



# Unlocking Talent

A collective approach for workforce development in the Toronto Region

MARCH 2022

## CONTENTS

Foreword 2

### A Regional Workforce Development Strategy:

#### Why and Why Now? 5

The Current Crisis 5

Approach 5

The Transformation of Work 7

Leveraging the Talent Ecosystem 9

#### Regional Workforce Development Opportunities 10

Collaborating to Narrow the Skills Gap 10

Promoting Collective Workforce

Development in the Skilled Trades 16

Tapping into Talent Pipelines 19

1. Immigrants 19

2. Youth 21

Acknowledgements 24



# Foreword

**We must seize this moment to redefine how workers can access jobs that best match their skills and interests, and it is time to truly rethink how employers can access the talent that best meets their business needs.**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it an immeasurable loss of life, burnout and mental health crises, as well as disproportionate harms for women, racialized communities and the working poor. At its height, the pandemic instigated the worst week in TSX history (March 2020), a higher than 9% unemployment rate (April to August 2020), an estimated 630,000 net job losses in the Innovation Corridor (Jun 2020 vs February 2020), and a more than 10% drop in GDP (April 2020), which led to the risk that one in five businesses would permanently close. The pandemic accelerated many of the pre-existing social, economic, demographic and technological trends that were already reshaping labour markets, both globally and in the Toronto region. And it exacerbated many pre-existing challenges in workforce development planning.

The Toronto Region Board of Trade has supported businesses managing the impacts of the pandemic through **We're Ready Toronto** and the **Recovery Activation Program**. Through these initiatives, we have provided businesses with resources, guidelines, and practical steps to help guide reopening and return to workplaces.

However, it is not enough to narrowly focus on workplace development challenges that have arisen from the pandemic – more foundational changes are needed. In order to ensure the region's continued resiliency and its attraction for innovation, investment and business excellence, we must now seize this moment to redefine how workers can access jobs that best match their skills and interests, and it is time to truly rethink how employers can access the talent that best meets their business needs.

To that end, in 2020 the Board sought the advice of its Talent Ecosystem Policy Committee. We subsequently held a series of consultations where we learned about the gaps and opportunities in regional workforce development. A key theme that emerged throughout these consultations is that we must strengthen connections between ecosystem players, including governments, employers, training & education providers, post-secondary institutions, unions, and workers and job seekers. Doing this will allow us to advance policies and programs that are more responsive to employer and worker needs. We must act with urgency and remain laser-focused on our most critical resource: *people*.

The Board's broad membership base, along with its expertise in convening influential stakeholders, uniquely situates us to guide a collaborative, networked and multi-sectoral approach to workforce development. The goal of this Workforce Development Strategy is to respond to system gaps, barriers and opportunities with connected and collective solutions. We identify opportunities for the Board to **drive** new initiatives that leverage its strengths, **amplify** pre-existing initiatives in the talent ecosystem, and **monitor** others' work to avoid duplicative efforts.

Throughout this *Workforce Development Strategy*, we call upon a multitude of stakeholders to implement recommendations that narrow the skills gap, advance the skilled trades, and tap into youth and immigrant talent pipelines. These recommendations are applicable to government, employers, industry associations, post-secondary institutions and other education and training providers. We've also included several inward-facing recommendations and are committed to leveraging our unique position to guide a collaborative and multi-stakeholder approach to workforce development.

But where to begin with such a complicated challenge, when the gaps and barriers span across sectors, present themselves within the talent pipeline in complex and nuanced ways, and require urgent interconnected solutions? While all the recommendations included in this Strategy seek to solve for crucial gaps and barriers flagged by stakeholders. Here are a few key calls to action:



## Collaborating to Narrow the Skills Gap

Increasing collaboration across the talent ecosystem is essential for narrowing the skills gap. This is particularly true for employers and organizations that provide education and vocational training. However, we must also explore opportunities to build employers' strategic HR capacity, as this will allow us to propose employer-centered workforce development initiatives.

In addition to other strategic recommendations identified in this Strategy, the Board calls for:

### CAPACITY BUILDING

The development and funding of a sector-specific pilot program for SMEs to build strategic HR capacity. The goal would be to better identify future skill needs based on industry transformations, logical career transitions, sectoral training and education needs.

### SECTOR COALITIONS

The establishment of sector coalitions of SMEs, large firms, industry associations, post-secondary institutions and training and education providers. These coalitions can then design sector-specific training programs and integrate employer perspectives into existing educational initiatives.

### IMPROVED PROGRAM DESIGN

The integration of employer insights into the design of government programs for displaced workers, job seekers and those in career transition, with a clear focus on workplace digital skills, including advanced skills that are in high demand throughout the Toronto region (i.e. cybersecurity competency).

### INCREASED FOCUS ON EMERGING INDUSTRIES

Convening talent ecosystem players to identify opportunities to close skills gaps in the region's key emerging sectors.

### DEIB LENS

Ensuring that all skills gap solutions adopt a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging lens so that differences in personal experiences and culture are considered.



## Promoting Collective Workforce Development in the Skilled Trades

A shortage of tradespeople and a misalignment in skills could have significant implications across the region’s economy. Large infrastructure projects such as hospital builds, transportation investments and the expansion of broadband are required to support the region’s population growth. However, these initiatives could be hampered by our workforce gaps. The provincial government is making considerable investments in the Skilled Trades, but further advancements in workforce development in this sector will require increased collaboration across ecosystem players.

In addition to the other strategic recommendations identified in this Strategy, the Board calls for:

### CURRICULUM MODERNIZATION AND INVESTMENTS IN THE DIGITAL SKILLS GAP

Increased collaboration between employers, unions and education providers to address the digital skills gap, including modernizing apprenticeship curriculums.

### ENGAGEMENT WITH UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Establishing coalitions of unions, colleges, employers, government and community agencies to expand opportunities for, and build awareness within, underrepresented groups to help grow the talent pipeline.

### MODERNIZING THE JOURNEY PATHWAY AND EXPANDING “WRAP-AROUND” STUDENT SUPPORTS

Identify opportunities to modernize systems to ensure students, parents and job-seekers can navigate complex career pathways within the skilled trades. This includes expanding “wrap-around” supports for students to ensure their completion of apprenticeship programs.



## Growing the Region’s Talent Pipelines

All talent groups in the Toronto region were significantly impacted by the pandemic. The Board’s consultations pointed to two talent groups that have not fully recovered to pre-pandemic employment levels and are significantly impacted by the pandemic’s transformations to the workplace and workforce: immigrants and youth. Going forward, the Board remains committed to connecting with marginalized communities throughout the region to support their full participation in talent pipelines.

In addition to other strategic recommendations identified in this Strategy, the Board calls for:

### AWARENESS BUILDING INITIATIVES

Initiatives that build employer awareness of youth and talent pipelines. This includes awareness of existing immigrant recruitment and integration programs, skills-matching programs and work-integrated learning programs. Focus should be given to how these resources can be implemented in a hybrid or remote work environment.

### EMPLOYMENT-READINESS PROGRAMS

Encouraging post-secondary institutions to invest more resources in increasing student usage of career centre services, student engagement in career planning, and to measure outcomes in the career preparedness of its students.

### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Expanding supports for mental health services for young people.

### SECTOR COALITIONS

Facilitating employer collaborations that expand investment into sectoral marketing and promotion, thereby building awareness of sectoral employment opportunities among young people and their parents.

### EMPLOYER COLLABORATION

To expand investments in marketing and promotion strategies to build awareness of their sector – both to young people and their parents.



# A Regional Workforce Development Strategy: Why and Why Now?

## The Current Crisis

The Toronto region is internationally known for its innovation, talent and business excellence. However, the region's continued economic and social prosperity is not guaranteed. Access to both skilled and unskilled labour is essential for continued business growth. For this reason, workforce development strategies and policy initiatives that strengthen and grow our workforce have long been a key policy goal for government, associations and private industry alike.

Employers currently identify labour shortages as the main factor limiting their ability to increase sales or production, ahead of "insufficient demand."<sup>1</sup> This shortage, which includes a misalignment between employer needs and workers skills, is not a novel problem caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A 2018 Business Development Bank of Canada study of 1,000 businesses indicated that nearly 40% of SMEs identified skills shortages as a major competitive challenge.<sup>2</sup>

Though labour shortages preceded the pandemic, COVID-19 has exacerbated them to the point where businesses across the region now believe that the "war

for talent" is a crisis that risks our economic recovery and growth. Almost half of respondents to the CFIB's December 2021 SME Business Barometer survey indicating that a shortage of skilled labour is a primary limitation on sales or production growth.<sup>3</sup>

Considering that concerns about labour shortages have been emphatically raised by businesses across most economic sectors, The Board believes that there is a clear call to action. Its response – this Workforce Development Strategy – considers how the pandemic has disrupted and redefined the talent ecosystem. This Strategy examines which gaps in this ecosystem require urgent attention and intervention, and how all members of the talent ecosystem can leverage their roles and strengths to best support economic recovery and growth.

10 out of 18 industries are seeing labour demand grow faster than supply,<sup>4</sup> but the Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor employment rate is still lower than pre-pandemic levels.<sup>5</sup> This problem must be solved, and so our Strategy seeks to guide government, industry, post-secondary and other talent ecosystem players toward actionable strategies that respond to the current crisis.

## Approach

Throughout the development of this Strategy, the Board pulled upon its decades of experience in workforce development advocacy. The Board has already released a plethora of resources that examine how to best attract and retain global talent, and, relatedly, how to support business growth and competitiveness in the Toronto region. Below are a few key examples of our work.

### ● OCTOBER 2016

In *Building Infrastructure, Building Talent*, the Board became a leading voice illustrating a growing problem of workforce shortages in the trades and linking the impending problem to risks to infrastructure build out in the Toronto region.

### ● JUNE 2019

In *Help Wanted: Modernizing Employment and Skills Training Services in Ontario*, the Board provided guiding principles and recommendations for the provincial government to strengthen its employment and skills training systems to better address workforce needs.

### ● 2020

Building on the *Help Wanted* report's guiding principles, *Help Wanted 2: A Data-Driven Approach to Workforce Development* focuses on Peel Region as a place-based case study of existing talent and occupations. The report identifies the top in-demand occupations that do not require a four-year degree and details a skills development framework that responds to the changing realities of both workers and employers.

### ● MARCH 2020 ONWARD

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board shifts into 'recovery mode' through its *Reimagining Recovery Framework*. The framework includes workforce resilience in its strategic recommendations for a safe recovery for the Toronto region and workforce development in the *Shaping Our Future* report.

### ● FEBRUARY 2021

The Board holds its first annual talent summit, *Reimagining our Workforce Summit*, convening experts from across sectors to discuss the future of work, with a focus on building a resilient workforce and harnessing the region's talent pipeline.

### ● APRIL 2021

In *Fast Forward*, the Board draws on insights from over 200 Toronto businesses, not-for-profits and public sector leaders, as well as research into economic recovery efforts from around the world. The report identifies shoring up the region's diverse skills and talent as a critical component to economic recovery and longer-term growth. In tandem with the report's release, the Board commits to continued work with business, cultural groups and government to develop a workforce development strategy designed to retain Toronto's global talent advantage through rebuilding efforts.

### ● SUMMER 2021

In its 2020/2021 policy committee cycle, the Board's Talent Ecosystem Committee identifies key labour market barriers and gaps, followed by broad cross-sector consultations to validate identified pain points.

### ● MARCH 2022

In 'Taking Off Together', the Board partnered with the Greater Toronto Airport Authority to put forward a workforce strategy and playbook for the Toronto Pearson International Airport. The report presents a set of considerations and recommendations that address the challenges and opportunities faced by the airport's unique talent ecosystem.

### ● MARCH 2022

In a forthcoming report in partnership with Toronto Global, the Board examines the growing importance of the quality of place in attracting and retaining workers to the region and why getting this right matters to investment attraction.

### ● LOOKING AHEAD

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Board will hold its second annual Reimagining our Workforce Summit, where it will convene players in the talent ecosystem and profile leaders in this space, advocating for more connected and networked workforce development.



## The Transformation of Work

Pre-pandemic trends towards remote work, digital transformation and automation have been changing our workforce and workplaces for over a decade. The pandemic has created new frictions in the labour market, such as concerns over the health risks of going to work, fiscal support programs, a lack of childcare, mental health issues, demographic shifts, and an increase in long-term unemployment.<sup>6</sup>

During the Board’s February 2021 Reimagining Our Workforce Summit, business leaders stressed that the pandemic has accelerated three key transformations that are radically disrupting and reshaping our talent ecosystem. First, the **type of work is changing** as organizations develop new operating models and new lines of business in response to the pandemic. Second, this changing nature of work is leading to **new workforce requirements** and an increased need for re-skilling, upskilling and different credentials. Last, **the workplace** is shifting, with a drive towards remote work, hybrid models and the “globalization” of talent recruitment. A networked and collaborative approach to workforce development must consider these changes.

**The type of work has transformed.** Accelerated by pandemic-driven disruptions, businesses of all sizes across all sectors have adopted more agile and inclusive operating models. They pivoted to new lines of business and have accelerated the adoption of digitalization and automation across work processes, product offerings and supply-chains. These shifts have enabled businesses to quickly adapt to new realities and remain competitive. Unsurprisingly, e-commerce has experienced massive growth globally. The pandemic doubled online retail’s share of total retail sales in Canada from 3% in 2018 to over 6% by 2020, with B2B transactions dominating e-commerce markets.<sup>7</sup>



The  
**TYPE OF WORK**  
has transformed



The  
**WORKFORCE**  
is transforming



The  
**WORKPLACE**  
is transforming



## Many workers in heavily impacted industries faced extended periods of unemployment and have likely shifted into new sectors.

Some sectors and businesses, however, were not able to shift to new business models. Sectors that were hardest hit by the pandemic, such as accommodation and food services, travel-related and cultural industries, and other vulnerable low-wage, low-skilled service sectors saw significant job losses.<sup>8</sup> They will continue to see a decline in demand for many key roles in the medium-to-long term. Sales and service occupations, for example, earn well below the average after-tax income and constitute 82% of jobs in the accommodations and food services in Ontario.<sup>9</sup> Many workers in heavily impacted industries faced extended periods of unemployment and have likely shifted into new sectors. As highlighted in the Board's **Recovery Tracker**, employment across the Innovation Corridor has been steadily climbing since June, adding 45,000 more jobs between February 2020 and October 2021, pushing labour participation above pre-pandemic levels. However, since January 2019, there has been a net decline of 78,500 jobs in transportation, warehousing, accommodation and food services.<sup>10</sup>

**The workforce is transforming.** Demographic shifts were already transforming our workforce, but the pandemic has created new pressures and fundamental career transitions that are changing the make-up of our workforce. Digital skills, which were already in high demand, are now even more urgently required. So too are soft skills (often referred to as “people skills” or “social and emotional skills”), which are one of the most in-demand skills sought by employers and critically important for employability and job transferability.

Demographic factors are also transforming our workforce. An aging population, combined with slower growth of the working age population, could impact economic performance. The proportion of the population aged 65 and older who are reaching retirement (even as many retirements are being delayed) is increasing at an accelerated pace over the next decade, with the youngest baby-boomers turning 65 in 2030.<sup>11</sup> The number of people aged 55 to 64 compared to youth aged 15 to 24 is increasing<sup>12</sup>, impacting both the availability of workers and the skills and experience of employees and job-seekers. In fact, in July 2021, there were 118 people potentially leaving Ontario's labour market for every 100 potential entrants.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, immigration is increasing our population projections, with Ontario's overall population expected to increase by over 35%, or 5.3 million new Ontarians, over the next 26 years, reaching over 20 million by 2046.<sup>14</sup> The GTA is projected to be the fastest growing region in the province, accounting for over 55% of Ontario's population growth. However, the pandemic has affected immigration rates, which is notable because immigrants account for 33% of Ontario's labour force.<sup>15</sup> When the federal government implemented restrictions on international travel to curb the spread of COVID-19, this had a profound impact on Canada's population growth.<sup>16</sup> Total international migration was negative for only the second time since 1971, with Canada losing almost 66,000 non-permanent residents, welcoming only 40,000 immigrants, and closing its borders to international students in the third quarter of 2020.<sup>17</sup>





The pandemic has also precipitated significant career shifts, with workers quitting companies with poor company culture, shifting into new more sustainable jobs or staying home due to a lack of accessible childcare options.

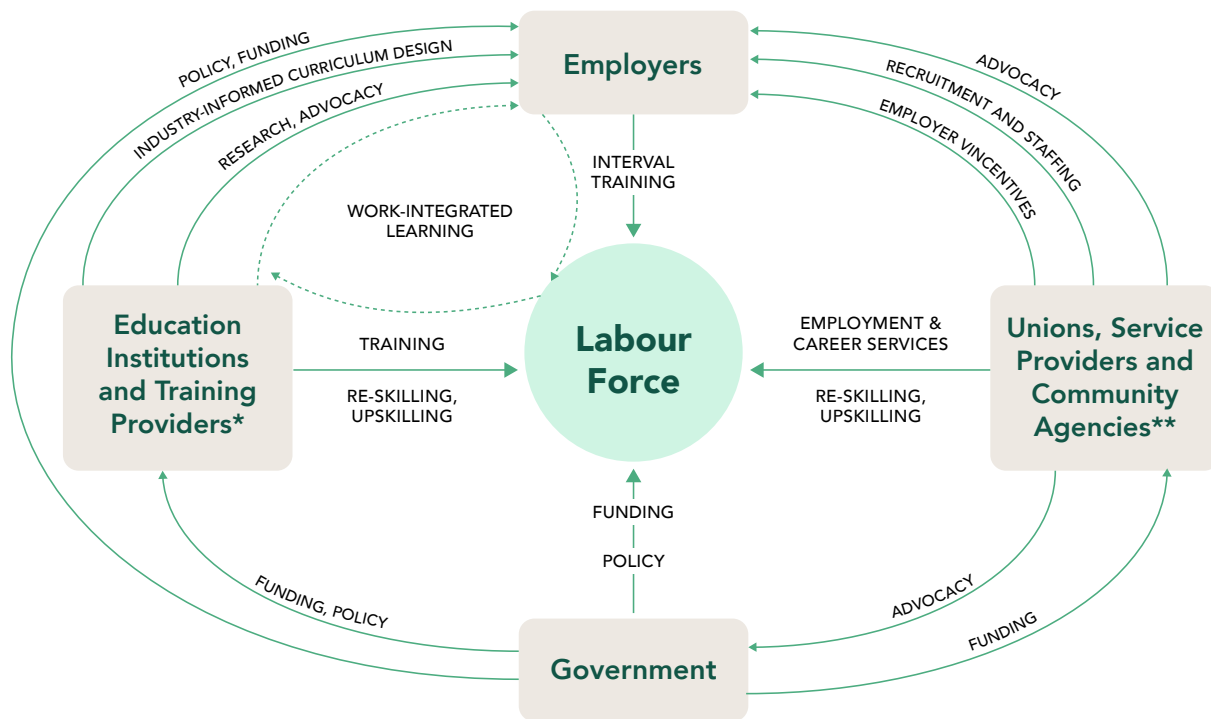
The pandemic has also precipitated significant career shifts, with workers quitting companies with poor company culture, shifting into new more sustainable jobs or staying home due to a lack of accessible childcare options. Dubbed a “she-cession,” women have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, with the impact on year-over-year employment losses consistently more severe for women than for men.<sup>18</sup> Younger women – likely with childcare responsibilities – have been most impacted.<sup>19</sup>

**The workplace is transforming.** The shift to remote work was perhaps one of the most significant changes to the work landscape during the pandemic. Based on interviews with over 40 executives in the Financial District, the Board’s November 2021 report, *The New Normal*, highlighted several key themes in how the nature of the workplace has changed.

Some form of the work-from-home model is here to stay. Digital connectivity has removed physical boundaries that once defined the workplace. The standard 9 – 5 workday is a thing of the past. These paradigm shifts have significant implications for workforce development planning. For example, how should employers promote skills development and intra-organizational networking in a virtual environment, and ensure these opportunities are provided to both home-based and in-office staff?

*The New Normal* also highlighted the “globalization” of talent attraction, which carries advantages and disadvantages to the region’s economic prosperity. An increasingly borderless labour market will help address friction and supply shortages in some sectors, but this trend also means that businesses and workers need not remain in the region, risking the loss of tax revenue and consumer spending. Workers with the ability to work remotely are expected to spend more time at their place of residence, signaling the need for cities in the region to invest further in building communities where workers can live, work, and play.

## TALENT ECOSYSTEM



### Leveraging the Talent Ecosystem

A “talent ecosystem” reflects the connected and interdependent contributors to effective workforce development. The Toronto region’s talent ecosystem is a network of public, private, labour and not-for-profit organizations. This includes employers, post-secondary education institutions and other training providers, all levels of governments, unions, service providers and community agencies, and, of course, workers themselves (employed or seeking jobs).

Each of these stakeholders serves an integral role in meeting current and future demands of employers and workers. For businesses to thrive and remain competitive, the talent ecosystem must be responsive and adaptable to emerging trends, such as emerging sectors’ specific skills needs and labour market dynamics. The talent ecosystem must also adapt to demographic shifts and the changing soft skills and expectations of young workers and immigrants, for example.

This Strategy provides guiding recommendations to all players in the talent ecosystem and builds on the insights and recommendations of the Board’s Talent Ecosystem Committee and consultations. It identifies opportunities for the talent ecosystem to work in partnership to build programs and policies that are responsive to the needs of all ecosystem members. Of course, many stakeholders in the talent ecosystem already have funding and programs available to address their workforce challenges. The Strategy is not intended to duplicate efforts, and instead seeks to identify where the Board can **drive** the implementation of new initiatives, **amplify** successful initiatives through strategic partnerships, or simply **monitor** to identify emerging opportunities.

#### \*POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

- Universities
- Colleges
- Institutes

#### \*INDUSTRY AND OTHER TRAINING PROVIDERS

- Coding Bootcamps
- Accelerators
- Incubators
- Micro-credentialing Institutes
- Digital Skills Training Programs
- Microsoft Learn
- LinkedIn Learning
- GitHub
- Lifehouse Labs, etc.

#### \*\*SERVICE PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES

- Unions
- Employment and Workforce Solutions Agencies
- Newcomer Services Providers
- Labour Market Information Providers
- Research Institutes (C.D. Howe, FutureSkills Centre)
- Civic Action
- Partnerships between Industry-Academia-Government-Research Institutes (e.g. Mitacs, BHER)
- Government-funded non-profit agencies
- Workforce and Industry Associations
- Innovation Centers, etc.



# Regional Workforce Development Opportunities



## Collaborating to Narrow the Skills Gap

The “skills gap” describes a mismatch between the skills that employers need from their workforce and the skills that workers and job seekers possess (or, notably, communicate as possessing). This mismatch makes it difficult for workers to find jobs and for employers to find workers. It presents a significant cost to Ontario’s economy – in a 2013 Conference Board of Canada report, it was estimated that the skills gap costs the Ontario economy up to \$24.3 billion in foregone GDP, as well as \$4.4 billion in federal tax revenues and \$3.7 billion in provincial tax revenues, annually.<sup>20</sup> More recently, Deloitte identified that the skills gap in the U.S. manufacturing sector *alone* may leave an estimated 2.4 million jobs unfilled between 2018 and 2028, resulting in a potential economic impact of \$2.5 trillion – though it should be noted that the Deloitte report was issued before the COVID pandemic.<sup>21</sup> Even when adjusting for the smaller scale of the Canadian market, the costs are staggering.

The skills gap existed long before the COVID-19 pandemic. As recently as 2018, a Business Development Bank of Canada study of 1,000 businesses indicated that nearly 40% of SMEs identified “skills shortage” as a major competitive challenge.<sup>22</sup> The pandemic accelerated the adoption of new technologies and has heightened the need to reskill and upskill workers, with 50% of workers globally facing the need to reskill within the next five years.<sup>23</sup>



## GAPS & BARRIERS

The underlying causes of the skills gap are complex and an area of significant study. One contributing factor may be how we communicate and conceptualize skills.

Employers may be relying on outdated assumptions of what jobs require rather than an analysis of the skills needed to perform the role today, resulting in a shortfall of skills upon hiring.<sup>24</sup> On the flip side, workers may struggle to articulate the skills they possess in language that resonates with employers. During 2019 and 2020 Conference Board of Canada roundtable discussions with employers, “skills articulation” was flagged as a key challenge, where a potential or current employee has relevant skills and experiences but fails to communicate them to employers, or perhaps fails to understand the possession and importance of these skills. xviii

Another contributing factor is undoubtedly the changing nature of work, and the ways in which skills may be lagging behind changing employer needs. As noted earlier in our reflections about the changing nature of work, the need for digital skills was growing across all sectors even before the pandemic, but the digitalization of many workplaces is further widening the digital skills gap. An August 2021 KPMG Business Outlook Poll found that nearly 80% of businesses surveyed said the pandemic has changed the way they work, necessitating workers with digital skills.<sup>25</sup> During the Talent Ecosystem Consultations, stakeholders highlighted that the digital skills gap is not narrowly centered on advanced technical skills (like programming/coding), but exists across a spectrum of digital skills including less technical workplace digital skills, like Microsoft Office.

The changing nature of the *workplace* is also affecting the skills gap. Remote work has impacted employers’ ability to upskill and reskill workers, and has reduced the availability of career development opportunities such as networking.

Demographic shifts, cultural shifts and our education system’s curriculum may also contribute to the skills gap, especially with respect to soft skills, which are not only harder to teach and assess than technical skills, but are also in high demand and short supply across sectors. Communication, resilience, problem-solving and organization are critical to employment success and growth, transferable between jobs and necessary complements to digital and technical skills. Our engagement with employers at the Toronto Pearson Airport, for example, revealed that communication, delegation, and conflict resolution skills were in high demand for leadership positions, but in short supply in the existing talent pool. During the Talent Ecosystem Consultations, stakeholders identified a major soft skills gap, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and other highly technical education programs.

Another contributing factor to the skills gap is the evolving skills needed to support emerging and growing sectors, especially as technological innovations change traditional industries. The Toronto region has an acute need for workers with the skills needed to support the emerging clean tech, agri-tech, fintech and biotech sectors, including skilled and experienced senior executives and employees with advanced digital skills (such as cybersecurity-related skills).

## SOLUTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

During the development of the workforce strategy, stakeholders reflected on potential opportunities to narrow the skills gap, including the importance of teaching digital and soft skills in K-12 curriculum, enhanced funding for employer-centered workforce development initiatives and the increased use of micro-credentialing and work integrated learning. Foundational to these opportunities is the need to increase collaboration across members of



the talent ecosystem, particularly between employers and post-secondary institutions (PSIs) and other training and education providers.

In proposing opportunities to narrow the skills gap, the strategic recommendations below are not intended to duplicate the successful efforts of ecosystem members. They instead aim to highlight both where the Board can drive new initiatives and where it can amplify others' programming.

### 1. Improved Access to Data

The successful development and adoption of programs to close the skills gap will depend, in large part, on data-informed decision-making. This is especially true for SMEs, for whom workforce development may be especially costly, and for individual job-seekers and workers looking to invest in their own upskilling and reskilling. How do we develop more effective programs to close the skills gap? How do we assess whether these programs are "paying off?"

#### a. Labour Market Data

In *Help Wanted 2* and *Fast Forward*, the Board noted that better labour market information and more timely, reliable and geographically granular data would support stronger analyses of labour market and industry trends. The Board recommended that we move towards a single provincial standard for all annual municipal employment surveys. We also recommended that Statistics Canada improve the robustness of its monthly Labour Force Survey and that there be a focus on skills data collection, mapping and collaborations by the Labour Market Information Council, Employment and Social Development Canada and Statistics Canada.<sup>26</sup> **The Board continues to call on the municipal, provincial and federal governments to recognize the critical importance of transparent and robust data to support workforce development planning and work towards meeting the recommendations outlined in *Help Wanted 2* and *Fast Forward*.**

It may be particularly valuable for the region's employers, job seekers, and other talent ecosystem members to have regional labour market and industry data (specific to Toronto, or the Innovation Corridor). This data must be analyzed and communicated in a way that is meaningful not only to policymakers and

program designers, but also to the employers, workers and job seekers who are making skills investment decisions. The Board's Recovery Tracker is an excellent example of the power of well communicated, regional data. **The Board will consider opportunities to collect, analyze, and communicate regional labour market and industry trend data.**

#### b. Increase transparency and accountability through publicly available performance metrics

Many executives view investments in upskilling and reskilling as an urgent priority that should be employer-led. However, they lack the data to assess the impact of upskilling and reskilling programs. As noted by the Diversity Institute and the Future Skills Centre, "reliably quantifying this return will arguably be the most significant step towards achieving full buy-in from all parties and scaling efforts to retrain the Canadian workforce beyond specific organizational or government initiatives."<sup>27</sup> **The Board calls on continued government funding for research programs to assess the financial return of employer-led and government funded upskilling and retraining programs. We call for a stronger commitment from all ecosystem members to integrate performance measurement systems into upskilling and reskilling program design. The Board welcomes opportunities to bring more awareness of the return on investment of employer-led upskilling and reskilling initiatives to its members and stakeholders.**

#### c. Skills Taxonomy

Skills development can only succeed if job-seekers, employees and employers alike can identify gaps in current skills and find programs to bridge those gaps. One key barrier may be how we understand, communicate and identify skills. Employers may not fully understand the skills needed for each job in their organization, while employees may not have a clear line of sight into what skills are needed to transition from one job to the next. Employers, as well as job-seekers with little or no job experience, may be relying on diplomas, degrees and certificates that provide limited insight into an individual's real abilities and potential.<sup>28</sup>

It would be valuable to the entire talent ecosystem if the skills sought in the labour market were



comprehensively mapped, and if that map was then connected to the skills that can be learned through training and education programs. Ultimately, a comprehensive mapping of the skills sought in the labour market with those that can be learned through training and education programs would provide incredible value to the entire talent ecosystem. This solution is recommended by the Institute for Research on Public Policy.<sup>29</sup> A more accessible starting point is the awareness and adoption of a skills taxonomy that reflects how members of the talent ecosystem think and talk about skills. This could not only build a common understanding of what each skill comprises, but also increase transparency and alignment in education and training programs.

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) has developed a Skills and Competencies Taxonomy and is validating and improving its content through stakeholder consultations.<sup>30</sup> As part of the ESDC's original stakeholder consultations in 2019, the Board's Economic Blueprint Institute (EBI) shared its placed-based approach to skills family mapping by demonstrating in Help Wanted 2 how the American O\*NET system could be combined with Canada's National Occupation Classification data. As ESDC continues to refine its taxonomy and to consult with stakeholders, including provinces and territories, to validate and improve the content of the Skills and Competencies Taxonomy, **the Board will work with members and stakeholders to consider opportunities to adopt the taxonomy in their organizations and build a shared language around skills. From there, more must be done in the region to link this taxonomy to existing occupations to clarify the composition and distribution of skills across jobs and workers in the region. The Board remains committed to supporting this work.**<sup>31</sup>

## 2. HR Capacity Building for SMEs

Employer leadership is an essential component of closing the skills gap, but full employer engagement, especially from the region's SMEs, has several barriers. Some employers believe that training will be wasted if employees leave the company. Smaller firms may find it difficult to map out retraining initiatives and may struggle finding information and programs that are suitable to their needs without additional customization. Finally, many smaller firms simply struggle with identifying their skills gaps.<sup>32</sup> Many SMEs don't have a dedicated HR function, and those that do are typically focused on operational matters and not on strategic forward-looking recruitment and training.<sup>33</sup>

Supporting HR capacity-building for the region's SMEs is essential, particularly given the workplace and workforce transformations identified earlier in this Strategy. When HR capacity is improved, SMEs can better assess needed skills, identify gaps, seek out programs to recruit, train and retain workers and partner with other members of the talent ecosystem. While government-funded programs like the Canada-Ontario Job Grant supports employers in purchasing third-party business training programs,<sup>34</sup> there is a gap in programming to support capacity-building and reduce many of the barriers facing SMEs.

**The Board recommends the establishment of a sector-specific program to support SME strategic HR capacity building, with participation from SMEs, large firms, industry associations, training and education providers and post-secondary institutions.** On a pilot basis, the program would first aim to establish a skills inventory (building upon existing taxonomies, such as ESDC's Skills and Competencies Taxonomy), assess future skills needs based on industry transformations and identify logical career ladder and lattice transitions. It would then consider shared resources for training programs, partnerships with post-secondary institutions and other education and training providers to establish sector-specific training programs (see below).





As emerging sectors such as cleantech, biotech and fintech grow throughout the region, new jobs and skillsets are in increasingly high demand.

**3. Facilitate Stronger Connections and Coalitions**

As the Board heard clearly during its consultations, communication and collaboration between employers and education and training providers, such as post-secondary institutions, is essential to ensuring smaller businesses can develop upskilling, reskilling and skills-gap programs that are otherwise only within reach for larger firms. This collaboration also enables employers to learn more about how training institutions are ensuring students are “job-ready” and that gaps and opportunities to better respond to employer needs are identified. As strategic HR capacity is built and employer needs are better understood, **the Board seeks to facilitate networked connections through sector-specific working groups of employers and education providers, with the objective of developing more employer-led training initiatives and integrating employer perspectives into educational programs.**

These working groups could amplify the work of organizations committed to work-integrated learning programs, such as the Business Higher Education Roundtable.<sup>35</sup> They could also serve as a platform to amplify existing funding and training programs – such as Mitacs Accelerate, Canada-Ontario Jobs Grant and training-provider scholarship opportunities.

**4. Program Design that Closes the Digital Skills Gap**

The digital skills gap is growing, as employers are increasingly unable to fill their need for workers with digital skills. This may be in part because employers are relying on outdated assumptions about what skills are needed for their staff, rather than analyzing the skills required to perform their increasingly digitized roles.<sup>36</sup> But there is clearly a growing need for digital

skills of all types. General workforce digital skills, such as use of Microsoft Office, are becoming a bare minimum across all sectors.<sup>37</sup>

Throughout the pandemic, all levels of government made significant investments in ensuring businesses could adapt to the global digitalization transition. They often relied on programs like the Board’s Recovery Activation Program,<sup>38</sup> which helps businesses grow and digitize their business operations, and the Digital Main Street program,<sup>39</sup> which helps businesses adopt technologies such as social media and e-commerce platforms. Most recently, in its 2021 Budget, the Government of Canada committed \$1.4 billion over four years for a new Canada Digital Adoption Program to help more than 160,000 businesses go digital or enhance their online services.<sup>40</sup> More support is needed to ensure workers and job-seekers have digital skills which have now become a requisite to success.

**The Board calls on all levels of government to ensure business digitalization programs include funding for employee digital skills development. Government programs designed for displaced workers, job seekers and those in career transition, such as the provincial Second Career, should integrate employer insights on workplace digital skills.**

As emerging sectors such as cleantech, biotech and fintech grow throughout the region, new jobs and skillsets are in increasingly high demand. Ensuring effective skills and workforce development in these sectors will require a networked and connected approach. **To support closing the digital skills gap in emerging industries, the Board will convene talent ecosystem players in select advanced economy sectors to identify gaps and opportunities to close the skills gap and grow the talent pipeline.**



The development of policies and programs aiming to close the soft skills gap must include a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) lens so that the personal experiences and cultural differences are considered and effectively accounted for.

#### 5. Increased Emphasis on Closing the Soft Skills Gap

The 2020 Business Council of Canada Skills Survey highlighted the growing call for soft skills, and an acknowledgment that worker and job-seekers' soft skills are not meeting expectations.<sup>41</sup> As with the closing of the digital skills gap, ensuring workers and job-seekers' soft skills meet employer expectations will require investment from across the talent ecosystem. That starts with learning soft skills in the K-12 education system, building on them through post-secondary education and then honing these skills in the workplace. The development of policies and programs aiming to close the soft skills gap must include a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) lens so that the personal experiences and cultural differences are considered and effectively accounted for.

The prioritization of soft skills by post-secondary institutions (PSIs) is critical, but a 2021 Conference Board of Canada analysis indicates that they are under-recognized as a core part of learning at Canadian PSIs.<sup>42</sup> To help advance skills development, the Conference Board of Canada is developing a website to highlight tools, resources and successes. **The Board echoes the Conference Board of Canada's call to post-secondary institutions to place more emphasis on soft skills development,<sup>43</sup> welcomes opportunities to amplify this work and encourages continued engagement with the region's business community.**

To support workers across sectors, the federal government's 2021 Budget proposes to invest almost \$300 million over three years in a new Skills for Success program to help Canadians at all skills levels improve their foundational skills, including soft skills.<sup>44</sup> The program will fund organizations to design and deliver training to enhance these foundational skills, including helping employers deliver training and the development of online training resources available to all Canadians.<sup>45</sup>

**The Board encourages the Government to focus on training design and delivery models that integrate employer needs and perspectives, and to transparently report on performance metrics.**





There is considerable concern that not enough young people are entering the sector to replace those who are beginning to retire, with older apprentices outnumbering those in younger cohorts.



### Promoting Networked Workforce Development in the Skilled Trades

As with all sectors, skilled trades in the construction sector, auto sector and elsewhere are experiencing the effects of digitization, automation and new technologies. Technical, information management, digital communication and other digital skills are increasingly expected of tradespeople. Massive shifts in automation and new technologies are creating entirely new fields of work. As highlighted in the Board's 2016 report, Building Infrastructure, Building Talent, there are also massive demographic shifts in the skilled trades, with the Toronto region requiring 147,000 new construction-related workers by 2031 to satisfy the demands of both new construction and retiring workers.<sup>46</sup>

There is considerable concern that not enough young people are entering the sector to replace those who are beginning to retire, with older apprentices outnumbering those in younger cohorts.<sup>47</sup> Those entering the skilled trades are also more likely to live in rural areas and small to medium population centres, affecting the ability of employers in larger cities to hire new talent.<sup>48</sup> Large segments of the region's population are not entering the skilled trades, with women and immigrants making up just 11% and 8.7% of new registrants for apprenticeship programs respectively.<sup>49</sup>

A shortage of tradespeople, and a misalignment in skills, could have significant implications across the region's economy. Large infrastructure projects such as hospital builds, transportation investments and the expansion of broadband are required to support the region's population growth. These projects cannot flourish if there are not enough tradespeople to construct them.

The Board's Housing Affordability Committee, for example, has highlighted that shortages in the skilled



trades could impact the region's commitments to increased housing. With recent reports projecting the need for one million new homes in the next ten years across Ontario,<sup>50</sup> it is clear that responding to shortages in this sector is a critical priority.

Given the significant infrastructure investment required to catalyze economic growth in the region, the skilled trades talent pipeline must expand to meet growing demand.

### GAPS & BARRIERS

Through the Talent Ecosystem Consultations, stakeholders indicated that negative perceptions of the skilled trades as low paying "last resort" jobs still exist. While it is certainly a priority to build awareness with young people directly, stigma seems to be most obstructive amongst parents and guidance counselors. Over 30% of apprentices in Canada in 2015 were between 25 and 29 years of age and only 11.5% were 15 to 19,<sup>51</sup> suggesting that those accessing pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs may be doing so after taking different educational routes first.

For those that do decide to seek out a career in the skilled trades, navigating the complicated journey pathway is another key barrier to retention, with stakeholders identifying red tape and complex regulatory frameworks as key barriers. Skills Ontario<sup>52</sup> and local colleges support students navigating this landscape, but critical information about the journey pathway- and a simplified and supported pathway- is still lacking. By winding down the Ontario College of Trades and passing new legislation to establish Skilled Trades Ontario, the provincial government is committed to making the system more efficient and easier to navigate.<sup>53</sup> However, leveraging the skills and resources of other talent ecosystem members is essential to program success.



All members of the talent ecosystem are committed to attracting more tradespeople from underrepresented groups, including women, racialized groups and immigrants.

Regardless of the number of new entrants into the skilled trades, aligning skills with employers' current and future needs is critical. Digital skills are crucial for adapting to the changes in the industry. There are ongoing challenges with the breadth of on-the-job training, technology changes that are outpacing training and curriculum, difficulties recruiting staff with relevant digital skills knowledge and paper-based logbooks.<sup>54</sup> Green skills are also increasingly necessary. Retrofitting Canada's nearly 500,000 commercial and institutional buildings and 14 million residential dwellings by 2030 would require one million additional workers involved in low-carbon, green building – an increase of 200% from current levels.<sup>55</sup>

## SOLUTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

### 1. Grow the talent pipeline through targeted awareness-building with parents and within the K-12 education system

Many unions, colleges and industry associations are targeting parents and guidance counselors to build awareness of the skilled trades as well-paying, long-term careers. For example, when Humber College and Seneca College engaged in the York Region Skills Challenge, they worked with high school teachers and guidance counselors to discuss job opportunities.<sup>56</sup> On a larger scale, Skills Ontario has developed educational videos for parents to help correct existing misconceptions.<sup>57</sup> The Technical Training Group's FunTech programme is an opportunity for young students in Grade 6 to participate in trade and technology-related workshops.<sup>58</sup> The provincial government recently announced \$5 million for Skills Ontario to increase awareness of the trades among elementary and secondary students.<sup>59</sup> **To help shift prevailing attitudes, the Board recommends increased funding for awareness campaigns and to focus on promoting the skilled trades as tech and STEM jobs, which they increasingly are.**

### 2. Expand opportunities for underrepresented groups

All members of the talent ecosystem are committed to attracting more tradespeople from underrepresented groups, including women, racialized groups and immigrants. The provincial government's recently-expanded Skills Development Fund is specifically targeted to groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic – including women, youth, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, racialized groups and immigrants.<sup>60</sup> The provincial government recently announced a \$600,000 investment in programs delivered by Hammer Heads, a non-profit organization that supports underprivileged youth from the GTA, to help secure apprenticeships in the construction sector.<sup>61</sup>

LiUNA and Aecon developed a Women in the Skilled Trades Network to host a 12-week training program and job placement, addressing both retention and mentorship on the job.<sup>62</sup> At the municipal level, the City of Toronto has a social benefits policy across its infrastructure development projects, and is working with a committee of developers, unions, colleges, and community-based organizations to identify opportunities to increase diversity on City infrastructure projects.<sup>63</sup> **The Board is encouraged by increased collaboration across the talent ecosystem to promote the inclusion of underrepresented groups in the skilled trades. The Board encourages unions, colleges and government to continue to seek out opportunities to work with not-for-profits and community agencies that are engaged with these underrepresented groups to promote the skilled trades and career paths. The Board also encourages more collaboration with immigrant settlement services and other support organizations to advance targeted awareness and engagement programs.**



### 3. Simplify and modernize the journey pathway, and increase student support

Notwithstanding considerable government investments into the skilled trades, many apprentices are at risk of not completing their apprenticeships. The newly announced agency, Skilled Trades Ontario, aims to provide a modernized and streamlined system through “one-window access for all client services, making the system more efficient and easier to use for apprentices, journeypersons and employers.”<sup>64</sup> Targeted “wrap around” supports are also essential to identifying students at risk of not completing their apprenticeships and providing the necessary supports to improve completion rates. **The Board calls on the provincial government to identify further opportunities to centralize information, reduce red-tape and modernize systems to ensure students, parents and job-seekers can navigate this complex landscape. The Board also calls on the provincial government to tap into the expertise and existing frameworks of other talent ecosystem players, such as colleges, to expand personalized supports for students and apprentices.**

### 4. Invest in digital and green skill upskilling and curriculum advancements

Digital transformations, new technologies and demand for new products and services are changing the skills mix for all sectors, including those that employ the skilled trades. Both digital and soft skills, such as information management, communication and critical thinking, are increasingly important. Partnerships between industry, colleges and other training providers are essential, so that industry can help guide curriculum development, support the development of industry-recognized certifications and recruit skilled students / apprentices.<sup>65</sup>

As an example of this type of collaboration, Workforce2030 is a coalition assembled to support low-carbon workforce development in the building industry. It includes employers, unions and education providers. The Board is also a member of this coalition. The Future Skills Centre is investing over \$1.2 million to support a rapid upskilling program to help transition pandemic-impacted workers into high-demand jobs.<sup>66</sup> **The Board encourages more employer, union and education provider workforce development coalitions to help solve for gaps in the skilled trades, digital or otherwise, and calls on the provincial government to update all apprenticeship curricula to ensure skills are not obsolete, are interdisciplinary and reflect digital transformations and new technologies.**

Digital transformations, new technologies and demand for new products and services are changing the skills mix for all sectors, including those that employ the skilled trades.



Although the employment rate among immigrants who have been in Canada for more than five years remains relatively stable compared to pre-pandemic levels<sup>66</sup>, there is still a need for increased immigration in our workforce to address talent shortages.

### Tapping into Talent Pipelines

The Toronto region's talent pipeline includes current students, recent graduates, the unemployed and underemployed, those out of the labour force (neither employed nor seeking work) and retirees who are looking to start working again. All of these talent groups were significantly impacted by the pandemic. Within each of these groups are workers that have been traditionally underrepresented in our workplaces and face structural barriers to maximizing participation in the labour market. This Workforce Development Strategy acknowledges these nuances but does not seek to offer guidance on every talent pipeline segment. However, the Board is committed to advancing partnerships with organizations which support underrepresented groups, and expanding on the relationships developed through the Talent Ecosystem Consultations.

The Consultations pointed to two talent groups that have not fully recovered to pre-pandemic employment levels: immigrants and youth. Although the employment rate among immigrants who have been in Canada for more than five years remains relatively stable compared to pre-pandemic levels<sup>67</sup>, there is still a need for increased immigration in our workforce to address talent shortages. The unemployment rate for both young men and women, in particular those aged 20 to 24, has not yet fully recovered from the losses suffered during the pandemic.<sup>68</sup>



## 1 Immigrants

Immigrants currently account for just under half of Toronto’s population,<sup>69</sup> make up 80% of Canada’s population growth and account for 33% of Ontario’s labour force.<sup>70</sup> Effectively tapping into this talent pipeline is essential for the region’s businesses. However, skills, experience and interests are not being effectively harnessed, with only 25% of internationally educated immigrants employed in the professions for which they are educated and trained.<sup>71</sup>

The pandemic hurt immigration levels. By December 2020, permanent resident admissions had dropped by 56%, but processing capacity is improving.<sup>72</sup> The federal government recently announced a transition to permanent residency for 90,000 international graduates and temporary workers in essential occupations.<sup>73</sup> With an aging population and slower growth of the working age population impacting Canada’s sustained economic potential, many – notably former prime minister Brian Mulroney and the Century Initiative<sup>74</sup> – are calling for massive increases in immigration beyond current levels.<sup>75</sup>

### GAPS & BARRIERS

The Board’s Consultations highlighted several key gaps and barriers to fully tapping into the immigrant talent pipeline. Examples include the Toronto region maintaining its attractiveness to highly-skilled immigrants, the immigration process flexibly adapting to the changing needs of business and ensuring that key sectors with labour shortages (such as hospitality and the skilled trades) are not overlooked in the permanent resident track.

Integration of immigrants into the labour market was flagged as a key barrier. Immigrants have consistently

higher rates of education than non-immigrants in Canada, but often accept lower-paid jobs to gain Canadian work experience.<sup>76</sup> This highlights their challenges in ensuring their skills are recognized in the labour market. These barriers may lead to more entrepreneurial pursuits, a phenomenon that is particularly noticeable among refugees. 14% of refugees who have been in Canada between 10 and 30 years are entrepreneurs, compared to 12.3% of people born in Canada,<sup>77</sup> with disproportionately high levels of job creation.<sup>78</sup> Full integration may be hampered by limited workforce orientation services, language barriers, an expectation of “Canadian experience” and other unconscious biases on the part of employers. Newcomers may also have challenges articulating their skills in a way that meets the demands and terminology of employers.

Certification was also highlighted as a key barrier to the immigrant talent pipeline during the Talent Ecosystem Consultations. For jobs where no certification or license is required, hiring managers are often unfamiliar with international institutions or programs and are therefore unable to evaluate credentials in the same way as those from a Canadian-educated candidate.<sup>79</sup> For regulated professions, the occupational regulatory systems were designed to respond to Canadian-educated applicants. Challenges exist in responding to foreign education systems and occupational standards. Immigrants also often face challenges navigating regulatory certification and licensing systems, inflexible assessment processes or limited opportunities to supplement missing skills.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, regulatory authorities may not have the financial or human resources to address the complexities of assessing foreign qualifications.

## SOLUTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

### 1. Increase immigrant attraction through improved information systems and innovative attraction strategies

A strong information system built for immigration attraction and integration is key to being able to successfully receive a large number of immigrants. There's an opportunity for Canada's current technological and data infrastructure to be more agile and responsive in both data collection and labour market gap identification. As required skills and job descriptions change rapidly, gaps in the labour market must be communicated with as little friction as possible to maintain aligned immigrant attraction. Decentralized immigration information systems also make it challenging for service providers and newcomers to integrate in an efficient way. **The Board will continue to advocate for more integrated systems that prioritize labour market data and industry trends, including those systems used to support immigrant attraction.**

Growing global competition for highly skilled workers is putting increased pressure on the region to ensure it remains attractive for immigrants. As noted in the Board's recent report, *The New Normal*, firms are increasingly connecting with international talent. Many Toronto region executives view access to an international talent pool as critical to continued viability in an increasingly global market.<sup>81</sup> Canada's global competitors have very ambitious immigration strategies and invest significantly in promoting its permanent residency routes through consular offices abroad.<sup>82</sup> **The Board calls on all levels of government, including municipal governments, to continue to closely monitor our global competitors' efforts and to identify opportunities to be innovative in our attraction strategies.**

### 2. Continue to remove barriers for immigrant participation in the labour market

In October 2021, the Ontario government announced its intention to propose legislation to remove barriers for foreign workers entering the labour force, in particular for some skilled trades and regulated professions outside of the health sectors. This would include eliminating Canadian work experience requirements for professional registration and

licensing, reducing duplicative language proficiency testing, enabling faster registrations and ensuring licensing processes are timely.<sup>83</sup> This is an excellent start to reducing barriers in specific sectors to fill labour shortages across the province. While at the federal level, the Global Express Entry program provides a streamlined mechanism for skilled workers to immigrate, program expansions should be considered to meet growing labour shortages. Equally, the federal Foreign Credential Recognition Program also provides funding to provincial and territorial governments, regulatory bodies, national associations and credential assessment agencies to help overcome credential barriers and to help implement the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications.<sup>84</sup> **The Board calls on the provincial and federal governments to continue working with employers, unions and other members of the talent ecosystem to explore opportunities to further reduce integration and certification barriers.**

Fragomen, an immigration firm, works with Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) on refugee attraction and integration, and partners with businesses to help fill their talent gaps with immigrants.<sup>85</sup> These services include a vetted catalog of highly skilled refugees that are readily available and can be matched with employer needs. Represented professionals range from software engineers, developers, and accountants, to PhD scholars in AI. The Toronto Newcomer Strategy 2022 – 2026 also seeks to prioritize improving newcomer access to the City, implementing the AccessTO Policy, preparing and implementing access plans for programs and services, collaborating with other government and agencies to remove systemic barriers to immigrant integration and reporting the results of its strategy for transparency.<sup>86</sup> **The Board supports these responses to integration barriers. It calls on all levels of government, settlement services agencies, education and training providers and employers to explore opportunities to better integrate all segments of the immigrant population, including refugees. This will ensure that refugees can find jobs that best fit their skills and can access reskilling programs to support access to in-demand occupations. The Board will also seek opportunities to amplify immigrant recruitment and integration programs to the region's employers.**



## 2 Youth

Though Ontario is seeing increases in youth employment, as of December 2021, unemployment rates for young men and women aged 20 to 24 are on par with those in February 2020.<sup>87</sup> With overall Innovation Corridor employment rates surpassing pre-pandemic levels, it appears that this segment of the talent pipeline is being left behind.<sup>88</sup> Demographic shifts and overall labour shortages mean young workers are a component of the talent pipeline that employers cannot overlook.

### GAPS & BARRIERS

During the Consultations, stakeholders reflected on the technical and soft skills gap that affects young people, as well as the struggle to acquire skills that are rapidly changing. More and more young people not working. Only 18% of today’s “Gen Z” teens were employed in 2018, compared to 27% of “millennial” teens in 2002, and 41% of “Gen X” teens in 1986<sup>89</sup>. Today’s youth may not have the opportunity to develop critical soft skills, such as teamwork and adaptability, before being expected to display said skills in the workplace.

Stakeholders highlighted how the pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing barriers to youth employment. Early career work experience, such as co-op programs, summer jobs and internships, have been delayed or cancelled. This has impacted young people’s exposure to the job market, networking and skills building, and reduced their confidence in entering the labour market.<sup>90</sup> Even where these job experiences continue, many have

been made virtual, which is especially challenging for new entrants who have not yet honed their social and technical skills. Virtual experiences are also a poor fit for jobs that require hands-on experience. The pandemic has exacerbated mental health challenges for young people and highlighted an urgent need for more mental health supports, as well as services for postsecondary students and young people entering the workforce.

The consultations also flagged another key barrier to youth employment: awareness. Youth, guided by their parents, are often not aware of the full variety of jobs available to them which could match their interests and skills. This may hamper entry into the skilled trades and manufacturing sectors.

### SOLUTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

#### 1. Relationship-building, resume building, and job searches

Young people particularly benefit from networking and mentorship opportunities, which guide their skills development, education and job search efforts. In Budget 2021, the federal government announced funding for a strategy to support vulnerable youth that face barriers to employment<sup>91</sup>. The City of Toronto funds programs for one-on-one support, networking, mentoring and connection to training programs.<sup>92</sup> YouthConnect, a CivicAction initiative, is another organization that aims to help prepare young people for the future of work through free skills-building events and online learning.<sup>93</sup>



Canada’s large employers are also contributing to relationship-building initiatives that support youth employment. For example, RBC’s Future Launch tackles four key areas of development for youth, including developing skills, building networks, gaining entry-level experience and accessing mental health resources. The program has reached three million youth with the support of over 500 community partners.<sup>94</sup>

In addition to government, not-for-profit and philanthropic initiatives to support youth skills-building and career development, post-secondary institutions also invest in career development activities through career fairs, resume-writing guidance, information sessions, employer visits and interview preparation. Increased efforts to support students for career development is essential. **The Board calls on post-secondary institutions to invest more resources to increase student usage of career centre services, support student engagement in career planning, measure outcomes in career preparedness and report on outcomes.**

## 2. Work Integrated Learning (“WIL”)

There’s no question that work integrated learning presents significant opportunities for young people to gain work experience; develop technical, digital and soft skills; and help build their confidence in the workplace. According to a 2014 survey from the Higher Education Quality Council of Canada, “WIL participants who graduated from university business programs and science and engineering programs were significantly more likely to have permanent full-time employment than their non-WIL counterparts.”<sup>95</sup>

Acknowledged as a critical tool to drive youth employment, all levels of government fund these types of opportunities. At the federal level, the 2021 Budget outlines a \$721 million two-year investment for youth workforce development, which includes

both work-integrated learning opportunities for post-secondary education students and supporting the Canada Summer Jobs program.<sup>96</sup> Provincially, the government funds co-op programs for high school students to get on-the-job training, allowing them to earn industry certifications and internship opportunities within the government.<sup>97</sup> The provincial government has also introduced a new performance-based funding model that links a larger portion of provincial post-secondary operating funding to student and economic outcomes.<sup>98</sup> It is investing in partnership-building between industry and the education sector.<sup>99</sup> At the municipal level, the City of Toronto offers full-time employment opportunities for young workers.<sup>100</sup> **The Board calls on all levels of government to continue to prioritize WIL as a key strategy to build young people’s skills and experience to prepare them for the workforce. All levels of government must also work closely with employers to ensure investments respond to employer barriers to integrating more WIL opportunities. Consideration and guidance should also be given to how WIL can be advanced in hybrid or remote workplaces.**

WIL is also promoted by the Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER), which brings together large companies and post-secondary institutions across Canada to build opportunities for young Canadians. BHER also develops resources to reduce barriers for employers participating in WIL programs, such as accessing financial supports and making a business case. BHER has developed a WIL Hub to provide employers with tools and resources to create or expand WIL programs, including a catalogue of financial supports and a return-on-investment guide.<sup>101</sup> **The Board encourages employers of all sizes to consider WIL and will explore opportunities to partner with talent ecosystem members to amplify the benefit of WIL.**





### 3. Awareness-building initiatives

During the Talent Ecosystem Consultations, stakeholders flagged *awareness* of jobs and career paths as a barrier to maximizing youth employment in a wide variety of fields. Ontario high school students must complete a compulsory Career Studies course, which is designed to help students learn about various career options and develop the skills necessary for success.<sup>102</sup> Tapping into the youth talent pipeline early may be very beneficial for multiple sectors, and this requires employer-led awareness building efforts beyond high school curriculum. To that end – and aligned with the recommendation for sector-specific working groups – **the Board calls on employers to expand investments in marketing and promotion strategies to build broad awareness of their sector. Marketing and promotion should be targeted to both young people and their parents. We call on post-secondary institutions, unions and governments to support these efforts.**

### 4. Expanded mental health support and services

Even before the pandemic, the mental health needs of postsecondary students were increasing dramatically in Canada. In a National College Health Assessment survey of the Canadian student population released in 2019, 52% of students reported feeling depressed compared to 46% in 2016. 69% of students experienced anxiety and 12% of students had considered suicide.<sup>103</sup>

Throughout consultations, stakeholders have identified the growing mental health crisis among young people, how it is impacting post-secondary students and also how it will undoubtedly impact young people entering the workforce. In May 2021 the provincial government announced over \$2 million in funding to eight projects at colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes.<sup>104</sup> The Future Skills Centre, Canada's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS), and CAMH have also launched programs to provide personalized supports to young people with mental health challenges to better ready them for employment.<sup>105</sup> The Board is encouraged by these programs and calls on more players in the talent ecosystem to identify opportunities to provide mental health support and services for young people entering (or currently in) the workplace. **To that end, the Board will explore opportunities to connect employer members, post-secondary education partners and other ecosystem players to identify funding opportunities and collaborative programs.**

Throughout consultations, stakeholders have identified the growing mental health crisis among young people, how it is impacting post-secondary students and also how it will undoubtedly impact young people entering the workforce.



# Acknowledgements

With strategic direction provided by Roselle Martino, this report was written by Uchenna Onuzo, Stéphanie Bussière and Judith Borts of JB Policy Group, edited by Adam Zivo and Avi D’Souza. Design was provided by Lisa Davison Design. We sincerely thank the members of the Board’s Talent Ecosystem Policy Committee and broader talent ecosystem partners for their comments, time and insights. Special thanks to former Talent Ecosystem Policy Committee Chair Hillary Marshall, and current Vice Chair Blaine Woodcock, for their wisdom, insights and advice.

---

## TALENT ECOSYSTEM COMMITTEE

Deloitte	RBC
Centennial College	Ryerson University
Fragomen	Telus
Finding Clarity	Tourism Toronto
Greater Toronto Airports Authority	University of Toronto
Jacobs	York University
PricewaterhouseCoopers	

---

## TALENT ECOSYSTEM CONSULTATION CONTRIBUTORS

Accenture	LiUNA
Black Business and Professional Association	Lovis
Black Talent Initiative	Magna
BrainStation	MaRS Discovery District
Bruce Power	Mitacs
Canada Green Building Council	Ontario Power Generation
CD Howe Institute	Palette Skills
City of Toronto, Newcomer Leadership Table	Ryerson University
CivicAction	Skills For Change
Conference Board of Canada	Technical Training Group
Council of Ontario Universities	The T1 Agency
eCampus Ontario	TouchStone Personnel Inc
Fragomen	United Way Greater Toronto
George Brown College	Wipro
Humber College	World Education Services
Lighthouse Labs	YMCA-GTA
LinkedIn	York University

## Endnotes

- 1 Canadian Federation of Independent Business, “Business Barometer, December 2021”, December 2021, <https://content.cfib-fcei.ca/sites/default/files/2021-12/business-barometer-Canada-2021-12.pdf>
- 2 Business Development Bank of Canada, “Labour Shortage: Here to Stay,” 2018, [https://www.bdc.ca/en/documents/analysis\\_research/labour-shortage.pdf](https://www.bdc.ca/en/documents/analysis_research/labour-shortage.pdf)
- 3 Canadian Federation of Independent Business, “Business Barometer, December 2021”, December 2021, <https://content.cfib-fcei.ca/sites/default/files/2021-12/business-barometer-Canada-2021-12.pdf>
- 4 TD Bank, “Growing Labour Market Imbalances Present Upside Risk to Wages in Canada”, October 2021, <https://economics.td.com/ca-labour-imbalances>
- 5 Toronto Region Board of Trade, “Recovery Tracker”, November 2021, <https://supportbusiness.bot.com/ready-toronto/recovery-tracker-charts/>
- 6 TD Bank, “Growing Labour Market Imbalances Present Upside Risk to Wages in Canada”, October 2021, <https://economics.td.com/ca-labour-imbalances>
- 7 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, “Global e-commerce jumps to \$26.7 trillion, COVID-19 boosts online sales”, May 2021, <https://unctad.org/news/global-e-commerce-jumps-267-trillion-covid-19-boosts-online-sales>
- 8 Toronto Region Board of Trade, “Recovery Tracker”, November 2021, <https://supportbusiness.bot.com/ready-toronto/recovery-tracker-charts/>
- 9 Toronto Region Board of Trade, “From Crisis to Opportunity: Challenges Today and Futureproofing for Tomorrow in the Metropolitan Centre of Canada’s Innovation Corridor”, June 2021, <https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/TRBOT-EBI-R4Y-BD-MC-060821.pdf>
- 10 Toronto Region Board of Trade, “Innovation Corridor Overview”, February 2022, <https://supportbusiness.bot.com/ready-toronto/recovery-tracker-charts/>
- 11 Statistics Canada, “Population Projections for Canada (2018 to 2068), Provinces and Territories (2018 to 2043)”, September 2019, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-520-x/91-520-x2019001-eng.htm>
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Government of Ontario, “Ontario population projections”, August 2021, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-population-projections>
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibbitson, John, “Ontario to remove work certification barrier for immigrants”, October 2021, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-ontario-to-remove-work-certification-barrier-for-immigrants/>
- 16 Statistics Canada, “Canada’s population estimates, third quarter 2020”, December 2020, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/201217/dq201217b-eng.htm>
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Statistics Canada, “Gender differences in employment one year into the COVID-19 pandemic: An analysis by industrial sector and firm size”, May 2021, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2021005/article/00005-eng.htm>
- 19 Royal Bank of Canada, “Canadian Women Continue to Exit the Labour Force”, November 2020, <https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/canadian-women-continue-to-exit-the-labour-force/>
- 20 The Conference Board of Canada, “The Need to Make Skills Work: The Cost of Ontario’s Skills Gap”, June 2013, [https://otec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Need\\_to\\_Make\\_Skills\\_Work\\_Report\\_June\\_2013.pdf](https://otec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Need_to_Make_Skills_Work_Report_June_2013.pdf)
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Toronto Region Board of Trade, “Fast Forward: Sector Strategies for Accelerating the Toronto Region’s Recovery”, April 2021, [https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/PDFs/Fast\\_Forward\\_Sector\\_Strategies\\_for\\_Recovery.pdf](https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/PDFs/Fast_Forward_Sector_Strategies_for_Recovery.pdf)
- 23 Future Skills Centre, “The Mother of Invention: Skills for Innovation in the Post-Pandemic World”, June 2021, <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/the-mother-of-invention-skills-for-innovation-in-the-post-pandemic-world/>
- 24 Future Skills Centre, “Bridging the Digital Skills Gap: Alternative Pathways”, January 2020, <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/bridging-the-digital-skills-gap-alternative-pathways/>
- 25 KPMG, “Canadian Businesses struggling to find skilled talent: KPMG Survey”, August 2021, <https://home.kpmg/ca/en/home/media/press-releases/2021/08/tech-skills-top-priority-for-businesses-kpmg.html>
- 26 Toronto Region Board of Trade, “Help Wanted 2: A Data-Driven Approach to Workforce Development”, 2020, [https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/HelpWanted\\_Report2.pdf](https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/HelpWanted_Report2.pdf)
- 27 Toronto Region Board of Trade, “Fast Forward: Sector Strategies for Accelerating the Toronto Region’s Recovery”, April 2021, [https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/PDFs/Fast\\_Forward\\_Sector\\_Strategies\\_for\\_Recovery.pdf](https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/PDFs/Fast_Forward_Sector_Strategies_for_Recovery.pdf)
- 28 Future Skills Centre, “Return on Investment: Industry Leadership on Upskilling and Reskilling their Workforce”, January 2020, <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/return-on-investment-industry-leadership-on-upskilling-and-reskilling-their-workforce/>
- 29 Institute for Research on Public Policy, “Mapping Canada’s Training Ecosystem: Much Needed and Long Overdue”, January 2021, <https://irpp.org/research-studies/mapping-canadas-training-ecosystem-much-needed-and-long-overdue/>
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Government of Canada, “Skills and Competencies Taxonomy”, August 2021, <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/SkillsTaxonomy/SkillsTaxonomyWelcome?GoCTemplateCulture=en-CA>
- 32 Future Skills Centre, “Competency Frameworks and Canada’s Essential Skills”, November 2020, <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/competency-frameworks-and-canadas-essential-skills/>
- 33 Canadian Chamber of Commerce, “Closing the Skills Gap: Mapping A Path for Small Business”, February 2013, [http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/ccc/skills\\_gap/skills\\_gap.pdf](http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/ccc/skills_gap/skills_gap.pdf)
- 34 Brookings, “Understanding the Skills Gap and What Employers Can Do About it”, December 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/understanding-the-skills-gap-and-what-employers-can-do-about-it/>
- 35 Ministry of Colleges and Universities, “Canada-Ontario Job Grant”, September 2021, <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/cojg/>
- 36 Business Higher Education Roundtable, <https://bher.ca/>
- 37 Future Skills Centre, “Bridging the Digital Skills Gap: Alternative Pathways”, January 2020, <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/bridging-the-digital-skills-gap-alternative-pathways/>
- 38 Michel Cournoyer, “Digital Skills Most In Demand in Job Postings in Canada – Not highly technical programming languages, but everyday digital skills”, December 2019, <https://jobmarketmonitor.com/2019/12/18/digital-skills-most-in-demand-in-job-posting-in-canada-not-highly-technical-programming-languages-but-everyday-digital-skills/>

- 38 Toronto Region Board of Trade, Recovery Activation Program, <https://wtctoronto.com/rap/>
- 39 Digital Main Street, <https://digitalmainstreet.ca/>
- 40 Government of Canada, “Backgrounder: Government of Canada investments in training and skills development”, May 2021, <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2021/05/backgrounder-government-of-canada-investments-in-training-and-skills-development.html>
- 41 Morneau Shepell, “Investing in a resilient Canadian workforce: 2020 Business Council of Canada Skills Survey”, Summer 2020, <https://www.morneaushepell.com/permafiles/92941/investing-resilient-canadian-workforce-2020-business-council-canada-skills-survey.pdf>
- 42 The Conference Board of Canada, “What Are Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions Saying and Doing?”, January 2021, [https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/10877\\_25110\\_issue-briefing\\_ses-canadian-post-secondary.pdf](https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/10877_25110_issue-briefing_ses-canadian-post-secondary.pdf)
- 43 The Conference Board of Canada, “Social and Emotional Skills are Top of Mind Across Canada”, December 2020, [https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Summary-Report-ses\\_are-top-of-mind-across-cnd-English.pdf](https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Summary-Report-ses_are-top-of-mind-across-cnd-English.pdf)
- 44 Government of Canada, “Creating Jobs and Growth”, April 2021, <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/report-rapport/p2-en.html>
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Toronto Region Board of Trade, “Building Infrastructure, Building Talent”, October 2016, [https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/unsecure/Advocacy/TRBOT\\_Talent\\_Study\\_2016.pdf](https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/unsecure/Advocacy/TRBOT_Talent_Study_2016.pdf)
- 47 Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, “The Journey of Ontario Apprentices: From High School to the Workforce”, 2020, [https://heqco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Formatted\\_Journey-of-Ontario-Apprentices-FINAL.pdf](https://heqco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Formatted_Journey-of-Ontario-Apprentices-FINAL.pdf)
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Royal Bank of Canada, “Powering Up: Preparing Canada’s skilled trades for a post-pandemic economy”, September 2021, <https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/powering-up-preparing-canadas-skilled-trades-for-a-post-pandemic-economy/>
- 50 Smart Prosperity Institute, “Baby Needs a New Home: Projecting Ontario’s Growing Number of Families and Their Housing Needs”, October 2021, <https://institute.smartprosperity.ca/sites/default/files/Baby-Needs-a-New-Home-Oct-1.pdf>
- 51 Statistics Canada, “Demographic characteristics of apprentices, Canada”, April 2017, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tb1/en/cv.action?pid=3710012301>
- 52 Skills Ontario, <https://www.skillsontario.com/>
- 53 Government of Ontario, “Skilled trades and apprenticeship system changes”, January 2022, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/skilled-trades-and-apprenticeship-system-changes>
- 54 The Conference Board of Canada, “Bridging Generational Divides: Advancing Digital Skills in Canada’s Apprenticeships and Skilled Trades Ecosystem”, September 2020, <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=10707>
- 55 Workforce 2030, “2021 Budget Consultations”, February 2021, [https://www.cagbc.org/cagbcdocs/workforce/Workforce2030\\_Pre\\_Budget\\_Submission\\_2021.pdf](https://www.cagbc.org/cagbcdocs/workforce/Workforce2030_Pre_Budget_Submission_2021.pdf)
- 56 York Region District School Board, “York Region Skills Challenge”, 2019, <https://www2.yrdsb.ca/schools-programs/school-programs-nav/school-programs/york-region-skills-challenge-yrsc>
- 57 Skills Ontario, “Presentations”, <https://www.skillsontario.com/in-school-presentations>
- 58 Technical Training Group, “FunTECH AMDSB”, <https://www.technicaltraininggroup.org/funtech-amdsb>
- 59 Government of Ontario, “Ontario Expanding Youth Training Programs to Promote the Skilled Trades”, August 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/58150/ontario-expanding-youth-training-programs-to-promote-the-skilled-trades>
- 60 Government of Ontario, Ministry of Colleges and Universities, “Skills Development Fund”, October 2021, <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/sdf.html>
- 61 Government of Ontario, “Ontario Helping Underprivileged Youth Start Careers in Construction”, July 2021, <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000585/ontario-helping-underprivileged-youth-start-careers-in-construction>
- 62 Ontario Construction Report, “Aecon partners with LiUNA to deliver Women in Trades program”, September 2021, <https://ontarioconstructionreport.com/aecon-partners-with-liuna-to-deliver-women-in-trades-program/>
- 63 City of Toronto, “Social Development, Finance and Administration”, <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/city-administration/staff-directory-divisions-and-customer-service/social-development-finance-administration/>
- 64 Government of Ontario, “Skilled trades and apprenticeship system changes” January 2022, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/skilled-trades-and-apprenticeship-system-changes>
- 65 Moore, Sarah, “We’re all being encouraged to get electric vehicles, but who is going to service them?”, September 2021, <https://www.thestar.com/autos/2021/09/18/were-all-being-encouraged-to-get-electric-vehicles-but-who-is-going-to-service-them.html>
- 66 Future Skills Centre, “Workforce 2030L Rapid Upskilling for Green Building”, 2020, <https://fsc-ccf.ca/projects/upskilling-green-building/>
- 67 Statistic Canada, “Labour Force Survey, December 2021”, December 2021, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220107/dq220107a-eng.htm>
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 City of Toronto, “Population Demographics”, 2019, [https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/99b4-TOHealthCheck\\_2019Chapter1.pdf](https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/99b4-TOHealthCheck_2019Chapter1.pdf)
- 70 Ibbitson, John, “Ontario to remove work certification barrier for immigrants”, October 2021, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-ontario-to-remove-work-certification-barrier-for-immigrants/>
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 The Conference Board of Canada, “Counting on Immigration: Measuring the Pandemic’s Effect and Building Back Stronger”, May 2021, <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/274e4638-8554-420b-991c-46f9619d9855/11129-sfe-counting-on-immigration.pdf>
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Century Initiative, <https://www.centuryinitiative.ca/>
- 75 Ibbitson, John, “It’s time for Canada to focus on expanding immigration”, March 2021, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-its-time-for-canada-to-focus-on-expanding-our-population/>
- 76 Mahboubi, Parisa, “The economic case for more immigration”, June 2019, [https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/commentary/article-the-economic-case-for-more-immigration/?cmpid=rss&utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=twitter](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/commentary/article-the-economic-case-for-more-immigration/?cmpid=rss&utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

- 77 United Nations Refugee Agency, “Refugees in Canada”, <https://www.unhcr.ca/in-canada/refugees-in-canada/>
- 78 Statistics Canada, “Immigrant Entrepreneurs as Job Creators: The Case of Canadian Private Incorporated Companies”, April 2019, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2019011-eng.pdf?st=g5OILrhR>
- 79 Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, “Eliminating the barrier of credential recognition for immigrant professionals”, November 2018, <https://triec.ca/eliminating-the-barrier-of-credential-recognition-for-immigrant-professionals/>
- 80 Government of Canada, “A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications”, October 2021, <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/foreign-credential-recognition/funding-framework.html>
- 81 Toronto Region Board of Trade, “The New Normal: Considerations for the Long-Term Resiliency and Vibrancy of Toronto’s Financial District”, November 2021, [https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/PDFs/New\\_Normal\\_031121.pdf](https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/PDFs/New_Normal_031121.pdf)
- 82 Government of the United Kingdom, “New strategy to attract world class talent and put people at the heart of R&D”, July 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-strategy-to-attract-world-class-talent-and-put-people-at-the-heart-of-rd>
- 83 CBC News, “Ontario to propose bill that would remove barriers facing foreign-trained professionals, tradespeople”, October 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-foreign-trained-immigrants-proposed-legislation-labour-shortage-changes-1.6218928>
- 84 Government of Canada, “Funding: Foreign Credential Recognition Program- Overview”, April 2021, <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/foreign-credential-recognition.html>
- 85 Talent Beyond Boundaries, <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/>
- 86 City of Toronto, “Toronto Newcomer Strategy 2022-2026”, 2021, <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-166819.pdf>
- 87 Statistic Canada, “Labour Force Survey, December 2021”, December 2021, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220107/dq220107a-eng.htm>
- 88 Toronto Region Board of Trade, “Recovery Tracker”, November 2021, <https://supportbusiness.bot.com/ready-toronto/recovery-tracker-charts/>
- 89 Pew Research Center, “On the Cusp of Adulthood and Facing an Uncertain Future: What We Know About Gen Z So Far”, May 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/05/14/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far-2/>
- 90 Youth Culture, “COVID-19 Youth Impact Report from an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lens”, March 2021, <https://youthimpactreport.com/>
- 91 Government of Canada, “Budget 2021: A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience”, April 2021, <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/report-rapport/toc-tdm-en.html>
- 92 City of Toronto, “Partnership to Advance Youth Employment (PAYE)”, <https://eos.toronto.ca/jobsincommunity/go/PAYE/2581717/>; <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/employment-social-support/employment-support/youth-employment-seekers/>
- 93 CivicAction, “YouthConnect”, <https://leadership.civicaction.ca/youthconnect/>
- 94 Royal Bank of Canada, “Future Launch”, <https://www.rbc.com/dms/enterprise/futurelaunch/>
- 95 Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, “Work-Integrated Learning in Ontario’s Postsecondary Sector: The Pathways of Recent College and University Graduates”, 2014, [https://heqco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WIL\\_Grad-Follow-up-ENG.pdf](https://heqco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WIL_Grad-Follow-up-ENG.pdf)
- 96 Government of Canada, “Creating Jobs and Growth”, April 2021, <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/report-rapport/p2-en.html>
- 97 Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education, “Specialist High Skills Major”, October 2021, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/SHSM.html>
- 98 Government of Ontario, “Promoting Excellence: Ontario Implements Performance Based Funding for Postsecondary Institutions”, November 2021, <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/59368/promoting-excellence-ontario-implements-performance-based-funding-for-postsecondary-institutions>
- 99 Government of Ontario, “Ontario Supports Hands-on Training Opportunities for Postsecondary Students”, March 2021, <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/60618/ontario-supports-hands-on-training-opportunities-for-postsecondary-students>
- 100 City of Toronto, “Youth Job Seekers”, <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/employment-social-support/employment-support/youth-employment-seekers/>
- 101 Business and Higher Education Roundtable, “WIL Hub”, <https://bher.ca/wil-hub>
- 102 Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education, “Grade 10 Career Studies: A Guide for Parents and Students”, <http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/career-studies-fact-sheet.html>
- 103 American College Health Association, “American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment II: Canadian Consortium Executive Summary”, Spring 2019, <https://www.cacuss.ca/files/Research/NCHA-II%20SPRING%202019%20CANADIAN%20REFERENCE%20GROUP%20EXECUTIVE%20SUMMARY.pdf>
- 104 Government of Ontario, “Ontario Supports Innovative Mental Health Projects at Postsecondary Institutions”, May 2021, <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000215/ontario-supports-innovative-mental-health-projects-at-postsecondary-institutions>
- 105 Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, “CAMH, YWHO, ACCESS Open Minds and Foundry launch first-of-its kind initiative to help young people with mental health challenges find employment”, May 2021, <https://www.camh.ca/en/camh-news-and-stories/initiative-to-help-young-people-with-mental-health-challenges-find-employment>



The Toronto Region Board of Trade is one of the largest and most influential chambers of commerce in North America and is a catalyst for the region's economic growth agenda. Backed by more than 13,500 members, we pursue policy change to drive the growth and competitiveness of the Toronto region, and facilitate market opportunities with programs, partnerships and connections to help our members succeed – domestically and internationally.

To learn about the Board's economic recovery efforts and response to COVID-19, visit [supportbusiness.bot.com](https://supportbusiness.bot.com). For more on making Toronto one of the most competitive and sought-after business regions in the world, visit [bot.com](https://bot.com) and follow us at [@TorontoRBOT](https://twitter.com/TorontoRBOT).