



## Work and Employment

Jobseekers having access to quality jobs, workers' ability to make a living wage, and employers being able to find a match between employees' skills and the jobs being offered are key to Niagara's growth and development.

### Happening Now

- Leading up to the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020, Niagara's employment rates had been increasing, in line with the national trend.
- 2019 data shows Niagara's top 5 sectors by employment: Accommodation and food services; Retail trade; Health care and social assistance; Manufacturing; and Construction. The top 5 sectors by employment growth rate were: Professional, scientific, technical service; Accommodation and food services; Transportation and warehousing; Health care and social assistance; and Educational services.
- Small businesses (including for-profit entities, non-profits and registered charities), with between 1 and 99 employees represent over 97% of Niagara's employers.
- The effect of employment precarity on individual, family and community health is becoming more recognized in Niagara.
- The Ontario Living Wage Network calculation for Niagara for 2019 was \$18.12/hour. A living wage reflects what earners need to be paid, based on actual costs of living and being included in the community. By December, 2020, a total of 45 Niagara employers had committed to being Certified Living Wage Employers.



## What's Emerging

- Niagara is part of an employment services prototype project, with changes the provincial government is making to bring together services previously delivered separately through Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program and Employment Ontario Service. A consortium led by Fedcap began its role as service system manager for Hamilton-Niagara in 2020.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is an extremely challenging time for employers, employees and job-seekers alike. Barriers and supports are being identified, to assist these people as our community emerges from the pandemic.
- A surge in the Ontario Works caseload in Niagara is anticipated in 2021. People living in low income have been disproportionately impacted during the pandemic. They are more likely to live in overcrowded communities; be impacted by change in the employment landscape; and work in industries that increase proximity to the public.
- Critical uncertainties that will affect labour supply and demand in the coming two years include: changes in women's participation in the labour force; and the ability of local tourism employers to maintain operations at reduced levels of capacity.
- Implications of the significant economic impact of COVID-19 on Niagara women in the workforce is being examined. Women dominate the workforce in some of the hardest-hit sectors, such as accommodation and food service; and the retail trade. Complex factors include: the role accessible childcare plays in the economy; necessity for flexible hours and paid sick leave for productivity; and the lower and part-time wages that have become associated with occupations dominated by women.

## Suggested Community Action Steps

- Acknowledge the importance of health and well-being, including mental health, for individuals, families and everyone in the workplace, as our community emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Consider the effects of missed milestones during the pandemic; and related long-term impacts for the younger generation and jobseekers of all ages.
- Recognize that having digital skills is essential for modern workplace competency.

## Indicators Measures for these indicators can be found at: [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com)

- **Employment Services in Niagara**
- **Jobs in Niagara**
- **Labour Force in Niagara**
- **Niagara-wide Coordination and Planning**
- **Workplace Injuries and Workplace Psychological Health and Safety**