

# NIAGARA WORKFORCE PLANNING BOARD

## Employer One: 2015 Results

### Data by Niagara, for Niagara

Thank you to all our partners who supported the Employer One Survey

This *Employment Ontario* project is funded by the Ontario government

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of  
*Employment Ontario*





## Introduction

The Niagara Workforce Planning Board (NWPB) deployed the Employer One survey from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 to February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015. This was NWPB's first delivery of the Employer One survey. NWPB plans on repeating Employer One in January of 2016 and again in January 2017 as part of a commitment to improving labour market information in the Niagara region.

This document reflects the results of the 73 employers who completed the Employer One survey. Readers should note that while NWPB considers this response an excellent turnout, these responses do not constitute a representative sample of employers in the Niagara region. As such, the results of the survey reflect only the businesses who completed the survey and *should not* be extrapolated to a regional level.

NWPB would like to thank the following organizations for going above and beyond with their help in promoting Employer One to employers.

Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce

John Howard Society of Niagara / Job Gym

Niagara Construction Association

Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce

Niagara Industrial Association

Niagara Region

Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce

Welland-Pelham Chamber of Commerce

YMCA of Niagara Employment Services

NWPB would like to thank all organizations who completed the survey and offered their support through e-mail blasts, social media broadcasts, or word-of-mouth endorsements.

## Executive Summary

The Employer One survey asked questions within three categories: organization and workforce patterns, labour turnover and recruitment rates, and skills shortages, training, and education. For your convenience, we have summarized key data points on this page.

### Section A: Organization and Workforce Patterns

- 75.3% of the firms who completed Employer One self-identified their business as “established”. 2.7% of respondents reported their business was in the “start-up” phase.
- Respondents reported the majority of their permanent full-time and temporary full-time workers were between the ages of 25-44.
- The median number of employees employed by survey respondents was 7.5 – a figure which is not surprising given Niagara's small-business economy.
- The top-three industries represented in Employer One responses were other services<sup>i</sup>, construction, and manufacturing.
- Most employers who completed the survey had their operations located in either St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, or Niagara-on-the-Lake.

### Section B: Labour turnover and Recruitment Rates

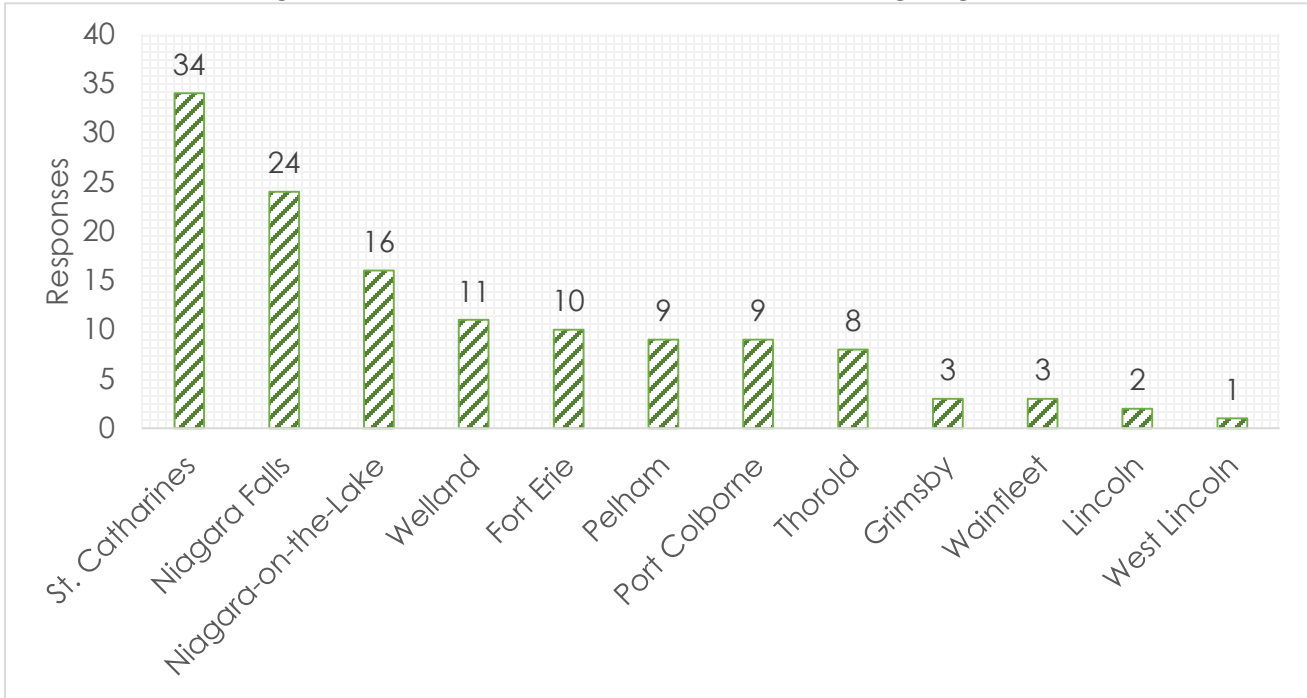
- 52.8% of surveyed employers reported separations<sup>ii</sup> in 2014.
- 67.1% of surveyed employers reported hiring in 2014.
- Informal recruitment methods such as word of mouth advertising, personal referrals, or personal contacts were the most reported recruitment tool.
- 52.1% of the employers who reported hiring in 2014 classified some or all of their hires as “hard-to-fill”<sup>iii</sup> positions.
- 74.6% of employers limited their search for workers to the Niagara region.

### Part C: Skill Shortages, Training, and Education Needs

- 73.6% of respondents rated the availability of skilled workers in Niagara as either “good” or “fair”.
- A “strong work ethic”, “dependability”, and other “soft skills”<sup>iv</sup> were rated as the top competency among current and future workers.
- Respondents most frequently reported sales positions as those needing additional training.
- Respondents identified a mix of “hard”<sup>v</sup> and “soft” skills when reporting in-demand skills for their current and future workforce.
- 81.6% of respondents reported they were able to provide some level of ongoing training or education for their employees.

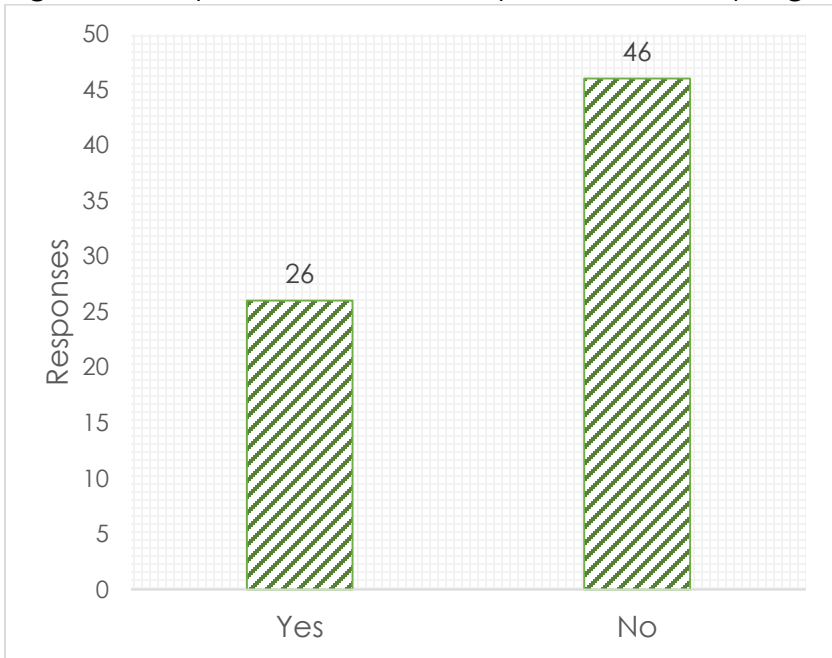
## Section A: Organization and Workforce Patterns

Figure 1: Completed survey responses by geography



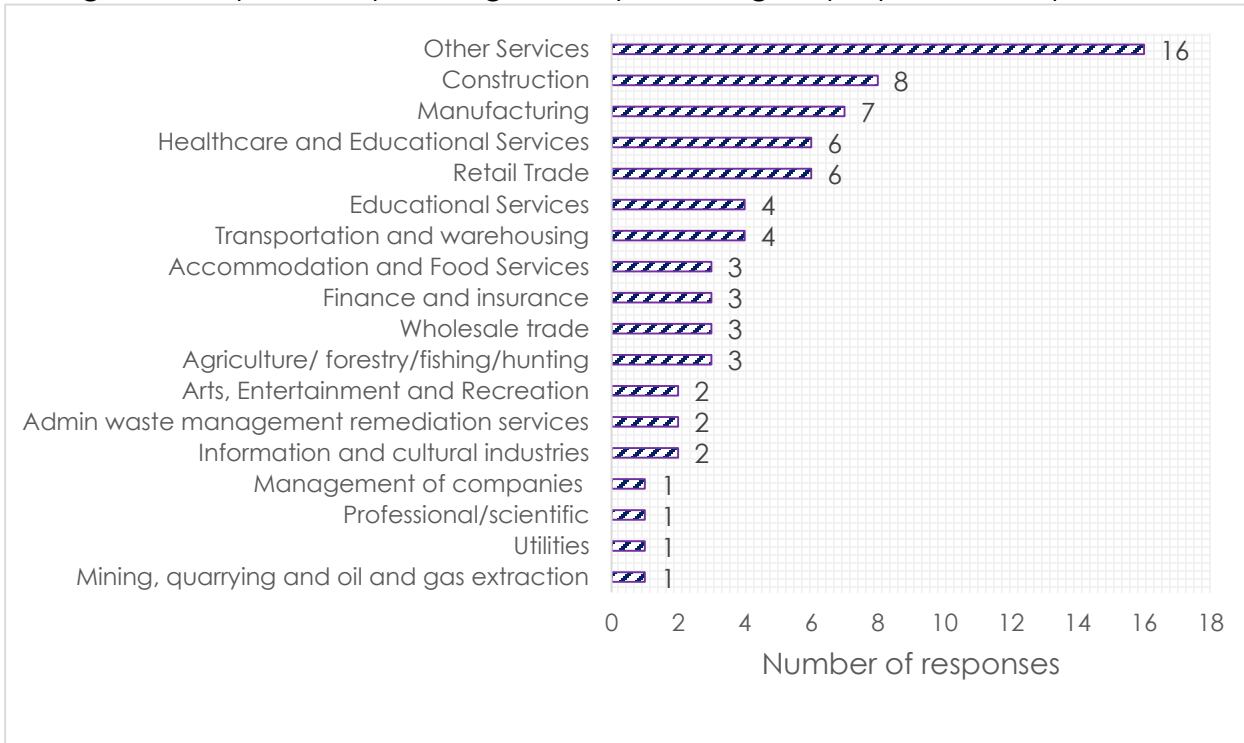
Most of the respondents who completed the survey were located in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, and Niagara-on-the-Lake. Among the completed responses, 65 respondents reported being head offices and 8 reported being branches of larger organizations.

Figure 2: Respondents with workplace wellness programs



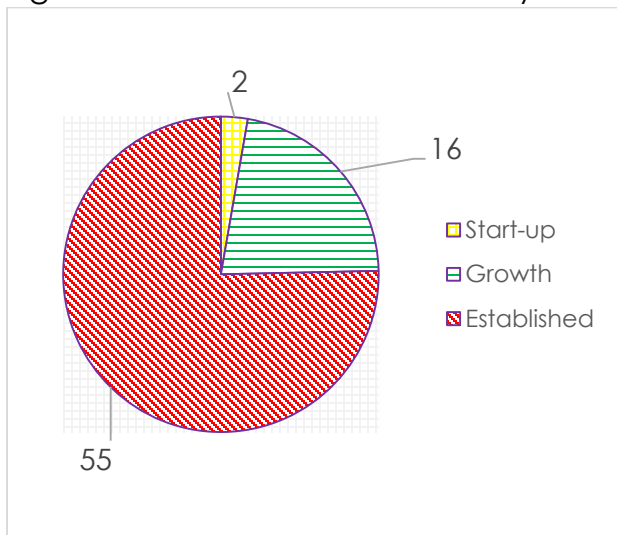
Among Employer One respondents:  
Average number of employees among respondents: 72.3.  
Median number of employees among respondents: 7.5.  
The median figure aligns with previous NWPB reports on Niagara's small business economy.

Figure 3: Reported operating industry<sup>vi</sup> among Employer One respondents



As defined by Statistics Canada, “Other Services,” as seen in Figure 3, can include staff primarily engaged in repairing, or performing general or routine maintenance on motor vehicles, machinery, equipment and other products to ensure that they work efficiently; providing personal care services, funeral services, laundry services and other services to individuals, such as pet care services and photo finishing services; organizing and promoting religious activities; supporting various causes through grant-making, advocating (promoting) various social and political causes, and promoting and defending the interests of their members.

Figure 4: Self-identified business cycle among Employer One respondents



As seen in Figure 4, the majority of respondents to Employer One reported being established operations. 22% of respondents reported being in the growth phase. 2.7% of respondents reported being in the start-up phase. As the number of firms sampled is not representative of all the firms in Niagara, these figures should not be extrapolated to the region as a whole.

Figure 5: Workforce employment status among respondents

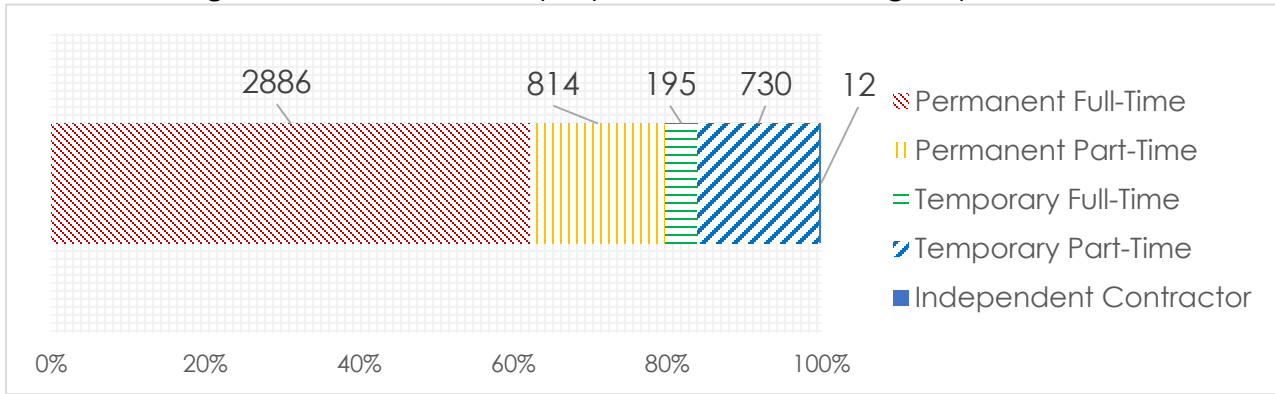
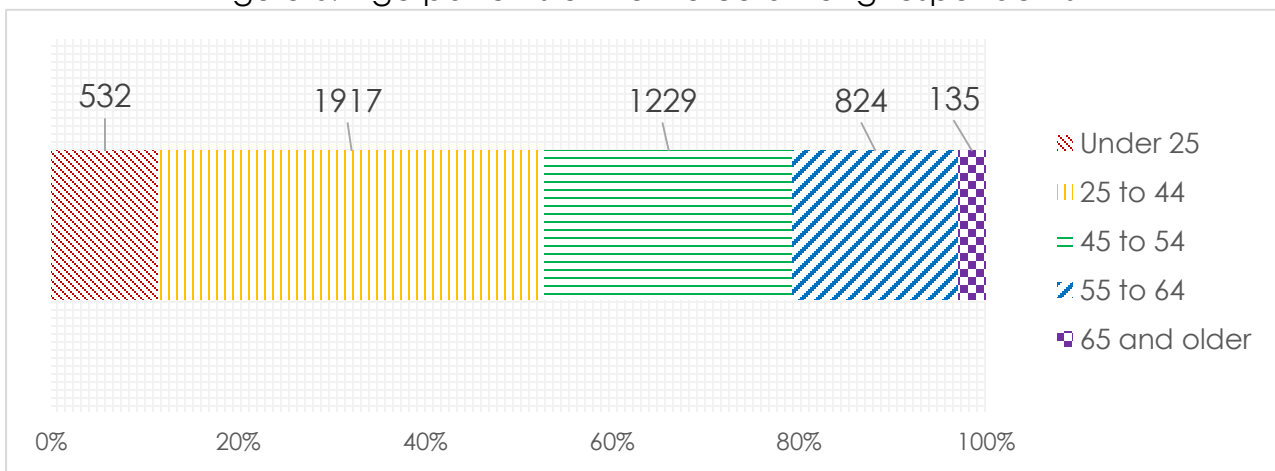


Figure 6: Age patterns of workforce among respondents



Demographic Profiles:

Workers under age 25 accounted for only 4.2% of reported permanent full-time jobs. This cohort accounted for 30% of temporary part-time jobs.

Workers between age 25 and 44 accounted for 39.9% of reported permanent full-time jobs, more than any other age cohort. This age cohort also accounted for 53.3% of all temporary full-time jobs and 40% of all temporary part-time jobs.

Workers between age 45 and 54 accounted for 32.3% of reported permanent full-time jobs, becoming the second largest age cohort among full-time workers.

Workers between age 55 and 65 accounted for 21.2% of reported permanent full-time jobs.

Workers over 65 represented the smallest proportion of workers reported in each employment status group. These workers were most heavily concentrated in permanent full-time occupations, but were almost three times as likely to be working in a permanent part-time capacity.

## Section B: Labour Turnover and Recruitment Rates

Figure 7: Respondents that reported separations in 2014

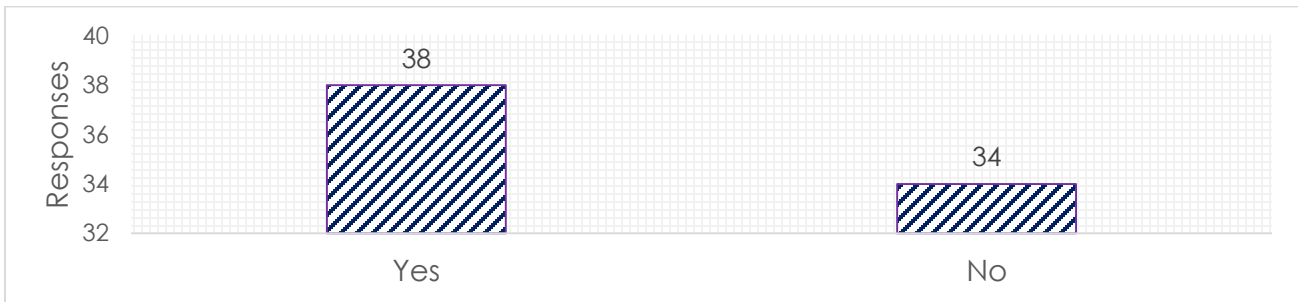


Table 1: 2014 separation history

Separations	Count	Percentage
Quits	260	49.4%
Retirements	68	12.9%
Temporary layoffs	65	12.4%
Other	133	25.3%
Total	526	100.0%

Data from survey respondents indicates that voluntary quits accounted for the largest number of employee separations in 2014. Note: the “other” category includes, but is not limited to, employees being terminated and permanent lay-offs due to business closure or downsizing. Employer One did not collect any additional data on the “other” category.

Figure 8: Respondents that reported hires in 2014

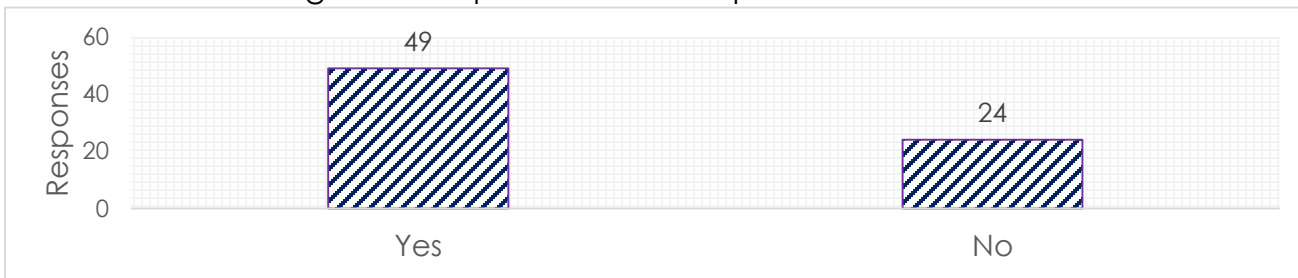


Table 2: 2014 hiring patterns among respondents

Hires	Count	Percentage
Permanent full-time hires	394	63.5%
Permanent part-time	151	24.4%
Temporary full-time	49	7.9%
Temporary part Time	23	3.7%
Independent Contractors	3	0.5%
Total	620	100.0%

Production and service workers accounted for 61% of permanent full-time hires. Respondents reported that 14.8% of their hires were recent college or university graduates, though some reported these figures were not tracked internally.

Figure 8: Top number of occupational hires

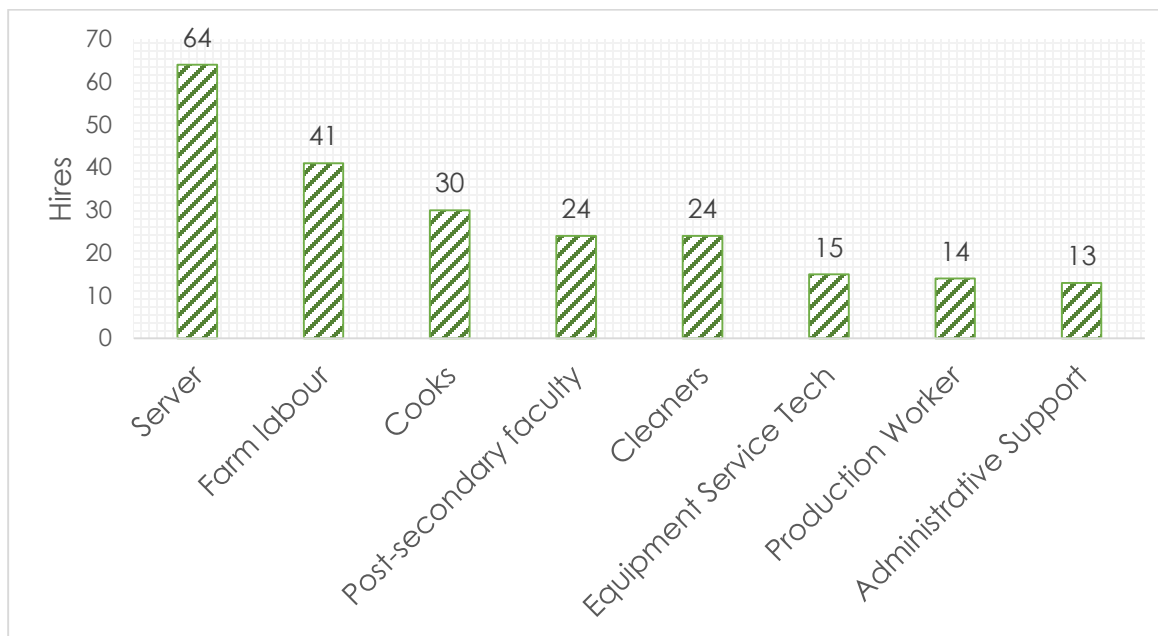


Table 3: Frequently used recruitment methods among respondents

Recruitment Methods	Responses
Word of mouth/personal contacts/referrals/informal networks	36
Online job boards/postings	18
Company's own internet site	15
Unsolicited resumes	13
Other	10
On-site job signs or posters	9
On-site recruitment at schools, colleges, or universities	7
Government employment centres or websites	7
Executive search companies or temporary help agencies	6
Newspaper ads	6
Non-government or community employment service centres or websites	5
Trade or professional association publications/sites	4
Job fairs	1

As seen in table 3, word of mouth/personal contacts/referrals/informal networks ranked as the most common recruitment tool among survey respondents. NWPB believes this data may indicate a need for a larger study on hiring practices in the Niagara region.



Table 4: Geographical areas targeted for worker recruitment

Geography	Responses
Within the local area (Niagara region)	47
Within the province	10
Within the rest of Canada	4
Internationally	2

Figure 9: Respondents who reported using a paid recruitment agency

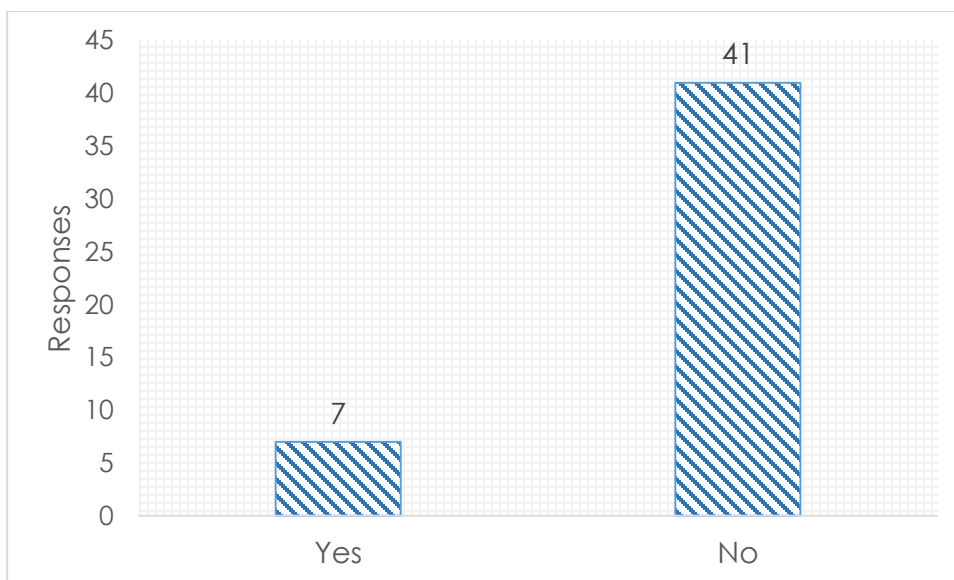


Table 5: Respondents who reported using a free employment service to fill a position with an individual from an identified group

Identified Groups	Responses
Youth (15-24 years of age)	5
Immigrants and visible minorities	1
Aboriginals	1
Older workers (55 and older)	1
Persons with disabilities	0

Employment Ontario's front-line service providers are one of Niagara's best systems for addressing unemployment, under-employment, self-employment, literacy, and workplace skills training. The Niagara Workforce Planning Board encourages all employers to build a professional relationship with the Employment Ontario agency in their area of operation.

Figure 10: Respondents who identified any 2014 hires as hard-to-fill

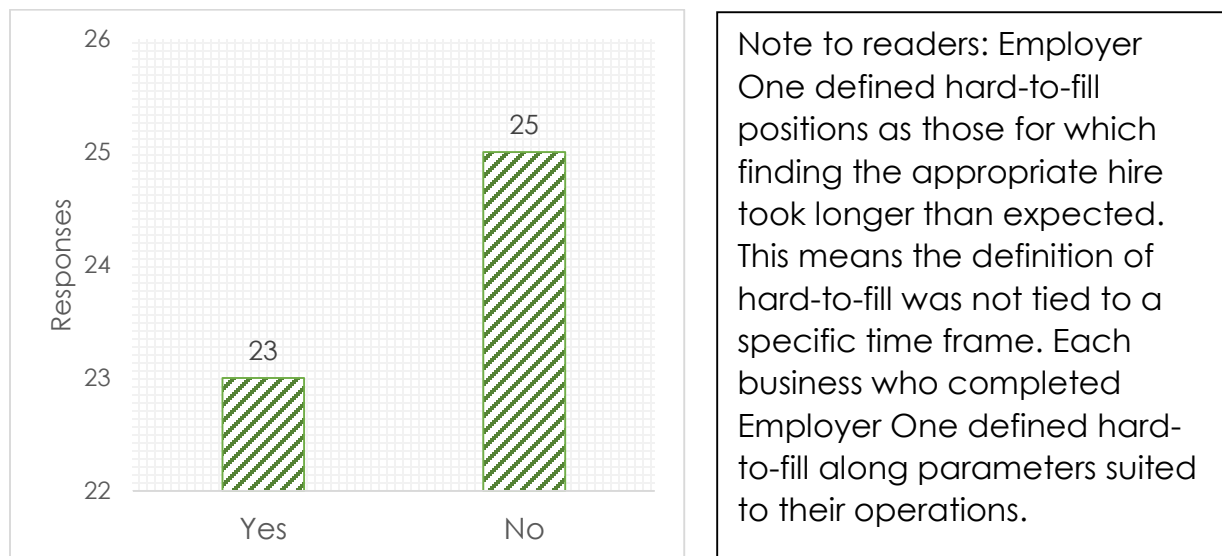


Table 6: Identified reasons for hard-to-fill positions

Reason positions were hard-to-fill	Responses
Applicants not meeting skills	16
Applicants not meeting work experience	15
Applicants not meeting motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities	12
Not enough applicants	10
Applicants not meeting qualifications (education level/credentials)	10
Inability to compete with other employers due to pay and benefits	6
No local qualified applicants	6
No applicants at all	4
Inability to compete with other employers due to promotion opportunities	3
Inability to compete with other employers due to remote location/poor public transit	3
Other	2
Inability to compete with other employers due to nature of work	1

Note in Table 6 that “applicants not meeting motivation, attitude, or personal abilities” (i.e. soft skills) accounted for twice the number of hard-to-fill positions compared to “no qualified applicants” and triple the number of “no applicants”.

Table 7: Respondents' projected hires for 2015

Future hires	Count	Percentage
Full-time	293	68.0%
Part-time	136	31.6%
Independent Contractor	2	0.5%

Managers and executives (as seen in Table 8) accounted for 65.4% of projected full-time hires. Professionals (e.g. accountants, engineers) accounted for 23.6% of projected full-time hires. 44.8% of projected part-time hires were from the "other" category.

Table 8: Reason for anticipated job openings among employee groups

Employee Group	Retirements	Expansion	Technology	Other	N/A	Total
Managers and Executives	3	7	0	3	4	17
Sales and Marketing	0	8	0	4	3	15
Administrative and Clerical	3	6	0	2	3	14
Apprentices	0	5	0	2	6	13
Production Worker	1	3	0	3	6	13
Trades (Journeyperson)	1	3	0	3	5	12
Service Worker	2	3	0	5	2	12
Technical	0	4	0	3	3	10
Professionals	1	5	0	2	1	9
Other	0	3	0	1	4	8

Other reasons for anticipated job openings among Employer One respondents include:

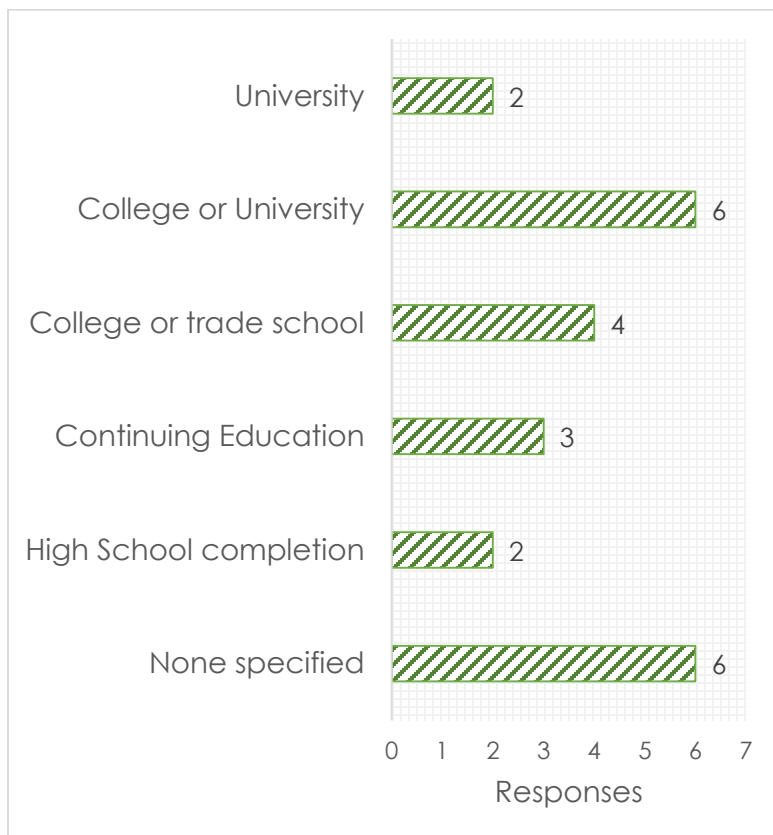
- Forecasted seasonal demand
- Existing positions being reclassified and requiring additional staff/labour to meet demands
- Internal staff turnover due to part-time positions
- Mobility of the labour force
- Resignations/staff attrition

## Part C: Skill Shortages, Training, and Education needs

Figure 11: Respondents' rating of the availability of qualified workers in Niagara



Figure 12: Level of education in greatest demand among respondents' current employees



Employers identified the following list of skills as those most in-demand for their current employees:

- Willingness to learn on the job
- Computer literacy
- Literacy
- Punctuality
- Common sense
- Customer service
- Bilingualism
- Numeracy
- Critical thinking
- Dependability

It is important to note these skills represent a mix of "hard" skills and "soft" skills.

Employer One respondents identified a number of professional designations and certifications in-demand for current and future employees. These included:

- Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT)
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)
- Registered Nurse (RN)
- Basic Cardiac Life Support Certification (BCLS)
- Accounting designation (CA, CMA, CGA, CPA)
- AZ Drivers/Licencing
- Canadian Welding Bureau Qualifications
- Insurance Broker Licence
- Life and A&S Insurance Licencing
- Quality Control/Quality Assurance Certificates (multiple trades)
- Certified Sales Professional
- CNC Programmer
- Journeyman Welder, Pipefitter, Millwright, Fitter, Machinist

Figure 13: Respondents able to provide or support ongoing training and education opportunities for employees

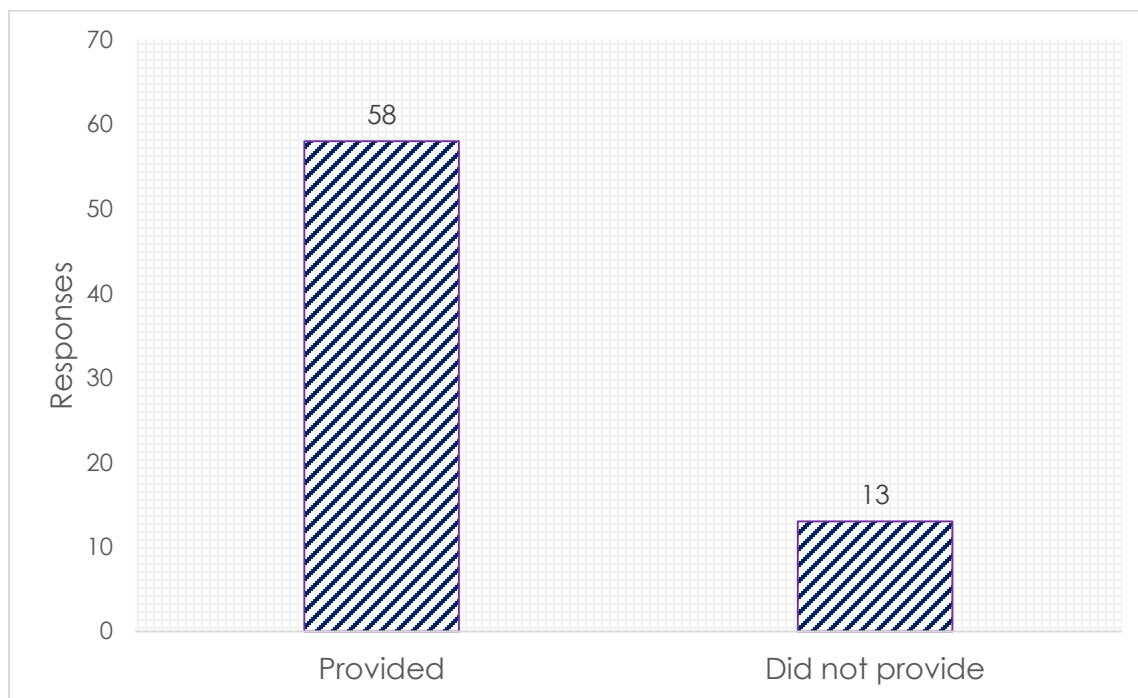
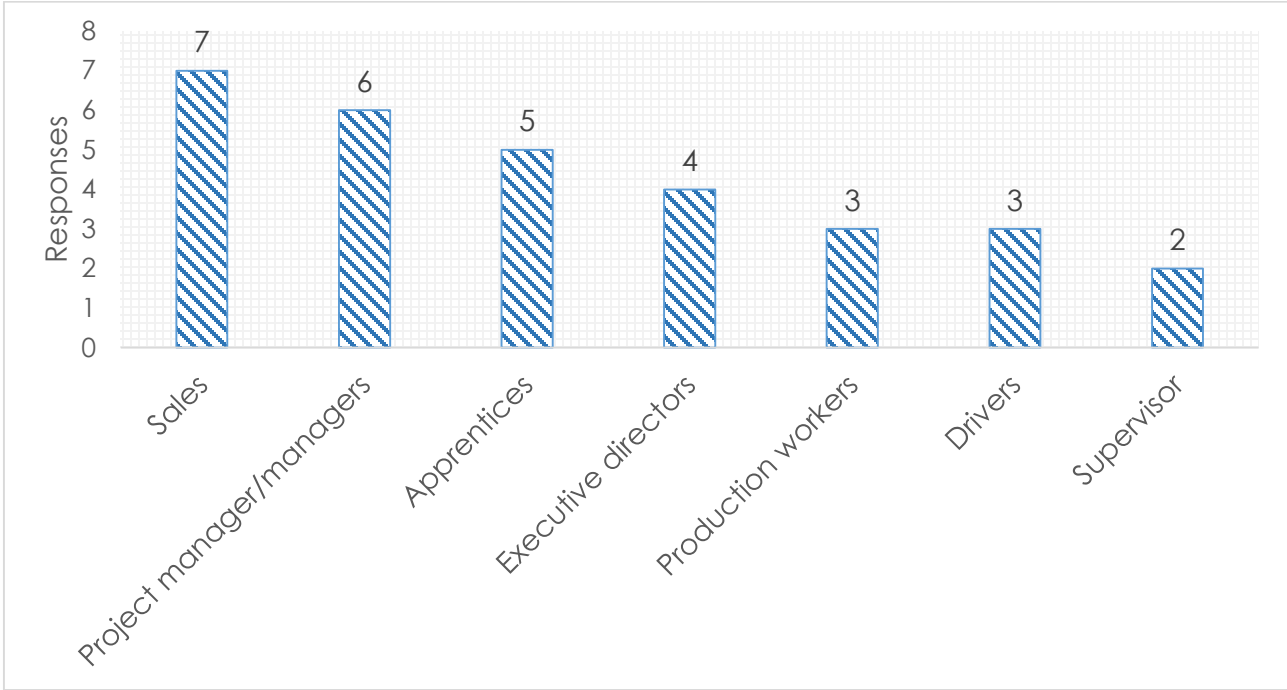
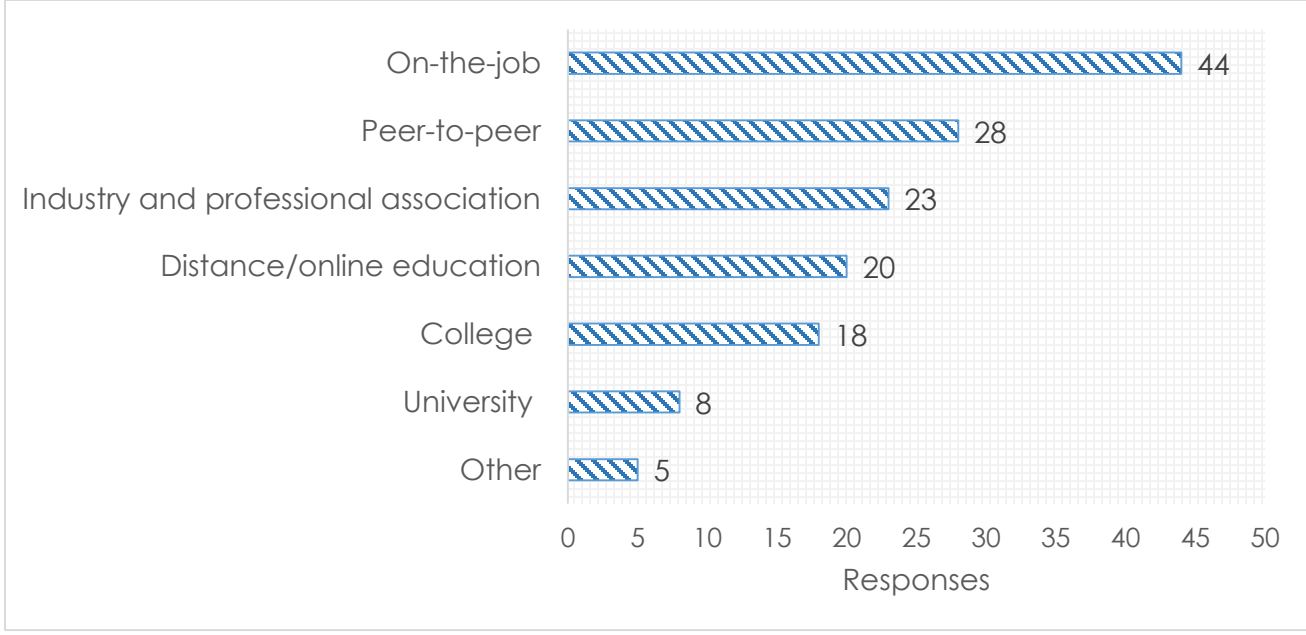


Figure 14: Occupations requiring training



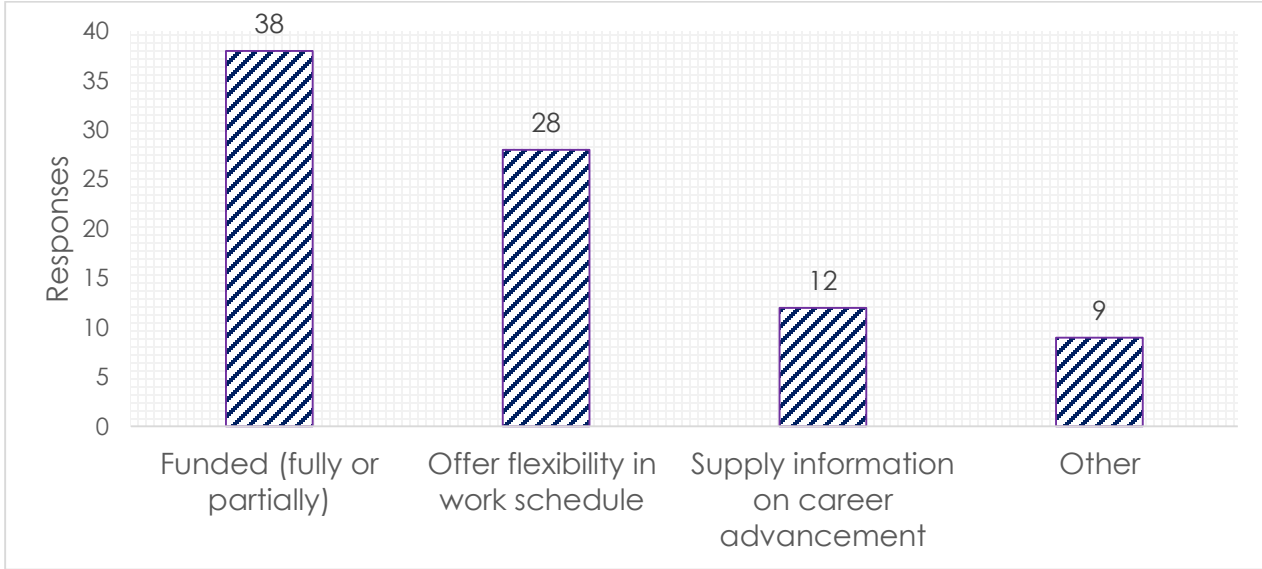
Note: Employers who completed Employer One offered ninety-six occupations which required additional training. Those identified in the figure above represent the most frequently occurring responses.

Figure 15: Common sources of training/education for occupations requiring training



Note: College and University options include continuing studies programs.

Figure 16: Methods of supporting education and training



The majority of “Other” responses referenced paid on-the-job training.

Figure 17: Barriers to employees receiving on-going training and education.

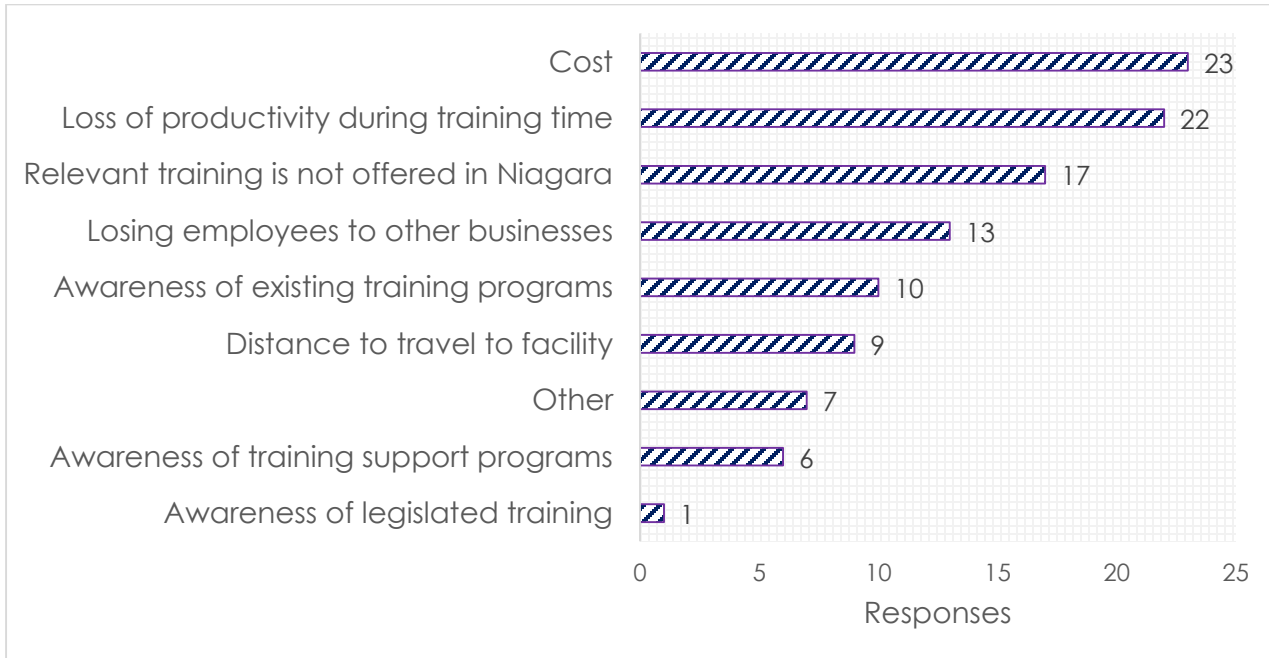
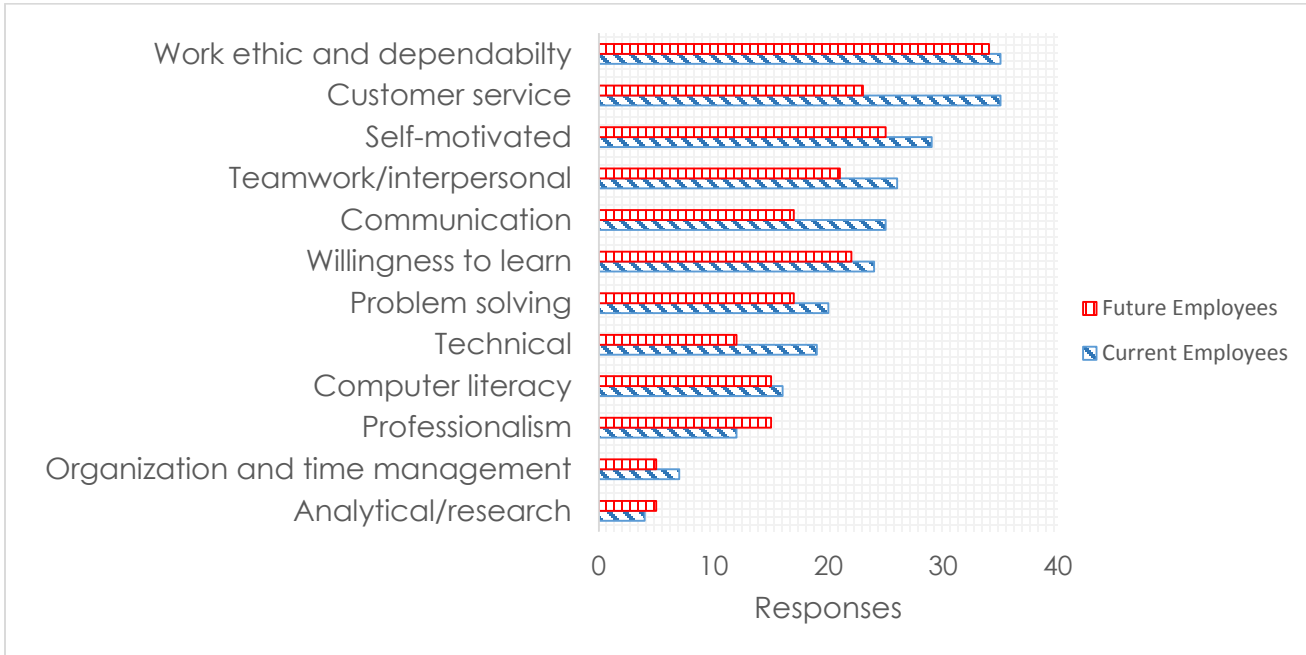
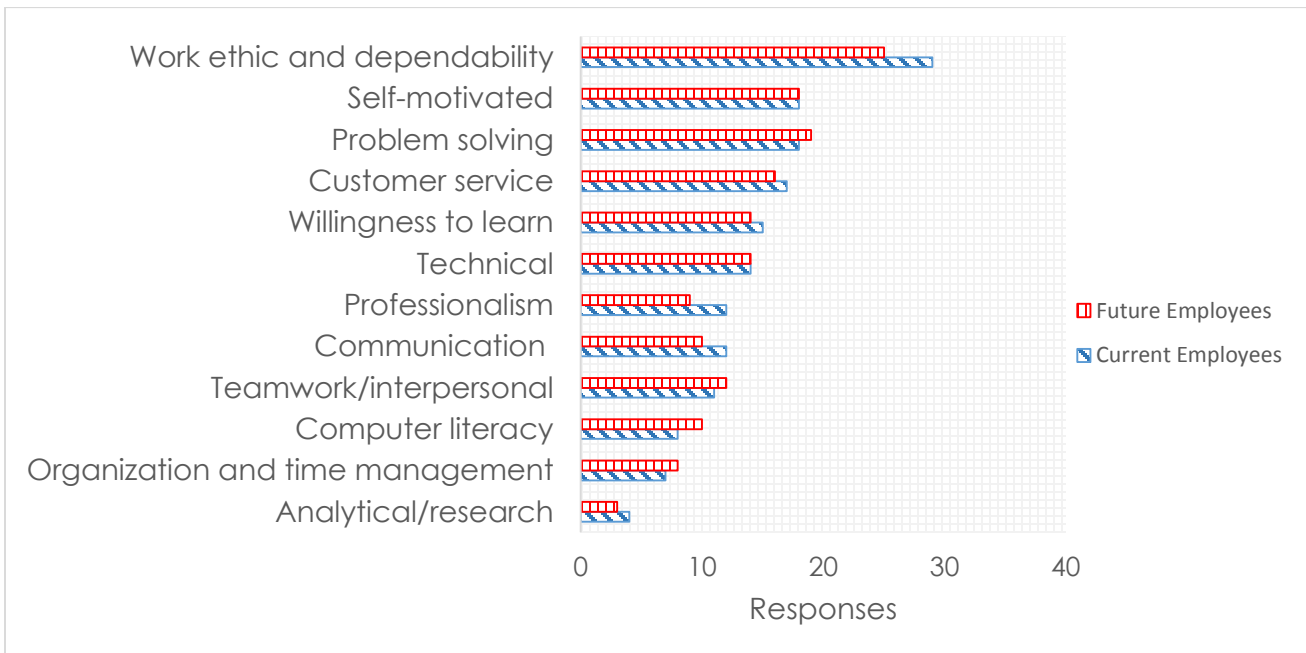


Figure 18: Top 3 competencies in employees



Employer One respondents overwhelmingly identified work ethic, customer service, and self-motivation among the top three competencies for their staff. These findings are consistent with responses to similar questions in the survey.

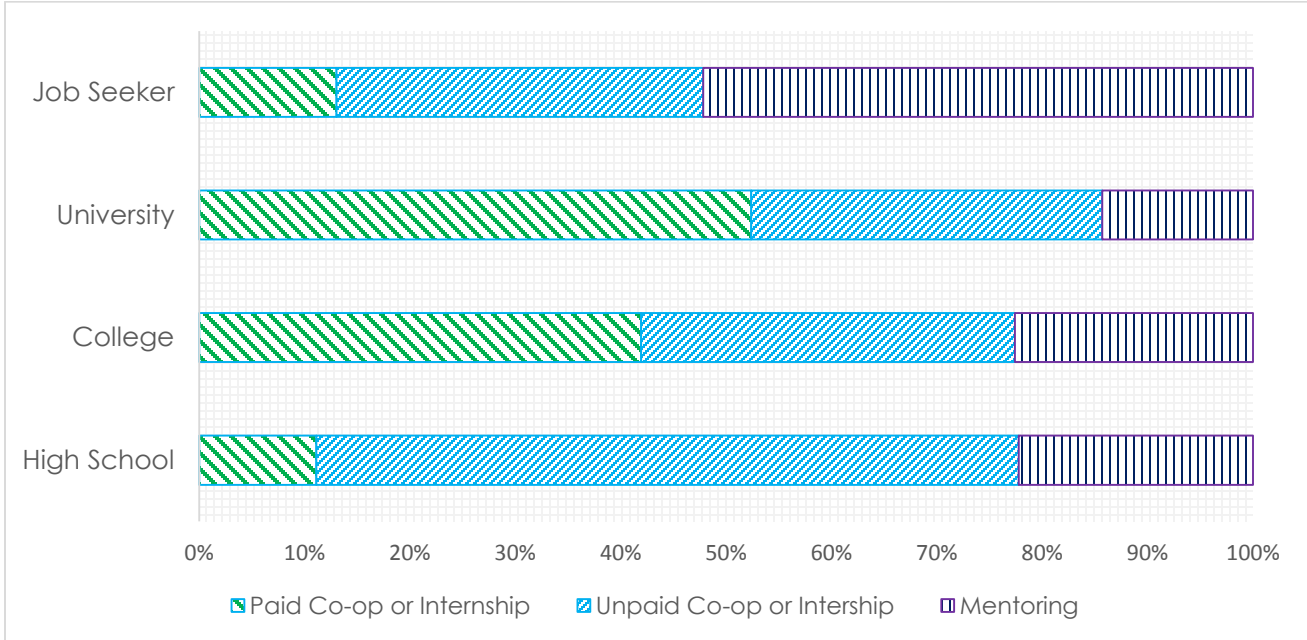
Figure 19: Top 3 competencies in hard-to-fill positions



Even among hard to fill positions, “work ethic and dependability” was identified as the top competency, accounting for 17.5% of responses for current employees and 15.8% of responses in future employees.



Figure 20: Workplace-relevant training for students and future workers



Unpaid co-ops or internships account for 66.7% of training placements for high-school students. This figure falls considerably for college and university students with paid co-op and internships accounting for, respectively, 42.0% and 52.3% of training placements. Mentoring accounts for 52.2% of training placements for individuals not in education.

## Section D: Follow-up and Next Steps

In the coming year, Niagara Workforce Planning Board will commit to the following activities and actions in support of the Employer One survey:

- Continue to build a broad base of partnership and support for the Employer One survey. Community groups or organizations interested in supporting Employer One as marketing partners should contact NWPB.
- Promote Employer One and its results with Employment Ontario partners in the Niagara region. It is our hope this tool can be used to help employers strengthen existing relationships with local service providers.
- Promote Employer One and its results among educators as a tool for informing skill and training opportunities.
- Prepare raw data collected with the Employer One survey for distribution as part of NWPB's commitment to open data in the Niagara region.
- Integrate select responses and feedback on Employer One into the 2015-16 Local Labour Market Planning Report.
- Explore research opportunities relating to specific trends identified in Employer One to see if they can be studied at a level that will allow for responsible extrapolation to the regional level.

NWPB invites you to respond to this report through a brief, four question survey. The survey can be accessed at [this link](#).

NWPB wants to hear from you.

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Follow us on Twitter: @nwpb

Like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/niagaraworkforce](http://www.facebook.com/niagaraworkforce)

Email: [info@niagaraworkforceboard.ca](mailto:info@niagaraworkforceboard.ca)

## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> As defined by Statistics Canada, "Other Services," can include staff primarily engaged in repairing, or performing general or routine maintenance on motor vehicles, machinery, equipment and other products to ensure that they work efficiently; providing personal care services, funeral services, laundry services and other services to individuals, such as pet care services and photo finishing services; organizing and promoting religious activities; supporting various causes through grant-making, advocating (promoting) various social and political causes, and promoting and defending the interests of their members.

<sup>ii</sup> Separations include: quits, retirements, and dismissals.

<sup>iii</sup> Employer One defined hard-to-fill positions as those for which finding the appropriate hire took longer than expected. This means the definition of hard-to-fill was not tied to a specific time frame. Each business who completed Employer One defined hard-to-fill along parameters suited to their operations.

<sup>iv</sup> Soft skills include: interpersonal, communications, behavioral, and organizational skills.

<sup>v</sup> Hard skills include: technical skills, certificates, accreditations, and experience.

<sup>vi</sup> 2 digit NAICS code.