

What Employers Need: *Skills for Tomorrow*

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News Release

What Employers Need: Skills for Tomorrow

Oshawa - Community planning takes work and a lot of research. The [Durham College \(DC\) Office of Research Services, Innovation and Entrepreneurship \(ORSIE\)](#) and the Durham Workforce Authority (DWA), have partnered through the [DWA Local Employment Planning Council \(LEPC\)](#) project to launch an employer survey titled [What Employers Need: Skills for Tomorrow](#).

Provincial and federal studies examining the 'skills gap' between the skills workers have, and the skills employers need, do not provide sufficient direction for addressing local responses to what is needed within the community. As such, local communities are identifying a growing need for data-gathering to assist in connecting workers with local job prospects.

"The survey will provide the DWA, Economic Development, Durham College and our community partners with labour market information that can be used for program planning, economic development initiatives and future research," said Heather McMillan, executive director of the DWA. "The survey will also explore sector specific employment information in important local sectors such as construction, health care and biosciences; information communications technology; and multi model transportation."

The survey will be conducted between September 2016 and December 2016, and the results will be used to gather the experiences of Durham Region employers. Questions will inquire about methods employers use to recruit workers and the skill sets and qualifications employers desire from current and potential employees. This feedback will be valuable in understanding and shaping the future of the local economy and corresponding skill development.

"At Durham College, our research activities foster critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and intellectual independence," said Debbie McKee Demczyk, dean, ORSIE. "These are many of the skills that today's businesses are increasingly identifying as must-have attributes for new employees. The college is excited to be involved in helping to identify what the future holds for college graduates in the rapidly evolving workplace of tomorrow so we can meet those challenges now and into the future."

'What Employers Need: Skills for Tomorrow' report will be publicly available in spring 2017.

To participate in the survey, go to www.durhamwa.ca.

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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Partner Organizations

Durham Workforce Authority ([DWA](#))

Created fifteen years ago as part of a government initiative aimed at building a network of locally-focused labour market organizations, the Durham Workforce Authority ([DWA](#)) has evolved into an effective research and planning body funded by the Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD). The DWA has successfully engaged Durham's business and labour communities while providing critical local labour market analysis and reports to the Ministry and to the Region's many stakeholders.

DWA Local Employment Planning Council ([LEPC](#))

The LEPC pilots are intended to improve local labour market conditions through the provision of research and labour market information to drive innovation in service delivery based on solid, local evidence. The emergence of the Local Employment Planning Council proposal is a timely response to the need to continue and to increase the collection, dissemination and use of Local Labour Market information to move Durham Region and the province toward the development of a workforce planning system, within organizations, clusters and regions. A more strategic approach to workforce planning is becoming increasingly important to assist organizations, regions and communities to respond to a variety of factors such as an aging workforce, current and projected labor shortages, a desire to increase productivity and the evolution of technology and tools.

As local issues become more complex, a cross-sectoral response is often needed. The DWA will use the LEPC opportunity to work with a broad, diverse and regionally representative committee to strengthen local capacity to plan for future local labour needs, changes and challenges. The DWA will approach the LEPC as a collaborative partnership with the DWA as the lead organization and with the Region of Durham and Durham College as key partners. This partnership is valuable and can provide a strong and focused approach to delivering on the LEPC objectives.

Durham College Office of Research Services, Innovation and Entrepreneurship ([ORSIE](#))

The Office of Research Services, Innovation and Entrepreneurship ([ORSIE](#)) provides an important link to the community. ORSIE supports and advances institutional effectiveness and contribute to the economic performance of the region. This is accomplished through a collaborative culture of engagement that is student-centered and community-focused.

Since its founding in November 2009, Durham College's ORSIE has initiated and supported a variety of research activities. To date, the college has received \$7.22 million in research funding, and for the last two years has been ranked as one of Canada's Top 50 research colleges.

ORSIE is comprised of three teams:

- Applied research
- Institutional research and planning
- Entrepreneurship services

Employer Survey Fact Sheet

Survey will Analyze

Skills - The survey will seek and provide in depth analysis of the nine federally identified [skills](#). These skills include the skills associated with literacy (i.e. reading, writing, document use and numeracy) but go beyond to also include thinking skills, oral communication, computer use/digital skills, working with others and the skills associated with continuous learning. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to better prepare for, get and keep a job, and adapt and succeed at work.

Services – Employers will be asked to respond to the availability of ancillary business support services in Durham Region; such as, transportation, telecommunications and infrastructure.

The Benefits of an Employer Survey Study

An Employer Survey is a tool to better understand the local labour market through the collection of regional employer data and the required workforce skills data such as: availability of employees with required job qualifications and skills, training requirements, employers' business development plans and the corresponding human capital requirements. Groups such as economic developers, employers, and regional residents use this information to make informed and distinctly community based decisions about employment, facilitation of industry expansion and recruitment.

Next Steps

Durham Workforce Authority aims to use these surveys as an opportunity to provide current, relevant and value-added local labour market information. The Employer Survey study is a prospective step in delving into different areas of local labour market research, and understanding the worker characteristics of particular Durham Region cities and industries. Furthermore, this Employer Survey study will also serve as a benchmark for future Employer Survey studies, and may be used for longer-term monitoring of Durham Region's local labour market and workforce.