



EASTERN WORKFORCE INNOVATION BOARD

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that our office is situated on the traditional Audenosaunee Mohawk Territories with gratitude and respect, we acknowledge the significant contributions indigenous peoples have made to preserve the land around us.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

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Links for organizations from Eastern Workforce Innovation Board's website

All you need to know about Your Local Labour Market

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 3 | SEPTEMBER 2024

WORDS FROM THE ED

Frank O'Hearn Executive Director



Greetings from the Eastern Workforce Innovation Board. The weather had certainly been kind to our region this past summer. Our local agricultural community, our gardens have certainly benefited from nature's blessings to our community. Accordingly, our beautiful region has benefited from a significant influx of visitors and guests.

Community consultations with our employment services providers reflects the following:

Our hospitality sector has certainly seen an uptake in their activity this past summer and is a positive for our local economy. Feedback does indicate that there continues to be some difficulties in the recruitment

of individuals to the service sector (retail, hospitality) but the shortages experienced during our pandemic environment is not the same. Client intakes are normal for this time of the year as during the summer demand for services decreases while demand for interventions increases as we move into the fall months. Manufacturing sectors employment needs are manageable and many clients look to this sector for employment due to their wage rates and the offering of employment benefits. The construction sector is busy and their requirements for skilled and motivated workers continues. There continues to be a need for more women to become involved in this sector. This gender issue is not a new issue for our region and certainly needs our continued attention. The health care sector continues to be strained in respect to its staffing needs and many of our citizens are struggling to access and maintain health care services locally.

Feedback from our colleagues indicates they are seeing an increased number of citizens who are experiencing significant poverty and food security issues. Feedback does indicate that there are many individuals who do not see a minimum wage job paying \$16.55 per hour as a means of survival. Accordingly, many small employers are limited in their ability to pay more than this rate. On a positive note - the minimum wage in Ontario will increase to \$17.20 on October 01, 2024. However, there are a number of citizens who reason that this increase will have a small impact on those individuals (workers) who are struggling financially. However, it is also argued that the increase in the minimum wage may also have a negative impact on some small employers who are struggling to maintain their business operations and may put them over the edge.

This topic is a very difficult and complex topic as poverty is certainly linked to mental

health, housing and transportation issues for many of our citizens. It is very important to keep in mind that the living wage in our region for 2023 was \$20.60 per hour. The Ontario Living Wage Network reports that “Despite small wage increases over the last few years, we know that [“...64 per cent of Canadian workers have experienced real wage losses over the past two years, after adjusting for inflation”](#) via a report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives economist David Macdonald. “You may refer to more information on this subject by referring to <https://www.ontariolivingwage.ca/about>

It should be noted that there are a number of employers in our region who do offer (as a minimum) an Ontario Living Wage. Many of our Employment Ontario colleagues lobby their local employers to consider a living wage for consideration as it will assist workers and the employer community in respect to its worker needs. A number of employers are not.

The focus of this newsletter is on mental health and the available mental health supports in our community. Mental health a few years ago was not a discussion point within the employment services community as it was not fully recognized or understood. Simply put - few people wished to talk about it. Things have certainly changed and it is recognized as a significant issue for both our citizens and employers who see it within their workforce. Poverty and increased substance abuse in our region has certainly intensified the needs of our citizens who are suffering from this sickness. Many areas of our region do not have the resources / services to cope with the demands of citizens in crisis. Work continues by a number of our community partners in addressing these challenges.

In closing we would like you to consider a review of our most recent report on the labour market issues affecting our region. This being

our 2023 – 24 / Local Labour Market Planning report <https://www.workforcedev.ca/llmp-reports/>

It is comprised of both quantitative and qualitative data of our region. The quantitative information found in the document is derived from a number of data sources:

- Employment Ontario Data
- Canadian Business Counts
- Labour Market Insights – EWIB Jobs Hub
- 2016 Census and 2021 Census
- Labour Force Survey
- Tax filer Data
- Canadian Business Counts
- Lightcast – data modelling
- Employment Insurance Data
- Statistics Canada

Qualitative data has been compiled from information gathered from various outreach initiatives conducted throughout the year involving local employers, workers, service providers, educators and other community agencies. One hundred and eleven (111) agency representatives and/or employers participated in local consultations and/or surveys. The valuable input gathered from these stakeholders helped to inform the EWIB on current challenges and opportunities within the local labour market. Our next report will be available to the community in March, 2025.

Thank you for your attention to this newsletter and our reports. We look to your continued support and input.

WHAT THE BOARD IS UP TO?

LLMP Report:

Frank and Sandra Wright are conducting outreach to Economic Development and Chambers of Commerce. This will be followed up with discussions with the Employment Ontario Network. We have booked Erik Lockhart for half days on Tuesday November 19 and Wednesday November 20, 2024. These sessions will facilitate what the community is doing to address needs and challenges and their action plans. There will be a presentation December 11, 2024 to provide the results of the LLMP report. The final report will be submitted to the Ministry February 21, 2025.

[Local Labour Market Report Planning LLMP Reports – Eastern Workforce Innovation Board \(workforcedev.ca\)](#)

Workforce Development:

We are producing 4 newsletters this fiscal. There will be a focus on themes from findings during LLMP report consultations.

[Newsletters – Eastern Workforce Innovation Board \(workforcedev.ca\)](#)

Employer Engagement:

The Board will continue to offer the Labour Market Information Help Desk. Sandra Wright will respond to the requests. We will promote the Help Desk through social media, career fairs and other means our LMI Help Desk service can answer questions such as:

- What skills are in demand in my area?
- What is the demographic of workers in my area?
- What is the demand for my occupation?
- What is the breakdown of industries in my area?

We provide answers to questions about economic trends, industry and occupational breakdowns, wages demographics and more.

To ask a question, click here [LMI Help Desk - Ask a Question](#)



On our website there are videos of potential careers and details about them. Go to our website to see the videos of careers in our region.

<https://www.workforcedev.ca/career-videos/>

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKFORCE

Portions of this article are from the CMHA website. <https://cmha.ca/findhelp/find-cmha-in-your-area>

During the consultations for the LLMP Report one of the main issues facing people in and outside the workforce is mental health. This may present itself in many ways. People who experience a mental illness may doubt their abilities or appear less confident. A person may have a hard time concentrating, learning, and making decisions. Symptoms of a mental illness may feed much bigger thoughts. For example, someone who can't concentrate may then also think that they can't do their job well or worry about losing their job. It's easy to see how these changes affect work performance.

Mental illnesses can also have a big effect on relationships. People who experience a mental illness may withdraw from others, act in unexpected ways, take a lot of time off, or appear less productive than usual. This can strain relationships with supervisors and co-workers.

Mental illnesses cost Canadian employers billions of dollars in absenteeism or sick days. "presenteeism" (coming to work, even when the employee can't work well), disability and other benefits, and lost productivity.

CMHA defines mental health problems that affect the way we think about ourselves, relate to others, and interact with the world around us. They affect our thoughts, feelings, abilities and behaviours. Depression and anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses.

Mental illnesses are more likely to come up during times of stress or uncertainty, which can be part of many people's jobs. However, life stress outside of work can also affect mental health, which may then affect a person at work.

It's important to understand that mental illnesses are real illnesses. Like other illnesses, such as diabetes or asthma, most mental illnesses are episodic. That means people have periods when they are well and productive, as well as periods when they are unwell and overall functioning is low.

Mental illnesses are treatable. Early recognition of mental health problems, referrals to the right resources (such as Employee and Family Assistance Plans), and adequate treatment can help people get on the path to recovery and go back to their usual work quickly. Employees can and do reach their full potential when they have the right supports in their life, including those at their workplace. Some mental health problems in the workplace can also be prevented when organizations take steps to create mentally healthy workplaces for all employees.

There are risks and benefits to disclosing your experience of a mental illness. If you do disclose, you and your supervisor may figure out strategies that help you stay at work. For example, you may change the way you complete tasks or change the tasks you do. These strategies are also called accommodations. By law, workplaces have to try to look at reasonable accommodations for anyone who experiences a disability, including a mental illness. Disclosing may help other people in your workplace understand any changes of difficulties that they've noticed.

On the other hand, disclosing can lead to stigma or discrimination. Unfortunately, being open about a mental illness can impact a person's position at a workplace or their ability to find a new job.

There are laws to prevent this kind of discrimination, but it can still happen.

Workplaces have different attitudes and cultures, so everyone will have different experiences. However, it's best to think through all the options before you make a decision.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH:

Mental health is a huge issue for our workforce – employment service providers- sector transformation plus significant change and challenges resulting in huge turnover our sector and leaves and mental health concerns. Helping our very vulnerable and barriered clients contributes to our own mental health as well.

Mental health is the number one issue facing our clients as they come into our services and our staff spend a great deal of time to help in this area which is out of our scope of work – we are all not necessarily equipped to do this work either.

Our clients' mental health concerns are the biggest challenge to obtaining and retaining employment.

Employers are often not aware of their workforce's mental health and see the results of it in high absenteeism.

Employers are not equipped to deal with mental health in their workplace or are not interested in becoming equipped.

One provider has 140 clients having identified with having a disability since January 2024. (The data cannot be broken out between mental health or a physical health. Of the 140, 46 are in receipt of OW and 12 are in receipt of ODSP)

Resources that clients that are referred to:

- Lanark Leeds Grenville Addictions and Mental Health
- Mental Health Crisis Line (1-866-281-2911)
- Suicide Crisis Line (988)
- Distress Centre of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville
- Leeds and Grenville Interval House
- Victim Services Leeds and Grenville
- Good2Talk (for post-secondary students)
- TELUS Health MyCare app



Wellness in the
Workplace - Present



Stress
management(online)

Another provider offers workshops for Mental Health and Stress management in the workplace for clients. Please find attached.



STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW

St. Lawrence College has announced it's adding a residential air conditioning system mechanic program to its roster of apprenticeship programs. The program, which welcomed its first in-class participants early August, is offering learning via a hybrid mode, with 12 weeks of part-time online study, followed by a few weeks of "intensive in-class training," according to a release from the college. "This innovative approach provides students with the flexibility to balance their studies with other commitments while ensuring they receive hands-on experience in a modern and industry-standard learning environment." the release said. Glenn Vollebregt, president and CEO of St Lawrence College said "SLC is committed to providing excellent training for our students in a real-world setting". "The new HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) Lab and hybrid delivery represents a significant step forward in our efforts to equip future HVAC professionals with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in this essential industry. We have already seen tremendous support and need from local employers for this and look forward to training apprentices to fill labour market needs"

A new comedy club opened up in Kingston in July. Time to Laugh at Nawabz Indian Sports Bar and Restaurant at Portsmouth Avenue and Princess Street in what used to be longtime restaurant Aunt Lucy's. It takes its name from the Time to Laugh comedy club that was located in the city's Hub district. Kingston's Ryan Dennee, who is opening the new club with friend and fellow comedian Luke Bawn, was a frequent performer at that club back when he was getting his comedy career off the ground.

Frontenac Paramedics have announced a new chief will take the reins at the end of September. Marc Goudie, currently the service's deputy chief of performance standards, will succeed chief Gale Chevalier on September 30. "Lifelong learning is increasingly integral to our evolving profession and (deputy chief) Goudie has strong aptitude and skill as a student, facilitator, instructor, and teacher," chief Chevalier said in a news release. "Those qualities make him extremely valuable to the Frontenac Paramedics leadership team as is evidenced by his leadership of the Community Paramedicine Program so far. (Deputy chief) Goudie is well equipped to be chief, and I know I'll be leaving Frontenac Paramedics in capable hands."

Corus cuts radio, TV jobs in Kingston as part of cost savings. "As part of our efficiency review process across Corus, we have made some difficult but necessary changes to create a more sustainable future for the company, the statement from Corus Entertainment read. "As a result, certain roles have been impacted across our news and audio business." The cuts included all of its on-air talent on both radio stations and deep cuts to its Global TV Kingston staff. On the audio side, BIG 96.3 and Fresh 104.3 will remain in Kingston, and the stations will utilize voice tracking to continue to produce local content made for and reflecting Kingston. In the news division, we have reimagined our broadcast schedule in Kingston, Peterborough, and Kelowna with a focus on supper hour and late-night news programming. Additionally, our local online team will now operate

under a new model to better support local breaking news.

The former president of what is a big, successful logistics business told a captivating story about the company's growth, his favourite business practices, and the importance of succession planning. Wills Transfer Ltd. seems to have that last element perfected-only about three per cent of family businesses make it to a fourth generation. "I'm really surprised at how much I enjoy my role," said Terry Wills, special guest speaker at the latest Cornwall SDH Business Enterprise Centre Break fast Connections vent in Long Sault, talking about how in March he became advisory committee chairman for the company when it transitioned to the leadership of his son Jordi Wills. It was Terry Wills' grandfather who started the company nearly 80 years ago when in 1945 he returned to the Eastern Ontario region from the war, had trouble finding work, and decided to go into business with the purchase of a small truck.

A laser technology firm with roots in Kingston is excited to expand its local facilities thanks to a \$21-million investment from its global company, IPG Photonics. The investment was prompted largely by a \$1.5-million contribution to IPG Photonics Corporation from the provincial government's Eastern Ontario Development Fund. "Even between our two locations (in Kingston) we're bursting at the seams," explained Paul Webster, general manager and chief technology officer at IPG Photonics Corporation Canada. IPG Photonics Corporation, the world's largest producer of fibre lasers, currently has two Kingston locations but its key manufacturing takes place at 175 Railway St. Thanks to the investment from IPG Photonics, their new facility will be 37,300 sq. ft. and open the door to increased manufacturing capabilities and 20 new jobs. Webster said construction on the facility located just north of Canada Royal Milk should be complete early next year.

Brockville General Hospital celebrated the dedication of 30 longtime employees in June, including the 50-year career of one of its lead pediatricians. The local hospital held its annual long service recognition dinner, where staff were celebrated for their commitment to local health care. Combined, the group has given "an incredible 865 years of commitment and hard work to the hospital and the patients and families it serves," hospital officials said. "our amazing people are the heart of Brockville General and experience for our patients," Nick Viacholias, president and CEO, said in a statement.

Sarnia O'Day, an accomplished musician, business owner and advocate for the arts, is Brockville's 2024 Businessperson of the Year. The Brockville and District Chamber Commerce made the announcement in June. O'Day is the co-founder of All You Need Music, which is headquartered in Brockville, creating local jobs, and supplying students, teachers, communities, place of worship and school boards with instruments, service and pro equipment, supported by a professional team.

LINKS TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS

For Links to our community partners click on the link below to go to our website
<https://www.workforcedev.ca/community-partners/>



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