



PLANNING FOR PROSPERITY

Building economic strength through workforce development

January 2022

Canada 

**EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO**

Ontario 

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



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INTRODUCTION



Building economic strength through workforce development.

The Western Ontario Workforce Strategy is a regional collaboration developed to address current and future workforce demand across the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) region.

WOWC member municipalities are committed to working together to ensure there is sufficient workforce today and tomorrow to achieve the region's economic potential and support key industry sectors.

WOWC members recognize the power of regional collaboration. They face many of the same challenges: attracting more newcomers, educating youth

about career opportunities in their own backyard and recalibrating post-secondary education to meet emerging demand.

Collectively, the member municipalities also understand that improved access to attainable housing is crucial to workforce recruitment and retention. This strategy document provides a practical blueprint, with measurable outcomes, for moving forward in a spirit of positive co-operation with WOWC's senior government partners.





**THE WESTERN ONTARIO
WORKFORCE STRATEGY WAS
DEVELOPED TO IMPROVE THE
REGION'S ACCESS TO A SKILLED
AND TALENTED LABOUR POOL**

WOWC WORKFORCE STRATEGY

MISSION

To provide and advocate for regional workforce development resources and supports, build workforce development capacity and foster collaboration between member municipalities and other workforce stakeholders.

VISION

WOWC members have the supports and resources required to successfully address their workforce development needs.



GOALS

1 **Workforce Retention and Attraction**

Collective efforts to attract population and workers to the region.

2 **Leveraging Existing Population**

Aligning post secondary education with industry needs, exposing youth to career opportunities and supporting individuals with barriers to employment.

3 **Attainable Housing**

Providing innovative and compelling housing options to meet the demand of local residents and those moving into the region.

4 **Employer Recruitment and Retention**

Supporting regional employers with their recruitment, retention and human resources practices.



GOAL 1: WORKFORCE RETENTION AND ATTRACTION

Objective

Provide member municipalities with the support, resources and connections to address local workforce replacement demand and industry growth requirements

Strategic Directions

- 1.1 Resident/Workforce Attraction and Retention
- 1.2 Immigrant Attraction and Support
- 1.3 Industry Specific Attraction
- 1.4 Creating a Welcoming Environment for New Residents
- 1.5 Municipal Amenities

Every year thousands of potential workers move to the WOWC region, but many thousands also leave for a variety of economic and personal reasons. This strategy outlines actions to increase the net gain of workers staying in the region, attracting people into specific careers and industries in demand. It includes population attraction campaigns, immigrant support and retention efforts and industry specific initiatives to address targeted workforce needs.

The WOWC will support the development and implementation of resident/workforce attraction programs by using its resources to build the regional brand, raise awareness of job and career opportunities and expand online information.

The WOWC will develop compelling value propositions for the communities across the WOWC region addressing the needs and motivations of five workforce groups or personas: entry-level

workers, newcomers, families, older/55+ workers and temporary or seasonal workers.

A workforce development microsite will house WOWC recruitment and retention toolkit materials to support member municipalities. Online tools will include a newcomer readiness self-assessment, individual fact sheets for member municipalities and a forum for members to share information, discuss and collaborate on resident and workforce attraction efforts.

The WOWC needs to ensure its strategically important industries have the workers they need to survive.



KEY WORKFORCE PERSONAS



ENTRY-LEVEL WORKERS



NEWCOMERS



FAMILIES



55+ WORKERS



TEMP/SEASONAL WORKERS

Personas offer a human-centred approach to characterizing the workforce.

This strategy uses five personas to broadly capture the current and potential workforce employed and living in the WOWC region.

The personas provide the WOWC with pathways to develop workforce attraction and retention and housing strategies that are responsive to their current and future needs.

The region needs to attract more immigrants to meet workforce demand focusing on individuals with the skills to match the most critical job vacancy sectors and jobs in demand and contribute to long term retention. New immigrants already living within the WOWC region will be engaged to help in the development of the newcomer attraction strategy, leveraging their personal and community networks.

The WOWC will develop a resource centre focusing on immigrant employment programs including temporary foreign workers, immigrant nominee programs and internationally trained workers for WOWC member municipalities, businesses and community stakeholders. Other more general actions will include supporting business succession planning and improving the

quality and efficacy of labour market information across the region.

Building a welcoming, inclusive community is crucial to attracting and retaining skilled and motivated newcomers.

Industry Specific Attraction

The strategy includes focused efforts on three industry sectors of critical importance to the regional economy: manufacturing, health care and agriculture. The WOWC will also support the tourism workforce development efforts of the regional tourism organizations (RTOs).





Creating a Welcoming Environment for New Residents

Ensuring new residents feel welcome in their new communities will be fundamental to successful workforce retention. The WOWC and member municipalities must ensure there is broad-based immigrant settlement capacity across the region in both large and smaller communities.

The WOWC plans to create a welcoming environment which will include hosting regional forums to share best practices, successfully integrating newcomers into local communities and developing an inventory of equity, diversity and inclusion, and anti-racism training and other resources for member municipalities and local employers. The WOWC will assist communities in supporting and welcoming newcomers with community education campaign resources. As part of the marketing efforts the WOWC will conduct market research on key prospective out-of-province and international target markets

for workforce/resident attraction efforts. These actions will lead to a more successful integration of newcomers into all parts of the region.

Workforce attraction and retention and access to attainable housing are closely aligned.

Municipal Amenities

Developing and maintaining services and infrastructure to a consistently high level throughout the WOWC region is beneficial in not just attracting new residents, but also in retaining existing residents and businesses. Municipal members will identify and explore opportunities to support existing transit systems, continue to advocate for affordable broadband access and study childcare best practices.

GOAL 2: LEVERAGING EXISTING POPULATION

Objective

Assist member municipalities to engage local residents with the education and career opportunities in their communities

Strategic Directions

2.1 Post-Secondary Education

2.2 Youth

2.3 Target Populations

Maximizing workforce participation within the local population is also essential to local workforce development efforts. Many of the tens of thousands of students enrolled in local post-secondary education institutions will stay in the region if they believe there is opportunity for career development and growth. Persons with disabilities or other barriers to employment have the potential to expand the existing workforce. The WOWC will also explore opportunities to encourage and incentivize residents and newcomers approaching retirement age to maintain some level of employment.

Post-Secondary Education

To achieve the strategy objectives, the region's universities and colleges will play an even more important role in the years ahead in helping to address the growing workforce demand.

Working alongside its post-secondary education partners, the WOWC will support expanded experiential learning which connects local employers and communities in the region with a talent pipeline. The Workforce Strategy also

includes targeted training, micro-credentialling and bootcamps to develop a workforce with the skills needed to thrive in the region.

The post-secondary student population of 135,000 needs to be a primary recruiting ground for employers.

The WOWC will support efforts to bring employers and post-secondary institutions together to recalibrate the education system to ensure students are prepared to address workforce demands of the future.

Youth

The WOWC will develop tools to help retain a greater share of the young people graduating high school across the region, working with partners to create greater awareness and exposure to local career opportunities and the availability of internships and other experiential learning opportunities in rural communities. The WOWC





TOP 5 IN-DEMAND SECTORS



MANUFACTURING



HEALTH CARE &
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE



CONSTRUCTION



RETAIL TRADE



ADMIN & SUPPORT



will convene annual (biannual) youth employment forums and provide research and best practices on repatriation programs to encourage youth to return to live and work in their home communities.

100,000 young people in the region will reach working age over the next five years.

Target Populations

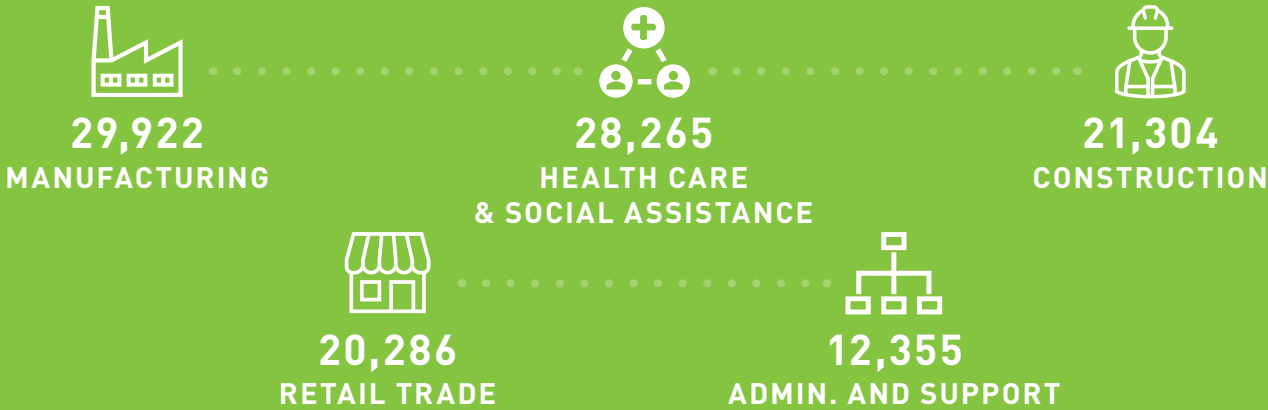
The WOWC will work with relevant agencies and

organizations to quantify the numbers of potential workers facing barriers to employment, determine the supports needed to engage and integrate them and ensure employers are aware of the existing programs in place to support the integration.

The WOWC will compile and provide information for municipalities to share with employers on wage subsidy programs for special populations and provide resources on the rationale and steps to provide more flexible workplaces and better access to childcare for families with young children.

Forecast additional jobs by sector, 2030

*WOWC region Includes replacement and growth demand. Source: EMSI



GOAL 3: ATTAINABLE HOUSING

Objective

Advance services and programs to assist member municipalities to increase the supply and variety of attainable housing aligned with local workforce needs

Strategic Directions

- 3.1 Model Policy
- 3.2 Development Industry
- 3.3 Rental Programs
- 3.4 Program Promotion

The strategy for attainable housing consists of five primary areas: model policies, developer interactions, a resource centre, rental programs and overall program promotion/marketing.

The WOWC will develop a policy framework that member municipalities can use and adapt to expand the opportunities and access to attainable housing.

The development industry will be an important partner in expanding the attainable housing options in the region. WOWC will work collaboratively with developers to develop the business case for greater diversity in housing form and density, simplifying the development process, and supporting development on public lands.

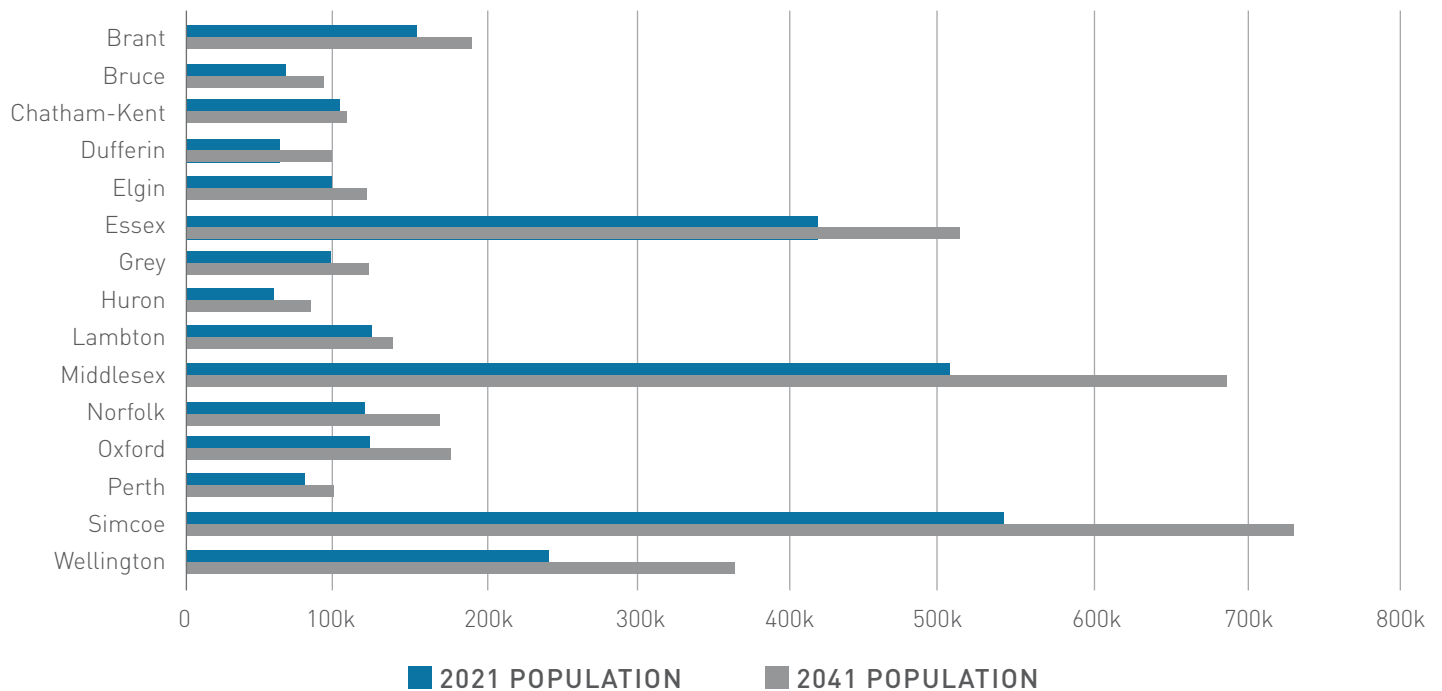
The WOWC will also support partnerships with third party attainable housing advocates and explore innovative rental housing models, aimed at increasing options for tenants and bridging the transition to home ownership. It will work with member municipalities to develop community engagement plans that anticipate and address any opposition to new housing models and policies through community consultation and education.

Member municipalities will have consistent guidance and support for new housing policies and models.



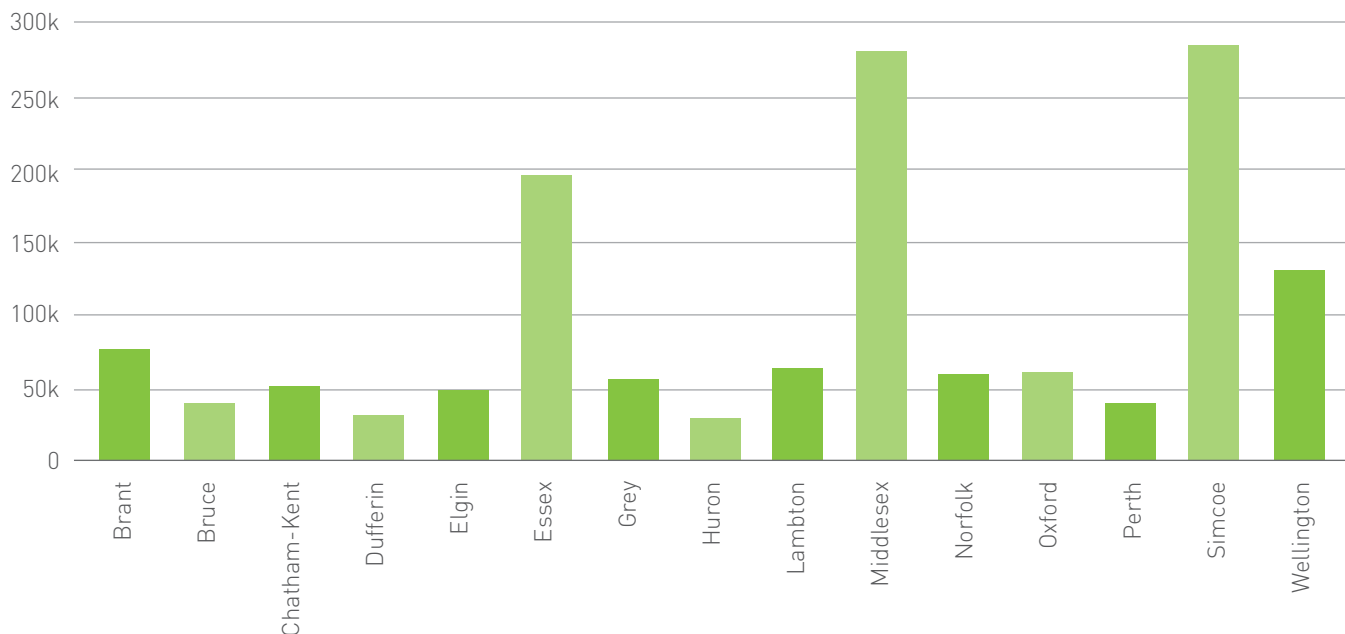
WOWC Municipalities Population Growth (2021-2041)

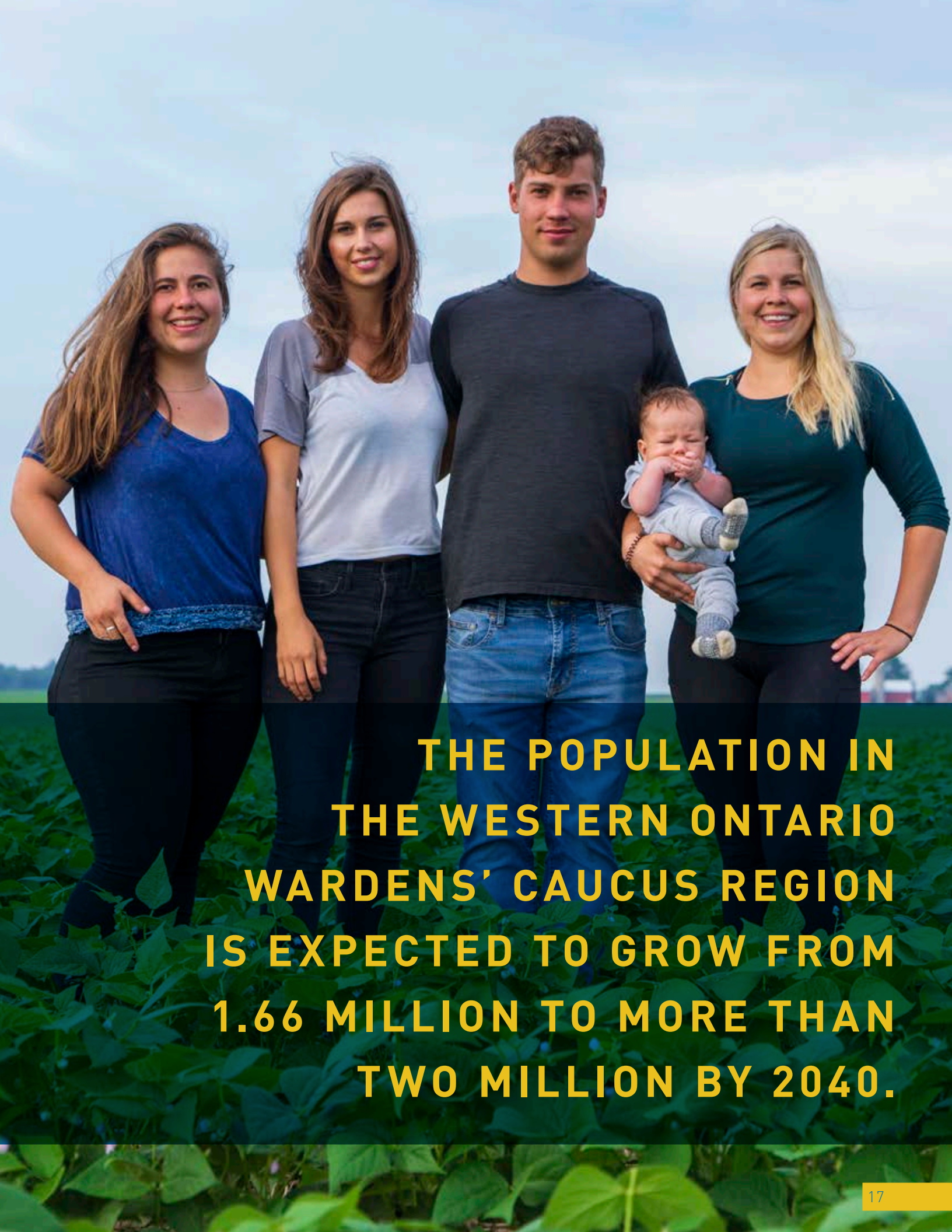
Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance. (2021). Population projections by age and sex for the 49 census divisions
These population projections include the separated cities.



Anticipated Households by Municipality (2041)

Source: Mellor Murray/Prime Strategy & Planning calculations using Ontario Ministry of Finance Projections 2021, and Statistics Canada Census data.





**THE POPULATION IN
THE WESTERN ONTARIO
WARDENS' CAUCUS REGION
IS EXPECTED TO GROW FROM
1.66 MILLION TO MORE THAN
TWO MILLION BY 2040.**

GOAL 4: EMPLOYER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Objective

Enhance member municipalities collaboration to strengthen workforce recruitment and retention

Strategic Directions

4.1 Recruitment and Retention Support

4.2 Temporary Foreign Workers Programs

Many of the employers in the WOWC region need to modernize and optimize their recruitment, retention, and human resources practices.

Small businesses are the backbone of the regional and local economies. Across the WOWC region, 76 percent of employers have fewer than 10 employees.

Smaller firms often do not have the internal capacity to address the recruitment challenges. Some employers may need to raise wages or offer better benefits. Others may need to be more flexible with work hours. Almost all will need to engage more with experiential learning for ongoing training and recruitment purposes.

Employers large and small will need to take a greater role in worker recruitment and retention efforts to be successful in this new, more competitive environment. The WOWC and member municipalities can contribute to the employers' success, providing information and connections to regional and sectoral efforts.

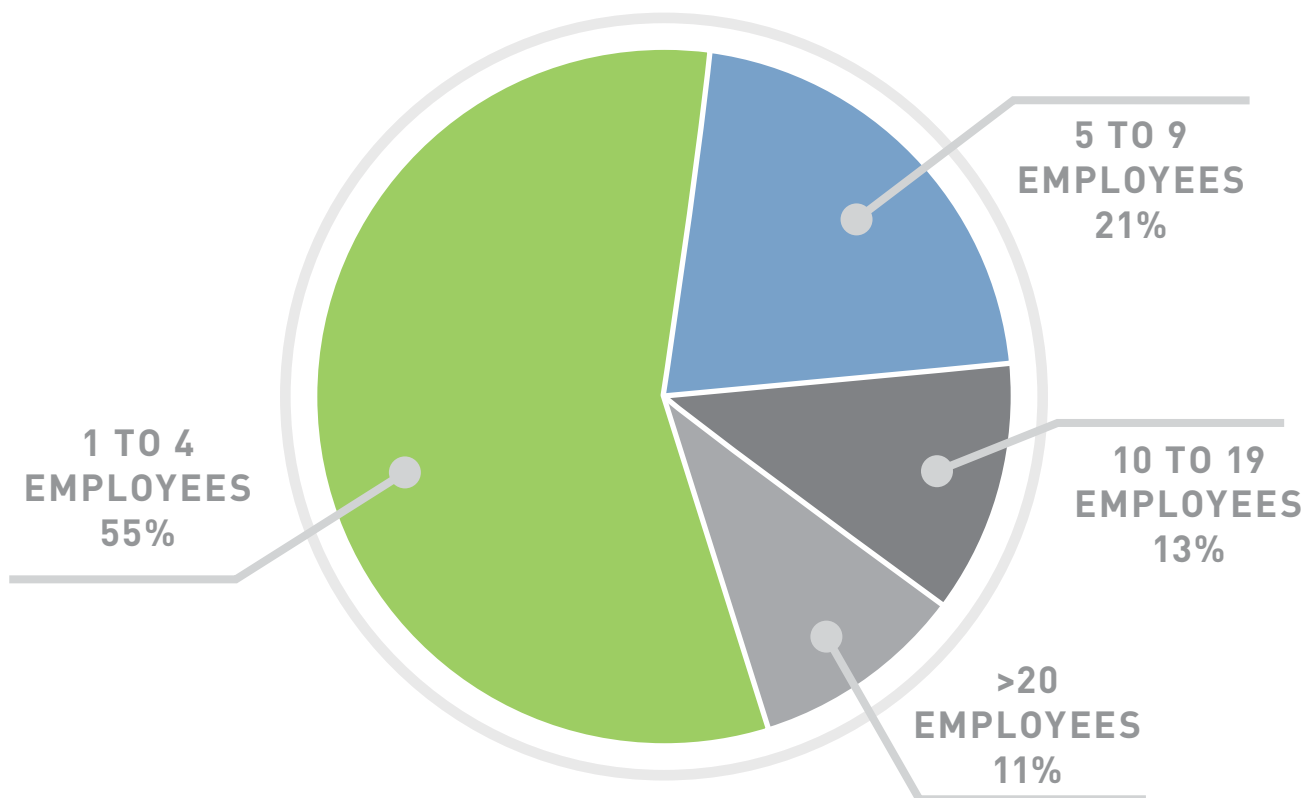


Supporting small business in their efforts to recruit and retain workers is a cornerstone of the Workforce Strategy.



Organizations by Employment Level, WOWC region

Source: Statistics Canada location counts, June 2020.



WOWC'S ROLE IN WORK-FORCE DEVELOPMENT

The WOWC Workforce Strategy recognizes the role of the WOWC to support local workforce development efforts and ensure successful and thriving labour markets across the WOWC region.



Primary: Lead partner, responsible for driving implementation through partnership and the organization.



Developer: Creating new and/or expanding on programming. Providing this service or offering to others to provide.



Convenor: Bringing key stakeholders together to discuss an issue, driving toward group consensus and alignment, resolution, and implementation.



Connector: Dedicating resources and capacity toward servicing clients by directing them toward needed resources outside WOWC.




Advocate: Vocally supporting and dedicating organizational resources towards a policy or program needing political or community support.



Supporter: Signing on as a partner such as by letter of support or board resolution.



A man in a dark blue t-shirt and pants, wearing grey gloves and brown work boots, is walking through a warehouse aisle. He has a tattoo on his left arm. The aisle is lined with tall metal shelving units filled with cardboard boxes. In the background, another person is visible working. A semi-transparent blue banner is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing yellow text.

**THERE WILL BE AN ESTIMATED
214,000 JOBS TO BE FILLED
ACROSS THE WESTERN ONTARIO
WARDENS' CAUCUS REGION
BETWEEN 2020-2030.**

WOWC WORKFORCE RESOURCES

The full strategy and a comprehensive suite of related workforce development resources are available at:
www.WorkforceDevelopment.WOWC.ca.

Additional reports produced as part of the Workforce Strategy include the following:

- Background Discussion Report
- Findings and Issues Report
- Findings and Issues Appendix with individual municipal projections
- Occupations and Housing Affordability
- Full Workforce Strategy



PLANNING FOR PROSPERITY

The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus is an important platform for addressing issues and opportunities that impact the entire region. The WOWC will leverage the scale that comes from serving a population of close to two million people. The full strategy document and accompanying material enumerates the clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all partners including all levels of government, industry groups, the education sector and other stakeholders.

This strategy illuminates and asserts its goals across a broad spectrum of sectors with measurable outcomes, to ensure the region can meet workforce demand in the years ahead. The document also assigns specific roles and tasks for the WOWC such as leading, convening, connecting and advocating.

A common thread throughout the strategy is collaboration: Universities and colleges collaborating with industry and government, the housing development sector engaging with local and regional government to advance innovative housing solutions and all stakeholders working together to promote the WOWC region to attract workers from within Canada and around the world.



173,000
NEW HOUSING UNITS
REQUIRED BY 2041



214,000
JOBS TO BE FILLED
BY 2030





CONTACT

For additional resources and information, please contact:

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