

Northern Ontario Tourism Workforce Development & Industry Training Survey Highlights

The top five identified positions to fill in the workplace for the upcoming season include:

1. Housekeepers
2. Dock Hand
3. Maintenance
4. Fishing Guides
5. Cooks

Other positions identified included: front desk, servers, administrative assistance, labourers/groundskeepers, ecotourism guides, canoe/kayaking guides, hunting guides.

In terms of qualifications, most operators are searching for:

1. WHIMIS
2. CPR/First Aid
3. Customer Service
4. Health and Safety Certifications
5. Food and Beverage Certifications

Other certifications included: fishing guide certification, culinary arts post-secondary accreditation, tourism and hospitality post-secondary accreditation, Smart Serve, computer skills, small engine mechanic training or skills, Wilderness Adventure Tourism Guide Certification.

In terms of staffing challenges during the 2020 season, most operators listed the following:

- Limited cash flow to hire staff due to late opening/border closure.
- Late season opening meant losing some regular staff.
- Few and/or underqualified applicants.
- Staff unwilling to return due to CERB benefits &/or fear of being regularly laid-off due to lockdowns.
- Regularly short-staffed due to COVID-19 screening (children having COVID symptoms leading to the whole family getting tested and waiting extended periods of time for COVID results to come back + arranging daycare).



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70% of survey participants indicated that they and their staff had to face new challenges as a result of meeting COVID-19 protocols and the shift to the domestic market. Challenges included:

- Constantly having to change business protocols to meet new regulations (which change often).
- New training, additional steps and time for cleaning processes, making schedule adjustments to allow for social distancing.
- Canadians do not want to pay the price/ understand the value of the product.
- Comfort levels of staff in the workplace.
- Negative sentiment with regards to individuals from Southern Ontario.

In terms of training, most employers anticipate needed to provide the following:

- Customer service
- Sector specific training (housekeeping, food and beverage, etc.)
- Sanitization
- WHIMIS
- CPR/First Aid
- Employability Skills & Soft Skills (leadership, conflict management, communication, appearance/first impressions etc.)

Other training included customer service for persons with disabilities, Smart Serve, food safety, diversity and inclusion, fishing guide training, ecotourism guide training.

63% of operators feel it would be helpful to have staff trained to help educate individuals who are new to the outdoor experience (teaching them how to pack properly for a day outdoors, preparing food and how to deal with food waste when away from facilities, leave no trace model, etc.).

In terms of staff for the 2021 season, most operators anticipate re-hiring some of their regular staff, however there remains too much uncertainty about the upcoming season, especially the Canada-US border closure.

63% of participants would be interested in participating in a placement/training program if support was made available to them.

