

MARCH 2017

EMPLOYER ONE SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

BRUCE GREY HURON PERTH



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Four County Labour Market Planning Board (FCLMPB) is a community-directed, not-for-profit corporation assisting Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth counties in its approach to workforce development and labour market planning. Our mission is to plan and promote local labour market strategies to meet the challenges of a changing economy.

We wish to thank the following:

Memorandum of Understanding Community Partners:

Bruce Federation of Agriculture
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME)
The Centres for Employment and Learning of the Avon Maitland District School Board
Conestoga Career Centre
Corporation of the County of Bruce
Corporation of the County of Grey
Corporation of the County of Perth
Fanshawe College
Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology
Grey Federation of Agriculture
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Huron Manufacturing Association (HMA)
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Municipality of South Huron
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YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce

Business Owners and Managers that assisted by completing the survey

Staff of the Four County Labour Market Planning Board

The views of this document do not necessarily reflect those of Government of Ontario.



The Four County Labour Market Planning Board is a member of:





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HIGHLIGHT OBSERVATIONS



By reviewing general conditions of the local labour market, we set the stage for the survey responses. According to Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, between 2015 and 2016, the Four County labour market experienced some mixed changes: the number of people in the labour force decreased by 900; the number of people employed increased by 500; and the number of people unemployed decreased by 1,400. In addition, the 2016 unemployment rate was 4.8 percent in the Four County area and 6.5 percent in Ontario, pointing to a tight supply of labour for the region.

68% of survey respondents felt the availability of qualified workers was **FAIR TO POOR**

[showing no improvement from the previous two surveys]

TOP 5 sectors rated the availability of qualified workers as **FAIR TO POOR**



over 75% Agriculture, Construction & Manufacturing

58% Retail Trade

49% Health Care and Social Assistance

461 employers hired at least ONE person in 2016



collectively accounting for **5,416** JOBS

 **51%** of hires were **FULL-TIME POSITIONS**

Positions created in 2016 tended to be in occupations requiring less formal skills

393 employers experienced at least ONE separation in 2016



collectively representing **4,006** JOB LOSSES

53% were **QUITS**

In 2016 **296**
companies had
at least ONE
hard-to-fill
position

25% of employers with
HARD-TO-FILL
positions spent over
one year
trying to fill these positions



**TOP 3 REASONS POSITIONS WERE
HARD-TO-FILL:**

- ☒ Not enough applicants
- ☒ Lack of motivation, attitude or interpersonal abilities
- ☒ Lack of qualifications (education level/credentials)

**TOP 3 COMPETENCIES REQUIRED
FOR HARD-TO-FILL POSITIONS:**

- ★ Work ethic, dedication, dependability
- ★ Self-motivated/ability to work with little or no supervision
- ★ Teamwork/interpersonal

402 surveyed businesses
anticipate hiring in 2017,
representing

4,427 NEW
POSITIONS



**In all occupational categories
— except Service Workers —
the majority of employers anticipate
hiring for full-time positions**



Respondents main method of recruitment continues to be

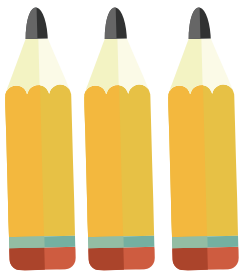
WORD OF MOUTH

The majority of employers are NOT using either free employment service agencies or paid recruitment agencies

As in previous years, business geographic area of recruitment continues to focus on the Four County area, despite the fact that many people are moving to each of the four counties from outside Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth.

75%

of surveyed employers were able to provide or support ongoing training and education opportunities in 2016



TOP 3 BARRIERS TO PROVIDING TRAINING CONTINUE TO BE:



Cost



Loss of productivity during training time



Relevant training not offered locally

13%

of surveyed businesses provided an

APPRENTICESHIP
in the SKILLED
TRADES in 2016

Of the 78 businesses that could have provided apprenticeship opportunities last year, but did not, THE TOP REASONS FOR NOT DOING SO WERE:



Lack of requisite staffing ratios



Loss of time/productivity



Financial hardship



Loss of employees to other organizations once trained

BACKGROUND



The EmployerOne Survey was conducted for the third time in January 2017 in the Four County area, which includes the counties of Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth. In total, 729 businesses responded to the survey; 633 businesses completed the survey (all questions), and 96 businesses completed some of the questions in the survey. Collectively, respondents represented 29,514 employees. These business respondents continue to provide valuable insights into changes in the local labour market.

The goal of this survey is to gather information about employers' successes and challenges in the workplace, and to identify trends occurring in the local labour market. Information from EmployerOne is continuously shared with community partners, government organizations, educational institutions and employment centres in order to assist those who are involved in preparing our future workforce.

METHODOLOGY



For the purposes of this report, only responses from the 633 completed surveys have been included.

For the purposes of this report, Perth County includes Stratford and St Marys.

Based on business counts for 2016 (including only businesses with 1 or more employees), completed survey responses represent 6 percent of all businesses in the Four County area, and between 5 percent and 8 percent of businesses in each individual county.¹

GENERAL LABOUR MARKET CONDITIONS



The general conditions of the local labour market set the stage for survey responses. According to Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, between 2015 and 2016, the Four County labour market experienced some mixed changes: the number of people in the labour force decreased by 900; the number of people employed increased by 500; and the number of people unemployed decreased by 1,400. These net numbers describe a definite churn in our labour market. The unemployment rate fell between 2015 and 2016 almost a full percentage point, from 5.7 to 4.8. Although there were 900 less people available for work in 2016, overall there were more people employed in the year. The participation rate declined in 2016 by 0.5 percent and this continues to highlight the challenge of fewer people locally to fill vacancies.

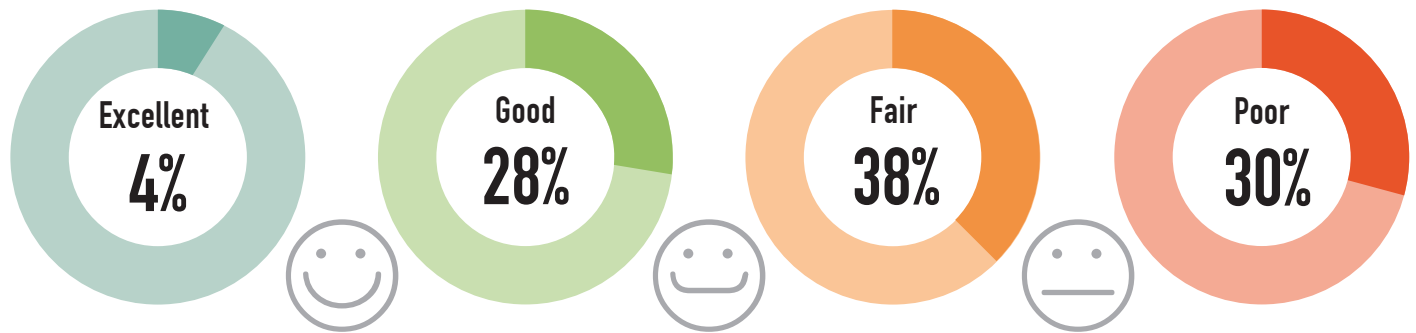
Since the Four County area still has a lower unemployment rate than Ontario, 4.8 percent versus 6.5 percent, the area will need to focus on ways to grow its labour supply to meet the demands of a growing local economy.

¹ Based on business counts for 2016, the 2017 EmployerOne survey has a confidence level of 95 percent with a confidence interval of ± 4 .

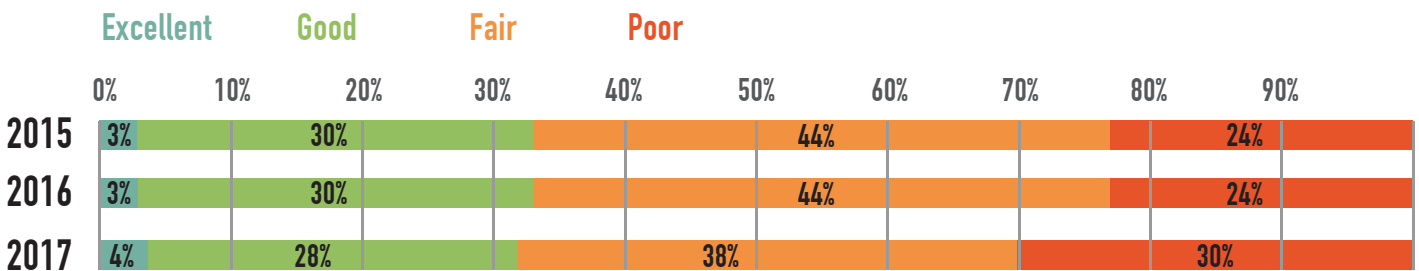
AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED WORKERS



When business respondents were asked how they rate the availability of qualified workers in the Four County area:



In 2017, compared to the previous two years, more employers responded that the availability of qualified workers was excellent. However, the majority of employers continue to report that the availability of qualified workers is fair or poor, suggesting a broad and ongoing challenge finding qualified employees.































AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED WORKERS BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

In most sectors, the majority of employers continue to report the availability of qualified workers as fair or poor.

The percentage of employers in our top five sectors who identified worker availability as fair or poor is as follows:



SECTOR	EXCELLENT – GOOD		FAIR – POOR	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting		21%		79%
Construction		16%		84%
Manufacturing		23%		78%
Retail Trade		42%		58%
Transportation and Warehousing		39%		62%
Information and Cultural		33%		67%
Finance and Insurance		43%		57%
Professional, Scientific, Technical		29%		71%
Educational Services		33%		67%
Health Care and Social Assistance		51%		49%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation		33%		67%
Accommodation and Food Services		25%		75%
Other Services (except Public Administration)		30%		70%
Public Administration		46%		54%

* Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding

* Includes only sectors in which 10 or more employers responded

AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED WORKERS BY COUNTY

The majority of survey respondents from each county reported that the availability of qualified workers was fair or poor.












	EXCELLENT - GOOD		FAIR - POOR	
BRUCE COUNTY		30%		70%
GREY COUNTY		32%		68%
HURON COUNTY		35%		65%
PERTH COUNTY		32%		68%

EMPLOYMENT DYNAMICS IN 2016



HIRING AND SEPARATIONS

461 employers hired at least one person in 2016, collectively accounting for 5,416 jobs. The jobs by tenure included:

	TOTAL NUMBER		% OF TOTAL HIRES	
FULL-TIME		2,773		51%
PART-TIME		875		16%
CONTRACT		251		5%
SEASONAL		1,402		26%
PAID CO-OP		115		2%
TOTAL		5,416		

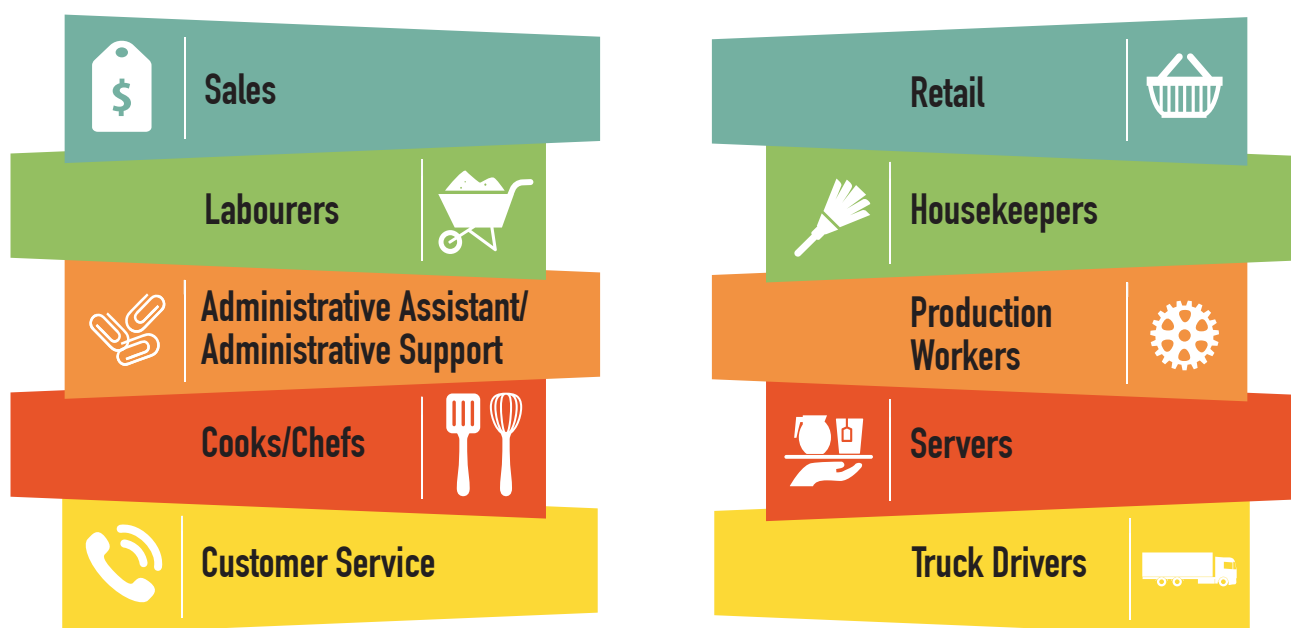
393 employers experienced at least one separation in 2016, collectively representing 4,006 job losses. The separations by category included:

	TOTAL NUMBER	% OF TOTAL SEPARATIONS
QUITS	2,124	53%
RETIREMENTS	277	7%
LAYOFFS	809	20%
DISMISSALS	597	15%
OTHER JOB LOSSES	199	5%
TOTAL	4,006	

HIRING: OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

Jobs created in 2016 were in a wide range of occupations. As in previous years, the majority of jobs were created in occupations requiring less formal skills.

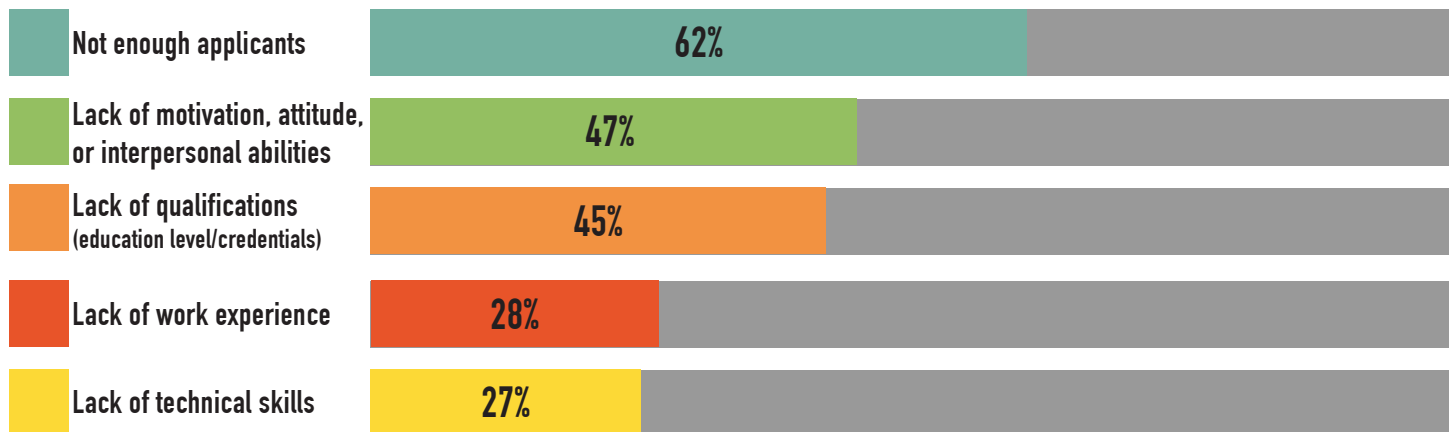
Surveyed employers most frequently identified the following occupations as positions that were filled:



HIRING CHALLENGES

296 employers had trouble filling at least one position in 2016.

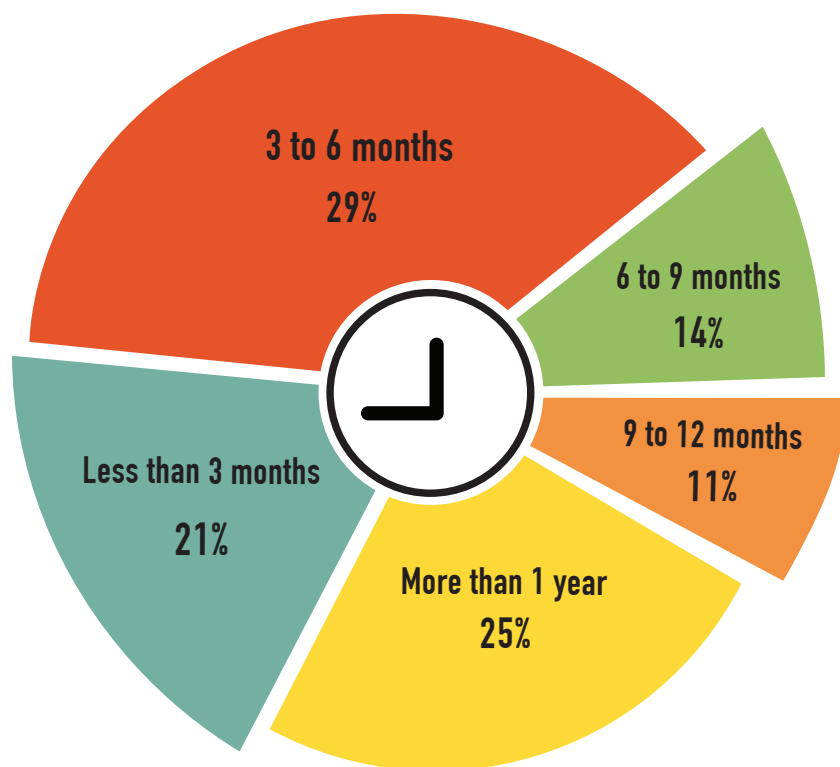
Top reasons positions were hard-to-fill:



* This does not total 100% because employers were asked to select all that apply

This order remains virtually unchanged from what was reported based on 2015 activity.²

When asked how long, on average, they had been trying to fill hard-to-fill positions, employers responded:

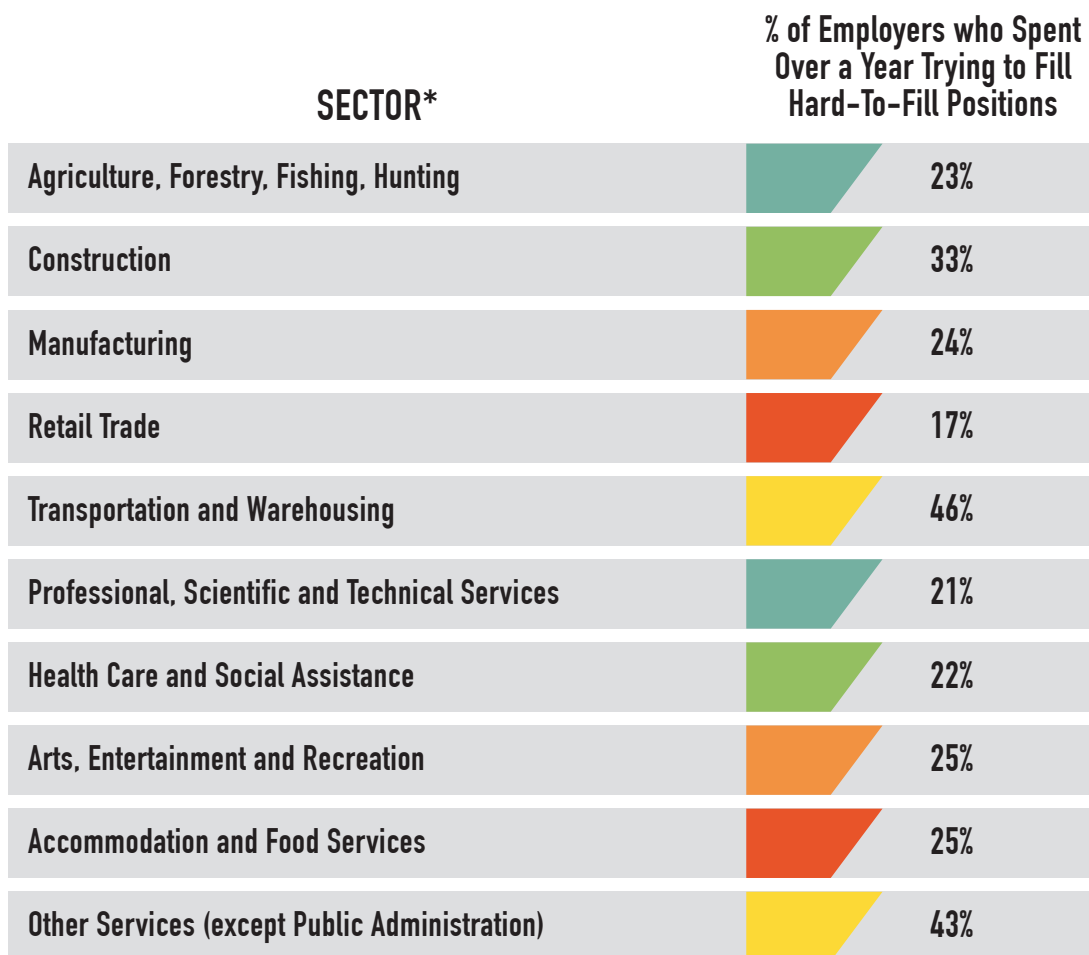


² The one difference from last year is “lack of motivation, attitude, or interpersonal ability” moved from the third to the second most reported reason, and “lack of qualifications” moved from the second to the third most reported reason.

Although the majority of employers (29%) who had hard-to-fill positions spent between 3 and 6 months trying to fill them, 25 percent of employers with hard-to-fill positions spent over a year trying to find employees. Some local employers are experiencing long-term challenges trying to find employees.

Hard-to-fill positions included a wide range of occupations, some of which require training at post-secondary institutions such as engineers, early childhood educators and cooks, while some do not, including labourers, servers and positions in customer service.

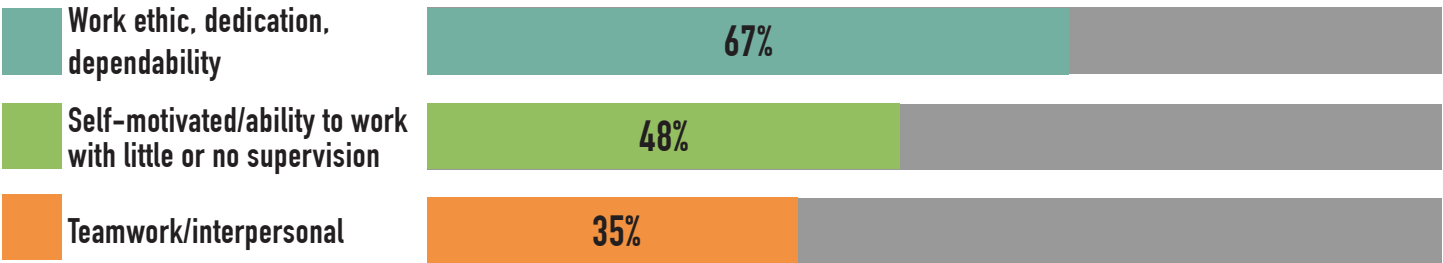
When analyzed according to industrial sector, Transportation and Warehousing, Other Services (except Public Administration) and Construction had the highest percentage of employers reporting that they spent over a year trying to find employees.



* Includes only sectors in which 10 or more employers responded that they had hard-to-fill positions

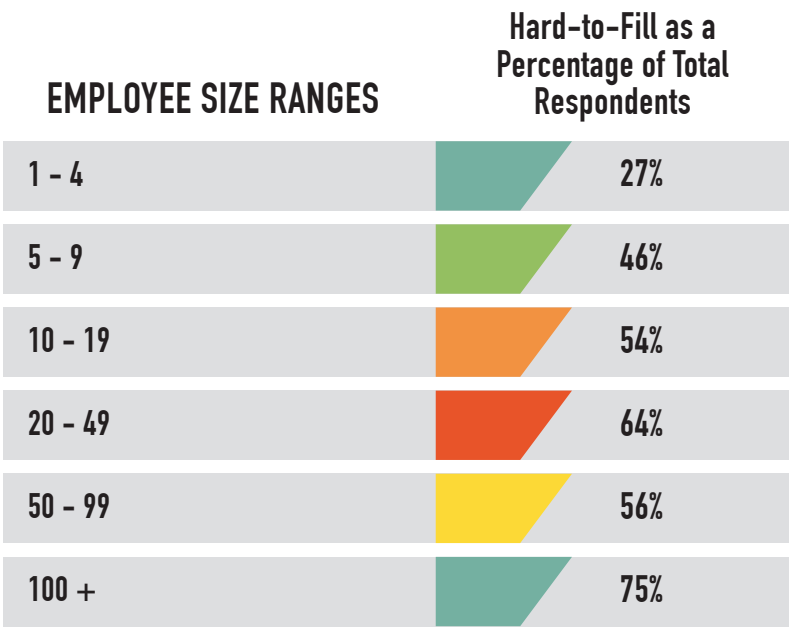
TOP EMPLOYEE COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR HARD-TO-FILL POSITIONS

When asked to select the top three competencies employers are looking for in hard-to-fill positions, employers responded:



Employers across all sectors continued to identify soft skills as critical aspects of success in the workplace. Employees and job seekers must recognize that these skills are key components of workplace success and, without them, one’s ability to be hired and maintain employment may be limited.

HARD-TO-FILL POSITIONS BY SIZE OF BUSINESS



When survey respondents are examined by different employee size ranges, it appears that as the size of the business increases, the difficulty in filling positions also increased, which is reasonably consistent with data gathered from the 2016 survey.³ Survey respondents with 100 or more employees continue to report the most difficulty filling positions.

³ The one exception to this is that companies with 20-49 employees appeared to have more hard-to-fill positions than those with 50-99 employees based on 2016 activity.

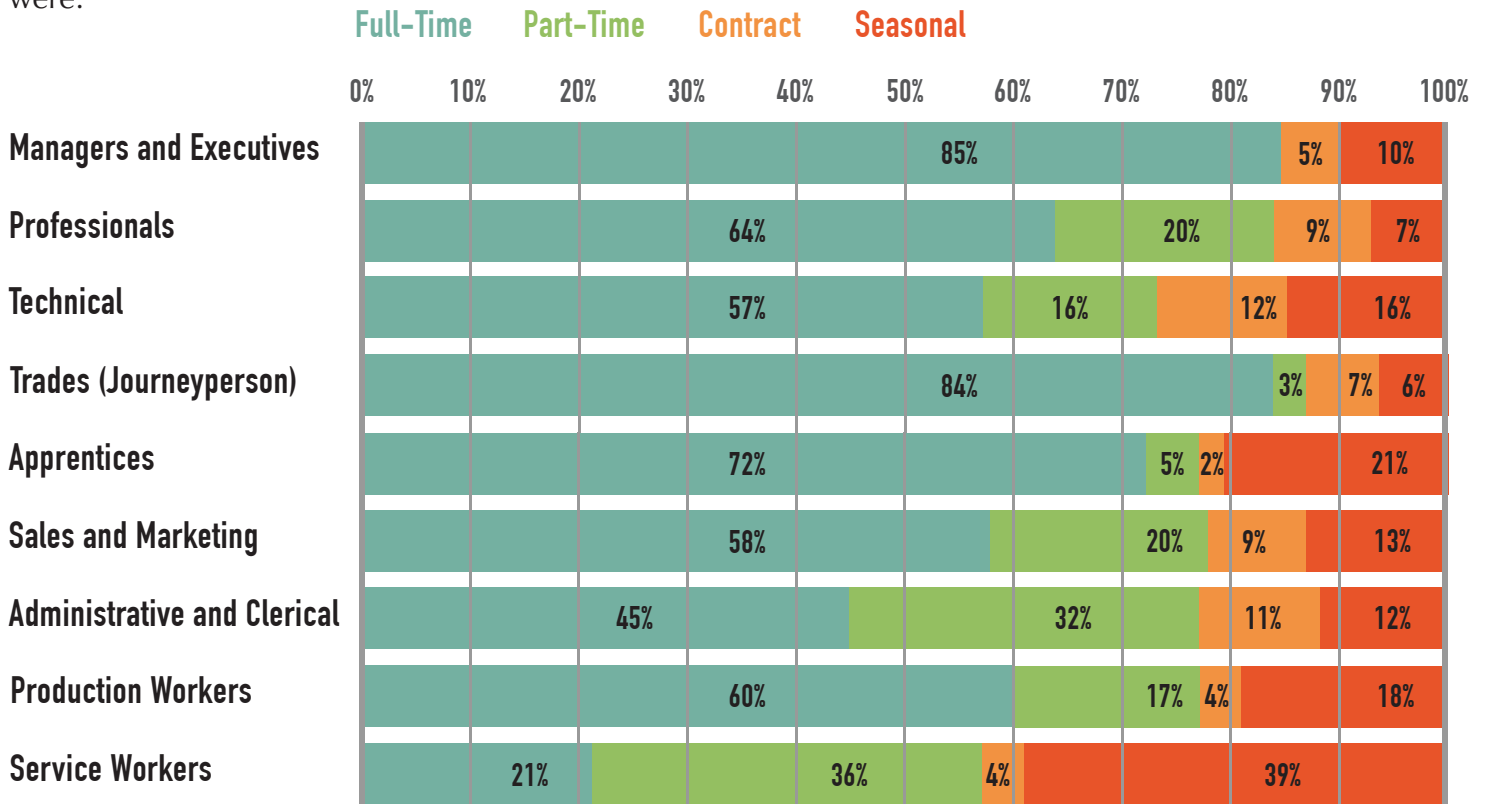
ANTICIPATED HIRES AND RECRUITMENT



ANTICIPATED HIRES

402 surveyed businesses indicated that they anticipate hiring in 2017, for a total of 4,427 anticipated hires across the Four County area.

When asked about the occupational group for which they anticipate hiring the most employees, responses were:



* Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding

In all categories except Service Workers, the majority of employers anticipate full-time hires. For Service Workers, 75 percent of employers anticipate that future hires will be either part-time or seasonal.

METHOD OF RECRUITMENT

Of the surveyed businesses, the majority continue to identify word of mouth as the most often used method to find workers. The next most often used methods of recruitment are online job boards/postings, social media, newspaper ads, and the company's own internet site.

The most popular job search method used by Ontario's unemployed in 2016 was looking at job ads. There continues to be a discrepancy between how job seekers look for work and how employers recruit employees.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF RECRUITMENT

A significant majority (95%) of survey respondents reported that recruitment focused within the local area. This is significantly higher than last year's results in which 70 percent of employers indicated that workforce recruitment focussed within the Four County area. Only 19 percent of this year's employers reported that they recruited from other regions within Ontario.

Businesses in the Four County region may want to consider expanding their employee search area within Ontario. The communities from which the Four County area draws the most people include: Waterloo Region, Wellington County, Middlesex County, Toronto Region, and Simcoe County. Between 2009 and 2014, a combined 21,199 people have moved to the Four County area from these communities.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AGENCY RECRUITMENT

The majority of surveyed businesses (82%) did not receive any assistance from a free employment service agency. The majority (90%) also indicated that they received no assistance from a paid recruitment agency. Given that 64 percent of surveyed businesses plan to hire in the upcoming year, and 25 percent of employers struggled with hard-to-fill positions for more than a year, Employment Ontario service providers could be an answer for employers who are struggling to find workers, particularly those who have been searching for extended periods of time.

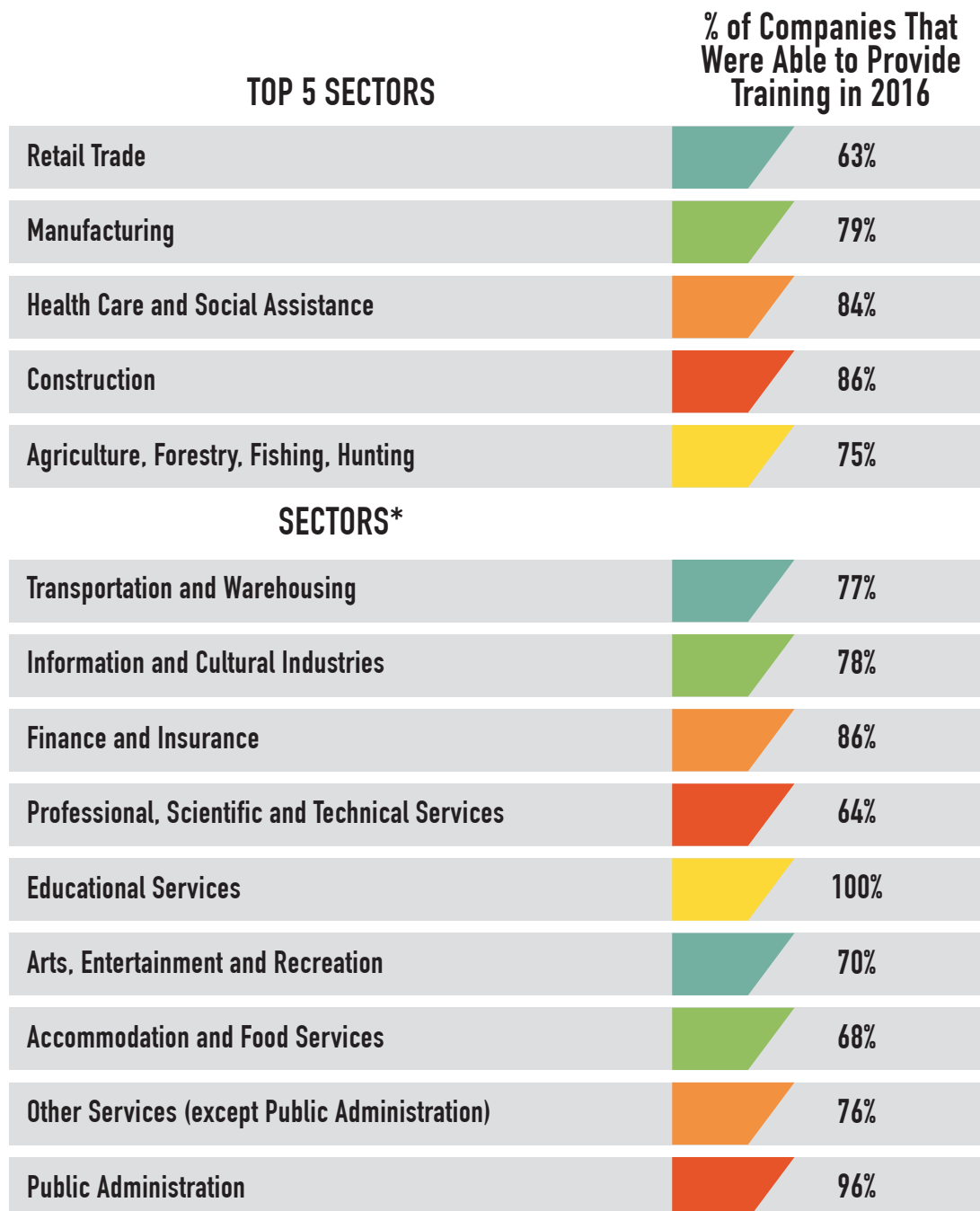
BUSINESS INVESTMENT IN TRAINING



When survey respondents were asked if they were able to provide or support ongoing training and education opportunities in 2016, 75 percent indicated that they were able to do so. There is no change in this response compared to previous surveys.

Sectors in which less than 75 percent of employers were able to provide training included: Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; Accommodation and Food Services; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Retail Trade.

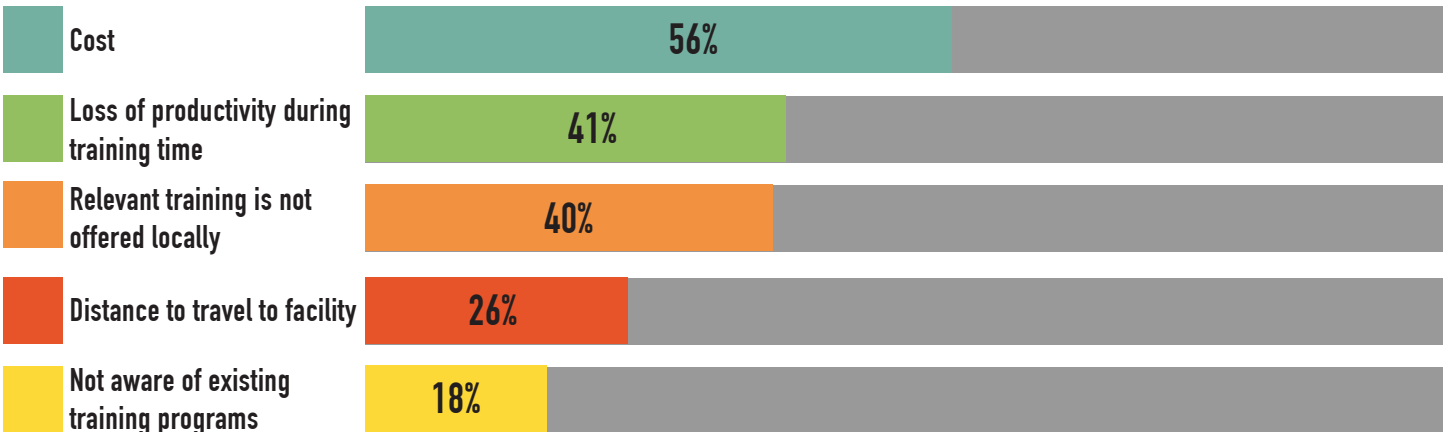
Of our top 5 employment sectors, the only sector in which less than 75 percent of employers provided training in 2016 was Retail Trade.



* Only includes sectors with 10 or more employers responding

When asked how they were able to support training, employers most frequently responded that they were able to fund it (fully or partially), they were able to offer the training internally, or they were able to offer flexibility in work schedules to accommodate staff training needs.

When asked which barriers prevented employers from providing training, the top responses were:



* This does not total 100% because employers were asked to select all that apply.

Given that cost continues to be the top barrier preventing employers from providing training, government training incentives such as the Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG) are an important funding opportunity for employers in the Four County area.

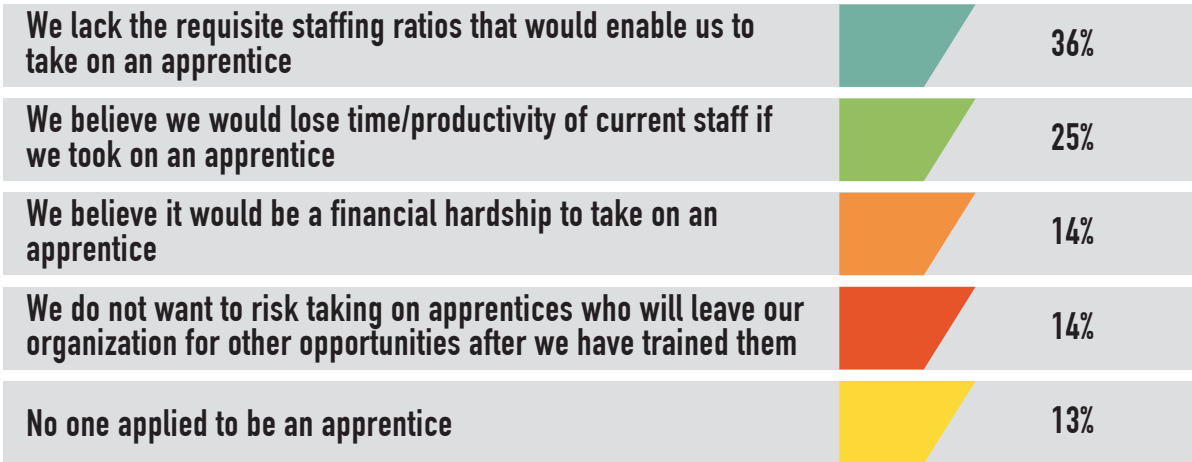
APPRENTICESHIPS

Of surveyed businesses, 13 percent provided an apprenticeship in the skilled trades in 2016.

The most frequently offered apprenticeships were:

- Millwright
- Automotive Service Technician
- Electrician
- Carpenter

Of those businesses that did have potential apprenticeships but did not provide any opportunities, the reasons were as follows:



* This does not total 100% because employers were asked to select all that apply.



SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING

As with previous surveys, the businesses that reported they were unable to support ongoing training and education in 2016 tended to be small; 113 of 160 businesses that could not support training last year had fewer than 10 employees. Given that there are over 7,000 small businesses (1-9 employees) in the Four County area, the potential number of businesses unable to support training could have a huge impact on skills development.

In direct response to this need, a Planning Board partnership has created a small business mobile training project in which legislated training courses are facilitated at an employer's location, thereby eliminating obstacles such as lack of relevant local training and distance to travel to training facilities.

HARD-TO-FILL POSITIONS

**Potential Number of Businesses by Employee Size Range
that May Find New Positions Hard-to-Fill**

Employee Size Range	Total Number of Businesses	Percent of Survey Respondents with Hard-to-Fill Positions	Potential Number of Businesses with Hard-To-Fill Positions
1 to 4 employees	5,212	27%	1,407
5 to 9 employees	2,109	46%	970
10 to 19 employees	1,392	54%	752
20 to 49 employees	796	64%	509
50 to 99 employees	254	56%	142
100+ employees	186	75%	140

Source: FCLMPB Local Labour Market Plan 2016, EmployerOne Survey 2017

SOFT SKILLS TRAINING

The majority of employers continue to report that the availability of qualified workers is fair or poor. This is reported in all four counties as well as most industrial sectors. This feedback has not changed during the three years in which this survey has been conducted. In direct response to this general dissatisfaction with the local workforce, the Planning Board has been working closely with our community partners to share these findings with high school students (co-op and careers classes) and job seekers (individuals who are working with Employment Ontario service providers) who will be our future workforce. High school classroom visits, the Skills Opportunities Showcase trailer projects, and industry specific outreach – such as Manufacturing tours and the upcoming Agriculture Career Fair – are all projects in which soft skills discussions with local youth are continuously taking place. These opportunities allow us to highlight the research from this report showing that most employers are overwhelmingly concerned that a lack of soft skills is negatively impacting the local labour pool.

Information from EmployerOne and previous Planning Board projects⁴ has provided background research for several initiatives addressing the ongoing need for soft skills training in the region. An upcoming 10-week soft skills program for youth was developed by Community Futures Development Corporations in Bruce and Grey counties. Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) providers throughout the area have been trained to incorporate soft skills in their work with clients. This training was developed by Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board.

APPRENTICESHIPS

78 responding employers who have the ability to hire apprentices did not do so in 2016. The most frequently reported reasons for this included inadequate staffing ratios, loss of productivity, financial hardship, and the risk of losing trained employees to other organizations. In addition to these challenges to the employer, future and current apprentices experience individual challenges that may prevent them from completing apprenticeships.

In direct response to these challenges, the Planning Board is undertaking a project that will look at apprenticeship completion rates from the point of view of both employers and apprentices. In this project, we will explore the key barriers that are resulting in low apprenticeship completion rates.⁵ We will then identify possible solutions that could enable employers to offer more apprenticeship opportunities, and connect apprentices with the resources they need to successfully complete both the competencies and educational components of their chosen skilled trade.

⁴ *The First Step: Understanding the Skills Gap, Four County Labour Market Planning Board, 2014.*

⁵ “In 2011, the Registered Apprenticeship Information System. . . found that, of all Canadian provinces, Ontario’s completion rates were the lowest (Laporte & Mueller, 2011)” p.5, *Barriers to Attracting Apprentices and Completing their Apprenticeships*, 2015.



We'll be looking for your input once again.
In January 2018, an updated version of the
survey will be made available.

Join our mailing list to stay informed:
e-mail employerone@planningboard.ca

FOUR COUNTY LABOUR MARKET PLANNING BOARD
111 Jackson Street South, Suite 1 • Walkerton, Ontario • N0G 2V0
www.planningboard.ca • 519-881-2725