



*Your Workforce. Our Future.*

# Waterloo Wellington Dufferin 2022



**Workforce Planning Board**  
of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin

Released March 2022

---

**Our Vision:** We envision the continuous development of a leading-edge workforce.

**Our Mission:** Engage partners to find solutions to local workforce development needs.

The material contained in this report has been prepared by the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin (WPBWWD) and is drawn from the EmployerOne survey conducted January 2022. In providing this material, WPBWWD does not assume any responsibility of liability.

Canada 

EMPLOYMENT  
ONTARIO

Ontario 

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

The views expressed in this document do not reflect those of the Government of Canada or the Government of Ontario.



## Table of Contents



Methodology	4
Key Highlights	5
Section A: Organization and Workforce Characteristics	6
Section B: Hiring in 2021	8
Section C: Separations in 2021	10
Section D: Hard to Fill Positions in 2021	12
Section E: Planned Hires for 2022	15
Section F: Recruitment and Retention	18
Section G: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	21
Section H: Work Trends	22

# Methodology

## Information on the Survey

EmployerOne is an employer survey that is promoted to industries across the Waterloo Region and the Counties of Dufferin and Wellington. After a brief hiatus in 2021, the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin (WPBWWD) resumed surveying local employers to discuss their skills needs, practices around recruitment and hiring and separation activity for the past year. The survey also asked employers about their proposed future hiring needs over the next 12 months. This report summarizes those findings. Further reports will be released in 2022 that focus on specific industries, including technical skills that the industry seeks in applicants.

## Methodology

The EmployerOne survey is used across the Western Ontario region to collect employer data around hiring and skills needs. The 9 planning boards across the region meet and develop the questions each year. Each individual board adds 1-2 questions that are relevant to their individual communities. In Waterloo Wellington Dufferin, the survey was shared at a meeting with representatives from some of the 40 partners who support the survey. During this meeting, the questions were shared and the partners identified two additional topics to gather information on: the equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) efforts of employers and how engaged employers are in future of work trends that the pandemic seemed to accelerate.

The electronic survey opened on December 1st for all employers who had taken the survey in prior years followed by a launch on January 1st and a closing date of January 31st. After January 31st, WPBWWD did some follow-up calls with employer who were almost done to complete their surveys until February 4th. Staff at the planning board then analyzed data to create this report back to the community.

Industry specific reports will be available in the late spring as staff pull together responses. This data in aggregate with partners who would like the raw data, minus any identifiers, and is shared with an academic team who collates the data into a regional report.

# Key Highlights

- ⇒ 538 employers completed the survey (432 in 2020).
- ⇒ 81% of responding companies have less than 100 employees.
- ⇒ The top 3 industries that responded remain Manufacturing, Professional, scientific and technical services and Construction.
  
- ⇒ 86% of employers hired in 2021 vs 91% of employers in 2019.
- ⇒ The number of people hired remained almost the same: 11,604 in 2021 vs 11,781 in 2019.
- ⇒ Almost 78% of employers reported they had hard-to-fill positions. (62% in 2019)
- ⇒ 67% of employers rated the availability of workers as poor or fair. (59% in 2019)
  
- ⇒ 74% of employers reported separations in 2021. (80% on 2019)
- ⇒ 58% of employers said that retention was an issue in their company. (51% in 2019)
- ⇒ Only 44% of employers had a strategy in place for their recruitment and retention needs over the next 3 to 5 years.
- ⇒ The number one reason why employers felt that they were having problems retaining people was “not enough positions that people can move into”. (29% identified this reason)
  
- ⇒ 85% of employers plan to hire in 2022 (85% planned in 2020)
- ⇒ Employers plan to hire for 3,089 (a conservative estimate based upon ranges) which is a 5% increase in anticipated hires.
- ⇒ 92% of employers said that they would hire someone who was a fit for their organization, even if they needed some technical training. (94% in 2022)
  
- ⇒ Employers were asked to rate their agreement with the following idea that hiring with a lens to diversity was an important part of their organization’s strategy. That statement scored a 58.9 out of 100.
- ⇒ 70% of employers have added new tech or intend to add new tech in the next 1-2 years to increase collaboration and productivity and 72% have started training on that new tech or will need that training for staff.
- ⇒ 65% of employers have offered or will offer flexible work hours to staff but only 38% offered or are looking to offer flexible work arrangements (gig work, freelancing, etc).

# Section A: Organization and Workforce Characteristics

### Head Offices

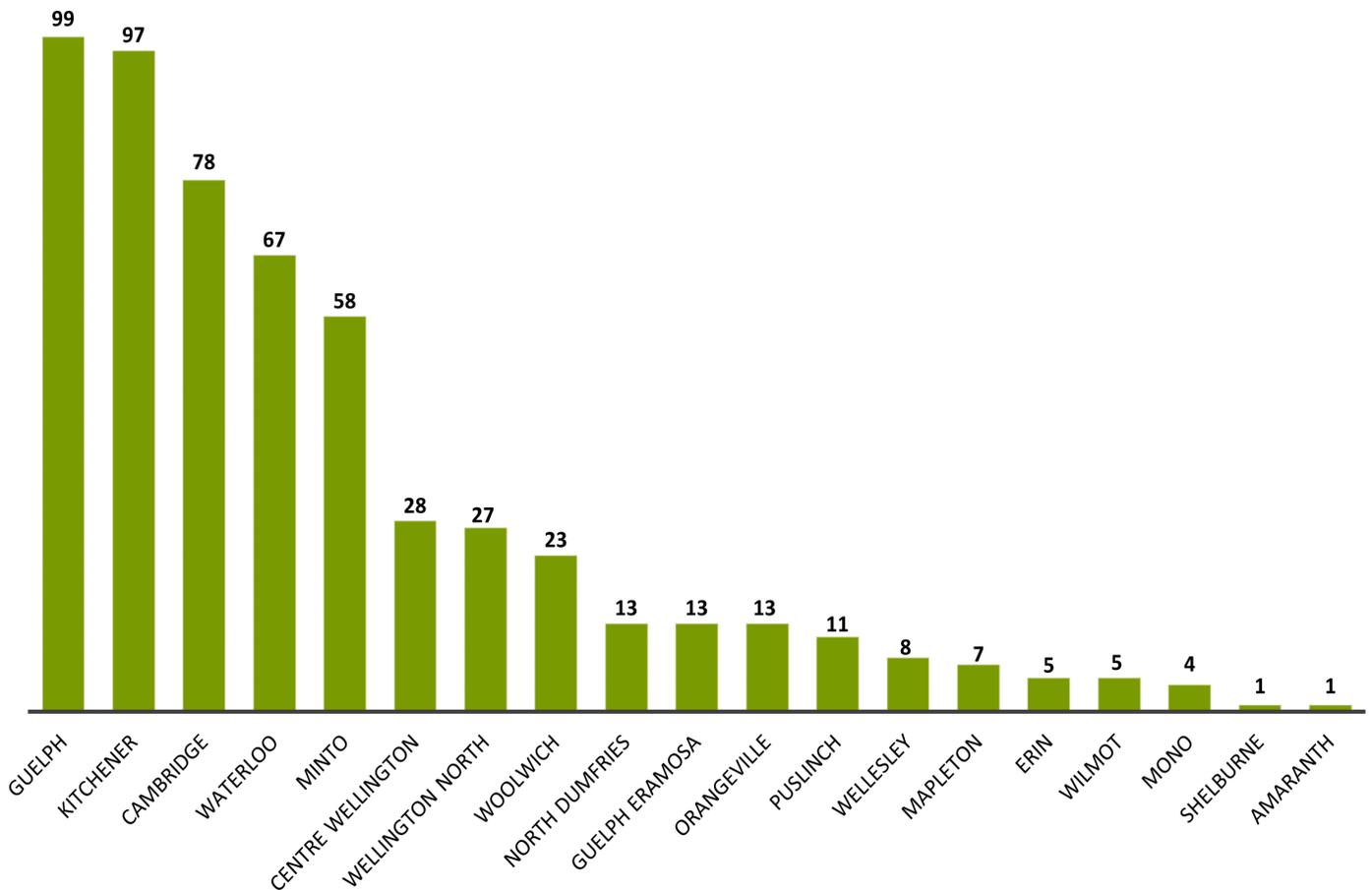


### Non start-ups

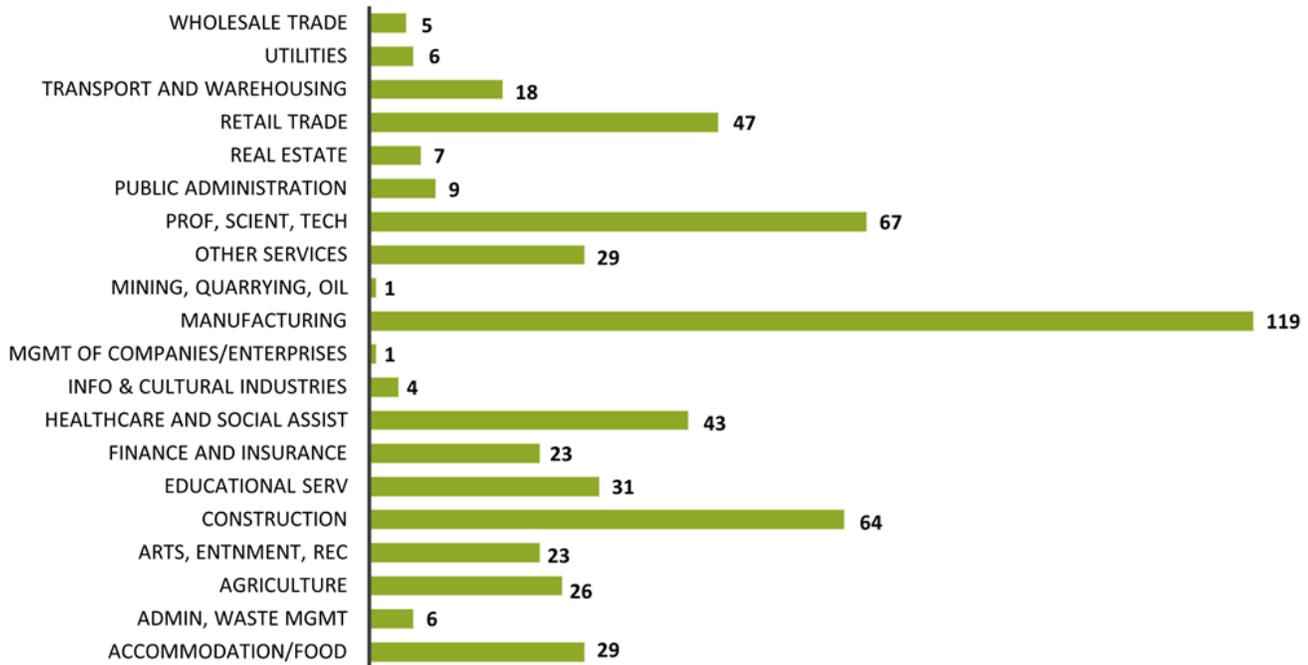


- 52.1% of surveyed employers are from Waterloo Region, 44.4% from Wellington County, 3.5% from Dufferin County.
- 93.7% of all businesses have been in operation for over 5 years.
- Top 3 industries with start-ups in 2021 : Educational Services, Arts, Recreation and Entertainment, and Accommodation and Food Services.

## Business Locations



## Employers by Industry



## Number of Employees

1-4 employees: 70  
 5-9 employees: 82  
 10-19 employees: 90  
 20-49 employees: 123



50-99 employees: 75  
 100-199 employees: 40  
 200-499 employees: 30  
 500+ employees: 32

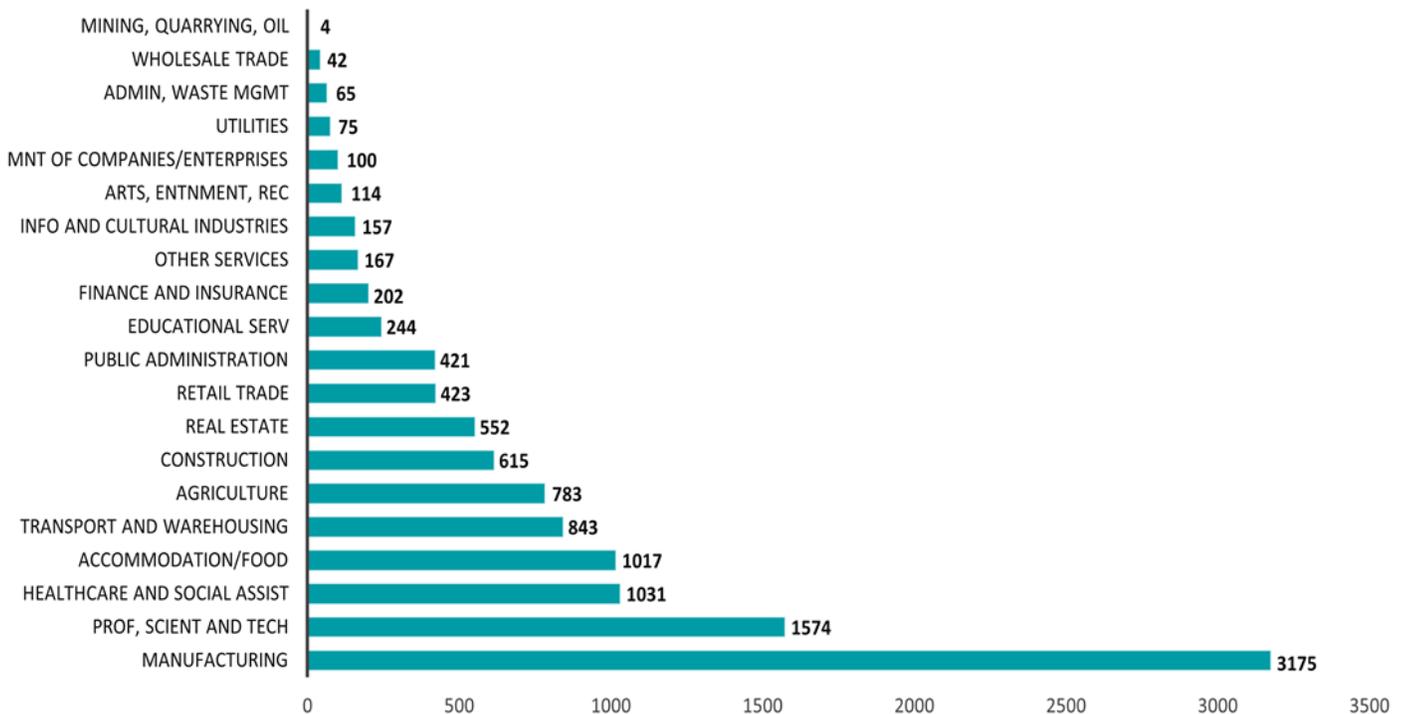


## Section B: Hiring in 2021



- 86% (478) of employers hired 11,604 people in 2021.
- 57% of the roles were permanent full-time (unchanged since 2019).
- Top hiring industries in 2021 were Manufacturing, Professional, scientific and technical services, and Healthcare and social assistance.

### Hiring by Industry



Every industry was hiring. As in previous years, Manufacturing hired the most workers. Transportation and warehousing was replaced by Professional, scientific and technical services as the industry hiring the second most. Accommodation and food services probably did most of its hiring in 2021 as businesses were permitted to re-open which would explain its higher number than in 2019.

## Types of Hires



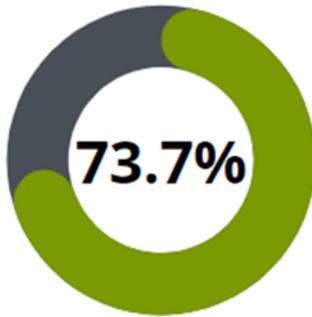
Employers were most likely to hire permanent full-time followed by contract (FT or PT) then permanent part-time.

## Hiring Breakdown by Industry

Industry	Full-time Permanent	Contract	Part-time Permanent
Manufacturing	2456	449	270
Professional, scientific & technical	418	1133	23
Healthcare & social assistance	403	330	298
Accommodation & food	258	73	686
Transportation & warehousing	712	55	76
Agriculture, forestry, hunting	539	242	2
Construction	458	149	8
Real estate, leasing & rental	504	30	18
Retail trade	220	15	188
Public administration	68	340	13
Educational services	122	68	54
Finance & Insurance	126	46	30
Other Services (except public admin)	78	47	42
Info & cultural industries	103	51	3
Arts, entertainment & recreation	7	95	12
Management of companies & enterprises	60	40	0
Utilities	38	33	4
Admin & support, waste management	41	24	0
Wholesale trade	42	0	0
Mining, quarrying, oil & gas	0	4	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,653</b>	<b>3,324</b>	<b>1,727</b>

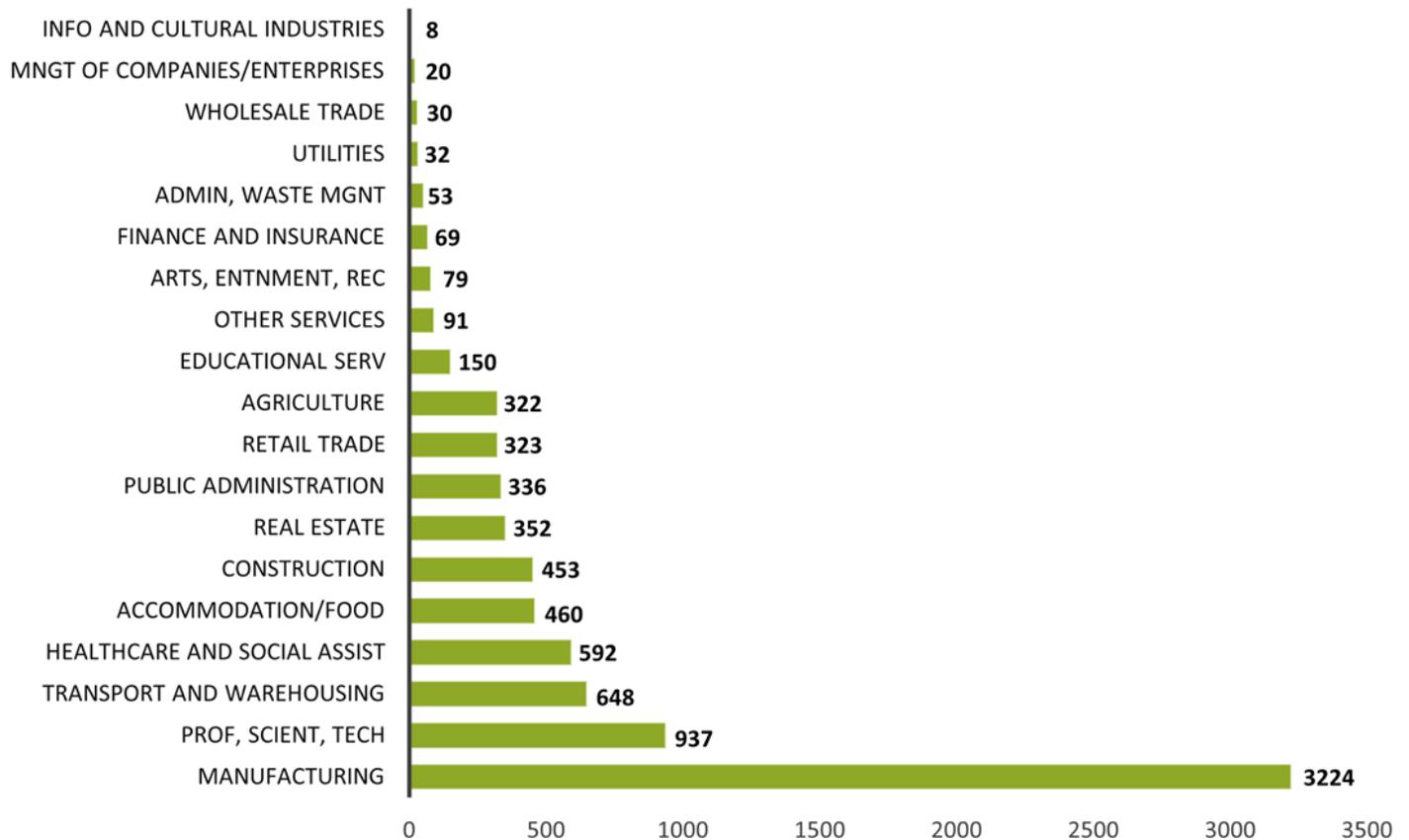
## Section C: Separations in 2021

Separations are defined as retirements, dismissals, lay-offs (both temporary and permanent), quits or other times when staff have left positions.



- 73.7% of employers (411) had employees leave the company.
- Those 411 employers reported 8,179 separations in 2021.
- Manufacturing, Transportation & warehousing and Professional, scientific and technical services reported the most separations.

### Separations by Industry



Manufacturing has often had the most separations. In 2019, Manufacturing only had 800 more separations than the next industry. In 2021, that number far exceeds the separations of any other industry.

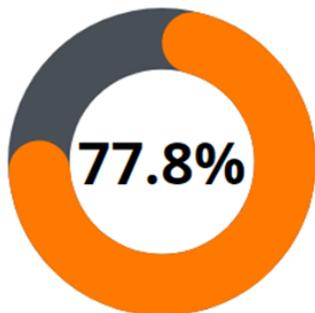
## Type of Separations by Industry

Industry	Quits	Retirement	Layoffs	Dismissal	Other
Manufacturing	1430	183	900	500	211
Professional, scientific, technical	184	14	63	53	623
Transportation & warehousing	507	63	30	47	1
Healthcare & social assistance	430	19	10	49	84
Accommodation & food	267	22	104	29	38
Construction	196	22	140	64	31
Real estate, leasing, rental	315	5	20	12	0
Public administration	127	17	35	13	144
Retail trade	245	9	16	46	7
Agriculture, forestry, hunting	245	66	4	5	2
Educational services	62	43	15	19	11
Other services	52	4	13	19	3
Arts, entertainment, recreation	18	3	53	4	1
Finance and insurance	40	14	0	12	3
Admin, waste management	37	3	0	12	1
Utilities	15	8	3	6	0
Wholesale trade	18	6	1	5	0
Management of companies & enterprises	10	6	0	4	0
Info & cultural industries	3	1	0	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4201</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>1354</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>1161</b>

Most industry separations were dominated by employees quitting their jobs. 34% of all quits were in Manufacturing as were 66% of all lay-offs and 55% of all dismissals.

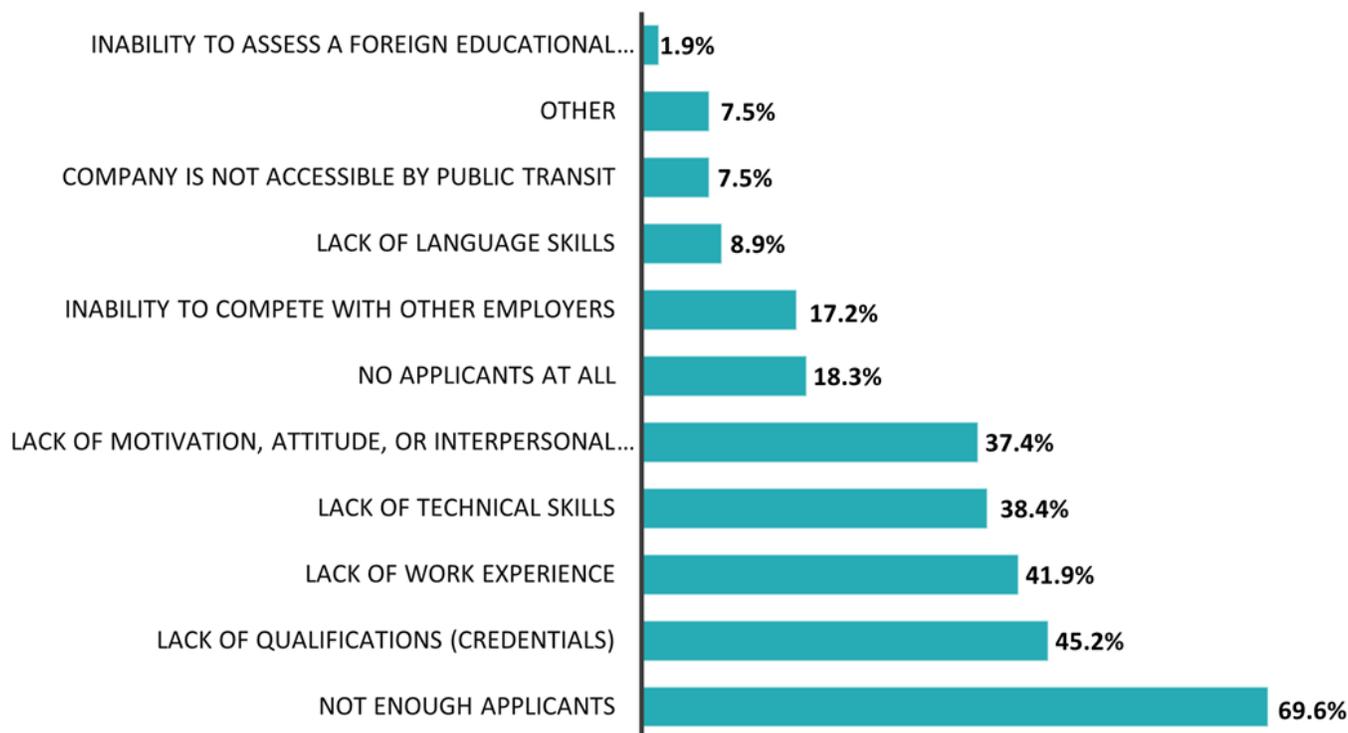
The top 3 industries had 59% of all separations reported. There is a lot of churn happening in these three industries with Professional, scientific and technical churn happening due to contract end dates most likely as many of their hires were contracts and Manufacturing and Transportation & warehousing employee quits driving the churn.

## Section D: Hard-to-fill Positions in 2021



- 77.8% of surveyed employers had positions they found hard to fill—a significant rise from 2019 when 62% of employers answered the same.
- Shifts in the labour market, and workforce needs, are most likely driving this increase.
- A hard-to-fill position is one which takes longer than the usual amount of time to fill.

### Reasons employers said positions were hard-to-fill



- Not enough applicants remains the number 1 reason for hard-to-fill positions but 70% of employers chose it as a reason in 2022 vs 51% of employers in 2020.
- The rest of the top 5 remains in place. However, lack of qualifications and work experience have switched places.
- More employers reported no applicants at all and inability to compete with other employers as reasons for hard-to-fill roles.

## Top 3 hard-to-fill positions by industry

The answers provided by employers to this questions were grouped into similar roles to provide some insight into where employers are struggling. Some have a National Occupational Classification (NOC) equivalency and some groupings may represent a number of NOCs.

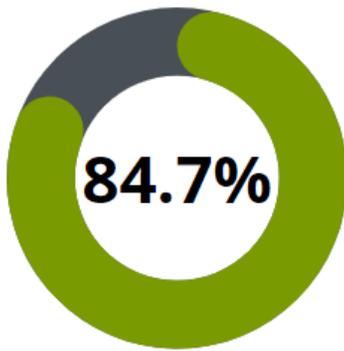
Industry (NAICS categories)	Top-3 Hard-to-Fill Positions
<b>Accommodation and food services</b>	Cooks and line cooks Counter and kitchen helpers Servers and bartenders
<b>Administration and support, waste management and remediation services</b>	Lawncare technicians Skilled trade—mechanics, millwrights Equipment operators
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</b>	Agriculture technicians Store operation and management Equipment operators/ farm labourers
<b>Arts, entertainment and recreation</b>	Design and marketing Office and financial support Instructors—fitness and art-based
<b>Construction</b>	Skilled trades Construction trade helpers Construction managers/supervisors
<b>Educational services</b>	Educators Early childhood educators Software developers
<b>Finance and insurance</b>	Accountants Financial advisors and client support Administrative
<b>Healthcare and social assistance</b>	Registered practical nurse Physiotherapist/occupational therapist Support roles
<b>Information and cultural industries</b>	Technical specialist
<b>Management of companies and enterprises</b>	Bookkeeping Truck drivers

## Top 3 hard-to-fill positions by industry

Many industries were finding it difficult to find staff who could fulfill administrative duties, sales roles and skilled trades positions. As well, more than one industry was looking for people to fill labour or equipment operator roles. Talent competition appears to be much more cross-sectoral.

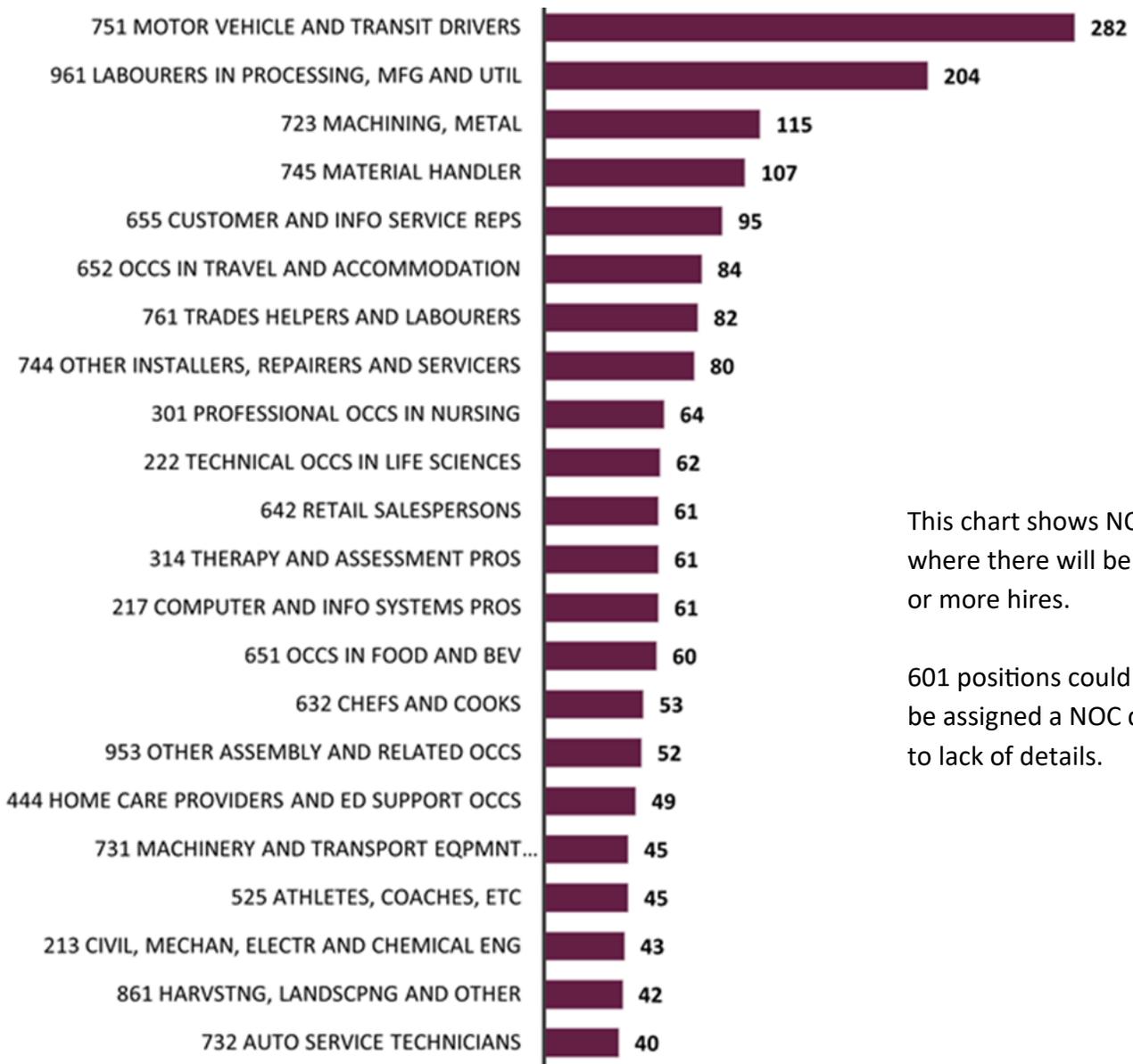
Industry (NAICS categories)	Top 3 Hard-to-Fill Positions
<b>Manufacturing</b>	Production associate/machine operators Welders Millwrights, machinists and CNC programmers
<b>Other services</b>	Administrative and office Skilled trades—auto service techs, heavy mechanics, HVAC technicians Sales
<b>Professional, scientific and technical services</b>	Software engineers and developers Technicians/technologists—various specialties Project managers
<b>Public administration</b>	Science, engineering Recreational instructors—includes casual, students Public works labour
<b>Real estate, rental and leasing</b>	Maintenance associates Clerks Marketing professionals
<b>Retail trade</b>	Store and sales associates Service technicians Managers and supervisors
<b>Transportation and warehousing</b>	Drivers—truck and courier Administrative Mechanics and technicians
<b>Utilities</b>	Skilled trades—mechanics, fibre installation techs, gasfitters Quality control Customer service
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	Administrative and finance Forklift operators Shippers

## Section E: Planned Hires for 2022



- 84.7% of employers (435) were planning to hire in 2022—similar to 2020 estimates.
- While we do ask for a range, conservative estimates are that those 435 employers will hire for at least 3,089 positions in 2022. That is a 5% increase in positions over 2020.

### Anticipated Hiring by Occupations

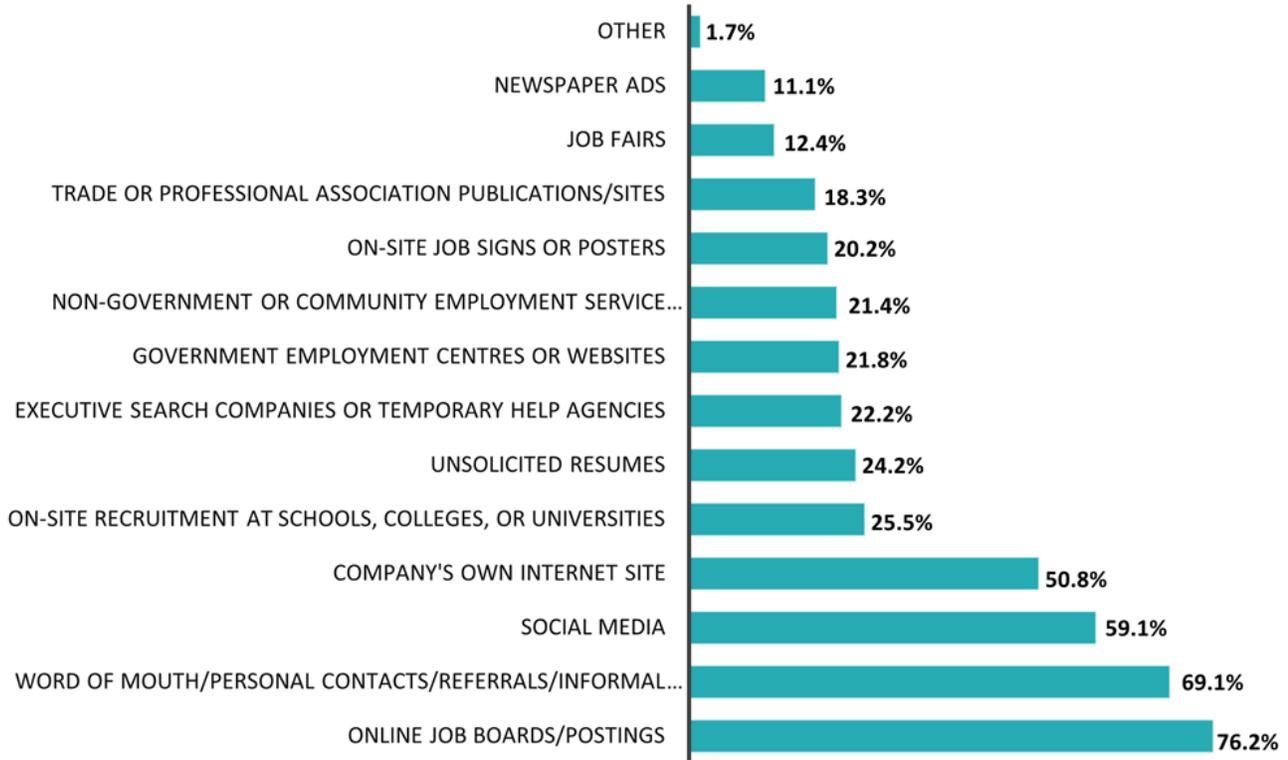


This chart shows NOCs where there will be 40 or more hires.

601 positions could not be assigned a NOC due to lack of details.

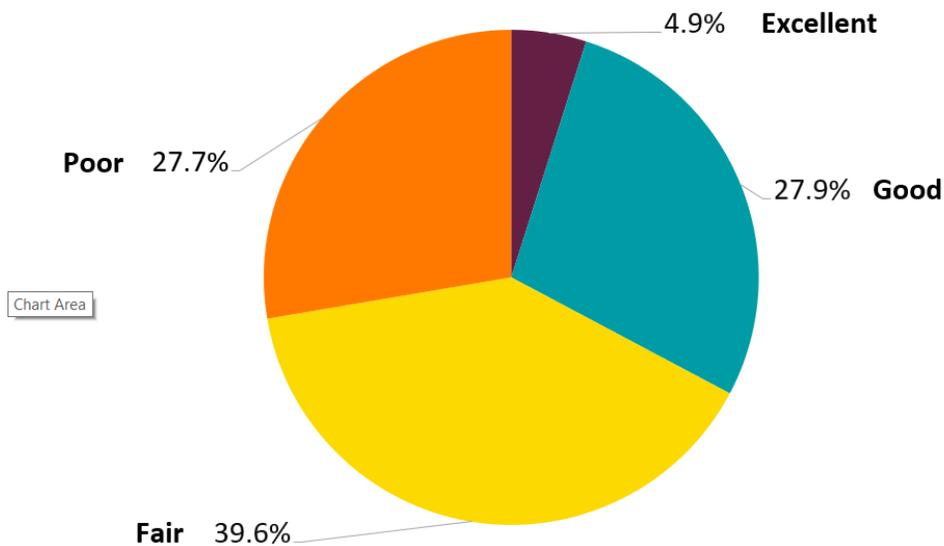
# Section F: Recruitment and Retention

## Recruitment Methods



- The most used recruitment methods stayed the same - “online job boards” and “word of mouth, referrals, informal networks”.
- Social media is becoming a very popular way to recruit and advertise hiring , even surpassing “company’s own internet site” .

## Availability of Workers in Waterloo Wellington Dufferin

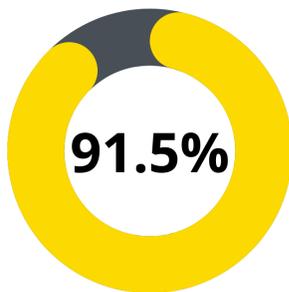


## Top Competencies Employers Seek



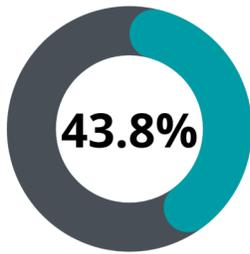
- Work ethic and Dependability were top 3 competencies in 2020 and 2022.
- Communication has been replaced in the top 3 by Willingness to learn.

## Training a Candidate to Join your Organization



- 91.5% of employers are willing to train a candidate who is a fit for their organization but may lack some technical skills.
- 84.4% of those employers would do that training in-house
- For those who would outsource training, employers would use a
  - private trainer or consultant(68%)
  - industry association (65%)
  - on-line courses (58%)
  - postsecondary partner (47%)

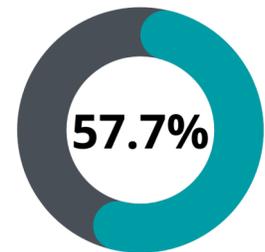
## Do Companies Have Recruitment and Retention Strategies?



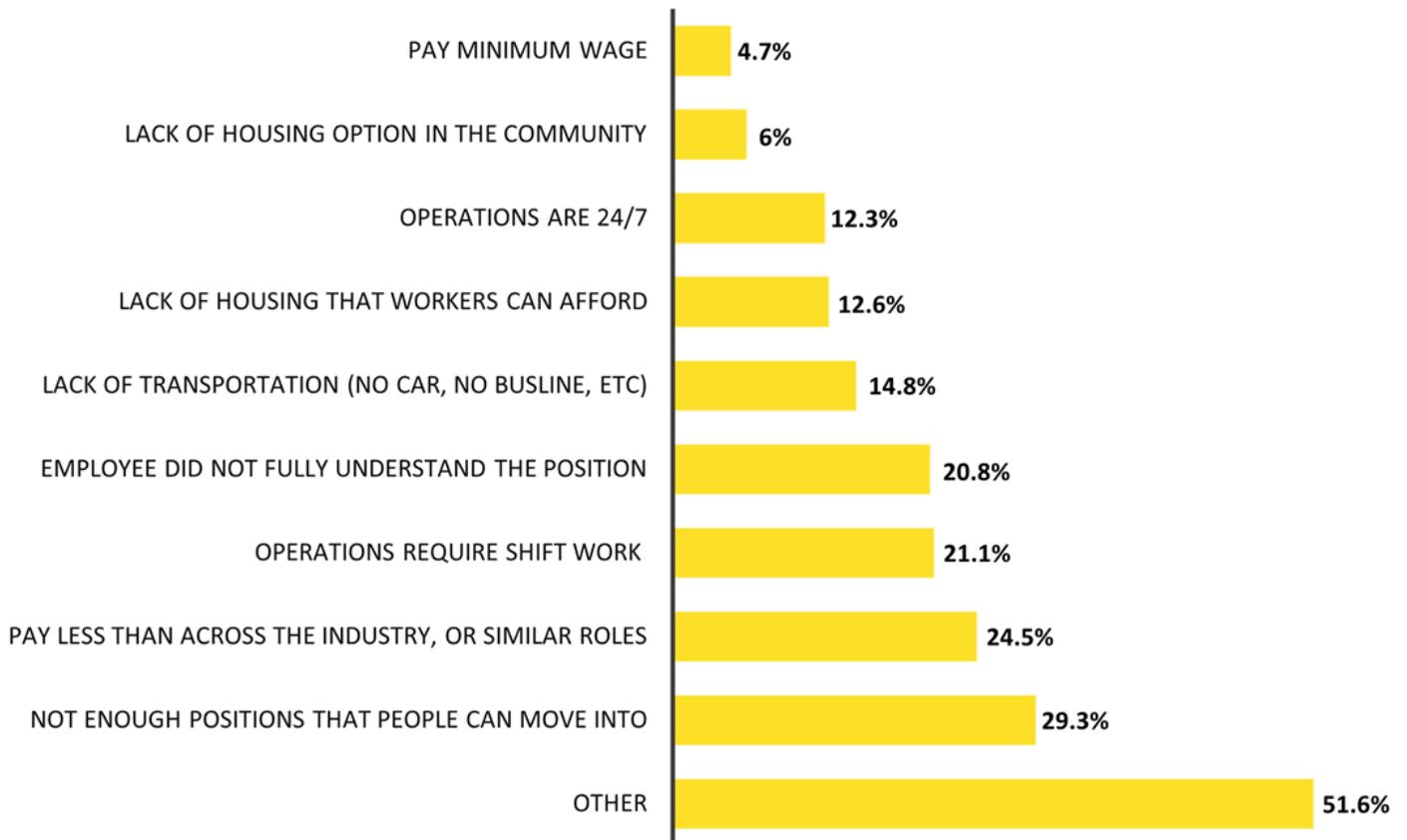
- Over 50% of employers who responded do not have a recruitment and retention strategy in place to help them address company growth over the next 3 to 5 years.

## Is Retention a Concern for your Company?

- Almost 58% of employers identified that retention is a concern for their organization.

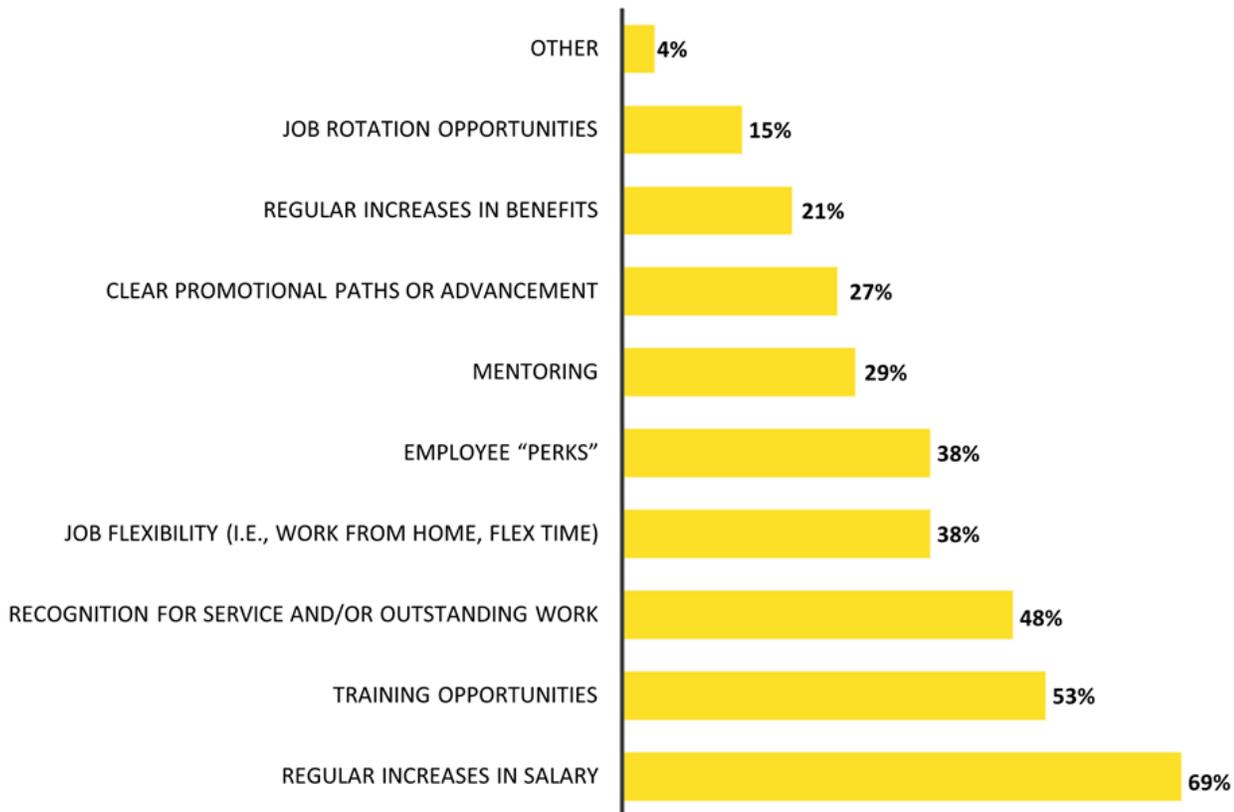


## Why Retention is a Concern



Other includes: high competition for workers, lack of stability in workplace, the pandemic, emotional and physical burn-out, seasonality of work, jobs oversaturating the labour market, rural location, no benefits.

## Retention Strategies Employers Use



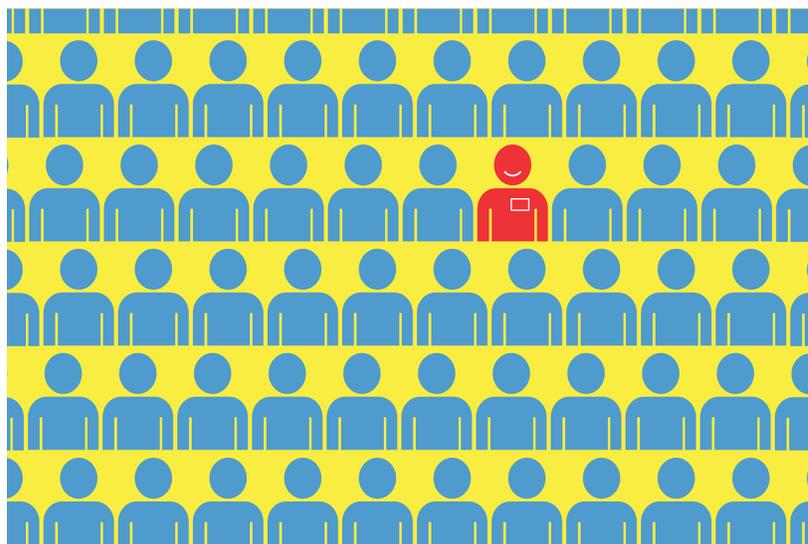
## Other Retention Strategies That Could be Supported

We asked employers to identify other types of strategies they think may solve recruitment and retention issues. Below are trends that emerged from the analysis:

- Hiring incentives: (including referral, hiring and signing bonuses): 2.8%
- Clearer COVID-19 mandates and operating requirements: 3.8%
- Immigration: 3.8%
  - Attract international talent, hire international nurses, more translators to support newcomers to join the labour market
- Opportunities for advancement, development, and clear career paths: 4.7%
- Public outreach and networking: 5.7%
  - Foster relationships with colleges and educational institutions including new graduate outreach, develop tie to that large talent pool, promote the industries needing talent (e.g. Agriculture, LTC)

A continuation of the recruitment and retention strategies from the previous page:

- **Training opportunities: 5.7%**  
Pre-employment training, more training and mentorship opportunities, update educational to meet employers' needs and job requirements, expand funding to students and workers
- **Flexibility for workers: 8.5%**  
Consistent work hours, flex time/work from home/job rotation opportunities, change shift periods and offer flexible shifts (for youth), offer more work hours
- **Trades: 10.4%**  
Attract more youth to trades, more trade classes for elementary students, more opportunities to start trades career in high school, engage and attract more labour to the area for mentorship programs, promote trades as a career path
- **Supportive work environments for employees: 12.3%**  
Checking in with staff to understand their needs, work-life balance initiatives, changing company culture, employee input into strategies and policies, informal after-work events
- **Government supports: 12.3%**  
Government to support most vulnerable in community, improve existing government services to make process more efficient, collaborate with business to ensure benefits and growth for all stakeholders, less government supports (unclear if to business or workers)
- **Wage, benefits, and recognition: 30.2%**  
Wage and salaries increase, more government funding to support wage enhancement and sustainability, childcare assistance, better benefits, sufficient vacation days and paid time off, matched retirement options, performance bonuses/stock options/profit sharing, benefits for part-time employees, discounts on partnership services, create meaningful work



## Section G: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

With a world that is consistently shifting and more awareness about systemic barriers to full participation in society, and the workplace, employers were asked some questions around Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives that they may have or be considering.

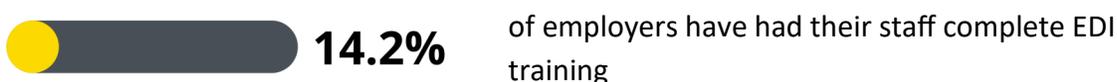
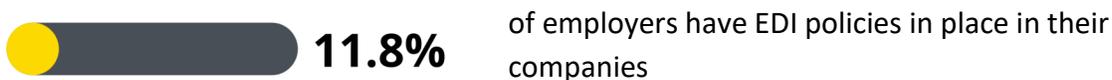
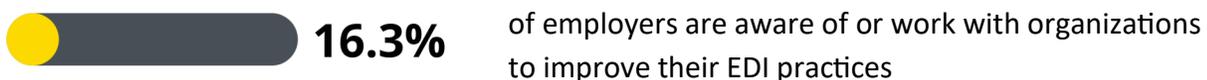
These questions help to determine if employers are ready to welcome all talented people into their organization or if there may still be work to be done to make workplaces fully accessible.

### Hiring with a Lens to Diversity

Employers rated their level of agreement around hiring with a lens to diversifying the workforce being an important part of their organization's strategy. The combined responses indicated that the level of agreement with the statement averaged out to **58.9 out of 100**.



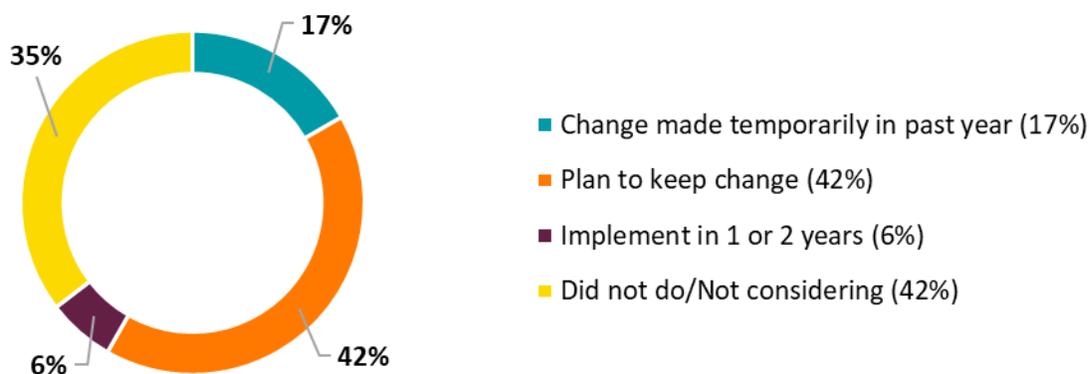
There is a lot of uncertainty and confusion around the EDI and its role in accessing, hiring and retaining talent. Many employers responded that they hire based upon qualifications, and do not discriminate based upon identity or background. They “keep EDI in mind” but could not define how they do so.



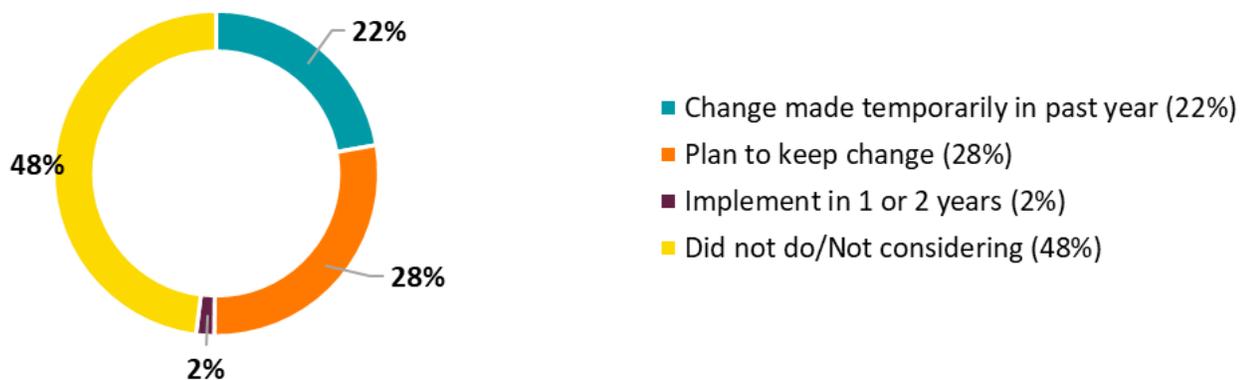
## Section H: Work Trends

Through the pandemic, many experts have talked about the workforce being attracted to employers who understand and attempt to accommodate worker needs. Considering how an organization can build upon current trends is quickly becoming a recruitment and retention tool. This section is to help determine if local employers are making changes and which ones.

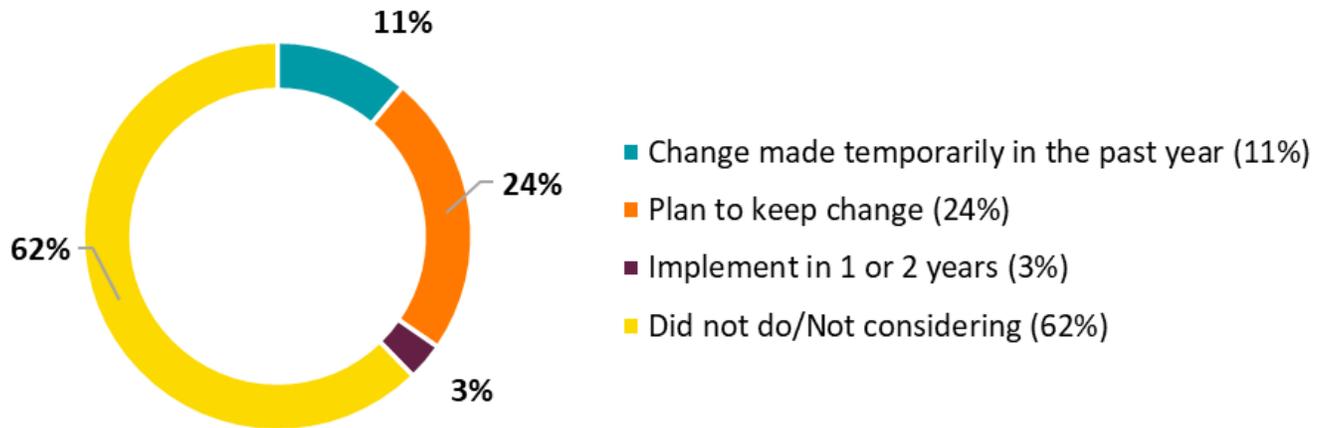
### Offer flexible work hours to promote work-life balance



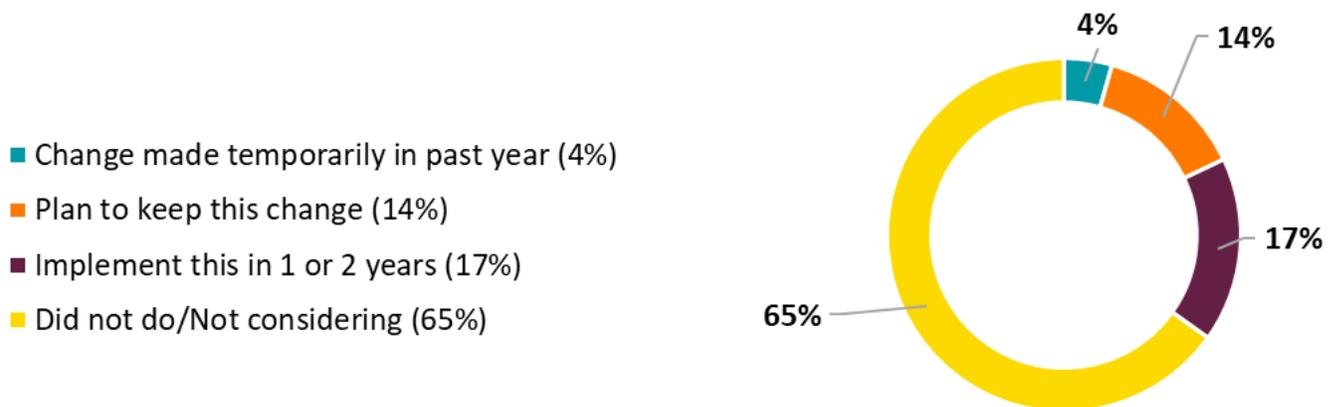
### Shift to work from home (FT or PT) for at least some of workforce



## Increase in flexible work arrangements (gig work, freelance, etc.)

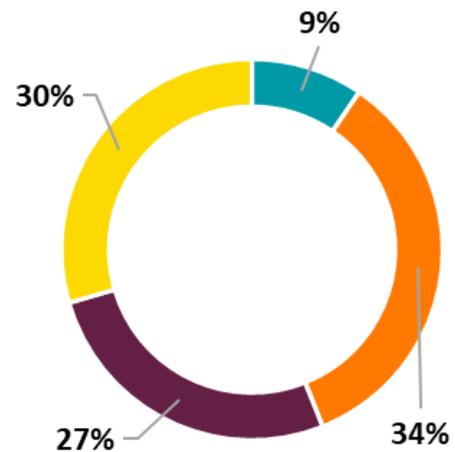


## Introduce automation or AI to some roles



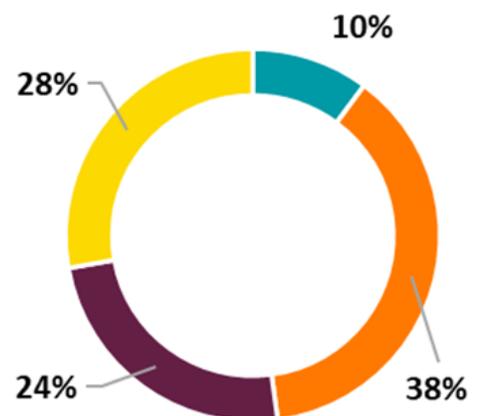
## Add new tech to promote collaboration or productivity

- Change made temporarily in past year (9%)
- Plan to keep change (34%)
- Implement in 1 or 2 years (27%)
- Did not do/Not considering (30%)



## Offer formal training for all staff on new technology introduced

- Changes made temporarily in past year (10%)
- Plan to keep change (38%)
- Implement in 1 or 2 years (24%)
- Did not do/Not considering (28%)





**Workforce Planning Board**  
of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin

To get involved with EmployerOne as a partner or if you have further inquiries about the data

Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin  
218 Boida Ave, Unit 5  
Ayr, ON N0B 1E0

[info@workforceplanningboard.com](mailto:info@workforceplanningboard.com)

[www.workforceplanningboard.com](http://www.workforceplanningboard.com)