

# EMPLOYER ONE SURVEY 2022



**Workforce Planning Hamilton**

Planification de main d'oeuvre de Hamilton

 **EMPLOYERone**  
**survey**

*Your Workforce. Our Future.*

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## Introduction

The results are in! For the ninth year in a row Workforce Planning Hamilton (WPH) has delivered the EmployerOne Survey in partnership with the City of Hamilton's Economic Development team to develop and distribute the Business Impact Survey. This survey included workforce development questions from our EmployerOne survey but also focused on the impact businesses have endured through the global pandemic. Hamilton employers across all industries shared their hiring experiences on the most in-demand jobs in Hamilton and highlighted recruitment, retention and skills concerns. This survey provides a snapshot of how local employers were fairing in the January 2022 labour market. This year 1085 employers completed the EmployerOne survey; 896 employers completed the survey fully (100%).

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank City of Hamilton Economic Development division for their partnership and support to complete this project. With this valued partnership we were able to extend our reach for survey completion and gather valuable feedback from our local economy during these challenging times.

### About Workforce Planning Hamilton

Workforce Planning Hamilton is a community-based economic and labour market research and development organization. WPH works with a broad range of stakeholders including business, labour and employment service organizations to understand the employment needs in Hamilton. WPH is funded by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Visit our website for other labour market information [www.workforceplanninghamilton.ca](http://www.workforceplanninghamilton.ca)

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# Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic was a unique snapshot in economic history, causing irregular labour market trends with potential lasting implications. From this were the pandemic-induced trends and structural shifts which occurred in Hamilton's labour ecosystem in 2021 and 2022. The EmployerOne Survey identified the workforce needs and challenges faced by various Hamilton employers, and among this, further identified how local businesses and firms were fairing after a tumultuous period of economic decline. This year, 1085 employers participated in the survey, with 895 fully completing the survey. To maintain accuracy, only 100% completed responses were used. Results from the survey found that local businesses were in a stage of recovery: compared to last year (31%), many businesses did not report a decline in revenue (26%). However, the pandemic has made it difficult for employers to anticipate the business environment in the short-term (10%). These pandemic-induced trends have also exemplified the need to financially assist smaller and new businesses in Hamilton, as well as address the labour shortage where specific skills and education requirements are needed.

## Survey Information

This was the second year in a row the EmployerOne Survey has been done in conjunction with the City of Hamilton's Economic Development. This year, supplementary surveys including the Hamilton's Chamber of Commerce and Mohawk College were added to better reflect the Hamilton labour market. This collaboration was done together to limit survey fatigue many employers were feeling during the pandemic. The survey was done between January and February 2022. The purpose of this survey is to better understand the needs and issues of Hamilton employers after nearly two years into the COVID-19 pandemic. The total number of observations amounted to 1085 employers, however, only 896 employers had a response rate of 100%. To maintain accuracy, this report used the responses from the 896 employers who fully completed the survey.

The survey questions varied from workforce needs and challenges to specific business priority needs for 2021. Survey results reveal that overall, the local economy is doing better, and many businesses are in a recovery stage. Compared to last year there weren't as many businesses that had revenue declines which created a positive outlook for many employers. However, certain industries are still being impacted by the pandemic, and supports are still needed. Further, labour shortages do appear to be occurring in specific industries but many employers across multiple industries are concerned about recruitment.

# [1] Results Table

The results show that there are still many ways for local stakeholders to help the business community and building connections between different groups will help with the recovery in the local economy.

Below is the list of Hamilton industries that completed the survey. Overall, survey respondents captured most of the industries across Hamilton, offering a good representative overview. However, we did get a significant number of responses from employers of certain sectors such as Accommodation and food services; Other services; and Retail trade. The sector analysis was cut from sectors that had 15 or more businesses. Further, most businesses were small businesses, which does reflect the overall economy. Nearly three-quarters of employers have less than 20 employees. This makes the analysis challenging to compare to larger businesses.

Industry	#	Share
Accommodation and food services	169	19%
Other services (except public administration)	115	13%
Retail trade	113	13%
Construction	112	13%
Manufacturing	74	8%
Professional, scientific and technical services	57	6%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	48	5%
Health care and social assistance	45	5%
Transportation and warehousing	39	4%
Educational services	27	3%
Real estate and rental and leasing	21	2%
Finance and insurance	19	2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	15	2%
Wholesale trade	15	2%
Administrative and support, waste management & remediation services	6	1%
Information and cultural industries	6	1%
Management of companies and enterprises	5	1%
Public administration	5	1%
Utilities	5	1%
Grand Total	896	100%

# = Number of Businesses

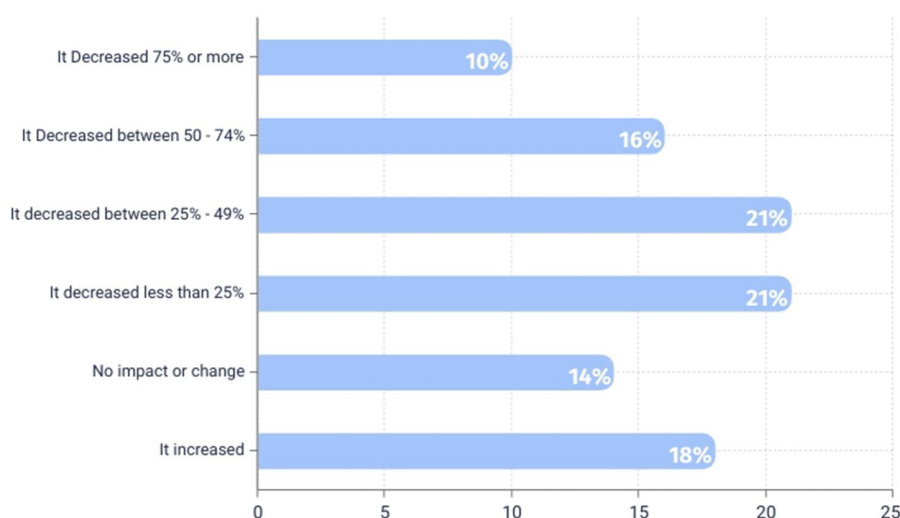


# Recovery From Pandemic

In 2021, Hamilton's economy saw a recovery occurring from the declines seen in 2020, especially in economic output and employment. While there were public health restrictions in April of 2021 and again in December, total employment still increased overall and unemployment rates were the lowest they have been since the pandemic started, 5.8%. However, there are still a number of businesses facing significant challenges.

## HOW DID COVID-19 IMPACT BUSINESS REVENUE IN 2021

IN 2021, HAMILTON'S ECONOMY SAW A RECOVERY OCCURRING FROM THE DECLINES SEEN IN 2020, ESPECIALLY IN ECONOMIC OUTPUT AND EMPLOYMENT.



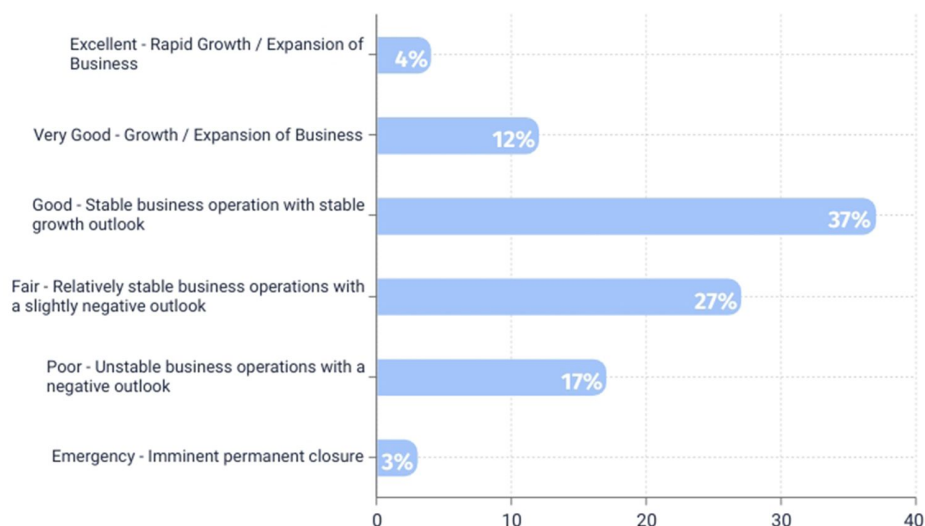
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We see that 26% of employers said their revenue declined by 50% or more. Which is better than last year, where 31% of employers saw revenue declines 50% or more. Further, 14% said there was 'No impact or change' and 18% said 'It increased', both are higher than last years figures. The industries that saw the largest negative impacts to revenue were: Accommodation and Food Services; Other Services (except Public Administration); and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation. Construction had the largest increase in revenue in 2021, with 23% saying it increased.



## WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBE THE SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK FOR YOUR BUSINESS OVER THE NEXT SIX (6) MONTHS?

IT APPEARS WHILE MANY EMPLOYERS ARE DOING WELL AND GROWING, A SIGNIFICANT SHARE ARE STILL FACING SUBSTANTIAL DIFFICULTIES.



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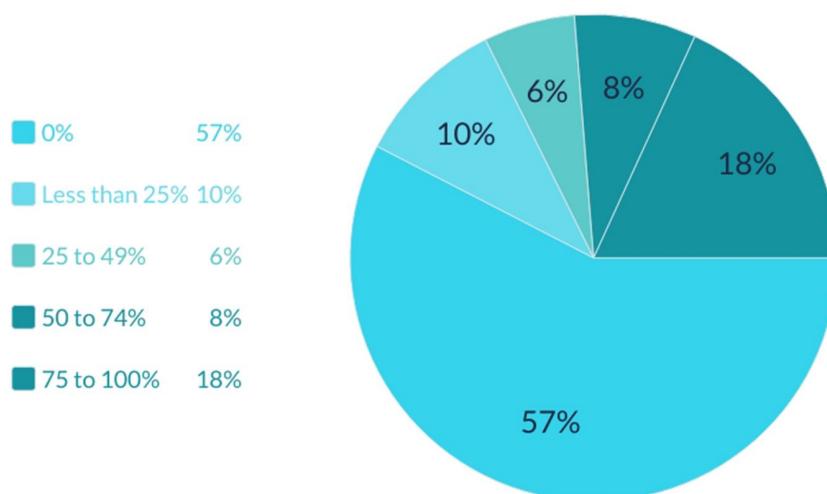
Comparatively, to evaluate how employers were doing during the pandemic, was to look at how they viewed themselves in the short-term as Canada rolled out it's recovery plan. This is a new question in this year's survey. We see that the largest share of employers, 37%, said 'Good -Stable business operation with stable growth outlook'. However, only 4% said 'Excellent', and 20% said 'Poor' or 'Emergency'. It appears while many employers are doing well and growing, a significant share are still facing substantial difficulties. The industries that had the highest share of 'Poor' or 'Emergency' were: Accommodation and Food Services; Other Services (except Public Administration); Retail Trade; Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; and Transportation and Warehousing.



# Wage Subsidy Percentage

We also asked what share of the employers are using the wage subsidy program. The program became more targeted for specific demographics throughout the year, nonetheless, it still provides a well-rounded picture of how employers and employees are faring and how it compared to last year.

**APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE OF HAMILTON  
BASED EMPLOYEES THAT WERE  
SUPPORTED BY A WAGE SUBSIDY  
PROGRAM AT ANY POINT DURING 2021**



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The majority, 57% said no employees are using the program, while 18% are using for '75% to 100%' of their employees. Therefore, similar to the other charts, we see that the majority are able to deal with the continued resurgence of the virus but a significant share still require assistance. It is imperative for the Canadian Government to be aware of taking away fiscal supports too quickly, as many employers and employees may need continued financial support. By extension, some wage subsidies such as the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB) have claw-back rates that could hurt beneficiaries in the long-term. Once again, the industries that are using the wage subsidy the most are: Accommodation and Food Services; Arts, Entertainment and Recreations; Other Services (except Public Administration; Information and Cultural industries; and Educational Services.

# Workforce Impact

The following are workforce impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic. Employers were asked to rate how much of an impact they felt among their employees. The following is ranked by highest to lowest from the Negative Impact column.

Impacts	Positive Impact	No change	Negative Impact	Significant Negative Impact
Employee mental health	2%	24%	58%	16%
The evolving/changing rules and protocols relating to capacity limits of businesses	3%	26%	43%	28%
The evolving/changing rules, protocols and status of daycares, elementary and secondary schools (up to and including grade 12)	2%	29%	47%	21%
Recruitment of new employees	5%	26%	36%	32%
Childcare availability for your employees	2%	32%	51%	15%
Uncertainty/concern regarding employment stability	2%	36%	44%	18%
Overall business stability	10%	30%	43%	17%
Employee productivity	6%	42%	44%	8%
The evolving/changing rules, protocols and status of post-secondary, trade or other adult education institutions and programs	2%	48%	36%	14%
Demand for your business' products and services	28%	25%	31%	16%
Retention of existing employees	3%	55%	32%	9%
Sufficient availability of PPE for safe operation of your work locations	15%	59%	22%	4%
Regular public transportation availability to your work locations	4%	79%	13%	4%

We see that 'Employee mental health' had the highest share of negative impact, 58%. This shows that this is a top concern.

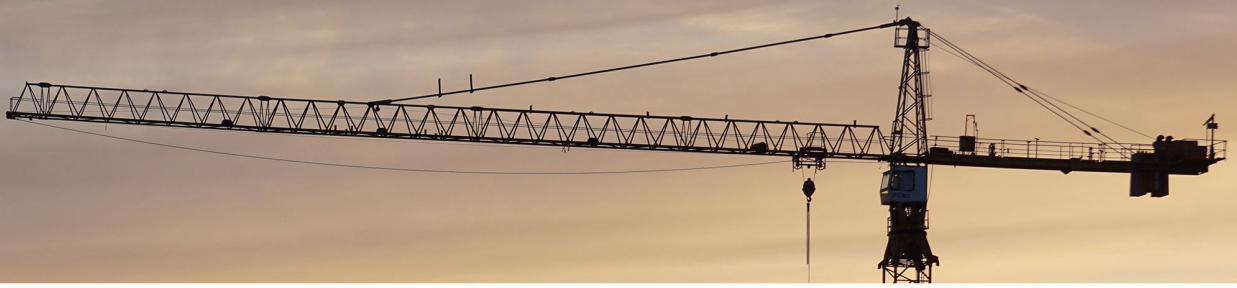
The industries that it was the highest, in terms of 'Negative' plus 'Significant Negative' impact are: Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (89%); Health Care and Social Assistance (87%); and Manufacturing (78%)

Second, 'The evolving/changing rules, protocols and status of daycares, elementary and secondary schools (up to and including grade 12)' had a negative impact of 47%. This could be indicative of how lockdowns affected daycare and childcare services, including heightened public health concerns deterring parents from sending children to daycare centers

Third, 'The evolving/changing rules and protocols relating to capacity limits of businesses' had a negative impact of 43%. Many client-facing sectors, including Food and Accommodation Services suffered from cyclical lockdown closures, resulting in lost business revenue, employee retention, and customer engagement

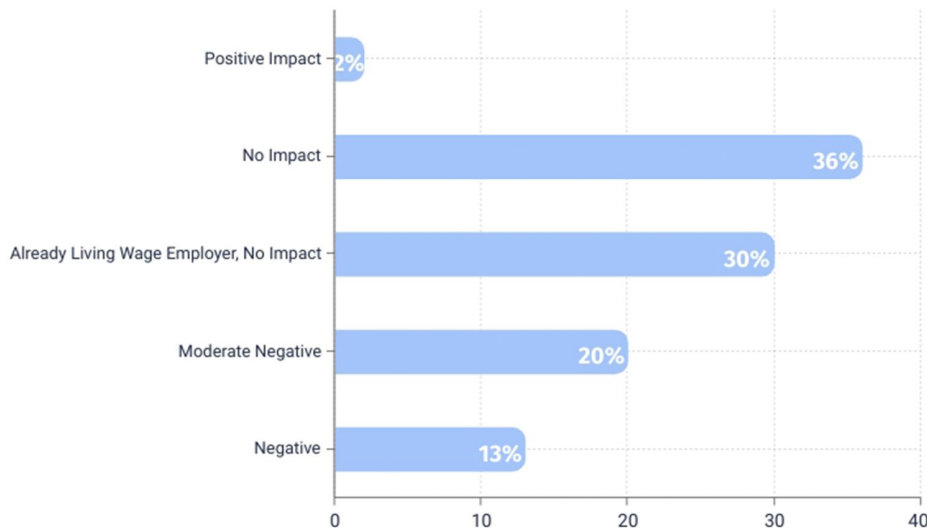
The next highest impact is 'Recruitment of new employees'. This shows that the labour shortage is a top concern for many employers. The industries that had the Recruitment the highest, in terms of 'Negative' plus 'Significant Negative' impact are: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (60%); Finance and Insurance (57%); Retail Trade (45%); Manufacturing (43%); Educational Service (42%); and Accommodation and Food Services (40%)





## HOW HAS THE MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE IMPACTED YOUR OVERALL BUSINESS?

THE HIGHEST SHARE OF EMPLOYERS SAID THAT THE INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE HAD "NO IMPACT" AT 36%



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The highest share of employers said that the increase in minimum wage had 'No impact' at 36%

The next highest was 'Already Living Wage employer, No impact'

However, one-third of employers had a 'Moderate Negative' or 'Negative' impact from the increase in minimum wage

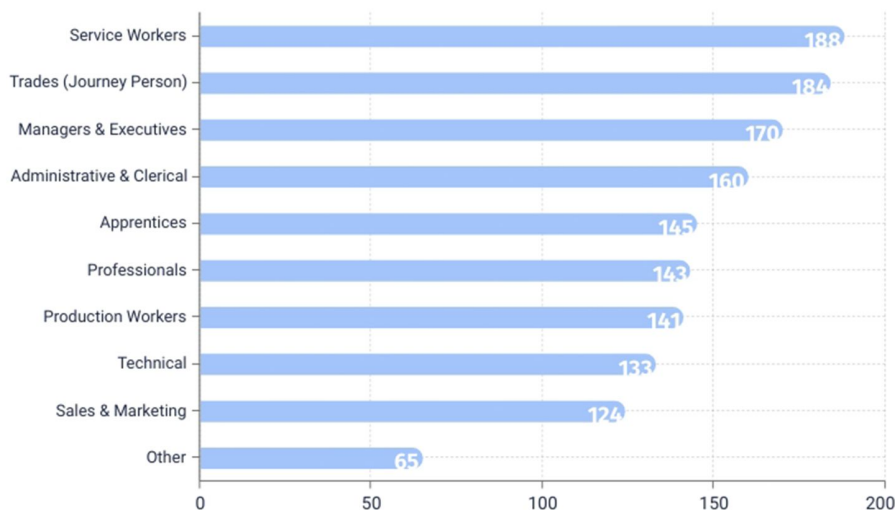
The industries that had the greatest negative impact in was: Accommodation and Food Services (64%); Retail Trade (45%); and Other Services (38%). All these industries are large share of their workers at minimum wage

# Jobs: Planning to Hire

We asked employers about their future hiring plans. We see that most are willing to hire in the next 6 months, therefore the recovery will continue but so will potentially labour shortages. Sixty-six percent of employers said they will hire at least one position in the upcoming year, this is an increase from last year where 52% said they are planning to hire. Sixty-six percent of employers stated they plan on hiring over the next 6 months

## WHICH OCCUPATIONS ARE CURRENTLY THE MOST IN-DEMAND?

SIXTY-SIX PERCENT OF EMPLOYERS SAID THEY WILL HIRE AT LEAST ONE POSITION IN THE UPCOMING YEAR, THIS IS AN INCREASE FROM LAST YEAR WHERE 52% SAID THEY ARE PLANNING TO HIRE.



The most selected occupation is Service Workers with 188 employers planning to hire at least one.

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The most selected occupation is Service Workers with 188 employers planning to hire at least one. This is followed by Trades (Journeypersons) at 184, and Managers and Executives. The industry that selected Service Workers most was overwhelming Accommodation and Food Services, where over half of the selections came from this one industry

Trades jobs came most from Manufacturing and Construction.

Managers and Executives were selected most from Accommodation and Food Services and Manufacturing.



“The need for quality health care workers in all sectors, community, LTC & RH, and hospitals, as well as privately.”

- Employer

Occupations	1 employee	2-4 employees	5-9 employees	10 or more employees	Total
Service Workers	27%	37%	19%	18%	100%
Trades (Journey person)	43%	40%	9%	8%	100%
Managers and Executives	61%	31%	4%	4%	100%
Administrative and Clerical	75%	21%	3%	1%	100%
Apprentices	60%	30%	6%	3%	100%
Professionals	48%	42%	7%	3%	100%
Production Workers	28%	41%	16%	15%	100%
Technical	50%	38%	8%	5%	100%
Sales and Marketing	69%	24%	5%	2%	100%
Other	22%	37%	15%	26%	100%

“Support efforts to connect local businesses to the education sector.”

- Employer

This chart shows the number of employees that employers are willing to hire for each occupational category. It is shown by shares for comparison purposes

We see that the overwhelming hiring will be less than 5 employees for most employers for all occupational categories

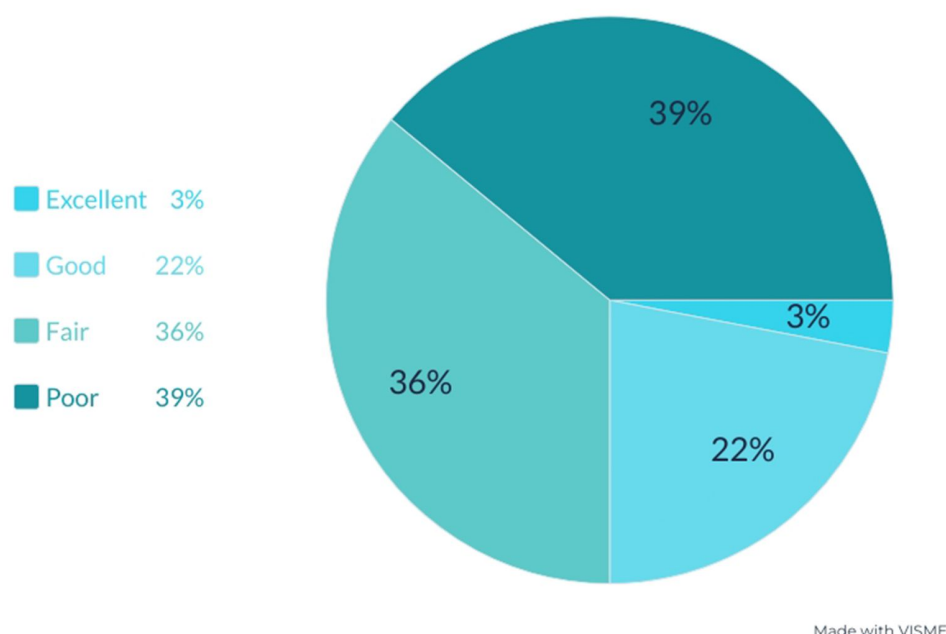
Service workers and Production workers had the highest share of employers willing to hire 10 or more person. The industries that are more willing to hire service workers at 10 or more is Accommodation and Food services. For Production Workers it is Manufacturing employers

# Recruitment Challenges

One of the most significant challenges for employers is recruitment. This section looks at specific questions related to that.

## HOW DO YOU RATE THE AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED WORKERS IN HAMILTON?

The largest share of employers said the availability of qualified labour in Hamilton was 'Poor', at 39%. The next highest is 36% for 'Fair'. Only 3% said 'Excellent'



The largest share of employers said the availability of qualified labour in Hamilton was 'Poor', at 39%. The next highest is 36% for 'Fair'. Only 3% said 'Excellent'

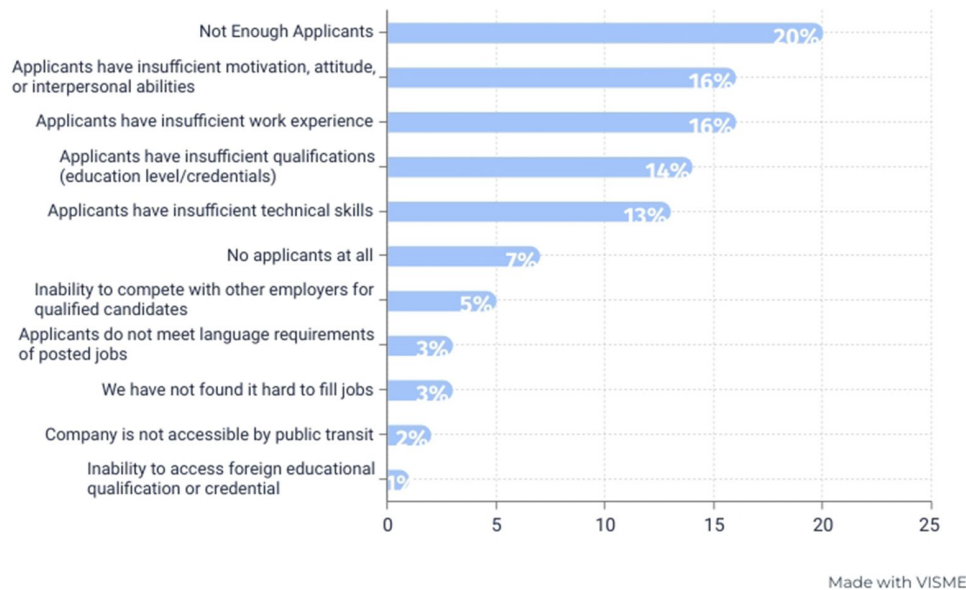
Compared to last year the share that said Poor or Fair has increased, from a combined 55% from last year to 75% this year.

Among Workforce Impacts, 68% said recruitment was 'Negative' or 'Significant Negative' impact. This question is similar but asks a broader question of finding qualified talent. This could be why the share is higher, and resembles the feeling of employers of the labour shortage or mismatch.



# THE FOLLOWING CHART LOOKS AT THE REASONS EMPLOYERS SAID POSITIONS WERE 'HARD-TO-FILL'

"THE BIG PROBLEM IS NOT HIRING NEW STAFF, IT'S THE TIME  
CONSUMING ON TRAINING AT THE BUSINESS COST (RESOURCES &  
SALARY)"



The following looks at the reasons employers said positions were hard-to-fill

There was a noticeable increase in the number of employers answering this question compared to last year

The highest share was 'Not enough applicants' at 20%. This is one of the main driving issues behind the recruitment challenges. Employers are having a hard time finding qualified applicants among those that apply. Most industries had the share close to 20% but Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Service employers had it at 24% and 23% respectively


The next reason is 'Applicants have insufficient motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities' at 16%. These are soft skills, and it shows these are more important than technical skills for many employers. The industries that indicated this as the highest were Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade, both sectors that rely heavily on soft skills

Following this is 'Applicants have insufficient work experience', at 16%

The sectors that had technical skills the highest were: Construction (18%); Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (17%); Manufacturing (16%)

# Hard-to-Fill Jobs

Hard-to-fill jobs were identified by the employers as the most challenging to fill. Not all employers answered the question, but a significant number of employers did have hard-to-fill positions. The following is the best attempt to aggregate the results. These are the ones that saw the most duplicates and are likely impacting the most employers.

Hard-to-fill Jobs		Skilled Trades
Administrative Support Staff		Automotive Technician
Bartender		Baker
Cashier		Carpenter
Construction labourer		Chef
Cook		CNC Machinist
Customer Service Representative		Electrician
Esthetician		Fitter / Welder
Food counter attendant		Hair Stylist
General labor		Millwright
Kitchen Staff		Plumber
Licensed heavy truck technician		Registered Early Childhood Educator
Manager		Steel Fitters
Marketing		Truck Drivers
Mechanical Designers		
Mechanical Engineer		
Personal Support Worker		
Production Manager		
Production Workers		
Project Manager		
Registered Massage Therapist		
Restaurant Manager		
Sales Representatives		
Server		
Social Worker		
Technician		
Warehouse Clerk		

We can see that many of the occupations are entry-level type jobs such as labourers or servers, and most of these occupations come from the Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Accommodation Food Services industries. In addition, skilled trades occupations were mentioned many times by employers and are one of the hardest to fill occupational categories.

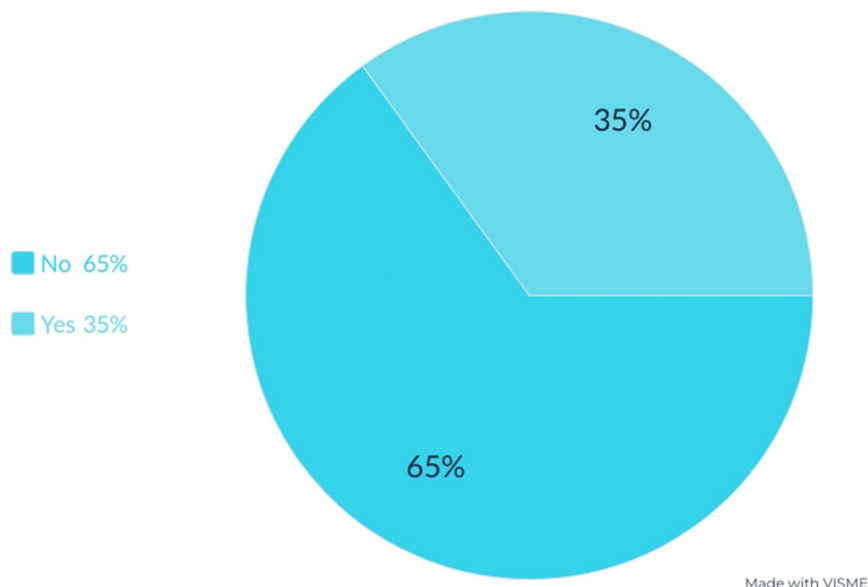


# Equity Diversity and Inclusion

This year we asked respondents about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives and policies in the workplace. EDI is imperative in fostering a non-discriminatory work culture, especially when considering employment outcomes.

## DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE ANY POLICIES OR PRACTICES IN PLACE WHICH ENCOURAGES HIRING FROM HISTORICALLY UNDER-REPRESENTED POPULATIONS?

(e.g. People with Disabilities, LGBTQ2AI+, First Nations, Metis, or Inuit, BIPOC)



We see that most employers do not have policies or practices in place which encourage hiring from under-represented groups

Healthcare and Social Assistance (66%) and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (49%) had the highest shares of employers that have a policy or practice in place

The larger an employer is the more likely they are to have a policy, but again the majority of employers do not.

# Barriers

The following chart shows the barriers for employers hiring more immigrants/newcomers. It is meant to help immigrants/newcomers with practical advice on finding employment. Employers were asked to select as many options as they like.

Barriers	Share
I do not get many immigrant/newcomer applicants	19%
We do not have any barriers	14%
Applicants have insufficient work experience	14%
Applicants have insufficient qualifications (education level/credentials)	12%
Applicants have insufficient technical skills	10%
Applicants have insufficient motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities	9%
Applicants do not meet language requirements of posted jobs	9%
Other (please specify)	8%
Inability to compete with other employers for qualified candidates	3%
Inability to assess a foreign educational qualification	2%

The highest share said they do not get many immigrant/newcomer applicants at 19%. This shows that many immigrants/newcomers would benefit from applying to a broader group of employers but due to a lot of employers not having EDI policies, it can be a barrier to employment opportunities

This illustrates that some employers do not view immigrant/newcomer workers' qualifications on par with domestic workers. That said, increased EDI initiatives would help decrease the employment barrier when it comes to hiring immigrants/newcomers – offering better education and skill requirements



# Priorities

We asked employers the following question: What are your business priorities in 2022 that you plan on dedicating resources toward addressing? They selected as many options as they liked, and it is ranked by most to least selected.

Priorities	Share
Attracting new employees	11%
Increasing marketing / promotional activities to increase customer awareness	9%
Increasing the online presence / activity of your business	9%
Implementing new technologies/systems to automate or improve processes	7%
Finding and applying to current provincial and federal government funding programs	7%
Offering co-op, internship, apprenticeship and/or work placements	6%
Obtaining a better understanding of current provincial and federal government funding programs	6%
Forming local partnerships / buying local	5%
Providing external training or professional development opportunities for your staff (example digital skills)	5%
Increasing equity / diversity / inclusion (or EDI) practices in your business (hiring, staff training, client relations, etc.)	4%
Expanding my business (to a larger location or adding another location)	4%
Increasing diversity among employees (Sex/Gender, LGBTQ2AI+, Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, Newcomers, People with Disabilities, etc.)	4%
Seeking financing for my business (increasing debt or pursuing investment)	4%
Increasing environmental protection (or "Green") activities in your business	3%
Obtaining a better understanding of current government mandated COVID-19 rules	3%
Wanting help in accessing the immigrant/newcomer talent pool	3%
Examining and/or modifying the amount of office/storefront/warehouse space used by the business	2%
None of the above	2%
Undertaking research and development activities	2%
Winding down or transitioning business to a new owner	2%
Finding local COVID-19 related suppliers and services providers	1%
Pursuing international export opportunities	1%
Obtaining a better understanding of current City of Hamilton government COVID-19 rules	0%
Obtaining a better understanding of current provincial government COVID-19 rules	0%





We asked employers to select their top priorities for 2022, and most selected 'Attracting new employees' as their priority. This perhaps parallels the impact labour shortages could be having on employers. The industries that selected this the highest are: Construction (18%); Transportation and Warehousing (17%); and Manufacturing (13%)

The next two options are related to marketing and online presence. It appears that employers are realizing the shift that is occurring with online shopping and everything moving to virtual spaces including workplaces. Employers will need help with this adjustment. The industries that had the highest share for these were: Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and Educational Services

The next most selected category is related to technology and automation, 'Implementing new technologies/systems to automate or improve processes'. It shows that employers are more interested in investing in technologies to improve productivity. It is also likely related to the labour shortage, so employers are more willing to invest in automation to offset the higher costs of labour. The industries that selected this the most were: Finance and Insurance (14%); and Manufacturing (9%)

These are much different than last year, as many of the top options were finding funding, and understanding the rules. This year more employers are in the recovery stage, and these options reflect this outcome

"Just because we are allowed to remain open, doesn't mean that anyone wants to come. There is no financial support for personal services. We are struggling. Expenses keep going up, yet we cannot even come close to the profits we saw pre-pandemic."

- Employer

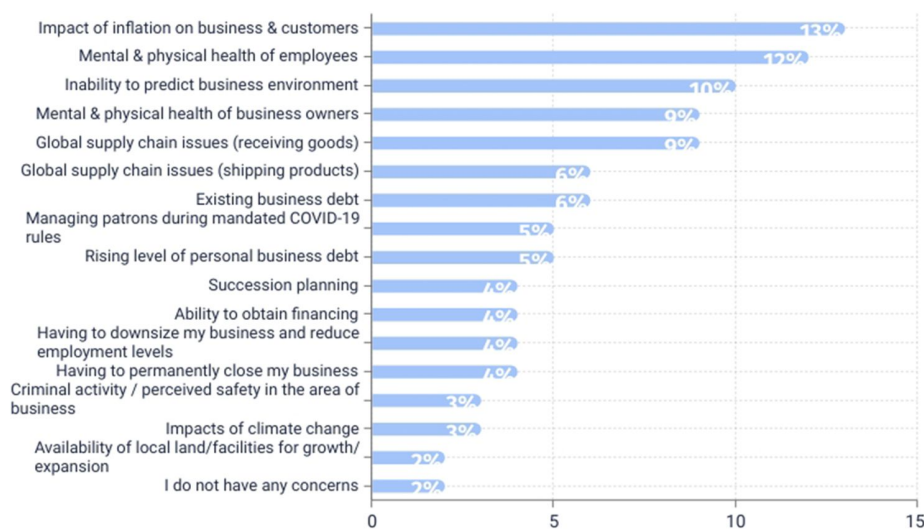


# Concerns

We asked employers the following question: What are your concerns for 2022 that could impact the health and viability of your business? They selected as many options as they liked, and it is ranked by most to least selected.

## WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS FOR 2022 THAT COULD IMPACT THE HEALTH & VIABILITY OF YOUR BUSINESS?

THE MENTAL HEALTH OF BOTH EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS WAS HIGH ON THE LIST OF CONCERNS, RANKED 2ND AND 4TH. THIS SHOWS THAT THE IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC HAVE BEEN FELT BY EVERYONE AND MAY HAVE LASTING IMPACTS



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We see that the impacts of inflation weighed heavily on employers, as ‘The impacts of inflation on my business and my customers’ were selected most at 13% of all selections. This impact will affect the cost of production and the costs of their goods. If they feel they cannot pass on costs, rising inflation levels could hurt profitability.

The mental health of both employees and employers was high on the list of concerns, ranked 2nd and 4th. The Covid-19 pandemic drastically impacted peoples’ mental wellbeing, with potential lasting impacts.

Another key concern among employers is ‘The inability to reasonably predict the business environment in the short term’. This shows that planning long-term has become very challenging for employers due to pandemic-induced trends and structural shifts within the labour market.

# Summary

The Covid-19 pandemic created a unique snapshot in time for Hamilton – and Canada's – labour market. It is harder now to anticipate how the labour market will look in the long-term. The economic ramifications following the pandemic, such as the cyclical lockdowns that caused the Food and Accommodations sector to suffer heavy economic losses, have created structural shifts in Hamilton's labour market. These pandemic-induced employment trends mean that employees and employers alike will experience difficulties and barriers during the following months in the labour market.

Client-facing sectors, such as Food and Accommodation Services, Retail Trade, as well as Construction and Manufacturing experienced the most labour vacancies across all industries. These hard-to-fill jobs (technicians, bakers, carpenters, chefs, fitters/welders, etc.) often require specific skill-sets, training, and work experience.

The federal minimum wage increased from \$14.25/hour to \$15/hour in January 2022 – where it is further expected to increase to \$15.50/hour in October 2022. Businesses with pre-existing financial constraints due to the Covid-19 pandemic had less hiring power (33%) after the minimum wage was increased to \$15/hour in January. Employers who hire at the minimum wage (retail trade, food and drink services, etc.) can face an extra barrier to hiring talent. Rising inflation levels, higher costs of living, and increased incurred business expenses can all exemplify employer difficulties in hiring.

From the survey, the majority of labour vacancies across the industries highlighted the insufficient education, skills, or experience from the applicant pool. This is paralleled by employer responses, with majority of employers rating the qualifications of the applicant pool as poor (39%). This labour shortage was further exemplified by the lack of available migrant workers (19%) in the Hamilton region. With this said, the biggest concerns for employers were 1) how inflation would impact their business and customers; 2) how mental and physical health of their employees; and 3) the inability to predict the future business environment. These concerns perhaps also reflect the current pandemic-induced trends and employer-employee mismatch in Hamilton. An unqualified applicant pool coupled with a reduced inflow of migrant workers in the labour market mean employers are experiencing heightened difficulties in hiring qualified applicants.



# The Next Steps

The top priorities for employers in the following months are talent acquisition and retention. From the survey, the top four priorities included: 1) attracting new employees; 2) implementing new tech/automation; 3) increased work placements; and 4) external training and professional development supports. These priorities reflect the need for skilled candidates in Hamilton's labour pool. Potential avenues to hire employees might be:

Allow more temporary foreign workers (TFW) into Hamilton labour market

Entry-level opportunities (e.g., co-op placements, internships, etc.) for migrants and newcomers

Skill and talent development programs and opportunities for new graduates and young professionals

Networking events for employers and employees

Financial supports for small businesses and those ineligible for federal/provincial aid.

A top consideration should be how to attract and, more importantly, retain employees with the persistent, monthly hike in the inflation rate. These monthly hikes will be accompanied by increases in the cost of living, with decreases in consumer confidence to purchase necessities such as food, shelter and gas. Another area of priority for employers is how to retain and foster employee loyalty. Brain drain, which is the departure of educated professionals from one sector, field, or location to another can posit an issue for the Hamilton region. Hamilton is positioned with many great educational institutions, most notably: McMaster University, Mohawk College, and Redeemer University. Finding ways to redirect and attract young professionals, especially those in the trades field, into the Hamilton labour market should be considered.

Overall, the Canadian economy will see a turbulent economic path in the following months. High inflation coupled with rising costs for shelter, food, and gasoline mean candidates will seek employment opportunities with competitive salaries and flexibility. However, with the recent increase in the federal minimum wage from \$14.25/hour to \$15/hour, some employers are finding it difficult to hire workers due to pre-existing financial constraints from the pandemic. Financial support for small businesses and businesses who are ineligible for federal/provincial aid should be further considered.