EMPLOYERONE REPORT
2016

ALGOMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

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

The information presented in this report is current at the time of printing.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Regional Employment Help Centre
- Sault Community Career Centre
- Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce
- Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association

INTRODUCTION

The employerone survey is designed to collect information annually from local employers on HR issues, such as labour turnover, hard-to-fill positions, recruitment difficulties, current and future skill shortages, as well as issues in training and education practices.

The long-term objective of this initiative is to develop a mechanism to collect information in a coordinated, timely and standardized way in order to gain an understanding of the demand side in the local area's labour market. The ultimate goal is to better support local industries with the training and recruitment of their current and future workforce.

The employer outreach was done primarily with local business organizations, which provided direct access to employers while leveraging existing resources and networks. Our objectives with this approach were to: strengthen the working relationship with local business organizations, avoid duplication, address survey fatigue by having different agencies going to employers with the same questions, and demonstrate to employers that local agencies are working together in a coordinated and collaborative way to collect their input.

BACKGROUND

Initiated as a pilot project in 2014, the employerone survey is in its third year. Every year the survey instrument and the outreach process are evaluated and adjusted to reflect the input received from local business partners, and to improve the response rate in terms of the number of respondents, but also in regards to the sectoral and community representation within the pool of participating employers.

The employerone survey has seen an increase in the number and variety of respondents' year-over-year. This lends stronger credibility to the results and allows us to more accurately identify trends and issues in regards to local employers' recruitment challenges.

METHODOLODGY

Based on employer feedback and the lessons learned with the 2014 and 2015 employerone survey project, the questionnaire was edited to be more concise and shorter. We believe that the revised and shorter survey questionnaire contributed to the increased number of responses in this region.

Contrary to the previous years, the employerone survey was available online between October 21st and November 30th, 2016. Employers were invited via email to complete the survey. The invitation to respond was posted on the FNETB website. The participating business organizations also promoted employerone in their regular newsletters. Several reminders were sent during that period to increase the number of responses.

LIMITATIONS

The information collected with the employerone survey is important for local labour market planning because it is current local labour market demand information. It does however have its limitations in that it is relevant at the time of its collection. Furthermore, the report will contain the input of a limited number of employers, as such the results will be influenced by the relevance of the questions to the responding employers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

219

Surveyed in 2016

In total, 219 employers started the survey. Of those 187 answered all of the questions and 32 responding employers left some questions blank. We assume that the unanswered questions were not relevant or did not apply to their situation. 49 respondents indicated that they had been part of the survey last year, when 186 employers had participated.

There are only a few imbalances when it comes to the distribution of respondents by industry, but there are certainly more instances where the survey distribution is quite close to the actual distribution of firms by industry in the study area. There are three industries where the survey proportion is somewhat higher than the share of all industries in Algoma: Manufacturing; Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; and Public Administration. Only the Administration and Support sector is somewhat underrepresented in the survey results.

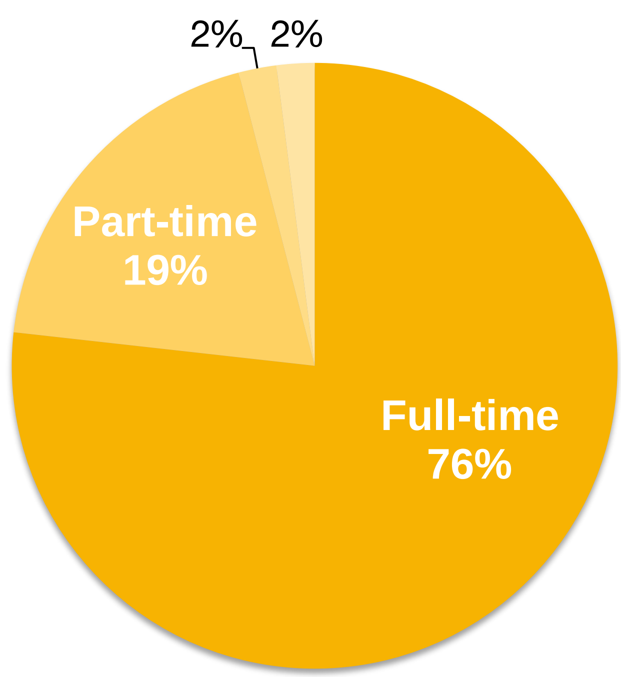
Overall, the respondents represented 7,132 employees. In the 2011 National Household Survey, Algoma District accounted for 43,435 jobs. The number of jobs has declined slightly in Northeast Ontario since 2011, but assuming the level of employment in 2011, the respondents in the survey represent somewhere around 16% of all local jobs.

16%

of the Total Employment

According to the respondents:

- Three quarters of all jobs listed (76%) were full-time.
- 19% were part-time.
- The remainder were either contract or seasonal jobs. (Both 2% of all jobs listed).



Separations in the past 12 months:

824

Separations

- 52% of the 201 responding companies reported a total of 824 separations in the previous 12 months, resulting in an annual turnover rate of 11.7%, slightly lower than last year's estimated turnover rate of 12.1%.
- Data on separations by type of employment and by type of separations reveals that:
  - 216 (26%) of employees quit their job
  - 96 (12%) retired
  - 381(46%) were laid-off temporarily
  - 96 (12%) were permanently laid-off
  - 30 (4%) were dismissed
- Full-time jobs make up 58% of all separations, and seasonal jobs came in second at 28%

Hires in the past 12 months:

863

Hires

- 194 employers reported hiring 863 people in the previous 12 months:
  - 322 (37%) were full-time
  - 228 (26%) were part-time
  - 79 (9%) were contract
  - 234 (27%) were seasonal
- The top three occupations with the highest total number of hires in the past 12 months were:
  - Construction worker
  - Production worker
  - Hostess/Host

Projected hires in the next 12 months:

771

Projected Hires

- 58% of respondents to this question indicated that they planned on hiring in the next 12 months. The total number of anticipated new hires is 771 of which:
  - 366 are full-time
  - 167 are part-time
  - 46 are contract
  - 192 are seasonal
- Occupations with the highest number of anticipated new hires are:
  - General labourers
  - Cooks
  - Housekeeping/Cleaning

Recruitment methods:

The most frequently reported methods of recruitment are:

Word of Mouth, Personal Contacts, Networks and Referrals	Online Job Postings	Government Employment Centres	Company's own Website

Top methods or sources of training:

- On the job (90%)
- Peer-to-peer (33%)
- Industry and professional associations (22%)
- Distance/online education (22%).

Most important competencies employers look for in employees:

- Work ethic (dedication, dependability)
- Willingness to learn
- Team work/interpersonal skills
- Professionalism
- Self-motivation/ability to work with little or no supervision.

It is important to note that this report contains the results of a survey conducted with a limited number of employers. The answers are therefore influenced by the relevance of the questions and/or the interest of those responding employers, and by the economic situation at the time that the survey was conducted.

Nonetheless, the results provide insight on some of the key hiring and recruitment challenges and opportunities. That information is essential to assist local stakeholders with the planning and tailoring of employment and training services to better meet the requirements of the local labour market.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

219 employers started the survey and 187 completed it, with a variable number of respondents for each question. 49 respondents indicated that they had been part of the survey last year, when 186 employers had participated.

Respondents reflected a range of industries. Table 1 provides the breakdown of respondents by industry and compares the percentage distribution with the distribution of businesses in the AWIC area (Algoma District) in June 2016. The colour-coding for the survey results highlights where the survey percentage share is much greater (yellow) or much lower (black) than the actual distribution.

Table 1: Number and percent of respondents by industry

INDUSTRY	NUMBER	PERCENT	ACTUAL
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3	1.4%	3.0%
Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction	2	0.9%	0.3%
Utilities	1	0.5%	0.6%
Construction	22	10.1%	12.8%
Manufacturing	14	6.5%	3.0%
Wholesale Trade	3	1.4%	3.1%
Retail Trade	38	17.5%	16.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	5	2.3%	3.5%
Information and Cultural Industries	4	1.8%	1.1%
Finance and Insurance	9	4.1%	3.0%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	5	2.3%	4.4%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	24	11.1%	6.9%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	0.5%	0.5%
Administration and Support, Waste Management	4	1.8%	4.4%
Educational Services	6	2.8%	1.0%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	19	8.8%	11.6%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5	2.3%	1.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	19	8.8%	9.6%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	21	9.7%	11.4%
Public Administration	12	5.5%	1.4%
TOTAL	**217**	**100.1%**	**100.1%**

Actual figures are from Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, June 2016

There are only a few imbalances when it comes to the distribution of respondents by industry, but there are certainly more instances where the survey distribution is quite close to the actual distribution of firms by industry in the study area. There are three industries where the survey proportion is somewhat higher than the share of all industries in Algoma: Manufacturing;

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; and Public Administration. Only the Administration and Support sector is somewhat underrepresented in the survey results.
The distribution of respondents by number of employees shows a far greater proportion of respondents with a larger number of employees compared to the actual figures, particularly among those firms with 20-99 employees.

Table 2: Percent of respondents by number of employees compared to actual percentage

	1-4 employees	5-19 employees	20-99 employees	100+ employees
Survey	31%	43%	22%	5%
Actual	47%	39%	12%	3%

Actual figures are from Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, June 2016

Overall, the respondents represented 7,132 employees. In the 2011 National Household Survey, Algoma District accounted for 43,435 jobs. The number of jobs has declined slightly in Northeast Ontario since 2011, but assuming the level of employment in 2011, the respondents in the survey represent somewhere around 16% of all local jobs.

According to the respondents, around 76% of these jobs were full-time, 19% were part-time, 2% were contract jobs, and 2% of jobs were seasonal.

Around 10% of all jobs were filled by youth under the age of 25 years old, and 34% of the jobs were filled by adults aged 55 years or older. According to the survey, 42% of these jobs were filled by women, 2% by immigrants, 1% by persons with disabilities, and 5% by members of Aboriginal groups.

The survey respondents largely represent older firms: 85% were over 10 years old. In fact, 17% were over 50 years old.

Table 3: Age of Company

Less than 2 years old	Between 2 and 5 years old	Between 6 and 10 years old	Between 11 and 20 years old	Over 20 years old
6	9	19	35	172

SURVEY RESULTS

SEPARATIONS

Separations over the last 12 months

201 companies provided an answer regarding whether they had experienced a separation in the previous year. Of these, slightly over half (52%) reported a separation in the past year. The total separations amounted to 824, resulting in an annual turnover rate of 11.7% among those employers who responded to this question. (Last year the figure was 12.1%).

Table 4 presents the data on separations by type of employment and by type of separation.

Table 4: Number of separations, by type of employment and reason for separation

	Quit	Retirement	Temporary Lay-off	Permanent Lay-off	Dismissal	Other	TOTAL
Full-time	96	76	271	26	7	1	**477**
Part-time	107	9	10	0	22	3	**151**
Contract	1	1	2	2	1	1	**8**
Seasonal	12	10	98	68	0	0	**188**
TOTAL	**216**	**96**	**381**	**96**	**30**	**5**	**824**

Table 5 presents these same figures as a percentage distribution, in order to make comparisons between the categories easier.

Overall, Temporary Lay-offs were the main reason for a separation, almost half (46%), followed by Quits, which accounted for a quarter (26%). Retirements and Permanent Lay-offs tied for third, at 12%.

The single largest separations category by type of employment was Full-time positions, followed by Seasonal. The number of Seasonal separations (188) actually exceeded the number of Seasonal positions reported by survey respondents (163), which suggests that the number of Seasonal positions was under-reported when employers were asked to list their total number of employees.

Table 5 presents these same figures as a percentage distribution, in order to make comparisons between the categories easier.

Table 5: Percentage distribution of separations, by occupational category and reason for separation

	Quit	Retirement	Temporary Lay-off	Permanent Lay-off	Dismissal	Other	TOTAL
Full-time	12%	9%	33%	3%	1%	0%	**58%**
Part-time	13%	1%	1%	0%	3%	0%	**18%**
Contract	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	**1%**
Seasonal	2%	1%	12%	8%	0%	0%	**23%**
TOTAL	**26%**	**12%**	**46%**	**12%**	**4%**	**1%**	**100%**

Temporary lay-offs account for almost half (46%) of all separations, and account for just over a quarter, at 26%. According to the survey, only 12% of all separations are on account of a retirement. Full-time jobs make up 58% of all separations, and seasonal jobs come in second at 23%. The single largest cell is temporary lay-offs of seasonal staff, accounting for 33% (almost a third) of all separations.

HIRES

Number of hires over the last 12 months

Table 6 lists the figures for total hires over the previous 12 months, by type of employment and compares the figures to the number of separations during the same period. The row shaded green lists the number of hires reported last year.

Table 6: Total number of hires, comparison to total number of separations

	Full-time	Part-time	Contract	Seasonal	TOTAL
Hiring					
Number	322	228	79	234	**863**
Percent	37%	26%	9%	27%	**100%**
Separations					
Number	477	151	8	188	**824**
Percent	58%	18%	1%	23%	**100%**

There was a rough equivalence between the number of separations and the number of hires last year, with a slightly greater number of hires (In 2015, the pattern was similar, although the spread was greater: 656 hires versus 577 separations). There also were fewer full-time hires in 2016 compared to separations among full-time employees, with a larger number of hires among the other employment categories.

Of the respondents to this question, 73% indicated that they had hired in 2016, very similar to the 69% in 2015. Around 13% of the hires involved the re-hiring of previously laid-off workers.

Occupations for which the highest number of employees were hired in the last 12 months

140 employers provided 261 entries for this question. Once the obvious duplication of occupations was sorted out, there still remained some 170 occupations named. In many instances, the number of hires was only one or two (84 occupations referred to a single hire, half of the number of different occupations named).

Table 7 lists the 14 occupations with at least 15 new hires. These 14 occupations accounted for half (48%) of the 783 frequent hires. (One can compare this number to the total number of hires last year: 863.)

Table 7: Largest number of hires among high frequency hiring occupations

Occupation	Number	Occupation	Number
Construction worker	50	Cook	21
Production worker	40	Bus driver	20
Hostess/Host	36	Roofer	20
Child welfare worker	35	Food & beverage server	20
General Labourers	34	Administrative/Clerical	19
Summer student	26	Housekeeping	18
Retail clerk	22	Trades (mechanical/electrical)	15

Employers were further asked whether any of these high frequency hires were hard to fill. Close to half (45%) who identified high frequency hires said yes, exactly the same proportion as last year.

Employers were then asked to list their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements relating to recruitment for hard-to-fill jobs. The full statement in the survey is provided in the table below, together with its abbreviated form used to report the results. Chart 1 presents the responses of employers.

Statements about recruitment for hard-to-fill jobs

STATEMENT	ABBREVIATED
Currently, there is an adequate supply of qualified workers in your community.	Adequate qualified workers
No applicants at all.	No applicants
Applicants not meeting qualifications (education level/credentials).	Lack educational requirements
Applicants not meeting skills.	Lack skills requirements
Applicants not meeting work experience.	Lack work experience
Applicants not meeting motivation, attitude or interpersonal abilities.	Lack motivation/right attitude
Applicants not meeting language requirements.	Lack language requirements
Inability to compete with other employers due to remote location/poor public transit.	Remote location
Company's wage and benefit package is competitive with similar companies in other regions outside your community.	Lack competitive wage
Inability to compete with other employers due to the nature of work (seasonal, shift work, irregular hours, job content).	Nature of job
Inability to assess a foreign educational qualifications or credentials.	Foreign credential challenge
Inability to compete with other employers due to promotion opportunities.	Lack promotions
Workforce turnover is typically not a problem for our company.	Turnover not a problem

The top three challenges related to the educational, skills and work experience qualifications of the job applicants, with the highest proportion of employers who either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with that statement (between 64% and 70%). (Last year these same challenges came in 1st, 2nd and 4th).Coming in at fourth place was the view that the employer was not able to offer a competitive wage.

At the bottom of the scale were the following statements, which attracted the least agreement:

- Applicants not meeting language requirements
- Inability to assess a foreign educational qualifications or credentials
- Currently, there is an adequate supply of qualified workers in your community

Chart 1: Assessment of challenges filling hard to fill jobs

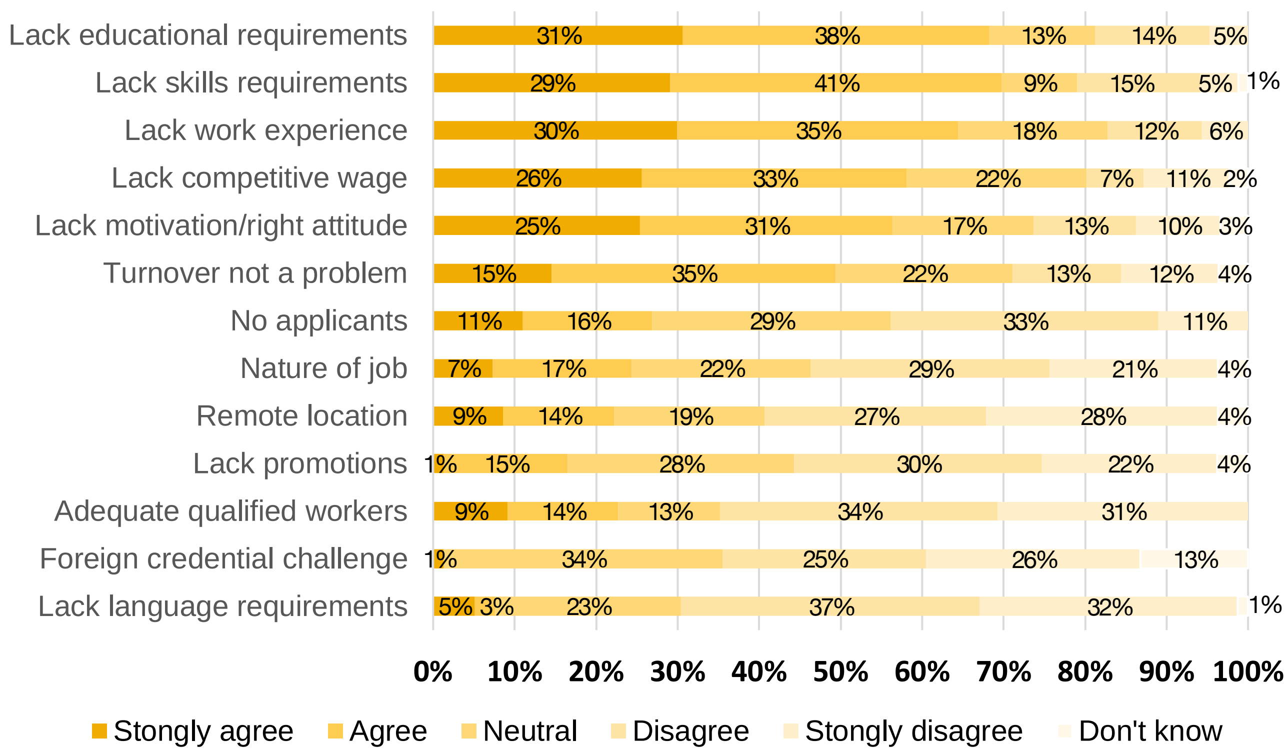


Table 8: Scoring for assessment of challenges filling hard-to-fill jobs

Statement	Score
Lack educational requirements	0.75
Lack skills requirements	0.74
Lack work experience	0.71
Lack competitive wage	0.56
Lack motivation/right attitude	0.48
Turnover not a problem	0.27
No applicants	-0.17
Nature of job	-0.39
Remote location	-0.53
Lack promotions	-0.56
Adequate qualified workers	-0.64
Foreign credential challenge	-0.75
Lack language requirements	-0.87

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment methods

Respondents were asked to indicate what mechanisms they used to recruit job candidates, for any hiring. Answers were provided by 174 respondents and the percentage frequency of use for each recruitment method is listed in Table 9, together with the percentage frequency for that method registered in last year's survey.

Table 9: Frequency of use of recruitment methods
(Number of respondents: 2016 – 174; 2015 – 105)

Recruitment method	% frequency of use	
	2016	2015
Word of Mouth / Personal Contacts / Referrals / Informal Networks	80%	76%
Online Job Boards / Postings	49%	49%
Government Employment Centres or Websites	36%	33%
Company's Own Website	32%	36%
Unsolicited Resumes	25%	31%
Non-Government or Community Employment Service Centres	21%	17%
Newspaper Ads	20%	28%
On-Site Job Signs or Posters	20%	24%
On-site Recruitment At Schools, Colleges, or Universities	16%	10%
Job Fairs	10%	7%
Trade or Professional Association Publications	10%	6%
Executive Search Companies or Temporary Help Agencies	4%	4%
Other	2%	6%

In terms of frequency of use by employers, the ranking is very similar to last year's. It has been a common perception that word-of-mouth is the most frequently relied upon method of recruitment, however it is noteworthy that the on-line channels (on-line job boards, company's own website, government employment centres or websites) take 2nd, 3rd and 4th place. More than half of the employers responding (54%) used three recruitment methods or more.

Geographic areas targeted for recruitment

Respondents were asked to indicate the areas their recruitment efforts targeted. Table 10 lists the responses by number of employers selecting each option, together with the percentage of respondents choosing each of the options.

Table 10: Geographic target areas for job recruitment activities (N=178)

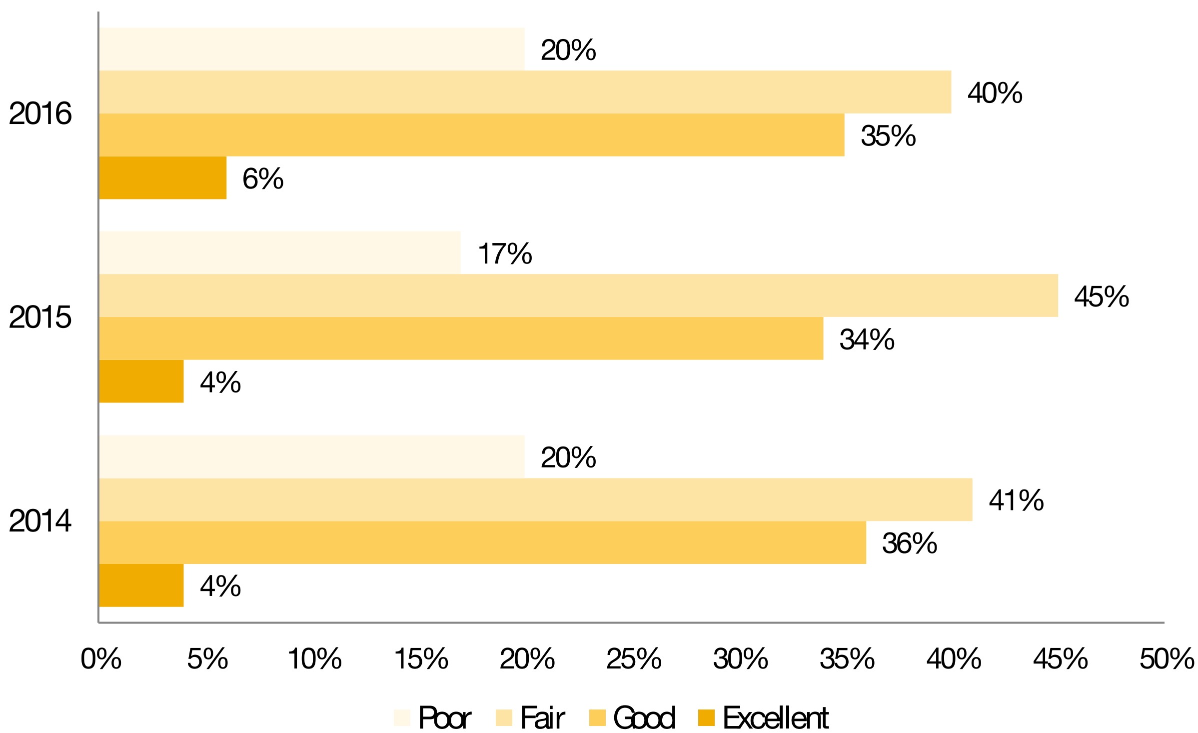
	Within the Algoma District	Within the Province	Within Canada	Internationally
2016	91%	25%	5%	3%
2015	93%	29%	9%	2%

Most of the recruitment effort of employers is focused on the District of Algoma, with considerable outreach extending to the province as well. A limited amount of recruitment extends to Canada, and very little internationally. Perhaps what is surprising is that 9% of the respondents who replied claimed that they do not recruit within Algoma District. (The percentages add up to more than 100% because some employers listed more than one option.)

Availability of qualified workers in the Algoma region

Employers had a lukewarm opinion about the availability of qualified workers in Algoma District. Of the 181 responses, 40% said "Fair" and 20% replied "Poor." If one assigned a numerical value to each choice, where "3" = Excellent, "2" = Good, "1" = Fair, and "0" = Poor, then added up the scores and divided by the total number of responses, the average figure would be 1.25, only somewhat higher than Fair (1.0), and equal to the score from last year and the year before (1.24).

Diagram 1: Rating the availability of availability of qualified workers in Algoma



Use of free employment service agencies

Employers were less likely to receive employment services from an agency providing assistance on behalf of a particular demographic group. Of the respondents who provided a response to this question, 79% said they received no such assistance (78% last year). Apart from help in securing youth job candidates (which represented a considerable minority) and, to a lesser extent, older workers, reliance on such assistance amounted only to a small proportion of survey respondents, as follows (some employers received assistance in relation to more than one category):

- 16% of respondents indicated they received employment services from an agency assisting youth (15-24 years of age)
- 7% received assistance from an agency serving older workers (55 years and older)
- 5% received assistance from an agency serving persons with disabilities
- 5% received assistance from an agency serving Aboriginals
- 3% received assistance from an agency serving immigrants or visible minorities

Use of paid recruitment agencies

Six employers indicated that they used a paid recruitment agency, while 183 said they had not, resulting in 3.2% of those responding to the question confirming that they used a paid recruitment agency (this figure is in the range of previous responses, 1% in 2015 and 4% in 2014).

FUTURE HIRES

Project hires over the next 12 months

Slightly more than half (58%) of the respondents indicated that they planned on hiring over the next 12 months, more or less in the same range as the 2015 survey(52%) and 2014 survey (56%).

Table 11 provides the breakdown of the number of projected hires by type of employment and compares the figures to the reported hires undertaken in 2016. The ratio of projected future hires to the previous year's hires is provided, as are the figures from last year's survey.

Table 11: Number of projected hires for the coming year, compared to reported hires in past year, by employment categories

	Full-time	Part-time	Contract	Seasonal	TOTAL
Response from 2016 Survey					
Projected	366	167	46	192	**771**
Past year	322	228	79	234	**863**
Ratio	1.14	0.73	0.58	0.82	**0.89**
Response from 2015 Survey					
Projected	119	60	23	102	**304**
Past year	213	125	63	255	**656**
Ratio	0.56	0.48	0.37	0.40	**0.46**

What do these ratios tell us? In 2015, the projections for future hiring in the coming year came out to around half of what had been the actual hires that had taken place in 2015. It is understandable if employers appear cautious about what their hiring plans might be. It is interesting that in 2016, their projections for the coming year were generally higher, as a proportion of the actual hiring they undertook in 2016. It would be a sign of higher optimism. That optimism was particularly higher for full-time hiring.

Employers were further asked to name the top three occupations for which they planned to hire. As with the question about high frequency hiring, there were a multitude of occupations: in total, close to 190 entries were provided, which represented as many as 130 occupations (some occupations have very fine distinctions, such as fundraising coordinator and fundraising assistant. Occupations that were cited several times by different employers included general labourers, cooks, housekeeping/cleaning and servers/bartenders/hosts. It should be noted that many of the individual occupations represented high level skill requirements or professional designations.

Employers were asked why they expected to have job openings. 169 employers responded to this question, with 54 choosing “N/A” from among the possible answers. Excluding this segment, Table 12 lists the percentage choosing from among the remaining possible answers and compares the proportions to previous years.

Table 12: Percent choosing reason for expected hiring, 2014 and 2015

	2016	2015	2014
Retirements	23%	16%	21%
Expansion/Restructuring	38%	41%	49%
Technological Change	2%	2%	0%
Other	48%	41%	30%

By and large, the proportions have held relatively steady, with a decline in Expansion/Restructuring as a reason, and an increase in the Other category. Where reasons were provided, the two largest categories among the Other responses were because the work was seasonal (11 responses) or because of high turnover (7 responses).

SKILLS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Minimum level of education required for new hires

Employers were asked to list the minimum educational attainment requirements for new hires. The survey did not distinguish between different types of occupations. Employers often indicated more than one level of educational attainment, so that the percentage distribution of their responses adds up to more than 100%.

Table 14: Minimum educational requirements for new hires (N=175)

None	18%
High school diploma	42%
Some postsecondary	14%
Trade certificate	13%
College diploma	21%
Undergraduate degree	9%
Professional accreditation	10%

These results show a high cluster of responses at high school diploma, with college diploma and no educational certificate coming in at a more distant second and third place.

It is likely that the way the question was asked in the survey this year affected the nature of the response. By asking for the minimum level of education for all jobs, it appears that the greater proportion of respondents choose a lower level of education, namely a high school diploma or no educational certificate. In last year's survey, the question was asked in relation to a number of different levels of occupations, with the result being two clusters of responses, occupations where a high school diploma may suffice and those where a college diploma is expected.

Most highly rated competencies

Employers were asked to rate the importance of each of the following competencies for their employees (the competencies are provided in their full form and then the abbreviated form used in the chart).

Competency	Abbreviated
Technical	Technical
Analytical/research	Analytical
Communication (both oral and written)	Communication
Customer service	Customer service
Teamwork/interpersonal	interpersonal
Work ethic, dedication, dependability	Work ethic
Computer literacy	Computer literacy
Time management/organizational	Time management
Problem solving, reasoning, creativity	Problem solving
Self-motivated/ability to work with little or no supervision	Self-motivated
Professionalism	Professionalism
Willingness to learn	Willingness to learn

Employers were asked to assess each competency according to its level of importance, with each response assigned a score, as follows:

Extremely important	4
Very important	3
Moderately important	2
Slightly important	1
Not at all important	0

The addition of all the scores for each competency, divided by the number of responses, produced an average score that is illustrated in Chart 2.

The two most important competencies (scoring slightly higher than half-way between very important and extremely important) were:

- Work ethic, dedication, dependability
- Willingness to learn

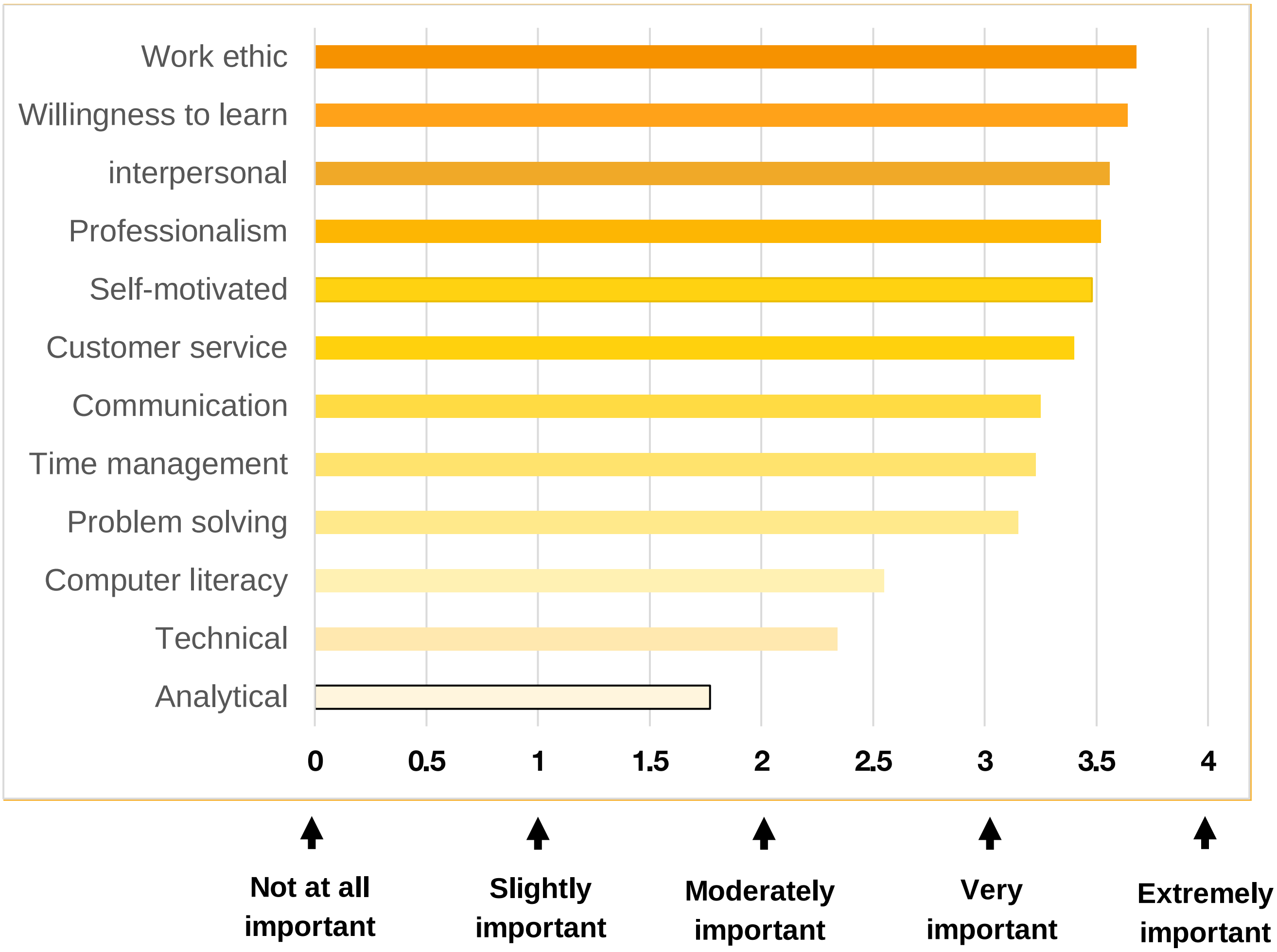
These two were followed closely by: teamwork/interpersonal; professionalism; and self-motivated/ability to work with little or no supervision.

The three lowest ranking competencies were:

- Analytical/research (scoring between slightly important and moderately important)
- Technical (scoring between moderately important and very important)
- Computer literacy (scoring between moderately important and very important)

It is noteworthy that among these 12 competencies, the one that by definition would be considered a hard skill (“technical”) ranks second-to-last on the scoring, compared to what are otherwise primarily soft skills.

Chart 2: Rating of competencies



Training for incumbent workers

Employers were asked whether they were able to provide or support ongoing training and education opportunities for their employees over the last year, and a significant majority (69%) said yes, almost exactly equal to last year's figure (70%).

Respondents were further asked in what specific ways they supported training or education for their employees. Table 15 identifies the percentage of employers who provided each of the following supports. The figures add to more than 100% because some employers identified more than one support – in fact, slightly more than half (53%) of employers provided more than one support. Table 15 also lists the percentage breakdown for responses to this question from last year's survey, which by and large were very similar.

Table 15: Percent of employers providing supports (Number of respondents: in 2016 – 126; in 2015 – 103)

	2016	2015
Fund it (fully or partially)	68%	80%
Offer flexibility in work schedule	52%	46%
Supply information on career advancement	23%	23%
Using government hiring and training incentives	21%	21%
Other	14%	18%

By far, around two-thirds (68%) of employers, support training by funding it, either fully or partially (slightly lower than last year). In addition around half (52%) offer flexibility in scheduling to accommodate training. The "Other" category primarily involved in-house training, as well as on-line courses and training provided by suppliers.

In terms of the sources or delivery methods for training or education, by far the most common is on-the-job training. Table 16 lists each method by percentage of employers who undertook training and compares the proportions to those of the 2015 survey. Once again, the figures add up to more than 100% because some employers identified more than one training method. After on-the-job training, there is considerable reliance on peer-to-peer training, industry and professional associations, and distance or on-line education, college and distance or on-line education. In comparison to last year, the biggest change was that fewer respondents chose industry and professional associations and distance or on-line education.

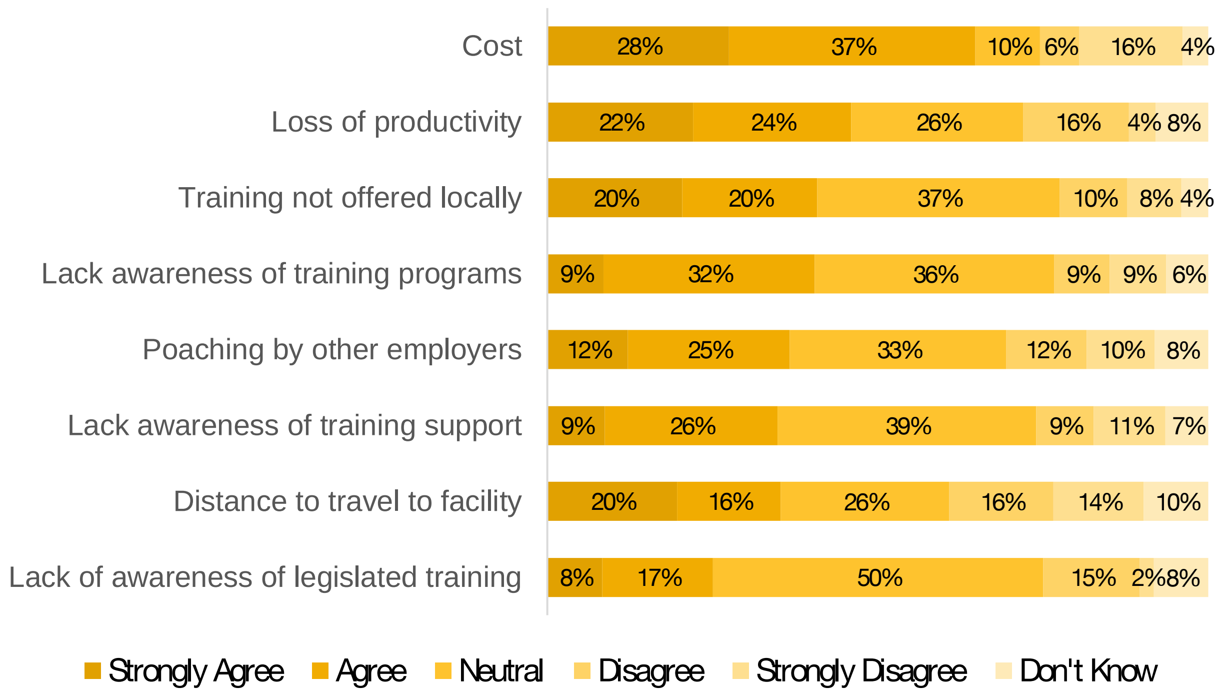
Table 16: Method or source of training/education for employees

	2016	2015
On the job	90%	77%
Peer-to-Peer	33%	46%
Industry and professional associations	25%	57%
Distance/online education	22%	41%
College (including continuing studies)	17%	19%
University (including continuing studies)	9%	11%
Other	6%	7%

Finally, employers were asked regarding barriers to training. A series of statements were offered to respondents and they were asked to indicate their level of agreement. The statements in the survey are indicated below, together with their abbreviated form for the purposes of displaying the responses, which are found in Chart 3.

Barriers to Training	Abbreviated
Cost	Cost
Lack of awareness of existing training programs	Lack awareness of training programs
Lack of awareness of training support programs	Lack awareness of training support
Relevant training is not offered locally (in the Algoma district).	Training not offered locally
Distance to travel to facility	Distance to travel to facility
Losing trained employees to other businesses	Poaching by other employers
Lack of awareness of legislated training	Lack awareness of legislated training
Loss of productivity during training time	Loss of productivity

Chart 3: Assessing the barriers to training



The barriers are listed in order of those with the largest percentage agreeing with each statement (that is, either agreeing or strongly agreeing, the combined values of the blue and orange bars). By far the greatest barrier is cost, with close to two-thirds of employers citing this issue (28% strongly agree and 37% agree, the largest numbers for each rating). Concerns regarding loss of productivity, that the training is not offered locally and lack of awareness of training programs come in 2nd, 3rd and 4th. While distance to travel to facility ranks relatively low, 20% of employers strongly agreed with the reason. A very high percentage of respondents were neutral about the issue of lack of awareness of legislated training, perhaps indicating that this reason was unclear to them.

A concern often heard in discussions regarding the lack of training is the poaching of trained workers by other employers. 37% of employers either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, while 22% either strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Workplace-relevant training to students and future workers

In terms of providing any workplace-relevant training to students or future workers, 65% respondents said they did not (close to the 61% who said no last year).

Of the remaining, the type of training and whether it was paid or unpaid varied, as Table 17 illustrates. Of employers who offered such experiences, six out of ten (61%) offered more than one such opportunity to students or job seekers.

Table 17: Percentage of employers providing workplace experience opportunities

	Paid co-op	Unpaid co-op	Paid internship	Unpaid internship	Apprentice
High school student	6%	18%	1%	2%	3%
College student	2%	8%	6%	6%	8%
University student	2%	6%	9%	5%	3%
Job seeker	1%	3%	1%	1%	3%

Roughly one-quarter of employers (6% + 18%) provide co-op placements for high school students, the vast majority of them unpaid placements. Otherwise, the proportion offering work experience opportunities is small. Co-op placements for college and university students tend to be unpaid, while internships for college students have a fifty-fifty chance of being paid, and somewhat better odds for university students. Overall, fewer of such opportunities are provided to the ordinary job seeker.

CONCULSION

As was mentioned earlier in the report, the results of this survey provide insight on some of the key hiring and recruitment challenges that local employers are facing. We emphasize again the limitations of the information which represents ‘a picture in time’, the views of 219 responding employers across the region based on their knowledge of what their future needs will be based on the economic situation at the time of the data collection.

The survey results do however represent one additional source of data to help us better understand areas where we need to focus some efforts in order to ensure that employers’ requirements are well known and communicated to job seekers, and those whose mandate it is to train and prepare workers for the current and future employment opportunities.

Ultimately, we hope that the information contained in this report will complement other sources and that it will help inform local stakeholders as they plan and tailor employment and training services, and ultimately better align the local labour market supply with the demand.

Notes:

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