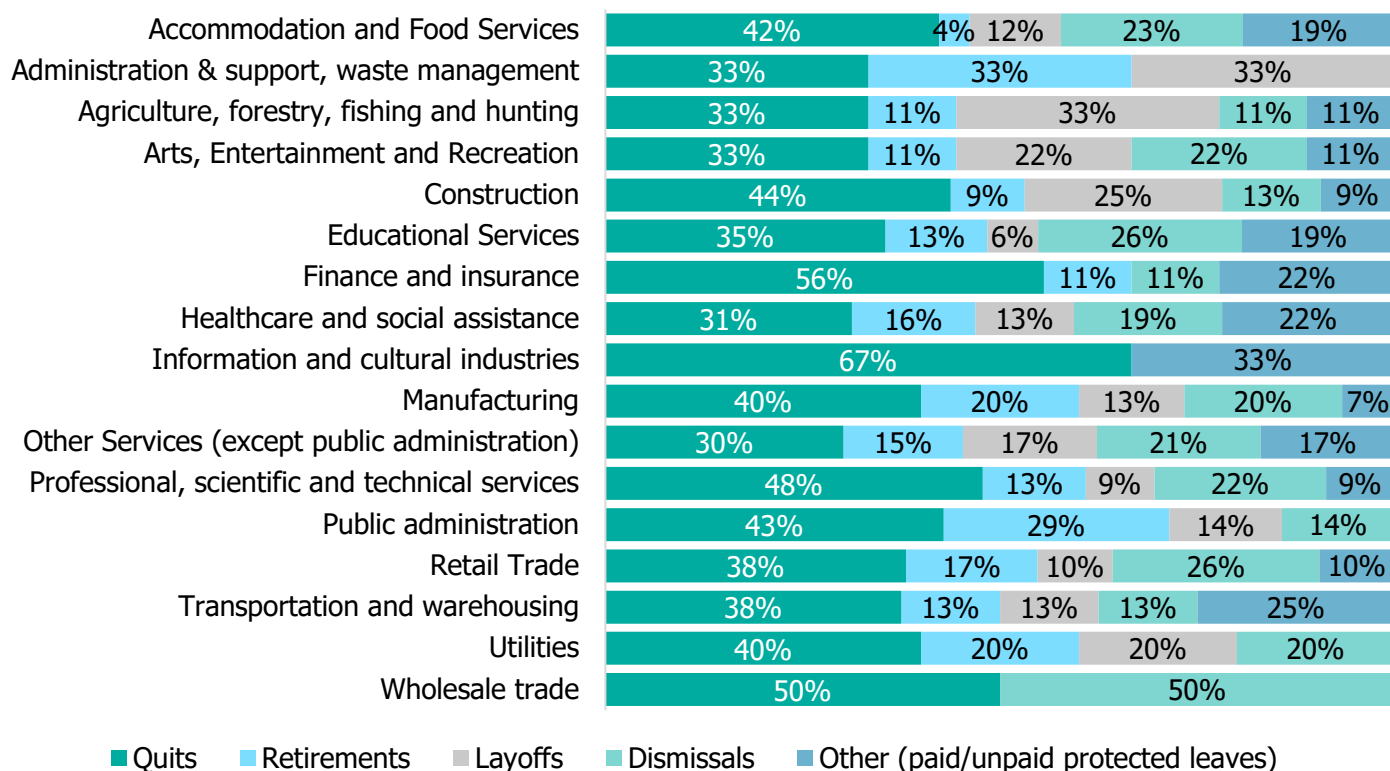


2023 SEPARATIONS

This year respondents reported 1,928 separations. An increase from last year where respondents reported 1,058 separations (n=263 responses). Industries that experienced the largest number of separations include Educational Services (35%), Healthcare and social assistance (15%), and Public administration (15%).

This year, there was a decline in the number of employees who quit their jobs (48% compared to 55% last year) and those who were laid off (17% compared to 18% last year). However, there was an increase in the number of employees who were dismissed (16% this year and 11% last year) and a decrease in the number of those who retired (12% this year and 16% last year). Finally, the percentage of protected leaves, whether paid or unpaid, remained consistent at 6% for both this year and last year.

Figure 7: Industry categorization of separation types.



INTERNATIONAL TALENT

As in the previous year, business participants were surveyed regarding their inclination towards hiring international talent. The findings indicated that industries most inclined to hire international talent included Educational Services (18%), Other Services (excluding public administration) (18%), and Healthcare and social assistance (12%). On the other hand, the industries that are least likely to hire international talent are Professional, scientific and technical services, and Construction (each 14%).

Figure 8: Likelihood of local employers hiring international talent in 2024.

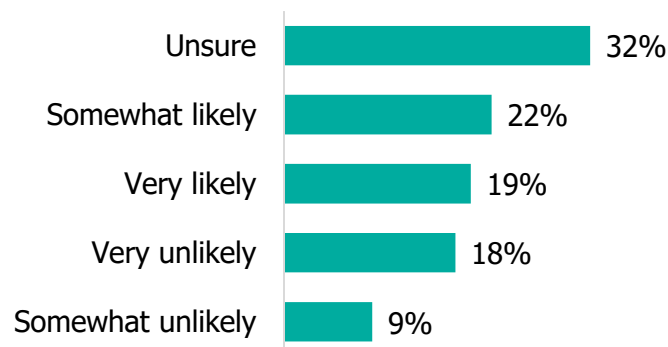
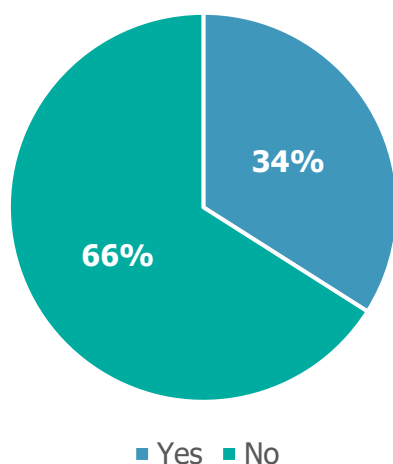


Figure 9: Percentage of Companies that Already Hired International Talent in 2023.



This year's survey also included a question regarding the hiring of international talent. Specifically, whether the companies had already filled any positions with international talent. In total, 34% responded yes, while 66% responded no. The top industries that reported hiring international talent were Accommodation and Food Services (17%), Educational Services (13%), Other Services (except public administration) (14%), and Retail Trade (13%).

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:

- Difficulty in attracting and retaining skilled workers due to labor shortages and skills gaps.
- Concerns regarding the impact of technology and the need for innovation to stay competitive.
- Challenges related to funding shortages and regulatory compliance across various sectors.
- Growing emphasis on sustainability practices and environmental responsibility.
- Shift towards remote work and digitalization in response to changing work environments.

Industry-specific trends:

- Other Services (except public administration): Difficulty retaining French-speaking personnel due to pay competition with other sectors.
- Transportation and Warehousing: Anticipation of disruption to the fossil fuel business by the rise of electric cars.
- Educational Services: Frustration with funding gaps and shortages, impacting support for businesses.
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation: Difficulty in hiring international students due to communication skill gaps.
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services: Emphasis on technology adoption, including AI, and challenges in securing funding for equipment.



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