



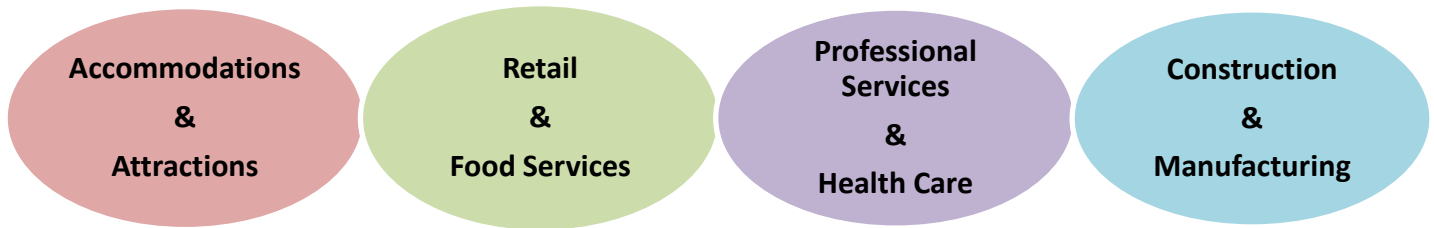
# HELP WANTED!

## Workforce Development Discussions

Since 2015, the Economic Development Team has reached out to businesses annually to better understand the successes and challenges of doing business locally. Last year the majority of the 236 businesses surveyed (22%) said workforce was their biggest struggle and there were 132 positions to be filled within the next 3-6 months.

In order to better understand these challenges, we consulted with business owners individually or within respective sector groups. Doing so helped to determine if there were commonalities for all local businesses and/or barriers within specific industries.

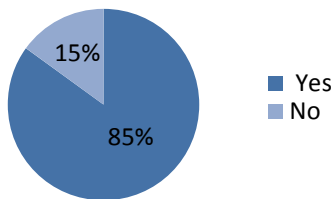
**38 Businesses in 8 Sector Groups filled out the initial survey and/or participated in group consultations**



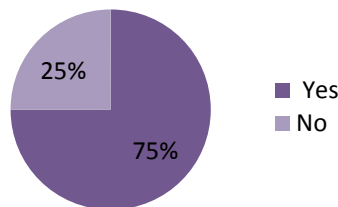
### WHAT WE HEARD

Challenges such as finding and retaining qualified employees, has become more prevalent as businesses are open longer and are busier through the year. Focus has shifted to finding not only seasonal employees but also full-time employees to expand service and hours to meet growing demands.

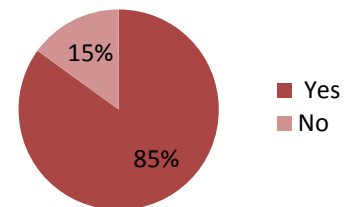
**Are you having difficulty finding and retaining employees?**



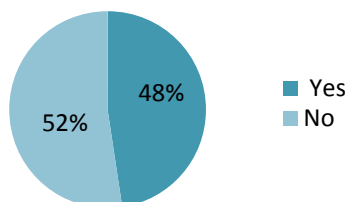
**Does your business currently have vacancies?**



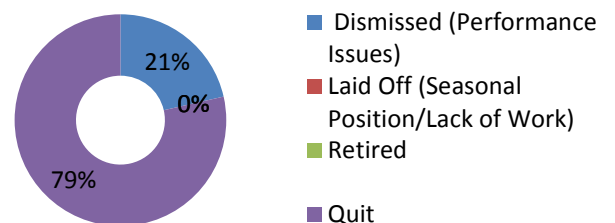
**Have you lost any employees in 2019?**



**Do you feel employee poaching is an issue in your sector?**

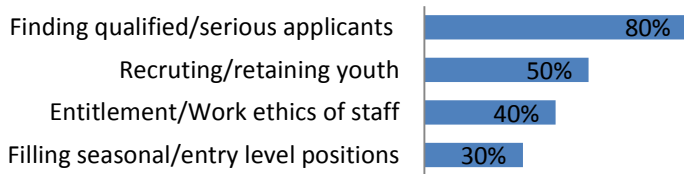


**Reason For Leaving?**

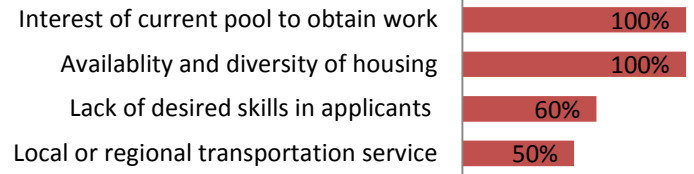


Finding quality applicants from the current local employment pool is the biggest workforce challenge for businesses. They cite lack of interest in working for various reasons such as; social assistance availability, lack of work ethic, indifference for financial independence, and or their skills, experience and in most entry level positions, their attitude is not adequate to fill positions.

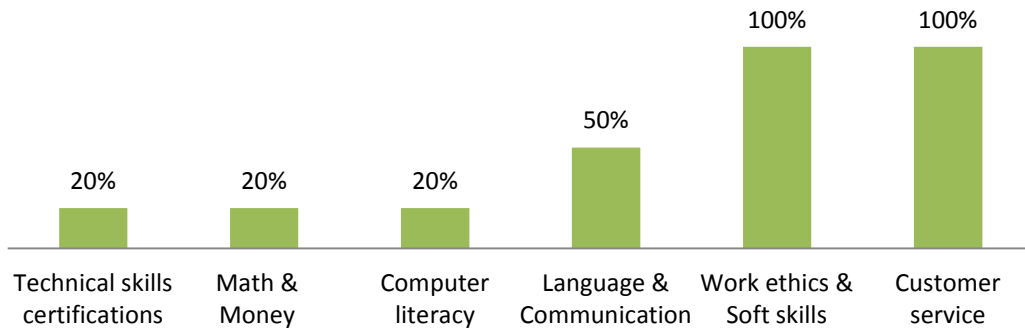
### Workforce issues affecting local business?



### Biggest barriers to growing the local workforce?

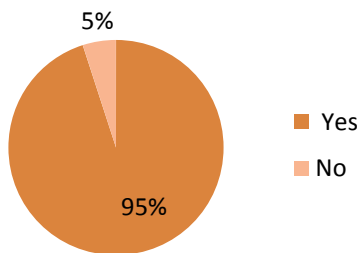


### Skills lacking in the current workforce?

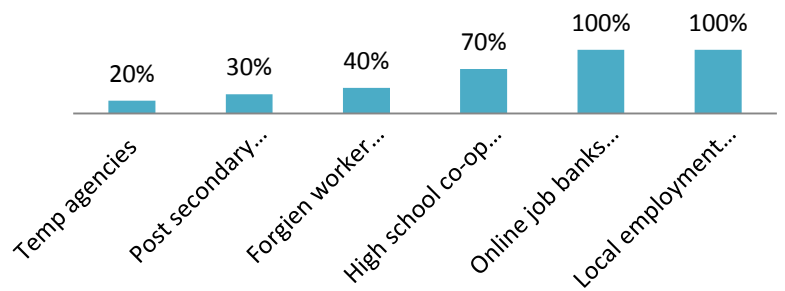


Businesses are filling some temporary and full-time positions using various employment resources. Businesses are also incentivizing applicants by offering competitive wages, benefits and other bonuses. Despite these, the majority are struggling to fill gaps with skilled trades and entry level positions.

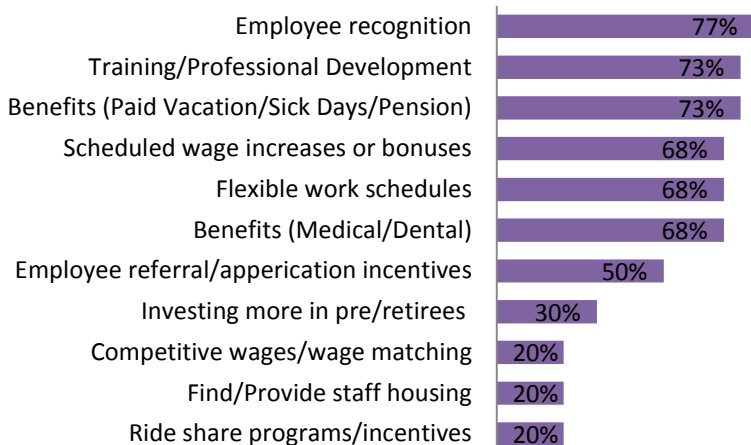
### Have you filled any vacancies in 2019?



### What Employment Services are you using?



### Recruiting/Retention incentives being used by businesses?



### Average wage range / Top wage range

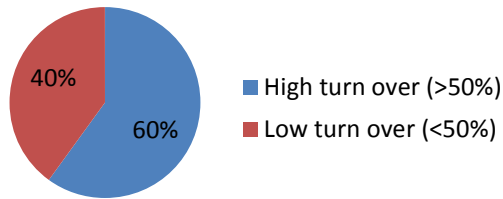


### Workforce businesses find difficulty recruiting?

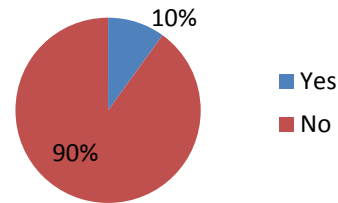


More than half the businesses interviewed said they would see half to all positions turn over in the next 3-5 years. Employees were expected to retire or leave and businesses would be looking to fill those positions to continue operating at current levels. Most of our businesses do not expect automation will be expanded in their industry to assist in alleviating workforce struggles.

**Workforce turn over in the next 3-5 years?**

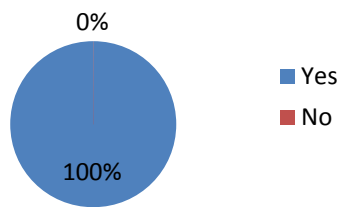


**Will your use of automation increase in the future?**

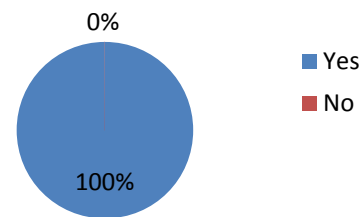


Businesses are only utilizing local high school or post-secondary institutions to find and recruit employees, both for co-op and permanent positions. They feel having and utilizing these partnerships are important and see opportunities in further building and strengthening these relationships as being key in developing needed skills and awareness in our current and future workforce.

**Are you currently working with an educational institution(s) to better prepare students for joining the workforce?**



**Do you feel partnerships with local high schools and post secondary institutions is important?**



Business felt there were new or missing programs or services locally which could assist both businesses owners and employees obtain the skills and meaningful employment they are looking for.

**What types of workforce programs or services do you feel would benefit local employers or employees?**

More/local mental health support programs for workers

Parents training program with kids starting into the workforce

**Job Sharing Program** **Local Career Fair**

**Available Workers Database**

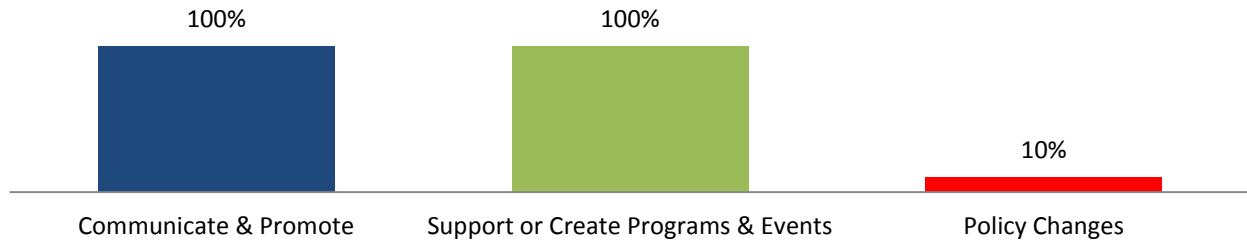
**NEW EMPLOYEE TRAINING**

Customer Service Excellence Training **Grants/Funding for Training**

Tech training for pre/retirees (be mobile friendly) **Employer program to better understand what new employees want/what motivates them**

There are a number of local services, organizations and initiatives that are intended to assist and support local businesses. The Town is not looking to duplicate programs but instead better understand where the business community feels the municipality can best support workforce development locally. Specific examples include:

### What might the Town do to assist businesses with Workforce Development?



#### Communicate & Promote

- Consult with other organizations about workforce roles, responsibilities and local issues.
- Help promote local job postings.
- Circulate/advertise programs, resources and information to businesses.
- Compile and report on wage comparison data (Local/Regional/ON).
- More communications about what's happening in town in general

#### Support or Create Programs & Events

- Create/Support a Job sharing program.
- Funding to subsidize fuel costs to attract new workers from within the region.
- Host a local seasonal workers job fair.
- Host/Fund a social event for younger/seasonal employees so they have something to do.
- Create Seasonal Employment Info packages/program to help attract and incentivize new or returning workers.
- Frontline employee FAM tour/tourism training.
- Create/Support a “New/Young Workers” skills training program.
- Assist with worker attraction “Why Work in Gravenhurst” packages for seasonal/foreign workers.
- Seasonal/Student FAM activities/event.
- Passport discount program for seasonal/new employees.
- Work with the High school to better prepare educate students on the workforce/expectations/skills.
- Create/Support a ride share program.
- Coordinate with the District for Regional Transportation program.
- Create/Support and Employers Forum (online/annual event).
- Create/Support a local Career Fair at the High school.
- Create/Support a Gravenhurst Alumni Program "Stay in Touch".
- Create Incentives to encourage residential builds to increase available stock (rentals/new homes).
- Create an Employer Web Portal so they can post jobs.
- Create more commercial/industrial shovel ready lots so new businesses can set up and attract new employee.

#### Policy Changes

- Revise Zoning so it is easier for builders to build housing.
- Create Policy/incentives for affordable housing.

## WHAT’S NEXT?

The Economic Development team is developing its 2020 work plan. We will continue to work on longer term goals as well as these proposed initiatives resulting from workforce discussions with business:

- **Develop a program to promote local job listings, business resource and information through our social media and create a periodical newsletter and send directly to our businesses.**
- **Work with our local partners to find a way for businesses to connect, learn and ask questions of each other to assist in facilitating growing relationships and finding solutions to common challenges.**
- **Reach out to local employment and business service organizations to discuss findings and opportunities to partner and support local and regional workforce initiatives.**
- **Include some specific initiatives (i.e. seasonal employee passport, “tourism in your own town”) in other strategic documents currently being developed.**
- **Continue with the workforce programs currently in place and increase the marketing of these.**