

# **LOCAL LABOUR MARKET PLAN**

## **Sarnia Lambton**

### **2024 -2025**

## 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 any 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. The team actively engages organizations and community partners in local labour market projects. SLWDB also conducts consultations with business owners throughout the year in order to identify needs and facilitate solutions to grow the local workforce.

### **Network**

SLWDB is one of 26 local planning board areas that make up Workforce Planning Ontario that are funded to conduct and disseminate local labour market research and engage community stakeholders in a planning process that supports local solutions to local issues.



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## 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
- EmployerOne Survey
- Focus Groups, Interviews, and 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.

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 (LLMP) is an annual, 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.

Throughout the year there have been shifts in the unemployment rate from a low of 8.2% to a high of 9.7%. Although Sarnia Lambton has experienced one of the highest unemployment rates in the economic region, employers in specific sectors continue to report demand for specific occupations. In the education sector, for example, positions for early childhood educators take an average of 33 days to fill with twice as many positions being posted compared to last year.

In the face of these changes and global events that influence our economy, our Action Plan for 2025-2028 has been crafted to support growth in the workforce especially where there is the biggest need. The Action Plan focuses on five key areas:

- Recruitment and Retention
- Skilled Trades
- Rural Workforce
- Diversity in the Workforce
- Clean Energy and Manufacturing

We hope that the information this report contains will help to inform our community partners and direct programming and workforce planning for the community. Our hope is that this report will encourage community discussions to identify opportunities and resolve gaps in the current workforce.

Sincerely,

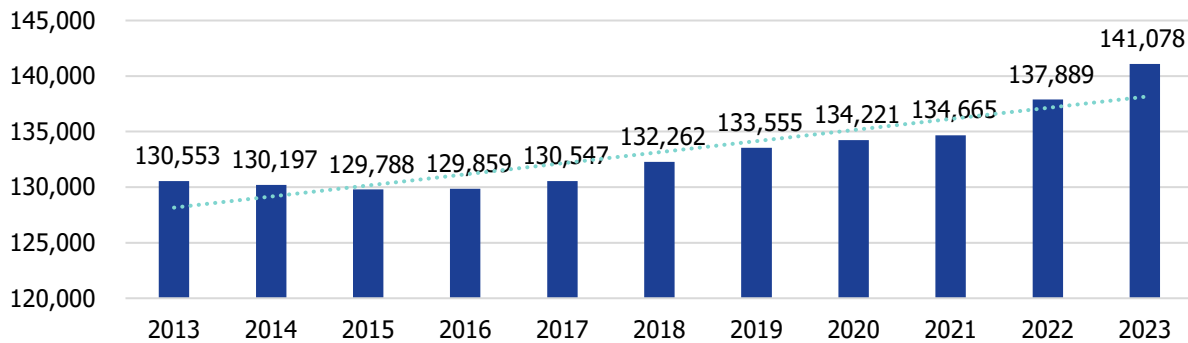
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# Local Population

Sarnia Lambton is home to 11 municipalities and three First Nations Communities. Located on the beautiful traditional territory of the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa First Nations, part of the Three Fires Confederacy the region blends urban and rural areas and is home to 141,078 residents. Since 2013, the population has experienced steady growth. According to population estimates by census division, 2021 boundaries, 49.86% of residents identify as male and 50.13% as female.

The three First Nations communities include Aamjiwnaang First Nation (2,596 registered members, 900 living on reserve), Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point (2,662 registered members, 1,358 on reserve), and Walpole Island First Nation (5,040 registered members, 2,310 on reserve).

**Figure 1: Population Trends (2013-2023).**



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0152-01 Population estimates, July 1, by census division, 2021 boundaries. Release date: 2024-05-22.

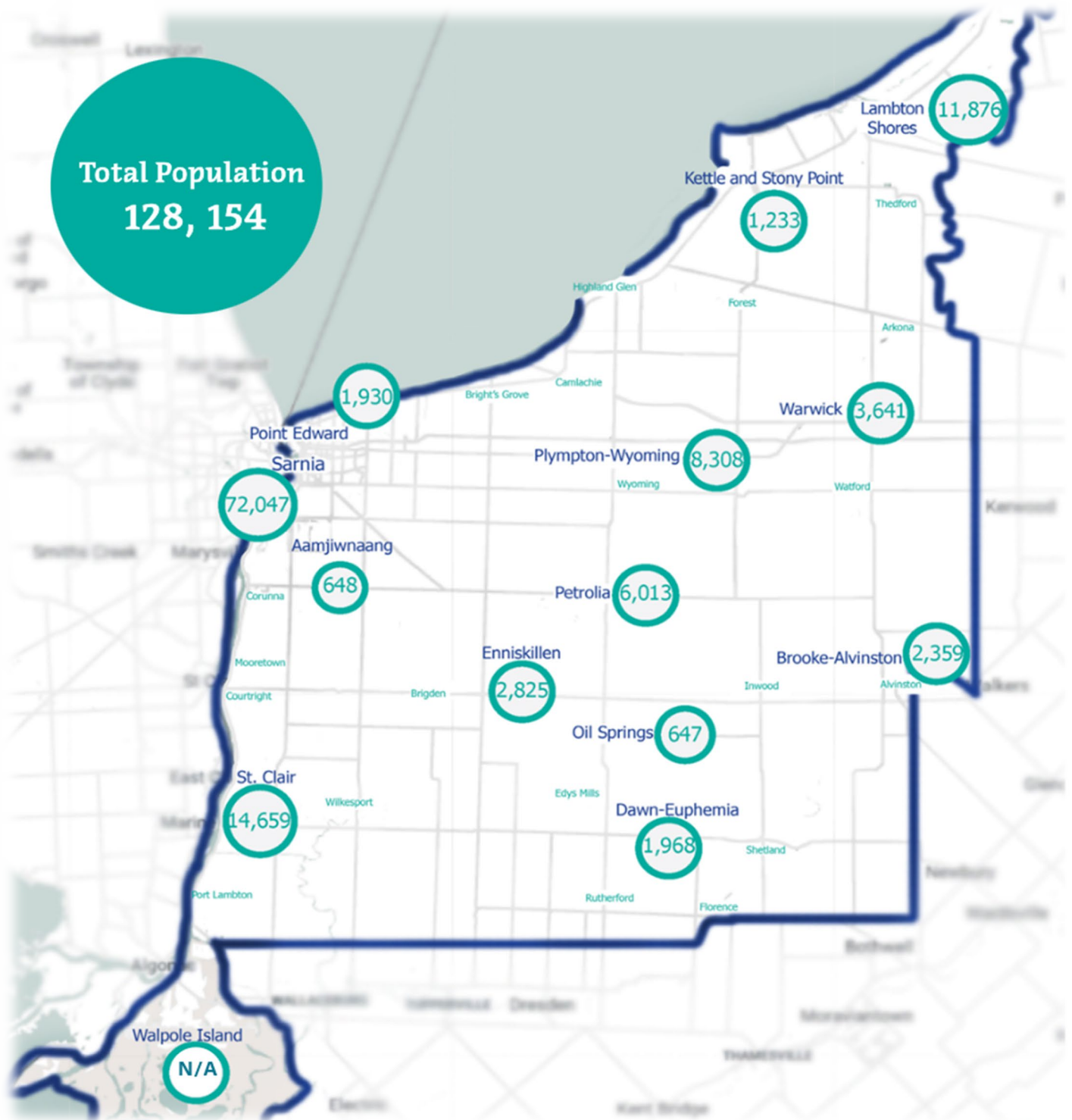
**Table 1: Demographic Data of First Nations Communities.**

Category	Aamjiwnaang	Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point	Walpole Island
Registered Population	2,596	2,662	5,040
Residing on Own Reserve	900	1,358	2,310
Residing Off Reserve	1,696	1,304	2,730
2016 Census Population	639	1,011	1,589
2021 Census Population	648	1,233	N/A <sup>1</sup>

Source: Government of Canada. Indigenous and Northern Affairs, First Nation Profile as of November 2024.

<sup>1</sup> Not available for a specific reference period.

**Figure 2: Sarnia Lambton Municipalities Population, Census 2021.**



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.  
 N/A Data not available for the selected period for Walpole Island

# Population And Migration Patterns In Sarnia Lambton

From 2016 to 2023, Sarnia Lambton’s population shifted, with growth in older age groups (55+ years) and declines in younger ones (15-24 and 25-54 years). Net migration was a key driver, adding 5,823 people, particularly among families (0-17) and those aged 45-64, while gains among young adults (18-24) were modest. Immigration remained stable, with increases in the 25-44 and 44+ age groups but a decline in younger immigrants (15-24). The racialized population grew (+1,620), while the Indigenous population declined (-860). These trends highlight the need for continued efforts to support the retention of youth to continue to develop our local population and subsequent workforce.

**Figure 3: Components of Population Growth (2017-2023).**



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0153-01 Components of population change by census division, 2021 boundaries. Release date: 2024-05-22.

**Table 2: Change in Age Groups (2016-2021).**

Age Groups	2016			2021			Change (2016-2021)		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
15 to 24 years	14,330	7,320	7,015	13,090	6,830	6,260	-1240	-490	-755
25 to 54 years	44,230	21,875	22,360	43,250	21,605	21,650	-980	-270	-710
55 years and older	46,460	22,105	24,350	50,035	23,760	25,285	3575	1,655	935
<b>Total 15+</b>	105,020	51,300	53,725	106,375	52,195	53,195	1,355	895	-530

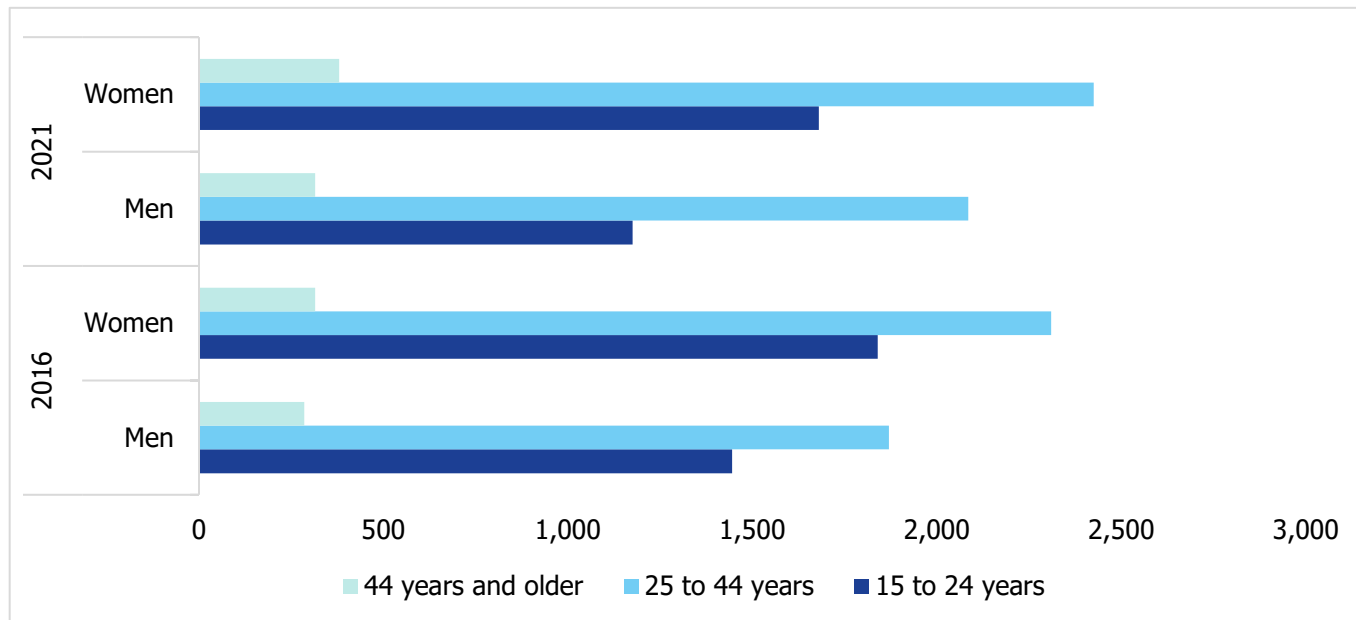
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 & 2021 Census. Custom Table.

**Table 3: Change in Indigenous and Racialized Population by Gender (2016-2021).**

Population Groups	2016			2021			Change (2016-2021)		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Indigenous	6,890	3,335	3,550	6,030	3,035	2,995	-860	-300	-555
Racialized	5,505	2,850	2,650	7,125	3,640	3,485	1,620	790	835

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 & 2021 Census. Custom Table.

**Figure 4: Number of Immigrants by Group Age and Gender (2016-2021).**



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 & 2021 Census. Custom Graphic.

**Table 4: Migration Characteristics (2017-2022).**

Age Group	In-migrants	Out-migrants	Net-migrants
0-17	3,524	2,186	1,338
18-24	3,056	2,610	446
25-44	7,275	5,694	1,581
45-64	4,684	2,596	2,088
65+	2,253	1,883	370
Total	20,792	14,969	5,823

Source: Statistics Canada, Taxfiler.

# Education in Sarnia Lambton

In 2021, 15.7% of Sarnia Lambton’s population held a university degree at the bachelor level or higher, which was lower than Ontario’s average of 29.9%. However, a higher percentage of residents here held a certificate or diploma (28.4% compared to 20.3% in Ontario).

Overall, there has been an increase in the number of residents who have earned a certificate, diploma, or degree compared to 2016 suggesting a continued trend toward higher educational attainment. Additionally, Sarnia Lambton has a higher representation of apprenticeship or trades certificates or diplomas compared to Ontario.

**Table 5: Educational Attainment in Sarnia-Lambton (2016 & 2021).**

2016		Education Level	2021		Sarnia Lambton Change 2016-2021
Sarnia-Lambton	Ontario		Sarnia-Lambton	Ontario	
16.8% 17,615	17.5% 1,935,355	No Certificate, Diploma, or Degree	14.6% 15,500	15.3% 1,799,890	-12%
29.4% 30,835	27.4% 3,026,100	Secondary (High) School Diploma or Equivalency Certificate	30.6% 32,520	27.2% 3,204,170	5.4%
10.5% 11,075	6.0% 664,180	Apprenticeship or Trades Certificate or Diploma	9.2 % 9,955	5.0% 592,485	-10.1%
27.9% 29,275	20.8% 2,298,715	College, CEGEP, or Other Non-University Certificate or Diploma	28.4% 30,190	20.3% 2,389,205	3.1%
1.3% 1,395	2.2% 242,005	University Certificate or Diploma Below Bachelor Level	1.4% 1,500	2.3% 268,480	7.5%
14.1% 14,825	26% 2,872,085	University Certificate, Diploma, or Degree at Bachelor Level or Above	15.7% 16,710	29.9% 3,528,600	12.7%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 & 2021 Census. Custom table.

# Economic Pulse: Labour Force Insight

Based on workforce size, the top industries include Healthcare and social assistance, Manufacturing, and Retail trade. Sarnia Lambton witnessed substantial growth across various industries, with Construction having the most growth (19.8%), followed by Mining and Oil (19.2%) and Real Estate (15.3%). Agriculture and Utilities also experienced growth by 11.7% and 10.5% respectively. Between 2016 and 2021, the Arts & Recreation industry had a decline of -56.2%, followed by Wholesale trade (-33.7%), and Other Services (-33.5%). The Management sector also experienced a downturn of -33.3%, as did the Information and Culture industry (-31%).

## Industries experiencing the largest growth:

- **+ 19.8%** Construction
- **+ 19.2%** Mining and Oil
- **+ 15.3%** Real Estate
- **+ 11.7%** Agriculture
- **+ 10.5%** Utilities

## Industries experiencing the largest decline:

- **- 56.2%** Arts & Recreation
- **- 33.7%** Wholesale
- **- 33.5%** Other Services
- **- 33.3%** Management
- **- 31%** Info and Culture

**Table 6: Workforce Changes by Industry in Sarnia Lambton and Ontario (2016-2021).**

Industry	Lambton 2016	Lambton 2021	Change 2016-2021 Lambton	Change 2016-2021 Ontario
Construction	4,910	5,880	↑ <b>19.8%</b>	↓ <b>-9.9%</b>
Mining, quarrying, oil & gas extraction	650	775	↑ <b>19.2%</b>	↓ <b>-9.7%</b>
Real estate, rental & leasing	750	865	↑ <b>15.3%</b>	↓ <b>-2.6%</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting	2,555	2,855	↑ <b>11.7%</b>	↓ <b>-2.5%</b>
Utilities	620	685	↑ <b>10.5%</b>	↓ <b>-8.4%</b>
Health care and social assistance	7,665	8,385	↑ <b>9.4%</b>	↓ <b>-10.4%</b>
Professional, scientific & technical services	2,730	2,785	↑ <b>2.0%</b>	↓ <b>-15.5%</b>
Educational services	3,580	3,555	↓ <b>-0.7%</b>	↑ <b>3.3%</b>
Finance and insurance	1,295	1,240	↓ <b>-4.2%</b>	↓ <b>-4.3%</b>
Public administration	2,315	2,210	↓ <b>-4.5%</b>	↓ <b>-3.4%</b>
Transportation & warehousing	2,460	2,335	↓ <b>-5.1%</b>	↓ <b>-7.5%</b>
Manufacturing	6,495	5,995	↓ <b>-7.7%</b>	↑ <b>8.3%</b>
Administrative and support	2,755	2,430	↓ <b>-11.8%</b>	↑ <b>9.1%</b>
Retail trade	6,490	5,630	↓ <b>-13.3%</b>	↑ <b>7.9%</b>
Accommodation and food services	4,330	3,090	↓ <b>-28.6%</b>	↑ <b>50.0%</b>
Information & cultural industries	565	390	↓ <b>-31.0%</b>	↑ <b>7.7%</b>
Management	45	30	↓ <b>-33.3%</b>	↓ <b>-52.9%</b>
Other services	2,835	1,885	↓ <b>-33.5%</b>	↑ <b>23.5%</b>
Wholesale trade	2,105	1,395	↓ <b>-33.7%</b>	↑ <b>12.8%</b>
Arts, entertainment & recreation	1,335	585	↓ <b>-56.2%</b>	↑ <b>55.8%</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 & 2021 Census. Custom Table.

## Occupation Trends Data

The top occupations in Sarnia Lambton include Sales and service, Trades, transport, and equipment operators, Business, finance and administration, Occupations in education, law and social, community and government service, and Health. The workforce has expanded, with the labor force numbers rising from 105,015 to 106,375. This growth occurred despite a decrease in active labor force participants, dropping from 61,460 to 59,650 residents actively participating in the workforce. The occupations that experienced the largest increase in the unemployment rate between 2016 and 2021 included Art, culture, recreation, and sport (11.2% increase), Sales and service (9.8% increase), Manufacturing and utilities (3.7% increase), and Management occupations (2.3% increase).

**Table 7: Workforce Changes by Occupation for Sarnia Lambton and Ontario, 2016-2021.**

Occupations	Sarnia 2016	Sarnia 2021	Ontario 2016	Ontario 2021	% Change Sarnia	% Change Ontario
Management	6,130	6,615	790,875	897,595	↑ 8%	↑ 13%
Business, finance & administration	7,300	6,825	1,124,765	1,150,215	↓ -7%	↑ 2%
Natural, applied sciences & related	3,935	3,890	516,115	24,045	↓ -1%	↓ -95%
Health	4,640	5,420	447,045	24,620	↑ 17%	↓ -94%
Education, law & social, community & government services	5,865	5,705	831,340	849,345	↓ -3%	↑ 2%
Art, culture, recreation & sport	1,070	895	225,715	223,645	↓ -16%	↓ -1%
Sales & service	14,690	12,765	1,632,080	1,510,455	↓ -13%	↓ -7%
Trades, transport & equipment operators & related	11,230	11,115	927,825	967,055	↓ -1%	↑ 4%
Natural resources, agriculture & related production	1,675	1,595	113,400	104,285	↓ -5%	↓ -8%
Manufacturing & utilities	3,480	3,400	361,450	335,440	↓ -2%	↓ -7%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 & 2021 Census. Custom Table.

**Table 8: Occupation Unemployment Rate Changes for Sarnia Lambton and Ontario, 2016-2021.**

Occupations	Sarnia 2016	Sarnia 2021	Ontario 2016	Ontario 2021	% Change Sarnia	% Change Ontario
Management	2.1%	4.5%	2.6%	5.3%	↑ 2.4%	↑ 2.7%
Business, finance & administration	4.4%	5.3%	4.4%	6.6%	↑ 0.9%	↑ 2.2%
Natural, applied sciences & related	4.1%	4.5%	4.0%	4.5%	↑ 0.4%	↑ 0.5%
Health	2.8%	4.2%	2.3%	3.7%	↑ 1.4%	↑ 1.4%
Education, law & social, community & government services	4.2%	5.1%	3.8%	6.4%	↑ 0.9%	↑ 2.6%
Art, culture, recreation & sport	14.0%	25.1%	8.0%	16.0%	↑ 11.1%	↑ 8.0%
Sales & service	7.4%	17.2%	6.7%	19.0%	↑ 9.8%	↑ 12.3%
Trades, transport & equipment operators & related	8.3%	8.8%	6.6%	9.7%	↑ 0.5%	↑ 3.1%
Natural resources, agriculture & related production	11.3%	11.0%	10.1%	11.3%	↓ -0.3%	↑ 1.2%
Manufacturing & utilities	5.3%	9.0%	6.9%	11.8%	↑ 3.7%	↑ 4.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 & 2021 Census. Custom Table.

# Labor Market Dynamics

The Labour Force Survey data highlights shift in employment patterns in Sarnia Lambton from 2013 to 2024. The population aged 15 and over increased from 108,500 in 2013 to 118,200 in 2024. However, the labour participation rate fluctuated over the years, decreasing from 61.1% in 2013 to 54.5% in 2020, before recovering to 61.3% in 2024. This variation suggests an evolving workforce influenced by demographic trends, including an aging population and changes in workforce engagement.

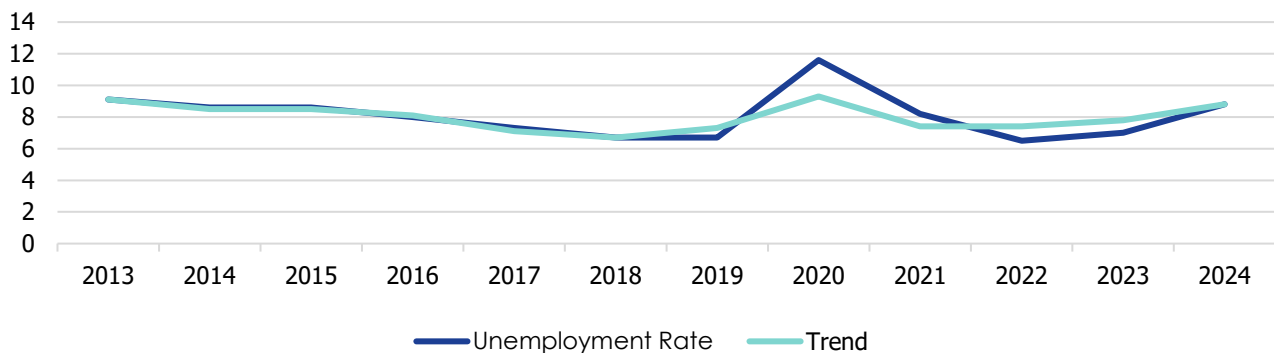
Employment trends reveal the substantial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with employment dropping to 52,900 in 2020 but rebounding to 66,000 in 2024. The unemployment rate, which peaked at 11.6% in 2020, showed gradual improvement, reaching 6.5% in 2022 but rising again to 8.8% in 2024. The most recent data suggests ongoing workforce shifts, presenting both challenges and opportunities for economic development in Sarnia Lambton. Continued monitoring and workforce planning will be crucial for supporting long-term employment stability.

**Table 9: Labour market information for Sarnia Lambton, 2013-2024.**

Annual Average	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Source Population 15+	108.5	108.3	107.9	107.7	107.8	108.6	109.3	109.6	109.4	109.8	111.3	118.2
Participation Rate (%)	61.1	61.4	61.3	60.7	60.2	60.1	59.5	54.5	57.5	57.7	60.7	61.3
Labour Force	66.3	66.5	66.2	65.4	64.9	65.3	65.0	59.7	62.9	63.4	67.6	72.4
Employed	60.3	60.8	60.5	60.2	60.2	60.9	60.6	52.9	57.7	59.3	62.8	66.0
Unemployed	6.0	5.7	5.7	5.2	4.7	4.4	4.4	6.9	5.2	4.1	4.7	6.4
Unemployment Rate (%)	9.1	8.6	8.6	8.0	7.3	6.7	6.7	11.6	8.2	6.5	7.0	8.8

Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey, 2013 - 2024. Estimates calculated by Metro Economics (Note: Estimates for source population, labour force, employed and unemployed are in thousands of persons).

**Figure 5: Unemployment Rate (%) Sarnia Lambton, 2013 – 2024.**



Source: Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey, 2013-2024. Estimates calculated by Metro Economics.

## Business Profile

Sarnia Lambton is home to 11,912 businesses with the majority (70%) operating without any employees. Businesses without employees are largely in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing and Agriculture. Sarnia Lambton's business landscape is primarily driven by micro-sized businesses (1-4 employees) and small businesses (5-99 employees), which operate in the Construction and Retail trade sectors. Medium-sized businesses (100-499 employees) are primarily within the Manufacturing and Health Care and Social Assistance sectors. Meanwhile, large businesses (500+ employees) are predominantly in the Manufacturing, Educational Services, and Public Administration industries.

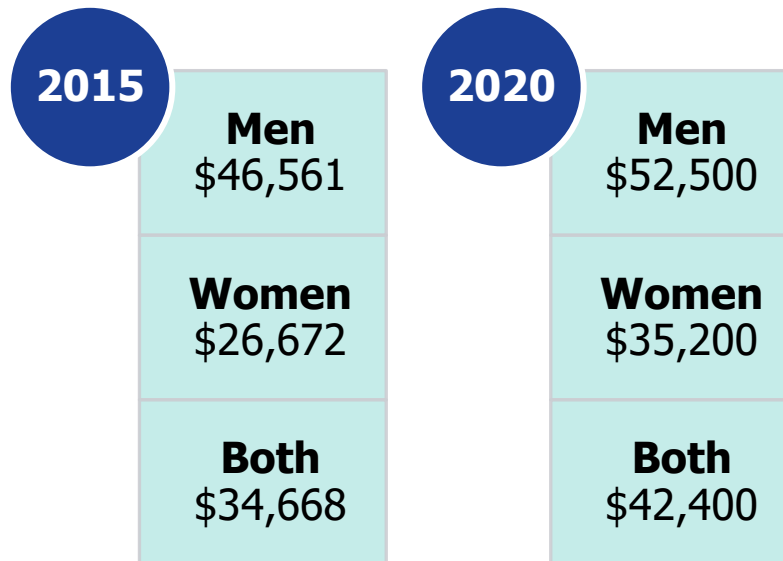
**Table 10: Industry Breakdown of Businesses.**

Industry sector (2-Digits NAICS)	Business Size					Total Businesses	% of Total Businesses
	No Employees	Micro 1-4	Small 5-99	Medium 100-499	Large + 500		
11 – Agriculture	2,239	150	92	0	0	2,481	19.6%
21 – Mining	31	13	10	0	0	54	0.5%
22 – Utilities	40	3	6	1	0	50	0.5%
23 – Construction	586	249	209	8	1	1,053	9.0%
31-33 – Manufacturing	92	45	106	13	2	258	2.2%
41 - Wholesale Trade	92	50	108	2	1	253	2.3%
44-45 - Retail Trade	299	157	351	9	0	816	7.1%
48-49 - Transportation & Warehousing	303	59	59	1	0	422	3.4%
51 - Information & Cultural	42	18	14	0	0	74	0.7%
52 - Finance & Insurance	452	50	85	0	0	587	5.2%
53 - Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	2,195	131	31	1	1	2,359	19.8%
54 - Professional, Scientific & Tec. Services	589	162	89	4	0	844	7.2%
55 - Management of Companies	58	5	4	0	1	68	0.7%
56 - Administrative Support	196	56	62	6	0	320	2.7%
61 - Educational Services	57	19	20	0	2	98	0.7%
62 - Health Care & Social Assistance	415	188	224	13	1	841	6.9%
71 - Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	105	12	33	1	0	151	1.2%
72 - Accommodation & Food Services	126	36	219	4	0	385	3.4%
81 - Other Services	448	177	148	3	0	776	6.7%
91 - Public Administration	1	2	14	3	2	22	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,366</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>1,884</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11,912</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, June 2024. Custom Table.

## Median Individual Income

Figure 6: 2015 & 2020 Median Individual Income in Sarnia Lambton.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 & 2021 Census of Population. Custom Graphic.

## Income and Employment Type Analysis by Occupation

In 2021, occupations with the highest median income included those in Business, finance, and administration, Natural and applied sciences, and Manufacturing and utilities. Occupations with the lowest median income were in Art, culture, recreation and sport occupations, Sales and service, Natural resources, and Agriculture. Approximately 59% of those employed worked full-time. Part-time occupations were moderately higher in the Arts, culture, recreation, and sport, as well as sales and service and agriculture occupations.

Table 11: Income and Employment Type by Occupation.

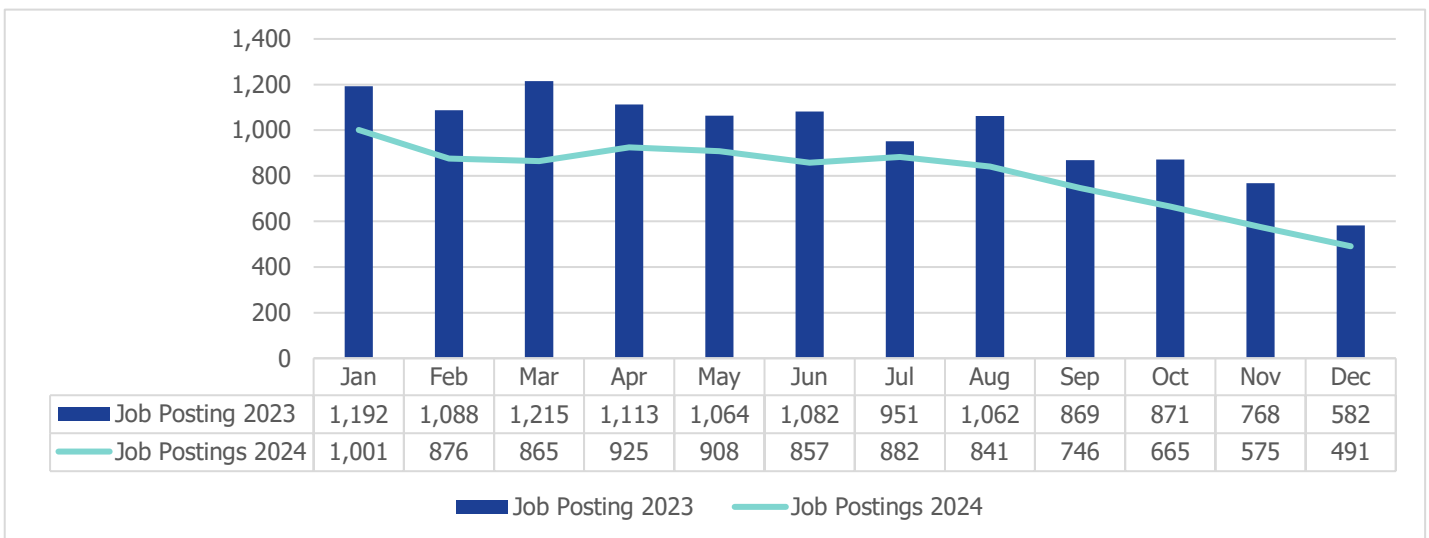
Occupations	Median Income	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time
0 Management Occupations	\$103,000	4,660	1,415
1 Business, Finance, and Administration Occupations	\$44,800	3,955	2,230
2 Natural and Applied Sciences and Related Occupations	\$87,000	2,710	925
3 Health Occupations	\$44,000	2,565	2,355
4 Education, Law, Social, Community, and Gov. Services	\$50,400	3,340	1,800
5 Art, Culture, Recreation, and Sport Occupations	\$12,000	300	315
6 Sales and Service Occupations	\$18,400	3,865	5,850
7 Trades, Transport, and Equipment Operators and Related	\$52,000	5,355	4,190
8 Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Related Production	\$20,800	575	660
9 Manufacturing and Utilities Occupations	\$67,000	2,090	900
Total average of median income and counts of FT & PT	\$33,200	29,420	20,645

Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census. Custom Table.

# WISL: WORK IN SARNIA LAMBTON

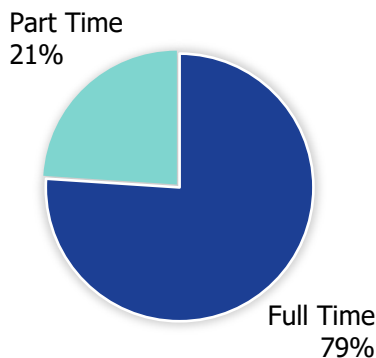
Work in Sarnia Lambton (WISL) is an online job board and platform operated by SLWDB that connects employers and job seekers in Sarnia Lambton to various tools and resources. WISL provides local job demand data with key information, including the total number of job postings, as well as job posting information on occupations, industries, locations by municipalities, job boards, and skills required for available jobs in Sarnia Lambton. Job posting counts across many industries fluctuate month-to-month. In 2024, WISL collected a total of 10,058 active job posts from 2,055 companies. There has been a 20% decrease in job posting counts in comparison to the previous year, with an average job posting length of 26.7 days.

**Figure 7: Job posting counts by Month.**

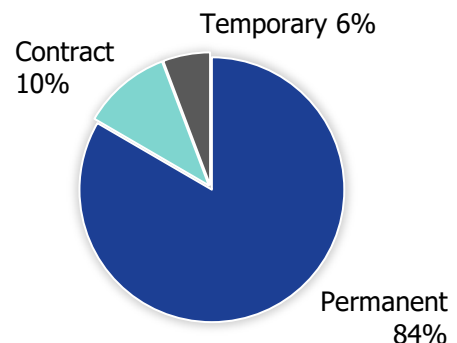


Source: Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (WISL), January – December 2024 Data.

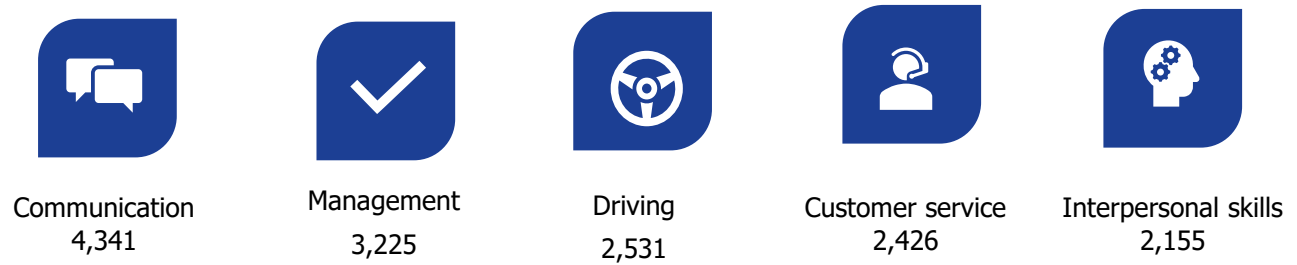
**Figure 8: Job Duration.**



**Figure 9: Job Type.**



**Figure 10: Top Five Skills Demanded by Employers.**



Source: Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board (WISL), January – December 2024 Data.

**Table 12: Annualized Full-Time Salary by Occupation in Sarnia Lambton.**

Occupations	Job postings	Annualized Full-Time Salary (CAD)
Retail salespersons and non-technical wholesale trade sales and account representatives	558	\$77,500
Nursing and allied health professionals	464	\$84,000
Paraprofessional occupations in legal, social, community, and education services	418	\$55,500
Transport truck and transit drivers	298	\$100,00
Food support occupations	288	\$40,000
Cleaners	282	\$65,000
Cashiers and other sales support occupations	267	\$60,000
Home care provider occupations	261	\$65,000
Customer and information services representatives	239	\$45,000
Technical occupations in therapy and assessment	232	\$65,000
Office administrative assistants - general, legal and medical	226	\$55,000
Cooks, butchers and bakers	200	\$46,500
Service supervisors	191	\$53,000
Retail and wholesale trade managers	186	\$65,000
Automotive service technicians	184	\$86,000
Administrative, property and payroll officers	160	\$69,500
Longshore workers and material handlers	145	\$51,000
Machinery and transportation equipment mechanics (except motor vehicles)	139	\$69,000
Assisting occupations in support of health services	128	\$60,000
Office support and court services occupations	127	\$50,000
Building maintenance installers, servicers and repairers	118	\$54,000
Security guards and related security service occupations	115	\$45,000
Retail sales supervisors	113	\$60,000
Machining, metal forming, shaping and erecting trades	104	\$59,000
Managers in construction and facility operation and maintenance	101	\$90,000

Source: Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board (WISL), January – December 2024 Data.

**Table 13: Job Postings in Sarnia Lambton by NAICS Code.**

Industry Title	Combined Count of Companies
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	1,532
91 - Public Administration	879
56 - Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	838
44 - Retail Trade	689
81 - Other Services (except Public Administration)	373
48 - Transportation and Warehousing	358
45 - Retail Trade	357
54 - Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	356
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	355
52 - Finance and Insurance	248

Source: Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (WISL), January – December 2024 Data.



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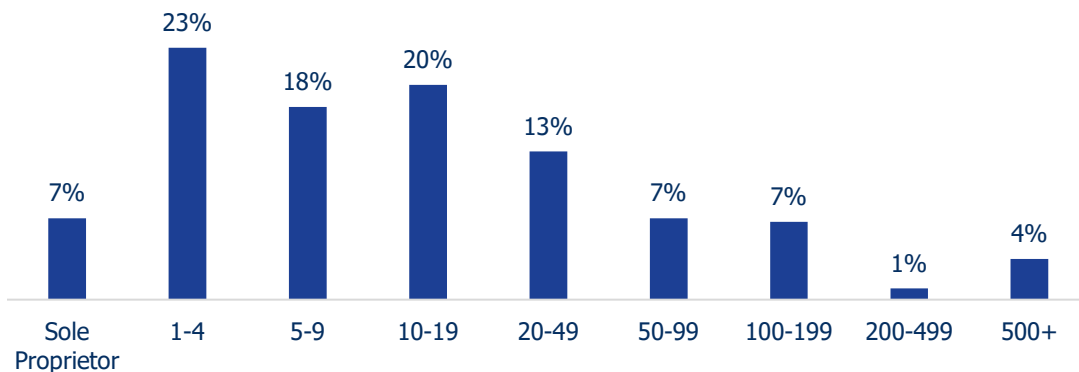
# EmployerOne Survey

The EmployerOne Survey is an annual survey by SLWDB that collects information directly from local employers to address the local workforce's needs and identify trends. This report provides job seekers and employers with data on local hiring trends and recruitment methods for future and career planning. It also aims to address the challenges faced by small businesses and sole proprietors.

In 2024, the survey received responses from 304 local businesses representing various sectors of the economy. 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.

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. Respondents also reported 1,928 separations. An increase from last year when 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%).

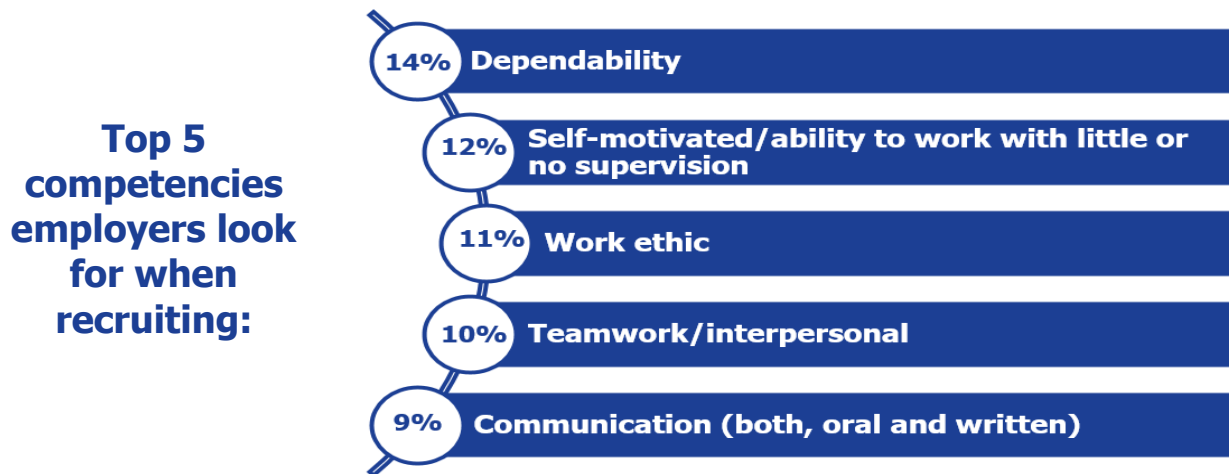
**Figure 11: Business Size Categorization of Survey Respondents.**



Source: Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, EmployerOne Survey, Report 2024.

The top recruitment methods identified included word of mouth, personal contacts, informal networks, online job boards, and social media. Online platforms, with online job boards emerging as the primary method at 37%. This is an increase from the previous 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%.

**Figure 12. Top Competencies Recruited.**



Source: Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, EmployerOne Survey, Report 2024. Custom Graphic.

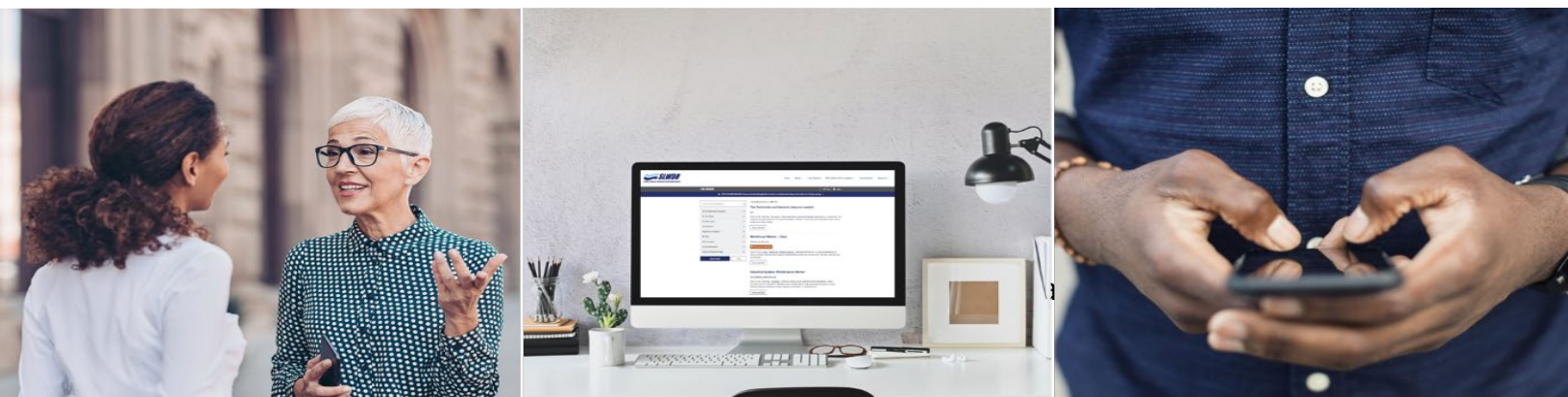
Retention remains a concern for nearly half of employers. Similar to the previous year, 48% of employers expressed a concern with retaining staff. Additionally, 51% of respondents reported having succession plans to manage anticipated growth and impending retirements over the next 3 to 5 years. Among 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
- Recognition for service and/or outstanding work
- Employee “perks” (i.e., discounts on merchandise, company-branded clothing, etc.)
- Training opportunities
- Job flexibility (i.e., work-from-home arrangements, flex time, job sharing)
- Clear promotional paths or advancement opportunities
- Regular increases in benefits
- Job rotation opportunities

Notably, 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 expansion. Industries that anticipate recruiting the largest number of new hires include Educational Services (432), Public administration (413), and Healthcare and social assistance (251).

The full report can be accessed at <https://www.slwdb.org>



# Employment Ontario Programs

Employment Ontario service providers play a vital role in supporting job seekers, workers, and employers throughout Ontario. The data and statistics presented in this section pertain to the period between 2023 and 2024, and they are sourced from the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development's 2023-2024 Employment Ontario Data for Local Boards.

These data elements provide the foundation for local boards and regional networks to engage in evidence-based discussions with Employment Ontario service providers and non-Employment Ontario organizations. These discussions focus on addressing local challenges, including issues related to skills, service gaps, overlaps, and underserved populations in Sarnia Lambton. The collaborative efforts of Employment Ontario service providers, local boards, and regional networks aim to develop strategies and actions that effectively address these localized issues.

For more detailed information regarding Employment Ontario programs, please refer to the Government of Ontario's website at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/employment-ontario>.

Employment Ontario Programs that ran in the past year include:

- Employment Service
- Apprenticeship
- Canada Ontario Job Grant
- Youth Job Connection
- Literacy and Basic Skills
- Ontario Employment Assistance Service
- Better Jobs Ontario

## Employment Ontario Consultations

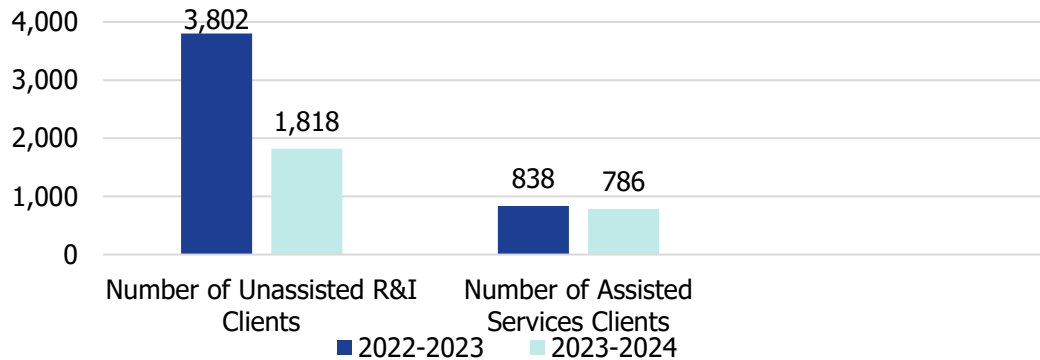
SLWDB connects monthly with our Employment Ontario community partners. As providers of direct employment support to both job seekers and employers the Employment Ontario providers offer an insight that reflects the direct needs of the workforce. Themes the Employment Ontario providers have noted included:

- The importance of math support for those entering or completing an apprenticeship.
- Training on soft skills continues to be a need in the local community.
- Burnout and retention are key barriers for social service organizations.
- Community partnerships among EO organizations and other community stakeholders give EO providers the opportunity to support the community with a diverse range of needs.
- More work is needed to recruit French speaking candidates.

## Employment Services

Employment Services offer a diverse range of resources and support for local individuals and employers, addressing personal career and employment goals as well as local skilled labor needs. In the fiscal year 2023-2024, Employment Services assisted 786 clients and provided resources and information to 1,818 unassisted clients, a decrease compared to the previous year.

**Figure 13: Number of Clients Utilizing Employment Services.**



Source: Employment Ontario Programs, Government of Ontario, 2024.

Employment Services experienced a decrease in client numbers from the previous year, while maintaining a consistent demographic composition in terms of age and gender. Particularly, 44% of clients reported having no income, relying on supports such as Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), or employment earnings. No clients reported dependence on Employment Insurance (EI). Most clients had education beyond high school, though 14% had not completed secondary education. Gender distribution included 40% identifying as female, 58% as male, and 2% as trans, other, or undisclosed. Clients were spread across age groups: 26% aged 15-24, 45% aged 25-44, 27% aged 45-64, and 2% aged 65 or older.

A total of 59% of clients identified as disabled, 15% as Indigenous, 8% as internationally trained professionals, and 8% as newcomers. Additionally, 7% identified as racialized, with smaller groups including francophones and deaf individuals.

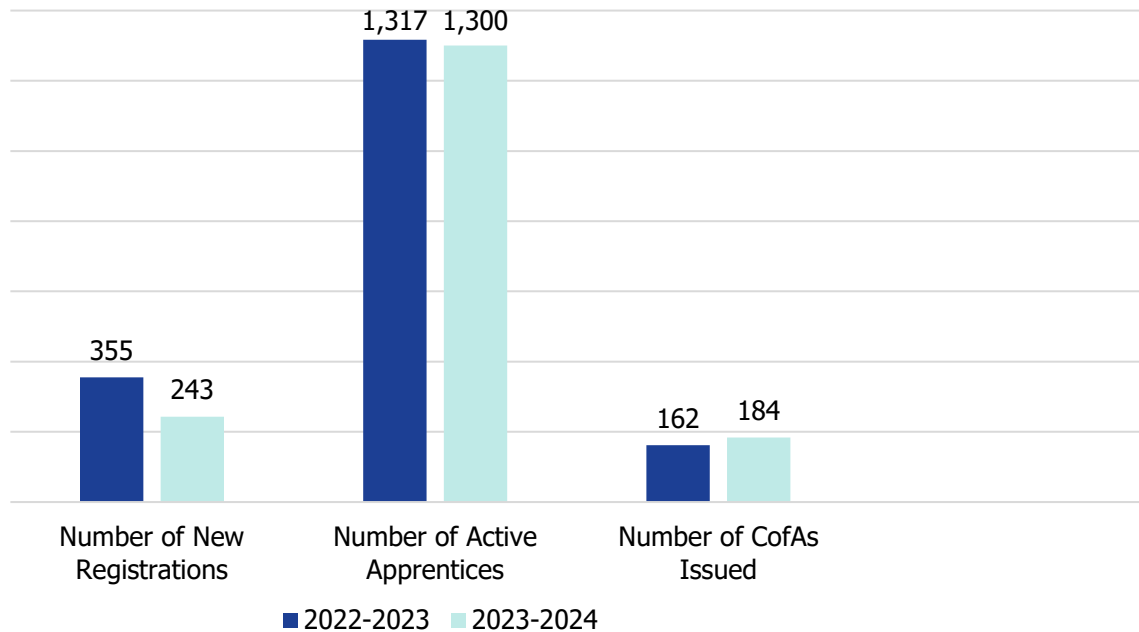
Labour force connection remained consistent with previous years: 86% of clients were unemployed and 7% underemployed, with most jobless for over three months. Major layoffs were observed in industries such as construction, accommodation and food services, healthcare and social assistance, retail trade, manufacturing, and administrative and support services. Impacted occupations included administrative and financial support roles, supply chain logistics, sales and service positions, technical trades, transportation officers, general trades, and labourers.

The length of unemployment varied: 37% were jobless for less than three months, 13% for three to six months, 14% for six to twelve months, and 24% for over a year. Despite these challenges, outcomes were positive: 65% of clients gained employment (37% full-time), 11% pursued education or training, 13% had unknown outcomes, and 9% remained unemployed. The remainder were independent, unable to work, or engaged in volunteering.

## Apprenticeship Programs

In the 2023-2024 period, there were 243 new apprenticeship registrations, reflecting a decrease compared to the previous year's 355. The number of active apprentices reached 1,300, and 184 Certificates of Apprenticeship (CoA) were issued. The age demographic saw a slight shift, with a rise in younger participants, highlighting a growing interest in trades. The trades of Electrician- Construction and Maintenance, and Steamfitter experienced registration increases. Ongoing efforts to promote gender diversity in the trades industry continued, with discussions aimed at understanding and addressing barriers, while emphasizing the importance of support and fostering inclusive workplaces.

**Figure 14: Number of Apprenticeship Program Clients, 2023-2024.**



Source: Employment Ontario programs, Government of Ontario, 2024.

The apprenticeship program saw a 32% decrease in new registrants, a 14% increase in Certificates of Apprenticeship, and a 178% increase in modular training enrollment. Predominantly male, 86% of applicants were men, and 14% were women, with the majority aged 15-24. Most had finished high school, and trade registration distribution remained consistent, with 52% of new apprentices under 25, and 44% between 25-44, and 4% between 44-64.

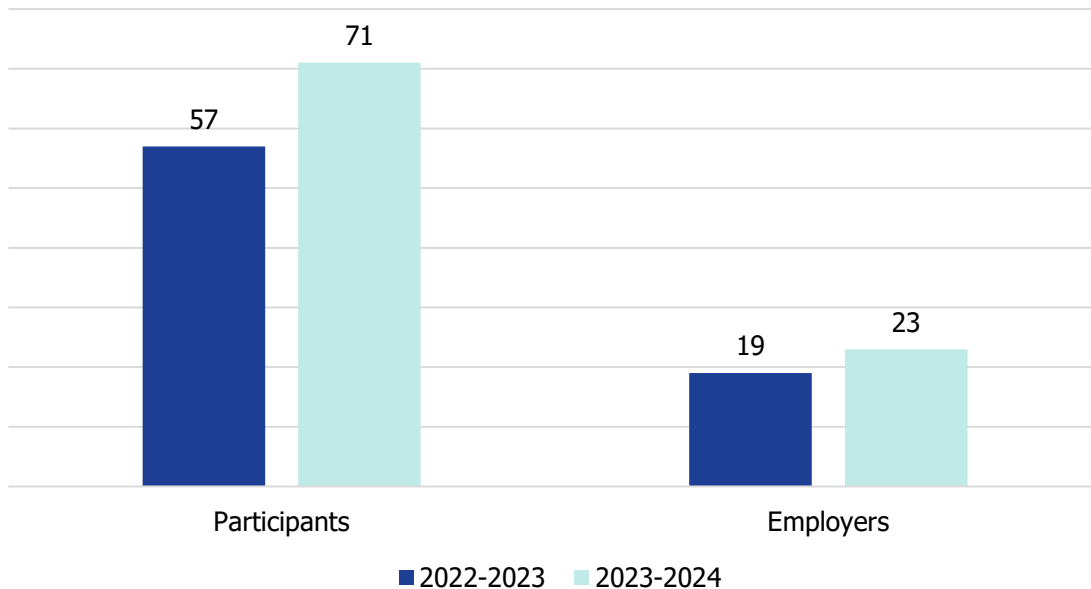
In the 2023-2024 period, the number of new apprentices joining the program varied by trade. Some examples of new registrations include:

- 20 Steamfitter apprentices
- 16 General Carpenter apprentices
- 20 Construction Craft Worker apprentices
- 40 Electrician- Construction and Maintenance apprentices
- 19 Automotive Service Technician apprentices
- 19 Truck and Coach Technician apprentices
- 17 Industrial Mechanic Millwright apprentices

## Canada Ontario Job Grant (COJG)

The Canada Ontario Job Grant (COJG) allows employers 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 23 employers and 71 participants during the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

**Figure 15: Number of Program Clients, 2022-2023 versus 2023-2024.**



Source: Employment Ontario programs, Government of Ontario, 2024.

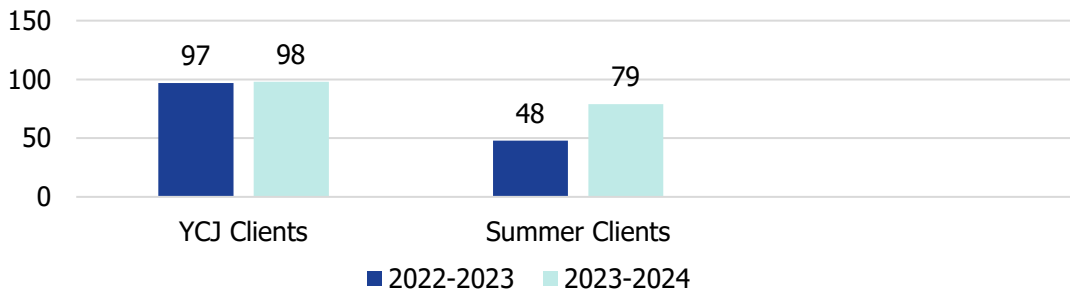
The Canada Ontario Job Grant experienced an increase in both participant and employer numbers from the previous year, aligning with a broader provincial trend. Participant numbers increased to 71 across 23 employers, with a 100% increase in female participation. Most (93%) of participants were primarily funded through employment, predominantly full-time (90%). Although designated groups such as Indigenous peoples, Internationally Trained Professionals, Newcomers, Persons with Disabilities, and Racialized individuals were part of the program, specific numbers were undisclosed due to each group having fewer than 10 members. Remarkably, 100% of participants found employment after the program, 70% were in full-time roles.

On the employer side, there was a 21% increase in participation, with 83% of the 23 participating employers having fewer than 50 employees. Despite this, all reported a boost in trainee productivity and affirmed that the training aligned with workforce needs. Participants showed a broad age range, with 15% aged 15-24, 47% aged 25-44, and 38% aged 45-64.

## Youth Job Connection (YJC)

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. Participation in the summer program is calculated separately. There were 98 YJC clients, and 79 Summer clients, an increase from previous years.

**Figure 16: Number of YJC Clients (2022-2023 versus 2023-2024).**



Source: Employment Ontario programs, Government of Ontario, 2024.

Most clients were aged 15-24 in both the regular and summer programs. During the summer, 92% of clients had less than a grade 12 education, an increase from 40% the previous year, while the regular program saw 33% with the same education level. Male representation in the program was higher at 56%, compared to females at 38%, and those who prefer not to disclose 6% in both. 73% of clients had no income, with 19% dependent on Ontario Works.

There was a higher representation of clients identifying as having a disability (72%) Additionally, 6% of clients identified as Indigenous, and 21% were identified as Racialized, Newcomers, Francophone, and others. Breaking down by age, all the clients during the Summer were aged 15-24, while in the regular program 85% of clients were aged 15-24, and 15% were aged 25-44.

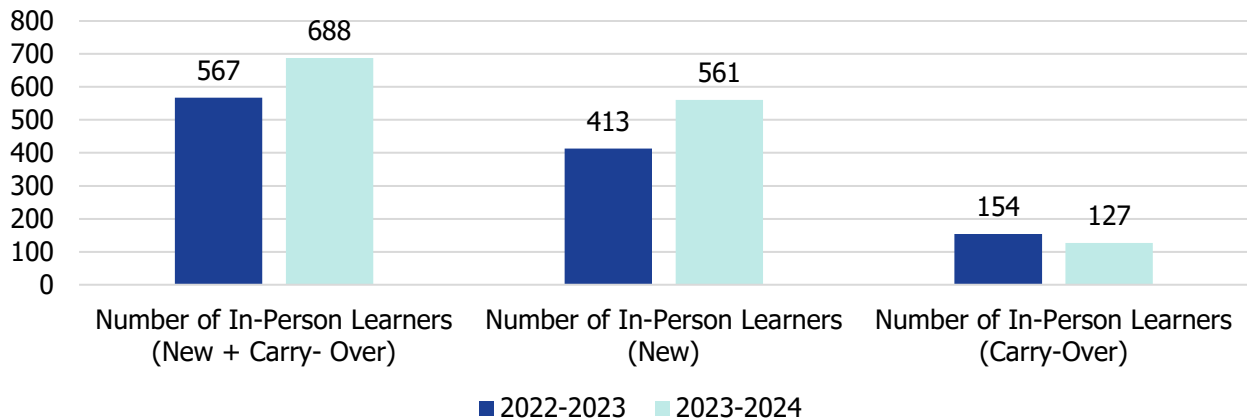
## Better Jobs Ontario Program

The Better Jobs Ontario program supports eligible applicants by providing skills training for in-demand jobs and financial assistance. Applicants qualify if they have been laid off, are not working, have been unemployed for six months or more, and belong to a low-income household. While Sarnia Lambton participated in the program, specific numbers were undisclosed because there were fewer than 10 participants. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the program saw 3,401 participants, an increase of 3,064 compared to the previous period, with prominent participation in regions such as Ottawa, Toronto, Essex, Peel, Waterloo, Hamilton, and Middlesex, highlighting its growing impact across Ontario.

## Literacy and Basic Skills

The Literacy and Basic Skills program is a vital contributor to enhancing foundational skills and employability. This report provides insights into the program's performance and key statistics during the 2023-2024 program year.

**Figure 17: Number of In-Person Learners (2022-2023 versus 2023-2024).**



Source: Employment Ontario programs, Government of Ontario, 2024.

The Literacy and Basic Skills program served 688 clients, including 561 new participants and 127 carried over from the previous fiscal year. Female representation was the highest at 53%, followed by males at 45%, with a small percentage identifying as trans or other. Learner representation from designated groups remained stable, with 35% identifying as having a disability, higher than Ontario's average of 32%. Additionally, 15% of learners were Indigenous (compared to Ontario's 12%), while racialized individuals made up 4% (Ontario: 20%) and newcomers represented 4% (Ontario: 20%).

The age distribution of learners showed that 39% were aged 15-24, 44% were 25-44, 14% were 45-64, and 3% were 65 or older. Educational attainment levels revealed that 4% had less than a grade 9 education, while 37% had not completed grade 12, a slight improvement from 40% previously. Among the rest, 35% had completed secondary education, and 14% held a certificate or diploma.

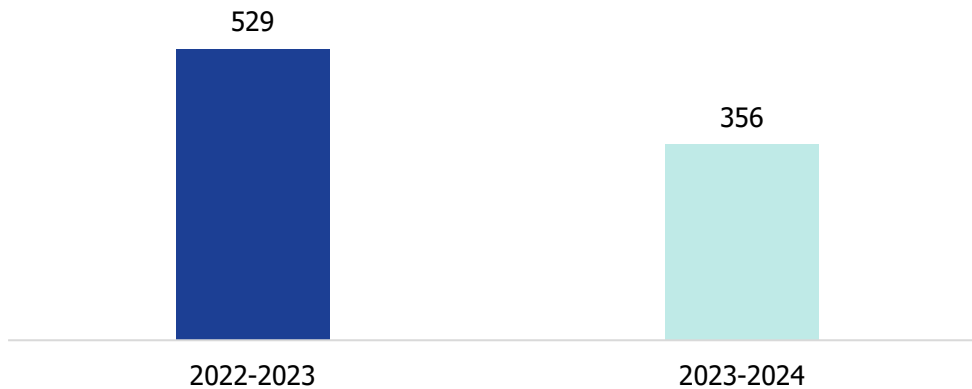
Income sources varied, with 33% of learners reporting employment income, 16% having no income, and 51% relying on support such as Ontario Works, ODSP, or EI. Referrals to the program were primarily from formal sources (347), while informal referrals via word of mouth or media were also significant (154). Additional referrals came from Indigenous services (60), employment services (49), Ontario Works (39), literacy services (13), and others (26).

Learners pursued diverse goals, with a larger proportion aiming to obtain secondary school credits compared to Ontario averages. Goal paths included 36% for postsecondary education, 29% for secondary school credits (notably higher than Ontario's 12%), 22% for employment (lower than Ontario's 36%), 9% for apprenticeship, and 4% for independence.

## Ontario Employment Assistance Service Overview

Ontario Employment Assistance Services helps people connect with a variety of employment programs. It also has services to help people prepare for and find a job. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the OEAS program provided services to 356 clients.

**Figure 18: Number of Clients (2022-2023 versus 2023-2024).**



Source: Employment Ontario programs, Government of Ontario, 2024.

The majority of clients (82%) were unemployed, while 9% were employed, and 7% were underemployed. The primary age range fell within the core working groups, with a slightly higher female representation at 55%, compared to 44% male, and a smaller percentage identifying as trans or other.

Clients displayed diverse educational attainment with 32% having completed secondary education, and 28% holding a certificate or diploma. Regarding income, 37% reported having no income, while others relied on employment income (8%) or Ontario Works (20%).

The age distribution was as follows: 17% were aged 15-24, 50% were 25-44, 30% were 45-64, and 3% were 65 or older. Among designated groups, clients with disabilities represented the largest segment at 56%. Additionally, 12% of clients were newcomers, 11% identified as Indigenous, 8% were racialized, and 13% were categorized as other.



# Community Consultations

As we began our 2024/2025 fiscal our aim was to connect with a diverse range of key stakeholders in the Sarnia Lambton community. These stakeholders provided a level of expertise and insights that those working directly with employees and job seekers can offer. The experiences and insights shared help us better understand the labour market data, which we share with students, job seekers, employers and others.

Consultations were conducted throughout 2024-2025 in person, over the phone and virtually. There were also two consultation days where we headed out to the communities of Sarnia and Point Edward, to further understand employer challenges and successes and reach a larger sample of employers throughout Sarnia Lambton.

## **SLWDB staff also participated in the following committees over the past year:**

- Business and Economic Taskforce
- Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals
- Collective Leadership Employment Services
- Early Childhood Educators Workforce Development Taskforce
- Famous Five Sarnia Lambton Speaker Series
- Francophone Immigration
- Immigration Task Force
- Lambton Farm Safety
- Lambton Wellness at Work
- Partners Active in Resource Sharing
- Sarnia Lambton Industrial Alliance
- Sarnia Lambton Local Immigration Partnership
- Sarnia Lambton Social Services Network
- Southwest Apprenticeship Network
- Workforce Planning Ontario
- Workforce Planning West
- Team Work Steering Committee

## **As we reflect on the consultations held with key stakeholders throughout the Sarnia Lambton community, we see the following topics reflected in these conversations:**

- Workforce Recruitment and Retention
- Housing and Transportation
- Aging Population
- Soft Skills

## **Workforce Recruitment and Retention**

Over the past number of years, retention and recruitment have been identified as key challenges for Sarnia Lambton employers. Again, this year retention and recruitment were identified as key challenges. This is true, despite the local unemployment rate experiencing increasingly high rates over the year and hitting highs of 9.5% and 9.7% in June and November, respectively. Businesses, especially small and medium-sized businesses in the healthcare and social assistance sector, indicated that they have struggled to fill positions with candidates with the required skills.

Throughout the consultations in the more rural areas of Sarnia Lambton, employers also indicated that they have hard-to-fill positions due to a lack of candidates with the necessary qualifications and/or candidates with a lack of rural housing or transportation.

Employers noted a reoccurring gap in the skills required for a job and the qualifications of the applicants. Community-led initiatives such as job fairs and skills re-training programs were recognized for their role in facilitating better connections between employers and candidates with the necessary skills.

## **Housing and Transportation**

Similar to previous years, the need for more housing and transportation was a salient theme throughout the consultations. Although this trend spans multiple industries, employers and other stakeholders suggested it is heightened in the more rural areas of Sarnia Lambton. Additionally, it was suggested that a lack of housing and transportation are impacting the workforce and population growth. In the more rural areas of the County some employers addressed the housing challenge by building on-site housing for their employees. This came at a great financial cost but helped to alleviate the recruitment and retention issues. This is a solution that is not feasible for the majority of employers but highlights an employer-driven solution that can support the housing challenges faced by employers, especially in the rural locations.

## **Aging Population**

Compared to 2016, Sarnia Lambton experienced a shift in its population, with an increase in those 55+ and a decline in those 15-24 and 25-54 years. This trend suggests the need to recruit and/or retain more youth to the local area. Throughout the consultations, the employers and stakeholders suggested the out-migration of youth might hinder the ability of local industry to thrive in the next 5 to 10 years. As more retirements occur, the wealth of experience can be lost unless captured through robust workplace training programs.

## **Soft Skills**

A gap in soft skills, such as interpersonal abilities and work ethic, were identified across various sectors. Employers noted an increase in the digital literacy of employees and found themselves learning about the technology to remain competitive. Many stakeholders and employers noted that shifts in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) were becoming more mainstream in conversations with other employers and training.

# 2025-2028 Action Plan

The Action Plan for 2025-2028 addresses several gaps highlighted in local statistical data and through community consultations. The Action Plan focuses on the following priorities:

- Priority 1: Recruitment and Retention
- Priority 2: Skilled Trades
- Priority 3: Rural Workforce
- Priority 4: Diversifying the Workforce
- Priority 5: Clean Energy and Manufacturing

## Priority 1: Recruitment and Retention

SLWDB's 2023/2024 EmployerOne Survey results show that 61% of employers report that retention is a concern for their business. Additionally, according to SLWDB's Work in Sarnia Lambton (WISL) job board, the average length of time a posting remains unfilled has increased 16% from last year. It was also noted in EmployerOne survey data that 65% of employers plan to hire this year. Both of these data points suggest the need for focused efforts to continue on recruitment and retention. To support efforts in recruitment and retention in 2024/2025 SLWDB committed to four action-based outcomes. They are defined and updated below.

### **2024-2025 Activities. SLWDB:**

- As committed in our 2024/2025 Action plan we lead 12 community presentations to showcase the demand and labour market trends locally. The labour trends were also shared in 18 job demand reports specifically on in-demand sectors; considerably higher than the five demand reports committed in the previous action plan.
- Participated in four job fairs showcasing WISL tools that can support employers and job seekers. Exceeding our previous target of two job fairs.
- Held a consultation day with employers in Point Edward and Sarnia to discuss any retention and/or recruitment concerns.
- Participated in several committees that address local recruitment efforts, including the Business Collaborative (formally known as the Business and Economic Taskforce), the Early Childhood Educators Workforce Development Taskforce, the Sarnia Lambton Local Immigration Partnership's Employment Committee, Collective Leadership to support the EO providers, and the Immigration Taskforce. Again, exceeding our target of participation in two taskforce groups.

### **2025-2026 Activities. SLWDB will endeavor to:**

- Give seven labour market presentations to promote sectors in demand and supports for job seekers and employers.
- Participate in three local job fairs to promote labour force data and WISL job tools.
- Support the action plans of three task force groups (Francophone, Early Childhood Educator, and Immigration).

- Develop and share five Job Demand reports in areas of the highest need (i.e. Health care and social assistance).

**2027-2028 Activities. SLWDB will endeavor to:**

- Develop social media assets that highlight local statistics, resources, and community events on labour market and skills gaps.
- Promote and support the on-going work of local Employment Ontario (EO) providers and the Windsor Regional Employment Network (WREN) by promoting their training events and directing employers and job seekers we connect with to seek out EO services.

## Priority 2: Skilled Trades

According to the 2021 Statistics Canada Census Sarnia Lambton saw a 1% decrease in those participating in skilled trade occupations. Additionally, according to recent Employment Ontario data there has also been a 32% decline in new apprentice registrations (243 registrations vs. 355 last year). These points, coupled with an aging population, hint towards more demand for a larger skilled trades workforce. Additionally, businesses operating in the construction sector saw a 19.8% increase over the past year (Statistics Canada Census, 2021). Growth in any sector is a positive shift, but it also places a heightened spotlight on the need to continue to focus efforts on building the skilled trade workforce to match the increase in demand. Our previous action plan committed to three objectives for the 2024/2025 time period. They are updated below.

**2024-2025 Activities. SLWDB:**

- Achieved our target and served as Secretary/Treasurer of the Southwest Apprenticeship Network (SWAN) and chair of the Gala Awards Planning subcommittee. The Gala Awards celebrate employers who excelled in apprenticeship.
- Presented Skilled Trade Ontario data to the SWAN and to the community in a workshop geared towards literacy support service providers. Achieving our target of two presentations on the in-demand trades. SLWDB also collected data from employers on the in-demand trade areas through our annual Employer One survey.
- Led a panel discussion at the PetroChem conference to share best practices for diversifying the skilled trade workforce.
- Planned and hosted a community skilled trade expo which welcomed 32 exhibitors showcasing skilled trades across all four sectors and an estimated 800 attendees. This gave SLWDB the opportunity to consult with the skilled trade employers in areas of high demand.

**2025-2026 Activities. SLWDB will endeavor to:**

- Share skilled trade data to highlight the demand in two community presentations.
- Continue to promote the work of the SWAN by serving as Secretary/Treasurer for another term. Lead the planning of the 2025/2026 SWAN's Employer Awards Gala.
- Promote the trades to under-represented groups/those working with these populations. such as women and newcomers to Canada in two community presentations.

**2027-2028 Activities. SLWDB will endeavor to:**

- Consult annually with a minimum of 15 employers/unions in the skilled trades.
- Continue to participate and support the action plan of the Sarnia Lambton Industrial Alliance (SLIA). A network of local employers and organizations that predominantly work in skilled trade dominated businesses.

## Priority 3: Rural Workforce

In 2024 SLWDB explored the current and future workforce needs of the agriculture-based workforce. Through this work, key challenges and action-based solutions were identified. Some of the issues outlined by key stakeholders were the difficulty filling labor-intensive positions, the lack of farm-based experience of candidates, and concerns for workforce numbers in the future. Since the 2016 Census there has been a 17% increase in the number of farms in Lambton County. However, there has been a 5% decrease in those working in natural resources, agriculture and related production. The impact of these shifts were illustrated during our consultations with rural employers, many of whom noted challenges recruiting and retaining employees. The three action items from 2024/2025 to support the rural workforce are highlighted below.

### **2024-2025 Activities. SLWDB:**

- Conducted three community presentations to share data and insights on the rural workforce. Exceeding our target of two presentation on rural workforce data.
- Played an active role as a member of the Lambton Farm Safety Board (LFS). A volunteer-run board that promotes the safety and protection of the local agriculture workforce through community initiatives and training.
- Lead 50 consultations with local employers, 10 of which were in the rural areas of the County. This action was achieved through our rural consultation day and new collaboration to the Municipality of Lambton Shores.
- Data on the agricultural workforce was shared in 10 job demand reports specifically on the agriculture sector with local Colleges and training delivery agents.

### **2025-2026 Activities. SLWDB will endeavor to:**

- Share and present data to the agriculture community through ongoing work with LFS and two community presentations.
- Focus consultations in the rural areas of the county with 10 employers to better understand their training needs and how to access employment support in the community.
- Share findings from SLWDB's 2024 research on the agriculture workforce and develop five social media assets.

### **2027-2028 Activities. SLWDB will endeavor to:**

- Connect with local post-secondary institutions and training providers to rural employers and organizations that represent the agriculture community to support an alignment of employer needs and programming.

## Priority 4: Diversifying the Workforce

Over the past year Sarnia Lambton has seen a steady increase in the unemployment rate (8.2% to 9.7%). Despite having one of the highest unemployment rates in the economic region, results of our 2024 Employer One survey suggest 61% of employers have hard to fill positions. This is mirrored when we explore job posting data. In specific sectors, we see an increase in the number of job posts and lengthy posting times. For instance, when we look at job postings that require French language skills, the average time to fill a position is 29 days (accompanied by a 10% increase in the number of job posts compared to last year). This number is even higher for job postings for social and community service workers (an average of 30 days). This suggests focused efforts are needed to build a workforce interested in these occupations with these specific skills. This may require recruiting from a more diverse population to find candidates with these skills. To support this priority SLWDB engaged in three action items in this fiscal.

### **2024-2025 Activities. SLWDB:**

- Led a monthly meeting of leaders in employment services. These meetings served as an opportunity to hear about programs and services that support a diverse range of community members.
- Participated in the Sarnia Lambton Local Immigration Partnership and Immigration Taskforce monthly committee meetings and presented on immigration data in two presentations. Achieving the targeted number. Additionally, sharing data on the TeamWork project, supporting Temporary Foreign Workers.
- Supported the development of a grant to make Sarnia Lambton a Rural Economic Development Immigration Pilot Area (REDI).
- Gave two labour market community presentations focusing on diversity in the workforce.
- Helped organize two job fairs geared towards francophone newcomers and employers seeking French speaking candidates. Promoting diversity in the workforce to local employers.

**2025-2026 Activities. SLWDB will endeavor to:**

- Share labour force data, specifically related to a diverse workforce, in two community presentations.
- Continue to support the development and initiation of an action plan as a steering committee member of the Immigration Task Force.
- Support the efforts of Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership who are leading the REDI pilot project.
- Form a francophone workforce taskforce to develop an action plan to bolster the francophone workforce.

**2027-2028 Activities. SLWDB will endeavor to:**

- Share the action plan created by the francophone taskforce with key stakeholders.
- Continue to work with the WREN to identify training opportunities and resources to support building the workforce in the most in-demand sectors.

## Priority 5: Clean Energy and Manufacturing

Two sector specific priorities were identified as filling a gap in the local workforce. Clean Energy was identified as an area in need of further expansion in Sarnia Lambton. With the push to develop a hydrogen-hub in Sarnia Lambton and the exploration of a large-scale battery recycling facility, more attention was focused on the clean energy workforce and will continue to be explored in the manufacturing sector for 2025/2026. Since 2016 Sarnia Lambton has seen some declines in the manufacturing sector (Statistics Canada Census, 2016 vs 2021). This is true for both workforce figures, which saw a decline of 2%, and for businesses operating in the manufacturing sector, which saw a decrease of 7.7%. This trend is not unique to Sarnia Lambton. According to the Advanced Manufacturing Council final report by the Government of Ontario, Ontario has seen its manufacturing output shrink by 14%. Just as the Advanced Manufacturing Council is currently exploring how to bolster manufacturing in Ontario, this calls for further exploration into the manufacturing sector in Sarnia Lambton. More work is needed to uncover challenges in the manufacturing sector and what the current and future workforce needs are in this sector. Action items related to the clean energy sector in 2024/2025 are updated below and the efforts in the manufacturing sector are projected for the 2025/2026 fiscal.

**2024-2025 Activities. SLWDB:**

- To explore future and current needs in the clean energy workforce interviews with 20 key stakeholders were conducted. Exceeding our target of 10. A report, including action-based recommendations and presentation on the findings was created to disseminate the results to the community.

- Was an active member of the Sarnia Lambton Industrial Alliance. A network of local manufacturers and companies with a focus on the clean energy sector.

**2025-2026 Activities. SLWDB will endeavor to:**

- Participate in the Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC), the largest consortium of manufacturers in Canada.
- Conduct an environmental scan of local manufacturers. Identifying which are exploring the clean energy sector.
- Consult local manufacturers to uncover the workforce needs.
- Present findings in a community presentation to share key actionable recommendations.
- Take part in two webinars aimed at exploring challenges in the clean energy and manufacturing sector.

**2027-2028 Activities. SLWDB will endeavor to:**

- Map the workforce needs of the future in the manufacturing sector and identify any training gaps.
- Maintain active membership in the EMC and connect local employers to EMC.



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We invite community feedback on all SLWDB publications:  
[Provide feedback on the 2023-2024 Local Labour Market Plan](#)



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